To the Graduate Council:

I am submitting a thesis written by Tatiana B. Trevor entitled "Organizational Justice, Equity Sensitivity, and Workplace Attitudes." I have examined the final copy of this thesis for form and content and recommend that it be accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Science with a major in Industrial / Organizational Psychology.

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Dean of the Graduate School

ORGANIZATIONAL JUSTICE, EQUITY SENSITIVITY, AND WORKPLACE

ATTITUDES

A Thesis

Presented for the

Master of Science Degree

The University of Tennessee at Chattanooga

Tatiana B. Trevor

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Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to my family for always believing in me, inspiring me, and

encouraging me to reach higher in order to achieve my goals.

Soli Deo Gloria.

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I wish to thank all those who helped me complete my Master of Science degree in Industrial / Organizational Psychology. I would like to thank Dr. Allen Slade for inspiring me to go on in my studies. I would like to thank Dr. O'Leary for his guidance and his humor throughout the thesis process. I would like to thank Dr. Cunningham for helping me to find a topic that interests me and for helping me interpret my data. I would like to thank Dr. Weathington for serving on my committee.

Lastly, I would like to thank my family and friends, whose encouragement made this work possible.

Abstract

Organizational justice is a multifaceted construct used to measure perceptions of equity within an organization. Utilizing hierarchical regression analysis, this study tested how equity sensitivity moderated the relationship between organizational justice and overall job attitudes, including job satisfaction and affective commitment. A sample of employees at one small and one medium southeastern university were used to demonstrate that equity sensitivity influenced perceptions of justice resulting in an increase or decrease in individual and organizationally-directed workplace attitudes. Implications and directions for future research are discussed.

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INTRODUCTION

Social interaction is an essential factor in explaining how and why certain human behaviors and attitudes occur in the workplace. Social exchange theory posits that a relationship develops between two parties through a process of joint, but not necessarily concurrent exchanges, which then gives way to a joint responsibility (Blau, 1964). According to equity theory (Adams, 1965), employees make comparisons about whether outcomes (i.e., output) offered in an organization (e.g., pay, promotions) are fairly distributed based on the amount of effort put forth (i.e., input; Blakely, Andrews, & Moorman, 2005). Individuals who view themselves as under-rewarded or over-rewarded will often experience some level of distress, which can result in decreased workplace attitudes (e.g., job satisfaction, organizational commitment; Huseman, Hatfield, & Miles, 1987). In an effort to identify individual preferences for different input-output combinations, Huseman et al. proposed the construct of equity sensitivity, based on relative equity preferences (i.e., benevolents, sensitives, and entitleds). Organizational justice also extends equity theory by turning attention to employees' views of whether they are fairly treated by the organization (Greenberg, 1987).

The present study explores equity sensitivity as an explanation for the differences in individual job satisfaction and organizational commitment in response to their perceptions of organizational justice. In the following paper, the results of a thorough literature review will be presented which provided the theoretical basis for testable hypotheses. Then, a description of how the study was conducted and the analyses performed will be provided. Finally, the paper will conclude with a discussion of the results, identification of study limitations, and provide suggestions for future research.

Equity Theory

In an effort to relieve the distress and uphold joint responsibility, individuals constantly strive to maintain a sense of balance or equity compared to others when it comes to organizational inputs and resulting outcomes as reflected in the Equity Theory of Motivation (Adams, 1965). Since the early 1950s, theorists have sought to accurately assess why and how people determine a sense of equity through social exchange. According to Equity Theory, individuals seek to determine whether their rewards (i.e., output) accurately reflect their level of effort (i.e., input) in completing a task as compared to a referent employee. An unbalance can result in a sense of overpayment or underpayment inequity, which motivates individuals to restore balance by cognitively altering specific inputs or outputs, changing the "referent other," terminating the relationship with the "referent other" or leaving the organization (Adams). Huseman et al. (1987) suggest that these reactions to inequity are moderated by perceptions of or sensitivity to equity.

Equity Sensitivity

In an effort to better understand individual and group perceptions of equity, Huseman et al. (1987) proposed the Equity Sensitivity Continuum stating that "individuals react in consistent but individually different ways to both perceived equity and inequity because they have different preferences for (i.e., are differentially sensitive to) equity" (p. 223). By measuring output/input ratios on a continuum (see Figure 1), Huseman et al. divided these differences between individuals into three levels of individual sensitivity: benevolents, entitleds, and sensitives.

Benevolents are individuals who consciously desire that their input/output ratio be less than the comparative standard (Huseman et al., 1987). King and Miles (1994) changed the definition of a *benevolent* to an individual who has a "greater tolerance" for an unbalanced ratio. From all outward appearances, the altruistic behavior of these individuals is sincere and heartfelt. However, their motivation is often a result of a desire for social approval. At the other end of the spectrum, *entitleds* seek a higher ratio of inputs/outputs as compared to other individuals. These "getters" create a large sense of indebtedness to the giver of the output and always expect comparatively greater outcomes from the organization. Finally, the individuals who adhere most closely to the tenets of equity theory, *sensitives*, seek personal input/output ratios that equal other individuals' ratios.

$$\frac{O/I}{E} < \frac{O/I}{C} \qquad \frac{O/I}{E} = \frac{O/I}{C} \qquad \frac{O/I}{E} > \frac{O/I}{C}$$

| Benevolents | Sensitives | Entitleds |

←—————————————————————————————→

High Ratio   Low Ratio

O = Output I = Input E = Employee C = Comparative Other

Note: The equity formula shown in Figure 1 is an adaptation of Huseman's formula, simplified from Adams (1965).
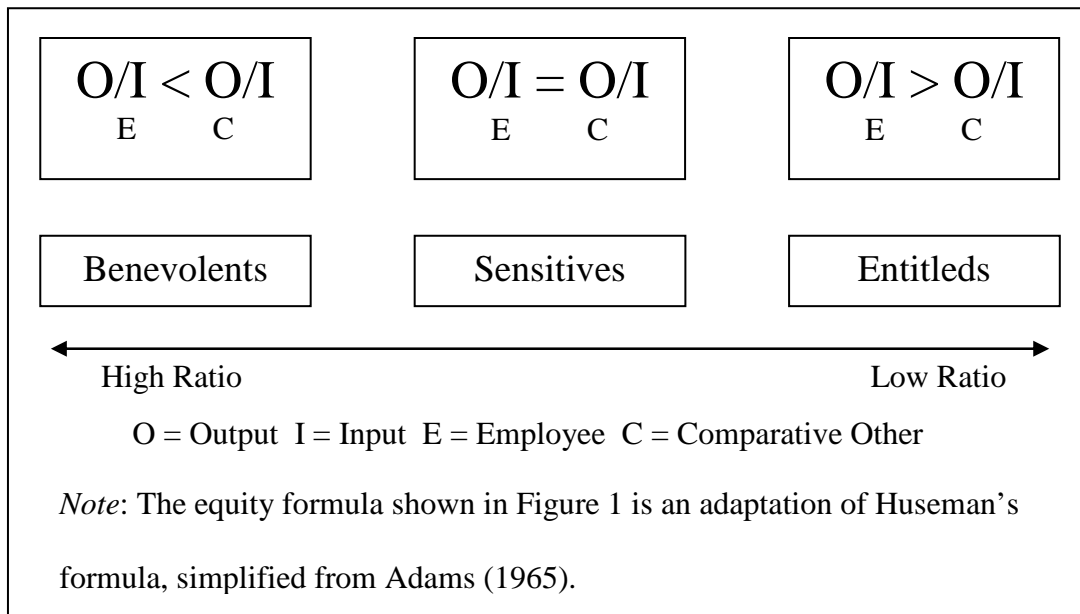
Figure 1. Equity sensitivity continuum.

Workplace Attitudes: Job Satisfaction, Organizational Commitment, Overall Job Attitude

Previous research has identified the positive relationship between perceptions of fairness and workplace attitudes such as job satisfaction, organizational commitment, job performance, organizational citizenship behaviors, trust in authorities, and pay satisfaction (Ambrose, Hess, & Ganesan, 2007; Colquitt, Conlon, Wesson, Porter, & Ng, 2001; Liao & Rupp, 2005). A social exchange occurs at two levels within an organization, which has a direct link to employee attitudes and behaviors. First, there is an exchange between an organization and its employees, which can impact employee commitment to the organization. Second, there is an exchange between supervisors and individual employees, which can impact employee satisfaction. For this reason, this study was designed to focus on the individually-directed attitude of job satisfaction and the organizationally-directed individual attitude of organizational commitment.

Job satisfaction. Job satisfaction can be defined as an employee's affective response to a work situation or particular job (McFarlin & Sweeney, 1992). The degree to which employees feel an internal sense of accomplishment and fulfillment (i.e., whether a job has met physical and psychological needs provided at work) in their jobs can greatly affect their commitment to the organization (Masterson, Lewis, Goldman, & Taylor, 2000; Spector, 1997). However, job satisfaction should be viewed from a more expanded viewpoint than mere needs fulfillment because cognitive processes underlie these needs, which reflect individual attitudes. Therefore, the attitudinal perspective (i.e., a combination of affect and cognition) should dominate any study of job satisfaction (Spector). Job satisfaction will be influenced by the degree to which employees agree or

disagree with organizational procedures and outcomes (Moorman, 1991), thus reflecting employees' organizational attitudes (Brayfield & Rothe, 1951).

Organizational attitudes often reflect the interpersonal exchanges that occur between supervisors and subordinates. Therefore, job satisfaction is highest when an employee perceives that there has been a fair distribution of outcomes (Masterson et al., 2000; McFarlin & Sweeney, 1992). Fairness heuristic theory (Lind, Kulik, Ambrose, & de Vera Park, 1993) further proposes that fairness judgments can be affected by the potential for exploitation by an authority figure, suggesting that lack of trust can threaten social identity and negatively impact employee attitudes such as employee commitment to an organization (Harrison, Newman, & Roth, 2006).

Organizational commitment. The ability to achieve organizational goals may be dependent upon individual satisfaction, productivity, or job performance. However, an organization cannot achieve increased job performance without committed employees. . Organizational commitment is broadly defined as an employee's loyalty to a particular organization that has affective, continuance, and normative components (Meyer & Allen, 1991). Affective commitment involves individual identification with, involvement in, and overall emotional connection between that individual and the organization (Allen & Meyer, 1996). If employees feel no emotional attachment to their workplace, they will have increased distress, increased absenteeism, and will be less likely to commit, which results in decreased productivity for the organization. An employee who has strong affective commitment is more likely to remain with an organization. However, affective commitment can be greatly altered by perceptions of equity and organizational justice (Williams, 1999).

In contrast to affective commitment, continuance commitment reflects the perceived investment an employee has made in the organization (Allen & Meyer, 1996). Individuals high in continuance commitment have weighed the costs and benefits of leaving the organization, but have decided that the cost of leaving would be greater than staying. Thus, employees remain in the organization because they feel they have to (Allen & Meyer).

Normative commitment, on the other hand, is based on the sense of obligation an individual feels toward an organization (Allen & Meyer, 1991; 1996; Jex, 2002). Individuals high in normative commitment tend to remain in the organization because they believe it is the right thing to do (Allen & Meyer). The three-component model of organizational commitment gives a more holistic approach to understanding this multifaceted organizational attitude and served as the basis for investigating its relationship with equity sensitivity in the present study.

Overall job attitude. Job satisfaction, with its cognitive and affective components, has been theoretically and empirically linked with organizational commitment (Harrison et al., 2006; Schleicher, Watt, & Greguras, 2004; Spector, 1997). Affective commitment, in particular, has been found to be highly correlated with overall job satisfaction with the only difference being the target or focus of the attitude (e.g., meta-analytic $p = .65$; Meyer, Stanley, Herscovitch, & Topolnytsky, 2002). Whereas job satisfaction is focused on individual work roles or positions, affective commitment is directed toward the larger organization (Harrison et al., 2006; Hulin, 1991). Thus, as proposed by Judge, Thoreson, Bono, and Patten (2001), and extended by Harrison et al., it is appropriate to treat job

satisfaction and affective commitment as an overall job attitude that focuses on, "the fundamental evaluation of one's job experiences" (p. 306).

Organizational Justice and the Construct of Equity Sensitivity

Researchers have identified and explored multiple conceptualizations of organizational justice to help explain perceptions of fair treatment in the workplace (Colquitt, 2001; Colquitt et al., 2001; Leventhal, 1980; Masterson et al., 2000; Roch & Shanock, 2006). However, theorists have continued to examine how equitable treatment could be more clearly defined and measured beyond merely assessing types of justice (Colquitt; Cropanzano & Folger, 1989; Huseman et al., 1987; Moorman, 1991). It may be that the construct of equity sensitivity can assist in the quest to further define equitable treatment, as it directly mirrors the levels at which equity operates: input and output.

At the first level, employees assess the process (input) by which the resulting outcomes were received, and at the second level, they assess the outcomes (output) provided. From an organizational perspective, supervisors evaluate the process by which rewards were given to employees via a bilateral connection. If this connection between manager and employee is balanced and remains equitable, then mutual respect, reciprocal trust, and a sense of obligation between the two parties will occur (Roch & Shanock, 2006). These levels of measurement are subsumed under the heading of organizational justice (Colquitt, 2001).

Organizational justice can be addressed most simply by asking the question of any workplace relationship or exchange: Was it fair? Generally speaking, the question of fairness can be applied to any work situation and is evaluated by the individual and the organization. Often, this question is asked by employees when comparing outcomes, such

as pay, and is also asked when comparing the process by which a pay raise was or was not given (McFarlin & Sweeney, 1992). Moorman (1991) expanded the concept of "was it fair" to include the ways in which these assertions influence a variety of other work-related variables, such as job satisfaction and organizational citizenship behaviors.

Huseman et al.'s (1987) equity sensitivity construct can be used as a moderator of the relationship between perceived organizational justice and other workplace attitudes (Blakely et al., 2005). Benevolents, entitleds, and equity sensitive persons all have a unique perspective on equity and all react differently when asking the question of a given work outcome or process, "Was it fair?" For example, an entitled is concerned with fairness and equity, but compared to a benevolent, is unlikely to react with positive cognitive and behavioral outcomes to fair treatment unless that treatment is extremely fair (i.e., overpayment; Blakely et al.).

The 'What If' Factor

Among the most important reasons to study organizational justice is to understand how to avoid counterproductive behaviors within the organization, while at the same time bolstering more desired behavioral outcomes or attitudes (Konovsky & Pugh, 1994). In their referent cognitions theory (RCT), Folger (1986) and Cropanzano and Folger (1989) took the need to study organizational justice a step further than previous researchers by cautioning organizations against the "what if" factor:

> In a situation involving outcomes allocated by a decision maker,
> resentment is maximized when people believe they *would* have obtained
> better outcomes if the decision maker had used other procedures that
> *should* have been implemented…The absence of participation makes it

easier for people to imagine ways their outcomes might have been more

favorable. Thus, the lesson for administrators is that if people do not

participate in decisions, there may be little to prevent them from assuming

that 'things would have been better if I had been in charge' (p. 293).

This suggests that the organization needs to be aware of individual perspectives on

justice. For this reason, it is important to understand the intricacies of organizational

justice, the levels at which it operates, both for the individual and within the organization,

and the resulting outcomes that produce perceived levels of satisfaction and fairness.

Types of Organizational Justice

Theorists have indicated that employees evaluate fairness using four distinct, yet

interrelated classes of justice: distributive, procedural, and interactional, which includes

interpersonal and informational forms of justice (Colquitt, 2001).

Distributive justice. Derived from equity theory, distributive justice (DJ) can be

cultivated when the outcomes received are consistent with previously specified norms of

distribution (Colquitt, 2001). This type of justice is typically measured at the individual

level (e.g., regarding educational level, effort, performance, etc.) as a perception of equity

and is a result of individual cognitive evaluation (Moorman, 1991). For example,

distributive justice can only exist to the extent that the distribution of an outcome (e.g.,

pay) is consistent with the goals of a particular situation, such as maximizing the

productivity of individuals or improving cooperation among employees (Colquitt). At the

organizational level, there should be one guiding norm which promotes the equitable

distribution of rewards and resources to employees based on a recipient's contribution to

the process (Leventhal, 1976), thereby promoting a sense of fairness between the

individual and "comparison other."

Procedural justice. Procedural justice (PJ) focuses on the process by which

employees seek to create or participate in fair decision making, policies, and procedures

(Sweeney & McFarlin, 1997). Procedural justice is fostered by a participative decision-

making process, which is an individual's perception of influence over the outcome

(Thibaut & Walker, 1975) and/or by adherence to fair process criteria, such as

consistency, lack of bias, correctability, accuracy, and ethicality (Leventhal, 1980;

Leventhal, Karuza, & Fry, 1980). Folger (1986) indicated that having a voice in the

decision-making process assists an employee in perceiving greater levels of procedural

justice. The key to achieving procedural justice at the organizational level is to maintain

managerial consistency across organizational situations (Greenberg, 1987). In other

words, organizations need all supervisors to implement the same procedures. These

evaluations of fairness could result from formal or informal procedures. Unlike

distributive justice, judgments of procedural justice typically focus on the organizational

level processes that lead to outcomes (Moorman, 1991).

Although an employee may evaluate distributive and procedural justice with

different criteria (outcomes or process), there still needs to be a connection made between

the two. According to referent cognitions theory, employees evaluate and reflect on their

work situations by evaluating what could have been if there were different circumstances

(Folger, 1986). This closely follows Cropanzano's and Folger's (1989) "what if" factor,

suggesting that referent cognitions theory offers a potential link between distributive and

procedural justice. McFarlin and Sweeney (1992) summarized the connection that exists between the forms of justice as follows:

> In effect, referent cognitions theory suggests that employees will contrast
> this situation to the more positive outcomes [e.g., distributive justice] that
> they would have obtained had the decision maker used fair allocation
> procedures [e.g., procedural justice]. On the other hand, referent cognitions
> theory predicts that when people perceive procedures to be fair, resentment
> will be minimal, even when distributive justice is low (p. 627).

It is important to study the reciprocal interaction of distributive and procedural justice, which can be measured with equity sensitivity, when evaluating a work situation. These employees will be influenced either positively or negatively by their perceptions of the justice of the outcome, and by the process of achieving that outcome.

Interactional justice. In the past, justice research was restricted to the individual and organizational levels of analysis. As mentioned above, however, procedural justice was defined by Greenberg (1987) as having a formal level and an informal level. At the formal level, individuals might merely evaluate the inputs and resulting outputs contributed via distributive and procedural justice. At the informal level, individuals tend to look at the social interaction that occurs between comparative employees as well as relationships employees have with their supervisors.

Bies and Moag (1986) introduced the concept of interactional justice to reflect the interpersonal treatment that people receive when a process or norm is implemented, as well as the perceived adequacy of the explanations for policy implementation. Interactional justice has since been divided into interpersonal and informational justice

(Colquitt, 2001). *Interpersonal justice* (IPJ) focuses on how management treats

employees when implementing procedures or determining outcomes, while *informational*

justice (IFJ) focuses on the adequacy of an explanation for the processes or outcomes that

were implemented or received (Colquitt et al., 2001).

Interactional justice relates to the social exchange theory mentioned at the outset

of this discussion (i.e., the development of a relationship between two parties with joint,

but not necessarily concurrent exchanges; Blau, 1964). When studying the social

exchanges in the workplace, research also needs to examine the equity of social

interactions. Employees do not merely measure outcomes and the process by which

outcomes are received. They also consider who distributed the outcomes, the procedures

used, and how they were treated by supervisors and the organization as a whole (i.e.,

interpersonal and informational justice).

There are several basic criteria by which interactional justice is measured:

justification, truthfulness, respect, and propriety (Colquitt, 2001). When employees

evaluate the level of justification used in procedures, they are looking to understand the

base for certain decisions in comparison to those used for other employees. If a

supervisor is forthright about procedures (i.e., informational justice), then an employee is

most likely to view those procedures as fair.

Respect (e.g., politeness rather than rudeness) and propriety (e.g., abstaining from

indecent remarks or statements) work hand-in-hand because they affect the way an

employee perceives the supervisor's intentions toward the individual (Colquitt, 2001). If

supervisors are polite and value the individual person, they are more likely to treat their

employees in a non-prejudicial manner. It seems, therefore, that equity sensitivity can moderate the perceived level of justice in interpersonal work situations.

The updated four-factor model (i.e., distributive, procedural, interpersonal, informational) encompasses a more complete and holistic approach to organizational justice (Colquitt, 2001; Masterson et al., 2000). Each dimension of this model is critical on its own and has the ability to uniquely predict certain behaviors and job attitudes, while equity sensitivity may help to explain individual differences in perceptions of fairness.

The Present Study

Many studies of organizational justice have focused on how the individual responds to an organization's processes and decision-making policies. In addition, much of the organizational research investigates how an employee's perceptions of justice might ultimately be strengthened within the workplace through a variety of factors (e.g., locus of control, individual personality; Lilly & Virick, 2006). Sweeney and McFarlin (1992) further suggest that the greater employees' perceptions of justice, the more likely they are to reduce any cognitive distress when posed with an unfair outcome or process.

The purpose of the present study is to investigate the perception of fairness and equity sensitivity of the individual, as well as the individual's justice and equity perspective of the greater organization. Neither perspective, individual or organizationally-directed, should be studied in isolation from the other, as each dimension of the four-factor model of justice predicts different behavioral outcomes and attitudes for each. Past research has indicated that individual, person-centered outcomes, such as job satisfaction, are most affected by distributive and interpersonal justice, while

individual evaluations of the organization (e.g., organizational commitment) are more related to procedural and informational justice (Folger & Konovsky, 1989; Lind & Tyler, 1988; Masterson et al., 2000; McFarlin & Sweeney, 1992; Tyler, Degoey, & Smith, 1996).

However, this past research has only studied these outcomes with a two- or three-factor model of justice. In his analysis of the multiple variations of justice measurements (e.g., two-factor model including only procedural and distributive justice), Colquitt (2001) determined, through confirmatory factor analysis, that the best-fitting model for evaluating perceptions of fairness is a four-factor model with distributive, procedural, interpersonal, and informational justices as distinct measures.

The present study will use the four-factor model of justice to help explain the development of two of the most heavily researched individual and organizationally-directed workplace attitudes: job satisfaction and organizational commitment (i.e., affective commitment). As mentioned in the preceding sections, organizations cannot achieve increased job performance without committed employees, and the ability to achieve organizational goals may be partially dependent on individual job satisfaction (see Figure 2). This leads to the first set of hypotheses:

Hypothesis 1a: Perceptions of procedural justice will have a positive relationship with overall job attitudes (job satisfaction and affective commitment).

Hypothesis 1b: Perceptions of distributive justice will have a positive relationship with overall job attitudes (job satisfaction and affective commitment).

Hypothesis 1c: Perceptions of interpersonal justice will have a positive relationship with overall job attitudes (job satisfaction and affective commitment).

Hypothesis 1d: Perceptions of informational justice will have a positive

relationship with overall job attitudes (job satisfaction and affective commitment).
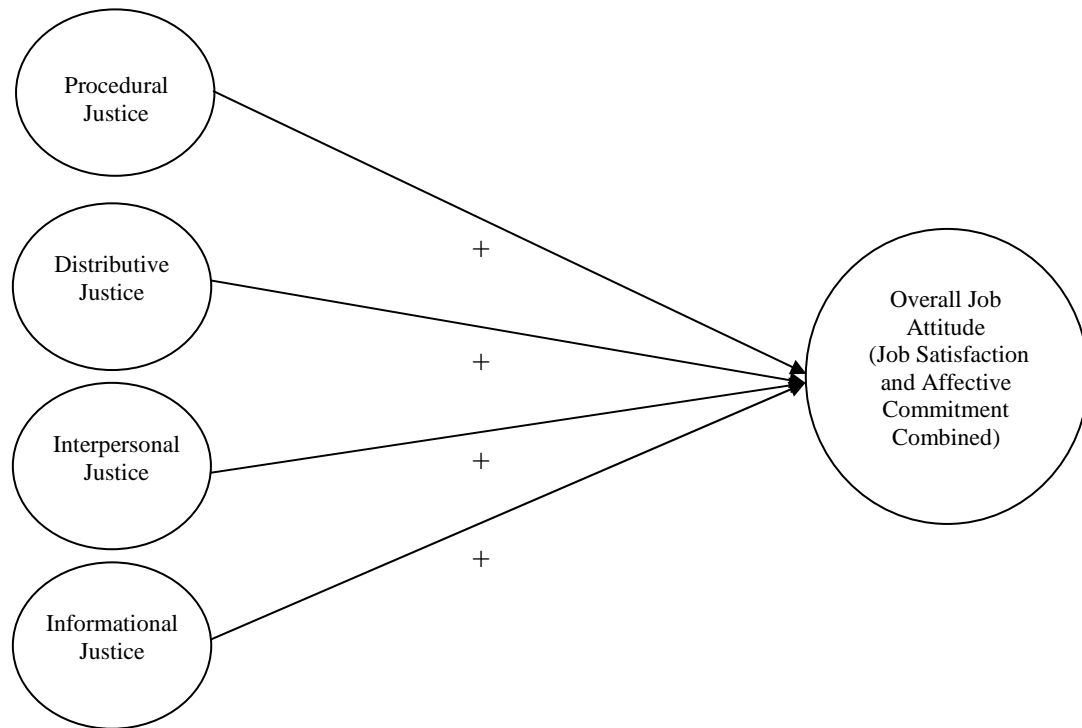
Figure 2. Proposed model for relationship between organizational justice and overall job
attitude.

Equity Sensitivity as a Moderator

According to McFarlin and Sweeney (1992), distributive justice is generally a

better predictor of personal job attitudes (e.g., job satisfaction, organizational

commitment) than procedural justice. Every social exchange involves both an evaluation

of the process and the resulting outcome. Attempts to separate the two seem

counterintuitive. Equity sensitivity has been shown to affect all types of organizational

justice and the resulting overall job attitudes (Begley et al., 2006; Blakely et al., 2005;

Howard, 1999; Liao & Rupp, 2005; Moorman, 1991).

Equity Perceptions

Most researchers have measured individual perceptions of organizational justice apart from the concept of equity sensitivity. However, Greenberg (1987) proposed that an employee's sensitivity to equity within the organization did, in fact, affect organizational justice by influencing the perceptions of fairness on performance evaluations. By using accurate information obtained from diaries, the fairness of the performance appraisal method, the evaluator, and the actual evaluation itself was increased (Greenberg). Blakely, Andrews, and Moorman (2005) expanded on this basic understanding by proposing that equity sensitivity had a relationship with perceptions of organizational justice (see Figure 3).

Blakely et al. (2005) proposed that reactions to perceptions of injustice may be more prevalent for entitleds than for sensitives and benevolents. This may be due to the mentality that most entitleds adhere to, that of a "getter" (Huseman et al., 1987). Some organizations might appreciate the insatiable, exploitive charm of the entitled, which could contribute to increased competition internally, between individual employees, and externally between other companies. However, other organizations seeking to promote a greater sense of justice may choose to hire individuals who are more benevolent (see Figure 3).

>*Hypothesis 2:* The positive relationship between perceptions of organizational justice and overall job attitude (OJA) will be moderated by equity sensitivity, such that those higher in equity sensitivity will have a stronger positive relationship with OJA.
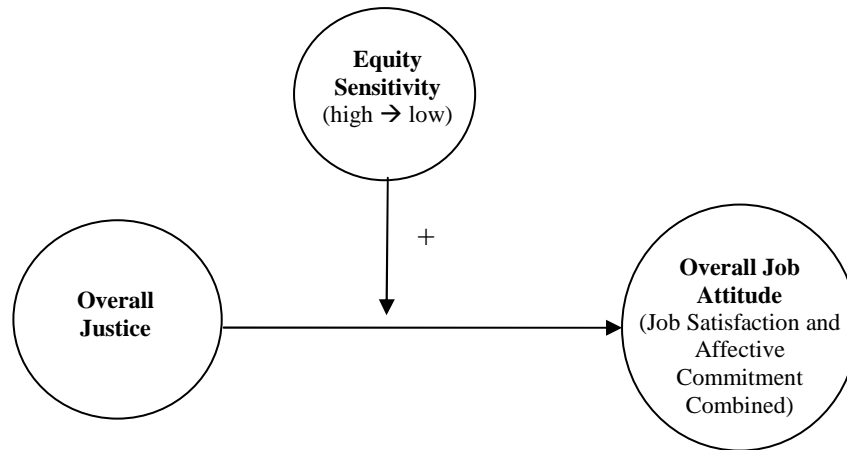
Figure 3. Proposed model of interaction between equity sensitivity, overall organizational justice, and overall job attitude.

Individually-Directed Attitude: Job Satisfaction

The social exchange that occurs between supervisors and subordinates has a direct link to employee attitudes and behaviors. Masterson et al. (2000) found that perceptions of interactional justice associated with this social exchange influence overall job satisfaction. The individual's reaction to the outcome received is affected by the attitude of the person who distributes the outcome or treatment (Masterson et al.).

Thus, it appears that interpersonal and informational justices are most appropriate for the measurement of job satisfaction. According to Adams's (1965) equity theory, under-rewarded individuals should report low levels of job satisfaction, equitably rewarded individual should have a high level of job satisfaction, and over-rewarded individual should report a low to moderate level of job satisfaction (Huseman et al., 1987). Thus, by incorporating the hypothesized moderation of equity sensitivity, the following hypotheses are proposed (see Figure 4):

Hypothesis 3a: The positive relationship between interpersonal justice perceptions and job satisfaction will increase with an increase in equity sensitivity.

Hypothesis 3b: The positive relationship between informational justice

perceptions and job satisfaction will increase with an increase in equity
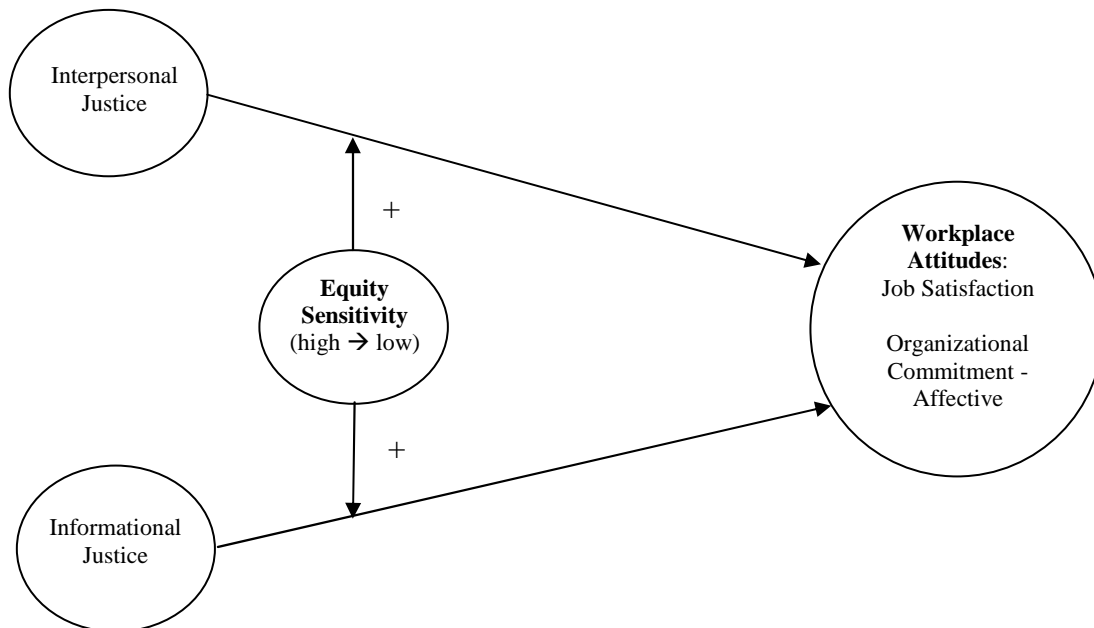
sensitivity.

Figure 4. Proposed model of interaction between equity sensitivity, interpersonal and informational justice, and workplace attitudes.

Organizationally-Directed Individual Attitude: Affective Commitment

Organizational justice also can be studied from the individual's organizationally-

directed perspective (Liao & Rupp, 2005). When viewing the interactions within the

workplace, employees have individual perspectives on how the organization deals with

relationship exchanges. While one employee may emphasize the outcome received, the

other might place a larger emphasis on who distributed the outcome and how fairly the

exchange took place. However, individual outcomes of perceived organizational justice

can also have an important effect on the organization as a whole.

In recent years, there has been a slight shift away from the heavily researched individual perspective (e.g., job satisfaction, intent to quit, job performance), moving toward the less researched organization-directed perspective (e.g., organizational citizenship behaviors, organizational commitment, collective esteem; Begley et al., 2006; Blakely et al., 2005; Masterson et al., 2000; Moorman, 1991; Roch & Shanock, 2006). According to Moorman (1991), employers, including managers and supervisors, should be more concerned with how their treatment of subordinates affects the overall occurrence of organizational attitudes, such as commitment and citizenship. In general, procedural and interactional forms of justice predict organizationally-directed individual attitudes (i.e., affective commitment) more effectively than distributive justice, which better predicts individually-directed attitudes (i.e., job satisfaction).

Organizational commitment (i.e., continuance, normative, and affective) also seems to increase with an increase in perceptions of justice (Masterson et al., 2000). In an effort to incorporate the effects of procedural and distributive justice on organizational commitment, McFarlin and Sweeney (1992) proposed a relationship between the two forms of justice and workplace attitudes: procedural justice better predicted workplace attitudes involved with evaluation of a company, such as organizational commitment, than distributive justice, which tended to better predict individual work attitudes, such as job satisfaction. In contrast, Howard (1999) noted a relationship between overall commitment and distributive justice, acknowledging that one source of increased commitment would be outcome based (e.g., pay increase). If, however, procedural justice was high, organizational commitment varied insignificantly as a function of distributive justice.

While previous research indicates that procedural and distributive justice interact, their specific influence on organizational commitment is disputed. Questions arise with regard to which form of justice has a larger impact on commitment. McFarlin and Sweeney (1992) argued that, regardless of perceived distributive justice, fair procedures produced a higher level of organizational commitment. Likewise, fair procedures are influenced by the exchange between supervisors and their subordinate(s). Various workplace attitudes may have an individual or an organizationally-directed focus (e.g., the job, the occupation, the organization, the supervisor), but still they are individually based.

Regardless of the focus, the interactional character of these workplace attitudes is predominantly affective in nature (Allen & Meyer, 1996; Liao & Rupp, 2005). As mentioned above, employees with no emotional attachment to the organization will be less likely to commit. Employee perception of equity and organizational justice can greatly influence individual affective commitment to a job or to an organization (Williams, 1999). Thus, the final set of hypotheses is as follows (see Figure 4):

Hypothesis 4a: The positive relationship between interpersonal justice perceptions and affective commitment will increase with an increase in equity sensitivity.

Hypothesis 4b: The positive relationship between informational justice perceptions and affective commitment will increase with an increase in equity sensitivity.

METHOD

Participants

Participants in this study were 166 employees at one small and one medium southeastern university, including staff and faculty members. Fifty-five percent ($n = 92$) of participants were female, 33% male ($n = 55$), and 11% ($n = 19$) did not provide data on gender. Whereas the majority of participants who responded to the question or race were Caucasian ($n = 142$; 86%), the remaining were African-American ($n = 3$; 2%), and Native American ($n = 1$; < 1%). The average age of the participants was 44 (SD= 13).

Of the participants who responded, most were employed full-time *($n = 129$; 78%)* but some were part-time *($n = 17$; 10%)*. The mean salary range of participants was between $30, 000 - $40,000 (SD = $10,500). Of those who reported their current tenure at their organization, 22% had been at their job for 1 year or less *($n = 31$)*, 38% had been at their job between 2 and 5 years *($n = 54$)*, 10% had been at their current job 5 to 10 years *($n = 15$)*, and 30% had been in their job for more than 10 years *($n = 44$)*. When participants were asked how long they planned staying in their current job, 13% planned on staying for 1 year or less *($n = 21$)*, 24% planned on staying between 2 and 5 years *($n = 40$)*, 26% planned on staying for 5 to 10 years *($n = 43$)*, and 23% planned on staying for more than 10 years *($n = 39$)*. 14% of participants chose not to answer the question of intent to stay.

The participants who responded ranged in their level of education from some college *($n = 15$; 10%)*, 2-year degree *($n = 3$; 2%)*, a 4-year college degree *($n = 41$; 28%)*, a master's degree *($n = 40$; 27%)* to a doctoral or professional (MD, JD) degree *($n = 48$;* 33%)*. Of those who responded, the majority of participants were married *($n = 97$; 67%)*

or single, never married *(n = 31; 22%)*, with 8% divorced *(n = 12)* and 3% widowed *(n =*

4).

Measures

The actual scales are presented in Appendix A.

Equity sensitivity. A five-point Likert-type scale, created by Sauley and Bedeian

(2000) was used to measure equity sensitivity. The Equity Preference Questionnaire

(EPQ) is a 16-item scale that measures the extremes of the construct (entitled and

benevolent) on a five-point scale ranging from *1 = strongly disagree* to *5 = strongly*

agree. Each statement describes a particular perception or feeling regarding an

individual's work situation (e.g., "I prefer to do as little as possible at work while getting

as much as I can from my employer"). Under each question, the participant respondent

was asked to select the appropriate response. Each participant's scores were summed and

given a total. Summed values reflect the level of equity participants perceive in the

workplace based on a continuum (i.e., high to low equity sensitivity). Reliability was

moderate ($\alpha = .76$).

Organizational justice. A total of 20 items were used to assess organizational

justice with procedural justice (PJ) being measured with items developed by Thibaut and

Walker (1975) and Leventhal (1980; e.g., "Have you been able to express your views and

feelings during those procedures?"; $\alpha = .90$). Measures developed by Leventhal (1976)

were used to measure distributive justice (e.g., "Is your (outcome) appropriate for the

work you have completed?"; $\alpha = .95$). There was high overlap in the distributive justice

(DJ) measures, but additional analyses determined that loading the DJ measure onto one

scale item did not result in improved reliabilities. Thus, the aggregate measure was used.

Interpersonal justice (IPJ) was measured using items developed by Bies and Moag (1986; e.g., "Has (your supervisor) treated you with dignity?"; α = .97) and informational justice (IFJ) was measured using items developed by Bies and Moag (1986) and Shapiro, Buttner, and Barry (1994; e.g., "Has (your supervisor) explained the procedures thoroughly?"; α = .93). The IPJ measure was highly skewed and had a large amount of overlap in the measures. However, the consistency of the individual items was strong and therefore, the IPJ measure was not loaded onto one scale item. The five-point Likert-type scale ranged from *1 = to a small extent,* to *5 = to a large extent*, and asked questions about how participants generally felt about justice on average. Each justice measure was summed to calculate a total score. Reliability for an overall justice measure of the 20-items was strong (α = .84).

Job satisfaction. In line with Harrison et al.'s (2006) approach, two five-point Likert-type scales developed by Brayfield and Rothe (1951) and Weiss, Dawis, England, and Lofquist (1967) were used to measure job satisfaction. The combined scale contained 38 statements about work-related job satisfaction, assessing both the affective and cognitive components of satisfaction. The Likert-type scale from Brayfield and Rothe's Overall Job Satisfaction (OJS) scale ranged from *1 = strongly disagree* to *5 = strongly agree*. The Likert-type scale from Weiss et al.'s Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire (MSQ) was modified to reflect the same scale as the OJS (i.e., 1 = *strongly disagree* to 5 = *strongly agree*). Those individuals with higher scores on the combined scale represent higher job satisfaction.

Participants were told that the questionnaire described how they act at work and were asked to indicate to what extent they generally feel that way. Items were summed to

calculate the total job satisfaction score of each participant. Estimates of reliability were strong for OJS ($\alpha = 0.87$) and for MSQ ($\alpha = .89$). An overall job satisfaction scale, which included the MSQ and the OJS, was used ($\alpha = .92$).

Organizational commitment. Allen and Meyer's (1990) eight item scales for affective commitment (AC) were used in this study. Each item was rated on a five-point Likert-type scale that ranged from *1 = strongly disagree* to *5 = strongly agree*. A high score of 40 points is possible for the AC scale, where higher scores indicate higher commitment.

Participants were told that the questionnaire described how they act at work and were asked to indicate to what extent they generally feel that way. Item responses were summed to calculate the total commitment score of each participant (affective commitment $\alpha = .82$).

Overall job attitude. Participant responses to the job satisfaction (i.e., OJS and MSQ; Schleicher et al., 2004) and affective commitment (Allen & Meyer, 1990) scales were aggregated together to form the overall job attitude scale measure. This measure served as an empirical extension of Judge et al. (2001) and the meta-analytic work of Harrison et al. (2006), who argued that job satisfaction and organizational commitment can be conceptualized as an indicator of one underlying overall job attitude. For purposes of this study, job satisfaction and affective commitment were aggregated together to create the overall job attitude measure. After reviewing the variability of the OJA measure, it was determined that the OJA mean would be used as the dependent variable. Reliability for the items that composed the OJA measure was strong ($\alpha = .94$).

Demographics. Participants were asked to provide demographic information with their questionnaire, though all the information was anonymous and confidential (see Appendix A). The information gathered from this included: gender, age, race, highest level of education completed, current marital status, work status, and current salary per year. Also, questions were asked regarding how long the participant had been at his or her current job, and how long the participant was planning on staying at his or her current job.

Procedure

Questionnaires were distributed via an internet survey program monitored within the psychology department. The online survey included an informed consent statement (see Appendix B), the different work attitudes scales, and the demographics information (see Appendix A). Each participant was instructed that the study was completely anonymous and no information regarding their identity or the identity of their workplace would be revealed. Participants were asked to read and acknowledge the consent statement from the questionnaires prior to completing the online survey. Participants could request debriefing information.

Analysis

Job satisfaction and organizational commitment have been found to correlate with a number of personal, job, and organizational characteristics. For this reason, a number of demographic variables were used as covariates to in the analyses to ensure that the model was properly specified, including race, annual income, age, and gender.

Traditionally, organizational justice has focused on the unique predictability of the four distinct types of justice (i.e., procedural distributive, interpersonal, and

informational; Ambrose & Schminke, 2007). These four measures of justice have unique

effects on various outcomes. For this reason, the first set of hypotheses (1a-1d) was

analyzed as four, distinct justice constructs. For H2, H3a, b, and H4a, b the following

were entered into hierarchical linear multiple regressions: (1) covariates (e.g., age, race,

gender, salary), (2a) overall justice, (2b) interpersonal justice, and (2c) informational

justice and equity sensitivity, and (3) two-way interactions of equity sensitivity by

overall, interpersonal, and informational justice.

A hierarchical regression test for moderation does not require the main effects to

be significant (Baron & Kenny, 1986). Support for moderating effects exists if the R^2 for

the set of interaction terms with each dependent variable is significant. To support the

specific effects hypothesized, the slopes of the interaction terms must be in the predicted

direction. To reduce the possibility of multicollinearity during overall moderation

analysis (H2), the justice variables were first standardized and combined into a composite

overall justice measure (Cohen & Cohen, 1983; Colquitt & Shaw, 2005; Schminke &

Ambrose, 2007). For the analysis for the third and fourth set of hypotheses, interpersonal

and informational justice were entered separately into step 3 of the moderation (i.e.,

combined justice measures were not used to analyze H3 and H4). In addition, equity

sensitivity measures were standardized for purposes of analysis.

RESULTS

The means, standard deviations, and simple correlations for each of the study variables are reported in Table 1.

Several linear regression analyses were conducted for each of the direct hypotheses (1a-1d) and will be discussed in detail below. Step-wise (hierarchical) linear multiple regression analyses for the hypothesized moderating interaction of equity sensitivity on overall job attitudes were conducted (H2, H3, H4).

Procedural Justice. The first exploratory hypothesis (1a) stated that there would be a positive relationship between procedural justice (PJ) and overall job attitude (OJA). A multiple regression analysis was conducted to predict overall job attitude from four covariates (i.e., age, race, gender, and salary). The results of this analysis indicated that age, race, gender, and salary accounted for a significant amount of the overall job attitude variability, adjusted $R^2 = .14$, $F(4, 133) = 6.73$, $p < .05$, indicating that these four covariates did impact OJA. Not surprisingly, those with higher pay were more likely to have increased OJA. Also, women expressed higher perceptions of job satisfaction and affective commitment.

The second step in the analysis evaluated whether PJ predicted OJA above the covariates. PJ accounted for a significant proportion of variance in OJA after controlling for the effects of age, rage, gender, and salary, adjusted $R^2 = .48$, $F(5, 132) = 25.84$, $p < .05$. The results shown in Table 2 provide evidence that PJ does have a significant positive relationship with OJA. The multiple regression results suggest that employees who have similarities in age, race, gender, and salary are more likely to have increased

Table 1.

Means, Standard Deviations, and Correlations Between Variables

	Variable	Means	Std. Dev.	Correlations						
				1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1.	Gender	1.63	0.49	--						
2.	Age	43.90	13.01	-0.05	--					
3.	Race	1.05	0.36	-0.10	0.03	--				
4.	Current Salary	4.49	1.53	-0.26 **	0.57 **	-0.20	--			
5.	Equity Sensitivity	67.59	9.09	0.16 *	0.29 **	0.04	0.10	--		
6.	Procedural Justice	21.95	7.38	0.08	0.18 *	-0.16 *	0.15	0.23 **	--	
7.	Distributive Justice	12.30	5.16	0.10	0.10	-0.12	0.22 **	0.06	0.65 **	--
8.	Interpersonal Justice	16.87	4.31	0.01	0.15	-0.26 **	0.15	0.03	0.61 **	0.47 **

*p < .05. **p < .01 (two-tailed). *Due to participant responses, there is no consistent* n *across all variables*.

Note: Gender (1 = Male, 2 = female), race (1 = white, 2 = African-America, 3 = Hispanic, 4 = Asian-Pacific Islander, 5 = Native American, 6 = Other), Salary (1 = <$10K, 2 = $10-$20K, 3 = $20-$30K, 4 = $30-40K, 5 = $40-$50K, 6 = $50-$100K, 7 = 100K+), were dummy-coded. For all other variables, increase scores indicate increasing levels of the variable.

Table 1, cont'd.

Means, Standard Deviations, and Correlations Between Variables

	Variable	Means	Std. Dev.	8		9		10		11		12	
								Correlations					
8.	Interpersonal Justice			--									
9.	Informational Justice	18.05	5.72	0.71	**	--							
10.	Overall Justice	69.34	23.81	0.80	**	0.84	**	--					
11.	Job Satisfaction	141.57	23.78	0.49	**	0.54	**	0.71	**	--			
12.	Affective Commitment	24.21	5.53	0.47	**	0.52	**	0.59	**	0.74	**	--	
13.	Overall Job Attitude	3.76	0.53	0.55	**	0.57	**	0.60	**	0.67	**	0.85	**

*$p < .05$. **$p < .01$ (two-tailed). *Due to participant responses, there is no consistent* n *across all variables*.

Note: Gender (1 = Male, 2 = female), race (1 = white, 2 = African-America, 3 = Hispanic, 4 = Asian-Pacific Islander, 5 = Native American, 6 = Other), Salary (1 = <$10K, 2 = $10-$20K, 3 = $20-$30K, 4 = $30-40K, 5 = $40-$50K, 6 = $50-$100K, 7 = 100K+), were dummy-coded. For all other variables, increase scores indicate increasing levels of the variable.

OJA if perceptions of procedural justice are high.

     Distributive Justice. The second hypothesis (1b) stated that there would be a positive relationship between distributive justice (DJ) and overall job attitude (OJA) above the covariates. DJ accounted for a significant proportion of OJA after controlling for the effects of age, rage, gender, and salary, adjusted R^2 = .33, $F(5, 132)$ = 14.25, $p <$ .05. The results shown in Table 2 provide evidence that DJ does have a significant positive relationship with OJA. The multiple regression results suggest that employees who have similarities in age, race, gender, and salary are more likely to have increased OJA if perceptions of distributive justice are high.

     Interpersonal Justice. The third hypothesis (1c) stated that there would be a positive relationship between interpersonal justice (IPJ) and overall job attitude (OJA) above the covariates. IPJ accounted for a significant proportion of OJA after controlling for the effects of age, rage, gender, and salary, adjusted R^2 = .36, $F(5, 131)$ = 16.10, $p <$ .05. The results shown in Table 2 provide evidence that IPJ does have a significant positive relationship with OJA. The multiple regression results suggest that employees who have similarities in age, race, gender, and salary are more likely to have increased OJA if perceptions of interpersonal justice are high.

     Informational Justice. The fourth hypothesis (1d) stated that there would be a positive relationship between informational justice (IFJ) and overall job attitude (OJA) above the covariates. IFJ accounted for a significant proportion of OJA after controlling for the effects of age, rage, gender, and salary, adjusted R^2 = .40, $F(5, 131)$ = 19.13, $p <$ .05. The results shown in Table 2 provide evidence that IFJ does have a significant positive relationship with OJA. The multiple regression results suggest that employees

who have similarities in age, race, gender, and salary are more likely to have increased

OJA if perceptions of informational justice are high.

Table 2.
Summary of Linear Regression Analyses for OJA

		OJA[a]	
	Independent Variables	ß	
Step 1	Gender	.17	*
	Age	.20	*
	Race	-.18	*
	Salary	.20	
	ΔR^2	.17	***
	F	6.73	
	Adjusted R^2	.14	***
	F	6.73	
Step 2a	PJ	.60	***
	ΔR^2	.33	***
	F	85.22	
	Adjusted R^2	.48	***
	F	25.84	
Step 2b	DJ	.45	***
	ΔR^2	.18	***
	F	37.03	
	Adjusted R^2	.33	***
	F	14.25	
Step 2c	IPJ	.50	***
	ΔR^2	.21	***
	F	44.84	
	Adjusted R^2	.36	***
	F	16.10	
Step 2d	IFJ	.52	***
	ΔR^2	.25	***
	F	57.45	
	Adjusted R^2	.40	***
	F	19.13	

Note. Steps 2a-2d represent the regression analysis conducted for each of the hypotheses (1a-1d). OJA = overall job attitude; PJ = procedural justice; DJ = distributive justice; IPJ = interpersonal justice; IFJ = informational justice
*p<.05. **p<.01. ***p<.001. [a] *Due to participant responses, there is no consistent* n *across all variables.*

Moderation. To test the second, third, and fourth hypotheses, equity sensitivity was entered in the second step of the moderation analyses. Table 3, 4, and 5 present the results of the moderated hierarchical regressions. Because the four justice dimensions were so highly correlated, and because it was hypothesized that organizational justice would have a positive relationship with overall job attitude, the four dimensions were collapsed into one overall measure of justice to test the moderation of H2. This procedure is consistent with past research in which justice measures of fairness are combined into a composite measure (e.g., Blakely et al., 2005; Colquitt & Shaw, 2005; Konovsky & Organ, 1996).

In contrast to previous research conducted by Huseman et al. (1987) and King and Miles (1994), equity sensitivity was analyzed as a continuous variable in accordance with procedures developed by Cohen, Cohen, West, and Aiken (2003) which is more statistically efficient than splitting the construct into three components (i.e., benevolent, sensitive, and entitled) prior to analysis.

Overall Justice. The second hypothesis (H2) stated that the positive relationship between perceptions of organizational justice and OJA would be moderated by equity sensitivity. Table 3 shows that when analyzed together as an overall justice measure, equity sensitivity does have a significant interaction effect with overall job attitudes (ß = .78; adjusted R^2 = .64; p < .05).

Table 3
Results of Analysis Using Hierarchical Regression for Overall Justice

	Independent Variables	Betas for Dependent Variables					
		Outcomes					
		OJA		JS		AC	
Step 1	Age	.17		.14		.24	**
	Race	-.16	**	.19	**	.06	
	Gender	.17	**	.16	**	.17	**
	Salary	.21	**	.24	**	.09	
	ΔR^2	.16	**	.16	**	.11	**
	F	6.25	**	6.54	**	4.35	**
	Adjusted R^2	.13	**	.14	**	.09	**
	F	6.25	**	6.54	**	4.35	**
Step 2	ES	.06		0.06		.10	
	OJ	.52	**	.66	**	.52	**
	ΔR^2	.26	**	.39	**	.28	**
	F	29.90	**	56.51	**	30.96	**
	Adjusted R^2	.39	**	.53	**	.37	**
	F	15.92	**	26.78	**	14.51	**
Step 3	ES * OJ	.78	**	.82	**	.92	**
	ΔR^2	.24	**	.27	**	.34	**
	F	93.80	**	195.71	**	171.97	**
	Adjusted R^2	.64	**	.81	**	.72	**
	F	36.56	**	84.51	**	52.99	**

Note: OJ = Overall justice, ES = Equity Sensitivity, OJA = overall job attitude, JS = Job Satisfaction, AC = Affective Commitment
*$p<.05$. **$p<.01$. ***$p<.001$. Due to participant responses, there is no consistent* n *across all variables.*

Job Satisfaction. To investigate the individual impact of justice perceptions on workplace attitudes, the third set of hypotheses (3a and 3b) stated that the positive relationship between interpersonal and informational justice and job satisfaction would be increased with an increase in equity sensitivity. As can be seen in Tables 4 and 5, equity sensitivity did have significant main effects on job satisfaction (IPJ; adjusted $R^2 = .31$; $p < .05$; IFJ; adjusted $R^2 = .37$; $p < .05$), but the interactive effects were not supported. This would seem to indicate that employee perceptions of job satisfaction are associated with

higher levels of equity sensitivity, but that perceptions of IPJ or IFJ do not have an

impact.

Table 4
Results of Analysis Using Hierarchical Regression for IPJ

		Betas for Dependent Variables				
		Outcomes				
	Independent Variables	OJA		JS		AC
Step 1	Age	.17		.14		.24 **
	Race	-.16 **		-.19 **		-.06
	Gender	.17 **		.16		.17 **
	Salary	.21 **		.24 **		.09
	ΔR^2	.16 **		.16 **		.11 **
	F	6.21 **		6.50 **		4.32 **
	Adjusted R^2	.13 **		.14 **		.09 **
	F	6.21 **		6.49 **		4.32 **
Step 2	ES	.21 **		.14		.25 **
	IPJ	.50 **		.43 **		.44 **
	ΔR^2	.26 **		.18 **		.23 **
	F	29.36 **		17.70 **		23.41 **
	Adjusted R^2	.39 **		.31 **		.32 **
	F	15.67 **		11.30 **		11.65 **
Step 3	ES * IPJ	.00		-.05		.04
	ΔR^2	.00		..00		.00
	F	.00		.39		.33
	Adjusted R^2	.39		.31		.31
	F	13.33		9.70		9.98

Note: IPJ = interpersonal justice , ES = Equity Sensitivity, OJA = overall job attitude, JS = Job Satisfaction, AC = Affective Commitment
*p<.05. **p<.01. ***p<.001.Due to participant responses, there is no consistent* n *across all variables.*

Affective Commitment. To investigate the individual impact of justice perceptions

on workplace attitudes, the fourth set of hypotheses (4a and 4b) stated that the positive

relationship between interpersonal and informational justice and affective commitment

would be increased with an increase in equity sensitivity. Much like the results of the

moderating effects of job satisfaction, Tables 4 and 5 indicate that there are significant

main effects with affective commitment (IPJ; adjusted R^2 = .31; $p < .05$; IFJ; adjusted R^2

= .36; $p < .05$), but there was no support for the interaction of equity sensitivity on the

relationship between interpersonal and informational justice and affective commitment.

Thus, those with higher levels of equity sensitivity would have an increase in affective

commitment regardless of perceptions of IPJ or IFJ.

Table 5
Results of Analysis Using Hierarchical Regression for IFJ

		Betas for Dependent Variables					
		Outcomes					
	Independent Variables	OJA		JS		AC	
Step 1	Age	.17		.14		.24	**
	Race	-.16	**	-.19	**	-.06	
	Gender	.17	**	.16		.17	**
	Salary	.21	**	.24	**	.09	
	ΔR^2	.16	**	.16	**	.11	**
	F	6.21	**	6.49	**	4.32	**
	Adjusted R^2	.13	**	.14	**	.09	**
	F	6.21	**	6.49	**	4.32	**
Step 2	ES	.20	**	.13		.25	**
	IFJ	.52	**	.48	**	.48	**
	ΔR^2	.29	**	.24	**	.28	**
	F	34.79	**	26.38	**	30.35	**
	Adjusted R^2	.42	**	.37	**	.37	**
	F	17.82	**	14.76	**	14.26	**
Step 3	ES * IFJ	.04		.02		-.01	
	ΔR^2	.00		.00		.00	
	F	.34		.08		.02	
	Adjusted R^2	.42		.37		.36	
	F	15.24		12.57		12.13	

Note: IFJ = Informational justice, ES = Equity Sensitivity, OJA = overall job attitude, JS = Job Satisfaction, AC = Affective Commitment
*$p<.05$. **$p<.01$. ***$p<.001$.Due to participant responses, there is no consistent* n *across all variables.*
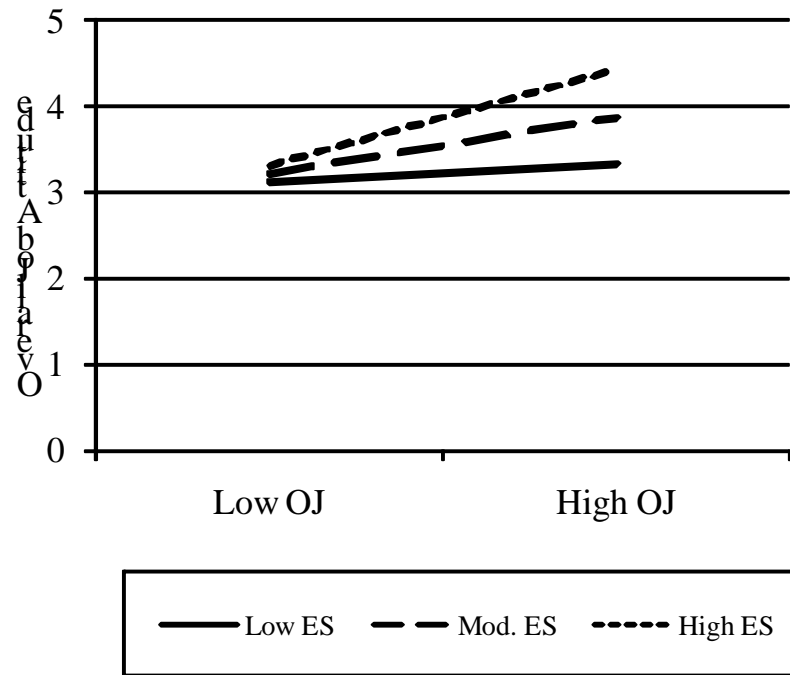
DISCUSSION

The purpose of this study was to examine the relationship between perceptions of justice and overall job attitudes as moderated by the construct of equity sensitivity. This study specifically examined how people perceive procedural, distributive, interpersonal, and informational justice and how that perception was related to overall job attitudes (OJA). Hypotheses were examined and tested using both multiple regression and step-wise (hierarchical) linear regression analyses.

Results indicate that, as perceptions of organizational justice (procedural, distributive, interpersonal, informational) increase, so does the level of OJA. This finding adds further support to past research that suggests that a fair work environment is important for promoting individual workplace attitudes (i.e., job satisfaction and affective commitment; Begley, Lee, & Hui, 2006; Konovsky & Pugh, 1994; Liao & Rupp, 2005). Of the multiple forms of justice, employee perceptions of interpersonal justice had the most dramatic impact on OJA. This provides support for the notion that personal interactions with authority figures in the workplace have an important impact on overall satisfaction and commitment to an organization. The social exchange that occurs between supervisors and subordinates has a direct and dramatic link to employee attitudes and behaviors in the short and long-term outlook of the organization (Masterson et al., 2000). This study supports that notion.

In addition, Harrison et al. (2006) had proposed a measure of overall job attitudes (OJA) that could be used to predict behavioral criteria (combined measures of focal performance, contextual performance, lateness, absence and turnover). Using this framework of combining the measures of job satisfaction and organizational

commitment, results from this study add further support to Harrison et al. (2006) who also found that OJA increases with increases in employee perceptions of organizational justice.

It was also hypothesized that equity sensitivity would moderate the relationships of the perceptions of overall organizational justice with OJA. When using a composite measure of organizational justice, the interaction was significant and in the predicted direction (see Figure 5). Because benevolents are more tolerant of under-rewarded situations in the workplace, they continued to exhibit higher levels of OJA than entitleds or equity sensitives even when there was low organizational justice. While entitleds exhibited lower levels of OJA than benevolents, they still had a positive increase in OJA as perceptions of justice increased. Justice is still an important construct for equity sensitives, but reactions to perceptions of justice or injustice appear to be more pronounced for benevolents and entitleds. This relationship may be a result of the nature of equity sensitivity measures, which is based on a continuous variable anchored by the extremes of equity sensitivity (i.e., high and low equity sensitivity).

<figure>

Y-axis label (vertical): Overall Job Attitudes

Y-axis: 0, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5

X-axis: Low OJ, High OJ

Legend: Low ES, Mod. ES, High ES
</figure>

Note: OJ = Overall Justice, ES = Equity Sensitivity; *n* = 165.

Figure 5. Graphical depiction of results of equity sensitivity moderating the relationship between overall organizational justice and overall job attitudes.

More specifically, it was hypothesized that interpersonal (IPJ) and informational justice (IFJ) would be related to the individual work attitudes of job satisfaction and affective commitment. Contrary to the prediction, equity sensitivity had no interaction with the relationship between the justice measures (i.e., IPJ, IFJ) and the individually- and organizationally-directed workplace outcomes (i.e., job satisfaction, affective commitment). It was also hypothesized that equity sensitivity would increase the positive relationship that already existed between the IPJ and IFJ and the workplace attitudes. If, for instance, the fairness perceptions were low, employees may have less job satisfaction and affective commitment because they would try to rebalance their output to input ratio as predicted by Adam's (1965) equity theory. As fairness perceptions increased, it was

expected that equity sensitivity would increase job satisfaction and affective commitment in an effort to maintain a sense of balance in the ratio of inputs to outputs. However, the main effects suggest that there is a positive relationship between equity sensitivity and job satisfaction and affective commitment. In other words, those employees with lower ratios of outputs to inputs (benevolents) tend to be more satisfied and affectively committed to their organizations than entitleds, who have a ratio with a higher ratio of outputs to inputs (Huseman et al., 1987). This could also help to explain generational differences that exist in the workplace. Smola and Sutton (2002) conducted a study to determine how workers' values shift as they age. Overall work values were found to change as generations matured. Younger generations reported less loyalty to their organizations, wanting to be promoted more quickly and being more "me-oriented" than older generations (Smola & Sutton). This sense of entitlement (i.e., higher ratio of outputs to inputs) supports the notion that younger employees will likely be less satisfied and committed to their organizations if they feel they have not received a higher ratio of outputs to inputs compared with their older counterparts.

Organizational Justice

Research has indicated that the measurement of overall justice is an important construct that does contribute to individual perceptions of justice (Schminke & Ambrose, 2007). The significant interactive results of this study suggest that the four types of organizational justice do not exist exclusively from each other. Instead, they have a four-way interaction that results in an indeterminate interaction. According to Lane (2008), "four-way interactions occur when three-way interactions differ as a function of the level of a fourth variable. Four-way and higher interactions are usually very difficult to

interpret and are rarely meaningful." It may be that combining the four justice variables into a single composite measure eliminates the interactions and more meaningful results are the outcome, as is seen in the significant interactive effects of the second hypothesis. While combining the four types of justice into one composite masks the unique relationship of the specific components, the results may be more generalizable.

Limitations and Future Research

The present study had a few limitations. First, while the participants included in this study were employees from two differing universities, they were mostly middle-age, Caucasian females from the southeastern portion of the United States who earned a decent salary. Thus, the results are harder to generalize across age groups, across both genders, across races, across salary brackets, and across the United States. The generalizability of future studies would be dependent on using a broader range of people to make sure the results are more accurate for organizations across the country.

Second, employee perceptions of fairness have a tendency to change over time. This study only measured perceptions at one point in time. How much perceptions change and the affects of the change are unknown. Future research should perhaps include a longitudinal study and look more into perceptions of fairness at various times in the life of the employee. This could then account for more accurate perceptions of fairness and their impact on workplace attitudes over time.

Third, there has long been a discussion that revolves around measuring overall organizational justice or measuring the constructs separately (i.e., procedural, distributive, interpersonal, informational). Both methods were used in this study, though further empirical research should provide support for which method is more useful. This

would require more theory development on expanding the justice measures to determine whether they should be examined individually (i.e., distributive, procedural, interpersonal and informational) or as a composite.

Fourth, the Equity Preference Questionnaire (EPQ) used to measure equity sensitivity in this study may not accurately reflect the continuous nature of the variable (i.e., low → high sensitivity). Previous research has tended to split the results of the EPQ into artificial categories (i.e., benevolent, sensitive, entitled), which may confound the interpretation of their results. Treating equity sensitivity as a categorical variable reduces the variability of the construct. The reduced variability could be one explanation as to why the relationships between interpersonal and informational justice and workplace attitudes (job satisfaction and affective commitment) were not significant. Future research should seek to create and validate an updated measure of equity sensitivity, which accurately reflects the continuous nature of the variable.

Finally, a further limitation to this study is common method variance. Questionnaires were the only tool used for collecting data. This may result in spurious positive correlations between constructs that may in fact have no correlation at all. However, especially in the social sciences, it has been argued that carefully designed research, even with the use of a questionnaire, does not always result in common method variance (Kline, Sulsky, Rever-Moriyama, 2000).

Future research should look more closely at how equity sensitivity and organizational justice affect workplace attitudes at work. It would be interesting to know more about how these fairness perceptions affect other outcomes, such as organizational citizenship behavior, and intent to turnover.

Conclusion

As indicated by the results of this study, perceptions of fairness do play a role in the lives of employees. Fairness affects employee satisfaction and commitment levels. Perhaps fairness perceptions should be incorporated into the understanding of the organizational culture. It is possible that organizational culture could be changed by implementing organization-wide training (e.g., supervisors and subordinates) that helps employees learn how to identify the antecedents (i.e., ratio of outputs to inputs) and consequences of perceived fairness (i.e., workplace outcomes). This training may also provide a better understanding, for individual employees and the larger organization, where motivation is placed and how to increase it. As a result, employees and organizations would better understand influences on their fairness perceptions and how that affects their attitudes and outputs at work. Furthermore, by understanding the possible discrepancy that lies between the ratio of outputs to inputs, people could feel more empowered to rebalance or align their actions with their beliefs. This could also assist organizations in knowing best how to motivate and interact with employees that have individual perceptions of justice.

This study has demonstrated that perceptions of fairness are important to people in the workplace both from the individual and organizational perspectives. However, the importance of such a question still needs to be assessed in the future.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A

EQUITY SENSITIVITY (Sauley & Bedeian, 2000)

This scale consists of a number of statements that describe different perceptions and feelings. Read each item and then mark the appropriate answer in the space next to that word. Indicate to what extent you generally feel this way at work. Use the following scale to record your answers.

		1 Strongly Disagree	2 Disagree	3 Neither Agree nor Disagree	4 Agree	5 Strongly Agree
2r.	I prefer to do as little as possible at work while getting as much as I can from my employer. **R**	1	2	3	4	5
3r.	I am most satisfied at work when I have to do as little as possible. **R**	1	2	3	4	5
4r.	When I am at my job, I think of ways to get out of work.	1	2	3	4	5
5r.	If I could get away with it, I would try to work just a little bit slower than the boss expects. **R**	1	2	3	4	5
6r.	It is really satisfying to be me when I can get something for nothing at work. **R**	1	2	3	4	5
7r.	It is the smart employee who gets as much as he/she can while giving as little as possible in return. **R**	1	2	3	4	5
8r.	Employees who are more concerned about what they can get from their employer rather than what they can give to their employer are the wise ones. **R**	1	2	3	4	5
9.	When I have completed my task for the day, I help out other employees who have yet to complete their tasks.	1	2	3	4	5
10.	Even if I received low wages and poor benefits from my employer, I would still try to do my best at my job.	1	2	3	4	5
11r.	If I had to work hard all day at my job, I would probably quit. **R**	1	2	3	4	5
12.	I feel obligated to do more than I am paid to do at work.	1	2	3	4	5
13.	At work, my greatest concern is whether or not I am doing the best job I can.	1	2	3	4	5
14.	A job which requires me to be busy during the day is better than a job which allows me a lot of loafing.	1	2	3	4	5
15.	At work, I feel uneasy when there is little work for me to do.	1	2	3	4	5
16.	I would become very dissatisfied with my job if I had little or no work to do.	1	2	3	4	5

17.   All other things being equal, it is
      better to have a job with a lot of
      duties and responsibilities than   1   2   3   4   5
      one with few duties and
      responsibilities.

R = Reversed Scored

(0-63.4 = low equity, 63.5-72.5 = moderate equity, 72.6-80 = high equity)

ORGANIZATIONAL JUSTICE (Bies & Moag, 1986; Leventhal, 1976, 1980; Shapiro, Buttner, & Barry, 1994; Thibaut & Walker, 1975)

This scale consists of a number of items that describe how you react to procedures and outcomes at work. Read each item and then mark the appropriate answer in the space next to that word. Indicate to what extent you generally feel this way. Use the following scale to record your answers.

Procedural Justice- **The following items refer to the procedures used to arrive at your (outcome). Outcomes are those things that you receive as the result of your efforts at work, such as pay, vacation, recognition, respect, or other rewards and benefits. To what extent:**	1 To a Small Extent	2 To Somewhat a Small Extent	3 Neither Large or Small Extent	4 To Somewhat a Large Extent	5 To a Large Extent
18. Have you been able to express your views and feelings during those procedures?	1	2	3	4	5
19. Have you had influence over the (outcome) arrived at by those procedures?	1	2	3	4	5
20. Have those procedures been applied consistently?	1	2	3	4	5
21. Have those procedures been free of bias?	1	2	3	4	5
22. Have those procedures been based on accurate information?	1	2	3	4	5
23. Have you been able to appeal the (outcome) arrived at by those procedures?	1	2	3	4	5
24. Have those procedures upheld ethical and moral standards?	1	2	3	4	5

		1	2	3	4	5
Distributive Justice- **The following items refer to your (outcome). Outcomes are those things that you receive as the result of your efforts at work, such as pay, vacation, recognition, respect, or other rewards and benefits. To what extent:**		**To a Small Extent**	**To Somewhat a Small Extent**	**Neither Large of Small Extent**	**To Somewhat a Large Extent**	**To a Large Extent**
25.	Does your (outcome) reflect the effort you have put into your work?	1	2	3	4	5
26.	Is your (outcome) appropriate for the work you have completed?	1	2	3	4	5
27.	Does your (outcome) reflect what you have contributed to the organization?	1	2	3	4	5
28.	Is your (outcome) justified, given your performance?	1	2	3	4	5

		1	2	3	4	5
Interpersonal Justice- **The following items refer to (the authority figure who enacted the procedure). To what extent:**		**To a Small Extent**	**To Somewhat a Small Extent**	**Neither Large of Small Extent**	**To Somewhat a Large Extent**	**To a Large Extent**
29.	Have (he/she) treated you in a polite manner?	1	2	3	4	5
30.	Has (he/she) treated you with dignity?	1	2	3	4	5
31.	Has (he/she) treated you with respect?	1	2	3	4	5
32.	Has (he/she) refrained from improper remarks or comments?	1	2	3	4	5

		1	2	3	4	5
Informational Justice- **The following items refer to (the authority figure who enacted the procedure). To what extent:**		To a Small Extent	To Somewhat a Small Extent	Neither Large of Small Extent	To Somewhat a Large Extent	To a Large Extent
33.	Has (he/she) been candid in (his/her) communications with you?	1	2	3	4	5
34.	Has (he/she) explained the procedures thoroughly?	1	2	3	4	5
35.	Were (his/her) explanations regarding the procedures reasonable?	1	2	3	4	5
36.	Has (he/she) communicated details in a timely manner?	1	2	3	4	5
37.	Has (he/she) seemed to tailor (his/her) communications to individuals' specific needs?	1	2	3	4	5

JOB SATISFACTION (Brayfield & Rothe, 1951; Weiss et al., 1967)

This scale consists of a number of items that describe how satisfied you are at work. Read each item and then mark the appropriate answer in the space next to that word. Indicate to what extent you generally feel this way. Use the following scale to record your answers.

		1 Strongly Disagree	2 Slightly Disagree	3 Neither Agree nor Disagree	4 Slightly Agree	5 Strongly Agree
38.	My job is like a hobby to me.	1	2	3	4	5
39.	My job is usually interesting enough to keep me from getting bored.	1	2	3	4	5
40r.	It seems that my friends are more interested in their jobs. **R**	1	2	3	4	5
41r.	I consider my job rather unpleasant. **R**	1	2	3	4	5
42.	I enjoy my work more than my leisure time.	1	2	3	4	5
43r.	I am often bored with my job. **R**	1	2	3	4	5
44.	I feel fairly well satisfied with my job.	1	2	3	4	5
45.	Most of the time I have to force myself to go to work.	1	2	3	4	5
46.	I am satisfied with my job for the time being.	1	2	3	4	5
47r.	I feel that my job is no more interesting than other I could get. **R**	1	2	3	4	5
48r.	I definitely dislike my job. **R**	1	2	3	4	5
49.	I feel that I am happier in my work than most other people.	1	2	3	4	5
50.	Most days I am enthusiastic about my work.	1	2	3	4	5

51r.	Each day of work seems like it will never end. **R**	1	2	3	4	5
52.	I like my job better than the average worker does.	1	2	3	4	5
53r.	My job is pretty uninteresting. **R**	1	2	3	4	5
54.	I find real enjoyment in my work.	1	2	3	4	5
55r.	I am disappointed that I ever took this job. **R**	1	2	3	4	5
56.	I am satisfied with being able to keep busy all the time.	1	2	3	4	5
57.	I am satisfied with the chance to work alone on the job.	1	2	3	4	5
58.	I am satisfied with the chance to do different things from time to time.	1	2	3	4	5
59.	I am satisfied with the chance to be "somebody" in the community.	1	2	3	4	5
60.	I am satisfied with the way my boss handles his or her workers.	1	2	3	4	5
61.	I am satisfied with the competence of my supervisor in making decisions.	1	2	3	4	5
62.	I am satisfied with being able to do things that don't go against my conscience.	1	2	3	4	5
63.	I am satisfied with the way my job provides for steady employment.	1	2	3	4	5
64.	I am satisfied with the chance to do things for other people.	1	2	3	4	5
65.	I am satisfied with the chance to tell people what to do.	1	2	3	4	5
66.	I am satisfied with the chance to do something that makes use of my abilities.	1	2	3	4	5

67.	I am satisfied with the way company policies are put into practice.	1	2	3	4	5
68.	I am satisfied with my pay and the amount of work I do.	1	2	3	4	5
69.	I am satisfied with the chances for advancement on this job.	1	2	3	4	5
70.	I am satisfied with the freedom to use my own judgment.	1	2	3	4	5
71.	I am satisfied with the chance to try my own methods of doing the job.	1	2	3	4	5
72.	I am satisfied with the working conditions.	1	2	3	4	5
73.	I am satisfied with the way my coworkers get along with each other.	1	2	3	4	5
74.	I am satisfied with the praise I get for doing a good job.	1	2	3	4	5
75.	I am satisfied with the feeling of accomplishment I get from the job.	1	2	3	4	5

R = Reversed Score

ORGANIZATIONAL COMMITMENT (Allen & Meyer, 1990)

This scale consists of a number of items that describe how you act at work. Read each item and then mark the appropriate answer in the space next to that word. Indicate to what extent you generally feel this way. Use the following scale to record your answers.

Affective Commitment		**1** **Strongly Disagree**	**2** **Slightly Disagree**	**3** **Neither Agree nor Disagree**	**4** **Slightly Agree**	**5** **Strongly Agree**
76.	I would be very happy to spend the rest of my work career with my current organization.	1	2	3	4	5
77.	I enjoy discussing my organization with people outside it.	1	2	3	4	5
78.	I really feel as if my organization's problems are my own.	1	2	3	4	5
79r.	I think that I could easily become as attached to another organization as I am to my current job. **R**	1	2	3	4	5
80r.	I do not feel like "part of the family" at my organization. **R**	1	2	3	4	5
81r.	I do not feel "emotionally attached" to my organization. **R**	1	2	3	4	5
82.	This organization has a great deal of personal meaning for me.	1	2	3	4	5
83r.	I do not feel a strong sense of "belonging" to my organization. **R**	1	2	3	4	5

R = Reversed Score

Continuance Commitment	1 Strongly Disagree	2 Slightly Disagree	3 Neither Agree nor Disagree	4 Slightly Agree	5 Strongly Agree
84r. If I quit my job without having another one lined up, I am not afraid of what might happen. **R**	1	2	3	4	5
85. It would be very hard for me to leave my organization right now, even if I wanted to.	1	2	3	4	5
86. Too much in my life would be disrupted if I decided I wanted to leave my organization now.	1	2	3	4	5
87r. It wouldn't be too costly for me to leave my organization now. **R**	1	2	3	4	5
88. Right now, staying with my organization is a matter of necessity as much as desire.	1	2	3	4	5
89. I feel that I have too few options to consider leaving my organization now.	1	2	3	4	5
90. One of the few serious consequences of leaving my organization would be the scarcity of available alternatives.	1	2	3	4	5
91. One of the major reasons I continue to work for my organization is that leaving would require considerable personal sacrifice – another organization may not match the overall benefits I have now.	1	2	3	4	5

R = Reversed Score

	Normative Commitment	1 Strongly Disagree	2 Slightly Disagree	3 Neither Agree nor Disagree	4 Slightly Agree	5 Strongly Agree
92.	I think that people these days move from company to company too often.	1	2	3	4	5
93r.	I do not believe that a person must always be loyal to his or her organization. **R**	1	2	3	4	5
94r.	Jumping from organization to organization does not seem at all unethical to me. **R**	1	2	3	4	5
95.	One of the major reasons I continue to work for my organization is that I believe loyalty is important and I therefore feel a sense of moral obligation to remain.	1	2	3	4	5
96.	If I got another offer for a better job elsewhere I would not feel it was right to leave my organization.	1	2	3	4	5
97.	I was taught to believe in the value of remaining loyal to one organization.	1	2	3	4	5
98.	Things were better in the days when people stayed with one organization for most of their careers.	1	2	3	4	5
99r.	I do not think that wanting to be a "company man" or "company woman" is sensible anymore. **R**	1	2	3	4	5

R = Reversed Score

DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

Please fill in the following demographic information as honestly and accurately as possible. This information is voluntary and will remain completely anonymous. It will only be accessible to individuals involved in this study. Please try not to leave any information blank.

Gender:
- ☐ Male
- ☐ Female

Age: _____

Race:
- ☐ White
- ☐ African-American
- ☐ Hispanic
- ☐ Asian-Pacific Islander
- ☐ Native American
- ☐ Other:_____

Highest level of education completed:
- ☐ Less than high school
- ☐ High school / GED
- ☐ Some college
- ☐ 2-year college degree (Associates)
- ☐ 4-year college degree (BA, BS)
- ☐ Master's Degree
- ☐ Doctoral Degree
- ☐ Professional Degree (MD, JD)

Current marital status:
- ☐ Single, never married
- ☐ Married
- ☐ Separated
- ☐ Divorced
- ☐ Widowed

What is your work status? (Check all that apply)
- ☐ Part-time
- ☐ Full-time
- ☐ Self-employed
- ☐ Unemployed

How long have you been at your current job?
- ☐ Less than a year
- ☐ 1 year

☐ 2-5 years
☐ 5-10 years
☐ Over 10 years

How long do you plan on staying at your current job?
☐ Less than a year
☐ 1 year
☐ 2-5 years
☐ 5-10 years
☐ Over 10 years

What is your current salary per year?
$_____/year

Appendix B

INFORMED CONSENT STATEMENT

GENERAL INFORMATION

You will complete a few questionnaires plus a demographic questionnaire. The study will last about 20-30 minutes. While you will not receive any direct benefit from participating, we believe that the results of this study can provide information that will assist organizations in understanding their workers better.

PARTICIPATION & RISKS

Participation in this study is completely voluntary. You may elect to discontinue your participation at any time during the study. In addition, if you do not feel comfortable answering any of the questions you may leave that question blank and continue with the rest of the study. All participants must be at least 18 years old. There are no physical risks involved in this study.

CONFIDENTIALITY

The information that you provide in this questionnaire will be kept strictly confidential.

Your responses to this questionnaire are completely anonymous—we do not ask that you identify yourself in any way. This information will be stored securely and will be made available only to persons directly involved in the study. Your name and place of work **will not** be included on any documents. At no time will single responses be identified.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY AND PROCEDURE

We are interested in the relationship between perceptions of justice, satisfaction and commitment in the workplace. You will be given a survey that asks you to rate a series of statements and reactions to them. In addition, other questions will provide us with information about your background, general attitudes, and present employment status. These questions will help us to interpret the rest of the study.

When you have completed the survey please return it to the researcher administering the study. Remember this is an anonymous questionnaire, so do not put your name on any part of it.

CONTACT

The UTC Institutional Review Board has reviewed and approved this research. If you have any questions regarding your rights as a human subject or would like to know more about the IRB policies and procedures, you may contact:

The IRB Chair: **Dr. M. D. Roblyer (423) 425-5567**

If you have questions at any time about the study or the procedures or you would like to obtain a report of this research study when the results have been completed, please contact:

Dr. Brian O'Leary: **Brian-O'Leary@utc.edu / (423) 425-4283**
                             Dept. of Psychology, The University of Tennessee at Chattanooga

CONSENT

I have read and understand the above information. I have received a copy of this form in electronic form. By choosing to continue on and complete the survey, I agree to participate in this study.

> **The Institutional Review Board of the University of Tennessee at Chattanooga (FWA00004149) has approved this research project # 08-145.**

Appendix C

MEMORANDUM

TO: Tatiana Trevor   IRB # 08-145
           Dr. Brian O'Leary

FROM: Lindsay Pardue, Director of Research Integrity
           M. D. Roblyer, IRB Committee Chair

DATE: September 23, 2008

SUBJECT: IRB # 08-145: Organizational Justice, Equity Sensititivity, and Workplace Attitudes

The Institutional Review Board has reviewed and approved your application and assigned you the IRB number listed above. You must include the following approval statement on research materials seen by participants and used in research reports:

> *The Institutional Review Board of the University of Tennessee at Chattanooga (FWA00004149) has approved this research project # 08-145.*

Please remember that you must complete Form C when the project is completed or provide an annual report if the project takes over one year to complete. The IRB Committee will make every effort to remind you prior to your anniversary date; however, it is your responsibility to ensure that this additional step is satisfied.

Please remember to contact the IRB Committee immediately and submit a new project proposal for review if significant changes occur in your research design or in any instruments used in conducting the study. You should also contact the IRB Committee immediately if you encounter any adverse effects during your project that pose a risk to your subjects.

For any additional information, please consult our web page http://www.utc.edu/irb or email instrb@utc.edu

Best wishes for a successful research project.