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Doctoral Dissertation

Three Perspectives on Organizational Justice within Care Centers for People with Intellectual Disability: A Study about the Partnership between Professionals and Families

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endless "after lunch breaks" in the magic forest, our unique language "Dengspanol", sharing secrets and laughter, and ups and downs (weight pun intended).

Thank you, *David*, for bearing with me particularly during the final phases of my PhD project. I know I was not always the easiest to be around, and I am so grateful you were there to motivate me and to believe in me when I was on the verge of giving up. Je t'aime.

Thank you, *Mama* for everything. Without you, all of this would not have been possible, and I am eternally grateful for your unconditional love and support every step of the way.

Thank you *Opa Leo* for always being interested in what I am doing. You are greatly missed but I thought it would be important to mention that now after all those years you can be proud that I am officially "Frau Doktor".

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1   INTRODUCTION

"All virtue is summed up in dealing justly" - *Aristotle*

1.1 General Introduction

In the recent decades, organizations have come to understand that growing successfully means to overcome the gap between having concern for business on the one hand and concern for human beings, on the other (Barley & Kunda, 1992). This balance is the key ingredient that will lead to sustainable development over time. When dealing with people, we often find ourselves confronted with situations that involve justice in some way, as many circumstances require interpretation and thus justification to be morally acceptable according to a certain set of ethical standards (Folger & Cropanzano, 2001). That our moral sentiments often lead us through our lives will then be apparent at the latest, when we ponder on reasons to guide our behavior every single day, particularly within our workplace. These reasons, or justifications, give us some sort of orientation considering how to think, work, act, and when and why to cocreate with other people.

Indeed, fairness as a moral sentiment is a fundamental element of today's organizations and organizational research (Konovsky, 2000). The term *Organizational Justice* was defined by Greenberg (1990) to portray to what degree organizations treat their employees in a just, fair, and ethical manner. Whether the concern is a task assignment, an organizational decision, an allocation of rewards, or any other type of social exchange, matters of fairness are bound to arise in any organization.

Regarding the justice literature, we can find multiple sources of the elements of fairness and justice within different forms of organizations that include actors, such as managers, supervisors, employees. Today, the research attention has been widened as the interest has been extended to another group of relevant stakeholders: customers and guests of the organization. This advance has certainly been proven to be useful to the commonly known service industries where customers play a central role in the performance and financial sustainability of the organization. However, in modern societies, other more socially oriented

industries, such as health care institutions, have felt the urge to redesign their services to involve service users in the organizational daily life and decision-making (e.g., Buchanan *et al.*, 2005). In addition, Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) have an increasing role as part of the service industry to support groups at risk of exclusion, such as people with intellectual disability (PID). Their challenge – to improve the life of PID – does not display typical objectives of service industries, as their most important objective is related to the usefulness of their organization /the benefit of their service to the customer, rather than maximizing their outcomes/profits or efficiency aspects (Modell, 2005). Consequently, the study of justice within NGO services oriented to groups at risk of exclusion is therefore an even greater challenge to face, as the definition of the customer per se and their ability to evaluate the service is a far more intangible concept than in other service industries. The service user/the customer will often have limited resources and verbal abilities (Rapley, Ridgway & Beer, 1998) and thus often relies on a proxy as external informant such as families or a support worker who will take over the communication for them (Alves-Nogueira, Silva, McConachie & Carona, 2020; Cummins, 2002; Petry & Maes, 2006; Zalmstra *et al.*, 2021)

There are a few studies that focused on how employees react to customer's justice behavior and vice versa, despite its potential importance in understanding the relationships between employees and customers. In this doctoral dissertation, the focus will lay on interpersonal justice. We define interpersonal justice as the "degree to which people are treated with politeness, dignity, and respect by authorities or third parties involved in executing procedures or determine outcomes" (Colquitt, 2001, p. 427). Although there are several types of justice, we want to focus the research project on this particular dimension, because this element of justice is applicable to a wide range of customer service roles and therefore ideally applicable to the customer service within care centers for PID, given that the personal interaction is of great importance for the outcome of certain service goals. To be more specific,

the interpersonal treatment between families and employees within centers for PID (professionals) is ubiquitous to establish a healthy relationship that will lead to an intergroup contact that allows for reaching the service goal, which is to improve the quality of life (QoL) of the service user. We believe that the personal interaction between families and service workers is particularly relevant in centers for individuals with intellectual disability because families, as the proxy, will contribute to the life of their loved ones and hence will play an active role in improving the QoL of their relative.

The present doctoral dissertation aims to deepen the understanding of interpersonal justice between professionals and families within centers for PID. Within the centers, we find two fundamental parties that form a partnership that aims to improve the QoL of the PID: a) the professionals who deliver services oriented to individuals with intellectual disability; and b) the proxy as the primary caretaker (families/ legal guardians).

We based our approach on the assumption that to reach the superior goal of the centers – to improve the QoL of the service users – professionals and families need to collaborate, as this will be a vital prerequisite for the success of their work (Carter *et al*., 2013). Like this, the improvement of QoL becomes the main quality indicator of the service, although others are also relevant (e.g., satisfaction, trust). In the present dissertation we shift the perspective to the relationship between professionals and families to see if the improvement of their collaboration will not only be beneficial to their partnership per se but might additionally hold the potential to help reach the outcome goals of the service. This way, the study does not only enrich the service literature in general, but also aims to contribute to the understanding of collaboration (and its effects) between professionals and families in organizations for individuals with intellectual disability.

We address our goal by implementing a set of three empirical studies. Through a variety of methodological designs and different samples of professionals and family members, we

hope to get an insight into the justice relationship between professionals and families and analyze which effects this relationship has on relevant outcome variables. More specifically, with each of the research studies we aim to cover one of three perspectives of the study of interpersonal justice between the two parties (families and professionals): a) mutual justice from the perspective of both families and professionals; b) justice-trust spiral over time from the professionals' perspective; and c) within-person justice from the families' perspective. Like this, we are aiming for a holistic approach to study organizational justice in centers for PID. For a visual representation of the approach please refer to Figure 1.
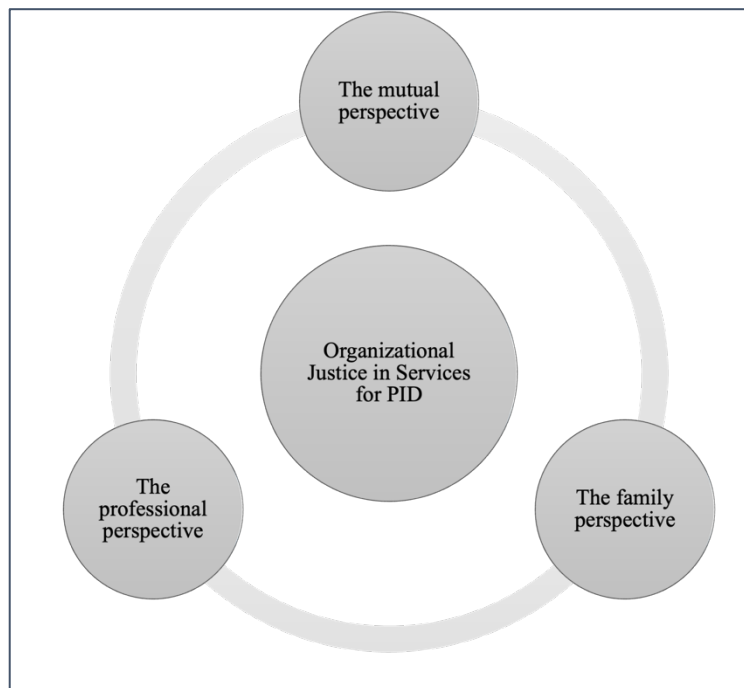
Figure 1. Uniting three Perspectives: A Holistic Approach to Organizational Justice in Service Centers for People with Intellectual Disability

The first research study examines the links from mutual interpersonal justice (interpersonal treatment within a relationship between two or more actors or groups that is characterized by both the level of interpersonal justice and the agreement between the parties simultaneously), in the partnership between professionals and families, to a) satisfaction with

the service provided, b) employee performance directed to individuals with intellectual disability, and c) to the QoL as a quality indicator of the service and support unit. The mutual perspective allows us to get a holistic view of interpersonal justice between the two groups.

The second study we conduct will shift the perspective to the viewpoint of professionals, more specifically on how justice that professionals receive from families is interrelated with trust in families over time. A spiral is tested where justice enhances trust and trust, in turn, simultaneously stimulates justice. Trust in families has been proven a pivotal factor for the successful collaboration between professionals and families, therefore the research context sets an optimal ground to study these dynamics.

The third study will focus on the perspective of families, on how professionals' justice treatment can serve as an indicator of service performance oriented towards QoL. Here we aim to address a challenge that is often encountered by families in services of PID: a lack of information scarcity that families encounter when trying to evaluate whether the quality of the service is adequate. Specifically, we are trying to see whether it is possible that families utilize interpersonal justice as a heuristic to draw conclusions of organizational performance oriented to QoL improvement in the services for individuals with intellectual disability.

In the next sections we will describe organizational justice, give a recap on the state of art of justice research and its meaning for organizations, followed by an introduction into how justice can be used in service organizations to improve the support service. Next, we will describe the research designs used in the three studies that we have conducted. Finally, we will come to a general discussion in which we will debate the different contributions and implications that our studies have.

1.2 Organizational Justice

Almost three decades ago, Greenberg (1993) mentioned that the field of organizational justice was in a state of intellectual adolescence marked by "intellectual awkwardness and

immaturity" (p. 135). Today, we can find multiple literature reviews, meta-analyses, and empirical studies that cover several aspects of justice research (e.g., Bobocel, 2021; Cohen-Charash & Spector, 2001; Colquitt, 2012; Colquitt *et al*., 2013; Cropanzano, Goldman & Benson, 2005; Greenberg, 2002; Martínez-Tur; Molina & Maniezki, 2021). Nevertheless, with changing societies and work environments, organizational justice and its implications for science and practice is a field with more relevance than ever, with many more research niches yet to discover.

Generally speaking, *justice*, which was often painted as the primary virtue of social institutions (Rawls, 1971), was originally an established problem of discussion by ancient philosophers who were discussing morality and ethics (see Colquitt, 2001) by questioning the right and wrong of structures and behaviors (Gosh, Rai & Sinha, 2014). Later it was rather used to critically look at society by establishing justice as a "normative ideal" (Colquitt, Greenberg & Zapata-Phelan, p. 4) from which rules were derived that would position individual behavior around a standard.

That justice is a relevant aspect of organizational life became clear in the late 1970s and took off rapidly from the 1980s on (Byrne & Cropanzano, 2001). Today, *organizational justice* is commonly understood as the employee's perception of whether an element or an agent of the organizational environment is fair, according to a certain rule or standard (Cropanzano, Rupp, Mohler, & Schminke, 2001), which includes a personal evaluation of the ethical and moral standing of managerial conduct (Cropanzano, Bowen, & Gilliland, 2007).

During the last six decades, there has been ongoing and in-depth research on organizational justice. Starting with the definition of justice and its types or dimensions, researchers first looked into individual effects of the dimensions before taking a more holistic approach by studying integrative and overall justice and its effects on individuals and behaviors. Then, scholars investigated ways of measurements and applications in various

contexts (management, policy making, education, healthcare etc.) mostly regarding justice as antecedent that influences several different outcomes. It was soon recognized that individuals usually evaluate organizational justice in reference to specific situations or justice events (e.g., performance appraisal, assessment process, promotion) by referring to a particular party that they hold responsible for the situation that occurred (Cropanzano *et al*., 2001). Hence, the understanding grew that any given party can be hold accountable for showing different justice behavior whether in processes, when outcomes are allocated or personally.

Recently, justice was conceptualized as dependent variable and researchers studied potential antecedents of justice (see Brockner *et al*., 2015; Colquitt *et al*. 2005) before starting to slowly shift over to consider dynamics in the justice concept over time. Scholars have often assembled reviews to establish an order to this very versatile topic (see Bobocel, 2021; Colquitt, Greenberg, & Zapata-Phelan, 2005; Coyle-Shapiro & Dhensa, 2011; Cropanzano, Byrne, Bobocel, & Rupp, 2001; Greenberg, 1990; Martínez-Tur, Molina & Maniezki, 2021), while at the same time focusing on aspects to be studied more thoroughly. That organizational justice is a construct that might be of relevance, way beyond its obvious use, was somewhat clear right from the start. Yet, scholars to this day are amazed about the various application and thus potential that the concept has to improve organizational life and with this human flourishing. A recent literature review by Bobocel (2021) has called upon researchers to expand their horizon when it comes to justice research by considering interconnecting justice research with other I/O psychology domains (e.g., affect, biases, diversity/inclusion and motivation) while maintaining the trend to study justice in a dynamic and dyadic manner. With our research we want to contribute to modern justice research by serving this demand and study organizational justice in an environment that supports groups at risk of exclusion and study justice in dynamic and dyadic relationships.

1.3   About the Different Dimensions of Organizational Justice

Academics and practitioners to this day seem to struggle with the complexity of the multidimensional construct. Colquitt and colleagues (2005) concluded that from the 1950s to the early 2000s there were 4 main "waves" that sculpted the field of organizational justice research: a) the distributive wave – primarily focusing on resource allocation; b) the procedural wave - focusing on fairness within methods and processes; c) the interactional wave – shifting the focus on people and their fairness behavior; and d) the integrative wave - joining the previous waves and examining its effects on employees (Bobocel, 2021). In this chapter, we want to first dive into the individual justice dimensions that were accompanying each wave, briefly describe their history and rise, and finally come to discuss their effects on people and their behavior in contemporary justice research.

The oldest dimension (i.e., distributive justice) was originally studied when looking at relative deprivation among members of the US military during the second world war (Stouffer, Suchman, DeVinney, Starr, & Williams, 1949). Distributive justice focuses on the fairness of outcomes, more specifically on rules and norms that are used to determine outcome allocation such as the outcome of performance appraisals, pay, layoff and hiring processes. Nevertheless, justice scholars often reference the economist John Stacey Adams –the father of equity theory (1965) – as the first person to explain the motives behind this particular justice dimension and to initiate the research of the justice dimension in organizational context (Colquitt, Greenberg, & Zapata-Phelan, 2005; Greenberg, 1987). According to his theory, people would compare the effort that they put into their interaction with others – of the same social hierarchy level – with the benefits they will get out of this interaction in return. Furthermore, in a somewhat mathematical way, they would mentally compare their ratio of input (e.g. effort put into an assessment center) vs. output (e.g. getting a particular position/ a raise/ promotion) with the ratio of their peers and come to a either positive or negative result depending on whether their

result will look better or worse compared to others. If the evaluation of fairness in terms of outcomes matched the one of their peers, they would feel a sense of equity. One can assume that this way of judgement – although seemingly mathematical, and hence observable – is indeed subjective, which was later confirmed by scholars (see Colquitt, 2001). The rule of equity is usually viewed as the most appropriate allocation norm, nevertheless, further research also supported other ways of allocation rules that include needs, equality (Leventhal, 1976), and other personal motives (Deutsch, 1975). Distributive justice usually applies to a specific allocation norm depending on the specific decision-making context. In this sense, Deutsch's (1975) theory of distribution principles is of essential importance. According to Deutsch, there are other allocation norms besides equity, such as equality (equal outcomes across receivers), and need (outcomes reflect the relative need of receivers) (Leventhal, 1976). Later, other principles were additionally considered such as justified self-interest and entitlement (Lerner, 1977). Distributive justice has been linked to turnover intentions and job satisfaction, (Folger & Konovsky, 1989; Haar & Spell, 2009), as well as to work related stress (Sert *et al*., 2014), showing that distributive justice or the lack thereof might be crucial to ensure employee welbeing and thus to ensure organizational functioning.

The second dimension of organizational justice is procedural justice (Leventhal, 1980). Research on this dimension emerged first in the 1970s by Thribaut and Walker (1975) and was later followed by Leventhal (1980). It was originally studied within the context of legal dispute resolution but started growing recognition among social psychologists to study processes that lead to resource allocation (Bobocel & Gosse, 2015). Procedural justice refers to people's perception of fairness of the formal and structural processes that are used to determine the outcome (Thibaut & Walker, 1975). In order for a process to be procedurally fair, the decision-making embedded in the process has to satisfy the following aspects (Leventhal, 1980): a) consistence – identical procedures are used for everybody and always; b) bias-free – without

any vested interest by a third party; c) accuracy – decisions are based on adequate information and are not arbitrary; d) ethically sound – fulfill certain standards of ethics or morality; and e) inclusivity – supervisors explore and listen the opinions of all subordinates affected by decision. Over the years, procedural justice has been found to be generally linked to employee satisfaction and organizational commitment (Lambert *et al.*, 2020) as well as to employee thriving (Kim & Beehr, 2020) Scholars noted that although an outcome may be perceived as favorable, the individual might feel dissatisfied when the process that led to the favorable outcome is viewed as unfair. Likewise, even negative outcomes are much more accepted when the process was perceived as fair (Lind & Tyler, 1988).

Later, scholars identified two more dimensions of organizational justice: informational and interpersonal justice (Colquitt, 2001). Originally, research was ambivalent about organizational justice being a three (distributive, procedural, interactional) or four-dimensional construct. However, most scholars have now come to the consensus to divide interactional justice into two separate constructs, as of their logical distinction and confirmed differing effects (see Greenberg, 1993; Colquitt, 2001; Colquitt & Shaw, 2005). Really, Greenberg (1993) maintained that informational justice and interpersonal justice ought to be differentiated as the former one displays principles of honesty and truthfulness whereas the latter one reflects standards of respect and propriety. Informational justice relies on explanations or justifications that are supplied during procedural implementation or outcome allocation (Bies & Moag, 1986; Greenberg, 1993). Further, it mirrors the degree to which the explanations of processes are guided by rules of honesty and justification. Interpersonal justice was described by Colquitt (2001) as the "degree to which people are treated with politeness, dignity, and respect by authorities or third parties involved in executing procedures or determine outcomes" (Colquitt, 2001, p. 427). As previously mentioned, at the current state of art, researchers concluded that evidence would support the distinctiveness of all four dimensions of justice (see Colquitt &

Shaw, 2005), with each of the dimensions having effects on various outcome variables. For example, distributive justice and procedural justice have been found highly correlated to outcome satisfaction, job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and trust (Colquitt *et al.*, 2001). Additionally, interpersonal justice was found positively related to organizational turnover (Leineweber, Peristera, Bernhard-Oettel, & Eib, 2020), organizational citizenship behavior (Chen & Jin, 2014) and supervisor satisfaction (Sudin, 2011). Both interpersonal and informational justice have found to effect daily job satisfaction (Loi, Yang & Diefendorff, 2009). Furthermore, researchers found out that employees accepted negative supervisor feedback much more when both interpersonal and informational justice were perceived (see Leung, Su, & Morris, 2001). A study by Wenzel (2006) showed that employees would increase their compliance to authority when interpersonal and informational justice were present during the request, and another study by Kernan & Hanges (2002) showed that employees who went through a reorganization would have higher trust in management if both justice dimensions were highly present.

All in all, although most primary research focused on distributive and procedural justice (O'Connor & Crowley-Henry, 2019; Sarti, 2019; Kaltiainen, Lipponen, & Petrou 2018), the two last dimensions of organizational justice (interpersonal and informational) received more and more attention (Agarwal, 2014; Ghosh, Rai & Sinha, 2014; Kim & Park, 2017; Moliner Martinez-Tur, Ramos, Peiró & Cropanzano, 2008) as the emotional side, and with this also the personal component within justice events, was increasingly considered.

1.4   Why People Care About Fairness

After looking at the numerous amounts of research focused on organizational justice, scholars can now confidently state that people wish to be treated fairly in every area of their life (Ambrose, 2002). This tendency is clearly noticeable in infants who feel the urge to fight for their position or rank in a family. Every parent with more than one child will realize this

very fascinating fact once they have given out treats for the first time and one child complaints about not having enough or at least the equal amount as their sibling. In fact, studies that performed experiments, which investigated infants' reactions to equal and unequal distributions, supported the assumption that infants in the second year of life already have developed a sense of fairness that relates to context sensitive expectations (Geraci & Surian, 2011; Sloane, Baillargeon & Premack, 2012) and further that even very young children will use fairness to guide their social decision making (Lucca, Pospisil & Sommerville, 2018). Neuroscientific research confirmed this further by showing that people's concern with justice is rather part of our nature, deeply rooted into the human brain than a conscious choice we make (Sanfey *et al.*, 2003).

But why do people care about fairness in the first place? When we investigate the motivation that goes into why people are concerned with fairness, scholars generally dive into two different categories which have either a content or a process focus (see Campbell & Pritchard, 1976). Content theories are somewhat systematic by trying to identify the variables that might cause a certain motivation (such as incentives, rewards, basic needs, etc.), while process theories aim to provide an overview and explanation of cognitive steps that will guide any sort of motivation or motivated behavior (Greenberg, 1987; Stecher & Rosse, 2007). Further, scholars often differentiate between two primary theoretical approaches: Self-Interest vs. Group Value Model theories (Conlon, 1993; Tyler, 1987; Lind & Tyler, 1988). These theories emerged from social psychology to understand why people value justice. Self-interest theories generally assume that employees are concerned about justice to obtain desired outcomes or to have control over procedures to obtain favorable outcomes (Tyler & Smith, 1998). It describes an instrumental (egocentric) view of human nature in which people are incentivized by the perspective to obtain a certain outcome that will provide them with a benefit. On the other hand, group value models proclaim that justice is desired itself within

social processes. To us, belonging to a group has two main benefits: a) members are provided with an identity that is highly attractive; and b) members' beliefs and value systems are reenforced and validated by the group (Brockner, Tyler, Cooper-Schneider, 1992). In other words, the motivation is based on the desire of memberships within the group. When employees perceive justice, there is self-validation for the position within the group/organization. Hence, justice informs about respect within the community and long-term stability. It describes a rather social-relational view of human nature in which justice matters as part of a process.

Within the following sections we are aiming to explain some of the common theories that are used to explain fairness thinking/ behavior and their underlying motivations. Each section will follow up on a particular need/motive that lies within the particular theory of why people care about justice.

1.4.1 The Need for Reciprocity

Considering theoretical frameworks, one of the most essential theories in the organizational justice literature is the Social Exchange Theory, brought forward by Blau (1964). According to Blau, there are only two sorts of exchange relationships that human beings pursue: a) Economic or monetary exchange; and b) Social exchange.

While economic exchange focuses on two parties agreeing on a particular specified exchange of monetary benefit, social exchange is a much more difficult transaction to grasp. While either party does not neglect their own interest, the exchange is rather vaguely defined about the conditions and obligations that were agreed upon. Homans (1961) described social exchange as an exchange that involves two (or more) people, that anticipate receiving a reward that can be both tangible goods – given in products, services, and money, as well as intangible goods (love, dignity, appreciation). Consequently, social exchange, compared to economic exchange, blends in the value of social relationships.

Through social exchange that follows certain rules and norms, resources are exchanged based on the rules of reciprocity (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005). Reciprocity, as a generally accepted and well-known principle (Gouldner, 1960), usually involves a bi-directional exchange, in other words, you will give what you receive and vice versa. Interestingly, research pointed out that the rule of reciprocity might work in a positive and negative manner (Eisenberger, Lynch, Aselage & Rohdieck, 2004). Bringing this into the workplace, an employee would most likely give a negative reaction to a negative treatment, and a positive reaction to a positive treatment.

Optimally, social exchange will lead to high-quality relationship between the exchange partners (Blau, 1964). Over time, several mutual exchanges happen between the parties. We can imagine the following scenario: person A will initiate the exchange and person B will receive something with a certain value. This will then prompt an obligation to reciprocate to "give back" to person A. Over time and as this relationship develops, this exchange will continue along with the ongoing expectation and obligation of return for the future not only focused on what is being exchanged but also on how it is being exchanged (Blau, 1964).

As previously mentioned, social exchange relationships are to be differentiated from other exchange relationships that are rather based on economic interests and focus on monetary reciprocity (Masterson, Lewis, Goldman & Taylor, 2000). Academics early on noticed that the degree to which a social exchange process is characterized by fairness will underline the social component and foster the development of the relationship between both parties in a way, that fair treatment will generate positive feedback which improves the changes of a positive reciprocation (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005; Lavelle, Rupp & Brockner, 2007). The aspect of interpersonal justice is of high importance, as social relationships will be much more evaluated on unspecified and subjective measurement contributions than situations of distributive justice for instance. In the organizational context, studies found out that supervisors who treat their

employees in a fair manner, will receive reciprocated behavior in terms of positive attitudes from employees (Campbell *et al.,* 2013). Interestingly, scholars (Mitchell, Cropazano & Quisenberry, 2012) pointed out that people who participate in social exchange do so by purely self-interest reasons, with a somewhat clear estimation of what is expected to be received and given back when engaging in exchange, which then again underlines an ego-centric nature of people.

1.4.2 The Need for Self-regard and Group Identity

As mentioned earlier, another branch of research is focused on group value models, that focus on justice as desired part within social processes. Like this they are underlining the human need of affiliation or belongingness, which is expressed in the nature desire towards meaningful attachment to others (Baumeister & Leary, 2017). The need of affiliation can be explained as people generally tend to feel positive about themselves to form a good view of their own identity (Steele, 1988). Lind and Tyler (1988) investigated relational aspects of justice within their Group-Value model. They assumed that people actively look for information that gives them clues about how much a certain group values them. If people receive a favorable justice treatment, they perceive this information as that they are valued by the group with then in turn fosters their self-esteem (Lind & Tyler, 1992). Additional research supported this idea as injustice was found to harm self-esteem and thus also the affiliation with the respective group (Bies & Moag, 1986; Greenberg, 1993).

1.4.3 The Need for Control

The instrumental model (Thibaut & Walker, 1975; Lind & Tyler, 1988) that was promoted a few years after the social exchange theory, underlined the need to control as an essential human desire. According to the model, people will value justice in relationships as it provides a certain level of predictability of outcomes in the long run, which then creates a feeling of control. As this notion might not always be accurate, Cropanzano and colleagues

(2001) pointed out that "fair dealings may be instrumentally important as long as they establish a foreseeable pattern of events, and this effect could exist even when desired outcomes are not received" (p. 176). To explain this more specifically, people will look at previous situations where justice or injustice has occurred, and with that they will try to predict future situations or justice outcomes which will then provide them with a sense of control, although from an objective point of view, this might not be realistic as past events do not necessarily predict future events accurately (Cropanzano *et al*., 2001).

1.4.4 The Need for Reducing Uncertainty

A theory that argues similarly is Uncertainty Management by Lind & Van den Bos (2002). Their research was built on the assumption that even though we might have a high motive to control our environment and personal outcomes, personal uncertainty is an essential aspect of our lives that we encounter in various situations. Naturally, this status brings negative feelings and feels somewhat threatening. With the motivation to confront this situation, people seek to gain information to predict future events and outcomes. Like this, fairness could be a criterion that is used for predictions, and thus reduces feelings of uncertainty but improves feelings of control.

A theory that feeds from the control of uncertainty and the need for affiliation is Fairness Heuristic Theory (Lind, 2001; Lind, Kulik, Ambrose, & de Vera Park, 1993, Van den Bos, 2001a; 2001b). This theory is inspired by the fundamental social dilemma that individuals encounter when they must decide whether to be part of a group although they are confronted with a limited amount of objective information that would facilitate the decision making. According to the theory, people create a heuristic conception of fairness based on accessible and understandable information during earlier justice events (Lind 2001). Subsequently, these quickly made fairness judgments are used as a guide to regulate behaviors in various social settings to match the level of justice that is perceived (Lind, 2001). In other words, Fairness

Heuristic Theory claims that justice-relevant information is quickly aggregated into a "fairness heuristic" that is used to direct ensuing attitudes and behaviors (Lind, 2001; Van den Bos, 2001a). As we know, using fairness judgements by applying these quick thumb rules (heuristics), will free up cognitive space/resources to act quicker and consequently, have more confidence in our actions that we show (Cropanzano, Byrne, Bobocel & Rupp, 2001). Nevertheless, alongside with all cognitive heuristics, these judgements are based on perceptions that are often imprecise or even completely incorrect (Cropanzano, Byrne, Bobocel & Rupp, 2001). The uncertainty common to most organizational situations prompt employees to search for signals about the other party, which will be of relevance for the present dissertation as we will see later.

1.4.5 The Need for Justice as a Virtue

According to Folger (2001), individuals are concerned with justice issues as justice in itself represents a virtue, which brings its own reward. Scholars summarized this in the deontic theory of justice (Folger, Gilliland, Steiner & Skarlicki, 2001). As the word *deon* comes from the Greek word of obligation/permission (Cropanzano, Goldman & Folger, 2003; Folger, 2001), people are concerned with fairness because one is ought to behave in a certain way to do what is the right thing to do, similarly argued as Aristotle's approach to describe practical wisdom (Schwartz & Sharpe, 2010). The theory is less concerned with individual benefits such as self-interested exchange or group standing and belongingness, as the interest in justice is completely independent of the consequences of the event. Instead, the theory argues that individuals seek justice rather as an end of itself. When trying to apply this theory into the organizational environment, it becomes clear that employees must uphold a moral code or standard that they will compare themselves, as well as their additional organizational members. Indeed, research by Colquitt, Scott, Judge, and Shaw (2006) supported that those employees who responded rather positively on justice matters would also score high on trait morality.

Further, additional research has shown that employees would even go so far to evaluate their superiors and their conduct to be just or unjust in nature (Priesemuth & Schminke, 2019), which was underlined by similar research that showed that individuals did not only care about the justice that was perceived but also about the prospectus of justice being offered by their superiors (Umphress *et al.*, 2013).

1.5 The Appraisal of Justice in the Workplace

The previous section gave an idea on the concern about justice itself or – put in other words – about why people care about justice in the first place. To present an adequate overview, we summarized five different theories as to what motivates and incentivizes people to seek fairness in relationships. This section will dive into the question of how fairness perceptions are formed and whether justice perceptions form in a conscious manner through information processing or rather subconscious and spontaneously.

1.5.1 Formation of Fairness Perceptions

We know that all human beings form justice perceptions for a variety of reasons. However, it is interesting to understand how the actual justice perceptions are formed. Countless theories have risen in the recent years that go over the development of fairness, or unfairness perceptions stating that it might be a deliberate process that is well thought through but also an unconscious quick procedure. In the previous parts of the present dissertation, we mentioned different theories that are often used when it comes to why people actually care about fairness. Particularly, Uncertainty Management Theory and Fairness Heuristic Theory seem to give a clear hint that the development of fairness perceptions might be of unconscious nature, however, as we will see scholars have reason to assume that both, unconscious and deliberate processing might be of importance when dealing with this issue.

1.5.2 Unconscious Processing

Starting with the assumption that fairness perceptions are unconsciously formed, researchers mentioned that we have good reason to think this way as most people in organizations are confronted with a particular dilemma: the scarcity of information that is required when to make a deliberate decision. Indeed, Folger and Cropanzano (2001) posited that people might rely on automatic processing upon challenged by incomplete information or even time constraints.

The Fairness Heuristic Theory (Lind, 2001; Van den Bos, 2001a; Proudfoot & Lind, 2015) offered a more detailed explanation on how fairness perceptions are formed. According to Lind (2001), two phases can be identified as relevant to the general justice judgment process: the judgement phase and the usage phase. The construction of justice perceptions from cognitive processes has been termed the judgment phase. In this phase, the justice-relevant information is used to form a general fairness impression. Once these fairness judgments are formed, a usage phase ensues during which employees use their heuristics fairness judgments as guides for individuals' attitudes and behaviors. Considering this, fairness heuristic serves as a substitution for trustworthiness, even when information is lacking (Lind, 2001). But Fairness Heuristic Theory is not the only theory that suggests that fairness perceptions might be formed unconsciously. When considering Deonance theory (Folger, Cropanzano & Goldman, 2005), we recall that fairness perceptions are usually based on whether a recent justice event relates to a person's internal moral compass. When violations to the moral compass are detected, they usually do not require an in-depth analysis as a violation is quite evident. People will even act if their own interests are not in danger. As long as they are confronted with a justice event that requires a moral analysis, an evaluation will automatically follow (Folger, Cropanzano & Goldman, 2005).

Other studies have shown that employees who identified with a set of relatively high moral standards would show rather high retributive reactions, even when they were not affected by an event but instead another employee (Skarlicki & Rupp, 2010). In a nutshell, these theories indicate that people will rely on fast, automated judgements through an ingrained inner moral code when confronted with fairness situations.

1.5.3 Deliberate Processing

While Fairness Heuristic Theory assumes that the usage phase is a somewhat automated response, the judgement phase is defined by gathering justice-relevant information to form a general fairness impression. Hence, we can assume that the information gathering process is of deliberate nature. Indeed, Leventhal (1980) described the formation of fairness perceptions as a very cognitive process during which people would estimate and choose the justice rules they would want to consider and how much importance they would attribute to them. This would differentiate according to people and events (Leventhal, 1976). This makes sense when we consider that when it comes to the allocation of outcomes, the rules differ depending on the environment such as that not always equity would be of relevance, but instead and depending on context even equality and need (Deutsch, 1975).

Another theory that assumes that's the formation of fairness perceptions is a somewhat conscious process can be found in Fairness theory (FT) (Folger & Cropanzano 2001). As we know, the theory posits that individuals hold authorities accountable for their actions and behavior, based on three different counterfactuals, meaning whether events or behavior could and should have played out differently and whether a better outcome would have been achieved with an alternative behavior. The theory gives us reason to assume that individuals are involved in the evaluation of a fairness event and its alternative in a deliberate way, and that – like deonance theory – they will compare the actual scenarios with a certain moral standard and imaginative scenarios. Depending on the level of divergence they will then decide whether the

situation is being perceived as fair or unfair. Hence, we see that both unconscious but also conscious processes are of importance when considering, how justice perceptions are being formed.

1.5.4 The Role of Affect

While information processing received a lot of attention, another stream of research started focusing on an aspect that undoubtedly defines human beings: emotions. We can imagine that individuals will not only judge fairness events with their cognitive abilities, but also with their affective responses. In fact, when we get to remember a situation that could be described as an event of (in)justice, we often refer to it by saying that it "felt" unfair without being able to explain logically where exactly the unfairness rooted from or why we felt that way. We simply did.

That situations of (in)justice are followed by attitudinal and behavioral consequences has long been acknowledged (De Cremer & Van den Bos, 2007). Almost everyone has been in a situation that was somewhat unfair to them and felt the anger, or sometimes even hate towards the people or institutions from where the unfair situation arose from. Adams (1965), who was credited for the previously mentioned equity theory, recognized that when people were being handed what they considered disadvantageous, they reacted with very strong feelings such as anger, irritation, distress, and resentment. Further research has shown that even when rewarded something that was considered unfair to gain a positive advantage, people would deal with feelings of irritation and guilt (Homans, 1961). However, attitudinal and behavioral consequences of experiencing (in)justice within situations is only one aspect to mention. De Cremer and Van den Bos (2007, p.4) stated that "justice is not only a judgment but can also represent an intuition or feeling" and indeed, researchers have recognized affect in fairness perceptions that influences not only receivers of (in)justice but also justice actors, and even observers of fairness situations (Scott & Dana-Lê, 2020). When we think of daily situations of

(un)fairness, this seems logical. We tend to interpret situations according to our daily mood, but also according to how we are used to interpret situations and behavior and actions of others. Hence, it gives us reason to believe that also justice situations and their interpretations can be highly influenced by our particular outlook on a situation on that day, but further on what we have experienced in the course of our life. We can imagine the following: You have a horrible day at work and – to make the situation a bit more drastic – half of the team has called in sick, which put you in a situation today where will have to cover work that is usually carried out by three more of your coworkers. As you recently finished a project, your boss is giving you a performance review. The performance review is not as positive as you expected. Although the critique is reasonable, given the situation and your current mood that is very negative you will most likely feel that you were treated very unfairly. This effect will most likely be even greater, if you are "used" to being treated in an unfair matter in other aspects of your life. Indeed, whether we perceive a situation as just or unjust highly depends on our emotional state (moods and emotions) as well as traits (stable tendencies to experience particular moods and emotions) (Barsky & Kaplan, 2007; Barsky, Kaplan & Beal, 2011).

Weiss & Cropanzano (1996) also argued that affective reactions influence how individuals would cognitively evaluate a situation, and further that affect will also influence attitudes towards a situation. Schwarz (1990) mentioned that, especially in situations of uncertainty, individuals will rely on their emotions as a salient source of information substitution. Like this, affect would also serve as a somewhat heuristic in the fairness evaluation process. Moreover, affect and the mood of an individual is mentioned to be of relevance. In lab experiments by Van den Bos (2003), individuals who were in a positive mood rated procedures as fairer compared to others that were in a negative mood. This is consistent with previous findings by Weiss & Cropanzano (1996), who argued that employees' moods would color the situation they were to experience and determine the information that was

considered, with good moods making the situation more positive and bad moods more negative respectively. All in all, researchers concluded that affect plays a relevant role when it comes to how we form fairness perceptions, as judgements of justice are prone to be influenced by affective state and general dispositions over short but also over long time (Barsky & Kaplan, 2007).

1.6 Targets of Fairness Evaluations – Justice Sources

The previous sections have dealt with how justice perceptions form, how conscious and unconscious information processing play a role, and in which ways affect may influence the way we interpret situations and therefore justice events. Naturally, it is not only important "how" fairness is being evaluated but also "what" or "who" the target of evaluation is. In recent years, scholars have conducted a lot of research on this topic. In the following, we will introduce some of the common targets that have been studied quite vigorously.

1.6.1 The Multi-foci Perspective

Organizational justice academics have held the view that employees will judge multiple entities be it the supervisor, the organization, and/or colleagues or the organization itself as a whole (Rupp & Cropanzano, 2002). As a matter of fact, when thinking of different industries, it is somewhat obvious that the employee is in constant interaction with others within the organization, but also with other individuals which are not part of the organization (e.g., the customer). The *multi-foci perspective* argues that asking about justice without referring to the responsible for the fairness, is missing an important part of the phenomenon. With this perspective, we are offered a more holistic view of prospective employee justice sources and by affirming that employees can evaluate any justice source as long as they are the actual cause for the (un)fair treatment (Cropanzano, Byrne, Bobocel, & Rupp, 2001; Byrne & Cropanzano, 2000; Rupp & Cropanzano, 2002; Lavelle, Rupp &Brockner, 2007; Martínez-Tur, Molina & Maniezki, 2021; Rupp, Shao, Jones & Liao, 2014). Multi-foci justice refers to justice

perceptions that stem from several justice agents, so the changing focus of justice is considered to improve the prediction of the criteria variables from the same source. More specifically, justice perceptions made about a particular party are related to attitudinal and behavioral reactions directed specifically at that party. Further, the multi-foci perspective argues that all justice dimensions can be of any party or agent, given that the individual who evaluates the situation is convinced that the person or entity is responsible for the act of (in)justice (Liao & Rupp, 2005; Rupp, & Cropanzano, 2002). Nevertheless, although individuals might be able to equally judge different justice sources, previous research discovered that employees often relate justice types/dimensions with either systems (e.g. procedural justice) or agents (e.g. interpersonal justice) (see Bies & Moag, 1986; Cropanzano, Prehar, & Chen, 2002; Masterson, Lewis, Goldman, & Taylor, 2000; Olkkonen & Lipponen, 2006).

In the following, we will present two major sources of justice that are essential when dealing with organizational justice in the workplace: internal sources of justice and external sources of justice. Both can be receiver but also issuers of justice as we will see in the following paragraphs.

1.6.2 Internal Agents of Justice

Within the organization we are presented with various sources of justice, being either the organization as a whole system, or the individual agents of justice such as supervisors, or co-workers. Byrne (1999) first confirmed a four-factor model of justice that showed that both, procedural justice and interactional (interpersonal and informational) justice could be organizational and supervisory related, while previously procedural justice was attributed to organizations and interactional justice to supervisors. In fact, supervisors as "decision making agents" (Colquitt, 2001, p. 388) have a lot of power over employees in processes of fairness. Although procedural fairness stems from formal policies and procedures rather than volatile decision making according to supervisors' preferences, they do have much to say in the

application and enactment of them in ways that employees would consider fair (Matta *et al.*, 2020). In fact, research has shown that the justice treatment between supervisors and subordinates greatly influences the relationship between them, which in consequence leads to several work-related outcomes such as greater commitment, task performance, organizational citizenship behavior, and trust (Cohen-Charash & Spector, 2001; Colquitt, Conlon, Wesson, Porter, & Ng, 2001; Lind & Tyler, 1988).

Supervisors are not the only internal justice agents that we find in organizations. As teams become less and less hierarchical, co-workers have become a more important agent of justice to be studied (Branscombe, Spears, Ellemer, & Doosje, 2002; Donovan, Drasgow, & Munson, 1998; Lavelle *et al.*, 2007). The question whether people are treated fairly by the own members of their team or group (by an internal party) is usually referred to as intraunit justice or peer justice (Cropanzano, Li & James, 2007). In this line of research, Rubb and Paddock (2010) found that people evaluate fairness often at the group level, as individuals develop perceptions not isolated from each other but through shared perceptions. The more people interact with each other, the more they will share their (justice) perceptions, (Schminke, Ambrose, & Cropanzano, 2000; Schminke, Cropanzano, & Rupp, 2002). Hence, justice research has shifted towards including group/organizational level and shared perceptions as regular structures in the workplace (Colquitt, Zapata-Phelan, & Roberson, 2005; Martínez-Tur & Moliner, 2017; Konovsky, 2000).

Researchers have further examined the function of organizational justice at the individual and collective level (e.g., Li & Cropanzano, 2009), as well as the extent to which perceived fairness at the individual/organizational level predicts individual/organizational level outcomes. Research has shown that it is an important aspect to consider, particularly as hierarchies become smaller and the work in (autonomous) teams becomes a more important aspect within modern organizations (Cohen & Bailey, 1997). As in particular aspects such as

engagement, work performance, and trust are very relevant for the work in modern, autonomous teams, peers are a relevant justice source to study (Donovan, Drasgow, & Munson, 1998; Lavelle *et al*., 2007).

1.6.3   External Agents of Justice

Although internal agents of justice are an important line of research, the present dissertation is not focusing on this particular aspect. Instead of looking on how employees relate with their supervisors and peers, we are interested in how employees relate with external agents of justice, namely customers; particularly, with customers that they typically work with on a regular basis, in a somewhat equal relationship.

In general, research has focused on customers as another source of justice, with perceptions of customer fairness impacting employee' attitudes and behaviors towards customers (Rupp, McCance, Spencer, & Sonntag, 2008; Spencer & Rupp, 2009). Research posited that, for example, customers judge their relationships with institutions and people of the organization using fairness as a fundamental base (Masterson, 2001), but also other service organizations profit from high levels of justice within their daily functioning (Moliner, Martínez-Tur, Peiró, Ramos & Cropanzano, 2005).

Research by Martínez-Tur, Peiró, Ramos and Moliner (2006) showed that customer satisfaction is sensitive to distributive justice and interpersonal justice, showing that customers are mostly focused on the service/product outcome and the interpersonal treatment they receive during it. Further, their research pointed out that customers expect consumption experiences to be fair and, will show negative reactions (e.g., dissatisfaction, switching service providers, filing complaints) upon having the perception to be subjected to unjust outcomes or procedures. As one can imagine, these negative reactions from customers will have further consequences for the employee. Indeed, Rupp, McCance and Grandey (2007), showed that employees are often confronted with injustice by customers as they deliver unfair information and treatment.

This again, will lead to negative emotions in employees which then make it more difficult to display the emotions that they were expected to display (friendly face and conduct). In line with these findings, Rupp, McCance, Spencer & Sonntag (2008), discovered that in cases of more customer injustice, employees would show higher levels of surface acting – which is classified as emotional labor - as they will have more need to counteract their (negative) emotions cause by the customer's reactions. Similarly, research has shown that interactional injustice stemming from customers increased participants' emotional labor (Rupp & Spencer, 2006). On the other hand, research has also shown that employees will react to customer injustice with acts of retaliation upon being mistreated (e.g., handing up on a phone call, purposely giving them false information as to which department to go) both in direct, face-to-face and in indirect situations (Rupp & Spencer, 2006; Skarlicki *et al*., 2008; Shao & Skarlicki, 2014; Wang, Liao, Zhan, & Shi, 2011).

As we see, the justice relationship between employee and customer is of great importance, particularly in service industries in which employees work closely with customers on a daily basis. Justice between employees and customers can greatly influence their relationship, but also service outcomes. Research by Martínez-Tur and colleagues (2006) showed that customer satisfaction with the service highly depended on justice perceptions from customers towards employees of the service unit. It is important to mention that both parties can be an actor of justice but also a receiver of justice, particularly when the organization's objectives depend on the active contribution of the customer creating a unique bond between both parties. Thus, the customer becomes a source of justice for the employee, but likewise the employee becomes a source of justice for the customer which provides us with a very interesting perspective: in a relationship where both giving and receiving are of essential importance, what about mutuality? Mutuality of constructs is something that has been investigated in other constructs such as trust and communication (Smith & Barclay, 1997;

Martínez-Tur *et al*., 2018), but still been quite neglected in justice research. However, it becomes relevant if we imagine the following: In an employee-customer relationships that is fostered by both giving and receiving justice at the same time from either source we cannot only focus on one side of the coin. Instead, it is important to look at the degree that each party attributes to the justice treatment they receive and to the congruence of their perceptions (Smith & Barclay, 1997). When looking at mutuality in the interpersonal justice relationship between employees and customers of a service for PID, we define mutual interpersonal justice as the interpersonal treatment within the relationship that is characterized by two aspects simultaneously: (a) level of interpersonal justice; and (b) agreement between the parties. We would consider their relationship as optimal when both, a high level of interpersonal justice treatment and a high level of agreement on this from both sources is supported. In this dissertation, we want to focus on employees and customers as sources of justice and additionally consider mutuality for our research.

1.7 Adding Time into Justice Research

The research on organizational justice initially focused on between individual differences in average levels of fair justice treatment, such as on average levels of individual justice perceptions (e.g. procedural justice in performance appraisals) This way, the essential premise was widely acknowledged "the more justice the better" (Matta, Scott, Colquitt, Koopman & Passantino, 2017). Nevertheless, this perspective has neglected the importance of considering dynamic and within individual fluctuations within justice treatment. In other words, a supervisor could either treat his employee fair on any occasions, or just now and then – depending on various circumstances; meaning, they could be inconsistent in his or her justice treatment. To be more specific, we can take into account an example of two employees. They both receive a certain justice treatment by their supervisor. One employee would rate his supervisor's treatment a 3 on a scale from 1-6. We could ask him four times and he would rate

the treatment continuously as mediocre with a 3. On the other hand, his colleague perceives the treatment she receives at times as very good, but at other times as very poor. She would rate her treatment four times as well, the following way: 6, 2, 6, 2. Her average rating would be a 4 which is a higher level than her colleague overall. Traditional justice scholars might say at this point that she experienced a higher justice treatment compared to her colleague, which should then lead to a higher well-being as well. However, modern justice research started to see this as critical as they included considering the stability of the justice construct, which gave rise to another essential topic: justice variability. The following paragraphs will dive deeper into justice variability.

1.8 Justice Variability

Today, scholars acknowledge that significant individual differences exist in many cases in the variability of a given construct over time. This has been demonstrated with studies on interpersonal trust (Fleeson & Leicht, 2006), emotional labor (Scott, Barnes & Wagner, 2012), self-esteem (Kernis, Cornell, Sun, Berry, & Harlow, 1993), and personality (Fleeson, 2001). Consequently, scholars started becoming interested in the concept of *justice variability*. Justice variability is broadly defined as a 'between person difference in the stability of justice over time' (Matta, Scott, Colquitt, Koopman & Passantino, 2017, p. 2). The theory draws from other theoretical concepts and is widely based on the previously elaborated uncertainty management theory (Van den Bos, 2001b). As previously explained, uncertainty occurs when the individual is not able to predict his or her future or cannot experience consistency in his/her behaviors, experiences, or cognitions (Van den Bos & Lind, 2002). According to Jones and Skarlicki (2013), fairness perceptions evolve with new experiences and are compared and connected with prior experiences and expectations. In their model, the scholars describe two different types of reactions to justice events. Expected or inconsequential justice events will be automatically processed and reacted to. In this case, the previous perception of the justice entity

will be strengthened and remain the same. When a justice event is unexpected or takes place in a more risky or threatening environment, the previous (although relatively stable) entity perception can be revised in terms of the recent justice judgement based on the previous event. Like this, Jones and Skarlicki (2013) stated that prediction of how the individual will be treated in the future is important and that when employees cannot predict the way they will be treated or experience inconsistency in fair treatment, it will rise to a source of uncertainty and hence, present a potential stressor that could lead to a decrease in overall wellbeing of the employee (Peters, McEwen & Friston, 2017). Another theory justice variability builds on is Fairness Heuristic Theory. We have previously seen that employees often rely on fairness heuristics to be able to quickly react for self-interest reasons and to save relevant cognitive resources. However, this can only be possible if the fairness heuristic is based on a stable heuristic that is relatively unlikely to fail. As heuristics are mostly based on previous experiences, the individual needs this experience to be consistent in their essence. Inconsistent experiences would prevent the establishment of a stable fairness heuristic and thus, not prove itself as legitimate source. In this sense, we can see that justice variability seems a factor to consider when evaluating how individuals perceive fair treatment. Matta and colleagues (2017) demonstrated the importance of justice variability in a number of experiments on interpersonal justice. They found that not only the level of perceived justice was relevant but also the extent to which this level was consistent. They looked at whether an inconsistent treatment would influence the overall individual experience in terms of stress. Surprisingly the results indicated that an inconsistent treatment would lead to more stress for the individual regardless of the justice level. Logically, fair treatment that is variable is perceived as more uncertain and hence, more stressful than fair treatment that is persistent. However, interestingly they found out that fair treatment that is inconsistent is also more uncertain and more stressful than consistent unfair treatment. Thus, being treated consistently unfair is less stressful for the individual than

being treated variably fair. When thinking back about the earlier example of the two work colleagues, the person with the consistent mediocre treatment (all treatments rated 3 on a scale from 1-6) is most likely to experience less stress than the person with the altering but higher-level justice treatment (with an average rating score of 4 ranging from 2-6 in the treatments). Consequently, scholars demonstrated that a focus on justice levels while ignoring variability over time will lead to an incomplete view of justice within organizations.

1.9   Exchange Spirals

With the rise of the importance of justice variability, research is increasingly interested in illuminating a reality that is often spotted but not often studied: exchange spirals or loops. Lindsley, Brass & Thomas (1995) defined spirals in relationships in which one change in one variable leads to a corresponding change in another variable. These spirals can be enhancing spirals in which the increase in one variable leads to an increase in another variable, or diminishing in which a decrease in one variable leads to a decrease in another. As these relationships are cyclic in nature and lead to reciprocal causation, they are referred to as deviation-amplifying relationships (Lindsley *et al.*, 1995; Shepherd, Patzelt & Haynie, 2010).

Reciprocal pattern of positive "gain" spirals can also be observed in different fields. For instance, Salanova, Bakker, and Llorens (2006) have shown that school teachers' personal and organizational resources led to positive flow experiences at work, while flow at work predicted personal and organizational resources. In another study, Llorens *et al.* (2007) found that task resources contributed to the work engagement of students, and work engagement increased task resources over time. Both these relationships were mediated by efficacy beliefs. In customer-employee relationships, negative spirals have been researched quite vigorously. Previous research has shown that lighter workplace incivility that was originally characterized by rudeness or other minor thoughtless behavior escalated rapidly into much more intense aggressive acts (Andersson & Pearson, 1999). Another study by Olson-Buchanan and Boswell

(2008) confirmed this showing that negative responses to perceived mistreatment will lead to downwards spirals, although a recent study in hospitality conducted by Zhu, Lam & Lai (2019) has shown that it is indeed possible to halt the negative spiral by "engaging with customers in a constructive manner." (e.g., offering a room upgrade) (p.70). Indeed, many constructs have the potential to not only be haltered, but indeed to reverse a negative spiral into a positive spiral though reciprocity (Breugst, Patzelt & Rathgeber, 2015). This way we are presented with mutually reciprocated relationships in which a positive behavior triggers another positive behavior, while diminishing a negative behavior. A study conducted by Breugst and colleagues (2015) investigated effects of perceived fairness in equity distribution within teams on team members within 8 different entrepreneurial teams over 6 months. Results indicated that high perceived justice would lead to positive team interaction spirals (high performance and high unity), affecting the team's experience of being a strong entity over time while low perceived justice triggered negative team interaction spirals (low performance and team members exiting the team). Interestingly, the authors mentioned that one team member's perception of unfairness was sufficient to trigger a negative interaction spiral, while all other team members perceived high justice. We believe the research shows us that justice can be of vital importance when researching spirals. Another study by Chebat and Slusarczyk (2005) supports this claim, as the researchers demonstrated that interactional justice perceptions in service encounters could lead to both positive and negative response which then, if negative, ultimately triggered customer anger consequently causing retaliatory behaviors.

As we see, justice in service encounters has the potential to cause both, positive and negative spirals, which can be either beneficial or detrimental for the well-being of service employees and customers as well as the service objectives to better the life of PID. The aim of the dissertation is to investigate interpersonal justice not only through different lenses of justice actors and receivers but further to see the effects of justice over time on families and employees.

In the previous sections we introduced organizational justice, then gave an overview of common approaches on why justice concerns individuals, how perceptions are formed and how people evaluate justice. We finished the section with adding time as a valuable aspect to consider for our justice research. Next, we want to explain how justice can be used in service organizations such as services for PID.

1.10 Utilizing Justice in Services for People with Intellectual Disability

1.10.1 A Thorough Approach to Intellectual Disability

Around 1 % of the global population has an intellectual disability (McKenzie, Milton, Smith & Ouellette-Kuntz, 2016), which is characterized by "significant limitations both in intellectual functioning and adaptive behavior as expressed in conceptual, social, and practical adaptive skills. This disability originates during the developmental period, which is defined operationally as before the individual attains age 22" (Schalock, Luckasson & Tassé, 2021, p. 439). Over the years, societal view on disability has changed a lot and is still changing. Starting with an understanding of disability as a rather tragic condition, people then began seeing it as something that should be medically treated before developing the idea to using professionals' or experts' power to support the person who is experiencing the disability (Campbell & Olivier, 1996; Clapton & Fitzgerald, 1997). The contemporary view differs from this, as we now see that everyone needs support and community. The idea is that disability comes with social relationships that form an essential part of every community as individuals that are experiencing the disability might be disabled or even enabled by the actions and attitudes of other people (Cologan *et al.*, 2016).

To reflect the changing societal understanding of disability, intellectual disability has to be understood in context. Recent research (Schalock, Luckasson & Shogren, 2020) has introduced a multidimensional model of context that includes the different micro, meso, and macro system in which individuals experience life through work, learning, and recreation. As

the person and the environment are in a constant interaction, both human functioning as well as personal outcome are drastically influenced. Schalock, Luckasson and Shogren (2020), described the three essential characteristics of context as multilevel, multifactorial and interactive. An interaction is thus described as a "reciprocal action or influence that occurs between multilevel/multifactor contextual variables" (Luckasson & Schalock, 2021, p. 3). Examples of these reciprocal influences are seen in living support, inclusive education, employment support, etc. The purpose of contextualizing is to not only focus on the impact of environmental factors, but to further be able to maximize the success of support that the individual is receiving. Like this, support services can be more optimally assessed and adapted according to the individual's needs within their interactions with their environment. Naturally, this goes up to the level of policy making so that institutions can further promote justice and fairness in the legal system, but also on the individual or micro level where support organizations and their cooperation with families are of importance (Luckasson & Schalock, 2021).

1.10.2 Justice Research in Services for People with Intellectual Disability

The relationship between workers and customers becomes an intrigant topic when considering the perspective of service organizations that aim to enhance the QoL of PID. A keen interest in the individual and a people focused approach has led to organizations offering support services (Harbour & Maulik, 2010). This type of service industry is highly complex and linked with emotional content. Reaching the service goals is essential for not only the successful delivery of services, but also for the personal well-being of the service professionals, as well as the individuals that use the service.

When looking at the relationships within the service, we notice that we find a triad constellation of people being the service professional, the PID, and the parent or family of the PID. Consequently, when it comes to delivering the adequate service, service workers are

catering not only to their primary customer – the PID – but also to another one, namely the family. Early on in research for children with intellectual disability, a collaboration between families and service workers was highly encouraged, as it would benefit not only the delivery of core services but also help the support system that is needed to even provide the service by reducing uncertainty through the provision of information, reduction of conflict, and building trust (DeChillo, Koren & Schultze, 1994; Vidal *et al.*, 2020; Vosler-Hunter, 1998).

Indeed, it seems as if the way professionals and families treat each other within day-to-day interactions is of essential importance for the success of the support service. Thus, it appears only logical that the fairness treatment within their relationship will be of grand effect as well. However, justice research habitually focuses on service organizations in common service industries (e.g., hotels, call centers, banking industry etc.) in which emotional labor and surface acting is often imbedded in daily work tasks (Hochschild, 1979). Generally, it has been found that justice does indeed foster helping behaviors (Masterson, Lewis, Goldman & Taylor, 2000) and further, proliferates customer-professional relationships as it is connected to customer satisfaction (Clemmer, 1993). For our research, we want to focus on investigating justice in services for PID. Here, we want to take advantage of the relationship that is brought to us from the center, namely by focusing on justice in the relationship between service professionals and families.

We aim to take advantage of an active collaboration between professionals and families to not only enhance their partnership and well-being, but further to enhance the service quality and the achievement of superior service goals such as enhancing the QoL of the PID. In this next section, we will explain possible ways in which justice can proliferate service organizations particularly focusing on the support delivered by professionals and families. The explanations will be contextually linked with the empirical studies to then define the specific objectives of each study.

1.10.3 Mutual Justice to Improve Service Quality (Study 1)

Challenges in Providing Services and Support for People with Intellectual Disability

With our first research study, we aim to get an insight into service institutions that aim to help PID by uniting *two perspectives* – service professionals and families of the service users. In the centers, mainly two types of services are being delivered: 1) general day care services by organizing educational and 2) leisure social activities and sheltered workshops that aid in transitioning out of work disabled individuals back into the work force. It is important to acknowledge that the relevance of interaction between families and professionals in the centers is not limited to the functional core services. Instead, the quality of this interaction will be immensely influenced by the establishment of emotional bonds between the two groups. The relational aspects become of particularly high importance when considering the work with individuals with intellectual disabilities, as many complex social interactions, as well as specialized knowledge, communication, and trust between service provider and customer are involved (Schalock *et al*, 2008; Martínez-Tur *et al*., 2015; Molina *et al*., 2015). With our first research study, we focus on the interpersonal aspects within the service support system, namely the partnership between families and professionals.

According to the Intergroup Contact Theory (Allport, 1935), disagreements between groups can be reduced by positive relationships. Consequently, increased positive (Paolini, Harwood & Rubin, 2010) contact between groups encourages positive exchange and reduces risks of disagreements. Good communication and interaction will lead to an improved service quality and hence, to a more effective delivery of service outcomes. This was demonstrated by previous research by Martínez-Tur and colleagues (2015), as opening communication channels between professionals and families promoted strategies to change negative attitudes in families, which eventually lead to an increase of the PID's self-determination behaviors at home (Martínez-Tur *et al*., 2015).

With our study, we want to focus on interpersonal justice within the partnership between families and professionals to understand justice from a mutual perspective. More specifically, we are looking at mutual justice and its effects on the service outcomes of the support institution.

Mutual Justice

The concept of *mutual justice* is introduced in analogy to findings and research about constructs such as mutual trust (e.g., Smith & Barclay, 1997) and mutual communication (Martínez-Tur *et al*., 2018). Accordingly, mutual interpersonal justice is defined as the interpersonal treatment within a relationship between two or more actors or groups that is characterized by two aspects simultaneously: (a) level of interpersonal justice; and (b) agreement between the parties. A high level of interpersonal justice is necessary to form an adequate relationship between the two parties. However, the key aspect that leads to mutual justice perceptions that can be found in positive social relations is agreement. In fact, it is difficult to accept that a good relation exists if one of the parties does not agree that there is a fair treatment in the relationship. It is reasonable to view the relationship as optimal when a high level of interpersonal justice is simultaneously supported by high levels of agreement on this between the parties (i.e., professionals and families).

Service Outcomes of Support Institutions

For the first research study, we assume that mutual justice between professionals and families will be linked to satisfaction with the use of services. The service encounter that we find in services for PID is bi-directional. In other words, families, as indirect customer, have an active role (see Zablah *et al.,* 2016). This dynamic is undisputable in services for PID where the participation of families is necessary for the achievement of goals. Therefore, they are considered a significant cocreator of the service, as it is often the case in health care industries (Beirão, Patricio, & Fisk, 2017).

We further propose that mutual justice is connected to organizational performance, and with that connected to the delivery of services. A "healthy" intergroup contact between employees and families is characterized by a social exchange that is based on "giving and receiving" a fair interpersonal treatment. It means that both groups agree that high levels of dignity and respect exist through mutual justice. Further, both professionals and families share the same critical goal: the improvement of QoL of PID. A high-quality relation between these two groups, in terms of mutual interpersonal justice, should facilitate positive organizational efforts to achieve the aforementioned goal.

We consider three critical indicators of organizational performance that focus on the service delivered to PID.

The first two indicators are based on the well-known differentiation between functional vs. relational service quality (e.g., Gwinner, Gremler, & Bitner, 1998; Liu *et al*., 2017; Molina *et al*., 2015). Functional service quality refers to the degree to which the core service is delivered with expertise and efficiently. Relational service quality focuses on the quality of social relationships beyond the instrumental nature of functional facets. This is especially relevant in services for PID because it describes a way of delivering the service that signals appreciation and esteem towards vulnerable service users (Molina *et al*., 2015).

Ultimately, we also consider a more contextualized indicator of organizational performance that focuses on the main goal of services for PID: the improvement of QoL of service users. According to Moliner and colleagues (2013), the definition and assessment of organizational performance can be contextualized to diagnose the improvement in QoL of service users thanks to the actions and efforts of organizations. Therefore, a measure of organizational performance focused on the QoL captures the particularity of services for PID. Considering the entire research study, it can be said that the following first objective of the doctoral dissertation was framed:

1. Determine the link from mutual justice between professionals and families to service satisfaction, employee performance, as well as to performance oriented towards the improvement of QoL.

1.10.4 Justice and Trust between Families and Professionals (Study 2)

In our second research article we want to zoom in on the *perspective of professionals*. More specifically, we are interested in seeing in which ways professionals' perception of trust in families and family's justice treatment might interrelate over time. Trust has been quite vigorously researched and previously linked to organizational justice (Martínez-Tur *et al*., 2016). As a matter of fact, it seems logical to assume that trust plays a pivotal role in the partnership between families and professionals, as both parties cooperate on a topic as sensitive as the care for PID that even represent family to one side of the partnership. Naturally, trust is needed to fulfill the complex requirements of such care-taking demands.

In our research, we want to view trust defined as an attitude. Mayer, Davis and Schoorman (1995) described trust as a willful vulnerability to an action of the trustee, because one expects the trustee to performed in an anticipated way. This, however, is completely independent of an ability to supervise the trustee, indicating that no logical "latter" is involved in the assumption to trust someone. Nevertheless, something must function as an indicator of trustworthiness. Therefore, our second study aims to explore if justice might serve as an indicator of such trustworthiness from the perspective of professionals.

Relevance of the Research: Overcoming the Asymmetry Between Experts vs. Non-Experts

There has been a variety of research studies that deal with the topic of trust between families and professionals. Research within educational institutions often underlined the asymmetry that one finds between parents and educational staff in the trust they attribute to each other. Indeed, both research in elementary schools, as well as secondary schools demonstrated that parents trusted teachers more than teachers trusted parents (Adams & Christenson, 1998). In other institutions, such as services for people with chronical illnesses, the same asymmetry was found to be present (Lynn-McHale & Deatrick, 2000), confirming that one side seems to have a higher "status" than the other. A study by Vidal *et al*., (2020)

confirmed the asymmetry in trust as well between families of PID and professional health care staff. Their research followed the argument of social identity theory to distinguish clearly between professionals as "experts" and families as "non-experts". With the second article, we aim to see whether the asymmetry could be overcome. In other words, we want to see whether a) families' justice behavior leads to a change of professionals' attitudes (trust), and b) professionals' attitudes could also lead to families' justice behavior.

Studying Justice as a Dynamic Concept

With this research, we seek to find answers to the question of which concept (justice or trust) might mandate the relationship and whether there is a chance that both concepts could dynamically develop in a simultaneous manner.

This type of study design has recently found many supporters within the research community (Kaltiainen, Lipponen & Holtz; 2017), as studying the dynamics of concepts enriches the knowledge in a profound manner and gives the opportunity to study causality. The reason we find it an adequate sub-objective for our second study is that previous research was somewhat ambiguous in terms of the direction of the relationship between justice and trust. In a nutshell, most studies indicate justice as an antecedent to trust (Colquitt & Rodell, 2011). However, complementary studies have shown great potential in proving the opposite, by accounting trust as the antecedent of justice (Holtz, 2013; 2015). Because the relationship of justice and trust is intertwined (Colquitt & Rodell, 2011; Lewicki, Wiethoff & Tomlinson, 2005), we want to test the existence of a reciprocal relationship from the perspective of professionals. Like this we can specify the second research objective of the doctoral dissertation:

2. Assess from the perspective of professionals, how families' justice behavior towards them. is interrelated with their trust in families over time.

1.10.5 Professionals' Justice Treatment towards families as an Indicator of Organizational Performance and Quality of Life (Study 3)

Most service programs are focused on improving the QoL of PID (Schalock *et al.*, 2008). However, due to several reasons including the limited participation of families in the day-to-day life of the services (Deslandes *et al.*, 1999; Rodríguez, Blatz, & Elbaum 2014), as well as the fact that families as non-experts have less knowledge than professionals considering what actually succeeds high quality care service (Vidal *et al.*, 2020), families often encounter a situation of information scarcity considering whether the organization is capable of improving the QoL of their relative with intellectual disability. This situation is a tricky one. Not knowing whether an organization and its professional members are equipped enough to provide high quality care, renders in great amounts of uncertainty. To amplify this situation, families are in some way dependent on professionals to the point where they have to surrender to their authority as they simply do not have another option. To overcome the situation of information scarcity, families will refer to other information or indicators to reduce the uncertainty that stems from the lack of information and the fear of surrendering to an authority that they have very little knowledge about (Van de Bos, 2001; Tyler & Lind, 1992). We believe that justice could serve as indicator which helps to reduce uncertainty for families. More specifically, we assume that justice can function as heuristic serving families to estimate how well their relative with disability will be taken care of by the service professionals. Our rationale is based grounded theoretical theories, such as Fairness Heuristic Theory and Uncertainty Management Theory. Tyler and Lind (1992) mentioned that people often refer to supplementary information when encountering a situation of information scarcity. Like this, families will perceive the interpersonal justice treatment by professionals and derive an idea on how trustworthy the organizational performance is to improve the QoL of their loved one. Thus, when uncertainty arises, families will consider the fairness treatment that stems from

professionals, using cognitive short-cuts, and consequently arrive to a position in which they will be able to evaluate professionals to the point that they are able to estimate the ability of the organization to provide adequate care.

Quality of Life in Services for People with Intellectual Disability

Scholars, to this day, still have difficulties when it comes to a universally accepted concept or definition of QoL due to its multi-dimensional nature involving both subjective (i.e. perceptions, values, subjective evaluation of current situation) and objective (i.e. economic status, physical and psychological health, social interactions) components (Schalock *et al*., 2011), that cover many areas of life and that flow seamlessly into each other and hence, somewhat intermingle (Moliner, Grau, Prieto, Martínez-Tur, 2003). Literature indicates that common definitions of QoL share the following characteristics: general feelings of well-being, the feeling of positive social participation and connection, and prospects to achieve personal potential (Schalock *et al*., 2002). Further, QoL is a concept that can dynamically change over time, depending on personal and contextual development (Kiernan & Marrone, 1997). Thus, the bare nature of the concept is something that cannot be limited in its fulfillment (see Schalock, 1996). The World Health Organization (WHO) defines QoL as the "individuals' perceptions of their position in life in the context of the culture and value systems in which they live, and in relation to their goals, expectations, standards and concerns" (WHOQOL Group, 1998, p.1).

However, to comprehend QoL, it is necessary to take into consideration the objective living circumstances of an individual and their personal fulfillment with these living circumstances (Moliner, *et al*., 2003). When it comes to the QoL of someone with intellectual disability, people often believe that the disability represents a factor that greatly influences the life of the PID in a negative way. Despites the assumption, research found out that the majority of disabled individuals would report levels of happiness that reached widely beyond what was

expected for them to be reported from individuals without a disability (Ubel, Loewenstein, Schwarz & Smith, 2005). This phenomenon, which is referred to as the disability paradox (see Albrecht & Devlieger, 1999) represents something that must be considered when trying to assess the QoL by proxies and professionals, as objective indicators are needed that can estimate QoL in relationship to the life circumstances of the PID. Research (Rice, Frone & McFarlin, 1992) suggested that QoL can be evaluated as a whole or as individual domains of life. Additional research that focused on QoL of PID identified 8 domains used as indicators to describe QoL as the following: emotional wellbeing, physical wellbeing, material wellbeing, interpersonal relations, self-determination, social inclusion, rights, and personal development (Schalock *et al.*, 2002). Starting from this concept, Moliner, and colleagues (2013) developed a contextualized instrument to measure in which ways organizations can – through their actions and activities - contribute to the improvement of QoL of PID as part of their overall service quality. This way, not only QoL in general can be measured, but also the quality of the support system. The relevance of this is obvious: the service environment is of very high importance to the service users' QoL as the set of people and their ability to collaborate can either optimally benefit or harm the PID (Martínez-Tur, *et al*, 2015; Marquis & Jackson, 2005; Molina *et al.*, 2015). The nature of the service is of very specific characteristic to reach the service goals. The services are always adapted to consider the individuals' needs and they often last more than 10 years during which a very personal bond develops between the service providers (professionals) on the one hand, and the service users (families and PID) on the other hand. Research has indeed shown that QoL does not only depend on individual characteristics, but also on environmental factors (Marquis & Jackson, 2005; Schalock *et al.*, 2010). As the environment is to a big part shaped by the relationship between professionals and families, we can imagine that the service user is highly dependent on the well-functioning of their relationship.

Research has indicated that families' (justice) perceptions can easily vary over time as their interactions with professionals are bound to time and likely to fluctuate according to the individuals' mood, emotional state, energy levels, and other indirectly related factors such as task- and relationship related stress. Indeed, scholars supported this point of view that many constructs, interpersonal justice included, display considerable within-person variability (see Holtz & Harold, 2009; Loi, Yang, & Diefendorff, 2009; Schalock *et al*., 2002) that will add great value to the justice literature when studied.

As previously mentioned, families have limited access to information about whether the organization and its personnel will provide enough assistance to improve the QoL of their intellectually disabled family member. The situation of information scarcity that families face is common, and it is often caused by a variety of factors, such as the fact that interactions with professionals are time-limited, but also because families, as so-called non-experts, fundamentally know less about what constitutes good care service than professionals, who are experts (Vidal *et al*., 2020).

When faced with this issue, we may expect families to confront a great deal of uncertainty which is exacerbated by the fact that they are partially reliant on experts for their relative's care. In this sense, families will have to surrender to professionals as the authority, which is somewhat difficult as we can imagine when there is little knowledge about the organization and the professional who is in charge of taking care of their loved one. Being confronted with this difficult situation, we want to know how families overcome this insecurity to trust in the organization to take care of the PID, as research pointed out that people look for information on the authority they will most likely surrender to (Van den Bos, Wilke & Link, 1998). For this research purpose, we would like to see whether justice treatment, received by professionals, can have an influence. More specifically, we want to see whether families

evaluate organizational performance that is oriented towards QoL depending on the fairness treatment they receive from professionals. The treatment will serve as an indicator (heuristic) of whether professionals can be trusted to deliver the adequate support. We assume that the change in how QoL and performance oriented towards QoL depends on the change in justice treatment that families receive from professionals. The changes of the support service are fully evaluated from the families' perspective, giving us a new perspective to complement the previous other ones in study 1 and 2.

With these aspects in mind, we aim to complete the final research objective of the doctoral dissertation:

3. Assess from the families' perspective, whether change in professionals' interpersonal justice treatment towards them will lead to change in families' evaluation of organizational performance.

2   RESEARCH STUDIES

2.1   Outline of Objectives

As previously seen, organizational justice has a great impact on different facets of organizational life, and so the investigation of its effects within services that are aimed towards PID is of essential significance.

In this doctoral dissertation, we aim to understand organizational justice fully in the context of support services, particularly in the relationship that forms between service professionals and families of PID. Our general objective is to investigate the role of interpersonal justice to improve the relationship between families and professionals, as well to achieve a series of results considering family satisfaction with the centers, improved quality of service and performance oriented towards improving the QoL of people with intellectual disabilities.

To do this we want to explore organizational justice within the relationship between families and professionals from three different perspectives: a) a mutual perspective involving both professionals and families, b) the professionals' perspective, and c) the families' perspective. The above objective is the potentially improvement of the QoL of the PID by refining the relationship of the support service, which then positively relates to the service quality.

This general objective is achieved with three specific objectives that address interpersonal justice through a very complete empirical framework:

Objective 1: Determine the link from mutual interpersonal justice between professionals and families to service satisfaction, employee performance, as well as to organizational performance oriented towards the improvement of QoL.

Objective 2: Estimate how families' interpersonal justice behavior towards professionals is interrelated with professionals' trust in families over time.

Objective 3: Assess whether changes in professionals' interpersonal justice treatment towards families leads to changes in families' perception of the organizational performance oriented towards aspects of QoL of individuals with intellectual disability

Each one of the studies is composed around the presented objectives. A review of relevant research is presented, from which specific research hypotheses are derived.

2.2 General Methodology

In the following we will present the general logic around which we planted the methodology of the studies conducted in the presented doctoral dissertation. We will give an overview of the samples used, briefly describe how we plan on assessing the formulated research objectives with our samples and finally pointing out strengths of the samples for our study context. More detailed information about the methodology of our studies can be found in the individual research studies that are presented in the following chapter.

In all three studies, we used samples that formed part of different research projects conducted in cooperation with "*Plena Inclusión*", a federation of associations, which aims to improve QoL of people with intellectual disabilities on a Spanish national level. We can differentiate two types of centers that participated in the studies: 1) day-care centers that deliver educational, therapeutic and leisure services and 2) sheltered workshops focusing on the incorporation of its users eventually into the Spanish labor market.

Each of the research studies incorporates a different perspective to get a complete view of organizational justice and its effects within the service for PID. The perspective changes according to the established study objectives. We included front-line contact employees (nurses, psychologists, physiotherapists, occupational therapists, and social workers) that are in daily contact with the service users and families. We further included families to get another, more external perspective of the organization and the treatment (interpersonal justice) they receive from professionals.

The first study includes a mutual perspective, the second study zooms in on the professionals' perspective, then we conclude with a third study that explores the external perspective by families.

Our samples are adequate for the previously established research objectives, as the social service sector with its differences to other service sectors is characterized in broad client contact and participation, rather intangible service objectives, and its meaning and variety of service (Schneider & White, 2004). The service is usually very user oriented and can therefore differ greatly from one individual to another. In no other service sector, we find the unique constellation that is composed by service professional, service user, and family. The importance of studying the relationship between families and professionals lies in the active participation of the family in the service relationship, which is vital in order to achieve the ultimate objectives, to provide adequate services in order to improve the QoL of the service user, the person with intellectual disability. We are convinced that interpersonal justice is able to define the relationship and its quality within our sample, both from the professionals towards families as well as the treatment of families towards professionals. As the present doctoral project aims to get a holistic view on organizational justice within the service through the different perspectives, we find that each of the samples allowed us to complete our research objectives.

For data collection, each center chose one professional that would be the responsible person for the respective center, as well as the contact person for our research team. To explain the details of data gathering, we scheduled a training session to make sure that they were fully informed about correct data collection. During the trainings the focus was on random selection, considering professionals on the one hand and families on the other. Furthermore, we explained the criteria that had to be considered to be surveyed, such as that professionals had to be contact

employees, which meant that that had to have contact with PID as well as their family as part of their job on a daily basis.

Overall, we believe that the presented doctoral dissertation has the potential to add value to the organizational justice research particularly considering employee-customer research in services for people with risk of exclusion. First, each of the studies has been carried out with a different sample for the unique purpose to address very specific goals and contributions. Second, in order to assess interpersonal justice, we have used two types of informants – families and professionals. This allowed us to take into account the perspective of the family and the professionals. In addition to considering each of their perspective separately (study 2 and 3) we were able to study mutuality in the construct (study 1), using a multi-level approach. Hence, justice is conceived as a relational property where both parties are taken into account simultaneously and where the optimal situation occurs when both parties perceive a high degree of justice from the other party and further will come to an agreement on this. Third, we employed temporal dynamics on two accounts: as spirals (study 2) and as within-person approach (study 3). Taking into account temporal dynamics allows us further to contribute to modern justice literature as most of our constructs are rather dynamic in their nature and change over time (Matta *et al.,* 2017; Molenaar & Campnell, 2009; Nesselroade & Molenaar, 2010; Ram & Gerstorf, 2009; Van Geert & Van Dijk, 2021) justifying a growing demand for studies that consider dynamic and dyadic relationships (Bobocel, 2021).

The upcoming section contains the three research studies included in the present doctoral dissertation. Each study related to the previously mentioned objectives of the dissertation. In each study we will present a detailed literature review of all variables, a full description of the methodological aspects, including instruments, participants and procedure, statistical analysis, and strategy, as well as a disclosure of results and an in-depth discussion at the end.

3 RESEARCH ARTICLES

3.1 ARTICLE 1: Service Co-creation through Mutual Intergroup Justice in Centers for Individuals with Intellectual Disability

Abstract

We propose mutual intergroup justice as a means for co-creation in services for individuals with intellectual disabilities, focusing the attention on the relationship between professionals and families. We examine the links from mutual intergroup justice to three outcomes reported by families: satisfaction with the center, service quality delivered by professionals, and performance focused on the QoL of individuals with intellectual disability. We used data from 111 centers. In each center, a group of families (n = 845) and a group of professionals (n = 914) participated. Multilevel modelling revealed that mutual intergroup justice has a positive effect on satisfaction with the center, perceptions of functional and relational service quality, and performance based on QoL.

Keywords: mutual intergroup justice; satisfaction; service quality; intellectual disability

Introduction

Recent meta-analyses indicated that more than 70 million people around the world (approximately 1% of the global population) have an intellectual disability (Maulik, Mascarenhas, Mathers, Dua, & Saxena, 2011; McKenzie, Milton, Smith, & Ouellette-Kuntz, 2016). To respond to the needs of these individuals, modern societies have created services with the main objective of improving their Quality of Life (QoL). Targeting a very distinctive group of users, these types of services have relevant characteristics. First, the interaction between professionals and families, as service users, represents more than a mere transaction. Following the terminology of Price, Arnould, and Tierney (1995), the nature of this service is characterized by a long-time duration and strong emotional content. Furthermore, expectations related to the service are complex because they are tied not only to the accurate delivery of core services, but also to a higher objective, the improvement of QoL. Ultimately, the involvement of both professionals and families is critical to achieving the main objectives (Carter *et al.,* 2013), and so a high-quality relationship between these two groups becomes a necessary requirement to improve the QoL of service users (see Martínez-Tur, Moliner, Peñarroja, Gracia, & Peiró, 2015). With all these aspects in mind, and similarly to other human services (Beirão, Patrício, & Fisk, 2017), families are relevant cocreators of services and can contribute through their collaboration with professionals.

One critical way to achieve service co-creation is through mutual ethical actions where interacting participants treat each other with fairness, respect, and honesty (Neghina, Caniëls, Bloemer, & van Birgelen, 2015). Accordingly, this research study focuses on mutual intergroup justice between families and professionals of services for individuals with intellectual disabilities. The mutuality concept considers both the level of a specific variable and the degree to which the actors involved in the interaction agree on it (shared perception) (Ko, 2014; Martínez-Tur *et al.,* 2018). The mutuality concept can be transferred to justice within the

interaction between two or more people or groups. Therefore, not only will the amount of fairness each party brings to the interaction be considered, but also the degree to which each party agrees with the other about the amount of justice they perceive during the interaction. Optimal mutual intergroup justice emerges when there is agreement that high justice exists between the two actors or groups involved in service organizations (i.e., professionals and families).

This approach to justice provides us with specific research and managerial contributions related to services for individuals with intellectual disability. First, both professionals and families are viewed as sources and recipients of justice at the same time. Previous justice research has often been one-sided in terms of the degree to which an individual or group is treated fairly by another. Typically, in service contexts, the focus is on customers' justice perceptions of efforts made by a company (Crisafulli & Singh, 2016). This perspective is limited because the service user (e.g., the family) can also be seen as a source of justice, especially when there is a long-term relationship with professionals over time, as in services for individuals with intellectual disability. Second, by introducing mutual intergroup justice, we can provide an indicator of the quality of the relationship that emerges, beyond the perspective of only one of the actors involved. Hence, each part (employee and family) will be regarded as a significant actor involved in a relationship in which each of them is giving and receiving (un)fair treatment. Because cooperation between professionals and families is necessary in this type of service in order to achieve critical objectives (Carter *et al.,* 2013), mutual intergroup justice helps to create an environment for adequate performance of services for individuals with intellectual disability. Mutual ethical action has been proposed as a relevant dimension of co-creation (Neghina *et al.,* 2015), but there is a lack of empirical evidence. The current research study contributes to the service co-creation literature by examining the role of mutual intergroup justice in service performance in a real context. We

anticipate that an optimal relationship between the two parties (high mutual intergroup justice) will be positively associated with three outcomes: family satisfaction, service quality, and organizational performance focused on the QoL of individuals with intellectual disability.

Interpersonal Justice

The study of justice was already a topic of interest during the times of Plato and Socrates (Colquitt *et al.,* 2001). Often described as righteousness, justice was a common issue in philosophical ethics, where philosophers questioned the right and wrong of behaviors and systems. Justice research has evolved in many ways, leading to different theories about what people perceive as fair and how justice works in different contexts. Over time, justice has gone beyond the legal perspective to become an essential element of organizational functioning and service delivery. The present study focuses on interpersonal justice, defined as the degree to which people are treated with respect, dignity, and politeness (Colquitt, 2001), which is the relevant dimension for the purposes of this study. When families and professionals interact with each other, interpersonal justice becomes ubiquitous. By contrast, other dimensions, such as the ratio of costs and benefits managed by the organization (distributive justice) or the fairness of procedures implemented by managers (procedural justice), go beyond the mutual relationship between professionals and families. In the interaction between professionals and families, neither party is a formal authority that decides on costs, benefits, and procedures, but there is an emergent property corresponding to the quality of the relationship, and it is reflected in the way each party treats the other in interpersonal terms. Accordingly, we concentrate on interpersonal justice in this study.

Mutual Intergroup Justice at the Organizational Level

Mutual intergroup justice is introduced in this manuscript as an analogy to findings and research on mutual trust (e.g., Smith & Barclay, 1997) and mutual communication (Martínez-Tur *et al.,* 2018). Accordingly, mutual intergroup justice is defined as the interpersonal

treatment in the relationship between two groups, and it is simultaneously characterized by two aspects: (a) the level of interpersonal justice perceived by each party; and (b) the agreement between the parties about this level of interpersonal justice. A high level of interpersonal justice is necessary to form an adequate relationship between the two parties; however, the key aspect is the agreement that leads to mutual intergroup justice perceptions in positive social relations. In fact, it is difficult to accept that a good relationship exists if one of the parties does not agree that there is fair treatment in the relationship. Therefore, it is reasonable to view the relationship as optimal when a high level of interpersonal justice is simultaneously supported by high levels of agreement about this level between the groups (i.e., professionals and families).

Mutual intergroup justice occurs at the organizational level, describing the quality of the relationship between the two groups involved (professionals and families) in each service organization for individuals with intellectual disability. As mentioned above, in this type of service, the relationship between professionals and families usually lasts for years, thus providing an ideal context for the emergence of shared justice perceptions within each group. An explanation for this can be found in the structuralist approach (Schneider & Reichers, 1983), according to which the mere exposure to similar practices and experiences facilitates the emergence of shared views and justice perceptions (Naumann & Bennet, 2000). Over time, professionals will agree on the way families treat them in terms of interpersonal justice, facilitating the emergence of shared perceptions of justice among professionals. Similarly, families perceive the way professionals treat them over time, leading to the existence of shared perceptions of interpersonal justice among families. In addition, social interactions within each group reinforce the emergence of shared perceptions (Maxham & Netemeyer, 2003). Whitman *et al.,* (2012) and Li, Cropanzano & Molina (2015) used social information processing (SIP) to argue that discussion about justice events leads to similar perceptions. Accordingly, during shared working hours, professionals have the opportunity to discuss their interpersonal justice

experiences. Discussion about interpersonal justice within the group of families in each organization is also possible because their relationship with this type of service organization and its professionals is extended over time. The existence of shared justice perceptions within each group (i.e., professionals vs. families) does not mean that visions are equivalent between groups. Hence, it is reasonable to assume that intergroup differences can exist. Therefore, mutuality at the organizational level incorporates the combination of direct consensus and dispersion models (see Martínez-Tur *et al.,* 2018). Direct consensus models postulate agreement among the participants, whereas dispersion models focus on disagreement and the extent to which there is variability among participants (Dawson, González-Roma, Davis, & West, 2008). Mutual intergroup justice at the organizational level combines the two approaches: on the one hand, agreement is expected within each group, but it is possible to encounter disagreement in the way the two groups (professionals and families) perceive each other.

Linking Mutual Intergroup Justice to Satisfaction and Service Performance

We argue that mutual intergroup justice between professionals and families can predict both satisfaction with the use of services and relevant indicators of performance in services for individuals with intellectual disability. Customer *satisfaction* has been defined as the favorability of the individual's subjective evaluations of the outcomes and experiences associated with consumption activities (Moliner *et al.,* 2017). Because of the specific characteristics of services (e.g., the customer is usually physically present at the service setting), the employee is the visible face of the organization for the customer and a main source of his/her satisfaction with the service (Delcourt, Gremler, De Zanet, & van Riel, 2017; Tyler & Wells, 2019). Traditionally, customers have been seen as passive actors who react, with more or less satisfaction, to professionals' efforts and behaviors. However, this perspective becomes limited because service encounters are often bidirectional and, hence, allow the

customer to have an active role (see Zablah, *et al.,* 2016). This is particularly visible in services for individuals with intellectual disability, where the participation of families is necessary to achieve the established objectives. Therefore, the family is considered a significant cocreator of the service, as usually occurs in human service organizations (Beirão *et al.,* 2017).

Traditionally, satisfaction has been based on experiences and outcomes that service users (e.g., families) receive during service encounters. However, we propose that families' contribution to an optimal relationship with professionals, in terms of interpersonal justice, is also related to their satisfaction. Nelson and colleagues (2016) noted that the individual's pursuit of happiness not only encourages a focus on oneself and one's needs, but it also directs the attention to others. Their research proposed that performing acts out of kindness for others may trigger positive emotions such as gratitude, love, and trust within the relationship, whereas performing an act out of self-kindness may not offer this opportunity. In fact, it might even lead to negative emotions such as guilt and selfishness. In other words, if individuals do pleasant things for others, they are likely to have greater feelings of joy, contentment, and satisfaction, which will further promote their overall happiness (Nelson *et al.,* 2016). These arguments can be transferred to the interaction between professionals and families in services for individuals with intellectual disability. It is reasonable to expect a positive relationship between satisfaction with the center and the degree to which the group of professionals and the group of families contribute to good social relations in terms of interpersonal justice. Mutual intergroup justice (professionals and families agree that they treat each other in a fair way) means that the active role of giving good treatment in the service organization is not restricted to the group of professionals. By contrast, through mutual intergroup justice at the organizational level, the group of families also contributes to the formation of good relations with the group of professionals, describing an active co-creation role that is positively related to families' satisfaction. Based on these arguments, we propose the following hypothesis:

Hypothesis 1: Mutual intergroup justice (between professionals and families) at the organizational level is positively related to individual family satisfaction with the service.

We also propose that mutual intergroup justice is linked to service performance directed to individuals with intellectual disability. In the present research study, we consider three critical indicators of organizational performance that focus on the service delivered to individuals with intellectual disability. The first two indicators are based on the well-known differentiation between functional vs. relational service quality (e.g., Gwinner, Gremler, & Bitner, 1998; Liu *et al.,* 2017; Molina *et al.,* 2016). *Functional service quality* refers to the degree to which the core service is delivered with expertise and efficiency. In organizations for individuals with intellectual disability, there are core prescribed tasks that should be performed as well as possible (e.g., care services, workshop training). However, the service delivery cannot be restricted to functional aspects. *Relational service quality* focuses on emotional and social benefits for the service user beyond the instrumental nature of functional facets. It includes aspects such empathy, authentic understanding, and little extras or special recognition. These aspects are especially relevant in services for individuals with intellectual disability because they describe a way of delivering the service that "signals appreciation and esteem towards vulnerable service users" (Molina *et al.,* 2015, p. 630). Finally, we also consider a more contextualized indicator of organizational performance that focuses on the main goal of services for individuals with intellectual disability: improving the QoL of service users. According to Moliner, Gracia, Lorente, & Martínez-Tur (2013), the definition and assessment of organizational performance can be contextualized to diagnose the improvement in the QoL of service users due to the actions and efforts of organizations. Therefore, a measure of organizational performance focused on QoL captures the nature of services for individuals with intellectual disability.

It is generally assumed that a good relationship between professionals and families is crucial in achieving adequate performance in service organizations for individuals with intellectual disability (Carter *et al.,* 2013; Martínez-Tur *et al.,* 2015). After all, both groups can jointly contribute to organizational performance because they both contribute to providing a high QoL for the person with intellectual disabilities. Mutual ethical actions are relevant for this service co-creation because they involve collaboration, avoid opportunistic behavior, and reflect a humanistic approach to service interactions (Vargo & Lusch, 2008) as key elements for vulnerable service users (i.e., individuals with intellectual disability). However, there is a lack of empirical evidence related to this question. Based on intergroup contact theory (Allport, 1935), empirical evidence has confirmed that mere contact is not sufficient to change the intergroup attitudes between professionals and clients, but the quality of the relationship is what allows a more positive interaction (Liebkind, Haaramo, & Jasinskaja-Lahti, 2000). A similar rationale can be transferred to service organizations for individuals with intellectual disability. "Healthy" intergroup contact between professionals and families is characterized by social exchange based on "giving and receiving" fair interpersonal treatment, which means that both groups agree that high levels of dignity and respect exist through mutual intergroup justice. High mutual justice between professionals and families is the adequate *breeding ground* for organizational performance directed to individuals with intellectual disability. Both professionals and families share the same critical goal: improving the QoL of individuals with intellectual disability. A high-quality relationship between these two groups, in terms of interpersonal justice, should facilitate positive organizational efforts to achieve this goal. By contrast, it is likely that low mutual intergroup justice leads to difficulties in achieving satisfactory organizational performance. Accordingly, we propose the following hypothesis:

Hypothesis 2: Mutual intergroup justice (professionals and families) at the organizational level is positively related to service performance in terms of functional service quality (H2a), relational service quality (H2b), and organizational performance focused on QoL (H2c).

Method

Participants and Procedure

A total of 118 small centers, each affiliated with an NGO for Persons with Intellectual Disability ("Plena Inclusión", Spain), participated in the current research study. Each small center is considered a work unit that provides services to individuals with intellectual disability. Two types of informants were surveyed: 937 professionals and 876 customers (families). Two types of centers participated in the research study: sheltered workshop and day-care services. Participating professionals and families were randomly chosen in each center.

The participation was confidential and voluntary. In order to carry out the random selection (assigning codes to professionals and families) and perform the data collection, researchers trained one employee per center. This procedure resulted in a very satisfactory response rate, above 90% for both professionals and families. To be eligible, professionals had to have contact with individuals with intellectual disability as part of their daily work. After the families from each center had been randomly selected, one family per family was invited to participate in the research study. The participating family was the one who had more direct and frequent contact with the center, its activities, and its professionals. Because some of the measures used for the statistical analyses were aggregated at the organizational level, at least three usable surveys per center, from both professionals and families, were required. In addition, participating professionals from each center represented at least 60% of the members under the direct supervision of the manager of the center (Liden, Erdogan, Wayne, & Sparrowe, 2006).

Of the total number of participating centers, seven were excluded because they did not meet the requirements. Therefore, 111 centers (49.2% were sheltered workshop services, and 50.8% were day-care services) were represented in the final sample (914 professionals and 845 families). professionals ranged from 3 to 24 per center (M = 5.06), with an average tenure of 11.28 years. Families ranged from 3 to 11 per center (M= 4.64), and they had used the center for an average of 8.80 years. Regarding the professionals, 75.5% were women, and their average age was 37.64 years. In the case of the families, 67% were women, and their average age was 57.56 years.

Measures

Interpersonal justice between groups (professionals and families). To assess interpersonal justice perceptions, three items from Colquitt's (2001) justice scale were used, adapting them to the context of services for individuals with intellectual disability. With this measure, the quality of the interpersonal treatment between families and professionals was assessed. Professionals reported on the treatment they received from families (α =.96) (e.g. "Families treat employees of this center with kindness and courtesy"). Using the same three items, families reported on the treatment they received from employees (α =.89) (e.g. "Employees of this center treat the families with respect"). The justice items were scored on a 7-point Likert scale ranging from 1= *completely disagree* to 7 = *completely agree*. Justice perceptions were aggregated at the center level for both professionals and families. For this reason, we used the referent shift consensus model in writing the items, considering the center as a whole rather than the individual justice perceptions (Van Mierlo, Vermunt, & Rutte, 2009). More specifically, professionals answered the items considering families from the center as a whole, whereas families reported their justice perceptions taking into account the professionals from the center as a whole. A high score indicates a high level of perceived interpersonal justice.

Satisfaction with the service. We used the three-item reduced scale of satisfaction (Gotlieb, Grewal, & Brown, 1994; Martínez-Tur, Peiró, Ramos, & Moliner, 2006), based on Oliver's scale (1980), which measures satisfaction and feelings of families associated with the choice of the center (α = .83) (e.g. "I am happy that my family with an intellectual disability is using this center"). The response scale ranged from 0 = *completely disagree* to 10 = *completely agree*.

Service Quality. Families reported on service quality using the 7-item scale validated by Molina *et al.* (2015). The *functional service quality* measure includes four items that refer to employee reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and personalized attention (e.g. "intellectually disabled people are taken care of as quickly as required by each situation") (α = .74). The *relational service quality* measure includes three items that reflect empathy, extras, and authentic understanding (e.g. "This center does things to make the people with intellectual disabilities feel important and special") (α = .81). All the items were rated on a 7-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 = *strongly disagree* to 7 = *strongly agree*.

Organizational Performance focused on Quality of Life. We used a 5-item scale validated by Moliner *et al.* (2013) that focuses on the degree to which the QoL of the individual with intellectual disability has improved due to the actions and efforts of the center, as reported by families (α = .89) (e.g. "The QoL of the person with intellectual disabilities under my responsibility has improved because of this center"). The ratings were given on a 7-point Likert scale, with options ranging from 1 = *strongly disagree* to 7 = *strongly agree*.

Control Variables. Regarding families, we controlled for age, sex (as a dummy variable, 0 for women and 1 for men), and individual perceptions of interpersonal justice. It is reasonable to expect that older participants would have more experience with the center in question, which would affect their evaluation of the services. In addition, it is well known that the evaluation of services can be related to the age and sex of customers (Choi, Lee, Kim, &

Lee, 2005). We also controlled for family justice perceptions at the individual level because it is relevant to check whether service co-creation through mutual intergroup justice at the center level is significantly linked to outcomes beyond individual perceptions. In other words, does mutual intergroup justice at the center level have significant relationships with the outcomes, regardless of the treatment each family perceives? At the center level, we controlled for type of center as a dummy variable: sheltered workshop (assigned with 0) and day-care services (assigned with 1). We considered type of center as a control variable because it is possible that satisfaction and performance evaluations are related to the different characteristics of these two types of centers.

Computing Mutual Intergroup Justice at the Organizational Level

Mutual intergroup justice was computed as in previous measures of mutual trust (Martínez-Tur *et al.,* 2016; Smith & Barclay, 1997). Accordingly, we followed a two-step procedure: a) aggregation of justice scores at the center level of justice scores, for both professionals and families separately; and b) computation of the square root of the product of families' justice perception and professionals' justice perception. Therefore, the first step consisted of aggregating justice perceptions in order to obtain two scores per center, one for professionals and one for families. To examine whether the aggregation was justified statistically, within-group agreement had to be assessed using a consensus-based approach (computation of the Average Deviation Index, or ADI). The ADI, initially proposed by Burke, Finkelstein, & Dusig (1999), provides an estimate of within-team agreement. Burke & Dunlap (2002) developed and proposed a practical upper limit criterion of c/6 (c is the number of response categories in the response scale) for interpreting AD indices. For interpersonal justice, we worked with a 7-point Likert scale leading to c = 7, and consequently, to an upper limit criterion of c/6 = 1.16. The ADI values were below the cutoff (1.16) for both families (M = .28; SD = 0.26) and professionals (M = .69; SD = .30), supporting aggregation at the center

level for both informants. Furthermore, we carried out one-way ANOVAs to check whether the expected discrimination between centers existed. Discrimination was confirmed for families $F_{(110, 721)} = 1.56$ ($p < .01$), and for professionals $F_{(110, 765)} = 3.30$ ($p < .01$). Taken as a whole, the results supported the aggregation at the center level of justice perceptions, for both professionals and families.

The second step in achieving mutual intergroup justice was to compute the square root product of families' justice perceptions and professionals' justice perceptions (see below). Smith & Barclay (1997) recommended this strategy because it has three main advantages: a) it respects the original metrics, facilitating interpretation; b) there are fewer inflated correlations due to the size of the groups; and c) it includes both level and agreement. The latter is especially relevant for the current research study, making it possible to capture mutual intergroup justice between professionals and families by considering both the overall (the justice scores of professionals and families taken together) level of interpersonal justice and the level of agreement. The square root product reflects both level and agreement. The extent to which the two parts agree has an effect on the final mutual intergroup justice, with disagreement reducing the final score. For instance, disagreement between professionals and families, with scores such as [3, 1], would produce lower mutual intergroup justice [$\sqrt{3 \times 1} = 1.73$] than agreement, such as [2, 2], [$\sqrt{2 \times 2} = 2$], even though the overall levels in these two examples are identical: (3 + 1) / 2 = 2; (2 + 2) / 2 = 2.

Statistical Plan for hypothesis testing

We computed multilevel structural equation modelling (MSEM) with robust maximum likelihood (RML) estimation to assess the hypotheses, using Mplus Version 7.0 (Muthén & Muthén, 2012), with observations nested within units. We used four 2-1 models with two levels (see Figure 2), one per outcome: satisfaction, functional service quality, relational service quality, and performance focused on QoL.
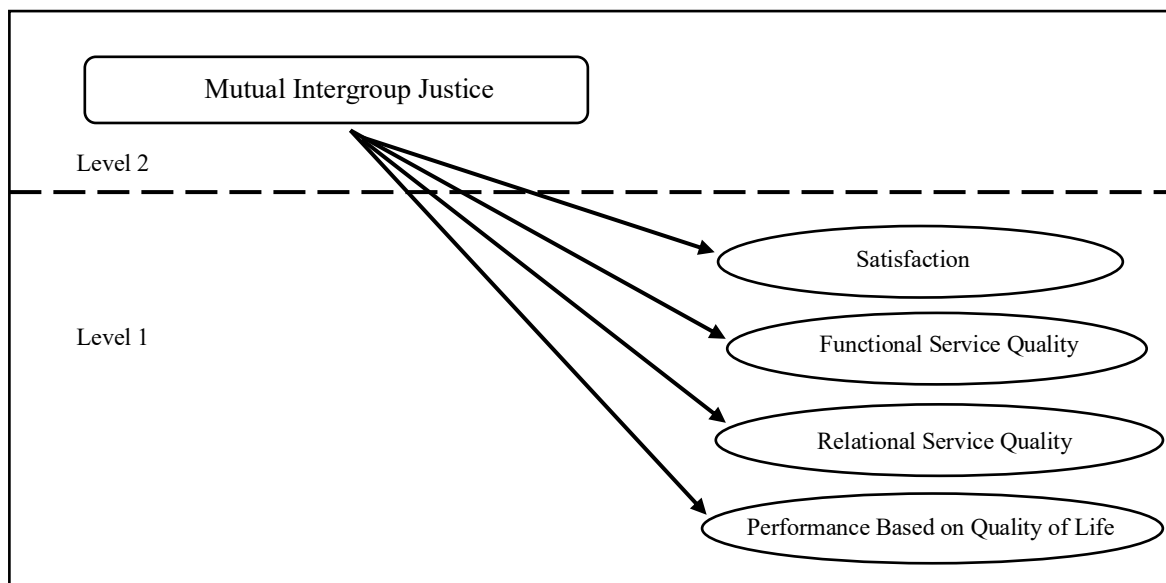
Figure 2. Multilevel Model

Results

Means, standard deviations, and correlation scores are shown in Table 1. Mutual intergroup justice was positively correlated with satisfaction with the service ($r = .17$, $p < .01$), functional service quality ($r = .20$, $p < .01$), relational service quality ($r = .19$, $p < .01$), and performance based on QoL ($r = .23$, $p < .01$). Individual interpersonal justice perceptions of families also had positive significant links with all the outcome variables.

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics and Correlations

	Mean	*SD*	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1. MIG Justice	6.09	0.43									
2. Type of Center	--	--	0.07*								
Family Members											
3. Sex	--	--	-0.02	-0.03							
4. Age	57.56	11.60	0.02	0.01	-.019**						
5. II Justice	6.70	0.60	0.20**	0.04	-0.04	0.02	(0.89)				
6. Satisfaction	9.26	1.24	0.17**	0.10**	0.01	0.08*	0.41**	(0.83)			
7. Functional SQ	6.13	0.79	0.20**	0.10**	-0.01	0.13**	0.51**	0.55**	(0.74)		
8. Relational SQ	6.27	0.83	0.19**	0.01	-0.01	0.01	0.56**	0.49**	0.68**	(0.81)	
9. P QoL	6.21	0.86	0.23**	-0.01	-0.02	0.01	0.53**	0.58**	0.61**	0.68**	(0.89)

Note. SD-standard deviation; MIG Justice-Mutual Intergroup Justice; IIJ-Individual Interpersonal Justice; SQ-Service Quality; P QoL-Performance based on Quality of Life.
Pearson's correlation coefficient was computed for interval data. Spearman rank correlation was used when the data were dummy. Cronbach's alpha coefficients in brackets.
*$p < .05$; **$p < .01$.

The proposed four 2-1 models showed a good fit to the data (see Table 2). Table 3 shows the results of the MSEM analysis. In H1, we proposed that mutual intergroup justice, in terms of interpersonal treatment (interpersonal justice), would be able to predict families' satisfaction with the service. There was a significant relationship between mutual intergroup justice at the center level (level 2) and satisfaction of families at the individual level (level 1) ($\beta = 0.34$, $p < .01$), thus supporting H1.

Table 2. Fit Indices of the Hypothesized Models

	χ^2	df	RMSEA	CFI	TLI
Model 1. Satisfaction	0.022	1	0.000	1.000	1.059
Model 2. Functional SQ	0.021	1	0.000	1.000	1.026
Model 3. Relational SQ	0.010	1	0.000	1.000	1.897
Model 4. P QoL	0.021	1	0.000	1.000	1.035
Cut-offs	---	---	< 0.10	> 0.90	> 0.90

Note. df-degrees of freedom; SQ-Service Quality; P QoL-Performance Based on Quality of Life.

Table 3. Multilevel Analysis

	Satisfaction		Functional SQ		Relational SQ		P QoL	
	Parameter	SE	Parameter	SE	Parameter	SE	Parameter	SE
within								
Sex	0.05	0.08	0.03	0.06	0.01	0.01	0.02	0.06
Age	0.01*	0.01	0.01**	0.01	0.18	0.15	0.01	0.01
II Justice	0.78**	0.13	0.63**	0.05	-0.04	0.05	0.69**	0.07
between								
MIG Justice	0.34**	0.10	0.21**	0.08	0.25*	0.11	0.26*	0.11
Type of Center	0.21*	0.10	0.12*	0.06	0.04	0.05	0.01	0.06

Note. II Justice-Individual Interpersonal Justice; MIG Justice-Mutual Intergroup Justice; SQ-Service Quality; P QoL-Performance based on Quality of Life.
Coefficients are unstandardized.
*$p <. 05$; **$p < .01$.

Results also supported H2, H3, and H4, showing significant relationships between mutual intergroup justice at the center level (level 2) and the three indicators of performance at the individual level (level 1). Our findings showed positive links from mutual intergroup justice to functional service quality (H2; $\beta = .21$, $p < .01$), relational service quality (H3; $\beta = .25$, $p < .05$), and performance focused on QoL (H4; $\beta = .26$, $p < .05$).

Discussion

The present research study focused on mutual intergroup justice in the relationship between families and professionals of centers for individuals with intellectual disabilities. Our findings indicated that mutual intergroup justice, in terms of interpersonal treatment (interpersonal justice), was able to predict the outcomes of families' satisfaction with the center, families' perception of functional and relational service quality, and performance focused on the QoL of individuals with intellectual disabilities.

Theoretical Implications

Traditional justice research has often focused on one side of a relationship, for example, the degree to which service users perceive fair treatment from professionals. Although this one-sided perspective has facilitated advances in knowledge, it neglected a more complete and richer view of justice as a relationship property where different parts of an interaction are jointly considered. This is especially relevant in human service organizations such as those for individuals with intellectual disability. In these types of services, there are extended (long-term) relations between professionals and service users (i.e., families) over time. More specifically, families could play an active role, displaying (un)fair behaviors directed to professionals. Considering previous research efforts on relevant phenomena such as mutual trust (Brower, Lester, Korsgaard, & Dineen, 2009; Martínez-Tur *et al.,* 2016), the current study introduces mutual intergroup justice as a construct that describes a critical facet of mutual ethical action in the process of service co-creation (Neghina *et al.,* 2015). Our findings

confirmed the existence of mutual intergroup justice between professionals and families at the organizational level, predicting satisfaction with the center and performance evaluations beyond families' individual justice perceptions. Accordingly, creating a service environment characterized by mutual intergroup justice between families and professionals (where each party treats the other fairly in their interpersonal relations) explains variance in positive outcomes in the delivery of services that is not captured by the one-sided perspective of the individual justice perceived by families. Mutual intergroup justice considers level and agreement simultaneously. In the co-creation of services for individuals with intellectual disability, optimal mutual intergroup justice reflects an intergroup relationship where both parties (professionals and families) agree that high fair interpersonal treatment exists in their interactions, producing the positive effects found in this study.

One of the positive outcomes investigated in the current research study was satisfaction of families with the center. Of course, satisfaction is linked to the degree to which each family perceives, at the individual level and as a recipient of the service, fair treatment from professionals. However, this one-sided and self-focused perspective attributes a passive role to the families. From a rationale of co-creation of services, the active contribution of families should also produce a favorable evaluation of the center. Previous research efforts (Aknin *et al.,* 2013; Nelson *et al.,* 2016) have confirmed that positive behaviors oriented towards others (e.g., prosocial behaviors) not only have benefits for the receiver, but also for the giver. In fact, positive behavior toward others is emotionally rewarding for human beings in different cross-cultural contexts (Aknin *et al.,* 2013). Positive behaviors directed to others help to stimulate emotions such as joy, happiness, and satisfaction (Anik *et al.,* 2013; Nelson *et al.,* 2016). The current research study transferred this rationale to the intergroup relations between professionals and families in centers for individuals with intellectual disability. Giving and receiving fair treatment implies a high level of dignity and respect from both sides in the

intergroup relationship. The role of families is expanded because they are also able to contribute actively to fair intergroup treatment, creating a context that is rewarding to them in terms of satisfaction. Our findings confirmed this proposition, showing a positive link from mutual intergroup justice to families' satisfaction with the center.

The other type of positive outcome examined in the current study was service performance directed to individuals with intellectual disability. To do so, we considered three indicators: functional service quality, relational service quality, and performance focused on QoL. The differentiation between functional (degree to which the core service is delivered with expertise and efficiently) vs. relational (emotional and social benefits for the service user beyond the instrumental nature of functional facets) service quality has been well-established in the literature (e.g., Gwinner *et al.,* 1998; Liu *et al.,* 2017; Molina *et al.,* 2015; Rod, Ashill & Gibbs, 2016). In addition, the current research study also considered a contextualized measure of service performance (Moliner *et al.,* 2013) that focuses on the degree to which the center is able to achieve its main goal: improving the QoL of individuals with intellectual disability. Although scholars have suggested that a good relationship between professionals and families is necessary to enhance service performance for individuals with intellectual disability (Carter *et al.,* 2013; Martínez-Tur *et al.,* 2015), empirical findings were lacking. Mutual intergroup justice describes a high-quality relationship characterized by "giving and receiving" fair interpersonal treatment. This social exchange should facilitate positive co-creation of the service because both groups are responsible for improving the QoL of individuals with intellectual disability. Mutual intergroup justice helps to create an adequate environment for service performance. Our results confirmed this argument by showing consistent significant links from mutual intergroup justice to the different indicators of service performance directed to individuals with intellectual disability.

Practical Implications

Our results also lead to a number of practical implications that can help to provide organizations with knowledge about how to foster a service co-creation environment characterized by mutual intergroup justice. Because mutual intergroup justice requires not only high justice but also shared perceptions, it can only evolve through social contact and collaboration between professionals and families. Therefore, managers should promote close interactions and cooperation between the two groups to achieve important goals. These types of actions probably require a training process for both professionals and families in order to share with them the relevance of interpersonal justice in their interactions, the important active role of families in creating a fair service environment in intergroup relations, and the adequate co-creation of services through mutual ethical actions. Additionally, mixed teams (composed of professionals and families) could be created to design and implement projects where one of the functioning requirements is to display fair behaviors in interpersonal terms.

Limitations and Future Research

The current research study has a number of limitations that could provide input for further research efforts. First, our design was based on a survey study. It had a very important advantage: the investigation was carried out in a real context with the participation of professionals and families who were involved in the life of centers for individuals with intellectual disability. However, solid causal links cannot be established. It would be interesting to investigate this relationship using other research designs. For example, experiments could be conducted to examine whether stimulating fair intergroup treatment produces positive outcomes, comparing an experimental condition to a control condition. Second, we used self-reports to measure our variables. Although the joint consideration of perceptions of professionals and families is a positive contribution of the study, going beyond the traditional one-sided perspective, future research studies could consider other measures that are not based

on perceptions (e.g., objective indicators of QoL). The use of other relevant sources of information (e.g., the individual with intellectual disability) could also be taken into account. This consideration of other measures and sources of information will allow rigorous replicability of our findings. Despite these limitations, the current study takes an initial step in investigating mutual intergroup justice between professionals and families, and its links to service performance directed to individuals with intellectual disability.

Conclusion

Our study is congruent with the idea that families do not have a passive role. Instead, both professionals and families are significant actors in achieving good service delivery. Fair and mutual intergroup treatment is a positive way to achieve the co-creation of services, describing a service context that enhances not only satisfaction with the center, but also performance. The generalization of justice in intergroup relations is confirmed as a constructive way to understand service performance oriented towards individuals with intellectual disability.

3.2 ARTICLE 2: Which Came First – the Chicken or the Egg? Simultaneity of Interpersonal Justice and Professionals' Trust in Families

Abstract

This study investigates the dynamic relationship between the treatment professionals receive from families (in terms of interpersonal justice) and professionals' trust in families, focusing on organizations for individuals with intellectual disability.–We studied data from 179 professionals, measuring interpersonal justice and trust three times with a separation of four weeks. We tested and compared four different models using structural equation modeling (SEM): a) stability, b) "justice as initiator" (a spiral initiated by interpersonal justice), c) "trust as initiator" (a spiral initiated by trust), and d) "double spiral" (interpersonal justice and trust are both initiators of dynamic spirals).

Our findings support the superiority of the double spiral model over the other alternatives, leading to a complex view of the relationship between justice and trust. Both the social context (interpersonal justice) and personal attitudes (trust) are simultaneous initiators of parallel spirals that describe how professionals develop positive evaluations of families over time.

Keywords: interpersonal justice, trust, spiral dynamic, attitudes

Introduction

Based on international policies (UN DESA, 2019), today's societies increasingly dedicate organizations and support services to the objective of improving the Quality of Life (QoL) of PID (Schalock & Verdugo, 2012). These are complex services where professionals and families have to cooperate in order to achieve relevant goals (Carter *et al.,* 2013; Colarusso & O'Rourke, 2007; Meppelder, Hodes, Kef & Schuengel, 2014; Mereoiu, Abercrombie. & Murray, 2016; Turnbull, Turnbull, Erwin & Soodak, 2006). In addition, fruitful partnerships between professionals and families provide benefits such as lower levels of stress in mothers (Burke & Hodapp, 2014) and better QoL for families (Eskow, Summers, Chasson & Mitchell, 2018). An adequate partnership requires high-quality relationships characterized by trust between the two parties (Turnbull & Turnbull, 2015). However, empirical evidence has shown an asymmetry in the degree to which professionals and families trust each other. Adams and Christenson (1998) found that families trust professionals more than professionals trust families. Similarly, Angell, Stoner and Shelden (2009) reported the existence of families' "unconditional" trust in professionals. More recently, Vidal and colleagues. (2020) again confirmed this asymmetry. They understood that professionals have a status based on knowledge and expertise that facilitates high trust from families. By contrast, this status is not usually associated with families. Therefore, an important challenge is to examine the process through which professionals develop high trust in families, that is, how professionals perceive that families "will act in a way to benefit or sustain the relationship" (Adams & Christenson, 1998, p. 6). Because families lack the traditional reputation and credentials that the experts have, it is plausible that the social interaction and the interpersonal treatment received from families are relevant factors in understanding professionals' trust in families. Accordingly, interpersonal justice –defined as the degree to which people (i.e., professionals) are treated with politeness, dignity, and respect (Colquitt, 2001)– and its interrelation with trust become crucial.

With this in mind, the present study seeks to gain a better understanding of the way interpersonal justice and trust are connected and evolve dynamically over time from the perspective of professionals. We contribute to this knowledge in different ways. First, we extend the research on fairness by including families as a source of justice. According to the multi-foci approach to justice, there are different sources of justice in organizations, such as supervisors, peers, and clients (Lavelle, Rupp & Brocker, 2007). However, the role of families as service users has been somewhat neglected. It is hard to view families as mere passive clients in organizations for individuals with intellectual disability. In fact, families play an active role, along with professionals, as co-creators of services and support systems (Gur & Stein, 2019; Maniezki, Martínez-Tur, Estreder & Moliner, 2021). In their social interactions with professionals, families might show respectful behavior or, conversely, act out and even display incivility (e.g., Campana & Hammoud, 2015). This is relevant information for professionals with regard to their trust in families. Second, this study helps to clarify the direction of the relationship between interpersonal justice and trust in organizations for individuals with intellectual disability. In other organizational contexts (see Colquitt & Rodell, 2011), the majority of the studies indicate that justice is an antecedent of trust, whereas other investigations identify trust as a possible antecedent of justice, thus reversing the relationship (Holtz, 2013; 2015). More recently, Kaltiainen, Lipponen, and Holtz (2017) suggested the existence of reciprocal relations. Our study aims to find out which of these alternatives can be supported in professionals' evaluations of families: What is the initiator of a positive spiral in the social interaction? Do interpersonal justice, trust, or even both concepts act as precursors? We aim to test the relationship between justice and trust over time, considering dynamic spiral models that allow us to assess how these two constructs are interrelated over time. Finally, we measured both constructs three times, addressing calls to study trust and related concepts dynamically and solidly test the causality direction (see Tjosvold, Wan, & Tang 2016). In

addition, because almost all organizational constructs change over time (George & Jones, 2000; Roe, 2008), our dynamic perspective allows us to more accurately capture the complexity of interpersonal justice and trust.

Interpersonal justice as initiator of the spiral

A context-oriented model of human behavior has dominated the research in organizations in general. It is commonly accepted that the context is the precursor that leads to personal attitudes and behaviors. People generally perceive and process information from their contexts, in order to make sense of their social environment and then arrive at their attitudes and behaviors (see Fiske &Taylor, 1984). An example is the investigation of the justice-trust relationship, with scholars predominantly considering that justice is the precursor that leads to trust (see Cohen-Charash & Spector, 2001; Colquitt *et al.,* 2013; Colquitt & Rodell, 2011; Dirks & Ferrin, 2001; Rupp *et al.,* 2014). Based on the social exchange theory (Blau, 1964), scholars propose that organizational members perceive the treatment they receive from others in their context (supervisors, peers, clients) and tend to reciprocate with positive or negative attitudes in terms of trust or distrust (degree to which the source of trust is trustworthy) (see Colquitt *et al.,* 2013). This rationale can be transferred to the social interaction between professionals and families. Families' behavior serves as a source of relevant information from the social context to evoke attitudes among professionals in terms of trust, that is, the degree to which professionals consider families trustworthy. Although there are different factors that might explain trust (Mayer, Davis, & Schoorman 1995), what professionals can access and cognitively evaluate in order to build their (dis)trust is the interpersonal justice treatment they receive from families. Hence, a somewhat deliberate process occurs (Srull & Wyers, 1979) where professionals evaluate the treatment they receive from families and consequently develop an attitude of more or less trust. It is well-known that, once the attitude develops, it helps to interpret the social reality (Fazio, 1986). Accordingly, professionals' trust in families

will guide any future perceptions about the treatment received by families (interpersonal treatment). Trust will thus "tinge" the way behavior is perceived, as Kaltiainen and colleagues (2017) state, in the form of confirmation bias or behavioral confirmation (Kaltiainen *et al.,* 2017; Nickerson, 1998). In other words, people tend to perceive reality according to their previous attitudes. In sum, we propose that when professionals are treated fairly by families, they will develop trust as a consequence of this evaluation process. This trust will subsequently guide the way future fairness treatments are perceived and, thus, tend to lead to the positive evaluation of further justice treatment. Therefore, we are presented with a positive spiral that starts with justice: justice – trust – justice:

H1: Professionals' perceptions of families' justice treatment in T1 will have positive effects on professionals' trust in families in T2, which will then have subsequent positive effects on professionals' perceptions of families' justice treatment in T3.

Trust as initiator of the spiral

Despite the aforementioned predominance of the context-oriented framework in understanding organizational behavior, some research has critically examined the argument that people's attributes and behaviors depend on their environment, instead proposing the notion that individuals are thoroughly able to define their organizational context (Schneider, 1987; Schneider, Goldstein, & Smith, 1995). According to Schneider and colleagues, people shape their (organizational) environment with their personal attributes and behaviors, which contrasts with the assumption that behavior and attitudes develop as a consequence of a specific environment. Organizational members' attitudes, such as trust, are one of the relevant attributes that help to define the social reality in general (Fazio, 1986) and the organizational context in particular (Schneider, 1987; Schneider *et al.,* 1995). Regardless of their previous experiences, at any moment, people are able to show a level of (dis)trust in other people (Murray, Lupien & Seery., 2012; Murray *et al.,* 2011) and in organizations (Holtz, 2013; 2015). This attitude

guides information processing and helps to interpret events in the environment, including the behavior of the object or recipient of the attitude (Fazio, 1986). Social perceptions that are prompted by attitudes can ultimately function as self-fulfilling prophecies or confirmation biases and, hence, shape or even create social reality (Kaltiainen *et al.,* 2017; Snyder & Swann, 1978). This process has implications for the nature of the justice-trust relationship in professionals' evaluations of families over time. The interesting question is whether the typical "justice to trust" initial direction might be reversed, that is, whether trust could be viewed as the initiator of the spiral. According to this alternative, professionals' trust towards families will impact their perception of the families as the object of their attitude. This perception, consequently, will affect and shape their social reality in terms of the way they view families' justice treatment. In other words, if professionals trust families, they will view the justice treatment they receive more positively. Once this social processing is over (professionals perceive that families treat them fairly), it is expected that – based on social exchange – professionals tend to reciprocate with a subsequent high level of trust in families. Therefore, we are presented with a second possible spiral initiated by trust: trust – justice – trust:

H2: Professionals' initial trust in families in T1 will have positive effects on professionals' perceptions of families' justice treatment in T2, which will subsequently have positive effects on professionals' trust in families in T3.

The double spiral

The alternatives ("justice as initiator" and "trust as initiator") could be compatible, describing a double spiral where interpersonal justice and trust occur in parallel as initiators of spirals. The sequential approach in the dynamic relationship between the two constructs is very popular in research, especially the perspective that views justice as an antecedent of trust. However, the reality is probably more complex. It is plausible that, in the same measurement time, individuals process social information in terms of treatment received (justice), but they

already have attitudes (trust) that influence the evolution of the relationship with the people who are the recipients of the attitude. A few results from organizational change studies seem to support this idea (see Kaltiainen, Lipponen, Holtz, 2017; Saunders & Thornhill, 2003). We consider that our study context is also suitable to investigate this dynamic because both concepts have the possibility of enriching the partnership between professionals and families. A double spiral should provide insight into the relationship between justice and trust by not only investigating a positive spiral initiated by justice or trust, but also by assuming that justice and trust are simultaneous precursors of high-quality relations. Both interpersonal justice towards professionals and trust in families will be viewed as initiating the other, which could add value by contemplating a more dynamic perspective. Based on this argument, we propose the following two hypotheses:

H3: A model describing the double spiral (in which professionals' perception of families' justice treatment and professionals' trust towards families are both simultaneous initiators of the spiral) will be significantly better than a single model where justice is the only initiator of the spiral

H4: A model describing the double spiral will be significantly better than a single model where trust is the only initiator of the spiral

Method

Procedure

We conducted the study in small, sheltered workshops that belong to "Plena Inclusión", an NGO located in Spain dedicated to improving the QoL of PID and their families. We gathered our data during a period of 8 weeks, with 3 measurement time points separated by four weeks. The research team contacted the centers to explain the project and ask for their participation. They also selected one employee from the organization to help with the data collection. The person was trained to randomly choose a small group of professionals to participate in the study. The contact person in each center did not participate. All participants were informed about the objectives and methods of the study and agreed in writing to participate voluntarily. The Ethical Committee of the University of the corresponding author approved the project.

Participants

The study participants were professionals who worked in 56 small, sheltered workshops oriented toward improving the skills and employability of individuals with intellectual disability. A total of 269 professionals initially participated (T1) in the study, with a response rate above 90%. However, we excluded 90 professionals because they did not continue their participation in the two subsequent time measurements. Hence, the final sample consisted of 179 professionals (67%), the majority female (79.2%). On average, participants were 38.9 years old (SD = 9.3) with a tenure of around 11.4 (SD = 7.96) years in the organization. To ensure that the final sample was not biased due to the aforementioned panel loss, we compared the scores of the final sample (N = 179) with the scores of the participants who dropped out in T2 and/or T3 (N = 90). We did not find any significant differences in the gender distribution of the participants ($\chi^2_{(1)}$ = .15, p > .05) or in their age ($t_{(257)}$ = .53, p > .05). Accordingly, these results indicated that our final sample did not introduce a systematic bias.

Measures

Interpersonal Justice. To assess professionals' justice perceptions, Colquitt's interpersonal justice scale (2001) was chosen (four items). Professionals reported on the justice treatment they received from families. An example item would be "Families treat employees of this center with kindness and courtesy". The items were scored on a 7-point Likert scale ranging from 1 ("completely disagree") to 7 ("completely agree").

Trust in families. We used the general trust scale by Butler (1991) (four items) with measures involving professionals' trust in families. An example item would be "I consider families to be trustworthy". The items were scored on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 ("completely disagree") to 5 ("completely agree").

Again, we compared (in T1) the scores of the final sample (N = 179) with the scores of the participants who did not complete the measurement in T2 and/or T3 (N = 90). Results showed no significant effects for either variable, suggesting that there was no bias in our final sample for interpersonal justice ($t_{(259)}$ = .11, $p > .05$) or trust ($t_{(266)}$ = -.31, $p > .05$).

Statistical Analysis

To test the relationships between the variables in our model, we conducted Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) with latent variables and robust maximum likelihood estimation (MLR) using Mplus 7.4 (Muthén & Muthén, 1998). We specified four different models that we then compared by means of χ^2 difference testing (see Satorra & Bentler, 2001). The first model specified a stability model that only included the temporal stabilities over time for interpersonal justice (T1→ T2 → T3) and trust (T1→ T2 → T3), without incorporating any cross-lagged structural paths between the variables (Model 1). We then specified three models with added complexity. The second model was constructed as a spiral initiated by interpersonal justice (Model 2: justice as initiator). This model is equal to Model 1, but it also includes cross-lagged pathways from interpersonal justice in T1 to trust in T2, and from trust in T2 to

interpersonal justice in T3, as indicated in Hypothesis 1. We then tested another model with a spiral initiated by trust in this case (Model 3: trust as initiator). This model is identical to Model 1, but it also includes cross-lagged pathways from trust in T1 to interpersonal justice in T2, and from interpersonal justice in T2 to trust in T3, as specified in Hypothesis 2. Finally, we tested a model with reciprocal relationships over time, where both interpersonal justice and trust are simultaneous initiators of the spirals (Model 4: double spiral). In order to do so, we extended Model 1 by including all the paths from Models 2 and 3, as previously specified in the double spiral (Hypotheses 3 and 4). To test the relationships in our models, all the research hypotheses proposed in our study specified directional relationships derived from theory. Thus, based on logical consistency, we conducted one-tailed hypothesis tests to assess our regression coefficients (Cho & Abe, 2013).

Results

Preliminary results

Table 4 shows means, standard deviations, correlations, and reliability estimates. All the variables have a Cronbach's alpha coefficient above .70. Furthermore, all the study variables correlated positively with each other, which was a good indication to continue the analysis by testing the model in SEM.

Table 4. Descriptive Statistics and Correlations

	Range	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6
1. Interpersonal justice T1	1-7	5.60	1.00	(0.88)					
2. Trust in family members T1	1-5	3.75	0.68	0.13*	(0.84)				
3. Interpersonal justice T2	1-7	5.52	1.03	0.60**	0.24**	(0.83)			
4. Trust in family members T2	1-5	3.76	0.70	0.30**	0.57**	0.35**	(0.88)		
5. Interpersonal justice T3	1-7	5.52	0.98	0.63**	0.25**	0.67**	0.39**	(0.87)	
6. Trust in family members T3	1-5	3.67	0.68	0.30**	0.60**	0.31**	0.74**	0.42**	(0.87)

Note: T1 = Time 1; T2 = Time 2; T3 = Time 3. Pearson's correlation coefficient was computed. Reliability coefficients appear on the diagonal in brackets. * $p < .05$.; ** $p < .01$.

To confirm that our two study variables (justice and trust) are distinct from each other, we ran three confirmatory factor analyses (CFA), one for each measurement time point (T1, T2, T3). For each of the three measurement time points, we compared a one-factor model, in which all interpersonal justice and trust items were forced to load on one single factor, with a two-factor model, in which the respective items loaded on the two representative scales. We chose robust maximum likelihood (MLR) as the estimation method. The results of the CFAs revealed that the theorized two-factor model, in which the items for interpersonal justice and trust loaded on the respective factor, presented a satisfactory fit over all the measurement time points at T1($\chi^2_{(19)}$ = 18.796, p > 0.05, CFI = 1.000, TLI = 1.000, RMSEA = 0.000); T2 ($\chi^2_{(19)}$ = 25.828, p > 0.05, CFI = 0.990, TLI = 0.986, RMSEA = 0.045); and T3 ($\chi^2_{(19)}$ = 26.773, p > 0.05, CFI = 0.990, TLI = 0.985, RMSEA = 0.048). The one-factor model, which forced all the items to load on one single factor, showed a much poorer fit overall at T1 ($\chi^2_{(20)}$ = 447.668, p < 0.05, CFI = 0.328), TLI = 0.059, RMSEA = 0.346); T2 ($\chi^2_{(20)}$ = 433.398, p < 0.05, CFI = 0.415, TLI = 0.181, RMSEA = 0.340); and T3 ($\chi^2_{(20)}$ = 848.412, p < 0.05, CFI = 0.000, TLI = -0.561, RMSEA = 0.481). We then compared the one-factor model with the two-factor model for each time point. The results of the χ^2 comparison revealed that all the χ^2 differences were significant, indicating that the two-factor model was superior to the one-factor model over all the three measurement time points at T1 (χ^2_{diff} = 75.3098; df_{diff} = 1, p < .01); T2 (χ^2_{diff} = 50.996; df_{diff} = 1, p < .01); and T3 (χ^2_{diff} = -476.763; df_{diff} = 1, p < .01). Hence, for all three measurement time points, we confirmed discriminant validity, which means that the measurements for interpersonal justice and trust are independent.

Hypothesis Testing

The results of all our models can be obtained from Table 5. All the models (Model 1-Model 4) displayed an adequate goodness of fit.

Table 5. Fit Indices of the Hypothesized Models

	χ^2	df	RMSEA	CFI	TLI
Model 1. Autoregressive path model	507.081	246	0.077	0.923	0.914
Model 2. Spiral 1 (Justice T1 - Trust T2 - Justice T3)	470.498	244	0.072	0.933	0.924
Model 3. Spiral 2 (Trust T1- Justice T2- Trust T3)	495.007	244	0.076	0.926	0.916
Model 4. Double Spiral	460.457	242	0.071	0.936	0.926
Cut-offs	---	---	< 0.10	> 0.90	> 0.90

Hypothesis 1 (spiral initiated by justice) stated that interpersonal justice in T1 will have positive lagged effects on trust in T2, and, subsequently, trust in T2 will have positive lagged effects on interpersonal justice in T3 (specified with Model 2). After testing this hypothesis with SEM in Mplus 7.4, the results indicated a significant structural path from justice in T1 to trust in T2 ($\beta = .30$; $p < .01$), along with a significant structural path from trust in T2 to justice in T3 ($\beta = .25$; $p < .01$). Results supported Hypothesis 1.

In Hypothesis 2 (spiral initiated by trust), we indicated that trust in T1 would have positive lagged effects on interpersonal justice in T2, and interpersonal justice in T2 would have positive effects on trust in T3 (specified with Model 3). After testing this relationship with SEM in Mplus 7.4, the results revealed a significant structural path from trust in T1 to justice

in T2 ($\beta = .17$; $p < .01$), and a subsequent significant path from justice in T2 to trust in T3 ($\beta = .15$; $p < .01$), supporting our second hypothesis.

Finally, in Hypotheses 3 and 4, we specified that justice and trust would describe a double spiral that integrates Models 1, 2, and 3 over time. The findings of this model (Model 4) also resulted in significant paths, which suggests support for the previously found positive lagged effects corresponding to Models 2 and 3. The effect sizes for Model 4 can be obtained from Figure 3.
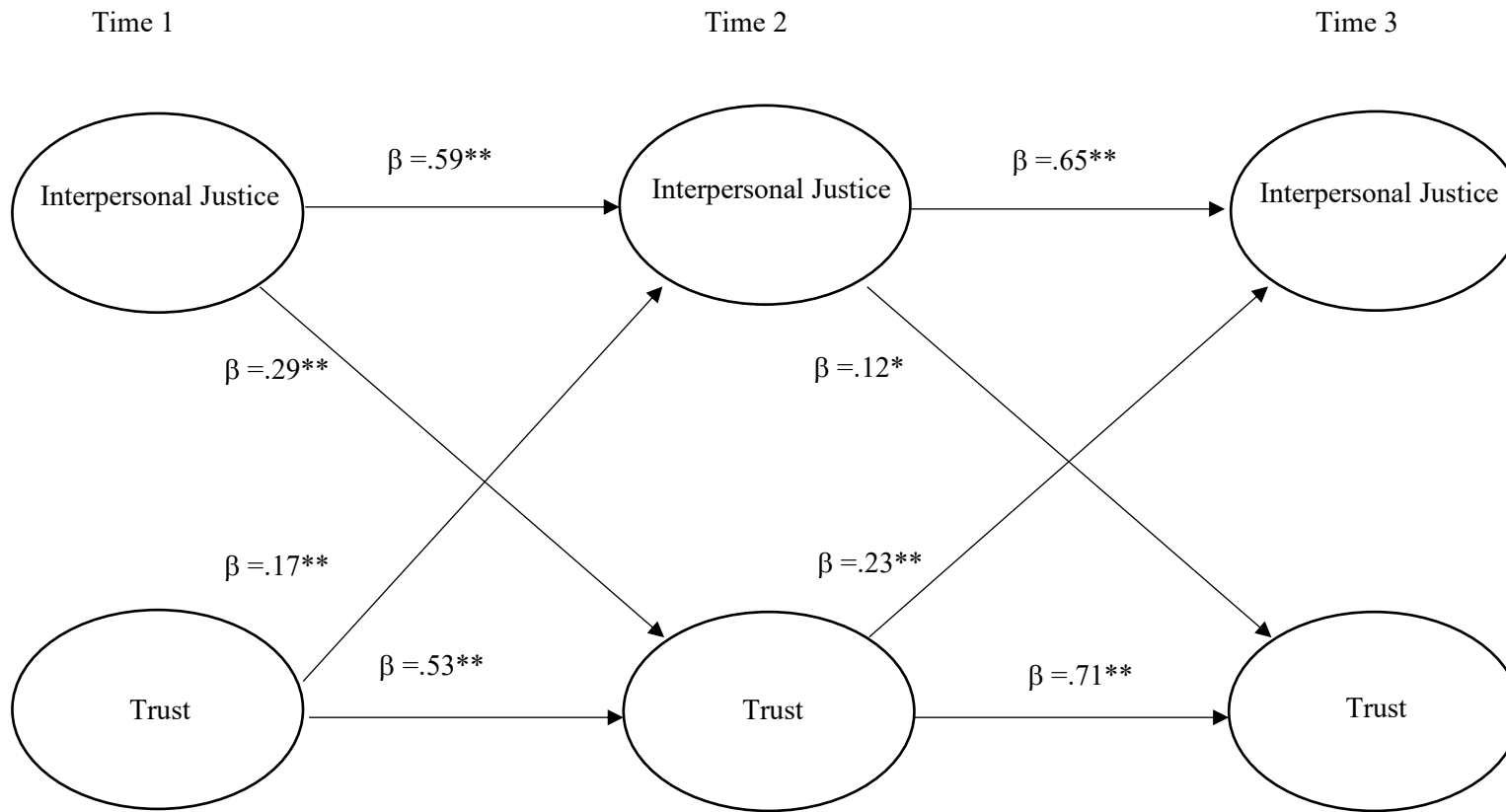
Figure 3. Cross-lagged Path Effects for Double Spiral (Model 4)

Comparing the stability model (Model 1) with the two single spirals (Model 2 and 3), our results indicated that incorporating cross-lagged paths to generate a spiral initiated by interpersonal justice (Model 2, χ^2 M1-M2 = 25.53; df$_{diff}$ = 2, p < .05), as well as a spiral initiated by trust (Model 3, χ^2 M1-M3 = 10.41; df$_{diff}$ = 2, p < .05), provides a significantly better fit to the data than the stability model (Model 1). These findings also supported Hypotheses 1 and 2, respectively.

We also compared the double spiral (Model 4) to the other three alternatives. Adding cross-lagged paths in the double spiral (Model 4) to the stability model (Model 1) resulted in significantly improved fit to the data (χ^2 M1-M4 = 36.34; df$_{diff}$ = 4, p < .05). Thus, Model 4 provided a superior fit, compared to Model 1. More importantly, Model 4 was superior to Model 2 (justice as initiator) and Model 3 (trust as initiator), supporting Hypotheses 3 and 4, respectively. Specifically, the results indicated that the double spiral significantly improved the fit to the data, compared to Model 2 with justice as the initiator (χ^2 M2-M4 = 8.96; df$_{diff}$ = 2, p > .05). In addition, tuhe comparison with Model 3, with trust as the initiator, also showed a significantly improved fit to the data (χ^2 M3-M4 = 24.90; df$_{diff}$ = 2, p < .05).

Discussion

With our study, we aimed to gain a better understanding of how interpersonal justice and trust are connected and evolve dynamically from the perspective of professionals who interact with families in organizations for individuals with intellectual disability. In this context, we provided a first-time investigation of the dynamic interplay between the two variables over time. In other research contexts, the majority of the studies have supported a sequential approach (see Colquitt & Rodell, 2011; Holtz, 2013; 2015; Saunders & Thornhill, 2003). In other words, they assumed that one construct – whether trust or justice, respectively – develops depending on the other. By contrast, our findings supported the existence of a double spiral with reciprocal relationships between justice and trust, indicating that both

constructs are simultaneous precursors of the other over time. More specifically, both the interpersonal justice treatment professionals receive from families and professionals' trust in families function as simultaneous and parallel initiators of a dynamic double spiral. In addition, the model comparison showed that the double spiral, in which interpersonal justice and trust are simultaneous initiators, was significantly superior to any other alternative. Therefore, the complexity of the interaction with families, from the perspective of professionals, cannot be captured by sequential models because the social context (interpersonal justice) and personal attitudes (trust) develop in a parallel way. Implications of these results are discussed below.

Theoretical Implications

Our findings have relevant theoretical implications. First, our research considered families as a new valid source of justice for professionals. This approach can help to better comprehend the perspective of professionals. It is hard to view families as passive users in organizations for individuals with intellectual disability because they are crucial in the co-creation of adequate services through their interactions with professionals (Maniezki *et al.,* 2021). Therefore, the treatment professionals receive from families is a precursor of the partnership quality in terms of professionals' trust in families.

Second, the results support a complex vision of the way justice and trust interact over time, where both constructs are parallel precursors. Simple models cannot grasp this complex dynamic development, which indicates that human interaction with the environment is complex and cannot be captured by sequential models with a single directedness. Professionals' trust seems to influence the way they process information from the social context (treatment received by families), but the social context also influences their trust. Previous research (see Fazio, 1986; Fiske & Taylor, 1984; Schneider, 1987) might seem contradictory, but these approaches do not have to be mutually exclusive. Indeed, people deliberately develop trust due to social information processing (interpersonal justice from families), but simultaneously a

certain level of (dis)trust always exist and guides the way we perceive the social context (Murray *et al.,* 2011; 2012; Snyder & Swann, 1978). In our research, we confirmed that these two processes develop in parallel. Professionals who perceive that they are treated fairly by families develop trust as a consequence of a deliberate evaluation process of families' behavior, but professionals' trust towards families also impacts the perception professionals have of families. Therefore, the double spiral shown in our findings helps to integrate different theoretical approaches and clarifies the debate about the predominance of context (Johns, 2018) vs. person-oriented (Schneider, 1987; Schneider *et al.,* 1995) frameworks in understanding organizational behavior. We should not neglect the simultaneity of individuals and contexts when they are studied in dynamic exchanges with each other.

Third, our study addressed the call for longitudinal research on trust and other related concepts (Tjosvold *et al.,* 2016). Because one of the particularities of human behavior is its change over time, the consideration of temporal dynamics is necessary in order to build organizational theory and capture phenomena accurately (George & Jones, 2000; Roe, 2008). Compared to the still pictures that cross-sectional studies provide, dynamic approaches allow a much better view of the complexity of a reality based on complex relationships that evolve over time. Specifically, our longitudinal approach made it possible to gain in-depth knowledge about how professionals perceive and evaluate families.

Practical implications

Our findings have practical implications. One strategy that could be taken into consideration is to make families aware that their fair treatment can improve the relationship with professionals by increasing their trust in families. Hence, families could be actively encouraged to engage in respectful interaction with professionals as a way to actively shape the environment perceived by professionals. Families should be assigned an active role (also based on interpersonal justice towards professionals) because their behavior affects the quality

of the relationship with the professionals –which is necessary to achieve organizational objectives such as better QoL of individuals with intellectual disabilities (Carter *et al.,* 2013; Colarusso & O'Rourke, 2007; Turnbull *et al.,* 2006). Therefore, specific actions such as training, socialization, and role analysis of families could be considered in order to improve their treatment of professionals.

A complementary but less intuitive strategy is related to professionals' attitudes of trust towards families. As our results point out, trust plays a parallel role in creating an adequate partnership from the perspective of professionals. Therefore, actions to improve professionals' trust in families are welcome. This includes sharing rational arguments about families' benevolence, integrity, and capacity (Mayer *et al.,* 1995), as well as positive emotions associated with the role of families (see Hofmann *et al.,* 2010).

Limitations and Prospective for Future Research

Although our research design was congruent with well-established theories, and the double spiral approach helped to find causal connections, prior studies have shown that keeping fair treatment constant is also a key element. Stability reduces uncertainty, which can have a strong influence on fairness perceptions (Cropanzano, Byrne, Bobocel & Rupp, 2001). That is, a stable perception of fair treatment would result in a positive evaluation of families' behavior. By contrast, if treatment from families is unstable and uncertain, professionals' perceptions and attitudes towards families will suffer. The consideration of the (in)stability of interpersonal justice and trust could enrich our view of how the partnership between professionals and families develops. Thus, future studies may add (in)stability as a potential factor in understanding the quality of the relationship professionals perceive in their interactions with families.

Moreover, the current study was carried out in centers for PID located in Spain. The sample brings essential strengths, given that it comes from a real context with professionals

who work with families on a daily basis. Furthermore, we were able to measure our variables several times in order to give more causality and solidity to our data. Nevertheless, although we think the characteristics of these organizations and the jobs of professionals largely coincide with those of other countries, we want to mention a limitation involving the cross-cultural generalization of our findings. Hence, future studies should investigate our double dynamic spiral in other cultural settings.

Conclusion

By considering the perspective of professionals who interact with families in organizations for individuals with intellectual disability, this study highlighted the importance of fair treatment from families (interpersonal justice) and attitudes towards families (trust). Both interpersonal justice and trust are parallel and simultaneous precursors in a double positive spiral that allows good professional-family partnerships to be created. That is, professionals trust families because they perceive fair treatment from families, but, simultaneously, trust in families leads to a social processing where the treatment received from families is perceived as positive.

3.3 ARTICLE 3: Interpersonal Justice as Heuristic of Service Performance among Families in Centers for People with Intellectual Disability: a Within-subject Design

Abstract

In centers for people with intellectual disability, families often lack the relevant information to evaluate whether the center and its professionals will improve the Quality of Life (QoL) of their relatives. Our study investigates interpersonal justice as a heuristic that can serve families to reduce uncertainty and evaluate service performance. We investigate fluctuations in interpersonal justice treatment as dynamic heuristic that is reassessed and thus producing fluctuations in how families perceive organizational performance. Using a sample of 86 family members, we test a within-person model to see whether changes in professionals' interpersonal justice towards family members are positively related to changes of families' evaluations of organizational performance oriented to improve aspects of QoL. Professionals' justice treatment towards families functions as a heuristic indicating whether the performance of the organizations might be perceived as adequate to improve QoL. Family members evaluate and re-evaluate justice and organizational performance describing fluctuations over time. The variability we found is significant, showing that interpersonal justice is a powerful concept that can impact the family-professional relationship over time.

Keywords: interpersonal justice; heuristics; quality of life, service performance

Introduction

In organizations that aim to support people with intellectual disability (PID), one of the essential service goals is to guarantee and improve their Quality of Life (QoL) (Martínez-Tur *et al.,* 2019; Schalock *et al.,* 2008). However, often families do not have the adequate information that is needed to be sufficiently informed about whether the chosen care unit with its professionals is giving the support that will improve the QoL of their relatives with intellectual disability. One important factor explaining this situation is the limited participation of families in the daily functioning of these organizations (Mereoiu *et al.,* 2016). There is a lack of opportunities for mutual knowledge between families and professionals, hindering both the effective collaboration (Deslandes *et al.,* 1999; Rodríguez *et al.,* 2014) and the access to information by families. To overcome this situation, people are generally likely to refer to other information or indicators to reduce the uncertainty that stems from the lack of information (Van de Bos, 2001; 2001b). With this in mind, our research identifies interpersonal justice treatment – the degree that the person (i.e., family members) are treated with dignity and respect (i.e., by professionals) (Colquitt, 2012) – as such indicator which serves families as heuristic to reduce uncertainty and conclude whether the care-unit and their professionals will perform adequately to improve the QoL of their relative with intellectual disability. Under heuristics we define a "strategy that ignores part of the information, with the goal of making decisions more quickly, frugally, and/or accurately than more complex methods" (Gigerenzer & Gaissmaier, 2011, p.454). Therefore, we propose that, due to the absence of more elaborated information, family members will consider the interpersonal treatment they receive from professionals to judge the service performance oriented to improve the QoL of their relatives with intellectual disability.

Our study bares the potential for the following three contributions. First, we are aiming to study the interpersonal justice treatment by professionals as a heuristic used by families to

evaluate service performance in organizations for PID. Previous studies have focused on other kinds of authorities within the organization (e.g. leaders) which often allowed heuristic indications (e.g., integrity, trustworthiness, competency, leadership ability) to employees (Moorman *et al.,* 2018). We want to expand this approach to the relationship between families and professionals in organizations for PID as families are somewhat subordinate to professionals as an authority figure who has the expert knowledge. The treatment that families receive from professionals will guide their evaluation of the organization considering whether professionals will achieve their objectives regarding the QoL of the PID. We aim to identify professionals' interpersonal justice treatment as heuristic that helps families to judge the degree to which organizational performance is oriented to improve the QoL improvements of their relatives with intellectual disability.

Second, by considering organizational performance oriented to improve QoL we are introducing a novel alternative to current indicators of organizational performance, which is often evaluated by other number-based outcome conceptions (effectivity, number of services delivered/received, etc). Organizational performance oriented to improve QoL will serve as rather contextualized definition that considers the specific social objectives of the sector (see Maniezki *et al.,* 2021; Pătraş *et al.,* 2018) to improve the QoL of service users.

Last, with our research we are studying within-person variability. The majority of justice research focuses on individual differences in average levels of fair treatment (e.g. average levels of the individual justice dimensions) or on average levels of overall justice perceptions (Colquitt *et al.,* 2015). The rule of thumb was often "the more justice the better" (Matta *et al.,* 2017). With our research we aim to investigate intra-individual fluctuations of the construct (see Holtz & Harold, 2009; Judge *et al.,* 2006; Loi *et al.,* 2009; Schalock *et al.,* 2002) to widen the perspective by considering that the interpersonal justice treatment that families receive is not only evaluated at a specific time but instead constantly reevaluated

dynamically over time, impacting changes in the evaluation of organizational performance. Hence, we are bringing the topic of intra-variability into the research, which will allow us to make better causal conclusions and in-depth analysis of how justice treatment is evaluated over time and how changes in justice are associated with fluctuations in organizational performance oriented to improve aspects of QoL.

Interpersonal justice: within-person variability

For the current study, the central justice dimension in focus is interpersonal justice (Colquitt, 2001), which is characterized by the degree to which people are treated with respect, dignity, and politeness (Neghina *et al.,* 2015). We are focusing on interpersonal justice, as this justice dimension is of most relevance for families. This dimension of justice is the only one that families have adequate access to and enough opportunities and capacities to effectively observe and experience. Other justice dimensions, such as distributive justice or procedural justice, will simply not allow this as the information remains much more limited in its access.

Families' interpersonal justice perceptions can easily vary over time because of their interactions with professionals, which was supported by previous research that stated that interpersonal justice displays considerable intra-individual or within-person variability over time (Holtz & Harold, 2009; Loi *et al.,* 2009). According to Goltz (2013), individuals will look for clues of fairness behavior in others to help them confirm or reject their initial impression of fairness. This is even the case when observing how fair others are treated by an authority (Huang *et al.,* 2015). Not only will individuals show this behavior upon joining the group, but further during the entire time that they consider themselves a member of the group, even leading to retaliating behavior or switching to alternative groups when being confronted with unfairness. Considering the relationship between families and professionals, we can assume that families will always observe and reevaluate professionals' fairness treatment when they go to the organization, during each interaction, and will then use this indicator to evaluate

professionals' performance which consequently reflects the performance of the organization to achieve service objectives.

Organizational performance oriented to improve QoL of PID

Definitions of QoL share the characteristics of having an overall feeling of well-being, the feeling of positive social contribution and relationships, and a great outlook on succeeding personal potential (Schalock, 2004). The World Health Organization (WHO) described QoL as the "individuals' perceptions of their position in life in the context of the culture and value systems in which they live, and in relation to their goals, expectations, standards and concerns" (WHOQOL Group, 1998, p.1). Additional research has shown that QoL is influenced by personal characteristics but also by environmental factors (Marquis & Jackson, 2000; Schalock *et al.,* 2010). This aspect becomes of relevance when providing services for people with intellectual disability, because the circumstances in which the service is offered are of enormous importance, as the set of people and their collaboration is of essential significance to guarantee the quality of support the person in need is receiving (Martínez-Tur *et al.,* 2015; Marquis & Jackson, 2000; Molina *et al.,* 2015). Wu *et al.* (2007) confirmed this by finding significant relationships between the design of services and QoL. Therefore, organizational performance oriented to improve QoL of PID becomes crucial. Moreover, previous studies underlined that QoL is a dynamic construct that can change over time, depending on the personal development of the individual whose QoL is of concern (Kiernan & Marrone, 1997). The concept can be continuously developed and thus brings the potential to be unlimited in its fulfilment (Schalock & Siperstein, 1996; Schalock *et al.,* 2002).

For our study we chose two types of QoL indicators in understanding organizational performance. First, we considered performance oriented to improve two relevant facets of QoL: self-determination and social inclusion. Second, considering the suggestions by Moliner *et al.* (2013) and Pătraș *et al.* (2018) in organizations for PID, we also included a contextualized

approach to our definition and assessment of organizational performance. In fact, performance describes the professional's contribution to reach previously established organizational objectives (Zhang *et al.,* 2014). Accordingly, to get an accurate understanding of organizational performance in our research sector, we must contextualize the concept considering that the main goal is to improve the QoL of PID.

We decided to consider self-determination and social inclusion, as specific facets of QoL, given that these two domains have been found to majorly improve the integration of the PID in our societies (McDougall *et al.,* 2016). Self-determination logically becomes a central aspect of QoL when keeping in mind that the intellectual disability of the person often influences the ability to make choices on their own, which is why they often require assistance in their daily life (Schalock, 2004), as well as the security to rely on a proxy (Alves-Nogueira *et al.,* 2020; Zalmstra *et al.,* 2021). We understand self-determination as "volitional actions that enable one to act as the primary causal agent in one's life and to maintain or improve one's QoL" (Wehmeyer, 2005, p.117). It has proven to benefit the PID in several aspects of their lives whether it be employability, educational achievements, independent living, as well as QoL in its broader sense (see Lachapelle *et al.,* 2005; Shorgren *et al.,* 2015; Palmer & Wehmeyer, 2003; Webster, Cumming & Rowland, 2017). Self-determination becomes a universal need under the concept of QoL that applies to everyone with or without disability. It is expected that organizations for PID can enhance their self-determination.

Wolfensberger defined social inclusion as "valued participation, with valued people in valued activities that take place in valued settings" (1998, p.123). PID often experience problems when trying to be included into social situations that are available to other members of society (Schalock, 2004). Although they have become more present in society, the majority are not part of communities and rather reside in a constructed social space consisting of families, other residents of the living unit as well as healthcare professionals working for the

unit (Clement & Bigby, 2010; Forrester-Jones *et al.,* 2006). This represents a great danger for the PID because lack of social inclusion is associated with low levels of social support, stress, and mental illnesses (Scott & Havercamp, 2014). The concept social inclusion is therefore an aspect to include in evaluating the QoL of PID because it allows to assess the degree to which they have opportunities for social inclusion through the performance in organizations for PID.

Although assessing self-determination and social inclusion allow to report on concrete facets of QoL among PID, we also consider an overall evaluation of QoL because it has a relevant and complementary role. In a similar way to what happens with other constructs (e.g., Ambrose & Schminke, 2009), an overall measure can capture a holistic view of QoL that considers the gestalt or complete picture. Accordingly, family members can report about the overall improvement of QoL of their relatives with intellectual disability based on organizational efforts.

Professionals' interpersonal justice as a heuristic for families

As previously mentioned, families have limited access to the information concerning whether the organization and its professionals will provide the adequate services to improve the QoL of their family member with intellectual disability. The situation of information scarcity that families encounter is a typical one and often due to various possible factors, such as that interactions with professionals are time bound but also as families as so-called non-experts fundamentally possess less knowledge about what makes good care service compared to professionals as experts (Vidal *et al.,* 2020). Confronted with this issue, we can assume that families will face an immense amount of uncertainty, which is only amplified when we think about that they are in a somewhat dependency with professionals when it comes to the care for their loved ones with intellectual disability. This idea is underlined by the work of Tyler and Lind (1992) who mentioned that people indeed feel troubled when it comes to surrendering to an authority as it always bares risk. Given this risk and the uncertainty of receiving the desired

and expected outcome – such as achieving an organizational performance oriented to improve QoL of PID – people would first and foremost seek information on whether an authority is trustworthy (Van den Bos *et al.,* 1998).

Families hence deal with a dilemma. On the one hand, it is important for them that the organizations and their professionals provide a service that improves the QoL of their relatives with intellectual disabilities. On the other hand, they have little day-to-day access to accurate information that allows them to assess the extent to which improvements are being achieved. How, then, do families form an evaluation of organizational performance? According to Tyler and Lind (1992), people will refer to other information to derive conclusions. In the example of a relationship between authority and subordinate, the researchers argued that fairness might serve as a valid indicator of trustworthiness (Frazier *et al.,* 2010). In a nutshell, fairness would function as a heuristic to facilitate evaluation and reduce uncertainty. Fairness Heuristic Theory (FHT) is based on this same fact. According to FHT fairness heuristics can be used to guide future behavior expectations when individuals consider belonging to a certain group (Lind, 2001; Lind & Van den Bos, 2002). The reason for that can be found when looking at Uncertainty Management Theory (UMT), which posits that in order to reduce uncertainty people are trying to reduce any cognitive burden by using cognitive short-cuts and hence quickly organizing known information (Lind, 2001, Van den Bos, 2001b). The more uncertainty rises, the more we will find the phenomena of information substitution. Bringing this rationale to the relationship between families and professionals, we argue that families often have to submit to the authority of professionals to improve the QoL of their relatives with intellectual disabilities. Their dependency on professionals, combined with the fact that they do not usually hold direct and accurate information, generates uncertainty, which is then attempted to reduce by substituting it with other replacement information such as interpersonal treatment. The idea is that the adequate treatment (interpersonal justice) by professionals will

give families an idea about whether their family member with intellectual disability will be cared for adequately as well. Families might not have access to the information whether the organizational performance will be satisfactory to improve their relatives' QoL. However, they do have information about the treatment they receive from professionals themselves when they go to the organization. Hence, the fair and adequate treatment of families will act as a heuristic and thus as an indicator to determine whether professionals are able to reach the objectives of the support service in organizations, including the enhancing of self-determination and social inclusion but also the overall improvement of QoL. As mentioned above, we adopted a within-person perspective. The treatment that family members perceive from professionals may differ through successive social interactions, acting as a dynamic heuristic that is reassessed and producing fluctuations in how families perceive organizational performance oriented to improve the QoL of PID. Considering the above arguments, we propose the following hypotheses to be empirically examined.

H1. Changes in professionals' interpersonal justice towards family members are positively related to changes of families' evaluations of organizational performance oriented to improve self-determination.

H2. Changes in professionals' interpersonal justice towards family members are positively related to changes of families' evaluations of organizational performance oriented to improve social inclusion.

H3. Changes in professionals' interpersonal justice towards family members are positively related to changes of families' evaluations of organizational performance oriented to improve QoL.

Method

Sample and procedure of data collection

A total of 58 centers affiliated with "Plena Inclusión", a national NGO located in Spain whose mission is to improve the QoL of PID, facilitated the recruitment of participants. Sheltered workshops were small centers where PID work under supervision in order to enhance their employability as a way to stimulate self-determination and social inclusion. Each center randomly selected and invited at least two families to participate in the study. This resulted in the recruitment of 133 families, with a participation rate higher than 90%. Within each family unit, the family member of the PID who had the most frequent contact with the service was the person who participated in the study. After explaining the objectives of the study, and ensuring anonymity and confidentiality, the participants gave their informed consent and subsequently they were invited to answer the questionnaire four times (T1-T4) with each four weeks in between measurement points. In order to gather the data, the research team trained one professional per center. This procedure received the approval from the Ethical Committee of the research team university.

Data at T1 was collected from 133 families. Over time, 47 participants declined to participate in the subsequent measurement times. Therefore, a total of 86 family members from 55 centers answered our questionnaire for all four times of measurement. The average age was 59.01 (SD = 9.76). The majority of participants was female (74.4%). There were no significant differences between the families who declined after an initial participation and the final sample of families used in this research study (those who answered in the four measurement times) in mean age, $t(130) = -1.24$, $p > 0.05$, or sex distribution, $\chi^2(1) = 1.72$, $p > 0.05$, which indicates that there was no bias in our final sample.

Measures

Interpersonal justice towards families. We used the three-item measure of interpersonal justice in centers for PID (Maniezki *et al.,* 2021), based on the Colquitt's (2001) scale to assess the interpersonal justice perceptions. With this measure, the quality of the interpersonal treatment of professionals towards families was assessed. Specifically, families informed about the treatment they receive from professionals in the center. An example item is "The employees of this center treat the families with respect". The justice items were scored on a 7-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (completely disagree) to 7 (completely agree). Cronbach's Alpha ranged from to 0.92 to 0.96. We centered justice measure at the person mean.

Organizational performance oriented to self-determination. We used the contextualized five-item scale by Moliner *et al.* (2013) that focuses on improvements in self-determination due to the efforts of the centers for PID. Family members were required to express the degree to which self-determination of the PID improves thanks to the actions of the center. An example of an item is "This center encourages the person with intellectual disability I am responsible for to participate in making decisions about him/herself." The items were scored on a 7-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (completely disagree) to 7 (completely agree). Cronbach's Alpha ranged from to 0.86 to 0.89.

Organizational performance oriented to social inclusion. This construct was assessed through the six-item scale by Moliner *et al.* (2013). The measure focused on the extent to which social inclusions of the PID improves due to the actions of the center. An example of an item is "Society's attitudes towards my relative with intellectual disabilities are more positive, thanks to the actions developed by this center". The items were scored on a 7-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (completely disagree) to 7 (completely agree). Cronbach's Alpha ranged from to 0.89 to 0.93.

Overall organizational performance oriented towards QoL improvement. The overall measure or organizational performance of the center oriented towards QoL improvement was measured through the five-item scale by Moliner *et al.* (2013). An example of an item is "The programs or activities to support families with people with intellectual disabilities developed in this center have contributed to improving the QoL of my family member with disability". The items were scored on a 7-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (completely disagree) to 7 (completely agree). Cronbach's Alpha ranged from to 0.77 to 0.90.

Control variables. Previous research has shown the effect of age and gender on the evaluation of services. Research by Cooil and colleagues (2007) has shown that when it comes to service failure, older individuals seem to react more negatively, indicating that they put a greater emphasis on the service encounter. Similarly, gender influences fairness evaluations within services, with women rating fairness in service encounters as more critically than men do (Snipes, Thomson & Oswald, 2006). Further, women and men have been found to differ in their information processing style, as women tend to put a bigger emphasis on negative information whereas men tend to focus on positive information (Dubé & Morgan, 1996). Thus, we controlled for the effects of both demographic variables.

Analytical strategy

In order to test our hypotheses, hierarchical linear models with SPSS were conducted (see Heck *et al.,* 2013) using growth modeling (Duncan *et al.,* 2013). The nested structure of the data was studied considering two levels: Level 1 (occasions) and Level 2 (individuals). To test the hypotheses, we analyzed the impact of change in the predictor variable to change in the respective outcome variables. Specifically, we examined whether changes in interpersonal justice over time were related to changes in organizational performance oriented to QoL by computing a model for each outcome performance indicator (self-determination, social inclusion, and overall performance).

Results

Preliminary results

Before hypothesis testing, we performed a confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) for T1 with MPlus, to test the distinctiveness of the measures used in this study. The estimation method used was robust maximum likelihood (MLR). We compared the proposed four-factor model (identifying the items on the four separate scales) with a nested one-factor model (with all items loading on a single general factor). The results of the conducted CFA revealed that the proposed four-factor structure [$\chi2_{(128)}$ = 211.567, p < 0.01, CFI= 0.934, TLI= 0.911, RMSEA= 0.070] fit the data well, whereas the one-factor model showed worse fit [$\chi2_{(134)}$ = 392.055, p < .01, CFI= 0.795, TLI= 0.738, RMSEA= 0.120]. The chi-square difference between the four-factor and one-factor models was significant at T1 ($\chi2$ diff = 55.998; dfdiff = 6, p < 0.01), which supports that the hypothesized four-factor model was the best fitting model.

Additionally, it is necessary to confirm that all considered variables have indeed a significant between- and within- person variance to justify the subsequent analysis. Results showed in Table 6 confirmed significant between and within person variance as for all variables (p < 0.01).

Table 6. Variance Components of the Measures

Variable	Within Person (σ^2)	Between Person ($\sigma^2_{\tau00}$)
Interpersonal justice	0.11**	0.11**
Self determination	0.27**	0.59**
Social inclusion	0.21**	0.41**
Performance QoL	0.19**	0.32**

Note(s): QoL = Quality of Life, **$p < 0.01$

We assessed the proportion of variance in the respective dependent variables attributable to between-person differences and the proportion attributable to within-person differences. Our results indicated that 68% (self-determination), 66% (social inclusion), and 63% (performance oriented towards QoL) of the total variance was attributable to between-person differences. 32%, 34%, and 37% of the variance was attributable on within-person variance over time. The results indicated that there were within and between differences in individuals' means on all outcome variables, justified the further study of intra-individual fluctuations in all outcome variables.

We additionally estimated the proportion of variance of interpersonal justice that can be accounted for to between-person differences as well as to within-person variability. The results indicated that 50% was attributable to between person differences, while 50% was due to within person variability over time, indicating that there was great within-person variability of interpersonal justice over time, evidently justifying a closer analysis of variability in the construct.

Descriptive results and aggregated across time correlations are shown in Table 7. As seen, all correlations are positive and significant between study variables.

Table 7. Descriptives and Correlations

	Range	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4
1. Interpersonal justice	1-7	6.75	0.37	--			
2. Self determination	1-7	6.05	0.81	0.57**	--		
3. Social inclusion	1-7	6.20	0.68	0.58**	0.84**	--	
4. Performance QoL	1-7	6.37	0.61	0.73**	0.88**	0.88**	--

Note(s): N= 86; SD = standard deviation; QoL = Quality of Life
Descriptive and correlations were computed by aggregating participants' four-time scores
Pearson's correlation coefficient was computed
** $p < 0.01$

Hypotheses testing

Table 8 presents the results of the conducted hierarchical linear models. Hypothesis 1 posited that the change in interpersonal justice treatment towards families would be positively related with change in organizational performance oriented to improve self-determination. The results of our analysis supported this ($\gamma_{20} = 0.34$, $p < 0.01$), meaning that positive slopes in interpersonal justice will lead to positive slopes in organizational performance oriented to improve self-determination. Changes in interpersonal justice over time are positively related to changes in organizational performance oriented to improve self-determination. Our first hypothesis is thus supported.

Table 8. Hypotheses Testing

Parameter	Self determination		Social inclusion		Performance QoL	
	Estimate	SE	Estimate	SE	Estimate	SE
Linear growth model: Change as predictor of change						
Intercept (γ_{00})	5.27**	0.65	5.56**	0.53	5.87**	0.47
Time (γ_{10})	0.04	0.03	0.06*	0.02	-0.01	0.02
Sex	-0.04	0.22	0.01	0.18	-0.06	0.16
Age	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.01
Interpersonal justice (γ_{20})	0.34**	0.09	0.27**	0.08	0.41**	0.08

Note(s): QoL = Quality of life, SE = Standard Error

**$p < 0.01$

Hypothesis 2 posited that the change in interpersonal justice treatment towards families would be positively related with change in organizational performance oriented to improve social inclusion. The results of our analysis supported this ($\gamma_{20} = 0.27$, $p < 0.01$), meaning that positive slopes in interpersonal justice will lead to positive slopes in organizational performance oriented to improve social inclusion. Changes in interpersonal justice over time are positively related to changes in organizational performance oriented to improve social inclusion. Our second hypothesis is thus supported.

Hypothesis 3 posited that the change in interpersonal justice treatment towards families would be positively related with change in organizational performance oriented to improve overall performance. The results of our analysis supported this ($\gamma_{20} = 0.41$, $p < 0.01$), meaning that positive slopes in interpersonal justice will lead to positive slopes in organizational performance oriented to improve overall performance. Changes in interpersonal justice over time are positively related to changes in organizational performance oriented to improve overall performance. Our third hypothesis is thus supported.

Discussion

The current study was carried out in organizations for PID, focusing on the perspective of families. We aimed to test whether changes in professionals' interpersonal justice towards family members are associated with fluctuations in organizational performance oriented to improve QoL of PID. Our findings confirmed that both interpersonal justice and organizational performance fluctuate significantly over time. In addition, changes in interpersonal justice were positively related to changes in organizational performance. Implications of these findings are discussed below.

Theoretical implications

Families must often submit to the authority of professionals as experts to achieve relevant objectives to improve the QoL of their relatives with disabilities. Their dependency on

professionals combined with the fact that they do not usually hold direct and accurate information related to organizational performance generate uncertainty. We have argued that because families are confronted with scarce information, related to whether professionals will be competent enough to provide high quality service to their family member with intellectual disability, they substitute the missing information with the fairness treatment they receive from professionals. We based our rationale on fairness heuristic theory (FHT) that holds the view that when individuals contemplate belonging to a specific group, fairness heuristics can be used to guide their behaviors in the future, especially with rising levels of uncertainty (Lind, 2001; Lind and Van den Bos, 2002; Van den Bos 2001a, 2001b, Van den Bos & Lind, 2002). The more uncertainty levels rise, the more it will come to information substitution. Thus, the justice treatment would serve as heuristic: that is, as an indicator to determine professionals' behavior which should then also be mirrored in families' evaluation of organizational performance oriented to improve QoL of PID.

Our findings are congruent with this argument. The three hypotheses were supported, indicating that professionals' justice treatment towards families can function as an indicator of whether the service of the organizations might be perceived as adequate for the family member with intellectual disability. Families cannot be certain whether the outcome that they are hoping to receive from the organization – namely the adequate care for their relative with intellectual disability mirrored in their QoL – is guaranteed. Consequently, they are trying to find out if professionals are trustworthy (Van den Bos *et al.,* 1998) by substituting the missing information with information that is available. We are aware that full availability of information is better in order to achieve that families have a more active role in the organizational life. However, it is well-known that this wish is often not achieved because of the traditional passive role of families in organizations (Mereoiu *et al.,* 2016). The justice treatment family members receive from service professionals can function as a heuristic that might give families a way to evaluate

organizational performance oriented to improve QoL of their members with intellectual disability.

We aimed to study within-person variability because it describes a better picture of how justice perceptions and performance evaluations co-evolve over time. With our research we consider professionals' interpersonal justice treatment as a fluctuating construct (see Holtz and Harold, 2009; Judge *et al.,* 2006) that families will not evaluate once but rather constantly over the course of time. This is in line with previous research by Goltz (2013), who observed that individuals constantly evaluate the fairness behavior. This is translated to our research. Family members evaluate and re-evaluate justice and organizational performance describing fluctuations over time. In fact, our results confirmed that this variability is significant. In addition, changes in justice lead to changes in organizational performance, meaning in the context of our research that families' interaction with professionals is characterized by tracking and confirmation or rejection of performance oriented towards QoL of PID. In sum, our research brings within-person variability into the picture, a topic that has been somewhat neglected by previous justice research.

We also address research calling for a contextualized approach to organizational performance where the specific goals of the organization should be considered (Kane, 2009) Martínez-Tur *et al.,* 2020). Following this approach, we chose organizational performance oriented to social inclusion and self-determination as valuable dimensions for families to evaluate performance of organizations for PID. Both dimensions have been found to be universal constructs that are essential to guarantee the PID's QoL (Lachapelle *et al.,* 2005; Schalock, 2004; Shorgren *et al.,* 2015; Scott & Havercamp, 2014; Webster *et al.,* 2017). We further included an overall organizational performance indicator directed towards QoL of PID as studies in other research areas concluded that this type of constructs (e.g., Ambrose and Schminke, 2009) captures a holistic view that complements the evaluation of specific facets.

Practical implications

Our findings leave us with the following two practical implications. First, professionals should be trained and informed about the consequences of their behavior has not only when it comes to the primary persons to be cared for but also towards their families. If families are treated well, they also evaluate the performance in terms of the QoL of their relative accordingly. This is important to keep in mind when working, as the good treatment that family members receive is of great importance for enhancing organizational positive image among families. Awareness and information are a step into the right direction and expanding the target of service towards families will help facilitate good relationships that are necessary for achieving a good organizational performance from the perspective of family members. Second, it is important to keep in mind that perceptions and evaluations of families can change over time. This is an important aspect to keep in mind when considering the design of services. Beyond good interpersonal treatment level, achieving consistency over time is also meaningful. For example, interpersonal treatment towards families can be part of the requirements in the contents of the jobs.

Limitations and future research

Our study naturally has limitations that create room for future research. First, it is important to keep in mind that according to the definition of heuristic we are dealing with cognitive short-cuts (Lind, 2001; Lind *et al.,* 2001). The purpose of these cognitive short-cuts is to have automated cognitive responses available that free cognitive space, which can then be used otherwise. The challenge at this point is that this way of thinking – although highly time efficient – may be faulty at times (Kahneman *et al.,* 2011; O'Neil, 1995; Tversky & Kahneman, 1974). Nevertheless, our longitudinal design is able to combat this limitation as it adds variability through the observation of justice over time. Another noteworthy aspect is that if we wish to stress the importance of time within the justice research, it is important to consider

justice variability. Our research has done a first very important step to achieve this, however, we did not manipulate the justice treatment, which is another factor that could be improved in future studies. By manipulating the treatment, the aspect of justice variability could be investigated controlling for continuous and discontinuous treatment. The literature has shown that greater variability in the treatment will lead to greater uncertainty compared even when compared to continuous negative treatment (Matta *et al.,* 2017). Future research should investigate this, as many service environments underly external factors such as e.g. stress and pressure which can lead to a variation of justice treatment at times.

Conclusion

Professionals' interpersonal justice treatment towards family members is a dynamic heuristic that helps to understand how families' perceptions of organizational performance oriented to improve the QoL of PID change over time. In the absence of more accurate information, family members use the treatment from professionals as an indicator of organizational performance. Implications of interpersonal justice are not restricted to the social interaction between professionals and family members, they are also reflected in the evolution of organizational image among families.

4 GENERAL DISCUSSION

The present doctoral dissertation previously covered the general introduction and the three research articles, in which all theoretical concepts, the methodological approach, and the results were discussed in detail. In this upcoming chapter, we want to give an overview of the most important findings and we will summarize main theoretical and practical conclusions. Finally, we will discuss the highlights of the limitations and proposals for future studies.

We conclude this part of the dissertation with an overview of the main conclusions.

4.1 Summary of Findings

4.1.1 Study 1

The findings of our first study supported that mutual intergroup justice between professionals and families at the organizational level predicts satisfaction with the center and performance evaluations beyond families' individual justice perceptions. We also concluded that a service environment characterized by intergroup justice between families and professionals, in which each treats the other fairly in interpersonal relations, could explain variance in positive outcomes in service delivery that cannot be adequately explained by an individualistic perspective on justice that is perceived by families. With the introduction of mutual intergroup justice, we considered level and agreement simultaneously. A high-quality relationship between families and professionals is characterized by "giving and receiving" fair interpersonal treatment. Because both groups are responsible for improving the QoL for individuals with intellectual disabilities, the social exchange should facilitate positive co-creation of the service. Mutual intergroup justice helps to create a fruitful environment for service performance so that service goals can be achieved, such as the improvement of QoL of people with intellectual disability. The results we obtained substantiated this argument by showing consistent significant links between mutual intergroup justice to service satisfaction, as well as to the indicators of service performance directed toward individuals with intellectual

disabilities, namely functional service quality, relational service quality, and performance focused on QoL.

4.1.2 Study 2

We found that justice and trust are mutually dependent and that both constructs are simultaneously precursors of each other over time. Professionals' perceptions of interpersonal justice treatment received from families and their trust in families function as concurrent and parallel initiators of a dynamic double spiral. The model comparison concluded that the double spiral, in which interpersonal justice and trust are simultaneous initiators, outperformed all alternatives. As a result, the nature of the interaction with families has too much complexity for sequential models to account for since both the social context (interpersonal justice) and the personal attitudes (trust) are in parallel development.

4.1.3 Study 3

Results supported all three hypotheses, showing that changes in families' perceptions of the interpersonal treatment from professionals lead to changes in how families evaluate organizational performance oriented to QoL of persons with intellectual disability. The results indicated that the fairness treatment towards families can be an important predictor of whether professionals will be perceived as satisfactory and trustworthy to provide the adequate service for the family member with intellectual disability. Essentially, when families are faced with scarce information about whether an organization can improve the QoL of the PID, they will refer to the justice treatment they receive from professionals as to how well they are treated in their interactions with professionals. In this sense, justice functions as heuristic according to which families conclude whether the organization and its members will be capable to fulfill their promises of providing the adequate care for their relative with intellectual disability and so improve their QoL.

4.2   Theoretical Implications

All of the studies focused on interpersonal justice, which we considered the significant dimension for our study contexts as the interpersonal facet of justice is of relevance when investigating the relationship between families and professionals. In the interaction between professionals and families, neither party has formal power that decides on costs, benefits, and processes, but there is an essential element relating to the quality of the connection, which is reflected in the way one party treats the other interpersonally.

In general, our studies have provided us with the following contributions. The three different perspectives have enormously enriched our understanding of interpersonal justice and allowed us to investigate the concept through the different lenses including families, professionals, and both perspectives mutually. We managed to understand that justice goes beyond the internal perspective of justice sources and additionally considers families as external source of justice who can receive justice but also to act on it. Researching justice as a relationship property is something that was demanded of modern justice research that includes dyadic aspects of justice (Bobocel, 2021). The particular study context - the services for PID– was a unique context to conduct our research as we were able to really deep dive into the role of third parties such as families and see their active contribution in the service that aims to better the life for people on the risk of exclusion.

Considering families as an active part is something that was widely called for, as family advocacy becomes more and more important (Szlamka *et al.,* 2022). With our research, we gave families and active role by seeing them as a vital element to achieve the service objectives (study 1). Further, we considered temporal dynamics, something that was called for as well by recent research (Bobocel, 2021) in order to investigate justice variability in gain spirals (study 2) as well as in within-person designs (study 3).

We further want to mention that our study also highlighted the importance of interpersonal justice as a justice dimension that is essential when considering customer services that demand a strong customer-employee relationship in order to fulfill the service objectives, as the dimension that can lead to strong affect in individuals (Bies, 2001; Bies & Tripp , 1996) is naturally social and requires personal intimacy (Bies & Moag, 1986; Greenberg, 2011). Studying interpersonal justice in our study context, was thus not only novel, but much needed to understand the complex relationship between families and professionals. In the following paragraphs we want to highlight the individual study contributions and their theoretical implications.

With **study 1** we introduced mutual intergroup justice as an analogy to findings and research on mutual trust. It was defined as the interpersonal treatment in the relationship between two groups, considering both the level of interpersonal justice and the agreement between the parties about this level of interpersonal justice. The optimal relationship between families and professionals consists of high level of interpersonal justice simultaneously supported by high levels of agreement about this level between the groups. Argued with theory on social information processing, professionals will slowly develop similar justice perceptions, and so will families among themselves. At the same time, we assumed that differences between both groups exist meaning that, mutuality in justice perceptions at the organizational level integrates the combination of direct consensus and dispersion models (see Martínez-Tur *et al.,* 2018). Combining those approaches for our first study we argued that although agreement is expected within each group, it is possible to encounter disagreement in the way the two groups (professionals and families) perceive each other.

We identified mutual intergroup justice as a critical aspect of service co-creation (Neghina *et al.,* 2015). When the intergroup contact between professionals and families is characterized by a social exchange that is based on giving and receiving, both groups display

high levels of mutual justice within their relationship. To explain our rationale, we argued that the active involvement of families should result in a favorable appraisal of the center based on the logic of co-creation of services. Previous studies (Aknin *et al.,* 2013; Nelson *et al.,* 2016) have proven that good acts directed toward others (e.g., prosocial behaviors) benefit both the receiver and the giver, and indeed, positive action toward others is, in fact, emotionally gratifying for humans in a variety of cross-cultural circumstances (Aknin *et al.,* 2013) and serves to generate emotions of joy, happiness, and satisfaction (see Anik *et al.,* 2013; Nelson *et al.,* 2016). As a result, a fair treatment received and given from both sides will impact the families' satisfaction with the center, as well as the service performance directed to individuals with intellectual disability. Families' satisfaction with the center is a necessary condition for a constructive relationship with the center, and the quality of the justice relationship between both parties is a powerful antecedent (e.g., Molina *et al.,* 2015).

We additionally saw that the quality of relationship is more than the one-sided treatment that families receive from professionals. From intergroup contact theory (Allport, 1935) we know that the active role of each group that goes beyond mere contact does not only have benefits, but further is a necessity in order to impact the quality of the relationship, which then permits a more positive interaction (Liebkind, Haaramo, & Jasinskaja-Lahti, 2000). Families can be active contributors to fair intergroup treatment, thus creating a context that will later benefit them when it comes to their satisfaction with the center. The results additionally indicated that mutual intergroup justice helps to create a prosperous environment for service performance. Fair mutual interpersonal justice treatment is inspiring to both parties, leading to an improved relationship in which service objectives are easier to achieve.

After studying the mutuality of interpersonal justice by considering both families' and professionals' perspective on each other's justice treatment, we zoomed in on families as a legitimate source of justice to understand professionals' perspective in **study 2**. Due to its

longitudinal character, the study addressed the call for dynamic and dyadic research on justice, trust and other related concepts (Bobocel, 2021; Tjosvold *et al.,* 2016). The longitudinal approach made it possible to gain in-depth knowledge about the perspective of professionals and how professionals perceive and evaluate families, which allowed to provide a much better view of the complexity of a reality based on intricate relationships that evolve over time as depicted in our study.

Our results showed us that the fair treatment that professionals receive from families is in fact a predicate to the quality in their relationship regarding professionals' trust in families because families are co-creators of services as a result of their interactions with professionals. Thus, not only will mutual interpersonal justice from both parties enrich the relationship to foster co-creation, which then results in better service outcomes, but also only just focusing on families as active participants in the employee-customer relationship and their interpersonal justice treatment on professionals will benefit their relationship as it evokes higher degrees of trust from professionals in families.

When it comes to the direction of the justice-trust relationship, we were presented with several rationales. A context-oriented model of human behavior has dominated organizational research when it comes to peoples' attitudes and behaviors in organizational settings (Johns, 2018). It is argued that people see and process information from their environments in order to make sense of their social world and subsequently generate attitudes and behaviors (see Fiske &Taylor, 1984). This model was challenged by the claim that individuals are fully capable of defining their organizational context (Schneider, 1987; Schneider, Goldstein, & Smith, 1995). Schneider and colleagues believed that individuals influence their (organizational) environment by their personal traits and actions, opposing the belief that behavior and attitudes arise as a result of a specific environment. Attitudes of organizational members, such as trust, are thus one of the key aspects that serve to define social reality in organizations, as they guide

information processing and therefore serve to interpret (justice) events in the environment (Fazio, 1986; Tormala, 2016; Tormala & Rucker, 2007). Both previous approaches considered, we argued that the reality is often far more complex than we assume. Individuals may interpret social information in terms of treatment received (justice), while at the same time, they may already have attitudes (trust) that impact the course of the connection with the people who are the beneficiaries of the attitude (see Kaltiainen, Lipponen, Holtz, 2017; Saunders & Thornhill, 2003). In the relationship between families and professionals, our results supported a dynamic theory of justice and trust as parallel antecedents, with complex interactions over time, which is why it is additionally crucial to note that this complicated dynamic cannot be comprehended and explained by simple models as human interaction with the environment is far too complex to be condensed into sequential models with a single direction. To be more specific, our results indicated that families' justice treatment equally influences professionals' trust, but professionals' trust influences families' justice treatment equally. The double spiral integrates the various theoretical approaches and explains the debate about the predominance of context vs. person-oriented (see Johns, 2018; Schneider, 1987; Schneider *et al.,* 1995) frameworks aiming to comprehend behavior in organizations. When studying people and environments in dynamic interactions with one another, we shouldn't overlook their simultaneity as it adds value to the overall understanding of how behavior and affect develops.

After zooming in on families as a source of justice for professionals, we focused on professionals as a source of justice for families and its effect on service performance oriented to the improvement of QoL of people with intellectual disability. With **study 3** we had the opportunity to study within-person change across the span of time which was another aspect that was called for in modern justice research (Bobocel, 2021) as previously mentioned.

When considering the families' perspective, we understand that the collaboration with professionals might be more complicated than what one might think. When it comes to making

the right choices for the family member with intellectual disability, the choosing of an adequate center and its professionals is of vital importance. Evaluating the service of the center in its quality is difficult as families are faced with a situation of information scarcity due to time-limited interactions with professionals, but also because families, as so-called non-experts, fundamentally know less about what constitutes good care service than professionals, who are experts (Vidal *et al.,* 2020). Hence, families might feel uncertain and troubled considering whether the relationship will result in the achievement of key objectives they hope for (Tyler and Lind, 1992), which is the proper provision of services to their intellectually disabled relative that has its roots in an improvement in QoL. Consequently, families would aim to find out if professionals are trustworthy (Van den Bos, Wilke & Lind, 1998) by substituting the missing information with information that is available.

Fairness heuristics can be used to direct future behavior expectations when individuals contemplate belonging to a certain group (Lind, 2001; Lind & Van den Bos, 2002) which can be explained by Uncertainty Management Theory as people strive to lessen any cognitive burden by taking cognitive short-cuts to organize existing information (Lind, 2001; Lind, Kray & Thomson; 2001).The phenomenon of information substitution will become more prevalent as uncertainty increases. It is hence crucial to be aware that the justice treatment families received from service professionals can serve as a heuristic that might reduce uncertainty and give families a way to re- and evaluate the service not just in the beginning but also over time. This will help to alleviate the dilemma that families face. In this way, we were able to identify justice as a measure of service quality from a family's point of view which along with our previous implications that stem from study 1 and 2, gives us another insight into the functionality of services for people with intellectual disability.

Additionally, our research attempted to highlight intra-variability, which demonstrates that altering one aspect (justice treatment) over time will result in altering another aspect (e.g.,

performance oriented towards QoL). Families constantly evaluate the way professionals treat them. If families are treated better over time, they also reevaluate the performance in terms of the QoL of their relative. According to earlier research (Matta *et al.,* 2017), receiving consistent justice treatment was just as important for overcoming feelings of uncertainty as the amount of justice received. To put it another way, a person may feel more unsettled when they receive a justice treatment that varies greatly as opposed to someone who receives a justice treatment that is consistent over time. This was supported by a series of trials by Matta and colleagues (2017), even if the justice treatment was continuously poor. Consequently, it's important to remember that treating families fairly is important, as is making sure that this positive treatment is stable over time. In this way, the viewpoint of the families has demonstrated to us the importance of time in regards to justice within their interactions with professionals and shown that all justice sources, whether if we consider both parties in mutuality, only professionals who receive fair treatment from families, or families who receive fair treatment from professionals, are equally important in contributing to a service environment that has its roots in a fruitful partnership between families and professionals.

4.3   Practical Implications

All conducted studies have practical implications that allow us to apply our findings into daily processes of services for people at the risk of exclusion, particularly with regard to the relationship between families and professionals. In the following, we will present these practical implications considering each study individually.

Study 1 lead to a variety of essential practical implications that bare the potential to provide organizations with knowledge that can help to stimulate the service environment to foster a fruitful co-creation between professionals and families that is characterized mutual intergroup justice. In order to reach this objective, professionals need to collaborate, because

mutual intergroup justice requires not only high justice but also shared perceptions that can only exist through lots of social contact.

This is an essential take away for managers, as they should promote an environment in which professionals and families have time and space to interact with each other. Naturally they would also have to be equipped with the right knowledge and skills that allow them to understand why collaboration and the right treatment of the other party is of importance. One possible measure could be to establish teams that are composed of professionals and families, who would then work on small projects that require the display of fair treatment in order to function.

Study 2 has another number of practical implications. It is important to make families aware that they are an active part of the relationship. In past years this viewpoint has shifted drastically from families as passive receivers of the service to families as active caregivers that are able to advocate for their rights and the rights for their relative with intellectual disabilities (Szlamka,Tekola, Hoekstra & Hanlon, 2022) Our findings showed that fair treatment can improve the relationship with professionals by increasing their trust in families. Hence, families should know that that their interaction with professionals is a way to shape the environment perceived by professionals. Their behavior affects the quality of the relationship with professionals – which is a necessary precursor to achieve organizational objectives such as a better QoL of individuals with intellectual disabilities (Carter *et al.,* 2013; Colarusso & O'Rourke, 2007; Turnbull *et al.,* 2006). We thus recommend managers to include families in training, socialization, and role analysis to optimize the service environment as much as possible and to give families the opportunity to contribute and to feel like they are contributing and able to influence the service and service quality, which then directly relates to service outcomes relevant for their relatives with disabilities.

Another practical implication is corresponding to professionals' attitudes of trust towards families. As our results point out, trust was affecting justice as much as justice was affective trust. Hence, trust plays a somewhat similar role as justice in relation to creating an adequate partnership. Therefore, we propose that managers consider initiatives aimed at increasing professionals' trust in families, such as presenting reasonable arguments regarding the beneficial aspects of families, as well as favorable attitudes about the role of families regarding the service outcome (see Hofmann *et al.,* 2010).

Professionals should be made aware that families are active participants in the collaboration. They should urge them to guarantee that families engage, even though they may not feel as prepared as professionals owing to their distinctive expert vs non-expert position.

Study 3 brought us the following practical implications. Families encounter a situation of information scarcity regarding the evaluating of professionals and their ability to provide adequate, high-quality service to their relatives. We learned that professionals' interpersonal justice treatment towards families can function as a heuristic to substitute the scarcity of information and to reduce uncertainty. Therefore, it is highly important that professionals are aware of how their behavior might or might not affect families and the way their potential service performance is perceived. We believe it is further important that the unique constellation is stressed that we find in the relationships within the centers that typically consist of the professional, the person with intellectual disability and the family. The training and information of professionals should highlight that their actions and behaviors have consequences, and that negative consequences for the families – such as poor interpersonal justice treatment they receive – will automatically have adverse consequences for the service user, which is reflected in a diminishing organizational performance that consequently leads to issues in achieving the service objectives. Thus, as the relationship between professionals and families represents an essential precursor to reach the service goals (Martinez-Tur *et al.,* 2018),

professionals must be educated and sensitized. We argue that when the service aim is extended to include families as an indirect service user, the interaction between professionals and families is reinforced, which evokes an improvement in service performance. Another important consideration is that families will not only assess professionals once, but also reevaluate them over their continuous engagement. As an inconsistent justice treatment can have negative consequences, it is essential to make professionals aware of this and to additionally provide enough ways in which professionals and families can collaborate. In other words, services should be designed in a way that fosters intergroup contact that is sufficient for families to get the adequate information they need about professionals and their justice treatment. This way they will reduce the uncertainty they usually encounter, and form partnerships that are characterized by fair treatment, communication, and trust that will foster a service quality that will help to improve the QoL of the service user.

4.4   Limitations and Future Research

Naturally all our studies have limitations that we want to summarize in the following paragraphs. **Study 1** was based on a survey study, which had the limitation that solid causal links could not be stablished.

Although we conducted the research in a real-world setting with the participation of professionals and families, it would be interesting to broaden the study and assess their relationship using other designs, such as experiments to see if stimulating fair intergroup treatment in terms of mutual justice leading to positive outcomes when compared to a control group in which mutual justice is not present.

Another restriction is that, while we did examine both professionals and families to acquire a mutual perspective, we only employed self-report assessments for our variables. Future research should incorporate variables that assess the QoL of PID more directly in order

to have another indicator that evaluates the quality of the service relationship, which is reflected in the quality of service.

Although **study 2**, contained a well-thought through research design, that through the double-spiral was able to find causal connections, the element of time to specifically see the influence of consistency of families' justice treatment was missing.

Because stability decreases uncertainty, it would be a fascinating feature to study in future research that might modify this specific component. This might contribute to a better understanding of the connection between professionals and families and how it evolves through time.

Another restriction is that our sample was drawn from facilities in Spain that provide our services to persons with intellectual disabilities. The qualities of the organizations, which originate from a real-world environment with professionals who interact with families daily, allowed us to measure our variables several times to give our results more causality and solidity. However, it is important to mention that the cross-cultural generalization of our findings represent a limitation of our study. Future studies could replicate the double spiral in another cultural setting.

Study 3 has a few limitations as well that are important to mention. Families see the way justice is handled as an indicator for whether an organization can perform in ways that provides the adequate care for their relative with intellectual disability. Therefore, the justice is functioning as a heuristic, a mental shortcut that causes an automatic mental reaction (Lind, 2001; Lind, Kray &Thomson; 2001).

The difficulty at this stage is that, while this way of thinking saves time, it can also be occasionally incorrect (Kahneman, Lovollo, & Oliver, 2011; Tversky & Kahneman, 1974; O'Neil, 1995). Nonetheless, our longitudinal approach overcomes this constraint by including variability in the observation of justice across time.

Another point to add is that, if we want to emphasize the relevance of time for justice research, we will have to have a closer look at what happens when justice varies. By studying variability within our longitudinal approach, our research has taken an essential first step toward achieving this goal; however, we did not modify the justice treatment, which is a component that might be addressed in future studies, as many service contexts are influenced by external elements such as stress and pressure, which might result in a variance in justice treatment at times.

4.5 Conclusions

1. Considering the perspective of mutuality, we can conclude that mutual intergroup justice is a way to understand service performance that is oriented towards individuals who experience an intellectual disability.

2. Both professionals and families have an active role within their partnership to sustain and improve the QoL of the people who experience the disability.

3. Mutual Justice combines the level of interpersonal justice both parties show towards each other, and the agreement both parties have in this.

4. Fair, mutual treatment between both parties leads to the co-creation of services, which then in turn leads to satisfaction with the center but also to an improved performance.

5. Considering the professional perspective, we now understand that both interpersonal justice and trust are parallel and simultaneous precursors in a double positive spiral that allows good professional-family partnerships to be created.

6. Professionals trust families because they perceive fair treatment from families, but, simultaneously, trust in families leads to a social processing where the treatment received from families is perceived as positive.

7. Families are active agents when it comes to forming professionals' trust in them. Their justice treatment can positively influence how much professionals will trust them.

8. Considering the families' perspective, we identified professionals' interpersonal justice treatment as heuristic that substitutes the missing information to help families evaluate organizational performance.

9. Changes in professionals' justice treatment towards families will lead to changes considering families' evaluation of organizational performance oriented towards

a) improvement of self-determination, b) improvement of social inclusion and c) improvement of QoL over time.

10. Service providers should consider families as another primary customer that needs to be actively included in the service to form partnerships to achieve the optimal delivery of services with the main objective to improve the life of the people experiencing the disability.

5 SUMMARY

Summay Structure

This section contains a summary of the present doctoral dissertation, divided into several individual parts. Starting with a short overview of the doctoral thesis we will briefly introduce the research work and explain the originality and value of the research. We subsequently elaborate on the academic foundations of the research project starting with a brief history of Organizational Justice, the dimensions of the construct, its relevance and formation as well as sources and agents of justice. We introduce the importance of time in the concept by presenting justice variability and we finish the academic foundation by underlining the relevance of justice to our research area of interest: centers for PID. In the next section we will provide a deep dive into the three research studies summarizing the theoretical concepts and objectives of each study. We thereafter relate the three individual objectives to the overall goal of the dissertation before presenting a brief summary of the methodology that we used in order to reach the goal. We end the summary by specifying an overview of the findings from each research study, followed by the presentation of the general theoretical and practical implications, as well as 10 conclusions of the project.

Introduction

In response to the demands placed on modern communities, societies have devised services with the primary intention of enhancing the Quality of Life (QoL) of PID (Schalock & Verdugo, 2012). These services, which are directed toward a population that is relatively narrow in scope, have characteristics that are pertinent. To begin, the interaction that occurs between those who give care and the families who are the beneficiary of that care is more than just a transaction. According to the terminology developed by Price, Arnould, and Tierney (1995), the nature of this service is characterized by a significant amount of time as well as a complex degree of emotional intensity. Furthermore, service-related expectations are complex due to the fact that they are not only tied to the accurate delivery of essential services, but also to the improvement of the QoL. A high-quality interaction between these two groups is essential to improve the QoL of service users (see Martínez-Tur, Moliner, Pearroja, Gracia, & Peiró 2015). In the end, the involvement of both professionals and families is crucial to achieve the service goals (Carter *et al.,* 2013).

When examining the structure and functioning of the centers and support services, we identify two key groups that must work together to enhance the QoL of PID: a) professionals who provide services targeted at such people; and b) families. When evaluating how each party interacts with the other on a personal level, the quality of the support system—which includes the collaboration between families and professionals—is of utmost importance. This relationship is distinct from other customer service relationships that are currently in place in other industries. The partnership in services for people with intellectual impairments typically lasts for a number of years, involves intricate personal exchange, and develops close emotional attachments over time. As a result, improving the PID's QoL depends on the quality of the relationship.

As a matter of distributive justice (fair compensation), procedural justice (fair decision-making processes), interpersonal justice (dignified treatment), and informational justice (e.g., transparency), justice in organizations has traditionally been viewed from the perspective of the fair treatment that employees receive from their superiors (Colquitt, 2001, Molina *et al.*, 2015). It is anticipated that when professionals and families interact appropriately, their connection will improve, which will lead to the development of a stronger framework for providing adequate care for PID and improving their QoL. Interpersonal justice, which is defined as the extent to which people are treated with respect, dignity, and courtesy, is the focus of the current initiative (Colquitt, 2001). With regard to the current research goal, interpersonal justice is pertinent because it is the crucial dimension in interactions between families and professionals.

The main goal of the current doctoral research was to comprehend interpersonal justice in the framework of support services for PID, notably in the interaction between service providers and families of loved ones with intellectual disabilities. The objective was to adopt a comprehensive strategy that would alter perspective in each research study carried out. To this end, we created three research projects with separate samples and research objectives: a) mutual justice between professionals and families, b) the professionals' perspective, and c) the families' view.

Originality of the Research Project

By conducting this research, we hoped to make a positive contribution to the efforts being made by the academic community to improve the QoL of PID. More specifically, we wanted to improve the interaction that occurs between professionals and families, which has a beneficial impact on the effectiveness with which support services are delivered. In order to accomplish this goal, we devised three empirical studies, each of which was aimed to offer a unique perspective on the support service.

The purpose of Study 1 was to investigate the ways in which families and professionals perceive one another. In order to do this, we came up with the novel concept of mutual justice to investigate its connection with satisfaction with the service, service quality, and performance oriented to improve QoL.

In the second study, the objective was to gain an understanding of the perspective held by professionals in order to employ justice as a strategy of mending trust gaps between professionals and families. We assumed that there is a living, breathing relationship between the degree to which families treat professionals with respect and the degree to which professionals treat families with trust.

In Study 3, we investigated how families perceived the justice conduct of professionals toward them to determine whether a shift in professionals' justice behavior would result in a shift in how families saw professionals' performance. Specifically, we wanted to know whether a shift in professionals' justice behavior would result in a shift in how families saw professionals' performance. The QoL of the service user was evaluated using a number of different measures. Two of these variables were self-determination and social inclusion. In addition to this, we made use of a contextualized measurement of service performance, the primary focus of which was the improvement of the QoL of the individual receiving the service.

Theoretical Foundation for the dissertation

A Brief History of Organizational Justice

Today, there are several literature reviews, meta-analyses, and empirical studies covering various elements of justice research (e.g., Bobocel, 2021; Cohen-Charash & Spector, 2001; Colquitt, 2012; Colquitt *et al.,* 2013; Cropanzano, Goldman & Benson, 2005; Greenberg, 2002; Martínez-Tur; Molina & Maniezki, 2021). Organizational justice and its implications for science and practice are a discipline with greater significance than ever, with many more untapped research areas. This is despite changing societies and workplace contexts. In the late

1970s, it became evident that justice was an important component of organizational life. From the 1980s on, it grew significantly (Byrne & Cropanzano, 2001). Organizational justice is the perception of an employee as to whether a component or agent of the organizational environment is fair in accordance with a particular rule or standard (Cropanzano, Rupp, Mohler, & Schminke, 2001). This includes a subjective assessment of the moral and ethical standing of managerial conduct (Cropanzano, Bowen, & Gilliland, 2007). Organizational justice has been the subject of extensive, continuous research during the previous 60 years. It was somewhat obvious from the beginning that organizational justice is a concept that might be relevant, much beyond its obvious purpose. However, the concept's numerous applications and consequent potential to enhance organizational life and human happiness continue to astound academics today. According to a recent review of the literature by Bobocel (2021), researchers should examine linking justice research with other Work and Organizational Psychology topics (such as affect, biases, diversity/inclusion, and motivation) while continuing the trend to study justice in a dynamic and dyadic way. By meeting this need and investigating organizational justice in a setting that supports groups at risk of exclusion as well as justice in dynamic and dyadic relationships, we hope to contribute to contemporary justice research.

Dimensions of Organizational Justice

When examining relative deprivation among US military personnel during the Second World War, the oldest dimension (distributive justice) was initially addressed (Stouffer, Suchman, DeVinney, Starr, & Williams, 1949). The focus of distributive justice is on the fairness of outcomes, more specifically on the norms and standards that are used to allocate outcomes, such as the results of hiring, firing, and performance review systems. The pioneer of the equity hypothesis, economist John Stacey Adams (1965), asserted that individuals would weigh the benefits they would derive from interactions with those at the same social hierarchy level against the work they would expend to engage in those interactions. Additionally, they

would mentally compare their input (example: effort put into an assessment center) to output (example: obtaining a specific position, a raise, or a promotion) ratio with the ratio of their peers and arrive at either a positive or negative result depending on whether their result would look better or worse in comparison to others. They would experience a sense of parity if their peers' assessments of fairness in terms of the outcomes were the same. The intention to leave a job and work satisfaction have both been connected to distributive justice (Folger & Konovsky, 1989; Haar & Spell, 2009).

Procedural justice is the second dimension of organizational justice (Leventhal, 1980). Thribaut and Walker (1975) conducted the first studies on this dimension in the 1970s, and Leventhal later followed (1980). Although it was initially explored in the context of legal dispute settlement, social psychologists are beginning to take notice of its relevance for understanding resource allocation processes (Bobocel & Gosse, 2015). People's perceptions of the fairness of the formal and structural processes underlying decision-making are referred to as procedural justice (Thibaut & Walker, 1975). According to Leventhal (1980), for a process to be procedurally fair, the decision-making within it must meet the following criteria: a) consistency; b) bias-free; c) correctness; d) ethically sound; and e) inclusivity. Employee satisfaction has been found to be generally correlated with procedural justice over time. According to academics, even when an outcome is seen favorably, a person may still feel unsatisfied if they believe that the procedure that produced it was unfair. Likewise, when the process is seen as fair, even unfavorable results are far more accepted (Lind & Tyler, 1988). Later, informational and interpersonal justice were recognized as two more components of organizational justice (Colquitt, 2001). Informational justice is based on reasoning or justifications provided during the application of processes or the allocation of results (Bies & Moag, 1986; Greenberg, 1993). It also illustrates the extent to which standards of integrity and reason are applied to process explanations. Colquitt (2001) defined interpersonal justice as the

degree to which authorities or other third parties involved in carrying out procedures or determining outcomes treat individuals with kindness, dignity, and respect (Colquitt, 2001). Researchers came to the conclusion that there is evidence to support each of the four unique dimensions of justice, with each dimension having an impact on different outcome variables (see Colquitt & Shaw, 2005). For instance, it has been discovered that distributive justice and procedural justice are strongly connected with outcome satisfaction, job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and trust (Colquitt *et al.,* 2001). Interpersonal justice has also been linked favorably to employee retention, organizational citizenship behavior, and supervisor satisfaction (Leineweber, Peristera, Bernhard-Oettel, & Eib, 2020). (Sudin, 2011). It has been determined that daily job happiness is impacted by both interpersonal and informational justice (Loi, Yang & Diefendorff, 2009).

After examining the breadth of organizational justice studies, academics can affirm with certainty that individuals want to be treated equally in all facets of their lives (Ambrose, 2002). Indeed, according to neuroscientific study, people's desire for justice is more a part of our nature, firmly ingrained in the human brain, than a decision we consciously make (Sanfey *et al.,* 2003).

Why Fairness Matters

When we examine the factors that influence why individuals care about justice, experts typically divide their research into two groups that either have a content focus or a process focus (see Campbell & Pritchard, 1976). Additionally, academics frequently distinguish between the two main theoretical orientations of self-interest vs. group values (Conlon, 1993; Tyler, 1987; Lind & Tyler, 1988). Self-interest theories typically presuppose that workers care about justice to get the results they want or to have influence over processes to get the results they want. On the other hand, group value models assert that social processes themselves promote justice. We see two key advantages to belonging to a group: (1) members receive a

very attractive identity; and (2) members' views and value systems are reinforced and confirmed by the group (Brockner, Tyler, Cooper-Schneider, 1992). Employees self-validate their position within the group or organization when they feel that justice has been served. Justice thus conveys information regarding community respect and long-term stability. It describes a socially linked understanding of human nature where justice is important as a process.

When it comes to theoretical frameworks, one of the most important theories in the organizational justice literature is Blau's Social Exchange Theory (1964). According to Blau, humans pursue just two types of exchange relationships: a) economic or monetary exchange and b) social interaction.

While economic exchange focuses on two parties agreeing on a specific monetary benefit exchange, social exchange is a far more difficult transaction to comprehend. While neither party ignores their own interests, the exchange is relatively hazy in terms of the conditions and obligations that were agreed upon. Homans (1961) defined social exchange as an exchange involving two (or more) persons who anticipate getting a reward that can be both tangible goods - supplied in the form of products, services, or money - and intangible goods. As a result, social transaction, as opposed to economic exchange, incorporates the value of social relationships. Resources are exchanged according to the rules of reciprocity through social interaction that adheres to specific rules and norms (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005). In an ideal world, social interaction will result in high-quality relationships between the exchange participants (Blau, 1964). Several mutual exchanges occur between the parties over time. As previously stated, social exchange connections must be distinguished from other types of exchange partnerships that are based on economic interests and emphasize monetary reciprocity (Masterson, Lewis, Goldman & Taylor, 2000). Academics recognized early on that the degree to which a social exchange process is characterized by fairness will highlight the

social component and foster the development of the relationship between both parties in such a way that fair treatment will generate positive feedback, improving the chances of positive reciprocation (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005; Lavelle, Rupp & Brockner, 2007). Interpersonal justice is critical since social connections will be judged considerably more on nonspecific and subjective measuring contributions than instances of distributive justice, for example. Supervisors who treat their employees fairly will obtain reciprocal behavior in the form of favorable attitudes from their employees as they are found to be task and relationship focused (see Campbell *et al.,* 2013).

Another area of study is group value models, which emphasize justice as a valued component of social processes. In this way, they highlight the human need for affiliation or belonging, which is represented in the need for meaningful attachment to others (Baumeister & Leary, 2017). People generally like to feel good about themselves in order to have a favorable self-image (Steele, 1988). Lind and Tyler (1988) hypothesized that people actively seek information that reveals how much a particular group valued them. If people obtain favorable justice treatment, they interpret this as evidence that they are valued by the group, which boosts their self-esteem (Lind & Tyler, 1992). Additional studies confirmed this hypothesis, as it was discovered that injustice harmed self-esteem and hence the identification with the appropriate group (Bies & Moag, 1986; Greenberg, 1993).

The need for control, as indicated by the instrumental model, is another major motivation for seeking justice (Thibaut & Walker, 1975; Lind & Tyler, 1988). As a result, people will prioritize fairness in relationships because it provides some predictability of results in the long run, which promotes a sense of control. To put it another way, people will look at previous situations where justice or injustice has occurred and try to predict future situations or justice outcomes, which will give them a sense of control, even though this may not be realistic from an objective standpoint, as Cropanzano and colleagues (2001) pointed out.

Lind and Van den Bos' Uncertainty Management Theory (2002) makes a similar argument. According to their idea, while people may have a strong desire to control our surroundings and personal results, personal uncertainty is an important component of our life that we meet in a variety of situations, bringing with it negative sentiments. People that are motivated to address this situation seek information in order to foresee future events and results. As such, fairness could be a criterion for prediction, reducing feelings of uncertainty while increasing sensations of control.

Fairness Heuristic Theory is a theory that stems from the control of uncertainty and the necessity for affiliation (Lind, 2001; Lind, Kulik, Ambrose, & de Vera Park, 1993). This theory is inspired by the fundamental social problem that individuals face when deciding whether to join a group despite having a limited quantity of objective knowledge to help them make their decision. According to the theory, people construct a heuristic conception of fairness based on information that is easily accessible and intelligible during previous justice situations (Lind 2001). As a result, these fast fairness assessments are utilized as a guide to govern conduct in diverse social circumstances to fit the perceived amount of justice (Lind, 2001). Fairness judgements are hence used in a simple rule of thumb (heuristics), a cognitive short-cut, to free up cognitive space/resources with the intention to act faster and, as a result, have more self-assurance in our actions (Cropanzano, Byrne, Bobocel & Rupp, 2001).

Another theory on why justice is important is the necessity for fairness as a virtue. Individuals are worried with justice issues, according to Folger (2001), since justice is a virtue in and of itself. This was summarized by scholars in the deontic theory of justice (Folger, Gilliland, Steiner & Skarlicki, 2001). People are concerned with fairness because, as the word *deon* derives from the Greek word for obligation/permission (Cropanzano, Goldman, & Folger, 2003; Folger, 2001), one is obligated to behave in a certain way to do what is right. Indeed, Colquitt, Scott, Judge, and Shaw (2006) found that employees who responded positively to

justice issues scored high on trait morality, and later research found that employees judged their superiors and their behavior to be just or unjust in character (Priesemuth & Schminke, 2019).

Formation of Fairness Perceptions

Several studies have been conducted to investigate how fairness judgements are created. Countless hypotheses have emerged in recent years about the establishment of fairness or unfairness perceptions, claiming that it may be a purposeful, well-thought-out process as well as an unconscious, rapid operation.

Beginning with the notion that fairness judgments are formed unconsciously, researchers stated that we have good reason to think this way because most people in companies face a certain dilemma: the shortage of information required while making a meaningful decision. Indeed, Folger and Cropanzano (2001) proposed that when confronted with insufficient information or even time limits, humans may rely on automated processing.

A more extensive explanation was provided by the Fairness Heuristic Theory (Lind, 2001; Van den Bos, 2001a; Proudfoot & Lind, 2015): There are two phases that are relevant to the universal justice judgment process: the judgment phase and the usage phase. The judgment phase refers to the process of constructing justice perceptions from cognitive processes. The justice-relevant information is employed in this phase to establish a general fairness perception. Following the formation of these fairness judgments, a usage phase occurs in which employees apply their heuristics fairness judgments as guidelines for individuals' attitudes and behaviors. Given this, the fairness heuristic can be used to replace trustworthiness even when information is scarce (Lind, 2001). Furthermore, according to Deonance theory (Folger, Cropanzano, & Goldman, 2005), fairness impressions are frequently based on whether a recent justice occurrence is related to a person's internal moral compass. When people are confronted with a

justice incident that necessitates a moral analysis, an appraisal is unavoidable (Folger, Cropanzano & Goldman, 2005).

While Fairness Heuristic Theory presupposes that the usage phase is largely automated, the judgement phase is defined by accumulating justice-relevant information in order to develop an overall fairness impression. According to Leventhal (1980), the construction of fairness perceptions is a very cognitive process in which people estimate and pick which justice standards they want to examine and how much priority they want to assign to them. This might differ depending on the persons and events (Leventhal, 1976). This makes sense when we realize that the rules for allocating outcomes vary based on the context (Deutsch, 1975). Fairness Theory (FT) is another hypothesis that believes that the establishment of fairness perceptions is a relatively intentional process (Folger & Cropanzano 2001). As we all know, the theory holds authority accountable for their acts and conduct based on three separate counterfactuals, which refer to whether events or behavior might and should have played out differently and whether a better outcome would have been attained with an alternative behavior. They will next assess whether the scenario is seen as fair or unfair based on the extent of divergence. As a result, we can see that both unconscious and conscious processes are important when analyzing how justice judgments are created.

While information processing garnered a lot of attention, impact was also investigated. Adams (1965) proposed that when people were given what they thought was unfair, they reacted with powerful emotions such as anger, aggravation, anguish, and resentment. Further research has revealed that even when people were compensated for doing something regarded unjust in order to obtain a competitive advantage, they experienced feelings of annoyance and shame (Homans, 1961). We also tend to evaluate circumstances based on our daily mood, but also on how we are used to interpreting situations, behavior, and actions of others. As a result, we have cause to suppose that justice situations and their interpretations might be heavily

influenced not just by our unique outlook on a scenario on that day, but also by what we have experienced throughout our lives. Weiss and Cropanzano (1996) also contended that affective reactions influence how individuals cognitively perceive a situation, and that affect also influences attitudes toward a situation. According to Schwarz (1990), in instances of ambiguity, people will rely on their emotions as a primary source of information substitution. As such, affect could act as a heuristic in the fairness judgment process.

Sources and Agents of Justice

Academics in organizational justice believe that employees will assess numerous entities, including their supervisor, the organization, and/or peers, or the organization itself (Rupp & Cropanzano, 2002). According to the multi-foci perspective, inquiring about justice without mentioning who is responsible for the fairness misses a crucial aspect of the phenomenon. As a result, because justice perceptions can be influenced by multiple justice agents, shifting the focus of justice is thought to improve the prediction of criteria variables from the same source. More specifically, views of justice about a given party are associated to attitudinal and behavioral responses directed specifically at that party. Nonetheless, while individuals may be able to rate multiple justice sources equally, recent research has revealed that different justice dimensions are coupled with different justice agents. Previous research shown that employees frequently associate different sorts of justice/dimensions with either systems (e.g., procedural justice) or agents (e.g., interpersonal justice) (see Cropanzano, Prehar, & Chen, 2002; Masterson, Lewis, Goldman, & Taylor, 2000; Olkkonen & Lipponen, 2006). We are presented with numerous sources of justice within the organization, which can be the organization as a whole system or individual agents of justice such as bosses or coworkers. Byrne (1999) established the first four-factor model of justice, demonstrating that both procedural and interactional (interpersonal and informational) justice could be organizational and supervisory in nature, whereas procedural justice was attributed to organizations and

interactional justice to supervisors. In fact, managers wield considerable authority over employees in fairness procedures as "decision making agents" (Colquitt, 2001, p. 388). Supervisors are not the only types of internal justice agents found in corporations. Coworkers have become a more essential agent of justice as teams have gotten less hierarchical (Branscombe, Spears, Ellemer, & Doosje, 2002; Donovan, Drasgow, & Munson, 1998; Lavelle *et al.,* 2007). Intraunit justice or peer justice refers to the question of whether people are treated fairly by their own members of their team or group (by an internal party) (Cropanzano, Li & James, 2007). Surprisingly, the more people engage with one another, the more they share their perceptions of (justice) (Schminke, Ambrose, & Cropanzano, 2000; Schminke, Cropanzano, & Rupp, 2002). As a result, justice research has changed to include group/organizational level and shared perceptions as normal workplace structures (Colquitt, Zapata-Phelan, & Roberson, 2005; Martínez-Tur & Moliner, 2017; Konovsky, 2000). Researchers have gone on to investigate the role of organizational justice at the individual and collective levels (e.g., Li & Cropanzano, 2009), as well as the extent to which perceived fairness at the individual/organizational level predicts individual/organizational level outcomes.

Although internal agents of justice are an important area of research, much attention has been paid to external agents like as customers as another source of justice, with views of customer fairness influencing staff attitudes and conduct toward customers (Rupp, McCance, Spencer, & Sonntag, 2008; Spencer & Rupp, 2009). Customers may judge their relationships with institutions and people of the organization using fairness as a fundamental base, particularly in industries that require high levels of co-creation between customers and employees to achieve service goals (Masterson, 2001; Moliner, Martínez-Tur, Peiró, Ramos, & Cropanzano, 2005). According to Martínez-Tur and colleagues (2006), customer satisfaction is sensitive to distributive justice and interpersonal justice, indicating that customers are primarily concerned with the service/product outcome and the interpersonal treatment they

receive during the service. As one could expect, bad customer reactions will have an impact on the staff. Indeed, studies have found that interactional injustice caused by consumers increased participants' emotional labor (Rupp & Spencer, 2006). On the other hand, research has shown that when employees are mistreated, they will retaliate with acts of retaliation (e.g., hanging up on a phone call, purposefully giving them false information as to which department to go) both in direct, face-to-face and indirect situations (Rupp & Spencer, 2006; Skarlicki *et al.,* 2008; Shao & Skarlicki, 2014; Wang, Liao, Zhan, & Shi, 2011).

Customer satisfaction with the service is largely dependent on customers' opinions of justice toward service unit employees (Martínez-Tur *et al.,* 2006). It is crucial to note that both sides can be both an actor and a receiver of justice, especially when the organization's objectives rely on the active participation of the customer, forming a unique link between both parties and bringing us to the topic of mutual. Mutuality of constructs is something that has been investigated in other constructs such as trust and communication (Smith & Barclay, 1997; Martínez-Tur *et al.,* 2018) but still been quite neglected in justice research. When looking at mutuality in the interpersonal justice relationship between employees and customers of a service for PIDwe define mutual interpersonal justice as the interpersonal treatment within the relationship that is characterized by two aspects simultaneously: (a) level of interpersonal justice; and (b) agreement between the parties.

Justice variability and Exchange Spirals

Another essential point to note is that research on organizational justice has frequently overlooked the need of taking into account dynamic and within-individual changes in the justice treatment and perception. Scholars now recognize that considerable individual differences exist in the variability of a particular construct over time in many circumstances. Studies on interpersonal trust (Fleeson & Leicht, 2006), emotional labor (Scott, Barnes, & Wagner, 2012), self-esteem (Kernis, Cornell, Sun, Berry, & Harlow, 1993), and personality

have all demonstrated this (Fleeson, 2001). The term "justice variability" refers to a "between person variance in the stability of justice across time" (Matta, *et al.,* 2017, p. 2). The idea is heavily based on the previously developed uncertainty management theory and pulls heavily from other theoretical concepts. Uncertainty happens when an individual is unable to foresee his or her future or cannot feel consistency in his or her behaviors, experiences, or cognitions, as previously defined (Van den Bos & Lind, 2002). Fairness perceptions, according to Jones and Skarlicki (2013), evolve with new experiences and are compared and related with earlier experiences and expectations. Employees frequently rely on fairness heuristics to respond fast in self-interest and save relevant cognitive resources. This is only achievable if the fairness heuristic is based on a stable heuristic that is unlikely to fail. Because heuristics are primarily dependent on previous experiences, the individual must have this experience in order for their essence to be consistent. Inconsistent experiences would preclude the construction of a stable fairness heuristic, and hence the source would not be proven to be legitimate. In this sense, justice variability appears to be a component to consider when assessing how individuals perceive fair treatment. Variable fair treatment is viewed as more unclear and thus stressful than consistent fair treatment. Being treated consistently unfair, on the other hand, is less stressful for the individual than being treated inconsistently fair, as the latter creates more ambiguity.

With the growing importance of justice variability, researchers are becoming more interested in revealing a fact that is frequently observed but rarely studied: trade spirals or loops. Spirals are defined by Lindsley, Brass, and Thomas (1995) as relationships in which a change in one variable causes a matching change in another variable. These spirals can be either enhancing spirals, in which an increase in one variable causes an increase in another, or decreasing spirals, in which a reduction in one variable causes a decrease in another.

According to a study conducted by Breugst and colleagues (2015), perceived high justice leads to positive team interaction spirals (high performance and high unity), influencing the team's experience of being a strong entity over time, whereas low perceived justice leads to negative team interaction spirals (low performance and team members leaving the team), making spiral dynamics another important aspect that we would like to investigate with this project.

Justice in Service Centers for People with Intellectual Disability

The societal perspective on disability has changed significantly over time and continues to evolve. Beginning with an understanding of disability as an unfortunate state, people then began to view it as something that should be medically addressed before adopting the concept of utilizing the power of professionals or experts to assist the one suffering the disability (Campbell & Olivier, 1996; Clapton & Fitzgerald, 1997). The modern perspective varies from this in that we now recognize that everyone requires support and community. The premise is that disability is inextricably linked to social interactions that are crucial to every community, since individuals with disabilities may be disabled or assisted by the actions and attitudes of others (Cologan *et al.,* 2016).

Intellectual disability should be defined contextually to reflect the evolving societal perception of disability. A recent study (Schalock, Luckasson, & Shogren, 2020) has developed a multidimensional model of context that incorporates the micro, meso, and macro systems through which individuals experience life through employment, education, and recreation. As a result of the ongoing interplay between the individual and the environment, both human functioning and individual outcomes are profoundly influenced. Schalock, Luckasson, and Shogren (2020) identified multilevel, multifactorial, and interactive as the three important elements of context. Therefore, interaction is defined as "a reciprocal action or influence between multilevel/multifactor contextual variables" (Luckasson & Schalock, 2021, p. 3).

Examples of these reciprocal influences include living assistance, inclusive education, and employment assistance, among others. The objective of contextualizing is not only to emphasize the impact of external circumstances, but also to optimize the success of the individual's assistance. As a result, support services can be optimally analyzed and tailored to the individual's interactions with their surroundings. Obviously, this extends to the policymaking level so that institutions can further promote justice and fairness in the legal system, but it is also significant on the individual or micro level, where support organizations and their cooperation with families play a role (Luckasson & Schalock, 2021).

When examining the standpoint of service firms aiming to improve the QoL for PID, the interaction between workers and consumers becomes an important concern. Customization and a focus on people have led to the development of organizations that provide support services (Harbour & Maulik, 2010). This type of service business is very complicated and emotionally charged and achieving service goals is vital not just for the successful delivery of services but also for the well-being of service workers and persons who utilize the service.

When examining the relationships inside the service, we observe a triad constellation consisting of the service professional, the PID, and the PID's family members. Consequently, when it comes to providing an appropriate level of care, service employees attend not only to their primary client, the PID, but also to a secondary client, the family. Early on in the research for children with intellectual disability, it was recognized that a collaboration between families and service workers would not only benefit the delivery of core services, but also the support system required to provide those services by reducing uncertainty through the provision of information, reducing conflict, and building trust (DeChillo, Koren & Schultze, 1994; Vidal *et al.,* 2020; Vosler-Hunter, 1998).

Indeed, it appears that the manner in which professionals and families interact on a daily basis is crucial to the success of the support service, thus it stands to reason that the

fairness of their interactions will also have a significant impact. Nevertheless, justice research typically focuses on service organizations in common service industries (e.g., hotels, call centers, banking industry, etc.), where emotional labor and surface acting are frequently embedded in regular work responsibilities (Hochschild, 1979). In general, it has been discovered that justice promotes helping behaviors (Masterson, Lewis, Goldman, & Taylor, 2000) and further promotes customer-professional connections because it is associated with customer pleasure (Clemmer, 1993). We intend to focus our research on investigating fairness in services for PID. By emphasizing on justice in the interaction between service workers and families, we hope to take advantage of the relationship provided to us by the center.

We intend to take advantage of an active collaboration between professionals and families to improve not only their partnership and well-being, but also the service quality and the achievement of superior service goals, such as enhancing the QoL of the individual with intellectual disability.

Research Studies of the Doctoral Thesis

Families and Professionals: Mutual Justice (study 1)

With our first research study, we hope to gain insight into service organizations that attempt to assist individuals with PID by bringing together two viewpoints - service professionals and families of service users. In the centers, primarily two types of services are provided: general day care services through organizing educational and leisure social activities and sheltered workshops that assist disabled individuals in returning to the workforce after being unemployed. It is essential to recognize that the importance of connection between families and professionals in centers extends beyond the functional core offerings. Rather, the creation of emotional attachments between the two groups will have a significant impact on the quality of this encounter. Many complicated social interactions, as well as specialized expertise, communication, and trust between service provider and client, are required when

working with individuals with intellectual disabilities (Schalock *et al.,* 2008; Martínez-Tur *et al.,* 2015; Molina *et al.,* 2015). The primary focus of our first research study is on the interpersonal dimensions of the service support system, specifically the cooperation between families and professionals.

According to the Intergroup Contact Theory (Allport, 1935), beneficial ties can lessen disputes between groups, as people are generally interested in belonging to groups for their own benefit. Naturally, more positive (Paolini, Harwood, & Rubin, 2010) contact between groups promotes positive exchange and minimizes disagreement risks. Good communication and interaction will result in enhanced service quality and, consequently, more efficient service delivery outcomes. Previous research by Martínez-Tur and colleagues (2015) indicated that establishing communication channels between professionals and families enabled ways to modify negative attitudes in families, which ultimately led to an increase in the PID's self-determination behaviors at home.

With the first study, we are focused on interpersonal justice within the relationship between families and professionals in order to gain a mutual understanding of justice. Specifically, we are examining the effects of mutual justice on the service outcomes of the support institution.

Theoretical Concepts of Study 1

The concept of mutual justice is introduced by analogy to discoveries and research regarding concepts like mutual trust (e.g., Smith & Barclay, 1997) and mutual communication (Martínez-Tur *et al.,* 2018). Mutual interpersonal justice is thus defined as the interpersonal treatment inside a connection between two or more actors or groups that is simultaneously characterized by two aspects: (a) level of interpersonal justice and (b) agreement between the parties. A high level of interpersonal justice is required for the formation of an appropriate connection between the parties. However, agreement is the most important factor that

contributes to beliefs of mutual justice in healthy social relationships. It is difficult to acknowledge that a good connection exists if one of the participants does not believe that they are being treated fairly. It is reasonable to see the connection as ideal when both a high level of interpersonal justice and high levels of agreement on this are present.

For the first research study, we hypothesize that mutual justice between professionals and families will correlate with crucial outcomes. Families are viewed as a crucial co-creator of the service, as is typically the case in the health care industry (Beiro, Patricio, & Fisk, 2017); hence, we view them as an active participant in the bidirectional interaction. We hypothesize that mutual fairness is linked to organizational success and, by extension, to the provision of services. As was previously said, "healthy" intergroup contact between employees and their families is characterized by a social exchange based on "giving and receiving" equitable interpersonal treatment. It indicates that both parties agree that high levels of respect and dignity exist due to mutual justice. In addition, both professionals and families share the same essential objective: the improvement of PID patients' QoL. A high-quality relationship between these two groups in terms of reciprocal interpersonal justice should support constructive organizational efforts to reach the stated objective.

We evaluate three crucial organizational performance indicators that highlight the service provided to PID. In addition to satisfaction with the service we used the well-established distinction between functional and relational service quality (e.g., Gwinner, Gremler, & Bitner, 1998; Liu *et al.,* 2017; Molina *et al.,* 2015). Functional service quality refers to the proficiency and effectiveness with which the core service is provided. Beyond the instrumental character of functional features, relational service quality emphasizes the quality of social interactions. This is especially pertinent in PID services since it indicates a mode of service delivery that conveys gratitude and respect to vulnerable service users (Molina *et al.,* 2015). We also evaluate a more contextualized indicator of organizational effectiveness that

focuses on the primary objective of PID services: the enhancement of service users' QoL. According to Moliner and colleagues (2013), the definition and evaluation of organizational performance can be contextualized to diagnose the improvement in service users' QoL as a result of organizational actions and efforts. Consequently, a measure of organizational performance centered on QoL captures the uniqueness of PID services. Thus, the objective of our first research study was to investigate the relationship between mutual justice between professionals and families and service satisfaction, service quality, and performance aimed at enhancing QoL.

The Professional Perspective (study 2)

In our second study paper, we intend to narrow in on the professional perspective. Specifically, we are interested in the interrelationships between professionals' perceptions of trust in families and the justice treatment of families over time. There has been extensive research on the relationship between trust and organizational justice (Martínez-Tur *et al.,* 2016). In fact, it is reasonable to infer that trust plays a crucial role in the relationship between families and professionals, given that both parties collaborate on a topic as delicate as the care for PID, which even represents family for one side of the partnership. Obviously, trust is required to satisfy the complex requirements of such caregiving.

In our research, we intend to examine trust as an attitude. Mayer, Davis, and Schoorman (1995) defined trust as a purposeful susceptibility to a trustee's conduct, because one expects the trustee to act in a predetermined manner. This, however, is fully independent of the trustee's ability to be supervised, suggesting that there is no logical "subsequently" involved in the acceptance of trust. However, something must act as an indicator of trustworthiness, hence the purpose of our second study is to determine whether justice may serve as such an indicator from the perspective of experts.

Theoretical Concepts of Study 2

Several research studies have been conducted on the topic of trust between families and professionals. In numerous studies conducted within educational institutions, the disparity in trust between parents and educational professionals has been highlighted. In fact, both elementary and high school research revealed that parents trusted teachers more than instructors trusted parents (Adams & Christenson, 1998). The similar asymmetry was identified in other institutions, such as those for people with chronic illnesses (Lynn-McHale & Deatrick, 2000), confirming that one side appears to have a higher "status" than the other. A study by Vidal *et al.* (2020) confirmed the asymmetry of confidence between PID families and health care professionals. Their research adhered to the premise of social identity theory in order to make a clear distinction between professionals as "experts" and families as "non-experts." With the second piece, we intend to determine whether the asymmetries may be resolved. In other words, we wish to determine a) whether families' justice behavior influences professionals' views (trust) and b) whether professionals' attitudes can influence families' justice behavior.

With this research, we aim to answer the question of which notion (justice or trust) might govern the connection and whether both conceptions have the potential to evolve dynamically simultaneously.

This form of study design has lately gained widespread favor in the scientific community (Kaltiainen, Lipponen, & Holtz, 2017), as investigating the dynamics of concepts improves knowledge in a profound manner and allows for the investigation of causation. We deem it a suitable sub-goal for our second study because earlier research was somewhat equivocal on the direction of the relationship between justice and trust. In a nutshell, the majority of studies demonstrate that justice is a precursor to trust (Colquitt & Rodell, 2011). However, supplementary studies have showed significant promise in demonstrating the

opposite, by identifying trust as the precondition of justice (Holtz, 2013; 2015). Because the relationship between justice and trust is intertwined (Colquitt & Rodell, 2011; Lewicki, Wiethoff, & Tomlinson, 2005), we wish to examine, from the perspective of professionals, the presence of a reciprocal relationship. The second study objective of the thesis is to examine, from a professional standpoint, the relationship between families' justice behavior toward professionals and their trust in families through time.

The Family Perspective (study 3)

Most service programs are geared toward enhancing the QoL of people with disabilities (Schalock *et al.,* 2008). Due to several factors, including the limited participation of families in the day-to-day life of the services (Deslandes *et al.,* 1999; Rodríguez, Blatz, & Elbaum 2014) and the fact that families as non-experts have less knowledge than professionals regarding what constitutes a high-quality care service (Vidal *et al.,* 2020), families frequently face a situation of information scarcity regarding whether the organization is capable of enhancing the quality of care. This situation is challenging. Great ambiguity results from not knowing if an organization and its professional members are well suited to provide high-quality treatment. Families are dependent on experts to the extent that they must submit to their authority because they have no other choice. Families will turn to other facts or signs to decrease the uncertainty caused by the absence of information and the anxiety of submitting to an authority about which they have limited awareness (Van de Bos, 2001; Tyler & Lind, 1992). We feel that justice could act as an indicator that reduces family uncertainty. In particular, we argue that justice might serve as a heuristic for families to assess how effectively their disabled relative would be cared for by service personnel. Our reasoning is founded on well-grounded theoretical frameworks, including Fairness Heuristic Theory and Uncertainty Management Theory. Tyler and Lind (1992) noted that when faced with a lack of information, people frequently refer to supplementary resources. Consequently, when uncertainty emerges, families will evaluate the

fairness of professionals' treatment using cognitive shortcuts, allowing them to estimate the organization's capacity to offer acceptable care.

Theoretical Concepts of Study 3

Scholars are still unable to agree on a universally accepted concept or definition of QoL due to the complexity of its multi-dimensional nature, which includes subjective (i.e. perceptions, values, subjective evaluation of current situation) and objective (i.e. economic status, physical and psychological health, social interactions) components that span many aspects of life and are interconnected. Popular QoL definitions include the following characteristics: overall sentiments of well-being, the experience of good social engagement and connection, and the opportunity to realize one's personal potential (Schalock *et al.,* 2002). Moreover, QoL is a notion that can alter dynamically through time, based on personal and contextual growth (Kiernan & Marrone, 1997), therefore the concept's fulfillment is not restricted by its essence (see Schalock, 1996). QoL is defined by the World Health Organization (WHO) as "individuals' perceptions of their place in life in the context of their culture and value systems, and in connection to their objectives, expectations, standards, and worries" (WHOQOL Group, 1998, p.1).

To comprehend the concept, one must evaluate both the objective living conditions of an individual and his or her subjective satisfaction with these living conditions (Moliner, *et al.,* 2003). When it comes to the QoL of a PID, it is commonly believed that the disability has a significant negative impact on the PID's life. Despite the assumption, studies revealed that the majority of impaired individuals reported happiness levels that were far higher than those predicted for individuals without a disability (Ubel *et al.,* 2005). This issue, known as the disability paradox (see Albrecht & Devlieger, 1999), must be taken into account when proxies and experts attempt to quantify QoL, as objective indicators are required to estimate QoL in respect to the life circumstances of the PID. According to research (Rice, Frone, & McFarlin,

1992), QoL can be evaluated as a whole or as separate areas of life. Additional study on the QoL of PID has identified eight dimensions that serve as indices of QoL: emotional wellbeing, physical wellbeing, material wellbeing, interpersonal relationships, self-determination, rights, and personal development (Schalock *et al.,* 2002). Moliner and colleagues (2013) created a contextualized tool to quantify the extent to which companies may contribute to the enhancement of PID QoL as part of their overall service quality through their actions and activities. This way, not only the QoL in general, but also the quality of the support system, may be measured. The significance of this is self-evident: the service environment is of utmost importance to the QoL of service users because the set of people and their ability to collaborate can either optimally benefit or harm the PID (Martínez-Tur *et al.,* 2015; Marquis & Jackson, 2000; Molina *et al.,* 2015). The nature of the service is highly specialized in order to achieve the service's objectives. The services are constantly personalized to the needs of the individual, and they frequently continue more than ten years, during which time a highly intimate relationship develops between the service providers (professionals) and the service recipients (families and PID). Indeed, research has demonstrated that QoL is dependent not just on human attributes, but also on environmental influences (Marquis & Jackson, 2000; Schalock *et al.,* 2010). As the environment is mostly defined by the relationship between professionals and families, it is reasonable to assume that the service recipient is heavily reliant on their relationship.

According to research, families' perceptions of the justice system are susceptible to change over time, as their interactions with professionals are time-bound and susceptible to fluctuation based on the individuals' mood, emotional state, energy level, and other indirectly related factors such as task- and relationship-related stress. In fact, scholars supported the notion that many constructs, interpersonal justice included, exhibit high within-person

variability (see Holtz & Harold, 2009; Loi, Yang, & Diefendorff, 2009; Schalock *et al.,* 2002), which will contribute significantly to the justice literature when examined.

As previously stated, families have limited access to information regarding whether the organization and its workers would give sufficient assistance to improve the QoL of their family member with an intellectual disability. It is common for families to experience a lack of information, which is frequently the result of a number of factors, such as the fact that interactions with professionals are limited in time, but also because families, as so-called non-experts, know less about what constitutes good care service than professionals, who are experts (Vidal *et al.,* 2020).

Families may experience a tremendous degree of uncertainty when confronted with this issue, which is aggravated by the fact that they are partially dependent on experts for their relative's care. In this sense, families will have to submit to the authority of professionals, which can be challenging when there is limited understanding about the organization and the individual responsible for their loved one's care. Being presented with this challenging circumstance, we wish to understand how families overcome their reluctance to entrust the organization with the care of the PID, since research indicates that people seek information about the authority they will likely submit to (Van den Bos, Wilke & Link, 1998). For the goal of this study, we wish to determine whether the justice professionals get can have an effect. Specifically, we wish to determine if family evaluations of QoL-focused organizational performance are influenced by the fairness of professionals' treatment. Justice will act as a heuristic indicator of whether or not experts can be relied upon to provide enough support. We hypothesize that changes in performance oriented to QoL depend on the change in how professionals treat families. The changes to the support service are thoroughly reviewed from the families' point of view, providing us with a new perspective to supplement those in studies 1 and 2.

With these considerations in mind, we intend to fulfill the doctoral dissertation's final research objective: Assess, from the families' perspective, whether a change in professionals' interpersonal justice treatment of them will result in a change in families' judgment of organizational performance.

Aligning Research Studies with the Overall Objective of the Doctoral Dissertation

We seek a comprehensive understanding of organizational justice in the context of support services, focusing on the interaction that develops between service professionals and PID families. Our overarching goal is to investigate the role of interpersonal justice in enhancing the relationship between families and professionals, as well as to achieve a series of results pertaining to family satisfaction with the centers, improved quality of service, and performance aimed at enhancing QoL of PID.

To do so, we intend to examine organizational justice within the connection between families and professionals from three distinct vantage points: a) a mutual perspective, b) the professionals' perspective, and c) the families' perspective. The aforementioned purpose is the potential enhancement of the PID's QoL by refining the interaction between the support service and the PID, which has a positive correlation with service quality.

This overall purpose is attained by means of three specific objectives pertaining to interpersonal justice and a comprehensive empirical framework.

Objective 1: Determine the link from mutual interpersonal justice between professionals and families to crucial outcomes.

Objective 2: Estimate how families' interpersonal justice behavior towards professionals is interrelated with professionals' trust in families over time.

Objective 3: Assess whether changes in professionals' interpersonal justice treatment towards families leads to changes in family's perception of the organizational performance oriented towards QoL of PID.

In all three investigations, we utilized independent samples from various research initiatives undertaken in collaboration with "Plena Inclusión," a federation of associations whose mission is to improve the QoL of individuals with intellectual disabilities on a national scale in Spain. Two types of facilities that participated in the studies can be distinguished: 1) day care centers that provide educational, therapeutic, and recreational services, and 2) sheltered workshops that focus on the eventual integration of their users into the Spanish labor market.

Each of the research papers integrates a unique perspective to provide a comprehensive understanding of organizational justice and its implications in the PID service. The perspective shifts based on the planned study objectives. We included front-line contact personnel (nurses, psychologists, physiotherapists, occupational therapists, and social workers) who interact daily with service users and their families. We further included families to get another, more external perspective of the organization and the treatment (interpersonal justice) they receive from professionals.

The first study contains a mutual perspective, the second study focuses on the perspective of experts, and the final study investigates the external perspective of families. The social service sector, in contrast to other service sectors, is characterized by substantial customer contact and engagement, rather intangible service objectives, and a variety of service meanings, our samples are adequate for the previously specified research objectives (Schneider & White, 2004). Typically, the service is extremely user-centric and might consequently vary considerably amongst individuals. In no other service industry can we find the unique combination of service provider, service recipient, and family. The significance of studying the relationship between families and professionals lies in the active participation of the family in the service relationship, which is essential for achieving the ultimate goals of providing adequate services to enhance the QoL of the service recipient, the individual with intellectual

disability. We are persuaded that interpersonal justice can describe the quality of the interaction between professionals and families in our sample, as well as the treatment of families by experts. As the present doctoral thesis seeks to gain a comprehensive understanding of organizational justice in the service from many viewpoints, we found that each of the samples enabled us to meet our research objectives.

Overall, we believe that the submitted doctoral dissertation has the potential to contribute to organizational justice research, specifically employee-customer research in services for individuals at risk of exclusion. First, each of the research was conducted using a distinct sample in order to address very distinctive objectives and contributions. Second, in order to evaluate interpersonal justice, we have utilized both family and professional informants. This allowed us to consider both the family and professional perspectives. In addition to analyzing the mutual perspective through a multi-level approach (study 1), we were able to explore two independent perspectives (studies 2 and 3). Thus, justice is understood of as a relational attribute in which both parties are considered simultaneously and where the best scenario arises when both parties sense a high degree of fairness from the other party and agree on this. Thirdly, we utilized temporal dynamics in two ways: as spirals (research 2) and as a within-person method (study 3). Most of our constructs are dynamic in nature and change over time (Matta *et al.,* 2017; Molenaar & Campnell, 2009; Nesselroade & Molenaar, 2010; Ram & Gerstorf, 2009; Van Geert & Van Dijk, 2021), which justifies a growing demand for studies that consider dynamic and dyadic relationships (Bobocel, 2021). With our research we wanted to accomplish this task and to study intra-variability in the justice concept and its potentially causal effects.

Detailed Methodology

Design and Participants

Participating in study 1 were 118 small centers linked with an NGO for Persons with Intellectual Disability ("Plena Inclusión", Spain). Each small center that provides services to individuals with intellectual disability is designated a work unit. There were two sorts of respondents: 937 professionals and 876 customers (families). The research study involved two types of centers: sheltered workshops and daycare services. Each center's participating professionals and families were selected at random.

Participation was voluntary and strictly confidential. Researchers taught one employee each location to conduct the random selection (assigning codes to professionals and families) and data collection. This technique yielded a response rate that over 90% for both professionals and families. To be eligible, professionals were required to have daily interaction with individuals with intellectual disability. After randomly selecting families from each center, one member per family was invited to engage in the research project. The family that participated had the most direct and frequent interaction with the center, its programs, and its staff. Because several of the indicators utilized for the statistical analyses were aggregated at the organizational level, each center was required to collect at least three usable surveys from both professionals and families. Seven of the total number of participating centers were disqualified for failing to meet the requirements. Consequently, the final sample included 111 centers (49.2% sheltered workshop services and 50.8% day care services) (914 professionals and 845 families).

Study 2 was as well completed in small, protected workshops belonging to "Plena Inclusión,". We collected data over the course of eight weeks, with three measurement periods separated by four weeks. The study team reached out to the centers to describe the initiative and solicit their participation. Additionally, they selected one member of the organization to

assist with data collection. The individual was trained to randomly select a small sample of experts for the study.

Participants of the study were professionals who worked in 56 small, protected workshops designed to enhance the skills and employability of people with intellectual disability. Over 90% of the initial 269 experts who participated (T1) in the study responded. However, 90 experts were removed since they did not participate in the two subsequent time measures. To ensure that the final sample was not skewed by the aforementioned panel loss, we compared the scores of the final sample (N = 179) to those of the individuals who dropped out in T2 and/or T3 (N = 90).We did not find any significant differences in the gender distribution of the participants ($\chi^2_{(1)}$ = .15, $p > .05$) or in their age ($t_{(257)}$ = .53, $p > .05$).

For Study 3 a total of 55 centers affiliated with "Plena inclusion" facilitated the recruitment of participants. Participants were families from service users of sheltered workshops. Each center invited at least two families at random to participate in the study. Within each family unit, the person who participated in the study was the PID family member who had the most regular interaction with the service. After explaining the aims of the study and ensuring anonymity and confidentiality, the participants provided informed consent and were then asked to complete the questionnaire four times (T1-T4), with four weeks between each measurement point. The research team trained one professional per center to collect the data. Initially we recruited 133 families. Over time, 47 participants declined to participate in the subsequent measurement times. Therefore, a total of 86 family members from 55 centers answered our questionnaire for all four times of measurement. The average age was 59.01 (SD = 9.76). The majority of participants was female (74.4%). Attrition analyses revealed that there were no significant differences between the families who declined after an initial participation and the final sample of families used in this research study (those who answered in the four

measurement times) in mean age, $t(130) = -1.24$, $p > .05$, or sex distribution, $\chi2(1) = 1.72$, $p > .05$, which indicates that there was no bias in our final sample.

Instruments

Interpersonal justice

Interpersonal justice was assessed in all studies. Three items (Study 1 and 3) and four items (study 2) from Colquitt's (2001) justice scale were used, adapting them to the context of services for individuals with intellectual disability. With this measure, the quality of the interpersonal treatment between families and professionals was assessed. Professionals reported on the treatment they received from families. Using the same three items, families reported on the treatment they received from professionals. Items were scored on a 7-point Likert scale ranging from 1= *completely disagree* to 7 = *completely agree*.

For study 1, both professionals and families reported on interpersonal justice treatment. We obtained a Cronbach's Alpha for professionals of .96 and of .89. for families to later compute the score for mutual justice. For study 2 only professionals reported on families' treatment. Over the three measurement time points, we obtained a Cronbach's Alpha that ranged from .83-.88. In study 3, only families reported on professionals' justice treatment. Over the four measurement time points, we obtained a Cronbach's Alpha that ranged from .92-.96.

Satisfaction with the service

For study 1, we used the three-item reduced scale of satisfaction (Gotlieb, Grewal, & Brown, 1994; Martínez-Tur, Peiró, Ramos, & Moliner, 2006), based on Oliver's scale (1980), which measures satisfaction and feelings of families associated with the choice of the center. We obtained a Cronbach's Alpha of .83. The response scale ranged from 0 = *completely disagree* to 10 = *completely agree*.

Service Quality

In Study 1, we assessed service quality using the 7-item scale validated by Molina *et al*. (2015). The *functional service quality* measure includes four items that refer to employee reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and personalized attention. The *relational service quality* measure includes three items that reflect empathy, extras, and authentic understanding. All the items were rated on a 7-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 = *strongly disagree* to 7 = *strongly agree*. We obtained a Cronbach's Alpha of .74 for functional service quality, of .81 for relational service quality.

Organizational Performance focused on improvement of QoL

For study 1 and 3, we used the 5-item scale validated by Moliner *et al*. (2013) that focuses on the degree to which the QoL of the individual with intellectual disability has improved due to the actions and efforts of the center, as reported by families. The ratings were given on a 7-point Likert scale, with options ranging from 1 = *strongly disagree* to 7 = *strongly agree*. We obtained a Cronbach's alpha of .89 for study 1 and of .77-.90 over the four measurement time points for study 3.

Trust in families

For study 2, we used the general trust scale by Butler (1991) (four items) with measures involving professionals' trust in families. The items were scored on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 ("completely disagree") to 5 ("completely agree"). We obtained a Cronbach's alpha ranging from .84-.88 across the three measurement timepoints.

Organizational performance focused on improvement of self-determination

Self-determination behaviors were assessed in study 3 through 5 items based on the self-determination aspects by Verdugo and colleagues (2005). Families were required to express the frequency of the self-determination behavior of their relative in question. The items were scored on a 7-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (''completely disagree'') to 7

(''completely agree''). We obtained a Cronbach's Alpha ranging from .86-.89 across the four measurement timepoints.

Organizational performance focused on improvement of social inclusion

In study 3, social inclusion was accessed through 6 items of the social inclusion aspects by Verdugo and colleagues (2005). The items were scored on a 7-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (''completely disagree'') to 7 (''completely agree''). We obtained a Cronbach's Alpha ranging from .89-.93 across the four measurement timepoints.

Plan of Analyses

Considering our first study, we computed multilevel structural equation modelling (MSEM) with robust maximum likelihood (RML) estimation to assess the hypotheses, using Mplus Version 7.0 (Muthén & Muthén, 2012), with observations nested within units. We used four 2-1 models with two levels (see Figure 1), one per outcome: satisfaction, functional service quality, relational service quality, and performance focused on QoL.

Regarding our second research study, to test the relationships between the variables in our model, we conducted Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) with latent variables and robust maximum likelihood estimation (MLR) using Mplus 7.4. We tested and compared four different models using structural equation modeling (SEM): a) stability, b) "justice as initiator" (a spiral initiated by interpersonal justice), c) "trust as initiator" (a spiral initiated by trust), and d) "double spiral" (interpersonal justice and trust are both initiators of dynamic spirals).

Finally, in our third research study, we conducted hierarchical linear models with SPSS (see Heck *et al.,* 2013) using growth modeling (Duncan *et al.,* 2013). The nested structure of the data was studied considering two levels: Level 1 (occasions) and Level 2 (individuals). To test the hypotheses, we analyzed the impact of change in the predictor variable to change in the respective outcome variables. Specifically, we examined whether changes in interpersonal justice over time were related to changes in organizational performance oriented to QoL by

computing a model for each outcome performance indicator (self-determination, social inclusion, and overall performance).

Summary of Findings

The findings of study 1 supported the notion that mutual intergroup justice between professionals and families at the organizational level predicts satisfaction with the center and performance ratings in addition to families' individual judgments of justice. We also concluded that a service environment characterized by intergroup justice between families and professionals, in which each treats the other fairly in interpersonal relations, could explain variance in positive service delivery outcomes that cannot be adequately explained by a family's individualistic perspective on justice. With the introduction of mutual intergroup justice, we simultaneously considered level and agreement. A relationship between families and professionals that is of good quality is characterized by "providing and receiving" equitable interpersonal treatment. Because both groups are accountable for enhancing the QoL for people with intellectual impairments, the social interchange should allow the productive co-creation of the service. Mutual intergroup justice contributes to the creation of a productive atmosphere for service performance, enabling the achievement of service objectives, such as the enhancement of the QoL for individuals with intellectual disability. The results obtained supported this argument by demonstrating significant and consistent relationships between mutual intergroup justice and service satisfaction, as well as the indicators of service performance directed toward individuals with intellectual disabilities, namely functional service quality, relational service quality, and QoL-oriented performance.

Taking into account the findings of study 2, we discovered that justice and trust are interdependent and serve as antecedents to each other across time. Initiators of a dynamic double spiral are professionals' perceptions of the interpersonal justice treatment they receive from families and their trust in families, which operate concurrently and in tandem. The

comparison of models revealed that the double spiral, in which both interpersonal justice and trust serve as initiators, outperformed all alternatives. Due to the concomitant development of the social setting (interpersonal justice) and the individual's views (trust), the nature of the relationship with families is too complicated for sequential models to account for.

Regarding our study 3 findings, all three hypotheses were supported, demonstrating that both interpersonal justice and organizational performance shift considerably over time. Moreover, alterations in interpersonal fairness were positively associated with alterations in organizational performance. The results suggested that the treatment of families with fairness can be a significant predictor of whether professionals would be seen as satisfactory and trustworthy to deliver the necessary service for the intellectually disabled family member. Families will refer to the justice treatment they receive from professionals as a measure of how well they are treated in their encounters with experts when presented with limited information regarding whether an organization can improve the QoL of the PID. In this sense, fairness serves as a heuristic for families to determine if an organization and its members will be able to fulfill their commitments to provide adequate care for their relative with an intellectual disability and so improve their QoL.

Summary of Theoretical Implications

All the studies focused on interpersonal justice, which we deemed to be the most important aspect for our research contexts, as the interpersonal feature of justice is pertinent when examining the relationship between families and professionals. In the contact between professionals and families, neither party has official authority over prices, benefits, and procedures. However, the quality of the connection between the parties is crucial and is reflected in how one party interacts with the other.

Our investigations have generally yielded the following contributions. The three views have greatly improved our understanding of interpersonal justice and enabled us to examine

the notion through the glasses of families, professionals, and both perspectives simultaneously. We were able to comprehend that justice extends beyond the internal perspective of justice sources and also takes into account families as exterior sources of justice who can not only receive justice but also do it. Modern justice study, which incorporates dyadic components of justice, has been required to investigate justice as a relationship property (Bobocel, 2021). We were able to delve deeply into the role of third parties, such as families, and observe their active participation in the service that aims to improve the QoL for people at risk of exclusion because our research was conducted in the context of the services for individuals with intellectual disability.

As the importance of family advocacy rises, there has been a growing demand to include families in decision-making processes (Szlamka *et al.,* 2022). Through our research, we provided families an active participation by recognizing them as a crucial factor in achieving service goals (study 1). In order to evaluate fairness variability in gain spirals (study 2) and within-person designs (study 3), we also considered temporal dynamics, as was recommended by recent research (Bobocel, 2021).

Our research project also emphasized the importance of interpersonal justice as a justice dimension that is essential when considering customer services that require a strong customer-employee relationship in order to meet service objectives, as the dimension that can lead to strong affect in individuals (Bies, 2001; Bies & Tripp, 1996) is inherently social and requires personal intimacy (Bies & Moag, 1986; Greenberg, 2011).

Theoretical implications of study 1

In our first study, we presented mutual intergroup justice as an analogy to findings and research on mutual trust. Mutual interpersonal justice was described as the interpersonal treatment in the interaction between two groups, taking into account both the level of interpersonal justice and the parties' agreement on this level. The best connection between

families and professionals is characterized by a high degree of interpersonal justice backed by high levels of agreement amongst the groups regarding this level. According to the theory of social information processing, professionals and families will gradually adopt similar notions of fairness. In addition, we hypothesized that there are discrepancies between the two groups, implying that mutuality in justice judgments at the organizational level combines direct consensus and dispersion models (see Martínez-Tur *et al.,* 2018). Combining these methodologies for our first study, we argued that although consensus is anticipated within each group, it is feasible for professionals and families to perceive each other differently.

Mutual intergroup justice was identified as a crucial feature of service co-creation (Neghina *et al.,* 2015). When intergroup contact between professionals and families is defined by a social exchange focused on giving and receiving, both groups demonstrate high levels of mutual justice. Based on the logic of co-creation of services, we suggested that the active participation of families should result in a good evaluation of the center. Previous research (Aknin *et al.,* 2013; Nelson *et al.,* 2016) has demonstrated that good acts directed toward others (e.g., prosocial behaviors) benefit both the recipient and the giver. Positive action toward others is, in fact, emotionally gratifying for humans in a variety of cross-cultural contexts (Aknin *et al.,* 2013) and generates feelings of joy, happiness, and satisfaction (see Anik, *et al.,* 2013; Nelson *et al.,* 2016). Therefore, fair treatment on both sides will affect the families' happiness with the center as well as the performance of services provided to people with intellectual disability. Families' happiness with the center is a prerequisite for a positive relationship with the center, and the quality of the justice relationship between both sides is a potent antecedent (e.g., Molina *et al.,* 2015). We observed that the quality of a family's relationships transcends the one-sided care they receive from specialists. From intergroup contact theory (Allport, 1935), we know that the active involvement of each group that goes beyond mere touch is not only advantageous, but also necessary for influencing the nature of the relationship, which

enables a more positive interaction (Liebkind, Haaramo, & Jasinskaja-Lahti, 2000). Families can actively contribute to equitable intergroup treatment, so creating a situation that will eventually contribute to their center satisfaction. In addition, the results suggested that intergroup justice promotes a profitable atmosphere for service performance. Fair interpersonal justice inspires both parties, resulting in a strengthened connection in which service objectives are more easily attained.

After studying the mutuality of interpersonal justice by considering both families' and professionals' perspective on each other's justice treatment, we changed the perspective to families as legitimate source and active agent of justice to understand professionals' perspective in our second study. Due to its longitudinal nature, the study responded to the need for dynamic and dyadic research on justice, trust, and other related concepts (Bobocel, 2021; Tjosvold *et al.,* 2016). The longitudinal approach made it possible to gain in-depth knowledge about the perspective of professionals and how professionals perceive and evaluate families, allowing for a much clearer depiction of the complexity of a reality based on relationships that evolve over time, as depicted in our study.

Because families are co-creators of services as a result of their interactions with professionals, our findings revealed that the fair treatment professionals perceive from families is a prerequisite for the quality of their relationship with respect to professionals' trust in families. Thus, not only will mutual interpersonal justice from both parties enrich the relationship to foster co-creation, which then leads to better service outcomes, but focusing solely on families as active participants in the employee-customer relationship and their interpersonal justice treatment of professionals will also benefit their relationship by eliciting higher levels of trust from professionals in families.

Regarding the direction of the relationship between trust and justice, numerous foundations were offered. Concerning the attitudes and behaviors of individuals in

organizational contexts, a context-oriented model of human behavior has dominated organizational research. It is suggested that people see and process environmental information in order to make sense of their social reality and produce attitudes and behaviors accordingly (see Fiske &Taylor, 1984). The argument that individuals are completely capable of defining their organizational surroundings posed a challenge to this approach (Schneider, 1987; Schneider, Goldstein, & Smith, 1995). In contrast to the view that behavior and attitudes originate from a specific context, Schneider and his colleagues felt that individuals influence their (organizational) environment by their own attributes and behaviors. As they influence information processing and hence serve to understand (justice) occurrences in the environment, attitudes of organizational members, such as trust, are one of the most important factors that constitute social reality in organizations (Fazio, 1986; Fazio, Sanbonmatsu, Powell & Kardes, 1986). Taking into account both preceding approaches, we suggested that reality is frequently significantly more complex than we imagine. Individuals may evaluate social information in terms of treatment received (justice), while they may already have attitudes (trust) that influence the direction of their relationship with the people who benefit from the attitude (see Kaltiainen, Lipponen, Holtz, 2017; Saunders & Thornhill, 2003). In the relationship between families and professionals, our findings supported a dynamic theory of justice and trust as parallel antecedents, with complex interactions over time. It is also important to note that this complicated dynamic cannot be understood and explained by simple models, as human interaction with the environment is far too complex to be condensed into sequential models with a single direction. To be more explicit, our data suggested that the treatment of families in the justice system influences professionals' trust equally, but professionals' trust influences families' treatment in the justice system equally. The double spiral incorporates the many theoretical approaches and explains the argument on the predominance of context-oriented versus person-oriented (see Johns, 2018; Schneider, 1987; Schneider *et al.,* 1995) frameworks

for understanding behavior in companies. When studying individuals and settings in dynamic interactions, we should not disregard their simultaneity because it contributes to our overall understanding of how behavior and emotion develop.

After focusing on how families perceive justice from families, we reversed the perspective and professionals as a source of justice for families and its effect on service performance oriented to the improvement of QoL of people with intellectual disability. With our third and final study we had the opportunity to investigate within-person change across the span of time which was another aspect that was called for in modern justice research (Bobocel, 2021) as previously mentioned.

When seen from the standpoint of the family, we feel that collaboration with professionals may be more challenging than one may expect. When it comes to making the best decisions for a family member with an intellectual disability, the selection of an appropriate institution and its staff is crucial. It is difficult to evaluate the quality of the center's service because families suffer a lack of knowledge due to restricted interactions with professionals, and because families, as so-called non-experts, know less about what makes effective care service than professionals, who are specialists (Vidal *et al.,* 2020).

As a result, families may feel apprehensive and concerned about whether the relationship will result in the achievement of key goals (Tyler and Lind, 1992), such as the right provision of services to their intellectually impaired relative that stems from an improvement in QoL. Therefore, families would want to determine whether experts are reliable (Van den Bos, Wilke, & Lind, 1998) by supplementing the missing information with known information. Fairness heuristics can be used to guide future behavior expectations when individuals consider belonging to a particular group (Lind, 2001; Lind & Van den Bos, 2002), which can be explained by the Uncertainty Management Theory as individuals attempt to

reduce cognitive load by using cognitive shortcuts to organize existing information (Lind, 2001; Lind, Kray &Thomson; 2001).

As uncertainty increases, the phenomena of information substitution will become more widespread. It is therefore essential to recognize that the justice treatment families receive from service personnel can act as a heuristic that can lessen uncertainty and provide a means for families to reevaluate and evaluate the service not just initially but also over time. This will aid in alleviating the issue faced by families. In this approach, we were able to identify justice as a measure of service quality from a family's perspective, which, along with our prior conclusions from studies 1 and 2, provides us with an additional understanding of the functionality of services for individuals with intellectual disability.

In addition, we sought to highlight intra-variability, which illustrates that adjusting one component (justice) over time will result in altering a different aspect (e.g., performance oriented towards QoL). Families continually evaluate the treatment they receive from specialists. If families are treated better over time, they will reassess their relative's QoL performance. According to previous research (Matta *et al.,* 2017), obtaining constant justice treatment was just as significant as receiving a large amount of justice for overcoming feelings of uncertainty. In other words, a person may feel more uneasy if their justice treatment varies significantly over time, as compared to if their justice treatment is consistent over time. This was supported by a series of trials conducted by Matta and colleagues (2017), notwithstanding the unfavorable results of continuing justice therapy. Consequently, it is essential to remember that treating families equitably is essential, as is ensuring that this favorable treatment is consistent throughout time. In this way, the perspective of the families has demonstrated the significance of time in relation to justice in their interactions with professionals and revealed that all sources of justice, whether we consider both parties in mutuality, only professionals who receive fair treatment from families, or only families who receive fair treatment from

professionals, are equally important in contributing to a service environment that has its roots in a productive partnership between families and professionals.

Summary of Practical Implications

Our first study resulted in a number of important practical implications that have the potential to provide organizations with knowledge that can help to stimulate the service environment in order to foster a productive co-creation between professionals and families that is characterized by mutual intergroup justice. To achieve this purpose, experts must collaborate, as mutual intergroup justice necessitates not only high standards of justice, but also shared views, which can exist only through extensive social contact.

This is a crucial takeaway for managers, as they must foster an environment where professionals and families have time and space to engage. Obviously, they would also need to be provided with the information and abilities necessary to comprehend the significance of collaboration and proper treatment of the other party. Establishing teams comprised of professionals and families, who would then work on minor projects requiring fair treatment in order to function, is one potential solution.

The second study led us to the following practical implications: families must be made aware of their active role in the relationship. This perspective has altered dramatically over the past decade, from families being passive recipients of services to active caregivers who can argue for their rights and the rights of their relative with intellectual impairments (Szlamka, Tekola, Hoekstra & Hanlon, 2022) Our findings demonstrated that fair treatment can enhance relationships with professionals by enhancing their confidence in families. Therefore, families should be aware that their interactions with professionals influence how professionals see the environment. Their behavior impacts the quality of the relationship with professionals, which is a prerequisite for achieving organizational goals such as improving the QoL for people with intellectual impairments (Carter *et al.,* 2013; Colarusso & O'Rourke, 2007; Turnbull *et al.,*

2006). We therefore recommend that managers include families in training, socialization, and role analysis in order to optimize the service environment as much as possible and to give families the opportunity to feel that they are contributing to and able to influence the service and service quality, which is directly related to service outcomes that are important for their relatives with disabilities.

Another practical implication corresponds to the confidence experts have in families. According to our findings, trust affected justice just as much as justice affected trust. Therefore, trust plays a role comparable to that of justice in the formation of an effective relationship. Therefore, we recommend that managers undertake measures designed to increase professionals' faith in families, such as giving plausible arguments about the positive elements of families and fostering positive views regarding the role of families in service outcome (see Hofmann *et al.,* 2010).

Families must be made aware to professionals that they are active collaborators. They should encourage them to ensure that families participate, even if they may not feel as prepared as professionals due to their expert versus non-expert status.

The following practical consequences emerged from the third and final research study. Families face a lack of information when attempting to evaluate experts and the services they will provide for their loved ones. As the interpersonal justice treatment of professionals towards families can serve as a heuristic to compensate for a lack of information, it is crucial that professionals are aware of how their behavior may or may not affect families. In addition, it is crucial to emphasize the particular constellation that exists between the professional, the person with intellectual disability, and the family in these partnerships. The training and information of professionals should emphasize that their actions and behaviors have consequences, and that negative consequences for the families – such as poor justice treatment – will automatically have negative consequences for the service user, which is reflected in a decline in

organizational performance, which in turn causes difficulties in achieving service objectives. As a result, given that the interaction between professionals and families is a crucial aspect in achieving service goals (Martinez-Tur *et al.,* 2018), professionals must be taught and made aware. When the service objective is broadened to include families as indirect service recipients, the relationship between professionals and families is strengthened, resulting in an improvement in service. Families will not only evaluate professionals once but will also appraise them during the duration of their involvement. As inconsistent justice treatment can have severe repercussions, it is crucial to make professionals aware of this and to provide many opportunities for professionals and families to work together. In other words, services should be constructed in a way that encourages sufficient intergroup contact for families to obtain the knowledge they require regarding professionals and their justice treatment. Consequently, they will confront less ambiguity and develop partnerships marked by fairness, communication, and trust, which will enhance service quality and increase the QoL of the service user.

Future Research

Considering the first research study, it would be interesting to broaden the study and assess their relationship using other designs, such as experiments to see if stimulating fair intergroup treatment in terms of mutual justice leads to positive outcomes when compared to a control group in which mutual justice is not present. A limitation is that we only used self-report questionnaires to evaluate the variables in our study, even though we did look at families as well as experts to have a better understanding of both perspectives. To have another indicator that evaluates the quality of the service connection, which is reflected in the quality of service, future study ought to integrate factors that assess the PID's QoL in a manner that is more direct.

Although our second study had a well-thought-out research design that, by using the double spiral, was able to find causal connections, the variable of time was not included, so we

were unable to determine whether the consistency with which families were treated by the justice system had an effect.

Since stability reduces uncertainty, it would be an interesting aspect to investigate in potential future research that might improve this component. It's possible that a deeper understanding of the connection between professionals and families, as well as how that connection changes over time, could result from this.

Another limitation on our research was that the facilities in Spain where we work with people who have intellectual disabilities provided the participants for our sample. We were able to measure our factors multiple times because of the attributes of the organizations, which come from a real-world context and consist of professionals that engage with families on a daily basis. This gave our findings a greater sense of causation and made them more robust. However, it is essential to point out that the generalization of our findings to other cultures is a limitation of our research, since this is something that needs to be addressed. In subsequent research, researchers may attempt to recreate the double spiral in a different cultural context.

The third research study, like the other two, has a few limitations that should be pointed out for completeness. Families view the administration of justice as an indicator of whether an organization can function in a manner that is capable of providing proper care for their relative who has an intellectual handicap. As a result, justice is operating as a heuristic, which is a mental shortcut that creates an automatic mental reaction (Lind, 2001; Lind, Kray &Thomson; 2001).

The challenge at this point is that, even though this mode of thinking is efficient and helps save time, it also has the potential to provide inaccurate results (Kahneman, Lovollo, & Oliver, 2011; Tversky & Kahneman, 1974; O'Neil, 1995). Nevertheless, this limitation is circumvented by our longitudinal approach, which takes into account variations in the observation of justice over the course of time. An additional point to add is that if we want to

emphasize the relevance of time for study on justice, we will need to take a deeper look at what occurs when justice changes. This is a point that was brought up in the previous sentence. However, we did not modify the justice treatment, which is a component that might be addressed in future studies. This is because many service contexts are influenced by external elements such as stress and pressure, which might result in a variance in justice treatment at times. Our research has taken an essential first step toward achieving this goal by studying variability within our longitudinal approach.

Conclusions

1. Mutual intergroup justice is a way to understand service performance that is oriented towards individuals who experience an intellectual disability.

2. Both professionals and families have an active role within their partnership to sustain and improve the QoL of the people who experience the disability.

3. Mutual Justice combines the level of interpersonal justice both parties show towards each other, and the agreement both parties have in this.

4. Fair, mutual treatment between both parties leads to the co-creation of services, which then in turn leads to families' satisfaction with the center but also to an improved service performance.

5. Both interpersonal justice and trust are parallel and simultaneous precursors in a double positive spiral that allows good professional-family partnerships to be created.

6. Professionals trust families because they perceive fair treatment from families, but, simultaneously, trust in families leads to a social processing where the treatment received from families is perceived as positive.

7. Families are active agents in the relationship with professionals. Families' justice treatment can positively influence how much professionals will trust them.

8. Professionals' interpersonal justice treatment can serve as a heuristic that substitutes the missing information to help families evaluate organizational performance.

9. Changes in professionals' justice treatment towards families leads to changes considering families' evaluation of organizational performance oriented towards a) improvement of self-determination, b) improvement of social inclusion and c) service performance oriented towards improvement of QoL over time.

10. Service providers should consider families as another primary customer that needs to be actively included in the service. This way they can contribute actively to achieve the optimal delivery of services with the main objective to improve the life of the people experiencing the disability.

6 RESUMEN GLOBAL

Introducción

Sobre la base de políticas internacionales, nuestras sociedades han diseñado y puesto en marcha centros, servicios y apoyos cuyo objetivo específico es mejorar la Calidad de Vida (CdV) de las personas con discapacidad intelectual (PDI) (Schalock y Verdugo, 2012; UN DESA, 2019). Dos partes fundamentales en este sistema de apoyo, que colaboran para mejorar la CdV de las PDI, son: a) los profesionales que prestan servicios orientados a las PDI; y b) las familias o tutores legales. En las organizaciones o centros que prestan apoyos a PDI, algo crucial que emerge es la relación entre profesionales y familiares. Ambos actores tienen un rol activo para que ese apoyo sea efectivo. Por ello, es muy conveniente que mantengan una relación social, de alta calidad, entre ellos. Esta relación suele ser especial por la naturaleza de las organizaciones o centros: a) suele ser una relación que dura años, a diferencia de las transacciones de corta duración que suelen darse en otras organizaciones como hoteles, restaurantes, etc.; y b) trasciende la mera transacción y acaba creando fuertes vínculos emocionales a lo largo del tiempo ya que se trata de un apoyo que tiene gran relevancia para la vida de las PDI y sus familias. Por todo ello, consideramos la justicia interpersonal (caracterizado por el grado en que las personas son tratadas con respeto, dignidad y cortesía (Colquitt, 2001; Neghina, Caniëls, Bloemer y van Birgelen, 2015)) un precursor para mejorar la relación entre profesionales y familiares, así como la satisfacción con los centros y el desempeño orientado a mejorar la CdV de las personas.

Tradicionalmente, la justicia en las organizaciones se ha abordado desde la perspectiva del trato justo que los trabajadores reciben por parte de sus superiores en términos de justicia distributiva (una compensación justa), de procedimientos (procesos justos de toma de decisiones), interpersonal (un trato digno) y de información (transparencia en la comunicación) (Colquitt, 2001, Molina *et al.,* 2015). Es de esperar que cuando los profesionales y los familiares son tratados de forma justa en sus interacciones, su relación mejore y se cree un

mejor marco para la atención de las personas con discapacidad y su CdV. Por lo tanto, el presente proyecto explora la justicia interpersonal, definida como el grado en que las personas son tratadas con respeto, dignidad y cortesía (Colquitt, 2001), que constituye una dimensión relevante a efectos de la presente investigación. Cuando los miembros de la familia y los empleados interactúan entre sí, la existencia de mayor o menor justicia interpersonal se vuelve omnipresente. Nos centramos en la justicia interpersonal, ya que es crucial (y más) relevante para las familias. Para ser más explícitos, es el único componente de la justicia al que las familias tienen suficiente acceso, así como las posibilidades y habilidades para ver y experimentar con éxito. Otras características de la justicia, como la justicia distributiva, simplemente no lo permitirán, ya que el acceso al conocimiento sigue siendo mucho más restringido.

Objetivos

El objetivo general de la presente tesis doctoral es analizar la justicia interpersonal, y sus efectos, en el contexto de los centros de apoyo a las PDI. En particular, se presta atención a la relación entre los profesionales del servicio y las familias de las PDI. El objetivo es adoptar tres enfoques en la justicia interpersonal, una en cada estudio, que ofrezca una visión cabal del papel de esta dimensión de la justicia en la calidad de la relación entre profesionales y familiares, en la satisfacción con el uso de los centros de apoyo y en el desempeño orientado a mejorar la CdV de las PDI. De este modo, hemos diseñado tres estudios de investigación con objetivos concretos de investigación desde tres perspectivas diferentes: a) una perspectiva mutua que involucra tanto los profesionales como a las familias, b) la perspectiva de los profesionales, y c) la perspectiva de las familias. Más concretamente:

En el **estudio 1,** proponemos investigar el trato mutuo entre los profesionales y las familias. Para ello, establecemos el novedoso concepto de justicia mutua (se define como el trato interpersonal en la relación entre dos grupos, y se caracteriza simultáneamente por dos

aspectos: (a) el nivel de justicia interpersonal percibido por cada parte; y (b) el acuerdo entre las partes sobre este nivel de justicia interpersonal) entre profesionales y familiares para examinar su vínculo con la satisfacción del servicio, el desempeño de los empleados y el desempeño organizacional orientado a la mejora de la CdV de las PDI.

El objetivo del **estudio 2** es explorar la perspectiva de los profesionales en el uso de la justicia como medio para superar las asimetrías de confianza entre los profesionales y las familias. El problema que se encuentra a menudo entre las familias y los profesionales en los servicios para PDI es que existe una asimetría de confianza en la que las familias confían más en los profesionales que los profesionales en las familias. La investigación señaló que esto se debe probablemente a la condición de expertos que tienen los profesionales mientras que las familias no. Como sabemos por el estudio anterior, es muy importante que las familias y los profesionales colaboren y trabajen juntos para conseguir los objetivos del servicio. La colaboración necesita de la confianza, y por ello queremos ver si la justicia podría ser un factor importante para superar las asimetrías de confianza entre los profesionales y las familias. Queremos ver esto de tres maneras diferentes: en una espiral que se inicia por la justicia, otra que se inicia por la confianza, y una tercera, que es dinámica, en la que la justicia y la confianza se refuerzan mutuamente de manera simultánea.

En el **estudio 3**, estudiamos la perspectiva de las familias sobre el comportamiento de los profesionales para evaluar si un cambio en el comportamiento de los profesionales en materia de justicia conduce a un cambio en el rendimiento de los servicios de los profesionales. Un problema con el que se encuentran las familias es que tienen acceso limitado a la organización y a los profesionales que trabajan en los centros. Las familias no saben si la organización y los profesionales proporcionarán el tratamiento adecuado a sus familiares que utilizan el servicio. En otras palabras, las familias no saben si la actuación de la organización es suficiente para alcanzar el objetivo del servicio: mejorar la CdV de su ser querido. Una forma

de superar la escasez de información para las familias podría encontrarse en el trato de justicia que éstas reciben de los profesionales. Suponemos que las familias evalúan y reevalúan el tratamiento de justicia de los profesionales a lo largo del tiempo, ya que su colaboración suele ser muy larga. Cuando las familias se encuentran con información escasa que considera si los profesionales serán lo suficientemente competentes para proporcionar un servicio de alta calidad a su familiar con discapacidad intelectual, sustituirán la información que falta por el trato de justicia que reciben de los profesionales. De este modo, el trato de justicia serviría como heurístico para determinar la competencia de los profesionales, que luego debería reflejarse también en la evaluación de las familias sobre la actuación de la organización. Creemos que, con el tiempo, el cambio en el trato de justicia hacia las familias conducirá a un cambio en la forma en que las familias evaluarán el desempeño organizacional. Medimos el desempeño organizacional utilizando a) dos indicadores que estiman la CdV del usuario del servicio: autodeterminación e inclusión social, y b) una medida contextualizada con respecto a la mejora de la CdV del usuario del servicio.

Marco teórico

Como se ha mencionado anteriormente, la presente tesis doctoral abarca tres objetivos concretos de investigación. Cada uno de ellos se aborda en un estudio:

Estudio 1. El primer objetivo del presente proyecto se aborda en la investigación de la justicia mutua intergrupal, entre profesionales y familias. El concepto de justicia mutua se introduce por analogía con los hallazgos e investigaciones sobre constructos como la confianza mutua (por ejemplo, Smith y Barclay, 1997) y la comunicación mutua (Martínez-Tur *et al.,* 2018). Proponemos que la justicia interpersonal mutua entre profesionales y familias es capaz de predecir la satisfacción con el uso de los servicios y los indicadores relevantes de desempeño en los centros de apoyo para PDI. La justicia mutua es un precursor esencial de una asociación de alta calidad entre las familias y los profesionales, ya que los comportamientos éticos mutuos

son cruciales para esta cocreación de servicios porque implican la cooperación, eliminan el comportamiento oportunista y representan un enfoque humanista de las interacciones de los servicios como aspectos clave para los usuarios vulnerables de los servicios (Vargo y Lusch, 2008). Al considerar no sólo la cantidad de justicia, sino también el grado de acuerdo, estamos considerando la justicia mutua como una propiedad de la relación que puede representar un indicador de calidad para los servicios que va más allá de los niveles individuales de percepción de la justicia.

La satisfacción del cliente suele definirse como el grado en que las evaluaciones subjetivas del individuo en relación con los resultados y las experiencias asociadas a las actividades de consumo son favorables (Hunt, 1977; Westbrook, 1980). Por tanto, se refiere a una experiencia de consumo placentera (Oliver, 1997). Asumimos que el encuentro del servicio es bidireccional, y el cliente podría desempeñar un papel activo (Zablah *et al.,* 2016). Esto es evidente en los centros de apoyo para PDI, donde la participación de las familias es necesaria para el logro de los objetivos del servicio. Por lo tanto, las familias son consideradas como importantes cocreadoras del servicio, como ocurre en la industria de la salud en general (Beirão, Patrício, & Fisk, 2017). Proponemos que cuanto mayor sea la justicia mutua entre profesionales y familias, más satisfechas estarán las familias con el centro de apoyo a sus familiares con discapacidad intelectual.

¿Por qué es tan importante la mutualidad? Nuestro razonamiento es el siguiente: la contribución de la familia a una conexión ideal con los profesionales está ligada a su satisfacción en términos de justicia interpersonal. Para explicar esto, según Nelson, Layous, Cole y Lyubomirsky (2016), la búsqueda de la felicidad no solo fomenta el enfoque en uno mismo y sus deseos, sino que también centra la atención en los demás. Su investigación indicó que cometer actos para los demás puede provocar buenas emociones como el aprecio, el amor y la confianza dentro de la relación. En otras palabras, si los individuos hacen cosas agradables

por los demás, es probable que tengan mayores sentimientos de alegría, contento y satisfacción, lo que promoverá aún más su felicidad general (Nelson *et al.,* 2016). Estos argumentos pueden trasladarse a la interacción entre los profesionales y las familias en los servicios para PDI. Es razonable esperar una relación positiva entre la satisfacción con el centro y el grado en que el grupo de profesionales y el grupo de familias contribuyen a las buenas relaciones sociales en términos de justicia interpersonal.

Además, de acuerdo con nuestra propuesta, la justicia mutua también está relacionada con el desempeño de la organización. Consideramos tres indicadores críticos que centran la atención en el servicio de apoyo prestado a las PDI. Los dos primeros indicadores se basan en la conocida diferenciación entre calidad de servicio funcional *versus* relacional (Gwinner, Gremler, & Bitner, 1998; Liu, Xiao, Lim, & Tan, 2017; Molina, Moliner, Martínez-Tur, Cropanzano, & Peiró 2015). La calidad funcional del servicio se refiere al grado en que el servicio básico se presta con eficiencia. En las organizaciones de PDI, hay varios servicios básicos que deben prestarse adecuadamente (por ejemplo, servicios de atención, formación en talleres). Sin embargo, la prestación de servicios no puede limitarse a los aspectos funcionales. La calidad del servicio relacional se centra en la calidad de las interacciones sociales más allá del carácter instrumental de la calidad funcional. Incluye aspectos como la empatía, la comprensión y el reconocimiento a las PDI. Esto es particularmente relevante en centros de apoyo a PDI porque describe una forma de prestar el servicio que señala el aprecio hacia personas en situación de exclusión (Molina *et al.,* 2015.). La justicia mutua entre los profesionales y las familias puede ayudar a optimizar el servicio, lo que a su vez conduce a una mejora en el rendimiento funcional y relacional del servicio.

El tercer indicador se refiere a una medida de desempeño organizacional contextualizada que se centra en el objetivo principal de los centros de apoyo para PDI: la mejora de su CdV. En general, se asume que una buena relación y contacto entre los

profesionales y las familias es crucial para lograr un desempeño adecuado en las organizaciones de servicios para PDI (Carter *et al.,* 2013; Martínez-Tur *et al.,* 2015). Un contacto intergrupal adecuado entre empleados y familiares se caracteriza por un intercambio social que se basa en "dar y recibir" un trato interpersonal justo. Significa que ambos grupos están de acuerdo en que existen altos niveles de dignidad y respeto mediante la justicia mutua. Además, ambas familias de profesionales comparten el mismo objetivo crítico: la mejora de la CdV de las PDI. Una relación de alta calidad entre estos dos grupos, en términos de justicia interpersonal mutua, facilita los esfuerzos organizativos positivos para lograr el objetivo mencionado.

El segundo objetivo de la tesis doctoral se aborda en nuestro segundo estudio de investigación, y se centra en la espiral recíproca entre la confianza y la justicia interpersonal a lo largo del tiempo. Como se ha mencionado anteriormente, cambiamos la perspectiva para centrarnos esta vez en los profesionales. En general, muchas actitudes y comportamientos en las organizaciones pueden estar directamente relacionados con la justicia. Una actitud que es importante en las organizaciones es la confianza (Martínez-Tur *et al.,* 2016). Teniendo en cuenta las circunstancias particulares que condicionan el trabajo de los profesionales en centros de apoyo para las PDI (complejidad de la tarea, implicaciones para la vida de los usuarios, etc.), podemos imaginar que se requiere una alta confianza en las familias para cooperar con ellas en un tema tan sensible. De hecho, los estudios de investigación previos han confirmado la existencia de una asimetría entre profesionales y familias en la confianza que se atribuyen mutuamente, y donde se observa, de manera reiterada, que los profesionales confían menos en las familias que las familias en los profesionales (Adams & Christenson, 1998; Lynn-McHale & Deatrick, 2000; Vidal *et al.,* 2020). Con este estudio de investigación queremos averiguar si la justicia puede ser una forma de superar esta asimetría a través de su dinámica única con la confianza.

En primer lugar, queremos estudiar una espiral iniciada por la justicia. En la investigación sobre justicia y confianza, los estudiosos asumen que es la justicia la que conduce a la confianza a través del procesamiento de la información social. El comportamiento de las familias sirve como fuente de información relevante del contexto social para evocar actitudes entre los profesionales en términos de confianza, es decir, el grado en que los profesionales consideran a las familias dignas de confianza. De ahí que se produzca un proceso algo deliberado (Srull & Wyers, 1979) en el que los profesionales evalúan el trato que reciben de las familias y, en consecuencia, desarrollan una actitud de mayor o menor confianza. Es bien sabido que, una vez desarrollada la actitud, ésta ayuda a interpretar la realidad social (Fazio, 1986). En consecuencia, la confianza de los profesionales en las familias guiará cualquier percepción futura sobre el trato recibido por las familias (trato interpersonal) y matizará su percepción del trato de la justicia familiar hacia ellos.

En segundo lugar, queremos ver si la confianza puede inducir una espiral. Basándonos en el razonamiento de Schneider (1987), las personas moldean su entorno con sus atributos y comportamientos personales, lo que contrasta con el supuesto de que el comportamiento y las actitudes se desarrollan como consecuencia de un entorno específico. Las actitudes de los miembros de la organización, como la confianza, son uno de los atributos relevantes que ayudan a definir la realidad social en general y el contexto organizativo en particular (Fazio, 1986). Independientemente de sus experiencias previas, las actitudes guían el procesamiento de la información y ayudan a interpretar los acontecimientos del entorno, incluyendo el comportamiento del objeto o destinatario de la actitud. En principio, la confianza de los profesionales hacia las familias repercutiría en su percepción de las mismas como objeto de su actitud. Las percepciones sociales que son provocadas por las actitudes pueden funcionar, en última instancia, como profecías auto cumplidas o sesgos de confirmación y, por lo tanto, dar forma o incluso crear la realidad social (Kaltiainen *et al.,* 2017; Snyder y Swann, 1978). En

otras palabras, si los profesionales confían en las familias, estas verán más positivamente el trato de justicia que reciben. Basado en el intercambio social - los profesionales tienden a corresponder con un alto nivel de confianza posterior en las familias.

Por último, las alternativas mencionadas ("la justicia como iniciadora" y "la confianza como iniciadora") podrían ser compatibles, describiendo una doble espiral en la que la justicia interpersonal y la confianza se producen en paralelo como iniciadoras de espirales. Como la realidad es muy compleja, podríamos imaginar que al mismo tiempo los individuos procesan la información social en función del trato recibido (justicia), pero ya tienen actitudes (confianza) que influyen en la evolución de la relación con las personas receptoras de la actitud. Algunos resultados de estudios sobre el cambio organizacional parecen apoyar esta idea (véase Kaltiainen, Lipponen, Holtz, 2017; Saunders y Thornhill, 2003). Consideramos que nuestro contexto de estudio es adecuado para investigar esta dinámica porque ambos conceptos tienen la posibilidad de enriquecer la asociación entre profesionales y familias.

Nuestro estudio contribuye a aclarar la dirección de la relación entre la justicia interpersonal y la confianza en las organizaciones para PDI. Además, se centrará en las relaciones dinámicas y diádicas dentro de la investigación sobre la justicia, algo que se ha exigido recientemente a la investigación sobre la justicia moderna (Bobocel, 2021).

El tercer objetivo se aborda en el tercer estudio de investigación. En este, dirigimos nuestra perspectiva hacia las familias, en particular a cómo las familias evalúan el trato de justicia interpersonal de los profesionales, y cómo esto afecta a la evaluación que hacen las familias con respecto al desempeño organizacional orientado a la mejora de la CdV de sus familiares con discapacidad intelectual. En los centros de apoyo a las PDI, las familias se encuentran a menudo con una situación difícil: no disponen de la información adecuada para valorar si el centro está prestando el apoyo necesario para mejorar la CdV de su familiar. Se atribuye esto a la escasa participación de las familias en el funcionamiento diario de la

organización. De hecho, la investigación ha demostrado que existe una falta de oportunidades de conocimiento mutuo entre las familias y los profesionales que se traduce en dificultades a la hora de acceder a la información y a obtener colaboración (Deslandes *et al.,* 1999; Rodríguez, Blatz, & Elbaum 2014). En analogía con investigaciones recientes, asumimos que las familias suelen remitirse a otras informaciones o indicadores para reducir la incertidumbre que se deriva de la falta de información (Van de Bos, 2001).

En nuestro estudio proponemos que las familias utilizan el trato de justicia interpersonal de los profesionales como indicador que sirve como heurístico para reducir la incertidumbre y concluir si el centro de apoyo actúa adecuadamente para mejorar la CdV de los familiares con discapacidad intelectual. Por lo tanto, el trato que reciben las familias por parte de los profesionales guiará su evaluación del centro y su desempeño. Además, esta evaluación variará en función de los cambios que perciban los familiares en el trato (justicia interpersonal) que reciben a lo largo del tiempo. Para poner a prueba esta hipótesis, hemos estudiado los efectos de los cambios que perciben las familias en el trato que reciben de los profesionales sobre los cambios en las evaluaciones del desempeño organizacional en dos indicadores clave de CdV (autodeterminación e inclusión social) y en una medida general de desempeño organizacional. De este modo, exploramos la variabilidad intra-persona, lo que nos permitirá sacar mejores conclusiones causales y analizar si los cambios en justicia interpersonales van acompañados de cambios en las evaluaciones del desempeño organizacional.

Metodología

Diseño

En general, creemos que el diseño de la tesis doctoral presentada tiene el potencial de añadir valor a la investigación de la justicia organizacional, especialmente si se considera la investigación empleado-cliente en los servicios para personas con riesgo de exclusión. En primer lugar, cada uno de los estudios se ha llevado a cabo con una muestra diferente con el

único propósito de abordar objetivos y aportaciones muy específicas. Los participantes de todos los estudios estaban vinculados a centros de día y talleres protegidos afiliados a Plena Inclusión, una ONG nacional ubicada en España cuya misión es mejorar la CdV de los usuarios del servicio. En los talleres protegidos, las PDI trabajan bajo supervisión para alcanzar el objetivo de inclusión en el mercado laboral español.

En segundo lugar, para evaluar la justicia interpersonal, hemos utilizado dos tipos de informantes: las familias y los profesionales. Esto nos ha permitido tener en cuenta la perspectiva de la familia y de los profesionales. Además de considerar la perspectiva de cada uno de ellos por separado (estudio 2 y 3) pudimos estudiar la mutualidad en el constructo (estudio 1). De este modo, la justicia se concibe como una propiedad relacional en la que se tienen en cuenta ambas partes simultáneamente y en la que la situación óptima se produce cuando ambas partes perciben un alto grado de justicia por parte de la otra parte y, además, llegan a un acuerdo al respecto. En tercer lugar, empleamos enfoques multinivel utilizando la dinámica temporal en dos cuentas: como espirales (estudio 2) y como enfoque intrapersonal (estudio 3). Tener en cuenta la dinámica temporal nos permite seguir contribuyendo a la literatura moderna sobre justicia, ya que la mayoría de nuestros constructos son bastante dinámicos en su naturaleza y cambian con el tiempo (Matta *et al.,* 2017; Molenaar & Campnell, 2009; Nesselroade & Molenaar, 2010; Ram & Gerstorf, 2009; Van Geert & Van Dijk, 2021), lo que justifica una creciente demanda de estudios que consideren las relaciones dinámicas y diádicas (Bobocel, 2021).

Los tres estudios de investigación contenidos en la presente tesis doctoral se detallan en la siguiente sección. Cada investigación fue relevante para los objetivos de la tesis previamente establecidos. Se hará una revisión bibliográfica completa de todas las variables, una explicación de los componentes metodológicos, incluyendo los instrumentos y el proceso,

el análisis estadístico, así como una divulgación de los resultados y una breve discusión al final de cada investigación

Para el estudio 1, realizamos un estudio transversal multinivel en MPLUS. En general, utilizamos datos de 111 centros, que en cada uno de los cuales contribuyó un grupo de familias (N=845) y un grupo de profesionales (N=914). Cada centro se considera una unidad de trabajo que presta servicios a PDI. Los principales servicios prestados en los centros son terapéuticos, educativos, sociales y de ocio inclusivo. Los empleados y las familias participantes se eligen al azar en cada centro concreto. La participación es confidencial y voluntaria.

Los participantes del estudio 2 eran profesionales que trabajaban en 56 centros ocupacionales orientados a mejorar las habilidades y la empleabilidad de las PDI. Un total de 269 profesionales participaron inicialmente (T1) en el estudio, con una tasa de respuesta superior al 90 %. Sin embargo, se excluyeron 90 profesionales porque no continuaron su participación en las dos mediciones temporales posteriores. Por lo tanto, la muestra final estaba formada por 179 profesionales (67 %), la mayoría mujeres (79,2 %). En promedio, los participantes tenían 38,9 años (DE = 9,3) con una permanencia en la organización de alrededor de 11,4 (DE = 7,96) años. Para asegurarnos de que la muestra final no estaba sesgada debido a la mencionada pérdida del panel, comparamos las puntuaciones de la muestra final (N = 179) con las puntuaciones de los participantes que abandonaron en T2 y/o T3 (N = 90). No encontramos diferencias significativas en la distribución por sexos de los participantes (χ^2 (1) = .15, p > .05) ni en su edad (t(257) = .53, p > .05). En consecuencia, estos resultados indican que nuestra muestra final no introdujo un sesgo sistemático. También se comprobó la existencia de un sesgo en la muestra final para nuestras dos variables de medición.

Los resultados no mostraron efectos significativos para ninguna de las dos variables, lo que sugiere que no hubo sesgo en nuestra muestra final para la justicia interpersonal (t(259) = .11, p > .05) o la confianza (t(266) = -.31, p > .05).

Para el Estudio 3, un total de 55 centros afiliados a "Plena Inclusión" facilitaron el reclutamiento de participantes. Los participantes eran familias de usuarios de servicios de talleres protegidos. Cada centro invitó al menos a dos familias al azar a participar en el estudio. Dentro de cada unidad familiar, la persona que participaba en el estudio era el miembro de la familia del PDI que tenía la interacción más regular con el servicio. Tras explicar los objetivos del estudio y garantizar el anonimato y la confidencialidad, los participantes dieron su consentimiento informado y, a continuación, se les pidió que rellenaran el cuestionario en cuatro ocasiones (T1-T4), con cuatro semanas entre cada punto de medición. El equipo de investigación formó a un profesional por centro para recoger los datos. Inicialmente se reclutaron 133 familias. Con el tiempo, 47 participantes se negaron a participar en los siguientes tiempos de medición. Por lo tanto, un total de 86 familiares de 55 centros respondieron a nuestro cuestionario en los cuatro momentos de medición. La edad media era de 59,01 años (DE = 9,76). La mayoría de los participantes eran mujeres (74,4%). Los análisis de atrición revelaron que no había diferencias significativas entre las familias que declinaron después de una participación inicial y la muestra final de familias utilizada en este estudio de investigación (las que respondieron en los cuatro tiempos de medición) en la edad media, $t(130)$ = -1.24, $p > .05$, ni en la distribución por sexo, $\chi^2(1) = 1.72$, $p > .05$, lo que indica que no hubo sesgo en nuestra muestra final.

Instrumentos

Justicia interpersonal

La justicia interpersonal se evaluó en todos los estudios, adaptando la escala de justicia de Colquitt (2001) al contexto de los servicios para PDI. Con esta medida, se evaluó la calidad del trato interpersonal entre familias y profesionales. Los profesionales informaron sobre el trato que recibían de las familias. Las familias, por su parte, informaron sobre el trato que recibían de los profesionales. Los ítems se puntuaron en una escala Likert de 7 puntos desde

"1= totalmente en desacuerdo" hasta "7 = totalmente de acuerdo". Un ejemplo de ítem sería: "Los empleados de este centro tratan a las familias con respeto".

En el estudio 1, tanto los profesionales como las familias informaron sobre el trato de justicia interpersonal. Obtuvimos un alfa de Cronbach para los profesionales de .96 y de .89 para las familias para calcular posteriormente la puntuación de la justicia mutua. En el estudio 2, solo los profesionales informaron sobre el trato de las familias. En los cuatro momentos de medición, obtuvimos un Alfa de Cronbach que osciló entre .83 y .88. En el estudio 3, solo las familias informaron sobre el trato de justicia de los profesionales. Obtuvimos un Alfa de Cronbach que osciló entre .92 y .96.

Satisfacción con el servicio

Para el estudio 1, utilizamos la escala reducida de satisfacción de tres ítems (Gotlieb, Grewal, & Brown, 1994; Martínez-Tur, Peiró, Ramos, & Moliner, 2006), basada en la escala de Oliver (1980), que mide la satisfacción y los sentimientos de las familias asociados a la elección del centro de apoyo a su familiar con discapacidad intelectual. Se obtuvo un Alfa de Cronbach de .83. La escala de respuesta osciló entre "0 = totalmente en desacuerdo" y "10 = totalmente de acuerdo". Un ejemplo de ítem sería "Estoy contento de que mi familia con discapacidad intelectual utilice este centro".

Calidad del servicio

En el estudio 1, evaluamos la calidad del servicio mediante la escala de 7 ítems validada por Molina *et al.* (2015). La medida de calidad de servicio funcional incluye cuatro ítems que hacen referencia a la fiabilidad de los empleados, la capacidad de respuesta, la garantía y la atención personalizada. Un ejemplo de ítem sería "Las PDI son atendidas con la rapidez que requiere cada situación". La medida de calidad de servicio relacional incluye tres ítems que reflejan la empatía, los extras y la comprensión auténtica. Un ejemplo de ítem sería "Este centro hace cosas para que las PDI se sientan importantes y especiales". Todos los ítems se calificaron

en una escala Likert de 7 puntos, desde "1 = totalmente en desacuerdo" a "7 = totalmente de acuerdo". Obtuvimos un alfa de Cronbach de 0.74 para la calidad de servicio funcional y de .81 para la calidad de servicio relacional.

Desempeño organizacional orientado a la mejora de la Calidad de Vida

Para el estudio 1 y 3, se utilizó la escala contextualizada de 5 ítems validada por Moliner *et al.* (2013) que se centra en el grado de mejora de la CdV de las PDI gracias a las actuaciones y esfuerzos del centro, según informan las familias. Un ejemplo de ítem es: "Los programas o actividades de apoyo a las familias con PDI desarrollados en este centro han contribuido a mejorar la CdV de mi familiar con discapacidad". Las valoraciones se realizaron en una escala Likert de 7 puntos, con opciones desde "1 = muy en desacuerdo" hasta "7 = muy de acuerdo". Obtuvimos un alfa de Cronbach de .89 para el estudio 1 y de .77 a .90 en los cuatro momentos de medición del estudio 3.

Confianza en las familias

Para el estudio 2, se empleó la escala de confianza general de Butler (1991) (cuatro ítems) con medidas relativas a la confianza de los profesionales en las familias. Un ejemplo de elemento sería "Considero que las familias son dignas de confianza". Los ítems se puntuaron en una escala Likert de 5 puntos de 1 ("totalmente en desacuerdo") a 5 ("totalmente de acuerdo"). Obtuvimos un alfa de Cronbach que oscilaba entre .84 y .88 en los cuatro momentos de medición.

Desempeño organizacional orientado a la mejora de la autodeterminación

La actuación organizativa orientada a mejorar la autodeterminación se evaluó en el estudio 3 utilizando 5 ítems basados en los aspectos de autodeterminación de Verdugo y colegas (2005). Se pidió a los familiares que expresaran la frecuencia del comportamiento de autodeterminación del usuario en cuestión. Un ejemplo de ítem sería: "Este centro proporciona formación para desarrollar la autodeterminación de las PDI, mejorando su CdV". Los ítems se

puntuaron en una escala Likert de 7 puntos de 1 ("completamente en desacuerdo") a 7 ("completamente de acuerdo"). Obtuvimos un Alfa de Cronbach que oscilaba entre .86 y .89 en los cuatro momentos de medición.

Desempeño organizacional orientado a la mejora de inclusión social

En el estudio 3, se accedió al desempeño organizacional orientado a la inclusión social a través de 6 ítems de los aspectos de inclusión social de Verdugo y colegas (2005). Los ítems se puntuaron en una escala Likert de 7 puntos de 1 ("completamente en desacuerdo") a 7 ("completamente de acuerdo"). Obtuvimos un Alfa de Cronbach que oscilaba entre .89 y .93 en los cuatro momentos de medición. Un ejemplo de ítem sería: "Las actitudes de la sociedad hacia mi familiar con discapacidad intelectual son más positivas, gracias a las acciones desarrolladas por este centro".

Análisis y resultados

Para alcanzar los objetivos, se diseñaron tres estudios diferentes. El estudio 1 aborda el objetivo 1 de la tesis doctoral. Se trató de evaluar el vínculo de la justicia mutua entre profesionales y familias con la satisfacción del servicio, el rendimiento de los empleados, así como con el rendimiento orientado a la mejora de la CdV. Para calcular la justicia mutua, seguimos un procedimiento que se divide en dos pasos: a) la suma de las puntuaciones de justicia en el nivel central de las puntuaciones de justicia, tanto para los empleados como para las familias por separado; y b) el cálculo de la raíz cuadrada del producto de la percepción de justicia de las familias y la percepción de justicia de los empleados. La justicia intergrupal mutua entre profesionales y familias se computó mediante el cálculo del producto de la raíz cuadrada de las percepciones de justicia de las familias y de los profesionales. El producto de la raíz cuadrada refleja tanto el nivel como el acuerdo. El desacuerdo llevaría a una reducción de la puntuación final.

A continuación, ejecutamos un modelo de ecuaciones estructurales multinivel (MSEM) con estimación de máxima verosimilitud robusta (RML) para evaluar las hipótesis, utilizando MPLUS (versión 7.0) con observaciones anidadas dentro de las unidades. Se utilizaron cuatro modelos 2-1 con dos niveles (véase la figura 1), uno por resultado: satisfacción, calidad funcional del servicio, calidad relacional del servicio y rendimiento centrado en la CdV.

El estudio 2 está relacionado con el objetivo 2 de la tesis doctoral. Queríamos evaluar la relación dinámica e interrelacionada entre el comportamiento de justicia de las familias hacia los profesionales y la confianza de los profesionales hacia las familias. Para comprobar las relaciones entre las variables de nuestro modelo, realizamos un modelo de ecuaciones estructurales (SEM) con variables latentes y una estimación robusta de máxima verosimilitud (MLR) utilizando MPLUS 7.4. Probamos y comparamos cuatro modelos diferentes utilizando el modelo de ecuaciones estructurales (SEM): a) estabilidad, b) "justicia como iniciadora" (una espiral iniciada por la justicia interpersonal), c) "confianza como iniciadora" (una espiral iniciada por la confianza), y d) "doble espiral" (la justicia interpersonal y la confianza son ambas iniciadoras de espirales dinámicas).

El estudio 3 abordó el objetivo 3 de la tesis doctoral para evaluar si un cambio en el comportamiento de justicia interpersonal de los profesionales conduciría a un cambio en el rendimiento del servicio de los profesionales.

Para comprobar nuestras hipótesis, se realizaron modelos lineales jerárquicos con SPSS (Heck *et al.,* 2013) utilizando el modelo de crecimiento (Duncan *et al.,* 2013). La estructura anidada de los datos se estudió considerando dos niveles: Nivel 1 (ocasiones) y Nivel 2 (individuos). Para probar las hipótesis, se analizó el impacto del cambio en la variable predictora al cambio en las respectivas variables de resultado. En concreto, examinamos si los cambios en la justicia interpersonal a lo largo del tiempo estaban relacionados con los cambios

en el rendimiento organizativo orientado a la CdV, calculando un modelo para cada indicador de resultado (autodeterminación, inclusión social y rendimiento general).

Resultados

Considerando el estudio 1, los cuatro modelos 2-1 propuestos mostraron un buen ajuste a los datos. Además, los resultados indicaron que la justicia intergrupal mutua afecta positivamente a la satisfacción con el centro, a la calidad de servicio funcional y relacional percibida y al rendimiento centrado en la CdV.

En estudio 2, los resultados de nuestro SEM confirmaron la existencia de espirales positivas iniciadas por a) la justicia, b) la confianza, así como c) por ambos constructos simultáneamente. Además, comparamos todos los modelos. Los resultados mostraron la superioridad del modelo de doble espiral (con la confianza y la justicia como iniciadores simultáneos de la espiral) sobre las otras alternativas, apoyando una visión dinámica de la relación entre justicia y confianza.

Considerando el estudio 3, los resultados revelaron que un cambio en el tratamiento de justicia interpersonal de los profesionales hacia las familias está relacionado con el cambio en la evaluación de las familias sobre el rendimiento de la organización centrado en a) la mejora de la autodeterminación, b) la mejora de la inclusión social y c) la mejora de la CdV.

Principales contribuciones al conocimiento

Los resultados de nuestro estudio 1 apoyan que la justicia intergrupal mutua entre los profesionales y las familias a nivel organizativo predice la satisfacción con el centro y las evaluaciones de rendimiento más allá de las percepciones individuales de justicia de las familias. También concluimos que un entorno de servicio caracterizado por la justicia intergrupal entre las familias y los profesionales, en el que cada uno trata al otro de forma justa en las relaciones interpersonales, podría explicar la variación en los resultados positivos de la prestación de servicios que no puede ser explicada adecuadamente por una perspectiva

individualista de la justicia percibida por las familias. Con la introducción de la justicia intergrupal mutua, consideramos simultáneamente el nivel y el acuerdo. Una relación de alta calidad entre las familias y los profesionales se caracteriza por una justicia interpersonal de "dar y recibir". El intercambio social debe fomentar la cocreación constructiva del servicio porque ambos grupos son responsables de aumentar la CdV de las PDI. La equidad intergrupal mutua contribuye al desarrollo de un entorno de prestación de servicios favorable, que permite alcanzar los objetivos del servicio, incluida la mejora de la CdV de las PDI. Los hallazgos que encontramos apoyan esta afirmación al demostrar relaciones fuertes y duraderas entre la justicia mutua intergrupal y la satisfacción con el servicio, así como con las métricas de rendimiento de los servicios dirigidos a las PDI, en concreto la calidad funcional del servicio, la calidad relacional del servicio y el rendimiento centrado en la CdV. Una relación positiva con el centro requiere que las familias estén satisfechas con él, y la eficacia de la relación de equidad entre ambas partes es un antecedente significativo (por ejemplo, Molina *et al.,* 2015). Como vimos, la calidad de la relación va más allá del trato unilateral de los expertos con las familias. Para crear un entorno que les beneficie a la hora de ser felices con el centro, las familias pueden contribuir activamente a un trato intergrupal equitativo. Creemos que la equidad intergrupal mutua contribuye al florecimiento del entorno de rendimiento del servicio. La equidad entre individuos inspira a ambas partes, creando una mejor conexión en la que los objetivos del servicio son más sencillos de alcanzar.

Considerando el estudio 2, descubrimos que la justicia y la confianza son interdependientes, y que ambos conceptos han servido históricamente de precursores el uno del otro. La opinión de los profesionales sobre el trato que reciben de las familias en términos de justicia interpersonal y su confianza en esas familias sirven como iniciadores concurrentes y paralelos de una doble espiral dinámica. Los resultados de la comparación del modelo mostraron que la doble espiral, en la que el respeto mutuo y la confianza actúan como sus

iniciadores simultáneamente, funcionó mejor que todas las demás opciones. Dado que tanto el trasfondo social (justicia interpersonal) como las actitudes personales (confianza) se desarrollan de forma concurrente, la naturaleza de la conexión con las familias es demasiado complicada para que las teorías secuenciales puedan dar cuenta de ella. El estudio abordó la necesidad de una investigación dinámica y diádica sobre la justicia, la confianza y otros conceptos relacionados debido a su naturaleza longitudinal (Bobocel, 2021; Tjosvold *et al.,* 2016). El enfoque longitudinal permitió comprender en profundidad las perspectivas profesionales y la forma en que los profesionales ven y evalúan a las familias, lo que permitió que los enfoques dinámicos ofrecieran una representación mucho más precisa de la complejidad de una realidad basada en relaciones complejas que cambian con el tiempo, como se muestra en nuestro estudio. También es importante señalar que esta compleja dinámica no puede ser entendida y explicada por modelos simples, ya que la interacción humana con el entorno es demasiado compleja para ser condensada en modelos secuenciales con una única dirección. Esto se debe a que apoyamos una teoría dinámica de la justicia y la confianza como antecedentes paralelos, con interacciones complejas a lo largo del tiempo. Más concretamente, nuestros resultados mostraron que mientras la confianza profesional influye por igual en el trato de la justicia familiar, el trato de la justicia familiar también influye por igual en la confianza profesional. Si bien una cierta cantidad de (des)confianza siempre existe y guía la forma en que las personas perciben su entorno social, las personas crean intencionalmente la confianza a través del procesamiento de la información social, lo que hace que este tipo de dinámica parezca razonable (Murray *et al.,* 2011; 2012). La discusión sobre la supremacía de los marcos orientados al contexto frente a los orientados a la persona para entender el comportamiento en las empresas (véase Johns, 2018; Schneider, 1987; Schneider *et al.,* 1995) se explica por la doble espiral, que integra una variedad de enfoques teóricos. No deberíamos ignorar la simultaneidad de los individuos y los entornos mientras investigamos sus

interacciones dinámicas porque contribuye a nuestra comprensión más amplia de cómo se forman el comportamiento y el afecto.

Al examinar el estudio 3 y sus implicaciones, los resultados confirmaron las tres hipótesis, demostrando que el cambio de opinión de las familias sobre el comportamiento interpersonal de los profesionales afecta a la forma en que las familias evalúan el rendimiento de la organización en cuanto a la mejora de la CdV de las PDI. Los resultados mostraron que el trato justo de las familias puede ser un indicador significativo de si la gente tendrá una buena opinión de los expertos y confiará en ellos para atender a un familiar con discapacidad intelectual. Es fundamental ser consciente de que el apoyo de la justicia que las familias reciben de los proveedores de servicios puede actuar como una heurística que podría disminuir la ambigüedad y permitir a las familias un método para volver a evaluar el servicio no sólo al principio sino también a lo largo del tiempo. Gracias a ello, las familias ya no se encontrarán en una situación tan difícil. Esto nos permitió comprender de nuevo el funcionamiento de los servicios para PDI y conectar la justicia como perspectiva de las familias sobre la calidad del servicio con nuestras implicaciones anteriores de los estudios 1 y 2.

Nuestra investigación también pretendía hacer hincapié en la intravariabilidad, que muestra que el cambio de una característica (la justicia) modificará otro aspecto (por ejemplo, el rendimiento orientado a la CdV). Las familias evalúan con frecuencia el trato que reciben de los expertos. Las familias que reciben una mejor atención a lo largo del tiempo reevalúan el rendimiento de la CdV de su familiar. Un estudio anterior (Matta *et al.,* 2017) encontró que la obtención de justicia de forma consistente era tan crucial para superar los sentimientos de duda como la cantidad de justicia recibida. Dicho de otro modo, recibir un trato de justicia que varía significativamente puede hacer que la persona se sienta más incómoda que recibir un trato de justicia constante a lo largo del tiempo. Esto fue apoyado por una serie de ensayos realizados por Matta y sus colegas (2017), incluso si el tratamiento de justicia continuo era negativo. Es

fundamental tener en cuenta que el trato justo a las familias es crucial, así como garantizar que este trato favorable perdure en el tiempo. La perspectiva de las familias nos ha mostrado, por tanto, la importancia del tiempo en relación con la justicia dentro de sus interacciones con los profesionales y ha demostrado que todas las fuentes de justicia, ya sea que consideremos a ambas partes en la mutualidad, solo a los profesionales que reciben un trato justo por parte de las familias, o a las familias que reciben un trato justo por parte de los profesionales, son igualmente importantes para apoyar un entorno de servicio que tenga sus raíces en una asociación fructífera entre familias y profesionales.

Conclusiones

1. Teniendo en cuenta la perspectiva de la mutualidad, podemos concluir que la justicia intergrupal mutua es una forma de entender la actuación de los servicios orientada a los individuos que experimentan una discapacidad intelectual.

2. Tanto los profesionales como las familias tienen un papel activo dentro de su asociación para mantener y mejorar la CdV de las personas que experimentan la discapacidad.

3. La Justicia Mutua combina el nivel de justicia interpersonal que ambas partes muestran hacia el otro, y el acuerdo que ambas partes tienen en esto.

4. El trato justo y mutuo entre ambas partes conduce a la cocreación de servicios, lo que a su vez conduce a la satisfacción con el centro, pero también a una mejora del rendimiento.

5. Considerando la perspectiva profesional, ahora entendemos que tanto la justicia interpersonal como la confianza son precursores paralelos y simultáneos en una doble espiral positiva que permite crear buenas asociaciones profesionales-familiares.

6. Los profesionales confían en las familias porque perciben un trato justo por parte de las mismas, pero, simultáneamente, la confianza en las familias conduce a un

procesamiento social en el que el trato recibido por parte de las familias es percibido como positivo.

7. Las familias son agentes activos a la hora de formar la confianza de los profesionales en ellas. El trato justo que reciben puede influir positivamente en la confianza que los profesionales depositan en ellas.

8. Considerando la perspectiva de las familias, identificamos el trato de justicia interpersonal de los profesionales como un heurístico que sustituye la información que falta para ayudar a las familias a evaluar el desempeño organizacional.

9. Los cambios en el trato de justicia de los profesionales hacia las familias conducirán a cambios considerando la evaluación de las familias sobre el desempeño organizacional orientado a) a la mejora de la autodeterminación, b) a la mejora de la inclusión social y c) a la mejora de la CdV en el tiempo.

10. Los proveedores de servicios deberían considerar a las familias como otro cliente principal al que hay que incluir activamente en el servicio para formar asociaciones que permitan lograr la prestación óptima de los servicios con el objetivo principal de mejorar la vida de las personas que experimentan la discapacidad.

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