PROCEDURAL JUSTICE AND WORKPLACE DEVIANCE: THE MEDIATING ROLE OF PERCEIVED NORMATIVE CONFLICT IN WORK GROUPS

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ABSTRACT

Deviant workplace behavior (DWB) constitutes a frequent and costly problem for organizations. This study examines the relationship between procedural justice, a specific type of organizational justice perception that reflects how fairly the organizational procedures are designed, and deviant workplace behavior in its two categories of organizational (DWBO) and interpersonal (DWBI) deviances. The model tested suggests that perceptions of procedural justice affect DWB by influencing the employees' sense of a normative conflict (PNC) in their work groups, which in turn prompts them to reciprocate with both DWBO and DWBI. SEM results show that procedural justice (PJ) is an antecedent of PNC that fully mediates the relationship of PJ and both types of the mentioned workplace deviance. Data were collected from 270 teachers of a Spanish public university. Implications of the results for the prediction and supervising of workplace deviance are discussed and future research directions are offered.

Key Words: Procedural Justice; Workplace Deviance; Deviant workplace behavior; Perceived Normative Conflict.

Workplace deviance is an object of growing interest to a broad range of Organizational Behavior and Human Resources Management researchers and practitioners. Its cost to US organizations is 4,200 million dollars in lost production at work and legal expenses (Bensimon, 1994). The statistics of social and economic costs and prevalence seem to indicate that deviant workplace behavior (DWB) is undoubtedly a significant problem for organizations (Bennett and Robinson, 2000; McGurn, 1988; Verton, 2000; Filipczak, 1993).

Organizational injustice is a frequently cited cause of misconduct (DiBattista, 1989, 1996; Lim, 2002; Neuman & Baron, 1998; Robinson & Bennett, 1997; Skarlicki & Folger, 1997; Sieh, 1987; Tucker, 1993). There is abundant evidence that organizational justice perceptions include not only judgments of income fairness, but also judgments about the way the allocation decision was made (Greenberg, 1990; Lind & Tyler, 1988; Tyler & Bies, 1990). We refer to procedural justice (PJ), which reflects the perceived fairness of the organizational procedures. However, the direct association of the equity theory and employee outcomes –and workplace deviance in particular– provide relative deprivation models that only support a partial explanation (see, e.g., Aquino, Lewis, Bradfiled, 1999; VanYperen, Hagedoorn, Zweers, & Postma, 2000; Spector, & Fox, 2002, 2004; Aryee, *et al.*, 2002; Moideenkutty, Blau, Kumar, & Nalakath, 2001; Masterson, et al., 2000; Lipponen, Olkkonen, & Moilanen, 2004) while they largely ignore the effects of PJ (Lind & Tyler, 1988). In that respect, researchers frequently interpose a mediator in models, or use moderators, to try to reflect better the real mental process that, in the face of a perception of injustice, leads the employee to work outcomes/deviance. In fact, Aryee, *et al.*, (2002) interposes 'trust in the organization' as a mediating variable, while both Moorman, *et al.* (1998) and Moideenkutty, *et al.* (2001) study the mediation of 'perceived organization support.' Lim (2002) introduces 'The Metaphor of Ledger', a construct developed through the theory on 'neutralization techniques' (Sykes & Matza, 1957). On this line, Aquino, *et al.* (2004:1002) affirms that "... not everyone who is treated unjustly by his or her supervisor at work responds by engaging in deviance..." and states the need for moderators. In

referring to PJ, in an earlier study (1999), they found that procedural justice was not directly related to deviant workplace behavior (DWB), distinguishing between organizational deviant workplace behavior (DWBO) and interpersonal (DWBI). We expand on them below.

In our study, we suggest that the employees' sense of normative conflict (PNC) in their work groups may mediate the relationship between procedural justice and workplace deviance. The use of the perceived normative conflict (PNC) construct as mediator on this link is unprecedented. To support that idea we must first support procedural justice as an antecedent of PNC (see Figure 1).

Figure 1

Hypothesized model of perceived normative conflict as a mediator of the relationship between procedural justice and workplace deviance
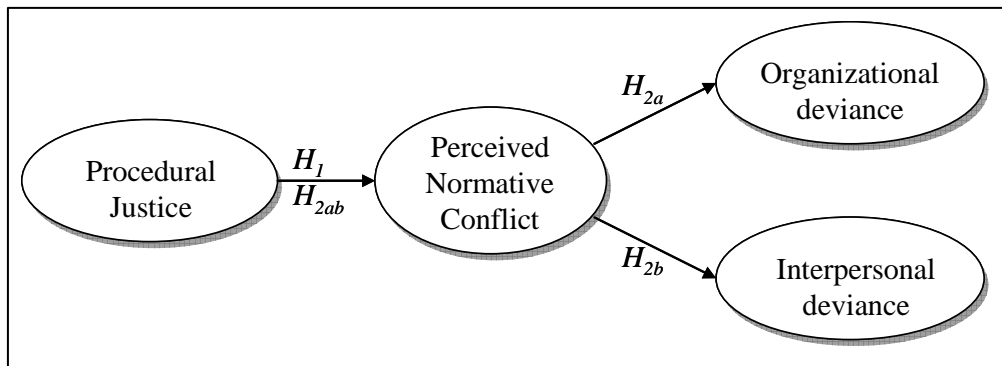
Exchange theorists suggest that human interactions are characterized by social economics, where people are concerned about the inputs they invest in relationships and the outcomes they receive from these relationships (e.g., Blau, 1964; Homans, 1961; Thibaut & Kelly, 1959). The need to reciprocate for benefits received in order to continue receiving them, serves as a "starting mechanism" of social interaction and group structure (Gouldner, 1960). Since people are thrown together, common norms, goals, and role expectations crystallize among them. Eventually, group norms to regulate and limit the exchange transactions emerge, and these include the fundamental and ubiquitous norm of reciprocity (Blau, 1964).

When an organization's formal rules are perceived to be congruent with the preferences and interests of the employees, the relationship between formal and informal norms will be closely coupled (Ellickson, 1991), they are mutually reinforced, and it is often difficult to demarcate their boundaries (Nee, 1998). In an ongoing social exchange relationship the organization and employees use fairness judgments as proxies for trust in determining whether they should behave in a cooperative manner (Lind, 2001). Conversely, organizational justice studies have shown that unfairness judgments increase organizational conflict and hinder cooperation in wide variety of contexts (Lind, 1995; Tyler & Smith, 1997). In effect, and in line with that, Deutsch (2000:41) notes that "That's not fair' expresses a feeling that frequently leads to conflict." Thus, unfavorable PJ could lead the employees to a lack of cooperation with the organizational procedures, and consequently to a formal rule compliance dilemma. Underlying such a compliance 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 & Van Vugt, 1999; Kramer & Brewer, 1984; Schopler & Insko, 1992; Tyler & Smith, 1999; Turner & Haslam, 2001; Wenzel, 2000). Effectively, due to the classic social psychological pressures mechanisms, employees may feel compelled to take

one side (with the formality) or another (with their work group); and the more they opt for the latter, the more the "informal opposition rules" emerge against the formal ones: The door to organizational conflict is now opened. The perceived normative conflict (PNC) construct aims to measure such contradictory circumstances. It could be defined as the degree to which the employees perceive a normative conflict between their work groups and their organization's formal rules in siding with their work groups in opposition to their institution. Thus, the normative conflict is sensed as more intense insofar as employees also feel more strongly that their work group is the self-category they consider have to refer to for normative orientation as to how they should behave in the workplace. Hence, our first hypothesis is:

Hypothesis 1: Employees' perceptions of procedural justice from their organization will be negatively associated to their sense of a normative conflict occurrence.

In our study, to explain why procedural justice may affect workplace deviance via PNC, we draw on some work pathologies such as work alienation (e.g., Seeman, 1971, Kakabadse, 1986; Mottaz, 1981) or work anomie (e.g., Srole, 1956; Merton, 1957; Hodson, 1999; Farrell, *et al.*, 2001; Caruana, *et al.*, 2001).

Robinson and Bennett (1995) presented a typology of workplace deviance that identifies two target dimensions of deviant behavior depending on whether the organization is harmed, organizational deviance, or individuals, interpersonal deviance. Research has documented numerous ways in which employees react to injustice with workplace deviance (see, e.g., Greenberg, 1993; Bies & Tripp, 1998; Bies, Tripp & Kramer, 1997; Robinson & Bennett, 1997; Skarlicki & Folger, 1997). These reactions seem to be motivated by a desire to restore justice (Adams, 1965; Bies & Tyler, 1993; Greenberg, 1993; Greenberg & Scott, 1996) so they can be considered to be retributive actions or attempts to "get even" (Bies & Tripp, 1995; Bies, Tripp, & Kramer, 1997; Goldman, 2003).

When that desired restoration does not occur, the formal rules are at variance with the preferences and interests of employees in the organization, and thus the normative conflict remains open. As John Meyer and Brian Rowan (1977) observe, normative conflict enables organizations to maintain standardized, legitimate, formal structures. The informal norms, which until now have been coupled with the formal rules, evolve into "opposition norms." On that line, Nee (1998) states: "Opposition norms have the most negative implication for performance. They give rise to organizational conflict and factionalism and often result in low morale ... they also embody more intangible states of sentiment and identity that arise from ongoing social relationship." Thus, it could be those "intangible states of sentiment and identity" that really trigger employee deviance in response to unfavorable PJ? Could those intangible states be workplace dysfunctional sentiments that result in a perceived normative conflict?

As we see above, norms are implicit or explicit rules of expected behavior that embody interests and preferences. As Nee (1998:87) suggests, normative decoupling "reflects opposing aims and values" of the organization and its members. Thus, PNC may reflect the decoupling of the aims and values of an organization from those of its employees thru their work groups. In effect, a general prediction in the organizational and social psychology literature is that many forms of member-organization misfit are the etiology of several organizational and workplace pathologies that could lead the employee to dysfunctional behavioral intentions and resistance attitudes (see, e.g., Chatman, 1989, 1991; Rokeach, 1973; Locke, 1976). In that respect, Edgar Schein (1980) recognizes the workplace role conflict as a powerful determiner of behavior in organizations that increases tension and frustration.

Ackroyd and Thompson (1999:18) note that "lack of adjustment echoes Durkheim's anomic reactions" related with disrupted social equilibrium. In referring to work alienation, Mottaz (1981) notes that "discrepancy" takes the form of a gap between the objective work situation and employee values or expectations, among other aspects. Seeman (1959) describes the outcomes as feelings of powerlessness, meaninglessness, normlessness, isolation, and self-estrangement at work that may create detachment from the organization, its goals, or fellow workers. Bass (1990:915) affirms that such alienation senses "... contribute to the disinhibition of personal controls against engaging in deviant behavior." In effect, powerlessness stems from a lack of freedom or autonomy (Allen & Greenberger, 1980; Bennett, 1998). Empirical research suggests that individuals who feel powerless may engage in workplace deviance (Bennett, 1998; DiBattista, 1991; Allen & Greenberger, 1980). In addition, researchers also have recognized that powerlessness can be frustrating (Bennett, 1998; Brown & Herrnstein, 1975). On the same line, organizational frustration is defined as an interference with goal attainment or goal maintenance (Spector, 1978). As in the case of powerlessness, research demonstrates that workplace deviance is related to organizational frustration (Chen & Spector, 1992; Spector, 1975; Storms & Spector, 1987; Taylor & Walton, 1971).

Sociological anomie (from the Greek, *an-*: absence, and *-nomos*: law) has largely remained outside empirical research in organizations until Srole (1956) reformulated it into an individual-level construct. The work alienation dimension most closely associated with work anomie is normlessness, which derives from Durkheim's (1893/1897) original conceptualization. Work anomie is a state in which social norms regulating employee behavior have broken down, or are no longer effective, and that generates a sense of normlessness, disconnectedness and helplessness that leads employees to deviance (Bass, 1990; Hodson, 1999; Farrell, *et al.*, 2001; Caruana, *et al.*, 2001). Effectively, research initially points to indications that normlessness may engage workplace deviance, since Durkeim's (1893/1897) anomie decisively tried to explain deviant conducts in the society (Clinard, 1952; Lemert, 1954; Short & Strodtbeck, 1965; Lindesmith & Gagnon, 1964; Cohen, 1995). After the Srole (1959) reformulation into the individual-level, empirical research notes that feelings of normlessness may trigger workplace deviance (Hodson, 1999; Potter, 1989; Menard, 1995; Caruana, *et al.*, 2001; Hagedorn, Miller & Labovitz, 1971; Cloward, & Ohlin, 1960; McClosky & Schaar, 1965).

Furthermore, dimensions of work alienation, such as powerlessness and normlessness, may be the abovementioned "intangibles states of sentiment and identity" provoked by a misfit between employee-organization values and norms that in turn causes workplace deviance. Thus, PJ may be related to workplace deviance because perceptions of unfavorable PJ affect an employee's general perception that the organization has a conflicting normative social exchange and consequently unfavorable PJ configures an alienated or anomic workplace climate in which workplace deviance occurs.

With regard to the target dimension, Robinson and Bennett (1995:567) suggest that organizational variables are "more likely to influence deviance directed at harming organizations and individual variables are more likely to explain interpersonal forms of deviance." Since unfavorable PJ is created by the organizational system and elicits PNC, we expect that employees will target their workplace deviance at the source of the perceived injustice. Furthermore, we propose the following hypothesis:

Hypothesis 2a: Perceived normative conflict will mediate the relationship between employee perceptions of procedural justice and his/her deviant workplace behavior against organization.

We stated that, in our mediating construct (PNC), in the face of a compliance dilemma, there is an underlying employees' "taking of position". Effectively, employees may feel compelled to take one side (alongside formality) or the other (alongside their work group). Despite PNC being essentially

associated to an employee siding with his or her work group, it is also plausible that not all employees will take the same position. Contrarily, although normative conflict is initially perceived as provoked by organizational PJ and is thus against the organization; a secondary escalation of conflict between individuals diversely positioned within the work groups may occur. Hence, in this case the misconduct target and the entity harmed are not necessarily the same. However, research on workplace deviance suggests that targets of harm and entities harmed may diverge, probably by displacement to others individuals, or because in an attempt to harm the organization, co-workers are harmed as well. Thus, our last hypothesis is:

Hypothesis 2b: Perceived normative conflict will mediate the relationship between the employee's perceptions of procedural justice and his/her deviant workplace interpersonal behavior.

Method

Procedure and Sample Characteristics

Data were collected from 270 of the 1,547 teachers at a Spanish public university. With a response rate of 17.46%, we achieved a sampling error of 5.5%. Accessibility to individual e-mail was similar for all teachers, and no reasons to suppose different predispositions to response were found. Additionally, the sample descriptive structures are quite similar to the mentioned population data. Effectively, in the universe 932 (60.28%) of the teachers held tenures, while the remaining 624 had some other type of contract. By age, 501 (32.5%) were 40 years old or younger and only 89 (5.7%) were 60 or above. By gender, 68% were male and 32% female.

E-mails asking for the teachers' collaboration were sent in two phases: the first on October 5, 2004 and the second on November 11. A questionnaire was posted on the university Intranet and could be accessed by clicking on a link in the e-mails. The responses were received over a period ending on December 2. Eventually, there were 270 valid responses after twelve were rejected due to incorrect completion or incoherent information.

Measures

All items of this study were scored on a 7-point scale ranging from (1) Strongly Disagree to (7) Strongly Agree, and are presented in the Appendix. Reliability was established by means of Cronbach's alpha, the values of which are shown on the main diagonal of the correlations table (Table 1).

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

Perceived normative conflict. We constructed and used a scale of five items developed from the literature on work group norms (e.g., Hyatt, & Ruddy, 1997; Turner, 1990) and intra-group conflict (e.g., Jehn, 1995; Friedman, 2000). We took into account the specific characteristics of the studied public organizational context. Finally, the scale aims to measure the degree to which the teachers choose their work group over formal rules as the self-category they refer to for normative orientation as to how they should behave in the workplace. When teachers choose the work group more frequently and strongly, the normative context that they perceive may be more conflicting.

Workplace deviance. The scale used was a reduced adapted version of that developed by Bennett and Robinson (2000). Some deviance referenced in Bennett and Robinson's scale regarding, i.e., ethnic, religious, or racial differences, or also about working hours, did not proceed in our researched university. Thus, special features of the teacher collective, and the mentioned university,

led us to select nine of those items in an attempt at two dimensions (five DWBO-related items, and four DWBI-related).

Results

Table 1 shows the scale means, standard deviations, reliabilities and correlations (*r*) between all the research variables. Results of the correlation analyses suggest that the variables in our study are significantly correlated in the expected directions, and that the proposed PNC mediating role receives initial support.

Table 1

Means, standard deviations, correlations and reliabilities

Variables	N	*M*	*SD*	1	2	3	4
1. Procedural Justice (PJ)	270	3.05	1.43	*(0.961)*			
2. Perceived Normative Conflict (PNC)	270	3.59	1.38	0.292***	*(0.842)*		
3. DWBO	270	2.48	1.31	–0.100	0.287***	*(0.860)*	
4. DWBI	270	2.55	1.33	–0.128*	0.271***	0.497***	*(0.829)*

Note. The numbers in parentheses on the diagonal are coefficient alphas.
*N = 270. * p < 0.05;   ** p < 0.01;   *** p < 0.001.*

To test the relationships among variables in our study we used structural equation modeling (SEM), which is a powerful tool to analyze causal relationships in non-experimental studies. For technical overview and exhaustive discussion of structural equation modeling, readers are referred to specific references (see, e.g., Jöreskog & Sörbom, 1979; Long, 1983; Bollen, 1989; Arbuckle, 2003). Figure 2 is a path diagram that shows the stated relationships among the observed variables (survey answers, in rectangles) and the unobserved latent variables (circles). Items provided in the Appendix define the observed variables of the model through the survey questions and their response options.

First, 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 was compared with the saturated alternative model that contains both direct paths from Procedural Justice to DWBO and DWBI, and indirect paths through PNC. This model represents a partially mediated model of the effects of PJ on DWB. The various indexes used show the fit of the model (χ^2 [165, 270] = 344.633) to be acceptable and the direct paths from PJ to DWBO ($B = 0.004$; $p = 0.956$) and to DWBI ($B = –0.061$; $p = 0.372$) show non-significance. Although the chi-square is significant ($p <$ 0.001), the CFI is 0.95; the goodness-of-fit (GFI) is 0.89; the root-mean-square error of approximation (RMSEA) is 0.064; the parsimony goodness-of-fit index (PGFI) is 0.697; and the parsimony normed fit index (PNFI) 0.789. Support for Hypothesis 1 is shown (Figure 2) by the significant path between PJ and PNC ($B = –0.27$; $p < 0.001$).

To test Hypotheses 2a and 2b, and to examine whether the association between PJ and DWBO/I is better explained as a fully mediated relationship through PNC, we compared the saturated model (less constrained) to the hypothesized model (more constrained). This model represents a fully mediated model of the effects of PJ on DWBO/I because no direct paths between those mentioned constructs are present (Figure 2). The change in chi-square of the hypothesized model (χ^2 [167, 270] = 345.427; $p < 0.001$) as compared with the saturated one is 0.794 for 2 degrees of freedom ($\chi^2_d = 0.794$;

$df_d = 2$) showing a better fit (CFI = 0.95; GFI = 0.89; RMSEA = 0.063; PGFI = 0.705; and PNFI = 0.798) than the saturated model especially in the cases of the PGFI and PNFI indexes.

Figure 2

Accepted model of procedural justice, perceived normative conflict and workplace deviance
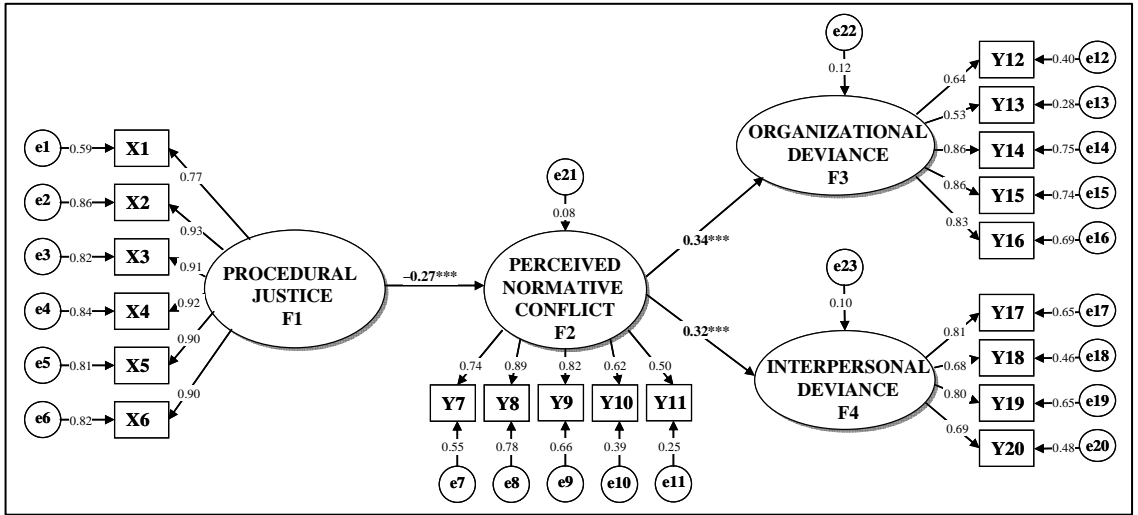
$N = 270$
Note: * $p < 0.05$; ** $p < 0.01$; *** $p < 0.001$.

The parameter estimates for the best-fitting model are reported in Figure 2. In addition to the significant path between PJ and PNC, the paths from PNC to DWBO ($B = 0.34$; $p < 0.001$) and DWBI ($B = 0.32$; $p < 0.001$) also are supported. The indirect effects of PJ on DWBO (–0.094) and DWBI (–0.088) are consistent with above thesis; namely, PJ decreases DWBO/I through PNC. Hence, all the results support Hypotheses 2a and 2b.

Discussion

The aim of this research was to test the usefulness of PNC in further explaining the mental process through which the employee's favorable PJ perceptions discourage workplace deviance. We analyzed whether PJ affects DWBO/I by influencing the employee's level of perceived normative conflict and whether that conflict prompts reciprocation with workplace deviance. The results offer support for an association between PJ and PNC ($B = –0.27$; $p < 0.001$) and between PNC and DWBO ($B = 0.34$; $p < 0.001$) and DWBI ($B = 0.32$; $p < 0.001$). Additionally, when it mediates the perceived normative conflict, the results show stronger support for a fully mediated model of the effects of PJ on DWBO/I. In effect, the fitness of the accepted model is better than the saturated model, in which the direct paths between PJ-DWBO and PJ-DWBI did not show significance.

In spite of the theoretical and empirical support for the model studied, there are some alternative issues that do not share that support. For example, as shown above, perceived normative conflict has been studied in the social exchange framework, hence, the inverse causal path PNC-perceptions of PJ is plausible but unsupported. In the same way, workplace deviance may be likely to elicit perceptions of normative conflict in organizations. That extreme also appears to be unsupported.

Theoretical and Practical Implications and Future Research

This study of normative conflict in organizations uses an one-dimensional construct, whose mediation between PJ and DWBO/I is supported by the results, and offers several organizational, psycho-sociological, and behavioral implications that could gives a boost to the organizational behavior research and management practice. In Fritz Roethlisbeger and William Dickson's study (1939) of work groups in the Western Electric Company's Hawthorne Plants that documented that informal out-put norm, rather than managers, regulates employee performance, the usefulness of formal-informal organizational fitness in organizations was stated as a classic topic largely cited in the literature. However, the perceived normative conflict interaction with organizational justice and workplace deviance may permit us to analyze new perspectives of its occurrence and to identify better its misconduct consequences.

As we said above, the study of the PNC construct may permit us to discuss some issues that are implied in that mediation. Effectively, apart from the classic formal-informal conflict, in PNC we should point out the psychological implications of the employee's norm dilemma compliance. In effect, the PNC descriptive statistics in Table 1 ($M = 3.59$; $SD = 1.38$) show how the teachers have different perceptions of the degree of conflict with the existing university norms, while taking different positions in the continuum formal rules-group rules. The perception of a deeper conflict that consequently implies two deeper decoupling normative references seems to place the teachers in a compliance dilemma that generates DWB against the organization. Since PJ is supported as a PNC antecedent, DWBO appearance could be interpreted as teachers' hostile reaction against the sense of unfairness of the norms that are embodied in our studied university procedures.

However, as we indicated above, the workplace intra-group perceptions of those misbehaving teachers also seem to be conflicting ones. In effect, the "open wound" between those teachers, on one side, and their colleagues who are closer to the formal rule position, on the other side, may generate an unhealthy climate that explains their DWBI. Hence, unjust formal norms have important implications in conflicting workplace situations and on the consequent deviance, both between individuals and between them and their organizations. In effect, it is said that an escalation of conflict could be due to the employer's lack of understanding that workplace deviance should be interpreted as an employee act of retribution. That incomprehension puts the primary conflict into an upward spiral. However, based on our study, the employee who feels treated unfairly finds in PNC the support to engage in deviance as retribution since PNC implies that each party in the conflict has distinct norms and value self-categories. That "discrepancy" in the framework of PNC makes it more plausible and easier to understand why each partner is in conflict and could offer a more understandable model of the workplace deviance process, thus also making it easier for organizational managers to seek remedies.

Probably, the most interesting managerial implications might concern the avoidance of those employee feelings of norm conflict and the consequent harm it does within the organization. The conflict management literature suggests they can be resolved by addressing the parties' underlying interests, and those interests are related to the parties' motives for desiring justice –PJ in our study– (Fisher, Ury, & Patton, 1991; Ury, Brett, & Goldberg, 1993). The mentioned literature suggests that the three major motives behind concern for justice are instrumental, relational, and deontic motives (Cropanzano, Byrne, Bobocel, & Rupp, 2001). The instrumental motive leads individuals to care about procedural justice not as an end in and of itself but because it can be a means to a material end. The relational motive causes people to care about justice because fair treatment speaks of their status as members of the group (Lind & Tyler, 1988). The deontic motive speaks to an intrinsic desire for justice that is grounded in a value-based belief system (e.g. Bies, 1987; Cropanzano, R., Goldman, B, & Folger, R., 2003).

Perceived normative conflict gives rise to instrumental remedies since normative conflict interacts in the misconduct-unfairness spiral. In this respect, an instrumental argument to employee

trust restitution could be the now known scenario that PNC configures in his/her workplace. Powerlessness, normlessness, helplessness, among other senses, could help to make easier for the employee to want to find a harmonic workplace and, thus, agreement. Probably, supported by the above known situation, an offer of an apology may be more acceptable. On the same lines, the collateral relational conflict that PNC reveals may guide the employee in that aim. In effect, PNC discloses the conflict relational perspective and give rise, hence, relational remedies that literature only advised to interactional justice restoration.

Finally, the evaluation of invoking deontic principles as a remedy could be improved by the perspective that offers the shades of PNC construct. 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 adherence to his/her work group value category. In effect, since it is that value category that is really in conflict, the employee will always find in his/her groups the sufficient support to consider the punishment as unjust. Empirical research provides evidence of the inefficiency of unjust punishment (see, e.g., Ball, Trevino, & Sims, 1994).

In order to offer future research, in the last lines of this work, we find some questions that remain open. The literature contains numerous proposals that the perception of unfairness leads an employee to desire the restoration of justice, which in turn makes him/her engage in retributive actions against the perceived perpetrator. Could the teachers' "taking of position" with their "in opposition" work group constitute a first step toward retributive action? Could it even be the definitive retributive action and so offer an alternative justification of the PNC as a mediator in our proposed model? Additionally, the conflicting situation seems be a "culture medium" of emotions. Could PNC be supported as playing a mediating role between PJ and DWBO/I because of its emotion implications? Does this study lend new support to the thesis that perceptions affect misconducts thru emotions by which employee behavior appears more likely to be triggered?

Finally, the success of the normative framework could lead us to think that a modern system of control of DWB should fall within the "situationalist" view that considers employees conditioned by a more or less favorable attitudinal environment but refuses to consider lazy or irresponsible employees. On that line, Davenport & Prusak (1999) more recently noted that "knowledge" is something that goes beyond mere data or an information flow charged with data and is a framework of the individual's experiences, values (attitudes), information and 'know what' that permits both the accumulation of new knowledge and effective action. Should we state our support for organizational learning as a tool to integrate that "[attitudinal] knowledge" and achieve fair and harmonious organizational attitudinal images in the organization's members?

Limitations of the Study

We should also mention that our research has certain limitations. Firstly, the university institution researched is a recently created university, with a younger workforce, and fewer career civil servants than other, more consolidated, universities in Spain and abroad. That circumstance may limit the ability to extrapolate the conclusions of this research. Secondly, the researched teachers have certain job conditions that are often inherent to the peculiarities of workers in the public sector and universities. For example, the higher bureaucracy in the public university context than in the private sector could also present a different picture of the normative context. Consequently, the performance of used constructs as well as its implications could vary. Finally, PNC was carefully designed to ask about perceptions of conflicting norms, however, since is it a self-supplied new scale, it is impossible to rule out the presence of shades of other unknown measurements.

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Appendix

Variable Items Used in This Study

Measure

Procedural Justice

How fairly are the university's procedures designed to . . .
X1 provide useful feedback regarding a university's decision and its implementation?
X2 hear the concerns of everyone affected by a university's decision?
X3 allow for requests for clarifications or additional information about a university's decision?
X4 have all parties affected by a decision included in the decision-making process?
X5 help you to collect accurate information for decision-making?
X6 provide opportunities to appeal against or challenge a company's decision?

Perceived Normative Conflict

Y7 If my co-workers supported me I would be inclined to a non-compliance with some rules of my job
Y8 In order to get on with my job I sometimes have to ignore the university rules
Y9 In some issues, I prefer to take more notice of my work group than of the university rules
Y10 Sometimes I feel that my co-workers and I see one thing and the university rules another
Y11 To tell the truth, my work group and I take different ways from the university rules

Organization Deviance

Y12 Spent too much time fantasizing or daydreaming instead of working
Y13 Come in late to work without giving prior notice
Y14 Intentionally worked slower than I could have worked
Y15 Put little effort into my work
Y16 Taken an additional or longer break than is acceptable at my workplace

Interpersonal Deviance

Y17 Said something hurtful to some at work
Y18 Publicly embarrassed someone at work
Y19 Made fun of someone at work
Y20 Acted rudely toward someone at work