Looking the organization’s “backstages”: political leadership in health organizations

Sandra Marisa Lopes Miranda (smiranda@cscts.up.pt)

Organizational Communication Department, School of Communication and Media Studies, Lisbon.

Introduction

Although leadership investigation has become for the last years an election topic with major relevance on organizational studies and accepting peacefully the general idea that organizations are freeload for politics, all these acceptances run against a kind of “fear” from the academy scholars on approaching the political leadership’s singularities on organizations. Indeed, when we cross over both phenomena we verify that the absence and weaknesses towards the unique characteristics of political leadership on work scenarios are becoming shaped regarding to their predictors, their workers and their organizations, even if we left aside its moderator variables.

Objectives

- This study was conducted to determine:
  - What’s the impact of political leadership on workers’ organizational attitudes?
  - Which organizational and individual variables could act as moderators’ agents between political behaviors from leaders and its effects on their workers?

Methods

- Quantitative investigation grounded on theoretical model of integrative analysis which gathers number of variables that have been neglected so far.
- Quests application on a set of 332 health professionals (physicians and nurses) from public and private health organizations.

Theoretical Analysis Model & Hypotheses

- L LEADERS POLITICAL BEHAVIORS; soft (SPB) and hard (HPB) (Yuki e Falbe, 1992; Yukl, 2000).
- IMPLICATION OF POLITICAL LEADERS’ BEHAVIORS on workers’ organizational attitudes.
  - Organizational Satisfaction (OS) (Christiansen, Vilanueva e Mikulay, 1997);
  - Organizational Commitment (OC) (Ferris et al., 2005);
- HPB: Leaders soft political behaviors (when face to face with hard political behaviors) have a categorical impact on workers’ organizational commitment.
- Organizational Trust (OT) (Ammeter et al., 2004);
- Leaders soft political behaviors (when face to face with hard political behaviors) have a categorical impact on workers’ organizational trust.
- Organizational Cynicism (Ocin) (Treadway et al., 2004)
- Leaders hard political behaviors (when face to face with hard political behaviors) have a categorical impact on workers’ organizational cynicism.

Hypotheses

- MODERATION VARIABLES/RELATION:
  - Organizational Political Climate (PC) (Vigoda e Cohen, 2002)
- H2a: political climate moderate the relation between soft and hard political behavior and organizational satisfaction.
- H2b: political climate moderate the relation between soft and hard political behavior and organizational commitment.
- H2c: political climate moderate the relation between soft and hard political behavior and organizational trust.
- H 2d: political climate moderate the relation between soft and hard political behavior and organizational cynicism

- Leaders Personnel Reputation (PR) (Ferris et al., 2003)
- H3a: personnel reputation moderate the relation between soft and hard political behavior and organizational satisfaction.
- H3b: personnel reputation moderate the relation between soft and hard political behavior and organizational commitment.
- H3c: personnel reputation moderate the relation between soft and hard political behavior and organizational trust.
- H3d: personnel reputation moderate the relation between soft and hard political behavior and organizational cynicism.

Results

- Model Goodness of fit: x²(9, 33038) = 266,49, p < 0,001; CFI = 1,00; GFI = 1,00; AGFI = 0,99; RMSEA = 0,03; AIC = 304,49
- SO <— SPB: β = 0,65 (t=28,28; p<0,001); SO <— HPB: β = 0,18 (t=6,28; p<0,001)
- OC <— SPB: β = 0,51 (t=3,32; p<0,001); OC <— HPB: β = 0,13 (t=6,95; p<0,001)
- OT <— SPB: β = 0,24 (t=7,79; p<0,001); OT <— HPB: β = 0,09 (t=6,28; p<0,001)
- Ocin <— SPB: β = 0,09 (t=10,63; p<0,001); Ocin <— HPB: β = 0,20 (t=6,95; p<0,001)

Moderations:
- SPB/PC (p<0,001 OC); High OC: β = 0,14 (t=2,35; p<0,05); Low OC: β = 0,32 (t=5,59; p<0,005).
- SPB/PR (p<0,001 Ocin); High Ocin: β = 0,22 (t=4,62; p<0,005); Low Ocin: β = 0,18 (t=2,33; p<0,005)
- HPB/PR (p<0,001 Ocin); High Ocin: β = 0,68 (t=24,89; p<0,005); Low Ocin: β = 0,87 (t=19,39; p<0,005)

Discussion

The outcomes brought by the structural equations, show that:
- This model’s adjustment is quite suitable to explain the variables relations
- Workers react differently to leader’s political behaviors:
  - The high version sets a positive impact over satisfaction, commitment, and organizational trust.
  - The hard version has a stronger impact over organizational cynicism.
  - Confirmed: Hypotheses 1a, 1b, 1c and 1d.
- Political climate exercises an important moderator effect amongst leader’s soft political behavior and and organizational commitment.
- On lower political climate conditions, leader’s soft political behavior have a positive impact on organizational commitment.
- On higher political environment conditions, leader’s soft political behavior have a negative impact on organizational commitment.
- No Confirmed Hypotheses 2a, 2b, 2c e 2d.

- Leader’s personnel reputation leads an important moderator effect amongst leader’s political behavior and cynical attitudes which workers develop towards the organization.
- On lower personal reputation’s conditions, leader’s soft political behaviors are the steering wheel of bigger organizational cynicism.
- On higher personal reputation’s conditions, leader’s soft political behaviors are a deterrent element of organizational cynicism.
- On lower personal reputation’s conditions, leader’s hard political behaviors are conducting with a greater organizational cynicism.
- On higher personal reputation’s conditions, leader’s hard political behaviors are a discouraging element of organizational cynicism.
  - Confirmed: Hypotheses 3d.

Conclusions & Implications for health organizations

- It provide us a less blurred portrait and a balanced reading of political agenda and, specially, from political leadership on organizations (health context, mainly).
- Shows that leader’s political actions are not, invariability, an activity which only concentrates disarticulate. These leadership effects and impacts among workers and organizations, showing what behaviors and under which conditions those actions can assume the functionality level.
- It opens space to a few intervention areas within managers formation and organizational leaders might potentiate, such as the management of personal reputation.

References
