

# SELF APPRAISAL 'VOICE' AND PERCEPTIONS OF JUSTICE: EXAMINING THE IMPACT AND INTERDEPENDENCE OF INSTRUMENTAL AND VALUE-EXPRESSIVE EFFECTS

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*Individuals in two separate studies participated in a self-appraisal activity in which they were randomly assigned to three conditions promising different levels of potential influence on the evaluation of a written assignment. Self-report data regarding perceptions of voice impact, voice appreciation, and procedural and distributive justice were analyzed. Results of MANOVA and regression suggest voice appreciation, measuring value expressive effects, was positively and significantly related to perceptions of justice, while the self appraisal's perceived impact on a valued outcome was not. However, the impact of value expressive effects on perceptions of fairness was reduced somewhat with higher instrumental possibilities for voice among undergraduate students. Implications for ongoing research and practical applications are discussed regarding the use of various forms of self appraisal.*

"Voice" and its justice-enhancing effects are perhaps the best documented and most manipulated phenomena in organizational justice research (Colquitt, Conlon, Wesson, Porter, & Ng, 2001; Lind, Kanfer, & Earley, 1990; van den Bos, 1999). In contrast, justice research on self appraisal, a unique form of voice, is rare. Although some argue self appraisal positively impacts perceptions of fair pro-

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cedures (Folger & Greenberg, 1985; Folger, Konovsky, & Cropanzano, 1992; Folger & Lewis, 1993; Greenberg, 1986; Korsgaard & Goodwin, 1992; Taylor, Tracy, Renard, Harrison, & Carroll, 1995), no studies as yet examine *why* self appraisal forms of voice have these positive effects. Further, because most justice research examines voice as an interpersonally-directed form of employee input, not the kind characterized as *self* appraisal, it is difficult and premature to draw conclusions as to how specific voice effects (e.g., instrumental and symbolic) relate to these practices. For example, a recent meta-analysis simultaneously reported a strong correlation between performance appraisal participation and subordinate affective reactions and a weak relationship between these reactions and self-appraisals (Cawley, Keeping, & Levy, 1998). Acknowledging that the few available studies ( $n = 3$ ) likely contributed to these somewhat suspect and difficult to interpret results, they assert the need for experimental studies investigating individuals' reactions to self-rating components of appraisal systems and conclude that while most existing literature "posits increased satisfaction and fairness as a result of including self-appraisals, this has yet to be substantiated by experimental research" (p. 627).

Given the increasing number of organizations that use some form of self appraisal, it is important to consider how they affect individuals' reactions toward organizational procedures and outcomes. The research reported here helps in this effort by examining the role instrumental and value expressive voice effects play in perceptions of procedural and distributive justice.

### INSTRUMENTAL AND SYMBOLIC EFFECTS OF VOICE

To better understand self appraisal voice, we must first review what is known about organizational and employee voice. This opportunity to express opinions and provide relevant information for decision making (voice) is continuously shown to enhance perceptions of fairness in organizational settings. Initially dubbed *process control* (Thibaut & Walker, 1975), the voice effect is found to enhance perceptions of justice, even when one's communication does not directly influence an eventual decision (Folger, 1977; Lind & Tyler, 1988; Lind et al., 1990; Tyler, 1987; Tyler & Bies, 1990; Tyler, Rasinski, & Spodick, 1985).

Over the past two decades, scholars have pursued answers for why voice is such a significant contributor to perceptions of organizational justice. From these efforts, two theories, the *instrumental* and the *value-expressive* perspectives, emerged as explanations for this powerful effect (Lind et al., 1990; Shapiro, 1993). The instrumental perspective (Brett, 1986; Thibaut & Walker, 1975) reflects *rational* notions of exchange theory in which individuals act to maximize their own outcomes. Employees offer input on the belief that what is said will have some favorable impact (either direct or indirect) on outcomes affecting themselves. Consequently, another term for this effect is the "self-interest explanation" (Lind & Tyler, 1988; Shapiro & Brett, 1993). In contrast, the value-expressive model (Tyler et al., 1985) suggests that voice offers *relational* or *symbolic* (versus instrumental) consequences. Organizational members value opportunities to express themselves, especially to high-ranking individuals with decision-making authority (Tyler, 1987). Offering one's opinion through participation in decision-making processes is an indication of group membership and even status (Lind et al., 1990). Thus, this explanation is also referred to as the "group-value model" (Lind & Tyler, 1988).

Empirical support is found for both perspectives (Avery & Quiñones, 2002; Korsgaard & Roberson, 1995; McFarlin & Sweeney, 1996; Robbins, Summers, Miller, & Hendrix, 2000; Shapiro & Brett, 1993; Tyler et al., 1985). When decisions have not yet been made, voice is primarily char-

acterized as instrumental in that individuals believe they can influence (either directly or indirectly) relevant outcomes. In post-decision conditions, voice is seen as having more symbolic, expressive value. While some argue that instrumental voice effects are primary in contributing to perceptions of procedural justice (Shapiro, 1993; Thibaut & Walker, 1975), others contend that symbolic voice has at least as strong an effect (Lind et al., 1990). A recent meta-analysis, for instance, concludes that value-expressive participation has a stronger relationship to critical employee reactions, including perceptions of fairness, than does instrumental participation (Cawley, et al., 1998).

Increasingly, scholars propose and promote integrative views of these approaches, acknowledging their mutual relevance in explanations of justice perceptions and theoretical advancement (Barry & Shapiro, 2000; Colquitt, 2001; Lind & Tyler, 1988; Lind et al., 1990; see also Brockner & Wiesenfeld, 1996). Consequently, attention is shifting away from promoting the validity or potency of one explanation over the other and toward applications of both models simultaneously to examine organizational situations or practices in which each may become more or less prominent in justice perceptions (e.g., Barry & Shapiro, 2000; Korsgaard & Roberson, 1995.) One such practice, self appraisal (SA), is examined in this study.

### SELF-APPRAISAL VOICE AND THE EVALUATION PROCESS

Responses to appraisal practices, in general, are a useful phenomenon through which one can examine perceptions of organizational justice (see Greenberg, 1986; Taylor, et al., 1995). Self appraisal, in particular, offers considerable promise for enhancing perceived fairness and accuracy of the appraisal process (Folger & Lewis, 1993; Roberson, Torkel, Korsgaard, Klein, & Diddams, 1993). Self-assessment, the process whereby individuals provide an evaluation of their own performance, skills, or attributes can be used for:

1. promoting self-awareness,
2. providing additional data for the performance appraisal,
3. fostering acceptance of the process, and
4. identifying training and development needs (Atwater, 1998; Farh, Webel, & Bedian, 1988).

Thus, inherent in self appraisal voice are both value-expressive and instrumental components. That is, use of self appraisals can give organizational members a sense of status, dignity and self-respect (value expressive) in the appraisal process by signaling to the individual that s/he has valued input (Atwater, 1998; Meyer, 1991). Further, scholars have argued for the usefulness of considering self-appraisal input (instrumental) when making evaluations about work performance (deLeon & Ewen, 1997; Murphy & Cleveland, 1995). Surprisingly, however, no research to date has examined these unique effects of voice as they relate to self appraisal and justice perceptions.

Anecdotal data suggest that the number of organizations using self appraisal components to performance appraisal is increasing. A recent report states that multi-rater practices, including self appraisals, are used by 52 percent of the top ten percent ( $N = 43$ ) of U.S. public firms, while only about 4 percent of the 42 companies representing the "bottom 10 percent" offer this option (Becker, Huselid, & Ulrich, 2001). Such upward trends further signal a need to better understand SAs—especially given the considerable variation both in how self appraisals are used in organizational evaluation practices and viewed by the academic community.

For instance, some scholars have disputed the value of self appraisals for anything other than personal development purposes (see Campbell & Lee, 1988). Practical extensions of this research would *discourage* use of self appraisals (seen as inflated and inaccurate) as input for performance evaluation decisions. This view would, however, encourage its use for personal developmental and perhaps goal-setting purposes. The question arises, then, is the opportunity for self-appraisal valued, even if individuals are told or believe it will have no impact on salient outcomes such as performance ratings?

Countering this view with assertions that individuals are typically the best-informed about their own activities (deLeon & Ewen, 1997), scholars promote SAs as valuable input for appraisal decisions, arguing that these sources have continuous knowledge of their task-related efforts and behaviors, and often, eventual results (Folger & Lewis, 1993; Murphy & Cleveland, 1995). Practical extensions of such conclusions include the typical scenario of asking individuals to complete a self appraisal and bring it with them to a performance interview, at which time the rater (often a direct supervisor) also reveals his or her own assessment. Individuals are likely to view such instances as instrumental for (assumedly) *raising* supervisor assessments of their performance, as well as potentially enhancing status. Does an added promise or belief that one's input will affect important outcomes enhance perceptions of a fair evaluation process and/or outcome?

Evidence suggests that self appraisal has its strongest impact on perceived fairness if elicited before a supervisor's evaluation rather than concurrent with it (Greenberg, 1986; Korsgaard & Goodwin, 1992 cited in Korsgaard & Roberson, 1995). For instance, soliciting input prior to an evaluation is identified as one of the five categories of procedural fairness (Greenberg, 1986). Thus, expanding on notions that SAs contain useful information in making decisions about individual performance, a third SA format has individuals submit personal reviews prior to supervisors making an evaluation of their performance. Do individuals view self appraisal input considered prior to a supervisor's initial decision-making process as fairer than the previous two examples? We pursue these questions in an effort to understand how variations in SA voice opportunities (instrumental versus non-instrumental) affect perceptions of fairness in organizational contexts.

## HYPOTHESES

Many studies examining value expressive and instrumental voice effects focus on procedural justice, while less is known how these explanations for voice impact perceptions of distributive justice. Ongoing research consistently reports strong relationships between distributive and procedural justice conceptualizations, with corrected population correlations ranging from .34 to .77 (Colquitt et al., 2001). This recent meta-analysis also reports both are highly correlated with outcome satisfaction, job satisfaction, organizational commitment, trust, and agent-referenced evaluation of authority (Colquitt et al., 2001). While some scholars suggest that these two conceptually distinct fairness assessments could be functionally combined (Cropanzano & Ambrose, 2001), we chose to treat these as separate, but related constructs—examining them simultaneously and anticipating similar voice effects.

Beyond the focus on procedural justice, previous research examining voice also tends to distinguish between "pre and post decision" voice opportunities, and "voice and no voice" conditions to account for instrumental or value expressive effects (see Cawley et al., 1998, Colquitt, 2001 for reviews). Past manipulations of *instrumentality* allowed voice before a decision was made. Similar manipulations regarding *value expressiveness* allowed voice only after a decision was made, and

"no voice" conditions were used as controls. Nevertheless, because the voice effect is well established, we do not include a "no voice" condition in our research. In this study, we do incorporate the traditional pre- and post-decision conditions to account for, respectively, instrumental and value expressive effects. However, it is argued that voice offered *after* a decision is made may still serve an instrumental purpose if individuals believe their voice will be given some degree of *consideration* (Shapiro, 1993). Thus, we also introduce a post-decision, instrumental condition for our examination of SA voice, in which individuals are told that although a decision was already made, their comments would be considered. As both conditions promise the opportunity for impact (i.e., instrumental effects), we offer the following hypotheses:

- Hypothesis 1a.* Procedural justice perceptions are higher in both pre- and post-decision instrumental (versus value expressive) conditions.
- Hypothesis 1b.* Distributive justice perceptions are higher in both pre- and post-decision instrumental (versus value expressive) conditions.

Promised versus perceived voice impact, however, may be two separate assessments individuals make. Lind and colleagues (1990) demonstrate that procedural justice is influenced more by the "illusion of control," i.e., how much subjects believed they influenced decisions, than actual characteristics, i.e., instrumentality according to experimental conditions. Shapiro and Brett (1993) found that objective characteristics of procedures explained less variance in judgments of procedural justice than did subjective characteristics. Further, Shapiro (1993) asserts that researchers interested in determining the extent voice is appreciated especially for value-expressive reasons must distinguish between actual (objective) and potential (perceived) influence on outcomes—otherwise, what is called a value expressive effect may in actuality be *potential* instrumentality. Therefore, to assess perceived influence on outcomes regardless of asserted or "promised" impact (via experimental condition placement), we utilize a separate, self-report measure of perceived voice impact to identify instrumental effects of SAs, and offer the following hypotheses:

- Hypothesis 2a.* Procedural justice perceptions are higher for those who perceive their SA voice will impact outcomes.
- Hypothesis 2b.* Distributive justice perceptions are higher for those who perceive their SA voice will impact outcomes.

Tyler and Lind (1992) propose and research supports the notion that value expressive effects involve something beyond instrumental concerns (Cawley et al., 1998). Korsgaard and Roberson (1995) argue that the opportunity to voice one's opinion is a desired end in itself. Thus, we assessed value expressive effects not only via the traditional post-decision condition, but also with a self-report measure of voice appreciation. This idea is consistent with definitions of value expressive effects reflecting an appreciation to simply be afforded a voice opportunity. Given the research supporting the value expressive effect on perceptions of justice, and research suggesting that subjective measures may be more robust than condition placement (objective measure) in assessing non-instrumental or value expressive effects, we offer the following hypotheses:

- Hypothesis 3a.* Procedural justice perceptions are higher for those who appreciate their opportunity for SA voice.

*Hypothesis 3b.* Distributive justice perceptions are higher for those who appreciate their opportunity for SA voice.

Our final set of hypotheses reflect recent proposals that main effects attributed to either instrumental or non-instrumental explanations may be just part of the story. That is, people likely seek evidence of status and more favorable outcomes through voice. Lind and Tyler (1988) argued that theoretical advancements in organizational justice may be best served by applying both instrumental and value expressive models simultaneously in research. Initial studies suggest that these two voice effects have an interdependent influence on reactions to decisions as well as perceptions of procedural justice (Barry & Shapiro, 2000; Brockner & Wisenfeld, 1996). For instance, value expressive effects or the opportunity to simply be heard may become more appreciated in situations where voice instrumentality is seen as less likely (post-decision). Where the potential for instrumentality is high (pre-decision), value expressive effects may be less salient in perceptions of procedural justice. This trade-off on expectations regarding voice may impact individuals such that when they do not expect to impact favorable outcomes from voice, they may place more emphasis on its value expressive effects. In contrast, when individuals do not perceive greater status from voice, they may place more value on its instrumental effects.<sup>1</sup> Thus, we offer the following hypotheses:

*Hypothesis 4a:* As potential SA instrumentality is reduced, voice appreciation effects increase with regard to perceptions of procedural justice.

*Hypothesis 4b:* As potential SA instrumentality is reduced, voice appreciation effects increase with regard to perceptions of distributive justice.

## METHOD

### Sample

Participants included 160 freshmen and sophomores attending classes at a private Midwest college ( $N = 39$ ) and a public northeast university ( $N = 121$ ). Fifty-five percent of the undergraduates were female and 77 percent were employed at least part-time. Fifty-six percent were Caucasian, 27 percent African American, 9 percent Asian, 4 percent Hispanic, and 4 percent were of other races. Most of these individuals' age (86%) fell within the 18-22 year old range ( $M = 20.3$ ,  $SD = 1.6$ ).

### Research Design and Procedure

We hoped to combine advantages of both experimental conditions (control) and field studies (realism) by designing an experiment that involved participants' actual, rather than simulated work. Consequently, it was more realistic to collect work samples from a more controllable student (versus corporate) environment. We identified and invited several faculty members who required students to complete various short, graded written assignments during the semester to participate in this study. The topics and length (average 1-2 pages) of the papers used for the research varied with the courses in which they were offered. These papers were considered "meaningful" tasks involving significant effort and consequences (see Hunton, Hall, & Price, 1998); nevertheless, none were considered a major assignment.

The experiment required professors to collect student papers the class prior to a self-appraisal exercise and survey.<sup>2</sup> Faculty were instructed to refrain from marking any of these papers, which was necessary to maintain a consistent framework for all conditions. Next class period, instructors returned the unmarked papers along with a SA worksheet. Participants were asked to carefully read worksheet instructions and take approximately 10-15 minutes to complete the self-appraisal task. No other instructions were verbalized so as not to compromise the conditions. Care was given in the design and distribution of the self-appraisal sheet so that all believed they were receiving an identical worksheet from their professor.

Instructions at the top of the self-appraisal sheet directed participants to reread their own papers, and then use the blank section of the sheet to write a self-critique, characterized as useful for personal development. As a result of three unique sets of instructions on the self-appraisal worksheet, students were randomly placed in one of three experimental conditions. The fourth and fifth sentences of the instructions were manipulated to generate the following three experimental conditions, which parallel conditions discussed previously regarding self-appraisal practices in organizational settings:

1. *Post-decision value expressive*: "I have already graded your paper. Thus, your comments will have no effect on this paper's grade."
2. *Post-decision instrumental*: "I have already graded your paper. However, I will consider your comments before assigning a final grade for this paper."
3. *Pre-decision instrumental*: "I have not yet graded your paper. And I will consider your comments before assigning a grade for this paper."

The last sentence of the instructions asked individuals to list perceived strengths and weaknesses in their paper and assign themselves a letter grade on what they felt the paper had earned.

After collecting completed self-appraisal forms and student papers, the professor announced that there was an opportunity for students to participate in a study on self-appraisals and turned this portion of the class over to one of the researchers, an individual not affiliated in any way with that course. At this point, the instructor left the room. The researcher thanked students for their time and invited them to participate by signing a student consent form and then completing a brief survey related to their just-completed self appraisal and its corresponding written assignment. Students took approximately five minutes to complete the survey, and afterwards were provided a token incentive as a thank you.

Participants were instructed to respond honestly since there were no "right" or "wrong" answers and assured that their comments would be confidential and never shown to their professor. The last four digits of each participant's social security number were used to match the survey with the previously completed self-appraisal sheet—allowing us to determine the condition from which they responded. Completed surveys were collected by the researcher, who then left the room, and regular class activities resumed. Debriefing occurred at the end of class when either the researcher returned and explained the experiment, or the instructor distributed debriefing sheets prepared by the researchers and answered any questions. Those with concerns or questions were encouraged to contact the researchers directly. Appropriate email addresses and phone numbers were provided.

## Measures

Study participants rated survey items on a five-point scale ranging from (1) strongly disagree to (5) strongly agree. The two dependent variables, procedural and distributive justice, were solic-

ited by direct items stating, respectively, "The process used for grading this assignment was fair," and "The grade I receive from the professor (for this paper) will be appropriate." Regarding perceptual independent variables, three items measured voice appreciation (Cronbach's alpha = .80) including, "I was glad for the opportunity to give an opinion about my work," "Doing the self appraisal of the paper was a worthwhile assignment," and "Self-appraisals are a worthwhile exercise in the classroom." As both a manipulation check and assessment of the perceived instrumental value the self appraisal would have on the eventual grade, two items measured self appraisal impact (Cronbach's alpha = .72) stating, "My self-appraisal will not affect my grade for this assignment" (reversed) and "The comments I wrote may impact my grade for this assignment." Participants' belief that they did well on the paper itself was used as a control variable as we felt that expectations of a favorable outcome might inflate justice perceptions. Demographic information was requested at the end of the survey, including gender, race, age, and current work situation, i.e., full-time, part-time, or unemployed.

## RESULTS

As mentioned previously, instrumentality was manipulated in all three conditions by varying statements on the self appraisal instruction sheet. To gauge the effectiveness of this manipulation, a one-way analysis of variance revealed a significant difference [ $F(2,156) = 25.01, p < .000$ ] among participants' perceptions regarding their self appraisal's impact on the assignment grade. Scheffe' post hoc pairwise comparisons among the three groups showed that the value expressive condition ( $M = 2.18$ ) varied significantly from both the post-decision instrumental ( $M = 3.18$ ) and the pre-decision instrumental ( $M = 3.27$ ) conditions with regard to perceived voice instrumentality (critical  $S_{.05} = .60$ ), indicating a successful manipulation. Of note, there were no significant differences in voice appreciation scores among conditions.

Given that our study utilized two, correlated dependent variables ( $r = .48, p < .01$ ), multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) was employed (see Table 1). The first set of hypotheses contrasted the effects of pre- and post-decision, instrumental SA voice conditions with the post-decision, value expressive SA voice condition on perceptions of justice. The "I think I did well on my paper" covariate was significant [Wilks Lambda = .91;  $F(2,152) = 7.28, p = .001$ ] for both distributive [ $F(1,153) = 14.13, p = .000$ ] and procedural justice [ $F(1,153) = 5.47, p = .02$ ]. Multivariate tests of significance on the effects of condition, however, were nonsignificant [Wilks Lambda = .99,  $F(4,304) = .031$ ,

**Table 1**  
Correlations among Independent and Dependent Variables and Covariate  
(Undergraduate Sample)

Variables	Voice Instrumentality	Voice Appreciation	Procedural Justice	Distributive Justice
Voice appreciation	.36**			
Procedural Justice	.08	.38**		
Distributive Justice	-.01	.34**	.48**	
I did well on assignment	-.05	.13	.20*	.30*

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



**Table 2**  
**Cell Means and Standard Deviations by Condition (Undergraduate Sample)**

Variable	Condition 1 N = 47		Condition 2 N = 54		Condition 3 N = 59		Overall N = 160	
	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD
Voice instrumentality	2.18	.78	3.18	.94	3.27	.82	2.92	.97
Voice appreciation	3.46	.84	3.61	.85	3.61	.83	3.56	.84
Procedural Justice	3.65	.90	3.61	.66	3.79	.61	3.69	.72
Distributive Justice	3.70	.89	3.74	.68	3.85	.67	3.77	.74
I did well on assignment	3.89	.84	3.87	.85	4.22	.79	4.01	.84

1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = agree and disagree, 4 = agree, 5 = strongly agree

ns]; consequently, no univariate F-tests were performed (see Table 2). These results fail to support hypotheses 1a and 1b, indicating that neither pre- nor post-decision instrumental SA conditions promoted significantly higher perceptions of justice than the value expressive SA condition.

To determine if individual belief in potential voice impact (rather than condition placement) improves justice perceptions, multivariate tests of significance were conducted utilizing perceived impact of SA as the independent variable. The covariate again was highly significant [Wilks Lambda = .90;  $F(2,149) = 8.15$ ,  $p = .000$ ] for both distributive [ $F(1,150) = 15.64$ ,  $p = .000$ ] and procedural justice [ $F(1,150) = 6.75$ ,  $p = .01$ ]. However, perceived impact of voice was nonsignificant [Wilks lambda = .96,  $F(8,298) = .47$ , ns]; consequently, univariate F-tests were not conducted. Thus, hypotheses 2a and 2b were not supported. This indicates participants' perceptions of justice were not significantly enhanced by a belief that their voice (self appraisal) would influence a valued outcome (assignment grade).

Hypotheses 3a and 3b proposed that appreciation for the opportunity to voice, a measure of the value-expressive effect, would promote perceptions of both procedural and distributive justice. The covariate was significant [Wilks Lambda = .935;  $F(2,148) = 5.26$ ,  $p = .006$ ] for distributive justice only [ $F(1,149) = 10.36$ ,  $p = .002$ ]. Multivariate tests of significance regarding the voice appreciation variable proved highly significant [Wilks lambda = .75,  $F(8,296) = 5.74$ ,  $p = .000$ ]; thus, univariate F-tests were performed. Voice appreciation produced significant main effects on both the ratings of perceived distributive justice, [ $F(4,149) = 7.62$ ,  $p = .000$ ], and procedural justice, [ $F(4,149) = 8.39$ ,  $p = .000$ ]. Results support both hypotheses suggesting appreciation for SA voice contributes significantly to perceptions of justice, both procedural and distributive.

Multiple regressions were performed to determine voice appreciation's impact on justice perceptions in relation to potential instrumentality (via condition placement). With procedural justice as the dependent variable, we first regressed the covariate, then condition and voice appreciation, and finally an interaction term (Condition  $\times$  Voice Appreciation). The overall model was significant [ $F(4, 155) = 10.06$ ,  $p = .000$ ] as was the interaction (beta = -1.04,  $p = .006$ ). A similar regression with distributive justice as the dependent variable also revealed an overall significant model [ $F(4, 155) = 10.01$ ,  $p = .000$ ] and interaction (beta = -.803,  $p = .03$ ). To more clearly assess this interactive relationship, two-step hierarchical regressions were subsequently performed and interpreted on each justice perception for all three conditions.

**Table 3**  
**Beta Weights, R<sup>2</sup> and  $\Delta R^2$  Change when Voice Appreciation Entered in Hierarchical Regression**  
**(Undergraduate Sample)**

	Procedural Justice			Distributive Justice		
	Beta	R <sup>2</sup>	$\Delta R^2$	Beta	R <sup>2</sup>	$\Delta R^2$
Condition 1	.55**	.45	.29**	.52**	.39	.26**
Condition 2	.25	.07	.06	.13	.09	.02
Condition 3	.25	.06	.06	.25*	.11	.06*

\*\* p < .01 \* p < .05

With procedural justice as the dependent variable, the "I think I did well" covariate and voice appreciation were entered into the regressions. As predicted, standardized beta weights for voice appreciation were highest in the value expressive (low-instrumentality) condition (beta = .55, p = .000) and decreased in significance for the overall regression in the instrumental conditions (Condition 2: beta = .25, p = .08; Condition 3: beta = .25, p = .06). Following the same procedure for distributive justice, standardized beta weights for voice appreciation were highest in the value expressive Condition One (beta = .52, p = .000), and decreased in the instrumental conditions (Condition 2: beta = .13, p = .33; Condition 3: beta = .25, p = .05)<sup>3</sup>. Results show that the impact of appreciation for voice on procedural and distributive justice perceptions is highest when self appraisal instrumentality is low, supporting hypotheses 4a and 4b (see Table 3).

We also wondered about voice effects on justice perceptions in relation to our subjective, *perceived impact* variable. Thus, we performed additional regressions on both dependent variables. For comparison purposes, we grouped respondents such that scores of three or lower indicated participants believed the self appraisal would not impact their final grade (N = 105), and scores higher than three indicated they believed the self appraisal would have some impact on their grade (N = 55).

With procedural justice as the dependent variable, we again regressed the covariate, then perceived SA impact and voice appreciation, and finally an interaction term (SAimpact  $\times$  Voice Appreciation). The overall model was significant [F(4, 155) = 9.19, p = .000] as was the interaction (beta = -1.04, p = .05). A similar regression with distributive justice as the dependent variable also revealed an overall significant model [F(4, 155) = 9.03, p = .000], but a nonsignificant interaction (beta = -.41, p = .44). Two-step hierarchical regressions were performed for both dependent variables, but interpreted for procedural justice only.

**Table 4**  
**Beta Weights, R<sup>2</sup> and  $\Delta R^2$  Change when Voice Appreciation Entered in Hierarchical Regression**  
**Table (Undergraduate Sample)**

	Procedural Justice			Distributive Justice		
	Beta	R <sup>2</sup>	$\Delta R^2$	Beta	R <sup>2</sup>	$\Delta R^2$
SA will not impact	.43**	.27	.18**	.35**	.22	.12**
SA will impact	.20	.04	.04	.22	.12	.05

\*\* p < .01 \* p < .05

With procedural justice as the dependent variable, we first entered the covariate and then voice appreciation in the model. Standardized beta weights for voice appreciation were significant when individuals believed their self evaluation would not impact their final grade ( $\beta = .43, p = .000$ ) and insignificant when they believed it would ( $\beta = .20, p = .16$ ). A similar pattern was found for distributive justice. Results reinforce that voice appreciation effects, particularly with regard to perceived procedural justice, are highest when perceived instrumentality is low, providing additional support for hypotheses 4a (see Table 4).

## DISCUSSION

The key findings in Study One center on the strength of voice appreciation and what is known as the value expressive effect. In particular, our research shows its strong, favorable influence on perceptions of procedural justice and to a somewhat lesser degree on distributive justice. This is consistent with previous research that shows a consistent and strong relationship between voice and procedural justice (Cawley et al., 1998; Lind et al., 1990). In addition, findings indicate that this value expressive effect is not enhanced by outcome utility—actual or perceived. Thus, results somewhat counter beliefs that the more voice impacts outcomes, the more one appreciates this opportunity. Our findings discount this idea in two ways. First, voice appreciation was a more powerful predictor of justice than either promised or perceived impact. Second, as the potential for impact increased, the predictive ability of voice appreciation on justice perceptions actually went down. Thus, one's opportunity to be heard appears most relevant in determining justice perceptions when individuals are not anticipating their SA to impact evaluations.

To better interpret both our expected and unexpected findings, it is helpful to reconsider the context in which the data were collected and relevant parallels in organizational settings. Our sample included young (freshmen and sophomore) undergraduates, who would not necessarily expect to participate in the grading of their own work. Research with students participating in administrative duties shows that expectations may be key when it comes to perceived fairness regarding voice. For example, Greenberg, Eskew, and Miles (1991) found that denying student voice on a departmental grading policy produced unfavorable responses primarily among students expecting to be allowed input (because they were told as such), not among those who had no such promises and, thus, expectations (Cropanzano & Ambrose, 2001). Similarly, another study found that when expectations were violated in a role-playing exercise, students reacted with lowered perceived procedural justice, even when the violation consisted of allowing these individuals actually *more input* into the procedure (van den Bos, Vermunt, & Wilke, 1996).

In organizations, expectations regarding one's input on outcomes may vary significantly. For instance, Cawley and colleagues (1998) suggest many organizational members may feel they have more of a right to voice an opinion than to actually control an outcome. Such beliefs may be more prevalent among lower status organizational members, e.g., non-exempt and younger employees, part-timers, temps, recent hires, etc. Thus, when the opportunity for outcome control is not offered, it would not necessarily reduce their perceptions of a fair process or consequence (see Cropanzano & Prehar, 2000). Again, this helps explain the impotence of perceived impact in predicting justice beliefs among our students. Because these individuals do not traditionally participate in the administrative function of grading, the belief that their input would impact outcomes might violate expectations and not necessarily contribute favorably to perceptions of a fair process or outcome. Instead, value expressive effects would likely contribute more positive responses (e.g., fairness), as self

appraisal requests might signal status and "group membership," i.e., individuals are invited to engage in a process normally reserved only for those with higher organizational standing.

But what about individuals who feel they have more of a right to control personally relevant outcomes? In these cases, voice instrumentality may prove more salient and, therefore, more powerful in justice considerations. In contrast to students, for instance, faculty typically expect requested SA input (e.g., merit applications, committee reports) to impact administrative decisions that will personally affect them, their colleagues, and/or departments. Consequently, if they perceive that their recommendations are not considered in final decisions, proposals or policies, perceptions of procedural and distributive justice are more likely to be adversely affected. Higher-ranking organizational members are likely to have similar expectations regarding voice opportunities and its impact on valued outcomes.

We wondered if increased organizational status would raise expectations regarding outcome control and the voice instrumentality of self appraisals. Thus, we replicated the procedures of Study One using a graduate student sample to test our original set of hypotheses. Given the enhanced age, work and classroom experience, and working relationships with faculty, we anticipated that graduate students would see themselves as higher status in this academic environment, perhaps with greater expectations regarding voice opportunities.

## STUDY TWO

In Study Two, we followed the same approach used in Study One, modifying only the make up of the sample. Participants included business graduate students from one private and one public university in the East ( $N = 79$ ). Fifty-three percent of these participants were male, and approximately 75 percent were employed full-time. Sixty-five percent were Caucasian, 17 percent African American, 10 percent Asian, 3 percent Hispanic, 2 percent Indian, and 2 percent indicated other races. Ages ranged from 23 to 55 years ( $M = 32$ ,  $SD = 8.3$ ). Papers written by this group were somewhat longer than the undergraduate sample, averaging 3-4 pages in length. Similar to the previous sample, these were considered meaningful assignments to students in that they were graded work, requiring significant effort outside of the classroom. No role plays or case scenarios were used.

## RESULTS

Reliabilities performed for independent variables SA impact (Cronbach's  $\alpha = .65$ ) and voice appreciation (Cronbach's  $\alpha = .72$ ) were somewhat lower for this smaller sample.<sup>4</sup> In determining the effectiveness of our instrumentality manipulation, we again used a one-way analysis of variance revealing a significant difference [ $F(2,76) = 6.23$ ,  $p < .003$ ] among participants' perceptions regarding their self appraisal's impact on the assignment grade. Scheffe' post hoc pairwise comparisons among the three groups showed the value expressive condition ( $M = 2.44$ ) varied significantly from both the post-decision instrumental ( $M = 3.06$ ) and the pre-decision instrumental ( $M = 3.26$ ) conditions with regard to perceived voice instrumentality (critical  $S_{.05} = .65$ ). As in Study One, no significant differences in voice appreciation scores were found among conditions (see Tables 5 and 6).

Recall that hypotheses 1a and 1b contrasted the effects of pre- and post-decision instrumental self appraisal voice conditions with a post-decision, value expressive condition on perceptions of jus-

**Table 5**  
**Correlations among Independent and Dependent Variables and Covariate (Graduate Sample)**

Variables	Voice Instrumentality	Voice Appreciation	Procedural Justice	Distributive Justice
Voice appreciation	.21			
Procedural Justice	.16	.42**		
Distributive Justice	.08	.22	.48**	
I did well on the assignment	.09	.17	.05	-.06

\*\*  $p < .01$ ; \*  $p < .05$

tice. In contrast to the undergraduate sample, the "I think I did well on the paper" covariate proved insignificant to graduate students for this [Wilks Lambda = .99;  $F(2,67) = .78$ , ns] and all subsequent MANOVA calculations. Multivariate tests of significance on the effects of experiment condition were once again not significant [Wilks Lambda = .93,  $F(4,134) = 1.19$ , ns] in differentiating justice perceptions; consequently, no univariate F-tests were performed. These results are consistent with Study One findings, and indicate that neither pre- nor post-decision instrumental SA conditions promoted significantly higher perceptions of justice than the value expressive SA condition.

We also examined whether or not subjectively-perceived voice impact (vs. objective condition placement) improved justice perceptions. Perceived impact of voice was also nonsignificant [Wilks lambda = .91,  $F(8,130) = .82$ , ns]; thus, again consistent with the undergraduate sample, a belief that self appraisal voice could influence relevant evaluation decisions did not significantly enhance participants' perceptions of a fair process or outcome.

The third set of hypotheses proposed that appreciation for the opportunity to voice, measuring the value-expressive effect, would promote perceptions of both procedural and distributive justice. Multivariate tests of significance regarding the voice appreciation variable [Wilks lambda = .84,  $F(6,132) = 2.06$ ,  $p = .056$ ] led us to pursue univariate tests. Voice appreciation main effects while not significant for distributive justice [ $F(3,67) = 1.91$ ,  $p = .14$ ], were significant for procedural justice [ $F(3,67) = 3.90$ ,  $p = .01$ ]. Thus, results support hypotheses 3b suggesting appreciation for SA voice significantly enhanced perceptions of procedural justice.

To address hypotheses 4a and 4b, multiple regressions were performed examining voice appreciation's impact on justice perceptions in relation to potential instrumentality (via condition placement). With procedural justice as the dependent variable, we first regressed the covariate, then

**Table 6**  
**Cell Means and Standard Deviations by Condition (Graduate Sample)**

Variable	Condition 1 n = 27		Condition 2 n = 27		Condition 3 n = 25		Overall n = 79	
	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD
Voice instrumentality	2.50	1.03	3.07	.92	3.28	.84	2.91	.93
Voice appreciation	3.73	.70	3.73	.84	3.88	.67	3.77	.73
Procedural Justice	3.78	.55	3.86	.86	4.11	.76	3.91	.74
Distributive Justice	4.00	.56	4.19	.68	4.22	.55	4.14	.60
I did well on assignment	4.04	.76	3.89	.85	4.28	.46	4.06	.72

1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = agree and disagree, 4 = agree, 5 = strongly agree

condition and voice appreciation, and finally an interaction term (Condition  $\times$  Voice Appreciation). The overall model was significant [ $F(4, 74) = 3.95, p = .006$ ]; however the interaction was not (beta = .170,  $p = .807$ ). A similar regression with distributive justice as the dependent variable revealed a nonsignificant model [ $F(4, 74) = 1.75, p = .149$ ] and interaction (beta = -.769,  $p = .295$ ). No subsequent analyses were performed; thus, no support was found for these hypotheses.

We also examined the predictive ability of appreciation for voice in relation to the perceived impact. Using the same groupings described in our first sample, respondents were separated into those who believed the self appraisal would not impact their final grade ( $N = 54$ ), and those who believed the self appraisal would have some impact on their grade ( $N = 25$ ). With procedural justice as the dependent variable, we again regressed the covariate, then perceived SA impact and voice appreciation, and finally an interaction term (SAimpact  $\times$  Voice Appreciation). The overall model was significant [ $F(4, 74) = 3.41, p = .01$ ]; however, the interaction was not (beta = -.340,  $p = .61$ ). A similar regression with distributive justice as the dependent variable showed a nonsignificant model [ $F(4, 74) = 1.26, p = .29$ ] and interaction (beta = .609,  $p = .38$ ). No subsequent analyses were performed.

## DISCUSSION

Similar to the undergraduate sample, neither the condition placement (promised) nor the subjective measure of instrumentality (perceived) predicted justice perceptions among graduate students. In other words, the utility of the self appraisal for impacting their final paper grade did not significantly influence student perceptions of fair procedures or outcomes. However, in contrast to undergraduates, value expressive effects among graduate students enhanced procedural justice only. Further, whereas undergraduates' appreciation of voice had the strongest relation to justice perceptions when no instrumentality was offered, the data were unclear with regard to the graduate sample. These distinctive differences suggest that increased status may reduce the predictive effects of value expressiveness, although more with regard to distributive than procedural justice. Voice opportunities may be especially valued and have a more overwhelming effect when individuals feel it is a privilege to participate, not necessarily a right. Individuals at higher levels of the organization likely are less impressed when given the opportunity to evaluate themselves, whereas those at lower levels might view self appraisal requests as an indication of enhanced status.

## CONCLUSIONS

Our research goals were to examine how individuals react to various self appraisal conditions and determine how instrumentality and value expressiveness affect their assessments of fairness. These studies addressed the call for more experimental studies investigating reactions to self-rating components in appraisal systems (Cawley et al., 1998; Folger & Lewis, 1993), and also tackled concerns raised about previous voice effects research, namely to better differentiate actual from perceived utility, and value expressive from potential impact effects (Shapiro, 1993), and to consider the interactive effects of instrumentality and value expressiveness (Barry & Shapiro, 2000). Consequently, the research design incorporated a unique post-decision instrumental condition, measured participants' perceptions of their self evaluation's impact, and incorporated not only a traditional post-decision, value expressive condition, but also a subjective measure of voice appreciation to help differentiate these effects.

Findings presented here reinforce the strong predictive ability of value expressiveness for justice perceptions. They further show that these effects may be reduced when the opportunity for instrumentality emerges; thus, our results highlight the value of considering both voice effects simultaneously and examining their relationship. Research by Barry and Shapiro (2000) reinforces this notion as their findings indicate that people particularly want to be heard or socially valued when opportunities to influence outcomes are less available. Further, while the subjective measure of instrumentality predicted no better than condition placement, the subjective assessment of voice appreciation was better than the more traditionally-used, post-decision condition in predicting justice perceptions. This suggests it would be prudent for future voice research to incorporate subjective measures when measuring voice effects. Our studies reinforce the usefulness of a subjective measure of value expressiveness, while others show through their findings the value of subjective measures of voice instrumentality (see Avery & Quiñones, 2002).

Although it is not particularly surprising that neither student sample required instrumental voice to believe the process and outcomes would be fair, future research assessing fairness beliefs in academic or organizational settings should consider the moderating effects of *outcome control expectations* regarding self appraisal opportunities. That is, if individuals expect their voice to impact outcomes, and it does not, perceptions of justice should be reduced considerably. Conversely, if individuals do not expect instrumental voice, but are promised as such, this may also impact justice perceptions unfavorably because of violated expectations. Future research should consider this potential moderator regarding voice opportunities and perceived justice. Recent calls to consider *psychological contracts* between employees and employers when conducting justice research (Cropanzano & Prehar, 2001) also seem appropriate and promising for addressing this issue, especially given that changing psychological contracts and corresponding expectations may significantly impact the "fluidity" associated with perceptions of justice.

Proposals to consider the *cognitive phases* that form fairness perceptions are also relevant here (van den Bos, Lind, & Wilke, 2001). Specifically, fairness heuristic theory, based on the group-value model (Lind & Tyler, 1988) proposes that depending on the outcomes of the previous phase, certain expectations and perceptions are present. If one is explicitly promised their voice will be considered, and they subsequently find out or believe it was not, future perceptions regarding the fairness of self appraisal procedures may be in jeopardy. For example, it is often the scenario in corporate settings that employee and supervisor meet with their own appraisals already completed, but not submitted to upper management. The hope is that the subsequent input from the employee's self evaluation will modify the manager's original perceptions in some favorable way. If this is repeatedly not the case, organizational members are less likely to believe that what they say will have any impact on the final outcome, and the promise of fair consideration of the self appraisal would not appease or motivate, it would likely frustrate, and possibly, infuriate.

Our findings do suggest, however, that when self appraisals are promoted and used for developmental purposes, and instrumentality is neither promised nor implied, they still have a justice-enhancing effect. In many instances, especially with lower status participants, it may be more important to offer individuals voice than to have that voice actually affect outcomes. This underscores the value in allowing broader participation in appraisal practices through self evaluation and eliminates or certainly reduces concerns over potential rater-ratee disagreement—a phenomenon often used to discount or discourage the use of self appraisals (see Atwater & Yammarino, 1997; Blakely, 1993).

There are limitations to this study. We analyzed cross-sectional, survey data from student subjects, with some correlated self-report measures. Concerns regarding the generalizability of student sample research are acknowledged. Our hope would be a replication of this study in a non-academic organizational setting. Nevertheless, the study's quasi-experimental format added controls difficult to match in such arenas. Participants responded based on real work samples and real consequences; no role plays or simulations were involved. Independent variables were correlated only in our undergraduate study and controlled in regressions associated with Hypotheses 4a and 4b. The positive correlation between dependent variables procedural and distributive justice is consistent with previous findings (see Colquitt et al., 2001; Cropanzano & Ambrose, 2001; Folger & Greenberg, 1985; Hauenstein, McGonigle, & Finder, 2001; Lind & Tyler, 1988); thus, we appropriately controlled for this phenomenon using MANOVA.

Further, due to the nature of the experimental design, participants had to evaluate the "expected" rather than the "actual" outcome (i.e., grade) received. This made our measure of distributive justice more anticipatory than past measures that typically correspond to a more definitive knowledge of outcomes. Although our findings provide insights in an area with minimal empirical work, we acknowledge this is a potential limitation of our study. Finally, multi-item measures are preferable over direct, single-item measures (Colquitt et al., 2001; Greenberg, 1990; Lind & Tyler, 1988); nevertheless, such approaches have been used successfully in the past (see Lind et al., 1990; McFarlin & Sweeney, 1996). Given that our dependent variables dealt with a specific question on a narrow phenomenon (was this grading procedure/outcome fair?), rather than a more diffuse or multidimensional construct that might require a more definitive test of internal consistency, we believe this limitation is somewhat minimized.

In conclusion, self appraisal practices, in its many forms, are an effective opportunity for voice that can promote feelings of procedural and outcome fairness. Whether for developmental purposes or as input for administrative decisions, its use appears to be valued by organizational members.

## NOTES

1. We acknowledge the contributions of an anonymous reviewer for some of this discussion.
2. Human subject committee approval at the sponsoring university was obtained for this experiment. See referenced protocol #99-237.
3. We wanted to better understand why although the predictive ability of value expressiveness for distributive justice was reduced, it was still significant for Condition 3. Revisiting Table 1, we noted instrumental condition and the covariate (I think I did well on the assignment) were positively correlated ( $r = .17$ ,  $p = .04$ ). Students in Condition 3—told their papers had not yet been graded—on average scored higher on the covariate ( $M = 4.22$ ) than those in Condition 1 ( $M = 3.89$ ) or Condition 2 ( $M = 3.87$ ) (see Table 2). This suggests that when individuals believe they performed well and are given the opportunity to self evaluate, they appreciate voice opportunities and decision control (instrumentality).
4. Given that the number of items in a measure has a profound effect on alpha (see Cortina, 1993, pp. 101-102), we followed the convention of examining inter-item correlations for scales using few items. Our inter-item correlation for the two items used for "self appraisal impact" was still highly significant, even with the relatively small sample of grad students ( $r = .479$ ,  $p < .000$ ) as it was with the larger sample of undergraduates ( $r = .567$ ,  $p < .000$ ). Consequently, we felt an alpha of .65 with only two items, while not ideal, was still acceptable to use in this study.



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