Culture and Procedural Fairness: When the Effects of What You Do Depend on How You Do It

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Previous research has shown that procedural fairness and outcome favorability interactively combine to influence people's reactions to their social exchanges. The tendency for people to respond more positively when outcomes are more favorable is reduced when procedural fairness (how things happen) is relatively high. This paper evaluates whether cultural differences in people's tendencies to view themselves as interdependent or independent (their self-construal) moderate the interactive relationship between procedural fairness and outcome favorability. In three studies, participants indicated their reactions to an exchange with another party as a function of the other party's procedural fairness and the outcome favorability associated with the exchange. In Study 1, participants' national culture was treated as a proxy for their self-construal. In Study 2, people's national culture and self-construal were assessed. In Study 3, participants were classified on the basis of their self-construals. Converging evidence across studies showed that the interactive relationship between procedural fairness and outcome favorability was more pronounced among participants with more interdependent forms of self-construal.

A basic tenet of social exchange theory (Blau, 1964) and equity theory (Adams, 1965) is that employees' work attitudes and behaviors are significantly determined by the outcomes that they obtain from their relationships with their employers. For example, the greater the perceived favorability of the outcomes employees obtain from their employers, which may be material (e.g., compensation) or social/psychological (e.g., feeling respected), the more likely they are to reciprocate in the form of greater productivity and morale. Procedural justice theory has shown that employees' work attitudes and behaviors also depend on the fairness of the methods used to plan and implement decisions (Thibaut and Walker, 1975; Lind and Tyler, 1988; Greenberg, 1990, 1996). For example, employees have been shown to be more supportive of decisions, decision makers, and the organizations that decision makers represent when procedures are perceived to be relatively fair. Such research has thus shown that employees respond both to what happens (outcome favorability) and to how things happen (procedural fairness). Such findings reflect the adage, "It's not only what you do, but how you do it that matters."

More recent findings suggest that the influence of outcome favorability and procedural fairness is more complex. Many studies have shown that outcome favorability and procedural fairness combine interactively to influence employees' work attitudes and behaviors (see Brockner and Wiesenfeld, 1996, for a review). The nature of the interaction suggests that the tendency for people to respond more positively to favorable outcomes is weaker when procedural fairness is high rather than low. To state the interaction effect more colloquially, "The effects of what you do depend on how you do it."

While the interactive relationship between procedural fairness and outcome favorability has been found repeatedly, the vast majority of studies have been conducted in the United States. But there are theoretical reasons to believe that the magnitude of the interactive relationship between procedural favorability and procedural fairness is likely to be greater in more collectivist societies. Such differences in cultural collectivism may moderate the interactive relationship between procedural fairness and outcome favorability. The moderating effect of cultural collectivism may be stronger in more collective societies. This study examined whether national culture is associated with the interactive relationship between procedural fairness and outcome favorability. The results suggest that the relationship between procedural fairness and outcome favorability is stronger in collectivist societies than in individualist societies.
Culture and Fairness

fairness and outcome favorability will vary between national cultures. Thus, our research evaluates whether national culture has a moderating influence on the interactive relationship between procedural fairness and outcome favorability. In so doing, we also hope to contribute to a broader (and growing) body of knowledge in organizational behavior that seeks to explain how national culture influences people's work attitudes and behaviors (Hofstede, 1980; Markus and Kitayama, 1991; Erez and Earley, 1993).

Interaction of Procedural Fairness with Outcome Favorability

Central to people's appraisals of the nature of their social interactions and relationships is their judgment of how much to trust the other party (Kramer and Tyler, 1995). One determinant of their trust judgments, in turn, is their perceptions of the procedural fairness shown by the other party. The more that people perceive the other party to be procedurally fair, the more likely they will be to trust the other party (Konovsky and Pugh, 1994). The perception of the other party's trustworthiness, in turn, helps to explain the interactive relationship between procedural fairness and outcome favorability. If the other party is perceived to be trustworthy, then people will attach less importance to, and hence be less affected by, the favorability of the economic or tangible outcomes of the current exchange situation. The tendency for high trust to reduce the impact of the favorability of current economic outcomes may be due to the time frame of the relationship, the currency of exchange inherent to the relationship, or both.

Time frame. In social interactions or relationships (hereinafter referred to as social exchanges) in which trust is relatively high, people concern themselves not only with the short-term outcomes of the social exchange but also with the longer-term outcomes. When trust is relatively high, people may be willing to accept a less-than-hoped-for outcome in the short term because the presence of trust makes them more likely to believe that they will receive their share of desired outcomes over time. In contrast, if people perceive their social exchange partner to be relatively untrustworthy, they will be more influenced by the favorability of their immediate outcomes. If trust in the other is low, then people cannot be reassured that they will receive their share of desired outcomes over time. As a result, they will assign greater importance to the favorability of their current outcomes; the greater the favorability of current outcomes, the more positively they will respond.

Currency of exchange. In trusting social exchanges, people are not only motivated by the economic outcomes of the exchange but also by social and psychological considerations such as their needs for esteem, identity, and affiliation (Lind and Tyler, 1988; Folger, 1993). Since people in more trusting social exchanges also are seeking to satisfy their social and psychological needs, they may assign less importance to the economic aspects of the exchange and, as a consequence, be less affected by the favorability of the economic outcomes. In contrast, when trust in the other party is low, peo-
ple know that they are unlikely to reap social and psychological rewards (e.g., feeling respected by the other party). Consequently, they are likely to define the currency of the exchange more strictly in economic terms, which leads them to be influenced by the favorability of the economic outcomes.

The time frame and currency of exchange figure prominently in a variety of conceptual frameworks in organizational behavior and social psychology. In the psychological contracts literature (e.g., Rousseau and McLean Parks, 1993; McLean Parks and Kidder, 1994), social exchanges in which trust is low are more likely to be viewed as transactional, whereas those in which trust is high are more likely to be seen as relational. The negotiations literature distinguishes between negotiators who have an “episodic” versus a “continuous” orientation toward the other party. Negotiators with an episodic orientation are more likely to be concerned with short-term, economic outcomes, whereas those with a continuous orientation have both a short-term and a long-term focus, as well as a concern for both economic and social/psychological outcomes (Heide and Miner, 1992; Mannix, 1994; Kramer and Messick, 1995; Lewicki, Saunders, and Minton, 1999). Fiske (1992) proposed four basic forms of social relations: communal sharing, authority ranking, equality matching, and market pricing. Among the many dimensions along which these four forms of relations differ is the currency of exchange. The prototypical currency of exchange is more likely to be economic in the market pricing form of social exchange than in other forms.

Empirical evidence also has shown that people use procedural fairness information to make inferences about the degree of trust to place in the other party, which, in turn, influences their work attitudes and behaviors. Konovsky and Pugh (1994) found that employees whose managers were more procedurally fair were more likely to trust their managers and, as a consequence, exhibit greater organizational citizenship. Thus, subordinates’ trust in their managers mediated the relationship between their managers’ procedural fairness and the subordinates’ organizational citizenship behaviors. Brockner et al. (1997) found that it was not procedural fairness per se that interacted with outcome favorability to influence employees’ work attitudes and behaviors. Rather, it was the degree of trust elicited by procedural fairness that interacted with outcome favorability to influence employees’ reactions.

While previous theory and research help to account for the interactive relationship between procedural fairness and outcome favorability, no studies have examined the conditions under which the interactive relationship will be more or less pronounced. The interaction between procedural fairness and outcome favorability is based on people’s use of procedural fairness information to make inferences about the nature of their social exchanges (i.e., how much to trust their social exchange partner). Implicit in this reasoning is the assertion that because social exchanges are important to people, it is significant to them to make inferences about the nature of their social exchanges. While people generally may believe their social exchanges to be important (and therefore assign
significance to the process of making inferences about the nature of their social exchanges, they may vary in how much importance they place on their social exchanges. Some people may place more importance on their social exchanges than others. The more importance they place on their social exchanges, the more likely they are to assign significance to (and hence be influenced by) the process of determining what the other party’s procedural fairness says about their social exchanges. This reasoning suggests that those who place more importance on their social exchanges (and thus are more influenced by the process of determining what the other party’s procedural fairness says about their social exchanges) should exhibit a stronger interactive relationship between procedural fairness and outcome favorability, relative to those for whom social exchanges are less important. Culture is one of the factors that influences the degree of importance that people place on their social exchanges.

The Influence of Culture

Social scientists have long been interested in how different cultures foster in their members varying beliefs and values, with a resulting impact on people’s cognitions, emotions, and behaviors (e.g., Hofstede, 1980). Markus and Kitayama (1991) suggested that in different cultures people develop construals of themselves that are relatively interdependent vs. independent. The essence of the distinction between interdependent and independent self-construals is the extent to which people see themselves as connected to versus distinct from others. People who see themselves as connected to others should assign greater importance to their social exchanges than those who see themselves as distinct from others.

In cultures fostering interdependent self-construals, Markus and Kitayama (1991) suggested that people focus on, “the fundamental connectedness of human beings to each other. . . . Experiencing interdependence entails seeing oneself as part of an encompassing social relationship and recognizing that one’s behavior is determined, contingent on, and, to a large extent organized by what the actor perceives to be the thoughts, feelings, and actions of others in the relationship” (p. 227). In contrast, they suggested that in cultures fostering independent self-construals, there is a faith “in the inherent separateness of distinct persons. . . . Achieving the cultural goal of independence requires construing oneself as an individual whose behavior is organized and made meaningful primarily by reference to one’s own internal repertoire of thoughts, feelings, and actions, rather than by reference to the thoughts, feelings, and actions of others” (p. 226). An important implication of the distinction between people with interdependent versus independent self-construals is that the former assign greater significance to their social exchanges. As Markus and Kitayama (1991: 229) put it, “Although people everywhere must maintain some relatedness with others, an appreciation and a need for people will be more important for those with an interdependent self than for those with an independent self.” Thus, differences in the nature of the social exchange, such as the degree of trust inherent in the relationship, are more significant and therefore more likely to
have an impact on people from cultures that foster interdependent self-construals. Whereas people generally should respond more positively to social exchanges in which trust is high rather than low, this tendency should be even more pronounced among those with more interdependent self-construals. Consistent with this reasoning, people from cultures fostering interdependent self-construals should make more of a distinction in their exchanges with in-group members (in which trust is relatively high) and their exchanges with out-group members (in which trust is relatively low) than do those from cultures that foster independent self-construals (Triandis, 1990; Erez and Earley, 1993).

The primary hypothesis examined in the studies presented here derives from the arguments above. If the interaction between procedural fairness and outcome favorability stems from people’s use of procedural fairness information to make inferences about the nature of their social exchanges, and if people from cultures fostering more interdependent self-construals place more importance on the nature of their social exchanges, then the interactive relationship between procedural fairness and outcome favorability should be more pronounced among people in cultures fostering interdependent than independent self-construals. We tested this hypothesis in three studies. In all three studies we investigated participants’ reactions to an interpersonal or organizational encounter. Independent variables in studies 1 and 2 included cultures believed to differ on average in the extent to which they foster interdependent self-construals, as well as the outcome favorability and procedural fairness associated with the encounter. The dependent variable consisted of participants’ support for the decision that was reached (in Study 1) and their support for their social exchange partner (in studies 2 and 3). The primary prediction was that of a triple interaction effect: the tendency for high procedural fairness to reduce the effect of outcome favorability should be more pronounced in the culture fostering interdependent self-construals than in the culture fostering independent self-construals.

Whereas culture was treated as a proxy for self-construal in Study 1, self-construal was actually assessed in Study 2. By measuring self-construal, we were able to evaluate whether the cultures differed on this dimension in the expected direction and, even more important, whether it was differences in self-construal (rather than culture per se) that moderated the interactive relationship between procedural fairness and outcome favorability. In studies 1 and 2, participants were drawn from two cultures varying in whether they tend to elicit interdependent or independent self-construals. In contrast, participants in Study 3 were drawn from many different cultures; furthermore, their self-construal was assessed. Regardless of people’s culture, we hypothesized that those with more interdependent self-construals would be more likely to exhibit the interactive relationship between procedural fairness and outcome favorability than would those with more independent self-construals. Although all three studies examined the triple interaction between procedural fairness, outcome favorability, and self-construal, the studies varied in a number of significant respects. The research contexts differed, as did the
ways in which the independent and dependent variables were operationalized. Therefore, if similar results emerge across methodologically different studies, it will help to establish the validity and generalizability of the findings.

We had two goals in examining the moderating influence of self-construals on the interaction between procedural fairness and outcome favorability. The first was to provide further insight into why procedural fairness interacts with outcome favorability. The notion that people use procedural fairness information to make inferences about the other person’s trustworthiness implies that the interaction between procedural fairness and outcome favorability should be more pronounced under certain conditions than others. By identifying when the interaction effect is more or less likely to occur, we should be better able to explain why it occurs and thereby provide converging evidence for previously obtained findings (Brockner et al., 1997). Our second goal was to provide further linkages between two prominent literatures in organizational behavior: the influence of culture on people’s beliefs and values (e.g., Hofstede, 1980; Triandis, 1990; Markus and Kitayama, 1991; Erez and Earley, 1993) and organizational justice (e.g., Greenberg, 1996; Lind, Tyler, and Huo, 1997). Attempts to link the respective literatures on culture and justice may provide extensions to each. For example, cultural variation in the interactive relationship between procedural fairness and outcome favorability may shed light on both the psychological differences between people from various cultures and basic theoretical processes of organizational justice.

STUDY 1

Participants. Participants consisted of 89 managers who were enrolled in an executive Master’s of Business Administration (MBA) program in Taiwan (N = 60) and Canada (N = 29). Previous research has suggested that people are more likely to have more interdependent self-construals in Taiwan and more independent self-construals in Canada (e.g., Hofstede, 1980). Their average age was 32 years, and 78 percent were male. Their mean tenure as manager in their company was 7.01 years. Participants from the two cultures did not differ from each other in average age, gender composition, and tenure in the organization; t < 1 in each instance.

Procedure. Participants completed the study during a regularly scheduled class meeting. All participants read a vignette in which they were asked to imagine that they were the target person in a job application scenario. The vignette was taken verbatim from one used in previous research (van den Bos, Vermunt, and Wilke, 1997). They were told that, as part of the application process, the target person had completed a series of nine selection tests measuring job-relevant attributes such as intelligence, personality, and technical skills. Manipulations of outcome favorability and procedural fairness were included in the vignette. Participants were randomly assigned to receive different versions of the vignette. All materials were written in English, which was the language being used in the classroom in both cultures. After reading the vignette, participants completed a short questionnaire.
that included manipulation checks and the primary dependent variable.

Outcome favorability. In the high outcome-favorability condition, participants were told that the target person was offered the job. In the low outcome-favorability condition, participants were told that the target person was not offered the job.

Procedural fairness. In the high procedural-fairness condition, participants were told that the decision of whether to offer the job to the target person was based on the target person’s performance on all nine tests. In the low procedural-fairness condition, participants were told that the decision of whether to offer the job to the target person was based on the target person’s performance on only one of the nine tests. Thus, they were led to believe that most of the information pertinent to the hiring decision was being ignored.

Manipulation checks. The effectiveness of the outcome favorability manipulation was assessed with the following item: “How favorable was the outcome of the selection decision?” A 5-point response scale was used, with endpoints labeled “not favorable” (1) and “very favorable” (5). The procedural fairness manipulation check read as follows: “I believe that the selection procedure was fair,” with endpoints of the 5-point scale being “strongly disagree” (1) and “strongly agree” (5).

Dependent variable. Participants’ willingness to protest the selection decision was based on the average of their responses to the following questions: “If this were me I would criticize the way the hiring process took place,” and “I would be willing to protest against this situation.” Responses to both scales could range from “strongly disagree” (1) to “strongly agree” (5). The coefficient alpha was .71.

Results
Participants’ responses to the manipulation checks and the dependent variable were analyzed with three-factor (procedural fairness x culture x outcome favorability) analyses of variance (ANOVA).

Manipulation checks. Analyses revealed highly significant main effects of the manipulated variable on the corresponding manipulation check item. Participants reported that outcome favorability was greater in the high outcome-favorability condition than in the low outcome-favorability condition (means = 3.45 vs. 2.76, respectively; $F(1, 81) = 11.82, p < .001$). Moreover, they reported that procedural fairness was greater in the high procedural-fairness condition than in the low procedural-fairness condition (means = 3.24 vs. 2.39, respectively; $F(1, 81) = 11.26, p < .001$).

A number of smaller but significant effects (all $p$ values < .05) emerged on the manipulation check measure of outcome favorability, including (1) the main effect of procedural fairness, such that outcome favorability was perceived to be greater in the high procedural-fairness condition than in the low procedural-fairness condition, (2) the interaction between procedural fairness and outcome favorability, which showed
that the outcome favorability manipulation had less of an effect on participants' judgments of outcome favorability in the high procedural-fairness condition than in the low procedural-fairness condition, and (3) the interaction between outcome favorability and culture, which showed that the outcome manipulation had more of an effect on the judgments of participants from Canada than Taiwan. No other effects were significant in the analysis of the procedural fairness manipulation check.

**Test of hypothesis.** The analysis of participants' desire to protest the hiring decision revealed a significant main effect of outcome favorability, with participants expressing more of a desire to protest the decision in the low outcome-favorability condition than in the high outcome-favorability condition; \( F(1, 81) = 7.51, p < .01. \) The only other effect to achieve significance was the triple interaction; \( F(1, 81) = 7.45, p < .01. \) As can be seen in table 1, the triple interaction took the predicted form. Among participants in the high procedural-fairness condition, outcome favorability had much less of an effect on participants' desire to protest the hiring decision among those from Taiwan (who presumably had an interdependent self-construal) than Canada (who presumably had more of an independent self-construal). A simple interaction effect analysis revealed that among participants in the high procedural-fairness condition the two-way interaction between outcome favorability and culture was significant, \( F(1, 81) = 6.35, p < .05. \)

A different pattern emerged among participants in the low procedural-fairness condition, in which the effect of outcome favorability on willingness to protest the hiring decision did not differ between Taiwan and Canada. The simple interaction between outcome favorability and culture was not significant; \( F(1, 81) = 1.79, p > .15. \)

**Subsidiary analysis.** We examined further the result from the outcome favorability manipulation check that the outcome favorability manipulation had more of an impact on participants from Canada than those from Taiwan. To evaluate whether cultural differences in participants' experience of the outcome favorability manipulation accounted for the triple

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 1</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Mean Desire to Protest Hiring Decision as a Function of Procedural Fairness, Culture, and Outcome Favorability, Study 1</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Procedural fairness</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Scores could range from 1 to 5, with higher scores reflecting more negative reactions (more of a desire to protest the hiring decision).*

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interaction on the primary dependent variable, we conducted a three-factor analysis of covariance of participants’ desire to protest the selection decision, with participants’ ratings on the outcome favorability manipulation check serving as the covariate. The triple interaction was virtually the same in the covariance analysis, $F(1, 80) = 7.37, p < .01$, suggesting that it was not mediated by cultural differences in participants’ experience of the outcome favorability manipulation.

STUDY 2

While the results of Study 1 supported the predictions, the study had several shortcomings. First, participants were asked to indicate how they would have responded to a hypothetical situation, raising questions about the generalizability of the triple interaction effect to a setting in which participants responded to an actual event. To address this concern, we measured participants’ reactions in Study 2 to an actual interpersonal encounter. Second, participants’ self-construal was not assessed in Study 1. Although Hofstede (1980) and Markus and Kitayama (1991) suggested that the Asian culture tends to foster more interdependent self-construals than the North American culture, which promotes more independent self-construals, it is not certain whether participants’ self-construals were in accordance with these general tendencies and whether self-construal actually moderated the interactive relationship between procedural fairness and outcome favorability in Study 1. A key purpose of Study 2 was to address these concerns.

Participants in Study 2 also were drawn from two cultures whose members were expected to have different self-construals: the People’s Republic of China (PRC), which tends to foster more interdependent self-construals, and the United States (U.S.), in which people’s self-construals generally are more independent. They took part in a dyadic negotiation task in which the other party was another person from the same culture. Independent variables included culture, the perceived favorability of the outcome of the negotiation, and procedural fairness. The dependent variable was participants’ desire to engage in future negotiations with the other person. We tested the following hypothesis:

Hypothesis 1: The tendency for high procedural fairness to reduce the relationship between outcome favorability and participants’ desire to engage in future negotiations with the other party should be more pronounced in the PRC than in the U.S.

Participants in Study 2 also completed a self-report measure of self-construal. If it is self-construal, rather than culture per se, that actually moderates the interactive relationship between procedural fairness and outcome favorability, then across cultures, those with more of an interdependent self-construal orientation should be more likely to exhibit the interactive relationship between procedural fairness and outcome favorability. We used these data to test the following hypothesis:

Hypothesis 2: The tendency for high procedural fairness to reduce the influence of outcome favorability should be more pronounced among those with more interdependent self-construals.

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Thus far, we have predicted two triple interaction effects in Study 2: (1) procedural fairness × culture × outcome favorability, and (2) procedural fairness × self-construal × outcome favorability. To examine further the notion that it is not culture per se but, rather, people’s self-construal that interacts with outcome favorability and procedural fairness to influence their desire to do business in the future with their negotiating partner, we also performed a mediation analysis (Baron and Kenny, 1986), testing the following:

Hypothesis 3: The triple interaction between procedural fairness, culture, and outcome favorability is attributable to (or mediated by) the triple interaction between procedural fairness, self-construal, and outcome favorability.

Method

The PRC sample consisted of 96 graduate students in the Economics Department at Peking University; the U.S. sample was made up of 74 MBA students at Columbia University. The PRC sample received a small monetary payment for their participation, while the U.S. sample participated as part of a course in which they were enrolled.

All participants first completed a self-perception questionnaire, which included the items measuring self-construal. Subsequently, they were randomly assigned to play the role of either the executive vice president of an outdoor sports manufacturer (seller) or the executive vice president of a company that provides protective fire-fighting clothing to fire departments (buyer) in a dyadic negotiation that involved a technology transfer. The negotiation task, called Z-Tek, was adapted from a negotiation simulation described by Bazerman and Neale (1992: 77–88). A list of nine potential settlement options were listed on the payoff tables for both sides. The simulation was pretested with 10 business school students in both cultures to ensure the clarity of the description and the appropriateness of the negotiation setting.

Participants were given 30 minutes to prepare for their roles and 40 minutes in which to negotiate face to face. Upon completion of the negotiation, they proceeded to two separate rooms to complete the post-negotiation questionnaire, which contained the independent variable measures of outcome favorability, procedural fairness, and the dependent measure of participants’ desire to engage in future business dealings with the person with whom they had negotiated.

Self-construal. The extent to which people see themselves as connected with or distinct from others was assessed with five items from several existing scales (e.g., Singelis et al., 1995). Sample items included “My personal identity independent of others is very important to me,” and “I enjoy being unique and different from others in many ways.” Responses were made along 7-point scales, with endpoints labeled “strongly disagree” (1) and “strongly agree” (7). Higher scores reflected more of an independent and/or less of an interdependent self-construal. The coefficient alpha was .75; participants’ responses were averaged into an index.
Outcome favorability. This measure consisted of four items. Two sample items were "Is the negotiation outcome worse or better than you expected?" to which responses could range from "much worse than expected" (1) to "much better than expected" (7), and "How satisfied are you with your individual profit level?" to which responses could range from "very dissatisfied" (1) to "very satisfied" (7). The coefficient alpha was .79; participants' responses were averaged into an index.

Procedural fairness. Eight items tapping various aspects of procedural fairness were included. The items referred to the extent to which people felt that they had voice in the negotiation process as well as their perceptions of the interpersonal behavior exhibited by the other party. An example of the former was "How much did you get to express your opinions during the negotiation process?" Respondents answered on a 7-point scale, with endpoints of "not at all" (1) and "very much" (7). An example of the latter was "In your opinion, how fairly did the other party treat you?" Responses on the 7-point rating scale could range from "extremely unfairly" (1) to "extremely fairly" (7). The coefficient alpha was .78; participants' responses were averaged into an index.

Dependent variable: Desire for future business dealings. The desire to engage in future business dealings with their negotiating partner was assessed with participants' responses to the following item: "How much do you want to continue any future business dealings with the same party?" Endpoints on the 7-point rating scale were "not at all" (1) and "very much" (7).

All of the materials were administered in Chinese to the PRC participants. In developing the Chinese versions of the materials, we employed the back-translation procedure (Brislin, 1980).

Results

Table 2 presents the means for all variables within each culture; it also contains the results of t-tests that compared the between-culture differences in means. Consistent with expectations, participants in the U.S. had more of an independent (and/or less of an interdependent) self-construal than participants in the PRC (p < .001). The two samples did not differ, however, on the other measures in table 2.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>U.S. Sample Mean</th>
<th>PRC Sample Mean</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Self-construal</td>
<td>5.49</td>
<td>4.69</td>
<td>5.88</td>
<td>.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outcome favorability</td>
<td>4.95</td>
<td>4.99</td>
<td>0.27</td>
<td>n.s.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Procedural fairness</td>
<td>5.23</td>
<td>5.06</td>
<td>1.58</td>
<td>n.s.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Desire for future business dealings</td>
<td>5.30</td>
<td>5.43</td>
<td>0.98</td>
<td>n.s.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Higher scores reflect more of an independent self-construal and higher levels of the other variables mentioned.

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Procedural fairness × Culture × Outcome favorability. We conducted a hierarchical multiple regression to test hypothesis 1. In the first step, we simultaneously entered the main effects of procedural fairness, culture, and outcome favorability. In the second step, we simultaneously added all two-way interaction effects, and, in the third step, we added the triple interaction effect. As shown in table 3, a number of lower-order main and interaction effects emerged. Participants expressed more of a desire for future business dealings with their negotiation partner when procedural fairness was relatively high and when outcome favorability was relatively high. Also, the significant two-way interaction between procedural fairness and outcome favorability conceptually replicated the results of previous studies (Brockner and Wiesenfeld, 1996): higher procedural fairness reduced the relationship between outcome favorability and desire for future business dealings with the negotiation partner.

Of greatest importance, the triple interaction also was significant, $p < .05$. To illustrate the nature of the interaction, we classified participants as relatively high or low in procedural fairness and outcome favorability. We then computed the mean level of desire for future business dealings with each of the eight groups emanating from the $2 \times 2 \times 2$ (procedural fairness × culture × outcome favorability) classification scheme. As can be seen in table 4, the nature of the triple interaction supported hypothesis 1: the tendency for high procedural fairness to reduce the positive relationship between outcome favorability and desire for future business dealings with one’s negotiation partner was stronger in the PRC than in the U.S.

To further elaborate the nature of the triple interaction effect, we conducted hierarchical multiple regressions within each of the high procedural-fairness and low procedural-fairness subgroups. The interaction between outcome favorability and culture was significant when procedural fairness was high;

| Table 3 |
|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| Hierarchical Multiple Regression Results Involving Culture, Study 2 |
| Independent variable | Desire for future business negotiations |
|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|
|                  | Beta | $F$ | $p$ |
| Step 1 |
| Procedural fairness | 0.54 | 17.65 | .001 |
| Culture | 0.25 | 3.04 | .10 |
| Outcome favorability | 0.32 | 14.64 | .001 |
| Overall $F(3, 166) = 21.92$, $p < .001$; total $R^2 = .284$ |
| Step 2 (terms added to Step 1) |
| Procedural fairness × culture | −0.41 | 2.67 | n.s. |
| Procedural fairness × Outcome favorability | 0.29 | 10.73 | .001 |
| Culture × Outcome favorability | −0.32 | 2.91 | .10 |
| Overall $F(6, 163) = 15.51$, $p < .001$; total $R^2 = .363$; significance level for the change in $R^2$ from Step 1 to Step 2: $F(3, 163) = 6.80$, $p < .01$ |
| Step 3 (term added to Step 2) |
| Procedural fairness × Culture × Outcome favorability | 0.18 | 4.17 | .05 |
| Overall $F(6, 162) = 14.18$, $p < .001$; total $R^2 = .379$; significance level for the change in $R^2$ from Step 2 to Step 3: $F(1, 162) = 4.17$, $p < .05$ |

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Table 4

Mean Desire for Future Business Dealings with Negotiation Partner as a Function of Procedural Fairness, Culture, and Outcome Favorability, Study 2*

| Procedural fairness | Culture          | Outcome favorability | High | Low |
|---------------------|------------------|----------------------|------|-----|------|
| High                | U.S. (Independent)|                      | 5.50 |     | 6.31 |
|                     | PRC (Interdependent) |                    | 6.11 |     | 5.73 |
| Low                 | U.S. (Independent)|                      | 4.78 |     | 5.25 |
|                     | PRC (Interdependent) |                  | 5.19 |     | 5.85 |

*Scores could range from 1 to 7, with higher scores reflecting more of a desire for future business dealings.

\[ F(1, 60) = 6.53, \ p < .05. \] In the low procedural-fairness group, however, the interaction between outcome favorability and culture was trivial, \( F < 1 \).

**Procedural fairness \times Self-construal \times Outcome favorability.** Hypothesis 2 posited that it was not culture per se but, rather, self-construal that influenced the tendency for high procedural fairness to minimize the impact of outcome favorability on participants' desire for future business dealings with their partner. This hypothesis was tested by examining the triple interaction when people were sorted on the basis of self-construal rather than culture. We conducted the same hierarchical regression procedure we used to test hypothesis 1, substituting self-construal for culture. Of greatest relevance, the triple interaction proved to be significant; \( F(1, 162) = 6.02, \ p < .05. \) To illustrate the nature of the triple interaction, we split participants into high and low groups on each of the three independent variables and then computed the mean level of desire for future business dealings exhibited by each of the eight groups. Table 5 shows that the pattern of means was consistent with hypothesis 2. The tendency for high procedural fairness to reduce the relationship between outcome favorability and desire for future business dealings was stronger among people with more of an interdependent self-construal: those with more of an independent self-construal responded much like those in the U.S. did, while those with more of an interdependent self-construal responded similarly to those in the PRC. By comparing the top half of table 4 with the top half of table 5, and the bottom half of table 4 with the bottom half of table 5, one can see that similar results emerged regardless of whether participants were classified on the basis of culture or self-construal.

We also conducted hierarchical multiple regressions within each of the high procedural-fairness and low procedural-fairness subgroups. Further supporting hypothesis 2, the interaction between outcome favorability and self-construal was significant when procedural fairness was high, \( F(1, 60) = 5.20, \ p < .05, \) but not when it was low, \( F(1, 102) = 1.71. \)
Table 5

Mean Desire for Future Business Dealings with Negotiation Partner as a Function of Procedural Fairness, Self-construal, and Outcome Favorability, Study 2*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Procedural fairness</th>
<th>Self-construal</th>
<th>Low</th>
<th>High</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>High</td>
<td>Independent</td>
<td>5.30</td>
<td>6.20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Interdependent</td>
<td>5.94</td>
<td>5.82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Independent</td>
<td>4.81</td>
<td>5.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Interdependent</td>
<td>4.89</td>
<td>5.67</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Scores could range from 1 to 7, with higher scores reflecting more of a desire for future business dealings.

Test of mediation. The preceding analyses showed that the triple interactions between outcome favorability, procedural fairness, and culture and between outcome favorability, procedural fairness, and self-construal were significant when evaluated in separate regression analyses. A mediational analysis was conducted in which both triple interaction effects were entered in the same regression equation. If it is self-construal rather than culture per se that is interacting with outcome favorability and procedural fairness, then the triple interaction involving culture should become less significant. Even more convincing mediation evidence would emerge if the triple interaction involving self-construal remained significant while the triple interaction involving culture became less significant (Baron and Kenny, 1986).

Four independent variables were entered simultaneously in a hierarchical multiple regression: procedural fairness, outcome favorability, culture, and self-construal. All two-way interactions were entered on the second step. Finally, we entered all triple interactions on the third step. Consistent with hypothesis 3, the triple interaction between procedural fairness, culture, and outcome favorability was reduced to non-significance: $F(1, 155) = 1.47, p > .20$. Furthermore, the triple interaction between procedural fairness, self-construal, and outcome favorability remained significant: $F(1, 155) = 4.55, p < .05$.

STUDY 3

Unlike in studies 1 and 2, in which participants came from two cultures presumed to foster different self-construals, participants in Study 3 came from many different cultural backgrounds. The results of Study 2 suggest that it is not culture per se but, rather, differences in self-construal that moderate the interactive relationship between procedural fairness and outcome favorability. Thus, participants in Study 3 were classified not on the basis of their cultural background but, rather, on the basis of their self-construal.

Method

The participants were 86 MBA students at New York University who came from more than 20 different cultural backgrounds. All of them took part in the study as part of an in-class exercise in a course on negotiations. The procedure was very similar to the one used in Study 2, with two excep-
tions. First, the negotiation task differed. Entitled "The Acquisition of Rio Copa Foods" (Bontempo, 1994), it involved a cross-national acquisition negotiation between an American consumer foods company and a Latin American foods company. Participants were randomly assigned to play the role of either the vice president of the American company (buyer) or the president and majority stockholder of the Latin American company (seller), resulting in 43 dyads.

Second, the dependent measure in Study 3 consisted of three items: (a) "How much are you willing to introduce this negotiating person to your future company as a client?" (b) "How much do you want to continue any future business dealings with the same party?" and (c) "How much are you willing to negotiate (or partner) with the same negotiating person in future in-class negotiation simulations?" Responses were recorded on 7-point rating scales, with endpoints labeled "not at all" (1) and "very much" (7). Participants' responses to the three items were averaged into an index; the coefficient alpha was .84.

The measures of outcome favorability, procedural fairness, and self-construal were identical to the ones used in Study 2. Coefficient alphas were .81, .81, and .65, respectively.

Results

A hierarchical multiple regression was conducted. In the first step, we entered simultaneously the main effects of procedural fairness, self-construal, and outcome favorability. In the second step, we added all two-way interaction effects simultaneously, and in the third step, we added the triple interaction. Table 6 shows that the main effects of outcome favorability and procedural fairness were significant, as was the interaction between the two. The form of these main and interaction effects was identical to those reported in Study 2.

Table 6

Hierarchical Multiple Regression Results (Study 3)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Independent variable</th>
<th>Desire for future business negotiations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Beta</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Step 1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Procedural fairness</td>
<td>0.62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-construal</td>
<td>-0.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outcome favorability</td>
<td>0.37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall R² = .557</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Step 2 (terms added to Step 1)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Procedural fairness × Self-construal</td>
<td>-0.28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Procedural fairness × Outcome favorability</td>
<td>-0.35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-construal × Outcome favorability</td>
<td>0.07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall R² = .631</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Step 3 (term added to Step 2)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Procedural fairness × Self-construal × Outcome favorability</td>
<td>0.48</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Overall R² from Step 1 to Step 2: R² = .530, p < .01
Overall R² from Step 2 to Step 3: R² = .692, significance level for the change in R² from Step 2 to Step 3: F(1, 78) = 15.44, p < .001

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Table 7
Mean Desire to Engage in Future Business Negotiations as a Function of Procedural Fairness, Self-construal, and Outcome Favorability, Study 3*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Procedural fairness</th>
<th>Self-construal</th>
<th>Low</th>
<th>High</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>High</td>
<td>Independent</td>
<td>5.62</td>
<td>6.51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Interdependent</td>
<td>6.06</td>
<td>6.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Independent</td>
<td>4.82</td>
<td>5.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Interdependent</td>
<td>4.17</td>
<td>5.60</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Scores could range from 1 to 7, with higher scores reflecting more of a desire to engage in future business negotiations.

Of greater importance, the triple interaction also was significant; $F(1, 78) = 15.44, p < .01$. To illustrate the nature of the interaction, we performed splits on all three independent variables and then computed the means for the eight groups resulting from the $2 \times 2 \times 2$ classification scheme. As shown in table 7, the nature of the interaction confirmed the prediction. Among participants who perceived procedural fairness to be high, the relationship between outcome favorability and desire for future business negotiations was less pronounced among those with more of an interdependent self-construal. In fact, the results of a hierarchical multiple regression analysis conducted on the subgroup that perceived procedural fairness to be relatively high revealed that the two-way interaction between outcome favorability and self-construal was significant, $F(1, 46) = 4.21, p < .05$. In contrast, among those who perceived procedural fairness to be relatively low, the relationship between outcome favorability and desire for future business negotiations was positive regardless of level of self-construal. The latter finding is reinforced by the results of a hierarchical multiple regression conducted on the subgroup that perceived procedural fairness to be relatively low, in which the interaction between outcome favorability and self-construal was not significant; $F < 1$.

GENERAL DISCUSSION

Taken together, the results of all three studies suggest that the previously established interactive relationship between procedural fairness and outcome favorability is more pronounced among people with more of an interdependent than independent self-construal. The consistency in results is all the more compelling in light of the numerous operational differences between studies, which included (1) the countries examined in studies 1 and 2, (2) the nature of the social exchange context, (3) whether outcome favorability and procedural fairness were manipulated or measured, and (4) the specific nature of the dependent variables. Consistent results emerged across studies in spite of these differences, which attests to the validity and generalizability of the findings.

Theoretical Implications

Organizational justice. Many studies have shown that procedural fairness and outcome favorability interact to influence people's behaviors and beliefs (summarized in Brockner and

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Wiesenfeld, 1996). While the interaction effect is quite robust, the studies presented here are the first to examine cross-cultural differences in the magnitude of the interaction between procedural fairness and outcome favorability. Moreover, these studies not only document but also help to explain differences between cultures in the magnitude of the interactive relationship between procedural fairness and outcome favorability. Based on the notion that people use procedural fairness information to help them define the nature of their social exchanges, we suggested that people for whom social exchanges are more important will be more likely to exhibit the interactive relationship between procedural fairness and outcome favorability. Given that the importance of social exchanges differs between cultures (reflected in Markus and Kitayama's 1991 construct of self-construal), we predicted and found that individuals from cultures that emphasize people's connectedness to others would be more likely to exhibit the interactive relationship between procedural fairness and outcome favorability than their counterparts from cultures emphasizing people's independence from one another.

Our findings also help to elucidate the process by which procedural fairness and outcome favorability interact. Lind (1994) suggested that people use procedural fairness information to make inferences about the nature of their social exchanges. More specifically, greater procedural fairness leads people to see their social exchange partner as more trustworthy (Kovovský and Pugh, 1994; Brockner et al., 1997). As a result, outcome favorability will be less influential when procedural fairness is relatively high. The fact that self-construal moderated the interactive relationship between procedural fairness and outcome favorability provides converging evidence that the interaction is attributable to the influence of procedural fairness on trust (Brockner et al., 1997).

The previously established two-way interaction between procedural fairness and outcome favorability (e.g., Folger, Rosenfield, and Robinson, 1983) was replicated to some extent in our research. For example, in studies 2 and 3 the tendency for high procedural fairness to reduce the influence of outcome favorability emerged on the measure of participants' desire for future business dealings with their negotiation partner (see tables 3 and 6, step 2). While the two-way interaction between procedural fairness and outcome favorability did not emerge in Study 1 on the measure of desire to protest the hiring decision, it did appear in its typical form on the outcome favorability manipulation check.

In other ways, however, our studies did not yield the predicted two-way interaction between procedural fairness and outcome favorability. In fact, these failures to replicate provide suggestive evidence on the conditions under which the interaction will or will not appear. From tables 1, 4, 5, and 7 it can be seen that the participants with more independent self-construals did not exhibit the two-way interaction between procedural fairness and outcome favorability. In their review of studies examining the interaction between procedural fairness and outcome favorability, Brockner and Wiesenfeld (1996) reported five studies in which the interaction effect
did not appear. Perhaps previous failures to obtain the interaction effect also were due to the participants having adopted strong independent self-construals, either because of dispositional factors, as in the present studies, or situational factors (e.g., Trafimow, Triandis, and Goto, 1991).

Cross-cultural theory and research. This paper has two important implications for cross-cultural theory and research. First, the findings extend the scope of Markus and Kitayama’s (1991) construct of self-construal. Although Markus and Kitayama analyzed how cultural differences in self-construal influence a variety of people’s thoughts, feelings, and behaviors, they did not discuss linkages between self-construal and procedural justice. Our findings show that the scope of self-construal extends to people’s responsivity to the interaction between procedural fairness and outcome favorability. Second, and more generally, Study 2 illustrates a research strategy that may be used to explain differences between cultures in employees’ attitudes and behaviors. In many studies it is assumed that employees from different cultures vary on some psychological dimension, which, in turn, accounts for between-culture differences in their attitudes or behaviors. In most instances, however, this assumption is not evaluated; instead, culture is simply treated as a proxy for the underlying psychological variable. Study 1 is a case in point. Although participants in Study 1 came from cultures presumed to foster different self-construals, it was not determined if the participants from Taiwan actually had more interdependent self-construals than those from Canada. Study 2, in contrast, did include a measure of self-construal. Not only did the cultures differ in self-construal in the expected direction (see Table 2), but, also, self-construal, rather than culture per se, interacted with outcome favorability and procedural fairness to influence participants’ desire for future dealings with their negotiation partner. If we had not measured self-construal in Study 2, it would have been far less clear why culture had a moderating influence on the interactive relationship between outcome favorability and procedural fairness. In short, to heighten the theoretical rigor of research on cross-cultural comparisons, future investigators should include operationalizations of the psychological variables hypothesized to account for cultural differences in attitudes and behaviors (Earley, 1989; Leung and Bond, 1989).

Limitations and Suggestions for Future Research

Although our studies yielded highly consistent findings with important implications, they do have a number of methodological and conceptual shortcomings. In calling attention to these shortcomings, we simultaneously suggest avenues for future research.

Methodological concerns. The design of studies 2 and 3 was correlational, in that all of the independent variables were measured. As a result, it is difficult to assess the causal impact of the independent variables on the dependent variables. Other findings, however, do provide some evidence that the independent variables were causally related to the dependent variables. For instance, within each of the cultures in Study 1 the independent variables of outcome favorability
and procedural fairness were experimentally manipulated, thereby ensuring a high degree of internal validity. Thus, the emergence of the key triple interaction effect was not contingent on whether the independent variables were measured or manipulated.

Another methodological shortcoming stems from the fact that the dependent variable in Study 2 consisted of a single-item measure of unknown reliability. While the presence of single-item measures with unknown reliability poses a threat in Study 2, the fact that conceptually analogous triple interaction effects emerged across all three studies increases the validity of the findings. For example, whereas Study 2 may be compromised to some extent by the use of a single-item dependent variable, the results of Study 3 suggest that the findings from Study 2 were not an artifact of the dependent variable consisting of a single item.

**Conceptual concerns.** The conceptualization underlying the studies presented here was based on prior theory and research on the two-way interaction between procedural fairness and outcome favorability suggesting that (a) people use procedural fairness information to make inferences about the nature of their social exchanges (e.g., Lind, 1994; Lind, Tyler, and Huo, 1997), in particular how much to trust the other party, and (b) trust, rather than procedural fairness per se, interacts with outcome favorability to influence people’s reactions to the exchange relationship (Brockner et al., 1997), such that outcome favorability is less influential when trust is high.

One factor that may account for the interaction between trust and outcome favorability is the time frame through which people view their social exchanges. Relative to when trust is low, social exchanges characterized by high levels of trust lead people to adopt a longer-term focus. As a result, people in high-trust social exchanges will assign less importance to, and hence be less influenced by, their short-term or immediate outcomes. In suggesting that procedural fairness influences people’s trust in their exchange partner, which in turn affects the time frame through which people perceive the social exchange, we do not mean to imply that procedural fairness is the only factor to affect people’s time frame in exchange relationships. Certain interactions between people are inherently one-time encounters (e.g., the purchase and sale of a home), whereas others take place in the context of anticipated future interaction (e.g., most relationships between managers and their direct reports). Future research could evaluate whether other factors besides procedural fairness that influence people’s time frame also interact with outcome favorability to influence people’s reactions to their exchange relationships. For example, people may be relatively unaffected by their current outcomes when they believe, as a result of anticipated future interaction, that they will receive their share of desired outcomes over time (Heide and Miner, 1992; Mannix, 1994).

On the surface, the present studies appear to be one-shot encounters, although the dependent variables that supported the predicted triple interaction induced participants to think
about the longer term. In studies 2 and 3, for instance, the dependent measure required participants to indicate the extent to which they would want to have future business dealings with their negotiation partner. In Study 1 the dependent variable consisted of having participants indicate the extent to which they would have protested the hiring decision if they had been the focal person in the scenario. Thus, as in studies 2 and 3, the dependent measure in Study 1 cast the shadow of the future in that it required people to indicate how they would have responded if the exchange were to continue. An implication of this reasoning (which also should be tested in future research) is that the triple interaction we found may be especially likely to emerge on dependent variables or in the context of relationships in which future interaction is anticipated.

The predicted triple interaction also was based on the assertion that procedural fairness influences trust, rather than the other way around. This is not to say that we believe the relationship between procedural fairness and trust to be unidirectional. In fact, Lind and Tyler (1988) have suggested that trust is an important determinant of procedural fairness. In all likelihood, the causal arrow in the relationship between procedural fairness and trust runs in both directions. The two-way interaction between procedural fairness and outcome favorability, however, is based on empirical evidence showing that procedural fairness influences trust (Konovsky and Pugh, 1994) and that it is trust, rather than procedural fairness per se, that interacts with outcome favorability to influence employees' work attitudes and behaviors (Brockner et al., 1997).

Future research also needs to evaluate the relationship between the two forms of self-construal, as well as their joint and possibly interactive effects with other variables. Singelis (1994) has suggested that independent and interdependent self-construals represent two distinct dimensions, rather than opposite ends of a single continuum. The studies presented here do not clarify whether the two forms of self-construal represent one dimension or two, nor were they intended to. If future research supports Singelis' contention that the two constructs are orthogonal, it just may be that the interaction between procedural fairness and outcome favorability will be particularly strong among people who are both high in interdependent self-construal and low in independent self-construal.

Finally, another important avenue for future research is to evaluate whether the tendency for self-construal to moderate the interactive relationship between procedural fairness and outcome favorability is itself moderated by other factors, such as the clarity of the relationship between the focal individuals and their exchange partners. Our studies examined people's reactions to their initial encounters with their exchange partners. Thus, it was appropriate for participants to use procedural fairness information to help them define the nature of the relationship. In well-defined relationships, however, it may be less necessary for them to do so (e.g., Farh, Earley, and Lin, 1997). Moreover, people can have well-defined relationships with others who are deemed to be
members of their in-group as well as with members of their out-groups, so that the extent to which the relationship is clear or well defined is conceptually distinct from the actual nature of the relationship. Thus, the findings of these studies, which are predicated on people using procedural fairness information to make inferences about the nature of their social exchanges, may be less apt to occur when people’s relationships with their exchange partners already have been well articulated (e.g., as clearly being an in-group relationship or an out-group relationship). In earlier stages of relationship development, however, as in our studies, in which people may be trying to determine whether the other party is a potential in-group member or a potential out-group member, there may be a more consistent tendency for self-construal to moderate the interactive relationship between procedural fairness and outcome favorability. As the present findings suggest, because it is more important to people with interdependent self-construals to make inferences about the nature of their social exchanges, they will be more likely to exhibit the interactive relationship between procedural fairness and outcome favorability. Other studies, based on more well-defined relationships, may produce effects other than those found here, but that might tell us yet more about how the effects of what one does depends on how one does it.

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Culture and Fairness


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