

Organizational Justice

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Abstract

This chapter frames the development of the justice literature around three literature-level trends: differentiation, cognition, and exogeneity. The differentiation trend has impacted how justice is conceptualized, with additional justice dimensions being further segmented into different sources. The cognition trend has created a rational, calculative theme to the most visible justice theories. The exogeneity trend has resulted in justice occupying the independent variable position in most empirical studies. Taken together, these trends have resulted in a vibrant and active literature. However, I will argue that the next phase of the literature's evolution will benefit from a relaxation—or even reversal—of these trends. Path-breaking contributions may be more likely to result from the aggregation of justice concepts, a focus on affect, and the identification of predictors of justice.

Keywords: Justice, fairness, attitudes, cognition, emotion

Introduction

For some four decades, scholars interested in justice have been examining individuals' reactions to decisions, procedures, and relevant authorities (for a historical review, see Colquitt, Greenberg, & Zapata-Phelan, 2005). One of the central themes of this research is that individuals do not merely react to events by asking "Was that good?" or "Was that satisfying?" Instead, they also ask "Was that fair?" Hundreds of studies have shown that perceptions of fairness are distinct from feelings of outcome favorability or outcome satisfaction (Cohen-Charash & Spector, 2001; Colquitt, Conlon, Wesson, Porter, & Ng, 2001; Skitka, Winiquist, & Hutchinson, 2003). Many of those same studies have further shown that fairness perceptions explain unique variance in key attitudes and behaviors, including organizational commitment, trust in management, citizenship behavior, counterproductive behavior, and task performance (Cohen-Charash & Spector, 2001; Colquitt et al., 2001).

In the early years of the literature, justice scholars focused solely on the fairness of decision outcomes, termed *distributive justice*. Drawing on earlier work by Homans (1961), Adams (1965) showed that individuals react to outcome allocations by comparing their ratio of outcomes to inputs to some relevant comparison other. If those ratios match, the individual feels a sense of equity. Although equity is typically viewed as the most appropriate allocation norm in organizations, theorizing suggests that other norms can be viewed as fair in some situations. For example, allocating outcomes according to equality and need norms are perceived to be fair when group harmony or personal welfare are the relevant goals (Deutsch, 1975; Leventhal, 1976). Integrating these perspectives, distributive justice has been defined as the degree to which the appropriate allocation norm is followed in a given decision-making context.

Working at the intersection of social psychology and law, Thibaut and Walker (1975) conducted a series of studies on the fairness of decision-making

processes, termed *procedural justice*. The authors recognized that the disputants in legal proceedings judge both the fairness of the verdict and the fairness of the courtroom procedures. Thibaut and Walker (1975) argued that procedures were viewed as fair when disputants possessed process control, meaning that they could voice their concerns in an effort to influence the decision outcome. A separate stream of work by Leventhal (1980) broadened the conceptualization of procedural justice in the context of resource allocation decisions. Specifically, Leventhal (1980) argued that allocation procedures would be viewed as fair when they adhered to several “rules,” including consistency, bias suppression, accuracy, correctability, and ethicality.

While examining fairness in a recruitment context, Bies and Moag (1986) observed that decision events actually have three facets: a decision, a procedure, and an interpersonal interaction during which that procedure is implemented. The authors used the term *interactional justice* to capture the fairness of that interpersonal interaction. They further argued that interactional justice was fostered when relevant authorities communicated procedural details in a respectful and proper manner, and justified decisions using honest and truthful information. In a subsequent chapter, Greenberg (1993b) argued that the respect and propriety rules are distinct from the justification and truthfulness rules, labeling the former criteria *interpersonal justice* and the latter criteria *informational justice*.

Adopting an umbrella term first coined by Greenberg (1987), the dimensions reviewed above have come to define the “organizational justice” landscape. In a series of reviews, Greenberg charted the development of the organizational justice literature from its intellectual adolescence to its status as a more adult literature (Colquitt & Greenberg, 2003; Greenberg, 1990b; Greenberg, 1993a). That maturation saw articles on organizational justice gain an ever-expanding presence in academic journals, scholarly book series, and conference programs in organizational behavior and industrial/organizational (I/O) psychology. Indeed, the top ten journals in organizational behavior included 50 or more articles on organizational justice in 2001, 2003, and 2006—up from single digits throughout the 1980s (Colquitt, 2008).

The current review will argue that the development of the organizational justice literature has been shaped by three major trends: differentiation, cognition, and exogeneity. The trend toward *differentiation* has impacted the ways in which justice is

conceptualized and measured, with specific justice dimensions being further segmented into different sources or “foci.” The trend toward *cognition* has created a rational, calculative theme in many of the most visible theories in the justice literature. Finally, the trend toward *exogeneity* has resulted in justice occupying the independent variable position in most empirical studies, resulting in an emphasis on its predictive validity. Taken together, these trends have influenced the typical study in the justice literature in a number of ways, including its research question, its conceptual lens, and its methods and procedures.

The sections to follow will review each of these trends in some detail, focusing on the key articles that helped to trigger and shape those trends. Perhaps more importantly, the sections will explore the following premise: that the “next steps” in the development of the justice literature would benefit from a reversal, or at least a stemming, of the trends that have dominated the literature. Although Greenberg (2007) argued that there are still many “conceptual parking spaces” available to study in the justice literature, progress in mature fields inevitably takes on a more incremental and nuanced nature. Studies that strive for a more significant impact may need to “go against the grain” of the literature to examine research questions in a novel and innovative manner. With that in mind, this chapter will explore the merits of the obverses of the three literature forces: a trend toward *aggregation* of justice concepts, a trend toward *affect* in justice theorizing, and a trend toward *endogeneity* in causal models.

Trend One: Differentiation

Many of the earliest studies on justice in the mainstream organizational behavior and industrial/organizational psychology literature were focused on differentiating procedural justice from distributive justice. For example, Greenberg (1986) asked managers to think of a time when they received a particularly fair or unfair performance evaluation rating, and to write down the single most important factor that contributed to that fairness level. After the responses were typed on a set of index cards, another set of managers participated in a Q-sort in which shared responses were identified and fit into categories. After the categories were cross-validated, another sample of managers were given a survey that included the categories and were asked to rate how important they were as determinants of fair performance evaluations. Importantly, a factor analysis of those ratings resulted in a two-factor solution

with procedural factors (e.g., consistent application of standards, soliciting input, ability to challenge evaluation) loading separately from distributive factors (e.g., rating based on performance, recommendation for raise or promotion). Importantly, the procedural factors were similar to the rules that Thibaut and Walker (1975) and Leventhal (1980) had identified in their theorizing.

Once evidence had been established that procedural justice and distributive justice could be differentiated in Q-sorts and factor analyses, scholars began examining whether the two constructs varied in their predictive validity. Folger and Konovsky (1989) gave employees in a manufacturing plant a survey about their most recent salary increase. Twenty-six survey items were written to assess procedural justice, including Leventhal's (1980) rules, Thibaut and Walker's (1975) concepts, and—in a foreshadowing of a looming debate in the literature—Bies and Moag's (1986) concepts. These 26 items wound up loading on five factors, four of which were retained in the analyses. Another four items were included to assess distributive justice and outcome favorability, and the survey also included measures of organizational commitment, trust in supervisor, and pay satisfaction. Regression analyses revealed that the procedural justice variables were stronger predictors of organizational commitment and trust in supervisor, whereas the distributive justice and outcome favorability variables were stronger predictors of pay satisfaction. This pattern—where procedural justice was a stronger predictor of system-referenced attitudes and distributive justice was a stronger predictor of outcome-referenced attitudes—came to be termed the *two-factor model* (Sweeney & McFarlin, 1993; see also McFarlin & Sweeney, 1992).

After the publication of Bies and Moag (1986) and some initial studies on the interactional justice construct (e.g., Bies & Shapiro, 1988), justice scholars turned their attention to differentiating interactional justice from procedural and distributive justice. In a study of citizenship behavior in the paint and coatings industry, Moorman (1991) created a 13-item measure that included procedural and interactional justice dimensions. Whereas Folger and Konovsky (1989) had included “procedural justice” items that tapped Bies and Moag's (1986) concepts, Moorman included “interactional justice” items that tapped Leventhal's (1980) and Thibaut and Walker's (1975) rules (e.g., bias suppression, process control). Such items were actually consistent with chapters that provided a somewhat

revised conceptualization of interactional justice—defining the construct in terms that went beyond respect, propriety, truthfulness, and justification to include manager-originating versions of Leventhal's rules (Folger & Bies, 1989; Greenberg, Bies, & Eskew, 1991; Tyler & Bies, 1990).

Moorman's (1991) results showed that interactional justice was distinct from procedural justice in a confirmatory factor analysis. It was also distinct from a measure of distributive justice taken from Price and Mueller's (1986) work. From a predictive validity perspective, the results also showed that interactional justice was a better predictor of citizenship behaviors than either procedural or distributive justice. Moorman's (1991) study had a lasting impact on the justice literature in two respects. First, it helped to establish citizenship behavior as the most common behavioral outcome in the justice literature (for a review, see Moorman & Byrne, 2005). Second, it introduced one of the most commonly used measures in the literature, reducing the tendency for scholars to construct ad hoc measures in a given study.

Although Moorman's (1991) measure brought an increased amount of attention to interactional justice, the remainder of the decade was characterized by a debate about whether that justice form could truly be differentiated from procedural justice. The chapters that had reconceptualized the new justice form seemed to suggest—either explicitly or implicitly—that interactional justice was merely a manager-originating version of procedural justice (Folger & Bies, 1989; Greenberg et al., 1991; Tyler & Bies, 1990). Moreover, the fact that Moorman's (1991) interactional justice scale included concepts from Thibaut and Walker's (1975) and Leventhal's (1980) theorizing seemed to result in inflated correlations between interactional and procedural justice. As a result, scholars who utilized Moorman's (1991) scale sometimes wound up combining the interactional and procedural dimensions due to high intercorrelations (e.g., Mansour-Cole & Scott, 1998; Skarlicki & Latham, 1997).

In an attempt to clarify these issues, Colquitt (2001) validated a new justice measure whose items were based on more literal interpretations of Thibaut and Walker (1975), Leventhal (1980), and Bies and Moag (1986). Thus, the interactional items assessed respect, propriety, truthfulness, and justification, not procedural concepts such as process control or consideration. Drawing on Greenberg's (1993b) earlier conceptual work, Colquitt (2001) also examined the merits of further differentiating

interactional justice into interpersonal (respect and propriety) and informational (truthfulness and justification) facets. Confirmatory factor analyses in two independent samples showed that a four-factor structure fit the data significantly better than one-, two-, or three-factor versions. In addition, structural equation modeling results revealed that the four justice dimensions had unique relationships with various outcome measures.

At its core, the differentiation of interpersonal and informational justice acknowledges that the politeness and respectfulness of communication is distinct from its honesty and truthfulness. Indeed, that differentiation is not at all controversial in the literature on explanations and causal accounts, where scholars routinely separate the sensitivity of an account from the truthfulness or comprehensiveness of its content (e.g., Bobocel, Agar, & Meyer, 1998; Gilliland & Beckstein, 1996; Greenberg, 1993c). Several of the studies that have utilized Colquitt's (2001) scales have provided factor-analytic support for the interpersonal-informational distinction (e.g., Ambrose, Hess, & Ganesan, 2007; Bell, Wiechmann, & Ryan, 2006; Camerman, Cropanzano, & Vandenberghe, 2007; Choi, 2008; Jawahar, 2007; Judge & Colquitt, 2004; Mayer, Nishii, Schneider, & Goldstein, 2007; Scott, Colquitt, & Zapata-Phelan, 2007; Streicher et al., 2008). Of course, several other studies have included only one of the interactional facets, depending on which is most relevant to the research question. For example, Roberson and Stewart's (2006) study of the motivational effects of feedback focused on informational justice but not interpersonal justice. As another example, Judge, Scott, and Ilies's (2006) study of hostility and deviance focused on interpersonal justice but not informational justice.

Even as the organizational justice dimensions were being differentiated into three and then four dimensions, scholars were drawing additional distinctions. For example, scholars argued that the justice dimensions could be distinguished by their *focus*, not just their *content* (Blader & Tyler, 2003; Colquitt, 2001; Rupp & Cropanzano, 2002). Just as formal organizational procedures could be perceived as consistent and unbiased, so too could managers' own decision-making styles (Folger & Bies, 1989; Greenberg et al., 1991; Tyler & Bies, 1990). Just as managerial accounts could be perceived as respectful and candid, so too could an organization's more formal communications. Blader and Tyler referred to this organization- versus manager-originating distinction as *formal justice* versus *informal justice*,

whereas Rupp and Cropanzano (2002) utilized the terms *organizational justice* versus *supervisory justice*.

The distinction between justice "foci" (to utilize Rupp and Cropanzano's (2002) terminology) serves to complement one of the dominant theoretical lenses in the literature: social exchange theory (Blau, 1964). This theory suggests that supportive behaviors by an authority can be viewed as a benefit to an employee that should trigger an obligation to reciprocate. That obligation to reciprocate can then be expressed through positive discretionary behaviors. As applied in the justice literature, this core theoretical premise can be used to explain findings such as the positive relationship between justice perceptions and citizenship behavior (Masterson, Lewis, Goldman, & Taylor, 2000; Organ, 1990). Differentiating organization and manager-originating justice can allow scholars to examine this exchange dynamic with more nuance (Lavelle, Rupp, & Brockner, 2007). For example, organization-originating justice should be a stronger predictor of organization-directed citizenship (e.g., attending optional meetings). In contrast, supervisor-originating justice should be a stronger predictor of supervisor-directed citizenship (e.g., helping one's supervisor with a heavy workload).

These sorts of propositions have been tested in three studies, beginning with Rupp and Cropanzano (2002) and continuing in Liao and Rupp (2005) and Horvath and Andrews (2007). Support for the propositions can be examined by contrasting the size of "focus matching" correlations (e.g., supervisor-originating procedural justice and supervisor-directed citizenship, organization-originating procedural justice and organization-directed citizenship) with their non-matching analogs. Rupp and Cropanzano (2002) and Horvath and Andrews (2007) examined procedural and interpersonal justice, whereas Liao and Rupp (2005) included procedural, interpersonal, and informational justice. Taken together, the correlation matrices in the three studies yielded 28 different matching versus non-matching contrasts. Of those, 18 contrasts revealed the predicted pattern. Interestingly, all three studies suggested that supervisor-originating justice (whether procedural, interpersonal, or informational) was actually a stronger predictor of organization-directed citizenship than was organization-originating justice. Indeed, supervisor-originating justice always explained more variance in the citizenship outcomes, regardless of their target, than organization-originating justice.

Advantages and Disadvantages of the Differentiation Trend

The trend toward differentiation has benefited the literature in many ways. Differentiating procedural justice from distributive justice has allowed scholars to distinguish between the effects of the decision-making process and the effects of the ultimate outcome, while also exploring the interaction of the two (Brockner, 2002; Brockner & Wiesenfeld, 1996). Differentiating interactional justice from procedural justice has highlighted the critical role that the agents of the organization can play when communicating procedural and distributive details (e.g., Greenberg, 1990a; Schaubroeck, May, & Brown, 1994). Decomposing interactional justice into its interpersonal and informational facets has helped to clarify that those agents have dual responsibilities during such communications—to be respectful but also to be honest and informative—and that both of those responsibilities are uniquely relevant to employee reactions (Ambrose et al., 2007; Greenberg, 1993b; Kernan & Hanges, 2002). The end result of these streams of research is that justice scholars can offer managers four distinct strategies for improving fairness perceptions in their organizations.

Differentiating the focus of the justice perceptions has brought a more careful analysis to the examination of justice effects. For example, consider a study demonstrating that procedural justice was more strongly related to organizational commitment than was interpersonal justice. A tempting takeaway from that sort of study would be that concepts like consistency, bias suppression, and accuracy are more salient drivers of attachment than concepts like respect or propriety. However, if the procedural justice scale was focused on the organization and the interpersonal justice scale was focused on a supervisor, the result may instead show that organization-originating justice is more relevant to organization-focused attitudes. Indeed, Liao and Rupp's (2005) study actually showed that organization-originating interpersonal justice was a stronger predictor of organizational commitment than organization-originating procedural justice. This nuance can therefore provide cleaner interpretations of the relative importance of the justice rules that have been identified by scholars (Adams, 1965; Bies & Moag, 1986; Leventhal, 1976, 1980; Thibaut & Walker, 1975).

However, the trend toward differentiation brings significant costs as well. One of those costs is multicollinearity (Ambrose & Arnaud, 2005; Colquitt & Shaw, 2005; Fassina, Jones, & Uggerslev,

2008). Studies using Colquitt's (2001) scales to measure the justice dimensions tend to yield distributive-procedural correlations in the .50s, procedural-informational correlations in the .60s, and interpersonal-informational correlations in the .60s, with other correlations tending to fall in the .40 range (e.g., Ambrose et al., 2007; Bell et al., 2006; Camerman et al., 2007; Choi, 2008; Jawahar, 2007; Johnson, Selenta, & Lord, 2006; Judge & Colquitt, 2004; Mayer et al., 2007; Roberson & Stewart, 2006; Scott et al., 2007; Siers, 2007; Spell & Arnold, 2007; Streicher et al., 2008). Studies using multifoci justice scales tend to yield "within-focus correlations" (e.g., supervisor-originating procedural justice with supervisor-originating interpersonal justice) in the .70s, with other correlations falling in the .40 area (Blader & Tyler, 2003; Horvath & Andrews, 2007; Liao & Rupp, 2005; Rupp & Cropanzano, 2002).

Of course, most justice scholars would argue that such strong correlations are to be expected, especially given that meta-analyses place even the distributive-procedural justice correlation in the .50–.60 range (Cohen-Charash & Spector, 2001; Colquitt et al., 2001; Hauenstein, McGonigle, & Flinder, 2001). Still, when it comes to multicollinearity, most scholars "prefer less to more" (Schwab, 2005, p. 257). After all, multicollinearity inflates the standard errors around regression coefficients, harming statistical power and resulting in "bouncing betas" from one study to the next (Cohen, Cohen, West, & Aiken, 2003; Schwab, 2005). Moreover, because the formula for beta subtracts some portion of predictor covariation from a given correlation, multicollinearity results in circumstances in which a given predictor's beta can be near-zero, or even opposite in sign from its correlation. Finally, shared covariance between a set of predictors and an outcome creates interpretational difficulties, given that no one predictor receives "credit" for the effect.

Another cost of the differentiation trend is decreased parsimony. In his discussion of theory evaluation, Bacharach (1989) argued that useful theories have constructs that sufficiently—although parsimoniously—tap the phenomenon of interest. The parsimony of justice models is hindered when several variables (and degrees of freedom) are required to adequately capture justice perceptions—particularly when each of those variables winds up having its own mediator in a structural equation model. Although scholars within the literature have become used to such models, they may constrain the integration of justice concepts into other literatures. For example, a scholar wanting to incorporate

justice concepts into a model of job satisfaction might be fine measuring two justice variables, yet may balk at the idea of measuring four, or even eight.

The Merits of Aggregation

One potential course of action to address these issues is to aggregate justice, rather than differentiate it. Two different approaches are possible in this vein. One approach is to treat justice as a multidimensional construct, viewing “organizational justice” as a construct rather than a literature label (see Figure 16.1). Law, Wong, and colleagues have noted that many literatures possess “pseudo-multidimensional constructs,” in which authors are vague about whether their labels reflect true constructs or merely useful umbrella terms (Law, Wong, & Mobley, 1998; Wong, Law, & Huang, 2008). Indeed, the authors list the justice literature as an example of this problem, noting that scholars sometimes draw conclusions about justice, in a general sense, from findings that focus specifically on particular dimensions.

Law, Wong, and colleagues describe multiple types of multidimensional constructs, noting that sound theory is needed to guide one’s choice of the most appropriate type (Law et al., 1998; Wong et al., 2008). The most familiar type is the “latent model,” in which the construct is viewed as a higher order, unobservable abstraction underlying the specific dimensions. In a latent model, specific dimensions serve as different manifestations or realizations

of the construct, with each representing the construct with varying degrees of accuracy. The specific dimensions tend to be functionally similar and more or less substitutable. Moreover, the specific dimensions are highly correlated, as the latent construct is defined solely by the common variance shared by the dimensions.

Do theories in the justice literature support a latent model conceptualization? Unfortunately, the answer is likely “sometimes,” as the justice literature includes a number of theories and models that do not necessarily converge in their implications for that question. As it is applied in the justice literature, social exchange theory does seem consistent with a latent model conceptualization, at least on a “within-focus” basis (Lavelle et al., 2007; Rupp & Cropanzano, 2002). The application of the theory tends to view the specific justice dimensions as more or less substitutable examples of a “benefits” construct (Blau, 1964). The key distinction is one of focus, as supervisor-originating benefits should trigger supervisor-directed reciprocation, whereas organization-originating benefits should trigger organization-directed reciprocation. No differential predictions are made for the distributive, procedural, interpersonal, and informational justice dimensions when focus is held constant (Lavelle et al., 2007; Liao & Rupp, 2005; Rupp & Cropanzano, 2002).

Fairness heuristic theory represents another theory that would be consistent with a latent model conceptualization. This theory argues that

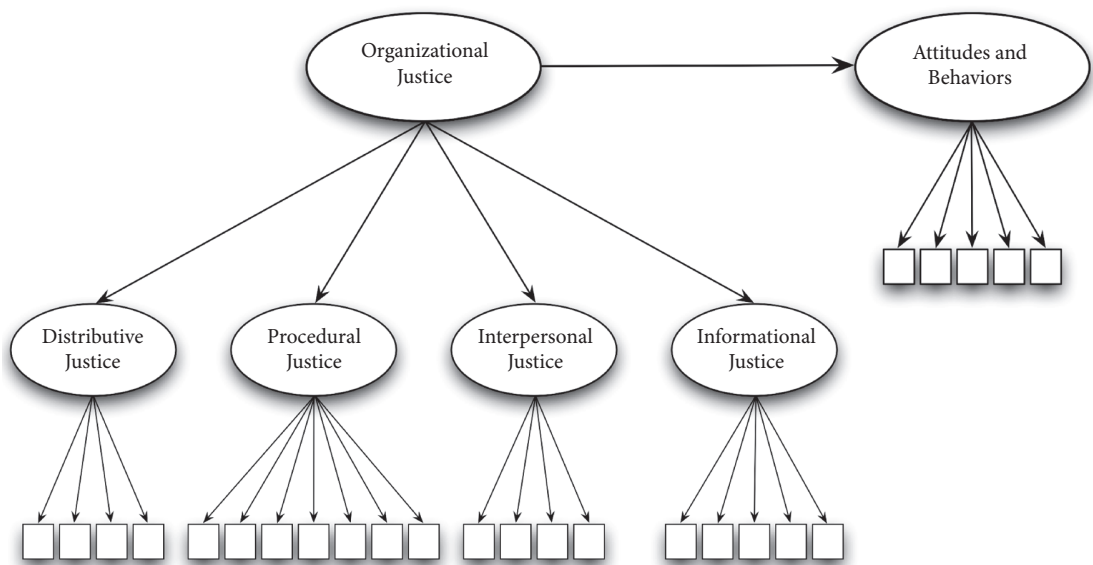


Figure 16.1 Aggregating Justice Using a Higher-Order Latent Variable.

newcomers in an organization are motivated to form a “fairness heuristic” quickly, so that the heuristic can be used to inform decisions about whether to cooperate with authorities (Lind, 2001a; Van den Bos, 2001). The newcomers draw on whatever justice-relevant information is first encountered or is most interpretable, regardless of whether it is of a procedural, distributive, interpersonal, or informational nature. During this initial judgmental phase, the justice-relevant information is used to form a general fairness impression. However, after this initial phase, it is actually that general impression that drives judgments of the specific justice dimensions (Lind, 2001a). At that point, judgments of procedural, distributive, interpersonal, or informational justice merely serve as different manifestations of the same fairness heuristic construct.

A third theory in the literature would not be consistent with a latent model conceptualization, however. Fairness theory argues that individuals react to decision events by engaging in counterfactual thinking (Folger & Cropanzano, 1998, 2001). “Could” counterfactuals consider whether the decision event could have played out differently. “Should” counterfactuals consider whether moral standards were violated during the event. “Would” counterfactuals consider whether one’s well-being would have been better if events had played out differently. The theory suggests that individuals will blame an authority for an event when it could have (and should have) occurred differently, and when well-being would have been better had the alternative scenario played out. Importantly, the different justice dimensions are most relevant to different counterfactuals (Shaw, Wild, & Colquitt, 2003). For example, distributive justice is most relevant to the “would” counterfactual because well-being is often defined in outcome terms. Procedural and interpersonal concepts such as bias suppression, ethicality, and propriety are most relevant to the “should” counterfactual because they are more “morally charged.” Informational justice is most relevant to the “could” counterfactual if explanations are used to excuse the event in question. Thus, the justice dimensions are less substitutable in this theory’s formulations, and do not appear to be different manifestations of some common construct.

The appropriateness of a latent model conceptualization would therefore seem to depend on the theoretical grounding for a given study and the nature of its specific predictions. If predictions are focused on the independent or interactive effects of specific justice dimensions, such an approach is obviously

inappropriate. If predictions are focused on the effects of shared justice variance, however, then a latent model approach would be suitable (Fassina et al., 2008). At this point, however, examples of a latent model approach are very rare. In their chapter on justice measurement, Colquitt and Shaw (2005) showed that Colquitt’s (2001) four scales had strong factor loadings if used as latent indicators of a higher order “organizational justice” construct. The only refereed example of a latent model approach is Liao’s (2007) study of how customer service employees respond to product complaints. Liao noted that the approach was utilized in the interest of parsimony in that differential predictions were not offered for the specific justice dimensions. As in Colquitt and Shaw (2005), Liao’s (2007) results showed that the four justice dimensions had strong loadings on a higher order organizational justice factor. In addition, because the specific dimensions were measured and included in the study as indicators, the reader could peruse the correlation matrix to examine any differential relationships that might be evident.

Another approach to aggregation would be to include an actual scale devoted to an overall sense of fairness. Although this overall fairness could serve a number of roles, it is often discussed as “theoretically downstream” from the specific justice dimensions (Ambrose & Arnaud, 2005; Ambrose & Schminke, 2009; Colquitt, Greenberg, & Scott, 2005; Colquitt & Shaw, 2005; Leventhal, 1980). From this perspective, distributive, procedural, interpersonal, and informational justice serve as antecedents of overall fairness, with overall fairness then serving as an antecedent of attitudinal and behavioral outcomes (see Figure 16.2). The positioning of overall fairness in Figure 16.2 is similar to the positioning of overall satisfaction scales in the job satisfaction literature, which often view overall satisfaction as a consequence of more specific satisfaction facets (e.g., Bowling & Hammond, 2008; Ironson, Smith, Brannick, Gibson, & Paul, 1989).

The use of an overall fairness measure has a number of potential benefits. Perhaps most importantly, it explicitly captures the “that’s not fair!” response that is expected to accompany violations of rules like equity, consistency, accuracy, respect, truthfulness, and so forth. It also allows scholars to verify that it is that sense of fairness or unfairness that explains why distributive, procedural, interpersonal, and informational justice are predictive of key organizational outcomes. The relationship between overall fairness and those outcomes is also devoid of multicollinearity (though multicollinearity would still

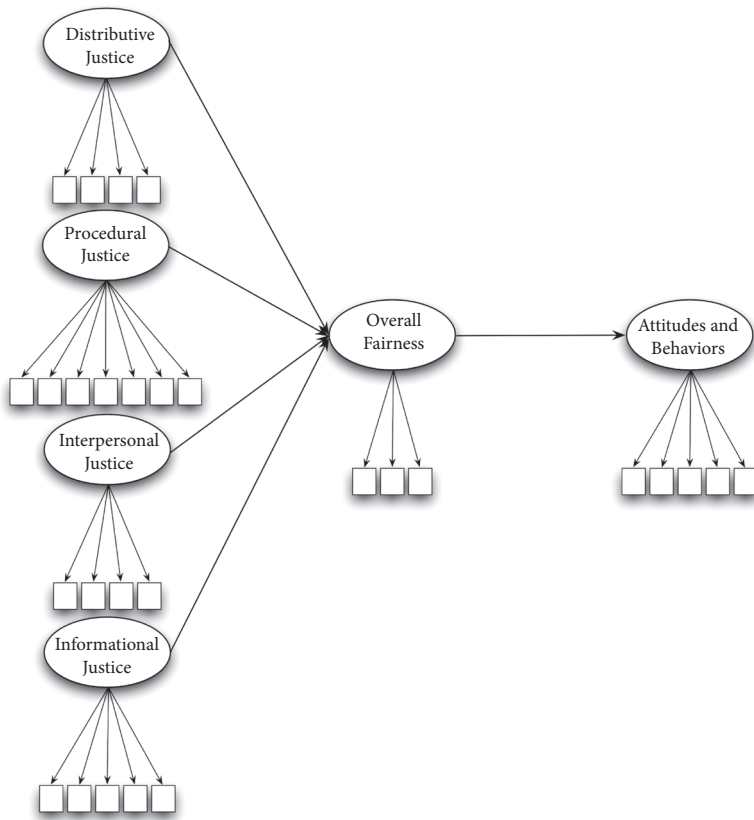


Figure 16.2 Aggregating Justice Using Overall Fairness Perceptions.

become problematic if Figure 16.2 were replaced by a partially mediated structure that included direct effects of the specific justice dimensions on the outcomes of interest). Moreover, because of its brevity, overall fairness could serve as a useful construct for inclusion in studies that are not focused on organizational justice per se.

At least six studies have included measures of overall fairness (Ambrose & Schminke, 2009; Choi, 2008; Kim & Leung, 2007; Masterson, 2001; Rodell & Colquitt, 2009; Zapata-Phelan, Colquitt, Scott, & Livingston, 2009). One challenge in constructing such measures is to avoid item wording or content that seems to reflect some justice dimensions more than others. The measures shown in Table 16.1 attempt to strike that balance by utilizing broad, all-encompassing terms like *is* or *acts*. In contrast, measures by Ambrose and Schminke (2009) and Kim and Leung (2007) sometimes utilize the word *treats*, which may reflect interpersonal justice more than the other justice dimensions. Another challenge in constructing such measures is that perceptions of overall fairness may be driven by more than just the specific justice dimensions. Such judgments

may also be colored by the perceiver's affect or by other qualities of the target, such as supportiveness or flexibility (Colquitt & Shaw, 2005; Hollensbe, Khazanchi, & Masterson, 2008).

Interestingly, of the six studies that have operationalized overall fairness, only two cast overall fairness as a mediator of the effects of the specific justice dimensions on job satisfaction and turnover intentions. Ambrose and Schminke's (2009) results revealed the same pattern for both attitudinal and behavioral outcomes, including citizenship and counterproductive behavior. In contrast, Choi (2008) cast overall fairness as a moderator of the relationship between specific justice dimensions and attitudinal and behavioral outcomes, consistent with Cropanzano, Byrne, Bobocel, and Rupp's (2001) model of "event versus entity" justice judgments. Rodell and Colquitt (2009) cast overall fairness as an antecedent of the specific justice dimensions, consistent with Lind's (2001a) description of fairness heuristic theory. As in the discussion of the latent model, such variations reveal the

Table 16.1. Examples of Measures of Overall Fairness

Author String	Items
Choi (2008) ^a	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. My supervisor always gives me a fair deal. 2. My supervisor is a fair person. 3. Fairness is the word that best describes my supervisor.
Masterson (2001) ^a	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Overall, I believe the university is a fair organization. 2. I do not believe that the university is a fair organization. (R) 3. In general, I believe the university is just. 4. On the whole, the university is a fair organization.
Rodell & Colquitt (2009) ^b	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. How often does your immediate supervisor act fairly toward you? 2. To what extent do you believe that your immediate supervisor is fair to you? 3. How fair do you think your immediate supervisor is to you?
Zapata-Phelan, Colquitt, Scott, & Livingston (2009) ^c	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. In general, the experiment was fair. 2. Overall, I felt that this experiment was done fairly. 3. If asked, I would tell other students that this experiment was fair.

^a Item anchors range from 1 = *Strongly Disagree* to 7 = *Strongly Agree*.

^b Item anchors are as follows: (1) 1 = Almost Never to 5 = Almost Always, (2) 1 = To a Very Small Extent to 5 = To a Very Large Extent, (3) 1 = Very Unfair to 5 = Very Fair.

^c Item anchors range from 1 = *Strongly Disagree* to 5 = *Strongly Agree*.

differing predictions that justice theories make for overall assessments of fairness.

Trend Two: Cognition

Many of the earliest models of justice were cognitive in nature, viewing justice through a lens of mental deliberation and/or intuition. Some models have stressed the controlled or calculative end of the cognitive continuum, whereas others have stressed the automatic or heuristic end (see Cropanzano et al., 2001, and Lind, 2001b, for a discussion of such issues). Regardless of these differences, the trend toward cognition can be seen in a number of research streams within the literature. Those streams include research focused on why individuals care about justice issues, how individuals form justice perceptions, and why justice is predictive of attitudes and behaviors.

Beginning with the “Why do individuals care?” question, a review by Gillespie and Greenberg (2005) noted that justice is assumed to fulfill a number of key goals, where goals are defined as cognitive representations of desired states. Similarly, Cropanzano et al.’s (2001) review argued that justice is assumed to fulfill multiple needs, where needs can be defined as cognitive groupings of outcomes that have critical consequences to the individual. One goal (or need) that was emphasized in early justice research is control. In what has come to be known as the instrumental model (Lind & Tyler, 1988), Thibaut and

Walker (1975) argued that justice is valued because it provides a sense of control and predictability for outcomes over the long term. From this perspective, individuals value and consider justice rules because justice is instrumental—it helps in the attainment of valued outcomes.

Partially in response to the instrumental model, Lind and Tyler (1988) suggested that individuals also attend to justice issues because fairness satisfies a goal (or need) for positive self-regard or belonging. The relational model argues that individuals are motivated to belong to groups and that they look for signals about the extent to which those groups value them (Lind & Tyler, 1988; Tyler & Lind, 1992). When authorities are neutral and unbiased, or when they implement procedures with dignity and respect, they convey to the relevant individuals a sense of status in the group. This model is capable of explaining why fair treatment is associated with more favorable reactions, even when it does not enhance actual control over outcomes or resources (Tyler, 1994).

A more recent model emphasizes a third goal (or need). The deontic model (Cropanzano, Goldman, & Folger, 2003; Folger, 1998, 2001), sometimes also termed the *moral virtue model* (Cropanzano et al., 2001), argues that individuals attend to justice issues because they signal a respect for principled moral obligations. That is, rather than merely signaling a sense of control or esteem, justice is valued because

“virtue serves as its own reward” (Folger, 1998, p. 32). The deontic model is able to explain why individuals value justice, even when it does not benefit their own outcomes, and even when it does not improve their standing in some relevant social group (Turillo, Folger, Lavelle, Umphress, & Gee, 2002).

As with the goals and needs used by the models above, justice theories also use cognitive mechanisms to explain how individuals form justice judgments. As described in the discussion of the differentiation trend, fairness heuristic theory argues that justice-relevant information is quickly aggregated into a “fairness heuristic” that is used to guide subsequent attitudes and behaviors (Lind, 2001a; Van den Bos, 2001). The theory views distributive, procedural, interpersonal, and informational justice information as substitutable inputs into that heuristic creation process. Because organizational newcomers will often experience decision-making procedures before the outcomes become apparent, and because information about outcome comparisons may not be available, procedural information often has a particularly strong impact on the heuristic. Regardless of which justice dimension winds up being experienced first or being viewed as most interpretable, this theory portrays the development of justice judgments as less deliberate and effortful.

A different portrayal is offered by fairness theory (Folger & Cropanzano, 1998, 2001). The counterfactual thinking described by this theory brings a more structured and careful analysis to the justice judgment process, as individuals ask whether events “could” have played out differently, whether authorities “should” have acted differently, and whether well-being “would” have been enhanced if events had occurred differently. Although there is no one order in which these counterfactual cognitions must be considered, all three seem necessary to ultimately decide how to react to the authority in terms of perceived fairness, perceived accountability, and potential for blame. As a result, fairness theory requires a more extensive consideration of the justice dimensions than does fairness heuristic theory.

Although it has gained less research attention than fairness theory and fairness heuristic theory, another model provides a third example of explaining the justice judgment process with cognitive mechanisms. Ambrose and Kulik’s (2001) categorization approach relies on categories to describe how fairness perceptions are formed. Categories are cognitive structures that represent the features of a given stimulus. Category prototypes are special

structures that include all of the essential features of a given category. Ambrose and Kulik (2001) suggest that the justice rules identified by Thibaut and Walker (1975), Leventhal (1976, 1980), Bies and Moag (1986), and others represent the features of a category prototype for justice, though some rules may be more essential to the prototype, with others being more peripheral. From this perspective, a given decision event is judged to be fair when the event’s features match the central elements of the justice category prototype.

Finally, explanations about why justice is predictive of attitudes and behaviors have also been largely cognitive in nature. Consider the social exchange-based explanation described in the prior section—that fair behaviors serve as a benefit to an employee, with attitudes and behaviors that support the organization offered in reciprocation (Blau, 1964). Blau’s description of the social exchange dynamic emphasizes the concept of obligation. When fair treatment is received, a general expectation of future return is triggered, though the form or time frame for that return is left unspecified. Blau (1964) also emphasizes the importance of trust to the establishment and expansion of the social exchange dynamic. Reciprocation may not be offered if the exchange partner is not deemed trustworthy, and reciprocation will not deepen if trust does not expand commensurately. Those descriptions highlight the calculated rationality used to explain the relationship between justice and employee reactions.

Advantages and Disadvantages of the Cognition Trend

The trend toward cognition has benefited the literature in a number of ways. It has, for example, enabled scholars to look inside the “black box” of justice perceptions to explain how and why individuals come to view decision events and authorities as fair or unfair. In so doing, the theories that introduced the cognitive mechanisms helped to fill a void in the literature. Literature reviews near the beginning of the 1990s pointed to a dearth of integrative theories in the justice literature (Greenberg, 1990b; Lind & Tyler, 1988). The relational model, fairness theory, and fairness heuristic theory joined social exchange theory to give the justice literature a level of conceptual richness that other literatures may not enjoy. Those theories have also served as conceptual “jumping-off points” for other theorizing that has identified mediators and moderators of justice relationships (Colquitt & Greenberg, 2003; Cropanzano et al., 2001).

However, the trend toward cognition has important limitations as well. First and foremost, it has created somewhat of a disconnect between how employees describe fairness and how academics study it. Bies and Tripp (2002) note that employees *feel* injustice on an emotional basis—reporting anger, bitterness, and fear in connection with violations of justice rules. The authors suggested that the justice literature has focused more on the cognitive “high ground” than the emotional “valley of darkness” associated with experiences of injustice. Similarly, Folger, Cropanzano, and Goldman’s (2005) discussion of fairness theory and the deontic model notes that the capacity to reason about justice operates simultaneously with a sense of anger that results from violations of moral standards.

The neglect of affective mechanisms creates an unmeasured variables problem in many of the models in the justice literature. Consider the notion that biased procedures result in a less favorable justice judgment, which then results in a scaling back of reciprocation behaviors on the job. Explicitly considering the role of affect could change “what we know” about the links in that presumed causal chain. It may be that the unfavorable justice judgment triggers a negative emotion and gives that emotion its depth and resonance. However, it may also be that the experience of bias itself triggers the emotion, with a justice-relevant label ascribed to make sense of the feeling post hoc (Bies & Tripp, 2002; Colquitt, Greenberg, & Scott, 2005). Moreover, it may be that the emotional reactions fully mediate the effects of the bias on subsequent behaviors, with the justice judgment having no unique mediating role. The only way to ascertain the relative effects of cognitive and affective mechanisms is to integrate affect into the justice literature more fully.

The Merits of Affect

A number of affective variables and mechanisms are potentially relevant to justice theorizing (Cohen-Charash & Byrne, 2008). That list includes emotions, mood, and trait affectivity (for a review, see Grandey, 2008). Emotions are short-term feeling states that are referenced to a particular target. A number of emotions are relevant to justice models, including positive emotions (e.g., happiness, pride, gratitude) and negative emotions (e.g., anger, sadness, fear, envy). Moods are feeling states that are weaker in intensity and longer in duration than emotions, and lack a salient target.

Moods are typically operationalized on a more aggregate basis, with positive moods reflecting pleasant and active forms of state affect and negative moods reflecting unpleasant and active forms of state affect. Finally, trait affectivity reflects a dispositional tendency to experience positive or negative feeling states. As with mood, trait affectivity is typically operationalized on a more aggregate basis, in the form of positive affectivity and negative affectivity. Those dimensions are functionally similar (if not identical) to the personality dimensions of extraversion and neuroticism, respectively (Clark & Watson, 1999).

Figure 16.3 illustrates some of the emotions, mood, and trait affectivity effects that have begun to be examined by justice scholars. For example, Van den Bos (2003) examined the effects of mood on fairness perceptions when information on justice criteria was clear versus unclear. In two studies, the author manipulated the degree to which Thibaut and Walker’s (1975) process-control criterion was clearly and unambiguously fulfilled by comparing three conditions: (a) process control explicitly granted, (b) process control explicitly denied, and (c) process control not mentioned. The author also manipulated mood by asking participants to describe and write about the experience of being either happy or angry. The results of the study showed that mood had little impact on fairness perceptions when information about process control was clear and unambiguous. However, when information on that procedural justice rule was omitted, participants in the positive mood condition perceived more fairness than participants in the negative mood condition. Essentially, mood “filled in the gaps” left by the absence of clear information on relevant justice rules.

Barsky and Kaplan (2007) examining the effects of both mood and trait affectivity on measures of procedural, distributive, and interactional justice. More specifically, the authors conducted a meta-analysis of 57 samples that included measures of the justice dimensions, mood, and/or trait affectivity. The results yielded moderately strong correlations between mood and the justice dimensions. Positive mood was associated with more favorable justice perceptions, and negative mood was associated with less favorable justice perceptions. Interestingly, the magnitude of the positive and negative mood effects were quite similar. The results yielded somewhat weaker, but still significant correlations between trait affectivity and the justice dimensions. As with the mood results, the magnitude of the positive and negative

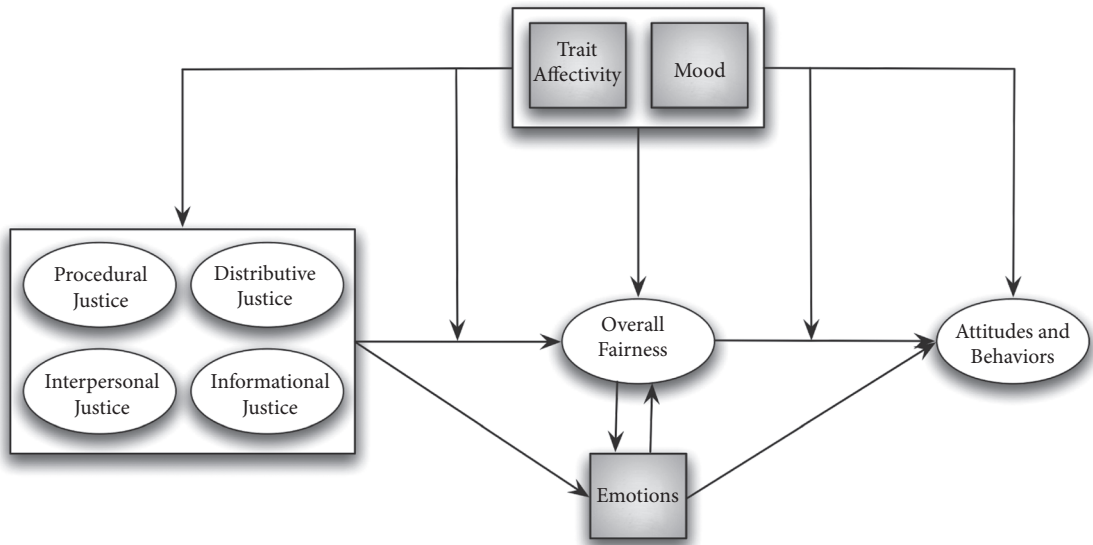


Figure 16.3 Integrating Justice and Affect.

affectivity effects were similar. It therefore appears that positive affect and negative affect can “move the needle” on justice perceptions to a similar degree.

Barsky and Kaplan’s (2007) review raises a number of questions about the role of affect in forming justice perceptions. For example, given that most of the articles included in the review were field studies that utilized self-report measures of both affect and justice, it may be that the meta-analytic correlations are inflated by common method bias (Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Lee, & Podsakoff, 2003). It would therefore be useful to compare Barsky and Kaplan’s (2007) results with studies that utilize multiple sources. For example, Rodell and Colquitt (2009) showed that ratings of neuroticism by significant others were negatively correlated with a number of justice dimensions. Even here, however, the interpretation of the findings is ambiguous, as individuals who are rated high in negative affectivity should themselves exhibit a strictness bias on many self-report measures (justice included). Moreover, as Barsky and Kaplan (2007) note, it may be that the affect exhibited by individuals leads to “objectively” different treatment by organizational authorities. For example, an individual who frequently exhibits feelings of hostility may actually experience more disrespectful treatment by a supervisor as a direct result (the subsequent section of this review discusses this possibility in more detail).

Whereas the studies reviewed above cast affect as an antecedent of justice perceptions, other work has focused on affect as a consequence of them. This stream of research focuses on emotions rather than mood or trait affectivity, given that emotions can be referenced to a particular agent, action, or event. Drawing on appraisal theories of emotions, Weiss, Suckow, and Cropanzano (1999) conducted one of the earliest studies in this stream. The authors noted that events first trigger a primary appraisal, which is a gross evaluation of whether an event is harmful or beneficial to relevant goals or values. This appraisal determines the general valence of the state affect, in terms of whether it is positive or negative. A secondary appraisal then follows, which includes an assessment of whether the outcome is attributed to the self or some other. It is this secondary appraisal that typically results in the differentiation of positive or negative state affect into more discrete emotions.

In a laboratory study, Weiss et al. (1999) paired participants with a confederate in order to compete with another pair of confederates on a decision-making task. Two procedurally unjust conditions were created: a favorably biased condition in which the confederate mentioned that a friend had already done the study and provided some answers, and an unfavorably biased condition in which the participant overheard the other pair mentioning the same advantage. No such information was given in a third condition, reflecting a more procedurally just

circumstance. The study crossed these conditions with outcome favorability, with participants winning the competition in some conditions and losing it in other conditions. Participants then filled out a survey that asked, "Please indicate how you feel about what just happened," with items included to represent happiness, pride, anger, and guilt.

Weiss et al.'s (1999) results showed that happiness was driven solely by outcome favorability, suggesting that it depends only on primary appraisals of harm or benefit. The authors had expected that pride would be highest when the outcome was favorable and the procedure was either just or unfavorably biased. However, as with happiness, pride was driven primarily by outcome favorability, with the predicted procedural pattern failing to emerge. With respect to the negative emotions, anger was highest when the outcome was unfavorable and the procedure was unfavorably biased. Guilt, in contrast, was highest when the outcome was favorable and the procedure was favorably biased. The two negative emotions therefore seemed to depend on both primary and secondary appraisal, with the gross evaluation of harm or benefit needing to be supplemented with information about whether the outcome could be attributed to oneself or another.

In a subsequent study, Krehbiel and Cropanzano (2000) replicated the above findings for happiness and pride, while also showing that a negative emotion—disappointment—was solely driven by outcome favorability. Other emotions again depended on particular combinations of outcome favorability and procedural justice, including anger, guilt, and anxiety. Barclay, Skarlicki, and Pugh (2005) conducted a field study of reactions to a layoff event, focusing primarily on the negative emotions of guilt and anger. As in Weiss et al. (1999), their results showed that those emotions were an interactive function of outcome favorability (i.e., the quality of the severance package) and the justice of the layoff process (i.e., procedural justice and interactional justice).

Given the distinction between outcome favorability and distributive justice, an important issue is whether the same sort of interactive pattern exists when the outcome is expressed in equity terms. A field study by Goldman (2003) examined this issue in a study of reactions to a termination event. The results of the study showed that anger was predicted by a three-way interaction of distributive justice, procedural justice, and interactional justice. The pattern of this interaction revealed that the procedural and interactional justice combinations had

stronger relationships with anger when distributive justice was low than when it was high. In addition, the highest levels of anger were felt when all three justice dimensions were low. Thus, as in Weiss et al. (1999), anger seemed to depend on both the primary appraisal and the secondary appraisal.

Goldman's (2003) study also examined two other affective influences from Figure 16.3. First, he examined whether anger served to mediate the negative relationship between justice perceptions and whether the terminated individual filed a legal claim against the company. The results revealed the same three-way interaction for legal claiming that was described above, and the results further showed that the effect was mediated by anger. Second, he examined whether trait anger—a more specific facet of trait negative affectivity—moderated the relationship between the justice dimensions and legal claiming. The results showed that the three-way interaction for legal claiming was more pronounced for individuals who experience anger more frequently, as a function of their disposition.

A field study by Fox, Spector, and Miles (2001) examined a similar set of relationships, though it differed from Goldman's (2003) study in two key respects. First, it focused on the main effects of the justice dimensions rather than their interactive effects. Second, it did not focus on a specific decision event, instead surveying a variety of employees about more general perceptions of distributive and procedural justice (with the latter also containing interactional items). As a result of this second difference, the emotion measures also differed from the studies reviewed above. Rather than asking how the participants felt at a specific point in time, Fox et al. (2001) assessed the degree to which their jobs have made them feel particular emotions during the past 30 days (Van Katwyk, Fox, Spector, and Kelloway [2000] termed this "affective well-being"). The results showed that negative affective well-being (an amalgam of fear, anger, disgust, and sadness) mediated the relationship between procedural justice and counterproductive behaviors. Positive affective well-being (an amalgam of enthusiasm, pride, happiness, and contentment) was also included, though it exhibited weaker relationships with counterproductive behaviors. Fox et al. (2001) also included two measures of trait affectivity—trait anger and trait anxiety—but neither was shown to be a significant moderator of the justice-counterproductive behavior relationships.

A more recent study relied on an experience sampling methodology (ESM) to examine the mediating

and moderating effects of emotions and trait affectivity. Judge et al. (2006) surveyed employees at the end of each workday for a three-week time period. The participants completed self-report measures of interpersonal justice, anger, job satisfaction, and counterproductive behavior each day, and a significant other completed a measure of trait anger. The ESM results showed that more than half of the variation in counterproductive behavior was within-person variance (as opposed to between-person variance). The results suggested that the relationship between interpersonal justice and counterproductive behavior was mediated by state anger and job satisfaction. Moreover, trait anger moderated the interpersonal justice–state anger relationship, such that the linkage was stronger for individuals who were more prone to experience feelings of anger and hostility.

Trend Three: Exogeneity

In his review that coined the “organizational justice” term, Greenberg (1987) introduced a 2 x 2 taxonomy to organize the models in the nascent literature. One of the taxonomy dimensions was process versus outcome, reflecting the distinction between procedural and distributive justice. The other dimension was reactive versus proactive, with the former focusing on reactions to just and unjust events, and the latter focused on the behaviors that can create just events. For example, Adam’s (1965) work on equity theory exemplified the outcome-reactive cell, because it focused on reactions to inequitable outcome distributions. In contrast, Leventhal’s (1976) work on allocation norms was proactive, because it focused on the effects of certain goals (e.g., individual productivity as opposed to group harmony or personal welfare) on the decision to utilize an equity norm.

In reflecting on the 1987 taxonomy, Greenberg and Wiethoff (2001) noted that reactive research explores this focal question: “How do people respond to fair and unfair conditions?” (p. 272). In contrast, proactive research explores a different focal question: “How can fair conditions be created?” (p. 272). At the time of Greenberg’s (1987) review, the justice literature was still focused on the specific procedural rules that could be used to promote perceptions of fairness. For example, Greenberg’s (1986) Q-sort study supported the notion that process control, consistency, bias suppression, accuracy, correctability, and so forth could be used to create a fair decision-making process (Leventhal, 1980; Thibaut & Walker, 1975). As another example,

initial studies on interactional justice (e.g., Bies & Shapiro, 1988) were focused on supporting the notion that respect, propriety, truthfulness, and justification could be used to create a fair procedural enactment (Bies & Moag, 1986). These sorts of early studies would fall under Greenberg’s (1987) proactive label because they are focused on the creation of fairness.

Once the constitutive elements of the justice dimensions became clear, however, the literature began to move in a decidedly reactive direction. Many of the studies spotlighted in the prior sections of this review are indicative of that trend. Early work on the distributive and procedural justice distinction cast justice as the independent variable, with job attitudes (job satisfaction, trust, organizational commitment) serving as the outcomes (Folger & Konovsky, 1989; McFarlin & Sweeney, 1992; Sweeney & McFarlin, 1993). The advent of the social exchange lens brought a new set of variables for justice to predict, including citizenship and other reciprocation-oriented behaviors (Blau, 1964; Masterson et al., 2000; Organ, 1990). Even the studies linking justice to affect have tended to adopt a reactive structure, with the justice dimensions serving as predictors of emotions and emotion-driven behaviors (Barclay et al., 2005; Fox et al., 2001; Goldman, 2003; Krehbiel & Cropanzano, 2000; Judge et al., 2006; Weiss et al., 1999).

The end result of this reactive focus is that justice is exogenous in most of the empirical studies in the literature. That is, scales like Colquitt’s (2001) or Moorman’s (1991) are utilized as the independent variables, with direct and indirect effects on attitudinal, affective, and behavioral variables. It is true that measures of fairness perceptions, similar to the type shown in Table 16.1, may be endogenous in some studies. However, the focal independent variables in those studies are often manipulations or measures of the rules included in Colquitt’s (2001) and Moorman’s (1991) measures. Moreover, such studies may still ultimately be focused on the prediction of some attitudinal, affective, or behavioral reaction.

Advantages and Disadvantages of the Exogeneity Trend

The trend toward exogeneity has benefited the literature in a number of ways. Perhaps most importantly, it helped establish the organizational justice literature as a worthy area of study. Within a few years of the construct’s introduction to the organizational sciences, reactive research had shown that

justice was as predictive, or more predictive, of relevant criteria than other job attitudes or other leader variables. Those findings brought a practical relevance to the literature, providing an incentive to conduct field research that could benefit the host organization. Those findings also brought a theoretical relevance to the literature, encouraging scholars in other literatures to “import” justice concepts into their work. Indeed, were it not for that reactive focus, it would be difficult to conceive of the literature’s rapid growth in the past two decades (Colquitt, 2008).

However, a consequence of this focus is that scholars know little about the circumstances that result in an adherence to the justice rules described by Leventhal (1976, 1980), Thibaut and Walker (1975), Bies and Moag (1986), and others. Presumably, there are features of the organization, the manager, or the employee that decrease the likelihood that those justice rules will be violated (Gilliland, Steiner, Skarlicki, & Van den Bos, 2005). As Greenberg and Wiethoff (2001) describe, proactive research treats justice as a motive—it seeks to explain why individuals strive to create just states. Organizational, managerial, and employee factors may predict that motive, or they may create a circumstance in which the motive is easier to act upon. In either event, identifying the factors that foster justice rule adherence requires making the justice dimensions endogenous within empirical studies.

The Merits of Endogeneity

An emerging set of empirical studies has begun to examine antecedents of the justice dimensions. Some of those antecedents are characteristics of the organization. Schminke, Ambrose, and Cropanzano (2000) linked aspects of the organization’s structure to adherence to the process control and bias suppression rules of procedural justice. For example, employees reported less adherence to those rules when the organization had a centralized authority hierarchy, meaning that even small decisions had to be referred to a “higher up” for approval. Such results suggest that managers need to be given enough of their own authority to maximize justice rule adherence within their work units. Schminke et al. (2000) also included interactional justice, but it was operationalized using general perceptions of fair treatment, rather than adherence to the specific rules of respect, propriety, truthfulness, and justification.

Gilliland and Schepers (2003) conducted a survey of human resources managers in a study of adherence to interpersonal and informational justice rules

during layoff events. One aspect of the organization, whether or not it was unionized, predicted the number of days notice that employees were given—an aspect of informational justice. That variable was not related to the amount of information that was shared, however, nor was it related to the demeanor used to communicate the layoff—an aspect of interpersonal justice. The authors also assessed managerial variables, including past experience conducting layoffs and the number of employees personally laid off. Past experience was actually negatively related to days notice, whereas the number laid off was positively related to the amount of information shared. Neither variable predicted the demeanor used to communicate the layoff, however.

A different set of managerial variables was examined by Mayer et al. (2007) in a sample of grocery store employees. The authors measured managerial personality in terms of the five-factor model, attempting to link those dimensions to procedural, interpersonal, and informational justice rule adherence. The results of the study depended on whether the Big Five were examined separately or in tandem. However, the results seemed to support a negative relationship between neuroticism and interpersonal justice rule adherence and a positive relationship between agreeableness and informational justice rule adherence. Neurotic managers tended to communicate less respectfully, and agreeable managers tended to be more candid and forthcoming. None of the Big Five variables predicted adherence to procedural justice rules, however.

Although the studies reviewed above revealed some linkages between organizational and managerial variables and the justice dimensions, it may also be that the employee has some impact on the treatment that he or she receives. Korsgaard, Roberson, and Rymph (1998) examined this possibility in two studies. They reasoned that assertive employees would receive more extensive justifications from their managers because of their tendency to use confident posture and eye contact and to ask questions of clarification. A laboratory study supported the relationship between employee assertiveness and adherence to informational justice rules, but the linkage was not supported in a field study.

In a more recent study, Scott et al. (2007) examined the effects of employee charisma on managers’ adherence to justice rules. The authors argued that charismatic employees have a “personal magnetism” that inspires affective responses on the part of their managers. Those affective responses were operationalized using positive and negative sentiments

(i.e., tendencies to experience positive or negative emotions when around specific individuals). Scott et al. (2007) argued that positive sentiments would prompt managers to be more courteous and friendly to employees and to engage in more frequent instances of information sharing with them. Indeed, a field study of insurance company employees revealed a significant relationship between charisma and interpersonal justice, with both positive and negative sentiments mediating that relationship. Contrary to expectations, no relationship was observed for informational justice.

Conclusion

There is little doubt that the three trends spotlighted in this review—differentiation, cognition, and exogeneity—have fueled the growth of the justice literature and have brought a cohesion and structure to the domain. There is also little doubt that the trends have impacted how a given justice study “looks,” in terms of the models it tests, the conceptual lenses it uses, and the methods and statistics it employs. As the literature reaches a more mature stage of its life cycle, however, one potential concern is that the significant advances of the past will give way to more incremental or marginal advances. This chapter has argued that justice scholars should consider the merits of the obverses of these literature trends—aggregation, affect, and endogeneity—in order to tap into their potential for creating new directions for justice research. By “breaking the mold” that has come to define justice studies, efforts focused on aggregation, affect, and endogeneity could result in more novel, innovative, and significant advances.

Future Directions

Of course, going against the trends that have shaped the literature could be viewed as risky by the potential authors of such studies. On the one hand, many top-tier journals explicitly emphasize novelty in their mission statements and information for contributors. On the other hand, many editors and reviewers use the characteristics of more typical justice studies to create a sort of template for judging the theoretical and empirical adequacy of new submissions. This chapter therefore closes with some research directions that can be used to guide future steps down the aggregation, affect, and endogeneity paths. These suggested directions are meant to be contributions that are novel but that are still grounded in established or emerging areas of the literature. I begin with suggestions that focus on

one specific trend before moving to directions that involve a combination of the trends.

Aggregation

Future research needs to critically explore whether aggregate or differentiated operationalizations are appropriate with the dominant theoretical lenses in the literature. The social exchange lens has emerged as the dominant framework for understanding the effects of justice on job attitudes and behaviors (Blau, 1964; Masterson et al., 2000; Organ, 1990). As noted above, that lens seems suitable for an aggregate approach, as justice scholars rarely draw distinctions among the justice dimensions when predicting attitudes supportive of reciprocation (e.g., trust, commitment, felt obligation) or behaviors indicative of reciprocation (e.g., citizenship). Instead, the only distinctions that tend to be made concern the source of the justice and the target of the reciprocation. However, discussions of social exchange theory describe a number of benefits that can be used to foster exchange relationships, including information, advice, assistance, social acceptance, status, and appreciation (Blau, 1964; Foa & Foa, 1980). It may be that specific justice rules are more relevant to some of those benefits than others, creating distinctions in the specific nature of the resulting exchange dynamic.

Testing the viability of an aggregate approach to social exchange theorizing could be done in a number of ways. For example, the variance explained in reciprocation attitudes and behaviors by the four justice dimensions could be compared to the variance explained by a higher order justice dimension or a measure of overall fairness. Presumably, some decrement in variance-explained would result for an aggregate approach. The question would be how much was lost, and whether that decrement was justifiable given the gain in parsimony. As another example, the pattern of correlations between aggregate justice (whether a higher order dimension or an overall measure) and a set of reciprocation attitudes and behaviors could be compared to the corresponding patterns for the specific justice dimensions. If the dimensional nuance matters, the distributive, procedural, interpersonal, and informational patterns will differ from one another, and will also differ from the aggregate pattern. Westen and Rosenthal (2003) describe methods for quantifying similarities in correlation patterns that could prove useful in this regard. Regardless of the approach that is utilized, it is important to note that such studies should hold the source of the justice and the target

of the reciprocation constant, so that differences in relationships can be interpreted unambiguously.

Affect

Research integrating justice and affect should begin to explore whether emotions mediate justice effects when more cognitive mediators are also modeled. Existing research has been more focused on identifying and clarifying the justice-emotion linkages (Barclay et al., 2005; Fox et al., 2001; Goldman, 2003; Krehbiel & Cropanzano, 2000; Weiss et al., 1999), omitting the kinds of mediators that would flow out of more cognitive justice theorizing. Do positive and negative emotions mediate the relationships between justice and behavioral reactions when mediators like trust and felt obligation are also modeled? Examining this question requires the integration of more cognitive theories, such as social exchange theory (Blau, 1964), with more affective theories, such as affective events theory (Weiss & Cropanzano, 1996).

One challenge in conducting such research is balancing the differing time horizons for emotion-based mediators and cognition-based mediators. Studies that examine the mediating effects of trust or felt obligation would typically be between-individual studies of either a cross-sectional or longitudinal nature. Because emotions are short-term feeling states, it may be inappropriate to operationalize them in such studies. Instead, scholars may need to utilize more long-term feeling states that still possess a particular target, such as affective well-being (Fox et al., 2001; Van Katwyk et al., 2000) or sentiments (Scott et al., 2007). Alternatively, scholars could utilize ESM studies to model within-individual changes in emotions as a function of daily justice experiences. This approach would involve measuring mediators such as trust or felt obligation on a daily basis, so that within-person changes in those mechanisms could also be assessed. It may be, however, that the within-person variation in those more cognitive mediators will be limited, especially relative to the emotional mediators.

Endogeneity

With respect to the endogeneity trend, future research should continue to examine the organizational, managerial, and employee variables that can help predict the adherence to justice rules. At this point, the list of potential antecedents is quite short and varied, including organizational structure (Schminke et al., 2000), unionization (Gilliland & Schepers, 2003), managerial

personality (Mayer et al., 2007), employee assertiveness (Korsgaard et al., 1998), and employee charisma (Scott et al., 2007). Although it is difficult to draw conclusions from so few studies, two trends seem notable. First, several of the studies have yielded either small effect sizes or effects that are not statistically significant. Second, most of the hypotheses have focused on adherence to interpersonal and informational justice rules, such as respect, propriety, justification, and truthfulness (Bies & Moag, 1986; Greenberg, 1993b).

Recent theorizing by Scott, Colquitt, and Paddock (2009) can shed some light on these emerging trends. In their actor-focused model of justice rule adherence, the authors argued that it would be easier for managers to adhere to justice rules when they had more discretion over the actions inherent in those rules. They further argued that discretion over justice-relevant actions could be arrayed on a continuum, with the most discretion afforded to interpersonal justice, followed by informational, procedural, and distributive justice, respectively. The rationale for that rank order was that the interactional justice forms were less constrained by formal systems, that they could be acted upon more frequently, and that they were less costly to managers in an economic sense. If that continuum is correct, it may be more difficult to identify significant predictors of procedural and distributive justice. In the case of procedural justice, a good starting point might involve examining adherence to specific rules. For example, one study could focus on predictors of voice provision, another could focus on predictors of bias suppression, and another could focus on predictors of consistency.

Multiple Trends in Combination

Other future directions lie at the intersection of multiple trends. In the case of aggregation and affect, it is instructive to note that both justice and affect can be conceptualized at higher or lower levels of abstraction. In the case of justice, specific rules can be grouped into the four justice dimensions, which can themselves be modeled as a higher order organizational justice variable. In the case of affect, positive and negative forms of both state and trait affect can be examined at a specific level (e.g., state happiness and state anger; trait happiness and state anger) or an aggregate level (e.g., positive and negative state affect, positive and negative affectivity). From a bandwidth-fidelity perspective (e.g., Cronbach, 1990), it may be that the strongest justice-affect relationships will be observed when

the level of aggregation is consistent across the variables—either both broad or both narrow. That premise is consistent with past research showing that specific combinations of individual justice dimensions may be needed to predict specific emotions (Barclay et al., 2005; Goldman, 2003; Krehbiel & Cropanzano, 2000; Weiss et al., 1999).

In the case of aggregation and endogeneity, it may be the case that the merits of aggregation diminish when justice is cast as the dependent variable. One justification for employing a higher order organizational justice factor is to avoid the multicollinearity that comes with multiple independent variables being highly correlated. However, multicollinearity is not an issue when it is the dependent variables that are correlated (though correlated outcomes can create concerns about the family-wise error rate for hypothesis tests). Moreover, the studies that have examined justice in an endogenous manner have found very different results across the justice dimensions. For example, Gilliland and Schepers (2003) linked organizational unionization to informational justice but not interpersonal justice. Mayer et al. (2007) linked managerial neuroticism to interpersonal justice but not informational or procedural justice. Scott et al. (2007) linked subordinate charisma to interpersonal justice but not informational justice. Further studies should proceed in a differentiated manner to see whether those distinctions are replicated.

Affect and Endogeneity

In the case of affect and endogeneity, future research should explore whether managerial affect encourages or discourages adherence to justice rules. In their actor-focused model, Scott et al. (2009) suggested that positive affect could encourage justice rule adherence, as managers look to maintain that affect by acting prosocially. Negative affect, in turn, could discourage justice rule adherence, as aversive feelings cloud moral judgment and trigger venting behaviors. Tests of those propositions could involve trait affectivity or mood, as the affect need not be targeted to a given employee for justice-relevant actions to be affected. Indeed, Mayer et al.'s (2007) result linking higher managerial neuroticism to lower interpersonal justice rule adherence is supportive of Scott et al.'s theorizing. Those could also involve emotions if an ESM approach is utilized. For example, a study could link within-individual variation in positive emotions (e.g., happiness, enthusiasm, pride, compassion, gratitude) and negative

emotions (e.g., anger, sadness, guilt, anxiety, envy) to within-manager variation in justice rule adherence. That sort of research could reveal that organizational justice varies significantly within managers, not just between managers.

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