

THE INFLUENCE OF PERSONAL VALUES AND DARK PERSONALITY TRAITS ON THE USE OF GUIDANCE SOURCES AT WORK

A INFLUÊNCIA DE VALORES PESSOAIS E TRAÇOS SOMBRIOS DE PERSONALIDADE NO USO DE FONTES DE ORIENTAÇÃO NO TRABALHO

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Submissão: 02.07.2022. **Aprovação:** 24.05.2023. **Publicação:** 25.05.2023.

Sistema de avaliação: *Double blind review*. **Centro Universitário UNA**, Belo Horizonte - MG, Brasil.

Editora chefe: Profa. Dra. Daniela Viegas da Costa-Nascimento

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<http://revistas.una.br/index.php/reuna/article/view/1419>

Abstract

The objective of this study was to test the simultaneous influence of employees' personal values and dark personality traits on their attitude toward relying on sources of guidance when dealing with different events at work. Employees from an American university filled out a paper-and-pencil questionnaire comprised of three previously-validated scales. Correlations and multiple linear regressions were performed to test the influence of personal values and dark personality traits on guidance sources at work. The results yielded from the tests suggest to managers, human resource professionals, and psychologists which internal characteristics are relevant to predicting the use of formal rules, informal rules, and own experience as guidance sources at work, contributing, for instance, to recruitment and selection processes.

Keywords: Sources of guidance; Personal values; Dark personality traits; Organizational behavior; Psychology.

RESUMO

O objetivo deste estudo foi testar a influência simultânea de valores pessoais e traços sombrios de personalidade de trabalhadores em sua atitude de confiar em fontes de orientação ao lidar com diferentes eventos no trabalho. Trabalhadores de uma universidade americana preencheram um questionário físico composto por três escalas previamente validadas. Correlações e regressões lineares múltiplas foram realizadas para testar a influência de valores pessoais e traços sombrios de personalidade nas fontes de orientação no trabalho. Os resultados dos testes sugerem

a gestores, profissionais de recursos humanos e psicólogos quais características internas são relevantes para prever o uso de regras formais, regras informais e a própria experiência como fontes de orientação no trabalho, contribuindo, por exemplo, para processos de recrutamento e seleção.

Palavras-chave: Fontes de orientação; Valores pessoais; Traços sombrios de personalidade; Comportamento organizacional; Psicologia.

1. Introduction

Sources of Guidance (SOGs) are sources of information on which organization members rely to handle different events at work (PETERSON *et al.*, 1990). Depending on SOGs is not deliberate, consciously recognized, or publicly announced, but comprises employees' attitudes to direct their actions (SMITH *et al.*, 2011). According to Smith, Peterson, and Schwarz (2002), the following SOGs are among the most frequent in a wide variety of cultural contexts and events at work: social sources, based on superiors, subordinates, specialists, and co-workers (ATHAYDE; TORRES, 2020; PETERSON *et al.*, 2010); individuals' own experience, based on previous experience and training (SMITH *et al.*, 2011); impersonal sources, based on formal or informal norms (SMITH; PETERSON, 2005); and beliefs that are spread in a nation (PETERSON; BARRETO; SMITH, 2016). Work events include anything that triggers employees' conscious attention (SMITH; PETERSON; SCHWARTZ, 2002) and can be exemplified by the following situations: there are differing opinions within the department; subordinates are doing consistently good work; equipment or machinery used in the department seems to need a replacement; among other work events (PETERSON; BARRETO; SMITH, 2016).

For classical contingency leadership models (e.g., HOUSE, 1971), some work tasks and work settings are more structured than others. These models assume that leaders act according to how structured a task or setting is. On the other hand, Smith and Peterson (1988) proposed something different. According to them, employees' work varies over time, depending on the event they are handling. These authors highlighted that such variability in attitudes and behavior in response to changing situations – events – is exactly what is found in work organizations. This hypothesis turned out to be known as the event-based contingency hypothesis, the background of this article.

Despite the evidence in the literature that the attitude of using sources of guidance to handle work events might be influenced by individuals' psychological profiles, its possible internal antecedents have been poorly investigated. Some studies have already investigated the mutual influence of personality traits and personal values (e.g., PARKS-LEDUC; FELDMAN; BARDI, 2014) and their theoretical relationships with SOGs (e.g., ATHAYDE; TORRES, 2020), however, their empirical influence still constitutes a theoretical gap. Hence, the main objective of the present research was to test employees' personal values and dark personality traits on their attitude toward relying on SOGs at work.

The use of guidance sources at work deserves to be deeper investigated for its practical implications. For instance, companies that foster the use of specific SOGs by their employees can benefit from knowledge about which individuals' internal characteristics predict the use of these SOGs, which is something that can be assessed in human resource recruiting and selecting processes. Moreover, once the

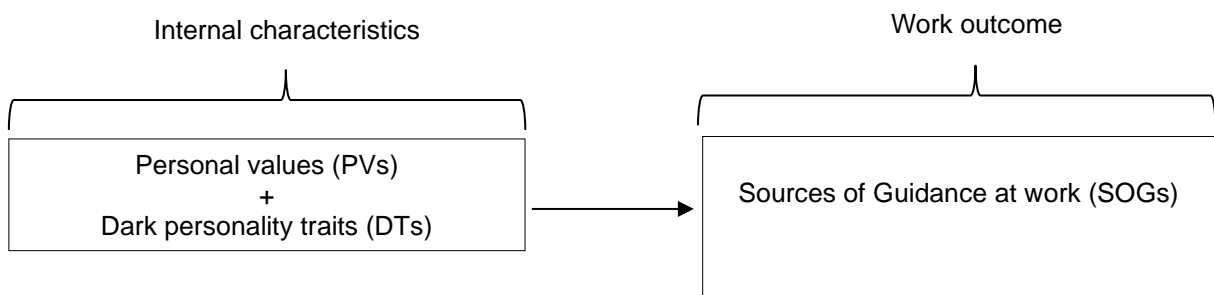
attitude toward relying on SOGs guides employees' actions when dealing with different work events, studying this construct is relevant due to its intimate relationship with employees' ultimate behavior and performance.

Investigating the internal antecedents of the use of guidance sources at work naturally leads us to one specific field: Personality Psychology, which is an area of Psychology that has broadly influenced Organizational Behavior (JUDGE *et al.*, 2008). Barrick and Mount (2005, p. 361) state: "Personality traits do matter at work", and indeed, data from scientific research seem to support their conclusion (HOGAN, 2004).

Despite the relative consensus among researchers in Psychology that five dimensions describe the basic structure of personality, known as the Big Five Model, this model does not adequately cover socially aversive traits that are part of a normal range of personality functioning (HUANG; LIANG, 2015; JONASON; MIDDLETON, 2015). A dark personality trait is one that is prejudicial and relates to the most varied interpersonal difficulties, regardless of the context or even the level of trait that the person presents, and is not as much explored in the literature as other personality models, such as the Big Five Model (ZEIGLER-HILL; MARCUS, 2016). This theoretical gap in the literature regarding the dark side of personality was filled by the Dark Triad of Personality (PAULHUS; WILLIAMS, 2002), indicating that three traits comprise the dark side: Machiavellianism (MAC), Psychopathy (PSY), and Narcissism (NAR), known as the Dark Triad (DT). The fact that the dark triad of personality is not as much explored in the literature as the Big Five Model is the main reason why the present research decided to explore it, besides the fact that this model complements the Big Five Model. But above that: there is strong evidence in the literature to believe that personality traits influence work outcomes (e.g., WU; CHI, 2020; HARTOG; WEIJS-PERRÉE; APPEL-MEULENBROEK, 2018).

To complement employees' internal characteristics in the present research, personal values were also included as possible antecedents of the use of SOGs, because they serve as standards or criteria for attitudes and behavior (SCHWARTZ *et al.*, 2012). The relationship between personality traits and personal values represents an important topic at the intersection of Personality Psychology and Social Psychology. Hence, considering both personal values and dark personality traits simultaneously as predictors of the use of guidance sources at work is a novel contribution of the present study, in comparison to relevant prior studies, and brings a considerable advance in the field of Organizational Behavior. The proposed investigation is illustrated in Figure 1.

Figure 1. Investigation model



Source: Authors

This article is divided into five sections. Right after this introductory section, the literature review section will conceptualize the investigated constructs. Third, the methodological procedures adopted in the study will be presented. In the fourth section, the results will be presented and discussed and, fifth, considerations will be made, highlighting the theoretical and practical implications of this research.

2. Literature review

In this section, the constructs Personal Values, Dark Personality Traits, and Sources of Guidance will be conceptualized.

2.1 Personal values

Personal values, the first predictor construct in the present research, are socially shared conceptions of what is good, right, and desirable (KNAFO; ROCCAS; SAGIV, 2011). According to Schwartz *et al.* (2012), values are desirable goals that transcend specific situations and serve as standards or criteria for individual attitudes and behavior. Values are ordered according to the relative importance given to them and comprise an orderly system of priorities, which is not established randomly. On Chart 1, the nineteen personal values and their respective definitions are presented, according to Schwartz's theory of basic human values (SCHWARTZ *et al.*, 2012), the most used theoretical framework of personal values in the literature, adopted in the present study.

Chart 1. The 19 personal values in Schwartz' refined theory

Personal value	Conceptual definition in terms of motivational goals
Self-direction – Thought (SDT)	Freedom to cultivate one's own ideas and abilities
Self-direction – Action (SDA)	Freedom to determine one's own actions
Stimulation (ST)	Excitement, novelty, and change
Hedonism (HE)	Pleasure and sensuous gratification
Achievement (AC)	Success according to social standards
Power – Dominance (POD)	Power through exercising control over people
Power – Resources (POR)	Power through control of material and social resources
Face (FAC)	Security and power through maintaining one's public image and avoiding humiliation
Security – Personal (SEP)	Safety in one's immediate environment
Security – Societal (SES)	Safety and stability in the wider society
Tradition (TR)	Maintaining and preserving cultural, family, or religious traditions
Conformity – Rules (COR)	Compliance with rules, laws, and formal obligations
Conformity – Interpersonal (COI)	Avoidance of upsetting or harming other people
Humility (HUM)	Recognizing one's insignificance in the larger scheme of things
Benevolence – Dependability (BED)	Being a reliable and trustworthy member of the ingroup
Benevolence – Caring (BEC)	Devotion to the welfare of ingroup members
Universalism – Concern (UNC)	Commitment to equality, justice, and protection for all people
Universalism – Nature (UNN)	Preservation of the natural environment
Universalism – Tolerance (UNT)	Acceptance and understanding of those who are different from oneself

Source: Adapted from Schwartz *et al.* (2012).

Moreover, personal values are relevant constructs for the prediction of attitudes and behaviors (TORRES; SCHWARTZ; NASCIMENTO, 2016), confirmed in many studies (e.g., BUDI *et al.*, 2021; ORTIZ-GÓMEZ; ARIZA-MONTES; MOLINA-SÁNCHEZ, 2020; ARIELI; SAGIV; ROCCAS, 2018).

2.2 Dark personality traits

Personality traits, the second predictor construct in the present research, are individuals' enduring characteristics that summarize trans-situational consistencies in characteristic styles of responding to the environment. Hence, personal values are individual goals, whereas personality traits are related to how these goals are pursued. A growing body of evidence indicates that personality traits are endogenous-basic tendencies tied to underlying biophysiological response systems (COSTA; MCCRAE, 1998). They are strongly heritable (ILIES; ARVEY; BOUCHARD, 2006) and remarkably stable throughout adulthood (MCCRAE *et al.*, 2000).

Personality traits have emerged over the last decades as one of the main predictors of work outcomes (e.g., WU; CHI, 2020; HARTOG; WEIJS-PERRÉE; APPEL-MEULENBROEK, 2018). Authors around the world have researched the relationship between personality traits and performance at work (GUPTA; GUPTA, 2020; VAN AARD, MEIRING; WIERNIK, 2017), job satisfaction (BUI, 2017), subjective well-being (SUN; KAUFMAN; SMILLIE, 2018), political participation (WEINSCHENK, 2017), stress (HENGARTNER *et al.*, 2017), counterproductive behavior in the work environment (GRIJALVA; NEWMAN, 2015), among other work outcomes.

Even though nowadays there is a relative consensus among researchers in Psychology that five dimensions describe the basic structure of personality, known as the Big Five Model, this model does not adequately cover socially aversive traits that are part of a normal range of personality functioning (HUANG; LIANG, 2015; JONASON; MIDDLETON, 2015). As previously seen, this theoretical gap in the literature regarding the dark side of personality was filled by the Dark Triad of Personality (PAULHUS; WILLIAMS, 2002), indicating that there are three traits that comprise the dark side: Machiavellianism, Psychopathy, and Narcissism.

The members of the Dark Triad (Machiavellianism, Narcissism, and Psychopathy) present common aspects, such as the tendency to explore and manipulate others, the search for self-promotion, aggressiveness, emotional coldness, and lack of empathy (JONES; PAULHUS, 2009), but also have legitimacy as distinct constructs (PAULHUS; WILLIAMS, 2002). As for differentiating elements, it is possible to say that people with psychopathic traits are more hostile, impulsive, and searchers of sensations; Machiavellians are colder, strategic, and delay bonuses aiming at long-term gains; and Narcissists have a greater sense of superiority, a need to be admired and to constantly reassert their self-esteem, as well as can be aggressive when their ego is threatened (RAUTHMAN, 2013).

O'Boyle *et al.* (2011) found that reductions in the quality of job performance were consistently associated with increases in Machiavellianism and Psychopathy and that counterproductive work behavior (CWB) was correlated to increases in all three components of the Dark Triad.

2.3 Sources of guidance (SOGs)

Sources of Guidance (SOGs), the dependent construct in the present research, are sources of information that employees rely on to interpret and respond to the work situations they encounter (PETERSON *et al.*, 1990). When employees have to deal with work events, they operate within a context of alternative SOGs, many of which extend beyond the individual (PETERSON; SMITH, 2000). SOGs may include interpretive structures, such as memories, thoughts, and understandings to which new events can be connected. In addition, prevailing views in society (e.g., country beliefs) and organizational documents (e.g., Standard Operating Procedures) can be used by organization members to verify what guidelines they can offer.

The use of Sources of Guidance and its connections with other variables have been investigated considerably over the years. For instance, Smith, Peterson, and Schwartz (2002) tested the hypothesis that the predominant values of members of an organizational culture lead them to rely on certain SOGs to respond to what happens around them. By using samples from 53 different countries, they tested whether value differences at the cultural level could predict typical SOGs used to handle work events. Results showed that values at the national level are strongly predictive of reliance on those sources of guidance that are relevant to vertical relationships within organizations. However, values are less successful in predicting reliance on co-workers and more tacit sources of guidance.

Smith and Peterson (2005) carried out a meaningful survey with 7,380 managers from 60 countries to determine whether demographic variables were correlated with their reliance on SOGs to handle work events and whether these correlations differed depending on the characteristics of the national culture. Results pointed out that demographic effects are stronger in individualist nations than elsewhere. Peterson *et al.* (2010) investigated the influence of employees' values and the use of guidance sources on e-mail use. The study was developed in Canada, the English-speaking Caribbean, Nigeria, and the USA. Results showed that e-mail use was positively associated with work contexts that show high reliance on specialists, subordinates, and informal rules as guidance sources.

Smith *et al.* (2011) investigated the use of SOGs by 7,701 employees in 56 countries in dealing with work events and the moderating role of national culture in this relationship. Correlations between the sources of guidance that employees use and the perceived effectiveness of how well these events are handled were employed. These correlations were predicted to vary with dimensions of national culture. Results showed that reliance on one's own experience, formal rules, and subordinates was positively correlated with perceived effectiveness globally.

Athayde and Torres (2020) proposed a theoretical model of the internal antecedents of employees' use of guidance sources at work while dealing with different events. The in-depth-theoretical review developed by the authors enabled the proposition of a model according to which personality traits and personal values influence each other and both might influence employees' use of guidance sources at work.

Moreover, Athayde and Torres (2022) statistically compared employees' use of sources of guidance (SOGs) at work in the United States and Brazil and discussed results in light of differences concerning national cultural characteristics. Americans presented significantly higher means than Brazilians on the use of informal rules and people outside the organization as guidance sources at work and Brazilians presented

significantly higher means than Americans on formal rules. The discussion showed that some of these differences were compatible with national culture characteristics.

Having conceptualized the constructs Personal Values, Dark Personality Traits, and Sources of Guidance and presented some prior empirical studies, the methodological procedures adopted in this research will be presented hereafter.

3. Method

The sample was comprised of employees from an American university, including professors, administrative staff, and outsourced employees. Before administering the questionnaire at the university, the research project was submitted to its Institutional Review Board (IRB). The project was approved by the Department of Health and Human Services Policy for the Protection of Human Subjects (Process Number: 45 CFR 46.104; Project Number: 19-012). The sampling technique used in this study was non-probabilistic by convenience, according to which the most available individuals were selected to provide the necessary information (HAIR *et al.*, 2009). Employees were first invited via e-mail to participate in the study and were asked to specify a day and time when the questionnaire (paper and pen) could be administered to them in person. The official website of the university was used to obtain employees' e-mail addresses.

Considering the total of 22 predictors (19 personal values and three dark personality traits), alpha of 5%, and power of 80%, the minimum sample size calculated with the software G*Power 3.1 was 163 cases. Out of the 193 questionnaires answered by the employees, 27 were discarded because they had more than 10% of missing values, resulting in 166 valid questionnaires, which fulfilled the minimum sample size calculated previously (163). Missing values in the valid questionnaires left were replaced by the series mean. The questionnaire applied in the research was comprised of three internationally-validated scales, which will be detailed hereafter.

The Portrait Values Questionnaire Refined (PVQ-R) was adopted to measure the respondents' personal values. This questionnaire, which has already been tested and validated in many countries (SCHWARTZ *et al.*, 2012), presents 57 brief descriptions of different people, each with goals, aspirations, or desires implicitly related to the value in question. The respondents indicate their similarity to the person described on a scale of six points, ranging from 1 = does not look anything like me to 6 = looks a lot like me. With this, it is suggested that the values implicitly presented in the descriptions of the items allow the inference of respondents' personal values.

Dark Personality Traits were measured by the instrument Dark Triad Dirty Dozen (DTDD), validated by Jonason and Webster (2010), which is considered the most used concise instrument to measure the Dark Triad (JONASON; MIDDLETON, 2015). This scale has 12 items, equally distributed among the three factors: Psychopathy, Machiavellianism, and Narcissism. Participants are asked to express their level of agreement (ranging from 1 = Strongly Disagree to 5 = Strongly Agree) to statements, such as "I often use deception or lies to get what I want" (Machiavellianism), "I'm used to being cynical" (Psychopathy), and "I often expect special favors from others" (Narcissism).

The data collection instrument regarding the use of sources of guidance (SOGs) when dealing with different events at work was the Managerial Decisions

Questionnaire Global (Mdq1GL), which was piloted by Peterson (1987) and later revised by Peterson, Barreto, and Smith (2016). The events (situations) described in the Mdq1GL were selected as likely to occur within the work of any type of organization in any nation: “When one of your subordinates is doing consistently good work”; “When some of the equipment or machinery used in your department seems to need a replacement”; “When another department does not provide the resources or support you require”; “When there are differing opinions within your department”; “When you see the need to introduce new work procedure into your department”; and “When the time comes to evaluate the success of new work procedures”.

The phrasing for each event was: “When [event] ..., to what extent are the actions taken affected by each of the following?”. For each event, the question was followed by a listing of nine guidance sources, described as follows: a) Formal rules and Procedures (FRP); b) Unwritten rules about “How we do things around here” (Informal Rules - IR); c) Subordinates (SUB); d) Specialists (SPE); e) Other people at my level (Co-Workers - CWO); f) My Superior (SUP); g) Opinions based on my own experience and training (OEX); h) Beliefs which are widely accepted in my country about what is right (Country Beliefs – CB); and i) People outside the organization (POU). Responses were made on 5-point Likert-type scales, anchored by terms ranging from 1= not at all to 5= to a very great extent.

The first event, related to subordinates, was discarded in the present study, once this event applies only to managers, and the present research does not differ managers from non-managers. Further, for the same reason, the source of guidance subordinates was also discarded from the other five events left in the present study. So, compared to the original questionnaire (Mdq1GL) by Peterson, Barreto, and Smith (2016), the questionnaire used in the present research has one less event and one less source of guidance. Nevertheless, it is important to point out that this does not mean data loss, given the fact that the reliance on SOGs, in previous studies, was measured by calculating a mean across all events, that is, the events were not analyzed separately. The same procedure was adopted in the present research. The final part of the questionnaire covered sociodemographic items.

Statistical analyses were done by using the software IBM® SPSS® Statistics 20.0 (Statistical Package for Social Sciences). Following the recommendations of Tabachnick and Fidell (2001) and Miles and Shevlin (2001), the variables were checked for their normal distribution. Then, correlations and stepwise regressions were run to test the influence of personal values and dark personality traits on the use of guidance sources at work.

4. Results and discussion

In this section, the results will be presented and analyzed, starting with descriptive statistics and, then, with multiple linear regressions.

4.1 Descriptive statistics

The majority of participants were comprised of female employees occupying non-managerial positions with some college education. More details on respondents’

sociodemographic characteristics for categorical and interval variables are summarized in Tables 1 and 2 respectively.

Table 1. Respondent's sociodemographic characteristics: categorical variables

Variable	%	
Position	Managers	29.5
	Non-managers	70.5
Sex	Male	40.4
	Female	59.6
Education	No college or university	1.8
	Some college or university education	31.3
	Completed undergraduate degree	16.3
	Some graduate education	7.8
	Completed Master's degree	22.9
	Study towards a second Master's degree or Ph.D.	3.6
	Completed second Master's degree or completed Ph.D.	16.3

Source: Research data

Table 2. Respondents' sociodemographic characteristics: interval variables

Variable	Mean	Standard deviation
Age	37.8	14.3
Number of children living at home	0.4	0.8
Work hours per week	36.8	11.9
Years in the present organization	6.6	6.3
Years in the present department	5.5	5.8
Years in the present position	4.3	4.9

Source: Research data

Concerning personal values, the respondents were characterized by devotion to the welfare of in-group members (Benevolence-Caring: $M=5.20$; $SD=0.67$), being reliable and trustworthy members of the in-group (Benevolence-Dependability: $M=5.11$; $SD=0.68$), and commitment to equality, justice, and protection for all people (Universalism-Concern: $M=4.92$; $SD=0.84$). These three personal values were the ones with the highest means. Concerning dark personality traits, respondents were characterized by a sense of superiority and a need to be admired, which are some of the characteristics of Narcissism ($M=2.54$; $SD=0.85$). This dark personality trait was the one with the highest mean. Moreover, the respondents were characterized by relying mostly on Superiors ($M=3.75$; $SD=0.77$), Formal Rules and Procedures ($M=3.51$; $SD=0.73$), and Informal Rules ($M=3.19$; $SD=0.86$) as sources of guidance when dealing different events at work. These three sources of guidance were the ones with the highest means. More details on the research constructs are shown in Table 3.

Table 3. Descriptive statistics for the research constructs

Variable	Personal Values (PVs)	
	Mean*	Standard deviation
Self-direction – Thought (SDT)	4.85	0.77
Self-direction – Action (SDA)	4.68	0.80
Stimulation (ST)	4.21	1.09
Hedonism (HE)	4.58	0.99
Achievement (AC)	4.48	0.89
Power – Dominance (POD)	2.90	1.07
Power – Resources (POR)	2.77	1.16

Face (FAC)	4.10	0.98
Security – Personal (SEP)	4.65	0.79
Security – Societal (SES)	4.69	1.03
Tradition (TR)	3.64	1.30
Conformity – Rules (COR)	4.43	1.04
Conformity – Interpersonal (COI)	4.07	1.06
Humility (HUM)	4.38	0.86
Benevolence – Caring (BEC)	5.20	0.67
Benevolence – Dependability (BED)	5.11	0.68
Universalism – Concern (UNC)	4.92	0.84
Universalism – Nature (UNN)	4.26	1.07
Universalism – Tolerance (UNT)	5	0.74
Dark Personality Traits (DTs)		
Variable	Mean**	Standard deviation
Psychopathy (PSY)	1.81	0.70
Machiavellianism (MAC)	2.20	0.71
Narcissism (NAR)	2.54	0.85
Sources of Guidance (SOGs)		
Variable	Mean**	Standard deviation
Formal Rules and Procedures (FRP)	3.51	0.73
Informal Rules (IR)	3.19	0.86
Specialists (SPE)	2.69	0.78
Co-Workers (CWO)	3.07	0.94
Superiors (SUP)	3.75	0.77
Own Experience (OEX)	3.16	0.88
Country Beliefs (CB)	2.38	0.99
People Outside the Organization (POU)	1.99	0.80

Note. *Scale from 1 to 6; **Scale from 1 to 5

Source: Research data

Smith, Peterson, and Schwartz (2002) state that the following groups of guidance sources (SOGs) are among the most frequent in a wide variety of cultural contexts and events at work: the individual's own experience, based on previous experience and training; social sources, based on superiors, specialists, coworkers, and people outside the organization; impersonal sources, based on formal rules or informal norms; and beliefs that are spread in a nation. All aforementioned groups of SOGs were present in the instrument Managerial Decision Questionnaire Global (Mdq1GL), administered in the present research. Hence, it was expected that none of these eight guidance sources would show mean scores close to one (minimum score on the scale). This expectation was confirmed for all SOGs in this study as Table 3 highlights.

Based on the findings of Smith, Peterson, and Schwartz (2002) in a study with samples from 53 different countries, it was expected that Specialists and Country Beliefs would be sources of guidance (SOGs) much less used than the others. This hypothesis was also confirmed in the present research. Country Beliefs ($M=2.38$; $SD=0.99$) and Specialists ($M=2.69$; $SD=0.78$) were the SOGs with the lowest means, along with People Outside Organization ($M=1.99$; $SD=0.78$).

Before proceeding with multiple linear regressions, Pearson correlation (r) was run to verify the correlations between personal values, dark personality traits, and the use of guidance sources at work. A positive strong correlation, with a coefficient above 0.5 (TABACHNICK; FIDELL, 2001) was found between personal values Self-direction – Thought (SDT) and Self-direction – Action (SDA) ($r = 0.52$, $p < 0.001$). This means that the respondents who feel free to cultivate their own ideas and abilities also feel

free to determine their own actions. A positive strong correlation was also found between personal values Stimulation (ST) and Hedonism (HE) ($r = 0.50$, $p < 0.001$), pointing out that the employees who look for excitement, novelty, and change also look for pleasure and sensuous gratification. Moreover, a positive strong correlation was found between dark personality traits Machiavellianism and Narcissism ($r = 0.54$, $p < 0.001$). This means that the employees who are colder and more strategic also have a sense of superiority and a need to be admired. At last, a negative correlation ($r = -0.42$, $p < 0.001$) was found between sources of guidance People Outside Organization (POU) and Superiors (SUP). This indicates that employees who rely on Superiors as a guidance source tend not to rely on People Outside Organization.

In the next section, results regarding multiple linear regressions will be presented and analyzed, achieving the main objective of the present research.

4.2 Multiple linear regressions

Stepwise regressions were run to identify which personal values and dark personality traits would influence the use of specific sources of guidance by employees when facing different events at work. Table 4 summarizes the results.

Table 4. Results for stepwise regressions

SOG	Predictor	β	t	F	R ²
Formal Rules and Procedures	Security-Personal	0.17	2.31*	2.72*	0.032
Informal Rules	Machiavellianism	0.24	3.06**	4.38**	0.075
Specialists	<i>No significant prediction</i>	-	-	-	-
Co-Workers	<i>No significant prediction</i>	-	-	-	-
Superiors	<i>No significant prediction</i>	-	-	-	-
Own Experience	Conformity-Rules	-0.26	-3.49***	6.33***	0.193
	Humility	0.22	2.86**	6.33***	
	Power-Dominance	0.20	2.59**	6.33***	
Country Beliefs	<i>No significant prediction</i>	-	-	-	-
People Outside the Organization	<i>No significant prediction</i>	-	-	-	-

Note. * $p < 0.05$; ** $p < 0.01$; *** $p < 0.001$

Source: Research data

Based on strong literature evidence, this investigation expected that personal values and dark personality traits would predict the use of sources of guidance (SOGs). Hence, this general hypothesis can be considered supported by the results, once personal values and dark personality traits statistically predicted three sources of guidance, even though personal values and dark personality traits were not present together in the predictions.

First, source of guidance Formal Rules and Procedures (FRP) showed Security-Personal as the only predictor, which is a personal value related to safety in one's immediate environment (SCHWARTZ *et al.*, 2012). This personal value seems to make sense in this scenario, once, out of all sources of guidance, formal rules and procedures represent the highest level of conformity within the in-group. So, it is

reasonable to assume that employees might use formal rules and procedures as an impersonal way to seek safety within their immediate environment.

Second, source of guidance Informal Rules (IR) showed dark personality trait Machiavellianism as the only predictor. Once the Machiavellian personality is characterized by a moral outlook that puts convenience above principle (O' BOYLE *et al.*, 2011), it was expected that people who scored high on Machiavellianism would rely significantly on Informal Rules. Hence, the results confirmed this expectation. Even though an organizational department may foster the use of formal rules, employees who score high on Machiavellianism may use informal rules as a matter of putting convenience above principle.

Third, source of guidance Own Experience (OEX) was predicted by the personal values Power-Dominance and Humility, and by low levels of personal value Conformity-Rules. Schwartz *et al.* (2012) state that Power-Dominance is a personal value related to power through exercising control over people. So, employees who score high on this personal value might use their own experience as a guidance source, using it as a control strategy while dealing with different events at work.

The use of Own Experience (OEX) was also explained by Humility, which, according to Schwartz *et al.* (2012), is a personal value related to recognizing one's insignificance in the larger scheme of things. This result was not expected, because, theoretically, a high score in humility naturally implies that own experience would not be a guidance source substantially used at work, once employees would not consider their own experience as relevant or significant. Characteristics of the American national culture can be used as a possible explanation, once The United States is largely considered to present an individualistic national culture (e.g., HOFSTEDE, 2011). So, it is reasonable to assume that employees can be individualists even presenting high levels of personal value humility, which makes them rely on their own experience when dealing with different events at work. This reasoning is just a possible explanation and cannot be used categorically to explain this relationship established at the individual level, which represents a suggestion for future studies to deeper investigate the referred finding.

Own Experience (OEX) was also explained by low levels of the personal value Conformity-Rules, which, now, makes much more sense. Conformity-Rules is a personal value related to compliance with rules, laws, and formal obligations (Schwartz *et al.*, 2012). Hence, low levels of this personal value may motivate employees to act according to their own experience.

At last, after discussing the three predictions found, a reflection is due: the low prediction of SOGs by dark personality traits may be explained by the fact that they are socially aversive traits (HUANG; LIANG, 2015; JONASON; MIDDLETON, 2015), even though they are also part of a normal range of personality functioning (BERGMAN *et al.*, 2011). Furthermore, according to Zeigler-Hill and Marcus (2016), a dark personality trait is one that is prejudicial and relates to the most varied interpersonal difficulties. Therefore, dark traits do not have the capacity of describing the basic structure of personality, as the Big Five Model does (GOLDBERG, 1981). Nevertheless, this does not mean that assessing dark personality traits is questionable in the present study. Dark traits are not as explored in the literature as the Big Five Model, but have legitimacy as distinct constructs (PAULHUS; WILLIAMS, 2002). In the present study, the use of Informal Rules as a source of guidance, for instance, was predicted only by a dark personality trait (Machiavellianism), with no personal values

as predictors, which reinforces the importance of including dark traits in this research, once it increased explanatory power.

5 Final remarks

The present research aimed to test the influence of employees' internal characteristics (personal values and dark personality traits) on their attitude toward relying on sources of guidance (SOGs) when dealing with different events at work. By empirically testing the relationship between three constructs that are claimed to have never been analyzed together, the present research contributes to the advancement of three knowledge fields: Organizational Behavior, Personality Psychology, and Social Psychology. The results suggest to managers, human resource recruiters, decision-makers, and psychologists important individual characteristics that are related to specific guidance sources prioritized at work. This can be strategic information when it comes to recruitment and selection processes. The research showed that, in general, personal values are better predictors of the use of SOGs than dark personality traits, which may be justified by the fact that dark personality traits are socially undesirable traits, although they are also part of a normal range of personality functioning and demonstrated to be important in the prediction of the use of Informal Rules as a guidance source at work.

The results of the present research have many professional implications. One of them regards the fact that personal values and dark personality traits proved to be predictors of the use of specific guidance sources at work: Formal Rules and Procedures, Informal Rules, and employees' Own Experience. This means that, assessing personal values and dark personality traits in companies' selecting processes may be important to estimate which sources of guidance the employee is more likely to prioritize at work in case he or she is hired. For instance, identifying job candidates with high scores on the personal value Security-Personal indicates employees' higher probability of using Formal Rules and Procedures as a guidance source when dealing with various events at work. Moreover, identifying job candidates with high scores on the dark personality trait Machiavellianism indicates employees' higher probability of using Informal Rules as a guidance source.

It is recommended, as opportunities for future research, to test the same theoretical model using the Big Five Model, instead of the Dark Triad of Personality for the construct personality traits, to verify whether or not personal values would remain being better predictors of the use of SOGs than personality traits, as suggested hereby. Furthermore, it is suggested that future research include organizational variables in the model to increase explanatory power.

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