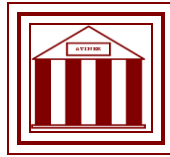


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**The Role of Dispositional
Aggressiveness and
Organizational Injustice on
Deviant Workplace Behavior**

Dr. Susan M. Stewart

Professor of Human Resource Management

Western Illinois University – Quad Cities,

USA

Athens Institute for Education and Research
8 Valaoritou Street, Kolonaki, 10671 Athens, Greece
Tel: + 30 210 3634210 Fax: + 30 210 3634209
Email: info@atiner.gr URL: www.atiner.gr
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The Role of Dispositional Aggressiveness and Organizational Injustice on Deviant Workplace Behavior

Dr. Susan M. Stewart
Professor of Human Resource Management
Western Illinois University – Quad Cities,
USA

Abstract

A field study of 262 hospital employees examined relationships between dispositional aggressiveness, three types of organizational injustice perceptions (distributive, procedural, interactional), and two forms of workplace deviance (interpersonal, organizational). First, it investigated whether perceptions of injustice mediate the relationship between dispositional aggressiveness and workplace deviance. It explored the psychological mechanisms that may underlie the aggressiveness → injustice → deviance relationships by illuminating the social-cognitive processes involved among these variables. Second, it focused on the sources of evocative stimuli that may trigger deviant responses in aggressive individuals to better specify the likely targets of this destructive behavior. It assessed two distinct categories of workplace deviance and the differential effects of aggressiveness and injustice perceptions on those deviance categories. Third, it employed measures for data collection purposes that differed from past research. Dispositional aggressiveness was assessed with the conditional reasoning measurement system and organizational injustices were measured via self-report instruments. Deviant workplace behaviors were evaluated with 985 ratings provided by supervisors, coworkers, subordinates, and customers.

Findings indicated that dispositional aggressiveness was positively related to all forms of organizational injustice and workplace deviance, and maintained a relationship with workplace deviance after controlling for injustice perceptions. Perceptions of distributive, procedural, and interactional injustice were positively related to interpersonal deviance, but not to organizational deviance. Furthermore, the relationship between dispositional aggressiveness and interpersonal deviance was partially mediated by perceptions of distributive injustice. Overall, these findings specify the important role that individual differences play in the appraisal of workplace events as unfair and in choices of behavioral responses.

Keywords:

Corresponding Author:

INTRODUCTION

Existing research demonstrates that perceptions of organizational injustice (unfairness) in the workplace influences the performance of deviant workplace behaviors, yet there has been a lack of systematic research designed to investigate what types of people perceive injustices and subsequently engage in destructive behavior and why and how these effects occur. Some research has examined the individual difference variables of negative affectivity and agreeableness to further explore the injustice-deviance relationship (see Aquino, Lewis, & Bradfield, 1999; Skarlicki, Folger, & Tesluk, 1999). These studies provide initial evidence that people who frame the world in negative terms (i.e., high negative affectivity, low agreeableness) are more likely to perceive injustices and/or engage in deviant behaviors than people who frame the world in positive terms.

The current study further explores the role of individual differences in the injustice-deviance relationship by including the variable of dispositional aggressiveness. It investigates the possibility that people who are high in aggressiveness are more likely to perceive injustice and/or engage in deviant behavior than people who are low in aggressiveness. A partial mediation model is proposed and tested which suggests that organizational injustice may enhance the explanation of the processes involved between aggressiveness and workplace deviance (see Figure 1). This study also attempts to further understanding of the psychological mechanisms that may underlie the injustice-deviance connection by focusing on the social-cognitive processes involved in this relationship. Finally, this study investigates the source of evocative stimuli that trigger deviant responses in aggressive individuals to better specify the likely targets of this destructive behavior.

Organizational Injustice and Workplace Deviance

The organizational injustice literature has identified three types of fairness perceptions: distributive, procedural, and interactional injustice. Judgments concerning *distributive injustice* (Adams, 1965) revolve around the employee's evaluations of outcome fairness, that is, whether the individual has received a fair share of rewards given his or her relative contribution to a social exchange. Distributive injustice typically refers to fairness evaluations regarding work outcomes such as pay, benefits, promotions, and so on. *Procedural injustice* includes judgments about the processes and procedures used to make decisions and to determine one's outcomes (Greenberg, 1990b; Lind & Tyler, 1988). Typically, procedural injustice refers to the perceived fairness of the company's formal procedures. A third category of injustice perceptions, *interactional injustice*, revolves around judgments of the quality of interpersonal treatment a person receives from others during the enactment of organizational procedures (Bies & Moag, 1986; Tyler & Bies, 1990). These perceptions arise from beliefs about the sincerity, respectfulness, and consistency of persons in authority (Bies & Moag, 1986).

There appears to be conflicting research findings regarding whether individuals target deviance toward others or toward the organizational system when taking revenge for procedural, distributive, and interactional injustices (Aquino et al., 1999; Bennett & Robinson, 2000; Fox, Spector, & Miles, 1999). For example, Fox et al. (1999) found a significant correlation between distributive injustice and organizational deviance ($r = .27$), whereas Aquino et al. (1999) found distributive injustice to be significantly related to interpersonal deviance ($r = .18$). Bennett and Robinson (2000) and Fox et al. (1999) reported that procedural injustice was significantly correlated with organizational deviance ($r = .32$ and $.31$, respectively), while Aquino et al. (1999), Bennett and Robinson (2000), and Fox et al. (1999) reported significant correlations between procedural injustice and interpersonal deviance ($r = .16$, $.33$, and $.23$, respectively). Finally, Aquino et al. (1999) and Bennett and Robinson (2000) found that interactional injustice was significantly related to both organizational deviance ($r = .20$ and $.33$, respectively) and interpersonal deviance ($r = .24$ and $.35$, respectively). Hence, an examination of these relationships will be conducted here to provide additional information as to the target of workplace deviance in response to specific types of organizational injustices. As depicted in Figure 1, it is hypothesized that,

Hypothesis 1: Perceptions of organizational injustice (distributive, procedural, interactional) will be positively related to workplace deviance (interpersonal, organizational).

Dispositional Aggressiveness and Workplace Deviance

The social cognition literature presents many personality variables that may play a role in shaping an individual's perceptions of (unjust) work situations and performance of deviant behavior (cf. Buss, 1961; McClelland, 1985). The personality trait of aggressiveness is the focus here. Aggressiveness is an underlying trait that predisposes some persons to aggress or attack more readily than others in response to perceived negative stimuli (Buss, 1961; Monahan, 1981). Research has found aggressive tendencies to be a consistently strong predictor of both unprovoked and provoked deviant behavior (Hammock & Richardson, 1992). Murray (1938) believed that certain people have a motive to aggress that consists of desires to overcome opposition forcefully, to fight, to revenge an injury, to attack another with intent to injure or kill, and to oppose forcefully or punish another. The motive to aggress has been described as "latent" because people with strong and dominant aggressive tendencies cannot explain why they experience an attraction toward acting in a deviant fashion. Rather, these individuals are aware of a strong desire to aggress toward others, compete and win, and anticipate and then experience the thrill of revenge.

Conditional reasoning (James, 1998) provides a powerful new tool for researchers to utilize when examining how aggressive latent motives engender deviant behaviors. This theory purports that reasoning is "conditional" because the probability that an individual judges certain behaviors to be acceptable is dependent on the strength of that person's motive to engage in the behavior.

According to James (1998), aggressive individuals reason that the behaviors they find attractive and perform (e.g., deviance) are justified, which is to say rational or sensible as opposed to irrational and foolish. To justify employing desired behaviors, aggressive individuals engage in slants or biases in reasoning called “justification mechanisms” (James, 1998) that are designed to enhance the logical appeal of deviant behaviors. Justification mechanisms are tied into (conditional) reasoning when people use their underlying assumptions (e.g., beliefs, ideologies) to make judgments about what is and is not rational or sensible behavior. These different assumptions can be referred to as “implicit theories” (cf. Wegner & Vallacher, 1977) and involve long-term, unconscious, and valued beliefs, explanations, and cognitive causal models about the effects of behavior. Implicit theories with embedded justification mechanisms typically go unrecognized by reasoners yet define, shape, and otherwise influence cognitive processing. They involve identifiable biases that attempt to enhance the logical appeal of trait-based or characteristic behavioral preferences (James, 1998). The unrecognized use of justification mechanisms in what are believed to be rational implicit theories is the primary reason that aggressive and nonaggressive individuals can decide to behave differently and yet each group believes that its reasoning is logical (James, 1998).

The Conditional Reasoning Test (CRT; James, 1998) was developed to measure individual differences in the extent to which people use implicit reasoning biases to justify aggressive behavior. It contains items that appear to be reasoning problems such as those found in standardized tests of critical thinking, thereby circumventing respondents’ inclinations to intentionally or unintentionally distort and enhance their responses. After reading a paragraph of information and a problem stem, the respondent is presented with four response options and is required to choose the most logical answer (option), given that more than one conclusion may appear reasonable. Of the four options, one response is designed to appeal to individuals relying on one of the justification mechanisms for aggressive behavior, one response is designed to appeal to nonaggressive (prosocial) individuals, and two responses are illogical. The purpose of the CRT is to determine the degree to which the respondent views the aggressive responses to be the logical and reasonable answers to the problems. The more justification mechanisms an individual has in place, the greater the willingness and implicit cognitive preparedness to aggress. Research has confirmed the existence of a direct relationship between dispositional aggressiveness and workplace deviance using the CRT methodology (Burroughs, LeBreton, Bing, & James, 2000). The uncorrected validity coefficients obtained in several studies ranged from .32 to .55. Based on these findings and as depicted in Figure 1, it is hypothesized that

Hypothesis 2: Dispositional aggressiveness will be positively related to workplace deviance, such that individuals higher in aggressiveness will be more likely to engage in deviant behavior at work.

Integrating Aggressiveness, Injustice, and Deviance

An integration of an individual's personality (aggressiveness) with evaluations of workplace events (procedural, distributive, interactional injustices) in the prediction of behavioral responses (organizational and/or interpersonal deviance) may assist researchers in discovering the source of evocative stimuli that trigger deviant responses in aggressive individuals, and better specify the likely targets of this destructive behavior. This research differs from previous injustice studies by recognizing that organizational injustice does not necessarily begin with an objectively unfavorable workplace event. Rather any salient event, outcome, or process - positive or negative - can trigger biases in reasoning in an aggressive individual through descriptions of and questions regarding the situation (James, 1998). Adjectives reflect the biases engendered by aggressive motives through descriptions of events as "unfair," "undeserved," "wrong," and so forth. Questions provide meaning to events by driving the appraisal process. For example, the type of injustice (procedural, distributive, interactional) and the target of an aggressive individual's deviance (organization and/or individuals) may be determined by responses to questions such as:

- *How were outcomes distributed by the company as well as by supervisors?*
- *To what extent were outcomes subject to organizational influences (e.g., policies)?*
- *Could the decision maker have acted differently (e.g., with more respect)?*
- *What would have happened if things had transpired differently?*

It is necessary to cognitively process information, that is, to think and to reason to answer these questions. One must draw inferences from such things as the outcomes one receives or does not receive, the personal control one has over the receipt of outcomes, and the effects that outcomes might have on one's life. These are reasoning processes. Two features of these reasoning processes are: (1) people whose motive to aggress dominates their need to behave prosocially often answer these questions differently than people whose need to behave prosocially dominates their need to aggress; and (2) irrespective of which need is dominant, every individual believes that his/her particular reasoning is rational and objective as opposed to irrational, subjective, and foolish (James, 1998). Hence, conditional reasoning (James, 1998) can be used to explain how it is possible for aggressive persons to frame and analyze a work situation very differently from the framing and analysis of nonaggressive, prosocial persons. These individuals draw different inferences from the same data. From the perspective of a perceiver engaged in differential framing, the psychological significance of any event is determined by its role in justifying motive-based behavior (James, 1998). Hence, one outcome of aggressive conditional reasoning may be perceptions of organizational injustice. To date, no research has investigated the following hypothesis (see also Figure 1).

Hypothesis 3: *Dispositional aggressiveness will be positively related to perceptions of organizational injustice (distributive, procedural, interactional), such that individuals higher in aggressiveness will perceive more injustices in the work environment.*

Targets of Deviance Based on Aggressiveness and Procedural Injustice.

Perceptions of procedural injustice result when an individual evaluates that the organization has made decisions that resulted in its failure to adequately maintain obligations in a manner commensurate with one's expectations (Greenberg, 1990b; Lind & Tyler, 1988; Morrison & Robinson, 1997). Hence, when aggressive individuals perceive a violation of procedural justice, they may engage in deviant acts directed against the organization rather than against individuals. This proposition is based on the results of several studies that showed that procedural injustice was a strong predictor of behaviors enacted in response to judgments about how the company as an institution allocated decisions (Folger & Konovsky, 1989; Greenberg, 1990a; Lind & Tyler, 1988; Tyler & Bies, 1990). Similar research in the area of psychological contract violation has shown that a violation of expectations about an organization's responsibilities can be just as consequential to certain individuals as a violation of a legal contract, and some of the penalties of non-fulfillment include loss of trust, greater job insecurity, reduced organizational commitment/satisfaction, increased intention to quit, and the withdrawal of organizational citizenship behavior, to name a few (Robinson, 1996; Robinson, Kraatz, & Rousseau, 1994; Robinson & Morrison, 1995; Robinson & Rousseau, 1994). Furthermore, Weide and Abbot (1994) found that over 80% of the cases of workplace homicide involved employees who "wanted to get even for what they perceived as (their) organizations' unfair or unjust treatment of them" (p. 139).

Aggressive conditional reasoning may influence perceptions of procedural injustice and bias an aggressive employees' evaluation of their work situations. For instance, an aggressive employees' feelings of anger arising from unmet expectations could color their judgments regarding fair company procedures and in turn increase their perception of inequity even when the employing organization had not acted in an inequitable manner. Such perceptions of procedural inequity could leave an aggressive employee feeling cheated and dissatisfied, thereby triggering various justification mechanisms for deviant behavior to decrease dissonance and protect the employees' self-worth (Goodman, 1974). A likely response to the perceived inequity would consist of seeking redress in the form of engaging in deviant workplace behavior targeted toward the organization to get back at the employer for not acting fairly (e.g., stealing from company, sabotaging equipment, etc.). Hence, any unmet expectations due to unfair company procedures may influence the aggressive employee's judgment of procedural injustice. Given the lack of a direct test of this proposition in past research, the following research question was asked (see Figure 1),

Research Question 1: Do perceptions of procedural injustice partially mediate the relationship between dispositional aggressiveness and deviance toward the organization?

Targets of Deviance Based on Aggressiveness and Distributive Injustice. Perceptions of violations of distributive justice may be related to organizational and/or interpersonal deviance depending on the perceived source of the injustice. This proposition is based on research and theorizing on revenge in organizations (Bies & Tripp, 1998; Bies, Tripp, & Kramer, 1997) that suggests that people are more likely to try and harm those whom they hold responsible for perpetrating unfair outcomes. It is thought that deviant acts may be a means by which to gain control over outcomes in the absence of direct control. Aggressive individuals may 'get even' with the organization or 'seek revenge' against individuals who have deprived them of some desired outcome (Greenberg, 1990a; Skarlicki & Folger, 1997). It is unclear as to whether aggressive people would target their deviance toward individuals or toward the organizational system when making attributions about unfair outcomes. It has been suggested by Crosby (1984) that people often lack sufficient information about the distribution of outcomes and do not wish to question the system, thereby blaming people, rather than the organization, for unfair outcomes. Clarification is needed as to the target of an aggressive individual's deviance when placed in a situation perceived as high in distributive injustice.

The nonreceipt of some desired outcome could color judgments regarding the fairness of the distribution of outcomes, and in turn increase perceptions of inequity, even when outcomes were distributed in an equitable manner. Justification processes are especially likely to occur when an aggressive individual does not receive some desired work outcome. Perceptions of distributive injustice will trigger a need to rationalize the reason for the inequity in order to protect one's self-concept, to be secure, to be accepted, and to avoid demonstrating incompetence. In other words, distributive inequity could leave an aggressive employee feeling unaccepted by the source in charge of distributing the outcomes, thereby activating various justification mechanisms to rationalize having to act out in a deviant fashion toward this source. As mentioned above, it is unclear as to the specific target of this deviance, hence the organization and/or the individuals responsible for not acting fairly may fall victim. Hence, the following research question was asked (see Figure 1),

Research Question 2: Do perceptions of distributive injustice partially mediate the relationship between dispositional aggressiveness and deviance toward the organization and/or toward other individuals?

Targets of Deviance Based on Aggressiveness and Interactional Injustice. Employees care about being treated fairly, especially by authority figures, because such treatment communicates information about one's status as an important and valued member of the organization (Lind & Tyler, 1988). Hence, perceptions of violations of interactional justice are particularly

disturbing to employees because they communicate that one is unimportant or marginal. Interactional injustices are very personal, pose a strong threat to an individuals' self-identify, and arouse intense emotional responses (Tyler & Bies, 1990). A common response to a threatened identity is to direct retaliatory action against the perceived source of threat (Baumeister, Smart, & Boden, 1996), typically when an audience is present in order to save face and maintain a more favorable identity (Felson, 1982). If one is unable to directly retaliate against the source of the threat for fear of reprisal (i.e., a supervisor), one may displace his or her aggression on a more convenient and vulnerable target (i.e., a coworker). Thus, it is reasoned that this type of injustice will provoke deviant behaviors targeted toward people rather than the organization.

Interactions with an authority figures can be a source of great stress for aggressive individuals, particularly during times when the authority figure treats them with disrespect and insensitivity (i.e., has generated perceptions of interactional injustice). According to James (1998), the actions of authority figures tend to pass through an interpretative lens in aggressive individuals that is sensitive to exploitation, tyranny, oppression, and adversity. To aggressive individuals, authority figures may represent a contest for dominance. The psychological significance of authority figures to aggressive individuals resides in how these figures function as exploiters, tyrants, oppressors, and adversaries. This framing is embedded in the implicit theories of aggressive individuals. Here, the actions of others may be seen as having hidden, hostile agendas designed to intentionally inflict harm. It is proposed (see Figure 1) that aggressive individuals may target interpersonal deviance toward these individuals (e.g., cursing, yelling). Therefore,

Research Question 3: Do perceptions of interactional injustice partially mediate the relationship between dispositional aggressiveness and deviance toward other individuals?

METHOD

Participants and Procedure

The participants for this study were 262 employees (51 men, 211 women) from a hospital located in the southern United States. Three percent were African American, 1% American Indian, 1% Oriental, .4% Hispanic, and 86% were classified as Other (which included Caucasians). Participants ranged in age from 20 to 68 years ($M = 42$) and had worked for the hospital an average of 9.56 years. The sample included nurses, laboratory technicians, radiologists, surgeons, and support and service staff.

The author attended hospital staff meetings to administer predictor measures and to distribute five sealed survey packets, which contained deviant behavior checklists, to each participant. After each participant completed the predictor measures, they were asked to identify five different individuals in their workplace (coworkers, supervisors, subordinates, internal customers, etc.) with whom they interacted on a regular basis. They were instructed not to select the individuals based on friendship or liking, but rather, to choose them based on

the frequency with which these individuals observed their performance at work. One of these individuals was to be their immediate supervisor. Participants were told that the persons they identified were going to assess their performance of certain behaviors on the job. The participants then distributed a survey packet to each of the identified individuals, who were instructed to act as raters of the participant's behavior. The raters completed the survey at a later time and returned it directly to the author in a postage-paid, pre-addressed envelope. The participant and rater responses were matched using a preassigned three-digit code to preserve privacy. Participants and raters were assured confidentiality regarding their responses and were informed that all responses would be used for research purposes only.

The mean number of ratings received per participant was 3.83, for a total of 985 (190 men, 784 women) raters¹. Of these raters, 63% were the participant's coworkers, 24% were supervisors, 9% were subordinates, 1% were customers, and 3% marked their relationship as 'other.' In addition to providing behavioral ratings, the raters reported on their relationship with the participant: 71% indicated that they had a better than average working relationship, 78% stated that they spent at least a fair amount of time together, and 38% noted that they worked together for over four years.

Measures

Dispositional Aggressiveness. Aggressiveness was measured using the 22-item Conditional Reasoning Test (CRT) of Employee Aggression (James, 1998). Each CRT item presents a paragraph of information and four response options: one designed to appeal to individuals relying on a justification mechanism for aggressive behavior (assigned a value of +1), one constructive/prosocial response designed to appeal to nonaggressive individuals (assigned a value of -1), and two illogical responses (assigned zeros). Participants were instructed to choose the one answer that could be most reasonably inferred from (i.e., the most logical answer to) the information presented in the problem. High scores on this measure indicate a strong implicit cognitive readiness to aggress ($\alpha = .76$).

Organizational Injustice. The complete instrument developed by Niehoff and Moorman (1993) was used to measure the three types of organizational injustice. Procedural injustice, or perceptions of unfairness of the organization's formal procedures, was measured with six items ($\alpha = .85$). Distributive injustice, or perceptions of inequity surrounding various work outcomes, was measured with five items ($\alpha = .70$). Interactional injustice, or perceptions that formal procedures have been enacted improperly, was measured with nine items ($\alpha = .96$). The response scale was a 5-point Likert

¹ This total resulted after removing twenty-six ratings from the study due to a lack of a working relationship between the rater and employee participant. If raters answered the question "How much time do you spend working with this person in a given day?" with the answer "No time at all", their ratings were discarded based on the assumption that they would not possess sufficient knowledge of the participant's on-the-job behaviors.

scale that ranged from *strongly disagree* (1) to *strongly agree* (5). High scores on these scales indicate greater perceptions of organizational injustice.

Workplace Deviance. The 19-item behavioral checklist of workplace deviance developed by Bennett and Robinson (2000) was used to assess aggressive behaviors targeted at the organization (organizational deviance) and targeted toward other individuals (interpersonal deviance). While this measure has typically been used in a self-report fashion, in this study it was utilized as a peer-report. Therefore, minor alterations to the items had to occur such as changing “your” to “their” to clarify the target of the rating. The raters indicated the frequency with which they had personally witnessed the employee participant engaged in deviant behaviors within the last year by using a five-point Likert scale ranging from *never* (1), *several times a year* (2), *monthly* (3), *weekly* (4), and *daily* (5). High scores indicate a greater frequency of deviance. The coefficient alpha was .90 for both the 12-item organizational deviance scale and the 7-item interpersonal deviance scale.

Aggregation of Workplace Deviance Ratings

In order to test the hypotheses and research questions posed above, it was necessary to aggregate individual rater’s responses on the deviant behavior checklist measures. The *rwg(j)* statistic (James, 1982; James, Demaree, & Wolf, 1993) was computed to provide empirical support for the aggregation of the rater data. An average *rwg(j)* of .97 was found across the items measuring interpersonal deviance. Similarly, an average *rwg(j)* of .97 was found across the items measuring organizational deviance. These two values were greater than the .60 cutoff recommended by James (1982), indicating adequate agreement among raters with regard to deviant behavior rated on individual employees. Accordingly, for each employee participant, their respective raters’ item responses of deviant workplace behavior were averaged (i.e., aggregated) to create mean level scale scores of Interpersonal Deviance and Organizational Deviance. This procedure changed the size of the rater sample from $N = 985$ before aggregation (recall that there was an average of 3.83 raters per employee participant) to $N = 262$ after aggregation.

RESULTS

Descriptive Statistics

Composite scores of dispositional aggressiveness, organizational injustice, and workplace deviance were calculated as the average of the multi-item scales. Table 2 contains the means, standard deviations, intercorrelations, and reliabilities.¹

¹ It should be noted that results that are statistically significant at the $p < .10$ level are presented to provide additional information. Significance levels do not measure the strength of statistical associations but rather the probability of a result given the validity of the null hypothesis. Because the relationships investigated in this study are somewhat exploratory in nature (given the use of both self-report and conditional reasoning methodologies, peer reports of deviance, etc.), it was

Hypotheses 1, 2, and 3: Tests of Direct Effects

Hypotheses 1, 2, and 3 were tested through the use of correlational analyses. The results are shown in Table 2. Significant positive correlations were found between interpersonal deviance and procedural injustice ($r = .12, p < .05$), distributive injustice ($r = .16, p < .01$), and interactional injustice ($r = .09, p = .08$). These results provided support for Hypothesis 1. However, no significant relationships were found between the injustice variables and organizational deviance. Hypothesis 2 was supported based on the significant positive correlations observed between dispositional aggressiveness and both interpersonal deviance ($r = .20, p < .01$) and organizational deviance ($r = .09, p = .08$). Furthermore, significant positive correlations were found between dispositional aggressiveness and procedural injustice ($r = .10, p = .06$), distributive injustice ($r = .15, p < .01$), and interactional injustice ($r = .09, p = .06$), thereby providing support for Hypothesis 3.

Research Questions 1, 2, and 3: Tests of Mediator Effects

Research Question 1 proposed that the relationship between dispositional aggressiveness and organizational deviance would be partially mediated by perceptions of procedural injustice. There was no support for this proposition. While procedural injustice was significantly related to aggressiveness in the first equation ($F_{1, 260} = 2.34, p = .06; \beta = .10, p = .06$), organizational deviance was not significantly related to procedural injustice in the second equation ($F_{3, 253} = .359, p > .10; \beta = .03, p > .10$). However, in the third equation, there was a significant relationship between organizational deviance and aggressiveness after holding the effects of the mediator variables constant ($F_{1, 255} = 1.51, p = .09; \beta = .08, p = .09$). This finding suggests that aggressiveness does not operate through perceptions of procedural injustice in the prediction of organizational deviance, but rather is directly related to this dependent variable. Interestingly, similar results were found when examining aggressiveness, procedural injustice, and interpersonal deviance. In this analysis, procedural injustice was significantly related to aggressiveness in the first equation ($F_{1, 260} = 2.34, p = .06; \beta = .10, p = .06$), and was not significantly related to interpersonal deviance in the second equation ($F_{3, 253} = 2.42, p < .05; \beta = .11, p > .10$), while aggressiveness was significantly related to interpersonal deviance in the third equation after holding the effects of the mediator variables constant ($F_{1, 255} = 8.01, p < .01; \beta = .18, p < .01$). Like the aforementioned finding with organizational deviance, this suggests that aggressiveness does not operate through perceptions of procedural injustice in the prediction of interpersonal deviance, but rather is directly related to this dependent variable.

Research Question 2 inquired into whether distributive injustice partially mediates the relationship between aggressiveness and organizational deviance and/or the relationship between aggressiveness and interpersonal deviance. Findings provide support for the latter proposition and not the former.

deemed appropriate to discuss findings that are significant at a slightly higher probability level than what may be considered the conventional statistical standard (i.e., $p < .05$).

Utilizing interpersonal deviance as the dependent variable, results indicate that distributive injustice was significantly related to aggressiveness in the first equation ($F_{1, 260} = 5.90, p < .01; \beta = .15, p < .01$), interpersonal deviance was significantly related to distributive injustice in the second equation ($F_{3, 253} = 2.42, p < .05; \beta = .15, p < .05$), and interpersonal deviance was significantly related to aggressiveness in the third equation after holding the effects of the mediator variables constant ($F_{1, 255} = 8.01, p < .01; \beta = .18, p < .01$). This finding suggests that aggressiveness operates through perceptions of distributive injustice in the prediction of interpersonal deviance as well as having a direct effect on the dependent variable. In short, the relationship between aggressiveness and interpersonal deviance is partially mediated by distributive injustice.

Alternatively, it appeared that distributive injustice did not mediate the relationship between aggressiveness and organizational deviance. Results showed that distributive injustice was significantly related to aggressiveness in the first equation ($F_{1, 260} = 5.90, p < .01; \beta = .15, p < .01$); however, distributive injustice was not significantly related to organizational deviance in the second equation ($F_{3, 253} = .359, p > .10; \beta = .06, p > .10$). Finally, aggressiveness was significantly related to organizational deviance in the third equation after holding the effects of the mediator variables constant ($F_{1, 255} = 1.51, p = .09; \beta = .08, p = .09$). This finding suggests that aggressiveness does not operate through perceptions of distributive injustice in the prediction of organizational deviance, but rather is directly related to this dependent variable.

Finally, Research Question 3 proposed that the relationship between dispositional aggressiveness and interpersonal deviance might be partially mediated by perceptions of interactional injustice. The results indicated a lack of support for this proposition. While interactional injustice was significantly related to aggressiveness in the first equation ($F_{1, 260} = 2.28, p = .06; \beta = .09, p = .06$), interpersonal deviance was not significantly related to interactional injustice in the second equation ($F_{3, 253} = 2.42, p < .05; \beta = .08, p > .10$). Finally, in the third equation, there was a significant relationship between interpersonal deviance and aggressiveness after holding the effects of the mediator variables constant ($F_{1, 255} = 8.01, p < .01; \beta = .18, p < .01$). This finding suggests that aggressiveness does not operate through perceptions of interactional injustice in the prediction of interpersonal deviance, but rather is directly related to this dependent variable. In addition, similar findings resulted when using organizational deviance as the dependent variable such that interactional injustice was significantly related to aggressiveness in the first equation ($F_{1, 260} = 2.28, p = .06; \beta = .09, p = .06$) and was not significantly related to organizational deviance in the second equation ($F_{3, 253} = .359, p > .10; \beta = .03, p > .10$), while aggressiveness was significantly related to organizational deviance in the third equation after holding the effects of the mediator variables constant ($F_{1, 255} = 1.51, p = .09; \beta = .08, p = .09$). Like the aforementioned finding with interpersonal deviance, this suggests that aggressiveness does not operate through perceptions of interactional injustice

in the prediction of organizational deviance, but rather is directly related to this dependent variable.

DISCUSSION

This study contributes to existing research in several ways. First, it examined relationships between aggressiveness, three types of organizational injustice, and two forms of workplace deviance. Second, it investigated whether perceptions of injustice mediate the relationship between aggressiveness and workplace deviance. Specifically, it explored the psychological mechanisms that may underlie the aggressiveness → perceived injustice → deviance relationships by illuminating the social-cognitive processes involved among these variables. Third, it focused on the sources of evocative stimuli that may trigger deviant responses in aggressive individuals to better specify the likely targets of this destructive behavior. It assessed two distinct categories of workplace deviance and the differential effects of aggressiveness and injustice perceptions on those deviance categories. Fourth, it employed measures for data collection purposes that differed from past research. Peer-reports rather than self-reports of workplace deviance were utilized thereby providing a unique source for ratings. Furthermore, the CRT (James, 1998) provided a means to identify aggressive individuals based on their propensities to rely on qualitatively distinct perspectives and interpretive adjectives to impute psychological significance to behaviors, people, environments, and events (i.e., differential framing). Qualitative differences in framing are believed to provide stronger differentiation among individuals than the typical measurement system, which attempts to assess psychological meaning using a self-report scale for all respondents (e.g., how much each respondent agrees with the statement “I have a temper”).

The data modestly supported the hypotheses. A few results were presented that may be considered nonsignificant by conventional statistical standards which rely upon the .05 level of significance, but were close enough to this standard (i.e., $p < .10$, actual probability levels are provided in the results section) to be deemed worthy of interpretation given the somewhat investigative nature of this study (e.g., use of self-report and conditional reasoning methodologies, peer reports of deviance, etc.). Perceptions of distributive, procedural, and interactional injustice were positively related to peer-reports of interpersonal deviance, with correlations similar to those depicted in past research that utilized self-reports of deviance. Greater perceptions of injustices were related to more frequent incidents of deviance targeted toward individuals. However, nonsignificant relationships were found between all three injustice perceptions and peer-reports of organizational deviance, thereby contradicting past research utilizing self-reported deviance (Aquino et al., 1999; Bennett & Robinson, 2000; Fox et al., 1999). Furthermore, dispositional aggressiveness was positively related to distributive, procedural, and interactional injustice as well as to both forms workplace deviance. Individuals with aggressive personalities perceived more

injustices and engaged in more deviant behaviors at work than nonaggressive individuals. These findings specify the important role that individual differences play in the appraisal of workplace events as unfair and in choices of behavioral responses. Additional analyses confirmed that aggressiveness added unique variance to the prediction of both interpersonal and organizational deviance beyond injustice perceptions alone.

Taken together, these results depicted higher and more often significant correlations with the Interpersonal Deviance scale rather than the Organizational Deviance scale. This may have occurred because other people rated target employees in this study, and these individuals may be more likely to observe interpersonally-focused rather than organizationally-focused deviant behaviors. It is interesting to note the prevalence of both forms of deviance as assessed by base rates, providing some support for the belief among researchers that verbal, passive, and subtle acts represent the largest portion of deviant workplace behaviors, and need to be studied further because they may lead to more intense, overtly aggressive, and/or violent acts (Baron & Neuman, 1996; Folger & Baron, 1996).

Based on the results of the mediation analyses, it appears that aggressive individuals who perceive distributive injustices in their work environments act out toward others as a result of this injustice compared to those who are less aggressive. In short, aggressive individuals perceived people, rather than the organization, as the source of unfair distributions of work outcomes thereby increasing their motivation to engage in deviant behaviors toward others. One reason for this finding may be that aggressive individuals ignored or lacked sufficient information about the distribution of outcomes and chose not to question the organizational system, but rather questioned the people perceived as being responsible for the negative outcome (Crosby, 1984; Robinson & Bennett, 1997). Another explanation may be that the immediate consequences of retaliating against the organization may be too costly (i.e., result in being fired), while acting out toward others was believed to be a less risky reaction. This finding is in line with Adams' (1963, 1965) seminal work in equity theory, which suggested that workers evaluate their relationships with other workers by assessing their ratio of rewards (outcomes) to contributions (inputs) in comparison to the corresponding ratios of the other workers. If the outcome/input ratio of the worker and comparison other are unequal, then inequity exists and the worker may become motivated to redress it. The most commonly studied responses to inequity are behavioral in nature, and include raising or lowering work inputs (Greenberg, 1988), or in extreme cases, quitting a job (Greenberg, 1987). This study provides initial evidence that another behavioral response may include engaging in interpersonal deviance. More specifically, it appears that aggressive individuals engage in this behavior, namely due to their tendency to attribute hostile intent to the perceived source of the injustice (Anderson, Jennings, & Arnoult, 1988; Dodge & Coie, 1987; Dodge, Price, Bachorowski, & Newman, 1990; James, 1998; O'Leary-Kelly, Griffin, & Glew, 1996).

Another finding from the mediation analyses is that aggressive individuals perceive all three types of injustices in the work environment and engage in deviant workplace acts regardless of the influence of these injustices (e.g., results support a direct relationship between dispositional aggressiveness and workplace deviance after controlling for the effects of injustice perceptions). Thus, aggressiveness has a direct and unique impact on deviant behavior, and does not indirectly affect deviance by systematically operating through perceptions of injustice. One explanation for this finding may have to do with the use of the conditional reasoning measurement system (James, 1998), which assessed differences in personality that engender differences in framing and analyses. Because conditional reasoning identifies the types of reasoning biases – justification mechanisms – that people with aggressive personalities are likely to employ to rationalize what they consider to be reasonable behavioral responses to unfair events, it may include an assessment of perceived injustices as well. Hence, conditional reasoning may be capturing elements of the injustice constructs thereby resulting in a lack of mediated relations with injustice and yielding direct relationships with workplace deviance.

Conclusion

It is surprising that many researchers have neglected to make an empirical connection between organizational injustices and individual differences in the cognitive appraisal process. While the former is concerned with events in the environment, the latter is based on evaluations occurring within us. This study has attempted to harmonize the organizational injustice and cognition paradigms by considering individual differences in aggressiveness in the evaluation of injustices. Having established a link between organizational injustice and dispositional aggressiveness, new ideas were presented. It is believed that a theory of injustice that is devoid of individual differences is a theory missing what is perhaps the most fundamental part of the appraisal process. In this sense, I believe the models proposed and tested here are a step in the right direction, particularly for researchers attempting to identify the triggers and targets of deviant workplace behaviors that waste a tremendous amount of both financial and human resources.

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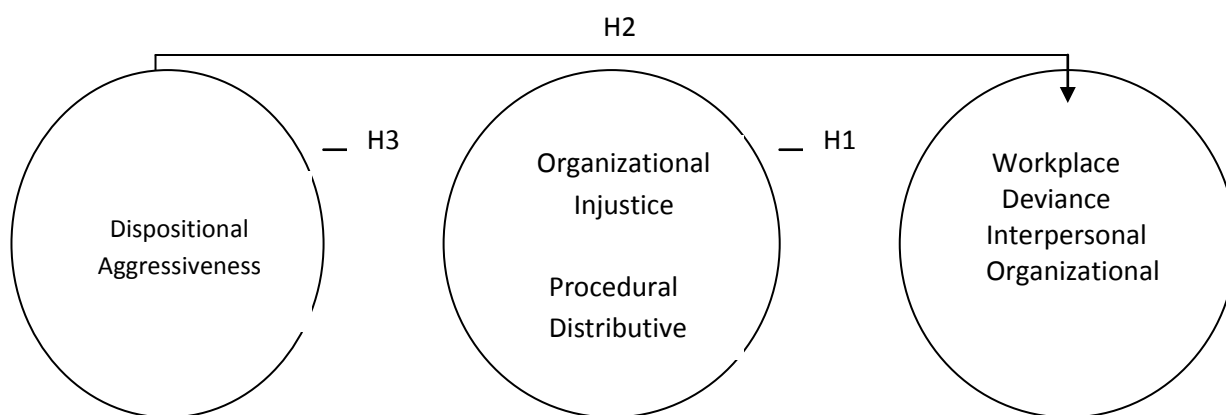
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Figure 1. Proposed model of organizational injustice as a mediator of the relationship between dispositional aggressiveness and workplace deviance



Also:
RQ1 RQ2 RQ3

Note. H = Hypothesis
RQ = Research Question

Table 1. Means, Standard Deviations, Reliabilities, and Intercorrelations for All Study Variables

Variable	M	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6
1. Dispositional Aggressiveness	-14.52	4.58	(.76)					
2. Procedural Injustice	3.39	.78	.10 [^]	(.85)				
3. Distributive Injustice	3.63	.65	.15**	.49**	(.70)			
4. Interactional Injustice	3.65	.80	.09 [^]	.81**	.54**	(.96)		
5. Interpersonal Deviance	1.23	.30	.20**	.12*	.16**	.09 [^]	(.90)	
6. Organizational Deviance	1.22	.29	.09 [^]	.02	.06	.04	.64**	(.90)

Note. N-size ranged from 257 to 262 due to missing data.
 Numbers in parentheses are alpha coefficients.
[^] p < .10 * p < .05 ** p < .01 (one-tailed).