



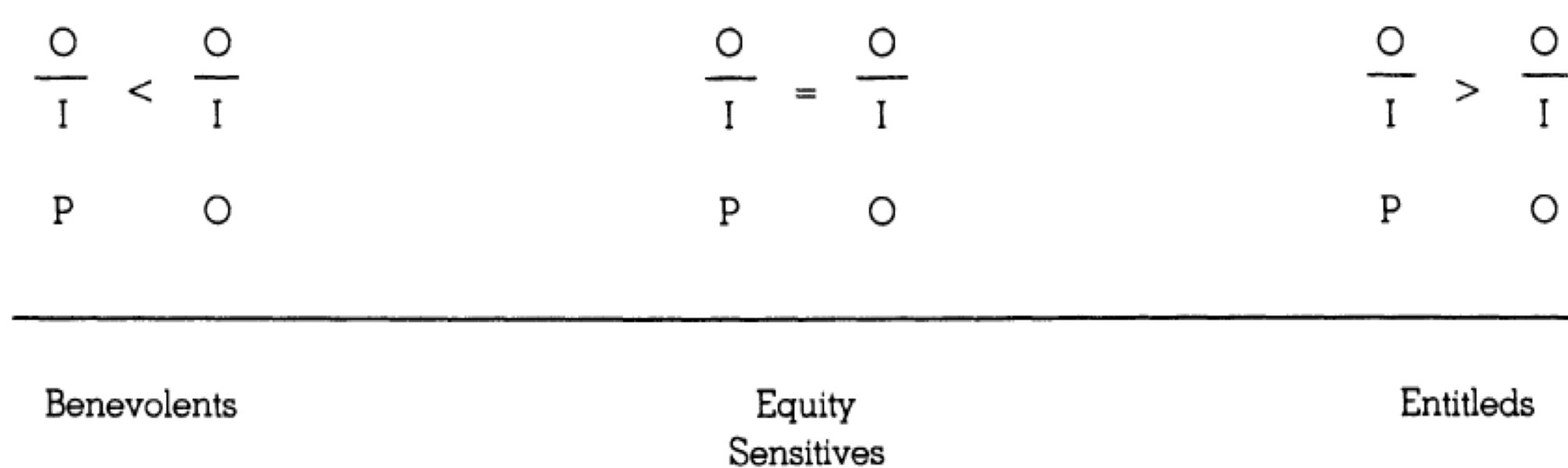
Input Adjustment Between and Within Equity Sensitivity Groups

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Introduction & Study Background

Equity Sensitivity research focuses on the individual's internal standard or perceptions of equity (Huseman, Hatfield, & Miles, 1987). However, little research has examined how individuals with different levels of Equity Sensitivity (Entitleds, Equity Sensitives, or Benevolents) would perform based on their preferred distribution of inputs and outputs. Adams's (1963) research on inequity identifies social comparison of the individual's inputs and outputs versus a referent other. The present study seeks to better understand the role of the identity of the referent other and the impact of social comparison on how an individual chooses to act on their Equity Sensitivity preference and whether they would act consistent with expectations for the category or adjust their ratio of inputs and outputs because of the identity of their referent other.



ES Groups' Hypothesized Inputs

Type	Input	→	Input	Type
ES	=	→	=	ES
ES	↑	→	=	B
ES	↓	→	=	E

Type	Input	→	Input	Type
E	↓	→	↑	ES
E	↓	→	↑	B
E	↓	→	↑	E

Type	Input	→	Input	Type
B	=	→	=	ES
B	=	→	=	B
B	↑	→	↓	E

Possible Results

The hypotheses are based on previous Equity Sensitivity research suggesting an individual's equity preference is stable and that they will act as expected of them. However, we are interested in whether individuals could deviate from their preference and act against what is expected of them because of environmental factors or societal expectations (Fisk, 2010).

Specifically, entitleds may increase their inputs enough to be considered equitable by as a result of social desirability, social comparison, and/or the presence of a performance management system that impacts their input/output ratio.

Type	Input	→	Input	Type
E	↑	→	=	ES
E	↑	→	=	B
E	↓	→	↑	E

Hypotheses

Based on previous research, we hypothesize that, with each different identity group as the referent, the participants will adapt their behavior consistent with their ES types.

Hypothesis 1 - Equity Sensitives will adjust their input to achieve balance with their referent regardless of the referent's level of Equity Sensitivity (Huseman et al., 1987).

Hypothesis 2 - Entitleds will minimize their input in comparison to their referent regardless of the referent's level of Equity Sensitivity (Huseman et al., 1987).

Hypothesis 3 - Benevolents are tolerant of inequity so they will adjust their input to meet the needs of their referent regardless of the referent's level of Equity Sensitivity (Huseman et al., 1987; King & Miles, 1994).

- When paired with a Benevolent, a benevolent will do what is expected of them
- When paired with an Equity Sensitivity, a benevolent will do what is expected of them
- When paired with an Entitled, a benevolent will put more input to make up for the Entitled's lack of input.

Methodology

We will recruit participants from the UTC student population. Each participant will be asked to take the single-stimulus Equity Sensitivity Instrument (Huseman et al., 1987; Davison & Bing, 2008). Participants will be presented with three hypothetical situations where each situation pairs them with an individual from one of the Equity Sensitivity groups. The participant is then asked for each scenario: "knowing the other person's expected input for the task, would you be willing to do more, less, or equal to what is expected of you?" They will then be asked how satisfied they would be working with each colleague on a 7-point Likert scale.

- Colleague 1:** looks out for others on the team and is willing to exert extra effort to compensate for reduced effort by others.
- Colleague 2:** does what is required for the situation and ensures everyone does their part.
- Colleague 3:** looks out for themselves and is mostly concerned about efficiency in his contribution. He prefers to contribute the minimum effort he can get away with.

Implications

The present study would inform current research on:

- How identifying the referent other impacts perceptions of equity
- Whether the Equity Sensitivity identity of the referent could be used to manipulate someone's inputs
- How organizational/environmental factors may impact how individuals choose to act on their equity preferences
- How Equity Sensitivity can affect group work dynamics in organizations where an individual's referent is their coworker
- Whether an individual's equity preference stably transfers

Selected References

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