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Promoting Pro-Environmental Behaviors in the Organizations: The
Role of Perceived Organizational Environmental Support

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Promoting Pro-Environmental Behaviors in the Organizations

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Mother and Father, your unconditional love, your pragmatic support and your investment in me are the reason why I am here. A thank you is not enough, and for this very reason, I can only wish that in response, I can be the daughter with whom you have always dreamed.

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Resumo

Atualmente, as empresas têm a necessidade de gerir cuidadosamente a utilização da sua energia, se quiserem sobreviver e aumentar a sua vantagem competitiva. O papel dos colaboradores nesta melhoria da eficiência energética é essencial. No entanto, comportamentos sustentáveis não são, habitualmente, requeridos pelo descritivo de funções, assumindo, assim, um cariz voluntário. Neste sentido, torna-se relevante identificar e caracterizar fatores que potenciem estas ações ecológicas, sendo este o objetivo do presente estudo. De facto, a literatura sugere que quando os trabalhadores percecionam suporte, por parte da empresa, direcionado para o ambiente, assumem mais comportamentos de cidadania organizacional relativos ao ambiente. Este efeito poderá ser tão mais efetivo, quanto mais ecológicas forem as políticas, maior for o suporte da chefia e mais sustentavelmente os colegas de trabalho se comportarem. Para testar este modelo, foram recolhidas, através de um questionário *online*, respostas de 135 colaboradores de uma instituição bancária. Os resultados demonstram que existe um efeito direto entre a perceção de suporte e os comportamentos voluntários ambientalmente amigáveis e que as políticas organizacionais e o suporte da chefia têm um impacto positivo nesta relação. Já as normas sociais, apesar de possuírem um efeito positivo direto nos comportamentos de cidadania relativos ao ambiente, não funcionam enquanto moderadoras da associação descrita anteriormente.

Palavras-chave: comportamentos de cidadania organizacional direcionados para o ambiente, perceção de suporte organizacional direcionado para o ambiente, políticas organizacionais, suporte da chefia, normas sociais.

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Abstract

Companies today need to carefully manage the use of their energy if they want to survive and increase their competitive advantage. The role of employees in improving this energy efficiency is essential. However, sustainable behaviors are not usually required by the defined functions descriptive, and therefore are voluntary. Because of this, it is important to identify and characterize factors that encourage these ecological actions, being this the goal of the present research. In fact, the literature suggests that when workers perceive support toward the environment from the organization, they perform more organizational citizenship behaviors related to the environment. This effect may be more apparent, the more environmentally friendly the policies are, the more manager support they feel and the more sustainably their co-workers behave. To test this model, an online questionnaire was collected from 135 employees of a banking institution. The results demonstrate that there is a direct effect between supportive perception and environmentally friendly voluntary behaviors and that organizational policies and supervisory support have a positive impact on this relationship. Social norms, while having a direct positive effect on citizenship behaviors toward the environment, do not function as moderators of the association described above.

Keywords: organizational citizenship behaviors toward the environment, perceived organizational support toward the environment, organizational policies, manager support, social norms.

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Table of Contents

Introduction	1
Chapter I – State of the art	3
1.1 Organizational citizenship behavior toward the environment and perceived organizational support toward the environment	3
1.2 Organizational policies	5
1.3 Manager support	6
1.4 Social norms	7
1.5 The present study	7
Chapter II – Method	11
2.1 Participants	11
2.2 Procedure	11
2.3 Measures	11
2.3.1 Organizational policies	11
2.3.2 Manager support	12
2.3.3 Perceived organizational support toward the environment	12
2.3.4 Social norms	13
2.3.5 Organizational citizenship behavior toward the environment	13
Chapter III – Results	15
3.1 Descriptive Analysis	15
3.2 Hypotheses	15
Chapter IV – Discussion	19
4.1 Intervention Plan	20
4.1.1 Organizational policies	21
4.1.2 Manager support	22
4.1.3 Social norms	22
4.1.4 Intervention plan timeline and assessment	23
4.2 Limitations and suggestions for future research	24
Conclusion	25

References	27
Appendixes	31

Table of Tables

Table 1. Central tendency measures 15
Table 2. Action plan proposed to address the three moderating variables 21

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Table of Figures

Figure 1. Theoretical research model: Effect of perceived organizational support toward the environment in the organizational citizenship behaviors toward the environment, moderated by organizational policies, manager support and social norms 9

Figure 2. Graphical representation of the moderation effect of organizational policies on the relationship between perceived organizational support toward the environment and organizational citizenship behaviors toward the environment 16

Figure 3. Graphical representation of the moderation effect of management support on the relationship between perceived organizational support toward the environment and organizational citizenship behaviors toward the environment 17

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Introduction

Sustainability has become the greatest challenge of the human species. Preventing the point of no return, ensuring an environmental course that allows the planet a balanced resource dynamic, is vital.

The growing concern and awareness of citizens about climate change problems and, consequently, the environmental impact of organizations is notorious (Lamm, Tosti-Kharas and King, 2015). In this sense, organizations have invested in strategies that aim to contribute to the progressive improvement of the environment, realising also of: (a) the competitive advantage that results from it; (b) the strengthening of the legitimacy and reputation it originates; (c) the reduction of energy costs and inherent resources that occurs (Stritch & Christensen, 2014).

Some examples are the optimization of the technology used in telecommunications (e.g. Portugal Telecom) with the introduction of periods of “passive standby”, where the energy consumption is 50% lower than in the “on” or “active standby”, resulting in the reduction of the carbon footprint. The installation of an Environmental Management System (e.g. Caixa Geral de Depósitos) in accordance with the requirements of ISO 14001, where several quantitative resolutions can be defined, namely the decrease of paper consumption and water, achieved through changing organizational processes and employee behaviors. The Recycling Mission, developed by Sociedade Ponto Verde, where several teams (composed by members of the organization) go to the field to equip the houses of the general population with domestic recycling bins, as well as to clarify doubts about the waste separation, with one goal in mind: to convert 30,000 non-separators on regular separators (http://www.bcsdportugal.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/10/Anuario_2014.pdf).

In the first example, structural-type measures were implemented, therefore the role played by the individual is not fundamental to achieve sustainability goals. However, in the other examples, the role of employees in the implementation of these enterprises is much more complex. Ecological behaviors are not generally required by the functions descriptive, assuming a voluntary nature. These discretionary decisions made by the workers, as well as their active participation in the applied strategies, affect the environmental impact of the organization (Stern, 2000).

In fact, researchers have explored how individual and organizational elements influence the subjects' voluntary initiatives in managing the company's environmental impact. Our

Promoting Pro-Environmental Behaviors in the Organizations

knowledge in this area has improved, but this line of research is recent and the psychosocial processes involved are not yet completely understood (Raineri & Paillé, 2016).

Understanding this process is of enormous relevance since, however small the sustainable behaviors of employees are, over time and with their accumulation, they shape the ecological path that the organization intends to follow (Lamm, Tosti-Kharas and Williams, 2013).

The assistance and involvement of employees in sustainable policies is paramount, which is why the present research intends to identify organizational factors associated with the discretionary decisions of workers, finding ways to empower them and, consequently, recognizing practical areas where the companies can make internal changes to the demand of a more positive environmental balance.

This dissertation will proceed as follow. After this introductory note, the next chapter - state of the art - intends to develop the concepts associated with the theoretical model, showing research already carried out in the area. Subsequently, in the methodology, the way the study was performed is analysed in greater detail, namely the participants, the procedure and the variables, for a possible replication. In the results is presented the data obtained, according to the established hypotheses. In the fourth chapter – discussion –, the results are explored theoretically. An intervention plan, built and customized for the institution under analysis, as well as the limitations of the study and suggestions for future research, are, also, presented in this chapter. The conclusion summarizes the identified effects as well as their practical implications, giving organizations guidance on how to encourage their workers to engage in sustainable behavior.

Chapter I – State of the Art

This research seeks to assist and encourage companies to develop their activity in an environmentally responsible way and to play an active role in the adoption of sustainable practices, essential conditions for a greener future.

The implementation of top down strategies is of enormous relevance because these structural projects engage the organization in a more powerful and effective sustainability culture (Haugh & Talwar, 2010 cit. by Lamm et al., 2015).

However, organizational citizenship behaviors toward the environment of employees are, also, determinant (Lamm et al., 2015), since its prevalence contributes to a greener path in the organization. Research from Lamm et al. (2015), suggests that these behaviors may be associated with the employees' perceptions of how much the organization supports and values their contributions regarding the environment. The present study intends to identify factors that potentiate the relation between perceived organizational support and organizational citizenship behaviors. According to the literature that will be highlighted, this support may be more effective, the more ecological the organizational policies are, the greater the managers support and the more co-workers demonstrate environmental actions and concerns.

In fact, since the perceived organizational support toward the environment is a recent construct, as well as the evidence of its effect on the sustainable behaviors of the employees, the main contribution of the present study is to identify and compare the moderating variables, specifically, organizational policies, manager support and social norms. These different level variables are studied because it is important to understand each of them separately and to compare their relative effect. Thus, while the first is related to a top-down strategy, the second refers to the middle leadership approach and the last one to a bottom-up approach.

1.1 Organizational Citizenship Behaviors Toward the Environment and Perceived Organizational Support Toward the Environment

Past research has shown that certain features of the organization's socio-political environment motivate individuals to act sustainably (Lamm et al., 2015).

One of components of the socio-political support - which refers to elements in the workplace that contribute to the employee's perception that the organization values and trusts him - is the perceived organizational support (Seibert, Wang & Courtright, 2011). This is defined as workers' general beliefs about how much the organization appreciates its

Promoting Pro-Environmental Behaviors in the Organizations

contributions (Rhoades, Eisenberger & Armeli, 2001). Based on this construct, the concept of perceived organizational support toward the environment is built. This is like the previous one, but oriented towards sustainable contributions (Lamm et al., 2015).

Given the evidence that when employees feel supported, they will perform more ecological actions, going beyond what is expected in the organization's favour (Lamm et al., 2015), it is relevant to identify the conditions that provide a favourable context and climate for the emergence of voluntary environmental initiatives.

Organizational citizenship behaviors - defined as individual discretionary behaviors, not expressly recognized by the formal reward system, which, overall, promote organizational effectiveness - function as a theoretical basis for studying the workers' voluntary actions (Lamm et al. 2015).

In fact, taking into account that this construct has a positive relationship with organizational success (Podsakoff, Blume, Whiting & Podsakoff, 2009), perhaps the organizational citizenship behaviors toward the environment are also a means to increase the companies' ecological effectiveness.

These two concepts are similar, but differ in their purpose: the first intends to support the organization, while the second promotes greater environmental efficiency (Lamm et al., 2015). Some examples of these behaviors are turning off the lights when unnecessary, separating waste, printing double-sided, sharing the car when going to the workplace or to external meetings, among others (Boiral & Paillé, 2012).

Thus, while actions such as drinking from reusable containers may be unquestionable, since they do not interfere with the normal working time, others, such as shutting down the computer whenever it is not in use, may be considered ineffective because it can interfere with the capacity of the employee for delivering his work on time. In these circumstances, the subjects search the organization for the indicated procedure and given the possibility that these behaviors are incongruent with the organizational culture and that they may seem to be wasting time, a good performance evaluation may be more important than the practice of sustainable behaviors (Lamm et al., 2015).

In this vein, investigations have shown that the voluntary actions toward the environment may be dependent on the employee's perception of the degree to which the organization supports and encourages these activities. In fact, in the absence of a clear idea that sustainable behaviors are appreciated and recognized by the organization, workers may feel constrained in their decision-making capacity (e.g. Lamm et al., 2015).

Promoting Pro-Environmental Behaviors in the Organizations

In sum, in accordance with Lamm et al. (2015), the employees' sustainable behaviors are based on the perception of organizational support. Drawing on this relationship we focused our study on identifying and understanding factors that increase the effect produced by this association.

1.2 Organizational Policies

The role of organizational policies is complex. If they are not explicit or, well communicated, or if they are general, that is, not directed toward the environment, or toward particular pro-environmental behaviors, they do not have sufficient strength to encourage sustainable behavior of workers (Ramus, 2001). Thus, employees are more likely to engage and participate in ecological issues in the presence of a strong environmental concern (Cantor, Morrow & Montabon, 2012).

The organizational policies established in the company's strategy provide an atmosphere of support, which shows encouragement and, consequently, results in innovative ecological behaviors (Ramus & Steger, 2000).

According to the literature, the mere knowledge of the existence of green policies has the capacity to facilitate or inhibit (if there is not) the personal and voluntary commitment of workers in the management of the organization's environmental impact (Lo, Peters & Kork, 2012 cit. by Raineri & Paillé, 2016).

In fact, by communicating a commitment to sustainable policies, organizations are sending a clear signal that they want and value environmentally friendly actions (Ramus & Steger, 2000). This vertical sign, as the name implies, is associated with a top-down strategy, characterized by the definition and communication of a general policy, later controlled in order to verify if the employee's actions are in conformity with the organization's decision (Sabatier, 1986).

So, if one of the goals of the organization is to become greener, Paillé & Raineri (2015) suggest that organizational environmental policies are an important step. However, although policies are important drivers that shape the organizational context, workers engage and participate less in environmental management, when policies are ignored or miscommunicated by close management (Ramus, 2001).

1.3 Manager Support

As a representative of the organization and responsible for transmitting information at each level of the hierarchy, the manager is in an ideal position to promote the formal and informal structure: first, they should strengthen the organization's design by demonstrating its authority, but on the other hand, they must assemble the resources needed to promote spontaneous moments of cooperation (Katz & Kahn, 1978 cit. by Raineri & Paillé, 2016).

In fact, because of their position, managers are associated with a middle leadership approach (e.g. Cawthorne, 2010, Fullan, 2015). In this approach, leaders influence throughout the organization by becoming partners of the top of the organization, attending the objectives of the system, and of the employees, considering their needs (Fullan, 2015). This approach promotes greater internal coherence, mobilizing the middle of the hierarchical structure, while at the same time developing a generalized capacity (Fullan, 2015).

Therefore, leaders are expected to have a greater knowledge of the organization's position on sustainable issues, possessing broader control or discretionary power to act accordingly (Robertson & Barling, 2013). In this sense, their level of support can be decisive in solving problems or overcoming difficulties associated with the complexity and diversity of environmental management (Raineri & Paillé, 2016).

The impact that manager's support has on ecological initiatives has been well demonstrated. Ramus & Steger (2000) have shown that by making time, investing in behavioral training and sharing information, leaders provide their employees with the context, conditions and resources needed to autonomation and capacity for change.

Moreover, studies have shown that the discretion with which managers decide (or not) to encourage environmental protection is significant in stimulating (or inhibiting) participation in sustainable workplace activities (Ramus & Steger, 2000).

In this sense, Ramus (2001) identified five behaviors that have the greatest impact on employees' willingness to act in an environmentally friendly way: (a) encourage sustainable initiatives, demonstrating openness to new ideas and enterprises; (b) skills development, allocating time and resources available to workers; (c) open communication, using a participatory leadership style and establishing a non-hierarchical approach with individuals; (d) rewards and recognition to reinforce good practices; (e) managing objectives and responsibilities by sharing decision-making processes with employees.

1.4 Social Norms

Individuals are also expected to be influenced by their coworkers. The way others behave in an organization, as well as what they think, influences - on a large scale - the individual's own beliefs and actions. These information's can cause impact due to multiple reasons, such as the willingness to: (a) fit in, building and strengthening relationships with others; (b) behave accordingly to what is expected; (c) preserving a positive self-concept (e.g., Cialdini & Trost, 1998; Farrow, Grolleau & Ibanez, 2017).

Social influence has been operationalized through normative beliefs, defined as implicit rules shared by a group, which specify what is - or is not – acceptable, regarding actions and beliefs (Luís & Palma-Oliveira, 2016).

In fact, a norm represents an expectation about what behaviors and attitudes are appropriate, in a collective context (McDonald & Crandall, 2015). Thus, they not only establish the proper patterns of behavior, but also define who the group is and what it does (McDonald & Crandall, 2015).

According to the literature, norms can be framed in multiple subtypes, the most salient distinction being: descriptive and prescriptive norms (Cialdini, Kallgren & Reno, 1991). The first ones are associated with the subjects' need to behave accurately, that is, to be in conformity with what others do. The prescriptive ones descend from the need to belong in the group, referring to the degree of social approval/disapproval (Cialdini et al., 1991).

In this sense, as far as social influence is concerned, it's expected that individuals, who perceive organizational support, practice more sustainable initiatives when their colleagues show environmental concerns, since individuals tend to follow the behavior of those around them, as well as act accordingly to what others value.

In fact, these collective behaviors of the employees, may be associated with a bottom-up strategy that, unlike the top-down, is characterized by an upward trajectory. In this approach, the organization begins by identifying the performance mechanisms of the employees and, based on these, defines the appropriate behavior patterns for the company (Sabatier, 1986). Thus, by influencing each other, workers may be defining new organizational paradigms.

1.5 The Present Study

The organization under analysis is a large banking institution, made up of thousands of employees. Leader in the market where it operates, it has more than one thousand branches spread throughout the multiple continents, having several million customers.

Promoting Pro-Environmental Behaviors in the Organizations

These numbers express the environmental responsibility to which this organization is subject. In this sense, the institution goal is to lead by example and has been developing several sustainable projects, such as reducing operational costs, energy dependence and mitigating the ecological footprint, with the aim of becoming a reference in the ecological scenario, with environmentally more informed and responsible employees and outsourcers.

As such, the organization has invested, essentially, in the renewal and communication of its policies, encouraging and fostering "moments of reflection", in an attempt to find the right way to change behavioral paradigms.

Therefore, the institution plans to verify if it is on the right path to consolidate the collaborators perception of an organization with a strong commitment to the environment, and/or which alternative directions should it follow.

Thus, the purpose of the present investigation is to see if people who perceive more this support regarding the environment, perform more voluntary behaviors, as well as if this effect is strengthened by the organizational policies, manager support and social norms (Figure 1). The four guiding hypotheses are:

H₁: The perceived organizational support toward the environment positively affects the organizational citizenship behaviors toward the environment.

H₂: The effect of perceived organizational support toward the environment on organizational citizenship behaviors toward the environment is moderated by knowledge of organizational policies.

H₃: The effect of perceived organizational support toward the environment on organizational citizenship behaviors toward the environment is moderated by the manager support.

H₄: The effect of perceived organizational support toward the environment on organizational citizenship behaviors toward the environment is moderated by social norms.

Based on these analyses, and on the descriptive results of the measures, an intervention plan is further proposed.

Promoting Pro-Environmental Behaviors in the Organizations

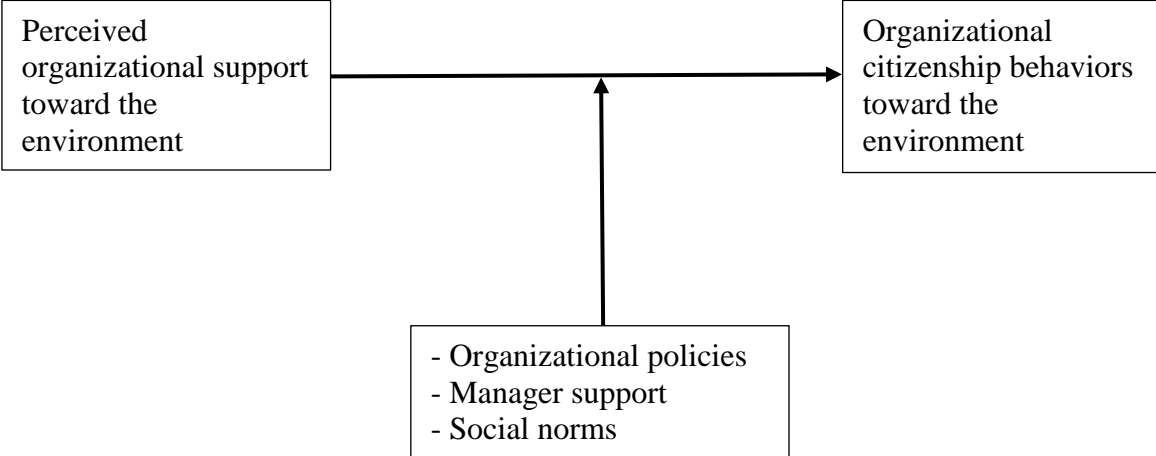


Figure 1. Theoretical research model: Effect of perceived organizational support toward the environment in the organizational citizenship behaviors toward the environment, moderated by organizational policies, manager support and social norms.

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Chapter II - Method

2.1 Participants

The sample consists of employees of a Bank, specifically from a large department - the fact that responses were collected from a single division was premeditated, since it was important that the participants were included in the same context, in the same group and, thus, shared the same norms.

A convenience sample of 135 individuals responded to the survey.

More than half of the respondents are men (57.2%), the mean age being approximately 47 (M = 46.69), with a minimum of 22 and a maximum of 60 years. As far as literacy is concerned, 72.4% of participants attended higher education (undergraduate and/or masters), 20% only attended the 12th grade and 1.4% have already completed a PhD.

2.2 Procedure

Prior to the application of the questionnaires a process of translation of all the scales was conducted, from English to Portuguese. In this sense, to validate the established translation, a pre-test was performed - to guarantee the facial validity - as well as a retro translation of the scales, with someone who works in the environmental area.

Participants were invited to respond via email and provided their informed consent to participate in the study. Data was collected - during the month of May 2017 - through an online survey, developed in the Qualtrics - Online Survey Software & Insight Platform.

The survey (Appendix A) was composed by 38 items, convened into six sections: organizational policies, management support, perceived organizational support toward the environment, social norms, organizational citizenship behaviors toward to the environment, and socio-demographic characteristics.

Results were quantitatively analyzed, using the IBM SPSS Statistics. For this purpose, multiple linear regressions were performed, since it enables the identification and description of relationships among several factors (Schneider, Hommel & Blettner, 2010).

2.3 Measures

2.3.1 Organizational policies.

The measure developed by Ramus and Steger (2000) was used. Thirteen items assessed whether the employee is aware of the existence of sustainable policies (for example, "my

organization has environmental policies"), as well as its perception of the organization's commitment to these same policies (for example, "my organization considers environmental aspects in decisions that are taken").

These items were evaluated, on a Likert scale, between 1 (totally agree) and 5 (totally disagree) and were aggregated into a composite measure with adequate internal consistency ($\alpha = 0.93$).

2.3.2 Manager support.

The measure created by Raineri and Paillé (2016) was used. Ramus (2001) established five behaviors, related to manager support, which are appreciated by employees: encouragement of sustainable initiatives, skills development, open communication, rewards and recognition and management of objectives and responsibilities. To measure this variable, Raineri and Paillé (2016) constructed 5 items based on each identified behavior, respectively, "my superior encourages environmental initiatives", "my supervisor ensures that I develop skills to manage environmental aspects", "my supervisor provides complete and accurate information on environmental issues", "my supervisor listens carefully and values ideas about environmental topics" and "my supervisor involves employees in solving environmental problems".

The items were assessed in a Likert-type response scale ranged from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree) and were aggregated into a composite measure with adequate consistency ($\alpha = 0.95$).

2.3.3 Perceived organizational support toward the environment.

Inspired by the Eisenberger, Huntington, Hutchinson and Sowa (1986) scale to measure perceived organizational support, regarding non-specific contributions of the employees, Lamm et al. (2015) developed a measure of perceived organizational support toward the environment which, in 5 items, includes statements such as "my organization encourages me to reduce the use of nonrenewable resources" and "my actions towards the environment are appreciated by my organization". The items are assessed in a Likert-type scale, ranging between 1 (strongly disagree) and 5 (strongly agree) and were aggregated into a composite measure with adequate consistency ($\alpha = 0.72$).

2.3.4 Social norms.

To study social norms, a measure based on the work of Luís and Palma-Oliveira (2016) was used. The authors developed 6 items, associated to different types of norms: (a) descriptive and prescriptive sociocultural norms; (b) subjective descriptive and prescriptive norms; (c) descriptive and prescriptive social norms.

Since we wanted to evaluate the social information that co-workers transmit to each other, only the statements referring to the social norms - descriptive and prescriptive - were used, adapted to the reality of the present investigation, that is, associated to the organizational citizenship behaviors toward environment (for example, "my colleagues behave in a pro-environmental way" and "my colleagues value pro-environmental behavior").

These items were assessed using a Likert scale, which ranged from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree) and were aggregated into a composite measure with adequate consistency ($\alpha = 0.94$).

2.3.5 Organizational citizenship behaviors toward the environment.

The scale used was originally developed by Boiral and Paillé (2012). In their study, in order to measure workplace citizenship behaviors, the authors identified 10 items - grouped into three dimensions: ecological initiatives, involvement in sustainable projects and environmental assistance.

However, Raineri and Paillé (2016) only used 7 items of the scale, since they were relatively general and consequently fit - with greater ease - to any organization and culture. According to the authors, the more specific the mentioned behaviors, the less generalizable they are for different types of organizations and activities.

In this sense, because it was better fitted with the present research and its objectives, the scale used by Raineri and Paillé (2016) was applied. Participants were therefore invited to respond on a Likert scale (0 = certainly not and 10 = certainly yes) to items such as "encourage my colleagues to adopt more environmental behaviors" and "volunteer for projects or activities related to environmental issues in my organization". The items were aggregated into a composite measure with adequate consistency ($\alpha = 0.94$).

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Chapter III - Results

3.1 Descriptive Analysis

In general, employees agree that the organization has a sustainability policy ($M = 3.36$, $SD = 0.82$), that management has room to improvement regarding the encouragement of ecological behaviors of its workers ($M = 3.05$, $SD = 1.09$), which ($M = 3.53$, $SD = 0.73$), that colleagues act in a sustainable way, appreciating these actions in others ($M = 3.35$, $SD = 0.87$) and, finally, that they have the opportunity to perform directed voluntary behaviors for the environment ($M = 5.95$, $SD = 2.31$).

Table 1. Central tendency measures¹.

Dimensions	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Organizational policies	3.34	0.82
Manager support	3.05	1.09
POS-E	3.53	0.73
Social norms	3.35	0.87
OCB-E	5.95	2.31

3.2 Hypotheses

3.2.1 Effect of perceived organizational support toward the environment on the organizational citizenship behaviors toward the environment.

The hypothesis was corroborated. The more employees perceive organizational support toward the environment, the more ecological behaviors they perform ($\beta = 0.518$; $t(132) = 7.103$, $p < .001$), explaining 26.8% of the variation in these actions.

¹ POS-E = Perceived organizational support toward the environment. OCB-E = Organizational citizenship behaviors toward the environment. All scales ranged between 1 and 5, except the organizational citizenship behaviors toward the environment that ranged between 1 and 10.

3.2.2 Impact of organizational policies on the effect of the perceived organizational support toward the environment on the organizational citizenship behaviors toward the environment.

To test the moderating role of organizational policies, we followed on Aiken and West (1991) and performed all analyses on centered data do avoid possible problems with multicollinearity. The results from the moderated regression showed that organizational citizenship behavior was predicted uniquely by organizational policies ($b = 1.45, p < .001$) but not by perceived organizational support ($b = 0.45, p = .147$). These effects were qualified by a marginally significant multiplicative effect ($b = .48, p = .058; R = .63; F(3,132) = 29.27, p < .001; \text{constant} = 5.76$). Through simple slopes analysis we can see that the relationship between organizational citizenship behaviors toward the environment and perceived organizational support toward the environment is significant ($t(132) = 2.46, p < .001$) with high organizational policies (defined as $+0.82$, one standard deviation above the mean; $Y_{\text{high}} = 1.46X - 5.76$). In the presence of low organizational policies, this relationship is no longer significant ($t(132) = 1.46, p = .148$) (Figure 2).

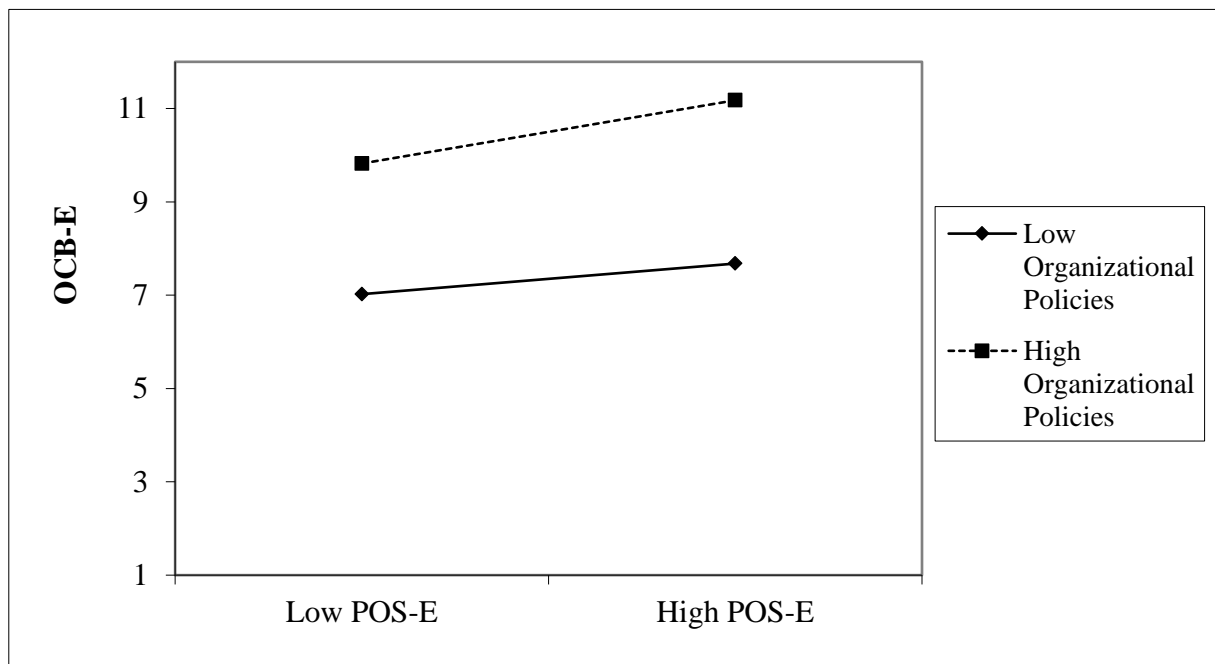


Figure 2. Simple slope graph representing the moderation effect of organizational policies on the relationship between perceived organizational support toward the environment (POS-E) and organizational citizenship behaviors toward the environment (OCB-E).

3.2.3 Impact of manager support on the effect of the perceived organizational support toward the environment on the organizational citizenship behaviors toward the environment.

The same analytical approach was used to test the moderating role of manager support. The results from the moderated regression showed that organizational citizenship behavior was predicted uniquely by manager support ($b = 1.20, p < .001$) but not by perceived organizational support ($b = 0.38, p = .191$). These effects were qualified by a significant multiplicative effect ($b = .49, p = .007; R = .67; F(3,132) = 36.13, p < .001; \text{constant} = 5.68$). Using simple slopes analysis, we can see that the relationship between organizational citizenship behaviors toward the environment and perceived organizational support toward the environment is significant ($t(132) = 2.543, p < .001$) in the presence of manager support (defined as +1.09, one standard deviation above the mean; $Y_{\text{high}} = 1.120X - 5.68$). In the presence of low manager support, this relationship is no longer significant ($t(132) = 1.317, p = .190$) (Figure 3).

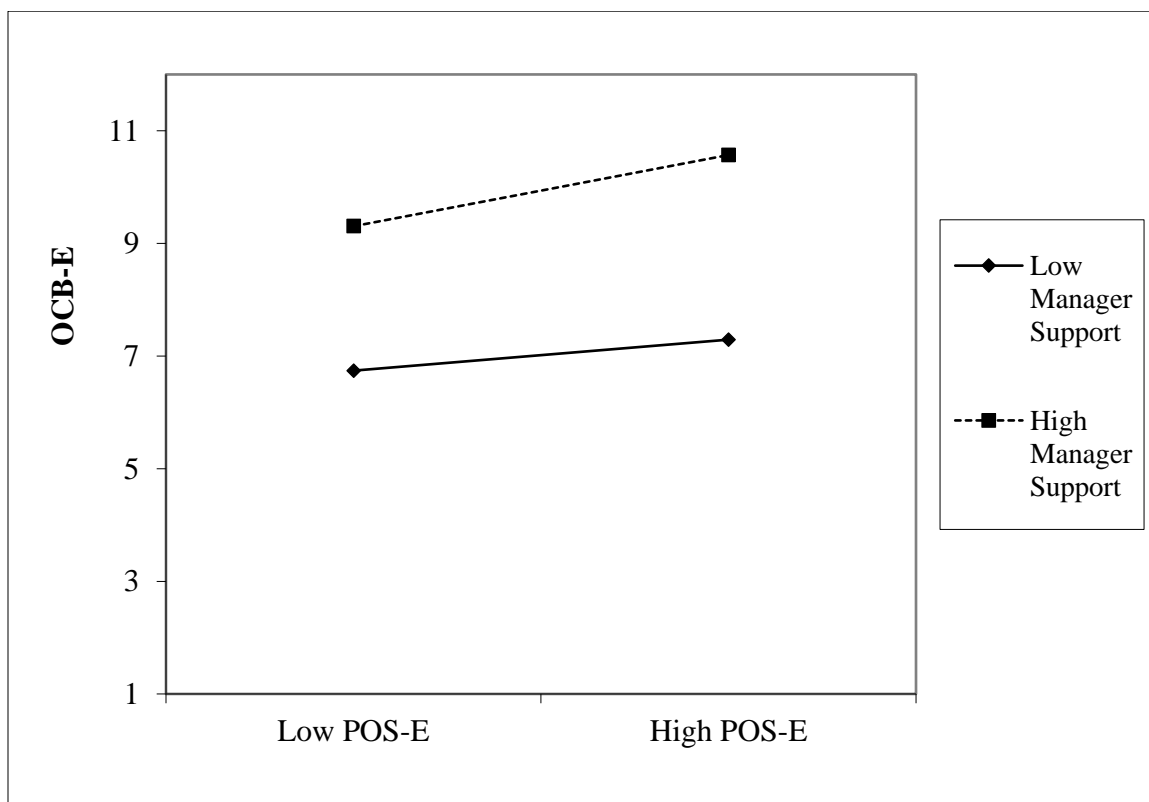


Figure 3. Simple slope graph representing the moderation effect of management support on the relationship between perceived organizational support toward the environment (POS-E) and organizational citizenship behaviors toward the environment (OCB-E).

3.2.4 Impact of social norms on the effect of the perceived organizational support toward the environment on the organizational citizenship behaviors toward the environment.

The moderating role of social norms was tested following the procedure described previously. The results from moderated regression showed that social norms ($b = 0.68, p = .005$) and perceived organizational support ($b = 1.14, p < .001$) were uniquely predictive of organizational citizenship behavior. However, these effects were not qualified by a significant multiplicative effect ($b = .25, p = .297; R = .56; F(3,132) = 19.88, p < .001$); constant = 5.86)

Additional analyses were performed in order to understand whether the prescriptive and descriptive norms functioned as moderators separately. However, these effects also did not occur. Prescriptive norms and descriptive norms ($t(132) = 0.269, p = 0.789$), individually also do not have a significant impact on the relationship between the perceived organizational support toward the environment on the citizenship behaviors toward the environment of the employees.

Chapter IV - Discussion

The main purpose of this study was to explore the impact of organizational policies, manager support and social norms on the effect of perceived organizational support toward the environment on organizational citizenship behaviors related to the environment.

This research makes an essential theoretical contribution by extending existing research regarding the individual role of employees in promoting organization's sustainability. In this way, results suggest employees engage in voluntary sustainable behaviors if they perceived organizational support toward the environment. Paillé and Mejía Morelos (2014) demonstrate that workers perform these behaviors as a way of rewarding the organization's recognition of their environmental contributions. In this sense, and since the perceived organizational support explains a significant part of the variation of these ecological actions, it is understood the importance of identifying factors that potentiate this effect.

In this investigation, manager support is the dimension that has the greatest impact on this relationship. Thus, when leaders want their workers to perform extra-role behaviors toward the environment (for example, reducing energy consumption), they should ensure that they feel supported and valued and that their efforts are not carried out in vain.

However, Ramus (2001) suggests that managers will only focus their energy on encouraging their teams to be more environmentally informed and accountable if they realize that the institution really cares about these issues. This message is decisive, highlighting the importance that organizational policies assume in the sustainability strategy.

In this line of thinking, results also show that environmental policy does not fall short of manager support on the effect of perceived organizational support toward the environment in organizational citizenship behaviors toward the environment. As such, it's important that companies adopt ecological policies and communicate this commitment, sending a clear signal to employees that they appreciate their sustainable initiatives and, consequently, motivating them even more to act accordingly.

In fact, literature demonstrates that these variables - manager support and organizational policies - complement each other, since workers wish to receive congruent information from the organization (Ramus, 2001). Thus, inconsistent messages can result in dissatisfaction and/or lack of motivation to act sustainably (Ramus, 2001), emphasizing the importance of investing in both dimensions in order to enjoy all the benefits that can come from it.

Social norms, contrary to the expectations, have no impact on the relationship between the perceived organizational support toward the environment and the organizational citizenship

Promoting Pro-Environmental Behaviors in the Organizations

behaviors related to the environment. One possible explanation for this result is that individuals do not consider the colleagues' representatives of the organization due to the lack of a hierarchical position and, therefore, do not associate the perception of organizational support to them.

This justification gains strength when results show a direct effect on voluntary sustainable behaviors, that is, employees, who find that the group in which they are involved acts ecologically, perform more environmentally friendly behaviors.

This may mean that top-down or middle-leadership strategies may have more influence power than bottom-up approaches. Thus, by maintaining a leadership and organizational management that, through their policies and leadership, encourages open communication, sharing knowledge and experiences, empowering their employees and involving them in decision-making processes, organizations will benefit from a strengthening of the relationship between the perceived support directed toward the environment and the organizational citizenship behaviors toward the environment.

However, this does not mean that a bottom-up approach is not also relevant. In fact, the ideal situation is for organizations to build and adapt through multiple interactions between these strategies. Thus, an organization that only applies one of these approaches, is governed by a simplistic view, which would benefit by the introduction of more complex and bidirectional models.

4.1 Intervention Plan

Regarding the current context of the institution, the descriptive results suggest that some investment might still be necessary, considering that the mean results of the variables that are directly and indirectly related to organization citizenship behaviors toward the environment have relatively medium values and, therefore, there is room for improvement. Also, the simple slope analysis demonstrates that the relationship between organizational citizenship behaviors and perceived organizational support toward the environment is only significant in the presence of high manager support and organizational policies, which increases the importance of an intervention plan that reinforces these variables.

In this line of thinking, this intervention plan aims: (a) to strengthen the perception of organizational support through organizational policies; (b) to promote the behaviors that demonstrate sustainable manager support; (c) to increase the identification of the employees with the group, since the literature shows that the more individuals recognize the group where

they are involved, the more they will perform the behaviors appreciated by them (Luís & Palma-Oliveira, 2016). Although social norms do not act as moderators of the studied relationship, they directly affect the citizenship behaviors toward the environment. Thus, it would be interesting to work on this variable on two fronts: (a) increasing the identification of the employees with the group, since the literature shows that the more individuals recognize the group where they are involved (Luís & Palma-Oliveira, 2016), the more they will perform the behaviors appreciated by them; (b) motivating the valorization of sustainable actions in the workplace.

As this study illustrates, the involvement of various levels of the structure appear to be essential factors for the organization to take advantage of the benefits that come from a greater perception of organizational support and from an increasing number of voluntary sustainable behaviors.

In this sense, the intervention program includes the three dimensions mentioned above (that is, the moderating variables of the study), divided into five recommended courses of action (Table 2).

Table 2. Action plan proposed to address the three moderating variables.

Dimensions	Action plan
Organizational policies	Identification of an environmental committee Sharing the environmental compromise within the organization
Manager support	Individual coaching
Social norms	Team building Environmental lectures

4.1.1 Organizational policies.

Identification of an environmental committee. According to Beer, Eisenstat & Spector (1990), the identification of a committee is one of the main strategies to implement change projects in the organizations, because it allows to involve and engage the employees of different departments and hierarchical structures, promoting a greater congruence throughout the organization. The main goal of this environmental committee would be to develop sustainable programs within the organization (e.g. workshops), according to the needs felt at the time (Beer et al., 1990).

Promoting Pro-Environmental Behaviors in the Organizations

The organization's Sustainability Department would be responsible for: (a) ensuring that the committee meets at least once every three months; (b) set up the committee, making sure that it is representative of the organization and that a member of the sustainability department is present; (c) carry out the projects defined by the committee.

Sharing the environmental compromise within the organization. Sharing the organization's commitment to the environment, operationalized through internal policies, is essential to foster a culture of good ecological practices (Beer et al., 1990). More than informing, this sharing is important to mobilize employees to act in a sustainable way.

Thus, a structured and dynamic communication plan with a distinctive image that responds to the needs of the organization is fundamental, especially when going along with complementary initiatives such as: (a) the placement of attractive posters in specific spots where everyone can see them; (b) the construction of flyers suggesting good environmental practices; (c) the distribution of some gift that workers can put on their desk to remind them of the importance of sustainability.

4.1.2 Manager support.

Individual coaching. Coaching is defined by the International Coach Federation (ICF) as "partnering with clients in a thought-provoking and creative process that inspires them to maximize their personal and professional potential" (<https://www.coachfederation.org>). In fact, instead of teaching, coaching allows individuals to learn by themselves, by supporting and assisting them (Whitmore, 2009).

In this sense, it would be interesting that, through this process, the leaders developed, among others, the five behaviors identified by Ramus (2001) as fundamental for a greater perception of manager support: (a) open communication, maintaining a transparent and engaging speech; (b) skills development, making time and resources available for employees to go to training and lead by example, that is, going themselves - the managers - to workshops associated with the environment; (c) formal rewards, such as awards, and recognition, like informal feedback; (d) managing responsibilities and objectives by empowering their teams; (e) innovation, encouraging the creativity of individuals to find more sustainable ways to work in the organization.

After these sessions, a 360° diagnosis should be carried out to gather feedback on the perceived evolution of the participants, taking into account the specific competencies worked within the scope of the coaching process.

4.1.3 Social norms.

Environmental lectures. For group influence to be effective, it is necessary, above all, that individuals are aware of the theme of sustainability. In this sense, it would be essential that they have the opportunity to participate in lectures on the subject, alerting to the importance of their contributions to the success of the organization's environmental initiatives. During these lectures should be provided information available on the individuals that value and practice pro-environmental behaviors. Employees' would, also, have the opportunity to clarify doubts and pose questions that they consider pertinent to the performance of organizational citizenship behaviors toward the environment.

Team building. Already aware of their vital role on promoting sustainability in the workplace, it would be important to evaluate, through a questionnaire, how employees identify with their colleagues.

If the values presented are low, the organization should plan team building actions, because it's this identification that will maximize the power of social norms - essential for the effect of social norms to be more effective in organizational citizenship behaviors toward the environment (Luís & Palma-Oliveira, 2016). These group actions consist of providing the necessary skills, resources and motivation for employees to work in harmony.

However, for this process to be effective it is essential that it be continuous, that is, more than isolated events, the important thing is to make team building part of the organizational culture (https://www.mindtools.com/pages/article/newTMM_52.htm).

In fact, activities that do not look like "another day in the office" and allow the team to spent time together, share experiences or work towards a common goal, strengthen the sense of belonging to the group, increasing collective identification (<https://www.forbes.com>).

4.1.4 Intervention plan timeline and assessment.

The first stage of this intervention plan should be at the level of the organizational policies, since the employees will perceive a greater commitment of the organization towards the environment. Thus, they will be more susceptible to the remaining investments made by the organization.

The second phase should be directed to the level of manager support, since a good leader, who supports and values their workers, giving the example, is fundamental for greater cohesion and harmony in the team.

Promoting Pro-Environmental Behaviors in the Organizations

In this sense, after working on these two dimensions, the focus should be on the level of social norms, knowing that they act directly on the organizational citizenship behaviors toward the environment.

To evaluate the program, the questionnaire in this study (adding a measure in employee's identification with their group) should be applied after 6 months its beginning - so the organization can monitor and adjust strategies if the results aren't good -, and at the end of the program, in order to analyse the evolution of the organization in the management of their environmental impact.

4.2 Limitations and Suggestions for Future Research

Some limitations of this study must be acknowledged. Responses were collected from a single organization, therefore it was not possible to compare results in organizations with different organizational policies and structures.

For the future, it would be important to apply the same model on two distinct organizations, one of which has a recognized environmental policy and one where this is not so prominent, to understand if there are differences in perceptions of employees. One would expect to find: (a) greater effects on those with more pro-environmental policies; (b) negative results on those without prominent sustainable policies. If so, it is important that organizations have this knowledge as it allows them to guide their actions towards better management of their ecological impact.

Moreover, knowing that manager support is such an important dimension regarding organizational citizenship behavior toward the environment, it would be interesting to explore if different leadership styles (e.g. authoritarian, democratic and laissez-fair, Bass & Stogdill's, 1990) mediate the relationship between perceived organizational support toward the environment and organizational citizenship behaviors toward the environment.

Conclusion

The evolving character of the sustainability context makes even the best practices constantly challenged. In this sense, it is important to help organizations, which represent part of the solution to the problem that we all face, to find new ways of working towards better management of environmental impact.

This is how environmental issues - one of the critical dimensions of sustainability, alongside with social and economic issues- are today inseparable from corporate life and are already present in the strategy, policies, practices and value propositions of most organizations.

It is now agreed that stakeholders, in particular customers, investors and employees, but also suppliers and public and regulatory entities, value - and in many cases demand - that the activity developed by organizations' respect and protect the environment (avoiding the erosion of natural capital). If we add to this reality the competitive advantages resulting from lower operational / transformation costs due to the optimization of consumption (energy, water, waste) and, although less tangible, of the reputational benefits, we better understand the growing importance that this theme has gained in defining corporate strategies.

It should also be noted that the application by organizations of eco-efficiency concepts to reduce consumption and emission of greenhouse gases, contributes to achieving the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals - ODS 7, 13, 14 and 15 - and is also a strong driver for the achievement of the environmental and climate change targets set out in the Paris Agreement, with which, together with States and civil society, most organizations - in particular the now studied - are already compromised.

It is within this frame of reference that we must understand - and value - the results of the present study which have shown that employees who feel that the company monitors, supports and values their sustainable contributions (e.g. reducing consumption or sharing innovative environmental initiatives), take on, promote and encourage more environmentally responsible behavior. In this way, the present research identified two ways of increasing this effect: (a) through the communication and dynamization by the organization of sustainable policies, processes and practices; (b) management support on environmental issues.

This study contributes to provide organizations with guidance on possible ways to reduce their environmental impact so that they could work as "if there were another tomorrow".

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Appendixes

Appendix A – Online Survey

Este estudo faz parte do projeto de mestrado de Inês Neves Silva no ISCTE-IUL, onde se pretende analisar a importância dos comportamentos "ambientalmente amigáveis" nas organizações. É coordenado por Sílvia Luís, que pode ser contactada através do e-mail silvia_luis@iscte.pt, caso tenha alguma questão ou comentário.

A sua participação é extremamente importante e consiste em responder a um questionário acerca de práticas organizacionais e comportamentos individuais que tem uma duração média de 5 minutos. Não existem riscos nem benefícios diretos associados à sua participação. Contudo, a sua participação permitirá avançar o conhecimento e a ciência nesta área.

A participação neste estudo é voluntária. Não tem que participar caso não queira. Se aceitar participar mas depois mudar de ideias pode desistir. A sua participação é anónima e confidencial.

Caso tenha compreendido e aceite participar, por favor carregue no botão abaixo para iniciar o questionário.

Agradeço desde já a sua colaboração.

Inês Neves Silva

(ines_abrantes@iscte.pt)

Promoting Pro-Environmental Behaviors in the Organizations

Utilizando uma escala de resposta que varia entre, 1 (discordo totalmente) e 5 (concordo totalmente), por favor assinale a sua opinião.

A minha organização...

	Discordo totalmente (1)	(2)	Em parte discordo e concordo (3)	(4)	Concordo totalmente (5)
Tem políticas ambientais.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Possui objetivos específicos para o desempenho ambiental.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Publica um relatório ambiental anual.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Utiliza um sistema de gestão ambiental.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Considera aspetos ambientais nas decisões que são tomadas.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Fornecer aos trabalhadores formação sobre o ambiente.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Torna os trabalhadores responsáveis pelo desempenho da organização a nível ambiental.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Promoting Pro-Environmental Behaviors in the Organizations

Utiliza uma análise do ciclo de vida (estuda os aspetos ambientais e potenciais impactos da vida de um produto).

Tem uma gestão que compreende/aborda questões sobre um desenvolvimento sustentável.

Reduz sistematicamente o uso de combustível fóssil (ex.: utiliza carros elétricos, incentiva o uso de bicicletas, usufrui de energia eólica ou solar, entre outros).

Reduz sistematicamente o uso de químicos tóxicos (ex.: utiliza produtos de limpeza ecológicos, entre outros).

Reduz sistematicamente o uso de produtos não-sustentáveis (ex.: reduz o uso de sacos de plástico, utiliza chávenas de café reutilizáveis, entre outros).

Aplica os mesmos critérios ambientais em todos os locais onde está sediado.

Promoting Pro-Environmental Behaviors in the Organizations

Indique a sua concordância em relação aos comportamentos do seu superior imediato.

O meu superior imediato...

	Discordo totalmente (1)	(2)	Em parte discordo e concordo (3)	(4)	Concordo totalmente (5)
Encoraja iniciativas ambientais.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Assegura-se que o colaborador desenvolve competências para gerir aspetos ambientais.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Ouve atentamente e valoriza ideias sobre tópicos ambientais.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Fornecer informações completas e precisas sobre questões ambientais.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Envolve os colaboradores na resolução de problemas ambientais.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Promoting Pro-Environmental Behaviors in the Organizations

As afirmações seguintes referem-se aos seus comportamentos e atitudes no local de trabalho.

	Discordo totalmente (1)	(2)	Em parte discordo e concordo (3)	(4)	Concordo totalmente (5)
Eu sinto que posso comportar-me tão sustentavelmente quanto quero na organização onde trabalho atualmente. (ex.: posso reciclar, imprimir frente e verso, entre outros)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
A minha organização não se interessa se me comporto de um modo sustentável ou não.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
A minha organização incentiva-me a reduzir o uso de recursos não-renováveis.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Eu não sinto que tenha um impacto ambiental positivo através do meu trabalho na minha organização.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
As minhas ações para com o ambiente são apreciadas pela minha organização.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Promoting Pro-Environmental Behaviors in the Organizations

As próximas afirmações referem-se aos seus colegas de trabalho.

	Discordo totalmente (1)	(2)	Em parte discordo e concordo (3)	(4)	Concordo totalmente (5)
Os meus colegas comportam-se, habitualmente, de um modo ambientalmente amigável.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
A maioria dos meus colegas considera, habitualmente, as questões ambientais envolvidas no trabalho.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Os meus colegas valorizam comportamentos ambientalmente amigáveis.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
A maioria dos meus colegas valoriza que se considerem as questões ambientais envolvidas no trabalho.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Promoting Pro-Environmental Behaviors in the Organizations

As afirmações seguintes permitem-lhe refletir sobre alguns dos seus comportamentos no local de trabalho. Selecione o número que melhor descreve a sua opinião sobre o que considera ser geralmente verdadeiro para si.

A escala de resposta varia entre 0 (certamente não) e 10 (certamente sim).

	Certamente não (0)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Certamente sim (10)
Sugiro novas práticas que possam melhorar o desempenho ambiental da minha organização.	<input type="radio"/>										<input type="radio"/>
Incentivo os meus colegas a adotar mais comportamentos ambientais.	<input type="radio"/>										<input type="radio"/>
Informo-me sobre os esforços ambientais da minha organização.	<input type="radio"/>										<input type="radio"/>
Sugiro formas eficazes de proteger o ambiente.	<input type="radio"/>										<input type="radio"/>

Promoting Pro-Environmental Behaviors in the Organizations

Voluntario-me para projetos ou atividades relacionadas com questões ambientais na minha organização.



Utilizo, espontaneamente, o meu tempo para ajudar colegas a considerarem questões ambientais.



Responsabilizo-me por ações ambientais que contribuam positivamente para a imagem da minha empresa.



Promoting Pro-Environmental Behaviors in the Organizations

Para terminar gostaríamos de lhe colocar algumas questões de caráter sociodemográfico.

Sexo

- Masculino
- Feminino

Idade (em anos)

Habilitações literárias

- Ensino primário
- Ensino básico
- Ensino secundário
- Ensino superior
- Doutoramento

A situação financeira do seu agregado familiar permite-lhe satisfazer as necessidades básicas de...

	Sempre	Quase sempre	Às vezes	Raramente	Nunca
Alimentação	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Habitação	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Saúde	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Educação	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>