



THE EFFECT OF ETHICAL FRAMEWORKS ON PERCEPTIONS OF ORGANIZATIONAL JUSTICE

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Research on both ethics and organizational justice distinguishes between process and outcome concerns. However, little research integrates these two areas. This study examined the influence of individuals' ethical frameworks on perceptions of organizational justice. We found that ethical formalists were more sensitive to procedural justice issues and ethical utilitarians were more sensitive to distributive justice issues. The implications of these results for both organizational justice and ethics are discussed.

Organizational justice and normative ethics both address the general organizational question, What is right? Work in the field of organizational justice has centered around how people feel about either the distribution of outcomes (distributive justice) or the process by which these outcome allocation decisions are made (procedural justice). Ethics research has often considered a similar distinction people draw between processes and outcomes as they attempt to determine what is ethical. One such approach distinguishes between utilitarian (outcome-based) decisions and formalist (rules- or process-based) decisions. These similar distinctions between processes and outcomes in organizational justice and ethics are notable, and in this research note we attempt to integrate the two areas.

PROCESS AND OUTCOMES IN JUSTICE RESEARCH

Organizational justice research makes a clear distinction between process and outcome concerns. Early justice research focused on distributive fairness—the perceived fairness of outcome distributions. Research on distributive justice in organizational settings has concentrated primarily on perceptions of equity (Adams, 1965). The most common focus of such research has been individuals' reactions to pay equity and inequity (Mowday,

We wish to thank Carol Kulik, Joseph Rosse, and Deborah Wells for their comments on earlier drafts. We also thank the three anonymous reviewers for their thoughtful comments and patient assistance in developing this research note. Finally, we thank Neil Brady and Gloria Wheeler for their help with the ethics instrument.

1983), although individuals' reactions to equity have been shown to be important for a variety of other variables, including job challenge (Oldham, Nottenburg, Kassner, Ferris, Fedor, & Masters, 1982), job security, supervision (Oldham, Kulik, Ambrose, Stepina, & Brand, 1986), office space (Greenberg, 1988), and layoffs (Brockner, Greenberg, & Brockner, 1986). In general, organizational research on distributive fairness has shown that individuals' perceptions of the fairness of outcomes affect their attitudes and behaviors.

Research on fairness shifted to an emphasis on procedural fairness in the 1980s. Much of this research stemmed from Thibaut and Walker's (1975) finding that, even when individuals received unfavorable outcomes, they evaluated an outcome more positively when they believed the process by which it was determined was fair. Thibaut and Walker demonstrated that input to a decision process (voice) increased individuals' perceptions of the fairness of the process—a finding Lind, Kanfer, and Earley (1990) called the most reliable result in the justice literature.

Research has demonstrated the impact of procedural fairness in a wide variety of organizational settings: performance appraisal (Greenberg, 1986, 1991), drug testing (Konovsky & Cropanzano, 1991), selection testing (Gilliland, 1994), discipline (Trevino, 1992), budget decisions (Bies & Shapiro, 1988), recruiting (Bies, 1985), and layoffs (Brockner, Grover, Reed, & DeWitt, 1992). One consequence of the increased emphasis on procedural justice is that distributive justice has been largely ignored. However, Greenberg (1990, 1993) emphasized the importance of considering procedural and distributive justice issues simultaneously.

Folger (1987) noted that distributive justice and procedural justice are distinct but highly related constructs; the relationship between the two is complex. Justice research has indicated that perceptions of distributive justice and perceptions of procedural justice may affect each other (Lind & Tyler, 1988; Tyler, 1988). Individuals may use outcomes as an indicator of procedural fairness (Lind & Lissak, 1985). Perceptions of procedural justice also may enhance the perceived fairness of the outcomes they produce (Lind & Tyler, 1988). Not only do procedural and distributive justice influence each other; research has also suggested that they interact (e.g., Folger, 1986). For example, procedural justice has a stronger impact when an outcome is unfair, and distributive justice has a stronger impact when a procedure is unfair (see Brockner and Wiesenfeld [1996] for a review). It is clear that both procedural justice and distributive justice contribute to individuals' perceptions of organizational fairness; both affect how individuals react. However, individuals' reactions may differ depending on the extent to which they focus on outcomes, procedures, or both. For example, an individual may receive a promotion she deserves, but may not feel the process allowed her adequate input prior to the decision. If she focuses on the outcome, she is likely to assess the situation as fair. If she focuses on the process, she is likely to assess the situation as unfair.

The finding that individuals distinguish between processes and outcomes when assessing a situation is not unique to the organizational fairness

literature. Research on ethical frameworks has suggested that individuals may differ in the extent to which they consider process or outcomes when making ethical decisions. We suggest that these differences identified in ethics research may manifest themselves in broader settings and may influence individuals' reactions to organizational justice.

PROCESS AND OUTCOMES IN ETHICS RESEARCH

Exploring individual differences in how people deal with moral judgments is a recurring theme in ethics research. A number of taxonomies have emerged, each attempting to delineate the ethical frameworks that underlie ethical judgments (e.g., Brady, 1985; Kohlberg, 1984; Velasquez, 1992). Underlying each of these is a belief that relatively stable individual differences in ethical ideologies affect people's ethical judgments. One approach contrasts process- and outcome-based concerns by distinguishing between formalist and utilitarian approaches to ethical decision making (Brady, 1985, 1990). A formalist approach is process oriented. Under formalism, individuals subscribe to a set of rules or principles for guiding behavior. Actions are ethical or unethical in and of themselves, to the extent that they conform to these rules. Alternatively, a utilitarian approach is outcome oriented. Under utilitarianism, people define ethical actions as those that create the greatest net social good. Actions in and of themselves cannot be identified as ethical; only their outcomes can be so defined.

Formalism (often associated with Kantian ethics) and utilitarianism (often associated with Bentham and Mills) are roughly synonymous with deontology and teleology (Brady, 1990), identified by Kohlberg as "the two major ethical principles" (1984: 579). Nozick stated that "all of substantive ethics has been fitted or poured into these two powerful and appealing molds" (1981: 494). (Of course, many finer-grained categories of ethics exist, including act and rule formalism, act and rule utilitarianism, and so on. However, for this application, we deemed the more global constructs more useful.) Originally, these approaches were considered to be opposite ends of a single continuum; individuals were thought to be either formalist or utilitarian, and stronger tendencies toward one implied weaker tendencies toward the other. However, Brady and Wheeler (1996) found that utilitarianism and formalism were not alternates, but rather, independent subdimensions. An individual can be high on both dimensions, high on one and low on the other, or low on both.

Clearly, a parallel exists between organizational justice and normative ethics. Outcomes are the focus of both distributive justice and utilitarian ethical frameworks. Processes are the focus of both procedural justice and formalist ethical frameworks. This parallel is not surprising, as the fields share common roots and patterns of development. Just as organizational justice research evolved from considering distributive to considering both procedural and distributive issues, research on ethical justice broadened from a focus on distributional issues to include both procedural and distri-

butional concerns; Rawls (1971) initiated this development of the field. Indeed, Thibaut and Walker (1975) empirically examined Rawls's basic premise in their seminal work on procedural justice.

However, both fields have moved away from these common roots. Organizational justice issues have become removed from normative ethics. For example, one sees only infrequent references to Rawls in the current literature. Similarly, in the ethics literature, issues concerning process have faded as distributive issues have again received primary attention (cf. Velasquez, 1992). We believe there are benefits to rejoining the two areas.

AN INTEGRATED MODEL OF ETHICS AND FAIRNESS

We chose to focus on integrating ethics and justice for several reasons. First, the roles of process and outcomes are clearly parallel in ethics and justice. Second, both ethics and justice have strong theoretical foundations on which to build. Third, these theoretical foundations lead researchers to focus on separate, but complementary, aspects of organizational environments. That is, ethics research focuses on individuals and how their beliefs affect perceptions of organizations. Justice research focuses on situations and how attributes of situations affect individuals' perceptions of organizations. We suggest that individuals are disposed to viewing, interpreting, and responding to the world in different ways according to their ethical frameworks, tending to view ethical situations through process (formalist) and outcome (utilitarian) lenses. These ethical frameworks may affect the way that individuals view more general organizational events and outcomes as well, including those involving the fairness of procedures and distribution of outcomes.

The belief that individuals' personal attributes may influence their perceptions of organizational justice is not new. Huselman, Hatfield, and Miles (1987) suggested that individuals may be differentially sensitive to equity. Witt and his colleagues (Joy & Witt, 1992; Witt & Broach, 1993) examined how individual differences such as exchange ideology, delay of gratification, and occupational identification influence individuals' perceptions of procedural fairness. Rasinski (1987) found that individuals' preferences for proportionality or for egalitarianism affected how they weighted procedural and distributive justice in judging the fairness of government policies.

We suggest that individuals' ethical propensities serve as lenses that moderate the relationship between organizational decisions and the perceived fairness of those decisions. Ethical frameworks may affect how individuals attend to, encode, and evaluate information. Just as the research on person-organization fit has suggested that individuals are sensitive to and react to the fit between individual and organizational values (e.g., Meglino, Ravlin, & Adkins, 1989), we suggest that individuals should be most sensitive to those aspects of organizational decisions (processes or outcomes) that match their ethical orientations: formalism, utilitarianism, or both. This moderating effect of ethical framework on the relationship between organ-

izational decisions and their perceived fairness should manifest itself in two ways. The relationship between organizational *procedures* and their perceived fairness should be stronger for strong formalists—those who base their opinions about what is right on rules of action. The relationship between the distribution of organizational *outcomes* and their perceived fairness should be stronger for strong utilitarians—those who base their opinions of what is right on the outcomes of actions. Two hypotheses summarize these moderating effects:

Hypothesis 1. The impact of fair procedures on perceptions of procedural fairness will be more pronounced for strong formalists than for weak formalists.

Hypothesis 2. The impact of fair outcomes on perceptions of distributive fairness will be more pronounced for strong utilitarians than for weak utilitarians.

METHODS

Respondents and Procedures

The respondents were from 11 primarily midwestern organizations that included insurance, communications, food-processing, light manufacturing, accounting, and architectural firms, as well as hospital, university, and government organizations. Each organization was contacted through a group associated with the first author's university, the College Board of Advisors, an advisory panel of upper-level managers from 25 local organizations. The sample represents a wide range of for-profit (both goods and services) and not-for-profit entities. Depending on the size of the department or organization, we hand-delivered 25 to 40 survey packets (described below) to each group that had agreed to participate. Each packet contained a postage-paid envelope so the respondent could mail the survey directly back to us, thereby preserving his or her anonymity. A total of 209 responses to 285 distributed surveys (73.3%) were returned. Thirty-five percent of the respondents were men, and 65 percent were women. The average age of respondents was 38.6 years. Supervisors constituted 55 percent of respondents, and nonsupervisors constituted 45 percent. The average length of tenure was 9.1 years with the present employer and 4.4 years at the present job.

In this study, we were interested in four variables that may affect perceptions of organizational justice: ethical formalism, ethical utilitarianism, procedural justice, and distributive justice. The first two were individual difference variables, and the latter two were experimentally manipulated through scenarios that reflected procedurally just or unjust and distributively just or unjust organizational actions. Each survey packet began with instructions and demographic questions (tenure, job category, gender, age) followed by several instruments, presented in random order across respondents: (1) an assessment of individual ethical frameworks, (2) a scenario describing a situation in which an employee was considered for promotion

(in which both procedural and distributive justice were manipulated), followed by an assessment of the respondent's perceptions of the fairness of the process and the outcome, and (3) measures of perceptions of the respondent's own organization, including perceptions of procedural and distributive justice.

Measures

Ethical predispositions. The character traits version of the Measure of Ethical Viewpoints (MEV) measured the extent to which respondents displayed utilitarian or formalist ethical predispositions (Brady & Wheeler, 1996). The instrument lists 20 character traits that respondents rate on a seven-point scale (1 = not important to me, 7 = very important to me) according to their personal judgment. Brady and Wheeler's factor analysis revealed two major factors that accounted for 42.8 percent of the variance in the data. Factor 1, utilitarianism (26.0%), included the traits innovative, resourceful, effective, influential, results-oriented, productive, and a winner; factor 2, formalism (16.7%), included the traits principled, dependable, trustworthy, honest, noted for integrity, and law-abiding. Our confirmatory factor analysis produced similar results, with the two factors accounting for 58.7 percent of the variance, 44.4 percent for factor 1 (utilitarianism) and 14.2 percent for factor 2 (formalism); all traits loaded on the same factor reported by Brady and Wheeler. We calculated each respondent's utilitarian and formalist scores by averaging responses to the appropriate items. (For more information on the instrument's development, see Brady and Wheeler [1996].)

Scenario-based procedural and distributive justice. Procedural and distributive justice were between-subjects manipulations. Our manipulations for each are embedded in four possible scenarios: (1) procedurally just, distributively just ($n = 58$), (2) procedurally just, distributively unjust ($n = 40$), (3) procedurally unjust, distributively just ($n = 69$), and (4) procedurally unjust, distributively unjust ($n = 42$). Each respondent received one of four scenarios describing an employee (Chris) who is considered for a promotion. As voice has been shown to be a consistent indicator of procedural fairness (Bies & Shapiro, 1988; Greenberg, 1986; Lind, Kanfer, & Early, 1990), in the high procedural justice scenarios, both Chris and a co-worker being considered for the promotion are allowed input into the promotion decision-making process. In the low procedural justice scenarios, the co-worker is allowed input, but Chris is not. We used an equity approach to manipulate the distributive justice of outcomes. In the high distributive justice scenarios, the individual with the better objective performance record is awarded the promotion. In the low distributive justice scenarios, the individual with the better performance record is not awarded the promotion. Pilot tests confirmed that the procedural and distributive justice manipulations were perceived as intended. (Details of pilot tests and their results can be obtained from the authors.)

Following the scenario, respondents were asked a series of questions adapted from Tyler (1990) that registered their reactions to the scenario. Two

items ("How fair was the process by which the decision was made?" and "How fair was the method the supervisor used to make the decision?") assessed perceived procedural fairness, and two items ("How fair was the promotion decision?" and "How fair was Chris' outcome?") measured perceived distributive fairness. Response options were on a seven-point Likert-type scale (1 = not at all, 7 = very). Mean responses created each respondent's perceived procedural justice and perceived distributive justice scores.

Own organization's procedural and distributive justice. The scenario responses allowed us to examine the interaction between ethics and justice perceptions in a controlled setting, where we manipulated conditions to alter perceptions of procedural and distributive justice. However, we were also interested in examining the relationship between justice perceptions and ethics in a real-world setting—one in which perceptions of justice formed naturally. Thus, we also asked the respondents to answer questions assessing their perceptions of procedural and distributive justice in their own organizations. Three items, adapted from Tyler and Schuller (1990), assessed those perceptions (response options: 1 = very, 7 = not at all). Procedural justice was measured by two items: "How fair are the procedures used in your department to make decisions that affect you?" and "How fairly treated are you by your supervisor?" Distributive justice was measured by a single item, "How fair are the outcomes you receive from the organization?"

ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

Initial Tests

Manipulation checks. Table 1 shows means, standard deviations, correlations for each variable, and reliabilities (coefficient alphas) for scales. Since we believed individuals' ethical lenses might affect the manner in which they interpreted organizational events, we included individuals' utilitarianism and formalism scores as covariates in our manipulation checks. Thus, one-way analyses of covariance (ANCOVAs) provided checks of the procedural and distributive justice manipulations in the scenarios.

Mean perceptions of procedural justice for the procedurally just and procedurally unjust scenarios were 4.65 (s.d. = 2.30) and 2.75 (1.47), respectively ($F_{1, 200} = 88.87, p < .001$). Mean perceptions of distributive justice for the distributively just and unjust scenarios were 4.76 (1.48) and 3.23 (1.47), respectively ($F_{1, 199} = 62.21, p < .001$). Previous research has indicated a likelihood of spillover effects occurring between manipulations of procedural and distributive justice (cf. McFarlin & Sweeney, 1992; Sweeney & McFarlin, 1993). Similarly, in this study, the distributive justice manipulation affected perceptions of procedural justice ($F_{1, 200} = 14.75, p < .001$), and the procedural justice manipulation affected perceptions of distributive justice ($F_{1, 199} = 32.12, p < .001$). However, the effect sizes indicate that the procedural justice manipulation provided a stronger effect for perceptions of procedural justice than did the distributive justice manipulation (f^2 's = .56 and .22, respectively) and that the distributive justice manipulation pro-

TABLE 1
Summary Statistics and Zero-Order Correlations^a

Variable	Mean	s.d.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1. Procedural justice manipulation	0.46	0.50								
2. Distributive justice manipulation	0.61	0.48	-.03							
3. Perceived procedural justice	3.62	1.69	.56 ***	.20 **						
4. Perceived distributive justice	4.17	1.70	.33 ***	.45 ***	.78 ***					
5. Ethical formalism	6.37	0.79	-.07	.05	.03	.06				
6. Ethical utilitarianism	5.41	0.84	-.13†	.10	-.08	-.05	.53 ***			
7. Own organization's procedural justice	2.79	1.26	.13†	-.02	.03	.04	-.19 **	.14†		
8. Own organization's distributive justice	3.24	1.26	.14†	-.08	.05	.02	-.15†	-.21 **	.73 ***	

^a Scale reliabilities are in parentheses on the diagonal.

† $p < .10$

** $p < .01$

*** $p < .001$

vided a stronger effect for perceptions of distributive justice than did the procedural justice manipulation (f^2 's = .46 and .33). There was no significant interaction between the procedural and the distributive justice manipulations on either rating of fairness. Additionally, neither utilitarianism nor formalism affected perceived justice ratings.

Demographic effects. A variety of demographic variables have been examined in business ethics research. Three of the most common include age, gender, and organizational hierarchical level. However, their effects have not been consistent (e.g., Gilligan, 1997; Kohlberg, 1984; Rest, 1986). Accordingly, we first tested for the effect of each of these on individuals' ethical framework scores. Analyses revealed that none was significantly related to respondents' ethical scores. Therefore, these variables were not included as control variables in the regression models reported below.

Hypothesis Tests

Scenario analyses. Hypothesis 1 predicts that the relationship between organizational procedures and the perceived fairness of those procedures will be stronger for high-formalism individuals than for low-formalism individuals. The second interaction term (procedural justice by formalism) in the regression results in Table 2 (left side) models that relationship. We also controlled for the scenario's procedural justice manipulation by including it in the regression equation. (Justice manipulations were coded as 1, fair, or 0, unfair.) Finally, since we observed a strong spillover effect between both justice manipulations in our manipulation checks, we included the distributive justice manipulation in the model as well.

Table 2 shows the results of the analysis. As predicted, the interaction of procedural justice and formalism was significant. Figure 1 illustrates this interaction; endpoints represent values one standard deviation above and below the mean. In particular, high-formalism respondents viewed procedurally just organizational actions as especially fair. It should also be noted that utilitarian tendencies did not interact with organizational procedures to affect perceived procedural justice. However, consistent with the spillover effect noted in the manipulation checks, the distributive justice manipulation exerted a significant main effect on perceived procedural justice. Additionally, with the interaction term in the model, the procedural justice manipulation main effect was not significant; the interaction term accounted for variance originally attributed to the main effect manipulation in the manipulation check.

Hypothesis 2 predicts that the relationship between organizational outcomes and the perceived distributive fairness of those outcomes will be stronger for highly utilitarian individuals than for those low on utilitarianism. The first interaction term (distributive justice by formalism) in the regression results in Table 2 (right side) models that relationship. As in the previous model, we included both the distributive and procedural justice manipulations in the model to assess whether the interaction contributed to perceived distributive justice above and beyond the justice manipulations.

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032
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TABLE 2
Results of Multiple Regression Analysis of Interaction of Utilitarianism with Distributive Justice^a

Independent Variable	Perceived Procedural Justice		Perceived Distributive Justice	
	<i>b</i>	β	<i>b</i>	β
Procedural justice manipulation	-3.96 (3.25)	-0.59	2.18*** (0.39)	0.32***
Distributive justice manipulation	1.43*** (0.39)	0.21***	3.69 3.13	0.54
Utilitarianism	-0.14 (0.31)	-0.03	-0.23 (0.30)	-0.06
Formalism	-0.15 (0.35)	-0.03	0.42 (0.36)	0.10
Procedural justice \times utilitarianism	-0.21 (0.32)	-0.17		
Procedural justice \times formalism	1.14** (0.51)	1.32**		
Constant	6.31** (2.03)			
Multiple <i>R</i>	.63			
<i>R</i> ²	.39			
Distributive justice \times utilitarianism			0.27* (0.14)	0.26*
Distributive justice \times formalism			0.16 (0.50)	0.15
Constant			3.92† (2.14)	
Multiple <i>R</i>			.59	
<i>R</i> ²			.35	

^a For the unstandardized regression coefficients (*b*), standard errors are in parentheses.

† $p < .10$

* $p < .05$

** $p < .01$

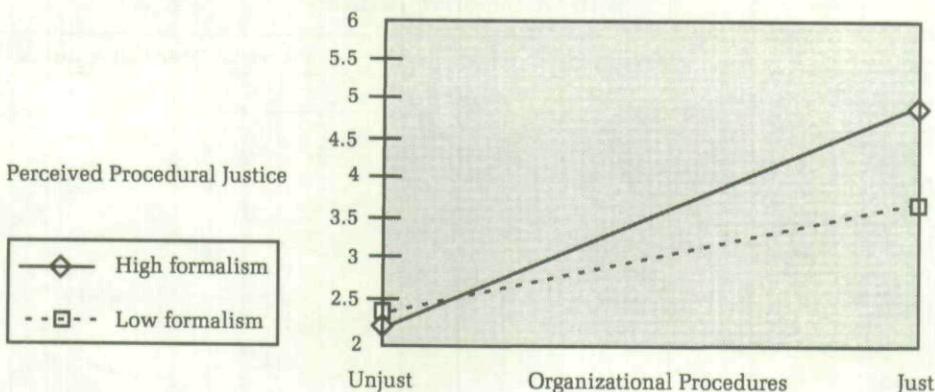
*** $p < .001$

Table 2 shows the results of the analysis. As predicted, the distributive justice-by-utilitarianism interaction was significant. (Figure 2 illustrates this interaction.) In particular, highly utilitarian subjects viewed distributively just organizational actions as especially fair.

Additionally, formalist tendencies did not interact with organizational outcomes to affect the perceived fairness of those outcomes. Again, consistent with the manipulation spillover effects, the procedural justice manipulation exerted a significant main effect on perceived distributive justice. Also, with the interaction term in the model, the distributive justice manipulation main effect was not significant; the interaction term again accounted for variance originally attributed to the main effect manipulation in the manipulation check.

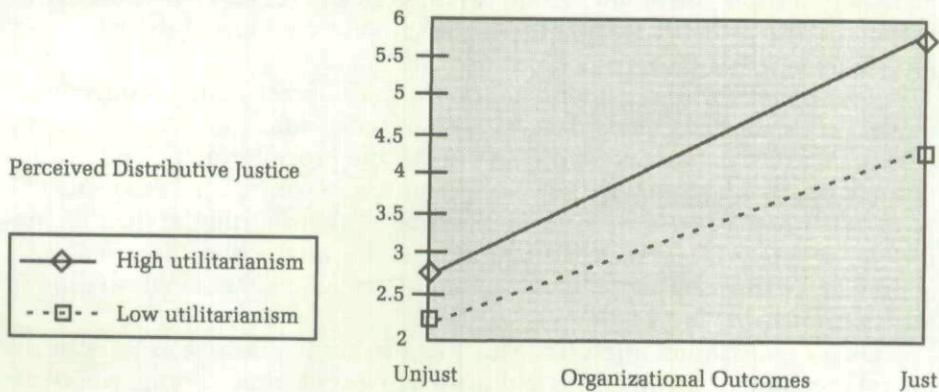
Own-organization analyses. The scenario study allowed us to examine the relationship between ethics and justice in a controlled setting, where we

FIGURE 1
Interaction between Procedural Justice and Ethical Formalism



were able to manipulate organizational decisions (processes and outcomes). However, one might question the generalizability of scenarios to individuals' actual organizational experiences. Thus, we conducted a final set of analyses to explore whether formalism or utilitarianism was related to respondents' fairness perceptions in their own organizations. Of course, in these settings we were not able to control the organizational decisions (process or outcomes) that should largely dictate employees' perceptions of procedural and distributive fairness. Therefore, we could not examine how ethics *moderated* the relationship between organizational decisions and the perceived fairness of those decisions. However, we could assess whether these ethical tendencies were related to fairness perceptions in a real-world setting. We expected that formalism would be related to perceptions of procedural justice and that utilitarianism would be related to perceptions of

FIGURE 2
Interaction between Distributive Justice and Ethical Utilitarianism



distributive justice, but since these analyses were exploratory, we did not make predictions about the direction of the relationships.

Table 3 shows the results of our exploratory analysis of individuals' fairness perceptions in their own organizations. As we speculated, utilitarianism was related to perceived distributive justice in own-organization evaluations. There was no significant relationship between formalism and perceived distributive justice. Formalism was marginally related to perceived procedural justice in own-organization evaluations. Similarly, there was no significant relationship between utilitarianism and perceived procedural justice.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

Research on organizational justice and research on ethics evidence parallel interests in process and outcome issues. Our study is a first attempt to look at how these areas might be integrated. The results suggest that ethical frameworks are important individual difference variables for understanding individuals' reactions to organizational actions and individuals' subsequent justice perceptions. Ethical frameworks served as lenses through which individuals viewed organizational decisions and influenced how they reacted to those decisions. Individuals' formalist tendencies moderated the relationship between organizational procedures and individuals' perceptions of procedural fairness. As predicted, highly formalist individuals were more sensitive to procedural justice than were those low on formalism. Utilitarianism had no significant effect on perceptions of procedural justice. Also as predicted, highly utilitarian individuals were more sensitive to distributive

TABLE 3
Results of Multiple Regression Analysis for Main Effects of Utilitarianism and Formalism on Distributive and Procedural Justice^a

Independent Variable	Own Organization's Procedural Justice		Own Organization's Distributive Justice	
	<i>b</i>	β	<i>b</i>	β
Formalism	-0.13† (0.07)	-0.16† (0.07)	-0.04 (0.07)	-0.05
Utilitarianism	-0.03 (0.07)	-0.05	-0.14* (0.07)	-0.19*
Constant	1.68*** (0.83)		2.62*** (0.43)	
Multiple <i>R</i>	.19		.22	
<i>R</i> ²	.04		.05	

^a For the unstandardized regression coefficients (*b*), standard errors are in parentheses.

† $p < .10$

* $p < .05$

*** $p < .001$

justice than were those low on utilitarianism. Formalism had no significant effect on perceptions of distributive justice.

These results suggest that individuals' ethical frameworks are important to a range of organizational phenomena broader than that in which they are usually examined. Typically, organizational research on ethical frameworks has focused on individuals facing specific, personal, ethical issues. Little attention has been given to how this individual-level construct affects other individual and organizational interactions. Our results suggest that individuals' ethical frameworks also affect how they perceive and react to organizational events. Thus, ethical frameworks are not just relevant to individual decision making. Rather, they color how individuals view the world and their subsequent reactions to that view.

It is important to note that we do not yet understand the cognitive processes by which ethical frameworks affect justice judgments. Perhaps ethical frameworks affect what individuals attend to in their environment. Formalists may notice procedural aspects; utilitarians may notice outcomes. Alternatively, ethical frameworks may influence how individuals interpret or encode information. For example, utilitarians may believe distributions based on equity are more fair. A third possibility is that ethical frameworks affect how people weight information in forming an evaluation. Formalists and others may notice and interpret information the same way, but strong formalists may give more weight to fairness aspects of a procedure than other individuals. Finally, ethical frameworks may influence any or all of these three processes.

Alternatively, the effects of ethical frameworks may not result from active information processing, but may instead be a cognitive shortcut for fairness judgments. Just as the fairness heuristic (Tyler & Lind, 1992) suggests individuals use judgments of procedures and outcomes to generate a global impression of the fairness and legitimacy of authorities, ethical frameworks may function as a heuristic for these preliminary fairness judgments. Our study does not allow us to determine how ethical frameworks affect fairness judgments, but assessing the cognitive processes that underlie these differences is potentially a rich area for future research.

The results of this study have implications for justice research as well. Traditionally, justice researchers have focused on either distributive or procedural justice, but clearly, both are important (Greenberg, 1990, 1993). However, our results suggest they may be differentially important for different individuals, and recognizing these differences has some practical implications. For example, a strongly formalist, weakly utilitarian supervisor may be most concerned about the process by which he makes decisions. A strongly utilitarian, weakly formalist subordinate may not notice this effort at procedural fairness. Thus, a gap may exist between the supervisor's beliefs about the fairness of his actions and the subordinate's fairness perceptions. These results suggest that to understand how individuals perceive and react to organizational decisions, researchers need to know what aspects of the decision they consider important. Congruence between the ethical ap-

proaches of supervisors and subordinates could lead to increased perceptions of fairness, just as congruence between work values affects other organizationally important phenomena like satisfaction and commitment (cf. Meglino et al., 1989).

Finally, our results indicate a relationship between individuals' ethical frameworks and perceptions of fairness in their own organizations. It is interesting to note that the signs of both relationships (Table 3) were negative. That is, formalists reported less procedural fairness and utilitarians reported less distributive fairness. We can only speculate about the reasons for these negative relationships. However, our data show that the mean ratings for procedural and distributive justice perceptions were well below the "neutral" point (4.0) on our 7-point scale (\bar{x} 's = 2.79 and 3.24, respectively). Individuals tended to see their own organizations as unfair. Thus, it may be that ethical frameworks accentuate these perceptions. If general perceptions of procedural fairness are low, they should be especially low for strong formalists, and if general perceptions of distributive fairness are low, they should be especially low for strong utilitarians. Alternatively, it may be that strong formalists and utilitarians are more aware of or sensitive to unfair processes and outcomes. Thus, they may simply perceive their worlds to be less fair places than other people see theirs as being. Since this sample reflected relatively high levels of both formalism and utilitarianism (6.37 and 5.41, respectively, on a 7-point scale), those higher ethical scores may result in lower perceptions of procedural and distributive fairness. Further research is needed to address this issue.

Our results also suggest other possibilities for future research efforts. For example, this study relied on simple conceptualizations of both ethics and justice. To examine individuals' ethical frameworks, we used Brady's (1990) two-dimensional taxonomy of ethical predispositions. Its parsimony and intuitively appealing fit with procedural and distributive justice were both positive features. However, ethics is a multidimensional construct, and future researchers should consider more complex taxonomies of ethical decision making when exploring the more complex relationships between ethics and justice. Perhaps the most promising extension would address approaches to ethical reasoning based on stages of moral development (e.g., Kohlberg, 1984; Rest, 1986). For example, there is some evidence that moral development is related to perceptions of equity, a foundation of the organizational fairness literature (Vecchio, 1981). Moral development approaches may provide a platform from which to explore other justice-related issues.

In this study, we also used a simple approach to examining justice. Recent research on procedural justice distinguishes between the attributes of a procedure and the interpersonal treatment an individual receives when the procedure is implemented (Bies & Moag, 1986). This area has been called interactional justice, and its relationship to ethical frameworks deserves attention. Originally posited as a new form of justice (Bies & Moag, 1986), interactional justice has more recently been considered to be a social aspect

of procedural justice (Brockner & Wiesenfeld, 1996). Thus, we might expect interactional justice to interact with formalism. However, Greenberg (1993) noted that there are both procedural and distributive aspects to interactional justice. Therefore, the relationship between interactional justice and ethics may depend on the specific aspect of interactional justice affected. These relationships warrant further investigation.

Finally, potential weaknesses of this research should be noted. First is the general issue of measuring ethics and ethical tendencies. The MEV is a new measure. New measures and new approaches must be interpreted cautiously until a sufficient psychometric record can be established. Second, this study employed scenarios. Scenarios may approximate real-life judgment-making situations more closely than simple questionnaire or survey methods (Alexander & Becker, 1978) and are especially appropriate for situations examining experienced respondents (Lind & Tyler, 1988), but they are not real life. That relationships between ethics and justice perceptions emerged in both scenario and own-organization results increases our confidence that ethics and justice are related. Still, we must generalize cautiously.

In all, this research represents a first attempt to integrate two important issues for organizations: ethics and fairness. Both of these represent critical lines of inquiry for organizational researchers. This study expands the ethics literature by suggesting that formalism and utilitarianism may reflect a propensity for people to view more than just ethical dilemmas in process or outcome terms; formalism and utilitarianism may serve as lenses for assessing daily organizational decisions as well. The study extends the justice research by examining how individuals may differ in sensitivity to procedural and distributive justice issues. We see this as a first step in understanding the relationship between individuals' ethics, their perceptions of organizational justice, and the impact of both on attitudinal and behavioral reactions.

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