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Organizational climate and its influence on employee's commitment to companies – a case study in Portugal

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Abstract

Organizational climate affects employee commitment and thus influences turnover. Because the environment of organizations is adaptable to various factors, including the social context and its norms, we identified relationships of commitment and leadership with the organization. The objective of the study was to understand the organizational environment and its influence on employee satisfaction and to verify whether there is a positive correlation between commitment and turnover. A quantitative approach was used; a questionnaire was applied to 85 individuals, aged 16–90, with market experience in Portugal, of which 49.4% were male and 50.6% were female. The results did not corroborate the expected correlation. Commitment decreases with an increase in the intention to leave due to employee dissatisfaction and lack of motivation, which then leads to an increase in turnover. It is necessary to improve communication and leadership to improve the organizational climate and increase employee commitment, thus reducing turnover.

Keywords: Commitment, Motivation, Organizational climate, Satisfaction, Turnover, Employees.

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1. Introduction

Organizational climate refers to the environment experienced and felt within a company [1]. For companies to achieve effective and efficient results, they need a positive organizational climate, which increases employee satisfaction and productivity. If the organizational climate is tense, toxic and pressured, this can lead to demotivation and lack of organizational commitment, resulting in low productivity. Interpersonal relationships are a lever for transmitting feelings

and emotions, which creates an environment dependent on employee satisfaction and well-being. Managers and supervisors play an important role in highlighting the organizational climate, as communication and leadership style can change the climate for good or for bad.

This study arose out of an interest in understanding how individuals perceive organizational climate that exists in their work environment and verifying whether they also experience organizational commitment. This illustrates whether they commit with the organization, and if a lack of commitment lies behind turnover. We thus investigate whether there is a positive correlation between commitment and turnover and the impact on organizational satisfaction. We focused on the problem encountered that gave rise to the initial questions:

- a) What is the impact of organizational climate on commitment and its influence on turnover?
- b) What type of relationship exists between organizational climate and employee satisfaction?

The general objectives focused on answering the research questions, while the specific objectives of this study were to analyse the impact of leadership, employees' expectations of the organization and vice versa, and to check whether there is relationship with quality of life and work—life balance.

As the studied sample on the population is linked with the activity on the tourism sector, which creates a specific work environment due to seasonal reasons on the industry, nevertheless the study is still an initial and exploratory approach to the theme, considering the research line will be continued further [2].

2. Literature Review

This point will be dedicated to a literature review, where it will be possible to analyse the different perspectives of different authors and compare them. Starting from general concepts to more specific ones, we seek to understand its philosophy and its importance in the organizational environment [3].

It is divided into five aspects: first on the organizational climate, which has as subpoints the organizational climate vs. organizational culture and organizational climate indicators. The second point develops organizational commitment and has two subpoints: the three-dimensionality of organizational commitment and the influence of commitment on the psychological contract. The third point will address turnover, with the subpoints being absenteeism and presenteeism. The fourth point refers to motivation and the fifth point refers to organizational satisfaction [4].

According to Coda and Bergamini [5] the word climate has Greek origins from klima, which designates tendency and inclination. Administrative theories compared organizations to living organisms with needs and shortages that must be met. Following this reasoning, the tendency or inclination guides the organization to meet organizational and personal needs, which translates into data that measures the organization's effectiveness.

The organizational climate is characterized by the fusion of the psychological and social environment within an organization, considering this to be the driving force behind employee behavior. The concept of organizational climate represents a broader aspect of the influence of the environment than motivation [1].

The organizational climate encompasses a domain over a set of different individual assessments in the work environment that can be analyzed in a multidimensional way [6].

An organization is made up of a group of people with similar values and different personalities and when it promotes organizational climate actions it has a broad impact with different intensities [7].

According to McClelland [8] the organizational climate is determined by the types of management applied and the different leadership styles, and through the organizational structure, in order to guide the behaviour of employees.

According to Martins and Siqueira [9] the organizational climate relates perspectives to expectations, which characterizes the environment, norms and activities of a given organization.

Organizational culture represents a set of essential conjectures developed and structured in a continuous process of collective learning to resolve socio-emotional conflicts, enabling employees to act in the most correct way within the company [10].

As noted by Cameron [11]:

(...) each culture is generally reflected by unique language, symbols, rules and ethnocentric sentiments... An organization's culture is reflected by what is valued, dominant leadership styles, language and symbols, procedures and routines, and the definitions of success that make an organization unique. (p. 219).

Individuals within the organization are faced with a process of adaptation to the organization's policies and values, as Reto and Lopes [12] point out when looking at this issue: "they simultaneously produce the conditions for learning new norms and values" (p. 182).

Groups within the company that share the same relationship with the production process, power distance, specific department objectives, generate specific strategies to integrate into the company's reality. Subcultures emerge from methods of learning norms and values shared by each sector in the development of their activities [13].

The management of organizational culture based on diversity, indispensably addresses the presence of subcultures, being a management opposite to traditional management, proving to be the only one coherent with the development of the modern individual and the social responsibility that the organization carries out [14].

To understand whether employees are satisfied and feel good within the organization, a climate analysis is carried out. This analysis serves to highlight the strengths and weaknesses of each employee, such as different levels of satisfaction [15].

According to Luz [16] the organizational climate is abstract, and to analyse it, here are some indicators:

a) Turnover – is characterized by the entry and exit of people, excessively. It demonstrates a lack of commitment, and it appears that employees do not have their needs met.

- b) Absenteeism symbolizes the lack of satisfaction with the work environment, resulting in recurrent absences.
- c) Performance assessment means the level of productivity of employees, but when low productivity is found it corresponds to a lack of motivation, commitment or the existence of personal problems.
- d) Strikes when employees carry out strikes, they demonstrate a lack of satisfaction with the conditions of the organizational environment.
- e) Interpersonal and interdepartmental conflicts this is a very important indicator of the organizational climate, therefore, if conflicts occur frequently, it determines the environment, characterizing it as toxic or healthy.
- f) Complaints in medical services when employees go to a medical office, whether company or public, they take advantage of this moment to demonstrate their dissatisfaction with the physical and mental conditions of work, in excess they turn into mental or physical illnesses that impact the environment organizational.

These indicators help diagnose the organizational climate, which enables the formation of strategies to improve working conditions [17].

In this study, it was decided to translate organizational commitment into organizational commitment, despite other authors such as Nascimento, et al. [18] translate organizational commitment into organizational commitment in the adjusted survey in Portuguese by Meyer and Allen [19].

In the Portuguese dictionary Porto Editora, he considers that commitment is an agreement between the parties, which includes a decision and a mutual adjustment. Commitment is characterized when both parties commit to and demonstrate responsibility for this agreement. Another translation in the dictionary of commitment is engagement. In this way, the construct of commitment will be used, as it involves the two concepts mentioned above: commitment and commitment [20].

Organizational commitment is determined by employee attitudes and the level of loyalty, becoming a transaction of behaviours aimed at organizational well-being [21].

In the same line of reasoning, organizational commitment stands out due to the designation that "... the strength of identification of an individual with a particular organization and with their participation in it. So, conceptually, it can be characterized by at least three factors: i) a strong conviction and acceptance of the organization's objectives and values; ii) a willingness to exert considerable effort for the benefit of the organization; iii) a strong desire to remain a member of the organization" by Mowday, et al. [22].

The author Etzioni [23] was one of the first to categorize organizational commitment, which demonstrates the level of agreement that individuals actively apply to the organization's norms [24].

Individuals are divided into three different categories that characterize the type of behavior or attitudes within the organization: I) moral – they demonstrate that they are aligned with the values, goals and norms of the organization, they simultaneously follow the guidelines in an intense and active way and identify themselves with her; II) calculating – is defined by the less intense relationship between the organization and individuals. Individuals value the relationship with the organization for allowing advantages and being fair in the rewards gained for recognition of their work; III) alienating – characterized by the authority of norms, in which employees follow guidelines in a limited way, as there are negative instructions regarding coordination.

According to Macário, et al. [25] commitment is revealed through the influence on the attitudes and behaviors of individuals within the company, demonstrating its impact through attendance, intention to leave the company, attitudes in situations of change, social responsibility behaviours and organizational performance or productivity.

Positive attitudes and behaviours demonstrate a high degree of commitment to the organization [26].

According to Pinto [27] companies must perform the function of managing work and creating tasks that give meaning to their employees. By verifying the existence of this concern, personal fulfilment develops in individuals, as increased dedication, commitment, happiness and well-being contribute to greater results for the company.

For Mowday, et al. [22] characterized unidimensional organizational commitment. According to Angle and Perry [28] through their practical study OCQ (Organizational Commitment Questionnaire) divided into two categories, one of which assesses the desire to remain in the company and the other values the support of employees to achieve organizational goals.

The methodology will have the following points: type of study, data collection and analysis instruments, characterization of the population and sample, procedures and data analysis [29].

More recently according to Makarius, et al. [30] the organizations must create an appropriate environment for talent management, in order to improve the commitment level and consequently reduce the turnover rates.

3. Methodology

The methodological approach used in this study is supported by Lancaster [31]; Saunders and Tosey [32] and Townsend, et al. [33]. The present study followed a quantitative approach using statistical techniques to measure the variables. It is a descriptive study that details the characteristics of the population sample or demonstrates relationships between variables. Data were collected through a questionnaire survey; it also followed a cross-sectional approach, as it was carried out at a specific time and was not experimental (i.e. the variables are measurable). In our study, we sought to answer the following research questions:

- a) What is the impact of organizational climate on commitment and was is its influence on turnover H1?
- b) What relationship exists between organizational climate and employee satisfaction H2?

The data collection method was the preparation of a questionnaire. This was adapted to the study, being supported by the article, Ecosystems of Healthy Workplaces (EoHW): Assessment Instruments for Healthy Workplaces, by the authors Gaspar, et al. [34] consequently it was adapted for this study. The intention was to collect data with assertive questions in

the areas of study: organizational climate, commitment and turnover, with scientific support and validated in the Portuguese work context.

The questionnaire consists of five sociodemographic questions and 35 study-specific questions, divided into the following dimensions: Communication with two questions, the Commitment dimension consists of twelve questions, the Well-Being dimension has seven questions and the Psychosocial Environment (in which it relates the content of the work with leadership) has thirteen questions and at the end an open question was asked about suggestions for improvement, the research instrument was been applied during the first half of 2024 and the sample is related with people of the industry in the Algarve region from several companies.

To facilitate data interpretation, a Likert scale from one to five was used, cited by Da Costa Júnior, et al. [35] making it possible to analyse from two perspectives, where between one and five is totally disagree/totally agree or never/very frequent.

Data collection was aimed at all individuals who have experience in the job market. We ensure the confidentiality of all responses and data obtained. For data processing, the Jamovi statistical analysis program was used.

The instrument used was a questionnaire applied for the appropriate research questions. Although the data collected are interesting for the study, not all of them will be analyzed as they demonstrate statistical values that are irrelevant to the study.

Only the variables with the greatest statistical relevance for the study will be analyzed, in which they determine the results promoting the final conclusions. On the other hand, these results will show the answer to the starting question, which you can corroborate or not. Data collection targeted all individuals with experience in the job market, aged 16–90, as one is legally allowed to work in Portugal starting from age 16. We ensure the confidentiality of all responses and data obtained. For data processing, Jamovi statistical analysis software was used.

Although the data collected are interesting for the study, not all were analyzed as they demonstrated statistical values indicating irrelevance to the study.

Only the variables with more significance in terms of frequency and correlation have been considered.

As we understand leadership as a key point and related with the main management actions promoted, as communication activities, we are expecting a specific reaction of the individuals inquired.

The present study had 85 participants, of which 50.6% were female (43 individuals) and 49.4% were male (42 individuals). Most (94.1%) were of Portuguese nationality, although 4.7% were Brazilian and 1.2% Cape Verdean. Regarding academic qualifications, 14.1% of individuals had reached the 9th year, 40% had completed the 12th year or high school, 31.8% had a bachelor's degree and 14.1% had a master's degree. Most (80%) only had one job, 10.6% were student workers and 9.4% had at least two jobs.

To verify the questionnaire, we carried out a pre-test to check if there were any grammatical errors or vocabulary that was difficult to understand and control the time it would take to answer. The questionnaire was circulated from 17 May to 6 June 2024.

For sampling, a link to the questionnaire created in Google Forms was disseminated shared on social networks (Instagram and Facebook), via private message or via WhatsApp, which made it possible to reach the national territory. It was also disseminated by email to university institutions throughout Portugal.

4. Results

This section presents the most relevant results for the study to determine whether the main questions/objectives are corroborated by the study. We analysed the following specific elements: the impact of leadership; employees' expectations of the organization and vice versa; and quality of life and work—life balance.

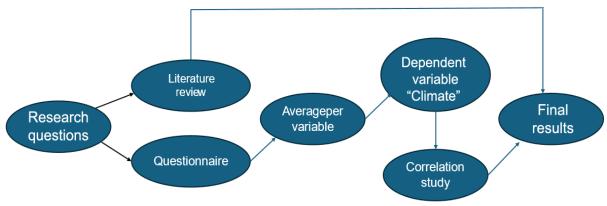


Figure 1. Conceptual framework.

The results are based on the analysis of the study variables with the sociodemographic variables.

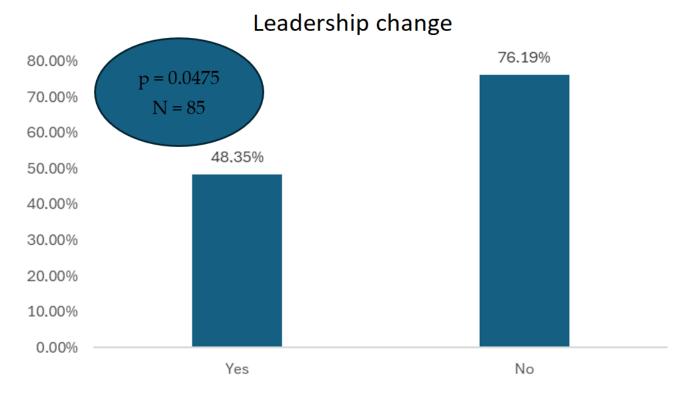


Figure 2. Relationship between employees and management.

We performed a Pearson $\chi 2$ test to analyse two independent variables in a contingency table and check whether the unpaired observations are independent of each other Silva, et al. [36]. Considering that the significance $\alpha = 0.05$ (5%) we rejected the null hypothesis, as the p is low, and we accept the alternative hypothesis in which there is a difference between the distributions as can be H2 considering a better organizational climate according to employee satisfaction level. Through the two variables analysed, we found that 76.19% of participants do not feel empathy for their boss and consider it important to change their boss. Nearly half (48.35%) of participants feel empathy for management as a whole, however, and do not consider it important to change.

Table 1. Correlation matrix

Variables/Scores		Age	Malaise	Communication	Commitment	Leadership
	R - Pearson					
	gl					
	N					
Age	p - value					
	R - Pearson	-0.36113				
	gl	83				
	N	85				
Malaise	p - value	0.0007				
	R - Pearson	0.05841	-0.24870			
	gl	83	83			
	N	85	85			
Communication	p - value	0.5955	0.0217			
	R - Pearson	0.31103	-0.50534	0.65074		
C	gl	83	83	83		
Commitment	N	85	85	85		
	p - value	0.0038	0.0001	0.0001		
	R - Pearson	0.1379	-0.54166	0.65142	0.65187	
	gl	83	83	83	83	
	N	85	85	85	85	
Leadership	p - value	0.2082	0.0001	0.0001	0.0001	
How often do you think	R - Pearson	-0.33828	0.53844	-0.59002	-0.65207	-0.54401
about leaving the	gl	83	83	83	83	83
company	N	85	85	85	85	85
	p - value	0.0015	0.0001	0.0001	0.0001	0.0001

Source: Performed by the authors based on research data.

5. Discussion of Results

In Table 1 we analyze the significant correlations between the variables of age, malaise, communication, leadership and turnover. We use the Pearson correlation (r) coefficient ranging from -1 to 1. The sign indicates the positive or negative direction of the relationship, and the value indicates the strength of the relationship. To determine a perfect correlation (-1 or 1) the score of one variable can be determined if the score of the other variable is known. Zero-valued correlations do not show a linear relationship between variables [37].

Dancey and Reidy [38] classify coefficients r = 0.10 to 0.30 as weak, r = 0.40 to 0.60 as moderate and r = 0.70 to 1 as strong – that is, the closer the coefficient is to 1, whether positive or negative, the stronger the correlation and the greater the degree of linear statistical dependence between the variables.

To interpret the results, we used reliability analyses for each score or variable, which are found in the study. The mean scores were around 3, with the malaise score being the lowest mean score, at around 2. The commitment score presents a moderate negative correlation with the malaise score (r = -0.50534), so that those who feel less commitment feel greater discomfort within the organization. The observed moderate correlation is statistically significant at the 1% level and 99% confidence, given that p is low (p < 0.0001). Both variables present moderate variability in the dispersion of responses, and the average commitment score is higher than the malaise score.

The leadership score has a moderate negative correlation with the malaise score (r = -0.54166), given that if the leadership applied is not effective, it increases malaise within the organization. The moderate correlation is statistically significant at the 1% level and 99% confidence, given that p is low (p < 0.0001). The leadership variable has high variability, or a large dispersion of responses, and the malaise variable has moderate variability or some dispersion in responses. The leadership average is higher than the malaise average.

The turnover variable ("How often do you think about leaving the company?") presents a moderate positive correlation with the malaise variable, as there are many individuals who intend to leave the organization and feel great discomfort within of the organization (r = 0.53844). The correlation is significant at the 1% level and 99% confidence, given that p is low (p < 0.0001). The turnover variable presents high variability, with great dispersion in responses, and the malaise variable has moderate variability with some dispersion of responses. The average of the turnover variable is greater than the average of malaise.

The commitment variable has a moderate positive correlation with the communication variable, given that commitment increases when communication increases between employees and managers (r = 0.65074). The correlation is significant at the 1% level significance and 99% confidence, given that p is low (p < 0.0001). The commitment variable has high variability, with a large dispersion in responses, and the communication variable has moderate variability with some dispersion of responses. The mean of the commitment variable is greater than the mean of the communication variable.

The leadership variable has a moderate positive correlation with the communication variable (r = 0.65142), which suggests that well-applied leadership in the organization improves communication between employees. The correlation is significant at the 1% level and 99% confidence, given that p is low (p < 0.0001). The leadership variable has high variability, with a large dispersion of responses, and the communication variable has moderate variability, with some dispersion of responses. The mean for the leadership variable is slightly lower than the mean for communication.

The turnover variable has a moderate negative correlation with the communication variable (r = -0.59002). We found that the individuals who most intend to leave are those who experience the most communication difficulties within the organization. The correlation is significant at the 1% level with 99% confidence (p < 0.0001). The turnover variable has high variability, with a large dispersion of responses, and the communication variable has moderate variability, with some dispersion of responses. The average of the communication variable is greater than the average of the turnover variable.

The leadership variable has a moderate positive correlation with the commitment variable (r = 0.65187), which suggests that well-applied leadership increases the level of commitment of individuals. This was significant at the 1% level and 99% confidence (p < 0.0001). Both variables present moderate variability with some dispersion in the responses, with the mean of the commitment variable being greater.

The turnover variable has a moderate negative correlation with the commitment variable (r = -0.65207). Individuals who demonstrate a greater intention to leave have less commitment to the organization. Again, this was significant at the 1% level, with 99% confidence (p < 0.0001). The turnover variable has high variability, with a large dispersion of responses, and the commitment variable has moderate variability, with some dispersion of responses. The average commitment score is higher than the mean for the turnover variable.

The turnover variable has a moderate negative correlation with the leadership score variable (r = -0.54401). Individuals who intend to leave the organization consider that the applied leadership is not following the best strategy. This, too, was significant at the 1% level, with and 99% confidence (p < 0.0001). Both variables have high variability with a large dispersion of responses. The average leadership score is greater than the average mean for the turnover variable.

Table 2. Contingency table.

Job satisfaction							
How people feels organizational climate		No	Yes	Total			
No	Observed	18	9	27			
	%	66.67%	33.33%	100.00%			
Yes	Observed	8	50	58			
	%	13.79%	86.21%	100.00%			
Total	Observed	26	59	85			
	%	30.59%	69.41%	100.00%			

Source: Performed by the authors based in research data.

In Table 2 we relate a variable on organizational climate with satisfaction using a Pearson chi-square test to analyse two independent variables. We found that 66.67% of participants are not aligned with the organization and are not satisfied with their work. 86.21% said they feel satisfied and feel aligned with the organization.

5.1. Other Studies and Considerations

Considering current trends in studies on organizational climate, the development of research models stands out, as well as instruments that bring together as many dimensions of analysis as possible, which are consensual for different types of organizations, such as public and private organizations, or related to different economic sectors. However, the big question that revolves around this objective is: "how to create research strategies that have greater inter-organizational generalization power and, at the same time, build instruments that are sensitive in evaluating characteristics of the organizational climate that are directly associated with the cultural elements specific to an organization?"

Faced with such a challenge, the complexity of investigating the organizational climate is not restricted to the apparent paradox of searching for a general and/or specific dimensionality for the phenomenon. A second contemporary and no less challenging trend is centered on carrying out studies to make the concept of organizational climate clearer and more specific, in light of other organizational constructs that are directly associated with it. In this case, the great difficulty in defining the organizational climate, including in operational terms, concerns the fact that the dimensions that constitute the climate can be characterized, in turn, also as unique constructs that can be evaluated independently. The attribute "leadership", for example, is one of the most evaluated dimensions when investigating the climate of an organization. However, leadership is a construct in itself, also made up of descriptors supported by theories that focus on the description of the construct.

Therefore, the organizational climate construct, as it is related to the theoretical knowledge produced on the topic of leadership, ends up constituting an attribute dependent on the assumptions that were developed within the scope of each leadership theory.

6. Conclusion

This study sought to determine if there is a positive correlation between organizational climate, commitment and turnover, and the results contradicted this idea.

The results demonstrated a negative correlation in response to the starting question (What is the impact of organizational climate on commitment and what is its influence on turnover?). There is a negative influence between organizational climate and commitment; individuals who feel poorly in the organization have less commitment to the organization. Commitment has a negative impact on turnover, and in analyzing the negative correlation between the two, we found that the level of commitment decreases when turnover increases. Commitment is determined by attitudes and the level of loyalty, ultimately involving behavioral transactions [21]. In the study, we measured commitment through the level of loyalty, in which individuals do not intend to leave the organization, as they are in tune with the organizational climate. From the analysis of the results, we concluded that the majority characterized the company's environment as healthy and tense, but the percentages of those who considered it toxic and mild were very close. This factor should be considered to understand the origin of tension in the work environment. Communication within the organization has a significant impact on commitment and turnover, because if communication is not clear and there is no exchange of feedback, the level of commitment decreases and the intention to leave the organization increases.

In response to the second research question (What relationship exists between organizational climate and employee satisfaction?), we found that there is a positive correlation between organizational climate and employee satisfaction. Individuals who feel that the organizational climate is good are satisfied, while individuals who are not satisfied do not feel that the organizational climate is good. According to Castro [39] the creation of a climate of satisfaction within the organization arises from the extrinsic motivation that results from the organization's values, mission and vision.

In addressing the secondary objectives, we found that leadership has a significant impact on commitment and turnover. If leadership is not adequate, the level of employee commitment decreases and turnover or intention to leave the organization increases. According Gil-Monte and Peiró [40] satisfaction in the work environment has a factorial perspective and these values are linked to the intrinsic origin of satisfaction, deriving from leadership style and organizational direction, among other factors. The study revealed that it is important to choose a good leader and invest in a motivation strategy to retain talent, as this is how the level of turnover decreases and commitment increases.

The expectations of employees withing the organization are exceeded and met according to the study carried out, although most individuals considered that the existing benefits did not meet their needs.

The last specific objective was to determine quality of life and work—life balance. We concluded that most employees are unable to maintain a balance between their professional and personal lives. This factor is important and must be developed in organizations. The present study aligns with that carried out by Robbins, et al. [41] who highlighted that employees with a higher level of job satisfaction demonstrate lower rates of turnover and absenteeism.

The answers to the open-ended question highlight interesting ideas to apply to organizations and make them evolve. These included:

- Training according to employees' needs.
- Team building and solidarity events.
- Fair promotions according to merit and skills.
- Reformulate administrative structures in organizations that present problems.
- Choose a new leader according to the context of the organization's sector.
- Plan the week with short meetings on Monday mornings.
- At least twice a year, dedicate a few days to demonstrating the company's results and showing that the organization values its employees.
- Improve the means of internal communication to increase clarification.
- Recruit and select people aligned with the organization's objectives, mission, vision and values.

It is necessary to motivate employees and create stronger emotional relationships to retain talent within the organization and improve the organizational climate. Leadership and communication factors need to be considered to increase the level of commitment and reduce turnover.

Only to reenforce our idea of performing an initial study on the subject, that for sure needs more research for the future, but in this case our main contribution can be provided for the utility and suggestion of management actions for the studied organization and leadership team.

6.1. Limitations to the Study

This study has some limitations that could lead to future research. The survey was applied to all individuals who have experience in the job market, so it was a a generalized study with general resolutions. This study could also have been carried out in an organization to understand the real problems in that context based on organizational climate, commitment and turnover. It would be interesting to do interviews with management and administer a questionnaire to employees to compare the two perspectives. Indeed, this was the initial idea for the study, but we were unable to follow this course and had to change the context of the study. The type of questions asked in the questionnaire ended up conditioning and limiting the analysis, so for the future research actions we will apply with more general sample and several organizations employee's population on the sector and on the region.

6.2. Future Research Lines

This study demonstrated that it would be interesting to understand the type of motivation that employees prefer. Future research could seek to understand the relationship between the psychological contract and presenteeism and absenteeism. Another suggested line of research would be examining the relationship between applied leadership style, the level of employee commitment and turnover and how the type of leader influences the organizational climate and can lead to organizational success.

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