

It's Different to Give Than to Receive: Predictors of Givers' and Receivers' Reactions to Favor Exchange

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The present research examines episodes of favor exchange among peer employees. We posit that favor receivers' and favor givers' commitment to their exchange relationships with one another will be accounted for by different factors. As predicted, in 2 different organizational contexts, receivers' commitment to their relationships with givers was found to be more related to their judgments of the givers' interactional justice when performing the favor, whereas givers' commitment to their relationships with receivers was shown to be more associated with their judgments of the favorability of the outcomes associated with the favor that they performed. The implications of these findings for how givers and receivers can better manage favor exchange, and hence their relationships with each other, are discussed.

Members of organizations often request favors to perform tasks or obtain resources they might not be able to perform or obtain alone (Blau, 1964). Favors encompass a wide variety of behavior, from asking a coworker to proofread a document to asking a colleague to "put in a good word" for one's promotion. Factors associated with the performance of the favor—such as the degree of benefit provided to the receiver or the way in which it was performed—may have important consequences, including influencing givers' and receivers' commitment to their exchange relationship. Commitment to an exchange relationship can be defined as "a social actor's willingness to give energy and loyalty. . . to a social relation" (Kanter, 1968, p. 500). Such energy and loyalty refer both to the actor's affect toward the other party and to his or her willingness to continue the relationship in the future.

Givers' and receivers' commitment to one another is likely to affect a variety of important work attitudes and behaviors. For example, the more committed givers and receivers feel toward their exchange relationship with one another, the more likely they are to cooperate with one another (both in favor-giving and nonfavor-giving contexts; e.g., Blau, 1963). Moreover, greater commitment toward the exchange relationship is likely to be associated with increased trust in the other party (Kramer & Tyler, 1996) and job satisfaction (Smith, Kendall, & Hulin, 1969).

Given the important consequences associated with givers' and receivers' commitment to their exchange relationships with each other, it is critical to determine the antecedents of such commitment. The present research is designed to do so, while simultaneously examining the intriguing possibility that givers' and receivers' commitment to their relationships with each other may be accounted for by different aspects of favor exchange. It is worth noting that previous research on favor exchange has tended not to examine both the giver's perspective and the receiver's perspective

in the same study. Instead, most studies have examined either how givers respond to favors they have performed (e.g., Cialdini, 1993; Latane & Darley, 1970; Organ, 1988) or how receivers respond to favors that have been done for them (e.g., Gergen et al., 1975; Nadler, 1991). The lack of simultaneous attention given to both givers and receivers is unfortunate. We believe that the joint examination of givers' and receivers' perspectives may help refine research on interpersonal cooperation in organizations. In particular, we assume that both givers and receivers prefer to engage in favor exchange in ways that strengthen their relationship with one another (or at the very least, that givers and receivers do not want to engage in favor exchange in ways that harm their relationship). By including both givers and receivers in the same design, we can better determine whether the reactions of the two parties to episodes of favor exchange may be predicted by the same factors. Indeed, a major premise of the present research is that the roles of giver and receiver give rise to differences in psychological perspective, leading both parties' reactions to episodes of favor exchange to be accounted for by different factors.¹

Conceptualizing Favor Exchange in a Broader Context

To date, management theory and research on the nature of exchange have tended to examine hierarchically based relationships. More specifically, many if not most studies consider how managers' attitudes and behaviors influence those of their direct subordinates (Porter, Allen, & Angle, 1983; Ginzel, Kramer, & Sutton, 1993; Pfeffer, 1997). Increasingly, however, management entails more than hierarchically based relationships. Many trends in organizations (at least in Western cultures) have had the effect of reducing hierarchical differences among employees. For example, many organizations have removed levels of hierarchy (Gal-

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¹ Whereas both givers and receivers are examined in the present research, they are not drawn from the same dyads. Rather, participants (in different exchange relationships) reported their reactions to episodes of favor exchange after having been randomly assigned to recall an instance in which they had received a favor from a peer or to recall an instance in which they had done a favor for a peer.

braith, 1994), and many have instituted a variety of employee involvement programs, which give greater (decision-making) power to people in lower hierarchical positions (Howard, 1995). Moreover, the movement toward team-based organizations means that people of relatively equal status increasingly are interdependent (Mohrman, Cohen, & Mohrman, 1995). As a result, important interactions between employees are taking place more often in contexts in which status and hierarchy differences have been reduced. This suggests that how well peer employees manage their relationships with one another also is an important component of management. Favor exchange, in turn, is one of the factors that may influence the nature of coworkers' relationships with one another. As such, it is important to delineate the factors associated with favor exchange that may influence employee relationships, which the present research was designed to do.

Favor Exchange in Organizations

Favor exchange refers to dyadic interaction in which giving and receiving resources is predicated on the expectation of equitable resources being provided directly in return (Blau, 1964; Homans, 1958). Thus, social exchange theorists have defined favors as unilateral acts of giving that either reciprocate previously rendered favors or are given with expectations of direct reciprocation (Blau, 1964). Whereas favor exchange is related to other types of employee helping behavior (e.g., organizational citizenship behavior), favor exchange is conceptually distinct as well. For example, favor exchange differs from organizational citizenship behavior in that the latter relates to *generalized* rather than *dyadic* exchange relations. Indeed, organizational citizenship behavior has been defined as behavior intended to benefit the organization (Van Dyne, Cummings, & Parks, 1995). In contrast, a favor need benefit only the receiver, not the organization.

Favor exchange is also distinct from other types of exchange found in organizations in that givers and receivers do not formally define or openly negotiate the concept of equity (Blau, 1964). Rather, equity in favor exchange is purportedly maintained by invoking the norm of reciprocity, which stipulates that people should help those who have helped them (Gouldner, 1960). The norm of reciprocity operates to enforce fairness in favor exchange; however, because individual expectations of reciprocal behavior are tacitly held rather than explicitly discussed, perceptions of fairness in favor exchange may vary, depending on the perspectives of those involved.

Perceptions of Fairness in Favor Exchange Among Employees

Research on organizational justice suggests that people's reactions to resource allocation decisions depend not only on outcome favorability but also on the fairness of the procedures underlying the allocation of outcomes (Brockner & Wiesenfeld, 1996; Folger & Konovsky, 1989; Lind & Tyler, 1988). That is, when evaluating the fairness of their interactions with others, people judge both what happened (i.e., outcome favorability) and how it happened (i.e., procedural justice).

Procedural justice includes two components—a structural component and a social or interactional component (e.g., J. Greenberg, 1994). The structural component deals with how decisions were made (e.g., whether mechanisms were in place whereby people

could have input in the decision process or whether decisions were enacted consistently across time, persons, and situations). When considering the fairness of a procedure, people also take into account the quality of the interpersonal treatment they received, such as the extent to which decision makers treated them with dignity or the extent to which decision makers were open and honest in their communication. This social component has been referred to as interactional justice (Bies & Moag, 1986).

The structural aspect of procedural justice is particularly relevant in the context of analyzing exchange relationships between employers (or their representatives) and employees. For example, studies of employer–employee exchange have examined the influence of the structural aspects of procedural fairness on employees' (a) organizational commitment (e.g., Brockner & Wiesenfeld, 1996) and (b) willingness to engage in organizational citizenship behavior (e.g., Moorman, 1991). The present study of employee favor exchange examines interactions between employees rather than between employers (or their representatives) and employees. Thus, it is more meaningful to examine the influence of the givers' interactional fairness in how they treated receivers than it is to look at the role of the structural aspects of the organization's decision-making procedures. In accordance, the role of the interactional (but not the structural) aspect of procedural fairness is considered in the present studies.

Furthermore, whereas prior research has tended to examine employees' reactions to the interactional justice shown by their managers (e.g., J. Greenberg, 1994; Masterson, Lewis, Goldman, & Taylor, 2000), interactional justice also may influence people's reactions to encounters with their peers (e.g., favor exchange). Indeed, the present study is one of the first to examine the role of interactional justice in encounters between peers (rather than between managers and their direct subordinates).

In favor exchange, givers' and receivers' reactions may be associated with their perceptions of both outcome favorability (i.e., how much the receiver benefited in some material or symbolic way) and interactional justice (i.e., how much the giver treated the receiver with dignity and respect). Of particular interest in the present research is how givers' and receivers' commitment to their exchange relationship with one another are differentially accounted for by these two factors.

Interactional Justice, Outcome Favorability, and Receivers' Commitment to the Exchange Relationship

Theory and research in the justice literature (e.g., Lind & Tyler, 1988) suggest that interactional justice may be more strongly related to receivers' commitment to the exchange relationship than is the favorability of the outcomes associated with the favor. In addition to its short-term consequences, the construct of commitment (to any relationship) has longer term implications. For example, an important component of employees' organizational commitment is their desire to remain with their employers (Mowday, Porter, & Steers, 1982). Given this long-term focus, people tend to rely on cues that they believe reflect stable information about the other party when deciding how committed to be to the other party. Put differently, people's commitment to relationships with others (including their favor exchange partners) will be based on the inferences they make about the nature of their relationships with others (e.g., how much they can trust the others). Inferences about the nature of their relationships (hereafter called *relational*

inferences) may be motivated by instrumental concerns (the extent to which people expect to receive their share of desired tangible outcomes; Thibaut & Walker, 1975) and symbolic concerns (e.g., the extent to which people believe that they are held in high regard by others, which may lead to more positive self-evaluations; Lind & Tyler, 1988).

One source of information from which people draw relational inferences is the quality of the interaction with the other party. The perceived quality of the interaction, in turn, is likely to depend on two factors: (a) how the other party behaved, and (b) the favorability of the outcomes of the interaction. Note, however, that these two aspects of interaction quality are likely to differ in their perceived stability. More specifically, how the other party behaved may be judged as more stable (predictive of the future) than would the favorability of the outcomes of the interaction. As Brockner and Siegel (1996) suggested the following:

According to the fundamental attribution error, people make (overly) internal attributions about the causes of another's behavior . . . thus, the interactional fairness with which the (other) behaves is likely to be attributed to the (other's) disposition . . . the (other's) disposition will be viewed as stable over time. Thus, perceivers are apt to believe that they can predict the future (level of interactional fairness) based on the way that they have been treated in the past. (p. 403)

In a related vein, Lind and Tyler (1988) noted the following:

When deciding the extent to which they will be loyal to a group or relationship, people focus on *the manner in which* [italics added] . . . decisions are made. If they believe that such decisions are made fairly, then group members are more inclined to accept a long-term commitment to [the other party]. (pp. 225–226)

Relative to how the other party behaved, outcome favorability is likely to be perceived as less stable. For one thing, givers who perform favors yielding favorable outcomes may or may not repeat such behavior in the future. Moreover, even if favors yielding favorable outcomes were to be repeated, the perceived cause of such occurrences may not be attributed to a stable (and hence, commitment-eliciting) characteristic of the giver. For example, the favorability of the outcomes associated with a favor may have more to do with the receiver (e.g., the extent to which the receiver needed the favor) rather than being perceived to result from a stable characteristic of the giver (e.g., the trait of generosity).

Furthermore, the results of many studies in the justice literature lend empirical support to the notion that how people behave (interactional justice) is perceived to be more stable than is outcome favorability. These studies have compared the relative explanatory power of interactional justice and outcome favorability in accounting for different types of dependent variables. Findings have consistently shown that on dependent variables pertaining to immediate or short-term outcomes (e.g., satisfaction with outcomes), outcome favorability has greater explanatory power than does interactional justice. However, on dependent variables that have more of a long-term focus (e.g., commitment to decision makers and organizations), which are closely related to the one in the present study, interactional justice has greater explanatory power than does outcome favorability (Folger & Konovsky, 1989; Lind & Tyler, 1988; Sweeney & McFarlin, 1993). Thus, we suggest the following hypothesis:

Hypothesis 1: Receivers' commitment to the exchange relationship will be more strongly related to the givers' interactional justice than to the givers' outcome favorability.²

Interactional justice also may be more strongly related to receivers' than to givers' commitment to the exchange relationship. The actor–observer bias in social psychology (Jones & Nisbett, 1972) suggests that there is a fundamental difference in how people perceive the causes of behavior, depending on whether the behavior is their own versus that of someone else. People tend to attribute others' behavior to dispositional qualities and their own behavior to situational forces (Jones & Nisbett, 1972). One explanation of this bias is based on perspective differences between the two parties. The actor dominates the visual field of the observer, and this heightened salience of the actor may lead the observer to overattribute the actor's behavior to dispositions. The actor, however, tends not to focus on her own behavior but rather on the situation—the place, the other people, and so on. The actor's behavior thus may be less salient to him or her than it is to an observer. For actors, the situation is more salient and therefore more potent. For example, Storms (1973) showed how differential attention focus and visual orientation could enhance the actor–observer bias. Following an episode of conversation, actors were more likely to attribute their behavior to external causes than were observers who witnessed the conversation. However, actors who were shown a videotape of their behavior during the conversation were more likely to attribute their behavior to internal causes than did those who did not view the videotape.

In episodes of favor exchange (in which the giver may be considered to be the actor whereas the receiver is the observer), the perspective difference posited to account for the actor–observer bias may be influential as well. In particular, the givers' behavior (that is, how much givers expressed interactional justice while performing the behavior) may be less salient to givers (the actors) than to receivers (the observers) during an episode of exchange. If the interactional justice shown by givers in the course of performing the favor is more salient to receivers than to givers, then we suggest the following hypothesis:

Hypothesis 2: Givers' interactional justice will be more strongly related to the receivers' than to the givers' commitment to the exchange relationship with the other party.

Interactional Justice, Outcome Favorability, and Givers' Commitment to the Exchange Relationship

We also expect that givers' commitment to their exchange relationship with receivers will be more strongly related to givers' perceptions of the favorability of the outcomes associated with the favor they have rendered than with their perceptions of their own interactional justice when rendering the favor, for two (not mutually exclusive) reasons. First, favors represent a form of social investment (Blau, 1964) or what some exchange theorists refer to

² The present research considers only episodes of favor exchange in which the giver has chosen to comply with the favor request; identifying whether interactional justice would be more influential than outcome favorability when the person requested has not complied with the request is beyond the scope of the present study and represents an important question for future research.

as *credit slips* (e.g., Coleman, 1988). Employees often rely on such credit slips to influence others in ways that help them accomplish their assigned tasks when they lack the resources to accomplish these tasks alone. For example, if an employee is having difficulty meeting a project deadline, he or she may enlist the support of those employees for whom he or she has done favors in the past (i.e., cash in the credit slip). As such, givers are committed to relationships with others for whom they have performed favors because they are motivated to recoup their social investments (Blau, 1964). It therefore stands to reason that the greater the benefit givers have provided for receivers (i.e., the greater the outcome favorability), the more motivated they will be to recoup their investments and, in turn, the more committed they will be to their exchange relationships with receivers.

Second, performing favors may engender in givers a sense of commitment to receivers through a process of self-perception (Bem, 1972). According to self-perception theory, people make judgments of their attitudes (e.g., their level of commitment to others) in part “by inferring them from observations of their own overt behavior and/or the circumstances in which this behavior occurs” (Bem, 1972, p. 2). Past research has suggested that those who perform favors for others may be inclined to justify this action by convincing themselves that the receiver is an attractive, likable, and deserving person, and therefore worthy of commitment. For example, Jecker and Landy (1969) conducted an experiment in which the experimenter requested a favor from some subjects but not from others. Those subjects who performed a favor for the experimenter convinced themselves that he was a decent, deserving fellow and reported greater liking for the receiver than did those who performed no favor. If givers’ commitment to receivers is driven, in part, by this self-perception process, it follows that givers’ commitment to receivers will depend on the amount of benefit provided to the receiver. Taken together, this reasoning suggests that, in favor exchange, givers may be relatively more concerned with what they have done for the receiver than the manner in which they have done it, or as Tolstoy (1865–1869) once wrote, “We do not love people so much for the good they have done us, as for the good we have done them.” This argument leads to the following hypothesis:

Hypothesis 3: Givers’ commitment to the exchange relationship will be more strongly related to their judgments of outcome favorability than it is to judgments of their interactional justice.

Givers’ commitment to the exchange relationship also may be more related to outcome favorability than is receivers’ commitment to the exchange relationship. Receivers often are appreciative of favors they have been given, but their initial pleasure may turn to distress as they become aware of the burdens of obligation. Indeed, prolonged indebtedness “is assumed to have motivational properties, such that the greater its magnitude, the greater the resultant arousal and discomfort, and, hence, the stronger the ensuing attempts to reduce it” (M. S. Greenberg, 1980, p. 4). In favor exchange, receivers may adopt different strategies to reduce the aversive sense of indebtedness. Some might seek the opportunity to provide reciprocation, whereas others may avoid future contact with givers (M. S. Greenberg, 1980). Regardless of which strategy they adopt, receivers’ commitment toward givers does not appear to increase following an episode of favor exchange. Thus,

whereas givers will seek to engage receivers in future favor exchange in order to receive reciprocation, receivers’ aversive feelings of indebtedness may lead them to feel relatively less committed to givers. This reasoning leads us to suggest the following hypothesis:

Hypothesis 4: Judgments of outcome favorability will be more strongly related to givers’ than to receivers’ commitment to the exchange relationship with the other party.

Method

Samples

We tested our hypotheses with data collected from two samples. One sample consisted of employees of a U.S. federal agency. Participants’ mean age was 42.37 years, and their average tenure was 13.92 years. Twenty-five percent of participants were non-White, and 19% were women. The other sample consisted of customer service agents from a major U.S. airline. Participants’ mean age was 32.48 years, and their average tenure was 2.59 years. Twenty-eight percent of the customer service agents were non-White, and 83% were women. In both samples, all participants were given a short questionnaire, which took approximately 15 min to complete. The questionnaire prompted each respondent to recall a recent episode of favor exchange with a coworker in which the respondent had either provided a favor or received a favor. Respondents were randomly assigned to the roles of either receiver or giver.

Procedure 1: The Federal Agency

Of 436 employees of a U.S. federal agency, 74 participated in the present study, yielding a 17% response rate. This response rate did not vary significantly across subunits of the agency. Participants’ job responsibilities included law enforcement and customer service. All of the participants worked at the same facility, located in a major U.S. city on the East Coast.

We collected original survey data by having employees’ supervisors distribute and collect questionnaires on site. The questionnaires were completed anonymously and returned to us in sealed envelopes. Each questionnaire focused on one of two possible episodes of favor exchange, either (a) the participant asked another employee to perform a favor for the participant and the other employee agreed (participant is the receiver) or (b) the participant was asked by another employee to perform a favor and the participant agreed (participant is the giver). As a priming mechanism designed to make the favor more vivid to participants, respondents were asked to “briefly describe the favor” prior to being asked to make ratings of the independent and dependent variables.

Procedure 2: The Airline

Of 128 customer service agents, 106 participated in this study, yielding an 83% response rate. Participants’ job responsibilities included ticketing, boarding, and providing flight information to passengers. All of the participants worked at the same station, located in a major airport on the East Coast. Agents were permitted to trade work shifts. Unlike others, this particular airline did not require formal approval for such arrangements; they were handled informally among the employees. When two employees agreed to switch a work shift, they needed only to inform their manager about the switch. The airline sample provided a unique setting in which to study favor exchange because the favors that participants exchanged (covering an 8-hr work shift) were quite similar. Further, although the allocation of work schedules was based on seniority, all employees engaged in this favor exchange process, regardless of tenure with the firm.

We collected survey data by administering questionnaires in the agents’ break room over a period of 2 days. The questionnaires focused on one of two possible episodes of favor exchange, either (a) the participant asked

another agent to trade a work shift as a favor to the participant and the other agent agreed (participant is the receiver), or (b) the participant was asked by another agent to trade a work shift as a favor to the other agent and the participant agreed (participant is the giver). Thus, each of the episodes collected was a personal account of a real favor. As in the previous sample, participants were randomly assigned to be givers or receivers, and they were assured that their responses were anonymous.

Independent Variables

Interactional justice. Following other researchers (e.g., Folger & Konovsky, 1989), we created a scale that assessed both parties' perceptions of the giver's interactional justice in performing the favor. Respondents reported perceptions of interactional justice by responding to each of four statements using 7-point Likert-type scales that ranged from 1 (*not at all*) to 7 (*to a great extent*). The scale contained the following items (these items were written from the perspective of the giver): (a) "To what extent did you treat this coworker with dignity and respect in performing the favor?" (b) "To what extent were you up front and open in your dealings with this coworker?" (c) "To what extent did you respond to this coworker's needs quickly?" (d) "To what extent do you believe you were concerned about this coworker's well being?" A complementary set of items was written from the receiver's perspective. For example, the first item was rewritten as "To what extent did this coworker treat you with dignity and respect in performing the favor?" The reliability (alpha) coefficients for the scale were .80 for the receivers and .73 for the givers. Responses were averaged, yielding an overall measure of perceived interactional justice ($X_{\text{federal agency}} = 6.25, SD = 0.93; X_{\text{airline}} = 5.93, SD = 1.03, t(179) = 1.39, p = \text{n.s.}$

Outcome favorability. Respondents reported perceptions of outcome favorability by responding to each of four statements using 7-point Likert-type scales that ranged from 1 (*not at all*) to 7 (*to a great extent*). The scale contained the following items (these items are written from the perspective of the giver): (a) "To what extent did the favor help this coworker?" (b) "To what extent did you perform the favor exactly as this coworker requested?" (c) "To what extent was this coworker satisfied with what you did for him/her?" (d) "To what extent did this coworker directly benefit from the favor?" A complementary set of items was written from the receiver's perspective. For example, the first item was rewritten as "To what extent did the favor help you?" The reliability (alpha) coefficients for the scale were .84 for the receivers and .75 for the givers. Responses were averaged, yielding an overall measure of perceived outcome favorability ($X_{\text{federal agency}} = 6.12, SD = 1.03; X_{\text{airline}} = 6.39, SD = 0.88, t(179) = -1.58, p = \text{n.s.}$

Dependent Variable

Commitment to the exchange relationship. We adapted a scale used by Brockner, Chen, Mannix, Leung, and Skarlicki (2000) to measure commitment to the exchange relationship. Respondents reported feelings of commitment to the exchange relationship with the other employee by responding to each of four statements using 7-point Likert-type scales that ranged from 1 (*not at all*) to 7 (*to a great extent*). The scale contained the following items (which were identical for both givers and receivers): (a) "To what extent do you feel that you can rely on this coworker in the future?" (b) "To what extent would you like to continue exchanging favors with this coworker?" (c) "To what extent would you prefer to continue working with this coworker?" (d) "To what extent do you feel close to this coworker?" The reliability (alpha) coefficients for the scale were .93 for the receivers and .83 for the givers. Responses to the four items were averaged, yielding an overall measure of each respondent's commitment to the other employee ($X_{\text{federal agency}} = 5.70, SD = 1.34; X_{\text{airline}} = 5.62, SD = 1.32, t(179) = 0.51, p = \text{n.s.}$

Control Variables

Demographics. Previous studies have shown evidence of a link between demographic factors and perceptions of justice (e.g., Brockner & Adsit, 1986). In addition, past research suggests that salient demographic differences (e.g., race and sex) may influence employees' psychological attachment (e.g., Tsui, Egan, & O'Reilly, 1992). Because the relationship between perceptions of justice and psychological attachment is the subject of our study, we felt it was important to control for demographic variables, particularly race and sex, in each of the analyses.

Status. We also felt it was important to control for perceived differences in status that may affect reactions to episodes of exchange (Goffman, 1971). For example, Buunk, Doosje, Jans, and Hopstaken (1993) found that employees perceived their relationships with colleagues to be reciprocal, but these same employees believed they overbenefited in relationships with superiors. Thus, favors may be evaluated differently depending on the relative status of the focal employee and his or her exchange partner. Hierarchical status was not a strong concern in the airline sample because exchanges between supervisors and subordinates were strictly prohibited. The participants in the federal agency, however, were not faced with such restrictions. Further, hierarchy is not an exclusive determinant of status—social factors play a critical role as well. To address both factors, we collected a measure of perceived relative status in each sample. Participants were asked to rate themselves in relation to their exchange partners on several dimensions related to social status (Anderson, John, Keltner, & Kring, 2001). The items were (a) "Compared with you, how well respected is this person at work?" (ranging from 1 = *not respected at all* to 7 = *respected a great deal*), (b) "Compared with you, how valuable are this person's contributions at work?" (ranging from 1 = *not valuable at all* to 7 = *extremely valuable*), and (c) "Compared with you, how much influence does this person exert over decisions at work?" (ranging from 1 = *does not affect decisions* to 7 = *has a great deal of influence*). Given the high reliability among the three items measuring perceived relative status between the giver and the receiver ($\alpha_{\text{givers}} = .91; \alpha_{\text{receivers}} = .84$), responses were averaged into an index ($X_{\text{federal agency}} = 3.69, SD = 1.12; X_{\text{airline}} = 3.77, SD = 1.24, t(179) = -0.034, p = \text{n.s.}$ ³

Prior commitment. We hypothesized that outcome favorability would be strongly related to givers' commitment to the exchange relationship. It may be the case, however, that the expected relationship between givers' outcome favorability and commitment to the relationship was due to the causal impact of the latter on the former. That is, employees may be willing to do larger favors for those to whom they feel more committed. In an attempt to evaluate this alternative explanation, we included a measure of prior commitment to the exchange relationship as a control variable. The measure of prior commitment consisted of the following three questions: (a) "To what extent had you previously exchanged favors with this coworker?" (b) "To what extent do you interact with this coworker?" and (c) "To what extent were you friends with this coworker?" Responses to these items were made using a 7-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 (*not at*

³ We asked a number of participants in the airline sample if they could suggest factors that might influence their favor evaluations in this context. Their responses converged on two factors: (a) whether the shift occurred on a holiday, and (b) whether the shift occurred on a weekend. These data were collected and were included in the analyses as control variables; however, given their limited impact ($\beta_{\text{holiday}} = -.08, p = .38; \beta_{\text{weekend}} = -.11, p = .28$), we decided to remove them from the analyses. In the federal agency sample, we asked respondents to provide brief descriptions of the favor act. We coded their responses, creating a dummy variable for each of three resource categories—information, goods, and services (Foa & Foa, 1980). We included these dummy variables as controls in each of the analyses for the federal agency sample. Their inclusion did not materially affect the study results ($\beta_{\text{information}} = -.02, p = .91; \beta_{\text{services}} = .12, p = .48$; goods served as the base group). Given their lack of explanatory power, we decided not to include these control variables in the analyses.

all) to 7 (to a great extent). Given the solid reliability among the three items measuring prior commitment between the giver and the receiver ($\alpha_{\text{givers}} = .73$; $\alpha_{\text{receivers}} = .78$), responses were averaged into an index ($X_{\text{federal agency}} = 4.67$, $SD = 2.02$; $X_{\text{airline}} = 4.29$, $SD = 2.33$), $t(179) = -1.36$, $p = n.s.$

Results

Descriptive statistics and correlations are reported in Tables 1 and 2. We used hierarchical regression to test all hypotheses. For Hypotheses 1 and 3, we conducted separate analyses on receivers and givers. For the other hypotheses, the primary term of importance was the interaction between role and interactional justice (Hypothesis 2) and the interaction between role and outcome favorability (Hypothesis 4). In all instances we entered the control variables on the first step and the independent variables of outcome favorability and interactional justice on the second step. (For Hypotheses 2 and 4 we added the main effect of role and the interaction effects on subsequent steps.)

Interactional Justice, Outcome Favorability, and Receivers' Commitment to the Exchange Relationship

Hypothesis 1, which posited that receivers' commitment to the exchange relationship would be more positively related to interactional justice than to outcome favorability, was supported. Results shown in Table 3 (commitment [receivers]), which draw on the combined data set, show that interactional justice was positively related to commitment to the exchange relationship for receivers ($\beta = .53$, $p \leq .01$). Conversely, outcome favorability was unrelated to commitment to the exchange relationship for receivers ($\beta = .08$, $p = n.s.$). Results within each of the two samples are consistent with those drawn from the combined sample (see Table 4, commitment [receivers] for the federal agency and airline).

As a test of uniqueness in explaining variance, we examined the relative explanatory power of each variable by first regressing the commitment to the exchange relationship variable on each independent variable separately and then simultaneously. The results are shown in Figure 1, Part a. When the regressions were run, with the interactional justice and outcome favorability variables entered

separately (restricted model), each was positively related to commitment to the exchange relationship. When they were entered simultaneously (full model), however, as in Table 3, the explanatory power of outcome favorability diminished, whereas the explanatory power of interactional justice remained significant.

In addition to the uniqueness analysis, we used a *t* statistic to test whether the relative effects of interactional justice and outcome favorability were significantly different from one another (e.g., Griffiths, Hill, & Judge, 1993, p. 364). In fact, the *t* statistics were significant for the combined sample, $t(179) = 2.69$, $p < .01$, the federal agency sample, $t(73) = 3.30$, $p < .01$, and the airline sample, $t(105) = 2.00$, $p < .05$.

Interactional Justice and Receivers' and Givers' Commitment to the Exchange Relationship

Hypothesis 2 predicted that interactional justice would be more strongly related to receivers' than to givers' commitment to the exchange relationship. Indeed, commitment in Table 3 shows a significant positive coefficient for the interaction effect of interactional justice and role ($\beta = .84$, $p \leq .05$). Further, the results reported in Table 4 show that this interaction effect exists in both the federal agency sample (commitment, $\beta = 1.00$, $p \leq .10$) and the airline sample (commitment, $\beta = 1.05$, $p \leq .05$), albeit at only a marginal level of significance in the former. Following the procedures recommended by Aiken and West (1991), we graphed the relationship between interactional justice and commitment to the exchange relationship separately for givers and for receivers at high and low levels of interactional justice (showing the predicted levels of commitment to the relationship for givers and receivers at 1 *SD* above and 1 *SD* below the mean level of interactional justice, respectively). As predicted, and as can be seen in Figure 2, receivers showed more of a positive relationship between interactional justice and commitment to the exchange relationship than did givers.

Interactional Justice, Outcome Favorability, and Givers' Commitment to the Exchange Relationship

Hypothesis 3, which posited that givers' commitment to the exchange relationship would be more positively related to outcome

Table 1
Means, Standard Deviations, and Correlations Among Study Variables (Federal Agency)

Variable	Givers	SD	Receivers	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1. Female					—	.32	-.37	-.04	.04	.23	.05
0 = male	93.10%		70.00%								
1 = female	6.90%		30.00%								
2. Racial minority					-.15	—	-.05	.22	-.18	.02	.03
0 = White	77.40%		72.20%								
1 = non-White	22.60%		27.80%								
3. Perceived relative status	3.84	1.07	3.56	1.15	-.28	.16	—	-.02	-.26	-.48***	-.30
4. Prior commitment	5.07	2.01	4.35	1.99	.20	-.30	.07	—	.16	-.01	.51***
5. Interactional justice	6.34	0.80	6.17	1.04	.17	-.21	-.41**	.14	—	.72***	.61***
6. Outcome favorability	6.15	1.04	6.10	1.04	-.12	-.24	-.37**	.13	.73***	—	.40**
7. Commitment	6.04	1.34	5.39	1.32	.15	-.27	-.42**	.49***	.49***	.67***	—

Note. *N* = 74 (38 givers, 36 receivers). Numbers below the diagonal are correlations among study variables for givers; numbers above the diagonal are correlations among study variables for receivers.
p* < .05. *p* < .01.

Table 2
Means, Standard Deviations, and Correlations Among Study Variables (Airline)

Variable	Givers	SD	Receivers	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1. Female					—	-.02	.05	-.14	-.03	.21	.18
0 = male	14.30%		19.60%								
1 = female	85.70%		80.40%								
2. Racial minority					.21	—	-.34	.09	.05	-.18	-.08
0 = White	77.50%		65.40%								
1 = non-White	22.50%		34.60%								
3. Perceived relative status	3.85	1.27	3.70	1.22	-.03	-.09	—	-.13	-.36**	-.15	-.22
4. Prior commitment	3.80	2.32	4.77	2.11	.12	.02	-.22	—	.45***	.20	.59***
5. Interactional justice	6.08	0.88	5.76	1.17	-.16	-.10	-.17	-.37***	—	.67***	.72***
6. Outcome favorability	6.48	0.64	6.30	1.09	-.10	.02	-.20	-.29**	.60***	—	.50***
7. Commitment	5.61	1.18	5.63	1.48	-.20	-.12	-.46***	.35**	.15	.37***	—

Note. $N = 106$ (56 givers, 50 receivers). Numbers below the diagonal are correlations among study variables for givers; numbers above the diagonal are correlations among study variables for receivers.

** $p < .05$. *** $p < .01$.

favorability than to interactional justice, was supported. Results shown in Table 3 (commitment [givers]), which draw on the combined data set, suggest that outcome favorability was positively related to commitment to the exchange relationship for givers ($\beta = .41$, $p \leq .01$). Conversely, interactional justice was unrelated to commitment to the exchange relationship for givers ($\beta = .06$, $p = \text{n.s.}$). Results drawn from each of the two samples are consistent with the results drawn from the combined sample (see Table 4, commitment [givers] for the federal agency and the airline).

As a test of uniqueness, we examined the relative explanatory power of outcome favorability and interactional justice by first regressing commitment to the exchange relationship on each independent variable separately and then simultaneously. The results are shown in Figure 1, Part b. When the regressions were run with interactional justice and outcome favorability entered separately (restricted model), each was significantly related to commitment to

the exchange relationship. When they were entered simultaneously (full model), however, as in Table 4, the explanatory power of interactional justice diminished, whereas the explanatory power of outcome favorability remained significant.

Finally, we used a t statistic to test whether the explanatory power of outcome favorability and interactional justice were significantly different from each other. The t statistics were significant for the combined sample, $t(179) = 3.20$, $p < .01$, and for the airline sample, $t(105) = 3.63$, $p < .01$, but not for the federal agency sample, $t(73) = 0.89$, $p = \text{n.s.}$

Outcome Favorability and Givers' and Receivers' Commitment to the Exchange Relationship

Hypothesis 4 predicted that outcome favorability would be more positively related to commitment to the exchange relationship for

Table 3
Regression of Commitment to the Exchange Relationship on Independent Variables (Combined Samples)

Variable	Combined data		
	Commitment (receivers)	Commitment (givers)	Commitment
Female	.16	-.13*	.02
Minority	-.18	-.12	-.15**
Perceived relative status	-.21***	-.39***	-.28***
Prior commitment	.56***	.35***	.44***
Contribution to R^2	.37	.35	.31
Interactional justice	.53***	.06	.34***
Outcome favorability	.08	.41***	.24***
Contribution to R^2	.36	.18	.23
Role	—	—	-.08
Contribution to R^2	—	—	.00
Interactional Justice \times Role	—	—	.84**
Outcome Favorability \times Role	—	—	-.96**
Contribution to R^2	—	—	.02
R^2	.63	.53	.56
Adjusted R^2	.61	.49	.52
Overall F ratio	23.82***	15.52***	23.75***
df	6, 81	6, 84	7, 170

Note. Entries represent standardized coefficients. Dashes indicate that variables were not entered in equation. * $p < .10$. ** $p < .05$. *** $p < .01$.

Table 4
Regression of Commitment to the Exchange Relationship on Independent Variables (Separate Samples)

Variable	Federal agency			Airline		
	Commitment (receivers)	Commitment (givers)	Commitment	Commitment (receivers)	Commitment (givers)	Commitment
Female	-.02	.13	-.05	.27**	-.22*	.03
Minority	-.09	-.03	-.08	-.20	-.10	-.18**
Perceived relative status	-.30**	-.48***	-.34***	-.21*	-.41***	-.29***
Prior commitment	.52***	.50***	.53***	.62***	.29***	.42***
Contribution to R ²	.35	.46	.39	.47	.34	.30
Interactional justice	.55***	.15	.40***	.40***	-.06	.20**
Outcome favorability	-.06	.40**	.14	.12	.44***	.32***
Contribution to R ²	.23	.22	.21	.18	.14	.20
Role	—	—	-.14*	—	—	0.01
Contribution to R ²	—	—	.01	—	—	.00
Interactional Justice × Role	—	—	1.00*	—	—	1.05**
Outcome Favorability × Role	—	—	-1.34**	—	—	-1.26**
R ²	.58	.68	.63	.65	.48	.52
Adjusted R ²	.49	.61	.58	.60	.41	.47
Overall F ratio	7.02***	9.71***	12.27***	8.72***	7.45***	11.42***
df	6, 31	6, 28	9, 64	6, 43	6, 49	9, 96

Note. Entries represent standardized coefficients. Dashes indicate that variables were not entered in equation.
* $p < .10$. ** $p < .05$. *** $p < .01$.

givers than for receivers. As predicted, commitment in the federal agency sample in Table 4 showed a significant interaction effect between outcome favorability and role ($\beta = -.96, p \leq .05$). Further, the results shown in Table 4 suggest that the interaction exists in both the federal agency sample (commitment, $\beta = -1.34, p \leq .05$) and the airline sample (commitment, $\beta = -1.26, p \leq .05$). To illustrate the form of this interaction, we used the Aiken and West (1991) procedure of showing predicted values of commitment among givers and receivers at 1 SD above the mean level of outcome favorability and 1 SD below the mean level of outcome favorability. As can be seen in Figure 3, the relationship between

outcome favorability and commitment to the exchange relationship was more positive among givers than receivers.

Supplementary Analyses

Further analyses were conducted to evaluate whether there were differences in variance between givers' and receivers' ratings of either interactional justice or outcome favorability. Perhaps such differences in variance accounted for the differential effects of these two factors among givers and receivers. For each of the two samples, we conducted the Levene (1960) test on both variables. In

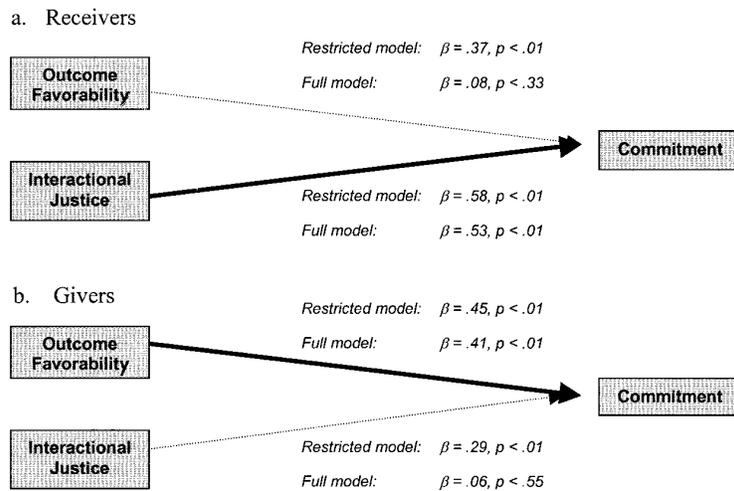


Figure 1. The relative explanatory power of outcome favorability and interactional justice for receivers and givers. In the restricted model, the regressions were run with interactional justice, and outcome favorability was entered separately. In the full model, both independent variables were simultaneously entered.

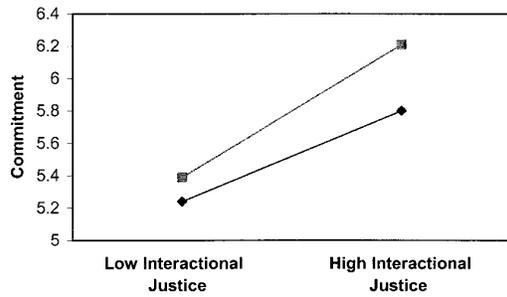


Figure 2. Interactional justice and commitment to the exchange relationship for givers and receivers. Low interactional justice represents a score that is one standard deviation below the mean, whereas high interactional justice represents a score that is one standard deviation above the mean. Giver is indicated by a diamond; receiver is indicated by a square.

fact, within the airline sample there was significantly greater variance in interactional justice among receivers than givers, $F(55, 49) = 5.17, p < .05$. At first blush, this appears to provide a possible alternative explanation for the finding that interactional justice was more influential among receivers than givers.

However, the results of additional analyses argue strongly against this possibility. There was no significant difference in variance in interactional justice between givers and receivers within the federal agency sample, $F(37, 35) = 2.08, p > .15$. However, the federal agency findings also showed that interactional justice was more strongly related to commitment to the relationship among receivers than givers. Put differently, the data from the federal agency sample show that the presence of a difference in the variance of interactional justice between givers and receivers is not necessary to produce the finding that interactional justice is more strongly related to the dependent variable among receivers than givers.

When we turn to the results for outcome favorability, the results argue even more strongly against an alternative explanation on the basis of receiver–giver differences in variance. More specifically, the Levene test of homogeneity of variance showed that there was a significant difference, once again, in the airline sample, $F(55, 49) = 6.89, p < .01$, but not in the federal agency sample, $F(37, 35) = 0.11, p = n.s$. Furthermore, it was the receivers in the airline sample who showed greater variance than did the givers (e.g., see Table 2, which shows that the standard deviation among receivers was greater than the standard deviation among givers on outcome favorability). However, note that this finding is directly contrary to the “difference in variance explanation.” That is, within and across the two samples, outcome favorability was more strongly related to the dependent variable among givers than receivers. This happened even though, in one of the samples, receivers showed greater variance in outcome favorability than did givers. In sum, it does not appear to be the case that the present findings are attributable to differences in variance between givers and receivers on the dimensions of interactional justice and outcome favorability.

Discussion

As predicted, we found that receivers’ commitment to the exchange relationship was more positively related to interactional justice, or the manner in which givers perform favors for them,

whereas givers’ commitment to the exchange relationship was more positively related to their perceptions of the favorability of the outcomes they provided to receivers. It is important to emphasize that similar patterns of results emerged across two very different contexts. Specifically, the favors were quite diverse in the federal agency sample but quite similar in the airline sample. Moreover, participants were 10 years older on average in the federal agency sample than in the airline sample, and most participants in the federal agency sample were male whereas most participants in the airline sample were female. The fact that highly similar results emerged across two very different settings bodes well for the generalizability of the findings.

Theoretical Implications

Social exchange theory (e.g., Blau, 1964) and equity theory (e.g., Adams, 1965) assumes that people are oriented toward requesting and providing certain levels of help commensurate with the level of help received in the past or expected in the future. According to this instrumental view, one’s commitment to an exchange relationship should hinge on the perceived magnitude of material benefit provided by the other party. This instrumental viewpoint implies that the manner in which the favor is given should not be nearly as consequential as the outcomes associated with the favor. Our findings question the instrumentally based assumption that receivers care more about the relative values of goods exchanged rather than how these goods are exchanged. Instead, receivers’ commitment to the exchange relationship was more positively related to how they were treated than to how much they benefited from the favor.

The present findings also shed light on some potential sources of interpersonal conflict that may result from the process of favor exchange. From the givers’ perspective, commitment to the exchange relationship was more strongly related to the amount of aid they provided. From the receivers’ perspective, commitment was more strongly related to how the favor was enacted. Thus, if employees provide favors that are “objectively” quite helpful but do so with little interactional justice, they may be unpleasantly surprised to learn that receivers are not especially appreciative. Indeed, givers may interpret receivers’ lack of appreciation as an expression of “biting the hand that feeds them.” Receivers, for

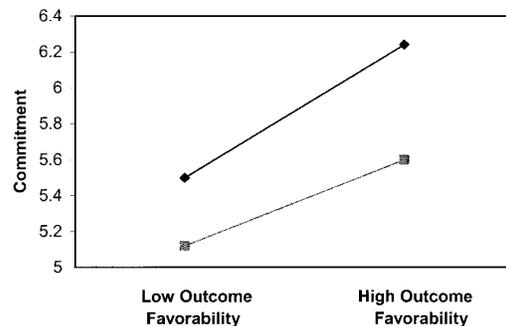


Figure 3. Outcome favorability and commitment to the exchange relationship for givers and receivers. Low outcome favorability represents a score that is one standard deviation below the mean, whereas high interactional justice represents a score that is one standard deviation above the mean. Giver is indicated by a diamond; receiver is indicated by a square.

their part, may be frustrated by their perceptions of givers simply trying to “buy them off,” which could occur if an objectively helpful favor were delivered with little interactional justice. Thus, what could potentially be a bonding experience for givers and receivers (the former doing a favor for the latter) might actually do damage to their exchange relationship if an objectively helpful favor were to be rendered with little interactional justice. The potential for receivers to be unappreciative of favors is reminiscent of the findings of Gergen, Ellsworth, Maslach, and Seipel (1975). Whereas Gergen et al. found that recipients of aid were much less appreciative if the manner in which the aid was given heightened their feelings of dependency on givers, we found the same may be true if givers treat receivers with low levels of interactional justice. The common theme in both studies is that receivers may be less appreciative of objectively helpful assistance if the assistance is offered in ways that receivers find to be more demeaning.

Practical Implications

Past research on dyadic exchange in organizations has primarily considered supervisor–subordinate relationships (Dansereau, Graen, & Haga, 1975; Dienesch & Liden, 1986). Leader–member exchange theory, for example, has informed our understanding of how hierarchical asymmetry influences the nature of dyadic exchange (e.g., Duarte, Goodson, & Klich, 1994). However, whereas our understanding of employee–employer exchange and supervisor–subordinate exchange has deepened, our understanding of exchange among peer employees remains less developed (Flynn, in press). This is unfortunate given that many trends in organizations have had the effect of reducing hierarchical differences among employees, thereby suggesting that how employees manage their relationships with one another warrants greater scholarly attention (Flynn, 2003).

The present findings have some important implications for both givers and receivers on how to handle episodes of favor exchange with their fellow employees. Our message to givers is that they need to pay attention to how they treat receivers when providing favors. It is not enough simply for givers to provide favors that are perceived by either or both parties to be associated with favorable outcomes. Although givers may feel more committed to the relationship by providing favors that they perceive to have yielded more favorable outcomes to receivers, receivers’ perceptions of outcome favorability are less strongly related to their commitment to the relationship than are their perceptions of interactional justice. Conversely, our message to receivers who wish to build givers’ commitment to the relationship is to make more salient (i.e., express greater appreciation for) the favorability of the outcomes associated with the favor rather than the interactional justice with which the favor was rendered. Even though outcome favorability was of lesser importance to receivers, it was more important to givers. In sum, in the favor exchange process, both givers and receivers can take action that strengthens their relationship with one another, but in order to do so, both parties need to “get outside of themselves.” That is, for both givers and receivers, the factors that are more strongly related to their own commitment to the relationship may be less strongly related to the other party’s commitment to the relationship.

Limitations and Directions for Future Research

One potential limitation of the present research is that we did not directly compare reports from givers and receivers in the same dyads. Rather, we assessed one party’s perspective in each dyad and then aggregated these reports to create samples of givers and receivers. The fact that we did not examine givers and receivers from the same dyads raises two kinds of concerns, one methodological and the other conceptual. At the methodological level, studying givers and receivers from the same dyads would allow for greater control of extraneous variables. For example, perhaps systematic differences in the favors recalled by givers and receivers elicited the differing effects of outcome favorability and interactional justice rather than their roles. Whereas this alternative explanation may be somewhat relevant to the results found among the employees in the federal agency sample, it seems less applicable to the employees in the airline sample, who responded to highly similar favors (in which the giver worked an 8-hr shift originally scheduled to be worked by the receiver). Given the highly consistent results across the two samples, a far more parsimonious explanation of the present findings is that the role employees played in their episodes of favor exchange made them much more likely to use outcome favorability or interactional justice information to make judgments of their commitment to the exchange relationship. It is also important to emphasize that participants were randomly assigned to the roles of givers and receivers. Thus, many additional factors that could have influenced participants’ commitment to the exchange relationship (e.g., individual difference variables) were controlled through randomization.

At the conceptual level, another possible concern raised by our not studying givers and receivers from the same dyads is that we cannot evaluate whether the nature of the relationship between the two parties affected the results. That is, the relationship between givers and receivers in some dyads was undoubtedly different from the relationship between givers and receivers in other dyads. Thus, it would seem important to evaluate whether perceived differences in the nature of the relationship between givers and receivers have any influence on the main findings of the present studies.

Fortunately, we do have some data that enabled us to answer this question. First, recall that we included participants’ ratings of their prior commitment to the other party as a control variable in tests of all hypotheses (Hypotheses 1–4). This control variable is a proxy for perceived differences in the nature of the relationship between parties prior to the favor. Hypotheses 1–4 were supported even though we controlled for participants’ perceptions of their prior commitment to the relationship with the other party. Second, we conducted several additional analyses to evaluate whether our findings were moderated by givers’ and receivers’ perceptions of their prior commitment to the other party. More specifically, Table 3 shows that outcome favorability interacted with role (such that outcome favorability had more of an influence on givers’ than receivers’ commitment to the other party) and that interactional justice interacted with role (such that interactional justice had more of an influence on receivers’ than givers’ commitment to the other party). We then examined whether either of these interaction effects was moderated by participants’ prior commitment to the other party. That is, we evaluated the significance of the three-way interaction between Role \times Outcome Favorability \times Prior Commitment in one regression equation, and then we evaluated the significance of the three-way interaction between Role \times Interac-

tional Justice \times Prior Commitment in a second regression equation. It is important to note that both of these three-way interaction effects did not approach significance (both p values $> .25$), suggesting that the main findings in the study do not depend on (are not moderated by) participants' prior relationship with one another. Nevertheless, we believe that an important step in future research comparing givers' and receivers' reactions with favor exchange is to study both givers and receivers from the same dyads so that the possible effects of the nature of their relationship with each other on their reactions to favor exchange may be examined more thoroughly.

A second limitation of the results in the federal agency sample is that the response rate was quite low (less than 20%). It is possible that the present results would have been different among nonrespondents in the federal agency sample. Although we cannot definitely discount this possibility, the results from the airline sample (in which the response rate was very high) and the consistency of the results across the two (diverse) samples are reassuring regarding the generalizability of the present findings.

A third potential limitation of the present study is common methods bias in that many of the variables consisted of self-reports. Indeed, the correlation between the interactional justice and outcome favorability variables is fairly high. To test whether the items used to measure each of these constructs loaded on to separate factors, we conducted a confirmatory factor analysis. The results of that analysis did not suggest the presence of two separate factors. However, several aspects of the research design and findings make common methods bias a less serious threat. One of the independent variables (role) was based on an experimental manipulation and was not operationalized through self-report. That is, common methods were not present in testing Hypotheses 2 and 4. Further, the results pertinent to Hypotheses 2 and 4 showed that the relationship between outcome favorability and commitment, and between interactional justice and commitment, were significantly different for givers than receivers. Whereas common methods bias may help explain in part why outcome favorability and interactional justice were related to commitment, it cannot easily explain why these relationships differed between givers and receivers. Similarly, common methods bias is hard-pressed to explain the results associated with Hypotheses 1 and 3, which showed that within a given role, outcome favorability and interactional justice were differentially related to commitment. In short, our findings show that in addition to the substantial relationship between outcome favorability and interactional justice, the items used to assess these two constructs are meaningfully distinct.

Finally, future research needs to delineate the mechanism(s) accounting for the present findings. For example, we hypothesized that outcome favorability would be strongly related to givers' commitment to the exchange relationship for at least two reasons. First, givers who provided favors yielding more favorable outcomes to receivers may become more committed in order to receive the benefit(s) of reciprocation from receivers. Second, people who provide favors to others may become committed through a process of self-perception, reasoning to themselves that the more valuable the favors they provided to receivers, the more that they must feel committed to the receivers. It may be that the two mechanisms affect different types of commitment. Whereas the instrumental mechanism we describe may lead to increased continuance commitment, the self-perception mechanism we describe may lead to increased affective commitment (e.g., Meyer,

Paunonen, Gellatly, Goffin, & Jackson, 1989). Future research needs to evaluate this possibility.

Conclusion

Given the centrality of how well employees manage their relationships with one another, it is important to understand the factors affecting their reactions to favor exchange. Our study suggests that a significant constraint and an equally significant opportunity exist with respect to perceptions of favor exchange among employees. On the one hand, the differing perspectives adopted by givers and receivers may lead them to have very different (and potentially conflicting) reactions to episodes of favor exchange, given that their commitment to favor exchange is accounted for by different factors. On the other hand, to the extent that both interactional justice and outcome favorability in favor exchange are maintained, commitment and cooperation among givers and receivers will be enhanced, albeit for different reasons. By recognizing that employees have different motives underlying their request for and performance of favors, researchers and managers alike may identify avenues for facilitating successful episodes of favor exchange in organizations, and with that, forge stronger working relationships among employees.

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