

Handling Injustice - Are Women Too Sensitive?



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ABSTRACT

At time of COVID-19 pandemic, not only isolation and loneliness were increasing, but injustice was increasing, as well. Scholars argue, workplace is quite unjust toward women in general suggesting salary, benefits, little value to their voice, career growth and it shows COVID-19 pandemic exacerbates injustice at work moreover. The aim of the contribution was to analyze the character of relationship between women's sensitivity to injustice, emotions, employment sector and coping with injustice at work during COVID-19. 208 women with the average age of 26.08 years ($SD = 7.39$) answered the questions measuring sensitivity to injustice by Justice Sensitivity Inventory (Schmitt et al., 2010; Slovak version - Lovaš, 1995), emotions by Positive Affect Scale and Negative Affect Scale (Džuka & Dalbert, in Džuka, 2019) and coping by Brief COPE (Carver, 1997; Slovak version - Ficková, 1992). The results showed that women were sensitive to injustice at work ($M = 4.49$; $SD = .89$), felt anger mostly ($M = 4.35$; $SD = 1.31$) and used adaptive coping strategies more than maladaptive coping strategies ($t_{(207)} = 15.47$, $p < .001$). The analysis of character of relationship between selected variables showed that negative affect and employment sector were predictors of coping with injustice at work. Specific results are part of the contribution.

KEY WORDS: *injustice, work, women, sensitivity to injustice, emotions, employment sector, coping, COVID-19*

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Introduction

The status of women in human society has faced many difficulties since we remember, and even nowadays there are many questions about who woman should be, what kind of roles she should have, how she should behave or what she should do for a living. Obviously, women face these issues or better say these expectations in private and professional life, as well. Despite of formally advanced and open-minded society which proudly proclaims equality between men and women, the reality is completely different and liberalism in opinions and attitudes has led to chaos rather than to gender justice.

As it is said in official UN Women site "The COVID-19 pandemic has created a global emergency of multiple dimensions. Most national governments have adopted extraordinary measures to protect their citizens and overcome the pandemic. Prior to the COVID-19 global crisis, 2020 was expected to be a year for reviewing achievements and accelerating progress on gender equality after 25 years of the adoption of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and 20 years since UN Security Council resolution 1325 on women, peace and security. There is now major concern that COVID-19 and its impact will push back fragile progress on gender equality, including in relation to reversing discriminatory laws, the enactment of new laws, the implementation of existing legislation, and broader progress needed to achieving justice for all." (UN Women, 2020).

Throughout history there have been considerable gender differences in justice issue. According to Fula (2004) it is because the femininity is emphasized by ability to live in apparent subordination, to live inside patterns and break them at the same time. On the other hand, men are attached to rules and to need to produce new ones in order to orientation and evaluation of behavior within rational and proper schemes. Whereas female identity is more focused on being with others, male identity is focused on organizing relationships according to ethics and normative morality.

Justice and Injustice Perceptions

It appears that current situation of COVID-19 has advanced the level of injustice toward women and men. For example, Johnston (2020) from Rapid Research Information Forum (RRIF) estimated that the pandemic will result in greater disadvantages for women than men. According to UN Women

(2020) the impacts of COVID-19 are exacerbated for women simply by virtue of their sex across every sphere. In the context of work, compounded impacts are felt especially by women who are generally earning less, saving less, and are more likely to be employed in the informal sector. On the other hand, Alon et al. (2020) suggest that despite injustice and vulnerability of gender equality in these days, there are opposing forces which may ultimately promote gender equality in the labor market. First, businesses are rapidly adopting flexible work arrangements, which are likely to persist. Second, there are also many fathers who now have to take responsibility for childcare, which may erode social norms that currently lead to a unfair distribution of the division of family work.

Justice is a complex phenomenon involving several aspects. In general, it is possible to differentiate three types of justice: (1) distributive justice (fairness of distribution), (2) procedural justice (fairness of procedures, decision-making process), and (3) interactive justice (fairness of treatment) (Greenberg & Colquitt, 2005). However, at the level of practical life, and especially work settings, the concept of organizational justice proposed by Colquitt (2001) is considered. This model distinguishes distributive, procedural, interpersonal (fairness in terms of dignity and respect) and informational (fairness in providing information and explanations) justice.

Application of justice principles at work (or society) is not complicated, however due to unethical actions taken by some individuals, these principles may not be fairly implemented in certain situations or areas. Social reality is variable, and therefore justice is burdened with subjective perception, evaluation and normative judgments (Váně, 2006). Therefore, diversified attitudes toward justice lead to situations in which person may be convinced his / her individual right has been violated and attributes responsibility and guilt to another person (Mikula, Scherer & Athenstaedt, 1998).

Ogungbamila and Udegbe (2014) summarized chosen contributions on gender differences in perception of injustice across some cultures. In sample of employees in western culture, Lambert et al. (in Ogungbamila & Udegbe, 2014) reported that female employees felt as justly treated as their male counterparts. However, studies conducted among employees in Africa (e.g. Mueller & Mulinge, in Ogungbamila & Udegbe, 2014) and Asia (e.g. Youn, in Ogungbamila & Udegbe, 2014) indicated that females perceived higher level of injustice at work than males. Gender differences in Asia have been confirmed even during COVID-19. Lim et al. (2020) found out that although a substantial share of both men and women anticipated a reduction in the

gendered division of paid work after COVID-19, women were not as optimistic as their male counterparts about this potential reduction. Especially, younger women were most skeptical about the prospect that paid work will be less divided by gender beyond the pandemic.

We can assume that COVID-19 may not have crucial impact on injustice perception for women and men. The issue of justice is much deeper and more complex, it has very long history and the waves of social changes are probably not strong enough to change the basis of current unjust society. Justice is absent even from COVID-19 illness. Men are about 60% more likely to be severely ill or to die from the complications of COVID-19 than women (Rozenberg, Vandromme & Martin, 2020).

Lerner and Clayton (2011) argue that people's reactions to injustice are intuitive, thus perception of injustice automatically evokes subconscious processes that include situation assessment, cognitive categorization of responses (i.e. sensitivity to injustice) with associated affective experience (i.e. emotions) and a tendency to act (i.e. behavior). From this perspective, people's reactions to injustice can lead, for example, to an intuitive association of a random unfair outcome with perpetrator's previous bad acts (Callan et al., 2014) or to urge to punish perpetrator or to help victim of injustice (Rand, Greene & Nowak, 2012).

The core element of differences in injustice perception embodies in a different level of sensitivity, which may influence the emotional and behavioral response to injustice. This tendency to perceive others' behavior as unfair or to perceive oneself as an object of unfair treatment is defined as sensitivity to injustice (Lovaš, 1995). Sensitivity to injustice refers to an individual's concern for justice which leads to interindividual differences in intensity of disturbance, discomfort or indignation experienced by an individual in situations related to injustice.

Scholars argue women are more justice sensitive compared to men (e.g. Schmitt et al., 2010). This difference may reflect women's elevated emotional vulnerability, as well as social and gender role or brain activation.

The perception of injustice has a significant relation to the character of an emotional reaction, specifically in terms of subjective emotional state and consequences of these emotions (Mikula, Scherer & Athenstaedt, 1998). Traditional justice concept argues perception of injustice can lead to emotional state which can increase motivation to re-establish justice. If an individual experiences injustice, he / she feels anger or even rage most often. These two dynamic emotions are considered "emotions of justice" and thus

may represent factors significantly influencing perception of injustice (Lively, Steelman & Powell, 2010).

In the context of gender, few gender differences were found in experience and expression of anger. Rather, contextual factors (e.g. gender of an decision-maker) have stronger effect on emotional responses than gender of a victim (Johnson et al., 2007).

The theoretical literature has been emphasizing anger as main emotional response to injustice, however there is a limited amount of research dealing with emotional responses in their complexity (e.g. Jasper & Owens, 2014; Krehbiel & Cropanzano, 2000; Lotz et al., 2011). The reason may be found in statement that people mostly rely on anger to prevent injustice. Another explanation may be that anger can produce a sensitivity of injustice perception, because it is normatively difficult for people to respond angrily without believing that their activity is based on justice principles (Miller, 2001).

People respond to injustice at work by negative emotions, by direct or indirect behavioral response like sabotage, vandalism, resistance, withdrawal or reduced citizenship behaviors (Jermier, Knights & Nord, 1994). Douglas and Martinko (2001) argue that anger has a strong relationship with attitude towards revenge and workplace aggression. Likewise, Khattak et al. (2018) found positive relationship between negative emotions (anger) and deviant workplace behaviors.

Mikula (1993) assumes that victim coping response to injustice is characterized by intensive feelings of anger, disappointment, depression and/or helplessness, strong sense of injustice and a greater number of direct activities aimed at re-establishing justice.

Several coping strategies have been described in the literature used by individuals to deal with injustice. Above all rationalization, helping victim of injustice or blaming victim have been discussed (Hafer & Gosse, 2011). Some authors also identified alternative coping strategies, which individuals use in positive way of understanding the suffering of injustice. For example, it can be an ability to perceive benefits in one's own suffering ("everything bad is good for something"). Although there has been an effort to explore this kind of strategies (e.g. Davis, Nolen-Hoeksema, & Larson, 1998), this kind of coping has not been explicitly confirmed as effective, and it has a very little attention among scholars.

It is essential to mention study by Džuka, Dalbert and Schmitt (2013). The authors focused on identifying specific coping strategies that could

mediate the effect of just world belief in relation to subjective well-being. They were able to define 8 strategies: (1) revenge, (2) intentionality minimizing (e.g. intention to harm), (3) forgiveness, (4) rumination avoiding (e.g. selfregretting: "why this happened just to me?"), (5) consequences minimizing (e.g. of harming activity), (6) self-accusation, (7) forgetting, and (8) non-adaptive reaction. Moreover, they found out that four chosen strategies could create one factor named "*assimilative coping response to injustice*" - people who cope with injustice in that way are likely to eliminate a negative experience caused by injustice through cognitive reinterpretation, which has assimilative character.

The ambition of theoretical part was to define and clarify the key variables of the contribution and subsequently empirical part will focus on analysing these variables in term of statistic procedures.

Methods

Objectives

The aim of the study is to investigate character of relationship between women's sensitivity to injustice, affect, employment sector and coping with work injustice during COVID-19.

Sample and Data Collection Procedures

The sample consisted of 208 women. Respondents aged from 18 - 59 years ($M = 26.08$, $SD = 7.39$). Regarding the level of education, 0.8 percent had completed primary education, 45.2 percent had completed the secondary level, and 54 percent were university certificate holders. The average length of an employment was 7.88 years ($SD = 8.39$). 52.2 percent worked in public sector, and 43.8 percent were employed in private sector. Data were collected from Slovak republic using an online self-report survey delivered in Slovak language by Google Forms during COVID-19 situation (between May 21 and July 1, 2020). Sample was not demographically representative. Participation was voluntary and anonymous; all respondents were treated in accordance with the ethical guidelines.

Measurements

Respondents completed a general socio - demographics questionnaire wherein they indicated age, sex (male/female), education level (primary/secondary/tertiary education), and type of sector in which they were employed (private/public sector).

Instruction for filling the questionnaire was the key element which described the concept of justice at work during COVID-19: "Workplace could be quite unfair toward women suggesting salary, benefits, little value to their voice, career growth and it has showed that COVID-19 pandemic exacerbates injustice at work moreover. Think about specific work situation during COVID-19 which you have perceived as unfair to you and try to approach this survey through those eyes."

Respondents completed the following measures:

Justice Sensitivity Inventory (Schmitt et al., 2010; Slovak version - Lovaš, 1995) - measure includes four questionnaire scales measuring (1) victim ("*It makes me angry when others receive a reward that I have earned.*"), (2) observer ("*I am upset when someone does not get a reward he/she has earned.*"), (3) beneficiary ("*I have a bad conscience when I receive a reward that someone else has earned.*"), and (4) perpetrator sensitivity ("*I feel guilty when I treat someone worse than others.*"). Each scale contained 10 items that were answered on a 6-point rating scale ranging from 1 (not at all) to 6 (exactly). The scale of victim sensitivity was used in research according to nature of study. Cronbach's alpha in this research was .86.

Positive Affect Scale and Negative Affect Scale (Slovak version - Džuka & Dalbert, in Džuka, 2019) - the emotional component of subjective well-being was assessed by the Positive Affect Scale consisting of four descriptors (enjoyment, happiness, joy, feeling fresh) and the Negative Affect Scale comprising six descriptors (anger, guilt feeling, shame, fear, pain and sadness). Respondents were asked to state how often they experienced each of these states. The answers were given on a 6-point scale ranging from 1 (almost never) to 6 (almost always). Cronbach's alpha values were: (a) Positive Affect Scale .89, (b) Negative Affect Scale .67.

Brief COPE (Carver, 1997; Slovak version - Ficková, 1992) - 28-item multidimensional measure of strategies used for coping or regulating cognitions in response to stressors. This abbreviated inventory (based on the complete 60-item COPE Inventory) is comprised of items that assess the frequency with which a person uses different coping strategies ("*I've been*

turning to work or other activities to take my mind off things," "I've been making fun of the situation," or "I've been criticizing myself") rated on a scale from 1 (I haven't been doing this at all) to 4 (I've been doing this a lot). There are 14 two-item subscales within the Brief COPE, and each is analysed separately: (1) active coping ($\alpha = .53$), (2) planning ($\alpha = .45$), (3) use of emotional support ($\alpha = .51$), (4) use of instrumental support ($\alpha = .68$), (5) positive reframing ($\alpha = .71$), (6) acceptance ($\alpha = .49$), (7) religion ($\alpha = .88$), (8) humor ($\alpha = .83$), (9) venting ($\alpha = .73$), (10) denial ($\alpha = .59$), (11) substance use ($\alpha = .90$), (12) behavioural disengagement ($\alpha = .47$), (13) self-distraction ($\alpha = .62$), and (14) self-blame ($\alpha = .81$). 14 scales can be divided into two dimensions, 8 of which measure adaptive coping strategies (scales 1 - 8), and 6 of which focus on maladaptive coping (scales 9 - 14) (Meyer, 2001). Evidence indicates adaptive coping scales tend to be linked with desirable outcome, whereas maladaptive coping scales tend to be associated with undesirable outcome (Carver et al., in Meyer, 2001). Many studies on Brief COPE have used the combined subscales (adaptive versus maladaptive coping) (e.g. Cooper et al., 2006; García et al., 2018; Meyer, 2001). Cronbach's alpha values were: (a) adaptive coping .60, (b) maladaptive coping .62.

Statistical Analysis

The data were processed using SPSS 20. Descriptive statistics were used to summarize data from a sample using indexes such as the mean and standard deviation. One sample t-test was used to test whether there were differences (1) between negative affect and positive affect among women, (2) between adaptive coping and maladaptive coping among women. An independent samples t-test was used to compare (1) the level of victim sensitivity between women employed in public and private sector, (2) the level of positive / negative affect between women employed in public and private sector, (3) adaptive / maladaptive coping between women employed in public and private sector. Pearson correlation was used to analyze the relationship between two variables (tested variables - victim sensitivity, negative affect, positive affect, adaptive coping, maladaptive coping). Multiple regression was used to analyze linear relationship between selected predictors (victim sensitivity, negative affect, positive affect, employment sector) and one outcome variable (adaptive coping, maladaptive coping). All statistical methods were implemented according to their conditions.

Results

Women reported higher level of victim sensitivity ($M = 4.55$; $SD = .85$; items were answered on a 6-point rating scale ranging from 1 - not at all to 6 - exactly). In other words, women were very sensitive to work injustice from a victim's perspective.

There were no differences in the level of victim sensitivity between women employed in public and private sector (public sector: $M = 4.51$, $SD = .79$; private sector: $M = 4.68$, $SD = .89$; $t_{(206)} = -1.453$, $p = .148$).

The experience of work injustice evocated negative affect rather than positive affect (NA: $M = 3.33$, $SD = .89$; PA: $M = 1.58$, $SD = .94$; $t_{(207)} = 20.49$, $p < .001$). Women felt anger mostly in situations of work injustice ($M = 4.45$; $SD = 1.28$; 6-point scale ranging from 1 - almost never to 6 - almost always). Frequencies for various emotions are provided in Table 1.

Table 1: The emotional component of subjective well-being

Emotion	M	SD
Anger	4.45	1.28
Sadness	4.16	1.51
Pain	3.16	1.53
Fear	2.89	1.51
Shame	2.68	1.45
Guilt feeling	2.53	1.30
Feeling fresh	1.65	1.13
Enjoyment	1.61	1.02
Happiness	1.59	1.17
Joy	1,56	1.09

Source: Author based on research results

There were no differences in the level of negative affect between women employed in public and private sector (public sector: $M = 3.26$, $SD = .86$; private sector: $M = 3.41$, $SD = .92$; $t_{(206)} = -1.210$, $p = .228$). There were no differences in the level of positive affect between women employed in public and private sector, neither (public sector: $M = 1.54$, $SD = .97$; private sector: $M = 1.63$, $SD = .91$; $t_{(206)} = -.671$, $p = .503$).

Results showed women used adaptive coping more than maladaptive coping (Table 3; AC: $M = 3.81$, $SD = .65$; MC: $M = 2.93$, $SD = .75$; $t_{(207)} = 15.47$, $p < .001$). Specifically, they most frequently coped actively with

injustice at work ($M = 4.43$, $SD = .99$; Table 2). Frequencies for use of various coping strategies in work injustice situations are provided in Table 2.

Table 2: Coping strategies

Coping strategy	M	SD
Active coping	4.43	.99
Planning	4.30	1.04
Use of emotional support	4.29	1.16
Use of instrumental support	4.25	1.18
Positive reframing	3.78	1.24
Acceptance	3.73	1.12
Self-distraction	3.69	1.34
Venting	3.65	1.05
Self-blame	3.26	1.48
Humor	3.10	1.44
Behavioral disengagement	2.72	1.11
Religion	2.70	1.80
Denial	2.50	1.35
Substance use	1.66	1.25

Source: Author based on research results

There were differences in adaptive coping between women employed in public and private sector. Women in private sector used adaptive coping more than women in public sector (public sector: $M = 3.73$; $SD = .56$; private sector: $M = 3.92$; $SD = .74$; $t_{(206)} = -2.176$, $p = .031$). There were no differences in maladaptive coping between women employed in public and private sector (public sector: $M = 2.87$, $SD = .69$; private sector: $M = 3.01$, $SD = .82$; $t_{(206)} = -1.376$, $p = .170$).

Table 3 shows the means, SD and bivariate correlations among the main variables. Victim sensitivity and negative affect were positively correlated ($r = .247$, $p < .01$). Correlation between negative affect and adaptive coping was positive ($r = .217$, $p < .01$). Correlation between negative affect and maladaptive coping was positive, as well ($r = .441$, $p < .01$).

Table 3: Means, SD and correlations between measured variables (N=208)

	M	SD	1	2	3	4
1 Victim sensitivity	4.55	.85	-			
2 Negative affect	3.31	.88	.247**	-		
3 Positive affect	1.60	.95	.021	.090	-	
4 Adaptive coping	2.89	1.51	-.027	.217**	.088	-
5 Maladaptive coping	2.68	1.45	.112	.441**	.121	.284**

Source: Author based on research results ** $p < .01$

The linear model explaining adaptive coping was statistically significant [$F(4, 203) = 3.858, p = .005, R^2 = .071$] and explained 7.1% of the variance in adaptive coping. The model showed negative affect and type of employment sector significantly contributed to adaptive coping (Table 4).

Table 4: Linear model explaining adaptive coping

	Adaptive coping $F(4, 203) = 3.858; p = .005$				
	<i>B</i>	<i>S.E.</i>	β	<i>t</i>	<i>P</i>
Victim sensitivity	-.053	.054	-.068	-.977	.330
Negative affect	.149	.052	.203	2.892	.004
Positive affect	.055	.047	.080	1.180	.239
Type of sector	.178	.089	.136	1.994	.047

Source: Author based on research results

Taking into consideration that negative affect was significant predictor of adaptive coping there was a need for further analysis. The linear model explaining adaptive coping in the context of negative affect was statistically significant [$F(6, 201) = 2.413, p = .028, R^2 = .067$] and explained 6.7% of the variance in adaptive coping. The model showed solely sadness contributed to adaptive coping ($B = .063, S.E. = .035, \beta = .147, t = 1.791, P = .045$).

The linear model explaining maladaptive coping was statistically significant [$F(4, 203) = 13.679, p < .001, R^2 = .212$] and explained 21.2% of the variance in maladaptive coping. The model showed only negative affect significantly contributed to maladaptive coping (Table 5).

Table 5: Linear model explaining maladaptive coping

	Maladaptive coping F (4, 203) = 13.679; p < .001				
	<i>B</i>	<i>S.E.</i>	β	<i>t</i>	<i>P</i>
Victim sensitivity	-.016	.058	-.018	-.275	.784
Negative affect	.374	.055	.443	6.851	<.001
Positive affect	.059	.050	.074	1.182	.239
Type of sector	.085	.095	.057	.901	.369

Source: Author based on research results

The linear model explaining maladaptive coping in the context of negative affect was statistically significant [$F(6, 201) = 8.912, p < .001, R^2 = .21$] and explained 21% of the variance in maladaptive coping. The model showed guilt ($B = .088, S.E. = .040, \beta = .156, t = 2.198, P = .029$) and sadness ($B = .094, S.E. = .037, \beta = .189, t = 2.502, P = .013$) contributed to maladaptive coping.

Discussion

Victim sensitivity is a self-related concern for justice. According to Thomas, Baumert and Schmitt (2012) justice sensitivity is assumed to include four psychological components, a perceptual component and three components concerning different kinds of reactions to injustice:

1. perception - it is assumed that persons high in justice sensitivity possess a low perceptual threshold for injustice compared to persons low in justice sensitivity, and therefore detect an injustice even if there are only a few and weak cues indicating this;

The assumed characteristic reactions toward perceived injustice are the following:

2. emotion - on the emotional level, strong reactions are indicative of persons high in justice sensitivity;
3. cognition - on the level of cognition, high justice sensitivity results in repetitive and intrusive thoughts about injustice;
4. motivation - on the level of motivation, persons high in justice sensitivity feel an urge to restore justice and show a willingness to act toward this goal.

In other words, scholars hypothesize there is relationship between sensitivity, cognitive, emotional and behavioral aspect of justice perception.

Our study focused solely on emotional aspect and behavioral aspect as reactions toward perceived injustice. Nevertheless, it has brought quite interesting results.

First, there was *relationship between victim justice sensitivity and negative affect* (women were very victim sensitive to work injustice and mostly felt anger in situations of work injustice). Mikula, Scherer and Athenstaedt (1998) argue that women who are victims of injustice (compared to men) consider these situations to be more unfair and less justified. Furthermore, considering that women may present a greater development in the perception of their own emotions and therefore would be more prompt to resort to them to face a stressful (unjust) situation (García et al., 2018). Those who are victim sensitive react strongly to situations that advantage others and disadvantage the self, such as when others are undeservingly better off than victim herself/himself. A victim who is highly sensitive to injustice is interested in justice but, on the other hand, he/she fears that it will be exploited by other party (Baumert et al., 2012). Consequently, this belief ends in a disproportionate aversion to expectations that others hide their intentions (Gollwitzer & Rothmund, 2009). As a result, victim reacts more sensitively (Gollwitzer & Rothmund, 2009), evaluates others through anger (Gollwitzer et al., 2012) and shows a lower willingness to cooperate. The victim's responses are driven by anger in order to restore justice (Schmitt & Maes, 2006).

Second, there was (1) *relationship between negative affect and adaptive coping*, (2) *relationship between negative affect and maladaptive coping*.

Third, the linear models explaining coping showed that (1) *negative affect (sadness) and type of employment sector significantly contributed to adaptive coping*, (2) *negative affect (guilt, sadness) significantly contributed to maladaptive coping*.

Adaptive responses of coping include direct coping, if the problem can be solved, reappraisal, regulated emotional expression, and non-repressive self-control (Connor-Smith & Flachsbart, 2007). Adaptive coping means respond in a mature and healthy manner, use knowledge to adjust to negative situation and avoid an overreaction or other wrong reactions. On the other hand, maladaptive coping includes rigid dysfunctional approach coping (rumination, venting, confrontation) and rigid maladaptive avoidance based

on abandonment, social isolation, inhibition, and emotional suppression (Connor-Smith & Flachsbart, 2007).

Traditional approach stresses the link between negative affect and maladaptive coping. When people experience injustice, their affect is negative and their coping strategies are characterized by sabotage, vandalism, resistance, withdrawal or reduced citizenship behaviors (Jermier, Knights & Nord, 1994).

It is necessary to remember that these types of strategies for injustice reflect synergistically character of coping. Coping strategies for injustice such as sabotage or revenge explain coping with injustice in an interaction framework which includes situational factors, social characteristics, stressor's conditions faced by individual and/or his/her social roles. However, our research looked at coping with work injustice during COVID-19 through the lens of an idiosyncratic framework and took into account only coping strategies by which woman can cope with work injustice during COVID-19 by herself (i.e. from her point of view; subjective reduction of work injustice consequences experienced during COVID-19). Unfortunately, scholars have not yet paid a lot of attention to this type of research, and therefore it is not possible to compare our results with other studies.

The variability of the results could reflect the uniqueness and dynamics of women's emotional world. Women are very sensitive to changes and their feelings are influenced by social context. It was said that female identity is more focused on being with others (Fula, 2004), thereby unexpected pandemic crisis exploiting work injustice could create specific emotional and behavioral reactions. As it has been shown, negative affect was related to both adaptive and maladaptive coping. It is necessary to seek answers in deeper analysis of relationships between individual negative emotions and particular coping strategies to understand specific nuances. Adaptive coping is focused on constructive ways of responding to unfair situation, and it can be controlled by negative affect such as sadness. This emotion can motivate woman to cope with work injustice through accepting, gaining perspective, and an effort to understand the meaning of "why work injustice happened" rather than trying to live a lifetime of unwarranted self-blame. On the other hand, emotion such as guilt can be found behind maladaptive coping. This type of emotion can evoke a tendency to experience a broad range of negative responses such as worry and self-criticism, to have negative self-image, etc.

Findings from the current study underscore the importance of taking into account particular emotions when considering differences in coping

responses when we discuss work injustice during COVID-19. These results clearly point to diversiform world of emotions that cannot be understood simply through the lens of statistical procedures. Negative emotions do not uniquely determine maladaptive coping. It will be always woman's choice how she tries to manage negative affect, and subsequently how it is reflected in coping with work injustice, not only in actual situation of COVID-19, but during her life span.

Finally, discussion-worthy result is also finding pointed to type of employment sector as significant predictor of adaptive coping. Our study revealed that women in private sector used adaptive coping more than women in public sector. Previous studies have shown significant difference between private and public sector employees, which, in general, indicates lower organizational commitment among public sector employees (Buelens & Van Den Broeck, 2007). Private sector workers develop a higher effort level compared to those from the public sector (do Monte, 2017) and are more satisfied with their work than public sector workers (Borges, 2013). If women in private sector are more committed, more satisfied and develop higher efforts, it can reflect logically in adaptive coping strategies. By using active planning, seeking emotional and/or instrumental support women directly works on controlling potential stressor (i.e. injustice) through appropriately targeted behavior, embracing responsibility for resolving situation with her internal resources.

It will be beneficial for future research to work with a larger number of respondents, which will in turn improve the representativeness of the sample as well as the adequacy of the linear models. Moreover, independent variables explained a smaller proportion of variance in the dependent variable. For this reason, (a) it will be effective to take into account other independent variables which may be potentially related to coping with work injustice, and (b) use structural equation modeling to analyze structural relationships between tested variables. These two steps will offer consistency and comprehensive explanations of the actual research phenomena. It is possible to assume the existence of significant predictors such as (a) dispositional - personality traits (e.g. Čopková, 2020; Köverová, 2014; Shi et al., 2009; Penley & Tomaka, 2002), (b) situational - leadership style (Armagan & Erzen, 2015; Loi, Lam & Chan, 2012), working conditions (Lichner, Halachová, & Lovaš, 2018) or organizational culture (Erkutlu, 2011). The other limitation can be found in design of research. The research was conducted during COVID-19, and it is possible that this situation could influence the results. It will be essential to

do another research pointed to work injustice during COVID-19. New research should be focused on particular types of justice (distributive, procedural, interactive), it should enquire for aspects of work-life balance during COVID-19 or adjustment of working conditions during COVID-19. The good option will be also to do interviews with women to catch individual experiences related to life in the context of COVID-19.

Conclusion

The present research provided support for the predictive relevance of negative affect and employment sector of work injustice coping framework. Gender injustice still exists and occurs in every area of life. Women are confronted by discrimination and injustice; women and men are not equal in justice manners and these differences have been probably arisen during COVID-19. The topic is still in need of further research, especially to clarify the extent to which COVID-19 will influence justice in the long term.

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