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Perception of Organizational Politics and the effect of Authenticity and Affective Commitment on Deviance and Task Performance in Contact Centers

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ABSTRACT

This study aimed to understand employees' reactions to organizational politics in Contact Centers. Drawing from a sample of 187 supervisor-employee dyads, we studied the relationship between employees' perceptions of organizational politics and supervisor-rated task performance and deviance, and mediation effects by authenticity at work and affective commitment. Results indicate that workers tend to react to workplace politics with deviant behavior and worse task performance. We found that the relationship between perceived politics and task performance was mediated by authenticity. The relationship between perceived politics and supervisor-rated deviance was mediated by affective commitment to the organization. Implications for management are discussed.

Key words: Perception of Organizational Politics, Task Performance, Deviance, Authenticity, Affective Commitment, Mediating, Contact Centers

INTRODUCTION

Contact Centers – Our choice

Due to the current economic conditions, customer's behavior has been changing in the last years. Customers are more demanding and markets are more competitive, what leads companies to increase their customer 'service and their communication channels. Through these new channels, customers can connect with organizations by phone call or by written emails. It is also possible for organizations to choose to have inbound services, receiving contacts from the clients or potential ones, or outbound services, when they prefer employees to do the contact with clients and potential ones. These Contact Centers might be created by organizations either to provide customer

support or to sell organization products and services. The goal for organizations is to answer the highest number of contacts as possible, in order to provide solutions for the biggest number of clients as possible. However, as many of these services are not direct sources of income, it is crucial for companies to keep the costs as low as possible, making efficiency the most important focus when managing the Contact Center. In pursuing efficiency Contact Center's employees are usually instructed to follow rigid procedures that make the service homogeneous and automatized, avoiding differences on the type of solutions given to clients between different employees.

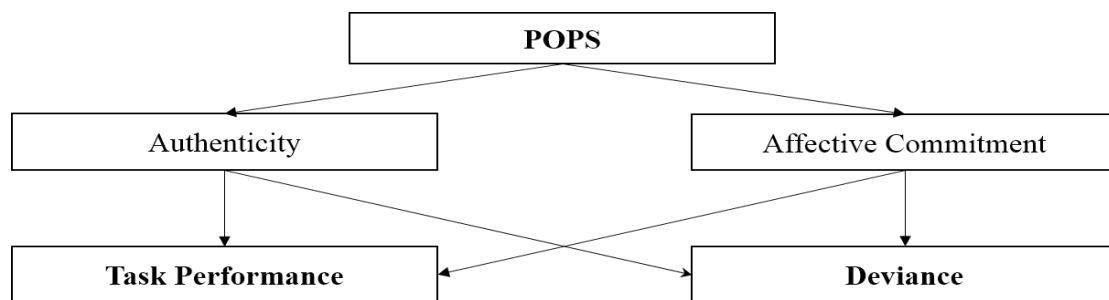
According with the most recent statistics (*European Contact Center Benchmark Platform Whitebook 2014*) in Europe Contact Centers employ around 3.8 million people in different 35.500 Contact Centers, 75% of them in Inbound Services and with a 3.6% of growth from the previous year. The most important metrics (KPI's) used to assess productivity are the Average Time of the Contact and the number of contacts, bringing to employees the pressure of answering to clients' needs fast and efficiently. According with Maia (2011) typical Contact Center' employees are young people who still studying or just left University and are looking for their first job. Turnover is high and most of them just keep working in Contact Centers while they don't get a job with a better fitting to their profile, considering it as a mean to achieve what they really want. Contact Centers are most of times outsourcing services, where employees have temporary or at short term contacts (Maia, 2011).

Technological tools distribute the work, control productivity, time of work, time of rest and time between calls and every other variables that can be quantified. During the work time, employees just relate with clients and with supervisors, leading to a very individualized job. Employees have no control or decision about answering a call or not, neither in how to solve each situation, given to the rigid procedures. Also, they are

permanently being controlled to perform more efficiently, approximating the Contact Center activities from a Taylorist view.

In spite of the rigid procedures and quantitative control, in Contact Centers the quality of the Employee-customer interaction is also important. According with Castanheira, and Chambel (2010) “in their work, call center employees can be required to answer or make many calls per hour, to develop and maintains a good customer relationship, and to show empathy and emotional involvement” (p.1050).

Considering the complexity of Contact Centers’ environment, our objective in this study will be to understand how Perceived Organizational Politics (POPS) relates with Task Performance and with Deviance in Contact Centers’ context, and how they can be affected by different levels of Affective Commitment and Authenticity.



Perceived Organizational Politics, Task Performance, and Deviance

To understand POPS meaning we first need to approach the Organizational Politics and why they exist. Organizational Politics are present in all organizations and they are defined as strategic behaviors by individuals in pursuit of their own self-interests, regardless of the organization goals. Organizational Politics are part of all organizations and consists in behaviors of their employees searching for increasing their power, influence others for their self-interest and achieving their own goals, regardless the organization ‘goals and norms. According with Ogungbamila (2013) uncertainty is the major predictor of organizational politics. Employees chose to

participate in political behaviors due to their uncertainty about their future in the organization; to keep their jobs and control their future in the organization, they chose to have manipulative behaviors towards the organization. These behaviors are informal and not formally accepted by organizations and exist in parallel with the formal rules of the organization. As Organizational Politics follow an individualistic thinking, making each employee to follow his own interests regardless their colleagues' interests, usually employees have a negative image about Organizational Politics. According with Gandz and Murray (1980), and Medison et al. (1980), when employees are asked by their perception of Organizational Politics, they usually describe it as negative "self-serving and manipulative activities", often including behaviors as manipulation, denigration and illegitimate ways to gain power and to use it in the pursuit of individual's interests. In Contact centers, supervisors have tight deadlines and performance targets, and rely on employees' performance to accomplish the team's goals. This instrumental interdependence may contribute indirectly to increase psychological control on the part of the supervisor and encourage undesirable behaviors such as instrumental manipulation, surveillance, and hostility (Castanheira, Chambel, Moretto, Sobral, & Cesário, 2015). This may increase employees' perceptions of Organizational Politics in the Contact Center.

According to previous studies (Drory, 1993; Ferris & Kacmar, 1992; Kacmar et al., 1999; Vigoda, 2000) POPS is associated with decreased Job Performance. Judge & Kammeyer-Mueller (2012), propose a multidimensional construct of Job performance, composed by Task Performance, Organizational Citizenship Behavior and Withdrawal/Counter productivity. These authors consider Job Performance as an outcome from Job Attitudes where "employee behaviors that are consistent whit role expectations and that contribute to organizational effectiveness" (p.357). In our study,

we will specifically focus in Task Performance, through employees direct 'supervisors assessment, because that is, in the last analysis, the most important outcome for organizations given that is through this that organization' goals are prosecuted.

Task Performance is the action of prosecuting "activities that are formally recognized as part of their jobs, activities that contribute to the organization's technical core either directly by implementing a part of its technological process, or indirectly by providing it with needed materials or services" (Barnes, & Morgeson, , 2007, p.262). According to this author, performance is a work outcome that consists on doing a certain job during a certain period of time. It depends of capabilities, efforts and the orientation of the employee toward his job goals. It can consist on accountable and tangible outcomes or in intangible outcomes as ideas and solutions for problems. It can vary due to many factors, such as leadership style of the supervisors, motivation or Organizational Commitment. So, considering the correlations previously founded by other authors, we propose that:

H1a: POPS is negatively associated with Task Performance.

Although there are several studies about Deviance, most of them focus on the Deviance by itself without regarding Organizational Politics or Job attitudes as potential predictors. In our study, we will try to infer how POPS can be associated with Deviance. According with Appelbaum, Iaconi and Matousek (2007; p.587) organizations have a group of "expected behaviors, languages, principles and postulations that allow the workplace to perform at a suitable pace". When this group of principles is broken Deviance happens. Robinson and Bennet (1995) define deviance as "voluntary behavior that violates significant organizational norms and, in so, threatens the well-being of an organization, its members or both" (p.556).

Deviance is a type of antisocial behavior that may happen in workplaces consisting in transgressing rules and even including aggression and incivility. While aggression have specifically the intent to harm and includes violence, incivility don't include it and has a lower intensity about the harm' intent. Incivility usually is composed by behaviors as rudeness, discourtesy and disregarding of the others and their well-being.

According with Robinson et al. (1995), Deviance behavior can have a lower or higher level of intensity and they can be directed to the organization itself or to the individuals of it. In this study, we will only consider Deviance focused on the organization.

When deviance happens inside of an organization it jeopardizes not only financial means but also productivity and the decision-making (Coccia, 1998).

So, in order to reduce Deviance, is important to understand what can cause it.

According with Appelbaum, Iaconi and Matousek (2007) Deviance arises due to “job stressors, organizational frustration, lack of control over the work environment, weak sanctions for rule violations, and organizational changes such as downsizing”(p.592) and it can be enhanced by organizational culture, differences on employee ‘treatment and supervisors ‘behavior. According with Ogungbamila, (2013) when the employees that are non-beneficiary of organizational politics remain in the organization, they tend to react with negative attitudes and behaviors towards the organization. Many different researches point “perceived injustice, dissatisfaction, role modeling and thrill-seeking” (Bennet & Robinson, 2000; p.349) as the main drivers for Deviance, even knowing that the resultant level of Deviance might vary depending of the context where employee is inserted. Ferris et al. (1989) suggested that when feeling high levels of POPS, people can have 3 different types of outcome behaviors: increased job anxiety, decreased job satisfaction, and withdrawal from the organization. These outcomes might influence other organizational behaviors, and eventually leading to lower Job Performance or

higher Deviance behaviors, due to an increased perception of unfairness and procedural injustice. Considering these results and statements from other researchers, we believe that POPS might be a cause for Deviance. This way, we suggest that:

H1b: POPS is positively associated with Deviance

Mediation by Affective Commitment:

Inserted in the Job Attitudes category, Organizational Commitment is defined as “the relative strength of an individual’s identification with and involvement in a particular organization” (Mowday, Steers, & Porter, 1979; p. 226). According with Meyer and Allen (1991; Allen & Meyer, 1990), there are three different types of Organizational Commitment distinguished between themselves by the mindset associated with each one of them: Affective Commitment, that is related with the level of attachment to the organization that employees feel, Normative Commitment, associated with the obligation that employees feel to remain on the organization, and Continuance Commitment, related with the cost of leaving the organization perceived by employees.

Considering that there was already demonstrated by other studies that there is a strong correlation between Affective Commitment and desirable work behaviors, as Job Performance, Attendance and Citizenship (Meyer et al., 2002), in this study we will focus on the Affective Commitment.

Employees with a strong affective commitment to their organization tend to identify themselves with the organization, to share the same values and the same orientation toward the goals as their organization, to be more involved in organizational issues and to apply higher efforts in pursuing organization ‘objectives. According to the Social Exchange Theory (Blau, 1964; Copranzano & Mitchell, 2005), and the norm

of reciprocity (Gouldner, 1960), when employees perceive that they are treated fairly and that the organization cares about them, employees tend to reciprocate with favorable attitudes, namely higher affective commitment. As Affective Commitment represents the emotional attachment of employee with the organization, high levels of that attitude are usually connected with favorable working environment and with good relationships with other employees and supervisors. Therefore, based on the Social Exchange Theory (Blau, 1964; Copranzano & Mitchell, 2005), this study proposes that when employees perceive their working environment as being high in POPS, they will decrease their investment and, therefore, report lower levels of affective commitment. This is aligned with earlier research that demonstrated that POPS is negatively associated with affective commitment (Butt, Imran, Shah, & Jabbar, 2013).

Furthermore, according to Gaertner (1999), Organizational Commitment is highly associated with productivity, efficiency and innovation by employees (Lashley & Lee-Ross, 2003). Therefore, we propose that:

H2a: Affective Commitment mediates the relationship between POPS and Task performance.

In addition, we propose that affective commitment is associated with lower deviance. According to the Social Exchange Theory (Blau, 1964; Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005), in a social exchange relationship, when someone gives evidence of “goodwill” toward the other part, this engenders a sense of obligation to reciprocate the good deed. Therefore, the more employees feel emotionally connected with the organization, the fewer propensities they will have to engage in negative behaviors directed to the organization. According with the same theory, the trade-off between employee and organization goes further beyond perform the job and receive a

paycheck. This exchange not only includes financial trade, but also a social trade where is included loyalty and trust, mutual commitment that creates a social relationship between employee and organization. According with Norm of Reciprocity (Gouldner, 1960) employees feel committed to give to the company the same that company give to them. So, we can infer that the more the organization gives, the more it will receive from the employees.

For organizations, having committed employees is benefic because the organizational commitment reduces the turnover, reducing, this way, recruitment and training costs and increasing productivity and performance. Higher affective commitment also reduces absenteeism and reduces Deviance (Maia, 2011). Hence, we propose that:

H2b: Affective Commitment mediates the relationship between POPS and Deviance.

Mediation by Authenticity:

In this study we went one step further to test the mediating effect of Authenticity in the relationship between POPS, Task Performance, and deviance.

Although there are some studies already published about authenticity, most of them are specifically related with the outcomes of it on customer service perceptions. In reply to this gap in research about how Authenticity affects employees' behaviors and their task performance, this study seeks to understand if feelings of authenticity contribute to explain the relationship between POPS and task performance and deviance.

Authenticity was first defined as “Know thyself” and “to thine own self be true” (Akin & Akin, 2014; p.40). From there, many definitions of Authenticity arise. Authentic behaviors can be defined as “expressing one’s true beliefs, values and behaviors to oneself and others sincerely, treating faithfully, and taking responsibility

for one's own emotions and actions" and also as a personality trait that is seen as "behaving congruent with feelings and thoughts and be "one self"" (Akin & Akin, 2014; p.40). According to the same authors, Authenticity means to act and to behave according with what we truly are. Going a bit further, in the same article the authors add that authenticity is "being emotionally sincere, having self-attunement, and psychological depth, and behaving candidly and without having hidden intentions" (Akin & Akin, 2014; p.40).

Bringing a new vision about it, Wood et al.(2008) proposed a new concept for authenticity, where it is divided on three distinct dimensions: Self alienation, Authentic Living and Accepting External Influence. From the three dimensions, Authentic Living is the one that is more related with beliefs and values and this is the one that we will approach. According with Wood et al. (2008; p.386), Authentic Living Scale "involves behaving and expressing emotions in such a way that is consistent with the conscious awareness of physiological states, emotions, beliefs, and cognitions". Authentic Living is, for these authors to be faithfully to our own values and beliefs and live and behaving according with.

According with Rotundo and Sackett (2002), Authenticity might not only be an additive factor to core performance, but actually enhance it. According to Mirchandani (2012) "workers' authenticity involves understanding, caring for, and connecting with customers". As proposed by this author, even when having rigid procedures, it is possible for employees to have authenticity in Contact Center Context by adding the "human touch" to each contact. This "human touch" must be very well managed by the employee to avoid mistakes; otherwise it can lead to incompliance with procedures that will put in risk the metrics from which he/she is evaluated. As the authenticity of an employee tend to create an impression of trustworthy and confident to customers

(Rafaeli, 1989; Sutton & Rafaeli, 1988) it also might influence the perception of their supervisor when evaluating their performance.

As Authenticity means to live according with our own values, and considering that higher levels of POPS are associated to higher perception of employees' self-interests at stake, lower values of authenticity might mean higher levels of POPS. Accordingly, we expect that:

H3a: Authenticity mediates the relationship between POPS and Task performance.

As there are few studies about authenticity, and there are none about the effect of Authenticity in Deviance, we believe that the results of this test will allow us to have a better understanding of how Authenticity affects employee' behaviors and work outcomes.

H3b: Authenticity mediates the relationship between POPS and Deviance.

METHODS

Sample and Procedure

To obtain the most diversified sample, we applied the survey on 5 Contact Centers. The sample was composed by 187 employees and 15 supervisors. Of the Contact Centers who collaborated with us, 32% were from Public Services area, 38% from Assurance Services and 30% from Travel Agencies. From the total sample, 62% are Inbound Customer Service Contact Centers and 38% are Outbound Sales Services.

Considering that it is common that in Contact Center free internet is unavailable, surveys were applied in paper both to employees and supervisors. In order to get the employee-supervisor dyads, for each employee survey there was a codification matching with a supervisor survey about that specific employee. The employees were asked to rate their perceptions of the organizational politics and rate their job satisfaction and affective commitment while supervisors rated employees' performance, both task and deviance behaviors. Of the employees' sample, 77% of respondents were female, the average age was 30 years old, and 62% had 12 years of scholar education; 10% had less than 12 years of scholar education and 28% had graduation degrees. The average tenure of employees was 31 months. Out of the supervisor sample composed by 15 supervisors, 67% were female, with ages between 24 to 35 years old, 40% had a Bachelor degree with average tenure ranging from 1 to 6 years.

Measures

POPS was measured by employees answering to 15 questions developed by Kacmar and Carlson (1997), Likert-type scale ranging from “strongly disagree” to strongly disagree. 13 of the questions were made on negative and 2 on positive. To allow the statistical analysis of all questions together we used the Recode Method (SPSS) to reverse the scale of those two questions. Sample items for this scale include “There is no place for yes-man on the team; good ideas are encouraged even when they are different from supervisors' ideas”; “Promotions on this team are not valued because they are determined on a very political way” (Cronbach's $\alpha = .85$).

Affective commitment was rated using the 6 items developed by Meyer, Allen and Smith (1993) on a 7-point Likert-type scale ranging from “strongly disagree” to

“strongly agree”. 3 of the questions were made on positive and 3 on negative. To allow the statistical analysis of all questions together we used the Recode Method (SPSS) to reverse the scale of those 3 negative questions. Sample questions include ‘I would be very happy to spend the rest of my life in this organization’ and ‘I do not feel emotionally attached to this organization’ (reversed). Cronbach’s alpha was .92 for this scale.

Authenticity was measured by employees answering to 4 questions (Wood et al, 2008) on a 7-point Likert-type scale ranging from “Never” to “Every day”. Sample items for this scale include “In my work I respect what I believe”; “In my work, it is better to be ourselves than to be just “popular”” (Cronbach’s $\alpha = .82$).

Task Performance was measured by supervisors answering to 4 questions (Williams, L.J. & Anderson, S.E. 1991) on a 5-point Likert-type scale ranging from “Never” to “Almost always”. Sample items for this scale include “Perform the tasks assigned to him/her”; “Meets the specific responsibilities for his/her function” (Cronbach’s $\alpha = .93$).

Deviance was measured by supervisors answering to 9 questions (Aquino, Lewis & Bradfield, 1999) on a 5-point Likert-type scale ranging from “Never” to “Almost always”. Sample items for this scale include “This employee leaves the work earlier without permission”; “This employee takes care of personal issues during the work time, instead of performing his function’ tasks.” (Cronbach’s $\alpha = .84$).

Statistical Analysis

To test our hypotheses we used a regression-based path analysis using PROCESS software, which is a computational tool for estimating and probing mediations with multiple mediators operating in parallel (Hayes, 2012). Process is a SPSS software

macro that allows the test of the indirect effects ab , with a normal theory approach (e.g., the Sobel test) and with a bootstrap approach to calculate Confidence Intervals (CI). According to MacKinnon, Lockwood, and Williams (2004) bootstrapping is recommended. Through the application of bootstrapped CIs, it is possible to avoid power problems introduced by asymmetric and other nonnormal sampling distributions of an indirect effect. Hypotheses were tested in two different models. In Model A, we examined the relationship between POPS and Task Performance (H1a), and the specific indirect effects through affective commitment (H2a) and authenticity (H3a), and in Model B, we examined the relationship between POPS and deviance (H1b), and the specific indirect effects through affective commitment (H2b) and authenticity (H3b). To test these hypotheses we estimated Model 4 in PROCESS using 1000 bootstrap samples, 95% bias-corrected bootstrap confidence intervals for all indirect effects. This model also incorporates the multistep approach proposed by Baron and Kenny (1986).

RESULTS

Means, standard deviations, and correlations are presented in Table 1. As expected, POPS is negatively associated with Task Performance ($r = -.249, p < .01$), and positively with Deviance ($r = .349, p < .01$). Moreover, POPS was negatively related to both Affective Commitment and Authenticity ($r = -.413, p < .01$ and $r = -.249, p < .01$, respectively). While Affective Commitment and Authenticity are both positively related with Task Performance ($r = .169, p < .05$ and $r = .331, p < .01$, respectively), both are negatively related with Deviance ($r = -.319, p < .01$ and $r = -.159, p < .05$, respectively).

Table 1. Descriptive statistics and study variable intercorrelations

	Mean	S.D.	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.	7.	8.	9.
1. Age	30,410	7,613	1	,041	,025	,306**	,057	,089	-,054	-,149	-,001
2. Gender (a)			,041	1	,118	,178*	-,002	-,064	,030	,110	-,065
3. Qualifications (b)			,025	,118	1	-,075	,021	-,149	-,004	-,010	-,006
4. Tenure (c)	31,650	29,849	,306	,178*	-,075	1	,095	0,190*	,018	,084	-,057
5. POPS	2,655	,648	,057	-,002	,021	,095	1	-	-	-	,390**
6. Affective Commitment	4,618	1,404	,089	-,064	-,149	,190*	-	0,413**	1	,106	,169*
7. Authenticity	5,757	1,511	-,054	,030	-,004	,018	-,413**	,249**	,106	1	,331**
8. Task performance	3,925	,877	-,149	,110	-,010	,084	-,249**	,169*	,331**	1	-,159*
9. Deviance	1,182	,369	-,001	-,065	-,006	-,057	,390**	-	-	-	1
								,319**	,159*	,378**	

Note. N=187; POPS = Perceived Organizational Politics

(a) Dummy Variable coded 0 if Male and 1 for Female; (b) ordinal variable coded 1 if "9 years"; 2 if 12 years; 3 if Graduate; and 4 if Post-Graduate or Master; (c) in months

* $\rho < .05$; ** $\rho < .01$; *** $\rho < .001$

Test of specific indirect effects

Hypothesis 1a proposed that POPS was associated with better supervisor-rated Task performance, and that this relationship was mediated by affective commitment (H2a) and authenticity (H3a) as mediators operating in parallel (Model A). Table 2 shows that POPS is not significantly associated with individual Task performance ($B = -.19$, $t = -1.61$, $\rho = .11$), thereby not supporting H1a. Furthermore, POPS was negatively associated with affective commitment ($B = -.92$, $t = -5.49$, $\rho < .001$) and authenticity ($B = -.63$, $t = -3.30$, $\rho < .001$). However, affective commitment was not significantly related with Task performance ($B = .07$, $t = -1.38$, $\rho = .17$), thereby not supporting H2a. In addition, authenticity was positively associated with Task performance ($B = .21$, $t = 4.48$, $\rho < .001$) and we observed a significant indirect effect of POPS on supervisor-rated Task performance through authenticity (indirect effect = .13; 95% CI from -.24 to -.05; $z = -2.62$, $\rho < .01$). Therefore, results supported the hypothesis that the relationship between POPS and Task performance was mediated by authenticity (H3a supported).

Table 2. Model A

Steps	B	SE	t	p
R2 = .10 $p < .001$				
Authenticity regressed on POPS (<i>a1</i> path)	-.63	.19	-3,30	$p < .001$
Affective commitment regressed on POPS (<i>a2</i> path)	-.92	.17	-5,49	$p < .001$
Task performance regressed on authenticity, controlling for POPS and affective commitment (<i>b1</i> path)	.21	.05	4,48	$p < .001$
Task Performance regressed on affective commitment, controlling for POPS and authenticity (<i>b1</i> path)	.07	.05	1,38	$p = .17$
Task performance regressed on POPS, controlling for authenticity and affective commitment (<i>c'</i> path)	-.19	.11	-1,61	$p = .11$
Unstandardized value	Effect	SE	LL95% CI	UL95% CI
Bootstrap results for indirect effect				
Effect through authenticity	-.13	.05	-.24	-.05
Effect through affective commitment	-.07	.05	-.20	.00
Normal theory tests for specific indirect effects (Sobel)	Effect	SE	z	p
Effect through authenticity	-.13	.05	-2,62	$p = .01$
Effect through affective commitment	-.07	.06	-1,32	$p = .19$

Note. N=189. Bootstrap sample size = 1,000. LL = Lower limit; CI = confidence interval; UL = upper limit.

Concerning the relationship between POPS and deviance (H1b) the mediation effects by affective commitment (H2b) and authenticity (H3b), as mediators operating in parallel (Model B), Table 3 shows that POPS was significantly associated with deviance ($B = .19$, $t = 3.82$, $p < .001$), thereby supporting H1b. Furthermore, POPS was negatively associated with affective commitment ($B = -.92$, $t = -5.49$, $p < .001$) and authenticity ($B = -.63$, $t = -3.30$, $p < .001$). In addition, affective commitment was negatively associated with deviance ($B = -.06$, $t = -2.51$, $p < .05$), and normality theory tests confirmed a significant indirect effect of POPS on supervisor-rated deviance through affective commitment (indirect effect = .05; 95% CI from .01 to .11; $z = 2.25$, $p < .05$). Therefore, results indicated a specific indirect effect through affective commitment in the relationship between POPS and deviance (H2b supported). On the contrary, authenticity was not significantly associated with deviance ($B = -.01$, $t = -.34$, $p = .74$), thereby not supporting H3b.

Table 3. Model B

Steps	B	SE	t	p
R2 = .10 $p < .001$				
Authenticity regressed on POPS (<i>a1</i> path)	-.63	,19	-3,30	$p < .001$
Affective commitment regressed on POPS (<i>a2</i> path)	-.92	,17	-5,49	$p < .001$
Deviance regressed on authenticity, controlling for POPS and affective commitment (<i>b1</i> path)	-.01	,02	-,34	$p = ,74$
Deviance regressed on affective commitment, controlling for POPS and authenticity (<i>b1</i> path)	-.06	,02	-2,51	$p < ,05$
Deviance regressed on POPS, controlling for authenticity and affective commitment (<i>c'</i> path)	,19	,05	3,82	$p < .001$
Unstandardized value	Effect	SE	LL95% CI	UL95% CI
Bootstrap results for indirect effect				
Effect through authenticity	,00	,01	-,02	,03
Effect through affective commitment	,05	,03	,01	,11
Normal theory tests for specific indirect effects (Sobel)	Effect	SE	z	p
Effect through authenticity	,00	,01	,32	$p = ,75$
Effect through affective commitment	,05	,02	2,25	$p < ,05$

Note. N=189. Bootstrap sample size = 1,000. LL = Lower limit; CI = confidence interval; UL = upper limit.

DISCUSSION

The goals of this study were to understand how POPS relates with Task Performance and with Deviance in Contact Centers' context, either directly and through mediation of Affective Commitment and Authenticity.

When analyzing the results, we conclude that POPS is not directly related with Task Performance.

Furthermore, we conclude that authenticity has the expected mediating effect between POPS and Task Performance. When adding the authenticity effect that has a positive relationship with Task Performance, we find that POPS indirectly affects Task Performance by negatively affecting authenticity. These results support that the lower the level of authenticity, the lower the level of task performance, and that those lower levels of authenticity might derive from high levels of POPS. So, when employees feel that there is organizational injustice, they tend to not follow their own values and to

simply follow procedures without applying the “human touch”, as defined by Mirchandani, (2012). As employees’ Authenticity has a significant impact on customers’ emotions (Hennig-Thurau, Groth, Paul, and Gremler, 2006), lack of authenticity might lead employees to formally execute the job according with the procedures, and that might affect customer’s perceptions about the service, thus leading to lower supervisor’s evaluation of task performance.

In addition, we found that POPS has a positive direct relationship with Deviance. This result confirms that Deviance can arise when POPS’ levels are higher, supporting that employees with higher feelings of low organizational justice tend to have more uncivil behaviors than the employees who feel the organization as being fair and without many informal politics among employees. Furthermore, when adding the Affective Commitment effect between POPS and Deviance, we found that POPS indirectly affects Deviance by negatively affecting Affective Commitment, confirming the expected result of mediation and also confirming that Social Exchange Theory (Blau, 1964; Copranzano & Mitchell, 2005). Contact Center’ employees tend to be temporary employees, whether due to their type of contract or by their own will. Either way, this may reduce the feeling of belongingness, making these workers to see the organization as a temporary place to get some money instead of seeing it as an organization with whom they can commit and where they can get more than just the paycheck. This way, these workers tend to have lower levels of affective commitment, and, as a consequence, higher propensity to incur in Deviance. Being mostly temporary workers, organizations, tend to look at them as non-strategic assets, not investing on them and disregarding their presence and their capacities, what might increase POPS.

We also found that, against what we expected, POPS doesn’t have direct relationship with Task Performance. Also, the relationship between POPS and Task

Performance is not mediated by Affective Commitment. When analyzing the results, we also conclude that the relationship between POPS and deviance is not mediated by Authenticity.

To understand why there is no direct relationship between POPS and Task Performance, it's important to be aware to specificities of Contact Center context, namely the high control and technological work distribution, the permanent monitoring of work KPI's, and the impossibility of employees to decide how each contact is solved, due to the rigid procedures. These rigid procedures, used to standardization of work, help employees to solve each situation in the most efficient way, assuring that they keep the KPI's according with what is expected. In addition, employees can have a variable component in their salary that usually depends on the Task Performance assessment (Castanheira & Chambel, 2010).

This way, in such controlled environment and having potential losses in paycheck, employees tend to keep their Task Performance unchanged even when they feel higher levels of POPS; instead, they tend to demonstrate how POPS affects them through Deviance, thus restoring the reciprocity (Blau, 1964; Goudlner, 1960).

LIMITATIONS

Considering that the study focuses on attitudes and job outcomes both are measured by people, we must be cautious when interpreting the results. In first place, because the type of measurement is very dependent of the perception that each individual has about what is asked, what may lead us not to the full reality; instead it might create some bias due to the difference between perceptions and reality. Although it doesn't eliminates the possible bias, to minimize this tendency, data from task performance was gathered through questioning supervisors, given that they are who

effectively measure the task performance of employees. Second, because attitudes and outcomes are made by people and so the origin of those is not simple to infer. This study must be analyzed, without disregard other job attitudes that also might affect the studied job outcomes.

The lack of direct contact with the employees to fill the questionnaire was also a limitation of this study. Although we have assured confidentiality and provided means to assure it by giving the questionnaire with an envelope that should be delivered sealed, these envelopes were collected by supervisors. This might have created some insecurity about the confidentiality and thus might also have created some bias.

Other limitation is the one-time data gathering. Considering that the data collected is based on employees' perceptions, and that Contact Centers are very dynamic, the context where each employee was inserted in that specific moment might have affected the answers. To avoid it, it would be interesting make the same data gathering around 6 months after the first moment. This would also allow for causality to be tested.

As job attitudes and job performance might vary along the time, for future studies we believe that it could be interesting to infer the effect of tenure on Task Performance and on Deviance, as so in the mediation effect of authenticity and affective commitment.

We believe that this study might be a launching for a better understanding of the Multidimensional construct of Job Performance and we suggest that in future research to analyze the impact of POPS and the mediation effect of Authenticity and Affective Commitment in the other two dimensions of Job Performance.

RECOMMENDATIONS

This study explores how Task Performance and Deviance are associated with the Perception of Organizational Politics. We believe that this study has a high practical value, given that it explores the effect of some attitudes not controlled inside a company in one of the most important outcomes for a company, Task Performance. So, through this study, we expect to create awareness about the importance of reducing the Perception of Organizational Politics. Even accepting that Contact Center managers need to count with the flexibility given by the temporary contracts, uncertainty can be minimized by including employees in decision-making and by being transparent about the emergent variations in business. In addition, we suggest the Human Resources Management to pursue a merit-based policy when implementing HR politics, in order to increase the feeling of organizational justice.

Considering that POPS affects authenticity and thus Task Performance, we believe that reducing POPS will increase productivity and customer satisfaction through employees' authenticity.

Considering that POPS also affects Deviance by affecting Affective Commitment, we believe that the proposed measures to reduce POPS will also increase the affective commitment, by giving participation in the business to employees, and thus, reduce Deviance.

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