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Organizational Culture, Internal Marketing, and Perceived Organizational Support in Portuguese Higher Education Institutions

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A B S T R A C T

Changes imposed on public higher education institutions try to adopt some management practices in public organizations. In this study, we intend to understand how organizational culture (support, innovation, goals, rules) and internal marketing can contribute to the organizational support of employees of higher education institutions. The study was developed with a sample of 635 employees. The results show that organizational culture and internal marketing contribute to the explanation of perceived organizational support (POS). Then, through a structural equation model, it was possible to confirm the contribution of support culture and internal marketing to the explanation of POS. More studies are necessary taking students' point of view into account. These results reveal the importance of the fact that organizations need to implement a culture of support and appropriate internal communication networks that allow employees to perceive social support.

Cultura organizacional, marketing interno y apoyo organizacional percibido en instituciones de educación superior portuguesas

R E S U M E N

Los cambios impuestos por las instituciones de educación superior públicas tratan de encajar algunas prácticas de gestión en las organizaciones públicas. En este estudio pretendemos entender cómo la cultura organizacional (apoyo, innovación, objetivos, reglas) y el marketing interno pueden contribuir al apoyo de la organización a los empleados de las instituciones de educación superior. El estudio fue desarrollado con una muestra de 635 empleados. Los resultados muestran que la cultura organizacional y el marketing interno contribuyen a la explicación de la percepción de apoyo organizacional (PAO). Se pudo confirmar la contribución de la cultura de apoyo y marketing interno a la explicación de la PAO. Se necesitan más estudios que tengan en cuenta el punto de vista de los estudiantes. Estos resultados muestran la importancia de la necesidad que tienen las organizaciones de implementar una cultura de apoyo y redes de comunicación.

Higher education institutions are complex organizations, enhanced as they are by their multi-product nature (Agasisti & Johnes, 2015). It is almost universally acknowledged that higher education institutions play an important role in the progression of advanced *knowledge economies* (Ponnuswamy & Manohar, 2014; Secundo, Margherita, Elia, & Passiante, 2010). In the last decade there have been innovations in higher education, such as the strengthening and creation of international cooperation networks, the increase of academic mobility of faculty and students, a new management structure, new methods of assessment, accreditation and financing, diversification of courses, programs and studies, and the application of technology in teaching and learning (Zhu & Engels, 2014). Innovation in a higher education context is of utmost importance to better equip new generations of students for the changing society of today.

In the European Union the most notable higher education reform was initiated by the Bologna Process to promote mobility by facilitating greater comparability and computability among the diverse higher education systems and institutions across Europe (Keeling, 2006). However, the expansion of access has often been accompanied by concerns about insufficient funding and declining quality in education (Kovtun & Stick, 2009; Ponnunswamy & Manohar, 2014). Studies have shown that, for example in United Kingdom, the current higher education policy is trending towards increasing marketization in different ways, such as by the reduction of direct funding for teaching (Brown, 2011). In our opinion, the Portuguese higher education institutions face the same kind of challenges, and this country has struggled with serious financial issues in the past, so much that the state was forced to ask for outside financial help.

Considering that the issue of higher education is one of the most important bases in the development of each country, the study of the type of organizational culture in this context is considered a valorous domain. Organizational culture is considered as an important and fundamental component in an organization (Zamini, Zamini, & Barzegary, 2011).

Several authors propose that organizational culture is a differentiating factor for organizations, revealing their specificity in terms of efficacy and success (Harrington, Bean, Pintello, & Mathews, 2001; Neves, 2000). The structuring role of organizational culture also highlights the interest in studying and analyzing organizational characteristics, which are easily recognizable and have an easily measurable impact.

Organizational culture deals with intra-organizational processes (Kondra & Hurst, 2009). The literature on organizational culture shows an association with the organizations' internal marketing, which will influence the employee's behavior (Lee & Chen, 2005; Wasner, Gordon, & Bruner, 1991; Wasner, Gordon, & Bruner, 2000). Inovation in internal marketing and identification with its message lead to a better market performance, through improved perceived quality and client satisfaction and, consequently, to the increase in financial (profit and market quota) and technical performance (worker commitment and performance) (Zhou, Brown, & Chekitan, 2009). The importance placed on the human element has led to an increasing role of human resources management in the organizational culture, supported by the fact that organizations aim to achieve goals that are impossible to achieve by a single individual and by the fact that people have the ability to evolve, learn, and re-learn.

Literature Review

Organizational Culture

Deal and Kennedy (1982) briefly characterize organizational culture as *how things are done* within an organization. A strong identification with an institution's cultural orientation is paramount for institutional success, as it assures company recognition and greater productivity (Coyle-Shapiro, 2002; Coyle-Shapiro & Kessler, 2000; Coyle-Shapiro & Morrow, 2006; Shore, Coyle-Shapiro, Chen, & Tetrick, 2009; Shore & Tetrick, 1991). Nowadays, considering the increasingly international markets and also a rapidly evolving technology, the human element reflects an organization's overall quality and becomes a determinant of success, closely related to the way every worker perceives the organization as his/her own and the feeling of belonging in the organization. A committed and involved worker merges his/her work and leisure, which assures professional and subjective well-being, and also the will to accomplish global workplace goals (Jesus & Lens, 2005).

According to Cameron and Quinn (2006), the Contrasting Values Model of Quinn and Cameron (1983) is one of the most important theoretical frameworks related to business management, and has been studied and tested in organizations for over twenty-five years. It is currently used in hundreds of organizations around the world to promote success and improve organizational effectiveness, particularly in schools.

Two shafts that create four quadrants represent the model. The vertical axis goes from flexibility to control and the horizontal axis goes from internal dimension to external dimension. Each quadrant represents one of four models in organizational theory: human relations, open systems, rational objectives, and internal processes. According to this model, organizations are contradictory systems, so in every organization there are these four models and the combination of these dimensions results in the following cultural typology (Cameron & Quinn, 2006; Quinn & Cameron, 1983): the support/clan culture (model of human relations) emphasizes the creation and maintenance of cohesion and commitment of

individuals, and the efficacy criterion includes the development of human potential and the involvement of people; a culture of innovation (model of open systems) considers values that change, and focuses on adapting the organization to the demands of the ever-changing environment; the culture of goals/objectives (model of rational objectives) is characterized as having clear objectives, well defined, short-range, and seeks to maximize results (profit) on the basis of a rational, technical, and economic performance; the culture of rules/bureaucratic model (internal process) is characterized by the predominance of values of respect for rules, order, hierarchy, security, stability, and formalism. Leadership in this kind of culture tends to be conservative in order to ensure control, and ensure stability and safety features that work as a criterion of effectiveness.

Organizations must focus their efforts on developing and sustaining an organizational culture that emphasizes internal customer well-being as a key to attracting and retaining external customers (Bansal, Mendelson, & Sharma, 2001). The company's culture influences the adoption of internal marketing and is an important precursor to the implementation of programs in this area (Gounaris, 2008). Moreover, an employee's job satisfaction level is directly conditioned by the degree to which the company has adopted internal marketing orientation concepts and practices. So, organizational culture is an important precursor of internal marketing, which are fundamental at attracting and retaining the most qualified and committed employees for the organization.

Organizations that are traditionally established in society, such as schools and universities, should be encouraged to adjust their culture to the present, and involve people that work in those institutions, society in general, and stakeholders in particular.

Internal Marketing

The implementation of marketing concepts in colleges and universities has become increasingly important over the last several years (Wasner & Bruner, 2000). As competition in higher education institutions becomes more intense than ever, institutions need to satisfy the customer (i.e., students and potential students). The goal of satisfied customers can only be achieved if employees themselves are also satisfied (Kotler 2000; Schultz, 2002).

Internal marketing is a concept which emphasizes that employees are a first market (Gronroos, 1990, 2000). The major point of this concept is to ensure that employees feel that management cares about them and their needs (Ewing & Caruana, 1999). According to Kotler (2000), internal marketing should be viewed as a priority, even ahead of external marketing. As acknowledged in the beginning, excellent service to customers results from satisfied employees. Therefore, in relation to winning the competition, successful marketing can be achieved if firms are involved both in external and internal marketing (Caruana & Calleya, 1998).

In operationalizing internal marketing, Lings and Greenley (2005) suggested that market orientation could be modified to the context of employer-employee exchanges in the internal market and developing an internal market orientation (IMO). IMO involves the generation and dissemination of intelligence pertaining to the wants and needs of employees. Several internal marketing researchers have identified information generation (e.g., Johlke & Duhan, 2000), which focuses on a) identifying what type of information should be generated and b) how information should be generated. The IMO considers three modes of information generation, based on different types of interactions between managers and staff, which appear in the literature. These are (a) formal written information generation, (b) formal face-to-face information generation, and (c) informal face-to-face information generation. In the context of IMO, internal communications are particularly important as the close proximity of staff and their managers' mean that bidirectional communications are an important part of workplace behavior. The

other IMO dimension that authors found in the literature involves responding to the information generated about the wants and needs of employees and dissemination of information.

Organization's internal marketing, especially considering a highly competitive market, is essential to provide an adequate internal networking in order to motivate employees (Berry & Parasuraman, 1991). Futhermore, the current economic, social, and financial scenario enhaces the importance that must be placed in social aspects within the organizational context, like organizational support.

Perceived Organizational Support

Perceived organizational support is defined as the degree to which employees believe that their organization and their superiors value their contributions and care about their well-being (Eisenberger, Huntington, Hutchison, & Sowa, 1986; Lee & Percei, 2007; Shore & Wayne, 1993). Some studies identify an association between perceived organizational support and internal marketing, recognizing also that both variables are related to job satisfaction (Piercy, Cravens, Lane, & Vorhies, 2006) and job commitment (Bell, Mengue, & Stefani, 2004).

Perceived organizational support could produce a feeling of obligation to care about the organization's welfare and to help the organization to achieve its goal (Eisenberger, Armeli, Rexwinkel, Lynch, & Rhoades, 2001; Eisenberger, Cummings, & Lynch, 1997). A study developed in higher education context showed its correlation with job performance (Guan et al., 2014).

Objectives

Considering that the issue of higher education is one of the most important bases in the development of every country, studying the organizational culture in a higher education context is a special issue to be considered. The aim of this study is to investigate the organizational culture in Portuguese higher education institutions, and their role as a determinant of perceived organizational support through internal marketing. The association of organizational culture with internal marketing and perceived organizational support has been previously reported (see Ertürk, 2010; Lee, & Chen, 2005) and we believe that these variables are related to the internalization of organizational culture and to the development of a worker's connection with the organization. The assesment of internal marketing will show workers' perceived knowledge of what is being done and acomplished in the organization; perceived organizational support will allow us to assess workers' perception of the support they feel the organization provides them with.

Method

Data collection and analysis for this study were accomplished by a transversal and quantitative study design.

Sample

We selected a non-random sample of 635 workers, regardless of their position, in all Portuguese public higher education institutions. The inclusion criterion for the sample was the complete fulfillment of the data collection questionnaire.

The sample consisted mainly of females (n = 375; 60%), aged between 23 and 64 years old, with an average 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 job-oriented. Our sample included 420 participants (66.8%) from university education and 211 participants (33.2%) from 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 et al., 1999). This tool is divided into two sections. The first section has a descriptive nature and regards behavioral aspects of 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 made up of 35 value-characteristic items regarding orientations of the organizational culture, evaluated within 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. The internal consistency of each dimension is very adequate (Support = .92, Innovation = .90, Goals = .86, Rules = .84).

The *Internal Marketing Orientation* (Lings & Greenley, 2005) questionnaire was used to assess internal marketing. This questionnaire is derived from focus group research, literature review, and individual interviews which resulted in a 42-item tool, scored in a seven-point Likert scale anchored in *strongly disagree* and *strongly agree*. An initial exploratory factor analysis of this tool, conducted by Lings and Greenley (2005) with 828 participants, showed an internal consistency between .78 and .81. The same authors, with a sample of 250 participants, established the existence of five underlying factors, or orientations, of internal marketing: the first, formal face-to-face information generation, is represented by items one to three in the questionnaire and has an internal consistency of .80; the second factor, formal written information generation, is represented by items four to six and has an internal consistency of .75; the third factor, response, includes items seven to nine and has an internal consistency of .75; the fourth factor, informal information generation, includes the items ten to thirteen and has an internal consistency of .81; and the fifth factor, communication and dissemination of information, includes items fourteen to sixteen and has an internal consistency of .78. In the current study, the Portuguese version of the Internal Marketing Orientation (IMO) questionnaire by Santos & Gonçalves (2010a) was used, as it has shown adequate psychometric properties (formal face-to-face information generation: α = .866; formal written information generation: α = .788; response: α = .934; informal information generation: α = .939; and communication and dissemination of information: α = .844).

Organizational support was assessed with the short version of the *Survey of Perceived Organizational Support* scale (Eisenberger et al., 1986), translated into Portuguese. This scale consists of 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, 2010b) have an internal consistency of .78, improving the .70 validity reported by Nunnally (1978).

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). 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 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 presidencies of the polytechnic institutions. These higher education institutions were asked to grant authorization for 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.

Data Analysis

Data were analyzed with IBM SPSS 20.0 and AMOS 20.0. The following psychometric properties of the questionnaire were studied: a) descriptive statistics, which included computing the averages, standard deviations, skewness, and kurtosis whenever appropriate; b) Harman single-factor test as a diagnostic tool to assess the presence of common method variance bias (CMV; Bang & Reio Jr., 2017; Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Lee, & Podsakoff, 2003), because the data were self-reported; c) Pearson's correlation coefficients for each scales that composed the questionnaire; d) hierarchical multiple regression; e) structural equation modeling using maximum likelihood estimation, considered a robust method when data does not follow a multivariate normal distribution (Schermelleh-Engel, Moosbrugger, & Müller, 2003), which was the case in this study.

Results

The purpose of this study was to establish a theoretical model detailing the relations between the different variables that were analyzed. The proposed model considers the association between orientations of organizational culture and their explanatory contribution in all other variables of organizational dynamics, namely internal marketing and perceived organizational support. The knowledge that organizational culture can be determined by other variables was previously suggested by various authors. Soares, Farhangmhr, and Shoham (2007), for instance, report that the role of culture in worker behavior is mediated by marketing.

Items Description

Table 1 presents mean, standard deviation, skewness, and kurtosis for each of the dimensions in the different scales in the final questionnaire. 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 formally written informal generation of

IMO scale has the highest mean value of all variables in the study but, unlike organizational culture, it was scored in a scale with a central point of 3.5 points. The mean score for perceived organizational support is slightly below 3.5. All the variables follow a non-normal distribution.

Table 1. Descriptives Statistics (N = 635)

Variables	M	SD	Skewness	Kurtosis	Normality[1]
Support OC	3.27	0.837	0.233	0.185	.000
Innovation OC	3.44	0.791	0.334	-0.332	.000
Goals OC	3.19	0.969	0.241	-0.481	.000
Rules OC	3.61	0.707	0.105	0.852	.000
Marketing Total	3.21	1.616	0.308	-1.006	.000
IM FFFIG	2.69	1.335	0.534	-0.498	.000
IM FWIG	3.52	1.679	0.092	-1.050	.000
IM CDI	2.95	1.480	0.375	-0.853	.000
IM IIG	2.99	1.511	0.309	-0.870	.000
IM R	3.65	0.712	-1.007	2.604	.000
POS	3.27	0.837	0.233	0.185	.000

Note. 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.
[1]p value obtained using the Kolmogorov-Smirnov, with correction Lillefors.

Harman's Single Factor Test

Two criteria can lead to the presence of common method variance, if (a) a single strong factor emerges from an exploratory factor analysis or (b) a first factor accounts for the majority of the variance in the variables (Malhotra, Kim, & Patil, 2006; Podsakoff et al., 2003). However, Harman single-factor results showed there were nine factors with eigenvalues greater than 1 and thus no single factor accounted for the majority of variance as the factors ranged from 1.01% to 19.96%. Consequently, this indicates that CMV was unlikely to be a major source of variations in the observed items of the present study.

Descriptive Statistics and Pearson's Correlation Matrix

Correlation matrix for the studied variables is presented in Table 2. Most of the organizational characteristics are significantly inter-correlated (p = .01) and, within each scale, the different dimensions tend to moderately correlate, which justifies their

Table 2. Pearson's Correlation Matrix

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

Note. 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.
**p < .01.

conceptual individuality and specificity. The four dimensions of organizational culture (support orientation, goal orientation, rules orientation, and innovation) are moderately inter-correlated, with correlation coefficients between .40 and .50. Regarding organizational culture and internal marketing, we found weak to moderate correlations between the different dimensions and orientations (r = .535 to .224). The same degree of statistically significant correlations was recorded between organizational culture and perceived organizational support and between internal marketing and perceived organizational support.

Hierarchical Multiple Regressions

The role of organizational culture and internal marketing as determinants of perceived organizational support was analyzed by hierarchical regression. In the first model constructed, we found a significant effect of organizational culture on perceived organizational support (r^2 = 31%, p = .000). When internal marketing 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	.462	10.936	.000
	Innovation OC	.153	3.593	.000
	Goals OC	.045	1.062	.289
	Rules OC	-.049	-1.232	.218
1.1	Support OC	.387	8.477	.000
	Innovation OC	.133	3.477	.000
	Goals OC	.012	0.286	.775
	Rules OC	-.035	-0.887	.377
	Internal Marketing	.167	4.050	.000

Our data suggest an effect of the support dimension of organizational culture (β = .387, p = .000) and internal marketing (β = .167, p = .000) on perceived organizational support.

Confirmatory Factor Analysis for the Model

In this section, our goal was to establish a model to explain the associations between the variables under study, starting both from their theoretical principles and relations between 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. The ratio between chi-square statistic and the distribution's degrees of freedom (χ^2/df = 5.315) is above the 3:1 cut-point for an unacceptable fit between the hypothetical model and sample data, but chi-square statistic (p = .21) indicates a good fit, even if non-significant (p > .05). We must also consider that chi-square test for model fit is heavily influenced by sample size (Byrne, 2001).

Comparative fit index (CFI) and goodness of fit index (GFI) were, respectively, .986 and .994, showing a good model fit (Bentler, 1992; Joreskog, 1996). Concerning error assessment, the literature suggests that Standardized Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR) and Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA) should be below .05 in order to verify a good model fit, while values between .05 and .08 represent a reasonable fit (Browne & Cudeck, 1993; MacCallum, Browne, & Sugawara, 1996). SMRM in our model was .029 and RMSEA was .083, which may allow us to infer a reasonable model fit.
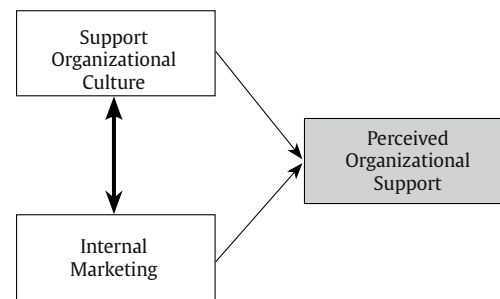

Figure 1. Confirmatory Tested Model.

Discussion

Previous research shows that organizational characteristics, namely organizational culture (Brian, Stanley, Achilles, & Christopher, 2009), internal marketing (Zhou, Brown, & Chekitan, 2009; Zou & Cavusgil, 2002), and perceived organizational support (Pazy & Ganzach, 2009) have repercussions in human assets' performance and in organizational eficacy and performance.

In the present study, the Rules dimension of *organizational culture* showed the highest mean score. This result seems to represent the traditional culture of higher education institutions in Latin European countries (Hofstede, 1997) and can be the outcome of the historical inheritance of education institutions as well as their preponderant role in society. In this sense, these organizations have been subsequently repeating ways and procedures for action, with rigid and defined hierarchies, prolonging and reenforcing actions under a beaurocratic profile.

An organization's communication can show its predominant organizational culture. Comunication and culture should be considered as an adjustment for all the organizational systems (Marchiori, 1999), meaning that organizational culture constructs a symbolic world that needs to connect to tangible and actual factors. Communication can be an important determinant in this process, as it guides everyday relations and implicitly models the way people communicate inside an organization, and direct which behaviors are acceptable and how power and status are organized. A key role in reducing uncertainty and ambiguity in the workplace is played by communication. When uncertainty is reduced, fear and anxiety among workers are also reduced, enhancing productivity. For Tourish and Hargie (1998), communication is the success center of organizations, making the creation of an effective and efficient communication center a highly important task. The same authors, in a study with British National Health Service workers (Tourish & Hargie, 2003), highlight the importance of the frequency of communication in times of change, reporting a positive association between communication and job satisfaction.

In this study, the Response orientation of the *IMO scale* showed the highest mean score. We believe that this can be due to changes in the structure and constitution of higher education institutions that were put in place by the ministerial bureau around the time data collection took place, making it a period of change.

Regarding *organizational support*, the mean score below the central point in the scale suggests that workers state global opinions about how much the organization values their contribution and takes care of their well-being. These opinions are related to workers' beliefs about organization's behavior as a whole and not to the behavior of specific organizational agents (Eisenberger et al., 1997).

According to our results, perceived organizational support, internal marketing, and organizational culture are correlated. Identification with internal marketing and perceived organizational support are considered key elements in managing people (Paschoal & Tamayo,

2005), and even considered as manifestations of an institution's identity or a reflex of prevalent organizational culture. People are increasingly considered the element that ensures the survival of an organization in a competitive market, which makes it fundamental to match workers' quality of life to their productivity, in order for the organization to achieve its goals, and implying a narrower and close relation between worker and organization.

Based on our results and on the theoretical background on variables under study, we constructed a model that considers the association between orientations of organizational culture and their impact in other variables that represent organizational dynamics, namely internal marketing, and its impact on the perception of organizational support. It has been suggested that the role of organizational culture as a determinant of human assets behavior seems mediated by marketing (Soares et al., 2007). Our model shows that support culture, by its characteristics of trust and openness, is a determinant of internal marketing and influences the way communication is established. Both support culture and internal marketing contribute to how organizational support is perceived by workers. In the same way, Allen and Shanock (2013) found that acquisition of knowledge about organizational culture and politics might also help explain how socialization influences more distal outcomes.

Conclusion

The organizational culture concept helps in the understanding and analysis of triggers that make an educational organization, such as an university or a school, to get structured, developed, and perform well. It also allows us to identify possible ways for universities and schools to improve management, build enhancement, and reform strategies (Lacatus, 2013).

Our results show how important it can be for organizations to develop a support culture to promote their workers' organizational support perceptions, while, at the same time, using internal marketing to adequately communicate the support provided. It is increasingly important in every organization to act and to promote action, but also to provide workers with information on those actions, clarifying ambiguities and boosting worker's confidence in the organization. This can improve motivation and job satisfaction. In the same way, Newman and Sheikh (2012) considered that organizations should consider taking the cultural orientations of their workforce into account when developing appropriate human resource policies aimed at heightening employee commitment.

The role of organizational culture and internal marketing showed in this study, as others previously but in a different contexts (i.e., Gounaris, 2008) as antecedents of IM programs, does a contribution for both scholars and practitioners that those are important keys to consider, before developing a more pragmatic and functional internal marketing program, which translates into investing the understanding what are each employee's values, employees committed to their job, as well as clients/students, who are the driving force of companies and universities. Another point of view that could be better understood in future studies refers to the analysis of different kinds of employees, as the literature suggests the actions of supervisor in constructing the levels of perceived organizational support are determinant (Rai & Prakash, 2016).

This study has limitations that future research might have to take into consideration. First, our sample included a sufficiently large number of universities and polytechnics' employees, the higher education organizations were all located in the same country and therefore shared the same culture. This may raise concerns about generalizability of findings in other cultural contexts (Kim et al., 2013), although observed relationship between variables under study allowed us to better understand the realities that exist in Portuguese public higher education. In the future, it will be interesting to take into consideration differences in this kind of institutions, such as its dimensions and regional engagement. The potential of higher educational institutions for sustainable economic, social, and cultural development has become a mutually beneficial engagement between the community or region and the university, so the concept of civic university emerges (Cai, 2014).

It is important to consider that our study relies on a cross-sectional design, with a convenience sample and using self-report questionnaires; consequently, it is not possible to conclude about causal explanation of those relationships. It is possible to consider a first step in the understanding of research topic, but additional studies should be developed. Furthermore, it could be useful to develop an action research study design to improve perceived organizational support, using human resources strategies.

Conflict of Interest

The authors of this article declare no conflict of interest.

Acknowledgements

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