

Research Article

Organizational justice and human values in Brazil: Does meaningfulness in life moderate this relationship?

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Abstract:

The study investigates a little explored relationship in the scientific field, i.e., how Personal Values, moderated by Meaningfulness in Life, may influence perceptions of Procedural Organizational Justice among civil police officers in Brazil. Studies suggest that the perception of justice in the organization can generate several effects on employees' thoughts, feelings, and behaviors, leading to negative consequences both for the organization and for employees. Human values serve as a guide for people to pursue their life goals (biological and social), functioning as predictors of various psychological constructs. Previous studies have suggested that in the Brazilian police force, the effect of values on organizational-related outcomes might be moderated by other variables. Meaningfulness in Life (MIL), a generalized individual cognitive orientation, can be a potent moderator of the relationship between individual values and organizational-related outcomes. People who have high MIL tend to evaluate events as serving a purpose in one's life, even in the

Keywords: Police psychology; Procedural organizational justice; Meaningfulness in life; Basic human values.

Introduction

Extant research on implications of employee perceived organizational justice has demonstrated its link to organizational behaviors, such as commitment and job satisfaction among others.¹ Perceptions of injustice can lead to negative consequences both for the organization and for employees.² Specific studies on police organizations suggest that when police perceive more organizational justice, they are more committed and disciplined, trust the public, and treat people more fairly.³ They also engage in less counterproductive behaviors and are more confident in their ability to overcome the challenges presented to them, reflecting in better quality and more democratic police service.⁴ Lack of perception of organizational justice points to a need for changes in the police, reducing phenomena such as the "Ferguson effect", that is, an increase in violent crime rates in a community caused by reduced proactive policing due to the community's distrust and hostility towards police.⁵

Human values are higher-order trans-situational principles, which serve as a guide for people to pursue their life goals (biological and social), functioning as predictors of various psychological constructs, such as attitudes, feelings, and behaviors.⁶ It is possible to state that values serve as a basis for evaluating people's everyday situations, including the perception of justice, and, depending on the context, the interpretation of a situation as being more or less fair according to the predominant values endorsed by the individual. Previous studies have suggested that in the police force, the effect of values on organizational-related outcomes might not be a direct one, or that this relationship might be at least moderated by other variables.⁷

Meaningfulness in life (MIL), a generalized individual cognitive orientation, can be a potential moderator of the relationship between individual values and perceived organizational procedural justice.⁸ Events that happen to people with high MIL, even if they are perceived as unfair, are interpreted as having purpose. Individuals who have a sense of MIL are generally happier, and have lower levels of negative emotions, and are mentally healthier.⁹ Previous findings suggest a predictive relationship between human values and perception of organizational justice in the context of workforce allocation on the investigative branch of the Brasilia's State Police of captains at the Federal District Civil Police (PCDF) in Brazil.¹⁰ The staff allocation of PCDF delegates is considered a highly relevant organizational resource, being understood by officers as a source of status, satisfaction and prestige. Moreover, severe differences in material and human resources between police units is another issue that can impact the officer's justice perception on staff allocation.

In Brazil, the preservation of security and public order is the sole responsibility of police institutions, which are constitutionally assigned to the task.¹¹ In the country, public security institutions include municipality, state, and federal organizations. At the state level, there are two police organizations, one responsible for uniform (preventive) policing and the other for investigative activities, both working in the same territory. The Brazilian Republic is formed by 26 States and the Federal District (FD), each one counting with those two police branches. It's important to register that the FD is a federative unit whose status is similar to other States of the Republic. It is worth noting that for historical reasons, the state police responsible for preventive policing are of a military nature, operating in all cities regardless of size. On the other hand, the investigative branch is composed of civilian sworn officers, whose attributions are similar to those of police detectives or criminal investigators in the United States.

Sworn police officers employed by the civil investigative police in Brazil's Federal District participated in the study, who were promoted to the highest level of the career in the year of 2022, hence having at least 13 years of service and being approved in a special course conducted by the organization. The Federal District (FD) houses the capital of Brazil,

Brasília, which is organized in 33 administrative regions, or neighborhoods, and has the highest human development index (HDI) of the country. The FD's HDI reached 0.874 in 2022, above other large cities in Brazil such as São Paulo (HDI=0.833) or Rio de Janeiro (HDI=0.820), and well above the average HDI=0.754 of the country.¹² Yet, even in the context of high educational and income rates, the FD presents social inequalities within its neighborhoods that reflect those found in the country regions. Official data suggests that some neighborhoods located on the East region of the DF present a rate of violent crimes (homicides, etc.) comparable to those of Nicaragua or El Salvador, i.e., about 45 violent deaths per 100,000 inhabitants. Southern neighborhoods, on the other hand, have not registered a single homicide in the past two years.¹³

In this context, staff allocation in PCDF is understood as an important resource by the police officers. Past studies show that the distribution of this resource without clearly complying with procedures and criteria of justice can generate a low perception of organizational justice and, therefore, have negative consequences for the service delivered.¹⁴ The organization is responsible for running around 50 police stations in the state, 34 of which maintain permanent and uninterrupted service to the public. According to the Federal Constitution, all crime reports, as well as arrests made by other military police are presented at these stations, at which point the case is analyzed by the investigative police and the pre-judicial phase of criminal prosecution begins.

In a police station, civil police officers are led by police commissioners and carry out activities as crime investigation and other police procedures, like recording a criminal fact, gathering evidence, executing arrests and search warrants under a judicial order, to name a few. The requirements to take on the position of investigative civilian police include having a bachelor's degree diploma, in addition to being approved in a specific public selection. The career is divided into four levels, with promotion criteria established by law.¹⁵ The investigative police officers can be allocated to any of the organization's units, with no pre-established criteria on how to make this distribution. It is worth noticing that, in addition to several branches spread throughout the region of Brasília, PCDF has several support branches located geographically in the downtown area. The material and human resources differences between police branches, as well the lack of clear rules for staff allocation is a problem identified in an audit made by the Federal District Auditors Court in the year of 2014.¹⁶ This opens up space for questions about personnel distribution - who will work in places considered worse? Assmar et al. suggest that when individuals receive negative results or when resources are scarce, judgments about organizational justice materialize more easily.¹⁷ This seems to be the case with the studied organization regarding their personnel allocation. The climate of uncertainty generated by unclear procedures draws attention to organizational justice issues. The present study can be of value and usefulness to other police forces that have similar characteristics, that is, a vast and stratified organizational structure with important differences in quality at work, status and prestige, spread throughout one territory.

Hypotheses Development

The norms of justice reflect one of the main aspects of human life, generating effects on the behavior of individuals and serving as the basis of morality in their interactions.¹⁸ It is suggested that the construct is fundamental to human life in group interaction. For Folger and Cropanzano, human beings evolved to survive in groups, and, for this, it is essential that social exchanges occur in harmony considering mutual interests.¹⁹ The evaluation of what is right and wrong, in this context, is carried out by the perception of justice. Individuals tend to feel discomfort and react negatively when perceiving injustice, from the distribution of wealth in a society to promotion within an organization. The perception of justice is subjective and socially constructed, a means for people to interpret and understand the social world about what is right or wrong.²⁰

Greenberg introduced the term "organizational justice" regarding the employees' perception of justice about the company's decision-making, on the distribution of benefits or punishment.²¹ Since then, it seems that understanding how workers perceive justice, as well as how they react to it, is of fundamental importance to the management of organizations.²² Crawshaw et al. summarize that theories on justice can be understood in three broad categories: those based on instrumental models, where justice is a means for achieving results of interest to people; interpersonal models, where fairness helps individuals meet their needs for positive social relationships; and deontic models, where justice finds an end in itself, based on ethics and moral.²³ From the organizational point of view, justice theories also follow three major categories. Distributive justice is related to Adams' theory of equity, which proposes that employees make comparisons among themselves, considering the ratio between what they contribute and what they receive at the workplace.²⁴ The author recognizes the central position of social exchanges in human relationships, where anything can be evaluated in terms of equity: wages, punishments, promotions, affection, recognition etc.²⁵ Interactional justice relates to the quality of interpersonal treatment during organizational interactions.²⁶ Even when there is a perception of distributive justice, Bies and Shapiro suggest that individuals still have a concern with the way they were treated in the decision-making process, which is the core of interactional justice.²⁷ For Colquitt and Zipay interactional justice relates to the sensitivity and explanations given by the decision maker to employees, involving justifications, trust, respect, and politeness.²⁸

Of special interest to this study is the concept of procedural justice, originally presented by philosopher John Rawls, which became known in management with Thibaut and Walker.²⁹ Studying the decision-making process of courts, the authors suggested that individuals understand what is fair or not according to the procedure adopted before a decision. For Leventhal, individuals are not only concerned with the result of the distribution of resources and punishments, but also make a mental map of how that result was defined, that is, they assess whether the social mechanism that generated that distribution followed a certain criterion of justice.³⁰ Thus, it was suggested that when judging the procedure involved in the decision individuals use three principles: 1. the procedure should be the same for all interested parties across time, ensuring equality of opportunity (i.e., consistency); 2. the procedure must prevent decision makers from interceding on a personal basis (i.e., suppression of personal bias); 3. the procedure must be based on publicly adopted criteria (i.e., accuracy); and 4. the procedure must contemplate the values and perceptions of all those affected by the decision (i.e., representativeness).³¹ Until now, all the four principles are not clearly established at the studied organization, despite the recent approval of an internal regulation which still depends on further actions to be fully effective.³²

Procedural justice is not only a means to meet an external purpose, but also represents a form of interaction between people. Individuals evaluate how much the procedure is in line with their values and, when the procedure represents a positive relationship between the individual and the decision maker, it is seen as fair by the person.³³ When individuals perceive procedures as fair, they are less concerned with potentially unfair or disadvantageous outcomes.³⁴ In case that seniority in the police force would be formally predefined criterion for allocation of the workplace, with the participation of police representatives, it is expected that novice police officers in the organization would feel justice even when working at an unwanted police station.³⁵ Fischer and Smith suggest that organizational justice is relevant to individuals because it reflects their importance within the organization.³⁶ Fair procedures activate a sense of belonging and pride on police officers.³⁷ Perception of justice is the result of the interaction between authority action and individual values. This relationship seems to be confirmed by Enoksen and Sandal, whose study was based on Schwartz et. al refined values theory, to find that values predict the perception of organizational justice.³⁸ The authors suggested that the prediction of self-enhancement values (e.g., power) and conservation (e.g., tradition) on perception of organizational justice can be explained by the uncertainty management theory, which proposes that individuals who have values based on anxiety are more sensitive to the perception of justice.³⁹ For Schwartz, the higher order values (HOV) of conservation have as their intrinsic motivation the preservation of traditional practices, preference for stability, and maintenance of the status quo; while the HOV of self-enhancement reflects the preference for power and achievement, and the pursuit of success and personal interests.⁴⁰ The clarity of the procedures used to follow previously established justice criteria which, in turn, can lead to the achievement of professional success by maintaining justice in the organization, seem to explain the positive relationship between these values and the perception of justice within the uncertainty management theory.⁴¹ On the other hand, the conflicting HOV values of openness to change (which motivation refers to the independence of thought, actions, and interests) and self-transcendence (i.e., concern for the well-being of others) would establish a negative relationship with the perception of fairness in situations in which procedures for enforcing established criteria are not clearly employed. The findings of Schminke⁴² confirmed this relationship, further reinforcing that the perception of organizational justice varies according to the values endorsed by individuals. In a previous study it was found to be a predictive relation between human values and perception of justice.⁴³ Hence, our first hypothesis suggests that:

H1: Individual values will predict the perception of procedural justice within police officers of the PCDF in such a way that:

H1a: Conservation and self-enhancement values will positively predict their perception of procedural justice, and;

H1b: Self-transcendence and openness to change values will negatively predict their perception of procedural justice.

Values are passed on relatively unchanged from one generation to the other.⁴⁴ Yet, one should always consider that the indirect effects of values on attitudes and behavior might be more prominent than the direct effects, depending on the strength and relevance of the social norm in that context.⁴⁵ To explain the indirect effect of values on outcome variables, such as justice perception, models including the effect of intervenient variables are called for. For instance, including moderator variables in the relationship goes beyond studying the simple and direct relationship between values and justice perception, thus providing opportunities for a more in-depth

explanation of this phenomenon.⁴⁶ An example of an important moderator variable is the meaningfulness of life – MIL, affecting the strength of a predictor variable onto an organizational-related outcome in the police context.⁴⁷

MIL is a global cognitive disposition to viewing experiences in life as having purpose and meaning. Although specific theories vary, most of them focus on MIL as a global understanding that a person's life has meaning and/or, as a notion that certain aspects of life (e.g., an individual's job) are perceived as having meaning.⁴⁸ The Glazer Meaningfulness in Life (GMIL) measure is a cognitive approach to interpreting experiences and events, such that symbolic meaning is attributed to those experiences or events.⁴⁹ Individuals who have MIL are generally considered to be happier, with lower levels of negative emotions.⁵⁰ Studies on the relationship between MIL, values, and outcomes at work are more recent (Glazer et al., in press). Glazer (2018) suggested that MIL can improve employee work experiences, being a powerful moderator affecting the extent to which police officers' values relate to their perception of justice.

Existing instruments for measuring meaningfulness in life (e.g., Antonovsky's *Sense of Coherence Scale*, and Battista & Almond's *Life Regard Index*) have validity concerns.⁵¹ Also, none of them directly aimed at meaningfulness in life at work. Glazer (2008) proposed a measure to assess MIL at work which has been successfully tested in Brazilian police, with results establishing its moderating role on organizational variables (Torres et al., 2022a). Given this evidence, Glazer's scale is the most appropriate choice for this study. Accordingly, our last hypothesis is that:

H2: Meaningfulness in life will moderate the relationship between individual values and perception of procedural justice, such that higher levels of MIL will strengthen the positive relationship between values of conservation and self-enhancement which procedural justice.

Method

Participants

This study focusses on the 362 sworn police officers employed by the civil investigative police in Brazil's Federal District, who were promoted to the highest level of the carrier at the year 2022. Among them, 321 responded to a paper-pencil questionnaire, representing 88.67% of the population. This sample size yielded satisfactory power for the study. Most respondents were men (64.8%), and the average age was 39.27 (SD = 7.19) years. Of the respondents, 12.6% worked at specialized investigation units, and 48.9% worked at local policing units (38.5% did not disclosed), most of them in daily shifts (76.1%). Table S1 in the Supplementary Materials show the detailed demographic characteristics of the sample, as well as power analyses. The sample demographic percentages reflect the actual demographic distribution in the police's population in terms of sex, age, and education.⁵² Further, when asked about the importance of allocation to their work performance, and whether they had already felt threatened by a relocation for the current work location (single items; Likert-like scale; 1=not important/never; 5=very important/often), work allocation was considered to be very important for respondents (M=4.5; SD=0.69), and reported feeling threatened by a possible removal to an unwanted work allocation (M=2.85; SD=1.13).

Measures

At the time of data collection, all the scales already presented evidence of validity to Brazilian samples.⁵³ Demographic and work

experience questions included sex, age, education level, police department, work shift, importance of work allocation, and feelings about being allocated to unwanted police stations.

Predictors

The Portrait Values Questionnaire - Refined (PVQ-R) represents a refinement of the original Schwartz' (1992) values questionnaire.⁵⁴ The questionnaire includes 57 brief descriptions of different people, each one with the goals, aspirations or desires implicitly related to the value in question. Of those, three items relate to each of 19 values described previously uses an ordinal scale with six points (1 = Not like me at all; 6 = Very much like me). A version of the PVQ-R validated by Torres et al. in Brazil was used.⁵⁵ Reliability indexes vary from $\alpha = .89$ to $\alpha = .82$.

Moderator

Glazer Meaningfulness in Life (G-MIL). An eight-item measure assesses sense of purpose, meaning, and fulfillment in life (e.g., "I typically think optimistically about events that occur even if they are greatly challenging situations").⁵⁶

Outcome

Organizational justice. The Perception of Organizational Justice Scale (EPJO) was used to assess the perception of procedural organizational justice.⁵⁷ It includes six items focusing on the allocation of employees within an organization (e.g., "My institution establishes criteria so that the decisions taken are fair").

Procedure

All data collection and analyses in the study were performed in accordance with the ethical standards of the Institute of Psychology of the University of Brasília – Brazil, and with the 1964 Helsinki Declaration and its later amendments or comparable ethical standards. Informed consent was obtained from all individual adult participants of the study. Surveys were administered individually or in small groups in a laboratory of a large university in Midwest of Brazil, after authorization was obtained from the General Command of the PCDF. Anonymity and confidentiality of responses were guaranteed to participants, and non-identifiable were only used for the purpose of the present study. Participants signed consent forms consisting of information regarding confidentiality, purpose, procedures, and duration of the study. They were also presented with contact information of the principal investigators and information regarding participant rights.

Statistical Analyses

Using the statistical package R the missing data patterns were analyzed and replaced through the Expectation-Maximization) method.⁵⁸ To keep the original response format, the values were rounded up to whole numbers. There were no missing data greater than 5%. To test hypotheses, a series of structural equation modeling – SEM (direct effects) were taken with the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS version 21), beside moderation analyses with PROCESS macro for SPSS.⁵⁹ For SEM, it was used multiple fit indexes for the evaluation of the models' covariance structures, with the comparative fit index (CFI) > 0.90, the root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA) < 0.06 and the standardized root mean square residual (SRMR) < 0.08.⁶⁰ It was also included the $\chi^2/\text{d.f.}$ ratio which is a badness-of-fit index. West et al. suggest that smaller values of the χ^2/df ratio indicate better fit up to the value of of^{61}

5. The estimation method used was the weighted least square mean and variance adjusted,

which is specifically designed for ordinal data, which is less biased and more accurate than the robust maximum likelihood.⁶² To achieve identification, the variance of latent factors was set at 1, allowing the loadings to have free estimate.

Results

Individuals and cultural groups differ in their use of the response scale.⁶³ These differences in scale use often distort findings and lead to incorrect conclusions, especially in the case of the PVQ-R.⁶⁴ Thus, it's necessary to compute each respondent's mean score across all value items for centering the scores of each individual's 19 values around that individual's mean rating.⁶⁵ To examine the relationship across variables a Pearson's correlation was performed. When applicable, to test for differences between variables it was performed One-way ANOVAs and estimated the effect size of the comparisons it was used the Glass' D. Participants presented a higher score for self-transcendence HOV (M=4.93; SD=.55) when compared to self-enhancement HOV (M=4.14; SD=0.54) (F=11.13; d.f.=429; p<.05; Glass' D=1.44), with no other significant differences between values found. Means, standard deviations, correlations, and Cronbach's alpha are presented in Table 1.

Table 1
Reliabilities, Descriptive, and Correlations Across Variables (N=321)

Variables	α	Ω	M	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6
1. HOV-C:	.88		4.32	0.58	---	.30**	-.18**	-.50**	.19**	.32**
2. HOV-SE:	.89	.86	4.14	0.54	.30**	---	-.63**	-.16**	.16*	.12*
3. HOV-ST:	.81		4.93	0.55	-.18**	-.63**	---	.21**	-.47**	-.13*
4. HOV-O:	.82		4.62	0.50	-.50**	-.16**	.21**	---	-.12*	-.52**
5. PJ	.84		2.43	0.85	.19**	.16*	-.47**	-.12*	---	.15**
6. MIL	.89		6.06	0.77	.32**	.12*	-.13*	-.52*	.15**	---

Note: *p < .05; ** p < .01; HOV-C = conservation higher order values; HOV-SE = self-enhancement higher order values; HOV-ST = self-transcendence higher order values; HOV-O = openness to change higher order values; PJ = procedural justice; MIL = Meaningful in life.

The first hypothesis was that individual values would predict the perception of procedural justice of police officers in such a way that conservation and self-enhancement HOVs would positively predict their perception of procedural justice (H1a); while self-transcendence and openness to change HOVs would negatively predict such perception.

Based on Hayes' and Little et al.'s recommendations, the relationships between the predictors and the outcome were examined with the help of a SEM.⁶⁶ The standard error of the indirect effect of the relationship between predictors and outcomes was estimated using the bootstrap resampling procedure with 500 samples.

For the final model, a chi-square ratio (χ^2/df) of 1.98 was obtained. All indexes of the final model met the fit criteria, with CFI > 0.91, RMSEA < 0.07 (Pclose Values: Lo90- 0.061; Hi90- 0.080, $p = 0.01$) and SRMR < 0.057. Modification indices were examined, leading to the insertion of four correlated errors, all of them within the same latent variables. The graphic representation of the final model is presented in Figure 1, and the effects between variables are presented in Table 2.

Figure 1
Structural Model for Direct Relationship Between Variables (N=321)

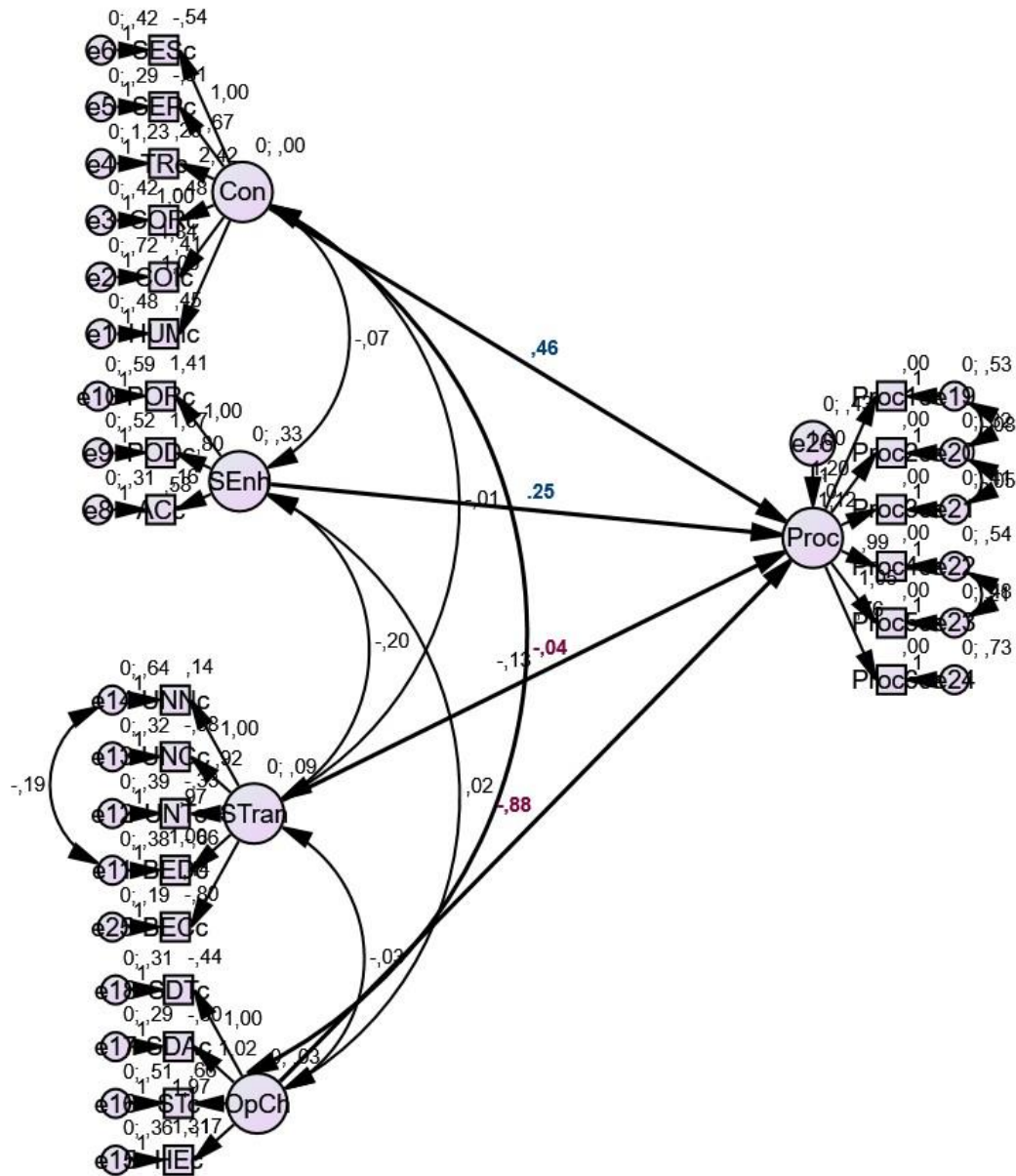


Table 2
Regression Weights of the Effects Among Variables (Final Model)

		Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	p
Procedural Justice	← Conservation	.46	0.234	1.97	.001
Procedural Justice	← S. Enhancement	.25	0.134	2.01	.001
Procedural Justice	← S. Transcendence	-.04	0.042	-1.90	.053
Procedural Justice	← Openness Change	-.88	0.093	-2.04	.001

Note. S. Enhancement = Self-Enhancement HOV; S. Transcendence = Self-Transcendence HOV.

The SEM yielded a positive prediction of conservation and self-enhancement values on procedural justice perception, leading to the acceptance of H1a, but only a negative relationship of openness to change values and procedural justice, resulting in a partial confirmation of H1b. West et al. suggest that most fit indices commonly used as criteria to evaluate a model's covariance structure are sensitive to factor scores, more importantly among them the RMSEA.⁶⁷ In fact, they suggest that only the goodness-of-fit index (GFI) is not affected. With our final model we obtained a GFI=0.91, which is an acceptable measure of goodness of fit of the model.

H2 predicted that MIL would moderate the relationships between individual values and procedural justice, especially in relation to conservation and self-enhancement HOVs. A series of moderation analyses were conducted using the PROCESS macro for SPSS for the moderating effect of MIL on the relationship of all HOVs and procedural justice.⁶⁸ According to the modeling proposed by Little et al., interaction variables were estimated through the following steps: creation of interactions between the moderation variable and the independent variables; orthogonalization of items based on linear regression coefficient and estimation of the latent variable using orthogonalized items.⁶⁹ This procedure avoids the collinearity between the interactions of the items and allows the estimation of a latent interaction. Furthermore, the parameterization of this model is simpler, which facilitates the identification of complex models with several latent variables.

As presented in Table 3, interactions between conservation, self-enhancement, and openness to change HOVs and MIL were significant, with no significance being found for self-transcendence. These results indicate that MIL moderates the relationships between the aforementioned HOVs and perception of procedural justice, confirming H2. For the criterion variable, we obtained positive effects of the moderation of MIL on the prediction of conservation and self-enhancement. That is, both HOVs predict positively the perception of procedural justice, and this relationship becomes more positive in the presence of MIL. We also observed a negative effect of the moderation of MIL for openness to change. In other words, as the scores of openness to change increases, MIL mitigates its effects on procedural justice perception. To better visualize this effect, we probed these interactions to

test the slopes reflecting the relationship between each HOV and perception of procedural justice for 3 cut-off percentiles, respectively: 16% inferior, 64% median and 16% superior.⁷⁰ Graphic representations of all interactions are presented in Figures 2 to 5. While MIL seems to increase the conservation and self-enhancement HOVs and the criterion relationship, it reduces the negative relationship between openness to change and procedural justice perception. More vividly, at high levels of MIL procedural justice is higher as conservation and self-enhancement increases and is lower as openness to change increases than when MIL is low.

Discussion

Results of the study suggest that both conservation and self-enhancement HOVs positively predict having perception of procedural justice. The inherent idea behind the values theory is the notion that human values act as motivational principles in people's lives.⁷¹ The motivation behind conservation values, that emphasize self-restraint, preservation of traditional practices and protection of stability seems to be coherent with an increasing willingness to have clear rules for allocation distribution. Security values, which integrates the conservation HOV, refer to owning as a guide to one's life the pursuit for harmony and stability of society, relationships, and oneself.⁷² Specifically, the values that formed the conservation HOV refer to having a sense of relishing secure surroundings and avoiding danger, appreciating social order, societal stability, and a state vigilant against threats, complying with expectations (conformity-interpersonal), and respecting laws and following informal rules. These values are only compatible but also create a perfect ground for the development and endorsement of well-established rules and criteria. Self-enhancement HOV includes intrinsic motivation the belief of the acceptance of power through the exercising of control over people, material and social resources, as well as obtaining success according to social standards. Together, these values relate to what the achievement literature calls "mastery" motivation: the pursuit of an absolute and intrapersonal competence, yet subjected to external assessments of performance.⁷³ We reasoned that these values would encourage individuals to accept their work allocation provided that clear rules for distribution are in place, due to their intrinsic motivation.⁷⁴ Our findings seem to confirm this relationship, which, however, did not appear to be clearly tested by previous empirical studies.

By confirming that these HOVs positively predict procedural justice perception, it can be suggested that the increase in such values is important to increase justice perception in the workplace. There are several ways by which values can be modified and made salient to foster a desired behavior, including educational programs based on the principles of accessibility, interpretation, and control.^{75,76} Conducting educational campaigns at work is a resource that can be used to increase the negative consequences of injustice perception, based on these principles.⁷⁷

Educational campaigns aimed at PCDF agents, leading to the understanding that those who protect society need to have clear rules for themselves, can also result in the strengthening of the representation of public security agents as guarantors of social order.⁷⁸ In addition to emphasizing conservation and self-enhancement HOVs, institutional management should also encourage the development of educational campaigns of this type, thus enabling a perception of justice for the public security corporation involved (PCDF).

A non-significative negative prediction was obtained for self-transcendent HOV on procedural justice perception, although a negative prediction was found for openness to change HOV. This lack of significance led us to partially refute H1b. However, it is possible

to infer that a negative relationship between openness to change and procedural means that officers with higher scores in this HOV have a lower tendency to perceive procedural justice. Openness to change refers to independence of action and thought, whereas self-transcendence refers to the belief of a unity with nature, and a world beauty for oneself. The motivations included in self-transcendence values also include a sense of not “rocking the boat” in order to preserve the harmony of one’s group, while openness to change main motivation refers to endorsing a readiness for new ideas, actions, and experiences. Considered to be both anxiety-free values (Schwartz et al., 2012), the autonomy motivation of openness to change shares an emphasis on intellectual openness with universalism–tolerance values. This autonomy contrasts with conservation values that emphasize self-restriction, order, and avoiding change, leading to the negative prediction found. Yet, self-transcendence values emphasize transcending one’s own interests for the sake of others contrasting with the self-enhancement values that emphasize pursuing one’s own interests. Hence, such values would hinder the pursue of justice in allocation distribution, but only for openness to change a significant relationship was actually observed in the study, leading to inconclusive results to H1b. The relationship between both HOVs should be further investigated in future studies.

The adoption of public policies particularly related to civil police in Brazil, specifically those that carried out the establishment of clear rules for action – in our study the work allocation – demand their compliance by the population in general.⁷⁹ Specifically, regarding the police sample under investigation, there is also the impact on the satisfaction and performance of police officers with the precinct allocated to them.⁸⁰ In addition to carrying on their routine tasks aimed at criminal control, the lack of clearly established rules at work turns the officers’ efforts to comply with rules that are ill formed and not well spread in their workplace. The reinforcement of conservation and self-enhancement HOVs lead to the perception of procedural justice as a sign of the traditional norms of the police corporation, hence motivating the work behavior. Consequently, these actions make it possible to reduce the level of dissatisfaction within the workplace, and clarifying officers about the benefits of clear explanations that unmask the misconceptions that might be disseminated in the lack of a clear roadmap.⁸¹ The adoption of these behaviors made it possible to consolidate police legitimacy to act in a crisis scenario as the one faced by the Brazilian population.⁸²

The cognitive orientation of high MIL acts as a catalyst to conservation and self-enhancement HOVs and as a buffer for openness to change HOV in their prediction of procedural justice, let it be, respectively, a positive or negative relationship. When police officers endorse conservation and self-enhancement values, those who have higher MIL will perceive more procedural justice than those who have low MIL. Likewise, endorsing openness to change values helps to reduce their perception of procedural justice slightly, but when MIL is high, this perception is quite lower. These results support cognitive theories that a person’s cognitive orientation influences their justice perception.⁸³ More specifically, the present study found MIL to be a relevant cognitive orientation that explains how values orientations will result in high or low procedural justice perception.⁸⁴ Therefore, perhaps what matters more, particularly for police officers, is that people develop a positive outlook and a perspective of meaningfulness in their lives as a way to protect themselves from the potential deleterious consequences of justice criteria absence. Indeed, when conservation and self-enhancement values are of high importance for the individual, MIL is a key factor in mitigating the adverse outcomes of injustice. The current study presents a healthy reminder that people’s cognitive schemas play a role in how they see the events of the world and aspects of the person act as contingencies for the values-justice relationship.⁸⁵

According to Acquadro-Maran, training courses and support programs are useful and effective in preventing negative effects of low organizational justice perception before they get out of hand, harming police officers and the police organization as a whole.⁸⁶ In fact, in their meta-analysis Walters and Bolger suggested that procedural justice perceptions and legitimacy beliefs are instrumental in promoting compliance with the law, and recommended increasing police officers' sense of control over their own lives, increasing their sense of purpose in life and in work, as well as fulfillment and satisfaction of life, and increasing their feeling of connectedness with their peers would reduce the deleterious effects of injustice perception.⁸⁷ Our findings corroborate these recommendations, and programs designed to increase MIL may positively affect organizational outcomes related to justice perception among police officers. In other words, training programs that can reinforce the meaningfulness of the police profession into officers' life could help reduce the adverse consequences of injustice perception within the studied organization. Procedural justice perception seems to be associated with conducive employee attitudes such as organizational trust and job satisfaction.⁸⁸

Preventive programs that motivate police officers' justice perception skills based on a purpose in life might increase the meaning of their own work. Ryan and Bergin suggest that when authorities in the criminal justice system treat people fairly and respectfully, they will be more likely to view the law and its representing authorities as legitimate, which per se is the basis of the procedural justice theory.⁸⁹ Actually, Lai et al. found that perception of procedural justice has a direct effect on mitigating citizens' perceptions of police misconduct, and enhancing officers' MIL may result in higher positive outcomes for the perception of the police organization by the general public.⁹⁰ Changes in the police regulations and training aimed at increasing officers' MIL may result in better work conditions among police officers and healthier employees.

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SUPPLEMENTARY MATERIAL

Table S1

Demographic Characteristics (N=321)

Characteristic	Percentage	Mean	Standard Deviation
Sex:			
- Male	64.8%		
- Female	34.1%		
Age		39.3	7.19
How important is allocation to your work performance?		4.50	0.69
Have you ever felt threatened by a relocation of the current work location		2.85	1.13
Department allocated:			
- DPC	48.9%		
- DPE	12.6%		
- Preferred not to disclose	38.5%		
Shift			
- Day	76.1%		
- Night	23.3%		
- Both	0.6%		

Power analysis

This study has eleven within-subjects continuous variables (i.e., higher order values with 4 levels, MIL, and procedural justice). Using the statistical power analysis proposed by Cohen, we found that a total of 107 participants would be sufficient in this research to observe a “small” to “medium” effect size ($\omega^2 = .04$) with $\alpha = .05$ to obtain a desired power of .80.⁹¹ Although Cohen’s rule of thumb that a “medium” effect (ω^2 ⁹²

= .06) reflects the average effect size reported in psychological research⁹³, in this study we estimated power for a “small” to “medium” effect ($\omega^2 = .04$) following Cohen’s (1977) seminal caution that “what a sociologist may consider a small effect size may well be appraised as medium by a psychologist” (p. 285). When the power analysis was recalculated using the actual sample of 321 valid responses, we found that the power obtained for the main effect of the independent variable was .99, as was the power for the main effect of other variables listed. Thus, this sample size provided more than satisfactory power.

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Statement of authors’ contributions:

Cláudio V. Torres and Helder Pedron were responsible for the conception and design of the study; data

collection planning, analysis, interpretation of the findings; writing the manuscript submitted.

We have no conflict of interest to disclose.

We hereby confirm that we have access to the original data on which the article reports.

Compliance with Ethical Standards: All procedures in the study were performed in accordance with the ethical standards of the Institute of Psychology of the University of Brasília – Brazil, and with the 1964 Helsinki Declaration and its later amendments or comparable ethical standards. Informed consent was obtained from all individual adult participants included in the study.



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