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Promoting Fairness in the Workplace: Identifying and Overcoming the Barriers to Managerial Fairness in Organizations

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PROMOTING FAIRNESS IN THE WORKPLACE:

IDENTIFYING AND OVERCOMING THE BARRIERS TO MANAGERIAL FAIRNESS

IN ORGANIZATIONS

By

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Master of Science – Organizational Behaviour and Human Resources Management

Bachelor of Management and Organizational Studies

DISSERTATION

Submitted to the School of Business & Economics in Partial Fulfillment of the

Requirements for

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY IN MANAGEMENT

WILFRID LAURIER UNIVERSITY

DECLARATION OF CO-AUTHORSHIP/PREVIOUS PUBLICATION

This dissertation includes an original paper that has been accepted for publication in a peer-reviewed journal. Specifically, a modified version of Manuscript 1 (Chapter 2) has been accepted for publication in the *Journal of Business Ethics* (a Financial Times Top 45 Journal). The copyright agreement with the *Journal of Business Ethics* allows for the inclusion of this paper in the final dissertation. The final version of this article is available online at Springer via **http://dx.doi.org/10.1007/s10551-014-2357-7**. The final print version is scheduled to be published in 2015. The full citation is:

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Manuscript 2 (Chapter 3) has been invited for a first revision at the *Journal of Management* (Impact Factor 6.862, ranked 3/173 in Management; 1/75 in Applied Psychology), but has not yet been accepted for publication.

ABSTRACT

Research examining "justice as a dependent variable" has largely focused on examining the factors that can *promote* fairness in the workplace whereas significantly less attention has been devoted to understanding the barriers and obstacles that can exist throughout the fairness process. This is an important gap in the literature because the *absence* of fairness can also have considerable implications for organizations. In this dissertation, I argue that it is important to adopt a *"barriers to fairness"* approach that sheds more light on how these obstacles can affect managers' fair behavior. Specifically, I present a typology of the different barriers to fairness managers may experience in the workplace and three manuscripts that contribute to our understanding of the "barriers to fairness" approach. Manuscripts 1 and 2 empirically examine (a) two different barriers (i.e., low trait empathy and ego depletion, respectively) that can significantly affect managers' enactment of fairness and (b) how these barriers can be overcome using targeted interventions. Manuscript 3 is a theoretical piece that outlines how and when enacting fairness can affect managers at each phase of the fairness process with a specific focus on how enacting fairness can increase managers' experience of depletion. I conclude with a discussion of the general theoretical, methodological, and practical implications of this dissertation as well as future research directions associated with a "barriers to fairness" approach.

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Finally, I'd like to thank my advisor, Dr. Laurie Barclay. Frankly, I could write an entire anthology on how grateful I am for everything Laurie has done for me and one paragraph could *never* do justice to the amount of recognition she deserves. I truly could not have asked for anything more in an advisor – she is not only incredibly supportive, caring, and understanding, but she has also pushed me to become a better academic, a better researcher, and a better person. I have never quite understood where Laurie finds the time, energy, and resources that she devotes to her students, but I am so honored and thankful that I have been able to experience that level of support for so many years. Laurie, from the bottom of my heart, thank you (x100). You are the best advisor, mentor, and friend that I could have ever asked for and I am so incredibly grateful for everything that you have done for me. Never stop happy dancing.

STATEMENT OF ORIGINALITY

The research contained in this dissertation was conducted between September 2010 and January 2015. This is to certify that the content of this dissertation is my own work except where due reference is made. It is being submitted to Wilfrid Laurier University as part of my PhD degree requirements. It has not been and shall not be submitted for the award of any degree or diploma at any other institution of higher learning.

David B. Whiteside

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PROMOTING FAIRNESS IN THE WORKPLACE:

IDENTIFYING AND OVERCOMING THE BARRIERS TO MANAGERIAL FAIRNESS

IN ORGANIZATIONS

"Obstacles don't have to stop you. If you run into a wall, don't turn around and give up.
Figure out how to climb it, go through it, or work around it." – Michael Jordan

Fairness is more than just a fancy organizational buzzword or a fashionable management trend – decades of organizational research have demonstrated that treating employees fairly has considerable benefits for both organizations (e.g., increased performance, employee citizenship behaviors) and their employees (e.g., increased health, job satisfaction; for meta-analytic reviews, see Cohen-Charash & Spector, 2001; Colquitt, Conlon, Wesson, Porter, & Ng, 2001; Colquitt et al., 2013; Rupp, Shao, Jones, & Liao, 2014). Importantly, this research also demonstrates that the *absence of fairness* can have significant costs for organizations (e.g., increased conflict, turnover intentions, and counterproductive work behaviors). Taken together, justice research has brought attention to one undeniable truth: fairness concerns are significant issues that must be carefully managed by organizations. However, while it is clear why fairness *should* be promoted, justice scholars have only recently begun to examine the reasons why managers do or do not "deliver justice" to their employees (i.e., "justice as a dependent variable"; Folger & Skarlicki, 2001). This gap has led to calls in the justice literature for research examining the factors that predict managers' fair behavior so that a better understanding and ability to promote fairness in the workplace can be cultivated (e.g., Patient & Skarlicki, 2010; Scott, Colquitt, & Paddock, 2009; Whiteside & Barclay, in press a).

Studies examining justice as a dependent variable have largely focused on one overarching question: how can fairness be promoted in the workplace? Specifically, researchers have primarily examined factors and interventions that lead to higher levels of managerial fairness. For example, factors that can increase managerial fairness in the workplace include subordinates' charisma (Scott, Colquitt, & Zapata-Phelan, 2007), employees' need to belong (Cornelis, Van Hiel, De Cremer, & Mayer, 2013), manager empathy (Cornelis et al., 2013; Patient & Skarlicki, 2010), and the spatial distance between managers and subordinates (van Houwelingen, van Dijke, & De Cremer, 2014). Although examining these facilitators of fairness can provide valuable insights into the reasons why managers engage in fairness, to fully understand and promote fair behavior, it is also critical to examine *barriers to fairness* (i.e., why and when managers *fail* to adhere to standards of fairness). That is, justice researchers must also understand the obstacles that can inhibit managers' fair behavior in the workplace and how these obstacles can be overcome.

In this dissertation, I present three manuscripts that address three overarching objectives. First, I demonstrate that barriers to fairness *can* exist in organizations and significantly inhibit individuals' enactment of fair behavior. Adopting this "barriers to fairness" approach is an important step for justice research because it can help researchers identify new and significant antecedents to fair behavior, while also providing a novel and intervention-centered perspective to reframe more traditional questions of fairness. For example, existing justice research has demonstrated that managers with high trait empathy generally engage in higher levels of fairness than managers with low trait empathy (e.g., Cornelis et al., 2013; Patient & Skarlicki, 2010). Adopting a "barriers to fairness" approach, however, presents new insights – that is, *low* trait empathy presents a barrier to managerial fairness and an opportunity for interventions that can

enhance fairness in the workplace. In other words, this approach can present valuable insights into our understanding of *why* managers may fail to treat their employees fairly in the workplace.

Second, utilizing this "barriers to fairness" approach can also provide important insights into identifying areas that can benefit from fairness interventions. Across the manuscripts, I examine how targeted interventions can overcome barriers to fairness. Acknowledging barriers to fairness is an important step towards developing a better *understanding* of fairness failures in the workplace. However, by targeting the mechanisms underlying specific barriers, I also demonstrate how these barriers to fairness can be addressed to either remove the barriers or give managers the willingness and/or ability to overcome them. Taken together, these interventions are designed to increase the extent to which managers are both motivated and able to engage in fairness, ultimately allowing organizations, managers, and employees to reap the rewards of a fair workplace.

Third, I outline how and when overcoming these barriers can affect managers. In their seminal work on justice as a dependent variable, Folger and Skarlicki (2001) suggested that delivering fairness to employees requires a considerable investment of time, energy, and resources. However, research in this field has devoted little attention to examining how enacting fairness impacts *managers*. I address this gap by highlighting how engaging in fair behaviors can affect managers at each step of the fairness process, with a specific focus on how enacting fairness can be related to managerial depletion and when the depleting effects of engaging in fair behaviors will be most prominent.

As an introduction to these three manuscripts, I provide a typology of barriers to fairness. Identifying the different types of barriers can provide a deeper understanding of why managers may fail to enact fairness in the workplace as well as critical insights into *how* these barriers can

be overcome to promote fair behavior. I also present a brief roadmap of the three manuscripts presented in this dissertation and outline how these studies can contribute to our understanding as well as the prevention and management of these barriers.

A TYPOLOGY OF BARRIERS TO FAIRNESS

To understand and overcome the barriers to fairness in the workplace, it is necessary to first outline the potential *types* of barriers that can exist since this allows researchers to identify the key conceptual differences underlying these barriers as well as the most effective way to manage and overcome them. In order to create such a typology, it is important to first identify the basic building blocks of managers' fair behavior. According to the theory of planned behavior (Ajzen, 1991), effective behavior in any sphere is a function of two factors: (1) individuals' intent to perform the behavior (i.e., the motivation and/or willingness to devote resources and energy towards that goal) and (2) their level of behavioral control over their performance (i.e., the capacity and/or ability to achieve that goal). For example, individuals may have the motivation to attain a goal, but this motivation counts for very little if they do not have the resources, skills, or ability to meet that goal. On the other hand, simply being able to meet a goal has little relevance if an individual does not actually have the drive to achieve it. Therefore, these two factors complement each other to predict successful goal attainment. Building from this theoretical framework, I argue that in order to purposefully engage in high levels of fairness, managers must have both (1) the *willingness* to be fair and (2) the *capacity* to be fair.

In the domain of fairness, a growing number of studies have directly or indirectly examined and found support for the role of motivation in managers' enactment of fairness (Ambrose & Schminke, 2009a; Patient & Skarlicki, 2010; Scott et al., 2007, 2009). Specifically, treating employees fairly requires a significant investment of time, energy, and resources (Folger

& Skarlicki, 2001). It has been argued, therefore, that justice motivation plays an integral role in the facilitation of justice because it encourages managers to both initiate and persist in their efforts to treat employees fairly (Ambrose & Schminke, 2009a). As a result, a *lack* of motivation to engage in fairness can present a significant barrier to managerial fairness in the workplace – that is, if managers are not compelled to be fair, they will be less likely to devote the time, energy, and resources required to treat their employees fairly. Managers' capacity to treat employees fairly, however, has received considerably less attention in the literature (Ambrose & Schminke, 2009a; Hannah, Avolio, & May, 2011). This is important because despite research demonstrating a positive relationship between motivation and fair behavior, managers' capacity to engage in fairness can present a critical boundary condition to this relationship. In other words, even though managers may *want* to be fair, they can lack the ability to fully adhere to standards of justice. Taken together, I suggest that managers' fair behavior is often a function of both their willingness and capacity to be fair and, as such, barriers to fairness can operate by inhibiting either of these factors.

Following this framework, I propose that barriers to fairness can generally be viewed in terms of four prototypic types (see Figure 1). Specifically, I argue that barriers to fairness can be characterized by understanding *how* the barrier affects fair behavior (i.e., through inhibiting individuals' willingness to be fair vs. their capacity to be fair) and *where* the barrier to fairness emerges from (i.e., person-specific vs. situational barriers to fairness). Utilizing this typology, I propose that barriers to fairness can generally be viewed in terms of the following four types: (1) *person-specific willingness barriers*, (2) *situational willingness barriers*, (3) *person-specific capacity barriers*, and (4) *situational capacity barriers*.

Person-Specific Willingness Barriers. Person-specific willingness barriers are internal factors that inhibit managers' motivation to be fair. For example, managers can have specific personality traits that lessen their motivation to be fair. Managers' trait empathy is one personality factor that has been examined as an important antecedent of managers' enactment of fair behavior (Blader & Rothman, 2014; Blader & Tyler, 2001; Cornelis et al., 2013; Patient & Skarlicki, 2010). Specifically, this research has demonstrated a positive relationship between trait empathy and fairness because trait empathy can make concerns of fairness more prominent (Blader & Tyler, 2001) and motivate managers to reduce employees' suffering in the wake of negative outcomes by providing detailed explanations and treating the recipient with respect (Patient & Skarlicki, 2010). Similarly, Colquitt, Scott, Judge, and Shaw (2006) posit that trait morality (i.e., dispositional differences in morality across individuals) will be associated with an increased sensitivity to justice issues and a greater inclination to engage in fairness in order to meet normative standards of justice. Although research suggests that high levels of these traits can facilitate managers' fairness, it is also important to understand how *low* levels of these traits can present important barriers to fairness by decreasing managers' willingness or motivation to treat their employees fairly and how the inhibiting effects of these traits can be overcome.

Beyond personality, person-specific willingness barriers can also emerge because managers are motivated to foster other identities. Specifically, justice scholars have suggested that managers can actively pursue identities that conflict with standards of fairness (Scott et al., 2009; Greenberg, 1990). For example, managers may purposefully treat employees disrespectfully to convey an image of toughness or purposefully withhold important procedural information in an effort to maintain a position of dominance. In these situations, managers have the ability to be fair, but their specific management approach minimizes their *willingness* to act

in accordance with standards of justice (Scott et al., 2009). Importantly, managers' personality

may also play a significant role in the social identities that they pursue (Hogg & Terry, 2000),

suggesting that certain managers may face both personality- and identity-based person-specific

willingness barriers. Taken together, person-specific willingness barriers to fairness stem from

managers' personality or approach to their roles as managers and inhibit managers' inclination to

enact justice in the workplace.

  Situational Willingness Barriers. Situational willingness barriers to fairness, on the other

hand, are external factors that inhibit managers' motivation to be fair. Situational willingness

barriers may stem from different factors, such as relational (i.e., factors that stem from a

manager's relationships and/or interactions with others) or contextual factors (i.e., factors that

stem from a manager's larger organizational context). Relational barriers to fairness are starting

to garner attention in the justice literature. Research on victim precipitation has demonstrated

that certain subordinate characteristics and behaviors can elicit managerial responses that conflict

with standards of fairness (Aquino & Bradfield, 2000; Aquino, Grover, Bradfield, & Allen,

1999; Aquino & Lamertz, 2004; Aquino & Thau, 2009; Whiteside & Barclay, in press a). For

example, individuals with high levels of negative affectivity tend to behave in ways that violate

social norms and make others feel threatened, which can provoke aggression from others (e.g.,

Aquino & Bradfield, 2000; Aquino et al., 1999; Aquino & Thau, 2009; Tepper, Duffy, Henle, &

Lambert, 2006). This suggests that certain employee traits and behaviors can present a barrier to

managers' willingness to be fair because managers may not see these employees as *deserving* of

fairness efforts (cf. Whiteside & Barclay, in press a). Similarly, Scott et al. (2007) demonstrated

that employees with low charisma received lower levels of interpersonal and informational

justice from their managers because managers held less positive sentiments about these

employees and therefore, lacked the motivational impetus to treat them fairly. Taken together, these studies demonstrate that managers' relationships and interactions with employees can inhibit their willingness to treat their employees fairly.

Situational willingness barriers can also be contextual and stem from a manager's organizational environment. For example, a lack of a strong justice climate (cf. Colquitt, Noe, & Jackson, 2002; Naumann & Bennett, 2000) can be a key contextual barrier to fairness motivation. This is because a strong justice climate increases the saliency and perceived importance of justice in the workplace, increasing individuals' motivation to be fair (Ambrose & Schminke, 2009a). However, in workplaces with a *low* justice climate, managers' motivation to be fair may be inhibited because managers are inclined to prioritize other organizational values such as profit or effectiveness.

Person-Specific Capacity Barriers. Person-specific capacity barriers are factors that originate at the individual level to inhibit managers' ability to be fair. To date, these barriers have received the least amount of attention in the justice literature; however, research in other areas suggests that important person-specific capacity barriers can exist and significantly impact behavior. For example, research on the limited strength model of self-regulation (Muraven & Baumeister, 2000) demonstrates that the self-regulatory resources required to engage in moral and ethical behaviors can be depleted (DeWall, Baumeister, Gailliot, & Maner, 2008; Gino, Schweitzer, Mead, & Ariely, 2011; Hagger, Wood, Stiff, & Chatzisarantis, 2010; Xu, Bègue, & Bushman, 2012) – a temporary state referred to as ego depletion (Muraven & Baumeister, 2000; Muraven, Tice, & Baumeister, 1998). This research suggests that when managers' self-regulatory resources are depleted, their capacity to adhere to normative standards (i.e., fairness) can be inhibited, even if they are *motivated* to act in accordance with these standards. Expanding

this resource-based perspective, other researchers examining the relationship between lack of sleep and unethical conduct have demonstrated that individuals' capacity to engage in ethical behavior can be diminished by feelings of exhaustion (e.g., Barnes, Schaubroeck, Huth, & Ghumman, 2011; Christian & Ellis, 2011). Despite the increasing interest in these resource-based perspectives in other areas, little to no research has examined how managers' cognitive and physical resources can inhibit their capacity to engage in fair behaviors. Taken together, research in other areas has demonstrated that important person-specific capacity barriers can exist. However, these barriers have received minimal attention in the justice literature, presenting an important gap for justice researchers to address.

Situational Capacity Barriers. Situational capacity barriers, on the other hand, are *contextual* factors that inhibit managers' capacity to be fair. In general, existing research on situational capacity barriers has focused on systemic barriers in the workplace. For example, research on the legalistic organization (e.g., Sitkin & Bies, 1993; Sitkin & Roth, 1993) suggests that when organizations implement overly formalized procedures, managers adhere to what is "legal" and/or procedurally accurate, at the expense of more social considerations such as fairness and interpersonal sensitivity. Such formalized systems and protocols can strip a manager of the flexibility that is necessary to treat employees fairly across a wide range of organizational events such as layoffs, performance appraisals, and bonus allotments (Schminke, Ambrose, & Cropanzano, 2000; Sheppard, Lewicki, & Minton, 1992). That is, managers' capacity for fairness can be inhibited in these organizational contexts because adherence to legalistic organizational procedures takes precedence over concerns of fairness.

SETTING THE STAGE: CONCEPTUALIZING "FAIRNESS"

Before providing an overview of the studies, it is important to first outline how fairness is conceptualized across the three manuscripts. Specifically, I have chosen to focus on *interactional justice,* the *presence* or *absence* of justice rather than "injustice", and managers' fair behavior rather than employee's perceptions of fair behavior.

Enactment of Interactional Justice

Organizational justice research has demonstrated that managers' fairness can be a function of a number of dimensions: distributive justice (i.e., the fairness of outcomes, such as pay or promotions; Adams, 1965), procedural justice (i.e., the fairness of the procedures used to derive outcomes; Leventhal, 1980; Thibault & Walker, 1975), and interactional justice (i.e., the fairness of interpersonal treatment; Bies & Moag, 1986). Some justice scholars further separate interactional justice into interpersonal justice (i.e., interpersonal treatment reflecting dignity, respect, and sensitivity) and informational justice (i.e., providing an adequate explanation; Colquitt, 2001; Colquitt et al., 2001). Across the three manuscripts in this dissertation, I focus on managers' enactment of *interactional justice* because this dimension is the least constrained by organizational factors and the most open to managers' discretion (Scott et al., 2009). This can be important when examining justice as a dependent variable because it means that managers' fair behavior is not constrained by external factors outside of the research question at hand.

I also focus on *interactional justice* (as opposed to interpersonal and informational justice) for a number of reasons. First, from a theoretical perspective, interpersonal and informational justice are closely related – for example, taking the time to provide explanations can also be an indication of dignity and respect (Bies, 2001). Interactional justice also provides a more parsimonious explanation – both interpersonal and informational justice have the same

hypothesized effects in many contexts (e.g., Barclay & Kiefer, 2014). Second, from an empirical

perspective, interpersonal and informational justice were highly correlated across all of the

studies within this dissertation (Manuscript 1: $r = .73$; Manuscript 2: Study 1 $r = .85$; Study 2 $r =$

.78; Study 3 $r = .81$). These high correlations indicate that these constructs are redundant (cf.

Stevens, 2002). Finally, this approach is consistent with recent justice research (e.g., Ambrose &

Schminke, 2009b; Barclay & Kiefer, 2014; Barsky & Kaplan, 2007; Spencer & Rupp, 2009).

Justice Versus Injustice

The distinction between justice and injustice is another key consideration in the justice

literature. Justice scholars have posited that there are important theoretical differences between

"justice" and "injustice" such that they represent different theoretical constructs rather than

opposite ends of a continuum (Barclay & Whiteside, 2011; Cojuharenco, & Patient, 2013;

Gilliland, 2008; Gilliland & Chan, 2001). In this dissertation, I focus specifically on the presence

and/or absence of justice for a number of reasons. First, a primary objective of the "barriers to

fairness" approach is to *increase* fairness among managers who are unwilling and/or unable to

enact fairness – that is, this approach is grounded in a *promotion* focus rather than a prevention

focus. In other words, the goal of this approach is to overcome barriers to fairness and maximize

managers' enactment of fairness rather than minimize managers' unfairness. Second, while

research on employees' reactions to interactional justice has focused largely on employees'

perceptions of and responses to *injustice* (Gilliland, 2008), research on managers' enactment of

fairness has focused mainly on the promotion of *justice* (e.g., Korsgaard, Roberson, & Rymph,

1998; Patient & Skarlicki, 2010; Scott et al., 2007). A "barriers to fairness" approach is meant to

complement and add to the prevalent fairness promotion approach within research on justice as a

dependent variable. With this in mind, I focus on the promotion and/or absence of fairness to better map onto existing research within this paradigm.

Fair Behavior Versus Perceptions of Fair Behavior

To date, justice scholars have typically measured justice as a dependent variable in one of two ways. On the one hand, justice may be measured as a *behavior* – that is, managers' enactment of fair behaviors (e.g., Blader & Rothman, 2014; Cornelis et al., 2013; Korsgaard et al., 1998; Patient & Skarlicki, 2010). On the other hand, justice may be measured using employees' *perceptions* of fairness – that is, the extent to which employees perceive a manager's behavior as fair (Scott et al., 2007; van Houwelingen et al., 2014). For the purpose of this dissertation, I focus specifically on managers' fair *behavior* because a "barriers to fairness" approach is devoted to understanding (a) how barriers affect managers' enactment of fairness and (b) how enacting fairness affects managers. Examining managers' enactment of fair behavior (i.e., as opposed to employees' perceptions of fair behavior) is more closely aligned with this manager-centric focus.

OVERVIEW OF THE CURRENT STUDIES

This dissertation is comprised of three manuscripts that contribute to our understanding of barriers to fairness in the workplace. Specifically, combining both empirical (Manuscripts 1 and 2) and theoretical (Manuscript 3) approaches, these manuscripts examine different *types* of barriers to fairness and identify potential avenues through which these barriers can be overcome. Together, these manuscripts are not meant to provide a comprehensive framework of barriers to fairness – rather, the general purpose of these manuscripts is to provide concrete examples of how barriers to fairness and related interventions can be studied within the justice literature.

Manuscript 1 ("The Face of Fairness: Self-Awareness as a Means to Promote Fairness Among Managers with Low Empathy") is an empirical study that focuses on a *person-specific willingness barrier* to fairness – low *trait empathy* (i.e., a manager's dispositional insensitivity to the emotional experiences of others). In this manuscript, I argue that managers with low trait empathy may be naturally predisposed to engage in lower levels of interactional justice when communicating negative outcomes as compared to managers with high trait empathy. This is because managers with low trait empathy are less likely to understand how negative outcomes affect employees and this lack of understanding can inhibit the extent to which managers feel compelled to treat employees fairly in order to minimize harm. Building upon self-awareness theory (Duval and Wicklund, 1972; Wicklund, 1975), I examine how increasing managers' *self-awareness* can help minimize the negative effect of low trait empathy on fairness – that is, I argue that self-awareness can motivate managers with low trait empathy to engage in greater levels of interactional justice. In support of my hypothesis, results demonstrate that increasing self-awareness through a self-focusing situation (i.e., using webcams) can help individuals with low trait empathy increase the fairness of their behavior when communicating negative news.

Manuscript 2 ("The Effects of Depletion on Fair Behavior: When Wanting to Be Fair Isn't Enough") focuses on a *person-specific capacity barrier* to fairness: the experience of *ego depletion* (i.e., a state in which an individual's resources required for effective self-regulation have been depleted; Baumeister, Bratlavsky, Muraven, & Tice, 1998; Muravan & Baumeister, 2000). In a set of three empirical studies, I argue that managers who are depleted may lack the self-regulatory resources required to manage the fairness of their behavior – even when they *want* to be fair. Specifically, results indicate that ego depletion can have significant negative effects on individuals' interactional justice when communicating negative news (Study 1) and

these depletion effects can occur even when individuals are explicitly instructed to be fair (Study 2). Further, I demonstrate that self-appraisal gaps, whereby depleted individuals overestimate the fairness of their behavior, are one avenue through which depletion can affect fair behavior. Building upon this finding, I use a moderation-of-process design (Study 3) to demonstrate how the negative effects of depletion on fairness can be overcome by increasing individuals' awareness that people overestimate the fairness of their behavior.

Manuscript 3 ("The Good, The Bad, and the Depleted: Outcome Valence and the Depleting Effects of Enacting Fairness") is a theoretical piece in which I argue that it is important for justice scholars to gain a better understanding of *how* and *when* enacting fairness affects managers. Integrating research on the limited strength model of self-regulation (cf. Baumeister et al., 1998) and multi-phase models of bad news delivery (cf. Bies, 2013; Clark & LaBeff, 1982; McClenahen & Lofland, 1976), I argue that engaging in fair behaviors can require a significant degree of self-regulatory resources and can be depleting for managers. However, I argue that the *valence* of organizational decisions is a key consideration in our understanding of when these depletion effects are most likely to occur. I argue that communicating negative outcomes presents significantly more barriers to fairness than communicating positive outcomes at each phase of the fairness process: (1) preparation, (2) delivery, and (3) transition. In order to overcome these barriers, managers communicating negative outcomes need to devote significantly more self-regulatory resources to attain standards of fairness than managers communicating positive outcomes and this can lead to higher levels of managerial depletion.

As a package, these three manuscripts make a number of contributions. First, the manuscripts answer calls in the justice community for research on "justice as a dependent variable" (Folger & Skarlicki, 2001; Scott et al., 2009). This is important because managers play

a central role in the fairness process (Scott et al., 2009) and examining fairness from their

perspective is critical to both understanding and promoting fairness in the workplace. Moreover,

expanding upon existing research on justice as a dependent variable, these manuscripts

demonstrate that significant barriers to fairness can exist. This is important because fairness is a

critical concern for organizations and is associated with a wealth of positive outcomes in the

workplace. To that end, it is important to not only identify factors that can promote fairness, but

also the factors that can constrain and inhibit fairness. By identifying key barriers to fairness,

researchers can outline significant factors that stand in the way of fair behavior in the workplace

and identify interventions to address these issues. Second, these manuscripts demonstrate that

while these barriers can have significant inhibiting effects on fairness in the workplace, it is also

possible to overcome these barriers. This provides a further impetus to study these barriers, so

that organizations can not only understand and identify these barriers, but also overcome them.

Figure 1
Typology of Types of Barriers to Fairness

	Person-Specific Factors	**Situational Factors**
Barriers to Willingness	Person-Specific Willingness Barriers	Situational Willingness Barriers
Barriers to Capacity	Person-Specific Capacity Barriers	Situational Capacity Barriers

CHAPTER 2 – MANUSCRIPT 1:

THE FACE OF FAIRNESS: SELF-AWARENESS AS A MEANS TO PROMOTE

FAIRNESS AMONG MANAGERS WITH LOW EMPATHY

THE FACE OF FAIRNESS: SELF-AWARENESS AS A MEANS TO PROMOTE

FAIRNESS AMONG MANAGERS WITH LOW EMPATHY

ABSTRACT

Although managing fairness is a critical concern for organizations, not all managers are predisposed to enact high levels of fairness. Emerging empirical evidence suggests that personality characteristics can be an important antecedent of managers' fair behavior. However, relatively little attention has been devoted to understanding how to promote fairness among managers who are naturally predisposed to engage in *lower* levels of fairness. Building upon self-awareness theory, I argue that increasing managers' *self-awareness* can motivate managers with low *trait empathy* to engage in greater levels of justice. The interactive effects of trait empathy and state self-awareness are tested using an experimental study ($N = 76$) in which individuals were asked to communicate negative news. Results indicate that increasing self-awareness through self-focusing situations can help promote interactional justice when communicating negative news for individuals with low trait empathy. Theoretical and practical implications of these findings are discussed.

THE FACE OF FAIRNESS: SELF-AWARENESS AS A MEANS TO PROMOTE

FAIRNESS AMONG MANAGERS WITH LOW EMPATHY

"These men ask for just the same thing – fairness, and fairness only." – Abraham Lincoln

Given the pervasive and beneficial effects of enacting fairness in organizations (for meta-analytic reviews, see Cohen-Charash & Spector, 2001; Colquitt, Conlon, Wesson, Porter, & Ng, 2001; Colquitt et al., 2013; Rupp, Shao, Jones, & Liao, 2014), it is critical to understand the factors that can prevent managers from engaging in fair behaviors and how these obstacles can be overcome. Emerging empirical evidence suggests that personality characteristics can play an important role in managers' enactment of fairness. Patient and Skarlicki (2010), for example, demonstrated that managers with low levels of empathy engage in fewer fair behaviors towards their subordinates than managers with high empathy. The notion that personality characteristics can naturally predispose some managers to engage in *lower* levels of fairness is concerning since having a reduced tendency or motivation to enact fairness can not only prevent individuals from adhering to standards of fairness, but it can also result in more frequent and severe violations of fairness (cf. Ambrose & Schminke, 2009a). This raises the question of how fair behaviors can be promoted, especially for managers who are predisposed to engage in *lower* levels of fairness.

Building upon self-awareness theory (Duval & Wicklund, 1972; Wicklund, 1975), I argue that increasing managers' self-awareness can provide one avenue through which managers with *low* trait empathy can be motivated to engage in higher levels of fairness. Consistent with research by Patient and Skarlicki (2010), I argue that trait empathy will be positively related to managers' enactment of fairness. However, I propose that increasing managers' self-awareness

through self-focusing situations (i.e., situations where one views the self as an object to be evaluated; e.g., seeing a video of oneself, looking into a mirror) can overcome the effects of low empathy on fairness. This is because states of self-awareness can trigger comparisons between one's current behavior and standards of normative behavior (Duval & Wicklund, 1972). Fairness is one example of such standards – that is, people generally believe that they *should* be fair and want to perceive of themselves as fair people (Diekmann, Samuels, Ross, & Bazerman, 1997; Lerner, 1971; Messick, Bloom, Boldizar, & Samuelson, 1985). By increasing the salience of normative standards, I argue that states of self-awareness can motivate managers to "shape up" their behavior and act more in line with general standards of justice.

The aims of this research are two-fold. First, I examine the relationship between trait empathy and fairness with a different perspective. Specifically, Patient and Skarlicki (2010) demonstrated that managers' trait empathy can be a significant antecedent of interactional justice. This is important because justice researchers are still working to uncover the factors that can promote fairness in the workplace (cf. Scott, Colquitt, & Paddock, 2009) and understanding the role of personality characteristics in the enactment of fairness can deepen our understanding of *who* will be most likely to enact fairness in organizations. However, rather than focusing on managers with high trait empathy, I am particularly interested in examining managers with *low* trait empathy (i.e., managers who may be predisposed to engage in lower levels of fairness). Second, I examine *self-awareness* as a possible contextual intervention to help promote fairness among managers with low trait empathy. I argue that situating managers in self-focusing situations can increase the salience of fairness standards and motivate managers with low trait empathy to treat employees fairly. Thus, I explore *how* to promote managerial fairness as well as identify new points of intervention to manage fairness in the workplace.

This research question is examined by exploring individuals' enactment of fairness when delivering bad news to others. The delivery of bad news is emphasized since justice issues are particularly prominent in the context of negative outcomes (Greenberg, 2001). As a result, it is especially important that managers deliver bad news to employees in a way that conveys dignity as well as respect and includes an adequate explanation (Bennett, Martin, Bies, & Brockner, 1995). However, managers are often motivated to disengage from their employees in these situations as a form of self-protection and can fail to treat employees with interpersonal sensitivity (Folger & Skarlicki, 2001; Margolis & Molinsky, 2008; Molinsky & Margolis, 2005). This suggests that delivering bad news is a context where fairness is particularly important, but difficult to promote. Moreover, I focus on individuals' enactment of interactional justice (i.e., the extent to which managers treat employees with sensitivity and provide an adequate explanation of outcomes; Bies & Moag, 1986) since interactional justice is the most open to managers' discretion compared to the other justice dimensions (Scott et al., 2009) and it is particularly important when communicating negative news to employees (Bennett et al., 1995).[1] In the interests of simplicity, the terms "interactional justice" and "fair behavior" are used interchangeably from this point forward.

THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

Communicating negative news in a fair manner is an important issue facing managers. Treating employees fairly is associated with a wide range of beneficial outcomes for employees (e.g., trust, job satisfaction) and organizations (e.g., performance, commitment; for meta-analytic

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[1] Although interactional justice is sometimes further separated into *interpersonal* and *informational* justice (e.g., Colquitt, 2001), I examine *interactional* justice for a number of reasons. From a theoretical perspective, interpersonal and informational justice are closely related and both dimensions have the same hypothesized effects in this context. Thus, interactional justice provides a more parsimonious explanation. From an empirical perspective, interpersonal and informational justice were highly correlated ($r = .73$). Finally, this approach is consistent with recent research that has focused on interactional justice (e.g., Ambrose & Schminke, 2009b; Barclay & Kiefer, 2014; Barsky & Kaplan, 2007; Spencer & Rupp, 2009).

reviews, see Cohen-Charash & Spector, 2001; Colquitt et al., 2001, 2013; Rupp et al., 2014).

However, there are a number of reasons why managers may fail to treat employees fairly when

communicating negative news. For example, managers may be motivated to disengage from their

employees in these situations as a form of self-protection (Margolis & Molinsky, 2008; Molinsky

& Margolis, 2005) or because they do not want to invest the effort, time, and resources required

to engage in fairness (Folger & Skarlicki, 1998, 2001).

Recent research has demonstrated that increasing managers' *justice motivation* can play

an important role in promoting fairness (Ambrose & Schminke, 2009a; Cornelis, Van Hiel, De

Cremer, & Mayer, 2013; Korsgaard, Roberson, & Rymph, 1998; Patient & Skarlicki, 2010;

Scott, Colquitt, & Zapata-Phelan, 2007). Specifically, managers who are motivated to engage in

fairness are more likely to initiate and persist in fairness efforts (Ambrose & Schminke, 2009a;

Scott et al., 2009). Although the motivation to enact fairness can be enhanced in a number of

ways, managerial empathy has been shown to be important within the context of communicating

negative news (Patient & Skarlicki, 2010).

Empathy is defined as an individual's "sensitivity to the emotional experiences of

another" (McNeely & Meglino, 1994: 837) and refers to the psychological process that allows an

individual to experience feelings that are congruent with the situation of another person

(Hoffman, 2000). In this study, empathy is examined as a dispositional characteristic; that is,

individuals' general capacity to empathize with others (i.e., *trait empathy*; Davis, 1994). This is

in contrast to *state* empathy (i.e., temporary and targeted feelings of warmth and compassion

toward another person; Davis, 1994). Trait empathy is emphasized in order to focus on how to

increase feelings of fairness among managers who are characteristically low on empathy since

these individuals are particularly likely to engage in lower levels of fairness on an ongoing/consistent basis.

Trait empathy can play an important role in the enactment of fairness because it can increase the perceived importance of justice, particularly when communicating negative outcomes to others. Specifically, research on empathy has demonstrated that people high on trait empathy are better able to understand the effect of negatives outcomes on others because they are able to put themselves in the shoes of those experiencing the negative outcome (Davis, 1994). That is, when delivering negative news, managers with high levels of empathy should have a better understanding of how harmful the news may be and how recipients may react than managers who demonstrate low levels of empathy (Blader & Tyler, 2001; Patient & Skarlicki, 2010). This is important in the context of fairness because justice issues become more important as negative outcomes become more prominent (Blader & Tyler, 2001; Greenberg, 2001). This suggests that engaging in fairness when communicating negative outcomes should be particularly important for highly empathic managers because they can better understand the potentially negative implications of the news for employees and recognize that the news should be communicated in a fair manner to minimize harm. In support of this effect, Patient & Skarlicki (2010) demonstrated that among managers completing a layoff scenario task, trait empathy was positively related to the enactment of fairness. Taken together, I argue that trait empathy will motivate individuals to engage in higher levels of interactional justice when communicating bad news because it can increase the importance of justice issues.

In the interests of fairness promotion, however, it is important to also outline potential avenues by which managers with *low* trait empathy can be motivated to engage in higher levels of fairness. I argue that managers' state *self-awareness* may provide one answer. Specifically,

managers with low trait empathy can be motivated to adhere to standards of justice when states

of self-awareness are activated because these states can highlight the importance of adhering to

normative standards such as fairness. Thus, I propose that self-awareness may promote fair

behaviors, particularly for individuals who are predisposed to engage in lower levels of fairness.

Overcoming Low Empathy: The Role of Self-Awareness

Self-awareness is a motivational state that occurs when one's attention is focused

exclusively on the self as an object to be evaluated. Duval and Wicklund (1972) outlined two

forms of self-awareness: (1) "objective self-awareness" (i.e., when attention is focused on the

self) and (2) "subjective self-awareness" (i.e., when attention is directed away from the self and

toward external objects). For the purposes of this paper, I focus on objective self-awareness (i.e.,

all references to "self-awareness" refer to objective self-awareness from this point forward).

According to self-awareness theory (Duval & Wicklund, 1972), states of self-awareness

can be activated by any stimuli in one's environment that focus one's attention on the self. For

example, seeing a video of oneself or simply looking into a mirror. These self-focusing situations

can be impactful because the perceiver is encouraged to view him or herself as an object to be

evaluated, similar to how people evaluate other people and objects in their environment (Duval

& Wicklund, 1972). Research has demonstrated that people in these states will engage in

automatic self-evaluations – or comparisons between the self and standards of normative

behaviors, attitudes, and traits (cf. Duval & Wicklund, 1972; Gibbons, 1978; Macrae,

Bodenhausen, & Milne, 1998; Wicklund, 1975) and these self-awareness related evaluations can

operate at both conscious and unconscious levels (Alberts, Martijn, & de Vries, 2011).

Specifically, these standards represent an individual's perception of how they *should* behave

given a certain set of circumstances (i.e., standards of fairness; Folger, 1998, 2001).

The motivational crux of self-awareness theory revolves around the likelihood that during this process of self-evaluation, perceived discrepancies will be identified between one's current behavior and standards of normative behavior (Duval & Wicklund, 1972). The existence of such discrepancies can motivate self-aware individuals to respond in one of two ways. Individuals, for instance, may "*ship out*" by removing the stimuli that triggered the self-focused attention (e.g., not looking into the mirror). This approach may be especially likely if there is a simple and effective way to avoid self-awareness. However, self-aware individuals may also "*shape up*" and attempt to reduce the discrepancy by changing their behavior such that it is more consistent with standards of normative behavior. This response may be particularly likely if individuals cannot or do not want to avoid the self-focusing stimuli. Moreover, these motivational effects can also be proactive. Gibbons (1990) suggests that self-awareness can motivate individuals to inhibit the *creation* of discrepancies by avoiding behaviors that are inconsistent with the standards that they hold. In this sense, standards can be prescriptive in that they indicate what a person *should* do in order to attain standards of correctness.

Previous empirical research has supported these effects. For example, Batson, Thompson, Seuferling, Whitney, and Strongman (1999) demonstrated that self-awareness increased the likelihood that individuals would assign another participant to a desirable task instead of themselves when this behavior was framed as the most "morally right" way to assign tasks. In a similar vein, Vallacher and Solodky (1979) demonstrated that individuals who were made self-aware were less likely to cheat on puzzle problems if standards of morality were prioritized over standards of competence. Taken together, this research supports the notion that by increasing the salience of normative standards, states of awareness can also motivate proactive moral behavior.

Self-awareness can also enhance individuals' motivation to "shape up" to standards of fairness. Specifically, as mentioned above, the activation of self-awareness triggers a self-evaluation between one's behavior and the standards one holds about how they *should* behave (Duval & Wicklund, 1972; Duval & Silvia, 2002) and can motivate individuals to avoid behaviors that are inconsistent with the standards that they hold (Gibbons, 1990). Fairness represents one example of a commonly held standard of ideal behavior. For example, fairness is often framed as a moral virtue and an important standard of how one *should* act, whereas violations of fairness are regarded as transgressions against standards of moral behavior (Folger, 1998, 2001; Folger & Cropanzano, 1998, 2001). Consistent with this approach, research has demonstrated that fairness is a desired social identity (Greenberg, 1990). That is, most people want to be fair (Diekmann et al., 1997; Lerner, 1971; Messick et al., 1985) and want others to perceive them as fair (Greenberg, 1990). This suggests that when individuals are made self-aware, they should be motivated to engage in greater levels of fairness to reduce the likelihood that discrepancies will emerge between their own behavior and the standards of fairness that they hold. That is, self-awareness can activate standards of fairness to indicate how one *should* act in order to attain a desired identity of fairness.

On the other hand, in the absence of self-awareness, standards of fairness should be less salient and the motivational drive to "shape up" and avoid discrepancies between one's behavior and standards of fairness should be less intense (Gibbons, 1990). In support of these effects within a justice context, Greenberg (1980) demonstrated that self-awareness can increase individuals' equity behavior, especially when individuals see themselves as responsible for performance differences between them and a competitor. The current study expands on these

findings by exploring these effects in the context of interactional justice and the extent to which self-awareness can promote fairness amongst individuals with low trait empathy.

The Interaction of Trait Empathy and Self-Awareness: Activating Standards of Justice

I argue that trait empathy will interact with self-awareness to predict fairness such that individuals with high trait empathy will engage in relatively high levels of fairness regardless of self-awareness whereas self-awareness will increase fair behaviors for individuals with low trait empathy. In other words, when individuals are *not* made self-aware, the relationship between trait empathy and interactional justice will be positive. This is because greater levels of empathy should increase the importance of justice issues when communicating negative news to others (Blader & Tyler, 2001). That is, individuals with higher trait empathy should demonstrate a greater motivation to communicate negative news in a fair manner in order to minimize the harm felt by the employee (Patient & Skarlicki, 2010). When individuals are made self-aware, however, the positive relationship between trait empathy and self-awareness will be tempered such that interactional justice is consistently high across all levels of trait empathy. Specifically, by increasing the salience of standards of justice, self-awareness can motivate individuals with *low* trait empathy to "shape up" to standards of justice and communicate negative outcomes with a greater level of interactional justice. In other words, increasing individuals' self-awareness can overcome the effects of low trait empathy on interactional justice.

> *Hypothesis 1: Trait empathy and self-awareness will interact to predict*
> *interactional justice such that the relationship between trait empathy and*
> *interactional justice will be positive when self-awareness is low, but tempered*
> *when self-awareness is high such that interactional justice will be high*
> *regardless of trait empathy.*

METHOD

Participants and Procedure

Participants ($N = 77$) were recruited from a North American university and received

course credit for participating (51% male, average age = 20.21 years, average work experience =

3.57 years). Participants completed a feedback task adapted from Patient and Skarlicki (2010).

The task was organized into two parts. First, participants were asked to grade a mock GMAT test

that had been completed by an ostensible participant in a previous study session. The test was

organized into four multiple-choice sections (reading comprehension, sentence correction,

algebra, and geometry) and one qualitative writing question. Participants were provided with a

marking rubric and asked to grade the test. All participants were provided with an identical test

in which the test-taker performed poorly – the test-taker failed the reading comprehension and

algebra sections (a score of 1/5 in each section), barely passed the sentence correction and

geometry sections (a score of 3/5 in each section), and had a flawed qualitative response. To put

these scores in context, participants were told that most MBA programs would automatically

reject any applicant with a GMAT score less than 70%. By marking the test themselves,

participants had a detailed understanding of the test-taker's strengths and weaknesses as well as

which areas needed improvement.

Second, after grading the test, participants were asked to provide the test-taker with

feedback on their test performance. Participants were told that their feedback would be given to

the test-taker in the third stage of the study the following week and were asked to "*provide your*

feedback in the way that you feel is most appropriate." To increase the perceived importance of

the task, participants were told that "*all of the students in the previous stage of this study are*

interested in applying for MBA programs and participated in this study as an actual opportunity

to prepare themselves for the format of the GMAT exam and receive feedback on their

performance". Using open-ended questions at the end of the study, participants were asked to

provide an explanation of what they thought the study was about and what the researchers were

trying to examine. An examination of these responses indicated that participants did not question

the authenticity of the feedback task.

In terms of the self-awareness intervention, participants were randomly assigned to either

a *high self-awareness* condition or a *low self-awareness* condition for the feedback task. In the

high self-awareness condition, participants provided the test-taker with video feedback using a

webcam program on a laptop that mirrored their image on the computer screen as they recorded

the feedback. That is, participants recorded their feedback while facing a live image of

themselves recording the feedback as if they were looking into a mirror. This is consistent with

other self-awareness research, which demonstrates that this type of self-focusing situation can

effectively activate states of self-awareness (Duval & Wicklund, 1972; Duval & Silvia, 2002;

Sentyrz & Bushman, 1998). In the low self-awareness condition, participants used a laptop to

record audio feedback (i.e., participants in the low self-awareness condition were not faced with

their own image as they recorded their feedback). See Appendix A for further information and

screenshots. This specific self-awareness manipulation was used to maximize the amount of time

participants in the high self-awareness condition spent looking at their own image as they

communicated their feedback (i.e., as opposed to using a mirror where participants can more

freely avoid the self-focusing situation by looking away).

To minimize potential anxiety about being identified, all participants were told that the

test-taker would only receive a text-based transcription of their feedback and they would not be

identifiable in any way. One participant was excluded for not correctly following the study

instructions. Thus, the final sample consisted of 76 participants. After the feedback task was completed, participants responded to the measures, including trait empathy, the manipulation check and demographics.[2]

Measures

Unless otherwise indicated, participants responded on a 5-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 (*not at all*) to 5 (*very much so*). Items were averaged to form the measures.

Manipulation Check. Self-awareness was measured with one item from Govern and Marsch's Situational Self-Awareness Scale (2001; "I am conscious of my inner feelings").

Interactional Justice. Following procedures from Patient and Skarlicki (2010), interactional justice was content-coded by two independent coders who were blind to the participants' condition using transcribed versions of participants' feedback. The coders assessed transcribed versions of participants' feedback to avoid any potential influence of differences in the feedback medium (i.e., video vs. audio) on coders' assessment of fairness. Before coding, the coders received several hours of training on how to code responses, which involved (a) reviewing what interactional justice entails and how it is defined and conceptualized in the justice literature (e.g., Bies, 2001; Colquitt, 2001; Colquitt et al., 2001), and (b) examining specific examples of feedback representing high, medium, and low levels of interactional justice. This training continued until the coders felt comfortable with the full coding process and the coders were encouraged to consult with the author if they encountered any issues. Once the training was completed, the coders independently rated interactional justice for each of the 76 participant responses.

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[2] Trait empathy was measured after the feedback task; however, there were no significant differences between participants in the high and low self-awareness conditions on trait empathy, $F(1, 75) = 1.16$, *ns*.

Coders assessed interactional justice using six criteria derived from Colquitt's (2001) measure. Only criteria that were applicable to this specific feedback context were used (e.g., the timing of the feedback was not included since participants did not have control over this criterion). Thus, the feedback messages were assessed based on the extent to which the communicator: (a) was polite, (b) treated the test-taker with respect, (c) treated the test-taker with dignity, (d) refrained from improper remarks, (e) provided a clear explanation of the test results, and (f) thoroughly explained the test results (cf. Colquitt, 2001; see Appendix B for a full description). All items were coded using a 5-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 (*not at all*) to 5 (*very much so*).

Both coders' scores were averaged for each item and the final interactional justice scale was calculated using the mean of these scores. To examine the degree of intercoder reliability, intraclass correlation coefficients (ICC) were calculated for the full interactional justice scale as well as each individual justice criterion. All of the intraclass correlation coefficients surpassed the commonly accepted threshold of .70 (ICC_2 for full scale = .97; ICC_2 for each individual criterion ranged from .88-.93), suggesting an acceptable level of intercoder reliability.

Trait Empathy. Trait empathy was measured using the empathy subscale of the Cloninger Temperament and Character Inventory (TCI; 8-items; e.g., "In general, I feel others' emotions", "In general, I am concerned about others"; Cloninger, Przybeck, Svrakic, & Wetzel, 1994). Unlike other empathy scales (e.g., Davis, 1980), this scale does not contain fairness-related items that may confound empathy with the dependent measure (fairness).

RESULTS

Descriptive statistics, correlations, and reliabilities are displayed in Table 1. Before testing the hypothesis, the manipulation check was examined. Results indicated that the self-

awareness manipulation was effective; participants in the high self-awareness condition reported being significantly more self-aware ($M = 4.05$, $SE = .11$) than participants in the low self-awareness condition ($M = 3.61$, $SE = .11$), $F (1, 75) = 9.09$, $p < .01$.

Hierarchical regression and simple slopes analyses were used to test the hypothesis (cf. Aiken and West, 1991). The variables were entered in the following steps: (1) the main effects (trait empathy and self-awareness) and (2) the interaction term between trait empathy and self-awareness. Trait empathy was mean-centered to minimize multicollinearity (Cohen, Cohen, West, & Aiken, 2003). Full results are displayed in Table 2 and Figure 1. Results indicated that trait empathy and self-awareness significantly interacted to predict interactional justice ($\beta = -.37$, $p < .05$). Simple slopes analyses revealed that the relationship between trait empathy and interactional justice was positive when individuals were not made self-aware ($\beta = .39$, $p < .01$), but was not significant when individuals were self-aware ($\beta = -.20$, $p = .21$). Hypothesis 1 was supported.

GENERAL DISCUSSION

Promoting fairness is a critical issue within organizations. By integrating research on trait empathy and self-awareness theory (Duval & Wicklund, 1972), an interactionist model of fairness was examined that focused on *self-awareness* as one contextual factor that can promote fairness among managers who may be naturally predisposed to engage in lower levels of fairness (i.e., managers with low levels of trait empathy). In support of the hypothesis, the findings demonstrate that increasing individuals' self-awareness through self-focusing situations can help promote interactional justice, particularly among individuals with low trait empathy. These findings have a number of theoretical and practical implications.

These findings provide further support for the important role of empathy in managers' fair behavior. Consistent with Patient and Skarlicki (2010), trait empathy was positively related to the enactment of fairness in the absence of self-awareness. This provides further evidence that empathy can increase the importance of justice issues and motivate managers to enact higher levels of fairness, especially when communicating negative outcomes to employees. Importantly, however, results demonstrate that the effects of *low* empathy can be overcome by increasing individuals' self-awareness. That is, by activating standards of justice through other means (i.e., self-awareness), organizations can motivate managers with low trait empathy to engage in higher levels of fairness, which are comparable to highly empathic managers. I argue that this occurs because states of self-awareness can increase the importance of meeting fairness standards and provide managers with low trait empathy with the motivation to "shape up" their behavior and act more in line with those standards. Moving forward, it is important to explore how other personality and contextual factors interact to promote fairness, particularly among managers who may be predisposed to lower levels of fairness. By doing so, justice researchers can create more effective interventions that can promote fairness across a wide range of managers and situations.

These findings also demonstrate that managers' self-awareness can be an important antecedent of justice behaviors. Specifically, the results suggest that activating states of self-awareness through self-focusing situations can enhance managers' levels of interactional justice when communicating bad news – a context where fairness has been shown to be particularly important (Bennett et al., 1995). This finding presents a promising avenue for promoting fairness in organizations. To date, the majority of research on justice as a dependent variable has focused on subordinate characteristics (e.g., subordinate charisma, Scott et al., 2007; assertiveness; Korsgaard et al., 1998; and need for belongingness, Cornelis et al., 2013) that can enhance

managers' enactment of fairness (see Patient & Skarlicki, 2010, for a notable exception).

Although these studies provide important insights into *why* managers may enact fairness, these

effects are dependent on the composition of an organization's workforce – a consideration that is

relatively hard to manage through organizational interventions. Self-awareness, on the other

hand, is a *manager-centric* antecedent that can more readily be adopted into interventions to

promote fair behavior because it depends upon the context in which managers operate. In order

to deepen our understanding of *how* to promote fairness in the workplace, justice scholars should

continue to examine these contextual factors and how these factors can be integrated into

interventions aimed at promoting fairness.

The significant interactive effects of trait empathy and self-awareness also highlight the

importance of justice motivation in managers' enactment of fairness. Specifically, the results

support the theoretical rationale that trait empathy can motivate fairness by increasing the

salience of justice in the context of negative outcomes (Blader & Tyler, 2001; Patient &

Skarlicki, 2010) whereas self-awareness motivates behavior by increasing the salience of

normative standards (e.g., fairness) and discrepancies between one's actual behavior and these

standards (i.e., the discrepancy between how fair one *wants* to be and one's actual fair behavior;

Duval & Wicklund, 1972; Gibbons, 1990). These findings support a larger stream of research

which suggests that increasing managers' *motivation* to be fair is a key component in promoting

managers' fair behavior (Cornelis et al., 2013; Korsgaard et al., 1998; Scott et al., 2007). As our

understanding of *why* and *when* managers enact fairness in the workplace continues to deepen, it

may also be important for justice researchers to examine contexts in which managers' motivation

to be fair may *not* suffice (i.e., the boundary conditions for justice motivation). For example,

research on depletion has demonstrated that the benefits of motivation can be tempered by

factors such as fatigue and sleep deprivation (e.g., Christian & Ellis, 2011; Xu, Bègue, & Bushman, 2012) and the depletion of self-regulatory resources (e.g., *ego depletion*; Vohs, Baumeister, & Schmeichel, 2012). By identifying boundary conditions, a more comprehensive picture of how to promote fairness across a wide range of contexts and situations can be developed.

Traditionally, justice researchers have measured fairness primarily from the employee's perspective (Colquitt, 2001; Colquitt & Shaw, 2005) – that is, asking employees about the level of fairness they experience. This approach has also pervaded research on justice as a dependent variable (e.g., Korsgaard et al., 1998; Scott et al., 2007). Often times, this research assumes that justice can only be measured from the perspective of employees. However, consistent with Patient and Skarlicki (2010), these findings suggest that fair behavior can also be assessed from the perspective of an observer or by an observer imagining themselves in the position of an employee. In other words, a qualitative coding approach is another potential avenue by which justice researchers can measure fair behavior. This is important because this approach can provide justice researchers with more flexibility in measuring fairness. For example, while measuring managers' fairness from the employee's perspective may be the best approach for field studies, a qualitative coding approach may allow researchers to measure fair behavior in the lab without the need for overly complicated study designs. Future research should consider utilizing and developing this coding approach further, particularly as research on justice as a dependent variable continues to garner attention.

Practical Implications

These findings contribute to research examining the promotion of fairness through training programs and interventions (e.g., Barclay, Skarlicki, & Latham, 2009; Greenberg, 2006;

Skarlicki & Latham, 1996, 1997). Specifically, managing fairness in the workplace is a critical

concern for organizations, especially when communicating negative news to employees (Bennett

et al., 1995). To date, research has focused primarily on training managers *how* to be fair (e.g.,

outlining examples of fair behavior). However, to translate this knowledge into fair behavior,

managers also require the *motivation* to be fair (Ambrose & Schminke, 2009a). These findings

indicate that trait empathy and self-awareness are two avenues through which managers can be

motivated to engage in interactional justice when communicating negative news. This suggests

that organizations may wish to place a greater emphasis on trait empathy in their recruitment and

selection of managers, particularly in contexts where negative news is a frequent occurrence

since these individuals are naturally predisposed to engage in greater levels of fairness**.**

      Practically, however, it may not be feasible to only hire managers with high levels of trait

empathy. These findings suggest that another way to increase managers' justice motivation is by

situating managers in self-focusing contexts. These contexts can be created by something as

simple as placing a mirror on managers' desks (Sentyrz & Bushman, 1998). These visual cues,

however, are not necessarily required to activate states of self-awareness – self-awareness can

also be activated by any stimuli that cause a manager to focus attention on him or herself as an

object (Duval & Wicklund, 1972). For example, organizations may ask managers to reflect on

specific workplace events (e.g., performance appraisals, meetings with employees) and rate the

extent to which they adhered to standards of fairness. Organizations can also embed justice

standards in organizational policies (e.g., "Code of Ethics") and advise managers to compare

their behavior with the standards of fairness outlined in these statements. Taken together, these

results suggest that effective training programs should incorporate interventions that maintain the

salience of fairness standards in the workplace and provide managers with the impetus to compare their *actual* fair behavior against ideal standards of fairness.

These findings also provide new insights into the potential implications of technology in a justice context. Specifically, virtual communication (e.g., email, text messaging) is becoming increasingly common in organizations and this context may present new barriers to fairness. Virtual communication, for example, can increase the psychological distance between communicators, thereby creating feelings of detachment and making communicators feel less emotionally connected to others (Walther & Parks, 2002). Moreover, the standards of "normative" communication are often less clearly defined in the context of virtual communication (Cialdini, Kallgren, & Reno, 1991). Managers need to overcome these obstacles in order to treat their employees fairly in a virtual environment. These results suggest that virtual barriers to fairness may be tempered by adopting other forms of online communication that activate states of self-awareness. For example, video-conference programs such as Skype that reflect the image of the communicator on the screen for the duration of the conversation may activate and help maintain states of self-awareness. By using such interventions, managers may be more capable of overcoming virtual barriers of fairness when communicating with employees.

Strengths, Limitations, and Future Directions

This research has both strengths and potential limitations. An experimental design was used which can strengthen internal validity by creating a controlled context (cf. Aronson & Carlsmith, 1968). Further, psychological realism was incorporated into the study by telling participants that their feedback would actually be received by the test-taker and that the test-taker was interested in the score for personal reasons. Future research, however, would benefit from exploring these relationships in the field and with other samples and methodologies.

With respect to the self-awareness manipulation, the same medium for the feedback task was used (i.e., participants in both conditions provided feedback by speaking into a laptop). However, video data was only available for the high self-awareness condition and not the low-self-awareness (i.e., audio) condition. Thus, differences in other factors that may be relevant in the context of fairness such as facial expressions and nonverbal behaviors were not compared. Future research should examine whether self-awareness can also influence individuals' nonverbal behaviors when communicating negative outcomes. Moreover, while previous research has indicated that self-awareness increases the salience of normative standards (e.g., Duval & Wicklund, 1972; Gibbons, 1978; Macrae et al., 1998), it is possible that the self-awareness manipulation exerted its effects through something other than the increased salience of justice motives. For example, self-awareness may have motivated participants to communicate clearly and effectively to attain standards of effective communication rather than standards of fairness. Future research should further examine the mechanisms underlying these effects.

The feedback task may also not be representative of the full range of feedback tasks managers encounter. First, participants were not responsible for the negative news being communicated (i.e., they were not the cause of the test-taker's poor performance). This may be an important consideration – for example, Folger and Skarlicki (2001) posit that managers can have an especially strong tendency to distance themselves from victims of adversity when they are responsible for the negative outcome – a term they refer to as the Churchill effect (see also Folger, 1993). Future research should examine the potential moderating effects of responsibility for the negative news being communicated and whether responsibility can act as a boundary condition on the effects of self-awareness on fairness.

Second, the study design focused on audio and video feedback. However, managers may also communicate negative news in other ways such as face-to-face or in writing (e.g., email and memos). These mediums may have unique effects on managers' fairness – for example, face-to-face communication of negative news allows individuals to interact and also allows employees to ask clarifying questions. This may help managers determine how to tailor communications to meet that employee's specific needs and encourage other processes, such as perspective taking. On the other hand, these dyadic effects are less likely to occur in the case of written communication. Future research should further examine these differences.

Finally, participants were not able to *avoid* communication in the feedback task. Self-awareness research has demonstrated that avoiding self-focusing situations is another way that people can reduce discrepancies caused by self-awareness, particularly when it is unlikely that the discrepancy can be reduced (Silvia & Duval, 2001). Moving forward, researchers should examine whether the ability to avoid communicating bad news is a boundary condition for the effects of self-awareness on fairness.

CONCLUSION

How can fairness be promoted among managers who are less inclined to adhere to standards of justice? This is a critical yet rarely studied question. Importantly, there will *always* be managers who, as a result of their personality characteristics, are predisposed to engage in lower levels of fairness than others. However, this study suggests that organizations can help these managers enhance their enactment of fairness with a relatively simple contextual intervention. Moreover, the results indicate that by exploring the interactive effects between personality and context, justice researchers can garner a deeper understanding of not only *why* managers fail to treat employees fairly, but also *how* fairness can be promoted across a wide

range of contexts and personality styles, ultimately helping organizations experience the many

benefits of a fair workplace.

Table 1
Means, Standard Deviations, Reliabilities, and Correlations

	Mean	SD	1	2	3
1. Trait Empathy	3.85	0.56	(.85)		
2. Self-Awareness	0.50	0.50	.12	(-)	
3. Interactional Justice (coded)	3.07	0.93	.11	.44**	(.95)

Notes.
** *p* < .01
Self-Awareness is coded: 1 = High Self-Awareness, 0 = Low Self-Awareness
Reliabilities (Cronbach's alpha) are shown on the diagonal in parentheses, where applicable

Table 2
Summary of Hierarchical Regression Analysis

Predictor	Interactional Justice [a]				
	B	SE	β	95% Lower Bound CI	95% Upper Bound CI
Step 1					
Trait Empathy	.10	.18	.06	-.26	.45
Self-Awareness	.79	.20	.43**	.40	1.19
Step 2					
Trait Empathy	.54	.24	.32*	.06	1.02
Self-Awareness	.73	.19	.40**	.35	1.11
Trait Empathy x Self-Awareness	-.88	.34	-.37*	-1.56	-.20

Notes.
[a] Step 1, $R^2 = .19$, $p < .01$; Step 2, $R^2 = .26$, $\Delta R^2 = .07$, $p < .05$.
* $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$.

Figure 1.
The Interactive Effects of Trait Empathy and Self-Awareness on Interactional Justice
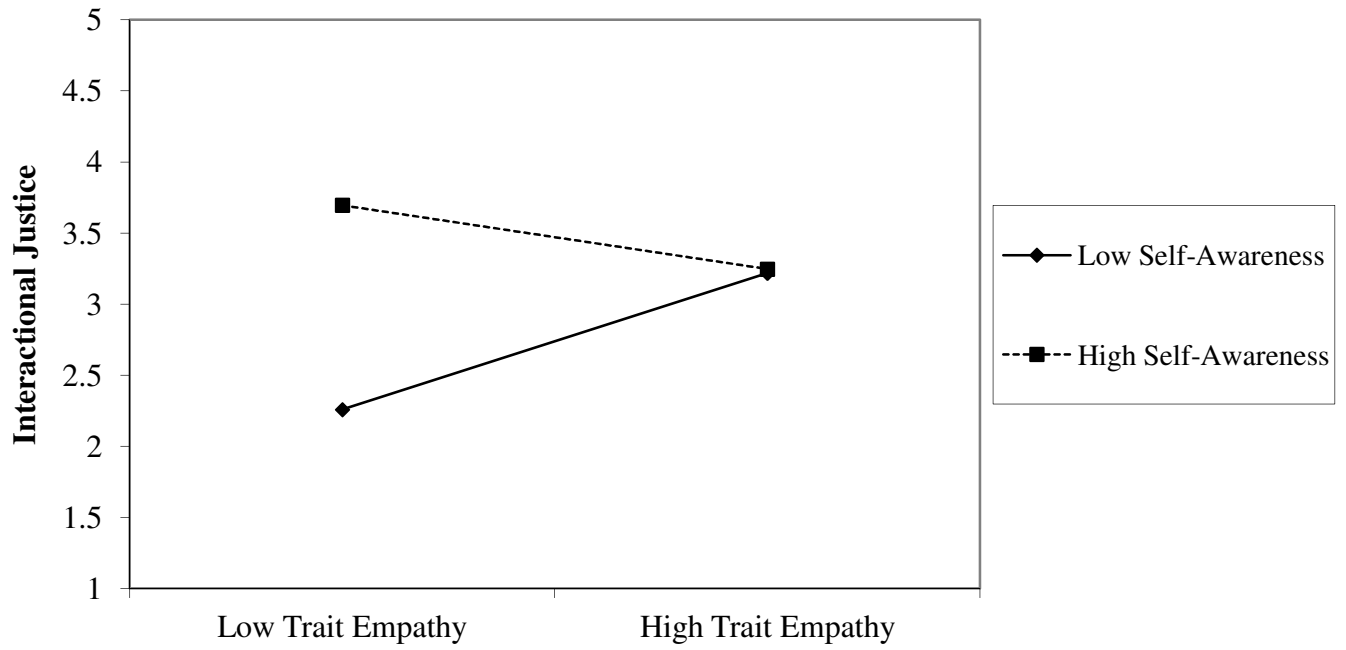
CHAPTER 3 – MANUSCRIPT 2:

THE EFFECTS OF DEPLETION ON FAIR BEHAVIOR:

WHEN WANTING TO BE FAIR ISN'T ENOUGH

THE EFFECTS OF DEPLETION ON FAIR BEHAVIOR:

WHEN WANTING TO BE FAIR ISN'T ENOUGH

ABSTRACT

Ensuring that managers engage in fair behaviors is critical for the effective functioning of organizations. Previous research has focused on increasing fair behaviors by enhancing managers' *willingness* to be fair. Drawing upon the limited strength model of self-regulation, I argue that engaging in fair behavior may not depend solely on managers' willingness or motivation to be fair but also on the extent to which managers have the self-regulatory resources required to manage the fairness of their behavior. Specifically, I propose that the depletion of self-regulatory resources can impair managers' ability to accurately appraise the fairness of their behavior, which can result in fewer fair behaviors. Across three experimental studies, results indicate that the depletion of self-regulatory resources can have a significant negative effect on interactional justice (Study 1) and these depletion effects occur even when individuals are explicitly instructed to treat others fairly (Studies 2 and 3). However, the negative effects of depletion can be overcome by increasing individuals' awareness that they may be overestimating the fairness of their behavior (Study 3). Theoretical and practical implications are discussed.

THE EFFECTS OF DEPLETION ON FAIR BEHAVIOR:

WHEN WANTING TO BE FAIR ISN'T ENOUGH

"Being good is easy. What is difficult is being just." – Victor Hugo

Effectively managing fairness in the workplace is a critical issue facing organizations. Treating employees fairly is associated with a wide range of beneficial outcomes for employees (e.g., increased health, job satisfaction) and organizations (e.g., increased performance; for meta-analytic reviews, see Cohen-Charash & Spector, 2001; Colquitt, Conlon, Wesson, Porter, & Ng, 2001; Colquitt et al., 2013; Rupp, Shao, Jones, & Liao, 2014). Despite these benefits, managers often fail to treat their employees fairly. To date, justice researchers have attempted to understand why this occurs by examining managers' willingness or motivation to be fair. Research, for example, has focused on identifying factors that can enhance managers' desire to engage in fair behavior (e.g., subordinate charisma, Scott, Colquitt, Zapata-Phelan, 2007; assertiveness, Korsgaard, Roberson, & Rymph, 1998; and need for belongingness, Cornelis, Van Hiel, De Cremer, & Mayer, 2013) and enhancing fairness by training managers how to treat employees fairly (e.g., Greenberg, 2006; Skarlicki & Latham, 1996, 1997). Although these studies provide important insights into the promotion of fair behavior, they are based on the assumption that managers' *willingness* to be fair is sufficient for increasing fair behavior.

Building upon the limited strength model of self-regulation (Muraven & Baumeister, 2000; Muraven, Tice, & Baumeister, 1998), I argue that engaging in fair behavior may not depend solely on managers' willingness or motivation to be fair, but also on the extent to which managers have the self-regulatory resources required to manage the fairness of their behavior. I propose that when managers' self-regulatory resources are depleted, their ability to engage in fair behaviors will be diminished because depletion can impair managers' self-appraisal processes

such that they may not be able to accurately appraise the fairness of their behaviors. Moreover, the detrimental effects of depletion are likely to occur even when managers believe that they *should* be fair. I also argue that one way to overcome depletion effects is to make individuals aware that they may overestimate the fairness of their own behaviors.

The aims of this research are three-fold. First, although previous research has demonstrated that increasing managers' willingness to be fair can enhance the enactment of justice, managers may not always engage in fair behaviors, even when they know that they *should* and/or are *motivated* to engage in fair behavior. I propose that the willingness or motivation to be fair may not always be sufficient to enhance justice – it is also important to explore factors that can impact managers' *ability* to be fair. Specifically, I argue that the depletion of self-regulatory resources (i.e., *ego depletion*) may hinder managers' ability to engage in fairness even when they believe that they should be fair. That is, I identify a boundary condition for the effectiveness of motivation within the context of justice.

Second, justice researchers still know relatively little about the reasons *why* managers fail to treat their employees fairly (cf. Scott, Colquitt, & Paddock, 2009). Drawing upon the limited strength model of self-regulation, I argue that when managers have diminished self-regulatory resources, their ability to accurately appraise their own behavior may be hindered, which can create discrepancies between how fair they *think* they are behaving and how fairly they are *actually* behaving. Thus, I examine self-appraisals as a psychological process that can explain the relationship between depletion and fair behaviors, thereby enhancing our understanding of *why* managers may not treat their employees fairly.

Third, while depletion has been associated with a wide array of negative behaviors (Hagger, Wood, Stiff, & Chatzisarantis, 2010), scholars are still searching for ways to overcome

these effects. I examine whether increasing *awareness* of potential inaccuracies in self-appraisals can mitigate the negative effects of depletion on fair behaviors. Addressing this question can enhance our ability to manage these effects within organizations and in the context of fairness.

These research questions are explored using three experimental studies. In Study 1, the main effect of depletion on the enactment of interactional justice is examined. Building on this foundation, Study 2 explores whether depletion negates the beneficial effects of justice motives on fair behavior. That is, I examine whether depletion hinders individuals' ability to engage in fairness, despite the presence of a justice motive. I also explore the psychological process underlying this effect. Specifically, I examine whether depleted individuals experience gaps in their self-appraisal processes that hinder their ability to evaluate how fairly they are treating others. In Study 3, I test whether increasing individuals' awareness that they may be overestimating the fairness of their behavior can overcome the negative effects of depletion.

Across all three studies, I focus on the enactment of interactional justice (i.e., the extent to which individuals are treated with sensitivity and provided an adequate explanation of outcomes; Bies & Moag, 1986). I focus on interactional justice because, compared to the other justice dimensions, it is the least constrained by organizational factors and most open to managers' discretion (Scott et al., 2009). In the interests of simplicity, hereafter, I use the terms interactional justice and fair behavior interchangeably.

THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

Fairness is a deeply valued virtue in society and a widely held standard of how people *should* act (e,g., Cropanzano, Byrne, Bobocel, & Rupp, 2001; Folger, 1998, 2001; Rupp et al., 2014). Most people believe that they *should* be fair and generally want to perceive of themselves as fair people (Diekmann, Samuels, Ross, & Bazerman, 1997; Lerner, 1971; Messick, Bloom,

Boldizar, & Samuelson, 1985). Despite the importance of justice, however, managers do not always treat employees fairly. This raises the question of why people do not always act fairly, even when they believe they *should* be fair (i.e., the knowing-acting gap; Comer & Vega, 2011).

Ego depletion (i.e., the depletion of self-regulatory resources) is one potential answer to this question. The limited strength model of self-regulation (Muraven & Baumeister, 2000; Muraven et al., 1998;) posits that people require a sufficient amount of resources to successfully regulate their behavior and bring it in line with standards of ideal behavior, such as fairness. Engaging in fair behavior can require self-regulation because it can demand conscious and controlled efforts to meet standards of fairness. More specifically, fairness is a standard of ideal behavior that people often strive to attain in their everyday interactions (Lerner, 1971). However, fairness can demand a significant investment of managers' time, energy, and resources (Folger & Skarlicki, 2001; Scott et al., 2009). Engaging in fairness may also conflict with other interests and require the inhibition of competing responses (Ambrose & Schminke, 2009a). Managers who must communicate bad news, for example, may be motivated to disengage from their employees as a form of self-protection – a response that is often devoid of interpersonal sensitivity (Margolis & Molinsky, 2008; Molinsky & Margolis, 2005).

To enact fairness, managers need to regulate their behavior to ensure that they are devoting sufficient time and energy towards ensuring that their employees feel fairly treated. For example, a manager who must reprimand an employee for poor performance needs to invest a significant amount of time and energy to thoroughly outline the reasons why the employee's performance has been inadequate, tailor one's communications to the specific needs of the employee, and ensure that the employee feels respected despite the uncomfortable nature of the message (i.e., enact *interactional justice;* Bies & Moag, 1986). Without adequate self-regulatory

resources, managers may not have the capacity to manage their behavior in a way that facilitates interpersonally sensitive communications. Thus, engaging in fair behavior can require self-regulation because it can demand conscious and controlled efforts to meet standards of fairness.

The Limited Strength Model of Self-Regulation and Fairness

The limited strength model of self-regulation (Muraven & Baumeister, 2000; Muraven et al., 1998) has emerged as the dominant framework for explaining how individuals' self-regulatory resources can be depleted and how this depletion can impact behavior (Baumeister, 1998; Baumeister, Bratlavsky, Muraven, & Tice, 1998; Hagger et al., 2010; Muraven & Baumeister, 2000; Muraven et al., 1998). Specifically, the limited strength model suggests that individuals require an adequate level of *self-regulatory strength* in order to successfully regulate their behavior. However, self-regulatory strength is a limited consumable resource that can be depleted (Muraven & Baumeister, 2000). When self-regulatory strength is depleted (i.e., individuals experience ego depletion), their ability to regulate their behavior and bring it in line with standards of ideal behavior can be hindered. Moreover, self-regulatory behaviors all draw on and deplete this single resource; engaging in self-regulation in one area can reduce the strength necessary to regulate behavior in other spheres (Hagger et al., 2010; Muraven & Baumeister, 2000). For example, inhibiting the urge to eat fatty foods can diminish an individual's ability to persist on a difficult task, a seemingly unrelated sphere of self-regulation. Taken together, the limited strength model posits that people require an adequate level of self-regulatory strength to manage their behavior and bring it in line with normative standards, but when this strength is depleted, people are less able to regulate their behavior, despite their best intentions to do so.

Empirical tests of the limited strength model have demonstrated that depletion can impact a number of outcomes such as persistence on frustrating tasks (e.g., DeWall, Baumeister, Mead, & Vohs, 2011; Muraven et al., 1998), helping behaviors (e.g., DeWall, Baumeister, Gailliot, & Maner, 2008) and aggression (e.g., DeWall, Baumeister, Stillman, & Gailliot, 2007; Finkel, DeWall, Slotter, Oaten, & Foshee, 2009). Building upon this research, I argue that ego depletion can also affect managers' ability to engage in fair behavior by impeding managers' ability to self-appraise. Specifically, depleted managers may not accurately assess the extent to which they are adhering to standards of fairness (DeWall et al., 2011). For example, depleted managers may intend to treat an employee with dignity during a layoff, but lack the resources required to identify when they are being disrespectful while explaining the layoff. Overall, self-regulatory strength provides individuals with the capacity to engage in fair behavior and the depletion of this strength is predicted to be negatively related to fair behavior.

> *Hypothesis 1: Individuals will engage in lower levels of interactional justice*
>
> *when they experience high as compared to low levels of depletion.*

STUDY 1

Participants and Procedure

Participants ($N = 83$) were undergraduate students recruited from a North American university and participated in exchange for course credit (51% male, average age = 20.34 years, average work experience = 3.07 years). The ostensible purpose of the study was to examine the relationship between mental acuity and communication. Participants were randomly assigned to either a *high depletion* or *low depletion* condition. The study was organized into three parts. First, participants completed an ego depletion manipulation. The *Es task* (cf. Baumeister et al., 1998; DeWall et al., 2007, 2008) was used since it has been shown to be one of the most

effective manipulations of ego depletion (see Hagger et al., 2010 for a meta-analysis). All participants were given a page of journal text and instructed to cross out every instance of the letter *e* on the page – 385 instances in total. Participants then received a second page of text (372 instances of the letter *e*) with a second set of instructions that varied depending on their condition. Participants in the *high depletion* condition were provided with modified instructions that conflicted with the now established habit of crossing out every *e*. Specifically, they were instructed to cross out every instance of the letter *e*, except for any *e* that was (1) followed by a vowel and/or (2) in a word with a vowel two letters before the *e*. Thus, the task required individuals to inhibit the established response of crossing out every *e*. Participants in the *low depletion* condition were instructed to follow the same instructions as the first page – crossing out every instance of the letter *e*. While this task may be effortful, participants do not need to inhibit their behavior like in the high depletion condition (Muraven & Baumeister, 2000).

Second, a layoff exercise validated by Patient and Skarlicki (2010) was used to measure interactional justice. Participants were placed in the role of a manager and asked to communicate a layoff to an employee. The layoff was designed such that both the organization and the employee held some degree of accountability for the layoff so that a wide range of communication strategies could be considered reasonable (cf. Patient & Skarlicki, 2010). Participants were then asked to record an audio message of how they would communicate the layoff decision to the employee. Finally, participants completed a questionnaire assessing measures such as interactional justice values, mood, and demographic information.

Measures

Manipulation Check. Participants were asked to indicate their feelings of depletion after the *Es* task (2-items; "Right now, please indicate to what extent you are feeling

[depleted/fatigued]"). The anchors ranged from 1 (*not at all*) to 5 (*to a great extent*).

Interactional Justice. Following procedures from Patient and Skarlicki (2010),

interactional justice was content-coded using transcribed versions of participants' audio-

recordings. Two coders, who were blind to the participants' condition, independently assessed

interactional justice using six criteria, including the extent to which the communicator: (a) was

polite, (b) treated the employee with respect, (c) treated the employee with dignity, (d) refrained

from improper remarks, (e) provided a clear explanation of the layoff, and (f) explained the

layoff procedures thoroughly (cf. Colquitt, 2001). All items were rated using a 5-point Likert-

type scale ranging from 1 (*not at all*) to 5 (*very much so*). The full coding process was consistent

with the interactional justice coding process used in Manuscript 1 (see Appendix B).

Both coders' scores were averaged for each item and the final interactional justice scale

was calculated using the mean of these scores. To examine the degree of intercoder reliability,

intraclass correlation coefficients (ICC) were calculated for the full interactional justice scale as

well as each individual justice criterion. All of the intraclass correlation coefficients surpassed

the commonly accepted threshold of .70 (ICC_2 for full scale = .95; ICC_2 for each individual

criterion ranged from .89-.95), indicating an acceptable level of intercoder reliability.

Control Variable.[3] Participants were asked to indicate the extent to which they valued

and placed personal importance on interactional justice (i.e., *interactional justice values*; Holtz &

Harold, 2013; 6-items; e.g., "Please indicate how important it is to you that people treat others

with dignity"). This scale was entered into the model as a covariate to rule out the potential

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[3] Previous depletion research often examines differences in mood across conditions to rule out the alternative
explanation that depletion differentially affects participants' mood (e.g., Baumeister et al., 1998; DeWall et al.,
2008, 2011). Mood was measured with the Brief Mood Introspection Scale (BMIS; 16-items; e.g., "Happy",
"Nervous"; Mayer & Gaschke, 1988). Results indicated that there were no significant differences between
participants in the high and low depletion conditions on mood valence, $t(80) = .06$, *ns*.

alternative explanation that the effect of depletion on justice was due to differences in participants' perceived importance of justice.

STUDY 1 RESULTS

Descriptive statistics, correlations, and reliabilities are displayed in Table 1. Results of the manipulation check indicated that depletion was greater in the high depletion ($M = 3.51$, $SE = .15$) versus low depletion condition ($M = 2.81$, $SE = .17$); $t(81) = 3.13$, $p < .01$. Thus, the manipulation was deemed effective. An analysis of covariance (ANCOVA) was used to test the hypothesis, with participants' interactional justice values entered as a covariate.[4] Results indicated that participants in the high depletion condition demonstrated significantly lower levels of interactional justice ($M = 2.29$, $SE = .14$) than participants in the low depletion condition ($M = 3.56$, $SE = .15$), $F(1, 80) = 39.06$, $p < .001$, $R^2 = .34$. Hypothesis 1 was supported.

STUDY 1 DISCUSSION

Research examining justice as a dependent variable has typically focused on managers' *willingness* to be fair (Scott et al., 2007). These findings, however, demonstrate that managers' enactment of justice may also be tied to the extent to which they have the self-regulatory strength available to engage in these behaviors. Specifically, the results indicated that individuals who were more depleted engaged in lower levels of interactional justice than those who were less depleted. This suggests that it is important to move beyond the willingness or motivation to enact justice to also explore factors that may constrain managers' *ability* to engage in fairness, such as whether they have the resources available to do so.

STUDY 2

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[4] The analysis was also conducted without the covariate. The results were substantively similar. Further, the interaction between depletion and interactional justice values was not a significant predictor of fair behavior.

Although Study 1 provided initial support for the hypothesis that the depletion of self-regulatory strength can hinder managers' ability to behave in a fair manner, it is possible that participants were not motivated to be fair or simply did not view the layoff scenario as a situation where fairness was required. Study 2 examines whether instructing individuals that they *should* be fair can overcome the detrimental effects of depletion on fair behavior. Further, self-appraisals are also explored as a potential psychological process that underlies the relationship between depletion and fair behavior.

Within the depletion literature, there is emerging evidence that depletion may influence behavior by impeding individuals' self-appraisal processes (e.g., Apfelbaum & Sommers, 2009; DeWall et al., 2011). Theoretically, self-appraisal is important since acts of self-regulation are driven largely by the desire to minimize discrepancies between the actual self and the ideal self (Carver & Sheier, 1982). In the context of fairness, this suggests that managers who are motivated to be fair should actively regulate their behavior in an attempt to realize their ideal self (i.e., being a fair manager). However, the experience of depletion may prevent managers from realizing that discrepancies exist between the actual and ideal self. This suggests that one reason why depleted managers may engage in lower levels of fairness is because their ability to accurately assess the fairness of their behavior has been hampered. That is, depleted managers may be *motivated* to be fair, but fail to identify potential discrepancies between the standards of fairness they want to achieve (the ideal self) and their actual fair behavior (the actual self). If depleted managers are not aware that a discrepancy exists, they may not have the impetus to regulate their behavior in order to attain standards of fairness (Carver & Sheier, 1982).

Drawing upon this argument, I propose that ego depletion will interact with individuals' motives to predict fair behaviors. Specifically, in the absence of ego depletion, individuals who

are told that they should be fair will engage in higher levels of interactional justice than those

who do not receive this instruction. This is because individuals generally want to perceive of

themselves as fair people (Diekmann et al., 1997; Lerner, 1971; Messick et al., 1985) and so

instructing managers that they *should* be fair can encourage them to initiate and persist in

fairness efforts (Ambrose & Schminke, 2009a; Scott et al., 2009). However, when individuals

are depleted, their ability to accurately assess their behavior can be hindered, thereby making it

difficult for individuals to recognize when they are failing to adhere to standards of ideal

behavior, such as fairness (Muraven & Baumeister, 2000). In this case, individuals' justice

motives should be less relevant because depletion can constrain their *ability* to attain those

standards. Taken together, I hypothesize that fairness motives will have a positive impact on fair

behavior, but only when individuals have the resources required to enact fairness (i.e., low

depletion). When managers are depleted, their ability to manage their behavior and adhere to

standards of other-oriented normative behavior will be diminished, even if they believe that they

should be fair.

> *Hypothesis 2: Depletion will interact with motives to predict interactional*
>
> *justice. Specifically, when individuals are experiencing low depletion,*
>
> *instructing them to be fair will result in higher interactional justice than not*
>
> *providing them with instructions, whereas these effects are attenuated when*
>
> *individuals are experiencing high depletion.*

Following a moderation-of-process design (cf. Spencer, Zanna, & Fong, 2005), I also

begin to explore the psychological process underlying this relationship by examining whether

there are any differences related to individuals' self-appraisals of the fairness of their own

behavior across conditions. A moderation-of-process design examines a psychological process

by manipulating the process so that it moderates the relationship between the independent (depletion) and dependent variable (fair behaviors). However, Spencer et al. argue that before manipulating the process, it is beneficial to provide evidence that the proposed psychological process is operational. The goal in this study is to explore whether there are discrepancies in individuals' appraisals related to the fairness of their behaviors (i.e., whether depleted individuals lack awareness about the fairness of their behaviors).

STUDY 2 METHOD

Participants and Procedure

Participants ($N = 68$) were undergraduate students recruited from a North American university and participated in exchange for course credit (50% male, average age = 20.06 years, average work experience = 3.18 years). Participants were randomly assigned to conditions in a 2 (*depletion:* high depletion vs. low depletion) X 2 (*motive*: fairness vs. no motive) experimental design.

Participants completed two tasks: a depletion manipulation and a feedback task. To increase the generalizability of the results, a different manipulation of ego depletion than Study 1 was used. Specifically, participants watched a 6-minute video of a woman being interviewed without audio (cf. Baumeister et al., 1998; DeWall et al., 2007, 2008). To conceal the true nature of the video, participants were told that the purpose of the task was to assess the employee's personality and potential job performance based on her body language. For the duration of the video, common words (e.g., boot, tire) would appear in the bottom corner of the screen and change every 10 seconds. Participants in the *low depletion* condition were not given any instructions with regards to how to watch the video. Participants in the *high depletion* condition, however, were asked to focus their attention on the interviewee and to avoid looking at the words

on the screen for the duration of the video. Moreover, they were instructed to redirect their attention back to the interviewee immediately if they caught themselves looking at the words on the screen. This task requires the exertion of one's self-regulatory strength because attention is automatically drawn to novel stimuli in the environment (cf. Shiffrin & Schneider, 1977) and participants must override these impulses in order to follow the instructions provided. After the completion of the video, participants completed brief measures of depletion and mood.

The second task was a feedback task adapted from Patient and Skarlicki (2010) in which participants were asked to grade a mock GMAT test taken by an ostensible participant in a previous study session and provide the test-taker with feedback on their performance. To increase the perceived importance of the task, participants were told that the test-taker was interested in applying to MBA programs and had participated in the study as an opportunity to prepare for the actual GMAT test. Participants were provided with a marking rubric and asked to calculate the test score. The test had four multiple-choice sections (reading comprehension, sentence correction, algebra, and geometry) and a qualitative writing section. All participants graded an identical test in which the test-taker failed the reading comprehension and algebra sections (a score of 1/5 in each section), barely passed the sentence correction and geometry sections (a score of 3/5 in each section), and had a flawed qualitative essay. Participants were told that most MBA programs would immediately reject applicants with a score of less than 70% on the GMAT. Therefore, the test-taker's score fell well below the cut-off.

Participants were then asked to provide the test-taker with feedback using an audio recorder. The manipulation of justice motives occurred before the message was recorded. In the *fairness motive* condition, participants were asked to "*please try to be as fair as possible when providing the test taker with feedback about their performance.*" In the *no motive* condition,

participants were not given any additional instructions regarding how to relay their feedback. After the feedback task, participants were asked to rate the extent to which they adhered to interactional justice criteria when communicating their feedback using a 5-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 (*not at all*) to 5 (*very much so*). This scale mirrored the coding scheme that was used to evaluate their behavior (6-items; e.g., "When providing the feedback, I treated the test-taker with dignity"; "I explained my feedback thoroughly to the test-taker"). Other measures and coding strategies were identical to Study 1. Consistent with Study 1, intraclass correlation coefficients (ICC) were calculated for the full interactional justice scale as well as each individual justice criterion to examine the degree of intercoder reliability. All of the intraclass correlation coefficients surpassed the commonly accepted threshold of .70 (ICC_2 for full scale = .93; ICC_2 for each individual criterion ranged from .86-.93).

STUDY 2 RESULTS

Descriptive statistics, correlations, and reliabilities are displayed in Table 2. Results indicated that the depletion manipulation was effective; participants in the high depletion condition were significantly more depleted ($M = 3.28$, $SE = .16$) than participants in the low depletion condition ($M = 2.54$, $SE = .14$), $t(66) = 3.55$, $p < .01$. The motive manipulation was also effective; 94.4% of participants in the fairness motive condition correctly indicated that they were asked to be as fair as possible when providing feedback and 90.6% of participants in the no motive condition correctly indicated that they were not given any further instructions, $\chi^2 (1) = .15$, *ns*.[5]

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[5] The analyses were also run after removing participants who incorrectly identified their condition from the analyses. Given that the results remained the same, findings from the full sample are presented.

An analysis of covariance (ANCOVA) was used to test the hypothesis, with interactional justice values entered as a covariate.[6] Results indicated that the interaction between depletion and motives significantly predicted interactional justice, $F(1, 62) = 6.70$, $p < .01$, $R^2 = .41$ (see Figure 1). In the *low depletion* condition, interactional justice was significantly higher in the fairness motive condition ($M = 3.82$, $SE = .18$) as compared to the no motive condition ($M = 3.00$, $SE = .18$), $F(1,33) = 11.32$, $p < .01$. However, in the *high depletion* condition, there were no significant differences in interactional justice between the fairness motive ($M = 2.38$, $SE = .21$) and no motive conditions ($M = 2.55$, $SE = .21$), $F(1, 28) = .34$, *ns*. Hypothesis 2 was supported. There were no significant differences across the four conditions related to individuals' perceptions that they had engaged in interactional justice, $F(1, 63) = .22$, *ns*.

STUDY 2 DISCUSSION

Study 2 indicated that ego depletion can lead to lower levels of interactional justice, even when individuals are explicitly told that they *should* treat others fairly. The implications of this study are two-fold. First, under the right conditions, managers' willingness to be fair can have important effects on their behavior. In the absence of depletion, individuals who were given a fairness motive engaged in significantly greater levels of interactional justice than individuals who were not given this motive, which supports existing research indicating that motivation is an important piece of the puzzle in the promotion of fairness (Cornelis et al., 2013; Korsgaard et al., 1998; Scott et al., 2007). However, focusing solely on motivation overlooks another important piece of the puzzle – the *ability* to be fair. These findings indicate that the positive effects of justice motives can be negated when self-regulatory strength is depleted. This suggests that ego

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[6] Consistent with Study 1, results were unchanged when running the analyses without the covariate and the interaction between depletion and interactional justice values was not a significant predictor of fair behavior. Results also indicated that there were no significant differences between participants in the high and low depletion conditions on mood valence, $t(68) = 1.51$, *ns*.

depletion can be an important boundary condition in the relationship between motivation and fair behavior. Taken together, this suggests that to effectively promote fairness in the workplace, managers must be *motivated* to be fair and also have the *resources* to act on that motivation.

These results also provide evidence that ego depletion may impact fairness by impeding managers' *awareness* of the fairness of their behavior. Although highly depleted individuals reported engaging in high levels of fairness, in reality, they engaged in relatively low levels of fair behaviors (the fairness of their behaviors was below the scale's mid-point). This implies that ego depletion can create a gap between how fair individuals *think* they are being and how fair they are *actually* being. It also provides preliminary evidence that depleted individuals' ability to engage in fair behaviors may be constrained by inaccuracies in their self-appraisal processes. Building upon this finding, a third study was designed to examine whether increasing awareness of potential deficiencies in ones' appraisal processes can overcome the negative effects of ego depletion on fair behaviors, particularly when individuals are motivated to be fair.

STUDY 3

Study 2 provided preliminary evidence that the effects of depletion may be related to inaccuracies in individuals' self-appraisal processes. Following a moderation-of-process design (cf. Spencer et al., 2005), Study 3 further explores this psychological process by manipulating individuals' awareness of self-appraisal discrepancies. That is, I examine whether manipulating awareness moderates the relationship between depletion, motives, and the enactment of fair behaviors. In contrast to the often-used Baron and Kenny (1986) method of establishing mediation through measurement, Spencer et al. (2005: 846) argued that manipulating both the independent and mediating variable is a powerful way to examine psychological processes because it allows researchers to "make strong inferences about the causal chain of events" and

"often does a better job of demonstrating the proposed psychological process than does the measurement-of-mediation design." Moreover, this method is particularly effective when it is easy to manipulate but difficult to measure the proposed psychological process, such as in the current context.

In this study, I argue that increasing managers' *awareness* of these self-appraisal gaps may help managers who are depleted, yet motivated to be fair, become cognizant of potential discrepancies between how fair they think they are being versus the actual fairness of their behavior, thereby providing the impetus to regulate their behavior (Carver & Scheier, 1982). I hypothesize a three-way interaction between depletion, motives, and awareness in predicting interactional justice. Specifically, I propose that the same interaction as Study 2 will occur when individuals are not made aware of potential detriments in self-appraisal processes. That is, when individuals are experiencing low depletion, fairness motives will enhance interactional justice compared to no motive, whereas under high depletion, individuals will engage in relatively low levels of fairness regardless of the motive. However, I predict that when individuals are made aware of potential self-appraisal gaps, individuals can overcome the effects of depletion, particularly when they have received a fairness motive. That is, depleted individuals who are made aware of potential detriments in their self-appraisal processes will engage in higher levels of fairness when they are motivated to do so as compared to no motive. This is because individuals will have the awareness to identify and minimize discrepancies between the standards of fairness that they want to attain and the fairness of their behavior.

> *Hypothesis 3: A three-way interaction between depletion, motives, and awareness*
> *will predict interactional justice. In the no awareness condition, an interaction*
> *between motives and depletion will occur such that individuals who are*

experiencing low depletion will engage in higher interactional justice when they

receive a fairness motive as compared to no motive, whereas these effects are

attenuated when individuals are experiencing high depletion. In contrast, in the

awareness condition, individuals who are depleted will engage in higher

interactional justice when they receive a fairness motive as compared to no

motive.

STUDY 3 METHOD

Participants and Procedure

Participants ($N = 155$) were undergraduate students recruited from a North American university and participated in exchange for course credit (62% male, average age = 20.00 years, average work experience = 2.78 years). Participants were randomly assigned to conditions in a 2 (*depletion:* high depletion vs. low depletion) X 2 (*motive*: fairness vs. no motive) X 2 (*awareness*: awareness vs. no awareness) experimental design. Participants completed the same tasks used in Study 1; depletion was manipulated using an *Es task* and participants recorded an audio message to an ostensible layoff victim. Consistent with Study 2, fairness motives were also manipulated. Participants in the *fairness motive* condition were asked to "*please try to be as fair as possible when conducting the layoff*" whereas participants in the *no motive* condition were not provided any additional instructions. To manipulate awareness, before conducting the layoff, participants in the *awareness* condition were told: "*According to recent research, managers generally overestimate how fair they are when interacting with their employees. That is, even when managers think they are treating employees fairly, they are often being less fair than they think. Please keep this in mind as you communicate the layoff to Bob [the layoff victim]."* Participants in the *no awareness* condition were not given any additional information.

The measures and coding strategies were identical to Studies 1 and 2. Also consistent

with Studies 1 and 2, intraclass correlation coefficients (ICC) were calculated for the full

interactional justice scale as well as each individual justice criterion to examine the degree of

intercoder reliability. All of the intraclass correlation coefficients surpassed the commonly

accepted threshold of .70 (ICC_2 for full scale = .95; ICC_2 for each individual criterion ranged

from .85-.95), indicating an acceptable level of intercoder reliability.

STUDY 3 RESULTS

Descriptive statistics, correlations, and reliabilities are displayed in Table 3. Consistent

with Studies 1 and 2, participants in the high depletion condition reported being significantly

more depleted (*M* = 3.38, *SE* = .09) than participants in the low depletion condition (*M* = 2.82,

SE = .10); *t*(153) = 4.18, *p* < .01. Thus, the depletion manipulation was deemed to be effective.

The motive and awareness manipulations were also deemed effective: 92.1% of participants in

the fairness motive condition correctly indicated that they were asked to be as fair as possible

during the layoff and 89.9% of participants in the no motive condition correctly indicated that

they were not given any further instructions, χ^2 (1) = .20, *ns*; 94.1% of participants in the

awareness condition correctly indicated that they received the awareness manipulation and

93.5% in the no-awareness condition correctly indicated that they did not receive any further

information, χ^2 (1) = .10, *ns*.[7] Consistent with Studies 1 and 2, there were also no significant

differences in participants' perceptions that they had engaged in interactional justice across the

conditions, *F*(1 128) = 1.04, *ns*,.

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[7] Analyses were also run after removing participants who incorrectly identified their condition from the analyses. Given that the results remained the same, the results from the full sample are presented.

An analysis of covariance (ANCOVA) was used, with participants' interactional justice values entered as a covariate.[8] Results indicated that a three-way interaction between depletion, motives, and awareness significantly predicted interactional justice, $F(1, 146) = 7.26$, $p < .01$, $R^2 = .29$ (see Figure 2). In the *no awareness* condition, the same interaction pattern as Study 2 was observed. Under low depletion, interactional justice was significantly higher in the fairness motive condition ($M = 3.85$, $SE = .19$) as compared to the no motive condition ($M = 3.11$, $SE = .20$), $F(1, 31) = 7.42$, $p < .05$; whereas in the *high depletion* condition, there were no significant differences in interactional justice between the fairness motive condition ($M = 2.40$, $SE = .24$) and no motive conditions ($M = 2.84$, $SE = .22$), $F(1, 37) = 1.68$, *ns*. However, the same effects were not observed in the *awareness condition*. Specifically, participants who were depleted but made aware of self-appraisal gaps engaged in significantly greater levels of interactional justice when in the fairness motive condition ($M = 3.58$, $SE = .17$) than the no-motive condition ($M = 2.68$, $SE = .17$), $F(1, 39) = 13.94$, $p < .01$. Hypothesis 3 was supported.

STUDY 3 DISCUSSION

Study 3 examined whether awareness can enhance fair behaviors, particularly when individuals are depleted but motivated to be fair. Consistent with Study 2, ego depletion negated the positive effect of justice motives on interactional justice when participants were not made aware of potential detriments in their appraisal processes. This lends further support to the argument that ego depletion can present an important boundary condition for the relationship between justice motives and fairness. However, this depletion effect was attenuated when individuals were made aware of potential constraints in their ability to self-appraise. The

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[8] Consistent with Studies 1 and 2, results were unchanged when running the analyses without the covariate and the interaction between depletion and interactional justice values was not a significant predictor of fair behavior. Results also indicated that there were no significant differences between participants in the high and low depletion conditions on mood valence, $t(149) = .88$, *ns*.

manipulation of awareness provided further evidence that self-appraisals can act as a mechanism through which depletion can have an effect on fair behaviors. It also suggests that increasing individuals' awareness of self-appraisal gaps can serve as an effective intervention that can mitigate the effects of depletion when individuals are provided with a fairness motive.

However, these results also indicate that awareness was only an effective depletion intervention if individuals received a justice motive. That is, when individuals were *not* instructed to be fair, there were no significant differences in fair behaviors between highly depleted participants who were versus were not made aware of self-appraisal gaps, $F(1, 39) =$ .57, *ns*. This suggests that increasing managers' awareness of fairness self-appraisal gaps may only mitigate these depletion effects if managers are actively striving to attain standards of fairness. This finding is further discussed below.

GENERAL DISCUSSION

A common thread underlying the majority of research on "justice as a dependent variable" has been an effort to increase managers' *willingness* to engage in fair behavior – it has been assumed that if managers recognize that they should be fair, they will subsequently treat their employees fairly. By integrating the ego depletion literature with research on justice as a dependent variable, it is clear that managers' willingness to be fair may not always suffice. Across three studies, ego depletion (i.e., the depletion of self-regulatory strength) was associated with significantly lower levels of interactional justice. Moreover, this depletion effect was found even when participants were explicitly instructed that they *should* be fair (Studies 2 and 3). Inaccuracies in self-appraisal processes were found to underlie these effects and increasing awareness of these gaps mitigated the negative effect of ego depletion on the motivation-fairness relationship (Study 3). Taken together, these results have a number of theoretical and practical

implications.

Theoretical Implications

These findings provide important new insights for research on "justice as a dependent variable". Although research in this area has been dominated by an emphasis on managers' willingness or motivation to be fair (e.g., Cornelis et al., 2013; Scott et al., 2007), these results indicate that managers' *ability* to enact fair behavior is also critically important. More specifically, the depletion of self-regulatory strength can impede individuals' ability to engage in fair behaviors, even when they are motivated to enact fairness. Justice scholars should continue to broaden the scope of research on justice as a dependent variable to examine additional boundary conditions that can explain why managers might not always engage in fair behavior, despite holding the belief that they *should* be fair. By doing so, a more comprehensive understanding of how and why fairness emerges in the workplace as well as interventions that can effectively increase fair behaviors can be developed.

Although research has established the effects of ego depletion on a variety of behaviors, questions still remain regarding *why* these effects occur. Understanding why and how ego depletion impacts behavior is an important step towards identifying interventions to mitigate these depletion effects. These studies provide empirical evidence that one avenue by which ego depletion can affect behavior is through the impediment of individuals' *self-appraisal processes* (cf. Apfelbaum & Sommers, 2009; DeWall et al., 2011). Specifically, these results indicated that depleted participants' perceptions of their own fairness did not differ significantly from non-depleted participants' perceptions of their own fairness, despite engaging in significantly lower levels of fairness. This suggests that depleted managers may fail to provide justice and/or lack the impetus to correct their behavior because their self-appraisals are inaccurate. These self-

appraisal gaps can not only affect the enactment of fairness, but may also provide an explanation for why predicaments of injustice can emerge in the workplace (i.e., occurrences when a manager perceives an interaction as fair, but an employee believes the interaction to be unfair; Bies, 1987; Cooper & Scandura, 2012; Whiteside & Barclay, in press a). These inaccuracies in self-appraisals may also impede managers' attempts to remedy unfairness by constraining their ability to appropriately assess fairness-related issues. Future research should examine these possibilities.

This paper is the first to my knowledge that demonstrates that the negative effects of ego depletion can be overcome by increasing individuals' *awareness* that their self-appraisal processes may have been compromised. In the context of fairness, this finding supports the premise that people generally want to see themselves as fair people (Diekmann et al., 1997; Lerner, 1971; Messick et al., 1985). By increasing individuals' awareness that they might not be as fair as they think they are (i.e., creating discrepancies between the actual and ideal self), individuals may be better able to adjust their behavior and engage in greater levels of fairness. This suggests that organizations may benefit from raising managers' awareness of potential self-appraisal gaps in fairness, particularly when managers are experiencing depletion, and this may provide an effective intervention to better manage the fairness of managers' behavior. Together, these findings provide further evidence that ego depletion can influence managers' behavior by creating gaps in their self-appraisal processes and also demonstrate that these effects may be mitigated by interventions designed to create an awareness of these self-appraisal gaps.

Finally, these results present an interesting contradiction to recent research, which suggests that motivation can temporarily override the effects of ego depletion. Whereas the current findings demonstrate that ego depletion can hamper or constrain the beneficial effects of

justice motives on fairness, others have found that participants who were motivated by task importance were able to overcome mild levels of depletion (e.g., Muraven & Slessareva, 2003; Vohs, Baumeister, & Schmeichel, 2012). Considering the *type* of outcomes studied may provide one explanation for this discrepancy. That is, while these authors examined the interaction between depletion and motivation in predicting largely non-social outcomes (e.g., delay of gratification, test performance; Muraven & Slessareva, 2003; Vohs et al., 2012), I focused on interactional justice, which has a significant social component (cf. Cropanzano et al., 2001). This discrepancy sheds new insight into the possibility that the nature of the interaction between depletion and motivation may depend on the type of outcome being considered. That is, motivation may override depletion effects for outcomes that are void of social pressures because individuals only have to "push through" to satisfy their own interests (e.g., delay of gratification; Vohs et al., 2012). However, in the case of social outcomes, depleted individuals' motivation to act in the best interest of *others* (i.e., fairness) may conflict with their desire to also act in their own best interests (i.e., conserve resources). This explanation is speculative and warrants testing.

Strengths, Limitations, and Future Research

This research has both strengths and potential limitations. The hypotheses were supported across three experimental studies using two different ego depletion tasks and two fairness tasks (a layoff and a feedback task). The use of experimental designs can strengthen internal validity by creating a controlled context for testing relationships (cf. Aronson & Carlsmith, 1968). Further, psychological realism was incorporated into the studies – for example, in Study 2, participants were told that their feedback would actually be received by the test-taker.

The manipulations of depletion were consistent with those that are used extensively in the literature (*E*s *task*, video); however, managers are unlikely to complete these tasks as part of their

daily repertoire of behavior. Given that research suggests that self-regulatory resources all draw from the same pool of resources (Muraven & Baumeister, 2000), this provides some assurance that these effects should generalize even if depletion originates from other sources. Nonetheless, future research would benefit from exploring these relationships in the field with working managers. Additionally, the awareness manipulation was examined under conditions of moderate depletion. Although managers' resources were diminished, they still had resources that could be devoted to correcting their behaviors. It is possible that under severe levels of depletion, managers may lack the resources to adequately regulate their behavior and be fair regardless of their awareness of self-appraisal gaps (Vohs et al., 2012). Future research should explore this within the context of justice.

A moderation-of-process design was used to explore self-appraisals as a psychological process underlying depletion effects within the context of fairness. Spencer et al. (2005) note that this is a powerful strategy for exploring psychological processes, particularly when it is easy to manipulate but difficult to measure the proposed psychological process. Using this design, evidence for the proposed psychological process was found by identifying gaps between depleted participants' *perceptions* of their fair behavior and their *actual* fair behavior. It is possible, however, that these gaps may have emerged through other mechanisms (e.g., a lowering of justice standards or self-rating confirmation biases). While the effectiveness of the awareness manipulation provides some assurance that these self-appraisal gaps exist, it would be beneficial for future research to also directly measure this psychological process as more sophisticated strategies for tapping appraisal processes become available.

Finally, it is possible that the justice motive manipulation in Studies 2 and 3 engendered higher levels of interactional justice through mechanisms other than motivation (e.g., obedience).

Research has demonstrated that people generally want to be fair (Diekmann et al., 1997; Lerner, 1971; Messick et al., 1986) and this normative component of fairness suggests that asking participants to be fair should instill the motivation to be fair. However, future research should examine these relationships using direct measures and manipulations of justice motivation.

Practical Implications

These results highlight the practical importance of managing managers' depletion in the workplace. Managers engage in many forms of self-regulation (e.g., to persist on arduous tasks, resist speaking out in meetings; Lord, Diefendorff, Schmidt, & Hall, 2010). These everyday behaviors may seem unrelated to fairness in the short-term; however, they may play an important role by depleting the self-regulatory resources that managers need to effectively regulate the fairness of their behavior (Muraven & Baumeister, 2000). This suggests that effectively managing and preventing depletion is a critical step to promoting fairness.

These findings also contribute to research examining the promotion of justice through training programs (e.g., Greenberg, 2006; Skarlicki & Latham, 1996, 1997). Although research in this area has largely focused on training managers *how* to be fair, these results suggest that these programs may also need to consider not only how managers can be fair but also how to motivate managers and enhance their capacity to enact those strategies. Specifically, these results suggests that training should encompass three components: (1) *motivation* - addressing managers' willingness to be fair, (2) *resources* - monitoring and managing organizational factors that may be depleting self-regulatory resources, and (3) *awareness* - training managers to be aware of when and how gaps may exist between how fair they *perceive* their actions to be and how fair their actions actually *are*. Future research should explore the effectiveness of interventions comprised of these three components.

Finally, the effective promotion of fairness in the workplace requires managers to be *willing* and *able* to engage in fair behaviors. Moreover, managers' ability to engage in fairness is not only related to having the resources to engage in fairness but also understanding when potential detriments in their ability to appropriately appraise the fairness of their behaviors can arise. Focusing solely on willingness to engage in fairness is insufficient and only provides one piece of the puzzle. Recognizing the roles of resources and awareness can provide a more comprehensive picture that can help managers ensure that employees feel fairly treated, which can help promote fairness and its beneficial outcomes in the workplace.

Table 1
Means, Standard Deviations, Correlations, and Reliabilities (Study 1)

	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4
1. Depletion	0.53	0.50	(-)			
2. Interactional Justice (coded behavior)	2.89	1.11	-.56**	(.98)		
3. Mood Valence	2.17	9.85	-.01	-.05	(.89)	
4. Interactional Justice Values (self-rated)	3.89	0.77	-.05	-.10	.03	(.92)

Note.
** *p* < .01
Depletion is coded: 1 = High Depletion, 0 = Low Depletion
Reliabilities (Cronbach's alpha) are shown on the diagonal in parentheses, where applicable

Table 2
Means, Standard Deviations, Correlations, and Reliabilities (Study 2)

	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6
1. Depletion	0.47	0.50	(-)					
2. Motive	0.53	0.51	-.06	(-)				
3. Interactional Justice (coded behavior)	2.99	0.94	-.53**	.23	(.97)			
4. Perceptions of Interactional Justice (self-rated)	3.90	0.70	.09	.04	.17	(.86)		
5. Mood Valence	5.38	13.16	-.18	.08	.03	-.03	(.88)	
6. Interactional Justice Values (self-rated)	4.13	0.68	.06	.13	.14	.43**	-.11	(.90)

Note.
** $p < .01$
Depletion is coded: 1 = High Depletion, 0 = Low Depletion
Motive is coded: 1 = Fairness Motive, 0 = No Motive
Reliabilities (Cronbach's alpha) are shown on the diagonal in parentheses, where applicable

Table 3
Means, Standard Deviations, Correlations, and Reliabilities (Study 3)

	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1. Depletion	0.53	0.50	(-)						
2. Motive	0.49	0.50	.00	(-)					
3. Awareness	0.52	0.50	-.02	.01	(-)				
4. Interactional Justice (coded behavior)	3.23	1.04	-.34**	.21**	.18*	(.97)			
5. Perceptions of Interactional Justice (self-rated)	3.72	0.64	-.13	-.01	-.11	.32**	(.82)		
6. Mood Valence	5.52	13.22	-.07	-.03	.04	.09	.15	(.85)	
7. Interactional Justice Values (self-rated)	4.24	0.61	.06	-.02	.01	.16*	.31**	.03	(.88)

Note.
** $p < .01$
Depletion is coded: 1 = High Depletion, 0 = Low Depletion
Motive is coded: 1 = Fairness Motive, 0 = No Motive
Awareness is coded: 1 = Awareness, 0 = No Awareness
Reliabilities (Cronbach's alpha) are shown on the diagonal in parentheses, where applicable
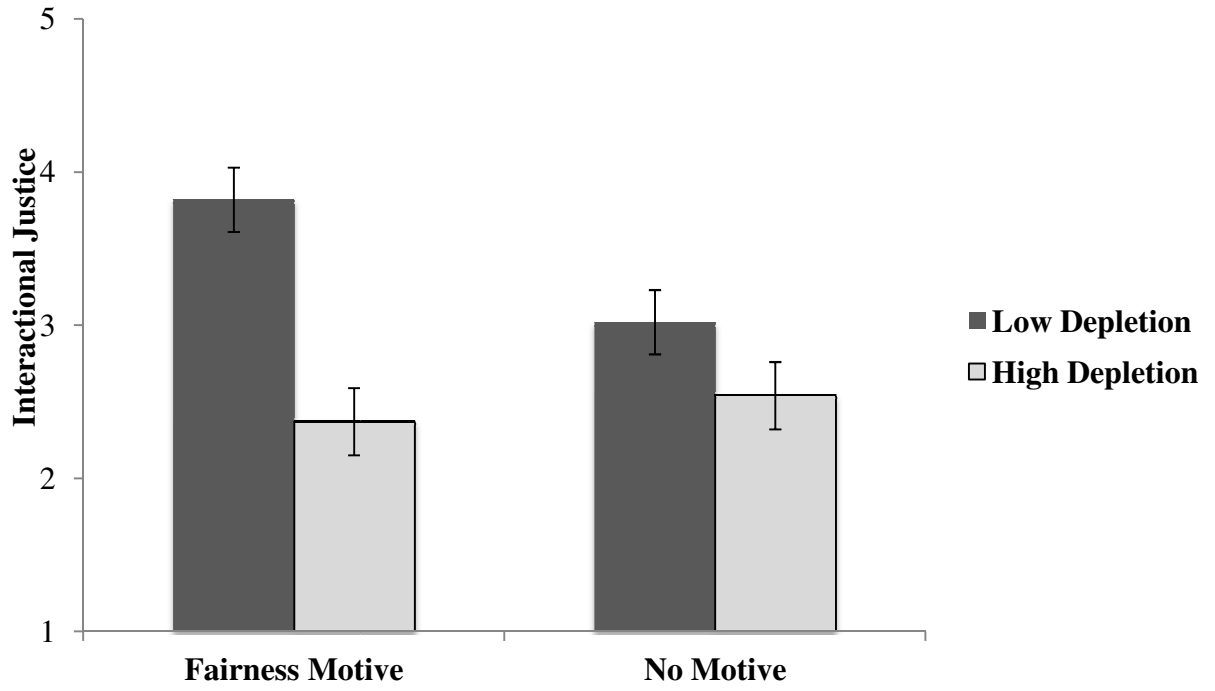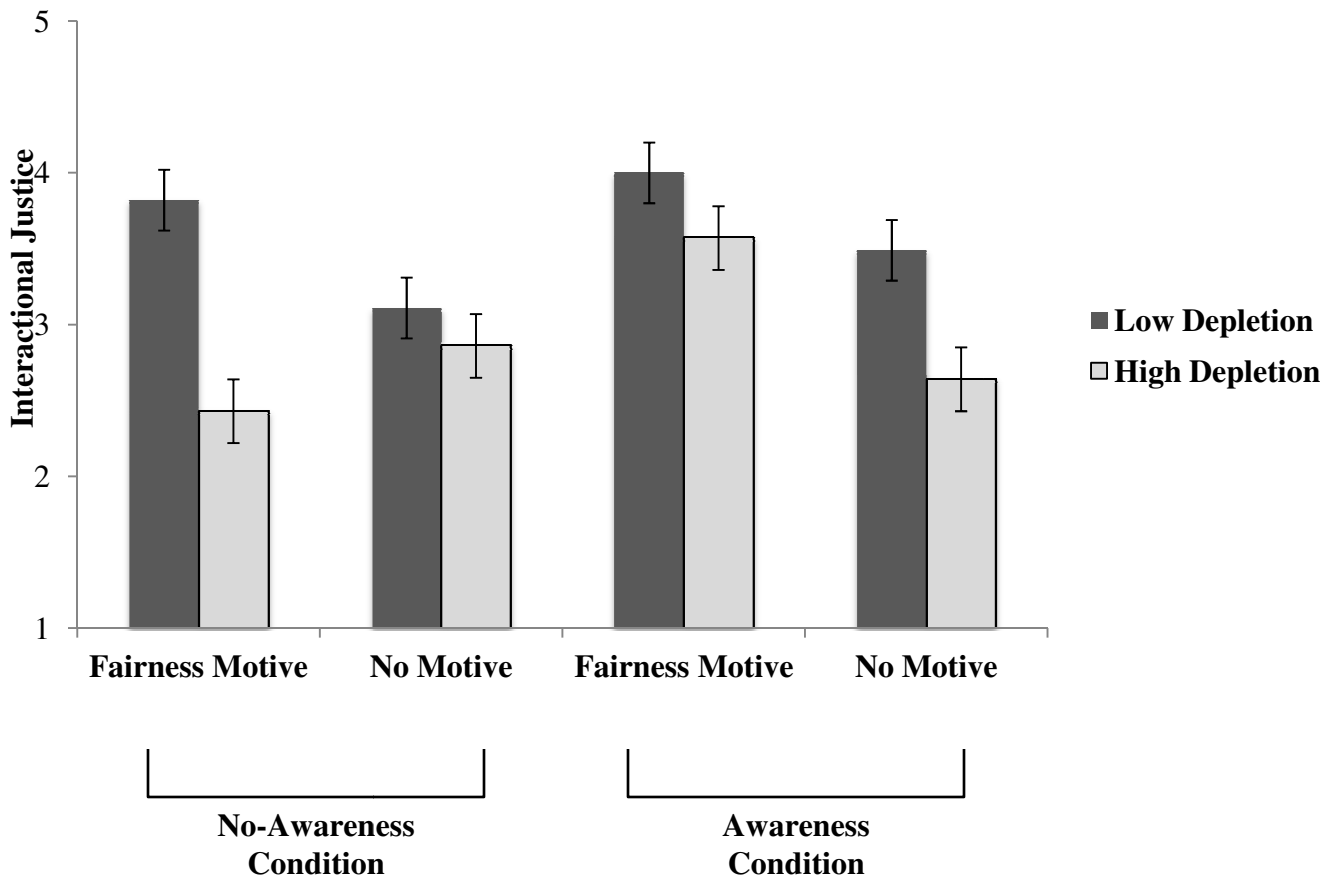
Figure 1
Study 2 Results

Figure 2
Study 3 Results

CHAPTER 4 – MANUSCRIPT 3:

THE GOOD, THE BAD, AND THE DEPLETED:

OUTCOME VALENCE AND THE DEPLETING EFFECTS OF ENACTING FAIRNESS

THE GOOD, THE BAD, AND THE DEPLETED:

OUTCOME VALENCE AND THE DEPLETING EFFECTS OF ENACTING FAIRNESS

ABSTRACT

Justice scholars have devoted a significant amount of attention to understanding how employees react to fairness and what factors can predict managers' enactment of fairness in the workplace – however, we still know relatively little about how the enactment of fairness affects *managers*. The objective of this paper is to gain a better understanding of *how* and *when* engaging in fair behavior affects managers. Specifically, integrating research on the limited strength model of self-regulation and multi-phase models of bad news delivery, I argue that enacting fairness can have significant depleting effects for managers at each phase of the fairness process: preparation, delivery, and transition. However, I argue that the *valence* of organizational decisions can have an important role in our understanding of when these depletion effects are most likely to occur. I argue that communicating negative outcomes presents significantly more barriers to fairness than communicating positive outcomes at each phase of the fairness process and in order to overcome these barriers, managers communicating negative outcomes need to devote more self-regulatory resources to be fair than managers communicating positive outcomes and this can lead to higher levels of depletion. Implications and future research directions are discussed.

THE GOOD, THE BAD, AND THE DEPLETED:

OUTCOME VALENCE AND THE DEPLETING EFFECTS OF ENACTING FAIRNESS

"No one loves the messenger who brings bad news." – Sophocles

"There is no bad time for good news." – Stephen King

Decades of organizational research have demonstrated that organizations and their employees can benefit from managerial fairness. For example, organizations can experience heightened levels of employee performance and organizational citizenship behaviors, whereas employees can experience better health and greater levels of job satisfaction (for meta-analytic reviews, see Cohen-Charash & Spector, 2001; Colquitt, Conlon, Wesson, Porter, & Ng, 2001; Colquitt et al., 2013; Rupp, Shao, Jones, & Liao, 2014). Given the pervasive benefits of fairness in the workplace, research on "justice as a dependent variable" (Folger & Skarlicki, 2001) has increasingly examined the factors that explain *why* and *when* managers do or do not engage in fair behavior (e.g., subordinate charisma, Scott, Colquitt, Zapata-Phelan, 2007; assertiveness, Korsgaard, Roberson, & Rymph, 1998; need for belongingness, Cornelis, Van Hiel, De Cremer, & Mayer, 2013; spatial distance, van Houwelingen, van Dijke, & De Cremer, 2014). However, relatively little is known about how engaging in fair behaviors actually affects *managers*. This is a critical oversight because in order to fully understand and facilitate fairness from the managers' perspective, we also need to understand how the devotion of time, energy, and resources that is often required to attain standards of fairness can affect managerial outcomes (Folger & Skarlicki, 2001). The primary purpose of this paper is to address this gap by outlining *how* and *when* engaging in fairness can affect managers.

The objectives of this paper are three-fold. First, drawing on the limited strength model of self-regulation (cf. Baumeister, Bratlavsky, Muraven, & Tice, 1998; Muraven & Baumeister, 2000), I outline how engaging in fairness can significantly affect managers' experience of *ego depletion* (i.e., a state in which managers' capacity to regulate and manage their behavior has been depleted; Muraven & Baumeister, 2000). Specifically, I outline how managers often have to overcome a number of "barriers to fairness" in order to treat employees fairly and this can require a significant investment of self-regulatory resources and lead to states of ego depletion. Managers' experience of depletion is a significant concern because research on the limited strength model has demonstrated that depletion can have negative consequences for both the organization (e.g., through detriments to managers' performance and increases in unethical and abusive behaviors) and the depleted manager (e.g., increased experience of fatigue and negative affect; for a meta-analysis, see Hagger, Wood, Stiff, & Chatzisarantis, 2010). This is important because outlining *how* these depletion effects can occur can provide critical insights into how organizations can better support and cater to managers' needs in their fairness promotion efforts.

Second, building upon multi-phase models of bad news delivery (cf. Bies, 2013; Clark & LaBeff, 1982; McClenahen & Lofland, 1976), I argue that these depletion effects are especially important because they are not limited to when fair behavior is being delivered to the recipient. To date, the majority of research examining managerial fairness has focused exclusively on the moment when justice is being enacted by the manager (e.g., Cornelis et al., 2013; Patient & Skarlicki, 2010; Scott et al., 2007; van Houwelingen et al., 2014; Whiteside & Barclay, in press b). However, engaging in fairness is a multi-phase process with depletion having potential effects at each phase: the preparation phase, the delivery phase, and the transition phase (Bies, 2013). Understanding the role of depletion throughout this process is important because it

provides a more complete picture of (a) how engaging in fairness can affect managers, (b) why managers may be hesitant to devote their energy and resources to attaining standards of fairness, and (c) critical points of intervention for organizations to manage these depletion effects.

Finally, I examine the critical role of *outcome valence* (i.e., the positive or negative nature of the outcomes that managers need to communicate to their employees; cf. Adams, 1965; Törnblom, 1988) in the fairness process and how it can broaden our understanding of *when* these depleting effects are most likely to occur so that they can be effectively managed. I propose that the barriers underlying the fairness process are greater when communicating negative as opposed to positive outcomes. Thus, managers' experience of depletion will be particularly relevant when communicating negative outcomes but will be less relevant when communicating positive outcomes. This is important because justice scholars typically pay little attention to the valence of fairness events when examining justice as a dependent variable. By outlining the ways in which valence influences managers, valuable insights into the most effective ways to manage these effects can be gained.

In the following sections, I review research on ego depletion and the limited strength model of self-regulation (cf. Baumeister et al., 1998; Muraven & Baumeister, 2000) and outline how managers' experience of depletion can be an important consideration during each phase of the fairness process depending on the valence of the organizational decision that managers must communicate. Finally, I outline the theoretical, methodological, and practical implications of this approach and why it is important for justice scholars to focus not only on how fairness affects employees, but also how fairness affects the managers who are enacting fairness.

UNDERSTANDING FAIRNESS FROM THE MANAGER'S PERSPECTIVE

Fairness matters to employees. A considerable amount of research has been devoted to understanding *why* employees care about fairness (e.g., Cropanzano, Byrne, Bobocel, & Rupp, 2001) and how they respond to fair treatment (e.g., Cohen-Charash & Spector, 2001; Colquitt et al., 2001, 2013; Rupp et al., 2014). This has also led to a growing interest in "justice as a dependent variable" (Folger & Skarlicki, 2001) and understanding the employee- and manager-based factors that can promote fairness in the workplace (e.g., Blader & Rothman, 2014; Cornelis et al., 2013; Korsgaard et al., 1998; Patient & Skarlicki, 2010; Scott et al., 2007; Whiteside & Barclay, in press b). While these questions have contributed significantly to our understanding of organizational justice, scholars have largely overlooked one important question: How does fairness affect the *managers* who enact it?

Importantly, justice scholars have suggested that fairness is not easy. Rather, significant barriers to fairness can exist in the workplace (Ambrose & Schminke, 2009a) and it can require a significant investment of time, energy, and resources to treat employees fairly (Folger & Skarlicki, 2001). However, little attention has been devoted to understanding how this investment of energy and the need to overcome these barriers can affect *managers*. This is a critical question because understanding how fairness affects managers can shed new light on the reasons why managers can *fail* to treat their employees fairly and the ways in which managers can be supported throughout the fairness process to help them effectively meet standards of fairness. For the purposes of this paper, I focus specifically on how engaging in fairness can elicit states of depletion among managers and how these effects can occur at each stage of the fairness process.

Ego Depletion: How It Happens and Why It Matters

Self-regulation refers to the overriding or inhibition of urges, behaviors, and desires that conflict with the normative standards of correct behavior people hold (Baumeister, Heatherton, & Tice, 1994). To that end, self-regulation is aimed at inhibiting immediate short-term desires (e.g., eating fatty foods) in favor of more ideal long-term interests (e.g., losing weight and improving health; Muraven & Baumeister, 2000). The limited strength model of self-regulation (cf. Baumeister et al., 1998; Muraven & Baumeister, 2000), however, posits that individuals' capacity to engage in self-regulation can be depleted, impeding individuals' ability to effectively manage their behavior – a state referred to as *ego depletion*.

The limited strength model can be characterized by a number of key assumptions. First, effective self-regulation requires an adequate level of *self-regulatory strength* – a consumable but limited self-resource that can be temporarily depleted. In other words, the depletion of self-regulatory strength impedes individuals' ability to regulate their behavior and bring it in line with standards of ideal behavior. Second, self-regulatory strength is depleted primarily through acts of self-regulation. That is, similar to a muscle, acts of self-regulation require the use of self-regulatory strength, but also cause fatigue and temporarily deplete the resources available for subsequent acts of self-regulation (Muraven & Baumeister, 2000). Third, research has demonstrated that there are seven different spheres of self-regulation: (a) controlling attention, (b) controlling emotions, (c) controlling impulses, (d) controlling thoughts, (e) cognitive processing, (f) choice and volition, and (g) social processing (Baumeister, Vohs, & Tice, 2007). This is important because *all* self-regulatory behaviors draw on and deplete this single resource. That is, engaging in self-regulation in one area reduces the strength necessary to regulate behavior in any other sphere (Hagger et al., 2010; Muraven & Baumeister, 2000). For example, having to inhibit emotions in a meeting (i.e., the controlling emotions sphere) will diminish a

manager's ability to perform on difficult tasks (i.e., the controlling attention sphere), a seemingly unrelated sphere of self-regulation. Taken together, the limited strength model posits that people require an adequate level of self-regulatory strength to manage their behavior and bring it in line with normative standards, but when this strength is depleted, people are less able to regulate their behavior, despite their best intentions to do so.

Importantly, managers' ego depletion can have significant consequences for both managers and their organizations. For managers, ego depletion has been associated with increased feelings of cognitive and physical exhaustion as well as heightened levels of negative affect and a diminished capacity to manage aversive emotions such as anger and sadness (Hagger et al., 2010). Moreover, depletion that emerges in the workplace can also bleed into managers' personal lives and has been associated with increased levels of violence towards intimate partners at home (Finkel, DeWall, Slotter, Oaten, & Foshee, 2009). Ego depletion has also been associated with a wide range of behaviors that can be detrimental to managers' effectiveness, such as lower levels of performance and persistence on difficult tasks (Baumeister et al., 1998; DeWall, Baumeister, Mead, & Vohs, 2011; Finkel et al., 2006; Muraven, Tice, & Baumeister, 1998), higher levels of unethical behavior (Barnes, Schaubroeck, Huth, & Ghumman, 2011; Gino, Schweitzer, Mead, & Ariely, 2011; Joosten, van Dijke, Van Hiel, & De Cremer, 2014), abusive supervision (Byrne et al., 2014), interpersonal aggression (DeWall et al., 2007; Finkel et al., 2009), workplace deviance (Christian & Ellis, 2011), and lesser levels of helping and prosocial behavior (DeWall et al., 2008; Xu, Bègue, & Bushman, 2012). Taken together, these studies demonstrate that managers' ego depletion is a critical concern for both managers and organizations because it inhibits managers' capacity to manage their lives and their employees in a way that is effective, respectful, and ethical.

In the following sections, I outline why fairness can elicit states of depletion among managers throughout the fairness process. However, I argue that engaging in fairness will not always be depleting. Rather, I argue that the depleting nature of fairness depends largely on the nature of the fairness issue at hand. For the purposes of this paper, I focus specifically on the role of outcome valence and how it can play an integral role in explaining *when* engaging in fair behaviors will elicit depletion in managers.

When Will Engaging in Fairness Take Its Toll? The Role of Outcome Valence

Managers typically have to communicate a wide range of outcomes to their employees and the valence of these outcomes can vary from primarily negative outcomes to primarily positive outcomes. For example, negative outcomes may include layoffs, poor performance appraisals, or budget cuts, whereas positive outcomes may include promotions, raises, or bonuses. Presumably, managers *want* to be fair regardless of the nature of the issue. This assumption is consistent with previous justice research that has demonstrated that people want to see themselves as fair (Diekmann, Samuels, Ross, & Bazerman, 1997; Lerner, 1971; Messick, Bloom, Boldizar, & Samuelson, 1986). However, I argue that outcome valence can play an integral role in how enacting fairness affects managers. Specifically, I argue that the barriers to fairness associated with communicating negative outcomes are significantly greater than the barriers to fairness associated with communicating positive outcomes. As a result, engaging in fairness will be significantly more depleting when communicating negative outcomes compared to positive outcomes. Importantly, I argue that these enhanced depletion effects will not only occur when managers communicate organizational decisions, but throughout the entire fairness process (i.e., as managers prepare for and respond to the communication of outcomes). In the

following section, I explicitly outline how outcome valence can moderate the depleting effects of fairness and how this moderation effect can occur at each phase of the fairness process.

MAPPING DIFFERENCES IN DEPLETION ACROSS THE FAIRNESS PROCESS

The primary purpose of this paper is to map out managers' experience of depletion across the fairness process. In order to do so, however, it is important to outline the fairness process itself and the phases that managers progress through in order to enact fairness in the workplace. In this paper, I focus specifically on the fairness process that managers follow in order to communicate organizational outcomes to employees in a fair manner (i.e., the enactment of *interactional justice*;[9] Bies & Moag, 1986). To this end, I build upon multi-phase models of bad news delivery (cf. Bies, 2013; Clark & LaBeff, 1982; McClenahen & Lofland, 1976) as a guiding framework to outline the fairness process because it is a communication-based framework in which valence issues are considered particularly important. This framework outlines three different, but interrelated, phases that managers move through when communicating organizational outcomes: (1) *preparation*, i.e., the mental and physical preparation managers undertake to be ready to communicate the outcome, (2) *delivery*, i.e., the actual communication of the outcome, and (3) *transition*, i.e., any activities undertaken after the outcome has been communicated.

Traditionally, these multi-phase models were developed primarily as an integrative framework for understanding how managers deliver bad news. However, I argue that these models provide an appropriate framework for the fairness process in general because the majority of managerial communication, regardless of the outcome, involves these three stages. For example, the extent to which managers explain decision-making procedures thoroughly and

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[9] Interactional justice can be further separated into *interpersonal justice* (i.e., treatment reflecting respect, dignity, and sensitivity) and *informational justice* (i.e., providing an adequate explanation for outcomes; Colquitt, 2001).

tailor their communications to employees' specific needs are integral rules underlying the

enactment of informational justice (i.e., *preparation*; Colquitt, 2001). In other words, to attain

standards of fairness, managers must understand what to communicate and how to deliver it

regardless of the valence of the outcome. Moreover, managers need to communicate the decision

itself regardless of whether the outcome is negative or positive (i.e., *delivery*). Finally, both

negative and positive outcomes can have significant implications for employees' working lives

and as such, both forms of outcomes should involve employee responses that persist after the

delivery has finished (i.e., *transition*). Overall, I propose that engaging in fairness in the context

of negative outcomes will be more depleting than in the context of positive outcomes and these

moderation effects will occur at all three phases of the fairness process: preparation, delivery,

and transition.

The Preparation Phase

The preparation phase includes any fairness-related activities undertaken by managers to

ensure that they are ready to communicate the outcome in a fair manner (i.e., *before* the

communication occurs). I argue that there are two key areas within this phase that can have

significant depleting effects on managers: (1) information collection and preparation as well as

(2) emotional preparation. However, I argue that these areas are significantly more depleting

when communicating negative outcomes as opposed to positive outcomes.

Information Collection and Preparation. The need to collect and prepare relevant

information is an important step in the preparation phase of the fairness process, which can have

significant depleting effects for managers. Specifically, providing employees with thorough and

reasonable explanations of organizational decisions is a key facet of informational justice

(Colquitt, 2001) and managers need to collect and prepare necessary information in order to meet

those standards (Bies, 2013). However, I argue that the depleting effects of information collection and preparation are significantly greater in the context of negative outcomes as opposed to positive outcomes because managers have to respond to greater informational expectations from employees when communicating negative outcomes.

When preparing to communicate negative outcomes fairly, the need to collect and prepare information is paramount. For example, research suggests that negative outcomes create a greater need for meaning and sensemaking than positive outcomes (cf. Baumeister, 1991; Baumeister, Bratslavsky, Finkenauer, & Vohs, 2001; Gilovich, 1983). That is, in the face of negative outcomes, people are especially motivated to understand the reasons *why* those outcomes occurred and *how* decisions were made. Similar effects have been found in the justice literature – for example, justice scholars have demonstrated that employees place increasingly more importance on procedural justice (Brockner & Wiesenfeld, 1996) and interactional justice (Brockner, DeWitt, Grover, & Reed, 1990; Greenberg, 1994; Shapiro, Buttner, & Barry, 1994) as outcomes become more negative. That is, employees who experience negative outcomes are especially concerned with *how* and *why* such decisions were made. Moreover, the question of blame is an integral component of the fairness process in the face of negative outcomes (Folger & Cropanzano, 2001) and the manager's own assumptions about how the employee will respond can "color the orientation adopted by the manager" during the preparation process (Folger & Skarlicki, 2001: 115). In other words, managers preparing to communicate negative outcomes may feel an increased need to prepare and collect information (i.e., why the decision was made, who was responsible) in an effort manage the blame attributed to them and protect themselves from the consequences of the negative outcome.

On the other hand, this degree of information collection and preparation is less necessary when preparing to communicate positive information. Specifically, the need to understand how and why decisions are made is less pronounced in the face of positive outcomes (Baumeister et al., 2001; Brockner et al., 1990; Brockner & Wiesenfeld, 1996). That is, employees who receive positive outcomes are generally satisfied with the outcome itself (Brockner & Wiesenfeld, 1996) and therefore, do not *expect* the same degree of information from managers in order to feel fairly treated. Due to these tempered expectations, managers who are communicating positive outcomes do not have to devote the same level of resources towards collecting and preparing necessary information in order to appease employees as managers who are communicating negative outcomes. Moreover, the issue of blame is less relevant in the context of positive outcomes (Folger & Cropanzano, 2001) and managers can prepare for their communication with the knowledge that the employee receiving the positive outcome will not hold them accountable for causing harm. Taken together, this suggests that the level of information collection and preparation required to communicate outcomes in a fair manner increases as the valence of the outcome becomes more negative.

This valence effect is important because this greater level of information collection and preparation can have repercussions for managers' experience of ego depletion. Specifically, in order to adequately collect and prepare the necessary information, managers must engage in a number of spheres of self-regulation (cf. Baumeister et al., 2007). For example, managers must engage in sustained cognitive processing in order to accurately identify what type of information is important and prepare the information in a way that is comprehensive yet also reasonable and easy to understand. Additionally, managers must engage in social processing in order to accurately identify what the specific employee in question requires and tailor this information to

the specific needs of the employee (i.e., informational justice; Colquitt, 2001). Overall, I propose that the level of information collection and preparation inherent in the fairness process when communicating negative outcomes is significantly greater than when communicating positive outcomes and this can lead to a greater degree of depletion amongst managers during the preparation phase.

Emotional Preparation. Similarly, preparing oneself emotionally is another important step in the preparation phase of the fairness process that can have significant depleting effects for managers. Specifically, organizational decisions can be significant affective events (Elfenbein, 2007) and managers need to ensure that they are prepared emotionally for the communication itself. Social-exchange theorists, however, posit that individuals' reactions to outcomes are typically a result of the valence of the outcome itself (cf. Blau, 1964; Homans, 1958, 1961). Using this social-exchange approach, I argue that negative outcomes require a significantly greater degree of emotional preparation than positive outcomes and this heightened level of emotional preparation can have significant effects on managers' experience of depletion.

When preparing for negative outcomes, managers need to prepare emotionally for a number of reasons. First, causing harm to others can be an intense emotional experience (Butterfield, Treviño, & Ball, 1996; Folger & Skarlicki, 2001; Margolis & Molinsky, 2008; Molinsky & Margolis, 2005; Rafaeli & Sutton, 1991; Wright & Barling, 1998) and can pose a threat to a manager's self-concept and perceived moral integrity (Bies, 1987). Managers who are preparing to communicate negative outcomes need to prepare for the reality that the decision can cause harm, including potential damage to the relationship with the employee and/or how the employee perceives them. Second, there is a great deal of uncertainty associated with *how* employees will react to negative outcomes. Specifically, the broaden-and-build hypothesis

(Fredrickson, 2001) posits that while positive emotions are associated with a more general approach orientation, negative emotions carry a wider variety of action tendencies. For example, employees may respond with sadness and cry or withdraw from the situation or they may "shoot the messenger" and respond to negative outcomes with acts of anger and retaliation (Bies & Tripp, 1996; Pruitt & Rubin, 1986; Tripp & Bies, 2009). On the other hand, they may be understanding of the situation and cooperate with the manager (Bies, 2013). Due to this uncertainty, managers communicating negative outcomes must prepare themselves for a wide array of employee reactions so they are able to react appropriately and manage these different situations.

On the other hand, these considerations are less relevant in the context of positive outcomes. For example, managers do not have to prepare for the emotional burden of causing harm to others to the same extent. In fact, managers can expect to experience personal benefits when preparing to communicate positive outcomes such as heightened feelings of esteem and seeing oneself as a good person (Aknin et al., 2013; Aknin, Dunn, & Borton, 2012; Brown, Nesse, Vinokur, & Smith, 2003). The uncertainty of employee responses is also minimized in the case of positive outcomes. Specifically, people generally respond to positive outcomes in a predictably positive manner (Fredrickson, 2001) and this lesser degree of uncertainty means that managers do not have to prepare emotionally to the same extent because the variety of employee responses to positive outcomes is less than that expected for negative outcomes.

These differences in the level of emotional preparation required by managers are important because emotional preparation can require a significant degree of self-regulation and elicit states of depletion. Specifically, controlling emotions (i.e., a major sphere of self-regulation) is a critical consideration in emotional preparation. For example, the emotional

preparation required when preparing to communicate harmful news to employees can lead to a high level of "internal drama" (i.e., a distressing experience of performance anxiety and guilt as they come to terms with the potential consequences of relaying the negative outcome; Molinsky & Margolis, 2005) that managers must manage and minimize through effortful self-regulation. Moreover, the anxiety and uncertainty associated with employees' potential responses to negative outcomes can be distressing and managers must devote self-regulatory resources towards managing these emotions (Tice & Bratlavsky, 2000), whereas this degree of emotion regulation is less necessary in the context of positive outcomes because the possibility of harm is reduced. The emotional preparation required to communicate negative outcomes also demands a greater degree of social and cognitive processing – two additional spheres of self-regulation (Baumeister et al., 2007). Specifically, in order to be prepared for employees' responses, managers who are communicating negative outcomes need to devote a greater degree of self-regulatory resources to predict *how* individual employees are likely to respond to the news as well as the best course of action to minimize potential threats. Taken together, I propose that the level of emotional preparation required when preparing to communicate negative outcomes is significantly greater than when preparing to communicate positive outcomes and this can lead to a greater degree of depletion amongst managers during the preparation phase.

The Delivery Phase

The delivery phase includes any fairness-related issues managers face *during* the actual communication of organizational outcomes. Within this phase, I argue that there are two key areas that can have significant depleting effects on managers: (1) the management of employee emotions and behaviors and (2) the management of personal emotions and behaviors. However,

similar to the preparation phase, I argue that these areas are significantly more depleting when communicating negative outcomes as opposed to positive outcomes.

Management of Employee Emotions and Behaviors. The management of employees' emotions and behaviors during the communication of organizational outcomes is one issue that can have significant depleting effects on managers during the delivery phase. Organizational decisions have the potential to significantly shape employees' work and personal lives and because of this, they can elicit a number of emotional and behavioral responses from employees (Elfenbein, 2007). While this emotional component can play an important role in the preparation phase, it plays an even more proximal role during the delivery phase. Similar to the preparation phase, I argue that the communication of negative outcomes is more likely to elicit reactions from employees that are more difficult to manage than the communication of positive outcomes. However, the role of positive employee responses can bring a new dimension to the delivery phase. I argue that the communication of positive outcomes is more likely to elicit positive reactions from employees that can have positive benefits for managers than the communication of negative outcomes. Rather than simply minimizing depletion, these employee positive reactions may actually replenish managers' resources during the delivery phase. In other words, I argue that the relationship between responding to employee emotions and behaviors will *increase* managers' experience of ego depletion when communicating negative outcomes and *decrease* managers' experience of ego depletion when communicating positive outcomes.

In terms of negative outcomes, research has consistently demonstrated that negative events provoke stronger reactions than positive events (e.g., Baumeister et al., 2001; David, Green, Martin, & Suls, 1997; Kahneman & Tversky, 1984; Taylor, 1991). Specifically, employees are more likely to react to negative news in a way that more difficult to manage

appropriately. For example, employees can respond to the communication of negative outcomes (e.g., layoffs, poor performance appraisals) with provocative behaviors such as insults or threats (Bies, 2013). Consistent with victim precipitation models of aggression (cf. Aquino & Thau, 2009; Curtis, 1974; Schafer, 1968; Sparks, Genn, & Dodd, 1977), being provoked can trigger a strong impulse to "lash out" and aggress against the provoker (Anderson & Bushman, 2002; DeWall et al., 2007; Kim & Smith, 1993). However, when communicating negative outcomes, aggressive manager responses can conflict with standards of fairness (Bies, 2001) and may even lead to costly lawsuits (Lind, Greenberg, Scott, & Welchans, 2000). This means that managers need to inhibit the urges to respond aggressively in order to treat aggrieved employees fairly in the face of provocation (DeWall et al., 2007) and this form of inhibition can be very depleting (i.e., controlling impulses, Baumeister et al., 2007).

On the other hand, these aggressive employee responses are less likely to occur in context of positive outcomes (Bies, 2013) and this means that managers do not need to devote the same degree of self-regulatory resources to manage their own responses to employee behaviors. Employees may also respond to negative outcomes with sadness and/or guilt, as well as related behaviors such as crying or asking for a second chance. Research on empathy demonstrates that these situations can lead managers to experience empathic distress – an aversive state experienced in response to the suffering of others (Hoffman, 1990; Klimecki, Leiberg, Ricard, & Singer, 2014). However, managers' expression of personal distress is often considered socially unacceptable according to norms of status and professionalism (Ashforth & Humphrey, 1995). Importantly, the inhibition of emotions is considered one of the primary spheres of self-regulation and emotional regulation has been consistently linked with individuals' experience of depletion (e.g., Baumeister et al., 1998; Hagger et al., 2010; Hoffman, Rauch, & Gawronski,

2007; Tice & Bratlavsky, 2000). On the other hand, employees are less likely to respond to positive outcomes with distressing emotions, which means that managers' need to manage these employee emotions is greatly reduced when communicating positive outcomes.

In contrast to these detrimental depletion effects, I argue that communicating positive outcomes can *decrease* depletion when communicating negative outcomes. Specifically, positive outcomes are more likely to elicit positive employee responses (i.e., happiness, pride) than negative outcomes (Blau, 1964). These more positive employee responses to favorable outcomes may be associated with personal benefits for the manager that are less likely to occur when communicating negative outcomes. For example, research on emotional contagion suggests that positive emotions can spread to instill positive emotions in others (Elfenbein, 2007; Hatfield, Cacioppo, & Rapson, 1994) and fostering happiness in others can also lead to heightened feelings of esteem and seeing oneself as a good person (Aknin et al., 2012; Aknin et al., 2013; Brown et al., 2003). In terms of depletion, this is important because research suggests that these positive interactions are not only unlikely to deplete a significant amount of self-regulatory resources, but they may even *replenish* resources through the experience of positive social interactions and personal validation (Baumeister et al., 2007; Bono, Glomb, Shen, Kim, & Koch, 2013; Johnson, Lanaj, & Barnes, 2014).

However, these positive interactions are significantly less likely to occur when communicating negative outcomes (Bies, 2013) and therefore, managers are less likely to experience these replenishing effects when delivering bad news to employees. This suggests that outcome valence can create a significant moderating effect whereby responding to the employee emotions and behaviors in the communicating phase can *increase* depletion when

communicating negative outcomes, but *decrease* depletion when communicating positive outcomes.

    Management of Personal Emotions and Behaviors. Managing personal emotions and behaviors during the communication of outcomes is another issue that can have significant depleting effects on managers during the delivery phase. Specifically, I argue that managers have to manage their personal emotions and behaviors to a greater extent when communicating negative outcomes as opposed to positive outcomes and as a result, managers experience a greater degree of ego depletion when communicating negative outcomes. I propose that this moderation effect stems from the degree to which managers have to regulate (1) their emotional experience and (2) their emotional expression.

    In terms of *emotional experience*, causing others harm can elicit strong emotions in managers (Butterfield et al., 1996; Folger & Skarlicki, 2001; Rafaeli & Sutton, 1991; Wright & Barling, 1998). However, because managers cause significantly more harm when communicating negative outcomes as opposed to positive outcomes, managers' experience of these aversive emotions can be particularly strong with negative outcomes. This is important because regulating these emotions can be very depleting. Specifically, the emotions associated with harm can elicit a strong urge to disengage from the target (e.g., depersonalizing the target, avoiding contact with the target, refusing responsibility; Folger & Skarlicki, 2001; Margolis & Molinsky, 2008; Molinsky & Margolis, 2005). This disengagement is meant to benefit the manager by reducing the discomfort and distressing emotions associated with harming others; however, disengaging from the target is also a response that is devoid of interpersonal sensitivity and respect (i.e., low interactional justice; Bies & Moag, 1986; Margolis & Molinsky, 2008).

To communicate these outcomes in a fair and sensitive manner, therefore, managers must inhibit their natural urge to disengage from the target in order to actively and fairly engage with the employee. This inhibition requires managers to control both their emotions and their impulses, two important spheres of self-regulation with significant depleting effects (Baumeister et al., 2007; Hagger et al., 2010). However, because positive outcomes do not cause the same degree of harm, this urge to disengage from employees should be significantly less when communicating positive outcomes and in turn, managers will not need to devote the same level of self-regulatory resources to manage these emotional experiences.

Managers in the delivery phase may also experience depletion through the regulation of *emotional expression*. Similar to regulating emotional experiences, regulating the expression of emotions can demand a significant degree of self-regulatory resources and can have considerable depleting effects as managers attempt to inhibit the expression of emotions that are inconsistent with the emotions that they believe they should express (Baumeister et al., 2007; Hagger et al., 2010; Tice & Bratlavsky, 2000). The communication of both negative and positive outcomes requires the regulation of emotional expression; however, I argue that the degree of regulation required is significantly greater when communicating negative outcomes. For example, communicating negative outcomes can elicit intense emotions of sadness and guilt within the managers (Bies, 2013). However, research on display rules and emotional labor has demonstrated that strong norms can exist with regards to the level of emotional expression that is deemed socially acceptable (Ashforth & Humphrey, 1993; Ekman, 1984; Hochschild, 1979; Wharton & Erikson, 1993) and these norms can be particularly powerful for negative emotions (Ashforth & Humphrey, 1995; Elfenbein, 2007). What is considered appropriate emotional expression is even explicitly outlined in many corporate manuals, especially in the context of

negative outcomes where the potential for lawsuits is particularly high (Van Maanen & Kunda, 1989). This suggests that significant display rules may exist when communicating negative outcomes whereby managers experiencing underlying emotions of sadness and guilt must change their visible emotional expression to maintain an image of professionalism (Ekman, 1984; Wharton & Erickson, 1993). While these display rules may facilitate organizational goals, they can have strong depleting effects, as managers must devote their self-regulatory resources towards attaining these standards.

Communicating positive outcomes can also require managers to regulate their emotional expression. Specifically, procedural justice rules require managers to enact procedures consistently and free of bias (Colquitt, 2001; Leventhal, 1980). In some instances, it is possible that this may require the inhibition of positive emotional expression such as joy and pride in an effort to quell concerns of favoritism and bias. However, even when this is the case, this form of regulation should require a lesser degree of self-regulatory resources than communicating negative outcomes. This is because negative affect and emotional distress generally have stronger effects than positive affect and pleasant emotions and as a result, people have to exert disproportionate amounts of energy to manage the expression of negative emotions as opposed to positive emotions (Baumeister et al., 1994, 2001; Taylor, 1991). Taken together, this suggests that the communication of negative outcomes requires managers to devote a greater degree of self-regulatory resources to regulating their (1) emotional experiences and (2) emotional expression than the communication of positive outcomes and this means that managers should experience greater levels of ego depletion when communication negative outcomes as opposed to positive outcomes.

The Transition Phase

The transition phase refers to any fairness-related activities that occur *after* the communication of outcomes. Within the transition phase, I argue that there are two key areas that can have significant depleting effects on managers: (1) the management of emotional episodes and relationships and (2) appeal procedures. Consistent with the other two phases, I argue that these areas are significantly more depleting when communicating negative outcomes as opposed to positive outcomes.

Management of Emotional Episodes and Relationships. Managing emotional episodes and relationships after the communication occurs is one area that can have significant depleting effects on managers during the transition phase. In the previous section, I argued that the management of emotions is a significant consideration in the delivery phase of the fairness process. Emotion scholars, however, posit that emotional encounters are not isolated experiences – rather, emotional encounters are a continuous flow of emotions and reactions between the individuals who participate in them (e.g., Frijda, 1993; Lazarus, 2006; Weiss & Cropanzano, 1996). This suggests that emotional episodes can persist after the communication itself has concluded and can impact interpersonal relationships as both the manager and the employee react to the outcome. I argue that managing these emotional episodes and relationships requires significantly more self-regulatory resources (i.e., greater levels of depletion) after communicating negative outcomes as opposed to positive outcomes.

As previously discussed, causing harm to others can trigger distressing cognitive and emotional reactions in individuals such as guilt, shame, and anger (Butterfield et al., 1996; Folger & Skarlicki, 2001; Margolis & Molinsky, 2008; Molinsky & Margolis, 2005; Rafaeli & Sutton, 1991; Wright & Barling, 1998). This is important in the transition phase because managers cause significantly more harm when communicating negative outcomes as opposed to

positive outcomes and this can influence both the managers' experienced emotional episodes and their relationship with the employee in question. After the delivery phase has concluded, managers who have communicated negative outcomes are left to reflect on and come to terms with the level of harm they have caused. Moreover, managers often have to continue interacting with the employee in a civil and effective manner after the communication has occurred.

Importantly, the intensity of these emotional episodes may be bolstered further by the extent to which managers committed to standards of fairness during the communication process. For example, consider a manager who has communicated a promotion decision to an employee and ensured that the employee had ample opportunity to voice their opinion of the decision during the communication phase (i.e., procedural justice; Colquitt, 2001; Thibault & Walker, 1975). Providing an employee who was denied a promotion (i.e., a negative outcome) the opportunity to voice their displeasure in the decision increases the manager's vulnerability and exposure to the degree of harm caused by the decision. On the other hand, providing a promoted employee (i.e., a positive outcome) with the opportunity to voice their opinion of the decision should have a limited effect on managers' vulnerability because the extent to which harm was caused is significantly less.

This is important because the extent to which managers experience these negative emotions can have a significant effect on how managers address the emotional episode and manage their relationship with the employee. Specifically, an established body of emotion research highlights the action tendencies associated with how individuals manage negative emotions. For example, the broaden and build hypothesis (Fredrickson, 2001) suggests that negative emotions narrow individuals' focus to addressing the problem at hand. Similarly, Schwarz (1990) posits that negative emotions signal that concerted actions need to be taken to

restore balance, whereas the mobilization-minimization hypothesis (Taylor, 1991) suggests that individuals respond to negative emotions with sustained efforts to minimize the long-term impact of the negative event.

In contrast, because of the lesser degree of harm associated with positive outcomes, managers' need to compensate for harm caused and restore balance to the relationship is minimized as the valence of the outcome becomes more positive (i.e., less harmful; Fredrickson, 2001; Schwarz, 1990; Taylor, 1991). In other words, this body of research suggests that the extent to which emotional episodes will push managers to minimize the long-term harm caused by the outcome to both the employee and their relationship (i.e., in order to restore balance to the relationship and compensate for the harm caused) should increase as the valence of the outcome becomes more negative (i.e., more harmful).

These differences can have important implications for managers' depletion. Specifically, as the valence of the communicated outcome becomes more negative, the associated action tendencies require managers' self-regulatory resources in two main ways. First, managers need to regulate and manage their actual experience of negative emotional episodes (i.e., controlling emotions; Baumeister et al., 2007), whereas this degree of emotional regulation is less necessary as the valence of outcomes becomes more positive because managers' experience of emotions such as guilt and sadness becomes less common. Second, managers need to engage in social processing, another sphere of self-regulation (Baumeister et al., 2007), in order to most effectively manage the relational concerns associated with negative outcomes. Specifically, the communication of negative outcomes raises political and social concerns (Bies, 2013) and managers need to engage in effortful social processing to best navigate these concerns and provide the employee with the appropriate type and degree of emotional and social support that

they require. On the other hand, this degree of social processing is less necessary as outcomes become more positive because the relative lack of harm means that the relationship will be less affected and managers do not need to provide employees with the same degree of compensatory support. Taken together, I argue that the extent to which managers must devote self-regulatory resources towards managing emotional episodes and relationships in the transition phase increases as the valence of the outcome becomes more negative and this will lead to greater levels of depletion amongst managers who have communicated negative outcomes.

 Appeal Procedures. The potential for appeal procedures after the communication occurs is another area that can have significant depleting effects on managers during the transition phase. Specifically, providing employees with adequate appeal procedures to contest and redress organizational decisions is an important facet of workplace fairness (Colquitt, 2001; Leventhal, 1980). However, effective appeal procedures can often be relatively long and arduous processes that require a significant investment of managers' time, energy and resources (Folger & Skarlicki, 2001). I argue that, on average, managers will have to devote significantly more resources towards appeal procedures in the wake of negative outcomes than in the wake of positive outcomes and this can subsequently lead to higher levels of depletion.

 In terms of negative outcomes, negative emotions and experiences can be motivating because they bring individuals' attention to the reality that an issue needs to be addressed (e.g., Lazarus, 2006). The existence of appeal procedures signals to employees that it is possible to overturn organizational decisions that they do not agree with. Consequently, employees who receive negative outcomes may divert their energy to appeal procedures in an effort to increase the favorability of the outcome they received. For example, employees may make a formal appeal that they were wrongly denied a bonus. However, it is unlikely that employees will

attempt to use appeal procedures when outcomes are favorable. In support of this claim, Bies (2012) found that employees are considerably more likely to appeal procedures in the case of negative outcomes, particularly in the case of low performance ratings and rejected resource requests.

This suggests that in the transition phase, the likelihood that managers will be faced with formal appeals increases in direct relation to the extent to which the outcome is unfavorable. These appeals can affect managers' depletion because in order to fairly address these appeals, managers must devote the necessary time and energy required to assess the validity of the appeal as well as any subsequent work required to address and communicate a revised outcome. This process can be a burden on managers' self-regulatory resources and lead to a state of depletion, especially in contrast to managers who do not have to engage in these appeal procedures. Taken together, I argue that employees are more likely to appeal outcomes when outcomes are negative as opposed to positive and the increased need to respond to these appeals will lead to greater levels of depletion among managers in the transition phase who communicated negative outcomes as opposed to positive outcomes.

GENERAL DISCUSSION

Decades of organizational justice research have comprehensively outlined the many ways that managerial fairness affects employees (Cohen-Charash & Spector, 2001; Colquitt et al., 2001, 2013; Rupp et al., 2014). Despite this vast body of work, relatively little is known about how enacting fairness affects *managers*. The primary purpose of this paper was to address this gap by asking how and when fairness can impact managers. Specifically, I have argued that enacting fairness can have important implications for managers' experience of ego depletion (i.e., *how* fairness can affect managers; Baumeister et al., 1998; Muraven & Baumeister, 2000).

However, I have argued that outcome valence plays a critical moderating role in this relationship such that managers' experience of depletion will be significantly stronger when they are communicating negative outcomes as opposed to positive outcomes (i.e., *when* fairness will affect managers). Moreover, this moderating effect will occur at each phase of the fairness process: (1) the preparation phase, (2) the delivery phase, and (3) the transition phase. Overall, this paper has a number of theoretical, methodological, and practical implications.

Theoretical Implications

Justice scholars have increasingly argued that examining fairness from the manager's perspective is a critical, yet understudied question (Folger & Skarlicki, 2001; Scott et al., 2009). To date, most of the research on justice as a dependent variable has focused on the factors that can increase managers' enactment of fairness (e.g., Cornelis et al., 2013; Patient & Skarlicki, 2010; Whiteside & Barclay, in press b), but researchers have devoted little attention to understanding how enacting fairness affects managers. This is important because while it has been suggested that fairness requires a substantial commitment of time, energy, and resources (Folger & Skarlicki, 2001), relatively little is known about what this means for managers who engage in fair behavior. Building upon this approach, I have outlined how fairness enactment can have detrimental effects on managers by increasing managers' experience of ego depletion. This is a critical consideration because depletion has been consistently linked with an array of negative consequences for both managers (e.g., fatigue, exhaustion, negative affect) and their organizations (e.g., lower performance, increased unethical behaviors and aggression; Hagger et al., 2010).

This also has important implications for research on promoting fairness. Specifically, it demonstrates that fairness promotion efforts should not only focus on improving the welfare of

employees who receive fairness, but they should also focus on the welfare of the manager by supporting and managing those who are *enacting* fairness. Moving forward, justice scholars should aim to outline fairness interventions that can benefit *both* parties – increasing fairness for employees, while minimizing the potential draining effects of engaging in fair behaviors on managers.

This paper also highlights the critical role of outcome valence for the enactment of justice. To date, research in this area has paid little attention to acknowledging these effects; however, this paper demonstrates how the valence of outcomes can be a significant factor in our understanding of *when* fairness enactment will have the strongest effects on managers. Specifically, I have argued that there are considerably more barriers to fairness when managers have to communicate negative outcomes as compared to positive outcomes. Thus, the depleting effects of fairness enactment will be strongest when outcomes are negative because managers need to devote significantly more self-regulatory resources towards overcoming these barriers.

This is an important consideration because the role of outcome valence may provide one explanation for conflicting results in the justice literature. To illustrate, consider research examining the relationship between managers' depletion and fair behavior. Whiteside (Manuscript 2, dissertation) demonstrated that individuals' experience of depletion was negatively related to fair behavior. Johnson and colleagues (2014), on the other hand, found that managers' experience of depletion was *not* significantly related to fair behavior.[10] These contrasting effects may be explained by how outcome valence was addressed in the authors' methodologies. Specifically, Whiteside examined the relationship between depletion and fairness particularly in the context of negative outcomes (i.e., communicating a layoff, a poor

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[10] Johnson et al. (2014) focused primarily on depletion as a *consequence* of fair behavior.

performance appraisal). In contrast, Johnson et al. (2014) adopted a more general measurement approach that did not account for the *nature* of managers' interactions with their employees (e.g., "How often did you treat others in a polite manner today?", "How often did you refrain from making improper remarks or comments today?"). That is, it is possible that the majority of these interactions occurred during neutral or positive interactions. These contrasting effects may be due to the valence of the outcome and its role in predicting *when* fairness is most likely to affect managers. Both justice scholars and organizations alike should be careful to acknowledge these valence effects to most accurately predict when fairness enactment will affect managers and best understand how and when to support managers through their fairness promotion efforts.

More generally, this paper demonstrates why justice researchers cannot simply assume that all fairness episodes are conceptually equal. To date, research on justice as a dependent variable has largely utilized measurement approaches that gloss over the context in which managers' fair behavior emerges. However, this may be a critical omission. This paper demonstrates that the *nature* of the fairness issue can have important implications for the fairness process and how engaging in fairness affects managers. In this paper, I have focused specifically on the role of outcome valence in the relationship between fairness enactment and depletion. However, there are a number of other contextual factors that may play critical roles in the fairness process. For example, the number of employees affected by an organizational decision may have a sizeable effect on how managers prepare for and communicate outcomes. Further, the quality of the relationship between the manager and affected employees may have an integral role in the emotions managers experience when communicating outcomes. These are important considerations that are likely to affect how and when fairness affects managers. Moving forward,

justice scholars should continue to examine how the context and the *nature* of the fairness issue

can further deepen our understanding of managerial fairness in the workplace.

Finally, this paper highlights how the multi-phase model of communication (cf. Bies,

2013; Clark & LaBeff, 1982; McClenahen & Lofland, 1976) can serve as a useful framework for

examining the fairness process and outlining how managers approach issues of fairness.

Theoretically, scholars have posited that fairness can demand a significant investment of

managers' energy, time, and resources (Folger & Skarlicki, 2001; Scott et al., 2009; Whiteside &

Barclay, in press a). Empirically, however, scholars have typically focused on the delivery phase

and have overlooked the wider process by which managers prepare for and respond to the

enactment of fairness. This paper sheds light on why this may be a critical oversight.

Specifically, by considering the preparation and transition phases of fairness, researchers may

gain important insights into (1) why fair behaviors can be so depleting (e.g., Folger & Skarlicki,

2001; Johnson et al., 2014), (2) the length of time that fairness episodes can influence managers,

and (3) why managers may often be unwilling or unable to treat their employees with the utmost

level of fairness.

It should be noted that the multi-phase model of communication might not be an

appropriate process model for all fairness issues. Specifically, the act of communication is an

integral component in this framework; however, fairness issues do not always require managerial

communication. For example, creating consistent and ethical procedures (i.e., procedural justice;

Colquitt, 2001; Leventhal, 1980) is often based largely on implementation as opposed to

communication and as such, the multi-phase model of communication may be less applicable in

these scenarios. Moving forward, justice researchers should continue to outline different types of

fairness processes that are most appropriate for the wide array of justice issues that managers

may be faced with, while still examining the ways in which the progression through these processes can affect managers.

Methodological Implications

This paper also has important methodological implications. First, this paper demonstrates that justice researchers should carefully consider the role of outcome valence. I focused primarily on the role of outcome valence in managers' experience of depletion, but the role of outcome valence in justice as a dependent variable research may be considerably more widespread, ultimately impacting a number of justice-related relationships. For example, consider the relationship between managers' trait empathy and fair behavior – justice researchers have demonstrated that managers' trait empathy is positively related to the enactment of interpersonal justice when communicating negative news to employees (Patient & Skarlicki, 2010; Whiteside & Barclay, in press b). However, the effects of empathy on behavior are driven primarily by empathic individuals' capacity to understand and relate to the suffering experienced by others (Davis, 1994). In situations devoid of employee suffering (i.e., communicating positive outcomes or positive interactions), the role of managers' trait empathy may be tempered because they do not have to respond to employees' experience of harm.

On the other hand, other antecedents to managers' enactment of fairness may be less affected by outcome valence. For example, Scott et al. (2007) demonstrated that subordinate charisma was positively related to managers' enactment of interpersonal and informational justice. Unlike empathy, which is particularly relevant in harmful contexts (Davis, 1994), the effects of charisma on fairness are not rooted in the valence of the event itself and as a result, may be more resistant to valence effects. Methodologically, this means that justice scholars

should be careful to assess the extent to which valence effects can play a role in their research question and address these issues appropriately.

More broadly, it is imperative that the methodologies used acknowledge and account for how the *nature* of fairness issues can significantly influence results. Specifically, when creating studies, researchers should be diligent in asking two important questions: (1) what characteristics of the fairness process are particularly *relevant* for the specific research question being examined and (2) what is the most appropriate way to *address* these characteristics empirically (e.g., should the effects be statistically controlled or do they play an important moderating/mediating role within the conceptual model). By addressing these questions, researchers can be more confident in the extent to which they are making accurate predictions about how and when certain antecedents will affect managers' fair behavior as well as how and when managers will be most affected by engaging in fair behavior.

Practical Implications

Practically, this paper highlights important new considerations for the effective management of fairness in the workplace. As mentioned, fairness has traditionally been framed as an employee-centric issue (Cropanzano et al., 2001). Accordingly, the interests of the employee generally take center stage in fairness interventions (e.g., Greenberg, 2006; Skarlicki & Latham, 1996, 1997). However, this paper demonstrates that the welfare and well-being of *managers* should also be an important consideration as organizations enact fairness promotion strategies, particularly managers' experience of depletion. Self-regulation research has outlined various short- and long-term interventions that can help manage ego depletion in the workplace. In terms of short-term interventions, experiencing positive social interactions and receiving social support can both replenish self-regulatory resources (Baumeister et al., 2007; Bono et al.,

2013; Johnson et al., 2014; Muraven & Slessareva, 2003). This suggests that organizations who

provide managers with increased social support throughout the communication process may help

minimize the depletive effects of fairness enactment and this increased social support will be

particularly relevant when managers are communicating negative outcomes. However, this

explanation is speculative and warrants testing. Research has also demonstrated that

supplementing depleted individuals with glucose is another short-term intervention that can

replenish their capacity to engage in effective self-control and minimize the experience of

depletion (DeWall et al., 2008; Gailliot, Baumeister, et al., 2007; Gailliot, Peruche, Plant, &

Baumeister, 2009; Masicampo & Baumeister, 2008).

Importantly, however, these short-term interventions are largely reactionary interventions

that are required *after* managers are already experiencing depletion. Self-regulation scholars have

demonstrated that it is also possible to provide individuals with more proactive, long-term

interventions that can increase individuals' capacity for effective self-regulation (i.e., their self-

regulatory strength) and boost their ability to effectively regulate their behavior for extended

periods of time without experiencing the same degree of depletion (Finkel et al., 2009; Gailliot,

Plant, Butz, & Baumeister, 2007; Muraven, 2010; Muraven, Baumeister, & Tice, 1999; Oaten &

Cheng, 2006a, 2006b). These training regimens are based on repeated practice of self-regulation

over time (i.e., strengthening the "self-regulatory muscle"; Muraven & Baumeister, 2000) and

increasing managers' awareness of their depletion and how to manage it. By offering similar

interventions, organizations may be able to increase managers' ability to enact fairness by

enlarging the pool of self-regulatory resources that they can draw upon when communicating

negative outcomes.

It is also important to recognize that in the context of organizational decisions, positive outcomes for some employees can often be paired with negative outcomes for others and vice versa. For example, consider the case of employee promotion decisions. The promotion of one employee (i.e., a positive decision) can mean that other employees are denied the same promotion (i.e., a negative decision). In other words, positive and negative organizational outcomes do not always occur in isolation; it is possible that for any given organizational decision, managers may have to communicate both positive and negative outcomes to different employees.

Practically, this suggests that organizations should carefully consider how these decisions are communicated as well as who communicates them in order to minimize depletion amongst managers. For example, research on the "morning morality effect" (Kouchaki & Smith, 2014) demonstrates that individuals' capacity to engage in regulatory moral behavior is greatest in the morning, but it is gradually depleted as managers expend their resources over the course of the day. This suggests that managers may aim to communicate negative outcomes in the morning (i.e., when they have the regulatory resources to cope with these experiences) and delay the communication of positive outcomes (i.e., an interaction that requires less regulatory resources) to the end of the day. However, research on how to balance the communication of positive and negative outcomes is still relatively sparse. Future research should continue to examine potential strategies and interventions that can most effectively manage the experience of depletion when managers are faced with a wide array of outcomes to communicate.

NEXT STEPS AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

The model proposed in this paper also highlights a number of important next steps for manager-centric approaches to justice. For example, it highlights the need for more process-

oriented methodologies in the justice literature. There have been calls in the literature for more longitudinal approaches to fairness (Ambrose & Cropanzano, 2003; Holtz & Harold, 2009; Whiteside & Barclay, in press a) and the model proposed in this paper outlines a key reason why these longitudinal approaches are so important – fair communication is not an isolated event; rather, it is only one part in a larger fairness process that unfolds over time.

It is important, therefore, to adopt methodologies that can effectively tap into managers' experiences, attitudes, and behaviors over time as they progress through these phases. Person-centric models of managers' fairness enactment (cf. Guo, Rupp, Weiss, & Trougakos, 2011; Weiss & Rupp, 2011) can provide justice researchers with one option to examine these longitudinal effects. Specifically, these models utilize person-centric measurement approaches such as diary study methodologies that allow researchers to examine meaningful within-person changes (i.e., fluctuations in managers' experience of depletion) throughout the entire fairness process (cf. Beal & Weiss, 2003). Moving forward, these process-oriented methodologies can provide critical insight into important questions such as the length and magnitude of depletion that managers can experience throughout the fairness process, which barriers have the strongest effects on depletion and how they can be managed, and whether the experience of depletion can affect managers' motivation to enact fairness across time.

This within-person approach can also be used to examine the potential *depletion cycles* that can occur in the relationship between fairness and ego depletion. Specifically, I have outlined in this paper how enacting fairness can deplete managers over time – interestingly, however, research has demonstrated that the experience of depletion can also impede managers' enactment of interactional justice (see Manuscript 2; see also work on the relationship between ego depletion and interpersonal aggression and/or ethical behavior: DeWall et al., 2007; Finkel et

al., 2009; Gino et al., 2011). This suggests that depletion cycles may exist whereby engaging in fair behavior depletes managers' resources, which inhibits their capacity to engage in subsequent acts of fairness, and so on. By utilizing person-centric measurement approaches such as diary studies that examine these longitudinal processes, justice researchers can gain a deeper understanding of how these two processes interact and reinforce each other over time and how these depletion cycle can affect other self-regulatory outcomes (i.e., ethical behavior, managerial performance), as well as outline critical intervention points that can be used to most effectively manage and overcome these depletion cycles in the workplace.

This paper also answers calls in the literature for dyadic justice research that examines how employees can be *active* members of the fairness process (cf. Barclay & Skarlicki, 2008; Cooper & Scandura, 2012; Whiteside & Barclay, in press a). Traditionally, justice research has focused on employees as passive recipients of the fairness that they receive (cf. Cropanzano et al., 2001). However, an important implication of this paper is that employees and managers can simultaneously influence each other throughout the fairness process such that managers' enactment of fairness can have a considerable influence on employees' attitudes and behaviors and employees' attitudes and behaviors can significantly influence how managers *enact* fairness as well as how they are *affected* by the enactment of fairness. This has important implications for future justice research. First, justice researchers should utilize methodologies that examine the justice experiences of *both* managers and employees and explicitly tap into the extent to which key experiences in the justice process (e.g., depletion, perceptions of fairness, emotions) can be attributed to the other individual.

Second, the importance of these dyadic effects is not limited to the delivery phase – rather, important dyadic effects can also occur during the preparation and transition phases. This

means that justice researchers should also utilize methodologies that allow for the analysis of

longitudinal dyadic data to examine these processes over time (cf. Kenny, Kashy, & Cook, 2006;

Raudenbush, Brennan, & Barnett, 1995; Song, Foo, Uy, & Sun, 2011). Taken together, future

research should examine how employees can play an *active* role in (a) managers' enactment of

fairness and (b) how managers are affected by the enactment of fairness. This can help justice

researchers develop a deeper understanding of how managers and employees simultaneously

influence each other throughout the fairness process as well as effective ways to *manage* these

dyadic fairness processes for both managers and employees.

　　Future research should also adopt a process-oriented approach to examine the depleting

effects of other types of justice (i.e., distributive and procedural justice). I focused primarily on

managers' enactment of interactional justice because this justice dimension affords managers the

most discretion and is the least constrained by organizational factors (Scott et al., 2009).

Interestingly, however, *not* having discretion on important tasks (i.e., such as how managers

approach fairness issues) may also have depleting effects on managers (cf. Hagger et al., 2010).

Similar to the role of outcome valence in the context of interactional justice, this suggests that

the level of discretion managers have over the enactment of distributive and procedural may be a

critical contextual factor in predicting the depletion that managers experience when engaging in

these other fairness processes. Research by Johnson and colleagues (2014) provides early

evidence that procedural justice may have significant depleting effects on managers. Overall,

justice researchers need to devote attention towards addressing a number of critical questions,

including how the nature of procedural/distributive issues affect *how* managers are affected by

the enactment of fairness and how the enactment of procedural/distributive justice affect

managers' experience of depletion over time and at each phase of the fairness process (e.g.,

making important distinctions between creating procedures, implementing procedures, and responding to procedures).

CONCLUSION

Being fair is not always easy. Justice scholars have argued that enacting fairness requires a substantial commitment of time, energy, and resources (Folger & Skarlicki, 2001; Scott et al., 2009), but relatively little is known about what this actually means for managers. In this paper, I have outlined how this commitment of resources underlying fair behavior can have a meaningful impact on managers' welfare, particularly when communicating negative outcomes. As research examining the promotion of fairness continues to evolve, it is important to keep this manager-centric focus as an integral component in the fairness promotion process. Overall, good news and bad news will always be a function of the fairness promotion process, but now it is time for justice scholars to consider the depleted.

CHAPTER 5 – CONCLUSION:

THE "BARRIERS TO FAIRNESS" APPROACH TO JUSTICE:

WHAT IT MEANS FOR FAIRNESS PROMOTION AND HOW TO MOVE FORWARD

THE "BARRIERS TO FAIRNESS" APPROACH TO JUSTICE:

WHAT IT MEANS FOR JUSTICE RESEARCH AND HOW TO MOVE FORWARD

Research examining "justice as a dependent variable" (Folger & Skarlicki, 2001) has largely focused on one overarching question: how can fairness be promoted in the workplace? The justice process, however, can also be fraught with a number of barriers and obstacles. In this dissertation, I argue that justice scholars need to not only examine the factors that can encourage managers to be fair but also the obstacles that can *prevent* managers from enacting fairness. In other words, it is important to recognize the driving *and* restraining forces that can influence the enactment of fairness in the workplace (Lewin, 1951).

Theoretically, exploring the "barriers to fairness" challenges a key assumption in the literature related to justice as a dependent variable – that willingness or motivation is sufficient for promoting justice. Instead, I have argued that it is important to consider the *barriers* that can prevent managers from enacting fairness. I had three main objectives in this dissertation: (a) to explore barriers to fairness and how they can have meaningful effects on managers' enactment of fair behavior in the workplace, (b) to identify how managers can *overcome* these barriers through targeted interventions that either remove these barriers or give managers the willingness and/or ability to engage in higher levels of fairness despite these barriers, and (c) to highlight *how* and *when* overcoming these barriers can affect managers, especially in the context of depletion.

In the following sections, I outline the general implications that emerge from this package of studies. I begin by overviewing the three manuscripts, integrating them into a conceptual model, and outlining the ways in which the dissertation, as a whole, meets the above objectives. Next, I discuss the broader implications of focusing on barriers to fairness and how this

perspective can provide a meaningful contribution to our understanding of how to promote fairness in the workplace.

INTEGRATING MANUSCRIPTS 1-3

The three manuscripts in this dissertation collectively contribute to our understanding of how the "barriers to fairness" approach can be conceptualized and studied in the justice literature (see Figure 1 for an integrated conceptual model of the three manuscripts). Specifically, the Typology of Types of Barriers to Fairness presented in the Introduction (Introduction, Figure 1) outlined four different types of barriers: *person-specific willingness barriers, situational willingness barriers, person-specific capacity barriers,* and *situational capacity barriers.* Manuscripts 1 and 2 were devoted to examining specific examples of these barriers, empirically demonstrating how these barriers can significantly impede the enactment of fairness, and highlighting how these barriers can be overcome using targeted interventions. In Manuscript 1, I outlined how *low trait empathy* can act as a person-specific willingness barrier to fairness and how a self-awareness intervention can help increase interactional justice among individuals with low trait empathy. In Manuscript 2, I outlined how the experience of *ego depletion* can act as a person-specific capacity barrier to fairness and how raising individuals' awareness of self-appraisal gaps can help increase interactional justice among depleted individuals. Together, these manuscripts provide concrete examples of how barriers to fairness can affect the enactment of justice and also provide evidence that it is possible to manage and overcome these barriers.

The purpose of Manuscript 3 was to address the third objective: how enacting fairness can affect *managers*. Adopting a "barriers to fairness" approach requires scholars and organizations to not only understand how these obstacles impact managers' enactment of fairness, but also how encountering these barriers can affect managers themselves. In this

manuscript, I outlined how obstacles to fairness can exist at each phase of the fairness process (the preparation phase, the delivery phase, and the transition phase; Bies, 2013) and how overcoming these obstacles can have depleting effects on managers throughout the entire justice process. Moreover, I argued that *outcome valence* is a key factor in our understanding of *when* enacting fairness will affect managers. Specifically, I outlined how the magnitude of the barriers underlying the justice process are greater when communicating negative outcomes as opposed to positive outcomes and as a result, managers will experience greater levels of depletion when communicating negative outcomes in a fair manner. Taken together, these three manuscripts have a number of important implications for research on justice as a dependent variable.

BARRIERS TO FAIRNESS: IMPLICATIONS AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS

Theoretically, a "barriers to fairness" approach to justice represents an important paradigm shift for research on justice as a dependent variable. This approach is grounded in three key assumptions that represent an important shift from traditional approaches to justice as a dependent variable. First, unlike traditional fairness promotion research, the theoretical starting point within a "barrier to fairness" approach is the *absence* of fairness. In other words, this approach focuses explicitly on managers who may be naturally predisposed to engage in lower levels of fairness (e.g., managers with low trait empathy) or managers who lack the time, energy or resources required to be fair (e.g., depleted managers). This is important because while fairness is associated with a wide range of benefits in the workplace, the *absence* of fairness is also associated with an extensive list of detrimental outcomes for both employees (e.g., health issues and insomniac reactions; Cropanzano & Wright, 2011; Greenberg, 2006) and organizations (e.g., employee revenge, counterproductive work behavior, withdrawal; Aquino, Tripp, & Bies, 2006; Cohen-Charash & Spector, 2001; Colquitt, Conlon, Wesson, Porter, & Ng,

2001; Colquitt et al., 2013; Rupp, Shao, Jones, & Liao, 2014). A "barriers to fairness" approach is devoted to identifying where manager-centric justice issues are most likely to occur and quelling them so managers, employees, and organizations alike do not fall victim to the multitude of concerns associated with the absence of fairness.

Second, a "barriers to fairness" approach assumes that managers must be both willing *and* able to effectively enact fairness. This is important because to date, the majority of research on justice as a dependent variable has explicitly or implicitly focused solely on managers' *motivation* to be fair as the key mechanism driving fair behavior (e.g., Cornelis, Van Hiel, De Cremer, & Mayer, 2013; Korsgaard, Roberson, & Rymph, 1998; Patient & Skarlicki, 2010; Scott, Colquitt, & Zapata-Phelan, 2007; Whiteside & Barclay, in press b). Consistent with this research, managers' motivation has an integral role within a "barriers to fairness" approach (i.e., person-specific and situational willingness barriers). However, building upon the theory of planned behavior (Ajzen, 1991), I argued that motivation represents only part of the equation. In order to most effectively predict managers' fair behavior, the roles of both motivation *and* ability need to be viewed as necessary and complementary mechanisms underlying the enactment of fairness. In other words, managers' motivation to be fair may play a minimal role in their enactment of justice if they do not have the resources or the support required to effectively engage in fair behavior. On the other hand, ensuring that managers are able to enact fairness may be ineffective if managers are not motivated to treat their employees fairly. This suggests that in order to gain the most complete picture of how to promote fairness in the workplace, justice scholars and organizations alike need to view motivation and ability as two *complementary* building blocks of fair behavior. By doing so, a deeper understanding of what types of barriers are affecting managers can be gained as well as new insights into the most appropriate

interventions to overcome them (e.g., ensuring that capacity-based interventions are used to address capacity-based barriers).

Third, a "barriers to fairness" approach assumes that enacting fairness is not always easy – the process can be fraught with obstacles. Rather than a straight 100m dash, it is more akin to 100m hurdles, with managers having to overcome obstacles and barriers as they attempt to enact fairness. This distinction is important because while early research on fairness as a dependent variable theorized that enacting fairness requires a significant commitment of managers' time, energy, and resources (Folger & Skarlicki, 2001), recent research in this area has devoted minimal attention towards understanding what this means for managers who do engage in fairness. A "barriers to fairness" approach, however, specifically outlines the reasons *why* enacting fairness can require so much effort as well as *how* these barriers can affect both managers' enactment of fairness and their subsequent well-being. While traditional fairness promotion research is focused solely on the interests of the employee (i.e., the extent to which they are or are not treated fairly), the interests and the well-being of the *manager* also have an integral role within a "barriers to fairness" approach. This is important because it provides justice scholars with the impetus to not only understand *how* enacting fairness affects managers, but also how to most effectively support managers throughout the justice process.

This dissertation also sheds light on the influential role of ego depletion throughout the justice process. Despite increasing interest in resource-based perspectives in other fields (cf. Hagger, Wood, Stiff, & Chatzisarantis, 2010), justice scholars have devoted little attention to understanding the role of cognitive and physical resources in the context of fairness (see Johnson, Lanaj, & Barnes, 2014, for an exception). However, I have outlined how the depletion of self-regulatory resources can act as both a barrier to managers' enactment of fair behaviors

(Manuscript 2) and a consequence of engaging in fairness (Manuscript 3). This is important for a number of reasons. First, managers' self-regulatory resources can be depleted through a wide range of everyday behaviors (e.g., persisting on difficult tasks, inhibiting emotions; Lord, Diefendorff, Schmidt, & Hall, 2010; Muraven & Baumeister, 2000). When viewing depletion as an antecedent of justice, this indicates that even some of the most routine managerial behaviors may actually have downstream implications for managers' enactment of fairness through the depletion of self-regulatory resources needed to regulate fair behavior.

Second, ego depletion has also been associated with a wide range of managerial consequences ranging from unethical and aggressive behaviors to poor performance and fatigue (cf. Hagger et al., 2010). In other words, engaging in fair behavior may also have downstream implications for a number of interpersonal and performance-based managerial behaviors, particularly when managers must communicate negative outcomes. Finally, integrating these two manuscripts hints at the potential cyclical effects of ego depletion within the justice process. That is, the experience of depletion can impede managers' capacity to engage in fair behaviors and this enactment of fairness can subsequently deplete managers further as the cycle starts again. This suggests that managers who get caught in this cycle may become increasingly more depleted and consequently, increasingly less able to engage in fair behavior until this depletion is effectively managed. Moving forward, justice scholars should continue to examine the ways fairness and depletion are related and their cyclical effects as well as the most effective ways to manage depletion throughout the justice process.

This dissertation also highlights the importance of taking a process-oriented approach to fairness. To date, research on justice as a dependent variable has focused almost exclusively on the moment at which communication occurs (i.e., the moment a manager does or does not treat

an employee fairly; e.g., Cornelis et al., 2013; Patient & Skarlicki, 2010; Whiteside & Barclay, in press b). While this approach is consistent with an employee-centric perspective (i.e., gaining a deeper understanding of moment of fair behavior that employees respond to), a more process-oriented approach can make considerable contributions to our understanding of fairness from a more manager-centric perspective. Specifically, a fairness event is rarely an isolated phenomenon – rather, it is influenced by the context surrounding the issue as managers prepare to communicate a decision and it can persist long after the communication itself has concluded (Bies, 2013).

By devoting greater attention towards the *preparation* and *transition* phases of the fairness process, a deeper understanding of fairness from the manager's perspective can be gained – particularly, the reasons why a manager may not be motivated and/or able to enact fairness as well as how engaging in fairness affects managers. For example, a manager who does not have the time or resources to adequately prepare for the delivery phase will be unlikely to satisfy an employee's need for informational justice during the communication itself, regardless of the manager's motivation to treat the employee fairly. However, the manager may then try to rectify this oversight in the transition phase by apologizing and providing the employee with the necessary information at a later time. Importantly, these managerial behaviors all occur outside of the delivery phase, but they are all meaningful indicators of how managers approach and respond to fairness that can also have a significant effect on employees' perception of fairness. As research on justice as a dependent variable continues to grow, it is important that justice scholars do not lose sight of these important processes that can occur during the preparation and transition phases so that a more accurate understanding of what it means to enact fairness from the manager's perspective can be gained.

A "barriers to fairness" approach also highlights the importance of the dyadic interactions between managers and employees throughout the justice process. Justice research tends to view employees as passive members of the justice process (Barclay & Skarlicki, 2008). However, a "barriers to fairness" approach highlights (a) how employees can play an *active* role in managers' enactment of fairness and (b) how managers and employees can simultaneously influence each other throughout a dynamic and interactive fairness process. First, employees can influence managers' enactment of fairness and the depleting effects of fairness by either exacerbating or minimizing the barriers to fairness that managers experience. For example, consider the how ego depletion can impede interactional justice when managers communicate negative outcomes (Manuscript 2). *How* employees respond to a manager's delivery can affect the type of barriers the depleted manager must overcome to achieve standards of interactional justice. Research on victim precipitation demonstrates that being provoked can elicit a strong urge to retaliate and aggress against the provoker (Anderson & Bushman, 2002; Aquino & Thau, 2009; DeWall et al., 2007; Kim & Smith, 1993) – a response devoid of interpersonal sensitivity (Bies, 2001). This suggests that the inhibiting effect of depletion on interactional justice will be exacerbated if an employee responds aggressively to the negative news because responding to this hostility in a respectful manner requires additional self-regulatory resources that the manager does not have (DeWall et al., 2007; Finkel, DeWall, Slotter, Oaten, & Foshee, 2009).

Moreover, the need to devote additional self-regulatory resources to managing this hostility can then increase the level of depletion managers experience during the fairness process (Manuscript 3). On the other hand, this negative relationship may be tempered if an employee responds in a calm and collected manner, asking clarifying questions, and giving the manager ample opportunity to explain the decision. By adopting a "barriers to fairness" approach and

viewing employees as active members of the fairness process, important strides towards understanding these intricacies underlying fair behavior can be made.

Further, a "barriers to fairness" approach not only examines employees as active members of the fairness process, but also highlights how managers and employees can simultaneously influence each other over time in dynamic and interactive fairness processes. Specifically, the fairness process does not occur in a vacuum – rather, research on "predicaments of injustice" (Bies, 1987; Cooper & Scandura, 2012; Whiteside & Barclay, in press a) demonstrates that justice perceptions are actively negotiated between managers and employees as *both* sides attempt to protect their own interests throughout the fairness process (Whiteside & Barclay, in press a). A "barriers to fairness" approach provides justice scholars with a longitudinal process-oriented perspective that can more effectively explore these dyadic effects and how both managers and employees vie for their own best interests at each phase of the fairness process (preparation, delivery, and transition). Future research should continue to examine these dyadic processes and the ways in which managers and employees can simultaneously affect the attitudes and behaviors of each other across time and how these processes affect the well-being of both parties throughout the fairness process.

A "barriers to fairness" approach also provides new insights into how research on justice as a dependent variable can be integrated with other literatures. For example, scholars have increasingly called for better integration between the fields of justice and behavioral ethics (cf. Crawshaw, Cropanzano, Bell, & Nadisic, 2013; Cropanzano & Stein, 2009). A "barriers to fairness" approach can contribute to the field of behavioral ethics in a number of ways. For example, our understanding of the potential barriers to managers' *capacity* for ethical behavior remains largely underdeveloped (cf. Hannah, Avolio, & May, 2011). A "barriers" approach can

be extended to these ethical realms to provide behavioral ethics researchers with a framework to

better understand how these barriers affect managers' ethical behavior. The results of this

dissertation also highlight the potential benefits of awareness-based interventions in behavioral

ethics research. Specifically, I demonstrated that awareness-based interventions can be used to

overcome both person-specific willingness (Manuscript 1) and person-specific capacity barriers

(Manuscript 2). Importantly, these awareness interventions relied largely on normative

mechanisms – that is, increasing the salience of how one *should* be acting (i.e., an awareness of

ethical standards; e.g., Duval & Wicklund, 1972). This common normative component suggests

that awareness interventions which trigger managers' deep-seated interests in seeing themselves

as ethical people may be an effective yet relatively inexpensive method to overcome various

barriers to managers' ethical behavior. As these two literatures are integrated further, scholars

should empirically examine the extent to which these awareness interventions can have similar

effects in the realm of behavioral ethics.

Methodological Implications

This dissertation also has a number of important methodological implications. First, it

highlights the importance of process-oriented approaches to fairness. Specifically, despite calls

in the literature for more longitudinal justice research (Ambrose & Cropanzano, 2003; Holtz &

Harold, 2009), justice research has focused primarily on specific justice events (e.g., the fairness

of a layoff) and entities (e.g., the fairness of a manager). The research in this dissertation

suggests that it is important for justice scholars to also examine managerial *justice episodes* (cf.

Whiteside & Barclay, in press a). Consistent with the notion of "emotional episodes" (cf. Frijda,

1993), "justice episodes" describe how fairness-related events can lead to an unfolding series of

interactions and interpersonal negotiations as managers navigate justice issues over time and can provide important insights into the contextual, temporal, and interactive elements of fairness.

To appropriately examine managers' justice episodes and how they unfold over time, it may be necessary to adopt alternative perspectives and methodologies. For example, adopting person-centric models of organizational justice (cf. Guo, Rupp, Weiss, & Trougakos, 2011; Weiss & Rupp, 2011) may provide one option for researchers to capture these dynamic processes. This perspective utilizes person-centric measurement approaches such as experience sampling methods (ESM: Beal & Weiss, 2003) to highlight the dynamic within-person variations in how managers approach and engage in fair behavior over time. The use of ESM methods also provides researchers with an opportunity to examine managers' attitudes and behaviors through the *preparation* and *transition* phases of the fairness process as well as how managers progress through these specific phases. Ultimately, this longitudinal process-oriented approach can inform a "barriers to fairness" approach because it allows researchers to examine how these barriers affect managers and how managers respond to targeted interventions across time and at each phase of the fairness process.

Similarly, this dissertation also highlights the importance of examining how dyadic interactions between employees and managers unfold across time and throughout the justice process. Traditionally, justice research has focused on fairness from the employee's perspective (Cropanzano, Byrne, Bobocel, & Rupp, 2001), whereas the emerging field of justice as a dependent variable has focused on fairness primarily from the manager's perspective (Folger & Skarlicki, 2001). However, justice research needs to examine how these two perspectives can be integrated to gain a more complete picture of how managers and employees navigate justice issues together in the workplace. This suggests that justice scholars should adopt methodologies

that can tap into the experiences of *both* employees and managers as they progress through the phases of the justice process. This can allow justice researchers to test relationships between the attitudes and behaviors of the two parties (e.g., how does a manager's perception of employee hostility influence their enactment of fairness? How does a manager's style of communication affect employee hostility?).

Moreover, our understanding of these dyadic interactions may be significantly limited by focusing solely on one point in the interaction (e.g., focusing only on the delivery phase of the fairness process) because these interactive effects can unfold over an extended period of time (Whiteside & Barclay, in press a). This suggests that justice researchers should explore these dyadic interactions between managers and employees longitudinally to develop a deeper understanding of how managers and employees can influence each other throughout the whole justice process and across various justice issues. This approach is important because it can provide more valuable insights into possible points of intervention that can help facilitate these dyadic fairness processes for both employees and managers.

This dissertation also highlights the potential utility of a qualitative coding approach in the measurement of fair behavior. Traditionally, justice has been measured primarily from the employee's perspective (Colquitt, 2001; Colquitt & Shaw, 2005) and this employee-centric approach has also pervaded research on justice as a dependent variable (e.g., Korsgaard et al., 1998; Scott et al., 2007; van Houwelingen, van Dijke, & De Cremer, 2014). However, consistent with Patient and Skarlicki (2010), Manuscripts 1 and 2 demonstrate that coding the content of managers' and/or participants' communications can be an effective way to measure interactional justice. This is important because it provides justice researchers with more versatility in how they approach and measure justice as a dependent variable. For example, it allows justice

scholars to measure participants' adherence to interactional justice rules in the laboratory without the need for a second group of participants (i.e., a group of participants receiving the communication). It also allows justice scholars to ensure that the outcome variable being measured is consistent with how justice rule adherence is currently conceptualized in the literature (e.g., Colquitt, 2001).

Ultimately, when deciding the most appropriate way to measure justice as a dependent variable, researchers should be careful to consider what conceptualization of justice they are most interested in predicting. Specifically, if justice researchers are interested in assessing whether employees perceive certain behaviors as fair, an employee-centric measurement approach will be most appropriate. On the other hand, if justice researchers are interested in managers' adherence to a certain set of justice rules (e.g., dignity, respect, propriety; Colquitt, 2001), a qualitative coding approach can be appropriate and can provide scholars with additional versatility and control in a laboratory setting. Moving forward, justice scholars should continue to develop this coding approach as well as examine the extent to which a similar coding approach could be appropriate in the context of procedural and distributive forms of justice.

This dissertation also highlights how a moderation-of-process design (cf. Spencer, Zanna, & Fong, 2005) can be an effective way to examine psychological processes underlying managers' enactment of fair behavior that would otherwise be difficult to measure using a more traditional measurement-of-mediation design (cf. Baron & Kenny, 1986). In Manuscript 2 for example, I was interested in examining how ego depletion could affect individuals' fair behavior by impeding their self-appraisal accuracy, a psychological process theorized in prior depletion research (Apfelbaum & Sommers, 2009; DeWall, Baumeister, Mead, & Vohs, 2011). That is, I was interested in whether ego depletion created important gaps between how fair managers

thought they were acting and how they were *actually* acting. Methodologically, this was

problematic as the proposed mechanism underlying this relationship was a *lack* of awareness, a

process that is understandably difficult to measure using conventional approaches. However, by

manipulating the psychological process (i.e., awareness of self-appraisal discrepancies), a

moderation-of-process design demonstrated how the psychological mechanism operated without

explicitly measuring it (Spencer et al., 2005). This is important because the normative

underpinnings of justice (Folger, 1998, 2001) can often complicate the explicit measurement of

the mechanisms underlying fair behavior (e.g., due to social desirability, self-appraisal accuracy).

Fortunately, this moderation-of-process approach provides justice scholars with a valid and

effective means to test these hard-to-measure psychological processes. Overall, justice scholars

should continue to examine *how* barriers to fairness affect managers' enactment of fairness and a

moderation-of-process design can be a particularly effective method to outline these processes

when the underlying mechanisms are difficult to measure, but easy to manipulate.

Practical Implications

Practically, a "barriers to fairness" approach has important implications for the

formulation and implementation of justice training programs. Specifically, research on justice

training has focused largely on instructing managers *how* to be fair and outlining the types of

behaviors that constitute fairness in the workplace (e.g., outlining the determinants of justice,

demonstrating how to grant voice in decision-making; Greenberg, 2006; Skarlicki & Latham,

1996, 1997). While the question of how to be fair is an integral question in a justice training

context, a "barriers to fairness" approach indicates that effective fairness training programs

should also address managers' *willingness* and *ability* to be fair. In other words, knowing what

fairness entails may count for little if managers are not motivated to act upon that information or

lack the resources and/or support to effectively meet those standards of justice. Moreover, the importance of willingness and ability may become increasingly important when managers are tasked with communicating negative outcomes – a context where the barriers to fairness that managers need to overcome may be particularly inhibiting.

Integrating these two streams of research suggests that justice training programs should be grounded in three critical facets. The first facet is *justice education* – that is, enhancing managers' knowledge of what fairness entails and how justice rules can be applied behaviorally to meet standards of justice (Ambrose & Schminke, 2009a). Skarlicki and Latham (1996, 1997) and Greenberg (2006) have provided detailed multi-step training interventions that can elicit positive effects by increasing managers' justice implementation skills.

The second facet is *justice motivation*. Motivation is important because justice education will be most effective if managers have the impetus to apply this knowledge in the face of justice issues. As a result, organizations should attempt to minimize the magnitude of willingness-based barriers that can impede managers' enactment of fairness. For example, increasing the salience and perceived importance of justice in the workplace may provide one avenue by which willingness barriers can be minimized. Specifically, the importance of justice should be particularly salient in organizations with a strong justice climate (Colquitt, Noe, & Jackson, 2002; Naumann & Bennett, 2000) and these climates may be shaped largely by the extent to which organizational leaders actively demonstrate and adhere to standards of fair behavior (cf. Grojean, Resick, Dickson, & Smith, 2004). These strong justice climates may help increase fairness by minimizing the existence of situational willingness barriers and also providing additional social pressures to be fair among managers who are not predisposed to fair behavior (i.e., impression management; Greenberg, 1990).

The third facet is *justice capacity*. Specifically, organizations need to ensure that managers feel supported in their fairness endeavors and have the self-regulatory resources required to effectively enact fairness. Overall, by grounding justice training programs in these three key facets, organizations may more effectively provide managers with the tools they need to treat employees in a fair manner. Future research should empirically examine these possibilities.

Efforts to promote fairness should also focus on how to help *managers* as they engage in the justice process on an ongoing basis. Specifically, Manuscripts 2 and 3 suggest that important cyclical effects can exist between fairness and depletion, whereby engaging in fairness can deplete managers and this depletion can in turn inhibit managers' ability to engage in subsequent acts of fairness. Manuscript 3 also outlined how the depleting effects of fairness can be amplified when communicating negative outcomes. This is important because employees expect a greater degree of fairness when receiving negative outcomes (cf. Brockner, DeWitt, Grover, & Reed, 1990; Brockner & Wiesenfeld, 1996), but these may be the moments when managers are the least capable of being just. This suggests that the welfare of the managers communicating outcomes may be a critical consideration in fairness promotion efforts. Similar to how passengers on an airplane are to put on their own oxygen mask before helping others, organizations should focus on managing the depletion of their managers as a necessary first step in the fairness process so that they have the ability to effectively treat others fairly.

As outlined in Manuscript 3, there are a number of ways to manage depletion in the workplace ranging from long-term self-regulation training regimes (Finkel et al., 2009; Gailliot, Plant, Butz, & Baumeister, 2007; Muraven, 2010; Muraven, Baumeister, & Tice, 1999; Oaten & Cheng, 2006a, 2006b) to more short-term interventions such as increased social support

(Baumeister et al., 2007; Bono et al., 2013; Johnson et al., 2014; Muraven & Slessareva, 2003), glucose supplements (DeWall et al., 2008; Gailliot, Baumeister, et al., 2007; Gailliot, Peruche, Plant, & Baumeister, 2009; Masicampo & Baumeister, 2008), and awareness interventions (Manuscript 2). Ultimately, organizational fairness promotion efforts will be ineffective if managers do not have the capacity to enact them and as a result, the welfare of managers should be an important consideration as organizations seek to maintain high standards of justice.

Future Research Directions

As a package, this dissertation highlights a number of future research directions. First, the Typology of Barriers to Fairness presented in the Introduction (Introduction, Figure 1) outlines four different types of barriers that can affect fairness. While I was able to empirically demonstrate and examine two significant examples of these barriers in Manuscripts 1 and 2 (a *person-specific willingness barrier* and a *person-specific capacity barrier,* respectively), this is only a small subset of the barriers that can exist and the interventions that can be used to overcome them – there are numerous barriers in *each* category of the typology that still deserve attention. In particular, research on situational barriers to fairness (i.e., *situational willingness barriers* and *situational capacity barriers*) and capacity barriers to fairness (i.e., *person-specific capacity barriers* and *situational capacity barriers*) as well as the most effective methods to overcome them is still in its infancy. I also focused primarily on barriers to interactional justice (Bies & Moag, 1986) in this dissertation because interactional justice offers managers more discretion than distributive and procedural justice (Scott, Colquitt, & Paddock, 2009). However, justice scholars should also consider the barriers to fairness underlying these other types of justice and the extent to which they operate differently or similarly to the barriers underlying interactional justice.

Another important next step for a "barriers to fairness" approach is to examine how these four types of barriers affect each other as well as their interactive effects. Barriers may not exist in isolation and it is important to understand how they may coexist within organizations. For example, the theory of planned behavior (Ajzen, 1991) posits that individuals' perceived behavioral control in a given activity can also influence the extent to which they are willing to engage and persist in that activity (see also, Bandura, 1977, 1982, 1997). In the context of fairness, this suggests that managers who lack the capacity to be fair (i.e., due to person-specific and/or situational capacity barriers) may also lack the motivation to be fair because they do not believe that it is worthwhile to expend effort if it will be futile.

These barriers may also interact in seemingly counterintuitive ways. For example, consider a manager who is communicating a layoff to an employee but is limited in the extent to which he/she can be interpersonally sensitive and tailor the communication to the employee's needs due to formal organizational policies (i.e., a situational capacity barrier). Managers who are *motivated* to be fair (i.e., experiencing one barrier to fairness) may experience high levels of depletion during and after the layoff because of the need to manage the cognitive dissonance associated with failing to meet the standards they hold (Festinger, 1957; Muraven & Baumeister, 2000). On the other hand, managers with trait low empathy facing the same situation (i.e., experiencing two barriers to fairness: a within-person willingness barrier and a situational capacity barrier) should experience significantly less depletion because their inability to treat the employee fairly will not elicit cognitive dissonance if they are not also *motivated* to be fair. These ideas are speculative and warrant testing. Overall, understanding how these barriers coexist and interact to predict managers' enactment of fairness as well as how fairness affects managers is an important next step for this "barriers to fairness" approach.
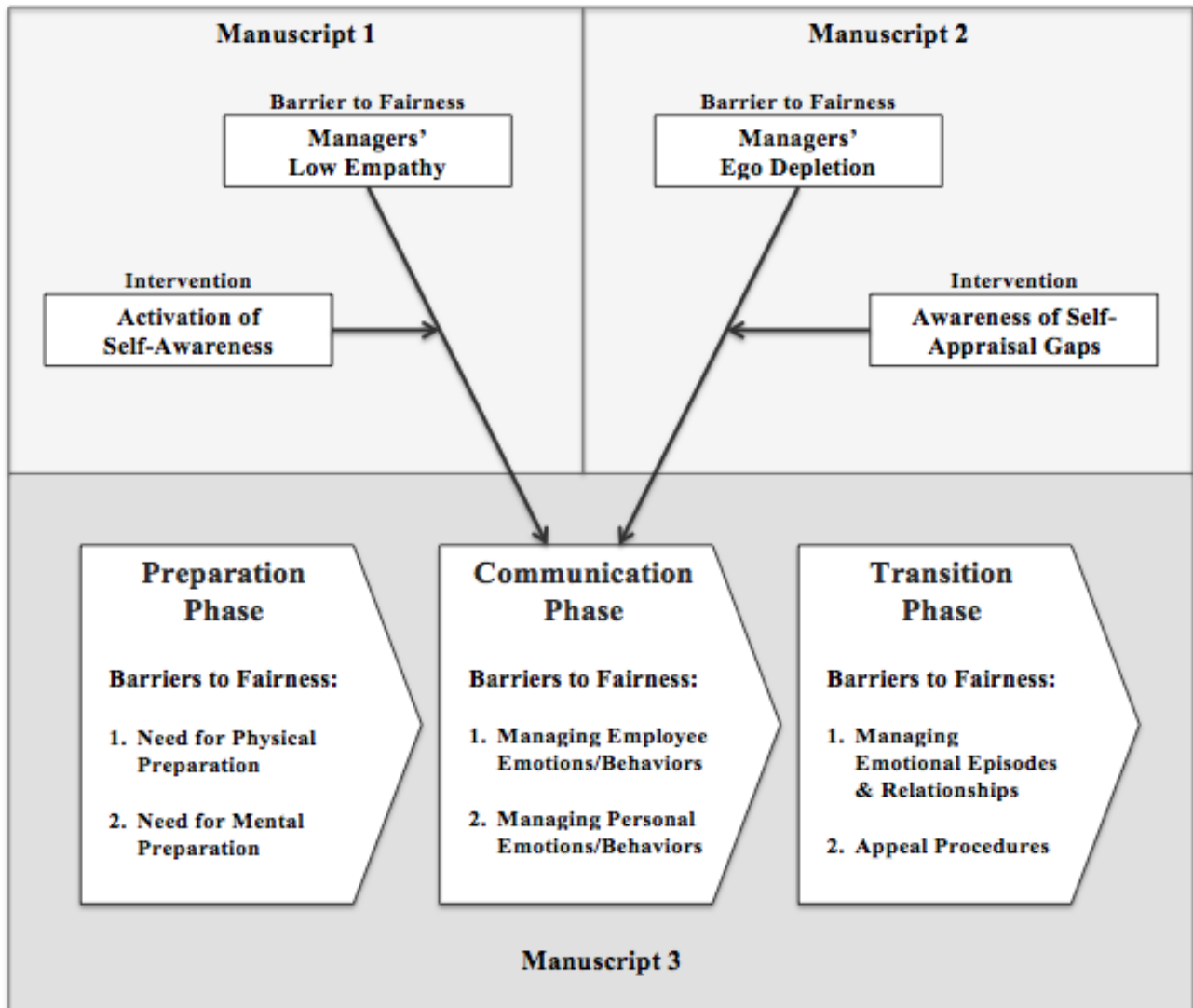
Finally, researchers utilizing a "barriers to fairness" approach should also examine the role of managerial accountability and how it can exacerbate the effects of these barriers on managers and their enactment of justice. Employee-centric justice research (i.e., research examining employee reactions to fairness) has demonstrated that managers' accountability can play a critical role in how employees react to managers' fairness. For example, fairness theory (Folger & Cropanzano, 2001) posits that accountability and the extent to which managers are considered blameworthy for harmful outcomes are a key driving force in whether employees will feel unfairly treated and retaliate against the communicator. However, the role of managerial accountability has received considerably less attention in research on justice as a dependent variable. This is surprising because the role of accountability can shed light on a number of interesting intricacies within the justice process. For example, among managers who are predisposed to engage in greater levels of fairness (i.e., managers with high trait empathy), being responsible for harm may have positive effects on the enactment of interactional justice because these managers are motivated to compensate for the harm caused by the decision (cf. Margolis & Molinsky, 2008). Among managers who are predisposed to engage in lower levels of fairness (i.e., managers with low trait empathy), however, accountability may have the opposite effect – exacerbating the urge to disengage from the target in an effort to avoid the potential discomfort of being targeted by unhappy employees (Margolis & Molinsky, 2008; Molinsky & Margolis, 2005). Overall, interactional justice is particularly important to employees when harm has been caused (Brockner et al., 1990) and questions of blame are critical considerations in the context of these negative outcomes (Folger & Cropanzano, 2001). Moving forward, justice scholars should examine how questions of accountability can inform a "barriers to fairness" approach – how can accountability exacerbate or minimize barriers? Can accountability act as a barrier in and of

itself? How does accountability change the ways in which enacting fairness affects managers? These are important questions and outlining these effects will be a necessary step in our attempts to gain a comprehensive understanding of managers' enactment of justice.

CONCLUSION

Fairness is important and it matters to employees. However, enacting fairness is *not* always easy. The primary purpose of this dissertation was to examine a "barriers to fairness" approach that is devoted to understanding the obstacles that stand in the way of managers' enactment of fair behavior, how to help managers overcome them, and what effect these barriers have on managers. Overall, if our goal is to increase fairness in the workplace, it is time to start devoting more attention to those managers who *struggle* to enact fairness and identifying the most effective ways to support them throughout the justice process. The "barriers to fairness" approach outlined in this dissertation provides an integrated framework for justice scholars to do just that. Fairness is not always easy *but* obstacles are meant to be overcome and barriers are made to be broken – let's break out the hammers.

Figure 1
Integrated Conceptual Model of Manuscripts 1-3

Manuscript 1

Barrier to Fairness
Managers' Low Empathy

Intervention
Activation of Self-Awareness

Manuscript 2

Barrier to Fairness
Managers' Ego Depletion

Intervention
Awareness of Self-Appraisal Gaps

Preparation Phase

Barriers to Fairness:

1. Need for Physical Preparation

2. Need for Mental Preparation

Communication Phase

Barriers to Fairness:

1. Managing Employee Emotions/Behaviors

2. Managing Personal Emotions/Behaviors

Transition Phase

Barriers to Fairness:

1. Managing Emotional Episodes & Relationships

2. Appeal Procedures

Manuscript 3

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APPENDIX A
Manuscript 1: Additional Self-Awareness Manipulation Information

a. Sample screenshot of participants' screen in the audio/low self-awareness condition:

b. Sample screenshot of participants' screen in the video/high self-awareness condition:

APPENDIX B
Manuscripts 1 & 2: Interactional Justice Coding Scheme

Below is the interactional justice coding scheme used for both the feedback task (Manuscript 1, Study 1; Manuscript 2, Study 2) and the layoff task (Manuscript 2; Studies 1 and 3). Both scenarios were developed and validated by Patient & Skarlicki, (2010). The coding scheme was derived from the justice criteria outlined in Colquitt's (2001) organizational justice measure. Specifically, two trained coders assessed every participant response using the six items below.

	Not At All		Some What		Very Much So
1. The participant treated [Bob/the test taker] politely.	1	2	3	4	5
2. The participant treated [Bob/the test taker] with dignity.	1	2	3	4	5
3. The participant treated [Bob/the test taker] with respect.	1	2	3	4	5
4. The participant refrained from improper remarks.	1	2	3	4	5
5. The participant gave a clear explanation for [the layoff/the test results].	1	2	3	4	5
6. The participant gave a thorough explanation of [the layoff/the test results].	1	2	3	4	5