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Organizational Culture and Perceived Organizational Support: The impact on Professional Satisfaction

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ABSTRACT

Purpose : Organizational culture is paramount for an institution and has a determining power on its efficacy (Yilmaz & Ergun, 2008).

Design : The goal of this study is to understand the way Organizational Culture (Support; Innovation; Objectives; Rules) and Perceived Organizational Support contribute to workers' Professional Satisfaction. 635 Portuguese workers in public higher education institutions composed the sample for this study.

Findings : Results show that both Organizational Culture and Perceived Organizational Support partly explain Professional Satisfaction (r2 = 42%; p = 0.000), mostly due to the Support orientation of Organizational Culture. By structural equation modeling we confirmed Support Culture as a predictor of Perceived Organizational Support and identified Organizational Support as a predictor of Professional Satisfaction.

Research Limitations / Implications : In future it will be interesting consider the students point of view, because they are costumers with benefits on this organizations (they are in same decision councils, such as pedagogic). It will be also interesting to analyze this variables in private higher education institutions, doing a multi-group analysis.

Originality / Value : We conclude that it is important for organizations to implement a Support Culture and to develop strategies for social care of their workers, in order to promote effective Professional Satisfaction.

KEYWORDS : Organizational culture; organizational support job satisfaction.

Introduction

How things are done around here.
(Deal & Kennedy, 1982)

In quotidian living, individuals are influenced by the cultural characteristics of their natural environment. The culture of a community or population encompasses all socially transmitted behaviors, arts, beliefs and several other processes considered as the expression of a certain time period (Choudhry, Fang, & Mohamed, 2007). At the organizational level, it is possible to identify a set of values, regulations and behavioral patterns that influence all the different elements of the organization. This set of values is organization specific, constituting the Organizational Culture.

Organizational Culture is paramount for an institution (Yilmaz & Ergun, 2008) and has a determining power over all organizational processes and their results, in particular over their efficacy (Carmeli & Tisher, 2004; Joyce & Slocum, 1990; O´Reilley, 1991; Powell & Dent-Micallef, 1997; Powell, Francesco, & Lings, 2009). Individuals choose to work in different settings and professional areas, but their efficacy depends, in part, of their Perceived Organizational Support, due to the fact that Professional Satisfaction, Professional Commitment, creativity, and the intention to leave an organization are affected by existing Organizational Culture (Gregory, Harris, Armenakis, & Shook, 2009; Kwantes & Boglarsky, 2007; Neves, 2000; Reichers & Scheneider, 1990; Schneider, Hanges, Smith, & Salvaggio, 2003).

Gorzoni (2010) reports that Organizational Culture has been thoroughly studied and represented with different theoretical referentials, leading to multiple interpretations and approaches. According to Zavareze (2008), this is still not a consensual concept, due to the fact that it implies that organizations can develop differentiated cultures. Despite this, an accepted definition that widely contributes to Organizational Culture understanding considers that it has a set of core values, behavior norms, artifacts and behavior patterns that govern the way people interact in an organization, and the way they commit to their job and to the organization (Schein, 1992). Organizational Culture is thus composed by several layered elements, such as values, norms, basic assumptions, artifacts and behavior patterns.

Ertürk (2010), in a sample of 518 workers from the Turkish naval industry, has shown a positive association between Perceived Organizational Support and organizational identification. Ertürk (2010) concludes that workers who identify heavily with the organization and its culture have a higher Organizational Satisfaction.

Perceived Organizational Support is usually defined as the degree to which employees believe that their organization values their contributions and cares about their well-being (Eisenberger, Huntington, Hutchison, & Sowa, 1986; Lee & Percei, 2007; Shore & Wayne, 1993). When a positive Perceived Organizational Support is identified, workers act in a reciprocal manner, acquiring feelings of trust (Rego & Souto, 2002), and experiencing more Professional Satisfaction (Eisenberger, Cummings, Armeli, & Lynch, 1997; Stamper & Johlke, 2003). It can be claimed that Perceived Organizational Support is a socio-emotional source for the workers. As friends' perceived social support completes the socio-emotional needs in interpersonal relations, Perceived Organizational Support allows to satisfy important socio-emotional needs, such as respect and approval, in the workplace (Armeli, Eisenberger, Fasolo, & Lynch, 1998).

Some studies report that Perceived Organizational Support has repercussions in Professional Satisfaction (Piercy, Cravens, Lane, & Vorhies, 2006). A meta-analysis by Riggle, Edmondson and Hansen (2009) identifies a strong positive effect of perceived organizational support on professional satisfaction and a moderate positive effect on performance.

Professional Satisfaction has been frequently examined, with many of the conducted studies trying to identify its determinants and/or socio-demographic and organizational consequences (e.g., Arvey, Bouchard, Segal, & Abraham, 1989; Arvey, Carter, & Buerkley, 1991). Some organizational variables, like Organizational Culture, seem to predict Professional Satisfaction (Igbaria & Guimarães, 1993; Johnson, 1992). Recent studies analyze the impact of the job socialization and autonomy on satisfaction (Yang, 2010). The importance of Professional Satisfaction results from the influence that professional satisfaction itself can have on the worker, affecting his mental and physical health, his attitudes and behaviors, and from the repercussions it implies in the worker's personal and family life (Bilgic, 1998; Zalewska, 1999).

The study of organizational variables has been common in private institutions, mostly because quality is a requisite to ensure that the institution stays competitive in its market segment. Nevertheless, in order that the performance of public institutions can constitute a reference

for other institutions, we believe that an in-depth knowledge of public institutions must exist. The organizational realities of Portuguese Public Higher Education, their repercussion on the workers and on the institutions' performance, must be assessed and analyzed.

Understanding the organizational paradigms related with the evaluation of attitudes and behavior of the human assets in Higher Education institutions represents an important step to optimize organizational health, as Organizational Culture seems to have an impact on workers' moral and attitudes and, consequently, on professional satisfaction. For example, using a sample of American workers, Daulatram (2003) has identified a positive impact of the Support and Innovation cultural orientations on professional satisfaction, reflecting the role of the existing culture on workers' satisfaction.

The present study intends to analyze Organizational Culture and Perceived Organizational Support as determinants of Professional Satisfaction.

Method

The data collection and analysis for this study were accomplished by a quantitative study design.

Sample

We selected a non-random sample of 635 workers, regardless of position, in all Portuguese Public Universities and Higher Education institutions. The inclusion criterion for the sample was the complete fulfillment of the data collection questionnaire.

The sample was mainly composed by females (n = 375; 60%), aged between 23 and 64 years old, with a mean of 39.77 (*SD* = 9.13) years old. Higher Education in Portugal is divided in University Education, which provides comprehensive theoretical basis and is more research-oriented, and Polytechnic Education, which provides a more practical training and is mainly profession-oriented. Our sample included 420 participants (66.8%) from the University Education and 211 participants (33.2%) from the Polytechnic Education.

Data collection tools

Organizational culture was assessed by the First Organizational Culture Unified Search (FOCUS) questionnaire (Neves, 2000), initially developed within a research project conducted in the Catholic University of Leuven (Neves, 2000; Van Muijen, Papalexandris, Branyiscski, Spaltro, Jesuíno, & Neves, 1999). This tool is divided into two sections. The first section has a descriptive nature and regards behavioral aspects of the organization's climate. It is composed by items scored in a numbered six-point scale, ranging from 1 ("never/no one") to 6 ("always/all"). The second section is composed by 35 value-characteristic items regarding orientations of organizational culture, destined to be evaluated in a six-point scale, ranging from 1 ("not at all") to 6 ("very"). Neves (2000) shows that a reliable assessment of the four orientations of organizational culture can be achieved with the scoring of 34 out of the 35 value-characteristic items in the FOCUS questionnaire.

Organizational support was assessed with the Perceived Organizational Support Scale (Eisenberger et al., 1986), translated into Portuguese. This scale is composed by eight items scored in a seven-point Likert scale anchored in "*strongly disagree*" and "*strongly agree*". Both the original scale and the Portuguese translation (Santos & Gonçalves, 2010) have an internal consistency of 0.78, improving on the 0.70 reported validity by Nunnally (1978).

The Professional Satisfaction Scale (Lima, Vala, &Monteiro, 1994) measures job satisfaction as well as the different factors affecting it. The scale contains 8 items assessed on a 7-point scale (1 = *extremely dissatisfied*; 7 = *extremely satisfied*), and presents rather adequate reliability, with an alpha of 0,854, slightly higher than the original value of 0,810 (Lima, Vala, & Monteiro, 1994).

Data collection procedures

Data was collected using a self-fulfillment online questionnaire, giving the participants a greater autonomy in their response. A pre-test for the clarity and presentation of the questionnaire was conducted in fifteen workers in Higher Education institutions (8 lecturers and 7 non-lecturer workers). The pre-test resulted in several changes in the questionnaire (e.g., item presentation and visual appeal) and the participants in the pre-test were not included in the final sample.

After the pre-test, a collaboration request was sent by e-mail and by registered postal service to the Rectories of all Public Universities and to all of the Presidencies of the Polytechnic Institutions. These Higher Education institutions were asked to grant authorization for the data collection and also to present the online questionnaire to their workers. The data collection stage lasted for three months, in which the online platform that stored the questionnaire recorded all the submitted responses.

Results

The purpose of the data analysis was to establish a theoretical model detailing the relations between the different variables, with a starting point on the prevalent theoretical constructs. Yang (2010), in a sample of 671 individuals, highlights the impact of the socialization context and of autonomy on Professional Satisfaction, by studying the determinants (e.g., ambiguity and conflict, burnout, socialization, and job autonomy) and consequences (e.g., absenteeism, intention of quitting) of Professional Satisfaction. Following previous research, we believe that both orientations of Organizational Culture and Perceived Organizational Support contribute to explain Professional Satisfaction.

Data were analyzed with IBM SPSS 20.0 and AMOS 20.0 and a 95% confidence interval was used to assess statistical significance in all computed tests. The statistical procedures used were: a) descriptive statistics, which included the mean, standard deviation, skewness and kurtosis; b) correlational analysis; c) hierarchical multiple regression; d) Structural equation modeling. For the confirmatory factor analysis, the variance-covariance matrixes were considered, adopting the maximum-likelihood estimation method. This method assumes normal distribution of data, but it is a robust estimator when this assumption is not met (Schermelleh-Engel, Moosbrugger, & Müller, 2003; Worthington & Whittaker, 2006). The following adjustment indicators were used:

Chi-square statistic (χ^2), representing the probability of data adjustment to the theoretical model, so that higher chi-square statistic values imply a weaker prediction model. As results can be heavily influenced by sample size, the ratio between χ^2 statistic and degrees of freedom is considered a more reliable indicator. Ratio values between 2 and 3 represent an adequate model, with ratio values up to 5 being accepted for data modeling.

The *Comparative Fit Index* (CFI), which ranges between 0 and 1, was used as an additional assessment of model fit. Values of CFI around 0.90 and above represent an adequate model fit.

The *Non-normed Fit Index* (NNFI) assesses model fit by comparing the chi-square for the model tested with a chi-square statistic from a null model. According to Bentler and Bonnet (1980), a 0.90 index reflects a good model fit.

The *Root-Mean Square Error of Approximation* (RMSEA) is characterized by a 90% confidence interval and represents the discrepancy between the hypothesized model and the population covariance matrix. Higher values suggest poor model fit, and an RMSEA between 0.05 and 0.08 is desirable. Values up to 0.10 are considered adequate.

The *Standardized Root-Mean Square Residual* (SRMR) assesses the discrepancy between the sample covariance matrix and the model covariance matrix and a good model fit is represented by values bellow 0.05 (Hu & Bentler, 1999).

Item description: Table 1 presents the mean scores, standard deviations, skewness and kurtosis for each of the dimensions in the different scales. The mean values for the dimensions of Organizational Culture are all above the central point in the scoring scale, which has a minimum of 1 and a maximum of 6; the Rules dimension has the highest mean value. The mean score for Perceived Organizational Support is slightly under 3.5, whereas the mean value found for Professional Satisfaction was above the central point of the scoring scale.

Table 1: Descriptives Statistics (n=635)

Variables	M	SD	Skewness	Kurtosis	Normality [a]
Support OC	3,27	0,837	0,233	0,185	0,000
Innovation OC	3,44	0,791	0,334	-0,332	0,000
Goals OC	3,19	0,969	0,241	-0,481	0,000
Rules OC	3,61	0,707	0,105	0,852	0,000
Marketing Total	3,21	1,616	0,308	-1,006	0,000
IM FFFIG	2,69	1,335	0,534	-0,498	0,000
IM FWIG	3,52	1,679	0,092	-1,050	0,000
IM CDI	2,95	1,480	0,375	-0,853	0,000
IM IIG	2,99	1,511	0,309	-0,870	0,000
IM R	3,65	0,712	-1,007	2,604	0,000
POS	3,27	0,837	0,233	0,185	0,000

Legend: Support OC – Support Organizational Culture; Innovation OC – Innovation Organizational Culture; Goals OC – Goals Organizational Culture; Rules OC – Rules Organizational Culture; IM FFIG – Internal Marketing formal face to face information generation; IM FWIG – Internal Marketing formal written information generation; IM CDI – Internal Marketing communication and dissemination of information; IM IIG – Internal Marketing informal information generation; IM R – Internal Marketing Response

[a] p value obtained using the Kolmogorov-Smirnov, with correction Lillefors

Descriptive statistics and Pearson's correlation matrix: The correlation matrix for the study variables is presented in table 2. Most of the organizational variables are significantly inter-correlated (p = 0,01) and, within each scale, the different dimensions tend to moderately correlate, which justifies their conceptual individuality and specificity. The four dimensions of Organizational Culture (Support Orientation, Goal Orientation, Rules Orientation and Innovativeness) are moderately inter-correlated (with correlation coefficients between 0.40 and 0.50). Correlations between Culture and Perceived Organizational Support are weak (e.g. r = 0,242), but are moderate between Culture and Professional Satisfaction, which, in turn, weakly correlates with Perceived Organizational Support.

Table 2: Pearson's correlation matrix

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
1 Support OC	1	0,520**	0,502**	0,489**	0,569**	0,534**	0,395**	0,431**	0,546**	0,545**	0,242**
2 Innovation OC		1	0,544**	0,449**	0,421**	0,391**	0,368**	0,311**	0,369**	0,387**	0,119**
3 Goals OC			1	0,447**	0,448**	0,393**	0,391**	0,300**	0,429**	0,416**	0,149**
4 Rules OC				1	0,276**	0,224**	0,230**	0,249**	0,250**	0,255**	0,116**
5 Mark. Total					1	0,892**	0,821**	0,821**	0,932**	0,850**	0,299**
6 IM FFFI						1	0,672**	0,694**	0,770**	0,675**	0,218**
7 IM FFWI							1	0,566**	0,685**	0,644**	0,226**
8 IM CDI								1	0,720**	0,631**	0,304**
9 IM IIG									1	0,794**	0,290**
10 MI R										1	0,270**
11 POS											1

p < 0,01 **Legend: *Support OC – Support Organizational Culture; Innovation OC – Innovation Organizational Culture; Goals OC – Goals Organizational Culture; Rules OC – Rules Organizational Culture; IM FFIG – Internal Marketing formal face to face information generation; IM FWIG – Internal Marketing formal written information generation; IM CDI – Internal Marketing communication and dissemination of information; IM IIG – Internal Marketing informal information generation; IM R – Internal Marketing Response*

Hierarchical multiple regressions: The role of Organizational Culture and Perceived Organizational Support as determinants of Professional Satisfaction was analyzed by hierarchical regression. In the first model constructed, we found a significant effect of Organizational Culture on Professional Satisfaction (r^2 = 40%; p = .000). When Perceived Organizational Support was added to the model, we found a significant increase in predictive power (Δr^2 = 2%; p = .000). Table 3 shows the contribution of each variable to the prediction model.

Table 3: Hierarchical multiple regression for Perceived Organizational Support

Model	Variables	β	t	p
1.	Support OC	0,462	10,936	0,000
	Innovation OC	0,153	3,593	0,000
	Goals OC	0,045	1,062	0,289
	Rules OC	-0,049	-1,232	0,218
1.1	Support OC	0,387	8,477	0,000
	Innovation OC	0,133	3,477	0,000
	Goals OC	0,012	0,286	0,775
	Rules OC	-0,035	-0,887	0,377
	Internal Mkt	0,167	4,050	0,000

Data suggest that Support orientation (β = 0,503; p = 0,000) and Perceived Organizational Support (β = 0,152; p = 0,000), have the most significant effect on Professional Satisfaction.

Confirmatory factor analysis for the model: In this section, our goal was to establish a model to explain the associations among the variables under study, starting both from their theoretical principles and the relations among the different variables. Inferential statistics, namely regression analysis, allowed us to construct a predictive model we assessed by the use of structural equations (figure 1). The model's goodness of fit was studied with the aid of different parameters. Both the ratio between X^2 and the degrees of freedom (X2/df = 2,394) and a non-significant X^2 (p = 0,311) represent a good model fit (Byrne, 2001). The CFI (Comparative Fit Index) and the goodness-of-fit statistic (GFI), respectively 0,938 and 0,977, also allow to infer a good model fit, due to their values closer to 1 (Bentler, 1992; Joreskog, 1996). Regarding discrepancy measures, the literature states that SRMR (*Standardized Root-Mean Square Residual*) and RMSEA (Root-Mean Square Error of Approximation) below 0,05 are evidence of good model fit, with values below 0,08 still being considered as evidence of reasonable model adequacy (Browne & Cudeck, 1993; MacCallum, Browne, & Sugawara, 1996). In this study, a SRMR of 0,023 and a RMSEA of 0,099 can indicate a reasonable fit.

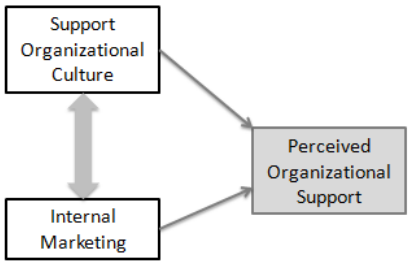


Figure 1

Discussion and conclusions

Most of the studies analyzing Organizational Culture and Perceived Organizational Support, and their repercussions on workers, are conducted in private institutions, which allow the knowledge of indicators that are useful for human assets management (Shore, Coyle-Shapiro, Chen, & Tetrick, 2009; Silverthorne, 2004). In our opinion, the main differentiating factor of this study lies in the type of organizational context analyzed: Public Higher Education institutions.

In the present study, the Rules orientation of **Organizational Culture** had a higher mean value, which seems to represent the tradition that prevails in education institutions in Latin European countries (Hofstede, 1997). These results can reflect the historical inheritance of education institutions and their role in society. In this sense, procedures and regulations within a rigid and defined hierarchy may have had the tendency to be repeated, prolonging and strengthening a bureaucratic profile for institutional action.

The Innovation dimension had the second highest mean value, translating a response to challenges made to society and to Higher Education institutions in particular. Currently, Higher Education institutions exist in a different setting than the one in which they existed some years ago. The current setting is characterized by a mass education of students, reduced public funding, the search of long-distance teaching and escalating cost of equipment (Bartell, 2003).

Nowadays, the competitive global economy enhances the pressure on Higher Education institutions, promoting changes in the institutional environment that require their transformation (Bartell, 2003). In our opinion, the results obtained reflect the antagonistic scenario surrounding Higher Education institutions, which, despite their hierarchical and traditional structure, are environmentally pushed to change and innovate.

Organizational Support has a mean value slightly below the classification scale's midpoint, suggesting that the workers have opinions on how much the organization values their contribution and assures their well-being. These opinions are related to workers' beliefs about the organization's behavior as a whole and not about the behavior of specific organizational agents (Eisenberger, Cummings, & Lynch, 1997). Some studies report the positive effects of organizational support on health and well-being, stating that its emotional aspect is, probably, the most important (Siqueira, Padovam, Chiuzi, & Covacs, 2006). In this sense, the organization, in order to appeal to its workers, can achieve a greater impact by placing an adequate value on affective dimensions.

Perceived Organizational Support can also be considered a precursor of positive experienced sensations, both in the work environment (e.g., Professional Satisfaction) and personal life, by subjective well-being indicators (Padovam, 2005). According to the literature, there is a significant impact of Perceived Organizational Support on workers' behavior and attitudes, and our results suggest the need for intervention strategies directed at workers. Interventions should value human assets, by recognizing their effective value and the irreplaceability of their work for the overall organizational benefit.

In our study, Perceived Organizational Support, Professional Satisfaction and Organizational are correlated. This contributed to our aim of constructing a model that identifies associations between the variables under study, considering also the related theoretical principles.

The role of Organizational Culture as a determinant of Professional Satisfaction, mediated by additional variables, has been proposed by previous research and our model also considers the associations between orientations of Organizational Culture, Perceived Organizational Support, and their determination of Professional Satisfaction. According to our results, the Support orientation in Organizational Culture, characterized by trust and openness, is determinant for Perceived Organizational Support.

Professional Satisfaction is explained both by Organizational Culture (40%) and by Perceived Organizational Support (42%). This result corroborates other studies reporting Organizational Culture (Igbaria & Guimarães, 1993) and autonomy as determinants of Professional Satisfaction (Yang, 2009). Furthermore, additional studies show that Perceived Organizational Support has repercussions in Professional Satisfaction (Piercy, Cravens, Lane, & Vorhies, 2006).

The findings in this study suggest that it is important for organizations to develop a Support Culture in order to promote Perceived Organizational Support in their workers. It is increasingly important for an organization to act but, also, to show to its workers what is being done, clarifying any ambiguities and increasing their trust in the organization while, at the same time, enhancing motivation and job satisfaction.

We believe that future research could expand on our results by the development of an action research study, designed to improve Perceived Organizational Support using human resources strategies. Furthermore, it could be useful to analyze the variables included in this study in different organizational settings and in different operating sectors.

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