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Cultura Organizacional e bem-estar no local de trabalho: Desafios para organizações e gestão

Organizational culture and well-being at work: Challenge for organizations and management

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Resumo • Abstract

Este estudo faz parte de um projeto maior que nasceu da escassez de estudos que analisem o papel que as características organizacionais desempenham no bem-estar dos trabalhadores e na saúde mental. Para analisar a relação entre a cultura organizacional e o bem-estar no trabalho, uma amostra de 856 policiais completou um questionário transversal. O cenário teórico é a conceptualização de Warr (1990) sobre o bem-estar afetivo relacionado ao trabalho e o modelo teórico da cultura organizacional de Quinn (1988). Os resultados mostram que os indivíduos que percebem um perfil de cultura organizacional equilibrado através das quatro orientações culturais diferentes têm níveis mais elevados de bem-estar no trabalho, isto é, mais conforto, entusiasmo, bem-estar afetivo geral e satisfação no trabalho, bem como níveis mais baixos de ansiedade e depressão.

This study it is part of a larger project that was born from the understanding of the scarcity of studies analysing the role that organizational characteristics play in workers' well-being and mental health. In order to examine the relationship between organizational culture and well-being at work a sample of 856 police officers completed a cross-sectional questionnaire. The theoretical background is Warr's (1990) conceptualization of work-related affective well-being and the competing framework of organizational culture from Quinn (1988). Results show that individuals who perceive an organizational culture profile balanced through four different culture orientations have higher levels of well-being at work, that is, more comfort, enthusiasm, overall affective well-being and job satisfaction as well as lower levels of anxiety and depression.

Palavras-Chave • Keywords

Cultura organizacional, bem-estar, polícia.

Organizational culture, well-being, police.

1. Introduction

It has been argued the scarcity of studies analyzing the role that organizational characteristics play in workers' well-being. This study was developed in an attempt to address this gap and its purpose was to explore the relationship between perceived organizational culture and well-being at work on a sample of police officers.

According with Warr (Warr, 1990: 3), affective well-being at work can be conceptualized based on two orthogonal dimensions (Fig. 1) pleasure and activation (“arousal” or “activation”) associated with work. Thus, a certain degree of pleasure/displeasure or satisfaction/dissatisfaction (horizontal dimension) may be accompanied by high or low levels of activation (vertical dimension), as these levels of activation – “state of readiness for action or energy expenditure” (Russell, 2003: 156) – may be accompanied by different levels of pleasure. Combining the two axes of pleasure and activation results in four quadrants emerges: anxiety (high activation and low pleasure), enthusiasm (high activation and high pleasure), depression (low activation and low pleasure) and comfort (low activation and high pleasure) consequently forming two orthogonal axes: (2a) anxiety / (2b) comfort and (3a) depression / (3b) enthusiasm. The axis (1a) pleasure / (1b) displeasure corresponds to the usual assessments of job satisfaction (Weinberg & Cooper, 2007) but does not constitute the core of the construct of work-related affective well-being.

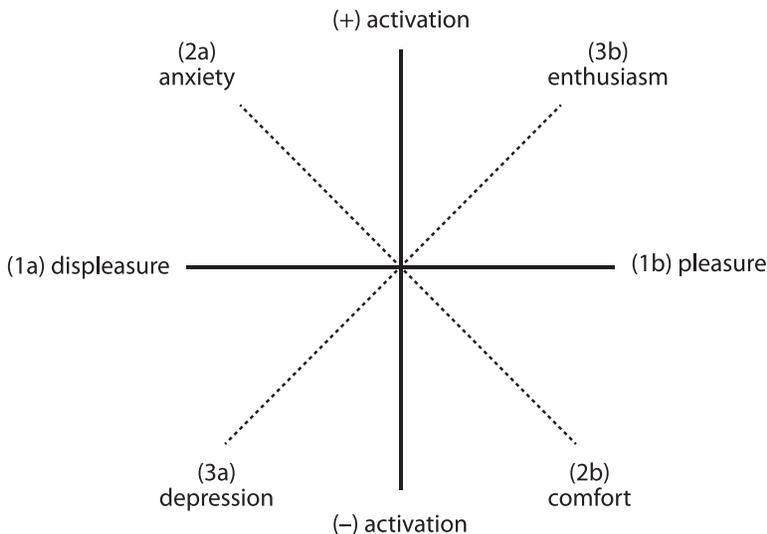


Figure 1 • Conceptualization of affective well-being • Source: (Warr, 1990: 3)

The Competing Values Framework has been named as one of the 40 most important frameworks in the history of business (Ten Have et al., 2003). The Competing Values Framework (Quinn, 1988) is represented by two axes that express the tensions or competing values that exist in all organizations that form four quadrants (Fig. 2): the horizontal axis refers to internal vs. external orientation. The internal orientation puts emphasis on human resources development and on the maintenance of a stable and cooperative working environment, while the external orientation emphasizes the development of activities for growth and acquisition of resources activities. The vertical axis represents flexibility vs. control; the flexibility factor depicts the importance of individual initiative, speed and organizational adaptability, and the control factor emphasizes the need for hierarchy and control. Each of the four quadrants has been given a label in order to characterize its most notable characteristics for creating value, defining four types of organizational culture: clan culture, adhocracy culture, hierarchy culture and market culture (Cameron et al., 2006).

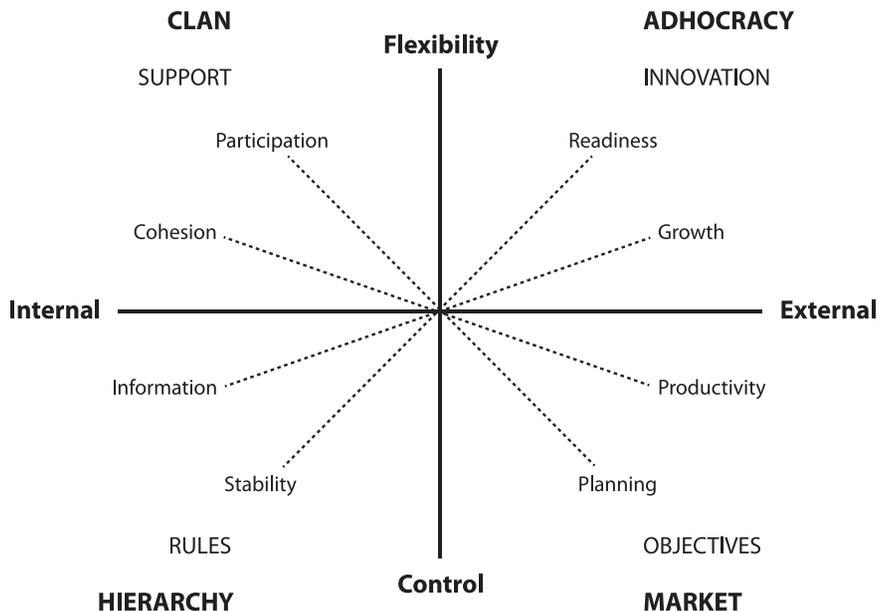


Figure 2 • Representation of the Competing Values Framework • Source: (Quinn, 1988)

The literature relating organizational culture with stress and well-being is scarce when compared to the existent research on other variables. For example, Quinn and Spreitzer (Quinn & Spreitzer, 1991) concluded that in cultures with greater emphasis on group or human relations and on developmental values or innovation employees report greater satisfaction regarding job, promotion, supervision and life. In the same study, it was found that workers of cultures with an emphasis on rules report less satisfaction with their job, promotion, life and physical well-being. Quinn (1988) suggests that the balance and tension between contrasting organizational values is important for achieving efficiency and personal well-being, stressing that imbalance, i.e., the predominant emphasis on one or two forms of culture may lead to less positive results. The studies by Quinn and Spreitzer (1991) and Yeung, Brockbank and Ulrich (1991) provide evidence for the importance of balance, i.e., outcome variables (i.e., job satisfaction, promotion, supervision, life and physical well-being) have better scores in the more balanced - all scores being essentially the same in the four different forms of culture, but not necessarily high or low - culture profiles.

2. Method

2.1. Participants

The sample consisted of 856 Portuguese police officers from seven different police institutions (including security forces and municipal police), from over the country, of whom 91.6% were men. The average age of those questioned was 37 years (SD = 8.76). Most were married (n = 496, 64.2%). With respect to academic qualifications, 57.2% (n = 413) had an education between the 10th and 12th grades. The mean of years of service was approximately 13 years (SD = 8.59).

Table 1 · Description of participants

	N	%
Gender		
Female	728	91,6
Male	67	8,4
Total	795	100
Marital status		
Single/divorced/widowed	215	27,9
Married/ unmarried partnership	554	72,1
Total	769	100
Level of academic qualification		
Less than the 9 th year	96	13,2
The 9 th year	174	24,1
Secondary Education (from the 10 th to 12 th grade)	413	57,2
Higher Education	39	5,4
Total	722	100
Age		
<i>M=37.34; SD=8.762; Min=20; Max=59</i>		
Seniority		
<i>M=13.563; SD=8.592; Min=1; Max=40</i>		

Note. *M* = Mean, *SD* = Standard Deviation; *Min* = Minimum; *Max* = Maximum

2.2. Instruments and variables

Organizational culture. Were measured based on 16 items from FOCUS (Neves, 2007; Van Muijen et al., 1999), which reflects four dimensions predicted by the Competing Values Framework: support (4 items; e.g. “mutual understanding”; $\alpha=0.823$), innovation (4 items; e.g., “take risks”; $\alpha=0.625$), rules (4 items, “compliance with rules”; $\alpha=0.740$) and objectives (4 items; “emphasis on task performance”; $\alpha= 0.724$). The items were answered based on a six-point Likert-type scale (1 = Not at all to 6 =Very much).

Well-being at work. General work satisfaction was assessed by one item, “All in all, and considering all aspects of their work in [organization name], I would say that it is...”, answered on a five-point Likert-type response scale where 1= Not at all satisfied and 5= Very much satisfied (Warr, Cook & Wall, 1979). Affective well-being at work was measured with the IWP Multi-Affect Indicator (Gonçalves, & Neves, 2011; Warr, 1990) which is made up of 12 items measured on a six-point Likert-type scale (1= Never to 6 = All the time) organized in four dimensions: anxiety ($\alpha= 0.888$), comfort ($\alpha= 0.866$), depression ($\alpha= 0.900$), enthusiasm ($\alpha= 0.911$) and a global index of affective well-being ($\alpha= 0.657$).

2.3. Procedure

Data were collected through a questionnaire. Telephone and face-to-face contacts were established with the managers to explain the study as well as the procedure for collecting data. The questionnaire was distributed and, after a period of approximately three weeks, we proceeded to the collection of those already completed, in person or via internal mail. The response rate was approximately of 53%.

3. Results

3.1. Descriptive statistics and correlations

The analysis of descriptive statistics show that the values associated with clan and hierarchy cultures have the highest means, followed by the market culture and, finally, by the adhocracy culture with lower values (Table 2). The statistically comparison (t-test pairs) reveals that all means are statistically different, except the means of clan and hierarchy cultures that were not different ($t_{(822)} = .480, p = .631$).

In emotional terms, the emotions that prevail are the ones related to enthusiasm, comfort and anxiety. The less prevailing are the ones of depression, although they all were near the midpoint of the response scale. The average level of satisfaction was below the midpoint of the response scale.

The correlations among the variables were all statistically significant, except for the correlation between clan culture and anxiety, which was not significant. Among culture types there are positive correlations, being the strongest the one between hierarchy and market cultures ($r = .590$) and the weakest between clan and hierarchy cultures ($r = .358$).

Anxiety and depression had a strong and positive correlation ($r = .649$) being negatively associated with other indicators of well-being at work. Comfort and excitement presented equally positive and strong correlations ($r = .616$). Job satisfaction had stronger associations with enthusiasm ($r = .454$) and overall affective well-being ($r = .457$).

The correlation pattern between culture dimensions and the negative dimensions of well-being at work revealed negative correlations and culture, with anxiety and depression being the strongest correlations between clan culture and depression ($r = -.205$). There were also statistically significant positive correlations between the dimensions of culture, comfort, enthusiasm, overall affective well-being at work and job satisfaction.

Table 2 • Descriptive statistics, correlations and internal consistency

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1. Adhocracy culture	(0.625)	.419**	.494**	.413**	-.121**	.196**	-.100**	.302**	.230**	.248**
2. Clan culture		(0.823)	.414**	.358**	-.049	.144**	-.119**	.263**	.181**	.216**
3. Market culture			(0.724)	.590**	-.145**	.171**	-.205**	.260**	.248**	.253**
4. Hierarchy culture				(0.740)	-.088*	.088*	-.107**	.157**	.137**	.191**
5. Anxiety					(0.888)	-.331**	.649**	-.282**	-.775**	-.334**
6. Comfort						(0.866)	-.287**	.616**	.759**	.285**
7. Depression							(0.900)	-.301**	-.729**	-.339**
8. Enthusiasm								(0.911)	.706**	.454**
9. Affective well-being									(0.657)	.457**
10. Overall job satisfaction										(n.a.)
Mean	2.837	4.014	3.680	3.989	3.118	3.203	2.508	3.234	3.637	2.77
Standard deviation	1.073	.831	1.275	1.276	1.076	1.056	1.203	1.188	.695	.827
Minimum	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.42	1.00
Maximum	6.00	6.00	6.00	6.00	6.00	6.00	6.00	6.00	5.58	5.00

Note. On the diagonal in parenthesis are the values of internal consistency (Cronbach's Alpha); n.a. = not applicable; ** $p < .001$; * $p < .05$.

3.2. Organizational culture profiles

Cluster analysis was used in order to obtain a more detailed analysis of the structure of the culture profiles and to be able to spatially visualize the emphasis of the groups on the four quadrants of the Contrasting Values Framework. This type of analysis makes it possible to identify groups of objects (i.e., of individuals) in homogenous groups (clusters), that is, it identifies similar groups of objects but with differences in relation to the objectives of the other groups and in so doing defines typologies.

Initially, the Ward method (a method of hierarchical cluster analysis) was used to find the number of clusters. Dendrogram analysis identified two clusters. Next, we used an optimization technique (*K-Means Cluster Analysis*) which is more suitable for a larger database.

Table 3 presents the centroids of each cluster on each culture orientation and the number of cases in all the clusters. The descriptions of each cluster were based on the following criteria: if the centroid of a cluster has a point for a given culture orientation below the first quartile of the distribution of that orientation for the global sample, then the importance of that orientation will be described as moderate; if the points are above the third quartile, the importance of that orientation will be characterized as high.

The structure of cluster 1 tends to be more balanced by the four quadrants, with perceptions that enhance objectives and rules more intensely and innovation

and support more moderately. On the other hand, cluster 2 seems to be less balance presenting predominance in the support dimensions.

The results reveal that there are significant differences between the two clusters. Cluster 1 presents significantly higher values in all dimensions of organizational culture.

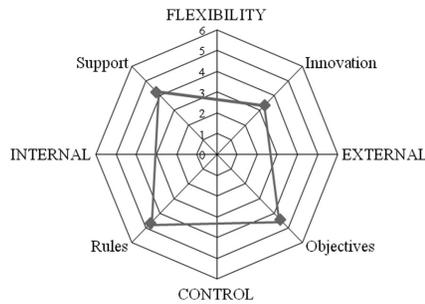
Table 3 • Culture clusters

Cluster	N	innovation orientation	support orientation	objectives orientation	rules orientation
1	482	3.33 (moderate)	4.25 (moderate)	4.45 (high)	4.67 (high)
2	336	2.11 (low)	3.67 (moderate)	2.58 (low)	2.98 (low)
Mean difference		t(785.633)= 20.104, p=.000	t(764.646)= 11.226, p=.000	t(816)= 30.368, p=.000	t(595.471)= 23.580, p=.000

Fig. 3 shows the spatial representation of the two culture profiles, denoting a profile is more balanced in cluster 1 when compared to cluster 2, which revealed a dominance of support orientation. Cluster 1 aggregates the police officers that have a perspective of organizational culture focused on control, i.e., objectives and rules. Cluster 2 seems to be characterized by a depletion of the perceptions of values, with low values in all dimensions, with the exception of the orientation of support with a moderate value.

To better characterize the clusters, we analyzed the demographic characteristics of individuals included in each cluster. From this analysis it was found that the clusters do not differ in terms of education of its members ($\chi^2_{KW(2)} = 1,063$, $p > .05$); however, they do differ with respect to age ($t_{(710.119)} = -1,948$, $p < .05$), service time ($t_{(665.075)} = -1,967$, $p < .05$) and institutional ownership of individuals ($\chi^2_{KW(2)} = 13,662$, $p > .05$). The first cluster consists of younger individuals (mean = 36.43) and with less service time (mean = 12.693) compared to the second cluster that had older individuals (mean = 37.67) with more service time (mean = 13.94). The first cluster had a more policemen and cluster 2 had more municipal police forces.

Cluster 1



Cluster 2

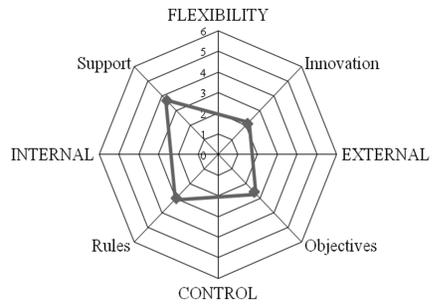


Figure 3 • Graphical representation of the cultural profiles of the clusters.

3.3. Relationship between organizational culture profiles and well-being at work

To analyze the relationship between culture profiles and well-being at work t-tests of differences in means were used to compare the means of well-being indicators in the two culture clusters (Table 4). The results reveal statistically significant differences in all well-being at work indicators: cluster 1 individuals have higher levels of comfort, enthusiasm, affective well-being and job satisfaction higher than cluster 2 individuals; conversely, cluster 2 revealed higher scores on anxiety and depression.

Table 4 • Analysis of the relation between culture profiles and indicators of well-being at work

	Culture cluster	N	Mean	Standard deviation	Means difference
Anxiety	1	473	3.013	1.002	$t_{(635.358)} = -3.401, p=.001$
	2	326	3.280	1.148	
Comfort	1	472	3.356	0.970	$t_{(636.914)} = 5.016, p=.000$
	2	326	2.976	1.108	
Depression	1	471	2.338	1.079	$t_{(612.387)} = -4.570, p=.000$
	2	326	2.738	1.301	
Enthusiasm	1	472	3.452	1.132	$t_{(796)} = 6.565, p=.000$
	2	326	2.910	1.167	
Affective well-being	1	473	3.763	0.652	$t_{(797)} = 6.365, p=.000$
	2	326	3.453	0.714	
Job satisfaction	1	459	2.920	0.738	$t_{(625.083)} = 6.361, p=.000$
	2	328	2.540	0.880	

4. Discussion of Results and Conclusions

The results showed that organizations are not characterized by a single “pure” culture but they tended to represent a combination of different types of cultures that can be mixed to highlight a dominant type of culture, or several types of culture, or none. As already reported by Quinn and Spreitzer (Quinn & Spreitzer, 1991), the identification of culture profiles is important to examine the impact of culture. The profiles identified in this study in some ways match those found in other studies, such as the studies by Quinn and Spreitzer (1991) and Young et al. (1991). For instance, Quinn and Spreitzer (1991) found several clusters in their study, two more similar with those two founded in the present study. One characterized by high scores in all four dimensions that they called “strong comprehensive profile” (similar to our cluster 1) and other one with lower scores in the four dimensions called “weak comprehensive profile” (similar to our cluster 2).

As expected the clan and market cultures had positive correlations with well-being at work (Quinn & Spreitzer, 1991). However, contrary to what was expected the correlations between perceptions of cultural rules and objectives and well-being indicators were positive. This result may be explained by tensions that characterize this occupational context. Rules and objectives are part of the training of workers and they were used to living with them. This may not occur as often as with other occupational contexts typically studied. In the police environment the emphasis on rules and objectives may be a protection strategy for dealing with daily situations, given the distressing context of these workers. As Robles (1997) argued, conservatism associated with policing organizations can be a form of organizational and occupational protection due to over-exposure to a disorganized environment and operate in the disorder. The perception of organizational culture based on rules and objectives may make workers feel more secure and have a better perception of self-efficacy and control which, consequently, tends to be associated with greater well-being. Thus, perceptions of self-efficacy and self-control may have a moderating role in this relation; a role that should be explored in future studies.

As expected, according to the literature on organizational culture (e.g. Warr, 1990), perceptions of culture as weak based on lower scores in different dimensions of culture and with more unbalanced profiles – in this study represented in cluster 2 – appear to be associated with lower levels of well-being when compared with stronger and more balanced cultures (i.e., cluster 1). These results support the research conducted in other occupational contexts and with different individual variables (e.g. Quinn & Spreitzer (1991), Yeung et al. (1991), reinforcing that cultures are the key for a better individual well-being (Quinn & Spreitzer, 1991).

Future studies should go into further detail about organizational culture in the police, exploring its impact on a number of other variables whose results are already known in other occupational contexts such as of organizational involvement and performance. Regarding the study of the relation between organizational culture and well-being, at some point it will make sense to explore this relationship in other industry sectors. Upcoming studies should invest in examining the mediating variables involved in the relational process of culture and well-being at work (e.g., perceived self-efficacy and perceived control) as well as in the analysis of moderating variables that could contribute to realizing under what conditions this relationship occurs (for instance, the study of person-organization fit or of leadership style).

This study presents results relevant to theory and practice. In theoretical terms, it reinforces the assumptions about the significant role of organizational characteristics, supporting the importance of including the organization's perceptions, values, models and occupational health psychology studies. Moreover, this study refutes the general idea of hierarchy values (i.e., rules) being inherently negative and supporting values necessarily positive. In view of that, the current study reinforces the importance of prior balance between organizational values through the four quadrants of the Competing Values Framework. Thus, a particular orientation is not inherently negative, when balanced evenly across the various quadrants of the Competing Values Framework. These results have practical implications in the sense that the efforts of leaders and heads of department must focus on developing the weaker quadrants in order to achieve the balance of all quadrants, not the strengthening of just one.

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