

Title: Conflict management, commitment and organizational citizenship behaviors: empirical study in a higher education institution

Theme: Human Resources Management

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Objectives

Over the years, researchers have reinforced the importance of including the study of conflict management and its resolution at the center of the debate on management research, in general terms, and on human resources management, in specific terms. Their importance increases when one begins to consider that conflict, managed in a positive and constructive way, can contribute decisively to the performance of individuals, groups and organizations.

This research intends to bring to debate the analysis about the importance of conflict management as a fundamental process of human resource management in organizations. So, the objectives are:

- To analyze the relationship between conflict management styles (CMS), organizational commitment (OC) and organizational citizenship behaviors (OCB) in a higher education context.
- To analyze empirically whether and how the CMS adopted by professionals are or can be the source of different types of OC and in what way they determine differently the practice of OCB.
- To reflect, in this process of articulation, the of sociodemographic variables (SV) in relation to the CMS.

Methodology/Approach

In theoretical terms the study allows the reflection of different perspectives concerning the frame of reference on the relationship between CMS and OC (e.g., Hussein, Al-Mamary & Hassan, 2017) and between OC and the OCB (e.g., Mehrabi, Alemzadeh, Jadidi & Mahdevar, 2013). In methodological terms, after the literature review, we constructed a conceptual analysis model with a global and integrative view on the relationship between the three constructs. In order to test the proposed model, a case study was carried out in a Portuguese higher education institution (HEI) through the application of a questionnaire survey to non-teaching professionals.

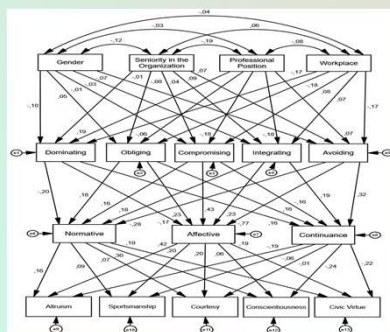
Figure 1 – Methodological strategy



Conclusions/Results

The values of the goodness indices of global adjustment of the analytical model are robust: [$\chi^2(41)=101.873$; $p<.058$; $\chi^2/df=1.258$; $GFI=.905$; $CFI=.962$; $TLI=.936$; $NFI=.851$; $RMSEA=.045$ (.000 - .071)]. The analysis of the normality of the variables shows that the values are lower than the maximum allowed (2 asymmetry and 7 kurtosis), which justifies the estimation of the fit of the model.

Figure 2 – Pictorial specification of the causal relations model with standardized values



SV and CMS:

➢ Lower functions → more CMS dominating ($\beta=.19$; $p<.05$) and a lower compromise ($\beta=-.18$; $p<.05$) and CMS integration ($\beta=-.18$; $p<.05$).

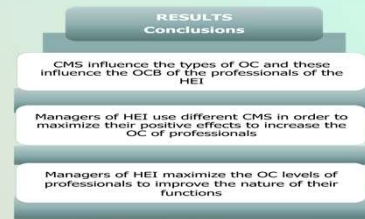
CMS and OC:

- CMS domination and CMS avoidance → higher OC continuance ($\beta=.16$, $p<.05$; $\beta=.32$, $p<.01$) and lower OC normative ($\beta=-.20$, $p<.05$; $\beta=-.28$, $p<.01$) and OC affective ($\beta=-.17$, $p<.01$; $\beta=-.77$, $p<.01$).
- CMS obliging and CMS integrating → higher OC normative ($\beta=.19$, $p<.05$; $\beta=.18$, $p<.05$), OC affective ($\beta=.23$, $p<.01$; $\beta=.23$, $p<.01$) and OC continuance ($\beta=.16$, $p<.05$; $\beta=.19$, $p<.05$).
- CMS compromise → more OC affective and OC normative ($\beta=.43$, $p<.01$; $\beta=.16$, $p<.05$) and less OC continuance ($\beta=-.17$, $p<.05$).

OC and OCB:

- OC affective and OC normative → greater OCB altruism ($\beta=.42$; $p<.01$; $\beta=.16$; $p<.05$), OCB conscientiousness ($\beta=.06$; $p<.01$ and $\beta=.30$; $p<.01$) and OCB civic virtue ($\beta=.19$; $p<.05$ for both).
- OC continuance → lower OCB altruism ($\beta=-.19$; $p<.05$), OCB civic virtue ($\beta=-.22$; $p<.05$), OCB conscientiousness ($\beta=-.24$; $p<.05$).

Figure 3 – Study conclusions



Research Implications

The contribution of the research is a better understanding of the dynamics established between CMS, OC and OCB, as well as in term of the development and promotion of policies and practices of management and human resources management, based on organizational behavior.

Figure 4 – Theoretical and practical implications



Considering that CMS has an impact on the development of the organization, contributing to the achievement of its goals and to the improvement of its results, and that the OC presupposes a way of being in context, with implications in the practice of OCB, then it must also be assumed that the organization will achieve advantages when managers define/implement policies/practices that are focused on the development of conflict management strategies. That is why, although conflict is an integral part of the organizational routine, how it is managed is extremely important to organizations in order to highlight their positive aspects.

Originality

The originality of this research focuses on the conceptual and methodological approach developed. The study differs from others because:

Conceptual approach

- It is the first, in a national and international context, which analyzes the relationship between CMS, OC and OCB in its various dimensions, in an educational context, and, more specifically, in higher education. It is presented, therefore, as a **three-dimensional analysis** of organizational behavior, while a large part of the studies developed on this subject have centered on a two-dimensional approach between only two constructs.

Methodological approach

- The proposed **research model is innovative**, assuming, simultaneously, as **hermeneutic, diagnostic and strategic**. *Diagnosis*, because it is based on the purpose of being a conceptual tool for analysis and performance in the area of organization management. *Hermeneutic*, because it aims to present, systematize and interpret, in a reflexive way, the relations that are established between the dimensions under analysis. *Strategic*, because it contributes to the implementation of a set of policies and practices of human resources management with a view to achieving its strategic objectives.
- The object of study is focus on the **non-teaching professionals** of a higher education institution in Portugal, analyzing their different professional categories, when most of the national studies essentially focus on the professional group of teachers. The various actors in the academic and business environment that maintain close proximity to these institutions have recognized the importance of these professionals: ensuring the implementation of administrative, technical and strategic processes and establishing bridges with others professionals, helping to create dynamics that allow them to leverage the positioning of these institutions as strategic agents of development.

Keywords

Conflict management; Organizational citizenship behaviors; Organizational commitment behaviors; Higher education institutions.

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