ISSN: 2658-8455

Volume 2, Issue 3 (May, 2021), pp.23-46.

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Antecedents of the perceived organizational justice: An aggregated theoretical framework

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Disclosure statement:	Authors are not aware of any findings that might be perceived as affecting the objectivity of this study
Conflicts of interest:	The authors reports no conflicts of interest.
Cite this article	Zayer, C., & Benabdelhadi, A. (2021). Antecedents of the perceived organizational justice: An aggregated theoretical framework. International Journal of Accounting, Finance, Auditing, Management and Economics, 2(3), 23-46. https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.4793454
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DOI: 10.5281/zenodo. 4793454

Received: May 02, 2021 **Published online:** May 26, 2021

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Abstract:

The interest of the perceived organizational justice realm remains an increased manifold. It is a behavioral concept that emphasizes how people subjectively assess the ethical and moral norms of organizational management. Perceived organizational justice (OJ) is sometimes studied as a dependent variable, but often as an independent variable. For that reason, various OJ antecedents are examined in this paper, such as factors related to individual characteristics (Demographic characteristics, personality traits), culture (Individualism/collectivism, uncertainty avoidance, power distance, long, term/court term orientation, masculinity/femininity), organizational processes (organizational structure, HR practices, CSR initiatives), and interpersonal relationship (Leader-member-exchange and social contagion). Besides, the current paper presents an analytic review of the existing perceived organizational justice literature, and attempts to respond to the following question: What contributes to framing a fairness perception? Because of the multidisciplinary and interdisciplinarity of this field, we consolidated more than 125 theoretical and empirical papers, to portray firstly a holistic overview of fairness theories (cognitive/process and content theories), and highlight secondly the different relationships between perceived organizational justice and an array of predictors. Thereby, this review aims to contribute to the enrichment of the state of knowledge of justice or fairness, by providing a clear roadmap and deeper insight for researchers and practitioners concerned with perceived organizational justice, and enabling them to understand how and why people make such fairness perceptions in the workplace. To do so, we discuss its relationships with various antecedent aspects and propose an aggregated theoretical framework to identify multiple areas for future investigation and guide the field forward.

Keywords: Perceived fairness, OJ antecedents' levels, Justice predictors, Factors of justice perceptions.

JEL Classification: L20

Paper type: Theoretical Research

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1. Introduction

In this changing modern era, the experimented and highly qualified Human Resources (HR) have represented a prevail asset for any corporation, institution, or even nation (Beugre, 1998). Since, they have contributed efficiently to the betterment of organizational capabilities, competitiveness, and efficiency (Lopez-Cabrales et al., 2006). Reciprocally, organizations need thus to focus their gaze on developing and well managing their HR, and to be as platforms in service of individuals rather than only considering them as their resources (Patterson, 2001), to be able to understand their needs, expectations, and behaviors. In this regard, perceived organizational justice or perceived fairness has been flourished as a fundamental aspect of Human Resources Management (HRM) and one of the thriving realms of Organizational Behaviors (OB).

Over the past few decades, organizational justice (OJ) has played a substantial role in guiding and analyzing work reactions, behaviors and attitudes, to boost up the quality of employees' working lives. However, there is no consensus about the conceptualization of organizational fairness. Definitions of organizational justice have been proliferated depending on various perspectives. In terms of ethics and philosophy, organizational justice relies on an objective and normative approach, which aims to prescribe norms and standards that should be taken into account in the organizational settings (Russell Cropanzano et al., 2007). By contrast, in management and social psychology sciences, scholars seek to describe, through psychological inquiries, subjective people's perceptions to understand their behaviors and reactions to fair or unfair situations (Byrne & Cropanzano, 2001; Russel Cropanzano & Greenberg, 1997; Van den Bos & Lind, 2002). Generally, organizational justice is a behavioral concept that emphasizes how people assess the ethical and moral norms of organizational management (Russell Cropanzano et al., 2007).

Besides, plenty of previous researchers have studied the behavioral, attitudinal, and health outcomes that result from employees' perceptions of fair or unfair organizational life events. These outcomes were related to positive effects such as organizational citizenship behaviors (Musringudin, Makruf Akbar, 2017), innovative work & knowledge sharing (Akram et al., 2019), job performance (Moazzezi et al., 2014), organizational commitment (Karem et al., 2019) organizational identification (Malhotra et al., 2020), organizational trust (Jafari & Bidarian, 2012), job satisfaction (Ozel & Cahit, 2017), wellbeing (Park et al., 2019), as well as negative effects like destructive and counterproductive behaviors (e.g., Sabotage, steal, theft, withdrawal) (Shkoler & Tziner, 2017). Nevertheless, to our knowledge, the predictors that determine employee's perceptions have not been fully discussed. This absence of settled research studies on this question has opened up an avenue to investigate the main existent factors that would push employees to shape such perceptions of organizational justice, taking into account the process of formulating these perceptions. So that the following research question will be answered in this paper: What contributes to framing a fairness perception? This, with the attempt to enhance empirical future researches to devote more attention to this worthwhile area.

In addition, regardless of discipline, any academic research requires to be based on the existing knowledge (Snyder, 2019). Therefore, Because of the interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary organizational justice area, we have deemed it appropriate to provide an analytical overview by first providing a brief overview of the main organizational justice theories that explain why and how fairness perceptions are made and then synthesizing relevant research findings from literature review to identify multiple areas of the antecedents of perceived organizational justice, and then build an aggregated theoretical framework, with the attempt to uncover and bridge the gaps of this realm in which more research is needed.

Consequently, this will provide a substantial contribution to developing an insightful explanation of the perceived fairness, for the benefit of the scientific research community and managers.

To conduct this research, a semi-systematic review was used. This approach is generally intended for multidisciplinary topics that have been conceptualized differently by diverse researchers and that strive to identify pertinent studies related to the studied topic and to analytically synthesize them instead of measuring their effect size (Wong et al., 2013). Thus, it is an excellent way and rigorous method to portray a state-of-the-art snapshot (Palmatier et al., 2018) of the organizational justice domain. In practical terms, this semi systematic review is designed by following the steps below:

- 1. Define the research question: we have set out the objective of this research which seeks to identify and understand the main factors impacting positively/negatively perceived organizational justice to predict behavioral and attitudinal outcomes.
- 2. Brainstorm keywords: a set of different key terms were listed such as antecedents of perceived organizational justice, organizational fairness antecedents, predictors of perceived justice, factors of perceived justice, determinants of justice perceptions, the influence of individual's characteristics on justice perceptions, the impact of individual's differences on justice perceptions, the effect of cultural characteristics on perceived justice, influence of HR practices on perceived justice, effect of CSR initiatives on perceived justice, the effect of organizational structure on perceived justice, the influence of LMX on perceived justice, effect of social contagion on perceived justice.
- 3. Identify databases: we have selected reputable and valuable database platforms to collect relevant published papers such as Scopus, Springer, Jstor, Web of Science, PubMed, ScienceDirect, APA Psycnet, and Frontiers in psychology.
 - 1. Screening and data extraction: to sift the appropriate search studies that meet the objective of our research, we have used several inclusion and exclusion criteria, for instance, both empirical and theoretical studies that highlight the relationship between perceived organizational justice and its different antecedents, among empirical evidences, both qualitative and quantitative forms of publications were included to have an overarching review of organizational justice field and avoid omissions. Furthermore, we have established a linguistic delimitation of our research excluding articles written in other languages to select only English articles. Moreover, we sought to understand determinants of fairness perceptions in the workplace without restricting the geographical and sectorial research perimeter.
- 4. Classify selected papers and structured them into four levels individual, cultural, organizational, and interpersonal, then establish a descriptive and analytical evaluation, present synthetically the main findings, describe existing gaps, and develop a theoretical framework to extend future research.

Therefore, to enhance the comprehending of how and why justice perceptions are made, we organized this review as follows: First, we scrutinized a taxonomy of organizational justice theories (Content & process theories), second, we highlighted an array of its salient antecedents and proposed a theoretical framework (individual-level, cultural-level, interpersonal-level, and organizational-level). Finally, we concluded thoughts for future research.

2. Taxonomy of organizational justice theories

2.1 OJ structures

Belonging an organization involves cognitive maps of the social system (Beugré & Baron, 2001) and perceptions of the surrounding workplace. Commonly, three types of events are perceived in terms of justice: outcomes, procedures, and interactional relationships.

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In the subjective and descriptive aspect, distributive justice (Adams, 1965) corresponds to the fairness perception of proportional outcomes or allocations; procedural justice (Thibaut & Walker, 1975) relates to the fairness perception of the decision-making process and interactional justice (Bies & Moag, 1986) indicates the fairness perception of interpersonal relationships (Colquitt, 2001). Recently, some researchers have separated interactional justice into two sub-dimensions. The first one, interpersonal justice, concerns the treatment of dignity and respect in relations, the second one, informational justice, pertains to explanation and sharing of information at the workplace (Colquitt, 2001; Colquitt et al., 2001).

2.2 Process theories: How justice perceptions are made?

The roots of organizational justice referred to the **Cognitive Dissonance Theory** and the **Theory of Relative Deprivation**, i.e. respectively a disharmony of individual's beliefs, behaviors, and attitudes which generate a mental discomfort (Festinger, 1957) and a negative feeling due to the comparison of an individual's current state with a better state (Crosby 1976). Relative deprivation theory was applied in Stouffer et al.'s (1949) earliest socio-psychological study about fairness in the workplace, in which they demonstrated how American airmen in the military police feel dissatisfied when they perceived low promotion opportunities comparing to others. This feeling is created when there is a gap between achievement and the expectation of that achievement (Adams, 1965), it is therefore a divergence between what has been perceived and what has been expected which engenders a feeling of injustice. Stemming from these two theories, fairness theories emerged, and have been classified according to the process motivation theories framework, that considers organizational justice as a category of motivated behaviors (Russell Cropanzano, Byrne, et al., 2001a; Jerald Greenberg, 1987).

Hence, Stacy Adams gave birth to one of the most pivotal theories in the organizational justice field i.e. **Equity Theory** (Adams, 1963, 1965), it consists of the individual cognitive perception of inputs' ratio (time, education, experience, effort, skills...) and outputs (salary, rewards, promotion...) in comparison with those of others. If these ratios match, it means that there is fairness in the workplace, thus the individual is more likely to react and behave positively. Although equity is generally considered to be the most appropriate outcome standard in organizations, it presents a unidimensional conceptualization of fairness (Leventhal, 1980), taking into account only material and economic outcomes (Folger & Cropanzano, 2001).

Therefore, **Referent Cognition Theory** (**RCT**) (e.g. Folger, 1987; Folger & Cropanzano, 1989, 2001; Folger & Martin, 1986) endeavored to complement equity theory focusing on processes rather than just outcomes. It pertains to a resentment perception of unfairness that may trigger counterfactual thinking of an outcome that would be more favorable with an alternative procedure that should be used, emphasizing that a high referent, which is an individual that provides a high cognition towards alternatives procedures, is more likely to perceive injustice than a low referent. This occurs when there is an absence of an employee's voice to participate in decision-making process, so that people make easily would/should analysis (Folger & Cropanzano, 1989). However, this theory is incomplete, it does not explain the accountability process by which fairness judgments are made, and omits socio-emotional aspects (Folger & Cropanzano, 2001). Consequently, Folger's Fairness Theory revised RCT and goes beyond it. It encompasses equity theory, relative deprivation theory, Leventhal's (1980) six rules of procedural justice, referent cognitions theory (RCT), interactional justice, and the relational approaches to justice (Folger & Cropanzano, 1998). It considers justice as a process of accountability, to the extent that it relies on identifying actions and someone accountable (e.g. decision-maker) engaged in those actions of unfair treatment that has been threatened another individual's well-being (material or psychological), it postulates that those actions would have been appropriated if the relevant accountable could have and should have

behaved differently and equally (Folger & Cropanzano, 2001). Despite its broad contributions, fairness theory is not sufficiently developed empirically (Árnadóttir, 2002; Russell Cropanzano, Byrne, et al., 2001b).

On the other hand, in organizational life, employees are dealing with authorities, which makes them facing a *fundamental social dilemma* (Lind, 2001), that is, the tension between economic rewards and the risk of being exploited, and the tension between social identity in the organization and the threat of being rejected. This phenomenon leads to a violation of individual cognitive schemes of fair and unfair acts (Crawshaw et al., 2013) and creates uncertainty in relationships because when individuals are uncertain about the world around them, they are more concerned about fairness (Van den Bos & Lind, 2002). In contrast to a lot of analytical thoughts and a great deal of calculation (*would/could/should* analysis), justice perceptions could be formulated in a relatively automatic way with a cognitive and heuristic shortcut (Goldman & Thatcher, 2002).

Consequently, **Fairness Heuristic Theory** (Lind, 2001) was coined to add some sources of evidence to justify quickly and easily an individual's fairness judgment. However, evaluating distributive justice issues are more difficult than those about decision-making processes and interpersonal relationships because of the unavailability of information, distributive justice perceptions require knowing all circumstances of the received outcomes which complicate its calculation, nevertheless, procedure and interactional justice predictions are categorized as heuristic tools easy to assess (Van Den Bas et al., 2001).

To sum up, three process theories (synthesized in figure 1) are classified as cognitive processes of fairness judgment (equity theory, CRT, and fairness theory), they rely on a controlled or systematic process that requires the availability of information, time, and cognition resources (For general reviews e.g. Crawshaw et al., 2013; Russell Cropanzano, Byrne, et al., 2001b; Folger & Cropanzano, 1989, 2001). However, there are some situations where perceptions are formulated automatically through the heuristic process when is information are incomplete or unavailable hence the need for a heuristic processing of judgment (Fairness heuristic theory) (Lind, 2001; Van Den Bas et al., 2001).

Relative depriviation Theory & Dissonance Theory

Theo

Figure 1: Organizational justice process theories

Source: By Authors

After providing a deeper insight into *how* employees express justice perceptions, we subsequently explore a series of content theories of justice, which remain substantial to understand *why* individuals matter about justice at the workplace.

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2.3 Content theories of fairness: Why employees are craving about justice?

Justice is an essential characteristic of a social human being, it is anchored in the human brain (Sanfey et al., 2003). This leads to a crucial question -why people care about justice when they are thinking about something else? Content theories respond to this question because they attempt to explain needs, motives, and goals that push employees to shape justice perceptions (Russell Cropanzano, Rupp, et al., 2001), which would allow managers to understand, predict and analyze their eventual behaviors and reactions.

A multiple needs model has been established in the literature (Russell Cropanzano, Rupp, et al., 2001; Fortin, 2008). This includes instrumental model, interpersonal model, and deontic model:

- Instrumental or economic model: Every employee works for a pecuniary consideration with a long haul to reach his self-interest. Fair organizational systems are more likely to ensure valuable economic profits and improve the quality of life. Extending this line of reasoning, the earliest theory of equity (Adams, 1965) suggested that individuals care about justice for motives of outcomes control, by calculating contributions and retributions ratio, also they seek to predict and control decision process or "voice" to maximize with more certainty the personal financial worth and favorability of outcomes (Thibaut & Walker, 1975) that are considered as outcomes of interest. By contrast, the unfavorability of outcomes drives employees to increase the chance of resigning and searching for other work opportunities. Although the support for the instrumental model, people are concerned with other social issues that could enable them to accept outcomes if they are treated with interpersonal dignity and respect (Bies & Moag, 1986).
- Group value/Interpersonal or social model: Social belongingness is a fundamental human need. In organizations, employees are interested in justice because it helps them to have membership in a group, being more respected, accepted, and valued by their authority figure (e.g. Lind & Tyler, 1988; T. R. Tyler & Bies, 1990). In addition, it protects them from being exploited or abused by their hierarchical managers. So that the risk of mistreatment decreases (Russell Cropanzano et al., 2007). In other words, when authorities make the right and honest decisions, use a fair process with a high level of trustworthiness, and treat all the team members respectfully, the feeling of pride in group membership increase (T. Tyler et al., 1996), then, employees become more committed to the company despite their unsatisfied outcomes (Lind & Tyler, 1988; T. R. Tyler & Bies, 1990; T. R. Tyler & Blader, 2000). As a result, they could achieve self-confidence and self-worth which produce a harmonious workplace environment.
- Deontic or ethical models: beyond the motives of worthwhile outcomes and social status of organizational justice, which are viewed as self-oriented approaches (Russell Cropanzano & Stein, 2009) justice is the cornerstone of the human values of dignity and worth (Folger, 1998). Individuals prefer a justice system within the organizational settings because they are convinced that it is the right moral and ethical way by which they should be treated (Folger, 2001; Folger & Salvador, 2008) and it is the appropriate moral obligation that determines how to react toward others with reciprocity. For instance, an experimental study(Treviño & Weaver, 2001) discovered that when employees perceived overall justice in the organization that abided by moral policies and ethics programs, they are less likely to behave unethically and more likely to report an ethical transgression to management that could harm the organization.

In short, we saw that employees desire justice for three reasons. First, for the motive of long-term control over required outcomes (the instrumental perspective). Second, for the need of being esteemed and belonged in a social group (the relational perspective). Third, for the ethical goal of working in a moral environment organized by deontic programs and initiatives (The deontic perspective).

Thereby, content theories and cognitive/heuristic process theories form the socle of organizational justice perceptions. However, there are other influential factors that contribute to the comprehension of these perceptions.

3. The antecedents of justice perceptions

The organizational justice literature has underlined empirically that perceived fairness is linked with various concepts that can be usefully organized by their level of analysis (Illustrated below in figure 2): individual level, cultural level, organizational level, and interpersonal level.

3.1 Individual antecedents' level:

Colquitt et al., (2001) have asserted that the predictors of fairness perceptions are dependent on a number of individual differences. In that sense, Cohen-Charash & Spector (2001) have analyzed in their meta-analysis the relationship between perceived organizational justice and different individual characteristics (age, gender, race, education level, tenure, affective negativity, and self-esteem). On one hand, they have found that in general demographic characteristics (age, gender, race, education level, and tenure) of the perceiver had a low and insignificant impact on perceived fairness, i.e., justice perceptions were similar from an individual to another. Contrary to Haybatollah (2015) who has affirmed that gender, marital status, educational background, and tenure predicted the dimensions of organizational justice perceptions, similar to a recent study that has been conducted for the benefit of health stuff, it has pointed out that specific set of socio-demographic factors significantly influenced the perception of organizational justice such as age, marital status, education, tenure, hospital ownership, and gender (Ghasi et al., 2020). In the same sense, Tessema et al., (2014) have highlighted that gender influenced significantly distributive and interactional justice but not procedural justice in addition to the education level that affected meaningfully perceived organizational justice components except interactional justice. However, Simpson & Kaminski (2007) have combined gender and race with organizational justice. As a result, they have shown that there was a direct, strong, and meaningful relationship between these two characteristics and organizational justice specifically the interactional justice dimension, they have concluded that black women paid more attention to respectful and dignify treatment more than white women and both black and white man.

On the other hand, Cohen-Charash & Spector (2001) have studied *negative affectivity* which refers to a negative emotional state and *self-esteem* as personality traits. Respectively, their conclusions highlighted that when an individual experiences high negative affectivity, he tends to focus on negative aspects of the situation, thus, he is more likely to perceive unjustly the work environment and vice versa. In short, negative affectivity was related significantly to procedural and interactional justice, more than distributive justice. Then, the relationship between self-esteem procedural justice has been revealed insignificantly (Cohen-Charash & Spector, 2001).

Furthermore, going beyond affective negativity and self-esteem, Törnroos and his colleagues (2018) have sought recently to examine the impact of personality traits on fairness perceptions in order to clarify why perceptions of organizational justice are not the same across individuals. Based on the Five Factors Model (FFM) of personality traits (*neuroticism*, *extraversion*, *openness*, *conscientiousness*, *and agreeableness*), they demonstrated that neuroticism, agreeableness, and openness were linked to perceptions of organizational justice. Neuroticism which is related to negative characters such as sadness and moodiness was associated with lower perceived distributive justice, procedural and interactional justice, while agreeableness which is attributed to kindness and affection was associated with higher perceived procedural and interactional justice. As well as an openness that is linked to curiosity and new challenges was associated with higher perceived distributive justice.

ISSN: 2658-8455

Volume 2, Issue 3 (May, 2021), pp.23-46.

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Overall, fairness perceptions are influenced by individual dispositions (demographic differences and personality traits) despite the few researches that have been dealt with these issues. This scant attention is perhaps due to the postulate that every individual differs from others by his expectations, experiences, preferences, and sensitivities. Along with individual characteristics, a better understanding of fairness perceptions requires considering cultural dispositions (J. Greenberg, 2001).

3.2 Cultural antecedent level

Every organization operates with reference to prevailing cultural standards. Cultural differences are considered as a heuristic way to explain and guide different aspects of social organizational life. Culture is defined as "the collective programming of the mind which distinguishes the members of one group or category of people from another." (G Hofstede, 1991, p. 5). In other terms, it is a set of thoughts, educational backgrounds, experiences, values, attitudes, beliefs, behaviors... that determine an employee's cultural differences and characterize him from another.

A burgeoning cross-cultural justice literature analyzes why perceptions of fairness often differ from one group or society to another, then it suggests that justice perceptions are interpreted differently all over the world depending on cultural variables and values (Cohen, 2015; Fischer, 2016) (Fischer, 2016). The most cross-cultural justice researches have been conducted in western countries (Beugré, 2007), while few ones have been studied in the Arabic context (e.g. Gadelrab et al., 2020; Gadelrab & Alkhadher, 2017). Based on Hofstede's (1980) cultural dimension model (*individualism/collectivism, uncertainty avoidance, power distance, long term/court term orientation, and masculinity/femininity*), studies have shown that culture affects perceived distributive, procedural, and interactional justice, or plays a moderating role under which justice perceptions have stronger or weaker effects on its outcomes (Shao et al., 2013).

Taking the case of the most frequently investigated factors in the literature (Silva & Caetano, 2016): collectivism and power distance which mean respectively the cohesiveness of a group of individuals and the acceptance or rejection of unequal distributions of power within a given organization (Geert Hofstede, 1980). For instance, concerning the distributive justice dimension, collectivist communities (e.g. Arab communities) tend to prefer assessing outcomes with equality and need principles over equity principle, while individualists perceive fairness when they receive their allocations equitably (Murphy-Berman, V., Berman, J.J., Singh, P., Pachauri & Kumar, 1984). However, in cultures with high power distance, people tend to prefer equity over equality and needs rules (Fischer & Smith, 2003). In respect of procedural justice, for collectivists, procedures must be consistent whereas individualists prefer expressing their opinions and making decisions via their voice (Summereder et al., 2014). Furthermore, interpersonal justice perceptions may also be influenced by collectivism in the sense that social sensitivity has a strong impact on justice perception in collectivistic culture (e.g. China) than individualistic ones (e.g. USA) (Tata et al., 2003). Contrary to the individualists, collectivists tend to accept hierarchically criticism and express fewer negative reactions towards interpersonal justice perceptions (Leung et al., 2001).

Indeed, every cross-cultural workforce is different and expects a specific fair treatment. However, culture is not sufficient to analyze justice perceptions in the workplace. Other organizational antecedents that should be taken into account.

3.3 Organizational antecedents' level

Perceived organizational justice has been impacted by many factors that should be put under the magnifying glass. Previously, fairness was influenced by the attributes of distributive outcomes (equity, equality, and need) (Adams, 1963, 1965; Deutsch, 1975) or by decision-making process (e.g., Accuracy, free from biases, consistency, Representativeness) (G. S Leventhal, 1976; Thibaut & Walker, 1975). Subsequently, it has been associated with other predictors that play a crucial role in how subjectively employee's fairness perceptions are made.

3.3.1. Organizational structure and hierarchy

At the macro-level, an organization is a structured social entity, it is considered as a system namely organizational structure that characterizes the hierarchy of each organization and the way its activities are divided according to its philosophy and predefined objectives. It refers to the "enduring characteristics of the organization reflected by the distribution of the units and positions within the organization and their systematic relationships to each other" (James & Jones, 1976, p. 76). Particularly, it pertains to defining authorities, functions, responsibilities, and tasks of each job as well as the network of members' relationships that clarifies who reports to whom.

It appears that slight studies have examined the relationship between organizational structure differences and fairness judgments. Thereby, we have seen wise to take into account two relevant studies that have demonstrated this relationship (Schminke et al., 2000, 2002). The first study is based on 11 organizations (N = 209), in which Schminke and his colleagues (2000) have predicted that three dimensions of organizational structure - centralization, formalization, size-would strongly affect perceived justice. However, their findings showed first that centralization, which relates to "the concentration of power or authority in an organization" (Schminke et al., 2000, p. 296), may influence negatively procedural justice, in the sense that in a highly centralized organization, decisions are taken by top managers, in other words, levels of participation in the decision-making process are likely to be low, and levels of the hierarchy of authority tend to be high. Unlike, in highly decentralized ones, decisions are delegated, because individuals are involved in organizational issues such as recruitment, promotion, and setting departmental strategies. Consequently, they feel they have the opportunity to voice their opinion and to participate in the decision-making process. This implies that employees have control over decisions which generates greater perceptions of fairness(Thibaut & Walker, 1975). In short, decentralization of the decision-making leads to stimulating a more participative work climate within the organization which positively strengthens employees' justice perceptions. Besides, they found that formalization signifies "the set of rules, procedures, instructions and communications that are written down in the organization" (Pugh, Hick-son, Hinings, & Turner, 1968) cited by (Schminke et al., 2000), was not related to procedural justice and distributive justice, similar to the organizational size the number of the staff working in an organization- that did not impact perceptions of procedural fairness, however, it played an important role in determining judgments of interactional fairness.

The second study has been conducted across 35 work organizations with a sample of 212 participants from 45 departments (Schminke et al., 2002). Results highlighted that centralization affected strongly perceived organizational justice like the anterior study of Schminke et al., (2000) and formalization exerted also main effects on perceptions of distributive, procedural, and interactional justice, since, highly formalized systems make employees feel they are equally treated, enabling them to recognize that their organization is an equitable structure, that wrote and prescribed clearly how a decision is made, what are the expected outcomes in a given situation or under what relational circumstances employees work.

3.3.2 HR policies

With the purpose of building justice into management systems, a lot of scholars and managers have been interested in setting up HR policies extracted from organizational justice

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principles. HR practices (e.g. selection procedure, reward system, conflict management, performance appraisal, and layoffs) (Russell Cropanzano et al., 2007) can take different types: intended, enacted and perceived (Wright & Nishii, 2006). Intended HR policies include the projected guidelines of the organizational approach. These practices are then enacted in respect to the implementation process, to be perceived subsequently by the employees who are considered as ultimate recipients of these practices. Therefore, perceived HR policies is certainly related to how employees see the organizational fairness in the workplace.

• Recruitment policy:

In the context of hiring, academic research used to focus previously on improving tools and techniques for evaluating candidates' skills and personalities (Ryan & Ployhart, 2014). Nowadays, there is a soaring interest in analyzing candidates' reactions and behaviors throughout the recruitment process (Nikolaou et al., 2015; Nikolaou & Konstantina, 2018). In this regard, studies have highlighted that, as selection procedure is a relevant HR function, the recruiter is considered as a facet between the job applicant and the organization in their first contact, a fair treatment leads to a first positive impression about the organization (Bauer et al., 2001) and then a positive perception of organizational fairness as a whole. This reaction may impact the organizational attractiveness of hiring highly qualified candidates (Gilliland, 1993). Recently, scholars have pointed out some practices that hinder the equity of selection procedure and reflect a negative justice perception such as nepotism, favoritism, cronyism... For example, new research (Burhan et al., 2020) has revealed that a nepotist organization is seen as unfair, especially because it violates the principles of procedural justice.

For that reason, the social validity theory (Schuler 1993) consists of four core aspects: informativeness (providing meaningful and useful information) participation (involving employees in the selection path makes them feel they are part of the process and showing their abilities) transparency (clearness and explanation of procedures that are used) feedback (giving adequate feedback about their performance even if they do not receive job offer), has been emerged to frame the selection process, emphasizing on the candidate's perception of dignified and respectful treatment during the selection procedure.

• Performance appraisal practices:

A systematic performance appraisal system is defined as "activities through which organizations seek to assess employees and develop their competence, enhance performance and distribute rewards" Fletcher (2001). In other words, these evaluation practices present undoubtedly benefits for employees and the organizational growth in general, through developing human capital, evaluating competencies and performances, assigning rewards, and making administrative decisions like training and promotion.

The organizational justice literature proposes a vigorous framework for understanding and enhancing perceptions about the performance appraisal system, and provides answers to the question of what makes a performance appraisal system perceived as being fair. (Jerald Greenberg, 1986) or how a performance appraisal system can impact perceived fairness. Consider the integrative study of Thurston & McNall (2010), which has shown that performance appraisal system influence employee's perceptions of justice dimensions, using psychometric properties allied to perceptions of equity decision norms and the absence of political goals (distributive justice) particularly when employees perceive performance appraisal as an outcome of an economic exchange relationship, in addition to structural components of the performance appraisal procedure such as assigning raters, setting criteria and seeking appeals (procedural justice), as well as respect and sensitivity treatment in supervision (interpersonal justice) and clarifying expectations, explaining decisions, and providing feedback (informational justice).

Broadly, this HR instrument should take into account discrepancies between expected and the status quo of performance ratings, that must remain fair, accurate, unbiased, and reflect equitably and precisely employees' performance (Suliman, 2007) with a good respectful atmosphere, because keeping it fair leads to positive perceptions of justice and then positive attitudes and reactions in the workplace.

• Employee reward system:

The employee reward system is a central HR function that has been largely neglected in the scholarly literature (Gupta & Shaw, 2014), despite its importance to motivate individual performance and to maintain group cohesion (Russell Cropanzano et al., 2007). It refers to a program that includes a set of mechanisms distributing tangible or financial benefits (e.g., Salary, superannuation, bonus system pension contributions) and intangible or non-financial benefits (e.g., health and well-being plans, growth and promotion, career development initiatives recognition, work environment conditions).

Prior evidence has shown that employee reward system is linked to the four factors of organizational justice perceptions (Cole & Flint, 2004, 2005; Laundon et al., 2019), insofar as employee's fairness perceptions relate to access to the distributed benefits (distributive justice), the process enacted to distribute these benefits (Procedural justice) interpersonal relationship between employees and supervisors about the received benefits (interpersonal justice) and all the explanations provided regarding the benefits (informational justice) (Laundon et al., 2019) Therefore, when employees perceive benefits as (un)fair, this can trigger a positive or negative effect on their behavior and organizational outcomes such as productivity and performance.

Indeed, fair management of employee reward system may be an excellent opportunity to improve Human resources Management, taking into account employees' perceptions of benefits in order to achieving employees effectiveness, retention, and attractiveness (Cole & Flint, 2005).

• Conflict management:

In the workplace, employees need interactions and social exchanges, which can create potential conflicts between them, and engender a frustrating and uncomfortable work environment, because of the fact that Human beings are obviously a complex species. Recent research has highlighted that perceived interpersonal conflict has a significant impact on perceived organizational justice, especially the interactional justice dimension (Fernández-Salinero et al., 2019). This relationship was moderated by job satisfaction and mediated by higher group identity. Therefore, fair conflict management is an essential framework for any social relationship, when Managers adopt an effective and adequate problem-solving approach based on the appropriate management conflict style, people tend to accept solutions and even strive to resolve quickly and mutually the conflict.

However, it should be pointed out that the link between conflict management and perceived fairness is an interesting issue that has received scant regard in the literature, although its meaningful influence, for instance, when the work environment is viewed as a just place to perform, despite the natural outcome of human interaction (Rahim et al., 2000) -interpersonal conflict- employees are more likely to exhibit positive attitudes and behaviors such as respecting the other colleagues and seeking to resolve problems peacefully.

• Layoffs: Softening the blow

For economic, organizational, or pandemic reasons, organizations opt for downsizing managerial decisions as a "deliberate organizational decision to reduce the workforce that is intended to improve organizational performance" (Kozlowski et al., 1993, p. 267). Downsizing through layoff is one of the policies conducted that refers to a temporary or permanent involuntary loss of jobs. It can affect not only employees victims but also undermine all survivors who remain working in the organization (Konovsky & Brockner, 1993).

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Nevertheless, when perceived fairness is kept under consideration (i.e., handling layoffs with justice principles), the ramifications of layoff practices at the macro-level (e.g., legal, financial, organizational) and micro-level (e.g., attitudinal, behavioral, cognitive, psychological) may be softened. Indeed, practices that reflect structural layoff, have a positive impact on justice perceptions (Hemingway & Conte, 2003) and employees who are just laid off can even still good organizational citizens (Bies et al., 1993). Since reactions of laid-off victims tend to depend on whether they feel they were treated fairly or not.

Therefore, higher positive justice perception is shaped (e.g., Pfeifer, 2007; Sobieralski & Nordstrom, 2012) when laid-off employees are compensated for their job loss such as severance package, generous benefits, or outplacement services, whether a systematic procedure has been handled that identifies which employees are laid off and incorporate them to participate in the layoff process, as well as the nature of interpersonal communication and treatment.

In general, as transparent HR practices are a sound investment for any organization, they are fundamental factors of formulating employee fairness perceptions. However, CSR initiatives go beyond these classical activities and contribute themselves to influencing how employees evaluate fairness in the workplace.

3.3.3 CSR initiatives

Many organizations have been involved in adopting the Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) philosophy, which refers to "context-specific organizational actions and policies that take into account stakeholders' expectations and the triple bottom line of economic, social, and environmental performance" (Aguinis, 2011, p. 858). This definition affirms that CSR has been studied earlier as a macro concept which aims to improve organizational performance by linking a firm's social/environmental performance to its financial performance (Orlitzky et al., 2003). In recent years, researchers seek to bridge CSR (macro-level) with organizational behaviors (micro-level) in order to explore the psychological micro-foundations of the corporate social responsibility field (Glavas, 2016; Glavas et al., 2019; Gond et al., 2017; Rupp & Mallory, 2015; Sarfraz et al., 2018; Zhao et al., 2020).

With a commonality view, Organizational justice and CSR are both founded on an ethical assumption of standard treatment that clarifies how fairly employees should be treated taking into account individual rights and morality (Folger et al., 2005; Rupp et al., 2015). By contrast, they are different in terms of perspective and level of analysis. While CSR relates to defining organizational norms and standards regarding external and internal (Individuals and groups) environment. Organizational justice pertains to how individuals and groups should be treated, taking into account their fairness perceptions formation, the cognitive and heuristic processing assessment of events, and their attitudinal and behavioral reactions (E. Rupp, 2011).

Otherwise, CSR policies explain the firm's level of social justice, adherence, and fulfillment to principles of fairness, for instance, when employees perceive the presence of organizational unfairness, they are often relating it with the transgression of some normative standard of appropriate conduct (Folger et al., 2005). In this case, organizational justice is "an important organizational platform that augments the commitment to ethics and CSR performed by organizations and their members" (Rupp et al., 2015, p. 20).

Indeed, several studies have revealed that CSR influences directly and greatly employees judgments about whether they have been treated fairly (Moon et al., 2014). Since CSR is grounded on ethical norms, it meets employees' expectations of fairness in the workplace (Valentine et al., 2008) and develops issues related to employees, such as improving employee wellbeing and working environments, establishing a fair compensation system, and implementing non-discrimination policies (Jamali et al., 2008), so that, employees feel that they

are equally, receiving a part of benefits from resources and actions of the firm (distributive CSR), evaluate the social concern of these actions (procedural CSR), and how they are treated throughout the implementation of these actions (Interactional CSR) (Rupp et al., 2006). Consequently, this leads employees to heighten their perception of organizational justice, and improves individual attitudes and work-related behaviors, in return they feel obliged to reciprocally gratify the organization by dedicating their effort to their organization based on social exchange theory (Blau, 1964).

In a word, we note that CSR activities and organizational justice are revealed in the literature to be expressively associated, although attention to these issues is still emerging.

3.4 Relational antecedents' level

In addition to the individual, cultural, and organizational antecedents of perceived justice, it has been pointed out that employee observes his relationship with his leader and his colleagues. Consequently, leaders' treatments and social contagious can be determinants of how employees are treated in the workplace.

3.4.1 LMX: Vertical relationship

Employee-organization relationship (EOR) is founded on an interactional and interpersonal process, based on mutual respect, loyalty contribution, and affect. Leadership is the cornerstone of this exchangeable relation which focuses on improving the ability of supervisors and organizational leaders to lead the other employees (House et al., 2004). This dyadic relationship between a leader and a follower is named Leader-Member-Exchange which is an excerpt from the vertical dyad linkage theory (VDL) (Fred et al., 1975) and is defined as a reciprocal vertical relationship between leader and each individual subordinate.

The relationship between the quality of leader-member exchange and perceived organizational justice has been examined by numerous researchers in prior work (e.g., Bhal et al., 2004; Karam et al., 2019; Kumar, M., & Singh, 2011) and affirmed that LMX is a good and significant predictor of employees' perception of justice. Since leaders handle two different groups depending on the quality of the relationship, members who are part of the "in-group" have a high-quality relationship with their leader, and the others who are in the *out-group* have a low-quality relationship with him. This implies that a "high-quality relationship is characterized by a high level of information exchange, a high level of trust and respect with extensive support, a high level of interaction, mutual influence, and numerous rewards" (Fein et al., 2013, p. 6) and vice versa. In other words, subordinates of in-group are more favorable compared to those who are in out-group, they are more likely to benefit from larger amounts of resources, challenging and interesting work and tasks, trust and good treatment as well as greater opportunities to be involved in the decision-making process. Therefore, these situations affect how employees see fairness in the workplace. For instance, LMX would influence perceived distributive justice when employees receive important or reduced allocations quantity, it may also impact perceived procedural justice when employees feel that the process of distributed outcomes is fair, besides, LMX might affect perceived interactional justice when the relationship between organizational members and their leaders is founded on respect and dignity treatment.

3.4.2. Social contagion: Influence of Coworkers

It is commonly known that employees spend a lot of time in the organization, which enables them to interact, collaborate actively with horizontal relationships, and develop with different coworkers a social network where information, thoughts, ideas, opinions, and experiences are shared extensively.



Considering the example of the Coronavirus epidemic (COVID-19), which has been widely spread through nations and populations due to social transactions. Similarly, organizational justice perception is impacted profoundly by social contagion (Lamertz, 2002; Roberson & Colquitt, 2005), because "thoughts and feelings about justice can be communicated from one individual to another, and ultimately spread and be maintained across entire networks or groups" (Degoey, 2000, p. 54). According to recent research based on large-scale survey data for 3,744, employees has explored that from the point of view of social comparison, employees perceive their earnings (distributive justice) as just or unjust depends on the degree to which their earnings differ from those of similar others (Schneider & Valet, 2017). Besides, coworkers' procedural and interactional justice judgments increase and strengthen employee's own procedural and interactional justice perceptions, which in turn influence their affective commitment to the organization (Stinglhamber & De Cremer, 2008).

Broadly, employees evaluate fairness by taking into account coworkers' justice judgments, coworkers' justice experiences, social discourses, social identification, and social comparisons, because of social interactions, the interdependence of tasks and results, and the relative lack of hierarchical authority, even coworkers can help employees to interpret justice events and treatments and affect their own justice perceptions (Roberson & Colquitt, 2005).

In fine, as the schema represented below highlights (figure 2), interpretations and perceptions about organizational fairness are not purely a personal matter (Individual-level factors), but also, they depend on the influence of rudimentary constructs related to the organizational settings (Organizational-level factors), cross-cultural differences (cultural-level factors) and the interpersonal environment (relational-level factors).

Individual antecedents Demographic characteristics Personality traits **Cultural antecedents** Individualism/collectivism **Perceived** Uncertainty avoidance organizational Justice Power distance **Organizational** antecedents Organizational structure HR policies Relational antecedents LMX Social contagion

Figure 2: Aggregated theoretical model of the antecedents of organizational justice

Source: by authors

4. Conclusion

The organizational justice field continues to proliferate. Whereas various prior work examined the consequences of fairness in the workplace. The purpose of this paper was to synthesize and analyze its antecedents -the issue of how evaluations about fairness are formed by employees- and provide a full theoretical framework for future research directions.

In a theoretical view, this paper intended to provide the readership with an enhanced, deeper, and holistic understanding of perceived organizational justice theories. Therefore, it provided an overview of fairness theories, starting with fairness cognitive/process theories (Cognitive Dissonance Theory, Theory of Relative Deprivation, Equity Theory, Referent Cognition Theory, Fairness Theory, Fairness Heuristic Theory) which point out that employees formulate justice perceptions using a cognitive and systematic process that requires the availability of information, time and cognition resources, by contrast, there are some situations where perceptions are formulated automatically through the heuristic process when information is incomplete or unavailable hence the need of a heuristic processing of judgment. As well as examining content theories (instrumental, interpersonal and deontic needs) which stress that employees are craving for justice for the economic motives, for the need of being esteemed and belonged in a social group, and for the ethical goal of working in a moral environment organized by deontic programs and initiatives.

Furthermore, in a practical view, we sought to demonstrate that several factors influence how and why employees shape fairness perceptions in the workplace. In this work, we identified four antecedents' levels of perceived justice.

Firstly, according to prior evidence, we showed that individual characteristics (e.g., age, gender, race, education level, tenure, marital status) and personality traits (e.g., neuroticism, extraversion, openness, conscientiousness, agreeableness, negative affectivity, selfesteem) may impact significantly perceptions of being treated fairly or not. Secondly, we concluded that every cross-cultural workforce is different and expects a specific fair treatment, for that reason, adopting "One size fits all" management should be escaped. Thirdly, we analyzed that in addition to the attributes of distributive outcomes or by decision-making process, there are other organizational antecedents of perceived justice. For instance, organizational hierarchy design (centralization & formalization structures) plays a substantial role in this question, for example, in highly centralized entities, employees' participation in the decision-making process is low, however, in highly formalized entities, employees are likely to perceive fairness, since outcome and process decisions, and relational circumstances of employee's work are clearly defined within the organization. Besides, when practices of the organizational HR system (e.g., selection procedure, reward system, conflict management, performance appraisal, and layoffs) are adjusted with justice principles, employees feel that they are equally treated, in turn, they can fully adhere to the HR instructions and express their willingness to support these decisions, similarly to CSR initiatives, albeit they remain as voluntary practices, they have a greater impact on the way employees perceived justice. Fourthly, we demonstrated that employees build relationships in a horizontal manner (with their coworkers) which leads them to be contagiously influenced by coworkers' justice judgments to frame their perceptions, also they interact vertically with their leaders, thus, they assess fairness by taking into account where leaders map them (in or out-group) and then how they treat them.

In summary, understanding the factors and reasons behind shaping such a perception of fairness to employees in the workplace has fruitful benefits. It allows managers to predict, analyze and manage proactively how employees think, perceive, and consequently react and behave in the face of a fair event.

Going forward, to the extent that the present theoretical framework is useful, it may seem tempting for future scholars to focus on studying organizational justice as a dependent variable, that has received relatively insufficient attention.

ISSN: 2658-8455

Volume 2, Issue 3 (May, 2021), pp.23-46.

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