



Investigating the effects of procedural justice on workplace deviance

Effects of
procedural
justice

Do employees' perceptions of conflicting guidance call the tune?

715

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Abstract

Purpose – The purpose of this paper is to test an explanation of how procedural justice (PJ) – a specific type of organizational justice that reflects how fairly organizational procedures are designed – may influence deviant workplace behavior targeting at the organization (DWB-O). The model proposes that PJ affects DWB-O through its influence on perceived normative conflict (PNC) with the organization. This influence, in turn, would prompt employees to reciprocate with DWB-O.

Design/methodology/approach – In the paper, data were collected from 270 (17.46 per cent) of the 1,547 teachers at a Spanish university by intranet.

Findings – The paper finds that the structural equation modeling (SEM) results suggest that PJ is an antecedent to PNC, which fully mediates a confirmed direct – but weak – PJ relationship with DWB-O.

Research limitations/implications – The paper shows that the researched teachers' job conditions are inherent to the peculiarities of the public sector that may limit the ability to extrapolate the findings in the private sector. The findings offer a better understanding of the way PJ is able to affect deviant behaviors. The findings also provide a more easily understood mechanism of the influence of procedural justice on DWB-O.

Practical implications – Results in this paper suggest that actions designed to promote PJ may be useful in communicating how companies are trying to introduce normative harmony in the workplace. Future lines of research are also offered.

Originality/value – The paper sees that the study of the mediating role that perceived normative conflict (PNC) may play in linking perceptions of PJ to DWBO is unprecedented in organizations.

Keywords Justice, Conflict, Harassment

Paper type Research paper

Deviant employee behavior has become a prevalent and costly problem for organizations. One study (McGurn, 1988) indicated that 75 per cent of employees have taken property from their employers at least once. Other studies have documented not only its financial impact, but also the social and psychological effects of negative workplace behavior on organizations (Hollinger and Clark, 1982, 1983; Murphy, 1993; Robinson and Greenberg, 1998). One such survey found that 42 per cent of women reported being harassed at work (Gruber, 1990).

A group of terms associated with deviance has evolved. These actions are also defined as anti-social behavior (Robinson and O'Leary-Kelly, 1998), organizational misbehavior (Vardi and Weiner, 1996), non-complaint behavior (Puffer, 1987),



workplace deviance (Robinson and Greenberg, 1998) and dysfunctional work behavior (Griffin *et al.*, 1998), just to name a few. The definitions of these actions also vary. Gruys and Sackett (2003), p. 30) labeled counterproductive workplace behaviors (CWB), and define them as “any intentional behavior on the part of an organizational member viewed by the organization as contrary to their legitimate interests”. Robinson and Bennett (1995) labeled deviant workplace behaviors (DWB), and described them as any voluntary behavior that violate significant organizational norms and, in so doing, threaten the well-being of an organization, its members, or both. Their construct forms part of the basis in this paper. Especially useful was the empirically derived typology of workplace deviance, which produced different dimensions. One of them represents the deviant workplace behavior (DWB) targeting toward the organization (DWB-O) as a whole (Bennett and Robinson, 2000).

Previous research has suggested that fairness perceptions play a key role in provoking DWB. A recent meta-analysis carried out by Cohen-Charash and Spector (2001) reported a robust relationship between DWB and different forms of justice. Perceptions of organizational justice include judgments of organizational procedures fairness or procedural justice (PJ), income fairness or distributive justice, and about the more or less respectable and honest interpersonal treatment or interactional justice. Researchers proposed a social exchange explanation (Blau, 1964) whereby employees perform DWB to retaliate against the unfair treatment offered by organizations, when they change their input to restore equity (Greenberg and Scott, 1996).

However, as Cohen-Charash and Spector (2001) state, the reasoning that explores details of the thought processes that lead employees to perform DWB has only been an ordinary imitation of the reasoning used in explaining organizational citizenship behaviors within a social exchange framework, where OCB is defined as a discretionary behavior that promotes organizational effectiveness. From a PJ perspective, the approach behind OCB, when also applied to DWB, would imply that to the extent employees perceive their organization using unfair procedures for resource allocations, they will develop negative attitudes toward the organization (e.g. reduced trust and commitment and increased dissatisfaction). In turn, these attitudes lead them to reciprocate in favor of (OCB), or against (DWB), the organization (Dailey and Kirk, 1992; Skarlicki and Folger, 1997).

Beyond the above analogy, limited research has been devoted to testing an *ad hoc* explanation for the relationship between unfair perceptions and DWBO within the social exchange process. Specifically, we focused on the mediating role that perceived normative conflict (PNC) may play in linking perceptions of PJ to DWBO.

Previous research has supported a relationship between PJ and perceived conflict at work (Cohen-Charash and Spector, 2001). For example, Lind and Tyler (1988) predicted a strong positive influence of PJ on the reduction of conflict within organizations. Similarly, Martinko *et al.* (2002) found that inflexible policies, rules and procedures in conflict, and task difficulty, may also lead employees to perceptions of disequilibria which, in turn, trigger retaliatory deviant behaviors that harm the organization. However, can PNC explain *why* PJ predicts DWBO? The answer to this question is very important because cited previous research also suggests that the direct cause and effect relationship between equity theory and DWB has been difficult to model. In that respect, Aquino *et al.* (2004), p. 1002) state that “... not everyone who is treated unjustly by his or her supervisor at work responds by engaging in work deviance...” In an

earlier study Aquino *et al.*, 1999, they found PJ was not directly associated to DWB. Indeed, studies frequently interpose mediators or use moderators to link PJ and DWB/OCB (see, e.g. Aquino *et al.*, 2004; Aryee *et al.*, 2002; Moorman *et al.*, 1998), and to provide a better understanding of what really leads the employee, who is faced with an injustice, to reciprocate with DWB.

Using the above arguments as a guide, and as Baron and Kenny (1986), p. 1173) state in referring to a mediator definition, PJ may be in need of “a third variable, which represents the generative mechanism through which the focal independent variable [PJ] is able to influence the dependent variable of interest (DWBO)”. Therefore, in order to offer an explanation for why PJ predicts DWBO, in our study we suggest this third variable may be PNC. Indeed, we predict that the employees’ sense of normative conflict (PNC) in their work groups will mediate the relationship between PJ and DWBO. To support that idea we must first support PJ as an antecedent of PNC (see Figure 1).

Hypotheses

When the formal rules of an organization are perceived to be congruent with the preferences and interests of the employees, the relationship between formal and informal norms is close (Ellickson, 1991). They are mutually reinforced, and it is often difficult to delimit their boundaries (Nee and Ingram, 1998).

In an ongoing social exchange relationship, the organization and employees use judgments of fairness as proxies for trust when determining whether they should behave in a cooperative manner (Lind, 2001). In contrast, studies of organizational justice have shown that judgments of unfairness increase organizational conflict and inhibit cooperation (Lind, 1995; Tyler and Smith, 1997). On that respect, Deutsch (2000), p. 41) notes that “That’s not fair” expresses a feeling that frequently leads to conflict. Thus, unfavorable PJ could lead the employees not to cooperate with organizational procedures, and consequently to a dilemma of compliance with formal rules. Underlying such a dilemma, there is an employees’ taking of position, since it is argued that processes of self-definition and social identification affect the way in which employees cope with a normative compliance dilemma (De Cremer and Van Vugt, 1999; Kramer and Brewer, 1984; Schopler and Insko, 1992; Tyler and Smith, 1999; Turner and Haslam, 2001; Wenzel, 2000). In effect, classical socio-psychological mechanisms of pressure may lead employees to feel compelled to side either with the organization or with their work group, and the more they opt to side with their group, the more an upsetting twofold guidance may result in the employee.

Perceived normative conflict (PNC) aims to measure such an expected tense situation. The construct tries to capture the extent to which the employees perceive a normative conflict between their work group rules and their organization’s ones.

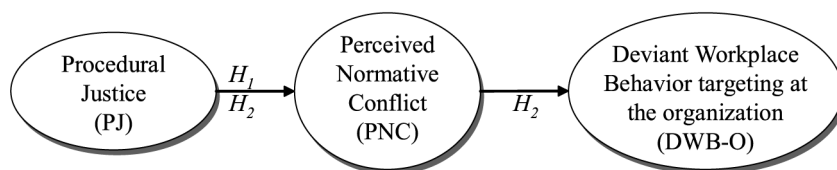


Figure 1. Hypothesized model of perceived normative conflict as a mediator of the relationship between procedural justice and deviant workplace behavior targeting at the organization

Moreover, normative conflict is perceived as more intense insofar as employees comparatively more invoke work group guidance: to abandon official normative implies, sooner or later, to have to face with the organization's coercive control. Hence, our first hypothesis is:

- H1. Employees' perceptions of procedural justice from their organization will be negatively associated with their sense of a normative conflict.

In an examination of the processes involved in the relationship between PJ and DWBO, researchers have been trying to describe why people care about justice in the first place. An explanation is provided by the group value model (Lind and Tyler, 1988; Tyler *et al.*, 1996; Tyler and Lind, 1992), which emphasizes identity relevant motivations behind the concern with fair procedures. That model suggests that procedural justice matters because it communicates information to group members about the quality of their relationship with authority and with other group members (Tyler *et al.*, 1996). In particular, Moorman *et al.* (1998) found that fair procedures promote citizenship behavior by eliciting feelings of respect and pride.

Lind and Tyler (1988) considered that PJ exist when procedures embody certain types of normatively accepted principles. Leventhal (1980) states six normative principles that, if not followed, may shape the picture sensed by people when facing with unfair procedures:

- (1) *A normative inconsistency*, or a sense that the allocation procedures are not consistent across persons and over time.
- (2) *A biased normative*, or perceptions that personal self-interests of decision-makers are operating during the allocation process.
- (3) *An inaccurate normative*, referring to the employee's sense of a lack of goodness of the information used in the allocation process.
- (4) *A perceived lack of a correctability rule*, dealing with the no apparent existence of opportunities to change an unfair decision.
- (5) *A lack of representative normative*, stating the sense that the needs, values, and outlooks of all the parties affected by the allocation process are not represented in the process.
- (6) *A perceived unethical normative*, according to which the allocation process is not compatible with fundamental moral and ethical values of the perceiver.

Accordingly, another explanation of what people concern with unfair procedures may be derived from their perceptions about the organizational normative. In effect, before unfair procedurals, employees may express concern about the appropriateness of the formal rules that employers put into practice within the workplace. As a result, that skeptical situation may lead the employee to a sense of normative disequilibria. As Ackroyd and Thompson (1999), p. 18) note, "lack of adjustment echoes Durkheim's anomic reactions" related to disrupted social equilibrium.

While the restoration of justice does not occur, the formal rules should remain at variance with the preferences and interests of employees in the organization, and a favorable atmosphere for a normative conflict is created. The informal norms, which until now have been perceived as linked to the formal rules, evolve into "opposition norms". On that line, Nee and Ingram (1998) state: "Opposition norms have the most

negative implication for performance. They give rise to organizational conflict and factionalism and often result in low morale". In that respect, Schein (1980) recognizes role conflict as a powerful determinant of behavior in organizations that increases tension and frustration. Using the above arguments as a guide, we think is reasonable to predict that when an employee faced with unjust procedures the direct cause whereby employees perform DWB, to retaliate against their organization (DWBO), may not be mainly the unethical context created, but their discontent with the organizational normative. Indeed, this general feeling of discomfort with formal rules, or this annoying compliance dilemma, may be the cause that really triggers employee deviance, in other words, the context that really leads employee to reciprocate against their unjust organization.

Based on the above reasoning, PJ may predict DWBO because unjust perceptions elicit employees' feelings of a perceived normative conflict (PNC). In turn, this PNC prompts the employees to retaliate by performing DWBO. Thus, our last hypothesis is:

- H2.* Perceived normative conflict (PNC) will mediate the relationship between the employee's perceptions of procedural justice (PJ) and his/her deviant workplace behavior against the organization (DWBO).

Method

Procedure and sample characteristics

Data were collected from 270 (17.46 per cent) of the 1,547 teachers at a Spanish public university by a questionnaire posted on the intranet, which could be accessed by clicking on a link in the e-mails asking for collaboration. The sample was comprised of 64.6 per cent males and 35.4 per cent females and, while 40 per cent were 40 years old or younger, only 4.2 per cent were older than 60. Most (68 per cent) of the sample held tenured positions while the remainder did not. Contextual conditions that lead us to presume varying willingness to respond were not found. In recent years, the University's internet usage policy to combat inappropriate use has been increasingly enforced. Under this anti-IT misuse context, the university uses software that monitors internet usage. The research project received prior official approval. In addition, IP addresses were unidentifiable and the surveyors were so informed so as to avoid their reticence and interference in responses. Eventually, there were 270 valid responses after twelve were rejected.

Measures

All items were scored on a seven-point scale ranging from (1) Strongly Disagree to (7) Strongly Agree – in DWB from (1) Never to (7) Constantly – and are presented in Table I. The values of Cronbach's alpha are shown on the main diagonal of the correlations table (Table II).

Procedural justice. We used six items of the scale developed by Moorman (1991) related to the fairness of organizational procedures.

Perceived normative conflict. We used a scale of five items developed from the literature on work group norms (e.g. Hyatt and Ruddy, 1997; Turner, 1990) and group conflict (e.g. Jehn, 1995; Friedman *et al.*, 2000) taking the specific characteristics of the particular public organizational context into account. The scale aimed to measure the degree to which the teachers choose their work group, against formal rules, as the self-category they refer to behave in the workplace: The more teachers are in line with

Measure	
<i>Procedural justice</i>	
X1 provide useful feedback regarding a university's decision and its implementation?	0.77
X2 hear the concerns of everyone affected by a university's decision?	0.93
X3 allow for requests for clarifications or additional information about a university's decision?	0.91
X4 have all parties affected by a decision included in the decision-making process?	0.92
X5 help you to collect accurate information for decision making?	0.90
X6 provide opportunities to appeal against or challenge a company's decision?	0.90
<i>Perceived normative conflict</i>	
Y7 If my co-workers supported me I would be inclined to a non-compliance with some rules of my job	0.75
Y8 In order to get on with my job I sometimes have to ignore the university rules	0.89
Y9 In some issues, I prefer to take more notice of my work group than of the university rules	0.82
Y10 Sometimes I feel that my co-workers and I see one thing and the university rules another	0.62
Y11 To tell the truth, my work group and I take different ways from the university rules	0.50
<i>Organization deviance</i>	
Y12 Spent too much time fantasizing or daydreaming instead of working	0.63
Y13 Come in late to work without giving prior notice	0.53
Y14 Intentionally worked slower than I could have worked	0.86
Y15 Put little effort into my work	0.87
Y16 Taken an additional or longer break than is acceptable at my workplace	0.83
Notes: Cmin = 185.410; <i>df</i> = 101; <i>p</i> < 0.0001; Cmin/ <i>df</i> = 1.836; GFI = 0.920; CFI = 0.972; NFI = 0.942; RMSEA = 0.056	

Table I.
Confirmatory factor
analysis results

their work groups against formal norms, the more they perceive a normative conflicting context.

Deviant workplace behaviour. We used a reduced version of scale developed by Bennett and Robinson (2000) in assessing DWB targeting at the organization. Some items included in Bennett and Robinson's scale were not appropriate to our public university under study. Thus, special features of the teachers' collective and their university led us to select five DWBO-related items.

We used structural equation modeling (SEM) to ensure that the above variables are three separate constructs. An inspection of the confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) results, presented in Table I, reveals that they are indeed distinct constructs: although the chi-square is significant ($p < 0.0001$), the goodness-of-fit (GFI), comparative fit (CFI), and normed fit (NFI) indices are above 0.90.

Results

Table II shows the scale means, standard deviations, reliabilities and correlations (r) between all the variables. Results suggest that they are significantly correlated in the expected directions. In effect, the correlation between PJ with PNC ($r = -0.292$; $p < 0.001$) seems to support *H1*. Since PJ weakly predicts DWBO ($r = -0.100$; $p < 0.07$) it also seems reasonable to test this relationship when it is indirectly stated. The correlation

of PJ with PNC ($r = -0.292$; $p < 0.001$) and, in turn, the PNC with DWBO ($r = 0.287$; $p < 0.001$) may be a good sign of indirect effects of PJ on DWBO through PNC.

To test the relationships between variables in our study we also used SEM, since it is a powerful tool to analyze causal relationships in non-experimental studies. Figure 2 is a path diagram that shows the relationships between the observed variables (survey answers, in rectangles) and the unobserved latent variables (circles). Items provided in Table I define the variables of the model observed by means of the survey questions and their response options. The various indexes used show an acceptable fit of the model ($\chi^2 [102, 270] = 185.426$). Support for *H1* is shown (Figure 2) by the significant path between PJ and PNC ($B = -0.294$; $p < 0.001$).

To test *H2*, we conducted a nested models comparison using the sequential chi-square difference test (SCDT). In line with Anderson and Gerbing's (1988) recommendations, our hypothesized model (more constrained) was compared with the saturated alternative model (less constrained) in which was added a direct path from PJ to DWBO. This latter model only represents a partially mediated model of the effects of PJ on DWBO.

A comparison of both models is shown in Table III. The fully mediated model of the effects of PJ on DWBO showed a better fit, especially with respect to parsimony fit indices, because no direct path between those constructs was placed. Additionally, although the saturated model includes a direct path so that PJ can show direct influences on DWBO, the SEM did not find significant effects in that direct path from PJ to DWBO ($B = -0.006$; $p = 0.901$). In other words, when PNC is added the initial partially supported link between PJ to DWBO ($r = -0.100$; $p < 0.07$) now loses any significance ($B = -0.006$; $p = 0.901$). Taken together, these patterns provide additional support to *H2*.

Finally, the estimated parameters for the best-fitting model are reported in Figure 2. In addition to the significant path between PJ and PNC, the path from PNC to DWBO ($B = 0.238$; $p < 0.001$) is also supported. The confirmation of indirect effects of PJ on DWBO (-0.094) provided by SEM outputs, is consistent with our mediation thesis; namely, PJ decreases DWBO through PNC.

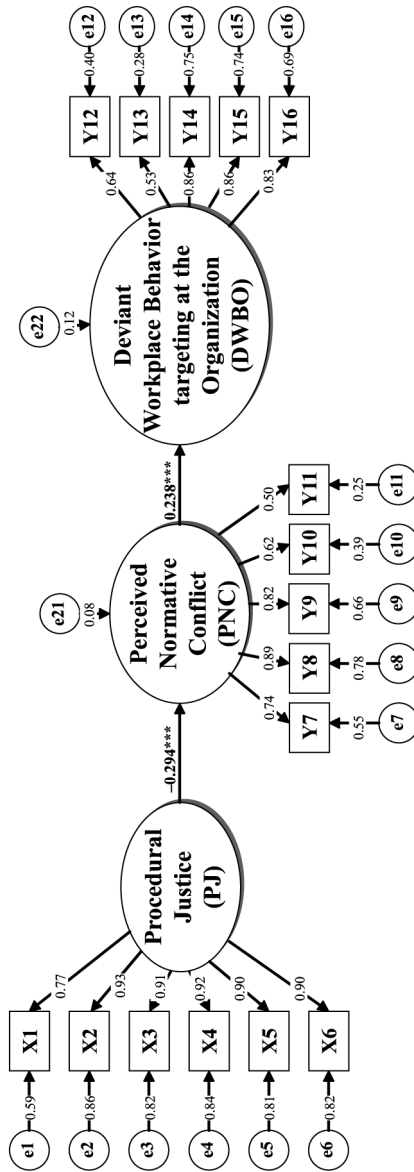
Discussion

The aim of this research was to test the usefulness of PNC to further explain the thought process of the employee who perceives unfavorable PJ, and consequently encourages her DWBO. The results support that procedural unfairness can provoke a perceived normative conflict ($B = -0.294$; $p < 0.001$) that in turn triggers DWBO ($B = 0.238$; $p < 0.001$). Moreover, the results suggest PNC as a full mediator of the relationship between PJ and DWBO. In effect, the fit of the accepted model was better

Variables	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	1	2	3
Procedural justice (PJ)	270	3.05	1.43	(0.961)		
Perceived normative conflict (PNC)	270	3.59	1.38	-0.292***	(0.842)	
DWBO	270	2.48	1.31	-0.100*	0.287***	(0.860)

Notes: The numbers in parentheses on the diagonal are coefficient alphas; $n = 270$; * $p < 0.07$; ** $p < 0.01$; *** $p < 0.001$

Table II.
Means, standard
deviations, correlations
and reliabilities



Notes: N = 270. * p < 0.05; ** p < 0.01; *** p < 0.001

Figure 2.
Accepted model of procedural justice, perceived normative conflict and workplace deviance targeting at the organization

MODEL	A direct path linking PJ with DWBO? Yes ($B = -0.006; p = 0.901$) [*] No (^{**})	χ^2	df	CFI	GFI	RMSEA	PGFI	PNFI	AGFI
PJ-PNC-DWBO		185.410	101	0.972	0.920	0.056	0.684	0.793	0.893
		185.426	102	0.973	0.920	0.055	0.690	0.800	0.894

Notes: * Although SEM "offers" this saturated model the possibility for PJ to hack a direct path to DWBO, its initial weak significance ($r = -0.100; p < 0.07$) disappears; ** According to fit indices provided, this fully mediated model shows a better fit, above all in referring to RMSEA (root-mean-square error of approximation) index that is lesser; and PGFI (parsimony goodness-of-fit index), PNFI (parsimony normed fit index), and AGFI (adjusted goodness of fit index) parsimonious fit indices, which are stronger

Table III.
Chi-square and fit index comparison of the fully and partially mediated models of the effects of procedural justice on DWBO

than the less constrained saturated model, which included the direct path PJ-DWBO but did not show significance. Indeed, SEM supported better parsimony adjustment for the model comparatively more difficult to fit (more constrained), given that in this model a direct path was not offered. Moreover, even though the saturated model was less constrained since one additional path “was available”, SEM fitted it worse and did not find the initial tendency of this path ($r = -0.100$; $p < 0.07$) that now disappears. Even though the direct link to mediate is weak, the whole of the results add support to our model, and thus offer an understanding of the way PJ is able to affect deviant behaviors.

Theoretical and practical implications and future research

The supported mediation between PJ and DWBO offers several organizational, psycho-sociological, and behavioral implications that could stimulate research on organizational behavior and management. Beginning in 1939, when Fritz Roethlisberger and William Dickson studied work groups in the Western Electric Company’s Hawthorne Plants, stating that it is the informal output norm, rather than the managers, which regulates employee performance, the usefulness of formal-informal organizational fit in organizations has been a widely cited topic. As such, employers’ actions regarding normative policy have probably been one of the more extensive practices into companies in seeking employee performance. Indeed, the traditional normative issues, such as the norm’s need for a link with key cultural matters, or its good-advisable drawing from employers-workers agreement, and broad discussions regarding adequate doses of coercion, to name a few, have been standard in organizations. However, our study seems to open new perspectives into such a traditional field.

The suggestion of the mediating role of PNC between just procedures and the discouragement of employee misconduct offers managers a new tool for use in normative strategies. The eternal – perhaps even Utopian – attempt of coupling formal and informal organizational facts now seem, to a greater extent, to be concerned with the elicitation of perceptions of PJ among workers. In effect, the way PNC was perceived among teachers throughout our sample varied depending on each one’s perception of justice. Thus, an “equity policy” in procedures may positively contribute as much in normative harmony, as many complex surveys and difficult negotiations which are seen as normative strategies. In effect, when managers act through PJ it is probably an easier way to get normative outputs. For instance, employees’ stronger tolerance with formal rule impairments, which may promote their pardon even, should ease managers dealing with eventual “discrepancies” between formal and informal norms.

Another interesting managerial implication concerns the prevention of those employee feelings of conflicting guidance that harm the organization. In effect, an escalation of conflict could be due to the employer’s lack of understanding that workplace deviance nature draws from an employee’s act of retribution. That employer’s incomprehension likely places one primary conflict into an upward spiral. However, given that our findings show the unfairly treated employee finds in PNC the vehicle to engage in retribution against the organization, the PNC framework may simplify seeing *why* each partner is in conflict and *why* workplace deviance process occurs. Hence, organizational managers, understanding better DWB etiology, may take

precautions through the causes of DWBO, and in so doing, avoid the “off” symptomatic remedies frequently linked with debatable coercive strategies.

However, prevention is not always possible and thus sometimes it may be necessary to resolve normative “discrepancies” which have already occurred. Since justice precedes PNC, we should note that both conflict and justice literatures can suggest remedies. As such, the former states that these discrepancies can be resolved by addressing the parties’ underlying interests, while the latter appeals to those interests which are related to the parties’ motives for desiring justice – PJ in our study – (Fisher *et al.*, 1991; Ury *et al.*, 1993). However, our findings may enhance the explanation of why people are concerned with fair procedures, that is, the appropriateness of formal rules. Therefore, our findings may also enhance the catalog of remedies by addressing, i.e. the above cited six normative principles of Leventhal (1980): The formal norm should be consistent, not biased, accurate, “correctability ruled”, representative, and perceived as ethical. The proposed remedy acts on the key link (PNC, normative) of the mechanism, which translates unfairness (PJ) on counterproductive behaviors (DWBO). That undesirable mechanism could be neutralized.

The three major motives justice literature suggests as remedies (Cropanzano *et al.*, 2001) are: instrumental (material-related), relational (status-related), and deontic (value-based belief system-related). When justice restoration invokes deontic principles as a remedy, its effects could also be improved/questioned by the perspective that offers the nuances of our findings. For example, organizational punishment –a deontic remedy since the victim does not derive any instrumental or relational gain– could be rejected due to the employee’s natural adherence to her work group value category. In effect, if an employee is faced with unfair procedures it is her value category that is really in conflict or questioned, and she will likely receive sufficient support from her groups, which can consider the punishment as unjust. Empirical research provides evidence of the inefficiency of unjust punishment (see, e.g. Ball *et al.*, 1994).

The study of the PNC also allows us to discuss some issues, which may be derived from that construct *per se*. When examining PNC, apart from the inherent formal-informal conflict, we can discover psychological implications of an employee’s norm dilemma compliance. The PNC descriptive statistics in Table II ($M = 3.59$; $SD = 1.38$) show how the teachers have different perceptions regarding the degree of conflict with the existing university norms, since they took different positions in the official-group rules continuum. In effect, employees felt compelled to take one side (alongside formality) or the other (alongside their work group). As we argued earlier, that fact leads teachers to two decoupling normative references, that is, to an annoyed compliance dilemma that triggered their DWB against the organization. However, the different intra-group perceptions of those teachers may also be conflicting among them. In effect, a likely “open wound” between those teachers may emerge. Their distinct positions about formality may generate an unhealthy group climate that may also explain DWB targeting at colleagues (DWB-I). Although unsupported, that suggestion could be a line for future research.

Some questions still remain open which could be used as a basis for future research. The literature contains numerous proposals that the perception of unfairness leads an employee to hope for the restoration of justice, which in turn causes her to engage in retributive actions against the perceived perpetrator. Furthermore, the conflicting situation is stated as a “culture medium” of emotions. Hence, could PNC be suggesting

a mediating role between PJ and DWBO because of affect-driven or only judgment-driven responses? In other words, can the DWBO triggered on that relationship be better explained as an affect-driven response, or as a cognitive action? Indeed, are its implications on prevention and remedy evidently distinct?

Finally, we believe that overall the study has strengths. First, we used a cross-sectional methodology. Next, the teachers in the study have certain job conditions that are often inherent to the peculiarities of workers in the public sector and universities. For example, the teachers' immediate bosses probably receive different opportunities to lead them. Consequently, the performance of the constructs used in our study as well as its implications could vary.

In conclusion, the results support a tendency of PNC as a full mediator of the relationship between PJ and DWBO. In effect, PNC as a mediator seems to carry the weight of the PJ predictions – even though weak – on DWBO, and may open a new normative scenario in combating deviant behaviors. The apparent mechanism is that perceptions of procedural injustice could affect the degree to which the employees perceive a normative conflicting climate, in which the employees are likely to reciprocate with deviant behaviors directed at the organization. The antecedence of PJ on PNC can also suggest that actions designed to promote PJ may be useful in communicating how companies may introduce normative harmony in the workplace.

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