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McDowall, A. & Fletcher, C., Employee Development – an Organizational Justice Perspective

Keywords

Procedural justice, interactional justice, employee development, workplace attitudes, feedback climate, 360-degree feedback

Abstract

The present study examined possible links between elements of perceived procedural justice, global fairness perception and attitudinal measures in a review/ development context. Organizational justice and possible correlates were reviewed resulting in four hypotheses. Data was collected from 132 employees of the UK arm of an international new media agency via a web-based survey. It was found that a psychometric instrument based on Gilliland's (1993) ten rules of procedural justice proved a valuable framework in a review and development context once condensed to a smaller number of factors. Of these, two factors relating to Interpersonal Effectiveness and Formal System Characteristics respectively were found to be of importance in predicting fairness ratings of the development process. The impact of 360-degree feedback on procedural justice perceptions was also examined in between group comparisons. Implications for further research into development techniques using organizational justice frameworks and recommendations for practice were discussed.

Introduction

In general organizational contexts have undergone fundamental changes. The prevalence of long-term relational psychological contracts, based on a 'job for life' in return for loyalty, is diminishing (Rousseau, 1995). Instead, the prevalence of a growing number of short-term contracts and portfolio workers, combined with increasing employee mobility, has been observed. At the same time, the value of human capital has increasingly been recognised and it has been suggested that 'organizations should become platforms for individuals, as opposed to individuals becoming resources for organizations' (Patterson, 2001, p.384).

Inexorably then, it has become the employers' responsibility to develop and prepare people for their next job: a message that has registered with the workforce. Thus, it is in an organization's best interest to focus on effective staff development strategies, since companies strong on training and development may be preferred over those offering the greatest rewards. As a result the onus is on researcher-practitioners in the field to delineate which factors underlie a fair and effective development process. Indeed, the apparent lack of research in the field seems at odds with recent trends in the labour market, where employability and transferable skills have become the new buzzwords.

One technique for developing individuals is through the social and motivational aspects of appraisal or review processes (Fletcher, 2001). The terms are often used interchangeably, although it seems to be conventional to use the term appraisal in relation to the formal rating of performance in the literature, whereas the term review is used widely in human resource practice, and tends to also encompass the developmental aspects of appraisal. In this paper, the terms 'review' and 'employee development' are going to be employed and will refer to a range of processes. It is proposed here that employee development could succinctly be classified as methodologies that have the aim of promoting both the professional and personal growth of individuals in the workplace, encompassing techniques such as formal performance ratings, multi-source feedback techniques, career discussions with managers and the agreement of personal development plans. Most studies to date have tended to concentrate on performance or rewards rather than development, perhaps reflecting the traditional practice of retrospective assessment (Nathan , Mohrman & Milliman, 1991). Models developed in this

context have emphasised the importance of understanding both the raters' and ratees' attitudes and beliefs about appraisal and the organizational context, as prevailing attitudes can put a 'ceiling' on the effectiveness of any method (Cleveland & Murphy, 1992; Murphy & Cleveland, 1991, 1995; Murphy, Cleveland; Henle, Morgan, Orth & Tziner, 1996).

Furthermore it has been noted that singular initiatives, such as the instigation of personal development plans, should be bound into a context of overall commitment to employee development and hence into an organizational strategy characterised by clear elements of performance management; these include enhanced communication within the organization and instigation of appropriate development methodologies (Fletcher & Williams, 1992; Williams, 1998). If these aspects are incorporated successfully, a positive impact on a variety of outcome measures should result, such as increased job satisfaction, job involvement or organizational commitment (Fletcher & Williams, 1996).

Feedback Effects and an Organizational Justice Perspective

To examine the impact of development methodologies existing literature on feedback effects may provide a useful research perspective when combined with an organizational justice perspective. Generic research findings about the impact of feedback have been largely equivocal (Kluger & DeNisi, 1996), and it is not always the case that positive feedback results in positive effects, and negative feedback in negative effects (Bastos & Fletcher, 1995). It is possible that organizational justice frameworks could account for this phenomenon, with feedback only having an effect if it is perceived as just and fair. There is a substantial body of literature concerned with fairness in organizations, which is briefly reviewed here. The term 'organizational justice' was originally coined by Greenberg in the 1980s (Cropanzano & Greenberg, 1997) and has generally been postulated to encompass three different components (e.g. Folger & Cropanzano, 1998; Bowen, Gilliland& Folger, 1999):

- Distributive justice: this is largely based on equity theory (Adams, 1965) and refers to the perceived fairness of outcomes that an individual receives (e.g. Cropanzano & Folger, 1991)

- Procedural justice: the perceived fairness of procedures which are used to determine outcome decisions (Folger & Konovsky, 1989)

- Interactional justice: the term was conceived by Bies and Moag (1986) and relates to the perceived fairness of the interpersonal communication relating to organizational procedures.

Although early justice frameworks tended to concentrate on distributive justice, since the early 80s the focus has shifted to the examination of procedural justice (e.g. Folger & Greenberg, 1985). Two theoretical orientations have predominated. Thibaut and Walker (1975) put forward a legal perspective that emphasized the role of 'voice' or 'process control'. In their view individuals see decisions as fair when they perceive adequate opportunity to participate in the decision-making process. In contrast, Leventhal (1980) emphasised cognitive processes and how the violation or fulfilment of procedural rules influences overall fairness perceptions.

Prompted by the initial work of Bies and his associates (e.g. Folger & Bies, 1989, Tyler & Bies, 1990) research into procedural justice has been augmented by accounts of its social aspects. However, it has been disputed whether these social aspects are a separate construct, or whether procedural justice might not better be conceived in terms of two sub-components that are a) fair formal procedures and b) interactional justice (Greenberg, 1990). The present research subscribes to the latter approach, as it is argued that the way organizational decisions and processes are communicated is naturally interdependent with the actual implementation.

Research relating to this domain has largely been confined to the US, where fairness of organizational decision making has received much attention in relation to the concept of the psychological contract (Rousseau, 1995), as well as in relation to assessment and selection (Gilliland, 1993, 1995; Bauer, Truxillo, Sanchez, Ferrara & Campion, 2001) and also in the context of performance appraisal (Erdogan, Kraimer, & Liden, 2001). It is widely believed that appraisal systems are by their nature unfair (Levine, 1975), as employers are more concerned with the assessment of performance, whereas employees expect more from the developmental and motivational aspects (Fletcher, 1997). Research on the latter domain is somewhat sparse, thus a perspective concerning itself with

fairness may prove useful for informing best practice in the context of employee development and pre-empting possible resistance to development processes.

Perceptions of procedural justice have consistently been shown to affect a variety of outcome variables (Flint, 1999) such as employee acceptance of performance appraisals (Greenberg, 1986; Landy, Barnes-Farell & Cleveland, 1980, Landy, Barnes & Murphy, 1978), organizational commitment (Konovsky and Cropanzano, 1991) or job satisfaction (Schaubroeck, May & Brown, 1994). Thus, it is postulated here that the characteristics of any review and development system are related both to an overall supportive feedback and communication structure, and to changes in attitudinal measures.

Based on Greenberg's (1986; 1990) work, Gilliland's (1993) model elucidated the role of organizational justice in selection by outlining how situational and personal conditions influence the perceived violation of distributive and procedural justice rules. Testing his theoretical account in practice, Gilliland (1995) went on to examine the association of ten rules of procedural justice (such as honesty, reconsideration opportunity, and two-way communication) with candidates' reactions to interview procedures. It was concluded that the provision of adequate explanations might alleviate otherwise negative reactions, that timely feedback is of prime importance and that the interpersonal effectiveness of the interviewer is a primary factor for interview reactions.

The present study attempts to transfer the said framework to a review and development context. It was hypothesized that Gilliland's (1993) rules of procedural justice could be condensed to a smaller number of factors, commensurate with Gilliland's (1993) tri-partite classification. As Table I shows this consisted of a) formal characteristics (of the procedure employed), b) explanation and c) interpersonal treatment.

Each of these dimensions was expected to correlate with an overall fairness rating of the review and development process. It was further anticipated that an overall fairness rating, as well as subcomponents of procedural justice, would correlate significantly and positively with organizational commitment and job satisfaction. Those who perceive the review process as fair may be more likely to feel emotionally committed to their organization, feel less likely to leave and feel more

committed to their job. Moreover, measures of procedural justice were also hypothesized to correlate positively with the feedback climate, operationalised here as feedback satisfaction, contact satisfaction (outside the review and development process) and perceived company support.

The impact of 360-degree feedback

The data presented here was collected via a web-based employee survey and was used to evaluate the effectiveness of recently introduced development initiatives in the London office of an international new media agency. These included 'Personal Development Champions', managers (other than the direct line manager) assigned to employees and whose role included the discussion and implementation of customised personal development plans. The survey aimed to evaluate the development processes and employee acceptance of the personal development champions. A pilot programme of 360-degree feedback used solely for developmental purposes had also recently been trialled with part of the work force. Multi-source/ multi-rater or 360-degree feedback methods generally entail an individual being rated from a variety of sources, such as peers, superiors, subordinates and occasionally customers, and usually includes a self-assessment. Such systems are assumed to offer certain advantages over singular-source appraisal, such as empowering employees, increasing self-awareness and serving as a diagnostic tool for pinpointing areas for personal development or performance optimisation. In addition, 360-degree feedback has been postulated to be inherently fairer and hence have greater face validity than monolithic systems (Fletcher & Baldry, 1999; Garavan, Morley & Flynn, 1997), as it is purported to be more balanced and rounded assessment. Therefore, it was hypothesised that the experience of 360-degree feedback-based reviews would have a positive effect on employees' procedural justice perceptions.

In summary, this paper is concerned with the exploration of factors underlying procedural justice in a review context, the correlates thereof and the impact of 360-degree feedback on fairness' perceptions. The experimental hypotheses were:

H_1: that Gilliland's (1993) ten rules of procedural justice could be condensed to three factors commensurate with his tri-partite classification

H_2: that sub-components of procedural justice would independently predict an overall fairness rating

H_3: that an overall fairness rating as well as sub-components of procedural justice would correlate significantly with organizational commitment, job satisfaction and the perceived feedback climate

H_4: that those who had experienced 360-degree feedback would perceive the review process as fairer than those who had not

Method

Scale Development

The first section of the survey instrument elicited relevant biographic information, such as age, tenure, sex and review experience to date. The second section consisted of a procedural justice scale operationalised as twenty-eight statements, which related to Gilliland's (1995) rules as set out in Table I:

Insert Table I about here

The third section of the questionnaire contained the Allen and Meyer (1990) organizational commitment scale, consisting of three subscales; namely for affective, normative and continuance commitment. The fourth section of the instrument elicited a global rating of job satisfaction as well as three items measuring the feedback climate; these were one-item measures of feedback satisfaction, contact satisfaction and perceived organizational support. The last section of the questionnaire invited participants' open comments with regard to issues raised by the survey.

Responses were scored categorically for biographical data, and continuously from 1 ('strongly disagree') to 7 ('strongly agree') for the scales employed, with negative items scored in reverse.

A pen and paper version of the questionnaire was piloted with thirteen individuals in order to ensure clarity - these were occupational psychologists, occupational psychology students and HR practitioners. The pilot sample included individuals

from the actual organization who were in a position to ensure face validity of the items, as well as individuals from outside the organization who provided an impartial perspective. Feedback on the layout and wording from the pilot sample considered all survey items relevant. Three items were reworded using the suggestions made by pilot respondents in order to eliminate ambiguous terms.

Survey Publication and Debriefing

The survey was published for a four-week period on the company's intranet. In order to avoid individual multiple responses each respondent was issued with a unique identity code that was only known to the researcher and that respondent. All participants were ensured confidentiality and anonymity, as all data was held and processed by an external researcher. An email was sent out prior to commencement of the survey containing contact details for the researcher and explaining that participation was not mandatory and participants could opt out of the submission of data at any point. Two emails reminding employees to complete the survey were sent, one after two weeks, one after three weeks. All participants were given information about the aim of the survey prior to the study and a synopsis of the findings was published on the company's intranet once all data was analysed.

Findings

All statistical analyses were computed using SPSS version 9.0 for Windows. Responses from six individuals were omitted from the analysis due to too much missing data. Missing data for individual analyses was deleted list-wise where necessary.

Descriptive Statistics

Data from 132 out of a pool of 297 individuals was collected, equalling a response rate of 45%. Respondents represented all four work-teams proportionally and covered all job roles; hence the sample was considered representative. Of the total respondents, 56.2% were male and 43.8% female. Three-quarters of the

respondents (76.5%) were less than thirty years old and 63.4% had been working for the company for less than a year; just over 30 percent had joined the organization by acquisition.

Approximately one third of participants had not yet had a review experience at the time of the survey and were unable to complete survey sections relating specifically to development initiatives, but were nevertheless able to complete all other items. Just over 50% had experienced their last review during the last three months and 52.8% had experienced 360-degree feedback as part of their review.

Explorative examination of participants' ratings (N=126) revealed six outliers, which were removed from the analysis as recommended by Tabachnik & Fidell (1996). Following reliability analysis, two items were removed from the affective commitment scale, a further two items from the continuance commitment scale, and lastly three items from the normative commitment scale. Coefficient alpha (0.49) for the affective commitment nevertheless remained low. The sub-scales were averaged to create an overall measure of organizational commitment, mean values were observed as per Table II:

Insert Table II about here

Participants' mean organisational commitment was below the scale midpoint (mean rating 3.43, SD=.74). Participants were on average satisfied with their job (mean rating 4.74, SD=1.68). With regard to the feedback climate, employees were satisfied with the amount of contact with their supervisor outside the review process (mean rating 4.28, SD=1.71), and with the overall perceived company support (mean rating 4.41, SD=1.67). However, they were less satisfied with the overall amount of feedback received (mean rating 3.82, SD=1.65). An average measure of the perceived feedback climate was computed from these three items, see Table III:

Insert Table III about here

Procedural Justice Scale

In order to determine the reliability of the procedural justice scale Cronbach's alpha was rerun successively, screening for scale reliability if item deleted. Henceforth seven items were removed, coefficient alpha for the curtailed scale of twenty-one statements was .72. With regard to the scale sub-structure, this reduced the number of items per subscale to three for job relatedness, one for consistency, three for feedback, one for development/review information, one for honesty, two for interpersonal effectiveness and lastly retaining the two items each for two-way communication and propriety of questions. Thus, neither 'opportunity to perform' nor 'reconsideration opportunity' were represented in the final item pool. Due to the particular nature of the sample (as fewer participants than anticipated had had a review/development experience) only 79 out of 133 participants had been in a position to respond to these items. Hence, findings derived from the subsequent factor analysis will have to be treated with caution, as correlation coefficients tend to be less reliable when estimated from small samples (Comrey & Lee, 1992).

H_1 stated that Gilliland's (1993) rules of procedural justice could be reduced to a smaller number of factors commensurate with his overall tripartite classification. As the aim of the analysis was a parsimonious solution that clearly differentiated underlying factors, Principal Components Analysis (PCA) was run on the condensed twenty-one-item scale; extracting Eigenvalues greater than 1 and suppressing values smaller than .3 in line with general convention (Tabachnik & Fidell, 1996). The initial rotated solution using Varimax procedure to maximise variance revealed a possible five-factor[1] structure. However, employing the Scree Test as a further visual criterion for determining the number of factors (Cattell, 1966), there was good reason to suspect a three-factor structure as the best fit. Also, taken together, the first three factors accounted for 54% of the overall variance.

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[1] Since Principal Components Analysis was used as the method of extraction, *Principal Components* were extracted. However for ease of reference and commensurate with common language, these are referred to as *Factors* in the following.

On this basis PCA was re-run requesting a forced three-factor solution. All twenty-one items were found to load strongly onto the factors extracted. Several of the marker variables (items loading on one factor only), exceeded loadings of .71, which is considered excellent (Comrey and Lee, 1992) and each factor was determined by more than four loadings greater than 0.4. Where multiple loadings were observed, items were assigned to the component where they displayed the higher loading (underlined), see Table IV:

Insert Table IV about here

The extracted factors were named and interpreted in order of magnitude:

- 'Review rapport and Interprsonal Effectiveness': the strongest factor would appear to largely mirror Gilliland's (1993) dimension of interpersonal treatment which parallels the concept of interactional justice, marked by items such as 'I felt that my personal development champion/ the person who did my review conveyed that he/she really understands me'.

- 'Interference with explanation': the second factor was overall negatively coloured (negatively worded items loading positively and positively worded items loading negatively) and related to the dimension of explanation from the selection context (Gilliland, 1993) marked by items such as 'Some questions asked during my personal development meeting /review were more intrusive than I would have liked them to be'.

- 'Adequacy of review characteristics and format': this would appear to mirror formal characteristics of the process (Gilliland, 1993), containing items such as 'The current format is comprehensive enough to give me an accurate review'.

apart from job relatedness which loaded onto 'adequacy of review format and characteristics' and two way communication which loaded onto 'review rapport and interpersonal effectiveness', none of the procedural justice rules loaded clearly onto the factors as commensurate with the original taxonomy.

The factor scores were saved using regression and used for the subsequent analysis.

Procedural justice: Further Analysis

In order to test H_2, standard multiple regression was run using the overall fairness rating as the criterion and the factor scores for review rapport and 'interpersonal effectiveness', 'interference with explanation' and 'adequacy of review characteristics and format' as predictors, see Table V:

Insert Table V about here

The model was overall significant ($F(3,71)=29.612$, $p<.001$). Two of the independent variables, 'review rapport and interpersonal effectiveness' ($p<.0001$) and 'adequacy of review characteristics and format' ($p<.0001$) were found to contribute significantly to the regression equation. In addition, it had been expected a priori that both the overall fairness rating and sub-components of procedural justice would be positively and significantly correlated with attitudinal outcome measures. For the full set of correlations see Table VI:

Insert Table VI about here

The perceived feedback climate was found to be highly significant and positively correlated with the overall fairness rating ($p<.01$) and with 'adequacy of review format and characteristics' ($p<.01$). The feedback climate was also significantly and positively associated with 'review rapport and interpersonal effectiveness' ($p<.05$) and significantly and negatively with 'interference with explanation' ($p<.05$). Job satisfaction was highly significant and positively correlated with 'review rapport and interpersonal effectiveness' ($p<.01$) and significantly and positively with the overall fairness rating ($p<.01$).

Partially disconfirming the hypothesis organizational commitment was not associated with any of the justice components or with the overall fairness rating.

Lastly, it had been hypothesized a priori that those who had experienced 360-degree feedback as part of their reviews would give a more positive overall fairness rating to the development process than those who had not. An

independent samples t-test was conducted to examine whether the difference between the two groups was statistically significant. The p value was in the expected direction and reached statistical significance for a one-tailed test at the 5% level (t (76)=1.76, p<0.05) [2].

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[2] Critical value for t for 60 degrees of freedom 1.67 or more extreme (Fischer & Yates, 1974)

Discussion

Principal Components Analysis revealed that, as hypothesised, Gilliland's (1993) ten rules of procedural justice could be condensed meaningfully to a three factor-solution for a review and development context mirroring the author's tri-partite classification. It is of interest to note that the strongest observed factor centred on interpersonal characteristics and communication effectiveness. This clearly parallels the concept of interactional justice, and hence would lend support to the notion that although social aspects may be considered as a sub-component of procedural justice, they nevertheless merit importance as a distinct factor. Indeed, communication and social interaction are crucial in a review context, as these are only meaningful when feedback is given. It is the feedback, and not the mere method itself, which enables the appraisee to make sense of information received and to further his/ her development. Indeed, the usefulness of sole performance-rating based appraisal has long been disputed (Fletcher, 1997, 2001). The results further link to other findings about workplace feedback sources (Bastos & Fletcher, 1995), which highlighted the importance of feedback-giver specific variables, such as the credibility of the feedback source. In general, the pattern observed here would seem to re-emphasize the need for future research into the feedback giver-feedback recipient relationship, as postulated by a recent review (Lefkowitz, 2000) which discussed potentially mediating factors such as supervisor affect ('liking').

Having tested the second working hypothesis, both 'adequacy of review format and characteristics' and 'review rapport and interpersonal effectiveness' (in order of magnitude) were significant independent predictors of the overall fairness rating, whereas 'Interference with Explanation' did not contribute significantly to the regression equation. This would seem in line with Greenberg (1986) who postulated formal characteristics and interactional justice as twin components of procedural justice, as opposed to Gilliland (1993), who added the third dimension of explanation. Furthermore this parallels findings in the context of selection by Bauer et al (2002), who developed the Selection Procedural Justice Scale (SPSJS) from Gilliland's rules and also found the third dimension of explanation to be redundant. Unfortunately, the sample size obtained here was insufficient for

further Confirmatory Factor Analysis contrasting a two-factor solution with a three-factor solution.

Having tested H$_3$ several strong associations between the survey sub-scales emerged. The perceived feedback climate was highly significant associated with the overall fairness rating and 'Adequacy of the Review Format and Characteristics', associated significantly with 'Review Rapport and Interpersonal Effectiveness' and associated significantly and negatively with 'Interference with Explanation'. Once more, these associations highlight the importance of interpersonal variables and lead on to a couple of possible inferences. Firstly, it may be that those who find their reviews to be conducted adequately and efficiently are more satisfied with the overall feedback climate. Secondly the reverse could be the case; that an adequate and supportive environment is an antecedent of efficient and satisfying development processes. Hence future studies may want to concentrate on solving this dilemma; whether an efficacious process sets the ground for a good feedback relationship, or whether good relationships make for a more efficacious process. Future studies should isolate relationships' distinctive characteristics such as liking or experience and their effects on other outcome measures, and how this in turn is influenced by the organizational context, thus building on earlier work within this domain (e.g. Nathan, Mohrmann, Milliman, 1991; Judge & Ferris, 1993). One implication for occupational psychology and human resource practice is that interpersonal aspects should deserve just as much attention as formal processes, hence amplifying the need for adequate interpersonal skills training for those in charge of development initiatives.

Following on from this, job satisfaction was highly significant and positively associated with 'review rapport and interpersonal effectiveness' and significantly with the overall fairness rating. As communication effectiveness is also perceived as a key element of performance management (Williams, 1998), this observed association confirms earlier findings by Fletcher and Williams (1996) who found that performance management initiatives had a marked impact on a variety of measures and in particular on job satisfaction.

Somewhat surprising, organizational commitment was not found to be associated with any of the fairness measures. The scale seemed to have suffered a loss of

reliability compared to earlier validation studies, in particular the sub-scale for affective commitment (see Table II). One possible explanation for this finding is that in today's team-based working environment employees find it difficult to comment on their emotional attachment to the organization, as the latter term may stand for a variety of entities such as the work team, the manager, or the organization as a whole. This was underlined by comments from several study participants who found survey items relating to organizational commitment difficult or even impossible to answer. Indeed, several studies and meta-analytic reviews have critically evaluated the validity and reliability of the three-component model (e.g. Mathieu & Zajac, 1990; Coleman, Irving, & Cooper, 1999; Ko, Price & Mueller, 1997).

The strongest observed correlation was between 'adequacy of review characteristics and format' and the overall fairness rating. This ties in with earlier findings on selection interviews, where formal characteristics had been found to be the most important predictor of candidates' procedural justice perceptions (Gilliland, 1995). In general, observed strong correlations between the overall fairness perception and attitudinal measures reinforce the need to consider and monitor user attitudes when implementing any review and development process, as otherwise even well implemented systems may fail due to a lack of acceptability. With regard to best practice, the findings reinforce the need for tight and effective processes within a development context, as otherwise a detrimental impact on individual fairness perceptions may occur. The findings also seem to be supported by existing frameworks utilising the concept of the psychological contract, a widely used metaphor for a set of mutual expectations about the workplace (e.g. Rousseau, 1995). Procedural justice is said to bear particular relevance to the experienced magnitude of contract violations, with a greater chance of more adverse reactions when rules of fairness have been dishonoured. It has been postulated that such potentially negative impact could be prevented by the implementation of fair procedures that promote accuracy, consistency and correctability (Rousseau, 1995), all of which would seem to tie in with 'adequacy of the review characteristics and format' as observed here.

With regard to the fourth experimental hypothesis, it had been postulated that those who had experienced 360-degree feedback as part of their reviews would

rate the development system as fairer, which was supported by the statistical comparison between the two groups. Thus it transpires that in this organizational context 360-degree feedback had a positive impact on employees' procedural justice perceptions, which lends a degree of support to its increasingly widespread implementation. Therefore an organizational justice framework could provide a valid theoretical perspective for further investigations into the efficacy of this method. This would then serve to supplement existing frameworks on feedback effects (e.g. London & Smither, 1995) as well as empirical findings concerned with the ratings themselves (e.g. Fletcher, Baldry & Cunningham-Snell, 1997).

Due to the sample size and the information collected it was not possible to conduct additional detailed post hoc comparisons in the present context. Without a doubt there is a dearth of long-term evaluations in contemporary corporate life, as any assessments more often than not tend to stop at the mere 'reactions level' assessing immediate reactions after participation in an activity (Kirkpatrick, 1959; in Patrick, 1992). Organizations would be well advised to monitor the effectiveness of their processes (both in terms of the amount of actual development activity as well as in terms of employee reactions to the process) as otherwise large budgets may be wasted on inefficient deliveries. Future controlled comparisons may reveal which individual variables and which differing review methods, for example 360-degree feedback as compared to the utilisation of structured career interviews, result in significant interactions with regard to system justice.

In all, the findings would seem to reinforce the need to bind review and appraisal systems into an overall organizational environment marked by good communication and support (Fletcher & Williams, 1996). Further explorations may want to concentrate on the impact of review and development processes on higher-level outcome measures, such as organizational culture, or 'hard data' such as turnover rates or absenteeism. A further way of approaching this would be to incorporate measures of employee perceptions of distributive justice; more specifically how candidates' perceptions of eventual rewards such as promotions, lateral movements or training received, and how these are influenced by formal characteristics and interpersonal aspects respectively.

The research presented here was an intra-organizational case study of pre-existing conditions, and future studies could build on this by conducting inter-group comparisons between different organizations and methodologies. This would then have the aim of drawing up a more precise framework with regard to practical aspects of development processes from an organizational justice perspective, delineating fair processes from both the employees' and the organizations' perspective. It may be noted that it was beyond the scope of the present research to incorporate perceptions of distributive justice as a control variable as in prior investigations (Cropranzano, Prehar & Chen, 2002). The distribution of outcomes resulting from any development process, in terms of pay rises, career movement, promotions and development interventions received (such as training or the realisation of personal development plans) is likely to have a bearing on procedural justice perceptions and this should be addressed in future studies.

The collection of data via the company intranet may also have limited the study, as differences between computer-based and pen and paper submissions have been demonstrated (Stanton, 1998; Smith & Leigh, 1997). Nonetheless, the method of data collection pre-empted multiple malicious data submissions and candidates were given the choice to opt out of the survey at any time. In addition participants' responses were kept anonymous and all employees were fully debriefed as recommended by experts in the field (Stanton & Rogelberg, 2001). It should also be acknowledged that web-based surveys could hold certain advantages over pen and paper methods, for example responses have been found to be returned significantly faster and to contain longer open-ended comments (Yost & Homer, 1998). The latter was certainly the case in this instance since survey comments enhanced the analysis of the data received. Moreover, a web-based survey also fitted best with the company's culture, which prided itself on a 'paperless office' utilising the intranet as the major communication tool.

To conclude, the present study may constitute an exploratory stepping-stone into review and development processes and their impact on candidates' reactions, as evaluated by an organizational justice framework. Principal Component Analysis supported a tri-partite taxonomy for procedural justice and highlighted the importance of interpersonal aspects or interactional justice. However, further analysis did not find the third factor, which related to 'explanation', to be a

significant predictor in its own right. Multi-source feedback was perceived as procedurally fairer than developmental feedback from the manager alone. Nevertheless, the role of manager within the development process would seem to merit attention in follow up research in order to elucidate the role of feedback and communication in more detail. It may also be fruitful to further consider actual development outcomes, as overall we still know comparatively little about the kind of developmental needs that groups of individuals have and how these are best met by a particular development activity (e.g. Carrick & Williams, 1998).

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List of Tables

Table I: Outline of Procedural Justice Framework (based on Gilliland, 1993, Table 1, p.702)

Classification	Procedural rule	Sample Item	Comparable Terms from preceding Organizational Justice Frameworks
Formal Characteristics (of the review and development process):	Four items representing *Job Relatedness*: These referred to the perceived content validity of the review procedure	The current format represents all the dimensions required to give an accurate and comprehensive review	Accuracy (Leventhal, 1980)
	Three items representing *Opportunity to Perform*: Procedures are perceived as fairer if candidates have the opportunity to express themselves	I had sufficient opportunity to describe or explain my recent achievements during my review/ development meeting	Soliciting Input (Greenberg, 1986), Voice (Thibaut & Walker, 1975)
	Two items representing Reconsideration Opportunity: The opportunity to correct or challenge decisions made prior to or during the review process	At points where my and the reviewer's/ personal development champion's views differed, there was ample opportunity for discussion	Ability to Challenge (Greenberg, 1986)
	Two items representing *Consistency*: The way in which procedures are applied consistently across time and candidates	I have had several meetings and they varied considerably in format over time (®)	Consistency rule/ standard (Greenberg, 1986, Levernthal, 1980, Thibaut & Walker, 1975)
Explanation:	Four items representing *Feedback*: The timeliness and efficiency of feedback received	I feel I was fed back too much information in one go	Timely Feedback (Thibaut & Walker, 1975)
	Two items representing Development/Review Information: The provision of information and justification for the review/development process	I was informed in a sufficiently clear and explicit manner about the format and aim of the development plan/ review procedure	Explanation (Thibaut & Walker, 1975)
	Two items representing *Honesty*: The perceived openness of the feedback giver and the feedback received	The person who reviewed me/ my personal development champion was honest and upfront with me	Truthfulness (Bies & Moag, 1986)
Interpersonal Treatment	Three items representing *Interpersonal Effectiveness*: The communication skills of the feedback giver during the review/development process	I did not feel that we 'talked around issues' but rather came straight to the point	Respect (Bies & Moag, 1986)
	Three items representing *Two-Way Communication*: The opportunity for the feedback recipient to have own views considered	Sufficient rapport was established between me and my personal development champion/ the person who reviewed me	Two-Way Communication (Greenberg, 1986), Consider Views (Thibaut & Walker, 1975)
	Three items representing *Propriety of Questions*: how appropriate, non-intrusive and free from bias the review/development process is perceived	I did not feel that all the issues discussed in my personal development meeting were relevant and necessary (®)	Propriety of Questions (Bies & Moag, 1986), Personal Bias (Leventhal, 1980), Bias Suppression (Thibaut & Walker, 1975)

Table II: Observed Mean For Organizational Commitment (n=123)

Commitment Scale	Mean	SD	Cronbach's α (Allen & Meyer, 1990)	Cronbach's α (present study)
a) Affective Commitment	4.35	.82	0.87	0.4905
b) Continuance Commitment	2.73	1.19	0.79	0.7493
c) Normative Commitment	3.24	1.09	0.75	0.7388
Average Organizational Commitment	3.43	.74		

Table III: Descriptive Statistics for Indicators of Perceived Feedback climate and Job Satisfaction (n=128)

	Mean	SD
a) Feedback satisfaction	3.82	1.65
b) Contact satisfaction	4.28	1.71
c) Perceived Company Support	4.41	1.67
Feedback Climate	4.15	1.36
Job Satisfaction	4.70	1.68

Table IV: Rotated Component Matrix – Three-Factor Solution Procedural Justice Scale

	Review Rapport and Interpersonal Effectiveness	Interference with Explanation	Adequacy of Review Format and Characteristics	Justice Rule
I perceive a clear link between my review/personal development plan and my future development within my organization			.838	Job Relatedness
The current format is comprehensive enough to give me an accurate review			.808	Job Relatedness
The present review/ development system is suited to my job role			.624	Job Relatedness
The development meeting clearly pinpointed my strength and weaknesses and my areas for future development	.653		.318	Opportunity to Perform
I had sufficient opportunity to describe or explain my recent achievements during my review/ development meeting	.585			Opportunity to Perform
I was not given the chance to provide my own thoughts and input with regard to my future development		.497		Opportunity to Perform
At points where my and the reviewer's/ personal development champion's views differed, there was ample opportunity for discussion	.709			Reconsideration Opportunity
Our views with regard to my development plan diverged so much that we were unable to find a consensus	-.303	.642		Reconsideration Opportunity
I have had the chance to compare my review/ development meeting with others and there seemed to be some differences in format and content		.505	-.404	Consistency
I felt that my personal development champion/ the person who did my review conveyed that he/she really understands me	.728			Feedback
I feel I was fed back too much information in one go		.754		Feedback
I was given sufficient feedback with regard to the aims and future action steps of my personal development plan, both at the end of and after the review/personal development meeting			.662	Feedback
I was informed clearly and explicitly about the format and aim of the development plan/ review procedure			.651	Development/ Review Information
The person who reviewed me/ my personal development champion was honest and upfront with me	.506	-.519		Honesty
My personal development champion/ the person who reviewed me made me feel like an individual who matters	.725	-.387		Interpersonal Effectiveness
I was treated with warmth and respect by the person conducting my review/ personal development meeting	.406	-.663		Interpersonal Effectiveness
Sufficient rapport for a constructive meeting was established between me and my personal development champion/ the person who reviewed me	.730	-.408		Two-way Communication
I felt that I 'owned' the process and could drive my own review/development plan meeting	.577			Two-way Communication
My personal development champion/ the person who reviewed me was free of any personal bias	.384	-.341		Propriety of Questions
Some questions asked during my personal development meeting /review were more intrusive than I would have liked them to be		.810		Propriety of Questions
I did not feel that all the issues discussed in my personal development meeting were relevant and necessary		.607		Propriety of Questions

Table V: Regression of Review Rapport and Interpersonal Effectiveness, Interference with Explanation and Adequacy of Review Format and Characteristics against Overall Fairness Rating (N=74, R Square 55%, 54% adjusted)

	B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
(Constant)	4.243	.139		30.509	.000
Review Rapport and Interpersonal Effectiveness	.662	.137	.383	4.840	.000
Interference with Explanation	-.03	.138	-.022	-.283	.778
Adequacy of Review Format and Characteristics	1.166	.144	.640	8.082	.000

Table VI: Pearson's r for Survey Measures

		a)	b)	c)	d)	e)	f)	g)
a) Overall Fairness Rating	r	1.00						
	N	80						
b) Review Rapport and Interpersonal Effectiveness	r	0.38**	1.00					
	N	75	76					
c) Interference with Explanation	r	0.00	0.00	1.00				
	N	75	76	76				
d) Adequacy of Review Format and Characteristics	r	0.64**	0.00	0.02	1.00			
	N	75	76	76	76			
e) Organizational Commitment	r	-0.06	0.15	0.17	-0.13	1.00		
	N	78	74	74	74	123		
f) Feedback Climate	r	0.44**	0.28*	-0.24*	0.31**	0.08	1.00	
	N	79	75	75	75	120	122	
g) Job Satisfaction	r	0.27*	0.35**	-0.17	0.06	0.27**	0.59**	1.00
	N	79	75	75	75	120	122	122

** = Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed), * = Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)