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ARTICLE



Pinpointing the role of the self in procedural fairness

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ABSTRACT

What is the role of the self in explaining the links between procedural fairness and organizational experience? In three experiments, we examined four self-related mechanisms: respect, certainty, self-esteem, and competence. We manipulated procedural fairness, introduced unfavorable personal or organizational outcomes, measured the putative mediators, and assessed organizational allure (attitude, identification, commitment). Across the three experiments, and a meta-review, exposure to procedural fairness (vs. unfairness) led to higher organizational allure via increased respect only. We obtained these result patterns regardless of whether unfavorable outcomes were personally or organizationally relevant, and regardless of the order in which procedural fairness and unfavorable outcomes were introduced. We consider implications of the findings.

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The concern for fairness is pervasive in social or organizational life (Folger & Cropanzano, 1998; Greenberg & Colquitt, 2005; Miller, 2001). We focus here on a particular kind of fairness, procedural fairness (PF). This refers to the perceived fairness of decision-making practices in groups or organizations, that is, whether members regard procedural rules that are implemented in organizational authority decisions (e.g., dispute resolutions, hiring practices, policy-making) as fair.

PF has profound consequences for organizational members, impacting on what we label their organizational allure (i.e., organizational attitude, identification, commitment). That is, PF positively influences members' organizational attitude (Folger & Konovsky, 1989; Folger, Rosenfeld, Grove, & Cockran, 1979; Konovsky & Cropanzano, 1991), organizational identification (Blader & Tyler, 2005; Dutton, Dukerich, & Harquail, 1994; Van Knippenberg & Van Schie, 2000), and organizational commitment (Clay-Warner, Hegtvedt, & Roman, 2005; Masterson, Lewis, Goldman, & Taylor, 2000; Mathieu & Zajac, 1990).

In this article, we ask why PF is so impactful. We endorse the view, backed by prior theoretical proposals and evidence, that PF is impactful, at least in part, because it implicates the self. But how so? We explore potential self-related mechanisms that may underlie the link between PF and organizational allure, and attempt to identify which of these mechanisms is most potent in accounting for this link.

The role of the self in procedural fairness

The self is fundamentally social (Leary, 2007): It is embedded in social interactions or procedures (De Cremer & Tyler, 2005; Johnson, Chang, & Rosen, 2010; Skitka, 2003). The self's embeddedness in fairness concerns has been well-documented in the literature (De Cremer & Tyler, 2005; Sedikides, De Cremer, Hart, & Brebels, 2010; Sedikides, Hart, & De Cremer, 2008). In general, people are more likely to think about fairness when their self-relevant goals and values are accessible (Skitka & Bravo, 2005), and are more likely to think spontaneously about fairness when they imagine an event happening to them than to someone else (Ham & Van den Bos, 2008). People also react more strongly to PF when the self is experimentally activated (both supraliminally and subliminally) than when it is not (Van den Bos, Miedema, Vermunt, & Zwenk, 2011) and retaliate more strongly against the perceived source of procedural unfairness (i.e., manager) when the self is accessible than when it is not (Brebels, De Cremer, & Sedikides, 2008). Furthermore, reliance on PF information to regulate attitudes and behaviors is greater among individuals with high levels of self-referential thinking (i.e., self-ruminators) than high levels of self-insight (i.e., self-reflectors) (Brebels, De Cremer, Sedikides, & Van Hiel, 2013), and among individuals with interdependent versus independent self-construals (Brockner, Chen, Mannix, Leung, & Skarlicki, 2000). The self, thus, *moderates* individuals' responses to PF information.

Given the self's embeddedness in fairness concerns, procedures constitute the medium through which important others (e.g., organizational authorities, group leaders) shape the way people think and feel about themselves (Leary, 2007; Stryker & Statham, 1985; Wallace & Tice, 2012). The literature points to four self-relevant *mechanisms* that may explain the links between PF and organizational allure. First, PF influences the extent to which individuals, as organizational members, feel *respected* (Tyler & Lind, 1992; Van den Bos & Miedema, 2000; Van Prooijen, Van den Bos, & Wilke, 2005). That is, people draw upon their experiences to infer whether the group (including the leader) represented by those procedures respects them. Greater respect, in turn, increases cooperative behavior (Tyler & Lind, 1992). Second, PF influences the extent to which individuals feel *certain* about their role. Generally, fair procedures reduce uncertainty, including uncertainty about one's role in the organization, by making the possibility of personal loss less anxiety provoking (Van den Bos & Lind, 2002, 2009; Van Prooijen et al., 2005). Conversely, higher perceptions of role certainty are associated with greater organizational commitment (Allen & Meyer, 1990; Lee & Jamil, 2016). Third, PF is associated with, or leads to, greater *self-esteem* (Brockner et al., 2003; De Cremer & Sedikides, 2008; De Cremer & Van Hiel, 2008; Koper, van Knippenberg, Bouhuijs, Vermunt, & Wilke, 1993; Ployhart, Ryan, & Bennett, 1999; Shroth & Shah, 2000), while organization-based self-esteem is positively related to job satisfaction, organizational commitment, work motivation, and citizenship behavior (Pierce & Gardner, 2004). Finally, PF is linked to stronger self-efficacy or *competence* about one's role in the organization (De Cremer, 2006; Gilliland, 1994; Lind, Kanfer, & Earley, 1990; Smith, Thomas, & Tyler, 2006), with a meta-analysis pointing to a positive relation between task self-efficacy and organizational commitment (Meyer, Stanley, Herscovitch, & Topolnysky, 2002).

The present research

For the first time, we engaged in a direct empirical assessment of whether these self-related variables mediate the relation between PF and organizational allure. Across three experiments, we tested the corresponding four putative mediators simultaneously in order to pinpoint which one (or which subset of them) accounts best for the relation between PF and organizational allure. Thus, we asked: Does PF strengthen organizational allure? What are the mechanism(s) through which PF might do so? Is it respect, certainty, self-esteem, competence, or a subset of them?

We also varied contextual features of the experiments in an attempt to examine the robustness and generalizability of our findings. In each experiment, we paired PF information with an unfavorable outcome, capitalizing on findings that PF matters more when outcomes are unfavorable rather than favorable (Bianchi et al., 2015; Brockner & Wiesenfeld, 1996). We manipulated across experiments whether participants received unfavorable outcomes that were either personally-relevant (Experiments 1–2) or organizationally-relevant (Experiment 3). Unfavorable personally-relevant outcomes took the form of negative feedback on an IQ test. Unfavorable organizationally-relevant outcomes took the form of price increases at the organization (i.e., University). We assumed that unfavorable personal outcomes are more relevant to the individual than collective self, and vice-versa for unfavorable organizational outcomes (Brewer & Gardner, 1996; Sedikides & Brewer, 2001).

In a test of generalizability, we manipulated whether receiving PF prior to, or after, unfavorable outcomes mattered. Although the general relation between PF information and outcomes seems to be unaffected by the presentational order of these variables, the effect of PF on outcomes may be mediated by different processes (Van den Bos, Vermunt, & Wilke, 1997). Hence, the issue requires additional clarification. We provided participants with PF information either prior to (Experiments 1, 3) or after (Experiment 2) unfavorable outcomes.

We addressed these issues with real-time manipulations in a laboratory. We operationalized PF in terms of voice (Folger, 1977). Across experiments, we: (a) tested participants to the end of the academic term (for the laboratory experiments) or a predetermined temporal period under the stipulation of $N = 30$ per condition (Leroy, 2011) – a stipulation we met with one marginal exception in Experiment 3, (b) assigned participants randomly to balanced or near-balanced between-subjects designs, (c) obtained no gender differences, and (d) debriefed participants both verbally and in writing at the end of the experimental sessions. All studies were approved by the Department of Psychology Research Ethics Committee at University of Southampton.

Experiment 1

In Experiment 1, we induced PF, operationalized in terms of voice (Folger, 1977). Next, we introduced a personally-relevant unfavorable outcome in the form of negative performance feedback on an IQ test, thus posing a threat to the individual self (Brewer & Gardner, 1996; Gaertner, Sedikides, & Graetz, 1999; Gaertner et al., 2012). Finally, we assessed the putative mediators and organizational allure.

Based on prior literature, we hypothesized that participants exposed to fair organizational practices (i.e., participants given a voice) would manifest higher organizational allure than those exposed to unfair organizational practices (i.e., participants deprived of

a voice). More importantly and for the first time, we explored simultaneously four mechanisms through which PF might buffer organizational members: respect, certainty, self-esteem, and competence. We asked whether any of them, or a subset thereof, mediates the relation between PF and organizational allure.

Method

Participants and design

Participants ($N = 80$; 55 women, 25 men; $M_{\text{age}} = 20.46$, $SD_{\text{age}} = 3.88$) were University of Southampton undergraduates who received course credit or payment (£7; about \$10) in return. An approximately even number of course credit and paid participants was represented in each condition. The experiment consisted of a one-factor (PF: fair, unfair) design.

Procedure and measures

PF manipulation and manipulation check. Participants signed up for two ostensibly unrelated studies: one on “attitudes toward university policy” and another on piloting a new IQ test. They learned that the research was conducted in association with the University Board of Directors (UBD), who was considering enforcing the recording of all lectures and making them available online, despite faculty concerns. The UBD was interested in student opinion. Participants received a copy of a memo from the Director of Undergraduate Studies to all faculty reiterating the proposal, a copy of the faculty newsletter elaborating on these issues, and a blank page on which participants could record their opinions. This would be taken away and read by a UBD representative.

While their opinions were allegedly read by the representative, participants completed a filler task in which they read two newspaper articles (about the scientific search for life on Mars) and stated their preferences for one. The PF manipulation followed. Participants received a sealed envelope containing handwritten feedback from the representative. In the *fair condition* (voice), the feedback read: “I am pleased to inform you that I will be forwarding your comments to the Director of Undergraduate studies for further consideration.” In the *unfair condition* (no-voice), the feedback read: “It is with regret that I inform you that I will not be forwarding your comments to the Director of Undergraduate studies for further consideration.” This envelope also contained the participant’s comment sheet with a strike through their comments.

PF manipulation check. Participants responded to two questions asking whether their opinions had been forwarded to the UBD (*yes, no*) and whether they found the decision fair (1 = *not at all*, 6 = *very much so*).

Unfavorable outcome. Participants completed an online IQ test (reaction time, memory sequence, verbal ability, and numeracy tasks), programmed in Macromedia Authorware, and received bogus performance feedback informing them that they had scored at the 42nd percentile and their performance was below the average test-taker. Participants indicated how pleased they were with their score (1 = *not at all pleased*, 6 = *very pleased*).

Mediators and dependent measures. The experimenter reentered the laboratory and apologetically informed participants that she had forgotten to distribute a booklet regarding the “attitudes toward university policy” study. She requested that participants kindly complete this information, and all complied. The booklet actually contained the mediators and dependent measures. Participants responded to four sets of questions (1 = *not at all*, 6 = *very much so*) corresponding to the four putative mediators. We derived these questions from published articles, consultation with colleagues, and pilot testing. We presented the four sets in a separate random order for each participant and formed four composites by averaging responses to each set. The first set pertained to *respect* ($\alpha = 0.88$). Participants were asked whether they felt respected, included, and valued by the university. The second set pertained to *certainty* ($\alpha = 0.96$). Participants were asked how certain, clear, and sure they felt about their role at the university. The third set pertained to *self-esteem* ($\alpha = 0.87$). Participants were asked how highly they thought of themselves, and whether they had high self-esteem and high self-regard, as students. The fourth set pertained to *competence* ($\alpha = 0.91$). Participants were asked whether they felt competent, capable, and successful as students.

Afterward, participants responded (1 = *not at all*, 6 = *very much so*) to three sets of questions assessing organizational allure. We randomized the presentational order for each participant. The first set pertained to *organizational attitude*. We relied on general attitudinal statements (Ostrom, Bond, Krosnick, & Sedikides, 1994) and adapted them through pilot testing. Participants were asked how warmly, positively, and favorably they felt toward the university. The second set of questions pertained to *organizational identification*. We adapted these questions from Brown, Condor, Mathews, Wade, and Williams (1986), and modified them through pilot testing. Participants indicated whether they affiliated themselves with, felt glad to belong to, and were proud to belong to, the University. The third set of questions pertained to *organizational commitment*. We adapted these questions from Meyer, Allen, and Smith (1993) and modified them through pilot testing. Participants indicated whether they would be glad to pursue postgraduate studies, felt that their future was tied to, and felt committed to, the university.

For conceptual and statistical reasons, and for expositional clarity and economy of space, we combined responses to the nine questions into a single organizational allure index ($\alpha = 0.88$) and used this index in our analyses. In this and all experiments, separate analyses for organizational attitude, identification, and commitment yielded virtually identical results as the ones we report for organizational allure.

Results and discussion

PF manipulation check

All participants responded correctly to whether their opinions had been forwarded to the UBD (40 yes, 40 no). Participants in the fair condition ($M = 4.88$, $SD = 0.88$) deemed the representative's decision fairer than those in the unfair condition ($M = 3.08$, $SD = 1.05$), $F(1, 78) = 69.10$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = 0.470$. The PF manipulation was effective.

Unfavorable outcome context check

Participants were displeased with their performance on the IQ test. A one sample t-test showed that the mean response ($M = 2.13$, $SD = .89$) differed significantly from the scale

midpoint, $t(79) = -13.80, p < 0.001$. Participants perceived the IQ feedback as equally unfavorable, regardless of PF condition (fair: $M = 2.08, SD = 1.00$; unfair: $M = 2.18, SD = 0.78$), $F(1, 78) = 0.25, p = 0.62, \eta^2 = 0.003$.

Organizational allure

As hypothesized, following a personally-relevant unfavorable outcome, participants in the fair condition ($M = 4.56, SD = 0.73$) expressed higher organizational allure than those in the unfair condition ($M = 4.16, SD = 0.80$), $F(1, 78) = 5.49, p = 0.022, \eta^2 = 0.066$.

Mediation

What are the mechanisms through which PF affects the self? Fair procedure was positively and significantly correlated with organizational allure, $r(78) = 0.26, p = 0.022$, and respect, $r(78) = 0.29, p = 0.010$, and marginally with certainty, $r(78) = 0.22, p = 0.056$, and self-esteem, $r(78) = 0.21, p = 0.068$. Fairness was uncorrelated with competence, $r(78) = -0.01, p = 0.97$ (Table 1). Importantly, organizational allure was positively and significantly correlated with all four potential mediators (r s ranging from 0.34 to 0.62, p s < 0.005).

We used PROCESS (Model 4; Hayes, 2013; 1,000 bootstraps) to test a multiple mediation model. Such a model allows the estimation of total and specific indirect effects for multiple mediators, and the examination of pairwise contrasts between specific indirect effects. For the indirect effect tests, significant mediation is evidenced by confidence intervals that do not include zero. For the contrast, a confidence interval that does not include zero suggests that these indirect effects are significantly different from each other. When taken as a set, respect, certainty, self-esteem, and competence mediated the effect of PF on organizational allure: The total indirect effect of PF on organizational allure through these four variables was significant, $B = 0.30, 95\% \text{ BC CI} = (+0.10, +0.55), R^2 = .42$. Examination of specific indirect effects showed that respect emerged as a significant mediator, $B = 0.23, 95\% \text{ BC CI} = (+0.07, +0.45)$. Certainty, self-esteem, and competence did not mediate the relation between PF and organizational allure, B s = $-0.02, 0.06, \text{ and } 0.00$, respectively, and $95\% \text{ BC CI} = (-0.04, +0.14), (-0.00, +0.17), \text{ and } (-0.05, +0.05)$, respectively (Figure 1).

Table 1. Means (SDs) and main effect tests of procedural fairness on respect, certainty, self-esteem, and competence in experiments 1–3.

	Respect		Certainty		Self-Esteem		Competence	
	Fair	Unfair	Fair	Unfair	Fair	Unfair	Fair	Unfair
Experiment 1	4.30 (0.80)	3.81 (0.87)	4.29 (1.01)	3.88 (0.91)	4.38 (0.86)	4.00 (0.99)	4.33 (0.95)	4.34 (0.87)
	$F(1,78) = 6.91$ $p = 0.010$ $\eta^2 = 0.081$		$F(1,78) = 3.76$ $p = 0.056$ $\eta^2 = 0.046$		$F(1,78) = 3.43$ $p = 0.068$ $\eta^2 = 0.042$		$F(1,78) = 0.002$ $p = 0.97$ $\eta^2 = 0.000$	
Experiment 2	4.32 (0.93)	3.47 (0.99)	4.25 (0.93)	3.62 (0.86)	4.48 (0.82)	4.09 (0.86)	4.52 (0.78)	4.44 (0.86)
	$F(1,88) = 17.27$ $p < 0.001$ $\eta^2 = 0.164$		$F(1,88) = 11.22$ $p = 0.001$ $\eta^2 = 0.113$		$F(1,88) = 4.70$ $p = 0.033$ $\eta^2 = 0.051$		$F(1,88) = 0.26$ $p = 0.61$ $\eta^2 = 0.003$	
Experiment 3	3.41 (1.18)	2.58 (1.18)	3.79 (1.13)	3.27 (0.99)	4.30 (0.90)	4.00 (0.93)	4.37 (1.04)	4.04 (0.72)
	$F(1,56) = 7.62$ $p = 0.008$ $\eta^2 = 0.120$		$F(1,56) = 3.15$ $p = 0.081$ $\eta^2 = 0.053$		$F(1,56) = 1.53$ $p = 0.22$ $\eta^2 = 0.027$		$F(1,56) = 1.47$ $p = 0.23$ $\eta^2 = 0.026$	

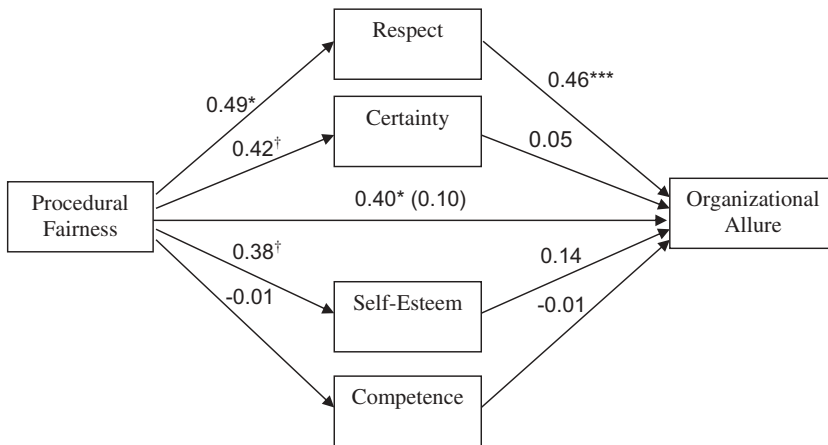


Figure 1. Path models of the relations among procedural fairness, respect, certainty, self-esteem, competence, and organizational allure in Experiment 1. The path coefficients are unstandardized regression coefficients. The value in parentheses is the direct effect (c) of procedural fairness on organizational allure. Procedural fairness: 0 = *unfair*, 1 = *fair*. [†] $p < 0.10$, * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.005$, *** $p < 0.001$.

Summary

Participants exposed to fair (vs. unfair) organizational practices expressed greater organizational allure, despite being exposed to personally-relevant unfavorable outcomes. Only respect emerged as the relatively potent mediator. Thus, PF boosts organizational allure by elevating mostly a sense of being respected as an organizational member.

Experiment 2

In Experiment 1, PF information preceded information about a personally-relevant unfavorable outcome. In Experiment 2, we presented PF information following the unfavorable outcome, for generalizability purposes. As in Experiment 1, we introduced the unfavorable outcome in the form of low IQ scores. Next, we manipulated PF, using the same voice operationalization as in Experiment 1. Finally, we assessed respect, certainty, self-esteem, and competence, as well as organizational allure. We hypothesized that, having already faced the unfavorable outcome, participants would be sensitive to PF information, providing an opportunity for those in the voice condition to boost their respect (and perhaps certainty, self-esteem, and competence) and in turn strengthen their organizational allure.

Method

Participants and design

Participants ($N = 90$; 71 women, 18 men, 1 unreported; $M_{\text{age}} = 19.91$, $SD_{\text{age}} = 2.04$) were University of Southampton undergraduates taking part for course credit or £7. Each condition included an approximately even number of course credit and paid participants. The experiment involved a one-factor (PF: fair, unfair) design.

Procedure and measures

Participants thought that they were taking part in two studies, one piloting a new IQ test, the other assessing their attitudes toward university policy.

Unfavorable outcome and context check. Participants received the same information about their low (42nd percentile, below average) performance on an IQ test, and responded to the same question (displeasure with information), as in Experiment 1.

PF manipulation and manipulation check. The PF manipulation (voice/no voice in response to proposed changes within the university) was the same as in Experiment 1. The two manipulation check questions (i.e., whether participants' opinions received further consideration) were also the same as in Experiment 1.

Mediators. The questions corresponding to each potential mediator were identical to those in the previous experiment. Internal consistencies were: respect $\alpha = 0.91$; certainty $\alpha = 0.93$; self-esteem $\alpha = 0.85$; competence $\alpha = 0.87$.

Dependent measures. The dependent measures were identical to those of Experiment 1. We created an organizational allure index ($\alpha = 0.88$).

Results and discussion

Unfavorable outcome context check

Participants were displeased with their performance on the IQ test: the mean response ($M = 2.03$, $SD = 0.80$) differed significantly from the scale midpoint, $t(89) = -17.40$, $p < 0.001$. Participants were equally displeased with the feedback in the fair ($M = 2.11$, $SD = 0.84$) and unfair ($M = 1.96$, $SD = 0.76$) conditions, $F(1, 88) = 0.87$, $p = 0.35$, $\eta p^2 = 0.010$.

PF manipulation check

All participants answered correctly on whether their opinions were forwarded to the UBD (46 yes, 44 no). Moreover, participants found the representative's decision to forward their opinions for further consideration ($M = 5.02$, $SD = 1.26$) as fairer than the decision not to do so ($M = 3.02$, $SD = 1.26$), $F(1, 88) = 61.93$, $p < 0.001$, $\eta p^2 = 0.413$. The manipulation was effective.

Dependent measures

Participants in the fair condition ($M = 4.70$, $SD = 0.72$) expressed greater organizational allure than those in the unfair condition ($M = 4.19$, $SD = 0.73$), $F(1, 88) = 10.90$, $p < 0.001$, $\eta p^2 = 0.110$.

Mediators

Fair procedure was positively and significantly correlated with organizational allure, $r(88) = 0.33$, $p = 0.001$, respect, $r(88) = 0.41$, $p < 0.001$, $p = 0.024$, certainty, $r(88) = 0.34$, $p = 0.001$, and self-esteem, $r(88) = 0.23$, $p = 0.033$, while being uncorrelated with competence, $r(88) = 0.05$, $p = 0.61$ (Table 1). Crucially, organizational allure was positively and significantly correlated with all four potential mediators (r s ranging from 0.32 to 0.65, p s < 0.005).

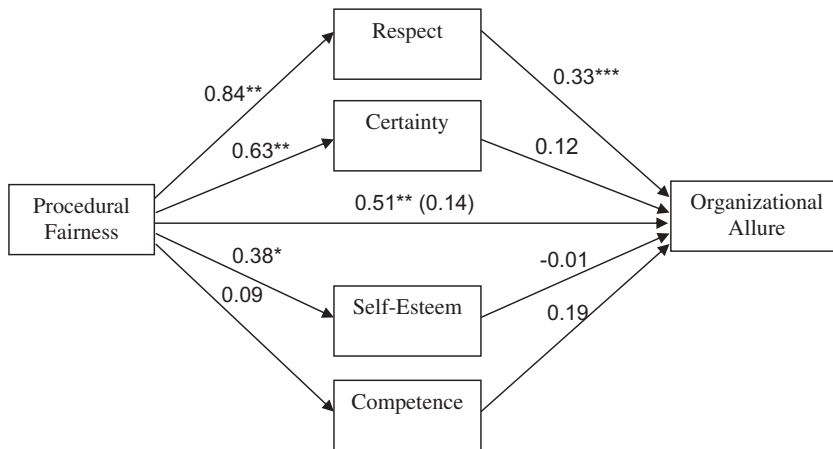


Figure 2. Path models of the relations between procedural fairness, respect, certainty, self-esteem, competence, and organizational allure in Experiment 2. The path coefficients are unstandardized regression coefficients. The value in parentheses is the direct effect (c) of procedural fairness on organizational allure. Procedural fairness: 0 = *unfair*, 1 = *fair*. * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.005$, *** $p < 0.001$.

In the subsequent multiple mediation analyses, respect, certainty, self-esteem, and competence mediated as a set the effect of PF on organizational allure: The total indirect effect of PF on organizational allure through these four variables was significant, $B = 0.37$, 95% BC CI = (+0.17, +0.63), $R^2 = 0.64$. Examination of specific indirect effects revealed that respect was a significant mediator of the relation between PF and organizational allure, $B = 0.28$, 95% BC CI = (+0.12, +0.51). Certainty, self-esteem, and competence did not emerge as significant mediators, B s = 0.07, -0.00 , and 0.02, respectively, 95% BC CI = (-0.03 , +0.25), (-0.11 , +0.09), and (-0.04 , +0.14), respectively (Figure 2).

Summary

Consistent with the Experiment 1 results, we showed that members exposed to fair (vs. unfair) organizational procedures reported higher organizational allure, despite the PF information being preceded by personally-relevant unfavorable outcome information (i.e., low IQ). Replicating the Experiment 1 results, we demonstrated that only respect emerged as the mechanism underlying the relation between PF and organizational allure: PF increased respect, which in turn promoted organizational allure.

Experiment 3

The objective of Experiment 3 was to test further the generalizability of the findings obtained so far. In prior experiments, the unfavorable outcome involved negative IQ feedback, and was thus directed at the individual self. What if the unfavorable outcome information pertained to organizational experience? Despite a degree of overlap between the individual and collective (organizational) self, the two selves are relatively autonomous psychological structures with unique properties and proclivities to responding to threat (Gaertner, Sedikides, Vevea, & Iuzzini, 2002; Kinias & Sim, 2016; Sedikides, Gaertner, Luke, O'Mara, & Gebauer, 2013). Here, we encompassed a new unfavorable outcome

related to the collective self, that is, price increases on campus. Would PF raise organizational allure in the face of an organizationally-relevant unfavorable outcome and through the same self-mechanisms (i.e., respect), as before?

Method

Participants and design

Participants ($N = 59$; 47 women, 12 men; $M_{\text{age}} = 20.27$, $SD_{\text{age}} = 3.89$) were University of Southampton undergraduates fulfilling a course option. The experiment involved a one-factor (PF: fair, unfair) design.

Procedure and measures

PF manipulation and manipulation check. Participants learned that this research was conducted in conjunction with the UBD, who was considering a final-year comprehensive oral examination and might want to hear from students. Participants received a memo, supposedly sent from the Director of Undergraduates Studies to faculty, detailing the proposal. They also received a copy of the faculty newsletter, which reiterated the information, and a blank page on which they expressed their opinions about the proposal. While their opinions were allegedly read by the UBD representative, participants completed a filler task (reading the same two articles as in Experiment 1). They were then subject to the PF manipulation. Participants received handwritten feedback from the representative informing them that their opinions were either forwarded to the UBD for further consideration (voice) or not (no-voice). Next, they received a booklet containing the PF manipulation check, unfavorable outcome information and context check, mediators, as well as dependent measures.

PF manipulation check. The PF manipulation checks were identical to those of Experiments 1–2.

Unfavorable outcome. All participants received the same unfavorable information about *price increases* on campus in order to compensate for over-expenditure of university funds. Higher student intake and accompanying recruitment of teaching or administrative staff, as well as the need to build classrooms, libraries, and dormitories, had put a strain on the university's finances. Following extensive consultation with relevant committees, the following prices would need to be raised: (a) printing/photocopying costs, (b) library fines, (c) entrance costs to student bars, (d) sports recreation cards, (e) halls-of-residence outlay, and (f) university branded calculators, which were compulsory in examinations. Subsequently, participants responded to two manipulation check questions (1 = *not at all*, 6 = *very much so*) assessing whether participants found the policies aimed to cope with the over-expenditure of university funds desirable and attractive. We proceeded to form an aggregate, $r(56) = 0.82$, $p < 0.001$.

Mediation. Participants responded to the same sets of questions as in Experiments 1–2 regarding mediation of respect ($\alpha = 0.89$), certainty ($\alpha = 0.92$), self-esteem ($\alpha = 0.92$), and competence ($\alpha = 0.90$).

Dependent measures. Participants completed the dependent measures, which were identical to those of Experiments 1–2. We formed an organizational allure index ($\alpha = 0.90$).

Results and discussion

PF manipulation check

Participants in the fair condition ($M = 5.00$, $SD = 0.94$) considered the decision making process fairer than those in the unfair condition ($M = 2.50$, $SD = 1.14$), $F(1, 57) = 85.63$, $p = 0.001$, $\eta^2 = 0.600$.

Unfavorable outcome context check

Participants found the policies to cope with the over-expenditure of University funds unfavorable ($M = 1.65$, $SD = 0.94$), $t(57) = -15.07$, $p < 0.001$. (One participant did not answer the first question.) Furthermore, they found these policies equally unfavorable, regardless of PF condition (fair: $M = 1.73$, $SD = 0.97$; unfair: $M = 1.54$, $SD = 0.90$), $F(1, 56) = 0.62$, $p = 0.43$, $\eta^2 = 0.011$.

Dependent measures

Participants in the fair condition ($M = 4.26$, $SD = 0.82$) manifested higher organization allure than those in the unfair condition ($M = 3.27$, $SD = 0.86$), $F(1, 57) = 19.98$, $p = 0.001$, $\eta^2 = 0.260$.

Mediation

Fair procedure was positively and significantly correlated with organizational allure, $r(57) = 0.51$, $p < 0.001$, and respect, $r(57) = 0.34$, $p = 0.009$, was positively but marginally correlated with certainty, $r(57) = 0.24$, $p = 0.070$, and was positively but directionally correlated with self-esteem, $r(57) = 0.17$, $p = 0.21$, and competence, $r(57) = 0.18$, $p = 0.17$ (Table 1). Importantly, organizational allure was positively and significantly correlated with all four potential mediators (r s ranging from 0.33 to 0.68, p s < 0.010).

We conducted multiple mediation analyses. As a set, respect, certainty, self-esteem, and competence mediated the effect of PF on organizational allure: The total indirect effect of PF on organizational allure through these four variables was significant, $B = 0.41$, 95% BC CI = (+0.08, +0.76), $R^2 = 0.61$. Examination of the specific indirect effects revealed that only respect emerged as a significant mediator, $B = 0.32$, 95% BC CI = (+0.10, +0.62). Certainty, self-esteem, and competence did not mediate the relation between PF and organizational allure, B s = 0.01, 0.07, and 0.00, respectively, 95% BC CI = (−0.08, +0.14), (−0.03, +0.29), and (−0.08, +0.16), respectively (Figure 3).

Summary

Replicating the results of Experiments 1 and 2, Experiment 3 demonstrated that (a) PF impacts on organizational allure through respect, and (b) these effects are generalizable to the collective self (i.e., price increases) in addition to the individual self.

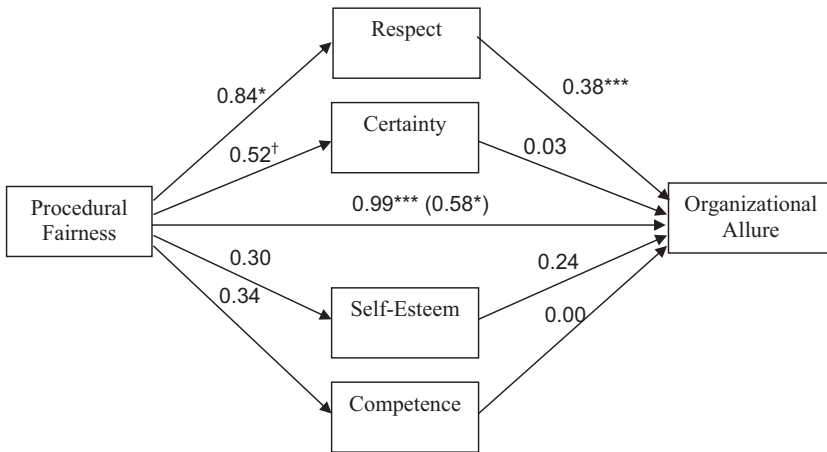


Figure 3. Path models of the relations among procedural fairness, respect, certainty, self-esteem, competence, and organizational allure in Experiment 3. The path coefficients are unstandardized regression coefficients. The value in parentheses is the direct effect (*c*) of procedural fairness on organizational allure. Procedural fairness: 0 = *unfair*, 1 = *fair*. †*p* < 0.10, **p* < 0.05, ***p* < 0.005, ****p* < 0.001.

A meta-review

Experiments 1–3 revealed a consistent results pattern, with respect emerging as a potent mediator between PF and organizational allure. Arguably, however, the sample sizes of these experiments were low. To remedy this potential deficiency, we undertook a within-article meta-analysis (Cumming, 2014; for concerns about internal meta-analysis, see Vosgerau, Simonsohn, Nelson, & Simmons, 2019). Using the R-package, metaSEM (Cheung, 2015), we synthesized a pooled covariance matrix (Table 2). We then used this pooled covariance matrix to test a Structural Equation Model comparable with the PROCESS models of Experiments 1–3, with PF as the predictor variable, respect, certainty, self-esteem, and competence as parallel mediators, and organizational allure as the criterion variable. We were unable to implement PROCESS, though, as it requires individual data rather than a covariance matrix. We instead implemented Lavaan (Rosseel, 2012) in testing the indirect effects of PF on organizational allure via the parallel mediators. Using the pooled covariance matrix, only the indirect effect of respect was significant (B = 0.24, 95% CI [+0.135, +0.350]). The indirect effects of certainty (B = 0.03, 95% CI [–0.021, +0.083]), self-esteem (B = 0.05, 95% CI [–0.005, +0.099]), and competence (B = 0.001, 95% CI [–0.009, +0.011]) were not significant. Taken together, the experiments individually and the meta-review point to respect as transmitting the relation between PF and organizational allure.

Table 2. Pooled correlations (above diagonal) and 95% CI (below diagonal) from experiments 1–3.

	Respect	Certainty	Self-esteem	Competence
Respect	-	0.28	0.29	0.29
Certainty	+0.17, +0.39	-	0.36	0.39
Self-esteem	+0.18, +0.39	+0.24, +0.47	-	0.46
Competence	+0.19, +0.40	+0.27, +0.50	+0.35, +0.57	-

General discussion

Why does PF affect so profoundly members' subjective experience and organizational or group behavior? What is it about self-processes that makes PF so consequential? These are the questions that prompted the current investigation.

Procedures have interpersonal relevance (Sedikides & Gregg, 2003; Skitka, 2003; Tyler & Blader, 2003). Given that the self is embedded in social interactions and fairness concerns (De Cremer & Tyler, 2005; Sedikides & Spencer, 2007; Skitka & Bravo, 2005), procedures have relevance for the self. The literature has documented the impact of PF on four self-related mechanisms (i.e., respect, competence, self-esteem, certainty) and the subsequent influence of these mechanisms on organizational allure. Up until now, these mechanisms have been tested in isolation. This practice has limitations. In isolation, a researcher may obtain an effect of PF on organizational experience through each of these mechanisms. However, these specific indirect effects may not hold in the presence of (i.e., while holding constant) other potential mechanisms (Bullock, Green, & Ha, 2010; Fiedler, Harris, & Schott, 2018). In this article, we tested the abovementioned self-related mechanisms simultaneously, allowing us to pinpoint which (or which subset) is most potent in explaining the link between PF and organizational allure.

In three experiments and a meta-review, we replicated prior findings: Recipients of fair (vs. unfair) procedures reported stronger organizational allure (i.e., more favorable attitude toward, stronger identification with, greater commitment toward the organization; Blader & Tyler, 2005; Clay-Warner et al., 2005; Folger & Konovsky, 1989), even in the presence of unfavorable outcome information. This results pattern was robust regardless of whether unfavorable outcomes were personally or organizationally relevant, and regardless of the presentational order of PF and unfavorable outcomes. Note that much of the literature has focused on situations in which the unfavorable outcome is produced by the (unfair) procedure (Brockner & Wiesenfeld, 1996). Our work indicates that organizational allure is sensitive to procedural unfairness, even when the negative outcome is unrelated to the procedure per se.

Respect emerged as the most potent mediator of the effect of PF on organizational outcomes, controlling for other potential mechanisms (i.e., certainty, self-esteem, competence). PF affords members respect for their role in the organization, and it is this sense of respect that helps members maintain their organizational allure (i.e., positive attitude, high identification, strong commitment) in the face of aversive personal or organizational events. The potency of respect is consistent with the relational model of PF (Tyler & Lind, 1992; see also Van Prooijen et al., 2005).

Future research may wish to address limitations of our work. For starters, such research could operationalize PF in alternative ways. One such way is consistency or accuracy (De Cremer, 2004; Van den Bos et al., 1997); here, organizational authorities are depicted as using decision-relevant information consistently and validly (fairness) versus inconsistency and invalidly (unfairness). Another way is correctability (Tyler, 1997; Tyler & Huo, 2002); here, members are granted the right to appeal against organizational authority decisions that they find objectionable (fairness) versus are denied such a right (unfairness). Nevertheless, informed by the literature (Leventhal, 1980; Tyler, 1988) we would expect for alternative operationalizations of PF to yield similar findings to those of voice. Follow-up research should also assess actual behavior, such as organizational citizenship (Moorman, 1991).

Moreover, future investigation would do well to focus not only on unfavorable outcomes (a practice we adopted based on prior research – Bianchi et al., 2015; Brockner & Wiesenfeld, 1996), but also on favorable outcomes, thus examining the full interactive relation between PF (fair vs. unfair) and outcome favorability (favorable vs. unfavorable). Finally, future research might examine moderators of our findings. For example, exposure to procedural fairness (vs. unfairness) may lead to stronger organizational allure (via respect) among members characterized by a promotion (than prevention) regulatory focus (Brebels et al., 2008; Johnson et al., 2010). Such members will likely be better able to reap the benefits (i.e., respect) of PF in the face of aversive outcomes in reaffirming their organizational allure.

In conclusion, our research addressed the question of why PF is so effective in organizational life. Its effectiveness is partly due to the role of the self (as prior theoretical and empirical work has documented), which we clarified. Exposure to PF increases organizational allure by heightening respect. We hope that future work on PF builds on and extends our findings.

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