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The organizations. Justice, trust and retaliatory attitude: a study in a company in the metal-mechanic sector

Las organizaciones. Justicia, confianza y actitudes vengativas: un estudio en una empresa en el sector metal-mecánico

Les organisations. Justice, confiance et attitudes vindicatives: une étude dans une entreprise du secteur métal-mécanique

*Carla Goergen*¹

Professor, University of Passo Fundo (UPF) - Passo Fundo, Brazil. e-mail: goergen@ciinet.com.br
ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-4063-4705>

*Jandir Pauli*²

Professor-Researcher of the Stricto Sensu Postgraduate Program in Administration, Meridional Faculty (IMED), Brazil. e-mail: jandir.pauli@imed.edu.br ORCID ID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-4618-6958>

*Priscila Cerutti*³

Master's Degree student in Administration, Meridional Faculty (IMED), Passo Fundo Brazil. e-mail: priscilacerutti@yahoo.com.br. ORCID ID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-1885-9668>

*Marcia Perin*⁴

Professor, Meridional Faculty (IMED) Passo Fundo, Brazil. e-mail: marcia.perin@imed.edu.br
ORCID ID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-4559-3826>

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Abstract

The working relationship between individuals and organizations has been based on the perspective of organizational justice due to the need for approaches that go beyond the formal-legal dimension that regulates such relationship. This study aimed to describe the role of employees' trust in the organization according to the relationship between organizational justice and predisposition to retaliatory attitudes. To accomplish that, a survey was carried out, with

¹ Psychology, Universidade de Passo Fundo, Brazil, Master's in Administration, Faculdade Meridional - IMED, Brazil.

² PhD in Sociology, Universidade Federal do Rio Grande do Sul - UFRGS, Brazil.

³ Psychology, Faculdade Meridional - IMED, Brazil, Master's Degree student in Administration, Faculdade Meridional - IMED, Brazil

⁴ Graduated in Law, Universidade Estadual de Ponta Grossa - UEPG, Brazil.

188 employees, chosen by convenience. Data analysis was performed using a confirmatory factor, regression, mediation and moderation in order to test the relationship between organizational justice with the other theoretical model constructs. The hypothesis of the negative effect of justice on the retaliation was confirmed (H1). The indirect mediating effect of organizational trust on justice and predisposition to employees' retaliatory attitude (H2) and the moderating effect of trust on the relationship between justice and employees' retaliatory attitude (H3) were also confirmed. The results suggested that employees' trust in the organization has a mediating and moderator effect on the relationship between justice and employees' retaliatory attitude. These findings contribute to a better understanding about the effects of justice on the relationship between employees and organizations, indicating objective managerial implications to mitigate the effects of retaliation in these organizations.

Keywords: Organizational behavior, Justice, Trust, Retaliatory attitudes.

Resumen

La relación de trabajo entre individuos y organizaciones se ha basado en la perspectiva de justicia organizacional debido a la necesidad de enfoques que van más allá de la dimensión legal formal que regula dicha relación. Este estudio tuvo como objetivo describir el papel de la confianza de los empleados en la organización de acuerdo con la relación entre la justicia organizacional y la predisposición a acciones de represalia. Para lograr eso, se llevó a cabo una encuesta, con 188 empleados, elegidos por conveniencia. El análisis de los datos se realizó utilizando un factor confirmatorio, regresión, mediación y moderación con el fin de probar la relación entre la justicia organizacional y los otros constructos del modelo teórico. Se confirmó la hipótesis del efecto negativo de la justicia sobre la represalia (H1). El efecto mediador indirecto de la confianza organizacional en la justicia y la predisposición a la actitud vengativa de los empleados (H2) y el efecto moderador de la confianza en la relación entre la justicia y la actitud vengativa de los empleados (H3) también se confirmaron. Los resultados sugieren que la confianza de los empleados en la organización tiene un efecto mediador y moderador sobre la relación entre la justicia y la actitud de represalia de los empleados. Estos hallazgos contribuyen a una mejor comprensión de los efectos de la justicia en la relación entre empleados y organizaciones, lo que indica implicaciones gerenciales objetivas para mitigar los efectos de las represalias en estas organizaciones.

Palabras clave: Comportamiento Organizacional, Justicia, Confianza, Actitudes vengativas.

Résumé

La relation de travail entre les individus et les organisations a été fondée sur une perspective de justice organisationnelle en raison de la nécessité d'approches qui vont au-delà de la dimension juridique formelle qui

régit une telle relation. Cette étude visait à décrire le rôle de la confiance des employés dans l'organisation selon la relation entre la justice organisationnelle et la prédisposition aux représailles. Dans ce but, un sondage a été mené auprès de 188 employés choisis pour leur convenance. L'analyse des données a été effectuée à l'aide d'un facteur de confirmation, de régression, de médiation et de modération afin de tester la relation entre la justice organisationnelle et les autres concepts du modèle théorique. L'hypothèse de l'effet négatif de la justice sur les représailles (H1) a été confirmée. L'effet médiateur indirect de la confiance organisationnelle dans la justice et la prédisposition à l'attitude vindicative des employés (H2) et l'effet modérateur de la confiance dans la relation entre la justice et l'attitude vindicative des employés (H3) se sont également confirmés. Les résultats suggèrent que la confiance des employés dans l'organisation a un effet médiateur et modérateur sur la relation entre la justice et les attitudes de représailles des employés. Ces constatations contribuent à une meilleure compréhension des effets de la justice sur les relations entre les employés et les organisations, en indiquant les répercussions objectives sur la gestion pour atténuer les effets des représailles sur ces organisations.

Mots-clés: Comportement organisationnel, Justice, Confiance, Attitudes vindicatives.

1. Introduction

Justice is one of the major concern for companies reflected in the organizations environment. In addition to the laws, rules and informal rules, justice is reflected in the individuals' perception facing a certain situation (Assmar and Ferreira, 2005). In the organizational field, empirical research demonstrates that justice has significant effects on employees' attitudes, perceptions and behaviors (Carr and Maxwell, 2017). Studies have shown that organizational justice is positively associated to the professional development (Monteiro and Mourão, 2016), organizational citizenship (Zehir, Akyuz, Eren, and Turhan, 2016; Lim and Loosemore, 2017), ethical behavior (Jacobs, Belschak, and Denhartog, 2014; Schminke, Arnaud, and Taylor, 2015), good corporate social responsibility practices (Rupp, Wright, Aryee, and Luo, 2015), performance at work (Wang, Lu, and Siu, 2015), engagement and leadership style (Strom, Sears, and Kelly, 2014). Also being related to performance, relationship with the supervisor and perceived usefulness (Dusterhoff, Cunningham, and Macgregor, 2014) and organizational commitment (López-Cabarcos, Machado-Lopes-Sampaio-De Pinho, and Vázquez-Rodríguez, 2015).

Moreover, studies show the negative results of injustice practices, relating construct with retaliation (Almeida, 2006), with abusive supervisory practices (Lian, Brown, Ferris, Liang, Maintaining, and Morrison, 2014) and stress at work (Omar, 2006).

The organizational justice has three basic dimensions (i) distributive justice (Adams, 1965) which analyzes the perceived fairness of the employees on what they receive from the organization, that is, the distribution of resources; (ii) procedural justice (Thibaut and Walker, 1975) that regards to methods and processes that the organization has, for example, selection processes and performance evaluation; and lastly; (iii) interactional justice (Bies and Moag, 1986) that involves employee perceptions about interpersonal treatment received by managers before and after the implementation of the evaluation process, such as promotions and salary increases (Simons and Roberson, 2003).

In the current research, organizational justice was related to trust and retaliatory attitudes, considering that trust can be defined as the expectation that a person has, group or company in an ethically justifiable behavior, morally correct decisions and actions based on ethical analysis principles from other person, group or company (Hosmer, 1995). The organizational trust has been explored in the literature and results show that formal control practices may, in some cases, affect employees' organizational trust (Weibel, Den Hartog, Gillespie, Searle, Seis, and Skinner 2016).

Concerning to the retaliatory attitudes, important to note that the fairness perception at work and attitudes that the individual may have, can take place in a different way, since it depends on each individual emotional state, reflecting a component of retaliatory attitudes, the affective. This component involves serious indignation considering an unfair context, which promotes resentment, disappointment and contempt. The second component, the conative, is related to the probability or the individual's tendency to behave consciously in a particular way, to reflect the trend of the organization itself (Mendonça and Mendes, 2005).

In this sense, analyzing the relationship between the variables justice, trust and

retaliatory attitude may prove relevant, since agreements and formal controls appear insufficient to ensure the realization of justice in organizations. In addition, the relationship between organizational justice, employees' trust in the organization and retaliatory attitudes are so far little explored in the organizational field (Maia and Bastos, 2011). Thus ethical leadership behavior engenders employees' trust in their employing organization, which in turn promotes their justice perceptions toward the organization (Xu, Loi, and Ngo, 2016).

This paper addresses the following questions: perceived fairness negatively influences the likelihood of retaliatory attitudes in organizations? Employees' trust in the organization may mediate or moderate the relationship between justice and retribution as to mitigate the predisposition of employees to practice retaliatory attitudes?

2. Reference framework

2.1. Organizational justice

Organizations are fair to their employees when they offer recognition of his or her work and performance, when employees are aware of policies and consider them fair, and when they are clearly communicated on the company's goals (Mendonça and Mendes, 2005). This perception leads employees to have lower levels of stress at work and increases the commitment to the organization (Simons and Roberson, 2003). To broaden the understanding of the theme of justice, this study uses the Rego classification (2002) which links directly the existence of three dimensions: (i) distributive justice (Adams, 1965); (ii) procedural justice (Thibaut and Walker, 1975); and (iii) interactional justice (Bies and Moag, 1986).

The first dimension, the distributive justice, is understood by the distribution of rewards that impact satisfaction and well-being, including psychological, physiological, economic and social aspects (Rego, 2002). It is the belief that the rewards received by the employee are fair enough when compared with the effort carried out to fulfill their tasks (Gomide Jr., 1999), those are subjective perceptions of justice of the outcomes (Carr

and Maxwell, 2017). Thus, the expression of more altruistic nature, of the distributive justice is a more liberated matter, permissive, related to issues of order and hidden interests, being connected to salaries, performance evaluations, promotions, distributed profits and disciplinary sanctions (Gomide Jr, 1999).

Because distributive justice refers to the fairness associated with specific outcomes such as remuneration, rewards and recognition it can represent a key psychological mechanism in the relationship between leadership and work life quality (Gillet, Bonnaud-Antignac, Mokoukolo, and Colombat, 2013). Previous studies demonstrated that entrepreneurial behavior concerning to the distributive justice is negatively related to corruption and illegal behavior, proven that it can impact on companies' economic growth (Collins, McMullen, and Reutzel, 2016).

Nevertheless, the distributive justice cannot fully explain people's reactions to the perceived injustice because it considers the sole motivator of negative reactions factors related to the distribution and allocation of rewards (Rego and Souto, 2004; Carr and Maxwell, 2017). It does not consider the social factors and the conditions in which the rewards are given, being fair or not (Rego and Souto, 2004).

In the second dimension, the procedural justice or procedures, which analyzes the factors that lead the individual to realize how fair the foregoing steps the distribution of rewards are, that is, policies of distribution (Thibaut and Walker, 1975). It is related to the rules consider inadequate by the employees at the work environment (Paiva, Irigay, Macedo, Ferreira, Mageste, and Dutra, 2018). The perception of procedural justice is related to the employee's belief that they are just the means used to determine the amount you receive as a result of their work and contribution to the company. According to the above, it is clear to the employee that there are established criteria, in order to decrease the questions and doubts as to the impartiality of character adopted by the organization, which entails the reduction of a possible employees' distrust regarding the justice in the rewards distribution, becoming a facilitator in the relationship between employee and organization.

Procedural justice encompasses structural aspects, such as having autonomy or decision-making and social aspects, as the justification to individuals affected by such decisions (Rego, 2002). Accordingly, this approach of justice involves the perception of what is just in the process by which the results and the rewards are established, and how are made the performance evaluations are made, the criteria adopted in the promotion and the rules used for setting salary increases, benefits, promotions and employee layoffs (Rego, 2002).

Procedural justice is highly important for organizations considering that in some cases, organizations have limited control (resources) over the actual outcomes employees receive, nevertheless, organizations have control over the fairness of processes can be used to determine these outcomes (Tyler, 1989). This can be achieved through fair processes such as allowing employee voice and providing enough information, what might reduce the stress levels from organizational change (Lee, Sharif, Scandura, and Kim, 2017). In a recent review Rineer, Truxillo, Bodner, Hammer, and Kraner (2017) verified the relationships between organizational justice, and cardiovascular health, the study suggested that higher levels of both procedural justice and perceived organizational support were needed in order to reduce heart rate, systolic and diastolic blood pressure.

Finally, the third dimension, interactional justice, aims to emphasize the importance of employees' interpersonal treatment quality, because only the distribution of resources and fair procedures are not sufficient to explain the organizational justice (Bies and Moag, 1986). This kind of justice is taken as an independent dimension of justice to emphasize the importance of the interpersonal treatment quality in an exchange relationship between two participants (Bies and Moag, 1986), represented by actions of sensitivity, empathy, respect, treatment with dignity (Maia and Bastos, 2011), justification and employees' rectitude (Sotomayor, 2006).

Interactional justice focuses on how each individual employee is treated by their supervisors, considering dignity, respect and sufficient explanation, besides the impact on how the employee feels regarding decision-making, considering the close relationship

between the employee and his or her immediate manager (Cropanzano, Prehar, and Chen, 2002). Studies have related interactional justice to ethical leadership and trust in the organization, pointing to the importance of building a fair workplace (Xu *et al.*, 2016).

Likewise, interactional justice refers to the social aspects in the relations between the people who decide and those affected by the decisions (Assmar and Ferreira, 2005). It concerns the fairness of the means in which the procedures are set into practice. The social elements in interactional justice can have twofold aspects: social sensitivity, which refers to the degree to which the manager adopts a dignified and respectful treatment towards people affected by the procedures and distributive decisions (interactional justice); and informational justification, reflecting the provision of information and explanation of decisions (informational justice) (Assmar and Ferreira, 2005). Hereupon all three justice aspects distributive, procedural and Interactional justice are significant mediators of high-performance, job satisfaction, affective commitment, showing that justice perception influence employees' well-being and attitudes at the workplace (Heffernan, and Dundon, 2016).

2.2 Retaliatory attitudes

Human retaliatory attitudes have been widely studied on different environments and demonstrate direct impact on interpersonal relationships, considering youngsters at the schools (Pellegrini, Bartin, and Brooks, 1999; Bradshaw, Sawyer, and O'Brennan, 2007). Exacerbating conflicts between teammates (Larrick, Timmerman, Carton, and Abrevaya, 2011) withal at the workplace (Skarlicki, and Folger, 1997; Young, 2017). Being inversely associated with belongingness and safety, but associated with a greater aggression and risk acceptability (Waasdorp, Pas, O'Brennan, and Bradshaw, 2011).

Retaliation compound a prospect of bad interpersonal treatment, located in the theoretical umbrella of deviant behavior at the workplace (Tepper and Henle, 2011). Retaliatory attitudes arise as a result of the

terms of an inappropriate trade between bosses and employees (Mendonça and Tamayo, 2008), or directly between employees (Townsend, Phillips, and Elkins, 2000). In the organizational context retaliation is used as an instrumental perspective, since employees use it as a way to seek the restoration of justice through actions that compensate for the perceived damages, which are due to unfair treatment of belief (Paiva *et al.*, 2018). Previous studies propose that this behavior can also occur when employees have strained relationships with their managers and perceive this relationship as unfair (Townsend, *et al.*, 2000; Charness and Levine, 2010).

Retaliatory actions can range from verbal abuse, jokes that ridicule the co-workers, dysfunctional communication (gossip), omissions and boycotts (Paiva and Leite, 2011). Such behaviors are influenced by the organizational personal actors' attributes, which are issued subtly or aggressively in response to perceived injustice at work, against the organization or people who belong to it (Mendonça and Tamayo, 2008). These negative behaviors aim to harm the organization or colleagues in response to perceived injustices, taking for granted the fact that individuals are reluctant to expose themselves to deviant behavior, because of the potential that these behaviors have for reproof (Skarlicki and Folger, 1997).

Retaliatory actions involving the affective component are targeting the indignation about the so considered unfair context, developing anger, disappointment and contempt, encompassing the belief that the injustice causes resentment and covers situations like disappointment and despicable (Mendonça and Tamayo, 2008). Consequently, this mode of thinking and acting have an impact on the work as a whole, greatly influencing all the work activities (Mendonça and Tamayo, 2008). However, the conative component involved in retaliatory attitudes is related to the conscious tendency to retaliate and act encompassing the positive assessment of the fees, the belief that the company deserves the reaction because it would act the same way in front of injustice situations. For employees, this is the best and most appropriate way to repair the injustice (Paiva and Leite, 2011).

The two dimensions are interrelated, since, to think of retaliation takes into account what is perceived in the environment as a whole. However, depending on the perceived injustice and the degree of discomfort that creates, the employee can effectively behave in a retaliatory and counterproductive manner (Paiva *et al.*, 2018). The analysis of organizational retaliation should consider the context in which these behaviors are issued and must therefore be based on the interaction individual versus organization (Mendonça, Pereira, Tamayo, and Paz, 2003). Therefore, retaliation is a strategy manifested in different ways, by the employee, according to individual peculiarities and work-related context (Mendonça and Tamayo, 2008).

In this perspective, when employees feel that their trust has been violated, they tend to increase the occurrence of deviant behaviors in the workplace (Litzky, Eddleston, and Kidder, 2006). At the same time, when they realize that their leaders are not trustworthy, employees make negatively efforts in order to retaliate (Robinson, 1996). In response to loss of trust caused by the leadership theft, examples of retaliatory attitudes are low production, threats and insults (Litzky *et al.*, 2006). Yet, when employees realize that they are treated unfairly, this feeling can lead to the desire for retaliation to restore or stay balanced once they feel that their trust has been violated (Edralin, 2015).

However, when employees receive an explanation about the decisions that are going to be taken and will affect them, consequently, it is more likely to retain the trust they have in their leaders, feeling less need to retaliate when such decisions are made (Litzky *et al.*, 2006). When the company builds trusting relationships with its employees, they are promoting the feeling of belonging and loyalty among the employees and helping to promote ethical conduct (Sims, 2002). As a result, when companies are reliable and demonstrate understanding of attitudes to employees, it is less likely to encounter employees' vengeful behavior (Litzky *et al.*, 2006).

2.3. Employee's trust in the organization

Trust is primordial in all aspects of social life (Yu, Mai, Tsai, and Dai, 2018). Overall, it

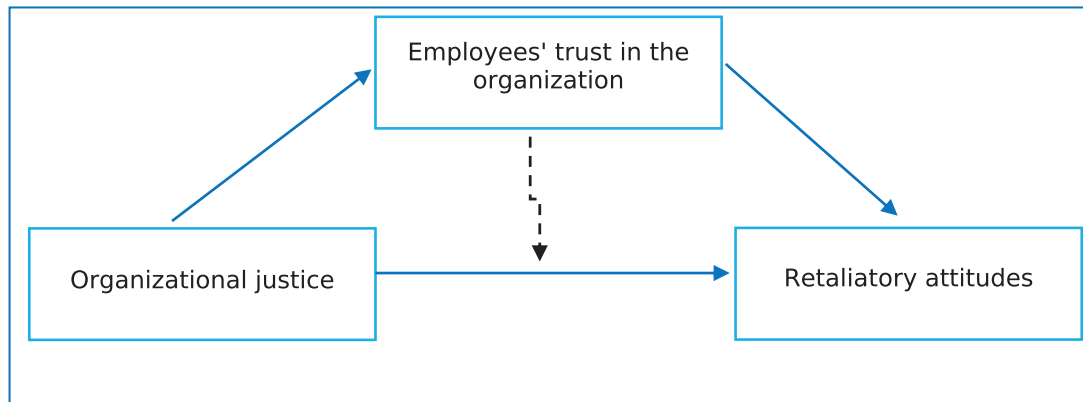
is a mechanism for reducing uncertainty and allows the creation of assumptions about future behaviors of the parties involved in a relationship (Mendonça and Tamayo, 2008). Trust indicates that the personal and professional relationship can be established and maintained for a long time, since its base is related to the values and previous experiences.

Thus, the trust can be understood as the learned and confirmed expectations by individuals and organizations with whom they live, based on the natural order, moral and social (Mendonça and Tamayo, 2008). Typically, high trust people are seen to display more honest and compliant behavior and cheat less than not trustworthy people (Rotter, 1980).

In this setting, trust in the organizational environment is seen as a psychological process in individual related processes at the organizational level (Payne, 2007). It is an expectation taken by an employee, a group or a company, notwithstanding of acts which are ethically justifiable, morally correct decisions and actions based on politically correct principles (Payne, 2007). The organizational trust is attached to employees who identify with the company and wish to establish long-term relations with it (Yu *et al.*, 2018).

Thus, organizational trust implies a perceived state of vulnerability, taking risks due to uncertainty about the motives, intentions and actions in whom it was laid up (Almeida, 2011). It is in this way that individuals create mental models in relation to the operation and the organization's mission, being able to determine whether you can establish a relationship of trust with the organization of the participation by relating it, even with organizational values, social norms and the cognitive process (Oliveira and Souza, 2014).

Employees' trust in the organization in general and, in particular at the leading positions, plays a key role in the dissemination of the workplace decisions, such as personal experiences (Capell, Tzafir, Enosh, and Dolan, 2017) and sharing knowledge ideas (Yu *et al.*, 2018). In addition, employees are more likely to admit their negative feelings when they work for leaders that they trust in (Lee, Gillespie, Mann, and Wearing, 2010). This

Figure 1. Research Theoretical Model

Source: Authors' Own elaboration.

is because, righteous leaders transmit their ethical expectations to employees when they have clear communication and hear what employees think about the organizational situations, as a decision-making, for example (Brown, Treviño, and Harrison, 2005). Thus, it facilitates the adherence to the workplace when employees perceive it as a particular company which has fair procedures (Li, Masterson, and Sprinkle, 2012).

Trust in the workplace plays a central role in the evaluation of justice, and, when employees have trust in the company, they develop a positive feeling about the political and organizational practices (Wong, Mok, and Yeung, 2012). In a recent study Schwepker (2018) with 408 sellers suggested that person-organization ethical values positively influence employees' commitment to the customer as well, and the trust in the leadership. Trusting the boss directly affects commitment and mediates the relationship between person-organization ethical values and unethical purpose.

Along similar lines, the literature shows that trust is a significant predictor of Justice (Hoy and Tarter, 2004; Li, Masterson, and Sprinkle, 2012), and the perception of organizational trust mediates the relationship between the employee and their perceptions of justice. The organizational context and conditions that assume porting and facilitate reliable actions and behavior by the employer and its agents may be critical in how employees perceive the right decisions

and their perceptions of ethical behavior (Kickul, Gundry, and Posig, 2005).

From the theoretical support on organizational justice employee trust in the organization and retaliatory attitudes, three hypotheses are proposed for this study:

Hypothesis 1: The perception of justice negatively influences the likelihood of organization retaliatory actions.

Hypothesis 2: Employees' trust in the organization has a positive mediating effect between the perception of justice and likelihood of organizational retaliatory actions.

Hypothesis 3: Employees' trust in the organization has a moderating effect on the relationship between perceived organizational justice and the probability to practice retaliatory attitudes.

3. Methodological procedure

This study aimed to describe the role of employees' trust in the company according to the relationship between organizational justice and predisposition to retaliatory attitudes. This research theoretical model predicted organizational justice as an independent variable, predisposition to retaliatory attitudes as dependent variables, and workers' trust in the organization as a mediating and moderating variable of this relationship, according to the theoretical

model (Figure 1). The analysis were performed in order to confirm that the dependent variables are influenced by the independent variable, and if the dimensions of justice are related to the affective and conative components of the retaliatory attitudes.

In order to achieve the general objective, a quantitative-descriptive research was carried out, since a large number of cases were approached from the perspective of a generalization of the results for all the chosen public (Hair, Black, Babin, Anderson, and Tatham, 2006). The quantitative-descriptive research is adequate for this type of situation because it allows describing a phenomenon, making possible to draw future conclusions on the data collected from planned and structured research instruments (Hair *et al.*, 2006).

The technique used can be classified as a survey, suitable for quantitative-descriptive research (Malhotra, 2012). The survey determines the occurrence and classification of characteristics and opinions of populations and people, obtaining the characteristics and opinions of small and presumably representative samples of these populations (Kerlinger, 1979). This is a cross-sectional survey and a Likert type scale ranging from 1 to 7 points was applied, considering 1=strongly disagree and 7=strongly agree. Data were collected with an online questionnaire between May and June 2018.

The non-probabilistic sample was used, being chosen for convenience and subjective criteria, such as: personal experience, accessibility and knowledge in the area (Malhotra, 2012). The definition of the population sample followed the normalization criteria (Hair *et al.*, 2006). Data collection utilized printed questionnaires that were applied to company's employees; each participant answered the questionnaire in a specific company's meeting room. Each participant took approximately 10 minutes to complete the questionnaire. The employees were summoned according to availability during business hours, forming groups of 10 to 15 people.

For the present research, the questionnaire used was based on three validated scales:

(i) Organizational Justice Perception Scale - EPJIS (Rego, 2002), constituted of 17 items; (ii) Trust Scale - ECEO (Oliveira and Tamayo, 2004) which has 31 items; and (iii) Organizational Retaliation Scale - MARO (Mendonça and Tamayo, 2003) comprising 12 items. In addition to the three scales, participants answered nine sociodemographic questions. For the characterization of employees were included (gender, age, study level, time in business, position and average salary); the questionnaire had 69 items at total.

At the end of the data collection the answers in the printed questionnaire were transformed into an Excel spreadsheet, and later exported to the SPSS® (Statistical Package for Social Sciences), to be debugged and later analyzed according to the assumptions of the study. To verify the reliability of the instruments, that is, the degree of internal consistency between the indicators of a factor, Cronbach's alpha was applied.

Descriptive statistics, regression analysis and moderation were applied for the analysis. For the moderation analysis, scales were standardized using the Zscore technique to reduce the effects of multicollinearity (Field, 2013). The analysis of moderation followed the proposition of Aiken and West (1991), allowing the creation of a graph of combinatorial estimates between high and low values of the independent variable Organizational Justice and the mediator and moderator variable Employees' trust on the Organization on the dependent variable retaliatory attitudes. For the mediation analysis, the indirect macro of Preacher and Hayes (2004) was employed and for moderation analysis, the SPSS macro was applied, and the regression coefficients were measured using the Johnson-Neyman technique (Hayes, 2013). To verify the accuracy of the regression model, we used the coefficient of determination (R^2) and coefficient of variation Beta (β).

The research was conducted in a multinational company chosen by convenience and subjective criteria, such as facility of access and geographical proximity (Malhotra, 2012). Data was collected in a multinational company located in the north region of Rio Grande do Sul State, Brazil, with 188 respondents. The company is a manufacturing in the metal-mechanic sector

Table 1. Sociodemographic data of the employees of this research

Variable	Group	Frequency	%
Period of employment	1 to 5 years	108	66,26
	6 to 10 years	33	20,25
	More than 10 years	22	13,49
Age	18 to 25 years old	18	11,05
	26 a 40 years old	97	59,5
	More than 40 years old	48	29,45
Gender	Male	143	87,7
	Female	20	12,3
Education level	Elementary School	29	17,79
	High school	79	48,46
	Undergraduate	43	26,38
	Graduate Degree	12	7,37
Income(R\$)	Until 1.449,99	29	17,79
	From 1450,00 to 2.899,00	110	67,49
	More than 2.900,00	24	14,72

Source: Authors' Own elaboration.

and uses low-skilled labor. The company manufactures agricultural machinery in a semi-automated production system employing 240 employees. Therefore, the sample of this research was 78.33% of the company's total population.

4. Results discussion

Before the hypothesis test, a data clearance was carried out on the dataset. Firstly, were detected and removed four missing cases (missing values) once they did not respond more than 10% of the questions that were part of the questions of the instruments, also 21 outliers were excluded, configured as cases that presented extreme values, far away from the others, because they have more than 3 average deviations in at least one of the items of the scales. Then, confirmation of normality of the data was performed using the obtained test KS (Kolmogorov-Smirnov). Thus, 25 cases were excluded from the analysis, resulting in a final sample of 163 cases. It is also important to note that four items of trust dimension as the rules regarding the dismissal of employees were reversals and therefore were recoded (items 1, 2, 4 and 6).

To test the internal reliability of the

scales Cronbach's alpha (α) was used, which requires the minimum value of 0.7 for each instrument (Hair *et al.*, 2006). Organizational Justice Scale obtained $\alpha = 0.933$, employees' trust in organization $\alpha = 0.917$ and Retaliation $\alpha = 0.911$.

The descriptive analysis of frequencies showed that the majority of employees are male ($n = 143$, 87.73%) with a mean age of 30 years. Of the total sample, 48.46% ($n = 79$) have high school, holding positions without managerial function having worked in the company between 08 months and 35 years, with a monthly income up to R\$ 2899.00 (Table 1).

After the data cleansing we passed to the analysis of the H1, which tested the negative influence of perceived organizational justice in the predisposition of the employees' practice of retaliatory actions in the organization. The results showed that despite the low explanatory power of the model ($R^2 = .101$), there is a highly significant effect ($p = .000$) and negative ($\beta = -.328$) justice of retaliation (Table 2). This result allows us to infer that the more employees perceive justice in procedures, interactions and redistribution, the less chances to practice retaliatory attitudes, both conative, as affective.

Table 2. Influence of justice on the predisposition of the practice of retaliation

	B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig. (p)
Dependent Variable: Organizational retaliation					
(Constant)	0.042	0.053		0.799	0.425
Organizational justice	-0.330	0.080	-0.328	-4,147	0.000

Source: Authors' Own elaboration.

The confirmation of H1 shows that the dimensions of justice and retaliation are strongly related, suggesting the confirmation of the argument of Paiva *et al.* (2018) that the perceived injustice and the degree of discomfort contribute to the employee behaving retaliatory, adopting counterproductive strategies. Organizational Justice is also an important variable to understand the context in which behaviors occur, suggesting new strategies for analyzing the individual versus organizational interaction (Mendonça *et al.*, 2003). The confirmation of the hypothesis also suggests that the indignation with the context of the work, perceived as unfair, provokes resentment and disappointment on the part of the worker, focusing on the formation of a retaliatory attitude towards the organization (Mendonça and Tamayo, 2008). In a similar way, the study is in line with Edralin's (2015) conclusions that showed the influence of unfair treatment on the desire for retaliation, seen as a strategy to balance the employees' relationship with the company in the face of breach of trust.

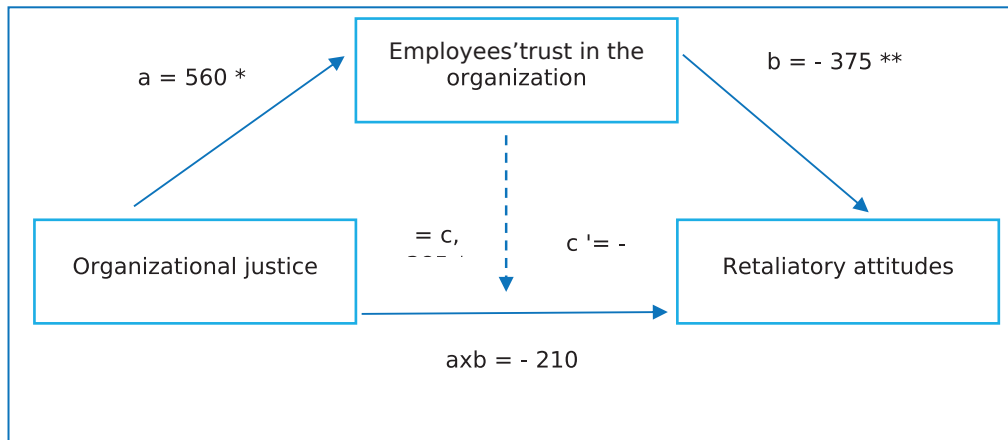
Importantly, for purposes of this study, confirming the H1 which serves to support the general proposition of the model, which suggests the mediator and moderator character of trust in the relationship between organizational justice and predisposition to retaliatory actions. Based on this, we tested H2. The hypothesis testing was performed using the macro Indirect (Preacher and Hayes (2004), following the procedures described by Zhao, Lynch, and Chen (2010) for measurement analysis using organizational justice, trust and retaliatory actions. The results showed the structural relationships of the variables. As for the estimation of the relationship between the model variables, the results indicated that the proposed theoretical model is suitable, taking account of the objectives of the study.

Thus, it defined justice as an independent variable, retaliatory action (retaliation) as the dependent variable, and trust as a mediating variable. The effect of the independent variable on the mediator variable was positive and significant ($a = 560$, $t = 13.725$; $p = 0.000$); trust had a negative effect on retaliation ($b = -375$; $t = -2.295$, $p = 0.023$); although the direct effect of justice in retaliation, was not significant ($c' = -175$; $t = -1.334$; $p = 0,180$). The indirect effect was significant and negative ($axb = -210$), since the 95% trust interval does not include the zero value (-0.417 to -0.005), which could make no effect (Figure 2). From the mediation analysis, it was found that the effect of justice on retaliation is mediated by trust, thus confirming the H2.

The confirmation of H2 shows the attenuating effect of trust in the mediation between the perception of injustice and predisposition to retaliatory attitudes. Thus, the greater the trust, lower is the probability of retaliation by the employees. This conclusion confirms the idea that when employees feel that their trust has been violated, they tend to increase the occurrence of deviant behavior in the workplace (Litzky *et al.*, 2006). It is concluded that higher levels of trust induce less retaliatory behavior, that is, while perceiving trust, employees make efforts not to retaliate against the company they work in (Robinson, 1996).

Finally, the H3 was conducted to demonstrate the moderating effect of trust on the relationship between perceived organizational justice and the willingness to practice retaliatory attitudes. For this, we used a macro PROCESS model developed by Hayes (2013), in which procedure does not require the selection of arbitrary conditional values of the moderator to investigate the significance of the indirect effect. Still, this model provides the significance values of the

Figure 2. Effect of justice retaliation, mediated by trust

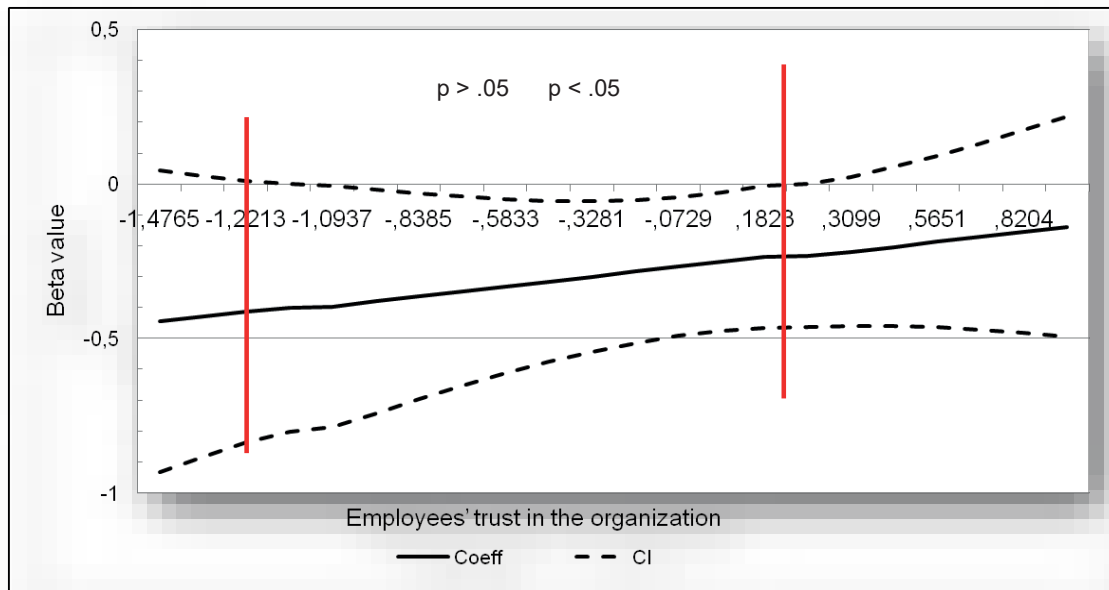


Source: Authors' own elaboration.

p < 0.00, ** p < 0.02.

*

Figure 3. Moderator effect of employees' trust in the organization on the relationship between organizational justice and retaliatory attitudes



Source: Authors' own elaboration.

indirect effect for use on the significance of the region technique. The procedure proposed by Hayes (2013) also provides data to generating moderation function graph which can assist in the visualization of the interaction effects.

In this study, Figure 3 explores the indirect effect of the dependent variable

(retaliatory attitudes) on the independent variable (organizational justice) through the mediator (organizational trust). The significance level (between $\beta = -1.2213$ and $\beta = 0.2050$) confirms that there is a moderating effect of employee's trust on the relationship between organizational justice perception and retaliatory actions.

The confirmation of H1 reinforces the findings that, when employees assessed their organization as fair, they have fewer negative behaviors such as dissatisfaction, worse individual and / or organizational performance, turnover, absenteeism and lower levels of proactive behavior (Rego, 2002). Furthermore, it confirms the conclusion that factors associated with justice, such as salaries, promotions, opportunities, rewards and punishments, are responsible for workers' attitude towards retaliation. These behavioral predispositions emerge in response to the injustice and gain strength with the positive judgment and retaliation perception.

The more distribution, the more promotions, salaries, opportunities, and other factors of distributive justice, less employees' retaliatory attitude, they will feel less disappointed, angry and / or work through vandalism, for example (Tyler, 1989). Accordingly, the fact that organizations and their managers are aware to the matter that the perception of fairness affects the retaliation is an important tool for improving performance and working conditions, since the study revealed that perceived fairness negatively influences the likelihood of retaliatory attitude against the organization.

In this context, it is argued that trust mediates the effect of justice on retaliation, since the trust is related to the organizational concepts of justice (Brown *et al.*, 2005; Payne, 2007; Yu *et al.*, 2018); the importance of implementing fair procedures might affect organizational outcomes once it demonstrates that employees are valued (Rineer *et al.*, 2017). It is a major factor on the reduction of retaliatory attitude caused by the feeling of injustice. Therefore, according to this research findings, it emphasizes the importance of trust in organizations as an important element for justice relationship and retaliatory actions.

The mediating and moderating effect of the trust, found in this study, reinforces the predictive potential of trust in organizational justice, as already indicated in other studies (Hoy and Tarter 2004; Li *et al.*, 2012). In the same direction, the findings of this study allow a dialogue with the conclusions of Wong *et al.* (2012) on the strategic centrality of trust to avoid the perception of injustice by the

employees, contributing to the development of a positive feeling towards the policies and practices. The conclusions also allow us to dialogue with Schwepker's (2018) findings that trust mediates the relationship between ethical values of person-organization and unethical intent.

These findings show that the existence of trust between the employee and organization is a key driver, since the fact that when employees perceive that the treatment received from the organization is fair and satisfactory, the feeling of trust (in this company) tend to increase as well as their deliveries (Almeida, 2011). Inasmuch as, when trust is high relationships are intensified and companies tend to achieve better results (Almeida, 2011). Still, supporting the research Chhetri (2014) that investigated the link between organizational justice, employees' and organizational citizenship behaviors. This research explains that the interdependence among employees only happens when there is trust between each other.

5. Final considerations

This study aimed to demonstrate the role of employees' trust in the organization on the relationship between organizational justice and predisposition to retaliatory attitudes. For this, we had a threefold purpose; we tested and confirmed the three hypothesis investigated, namely: the negative effect of justice on retaliation (H1); the indirect mediating effect of trust in the organization on justice and employees' retaliatory predisposition attitude (H2), and the moderating effect of trust on the relationship between justice and retaliatory attitudes (H3).

The three hypotheses of the study were confirmed, that is, the results suggest a highly significant and negative influence of justice on retaliation (H1); the effect of justice on retaliation is mediated by trust (H2), and there is a moderating effect of employee's trust in the relationship between perceived justice and retaliatory attitudes (H3). Therefore, the model tested in this study is useful to the theory, since it comprises the variables that lead the employee to demonstrate negative behaviors in the

workplace, and may subsidize intervention plans aimed at the establishment of criteria guided the organizational justice.

This model showed high levels of explanation, moreover convergent and discriminant validity, as well as high reliability of the scales used. Apart from that, this study allowed us to confirm that the effect of organizational justice on retaliatory attitudes is mediated and moderated by trust. This finding enables us to infer that employees' trust in the organization, to which he belongs, is an indispensable condition for justice relationship and retaliatory attitudes, showing that a trustworthy relationship between the employee and the organization is primordial.

The great contribution of the present study is in fact to demonstrate that the justice perception has gained an increasing relevance in the organizational context, especially due to the consequences that these have for the organization itself, including, affective and conative retaliatory attitudes. Specifically, regarding the managerial implications, the results showed that the more organizations present clear and defined formal justice procedures, assertive communication, transparency and accuracy of information, the less these organizations will have conative employees' retaliatory attitude, less employees will act in a similar way, or will have a conscious tendency to contribute to the organizational retaliation.

Also, from the results of this investigation, the leadership is suggested to promote actions in order to increase the employees' trust in the company. It is well known that organizations worry about treating employees with ethics, equality, respect, making clear the rights and duties of each individual. Consequently, the work environment becomes pleasant; the employee feels safer and motivated what might result in a decreasing staff turnover and a consolidated organizational intellectual capital.

As the search limitations and suggestions for future studies, we suggest the study to be held on other contexts. Moreover, considering that the topics covered in this research have connection with other organizational variables, such as absenteeism, turnover,

commitment, welfare, performance evaluation, we can further explore this topic and mainly discuss other hypotheses related to the affective retaliation and trust, given its relevance to researchers from the administration area.

Finally, it is emphasized that this study had the intention to start a diagnosis on the relationship between organizational justice, trust and retaliatory attitudes in organizations. Important to punctuate that the association between these variables requires continuous deepening and may also evaluate this model from qualitative approaches. As suggested by Collis and Hussey (2005) it is appropriate to elaborate other studies, possibly qualitative approaches or methodological triangulation, may be used various observation techniques, noting the use of structured, unstructured and in depth techniques.

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