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Journal of Applied Psychology
2007, Vol. 92, No. 1, 286–295

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0021-9010/07/$12.00 DOI: 10.1037/0021-9010.92.1.286

If You Feel Bad, It's Unfair: A Quantitative Synthesis of Affect and Organizational Justice Perceptions

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Whereas research interest in both individual affect/temperament and organizational justice has grown substantially in recent years, affect's role in the perception of organizational justice has received scant attention. Here, the authors integrate these literatures and test bivariate relationships between state affect (e.g., moods), trait affect (e.g., affectivity), and organizational justice variables using meta-analytically aggregated effect sizes. Results indicated that state and trait positive and negative affect exhibit statistically significant relationships with perceptions of distributive, procedural, and interactional justice in the predicted directions, with mean population-level correlations ranging in absolute magnitude from $M_{\hat{\rho}} = .09$ to $M_{\hat{\rho}} = .43$. Correlations involving state affect generally were larger but not significantly different from those involving trait affect. Finally, the authors propose ideas for investigations at the primary-study level.

Keywords: affect, organizational justice, fairness, meta-analysis

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Although the concepts date back to antiquity, fairness and justice issues have witnessed an explosion of research by social and organizational scientists over the past 2 decades (e.g., Folger & Cropanzano, 1998). Much of this research has focused on the outcomes that result from workers perceiving various aspects of their organizational lives as fair or unfair. Findings indicate that perceptions of fair decision outcomes (i.e., distributive justice), decision-making procedures (i.e., procedural justice) and treatment by decision makers (i.e., interactional justice) relate to higher levels of organizational commitment, job satisfaction, acceptance of organizational rules and policies, work effort, and less absenteeism (see Cohen-Charash & Spector, 2001; Colquitt, Conlon, Wesson, Porter, & Ng, 2001, for meta-analytic reviews). Despite the abundance of organizational justice research, a number of critiques have been leveled against this literature. First, justice perceptions primarily are treated as an independent variable, with relatively few organizational endeavors examining the formation and maintenance of fairness judgments (e.g., Folger, 1986). In a related vein, extant work generally has viewed justice reactions as cold cognitive responses to decision outcomes and specific human resource practices (e.g., selection procedures; Leventhal, 1980). This view contrasts both with our everyday subjective experience of injustice as "hot" and emotionally laden (e.g., Bies & Tripp, 1996) and with the emerging recognition that affect and affective tendencies play a central role in work-related social judgments (see Brief & Weiss, 2002; Thoresen, Kaplan, Barsky, Warren, & de Chermont, 2003, for reviews).

In the current article, we seek to continue broadening the literature on the psychology of fairness perceptions by highlighting the interplay of individuals' temperament, moods, and perceptions of organizational justice. We feel that incorporating affect into the justice literature will yield new insights regarding how and why people derive fairness judgments and, consequently, how organizations may create and foster these perceptions (e.g., Lind & Van den Bos, 2002). In the following pages, we integrate the affect and justice literatures and test theoretically derived hypotheses using meta-analytic procedures recommended by Raju, Burke, Normand, and Langlois (1991). Finally, the findings from the meta-analyses are integrated into the broader management literature on the formation of social and moral judgments, and recommendations for future research at the primary-study level are considered. First, we briefly define the relevant constructs.

Construct Definitions

Organizational Justice Perceptions

Researchers have long understood that people are concerned with more than the absolute level of their outcomes (e.g., pay or promotions), but also with the degree to which those outcomes are fair relative to those of others. Borrowing ideas from the legal domain and social psychology, Adams's (1965) equity theory framework suggests that outcomes are judged as fair if the ratio of contributions or inputs (e.g., education, effort) to outcomes is equal to the ratio of inputs to outcomes for a relevant referent. In keeping with the tenor of this literature, in the current article individual perceptions regarding outcome fairness are referred to as *distributive justice* perceptions. Recognizing that consideration of fairness solely in terms of outcomes was insufficient to under-

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We thank Carol Kulik for her invaluable comments on drafts of this article, Amanda Bielonko for her assistance in completing this project, and Dan Beal for providing the meta-analysis program.

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stand individuals' experience of (in)justice at work, researchers subsequently began exploring other types of justice. Most notable is Thibaut and Walker's (1975) suggestion that individuals also assess the fairness of the processes or procedures that others use in allocating relevant outcomes. The perceived fairness of procedures used to make decisions (as opposed to the decision itself) is referred to as *procedural justice* perceptions. Finally, completing the current organizational justice triumvirate is the concept of *interactional justice,* introduced by Bies and Moag in 1986. Researchers have suggested that individuals perceive fair interpersonal treatment when treated with respect, dignity, truthfulness, and propriety (e.g., Greenberg, 1990) and when provided with explanations for the decision (e.g., Folger & Bies, 1989).

State and Trait Affect

In the broadest sense, state affect represents a phenomenological condition of feeling (Watson, 2000), whereas trait affect represents individuals' predisposition to experience like states across time and situations (Watson & Clark, 1984). Our approach, consistent with the dominant approach in the organizational sciences (Barsade, Brief, & Spataro, 2003), conceptualizes affect as existing along two separate unipolar dimensions (i.e., factors), namely positive and negative affect (or activation; Watson, Wiese, Vaidya, & Tellegen, 1999; but see Carroll, Yik, Russell, & Barrett, 1999, for an alternative conceptualization). Within this framework, *state positive affect* (SPA) represents the experience of feelings such as enthusiastic, alert, active, and energetic (Watson, Clark, & Tellegen, 1988), whereas *trait positive affect* (TPA) refers to the tendency to experience these positively activated emotions consistently across time and situations. Conversely, *state negative affect* (SNA) refers to the experience of anger, guilt, fear, nervousness, and subjective stress (Watson & Clark, 1984), whereas *trait negative affect* (TNA) entails the tendency to experience these feelings consistently and also is characterized by a negative self- and worldview.

Two points regarding the structure and nature of affect variables warrant mention. First, researchers generally argue that PA and NA are separate and orthogonal affective dimensions (Bradburn, 1969; Watson et al., 1999), with distinctly different patterns of correlates (Watson et al., 1988; Watson & Pennebaker, 1989). Thus, low PA does not indicate high NA or vice versa. Second, we consider states and traits separately because, although they are conceptually related, research has indicated that they have different patterns of correlates and influence social judgments through separate mechanisms (e.g., George, 1991). Using these construct definitions, we offer a broad theoretical formulation seeking to explain how state and trait affect may be related to subjective judgments of justice.

State Affect and Justice Perceptions

We propose that justice perceptions are largely a result of the interplay between fundamental cognitive and social-information processes (i.e., memory, schemata) and phenomenological states of feeling (Forgas, 1998). Considerable research documents that moods influence the recognition, interpretation, and memory of affectively laden stimuli (e.g., Bowers, 1981; Necowitz & Roznowski, 1994; Rusting, 1999), as well as patterns of appraisal and choice of coping strategies when encountering such stimuli (e.g., Judge, Erez, & Thoresen, 2000). In particular, when individuals are asked to make judgments under conditions of uncertainty and incomplete information, they often rely on their affect as information in making these decisions (Schwarz, 1990). The affect-as-information model suggests that people use affect as a heuristic, substituting feelings for objective criteria when making social judgments (e.g., those involving organizational justice). Of import, this perspective implies that affect may influence justice judgments whether such affect emanates from previous work-related events (Weiss & Cropanzano, 1996) or from events occurring outside of the workplace (e.g., a fight with a spouse). Supportive of this notion is Van den Bos's (2003) study, which experimentally manipulated affect and found that individuals consistently rated procedures as more fair when in a positive mood and less fair when in a negative mood. However, this tendency manifested only when individuals were uncertain of the procedures, thus evidencing the critical role of affect as information in deciding the fairness of procedures.

In fact, the relationship between affect and justice perceptions likely is far more complex than typically presented, as affect and justice perceptions reciprocally interact in a dynamic manner across work and nonwork domains. That is, employees' affective reactions to justice-related events (decisions, procedures, treatment) and non-justice-related events (e.g., argument with a coworker; George, 1996) likely stimulate both their concern for fairness and morality (e.g., Haidt, 2001) and their appraisals of subsequent work events, which in turn engender and reinforce additional affective reactions. Thus, for instance, the NA that results from people perceiving injustice signals a threatening environment, thereby fostering greater vigilance and reactivity toward subsequent injustice (Schwarz, 1990). According to this view, affect both influences (Schwarz, 1990) and is influenced by (Lazarus, 1991; Ortony, Clore, & Collins, 1988) people's perceptions of events, both inside and outside of the workplace. This idea is consistent with recent research demonstrating that affect and other work-related judgments (i.e., job satisfaction) interact and "spill over" across time and settings (Judge & Ilies, 2004). Thus, we offer the following study hypotheses.

> *Hypothesis 1:* SPA will be positively related to reports of distributive justice, procedural justice, and interactional justice.
>
> *Hypothesis 2:* SNA will be negatively related to reports of distributive justice, procedural justice, and interactional justice.

Trait Affectivity and Justice Perceptions

Whereas state affect likely operates with justice perceptions in a reciprocal manner, trait affect is relatively stable across time and situations (Watson, 2000), and therefore, it should influence justice perceptions through differential mechanisms. Researchers generally claim that affectivity predicts individuals' judgments through its influence on perception formation (i.e., negative people tend to see the world in a negative way) and differential reactivity and exposure to environmental events (e.g., Bolger & Zuckerman, 1995). That is, affective traits predispose individuals to incur

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especially strong emotional reactions to environmental stimuli (e.g., Bolger & Schilling, 1991) because of the increased vigilance and sensitivity toward negative and positive stimuli that characterize high TNA and TPA individuals, respectively (Sinclair & Mark, 1991). In addition, affectivity is associated with the experience of like states (Larsen & Ketelaar, 1991), such that those high in TNA experience a preponderance of negative moods, whereas those high in TPA tend to experience positive moods (George, 1996). Accordingly, one would expect those higher in TNA to perceive a work situation as more hostile and unfair and to react more strongly to acts that they regard as unfair. In contrast, those higher in TPA are more likely to see work events in a positive and nonthreatening light and to react in an especially favorable manner to treatment that they regard as just.

In addition, substantial research indicates that dispositional affectivity not only moderates individuals' perceptions of environmental stimuli but also exerts a substantive influence on those stimuli and on people's likelihood of encountering them (e.g., Bandura, 1978; Buss, 1977). For instance, PA has been linked to agentive and assertive behavior typified by extroverted individuals (e.g., Costa & McCrae, 1995). Korsgaard, Roberson, and Rymph (1998) found that subordinates who were assertive tended to receive more interactionally fair behavior from appraisers than did less assertive subordinates. Thus, one would expect high TPA individuals, because of their assertive nature, to experience more positive interactional treatment at work than would their lower TPA coworkers. Conversely, because high TNA individuals tend to be interpersonally hostile (e.g., Watson & Clark, 1984) and create antagonistic social relationships, such people are likely to receive impolite or unfair treatment from coworkers and supervisors. As such, TPA and TNA are expected to predict justice judgments in their respective directions.

Hypothesis 3: TPA will be positively related to reports of distributive justice, procedural justice, and interactional justice.

Hypothesis 4: TNA will be negatively related to reports of distributive justice, procedural justice, and interactional justice.

State and trait affect, although proposed to have the same directional relationships with justice perceptions, are theorized to operate through different mechanisms, suggesting that the magnitude of these effects may differ. Given that affect's influence on job attitudes seems to occur largely through its interplay with cognitive processes (see Barsky, Thoresen, Warren, & Kaplan, 2004), we predict that its impact on justice responses has more to do with mood-dependent effects regarding the interpretation and reporting of events rather than on the events themselves (which would be influenced by trait affect). Thus, because state affect's relationship with the processing and measurement of justice perceptions should be more proximal than is that for trait affect, both temporally and in terms of social-information processing, we suggest that state affect should relate especially strongly to justice perceptions.

Hypothesis 5: SNA and SPA will be more strongly correlated than TNA and TPA with distributive and procedural justice perceptions.

Method

Identification and Selection of Studies

To locate all usable primary studies, we utilized various search and identification methods (Cooper, 1998). First, we conducted Internet searches of several relevant computer databases (e.g., *PsycINFO*) using the following search terms: for state affect, *positive* and *negative affect, mood, emotion, anxiety,* and *depression*; for trait affect, *affectivity, emotionality, emotional stability, neuroticism, anxiety, depression, extraversion,* and *personality;* and for fairness variables, *justice (perceptions), fairness (perceptions), (perceived) mistreatment, interpersonal treatment,* and *distributive, procedural,* and *interactional justice* (and *fairness*). We also conducted manual searches for the primary scholarly journals in the industrial/organizational realm (e.g., *Academy of Management Journal, Journal of Applied Psychology*) as well as those in related areas (e.g., social psychology) from their 1988 volume (the year in which Watson et al. [1988] published their seminal piece on PA and NA) through May 2005. In addition, we also manually searched the recent conference programs of the major organizational and management scholarly associations in the United States. Finally, we reviewed the articles we located through these primary means to identify cited studies that we may have missed initially. In combination, these search strategies yielded approximately 120 promising studies.

After retrieving these studies,[1] each of us independently reviewed and subsequently met to discuss whether each study should be included in the meta-analysis. We used several decision rules to determine which studies to include (e.g., Wanous, Sullivan, & Malinak, 1989). At the most general level, we considered only studies containing at least one correlation between trait and/or state affect and fairness perceptions (or containing the information necessary to derive a correlation).

In terms of conceptualizing PA and NA, we regarded those studies in which participants reported their affect over the past week (or less) as measuring state affect and those in which participants reported their affect over periods of time longer than 1 week or "in general" as measuring trait affect. Our treating state affect as 1 week or less is congruent with Watson's (2000) definition of moods as "transient episodes of feeling or affect" (p. 4) and has precedent in the literature as a "cutpoint" (Brief, Butcher, & Roberson, 1995; Thoresen et al., 2003). In addition to including studies that contained an explicit measure of affect (e.g., Positive and Negative Affect Schedule [PANAS]; Watson et al., 1988), we also included studies measuring anxiety or depression, as these two feeling states are universal to nearly all conceptualizations of NA (Watson, 2000) and because correlations between NA and job

[1] Retrieving potential studies often entailed requesting documents that the researchers' host libraries did not possess (e.g., doctoral dissertations, book chapters) and also required us to contact several of the study authors to obtain additional information. We wish to express our gratitude to those individuals, especially the primary study authors, who assisted us throughout this process.

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attitudes generally are quite similar across these various measures (Thoresen et al., 2003). Because our interest centered on justice perceptions' relationship with general affect, not with discrete emotions (e.g., anger, happiness), we discarded several studies (approximately 15) in which only specific emotions were assessed (e.g., Weiss, Suckow, & Cropanzano, 1999). Finally, we also discarded studies in which participants were asked to report their state affect in regard to a particular justice-relevant event (e.g., "How did being treated this way make you feel?"), because such studies potentially confound the constructs of interest.

An important decision regarding trait affect involved whether to regard the Big Five traits of Neuroticism and Extraversion as proxies of NA and PA, respectively, and to retain studies including these constructs. Although Watson and colleagues (e.g., Clark & Watson, 1999) have shown that Neuroticism is highly correlated with NA and Extraversion with PA (both correlations generally are around .60), Thoresen et al.'s (2003) meta-analytic results revealed that PA and NA generally were more strongly correlated with job attitudes (e.g., job satisfaction, organizational commitment) than were Neuroticism and Extraversion, suggesting the nonequivalence of these sets of traits. Given these contradictory findings, we decided to include studies assessing Neuroticism or Extraversion but to analyze these studies separately from those involving PA or NA in order to assess the consistency of the results.

With regard to justice perceptions, we categorized measures as tapping procedural, distributive, or interactional justice perceptions. In most cases, these categorization decisions were straightforward, as many studies included one (or more) of a few frequently used organizational fairness measures explicitly designed to assess a given dimension (e.g., Colquitt, 2001; Gilliland, 1994; Moorman, 1991; Price & Mueller, 1986). In those cases in which the researchers used an ad hoc justice measure, did not explicitly indicate the type of fairness being assessed, and/or constructed the measure post hoc on the basis of exploratory factor analyses, we examined the items to assess the measure's construct validity. If we agreed that the measure tapped distributive, procedural, or interactional justice, we assigned the study to the appropriate category. Studies whose fairness measures did not relate to one of these three types of justice were discarded.

In total, 45 studies and 57 distinct samples (owing to certain studies having multiple samples or multiple experiments) met the criteria for inclusion. Specifically, state affect was measured in 14 studies and 19 distinct samples, and trait affect was measured in 35 studies and 38 distinct samples, with 4 of these studies including measures of both state and trait affect. Study attributes, including the sample characteristics and reliability information, appear in Table 1. In interpreting this table, one should recognize that, because most studies contained measures of both PA and NA as well as various types of justice, there is some overlap among the pieces of information presented here. As seen in the table, most of the studies were survey-based investigations in which the respondents either all worked for the same organization or worked for various organizations (e.g., individuals in a motor vehicle inspection waiting area, teachers across organizations). Across state and trait affect studies, the samples were extremely diverse in terms of type of occupation (e.g., manufacturing workers, public health managers, various occupations within a given sample) and organization (e.g., government, private business, university). Participants in the laboratory-based studies reported their fairness perceptions regarding either a reward allotment or a testing situation (e.g., perceived relevance of test). A few studies asked participants to report their justice perceptions regarding a specific event or policy (e.g., layoffs, pay raise, organization's work–family policies), and the remainder asked about justice perceptions in general (i.e., not in regard to a specific event or policy). Across both specific and general targets, most of these studies included one (or more) of the commonly used organizational fairness measures listed above. Owing both to the use of similar measures and to our

Table 1
Characteristics of Primary Studies Included in the Meta-Analyses

	State affect studies			Trait affect studies		
Characteristic	*n*	*M*	*SD*	*n*	*M*	*SD*
Study origin						
Academic journal articles	10			22		
Doctoral dissertations	4			4		
Conference presentations				5		
Book chapters				1		
Unpublished data				3		
Study context						
Laboratory studies with experimental manipulation	3			3		
Survey studies	11			31		
Workers from one organization	6			20		
Workers from various organizations	5			11		
Justice referent						
Specific event	4			10		
In general	7			22		
Reliability information						
Positive affect		.86	.07		.80	.13
Negative affect		.86	.05		.83	.06
Distributive justice		.87	.11		.83	.15
Procedural justice		.88	.08		.86	.11
Interactional justice		.83	.19		.83	.19

lack of theoretical rationale in predicting differential relationships, we collapsed analyses across fairness targets.

Meta-Analytic Procedures

Because our objective was to obtain the population-level relationships between constructs disattenuated for measurement error, we used the Raju, Burke, Normand, and Langlois (RBNL) procedures (Raju et al., 1991). The RBNL approach yields results that approximate the true construct-level relationships by correcting for measurement artifacts (i.e., sampling error, unreliability of measures), using information (reliability estimates) from the primary studies, allowing for corrections at the individual-study level (see Burke & Landis, 2003, for further elaboration). This approach has been shown to result in more accurate estimates of the mean and variance of ρ (i.e., the population-level correlation) than do traditional "distributional" procedures (Raju et al., 1991). In addition, this procedure incorporates a random effects model, allowing for more accurate Type I error rates and more realistic confidence intervals than does a fixed effect model (Erez, Bloom, & Wells, 1996; Hedges & Vevea, 1998; Hunter & Schmidt, 2000; Overton, 1998).

Composite Correlations and Reliability Estimates

In several cases, studies contained multiple measures of either state or trait affect or, less frequently, multiple measures of a given type of justice. In addition, a few studies were longitudinal in nature, thereby yielding multiple measurements and, in turn, multiple correlations between the constructs of interest. Given the analytical problems that would be introduced by considering each of these correlations separately (e.g., erroneous standard errors; see Burke & Landis, 2003), we computed composite correlations in these instances. Composite correlations, in addition to being more construct valid than correlations involving single measures, are particularly useful in meta-analysis because they avoid downwardly biased estimates that can result from simply averaging the relevant correlations (Hunter & Schmidt, 1990). We derived composite reliability estimates for these correlations by using the Spearman-Brown prophecy formula (see Hunter & Schmidt, 1990, pp. 454–463).

Results

According to Hypothesis 1, SPA will be positively related to each type of justice perception, whereas, according to Hypothesis 2, SNA will be negatively related to the three types of justice perceptions. The results in Table 2 indicate support for both hypotheses in that all mean corrected population correlations ($M_{\hat{\rho}}$) were significant (i.e., 95% confidence interval [CI] did not include zero) and in the predicted direction. Recall that the standard errors were calculated using a random effects model, thereby providing a conservative (i.e., wide) interval. In addition, we calculated the 80% credibility intervals (CVs) for informational purposes. Finally, the results indicate that the magnitude of the relationship between affect and fairness perceptions is fairly constant across variables, with no sizable magnitude differences as a function of affect valence (i.e., positive vs. negative) or type of fairness perception.

Hypotheses 3 and 4, respectively, predicted that TPA and TNA would be positively and negatively correlated with the three types of justice perceptions. As noted above, we conducted separate analyses for studies including measures of TPA and/or TNA (e.g., PANAS; Watson et al., 1998) and those including measures of Extraversion and/or Neuroticism (e.g., the Revised NEO Personality Inventory [NEO-PI–R]; Costa & McCrae, 1992). The results from these analyses appear in Table 3. Turning first to the relationships regarding PA and NA, the results again provide support for the relevant hypotheses in that all mean corrected population correlations ($M_{\hat{\rho}}$) were significant and in the predicted directions. Moreover, with the exception of the relationships involving distributive justice perceptions, none of the other 80% CVs included zero. Once again, the results generally are consistent across both affect valence and justice perceptions, with the three NA correlations especially similar in magnitude. In contrast, the results re-

Table 2
True Score Correlations Between Positive and Negative State Affect and Fairness Perceptions

Estimated correlation with	k	N	$M\hat{r}$	$M\hat{\rho}$	$SD\hat{\rho}$	$SE_{M_{\hat{\rho}}}$	95% CI for $M\hat{\rho}$	80% CV for $M\hat{\rho}$
				State positive affect				
DJ	9	1,606	.27	.31	.16	.06	.19, .43	.09, .52
PJ	8	1,426	.32	.35	.13	.05	.25, .46	.18, .53
IJ	1							
				State negative affect				
DJ	10	2,184	−.22	−.25	.15	.05	−.35, −.15	−.45, −.05
PJ	14	2,750	−.21	−.24	.13	.04	−.32, −.16	−.40, −.07
IJ	2	718	−.37	−.43	.08	.06	−.55, −.30	−.53, −.33

Note. k = number of independent samples in analysis; N = total sample size in k studies; $M\hat{r}$ = mean n-weighted "bare-bones" uncorrected correlation; $M\hat{\rho}$ = estimated mean population correlation; $SD\hat{\rho}$ = estimated standard deviation of corrected correlations; $SE_{M_{\hat{\rho}}}$ = estimated standard error of measurement for estimated mean population correlation; CI = confidence interval; CV = credibility interval; DJ = distributive justice; PJ = procedural justice; IJ = interactional justice.

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Table 3
True Score Correlations Between Positive and Negative Trait Affect and Fairness Perceptions

Estimated correlation with	k	N	$M\hat{r}$	$M\hat{\rho}$	$SD\hat{\rho}$	$SE_{M_{\hat{\rho}}}$	95% CI for $M\hat{\rho}$	80% CV for $M\hat{\rho}$
Trait positive affect								
DJ	10	3,099	.09	.12	.10	.04	.04, .20	−.01, .25
PJ	4	796	.26	.30	.06	.05	.20, .40	.22, .39
IJ	2	390	.19	.22	—[a]	.03	.16, .29	—[a]
Extraversion								
DJ	3	520	−.05	−.06	.05	.06	−.17, .05	−.13, .01
PJ	4	623	.05	.05	—[a]	.03	.00, .11	—[a]
IJ	2	315	−.16	−.20	.04	.06	−.14, .11	−.29, −.12
Trait negative affect								
DJ	25	7,702	−.13	−.16	.12	.03	−.22, −.11	−.32, .00
PJ	22	9,382	−.17	−.20	.07	.02	−.24, −.17	−.30, −.11
IJ	10	6,818	−.16	−.20	.06	.02	−.25, −.16	−.29, −.12
Neuroticism								
DJ	6	1,915	−.07	−.08	.03	.03	−.14, −.03	−.12, −.05
PJ	7	2,015	−.12	−.14	.04	.03	−.19, −.08	−.19, −.08
IJ	3	943	−.20	−.23	.10	.07	−.36, −.10	−.36, −.11

Note. k = number of independent samples in analysis; N = total sample size in k studies; $M\hat{r}$ = mean n-weighted "bare-bones" uncorrected correlation; $M\hat{\rho}$ = estimated mean population correlation; $SD\hat{\rho}$ = estimated standard deviation of corrected correlations; $SE_{M_{\hat{\rho}}}$ = estimated standard error of measurement for estimated mean population correlation; CI = confidence interval; CV = credibility interval; DJ = distributive justice; PJ = procedural justice; IJ = interactional justice.
[a] These variance estimates were negative. One obtains negative values for these estimates when the observed variance is less than what would be predicted by sampling error, a situation that is common in meta-analyses incorporating a relatively small number of primary studies. Although researchers have suggested techniques for addressing this situation (Steel & Kammeyer-Mueller, 2003), the results of such techniques likely would not yield especially enlightening results in the current case because of the especially small number of studies available.

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garding Extraversion and/or Neuroticism provided only mixed support for the hypotheses. Specifically, the results did not support Hypothesis 3, as all of the corrected population correlations were low in magnitude, and two of the three (those involving distributive justice and interactional justice) were actually in the opposite direction as predicted. Accordingly, each of the 95% CIs for these correlations included zero. Conversely, we did find support for Hypothesis 4 in that all of the mean corrected population correlations involving Neuroticism ($M_{\hat{\rho}}$) were in the expected directions, and the 95% CI did not include zero. However, these correlations generally were weaker than were those involving trait NA.

Finally, according to Hypothesis 5, the correlations involving state affect were predicted to be larger in magnitude than were those involving trait affect. To assess this hypothesis, we used the meta-analytic z test for independent population-level correlations proposed by Finkelstein, Burke, and Raju (1995). Because the results involving Extraversion and Neuroticism differed from those regarding TPA and TNA, we decided to concentrate on the latter results in conducting these comparisons. To provide accurate tests of Hypothesis 5 (i.e., by avoiding potential nonindependence of effect sizes), we recomputed the meta-analytic correlations excluding the four studies that contained measures of trait *and* state affect. Although the correlations involving state studies generally were stronger, none of these differences was statistically significant. For distributive justice, the results were as follows: SNA ($M_{\hat{\rho}}$ = −.22) versus trait SNA ($M_{\hat{\rho}}$ = −.16), Z = 1.06, *ns,* and SPA ($M_{\hat{\rho}}$ = .24) versus TPA ($M_{\hat{\rho}}$ = .14), Z = 1.92, *ns.* For procedural justice, the results were SNA ($M_{\hat{\rho}}$ = −.20) versus TNA ($M_{\hat{\rho}}$ = −.20), Z = .01, *ns,* and SPA ($M_{\hat{\rho}}$ = .31) versus TPA ($M_{\hat{\rho}}$ = .30), Z = .52, *ns.*

Discussion

Organizational researchers traditionally have conceived of justice perceptions as cognitive judgments emanating from environmental events and human resource practices and have overlooked the affective or "hot" nature of these judgments. The lack of overt attention devoted to affect is somewhat surprising given both that justice scholars implicitly have alluded to affect in various theoretical formulations (see equity distress in Adams's [1965] original conception of equity theory) and that researchers now widely acknowledge affect's role in the formation and nature of other job-relevant judgments (e.g., job satisfaction; Brief, 1998). Through this article, we have attempted to redress this oversight by (re)focusing attention on the central role of affect and affectivity on the psychology (i.e., formation and maintenance) of justice

judgments. The current results indicate that state and trait affect are related to judgments of distributive, procedural, and interactional justice and that the magnitude of these meta-analytic correlations is fairly constant across affect and justice variables. We feel that these findings offer a new direction for justice research and a set of provocative questions that warrant investigation at the primary-study level. Below, we discuss a few of these possibilities.

In our opinion, a particularly novel and enlightening set of justice-relevant research questions can be derived from emerging work that seeks to link the functional significance of justice perceptions and emotions. Specifically, several scholars have noted that judgments of justice play an adaptive role for humans, as perceptions of injustice or of moral transgressions result in acute emotional reactions such as anger and resentment (e.g., Haidt, 2001; Weiss et al., 1999), which, according to an evolutionary perspective, signal that the organism is in danger (Lazarus, 1991). According to this perspective, the affective consequences of justice perceptions act as a marker of one's standing or safety within the environment, a notion closely tied to Lind and Tyler's (1988) group value model by which individuals use justice perceptions to infer their social standing within the group.

Other research from outside the organizational justice literature (e.g., Watson et al., 1999) suggests that affect not only results from potential danger, but that it also is functional by guiding how people select, interpret, and react to those foreboding stimuli. According to these theorists, affect acts as a preparatory mechanism that allows individuals to approach potentially rewarding and escape potentially noxious situations. Organizational research systematically investigating affect and affective disposition as antecedents of fairness judgments would be especially novel and potentially beneficial for organizations. Consider, for instance, the possibility that organizations could hire or place those individuals especially prone to detect unfair treatment (i.e., those higher in trait NA) in positions in which they are able to assess the fairness of the organizations' dealings, ensuring that the organization is operating and is being treated by others in a just manner. Another possibility is that higher trait NA managers, because of their vigilance for impending injustice, might perceive certain ostensibly benign phenomena, such as a worker who subtly but persistently harasses other workers, as especially troublesome and requiring attention, thereby protecting the victims and the organization.

Incorporating affect into the justice literature also should aid in understanding the relationship among justice concepts (see Ambrose & Arnaud, 2005; Bies, 2005, for excellent overviews). Consider, for instance, the relationship between interactional and procedural justice. Lind, Greenberg, Scott, and Welchans (2000) found that individuals who perceived disrespectful treatment while being laid off were especially likely to seek legal action against the organization. One possible explanation for this finding is that the NA resulting from this treatment prompted individuals to consider the organization's procedures in a different or more scrupulous manner, thereby leading them to perceive the decision-making procedures as unfair as well. In this case, affect is an outcome of interactional justice but an antecedent of procedural justice.

In addition to these specific study ideas, more systematic programs of research attempting to explicate the temporal ordering and theoretical mechanisms underlying the affect–justice relationship are essential. In the current study, we have provided substantial evidence that affect and justice perceptions are related, but we were not able to assess analytically these more interesting psychological questions because of the limited nature of the available data. Subsequent experimental studies as well as studies using experience sampling methodologies to address antecedents of and reactions to discrete justice-relevant work events (Weiss & Cropanzano, 1996) would be instrumental in beginning to address these issues.

Two specific issues from the current study that should be considered in future research warrant comment. First, in terms of whether state or trait affect is more strongly related to justice perceptions, we found that the meta-analytic correlations, although slightly stronger for state affect–justice perception relationships, were not significantly different across transient and dispositional affect. This finding is consistent with Thoresen et al.'s (2003) results that neither state nor trait affect consistently related more strongly to job attitudes (job satisfaction, burnout). However, we hasten to note that, although state and trait affect operate through distinct mechanisms and explain nonredundant variance in job attitudes (e.g., George, 1991), the comparison of meta-analytic correlations is not particularly well-suited to assess their unique relationships with work judgments. In particular, such comparisons do not speak directly to competing theoretical mechanisms and also are methodologically problematic in that trait affect predicts state affect (Watson, 2000), meaning the two are not independent.[2]

The second issue that bears mention is that of the (non)equivalence of PA and Extraversion and NA and Neuroticism, respectively. Consistent with past findings regarding other job attitudes (cf. Connolly & Viswesvaran's, 2000, results with those of Judge, Heller, & Mount, 2002, regarding job satisfaction; Thoresen et al., 2003), the current findings indicate that PA and NA are more strongly related to justice perceptions than are their respective Big Five Personality counterparts. Given these convergent results, we would encourage other researchers not to regard these pairs of characteristics as equivalent, either in terms of the nature of the constructs or their relationships with other variables. Given that these traits are hierarchically structured, with Extraversion subsuming PA and Neuroticism subsuming NA (Nemanick & Munz, 1997), their respective relationships with other variables likely depend on the breadth of those other constructs. For instance, one might hypothesize that the Big Five traits would relate more strongly to "general fairness" (e.g., "How fair is your job?") than to the types of justice assessed here.

Study Limitations

The current study was not without potential limitations. First, the number of samples was small in several cells, potentially allowing second-order sampling error to inflate or deflate meta-analytic estimates. In addition, as noted above, we were not able to systematically explore the processes underlying the empirical relationships, instead having to offer theory that the available data would not allow us to test. We hasten to mention that the theoretical processes presented here likely do not capture the multitude of theoretical lenses through which one could investigate the rela-

[2] We thank a reviewer for pointing out this methodological consideration.

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tionship between affect and justice perceptions. For instance, one might integrate work on affect into other cognitive processes central to justice judgments, such as social comparison or counterfactuals (see Folger & Cropanzano, 1998). Such inquiries would extend, not replace, current theories of justice.

Conclusion

The primary implication of the current study is that the role of moods, emotions, and affective dispositions can no longer be ignored in the fairness literature. In a related vein, this study highlights the fact that judgments of organizational justice are inherently subjective (e.g., Van den Bos, 2003) and susceptible to influence by internal states and dispositions. Given the present empirical relationships, the task of fairness researchers now becomes one of attempting to disentangle or elucidate the psychological mechanisms underlying these empirical relationships.

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Received January 12, 2005
Revision received August 1, 2005
Accepted November 10, 2005 ■

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