SOCIAL, WORK AND ORGANIZATIONS PSYCHOLOGY

Organizational Justice – An Overview of the Brazilian Scientific Production[*]

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ABSTRACT – The relevance of organizational justice for the improvement of the relationship between workers and organizations has given the theme a prominent role on the international stage in recent decades. In Brazil, discrepancies between national and foreign contributions were pointed out by the last review on the subject, in 2005. Thus, this study analyzed the Brazilian scientific production on organizational justice, focusing on the dimensions of the organizational justice, the theoretical background, and the relationships investigated. A semi-systematic literature review was carried out in 19 journals (1996-2018). The results showed significant differences between national and international production. A national research agenda is presented, highlighting the need for studies exploring the antecedents and the effects of the process of mediation and interaction of justice and a better theoretical foundation.

KEYWORDS: organizational justice, Brazil workers, semi-systematic literature review

Justiça Organizacional – Um Panorama da Produção Científica Brasileira

RESUMO – A relevância da justiça organizacional para melhoria da relação entre trabalhadores e organizações conferiu ao tema destaque em cenário internacional nas últimas décadas. No Brasil, discrepâncias entre as contribuições nacionais e estrangeiras foram apontadas pela última revisão do tema, em 2005. Assim, buscando responder como as dimensões de justiça foram pesquisadas, baseadas em que teorias e quais as principais relações investigadas, este estudo analisou o desenvolvimento da produção científica brasileira sobre justiça organizacional. Realizou-se uma revisão semi-sistemática da literatura em 19 periódicos (1996-2018). Os resultados evidenciaram diferenças significativas entre a produção nacional e internacional. Apresenta-se uma agenda de pesquisa nacional, explicitando as necessidades de investigação dos antecedentes e dos efeitos mediacionais e interacionais do construto e de melhor fundamentação teórica.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: Justiça organizacional, trabalhadores do Brasil, revisão semi-sistemática de literatura

Organizational justice is necessary to improve the relationship between workers and organizations and, consequently, it is a requirement for the satisfaction of those workers and the effectiveness of their organizations (Greenberg, 1990). Three decades ago, the theme of organizational justice gained prominence in international scientific production on organizational behavior (OB). The large volume of robust international research, reviews and meta-analyses has greatly contributed to the advancement of scientific knowledge on this topic. Empirical studies, mostly supported by the theory of social exchanges, have shown that organizational justice affects workers' behaviors and attitudes (Colquitt et al., 2013) such as work engagement and turnover intentions (Saraswati, 2019), performance and organizational citizenship (Roch et al., 2019), job satisfaction (Dal Vesco et al., 2016), counterproductive behaviors (Colquitt et al., 2013), commitment (Colquitt & Zipay, 2015), motivation, productivity, trust in supervisors and absenteeism (Assmar et al., 2005).

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International reviews allowed understanding the dimensions of the organizational justice construct, its antecedents, consequences, its mediating role, and its interactional effects in different relationships. They also allowed to understand how different theoretical bases can complement each other for the analysis and interpretation of the relationship between justice and different organizational variables (Colquitt et al., 2013; Colquitt & Zipay, 2015). However, a comparative analysis pointed out a great discrepancy between international contributions and Brazilian production on this topic, highlighting the small number of Brazilian studies included in the analysis (Assmar et al., 2005). Apart from the fact that such analysis has been published over fifteen years ago, it only portrays part of the period of those contributions that began in the last decade of the 20th century.

Despite the notorious importance of the subject, in Brazil only the review by Assmar et al. (2005) reported above and a bibliometric study by Battistella et al. (2012), which verified the number of publications through survey of the annals of events in the Administration Area (ANPAd and SemeAD), were found. The review indicated the need to develop more research on organizational justice in Brazil and the bibliometric study highlighted the small number of publications on these surveys and indicated the need for studies that associate organizational justice with the broad field of management research. Furthermore, the cultural bias for the interpretation of those contributions on organizational justice and for the proposition of interventions in the Brazilian scenario must be considered. This is because culture, local socioeconomic development and organizational, situational and individual characteristics interact to predict the development and reactions to (in) justice in different countries (Silva & Caetano, 2016).

Those international scientific contributions may have possibly produced a global theoretical-empirical framework of references. However, findings on OB may not allow generalizations for Brazil, or even for other Latin American countries. Most of these countries inherited Iberian sociocultural characteristics mixed with pre-Columbian ones and had their workforce deeply influenced by kidnapped people from Africa and later migrants who arrived from other parts of Europe and the Middle Eastern and Eastern Asia (Feitosa et al, 2018). These authors recognize the need to develop frameworks of universal referents but they emphasize that it is essential to understand the nuances and complexities of the contexts to which we seek to extend interpretations and interventions. These outreach attempts may not be appropriate in national or local contexts in which

human capital, equity and relative deprivation are distinct and have different effects on individual values, beliefs, and perceptions (Borges-Andrade et al, 2018). We are not seeking a break with that theoretical-empirical framework of referents on organizational justice. However, there may be autochthonous characteristics of OB that ought to be known, as suggested by Borges-Andrade et al. (2018).

Keeping a perspective of the historical development of Brazilian research on organizational justice, we should answer a few questions: (1) How have the dimensions of the justice construct been investigated in Brazil? (2) Are the relationships researched in national studies on the subject similar to the international ones? (3) Does the national scientific production use the same theoretical bases as the international production to interpret its results? Considering the perspective of historical development, a semi-systematic review is an appropriate methodological option (Snyder, 2019). In order to answer these three questions, it is imperative to understand the state of the art of that Brazilian research based on an update and expansion of the work carried out by Assmar et al. (2005). It is equally important to make another comparison with the international research to include articles published in journals that maintain higher requirements than those usually made for the posting of research reports in the annals of scientific events. These answers may provide guidance for the advancement of scientific production in Brazil, and help propose future organizational intervention strategies based on scientific evidence obtained from the population of their workers.

The objective is to review how the Brazilian scientific production on the theme of organizational justice developed in the period from 1996 to 2018. An analysis of this theme will be initially carried out, aiming to understand its adjacent construct and how it has been internationally investigated. Next, the review will be performed on national research on organizational justice, drawn from a database of articles published between 1996 and 2018, which reported research carried out in Brazil on organizational behavior (OB) having the justice theme inserted (Borges-Andrade & Pagotto, 2010). These research reports had a markedly upward curve in the last five years of the 20th century and, thus, the year 1996 was chosen to start this review, considering the aforementioned insertion. Another reason to go back to 1996 is that international contributions started in that decade. Comparison between national and international production settings will be established. Finally, a research agenda for future studies will be presented to contribute to the advancement of national scientific production on the subject.

ORGANIZATIONAL JUSTICE

Organizational justice is a construct that carries along the potential to improve relations between workers and

organizations (Assmar et al., 2005), and can be applied to a wide variety of processes and behaviors (Cropanzano &

Ambrose, 2015). Justice is necessary for the effectiveness of organizational functioning and for the personal satisfaction of workers (Greenberg, 1990). It is a topic that may be able to face two major challenges in social and professional life, as its presence: (1) indicates to people that they are perceived as valuable, and such valuing of people and consideration of their interests facilitates cooperation and work in collaboration and fosters the effectiveness of activities carried out towards a common goal; and (2) demonstrates that decisions taken by those in a higher hierarchical position have a moral foundation, which reduces workers' concern with the risk of being exploited and increases their capacity to trust organizational relationships (Cropanzano & Ambrose, 2015). Hence, broadening the understanding of justice contributes to the understanding of different phenomena in the field of organizational behavior (OB).

Studies concerning organizational justice began in the 1960s, especially from the contributions of Homans, in 1961, a theorist who advocated the idea that a person expects to be rewarded in proportion to the exchange relationships he/she establishes with his/her colleagues (Mendonça & Tamayo, 2004). In 1987, Jerald Greenberg coined the term Organizational Justice, with the gathering of studies aimed at employees' conceptions, perceptions and reactions regarding (in)justice in the organizations they worked for (Assmar et al., 2005). In 1990, the preponderant role that organizational justice plays in the relationship between workers and their organizations was evidenced, constituting a basic requirement for organizations to maintain their effectiveness and the satisfaction of their members (Greenberg, 1990). Based on this author's findings, studies on organizational justice became more frequent and were dedicated to the understanding of: 1) the dimensions that compose the construct (Colquitt, 2001; Rego, 2001; Rego et al., 2002); 2) its antecedents, consequences, interactional effects and its mediating role in different relationships (Assmar et al., 2005; Colquitt et al., 2013; Colquitt & Zipay, 2015) and 3) as the phenomenon manifests itself at the group level (Colquitt et al., 2005; Colquitt & Jackson, 2006).

The application and use of a set of moral principles to guide social behavior is what characterizes the presence of justice, especially in relation to the distribution of results, decision-making processes and interpersonal treatments (Cropanzano & Ambrose, 2015). The theme of organizational justice concerns the perceptions of (in)justice that permeate the relationships between employees and their organizations. These perceptions follow the social or economic exchanges that occur within organizations, between individuals and their subordinates, peers, superiors, or the organization as a whole (Assmar et al., 2005). The phenomenon of organizational justice is composed of four dimensions: distributive, procedural, interpersonal, and informational. Reviews on the subject indicate that some researchers consider that the interpersonal and informational dimensions represent a single dimension: the interactional (Assmar et

al., 2005; Colquitt, 2012). However, evidence has shown that interactional justice should be broken down into its interpersonal and informational justice components, as they have different effects in the measurement model (Colquitt, 2001; Rego et al., 2002).

The distributive dimension consists of the perception of justice in connection with decision-making regarding allocation of organizational resources among the organization's members (such as assets, promotions, sanctions). It reflects the degree of equity, equality and need regarding this distribution (Colquitt et al., 2013; Colquitt & Zipay, 2015). The procedural dimension concerns decision-making processes regarding distribution of the available organizational resources among the organization's members, emphasizing the procedures adopted for a given distribution (Assmar et al., 2005). This dimension thus reflects the degree to which these processes are consistent, accurate, impartial and open to the contribution of workers (Colquitt et al., 2013).

The interpersonal dimension refers to the aspect of social sensitivity and is related to the perception of the level adopted by managers of respectful, fair and dignified treatment in relation to people affected by the procedures and decisions of resource allocation (Assmar et al., 2005; Colquitt et al., 2013). The informational dimension, in turn, focuses on the delivery of detailed information and explanations about the decision-making process regarding the distribution of resources. Therefore, this dimension reflects the veracity and adequacy of the explanations offered for the procedures adopted in the allocation of resources (Assmar et al., 2005; Colquitt et al., 2013; Colquitt & Zipay, 2015).

Besides the studies that aimed to understand the dimensions of organizational justice, meta-analyses were performed in order to broaden the understanding of the phenomenon (Colquitt, 2001; Colquitt et al., 2013; Rupp et al., 2014). In one of those meta-analyses, hypotheses based on the theory of social exchange and affect were investigated (Colquitt et al., 2013). Strong and positive correlations between justice and quality indicators of social exchange (trust, perceived support, commitment and leader-member exchange) were found; they were moderate and positive with organizational citizenship behavior and task performance; and moderate and negative with counterproductive behaviors. Furthermore, the significant relationships between justice and the variables of task performance and organizational citizenship behavior were mediated by the quality of social exchange indicators. However, this mediation was not found in the relationship between justice and counterproductive behavior. Justice was moderately related to positive and negative affect (directly with the first and inversely with the second). Both affects mediated the relationship between justice and task performance, organizational citizenship, and counterproductive behavior. Thus, the findings suggested that some relationships could be understood by mechanisms other than the quality of exchange and that affection would play a complementary role in understanding these relationships.

The need for future research to integrate theories of exchange and affect was pointed out by Colquitt et al. (2013).

Different models and theories to understand organizational justice were used: equity theories and equity heuristics, relational and group engagement models, and also some broader theories, such as social exchange and, more recently, of affect and information processing (Colquitt et al., 2013; Koopman et al., 2019). The theory of social exchange has still been one of the most used to understand the impact of justice on work attitudes and behaviors. However, the integration between this and other theories is pointed out as a way to increase the aggregating potential to the understanding of the phenomenon (Colquitt et al., 2013).

Organizational justice is mostly studied at the individual level of analysis (micro), being operationalized through the *perception* of justice (or injustice). But this construct has also been studied at the meso or group level of analysis (Colquitt et al., 2002, 2005; Colquitt & Jackson, 2006; Liu et al., 2014). Among the antecedents of organizational justice at the group level are leader-member exchange and intra-group trust (Liu et al., 2014), and group size and its collectivist character (Colquitt et al., 2002). Among its effects, the climate of justice is positively related to group performance (Colquitt et al., 2002). Its positive impact occurs in a number of processes, including communication, contribution, cohesion, effort and support, which peak into greater engagement in group-oriented behaviors, strengthening group collaboration (Priesemuth et al., 2013). On the other hand, the climate of justice is negatively related to group absenteeism (Colquitt et al., 2002). Perceptions of injustice at the group level can lead to less engagement in group processes, and the lack of group cohesion, interaction and attachment among group members can result in selfish behaviors engagements that harm the group (Priesemuth et al., 2013).

The moderating role of justice has also been internationally investigated at the micro and meso level of analysis. In the micro, there is the interaction between justice and job insecurity, so that when justice is low, job insecurity is more negatively related to engagement and job performance (Wang et al., 2014). At the meso level, there is an interaction between the climate of distributive and procedural justice. Thus, the climate of procedural justice moderates the relationship between the climate of distributive justice and (individual) depression and anxiety, beyond the direct effect of justice perceptions at the individual level (Spell & Arnold, 2007).

Given the evolving scenario of international research on organizational justice, it is possible to verify that advancing in the understanding of the phenomenon has also shed light on different organizational phenomena, both at the individual level (micro) and at the group level (meso). However, the generalization of these findings to Brazil may be made impossible by cultural bias (Silva & Caetano, 2016). Awareness of Brazilian research on the subject is necessary in order to elucidate how the study of the phenomenon can advance in the national context and, in the future, compare these findings with those obtained outside Brazil. Variables associated with organizational justice and findings from international meta-analyses suggest a high degree of belonging to the field of OB. Thus, the methodological path chosen for this review had its starting point in this field, as described below.

METHOD

A semi-systematic literature review was conducted to achieve the objective of this study, following Snyder's classification (2019). The original database had scientific articles belonging to the field of organizational behavior (OB), published between 1996 and 2018, in 19 national journals specified in the upper extracts of Psychology and Management CAPES *Qualis-Periódicos* (Brazilian system that evaluates scientific journals by knowledge areas). The Psychology journals included: *Estudos de Psicologia (UFRN), Psicologia: Reflexão e Crítica (UFRS), Psicologia em Estudo (UEM), Estudos de Psicologia (PUC Campinas), Psicologia: Teoria e Pesquisa (UnB), Psico USF, Psico PUC-RS, Psicologia: Ciência e Profissão (CFP), Psicologia: Organizações e Trabalho – rPOT (SBPOT), Avaliação Psicológica (IBAP), and Paidéia (USP-Ribeirão Preto)*. The Management journals were: *Brazilian Administration Review (ANPAD), Revista de Administração da USP, Revista de Administração de Empresas (FGV-SP), Revista de Administração Pública (FGV-RJ), Organizações e Sociedade (UFBA), Revista de Administração Contemporânea (ANPAD), Revista de Administração Mackenzie (U. Presb. Mackenzie),* and *Revista Eletrônica de Administração (UFRGS)*.

This database was used in 15 reviews published from 2004 to 2021, on OB themes such as: organizational culture, competencies, organizational change, OB and personnel management, commitment, cooperation and proactive behaviors, leadership, OB in the third sector, effects of training, workplace learning, affect and well-being, turnover, deviant behaviors and OB measures. Organizational justice is one of the subjects included in the database, but it has never been addressed in previous reviews that used its information. This database is updated annually by OB professors and students from two Brazilian Psychology Graduate Programs hosted by *Universidade de Brasilia* and *Universidade Salgado Oliveira*. The students receive prior theoretical and practical training, so that they achieve skills to correctly carry out the search and classification of the articles. They should follow procedures and criteria that ensure that standardized information is systematically entered into the database. The professors supervise both activities.

Initially, only the following articles are selected from those Psychology and Management journals: 1) those containing empirical research reports with at least one OB criterion or mediator variable at the micro or meso level of analysis and 2) those including samples of Brazilian workers. Pair assessment of these articles for inclusion in the database is performed to verify the level of agreement. Then, two other pairs of students carry out the classification of themes into categories and subcategories. They also add information such as the purpose of the study, data origin, research design, types of instruments and analysis of data used, nature of the organizations in which the respondents work and the economy segment in which they operate. The complete database totaled 1,149 articles in 2018. The criterion variables identified in these studies were classified according to categories and subcategories of typical OB variables previously formulated to create that database, as described by Borges-Andrade and Pagotto (2010).

Among the variables found in the database, organizational justice was classified as part of the category "cognition at work", in the subcategory "perception of justice and equity at work". Thus, to understand the state of the art on this topic, all articles in this subcategory were analyzed in depth, for the present review. This subcategory totaled 19 articles, seven of which were removed after reviewing their titles and abstracts because they were not related to the justice theme. Furthermore, a general analysis of all OB categories was also carried out to verify the existence of research on the topic that could have been cataloged in other categories. For this purpose, we searched the database for articles that included the terms "justice" and "fairness" in their title or as a construct surveyed. Eleven articles were found in this search that had not been cataloged in the subcategory "perception of justice and equity at work". Out of these, three were removed after reviewing the title and abstract, as they were not related to the topic. At the end of the selection, a total of 20 articles reporting research on organizational justice carried out with Brazilian workers were included. They composed the database used for this literature review.

An analysis of these 20 articles was performed in order to interpret the results. Authors and theories were identified and the reported findings were interpreted. In addition, the level of analysis used to study justice and the dimensional composition of this construct were considered. The relationships between the variables investigated and the results of each research were also analyzed quantitatively, through the effect size of the relationships surveyed in the national scenario. This index is most commonly used in other review modalities, but it may be used in semi-systematic reviews (Snyder, 2019).

RESULTS

In the used OB database, national empirical publications on the topic of organizational justice only appeared at the beginning of the 21st century. No publication was found between 1996 and 2001. The average was 1.2 annual publications (from 2002 to 2018), which shows a low volume of investigations with Brazilian workers. During that period, the first triennium (from 2001 to 2003) was the one with the lowest number of publications (1 article), and the second triennium (from 2004 to 2006) displayed the largest number (5 articles). The lack of consensus regarding the number of dimensions that make up the construct of organizational justice is also perceived in these publications. There is a balance between researches that presents a three-dimensional (nine articles) and four-dimensional (nine articles) view. The remaining articles included one with a fifth-dimensional proposal (Jesus & Rowe, 2014), and one chose not to present a predefined definition of dimensional vision, as it adopted a qualitative research perspective (Santos, 2013).

All the articles reviewed were intended to study organizational justice at the individual (micro) level. It was set into operation through interviews (Mendonça & Mendes, 2005; Santos, 2013) or with scales that measure the perception that the subjects have regarding the different dimensions of justice. The scales most used to measure the perception of justice are those of Colquitt (2001) and Mendonça et al. (2004). Each of them had its use reported in five articles.

Only one article addressed organizational justice as a criterion variable, having as background the perception of managers regarding the principle of controllability – which establishes that managers should only be evaluated based on elements they can control (Beuren et al., 2015). The study was developed under the four-dimensional model of justice, and its analyses show that the controllability principle is only significantly and positively related to procedural justice. On the other hand, 14 articles treated organizational justice as an antecedent variable related to other OB criterion variables. Among these variables, the most frequently investigated were affective, normative and calculative organizational commitment (Rego et al., 2002; Rego & Souto, 2004 ; Filenga & Siqueira, 2006; Sousa & Mendonça, 2009; Ribeiro & Bastos, 2010), followed by suffering (Mendonça & Mendes, 2005; Sousa & Mendonça, 2009); burnout (Silva et al., 2005; Sousa & Mendonça, 2009); and satisfaction (Cavazotte et al., 2010; Masagão & Ferreira, 2015). Other consequents – investigated in only one article each – were: engagement (Oliveira & Ferreira, 2016); positive affect towards work (Masagão & Ferreira, 2015); attitude towards retaliation (Mendonça & Tamayo, 2004); perception of professional development (Monteiro & Mourão, 2016), and perception of people management policies (policies of involvement, working conditions, rewards and training, development and education) (Fiuza, 2010). Table 1 shows the ranges of correlations reported in the studies.

Table 1
Consequences of the dimensions of justice and the effect size of the reviewed studies.

Dimensions	Consequent	Pearson's coefficient	
		Lower value	Higher value
Distributive	Affective organizational commitment	.16**	.57**
	Normative organizational commitment	.32***	.45**
	Calculative organizational commitment	.40**	
	Emotional burnout exhaustion	-.33**	-.34*** [a]
	Satisfaction	.49**	.56*** [a]
	Positive affects	.52**	
	Engagement	.55**	
	Engagement Policy	.65***	
	Working conditions policy	.46***	
	Rewards Policy	.73***	
	Perception of professional development	.33**	
Procedural	Affective organizational commitment	.27***	.58**
	Normative organizational commitment	.34**	.36***
	Calculative organizational commitment	.35**	
	Emotional burnout exhaustion	-.28**	
	Satisfaction	.50**	.56*** [a]
	Positive affects	.51**	
	Engagement	.43**	
	Engagement Policy	.76***	
	Working conditions policy	.50***	
	Professional development perception	.31***	
Interpersonal	Affective organizational commitment	.32***	.49***
	Normative organizational commitment	.17**	.23***
	Calculative organizational commitment	-.16*	.20**
	Emotional burnout exhaustion	-.53**	
	Satisfaction	.50**	
	Positive affects	.56**	
	Engagement	.41**	
	Perception of professional development	.29**	
Informational	Affective organizational commitment	.44**	.46***
	Normative organizational commitment	.17**	.31***
	Calculative organizational commitment	.23**	
	Satisfaction	.50**	
	Positive affects	.57**	
	Engagement	.38**	
	Perception of professional development	.27**	
Interactional [b]	Affective organizational commitment	.38***	
	Emotional burnout exhaustion	-.13* [a]	
	Engagement policy	.71***	
	Training, development and education policy	-.31***	

Note. The lower and higher values of Pearson's coefficients consist of the lowest and highest indices reported by the studies reviewed, respectively. [a] Values calculated using Student's t ($r = \sqrt{\frac{t^2}{t^2 + gl}}$); [b] dimension considered by studies that analyzed justice as a three-dimensional construct;*p<0.05; **p<0.01; ***p<0.001.

The correlation coefficient was used as a metric for effect size, as its comparison between studies in the same area of investigation is useful to determine its practical meaning (Espírito Santo & Daniel, 2017),considering that this information was presented in most studies. For the two studies that did not report the correlation coefficient (Cavazotte et al., 2010; Sousa & Mendonça, 2009), the correlations were calculated from Student's t test ($r = \sqrt{\frac{t^2}{t^2 + gl}}$). According to the proposed interpretation, the effect size is considered "low" if Pearson's r is between 0 and .25. Values between .25 and .50 indicate a "moderate" effect size; between .50 and .75 indicate a "considerable" effect size; and between .75 and 1.00, a "high" effect (Espírito Santo & Daniel, 2017). Thus, the following studied consequents expressed effect size indices understood as "considerable" correlations with all the dimensions of justice (r between .50 and .75): satisfaction, positive affect towards work and involvement policy. Affective organizational commitment also showed a considerable correlation with the distributive and procedural dimensions of justice, while it was moderately correlated with the interpersonal and informational dimensions (r between .25 and .50). Despite achieving a considerable correlation with the dimension of distributive ($r = .57$) and procedural ($r = .58$) justices, affective organizational commitment was the only consequent to present, among the studies that investigated it, a low correlation with the distributive dimension ($r = .16$) and presented the lowest correlation with procedural justice ($r = .27$). The consequents that showed the lowest correlation with the interpersonal and informational dimensions of justice were normative and calculative organizational commitments.

In addition to the relationships between the dimensions of justice and the different consequents listed in Table 1, significant and negative relationships were also found between a favorable attitude towards retaliation and organizational justice as a whole (Mendonça & Tamayo,

2004). A content analysis study was also identified that concluded that the experience of injustice may generate suffering (Mendonça & Mendes, 2005).

The mediating role of organizational justice – or specifically of any of its dimensions – was addressed in three articles that make up the database. Its mediating function was investigated in the relationship between management control system and commitment and trust, between distributive justice and experiences of pleasure and suffering, and between organizational change and well-being at work (Beuren et al., 2016; Nery et al., 2016; Sousa & Mendonça, 2009). Procedural justice played a mediating role in the relationship between distributive justice and the experiences of suffering and pleasure (Sousa & Mendonça, 2009). The dimension of interactional justice mediated the relationship between distributive justice and the experience of suffering (Sousa & Mendonça, 2009). Finally, the dimensions of distributive, procedural and interactional justice mediated the relationship between planning and preparing for change and the well-being of workers (Nery et al., 2016). All articles that aimed to investigate the mediating role of justice considered it a three-dimensional construct.

None of the articles in the database investigates the moderating role of organizational justice or specifically any of its dimensions in relation to other variables. Only one article proposes to find evidence of the validity of a scale for the construct of organizational justice in Brazil. Its proposal is based on the five-dimensional model, and aimed to enable the use of the scale in some specific professional classes (Jesus & Rowe, 2014).

Only three of the 20 articles performed the interpretations of their results under the light of some specific theory (two used the Social Exchange Theory and the third one, the Professional Development Theory). The other articles did not specify on which theoretical basis they had been developed.

DISCUSSION

Based on the analysis of the Brazilian scientific production on organizational justice, this review sought to answer three priority questions: (1) how the dimensions of the construct have been researched in Brazil, (2) whether the relationships investigated in national studies on the subject resemble the international ones and, finally, (3) whether the national scientific production uses the same theoretical bases as the international one to interpret its results. This excerpt of Brazilian research on organizational justice shows, in contrast to international production, a low number of national studies on the subject. There are discrepancies especially regarding the investigation of its antecedents, interactional effects, mediating role it can assume, and how the results are interpreted.

The divergence on the dimensions of the phenomenon of organizational justice existing in the international literature

is also present in Brazilian research, either in three or four dimensions: (1) distributive justice, (2) procedural justice, (3) interpersonal justice and (4) informational justice. The consensus among researchers who consider the phenomenon composed by three dimensions is that interpersonal justice and informational justice represent a single dimension: interactional justice (Assmar et al., 2005; Colquitt, 2012). National publications on the subject tend to remain divided as to the construct dimensional composition. But studies have shown that interactional justice should be split into its components of interpersonal and informational justice, since they have different effects on the measurement model (Colquitt, 2001; Rego et al., 2002; Rego & Souto, 2004). On the national scene, differential effects between the dimensions of interpersonal and informational justice were also identified. Only the interpersonal justice has explanatory potential

regarding affective commitment (Rego et al., 2002; Rego & Souto, 2002), while informational justice has a preponderance to explain the normative commitment (Rego & Souto, 2004). This suggests that the use of the four-dimensional model of justice may increase the explanatory power of the relational models proposed by scholars.

Investigators of Brazilian workers have directed their efforts to understand the consequences of organizational justice and their main findings converge with the international findings (especially in the relationship between justice and commitment, satisfaction, engagement, and retaliation). Comparatively, very little progress has been made regarding this construct's antecedents in Brazil. Considering that the interaction between socioeconomic and cultural factors impacts the prediction of the reaction to (in)justice in different countries (Silva & Caetano, 2016), understanding its background on the national scenario is of paramount importance to allow to enact it.

On the other hand, 15% of the articles reviewed deal with justice (or some of its dimensions) as a mediator, which goes in the same direction as the international research. Still, it is noteworthy that all Brazilian articles that propose the mediation of organizational justice consider it a three-dimensional construct. Despite the mediation relationships surveyed in Brazil not being the same as those surveyed internationally, the tendency to investigate the mediating role of one of the dimensions of justice is also observed in Brazil. The interactional effects that justice can assume, though, were not investigated by the national research, evidencing a great contrast with the international scenario.

The analysis of the effect size is of great value to compare relationships investigated in the national scenario, as it shows a common metric between the different studies that do not depend on sample values (Espirito Santo & Daniel, 2015). The effect size analysis performed using the correlation coefficient indicated that some variables, such as calculative organizational commitment and the emotional exhaustion of burnout, are not promising in relation to the interpersonal and informational dimensions of justice (or its interactional dimension, in the case of burnout). This is because these variables had very small effect sizes in relation to these dimensions. On the other hand, some variables such as satisfaction, positive affect towards work and involvement policy showed a promising relationship with all dimensions of justice. Some studied consequents showed different effects in the relationships established with each dimension. There is, for example, a considerable effect size for the relationship between emotional burnout exhaustion and the interpersonal dimension of justice, while this relationship is moderated for the distributive and procedural dimensions, and low for the interactional dimension (in the latter case, justice was studied as three-dimensional). Along the same line, there is a moderate effect size for the relationship between calculative commitment and the dimensions of distributive

and procedural justice. However, there is a low effect size in the relationship between this same variable and the dimensions of interpersonal and informational justice. This indicates that specific relationships between the dimensions of justice must be considered, since they have differential effects.

Regarding the level of analysis at which the construct is investigated, the national scientific production on justice also differs from the international one. There are many international researches that investigate this construct at the meso level (Colquitt et al., 2002, 2005; Colquitt & Jackson, 2006; Liu et al., 2014; Priesemuth et al., 2013), and this scenario highlights the contrast with the Brazilian production assessed here. This production investigates the phenomenon of organizational justice at the micro level of analysis. Regarding the methodological proposal for the study of justice at the micro level of analysis, national articles were careful to express that they operationalized the construct through scales with the focus on the *perception* of justice.

Although most publications use the theory of social exchange, which is dominant in the international literature, the number of Brazilian research papers that explained the used theory is extremely low, contrary to international literature. This lack of clarity may represent a detriment to the developed studies, since it is the theoretical basis that elucidates how the relationships between the variables proposed in the research will be studied and what is expected from them in the empirical investigation.

Challenges to the national scenario and research agenda

There are some major similarities between the Brazilian and the international production reviewed here: the lack of consensus about the dimensional model of the organizational justice construct and the main findings regarding its consequences. However, the comparison showed that little has been developed on this construct in Brazil, despite the fact that this need was indicated more than 15 years ago by Assmar et al.(2005). Furthermore, in the last two assessed years, there was a possible interruption of publications with empirical reports, which goes against the grain of the need to deepen this theme in Brazil.

The three- and four-dimensional models of this phenomenon appeared in a balanced way in Brazilian publications. However, the Brazilian scenario may benefit from further studies that use the four-dimensional model, since this model has a higher predictive power, when compared to the three-dimensional model. There are differential effects for each of the four dimensions, with an improvement in the predictive power of each dimension (Colquitt, 2001; Rego et al., 2002). Moreover, it is essential to investigate the mediating role of organizational justice from a four-dimensional perspective with Brazilian workers. Research

reports that comparing the predictive powers of the four- and three-dimensional model may advance the understanding of organizational justice in the national context. This type of study can even contribute to reducing the lack of consensus regarding the dimensions that constitute the construct of organizational justice or pointing to autochthonous characteristics that deserve special attention.

There is a need for a greater volume and deepening of Brazilian studies aimed at the antecedents of organizational justice. Since the reactions to (in)justice are also the result of the interaction of cultural elements, which may vary between different countries, only by deepening their background will it be possible to understand how to enact it in Brazil. In addition, it is necessary to further investigate how justice can interact with other constructs to change the magnitude (intensity or direction) of the relationships between other organizational phenomena and to enable an understanding of how justice can impact other relationships between variables of interest.

The study of organizational justice at different levels of analysis will also contribute to the development of the theme in Brazil. Therefore, it is necessary to consider justice as a collective construct and treat it theoretically and methodologically as such, as well as carefully distinguishing the other variables to be investigated about their levels of analysis. Thus, it is essential to define the levels of analysis of the phenomena that will be studied. For those arising from the interaction between constructs from different levels of analysis, multilevel studies should be performed (Puente-Palacios & Laros, 2009).

Despite the predominant use of social exchange theory, there is a clear contrast. While the tradition of international publications on the subject perpetuates a clear definition of which theoretical basis is used to carry out the analysis of the proposed studies, in most articles with research reports on Brazilian workers, there is no explanation of their underlying theory. It is expected that a study, which intends to contribute to the base theory, obtains evidence to ratify it, confront it or even problematize it. . This contribution is impaired if the national articles do not clearly show on which theoretical basis they are grounded.

This study aimed to review the state of the art of the Brazilian scientific production about organizational justice, and to propose a national research agenda on the subject. The database included empirical studies carried out with Brazilian workers, published in the best qualified journals in the field of OB, in which this theme is inserted. However, unpublished empirical studies, such as thesis and dissertations, did not make up this database. On the other hand, national reviews on the subject were used to support the scenario presented. Thus, based on the present recommendations for future research, we expected to contribute to the development of studies on organizational justice in Brazil.

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