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The Role Affiliation Plays on Employee Well-being, Job Satisfaction, and Person-Organization Fit

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ISCTE Business School

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Department of Human Resources and Organizational
Behavior

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Resumo

O sentimento de afiliação, a sensação de pertença que as pessoas têm para a empresa para qual trabalham, tem vindo a desempenhar um papel cada vez mais relevante no universo organizacional. Esta afeição surge graças à conjuntura e vários elementos, sendo estes o bem-estar, o alinhamento com a organização, o enraizamento no trabalho e o apoio social proporcionado por outros membros da organização. A questão de investigação procura apurar de que maneira o sentimento de afiliação indicia estes fatores e, deste modo, traça a satisfação no e com o trabalho.

Foi definido um modelo conceptual do qual surgiram sete hipóteses, a partir das quais se procurou estudar a relação entre as diferentes variáveis e o impacto que podem ter na relação entre umas e outras.

Esta investigação utilizou como base de dados 204 respostas a um questionário que mede, em várias dimensões, cada um dos indicadores acima mencionados numa escala de Likert de 1 a 5. Foi realizada uma análise quantitativa dos resultados, tendo sido corroboradas todas as hipóteses, com a exceção de uma.

Atendendo aos resultados obtidos, concluiu-se que os aspetos previamente mencionados colaboram na construção de um ambiente e de uma cultura organizacional visionária.

Abstract

The feeling of affiliation, the sense of belonging that people have for the company they work for, is playing an increasingly important role in the organizational world. This affection arises thanks to the conjuncture of various elements, including well-being, alignment with the organization, rootedness at work and the social support provided by other members of the organization. The research question seeks to ascertain how the feeling of affiliation indicates these factors and thus traces satisfaction in and with work.

A conceptual model was defined from which seven hypotheses emerged, from which we sought to study the relationship between the different variables and the impact they may have on the relationship between each other.

This research used as its database 204 responses to a questionnaire which measured each of the above-mentioned indicators in various dimensions on a Likert scale from 1 to 5. A quantitative analysis of the results was carried out and all but one of the hypotheses was confirmed.

In view of the results obtained, it can be concluded that the aspects contribute to building a future-oriented environment and organizational culture.

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CHAPTER 1

Introduction

Employee well-being has a tangible and intangible form, and involves physical, psychological, and emotional health, thus contributing to the happiness and comfort of employees (Schaufeli et al., 2016).

Recent literature has already shown that the experience of well-being is a result of favourable working conditions (e.g., Martins Nunes et al., 2024), with one of those assisting circumstances being the sense of affiliation (e.g., Rhoades & Eisenberg, 2002).

A sense of affiliation is what links an employee to an organization in other form than job related. Being directly connected to the need for feeling nurtured and supported (Hill, 1987, p. 1009), the sense of affiliation within organizations allows employers to invest in and retain their employees through means beyond extrinsic and intrinsic compensation.

There exist many variables linked to employees' well-being. P-O (person-organization) fit is one of them (Van Wingerden et al., 2018). Overall, P-O fit concerns the antecedents and effects of compatibility between people and the organizations where they work (Kristof, 1996). It can be defined as the congruence between the values and norms of organizations and the values of people working for a specific organization (Chatman, 1989).

Additionally, job embeddedness is another variable related to employees' well-being, as is related by Jaleel & Sarmad (2022). It is described as “the extent of an employee’s “stuckness,” or enmeshing, within a larger social system, and it results from numerous external (or contextual) forces (...) in the organization and community that operate on a focal employee” (Lee et al., 2014, p. 201).

There is a key construct fairly linked with employees' well-being which is social support at work (Medina-Garrideo et al., 2023). Social support "is defined as information leading the subject to believe that he is cared for and loved, esteemed, and a member of a network of mutual obligations" (Cobb, 1976, p. 300). Social support allows people to transition from one environment to another in a softer way, making that transition easier to adjust to.

Although research demonstrates that well-being is related to job-embeddedness (e.g., Lee, 2014), P-O fit (e.g., Biswas & Bhatnagar, 2013), and social support (e.g., Taylor, 2011), the role that sense of affiliation plays on these variables is yet to unfold.

A complex framework tackling the role of employees' well-being in organizations is lacking, to the best of our knowledge. To fill this gap, the current study follows an exploratory approach by postulating that social support leads to job embeddedness, which ultimately is linked to P-O fit and such leverages employees' sense of affiliation. In turn, this sense of affiliation fosters employees' well-being.

We contend that if a person has a sense of affiliation towards the organization they work at, they will be more likely to have greater well-being, they'll feel more identified with the organization, thus more aspects are linking these employees with the company.

Given this scenario, the research questions that guide this dissertation are the following: How does social support influence the employees' well-being in the organization? To what extent does job embeddedness contribute to employees' sense of affiliation via P-O fit? Objectively, this research relies on a quantitative approach to understand how far social support has an indirect effect on well-being via job embeddedness, P-O fit and sense of affiliation. In practical terms, this investigation aims to support Human Resources Management (HRM) areas to better administer employees within organizations.

The dissertation is organized as follows: Chapter 1 introduces the five variables of the study; Chapter 2 reviews the literature consulted for the research paper; Chapter 3 presents the

conceptual model; Chapter 4 evolves the methodology, therefore the procedure, the sample, and the measures that were used during the investigation; Chapter 5 approaches the results through a descriptive and correlational analysis; Chapter 6 displays the discussion of results about the research, as well its implications, limitations, and recommendations for future researches; Chapter 7 concludes the primary outcomes of the investigation.

CHAPTER 2

Literature Review

2.1. Social Support

Social support is “a complex meta-construct (i.e., a family of resources) that includes aspects of the commerce of supportive interactions, perceptions of receipt of support, and aspects of the self” (Hobfoll, 2002, p. 309). Social support can also be purported as “the perception or experience that one is loved and cared for by others, esteemed and valued, and part of a social network of mutual assistance and obligations (...) (that) may come from (...) coworkers, social and community ties” (Taylor, 2011, p. 192). A transactional model of the dyadic support relationship (Schwarzer, 1991, p. 112) demonstrates how the recipient of the support and the provider engage to make changes in the adjustment.

It must be noted that people tend to seek assistance when they are in stressful situations because it allows them to receive aid that will help them endure the situation they are living in (Schachter, 1959). People naturally look for comfort and support in others, either in search of assistance or seeking consoles. These behaviors emerge in various everyday plots, including those in the workplace.

Ahmad (2024) links social support as a vital part of human life, which applies to the employment aspect, elucidates how social support benefits the workers' well-community, it allows them to relieve stress, it aids their adaptation and improvement in the company and secures they can uphold their job duties with prestige and interest.

This can be applied to work as well: an employee in a direful situation might seek guidance from their colleagues. Comfort or advice can be sought from a peer in a similar situation, from someone with more tenure in the organization, or from someone with whom the workers have a close relationship.

2.2. The pivotal role of Job Embeddedness

A key variable linked to social support is job embeddedness as, according to Crossley et al. (2007), social relationships formed at work are vital to increase employees' attachment to their jobs, as well the social support received in the organizations as enhances employees' embeddedness to their work. The authors reiterate how the relationships workers have with their teammates, leaders, and other colleagues, helps explains why they leave or stay in the organizations.

Job embeddedness is a concept that explains why employees stay in an organization, it can point out to what extent they are connected to their job and to the organization (Lee, et al., 2014). It suggests that workers are cemented to their jobs because of three influences: links, fit, and sacrifice in organizations (Ramaite et al., 2022). Each indicator is defined as follows: "Links refer to the formal or informal connections to fellow employees. Fit entails that employees' goals and plans connect to the organization's culture, job demands, and views of their work environment. Lastly, sacrifice is the perceived physical and psychological costs when leaving a job" (p. 3).

Mitchell et al. (2001) was the first to describe job embeddedness and compacted it as the matters of why employees are 'fixed' in certain job or organization, with these being related to a variety of topics related to the employee's life, such as on-the-job and off-the job factors (p. 1108).

Clinton et al. (2012) theorizes that job embeddedness illustrates how people are established in a specific job due to the attachment they have towards the work atmospheres, what concerns the people, the tasks, the places, and the organization itself.

Additionally, Hom et al (2009) defines job embeddedness and social exchange as mediators of employee-organization relationships. The authors characterize job embeddedness

as the attachment and the passivity of workers towards their job, how one may feel so bound or so complacent to their job that they don't conceive to exit the company, while social exchange is defined as an enduring relationship marked by shared investment of all constituent parts and mutual trust (p. 279). The authors explore how job embeddedness has a long-lasting effect on employee retention when compared to social exchange, and it is advocated how employee-organization relationships transmit effects on engagement and departure tendency, how job embeddedness alters the view of social exchange when the investment by employees and by the organizations is alike.

Considering that affiliation cultivates a sense of belonging within the organization and strong relationships with its employees, job embeddedness can be seen as a derivative of it. Ultimately, in line with Shah et al. (2020), job embeddedness can be viewed as a significant influence on affiliation, by bridging distinct factors and employees' outcomes, heightening organizational commitment, and lowering turnover intentions.

Based on Lee et al. (2014), the three traits that characterize job embeddedness can be related to affiliation in the following way:

- Links: if workers are affiliated, it is most likely for them to form significant ties with members of the organization, with these alliances shaping a social web that embeds the employees in the organization.
- Fit: when a strong sense of affiliation is perceived, it indicates that employees' ambitions are coordinated with the organization's *ethos*, with this adjustment expanding their job embeddedness.
- Sacrifice: if profoundly affiliated with the company they work at, workers will discern the expenses of leaving it, with these bringing material and immaterial losses.

In agreement with Liu's (2018) perspective, the job embeddedness's ranges play a central role in affiliation on account of the following:

- Links are reported as connections with others, the more there are, the greater their ally with the job will be.
- Fits portray the existence of harmony between employees and the organization, then if there is more alignment, stronger will be the bond.
- Sacrifices interpret the costs of workers leaving or staying in their jobs, if they anticipate the costs of leaving are bigger than if they stay, it can endower the investment and commitment towards the organization.

As displayed by Crossley et al. (2007), the might and characteristics of social support plays a crucial role in social connections, enhancing job embeddedness, because when people are installed by social links in the workplace, is build a bond that goes beyond the traditional work aspect, what has influence in the fit of the employee within the workplace. Therefore, we hypothesize the following:

H1: A higher social support at work positively influences job embeddedness.

According to Ahmad (2024), job embeddedness covers a broad spectrum of factors that help in employee's retention. Mitchell et al. (2001) refer the critical aspects that compose job embeddedness, and, like P-O fit, they are links, fit, and sacrifices: links are pictured as the connections of a worker and their family in a social netting, which includes their job; fit labels how employees' see their correspondence with the company and its setting; and sacrifice rounds around the perks that can be lost when leaving a job, with these perquisites being of dual nature.

These matters are necessary for an individual to become fully embedded in their job, on account of the links allowing them to develop human ties that will attach them to the

organization, a strong fit with the company that helps them to be more entangled in their job, and the more they recognize the sacrifice leaving brings, the more installed they will be.

Regarding Miller et al (2001), affiliation primarily requires human contact and interaction, and social support does as well. In brief, social support maintains a constructive work site, that leads to a greater sense of affiliation among workers and in them becoming more rooted in their jobs.

When workers feel supported by their superiors and colleagues, it is most likely for them to structure strong links with the company, which, in turn, harbour a sense of affiliation and shelter job embeddedness. Likewise, having social support within the company helps employees to feel more matched (fit) with the organization's standards, embedding them in their work. The proceeds of social support rigg the work environment, which raises the perception of sacrifice that people would deal with if abandoning the company.

Hoffman et al. (2023) explain how social support can be observed as a structure and as a resource. The flourishing of these contacts enables webs that will result in a thriving social capital and a greater organizational attachment, denoting how employees are more likely to remain in a job because of the bonds they established that extended their level of immersion in the company.

To make this premise clearer, let us depict the following scenarios: (1) a worker that didn't felt from the beginning and throughout their journey in the company that they are treasured from their leaders and peers, and a (2) worker that, from day one in the company, felt beloved by their teammates and heads.

Bearing these plots in mind, it is possible to understand in greater depth how social support has an impact on the relationship between affiliation and job embeddedness. By glancing at a study conducted by Caesens et al. (2020), we can see the authors describe three

sources of social support in the workplace (organization, supervisor, and colleagues), so when employees can feel that they receive social support in the organization, from one or more of those origins, their sense of belonging will increase.

Recalling the scenarios mentioned above and given the studies that were referred, we can affirm that the (1) first may not have the chance to become fully embedded in the organization and gain a sense of belonging, because in the time they were in the company they didn't have a network of support that sparked this. Unlikely, the (2) other individual might be more prone to become inserted in the organization due to the social support they felt that ended brought it up.

With this in consideration, it becomes appropriate to look more closely at how social support influences the impact that affiliation has on job embeddedness. Hence, we hypothesize the following:

H2: A stronger job embeddedness enhances the sense of affiliation.

2.2.1. Other effects of Job Embeddedness

In some way, P-O fit can be seen as a broader theme which includes job embeddedness, with the former having a strong impression of the latter. Kristof-Brown et al. (2024) refer how, while job embeddedness allows workers' fondness to the organization to grow, the P-O fit draws the unity of purposes between the employees and the organization. Still, both add favourably to different benchmarks, namely the continuance in employment, to identify retention strategies, to predict turnover intentions, and to reduce turnover (Kristof-Brown et al., 2024).

Jing et al. (2021), while emphasizing how the coherence of employee's values and organizational values moulds how embedded people become in a company, the authors also

describe individual and organizational collectivism: individual collectivism concerns how a person puts shared goals ahead of their personal goals, and organizational collectivism covers how an organization advocates for corporate objectives, partnership, and cohesion.

The scholars also mention these notions because of the part they play in job embeddedness. When individual and organizational collectivism are present in high levels, both contribute to a more substantial job embeddedness. This reasoning is displayed by the next quote: “(...) embeddedness is highest in the presence of both high individual and organizational collectivism. Additionally, the smaller the discrepancy between the two perceptions, the more embedded the employees.” (Jing et al., 2021).

When individual and organizational collectiveness become congruent and aligned, i.e. the person-organization fit is reached, it becomes noticeable how the union of culture and values among the organization and the employees sway the workers’ job embeddedness. On this basis, we hypothesize the following:

H3: A strong job embeddedness increases the P-O fit.

2.3. Does P-O fit affect Sense of Affiliation?

It is important to separate the two perspectives that divide the fit matter on P-O fit. Caplan (1987) distinguishes it in the following way: objective fit is independent of human partiality, it can be assessed through the job demands, competency requirements, and organizational culture and values, while subjective fit is covered by the employee’s observations. It is through this that social support can be viewed as the accessibility to interpersonal assets (Peplan, 1985, p. 280)

Considering that when employees feel supported in their work, it reinforces their sense of affiliation towards the organization, helping them feel more protected and guarded. If

employees feel supported in and at their workplace, it can fortify their sense of belonging with the organization they work at, which is an important feature of P-O fit. This heightens the relationship between workers and their company, especially if the culture, values, and goals are equivalent.

Social support can be regarded as a crucial component that clouds subjective P-O fit, because its existence and the way in which it is present in the organizational context, may have an impact on how workers perceive their suitability in the company. Taylor (2011) claims that the provision of social support is a substance that can weigh on organizational performance and turnover.

Still in accordance with Taylor, workers' presence in a company is filled with engagement within known groups of shared responsibilities (like teammates), so it is normal that when a favor is done, it is expected to be returned (p. 206). These established social ties manifest a sense of belonging, which can intensify the idea of person-organization fit. If workers feel appreciated by their cohorts, it is easier for them to align their principles with the organization's.

Moreover, a sense of support can further the employees' feeling secure within the company, which could elevate their compatibility with the organization (Kristof, 1996). Accommodating a support system may uphold the person-organization fit and boost the sense of affiliation.

For example, Cooper-Thomas (2004) states that socialization tactics, such as receiving social support from an experienced organizational insider or mentor, can enhance the P-O fit. By receiving the proper guidance, new recruits can easily acknowledge the organization's culture, resulting in smoother onboarding, while becoming more unified to the company.

As antecedently reported, affiliation promotes P-O fit. Therefore, if social support in the organization further embellishes P-O fit, we can convey it also influences the junction between affiliation and P-O fit. For this reason, it becomes significant to address this topic, so we hypothesize the following:

The Attraction-Selection-Attrition (ASA) Framework, designed by Schneider (1987), enables to understand the genealogy of person-organization fit. It argues that people are only attracted to careers and organizations that are congruent with their *persona*. Companies select people not only based on organizational needs and individual skills, but also on the candidates' profiles, being leaner to hire people that fit in their environment; and if people do not fit in with the work culture and values, they are more likely to leave compared with the ones that fit.

The ASA framework helps to preserve a stable P-O fit in the organization by assuring that, since the recruitment and selection process, people match with them and, at the same time, that people who do not fit can leave. It puts into practice the P-O fit concept, allowing it to become cyclical.

Sekiguchi (2004) affirms that by selecting workers that are prompt to be in sync with the company's culture, they are choosing people more apt to stay longer in the organization. By the author's view, social interactions lend people to feel adjusted in the organization they work at, especially if they are newly hired. Recalling that affiliation is closely related to the act of socialization, we highlight that socializing helps people to learn and know the organization's culture and forming bonds. The conformity of company's values and goals with the workers can intensify job satisfaction and organizational commitment, thus the sense of affiliation.

In addition, for instance, Biswas & Bhatnagar (2013) say that "a stronger person-organization fit may lead to merging of identities with the organization and hence may have higher engagement" (p. 29). This can be interpreted as how affiliation and P-O fit interplay,

since when employees' beliefs, values and behaviours are aligned with those of the organization, people feel more connected to the organization's culture, what can lead to a bigger commitment to the company they work at. When personal values are correspondent to the organizational standards, employees are inclined to feel more empowered and connected to the organization.

Originally proposed by Henri Tajfel and John Turner in 1979, the Social Identity theory seeks to clarify how people create their own identity based on the different social groups they belong to (Islam, 2014), and, depending on the situation and the moment they are living in, individuals act in accordance with the social group that suits that moment the best.

The Social Identity theory holds importance to this research because workers that positively identify themselves with the organization they work at, they will utterly cultivate causes to uplift it as they understand that, by heartening the company they belong to, they are empowering themselves.

As mentioned by Mael & Tetrick (1992), organizational identification can be interpreted as a form of organizational commitment, and the Social Identity theory can be used to measure it. As the sense of affiliation often evolves into a feeling of commitment, it is important to note that it improves person-organization fit, owing that the coordination of values and goals helps people feel they relate to each other and with the organization.

Ashforth & Mael (1989) suggest that, behind the behavioural consequences that the Social Identity theory brings, the most prominent is the extension of social interactions. It is possible to realize that, because affiliation portrays the attachment between workers and organization, it leads to fostering P-O fit as it assists the connection between employees and their company. The existence of a sense of affiliation often means there is an alignment between

employees and employers; it contributes to a harmonious and positive work environment and supports workforce retention.

From Vila-Vázquez et al. (2021) it was drawn the idea that the conformance between the employees' own identity and the role they perform in the organization generates a sense of value. This arrangement, propelled by the need for affiliation, can build a sense of connection and affinity inside the organization. Resultantly, workers can notice their input being appreciated. This remark enables them to grow an impression that is detailed as a "sense of return on investments of self in role performance" (p. 3703).

Previous research also highlights how socialization impacts and promotes P-O fit, especially in the initial period: it can impact new hires' values, their view of organizational principles, and the organization's own values may also shift thanks to internal and external occurrences. These socialization tactics favourably impact job satisfaction and organizational commitment and, gradually, the recent members' values fuse with those of the organization (Cooper-Thomas et al., 2004).

Recently, Lopes (2020) asserts that when there is a high level of adjustment between the person and the organization, pointing to a strong person-organization fit, there tends to exist a greater compatibility between the individual's and organization's values and ideals. This unity bolsters an elevated sense of connection and belonging, thereby, spurring a higher level of commitment to the organization and cementing the employees' sense of affiliation.

Workers who firmly identify themselves with the company, are more prone to be motivated and committed to its favourable outcome, and, overall, acumen a greater P-O fit. Herewith, it is relevant to investigate whether a stronger sense of affiliation with the organization enhances person-organization fit. Therefore, we hypothesize the following:

H4: A higher P-O fit positively affects the sense of affiliation.

As employees become more embedded in their work, they are likely to experience a stronger alignment with the organization's values and culture, i.e. a greater person-organization (P-O) fit, but also have their connection to the organization reinforced. Therefore, it is valid to consider P-O fit as a foundational element that explains how job embeddedness translates into a stronger sense of affiliation. Based on this rationale, we hypothesize the following:

H5: P-O fit plays a mediator role in the relationship between job embeddedness and sense of affiliation.

2.4. Sense of Affiliation: why is this important in organizations?

Affiliation can be described as an expression of “mutual investment between an individual and an organization on an ongoing contractual relationship” (Mohammed & Rashid, 2023, p. 5). In general terms, it concerns the connection that exists between a person and the organization where they work at.

Affiliation can also be depicted as how workers feel they belong to their organization. If there is a strong tie between a worker and the company, there is a strong sense of affiliation, i.e., workers become part of the organization. Contrariwise, if the workers have nothing that makes them feel connected to the company, perhaps, they will not have as many motives as someone who is affiliated with the place they work at.

Referring to the classic trichotomy of needs theory of McClelland, there are three needs that justify the way people act: the need for achievement, the need for power, and the need for affiliation (Doeze Jager et al., 2017). Affiliation is viewed as the eagerness to build and cultivate social relationships, enjoying being part of a group, and feeling loved and accepted.

The need for affiliation is bound to people's desire for social contact, belongingness, sense of communion, and urgency to be acknowledged (Wiesenfelda et al., 2001). This need also concerns organizations. Individuals require having contact with other people, to feel they are part of, connections, and validation in their work life.

A worker who feels affiliated with the organization may be more prone to have a better performance, according to Carney et al. (2011), following the Social Exchange theory by George C. Homans. In line with Cook et al. (2013), this theory started from the idea that social behaviour is a result of the exchanging process between two parties or more, being structured on some principles:

- Reinforcement: social behaviour is fortified by rewards or diminished by penalties.
- Cost-benefit: people try to seek benefits from social connections, while avoiding the costs of it and evaluating their social interactions.
- Reciprocity: individuals are more likely to support and help others if they have been helped.

Homans (Carney, et al., 2011) argued that forming a social bond, an affiliation, can be regarded as an accolade in social interactions. People are driven to become affiliated with others because it gives them support, company, and other perks. If workers become affiliated with their company, will be expected that is because they will benefit from the organizations and, in the meantime, give it some kind of revenue, which can be through the performance and less chances of leaving the organization.

It Is important that this feeling is created and cared for, since the moment a worker enters the organization and throughout their life at it. According to Edmondson (1999), affiliation is vital to organizations due to various reasons, like:

- Fosters a sense of belonging, making employees feel safe and that they are part of something bigger than their job.
- Sparks a sense of community, what favours collaboration, teamwork and partnership with others.
- Improves employee retention and corporate loyalty, due to workers sensing they are recognized and connected to the company.
- Prompts organizational cultural, thanks to sustaining all the needs and sensations, which can incite a pleasant workplace atmosphere and synchronization of objectives between the employees and the organization.

To ensure that there is a permanent sense of affiliation within the organization, it is important to determine that the organization is concerned with different aspects of the worker's life, and not only their job and task (Baumeister & Leary, 1995).

As reported by Steinman et al. (2020), it is highly important that leaders capacitate their teams, show consideration for their workers. Leadership behaviours are witnessed as effective when the actions are even with the job-demands and the team-members are involved in the decision-making processes.

Employees are more likely to surpass requirements and contribute to the organization if they have an affiliation-motivated leader, that is focused on building well-made relationships (Steinman et al., 2020). The role of leadership is decisive when talking about affiliation, which underlines the importance of considerate and empowering leadership behaviours.

It is significant that the organization is aware of the employee's well-being, how they are job embedded, and how they fit with the organization. Due to this, we postulate it is important to investigate how the power of affiliation shapes employees' well-being, job embeddedness, and the person-organization fit in the workplace setting.

Additionally, it is appropriate to explore how the presence of social support in organizations alters these fields and the imprint affiliation has on them. For example, Hill (1987) measured affiliation in four different parameters: emotional support, attention, positive stimulation, and social comparison.

These domains characterize how crucial it is to study affiliation considering the social support in organizational context. It is important that workers have a support system in the organization to back them up and assist them if it is necessary. Having the social support from their leaders and peers can contribute for workers to have a greater sense of affiliation.

Going forward in this review of literature, the primary understanding of affiliation will serve as keystone to inquire other fundamental notions. The ensuing sections will be developed further from this base, assessing the interplay between affiliation and other elements that configure the modern workspace. By placing importance on affiliation, we endeavour to disclose a clearer understanding of forming a cohesive, prosperous, and nurturing organizational surrounding.

2.5. What involves the relationship between Affiliation and Well-being?

As previously mentioned, well-being is a subjective matter (Schaufeli et al., 2016). However, the theories of hedonic and eudaimonic well-being can compile its various dimensions. Ryff et al. (2021) recaps it, describing the first as being based on the idea that well-being consists of maximizing pleasure and minimizing pain, and the second as well-being is achieved if people live a life of virtue and fulfil their purposes.

Based on Deci & Ryan (2008), the hedonic theory emphasizes that happiness exists because the positive alter is present, and the negative one is absent. Affiliation promotes positive relationships and social interactions, which can intensify the contentment and alleviate negative feelings. The hedonic idea envisions the human being only acquiring significance when

educated and established in a socio-cultural setting. Subsequently, affiliation sponsors associations with other people or groups, so we can claim that a sense of affiliation promotes community placement. In this manner, it can be explained how affiliations endorse hedonic well-being.

According to the same authors, the eudaimonic approach brings to the forefront that happiness comes from leading a life of virtue and achieving self-actualization. Affiliation covers a sense of belonging and valuable bonds, which are of utmost importance for individual growth and personal enlightenment. The eudaimonic philosophy comprehends the innate human characteristics can either facilitate or interfere in the attainment of fulfilment. While affiliation advocates the attainment of belongingness through human connections, eudaimonia draws attention to its differentiating role in attaining inner realization. By this means, the affiliation also upholds the eudaimonic well-being.

Belzak et al. (2017) summarizes the eudaimonic theory based on three other theories: Maslow's hierarchy of needs, Deci and Ryan's self-determination theory, and Ryff's theory of psychological well-being.

By combining these three doctrines, some ideas were drawn: meeting basic human needs enables an individual to reach their full potential. There are three psychological needs - competence, autonomy, and relatedness – that when are met set off six aspects (autonomy, positive relations, personal growth, purpose in life, environmental mastery, and self-acceptance), that in turn, supplement well-being and affiliation.

How each psychological need is related and can be applied to employee well-being and organizational affiliation is described below (Vansteenkiste et al., 2020):

- Competence is regarded as “the experience of effectiveness and mastery” (p. 3), feeling competent enables workers to achieve goals and to interact with others,

as they are confident in their own abilities, fortifying their self-worth and yielding a feeling of pride.

- Autonomy is perceived as the “experience of volition and willingness” (p. 3), when employees experience it, they will be more willing to take part in relations that are adjusted to their own zeal, and to go after pursuits and connections that address their needs and boosts their sense of direction and satisfaction.
- Relatedness stands for “the experience of warmth, bonding, and care, and is satisfied by connecting to and feeling significant to others” (p. 3), when people feel it, they are expected to establish meaningful ties and feel acknowledged in their social circles.

The Self-Determination Theory (Ryan & Deci, 2000) is a conjecture that aids in understanding the human motivation and personality. It asserts the significance of humans’ inner resources and behavioural self-regulation and highlights how the three psychological needs are vital for optimal functioning and well-being.

Maslow’s theory of human motivation (Maslow, 1943) also proves this. Graphed as pyramid (Figure 1), it shows if people have their physiological and safety needs secured, people will feel loved, like they belong, that they are esteemed, and they will be able to achieve self-actualization. Maslow says the pyramid must be seen as whole, since the base until the apex, all the faces must be noted as motivating factors and as reach points.

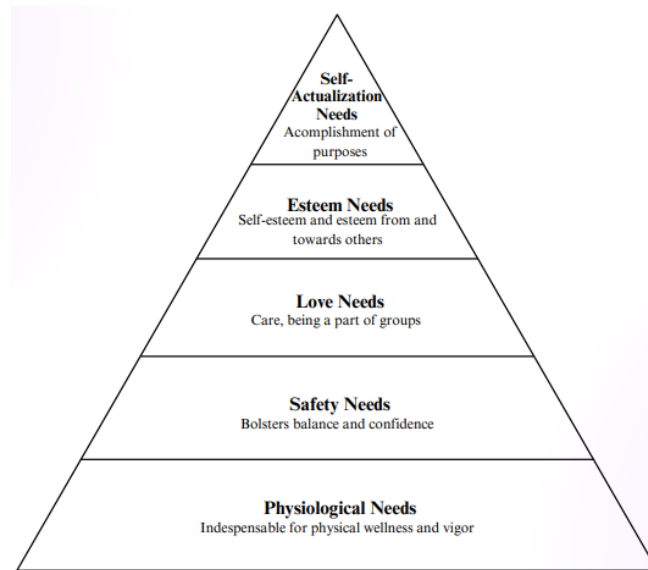


Figure 1 – *Hierarchy of Needs, based on Maslow's theory of human motivation (1943)*

Each level of Maslow's hierarchy impacts affiliation and employee well-being:

- Physiological needs must be satisfied because they are indispensable for physical health and stamina, and secure employees' ability to concentrate on work and social activities without the distraction of unmet necessities.
- Safety needs, must be attended as it cultivates a perception of stability and trust, boosting engagement and teamwork, whilst soothes stress and anxiety, promoting overall wellness.
- Love needs, must be met to promote a supportive company atmosphere, supporting workers to form meaningful connections, to alleviate isolation, and increase job satisfaction.
- Esteem needs must be addressed as it heightens workers' self-esteem and admiration from others, while fostering greater morale, inspiration, and fulfilment.

- Self-actualization needs ought to be satisfied as they enable employees to maximize their capacities and building a stronger connection to their roles and colleagues, while providing a profound sense of fulfilment, meaning, and well-being.

The relationship between affiliation and well-being can be encapsulated as feeling connected and prized at work has a great significance on the employee's happiness, motivation and overall wellness. When employees have a firm bond with the company they work at, they might feel more sustained and prone to succeed individually and in organizational terms (Martins Nunes et al., 2024).

According to Kirsten et al. (2022), people who present a bigger sense of affiliation tend to have greater well-being at work. This high sense of affiliation is expected from people that have more networking and have frequent social interactions. In the study carried out by the mentioned authors, it was concluded that “individuals higher in affiliation reported higher life satisfaction and lower levels of loneliness than individuals lower in affiliation” (p. 999) and that “highly affiliative individuals were more satisfied with their relationships than individuals scoring lower in affiliation” (p. 1004).

With these results in hand, it can be assured there is a relationship between affiliation and employee well-being. With this, the current study hypothesizes that employees' well-being is increased through a sense of affiliation. Thus, we hypothesize the following:

H6: A higher sense of affiliation with the organization positively influences employees' well-being.

2.6. Employee Well-being

Overall, social support tremendously impacts the sense of affiliation/employee well-being articulation. As discussed by Caesens et al. (2020), these ramifications are noted in the organizational context through multiple ways, such as the presence of a sense of belonging, reduced stress and improved health, higher job satisfaction and amplified organizational commitment, and positive work connections.

It is noticeable that the existence of a sense of affiliation might confer enrichment of social support in the organization, which in turn can subsidy employee well-being (Schachter, 1959). The perpetual presence of social support in a work context entails that, with the existence of a profound level of affiliation, there will be greater unity inside the organization which will largely contribute to the well-being of its members, thus aiding the entire organization. Therefore, we hypothesize the following:

H7: Social support positively influences employees' well-being.

Conceptual Model

We further present the conceptual model developed to guide and structure this research (Figure 2). The model was designed to illustrate the key concepts, variables, and relationships relevant to the impact of employee well-being, job satisfaction, and person-organization fit on affiliation. It serves as a theoretical model that frames the research questions and methodology, as it also ensures the alignment between the study's objectives, the data collection, and the analysis processes. By identifying the main elements and their interrelations, this conceptual model provides a visual and conceptual basis upon which the study is built.

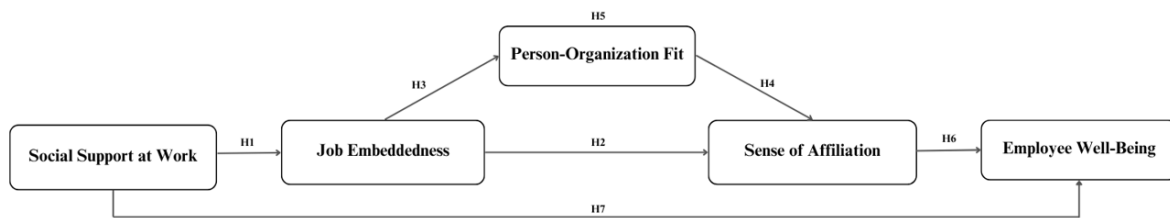


Figure 2 – Conceptual Model

CHAPTER 4

Methodology

In this section, we will assess the methodology that was used for data collection, the targeted population, and the measures that were used to delve into the sense of affiliation, employee well-being, job embeddedness, person-organization fit, and social support within the organization.

As in this study we intend to further explore how social support impacts employees' well-being, the effect of job embeddedness on P-O fit and on sense of affiliation, the role of P-O fit on the relationship between job embeddedness and sense of affiliation, and the influence of affiliation on employee well-being.

4.1. Procedure

It was chosen to use a quantitative approach as, according to Eyisi (2016), has numerous advantages, such as saving time and resources, allows generalizations, and enables replicability. The study is also correlational and cross-sectional in nature.

For the data collection, a survey was conducted (see Appendix A and Appendix B), in which we guaranteed the participants' privacy, anonymity, and confidentiality. In this regard, we did not collect any personal identifying information, and no items were used that could reveal or indicate the person's identity. The initial contact was via private messages to acquaintances that fitted the eligibility criteria, i.e., being over 18 years of age and working in the same company for at least 6 months. Additionally, a snowball method was implemented to broaden the sample, by asking those addressed in the first moment to share the survey with their companions that were also suitable to be inquired.

The survey had a brief introduction explaining the purpose of it, with reference to the inclusion criteria, the guarantee of confidentiality and anonymity, and the expected time response. It was followed by a mandatory question in which consent was given.

The survey was composed by thirty-eight questions divided into five categories (i.e., affiliation, well-being, job embeddedness, person-organization fit, social support received within the organization).

Each one of these questions were compulsory, and it was only possible to move to the next category after answering all the questions of the previous category.

Before concluding the inquiry, there were demographic information questions concerning the age, gender, organizational tenure, and the organization's business sector of the participants. In the final acknowledgements, a contact was provided in case participants had any doubts related to the survey.

4.2. Sample

Ultimately, the survey was conducted with a total of 204 participants.

The average age of the respondents is approximately 35 years old ($M = 35,5$; $SD = 11,59$), with 141 (69.1%) female and 63 (30.1%) male respondents.

With regard to length of service in the company where they currently work, 41 (20.1%) have been employed in the current organization for between 6 months and a year; 28 (13.7%) for between 1 and 2 years; 53 (26%) for between 2 and 5 years; 38 (18.6%) for between 5 and 10 years; and 44 (21.6%) for at least 10 years.

As for the organization's sector of activity, 1% (2 individuals) belong to the first sector, related to the extraction of natural resources (e.g. agriculture and livestock); 9.8% (20

individuals) to the second sector, geared towards industry; and 89.2% (182 individuals) to the third sector, focused on commerce and services.

4.3. Measures

All questions were to be answered on a Likert scale ranging from 1 to 5, with 1 meaning “*totally disagree*” and 5 “*totally agree*”.

Sense of Affiliation. It was measured through the adaptation of Silva Mendes (2019) (e.g., “*The members of my team maintain strong bonds with each other*”; $\alpha = 0,86$)

Employee Well-Being. This job-related variable was measured using the scale developed by Carochinho (2016). This scale comprises the following item: “*I feel attached to this organization*” ($\alpha = 0,85$)

Job Embeddedness. To measure job embeddedness, we adopted the scale developed by Crossley et al. (e.g., “*I feel attached to this organization*”; $\alpha = 0,93$).

Social Support at Work. To measure this variable, we used a scale that was originally developed by Pais Ribeiro in 1999, which was further adapted by the same author in 2011. One item-example is “*Even in the most embarrassing situations, if I need emergency support, I have several people I can turn to*” ($\alpha = 0,90$).

P-O fit. This variable was measured by the adoption of the scale set by Delgado (2011). One item that is comprised in the scale is presented as follows: “*I feel that my values are compatible or in line with this organization*” ($\alpha = 0,95$).

CHAPTER 5

Results

We propose a complex mediation model design to test the hypotheses. Prior to test them, we conducted a set of analyses, which are descriptive and correlational in nature, to understand the variables measured in the model.

5.1. Descriptive Analysis

As it is observed in Table 1, there are 204 ($N = 204$) valid responses that were used in the analysis, with all descriptive stats being based on the same set of participants. This sample was consistent across all the variables.

The values presented in the table follow a Likert scale of 1 to 5, with 1 being associated with a low score and 5 with higher score.

5.1.1. Minimum & Maximum

Minimum is the lowest observed score of each variable, and maximum is the highest observed score. The difference between the maximum and minimum is called as the range, it allows to understand the variability of the data points and to identify potential outliers.

The *Social Support at Work* observes a range of 3,79 (5,00-1,21), showing a substantial variation in the perceived support levels.

The *Sense of Affiliation* notes a range of 3,67 (5,00-1,33), also showing discrepancy of the affiliation feelings. The *Employee Well-being* reports a 3,30 range (4,90-1,60), suggesting more moderated responses than the previous variables, but not indicating the absolute best or worst well-being.

The *Person-Organization Fit* shows very dispersed experiences with a range of 4,00 (5,00-1,00), illustrating very distinct experiences, with some respondents being fully aligned and others entirely misaligned.

The *Job Embeddedness* also shows completely unlike connection levels with a range of 4,00 (5,00-1,00), suggesting some participants are totally disconnected at work and others fully embedded.

5.1.2. Mean

The mean (*M*) is the arithmetic average of scores, being interpreted as it follows. The participants rated the social support they perceive at work an average 3,80.

They report having an average 3,96 sense of affiliation towards the organization they work for, the variable with the highest mean. The employee well-being is rated as 3,73 by the respondents. The participants state an average of 3,50 when addressing the person-organization fit. They also report being embedded with their job an average of 3,12, with this being the variable with the lowest mean. It can be resolved that while the participants report a relatively high sense of affiliation, they picture a comparably lower embeddedness to their job.

5.1.3. Standard Deviation

The standard deviation (*SD*) displays how much scores spread from the mean, with small values indicating the data are close, while a high standard deviation indicates a greater variety of opinions.

The responses regarding *Social Support at Work* were consistent (*SD* = 0,72), what indicates a moderately and consistent sense of support.

Concerning *Sense of Affiliation*, it is slightly more varied ($SD = 0,80$) around the mean, show people felt connected in diverse ways. *Employee Well-being* presents the lowest dispersion ($SD = 0,65$), pointing out a strong agreement on well-being between the 204 respondents with narrow deviation.

With a much broader spread, *Person-Organization Fit* ($SD = 0,97$) suggest there is a mixed experience among the participants, with some strongly aligned and others strongly misaligned with the organization they work at.

Job Embeddedness displays the highest variability ($SD = 1,03$), what reveals there is significant differences in how embedded individuals fell in their jobs.

In sum, the data shows that there is, among the 204 participants, a moderate-high perceived social support at work, a high sense of affiliation, a positive well-being, a moderate person-organization fit, and lower attachment regarding job embeddedness, this being the variable that has the most divergent responses.

	N	Mi- nimum	Ma- ximum	Mean	Standard Deviation
Social Support at Work	204	1,21	5,00	3,80	0,72
Sense of Affili- ation	204	1,33	5,00	3,96	0,80
Employee Well-being	204	1,60	4,90	3,73	0,65
Person-Orga- nization fit	204	1,00	5,00	3,50	0,97

Job Em-beddedness	204	1,00	5,00	3,12	1,03
Valid N (from list)	204				

Table 1 – Descriptive statistics (N, Min, Max, Mean, and SD) for key variables in 2025 sample

5.2. Correlational Analysis

As it is displayed in Table 2, we can examine whether and how strongly the variables are related to each other, it is possible to know if a relationship exists between them.

Variables	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1. Social Support at Work	-								
2. Sense of Affiliation	,553*								
2. Employee Well-being	,358*	,356*							
3. Person-Organization Fit	,328*	,347*	,578*						

4. Job Embeddedness	,295*	248**	,582*	,609**					
5. Age (in years)	,085	,156*	,197*	,038	,238**				
6. Sex	,034	,071	,032	,008	,002	,050			
7. Tenure	,073	,066	,185*	,065	,269**	,665*	,063		
8. Work Sector	,078	,058	,050	,025	,044	,037	,169*	,084	

****.** The correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2 ends).

***.** The correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2 ends).

Table 2 – Pearson correlation coefficients among study variables (N = 204)

5.2.1. Social Support at Work

The variable *Social Support at Work* presents a moderate-to-strong correlation with *Sense of Affiliation* ($r = .553$; $p < .01$), meaning those who report higher social support tend to have a stronger sense of affiliation. It has a moderate positive correlation with *Employee Well-being* ($r = .358$; $p < .01$), showing social support is associated with improved well-being. With *Person-Organization Fit* ($r = .328$; $p < .01$), and *Job Embeddedness* ($r = .295$; $p < .01$), it presents low-to-moderate positive correlations, indicating social support is positively linked with how people

fit with the organization and how embedded they feel at their work. The correlations with *Age*, *Sex*, *Tenure*, and *Work Sector* ($|r| < .01$) are non-significant, implying there is little to no relationship.

5.2.2. Sense of Affiliation

The *Sense of Affiliation* presents moderated associations with *Employee Well-being* ($r = .356$; $p < .01$) and with *Person-Organization Fit* ($r = .347$; $p < .01$), suggesting that workers that picture having a strong sense of affiliation, are likely to have a greater well-being and fit with the organization they work at. With *Job Embeddedness* shows a lower correlation ($r = .248$; $p < .01$), but it is still significant, meaning how embedded people are at their job has an impact on how affiliated they are. It has a weak association with *Age* ($r = .156$; $p < .05$) but still having some significance on the people's affiliation with the organization. However, it has a smaller association with *Sex*, *Tenure*, and *Work Sector* ($|r| < .01$), what portrays that these individual characteristics don't play a significant role on employees' feeling of belonging.

5.2.3. Employee Well-being

Employee Well-being has a great correlation with *Person-Organization Fit* ($r = .578$; $p < .01$) and *Job Embeddedness* ($r = .582$; $p < .01$), suggesting that employees have a greater well-being when they identify themselves with the organization and are ingrained in their work roles. Although it is relatively weak compared with the previous correlations, *Employee Well-being* is positively associated with *Age* ($r = .197$; $p < .01$) and with *Tenure* ($r = .185$; $p < .01$), meaning that the employees age and for how long they work at the organization plays, in somehow, a role on their well-being. Alternatively, the *Sex* and *Work Sector* ($|r| < .01$) don't have influence on the well-being.

5.2.4. Person-Organization Fit

Person-Organization Fit is strongly linked with *Job Embeddedness* ($r = .609; p < .01$), implying that being in alignment with the values of the organization is reflected on how rooted workers are with their job. In contrast, *Age*, *Sex*, *Tenure*, and *Work Sector* ($|r| < .01$) don't play a significant part in P-O fit, thus, referring the personal and job-related factors have no impact on how people are aligned with the organization they work at.

5.2.5. Job Embeddedness

Job Embeddedness has a moderately low correlation with *Age* ($r = .238; p < .01$) and *Tenure* ($r = .269; p < .01$), indicating that how old or young people are and for how long they have been in an organization weights how embedded they are with their job. On the other hand, it is shown that there is not a meaningful association with *Sex* and *Work Sector* ($|r| < .01$), denoting that if a worker is a male or a female and if works in the first, second, or third sector, does not leverage how well-ingrained workers are.

5.2.6. Age, Sex, Tenure, and Work Sector

Age has a strong positive correlation with *Tenure* ($r = .665; p < .01$) as it was expected, because as age increases, tenure increases in accordance. With *Sex* and *Work Sector* ($|r| < .01$) does not resemble the same association as people's change of sex and work sector does not depend on their age.

Sex does not present a meaningful correlation with any other variable, only slightly linking with *Work Sector* ($r = .169; p < .05$), but not in a significant way.

Tenure does not have a significant correlation with other variables, however, present a marginally positive relation with *Work Sector* ($r = .169$; $p < .05$), what can indicate that workers of some sectors tend to stay longer in the organizations when compared with other workers' sectors.

5.3 Hypothesis Testing

To test our hypotheses, we conducted a series of linear regression models, but we also relied on a macro called PROCESS from SPSS (version 26). From this macro, we further conducted model 14 to test some of our hypotheses.

To test H1, which predicted that social support leads to job embeddedness, we conducted a linear regression model. Therefore, this hypothesis has not been rejected as there is a positive relation between social support and job embeddedness ($\beta = 1,52$; $p < 0,001$).

The second hypothesis concerned the positive linkage between job embeddedness and sense of affiliation. Results show that this direct relation is not statistically significant ($\beta = -0,11$; $p = 0,85$), therefore we reject H2.

H3 refers that a positive relation exists between job embeddedness and P-O fit. This relation is positive and significant, thus corroborating H3 ($\beta = 0,57$; $p < 0,001$).

Subsequently, H4 concerns the linkage between P-O fit and sense of affiliation, and this hypothesis has not been rejected as well ($\beta = 0,43$; $p = 0,05$).

H5 proposed that P-O fit plays a mediator role on the relationship between job embeddedness and sense of affiliation. This hypothesis has not been rejected ($\beta = 0,08$; IC95[0,012; 0,16]).

The sixth hypothesis proposed that a sense of affiliation leads to higher employee well-being. To test this, we conducted a linear regression model which shows that there is a positive and significant relation between sense of affiliation and employees' well-being ($\beta = 0,29$; $p < 0,01$), thus H6 has not been rejected.

Lastly, H7 concerns the direct effect between social support and employee's well-being. This effect has also been positive and significant ($\beta = 0,32$; $p < 0,001$).

CHAPTER 6

Discussion

The main purpose of this study was to investigate, using a quantitative approach, how social support within organizations influences employee well-being, by analyzing the effects of social support through job embeddedness, P-O fit, and the sense of affiliation of the employees.

Employee well-being is a multidimensional idea that evolves physical, psychological, and mental health, being fundamental to ensure satisfaction, comfort, and performance of workers (Schaufeli et al., 2016). Literature points out that favorable working conditions are determinant for well-being, and factors, such as sense of affiliation, play an important role in the process (Rhoades & Eisenberg, 2002).

Although some variables are linked to employee well-being, such as job embeddedness (Lee, 2014), person-organization fit (Biswas & Bhatnagar, 2013), and social support (Taylor, 2011), the role that sense of affiliation plays in this relationship is not fully understood. Thus, this investigation fills an important gap by proposing a model to explore how social support can lead to rooting in the workplace, which in turn can affect the fit between a person and the organization, and, subsequently, the belongingness, boosting the employee's well-being.

This framework is crucial for human resources managers to understand the underlying mechanisms of employees' well-being, and develop more effective strategies to improve satisfaction, retention, and productivity within organizations.

During the study, we sought to test a conceptual model that integrates these variables, through seven hypotheses that were previously presented.

The analysis provided enough empirical evidence to support H1, indicating that a higher social support at work positively influences job embeddedness. This line of thinking is

corroborated by Crossley et al. (2007), as the authors refer that social bonds build in the workplace solidify the employees' embeddedness to their job, by emphasizing that social bonds formed within the workplace are foundational elements that anchor individuals more firmly to their organizational environment.

Although the results do not confirm that a stronger job embeddedness enhances the sense of affiliation (i.e., H2), this perspective was formulated based on the standpoints of different authors, who state: in-person engagement fosters affiliation and job embeddedness (Miller et al., 2001); social support strengthens bonds and organizational attachment, enhancing embeddedness (Hoffman et al., 2023); support from the organization and its members enriches belonging and deepens integration, reinforcing retention (Caesens et al., 2020). Although no author directly mentions that greater integration in employment increases the sense of affiliation, this is implicit, and it is relevant to investigate this relationship in the future.

Additionally, the findings are consistent with the H3, confirming that a greater job embeddedness increases the person-organization fit. It is highlighted that, when both the employee and the organization highly value collectivism, their congruence fosters deeper integration into the workplace, with this mutual alignment ultimately strengthens the employee's embeddedness, that peaks when the individual's and the organization's collectivist orientations are both high and closely matched (Jing et al., 2021).

The relationship between person-organization fit and sense of affiliation is statistically significant, supporting H4. This is aligned with previous research stating that socialization tactics, like mentorship and insider support, allow newcomers to align with the organization's values and norms, paving the way for new recruits to adjust more smoothly and feel more integrated and connected, fostering a stronger emotional affiliation with the company (Cooper-Thomas, 2004).

The results also confirm H5, thus, there is evidence that person-organization fit mediates the relationship between job embeddedness and sense of affiliation. Socialization shapes how an employee's values align with those of the organization, which in turn enhances their emotional attachment and sense of belonging. As new members internalize organizational values, their embeddedness increases, and through that alignment, affiliation naturally strengthens (Cooper-Thomas et al., 2004).

H6 is supported by our evidence, thus confirming that a bigger sense of affiliation positively impacts on employees' well-being. When organizations show genuine concern for various facets of their employees' lives, it fosters a deeper sense of care and belonging, with this emotional bond contributing to a greater well-being. The more employees feel valued beyond their tasks, the more their well-being thrives, feeling holistically supported, not just as workers, but as people (Baumeister & Leary, 1995).

Lastly, the study confirmed that social support positively and directly influences employees' well-being (H7). Kirsten et al. (2022) refer how individuals with a strong sense of affiliation, often developed through supportive workplace relationships, enjoy better outcomes and bond strength. This calls attention to how social support acts as a vital component for emotional resilience, fulfilment, and overall employees' well-being, associating affiliation with a higher life contentment and easing loneliness.

6.1. Theoretical and Practical Implications

These results add to the advancement of knowledge about the phenomenon of well-being. Maslow's theory of human motivation (Maslow, 1943) shows that having physiological, safety, and love needs correspondents allows people to receive esteem and have self-esteem, and, consequently, accomplish their purposes.

Regarding Schaufeli et al. (2016), applying this reasoning to the work context, it can be understood how important it is to guarantee that all forms of the employees' well-being are met, thereby enhancing their well-being. By means of this investigation, we were able to prove that employees' well-being is increased when there is organizational identification and a feeling of connectedness between workers and the organization.

With this evidence, human resources managers can create more effective strategies that promote well-being in the work environment, like organizational approaches that provide mental health support, e.g. through offering access to counselling services or employee assistance programs to reduce stress and foster emotional resilience; fostering a positive work culture, e.g. cultivating inclusive environments that support social bonding and belonging, thus enhancing both hedonic and eudaimonic well-being; encouraging work-life balance, e.g. implementing flexible schedules and respecting personal time to meet autonomy needs and reduce burnout; supporting professional and personal development, e.g. providing learning opportunities and meaningful tasks that promote self-actualization; promoting physical health initiatives, e.g. ensuring basic physiological needs are met through ergonomic workspaces and wellness programs; and ensuring there is organizational support and transparency, e.g. maintaining open communication and shared decision-making to foster trust and relatedness.

All the above-mentioned tactics, strengthen the sense of affiliation, and amplify employers' well-being.

These practices and findings are relevant and useful for professionals and academics. Recalling recent literature, Martins Nunes et al. (2024) enhance how important is to have a favourable workplace environment in order to exist well-being among workers.

6.2. Limitations and Future Research

In spite of the fact that we were able to prove social support influences employee well-being, through the effects of social support through job embeddedness, P-O fit, and the sense of affiliation within organizations, the study had some limitations.

These limitations were primarily linked to the fact that the study was transversal in nature. While these types of investigations are suitable to understand the prevalence of some events, it presents some restraints.

In this case, we dealt with some shortcomings. We experienced a snapshot in time, because the survey only collected data from a single point in time and it couldn't capture the trends over time and in the population, as there was only one applicable survey and participants only could respond once, to prevent sampling and statistical *bias*. We also managed selection *bias*, as the sample may not reflect the characteristics of the larger population, because the survey was applied to a 204 individuals' sample, which is narrower population in comparison to the overall working population.

The data collection methodology was also a limitation of this investigation, having been applied a snowball method. While this type of method requires fewer resources, because participants help recruit others, reducing the time and effort needed to find them, and it takes advantage of existing social connections, which can increase the willingness to participate, it also presents some confines. Namely the next drawbacks: a sampling *bias*, since participants recruit others from their network, limiting diversity and the sample may not accurately represent the broader population, reducing generalizability of the results, resulting in lack of representativeness and over-representation of certain groups; it depends mostly on initial participants, and it is difficult to control how many people will answer through referrals; participants might be uncomfortable recruiting others, or sharing information about them, and,

as recruitment continues, people may be less willing to participate or recruit others, becoming more fatigated.

In regard to future investigations, other approaches can be relevant to be put into practice.

For instance, it can be included different variables in the conceptual model that are linked to employees' well-being and affiliation - like work environment, personal values and culture, personal and professional self-actualization, social relationships, and health *status* (physical and mental) -, as these factors consider physical, psychological, social, and environmental dimensions of workers' life. It is worth exploring how each of these parameters, or its multitude, act as an instrument for employers' well-being and/or sense of affiliation.

It can also be relevant to conduct a study, following a similar model, but with a longitudinal or experimental approach which draws causality between variables. It would be also interesting to target specific population, based on different criteria, in light of organizational work contexts, populations, and work sectors. For example: remote workers, to evaluate how the lack of in-person interactions affects the feeling of belonging and the well-being; multicultural teams, to understand how cultural differences can affect the perception of affiliation; high-stress position workers (as nurses, social workers, law enforcement officers, among others), to explore how constant high-stress tasks can compromise well-being and if the sense of belongingness acts as an attenuation factor for stress; employees with temporary contracts, as they can feel less stability, to comprehend how the established bonds affect the sense of belonging and motivation.

It can also be relevant to use a probability sampling method for the data collection to achieve a greater generalizability of the public, as every individual in the population has a known and non-zero chance of being selected and are not recruited by other participants. Thus,

making the results more applicable to a broader population. It can still be cost-effective, and it might prevent the homogenization of the target audience.

CHAPTER 7

Conclusion

Following the research's objective of trying to understand if a person who has a sense of affiliation, concerning the organization they work at, through discerning how social support shapes the employees' well-being, and how significant job embeddedness affects employees' feeling of belongingness through person-organization fit, the analysis led to the following conclusions.

The findings convey the aforementioned findings: organizational social support elevates job embeddedness; a stronger job embeddedness facilitates the sense of affiliation; a greater job embeddedness improves the person-organization fit; there is a significant relationship between person-organization fit and sense of affiliation; person-organization fit explains the relationship between job embeddedness and sense of affiliation; a bigger sense of affiliation positively impacts on employees' well-being; and social support at work favors employees' well-being.

These observations allow us to refine our knowledge about how non-physical and non-material subjects explain employees' attachment and bonds to their work, and the value it brings to the worker, but also to the organization itself.

Overall, these outcomes accentuate how prominent the social support, present within the work atmosphere, and job embeddedness are, regarding sharpening employees' well-being and building a sustainable and forward-looking organizational culture and environment.

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Appendices

Appendix A - Survey (English Version)

As part of my dissertation for a master's degree in Human Resources Management and Organizational Behaviour at ISCTE Business School, I would like to ask for your cooperation by filling in this questionnaire. All responses will be anonymous and confidential, and the data collected will be used exclusively for research purposes and analyzed in aggregate form. This questionnaire is intended for people over the age of 18 and with at least 6 months' work experience in their current company. It is estimated that the questionnaire will take approximately 10 minutes to complete.

Thank you for your cooperation!

I consent to the collection of data. []

Next, please indicate to what extent you agree with the following statements, using a **scale from 1 to 5**, where 1 means “*totally disagree*” and 5 means “*totally agree*”.

I. Affiliation - Silva Mendes (2019), p. 54 Q2.

1. The members of my team maintain strong bonds with each other. []
2. My team members value each other's opinions. []
3. My team members cooperate well with each other. []

II. Employee Well-being – Carochinho (2016), p. 43 Quadro 1

4. My work is interesting. []

- 5. My work gives meaning to my life. []
- 6. My work is creative, varied and stimulating. []
- 7. My work requires continuous learning. []
- 8. I enjoy my work. []
- 9. My work is monotonous, routine and boring. []
- 10. My job has given me independence. []
- 11. I have found support and affection in my work. []
- 12. My work is the most important thing to me. []
- 13. I am discriminated against at work. []

III. Job Embeddedness – Crossley et al. (2007), p. 1035 Table 2

- 14. I feel attached to this organization. []
- 15. It would be difficult for me to leave this organization. []
- 16. I'm too caught up in this organization to leave. []
- 17. I feel tied to this organization. []
- 18. I simply could not leave the organization that I work for. []
- 19. It would be easy for me to leave this organization. []
- 20. I am tightly connected to this organization. []

IV. Person-Organization Fit – Delgado (2011), p. 42 Quadro 1.4.

- 21. I consider that the values of this organization reflect my own values. []

22. The values of this organization are similar to my own values. []

23. I feel that my values are compatible or in line with this organization. []

24. This organization is compatible with me. []

V. Social Support within the Organization – Pais Ribeiro (2011), p. 22

Please answer the following items according to your work context.

25. Sometimes I feel alone in the world and without support. []

26. I don't go out with colleagues as often as I'd like. []

27. My colleagues don't come to me as often as I'd like. []

28. When I need to get something off my chest, I can easily find colleagues to do it with.

[]

29. Even in the most embarrassing situations, if I need emergency support, I have several people I can turn to. []

30. Sometimes I miss having someone really close who understands me and who I can talk to about intimate things. []

31. I miss social activities that satisfy me. []

32. I would like to participate more in the organization's activities. []

33. I am satisfied with the way I relate to the company I work for. []

34. I'm satisfied with the amount of time I spend with my colleagues. []

35. I'm satisfied with the number of friends I have at work. []

36. I'm satisfied with the amount of time I spend with these friends. []

37. I'm satisfied with the activities and things I do with my work colleagues. []

38. I'm satisfied with the type of colleagues I have. []

Lastly, I would ask you to fill in some demographic information:

- **Age:** ____ years
- **Gender:** [] Male; [] Female; [] Other.
- **Length of time in current company (tenure):** [] 6 months to 1 year; [] 1 to 2 years; [] 2 to 5 years []; 5-10 years []; More than 10 years.
- **Sector in which the company operates*:** [] First sector; [] Second sector; [] Third sector.

***First sector** – Extraction of natural resources (e.g. agriculture and livestock);

Second sector – Focus on industry; **Third sector** – Focus on trade and services.

Thank you very much for your participation! I believe that your response will make this study more complete. If you have any questions, I'll be happy to answer them via e-mail (madfc@iscte.pt).

Appendix B - Survey (Portuguese Version)

No âmbito da minha dissertação de mestrado em Gestão de Recursos Humanos e Consultoria Organizacional pela ISCTE Business School, venho por este meio pedir a sua colaboração através do preenchimento deste questionário. Todas as respostas serão anónimas e confidenciais, os dados recolhidos serão utilizados exclusivamente para fins de pesquisa e analisados de forma agregada. Este questionário destina-se a maiores de 18 anos e com, pelo menos, 6 meses de experiência de trabalho na empresa atual. Estima-se que o questionário demore aproximadamente 10 minutos a ser respondido.

Obrigada pela sua participação!

Consinto à recolha de dados. []

Seguidamente, por favor, indique em que medida concorda com as seguintes afirmações, utilizando uma **escala de 1 a 5**, onde 1 significa "*discordo totalmente*" e 5 significa "*concordo totalmente*".

I. Afiliação - Silva Mendes (2019), p. 54 Q2.

1. Os membros da minha equipa mantêm laços fortes uns com os outros. []
2. Os membros da minha equipa valorizam a opinião dos outros elementos. []
3. Os membros da minha equipa cooperam bem uns com os outros. []

II. Bem-Estar – Carochinho (2016), p. 43 Quadro 1

4. O meu trabalho é interessante. []
5. O meu trabalho dá sentido à minha vida. []

- 6. O meu trabalho é criativo, variado e estimulante. []
- 7. O meu trabalho exige uma aprendizagem contínua. []
- 8. Gosto do meu trabalho. []
- 9. O meu trabalho é monótono, rotineiro e aborrecido. []
- 10. O meu trabalho proporcionou-me independência. []
- 11. No meu trabalho encontrei apoio e afeto. []
- 12. O meu trabalho é o que tenho de mais importante para mim. []
- 13. No meu trabalho sou discriminado/a. []

III. Inserção no Trabalho – Crossley et al. (2007), p. 1035 Table 2

- 14. Sinto-me fortemente ligado/a à empresa onde trabalho. []
- 15. Seria difícil para mim deixar esta organização. []
- 16. Estou demasiado envolvido/a nesta organização para sair. []
- 17. Sinto-me ligado/a esta organização. []
- 18. Simplesmente não poderia deixar a organização para a qual trabalho. []
- 19. Seria fácil para mim deixar esta organização. []
- 20. Estou fortemente ligado/a a esta empresa. []

IV. Ajustamento Pessoa-Organização – Delgado (2011), p. 42 Quadro 1.4.

- 21. Considero que os valores desta organização refletem os meus próprios valores. []

22. Os valores desta organização são semelhantes aos meus próprios valores. []
23. Sinto que os meus valores são compatíveis ou estão ajustados a esta organização. []
24. Esta organização é compatível comigo. []

V. Apoio Recebido dentro da Organização – Pais Ribeiro (2011), p. 22 –

Reforçamos, por favor, que responda aos seguintes itens consoante o seu contexto laboral.

25. Por vezes sinto-me só no mundo e sem apoio. []
26. Não saio com colegas tantas vezes quantas eu gostaria. []
27. Os meus colegas não me procuram tantas vezes quantas eu gostaria. []
28. Quando preciso de desabafar com alguém encontro facilmente colegas com quem o fazer. []
29. Mesmo nas situações mais embaraçosas, se precisar de apoio de emergência tenho várias pessoas a quem posso recorrer. []
30. Às vezes sinto falta de alguém verdadeiramente íntimo que me compreenda e com quem possa desabafar sobre coisas íntimas. []
31. Sinto falta de atividades sociais que me satisfaçam. []
32. Gostava de participar mais em atividades da organização. []
33. Estou satisfeito/a com a forma como me relaciono na empresa em que trabalho. []
34. Estou satisfeito/a com a quantidade de tempo que passo com os meus colegas. []
35. Estou satisfeito/a com a quantidade de amigos que tenho no trabalho. []

36. Estou satisfeito/a com a quantidade de tempo que passo com esses amigos. []

37. Estou satisfeito/a com as atividades e coisas que faço com os meus colegas de trabalho. []

38. Estou satisfeito/a com o tipo de colegas que tenho. []

Por fim, peço-lhe que preencha algumas informações de carácter demográfico:

- **Idade:** ____ anos
- **Sexo:** [] Masculino; [] Feminino; [] Outro.
- **Tempo na empresa atual (antiguidade):** [] 6 meses a 1 ano; [] 1 a 2 anos; [] 2 a 5 anos []; 5-10 anos []; Mais de 10 anos.
- **Sector de atuação da empresa:** [] Primeiro setor; [] Segundo sector; [] Terceiro setor.

***Primeiro setor** – Extração de recursos naturais (ex. agricultura e pecuário);

Segundo setor – Enfoque na indústria; **Terceiro sector** – Enfoque no comércio e serviços.

Muito obrigada pela sua participação! Acredito que a sua resposta tornará este estudo mais completo. Caso tenha alguma dúvida, estarei disponível para esclarecer via e-mail (madfc@iscte.pt).

Appendix C – Pre-test of hypothesis

		N	%
Casos	Válido	204	100,0
	Excluídos ^a	0	,0
	Total	204	100,0

a. Exclusão de lista com base em todas as variáveis do procedimento.

Table 3 – Case processing summary

Alfa de Cronbach	N de itens
,902	14

Table 4 – Reliability statistics of social support's scale (Cronbach's Alpha)

Alfa de Cronbach	N de itens
,856	3

Table 5 – Reliability statistics of affiliation's scale (Cronbach's Alpha)

Alfa de Cronbach	N de itens
,852	10

Table 6 – Reliability statistics of well-being's scale (Cronbach's Alpha)

Alfa de Cronbach	N de itens
,927	7

Table 7 – Reliability statistics of job embeddedness's scale (Cronbach's Alpha)

Alfa de Cronbach	N de itens
,952	4

Table 8 – Reliability statistics of person-organization fit's scale (Cronbach's Alpha)

Appendix D – Test of hypothesis

Modelo	Variáveis inseridas	Variáveis removidas	Método
1	SUP ^b	.	Inserir

a. Variável Dependente: JEMB

b. Todas as variáveis solicitadas inseridas.

Table 9 – Analysis summary for social support variable entered and removed from the regression model, with job embeddedness as dependent variable

Modelo	R	R quadrado	R quadrado ajustado	Erro padrão da estimativa
1	,295 ^a	,087	,083	,98943

a. Preditores: (Constante), SUP

Table 9a – Model summary for social support variable

Modelo		Soma dos Quadrados	df	Quadrado Médio	Z	Sig.
1	Regressão	18,889	1	18,889	19,295	<,001 ^b
	Resíduo	197,752	202	,979		
	Total	216,641	203			

a. Variável Dependente: JEMB

b. Preditores: (Constante), SUP

Table 9b – ANOVA table for regression model predicting job embeddedness from social support

Modelo	Coeficientes não padronizados		Coeficientes padronizados	t	Sig.
	B	Erro	Beta		
1	(Constante)	1,524	,371	4,112	<,001
	SUP	,421	,096	,295	4,393

a. Variável Dependente: JEMB

Table 9c – Coefficients table for regression model predicting job embeddedness from social support

Modelo	Variáveis inseridas	Variáveis removidas	Método
1	AF ^b	.	Inserir

a. Variável Dependente: WB

b. Todas as variáveis solicitadas inseridas.

Table 10 – Analysis summary for affiliation variable entered and removed from the regression model, with well-being as dependent variable

Modelo	R	R quadrado	R quadrado ajustado	Erro padrão da estimativa
1	,356 ^a	,126	,122	,60770

a. Preditores: (Constante), AF

Table 10a – Model summary for affiliation variable

Modelo		Soma dos Quadrados	df	Quadrado Médio	Z	Sig.
1	Regressão	10,797	1	10,797	29,237	<,001 ^b
	Resíduo	74,598	202	,369		
	Total	85,395	203			

a. Variável Dependente: WB

b. Preditores: (Constante), AF

Table 10b – ANOVA table for regression model predicting well-being from affiliation

Modelo		Coeficientes não padronizados		Coeficientes padronizados		
		B	Erro	Beta	t	Sig.
1	(Constante)	2,596	,214		12,129	<,001
	AF	,287	,053	,356	5,407	<,001

a. Variável Dependente: WB

Table 10c – Coefficients table for regression model predicting well-being from affiliation

Modelo	Variáveis inseridas	Variáveis removidas	Método
1	SUP ^b	.	Inserir

a. Variável Dependente: WB

b. Todas as variáveis solicitadas inseridas.

Table 11 – Analysis summary for social support variable entered and removed from the regression model, with well-being as dependent variable

Modelo	R	R quadrado	R quadrado ajustado	Erro padrão da estimativa
1	,358 ^a	,128	,124	,60721

a. Preditores: (Constante), SUP

Table 11a – Model summary for social support variable

Modelo		Soma dos Quadrados	df	Quadrado Médio	Z	Sig.
1	Regressão	10,918	1	10,918	29,613	<,001 ^b
	Resíduo	74,477	202	,369		
	Total	85,395	203			

a. Variável Dependente: WB

b. Preditores: (Constante), SUP

Table 11b – ANOVA table for regression model predicting well-being from social support

Modelo		Coeficientes não padronizados		Coeficientes padronizados		
		B	Erro Erro	Beta	t	Sig.
1	(Constante)	2,515	,227		11,054	<,001
	SUP	,320	,059	,358	5,442	<,001

a. Variável Dependente: WB

Table 11c – Coefficients table for regression model predicting well-being from social support