

Extending the Multifoci Perspective: The Role of Supervisor Justice and Moral Identity in the Relationship Between Customer Justice and Customer-Directed Sabotage

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The multifoci perspective of justice proposes that individuals tend to target their (in)justice reactions toward the perceived source of the mistreatment. Empirical support for target-specific reactions, however, has been mixed. To explore theoretically relevant reasons for these discrepant results and address unanswered questions in the multifoci justice literature, the present research examines how different justice sources might interactively predict target-specific reactions, and whether these effects occur as a function of moral identity. Results from a sample of North American frontline service employees ($N = 314$, Study 1) showed that among employees with lower levels of moral identity, low supervisor justice exacerbated the association between low customer justice and customer-directed sabotage, whereas this exacerbation effect was not observed among employees with higher levels of moral identity. This 3-way interaction effect was replicated in a sample of South Korean employees ($N = 265$, Study 2).

Keywords: multifoci justice, customer justice, supervisor justice, customer-directed sabotage, moral identity

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The multifoci perspective of justice proposes that individuals integrate normative justice rules (e.g., the perceived fairness of outcomes, procedures, and interpersonal treatment) with moral accountability, giving rise to target similarity effects, whereby individuals are likely to direct their reactions toward the source of the (in)justice (Cropanzano, Byrne, Bobocel, & Rupp, 2001; Lavelle, Rupp, & Brockner, 2007; Rupp & Cropanzano, 2002; Rupp & Paddock, 2010). Sources of (in)justice can include the employee's organization, supervisors, coworkers, and customers.

Empirical evidence for these target similarity effects, however, is mixed. A meta-analysis by Colquitt et al. (2013) found weak support for target-similar effects while other meta-analyses (e.g., Fassina, Jones, & Uggerslev, 2008; Rupp, Shao, Jones, & Liao, 2014) found strong support for target-similar effects.

One potential explanation for these discrepant findings concerns unmeasured moderators, in particular the presence of (in)justice from multiple sources. Specifically, a theoretical and empirical gap that could extend this work is: how does (un)just treatment from more than one source combine to predict injustice reactions (for an exception, see Lavelle, McMahan, & Harris, 2011)? This is an important question because although research has tended to focus on single source effects, in reality, employees can have unique experiences with different parties—employees may come to view one source (e.g., customers) as unjust, and at the same time, perceive another source (e.g., the supervisor) as just (Lavelle, Rupp, Manegold, & Thornton, 2015; Tepper, 2000). In response to calls for this line of research (Rupp et al., 2014), one objective of this study was to consider how multiple sources of justice combine to predict target-specific justice reactions.

Given that the multifoci perspective is grounded in moral accountability, a second gap in these meta-analysis results concerns the degree to which moral concerns are more highly salient to some individuals than others, which can potentially moderate the degree that they will engage in certain injustice reactions in the first place. Evidence shows, for instance, that moral identity, defined as the chronic accessibility of the moral self (Aquino &

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Reed, 2002), moderates injustice reactions such that high (vs. low) moral identity individuals are less likely to engage in dubious retaliation behavior such as sabotage when faced with unjust treatment (Skarlicki, van Jaarsveld, & Walker, 2008). As such, it is important to examine whether moral identity inhibits morally loaded reactions to unjust treatment when the justice experience is complex and shaped by various sources. No research, however, has explored how moral identity's moderation effect might occur when individuals encounter multiple sources of (in)justice.

In the present article, we aim to extend the multifoci justice perspective and contribute to organizational justice theory in two ways. Specifically, we examine whether unjust treatment from supervisors exacerbates the relationship between customer injustice and *customer-directed sabotage*. In the present paper, we use the terms *unjust* and *injustice* to refer to low levels of perceived fairness. We focus on sabotage because it has been shown to be an act of retaliation motivated by perceptions of injustice (Ambrose, Seabright, & Schminke, 2002). Evidence shows that customer service employees can react to customer injustice by sabotaging the customer who they perceive has mistreated them (e.g., hanging up on a customer, sending the customer to the wrong department) in voice-to-voice (Rupp & Spencer, 2006; Skarlicki et al., 2008; Wang, Liao, Zhan, & Shi, 2011) and face-to-face interactions (Shao & Skarlicki, 2014). Little to no research has explored how these effects occur in conjunction with supervisor justice. We focus on the joint effects of supervisor and customer justice on customer-directed sabotage because both sources represent discretionary individual behavior. Justice-relevant actions have more discretion when they are neither constrained by organizational systems nor limited to formal exchange events (Scott, Colquitt, & Paddock, 2009). Moreover, supervisors and customers both can exert power over employees. Many companies adhere to a "customer is always right" policy, bestowing considerable power to customers to wield over employees, to the point where employees can report having two bosses: supervisors and customers (Edleston, Kidder, & Litzky, 2002). Examining how employees engage in customer-directed sabotage in the context of supervisor and customer injustice offers an opportunity to investigate this dynamic in more depth.

Consistent with the interactionist perspective of behavior (Schneider, 1983), we also test whether the combined effects of supervisor and customer (in)justice affect employees' sabotage reactions differently for employees who are high versus low on moral identity. Integrating the moral perspective of justice (Folger, 2001) into our theorizing, we reasoned that individuals for whom moral concerns are highly central to their identity are less likely to engage in sabotage because of the ethical implications of doing so. By examining multiple sources, we aim to add greater precision to the multifoci perspective's predictive ability in accounting for employees' justice reactions. Figure 1 provides our theoretical model.

From a practical perspective, customer-directed sabotage is an important issue because such events can erode customer service quality—a critical source of competitive advantage for many companies worldwide (Schneider, Ehrhart, Mayer, Saltz, & Niles-Jolly, 2005). The service industry employs the largest proportion of the workforce in the United States (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2006), and is one of the fastest growing segments of the global economy (Boehm & Dwertmann, 2015; Ghani, Goswami,

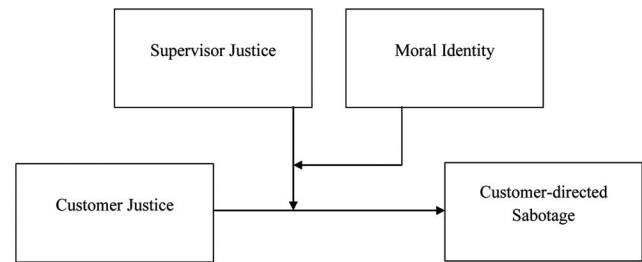


Figure 1. Hypothesized model.

& Kharas, 2012). Evidence also suggests customer mistreatment of employees is on the rise (Harris & Reynolds, 2003; Reynolds & Harris, 2006; Wang et al., 2013). Thus, research on the factors that can reduce sabotage is highly relevant for a growing number of companies that are likely interested in enhancing customer service quality.

Theoretical Background

To date, the dominant perspective for understanding (in)justice reactions involves distinct types or facets, including perceived violations of outcomes (distributive justice), procedures (procedural justice), interpersonal treatment showing dignity and respect (interpersonal justice), and adequacy of the explanations for decisions (informational justice; for reviews, see Cohen-Charash & Spector, 2001; Colquitt, Conlon, Wesson, Porter, & Ng, 2001). Research has revealed that these justice facets interact with each other in important ways (e.g., Brockner, 2010), and that some justice types can compensate for violations of other types to predict employee reactions. Skarlicki and Folger (1997), for example, found that when supervisors show adequate sensitivity and concern toward employees, treating them with dignity and respect, those employees seem somewhat more willing to tolerate unfair pay distribution and unfair procedures that would otherwise contribute to retaliatory tendencies.

The multifoci justice perspective (Cropanzano et al., 2001; Lavelle et al., 2015), in contrast, proposes that an accountable party is necessary for the formation of justice perceptions (Folger & Cropanzano, 2001). Specifically, the ability to predict justice reactions is enhanced by integrating the normative justice rules associated with distributive, procedural, interpersonal, and informational justice, with the accountable party responsible for violating or upholding these normative justice rules (i.e., the source of justice). Thus, the sources of (in)justice and target of justice reactions are given prominence in its theorizing.

The target similarity argument is rooted in social exchange theory (Blau, 1964), which proposes that individuals help people who help them, and harm people who harm them. Rupp et al. (2014), for instance, reported that justice from the organization better predicted outcomes targeting the organization (e.g., organizational trust, affective commitment) than justice from the supervisor, whereas supervisor justice more effectively predicted outcomes targeting the supervisor (e.g., trust and identification with supervisor) than justice from the organization. They also reported that source-specific social exchange mediated the relationships between source-based justice perceptions and outcomes directed at

matched sources. Due to an insufficient number of studies and the relatively recent expansion of justice sources to include customers, the customer as a source of justice has yet to be included in justice meta-analyses. Justice writers have similarly called for research on how different sources combine simultaneously to predict employees' customer-directed sabotage (Rupp, McCance, Spencer, & Sonntag, 2008).

Hypothesis Development

As noted above, the multifoci perspective is based on social exchange theory, which states that individuals hold one another accountable for their actions, and that individuals generally direct their retaliation for mistreatment toward the source of the transgression (Cropanzano et al., 2001). It follows that when a customer treats a service employee unjustly, the employee is likely to react negatively toward that customer by engaging in customer-directed sabotage. Evidence suggests, however, that employees also demonstrate a form of generalized response toward customers as a social entity (Walker, van Jaarsveld, & Skarlicki, 2014). That is, not only do employees engage in sabotage toward the specific customer who violated their fairness norms, they can also demonstrate a sabotage reaction toward customers in general.

Cropanzano et al. (2001) made a distinction between justice-relevant events (e.g., interactions with individual customers) and social entities (e.g., interactions with customers in general), arguing that unfairness perceptions of the former can lead to negative reactions toward the latter. This is especially likely to occur when unfair treatment is highly commonplace. Many customer service contexts involve frequent interactions with customers (e.g., 50–75 calls per day; Grandey, Dickter, & Sin, 2004; Wang et al., 2011) with high exposure to norm violations. Harris and Reynolds (2003), for instance, reported that 82% of the employees studied had witnessed or been the target of customer mistreatment in the past year. Call center employees report an average of seven hostile calls from customers per day, with 10 as the modal response (Grandey et al., 2004). Frequent and consistent exposure to perceived customer injustice can also foster a stereotype bias resulting in employees generalizing their impressions and reactions to customers beyond a specific unjust customer (e.g., Bargh, 1989). Moreover, at this high pace of exposure to moral violations, employees can have limited opportunities to retaliate toward the specific customer who mistreated the employee because they may have already moved onto the next customer. Thus, it is likely that employees' response to moral violations can result in negative reactions to customers in general as opposed to solely the customer who mistreated them. This generalized approach has been reported in numerous studies (Shao & Skarlicki, 2014; Skarlicki et al., 2008; Wang et al., 2011; for a review, see Koopmann, Wang, Liu, & Song, 2015) and reflects the approach we take in the present research.

Hypothesis 1: Customer justice is negatively related to customer-directed sabotage.

Interaction Among Justice Sources and Moral Identity

Supervisor justice refers to perceptions of fair treatment received from one's supervisor. Its theoretical origins lie in the

fairness of the interpersonal communication received by an authority figure (Bies & Moag, 1986). Initially labeled *interactional justice*, empirical evidence suggests that it consists of two distinct factors: interpersonal justice (treatment reflecting dignity and respect) and informational justice (perceptions that the employee received an adequate explanation for the processes and decisions) (Colquitt, 2001). In reality, however, supervisors can deliver and personify all organizational justice facets (e.g., Karriker & Williams, 2009). For example, supervisors can develop their own procedures for decision making and thus can be perceived by employees as a unique source of procedural justice (Byrne, 1999). Hence it is reasonable to consider that supervisor justice can include factors beyond interpersonal and informational justice. Studies have established, however, that overall supervisory-referenced justice is a unique construct from overall organizational justice (e.g., Choi, 2008; Holtz & Harold, 2009). Moreover, Holtz and Harold (2009) found that procedural and distributive justice were more strongly related to perceptions of overall organizational justice than to perceptions of supervisor justice, and that informational and interpersonal justice from the supervisor was a better predictor of overall supervisory justice than of overall organizational justice. To be consistent with previous fairness studies (e.g., Bies, 2005; Cropanzano, Prehar, & Chen, 2002; Moorman, 1991; Olkkonen & Lippinen, 2006) and multifoci research (e.g., Rupp et al., 2014), we operationalized supervisor justice in terms of interpersonal and informational justice.

We focus on supervisor justice in the present study because the supervisor is often more proximal to the employee than is the organization; he or she is the "face" of the organization and the interpersonal link with the organization as a whole, and hence can have stronger links with employee outcomes than other forms of organizational justice, labeled the *agent-dominance effect* (Fassina et al., 2008). Second, to a large degree, supervisor justice, in particular interpersonal and informational justice, is provided at the discretion of the supervisors (Bies & Moag, 1986; Lavelle et al., 2007). Distributive and procedural justice from supervisors, in contrast, can be relatively more constrained by organizational rules and policies than are interpersonal and informational justice. Indeed, organizations tend to have established decision-making procedures and guidelines for the distribution of rewards, which are outside the control of individual supervisors (Olkkonen & Lippinen, 2006). This issue has theoretical importance because reciprocity and accountability are enhanced when individuals view that their (mis)treatment was provided at the other party's discretion (Folger & Cropanzano, 2001).

It is conceivable that supervisor justice will moderate the relationship between customer justice and customer-directed sabotage such that supervisor injustice will exacerbate the relationship between customer justice and employees' customer-directed sabotage. Just treatment by supervisors enhances employees' perceptions that their supervisor values their contribution and cares about their well-being (Eisenberger & Stinglhamber, 2011). Therefore, the existence of just treatment from supervisors may alleviate and potentially neutralize the threat of customer injustice, especially in terms of upholding employee self-image (Wang et al., 2013) as well as providing additional resources to regulate negative emotions induced by customer injustice (Wang et al., 2011), both helping to inhibit retaliation tendencies. In addition, just treatment by supervisors could inhibit

customer-directed sabotage because employees may refrain from sabotage behaviors that could otherwise jeopardize their positive social exchange relationship with supervisors. Unjust treatment by supervisors, in contrast, could tax employees' resources (Thau & Mitchell, 2010), making it difficult for employees to regulate their retaliation tendencies when faced with customer injustice. Taken together, although an employee might be motivated to engage in customer-directed sabotage in response to low customer justice, this effect is likely stronger when the employee also perceives that his or her supervisor is unjust. In summary, unjust supervisor treatment is likely to exacerbate, while just supervisor treatment is likely to dampen, employees' sabotage reactions to customer injustice.

As discussed above, however, the multifoci perspective emphasizes the notion of moral relevance and accountability (Folger & Cropanzano, 2001; Rupp et al., 2014). Because individuals differ in their judgment regarding whether or not to engage in sabotage (e.g., Aquino & Reed, 2002; Blasi, 1984, 2005; Brown, Treviño, & Harrison, 2005; Haidt, 2001; Hoffman, 2000; Kohlberg, 1969; Rest, Narvaez, Thoma, & Bebeau, 1999; Wimbush & Shepard, 1994), we expect that the potential interaction effect between customer justice and supervisor justice will be qualified by employees' general tendency to engage in sabotage in the first place. That is, some individuals are likely to refrain from sabotage because they view it as an immoral and unethical act. We focus on moral identity as a potential moderator because research shows that moral identity can regulate individuals' reactions toward justice/morality violations (e.g., Reynolds & Ceranic, 2007; Skarlicki et al., 2008).

Aquino and Reed (2002) defined moral identity as the chronic accessibility of the moral self. Moral identity research draws upon social identity theory (Tajfel, 1979; Tajfel & Turner, 1979) proposing that individuals can have multiple identities including one's gender, ethnic background (e.g., visible minority), and occupation (e.g., professor or lawyer), to name a few. According to Lapsley and Lasky (2001, p. 347), a high moral identity person is someone "for whom moral schemas are chronically available, readily primed, and easily activated for information processing." To the extent that an individual's moral identity is strong, it can regulate one's behavior (Blasi, 1984, 2005; Hart, Atkins, & Ford, 1998; for a review, see Shao, Aquino, & Freeman, 2008). Damon and Hart (1992), for example, argued that the centrality of morality to the self is among the single most powerful mechanisms in the link between one's moral judgment and behavior.

Moral identity consists of two dimensions: internalization (e.g., the degree to which a set of moral traits are central to one's self-concept) and symbolization (e.g., the degree to which reactions to moral issues are expressed publicly through an individual's actions) (Aquino & Reed, 2002). We focused on the internalization dimension because it reflects the self-determined importance of moral characteristics to one's identity and has been shown to be positively related to moral reasoning and concern for others (Aquino & Reed, 2002). Reed and Aquino (2003), for example, found that individuals having higher (vs. lower) internalization scores reported higher perceived obligations toward outgroup members (Study 1), a lower inclination to endorse inflicting harm on harmdoers (Study 3), and a higher willingness to forgive transgressors (Study 4). Skarlicki et al. (2008) found that employees reporting higher (vs. lower) internalization were less

likely to engage in customer-directed sabotage in response to customer injustice. Following this line of research, we theorize that moral identity is likely to qualify the interaction between customer justice and supervisor justice as follows.

High moral identity. We expect individuals higher in moral identity will be less likely to engage in sabotage in response to low customer justice for two reasons: (a) they experience a lower tendency to punish transgressors, and (b) they are more likely to view sabotage as an ethical and moral violation in and of itself, given that sabotage is a type of morally loaded behavior (Skarlicki et al., 2008). Thus, high moral identity individuals are likely to abide by norms such as "treat the customer as you would want to be treated." As a result, high moral identity is likely to weaken the association between unjust treatment from customers and customer-directed sabotage, regardless of the levels of supervisor justice.

Low moral identity. Individuals lower in moral identity, in contrast, are less concerned with the moral or ethical implications of their justice reactions relative to their high moral-identity counterparts. As a result, sabotage is likely to occur in response to the low levels of customer justice more so among employees with low versus high moral identity. Among individuals who are low on moral identity, however, those who experience low (vs. high) supervisor justice are expected to be more likely to react to low customer justice with sabotage behaviors. This is because, as we argued earlier, supervisor injustice further taxes employees' resources and makes it more difficult for employees to inhibit the retaliation tendency. As such, for those with low levels of moral identity, the negative association between customer justice and customer-directed sabotage should be stronger when supervisor justice is low than when supervisor justice is high.

Taken together, we predict that the exacerbation effect of supervisor injustice on the association between customer justice and customer-directed sabotage is qualified by employees' moral identity because the latter manifests as an important inhibitor of customer-directed sabotage in the first place.

Hypothesis 2: A three-way interaction of customer justice, supervisor justice, and moral identity predicts employees' customer-directed sabotage. The exacerbation effect of supervisor injustice on the customer justice–customer-directed sabotage relationship will be more pronounced among employees with lower versus higher moral identity.

Study 1

Method

Participants. We administered a paper-based survey to customer service representatives in a call center located in North America ($N = 314$). We studied call center employees because they interact frequently with customers (Grandey et al., 2004). Second, call center employment is growing globally (van Jaarsveld & Poster, 2013). Thus, this setting has important implications for organizations worldwide. We invited approximately 500 employees to participate, and completed surveys were received from 314 respondents, representing a 62.8% response rate. The sample consisted of 189 women (60%), with an average tenure of 2.96 years ($SD = 3.16$), and average age of 29.32 years ($SD = 6.40$). The HR

manager confirmed these demographic characteristics were representative of the company's workforce.

Measures. For all measures, we averaged their items to form the indices. Larger numbers signify higher levels of the variable than lower levels.

Customer justice. Skarlicki et al.'s (2008) measure of employee perceptions of fairness was used to assess customer justice, which was developed in a call center setting. Employees responded to eight items with a 5-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 (*never*) to 5 (*frequently*). Sample items included: Please indicate the frequency that a "Customer yelled at you" and "Customer used condescending language (e.g., "you are an idiot")" (reverse-coded items). This scale shows evidence of reliability in North America and Asia (e.g., Wang et al., 2011).

Supervisor justice. We assessed supervisor justice as participants' perceptions of their supervisor's interpersonal and informational justice using Colquitt's (2001) measures indicating explicitly the supervisor as the source. This scale consists of eight items, with four items assessing each of informational and interpersonal justice from the supervisor. The response set consisted of a 5-point Likert-type scale (1 = *strongly disagree*, 5 = *strongly agree*).

Moral identity. We used Aquino and Reed's (2002) measure of internalization to assess moral identity. This scale shows positive psychometric properties (e.g., Aquino, Freeman, Reed, Lim, & Felps, 2009; Skarlicki et al., 2008). The measure asks respondents to imagine a person who possesses nine moral traits (i.e., caring, compassionate, fair, friendly, generous, helpful, hardworking, honest, and kind) and to indicate using five items the extent to which having these traits is important to the respondents' sense of themselves. The response set consisted of a 7-point Likert-type scale (1 = *strongly disagree*, 7 = *strongly agree*).

Customer-directed sabotage. We used Skarlicki et al.'s (2008) measure of employees' sabotage targeting the customer, which was also developed in a call center setting. This scale includes five items with a 5-point scale ranging from 1 (*never*) to 5 (*frequently—more than 7 times over the past month*). Sample items include: "Purposefully transferred the customer to the wrong department" and "Intentionally put the customer on hold for a long period of time." This scale also shows evidence of reliability in

North America and Asia (e.g., Skarlicki et al., 2008; Wang et al., 2011).

Control variables. Consistent with the multifoci perspective and our focus on justice source rather than justice type, we controlled for the organization sources of justice (i.e., distributive and procedural justice from the organization; Colquitt, 2001). Based on Skarlicki et al. (2008), we controlled for employees' moral identity symbolization (Aquino & Reed, 2002), gender, and tenure (Ng & Feldman, 2015).

Results and Discussion

Table 1 presents the means, standard deviations, correlations, and reliability estimates of the variables of interest. As shown, supervisor's interpersonal and informational justice was significantly correlated, $r = .69, p < .01$. We further compared the model fit between a CFA model with 4 lower-order factors (i.e., distributive justice, procedural justice, interpersonal justice, and informational justice; $\chi^2 = 291.07, df = 113, CFI = .96, RMSEA = .07, SRMR = .05$) and a CFA model with two higher-order factors (i.e., first-order interpersonal and informational justice factors loading on one higher-order factor [labeled supervisor justice] and first-order distributive and procedural justice factors loading on the other higher-order factor [labeled organizational justice]; $\chi^2 = 291.52, df = 114, CFI = .96, RMSEA = .07, SRMR = .05$). Although the fit indices were similar for the two CFA models, the CFA model with two higher-order factors is preferable because it is more parsimonious, containing one less parameter. Previous researchers (e.g., Mulaik et al., 1989; Preacher, 2006) have argued that given similar overall model fits, the model with fewer parameters should be preferred over a model with more parameters. Taken together, both the high correlation between supervisor's interpersonal and informational justice and the CFA model comparison results suggest that it is reasonable to combine them into a measure of supervisor justice.

We conducted hierarchical moderated regression analyses to simultaneously test our hypotheses. Following Aguinis (2004) and Aiken and West (1991), we centered the continuous predictors before creating the interaction terms. In Step 1, we entered the

Table 1
Means, Standard Deviations, Correlations, and Internal Consistency Reliabilities (Study 1)

Variables	M	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
1. Gender	.60	.49												
2. Tenure	2.96	3.16	.07											
3. Symbolization	4.82	1.13	.19**	.05	(.83)									
4. Organizationally-focused justice	3.42	.83	.08	-.28**	.14*	(.91)								
5. Supervisor justice	4.33	.74	.05	-.11	.12*	.53**	(.93)							
6. Distributive justice	3.52	1.07	.08	-.28**	.16**	.88**	.50**	(.94)						
7. Procedural justice	3.37	.82	.07	-.25**	.11	.95**	.49**	.70**	(.86)					
8. Interpersonal justice	4.50	.73	.07	-.08	.07	.44**	.90**	.43**	.39**	(.92)				
9. Informational justice	4.17	.88	.03	-.12*	.15**	.53**	.93**	.49**	.49**	.69**	(.90)			
10. Customer justice	2.61	.87	-.00	.12*	.17**	.26**	.16**	.21**	.26**	.10	.18**	(.87)		
11. Internalization	6.05	.93	.28**	.07	.36**	.25**	.26**	.21**	.24**	.27**	.21**	.08	(.78)	
12. Customer-directed sabotage	1.60	.74	-.07	-.07	-.23**	-.20**	-.29**	-.15**	-.21**	-.31**	-.24**	-.18**	-.44**	(.84)

Note. N = 314. Organizationally-focused justice = the combination of distributive justice and procedural justice; Supervisor justice = the combination of interpersonal justice and informational justice.
* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$.

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control variables (i.e., gender, tenure, symbolization, and organization-focused justice). We added customer justice, supervisor justice, and moral identity internalization in Step 2, and the two-way interaction between customer justice and supervisor justice in Step 3. In Step 4, we entered the customer justice and moral identity interaction and the supervisor justice and moral identity interaction terms. In Step 5, we entered the three-way interaction of customer justice, supervisor justice, and moral identity (see Table 2). As shown, customer justice was negatively (Step 2, $B = -.10, p < .05$) related to customer-directed sabotage, supporting Hypothesis 1. In a test of Hypothesis 2, the three-way interaction of customer justice, supervisor justice, and moral identity was a significant predictor of customer-directed sabotage (Step 5, $B = -.19, p < .01$). Simple slope analyses (see Figure 2) and slope difference tests revealed that among employees with lower moral identity, supervisor justice moderated ($B = .29, p < .01$) the relationship between customer justice and sabotage such that this relationship was stronger among employees receiving lower ($B = -.32, p < .001$) versus higher ($B = .09, p > .05$) supervisor justice. Among employees with higher moral identity, in contrast, supervisor justice did not moderate ($B = -.07, p > .05$) the customer justice and sabotage relationship. This relationship was not significant among employees reporting higher ($B = -.11, p > .05$) or lower supervisor justice ($B = -.01, p > .05$). We probed this three-way interaction using Process (Model 3; Hayes, 2013) to generate the Johnson-Neyman region of significance (see Figure 3). As shown in Figure 3, among employees reporting moral identity scores below 5.90 (36.31% of participants), supervisor justice attenuated the negative effect of customer justice on sabotage. For those with moral identity scores above 5.90 (63.69% of participants), supervisor justice did not moderate the customer justice and sabotage relationship.

To examine the effects of combining interpersonal and informational justice into supervisor justice, we conducted a series

of post hoc regression analyses to test whether informational or interpersonal justice alone had the same moderating effects compared to supervisor justice. Specifically, we replicated the regression analyses reported above by replacing supervisor justice with either interpersonal justice or informational justice. The regression coefficients and the resulting three-way interaction plots (see online supplemental Appendix A) showed that the moderation effects of interpersonal justice and informational justice were indeed very similar, and were consistent with the moderating effects of supervisor justice. Moreover, the full model including supervisor justice and the three-way interaction involving supervisor justice accounted for 28.1% of the total variance in sabotage (see Table 2, Step 5), whereas the full model including informational justice and the three-way interaction involving informational justice accounted for 27% of the total variance in sabotage (see online supplemental Appendix A, Table A2) and the full model including interpersonal justice and the three-way interaction involving interpersonal justice accounted for 28% of the total variance in sabotage (see online supplemental Appendix A, Table A1). These findings provide support for combining informational and interpersonal justice into a single construct of supervisor justice because the regression model with supervisor justice is more parsimonious and has relatively stronger predictive validity as compared to treating interpersonal and informational justice separately. The main analyses results also held whether distributive and procedural justice were controlled separately or combined as organizationally focused justice (See online supplemental Appendix C, Table C1).

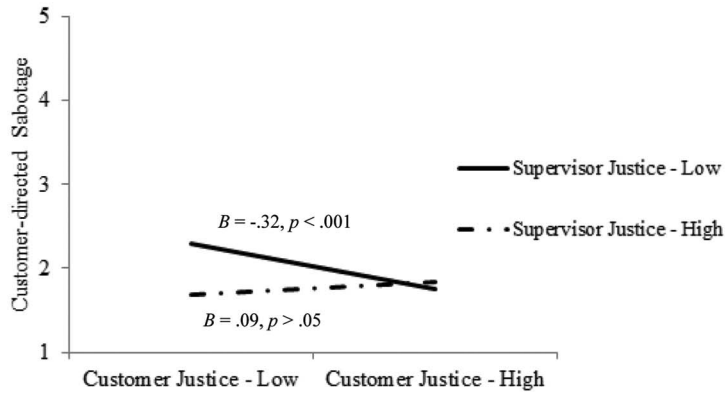
Although our hypotheses were supported, replication was warranted for at least two reasons. First, a plethora of published research has not been replicated, increasing the risk of false-positive results and other misestimated effect sizes (Kepes & McDaniel, 2013). Second, Study 1 consists of a North American sample where individuals tend to be lower in power distance

Table 2
The Joint Effects of Customer Justice, Supervisor Justice, and Moral Identity on Sabotage Toward Customers (Study 1)

Variables	Step 1			Step 2			Step 3			Step 4			Step 5		
	B	SE	β	B	SE	β	B	SE	β	B	SE	β	B	SE	β
Constant	1.61	.06		1.54	.06		1.53	.06		1.53	.06		1.54	.06	
Gender	-.02	.08	-.01	.09	.08	.06	.08	.08	.05	.08	.08	.06	.09	.08	.06
Tenure	-.03	.01	-.12*	-.01	.01	-.05	-.01	.01	-.05	-.01	.01	-.05	-.01	.01	-.06
Symbolization	-.12	.04	-.19****	-.04	.04	-.06	-.04	.04	-.07	-.04	.04	-.07	-.03	.04	-.05
Organizationally-focused justice	-.18	.05	-.20****	.01	.06	.02	.03	.06	.03	.02	.06	.02	.02	.06	.02
Customer justice				-.10	.05	-.11*	-.11	.05	-.13*	-.11	.05	-.13*	-.08	.05	-.09 ⁺
Supervisor justice				-.19	.06	-.19**	-.17	.06	-.18**	-.17	.06	-.17**	-.17	.06	-.17**
Internalization				-.30	.05	-.38****	-.31	.05	-.40****	-.31	.05	-.39****	-.31	.05	-.40****
Customer justice × supervisor justice							.12	.07	.10 ⁺				.11	.07	.08
Customer justice × internalization										.02	.05	.02	.02	.05	.02
Supervisor justice × internalization										.03	.05	.04	.02	.05	.02
Customer justice × supervisor justice × internalization													-.19	.07	-.14**
F		7.98****			14.82****			13.49****			10.81****			10.71****	
R ²		.09			.25			.26			.26			.281	
Adjusted R ²		.08			.24			.24			.24			.254	
ΔR ²					.16****			.01 ⁺			.00			.02**	

Note. N = 314.
⁺ p < .10. * p < .05. ** p < .01. **** p < .001.

Low Moral Identity Internalization



High Moral Identity Internalization

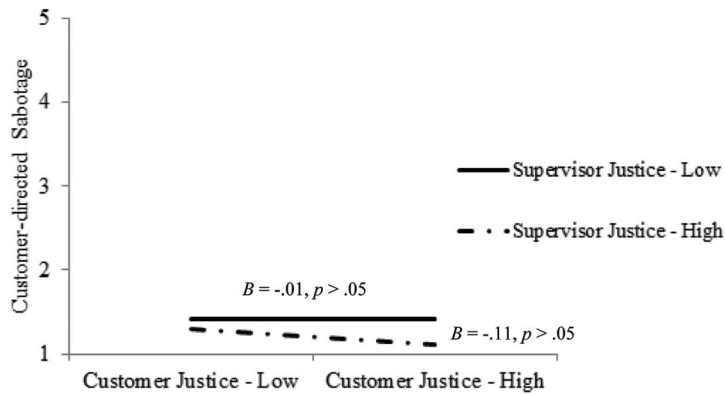


Figure 2. The three-way interaction of customer justice, supervisor justice, and moral identity internalization on customer-directed sabotage (Study 1).

values and higher in individualism (Hofstede & Hofstede, 2005). Shao and Skarlicki (2014) found that employees with this cultural profile engage in more customer-directed sabotage in response to customer injustice than employees with low individualism and high power distance values, who tend to be more willing to tolerate

mistreatment from customers than North American employees (e.g., Begley, Lee, Fang, & Li, 2002; Lee, Pillutla, & Law, 2000). Thus, studying these effects in a highly collectivistic and high power distance culture should provide a stronger test of our hypotheses.

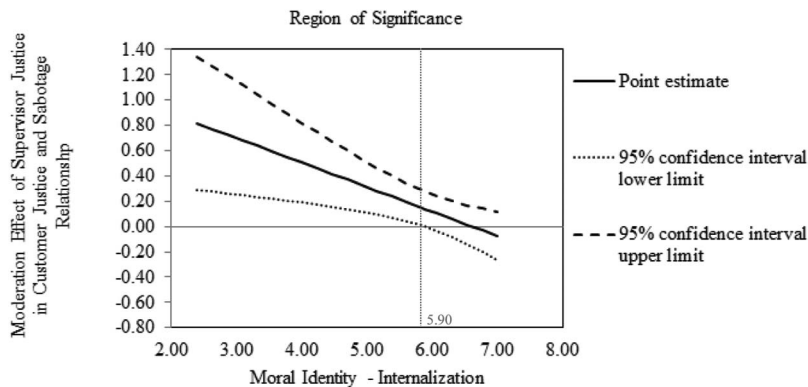


Figure 3. Region of significance (i.e., how the moderating role of supervisor justice in the customer justice and sabotage relationship differs as a function of moral identity internalization; Study 1).

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Study 2

Method

Participants. We administered paper-based surveys to 450 customer service representatives employed in a call center located in South Korea. We selected this site because South Koreans report higher collectivism and power distance values as compared to North Americans (Hofstede & Hofstede, 2005). Moreover, similar to North America, South Korean employees tend to view the boss and customer as having high status (Choi, Kim, Lee, & Lee, 2014). We received completed surveys from 265 respondents (58.9% response rate). Survey respondents were 88% female, had an average age of 37.74 years (*SD* = 6.96), and had an average tenure of 0.84 year (*SD* = 1.14). The HR director confirmed that this sample accurately represented the workforce.

Measures. We used the measures from Study 1. We strictly followed the translation and back translation technique (Brislin, 1970) to ensure scale validity in the South Korean version. Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) of the customer-directed sabotage items revealed that one item—"hung up on the customer"—had a factor loading below the conventional cut-off value (.40). We dropped this item and used the remaining four items for the sabotage measure. Consistent with Study 1, we controlled for organization-focused justice perceptions, moral identity symbolization, gender, and tenure.

Results

Table 3 presents the means, standard deviations, correlations, and reliability estimates for the variables of interest. Consistent with Study 1, supervisor interpersonal justice was significantly correlated with informational justice, $r = .80, p < .01$. We further compared the model fit between a CFA model with four lower-order factors (i.e., distributive justice, procedural justice, interpersonal justice, and informational justice; $\chi^2 = 377.62, df = 113, CFI = .94, RMSEA = .09, SRMR = .05$) and a CFA model with two higher-order factors (i.e., supervisor justice and organizational justice; $\chi^2 = 378.31, df = 114, CFI = .94, RMSEA = .09, SRMR = .05$). Although the fit indices are similar for the two CFA

models, as discussed in Study 1, the CFA model with the two higher-order factors is preferable because it is more parsimonious. Taken together, both the high correlation between supervisor's interpersonal and informational justice and the CFA model comparison results again suggest that it is reasonable to combine them into a single construct of supervisor justice.

We followed the analytic strategy from Study 1 to test our hypotheses. As Table 4 shows, customer justice was negatively (Step 2, $B = -.17, p < .001$) related to customer-directed sabotage, supporting Hypothesis 1. The three-way interaction among customer justice, supervisor justice, and moral identity predicting customer-directed sabotage was significant (Step 5, $B = -.09, p < .05$). Simple slope analyses and slope difference tests revealed that among employees with lower moral identity, low supervisor justice exacerbated ($B = .22, p < .001$) the relationship between customer justice and sabotage such that this relationship was stronger among employees reporting lower ($B = -.39, p < .001$) versus higher ($B = -.05, p > .05$) supervisor fair treatment. In contrast, among employees with higher moral identity, supervisor justice did not moderate ($B = .03, p > .05$) the customer justice and sabotage relationship, and this relationship was not significant for employees reporting either higher ($B = -.05, p > .05$) or lower supervisor justice ($B = -.11, p > .05$). The pattern of the three-way interaction is presented in Figure 4. Figure 5 provides the Johnson-Neyman region of significance. The two-way interaction of customer and supervisor justice on sabotage was significant for 55.1% of the participants (i.e., those with lower moral identity). For those with higher moral identity (44.9% of the participants), the exacerbating effect of supervisor justice was not significant.

As in Study 1, we conducted a series of post hoc regression analyses to test whether informational or interpersonal justice alone had similar moderating effects as compared to supervisor justice. Specifically, we replicated the regression analyses reported above by replacing supervisor justice with either interpersonal justice or informational justice. The regression coefficients and the resultant three-way interaction plots (see online supplemental Appendix B) showed that the moderation effects of interpersonal justice and informational justice were again highly similar, and

Table 3
Means, Standard Deviations, Correlations, and Internal Consistency Reliabilities (Study 2)

Variables	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
1. Gender	.88	.32												
2. Tenure	.84	1.14	.01											
3. Symbolization	4.51	1.03	.10	-.01	(.78)									
4. Organizationally-focused justice	3.20	.57	.08	-.06	.16**	(.89)								
5. Supervisor justice	3.80	.77	.02	-.07	.10	.56**	(.96)							
6. Distributive justice	3.37	.68	.12*	-.04	.14*	.85**	.30**	(.90)						
7. Procedural justice	3.02	.68	.01	-.06	.13*	.84**	.64**	.42**	(.90)					
8. Interpersonal justice	3.83	.77	-.01	-.08	.07	.49**	.94**	.27**	.56**	(.94)				
9. Informational justice	3.77	.85	.05	-.06	.12	.56**	.95**	.29**	.66**	.80**	(.94)			
10. Customer justice	3.91	.63	.06	-.29**	.03	.19**	.07	.22**	.09	.08	.06	(.80)		
11. Internalization	5.72	1.01	.02	.04	.44**	.10	.12	.10	.06	.11	.12	.03	(.74)	
12. Customer-directed sabotage	1.28	.39	-.07	-.01	-.10	-.23**	-.26**	-.14*	-.25**	-.24**	-.24**	-.27**	-.11	(.61)

Note. *N* = 265. Organizationally-focused justice = the combination of DJ and PJ; Supervisor justice = the combination of interpersonal justice and informational justice.
* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$.

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Table 4

The Joint Effects of Customer Justice, Supervisor Justice, and Moral Identity on Sabotage Toward Customers (Study 2)

Variables	Step 1			Step 2			Step 3			Step 4			Step 5		
	B	SE	β	B	SE	β	B	SE	β	B	SE	β	B	SE	β
Constant	1.33	.07		1.32	.07		1.30	.07		1.30	.06		1.29	.06	
Gender	-.05	.07	-.04	-.04	.07	-.04	-.03	.07	-.02	-.03	.07	-.02	-.02	.07	-.02
Tenure	-.01	.02	-.02	-.04	.02	-.10 ⁺	-.04	.02	-.10 ⁺	-.03	.02	-.10	-.04	.02	-.11 ⁺
Symbolization	-.02	.02	-.06	-.02	.02	-.04	-.01	.02	-.04	-.02	.02	-.05	-.02	.02	-.04
Organizationally-focused justice	-.15	.04	-.22 ^{**}	-.04	.05	-.06	-.04	.05	-.06	-.04	.05	-.06	-.05	.05	-.07
Customer justice				-.17	.04	-.27 ^{***}	-.17	.04	-.27 ^{***}	-.16	.04	-.26 ^{***}	-.15	.04	-.25 ^{***}
Supervisor justice				-.10	.04	-.20 ^{**}	-.11	.04	-.22 ^{**}	-.10	.03	-.20 ^{**}	-.10	.03	-.20 ^{**}
Internalization				-.02	.03	-.05	-.02	.02	-.04	-.02	.02	-.04	-.01	.02	-.02
Customer justice \times supervisor justice							.16	.05	.19 ^{**}				.14	.05	.17 ^{**}
Customer justice \times internalization										.07	.03	.13 [*]	.07	.03	.12 [*]
Supervisor justice \times internalization										.02	.03	.04	.03	.03	.06
Customer justice \times supervisor justice \times internalization													-.09	.05	-.12 [*]
F		4.07 ^{**}			6.58 ^{***}			7.38 ^{***}			6.60 ^{***}			6.44 ^{***}	
R ²		.06			.15			.19			.21			.22	
Adjusted R ²		.04			.13			.16			.18			.19	
ΔR^2					.09 ^{***}			.04 ^{**}			.02 [*]			.01 [*]	

Note. $N = 265$.

⁺ $p < .10$. * $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$.

were consistent with the moderating effects of supervisor justice. Moreover, the full model including supervisor justice and the three-way interaction involving supervisor justice accounted for 22% of the total variance in sabotage (see Table 4, Step 5), whereas the full model including informational justice and the three-way interaction involving informational justice accounted for 21% of the total variance in sabotage (see online supplemental Appendix B, Table B2) and the full model including interpersonal justice and the three-way interaction involving interpersonal justice accounted for 21.8% of the total variance in sabotage (see online supplemental Appendix B, Table B1). These findings justify combining informational and interpersonal justice into a single construct of supervisor justice because the regression model with supervisor justice is more parsimonious and has relatively stronger predictive validity as compared to treating interpersonal and informational justice separately. Again, the main analyses results held whether distributive and procedural justice were controlled separately or combined as organizationally focused justice (See online supplemental Appendix C, Table C2).

General Discussion

Research on the multifoci perspective of justice has found mixed results. While justice recipients can indeed direct their justice reactions toward the source of the justice, in reality, employees can perceive injustice from multiple sources simultaneously. Moreover, given the multifoci perspective's emphasis on moral relevance and accountability, it follows that individuals for whom moral concerns are highly salient are likely to respond differently to injustice than others. In the present paper, we explored in two studies whether the interplay between customer and supervisor justice on customer-directed sabotage could be qualified by moral identity.

Our research offers important theoretical insights. First, consistent with the multifoci perspective and the target similarity

framework, low customer justice was associated with higher levels of customer-directed sabotage. More important, however, across two studies, we found that this negative association only manifested when employees reported low moral identity and low supervisor justice. In other words, both low moral identity and low supervisor justice were necessary conditions for customer injustice to translate into customer-directed sabotage. These findings indicate that whereas the low customer justice and low supervisor justice jointly supplied the "fuse" for customer-directed sabotage, the "fuse" was only "lit" among employees who were low in moral identity. In contrast, for those employees with high moral identity, customer-directed sabotage was unlikely to occur even in the combined presence of low supervisor and customer justice. Given that sabotage is a type of morally loaded reaction (cf. Rupp & Bell, 2010), employees' moral identity becomes highly relevant in determining whether multiple sources of injustice will result in such reactions.¹

Second, the current findings are important because they reveal the possibility of unmeasured moderators that could help resolve the conflicting findings from the respective meta-analyses (Colquitt et al., 2013; Rupp et al., 2014), and potentially explain why discrepant results might emerge. Thus, the multifoci perspective would benefit from considering multiple sources and their interactions and theoretically derived moderators in order to clarify the variation in the target similarity effect across different situations and different target-specific reactions. In the present research, the combination of the interaction among the two justice sources and moral identity accounted for 18% (Study 1) and 10% (Study 2) additional variance in customer-

¹ We thank our reviewers for these helpful suggestions.

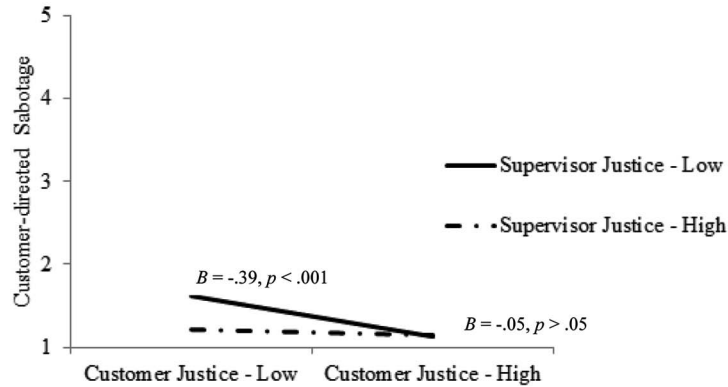
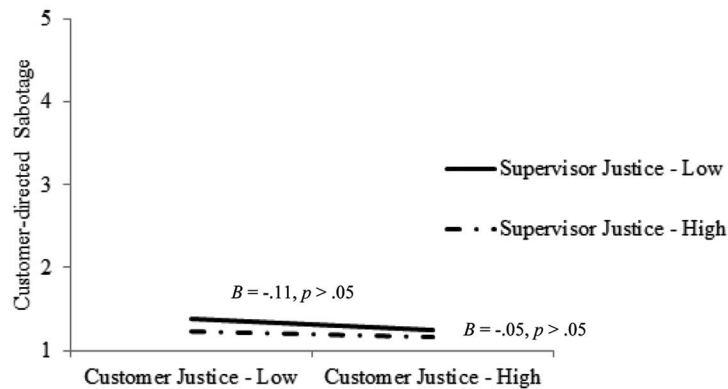
Low Moral Identity Internalization**High Moral Identity Internalization**

Figure 4. The three-way Interaction of customer justice, supervisor justice, and moral identity internalization on customer-directed Sabotage (Study 2).

directed sabotage than the variance explained by customer justice alone.²

Third, an important implication of these findings concerns the dependent variable. As noted above, sabotage is a morally charged outcome of interest. Although we expected that low supervisor justice would exacerbate the association between customer justice and customer-directed sabotage, such a qualifying effect was only consistently observed when employee moral identity was low. It is conceivable, however, that the moderating roles of supervisor justice and moral identity might be more salient in the general population if the reaction variables were not morally loaded (e.g., turnover or organizational citizenship behavior). This research question warrants future study.

Fourth, multifoci research has tended to focus on unfairness reactions in which a specific transgressor is targeted. The perspective taken in the present study, which extends previous multifoci research, is that unfairly treated employees can demonstrate negative reactions toward a social entity (customers in general) as opposed to solely the specific customer who mistreated them. Thus, sabotage reactions might not be as target-specific as multifoci theory would suggest. In the customer service context, this also implies that sabotage reactions to unfair customer treatment could become widespread and have negative implications for customer service.

Practical Implications

Our findings point to the critical role of supervisor justice in employee reactions to low customer justice. As Figures 2 and 4 (upper graphs) show, whereas low supervisor justice amplifies, high supervisor justice appears to neutralize the negative relationship between customer justice and customer-directed sabotage. These findings are important because although firms might be relatively less able to control customer injustice, they have relatively greater influence over how supervisors treat their employees. Second, the exacerbating effects of supervisor injustice were observed only among employees lower on moral identity internalization. This does not mean that high supervisor justice is wasted on employees with higher moral identity. Rather, supervisor justice will be especially important for reducing sabotage arising from unjust customers among employees lower on moral identity. Finally, given that high moral identity individuals tend to refrain

² To calculate the incremental variance explained by the full model over the main effect of customer justice, we compared Step 2 with a Step 3 that included all three main effects, their respective two-way interactions and the three-way interaction term. The results show that Step 3 accounted for an additional 18% (Study 1) and 10% (Study 2) of variance in customer-directed sabotage over and above Step 2.

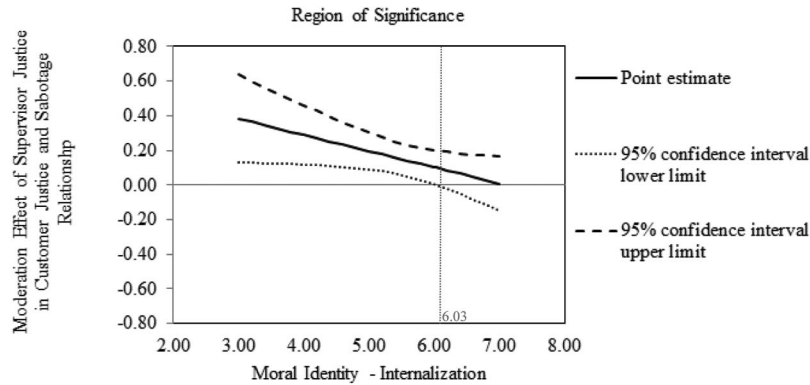


Figure 5. Region of significance (i.e., how the moderating role of supervisor justice in the customer justice and sabotage relationship differs as a function of moral identity internalization; Study 2).

from customer-directed sabotage, firms might consider including moral identity—in particular, internalization—in their selection of front-line employees.

Strengths, Limitations, and Future Research Directions

In terms of strengths, the call center context is well suited to this investigation because of the frequent interactions between employees and customers, and because these employees often report having two bosses, namely, supervisors and customers, yet few studies have examined how this dynamic influences employee reactions to injustice. Second, we tested the above relationships while controlling for organizational sources of justice (i.e., distributive and procedural justice). Third, the fact that the results generalized across different samples in different cultures increases confidence that the findings did not occur by chance.

In terms of limitations, the data are cross-sectional, limiting our ability to draw causal inferences. In defense of our theoretical reasoning, however, it is unlikely that our dependent variable (customer-directed sabotage) could cause a three-way interaction. We also performed post hoc regression analyses to explore the potential for reverse causality. Specifically, we examined the effect of the three-way interaction of customer-directed sabotage, supervisor justice, and moral identity on customer justice. Results revealed that this three-way interaction was not significant in Study 1 ($B = -.14, p > .05$) or Study 2 ($B = .05, p > .05$). That said, future research could adopt experimental or longitudinal design to assess the causal linkage between customer justice and customer-directed sabotage (e.g., Rupp & Spencer, 2006). Second, the data are self-reported so common-method variance could be an issue. Common method variance, however, is less likely to bias interactive effects (Siemsen, Roth, & Oliveira, 2010). With this concern in mind, future research might utilize alternative raters of customer-directed sabotage (e.g., customer ratings), reducing the possibility of common-method variance.

Third, in the present research, we operationalized supervisor justice by combining interpersonal and informational justice. This approach appears justified in light of our analyses showing that interpersonal and informational justice interacted with customer justice and moral identity in a similar fashion as the combined

measure of supervisor justice in predicting sabotage in both North American and South Korean samples. Moreover, as shown in online supplemental Appendices A and B, this approach demonstrates relatively stronger predictive validity in comparison to treating interpersonal and informational justice separately. Given the possibility that supervisors can deliver all four types of justice, however, future research is warranted to establish supervisor justice as a unique construct.

Fourth, both samples consisted of a relatively young, low-wage workforce engaged in short episodic interactions with customers over the telephone. Although these characteristics are representative of call centers (van Jaarsveld & Poster, 2013), to increase the generalizability of our findings, researchers should study other service workforces (i.e., non-call center settings) who build long-term relationships with their customers, interact face to face with customers, and who are relatively well paid (Guttek, 1997). We speculate, for instance, that long-term relationships might result in less customer-directed sabotage in the face of customer injustice due to the ongoing nature of their relationships. As Guttek, Bhappu, Liao-Troth, and Cherry (1999, p. 221) noted, “relationships have the potential to create more satisfying experiences for customers because the self-interested provider is motivated to provide good service in order to retain customers” (see also Axelrod, 1984). It is also important to recognize that employees may behave differently depending on whether the supervisor is able to track/observe the customer sabotage behavior and who might interpret such behavior as intentional. For example, supervisor monitoring may serve as another inhibitor of customer-directed sabotage behaviors during customer service interactions. Future studies could investigate these potential moderators.

Another important research direction is to consider other multifoci interactive effects on customer-directed sabotage, including the organization (e.g., pay or procedures) or treatment from peers. Although our interest focused on customer-directed sabotage, researchers could consider whether employees also engage in supervisor-directed sabotage and whether organizational sources of justice moderate these effects. In addition, while the present study explored general justice perceptions (labeled *entities* by Cropanzano et al. (2001)), it would be important to study specific episodes (labeled *events*). That is, future research might compare

the attenuating effect of general entity-level perceptions (e.g., overall supervisor justice) versus event-level justice perceptions (e.g., supervisor reactions in a specific customer injustice episode; cf. Walker et al., 2014) in the customer justice and sabotage relationship. For instance, did the supervisor show support for the employee or the customer in the episode? Together, these future directions could help to improve understanding of customer-directed sabotage and how target similarity effects vary as a function of both situational and individual factors.

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