

Procedural Justice and the Advisor-Advisee Relationship in Graduate Education

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Abstract

The advisor-advisee relationship is a critical part of traditional and online doctoral education. This paper describes two types of justice—distributive and procedural—and their importance to the advisor-advisee relationship. Distributive justice refers to the fairness of the outcomes that result from interacting with one’s advisor while procedural justice refers to the fairness of how the person was treated during that interaction. Both distributive justice and procedural justice have been linked to a number of student outcomes (e.g., increased persistence, increased learning, decreased hostility). In addition, this paper argues procedural justice is the more important factor to consider when examining advisors’ interactions with their advisees. It identifies and describes four principles—voice, neutrality, respect, and benevolence—people use when judging whether they have been treated in a procedurally just manner. Finally, it concludes that procedural justice represents an important way for advisors to socialize their graduate students into the university and discipline.

Keywords: advisor-advisee relationship, distributive justice, procedural justice, graduate student socialization

Introduction

Student-teacher relationships have long been known to be a critical factor in a successful educational career (Chickering & Gamson, 1987; Pontius & Harper, 2006; Powers & Rossman, 1985). However, with the emergence of online education, these interactions are changing (Cragg, Dunning, & Ellis, 2008; Teclehaimanot & Hickman, 2011). For example, the increase in computer-mediated interaction decreases or removes many of the nonverbal behavior—facial expressions, eye contact, voice qualities, and body movement—used to express and interpret emotional responses. Although online, these interactions

continue to be vital to students because the factors that influence the learning process (e.g., knowledge, communication, course design) remain largely the same despite the changing nature of the learning environment (Brocato, Bonanno, & Ulbig, 2013; Coppola, Hiltz, & Rotter, 2002). Moreover, these interactions have been linked to the same outcomes (e.g., student learning and satisfaction) in both online and conventional formats (Means, Toyama, Murphy, & Baki, 2013; Mortera-Gutiérrez, 2006; Swan, 2003). Student-teacher relationships matter, regardless of whether they occur in an online or face-to-face

context (Lammers & Gillaspay, 2013; Thurmond & Wambach, 2004).

The student-teacher relationship is even more important in graduate education, although it differs in nature. Instead of being primarily contained within the classroom, it comes in the form of an advisor-advisee relationship (Phillips, 1979; Schlosser et al., 2011). Here the teacher is expected to mold the student not only in terms of knowledge of a particular subject, but also to initiate the student into the norms, rules, and values of the department, university, and discipline. This is almost always done within the context of intense, individual, one-on-one advising/mentoring. Given the centrality of the advisor-advisee relationship in graduate education, it comes as little surprise that much of a graduate student's success often hinges on this relationship (Schlosser & Gelso, 2001; Schlosser et al., 2011). In fact, graduate student attrition has been linked to the quality of relationships advisees have with their advisors.

The last decade has seen a surge in online doctoral education programs (Allen & Seaman, 2007; 2014). With more students receiving their doctorates online, there has also been increasing awareness that the advisor-advisee relationship is evolving as well (Bennett & Lockyer, 2004; Erichsen, Bolliger, & Halupa, 2012). This has put a premium on identifying ways to establish, maintain, and enhance advisor-advisee interactions in an online world. Recently, scholars have highlighted the role of justice in shaping student-teacher interactions within the classroom (Chory, 2007; Chory-Assad, 2002, Lenzi et al., in press). This work builds on decades of research showing the importance of justice in improving

social relationships in a variety of contexts (Greenberg & Colquitt, 2005; Jackson & Fondacaro, 1999; Tyler, 2006a), especially those involving a power differential between a superordinate and a subordinate as is the case in the advisor-advisee relationship. Taken together, this indicates that justice concerns are also pivotal to the relationship between an advisor and advisee in doctoral education.

In this paper, I will expand the scope of the classroom justice research by investigating the role of justice issues in shaping the relationship between the advisor and advisee. In particular, I will identify and compare two distinct types of justice inherent to that relationship: distributive justice and procedural justice. In addition, I will argue that the latter is more important than the former in assessing the quality of the way advisors interact with advisees. I will also outline different criteria people use in making procedural justice judgments. These criteria are meant to guide advisors in making any changes to enhance their own specific advising style. Finally, I will conclude by describing the importance of and need for research examining the role of justice in the advisor-advisee relationship in online graduate education.

Justice in the Advisor-Advisee Relationship

Justice helps facilitate our social interactions. As Tyler (2000) noted, it is like the oil in an engine reducing friction and allowing the different mechanical parts to work harmoniously with each other. In much the same way, justice is a socially created construct that allows us to coordinate our social world at both an individual/dyadic level and a group/societal level (Lerner, 1975). Just as the oil in an engine can break down and impair the

normal functioning of the engine, a perceived imbalance of justice can cause strain and hostility leading to a breakdown of social relationships. Indeed as noted above, justice has been shown to be an important contributor to positive social interactions across a wide number of contexts (e.g., organizational, familial, legal). Thus, it stands that issues of justice are critical to the advisor-advisee relationship as well. In discussing the potential to improve the relationships between advisors and advisees via justice concerns, it is important to distinguish between two types that may be of potential value: distributive justice and procedural justice.

Distributive Justice

Distributive justice refers to people's perception of fairness concerning the outcome of an interaction or decision. For example, when people judge whether there was a fair allocation of resources among a group of individuals, they are focusing on concerns of distributive justice. People use a number of different principles in shaping their perceptions of distributive fairness (Deutsch, 1975). For instance, they may base their judgments on the degree of equality that exists between themselves and another, or they may consider their needs in regards to the outcome. Much of the work on distributive justice has focused on the principle of equity that is especially important in economically driven relationships, as is the case with the student-teacher relationship (Adams, 1965; Deutsch, 1975). From this perspective, people judge the fairness of an outcome based on a ratio of what they received (their outputs) to what they contributed (their inputs). If they believe their inputs match their outputs, they would judge the outcome to be fair.

However, if they perceived inequity, the outcome would be deemed unfair. For example, if a graduate student was working on a paper with an advisor, she may judge that her position in the listing of authors (output) does not match the amount of work she put into the final publication (input). Hence, she may conclude that the advisor is unfair.

It is important to note that distributive justice judgments are rarely based on a single objective comparison of one's inputs to outputs. Instead, people usually compare their ratio to some kind of a standard or norm (Adams, 1965). For instance, people may compare their actual input-to-output ratio with what they expected to receive. Many times the fairness of outcomes is socially defined, whereby individuals compare their ratio of inputs and outputs to someone else's ratio of inputs and outputs (Walster, Berscheid, & Walster, 1973). For example, the student in the scenario above may assess another graduate student's work on the paper in comparison to where that individual was put in the author list. If she determines the other student's ratio (i.e., position in the author list to the amount of work done) is more equitable than her own, she may conclude that the advisor is unfair. From a distributive justice perspective, our perceptions of social interactions and, more importantly, our responses to them are largely influenced by our judgments of fair outcomes (Deutsch, 1975; Walster, Berscheid, & Walster, 1973). In other words, we judge our social relationships based on the benefits/outputs we receive in comparison to our contribution/inputs. When these are deemed to be equitable, we are more satisfied with our social interactions. In the case of the advisor-advisee relationship, such

satisfaction would lead to higher group functioning in the form of more social cooperation and less social conflict (Tyler, 2013).

Research has shown distributive justice concerns shape a variety of factors that influence the way individuals interact with other people. When social interactions produce fair outcomes, people are happier and have more self-pride (Weiss, Suckow, & Cropanzo, 1999). When such interactions are inequitable, people experience more emotional distress and are less satisfied (Cook & Hegtvedt, 1983; Lambert et al., 2010). The importance of distributive justice has been well documented within organizational settings in terms of supervisor-worker interactions. For example, Tyler (1994) interviewed workers about their interactions with their supervisors. He found that when individuals believed those interactions produced fair outcomes, they were less angry and frustrated, and more willing to accept their supervisors' decisions. Distributive justice has also been linked to increased supervisor trust and more commitment to an organization (Folger & Konovsky, 1989; Tremblay, Vandenberghe, & Doucet, 2013). In their meta-analysis of organizational justice research, Cohen-Charash & Spector (2001) found distributive justice was related to a host of beneficial outcomes. For example, when workers believed their outcomes were fairly distributed, they were less likely to be in conflict with and more likely to be altruistic to co-workers. They were also more satisfied with their supervisors, unions, and management as a whole. Perhaps most importantly, distributive justice has been linked to lower job burnout and intentions to quit one's job (Lambert et al., 2010). Similar findings have also been shown in terms of

people's interactions with legal authorities. When individuals believe the legal system produces just outcomes, they are more satisfied with it (Tyler, 1988; 2006a), more willing to accept its decisions (Tyler, 1994; Sunshine & Tyler, 2003), and more likely to support it (van der Toorn, Tyler, & Jost, 2011).

Concerns over just outcomes in educational settings have a long history in distributive justice research as well (Deutsch, 1975; 1979). Recently, there has been a surge in work examining distributive justice within the classroom in terms of teacher-student interactions. Both teachers and students are aware and sensitive to distributive justice concerns like equality, equity, and need (Berti, Molinari, & Speltini, 2010). Moreover, when students believe that a teacher is more distributively fair, they are more motivated to learn and have more positive attitudes towards the course (Chory-Assad, 2002). They are less likely to engage in indirect verbal aggression against the teacher and be less hostile (Chory-Assad & Paulsel, 2004a). Students also give better final evaluations to professors when they believe grades were distributed fairly (Tata, 1999). Finally, and perhaps most importantly, student perceptions of distributive justice have been linked to higher academic achievement (Molinari, Speltini, & Passini, 2013).

Despite the results described above, distributive justice-based strategies to improve relations among individuals, especially when there is a power differential, have largely failed to produce long-lasting changes (Tyler, 2000). There are a number of reasons for this. For example, it has long been known that people distort their perceptions of their inputs and outputs on a given

task (Festinger & Carlsmith, 1959). In particular, people tend to overvalue their inputs when making justice judgments (Thompson & Loewenstein, 1992). In addition, in some situations it can be difficult, if not impossible, to compare one's outcomes to another person's (Mashaw, 1983). This has the potential to be especially problematic in online graduate education where students may have fewer interactions with other students or faculty outside of their relationships with their advisors. Also, most people understand that it is usually impossible for complete equity in the distribution of outcomes (Tyler, 2013). For instance, students have different attributes and backgrounds, which will naturally lead to unequal distributions of outcomes. Perhaps the biggest reason is that people tend to be more focused on how they are treated when interacting with a superordinate rather than the outcome of that treatment (Mikula, Petri, & Tanzer, 1990). For example, Messick and colleagues (1985) asked people to list instances when they had experienced unfairness. Rarely did participants report instances of unfair outcomes. Rather, the majority of them discussed being treated unfairly. This sensitivity to treatment concerns has led to the identification of a second type of justice that is also important in interactions between individuals (Tyler, Boeckmann, Smith, & Huo, 1997).

Procedural Justice

Procedural justice focuses upon a different aspect of the relationship between an advisor and advisee. While distributive justice emphasizes the fairness of the *outcomes* that come from that relationship, procedural justice concentrates on the *process* or procedures used to reach those

outcomes (Lind & Tyler, 1988). In other words, distributive justice focuses on perceptions of fairness concerning the "ends," whereas procedural justice focuses on the fairness of the "means." The fairness of how outcomes are distributed is important because they will dictate the fairness of the actual outcome. Indeed, if those procedures are unfair, the fairness of the outcome by its very nature is in question (Deutsch, 1975). The concept of procedural justice began with Thibaut and Walker's (1975) landmark research examining individuals' experiences within the legal system. Their research highlighted that individuals were highly cognizant of the procedures used during court proceedings. In most cases, people's acceptance and satisfaction with the court's decision was heavily based on how the court treated them during the decision-making process. This led Thibaut and Walker to conclude that the way decisions are made is just as, if not more, important in influencing individuals' acceptance of those decisions as the actual decision itself.

Subsequent work has shown procedural justice is important on an interpersonal level as well as a decision-making level (e.g., Tyler & Blader, 2003). This work highlights two major aspects of procedural justice: the quality of decision-making procedures and the quality of interpersonal treatment. The former refers to the rules or guidelines set forth to guide decision making. For example, in the scenario used previously, this aspect of procedural justice would focus on the procedures the advisor has in place to determine the order of authors on the final manuscript and whether the graduate student believes those guidelines are fair. The second

component regards the way a person is actually treated by the advisor. For instance, did the advisor treat the graduate student honestly and with dignity? Was the student given a chance to participate in the decision-making process? Perceptions of fairness here are shaped by the quality of interpersonal treatment. Such treatment communicates respect to the advisee and indicates the advisor cares about the process being fair and beneficial to both parties (Lind & Tyler, 1988; Platow et al., 2013).

Why is procedural justice important?

People care about how they are treated by others because it has important ramifications on how they view themselves in regards to their social world. Given that human beings are inherently social creatures, they are particularly attuned to the people in their social environment and are motivated to establish interpersonal bonds with them (Baumeister & Leary, 1995). These bonds are not solely restricted to those with which we want to be friends or have a romantic relationship, but apply to anyone who is a member of a social group in which we want to be included. Thus, a worker is motivated to establish an interpersonal relationship with a supervisor as a way to identify with an organization (Tyler & Blader, 2003). A citizen cares about the relationship between himself and the police because officers are symbols of the legal system that represents the values of the society of which the citizen is a part (Justice & Meares, 2014). Students are motivated to form interpersonal bonds with teachers as a means to establish themselves as members of the educational institution (Frymier & Houser, 2000). This is especially true in the advisor-advisee relationship, as the advisor is a symbol of the

university and the career field that the advisee is working to join.

The inherent need to belong is what makes issues of procedural justice so vital to our social interactions. Fair treatment is a marker of sorts that signals to an individual that they are part of a group (Lind & Tyler, 1988; Tyler, 1988, 1989; 1994). People want to know they are part of a group because it is psychologically rewarding. It gives people a sense of pride and self-validation, and serves to provide a sense of identity (Tyler, 2013). People are motivated to establish bonds with authorities because the quality of those bonds is a sign of group membership. It reflects the degree to which they are considered a part of that group. Procedural justice facilitates the formation of these social bonds (Lind & Tyler, 1988). When people are treated fairly, they are in essence being told that they are part of the group and their status as a group member is valued. Put simply, people care about whether they are being treated fairly because it provides them with important information about where they stand. In terms of the advisor-advisee relationship, graduate students care about the way their advisors treat them because it signifies the advisors care about their relationships and that the students are valued group members. In essence, fair treatment is both a way for advisors to usher students into a new social group and for students to assess the advisors' intentions in this regard.

What are the effects of procedural justice?

Procedural justice has received much attention from a variety of fields because of its influence on social interactions (Lind & Tyler, 1988). Certainly, one reason it has gained such traction is because

the majority of research shows it has a number of positive influences. Within the business world, procedural justice has been linked to increased pay satisfaction (Folger & Konovsky, 1989) and trust in both the organization and supervisors (Tremblay, Vandenberghe, & Doucet, 2013). The latter finding is especially important as it helps to explain the finding that people are more likely to endorse leaders who are procedurally just (Folger & Martin, 1986; van Dijke & De Cremer, 2010). Fair treatment and decision making also lead to increases in internal motivation to persist on a task and to perform at a higher level (Zapata-Phelan, Colquitt, Scott, & Livingston, 2009), two attributes vital to any successful graduate student. In addition, legal scholars have shown that judgments of procedural fairness lead to increased shame and less acceptance of rule-violating behavior (Scheuerman & Keith, in press; Sherman, 1993); increased satisfaction with and more support for police officers (Tyler, 1988; 2006a); more positive evaluations of judges, courts, and city councils (Hollander-Blumoff & Tyler, 2011; Tyler, Rasinski, & Spodick, 1985); and increased satisfaction with court decisions (Casper, Tyler, & Fisher, 1988; Hollander-Blumoff, 2011).

Based on these findings, in the last decade there has been a concerted attempt to bring procedural justice research into the classroom in terms of student-teacher interactions. This effort was spurred by prior work showing the importance of fair grading procedures in influencing student evaluations of teachers (Tata, 1999; Tyler & Caine, 1981). This work has largely come to the same conclusions as organizational and legal research. For example, fair treatment and decision making has been associated with

students being more enthused and interested in course material, more participatory with their teachers, and more motivated to learn (Berti, Molinari, & Speltini, 2010; Chory-Assad, 2002). Students also report getting higher grades in classes where they believed teachers treated them fairly (Molinari, Speltini, & Passini, 2013). Fair treatment and decision making has important benefits for the teacher as well. When students believe their teachers are procedurally fair, they are less hostile toward them and less resistant to their attempts at control (Chory-Assad & Paulsel, 2004a). Moreover, students are less likely to be indirectly aggressive (e.g., spreading rumors, complaining outside of class) towards teachers when they believe they are being treated fairly (Chory-Assad, 2002; Chory-Assad & Paulsel, 2004b).

In addition to the beneficial effects above, procedural justice has also been shown to be more indicative of people's reactions to superordinate authorities than distributive justice. As discussed previously, people are more likely to recollect instances of unfair treatment than unfair outcomes when asked to talk about their experiences of injustice (Messick et al., 1985; Mikula et al., 1990), a finding replicated within the educational domain as well (Horan, Chory, & Goodboy, 2010). More importantly, when procedural and distributive justices are put in the same statistical models, the former is usually a stronger predictor than the latter (Cohen-Charash & Spector, 2001; Tremblay et al., 2013; Tyler, 2006a, 2006b; Tyler et al., 1997). For example, Lambert and colleagues (2010) found that procedural justice was a better predictor of burnout and turnover intention than distributive

justice. Similarly, legal scholars have shown that citizens' trust and satisfaction with the legal system and their engagement in criminal behavior is driven more by procedural than distributive concerns (Tyler, 1988; Tyler, 2006a). Again, this work has been replicated in educational contexts as well. Teachers' use of fair decision making and interpersonal treatment is a better predictor of student motivation to learn, indirect aggression toward the teacher, hostility toward the class, and affective learning than fair outcomes (Chory-Assad, 2002; Chory-Assad & Paulsel, 2004a).

Taken together, these findings show the importance of procedural justice in shaping the relationship between a superordinate and subordinate. Given that such a relationship is a hallmark that distinguishes graduate school from other types of education (Phillips, 1979; Schlosser et al., 2011), it is likely issues of procedural justice play an important role in influencing the nature of the relationship as well. Thus, procedural justice stands as a means to understand and enhance the relationship between graduate advisors and their advisees.

Making Judgments of Fair Treatment

Due to the potential importance of procedural justice in shaping advisor-advisee relationships, it is natural to ask how people go about making such judgments. Understanding this process will provide guidelines for professors and graduate students alike to assess their particular relationships. Moreover, it will provide a blueprint to help stimulate ways to enhance advisor-advisee relationships. What follows is a discussion of the factors people contemplate when assessing procedural justice. This discussion is intended to identify and describe the criteria used to judge fair

treatment and decision making, rather than to provide a list of specific behaviors that professors can use to improve their relationships. This is done intentionally as there are an enormous amount of specific practices and behaviors that produce just interactions. Not all advisor-advisee relationships are the same so there is not a one size fits all approach (De Welde & Laursen, 2008). Behaviors considered fair treatment by one student may not be perceived the same way by another. Indeed, part of learning the craft of advising is learning to identify what specific people want/need and what they do not. As such, the criteria below are meant to be viewed as principles that can be used in examining one's own specific advising style and as a compass to help guide any changes one may want to make.

Judgments of procedural justice are not based on a single unifying principle. Instead, there are a number of criteria people can potentially use when making such judgments (Leventhal, 1980). However, despite this complexity, four primary factors consistently emerge across a variety of contexts (Lind & Tyler, 1988; Tyler, 1994; 2000; Tyler & Huo, 2002): the degree to which individuals feel they are part of the decision making process (participation), the degree to which decisions are made in an unbiased manner (neutrality), the respectfulness of interpersonal treatment (respect), and the extent that a superordinate is believed to be acting with caring motives (benevolence).

Participation

In their original work on procedural justice, Thibaut and Walker (1975) emphasized individuals were more likely to believe they were treated fairly when they were given an

opportunity to participate in the decision-making process. People want their “day in court.” They want a voice to express their opinions and concerns. When they get that opportunity, they are more likely to believe they are treated fairly (Fondacaro et al., 2006; Platow et al., 2013; Tyler et al., 1985). When superordinates are receptive to this need, they are signaling that they consider the person an in-group member because they value their input in terms of the decision being made (Lind & Tyler, 1988). In many cases, fairness judgments do not seem dependent on whether the chance to be heard will actually affect the outcome (Lind, Kanfer, & Earley, 1990). People strongly value an opportunity to be heard, even if they know it might do little good in terms of the final decision made. Participation has been found to be an important factor influencing people’s perceptions of procedural justice in a variety of contexts (Folger & Greenberg, 1985; Fondacaro et al., 2006; Goodman-Delahunty, 2010).

Students are also sensitive to whether they are given an opportunity to express their needs and concerns. Just as workers and citizens want to take part in decisions that will have direct consequences on them, students also want to participate. Moreover, they remember situations where they were denied this opportunity. For example, Horan, Chory, & Goodboy (2010) asked a group of college students to discuss instances in which they believed they were treated unjustly by a teacher. Many students identified instances where they were denied a voice, such as the professor not allowing discussions about scheduling issues or questions of how grades were assigned. Participation is important in graduate education as well. In their examination of the

characteristics of an “ideal type” advisor, De Welde and Laursen (2008) noted successful advisors listened to their students in terms of ongoing research projects and the trajectories of their careers. The students in turn reported this made them feel like they were contributing members of the research community.

Schniederjans (2007) has argued that graduate students should have a right to participate in determining who should be on their dissertation committee. Another place where voice is especially important in graduate school is in the selection of an advisor. Golde (2005) reported students were more likely to persist in graduate education when they had a say over who would be their advisors.

Neutrality

Expanding Thibaut and Walker’s (1975) earlier work on procedural justice, Lind & Tyler (1988) argued individuals do not base their procedural justice judgments solely on whether they have control over the decision-making process. In particular, they emphasized that individuals also focus on the neutrality of the decision-making procedures when they are interested in establishing or maintaining long-term bonds with the decision-maker (Tyler, 1988; 1989; 1994). People want to feel that a decision is made in an impartial manner. They do not want a superordinate to be influenced by any potential stereotypes or prejudices. Basically, people want an authority to make objective, factual decisions instead of relying on their own personal interests and biases. Although they understand that those decisions may result in unequal outcomes in many—perhaps most—cases, they at least want everyone to be on a “level playing field” while the

decisions are being made (Tyler, 2000). Such impartial behavior conveys the message that certain group members are not being placed above others at the leisure of the authority, ultimately leading to greater harmony (Lind & Tyler, 1988). A plethora of research from legal and organizational scholars has shown impartiality is a major precursor to judgments of procedural fairness (Goodman-Delahunty, 2010; Lind et al., 1990; Mazerolle et al., 2013; Tyler, 1989, 1994).

Not surprisingly, neutral decision making is incredibly important in education as well. Impartial decision making, especially in terms of grading and evaluation, is a major factor that students use when judging whether a teacher is treating them fairly (Chory, 2007). Students want to be treated impartially. They do not want to feel teachers are favoring one individual over another. When they believe they have not been treated impartially, they react with hostility and aggression (Chory-Assad, 2002). Horan et al. (2010) identified a number of different ways students have experienced bias in the classroom. For example, some students reported teachers failed to use the same grading procedures or enforce policy the same way for all students (e.g., athletes). Others discussed instances where professors singled out some students for praise or criticism, but ignored others. Neutral treatment is important in terms of the advisor-advisee relationship as well. In their interviews with doctoral students, De Welde and Laursen (2008) found some students complained about advisors who had alienated them through impartial treatment. For example, one student complained her advisor tried to develop a more personal, not professional, relationship with her because she

was a woman. Indeed, gender stereotypes have long been identified as a potential source of biased treatment that can place strain on the advisor-advisee relationship (Alleman, Cochran, Doverspke, & Newman, 1984). Such concerns led De Welde and Laursen (2008) to suggest that an ideal advisor is one who does not make assumptions about student needs based on gender or other stereotypes. In other words, an ideal advisor is one who behaves in an impartial manner when interacting with an advisee.

Respect

Another essential factor in making judgments about procedural fairness is the interpersonal treatment by the superordinate (Lind & Tyler, 1988). In particular, people value when their rights and status within a group are recognized by an authority. Being polite and treating people ethically is an important means to acknowledge those needs (Tyler, Degoey, & Smith, 1996). Regardless of whether people receive a favorable outcome, they at least expect to be treated with dignity and respect during the process of arriving at that outcome (Tyler & Huo, 2002). When superordinates or decision-makers treat individuals with respect, they are in essence telling the individuals that they are important as group members and their membership in the group is valued. As such, the individual is more likely to perceive procedural fairness (Lind & Tyler, 1988; Tyler, 1989, 1994). This relation between respect and procedural justice is well established in legal and organizational research (Colquitt et al., 2001; Goodman-Delahunty, 2010; Mazerolle et al., 2012; Tyler, 1994, 2006a; Tyler, Degoey, & Smith, 1996)

Treating people with dignity and respect is every bit as important in education as it is in business organizations and legal systems. In her examination of classroom justice, Chory (2007) highlighted that respectful behavior by teachers was associated with greater perceptions of fair treatment and decision making. Later work has shown that students focus on issues of respect when assessing fair treatment (Horan et al., 2010). For instance, students report their teachers are unjust when they are not sensitive to students' needs (e.g., sickness), fail to respond to students in an appropriate amount of time, do not follow through on established policies, and are rude and impolite to students (e.g., insulting or making them feel stupid). Respectful treatment is a hallmark of effective advising in graduate school, too (Schniederjans, Schniederjans, & Levy, 2012). It is essential in developing a positive working relationship between the advisor and advisee (Schlosser & Gelso, 2001). If an advisor is disrespectful, it will be difficult, if not impossible, to establish rapport with advisees and create a productive work environment. Graduate student attrition has also been linked to improper and disrespectful advisors (De Welde & Laurensen, 2008). When advisors fail to give their students clear expectations, show disrespect, and otherwise treat them unprofessionally, students feel abandoned and undervalued. Many times students respond to such treatment by leaving the program or field altogether. As Schniederjans (2007) noted, graduate students have a right to an advisor who is a role model of ethical conduct.

Benevolence

The final important factor in making judgments about procedural justice concerns the

motivation of the superordinate authority (Lind & Tyler, 1988). People understand that in most cases a superordinate has considerable discretion when interacting with subordinates (Tyler, 2000). As such, they are acutely aware of whether the authority is behaving with benevolent intentions. People want superordinates to be aware of their needs as individuals, show concern for their well-being, and try to do what is right for them. In short, they want to trust that person and feel the decisions being made are done with their best interests in mind (Tyler & Huo, 2002). Benevolent and caring motives on the part of the superordinate impart the feeling that people are important to the group (Lind & Tyler, 1988). When individuals believe an authority is behaving with benevolent motives, they are more likely to believe they are being treated fairly. The relation between benevolence and perceptions of procedural fairness is also well established in both legal and organizational research (Cohen-Charash & Spector, 2001; Colquitt et al. 2001; Goodman-Delahunty, 2010; Tyler, 1989; 1994; Tyler, 2006a).

Showing care for students' well-being is arguably one of the most important attributes for an educational authority to exhibit. Among undergraduates, the extent to which teachers express concern about student welfare is a major factor shaping perceptions of fair treatment and decision making (Chory, 2007). By recognizing and meeting students' needs, teachers are empowering and motivating them to succeed (Frymier & Houser, 2000). A benevolent advisor is vital to a successful graduate student career as well. For most students, advisors will be most influential in guiding them through graduate

school and facilitating their emergence as members of their academic fields (Schlosser & Gelso, 2001; Schlosser et al., 2011). In many ways, the advisor will act as an “academic mother or father figure” giving birth to a future scholar (Schniederjans et al., 2012, p. 230). Given this long-term influence, graduate students want to feel that their advisors are looking out for their best interests and directing them accordingly. It is no surprise that when graduate students feel their advisors are not concerned about and are ignoring them, they are more likely to leave their program or fields (De Welde & Laursen, 2008). De Welde and Laursen identified a number of different ways ideal advisors show they care about their graduate students and want them to succeed. Offering support, not letting students flounder, and having regular contact were all ways in which advisors showed their concern for graduate students. This may be especially important in online education, which has been criticized for isolating students (Adams & DeFleur, 2005; Motteram & Forrester, 2005; Shieh, Gummer, & Niess, 2008). Moreover, advisors who are emotionally supportive and responsive to their students produce students who are more likely to learn and more satisfied with and likely to finish their graduate education (Cockrell & Schelley, 2010; Wrench & Punyanunt, 2004)

Conclusions

Issues of justice have a powerful influence on the way we think, feel, and behave, especially in regards to our interactions with other people. In many ways, it is the lens by which we make judgments about our social world. As Tyler and Blader (2003) concluded:

Justice has an impact; it is substantial in magnitude; it is consistently found across a wide variety of group and organizational contexts; it is distinct from judgments of self-interest or personal/group gain ... information about justice is central to people’s evaluations of social situations. (p. 349).

Throughout this paper, I have made the argument that issues of justice are also a central factor in shaping the way in which an advisor and advisee interact throughout the latter’s graduate education and career. I have highlighted the role of two different types of justice: distributive and procedural. Although both are undeniably important in shaping the advisor-advisee relationship, I have placed considerable importance on elucidating the need for an advisor to make fair decisions and behave in a fair manner (i.e., behave in a procedurally just way). Being treated fairly provides people with information about whether another individual values them and considers them a group member (Lind & Tyler, 1988). In much the same way, fair treatment at the hands of an advisor assures advisees that their advisor values them as a future scholar and wants to bring them into this world we call academia.

I have highlighted different principles that advisors can use to assess whether they are communicating this ever important message to their graduate students. Advisors should strive to ensure

that they are providing their charges with opportunities to express themselves and participate in their education, research, and careers. They should make every effort to ensure they are treating their graduate students in an impartial and unbiased manner. They also need to be ethical in always treating their students with dignity, respect, and honesty. Finally, and probably most importantly, advisors need to show their students that they care about them and truly want them to succeed in their academic and scholarly careers. De Welde and Laursen's (2008) interviews suggested these principles are important regardless of the distance between advisor and advisee.

Given the ever increasing use of online and distance education (Allen & Seaman, 2007; 2014), it will be interesting to examine how justice issues manifest themselves in alternative educational formats moving forward. To date there has been little if any empirical research specifically examining procedural justice within the advisor-advisee relationship in either traditional or online education. Most of the work reviewed here comes from organizational and legal psychology. Although this review has highlighted the potential utility of applying this work to graduate education, more research needs to be conducted to examine the degree to which procedural justice research can be generalized to the advisor-advisee relationship.

Of particular interest will be examining how students are socialized within online graduate education. Such education has been criticized for not providing enough opportunities to socialize students into a discipline (Karl & Peluchette, 2013). The argument is that because of the decrease in face-to-face interactions, a student will not internalize the values and norms that provide the foundation for the rules, practices, and traditions that help coordinate scholarly activity among members of a discipline. Recently, scholars have highlighted that procedural justice serves a critical socializing function, especially in domains featuring power differentials between a superordinate and subordinate (Fagan & Tyler, 2005; Trinkner & Cohn, 2014; Tyler & Blader, 2003). Procedurally just treatment on the part of the superordinate is a means to socialize individuals by communicating to them that they are important members of the group. Rather than driving them away or alienating them, fair treatment and decision making shows people they are valued, that they have worth. As a result, people identify with that group, and develop pride and admiration at their status of being a member. They become motivated to internalize the values/norms of that group and behave in ways that are sanctioned by it. To do anything else would be to go against the person's self-identity. Because of the centrality of the advisor in facilitating the socialization process (Schlosser et al., 2011), procedural justice seems especially pertinent in potentially addressing critics' concerns about this vital function in online graduate school.

Online doctoral education has also been criticized because it requires advisors to

relinquish control over their students to some extent (Adams & DeFleur, 2005). For example, graduate students have greater opportunity to cheat and advisors have less opportunity to physically check their progress or monitor them by forcing them to maintain a presence in a physical laboratory. Many of these complaints are based on the assumption that advisors can only influence students' progress via instrumental control of outcomes. In other words, the advisor has to punish negative behavior and reward positive behavior in order to develop the student into a competent scholar. The idea is that online education will inhibit this process. However, it has become increasingly recognized that instrumental control of behavior is limited in its effectiveness and expensive in its implementation (Tyler, 2009). In large part this is because it relies on the advisor to continually monitor a graduate student's behavior so the person can be rewarded or punished appropriately. Although it is true that such means of social control are difficult if not impossible in online education, this does not mean online education cannot be effective.

Procedural justice represents an alternative way for an advisor to exert control on a graduate student without using instrumental means. When

people are treated fairly they come to internalize the values and norms that dictate appropriate behavior. As internalization progresses, people naturally feel a duty or obligation to engage in behavior that is consistent with those values or norms (Tyler, 2006b). When this occurs, control by others is displaced by self-control as the ability to self-regulate develops (Tyler, 2009). Thus, people engage in appropriate behavior because it is normative to do so rather than someone has control over the consequences of their behavior. In terms of the advisor-advisee relationship in online education, this means advisors stand a better chance of developing competent future scholars via fair treatment and decision making than instrumental control of rewards and punishments. Using this approach will ultimately lead to students who do what is needed to succeed because that is what they want, not because they are being forced. Ultimately, this will allow advisors to shift their precious resources away from ensuring students are engaging in appropriate behavior and instead focus those resources on more important matters, like publishing papers, providing service to the university, and having a fulfilling personal life.

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