A Work Project, presented as part of the requirements for the Award of a Master Degree in

Management from the NOVA – School of Business and Economics.

THE IMPACT OF POLITICS IN A CALL CENTER: A MODERATED MEDIATION OF

BURNOUT, JOB COMMITMENT AND JUSTICE SENSATIVITY.

ANA SOFIA FERRO DOS SANTOS - 2302

A Project carried out on the Master in Management Program, under the supervision of:

Prof. Joana Story

22nd May 2016

Abstract

This work aims to study the effect of Perceived Organizational Politics on Affective Commitment and the mediating and moderating processes through which this relationship occurs. Based on a sample of Call Center workers it was tested whether Burnout mediated the relationship between Perceived Organizational Politics (POP) and Affective Commitment. Results showed that Burnout does mediate that relationship. It was also studied whether Justice Sensitivity (JS) moderates the mediated relationship such that this relationship is stronger when JS is higher. This moderator effect was confirmed. However, this moderator effect wasn't found to strengthen the relationship between POP and Affective Commitment through Burnout.

Key words: Affective Commitment, Perceived Organizational Politics, Burnout, Justice Sensitivity

Introduction

Call Centers are nowadays one of the main points of contact of companies with the public (Aksin et al, 2009). Whether it is to build, maintain or manage customer relationships, to help customers solving their problems or accessing information, Call Centers are becoming key to a company's image and management (Prahabkar et al., 1997). They are key to keep customers satisfied, which in turn increases their loyalty (Caruana, A., 2002), willingness to recommend a company's service or product to a friend, or, as important, decrease customer dissatisfaction that has nefarious effects on loyalty and recommendation (Anderson, E. W., 1998). As ambassadors of an organization or product, it is very important for call center employees to be committed to their project once affective commitment correlates positively with performance (Meyers at al 1989, Mowday, Porter, and Dubin, 1974; Mowday, Steers, and Porter, 1979; Bashaw & Grant, 1994).

Accordingly to Meyer and Allen (1997), Organizational Commitment can take three forms: affective, continuance or normative commitment. This study will focus on Affective Commitment because it is considered the type of Commitment with more effect on general attitudes and behaviour (Hackett et al, 1994; Meyer at al, 2002). Herscovitch and Meyer (2002) recommend studying the commitment to a direct target because they found it to be a better predictor of behaviour than general organizational commitment. In that line, this research will study the affective commitment of Call Center employee's to their work project. This variable was also chosen because many call centers' employees have a dual relationship with the company they work for and the company they represent, which makes the measurement of Organizational Commitment a challenge. Job commitment can be characterized as the employee's dedication towards a particular work and job that they do in an organization (Khan, T. I et al, 2011).

Although many authors who have studied Affective Commitment used an organizational-focus, this study's literature review will review some of them anyway. Job commitment has been highly correlated to Organizational commitment and occupational commitment, suggesting that job commitment may be redundant with other forms of work commitment and share their consequences to employees and organizations (Cohen, 1993). Also, as studied by Morrow (1983) most work commitment forms are partially redundant. Furthermore, as stated by Scott-Ladd et al. (2006), affective commitment, regardless of the foci and bases, will, most of the time, direct the employee's effort to the achievement of the organizational goals.

In spite of the importance of commitment in Call Centers, studies like the one by Ruyter et al (2001) have shown that the employee satisfaction and commitment in those environments is, in most cases, low. Call Center employees often suffer from antagonistic pressures from the

company, their supervisors and customers. As described by Frei and Morris (2012): "(...) the person you spoke to [at the call center] was watching as many as eight screens at once while trying to assist frustrated customers from all cultures, ages, and levels of expertise with a growing range of product and service needs." (p.87). This stress is associated to many customer interaction jobs. Nevertheless the main differences between call center work and any other customer interaction jobs is that the Call Center work is more technology intensive, has a rapid pace, a high level of monitorization of employer performance and low levels of job control (Sawyerr et al 2009). Due to these factors, the affective commitment to their job is often missing, with consequences for performance. Due to the importance of Affective Commitment for performance and its scarcity in a Call Center environment, this will be the dependent variable of this study, as shown in Figure 1.

As already mentioned, one of the main motives of stress and lack of satisfaction and affective commitment in Call Center's employees is the high level of supervision and complexity of their work. These two factors can easily turn the Call Center in a work environment with a high Organizational Politics. Assuming political behaviours to be unsanctioned influence attempts that seek to promote self-interest at the expense of organizational goals (e.g., Ferris and Judge 1991; Ferris and Kacmar 1992; Ferris et al. 1989), these are an unethical and harmful side of an organization. This study proposes to test how Perceived Organizational Politics (POP) contributes to a reduction in employee's Affective Commitment. (Bodla et Danish, 2009).
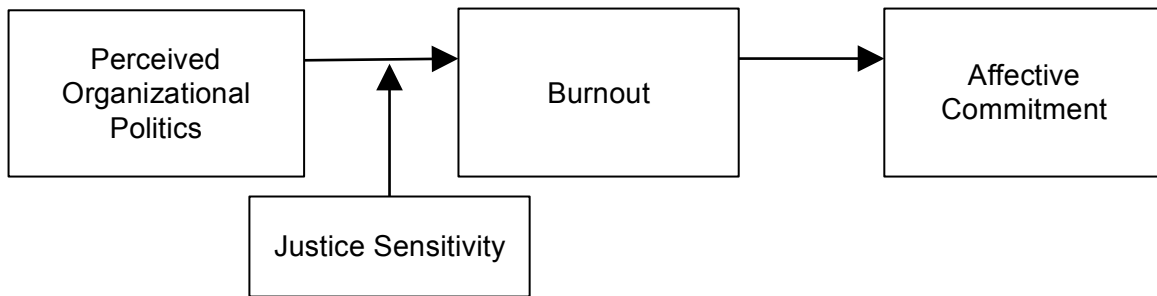
Besides employee attitudes such as job satisfaction and commitment, POP has other predicted organizational outcomes that impact employee performance. These include job stress, burnout, lack of cooperation and withdrawal and negligent behavior such as turnover intentions (Poon, 2006 and Bodla et Danish, 2009). Job stress and burnout are especially relevant outcomes

to this study since Call Centers are frequently characterized as highly stressful environments (Ruyter et al, 2001). Burnout is characterized as a psychological syndrome of emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and reduced personal accomplishment which may happen to individuals with jobs that require personal interactions of some kind (Maslach and Jackson 1986) and it has been correlated with a worse job performance in customer representatives (Singh, Goolsby & Rhoads, 1994). This study will try to understand if Burnout has any mediating power in the relationship between POP and Affective Commitment, as shown in Figure 1.

Besides POP, burnout can be a consequence of social conflicts; injustice, unfair treatment, nonreciprocal behavior, and antisocial behavior at work (Dormann, C. and Zapf, D 2004). This feeling of unfair treatment and injustice is also correlated with POP as mentioned by Kacmar and Ferris (1991) and Ferris and Kacmar (1992) who argue that the higher the perceptions of politics by the employees, the lower they view the level of justice, equity and fairness. In summary, burnout can be exacerbated by a higher justice sensitivity, which tends to occur in work environments with high POP such as a Call Center. Therefore, this research will try to analyse if Justice Sensitivity has any moderating power in the relationship of POP and Burnout. This completes the model in figure 1.

By analysing this model it is pretended to contribute to the literature by trying to understand how, in Call Center environments, Affective Commitment is affected (through Burnout) by Perceived Organizational Politics, especially taking into consideration employees' Justice Sensitivity.

Figure 1: Research Model

```
┌─────────────────┐      ┌─────────────┐      ┌─────────────┐
│   Perceived     │      │             │      │  Affective  │
│ Organizational  │─────▶│   Burnout   │─────▶│ Commitment  │
│    Politics     │      │             │      │             │
└─────────────────┘   ▲  └─────────────┘      └─────────────┘
              ┌───────┴─────────┐
              │Justice Sensitivity│
              └─────────────────┘
```

Literature Review and Hypotheses

Link Between Perceived Organizational Politics and Affective Commitment

Our first hypothesis relates to the link between POP and Commitment. As already stated in the introduction, this study will focus on the Affective Commitment. The focus of the commitment chosen for this study will be the call center employee's commitment towards their work project. Job commitment can be characterized as the dedication that employees give towards a particular work and job that they do in an organization (Khan, T. I et al, 2011). Many studies have found a positive correlation between affective commitment and performance and employee effort (Meyers et al's, 1989, Mowday, Porter, and Dubin, 1974; Mowday, Steers, and Porter, 1979; Bashaw & Grant, 1994). Job commitment has also been shown to be a good indicator of job and occupational withdrawal intentions, even more so than other Work Commitment forms (Wiener and Vardi 1980 and Cohan 1993). Furthermore, Witt (1993) suggested that employees to whom are given unsatisfactory work assignments may develop unfavorable and durable attitudes to the organization, decreasing their overall affective commitment, which can explain the results of the study by Cohen (1993) that correlated Job Commitment with Organizational Commitment and its effects.

One of the most common descriptions of Organization Politics is by Mintzberg (1983, p. 172), who described it as ''(…) individual or group behavior that is informal, ostensibly parochial, typically divisive, and above all in a technical sense, illegitimate—sanctioned neither

by formal authority, accepted ideology, nor certified expertise (although it may exploit any one of these).'' However, more important for this study than Organizational Politics per se is Perceived Organizational Politics (POP). As has been discussed by some authors (eg. Porter 1976; Gandz and Murray 1980), it is not the actual politics but their subjective perception which is of consequence in an organization. For instance, empowered groups in a politicized organization will have a more positive perception of such environment than disempowered groups (Bodla et Danish, 2009).

Previous studies have suggested a negative correlation between POP and Commitment. Cropanzano et al. (1997) compare workplace environment to a marketplace in which the individuals, in this case the employees, work to obtain a certain objective. This work requires effort that can be considered an investment of personal resources in a certain firm. When the environment of that given firm is politicized, there may be more uncertainty about rules and behavioural guidelines, and rewards may be tied up to power relationships and other less objective factors (Chang et al., 2009). In these environments, employees interact in an antagonistic way for rewards and power, which detracts from collaboration and may lead to some individuals not being able to obtain their own objectives and perceiving their work as unsatisfying and stressful. As a result, in such environments, employees may not be so willing to invest efforts in their work.

Rhoades et all (2001) developed on Meyer and Allen's (1997) research of how different aspects of organizations can affect Affective Commitment. They concluded that Organizational Rewards, Procedural Justice and Supervisor Support (that can be considered different aspects of Organization Politics) could lead to a higher or lower Perceived Organizational Support (POS), which then has an impact on the Affective Commitment (AC). An empirical study by Bodla et

Danish (2009) concluded that POP is positively correlated with job stress and turnover intentions but negatively related to job satisfaction, organizational commitment and job involvement. Although the type of commitment studied was organizational commitment, the negative effect of POP on job involvement was also mentioned.

This section provided a review of a theoretical model, models of the channels through which POP impacts affective commitment and empirical studies which document how POP negatively impacts affective commitment. This negative relationship is corroborated by further literature. (Drory 1993; Maslyn and Fedor 1998; Witt 1998; Vigoda 2000; Vigoda-Gadot et al. 2003; Kimura 2013). Therefore, we hypothesize:

Hypothesis 1: *Perceived Organizational Politics is negatively correlated with the Affective Organizational Commitment of one's work.*

<u>*The role of Burnout as Mediator*</u>

As stated in the introduction, Call Centers may be a complicated, over-policized and stressful work environment. Cropanzano et al. (1997) highlights the sparse literature on how Perceived Organizational Politics relates with work stress and burnout. Cropanzano et al. built upon Ferris et al. (1994) who assess the positive relationship between perceived politics and job anxiety, and Ferris et al. (1993) who also correlated positively POP and job stress. Cropanzano et al. (1997) added to this research by finding that if employees perceived their work environment to be politicized, they report greater levels of anxiety and tension and lower levels of general health. One limitation of this study, though, is that its sample was university students working part-time.

Furthermore, the study of Miller et al (2008) on the causes and effects of Perceived Organizational Politics (POP) showed a positive relationship between POP and job stress and

turnover intentions. Bodla and Danish (2009), mentioned above to illustrate POP's negative relationship to Commitment, also showed positive correlations between POP and job stress and turnover intentions. As job stress and burnout are related phenomena, it is possible that there is a link between POP and the employee's' feeling of Burnout.

Burnout is "(...) a reaction to chronic occupational stress characterized by emotional exhaustion (i.e., the draining of emotional resources), cynicism (i.e., a negative, callous, and cynical attitude towards one's job) and lack of professional efficacy (i.e., the tendency to evaluate one's work negatively)." (p.166. González-Romá, V. et al, 2006). This reaction to "chronic occupational stress" can lead to worse performance, the increase of job turnover, absenteeism, and low morale (Maslach and Jackson, 1986). Besides these consequences to the organization, Burnout can also lead to "personal dysfunction" as physical exhaustion, insomnia, abuse of alcohol and drugs, and marital and family problems. (González-Romá, V. et al, 2006).

Besides the relationship between POP and Burnout, the negative impact that burnout has on job attitudes such as commitment and satisfaction has already been studied. Moore (2000) stated that the effects of burnout can go from a decrease in job satisfaction to a decrease in attachment to the organization. The relationships between POP and Burnout and between Burnout and Affective Commitment have also been studied by the meta-analytic study of Chang et al (2009). Chang et al. concluded that POP is positively related to psychological strain and turnover intentions, which mediated the relationship between POP and performance, and negatively related with job satisfaction and affective commitment.

In summary, one negative effect of a highly perceived political organization can be employee stress and burnout, and one effect of burnout can be the decrease of employee affective

commitment. Burnout can play, then, a mediating role in the relationship between POP and Affective Commitment. This study will assess this hypothesis:

Hypothesis 2: *Burnout mediates the relationship between perceived organizational politics and affective commitment.*

Justice Sensitivity as a Moderator of this Mediated Relationship

Mikula (1994) observed that people experience justice-related situations from different perspectives as victims, beneficiaries, or neutral observers of injustice. Although different people react in different ways to unjust treatment, literature suggests that people have stable and consistent sensitivities to different justice-related situations. (Schmitt, Gollwitzer, Maes, & Arbach, 2005; Schmitt, 1996, Baumert et al 2010). This stable feeling towards injustice can be considered justice sensitivity.

Justice Sensitivity (JS) can have an impact on the way employees perceive and act in their work environment. Kacmar and Ferris (1991) and Ferris and Kacmar (1992) concluded that the higher the person's POP, the more the person perceives injustice, inequity and unfairness. It is thus possible that an employee's JS affects their POP. Since in this study we are considering POP a negative effect of over-politicized organizations, high justice sensitivity may amplify that negative effect.

Besides this possible relationship between Justice Sensitivity and POP, high JS can also be considered a factor related to Burnout. According to a study by Moliner et al. (2005), Justice Sensitivity among employees was an important predictor of the strength of Burnout experiences.

If Justice Sensitivity increases sensitivity to a Politicized Organization and may increase directly and indirectly (by increasing POP) Burnout among employee, it is possible that JS moderates the relationship between POP and Burnout (BO).

Hypothesis 3: *Justice Sensitivity moderates the relationship between Perceived Organizational Politics and Burnout, such that the relationship is stronger when Justice Sensitivity is higher.*

If we assume that Justice Sensitivity moderates the relationship between POP and Burnout, it becomes also likely that Justice Sensitivity will indirectly strengthen the relationship between POP and Affective Commitment, through Burnout. Therefore, we can hypothesize the following:

Hypothesis 4: *The relationship between Perceived Organizational Politics and Affective Commitment through Burnout will be stronger when Justice Sensitivity is high.*

Methodology

Sample

The survey was targeted to a call center company subcontracted to represent a large portuguese energy company. Of the 840 call center operators representing this company, 197 were invited to participate. The survey was in Portuguese and, since the original measures for the variables were in English, it was back-translated (Brislin, R. W., 1970). A total of 179 completed surveys were received, giving us a response rate of 90.8 percent. The sample comprised of 91 women (50.8 percent) and 87 men (58.6 percent).

Call Center operators were assigned to projects within their representation of this company. In terms of the tenure in the project, 0.6 percent of respondents were in their assigned project for less than one month, 1.1 percent between one and three months, 5.6 percent between three and six month, 17.9 percent between six month and one year, 46.9 percent between one and two year, 25.7 percent between two and five years, 0.6 percent between five and ten years and 1.7 percent for more than ten years.

In terms of education, 5 percent had completed the 9th grade (former mandatory schooling), 30.2 percent had completed academic secondary education, 34.6 percent had completed professional or technological secondary education, 23.5 percent had completed undergraduate studies, 1.7 percent had completed postgraduate studies and 5 percent a master's degree.

At the request of the author of this study, the Call Center company sent an email to 197 Call Center operators chosen randomly with a link to fill in the questionnaire, explaining the research aims and the researcher's' affiliation. All participants were assured that their individual responses would remain confidential.

Measures

Affective Commitment

This variable was rated using the 6 item measure developed by Meyer et al. (1993). Sample questions included "I feel the problems of the project I work on as my own" and "I don't feel emotionally connected with the project I am working in" (reversed). In this study we will focus on the affective commitment with the employee's project and to neither the call center company nor the energy company they represent. The 6 questions all used a 7 point scale from "totally disagree" to "totally agree". Cronbach's α was 0.89.

Perceived Organizational Politics

This variable was measured using the 15 item measure of Perception of Organizational Politics scale (POPs) validated by Kacmar and Carlson (1997). However, from the 15 item measure only 13 were used since 2 were not reliable in the sample. The 13 items consisted of questions such as "People in this organization attempt to build themselves up by tearing others down" and "Sometimes it is easier to remain quiet than to fight the system". All the 13 items

were answered from a 5 point scale from "totally disagree" to "totally agree". Cronbach's α was 0.79

Burnout

The Burnout variable is based in the Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI) created by Maslach et al (1996) but with a "totally disagree" to "totally agree" 5-points scale instead of a frequency one. This variable was tested using a 10 item measure with questions such as "I feel emotionally exhausted by my work" and "I doubt the value of my work". Cronbach's α was 0.89.

Justice Sensitivity

To test this variable it were used 9 of the 10 items presented in the Justice Sensitivity Inventory from Schmitt et al (2010). That Justice Sensitivity Inventory tests the justice sensitivity from different perspectives: the victim, an observer and the aggressor. In this survey it was tested the victim the perspective. Questions like "It bothers me when others receive something that ought to be mine" and "It makes me angry when others receive a reward that I have earned" were included. Once again, a 5 point scale from "totally disagree" to "totally agree" was used. Cronbach's α was 0.88.

Control Variables

Previous research has found that age, tenure and gender are sometimes related to affective commitment (Meyer et al 2002; Hanlon, 1986; Marsden et al. 1993). Therefore, this study set of analysis included these demographic variables as controls.

Statistical Analysis

To test the hypotheses, a regression-based path analysis was used, using PROCESS software. PROCESS is a macro for SPSS which estimates and probes interactions and the conditional indirect effects of moderated mediation models (Hayes, 2012; Preacher et al. 2007). PROCESS

also allows testing of indirect effects in the path ab, with a normal theory approach and a bootstrap approach to calculate confidence intervals (CIs), as recommended by MacKinnon, Lockwood and Williams (2004) for avoiding power problems introduced by asymmetric and other non-normal sampling distributions of an indirect effect.

The four hypotheses were tested in two steps. Firstly, using model 4 in PROCESS with a 10,000 bootstrap sample and 95 percent bias-corrected bootstrap CIs for all indirect effects, the mediation of POP and AC through BO was tested (results in table 2). Using the same model, the mediation of POP and BO through JS was also tested (results presented in table 3). Secondly, for the study of Hypotheses 3 and 4, model 7 in PROCESS was used, which accounts not only for the mediation of POP and AC through BO but also the moderation effect of JS. Once again, a 10,000 bootstrap sample and 95 percent bias-corrected bootstrap CIs for all indirect effects were used. All predictor variables (POP and JS) were mean centered and the conditional indirect effect was analysed at different values of the moderator variable (the mean, one standard deviation above and one standard deviation below the mean) as recommended by Aiken and West (1991). The control variables already mentioned were included in all analysis.

Results

The means, standard deviation (SD) and the intercorrelations of the variables are presented in Table 1

Table 1 - Descriptive Statistics, reliabilities, and zero-order correlations

Variables	M	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1. Age	28.69	6.96	-						
2. Tenure in the Project	4.97	1.01	0.16*	-					
3. Gender	1.50	0.51	-0.07	-0.07	-				
4. Burnout	3.13	0.78	-0.15*	0.09	0.07	(0.89)			
5. Justice Sensitivity	3.10	0.81	-0.11	-0.02	0.12	0.29**	(0.88)		
6. Affective Commitment	3.93	1.41	0.14	-0.07	-0.09	-0.57**	-0.07	(0.89)	
7. Perceived Organizational Politics	2.79	0.56	-0.11	0.01	0.17*	0.35**	0.41**	-0.22**	(0.79)

N= 179. Cronbach's αs are provided in parentheses on the diagonal. Tenure in the project was coded as 1= less than 1 month; 2= between 1 and 3 moths; 3= between 3 and 6 months; 4= between 6 months and 1 year; 5= between 1 and 2 years; 6= between 2 and 5 years; 7= between 5 and 10 years; 8= more than 10 years. Gender was coded as 1= Female; 2= Male; 3= Non-binary.

* $p < 0.05$; ** $p < 0.01$

Table 2- Simple mediation

	B	SE	t	p
Direct and Total effects R2=0.33 , P<0.001				
AC regressed on POP (c path)	-0.03	0.16	-0.22	0.82
BO regressed on POP (a path)	0.46	0.09	4.67	<0.001
AC regressed on BO, controlling for POP (b path)	-0.99	0.12	-8.19	<0.001
AC regressed on POP, controlling for BO (c' path)	-0.49	0.18	-2.67	<0.01
Partial effects on control variable on AC				
Gender	-0.12	0.17	-0.71	0.47
Age	0.01	0.01	0.82	0.40
Tenure in the project	-0.04	0.08	-0.51	0.60
Unstandardized value	Effect	SE	LL95%CI	UL95%CI
Bootstap result for indirect effect:				
Effect through BO	-0.46	0.12	-0.72	-0.24

Bootstrap = 10,000 95% confidence – mean centered variables

Hypothesis 1 proposed that the Perceived Organizational Politics was negatively associated with Affective Commitment. Table 1 shows that, although not in a strong way, POP and AC are indeed negatively correlated (correlation = -0.22, p<0.01). As we can conclude that POP and AC are negatively correlated, hypothesis 1 is confirmed.

Hypothesis 2 proposed that the relationship between the Perceived Organizational Politics and the Affective Commitment is mediated by Burnout. Table 2 shows that the POP and Burnout are positively associated (B=0.46, t=4.67; p<0.001) and Burnout is negatively correlated with Affective Commitment (B= -0.99; t= -8.19; p<0.001). On table 2 we can also see that there is a moderated negative association between POP and AC controlling for BO (B=-0.49, t= -2.67; p<0.01). Furthermore, there is a significant effect of POP on Affective Commitment through BO (indirect effect= - 0.46; 95 percent CI from -0.72 to -0.24). Therefore, the results support Hypothesis 2 that BO mediates the relationship between POP and Affective Commitment.

Table 3- Regression Results for Moderated Mediation

Predictor Variable	B	SE	t	p
DV: BO (mediator) R2 = 0.17, p<0.001				
1st step				
Constant	1.53	0.47	3.22	0.001
POP	0.36	0.10	3.43	<0.001
JS	0.16	0.07	2.26	0.02
2nd step ΔR2= 0.02 p<0.001				
Constant	3.03	0.37	8.02	<0.001
POP	0.37	0.10	3.49	<0.001
JS	0.16	0.07	2.32	0.02
POP X JS	-0.20	0.10	-1.96	0.05
DV: AC R2= 0.33 p<0.001				
Constant	7.15	0.72	9.91	<0.001
POP	-0.03	0.16	-0.22	0.82
BO	-0.99	0.12	-8.19	<0.001
Partial effect of control variables				
Gender	-0.12	0.17	-0.71	0.47
Age	0.01	0.01	0.82	0.40
Tenure in the project	-0.04	0.08	-0.51	0.60
Justice Sensitivity				
Conditional indirect effect at JS = M + SD and M – SD	Effects	bootSE	bootLLCI	bootULCI
-1 SD (-0.81)	-0.53	0.15	-0.85	-0.25
M (0,00)	-0.36	0.12	-0.63	-0.13
+1 SD (+0.81)	-0.20	0.16	-0.53	0.13

Bootstrap = 10,000 95% confidence - mean centered

The third hypothesis of this study suggested that Justice Sensitivity moderates the relationship between Perceived Organizational Politics and Burnout. The moderation would make the relationship between POP and BO stronger when the Justice Sensitivity would be higher. The table 3 presents the results of the mediated moderation in study and, with a 95% confidence level, it can be said that the cross-product term between POP and JS on BO is borderline significant (B=-0.20; t=-1.96; p=0.05). The way the moderation works can be seen in Figure 2: the highest level of BO is when both POP and JS are high; conversely, the lowest levels of BO is when both POP and JS are low. In terms of slope,

Figure 2 – Moderator effect of JS
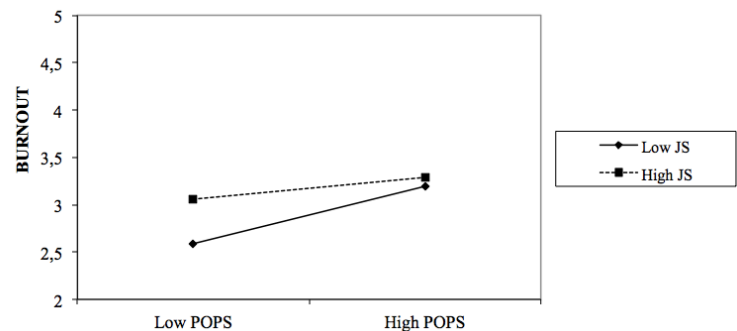
it can be seen in Figure 2 that when JS is high, BO begins and remains high. When JS is low, low-POP organizations have low BO but BO increases as POP increases. While this means that there is a steeper slope when JS is low, this is not enough to compensate the increased BO when JS is high. Thus, a high JS remains a strong moderator in the relationship between POP and BO. Therefore, hypothesis 3 is confirmed.

In order to analyse the hypothesis 4, that stated that the relationship between POP and AC (through Burnout) would be stronger when Justice Sensitivity is high, the conditional effect of POP on AC (through BO) was examined at 3 levels of JS: the mean (0.00), one SD above the mean (+0.81) and one SD below the mean (-0.81). That analysis can be found in table 3. The results show that, in a 95% confidence interval, the moderator values at the mean and one SD below the mean were negative and different from zero but the moderator values one SD above the mean may not always be different from zero. This may be explained by the fact that the interaction of JS and POP at this confidence level is only borderline significant (p=0.0506). Another possible explanation is that, as it can be seen in Figure 2, for a high JS the BO is always high, regardless of POP. It therefore is possible that the effect of POP on AC through BO is not so relevant when JS is high. So, although Hypothesis 3 has been stated to be truth, at a 95% confidence level, the moderator effect of JS, when JS is high, does not strengthen the relationship between POP and AC (through BO) as suggested in Hypothesis 4.

Discussion

This study aimed to add to the literature by analysing the moderated mediation of Burnout in the relationship between Perceived Organizational Politics and Affective Commitment. Justice Sensitivity was the suggested moderator.

The results obtained in the empirical study validate the first hypothesis, that POP and AC would be negatively correlated. Although the relationship is not very strong, it is consistent with the literature establishing a politicized environment in an organization as a negative trait, making its employees lose commitment. Reviewing these results, it can be said that organizations with an over-politicized environment, or at least one perceived as such, may suffer from lack of commitment of their employees towards their work. As seen in the introduction and literature review, this lack of commitment often translates to a worse performance.

The analysis of the results of the mediation analysis between POP and AC through BO did support the stated second hypothesis. The second hypothesis, based on the literature, suggested that POP and BO would be positively correlated and BO and AC negatively correlated, since Burnout could be caused by the uncertain and competitive environment characteristic of a Politicized Organization (Cropanzano et al., 1997) and also have the negative consequence of loss of enthusiasm, job satisfaction and commitment (Moore, 2000). This mediated relationship is much stronger than the relationship tested in the first hypothesis. In practice, this strong correlation between POP and BO may suggest other negative consequences to the company beyond a decline in commitment, such as worse performance, an increase in job turnover, absenteeism, and low morale (Maslach and Jackson, 1986). Besides the negative impact Burnout has on an employee's personal life, these are all negative consequences of great importance to companies since they may, directly or indirectly, lead to financial losses. This finding reinstates the importance of avoiding an over-politicized environment in the organization.

Besides this mediated relationship between POP and AC, this study also wanted to test if Justice Sensitivity would moderate the effect of POP in Burnout. That moderation would be such that the higher the JS of the employee would be, the more they would suffer from Burnout in an

over-politicized organization. Our empirical results did show a moderator effect of JS in the relationship between POP and BO. As suggested in Figure 2, the moderation works as suggested: BO is stronger in both low- and high-POP organizations when JS is high. When an employee has low JS, their BO is significantly increased by a higher POP. As justice sensitivity is seen as a personal trait which companies cannot change, it is important that organizations focus on correcting the politicized environment as this may be able to significantly reduce BO in low-JS employees. While employees with a high JS experience high BO in both low- and high-POP organizations, companies should then look for other ways of avoiding burnout, as this may impact work commitment.

In consequence of the established hypothesis 3, it was also studied the possible effect of JS's moderation in the mediated relationship between POP and the Affective Commitment. The fourth hypothesis stated that the relationship between Perceived Organizational Politics and Affective Commitment through Burnout would be stronger when Justice Sensitivity is high. This hypothesis could not, however, be validated in a confidence interval of 95 percent since the test of the conditional effect of POP on AC (through BO) at plus one SD of JS of the mean cannot be said to be significantly different from zero. The fact that hypothesis 3 was also only validated at a borderline situation, and that the direct correlation between POP and AC is not very strong, may explain why the effect of JS in the relationship of POP and AC (through BO) cannot be completed validated. This can also be explained by the fact that, as shown in Figure 2, BO is always high when JS is high, almost regardless on the level of POP. Consequently, when JS is high, the effect of POP in AC through BO may not be significant.

Organizations with an over-politicized environment may lead employees to feel a lot of uncertainty, to not speak up their minds for fear of negative consequences and to perceive their

work effort as being in vain given that the criteria for promotions may not always be a performance-based. As this study shows, employees with high JS will suffer more from BO in such organizations. However, even employees with a low JS may suffer such negative effects if the POP is very high. The findings of this study reinforce the need of Call Center managers' to re-evaluate predictors of POP such was job autonomy, skill variety, feedback and advancement opportunity (Ferris and Kacmar 1992); to maintain the organizational politics decisions, such as pay and promotions, as fair and transparent as possible; and to create solutions for decision– makers and employees to communicate more freely – as part of a strategy to reduce Perceived Organization Politics.

Limitations and Future Studies

These results must be interpreted taking into consideration some limitations. Firstly, the data was all gathered at the same time (throughout a week) and only using one source. As demonstrated by Maxwell and Cole (2007) and Maxwell, Cole, and Mitchell (2011), the mediation analysis of cross-sectional data (data gathered all at one time) may produce biased estimates of the effects of mediators. Therefore, it would be preferable in future studies to test the mediation hypothesis using longitudinal data. Besides only having one source, this study sample can't be considered large and although it can be considered representative of the Call Center in study, it cannot be considered representative of Call Centers or organizations in general. Secondly, and very importantly, this results should take into account the problem of Common Method Variance, in which variance can be attributed to the way the variables are measured instead of the constructs the measures represent (Malhotra et al 2006), so, for instance the fact that the survey was done online in a strange interface for the respondents, may have inflated or deflated the intercorrelations. Another limitation was that the Affective Commitment

in study was towards the employees' project, and not a specific organization, so it may have led to some differences between the results and the hypothesis constructed based on the literature review that analysed, in part, Organizational Affective Commitment or commitment without any specific foci. Future research should take this fact into account and explore this moderated mediation with the dependable variable being the affective commitment towards an organization. Thirdly, the confidence interval chosen didn't allow strong confirmation of hypothesis 3 and it may have jeopardized the confirmation of hypothesis 4. It would be advisable to re-analyse the moderated effect of JS in the relationship between POP and BO in other sets of data in order to reconfirm the results obtained in this study. A future study would also benefit from the research on the effect of different dimensions of POP and BO in order to understand more nuanced relationships, which this study was not able to achieve due to the small sample size. Finally, it would be of great additional value to this investigation to study the moderation effect of JS on BO with other independent variable other than POP in order to check if there is any organizational variable that reduces BO for people with high JS.

Conclusion

This research concludes that, in the studied Call Center environment, there is a small correlation between Perceived Organizational Politics and Affective Commitment, and their relationship is indeed mediated by Burnout. As POP increases, so does Burnout and, consequently, the affective commitment decreases. Justice Sensitivity provides a moderator variable for the relationship between POP and Burnout, such as when JS is high, regardless of the level of POP, Burnout is high, but when JS is low, higher POP significantly increases BO. We cannot conclude, however, that this moderator has an impact on the mediated relationship of POP and Affective Commitment through BO, at least when JS is high.

Bibliography

Aiken, L. S., & West, S. G. (1991). Multiple regression: Testing and interpreting interactions. Newbury Park, CA: Sage.

Anderson, E. W. (1998). Customer satisfaction and word of mouth. *Journal of service research*, 1(1), 5-17.

Aksin, Z., Mor A., and Vijay M. (2009) The Modern Call Center: A Multi-Disciplinary Perspective On Operations Management Research. *Production and Operations Management* 16(6) 665-688.

Bashaw, R. E., & Grant, E. S. (1994). Exploring the distinctive nature of work commitments: Their relationships with personal characteristics, job performance, and propensity to leave. *Journal of Personal Selling & Sales Management*, 14(2), 41-56.

Baumert, A., Gollwitzer, M., Staubach, M., Schimtt, M, (2010). Justice Sensitivity And The Processing Of Justice-Related Information. *Eur. J. Pers*. 25(5): 386-397.

Becker, T. E., Billings, R. S., Eveleth, D. M., & Gilbert, N. L. (1996). Foci and bases of employee commitment: Implications for job performance. *Academy of management journal*, 39(2), 464-482.

Brislin, R. W. (1970). Back-translation for cross-cultural research. *Journal of cross-cultural psychology*, 1(3), 185-216.

Bodla, M. A an Danish, R. Q. (2009) Politics and Workplace: An Empirical Examination of the Relationship Between Perceived Organizational Politics and Work Performance. *South Asian Journal of Management*, 16(1), p.44-58

Caruana, A. (2002). Service loyalty: The effects of service quality and the mediating role of customer satisfaction. *European journal of marketing*, 36(7/8), 811-828.

Castanheira, F., & Story, J. (2015). Making Good Things Last Longer: The Role of Savoring on the Relationship Between HRM and Positive Employee Outcomes. *Human Resource Management*.

Chang, C.-H., Rosen, C. C., and Levy, P. E. (2009) The Relationship Between Perceptions Of Organizational Politics And Employee Attitudes, Strain, And Behavior: A Meta-Analytic Examination. *Academy of Management Journal* 52.(4): 779-801.

Cohen, A. (1993). Work commitment in relation to withdrawal intentions and union effectiveness. *Journal of Business Research*, 26(1), 75-90.

Cropanzano, R., Howes, J. C., Grandey, A. A., & Toth, P. (1997). The relationship of organizational politics and support to work behaviors, attitudes, and stress. *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, 18(2), 159–180

Dormann, C. and Zapf, D. (2004), Customer-Related Social Stressors and Burnout. *Journal of Occupational Health Psychology*, 9(1) 61-82

Drory, A. (1993). Perceived political climate and job attitudes. *Organizational Studies*, 14(1), 59–71.

Frei, F. and Morris, A. (2012) *Uncommon Service*. Boston, Mass.: Harvard Business Review Press.

Ferris GR, Fedor DB, Chachere JG, Pondy LR. (1989) Myths and politics in organizational context. *Group Organ Stud*. 14(83) – 103.

Ferris, Gerald R., and Judge, Timothy A. (1991) Personnel/human resources management: A political influence perspective. *Journal of Management* 17(2): 447-488.

Ferris, G R and Kacmar, K M (1992) Perceptions of Organizational politics. *Journal of Management*, Vol 18: 93-116

Ferris, G. R., Brand, J. F., Brand, S., Rowland, K. M., Gilmore, D. C., Kacmar, K. M. and Burton, C. A. (1993). Politics and control in organizations. In: Lawler, E. J., Markovsky, B., Heimer, K. and O'Brien, J. (Eds) Advances in Group Processes, *JAI Press*, Greenwich, HCT 10: 83-111.

Ferris, G. R., Frink, D. D., Galang, M. C., Zhou, J., Kacmar, K. M. and Howard, J. E. (1994). Perceptions of organizational politics: predictions, stress-related implications, and outcomes, *Human Relations*, 48, 49-82.

Gandz, J., & Murray, V. V. (1980). The experience of workplace politics. *Academy of Management Journal*, 23, 237–251

González-Romá, V., Schaufeli, W. B., Bakker, A. B., Lloret, S. (2006), Burnout and work engagement: Independent factor or Opposite poles?. *Journal of Vocational Behavior* (68): 165–174

Hackett, R., Bycio, P., Hausdorf, P. (1994) Further assessment of Meyer and Allen's (1991) three-compement model of organizational commitment. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 79: 15-23

Hayes, A. F. (2012). An analytical primer and computational tool for observed variable moderation, mediation, and conditional process modeling. Manuscript submitted for publication.

Hanlon, M. D. (1986) Age and commitment to work: A literature review and multivariate analysis. *Research on Aging*, 8(2), 289-316

Herscovitch, L., & Meyer, J. P. (2002). Commitment to organizational change: Extension of a three- component model. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 87, 474–487.

Kacmar, K M and Ferris, G R (1991) Perceptions of Organizational Politics Scale (POPS): Development and Construct Validation, *Educational and Psychological Measurement*, 51: 191-205

Kacmar, Michelle K. and Carlson, Dwan S. (1997) Further Validation Of The Perceptions Of Politics Scale (Pops): A Multiple Sample Investigation. *Journal of Management* 23(5): 627-658.

Khan, T. I., Jam, F. A., Akbar, A., Khan, M. B., & Hijazi, S. T. (2011). Job involvement as predictor of employee commitment: Evidence from Pakistan.International. *Journal of Business and Management*, 6(4), 252.

Kimura, T. (2013) The Moderating Effects of Political Skill and Leader–Member Exchange on the Relationship Between Organizational Politics and Affective Commitment. *Journal of Business Ethics* 116, 587–599

MacKinnon, D. P., Lockwood, C. M., & Williams, J. (2004). Confidence limits for the indirect effect: Distribution of the product and resampling methods. *Multivariate Behavioral Research*, 39, 99–128

Malhotra, N. K., Kim, S. S., & Patil, A. (2006). Common method variance in IS research: A comparison of alternative approaches and a reanalysis of past research. *Management Science*, 52(12), 1865-1883.

Marsden, P. V., Kalleberg, A. L., Cook, C. R. (1993) Gender differences in organizational commitment: Influences of work positions and family roles. *Work and Occupations*, 20: 368-390

Maslach, C, Jackson, S E, (1986), *Maslach Bumout Inventory Manual*, Second Edition, Consulting Psychologists Press Inc, California

Maslach, C., Jackson, S E and Leiter, M P (1996). *Maslach Burnout Inventory Manual*. Palo Alto, California. Consulting Psychologists Press.

Maslyn, J. M., & Fedor, D. B. (1998). Perceptions of politics: Does measuring different foci matter? *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 83(4), 645–653

Maxwell, S. E., & Cole, D. A. (2007). Bias in cross-sectional analyses of longitudinal mediation. *Psychological Methods*, 12, 23-44.

Maxwell, S. E., Cole, D. A., & Mitchell, M. A. (2011). Bias in cross-sectional analyses of longitudinal mediation: Partial and complete mediation under an autoregressive model. *Multivariate Behavioral Research*, 46(5), 816-841.

Meyer, J. P., Paunonen, S. V., Gellatly, I. R., Goffin, R. D., & Jackson, D. N. (1989). Organizational commitment and job performance: It's the nature of the commitment that counts. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 74(1), 152.

Meyer, J.P., Allen, N.J. (1997) *Commitment in the workplace: Theory, research and application*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage

Meyer, J. P., Stanley, D. J., Herscovitch, L., Topolnytsky, L. (2002). Affective, continuance, and normative commitment to the organization: A meta-analysis of antecedents, correlates, and consequences. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 61(1), 20-52.

Mikula, G. (1994). Perspective-related differences in interpretations of injustice by victims and victimizers: A test with close relationships. In M. J. Lerner, & G. Mikula (Eds.), *Entitlement and the affectional bond* (pp. 175-203). New York: Plenum.

Mintzberg, H. (1983). *Power in and around organizations* (Vol. 142). Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall.

Moliner, C., Martínez-Tur, V., Peiró, J. M., Ramos, J. Cropanzano, R. (2005). Relationships Between Organizational Justice And Burnout At The Work-Unit Level. *International Journal of Stress Management* 12(2): 99-116.

Moore, J. E. 2000. Why is this happening? A casual attribution approach to work exhaustion consequences. *Academy of Management Review*, 25: 335–349

Morrow, P. C. (1983). Concept redundancy in organizational research: The case of work commitment. *Academy of management Review*, 8(3), 486-500.

Mowday, R. T., Steers, R. M. and Porter, L. W. (1979) The measurement of organizational commitment. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 14: 224-247.

Prahabkar, P.R., Sheehan M.J. and Coppett, J.I. (1997), The power of technology in business selling: call centers, *Journal of Business and Industrial Marketing*, 12, pp. 222-35.

Preacher, K. J., Rucker, D. D., & Hayes, A. F. (2007). Assessing moderated mediation hypotheses: Theory, method, and prescriptions. *Multivariate Behavioral Research*, 42, 185–227.

Poon, M L (2006) Trust-in-Superior and Helping Coworkers: Moderating Effect of Perceived Politics. *Journal of Managerial Psychology*, 21(6): 518-532

Porter, Lyman W., Richard M, Steers, Richard T. Mowday, and Paul V. Boulian (1974) Organizational commitment, job satisfaction, and turnover among psychiatric technicians. *Journal of Applled Psychology*, 59: 603-609.

Porter, L. W. (1976). *Organizations as political animals*. Presidential Address, Division of Industrial-Organizational Psychology, 84th Annual Meeting of the American Psychological Association, Washington, DC

Randall, M. L., Cropanzano, R., Bormann, C. A., & Birjulin, A. (1999). Organizational politics and organizational support as predictors of work attitudes, job performance, and organizational citizenship behavior. *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, 20(2), 159–174.

Rhoades, L., Eisenberg, R., Stephen A. (2001), Affective Commitment to the Organization: The Contribution of Perceived Organizational Support. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 86(5), 825-836

Ruyter, K., Wetzels, M and Feinberg, R. (2001). Role Stress In Call Centers: Its Effects On Employee Performance And Satisfaction. *Journal of Interactive Marketing* 15(2): 23-35.

Sawyerr, O. O., Srinivas, S. Wang, S. (2009) Call center employee personality factors and service performance, *Journal of Services Marketing*, 23(5):301 - 317

Schmitt, M. (1996). Individual differences in Sensitivity to Befallen Injustice (SBI). *Personality and Individual Differences*, 21, 3–20.

Schmitt, M., Gollwitzer, M., Maes, J., & Arbach, D. (2005). Justice sensitivity: Assessment and location in the personality space. *European Journal of Psychological Assessment*, 21, 202–211.

Schmitt, Manfred, Baumert, N, Gollwitzer, Mario, Maes, Jurgen (2010). The Justice Sensitivity Inventory: Factorial Validity, Location In The Personality Facet Space, Demographic Pattern, And Normative Data. *Social Justice Research* 23(2-3): 211-238.

Scott-Ladd, Brenda and Travaglione, Anthony and Marshall, Verena. (2006) Casual inferences between participation in decision making, task attributes, work effort, rewards, job satisfaction and commitment. *Leadership & Organization Development Journal*. 27 (5): pp. 399-414.

Singh, J., Goolsby, J.R., Rhoads, G.K. (1994). Behavioral and psychological consequences of boundary spanning burnout for customer service representatives. *Journal of Marketing Research,* 31: 558–569.

Vigoda, E. (2000). Organizational politics, job attitudes, and work outcomes: Exploration and implications for the public sector. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 57(3), 326–347

Vigoda-Gadot, E., Vinarski-Peretz, H., & Ben-Zion, E. (2003). Politics and image in the organizational landscape: An empirical examination among public sector employees. *Journal of Managerial Psychology*, 18(8), 764–787.

Wiener, Y. and Vardi Y. (1980) Relationships between job, organizational and work outcomes: an integrative approach. *Organizational Behavior and Human Performance* 26: 81-96

Witt, L.A. (1993) Reactions to work assignments as predictors of organizational commitment: The moderating effect of occupational identification. *Journal of Business Research*, 26, 17–30.

Witt, L. A. (1998). Enhancing organizational goal congruence: A solution to organizational politics. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 83(4), 666–674.