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Employees' relative deprivation for females and supervisory commitment: The mediating roles of interpersonal justice, informational justice, and perceived empathy¹

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Abstract

The present study aims to test a model derived from a conceptual framework that attempted to explain negative interactions among supervisor-employee dyads from a Relative Deprivation Theory (RDT) and justice-related perspective. Employees' perceptions of fraternal (group) deprivation on part of females compared to males in their organizations were suggested to be related to their interpersonal and informational justice perceptions as well as their perceptions of supervisors' empathy. Employees' perceptions of justice and empathy, in turn, were suggested to be positively associated with overall supervisory commitment. Moreover, the moderating effects of employee gender on the proposed relationships were investigated. The data was collected from 114 employees who were enrolled in undergraduate classes in a Southwestern university in USA. The proposed model as well as the alternative models were tested by Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) technique using AMOS 6.0 software. The findings revealed that proposed mediated model was supported by the data for the independent variable of employee perceptions of "affective" relative deprivation for females in the organization and for the dependent variables of "affective supervisory commitment" and "continuance supervisory commitment". However, employees' gender did not have a moderating effect on the relationships in the mediated model that was supported by the data. The results are discussed in terms of their theoretical and practical implications as well as the suggestions for future research.

Keywords: Relative Deprivation; Interpersonal Justice; Informational Justice; Empathy; Supervisory Commitment.

1. Introduction

The industrial and organizational psychology literature on the relationship between employees' perceptions about their organizational leaders and/or supervisors, gender and justice are mostly focused on associations between leaders' or supervisors' gender and employees' evaluations of

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various justice types (i.e., interpersonal, informational, procedural, and distributive justice) (e.g., Cole, 2004) and the relationship between employees' gender and sensitivity towards different types of justice (e.g., Buttner, 2004). Although there is some empirical evidence that female supervisors or leaders are perceived as higher on interpersonal justice than their male counterparts by both female and male subordinates, the results are conflicting when findings of studies investigating the effects of gender-match between supervisors and employees on various outcomes such as preference to work with the supervisor and job satisfaction are taken into consideration (e.g., Grissom, Nicholson-Crotty, & Keiser, 2012; Wharton & Baron, 1991). To illustrate, the literature shows that interpersonal and informational justice are strongly associated with positive employee outcomes such as job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and organizational citizenship behavior (Colquitt, Conlon, Wesson, Porter, & Ng, 2001). More importantly, interpersonal justice has been shown to have positive effects on supervisory satisfaction at individual, group and organizational levels (Simons & Roberson, 2003). However, despite the fact that female supervisors were generally evaluated more positively on interpersonal justice than male supervisors, other line of research revealed that female subordinates were more prejudiced towards female leaders than male subordinates (Garcia-Ratembero & Lopez-Zafra, 2006), were less likely to prefer working with female leaders than males and that they had lower levels of job satisfaction when they work with female supervisors than they had when they work with male supervisors (Wharton & Baron, 1991). Still, there are a number of recent studies which found that male employees reported significantly lower levels of job satisfaction and higher level of turnover intentions when they worked with female supervisors (e.g., Grissom et al., 2012).

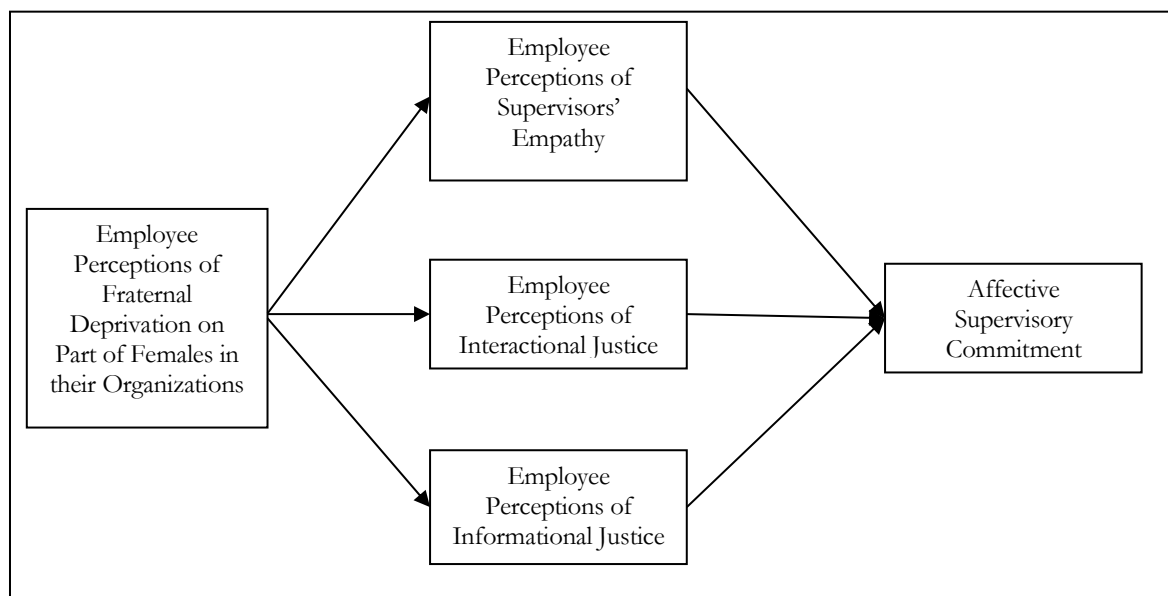
Although studies that focus on the link between gender and organizational variables such as preference for leadership style, perceived justice and empathy, job satisfaction and supervisory commitment are particularly important and valuable; it may be more informative to endorse a justice related perspective while examining negative relational and emotional consequences that is evident in supervisor-employee dyads in organizational settings. On the one hand, it is likely that organizations' and, particularly, supervisors' tendency to ignore fraternal deprivation for female employees in work life and in organization (i.e., employees' belief on gender inequity in terms of availability of organizational opportunities and their feelings of discontent about it) may be negatively related to perceived empathetic concern of subordinates in general. On the other hand, employees' perceptions that their supervisors do not show empathy and/or sensitivity regarding their problems in organizational settings are likely to evoke senses of interpersonal injustice, which

refers to injustice related to the degree of respect, concern, and treatment with dignity during the enactment of procedures (Greenberg, 1993), in their relationships with their supervisors. In addition, it is suggested that, employees, whose perceptions of fraternal deprivation on part of females in their organizations are at high level, may be more likely to believe that their supervisors are not likely to share information and to enact procedures in a fair or non-discriminative way. Therefore, these employees are also expected to report low levels of informational justice; that is, justice related to the accuracy and quality of explanations that employees receive about the organizational procedures (Greenberg, 1993; Kernan & Hanges, 2002). Feelings of interpersonal and informational injustice may be one of the main reasons behind tendency of employees to feel dissatisfied with their supervisors and have low levels of supervisory commitment.

The present research aims to integrate the results of previous studies which reflect both lines of research mentioned above and to combine the propositions of Relative Deprivation Theory (Crosby, 1976; Gurr, 1970; Runciman, 1968), Social Exchange Theory (Blau, 1964), and Group Value Model of Justice (Lind & Tyler, 1988). Specifically, it is suggested that employees' perceptions of fraternal or group deprivation for females in their organizations are proposed to be positively associated with employees' perceptions of supervisors' empathy towards them and perceptions of interpersonal and informational justice.

Literature consistently revealed that individuals' procedural justice perceptions are positively associated with their affective organizational commitment (e.g., Folger & Konovsky, 1989; McFarlin & Sweeney, 1992), job satisfaction (e.g., Martin & Bennett, 1996; Mossholder, Bennett, & Martin, 1998), and trust in management (e.g., Bruning, Keup, & Cooper, 1996). However, while defining their agent-system model Bies and Moag (1986) proposed that procedural justice was more likely to be a determinant of individuals' reactions to the larger organization whereas interpersonal and informational justice were more likely to be determinants of "individual authority figures or agents (i.e., supervisors) (Kernan & Hanges, 2002, p. 920). Therefore, the present research specifically focused on employees' interpersonal and informational justice perceptions as well as their perceptions of supervisors' empathy towards them. Supervisors' empathy towards subordinates; interpersonal and informational justice as perceived by employees, in turn, are suggested to be related with overall supervisory commitment (Figure 1).

Figure 1. The proposed mediated model



1.1. Theoretical Background: Relative Deprivation Theory

Relative Deprivation Theory (RDT; Gurr, 1970; Runciman, 1966) originally aimed to provide a framework to understand motivational processes that guide group members to engage in collective action in a given discrimination situation. The theory suggests that perceptions of relative deprivation are composed of violated expectations of not having an entitled outcome (i.e., cognitive component) and feelings of discontent and dissatisfaction (i.e., affective component) in a specific social comparison situation. Relative deprivation theory makes an important distinction between egoistic or personal deprivation and fraternal or group deprivation. Egoistic deprivation results from interpersonal comparisons of status with those of others in a given group whereas fraternal deprivation results from comparison of status of in-group with status of an out-group. The former is suggested to be related to personal distress and individual action to restore the dissatisfying situation and the latter is proposed to be associated with collective action or protest. Although propositions of relative deprivation theory were widely investigated in social psychology literature in relation to minority groups and to attitudinal as well as behavioral outcomes (e.g., Petta & Walker, 1992; Tripathi & Srivastava, 1981; Walker & Pettigrew, 1984), implications of relative deprivation theory in organizational settings have been examined by a very few number of studies (e.g., Beaton, Tougas, & Laplante, 2007; Jackson, 1989).

The literature suggests that females have a disadvantaged status compared to males in business contexts (e.g., Moreau, Osgood, & Halsall, 2007). To illustrate, women are paid less than men for

the same jobs (e.g., Mohan & Ruggiero, 2003; Selim & Ilkcaracan, 2002), they are underrepresented even in jobs which are generally thought to be “feminen” jobs (Moreau et al., 2007), and they are confronted with negative biases in their career advancement which are expressed by both women and men (e.g., Beaton & Tougas, 1997; Mathison, 1986; Sumer, 2004).

Relative deprivation theory proposes that feelings of fraternal deprivation are likely to result in collective action or protest; however, the theory offers little explanation for other behavioral consequences that may result from fraternal deprivation perception. In the present research, it is suggested that gender inequity in terms of availability of organizational opportunities will be negatively related with feelings of interpersonal justice, informational justice, and perceived supervisory empathy for subordinates. That is, subordinates who think that female employees are disadvantaged in their work settings and feel discontent about female employees' status relative to male employees' status in their organizations are less likely to perceive interpersonal justice, informational justice, and supervisory empathy in work-related matters. Perceived supervisory empathy and justice perceptions are proposed to be positively associated with supervisory commitment.

1.2. Employees' Perception of Fraternal Deprivation and Perceptions of Supervisors' Empathy

Batson (1991; cited in Chi & Lo, 2003, p. 30) stated that empathy "is a result of the perceiver adopting the perspective of the person in need". Empathizing with someone requires effort to imagine how the person is affected by his or her situation. Although the construct of empathy was elaborated to a large extent in developmental, social, and clinical psychology research (e.g., Davis, 1983; Pistrang, Solomons, & Barker, 1999), antecedents and consequences of empathy as well as its definition in organizational contexts were investigated by a limited number of studies in the field of industrial and organizational psychology and organizational behavior (e.g., Parker & Axtell, 2001; Williams, Parker, & Turner, 2007).

In a relatively recent paper, Goodman (2000) suggested that empathy is one of the important ways to motivate privileged groups for justice. The author suggested that hearing about or observing others' experiences in person is likely to enhance perspective taking which would foster empathy. More importantly, Goodman (2000) argued that acknowledging that the disadvantaged status of an individual belonging to a particular group is not his or her personal fault would facilitate empathetic

concern. Specifically, it is proposed that knowing the fact that the disadvantaged status of a particular group is mostly due to “lack of opportunities or disadvantage are due to larger societal conditions (Goodman, 2000, p. 1066)” would require assessment of social inequities and would enhance empathy. In line with relative deprivation theory and above mentioned propositions the present study suggests that supervisors who perceive that females are in a disadvantaged position relative to males in work life (and especially in their particular organization) are more likely to show empathy towards their female subordinates in work-related matters than supervisors who are less likely to think so. In addition, these supervisors are proposed to be likely to enhance subordinates' perceptions of interpersonal and informational justice. Therefore, the first set of hypotheses of the present research is generated as follows:

Hypothesis 1: Perceived fraternal relative deprivation for females in the organization will be negatively associated with perceived empathy by supervisors. That is, employees who report high levels of fraternal deprivation for females in their organizations will report lower levels of perceived empathy by their supervisors than employees who report low levels of fraternal deprivation.

Hypothesis 2: Perceived fraternal relative deprivation for females in the organization will be negatively associated with perceived interpersonal justice. That is, employees who report high levels of fraternal deprivation for females in their organizations will rate their supervisors as lower on interpersonal justice than employees who report low levels of fraternal deprivation.

Hypothesis 3: Perceived fraternal relative deprivation for females in the organization will be negatively associated with perceived informational justice. That is, employees who report high levels of fraternal deprivation for females in their organizations will rate their supervisors as lower on informational justice than employees who report low levels of fraternal deprivation.

The explorative part of the present study aims to answer the research question that whether or not supervisors' or employees' gender moderate the relationships proposed above. On the one hand, it may be likely that, when employees work with female supervisors, they may be less likely to perceive fraternal relative deprivation on part of females in their organization since female supervisors constitute an example of the fact that female and male employees are given equal opportunities in terms of organizational resources and advancement procedures. On the other hand, we can make further speculations based on the assumptions derived from relative deprivation theory and in the opposite direction. In line with relative deprivation theory, it may be suggested

that female supervisors are less likely to feel egoistic deprivation than female subordinates when their comparison in-group is other females in the organization, especially when they hold high-position ranks and when they work in male-dominant organizations (Aycan, 2004). High-level women managers are more likely to be in minority status in organizations and especially in their immediate work group in terms of their gender. The literature also suggests that women in predominantly male work environments were the ones who were most satisfied with their jobs, they reported the lowest levels of job-related depression and the highest level of self-esteem compared to females worked in mixed-gender or predominantly female environments (Wharton & Baron, 1991). Wharton and Baron (1991) proposed that token women in predominantly male work environments may benefit from the ascribed status of “maleness” which is favorably evaluated in most of the societies. Moreover, these women may be enjoying a “pioneer” status among their gender in-group which implies an intrinsic reward for them. Therefore, in line with the relative deprivation theory, it can be suggested that women holding high or mid-level manager positions may not feel egoistic deprivation and rather they may feel more satisfied when they make gender in-group comparisons regarding their status.

Aycan (2004) conducted in-depth interviews with fifty-two women managers holding top and middle-level management positions in various organizations in Istanbul, Turkey. The study revealed that the factors emphasized by the participants as influential for their career advancement were grouped into two main categories: Individual and situational factors and the latter involved both organizational and family-related variables. Individual factors were further divided into three groups that involve key success factors: centrality of work, career orientation, and attitudes towards gender roles. The key success factors suggested that these women mostly attributed their success at work to personal characteristics which showed an internal-locus of control regarding their career advancement. Among the primary of these factors were decisiveness, love for the job, high self-confidence, self-sacrifice and self-discipline. The other factors revealed that the participants were highly career and work-oriented and that they did not internalize the traditional gender roles.

Analysis of organizational culture and practices related to career advancement revealed that although most of them report the lack of efforts to support women to be promoted to higher-level management status in their organizations, many of these women did not agree that there is a “glass-ceiling” in their organizations as well. To illustrate most of the participants reported that they did not think that they had ever experienced any barriers regarding their career advancement because of

their gender. Aycan (2004) suggested that having a desired status, these managers were likely “to minimize their feelings of relative deprivation” (p.468).

Although female supervisors are unlikely to be unaware of fraternal deprivation for females in work life, level of group deprivation they feel or perceive is likely to be lower than those in subordinate positions and they are likely to convey the message that fraternal deprivation on part of female employees in their organizations is not a serious problem regardless of the actual organizational practices from which other female employees suffer. Therefore, employees who work with female supervisors may not be convinced that discriminatory practices in their organizations non-exist and may still report fraternal deprivation to a high extent regardless of the gender of their supervisors. Therefore, the first set of research questions of the present study is generated as follows:

Research question 1a: Do employees who work with female supervisors report higher or lower level of fraternal deprivation for females in their organizations than employees who work with male supervisors?

Research question 1b: Does the supervisors' gender moderate the relationship between employees' perceptions of fraternal deprivation for females in their organizations and employees' perceptions of supervisory empathy?

Research question 1c: Does the supervisors' gender moderate the relationship between employees' perceptions of fraternal deprivation for females in their organizations and employees' perceptions of interpersonal justice?

Research question 1d: Does the supervisors' gender moderate the relationship between employees' perceptions of fraternal deprivation for females in their organizations and employees' perceptions of informational justice?

Another part of the gender issue is related with the research question that whether or not gender of employees moderate the relationship of fraternal deprivation on part of female employees with supervisors' empathy; interpersonal, and informational justice. It can be suggested that, female employees may be more sensitive towards fraternal deprivation on part of females in their organizations than their male counterparts. However, gender discrimination in work settings may evoke a general sense of injustice for both female and male employees. Therefore, the second set of research questions of the present study is as follows:

Research question 2a: Do female employees report significantly higher level of fraternal deprivation for females in their organizations than male employees?

Research question 2b: Does the employees' gender moderate the relationship between employees' perceptions of fraternal deprivation for females in their organizations and employees' perceptions of supervisory empathy?

Research question 2c: Does the employees' gender moderate the relationship between employees' perceptions of fraternal deprivation for females in their organizations and employees' perceptions of interpersonal justice?

Research question 2d: Does the employees' gender moderate the relationship between employees' perceptions of fraternal deprivation for females in their organizations and employees' perceptions of informational justice?

1.3. Relationships of Subordinates' Perceptions of Managers' Empathy, Interpersonal and Informational Justice with Supervisory Commitment

Most of the early research on organizational justice has focused on distributive justice (i.e., fairness in allocation of outcomes) (Leventhal, 1976) and procedural justice (i.e., fairness in procedures that determine the allocation of outcomes) (Thibaut & Walker, 1975). More recently, Bies and Moag (1986) introduced the term interactional justice, which was based on four criteria of justification, truthfulness, respect and propriety. These two criteria were further investigated along two dimensions of explanations and sensitivity that were shown to have differential effects on various outcomes. To illustrate, Shapiro, Buttner and Barry (1994) found that specificity of explanations were more influential than interpersonal sensitivity on adequacy judgments regarding the explanations.

In the present study, Colquitt's (2001) operational definition and measurement of these two dimensions, and Greenberg's (1993; cited in Colquitt, 2001, p. 390) labels of interpersonal and informational justice will be used. In a recent meta-analysis Colquitt et al. (2001) noted that "interpersonal and informational justice should be considered to be distinct from procedural justice, just as the case with distributive justice" (p. 432). Interpersonal justice involves respect and propriety criteria. Colquitt (2001) exemplified respect as being polite rather than rude and propriety as trying to avoid making improper remarks. Informational justice includes Bies and Moag's (1986)

truthfulness and justification criteria as well as factors that were found to affect adequacy judgments regarding explanations in Shapiro et al.'s (1994) study. Truthfulness is argued to involve avoiding deception and being candid and justification was exemplified by providing explanations for the basis of decisions. In line with Shapiro et al. (1994), Colquitt (2001) also included providing timely, reasonable and specific explanations in his definition of informational justice.

Although effects of interpersonal and informational justice on employee outcomes such as organizational citizenship behaviors, withdrawal and negative reactions (Colquitt et al., 2001) were widely investigated in previous literature, antecedents or leadership variables that may have positive influence on formation of these two dimensions of justice among employees received relatively little attention. One of the findings related to leadership-related antecedents of interactional justice was that interpersonal justice is fostered by certain types of leadership styles such as team-oriented leadership (Erdogan, Liden, & Kraimer, 2006). More recently, Piccolo, Bardes, Mayer and Judge (2008) revealed that interpersonal (as well as procedural) justice was associated with organizational citizenship behaviors and felt obligation towards the organization only when quality of leader-member exchange (LMX) was high. This finding was in line with Social Exchange Theory (Blau, 1964) which proposed that employees would want to reciprocate their supervisors' fair treatment by engaging in behaviors that would enhance group cohesion and organizational effectiveness. Piccolo et al. (2008) suggested that high-quality or high-LMX relationships between supervisors and employees conveyed the message that employees would be treated fairly by their organizational agents. Moreover, high-LMX is suggested to enhance trust in the leader which would be positively associated with identification with the leader. In the present study, it is proposed that one of the variables that characterizes high-quality supervisor- employee relationships and that is likely to foster judgments of interpersonal and informational justice is empathy shown by the supervisor towards the employee.

Hoffman (2000) suggests that empathy is critical for justice and "it acts as a catalyst for societal cohesion". Empathy is helpful for establishing constructive social relations among people. Toussaint and Webb (2005) proposed that an individual who is empathetic would be more likely to act in an objective and unselfish manner rather than subjective and selfish manner towards the targets of empathy. Therefore, it is argued that individuals who show empathy towards others are also likely to behave in a fair or just way. Moreover, empathy is more likely to be an antecedent or one of the preconditions of interactional justice provided by supervisors rather than distributive or procedural justice in organizational settings. This is because empathy is effective in interpersonal

relationships and it is unlikely that a supervisor who feels empathy towards his or her subordinates is always able to ensure justice in outcomes (i.e., distributive justice) and in organizational procedures used to determine outcomes (i.e., procedural justice) even if he or she wants to do so.

In the present research it is suggested that supervisors who are empathetic towards their female subordinates are likely to be evaluated as high on both interpersonal and informational dimensions of justice. In line with Group Value Model of Justice (Lind & Tyler, 1988) it is expected that, subordinates whose supervisors understand and feel concern for those who are in a disadvantaged position are also more likely to perceive themselves as valued members of their work group and to evaluate their supervisors as fair. Supervisors who show empathy towards their subordinates in disadvantaged group in the organization are also likely to avoid derogating them and to maintain harmony in their relationship with them. Moreover, they are more likely to give accurate and timely information and tailor their responses according to specific needs of individuals when they understand their subordinates and concern about specific situations they are in. Therefore, the fourth and the fifth hypotheses of the present study are as follows:

Hypothesis 4: Subordinate perceptions of managers' empathy will be positively related to their perceptions of interpersonal justice.

Hypothesis 5: Subordinate perceptions of managers' empathy will be positively related to their perceptions of informational justice.

Subordinates who have high levels of perceived supervisory empathy, interpersonal and informational justice are expected to have positive feelings towards their supervisors. They are more likely to form a close relationship with their supervisors than subordinates who have low levels of perceived supervisory empathy, interpersonal and informational justice because they are likely to feel themselves as valued members of the work group in the eyes of their supervisors. The present study specifically focused on affective supervisory commitment which can be defined as a feeling of emotional attachment towards the supervisor and involvement in and identification with the target person, who is, the supervisor or the manager in this case (e.g., Allen & Meyer, 1990; 1991). The literature consistently revealed that positive experiences in the workplace, such as high level of job satisfaction and/or fair treatment by the organization, were strongly and positively associated with affective organizational commitment (e.g., Wasti, 2002). However, effects of fair treatment by supervisors on affective supervisory commitment received relatively little attention

from the researchers (e.g., Jawad, Raja, Abraiz, & Tabassum, 2012). Therefore, the final aim of the present research is to investigate the relationship of subordinates' perceptions of supervisory empathy, interpersonal and informational justice with affective supervisory commitment in a mediated model, and the last hypothesis of the present study is as follows:

Hypothesis 6: Subordinate perceptions of affective relative deprivation for females in their organization will be negatively associated with their perceptions of supervisory empathy, interpersonal and informational justice which, in turn, will be positively related to their affective supervisory commitment.

2. Method and Material

2.1. Participants and the Procedure

Participants were 114 employees enrolled in undergraduate and graduate classes in a Southeastern university in USA. Recruitment of the participants was completed through in-class announcements and web-based announcements as part of a broader research project. Each participant was granted 3 course credits for his or her participation and both females and males were eligible to participate. Participants were given specific time slots to participate in the study and they filled out the survey package that consisted of the questionnaires in the classrooms. The inclusion criterion for data analysis was to be working with the same supervisor at least for 3 months at the time of data collection; therefore, the final set of the participants were 114 individuals although there were 281 individuals in the broader sample from which the data was collected.

As shown in the Table 1, the majority of the participants were females ($N = 83$) and Caucasians ($N = 80$). College year range was relatively broad with an average of 3,54 years. Contract type of the participants were relatively evenly distributed ($N_{\text{Full-time}} = 47$, $N_{\text{Part-time}} = 67$). The majority of the participants were working in the retail/service industry ($N = 71$). Supervisor gender was also relatively evenly distributed ($N_{\text{Female supervisor}} = 62$, $N_{\text{Male supervisor}} = 52$). Participants were mostly in their mid-twenties; and duration of their current employment, duration of their time worked with the same supervisor, and their hours worked per week were quite fair to be included in the final data set for analyses as indicated by the means and standard deviations revealed in the Table 1.

2.2. Measures

Participants were administered a questionnaire that contained the following (in the order listed): measures of the supervisory empathy, interpersonal and informational justice, cognitive and

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affective relative deprivation, affective supervisory commitment, continuance supervisory commitment, normative supervisory commitment and demographic variables. Although the focus of the present study was affective supervisory commitment, data regarding the other two types of supervisory commitment were also collected for exploratory and control purposes.

Table 1. Descriptive statistics

Variable	Percentage, N (% , N)	Mean	SD
Participant gender			
Female	72.8 (N = 83)		
Male	27.2 (N = 31)		
Ethnicity			
Caucasian	70.2 (N = 80)		
African-American	10.5 (N = 12)		
Hispanic or Latino	11.4 (N = 13)		
Asian	3.5 (N = 4)		
Other	4.4 (N = 5)		
Contract type			
Part-time	58.8 (N = 67)		
Full-time	41.2 (N = 47)		
Industry			
Retail/service	62.3 (N = 71)		
Professional	18.4 (N = 21)		
Other	19.3 (N = 22)		
Supervisor gender			
Female	54.4 (N = 62)		
Male	45.6 (N = 52)		
Age		25.22	9.08
Duration of employment (Months)		31.34	38.80*
Duration of work with the current supervisor (Months)		16.55	17.37*
Hours worked per week		30.14	10.11

Participants responded to all scale items using a 5-point Likert scale (from 1 = “strongly disagree” to 5 = “strongly agree”).

* The statistical reason of high standard deviations for these variables was the fact that the range of these variables were extremely large (i.e., between 3 months and 216 months for the former; between 3 months and 86 months for the latter).

- ***Supervisory Empathy.*** Participants were administered a modified version of Parker and Axtell's (2001) 3-item measure of Empathy. The original scale is designed to assess individuals' self-reports of empathy towards the target. Therefore, the items were reworded to reflect subordinates' perceptions of their supervisors' empathy towards them. A sample item is "My immediate supervisor feels concerned for me if I am under pressure" ($\alpha = .73$).
- ***Interpersonal and Informational Justice.*** Colquitt's (2001) measures of interpersonal and informational justice scales were used in the present study. The participants were asked to what extent their immediate supervisor engages in the behaviors described in the items in enacting organizational procedures. The interpersonal justice scale consists of 4 items and a sample item is "Does (your immediate supervisor) treat you with respect?". The informational justice scale consists of 5 items and a sample item is "Does (your immediate supervisor) seem to tailor (his/her) communications to individuals' specific needs?" ($\alpha = .91$ for interpersonal, and $.86$ for informational justice).
- ***Cognitive and Affective Relative Deprivation.*** A modified version of Beaton, Tougas and Laplante's (2007) measure of Personal Relative Deprivation Scale were used to assess employees' perceptions of fraternal deprivation on part of female employees. The measure consists of 10 items which includes to 5 items to cover cognitive and 5 items to cover affective components of relative deprivation. In the cognitive component part, the participants were asked to indicate whether or not in general they think that female employees in their organization were disadvantaged regarding (a) promotion opportunities, (b) performance appraisals, (c) salary increases, (d) respect from supervisors and (e) training opportunities in work life compared to male employees. In relation to affective component, the participants were asked to rate the extent to which they felt satisfied with the result of each comparison. The responses on affective component items were reverse coded and a composite score of 10 items were computed for each participant. Both of the scales had good reliability estimates ($\alpha = .96$).
- ***Supervisory commitment.*** Commitment to the supervisor was assessed with Stinglhamber, Bentein, and Vandenberghe's (2002) supervisor commitment scale. The scale includes six items for affective supervisory commitment ($\alpha = .91$), four items for normative supervisory commitment ($\alpha = .93$), and five items continuance supervisory commitment ($\alpha = .82$). Sample items for affective supervisory commitment, normative supervisory commitment, and continuance supervisory commitment, respectively, are "I feel proud to

work with my supervisor,” “I would feel guilty if I left my supervisor now,” and “Changing supervisors would necessitate that I acquire new work habits.”

3. Results

The partial correlations between the variables are presented in the Table 2. As preliminary support for the hypotheses, even after controlling for the effect of subordinates' gender, affective relative deprivation was negatively related to interpersonal justice ($r = -.42, p < .001$), informational justice ($r = -.35, p < .001$), and to perceived supervisory empathy ($r = -.43, p < .001$). Affective relative deprivation was also negatively associated with affective supervisory commitment ($r = -.37, p < .001$). The relationship between affective relative deprivation and continuance supervisory commitment was not significant. Contrary to expectations, the relationship between affective relative deprivation and cognitive relative deprivation was not significant. Cognitive relative deprivation was significantly correlated only with continuance supervisory commitment ($r = .20, p < .05$). Therefore, hypotheses 1, 2, and 3 are supported by the data for affective relative deprivation.

Table 2. Descriptive statistics and correlations among the study variables

	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1. Cognitive relative deprivation	2.63	1.24	(.96)						
2. Affective relative deprivation	2.36	1.01	-.02	(.96)					
3. Interpersonal justice	4.22	.82	-.02	-.42***	(.91)				
4. Informational justice	3.87	.83	.08	-.36***	.68***	(.86)			
5. Supervisory empathy	3.69	.94	-.06	-.43***	.51***	.59***	(.73)		
6. Affective supervisory commitment	3.71	.96	.04	-.37***	.61***	.71***	.79***	(.91)	
7. Continuance supervisory commitment	2.56	.99	.20*	.02	.16	.23*	.29**	.29**	(.82)

Note: The gender of the participants was controlled for in the correlations.

Numbers on the diagonal are Cronbach's alpha coefficients.

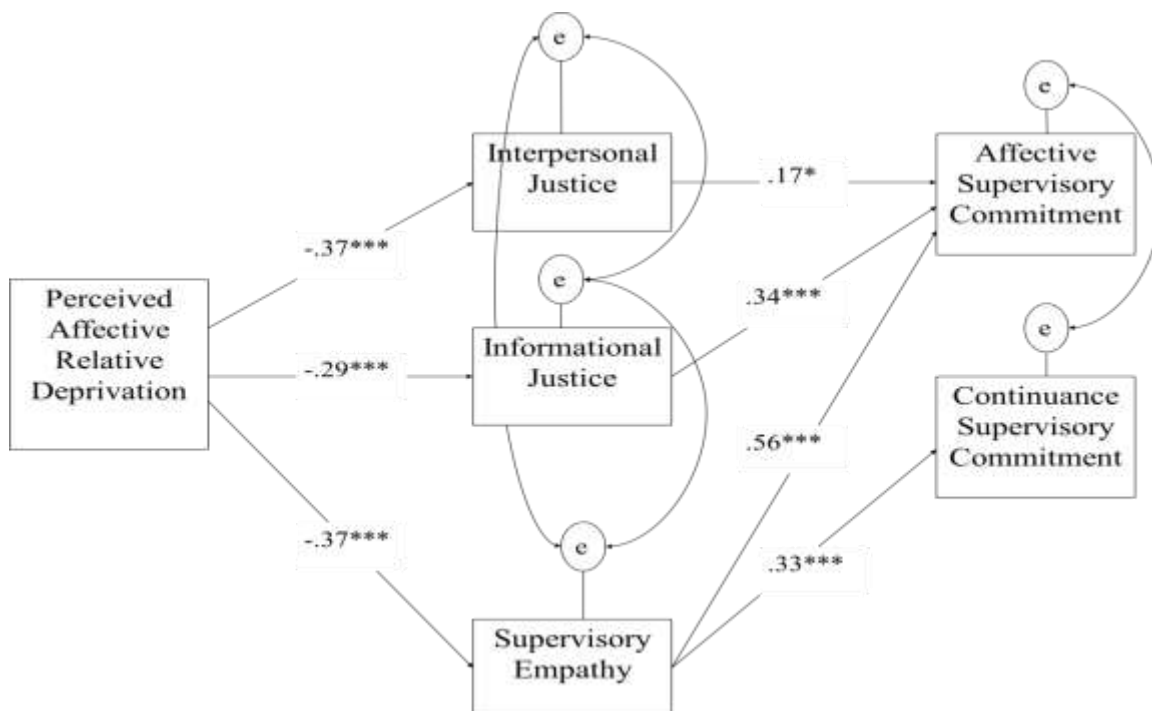
* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, and *** $p < .001$

As suggested, subordinates' perceptions of interpersonal justice was positively associated with perceived supervisory empathy ($r = .51, p < .001$) and with affective supervisory commitment ($r = .61, p < .001$). Informational justice was significantly correlated with supervisory empathy ($r = .59, p < .001$), affective supervisory commitment ($r = .71, p < .001$) and with continuance supervisory commitment ($r = .23, p < .05$). Therefore, hypotheses 4 and 5 were fully supported by the data.

The exploratory part of the study aimed to assess the moderating effects of subordinates' and supervisors' gender in the proposed relationships. However, although male subordinates reported lower levels of supervisory empathy than female subordinates ($r = -.19, p < .05$), the sample sizes of female and male subordinates were not evenly distributed and, unfortunately, the number of the male participants in the final data set was very low ($N = 31$). Therefore, this correlation was thought to be far from being convenient to draw conclusions and to test the moderation effects.

The proposed model as well as the alternative models were tested by Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) technique using AMOS 6.0 software. The results and the model which fit best to the data were presented in the Figure 2. Fully supporting the hypothesis 6, subordinates' perceptions of supervisory empathy, interpersonal justice and informational justice mediated the relationship between perceived affective relative deprivation for females in organization and affective supervisory commitment. However, unexpectedly, subordinates' perceptions of supervisory empathy also mediated the relationship between perceived affective relative deprivation for females in organization and continuance supervisory commitment. The χ^2 was 4.88 and non-significant ($p = .30$). The χ^2/df ratio was lower than 2 for the sample ($\chi^2/df = 1.3$); the GFI and AGFI were .99 and .93, respectively. TLI was .98 and CFI was .99. RMSEA was 0.4.

Figure 2. The standardized parameter estimations of the mediational model



Note. : $*p < .05$, $**p < .01$, $***p < .001$.

4. Discussion, Conclusions and Recommendations

The objective of the present study was to investigate the relationship between employees' perceptions of fraternal deprivation for females compared to males in their organizations, interpersonal and informational justice as well as supervisory empathy perceptions and their feelings of supervisory commitment. The model that fit to the data showed that both male and female employees reported lower levels of both types of justice and supervisory empathy when they feel that female employees did not have equal opportunities with male employees in relation to organizational practices. It is likely that not only females but also males seek organizational climates in which employees are given equal opportunities regardless of their gender. Such a climate may increase their perceptions of interpersonal and informational justice as well as perceived supervisory empathy. Justice perceptions were positively associated with affective commitment to the supervisor whereas perceptions of empathy were related to both affective and continuance supervisory commitment.

Although the present study was one of the few research attempts that assessed the effects of fraternal deprivation in organizational contexts, it had also a number of limitations. Firstly, the inclusion criterion which was to be worked with the same immediate supervisor at least for three months at the time of data collection, resulted in having a moderate number of participants to include in the final data set. Future studies are strongly encouraged to keep the same inclusion criterion to get more accurate results regarding subordinates' perceptions of supervisory empathy, interpersonal and informational justice, supervisory commitment as well as organizational practices that may lead to gender discrimination. However, researchers are also advised to collect data from larger samples with various backgrounds and replicate the results.

Secondly, only two types of justice as the variables of interest were included in the present research. Scholars are encouraged to investigate the relationship of relative deprivation perceptions with procedural and distributive justice in the organizational context.

The present study may contribute to the existing literature and may have practical implications as well. Firstly, contrary to expectations, we could not find significant relationships between cognitive relative deprivation and the study variables except for continuance supervisory commitment. Moreover, the correlation between affective relative deprivation and cognitive relative deprivation was not significant; therefore, we have tested alternative models in which combined deprivation

score and affective relative deprivation score only were used as the independent variables. The findings revealed that the alternative models with combined relative deprivation score revealed poor fit to the data. It may be the case that employees who are aware of the disadvantaged status of females in their organizations (i.e., cognitive relative deprivation) do not necessarily feel discontent about it (i.e., affective relative deprivation). On the other hand, the positive and significant correlation between cognitive relative deprivation and continuance supervisory commitment (i.e., commitment based on lack of alternatives or presence of high costs of leaving the situation or refusing to work with the supervisor) suggest that both variables which are cognitive in nature and related to logically evaluating the existing situation are highly relevant. Therefore, organizational leaders are suggested to be aware of the practices that lead to gender discrimination and underlying cognitive and affective mechanisms behind their employees' commitment.

Another (but less likely) explanation for the lack of significant correlation between affective and cognitive relative deprivation may be related to methodology. It may be the case that measures that were used in the present study are open to improvements and alternative methods to measure affective and cognitive relative deprivation based on the construct content should be developed. Yet, future studies may develop and examine alternative methods for measuring relative deprivation in various contexts and with different samples.

One important implication of the present study for organizations and organizational leaders is that both female and male employees seem to be sensitive to gender inequalities in organizational contexts and they are less likely to perceive justice and to be committed to their supervisors in organizations in which females are in a disadvantaged position compared to males. Therefore, organizational leaders are strongly recommended to employ equal opportunity policies starting from recruitment and selection processes to performance appraisal system practices and to induce sensitivity and awareness regarding these policies among their managerial level employees. Through this way, they may improve not only justice perceptions and commitment of their employees; but also they may improve personal and professional relationship quality between supervisors and subordinates.

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