

The importance of perceived organizational support, from the point of view of human resources. Case study "PAPADOPOULOU SA"

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ABSTRACT: *The present project dealt with the very important concept of perceived, organizational support, which involves 3 basic dimensions: perceived justice, HRM practices and the employee manager relationship. After a critical analysis of the relevant theory and the interpretation of the findings, in regard to the company "PAPADOPOULOU SA", the following conclusions were drawn:*

- *The business be moving successfully, at the POS level*
- *The business has a rich history (full of difficulties, controversies, etc.), which seems to be utilized both in terms of brand image development (communication messages, values that are displayed, etc.), but also internally. What is mentioned on its website is "on point", in terms of the findings of*
- *scientific management. It is one of the few Greek companies that can be considered to have understood the deep thoughts and consideration, of the modern scientific management and HRM.*

In the business, some suggestions for improvement are recommended, but it should be emphasized that its external success (market shares, profitability, etc.) is not accidental, as it seems that it has managed diligently its working environment / climate and the variables that are considered internal. The dimensions of performance are not so easily separated: the internal dimensions are considered as important as the external ones, as it has been found in a multitude of researches that successful companies are favored by the adoption of a long-term orientation. This is the subject of this paper, in essence. The perceived support that an employee perceives may not "mean much" to the average executive of a business, but it seems to be an extremely important concept at the academic level. Business that focus on similar, "soft" concepts seem to be gradually gaining ground, surviving, and gaining competitive advantage through a series of ways that primarily address the ability to create, transfer, and utilize organizational knowledge.

KEYWORDS: organizational support, human resources, reward, Papadopoulos SA, attribution, reciprocity.

INTRODUCTION

According to the theory of organizational support (Eisenberger & Stinglhamber, 2011; Shore & Shore, 1995), employees tend to develop general perceptions about how organizations value their contribution, their overall presence and are also interested in their well-being.

Therefore, employees, as they enter an organization, tend to begin to quantify (among other things), 2 central variables. The first concerns their offer, or what they consider to offer to the organization as a whole. This component is not easily measurable, as they can “indulge” in fields that can be difficultly measurable, such as the concept of psychological support, their improving of the office climate etc. (the subjective contribution of the average worker, cannot be involved, as opposed to all the above)

These can be fundamental issues in relation to the concepts of performance / talent management. It is very difficult to accurately measure the substantial/ critical contribution / influence of an employee in a joint effort. An endless effort may be required, where data from the immediate supervisor, colleagues, the results of the corporate performance appraisal survey, etc. will be taken into account.

One thing that can be argued is this: as the above can be very abstract concepts, Scientific Management has found ways to reduce variability by developing concepts (such as the psychological contract) where multilevel concepts of supply evaluation and employees thoughts, can be understood through other concepts, such as the employers brand.

For example, an organization that has a consistent employers brand, and therefore signals specific promises (at the level of a psychological contract), can recruit employees who will tend to be more precise in what they expect from the organization and in relation to those that are considered significant features, at the level of individual performance.

The second component concerns what each employee receives as rewards, internally or externally (salary, development opportunities, material means of supporting his/her work, etc.). As pointed out, there is a continuous, complex comparison of these 2 variables, in each employee. Of course, it is not at all simple, as in between those, exists a multitude of variables (individual, organizational, based on comparison, etc.), which affect the result.

The concept of perceived, organizational support (or POS here after), is a key component of producing perceived, work value (from the employee's point of view and in relation to his work). It is a key factor, from which the idea/ attitude or feeling of job satisfaction can arise. In essence, it concerns the extent to which an employee considers his or her work within the organization to be respected and be seen as important. But it is not so simple, as it concerns the extent to which the organizational capabilities have

been recognized and valued or whether the capabilities of an employee are considered worthy of investment by the organization (they can contribute to future success).

It has therefore attracted considerable academic interest, as the importance of adopting the above perspective has been understood as very important: the relationship between employees / organizations from the perspective of employees. Also, the clarity of the conceptual structure of the concept has been considered important, as well as the strong links, between the concept of POS and emotional, organizational commitment, job satisfaction, etc.(Kurtessis et al., 2015).

A meta-analytic review by Rhoades and Eisenberger (2002) showed that the following research relationships, in terms of concept, are in place:

- POS dimensions seem to be the perceived, organizational justice, HRM practices, and perceived immediate supervisor support
- Consequences/results relate to both outcomes at the level of attitudes (such as organizational commitment and satisfaction)
- as well as variables related to work behavior, such as work performance

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OST theory (Organizational Support Theory) is based on the attribution theory, where the average person deals with the difficult issue of interpreting causal relationships between important variables of his life, or simply grouping the information he/she gathers, in order to proceed to important judgments / evaluations and the theory of Self-enhancement. It has also been studied extensively in the recent years (Aselage & Eisenberger, 2009; Baran, Shanock, & Miller, 2012; Eisenberger & Stinglhamber, 2011; Wayne et al., 2009).

The modern success of a organization seems to depend to a great extent on the ways it manages internally and strategically, the final transition to the level of achieving high quality. Modern organizations must be able to constantly upgrade and evaluate the ser the products they produce.

To be more precise, it can be emphasized that today even in the field of products marketing, the main elements of the ongoing “battle” refer to more and more quality and abstract concepts, Now, all organizations tend to be able to produce the same product, potentially.

They may not have the same bargaining power, or they may not enjoy the same economies of scale, but competitive advantage is no longer based on productive knowledge. Competitive advantage is becoming more and more abstract and qualitative in nature (as opposed to quantitative, or measurable). Also, innovation now concerns not only the achievement of efficiency at the level of production but also the production of a modern product / service, which may transcend new values to the average consumer

(at the level of utility, self-knowledge, strengthening his self-identity, social relations, etc.).

Every industry and organization must be able to recognize consumer trends in a timely manner and be able to anticipate them and respond thoroughly to them. At the micro level, every organization must recognize the trends that concern the organization itself and manage them properly. As much as it's thought to be the era of technology, this may be far from the truth. In every technology, inputs are managed by humans, and the results are interpreted by human also. The role of human resources is more important than ever, as there has been a "productive equality" and a huge gap in the level of customer experience. This means that potentially all companies can produce the same product, more or less, but they may not be able to offer the same user experience. To achieve this, unlimited knowledge, is needed, which is very difficult to obtain/capitalize and transfer. This knowledge is not about buying a new technology or product. This knowledge is about the development of the proper, internal conditions that can lead to knowledge creation and transfer (Nonaka, 1995). Therefore, modern organizations compete rather in terms of knowledge and skills to fruitfully utilize the available technology.

Perceived Organizational Support (POS)

Eisenberger and Rhoades (2002) emphasized that perceived organizational support reflects employees' beliefs about how organizations support their work and their well-being. Meanwhile, Wendel (1994) defined the concept as all things related to the deployment of mutual help and strong bonds between colleagues, including the feelings of need that are created between supervisors and subordinates. Robbins (1996) said that it should come as no surprise that for most employees, perceived support and positive relationships lead to satisfaction. Davis (1985) argued that being involved in an organization and its goals is both emotional and mental. The concept that is studied, therefore, can be understood as the perceptions / feelings of the employees, that their organization is interested in them and their personal development. Their well-being of course, has to do with the quality of the relationships they develop, in the job environment.

Strauss and Sayles (1990) argued that there are 3 critical dimensions of the concept, which are:

- The development of a sense of perceived approval / acceptance, from the perspective of employees
- Building quality relationships, between supervisors / subordinates, based on a common sense of trust. In this way, employees' issues can be resolved systematically and effectively
- The existence of employee perceptions of fair treatment

Fleishman and Harris (1992) argued that the issue with copying with the concept, can be how the organization will provide the appropriate support that meets the needs of

employees. According to Mintzberg (1973) (in Sofo, 1999), this can be done interpersonally (through the development of strong relationships, etc., through the information reinforcement of the various roles) so that employees know better what is expected of them, or through "determination", where employees understand the strategic dimensions, such as resource allocation, etc.

Necessary ingredients for creating a healthy work environment.

A work organization is like a human organization. For it to work well, all the organs must cooperate well with each other. In other words, for a work organization to function well and be successful, all employees must equally work together as effectively as possible. To achieve this, healthy relationships must be built between employees with the appropriate components of a cohesive and effective team which are:

✓ Respect

A fundamental ingredient in building strong working relationships is respect. Respect is not only a necessary element for a good working relationship, but for any relationship in general. Respect is earned and not imposed

✓ Trust

Trust, once established, is a very important element in building strong working relationships. According to research, those who work in a work environment characterized by trust have 74% less stress, 100% more energy, 50% more efficiency, 76% more engagement, 29% more satisfaction and 40% less chance of burnout.

A manager, in order to create trust, must show interest in the long-term goals of his team, give feedback to your colleagues often and prioritize individual discussions, because in this way a climate of empathy is cultivated.

✓ Psychological safety

According to Google's "Project Aristotle", psychological safety is proving to be a very important factor in enhancing work relationships and by extension employee performance as it can help individuals and organizations thrive.

All these behaviors build strong bonds with colleagues in a work environment where potential feelings of anxiety, criticism and rejection give way to mutual safety, support and encouragement.

✓ Meaningful communication

The way you communicate may change from time to time, but whatever the change, nothing can replace human contact. Because meaningful communication is what helps the deepening and cultivation of relationships between colleagues

Predictors of POS

Predictors fall into three main categories, treatment by organizational members, quality of employer-employee relations, and working conditions - HR practices

Characteristic of the study of POS and its predictors is the tendency of employees to personalize the actions of their supervisors as actions of the organization itself (Eisenberger, Huntington, Hutchison, & Sowa, 1986), which reinforces the construction of a psychological contract between the two parties. Especially if the treatment (Treatment by organization members) is favorable, the positive orientation towards it is strengthened.

In order to strengthen the POS of its employees, management must make clear the voluntary nature and benevolent purpose of favorable treatment, but also the external constraints to which it is subject and unable to improve adverse conditions.

Predictors include perceptions of procedural (opacity) or distributive (resource allocation) justice of organizational policies and working conditions (autonomy, pay) (Murthy, 2017).

Also, the support received by the employees is important, because it is related to the quality of the working relations (Employee-organization quality) between superior and incumbent, which is reinforced by its negative correlation with work conflicts and task conflicts. It seems that support from leadership is a stronger predictor than support from colleagues

In an organization with increased POS, there is more consistency, even in how different tasks will be performed.

In the last category of predictive factors, are the working conditions and human resource practices (Human resource practices and job conditions), which can include the (fair) reward-recognition system and opportunities for decision-making and development. As concluded from their research Eisenberger et. al. (1997), workplace situations that are under employee control are positively related to POS.

Consequences of POS

POS according to social exchange theory increases employees' positive orientation toward the organization, promoting a sense of duty, trust, and the expectation that their effort will be rewarded. This implies a greater identification with the organization and a favorable orientation even towards the work object itself, which will lead to pleasant work experiences and an increase in interest in the work itself.

Therefore, POS is positively related to predicting work engagement (Caesens, Marique, Hanin, & Stinglhamber, 2015) and its three dimensions (vigor, commitment, absorption) (Kinnunen, Feldt, & Makikangas), as well as with

a number of other positive attitudes and behaviors at work. In their research, Sulea et al found that their positive association can lead to a strengthening of organizational and a reduction of counterproductive behaviors.

The sense of self-efficacy can mediate their relationship and act as a positive influence on the well-being of employees and on the performance of their roles outside of their duties.

For the employee, POS contributes by increasing his job satisfaction, elevating his positive mood and reducing stress

Interpersonal

Interpersonal relationships are an important factor for cooperation and teamwork within a business. Mutual understanding, trust and mutual support in the workplace are essential elements for the performance and well-being (financial and psychological) of both the employees and the entire company.

As Housel mentions, the characteristics that a person must possess in order to be considered a team player and be able to create a positive interpersonal relationship are to be kind, supportive, grateful, helpful, respectful, cooperative, be reliable, communicate openly and be positive about change and learning.

On the contrary, a person who gets in the way, does not take on roles beyond those officially assigned, is a source of unfounded rumors (gossip), does not cooperate, has aggressive behavior and cares only about his personal growth and success, is probably a person who will only be harmful within a business, unable to create productive interpersonal relationships.

It is the responsibility of the leadership to control the behaviors of the employees, to direct them to their positive side, and even to predict them, by correctly evaluating the candidates during the personnel selection process. What is needed is proper planning and proper selection of people for each task, creation of the right conditions (support, rewards, work environment, etc.) that will facilitate the desired behaviors, as well as continuous training.

The first impression⁵⁴ formed of a person in his work environment affects the perception of people and plays an important role in the development of good interpersonal relations with his colleagues and in his professional development

Eisenberger, Huntington, Hutchison and Sowa (1986) argued that the theory of POS is primarily of psychological nature and is based on fundamental rules of reciprocity and the creation of relationships / bonds based on mutual investment and the development of responsibility, from the perspective of employees. In relation to the above, it should be understood that the competitiveness of modern organizations is directly related to their ability to assure/ preserve talented and highly specialized human resources. Diener

et al., (2004), stated that human resources are the most important element for any strategic operation of scientific HRM (planning, organization, staffing, management and control).

The ongoing problem has to do, with how the organization can acquire and maintain human resources, that are highly motivated and committed.

Maehr (1989) stated that the effective achievement of the aspirations of communities, organizations, etc., can only be fulfilled by ensuring highly committed employees. In the present project, it is supported that: the current problems of organizations can only be resolved through attracting, developing and retaining the appropriate staff. Nowhere can be found, a deeper understanding/ observation of customer needs, for example, than in the case of the average examination of a series of committed employees to the clients. It is speculated that the middle management cannot receive such apt remarks (in relation to the above issue), compared to the feedback that is coming from a well-trained / motivated "front line" staff. The same goes for products. where vendor interactions at every level can be valuable.

Research models

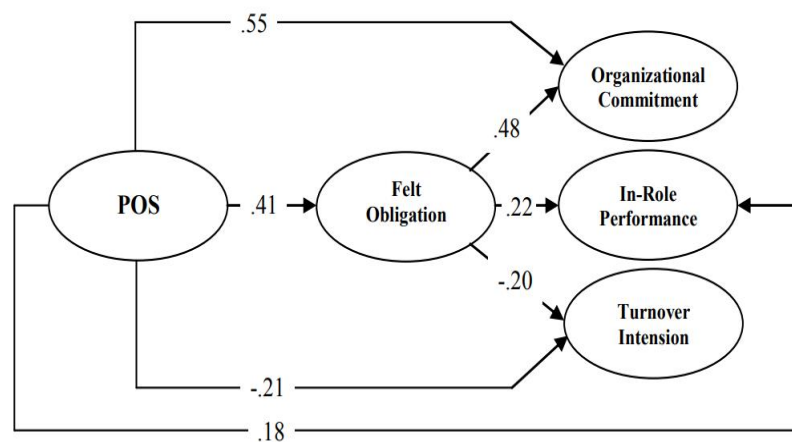


Image 1. Research model from Arshadi, N. (2011)

Source: Arshadi, (2011)

The research aims of Arshadi (2011)'s study was to examine various models of mediation, that involve the concept of POS (in terms of developing perceived employee obligation-as an intermediate variable), organizational commitment, perceived performance of adopting a predetermined role and the intention to abandon the organization

The model, which had been supported, produced the following results:

• In line with the research, POS was found to have a direct impact on organizational commitment, high performance within a role, and intention to leave the organization. It was therefore shown that:

• POS, seemed to affect the performance variables (organizational commitment, performance within the role that has been adopted and intention to leave), through the construct of perceived obligation. So, organizations need to know that if they want to influence the above final variables through POS, they need to stimulate feelings of perceived obligation.

These results favor the concept of organizational support theory, which emphasizes the perceived obligation that develops, and can influence the relationships between POS and other organizational variables related to organizational outcomes. Managers will have to find ways, to upgrade and empower employees' perceptions of the concept of POS.

The results of the research of Maan, et al., (2020, are presented in the following research scheme.

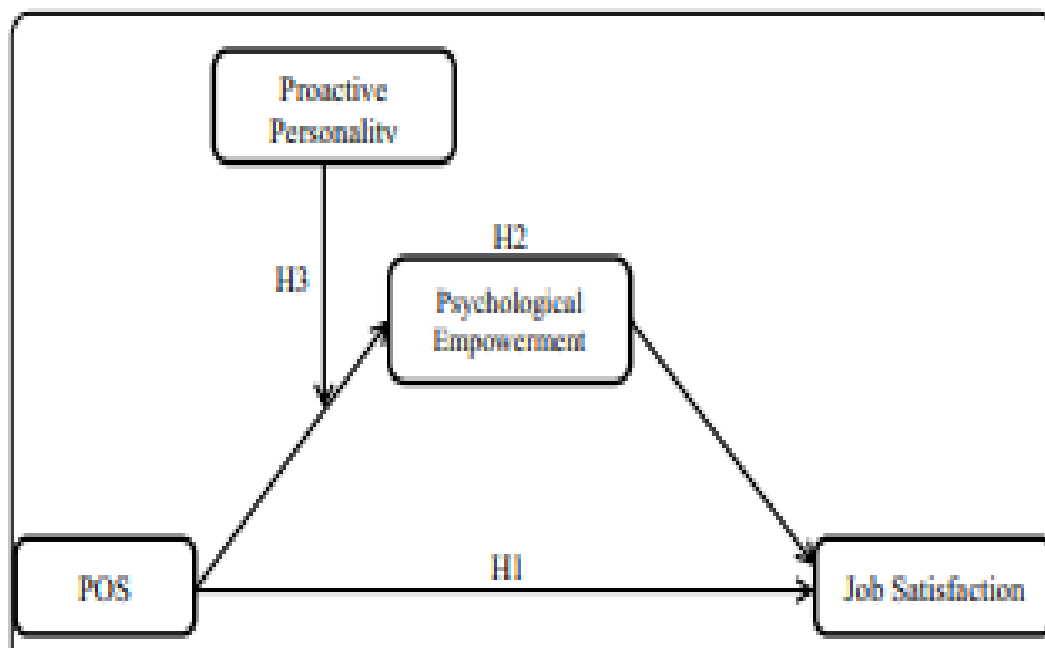


Image 2. Research model of Maan, et al., (2020)

Source: Maan, et al., (2020)

In this model, it seems that psychological empowerment is the intermediate variable that can interpret the relationship between POS and work satisfaction. Therefore, organizations should be aware that actions that can lead to an increase in perceived

organizational support, should primarily target the concept of psychological empowerment, in order to ultimately result in job satisfaction increase. The proactive personality of the organization will not be further analyzed, but appears as a moderator, from the figure, therefore significantly affects the intensity / direction of the relationship between POS and psychological empowerment.

In the third research model, the research findings of Alshaabani, et al., (2021) are presented below.

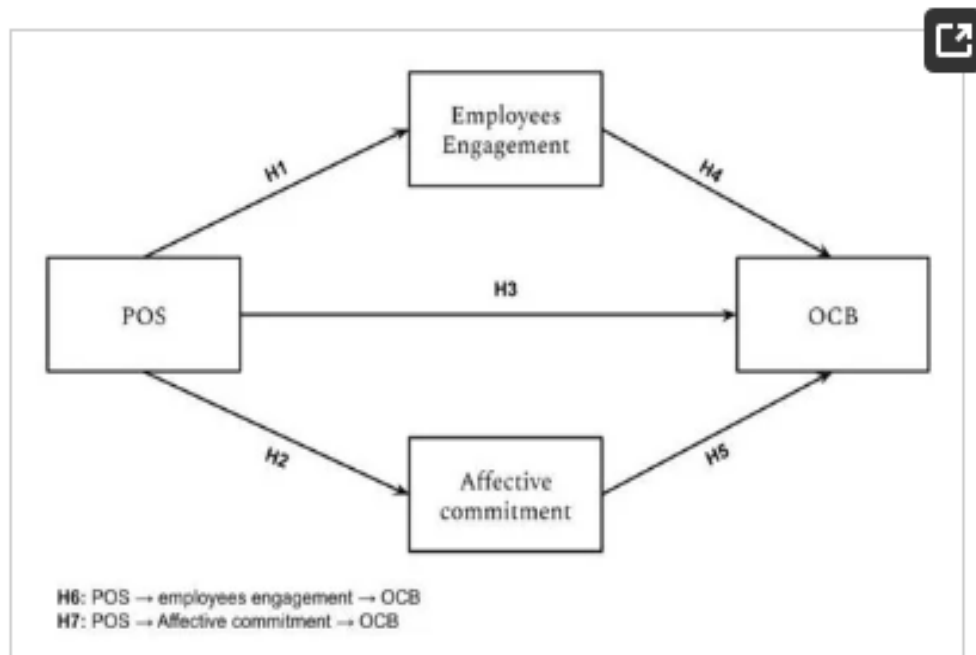


Image 3. Research model of Alshaabani, et al., (2021)

Source: Alshaabani, et al., (2021)

In this model, the concept of POS was examined as follows:

- It seemed to have a significant effect on organizational behavior in terms of social responsibility (the organization being a "responsible citizen", through work involvement).
- While the same seemed to apply to the emotional dimension of commitment, as an intermediate variable (commitment usually has 3 dimensions: emotional, regulatory/ normative, etc.)

Company profile

In 2022, 100 years of uninterrupted operation of a Greek food industry, that primarily produces biscuits (PAPADOPOULOS SA), were completed.

This has to do with the story of the Papadopoulou family, which has been leading this Greek company for a century. The operation started in Istanbul in 1916, went through very difficult conditions (wars, refugee crises, etc.) and at the moment, the company is extremely successful, carrying out advertising campaigns, which are "ahead of its time". The organization has managed to grow the loyalty of the employees, and constantly confirms its values, which have ensured its resilience over time.

The company emphasizes the values that govern the Human Resources. Provides a stable and friendly working environment, encouraging open communication, ensuring continuous improvement and development of employees through continuous training and development, gives equal opportunities and development prospects to all people. Employee safety is the first and foremost concern. The employee is always in the spotlight and interventions (physical and mental health care, job adjustments, first aid, information & training activities, etc.) are organized and monitored systematically through clearly defined procedures and management systems. Papadopoulos SA has 4 factories in Greece, more than 1,500 employees and a presence in more than 61 countries. In the year 2020 the company realized sales of € 178.9 million (2019: € 173.8 million) recording an increase of 2.9% compared to 2019.

Research-Analysis

The search of the company PAPAPOULOS SA revealed the following:

- The company emphasizes that it makes great efforts in order to provide a balanced working environment that cultivates a climate of fruitful dialogue and cooperation, with the aim of achieving mutual employee/ organization trust and understanding. It has also emphasized that employees are offered dynamic / attractive development prospects and equal opportunities for progress, with utter respect for the people and the value diversity respect. These are extremely important elements, and only their presence on the official website, shows a lot.
- The organization seems to place emphasis on the values that govern Human Resources. A stable and friendly working environment is provided, open communication is encouraged, continuous improvement and development of employees is ensured through continuous training and development, and equal opportunities and developmental prospects are given to all employees. One could argue, that the above are just "words", but when a major company commits to the above, simply mentioning all these on its website, it is something important. It can prove, that they are not just words, but commitments. This does not mean that everything will be ensured, but that at least the organization tries seriously and systematically to perform, in regards to these obligations. The above also signal the dimension of perceived justice, which is one of the 3 components of the concept under study.
- The main concern of the organization is the safety of individuals and the prevention dimension. The company focuses on prevention through employee health and safety training and undertakes all necessary measures

- On the basis of continuous improvement, there is a focus on targeted and effective training, through the design/ implementation of training programs, in order to develop the knowledge and skills of the employees, taking into account the specific needs of each role.

As it is accepted that the employees of the company are the most valuable factor for the achievement of the strategic goals of any contemporary organization, the training regarding the strengthening of the Health & Safety culture takes place from the first day, is updated and upgraded at a regular basis. In this way, possible changes in the production process can be arranged. This element, can be indirectly related to the concept under study, as it shows a practical interest in the health / safety of employees. The company's training policy, has emphasized that it focuses on issues of talent development, but also on the use and application of new technologies in all areas of work. This is also important, as it is by definition linked to the concept of support, where the question is the development of the sense (on the part of the employees) that the organization is interested in their personal development.

Finally, it can be argued that there is a strong commitment to company values, providing a balanced work environment that supports and develops individuals, offers transparent opportunities for development, fighting energetically discrimination and stereotypes, while rejecting any kind of indirect or direct discrimination. The goal is to build acceptance and support the effective utilization of each workers uniqueness (Papadopoulou Company Website, 2022). This is an extremely important note, in the context of developing organizational values.

CONCLUSIONS-SUGGESTIONS

The company PAPAPOULOU, seems to have realized the importance of human resources, in every aspect of the contemporary, organizational presence. In fact, the organization has made sure that there is a link on the website which refers to the information that the company cares about. In this, there is a separate reference to the workforce, that it is thorough and comprehensive. This can be considered an excellent choice of the organization, as all modern issues, values, etc. become clear, in the clearest of ways. Therefore, although the company can reproduce "clichés", in essence it demonstrates its commitment to these values of human resource support.

As it is not possible to be known what is really going on inside the organism under study, the only things that can be emphasized are the following:

- The connections between the overall, organizational value chain can become even more dynamic. Nowadays, anyone who has direct contact with customers can provide useful insights to the company. The scientific recording and evaluation of this information (from the bottom line), can be as important as the scientific research conducted by the company. Therefore, the important role of people who come in direct contact with customers on a daily basis could be emphasized, as a source of development of organizational knowledge.

Therefore, aside from the employees appraisal, practical decisions can be made, in order to enhance the organizational performance, and the employee feelings of perceived importance.

- Something extremely important, are the questions that are asked in the surveys of each company. As research is costly, it is important to study the right matters at the right time. Even in this part, human resources can play a key role. Therefore, here too, staff perception surveys are recommended, as an element that can help design effective HRM strategies.
- The company under study, has made excellent, advertising efforts, where it has produced advertising campaigns, extremely elegant, effectively representing corporate values that are in line with the present, underlying needs
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Nevertheless, the concept under study is not thoroughly implemented in the Greek, organizational reality. Companies that do just an ok job, at the employers brand level, can face significant problems globally. A significant upgrade in the level of perceptions of leadership and HRM is needed, in order to be able to continue the good work and to attract quality staff from inside and outside the country. Digital nomads, is a great opportunity for healthy, Greek businesses, which may not have been realized.

The country has the potential (through the country's destination image) to attract a significant number of talents, something that can potentially strengthen the Greek companies. An important pool must be developed, of extremely capable employees from all over the world (in a number of sectors), who could strengthen the Greek companies. The point is to communicate realistic messages at the level of attraction, and that an honest evaluation of brand values exists. Under no circumstances should promises be made that cannot be fulfilled.

It is also very important a beginning of an honest dialogue between the talents abroad and the Greek, healthy companies. This dialogue can be a dynamic process, where Greek executives can get to know better the ways of thinking of talented workers abroad. It is not necessary to gain something immediately, but to develop relationships with talented people, who have worked in large organizations abroad.

Finally, the concept under study, involves 3 dimensions, perceived justice, HRM practices and the supervisor-employee relationship. It can be argued that the third dimension is clearly easier to manage, compared to the other 2. What is ultimately proposed is to emphasize this component, through the deployment of emphasis on managerial attention and the relationships they can develop with the employees. Supervisors seem to be the "bridge" between employees and leadership.

Often, no matter how effective the leadership strategy and vision may be, it may not be effectively communicated at the middle level to the employees, which can be costly. It can be argued that in Greece, there is not an organization that cannot be worried in regards to this dimension. Whatever is said and supported by the Administration must

be adopted by the middle level and if there are no transfer capabilities, there may be serious issues.

The ways of attracting, training and selecting the people who will staff the middle level of management, should be considered as a top, organizational priority. Qualitative criteria should be taken into account, such as the ability to build strong bonds with employees, which seemed to be extremely important in the present work. Even perceived justice is rather significantly influenced by the middle level of administration. No matter how fair the decisions are from the top management, if the treatment of the middle managers does not signal the corresponding values, the messages that the employees tend to internalize can be contradictory and can hurt the organizational aspirations.

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