

# Beyond Teaching: Multiple Roles Played by University Professors and the Perception of Organizational Justice

**Crislaine de Fátima Gonçalves Godke**

<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-0397-9627>

**Nayane Thais Krespi Musial**

<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-9653-1417>

**Luciana Klein**

<https://orcid.org/0000-0001-6815-1831>

## Abstract

**Objective:** To analyze the relationship between the multiple roles of university professors and the perception of organizational justice among professors in the business field at Brazilian universities.

**Method:** An online questionnaire was administered to faculty members from Business Administration, Public Administration, and Accounting Sciences programs at 79 Brazilian universities (49 public, 23 private, and 7 mixed). The hypotheses were tested using Spearman's correlation and group differences analysis.

**Results and Contributions:** Simultaneous role performance is common in universities. Professors in the “educator” role tend to have lower perceptions of justice regarding the distribution of rewards. In contrast, professors in the “researcher” role exhibit higher perceptions of justice regarding decision-making procedures. Additionally, perceptions of justice increase among those in the “extensionist” and “manager” roles, but only with respect to task distributive justice. Significant differences were found between those performing multiple roles simultaneously and those performing a single role. This study's results highlight the importance of discussing the configuration of university professors in Brazil and their perceptions of justice.

**Keywords:** Business area; Faculty; Organizational Justice; Organizational Roles; Multi-role

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## 1 Introduction

To adapt to the bureaucratic context of Brazilian universities and promote the “teaching, research, and extension” tripod, professors assume different roles (Protasio & Tauchen, 2021). According to Mendonça *et al.* (2012), in addition to their role as educators, individuals who teach in higher education in Brazil also act in at least three other roles: (i) researcher, (ii) extensionist, and (iii) manager. In the first role, professors use scientific methods to produce knowledge and discover new facts (Pires, 2019). In the second role, they engage in activities that connect academia with society (Lopes & Costa, 2016; Miranda *et al.*, 2024). In the third role, individuals assume leadership positions at the university, influence the activities of others, and manage and provide solutions to the needs of others (Silva & Mirailh, 2020).

Professors teaching in Administration and Accounting programs, considered here to belong to the “business” field, typically assume the role of researchers when they participate in Graduate Programs, such as Master’s or PhD programs, which are the primary venues for scientific development in Brazil (Comunelo *et al.*, 2012; Nganga *et al.*, 2022). The role of extensionists includes working with third parties, engaging in volunteer activities, and promoting courses in the business field (Nascimento & Pereira, 2017; Miranda *et al.*, 2024), while the role of managers involves managerial activities such as program coordination, department administration, or university management, among others (Protasio & Tauchen, 2021).

However, faculty members often perform these roles simultaneously (Barbosa *et al.*, 2017). For example, professors continue working as researchers, extensionists, and teaching classes at their affiliated institutions, even when holding a management position (Silva & Mirailh, 2020). Furthermore, evidence shows a lack of training programs to teach how to perform these multiple roles (Barbosa & Mendonça, 2015; Protasio & Tauchen, 2021), while regulatory bodies and organizations exert significant pressure.

This situation is concerning when performing multiple roles, as it leads to feelings of ambiguity, conflict, injustice, and/or work overload (Guirguis & Chewning, 2005). According to Organizational Role Theory, individuals in formal organizations perform roles linked to specific social positions, which are shaped by normative expectations from the individual, the organization, and informal groups. However, because these normative sources are multiple, individuals are often subject to tensions and feelings about their position within the organization (Biddle, 1986).

One such feeling, analyzed since the 1960s in the organizational literature, is the perception of (in)justice, which addresses individual perceptions in work relationships between employees and their organizations (Klein & Colauto, 2020). According to Sotomayor (2007), there are three dimensions of justice: (i) distributive, (ii) procedural, and (iii) interactional, with the latter being subdivided into informational and interpersonal. However, in the case of educators, there is evidence that these professionals differentiate the distributive dimension in their perceptions of rewards and tasks, considering the educational environment’s particularities (Rego *et al.*, 2009; Jesus, 2016).

In this sense, although the literature does not explicitly state that the division of multiple roles performed by a professor in a university environment leads to perceptions of organizational (in)justice (Rego *et al.*, 2009; Jesus, 2016), it is suggested that perceptions of organizational justice decrease when individuals are required to perform multiple roles simultaneously without adequate training. Reatto and Brunstein (2018) and Silva and Mirailh (2020) provide evidence of this relationship. They analyzed the skills of department heads and coordinators in universities. They found complaints about the lack of clear procedures, poor time management, and difficulties in managing multiple roles due to the high demand for tasks.

Therefore, this study seeks to answer the following question: **What is the relationship between the multiple roles of the teaching career and the perception of organizational justice among business professors at Brazilian universities?** The business field was chosen for three main reasons. First, due to the relevance of these professionals in training managers for society; second, because of the common belief that it is easier for these professionals to assume roles beyond teaching, such as that of a manager, given their initial training in organizational management (Aras *et al.*, 2020); and third, because previous studies highlight that business educators, lacking a solid pedagogical background, are often forced to seek additional training in teaching and research, as well as to engage with practices exercised in the professional market (Miranda *et al.*, 2014; Nganga *et al.*, 2022). In our view, this may be a factor that impacts the perception of organizational justice.

Regarding this study's contributions from a social perspective, it is expected to encourage essential discussions on the configuration of university professors in Brazil and other countries with similar conditions. Hence, this study's findings will enable the creation of specialized training for professors or the exclusive allocation of vacancies for each role, aiming to improve the outcomes of actions. By analyzing the roles in the professional sphere from a perspective of justice within organizations, the results can support the definition of strategies in the context of Higher Education Institutions (HEIs), such as: i) reallocation of functions if the role performed is not aligned with the professor's perception of justice; ii) establishment of limits to avoid work overload; iii) creation of more effective procedures and regulations; and iv) implementation of continuous feedback. From an academic perspective, this study will advance empirical research on multiple roles and the perception of organizational justice among professors, a topic seldom explored in the organizational literature.

## 2 Literature Review

### 2.1. Organizational multi-roles of business teachers

Organizational Role Theory has gained widespread acceptance in academia, particularly in business schools and among industrial psychologists and sociologists (Guirguis & Chewning, 2005). This theory focuses on formal, structured, task-oriented, and hierarchical organizations. Biddle (1986) posits that roles are linked to specific social positions and are defined by normative expectations, influenced by the individual, the organization, and informal groups.

In the case of Brazilian universities (the formal organizations of university professors), laws such as the Federal Constitution (1988), Law No. 9,394 from 1996, Law No. 12,772 from 2012, Law No. 12,863 from 2013, and Ordinances No. 554 from 2013, No. 982 from 2013, and No. 171 from 2018, indicate that the activities of federal-level professors include "those related to teaching, research, and extension, as well as those inherent to the exercise of direction, advice, leadership, coordination, and assistance within the institution itself, in addition to those provided for in specific legislation" (Brasil, 2013, art. 2).

In this context, the formation of the four roles (educator, researcher, extension worker, and manager) can be identified, each with distinct expectations and competencies (Barbosa & Mendonça, 2015; Mendonça *et al.*, 2012), as shown in Figure 1.

		EXPECTATIONS	COMPETENCES
ROLE	Educator	Someone who has mastered the classroom (in-person and virtual) and translates content into the students' language and daily routine;	Cognitive and Functional.
	Researcher	Someone who has mastered research approaches, methods, and techniques and understands and respects the research object;	Cognitive, Behavioral, Ethical and Functional.
	Extensionist	Someone who fosters the connection between the educational institution and society, focusing on extension actions, mobilizing individuals, and helping the community;	Functional, Behavioral, and Ethical.
	Manager	Someone who can be recognized as an educator who plays a management role in higher education, temporarily or permanently, without ceasing teaching activities.	Cognitive, Behavioral, Ethical, and Political.

Source: Adapted from Mendonça *et al.*, 2012.

**Figure 1.** Multi-roles and competences

Mendonça *et al.* (2012) explain that an individual needs to acquire both cognitive and functional skills to be an educator. Cognitive skills refer to theoretical knowledge and cognitive qualifications necessary to perform the role, while functional skills involve applied knowledge to carry out specific tasks. Relating these concepts to the career of a business educator, it is clear that individuals must undergo academic training and master topics related to the field of Applied Social Sciences in order to act as educators (Brasil, 1996).

According to Lima and Araújo (2014), teaching requires broad training, as it involves several tasks, such as teaching, preparing classes, translating content for students' daily lives, grading coursework, administering tests, and preparing students for the job market. However, training for teaching future professionals in the business field is often criticized due to a lack of a solid pedagogical foundation (Miranda *et al.*, 2014; Nganga *et al.*, 2023). This results in additional challenges for these educators, who frequently need to seek extra training on their own to address gaps in their preparation (Aras *et al.*, 2020; Nganga *et al.*, 2024).

In the role of researcher, the individual needs to develop two additional skills: behavioral and ethical. According to Mendonça *et al.* (2012), behavioral skills pertain to the individual's personal and relational knowledge, while ethical skills involve axiological knowledge, including the predominant societal values and scientific values in the case of research. In the business field, training for this role occurs through Master's and doctoral programs, which foster scientific production and research development (Nganga *et al.*, 2022; 2024).

According to the Coordination for the Improvement of Higher Education Personnel (CAPES), one of the main objectives of Graduate Programs is to train and educate researchers with the knowledge essential for advancing scientific research in various fields (Comunelo *et al.*, 2012); though Nganga *et al.* (2024) caution about the pressure placed on professors in graduate programs within the business field to produce. These demands can create significant pressure to publish numerous articles and develop research projects quickly, often at the expense of researchers' well-being.



Mendonça *et al.* (2012) argue that functional, behavioral, and ethical skills are sufficient for an individual to perform the role of extensionist, as these individuals bring the university closer to society by administering short-duration courses, hosting community events, organizing extension projects, providing services, and engaging in volunteer work (Lopes & Costa, 2016; Nascimento & Pereira, 2017). In the business field, however, Miranda *et al.* (2024, p. 8) note that there is still “a need for complete teacher training, which covers not only technical aspects, but also ethical, social, and human aspects,” as extensionist work requires educators to have a broad and integrated understanding of social and community demands.

Finally, in the manager role, the individual must possess cognitive, behavioral, ethical, and political skills. According to Mendonça *et al.* (2012), political skills refer to political-relational knowledge, as when acting in this role, the professor must master negotiation, administration, and persuasion to lead the team (Silva & Mirailh, 2020). Additionally, Protasio and Tauchen (2021) highlight that professor-managers face several challenges: the bureaucratic model of universities, insufficient resources, limited institutional legitimacy to promote changes, the need to coordinate complex demands, and a lack of support and institutional training. In the organizational context, common belief suggests that professors in management areas (such as business professors) may find it easier to take on this role within universities. This assumption has been questioned though (Aras *et al.*, 2020). Barbosa and Mendonça (2015) argue that all university professors, regardless of their initial training, face challenges when assuming managerial roles within HEIs, as each educational institution has its own particularities.

An important point highlighted by Organizational Roles Theory is that acting in multiple roles, often simultaneously, can create tension and negative perceptions in individuals due to the multiple sources of normative expectations that surround them (Biddle, 1986). Previous studies show that this context is prevalent in the case of business professors (Barbosa, 2015; Barbosa *et al.*, 2017; Reatto & Brunstein, 2018; Silva & Mirailh, 2020). Additionally, Protasio and Tauchen (2021) argue that there is a gap in the training of these professors. They suggest a lack of organizational training policies, negatively impacting the educators’ performance in the university environment. For instance, Silva and Mirailh (2020) note that professors expressed concerns about taking on this role, stating that they had to learn how to manage the university and its people through practice, often independently. Therefore, studying these individual concerns of professors, such as their perception of organizational (in)justice, becomes highly relevant.

## 2.2 Perceptions of organizational (in)justice

Although the construct “perception of justice” was initially developed in psychology, specifically in the field of Social Psychology (Jesus & Rowe, 2014), other areas of knowledge have adopted this concept to explain its influences and relationships with other phenomena (Bernd & Beuren, 2020). The idea that individual and interpersonal aspects could explain employee behavior and help achieve goals in the organizational environment motivated scholars in the field to explore how such a perception functions within the context of companies and how a fairer environment can be fostered (Santos & Beuren, 2017).

Thus, the concept of “organizational justice” emerges, defined by Beuren and Santos (2012) as an individual’s perception of what is fair or unfair in the work environment. According to Borges and Simões (2012), the perception of organizational justice concerns how values, attitudes, and feelings about fairness affect individuals’ actions and influence their performance and satisfaction. It is important to note that research on organizational justice began with Adams (1965) and the Equity Theory. This theory addresses the perception of equal treatment in response to behavior or actions in similar situations. Such a perception is crucial for individuals’ judgment, enabling them to assess the degree of equity in their actions relative to others. To illustrate this concept, Omar (2006) explains that when employees believe they are being treated fairly, this belief leads them to maintain positive attitudes toward work. If they perceive, even briefly, that they are being treated unfairly though, this perception creates undesirable tensions, such as dissatisfaction, demotivation, loss of productivity, and decreased quality of work.

In this context, to understand such organizational tensions, several approaches and dimensions of justice have emerged (Bernd & Beuren, 2020). The most common dimensions are distributive, procedural, and interactional. One particular approach, however, discussed by Rego (2001), stands out for using educators as the study sample. According to the author, there are sufficient reasons to assume that, unlike other professionals in the traditional organizational environment, educators differentiate two aspects of distributive justice: task distribution and rewards. This distinction arises not because the aspects are inherently different but because, for educators, they may come from different sources (Rego *et al.*, 2009; Kvitko *et al.*, 2020).

The distributive dimension addresses the perceived equity of the outcomes an individual receives (Sotomayor, 2007; Bernd & Beuren, 2020) and primarily refers to the content of these distributions, which may include salary, performance, sanctions, tasks, or promotions (Borges & Simões, 2012). In Rego’s division (2001), the distributive dimension of tasks assesses the extent to which an individual perceives the distribution of tasks as fair (Jesus, 2016). In contrast, the distributive dimension of rewards concerns how fair individuals believe the rewards for their performance, or that of others, are. To justify this distinction, Rego (2001) explains that in the organizational context of educational institutions (especially public ones), the rewards received are beyond the control of the institution’s managers, as they depend on legal, statutory, hiring regimes, and political factors. Since these individuals must undertake various activities that do not affect their remuneration though, it is important to distinguish this dimension, as professionals may have differing perceptions of distribution (Jesus & Rowe, 2014).

On the other hand, the procedural dimension refers to one’s perception of the processes used for decision-making (Rego *et al.*, 2009). Initially proposed by Thibaut and Walker in 1975, it addresses the socio-psychological consequences of the procedures used within an organization. According to Jesus (2016), procedural justice concerns how decisions are made within organizations and how tasks are planned. In this sense, it refers to the means by which results are attributed (Beuren & Santos, 2012), focusing on the processes used to achieve specific outcomes, such as procedures for salary adjustments, promotions, evaluation systems, and so on.

Colquitt (2001) conceptualizes interactional justice as how decisions are communicated to employees, regardless of whether they are perceived as fair or unfair, and emphasizes business communication and the type of treatment employees receive within an organization. It can be divided into two aspects: interpersonal and informational. Interpersonal (or social) justice refers to the degree to which a superior treats employees with dignity and respect. In contrast, informational justice pertains to the extent and quality of the information provided by a superior, including the justification for decisions that affect others.

## 2.3 Hypotheses development

According to normative expectations, business educators assume at least four roles: (i) educator, (ii) researcher, (iii) extension worker, and (iv) manager. Each role involves different activities and requires the development of specific skills (Mendonça *et al.*, 2012; Brasil, 2013). In addition to the need to meet expectations without adequate training, these individuals often perform multiple roles simultaneously, leading to a perception of injustice (Silva & Mirailh, 2020).

For example, researchers working with scientific procedures, techniques, and research approaches (Pires, 2019), often pre-established by scientific journals and required by funding agencies, may have different perceptions of how their scientific production is evaluated or about the publication requirements. Additionally, studies show that business educators working in graduate programs face constant pressure to produce many high-impact papers (Nganga *et al.*, 2024). Such pressure can negatively influence perceptions of fairness, especially when academic productivity is assessed in terms of the quantity and impact of publications rather than their quality and relevance (Nganga *et al.*, 2022).

Extension workers engage directly with the community, promoting courses, projects, and extension programs (Lopes & Costa, 2016); as such, they develop individual perceptions of these relationships, the procedures for disseminating the courses, and how tasks and rewards are distributed. When analyzing the work environment, Nascimento and Daibem (2020) identified conflicting relationships within the manager role. Interview reports revealed the challenges of working as a coordinator due to a lack of training and clear technical procedures for program coordination or managing colleagues' activities. Barbosa *et al.* (2017), Reatto and Brunstein (2018), and Silva and Mirailh (2020) also report similar contexts. The lack of preparation and support for performing administrative functions can lead to an excessive workload and feelings of frustration, as educators are often burdened with responsibilities for which they were not adequately trained.

Given the previous discussion regarding the context of multiple roles, it is legitimate to state that when educators perform these different roles, each laden with expectations, they may have varying perceptions of justice in the university environment. Therefore, we propose the first theoretical hypothesis and its corresponding test hypotheses (Figure 2).

Hipótese teórica	Hipótese de testes
H1: There is a relationship between the organizational roles played by business educators and justice dimensions of justice	Ht1) The educator role is correlated with the perception of justice: : (a) distributive by tasks; (b) distributive by rewards; (c) procedural (d) interactional
	Ht2) The researcher role is correlated with the perception of justice: (a) distributive by tasks; (b) distributive by rewards; (c) procedural (d) interactional
	Ht3) The extensionist role is correlated with the perception of justice (a) distributive by tasks; (b) distributive by rewards; (c) procedural (d) interactional
	Ht4) The manager role is correlated with the perception of justice (a) distributive by tasks; (b) distributive by rewards; (c) procedural (d) interactional

Source: study's data, 2022.

**Figure 2.** First theoretical hypothesis and its respective test hypotheses.

Since each organizational role encompasses a set of activities and tasks that need to be performed within universities, requiring educators to develop specific skills, it is believed that working in multiple roles simultaneously impacts one's perception of justice. This is because the demands of one role can make it challenging to fulfill the responsibilities of others (Guirguis & Chewing, 2005). Barbosa (2015, p. 154) describes this scenario, stating that "the interaction between the roles of higher education educators contributes to inter-role conflicts, resulting from the individual's tension in being engaged in two or more roles simultaneously" (free translation).

The literature highlights conflicting situations for the educator-manager role (someone who works in both the educator and manager roles). For example, Silva and Mirailh (2020) discuss the challenges educators face in balancing teaching, research, and extension activities with management tasks due to time constraints and the demands imposed by these positions. Reatto and Brunstein (2018) note that time management and relationship conflicts are some of the primary obstacles when juggling these multiple roles simultaneously. In interviews with heads of departments at a public university, they identified feelings of overload and injustice. The second theoretical hypothesis is proposed based on this evidence and the context presented within Brazil's educational system.

**H2:** The perception of organizational justice differs between educators working in multiple roles simultaneously and those who do not.

### 3 Method

This is a descriptive survey with a quantitative approach (Sampieri *et al.*, 2013). It is descriptive because it aims to analyze the relationship between the multiple roles of the teaching career and the perception of organizational justice among professors in the business field of Brazilian universities. These institutions were selected based on two criteria: i) being classified as a “University” due to their didactic and financial autonomy, as well as the principle of inseparability between teaching, research, and extension (Brasil, 1996), which contributes to the multiple roles of educators; and ii) having graduate programs linked to the business field (CAPES area 027, excluding Tourism), as these are considered the leading centers for scientific research and development in Brazil (Comunelo *et al.*, 2012). The number of these institutions is shown in Table 1.

Table 1

#### Universities according to criteria

Region	Public	Private	Mixed	Total
Midwest	3	0	1	4
North	2	1	0	3
Northeast	12	3	0	15
South	13	9	6	28
Southeast	19	10	0	29
<b>Total</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>79</b>

Source: Sucupira platform, 2022.

This survey was conducted via an online questionnaire for educators working in 2022 in the Business Administration, Public Administration, and Accounting programs (at any level: undergraduate, degree programs, or specializations) at the 79 selected universities. The data collection instrument was structured into three blocks containing 30 questions. The first block, consisting of 3 questions, focused on whether the professors worked in simultaneous organizational roles. The second block included 24 statements rated on a 7-point Likert scale—Educators’ Perception of Justice, created by Rego (2001) and adapted and validated for the Brazilian context by Jesus and Rowe (2014). The third block, consisting of 3 questions, addressed (i) the participants’ genders, (ii) the type of university, and (iii) the region where the university is located.

The instrument was sent to professors’ emails in September 2022 and made available on the universities’ websites. The sample consisted of 201 valid responses. The respondents’ profiles included 116 male participants, 83 female participants, and two who did not mention their gender. The study included 165 professors from public universities, 22 from mixed universities, and 14 from private universities, covering all Brazilian regions: 79 from the South, 44 from the Southeast, 39 from the Midwest, 33 from the Northeast, and six from the North.

Finally, a quantitative approach was used to analyze the data, as outlined in the protocol, including descriptive methods, Spearman correlation tests, and tests of differences between groups (Mann-Whitney and Kruskal-Wallis) (Figure 3).



Indicators	Objective	Parameter	Theoretical Support
<b>Spearman correlation</b>			
<i>Spearman's rho correlation</i>	Check the correlation between two variables and whether they are significant.	<p><math>p\text{-value} &lt; 0.05</math></p> <p><b>Interpretation table:</b></p> <p><math>\rho = 0.10</math>: weak correlation.</p> <p><math>\rho = 0,30</math>: moderate correlation.</p> <p><math>\rho = 0,50</math>: strong correlation.</p>	Fávero and Belfiore (2017);
<b>Group difference tests (Kruskal-Wallis and Mann-Whitney)</b>			
<i>Mann-Whitney U test</i>	Test whether there is a statistically significant difference between the groups (in cases of 2 independent samples)		
<i>Kruskal-Wallis chi-square</i>	Test whether there is a statistically significant difference between the groups analyzed (in cases of k independent samples)	Sig < 0,05	Fávero and Belfiore (2017)

Source: study's data, 2022.

**Figure 3.** Analysis protocol.

The Institutional Review Board approved the survey and data collection instrument.

## 4 Presentation and discussion of results

### 4.1 Performing multiple roles simultaneously

According to Organizational Role Theory, multiple sources of regulation within an organization create tensions, and working in different roles simultaneously may exacerbate these tensions (Silva & Mirailh, 2020; Protasio & Tauchen, 2021). Therefore, we asked business professors (i) whether they had ever performed any roles concurrently during their careers and (ii) whether they were currently performing simultaneous roles.

Of the participants, 191 reported having worked simultaneously in some of the organizational roles presented (95% of the sample), while 10 reported not having worked in roles simultaneously (5%) – these participants had worked only as educators. Furthermore, of those who had worked simultaneously, 172 (86% of the sample) reported that they were currently working in different roles simultaneously. These findings corroborate the work of Barbosa (2015), Barbosa *et al.* (2017), and Silva and Mirailh (2020), who state that educators in Brazil typically perform multiple roles at the same time.

After obtaining this information, we sought to understand which organizational roles these were. Therefore, the participants were asked to report the roles they had previously played and those that they currently performing simultaneously (Table 2).

Table 2

**Frequency of participants working in multiple roles simultaneously**

Simultaneously working in multiple roles *	Number of participants			
	Yes	% of 191	Currently working in multiple roles	% of 172
Educator-researchers	167	87,43	152	88,37
Educator -manager	144	75,39	94	54,65
Educator -extensionist	98	51,31	66	38,37
Researcher-manager	53	27,75	41	23,84
Researcher- extensionist	23	12,04	28	16,3
Manager- extensionist	19	9,95	14	8,14

Note: Based on the participants' contexts, by answering "yes" to question (i), they could check more than one set of roles.

Source: study's data, 2022

Table 2 shows that the role of "educator-researcher" – someone who, in addition to teaching classes, is also dedicated to research and advancing science in Brazil – is the most frequent simultaneous role among the study participants. In line with the expectations of Organizational Role Theory, educators in this situation are required to develop skills related to teaching, such as translating content, delivering lessons, grading coursework, preparing students for the job market, and management (Lima & Araújo, 2019). Indicators explaining this finding include the growing demand for the dissemination of research, a practice established in Brazil since the University Reform and emphasized by the value placed on organizations like Capes, CNPq, and funding agencies within the scientific community.

Next, the role of "educator-manager" – characterized as a type of internal manager of the institution, who holds coordination and administration positions at the university in conjunction with academic activities – appears as the second most frequent role, both throughout the career of professors and currently. Feldkercher (2016) suggests that this role is common, as professors often take on functions related to university management to advance in their careers. Additionally, according to Protasio and Tauchen (2021), acting as a university manager is required by law (Decree No. 94,664, of 1987), which stipulates that professors must also perform advisory and leadership functions within their affiliated institution.

Next, the role of educator-extensionist stands out, with approximately 51.31% of participants having previously worked in this role and 38.37% currently working in it. This role includes educators who, in addition to teaching classes and training students, also promote short-duration courses, events, activities, and projects that connect society with the university. Compared to the first two roles previously mentioned, university extension is still seldom practiced by professors in the business field, reinforcing criticisms from previous studies (Lopes & Costa, 2016; Nascimento & Pereira, 2017). However, this context is likely to change in the coming years, as regulations such as the Curricular Integration of Extension Activities (CNE/CES Resolution No. 7, 2018) and the reformulation of the Curricular Guidelines of programs are calling for the development of these activities, particularly in undergraduate programs. According to Miranda *et al.* (2024), to meet these legal requirements (normative expectations), educational institutions and educators are already taking steps to implement extension activities.

In addition to the previously mentioned roles, there are “researcher-managers,” “researcher-extensionists,” and “manager-extensionists.” Although these roles are less frequently performed simultaneously, they are part of the university context for business educators. The first refers to individuals conducting research at the university while also assuming administrative functions, such as managing processes, people, and programs. The second refers to those who promote courses, lectures, and training for the academic community in addition to conducting research. The third connects university management with extension projects within the institution.

Therefore, it is critical to investigate the individual and interpersonal perceptions of these educators within the university context, along with their perceptions of organizational justice.

## 4.2 Perception of Organizational Justice

The perception of organizational justice helps us understand the behavior of individuals in the business environment and how the work context influences their actions (Borges & Simões, 2012). This section presents the perceptions of this study’s participants, categorizing these perceptions into four dimensions: (i) task distributive justice, (ii) rewards distributive justice, (iii) procedural justice, and (iv) interactional justice.

In the first dimension – task distribution – most study participants rated the statements regarding task distribution for the roles of educator (68%) and researcher (59%) with high levels of agreement (5, 6, and 7). This finding suggests that professors in the business field perceive tasks as being fairly distributed in these roles. However, participants rated this item for the extensionist and manager roles with low levels of agreement (1, 2, and 3), indicating “I do not agree” or “I am not experiencing that context” (43% and 48% of participants, respectively), suggesting they perceive the distribution as unfair (Table 3).

Table 3

### Dimension of tasks distributive justice

Statements concerning perceptions of Task Distributive Justice	Scale						
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
The tasks assigned to me related to my role as an educator are fair	4%	6%	11%	11%	22%	<b>24%</b>	21%
The tasks assigned to me related to my role as a researcher are fair	9%	7%	9%	15%	19%	<b>20%</b>	19%
The tasks assigned to me related to my role as an extensionist are fair	<b>27%</b>	7%	8%	21%	13%	10%	13%
The tasks assigned to me related to my role as a manager are fair	<b>27%</b>	9%	12%	18%	11%	13%	9%
Considering the working conditions offered to me, I consider the tasks required of me to be unfair.	<b>18%</b>	18%	13%	15%	16%	10%	10%

Note 1: “completely disagree” or “It does not apply” and 7 “completely agree”;

Note 2: the scales most frequently chosen are in bold to facilitate visualization.

Source: study's data, 2022.

Note that the perception of task distributive justice considers how professional and administrative tasks are distributed and whether employees consider such distribution fair (Jesus & Rowe, 2014). When asked whether the working conditions offered by universities were unfair, most participants (49%) disagreed, choosing low scales (1, 2, and 3), while 36% agreed (scales 5, 6, and 7), and 15% remained neutral (scale 4). These results align with the findings of Jesus (2016), which indicate a strong perception of this dimension by professors.

On the other hand, in the distributive dimension of rewards, perceptions of injustice predominate. In other words, most professors report not agreeing (or indicating that the statement does not apply) with the rewards they receive (Table 4). This is evident in the following statements: “Considering the stress and pressures of my professional activity, the rewards (remuneration, benefits, recognition, job security, freedom, and autonomy at work) that I receive are fair” and “Considering my effort and dedication, the rewards (remuneration, benefits, recognition, job security, freedom, and autonomy at work) that I receive are fair.” These statements presented the highest percentages of disagreement, with 61% and 56% of participants, respectively.

Table 4  
**Reward distributive Justice Dimension**

Statements concerning perceptions of Reward Distributive Justice	Scale						
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Based on my experience, I believe my rewards (remuneration, benefits, recognition, job security, freedom, and autonomy at work) are fair.	12%	12%	<b>21%</b>	17%	<b>21%</b>	11%	6%
Considering my responsibilities and the rewards I receive are fair.	15%	14%	<b>20%</b>	14%	18%	9%	8%
Considering the stress and pressures of my professional activity, the rewards I receive are fair.	<b>23%</b>	17%	21%	15%	9%	6%	8%
Considering my performance in the different roles I play within the university, the rewards I receive are fair.	<b>23%</b>	13%	19%	14%	13%	9%	7%
Considering my effort and dedication, the rewards I receive are fair.	<b>18%</b>	17%	16%	14%	17%	10%	8%

Note 1: “completely disagree” or “It does not apply” and 7 “completely agree”;

Note 2: the scales most frequently chosen are in bold to facilitate visualization.

Source: study's data, 2022.

Specifically regarding their performance in multiple organizational roles, 51% of professors believe that the rewards they receive are unfair (scales 1, 2, and 3), while 35% agreed with this statement (scales 5, 6, and 7), and 14% remained neutral. This information suggests that the study participants have doubts about the rewards they receive for performing these multiple roles. Regarding the responsibilities associated with working as a university professor in Brazil and the rewards received, approximately 50% of the participants do not consider these rewards fair (scales 1, 2, and 3). These results contrast with the conclusions of Kvitko *et al.* (2020, p. 15), who reported that “60.9% of respondents recognize that the institution distributes rewards fairly.” However, it is important to emphasize that the study sample in question is limited to universities in Santa Catarina, which may explain the discrepant results.

In the procedural justice dimension, which considers the perception of justice regarding the processes used by the organization for decision-making (Santos & Beuren, 2017), most participants believe that the university's procedures are fair, as they reported high levels of agreement, shown in Table 5. The statements with the highest levels of agreement regarding the amount of guidance provided stand out, with 67% of participants choosing scales 5, 6, and 7. Additionally, high levels of agreement were found for the designation of these guidelines and whether they align with the professors' line of research (66%).

Table 5

**Procedural Justice Dimension**

Statements concerning perceptions of Procedural Justice	Scale						
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
The designation of administrative processes, commissions and committees has clear procedures.	14%	13%	11%	12%	<b>19%</b>	17%	13%
The designation of orientation takes into account the linked line of research.	9%	8%	8%	8%	14%	23%	<b>28%</b>
The number of students who pass it on to me is fair.	6%	7%	5%	14%	12%	26%	<b>29%</b>
The number of internship students I receive is fair.	<b>26%</b>	4%	5%	14%	8%	19%	23%
My institution's procedures ensure that decisions are made consistently for all faculty.	15%	20%	13%	<b>22%</b>	10%	10%	8%
Decisions are made consistently for all professors on the board.	15%	15%	13%	<b>18%</b>	15%	13%	10%

Note 1: "completely disagree" or "It does not apply" and 7 "completely agree";

Note 2: the scales most frequently chosen are in bold to facilitate visualization.

Source: study's data, 2022.

Perceptions regarding procedures – whether they ensure that decisions are made consistently for all faculty members and whether such decisions consider all those on the board – received the highest percentages of neutral responses (22% and 18%, respectively) and “disagreement” (48% and 43% when adding the lowest scales), thus indicating higher levels of perceived organizational injustice. These results differ from those found by Rocha *et al.* (2016), who analyzed the perception of justice among all employees of the same institution and found that this group considered the processes fair.

Finally, the participants' perception of interactional justice was examined (Table 6). This dimension addresses how information is conveyed to employees and whether they perceive it as fair (Colquitt, 2001). Overall, the university professors in this study perceive this process as fair, with high levels of agreement, consistent with the findings of Jesus (2016) and Santos and Beuren (2017). These studies also indicate that university professors perceive this dimension at considerable levels.



Table 6

**Interactional Justice Dimension**

Statements concerning perceptions of Interactional Justice	Scale						
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I am consulted on the nature of the subjects I teach.	9%	5%	6%	6%	17%	23%	32%
The criteria used to distribute the workload/number of courses are fair.	7%	9%	7%	12%	18%	18%	27%
My superiors (coordinator and/or managers) show genuine interest in being fair with me.	4%	8%	7%	13%	19%	25%	23%
My superiors (education coordinator and managers) deal with me honestly and ethically.	3%	6%	5%	12%	18%	24%	30%
My superiors (education coordinator and managers) are open and sincere with me.	5%	7%	7%	14%	20%	22%	24%
Before deciding on matters that concern me, my superiors (education coordinator and managers) seek to hear my points of view.	6%	8%	11%	14%	14%	22%	24%
When making decisions about my work, my superiors (education coordinator and managers) give me clear explanations.	6%	7%	11%	16%	18%	22%	19%
When making decisions about my work, my superiors (education coordinator and managers) discuss the implications of these decisions with me.	9%	11%	12%	16%	13%	19%	19%

Note 1: “completely disagree” or “It does not apply” and 7 “completely agree”;

Note 2: the scales most frequently chosen are in bold to facilitate visualization.

Source: study's data, 2022

The statements “I am consulted about the nature of the courses I teach” and “My superiors (education coordinator and managers) deal with me honestly and ethically” stand out as those that received the most agreement, with 73% of participants selecting high scales. Additionally, the statements concerning the interaction between educators and their superiors showed similar percentages of agreement in general, suggesting that the interpersonal relationships between those involved are perceived as fair in the university environment.

Given these perceptions, we analyzed the relationship between the performance of business educators in multiple organizational roles and their perception of organizational justice to address the research question.

### 4.3 Multiroles versus Perception of Organizational Justice

Spearman’s correlation test was conducted to examine the correlations between the constructs. The results are summarized in the map in Figure 4.

<b>REWARDS</b>	-0.176*	-0.045	0.025	-0.052
<b>TASKS</b>	-0.014	0.124	0.287***	0.195**
<b>INTERACTIONAL</b>	0.025	0.02	-0.03	0.138
<b>PROCEDURAL</b>	0.071	0.206**	0.117	0.211**
		<b>TEACHING</b>	<b>RESEARCH</b>	<b>EXTENSION</b>
			<b>MANAGEMENT</b>	

Note: \*p-value < 0,05, \*\* p-value < 0.01 and \*\*\* p-value < 0.001

Source: study's data 2022

**Figure 4.** Map of significant correlations

A statistically significant correlation (p-value < 0.05) was found between the educator role and the dimension of reward distributive justice, indicating a relationship between these two constructs. Spearman’s rho (-0.176) suggests that this correlation is weak and inversely proportional, meaning that an individual’s perception of justice regarding the distribution of rewards decreases as they assume the educator role.

The characteristics outlined by Mendonça *et al.* (2012) and practical examples of the reward distributive dimension described in the literature (Rego, 2001; Rego *et al.*, 2009) helped us understand these results. Educators generally have several responsibilities, such as managing the classroom, translating content into students’ daily lives, preparing classes, grading coursework and tests, and teaching. These tasks require varying levels of effort. However, when it comes to distributing an educator’s income, these activities are not specifically accounted for, as rewards (especially in public institutions) are pre-established by regulations external to the university environment. Therefore, since the performance of these functions does not have clear and immediate effects on the distribution of rewards, perceptions of justice in this dimension tend to decrease (Rego, 2001).

Next, the relationship between the researcher’s role and the justice dimensions was examined. The distributive dimensions (by tasks and by rewards) and the interactional dimension were not found to be statistically significant in this study (p-value > 0.01). However, the procedural dimension showed a positive and moderate correlation (Spearman’s rho = 0.206), indicating that educators tend to have a stronger perception of procedural justice when working in the researcher role.

Thus, the analysis of the characteristics of this role revealed that when working on research activities, educators are involved in various scientific processes and are frequently evaluated based on their publication of articles, editorial work, and participation in conferences, seminars, and events (Mendonça *et al.*, 2012). These factors can influence their perception of procedural justice, as this dimension focuses on the decision-making process and how the means justify the ends (Jesus, 2016).

A statistically significant positive and moderate correlation (Spearman's  $\rho = 0.287$ ) was found for the relationship between the extensionist role and the task distributive dimension ( $p$ -value  $< 0.001$ ). This data indicates that the more an educator engages in extension activities, the higher the levels of perceived justice in the distribution of tasks within the university context.

Note that extension activities involve connecting the academic environment with the community, meaning educators need to be involved in various activities (such as creating courses, programs, projects, and training) to promote the institution and establish a transformative relationship between the university and the community (Lopes & Costa, 2016). In this context, educators form perceptions of how extension activities are distributed as they engage in them. According to Jesus (2016), the task distributive dimension specifically examines this perception, determining the extent to which an individual considers the distribution of activities and tasks fair or unfair.

Finally, a statistically significant correlation was found for the relationship between the manager role and two dimensions: the task distributive and procedural ( $p$ -value  $< 0.01$ ). In the first, Spearman's  $\rho$  (0.195) indicates a positive and weak relationship (Fávero; Belfiore (2017), and in the second (0.211), it shows a positive and moderate relationship. These findings indicate that managerial educators exhibit higher perceptions of justice regarding distributed tasks and procedures within universities.

An analysis of the activities performed within the manager role and the characteristics of the procedural and task distribution dimensions shows that the educators in management positions at the university accumulate several activities, such as serving peers (students, professors, administrative staff), coordinating programs, administering departments, and managing the university, among others (Barbosa, 2015). These tasks lead to positive or negative perceptions about how processes, decision-making, and task distribution occur within the educational context.

Furthermore, the literature describes gaps in the training of these educators regarding how to manage university affairs. According to Barbosa *et al.* (2017), there are no organizational training programs to promote managerial and technical skills among professors. When assuming this role, educators often “parachute” into university administration and must improvise while learning to navigate this context on their own (Protasio & Tauchen, 2021).

The perception of procedural justice, which examines organizational procedures, likely applies to these situations. Silva and Mirailh (2020) interviewed university managers who highlighted this perception and reported a lack of clear procedures for carrying out activities and noted that balancing different roles while achieving positive academic, administrative, and scientific outcomes is a significant challenge.

Thus, the interpretations of the results lead to the conclusion that Ht1b, Ht2c, Ht3a, Ht4a, and Ht4c failed to be rejected (Figure 5), as statistically significant correlations were found.

Interpretation of H1	Interpretação
Ht1) The educator role correlates with the perception of justice:	(a) task distributive; Rejected
	(b) reward distributive; <b>Failed to reject</b>
	(c) procedural Rejected
	(d) interactional Rejected
Ht2) The researcher role correlates with the perception of justice:	(a) task distributive; Rejected
	(b) reward distributive; Rejected
	(c) procedural <b>Failed to reject</b>
	(d) interactional Rejected
Ht3) The extensionist role correlates with the perception of justice:	(a) task distributive; <b>Failed to reject</b>
	(b) reward distributive; Rejected
	(c) procedural Rejected
	(d) interactional Rejected
Ht4) The manager role correlates with the perception of justice:	(a) task distributive; <b>Failed to reject</b>
	(b) reward distributive; Rejected
	(c) procedural <b>Failed to reject</b>
	(d) interactional Rejected

Source: study's data, 2022.

**Figure 5.** Interpretation of H1

On the other hand, as not all dimensions, this study partially supports the first theoretical hypothesis – which proposed a relationship between the multiple organizational roles of educators in the business field and their perception of justice.

#### 4.4 Multiroles versus Justice Perception

As discussed in the construction of the second hypothesis, the literature shows that working simultaneously in two or more roles can lead individuals to hold different perceptions. Hence, to verify whether the study participants perceive the dimensions of justice differently, the Mann-Whitney U test was performed between those who were working simultaneously in different roles (in 2022) and those who were not (Table 7).

Table 7

##### Results of the Mann-Whitney test

<i>Mann-Whitney test</i>	<b>Reward distributive</b>	<b>Task distributive</b>	<b>Procedural</b>	<b>Interactional</b>
U de Mann-Whitney	1256,500	2414,000	2222,500	2112,000
Significance (2 tails)	0,000*	0,978	0,484	0,277

Note: \* statistical difference at  $p < 0.05$ .

Source: study's data. 2022.

The results show significant differences between educators working in simultaneous roles and those who are not regarding the reward distributive dimension (Mann-Whitney  $U = 1256.500$ ;  $Sig < 0.05$ ). This finding indicates that educators who simultaneously perform two or more roles have different perceptions of reward distribution than those who play a single organizational role.

Note that the distribution of rewards (salaries and benefits) among university professors in Brazil depends on legal, statutory, and political factors (Rego *et al.*, 2009), which outline a job and salary plan with criteria that generally do not account for the performance of multiple simultaneous roles (Brasil, 2013). Thus, it is expected that there will be different perceptions between those performing two or more roles and those performing only one, as a professor might feel unfairly rewarded if those not performing multiple roles receive the same compensation.

This observation led us to investigate whether working in multiple roles simultaneously alters one's perceptions of the justice dimensions, considering the diversity of roles performed. The Kruskal-Wallis test was applied due to the number of groups: (i) working in one role simultaneously; (ii) in two simultaneous roles; (iii) in three simultaneous roles; (iv) in four simultaneous roles; (v) in five simultaneous roles; (vi) in six simultaneous roles; and (vii) not working simultaneously. The results are presented in Table 8.

Table 8

**Results of the Kruskal Wallis test**

<i>Kruskal Wallis test</i>	Reward distributive	Task distributive	Procedural	Interactional
Chi-square	19,314	18,100	5,629	4,319
Significance	0,004*	0,006*	0,466	0,634

Note: \*Significant at  $p < 0.05$

Source: Study's data, 2022.

Statistically significant differences were found among those working in multiple roles for the reward and task distributive dimensions. A comparison between the groups revealed that the perceptions of participants performing "one" or "three" simultaneous roles regarding reward justice differed significantly from those not performing simultaneous roles (Adjusted  $Sig < 0.05$ ). This finding supports the previous information and reinforces the claim that performing simultaneous roles impacts one's perception of justice, particularly in assessing whether an organization's rewards are fairly distributed.

Interestingly, educators working in two, four, five, or six simultaneous roles did not show significant differences in this dimension. This may suggest that they do not perceive the inclusion of additional roles as influencing the distribution of rewards. In other words, simply working in more than one role would already alter one's perception of reward distributive justice.

On the other hand, differences were found in the task distributive dimension when comparing the following groups: (i) educators working in one role simultaneously vs. those not working in simultaneous roles ( $Sig = 0.36$ ); (ii) one simultaneous role vs. two simultaneous roles ( $Sig = 0.039$ ); and (iii) one simultaneous role vs. three simultaneous roles ( $Sig = 0.004$ ). These results indicate that educators working in simultaneous roles tend to have different perceptions of justice in task distribution than those not working in multiple roles. The same trend is observed for those working in more than three simultaneous roles (such as educator-researcher, educator-extensionist, and educator-manager) compared to those performing only one role simultaneously.



Previous studies have already addressed the increase in task volume when taking on simultaneous roles in an academic career, along with reports of perceived injustice. For instance, one of the professors interviewed in Silva and Mirai's (2020) study explained that many activities and responsibilities are assigned when working as a "professor-manager," making reconciling teaching, research, and extension activities challenging. According to this professor, "you end up leaving research in the background, which is a big problem. I did not discontinue research, but relegated it to a lesser level; you produce less, read less, write less" (p. 14).

Considering these findings, the second hypothesis – which suggests a difference in the perception of justice between those working in multiple simultaneous roles and those not – was partially not rejected, as differences were not found across all dimensions.

## 5 Final Considerations

This study aimed to analyze the relationship between the multiple roles in the teaching career and the perception of organizational justice among business professors at Brazilian universities. To this end, a questionnaire was administered to professors in the Business Administration, Public Administration, and Accounting programs, and two research hypotheses were developed: (i) there is a relationship between the organizational roles performed by business professors and the dimensions of justice, and (ii) the perception of organizational justice among professors who perform multiple simultaneous roles differs from those who do not.

Regarding the first hypothesis, it was found that working as an educator tends to decrease perceptions of justice regarding the distribution of rewards. Educators' perceptions of procedural justice (related to decision-making processes) are positively impacted when working as a researcher. Additionally, an increase in justice perception was found in the extensionist and manager roles, but only for task distributive justice. The results, particularly in the manager role, also show an increase in perceptions of procedural justice regarding the organization's procedures.

These results indicate a relationship between the performance of multiple organizational roles and the perceptions of justice among business professors. However, this relationship varies depending on the role and the justice dimension analyzed. Therefore, Brazilian HEIs, as formal organizations for professors, should acknowledge that performing different simultaneous roles might lead to undesirable tensions. Consequently, these institutions must offer specific training programs to prepare professors for these roles and mitigate the associated challenges. Such programs should focus on management, research, and extension, in addition to teaching, to enhance the competence and confidence of professors in their multiple functions. Furthermore, fostering an environment where decision-making procedures and criteria are clear and transparent is crucial for improving perceptions of organizational justice. Clear policies and effective communication regarding expectations and competencies can help align professors' perceptions.

Regarding the second hypothesis, the following were found: (i) differences in perceptions between the group working in simultaneous roles and the one not working in simultaneous roles, and (ii) different perceptions of greater significance were found between the groups regarding the reward distributive dimension. However, no statistical significance was found when analyzing the correlation of this dimension. This indicates that, although there are noticeable differences, they may not be strong enough to be considered in all situations or contexts within Brazilian universities. This finding suggests the need for further studies to deepen understanding of these nuances and examine other factors that may influence perceptions of organizational justice among professors.

The limitations of this study include: (i) the focus on four roles, while educators possibly take on other roles; (ii) a sample focused on universities, excluding private institutions and educational centers; and (iii) new legal updates, such as the Curricular Integration of Extension Activities and the new National Curricular Guidelines for the Accounting Science program, which came into effect after this study was conducted (2023 and 2024). However, there are some possibilities for future studies, such as addressing other samples of educators and studies with qualitative approaches, which could support these results and complement evidence.

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