
Organizational Justice and Work-family Conflict in Colombian Organizations

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Abstract:

Purpose: This study evaluates the relationship between organizational justice, in its procedural and interactional dimensions, and the work-family conflict in Colombian companies.

Design/Methodology/Approach: The investigation was explanatory-causal in order to assess the relationships and effects between the variables. A structural equations model was used.

Findings: Research results contribute to the investigations and raise new perspectives to understand the relationship between transformational leadership and the Work-family conflict in organizations, with a series of practical and theoretical implications. The research revealed that organizational justice is negatively related to WFC.

Practical Implications: Only interactional justice had a negative and significant relationship with the work-family conflict; while the relationship of procedural justice and work-family conflict was positive, yet not significant.

Originality/Value: It is vital for organizations to try to minimize levels of conflict between work and family, as these are often positively related to counter-productive phenomena such as stress and burnout.

Keywords: Work-family conflict, organizational justice, procedural justice, interactional justice.

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1. Introduction

One of the variables that have recently been linked to the transformational leadership style of the manager is the perception of organizational justice, in its procedural and interactional dimensions (Gillet, Fouquereau, Bonnaud-Antignac, Mokoukolo and Colombat, 2013; Taner, Turhan, Helvacı and Köprülü, 2015). Greenberg (1990) defines the former as the element of organizational justice that refers to the perception of fairness and impartiality in the processes that determine and allocate resources. On the other hand, interactional justice corresponds to the perception of the treatment that the employee receives (interpersonal justice), and the nature of the explanations about the reasons that support the decision (informational justice) of the allocation of the results (Colquitt, 2001).

Several authors emphasize that organizational justice assumes a mediating role between transformational leadership, and different attitudes and behaviors of employees. Some are trust in the leader (Zeinabadi and Rastegarpour, 2010), citizen behavior (Kirkman, Chen, Farh, Chen and Lowe, 2009), and the affective commitment to the organization (Kim and Kim, 2015).

Organizations' employees must balance the responsibilities that their work demands with their home or family duties (Williams and Alliger, 1994). They face the reiterative dilemma of choosing between one activity or another, with the implications brought by whichever choice. This phenomenon, called work-family conflict (hereinafter WFC), is a conflict of roles emerging from the interference between family demands and job requirements (Munir, Nielsen, Garde, Albertsen and Carneiro, 2012; Baldacchino *et al.*, 2019).

WFC has inspired a lot of research from disciplines such as psychology, sociology, family studies, and management. These studies have focused on various aspects such as gender, time, and division of labor (Colquitt and Zipay, 2015, Hanif, Lambert and James, 2016, Kossek, Pichler, Bodner and Hammer, 2011).

Among the aspects studied by management, special attention is paid to the interaction between the manager or supervisor and their employees, since communication and the boss's treatment can affect employees' perception. Thus, the perception of justice and its relationship with the WFC has been investigated (Cropanzano, Byrne, Bobocel and Rupp, 2001, Ferris, Spence, Brown and Heller, 2012). For instance, Judge and Colquitt (2004) found that some dimensions of organizational justice have a negative relationship with the WFC exhibited by collaborators.

Previous research links the perception of organizational justice with the WFC (organizational justice → WFC). However, despite having investigated the interaction between them, there are limited studies that examine the relationship

between the procedural and interactional dimensions of organizational justice and the WFC.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Organizational justice

Organizational justice (OJ) is a social construct about what people consider fair, beyond their objective reality. Thus, organizational justice is a personal position (perception) about the ethical and moral conduct of management in the organization (Cropanzano, Bowen and Gilliland, 2007).

Cropanzano *et al.* (2007) consider that people are concerned about justice in organizations for three reasons. First, because justice allows them to predict and control the results they will likely receive from their organizations when they finish a successful task (Weiss, Suckow and Cropanzano, 1999). Second, because people want to feel valued and accepted in the organization, where belonging to a group and feeling relevant is even more important than economic aspects (Tyler and Blader, 2000; Tyler and Smith, 1998). Third, because people believe that fair treatment is the morally and/or ethically appropriate way to treat others (Folger, 2001), so they may have negative reactions to situations deemed unfair.

Studies on organizational justice have classified it into three dimensions: distributive (Leventhal, 1976), procedural (Leventhal, 1980, Thibaut and Walker, 1975), and interactional, which is in turn divided by some other authors into two types: interpersonal and informational justice (Greenberg, 1993). Bearing in mind that the research has emphasized that the procedural and interactional dimensions are more associated with leaders (DeCremer, van Dijke and Bos, 2007), those are the only dimensions described.

2.2 Procedural justice

According to Greenberg (1990), procedural justice (PJ) refers to the idea of equity in the processes that determine and allocate resources in the organization. Greenberg (1990) suggests that this type of justice reflects the judgments of a person about the impartiality of the decision-making process of assigning results. The basic premise is that fair treatment determines individual reactions to decisions and, therefore, is a central element of their behavior (Lind and Tyler, 1988).

According to Leventhal (1980), it has been suggested that there are six rules that, when followed, generate processes that are considered fairer: a) the consistency rule, which establishes that the allocation procedures must be consistent regarding people and time; b) the bias suppression rule, stating that the personal interests of decision makers should be avoided during the allocation process; c) the accuracy rule, referring to the quality of the information used in the allocation process; d) the

correction rule, which deals with the existence of opportunities to modify unfair decisions; e) the representativeness rule, which indicates that the needs, values, and perspectives of all parties affected by the allocation process must be represented in the process; and f) the rule of ethics, according to which the allocation process must be compatible with the fundamental moral and ethical values of the employees.

2.3 Interactional justice

Interactional justice (IJ) focuses on the perceptions of individuals about the quality of interpersonal treatment received during decision making and organizational procedures. This type of justice includes several behaviors that show social sensitivity such as respect, honesty, dignity, and courtesy (Bies, 2001; Cropanzano, Prehar and Chen, 2002). Interactional justice is made up of interpersonal, and informational justice. The former refers to the courtesy and respect given to employees in the execution of procedures and decision, while the latter, to the delivery of information to the employees regarding the reasons why certain procedures have been adopted (Greenberg, 1990; Greenberg, 1993; Luo, 2007).

2.4 Work-family conflict (WFC)

Greenhaus and Beutell (1985) defined the WFC as a type of conflict between roles, where the pressures or demands of work and family are mutually incompatible. In other words, the WFC refers to situations in which job requirements generate employees certain conflicts with the family or vice versa (Jiang, 2012). Greenhaus and Beutell (1985) identify three types: (a) conflict based on time, where the time demanded in one life domain decreases availability in the other, reducing energy and creating stress; (b) conflict based on tension, where the stress experienced in one role affects the performance in the other; and (c) conflict based on behavior, which consists of the incompatibility between various and desired behaviors in the two competing domains (Tziner and Sharoni, 2014).

In general, WFC literature suggests that it can arise in two ways (Kossek and Ozeki, 1998): (a) work interfering with the family (WIF), which takes place when labor demands interfere with family responsibilities; or (b) family interfering with work (FIW), that is, when family obligations interfere with the proper development and/or fulfillment of job responsibilities (Judge and Colquitt, 2004). Authors such as Grandey, Cordeiro and Judd (2007) and Kyei-Poku (2014) have found that the working environment tends to have a higher level of interference in the family than viceversa. Therefore, this research will focus on how labor situations, specifically the boss's leadership style, interfere in the proper development of the employees' family life. Based on the previous studies, the following hypothesis is established:

Hypothesis 1. The perception of interactional justice that employees have of their boss is negatively related to the level of WFC of the collaborators.

2.5 Relationship between organizational justice and WFC

Judge and Colquitt (2004), Greenberg and Colquitt (2005), Malisetty and Kumari (2016), and Kyei-Poku (2014) highlighted the negative relationship between organizational justice, in its procedural and interactional dimensions, and WFC. The relationship with procedural justice is explained by the tension generated when collaborators perceive the procedures executed as incorrect and unfair. For instance, employees whose bosses did not allow them to explain why they were late, or why they had made a mistake, generally perceived the situation as unfair; while the people who were listened tended to perceive more justice, even if the results were not what they sought or even if they got sanctioned.

On the other hand, the relationship with interactional justice is evident both in its interpersonal and in the informational element. Interpersonal justice is evidenced mainly when the supervisor becomes accessible in aspects such as facilitating parental leave, and allowing flexible working hours, especially when there are family commitments or personal matters, instead of promoting the sacrifice of important family matters for work. The relationship with informational justice seems to be explained by evaluating an open, reliable, and honest communication, and could be negatively affected when the employee perceives -as unfair- a situation where only a group of people in the organization (e.g. boss's favorites) handle relevant information of general interest (e.g. possible holiday periods, or changes in work shifts).

Research has shown that the supervisors' leadership styles perceived as unfair by their employees, with inadequate or unequal procedures and treatments, generate negative emotional states such as stress, frustration, and anxiety, typically linked to WFC (Malisetty and Kumari, 2016; Kyei-Poku, 2014). The relationship between the boss's leadership style and the employee's WFC is not direct, since the tension in the latter is generated precisely by the perception of injustice. The opposite occurs when the leader understands and offers a personalized treatment to each one and encourages them to look for alternative solutions to their problems, such as calling home, or flexible hours to attend family commitments, actions that diminish WFC. The literature review suggests that the different attributes of leadership generate situations in the organization that are perceived as fair-unfair, and that such perceptions increase affectations on employees' WFC. The second hypothesis is then proposed:

Hypothesis 2. The perception of procedural justice regarding their boss is negatively related to employees' WFC.

3. Methodology

The methodology includes four subsections: (1) the type of research is established; (2) the participants in the research and some socio-demographic characteristics are

described; (3) the study variables and their components are detailed; and (4) software for the analysis of information.

3.1 Procedure

The study is an explanatory-causal research, since it sought to establish the causes of events or phenomena (Hernández, Fernández and Baptista, 2010). The relationship between three different variables (procedural justice and interactional justice, as independent variables, and WFC, as a dependent variable) was addressed, and the reason for the facts was determined, based on a cause-effect analysis.

3.2 Participants

The research was carried out in three organizations of different economic sectors (services, financial, and production). 450 surveys were applied to their employees. The sample consisted of 60.5% men and 39.5% women, with an average of 35.8 years of age. The average number of children per person was 1.3; where on average 0.5 of them were the adults in charge. 3% of respondents had a level of primary education, 27%, secondary education, 28.1%, technical education, 30.2% had reached a level of professional training, and 11.7% had some type of post-gradual training. The respondents had on average 60.5 months of seniority; 3% from management, 31.5%, administrative positions, and 65.5% worked at operational level.

3.3 Measures

A physical questionnaire was applied for data collection with different measurement scales. Validity and reliability of each of the measurement scales of the instrument was tested through the Cronbach's Alpha, and the Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA). Each of the scales used to measure the study variables is described:

Independent variable:

The perception of organizational justice by the surveyed employees was configured as the independent variable. The Colquitt's Organizational Justice Scale (COJS) developed by Colquitt (2001) was used for its measurement. Taking into account the research hypotheses, only the two subscales corresponding to the procedural (PJ) and interactional (IJ) dimensions of justice were considered. The scale was validated and its translation adapted to Spanish (Díaz-Gracia, Barbaranelli and Moreno-Jiménez, 2014), specifically to the Latin American and Colombian cultural/organizational context (García and Forero, 2014).

The procedural justice subscale is composed of seven items, e.g. "You have been able to express your views and feelings about the procedures used to give rewards". Meanwhile the interactional justice subscale is composed of nine items, e.g. "Your boss has treated you with dignity." For each of the items, the respondents indicated

their perception on a five-point Likert scale, where one (1) was total disagreement, and five (5), total agreement.

Regarding subscale validity, previous studies such as that of Rodríguez et al. (2014) obtained adequate alpha reliability indices. In this research, these indices were also adequate: PJ, $\alpha = 0.90$ and for IJ, $\alpha = 0.90$.

Dependent variable:

The dependent variable was the WFC reported by employees. The Survey Work-Home Interaction-Nijmegen instrument (SWING) by Geurts et al. (2005) was used to measure it. This scale was validated and adapted to Spanish (Moreno-Jiménez, Sanz, Rodríguez and Geurts, 2009), and to the Latin American cultural/organizational context (Romeo, Berger, Yepes-Bladó and Ramos, 2014).

Considering that the aim of the research was to address the interference of work in the family, the subscale of negative work-family interaction was the only one taken into account, which contains eight items, e.g. "I have to cancel plans with my partner/family/friends due to work commitments". The respondents indicated their perception on a four-point Likert scale, where one (1) stands for "never", and four (4), "always". On the validity of the subscale, previous studies such as Romeo et al. (2014) obtained adequate alpha reliability indices, which is replicated in this investigation with a reliability level for WFC scale of $\alpha = 0.89$.

3.4 Data analysis

Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) (Anderson and Gerbing, 1988) was used to detect the proposed effects in the research hypotheses and to evaluate the relationships and effects between the variables. The SEM is a statistical multivariate analysis technique that allows to test causal relationships based on assumptions or qualitative data on the sense of causality (Hair et al., 1999).

The SEM allowed to establish the value belonging to each proposed theoretical relationship and, more importantly, some indexes that express the degree to which the data conform to the proposed theoretical model, confirming its validity. The adjustment of the proposed theoretical model was evaluated through different indexes such as: RMSEA (Root Mean Square Error of Approximation), that must be below 0.08; GFI (Goodness of Fit Index), that shows the amount of variances and covariances explained by the model, and must be greater than 0.90 for an adequate adjustment of the model; AGFI (Adjusted Goodness of Fit Index), that must be higher than 0.80; CFI (Comparative Fit Index), that must be greater than 0.90.

The software Amos Graphics and SPSS, two of the most used statistical programs for the analysis of SEM in social sciences, were used for the analyses.

4. Results

The descriptive statistics and the correlations between the study variables are reported in Table 1.

Table 1: Averages, standard deviations and correlations of the study variables

Variable	A	SD	1	2	3
Procedural justice	3,17	0,91	(0,90)		
Interactional justice	3,65	0,85	0,532**	(0,90)	
Work-family conflict	1.96	0,66	0,086**	-0,427**	(0,89)

Reliability indices (Cronbach's alpha) are reported on the diagonal.

** Significant correlation to 0.01 (bilateral)

Source: Authors.

4.1 Confirmatory Factor Analysis

The Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) of the latent organizational justice model was performed, since it is a multidimensional variable. This analysis is not necessary for the WFC variable because it is a one-dimensional variable. Goodness-of-fit indices of organizational justice with three dimensions were acceptable (see Table 2), given that some authors (e.g. Bies, 2001) propose that interpersonal and informational dimensions can be united as interactional justice (IJ).

Table 2: Adjustment indices for AFC models of organizational justice

Index	Model estimation	Acceptance level
Chi- squared	551,368	P < 0,00
Df	161	
CMIN/DF	3,426	< 3,00
CFI	0,940	> 0,90
TLI	0,930	> 0,90
IFI	0,940	> 0,90
RFI	0,904	> 0,90
NFI	0,917	> 0,90
GFI	0,892	> 0,90
AGFI	0,860	> 0,80
RMSEA	0,072	≤ 0,08

Source: Authors.

4.2 Structural model analysis and hypotheses testing

Table 3 shows the values of the different goodness of fit indexes for the structural model through which the proposed relationships were analyzed and, therefore, the research hypotheses were put to the test. Good fits were found for the data.

The proposed model contains the relationship between procedural justice, interactional justice, and the WFC. As can be seen in Figure 1, only interactional

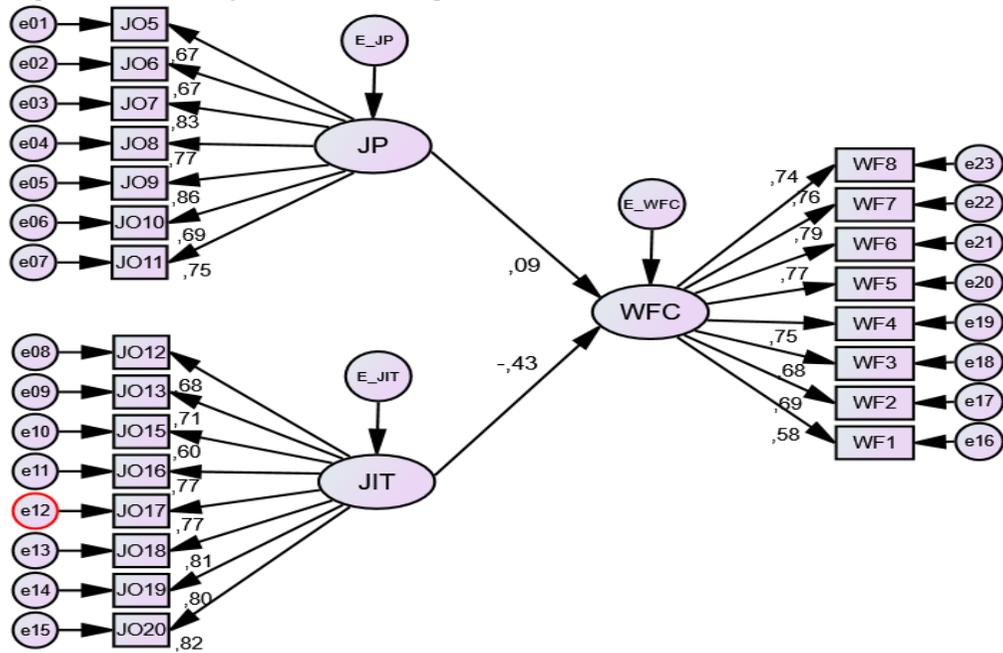
justice had a negative and significant relationship with the WFC (-0.427; $p < 0.00$); The procedural justice and WFC ratio was not significant (0.086, $p < 0.00$). Thus, the data corresponding to the model offers support for hypothesis 2, but does not offer support for hypothesis 1. These results will be discussed later.

Table 3: Adjustment indices of the theoretically proposed structural model

Index	Model estimation	Acceptance level
Chi- squared	952,557	$P < 0,00$
Df	341	
CMIN/DF	2,793	$< 3,00$
CFI	0,928	$> 0,90$
TLI	0,921	$> 0,90$
IFI	0,929	$> 0,90$
RFI	0,882	$> 0,90$
NFI	0,893	$> 0,90$
GFI	0,875	$> 0,90$
AGFI	0,851	$> 0,80$
RMSEA	0,062	$\leq 0,08$

Source: Authors.

Figure 1: Results of the structural equation model



Source: Authors.

5. Discussion

The evidences found contribute to the investigations and raise new perspectives to understand the relationship between transformational leadership and the WFC in organizations, with a series of practical and theoretical implications. The research revealed that organizational justice is negatively related to WFC. The mediating role of the procedural (PJ) and interactional (IJ) dimensions of justice was analyzed.

Interactional justice was significantly and negatively related to WFC. These results are consistent with the findings of Judge and Colquitt (2004) and Kyei-Poku (2014). Contrary to expectations, the relationship between procedural justice and WFC was positive, although not significant. The seemingly contradictory positive relationship between procedural justice and WFC could be understood from the perspective of social exchange theory (Blau, 1964). This in regard to employees who perceive that the procedures (e.g. participatory decision making policy) implemented by the organization as fair could be inclined to "return the favor" to the organization through positive attitudes, such as commitment organization (Grant, Dutton and Rosso, 2008). Based on the norm of reciprocity (Gouldner, 1960), the positive treatment on the part of the organization generates a feeling of indebtedness for which the employee can get to dedicate time destined to the family to working in the organization. This happens especially with procedural justice because employees value this as a structural in the organization (Siegel et al., 2005), and the possibility of a long-term relationship (Judge and Colquitt, 2004), so the perception of commitment is greater.

Interactional justice represents the psychological mechanism through which the leadership style of the supervisors ends up diminishing the levels of conflict the employees experience between work and their family, that is, that the leaders provide support to them, respond to their personal needs, and help them think creatively when they have to face contradictory or problematic situations (Grzywacz and Marks, 2000). This generates perceptions of justice, which seem to help employees to better manage the work-family relationship between, or at least, they seem to disregard their work's interference with their family life, since they deem their jobs fair. Good relationships at work transfer to the family through the psychological effect generated by the perceptions of justice associated.

As previous research has highlighted, it is vital for organizations to try to minimize levels of conflict between work and family, as these are often positively related to counter-productive phenomena such as stress and burnout (see Amstad et al., 2011), loss of physical health, as well as promoting lower levels of job satisfaction among employees and higher levels of turnover (see O'Neill and Davis, 2011).

6. Conclusion

This research highlights the value of the perception of organizational justice, in its

interactional dimension, in the reduction of levels of conflict between work and family. The correlation between interactional justice and WFC was significant and negative, while procedural justice was not significant.

Research findings are aimed at human resources specialists to work in development programs of competencies for bosses or supervisors in an organization to have a better deal with their collaborators or subordinates, giving them respect, honesty, dignity, and courtesy. This type of deal/interaction helps generate perceptions of justice in the employees, and contributes to diminish WFC.

The interactional dimension of organizational justice represents the psychological mechanism by means of which the behavior of the leader contributes to reduce the employees' levels of conflict.

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