

The relationship between organizational career management practices and entrenchment of civil servants: The role of career satisfaction

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Abstract

Background: The organization is changing the Human Resource Management procedures, because of the turbulent work environment. The strategies to attract and retain the employees are not efficient in Public Administration. The study aims to examine the moderator role of career satisfaction in the relationship between organizational career management practices and entrenchment of civil servants. **Method:** The research adopts a quantitative method, involving 105 civil servants. To test the H1 e H2 we performed Hierarchical Multiple Regression and to test H3 and the potential moderator role of career satisfaction we performed also the Multiple Hierarchical Regression. **Results:** The study support positively the H1 and H2 and partially the H3. However, the when the civil servants are satisfied in the career, the entrenchment tend to reduce because the organizational career management are corresponding to the employee's career expectation. **Conclusion:** The career satisfaction is high, when organizational career management practices are efficient which reduce the entrenchment of civil servants.

Keywords: career satisfaction, career development, career management, entrenchment of civil servants.

La relación entre las prácticas organizativas de gestión de la carrera profesional y el arraigo de los funcionarios: El papel de la satisfacción profesional

Resumen

Orientación: La organización está cambiando los procedimientos de Gestión de Recursos Humanos, debido al turbulento entorno laboral. Las estrategias para atraer y retener a los empleados no son eficientes en la Administración Pública. El estudio pretende examinar el papel moderador de la satisfacción profesional en la relación entre las prácticas organizativas de gestión de la carrera profesional y el arraigo de los funcionarios. **Método:** La investigación adopta un método cuantitativo, con la participación de 105 funcionarios. Para comprobar H1 y H2 se realizó una regresión jerárquica múltiple y para comprobar H3 y el posible papel moderador de la satisfacción profesional también se realizó una regresión jerárquica múltiple. **Resultados:** El estudio apoya positivamente las hipótesis H1 y H2 y parcialmente la H3. Sin embargo, cuando los funcionarios están satisfechos con su carrera profesional, el arraigo tiende a reducirse porque la gestión de la carrera profesional de la organización se corresponde con las expectativas profesionales de los empleados. **Conclusiones:** La satisfacción en la carrera profesional es alta cuando las prácticas de gestión de la carrera profesional de la organización son eficientes, lo que reduce el atrincheramiento de los funcionarios.

Palabras clave: satisfacción profesional, desarrollo profesional, gestión de la carrera profesional, atrincheramiento de los funcionarios.

Introduction

Currently, the organizations work in turbulent environments due to rapid social, political, economic and demographic transformations. For instance, the Covid-19 pandemic had negative impact in Human Resource Management (HRM). Many organizations designed new strategies to avoid massive layoffs, implementing flexible and sustainable Organizational Career Management (OCM) practices (Grimland, et al., 2012; Sirén, et al., 2018). Therefore, the HRM challenges are becoming the career more dynamic, unpredictable and complex, affecting the professional development and job satisfaction of civil servants. However, we recognize the scarcity of qualified employees in the Public Administration (PA). For this reason, the organizations are competing to attract and retain the productive people (Thunnissen & Buttiens, 2017). The OCM practices adopt innovative methods to value the employees as a critical and competitive resource (AbouAssi, et al., 2021; De Vos & Chambré, 2017; Hernández-Lechuga, 2019; Laer, et al., 2021; Redondo & Sparrow, 2019).

In the PA, the OCM practices are considered rigid and bureaucratic comparing to private sector (Piatak, 2019). However, the PA tends to appropriate the management models of private sector to become efficient and therefore enhance the satisfaction of public servants (Correia, et al., 2019; Piatak, 2017;). For this reason, the flexible OCM practices are replacing the bureaucratic matters to become OCM practices more flexible, dynamic and innovative, in order to ensure the professional development of civil servant's entrenchment (Saha, et al., 2017).

The Mozambican PA case, the New Public Management (NPM) principles have improved the HRM to become more attractive (Ayee, 2012; Simione, 2019). For example, the professional development is measured by new tools to assess the accountability, skills and productivity of civil servants. The innovative OCM practices aim to boost the satisfaction of civil servants. The Mozambican PA introduced new HRM National System and the Unique Salary Table to control and increase the rewards of civil servants.

Despite the innovations in OCM practices of Mozambican PA, we found some critical success factors such as financial constraints, causing career entrenchment. In this case, the OCM practices are not operate properly, facing some difficulties to attract, hire, select, develop and retain public servants (Awortwi, 2010). This fact happens with the implementation of austerity measures. For instance, the career freezing is the main measure taken to control the budget expenditures. Recognizing these assumptions, this study fills the gap in the literature by examining the role of career satisfaction in the relationship between the OCM practices and entrenchment of civil servants.

The contribution of this research is threefold. First, this study aim to support the OCM practices in PA, regarding to professional development of civil servants; Second, the theoretical contribution tend to examine the operationalization of OCM practices and the strategic issues used in PA to raise an organizational management culture, focused on the career development of civil servants; Third, the study brings some insights to propose the

reduction of turnover intention, dedicated to improve the OCM practices and the satisfaction of civil servants.

Literature review and hypothesis development

OCM Practices

The OCM practices are set of programs and activities that control the employee's career in organization, directed to attract, develop and retain the civil servants (Baruch & Perpeil, 2000; De Vos, et al., 2009). Likewise, the role of OCM practices addresses the talent retain and ensure the training at workforce to promote the employees' career satisfaction (Hernaus, et al., 2019). The results of the study of Dimba (2010) observe that the OCM practices promote the employee's commitment, ability and motivation. Holland, et al., (2007) points to career rewards and incentives as the main OCM strategies that improve civil servants' satisfaction and reduce turnover. Furthermore, Sullivan and Ariss (2019) indicate that the civil servants' productivity at work and the career growth depends on OCM practices. However, the organizational changes have turned the OCM practices to become more volatiles, reducing the HRM capacity to build up the professional development of civil servants (Bagdadli & Gianecchini, 2019).

Entrenchment of civil servants

The entrenchment has defined as psychological state, manifesting in immobility of civil servants in the career. It results on moral and economic investments done in career, which civil servants fear to lose (Rodrigues & Bastos, 2013; Scheible, et al., 2013;). For Zacher, et al. (2015) the entrenchment is analysed in the context of two prisms: satisfaction and dissatisfaction of civil servants. On one hand, the employees satisfied with the career remain in the organization because of the benefits they receive. On the other hand, the civil servants dissatisfied in their careers are immobilized because they have not alternatives to leave the organization. They fear to lose the status and investment done in the career (Rodrigues & Bastos, 2012) (Oliveira, et. al., 2020; Wilson, et al., 2016;). The OCM practices play a key role in promoting organizational strategies to control career entrenchment (Carson & Carson, 1997; Lima et al., 2015). In this case, we conceive the following hypothesis:

H1: The OCM practices are positive related to entrenchment of civil servants.

Professional Development

The professional development is one of the OCM practices connected to Strategic Human Resource Management (SHRM). It consists of planning activities to meet employees' career expectations to improve the performance at workplace (Watts, 2000). Furthermore, it provides opportunities for training and career advancement (Jayasingam & Yong, 2013). The civil servants can be high committed when they benefit from professional development (Chong & Leong, 2017). In the PA context, the professional development depends on OCM practices. However, the progression for civil servants is rigid and depend on a complex hierarchical structure. The results of the study by Soares and Mosqueira (2021) show that OCM practices have a positive influence on professional development,

job commitment and negative to turnover intention. In this way, we propose the following hypothesis:

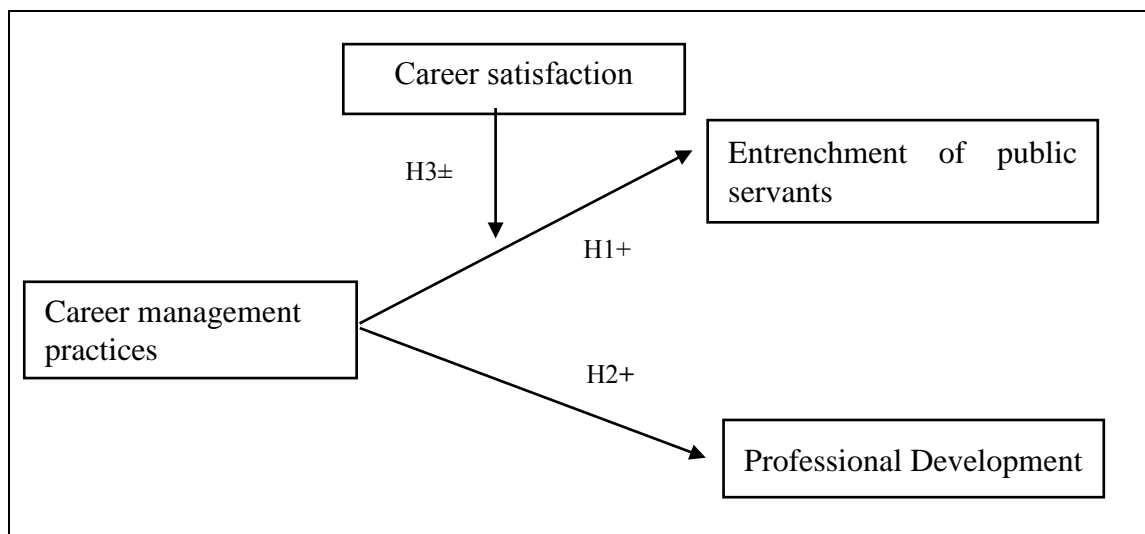
H2: The OCM practices are positive related to professional development of civil servants.

The role of career satisfaction

The career satisfaction refers to the feelings of the employees concerning their job and the positive attitudes regarding the rewards (salary, benefits and career advancement opportunities) (Dries, et al., 2008). The valorization of civil servants' performance at work, is the way to strengthen the career satisfaction (Oliveira, et al., 2019). This is a subjective indicator that is at the origin of career success. The satisfaction results from the civil servant's remuneration and incentives (Spurk, et al., 2015). The results of Andrade and Salessi (2020) indicate that job satisfaction has a positive impact on organizational commitment and is negatively related to turnover intention. Singh (2018) found the negative relationship between OCM practices and turnover. In this case, the OCM practices support public servants, concerning the training, and career progression. The study of Oliveira et al. (2019) concludes that career satisfaction is positively related to perceived organizational support. The OCM practices promote the job satisfaction and career success of civil servants. Therefore, we propose the following hypothesis:

H3: The career satisfaction moderates the relation between the increase of OCM practices and entrenchment of civil servants. Following, we conceive the structural hypothesis model.

Figure 1: Conceptual model of research.



Method

Participants and procedures

The sample were composed by 105 civil servants from Mozambique (58,1% male and 41,9% female). The age of participants varied between 23-56 years ($M=33,8$; $DP=5,8$) and the experience from 3-30 year. The average of job experience was 9,17 years, with $SD=4,88$. Concerning education, 50.8% of the participants completed middle school and 49.2% high school. The survey was conducted in Mozambique. The research was also authorized by Angoche District Government, after submitting a formal request letter. The questionnaire was distributed to 120 civil servants in opaque envelope to guarantee the anonymity and confidentiality of the information. Then, we explained the purpose of the research and its contribution to PA. Each envelope was coded to hide the identity of the civil servants. We received 105 completed questionnaires corresponding to 87,5% ($n=120$).

Instruments

For data collection, we used the survey contain 45 questions. This survey was previously translated from English to Portuguese. A five-point response scale was used ranging from Strongly Disagree to Strongly Agree.

Measures

OCM practices. We used the scale validated by Baruch and Peiperl (2000), containing 20 items. The Cronbach's Alpha was 0.70. This scale was also used by Singh (2018). The results demonstrated the relationship between OCM practices and the organizational commitment ($\beta =-.10$, $p<.05$). The study of De Vos and Chambré (2017) has also used the same scale to assess the relationship between organizational support and career development. The Cronbach's Alpha was 0.81.

Career Entrenchment. To measure the career entrenchment, we used the scale developed by Blau (2001), consisting of 20 items and the Cronbach's Alpha was 0.89. The results of the three factorial models (career investment, emotional costs and limitation of alternatives) demonstrated the following results: $\chi^2(5) = 4.42$, $p>.05$; $GFI = .989$; $AGFI = .961$; $RMSR = .019$. This scale was used in other studies and obtained Cronbach's Alpha of 0.84 and 0.86, respectively (Scheible et al., 2013; Zacher, et al., 2015).

Professional Development. We used the scale adapted from London (1993), contains 17 items. The Cronbach's Alpha was 0.89. One of the examples used in this scale was "Do your supervisor assess your performance?" The study of Day and Allen (2004) used the same scale and obtained positive results, concluding that OCM practices are positively related to rewards ($r=.46$, $p <.001$), effective employee performance ($r=.42$, $p <.001$) and career success ($r=.39$, $p <.001$).

Career Satisfaction. We used the scale validated by Spurk et al., (2015) containing 06 items. One of the examples found in this scale is "I am satisfied with my career progression". The factor analysis confirmed the appropriateness of the scale for all

participants (X^2 values: physicists=14.10; economists=6.66; engineers=8.45 and teachers=10.47).

Results

Descriptive statistics and correlations

The Table 1 presents the Mean, Standard Deviation and Pearson's Correlation of the variables. The results revealed a positive and significant correlation between OCM practices, entrenchment of civil servants and professional development ($r = .57, p < .001$); ($r = .73, p < .001$). The career satisfaction also showed a positive correlation with OCM practices ($r = .52, p < .001$).

Table 1

Means, standard deviations, and Pearson correlations.

	M	DP	1	2	3	4	5	6
1. Age	33.80	5.86						
2. Job Experience	9.17	4.88	.87**					
3. OCM practices	3.31	.58	-.16	-.16	.04			
4. Career entrenchment	3.06	.75	-.30**	-.22**	.07	.57**		
5. Professional development	3.14	.73	-.14	-.10	.02	.73**	.64**	
6. Career satisfaction	3.38	.68	-.00	-.05	-.04	.52**	.39**	.47**

Correlation is significant at the 0,01 (2 extremidades).**

Correlation is significant at the 0,05 (2 extremidades).*

Hypotheses testing

To test the positive relationship between OCM practices and entrenchment of civil servants (H1) and to professional development of civil servants (H2), we performed Hierarchical Multiple Regression (Enter Method), with the adjustment of the regression line to the least squares technique and the regression coefficient fixed. The correlations between the variables are positive and significant (Table 1). The regression results were confirmatory of H1 and H2. The model had a good fit ($\beta = .57, p < .001$) for H1 and ($\beta = .48, p < .001$) for H2. The result supports the H1 e H2.

To test H3 and the potential moderator role of career satisfaction in the relationship between the increase of OCM practices and entrenchment of civil servants, we performed Multiple Hierarchical Regression, using the statistical program Process V.4.0 of Andrew Hayes, added to SPSS version 27. We also process the data using model 1, based on bootstrapping for 5000 observations or resampling. The interval of confidence was 95%. The results show partial relationship of H3 ($\beta=0.15$; 95% CI [0.00;0.29], $t=2.04, p<0.05$) which demonstrate that when the civil servants are not satisfied in their career, the relationship between OCM practices and entrenchment is significant ($\beta=0.27, 95\%$ CI [0.13;0.40], $t=3.91, p<0.01$). When the career satisfaction is on intermediate levels, the relationship between OCM practices and entrenchment of public servants becomes moderated ($\beta =0.39, 95\%$ CI [0.25;0.53], $t=5.71, p<0.01$). The relationship between OCM

practices and entrenchment is good when the career satisfaction is high ($\beta = 0.47$, 95% CI [0.28;0.65], $t=5.12$, $p<0.01$).

Discussion

The purpose of this study is to examine the moderator role of career satisfaction in the relationship between OCM practices and entrenchment of civil servants. However, we recognize that empirical studies in Mozambican PA for this topic are scarce. Despite, our results support the H1. The empirical evidence provides some insights about the career growth of civil servants, which depends on OCM practices (Scheible et al., 2013; Soares & Mosqueira, 2021). Furthermore, the OCM practices comprise a wide range of HRM activities, that boost the career planning and the professional development of civil servants. It is also a key factor to implement the HRM policies oriented to career development of civil servants. Baruch and Peiperl (2000) identify five different practices, such as career planning, job posting (recruitment and selection), mentoring, training and career appraisal. These practices serve to manage talents and add to the well-being of civil servants at work (Baruch, 2003). However, the OCM practices in the PA is considered unattractive, because of the entrenchment of civil servants, which remains big problem (Soares & Mosquera, 2021). In this case Zacher et al., (2015) points out the low rewards as a HRM constraint in PA, because it reduces commitment and productivity at workplace. Meanwhile, it is important to refer that OCM practices are operating in context of budget reduction, without strategic view and in an *ad hoc* mode. Although, we assume that the entrenchment of civil servants continues to be a critical success factor, because it immobilizes the career growth. Thus, the civil servants feel dissatisfied at the workplace, which lead to turnover intention.

The results of this study also confirms the H2, which corroborate to the study of Rahman et al (2016). This author affirms that OCM practices are positively related to professional development. In this case the civil servants are a valuable resource of the organization competitiveness (Chen, et al., 2004). The OCM practices, according to De Vos et al., (2009), establish a positive relationship with the psychological contract of civil servants. The professional development by perceptions of internal employability. In the PA, the supervisor or colleagues play a role, helping other civil servants to improve the skills at workplace (Soares & Mosqueira, 2021). As such, the OCM practices are considered crucial, because are responsible to attract, retain and develop the civil servants.

The H3 is partially confirmed. The results of this study corroborate to Kong et al. (2020), to which career satisfaction has a positive relationship to OCM practices and organizational commitment. These practices enrich the effectiveness of HRM, becoming more flexible in response to the career expectations of civil servants. In addition, Bonneton, et al. (2019) believe that career success of civil servants results from the efficiency of OCM practices. In this way, Eby, et al. (2005) found that career satisfaction moderates the relationship between OCM practices and SHRM planning. Thus, the career planning serves to predict the OCM practices in order to reinforce the job satisfaction. Singh (2018) concluded that career satisfaction is positively related to OCM practices and negatively to turnover intention. Our result support that the career satisfaction moderates the OCM practices, controlling the entrenchment of civil servants. In sum, this discussion brings a

reflexive issue of the civil servant's feelings concerning the OCM practices, entrenchment and career satisfaction.

Conclusion

The purpose of this study is to examine the moderator role of career satisfaction in the relationship between OCM practices and entrenchment of civil servants. The results obtained are closer to provide some insights with a view to understand the civil servants work environments. We believe that the findings provide practical interventions in OCM practices and open potential view to mitigate the adverse aftermaths of the entrenchment of civil servants and professional development. Besides, we noted that the OCM practices need to reinvent the strategies in the PA to enhance the career satisfaction, reducing the entrenchment level of civil servants.

The findings of this study support the H1 and H2. The career satisfaction as a moderator plays an important role in OCM practices and the entrenchment of civil servants. Meanwhile, the job satisfaction is high, when OCM practices are efficient which reduce the entrenchment of civil servants. However, the satisfaction of the civil servants continues to be one of the big problems in HRM of PA. This fact results from dysfunctions of OCM practices, such as the budget constraints and career freezing. Indeed, we can conclude that the job satisfaction of civil servants is low and the entrenchment by dissatisfaction of civil servants is high as consequence of inefficient of OCM practices in Mozambican PA.

Limitations and future research

We recognize the limitations of this study. The first one concerns the development of this study in Mozambican public context. So, the findings are applicable to Mozambican civil servants. The second is related to the scarcity of literature in the Mozambican PA. Even so, this study serves to inform other research both in Mozambique and in other Portuguese speaking countries, regarding the moderating role of career satisfaction on the relationship between OCM practices and entrenchment of civil servants.

Therefore, we suggest the future research to analyze the data using the Structural Equation Modelling, with AMOS package, to explain in deep the moderator role of career satisfaction. However, we recommend other researchers to measure the turnover intention, career adaptability and organizational commitment to understand the OCM practices in Mozambican PA. Furthermore, the relationship between career entrenchment and organizational commitment is topic to be developed in the future trends. We also suggest exploring the perception of the PA managers to understand how OCM practices can enhance the career satisfaction of civil servants. Despite the limitations of this study, the findings provide empirical evidence, supporting the OCM practices and the entrenchment of civil servants.

Theoretical Contributions

This study brings some contribution to literature in two ways. First, it presents a theoretical overview on the OCM practices, career satisfaction and entrenchment of public servants. The main assumption addresses a comprehensive framework, regarding the HRM

in the public administration. The findings obtained allow to understand the role of career satisfaction as moderator in the relationship between OCM practices and the entrenchment of public servants. Second, we highlighted that the entrenchment occurs when OCM practices are not efficient and the career development of public servants is not satisfactory. Thus, this study may influence the managers making decision to guarantee the career effectiveness, enhancing opportunities for career growth.

Practical Implications

This study has some implications for HRM in the public administration. First, we believe that the findings contribute to encourage the managers to operationalize strategies to attract, retain and develop the career of civil servants. Furthermore, this study add value in terms of OCM practices, because highlights the flexibility of management to reduce the entrenchment of civil servants and turnover intention. The OCM practices are responsible to design strategies to improve the commitment of civil servants and then increase the productivity at workplace. This fact ensures the motivation of public servants, enhancing the career satisfaction. Otherwise, we believe that this study brings some changes of the OCM practices from traditional management to modern. The findings contribute to improve the level of commitment of civil servants.

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