

Aesthetic categories: construction and validation of the AESCATScale

Categorias estéticas: construção e validação da AESCATScale

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ABSTRACT

Purpose: The aim of this study focused on the elaboration and validation of an organizational aesthetic perception scale (AESCATScale) to be used in understanding individuals' perceptions of organizational life.

Design/methodology/approach: We carried out a literature review, exploratory interviews, two separate surveys, and multivariate analyses. The scale was validated through an application with a large sample of college professors.

Findings: Our outcomes consisted of a multidimensional construct model for the perception of organizational aesthetics (AESCATScale), with seven dimensions and 20 items. According to our analysis, the organizational aesthetics construct is consistent and may be the basis for future studies on the subject.

Research limitations/implications: We highlight three peculiar limitations to the research: a) the subjective nature of the theme, b) the lack of comprehension of some categories by respondents and c) the sample used was chosen for its accessibility and to have been restricted to college professors of a single state in Brazil.

Practical implications: The AESCATScale may reveal the sensitive logic underlying several organizational practices in the workplace based on a sensitive point of view. Also, it can be a valuable tool to aid in a manager's decision-making in situations of change.

Originality/value: This study introduces a differentiated approach to organizational management that can sometimes be missed due to its abstract nature. Therefore, it introduces a novelty research tool that can be used in corporate and academic environments.

Keywords: Scale; Aesthetic categories; Work practices

RESUMO

Objetivo: O objetivo deste estudo centrou-se na elaboração e validação de uma escala de percepção estética organizacional (AESCATScale) para ser usada na compreensão das percepções dos indivíduos sobre a vida organizacional.

Metodologia: Para tanto, realizamos revisão bibliográfica, entrevistas exploratórias, aplicação de surveys e técnicas de análise multivariada. A escala foi validada por meio de aplicação com professores de ensino superior

Resultados: Nossos resultados consistiram em um modelo de construto multidimensional para percepção da estética organizacional (AESCATScale), com sete dimensões e vinte itens. Conforme a análise, o construto se mostrou consistente e pode ser tomado como base para evoluções posteriores do estudo.

Limitações/implicações da pesquisa: Destacamos três limitações peculiares à pesquisa: a) o caráter subjetivo do tema, b) a falta de compreensão de algumas categorias pelos respondentes e c) a amostra utilizada foi escolhida por sua acessibilidade e por ter sido restrita a professores universitários de um único estado do Brasil.

Implicações práticas: A AESCATScale pode revelar a lógica sensível subjacente a várias práticas organizacionais no local de trabalho de um ponto de vista sensível. Além disso, pode ser uma ferramenta útil para auxiliar na tomada de decisão de um gerente em situações de mudança.

Originalidade/valor: Este estudo apresenta uma abordagem diferenciada para a gestão organizacional que às vezes pode ser perdida devido à sua natureza abstrata. Portanto, apresenta uma ferramenta de pesquisa inovadora que pode ser usada tanto em ambientes corporativos quanto acadêmicos.

Palavras-chave: Escala; Categorias estéticas; Práticas de trabalho

1 INTRODUCTION

What is beauty? What is ugly or sublime? Even though these are complex concepts, the study of aesthetics gives us sensitive knowledge and answers these questions. The aesthetic theory emerged in the field of Philosophy. Baumgarten (1988) and Kant (1998) are among the leading thinkers of the subject, but aesthetics have recently been studied in the organizational scope.

Organizational aesthetics is a form of knowledge that emerges from sensorial faculties and the aesthetic judgment of individuals (Strati 1992, 1996, 1999, 2000; Taylor & Hansen, 2005). It is based on everyday organizational aesthetic experiences (Strati, 1999; Taylor & Hansen, 2005), from a sense of touch, smell, taste, sight, and hearing. The senses bring out aesthetic judgments that are each person's own representations of the organization (Strati, 1999).

Aesthetic categories are general concepts related to the thoughts and judgments of a person (Souriau, 1929, 1990). The categories are appraisal instruments and reveal individual's feelings, emotions, affectionate impressions, or

profound reactions towards different forms of concrete, sensitive, or immediate presence (Castro, 2013).

In the mid-1980s, studies depicted the idea of aesthetics as a legitimate epistemological metaphor to obtain a plausible understanding of organizations (Degót, 1987; Grafton-Small & Linstead, 1985; Strati, 1992, 1996; White, 1996). Later, Strati (1999) combined aesthetic categories' philosophical theories with the organizational context; however, his ideas were from a qualitative perspective.

Thenceforth, the subject has become more apparent in Management studies since it conveys a sensitive dimension of knowledge. Thus, we point out the increase of aesthetic studies (e.g., Filippi & Tannery, 2009; Strati, 2010; Sorensen, 2010; Stephens & Boland, 2011; Schiavo & Antonello, 2014; Bertolin, Cappelle & Brito, 2014; Basso, Pauli & Bressan, 2014; Bouilloud & Deslandes, 2015; Ipiranga, Lopes & Souza, 2016; Turan & Cetinkaya, 2020; 2022; Ivanaj, Shrivastava & Ivanaj, 2018; Kerschbaum, 2022; Edwards, Hawkins & Schedlitzki, 2019, entre outros), although these focus on the qualitative perspective to investigate the subject.

Thus, we noticed the lack of studies concerned with building more objective measurements and susceptible to the generalization of aesthetics in organizations. Therefore, more objective approaches to developing scales were studied (Lundy, Schenkel, Akrie & Walker, 2010; Polat & Öztoprak-Kava, 2011; Blijlevens, Thurgood, Hekkert, Leder & Whitfield, 2014; Bahrami-Ehsan, Mohammadi-Zarghan & Atari, 2015). These address a more objective approach to abstract fields with a complex practical application. Our study proposes a scale of aesthetic categories (AESCATScale) through a rigorous psychometric process to be described in methodological processes.

Accordingly, this study focused on the elaboration and validation of an organizational aesthetic perception scale (AESCATScale) to be used in understanding individuals' perceptions of organizational life. The outcomes may support the understanding of individual behaviors in the workplace. Moreover,

they provide data to managers on the aesthetic perception of employees, and they also theoretically contribute to the field by providing a novelty scale.

Although debates deal with aesthetics in the advanced organizational context and are still silent in an implicit way in daily corporate life, the literature advocates that the aesthetic approach is still neglected or adopted within organizations (e.g., Turan & Cetinkaya, 2020; 2022; Shrivastava, Schumacher, Wasieleski & Tasic, 2017; Saifer & Dacin, 2021; Bazin & Korica, 2021). In line with this, we aim with this research to contribute to a more careful and enlightened evaluation of aesthetics in organizational practices through the elucidation of aesthetic categories.

2 AESTHETIC CATEGORIES: REPRESENTING WHAT IS NOT REPRESENTABLE

There are multiple aesthetic categories with intersections (Strati, 1999). For example, there is a considerable effort to separate aesthetics from beauty, a fundamental assumption of organizational aesthetics, a multi-category characteristic issue that has not been solved yet.

It is a difficult task to establish a delimitation among the categories given the historical conditions of each one. Therefore, intersections between categories must be considered. Each category does not exhaust the perception of an organizational environment (Strati, 1999).

Aesthetic categories are observed through the language used by people to describe their experiences in the organization (Strati, 2000), and are expressed through qualifying adjectives, analogies, or metaphors. This means the aesthetic categories emerge when people elaborate on their aesthetic judgment of something by creating a network of interpretations valid for the comprehension of the organization.

While choosing an aesthetic category to describe an organization, the individuals express a representation of the organization to themselves instead of

judging the organization as beautiful or ugly itself, for instance. This representation is possible through aesthetic judgment, which is the bridge between the individual and the organization (Strati, 1992, 1996, 1999).

Strati (1999) was the first to list and define aesthetic categories in the environment of organizations. The author emphasized the existence of many aesthetic categories, defining nine of them: the beautiful, the sacred, the picturesque, the tragic, the ugly, the agog, the comical, the sublime, and the gracious. Specifically, for this research, we used the concepts proposed by Strati (1999) to define the aesthetic categories presented below.

The aesthetic category of **beauty** can be described in several forms. It is actually challenging to define. In 530 B.C., Pythagoras related beauty to harmony, symmetric proportions, and consonance through visible symmetry.

Beauty is strongly related to sight. The same as hearing, sight is a general sense that generates perceptions that can be applied to the principle of commensurability. These characteristics are used when describing a more classical beauty, what can be perceived through such public senses and measured. However, the application of touch, smell, and taste is more complex than intimate senses. Ethics is also present in beauty. Pythagoras stated that what is morally correct is considered beautiful. This notion is based on the premise that beauty causes the sensation of well-being.

Taylor (2012; 2013) considers that **beauty** is a category that, at the same time, provides ethical and creative attitudes in organizations as well as being performed by them. In addition to being implicit in practices, **beauty** can guide them. Kerschbaum (2022) proposes using the aesthetic approach to developing organizational strategy, especially considering the complex, volatile and ambiguous current context. Ivanaj, Shrivastava and Ivanaj (2018) state that **beauty** can contribute to different organizational elements, such as results and processes, and propose the concept of Return on Investment in Beauty (ROIB) as a type of measurement.

The **sacred** is related to the unique. It evokes reverence and adoration towards people, artifacts, or legendary, fantastical, or mysterious practices. It includes divine and sacrosanct aspects that cannot be related to purposeful rationality. Neutgem and Dellagnelo (2020) use the category of the sacred to oppose the idea of secularity and rationalization, which are more often in the management field.

The aesthetic emotion called **picturesque** can be evoked from vivid, colorful, pleasantly informal and irregular, bizarre, uncommon, in other words, anything that visually arouses the observer's attention and brings on an immediate effect. Such effect or aesthetic emotion may manifest as a specific preference, sensibility, mood, or enchantment.

The **comical** category is perceived in daily jokes, nicknames, and witty sayings to coworkers. It also manifests into jokes about the difficulties faced by the organization itself, in other organizations, or even about skilled people. It encompasses everything that can elicit laughter in the organizational environment or banter between co-workers. It favors humor, sarcasm, fun, gamesome and the risible. Plester, Carroll and Kim (2019) discuss the comic as a dimension of organizational life that can strengthen organizational culture, stories and memory.

The aesthetic category known as **gracious** is related to the quality of organizational life. It is perceived in the elegance of strategic vision, interpersonal relationships in the workplace, the civility, spontaneity, and virtuousness of the individuals. In addition, the gracious accentuates the behavioral elegance in an organization by considering clothes, the work environment, artifacts, and products it creates. Everything that is pleasant, gentle, and enchanting in the organizational environment is related to the gracious.

The **tragic** is linked to the heroic in organizational life. Heroism is related to intense feelings felt by the individual or collectively. This passion is noticed in challenging postures to what is threatening, unknown, and inevitable. The tragic represents happiness in trying moments when overcoming comes from creation.

The **ugly** is not the opposition of beauty, although they complement each other (Strati, 1999; Vásquez, 1999). On the contrary, the ugly exists to illustrate that beauty is transitory, circumstantial, and precarious (Vásquez, 1999). The arts field expresses asymmetry, disproportionality, or the poorly formulated in a peculiar experience of a subject facing an artistic object (Strati, 1999, 2000). In organizational life, the ugly represents everything that is shocking, repugnant, or unpleasant. Edwards, Hawkins and Schedlitzki (2019) relate the ugly to the beauty to discuss the tensions in leadership practice. There is a relentless search for beauty at the same time that what is considered ugly in leadership practices is disgusting. However, these tensions contribute to the suppression of a broader aesthetic judgment in the organization.

The **agog** is related to the rhythm of activities in the organization. It comes from music and represents the rhythm of process coordination and workflow. It alludes to the progress of processes and organizational practices. This category is used by Ropo and Sauer (2008) as one of the dimensions to discuss leadership in organizations based on the dance metaphor. The authors point to a leadership that is aesthetically constructed from the dynamics between leaders and subordinates. Moreover, this approach directs to multiple realities and voices in the organizational context. This discussion is further endorsed by Chandler (2012) and Biehl-Missal and Springborg (2016) when they point out the relevance of rhythm, among other aspects, to the processes between leaders and followers. Johnson (2013) uses the agogic category to discuss the types of leadership based on a comparison with the primary dance rhythms. Currently, the agogic is also articulated as characteristics of emotions in the organizational context and as “rhythmic sensations” between managers and employees (Aromaa, Eriksson & Mills, 2022, p. 2).

The **sublime** is related to beauty, with the feeling of delight in which someone describes their job. It expresses beauty filled with emotions and sentimentality, specifically joy or tragedy (Strati, 1999). It is an attempt to represent what cannot be represented. When discussing student engagement in learning

from the lens of aesthetics, Kofinas (2018) considers the sublime as an opposing force that can compromise student engagement and their preparation for assessments. The author also proposes ways for teachers to communicate with their students in order to reduce the perception of the sublime.

Aesthetic judgment is the phenomenon that precedes the elaboration of aesthetic categories by individuals and consists of the perception of objects and actions in a given context (Strati, 1999). This judgment is a relevant point to understand, for example, how the members of an organization express themselves to each other (Bazin & Korica, 2021). The interaction between judgment and aesthetic categories enables the (dis)continuity of organizational identity (Bazin & Korica, 2021) or even fosters the environment and mental state that support the development of creativity and activities of an intellectual/cognitive nature (Hosey, 2012).

Thus, it is important to consider that there are multiple ways to experience data to support the decision-making process and one of these can be the aesthetic approach (Saifer & Dacin, 2021). This vision can contribute, for example, to a better understanding of the relationship between organizational aesthetics and various debates that directly involve the role and action of organizations, such as sustainable development, representation of organizational identity and teaching-learning relationships aligned with the job market.

Turan and Cetinkaya (2022) argue that sustainable development can be a continuous process of creating and consuming aesthetic values. The search by executives for categories such as the beauty, the good and the truth guide positive management practices towards sustainable development and can create value for organizations (Ivanaj, Shrivastava & Ivanaj, 2018), while the agogic can contribute to the understanding of the rhythm of changes that focus on sustainability.

Regarding the representation of organizational identity, aesthetic categories can be used to conceptualize organizations in different dimensions (Turan & Cetinkaya, 2020). These categories are delimited by the judgment of sensory experiences, aesthetic performances and by interaction with different systems that

collect aesthetic manifestations within organizations. These dynamics allow the creation of an aesthetic inventory that gives identity to that organization.

In the context of teaching and learning relationships, aesthetics can assist in engaging organizations focused on education (e.g. universities) and the job market, especially those focused on creative-based activities. This engagement would take place through an alignment between learning spaces and the demands of organizations analyzed through the lens of aesthetics (Poprawski, 2019).

It is still possible to point to an interaction between the aesthetic experience and various organizational elements, such as planning, organizational structure, and control (Shrivastava et al., 2017). This interaction is mediated, among other aspects, by aesthetic categories, more specifically by beauty, as well as by emotions, which not only emerge from a subjective aesthetic perception but also through the evaluation of the experience by the community where the subjects are inserted (Maitlis, Vogus & Lawrence, 2013)

We recognize that the debates considering the aesthetic perspective in the organizational context have advanced. However, a common element in the literature in this regard is: aesthetics is still often underestimated or muted in the reality of organizational practices, although it is implicit in them (Turan & Cetinkaya, 2020; 2022; Shrivastava et al., 2017; Saifer & Dacin, 2021; Bazin & Korica, 2020). Indeed, this research aims to contribute to a more careful and clarified appreciation of aesthetics in organizational practices through the elucidation of aesthetic categories.

3 CONCEPT AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE SCALE

The developing process of the perception scale of aesthetic categories (AESCATScale) contained two separate phases, which followed the structural patterns of scale development by Shimp and Sharma (1987), Vivek (2009, 2014), and Zheng, Zuh, Zhao & Zhang (2015) (see Figure 1).

Figure 1 – Development of Concept, Dimension, and Items of the AESCATScale

Development of scale measurements	Data collection and scale purification	Reliability and scale validation
Literature review	Pre-teste (n=45)	2nd Data collection (n=236)
Interview with Specialists	1st Data collection (n=92)	Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) – 2nd round
Analysis of the contents of interviews	Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) – 1st round	Elimination of two dimensions
Discussion with group of researchers	Internal consistency analysis	Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA)
Face and Contents Validation	Reduction from 64 to 34 variables.	Final Model with 7 dimensions and 20 scale items
Initial Generation of Items (n=64)		Convergent and discriminate validation and reliability

Source: elaborated by authors based on Shimp and Sharma (1987), Vivek (2009, 2014), Hinkin & Tracey (1999) and Zheng, Zuh, Zhao & Zhang (2015)

The first phase was a qualitative study with the purpose to specify the constructs (understand concepts, nature, dimension, and needs of a new scale), to develop the measurements of the scale, and to validate the contents (Churchill, 1979; Hinkin, 1995, 2005; Netmeyer, Bearden & Sharma, 2003). We adapted Churchill (1979) suggestions about the procedures to execute this qualitative phase comprised of a literature review, two unstructured interviews with experts in organizational aesthetics, and a discussion of the items on the scale with a group of researchers.

The second phase is comprised of quantitative studies. Study 1 explains the data collection process to purify and refine measures (Churchill, 1979) and Study 2 shows the reliability analysis and scale validation (Shimp & Sharma, 1987; Hinkin & Tracey, 1999; Vivek, 2009, 2014).

3.1 Qualitative Study Phase

To better understand the dimension of the constructs to be measured, we made a literature review of journals, books, and specialized publications on aesthetic categories from an organizational perspective. However, most of the literature comes

from philosophy and sociology with no application in the organization. Thus, we focused our studies on the aesthetic categories of Strati (1999).

We also interviewed two highly prestigious researchers with relevant experience in the studies on the perception of aesthetic categories in organizations. We used a non-structured method and asked the interviewees to freely talk about the perception of aesthetic categories in an organization. The interviews lasted an average of 74 minutes each and they were analyzed by contents analysis (Bardin, 2015; Krippendorf, 2018). The interviews supported the exploration of the definition of the realm of each category and the generation of items in the following quantitative phase.

We concluded that the constructs of the organizational aesthetic categories are subjective, complex, and multidimensional. Indeed, they emerge from the individual's perspective. This became clear from the analysis of the literature and the language used by the specialists. Each aesthetic category is a formative and latent construct, comprising the dimensions of the Aesthetic Perception Scale (AESCATScale). In our research, no perception scale of aesthetic categories or aesthetics in organizations was found in the literature.

We chose to address working practices since we could not find any study referring to the organization aesthetically as a whole. Subsequently, aesthetic judgments are more easily made on specific aspects, such as the work being done, the environment, or coworkers (Strati, 1999). Correspondingly, the literature and interviews reinforced the need to build an aesthetic perceptions scale since it provides variables that are usually neglected by managers and can strongly support decision making.

3.1.1 Developing the measurements of AESCATScale

We analyzed the contents (Bardin, 2015) of interviews and the chapter on aesthetic categories (Strati, 1999) to create the items on the scale, thus making a

deductive development of the scale (Hinkin, 1995). We had to interpret, decompose and translate the data collected from the literature and interviews for a more objective perception.

We chose the content analysis technique because it is a research technique that makes textual inferences replicable and valid for their contexts of use (Krippendorff, 2018). Bardin (2015) argues that content analysis consists of the codification and dismemberment of the text in initial categories that can be grouped into intermediate categories, which can later be grouped into final categories. However, in this case, we chose to stop the analysis in the initial categories since our purpose was to detail the facets of the construct.

The 40 initial statements we raised in the contents analysis became the items of the perception scale of aesthetic categories. The research instrument was composed by a 5-point The Likert scale, varying from 1 (totally disagree) to 5 (totally agree), indicates how much the respondents agreed with each statement related to the activities practiced in their occupation (i.e., college professors).

After generating the items, we analyzed the contents of the preliminary survey in a session among the researchers, three Ph.D. candidates in Management and a Senior Professor of a prestigious graduate program in Management. They were chosen due to their experience in organizational studies and scale construction. The session lasted approximately 50 minutes each. We verified the writing quality of items, the degree of comprehension of the sentences, and if they were valid to measure the perception of the aesthetic category to which the items should belong. In addition, we identified problems that could generate dubious interpretations and items that could be subdivided.

Accordingly, we elaborated a new version of the research instrument with improvements in the context validation session. By the end, the instrument had 64 items (statements), in which each aesthetic category had at least six items.

3.2 Quantitative Study Phase

The process of scale development occurs in this phase of the study. Hereafter, we will show how we collected the data, purified the scale, tested the reliability, and validated the AESCATScale. Study 1 contains the first field survey, exploratory factor analysis of the data and procedures to purify the AESCATScale. Study 2 contains the second field survey, confirmatory factor analysis, and the validation of the AESCATScale.

3.2.1 Study 1 – Data collection and filtering of the AESCATScale

We collected the data to begin the first data screening procedures of the scale. After finalizing the qualitative phase of face and contents validation, we carried out the first field survey. Firstly, we performed a pre-test with 45 college professors to validate the content of items with the target audience's perception. At the end of the pre-test, we asked the respondents if they understood the statements and if they had suggestions to improve the items. In the pre-test sample, the audience reported no difficulties in reading and interpreting the items: 71.1% considered all items of the questionnaire easy to understand. In comparison, 28.9% had difficulty interpreting a few of the items. Therefore, we maintained the items and carried out with the first field survey through an online questionnaire in Google Forms. We collected 92 responses for the first phase of the quantitative study.

The demographics of this first sample were composed of men (51.6%) and women (48.4%), with an average age of 39 years old and standard deviation of 8.2 years old. All professors teach for about 9.3 years ($\sigma = 5.8$), and 93.5% have a monthly income above US\$ 1,177.00. After being asked what they thought of the survey, 67.7% considered it easy to understand; 29% had difficulty understanding some of the items; while 2.2% had difficulty in most of the items, and only one person thought the survey was too difficult to understand. Also, 19 of the respondents had complete feedback with suggestions and detailed explanations of what they found difficult when answering

the questions. All in all, there was a good symptom of high comprehension of the survey, considering the subjective nature of the items.

An Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) was applied to each aesthetic category separately to purify the items. We wanted to reduce the items of the scale of each category and verify if there were factor grouping of the items in each aesthetic category. We expected the items in each category to be grouped into just one factor.

When more than one factor was found in one aesthetic category, we had to choose which factor best represented each category and eliminate the remainder. The selection criteria used were: the highest of the Variance Explained and Cronbach's Alpha, which revealed the factor with the most significant internal consistency aligned with the literature review (Hinkin, 2005, Costa, 2011, Hair et al., 2006 and Kline, 2015).

During this step, we faced problems with the Tragic category: the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy (KMO) was 0.612, one of the variables got an MSA inferior to 0.5, low communality in one of the items, and Cronbach's Alpha was only 0.529. These conditions indicate that the data collected is statistically weak so that they do not merge nor explain the Tragic category.

To solve this problem, we added an extra step to the methodology: we revised the literature again and the recordings of the specialists. Furthermore, we performed a second interview with them, focusing only on the Tragic aesthetic category.

Items of the scale were redefined, eliminating the previous items of this category. We also considered the feedback of 19 of the respondents on the survey itself. Three types of problems were identified: (i) difficulty in interpreting some of the adjectives used; (ii) difficulty with the verification scale used (two people could not distinguish the difference between "partially agree" with "partially disagree"); and (iii) the fact that the work practices of the professor have different environments in and out of the classroom, which harms the congruence of the work practices.

The wording was improved, with other synonyms to the adjectives written on the items; the verification scale was modified to specify agreeance intensity from 1

to 5, and we focused on the work practices of the professors in the classroom. With this filtering, we reduced the items from 64 to 34 and built a new research tool applied in Study 2.

3.2.2 Study 2 – Reliability and validation of the AESCATScale

The main goal of Study 2 was to run a second purification round of the scale and verify its reliability and, convergent and discriminant, construct validity. Shimp & Sharma (1987) and Vivek (2009, 2014) were the primary references to this phase. Consequently, we ran another field survey (round 2) and collected 236 responses. In the initial data screening of the database, we eliminated one observation due to missing values issues. We ran the data on the EFA and noticed some factors had a low internal consistency. With this information, we returned to the database and began identifying outliers through the z-score analysis of each of the construct variables. We removed all observations with a z-score above $|3.5|$ due to samples above 200 respondents (Hair et al., 2006), 17 observations, with 218 observations remaining. This cutoff point is based on the simulations that Iglewicz and Hoaglin (1993) performed with 10,000 resamples of n pseudo-normal observations in different sample sizes.

In the descriptive analysis, there were 106 men and 112 women. Indeed, none of these respondents participated in the previous phases. Most of the respondents (63.6%) have a monthly family income superior to US\$ 2,785.00, the average age of 43 years ($\sigma = 10.56$) and 13 years in the teaching in higher education institutions ($\sigma = 8.88$).

Due to the changes made from the procedures of the first round, we had positive results: 76.1% considered all items easy to comprehend (in comparison to 67.7% of the previous study) and 20.2% had some difficulty understanding some of the items (in comparison to 29% of the previous round). Only eight respondents had greater difficulty understanding and interpreting the survey items.

To reach the objectives of Study 2, two analyses were carried out: (1) Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) in order to confirm non-observable factors (aesthetic categories) based on research decisions of Study 1 and new possible refinements; and (2) Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) based on the structural model from the EFA.

3.2.2.1 Results from Study 2 – EFA and reliability analysis

In this phase, the EFA confirmed non-observable factors that constitute categories or dimensions of the aesthetic perception. The dimensions of Beauty, Sacred and Picturesque did not suffer any changes; they all formed only one factor from their observable variables, all with consistent statistics. Nunnally (1967) recommends a Cronbach's Alpha of at least 0.7 for evidence of internal consistency. Thus, the three dimensions showed good statistics with Cronbach's Alpha, respectively: 0.788, 0.811, and 0.730.

On the other hand, the Agog, Gracious, Ugly, and Sublime dimensions had one or more variables removed to adjust the EFA. We selected the dimension with higher Variance Explained and Cronbach's Alpha according to what we mentioned before. The alphas of these four dimensions were, respectively: 0.741, 0.807, 0.731, and 0.856.

Based on the EFA, even with the extra effort in creating the items of the scale, the Tragic and Comical dimensions did not reach adequate statistics to remain in the model. Consequently, none of them remained due to low Cronbach's Alpha (α). In Study 2, tragic and comic dimensions presented low internal consistency with Cronbach's Alpha equal to 0.560 and 0.528, respectively. We believe these problems occurred because of the diverse interpretations of the items of the scale, specifically, with the words highlighted: "I **mock** situations I go through at work"; "My work practices are **eccentric/unique**"; "I have no difficulty in dealing with **serious situations** at my job"; and "I feel pleasure in facing **challenges** in my work practices". We assume that Strati's (1999) own theory is subjective and open to several interpretations, so much so that even the specialists consulted were divergent regarding the meaning of aesthetic categories. Thus, since these

aesthetic categories did not reach adequate levels of internal consistency, we decided to remove them from the AESCATScale proposed model.

Consequently, 20 items remained with seven dimensions which formed the AESCATScale (Beauty, Picturesque, Agog, Sacred, Gracious, Ugly, and Sublime).

3.2.2.2 Results of Study 2 – CFA

This section discusses the results of the Confirmatory Factor Analysis conducted with the seven-dimension scale of aesthetic perception (AESCATScale).

Figure 2 – Items of the organizational aesthetic perception scale (AESCATScale)

Agogic	AG01. At my work, I am one musician in a fine-tuned orchestra.
	AG02. At my work, things happen at the right time.
	AG03. At my work, decisions are made at the right time.
Picturesque	PT01. I live through unexpected situations in my work practice.
	PT02. My work practices change rapidly.
Beauty	BL01. I feel good while carrying out my daily work practices.
	BL02. I love what I do at my job.
	BL03. I take pleasure in manipulating my working tools.
Sacred	SG01. I live through fantastic experiences at work.
	SG02. I hear fantastic stories related to my work.
	SG03. I live through uncommon experiences at my work.
Gracious	GR01. My work environment is charming/involving.
	GR02. I see elegance in the execution of my work practices.
	GR03. My workplace is sophisticated.
Ugly	FE01. My work practices annoy me.
	FE02. My work practices are poorly formed.
	FE03. My work practices are unpleasant.
Sublime	SU01. I feel amazed/in ecstasy while executing my job.
	SU02. My work practices are unique.
	SU03. I consider my work practices extraordinary.

Source: elaborated by authors

The indicators presented by the CFA were verified and evidenced the validation of the model. The proposed model shows a positive general adjustment: GFI=0.907, IFI=0.955, TLI=0.938, CFI=0.954, RMR=0.048, RMSEA=0.051, $e\chi^2=222,992$, $df=142$ ($\chi^2/df=1.570$; $p=0.000$). The ratio of the chi-square on degree levels of

freedom are within the recommended reach of 3:1 for the adjusted models (Carmines & McIver, 1981; Kline, 2015). Thus, we finalized this process with the items of each category contained in Table 2.

3.2.2.3 Results of Study 2 – Validation analysis

The validation processes are the most critical steps in building a novelty scale. According to Costa (2011), there are three types of validation: translation, criteria, and construct.

The translation validation is formed by the face and contents validation, described in the qualitative phase and Study 1. The criteria validation consists of predictive and simultaneous validations. The simultaneous validation could not be performed because we could not check the scale's capacity in effectively behaving as expected in a simultaneous collection of measurements. Therefore, we considered this type to be left for future studies.

Lastly, the construct validation is formed by reliability and convergent and discriminant validity. The construct validation consists of verifying the measurement behavior related to a specific theoretical expectation associated with the definition of the construct (Costa, 2011).

The quality of the measurement model of convergent validity, reliability, and discriminant validity are examined in this section. These were measured by examining the composite reliability (CR) scores to analyze reliability ($CR > 0.70$); average variance extracted (AVE) values to analyze the convergent validity ($AVE > 0.5$ and $CR > AVE$); and maximum shared square variance (MSV) and average shared square variance (ASV) to check the discriminant validity ($MSV < AVE$ and $ASV < AVE$) (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). The data obtained can be seen in Tables 3 and 4.

Figure 3 – Validity and Reliability

	CR	AVE	MSV	ASV
UGLY	0,763	0,518	0,308	0,088
PICT	0,740	0,591	0,134	0,075
BEAU	0,805	0,580	0,308	0,129
GRAC	0,731	0,577	0,408	0,207
SACR	0,815	0,602	0,408	0,227
SUBL	0,850	0,655	0,316	0,126
AGOG	0,798	0,573	0,291	0,145

Source: research data

Figure 3 shows that all constructs have composite reliability (CR) values greater than 0.70, demonstrating satisfactory internal consistency. The convergent validity, which indicates the proportion of variance in common between the indicators of a construct can be analyzed by AVE and CR values. They are both significant with $AVE > 0.5$ and $CR > AVE$ in all the constructs. Finally, it appears that all constructs also demonstrate satisfactory discriminant validity due to its difference from each other in the model ($MSV < AVE$ and $ASV < AVE$).

Figure 4 – Factor Correlation Matrix with Square Root of the AVE on the Diagonal

	UGLY	PICT	BEAU	GRAC	SACR	SUBL	AGOG
UGLY	0,720						
PICT	0,061	0,769					
BEAU	-0,555	0,285	0,761				
GRAC	-0,260	0,311	0,315	0,691			
SACR	-0,229	0,366	0,402	0,639	0,776		
SUBL	0,006	0,299	0,137	0,536	0,562	0,809	
AGOG	-0,312	0,218	0,324	0,530	0,539	0,215	0,757

Source: research data

Figure 4 shows that the correlation between the constructs is lower than the square root of their AVE values (numbers on the external diagonal in Figure 4), reaffirming the discriminant validity.

Since the AESCATScale is an entirely new scale, there are no similar scales to carry out the known-group method because it involves measuring how an expected group differs from known characteristics. Moreover, we also did not carry out the nomological validity due to the lack of unknown predictors of the organizational aesthetics (see Limitations and Future Studies section).

4 AESCATSCALE USABILITY

This study aims to offer aesthetic categories to an organizational context in a quantitative view of the impact of each of its constructs on organizational practice. Therefore, the aesthetic approach can be applied as one more factor that makes up management theories, supporting the vision of an inherently multidimensional and heterogeneous context. Thus, it contributes to minimize the silencing of this approach pointed out by Strati, 1999; Turan & Cetinkaya, 2020; 2022; Shrivastava, Schumacher, Wasieleski & Tasic, 2017; Saifer & Dacin, 2021; Bazin & Korica, 2021.

The scale created validates aesthetic constructs in the organizational context (Agogic, Picturesque, Beauty, Sacred, Gracious, Ugly and Sublime) and demonstrates to practitioners and managers that these dimensions can generate relevant effects in the context of a job.

It cannot be disregarded that organizations are composed of latent elements that impact management practices but are often ignored. Furthermore, the scale presents itself as an instrument that explores subjective dimensions more objectively but intensely influences organizational life.

5 OVERALL DISCUSSION

The main purpose of this study was to elaborate and validate a perception scale of organizational aesthetics (AESCATScale). The building of scales as tools to measure and follow certain situations, populations, or performance is highly disseminated and applied in academia and can have several purposes. First, scales can synthesize or apply more meaning to what is to be evaluated. They can express several dimensions of a particular situation, simplifying complex phenomena (Amendola, 2012; Carvalho, Barros & Franco, 2003), such as the perception of organizational aesthetics.

Aesthetics is commonly addressed subjectively in organizational studies. Our challenge was to transform the least subjective theory of the theme – Strati's (1999) aesthetic categories – into a scale construct, AESCATScale. We began with the nine aesthetic categories: Agog, Beautiful, Comical, Ugly, Gracious, Picturesque, Tragic, Sacred, and Sublime, based on the development of scale by Churchill (1979, Shimp & Sharma (1987), Hinkin, 1995), and Vivek (2009, 2014). Then, after a thorough literature review, interview with specialists, discussion groups, and survey in two separate field studies, we performed Exploratory and Confirmatory Factor Analyses to refine the proposed scale. Finally, we built a first version of the theoretical model of the scale. Thus, we analyzed reliability and context, convergent and discriminant validity.

The outcomes resulted in a multidimensional construct model to perceive organizational aesthetics, with seven dimensions in a twenty-scale item. According to the statistical analysis, the construct is consistent and can be used as the basis of future studies in the field. This construct contributes to the disclosure of aesthetic dimensions that influence the organizational environment, encouraging the organization to consider actions within these dimensions to complement its management practices. It may perform, for example, as an element of the organizational strategy, influencing decision-making, especially in valuing people in the organizational environment based on their aesthetic perceptions.

Furthermore, we understand that the construct can contribute to future studies that discuss aspects of organizational cultures, such as the relationship between aesthetics, employees' personal values and organizational values. In addition, it can also understand how aesthetics influences the construction of identity, organizational image, management of multiculturalism or organizational change, among many other possibilities.

We also envision that the construct may contribute to studies related to people management on topics such as motivation, innovations in people management practices, precarious work, strategies for moving people in organizations and others. Moreover, regarding interdisciplinarity and gaps already presented, the construct of the aesthetic categories can be applied to marketing, organizational strategy and public management to strengthen the student-teacher relationship, and develop beneficial pedagogical practices, among many other possibilities that cannot be exhausted here.

We considered that the aesthetic experience is a pre-reflexive phenomenon, i.e., it occurs non-intentionally through sensitive experiences and only reaches consciousness after an aesthetic judgment process (Strati, 1999; Taylor & Hansen, 2005). Thus, we highlighted the aesthetic experiences provided by the categories as a previous element to aesthetic judgment and even to perception.

Hence, the aesthetic experiences prior to the categories, which constitute a form of reflection, are considered latent in the entire process of sensitive awareness. In many cases, aesthetic categories develop in an underlying manner from organizational practices. The main purpose of each practice is not to provide aesthetic meaning, they emerge since they already exist.

Furthermore, the aesthetic experience culminating in Strati's (1999) categories are accomplished by measuring, developing, and organizing work practices before anything being done (Martin, 2002). There is also a collective dimension to the aesthetic experience, which is identified in a group context revealing the sensitive logic beyond work practices.

Although Nord & Fox (1996) point out a greater interest of researchers in collective matters of the organization as opposed to the individuals, organizational aesthetics establishes the individual as the relevant point, seeing personal perceptions as predictors to the collective. It results in the individual's identification with the organization, its values, desires, feelings, and sense of belonging.

For this reason, we reinforce the idea that the aesthetic process (experience, perception, and judgment) has managerial implications and should be considered by practitioners and managers. It is an individual perception that each employee has about the organization; consequently, managers will need to develop a sensitive organizational policy to consider this individuality. It also represents multiple challenges to managers, such as (i) reaching organizational objectives for the social environment that the organization is; and (ii) considering the individuality of each employee and their needs, among others. The AESCATScale may be a complementary instrument used to learn about the aspects of the organizational environment. Furthermore, the primary function of the scale is to reveal the sensitive logic underlying several organizational processes, such as practices developed in the workplace that undergoes against the firm's values, mission, and vision. Due to its sensitive bias, it can help explain why specific organizational change processes cannot be pursued. It can also effectively reveal the underlying organizational structure of a corporation company, considering it is not always rationally organized.

In the managerial scope, the AESCATScale is a valuable tool to allow the externalization of the aesthetic experience in order to let it know by them and third parties. It is essential to learn about the sensitive logic that reigns organizational practices in the work environment. For instance, aid in a manager's decision-making in situations of change; aid in understanding what motivates people in doing their jobs, all from a sensitive point of view.

Aesthetic experience, as well as the categories, can also be associated with new projects. For example, the choice to open a new business or launch a new product can be directly associated with how beautiful or sublime something is.

Furthermore, it leads us to understand the individual's sensitive perspective and how it can directly affect his/her job.

This study introduces a differentiated approach to organizational management that can sometimes be missed due to its abstract nature. It also presents an aesthetic measurement proposal through items that can be replicated and validated in other contexts and samples in different cultures. Therefore, it introduces a novelty research tool that can be used both in corporate and academic environments.

6 LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE STUDIES

Since this is a novelty scale from a construct that did not exist, it was not possible to carry out a known-group method and nomological validity. This study does not consist of all the necessary procedures for setting an aesthetic perception measuring scale, but it is a much-needed first step. New studies with different techniques to elicit the items of a scale from the aesthetic categories of Strati included the dimensions of the comical and the tragic.

We believe that the subjective nature of the theme brought difficulties and peculiar limitations to the process. One of the difficulties regarded the lack of comprehension of some categories by respondents, resulting in eliminating these categories. Even the conversion of the abstract into sentences is a challenge. Hence, even though our proposed scale presents limitations that can be suppressed through future studies, we believe in contributing to the quantitative treatment of a subject primarily observed from a qualitative perspective.

Lastly, the sample used was chosen for its accessibility and to have been restricted to college professors of a single state in Brazil is a limitation to the study that future studies can suppress in different cultures and occupations.

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Contribution	[Author 1]	[Author 2]	[Author 3]	[Author 4]
1. Definition of research problem	√	√	√	√
2. Development of hypotheses or research questions (empirical studies)	√	√	√	
3. Development of theoretical propositions (theoretical work)		√	√	
4. Theoretical foundation / Literature review		√	√	
5. Definition of methodological procedures	√			√
6. Data collection	√	√	√	√
7. Statistical analysis	√			√
8. Analysis and interpretation of data	√			
9. Critical revision of the manuscript	√	√	√	√
10. Manuscript writing	√	√	√	
11. Other (English traslation)				√

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The authors have stated that there is no conflict of interest.

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