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The influence of Human Resources Management Practices on Identity Construction through the Promotion of Identity Motives

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Master in Management

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ISCTE – Instituto Universitário de Lisboa

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**BUSINESS
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Human Resources and Organizational Behavior (IBS)

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“As coisas grandes começam nas pequenas”,
a mim e aos meus.

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Resumo

A identidade é um fator crucial na vida do ser humano, compreendendo o sentido que temos relativamente ao que somos e à forma como agimos e interagimos com o mundo à nossa volta. Neste estudo é analisada a forma como a identidade pode ser construída, tendo por base seis motivos de identidade, nomeadamente, continuidade, significado, pertença, eficácia, distintividade e autoestima. O argumento é o de que esta construção da identidade pode ser promovida pela aplicação de diversas práticas de recursos humanos, usadas num contexto em que há um incentivo ao desenvolvimento da identidade, tendo sido criado um novo conceito para o efeito, nomeadamente, o contexto de aprimoramento de identidade. Neste contexto, o aumento do bem-estar e a redução da rotatividade são consideradas consequências das práticas de recursos humanos, desde que estas reforcem a construção da identidade. Este argumento foi testado através de um estudo correlacional envolvendo 394 participantes. Os resultados demonstraram mostram que o contexto de aprimoramento de identidade tem uma correlação positiva com os motivos de identidade, embora negativa com a intenção de rotatividade, e positiva com o bem-estar. Para além disso, verificou-se uma correlação negativa entre os motivos de identidade e a intenção de rotatividade, ao par de uma correlação positiva entre os motivos de identidade e o bem-estar, dando suporte ao argumento inicial.

Palavras-chave: gestão de recursos humanos, construção da identidade, sistemas de trabalho de alto desempenho, motivação

Classificação JEL: O15, M12

Abstract

Identity is a crucial factor in the human being's life, comprising the sense we have in respect to who we are and the way we act and interact with the world around us. In this study, it is analyzed the way identity can be constructed, having as a basis six identity motives, namely, continuity, meaning, belonging, efficacy, distinctiveness, and self-esteem. The argument is that this identity construction can be promoted through the implementation of diverse human resources practices, applied in a context where the development of identity is encouraged, having been created a new concept for the effect, namely, identity enhancement context. In this context, the improvement of well-being and reduction of turnover intentions are considered consequences of the human resources practices promoted, as long as they reinforce identity construction. This argument was teste through a correlational study involving 394 participants. The results demonstrated that the identity enhancement context correlates positively with the identity motives, negatively with turnover and positively with well-being. Moreover, each of the identity motives has a negative association with turnover and a positive relationship with well-being, supporting the initial argument.

Keywords: human resources management, identity construction, identity motives, high-performance work systems, motivation

JEL Classification: O15, M12

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Glossary of Acronyms and Abbreviations

HR – Human Resources

HRM – Human Resources Management

AMO – Ability, Motivation, Opportunity (model)

HPWS – High-performance work system

IEC – Identity Enhancement Context

IdM – Identity Motive

IdM_C – Identity Motivate related to Continuity

IdM_B – Identity Motivate related to Belonging

IdM_M – Identity Motivate related to Meaning

IdM_E – Identity Motivate related to Efficacy

IdM_D – Identity Motivate related to Distinctiveness

IdM_SE – Identity Motivate related to Self-Esteem

HRM_C – Human Resources Management Consequences

HRM_C_T – Human Resources Management Consequences related to Turnover

HRM_C_WB – Human Resources Management Consequences related to Well-Being

R - Reversed

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CHAPTER 1

Introduction

1.1. Contextualization

Human resources management concerns the “systems, practices, competencies, and employee performance behaviors that reflect the development and management of the firm’s strategic human capital” in attaining organizational success (Becker and Huseli, 2006, p.899). Its importance in organizations has been increasingly recognized, but as it happens, many people might consider that it is also becoming very obsolete in the sense that, in some cases, the “same old” practices are applied, with no distinction, or even attention given to individualizing them according to each person’s values and needs.

This can very well become a problem because, if there are people who give more importance to the fact that they are simply being the focus of an HR practice, there are also those who care more about what the practice is about, and that it is being applied to them accordingly.

The need to fit a pattern or even the fear that people have to lose their jobs, might sometimes cloud employees’ vision and lead them to accept whatever they are given. Is this a bad thing for the organization!? Of course it is. Overtime this can turn on the organization, that can end up losing an employee due to its lack of care and support towards the individual’s development.

Springworks, a Californian Human Resources technology startup that focuses on “building tools and products to simplify recruiting and help organizations engage and retain their employees” (Springworks, n.d.), has written in their blog (Kumar, 2021):

- “80% of employees felt more engaged when their work was consistent with the core values and mission of their organization”;
- “90% of workers said they are more likely to stay at a company that takes and acts on feedback”;
- “22% of employees stated that they left a company for professional development”.

These are some of the statistics that reinforce the fact that stagnation is the opposite of what people want, specially nowadays where we’re in the presence of fast-changing and volatile markets (Iles, Chuai & Preece, 2010), increasing the importance of HRM – people need to know that they’re being given opportunities to grow and evolve not only into better professionals, but also into greater human beings.

This way, instead of generalizing, organizations should take into consideration that a satisfied, motivated and committed workforce is the best choice in order to achieve a better working performance (Savaneviciene and Stankeviciute, 2012).

This statement can be strengthened through Guest's (2017) idea of an HRM approach that prioritizes practices that enhance employee well-being and a positive employment relationship. He proposes an analytic model, in which certain HR practices are able to contribute and promote both aspects, through an exchange theory with mutual benefits, that is, well-being for the employee, and the improvement of performance for the organization, due to the impact that that prioritization has on employee's attitudes, behavior and motivation, such as organizational commitment or work engagement, lower turnover intentions and willingness to collaborate. Basically, investing in HR practices that show employees they are valued, contributing for their psychological, physical and social well-being and consequently to individual and organizational performance to be better.

Therefore, it is a reasonable idea that a motivated and committed workforce can be conquered by applying the right HRM practices that will show the investment and value that the organizations puts on each and every individual that works in it, in regards to their identity.

Identity is a very important part of the human being, if not the most important one. Having a sense of identity, or searching for it, is what makes us who we are, and what turns us into who we want to be in the world. It has, and it will always influence our decisions, which we make, based on our values, our beliefs, our thoughts, our personality, mainly, our identity. It is also the basis that guides us into how to behave, and once it is established, it's very hard to change.

The identity process theory (Breakwell, 1988; Vignoles, Chrysochoou & Breakwell, 2002a) is one way to look at identity construction. The focus of this theory are six identity motives, namely, the motive for self-esteem, the motive for continuity, the motive for distinctiveness and the motive for meaning, the motive for efficacy and the motive for belonging.

This dissertation will bring awareness for this matter as its primary subject will be on how HRM practices can have an influence on identity construction, through the promotion of the six identity motives cited. In this sense, a new concept was created to represent, not only the HR factor, but also the context of the organization, ideally supporting a high-performance work system and promoting the motivated construction of identities – identity enhancement context.

1.2. General Objective and Research Questions

HRM concern every management decision that may affect organizations and their employees – the human resources (Beer et al., 1984). Its focus is to design human resources practices, specifically designed to invest in people, and what better investment, than on their identity construction? The assumption on this master's thesis, is that HRM will be able to determine which practices are linked to each identity motive.

Accordingly, this dissertation will be articulated in a way to potentially answer the following question: can identity construction be carried out by the identity enhancement context, and if so, which HR practices satisfy certain employees' identity motives, contributing for the increase of their well-being and the decrease of their turnover intention?

1.3. Motivation

It has always fascinated me the fact that people can work, and enhance their performance, if organizations do just one “little” thing for them: motivate them to be bigger and better. According to Baumeister (2016) motivation “boils down to wanting”. So how can organizations take action in people's desire to change and to behave in a different way that's not only beneficial for companies, but also for the individual himself, in terms of personal growth and development?

This is what really interests me, figuring out how people can be motivated and bending down the very familiar path that is going to work every morning, do their job and come back home, only to return on the next day, in a very monotonous way. Thus, I believe that there is no greater subject to align with motivation than identity. Taking an insight and understanding how people view themselves in the present, and how people want to view themselves in the future and trying to help them get there, as they work to also better the performance of the organization, they're in. For me, this is what work-related motivation is about – aligning people's desires and needs with the organizational goals, in such way that there's progress and positive outcomes on both ends – no side being prejudiced, only working to achieve different, but synergetic results, seeing as, after all, if the individual is what makes a company exist, his well-being, will consequently be the organization's well-being.

CHAPTER 2

Literature Review

2.1 Motivated Construction of Identity

Vignoles, Regalia, Manzi, Golledge and Scabini (2006, p.309) define identity as “the subjective concept of oneself as a person”. This can translate into the self-representation that integrates every single aspect that involves and is a part of the human being, therefore including both personal and social elements, that the individual considers as part of himself.

In order for identity to be established, there must be a construction process. Essentially, identity development concerns the attempts to generate, preserve, or improve one's self-perception (Renner & Schütz, 2008), so that the individual and other people around his environment can have a better sense of who he is in the world, alerting to the sense of meaning implied. In this sense, the identity process theory (Breakwell, 1988; Vignoles, Chryssochoou & Breakwell, 2002a) can be used to describe identity construction. It revolves around motivational principles and social psychological processes that shape identity when combined (Breakwell, 1993). Those processes and principles are recognized as identity motives, “certain identity states and away from others, which guide the processes of identity definition and enactment” (Vignoles, Regalia, Manzi, Golledge & Scabini, 2006, p.309).

What we can take from this definition is that there are two crucial aspects when constructing identity – identity definition, which deals with the level of awareness that one has of himself; and, complementarily, identity enactment, consisting of more than being aware of one's identity, to be able to actually see oneself act according to his identity. In line with the Vignoles, Regalia, Manzi, Golledge and Scabini (2006), four motives contribute to identity definition: the motive for self-esteem, the motive for continuity, the motive for distinctiveness and the motive for meaning; while two other motives contribute for identity enactment, namely, the motive for efficacy and the motive for belonging.

Going into greater depth for each of the identity motives, we firstly have the motive for self-esteem. This motive consists on the fact that people will be inspired to perceive themselves in a better light (Vignoles, 2011). The reason why this happens is because higher levels of self-esteem, have been proven to provide an improved psychological well-being, leading individuals to attempt to preserve or improve (Vignoles, Chryssochoou, & Breakwell, 2002) this motive. It is a part of identity definition since, according to Vignoles (2011), individuals consider particularly self-defining situations and aspects of their life, that contribute to self-esteem maintenance, development and enhancement.

Following up, there's the continuity motive, a need to feel connected to one's past, present, and future identities (Vignoles, 2011). The reason for this concept to be considered as an identity motive is the consistency that is needed in one's life, not only across time, but also across life events (Vignoles, Chryssochoou, & Breakwell, 2002). This consistency is needed in order to provide some sense of responsibility for people's actions, creating an harmonious connection between what an individual did in the past, what he does know, and what he is able to do in the future. This doesn't mean that change cannot happen, on the contrary, it only means that despite change (constantly) happening, there can always be a perception of stability within an individual.

In regard to the distinctiveness motive, Vignoles (2011) defines it as what encourages people to see themselves as distinct from others. This motive pretrains the universal human need (Vignoles, Chryssochoou, & Breakwell, 2002) to be different from others, for one to have a meaningful sense of identity, allowing for better social coordination that can be possible through the use of the different, but complementary roles among individuals, who, at the same time, try to maintain and establish a sense of who they are.

When it comes to the motive for meaning, it refers to the yearning to find meaning or purpose in one's life (Vignoles, 2011), understood as being crucial to psychological well-being. The idea is that when an individual takes action, its significance goes beyond its most direct physical context, instead bringing a sense of purpose into one's life, and, according to Vignoles (2011), helping so in the face of severe and unpredictably occurring events.

Moving on to the identity enactment motives, the first one to refer is the motive for efficacy, which fosters for a perception of control and competence, encompassing the capacity to influence one's environment (Vignoles, 2011). The same author cites the self-efficacy theory, in which it is determined that the more self-efficacy one perceives of having, the higher will his motivation be, which translates into setting his goals higher, as well as trying harder and

persisting more amidst adversity. With this motive, not only will subjective well-being increase, as will satisfaction with life events.

Finally, the belonging motive concerns the need to preserve and enhance sentiments of social acceptance or connection to others (Vignoles, 2011). Ryan and Deci (2003) identify it as the principal function of identity formation, pretraining the required interdependence for survival purposes of the human being as a social specie. Therefore, when excluded socially, the individual recurs to coping strategies that help him return to a social state, implying the relation between self-esteem dynamics and the belonging motive, seeing as the first one is considered to be a way to help individuals prevent social rejection.

Researchers have found that people might not be aware of these identity motives. Some reasons have been identified as responsible for this matter, such as “self-deception (...), the high levels of abstraction to everyday concerns (...), or the automatic satisfaction” (Vignoles, 2011, p.406) of the identity motives. Nevertheless, they can be implied through expected effects they provide on people’s identity, considering their contribution to identity satisfaction or identity frustration.

When in the presence of identity satisfaction, one will experience more positive emotions that contribute to his psychological well-being, which makes the individual emphasize those identity elements in self-representation, while perceiving them as particularly central and self-defining. The opposite happens with the occurrence of frustrated identity aspects, seeing as negative emotions will emerge and dominate the individual, who in turn, will try to exclude those elements, both cognitively and behaviorally (Vignoles, Regalia, Manzi, Golledge & Scabini, 2006). This only shows how important the identity motives are to one’s well-being.

At the same time, it elucidates to the aspect of possible future selves. In line with Markus and Nurius’s (1986) theory, future possible selves can affect one’s current identity. This notion concerns people's notions about who they might become, who they wish to become and who they fear of becoming in the future (Vignoles, Manzi, Regalia, Jemmolo & Scabini, 2008). In short, it’s all about an ideal self that one would like to be like in the future – taking into consideration “who I am now”, in what ways can I change to be who I want to become. This way, it’s a motivational outlet that helps people turn their current behaviors in ways to help them achieve or avoid their desired or feared potential selves (Strahan & Wilson, 2006). On the same note, possible future selves depend on sociocultural values present in the society one inhabits, making it clear, once again, that one premise for identity construction is the influence it undergoes in terms of context, norms and values that are present in each society and culture.

2.2. Motivated Construction of Identity and Human Resources Practices

Essentially, the processes for identity construction can be guided by the identity motives, through privileging elements of identity that better satisfy those motives which, overtime, will become increasingly central for identity. And this is exactly how human resources management can take action regarding the promotion of identity construction.

HRM is described by Storey (1995, in Den Hartog & Verburg, 2004, p.55) as “a distinctive approach to employment management which seeks to achieve competitive advantage through the strategic deployment of a highly committed and capable workforce, using an integrated array of cultural, structural and personnel techniques”.

There are many HRM practices cited by the authors. Posthuma, Campion, Masimova, & Campion (2013) refer compensation and benefits, job and work design, training and development, recruitment and selection, employee relations, communication, performance management and appraisal and promotion as some of the most central to a high-performance work system, which will later on be discussed.

To improve their power to acquire, retain and develop talented and motivated employees, companies can recur to these practices which can be used within an high-involvement or high-performance work system.

A high-performance work system is a system that takes advantage of the HRM practices in a synergetic way (Delery, 1998; Wright and McMahan, 1992 in Den Hartog & Verburg, 2004). To explain, this system is defined by Kalleberg (2006) as a comprehensive collection of human resource strategies aimed at making organizations more participative and adaptable, with the goal of enabling them to compete in today's environment. More than being a rich ensemble of practices, this system relies on the idea that when combined in ‘bundles’, practices like selection, training, mentoring, incentives, and knowledge-sharing mechanisms (Horgan & Muhlau, 2006) will be more effective to the performance of the organization if it is based on a combination designed to maximize the outcomes that each of the practices would provide alone (Gittell, Seidner, & Wimbush, 2010).

It would be perfect if this could be applied to organizations in this plain and simple way – designing a combination of human resources practices that lead to better results, and those results directly and immediately happening –, but there are a lot of complexities and dynamics that are involved in between the spectrums of this system.

Many authors have defined this link between high-performance work systems and organizational outcomes as the ‘black box’ (Purcell et al., 2003), that implies that the discretionary effort and motivation of employees is triggered by a strong human resource system (Bowen and Ostroff, 2004).

The understanding here, and following the line of the AMO framework, is that internally oriented HRM practices are intentionally created to increase performance by enhancing employees’ ability, motivation and opportunity to perform and to contribute to the organization (Bayo-Moriones & GaldonSanchez, 2010). Ability being associated with the knowledge, skills, and actual ability to perform; motivation, which can be extended to include commitment and satisfaction, being that this aspect of the model concerns the areas of compensation and incentives, which have been known to have an influence and impact on employees’ attitudes; and the opportunity to perform, or “how the involvement and job design may reduce turnover and absenteeism” (Appelbaum, Bailey, Berg, & Kalleberg, 2000; Katou & Budhwar, 2010 in Benet-Zepf et al., 2018, p.392).

These variables – ability, motivation and opportunity – act as mediators to performance (Boxall, 2012) as long as the high-performance work system enables those conditions to happen, that is, motivating working conditions and growth prospects for employees (Den Hartog et al., 2013, p. 1640, in Song, Gu, & Cooke, 2020).

The behavior and attitude of employees are also variables to take into account inside the ‘black box’ (Boxall, & Macky, 2007), because one thing is to provide motivation conditions, to give opportunities and to have the appropriate abilities, and another, completely different is to take action and put effort into working accordingly to that environment. Song, Gu, and Cooke (2020), express that HRM practices exist to communicate to employees the way they should preferably behave inside their organization.

In this sense, “intended HR practices lead to 2) actual HR practices, which lead to 3) perceived HR practices, and then to 4) employee reactions” (Boxall, & Macky, 2007, p.266) and, finally, to 5) organizational outcomes. The notion counts on the influence on employees’ behaviors and attitudes – through their cognitive and affective responses – as well as on their perception of what the organization wants them to act like, in order for management intentions to come to life and actual produce the desired outcomes of the human resources practices in the existing high-performance work system (Boxall, & Macky, 2007).

Taking into consideration the values of the organization, as a cultural system, and the values of the individual, to whom human resources practices will be applied to – and who should ideally act and behave according to them –, the suggestion is that the process of shaping one's identity will have to prioritize the understanding of the identity motives by which individuals in an organization will be driven by. Then coming to the realization that the satisfaction of those identity motives will be required to provide employees the psychological well-being and satisfaction with life they constantly look for, and consequently to perceive the HRM practices like management intended them to, this way responding to them accordingly and providing the organizational outcomes previously desired. In doing so, human resources practices will be aimed towards the promotion of identity construction through understanding what practices, predicated by the identity elements, can better suit the satisfaction of the identity motives desired by individuals, who are motivated to maintain and increase that aspect of their identity.

What practices can be mentioned for the effect? Well, Den Hartog and Verburg (2004, p.56), point out practices related to “employee development and training, participation and empowerment, information sharing and compensation systems” practices that are often mentioned as being a part of a high-involvement or high-performance work system. Other authors mention “strict selection, incentive pay and profit sharing, the use of job redesign and task analysis, information sharing and employee autonomy (as an operationalization of participation), performance appraisal, teamwork, training, and an emphasis on keeping skills up to date, having opportunities for internal promotion and management development, as well as having an overarching philosophy (a mission statement and HRM strategy)” (Den Hartog & Verburg, 2004, p.57).

In this sense, we can have, for example, the enhancement of self-esteem, by applying human resources practices related to rewards and recognition, considering that if these practices are being applied to a certain employee, it could mean the effort they are putting into the organization is being appreciated and taken into account, therefore potentially leading to their perception of “job well done”.

Another example, and this time regarding the meaning motive, could be the use of the employment empowerment practice (e.g.: giving more autonomy or allowing for the employee to participate more). The mentioned motive, and the mentioned human resources practice, could have a positive relation since employees can arguably give more meaning to things they feel they have more control over, and in which they can better show their level of competence, giving it more significance.

Teamwork is a good practice to link with the belonging motive, considering the social aspect that both elements carry, and the interdependence level that both also pertain, and that is practically obligatory. The distinctiveness motive can be associated with promotion, taking into account the fact that promotion is basically applied to those who stand out from others, in terms of the work they do, and the behavior they have, that should be in line with the one the organization pursues. Training and development, for instance, could be linked with the continuity motive, seeing as this motive is based on a temporal aspect considering the congruence of the past, the presence and the future, which could be conquered through training and development practices, in view of enhancing the employees' competencies, whether technical or motivational ones. Finally, the efficacy motive can easily connect with compensation policies – compensation is fairly and usually applied in reference to competences, which is one element that translates the efficacy of oneself.

This way, the following hypothesis is presented - H1: The identity enhancement context promotes employees' sense of: a) self-esteem; b) distinctiveness; c) continuity; d) efficacy; e) meaning; f) belonging.

2.3. Human Resources Practices Outcomes

Human resources practices have been proven to contribute to positive outcomes, not only for the organization, but also for the employee himself, as it can influence the creation of specific psychological climates (Evans and Davis, 2005) while motivating the workforce through the stipulation of opportunities that will later on enable employees to take part in the achievement of goals the organization has previously established (Den Hartog, Boon, Verburg & Croon, 2013).

Employee turnover is mentioned as one of the core outcomes of human resources practices in a high-performance work system, seeing as practices that contribute to employee development and motivation produce outcomes such as the decrease of the first one mentioned, or at least of its intention, a major and arguably the most immediate predictor of actual leaving (Lee, Fernandez and Lee, 2021).

Turnover can be simply described as the reduction of personnel in an organization, overtime including “any employee departure, including resignations, layoffs, terminations, retirements, location transfers, or even deaths” associated with the feeling that the employee has regarding either the opportunity for career advancement, the organizational fit, the supervisor management or the training, support or resources needed to perform well (Roder, 2019).

This outcome should be accompanied and managed by organizations because of all the costs, time and productivity efforts it demands – associated with the hiring process or the adaptation of the current team and/or the new employee hired for the vacant position – an overall efficiency jolt can impact greatly (Frost, n.d.).

Many authors explain that this management can be mainly done through selection and training practices (Tang & Tang, 2012) - e.g.: promotion from within, competitive rewards or empowering employees in decision-making –, investment signals that will presumably reduce turnover intentions (Allen, Shore & Griffeth, 2003).

Employee well-being can also be mentioned as an HRM outcome. It's an ambiguous term than can be plainly put as the presence of a attitudinal positive effect and the apparent lack of a attitudinal negative effect (Diener et al., 2010). Grant et al. (p. 52, 2007), reinforce this simple definition by defining employee well-being as the general level of an employee's work experience and performance on the job. Overtime, is has taken many approaches, not only compromising stress, personality traits and mental health (Hayman, 2010) but also taking on “psychological (i.e. subjective happiness and satisfaction), physiological (i.e. physical and physiological wellness) and social (i.e. interpersonal relationships)” (Grant et al., 2007, p.52) dimensions.

In a high-involvement work system, practices that allude to high commitment, have been argued to increase employee well-being (Baptiste, 2008). This happens because organizations use methods like sharing information with employees to demonstrate that they trust their staff. (Menon, 2012). Examples of these practices can be training, giving employees the opportunity to be involved in decision making (Guest, 2002), or developing enriched jobs, which will in turn increase, not only autonomy, but also performance related rewards like “opportunities for skill use and development, job variety, and the sense of being valued or playing a significant role in the organization or society” (Wood and De Menezes, 2011, p.8); simply put, practices used for the investment on and development of each employee, giving the sense that employees are valued in that organization, which greatly impacts their well-being.

On the ground of these arguments, we posit the following hypothesis: H2 – Human resources practices outcomes include a) the decrease in turnover intentions b) and increase of employee well-being.

2.4. Human Resources Practices Outcomes and Motivated Construction of Identity

According to Appelbaum et al. (2000), HPWSs are systems of management practices that improve employee empowerment while also improving the skills and incentives that encourage and motivate them to use that empowerment. This definition can be assumed to have another intention if the ‘empowerment’ mentioned alludes to the promotion of self-esteem; the ‘enhancement of skills’ pretrains the continuity, the distinctiveness, and/or the efficacy motive; the ‘enhancement of incentives’ is considered for the belonging motive; and finally if the ‘advantage taking’ aspect corresponds to the meaning motive.

The purpose of this two-sided view of things is to reinforce the influence of human resources practices on the motivated construction of identities, through the promotion of the six identity motives mentioned in the first section.

The idea is that if HRM practices are applied, an end result must come out of it, whether it’s the improvement of employees’ skills, finding the best individual-organization/individual-job fit, or enhancing organizational performance. The fact is that, an outcome will arise, sometimes even not the one management intended to happen. And seeing as those practices are applied to and will be enacted by individuals, it’s only natural for a process of identity construction to take place. The individual must understand what the organization values, but the same thing must happen in reverse, in order for HR practices to be applied and for its’ juices to have the maximum effect, not only for the company, but also for the individual – the point of this dissertation.

Pending the corroboration of H1, Human Resources practices contribute to the motivated construction of identities, the argument is that if human resources practices have as outcomes, the consequences already mentioned in the section above, being turnover or employee well-being, those outcomes have too an influence on the construction of motivated identities.

At the same time, if HRM attempt to influence corporate performance by influencing employee attitudes and behavior (Kampkötter, Mohrenweiser, Sliwka Steffes & Wolter, 2016), thus, presumably influencing the construction of their identity (H1), then turnover intentions get influenced too by this last one, considering, for example, that the lower it is, the greater the organizational performance might be (Chen et al., 2011) the more it is able to reward its employees, which can contribute to their sense of distinctiveness, to their self-esteem and sense of efficacy, if they believe they took part in it.

Regarding employee well-being, it might be enhanced by employees' will to belong in the company and to give meaning to the work he/she does 40 hours/week; the enhancement of their sense of continuity, if for example, training is applied with the end result of an employees' promotion, due to their good results shown and attainable for the wellness they endure. This identity construction process can (indirectly) contribute to the outcomes through the promotion of those six identity motives mentioned through the implementation of human resources practices.

We propose the following hypothesis based on these arguments: H3 – The identity motives contribute to the decrease of turnover intentions and increase of employee well-being.

To sum up, the following table gathers the most relevant concepts and main authors used throughout this dissertation:

Table 2.1 Main concepts/frameworks of the study

Concept/Framework	Definition	Authors
Identity	“The subject concept of oneself as a person”	Vignoles, Regalia, Manzi, Golledge & Scabini (2006, p.309)
Identity Motive	“Certain identity states and away from others, which guide the processes of identity definition and enactment”	Vignoles, Regalia, Manzi, Golledge & Scabini (2006, p.309)
Self-Esteem Motive	People will be motivated to see themselves in a positive light	Vignoles (2011)
Continuity Motive	“Need to feel a sense of connection between one’s past, present and future identities”	Vignoles (2011, p.413)
Distinctiveness Motive	“Pushes people to see themselves as distinguished in some way from others”	Vignoles (2011, p.415)
Meaning Motive	“Need to find significance or purpose in one’s existence”	Vignoles (2011, p.417)
Efficacy Motive	“Pushes for feelings of competence and control”	Vignoles (2011, p.418)
Belonging Motive	“Need to maintain or enhance feelings of closeness to others or social acceptance, both in interpersonal relations with groups”	Vignoles (2011, p.419)
Human Resources Management	“Systems, practices, competencies, and employee performance behaviours that reflect the development and management of the firm’s strategic human capital” in attaining organizational success	Becker and Huseli (2006, p. 899)
High-performance work system	“A broad set of human resources practices that aim to make organizations more participative and flexible, with the objective of being capable of competing in the current environment”	Kalleberg (2006, in Marin-Garcia and Tomas, 2016, p. 1045)
Turnover Intention	Personnel reduction in an organization, overtime including “any employee departure including	Roder (2019)

	resignation, layoffs, terminations, retirements, location transfers, or even death”	
Employee Well-Being	“The presence of a dispositional positive effect and the absence of a dispositional negative effect”	Diener et al. (2010 in Ho, 2020, p.3)

Considering the concepts above, and the accomplished literature review, as well as the hypothesis mentioned throughout this section, the following conceptual model is presented:

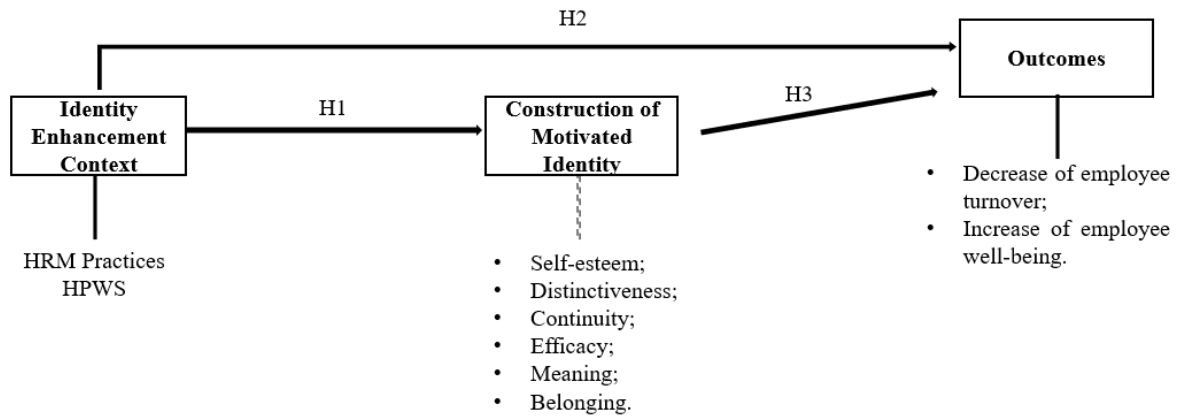


Figure 2.1 Conceptual Model (self-developed)

Methodology

3.1 Data collection and sample

In order to validate the proposed conceptual model, a total of 404 subjects that were invited and collaborated. The individuals were contacted via Linked In – both a post and direct messages -, Instagram – instastory post -, Facebook – publication and story post -, or by e-mail.

Out of the total of respondents, 2,48% (10) of them were ruled out of the sample and the answers considered invalid, due to missing vales, leaving the study with a sample of 394 respondents.

For this research, the sample can be described through six demographic factors: gender, age, nationality, educational background, type of contract and time in the organization. Considering, the greater part of the sample is Portuguese, particularly 96,46% corresponding to 380 respondents. From the total sample, 66,24% is female, and when considering educational background, 49,00% have a Bachelor Degree, 24,40% are integrated in High-School, 24,10% in a Master's Degree, while the PhD and Elementary School options, were only chosen by 01,50% and 01,00% of the respondents, respectively.

Out of the 394 participants, 89,10% (351) had a full-time job, and 07,90% (31) were doing an internship, while the remaining 03,00% corresponded to answers of 12 part-time employees.

Age was presented as an open question in the questionnaire, having a mean of 38 years old and a standard deviation of 11.722. The sample included a large diversity in terms of time in the organization, as it was also presented as an open question. 9.088 was the mean and 9.984 the standard deviation.

3.2 Measures

For this analysis, the measurement scales were validated through existent and established measure for each variable.

The respondents were requested to answer 86 questions – 6 of them being demographic and the remaining 80 to denote their sense of agreement or disagreement with the statements presented in the survey, related to either an identity motive, a human resources practice, or a human resources practice outcome.

A 7-point Likert-type scales was used, with the extreme levels of 1 to express 'Strongly Disagree' and 7 translating into 'Strongly Agree' – unless otherwise noted.

Identity enhancement context – 31 items were used to represent the identity enhancement context based on the six identity motives. The *belonging related organizational context* relied on five items from Steffens et al. (2014) and it refers to the organization's effort to make people believe they're included and accepted by others. An example item is "My organization makes people feel as though they're part of the same group". The *meaning related organizational context* provided the belief that life has a purpose and meaning and it was built under three items from Morgeson & Humphrey (2006) and other two from Kreiner & Ashforth (2004). An example item is "The role I perform is very significant and important in the overall scheme of how the organization works". The *distinctiveness related organizational context* in which the believe is that people are different from each other. As an example of an item "In my organization I feel as though I'm treated as a unique person". It was built under two items from Podsakoff et al. (1990) and other three self-created to better suit the variable. The *efficacy related organizational context* relied on five self-created items being related to people being competent and capable of influencing its surroundings. An example item is "My organization gives me feedback in order to enhance my skills". The *continuity related organizational context* where the belief is that identity is continuous, even though there are significant changes, was also a self-created six item scale. An example item is "My organization has created the conditions that allow me to maintain my way of being". Likewise, the *self-esteem related organizational context* reinforces the need for one to see himself favorably/worthily, having five self-created items. An example item is "My organization values my contribution".

Continuity motive – This variable was measured using four items from Sokol & Serper (2019) related to a similarity factor within their Future Self-Continuity Scale with an average single scale score ($\alpha = .82$). An example item is "How similar are you now to what you will be like 10 years from now?".

Belonging motive – This variable was measured using six items from Malone, Pillow & Osman (2012). related to an acceptance/inclusion factor with an average single scale score ($\alpha = .69$). An example item is "I feel accepted by others".

Efficacy motive – This variable was measured using six items from Scholz, Doña, Sud, & Schwarzer (2002) with an average single scale score ($\alpha = .76$ for Portugal). An example item is "I am confident that I could deal efficiently with unexpected events".

Meaning motive – This variable was measured using six items from Steger, Frazier, Oishi & Kaler (2006) related to a presence of meaning factor with an average single scale score ($\alpha = .82$). An example item is "My life has a clear sense of".

Distinctiveness motive – This variable was measured using five items from Şimşek & Yalınçetin (2010) related to a personal sense of uniqueness factor with an average single scale score ($\alpha = .78$). An example item is “I feel unique”.

Self-Esteem motive – This variable was measured using six items from Richardson, Ratner & Zumbo (2009) based on Rosenberg’s (1995) self-esteem scale items with an average single scale score ($\alpha = .85$). An example item is “I take a positive attitude toward myself”.

Well-being – This variable was measured using twelve items from Zheng, Zhu, Zhao, & Zhang (2015) with an average single scale score ($\alpha = .93$). An example item is “Most of the time, I do feel”.

Turnover intention – This variable was measured using one item from Roodt (2004)’s turnover intention scale and three self-created items. An example item is “Sometimes, I think of leaving this organization”.

A series of factorial analysis were performed on SPSS. The statistical technique was used to better understand if the underlying factors, that will be mentioned throughout the section bellow, could actually be measured by a certain number of observed variables, in this case, the set of items presented on the questionnaire.

CHAPTER 4

Data Analysis

4.1. Factor Analysis – New Variables

The initial stage of the analysis was a factor reduction, through a principal component analysis conducted on the SPSS software to test the constructs (represented through the set of new variables) validation. For each underlying factor, the group of items corresponding to it, were selected, for analysis.

The goal was to extract only one factor that could strongly explain one variable (e.g.: 31 items corresponding to identity enhancement context, an underlying factor that would be turned into a single variable).

The total variance explained table of each set of items gave away the components to be selected, but a number of conditions had to be checked, before the computation of each variable was done: selection of only components with high eigenvalues; extraction of the first *m* components accounting for a minimum of 70% of total variance; if none of the components corresponded to that last criterion, complement by cutting out from the factorial analysis the variables on the components matrix that explained more than one factor; and reliability for the selected items was tested through an alpha cronbach test.

Considering, the following table demonstrates the set of items that correspond to each variable/underlying factor, which were cut of from the analysis (following the criteria above), as well as the reliability values and strength to support the selection above mentioned:

Table 4.1 Variable's Selection Description and Reliability

Variable/Underlying Factor	Items removed from analysis	Reliability (α)	Strength – Internal Consistency
Identity Enhancement Context	IEC 5, IEC 6, IEC 7, IEC 8, IEC 9, IEC 10, IEC 24 and IEC 26	.983	Strong
Continuity Motive	IdM_C1	.824	Strong
Belonging Motive	-	.913	Strong
Efficacy Motive	-	.912	Strong
Meaning Motive ¹	IdM_M5 and Purpose_R	.945	Strong
Distinctiveness Motive	IdM_D1	.875	Strong
Self-Esteem Motive	-	.915	Strong
Turnover (Intention) ²	Turnover_R	.833	Strong
Well-Being	HRM_C_WB3, HRM_C_WB5, HRM_C_WB6, HRM_C_WB7, HRM_C_WB9, HRM_C_WB10, HRM_C_WB12	.896	Strong

¹an additionally step was taken before the analysis, seeing as one of the items IdM_M6 was written and presented to the respondents in a negative phrase, therefore, being reversed, in order to fit the other positively stated items – seeing as it was a purpose related statement, the following name was given to the reversed and considered for analysis variable: "Purpose_R".

²a new variable had to be created, to represent the reversed answers of an initial positively constructed sentence – IdM_T1 –, into one that could fit the same line as the others in the group of items related to Turnover, which ideally, are negative to identify lower turnover intentions of the employees. Having created the "Turnover_R"^{0.91}

4.2. Hypothesis Testing – Descriptive Analysis and Correlations

The new variables were created to get a small set of uncorrelated variables, from a large set of correlated ones, with the purpose of being utilized for the subsequent analysis. The following figure contains the means, standard deviations and intercorrelations between study variables statistics and correlations for each of the new variables:

Table 4.2 Descriptive Statistics and Correlations^a

Variable	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1. Identity Enhancement Context	5.31	1.41							
2. Continuity Motive	5.25	1.13	0.307**						
3. Belonging Motive	5.94	0.95	0.355**	0.314**					
4. Efficacy Motive	5.74	0.91	0.310**	0.313**	0.585**				
5. Meaning Motive	5.47	1.35	0.288**	0.243**	0.526**	0.584**			
6. Distinctiveness Motive	4.96	1.34	0.170**	0.061	0.171**	0.370**	0.355**		
7. Self-Esteem Motive	5.81	0.94	0.320**	0.207**	0.520**	0.671**	0.660**	0.521**	
8. Turnover	3.43	1.88	-0.601**	-0.213**	-0.282**	-0.286**	-0.261**	-0.053	-0.238**
9. Well-Being	5.32	1.14	0.492**	0.226**	0.580**	0.629**	0.706**	0.391**	0.725**

Notes: ^an = 394 (employees); *Correlation is significant at the 0.050 level; **Correlation is significant at the 0.010 level

Supporting hypothesis 1, “The identity enhancement context promotes employees’ sense of...”, the Pearson correlation’s and presented on the table on the section above, were used. With a significance level of 0.01 and a 0.31 Pearson correlation it is clear that there’s a moderate correlation between the identity enhancement context variable and the continuity motive one. It can be said that as there’s a mild sense that the organization contributes to the development of the identity of the individual, specifically related to continuity, by creating and facilitating the conditions for that promotion, and allowing for the validation of H1a.

The belonging motive follows the pattern, with a Pearson correlation of 0.36, it can also be stated that there’s a medium correlation between the identity enhancing context and the belonging motive, this last one being promoted through HR practices used within an identity enhancement context. H1b is validated.

The 0.31 Pearson correlation gives out what's been the common situation for the other variables tested, which is, that there is a moderate association between the variables, so it's safe to say the identity enhancement context does promote the individual's sense of efficacy. H1c is also verified. With a 0.29 Pearson correlation, being smaller than the value presented from the previous identity motives (continuity, belonging and efficacy), it indicates a weak relationship between the variables, while still existing, which grants for the assumption that H1d is true, that is, human resources practices, promote the employees' sense of meaning, in this case, through an identity enhancement context, validating H1d. The Pearson correlation of only 0.17, demonstrates that even though the identity enhancement context promotes employees' sense of distinctiveness, it is not quite strong of a relationship. Nonetheless, H1e is still corroborated. Finally, and with one of the highest Pearson correlation's, being 0.32, and ending with all the points of this first hypothesis to be considered true – in this specific one, the identity enhancement context, promotes employees' sense of self-esteem in a moderate way, again, validating H1e.

For the corroboration of hypothesis 2, “Human Resources practices outcomes include the decrease in turnover intentions and increase of employee well-being”, a Pearson correlation was conducted after confirming the linear association between IEC and the HR consequences variables.

This way, a following the same line of thought of the subsection above, two scatterplots were produced, one to assess if there's a relationship between IEC and turnover – anticipated to be negative –, and the other between IEC and well-being – expected to be positive.

As expected, the slope in the IEC and turnover was turning the opposite way, meaning that while, and as $R^2 = 0.36$ showed, there was a linear relationship, it was a negative one – as the identity enhancement context increases, the turnover intentions decrease, which all in one is actually positive for the organization, if it ensures that context/environment.

In the other hand, the IEC and Well-being had a $R^2 = 0.24$ indicating a positive linear relationship. This way, as the sense of an identity enhancement context increases, so does the well-being of the employee.

Both Pearson correlations evidenced that. There was a high degree of correlation between the identity enhancement context and turnover, on the negative stance ($r = -0.60$); while there was a moderate, close to high level of correlation between well-being and the identity enhancement context ($r = 0.49$).

So, it's very clear that H2 is corroborated – Human resources practices outcomes include de decrease of turnover intentions and the increase of employee well-being.

For the last and third hypothesis, “The identity motives to the decrease of turnover intentions and increase of employee well-being”, a different analysis was considered. A multiple linear regression was applied, and turnover was the first dependent variable to be analyzed.

Similar to the analysis before, a scatterplot analysis was employed to assess if there was any relationship between the variables. There was a negative association between the six identity motives and turnover, evidenced by the slope, noticeably stronger for with the belonging, meaning, self-esteem and efficacy motives, a little smaller for the continuity one and practically neutral in the distinctiveness motive. This way, considering the negative linear relationships, a Pearson correlation was performed to confirm that assumption.

The following assumptions were tested and verified: residuals have a normal distribution with a zero mean; residuals’ variance is constant; residuals are independent – assumed. There’s a negative correlation between turnover and the continuity motive ($r = -0.21$) – when there’s an increase of turnover intentions, it’s probable the decrease of sense of continuity – low relationship; there’s a negative correlation between turnover and the belonging motive ($r = -0.28$) – when there’s an increase of turnover intentions, it’s probable the decrease of sense of belongingness – low relationship; there’s a negative correlation between turnover and the efficacy motive ($r = -0.28$) – when there’s an increase of turnover intentions, it’s probable the decrease of sense of self-efficacy – low relationship; there’s a negative correlation between turnover and the meaning motive ($r = -0.26$) – when there’s an increase of turnover intentions, it’s probable the decrease of sense of meaning – low relationship; there’s a negative correlation between turnover and the distinctiveness motive ($r = -0.05$) – when there’s an increase of turnover intentions, it’s slightly probable the decrease of sense of distinctiveness – practically no correlation; there’s a negative correlation between turnover and the self-esteem motive ($r = -0.24$) – when there’s an increase of turnover intentions, it’s probable the decrease of sense of self-esteem – low relationship.

This way, the model for the multiple linear regression was developed, and in order to assess its quality, indicator R^2 was analyzed. $R^2 = 0.12$, meaning 12% of the variance of the target variable (turnover) is explained by the multiple regression line model based on the independent variables.

To demonstrate the complexity and precision of this model, R^2 should be penalized to incorporate the disadvantages of adding the 6 predictors. This way, the Adjusted R^2 was considered. Adjusted $R^2 = 0.11$, which considers the quality of the model after applying the parsimony criteria ($Adjusted R^2 = 1 - (1 - R^2) \frac{n-1}{n-k-1}$, with k-number of independent variables) – 11% of the variance of turnover is explained by the multiple regression line model.

Proceeding, an estimate of the coefficient of regression (by minimizing a summary of all errors through the sum of all squared errors) was performed, providing the table below:

Table 4.3 Turnover and Identity Motives Coefficients^a Table

	β	t	p value
(Constant)	7.96	11.14	0.00
Contiuity Motive	-0.11	-2.16	0.03
Belonging Motive	-0.11	-1.74	0.08
Efficacy Motive	-0.13	-1.77	0.08
Meaning Motive	-0.10	-1.45	0.15
Distinctiveness Motive	0.08	1.42	0.16
Self-esteem Motive	-0.15	-0.66	0.51
R^2		0.12	0.00
Adjusted R^2		0.11	0.00

Notes: ^a Dependent Variable Turnover; Standardized coefficients are presented; $n=394$

Considering, if $X = 0$, then turnover would be 7.96. By increasing one unit of the continuity motive (as an example for the independent variables) turnover decreases 0.11, and the remaining independent variables stay fixed – independent variables of belonging motive, efficacy motive, meaning motive, and self-esteem motive, can be considered for this same situation, only replacing the value of decrease by 0.11, 0.13, 0.10 and 0.15 respectively. in the case of the distinctiveness motive, by increasing one unit of the distinctiveness motive turnover increases 0.08, and the remaining independent variables stay fixed.

With the same coefficients table, the relative importance of the predictors can also be deemed, with the following order: 1) efficacy motive ($\beta_1 = -0.13$); 2) continuity motive ($\beta_2 = -0.11$); 3) belonging motive ($\beta_3 = -0.11$); 4) meaning motive ($\beta_4 = -0.10$); 5) distinctiveness motive ($\beta_5 = 0.08$); 6) self-esteem motive ($\beta_6 = -0.05$).

In order to proceed, multicollinearity was also tested, seeing as it'd be a problem for the regression model, because if it were to exist, it would mean there was correlation between the predictors (i.e. independent variables) and its presence can adversely affect the regression results. Multicollinearity is given out by the coefficients table, with the following values: Min (tolerance) = 0.38 > 0.1 – moderate; Max (ViF) = 2.67 < 10 – dimly correlated.

Taking into account that Sig (ANOVA) = 0.00 < α = 0.05 – H_0 was rejected, therefore, the independent variables (the six identity motives) were useful to explain the dependent one (turnover) and valid to be kept in the model.

Moving on to the well-being variable, the initial analysis was considered a scatterplot to assess the relationship between the mentioned variable and each of the identity motives. a positive association between the six identity motives and well-being, was evidenced by the slope, which was only a little less perceptible for the continuity motive relation. Nonetheless, still present, allowing for the progress of the analysis with a Pearson Correlation's test to confirm the assumption.

There's a positive correlation between well-being and the continuity motive ($r = 0.23$) – when there's an increase of well-being, it's probable the increase of sense of continuity – low relationship; there's a positive correlation between well-being and the belonging motive ($r = 0.58$) – when there's an increase of well-being, it's very likely the increase of sense of belongingness – high relationship; there's a positive correlation between well-being and the efficacy motive ($r = 0.63$) – when there's an increase of well-being, it's very likely the increase of sense of self-efficacy – high relationship; there's a positive correlation between well-being and the meaning motive ($r = 0.71$) – when there's an increase of well-being, it's very likely the increase of sense of meaning – high relationship; there's a positive correlation between well-being and the distinctiveness motive ($r = 0.40$) – when there's an increase of well-being, it's probable the increase of sense of distinctiveness – moderate relationship; there's a positive correlation between well-being and the self-esteem motive ($r = 0.74$) – when there's an increase of well-being, it's very likely the increase of sense of self-esteem – very high relationship.

The model for the multiple linear regression was developed. its quality was assessed through the analysis of $R^2 = 0.66$, meaning 65,50% of the variance of the target variable (well-being) was explained by the multiple regression line model based on the independent variables.

Once again, demonstrating the complexity and precision of this model, R^2 was penalized to incorporate the disadvantages of adding the 6 predictors. Adjusted $R^2 = 0.65 - 65.00\%$ of the variance of turnover is explained by the multiple regression line model.

the coefficient of regression was estimated and presented on the table below:

Table 4.4 Well-being and Identity Motives Coefficients^a Table

	β	t	p value
(Constant)	-0.65	-2.37	0.02
Contiuity Motive	-0.01	-0.33	0.74
Belonging Motive	0.17	4.22	0.00
Efficacy Motive	0.10	2.17	0.03
Meaning Motive	0.31	7.46	0.00
Distinctiveness Motive	0.03	0.73	0.46
Self-esteem Motive	0.36	7.48	0.00
R^2		0.66	0.02
Adjusted R^2		0.65	

Notes: ^a Dependent Variable Well-being; Standardized coefficients are presented; $n=394$

Considering, if $X = 0$, then well-being would be -0.65. by increasing one unit of the belonging motive (as an example for the independent variables) well-being increases 0.17, and the remaining independent variables stay fixed – independent variables of efficacy motive, meaning motive, distinctiveness motive and self-esteem motive, can be considered for this same situation, only replacing the value of increase by 0.10, 0.31, 0.03 and 0.36 respectively. In the case of the continuity motive, by increasing one unit of the continuity motive turnover decreases 0.01, and the remaining independent variables stay fixed.

With the same coefficients table, the relative importance of the predictors can also be deemed, with the following order: 1) self-esteem motive ($\beta_1 = 0.36$); 2) meaning motive ($\beta_2 = 0.31$); 3) belonging motive ($\beta_3 = 0.17$); 4) efficacy motive ($\beta_4 = 0.10$); 5) distinctiveness motive ($\beta_5 = 0.03$); 6) continuity motive ($\beta_6 = -0.01$).

Following the same line of though, multicollinearity was also checked: Min (tolerance) = $0.38 > 0.1$ – moderate; Max (ViF) = $2.67 < 10$ – dimly correlated. Again, there was no problem regarding multicollinearity, nor the other assumptions for the regression model.

Sig (ANOVA) = $0.00 < \alpha = 0.05$ – H_0 was rejected, therefore, the independent variables (the six identity motives) were useful to explain the dependent one (well-being) and valid to be kept in the model.

In line with the hypothesis testing – which all turned out to be corroborated, the following model was elaborated:

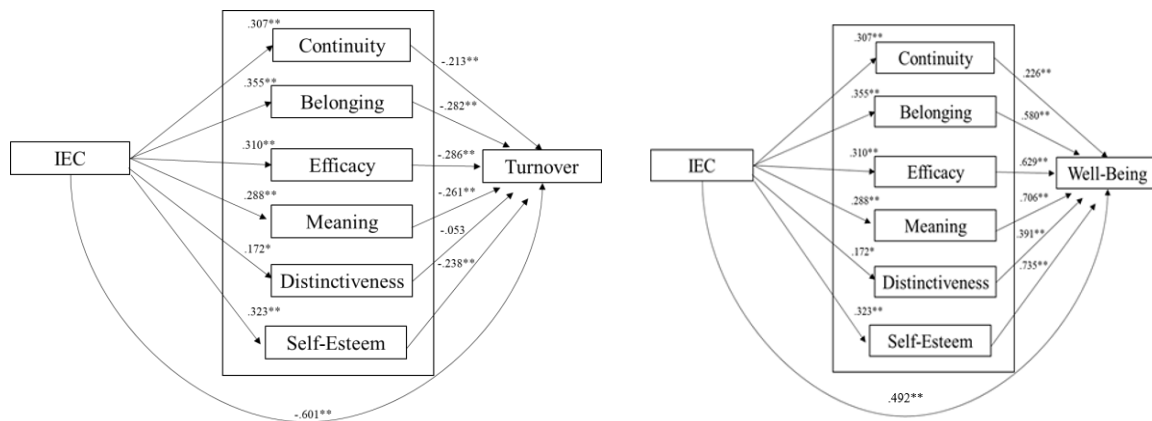


Figure 4.1 – Self-Developed Correlation's Model

4.3 Discussion

The purpose of this study was to identify if human resources management practices could have an influence on identity construction through the promotion of six identity motives – continuity, belonging, efficacy, meaning, distinctiveness and self-esteem within a identity enhancement context.

Throughout Chapter 4, a series of analysis were employed to understand if this purpose could be reached, and as shown by the developed correlation's model, all of the hypothesis were confirmed, considering the relationships between variables are all as were initially expected: IEC correlates positively with the identity motives; IEC correlates negatively with turnover and positively with well-being; and each of the identity motives has a negative association with turnover and a positive relationship with well-being.

The results indicate that most of the correlations had a moderate strength, but robust enough to support the analysis at hands. This way, the initial question of this study can be answered in a positive manner: can identity construction be carried out by the identity enhancement context, and if so, which human resources practices satisfy certain employees' identity motives, contributing for the increase of their well-being and the decrease of their turnover intention?

The identity enhancement context variable entails the exercise of human resources practices in a high-performance work system, enabling the promotion of identity construction. This last concept, and in line with Vignoles (2011) literature, being activated through six identity motives used to support the analysis.

Considering the positive correlations, between IEC and each of the Identity Motives, one could say that the answer to the first question is one of confirmation. If HRM reinforce certain practices that enable the individual to feel as though their identity is and will continue to be consistent over time, regardless of the circumstances; that they're competent; different from others; nonetheless in a positive sense; while still being close to others around him, or at least being accepted by them; and that their work has a purpose, it'll contribute for this identity construction perception to be intensified overtime and, as Vignoles et al. (2006) have stated, those human resources practices, considered to be identity elements that better satisfy the established set of motives, will surely have a stronger "perceived centrality" to identity. In this manner, identity construction can be carried out by HRM, as confirmed through the hypothesis analysis, and supported by literature review previously detailed.

Even though all the results met the expectations of the study, supporting the hypothesis created, it is important to refer that the senses of belonging and of distinctive both play a strong role in this sense. Although distinctiveness has been mentioned as a universal need, the lower values for this motive, can be explained through another universal need of individuals, which is "to affiliate, connect, and belong with groups" (Dahl, Niedbala & Hohman, 2019, p.1), more related to the belonging motive.

The same authors refer that being ostracized by a group brings identity insecurity (Dahl, Niedbala & Hohman, 2019), which is conflicting with the identity concepts preconized in this study. So, in this sense, being different from others, may lead for this group ostracization, which is why fitting in is made part of existence, especially in an organization where common rules and norms are made to be ensured through a similar line of thought referring to the mission, or organization goal.

Despite needing individuals that are different and that stand out from each other, knowledge wise – individuals that represent valued capital, because the knowledge they have is different from others, bringing new perspectives, allowing for competencies' synergies and enabling for a stronger competitive advantage –, having too many discrepancies in terms of employees' identities, may end up having the opposite result than that expectation, which might answer the reduced correlation among distinctiveness and IEC, and also turnover and well-being. thus, it's important that the identity enhancement context provides distinctiveness practices, alongside belonging ones, so that the exclusion of a 'different' individual in a group, is never an option, but always a strength.

The identity elements will not only contribute for identity construction, but also for the individual's well-being in their organization and/or personal lives. This happens, because, and as confirmed through the analysis, there's a positive correlation between the identity motives and well-being, and a negative one towards turnover. Meaning that as the identity elements, pertained by the human resources practices, in a high performance-work system, enabling for an identity enhancement context to exist, are more central to identity, the more it will contribute for the individual to feel good in his organization and to want to stay there, for as long as that promotion occurs. Thatcher and Greer (2008, pp. 6-18), mention that "identity comprehension has a significant impact on individual outcomes", being related to is "the degree to which the relative importance of one's identities is recognized by important others".

So, as identity is intensified in an individual, through those identity motives that human resources promote by means of the related practices, the impact on his well-being is stronger, and on his turnover intention weaker, motivating him to perform better, not only in aspects regarding the organization he work in, but also in his personal life.

This time around, efficacy is the identity motive that has a stronger negative relationship with turnover, meaning being the one to associate more positively with well-being and distinctiveness being the less affected motive. What can explain this is the fact that, as employees feel they're more competent, and have more ability to do things, that they're knowledge is getting better, turning them into great advantages to the company, and this way, being more susceptible to external environment factor, that is, an example, alternative job opportunities (Griffeth, Hom and Gaertner, 2000). Although this could be true, and is in fact in accordance with the result gathered, it can also be true that "employees with a strong belief in their own abilities to perform well in their current occupation may choose not to leave their job, because they are highly committed to their career and current job" (Park & Jung, 2015, p.1557).

This decision could be impacted by the meaning motive, which turned out to have a strong correlation with well-being. According to work related Meaning offers benefits, not only to employees but also to their organization, nurturing the belief that work is an important component of one's identity and a crucial contributor to well-being (Leunissen, Sedikides, Wildschut & Cohen, 2018). Thus, it is only normal that an individual that gives meaning do the work he/she does, wants to remain in that organization, to enhance or maintain well-being levels for himself and the company, seeing as low work meaning is associated with high turnover (Steger et al., 2012), and, supporting this dissertation's theory, to promote his own sense of identity.

Considering, the use of identity motives, specifically the six ones mentioned – continuity, belonging, efficacy, meaning, distinctiveness and self-esteem -, as a foundation for the development of human resources practices, should always be considered, because it not only impacts one's identity construction, but also organizational outcomes that end up being of so much importance for it. Each identity motive should be considered in a personalized manner for each individual, although taking into account, what's more beneficial for the group, and what impacts the most.

Conclusions

This study gathered initial evidence that identity construction can in fact be promoted through the implementation of human resources practices, applied in a context where the development of identity is encouraged. Through the literature review and discussion of the results, it was evidenced how certain practices can satisfy certain identity motives, and how important and beneficial an identity enhancement context can be, not only for the company, but also for the employees, considering it's something that is actually valued by the last ones. It motivates them to perform better and more in line with what the organization would want and vice-versa, although not equally, seeing as the distinctiveness motive was not as strongly supported by the participants in the study, providing results rather disappointing, but nonetheless positive, when comparing to the remaining identity motives, since the double sense of the social aspect this identity motive pretrains, may be the factor that leads employees to have "mixed up feelings" when it comes to the distinctiveness motive.

5.1. Limitations

The present study presented some limitations. Firstly, the common method variance approach, due to the fact that the measures regarding the constructs were gathered simultaneously in a one-wave survey, enabling for the possible inflation or deflation of correlations within the variables analysed through the answers in the survey.

At the same time, the sample analysed corresponded to a group of people working in different organizations, which doesn't allow for the specification of the role of organizational characteristics, considering that the identity enhancement context relies on those to prosper.

5.2. Future Research

The lack of previous research studies linking the identity motives with HRM inhibited the exploitation of these concepts, in the sense that it made it harder to identify specific practices that were linked with each identity motive. For example, even though one could think that high self-esteem levels could be linked with rewards and recognition given; high sense of meaning levels could be associated with employee empowerment and autonomy; high sense of belonging levels could be related with teamwork projects; high sense of distinctiveness levels could be connected with promotion practices; high sense of continuity levels could be tied with training

and development; high sense of efficacy levels could be correlated with fairness in compensation, there's no theory that actually proves that relationship between the identity motives and not only these but additional human resources practices.

Following up this study, future research could include the identification of the specific human resources practices that concern each identity motive, seeing as there was a problem to get more clarity on the subject, theory wise. This would enable for practitioners to know exactly what practices are to apply, if any of the six individual's identity motive is at shortage.

A focus on age could also help better understand how that variable can influence the six identity motives and consequently, identity construction. Realizing if there's a pattern among different groups of age, could help better suit the practices for employees, and even though, the identity elements of each person should be considered, a general idea of what usually works for that person's range. Perhaps, more than the effects of age, the career stage is important when considering newcomers versus adapted employees, who may potentially have different needs in terms of identity development that should both be recognized by organizations, for example, a newcomer that could have a greater need for integration (e.g.: belonging motive), and an adapted employee, that is, an employee that is in the organization for a considerable amount of time, that could have a greater need for the significance of the work he/she have been doing for years of their lives (e.g.: meaning motive).

Grasping which human resources practices can be applied, how impactful each of them are, while also taking an insight of the identity(s) motive(s) that contribute the most for identity in a short span of time, could help better understand the role of short-term contracts, whether it's internships, part-time or full-time jobs, on identity construction. This is important, because people are increasingly wanting to grow, not only professionally, but also personally. Most of the times, young people are required to have shorter-termed employment, in order to gain experience and then join the labor market in a more stable way, but in all honesty, what are those experiences for, if they don't have a meaning to it, and if they don't add up to each person, accordingly?

Something that is also of extreme importance, this time, more so on the organization's side, is the influence of identity construction on human resources management consequences. As it's been stated on the literature review chapter, human resources practices are applied with the goal to obtain certain consequences – higher organizational performance, job satisfaction, commitment, or engagement. Analyzing this supposed process, could help the organization be

motivated to allow for these practices to exist and to be prominent in the workplace, given the positive outcomes that they could bring.

The role of leadership should also be assessed, seeing as many employees consider their leaders to be the role model, the example to follow. So, how can they really make a difference on the employee's identity? And even better, how can they affect each person's identity motives, and the different results, one or another practice can have on each individual, through the way the leader deals with them.

Finally, a mention to the GIG economy is necessary. This term comprises a digital workforce, who can easily be identified as freelancers, that perform their tasks using electronic methods, usually on a work on-demand or short-term assignment basis (Schroeder, Bricka & Whitaker, 2021). These are non-standard employees who work in a progressively more independent way from their integration in the company, seeing as they're not exactly working for a single company, but for a range of businesses instead.

This type of context can have a great impact in the motivated construction of identity, considering many of the human resources practices that are applied in an identity enhancement context can be forgotten by the employers, given that the contact they have with these workers is so little, and most of the times, not even direct, raising a concern regarding the stimulation of social support and well-being. From the six identity motives, all of them require some sort of social interaction, whether it relates to recognition from others (e.g.: self-esteem motive, efficacy motive or distinctiveness motive) or to the inclusion most employees need to continue providing work, and performing accordingly, as time goes by (e.g.: meaning motive or continuity motive). These are all aspects to take into consideration when contracting the type of worker above described, and it would be interesting to analyze in what ways and how strongly each of the identity motives actually implicate on them, and how differently it does so from the "general" employees.

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Appendix

Appendix A – Questionnaire Sample (English Version)

Demographic Questions:

1. Gender

Female Male Other

2. Age

3. Nationality

4. Educational Background

Elementary School High-School Bachelor Degree Master’s Degree
PhD

5. Type of Contract

Internship Full-Time Job Part-Time Job

6. How long have you been in your organization? (please, indicate number of week/months/years)

Direction: Select the option that you consider to be the closest possible to your reality in the organization that you’re in.

1 – Strongly Disagree | 7 – Strongly Agree

Human Resources Practices:

IEC	Belonging	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1	My organization makes people feel as though they’re part of the same group							
2	My organization creates a sense of internal cohesion							

3	My organization promotes an understanding of what it means to be a member of a collective							
4	My organization nurtures team spirit among employees							
5	My organization creates activities that leads their members to get closer together.							
IEC	Meaning	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
6	It's likely that the results of my work affect other people in a significant way.							
7	The role I perform is very significant and important in the overall scheme of how the organization works.							
8	The role I perform has a big impact on people outside my organization.							
9	There is a sense of mission in my organization.							
10	My organization has an important mission.							
IEC	Distinctiveness	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
11	My organization considers my values and personal goals.							
12	In my organization I feel as though I'm treated as a unique person.							
13	When decision that affect me are made, my organization takes into account my personal characteristics.							

14	My organization acts considering my feelings.							
15	My organization acts considering my personal needs.							
IEC	Efficacy	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
16	My organization offers me opportunities to develop my skills.							
17	My organization gives me feedback in order to enhance my skills.							
18	My organization promotes me personal growth.							
19	My work experience in this organization has allowed me to broaden my skills.							
20	My work experience in this organization has contributed to make me even more competent.							
IEC	Continuity	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
21	My organization has created the conditions that allow me to maintain my way of being.							
22	I believe that, in the future, remaining in this organization, I'll have conditions to maintain my way of being.							
23	My organization has created the conditions that allow me to keep by beliefs and personal convictions.							
24	I believe that, in the future, remaining in this organization, I'll							

	maintain my beliefs and personal convictions.							
25	My organization has created the conditions that allow me to keep by values.							
26	I believe that, in the future, remaining in this organization, I'll maintain my values.							
IEC	Self-Esteem	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
27	My organization values my contribution.							
28	My organization appreciates me as a person.							
29	My organization demonstrates that I'm a person with value.							
30	My organization appreciates any extra effort that I make.							
31	My organization appreciates my ideas or suggestions.							
IdM	Continuity*	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1	How similar are you now to what you will be like 10 years from now?							
2	How similar are your beliefs now to what they will be like 10 years from now?							
3	How similar is your personality now to what it will be like 10 years from now?							
4	How similar are your values now to what they will be like 10 years from now?							
IdM	Belonging	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

1	When I am with other people, I feel included							
2	I have close bonds with family and friends							
3	I feel accepted by others							
4	I have a sense of belonging							
5	I have a place at the table with others							
6	I feel connected with others							
IdM	Efficacy	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1	It is easy for me to stick to my aims and accomplish my goals.							
2	I am confident that I could deal efficiently with unexpected events.							
3	Thanks to my resourcefulness, I know how to handle unforeseen situations							
4	I can solve most problems if I invest the necessary effort							
5	I can remain calm when facing difficulties because I can rely on my coping abilities							
6	I can usually handle whatever comes my way.							
IdM	Meaning	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1	I understand my life's meaning.							
2	My life has a clear sense of purpose.							
3	I have a good sense of what makes my life meaningful.							
4	I have discovered a satisfying life purpose.							

5	I am always searching for something that makes my life feel significant.							
6	My life has no clear purpose.							
IdM	Distinctiveness	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1	As people get to know me more, they begin to recognize my special features.							
2	I feel unique							
3	I cannot think of many special characteristics that distinguish me from others							
4	I think that the characteristics that make me up are different from others'							
5	I feel that some of my characteristics are completely unique to me.							
IdM	Self-Esteem	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1	On the whole, I am satisfied with myself							
2	I feel that I have a number of good qualities.							
3	I am able to do things as well as most other people.							
4	I feel that I'm a person of worth, at least on an equal plane with others.							
5	All in all, I am inclined to feel that I am a failure.							
6	I take a positive attitude toward myself.							
HRM_C	Well-Being	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

1	I feel satisfied with my life							
2	I am close to my dream in most aspects of my life							
3	Most of the time, I do feel happiness.							
4	I am in a good life situation.							
5	I am satisfied with my work responsibilities.							
6	In general I feel fairly satisfied with my present job							
7	I find real enjoyment in my work							
8	I can always find ways to enrich my work.							
9	I feel I have grown as a person.							
10	I handle daily affairs well.							
11	I generally feel good about myself and I'm confident.							
12	People think I am willing to give and to share my time with others.							
HRM_C	Turnover	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1	It's highly likely that I'll look for a new job in the next year.							
2	Overall, I like working here.							
3	Sometimes, I think of leaving this organization.							
4	If I was offered a job in another company, at the same compensation level, I'd accept it.							

*1 – Very Different | 7 – Totally Similar

Appendix B – Questionnaire Sample (Portuguese Version – Participant’s Version)

Questões Demográficas:

1. Género

Feminino Masculino Outro

2. Idade

3. Nacionalidade

4. Habilitações Literárias

Ensino Básico Ensino Secundário Licenciatura Mestrado Doutoramento

5. Type of Contract

Estágio Trabalho a Tempo Integral Trabalho a Part-Time

6. Há quanto tempo está na sua organização?(indicar n.º de semanas/meses/anos)

Direção: Selecione a opção que considera ser o mais próximo possível da sua realidade na sua organização.

1 – Discordo Totalmente | 7 – Concordo Totalmente

IEC	Pertença	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1	A minha organização faz com que as pessoas se sintam membros do mesmo grupo							
2	A minha organização cria um sentido de coesão interna							
3	A minha organização promove um entendimento do que significa ser membro de um coletivo							
4	A minha organização cultiva o espírito de equipa entre os colaboradores							

5	A minha organização cria atividades que levam os seus membros a aproximarem-se e a unir-se							
IEC	Significado	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
6	É provável que os resultados do meu trabalho afetem a vida de outras pessoas de forma significativa							
7	A função que desempenho é muito significativa e importante no esquema global de funcionamento da organização							
8	A função que desempenho função tem um grande impacto nas pessoas de fora da minha organização							
9	Existe um sentido de missão na minha organização							
10	A minha organização tem uma missão importante.							
IEC	Distintividade	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
11	A minha organização considera os meus valores e objetivos pessoais							
12	Na minha organização sinto que sou tratado como uma pessoa única							
13	Quando são tomadas decisões que me afetam, a minha organização tem em conta as minhas características pessoais							

14	A minha organização age considerando os meus sentimentos							
15	A minha organização age considerando as minhas necessidades pessoais							
IEC	Eficácia	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
16	A minha organização proporciona-me oportunidades para desenvolver as minhas competências							
17	A minha organização dá-me feedback com vista a melhorar as minhas competências							
18	A minha organização promove o meu crescimento pessoal							
19	A minha experiência de trabalho nesta organização tem-me permitido alargar as minhas competências							
20	A minha experiência de trabalho nesta organização tem contribuído para que eu seja cada vez mais competente							
IEC	Continuidade	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
21	A minha organização tem criado condições para que eu possa manter a minha maneira de ser.							
22	Acredito que, no futuro, continuando nesta organização, terei condições para vir a manter a minha maneira de ser							

23	A minha organização tem criado condições para eu manter as minhas crenças e convicções pessoais							
24	Acredito que, no futuro, continuando nesta organização, vou manter as minhas crenças e convicções pessoais							
25	A minha organização tem criado condições para eu manter os meus valores							
26	Acredito que, no futuro, continuando nesta organização, vou manter os meus valores.							
IEC	Autoestima	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
27	A minha organização valoriza a minha contribuição							
28	A minha organização aprecia-me enquanto pessoa							
29	A minha organização mostra que eu sou uma pessoa com valor							
30	A minha organização aprecia qualquer esforço extra que eu faça							
31	A minha organização aprecia as minhas ideias ou sugestões							
IdM	Continuidade*	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1	Em que medida aquilo que é atualmente será semelhante ao que será daqui a 10 anos?							
2	Em que medida as crenças que tem atualmente serão semelhantes às que terá daqui a 10 anos?							

3	Em que a sua personalidade atual será semelhante à personalidade que terá daqui a 10 anos?							
4	Em que medida os valores que tem atualmente serão semelhantes aos valores que terá daqui a 10 anos?							
IdM	Pertença	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1	Quando estou com outras pessoas, sinto-me incluído (a).							
2	Tenho laços fortes com família e amigos.							
3	Sinto-me aceite pelos outros.							
4	Tenho um sentimento de pertença.							
5	Eu tenho um "lugar à mesa" com as outras pessoas.							
6	Eu sinto-me conectado com as outras pessoas.							
IdM	Eficácia	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1	É fácil para mim manter-me fiel aos meus objetivos e atingi-los.							
2	Estou confiante de que posso lidar de forma eficiente com eventos inesperados.							
3	Graças às minhas capacidades, sei como lidar com situações imprevistas.							
4	Se me esforçar suficientemente, consigo resolver a maioria dos problemas.							
5	Consigo manter a calma quando enfrento dificuldades porque							

	posso confiar nas minhas habilidades.							
6	Geralmente consigo lidar com o que quer que surja no meu caminho.							
IdM	Significado	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1	Eu entendo o significado da minha vida.							
2	A minha vida tem um propósito claro.							
3	Tenho um bom entendimento do que torna a minha vida significativa.							
4	Eu descobri um propósito de vida satisfatório.							
5	Estou sempre em busca de algo torne a minha vida significativa.							
6	A minha vida não tem um propósito claro.							
IdM	Distintividade	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1	À medida que as pessoas me vão conhecendo, começam a reconhecer as minhas especificidades/características.							
2	Eu sinto-me único (a).							
3	Consigo pensar em muitas características minhas, que me diferenciam dos outros.							
4	Acho que as características que me definem são diferentes das dos outros.							

5	Sinto que algumas das minhas características são completamente únicas.							
IdM	Autoestima	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1	No geral, estou satisfeito comigo mesmo.							
2	Sinto que tenho várias qualidades.							
3	Sou capaz de fazer coisas tão bem quanto a maioria das outras pessoas.							
4	Sinto que sou uma pessoa de valor, pelo menos a um nível equivalente ao de outros							
5	De um modo geral, estou inclinado a achar que sou bem-sucedido							
6	Faço uma avaliação positiva sobre mim próprio (a)							
HRM_C	Bem-Estar	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1	Sinto-me satisfeito com a minha vida.							
2	Sinto que estou perto dos meus sonhos, na maioria dos aspetos da minha vida.							
3	Na maioria das vezes, sint-me feliz..							
4	Estou numa boa faze da minha vida.							
5	Estou satisfeito com as responsabilidades que tenho no meu trabalho.							

6	Em geral, sinto-me bastante satisfeito com o meu emprego atual.							
7	Ao realizar o meu trabalho, sinto verdadeiro prazer.							
8	Consigo sempre encontrar formas de enriquecer o meu trabalho.							
9	Sinto que cresci como pessoa.							
10	Eu lido bem com os meus afazeres diários.							
11	Em geral, sinto-me bem comigo mesmo e estou confiante.							
12	As pessoas consideram que estou disposto a partilhar o meu tempo com os outros.							
HRM_C	Rotatividade	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1	É muito provável que eu procure um novo trabalho no próximo ano							
2	Em geral, eu gosto de trabalhar aqui							
3	Às vezes penso em sair desta organização							
4	Se me oferecessem trabalho noutra empresa pelo mesmo nível de compensação, eu aceitaria							

*1 – Nada Semelhante | 7 – Totalmente Semelhante