

SERVING THE CUSTOMERS, THE ORGANIZATION, OR BOTH? EXPLORING SERVICE PROVIDERS'
IDENTIFICATION WITH CUSTOMERS IN THE CONTEXT OF AN ORGANIZATION'S CUSTOMER-
DIRECTED FAIRNESS

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DEDICATION

For my parents, who taught me the importance of learning,
and the greater importance of choosing the right.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT.....	8
INTRODUCTION.....	9
BACKGROUND.....	12
I. Organizational fairness	12
II. Organizational Identification	15
A. Customer identification.....	18
HYPOTHESES	21
I. Effects of Fairness on Organizational and Customer Identification	21
II. Identification as a Mediator between Fairness and Service Delivery	25
III. Effects of Customer Identification and Organizational Identification on Service Delivery ..	28
METHOD.....	32
STUDY 1.....	33
I. Participants and Design	33
II. Procedure.....	33
III. Manipulations.....	34
A. Customer fairness	35
B. Employee fairness	35
IV. Attitudinal Measures	36
A. Manipulation checks	36
B. Organizational identification.....	36
C. Customer identification.....	37

TABLE OF CONTENTS – *Continued*

V. Behavioral Measures	37
A. Organizational citizenship behavior (OCB).....	37
VI. Customer Service Behaviors	38
A. Politeness	38
B. Task extensiveness	38
C. Pro-customer rule breaking.....	38
RESULTS	40
I. Hypotheses Testing.....	40
DISCUSSION.....	44
STUDY 2.....	49
I. Participants and Design	49
II. Procedure and Manipulations	49
A. Customer fairness	50
B. Group characteristics	50
III. Measures	51
A. Manipulation checks	51
B. Dependent measures	51
RESULTS	53
A. Hypotheses Testing	53
GENERAL DISCUSSION.....	57
A. Organizational Fairness and Identification.....	57

TABLE OF CONTENTS – *Continued*

B. Customer Fairness and Pro-Customer Rule Breaking.....	59
C. Practical Implications.....	60
CONCLUSION.....	62
APPENDIX A: TABLES.....	63
APPENDIX B: FIGURES.....	70
APPENDIX C: SCALES AND MEASURES.....	74
APPENDIX D: SUBJECT DISCLOSURE FORM.....	76
REFERENCES.....	77

ABSTRACT

This dissertation investigates how customer service providers identify psychologically with their customers, as well as how this identification is influenced by an organization's treatment of customers, and how customer identification ultimately affects service performance. Based on predictions made from relational models of fairness and social identity theory, I hypothesize that an employee's perceptions of organizational fairness antecede identity cognitions related to the organization and its customers, and that these identity variables then influence service behaviors. These predictions are tested in two lab studies utilizing a simulated electronic help desk experiment. Results show that an organization's customer-directed fairness affects an employee's customer identification, while employee-directed fairness affects organizational identification. Results also show that customer identification and organizational identification interact to affect the level of politeness demonstrated by service providers, and that customer-directed fairness influences pro-customer rule breaking independently of identity variables. Theoretical and practical implications are discussed.

INTRODUCTION

Research on customer service continues to demonstrate how the quality of employee-customer interactions affects not only customer satisfaction (Homburg & Fürst, 2005; Liao & Chuang, 2007; Netemeyer & Maxham, 2007), but also employee satisfaction and well-being (Grandey, Kern, & Frone, 2007; Rupp & Spencer, 2006). This mutually shared influence is perhaps not surprising given the service employee's unique role as a boundary spanning agent (Aldrich, 1971; Aldrich & Herker, 1977) who must act as a "broker" between the organization and its external constituents (Troyer, Mueller, & Osinsky, 2000). By virtue of their positions, service employees must reconcile divergent interests between the organization and its customers; employees are therefore beholden to both groups, rather than having sole accountability to the organization. Prior research, however, has traditionally focused more attention on how employees experience their relationship to the organization than their relationship to the customers.

This dissertation explores how some theories of organizational psychology that developed around the employee-organization relationship can also be applied to the employee-customer relationship. Specifically, I rely on two theoretical approaches that each describe the nature of an employee's relationship to the organization, but whose literatures have remained largely distinct: organizational justice and organizational identity. Justice and identity constructs are both conceptualized as socio-cognitive judgments made by an employee regarding their relationship to the organization. Their distinctness, however, originates from their respective conceptual foundations. Organizational justice is grounded in a dyadic social exchange framework, where the employee seeks to reciprocate treatment received by a separate entity—

the organization (Cropanzano, Rupp, Mohler, & Schminke, 2001). Alternatively, organizational identity is based on a psychological sense of oneness espoused by the employee toward the organization. Organizational identity transcends individual identity, thereby blurring the separation between the employee and the organization (Edwards, 2005).

In this dissertation, I examine how an organization's treatment of customers influences how service employees manage a distinct social identity with the customers, and how this identity influences discretionary customer service behaviors. I define *customer-directed fairness* as an employee's fairness evaluation of the organization's treatment of customers. This construct is rooted in the perceptions of the employee and is utilized in this research as an event judgment—meaning the evaluation is made regarding a specific action of the organization. For purposes of methodological and theoretical comparison, I examine the effects of customer-directed fairness alongside those of the organization's *employee-directed fairness*—an employee's perception of how fairly they are treated by the employing organization.

I also introduce a construct of *customer identification* that parallels organizational identification, treating the customer base as a source of identity for service employees. Organizational identification refers to the incorporation of organizational membership into an employee's self-image, thereby leveraging the prestige and distinctiveness of the organization as a means toward self-enhancement (Ashforth & Mael, 1989). Issues of identity are particularly relevant for boundary spanners because of the multi-faceted social environment characterizing their jobs. Boundary spanners, such as customer service representatives, interface between constituencies that often have divergent interests and diverse norms of conduct. Managing these complexities requires social adaptation (Caldwell & O'Reilly, 1982), as mismanagement of

either relationship can invite verbal abuse and other forms of injustice from the organization as well as from outsiders (Holmvall & Sidhu, 2007; Dormann & Zapf, 2004).

Theory on identification addresses how and why individuals choose to psychologically associate with other groups. Research shows that organizational identification influences employee behavior (Bergami & Bagozzi, 2000; Dukerich, Golden, & Shortell, 2002). Therefore, a customer service employee's identification with the customers as well as the organization may provide theoretical insight into how employees manage multiple relationships. In this research, I discuss how identification variables are affected by an organization's customer- and employee-directed fairness. I first provide a brief review of the organizational fairness literature, followed by a review of the organizational identification literature. I then develop hypotheses based on a justice-driven model of identification, followed by two lab studies designed to explore the hypotheses in the context of customer service encounters—single interactions between specific customers and service providers (Guttek, Bhappu, Liao-Troth, & Cherry, 1999).

BACKGROUND

Organizational fairness

The study of organizational fairness addresses individuals' judgments regarding the treatment they receive from their organization or its representatives, and can be defined as the discrepancy between treatment that has occurred versus treatment the individual feels should have occurred given the available alternatives (Folger & Cropanzano, 2001). Fairness judgments are used to evaluate multiple aspects of organizational treatment, including decision outcomes (Adams, 1965), decision-making procedures (Leventhal, 1980), and the manner in which outcomes are distributed or decisions are carried out (Bies & Moag, 1986). Of additional importance, scholars have developed numerous explanatory motives for why individuals care about the different elements of fairness (for reviews, see Cropanzano, Byrne, Bobocel, & Rupp, 2001; Cropanzano et al., 2001).

For instance, fairness can be motivated by *instrumental* concerns, as individuals seek confirmation that the material rewards they receive for their efforts are proportional to those awarded for the efforts of referent others (Adams, 1965). Instrumental motives also extend beyond concern with outcomes to include decision making rules (Leventhal, 1980; Thibaut & Walker, 1978). However, individuals' concerns for fairness are not limited to self-interested motives and material outcomes. Individuals also harbor moral sentiment—standards of rightness regarding societal conduct that are used to judge and hold individuals accountable for their actions (Folger, Cropanzano, & Goldman, 2005). Referred to as *deontic* justice (Cropanzano, Goldman, & Folger, 2003), this perspective suggests that individuals engage in fairness evaluations even when their own interests are not at stake.

Another key advancement in the understanding of justice motives is the recognition that fairness is deeply intertwined with social consequences, and that social forces likewise impact the application of fairness rules. Wenzel (2000) has noted that fairness rules are not independent of situational factors, such as group membership, but rather are subject to identity as the basis for justice motives. Group categorizations are necessary for identifying the realm in which justice standards should be applied. Issues of identity and categorization are prior to the application of justice rules, as an individual must be able to assess what, or who, falls within the “scope of justice” (Opatow, 1990; 1994; Hafer & Olson, 2003). Thus, individuals are more likely to apply fairness rules to individuals with whom they identify (Clayton & Opatow, 2003). For example, identification with a group determines whether individuals value procedural fairness or instrumental benefits from the group’s authority figure (Boeckmann & Tyler, 1997).

Of particular importance to this paper is the literature examining the influence of fair treatment on cognitions about the self and the individual’s social standing. Collectively referred to as relational models of fairness (cf. Cropanzano et al., 2001), these literatures suggest that the effects of fair treatment on attitudes and behavior are mediated by perceptions of the self’s relation to the group (Lind, 2001; Tyler, 1989; Tyler, DeGoey, & Smith, 1996). Relational models include the group-value model of procedural justice (Lind & Tyler, 1988), the relational model of authority (Tyler & Lind, 1992), and the group engagement model (Tyler & Blader, 2003), all of which contrast with instrumental models by suggesting that individuals value fairness over and beyond having a desire to receive equitable outcomes (Adams, 1965) or to control outcome-distribution processes (Thibaut & Walker, 1978). Rather, because fairness signals inclusion and respect within a social group (Tyler, 1989), it affects individuals’ self perceptions (Lind, 2001).

For example, Tyler and colleagues have shown that individuals who were treated with high interpersonal fairness by an in-group authority figure had greater feelings of respect (Smith et al., 1998). They also found that an authority's fairness influences individuals' pride in the group itself, in addition to influencing their perceived social standing within the group (Tyler et al., 1996; Tyler, 1989).

The accrual of strong evidence in support of relational models has led Tyler and Blader (2003) to propose that "the primary antecedent of identity judgments [is]... the procedural justice of the group", and that these "identity judgments [are] the primary factors shaping attitudes, values, and cooperative behaviors" (p. 352). Thus, issues of fairness and identity may provide a strong foundation for investigating the complex social environment of organizational boundary-spanners such as customer service employees. The relational connotations of fairness suggest that target-specific treatment from an organization not only has implications for outcome distribution, but also signifies the status of the relationship between the organization and its target constituencies, such as employees and customers, respectively. In this paper, I develop the argument that customer service employees incorporate these status representations into cognitions about the self and the customer-base constituency. In doing so, I explore how service employees observe the fairness they receive from an organization and the fairness customers receive from the organization as cues to the respective social values of themselves and the organization's customers. These perceptions are then integrated into the employee's cognitions about how they identify with the organization and its customers. Below, I integrate literature on fairness with that on organizational identification, using a service context to test Tyler and Blader's (2003) prediction that identification mediates the effects of

fairness on behavior. In doing so, I review literature on the construct of *organizational identification*, while proposing a similar parallel construct referred to as *customer identification*.

In the hypotheses section, I discuss how these identification variables are affected by an organization's customer-directed fairness, as well as how they, in turn, affect customer service behavior.

Organizational Identification

Initial conceptualizations of organizational identification introduced the concept as a broad, multifaceted orientation taken by an employee that promotes attachment and association with the organization. Early conceptualizations were based on the perceived value and goal congruence between the organization and employee (Brown, 1969; Hall, Schneider, & Nygren, 1970; Schneider, Hall, & Nygren, 1971), an employee's loyalty and attraction to the organization (Brown, 1969), a sense of belongingness (Patchen, 1970; Lee, 1969; 1971), and emotional commitment accruing from acceptance of an organization's values and goals (Hall et al., 1970; Schneider et al., 1971).

Perhaps the most common and defining aspect of early conceptualizations, however, was the process of appropriating individual identity to the organization by identifying and accepting shared characteristics between the employee and the organization (Cheney, 1983; Schneider et al., 1971; Hall et al., 1970; Lee, 1971). The predominant theme among early models was therefore a cognition-based process grounded in employee perceptions of organizational values, goals, and images. As a psychological phenomenon, identification could therefore be distinguished from social exchange processes, as the former involved a cognitive

sense of oneness while the latter involved reciprocated actions between two entities (cf. Edwards, 2005).

Although the cognitive roots of organizational identification continued to influence later conceptualizations, identification as a construct gained a more secure theoretical footing with the introduction of social identity theory (Tajfel & Turner, 2004). Social identity theory posits that individuals can protect and enhance self-esteem by staking their self-concept on membership in important social groups (see Brown, 2000, for a review). As organizations comprise a salient set of groups to which individuals might identify, employees are at times motivated to associate the success and fate of their organization with that of the self (Ashforth & Mael, 1989). Overlapping of the self-concept with organizational attributes is particularly likely when organizations exhibit distinctiveness, and also when employees believe the organization garners attention or admiration from outsiders (Dutton, Dukerich, & Harquail, 1994; Foreman & Whetten, 2002). Although employees may have situational or practical reasons for aligning themselves with an organization (Rousseau, 1998), their use of organizational membership to enhance self-image cultivates a more enduring connection.

More recently, scholars have suggested that identification stems from more than one psychological motive. In addition to self-enhancement, individuals may also develop identity based on the need for self-verification (Polzer, Milton, & Swann, 2002), affiliation (Bartel & Dutton, 2001), or uncertainty reduction (e.g. Peteraf & Shanley, 1997). Regarding the latter, for example, self-categorization theory articulates how individuals depersonalize themselves and others into in-group and out-group prototypes (Hogg & Terry, 2000). By maximizing the

perceived similarities with in-group members and the perceived differences with out-group members, individuals construct a practical and parsimonious model of their social environment.

These theoretical pluralities in the identification literature have revealed both *impersonal* and *personal* bases of identification (George & Chattopadhyay, 2005). Impersonal bases involve the inclusion of abstract features of an organization in an individual's self-concept. For example, a number of studies have shown that identification is stronger based on an organization's prestige (Mael & Ashforth, 1992; Bergami & Bagozzi, 2000; Dukerich et al., 2002), distinctiveness (George & Chattopadhyay, 2005; Mael & Ashforth, 1992), visibility (Dukerich et al., 2002), and the perceived congruence between organizational and individual attributes (Brown, 1969; Patchen, 1970; Lee, 1971; Foreman & Whetten, 2002; George & Chattopadhyay, 2005).

Alternatively, personal bases of identification involve interactions between the employee and the organization that lead to a relationship and attachment to the organization. For example, Mael and Ashforth (1992) showed that time spent with an organization strengthens identity. This finding was supported by Bartel, Wrzesniewski, and Wiesenfeld (2007), who found the converse: employees who work remotely and spend little time in an organization develop weaker identification with the organization. Thus, employees who are immersed and involved in an organizational setting develop identity with the organization due to increased cohesiveness with colleagues (George & Chattopadhyay, 2005) and the organization's socialization tactics (Pratt, 2000). Although these processes also encourage attitudes such as organizational commitment, organizational identification has been shown to be a separate psychological construct (Pratt, 1998).

Customer identification. An employing organization, however, is not the only source of identification available to service employees. Due to their position as boundary spanning agents, service employees may acknowledge a number of salient constituent groups in addition to the organization. Contract employees, for example, are beholden to client organizations as well as their employing organization, and base their self-concepts on these multiple sources (George & Chattopadhyay, 2005). Moreover, social identity is not limited to association with organizations, but also includes smaller groups and individuals (Brown, 2000). Therefore, even traditional in-house customer service representatives may tend to develop shared identification with individual customers or the customer base as a whole.

In this paper, I introduce *customer identification* as an employee's relationship to the customers that defines the employee's self-concept. This definition is meant to denote a single, broad perception of the customer base as a whole entity, making customer identification somewhat analogous to organizational identification. Customer identification can be based on multiple components which reflect different motives and the different contexts in which identification takes place (cf. van Dick, Wagner, Stellmacher, & Christ, 2004). For example, identification can be based on a *cognitive* component resulting from a recognition of sameness between the employee and the customers. Perceived similarities may be based on interpersonal characteristics such as background similarity, group affiliation, and shared demographic traits. In addition, because job-related success for customer service representatives is often largely defined in terms of customer satisfaction, perceived similarities may result from the employee's fate being intertwined with that of the customers. Sharing fate in the form of successes and failures implies goal congruence between employees and

customers, and may therefore encourage identification (Schneider et al., 1971). Finally, in some instances, cognitive identification may be influenced by the prestige and uniqueness of customers. Many service employees attend to customers who are higher in status than the employees, such as personnel at exclusive resorts and spas, or employees providing private transportation services (e.g. limousines or corporate jets). Employees can enhance their self-concepts through identification with high-status groups or individuals, and may find the customer base to be a high-status source of identification.

This dissertation examines some of the cognitive components of customer identification. Customer identification, however, may also contain an *affective* component, based on empathy for the customers. To effectively interface between the organization and its customers, boundary spanning employees must develop an understanding and appreciation of customer needs and viewpoints. The development of this understanding may affect an employee's empathy and affective attachment toward customers—a process that encourages shared identity (Lewicki & Bunker, 1995).

Finally, customer identification may contain a behavioral component. Some service roles involve repeated interactions with the same customer—an arrangement referred to as “service relationships” (Gutek et al., 1999). Repeated interactions encourage attraction to customers, and thus constitute a “personal base” of identification (George & Chattopadhyay, 2005). Together with the cognitive and affective bases of customer identification, these components provide sufficient grounds for investigating the influence of customer identification on service employee work behavior.

Importantly, because organizational and customer goals are often divergent, service employees frequently experience role conflict (Troyer et al., 2000). Identification with multiple constituents such as an organization and its customers may at times be incongruent, resulting in a conflict of identities. Such conflict is not uncommon, and individuals must often confront and resolve identity conflict by strategically managing the salience and application of multiple identities (Mael & Ashforth, 1992).

In this paper, I use an organizational justice approach to investigate how service employees manage identification with customers. The self-enhancement motives of social identity suggest a link with the relational models of fairness: while the former suggest individuals identify with organizations in order to strengthen their self-concepts, the latter suggest that treatment from organizations affects the self-concept by conveying the social acceptance and respect accorded individuals by the organization. Fairness may therefore influence customer- and organization-based identity processes by suggesting to the employees the extent to which the organization values both employees and customers. These ideas are developed below in three sets of hypotheses addressing the following questions: 1) Does an organization's treatment of customers and employees affect the way employees identify with customers and the organization?, 2) Do identity variables mediate the influence of fairness on customer service behaviors?, and 3) Apart from fairness, do customer and organizational identification predict customer service behaviors? Each of these questions is addressed below, and illustrated in Figure 1.

HYPOTHESES

Effects of Fairness on Organizational and Customer Identification

As noted by Wenzel (2000), identity is central to the notion of fairness. This centrality is apparent in a number of relational justice perspectives, such as Lind's fairness heuristic theory (2001) and Tyler and Blader's group engagement model (2003). According to fairness heuristic theory (Lind, 2001; Van den Bos, Lind, & Wilke, 2001; Lind, Kulik, Ambrose, & De Vera Park, 1993), individuals are interested in fairness information because it signals whether the establishment of socially interdependent relationships is likely to result in cooperative-based benefits or exploitation and loss. In the context of organizational membership, individuals not only gain material benefits but also an enhanced social identity based on group affiliation (Tyler & Blader, 2003; Tyler et al., 1996). Because individuals risk hurting their personal identity if their contributions are exploited by the group, they rely on fairness information to convey the likelihood of social acceptance within the group. Thus, fairness perceptions act as "pivotal cognitions" (Lind, 2001) that determine whether individuals are willing to psychologically invest themselves in group membership.

A similar emphasis on fairness as an antecedent of identity is found in Tyler and Blader's group engagement model (2003), in which the authors suggest that "when people want to make identity assessments, one aspect of their lives that they look to is the procedures of the groups to which they belong" (p. 355). These procedural justice judgments provide the foundation for group-based identity by defining the role and social stature of the individual within the group. Identity thus mediates the effects of procedural justice perceptions on attitudes, motivation, and in-role and extra-role behaviors.

Both of these models imply a type of uncertainty-reduction function of fairness information, whereby fairness judgments become the basis for specifying the individual's relation to the group. This function has been duly described in the organizational identification literature under the heading of self-categorization theory (Hogg & Terry, 2000). This theory articulates how individuals simplify their social environment by depersonalizing themselves and others into in-group and out-group memberships. Doing so allows parsimonious generalizations about social entities and their relation to each other.

Taken together, these theoretical perspectives suggest connections between the diagnostic capacity of fairness information and the self-categorization motive for organizational identification. Fairness information becomes a driver of group identities due to its relevance as an indicator of social value. Based on these literatures, I predict that fair treatment has a direct influence on the extent to which an individual identifies with the organization.

Hypothesis 1: An organization's employee-directed fairness has a positive effect on an employee's organizational identification.

A primary motive for integrating social groups into cognitions about the self is the potential for self-enhancement. Numerous studies have supported the proposition that employees identify more strongly with an organization when it has the potential to increase their self-esteem. For example, employees develop stronger identity with more prestigious organizations (Mael & Ashforth, 1992; Bergami & Bagozzi, 2000; George & Chattopadhyay, 2005). In addition, Dukerich and colleagues drew a distinction between an employee's attraction to organizational attributes versus beliefs about how those attributes are viewed by outsiders—or the employee's "construed external image" (Dukerich et al., 2002). In their study,

they found that physicians identified more strongly with their health care system when the system's external image enhanced their own self-concepts. Thus, an individual's willingness to identify with a group or organization is partly influenced by the amount of respect or admiration that the group receives from others. By the same token, individuals are disinclined to identify with groups that have low social standing.

Because group-based identity is central to an enhanced sense of self, individuals must be discerning among various entities in the social environment. Such discernment among social actors is similarly found in multi-foci models of justice that demonstrate how employees reciprocate fairness through behaviors that target the entity responsible for the fair treatment (Bishop, Scott, Goldsby, & Cropanzano, 2005; Rupp & Cropanzano, 2002; Masterson, Lewis, Goldman, & Taylor, 2000). Multi-foci models are grounded in social exchange theory, and specify how reciprocation engages and binds two distinct social actors. By contrast, identification involves not an exchange relationship between two actors, but a psychological sense of oneness that transcends and displaces an exchange framework. Nevertheless, social discernment such as that posited in multi-foci social exchange relationships is similarly critical to social identification processes for recognizing those social actors that represent targets most capable of enhancing the actor's self-image.

An employing organization is not the sole source of self-enhancing identity for an employee (George & Chattopadhyay, 2005). Employees may discern other social groups that present opportunities for self-enhancement. Combining this self-enhancement motivation with the justice-based foundations of identity developed above suggests a preliminary organization-based justice model of identification, with the organization's fairness toward external

constituencies as an influence on the perceived social desirability of those groups. There is thus a multi-foci—or rather multi-target—component applied to an employee’s use of organization-based fairness as an indicator of social desirability. These multiple fairness targets may include all salient organizational constituencies, such as other employees, customers, regulators, suppliers, and competitors. Employees may interpret the perceived fairness of an organization’s actions toward an actor as an indication of the social status of the actor, an indication that subsequently influences employee identification with the actor.

I propose that an organization’s customer-directed fairness symbolizes the amount of respect accorded customers by the organization, and therefore implies the extent to which an employee perceives the customer base as socially esteemed. Customers who are treated fairly may be perceived by service employees as a highly-esteemed social group and potential source of self-enhancing group identification. On the other hand, customers who are treated unfairly by the organization are given no such respect and may thus provide a less attractive group with which the employee can identify for self-enhancement purposes. Put differently, employees cannot maintain strong identification with customer groups who are treated poorly by the organization, as the organization’s actions would then be attacking a source of the employee’s self-concept. In order to buffer themselves against threats to their self-image, employees can cognitively distance themselves from customer groups that are disrespected by an organization’s unfair treatment. Therefore, an organization’s customer-directed fairness is predicted to influence an employee’s identification with customers.

Hypothesis 2: An organization’s customer-directed fairness has a positive effect on an employee’s customer identification.

Identification as a Mediator between Fairness and Service Delivery

If organizational fairness exerts a significant influence on distinct group identities, as predicted above, then the relevance of this discovery can be shown in the extent to which organizational and customer identification mediate the respective effects of fairness on customer service behaviors. Tyler and Blader (2003) have specifically predicted that identity cognitions mediate the effects of procedural justice on extra-role behavior, and Sparrowe, Soetjijto, and Kraimer (2006) have provided initial support for this proposition by showing that leader-member exchange relationships, acting to define employee roles, ultimately influence discretionary helping behavior. Thus, although identification and social exchange models of organizational justice have traditionally been addressed as separate phenomena (e.g. van Knippenberg, van Dick, & Tavares, 2007), it is plausible to expect identification to mediate the effects of organizational fairness on customer service behaviors.

This type of mediation is far from given, as there are a number of justice motives apart from relational concerns that may drive service behavior. For example, workers' actions may be dominated by material self-interest, or, alternatively, may be guided by ethical principles and a strong moral orientation (Cropanzano et al., 2003). The latter seems particularly relevant in the case of an organization's customer-directed fairness, as customer treatment is much less directly connected to an employee's temporal welfare than the treatment the employee receives personally from the organization. The following set of hypotheses therefore tests the degree to which identification variables mediate the effects of fairness on service behavior, thereby helping to determine the extent to which identity cognitions are central to customer service.

In their study of customer-directed fairness and service performance, Evans and Gilliland (2009) found that an organization's employee-directed fairness and customer-directed fairness impacted different aspects of customer service behavior. Specifically, employee fairness affected service behavior that required sustained, concerted effort, such as task extensiveness. The authors argued that motivations to exert job-related effort are primarily associated with desires to reciprocate treatment received from the organization (Masterson, 2001). In addition, other research shows a significant relationship between organizational fairness and organizational citizenship behavior (OCB; Masterson et al., 2000). Based on these past findings, I utilize two variables—task extensiveness and OCB—to test the mediating properties of organizational identification in the relationship between employee-directed fairness and service behaviors.

Hypothesis 3: An organization's employee-directed fairness positively affects employee task extensiveness (3a) and organizational citizenship behavior (3b).

Hypothesis 4: Organizational identification mediates the effects of employee-directed fairness on task extensiveness (4a) and organizational citizenship behavior (4b).

Evans and Gilliland (2009) also found that customer-directed fairness affected the amount of politeness demonstrated by service providers toward customers. Interestingly, participants in their experiment demonstrated less politeness when they perceived customers to be treated unfairly. This relationship is consistent with a social identity explanation by suggesting that customers were perceived to be less worthy of polite treatment when they had previously received unfair treatment. Rather than using politeness as a means of restoring

inequity, participants appear to have felt less—rather than more—inclined to treat customers politely.

A final service behavior considered in this research involves the decision of a service employee to break organizational rules to better serve a customer. Morrison (2006) referred to this phenomenon as *pro-social rule breaking*, and posited this as a way of enhancing organizational functioning by overcoming unhelpful or outdated customer policies. However, in their discussion of *pro-customer rule breaking*, Evans and Gilliland (2009) noted that rule breaking may not always benefit the organization, but may come as a response toward irreconcilable interests between the organization and its customers. Facing divergent interests and goals between the organization and another constituent, service employees must sometimes simply choose which constituency to serve—occasionally at the expense of the other. They further found that customer-directed fairness was a greater determinant of pro-customer rule breaking than was employee-directed fairness. To test whether this relationship is based on identity perceptions, I utilize it here to test the mediating influence of customer identification.

Hypothesis 5: An organization's customer-directed fairness positively affects employee politeness (5a) and pro-customer rule breaking (5b).

Hypothesis 6: Customer identification mediates the effects of customer-directed fairness on politeness (6a) and pro-customer rule breaking (6b).

Effects of Customer Identification and Organizational Identification on Service Delivery

Numerous studies have supported the prediction that identification leads to citizenship behavior that is consonant with the identity (Dutton et al., 1994; Bergami & Baggozi, 2005; Riketta, 2005). For example, Bartel (2001) found that supervisors' ratings of employee cooperation and work effort were higher when the employee reported greater identification with the organization. Identification encourages greater support for the organization, thereby helping to strengthen the entity with which the employee identifies (Ashforth & Mael, 1989).

More generally, individuals are motivated to maintain or enhance the social position of groups that reflect on their social-identity (Tajfel & Turner, 2004). In a service context, where employees engage in constant interaction with customers, the motivation to provide service may be impacted by the extent to which employees identify with customers. Through serving customers, employees demonstrate and reaffirm the social value of that group. Thus, customer identification can be expected to influence customer-relevant behaviors and citizenship, just as organizational identification has been shown to influence organization-directed citizenship.

I predict organizational identification to be positively related to service behaviors that employees would expect to enhance the organization's performance directly (OCB), or to enhance the organization's image through their influence on positive customer experiences (task extensiveness and politeness). I also expect organizational identification to be negatively related to service behaviors that would detract from the image or performance of the organization (pro-customer rule breaking). Finally, I expect customer identification to be positively related to service behaviors that directly influence the quality of the customer's experience (politeness and pro-customer rule breaking).

Hypothesis 7: Organizational identification has a positive main effect on task extensiveness (7a), organizational citizenship behavior (7b), and politeness (7c). It has a negative main effect on pro-customer rule breaking (7d).

Hypothesis 8: Customer identification has a positive main effect on politeness (8a) and pro-customer rule breaking (8b).

The previous predictions suggest that some behaviors (politeness and rule breaking) are the domain of more than one social identity—in this case, organization and customer-based identities. In the past, researchers have disagreed over whether and how individuals maintain identification with multiple entities. For example, Turner (1975) argued that identities at the same level of abstraction are antagonistic and can only be maintained exclusive of each other (e.g. Johnson, Morgeson, Ilgen, Meyer, & Lloyd, 2006; Witt, Patti, & Farmer, 2002). Other researchers, however, have found that individuals do manage multiple identities, often simultaneously (Barker and Tompkins, 1994; Scott, 1997; van Knippenberg & van Schie, 2000; Mlicki and Ellemers, 1996; Wenzel, 2000).

Some have suggested that individuals manage multiple identities by sequentially adopting different identities based on their relative salience across situations (Ashforth and Mael, 1989). However, this kind of identity adoption seems unlikely for service employees, who, by nature of their role as boundary spanners, must be simultaneously attuned to the respective needs and viewpoints of the organization and its customers (Schneider, Parkington, & Buxton, 1980). An employee's ability to cognitively separate organizational identification from customer identification seems unlikely, as both entities are made salient in the course of performing the same job task. Hence, both might be operative in the same service setting.

A key aspect of identity conflict is that conflict is not inherent in the identities themselves, but in the values and prescribed behaviors entailed in the identities (Ashforth & Mael, 1989). The adoption of a role that involves believing or doing things contradictory to another identity is akin to an attack on the individual's self-concept. Thus, individuals must maintain inter-identity coherence in order to avoid implied attacks on the self. Conceptually, therefore, the management of multiple identities is similar to Heider's (1958) balance theory, which suggests that an individual's evaluations regarding two entities must be logically consistent with the inter-entity evaluations.

Based on the predicted effects of organizational and customer identification on politeness, and the presumed motivation of individuals to maintain behavior that is consistent with both identities, I predict an interactive effect of the identity variables on politeness. If employees maintain identification with either the organization or the customers, they will be motivated to maintain a certain standard of politeness. This standard of politeness will not be discarded so long as the employee identifies with at least one of the constituencies that stand to benefit from such behavior. It is only when the employee feels little identification with either the organization or the customers that politeness will decrease.

Hypothesis 9a: Organizational identification and customer identification have an interactive effect on politeness, such that when customer identification is low, organizational identification has a positive effect on politeness. When customer identification is high, organizational identification has no effect on politeness.

Finally, when employees identify strongly with the organization, they will be disinclined to give preferential treatment to customers if it hurts the organization. Rather, they will emphasize customer service behaviors that do not hurt the organization. When employees identify weakly with the organization, however, they will not feel a strong need to protect it, and may then be willing to consider customer services that are detrimental to the organization. Organizational identification may therefore enable—though not motivate—employees to consider pro-customer rule breaking at the organization’s expense.

At the same time, if service employees identify strongly with customers, they will have a greater desire to engage in pro-customer rule breaking. But if customer identification is low, they may feel no such need. Customer identification may therefore interact with organizational identification in its effects on rule breaking.

Hypothesis 9b: Organizational identification and customer identification have an interactive effect on pro-customer rule breaking, such that when organizational identification is low, customer identification has a positive effect on rule breaking.

METHOD

Study 1 and Study 2 utilized the same procedures, relying on a version of the electronic help desk experiment (Evans and Gilliland, 2009). This experiment places participants in the ostensible position of responding to email inquiries from those who seek information regarding the participants' organization. As these experiments took place in a business school and recruited senior business students as participants, the context was portrayed as a resource for potential business school applicants to direct questions to current students regarding the school's programs. Participants were recruited as "mentors" whose task was to provide informative, email-based responses to potential applicants.

STUDY 1

Participants and Design

Participants were recruited from a pool of upper-level business undergraduate students at a large Southwestern University and were offered course credit in exchange for their participation. Of the 118 participants, 50% were male; 64% were Caucasian, 14% were Asian American, 13% were Hispanic, 2% were African American, 1% were Native American, and the remaining 6% did not identify ethnicity.

Experimental manipulations involved the treatment received by the participants (employee-directed fairness) as well as their perceptions of the treatment received by prior applicants (customer-directed fairness). This resulted in a 2 (employee fair vs. employee unfair) x 2 (customer fair vs. customer unfair) factorial design, and individuals were randomly assigned to one of the four conditions.

Procedure

Experimental sessions contained up to 30 participants (or “trainees”) per session. Upon arrival, trainees were seated at individual cubicles with computers. A trainer explained the idea of the electronic help desk as a resource for prospective business school applicants to contact upper-level business students with questions about the school and its programs. Trainees were told to access a temporary email account that contained a number of messages in the inbox. Their task was to respond to the emails in the way they deemed appropriate, then to fill out a survey regarding their experience. Participants also received and were given instructions

regarding a packet of items: 1) a one-page introduction to the purpose of the electronic help desk, 2) a printed email correspondence presenting a sample exchange between the trainer and a potential applicant, 3) directions for accessing a temporary email account, and 4) a survey and volunteer form (explained in the Measures section).

As with other lab-based employment simulations (e.g. Rupp & Spencer, 2006; Chatman & Barsade, 1995), the electronic help desk experiment attempts to recreate the psychological conditions of the workplace while addressing the inevitable tradeoff between experimental control and contextual realism (McGrath, 1981). In this case, participants not only believe they are engaged in a real task, but can also authentically represent themselves and their organization. They have a working knowledge of the business school's operations and goals, and engage in a realistic organizational liaison role toward outside third parties. Past research utilizing this method has shown that it elicits strong task engagement and contextually authentic responses from participants (Evans & Gilliland, 2009).

Manipulations

Manipulations were designed to support and enhance the realism of the electronic service encounters. The customer-directed fairness manipulation was designed to portray the overall fairness of the business school's application process, thereby giving participants sufficient information to form a global fairness judgment. The employee-directed fairness manipulation involved the information and treatment provided to participants by the trainer (Bies & Moag, 1986; Greenberg, 1993; Shapiro, Buttner, & Barry, 1994).

Customer fairness. As part of their instructions, participants read a sample email correspondence between their trainer and a prospective applicant. In this scenario, the writer of the email reported a complaint regarding her admissions interview to the business school. She related an experience in which the interviewers had questioned her about her family situation. Once she revealed that she had a daughter, the interviewers responded with rudeness and condescension (e.g. “the business world doesn’t have a ‘mommy track’”) and ultimately failed her on the interview. In her email, she reported her highly qualified credentials for getting into business school, and asked for an opportunity to redo the admissions interview (“I really need some help here...”).

Customer-directed fairness was manipulated through the trainer’s response. In the customer-fair condition, the trainer reported that the business school does allow retakes of the admissions interview when applicants report having a bad experience. In addition, he gave brief directions on how to go about arranging a new interview. In the customer-unfair condition, the trainer first acknowledged that applicants occasionally have an unfair interview experience and that the business school is aware of such. He then stated that in spite of these unfortunate instances, the interview process works very well on behalf of the business school, they have no means for providing second interviews, and they do not intend to provide them in the future. In this condition, the applicant was told she could either apply the following year or get a new major. Trainer responses in both conditions used the same number of words.

Employee fairness. Once trainees were seated, those in the employee-fair condition were given accurate instructions for accessing the temporary email account. Those in the

employee-unfair condition were given a set of erroneous instructions designed to lead them through a series of futile attempts to access a non-existent account. In addition, after the erroneous instructions were handed out, the trainer stepped out for a break, briefly leaving participants alone to struggle with the bogus instructions. Upon returning, the trainer acted surprised when informed of the account access difficulty, and then announced—without apology or expression of sympathy—that participants must have received outdated instructions. He then found and handed out the correct instructions, identical to the ones originally given to participants in the fair treatment condition.

Attitudinal Measures

Manipulation checks. Measures used for assessing customer-directed fairness included three items adapted from Brockner, De Cremer, van den Bos, and Chen (2005, Study 2): 1) “How fair was the applicant treated by the [business school]?”, 2) “How just was the applicant treated by the [business school]?”, and 3) “How justified was the [business school’s] treatment of the applicant?” ($\alpha = .96$). Direct measures of fairness such as these are most appropriate when fairness is endogenous in the causal system (e.g. a manipulation check; Colquitt & Shaw, 2005).

Employee fairness was measured using four items from Colquitt (2001), capturing informational (e.g., “To what extent has he/she communicated details in a timely manner?”) aspects of justice by asking respondents to rate the trainer according to a five point Likert-scale ($\alpha = .90$; See Appendix A for this and all full scales).

Organizational identification. The organizational identification scale consisted of six items taken from Mael and Ashforth’s short scale (1992). Although some have criticized this

scale as having questionable content validity (Edwards, 2005), meta-analytic findings suggest it has the highest predictive validity of existing scales (Riketta, 2005). Sample items include “When someone criticizes [name of business school], it feels like a personal insult”, and “I am very interested in what others think about [name of business school]” ($\alpha = .80$).

Customer identification. The customer identification measure was based on a measure of group identification developed by Aron, Aron, and Smollen (1992) and refined by Tropp and Wright (2001). Participants were presented with a pictorial measure containing a series of Venn-like diagrams (see Appendix A). Paired with these diagrams were instructions to “circle the pair of circles that you feel best represents *your own level of identification with the potential applicants who emailed [the business school]*”. Responses were converted to an interval scale comprising the numbers one through seven.

Behavioral Measures

Organizational citizenship behavior (OCB). OCB was operationalized in terms of *volunteer behavior*. Each trainee was provided with a separate form that explained the business school’s need for additional feedback regarding the electronic help desk. Trainees were instructed to “check *yes*” and record their name and email address if they were willing to fill out an additional online survey, and to “check *no thank you*” if they were not willing. It was also noted that signing up to receive the additional survey was completely voluntary and did not constitute any commitment to participate in future testing. Responses were coded with a “1” for volunteering and a “0” for not volunteering.

Customer Service Behaviors

Politeness. To assess the politeness of participants' responses, two judges rated responses to one of the emails that asked a somewhat superficial question ("is there cool groups or any ways to meet people"). Ratings of politeness were recorded on a five point Likert-type scale (1 = *not at all polite*; 5 = *very polite*), and the resulting inter-rater correlation was strong ($r = .88$).

Task extensiveness. Task extensiveness was operationalized as the total word count of all emails written by each participant.

Pro-customer rule breaking. The measure of pro-customer rule breaking was based on the construct development work of Morrison (2006) and a measure developed previously by Evans and Gilliland (2009). During training, participants were briefed on a reputation-protection policy of the business school, and instructed to help maintain the reputation of the business school by absolutely refraining from expressing any degree of negativity in their responses. To measure the extent to which participants later deviated from this policy, one email correspondence involved an applicant who reported hearing negative opinions regarding a specific instructor of a required course, and inquired as to whether this individual and any other instructors should be avoided.

Participant responses to this particular correspondence revealed the extent to which they were willing to deviate from the reputation-protection policy of the business school and instead choose to provide applicants with helpfully candid information—a service that was beneficial to applicants but detrimental to the business school's goal of reputation

enhancement. Two independent judges who were blind to the conditions of the study coded participants' email responses based on the extent to which responses violated the reputation-protection policy of the business school. Ratings were provided on a 5-point Likert-type scale with the following anchors: 1 = no violation, 2 = very weak violation, 3 = modest violation, 4 = strong violation, and 5 = very strong violation. Inter-rater correlation was adequate ($r = .74$).

RESULTS

Manipulation checks for the employee- and customer-directed fairness manipulations were confirmed with a 2 (employee fairness: fair vs. unfair) x 2 (customer fairness: fair vs. unfair) between-subjects ANOVA. Results showed that the employee fairness manipulation had a strong effect on perceived employee fairness ($F_{(1, 117)} = 62.47, p < .01; M_{Fair} = 4.61, M_{Unfair} = 3.30$), but not on perceived customer fairness ($F_{(1, 117)} = .26, n.s.$). In addition, the customer-directed fairness manipulation demonstrated a significant effect on perceived customer fairness ($F_{(1, 117)} = 4.42, p < .05; M_{Fair} = 2.91, M_{Unfair} = 2.37$), but not on perceived employee fairness ($F_{(1, 117)} = .84, n.s.$).

Hypotheses Testing

Means, standard deviations, and zero-order correlation coefficients for the dependent measures are reported in Table 1. As expected, customer-directed fairness is correlated with customer identification but not with organizational identification, while employee-directed fairness is correlated with organizational but not customer identification. One point of interest is the significant negative correlation between politeness and rule breaking, suggesting that participants who were more polite did not necessarily engage in more rule breaking on behalf of the customer. I first tested whether the relational implications of fairness are manifested in their effect on distinct social identity variables. Hypothesis 1 predicted that employee-directed fairness would have a positive effect exclusively on organizational identification, while Hypothesis 2 predicted that customer-directed fairness would have a positive affect exclusively on customer identification. I ran a MANOVA, with organizational and customer identification

entered as dependent variables, and customer- and employee-directed fairness entered as categorical independent variables. Significant multivariate effects were found for both employee fairness (Wilks Lambda = 0.92, $F_{(2,112)} = 4.91$, $p < .01$) and customer fairness (Wilks Lambda = 0.94, $F_{(2,112)} = 3.77$, $p < .05$). These multivariate effects were followed up with separate univariate ANOVAs. Both hypotheses were both supported in a 2 (employee justice: fair vs. unfair) \times 2 (customer justice: fair vs. unfair) between-subjects ANOVA (see Table 2), which showed that employee-directed fairness had a significant effect on organizational identification ($F_{(1, 117)} = 9.92$, $p < .01$), while customer-directed fairness did not ($F < 1$, *n.s.*). Organizational identification was higher in the employee fair condition ($M = 4.05$) than the unfair condition ($M = 3.63$). At the same time, customer-directed fairness had a significant effect on customer identification ($F_{(1, 117)} = 6.83$, $p < .01$), while employee-directed fairness did not ($F < 1$, *n.s.*). Customer identification was also higher in the customer fair condition ($M = 3.98$) than the unfair condition ($M = 3.22$).

Secondly, I tested whether the effects of justice on customer service behaviors are mediated by identification variables. First, 2 (employee justice: fair vs. unfair) \times 2 (customer justice: fair vs. unfair) between-subjects ANOVAs revealed that employee-directed fairness had a significant affect on task extensiveness ($F_{(1, 117)} = 15.76$, $p < .01$) but not on OCB ($F < 1$, *n.s.*), thereby supporting H3a but not H3b. As predicted, task extensiveness was higher in the employee fair condition ($M = 665$) than in the unfair condition ($M = 490$).

Mediation analyses were used to examine whether the effect of employee-directed fairness on task extensiveness was mediated by organizational identification. Separate

regression equations established employee-directed fairness as a significant predictor of organizational identification ($\beta = .29, p < .01$), as well as a significant predictor of task extensiveness ($\beta = .35, p < .01$). A final equation showed that the effects of employee-directed fairness on task extensiveness ($\beta = .27, p < .05$) were somewhat reduced when controlling for organizational identification, suggesting that organizational identification may partially mediate the effects of employee-directed fairness on task extensiveness (Baron & Kenny, 1986). Thus, Hypothesis 4a received only modest support for organizational identification as a mediator between employee fairness and customer service behavior. Meanwhile, because employee-directed fairness was not related to OCB, Hypothesis 4b was not supported.

I also examined whether the effects of customer-directed fairness on customer service behavior were mediated by customer identification. In a 2 (employee justice: fair vs. unfair) \times 2 (customer justice: fair vs. unfair) between-subjects ANOVA, customer-directed fairness demonstrated a significant effect on rule breaking ($F_{(1, 117)} = 6.2, p < .05$) but not on politeness ($F < 1, n.s.$), thereby supporting H5b but not H5a. To test for mediation, separate regression analyses established customer-directed fairness as a significant predictor of pro-customer rule breaking ($\beta = -.24, p < .05$) and of the proposed mediator, customer identification ($\beta = .25, p < .01$). A final equation, however, showed that the effects of customer-directed fairness on rule breaking ($\beta = -.27, p < .05$) were not at all reduced when controlling for customer identification, suggesting that customer identification does not mediate the effects of customer-directed fairness on rule breaking. Thus, Hypothesis 6b was not supported. Also, because customer-directed fairness did not affect politeness, the proposed mediation in Hypothesis 6a was also not supported (see Table 4 for a summary of all Study 1 hypotheses).

Finally, apart from the effects of employee- and customer-directed fairness, I examined the respective effects of organizational and customer identification on customer service behavior, as set forth in Hypotheses 7, 8, and 9. Each customer service variable was examined using a stepwise regression analysis that included organizational and customer identification in the first step, and an interaction term in the second step. As shown in Table 3, organizational identification was related to task extensiveness ($\beta = .38, p < .01$) and politeness ($\beta = .27, p < .01$), thereby providing respective support for Hypotheses 7a and 7c. In addition, the effects of organizational identification on OCB (H7b; $\beta = .17, p = .07$) and pro-customer rule breaking (H7d; $\beta = -.19, p = .07$) received marginal support.

The analyses did not support Hypotheses 8a and 8b, revealing that customer identification had no main effect on either politeness ($\beta = .08, n.s.$) or pro-customer rule breaking ($\beta = .07, n.s.$). However, organizational and customer identification did have an interactive effect on politeness, as predicted by Hypothesis 9a ($\beta = -1.15, p < .05$). The form of this interaction is displayed in Figure 2, which shows that when customer identification is high, participants are likely to maintain a standard of politeness regardless of identification with the organization. But when customer identification is low, the level of politeness depends on organizational identification, such that higher organizational identification leads to greater politeness. Finally, there was no support for Hypothesis 9b, which predicted an interactive effect on rule breaking ($\beta = .37, n.s.$; see Table 4).

DISCUSSION

In summary, the hypotheses in Study 1 introduced the notion of customer identification and examined how customer service employees' identification with customers is affected by the organization's fair treatment of both employees and customers. In an electronic help-desk simulation, participants developed greater identification with customers when customers were treated fairly by the organization, and they developed greater identification with the organization when they were treated fairly by the organization. The identification variables, however, had surprisingly modest roles as mediators of the effects of fairness on customer service behavior. Organizational identification partially mediated the effects of employee-directed fairness on task extensiveness. But contrary to predictions, the effects of customer-directed fairness on pro-customer rule breaking were not mediated by customer identification. Finally, organizational identification and customer identification interacted to influence politeness, such that politeness remained high when participants maintained identification with either the customers or the organization or both, but was reduced when participants did not identify with either the customers or the organization.

These findings provide mixed support for the importance of customer identification, as well as the role of relational justice motives in customer service. However, three significant findings from Study 1 bear further consideration. Below, I highlight each of these findings and develop a hypothesis that further explores each relationship, to be tested in Study 2.

First, customer-directed fairness positively affected customer identification. This phenomenon is consistent with the tenets of relational models of fairness, which stipulate that fairness signifies social value (Tyler, 1989). It is also consistent with the self-enhancement

motive of social identity theory, which would predict that—once cued to the social value of customers—employees would identify with customers based on their perceived social value. Further testing of this relationship, however, would benefit from a closer examination of how perceived similarities between the employee and customers affect how the employee reacts to the organization's customer treatment—specifically, whether the customer is perceived as an in-group or out-group member.

Social identification with groups is partially motivated by its potential to provide favorable comparisons between the self and out-group members (Bartel, 2001). Favorable comparisons increase the prestige of the in-group and consequently support the individual's striving for self-enhancement. Consistent with this motivation, a substantial body of research on in-group and out-group relations demonstrates that individuals cognitively elevate the status of in-group members and derogate the status of out-group members (Brown, 2000). These cognitive representations are made easier when individuals can identify similarities between themselves and in-group members, or differences between themselves and out-group members (Bartel, 2001). Thus, an important factor for the management of social identity is the extent to which salient characteristics of in-group and out-group members facilitate identification or dis-identification with a group. A study of the effects of customer-directed fairness on service delivery would therefore benefit by examining the influence of customers' group-signifying characteristics, and how these characteristics moderate employees' reactions to customer-directed fairness.

Group affiliations come by way of multiple categories, such as demographic characteristics or organizational affiliation (Hogg & Terry, 2000). Because salient inter-group

differences hinder identification with out-group members, I predict that customer characteristics such as group affiliation will moderate the effects of an organization's customer-directed fairness on customer identification. Specifically, when customers are perceived as sharing an in-group affiliation with employees, customer-directed fairness will be positively related to identification with the customer. But when customers are perceived as out-group members, customer fairness will have no such effect.

Hypothesis 10: An organization's customer-directed fairness and the customer's group affiliation have an interactive effect on an employee's customer identification, such that when a customer is perceived as part of an in-group, customer fairness has a positive effect on customer identification.

Second, customer-directed fairness in Study 1 positively influenced pro-customer rule breaking. This relationship runs contrary to that identified in past research by Evans and Gilliland (2009), who found that rather than doing fewer favors for customers who were treated unfairly, participants increased their rule breaking for the benefit of the customer. Taken together, these studies on pro-customer rule breaking leave an unresolved divergence. While the findings above in Study 1 are consistent with predictions made from a relational perspective, the results of Evans and Gilliland's study suggest an alternative explanation. One such explanation is that unfair customer treatment may have elicited a moral, or "deontic" response from participants, who were then motivated to act on the basis of espoused moral principles (Cropanzano et al., 2003). Yet it is not clear why each motivation would be elicited rather than the other.

One way to further explore rule breaking as a reaction to customer-directed fairness is to investigate how customer characteristics affect the employee's scope of justice. Justice rules are confined to situations deemed to be within the scope of their application, a determination that relies heavily on "the perceiver's sociocategorical structuring of the situation" (Wenzel, 2000; p. 158). An observer may conclude, for example, that the application of a specific rule applies only to humans, or only to adults, or only to adults within a certain group, etc. Importantly, inclusion within the scope of justice has been shown to be a function of perceived similarity between the observer and the target recipient (Clayton & Opatow, 2003; Boeckmann & Tyler, 1997)—and exclusion from the scope of justice a function of target dissimilarity (Hafer & Olson, 2003; Opatow, 1994). Therefore, a useful test of the scope of justice boundary conditions would involve measuring changes in the way employees react to customer fairness when the customers are perceived to be more or less similar to the employee. If the research on pro-customer rule breaking summarized above reveals mixed motives for rule breaking, then different motives may be elicited depending on identification of the customer as an in-group member. Customer characteristics would then moderate the relationship between customer-directed fairness and rule-breaking in the following way:

Hypothesis 11: An organization's customer-directed fairness and the customer's group affiliation have an interactive effect on pro-customer rule breaking, such that when a customer is perceived as part of an in-group, customer fairness has a negative effect on rule breaking.

Finally, Study 1 suggested the importance of customer identification as a practical consideration pertaining to service delivery politeness. Participants maintained a higher level of

politeness as long as they strongly identified with either the customers or the organization. When participants did not identify strongly with either, however, they expressed less politeness in their responses. This finding goes some distance toward validating customer identification as an important consideration for customer service managers, but such a prescriptive conclusion would be more concrete if this finding was replicated. Therefore, in addition to testing the two hypotheses developed above, Study 2 seeks a replication of the interactive effects of customer identification and organizational identification on politeness.

Hypothesis 12: Customer identification and organizational identification have an interactive effect on politeness, such that when organizational identification is low, customer identification has a positive effect on politeness.

STUDY 2

Participants and Design

Participants were again recruited from a pool of upper-level business undergraduate students who were offered course credit in exchange for their participation. Of the 100 participants, 49% were male; approximately 74% were Caucasian, 12% were Hispanic, 10% were Asian American, 1% were Native American, and the remaining 2% did not identify ethnicity.

Experimental conditions consisted of the following: 1) the organization's customer-directed fairness, again in the form of perceived treatment of prior applicants, and 2) the customer's group characteristics, in which applicants to the business school were identified as either currently enrolled at the participants' university (in-group), or were applying externally from a separate local college (out-group). These conditions resulted in a 2 (customer fair vs. customer unfair) x 2 (in-group vs. out-group) factorial design, and individuals were randomly assigned to one of the four experimental conditions.

Procedure and Manipulations

The experimental procedure was identical to that used in Study 1, with participants being instructed to represent the business school in a new electronic help-desk initiative by responding to the email inquiries of potential applicants. After being instructed in the purpose and procedures of the task, participants were asked to respond to six emails in an electronic inbox, after which they filled out a survey.

Customer fairness. The customer fairness manipulation was modified from Study 1 in order to confirm whether justice rule violations were occurring, and whether these violations were interpreted by participants in terms of overall fairness. Participants were again instructed to read a sample email exchange between their trainer and an applicant. In this scenario, the writer of the email reported receiving erroneous information from the admissions office regarding an interview requirement for application to the business school. Because she followed this false information, her application was subsequently rejected, and she was seeking for advice and assistance. Customer-directed fairness was manipulated through the trainer's response. In the customer-fair condition, the trainer was apologetic for the misinformation, took full responsibility on behalf of the admissions office, and then gave her information to correct her previous misconceptions about the application process. In the customer-unfair condition, the trainer did not apologize or take responsibility, but argued that it was the applicant's responsibility to ensure she had the correct information. Here too, he corrected her misconception by providing the right information. Trainer responses in both conditions used the same number of words.

Group characteristics. The group characteristics manipulation involved changing the applicants' current academic institution. During their training, participants in the in-group condition were told that applicants were currently enrolled at the participants' university, while those in the out-group condition were told that applicants were applying externally and were currently enrolled at a separate local college. In addition, several of the applicant emails contained self-identifying information consistent with the experimental condition (e.g. "I am

currently enrolled at [business school]..." versus "I am currently enrolled at [name of alternative college]...").

Measures

Manipulation checks. Customer-directed fairness was assessed with two sets of items intended to measure justice rule violations and overall judgments of fairness to ensure the participants were interpreting the justice rule violations in terms of fairness. Therefore, the first set of measures assessed the violation of Colquitt's (2001) interpersonal justice rules: 1) "Has the trainer treated the applicant in a polite and helpful manner?", and 2) "Has the trainer treated the applicant with respect?" ($\alpha = .96$). The second set of items assessed overall fairness with the following two items: 1) "The treatment the applicant received from the trainer was fair", and 2) "Most people would say the applicant was treated fairly by the trainer" ($\alpha = .94$). All measures were recorded on a five-point Lykert type scale with the following endpoints: 1 = *Not at all*, 5 = *Always*.

For the group characteristics manipulation check, participants were asked to check one of the following two statements regarding the applicants: 1) "Most of the emails seemed to come from [name of participants' university] students", or 2) "Most of the emails seemed to come from [name of separate local college] students". Responses were coded with a one when participants marked the former, and a zero if they marked the latter.

Dependent measures. All dependent measures were identical to those used in Study 1, including measures of organizational identification (Cronbach's alpha: $\alpha = .85$), customer

identification, OCB, task extensiveness, politeness (inter-rater correlation: $r = .91$), and pro-customer rule breaking (inter-rater correlation: $r = .85$).

RESULTS

Manipulation checks for the customer-directed fairness manipulation and the customer characteristics manipulation were confirmed with 2 (customer fairness: fair vs. unfair) x 2 (customer characteristics: in-group vs. out-group) between-subjects ANOVAs. Results showed that the customer-directed fairness manipulation had a strong effect on perceived customer-directed interactional justice rule violations ($F_{(1, 99)} = 70.78, p < .01; M_{Fair} = 4.47, M_{Unfair} = 2.53$), as well as global justice judgments of perceived customer treatment ($F_{(1, 99)} = 35.94, p < .01; M_{Fair} = 4.24, M_{Unfair} = 2.91$). However, the customer fairness manipulation had no significant effect on perceived customer characteristics ($F_{(1, 99)} = .1, n.s.$). In addition, the customer characteristics manipulation demonstrated a significant effect on the perceived customer group affiliation ($F_{(1, 99)} = 130.26, p < .01; M_{In-group} = 0.88, M_{Out-group} = 0.12$), but not on perceived interactional justice rule violations ($F_{(1, 99)} = .95, n.s.$) or global justice judgments ($F_{(1, 99)} = .04, n.s.$).

Hypotheses Testing

Means, standard deviations, and zero-order correlation coefficients for the dependent measures are reported in Table 5. Interestingly, OCB is positively correlated with customer identification and customer group affiliation, suggesting an interesting but unexpected finding. Because these hypotheses all involve the influence of socio-categorical perceptions on customer service delivery, a number of demographic variables were entered as covariates in the ANOVAs and as control variables in the regression equations. These variables included participants' age, gender, and the number of semesters (if any) spent at the separate local college specified in the customer out-group condition.

Hypothesis 10 predicted that customer-directed fairness and customer group characteristics would interact to influence customer identification, such that customer fairness would have a positive effect on customer identification when the customer was perceived as an in-group member. This hypothesis was supported in a 2 (employee justice: fair vs. unfair) \times 2 (customer justice: fair vs. unfair) between-subjects ANOVA (see Table 6), which revealed a significant interaction term on customer identification ($F_{(1, 99)} = 4.14, p < .05$). Simple effects tests demonstrated that customer-directed fairness had a significant positive effect on customer identification when customers demonstrated in-group characteristics ($F_{(1, 49)} = 4.72, p < .05; M_{Fair} = 4.52, M_{Unfair} = 3.62$), but not when they demonstrated out-group characteristics ($F < 1, n.s.; M = 3.76$). Thus, customer identification was highest when customers were perceived to be in-group members who were also treated fairly by the organization (see Figure 3). No other effects were significant on either organizational or customer identification.

Hypothesis 11 predicted that customer-directed fairness and customer group characteristics would interact to influence the amount of pro-customer rule breaking, such that customer fairness would be negatively related to rule breaking when customers demonstrated in-group characteristics. This hypothesis was supported in a between-subjects ANOVA (see Table 6), which revealed a significant interaction term on pro-customer rule breaking ($F_{(1, 99)} = 5.44, p < .05$). The form of the interaction can be observed in Figure 4, which suggests that customer fairness is negatively related to rule breaking for in-group customers, but positively related to rule breaking for out-group customers. Simple effects tests were conducted to further explore the interaction; however, the tests were inconclusive because no simple effects were shown to be significantly different from zero. That is, customer fairness had no significant

effect on rule breaking in the in-group condition ($F_{(1,49)} = 2.75, n.s.$) or the out-group condition ($F_{(1,49)} = 3.22, n.s.$), while group characteristics had no significant effect on rule breaking in the fair condition ($F_{(1,39)} = 3.49, n.s.$) or the unfair condition ($F_{(1,47)} = 1.58, n.s.$). Therefore, the exact form of the interaction remains undetermined, as we can only conclude that the simple effects are not identical, and that at least one of them is not equal to zero. However, because of the significant main interaction term (illustrated in the plotted estimated marginal means, Figure 4), the data provide support for Hypothesis 11.

Finally, Hypothesis 12 proposed a replication of Study 1's findings that organizational identification would be related to task extensiveness (12a), and that organizational identification and customer identification would have interactive effects on politeness, such that customer identification is positively related to politeness when organizational identification is low (12b). Both hypotheses were investigated using stepwise regression analysis, which included age, gender, and the number of semesters spent at the alternative college in the first step, organizational and customer identification in the second step, and an interaction term in the third step. Results showed no support for a main effect of organizational identification on task extensiveness ($\beta = .35, n.s.$). However, the replication of an interactive effect on politeness was marginally supported ($\beta = -.98, p = .09$), thereby providing some basis for confirming the interaction in Study 1.

One final note concerns an interesting but unexpected finding: the positive effect of customer group affiliation on OCB. In this study, participants volunteered to fill out an additional survey for the organization more often when customers had in-group rather than out-

group characteristics. This finding is particularly interesting when noting that customer group affiliation did not have any direct effects on task extensiveness or politeness. Therefore, although customer group affiliation seems to have had minimal impact on service delivery, it also motivated participants to aid the organization more when customers were perceived to be in-group members.

GENERAL DISCUSSION

As boundary spanning agents, customer service providers must be attuned to the divergent interests of their employing organization and multiple external constituencies. While prior research has shown organizational identification to be a significant determinant of job performance and citizenship, this research introduces the notion of customer identification and shows how an organization's treatment of customers impacts customer identification and customer service behavior. Two studies above provide evidence that an organization's customer-directed and employee-directed fairness are positively related to customer identification and organizational identification, respectively. Study 2 also demonstrated that customer-directed fairness interacts with customer characteristics to predict customer identification. In addition, both studies also suggest that these two identity variables interact to predict politeness in service encounters. Finally, customer-directed fairness impacted pro-customer rule breaking, particularly when customers were perceived to be in-group members. These findings support the notion introduced by relational models of fairness that fair treatment signals respect, as well as the predictions of social identity theory that individuals generally identify with respected social groups. Below, I discuss these findings and provide some theoretical and practical implications.

Organizational Fairness and Identification

Organizational fairness has traditionally been framed as a social exchange phenomenon, describing how the actions of one actor toward another actor are interpreted and reciprocated by the receiver (Masterson et al., 2000). Alternatively, social identification is based on cognitions of oneness, as individuals appropriate their individual identity to an organization or

other group. These two prolific areas of research have therefore remained largely separate, while even those studies incorporating both approaches have studied them as two distinct processes (e.g. van Knippenberg & van Schie, 2000). Therefore, one of the primary contributions of this research is in positioning the social implications of fairness as antecedents of self-enhancement identity processes. According to relational models of justice, the fairness of a group's procedural functions serves to define social roles and status by suggesting the extent to which the group respects and values individual members. Meanwhile, according to social identity theory, individuals seek identification with groups or individuals who are highly regarded, as a means toward self-enhancement. This research shows that an organization's treatment of constituent groups has a powerful shaping on social ordering as perceived by employees.

In spite of the fact that an organization's treatment of customers was shown to affect employees' customer identification, the identity variables utilized in this study proved largely non-existent as mediators of the effects of fairness on customer service delivery. Organizational identification did not mediate the effects of employee-directed fairness on any service behaviors, with the exception of a very modest mediation effect on task extensiveness. Meanwhile, customer-directed fairness influenced rule breaking, but this effect was not mediated by customer identification. And although identity variables were not useful mediators, customer and organizational identification nevertheless interacted to influence politeness. Thus, the respective effects of fairness and identity variables on service delivery appear to be both significant and largely distinct.

Based on the lack of mediation findings, future research should consider alternative relationships between fairness and identity. For example, identity might moderate the effects of fairness on service delivery, as suggested by the Study 2 findings, where customer group characteristics interacted with customer fairness to influence rule breaking. Future research can explore these effects among a broader set of constituencies, as well as investigate additional moderating variables and changes in process over time. Study 2 introduced one moderating variable in the form of customer characteristics, showing how the perceived in-group status of customers tended to increase the positive association between customer-directed fairness and customer identification.

Customer Fairness and Pro-Customer Rule Breaking

These studies also reaffirm the observations of Evans and Gilliland (2009) by showing how employees react to customer-directed fairness in the form of rule breaking that benefits the customers at the cost of the organization. Considering how this relationship runs counter to social identity processes, it appears likely that participants are acting not from relational motives, but from deonance, or an orientation guided by moral values (Cropanzano et al., 2003). Study 2 showed that this deontic reaction may be contingent on whether the target group is perceived to fall within the employee's scope of justice, and that this scope may be influenced by perceived similarities between the employee and the customers. Future research can continue to investigate possible moderators of this relationship, as well as developing the idea of deonance as a motivator. For example, past research has explained why individuals engage in retribution toward moral offenders—even at the individual's own cost (Turillo, Folger, Lavelle, Umphress, & Gee, 2002). Yet in this research, opportunities for retribution were limited, given

the short duration of the study and the social distance between the offender and the observer. Another possible deontic reaction could involve not retribution toward the offender, but restitution for the victim. Again, however, restitution was impossible in the scenarios of this research, which were based on service encounters where individuals engage in one-shot interactions with a customer (Guttek et al., 1999). Finally, and perhaps most plausible in this research, observing the unfair treatment of a customer may have elicited moral awareness in participants, such that they were more able to apprehend the morally salient features of their job task, or felt increasingly motivated by guiding moral principles. Future research can continue to examine these reaction choices, as well as each one's antecedents and effects.

Practical Implications

This research introduces the concept of customer identification as an important component of the employee-customer relationship. Customer identification in both studies interacted with organizational identification to influence the politeness of service encounters. Considering the importance of politeness as a driver of customer satisfaction and relationship marketing, service managers may wish to consider the importance of customer identification as a motivator of service quality. When identification is encouraged, either explicitly or through organizational policies (such as in this research), service providers may be more motivated to engage in personal, extra-role customer service that enhances the customer experience. More broadly, organizational leaders may wish to consider how their policies build and shape employees' multiple identities toward organizational constituents, and how these identities ultimately affect the quality of interactions between employees and outsiders.

In addition, this research also shows how an organization's treatment of customers affects a service employee's willingness to break formal organizational rules for the benefit of the customer. Some scholars have suggested that rule breaking is largely beneficial for organizational performance (Morrison, 2006); but many scenarios suggest a tradeoff between serving the organization and serving the customers. Interestingly, this research shows that rule breaking is less a product of an employee's relationship to the organization or the customers, and more a product of how well the customers are treated by the organization. Managers may therefore wish to consider how customer-directed policies directly motivate service employee performance that may or may not be beneficial to the organization.

CONCLUSION

As boundary-spanning agents, customer service representatives must be attuned to the needs and interests of customers as well as their employing organization. This research suggests that employees in boundary-spanning roles may cultivate multiple social identities toward the organization and its customers, which can interact to affect service delivery. Furthermore, the organization may be a primary driver of these multiple identities by demonstrating the social value of actors through fair treatment. Although identity and fairness acted as significant influences on service performance, however, they appear to be separate motivations that lead to separate discretionary behaviors. This research therefore begins to parse out the multiple motivations inherent in the complex work of meeting both customer and organizational needs.

APPENDIX A

TABLES

TABLE 1

**Means, Standard Deviations, Correlations, and Indices of Agreement
for all Dependent Measures in Study 1**

	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1 Customer-Directed Fairness	0.46	0.50	-							
2 Employee-Directed Fairness	0.41	0.49	0.14	-						
3 Customer Identification	3.56	1.57	0.25 **	0.08	-					
4 Organizational Identification	3.79	0.74	0.02	0.29 **	0.17	.82 ^α				
5 Task Extensiveness	554	227	0.02	0.35 **	0.07	0.38 **	-			
6 OCB - Volunteer Behavior	0.28	0.45	0.15	0.09	0.15	0.19 *	0.28 **	-		
7 Politeness	3.59	0.96	0.07	0.33 **	0.13	0.28 **	0.51 **	0.07	.88 ^r	
8 Pro-customer rule breaking	2.1	0.86	-0.24 *	-0.03	0.04	-0.17	0.01	0.10	-0.21 *	.87 ^r

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

^α Cronbach's coefficient alpha

^r Pearson's correlation coefficient (interrater reliability)

TABLE 2
Analysis of Variance Summary for Study 1

Source	df	Customer Identification		Organizational Identification		Organizational Citizenship Behavior		Task Extensiveness		Politeness		Pro-Customer Rule Breaking	
		F	η^2	F	η^2	F	η^2	F	η^2	F	η^2	F	η^2
Customer Fairness (CF)	1	6.83 **	0.06	0.19	0.00	0.83	0.00	0.07	0.00	0.06	0.00	6.20 *	0.07
Employee Fairness (EF)	1	0.27	0.00	9.92 **	0.08	0.36	0.00	15.80 **	0.15	11.61 **	0.12	0.01	0.00
CF X EF	1	0.02	0.00	1.51	0.01	0.83	0.00	2.29	0.03	0.03	0.00	0.00	0.00
Error	115	(2.18)		(0.56)		(.21)		(43,234)		(0.81)		(0.67)	

Note: Values enclosed in parentheses represent mean square errors.

** $p < .01$

* $p < .05$

TABLE 3
Regression Analyses for Customer Service Behaviors in Study 1

Variables	Task Extensiveness		Organizational Citizenship Behavior		Politeness		Pro-Customer Rule Breaking	
	β	s.e.	β	s.e.	β	s.e.	β	s.e.
Intercept								
Organizational Identification (OI)	0.53 *	63.45	-0.03	0.13	0.68 **	0.28	-0.32	0.26
Customer Identification (CI)	0.36	70.64	-0.37	0.14	1.07 *	0.32	-0.26	0.29
OI * CI	-.43	17.68	.57	.04	-1.15 *	.08	.37	.07
<i>F</i>	5.92 **		2.39 ?		4.38 **		1.33	
<i>R</i> ²	.15		.06		.12		.04	
Adj. <i>R</i> ²	.13		.04		.10		.01	
<i>n</i>	103		116		96		99	

** $p < .01$

* $p < .05$

? $p < .10$

TABLE 4
Results Summary for Study 1

Hypothesis	Result
Effects of fairness on identification	
H1 EF has a positive effect on OI.	<i>supported</i>
H2 CF has a positive effect on CI	<i>supported</i>
Identification as a mediator between fairness and customer service behavior.	
H3a EF has a positive effect on task extensiveness.	<i>supported</i>
H3b EF has a positive effect on OCB.	not supported
H4a OI mediates the effect of EF on task extensiveness	<i>supported</i>
H4b OI mediates the effect of EF on OCB.	not supported
H5a CF has a positive effect on politeness.	not supported
H5b CF has a positive effect on pro-customer rule breaking.	<i>supported</i>
H6a CI mediates the effect of CF on politeness.	not supported
H6b CI mediates the effect of CF on pro-customer rule breaking.	not supported
Effects of identification on customer service behavior.	
H7a OI has a positive main effect on task extensiveness.	<i>supported</i>
H7b OI has a positive main effect on OCB.	<i>marginally supported</i>
H7c OI has a positive main effect on politeness.	<i>supported</i>
H7d OI has a positive main effect on pro-customer rule breaking.	<i>marginally supported</i>
H8a CI has a positive main effect on politeness.	not supported
H8b CI has a positive main effect on pro-customer rule breaking.	not supported
H9a OI and CI have an interactive effect on politeness.	<i>supported</i>
H9b OI and CI have an interactive effect on pro-customer rule breaking.	not supported

CF = Customer-directed fairness

CI = Customer identification

EF = Employee-directed fairness

OI = Organizational identification

OCB = Organizational citizenship behavior

TABLE 5
Means, Standard Deviations, Correlations, and Indices of Agreement
for all Dependent Measures in Study 2

	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1 Customer-Directed Fairness	0.45	0.50	-							
2 Customer Group Affiliation	0.51	0.50	0.08	-						
3 Customer Identification	3.91	1.66	0.10	0.09	-					
4 Organizational Identification	3.83	0.76	0.02	0.07	0.17	.85 ^α				
5 Task Extensiveness	535	205	0.03	-0.04	0.06	-0.03	-			
6 OCB - Volunteer Behavior	0.35	0.48	0.01	0.30 **	0.22 *	0.12	0.24 *	-		
7 Politeness	2.9	0.73	0.24 *	0.15	0.03	-0.05	0.33 **	0.22 *	.91 ^r	
8 Pro-customer rule breaking	2.32	1.13	0.02	-0.06	-0.04	-0.02	0.18	-0.15	-0.22 *	.85 ^r

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

^α Cronbach's coefficient alpha

^r Pearson's correlation coefficient (interrater reliability)

TABLE 6
Analysis of Variance Summary for Study 2

Source	df	Customer Identification		Organizational Identification		Task Extensiveness		Organizational Citizenship Behavior		Politeness		Pro-Customer Rule Breaking	
		F	η^2	F	η^2	F	η^2	F	η^2	F	η^2	F	η^2
Customer Fairness (CF)	1	0.75	0.01	0.18	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.23	0.00	3.25	0.04	0.11	0.00
Customer Group Affiliation (GA)	1	0.50	0.01	0.63	0.01	0.38	0.01	8.38 **	0.10	0.76	0.01	0.14	0.00
CF X GA	1	4.14 *	0.04	0.38	0.00	0.02	0.00	3.89	0.05	0.05	0.00	5.44 *	0.06
Error	97	(2.55)		(.60)		(41,382)		(.20)		(0.47)		(1.26)	

Note: Values enclosed in parentheses represent mean square errors.

** $p < .01$

* $p < .05$

TABLE 7
Regression Analyses for Customer Service Behaviors in Study 2

Variables	Task Extensiveness		Organizational Citizenship Behavior		Politeness		Pro-Customer Rule Breaking	
	β	s.e.	β	s.e.	β	s.e.	β	s.e.
Intercept								
Age	-12.27	8.84	0.00	0.02	-0.26	0.03	0.03	0.05
Gender	-34.00	43.29	-0.18	0.09	-0.05	0.15	0.43	0.25
Out-group experience	11.39	22.63	-0.02	0.05	0.10	0.08	0.01	0.13
Customer Identification (CI)	100.18	60.72	0.17	0.14	0.36	0.22	-0.40	0.35
Organizational Identification (OI)	100.69	71.53	0.19	0.16	0.38	0.26	-0.48	0.41
CI * OI	-25.57	15.53	-.03	.04	-0.10 [?]	0.06	0.10	0.09
<i>F</i>	1.25		2.32		1.55		.92	
<i>R</i> ²	.10		.15		.11		.07	
Adj. <i>R</i> ²	.02		.09		.04		-.01	
<i>n</i>	88		98		92		92	

** $p < .01$

* $p < .05$

? $p < .10$

APPENDIX B

FIGURES

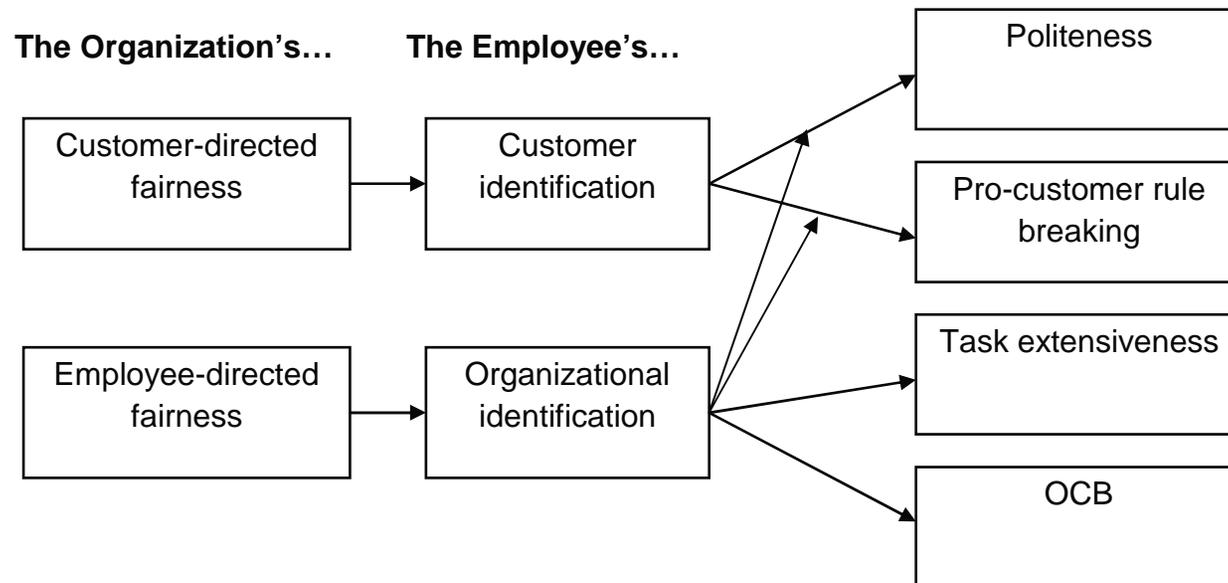


Figure 1

Summary representation of hypotheses: Study 1

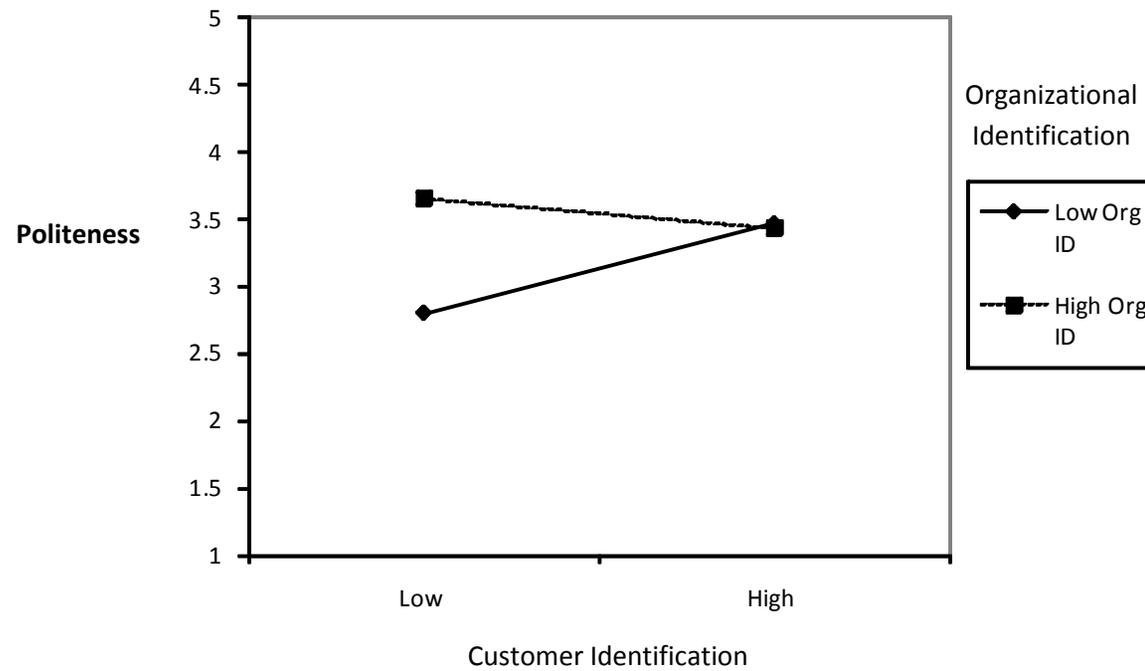


Figure 2

Interactive effects of customer identification and organizational identification
on service delivery politeness (Study 1)

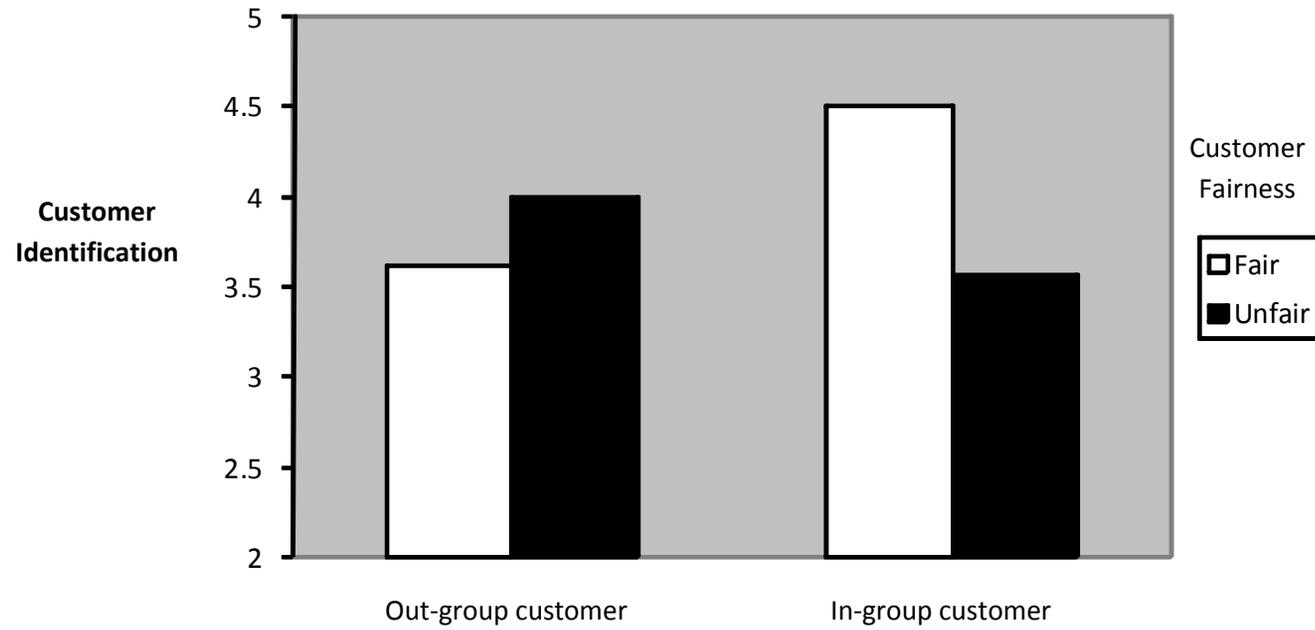


Figure 3

Interactive effects of customer-directed fairness and customer group affiliation on customer identification (Study 2)

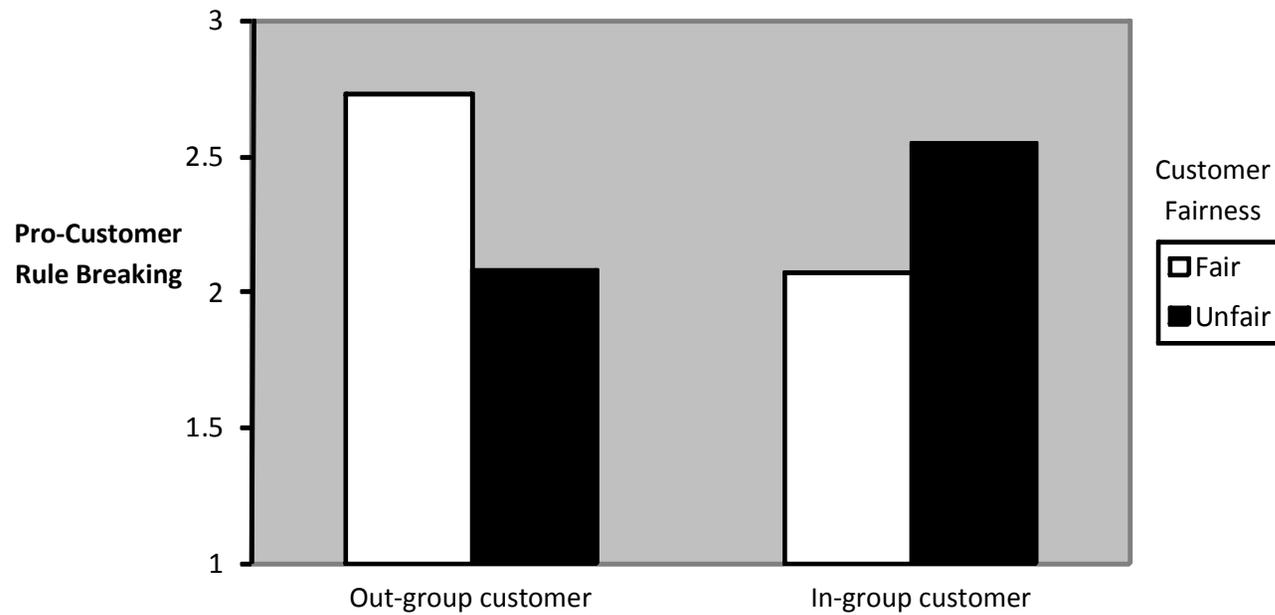


Figure 4

Interactive effects of customer-directed fairness and customer group affiliation on pro-customer rule breaking (Study 2)

APPENDIX C
SCALES AND MEASURES

Employee-Directed Interactional Fairness Scale (adapted from Colquitt, 2001)

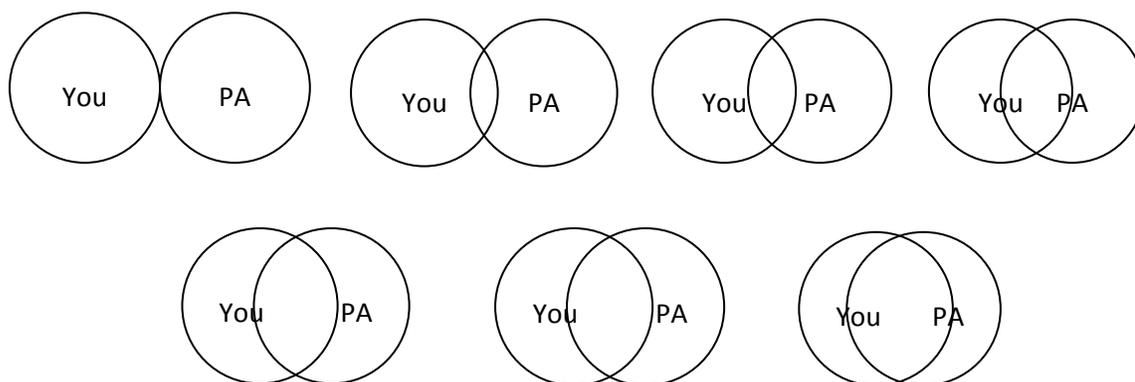
1. To what extent has he/she treated you in a polite manner?
2. Has he/she treated you with dignity?
3. Has he/she treated you with respect?
4. Has he/she refrained from improper remarks or comments?
5. Has he/she been candid in communications with you?
6. Has he/she explained the procedures thoroughly?
7. Were his/her explanations regarding the procedures reasonable?
8. Has he/she communicated details in a timely manner?
9. Has he/she seemed to tailor communications to individuals' specific needs?

Organizational Identification Scale (adapted from Mael & Ashforth, 1992)

1. When someone criticizes (name of school), it feels like a personal insult.
2. I am very interested in what others think about (name of school).
3. When I talk about this school, I usually say "we rather than 'they'
4. This school's successes are my successes.
5. When someone praises this school, it feels like a personal compliment.
6. If a story in the media criticized the school, I would feel embarrassed.

Customer Identification Scale (adapted from Tropp & Wright, 2001)

For the following item, please circle the pair of circles that you feel best represents *your own level of identification with the potential applicants (PA) who wrote emails to which you responded.*



APPENDIX D

SUBJECT DISCLOSURE FORM

You are being invited to voluntarily participate in *Student Mentorship*, a research experiment being conducted by researchers at the University of Arizona's Eller College of Business. The purpose of the study is to investigate how Eller students respond to student applicant inquiries regarding the college. You are eligible to participate if you are 18 years of age or older, and are currently registered as a student at the University of Arizona.

If you agree to participate, your participation will involve writing a number of email responses, and filling out a survey regarding your experience. The total time will take less than 60 minutes. You may choose not to answer some or all of the questions on the survey. We will be happy to answer any questions you have. All responses are anonymous, meaning your name and your responses will not be connected in any way.

Your performance in this experiment will not have any adverse affect on any of your grades or your relationship to the University. There are no known risks associated with participating in this research, and there are no known individual benefits associated with participation either.

You can obtain further information from the principal investigators, Professor Stephen Gilliland, at (520) 621-9324, or from Joel M. Evans, PhD candidate, at (520) 621-5937. If you have questions concerning your rights as a research subject, you may call the University of Arizona Human Subjects Protection Program office at (520) 626-6721. Retain this form for your records.

By participating in the study, you are giving permission for the investigator to use your information for research purposes. An alternative is to not participate in this study.

Thank you,

Joel M. Evans (Project Investigator)
Graduate Student, Management and Organizations
University of Arizona
jmevans@email.arizona.edu

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