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Individual and group level antecedents in the development of idiosyncratic deals. A cross-level study¹

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 & Amalia Pérez-Nebra⁶

Abstract

Research on workers' proactive behaviors has increased in recent years, emphasizing the need for a more active workforce. In this context, research has been carried out on idiosyncratic deals (i-deals), that is, individualized work arrangements that employees negotiate with their employers about aspects that are mutually beneficial. Because this research topic focuses on individuals' actions, most of the studies analyzing its antecedents examine individual characteristics. However, group and organizational characteristics have been suggested to play a role. The aim of the present paper is to analyze the interplay between individual and group

1 Although the present research has greatly evolved from its inception, this research originated as part of the Master thesis presented by Arianna Knering in the context of the Master on Work, Organizational and Personnel Psychology (WOP-P). Thus, to some extent is one of the fruits of the WOP-P Master, in which prof. Adelino Duarte Gomes was involved as a founder. We would also like to thank prof. Carla Semedo from the Universidade da Coimbra/Evora for her comments and feedback during the development of the research. The Spanish Government with project PSI2015-64862-R (MINECO/FEDER) supported this work.

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level factors in the development of *i-deals*. More specifically, we consider the role of psychological capital and justice climate in the development of *i-deals*. A total of 520 employees working in 83 work-units in Spain participated in a panel study. A cross-level approach was adopted to analyze the relationships among psychological capital (*psycap*), justice climate and *i-deals*. The results revealed group differences in the enactment of *i-deals*. Individual and group level factors showed a significant positive relationship with *i-deals*. After controlling for individual characteristics, Justice Climate still added predictive power.

Keywords: *I-deals*; Psychological capital; Justice climate; cross-level research

Antecedentes individuais e grupais no desenvolvimento de acordos idiossincráticos: um estudo entre níveis

Resumo

A investigação sobre comportamentos proativos de trabalhadores tem vindo a aumentar nos últimos anos, enfatizando a necessidade de uma força de trabalho mais ativa. No espectro do comportamento proativo, os acordos idiossincráticos (*i-deals*) foram desenvolvidos, isto é, acordos de trabalho individualizados que os funcionários negociam com os seus empregadores em aspectos que são benéficos para ambos. Como esse tópico de investigação está centrado nas ações dos indivíduos, a maioria dos estudos que analisa os seus antecedentes é focada em características individuais. No entanto, sugere-se que as características organizacionais e de grupo também desempenhem um papel relevante. Assim, o objetivo do presente artigo é analisar a interação entre fatores individuais e grupais no desenvolvimento de *i-deals* relacionados com as práticas de recursos humanos. Mais especificamente, incluiu-se o papel do capital psicológico (*psycap*) e do clima de justiça no seu desenvolvimento. Os dados foram recolhidos junto de 520 funcionários que trabalham em 83 unidades de trabalho em Espanha. Foi adotada uma abordagem *cross-level* para analisar a relação entre *PsyCap* e Justice Climate e os acordos *i-deal*. Os resultados mostraram que as variáveis individuais e grupais apresentaram relações positivas significativas estabelecidas com os *i-deals*. Depois de controlar as características individuais, o JC ainda acrescentou poder preditivo.

Palavras-chave: Acordo idiossincrático; Capital psicológico; Clima de justiça; Pesquisa entre-níveis

INTRODUCTION

The changes in the employment system that have occurred in recent decades have challenged the concept of career and the relationship between employers and employees. Both parties are now aware that the working relationship is not going to last forever (Arthur, Khapova, & Wilderom, 2005). This awareness, along with the demise of the traditional models of vertical growth-careers (Hall, 1996), may be factors underlying the change in psychological contracts (Schalk & Roe, 2007). Against this background, the definition of a career path becomes more tortuous and less clear, and careers today are increasingly fragmented and flexible. At the same time, there has been an evolution in the attitudes towards work and men and women's expectations about work have changed (Benko & Weisberg, 2007) emphasizing the employees' active role in developing their own careers.

It has also been argued that organizations can no longer rely on universalistic approaches ("one-size-fits-all approaches") in the design and implementation of Human Resource Practices (HR Practices) (Boxall & Macky, 2009). Instead, they need to tailor and adapt those practices to the specific needs and characteristics of their employees, so that each employee has the opportunity to define his/her own growth path within the organization (Bal, Kooij, & De Jong, 2013). If people increasingly differ from each other in terms of preferences, attitudes, and needs, their expectations towards the organization and their work and career development opportunities will also vary (Rousseau, 2005).

In this context, the concept of idiosyncratic deals (i-deals) (Rousseau, 2005) emerges. I-deals are defined as a type of proactive behavior through which employees develop personalized arrangements of their working conditions that are favorable to them and to the organizations they work for. These work arrangements allow valuable employees, high performers in particular, to benefit from the opportunity to customize all the conditions of their contract based on their personal and professional needs. Research on i-deals has shown that these types of behaviors are related to several positive outcomes, such as work-family balance (Hornung, Rousseau, & Glaser 2008), motivation to continue working after retirement (Bal, De Jong, Jansen, & Bakker, 2012), increased affective commitment (Liu, Lee, Hui, Kwan, & Wu, 2013), and satisfaction (Rosen, Slater, & Johnson, 2013).

Research on the antecedents of i-deals is rather scarce and mostly centered on individual antecedents, with personal initiative being the most well-established one (e.g. Hornung, 2018; Hornung et al., 2008). Some researchers have pointed out the need to explore other individual factors that might play an important role in organizational behavior, such as psychological capital (PsyCap) (Tims & Kooij, 2014). Moreover, some researchers have advocated the importance of analyzing the possible antecedents of i-deals from different perspectives and considering variables

at different levels (Bal et al., 2012; Liao, Wayne, & Rousseau, 2016). As Bal (2017) states, studies that take individual predictors into account offer a good explanation for “who” is more proactive at work, but not “why” or “what” factors inhibit or promote these behaviors. Group level and organizational level characteristics are the contextual factors where idiosyncratic deals evolve, and the workgroup has been considered “an appropriate starting point for extending the research on i-deals” (Liao et al., 2016, p. 19). Some research has shown that the organizational context moderates the effect of i-deals on employee outcomes (Bal et al., 2012), but the role of organizational and group factors in its development has been understudied.

Some theoretical approaches also suggest that contextual factors, such as justice climate, could have a moderator role in the relationship between individual antecedents and i-deals. Specifically, following the trait activation theory, some authors propose that when the situation is less supportive of individuals, individual traits might have stronger impact on behavior (Liao et al., 2016; Tett & Guterman, 2000). Thus, we propose that situations where the level of justice climate is lower could be related to stronger effects of PsyCap on the development of i-deals.

In summary, in the present paper, we aim to advance the study of antecedents of i-deals by analyzing the role of individual characteristics, PsyCap, along with a contextual group-level factor, justice climate, in generating proactive behaviors towards the creation of idiosyncratic deals. Moreover, we explore the interaction between both individual and group level factors.

The concept of i-deals

I-deals have been defined as individualized and voluntary employment arrangements that employees negotiate with their employers in order to adapt their work conditions to their own needs (Rousseau, 2005). Several elements contribute to distinguishing i-deals from other types of agreements that commonly exist in the workplace, such as cronyism or favoritism (Rousseau, 2005). First, they are the result of individual negotiation, i.e., they lead to a certain exclusive relationship between the employer and the employee. In addition, they are heterogeneous because they characterize the relations between workers and employer in a variety of ways. They benefit the employee and the employer, and they are executed based on legitimate values and shared across the organization, rather than being based on personal favoritism. Moreover, they have different scopes, in other words, they can be related to a closed circle or a much larger group of work aspects. For example, one worker might want more flexible working hours, whereas someone else might be interested in taking on different responsibilities, etc.

There are many examples of deals that can be made through i-deals. Rousseau and Kim (2006, in Hornung et al., 2008) identified the three most common forms of i-deals as developmental, flexibility and workload reduction. Developmental i-deals have the aim of developing the skills and knowledge needed to exploit interests and aspirations and to improve opportunities for growth. Flexibility i-deals have the objective of providing greater flexibility in work performance. Workload reduction i-deals have the aim, as the name suggests, of reducing the workload. Most of the research has concentrated on the two first types, developmental and flexibility (Hornung, 2018). Workload reduction i-deals have been suggested as less related to employees' proactive behavior than the other two types. Indeed, some studies have found a lower correlation with personal initiative and some authors suggest that this arrangement is more an indicator of the way managers compensate for employees' contributions than of proactive behavior (Stinglhamber & Vandenberghe, 2003). Thus, in the present research, we will consider i-deals referring to developmental and flexibility arrangements.

As indicated previously, most of the research on i-deals has focused on the relationship between i-deals and their outcomes. The study of antecedents of i-deals is still in an incipient phase.

Antecedents of i-deals

Research on antecedents of i-deals is still scarce and has mainly dealt with the individual characteristics of the actors in these agreements (employees or leaders). Different personal variables, such as a high degree of initiative (Hornung et al., 2008), have been shown to be related to the experience of these types of agreements. In addition, some skills, such as a political attitude and negotiating skills (Rosen et al., 2013), have been found to increase the possibility of concluding a customized agreement about the tasks and the flexibility of the work location. Moreover, career planning skills (Guerrero, Jeanblanc, & Veilleux, 2016), entrepreneurial orientation (Tuan, 2016) and employees' motivational goals (Ng & Lucianetti, 2016) have been found to have a positive relationship with the creation of i-deals. However, research on this topic is still in its initial stages and limited. For instance, Liao et al. (2016) suggested going beyond individual proactivity to examine the role of other personality characteristics. More specifically, Tims and Kooij (2014) defended the appropriateness of examining the role of personal resources such as psychological capital.

Some authors have also stressed the importance of looking at i-deals from a broader viewpoint; by researching them from different perspectives and considering

different levels of influence (Anand & Vidyarthi, 2015). Variables at the group or organizational level are considered important contextual factors in the explanation of behaviors and attitudes (Liao et al., 2016). Indeed, research has shown that certain cultural orientations promote or facilitate different organizational results (Rebello & Gomes, 2011). However, research on i-deals has not devoted much effort to this issue. Some authors have recommended adopting a multilevel approach to the study of i-deals, considering their conceptualization at the group level, potential group- and organizational-level predictors of i-deals, or the moderator role of context in the relationship between i-deals and outcomes (Liao et al., 2016).

In a similar vein, proactivity research has suggested that investigations of situational antecedents of proactive behaviors should pay more attention to the influence of organizational factors such as organizational climate (Grant & Ashford, 2008). Nevertheless, to date, research considering both individual and group-level antecedents and consequences of i-deals is limited and strongly suggested by some authors (Bal et al., 2012). Hence, the present research emphasizes the importance of considering the combined influence of individual and organizational factors in the development of i-deals.

Psychological capital and i-deals

The concept of psychological capital has received considerable attention in the recent decades. Luthans, Luthans and Luthans (2004) showed that PsyCap encompasses different personal resources that distinguish people, and have a significant impact on determining success in the business world. PsyCap is described as a state-like construct (Luthans, Youssef, & Avolio, 2007b) composed of four dimensions: hope, resilience, optimism and self-efficacy. Self-efficacy is the construct that denotes “having confidence to take on and put in the necessary effort to succeed at challenging tasks”, whereas optimism is “making a positive attribution about succeeding now and in the future”, hope is “persevering toward goals and, when necessary, redirecting paths to goals in order to succeed”, and resilience consists of “when beset by problems and adversity, sustaining and bouncing back and even beyond to attain success” (Luthans et al., 2007b, p. 3). PsyCap has been found to be related to different positive work outcomes such as job satisfaction, engagement or performance (Luthans, Avolio, Avey, & Norman, 2007a) and it has been considered a strategic resource for organizations (Newman, Ucbasaran, Zhu, & Hirst, 2014). Employees’ resources may provide them with the power to enact the employee-organization relationship (Meijerink, 2014), based on the theory of i-deals. PsyCap represents a strong financial leverage for the organization, and it creates returns

on investment, and competitive advantage through improved performance of high PsyCap employees (Luthans, Avolio, Walumbwa, & Li, 2005). Thus, according to social exchange theory, it would be a strong individual resource that employees can use in negotiating agreements with their employers. According to this theoretical framework, individuals with high PsyCap would have the necessary confidence to predict successful outcomes of their requests.

PsyCap could also influence the display of proactive behaviors at work because it involves valuable resources for activating the two processes that drive proactivity (Parker, William, & Turner, 2006), that is, the perceived capability of being proactive and the motivation for performing proactively. Thus, because employees with high PsyCap “are confident (self-efficacy), have positive expectations (optimism), persevere toward goals (hope), and overcome adversity (resiliency)” (Klemme Larson & Bell, 2013, pp. 297-298), they are likely to engage in proactive behavior at work (Tims & Kooij, 2014). Thus, research has suggested the need to examine the influence of psychological capital in filling the gap in the current knowledge about proactive behaviors such as i-deals. This research will therefore consider PsyCap as an individual antecedent of i-deals.

H1: PsyCap in T1 will be positively related to developmental and flexibility i-deals in T2, so that the higher the level of PsyCap in T1, the higher the level of i-deals in T2.

Justice climate as an antecedent of i-deals

Organizational justice has mainly been conceptualized in terms of individual-level justice perceptions and it has been associated with work attitudes, performance and citizenship behaviors (Liao & Rupp, 2005). Individual measures of organizational justice are considered antecedents of proactive behaviors, such as personal initiative (López-Cabarcos, Machado-Lopes-Sampaio-de Pinho, & Vázquez-Rodríguez, 2015), which, in turn, is recognized as an antecedent of i-deals (Hornung et al., 2008). As Anand and Vidyarthi (2015) state, employees are more likely to seek and obtain i-deals from a manager who has a reputation for being fair in interactions with subordinates.

Three dimensions of organizational justice have been identified: distributive, procedural and relational justice (Colquitt, 2001). Distributive justice refers to resources such as wages and the arrangement of accommodations in the workplace; procedural justice is related to policies and procedures, such as the way requests are handled; and interpersonal justice is related to the extent to which the organization’s members are treated with respect, dignity, and sensitivity. Research has shown that all three facets are interrelated and create an overall sense of fairness and justice in the workplace.

Because organizational justice is determined by organizational structures and shared information and organizational experiences arise from common interactions, employees may share their perception of organizational justice to a certain extent. Therefore, many authors have considered justice at a level higher than the individual, defining these shared perceptions as justice climate (Liao, 2007; Naumann & Bennett, 2000), which refers to the shared perception of organizational justice in a work unit or team (Liao, 2007; Moliner, Martínez-Tur, Peiró, Ramos, & Cropanzano, 2005),

Therefore, justice climate reveals collective beliefs about the distributive, procedural and interpersonal justice within an organization or a work group (Liao, 2007). Keeping in mind that i-deals should be favorable to both, the organization and the individual (Bal et al., 2012), it is conceivable that a high justice climate would favor a positive view of these arrangements, thus stimulating employees to request them. In work-units with a high level of justice climate, there would be more cooperation between employees and their co-workers towards the achievement of goals. Thus, we could also expect that it would contribute to an increase in proactivity in the work carried to achieve those goals.

In addition, a high level of perceived justice would potentially avoid problems between colleagues, and a sense of unfairness in i-deals. The role of organizational justice has been acknowledged in the acceptance of i-deals by co-workers (Brillert, 2015). Likewise, many studies have shown that people are influenced by various psychological pressures in their decisions in the workplace, such as the desire to please co-workers and the desire to be part of a team (Aronson, Wilson, & Akert, 2013). Hence, the shared perception of justice becomes an important element to account for the individual choice about whether to make an i-deal. In the decision to bargain with the management for this individual condition the support of other employees, induced by a climate of justice, would play a requisite role. In a climate in which justice is perceived as high, an employee will have the confidence to ask for the same personalized deals as his/her colleagues (Anand et al., 2010).

Recently, a qualitative study (Bal, 2017) showed that i-deals are more accessible when employees have good and strong relationships with their co-workers and managers and when they experience transparency and open communication about these deals in their organizations.

H2: After controlling for PsyCap in T1, justice climate in T1 will be positively related to developmental and flexibility i-deals in T2, so that, the greater the justice climate in T1, the higher the level of i-deals in T2.

As mentioned previously, trait activation theory proposes that in less supportive situational circumstances personal traits could be more salient in the prediction of certain

behaviors than in more supportive circumstances (Tett & Guterman, 2000). Based on these ideas, Liao et al. (2016) proposed that this effect could be relevant in understanding how personal characteristics affect the display of actions toward the development of i-deals. As described above, high justice climate levels in groups could contribute to enhancing a higher level of i-deals in the members of these groups. Situations characterized by low levels of justice climate could also increase the salience of individual differences in the display of i-deals. Thus, in this environment, employees with a high level of personal resources such as self-efficacy, optimism, hope and resilience, would be more likely to ask for i-deals than employees with lower levels of these resources.

H3: Justice climate in T1 will moderate the relationship between PsyCap in T1 and developmental and flexibility i-deals in T2, so that, the lower the level of justice climate in T1, the higher the relationship between PsyCap in T1 and i-deals in T2.

Therefore, the present research will examine the role of PsyCap and justice climate, as antecedents of developmental and flexibility i-deals. To test the hypotheses, we developed a cross-level study with two time-lags (see Figure 1).

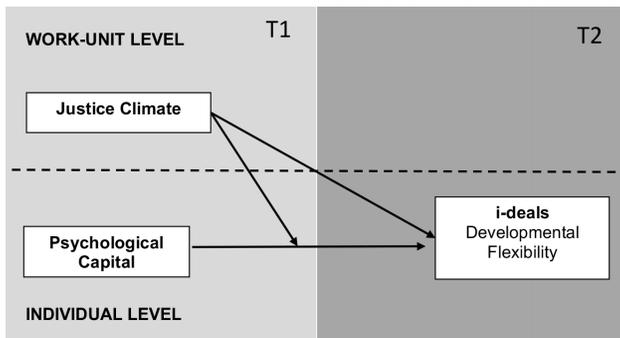


Figure 1. The cross-level research model.

METHOD

Procedure and sample

Managers from different organizations were contacted and asked to participate in the research study, and they were given details about the aims, procedure, and

timing of the study. Researchers also asked for formal permission to proceed with the data collection from the employees. Participation was voluntary and confidential. The data were collected using a set of self-report questionnaires.

Employees from 23 different organizations located in Spain participated in the study. We used a panel design with two time lags (Time 1 and Time 2). Data about psychological capital and justice climate were collected at Time 1. Data about *i-deals* were collected at Time 2 between 9 and 12 months later. The sample was composed of 520 employees in 83 work units. Most of them worked in the services sector (71.9%), and the rest worked in the production and construction sector (28.1%). They belonged to different occupational categories. Age composition was as follows: 29.7% were less than 35 years old, the majority (59.5%) were between 35 and 50 years old, and the remaining 10.8% of the employees were more than 50 years old. The sample was balanced between men (54.8%) and women (45.2%).

Measures

The following measures were used to test the proposed hypotheses:

HR i-deals were measured through an ad-hoc questionnaire that measures two types of *i-deals*: developmental (3 items) and flexibility (3 items). This scale measures the frequency of employees' proactive behaviors toward idiosyncratic agreements, rated on a 5-point Likert scale (1 = "never" to 5 = "always"). An example of an item in the developmental dimension is: "I participate in meetings to communicate my opinions to management". An example of an item in the flexibility dimension is: "I try to negotiate my job conditions with the company".

Psychological capital was measured using a 12-item scale, with 3 items in each of the four dimensions (modified version of the short Psychological Capital Questionnaire PCQ-12, Djourova, Rodríguez & Lorente, in press). A 6-point Likert scale measured respondents' level of agreement (1 = "strongly disagree" to 6 = "strongly agree"). An example of an item is: "I feel confident contributing to discussions about the company's strategy".

Justice climate was measured using an adaptation of the scale developed by Colquitt (2001) to measure organizational justice. This scale is composed by 9 items (3 items for each type of justice: distributive, procedural, interactional). A 5-point Likert scale was used (1 = "not at all" to 5 = "a lot"). An example of an item is: "Does your boss treat you politely?". Individual scores were aggregated at the work-unit level after justifying it statistically (Bliese, 2016; Moliner et al., 2005).

Analysis

Aggregation analysis

A consensus model was used to justify the aggregation of individual level responses (Chan, 1998). We statistically justified aggregation of justice climate by exploring within-work-unit agreement ($AD_{M(j)}$, Burke, Finkelstein, & Dusig, 1999) and reliability (ICC1) and between work unit differences (ANOVA, ICC2). The aggregation index for justice climate was: $AD_{M(j)} = .56$ ($AD_{SD(j)} = .12$), and so within-organization agreement was adequate. ANOVA showed between-organization variance ($F_{(82, 437)} = 2.25, p < 0.01$), and the interrater reliability index values (ICC1 = .11 and ICC2 = .56) showed sufficient reliability. Considering these results, we aggregated justice climate using the direct consensus model (Chan, 1998).

To take the nested experimental design (variables were observed clustered into work-units) into account, a mixed-effect model approach (multilevel modeling) was used, following the instructions provided by Bliese (2016). Individual level justice perceptions were also included in order to control for the individual level effects. The analyses were performed using the R statistical software.

RESULTS

Descriptive statistics, polychoric fit measures, correlations and Cronbach’s alphas are shown in Table 1. As can be observed, both PsyCap and justice climate were significantly related to developmental and flexibility i-deals.

Table 1
Descriptive statistics, polychoric fit indexes, correlations, RkF and Cronbach’s alphas (between brackets on the diagonal)*

	M	SD	Likelihood X ²	df	TLI	RMSEA	1	2	3	4
1. Psychological capital	4.74	.064	100	24	.94	.08	(.88)			
2. Organizational justice	3.51	0.63	67	12	.97	.08	.34**	(.83)		
3. Justice climate	3.51	0.34	-	-	-	-	.14**	.55**	(.83+)	

3. I-deal: Developmental T2	3.04	0.97	7	4	.92	.10	.27**	.20**	.21**	(.78)
4. I-deal: Flexibility T2	2.83	0.91			-	-	.20**	.18**	.17**	.64** (.69)

**p < .001

+To conduct reliability of multilevel data it was used Psych package from Revelle (2016).

To test the proposed hypotheses, we used hierarchical linear modeling, as implemented in the R statistical package.

Null model

In order to test the multilevel hypotheses, it is necessary to have significant within- and between-work-unit variance in the outcome variables. Accordingly, we specified both i-deal dimensions, developmental and flexibility, in T2 as the outcome variable. The -2 log likelihood value for the model with the random intercept is significantly smaller than the model without the random intercept, and the chi-square between these models was 24.17 (p < 0.001) for developmental i-deal and 15.34 (p < .0001) for flexibility i-deals. These indexes indicate that the variables have two sources of intercept variation: within-group and between-group, as can be seen in Table 2.

Table 2
Anova (Null.gls, Null.Model)

Null test	Model	df	AIC	BIC	logLikelihood	L.Ratio	p
Developmental	Null.GLS	2	1454.90	1463.40	-725.45		
	Null.Model	3	1432.72	1445.48	-713.36	24.17	< .0001
Flexibility	Null.GLS	2	1380.58	1389.09	-688.29		
	Null.Model	3	1367.25	1380.00	-680.62	15.34	< .00001

Random coefficient Regression model

We used the random coefficient regression model to test the three hypotheses. Specifically, we tested four models. Model 1 tests the relation between i-deals and PsyCap. Model 2 includes individual perceptions of organizational justice in order to test the effect of justice climate after controlling for its individual level effects (Bliese, 2016). Model 3 includes the group level variable, justice climate. Finally, Model 4 tests the same relations including a cross-level interaction between PsyCap and justice climate. Table 3 presents a summary of the findings for all the models.

Table 3
Results of Hierarchical lineal model

Model	IV	Value	df	t-value	p
Developmental					
1	Psychological capital	.40	436	6.25	< .01
2	Psychological capital	.36	435	5.37	< .01
	Organizational justice	.10	435	1.50	.13
3	Psychological capital	.37	435	5.46	< .01
	Organizational justice	.04	435	0.55	.58
	Justice climate	.40	81	2.23	.03
4	Psychological capital	.34	434	0.50	.61
	Organizational justice	.04	434	0.51	.61
	Justice climate	.37	81	0.40	.69
	Psychological capital*Justice climate	.01	434	0.05	.96
Flexibility					
1	Psychological capital	.28	436	4.94	< .01
2	Psychological capital	.25	435	3.82	< .01
	Organizational justice	.13	435	1.95	.05
3	Psychological capital	.25	435	3.86	.01
	Organizational justice	.09	435	1.18	.24
	Justice climate	.25	81	1.50	.14
4	Psychological capital	-.09	434	-.14	.89
	Justice	.08	434	1.14	.26
	Justice climate	-.22	81	-0.24	.81
	Psychological capital*Justice climate	.10	434	0.53	.60

Model 1 shows that PsyCap was positively related to both types of i-deals, supporting Hypothesis 1. In Model 2, positive significant relationships were found between Organizational justice and flexibility i-deals. No significant relationships were found with developmental i-deals. In Model 3, results show partial support for Hypothesis 2. We found a positive relationship between justice climate and developmental i-deals but not with flexibility i-deals. Model 3 for developmental i-deals shows that within-group variance explains 5,97% and the between-group intercept variance explains 28.42% (i.e. Justice climate). Finally, we did not find support for Hypothesis 3 because the cross-level interaction did not show any significant relationships.

DISCUSSION

The aim of our study was to test the role of individual and group level variables as antecedents of *i*-deals. The results confirm that PsyCap and justice climate were independent and simultaneous significant predictors of *i*-deals. Using a panel design and a cross-level approach, we contribute to previous research on the antecedents of *i*-deals by showing that both, individual and group-level factors contribute to the development of *i*-deals. Employees with higher levels of PsyCap in T1 showed higher levels of developmental and flexibility *i*-deals six months later. Employees in work units with a higher perception of justice climate in T1 also showed higher levels of developmental *i*-deals in T2. We did not find significant effects of justice climate on flexibility *i*-deals. However, individual level organizational justice perceptions were significantly related to flexibility *i*-deals. Finally, we found no support for the moderator role of justice climate in the relationship between PsyCap and *i*-deals.

Results offer support for research that has previously shown the importance of personal factors in the development of *i*-deals (Hornung et al., 2008). Moreover, these results support Tims and Kooij's (2014) call to consider PsyCap as an antecedent of proactive behaviors. Employees with higher levels of self-efficacy, optimism, hope and resilience are more likely to display proactive behaviors directed to negotiating idiosyncratic deals about development and flexibility in their working conditions. As previous research suggested, these personal resources can play a strategic role in organizations (Newman et al., 2014) which, in turn, will increase the ability of employees who have them to bargain for specific *i*-deals. Higher levels of PsyCap could also influence *i*-deals through the activation of the cognitive and motivational processes that drive proactivity: the perceived capability of being proactive and the will to perform proactively (Parker et al., 2006). Thus, employees who show higher levels of self-efficacy, optimism, perseverance toward goals and overcoming adversity are more likely to see themselves as more capable and more motivated to be proactive (Tims & Kooij, 2014).

Results also support the call for multilevel research in the *i*-deals' field (Bal, 2017; Hornung, 2018; Liao et al., 2016). First, they support the existence of between-group variations in *i*-deals. Thus, some of the variance in these types of behaviors seems to be due to work-unit factors. Therefore, it is reasonable to test the relationships between *i*-deals and second-level variables.

Our results also support the importance of justice climate, a group level variable, in the display of developmental *i*-deals at work, after controlling for PsyCap and individual perceptions of organizational justice. These results suggest that *i*-deals are not only a result of the individual bargaining power of employees, but also of contextual factors. Thus, our results offer some insights into what kind of group factors can facilitate the enactment of *i*-deals in organizations (Liao et al.,

2016). As suggested in Bal's (2017) qualitative study, organizational factors that favor good and strong relationships with co-workers and managers and increase transparency and open communication, as in the case of justice climate, could contribute to the enhancement of i-deals. Previous research has shown that individual perceptions of justice are related to employees' actions toward the development of i-deals (Anand & Vidyarthi, 2015). Our research takes a step forward by showing that shared perceptions of justice contribute further to the development of i-deals. Although no significant relationship was found between justice at the group level and flexibility i-deals, individual perceptions of justice showed positive relationships with this type of i-deals. These results are consistent with research that has found organizational justice to be an antecedent of proactive behaviors (Lopez-Cabarcos et al., 2015). Together, these results show that organizational justice is important for both types of i-deals, but at different levels. Justice climate was found to be an antecedent of developmental i-deals, whereas individual organizational justice perceptions were positively associated with flexibility i-deals. Differences in the specific characteristics of these two types of i-deals could explain these results (Rousseau & Kim, 2006). Developmental i-deals refer to actions designed to develop employees' skills, knowledge, and opportunities for growth, whereas flexibility i-deals refer to actions directed toward obtaining greater flexibility in work performance. Although developmental i-deals might change the content of the work performance in organizations (i.e. new responsibilities, skills), flexibility i-deals do not attempt to change the expected performance, but rather the procedures or timing of the prescribed performance (i.e. schedules, vacations, tele-work). Thus, for the former, factors related to the organizational culture, co-workers' acceptance of i-deals or a shared perception of justice climate could be more important than for the later.

Finally, we did not find support for the moderation hypothesis. Contrary to literature based on trait activation theory, the level of justice climate did not buffer the relationship between PsyCap and i-deals (Liao et al., 2016). PsyCap and justice climate contribute separately to the display of i-deals. Future research could explore other situational factors, such as other strategic climates that could make PsyCap more salient in reaching of i-deals. For instance, research could directly address the study of non-supportive climates as proposed by trait activation theory (Tett & Guterman, 2000).

The present study also has important implications for future research and practice. First, it provides evidence about the relationship between PsyCap and i-deals. In this regard, it extends the study of individual antecedents of i-deals. Further research could investigate the role of the different components of PsyCap to determine which personal resources have a stronger effect on the display of different types of i-deals. Second, following the suggestions of other researchers (Bal, 2017; Liao et al., 2016), this study is a seminal work in understanding the

role of group-level factors in the development of i-deals. Thus, it opens up a line of research in a field mainly focused on antecedents at the individual level. Future research could analyze the role of other situational factors as antecedents of i-deals (e.g. other cultural factors) that could influence the presence of these behaviors in organizational settings (Rebelo & Gomes, 2011). Further research could also examine the impact of different dimensions of justice climate (Moliner et al., 2005).

The results of the current research also have practical implications. These results point to some factors that organizations should take into account in order to detect which individuals might be more prone to developing i-deals. This information might help management and HR departments to design different HR practices such as recruitment and selection or training and development. Moreover, the results also provide information about how organizations might enhance these employee behaviors through the development and monitoring of a positive justice climate. For example, justice climate levels should be checked in their regular organizational assessments.

The present research also presents some limitations. First, the sample was limited to employees working in Spanish organizations. Thus, the results cannot be broadly generalized to other cultural contexts. However, the heterogeneous nature of the sample in terms of sectors and type of industries and the sociodemographic characteristics of the employees reduces the extent of this limitation. Second, we only included two types of i-deals, developmental and flexibility. Research has also suggested the existence of at least a one more type of i-deals, workload reduction i-deals. Nevertheless, these two types are the most commonly explored in the literature and more related to proactive behaviors.

In summary, the present research contributes to the knowledge about antecedents of i-deals in two ways. First, it broadens the scope of individual antecedents by exploring the relationship between psychological capital and i-deals, a construct that has been found to have a great impact on organizational behavior. In addition, it contributes to the consideration of multilevel issues in i-deals research, specifically group-level analysis in i-deals research. Moreover, it shows the importance of contextual factors, such as justice climate, in making developmental i-deals. Finally, it contributes to the simultaneous study of individual and group factors in i-deals research.

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