IJMCNM

Socially Responsible Internal Communication? Analysing the Combined Effect of CSR and Internal Communication on Employees' Affective Bond to Organization

Comunicação Interna Socialmente Responsável? A análise do Efeito Combinado de RSE e Comunicação Interna sobre o Vínculo Afetivo dos Trabalhadores à Organização

Daniel Gomes *

Vanda Asseiro **

Neuza Ribeiro ***

ABSTRACT

Positive organizational differentiation between competitors is a critical matter for every organization in current economic scenarios. This "La Palisse" truth is obviously related to the fact that organizations deal with extreme difficulties in what regards valid ways of developing themselves with efficiency and with efficacy, as a natural consequence of integrating widespread competitiveness-based economies. In addition, current economic crisis scenario (notably in the European Union) has brought severe challenges to organizations, which have sped up the necessity of quality, innovation, organizational change or business ethics (e.g. Gomes, Asseiro & Ribeiro, 2013).

Internal Communication (IC) is a strategic management area that directly deals with the internal publics of organizations (their workers). IC strategy follows the approach that information within an organization is a relevant resource, in such way, that its proper use when accompanied by inclusion actions regarding the internal publics brings them a relevant sense of awareness (D'Almeida & Libart, 2000). Curiously, this idea of vigilance and of the building of a supportive organization towards its human resources is also present in Corporate Social Responsibility's (CSR) guidelines (e.g. Neves & Bento, 2005).

When discussing CSR and its contributions for management, we become immediately alerted to the prospects of understanding its impact on effective IC management practices, notably on the employee-organization relationship improvement issues. In this matter, the existing literature is consistent in associating to both areas, directly or indirectly, several interesting contributions regarding critical indicators of individual performance at work, such as commitment, awareness or satisfaction (e.g. Brault, 1992; Brammer, Millington, & Rayton, 2007). However, despite of the amount of theoretical reasoning accumulated over the years regarding the importance of IC and CSR, these two areas still linger to be associated with the prediction of relevant individual indicators in joint models of analysis, such as employee commitment.

* Instituto Politécnico de Coimbra, ESEC/ BRU-UNIDE, Portugal. E-Mail: drmgomes@esec.pt
** Instituto Politécnico de Coimbra, ESEC, Portugal. E-Mail: vcgomes@esec.pt
*** Instituto Politécnico de Leiria – ESTG / CIGS, Portugal. E-Mail: neuza.ribeiro@ipleiria.pt

International Journal of Marketing, Communication and New Media. ISSN: 2182-9306. Vol 2, Nº 2, janeiro/junho 2014

168

Following these considerations, and using a quantitative methodology, this study's main purpose is to investigate how employees' affective commitment can be predicted by IC (considering its different axis), and evaluating if Internal CSR's orientations play a significant contextual role in this relationship. As such, we propose that Internal CSR's orientations will have a moderating influence on the positive association between the IC's axis and employee affective commitment, as we are expecting CSR to strengthen the IC-Commitment relation. With this model of analysis, we will be able to evaluate if Socially Responsible IC brings an added-value to employee commitment purposes. In this sense, the present study aims to explore an answer to the following question: do Internal CSR's guidelines moderate the relationship between IC and employees' affective commitment?

RESUMO

De forma relativamente generalizada, nos atuais cenários económicos competitivos as organizações procuram diferenciar-se positivamente entre si. Esta verdade de "La Palisse" encontra-se obviamente relacionada com o facto de as organizações lidarem com extremas dificuldades no que toca a encontrar formas de se desenvolverem com eficácia e eficiência, enquanto uma consequência natural de integrarem economias abertas baseadas na competitividade. Adicionalmente, o cenário de crise económica atual trouxe desafios acrescidos às organizações, tendo acelerado as necessidades de qualidade, inovação, mudança organizacional ou ética na forma como são conduzidos os negócios (e.g. Gomes, Asseiro & Ribeiro, 2013).

A Comunicação Interna (CI) é uma área de gestão estratégica que lida diretamente com os públicos internos das organizações (colaboradores). O termo "públicos internos" encontra-se fortemente influenciada pela Teoria da Comunicação, a qual, quando aplicada às organizações, apela a preocupações dos gestores para que estes se inteirem de que os colaboradores têm necessidades próprias que deverão ser atendidas. A Gestão da CI deve estar alinhada com a estratégia global de Comunicação Organizacional, e tenciona desenvolver práticas de gestão que a ativem na promoção de ambientes de trabalho positivos e envolventes. A CI segue assim a aproximação de que a informação na organização é um recurso valioso, de forma que, quando acompanhada por acções de inclusão relativas aos públicos internos lhe traz um sentido de "awareness" intenso (D'Almeida & Libart, 2000). Curiosamente, esta noção de vigilância e da construção de uma organização que tem atenções de suporte para com os seus capitais humanos está igualmente presente nas *guidelines* da RSO (e.g. Neves & Bento, 2005).

Quando se encontra em discussão a RSO e os seus contributos para a Gestão, estamos imediatamente alertados para as potencialidades inerentes a uma melhor compreensão do impacto de práticas de CI eficazes, nomeadamente, as que se podem posicionar ao nível da melhoria das relações indivíduo-organização. Relativamente a este assunto em particular, a literatura disponível é consistente em associar a ambas as áreas, de forma direta ou indireta, vários contributos relativamente a indicadores críticos da performance de indivíduos no trabalho, como a implicação, o *awareness* ou a satisfação (e.g. Brault, 1992; Brammer, Millington, & Rayton, 2007). Contudo, apesar da diversidade de considerações teóricas acumuladas ao longo dos anos sobre a importância da CI e da RSO, as duas áreas persistem em não ser claramente integradas na predição de indicadores relevantes de comportamento organizacional, como é o caso da implicação organizacional. Consequentemente, enquanto teoricamente temos várias referências que nos fornecem guias de raciocínio relevantes para que práticas de "*Comunicação Interna Socialmente Responsáveis*" sejam vistas de forma atrativa, estamos bastante limitados no que diz respeito a compreender a verdadeira aceção da expressão, na medida em que os resultados empíricos existentes oferecem-lhe pouco suporte.

Seguindo estas considerações, e utilizando uma metodologia quantitativa, este estudo tem enquanto propósito principal o de investigar como é que a implicação afetiva pode ser

International Journal of Marketing, Communication and New Media. ISSN: 2182-9306. Vol 2, Nº 2, janeiro/junho 2014

169

determinada pela Comunicação Interna (considerando os seus diferentes eixos), e avaliando se as orientações internas de RSO desempenham um papel de contexto relevante nesta relação. Como tal, propomos que as orientações internas de RSO terão um papel moderador que influencia a relação positiva entre os eixos da CI e a implicação afetiva, sendo expectável que fortaleça a relação CI-implicação. Com este modelo de análise poderemos avaliar se a *Comunicação Interna Socialmente Responsável* traz uma mais-valia às questões de vínculo de colaboradores às organizações. Neste sentido, o presente estudo pretende explorar uma resposta à seguinte questão de pesquisa: as orientações internas de RSO moderam a relação entre CI e implicação afetiva?

Palavras-chave: Comunicação interna; responsabilidade social; vínculo afetivo.

1. INTRODUCTION

Organizational competitiveness and the way how organizations build their positive differentiation is a critical issue in nowadays economies. This search for differentiation became even more evident following the current context that the national and international economies are going through, particularly in the Eurozone. As such, existing global orientations over restraint and austerity budgets across countries in the Eurozone have come to add up to rapid technological changes and globalization processes, bringing renewed demands and expectations to organizations (Kotler, 2009). One of the consequences of these orientations relates with some degree of societal pressure over managers' decision making processes. As such, they seem today to be more vigilant and pressured over the impact of their business decisions on stakeholders, and are more likely to follow ethical concerns over their decision making processes (Ribeiro, 2009).

It is in this specific context that organizations try to develop relevant opportunities to gain value over critical success issues regarding both internal indicators (such as employees' motivation, satisfaction or commitment) and external ones (such as image, reputation or brand awareness). As all of these indicators are hard to fit in one sole area of management, organizations currently struggle to develop themselves in managing diversity, but without losing their development project's consistency. As such, business administrations often look upon management opportunities and trends that can help organizations to develop themselves positively. Over this issue, in particular, there

International Journal of Marketing, Communication and New Media. ISSN: 2182-9306. Vol 2, Nº 2, janeiro/junho 2014

170

seems to be two interesting areas that can make positive contributions: Corporate Social Responsibility and Internal Communication.

Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) is directly associated with the concept of Sustainable Development, as its guidelines walk towards the integration of voluntary Social, Environmental and Ethical concerns in organizations. The definition applied by the EEC Green Paper (2001), reflects precisely this *voluntary issue* by suggesting that the CSR embodies a wide set of strategic guidelines that companies embrace, on the basis of voluntary acts, aiming to contribute to a better economy, a cleaner environment, and social concerns in the way organizations handle their business. Accordingly, Neves and Bento (2005) call for the attention that there are a set of three consensual points when organizations deal with CSR: *(1)* behavior voluntarily adopted by organizations that goes beyond what is required by law; *(2)* closely linked to the concept of sustainable development in order to integrate the economic, social and environmental impact; *(3)* it is a way of managing the organization itself and not an optional accumulation, what are its core functions.

In what regards the Internal Communication (IC) management area, it is linked with organizational orientations directed towards the internal publics which are strategically selected in order to develop cohesion, participation and awareness over the organization. This strategic management area includes actions that aim to inform the workforce, creating vertical flows in both directions and horizontal flows within the organization. Its aim is to facilitate the production, distribution, management information and also the relationship and interaction among the organization's internal publics (Almeida, 2009). Regarding this matter in particular, Kunsch (2003, p. 154) considers that "internal communication is strategic for aligning the interests of employees and the company, by encouraging dialogue, exchange of information, experience and participation at all levels".

An interesting point to establish here is that CSR and IC seem to be areas that can be combined and integrated in common management practices. Despite the content of both areas seem to be quite distinct, the truth is that they are not indissociable. This is the basic standpoint of several managers that often attempt to value their organizations, explaining that they encourage and apply "Socially Responsible Internal Communication" actions. Despite the fact that managers seem to be quite interested in pursuing this way, there seems to be a clear lack of empirical evidence supporting the

International Journal of Marketing, Communication and New Media. ISSN: 2182-9306. Vol 2, Nº 2, janeiro/junho 2014

171

construct of Socially Responsible Internal Communication. Providing clarification over this subject constitutes our main study motivation.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Corporate Social Responsibility

CSR is oftenly seen as a nowadays opportunity for organizations to develop themselves in order to be sustainable and competitive, and as a new management area. The first part of the previous sentence seems to gather strong consensus both by academics and practitioners, but the second part of the previous sentence is absolutely false. Despite the fact that societies share today a strong awareness of several kinds of Socially Responsible organizations, it is important to notice that this does not mean that organizations have just decided to embrace CSR, or that they have discovered a new area of management that brings benefits. In fact, CSR is probably almost as ancient as management itself. CSR's orientations of ethical and humane considerations regarding the way organizations perform their business has been a relevant area of discussion for several decades (Bakker, Groenewegen & de Hond, 2005).

CSR is above all a voluntary organizational long term strategy, where the integration of social and environmental concerns, pursuing sustainable development is seen as a beneficial way of developing business (Neves & Bento, 2004). As such, CSR doesn't imply making a choice between organizational profit or social and environmental concerns in the way business develops. On the contrary, it aims to strengthen the way how organizations deal with stakeholders and perform their business, by enriching them with long term concerns surrounding social, environment and economic sustainability development. The current identity and aims placed over CSR are the outcome of several kinds of influences of meaningful social and economic contexts. The CSR's fundamental idea of organizations acting beyond the immediate profit orientation and aiming to enrich them with ethic standards of consideration has several decades of evolution (Carroll, 1999; 2010).

The very first actions of CSR were related to the philanthropic activities of businessman during the industrial revolution (Waddock, 2008), and the very first notion of Social Responsibility being handled as a concept was made by Barnard in 1938, with the piece "The functions of the executive". Following Duarte's (2011) guidances, the Modern Era of CSR has started in the 50's with the current pillars of CSR being build, and since then the concept has been applied and redesigned cumulatively, both by managers and

International Journal of Marketing, Communication and New Media. ISSN: 2182-9306. Vol 2, Nº 2, janeiro/junho 2014

172

academics.

Bowen's (1953) work of "Social Responsibility of the Businessman", and Kreps (1940) "Measurement of the social performance of business" are oftenly seen as very relevant pieces setting the structured discourse and discussion of CSR's concept, even though the concept at this time was strongly influenced by philanthropy. According to Bowen (1953), CSR was strongly related with the social performance of companies, and related to the businessman's obligations of developing desirable politics and decision-making processes for society. This was also a period strongly influenced by the Human Relations' Management School, where social concerns on the organizations' internal environments started to be valued, due to implicit relations with worker's satisfaction and productivity.

According to Carroll (1999), the 60's were a decisive period for CSR. This management orientation has expanded in terms of followers, and the discourse surrounding the concept was now placed in the dependance of the organization, as well as its duties to society. It is this period that CSR starts being considered as business decisions that should go beyond entrepreneurial economic immediate interest (eg.: Davies, 1960). It is also in this period that the Equal Pay Act (1963) and the Civil Rights Act (1964) are approved as equitative rights, social legislation, preventing discrimination directly related to the way people are considered in the workplaces. With this, the social concerns of organizations were strengthened, and CSR gains weight in organizations focused on developing their Social Performance.

According to Carroll (1999), the 70's were a very interesting period for CSR, strongly distinguished as a period where the discussion over the concept, as well as the wideness and the content of CSR's actions proliferated. Curiously, it is in this decade that Carroll (1979) presents one of the most influencing works over CSR's content, that still lingers has a very important reference to understand CSR nowadays. During this period and through the 80's, economies have expanded worldwide, and globalization was seen clearly by managers as interesting ways of reaching for solid business opportunities. Accordingly, the Economic Dimension of CSR becomes a relevant issue to attend to, and businessman develops the clear idea that CSR brings economic advantages. From this period on, CSR had two clear dimensions on the basis of the concept: Social and Economic.

From the 90's until nowadays, additional discussions have been placed as relevant

International Journal of Marketing, Communication and New Media. ISSN: 2182-9306. Vol 2, Nº 2, janeiro/junho 2014

173

matters for modern societies. The Environmental concerns started to become very serious issues regarding planet conservation, and the impact and obligations of industry in the way production is developed is critically discussed worldwide. The Sustainability demands over business production and over society's models of organization are discussed, in an Intergenerational Ethics consideration for Society kind of way. The triple-bottom-line orientation of People, Profit and Planet, become decisive to understand the role and place of organizations in society. With this, CSR gains substance over its three critical dimensions: Social, Economic and Environmental.

Given its strategic nature and the content it bears, CSR has gained supporters, notably, academics and managers. On the academics' side, there are quite numerous researchers that seem to point to the positive impact of CSR on relevant organizational indicators, such as loyalty, reputation, commitment, brand value (eg.: Turban & Greening, 1996; Fombrun & Van Riel, 1997; Peterson, 2004; Salmones, Crespo & Bosques, 2005). On the managers' side, we nowadays have the ability to witness the adhesion of several kinds or organizations to CSR's principles of orientation, and have become quite aware of relevant CSR projects that seem to be genuinely integrated in the business models of their embracing organizations (eg.: IKEA; EDP; Walt Disney Company; Google).

Given the wideness of CSR's contributions, it is not strange to see the manager's focus on relating CSR with other strategic areas of management, pursuing the enrichment of the organizations' actions and political orientations. One of these areas is Communication, notably, the strategic communication efforts directed towards the internal publics: internal communication.

2.2 Internal Communication

As with all areas of Organizational Communication, Internal Communication (IC) is strategic for organizational development (D'Almeida & Libart, 2000; Ruck & Welch, 20012). This is a specific field of intervention that aims to deliver a set of strategically guided actions related to the promotion of the internal climates, worker's awareness of what is being developed by the organization, and also the day-to-day communication regarding organizational activities support. This is a very particular area of organizational development, as it deals with two main referrals in simultaneously: *(1)* Organizational Communication Strategy; and *(2)* Human Resource Management's Guidelines.
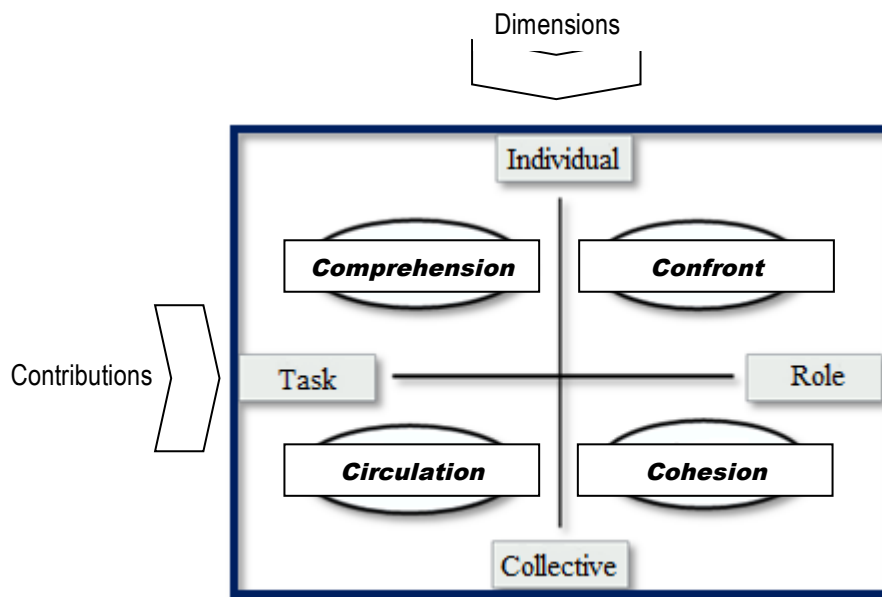
In what regards the Organizational Communication Strategy referral, the IC is directly

International Journal of Marketing, Communication and New Media. ISSN: 2182-9306. Vol 2, Nº 2, janeiro/junho 2014

174

linked to the strategic communication guidance that an organization chooses to follow. Evidently, the IC can't be maintained unplugged from the external communication orientations, either for market or for society purposes. This implies viewing a communication strategy with a clear sense of equilibrium between the efforts made by managers to communicate with several kinds of stakeholders and publics. As such, an organizational communication strategy should be assembled to integrate all strategic development of communicative interaction within the organization and between organizations, markets and society (Kunsch, 2003).

In what regards the Human Resource Management's (HRM) Guidelines referral, the IC is deliberately prepared to deal with the internal publics, that is to say, the workers of the organization. As such, an IC strategy should be prepared to deliver a clear sense of communication actions and efforts, strongly based on diversified internal publics' needs. Thus, both HRM and IC have a common bond: the workers. Both areas are clearly focused on providing the best means for the workers to be managed as an organization's capital, that should be dealt with in a sense of stimulation and development, and also as a focus of attention based on continuously evaluating workers' undelivered communication needs that must be attended.

As IC is compromised in delivering this wide set of contributions to the organization, its functions are mostly linked to production and coordination activities, socialization and integration, image management, organizational change and innovation supporter (eg.: Myers & Myers, 1982; Brault, 1992). As such, the IC's main purposes in any organization are in fact related to relevant and strategical inputs for competitiveness, efficacy and efficiency. Accordingly, IC is strategic for organizations. However, the way how an organization prepares its IC strategy should obey to some rules, based on which, the IC's practical benefits and effects become manifest. An IC strategy should be developed having the purpose of delivering communication orientations towards: *(a)* the individual and the collective dimensions, but also, towards *(b)* the functional (Task) and expectations (Role) contributions. The crossing of these fundamental orientations permits an organization to develop its IC strategy over four specific Internal Communication Axis (Henriet & Boneu, 1990), in the shape of a four C's Matrix: Comprehension; Circulation; Confront; Cohesion.

International Journal of Marketing, Communication and New Media. ISSN: 2182-9306. Vol 2, Nº 2, janeiro/junho 2014

175

Picture 1. Internal Communication's four 4's Matriz Axis

(Based on Henriet & Boneu, 1990)

Thus, we have information and communication activities that help the: (1) **Comprehension** of the knowledge about the organization, its structural aspects and better capacity of its own cognition; (2) **Circulation** of the information, understanding and coordination functions; (3) **Confront** of personal views and opinions of others; (4) **Cohesion** with the company and employees, encouraging greater identification with the organization.

The main idea surrounding the IC's Axis Matrix is that and IC strategy should be made in equilibrium. All axis should be active and in proper alignment with organizational demands. As such, an IC strategy should be made with dedicated planning in order to evaluate areas of IC development that contribute of IC's Axis development and equilibrium between themselves. The IC should be balanced in accordance with the organizational development guidance and with the double reference of the organizational communication and human resource management strategies. Based on these reasons, the IC should never be seen isolated or self-existing in organizations and should be dealt with having a strong sense of adjustment to internal and external organizational demands and pressures (Gomes, Fernandes & Sobreira, 2011).

Given the IC's properties of internal development and its focus over the workers, it is expected that IC is able to stimulate relevant organizational behavior outputs. As such, there are several standpoints regarding IC's positive effects in organizations. As such, it

International Journal of Marketing, Communication and New Media. ISSN: 2182-9306. Vol 2, Nº 2, janeiro/junho 2014

176

is possible to find several references that over time have associated IC with relevant organizational outputs, such as: organizational image (eg.: Brault, 1992); cohesion (eg.: Thévenet, 1997); worker's inclusion (eg.: Westphalen, 1998); organizational justice and commitment (eg.: Gomes, Fernandes & Sobreira, 2011); positive work environment effects (eg.: Ruck & Welch, 2012).

An interesting idea to follow regarding the IC's main issues, is that, despite all these quite consistent associations with relevant organizational behavior outputs, this is an area of research that has several available avenues of research. One of which seems to be over the IC-workers' commitment relation, as despite this relation is not argued by researchers or by practitioners, the truth is that, there is a clear lack of empirical research development over the issue in particular.

2.3 Employees' Commitment, CSR and IC

Employees's commitment can globally be defined as a psychological connection established between an individual and an organization (Kuehn & Al-Busaidi, 2002), or as the power of the individual's identification with an organization (Schappe, 1998). The relevance of employees' commitment is very well established in the literature. We have currently available research concerning different aspects of employees' commitment, and its association with critical organizational indicators, such as job characteristics (eg.: Lin & Hsieh, 2002), or trust (eg.: Korsgaard, Schweiger & Sapienza, 1995).

A very consensual and established theoretical model over commitment refers to the Meyer and Allen's Model (1991), proposing three components of organizational commitment underlying three psychological states, not mutually exclusive (Tavares, 2000). One first dimension refers to the predictors and consequents of workers' willingness of remaining in the organization because they like the organization. A second dimension has been devoted to studying the same types of associations when employees expressed their willingness to remain in the organization because they believe that they have to do it. The third dimension is devoted to the study of the predictors and consequents related to the willingness of employees to remain in the organization because they think it is the most just and moral choice. The literature has referred to these components of commitment as the Affective, Continuance and Normative commitment.

Continuance commitment is defined as an "awareness" from a collaborator that there

International Journal of Marketing, Communication and New Media. ISSN: 2182-9306. Vol 2, Nº 2, janeiro/junho 2014

177

are certain costs allocated to the abandonment of the organization that will not be favorable to him. So, the employees consider that if they leave the organization they will lose benefits, and therefore they remain in the organization because they believe that they have to do it (Meyer & Allen, 1997). In this sense, the same authors maintain that, as the reason of staying in the organization relates to the avoidance of abandonment costs, it can give a sense of frustration that can lead even to misfits performances.

In what regards, Normative Commitment component, Meyer and Allen (1991) define it as a sense of obligation to remain in the organization for thinking that this is the fairest and moral option (Meyer & Allen, 1997). As such, and according to Tavares (2000, p.6), Normative commitment refers to "a belief in the responsibility of loyalty the individual has to the organization".

As for Affective commitment, employees who demonstrate a strong sense of affective commitment remain in the organization by own will, namely, "remain in the organization because they want" (Meyer, Bobocel & Allen, 1991, p.718) given the emotional bond between the parts. Affective commitment is seen as an attitude of an individual to an organization, marked by a great understanding between personal and organizational values and objectives, predisposing the individual to exert considerable effort to the organization, accompanied by a strong desire to remain as its member (Lillian, Freeman, Rush & Lance, 1999). An interesting remark that is important to establish at this point is that according to Tavares (2000, p.10) "it is believed that in the Affective commitment component has the most desirable consequences for organizational behaviour", and that the vast majority of research found in the literature regards the clearance of the antecedents of affective commitment due to this reason.

As it is possible to conclude, organizations having affectively committed employees may have a competitive advantage over similar ones, as their workers are more likely to have better performance. As such, it is quite relevant to understand how to predict employees' affective commitment. Researchers, over the years have established important associations between several commitment predictors, but only more recently have they consistently and continuously directed their attention to CSR's development abilities over employee's attitudes and behaviors (eg.: Duarte, 2011). Furthermore, the IC's predictive abilities over workers commitment is theoretically established. However, we believe that the exists a clear lack of research over they way how can CSR and IC be

combined to stimulate employees affective commitment. As such, we have come to question if the expression of Socially Responsible Internal Communication makes sense for workers attitudes and behavior development. Following these reasons, our main research question is to understand if Social Responsibility and Internal Communication interact in the way employees' affective commitment is predicted. Our aim is thus to find if Internal Communication orientations are strengthened by CSR's policies and orientations in the prediction of employees' affective commitment. Following these considerations, our study hypothesis are:

H1 - The relationship between the Internal Communications, through its axes and Affective Commitment is positive and significant.

H2 - The Internal Organizational Social Responsibility moderates the relationship between the axes of Internal Communication and Affective Commitment, in that it will strengthen the relationship.

According to our research aim and to our hypothesis our research analysis model is as follows:

Figure 1 – Research Model
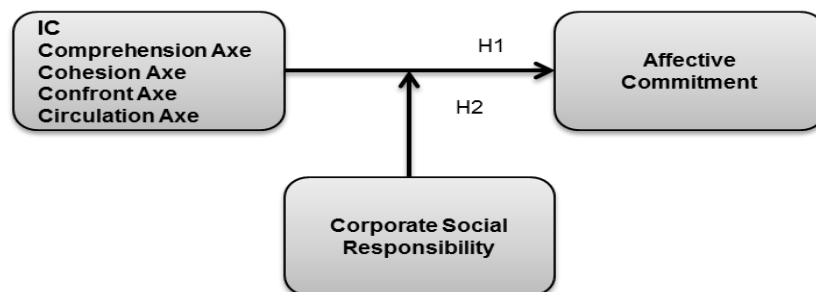
3. METHODOLOGY

3.1. Procedure and Instrument

Regarding the procedure, each participant of our study has received a survey integrating the measures of the study variables. The instructions informed them that they were participating in a survey whose aim was to understand what they most valued and how they evaluate their own organization. The construction of the questionnaire has obeyed to several criteria in order to minimize and control the impact of potential systematic errors regarding the intrument's usage and development, according to Podsakoff,

International Journal of Marketing, Communication and New Media. ISSN: 2182-9306. Vol 2, Nº 2, janeiro/junho 2014

179

Mackenzie, Lee and Podsakoff's (2003) suggestions.

In what concerns the procedure, the Human Resources Management Central Services have sent a copy of the instrument to a manager of each department, ensuring the application and collection of the data. Each department manager has guaranteed an adequate space for the data collected, and assured that the participants understood what was being asked when filling the survey. In addition, all the instructions regarding the filling of the questionnaire and the purpose of the study were also written on the cover of the instrument's sheet.

3.2. Measures:

Social Responsibility Orientations- evaluated using Duarte (2011) scale of 16 items (e.g.. "The organization invests in promoting work-life balance")

Internal Communication - was assessed according to the construction of a scale of 16 items following Henriet & Boneu's (1990) considerations over IC axis (eg "The information that is available to me is enough to allow situating myself in this organization").

Affective Commitment - An adapted version of the scale of Allen and Meyer (1996) of 6 items was used (e.g., "I feel a great sense of belonging to this organization").

3.3. Sample

This convenience sample integrates 172 employees from a Private Hospital Unit. The sample consists mostly of female participants (80,1%), aged mainly between 26-30 years (31,6%) and between 31- 35 (26, 3%). Regarding antiquity in the organization, 33.1% of the participants are working with the organization for less than 1 year (Start by opening to the public). The functions are distributed among Clinical Secretariat Team (40,4%), nursing staff (24.6%), auxiliary team (17.5%), host (4.7%), technical team (3.5%); medical staff (3.5%); senior staff (2.9%) and contact-centre (2,9%).

3.4 Results

To test the hypotheses of the study provided, we have performed our analysis throughout several steps. We have stared by developing two Exploratory Factorial Analyis (EFA) on the IC and CSR measures, due to the fact that we believe to be important to test for their dimensionality regarding our study sample. This decision was

International Journal of Marketing, Communication and New Media. ISSN: 2182-9306. Vol 2, Nº 2, janeiro/junho 2014

180

mainly due to the fact that the IC measure is new, and that we were interested in testing for CSR's internal orientations. As such, we have developed two EFA and have built our composite variables according to the results. We didn't perform the same with the employee affective commitment's variable, as we used a measure that is stable throughout literature.

After the EFA procedures we will show correlation analysis and the regression analysis performed in order to test for our study hypothesis. To test the foreseen moderation effects, we have followed the steps suggested by Baron & Kenny (1986).

3.5. Factorial Analysis, means and correlations

As mentioned, we present the results for the EFA regarding the IC's Internal Axis variable. In order to have a solid factorization with clear dimensionality, we have excluded several items from the original measure due to the factorial weights. As such, our measures from IC's Axis were built based on the results below.

Table 1. Factorial analysis of Internal Communication's Axis (*Rotated Component Matrix*[a)])

	Component			
	1	2	3	4
The information that the organization provides me the intended performance of my duties is sufficient.	**,804**	,407	,246	,208
The information that this organization gives me the intended performance of my duties is effective.	**,789**	,263	,337	,355
The information that is available to me is enough to allow me situated within this organization.	,388	**,790**	,255	,304
Often, I feel that the information that allows me situated within this organization is updated	,326	**,732**	,306	,397
The information circulating in the organization for the proper performance of the collective work is useful.	,179	,225	**,812**	,418
The information circulating in the organization for the good performance of the collective work is effective.	,456	,297	**,772**	,140
I feel I am part of a collective identity due to information that is made available to me by this organization.	,312	,371	,332	**,779**
Often, I identify myself with this organization due to information that is made available to me.	,335	,526	,336	**,658**

We have performed the same procedure to the CSR measures. We have excluded one

item from the original measure due to criteria of factorization weight and dimensionality. We have developed our composite variable of internal CSR orientation based on the results presented bellow on the second component.

Table 2. Factorial analysis of Variable Social Responsibility (*Rotated Component Matrix*[a])

	Component	
	1	**2**
This organization develops projects of nature conservation.	**,819**	,127
This organization supports the creation and development of smaller organizations.	**,803**	,134
This organization supports the integration of people with disabilities.	**,788**	,305
This organization gives grants to associations for the protection of nature.	**,762**	,056
This organization supports social causes.	**,684**	,078
This organization supports cultural and educational events.	**,522**	,079
This organization ensures job security.	,182	**,717**
This organization develops internal rules that guide the behaviour of employees.	-,023	**,703**
This organization complies with the labour code.	,416	**,682**
This organization encourages the training of their workers.	,326	**,657**
This organization supports sport events.	,331	**,657**
This organization promotes the balance between family life and professional life.	,296	**,561**
This organization guarantees the timely payment of wages and benefits.	,418	**,549**
This organization strives to be one of the best companies in its sector of activity.	-,088	**,506**
This organization strives to be profitable.	-,018	**,487**

Table 3 presents the means, standard deviations, correlations and internal consistencies of the variables. It is possible to see that all study variables are significantly associated with each other. Specifically, it appears that internal CSR orientations are positively and significantly correlated with all IC axes (Comprehension $r = ,53$; Confront $r = ,59$; Circulation $r = ,58$; Cohesion $r = ,58$). We can also see that internal CSR orientations are also related to Affective Commitment ($r = ,49$). All IC Axis are also positively and significantly correlated with affective Commitment (Comprehension $r = ,56$; Confront $r = ,57$; Circulation $r = ,57$; Cohesion $r = ,54$) .

International Journal of Marketing, Communication and New Media. ISSN: 2182-9306. Vol 2, Nº 2, janeiro/junho 2014

182

Table 3. Correlation Matrix, Means, Standard Deviations and Reliability

	M	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1. Internal CSR [a]	3,2	,67	(.85)						
2. External CSR[a]	2,4	,76	,513[**]	(.74)					
3. Comprehension Axis [b]	3,4	1,5	,539[**]	,370[**]	(.89)				
4. Confront Axis [b]	3,7	1,5	,598[**]	,401[**]	,790[**]	(.85)			
5. Circulation Axis [b]	4,2	1,4	,583[**]	,369[**]	,721[**]	,705[**]	(.88)		
6. Cohesion Axis [b]	3,8	1,5	,586[**]	,358[**]	,750[**]	,856[**]	,754[**]	(.87)	
7. Affective Commitment [b]	4,3	1,5	,494[**]	,393[**]	,564[**]	,569[**]	,567[**]	,540[**]	(.90)

[**] All variables correlated at $p < ,01$

5 point scale (a); 7 point scale (b)

Cronbach alpha in diagonal

In short, Internal Communication and Corporate Social Responsibility seem to have a significant relationship with Affective Commitment. Arising from this analysis, the data seem to be in line with the literature review performed and the previously formulated hypotheses.

To test for the moderation effects foreseen in our model of analysis, and according to Baron and Kenny (1986), we loaded a first regression introducing the control variables (educational attainment and age - Model 1); then we have introduced a second regression containning the predictors (Intern CSR; IC-Comprehension axis; IC-Circulation axis; IC-Confront axis and IC-Cohesion axis - Model 2); and then loaded a third regression with the interaction terms (CSR is interacting with 4 axes) taking as the criterion variable Affective Commitment – Model 3.

It was possible to see that the model was enriched through the steps followed (Model 1 - $R^{2 \text{ Ajust}}$ 4,2%; F=8,557; Sig = , 004/Model 2 - $R^{2 \text{ Ajust}}$ 39,2 %; F=20,530; Sig. ,000/Model 3 – $R^{2 \text{ Ajust}}$ 44%; F=4,558; Sig , 002), suggesting the existence of main effects and a significant moderating effect. These data seem to be in line with our hypotheses. Table 4 presents all the steps proposed by Baron & Kenny (1986) to test for the moderation effects through linear regression method.

International Journal of Marketing, Communication and New Media. ISSN: 2182-9306. Vol 2, Nº 2, janeiro/junho 2014

183

Table 4. Analysis of the Effects to tested the model considered

	Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	Qualifications	-,235	,080	-,219	-2,925	,002*
2	Qualifications	-,091	,066	-,085	-1,390	,083**
	Internal CSR	,368	,171	,168	2,159	,016*
	Comprehension axis	,169	,100	,178	1,685	,047*
	Confront axis	,178	,128	,181	1,395	,082**
	Circulation axis	,228	,104	,219	2,194	,015*
	Cohesion axis	-,029	,125	-,030	-,235	,407
3	Qualifications	-,089	,063	-,083	-1,402	,082**
	Internal CSR	,384	,169	,175	2,265	,013*
	Comprehension axis	,162	,100	,170	1,621	,054*
	Confront axis	,121	,124	,123	,976	,115
	Circulation axis	,292	,105	,281	2,793	,003*
	Cohesion axis	,011	,122	,011	,092	,462
	Internal CSR*IC Comprehension axis	-,217	,139	-,167	-1,564	,060**
	Internal CSR * IC Confront axis	-,500	,212	-,343	-2,356	,010*
	Internal CSR * CI Circulation axis	,350	,151	,235	2,313	,011*
	Internal CSR *CI Cohesion axis	,196	,179	,151	1,093	,138

Dependent Variable: Affective commitment

*One-tailled sig. ,05; **One-tailled sig. ,10

Internal CSR (β=, 368), Circulation axis (β=, 228) and Comprehension axis (β=, 169) have a significant direct effect on affective commitment at <.05. When the confrontation axis and the Internal CSR are in interaction, the effect is also significant at <.05. The interaction effect is significant and there is a strengthening of this through the CSR guidelines. In graph 1, it is possible to see that that a high CSR perception with a high perception of Circulation axis generates the highest level of Affective Commitment, supporting the usefulness of articulation between the Axis of Circulation with CSR internal orientations.

International Journal of Marketing, Communication and New Media. ISSN: 2182-9306. Vol 2, Nº 2, janeiro/junho 2014

184

As for Graph 2., it seems to show that high perception of CSR generates the highest level of Affective Commitment. It also shows that the interaction between the Confront Axis with CSR internal orientation generates a higher level of affective commitment when compared with the confront axis having no interaction with CSR. This is despite high confront axis is able to generate a high level of affective commitment. In this case, the interaction is not as clear as in the comprehension axis, due to the fact that low CSR and high confront generate higher level of affective commitment when compared with high confront and high CSR. Nevertheless, the level of commitment is higher when compared with low confront and low CSR.

Graph 2. Interaction effect between Circulation Axis and CSR in Affective Commitment
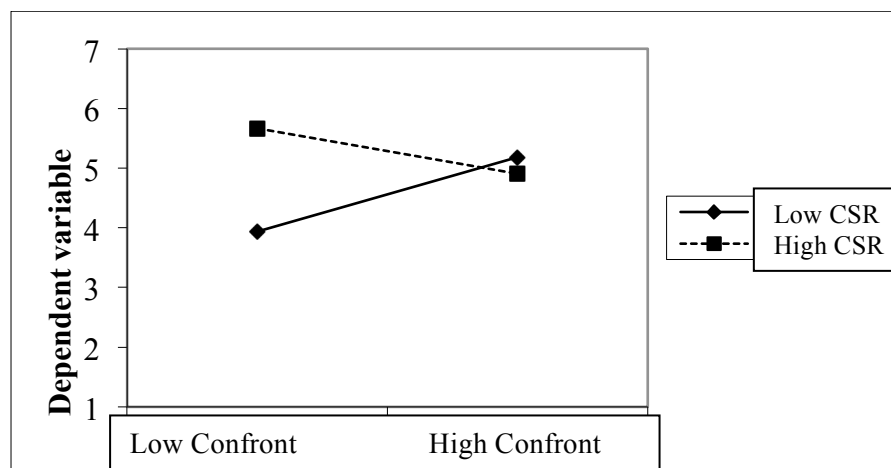
The Graph 3 results are close to the ones found on graph 2, in which a high perception of CSR generates a slightly higher level of affective commitment. It also shows that the interaction between the Comprehension Axis with CSR internal orientation generates a

International Journal of Marketing, Communication and New Media. ISSN: 2182-9306. Vol 2, Nº 2, janeiro/junho 2014

185

higher level of affective commitment when compared to the comprehension axis having no interaction with CSR, or high perception of comprehension axis in interaction with low CSR.

Graph 3. Interaction effect between Comprehension Axis and CSR in Affective Commitment
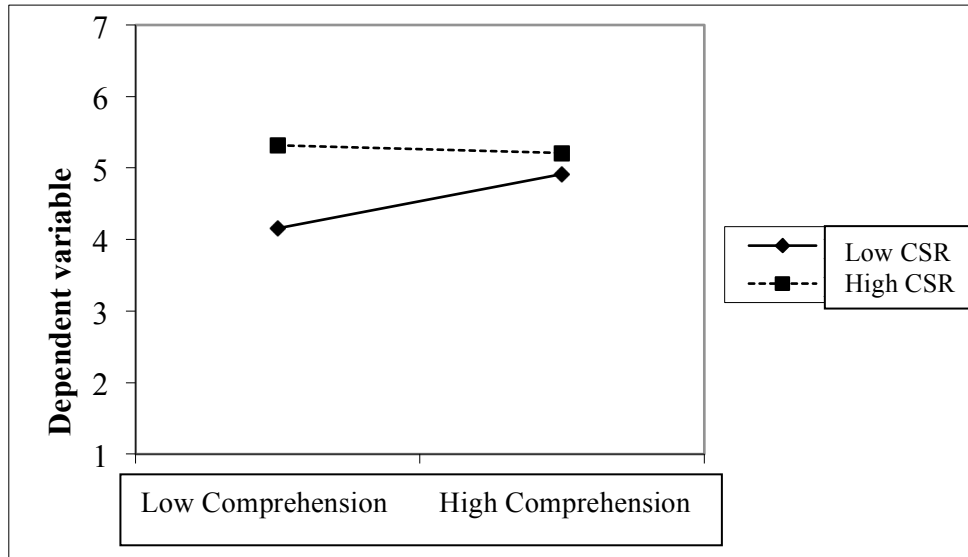
Our results seem to point for Hypotheses 1 and 2 validation, mainly because it seemed consistent that perceptions of IC Axis in interaction with CSR always shows higher levels of commitment when compared to IC Axis predicting commitment isolatedley, with the exception of the confront axis result, where this has happened not so clearly. As such, the concept of Socially Responsible Internal Communication seems to make sense, as in some cases it can indeed stimulate affective commitment.

4. CONCLUSIONS

IC refers to the entire set of strategies, practices and communication activities directed towards the internal pubic. The CSR, in turn, refers to the voluntary integration of social, environmental and economic concerns on organizational operations and in their interaction with stakeholders and other audiences (EEC, 2001). When it is specifically directed to the internal public, it involves issues such as: internal social climate, quality of life at work and monitoring the organization.

It was a clear aim of this study to determine how the IC could affect employees' Affective Commitment, and also in what way does CSR could influence this relationship. In consequence, we have tried to present different theoretical perspectives of various authors regarding the variables under study. The theoretical analysis

International Journal of Marketing, Communication and New Media. ISSN: 2182-9306. Vol 2, Nº 2, janeiro/junho 2014

186

developed has apparently showed that both academic and practitioners have been considering the CSR and IC as relevant indicators in a competitive economic environment (Neves 2004; Neves and Bento 2005; Quintão, 2009; Duarte 2011).

Reading the data from the empirical study, it seems important to consider CSR and IC articulation so that there is a manifestation of Socially Responsible Internal Communication, in the sense of achieving positive results in Affective Commitment.

The data presented in our empirical work suggested that the IC axes of Comprehension, Confront and Circulation when interacting with CSR internal guidelines seem to point for interesting outputs regarding the affective commitment variable, which should consequently give rise to actions regarding the goal of activating Socially Responsible Internal Communication activities.

Our research may cast interesting directions from the theoretical, empirical and practical points of view. However, our considerations should be read with a clear understandment of the study limitations.

At a theoretical level, we have tried to design a model explaining the importance of CSR guidelines on the relationship between Internal Communication and Affective Commitment. The theoretical model that is maintained throughout this work showed that the performance hinged between IC and CSR can happen, providing the basis for the concept of Socially Responsible Internal Communication.

Empirically, this study presents a perspective of articulation between Internal Communication and Corporate Social Responsibility that does not present as described, a tradition of research. So it suggests empirical support to the construct of Socially Responsible Internal Communication, that is, internal communication that can incorporate the guiding principles of Corporate Social Responsibility.

At a practical level, our results seem to support some grounding in the basics of a Socially Responsible Internal Communication, primarily on the relevance of a socially responsible internal guidance to support the strategy of Internal Communication.

The reading of these indications and final considerations should be made with a proper understanding of its limitations, as well as a set of recommendations regarding prospective research following similar purposes. The first limitation that we would like to stress out, is related to the fact that our model of analysis is recursive, as it was theoretically established. As such, the directionality between variables that we've presented were theoretically driven, and tested using a correlational design, which

International Journal of Marketing, Communication and New Media. ISSN: 2182-9306. Vol 2, Nº 2, janeiro/junho 2014

187

impedes assuming causality.

We would like to recommend as valid paths of research the replication of the objectives that supported this study in other organizations and other sectors of the industry, in order to assess the stability of results and to expand its generalization purposes. We also find relevant to develop similar research over the basic idea of Socially Responsible Internal Communication over relevant indicators in organizational behaviour such as satisfaction, motivation and turnover.

REFERENCES

Allen, N. J., & Meyer, J. P. (1996). Affective, continuance, and normative commitment to the organization: An examination of construct validity. *Journal of Vocational Behavior, vol. 49*, p. 252-276.

Almeida, A. (2009). Identidade, imagem e reputação organizacional: conceitos e dimensões da práxis. In: Kunsh, M. (Org.). *Comunicação Organizacional: linguagem, gestão e perspectivas*. Vol. 2. São Paulo: Saraiva, 2009, p. 215-242. F.G.A.

Bakker, P., Groenewegen & den Hond, F. (2005), A bibliometric analysis of 30 years of research and theory on CSR/CSP, *Business & Society* Vol.44, No.3, pp.283-317

Baron, R., & Kenny, D. (1986). The moderator-mediator variable distinction in social psychological research: Conceptual, strategic and statistical considerations. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, vol. 51*, p. 1173-1182.

Bowen, H. (1953), Social responsibilities of the businessman. New York, Harper & Row.

Brammer, S., Millington, A., & Rayton, B. (2007). The contribution of corporate social responsibility to organizational commitment. International Journal of Human Resource Management, 18 (10): 1701-1719.

Brault, L. (1992). *A Comunicação da Empresa para além do Modelo Publicitário*. Portugal: Edições Cetop.

Carroll, A. (1979). A three-dimensional concepttual model of corporate performance. *Academy of Management Review*. vol. 4, p. 497-505.

Carroll, A. (1999). Corporate Social Responsibility: Evolution of a Definitional Construct. *Business & Society*, vol. 38, n. 3, p. 268-295.

Carroll, A., & Shabana, K. (2010). The business case for corporate social responsibility: a review of concepts, research and practice. International Journal of Management Reviews, 12 (1), 85-105. Comissão das Comunidades Europeias (2001). Promover um quadro europeu para a responsabilidade social das empresas. *Livro verde*. Bruxelas, 18.7.2001 COM (2001) 366 final. Bruxelas. Publicações oficiais das Comunidades Europeias.

D'Almeida N., & Libaert T. (2000). *La communication interne de l'entreprise*. Paris: Dunod.

Davies, K. (1960). Can business afford to ignore social responsibilities? California Management Review (pre-1986), 2(000003), 70-76.

Duarte, P. (2011). *Corporate Social Responsibility from an Employees' Perspective: Contributes for Understanding Job Attitudes*. Dissertação de Doutoramento, Departamento de Psicologia Social e das Organizações - ISCTE-IUL, Escola de Ciências Sociais e Humanas. Lisboa, Portugal.

Fombrun, C., & Van Riel, C. (1997). The reputational landscape. *Corporate Reputation Review*, vol.9 n.1, p. 5-13.

Gomes, D., Asseiro, V. & Ribeiro, N. (2013). Triggering employee motivation in adverse organizational contexts: "going the extra mile" while holding hands with uncertainty? Business and Management Research, 2, 41-54.

International Journal of Marketing, Communication and New Media. ISSN: 2182-9306. Vol 2, Nº 2, janeiro/junho 2014

188

Gomes, D., Duarte, A. P., & Neves, J. (2009). *As orientações internas de responsabilidade social reduzem as intenções de turnover?* In J. Santos (Ed.), Turismo e gestão: Inovação e empreendorismo.

Gomes, D., Fernandes, J. e Sobreira, R. (2011). Promoting a path for organizational competitiveness: the role of internal communication, *EXEDRA,* 56-78

Henriet B., & Boneu F. (1990). *Audit de la communication interne*. Paris: Les Editions de l'Organisation.

Kotler, P., & Lee, N. (2009). *Up and Out of Poverty: The Social Marketing Solution*. Upper Saddle River: Wharton School Publishing.

Korsgaard, M., Schweiger, D., Sapienza, H. (1995). Building commitment, attachment, and trust in strategic decision-making teams: the role of procedural justice. *Academy of Management Journal, Champaign*, Ill., US, 38(1), 60- 84.

Kuehn, W. & Al-Busaidi, Y. (2002). Citizenship Behavior in a non-western context: an examination of the role of Satisfaction, commitment and job characteristics on self-reported ocb*, International Journal of Commerce and Management*, Vol. 12 Iss: 2, pp.107 - 125

Kunsch, M. K. (2003). *Planejamento de relações públicas na comunicação integrada* (4ª ed.). São Paulo: Summus Editorial.Lillian, Freeman, Rush & Lance.

Lillian, E., Freeman, D., Rush, M. & Lance, C. (1999). Motivational bases of affective organizational commitment: A partial test of an integrative theoretical model. *Journal of Occupational and Organizational Psychology*, vol. 72, p. 463-483.

Lin, C. & Hsieh, P. (2004). A fuzzy decision support system for strategic portfolio management. *Decision Support systems,* V.38, nº3, Dec. p.383-398

Meyer, J. P., & Allen, N. J. (1997). *Commitment in the workplace: Theory, research, and application*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Meyer, J. P., Bobocel, D. R., & Allen, N. J. (1991). Development of organizational commitment during the first year of employment: A longitudinal study of pre- and post-entry influences. *Journal of Management,* 17: 717–733.

Myers, M., and G., Myers. (1982). *Managing by Communication – An Organizational Approach*. New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company.

Neves, J. (2004). Responsabilidade Social das Organizações (RSO): Conceito e aplicabilidade. *Recursos Humanos Magazine*, vol. 30, p. 52 – 63.

Neves, J., & Bento, L. (2004). Traditional and the pressures of transformation. In Habish, A., Jonker, J., Wegner, M., Schmidpeter, R. Eds *CSR Across Europe. Germany: Publisher Springer*, Verlag, p.307-318.

Neves, J., & Bento, L. (2005). *Traditional values and the pressures of transformation*. In A.Habish, J. Jonker, M. Wegner, & R. Schimpeter (Eds.), Corporate social responsibility across Europe (pp.303-314). Hiedelberg: Springer Berlin.

Peterson, D., (2004). The relationship between perceptions of corporate citizenship and organizational commitment. *Business and society*, 43 (3):269-319

Podsakoff, P.M., MacKenzie, S.M., Podsakoff, N.P., & Lee, J. (2003). The mismeasure of man(agement) and its implications for leadership research. *Leadership Quarterly, vol. 14, p.* 615-656.

Quintão, G. (2009*). O papel da comunicação interna na construção da identidade e fortalecimento da marca das organizações socialmente responsáveis*, Trabalho de pós graduação.

Ribeiro, N. (2009). *Virtuosidade Organizacional, Empenhamento e Comportamentos de Cidadania Organizaciona*l. Dissertação de Doutoramento. Departamento de Economia, Gestão e Engenharia Industrial - Universidade de Aveiro, Aveiro. Portugal

Ruck, K. Welch, M. (2012) Valuing internal communication: management and employee perspectives. In Ruck, K. (Ed.) Exploring internal communication. Harlow. Pearson Education.

Salmones, G., Crespo, H., & Bosques, R. (2005). Determinantes de la intención de voto y el apoyo al gobierno saliente: Aproximación empírica desde la teoría del procesamiento de la información. *Revista Europea de Dirección y Economía de la Empresa*, 14 (4), pp. 171-183.

International Journal of Marketing, Communication and New Media. ISSN: 2182-9306. Vol 2, Nº 2, janeiro/junho 2014

189

Schappe, S., (1998). The influence of job satisfaction, Organizational Commitment, and Fairness Perceptions on Organizational citizenship behavior. *The Journal of Psichology*, 132, 277-290.

Tavares, S. (2000) *Manual de Psicossociologia das Organizações.* Lisboa: MCGROW-HILL, 255-333.

Thevenet, M., (1997). *Cultura de Empresa- auditoria e mudança*, Lisboa. Monitor

Turban, D., & Greening, D., (1996). Corporate Social Performance and organizational attractiveness to prospective employees, Academy of Management Journal, 40, 658-672.

Waddock, S. (2008). *The difference makers: How Social and Institutional Entrepreneurs created the Corporate Responsibility Movement*, Sheffield, Green Leaf Publishing.

Westhpallen, M. (1998). *A Comunicação na Empresa*. Porto: Rés

How to cite this article:

International Journal of Marketing, Communication and New Media. ISSN: 2182-9306. Vol 2, Nº 2, janeiro/junho 2014

190