

**THE RELATIONSHIP AMONG RETAIL SALEPERSONS'
PERCEPTIONS OF FAIR INTERPERSONAL
TREATMENT, ORGANIZATIONAL
COMMITMENT, AND
EMPLOYEE
DEVIANCE**

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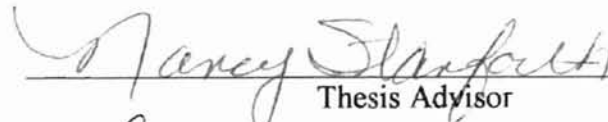
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Recently, many organizations have begun to recognize the importance of fair interpersonal treatment of employees of an organization. It is important not only for the employees' well being, but also for the organization's long term success that employees perceive that they have been treated fairly (Schappe, 1998). Employees who perceive they are treated fairly by their organization, both supervisors and co-workers consequently show more positive or helpful organizational attitudes and behaviors, such positive attitudes and behaviors in turn provide benefits to the organization. In contrast, employees who perceive that they are treated unfairly by their organization exhibit negative attitudes or engage in hostile behaviors, such as lessened job stability, being rude to customers, skipping work, and stealing from the workplace. Therefore, fair treatment in the workplace may be a substantial factor in the organization's overall success.

Employee organizational commitment has emerged as one of the most important variables in the study of organizational attitudes. Employees' commitment to an organization is critical to their job related attitude. A committed employee is less likely to be absent or turnover. A workforce that feels a commitment to the organization will provide many benefits, both seen and unseen. Employees who feel that they are part of the organization will be more likely to remain with the company and will have a higher

level of esteem for their position. The organization itself will benefit from this increase in positive esteem as employees will become more stable, less likely to seek other employment, and will be a valued asset to the workforce. These committed employees will be more focused on the particular needs and goals of the company and more likely to share the views and purposes of the organization.

Employee theft, retaliation, sabotage, counterproductive behavior, tardiness, work slowdown, and other negative workplace behaviors, which are acts against the organization, are defined as employee deviance (Hollinger & Clark, 1983). Employee deviance is an intentional reaction to the organization caused by organizational factors rather than individual characteristics. Hollinger and Clark (1983) reported that when employees perceive unfair treatment from an organization, they are more likely to engage in acts against the organization. Many organizations have become increasingly concerned with employee deviance, as this issue has become a serious and costly problem for both society and organizations (Wimbush & Dalton, 1997). For example, security analysts contend that employee deviance, such as employee theft, is on the rise, and that the cost of these behaviors will increase from \$114 billion in 1990 to \$200 billion by the end of the 2000 (Jones & Kavanagh, 1996). Therefore, business educators and organizational researchers have become increasingly concerned with reducing the incidence of employee deviance in the work place.

Employee deviance is a particularly important issue for retailers since the retail setting provides easy opportunities for employee deviance as compared with other business environments. In the retail organization, retail salespeople are often alone with cash and merchandise and have little supervision. Their special role gives them control of

assets and production (Darden, Hampton, & Howell, 1985). They perform many interrelated tasks that require them to cross the boundaries of their immediate functional responsibilities. They handle a variety of tasks directly related to organizational property and production in isolation with little or no supervision (Levy & Dubinsky, 1983). Therefore, the retail employee is presented with many opportunities to engage in deviant behavior that may have important consequences for the company.

In the retail environment, supervisors and co-workers are important influences on salespeople. Supportive relationships and fair treatment, based on good feedback between the salespeople and their supervisors or co-workers, correlated significantly with positive results in salespeople's attitudes and behaviors (Wolken & Good, 1995). Therefore, among the broader range of interactional treatment within an organization, an employee's perception of how he or she is treated by his or her supervisors and co-workers should be of great concern to the retail organization.

In the retail environment, salespeople are one of the most important sources of differentiation and competitive advantages in the retail sector. The salesperson has the closest contact with the customers on a daily basis, and his or her behavior may directly influence customer satisfaction. Most companies strive to satisfy their customers by providing better quality service for success in today's competitive retail environment, and a salesperson's performance is one of the most important factors for the fulfillment of customer satisfaction. According to Bettencourt and Brown (1997), there is a possible relationship between the fair treatment of employees and the quality of the customer service they provide. The retail company's success may be decided by the characteristics of the salesperson's attitude and behavior directed toward the retail company because the

salesperson has an important role in the company and customer relationship. The salesperson's attitude and behavior directed to the customer represents the customers' perception of the company's overall service quality. Organizations must realize that the salesperson is most important part of its business since a salesperson's attitude and behavior affects customers, other employees, and ultimately, the organization itself.

In spite of the increased interest in interpersonal fairness, organizational commitment, and employee deviance, there is little research focusing on the employee's perception of fair interpersonal treatment, organizational commitment or employee deviance within retail environments. Furthermore, there is little investigation of the relationship between perceived fair interpersonal treatment and employee organizational commitment and employee deviance in the retail environment. Perceived fairness in interpersonal treatment is assumed to be an important antecedent of employee commitment and deviance in the retail environment. The purpose of the present study was to investigate the effect of the relationship between the retail salespersons' perception of fair interpersonal treatment by supervisors and co-workers and that person's expression of organizational commitment and deviance, in terms of property and production.

Hypotheses

The following hypotheses guided this research.

H1: A salesperson's perception of fairness in interpersonal treatment will be positively related to his or her organizational commitment.

H1a: A salesperson's perception of fairness in interpersonal treatment by his or her supervisor will be positively related to his or her organizational commitment.

H1b: A salesperson's perception of fairness in interpersonal treatment by his or her co-workers will be positively related to his or her organizational commitment.

H2: A salesperson's perception of fair interpersonal treatment will be negatively related to the salesperson's employee deviance.

H2a: A salesperson's perception of fairness in interpersonal treatment by his or her supervisor will be negatively related to the salesperson's employee deviance.

H2b: A salesperson's perception of fairness in interpersonal treatment by his or her co-workers will be negatively related to the salesperson's employee deviance.

H2c: A salesperson's perception of fairness in interpersonal treatment will be negatively related to employee property deviance.

H2d: A salesperson's perception of fairness in interpersonal treatment by his or her supervisor will be negatively related to the salesperson's property deviance.

H2e: A salesperson's perception of fairness in interpersonal treatment by his or her co-workers will be negatively related to the salesperson's property deviance.

H2f: A salesperson's perception of fairness in interpersonal treatment will be negatively related to the salesperson's production deviance.

H2g: A salesperson's perception of fairness in interpersonal treatment by his or her supervisor will be negatively related to the salesperson's production deviance.

H2h: A salesperson's perception of fairness in interpersonal treatment by his or her co-workers will be negatively related to the salesperson's production deviance.

H3: An indirect effect of a salesperson's organizational commitment and the salesperson's perception of fair interpersonal treatment will be negatively related to the salesperson's employee deviance.

H3a: An indirect effect of a salesperson's organizational commitment and the salesperson's perception of fair interpersonal treatment will be negatively related to the salesperson's property deviance.

H3b: An indirect effect of a salesperson's organizational commitment and the salesperson's perception of fair interpersonal treatment will be negatively related to the salesperson's production deviance.

H3c: An indirect effect of a salesperson's organizational commitment and the salesperson's perception of fair interpersonal treatment by his or her supervisor will be negatively related to the salesperson's employee deviance.

H3d: An indirect effect of a salesperson's organizational commitment and the salesperson's perception of fair interpersonal treatment by his or her supervisor will be negatively related to the salesperson's property deviance.

H3e: An indirect effect of a salesperson's organizational commitment and the salesperson's perception of fair interpersonal treatment by his or her supervisor will be negatively related to the salesperson's production deviance.

H3f: An indirect effect of a salesperson's organizational commitment and the salesperson's perception of fair interpersonal treatment by his or her co-workers will be negatively related to the salesperson's employee deviance.

H3g: An indirect effect of a salesperson's organizational commitment and the salesperson's perception of fair interpersonal treatment by his or her co-workers will be negatively related to the salesperson's property deviance.

H3h: An indirect effect of a salesperson's organizational commitment and the salesperson's perception of fair interpersonal treatment by his or her co-workers will be negatively related to the salesperson's production deviance.

Definitions of Terms

The following definitions will be used in this study:

Justice: fundamentally, a perceptual phenomenon which is an evaluative judgement about "rightness" of a person's fate or treatment by others (Furby, 1986).

Workplace Fairness: employee perceptions of the "rightness" of outcomes, procedures and interactions within the organization (Bettencourt & Brown, 1997).

Organizational Justice: employee's perceptions of fairness of treatment received from the organization (James, 1993).

Interactional Justice: the quality of interpersonal treatment people receive during the enactment of organizational procedures or social exchange between two parties (Bies & Moag, 1986).

Interpersonal Treatment: includes treatment inside and outside of organizational procedures and policies (Messick, Bloom, Boldizar, & Samuelson, 1985).

Organizational commitment: the strength of an individual's identification with and involvement in a particular organization (Porter, Steers, Mowday, & Boulian, 1974).

Salesperson: a person who is employed by a retail organization to sell merchandise to customers.

Supervisor: a person within an organization who oversees the duties and responsibilities of subordinate employees.

Co-worker: a person in an organization who works with another.

Employee Deviance: voluntary behavior that violates organizational norms and in so doing, threatens the well being of an organization, its members, or both (Robinson & Bennett, 1995).

Assumptions

The following assumptions apply to the study:

1. Participants were able to answer the instrument honestly and truthfully.
2. The instruments accurately measure the salesperson's perceptions of fair interpersonal treatment, organizational commitment, and employee deviance.
3. Participants from the selected convenience sample accurately represent the population of salespeople employed by apparel retailers.
4. Participants were able to predict their own behavior to stated situations.

Limitations

The following limitations apply to the study:

1. The sample is a convenience sample that may not represent the average retail salesperson.
2. The instrument may not measure all the factors related to the salesperson's perception of interpersonal treatment.

3. The instrument may not measure all the factors related to the salesperson's organizational commitment.
4. The instrument may not measure all the factors related to the salesperson's deviance.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

This study is based on the equity theory first developed by Adams (1963,1965). Equity theory is useful in helping to understand how the employee's perceptions of interpersonal fairness in the organization affect the employee's organizational attitude and behavior. According to equity theory, employees who have negative perceptions of interpersonal treatment may decide to lower their inputs to the organization, such as by being absent or reducing work effort, to increase the ratio of outcomes to inputs. In contrast, employees who have positive perceptions of interpersonal treatment may decide to raise their inputs to the organization, such as by making scarifies or increasing work efforts, to decrease the ratio of outcomes to input. The retail store was chosen as the venue for this research. The relationship among the salesperson's perception of interpersonal fairness and his or her organizational commitment and deviance in retail settings was examined based on equity theory.

The following sections will review the literature related to equity theory, interactional justice, organizational commitment, and employee deviance.

Equity Theory

Adams' equity theory (1963, 1965) incorporated the notion of social comparison into a quasi-mathematical formula. The essential idea is that when individuals work for an organization they contribute certain inputs, and based on their inputs, they expect an equitable outcome.

Inputs and outcomes are major components of the relationship in equity theory. Inputs are those commodities a person contributes to the interaction, such as experiences, skills, work effort, past training, and time (Adams, 1963, 1965). Outcomes are what results from the interaction, such as pay, rewards, supervisory treatment, and fringe benefits (Adams, 1963, 1965). Equity theory claims that people evaluate the ratio of their own perceived work outcomes to their own perceived work inputs, in comparison to the perceived corresponding ratios of equal others, such as co-workers (Adams, 1963, 1965)

When individuals evaluate exchange relationships, if the ratios are perceived unequal, the party whose ratio is higher is theorized to be inequitably overpaid which causes them to feel guilty; whereas, the party whose ratio is lower is theorized to be inequitably underpaid, causing them to feel angry (Adams, 1963, 1965). According to Adams (1965), equity is said to exist whenever the perceived ratio of a person's outcomes to inputs is equal to the ratio of others' outcomes to inputs.

$$\frac{\text{Outcomes A}}{\text{Inputs A}} = \frac{\text{Outcomes B}}{\text{Inputs B}}$$

Inequality is experienced when the two ratios are unequal, either:

$$\frac{\text{Outcomes A}}{\text{Inputs A}} < \frac{\text{Outcomes B}}{\text{Inputs B}} \quad \frac{\text{Outcomes A}}{\text{Inputs A}} > \frac{\text{Outcomes B}}{\text{Inputs B}}$$

According to this formula, individuals decide which of their inputs entitle them to outcomes. The individuals then calculate the positive or negative value of each input, sum the value, and divide that sum into the sum of the outcomes received (Adams, 1963, 1965). Two important aspects of equity theory should be considered. First, the conditions necessary to produce equity or inequity are based on the individual's perceptions of inputs and outcomes. Second, inequity exists when a person is relatively underpaid or relatively overpaid.

Consequence of Equity or Inequity

According to Adams (1965), there are four major postulates of the equity theory: perceived inequity creates tension in the individual; the amount of tension is proportional to the magnitude of the inequity; the tension created in the individual will motivate him or her to reduce the inequity; the strength of the motivation to reduce inequity is proportional to the perceived inequity. The presence of inequity motivates the individual to change the situation through behavior or cognitive means to return to a condition of equity.

There are alternative methods through which individuals reduce inequity (Adams, 1965). These reactions are classified as being either behavioral, such as altering job performance, or psychological, such as altering perceptions of work outcomes (Greenberg, 1984). The alternative reactions include cognitively distorting inputs or outcomes, taking actions designed to change the inputs or outcomes, leaving the organization, and changing the comparison other.

Organ and Konovsky (1989) suggested that people increase or decrease their input relative to their outcomes based on their perception of organizational treatment in the

workplace. If employees perceive that they are over-rewarded by their organization, they may increase their inputs. Individuals who perceive that they are under-rewarded may take a course of action, which would reduce their level of input. They will put forth less effort, make fewer personal sacrifices, or leave the organization if corrective increases in outcomes are not made (Organ & Konovsky, 1989).

Based on equity theory, anger for perceived under-reward and guilt for perceived over-reward produce tension. The tension caused by anger or guilt increases as perceived inequity increases, and this situation motivates the employee to reduce the tension. The greater the perceived inequity, the stronger the resulting emotional state and the stronger the individual's desire to restore equity (Mowday, 1991). Therefore, equity theory involves a three-stage subsequent response to perceived unfairness. First, employees perceive an inequity. Secondly, employees experience an emotional response to this inequity. Acting on this emotional response, employees are then motivated to change the situation to re-establish equity.

Implications of Equity Theory

Equity theory has been applied in organizational settings. To reduce perceived inequity, a person may alter job inputs or outcomes in some way. Absenteeism and turnover, as a form of withdrawal behavior, is one method of inequity resolution. Dittrich and Carrell (1973) studied the relationship between employees' perception of equitable treatment, employee job satisfaction, and absence and turnover rates among 150 clerical employees in 20 departments of a large metropolitan area office. The longitudinal study used a field setting to assess employee perceptions of equity in treatment and job

satisfaction. A paper and pencil instrument was used to collect the data. Absenteeism and turnover rates were collected from personnel records for the 11 months immediately following the questionnaire administration. The study revealed that employees' perceptions of equity are positively related to job satisfaction, and negatively related to absenteeism and turnover. Their results suggested that the employees' negative perceptions of equitable treatment in the workplace increases withdrawal behavior as a consequent reaction to inequity.

Greenberg (1990) studied the effects of underpayment inequity on employee theft rate as a reaction of inequity. Data were collected from employees working for 30 weeks in three branch-manufacturing plants located in different areas of the Midwestern United States using two different measures, actuarial data on employee theft and self-reports for tapping some of the processes assumed to be underlying theft behavior. The results showed that workers experiencing underpayment inequity attempted to redress that inequity by raising their inputs through pilfering from the organization. Indeed, when workers experienced a pay reduction, they reported feeling underpaid and stole over twice as much as they did when they felt equitably paid. The results of this study were consistent with equity theory because it showed that a pay reduction leads to feelings of frustration and resentment, which motivated the aggressive acts of theft.

These findings suggested that withdrawal behavior or employees' acts of deviance be increased by their beliefs that their organization defaulted in their obligations to them by reducing their outcomes. Actions such as unfair treatment or reducing pay then led to employees' withdrawal behavior or theft and could be understood as a manifestation of feelings of unfair treatment.

Organizational Justice

Greenberg (1987) first introduced the term “organizational justice” to refer to perceptions of fairness within the workplace. “Organizational justice is the perceived fairness of the distribution of outcomes and procedures used to make these distributions” (Citera & Rentsch, 1993, p.211). James (1993) defined organizational justice as the individual’s and group’s perceptions of the fairness of treatment received from organizations. There are two components of organizational justice, distributive justice and procedural justice. Distributive justice refers to the perceived fairness of the distribution of outcomes, while procedural justice refers to the perceived fairness of the rules.

In the late 1980s, organizational justice researchers expanded beyond the traditional procedural and distributive types of justice and began to explore interactional justice, the interpersonal side of organizational justice which refers to the manner in which people were treated in interpersonal interactions and encounters (Greenberg, 1993a).

Definition of Interactional Justice

Interactional justice as a broad concept is defined and classified in several ways. Some researchers suggested that interactional justice is part of procedural justice (Greenberg, 1993b; Tyler & Bies, 1990) and other researchers suggested that interactional justice should be separated from procedural justice (Bies & Moag, 1986; Bies & Shapiro, 1987). Greenberg (1993b) suggested that interactional justice is the social aspect of procedural justice. Tyler and Bies (1990) suggest that interactional justice is an interpersonal aspect of procedural justice and prefer to use the term “interpersonal context

of procedural justice” instead of interactional justice (p.81). Procedural fairness judgements are affected, in part, by the interpersonal treatment one receives. Interactional justice was considered as encompassing the social aspects of procedural justice in some research. However, other research (Bies & Shapiro, 1987) suggested that interactional justice should be separated from procedural justice, although the two concepts are related. Interactional justice represents the enactment of procedures, rather than the development of the procedures themselves. Procedural justice refers to the structural quality of the decision process; whereas, interactional justice refers to a social exchange between two participants. Bies and Moag (1986) stated that “interactional justice refers to the quality of interpersonal treatment people receive during the enactment of organizational procedures”(p.44). Bies and Shapiro (1987) suggested that interactional justice should be studied as an independent aspect of justice as distinct from procedural justice. Both viewpoints are reasonable when fair treatment is focused on social situations of judgement and decision making.

Interactional Justice in the Organization

This study focused on interactional justice. Research has shown that compared to other types of organizational justice, whether distributive or procedural justice, interactional justice is the most important determinant of organizational attitude or behavior. For example, Barling and Phillips (1992) found that interactional justice was the most significant predictor of organizational attitudes and behaviors as compared with distributive and procedural justice. They investigated the effects on organizational outcomes of three types of organizational justice-interactional, formal procedural, and

distributive justice. In a simulation using vignettes, 213 full-time Canadian college students perceived that interactional justice influenced trust management, affective commitment, and withdrawal behaviors. In addition, they found that formal procedures influenced only trust in management, and that distributive justice did not influence any of the three outcomes.

Greenberg (1993b) proposed that when people were asked about what constituted unfair treatment in an organization, people focused on interpersonal factors rather than structural factors, such as distributive or procedural justice. Therefore, concern about interactional justice has recently been raised in many organizations.

Interpersonal Treatment

Interpersonal treatment refers to the social interactions between an individuals and others within the organization, such as supervisors, co-workers, or subordinates (Greenberg, 1993a). Interpersonal treatment is how others in the organization show concern for individuals regarding the outcomes they receive. It has impact in a variety of contexts in which organizational participants interact, such as the workplace, corporate recruiting, and employee interviews (Greenberg, 1990). Greenberg (1993a) stated that “interpersonal treatment focuses on the consequences of procedural outcomes instead of knowledge of the procedures leading to outcomes” (p.84). Tajfel and Turner (1979) stated that social relationships with other people in our lives is valuable because people enhance their self-identity and self-worth through these relationships. Perceived fair treatment by others leads people to feel that they are being dealt with in a dignified and respected

manner, leading to an enhanced sense of self-identity and self-worth (Brockner, Tyler & Cooper-Schneider, 1992).

Several studies provide evidence that people consider the nature of their treatment by others as a determinant of fairness. For example, Bies (1986) conducted two studies to investigate the important criteria of interpersonal treatment. He asked MBA job candidates prior to the job search process to list the criteria they would use to evaluate fairness. The results showed that honesty, courtesy, timely feedback, respect for rights, and reasonable justifications for the decisions they made were important fairness criteria. When job applicants received quick feedback, they judged the recruiting procedures to be fairer than when feedback was delayed. There are four attributes of fairness that deal with the nature of the communication while the interaction between two people is occurring, "truthfulness," "respect," "propriety of questions," and "justification" (Bies & Moag, 1986, p.47). In a follow up study, Bies (1986) asked another group of MBA students to describe instances of fair and unfair treatment they received during the course of employment interviews. Consistent with the previous study, the same four elements of interpersonal treatment received were expressed as important to fairness regardless of the outcome of the interview. The results revealed that job candidates who were displeased with outcomes they received, such as not receiving an offer, believed those outcomes to be fairer when the authority figure demonstrated concern for their plight than when no such concern was communicated (Bies, 1986). These results suggested that interpersonal treatment is considered an important aspect of fair treatment, independent of the outcomes. It appears that the quality of the interpersonal treatment received is a major determinant of people's assessment of fair treatment.

The Role of Interactional Justice in Organizational Behavior and Attitudes

The exchange mechanism is most often used to explain the relationship between employees' perceptions of fair interpersonal treatment and employees' behavior in workplace. Specifically, an employee who has positive perceptions of interpersonal justice consequently enacts positive reactions, such as positive organizational attitude and behavior. Organizations expect that employees will devote effort, skills, and abilities with positive attitudes and behaviors for the organization, while employees expect to be treated in a respectful, trusted, and polite manner by the organization (Randall, 1993).

Manogram, Stauffer, and Conlon (1994) assessed the relationship among three fairness dimensions (interactive, distributive, and formal procedures), and employees' organizational behavior and attitude. Subjects were 698 employees in a large automotive parts manufacturing company in the Midwest United States. Data were collected using two survey instruments. One instrument was the supervisor evaluation, which included the measure of organizational citizenship behavior "acts of cooperation, helpfulness, suggestions of goodwill and altruism" (Manogram, Stauffer, & Conlon, 1994, p.249). The second instrument was completed by the employees to measure leader-member-exchange, three dimensions of justice perceptions, job satisfaction, commitment, and organizational citizenship behavior. The results showed that interactional justice is the most critical dimension of fairness to have an impact on organizational citizenship behavior. However, this impact is indirectly realized through leader-member exchange. The results suggested that organizational citizenship behaviors can be enhanced through fairness in supervisor-

subordinate interactions, which in turn will enhance the quality of leader-member exchange and organizational citizenship behavior (Manogram, Stauffer, & Conlon, 1994).

Brockner, Tyler, and Cooper-Schneider (1992) investigated the relationship between individuals' perceptions of fairness of decisions rendered by the organization and organizational commitment, work effort, and turnover intention. The study examined the relationship between employees' perceptions of fairness in the decision ruling used to layoff other employees, and organizational commitment, work effort, and turnover intention in financial service organizations. Participants were 150 employees of a financial service organization that had undergone layoffs five to seven months prior to this study. Data were collected by asking participants to complete the survey containing the perceived fairness of the decision rule, organizational commitment, work effort, and turnover intention scales. The results showed that the employee's perceptions of fairness in the process of decision rules were positively related to his or her organizational commitment and work effort and negatively related to his or her turnover intention.

Moorman (1991) examined the relationship between perceptions of fairness and employees' organizational citizenship behaviors in a sample of the employees from two medium-sized companies in the mid-western United States. Data were collected in Company A by meeting with groups of employees and asking them to complete a pencil-paper questionnaire containing the justice scales (distributive, procedural, and interactional justice) and job satisfaction. Data were collected in Company B by sending the same questionnaire by mail. Employees' organizational citizenship behaviors, such as altruism, courtesy, conscientiousness, sportsmanship, and civic virtue, were measured separately by asking the supervisors to rate the employees. Equity theory was the theoretical basis to

investigate the relationship between fairness and citizenship behavior. Structural equation analysis with LISREL 7 was used. Support for a relationship between perceptions of interactional justice and four of five citizenship dimensions, altruism, courtesy, conscientiousness, and sportsmanship was found. However, perceptions of distributive justice failed to influence any dimension of citizenship. The results were consistent with equity theory in that employees who perceive unfairness may reduce the frequency or magnitude of their citizenship; whereas, employees who perceive they are fairly treated will see continued citizenship as a reasonable contribution to the system. The results also suggested that employees who believe that their supervisor personally treated them fairly appeared to be more likely to exhibit good citizenship behavior.

These findings demonstrate that employees' perceptions of fair interpersonal treatment by the organization play an important role for the benefit of both employees and organization itself. When employees perceive fairness from the organization, they are more likely to provide more positive organizational behavior. Conversely, employees who perceive that they are treated unfairly by their supervisor or organization appear to be more likely to react with hostile behaviors. Thus, the exchange relationship revealed the importance of fair interpersonal treatment to employees and organizations. From the employees' positive perceptions of interpersonal treatment, the organization receives positive organizational behavior and a reduction in negative workplace behavior.

Supervisor or Co-workers Support

Supervisors and co-workers are significant individuals who give interpersonal treatment to employees within the organization. There is little research exploring the relationship between interpersonal relations between employees and their supervisors or co-workers at work and employees organizational behavior (Valerius, 1998).

Babin and Boles (1996) examined key aspects of a retail employee's perceived work environment and how these perceptions influence job outcomes. Specifically, a causal modeling approach was used to test relationships among 261 front-line food service providers. The model represents relationships between work involvement and supervisory support and the ensuing role conflict and role ambiguity. Results suggested that employees' perceptions of co-worker involvement and supervisory support can reduce stress and increase job satisfaction.

Employees generally will have more positive organizational behavior when they perceive they have been treated fairly on an interpersonal basis. We expect that employees would express their resentment to perceived interpersonal unfairness by showing unfavorable outcomes.

Organizational Commitment

Many studies exist pertaining to the subject of commitment. Some of these studies have dealt with the antecedents, predictors, and relation of subjects to diverse commitment situations. Mathieu and Zajac (1990) conducted a meta-analysis of some antecedents, correlates, and consequences of commitment. Within their study, they provided an analysis

of the various concepts associated with commitment. The study is significant as it consolidates many of the concepts, which have been historically associated with commitment. Organizational commitment and guide the discussion through a concept forwarded by Porter, Steers, Mowday, and Boulian (1974).

There are three aspects to organizational commitment definition: 1) a strong belief in and acceptance of the organization's goals and values; 2) a willingness to exert considerable effort on behalf of the organization; and 3) a strong desire to maintain membership in the organization (Porter, Steers, Mowday, & Boulian, 1974). This suggests that commitment is not a passive reaction, but rather an active choice made by an employee. As an interactive relationship, commitment is a sense of mutual support stemming from both the organization and the employee in tandem.

Due to the fact that commitment is an inclusive subject, it may be perceived and examined in several ways. Each person brings to the argument his or her own concepts about commitment. In a 1985 study, Reichers stated that the commitment of an individual cannot be generalized to cover that of every other employee. One employee's commitment may be based on the organization's esteem for its employees, while another employee's commitment may be a function of the organization's dedication to customer service. From this it can be extrapolated that an employee's commitment can arise from any number of sources, thus making the construct of employee commitment difficult to gauge. Of some small relief to this problem, Becker and Billings (1993) devised "commitment profiles" which are in some measure able to reveal a pattern of commitment as related to other behaviors and demeanors of individuals. These commitment profiles are divided into those who are globally committed, committed, locally committed, and uncommitted persons.

Each individual is assessed at specific levels of commitment to their supervisor, work, upper management, and the organization as a whole. In contradiction to this, DeCotiis and Summers (1987) asserted that there is no way to type an individual's level of commitment, as no personality type is more likely than another to display commitment. Though no single individual is predisposed to be commitment to an organization, they can be stratified into commitment types that are based on other, more easily measures personal characteristics. As the commitment profile offers a way of quantifying commitment, albeit only to a degree, it is of great interest.

Organizational Commitment and Interaction with the Organization

Organizational commitment is demonstrated by the fluidity of exchange between the employee and the company. Neither entity can survive without the other, and thus a delicate balance is struck. "Employees are expected to expend effort and energy, utilizing their skills, training and abilities and in return receive organizational rewards such as compensation, fringe benefits, promotion" (Dubinsky & Levy, 1989, p.222). The employee is provided with benefits for working with the company, and the company is repaid in higher earnings and a work force that is both experienced and skilled. Individuals enter into employment with diverse expectations. Many may seek to apply skills they have acquired in previous positions and to fulfill their economic and professional needs. Employee commitment will be highest when the employees feel that their expectations have been met (Steers, 1977). Further, "when an organization commits to meeting the needs and expectations of its members, its members commit to service the organization in terms of its goals and values" (DeCotiis & Summers, 1987, p.467).

If the employee feels a reciprocal support from the organization, his or her own support will likely increase. For example, “actions by the organization or its representatives are the basis for an employee’s perception of support from the organization, and the employee responds to this perception of support with commitment to organization” (Hutchison, 1997, p.169). Additionally, rewards from the organization, whether they are perceived or concrete, also contribute to this dynamic. If employees feel that their performances engender rewards, such as promotion or recognition of their achievements, then they are more likely to have higher levels of commitment to the organization. Thus the level of reciprocity of the relationship between employees and the organization enhances the importance of organizational commitment to the employees and vice versa. An employee’s perception of the organization’s fairness affects the employee’s commitment to the organization in this reciprocal relationship. When the employee is committed, the organization receives fiscal returns, as well as a decrease in turnover and tardiness. Finally, society as whole gains from higher productivity, work quality, and lower rates of job movement.

Organizational Justice and Organizational Commitment

The attributes of an organization can be said to significantly benefit from employee commitment to an organization. Perceived fairness is one of the most important variables that potentially influence organizational commitment. Many aspects of the justice variables have been studied. Proof of a relationship between employee organizational commitment and perceived fairness has been offered.

Konovsky and Cropanzano (1991) studied the relationship among two types of justice (procedural justice and distributive justice) and employee attitudes such as commitment, job satisfaction, and management trust, as well as an employee's turnover intention. Survey data from 195 employees in a pathology laboratory indicated that the company's characteristics regarding justice were predictors of employee attitudes and behaviors. Specifically they found, in a study about the perceived fairness of employee drug testing, that an employee's organizational commitment was significantly related to the explanations from decision makers about the drug testing procedure. These results demonstrated the importance of organizational justice perceptions for predicting employee attitudes and behavior.

Baring and Phillips (1993) investigated the how different aspects of justice, interactional justice, formal procedural justice, and distributive justice impact commitment, management trust, and withdrawal behavior. Data were collected from 213 full-time Canadian students using a questionnaire. They ascertained that interactional justice significantly influenced organizational commitment. The result showed that interactional justice and formal procedural justice were significant predictors of organizational attitudes in as much as it predicts a greater number of outcomes (Baring & Phillips, 1993).

Overall, it is believed that an employee's view of level of their organizational fairness among organizational justice variables will affect the employee's organizational commitment.

Employee Deviance

A number of terms are related to employee deviance. Organizational behavior researchers have used or labeled employee deviance in different ways. Dishonesty, immorality, retaliation, or counterproductive behavior and employee deviance are all classified as types of employee deviance.

Robinson and Bennett (1995) defined employee deviance as "voluntary behavior that violates significant norms and in so doing threatens the well-being of an organization, its members, or both" (p.556). This definition focuses on violations harmful to the organization itself rather than workgroups or subcultures. Employees' lack of motivation to conform to normative expectations of the organizational context or motivation to violate those expectations is cause of employee deviance (Robinson & Bennett, 1995).

Kaplan (1975) stated that employee deviance is voluntary action committed by employees who have become motivated to violate normative expectations of the social context. He stated that deviance should be defined in terms of the standards of a specified social group rather than in reference to a system of absolute moral standards.

Skarlicki and Folger (1997) used the term retaliation instead of deviance and suggested that when people perceive that they have been treated unfairly at work, they tend to find a way to "strike back" and somehow even the score. This action is labeled as retaliation. The term retaliation is not distinct from employee deviance since the retaliatory behavior measures used in the study were similar to deviant workplace behavior measures studied by Robinson and Bennett (1995). Specifically, defined organizational

retaliatory behavior measurements are not severely negative behaviors but little actions used retributively (Skarlicki & Folger, 1997).

Lewis (1985) stated that workplace deviance is distinct from unethical workplace behavior because deviance focuses on behavior that violates organizational norms while unethical behavior focuses on what is right and wrong when judged in terms of justice, law, or other societal guidelines determining the morality of behavior.

Murphy (1993) defined employee deviance as one type of workplace dishonesty. Dishonesty in the workplace is defined in terms of the extent to which employees in organizations do not abide by consistent and rational ethical principles related to the obligation to respect the truth. Employee deviance is included in unethical workplace behavior because ethics guide the employees behavior in the workplace based on that which is good or bad or more generally acceptable and unacceptable behavior in the workplace (Murphy, 1993).

Overall, the descriptions and explanations of previous studies revealed that counterproductive behaviors, retaliation, and theft are theoretically similar and included under the broader category of employee deviance. Although each study focused on a slightly different aspect of the phenomenon, the overall concepts had commonalities. Employee deviance such as counterproductive behavior, retaliations, and employee theft are not random actions, but rather purposive responses to the organizational factors within the bounds of the working place. In this study, employee deviance will focus on a definition established by Murphy (1993) and Robinson and Benett (1995). Employee deviance is purposive violations of norms that threaten the well being of organization.

Categories of Employee Deviance

A typology of employee deviance is useful for people to better understand the term. Employee deviance has been categorized in several ways.

Robinson and Bennett (1995) developed a classification of deviant workplace behaviors using multidimensional scaling techniques. The results suggested that deviant workplace behaviors vary along two dimensions: minor versus serious and interpersonal versus organizational. Employee deviance falls into four categories: production deviance, property deviance, political deviance, and personal aggression. Production deviance includes leaving early, taking excessive breaks, intentionally working slowly, and wasting resources. Property deviance is sabotaging equipment, accepting kickbacks, lying about hours worked, and stealing from a company. Political deviance is showing favoritism, gossiping about co-workers, blaming co-workers, and competing non-beneficially. Personal aggression includes sexual harassment, verbal abuse, stealing from co-workers, and endangering co-workers.

Hollinger (1986) categorized employee deviance into types: property and production deviance. He examined the self-reported involvement in both property and production deviance among 9,175 employees randomly sampled from three industry sectors in three metropolitan areas. The finding supported that conceptual separation of these two forms of employee deviance is reliable. Involvement in property deviance seems to be primarily the result of a lack of commitment to the organization. Production deviance is better understood using a combination of employee's organizational

commitment and involvement. Both forms of workplace deviance were significantly more likely to involve younger employees

Employee Deviance in the Organizational Setting

Mangione and Quinn (1975) investigated the relationship of counterproductive behavior and drug use in the workplace to job dissatisfaction. Data were collected from 1,496 subjects randomly selected from the total sample for the 1972-1973 Quality of Employment Survey. The subjects were interviewed about work related values, quality of employment, work related problems, and reactions to the job in terms of job satisfaction. Subjects were also given a pencil-paper questionnaire about counterproductive behavior and drug use at work. They classified two types of employee deviance: doing little or nothing, which is producing output of poor quality or quantity, and doing something that is counterproductive behavior, which is purposely damaging organizational property (Mangione & Quinn, 1974).

Hollinger and Clark (1982) investigated the relationship between employee deviance and employees' job satisfaction. Self-reported data were collected from about 5000 subjects in three types of organizational settings. The results revealed that job satisfaction was strongly related to reported involvement in deviant behavior against the organization. They integrated numerous deviant workplace behaviors into two categories, product and property deviance. Property deviance is employee behavior directed against the property and assets of the workplace such as employee theft, pilferage, and embezzlement. Whereas, production deviance is various forms of employee behavior

violating organizational norms based on the quantity and quality of work performed (Hollinger & Clark, 1982).

Clark and Richard (1983) studied theft by employees in organizations over a three-year longitudinal study among 10,000 employees associated with a federal governmental agency, a large state university, a non-profit business educational organization, various professional associations, and business corporations. The results revealed that more than fifty percent of subjects reported they had experienced theft action. The retail setting had the highest theft rate.

Slora (1989) investigated the incidence, amount, and types of employee deviance occurring within fast food restaurants and supermarket stores using a four stage anonymous survey mailing process. Employees from 341 fast food restaurant and from 234 supermarkets indicated types of theft and counterproductive behaviors in which they engaged. Many employees from both industries admitted to costly theft and other counterproductive work practices. The most common types of employee deviance were practices related to the theft of company cash and property and time theft. For fast food units, 62% of respondents admitted to some type of cash or property theft and for supermarket stores, 43% admitted to some type of cash or property theft (Slora, 1989).

Employees' Deviance and Organizational Unfairness

Few studies have investigated the impact of organizational unfairness on negative organizational behavior, such as employee deviance. Greenberg (1990) studied the relationship between employee theft and underpayment inequity. When the manufacturing plant workers' pay was temporarily reduced without adequate explanation from

management, employee theft rose to a higher rate. The subjects who received high levels of interactional justice (interpersonal treatment and informational treatment) responded with a low theft rate. Therefore, these results clearly demonstrated that the theft rate and level of social justice were directly related (Greenberg, 1990). Greenberg (1990) explained the phenomenon in terms of equity theory, specifically that pilfering from their organization was an attempt to restore feelings of equity by increasing their outputs.

Skarlicki and Folger (1997) investigated the relationship between distributive, procedure and interactional justice, and organizational retaliation behavior in a sample of 240 first-line manufacturing employees. Data were collected using a questionnaire to measure organizational retaliatory behavior with peers rating their coworkers by means of behavioral observation scale. They found that distributive justice and retaliation were found only when there was low interactional and procedural justice. The two-way interaction of distributive and procedural justice was observed only at a low level of interactional justice, and the two-way interaction of distributive and interactional justice was observed only at a low level of procedural justice. This finding implies that "when supervisors show adequate sensitivity and concern toward employees, treating them with dignity and respect, those employees are somewhat willing to tolerate the combination of an unfair pay distribution and unfair procedures that would otherwise maximally contribute to retaliatory tendencies" (Skarlicki & Folger, 1997, p.438).

Perception of Fair Interpersonal Treatment and Organizational Commitment and Employee Deviance

As employees' organizational attitudes or behaviors are more influenced by organizational variables rather than individual characteristics, it is possible that an organizational variable such as fair interpersonal relationship might help to increase employee organizational commitment and reduce the employee deviant behavior within the workplace. The employee who perceives unfairness in interpersonal treatment in his or her workplace feels anger and stress and will then be more likely to respond with less commitment to his or her organization or workplace deviance. No literature was found relating the perception of fair interpersonal treatment and organizational commitment and employee deviance behavior in the retail environment even though these topics are important issues in today's work environment. Therefore we think these are important areas to study. The employee's fairness perceptions may increase the employee's positive attitude such as organizational commitment and reduce employee's negative behavior, especially employee deviance.

Our research only focused on the salesperson's perceptions of the fairness of interpersonal treatment in their work environment. Specifically we have conceptualized interpersonal treatment as an organizational variable rather than at the individual level. We believed that the supervisor and co-worker are the most significant others to employees; thus we will assess the salesperson's perceptions of how employees are treated by supervisors and co-workers in the organization. If this relationship is positive, we might expect more commitment to the organization and less deviance behavior, resulting in

benefits to both the salesperson and the organization. Therefore this study focused on a salesperson's perception of the fairness of interpersonal treatment by his or her supervisors and co-workers and how this might impact on employee organizational commitment and employees' deviant behavior.

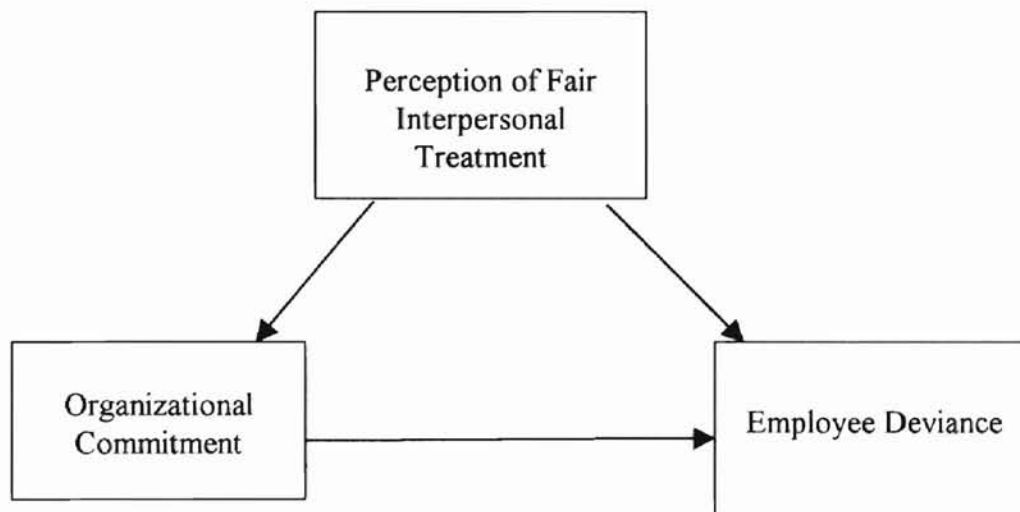
Specifically, based on equity theory, we are concerned with the relationship between perceptions of fair interpersonal treatment (which we will measure using employees' perceptions of fairness of interpersonal treatment within their relationship with supervisors and co-workers) in their work environment and its relationship to employee organizational commitment (which we will measure using employees' organizational commitment) and employee workplace deviance (which we will measure using two category of employee workplace deviance, property deviance and production deviance).

CHAPTER III

METHODS AND PROCEDURE

The purpose of this study was to determine the relationship among a retail salesperson's perception of fair interpersonal treatment and his or her organizational commitment as an attitudinal reaction and employee deviance as a behavioral reaction in the workplace. The following hypotheses directed this research:

Theoretical Model



H1: A salesperson's perception of fairness in interpersonal treatment will be positively related to his or her organizational commitment.

H1a: A salesperson's perception of fairness in interpersonal treatment by his or her supervisors will be positively related to his or her organizational commitment.

H1b: A salesperson's perception of fairness in interpersonal treatment by his or her co-workers will be positively related to his or her organizational commitment.

H2: A salesperson's perception of fair interpersonal treatment will be negatively related to the salesperson's employee deviance.

H2a: A salesperson's perception of fairness in interpersonal treatment by his or her supervisor will be negatively related to the salesperson's employee deviance.

H2b: A salesperson's perception of fairness in interpersonal treatment by his or her co-workers will be negatively related to the salesperson's employee deviance.

H2c: A salesperson's perception of fairness in interpersonal treatment will be negatively related to employee property deviance.

H2d: A salesperson's perception of fairness in interpersonal treatment by his or her supervisor will be negatively related to the salesperson's property deviance.

H2e: A salesperson's perception of fairness in interpersonal treatment by his or her co-workers will be negatively related to the salesperson's property deviance.

H2f: A salesperson's perception of fairness in interpersonal treatment will be negatively related to the salesperson's production deviance.

H2g: A salesperson's perception of fairness in interpersonal treatment by his or her supervisor will be negatively related to the salesperson's production deviance.

H2h: A salesperson's perception of fairness in interpersonal treatment by his or her co-workers will be negatively related to the salesperson's production deviance.

H3: An indirect effect of a salesperson's organizational commitment and the salesperson's perception of fair interpersonal treatment will be negatively related to the salespersons' employee deviance.

H3a: An indirect effect of a salesperson's organizational commitment and the salesperson's perception of fair interpersonal treatment will be negatively related to the salesperson's property deviance.

H3b: An indirect effect of a salesperson's organizational commitment and the salesperson's perception of fair interpersonal treatment will be negatively related to the salesperson's production deviance.

H3c: An indirect effect of a salesperson's organizational commitment and the salesperson's perception of fair interpersonal treatment by his or her supervisor will be negatively related to the salesperson's employee deviance.

H3d: An indirect effect of a salesperson's organizational commitment and the salesperson's perception of fair interpersonal treatment by his or her supervisor will be negatively related to the salesperson's property deviance.

H3e: An indirect effect of a salesperson's organizational commitment and the salesperson's perception of fair interpersonal treatment by his or her supervisor will be negatively related to the salesperson's production deviance.

H3f: An indirect effect of a salesperson's organizational commitment and the salesperson's perception of fair interpersonal treatment by his or her co-workers will be negatively related to the salesperson's employee deviance.

H3g: An indirect effect of a salesperson's organizational commitment and the salesperson's perception of fair interpersonal treatment by his or her co-workers will be negatively related to the salesperson's property deviance.

H3h: An indirect effect of a salesperson's organizational commitment and the salesperson's perception of fair interpersonal treatment by his or her co-workers will be negatively related to the salesperson's production deviance.

Design of the Instrument

Three scales were used in this study. The first assessed the retail salesperson's perceptions of fair interpersonal treatment. The second assessed a salesperson's organizational commitment. The third assessed a salesperson's workplace deviance.

Perception of Fair Interpersonal Treatment Scale Instruments

Donovan, Drasgow, and Munson (1998) developed a scale to measure the perception of fair interpersonal treatment. The Perceptions of Fair Interpersonal Treatment (PFIT) scale was designed to assess employees' perceptions of the interpersonal treatment in their work environments. Analyses of the factor structure and reliability of this instrument indicate that the PFIT scale is a reliable instrument composed of two factors: supervisor treatment and co-worker treatment. It was found that the PFIT scale was positively correlated with job satisfaction and negatively correlated with work withdrawal, job withdrawal, experiences of sexual harassment, and an organization's tolerance of sexual harassment. The PFIT scale consists of 18 statements with three response categories, "yes," "no," and "?." The following statement precedes the 18

statements: What is your organization like most of the time? Circle Yes if the item describes your organization, No. if it does not describe your organization.

Organizational Commitment Questionnaire (OCQ)

The Organizational Commitment Questionnaire (OCQ) was developed by Modawry, Steers, and Porter in 1979. The OCQ consists of 15 statements with seven response categories including “strongly disagree,” “moderately disagree,” “slightly disagree,” “neither disagree nor agree,” “slightly agree,” “moderately agree,” and “strongly agree.” Six of the statements are reverse scored items. The following statement precedes the 15 statements:

Listed below are a series of statements that represent possible feelings that individuals might have about the company or organization for which they work. With respect to your own feelings about the particular organization for which you are now working, please indicate the degree of your agreement or disagreement with each statement by checking one of the seven alternatives below each statement (p.228)

The OCQ is self-administered and was tested over a nine-year period with several different groups of employees from various dissimilar work organizations. The study found strong evidence for internal consistency and test-retest reliability. In addition, the result suggested that the items were homogenous and the overall measure of commitment was stable over short periods of time. When compared to other similar measures, the OCQ had acceptable levels of convergent, discriminant and predictive validity.

Modaway, Steers, and Porter (1979) determined that the OCQ exhibits consistency in the relationships between absenteeism, tenure, job performance, employee turnover, and the employee's level of commitment. The OCQ was found to be a better predictor of particular employee behaviors than the previously employed measures of job satisfaction. Various studies have utilized the OCQ, proving its reliability and validity, which justifies its use in the present study.

Employee Deviance Measure

The Employee Deviance scale was developed by Hollinger and Clark (1982). The scale consists of two parts: property and production deviance. The Property Deviance portion consists of seven statements concerning specific employee behavior, which damage or acquire the tangible property or assets of the organization without authorization. The Production Deviance portion consists of five items concerning employee behavior which violate the formally proscribed norms delineating the quality and quantity of work to be accomplished. The twelve statements are presented along with the question, "How often do you engage in each of the below listed activities?" (p. 103), with five response categories including 1 = "all the time," 2 = "often," 3 = "sometimes," 4 = "rarely," and 5 = "never." The scale is composed of three sections, concerning three different industries, manufacturing, retail, and health care. We have selected the section related to retail for this study. The EDQ examined self-reported data from almost five thousand employees from various work organizations in the midwestern United States. The organization of interest to us in this study is the retail sector and self-reported

involvement levels of property and production deviance correlated at the $r = .50$ level in the retail sector. Therefore, the EDQ has lent its use to this study.

Demographic Information

Demographic information includes gender, age, number of years that the respondent has worked in the current retail store, type of store, numbers of supervisors working in the store, numbers of co-workers working in the store, pay methods, whether the store has personal sales goals or quotas, and how often the respondent make these sales goals or quotas.

Pre-test

The pre-test was conducted to determine readability. The instrument was pre-tested with undergraduate students from the Design, Housing and Merchandising department at Oklahoma State University. Most students had previously worked in retail environments. Results showed that the subjects clearly understood the instrument.

Selection of Participants

The participants for this research were solicited from a convenience sample of retail sales people working in stores in three large shopping malls located in Oklahoma. Permission to hand out the self-administered instruments was requested of the management of stores in the mall. All salespeople that work in each store were asked to complete the instrument.

Data Collection

In order to collect data for this study, the researcher obtained permission to distribute instruments to salespeople working in stores in the selected shopping malls from individual store managers (Appendix B). The researcher hand-delivered instruments (Appendix A) to the salespeople on duty at the time. A cover letter accompanied each instrument. A self-addressed, stamped envelope accompanied each instrument. Participants was instructed to fill out the instruments on their own time, place the finished instrument in the envelope provided, and mail it directly to the researcher.

CHAPTER IV

MANUSCRIPT

Recently, many organizations have begun to recognize the importance of fair interpersonal treatment of employees. It is important not only for the employees' well being, but also for the organization's long term success that employees perceive that they have been treated fairly (Schappe, 1998). Employees who perceive they are treated fairly by their organization subsequently show more positive or helpful organizational attitudes and behaviors, which in turn provide more beneficial results for the organization. In contrast, employees who perceive that they are treated unfairly by their organization exhibit negative attitudes or engage in hostile behaviors. Therefore, fair treatment in the workplace may be a substantial factor in the organization's overall success.

Organizational commitment has emerged as one of the most important variables in the study of organizational attitude. A person who is committed to the organization will provide many benefits, both seen and unseen. Employees who feel that they are part of the organization will be more likely to remain with the company and will have a higher level of esteem for their position (Mowday, Porter, & Steers, 1982). The organization itself will benefit from this increase in esteem, as employees will become more stable, will be less likely to seek other employment, and will be a valued asset to the workforce (Hutchison & Garstka, 1996). These committed employees will be more focused on the

particular needs and goals of the company and more likely to share the views and purposes of the organization (Hutchison & Garstka, 1996).

Employee theft, retaliation, sabotage, counterproductive behavior, tardiness, work slowdown, and other negative workplace behaviors, which are acts against the organization, are defined as employee deviance (Hollinger & Clark, 1983). When employees perceive unfair treatment from an organization, they are more likely to engage in acts against the organization. Many organizations have become increasingly concerned with employee deviance, as this issue has become a serious and costly problem for both society and organizations (Wimbush & Dalton, 1997). It is a particularly important issue for retailers as the retail setting provides easy opportunities for salespeople to engage in employee deviance.

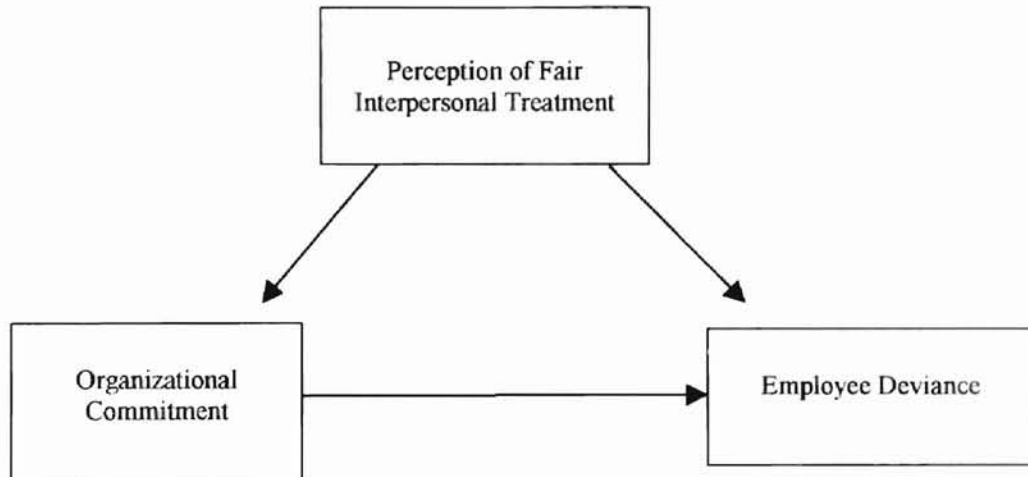
In the retail environment, supportive relationships, based on good feedback between the salesperson and his or her supervisors or co-workers, correlated significantly with positive results in the salesperson's attitude and behavior (Wolken & Good, 1995). Therefore, an employee's perception of how he or she is treated by his or her supervisors and co-workers should be of great concern to the retail industry.

The purpose of the present study is to investigate the relationship between the salespersons' perception of the fair interpersonal treatment by supervisors and co-workers and that persons' organizational commitment and property and production deviance. The direct relationship between a salesperson's perception of the fair interpersonal treatment and his or her organizational commitment and deviance is investigated as is the indirect relationship between a salesperson's perception of the fair interpersonal treatment as mediated by his or her organizational commitment on his or her deviance.

Equity Theory

Equity theory is useful in helping to understand the way in which employee's perceptions of interpersonal fairness in the organization affect the employee's organizational attitude and behavior (Adams, 1963, 1965). According to equity theory, employees who have positive perceptions of interpersonal treatment may decide to increase their inputs to the organization which may take the form of decreased turnover intention, less actual turnover, or increased work effort. Employees who have negative perceptions of interpersonal treatment may decrease their inputs to the organization by absenteeism, turnover, or reducing their work production in an attempt to increase the ratio of outcomes to inputs.

Theoretical Model



The essential idea of equity theory (Adams, 1965) is that when individuals work for an organization they contribute certain inputs, and based on these inputs, employees expect an equitable outcome. Inputs and outcomes are major components of the relationship in equity theory. Inputs are those commodities a person contributes to the exchange, such as experiences, skills, work effort, past training, and time. Outcomes are what results from the exchange, such as pay, rewards, supervisory treatment, and fringe benefits (Adams, 1963, 1965).

Equity theory claims that people compare the ratio of their own perceived work outcome to their own perceived work inputs, and then compare their ratio to the corresponding ratios of others, such as co-workers (Adams, 1963, 1965). When individuals evaluate relationships, if the ratios are perceived unequal, the party whose ratio is higher is theorized to be inequitably overpaid, causing them to feel guilty. In addition, the party whose ratio is lower is theorized to be inequitably underpaid, causing them to feel angry (Adams, 1963, 1965).

According to Adams (1965), there are four major postulates of the equity theory: perceived inequity creates tension in the individual; the amount of tension is proportional to the magnitude of the inequity; the tension created in the individual will motivate him or her to reduce the inequity; and the strength of the motivation to reduce inequity is proportional to the perceived inequity. The presence of inequity motivates the individual to change the situation through behavior or attitude as a means to return to a condition of equity.

Perceived inequity involves a three-stage subsequent response. First, employees must perceive an inequity. Secondly, employees experience an emotional response to

this inequity. Acting on this emotional response, employees are then motivated to change the situation to re-establish equity. Inequity is thought to lead to either anger for perceived under-reward or guilt for perceived over-reward producing tension. The tension caused by anger or guilt increases as perceived inequity increases, and this situation motivates the employee to reduce the tension. The greater the perceived inequity, the stronger the resulting emotional state and the stronger the individual's desire to restore equity (Mowday, 1991).

Equity theory has been applied in organizational settings to explain employee attitudes and behavior. To reduce perceived inequity, a person may alter job inputs or outcomes in some way. Job satisfaction, as a form of organizational attitude, and absenteeism or turnover, as a form of withdrawal behavior, are methods of inequity resolution. Dittrich and Carrell (1973) found that employees' perceptions of equity are positively related to job satisfaction and negatively related to absenteeism and turnover. Greenberg (1990) found that employees experiencing underpayment inequity attempted to redress that inequity by raising their inputs through pilfering from the organization. When workers experienced a pay reduction, they reported feeling underpaid and stole over twice as much as they did when they felt equitably paid.

Organizational Justice

Greenberg (1987) first introduced the term "organizational justice" to refer to perceptions of fairness within the workplace. "Organizational justice is the perceived fairness of the distribution of outcomes and procedures used to make these distributions" (Citera & Rentsch, 1993, p.211). James (1993) defined organizational justice as individual and group perceptions of the fairness of treatment received from organizations. These

encompass two components of organizational justice, distributive justice and procedural justice. Distributive justice refers to the perceived fairness of the distribution of outcomes, while procedural justice refers to the perceived fairness of the rules.

In the late 1980s, organizational justice researchers went beyond the traditional procedural and distributive types of justice and began to explore interactional justice, the interpersonal side of organizational justice which refers to the manner in which people were treated in interpersonal interactions and encounters (Greenberg, 1993a).

Interactional Justice

Interactional justice as a broad concept is defined and classified in several ways. Some have suggested that interactional justice is part of procedural justice (Greenberg, 1993b; Tyler & Bies, 1990) and others have suggested that interactional justice should be separated from procedure justice (Bies & Moag, 1986; Bies & Shapiro, 1987). Greenberg's (1993b) perspective is that interactional justice is the social aspect of procedural justice. Tyler and Bies (1990) considered that interactional justice is an interpersonal aspect of procedural justice and prefer to use the term "interpersonal context of procedural justice" (p.81). Bies and Moag (1986) stated that "interactional justice refers to the quality of interpersonal treatment people receive during the enactment of organizational procedures"(p.44). Both viewpoints are reasonable when fair treatment is focused on social situations of judgement and decision making.

In this study, we will focus on interactional justice as a component of procedural justice. Research has shown that compared to other types of organizational justice, whether distributive or procedural justice, interactional justice is the most important

determinant of organizational attitude or behavior. For example, Barling and Phillips (1992) found that interactional justice was the most significant predictor of organizational attitudes and behaviors as compared with distributive and procedural justice.

Greenberg (1993b) proposed that when people were asked what constituted unfair treatment in an organization, people focused on interpersonal factors such as interactional justice rather than structural factors such as distributive or procedural justice. Therefore, concern about interactional justice has recently been raised in many organizations.

Interpersonal treatment refers to the social interactions between an individual and others, such as supervisors, co-workers, or subordinates within the organization (Greenberg, 1993a). Interpersonal treatment is how others in the organization show concern for individuals regarding the procedure and outcomes they receive. Greenberg (1993a) stated that “interpersonal treatment focuses on the consequences of procedural outcomes instead of knowledge of the procedures leading to outcomes” (p.84). Perceived fairness of the relationship between an employee and others, such as supervisors or co-workers, is the concern of interpersonal treatment. Tajfel and Turner (1979) stated that social relationships with other people in our lives are valuable because we enhance our self-identity and self-worth through these relationships. Perceived fair treatment by others leads us to feel that we are being dealt with in a dignified and respected manner, leading to an enhanced sense of self-identity and self-worth (Brockner, Tyler & Cooper-Schneider, 1992).

Research provides evidence that people consider the nature of their treatment by others as a determinant of fairness. Bies (1986) found that honesty, courtesy, timely feedback, respect for rights, and reasonable justifications for the decisions made were

important fairness criteria. He suggested that interpersonal treatment be considered an important aspect of fair treatment, independent of the outcomes. It appears that the quality of the interpersonal treatment received is a major determinant of people's assessment of fair treatment.

The Role of Interactional Justice in Organizational Attitudes and Behaviors

Organizations expect that employees will devote effort, skills, and abilities with positive attitudes and behaviors for the organization, while employees expect to be treated in a respectful, trusted, and polite manner by the organization (Rebecca, 1999).

Manogram, Stauffer, and Conlon (1994) found that interactional justice is the most critical dimension of fairness to have an impact on organizational citizenship behavior. They suggested that organizational citizenship behaviors can be enhanced through fairness in supervisor-subordinate interactions, which in turn will enhance the quality of leader-member exchange and organizational citizenship behavior (Manogram, Stauffer, & Conlon, 1994)

Brockner, Tyler, and Cooper-Schneider (1992) found a direct relationship between an individual's perception of fairness of decisions rendered by the organization and his or her organizational commitment. When an employee perceives fairness in the organization, he or she will likely commit to the organization.

Moorman (1991) suggested that employees who perceive unfairness may reduce the frequency or magnitude of their citizenship, whereas employees who perceive they are fairly treated will see continued citizenship as a reasonable contribution to the system.

He also suggested that employees who believe that their supervisor personally treated them fairly appeared to be more likely to exhibit good citizenship behavior.

Organizational Commitment

In this study we will discuss organizational commitment and guide the discussion through a concept forwarded by Porter, Steers, Mowday, and Boulian (1974).

There are three aspects to this concept: 1) a strong belief in and acceptance of the organization's goals and values; 2) a willingness to exert considerable effort on behalf of the organization; and 3) a strong desire to maintain membership in the organization (Porter, Steers, Mowday, & Boulian, 1974). This suggests that commitment is not a passive reaction, but rather an active choice made by an employee within his or her organization. As an exchange relationship, commitment is a sense of mutual support stemming from both the organization and the employee in tandem.

As commitment is an inclusive subject, it may be perceived and examined in several ways. Each person brings to the argument his or her own concepts about commitment. Reichers (1985) stated that the commitment of an individual couldn't be generalized to cover that of every employee. One employee's commitment may be based on the organization's esteem for its employees, while another employee's commitment may be a function of the organization's dedication to customer service.

Organizational commitment is exemplified by the fluidity of exchange between the employee and the company. Neither entity can survive without the other, and thus a delicate balance is struck. "Employees are expected to expend effort and energy, utilizing their skills, training and abilities and in return receive organizational rewards such as compensation, fringe benefits, promotion" (Dubinsky & Levy, 1989, p.222). The

employee is provided with benefits for working with the company, and the company is repaid in higher earnings and a work force, which is both experienced and skilled. Individuals enter into employment with diverse expectations. Many may seek to apply skills they have acquired in previous positions and to fulfill their economical and professional needs. Therefore, employee commitment will be enhanced when employees feel that their needs and expectations have been met by their organization (Steers, 1977).

Employee Deviance

Employee deviance refers to voluntary behavior that violates significant organizational norms and in so doing, threatens the well being of an organization, its members, or both (Robinson & Bennett, 1995). A number of terms are related to employee deviance. Organizational behavior researchers have used or labeled employee deviance in different ways. Dishonesty, immorality, retaliation, or counterproductive behavior are all classified as types of employee deviance. Although each study focused on a slightly different aspect of the phenomenon, the overall concepts have commonalities. Employee deviance such as counterproductive behavior, retaliations, and employee theft are not random actions, but rather purposive responses to the organizational factors within the bounds of the working place. In this study, employee deviance will focus on a definition established by Murphy (1993) and Robinson and Benett (1995), that employee deviance are purposive violations of norms that threaten the well being of the organization.

A typology of employee deviance is useful for people to better understand the term. Employee deviance has been categorized in several ways. Hollinger and Clark (1982) classified deviant workplace behaviors into two categories, production deviance

and property deviance. Property deviance is employee behavior directed against the property and assets of the workplace such as employee theft, pilferage, and embezzlement; whereas, production deviance includes various forms of employee behavior violating organizational norms based on the quantity and quality of work performed (Hollinger & Clark, 1982).

Organizational Commitment and Interpersonal Treatment

Perceived fairness is one of the most important variables among organizational characteristics. Many aspects of the justice variables have been studied. Proof of a relationship between employee organizational commitment and perceived fairness has been offered.

McFarlin and Sweeney (1992) found that both procedural and distributive justice were important predictors of employee organizational commitment. Konovsky and Cropanzano (1991) found that the perceived fairness of employee drug testing as explanations from decision makers about the drug testing procedure was significantly related to employee's organizational commitment. These results showed that the importance of organizational justice perceptions for predicting employee attitudes and behavior.

Baring and Phillips (1993) ascertained that interactional justice significantly influenced organizational commitment. They showed that interactional justice and formal procedural justice were significant predictors of organizational attitudes in as much as it predicts a greater number of outcomes (Baring and Phillips, 1993). Further, Martin and Bennett (1996) found that there is a direct connection between procedural fairness and organizational commitment.

It is believed that employees generally will have more positive organizational attitude and behavior when they perceive they have been treated fairly on an interpersonal basis. In addition, supervisors and co-workers are significant individuals who give interpersonal treatment to employees within the organization. Especially, in the retail environment, the role of supervisor and co-worker is important. Therefore, we will assess salespersons' perceptions of how employees are treated by supervisors and co-workers in the organization.

Thus, it is believed that an employee's perception of interpersonal treatment fairness, in the interactional context of justice, will affect the employee's organizational commitment. Therefore we hypothesized the following:

H1: A salesperson's perception of fairness in interpersonal treatment will be positively related to his or her organizational commitment.

Also we hypothesize specifically the following two categories of interpersonal treatment, supervisor and co-workers' treatment:

H1a: A salesperson's perception of fairness in interpersonal treatment by his or her supervisors will be positively related to his or her organizational commitment.

H1b: A salesperson's perception of fairness in interpersonal treatment by his or her co-workers will be positively related to his or her organizational commitment.

Interpersonal Treatment and Deviance

Few studies have found a relationship between organizational justice and negative organizational behavior, such as employee deviance.

Greenberg (1990) demonstrated that the theft rate and level of organizational justice were directly related. Greenberg (1990) explained the phenomenon in terms of

equity theory, specifically that pilfering from their organization was an attempt to restore feelings of inequity from the organization by increasing their outputs.

Skarlicki and Folger (1997) studied that the relationship between distributive, procedural and interactional justice and organizational retaliation behavior. They found that "when supervisors show adequate sensitivity and concern toward employees, treating them with dignity and respect, those employees are somewhat willing to tolerate the combination of an unfair pay distribution and unfair procedures that would otherwise maximally contribute to retaliatory tendencies" (Skarlicki & Folger, 1997, p.438). Thus, a salesperson's perception of fair interpersonal treatment is an important influence on employee deviance. Therefore, we hypothesize the following:

H2: A salesperson's perception of fair interpersonal treatment will be negatively related to the salesperson's employee deviance.

In addition, we hypothesize specifically two categories of interpersonal treatment, supervisor's and co-workers' treatment and two categories of employee deviance, property deviance and production deviance:

H2a: A salesperson's perception of fairness in interpersonal treatment by his or her supervisor will be negatively related to the salesperson's employee deviance.

H2b: A salesperson's perception of fairness in interpersonal treatment by his or her co-workers will be negatively related to the salesperson's employee deviance.

H2c: A salesperson's perception of fairness in interpersonal treatment will be negatively related to employee property deviance.

H2d: A salesperson's perception of fairness in interpersonal treatment by his or her supervisor will be negatively related to the salesperson's property deviance.

H2e: A salesperson's perception of fairness in interpersonal treatment by his or her co-workers will be negatively related to the salesperson's property deviance

H2f: A salesperson's perception of fairness in interpersonal treatment will be negatively related to the salesperson's production deviance.

H2g: A salesperson's perception of fairness in interpersonal treatment by his or her supervisor will be negatively related to the salesperson's production deviance.

H2h: A salesperson's perception of fairness in interpersonal treatment by his or her co-workers will be negatively related to the salesperson's production deviance.

Perception of Fair Interpersonal Treatment and Employee Deviance as Mediated by Organizational Commitment

This study focuses on employees' perceptions of fair interpersonal treatment and how this might influence employees' commitment to the organization and workplace deviance. If employees perceived fair interpersonal treatment, we might expect them to be more committed to the organization and exhibit less behavior workplace deviance. In addition, we believed that a salesperson's perception of fair interpersonal treatment would influence the salesperson's employee deviance indirectly through the mediating effects of the salesperson's organizational commitment. Therefore we hypothesized the following:

H3: An indirect effect of a salesperson's organizational commitment and the salesperson's perception of fair interpersonal treatment will be negatively related to the salespersons' employee deviance.

Specifically, we are concerned with the relationship between perceptions of fair interpersonal treatment with two categories (of other supervisors and co-workers) and

two categories of employee deviance (property and production deviance). We hypothesize the following:

H3a: An indirect effect of a salesperson’s organizational commitment and the salesperson’s perception of fair interpersonal treatment will be negatively related to the salesperson’s property deviance.

H3b: An indirect effect of a salesperson’s organizational commitment and the salesperson’s perception of fair interpersonal treatment will be negatively related to the salesperson’s production deviance.

H3c: An indirect effect of a salesperson’s organizational commitment and the salesperson’s perception of fair interpersonal treatment by his or her supervisor will be negatively related to the salesperson’s employee deviance.

H3d: An indirect effect of a salesperson’s organizational commitment and the salesperson’s perception of fair interpersonal treatment by his or her supervisor will be negatively related to the salesperson’s property deviance.

H3e: An indirect effect of a salesperson’s organizational commitment and the salesperson’s perception of fair interpersonal treatment by his or her supervisor will be negatively related to the salesperson’s production deviance.

H3f: An indirect effect of a salesperson’s organizational commitment and the salesperson’s perception of fair interpersonal treatment by his or her co-workers will be negatively related to the salesperson’s employee deviance.

H3g: An indirect effect of a salesperson’s organizational commitment and the salesperson’s perception of fair interpersonal treatment by his or her co-workers will be negatively related to the salesperson’s property deviance.

H3h: An indirect effect of a salesperson's organizational commitment and the salesperson's perception of fair interpersonal treatment by his or her co-workers will be negatively related to the salesperson's production deviance.

Methodology

Instruments

An 18-item scale developed by Donovan, Drasgow, and Munson (1998) measured salespersons' perceptions of fair interpersonal treatment. The Perceptions of Fair Interpersonal Treatment (PFIT) scale was designed to assess employees' perceptions of interpersonal treatment in their work environment. Analyses of the factor structure and reliability of this instrument indicate that the PFIT scale is a reliable instrument composed of two factors: supervisor treatment and co-worker treatment. The PFIT scale has been found to be positively correlated with job satisfaction and negatively correlated with work withdrawal, job withdrawal, experiences of sexual harassment, and an organization's tolerance of sexual harassment. The PFIT scale consists of 18 statements with three response categories, "yes", "no", and "?".

Organizational commitment was assessed by the Organizational Commitment Questionnaire (OCQ), developed by Mowday, Steers, and Porter (1979). The OCQ consists of 15 statements with seven response categories including "strongly disagree," "moderately disagree," "slightly disagree," "neither disagree nor agree," "slightly agree," "moderately agree," and "strongly agree." The OCQ was tested over a nine-year period with several different groups of employees from various dissimilar work organizations. The study found strong evidence for internal consistency and test-retest reliability. A

study by Mowday, Steers, and Porter (1979) determined that the OCQ exhibits consistency in the relationships between absenteeism, tenure, job performance, employee turnover and the employees' level of commitment. The OCQ was found to be a better predictor of particular employee behaviors than the previously employed measures of job satisfaction. Various studies have utilized the OCQ, proving its reliability and validity, which justifies its use in the present study.

Employee deviance was assessed using a 13-item scale developed by Hollinger and Clark (1982). The scale consists of two parts: property and production deviance. The Property Deviance portion consists of seven statements concerning specific employee behavior that damages or acquires the tangible property or assets of the organization without authorization. The Production Deviance portion consists of five items concerning employee behavior that violates the formally proscribed norms delineating the quality and quantity of work to be accomplished. The thirteen statements are presented with five response categories including "all the time", "often", "sometimes", "rarely", and "never".

The EDQ examined self-reported data from almost five thousand employees from various work organizations in the mid-western United States. The organization of interest in this study is the retail sector and self-reported involvement levels of property and production deviance correlated at the $r = .50$ level in the retail sector. Therefore, the EDQ has lent its use to this study.

Demographic questions include gender, age, number of years that the respondent has worked in the store, number of years in retailing, numbers of supervisors working in the store, and numbers of co-workers working in the store.

Participants

The participants for this research was solicited from a convenience sample of retail sales people working in stores in three large shopping malls located in Oklahoma. Permission to hand out the self-administered instruments was requested of the management of stores in the mall. All salespeople that work in each store were asked to complete the instrument.

Procedures

The instrument was distributed to 300 retail sales people that were employed in stores within three large shopping malls located in three Midwest cities. The researcher hand-delivered a total of 300 instruments to the managers on duty at each store. Managers were asked to distribute instruments all sales people working the store. Participants were asked to complete the instrument on their own time, place the finished instrument in the envelope provided and mail it directly to the researcher.

Results

Demographics

Out of 300 questionnaires distributed, 100 were completed and returned, resulting in a response rate of 33 percent. Of the participants, 77 percent indicated that from one to five supervisors worked at their stores and 23 percent of participants responded that from six to fifty-seven supervisors worked at their stores. Additionally, 51 percent of the participants were working with less than 14 co-workers and the other 49 percent of the participants were working with more than 15 co-workers. Also, thirty-one percent of the

participants had been with the current organizations for two to three years; 52 percent of participants had been with their current organizations less than one year, and 17 percent had been with their organization more than three years (see Table 1).

Females comprised 61 percent of the participants and the other 39 percent of the participants were male. Respondents' ages ranged from 17 to 52. A majority of the participants (75 percent) were between 19 and 29 years of age; 9 percent were younger than 19 and only 16 percent were age 30 and up.

Full time workers were 60 percent of the participants, and the remainder were part time workers. Pay plans varied with 39 percent of the participants were paid by the hour; 40 percent were paid a salary; 15 percent were paid a base plus commission; 2 percent were paid straight commission; 4 percent were paid by the hour plus commission.

A majority (96 percent) of the participants answered that their store has sales goals or quotas, and of those 33 percent of the participants made their sales goals or quotas all the time; 55 percent made their goals often; 8 percent reached their goals sometimes. The majority of participants (75 percent) were working in specialty stores and the remainder (24 percent) were working in department stores.

Table 1. Demographic Information of the Participants

| | | % |
|---------------------------|-----------------------------|----|
| Supervisors work in store | 1-5 | 77 |
| | 6-10 | 17 |
| | More than 10 | 6 |
| Co-workers work in store | Less than 15 | 51 |
| | 15-35 | 29 |
| | More than 35 | 20 |
| Months with current store | Less than 24 | 52 |
| | 24-36 | 31 |
| | More than 36 | 17 |
| Gender | Female | 61 |
| | Male | 39 |
| Age | Under 20 | 34 |
| | 21-25 | 33 |
| | 26-30 | 16 |
| | Over 31 | 17 |
| Position | Full-time | 60 |
| | Part-time | 40 |
| Pay | Hourly | 39 |
| | Salary | 40 |
| | Straight commission | 2 |
| | Base plus commission | 15 |
| | Hourly base plus commission | 4 |
| Personal sales goal | Yes | 96 |
| | No | 4 |
| Type of Store | Department Store | 25 |
| | Specialty Store | 75 |

Perception of Fair Interpersonal Treatment

The mean score for the total PFIT scale was 46.13, with a minimum score of 28 and maximum score of 79. Specifically the mean score for the total supervisor treatment scale was 36.04, with minimum score of 22 and maximum score of 67; the mean score for the total co-worker treatment scale was 10.90, with a minimum score of 5 and maximum score of 12 (see Table 2). In supervisor scale statements, a majority of the participants (78%) perceived that employees are praised for good work in their organization, employees are trusted, and employees' complaints are dealt with effectively in their organizations. In addition, most of the participants (73%) perceived that employees are treated with respect, employees' questions and problems are responded to quickly, employees' hard work is appreciated, and employees are treated fairly. Only a small percentage of the participants perceived that supervisors yell at employees, employees are treated like children, and employees are lied to. Similarly, a small percentage of the participants perceived that employees' suggestions are ignored, their supervisors swear at employees, and their supervisors threaten to fire or lay off employees. Majority of participants perceived that their supervisor does not exhibit favoritism in their organization. These results indicated that most of the participants perceived fairness in interpersonal treatment with their supervisors except in a few cases where employers verbally threaten them.

Regarding the co-worker treatment scale, the majority of participants (83%) perceived that their co-workers help each other and (70%) their co-workers treat each other with respect. In contrast, a high percentage of participants perceived that their co-workers argue with each other and perceived that their co-workers put each other down.

The scores indicated that a majority of the participants perceived fairness in help from their co-workers, and mutual respect.

Table 2. Participants' Responses to Perception of Fair Interpersonal Treatment Scale

| | Mean |
|--|------|
| 1. Employees are praised for good work. | 2.60 |
| 2. Supervisors yell at employees. | 2.48 |
| 3. Supervisors play favorites. | 1.58 |
| 4. Employees are trusted. | 2.70 |
| 5. Employee's complaints are dealt with effectively. | 2.54 |
| 6. Employees are treated like children. | 2.64 |
| 7. Employees are treated with respect. | 2.54 |
| 8. Employees' questions and problems are responded to quickly. | 2.62 |
| 9. Employees are lied to | 2.67 |
| 10. Employee's suggestions are ignored | 2.69 |
| 11. Supervisors swear at employees | 2.76 |
| 12. Employee's hard work is appreciated | 2.67 |
| 13. Supervisors threaten to fire or lay off employees | 2.79 |
| 14. Employees are treated fairly. | 2.50 |
| 15. Co-workers help each other out. | 2.75 |
| 16. Co-workers argue with each other. | 2.33 |
| 17. Co-workers put each other down. | 2.42 |
| 18. Co-workers treat each other with respect. | 2.58 |

Organizational Commitment

Each participant responded to the organizational commitment portion of the instrument. Participants responded to a statement by choosing one of seven agree/disagree options. The questionnaires were coded that a lower score indicated stronger commitment, and a high score indicated lower levels of commitment. The mean score for the total commitment scale was 43.76 with a minimum score of 15 and maximum score of 81, indicating a moderate degree of organizational commitment for most participants (see Table 3).

The majority of participants (79%) agreed that they would be willing to put in a great deal of effort in order to help their organization to succeed and (74%) responded that they would promote their organization to their friends as a great organization to work for. In addition, the majority of participants (74%) agreed that they were proud to tell other people that (69%) they were part of their organization, their organization inspires them in the way of job performance, and (70%) they were glad because they chose their organization to work for over others. Also, most of participants (73%) disagreed that deciding to work for their organization was a mistake on their part, and (67%) they felt little loyalty to their organization. These scores indicated that most of participants were committed to their organization's success through their loyalty, and pride in telling others about their organization.

However, about half of the participants "disagreed" or "neither agreed nor disagreed" that their current organization is the best of all possible organizations for them and agreed about a change of organization if given the option to work for a different organization with similar working conditions. Also, a sizable percentage of the

participants agreed with the statement “there’s not too much to be gained by sticking with this organization indefinitely”. These results indicate that in a statement related to choice about changing companies, or concerning the rewards received from the company, a substantial percentage of participants were less committed in their organization.

Table 3. Participants’ Responses to the Organizational Commitment Scale

| | Mean |
|--|------|
| 1. I am willing to put in a great deal of effort beyond that normally expected in order to help this organization be successful. | 2.52 |
| 2. I talk up this organization to my friends as a great organization to work for. | 2.55 |
| 3. I feel very little loyalty to this organization. | 2.79 |
| 4. I would accept almost any type of job assignment in order to keep working for this organization. | 3.40 |
| 5. I find that my values and the organization’s values are very similar. | 2.87 |
| 6. I am proud to tell others that I am a part of this organization. | 2.34 |
| 7. I could just as well be working for a different organization as long as the type of work was similar. | 3.92 |
| 8. This organization really inspires the very best in me the way of job performance. | 2.66 |
| 9. It would take very little change in my present circumstances to cause me to leave this organization. | 3.64 |
| 10. I am extremely glad that I chose this organization to work for over others I was considering at the time I joined. | 2.50 |
| 11. There’s not too much to be gained by sticking with this organization indefinitely. | 3.26 |
| 12. Often, I find it difficult to agree with this organization’s policies on important matters relating to its employees. | 3.16 |
| 13. I really care about the fate of this organization. | 2.79 |
| 14. For me this is the best of all possible organization for which to work. | 3.20 |
| 15. Deciding to work for this organization was a definite mistake on my part. | 2.16 |

Employee Deviance

The Employee Deviance portion of the questionnaire consisted of two sub-scales. The Property Deviance scale consisted of the first seven items on the instrument, and the Production Deviance scale consisted of the remaining eight items. Participants responded to a statement by choosing a number from one through five. The Employee Deviance portion of the questionnaire was reversing coded so that a high score indicated positive behavior.

The mean score for the total Employee Deviance scale was 68.49, with minimum score of 18 and maximum score of 42. The mean score for the total Employee Property Deviance scale was 33.65, with a minimum score of 29, a maximum score of 35. The mean score for the total Employee Production Deviance scale was 34.84, with minimum score of 27 and maximum score of 40 (see Table 4).

Nearly all participants answered that they never took money without authorization and they never purposely under-rang purchases. Similarly, most of participants answered they never claimed excess expenses for reimbursement and they never damaged merchandise in their store on purpose. In addition, the majority of participants never got paid for more hours than they worked and never took store merchandise. However, about half of the participants misused employee discount privilege sometimes or rarely. These results indicated that a majority of participants hardly engaged in property deviance in their organization except for instances of improperly using the employee discount privilege.

Almost of all participants answered that they never surfed the net, or played computer games on work time and they never worked while influenced by alcohol or

drugs. However, the majority of participants answered that they did some personal business on company time and they made personal phone calls on work time. Also, about half of the participants answered that they took long lunch or coffee breaks sometimes or rarely, and they performed slow or sloppy work sometimes or rarely. These scores indicated that although many participants engaged in several types of production deviance in their workplace, such as using personal phone calls or doing personal business on work time

Table 4. Participants' Responses to the Employee Deviance Scale

| | Mean |
|--|------|
| 1. Misuse employee discount privilege | 4.37 |
| 2. Take store merchandise | 4.83 |
| 3. Get paid for more hours than worked | 4.77 |
| 4. Damaged merchandise | 4.77 |
| 5. Claim excess expense reimbursement | 4.91 |
| 6. Purposely under-ring purchases | 4.85 |
| 7. Unauthorized taking of money | 5.00 |
| 8. Taking long lunch or coffee breaks | 4.28 |
| 9. Perform slow or sloppy work | 4.37 |
| 10. Work while influenced by alcohol or drugs | 4.90 |
| 11. Come late and leave early from the work | 4.41 |
| 12. Sick leave when not sick | 4.52 |
| 13. Use personal phone calls on work time | 3.44 |
| 14. Do personal business on work time | 3.96 |
| 15. Surf the net or play computer games on work time | 4.96 |

Regression and Correlation

All relationships between variables were highly correlated (see Table 5). The relationships between the perception of fair interpersonal treatment (includes two dimensions) and organizational commitment were in the expected direction, with positive fairness perception related to lower score (higher commitment) on the organizational commitment measure. As expected, employee deviance of both property and production was to a large extent related to both the perceptions of either of the dimensions of fair interpersonal treatment and organizational commitment.

Table 5: Correlation Matrix for Each Construct

| | Perception of Fair Interpersonal Treatment | Perception of Fair Interpersonal Treatment by Supervisor | Perception of Fair Interpersonal Treatment by Co-worker | Organizational Commitment |
|------------------------------|--|--|---|---------------------------|
| Organizational Commitment | -0.293** | -0.288** | -0.257** | |
| Employee Deviance | 0.309** | 0.281** | 0.329** | -0.441** |
| Employee Property Deviance | 0.392** | 0.371** | 0.382** | -0.342** |
| Employee Production Deviance | 0.241* | 0.213* | 0.272** | -0.437** |

* p < .05 ** p < .001

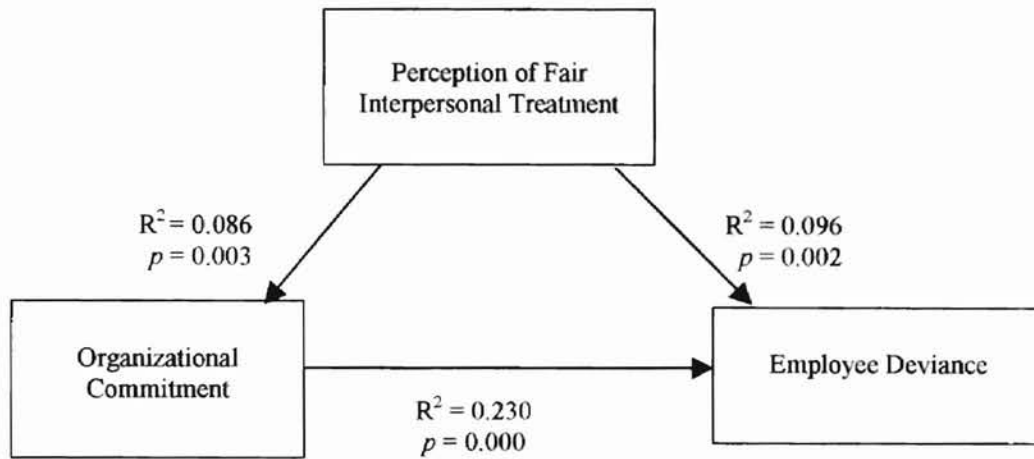
Mishra, S. P. / Journal of Business Ethics / 2010

Table 6: Regression Analysis

| Independent Variable | Dependent Variable | β | R^2 |
|---|---------------------------|---------|---------|
| H1: Perception of Fair Interpersonal Treatment | Organizational Commitment | -0.293 | 0.086 * |
| H1a: Perception of Fair Interpersonal Treatment by Supervisor | | -0.288 | 0.083* |
| H1b: Perception of Fair Interpersonal Treatment by Co-worker | | -0.257 | 0.066* |
| H2: Perception of Fair Interpersonal Treatment | Employee Deviance | 0.210 | 0.096* |
| H2a: Perception of Fair Interpersonal Treatment by Supervisor | | 0.281 | 0.079* |
| H2b: Perception of Fair Interpersonal Treatment by Co-worker | | 0.329 | 0.109* |
| H2c: Perception of Fair Interpersonal Treatment | Property Deviance | 0.392 | 0.154** |
| H2d: Perception of Fair Interpersonal Treatment by Supervisor | | 0.371 | 0.138** |
| H2e: Perception of Fair Interpersonal Treatment by Co-worker | | 0.382 | 0.146** |
| H2f: Perception of Fair Interpersonal Treatment | Production Deviance | 0.241 | 0.058* |
| H2g: Perception of Fair Interpersonal Treatment by Supervisor | | 0.213 | 0.045* |
| H2h: Perception of Fair Interpersonal Treatment by Co-worker | | 0.272 | 0.074* |
| H3: Perception of Fair Interpersonal Treatment | Employee Deviance | 0.197 | 0.230** |
| Organizational Commitment | | -0.383 | |
| H3a: Perception of Fair Interpersonal Treatment | Property Deviance | 0.320 | 0.210** |
| Organizational Commitment | | -0.248 | |
| H3b: Perception of Fair Interpersonal Treatment | Production Deviance | 0.209 | 0.648** |
| Organizational Commitment | | -0.626 | |
| H3c: Perception of Fair Interpersonal Treatment by Supervisor | Employee Deviance | 0.168 | 0.220** |
| Organizational Commitment | | -0.392 | |
| H3d: Perception of Fair Interpersonal Treatment by Supervisor | Property Deviance | 0.297 | 0.198** |
| Organizational Commitment | | -0.256 | |
| H3e: Perception of Fair Interpersonal Treatment by Supervisor | Production Deviance | 0.095 | 0.199** |
| Organizational Commitment | | -0.410 | |
| H3f: Perception of Fair Interpersonal Treatment by Co-workers | Employee Deviance | 0.232 | 0.244** |
| Organizational Commitment | | -0.381 | |
| H3g: Perception of Fair Interpersonal Treatment by Co-workers | Property Deviance | 0.315 | 0.209** |
| Organizational Commitment | | -0.261 | |
| H3h: Perception of Fair Interpersonal Treatment by Co-workers | Production Deviance | 0.171 | 0.218** |
| Organizational Commitment | | -0.393 | |

* $p < .05$ ** $p < .001$

Theoretical Model



Regression analyses were used to test the hypotheses in this study (see Table 6).

Hypothesis 1 states that a salesperson's perception of fairness in interpersonal treatment will be positively related to his or her organizational commitment. Results of the regression analysis indicate that there is a relationship between a salesperson's perception of fair interpersonal treatment and the strength of organizational commitment. The salesperson's perception of fair interpersonal treatment is a predictor of organizational commitment, with 8.6 percent of the variance in employee organizational commitment explained by the perception of fair interpersonal treatment. The more a salesperson perceives fair interpersonal treatment, the higher that salesperson's organizational commitment.

Hypothesis 1a states that a sales person's perception of fairness in interpersonal treatment by his or her supervisors will be positively related to that salesperson's organizational commitment. Results of the regression analysis indicate that there is a relationship between a salesperson's positive perception of fair interpersonal treatment by

his or her supervisors and that salesperson's stronger organizational commitment. The salesperson's perception of fair interpersonal treatment by his or her supervisors is a predictor of the salesperson's organizational commitment, with 8.3 percent of the variance in the salesperson's organizational commitment explained by his or her perception of fair interpersonal treatment. The more a salesperson perceives fair interpersonal treatment by his or her supervisor, the higher that salesperson's organizational commitment.

Hypothesis 1b states that a salesperson's perception of fairness in interpersonal treatment by his or her co-workers will be positively related to his or her organizational commitment. Results of the regression analysis revealed positive relationships between these variables, with 6.6 percent of the variance in a salesperson's organizational commitment explained by that salesperson's perception of fair interpersonal treatment by his or her co-workers. The more a salesperson perceives fair interpersonal treatment by his or her co-workers, the higher that salesperson's organizational commitment.

Overall, results showed that the salesperson's positive perceptions of interpersonal treatment both by his or her supervisor and co-workers are predictors of the salesperson's higher organizational commitment. A salesperson that perceived fair treatment by his or her supervisor and co-workers consequently showed higher organizational commitment. The influence of the salesperson's perception of his or her fair interpersonal treatment by supervisors was more important in explaining organizational commitment than his or her perception of fair interpersonal treatment by co-workers.

Hypothesis 2 states that a salesperson's perception of fair interpersonal treatment will be negatively related to that salesperson's employee deviance. Results of the regression analysis indicate that there is a negative relationship between the perception of fair interpersonal treatment and employee deviance. A salesperson's perception of fair interpersonal treatment is a predictor of employee deviance, explaining 9.6 percent of the variance in employee deviance by a salesperson's perception of fair interpersonal treatment. If the salesperson perceives that he or she is treated fairly, he or she is less likely to engage in deviant behavior.

Hypothesis 2a states that a salesperson's perception of fairness in interpersonal treatment by his or her supervisor will be negatively related to the salesperson's employee deviance. The results indicated that there is a negative relationship between a salesperson's perception of fair interpersonal treatment by his or her supervisor and that salesperson's employee deviance. A salesperson's perception of fair interpersonal treatment by his or her supervisor is a predictor of employee deviance, explaining 7.6 percent of the variance in employee deviance by a salesperson's perception of fair interpersonal treatment by his or her supervisor. If the salesperson perceives that he or she is treated fairly by his or her supervisor, he or she is less likely to engage in deviant behavior.

Hypothesis 2b states that a salesperson's perception of fairness in interpersonal treatment by his or her co-workers will be negatively related to employee deviance. The results indicated that there is a negative relationship between a salesperson's perception of fair interpersonal treatment by his or her co-workers and that salesperson's employee deviance. A salesperson's perception of fair interpersonal treatment by his or her co-

workers is a predictor of that salesperson's employee deviance, explaining 10.9 percent of the variance in employee deviance. If the salesperson perceives that he or she is treated fairly by his or her co-workers, he or she is less likely to engage in deviant behavior.

Hypothesis 2c states that a salesperson's perception of fairness in interpersonal treatment will be negatively related to his or her property deviance. Results of the regression analysis indicated that there is a negative relationship between the perception of fair interpersonal treatment and his or her property deviance. A salesperson's perception of fair interpersonal treatment is a predictor of employee property deviance, explaining 15.4 percent of the variance in employee property deviance. If the salesperson perceives that he or she is not treated fairly, he or she is more likely to engage in property deviance.

Hypothesis 2d states that a salesperson's perception of fairness in interpersonal treatment by his or her supervisor will be negatively related to his or her property deviance. There is a negative relationship between a salesperson's perception of fair interpersonal treatment by his or her supervisor and that salesperson's property deviance. A salesperson's perception of fair interpersonal treatment by his or her supervisor is a predictor of his or her property deviance, explaining 13.8 percent of the variance in employee property deviance. If the salesperson perceives that he or she is not treated fairly by his or her supervisor, he or she is more likely to engage in property deviance.

Hypothesis 2e states that a salesperson's perception of fairness in interpersonal treatment by his or her co-workers will be negatively related to that salesperson's property deviance. There is a negative relationship between a salesperson's perception of fair interpersonal treatment by his or her co-workers and that salesperson's property

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deviance. A salesperson's perception of fair interpersonal treatment by his or her co-workers is a predictor of his or her property deviance, explaining 14.6 percent of the variance in employee property deviance. If the salesperson perceives that he or she is not treated fairly by his or her co-workers, he or she is more likely to engage in property deviance.

Hypothesis 2f states that a salesperson's perception of fairness in interpersonal treatment will be negatively related to his or her production deviance. There is a negative relationship between perception of fair interpersonal treatment and employee production deviance. A salesperson's perception of fair interpersonal treatment is a predictor of employee production deviance, explaining 5.8 percent of the variance in employee production deviance. If the salesperson perceives that he or she is not treated fairly, he or she is more likely to engage in production deviance

Hypothesis 2g states that a salesperson's perception of fairness in interpersonal treatment by his or her supervisor will be negatively related to that salesperson's production deviance. There is a negative relationship between perception of fair interpersonal treatment by supervisor and employee production deviance. A salesperson's perception of fair interpersonal treatment by his or her supervisor is a predictor of his or her production deviance, explaining 4.5 percent of the variance in employee production deviance. If the salesperson perceives that he or she is not treated fairly by his or her supervisor, he or she is more likely to engage in production deviance.

Hypothesis 2h states that a salesperson's perception of fairness in interpersonal treatment by his or her co-workers will be negatively related to that salesperson's production deviance. There is a negative relationship between perception of fair

interpersonal treatment by co-workers and employee production deviance. A salesperson's perception of fair interpersonal treatment by his or her co-workers is a predictor of his or her production deviance, explaining 9.6 percent of the variance in employee production deviance. If the salesperson perceives that he or she is not treated fairly by his or her co-workers, he or she is more likely to engage in production deviance.

Overall, results show that a salesperson's perceptions of interpersonal fairness do influence a salesperson's likelihood of engaging in deviant behaviors. The influence of the salesperson's perception of his or her interpersonal treatment by co-workers was more important in explaining deviant behavior than their perceptions of the fairness of interpersonal treatment by supervisors. This may be due to the closeness of co-workers as opposed to supervisors and the amount of time salespeople are exposed to their co-workers.

Hypothesis 3 states that an indirect effect of a salesperson's perception of fairness in interpersonal treatment and his or her organizational commitment will be negatively related to that salesperson's employee deviance. Results of the regression analysis indicate that a salesperson's perception of interpersonal treatment affects his or her employee deviance indirectly mediating effects of his or her organizational commitment, explaining 23 percent of the variance. The salesperson, who perceives fairness in interpersonal treatment and who is highly committed organization, is less likely to engage in employee deviance.

Hypothesis 3a states that that an indirect effect of a salesperson's perception of fairness in interpersonal treatment and his or her organizational commitment will be negatively related to that salesperson's property deviance. Results of the regression

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analysis indicate that there is an indirect relationship between these variables. A salesperson's organizational commitment is a predictor of employee property deviance, with 21 percent of the variance in employee property deviance explained by perception of fairness and organizational commitment. The salesperson, who perceived fairness in interpersonal treatment and who is highly committed to the organization, is less likely to engage in property deviance.

Hypothesis 3b states that that an indirect effect of a salesperson's perception of fairness in interpersonal treatment and his or her organizational commitment will be negatively related to that salesperson's production deviance. Results of the regression analysis indicate that there is an indirect relationship between these variables. A salesperson's organizational commitment is an indirect predictor of employee production deviance, with 64 percent of the variance in employee production deviance explained by perception of fairness and organizational commitment. The salesperson, who perceived fairness in interpersonal treatment and is highly committed organization, is less likely to engage in production deviance.

Hypothesis 3c states that an indirect effect of a salesperson's perception of fairness in interpersonal treatment by his or her supervisor and his or her organizational commitment will be negatively related to that salesperson's employee deviance. Results of the regression analysis indicated that a salesperson's perception of interpersonal treatment by his or her supervisor affects employee deviance indirectly mediating effects of organizational commitment, explaining 22 percent of the variance. A salesperson, who perceived fairness in interpersonal treatment by his or her supervisor and is highly committed organization, is less likely to engage in deviant behavior.

Hypothesis 3d states that that an indirect effect of a salesperson's perception of fairness in interpersonal treatment by his or her supervisor and his or her organizational commitment will be negatively related to the salesperson's property deviance. Results of the regression analysis indicate that a salesperson's perception of interpersonal treatment by his or her supervisor affects the salesperson's property deviance indirectly mediating effects of organizational commitment, explaining 19.8 percent of the variance. The salesperson, who perceived fairness in interpersonal treatment by his or her supervisor and is highly committed organization, is less likely to engage in property deviance.

Hypothesis 3e states that that an indirect effect of a salesperson's perception of fairness in interpersonal treatment by his or her supervisor and his or her organizational commitment will be negatively related to the employee production deviance. Results of the regression analysis indicated that a salesperson's perception of interpersonal treatment by his or her supervisor affected the salesperson's production deviance indirectly throughout mediating effects of the salesperson's organizational commitment, explaining 19.9 percent of the variance. The salesperson, who perceived fairness in interpersonal treatment by his or her supervisor and is highly committed organization, is less likely to engage in production deviance.

Hypothesis 3f states that an indirect effect of a salesperson's perception of fairness in interpersonal treatment by his or her co-workers and his or her organizational commitment will be negatively related to employee deviance. Results of the regression analysis indicated that a salesperson's perception of interpersonal treatment by his or her co-workers affects employee deviance indirectly throughout the mediating effects of his or her organizational commitment, explaining 24 percent of the variance. The

salesperson, who perceived fairness in interpersonal treatment by his or her co-workers and is highly committed organization, is less likely to engage in employee deviance.

Hypothesis 3g states that that an indirect effect of a salesperson's perception of fairness in interpersonal treatment by his or her co-workers and his or her organizational commitment will be negatively related to the salesperson's property deviance. Results of the regression analysis indicated that a salesperson's perception of interpersonal treatment by his or her co-workers affected the salesperson's property deviance indirectly throughout the mediating effects of his or her organizational commitment, explaining 20 percent of the variance. The salesperson, who perceived fairness in interpersonal treatment by his or her co-workers and is highly committed organization, is less likely to engage in property deviance.

Hypothesis 3h states that that an indirect effect of a salesperson's perception of fairness in interpersonal treatment by his or her co-workers and his or her organizational commitment will be negatively related to the salesperson's production deviance. Results of the regression analysis indicated that a salesperson's perception of interpersonal treatment by his or her co-workers affected the salesperson's production deviance indirectly throughout the mediating effects of his or her organizational commitment, explaining 21.8 percent of the variance. The salesperson, who perceived fairness in interpersonal treatment by his or her co-workers and is highly committed organization, is less likely to engage in production deviance.

Overall, results showed that a salesperson's perceptions of interpersonal treatment and his or her organizational commitment have an indirect effect on frequency of that salesperson's deviance behavior. Specifically, a salesperson's perception of fair

interpersonal treatment most strongly affected the salesperson's production deviance indirectly throughout mediating effects of his or her organizational commitment, explaining the higher percent of the variance.

Discussion

Results of the regression analyses indicated that there is a positive relationship between perception of fair interpersonal treatment by supervisors and co-workers and organizational commitment. Participants who perceived fairness in interpersonal treatment by their supervisors and co-workers reported higher commitment to their organization. This result is consistent with work by Baring and Phillips (1993), McFarline and Sweeney (1992), and Martine and Bennett(1996). They found that organizational fairness (procedural, distributive, or interactional justice) was positively related to employee's organizational commitment.

Findings indicated that there is a negative relationship between perception of fair interpersonal treatment by supervisors and co-workers and employee deviance. A salesperson's perception of fair interpersonal treatment by his or her supervisor and co-workers influences the salesperson's employee deviance indirectly through the mediating effects of the salesperson's organizational commitment. In other words, participants who perceived fairness in interpersonal treatment by their supervisors and co-workers and participants who are more committed to their organization responded that they engaged less in their property and production deviance. These findings are similar to studies by Greenberg (1990) and Skarlicki and Folger (1997). Greenberg (1990) found that the employee's theft rate and level of organizational fairness were negatively related.

Skarlicki and Folger (1997) found that there is negative relationship between organizational justice and organizational retaliation behavior.

Based on this study, perceived fairness influences employee's organizational attitudinal and behavior outcomes. In addition, interactional justice in interpersonal treatment is a significant type of organizational justice as an antecedent of organizational commitment and employee deviance. Also, this study found that interactional justice in salesperson's perceptions of fair interpersonal treatment indirectly influenced on employee deviance throughout the mediating effect of that salesperson's organizational commitment.

Implications

Previous studies have investigated the relationship of organizational justice, particularly distributive fairness and procedural fairness, and organizational attitudes or behaviors, such as organizational commitment and employee theft. This study extended that work investigating in a retail setting

Results showed that a salesperson's perception of fair interpersonal treatment positively influenced his or her organizational commitment and negatively impacted his or her employee deviance. Findings also showed that the salesperson's deviance was a consequence of the salesperson's perception of fair interpersonal treatment by supervisors and co-workers and his or her organizational commitment. The present findings are similar to those of previous studies. McFarlin and Sweeney (1992) found that procedural justice was a good predictor of organizational commitment, and Martin and Bennett (1996) found that procedural fairness had a direct influence on organizational commitment. Skarlicki and Folger (1997) have demonstrated a relationship between the

perception of unfairness and aggressive responses, and organizational injustice and organizational retaliatory behavior were directly related. Greenberg and Scott (1996) suggested that employee theft from a company is a reaction to inequities and unfair treatment. Greenberg (1993b) found that uncaring and inconsiderate supervision are key determinants of employee theft. Thus, perception of fair interpersonal treatment in an organization may lead to higher organizational commitment and less employee deviance.

From a practical standpoint, the findings from the present study are important to retail management. Most organizations wish to increase their employees' organizational commitment and reduce employee deviance. Wimbush and Dalton (1997) suggested that organizations should be concerned with reducing the incidence of employee deviance through organizational control. This study's findings suggest that fair interpersonal treatment should play an important role in retailers' attempts to improve organizational commitment and reduce employee deviance.

These findings provide a better understanding of the influence of employees' perception of fair interpersonal treatment in the workplace and provide new knowledge to retail organizations regarding the organizational commitment and employee deviance among salespeople. Also the present study raises awareness of the importance of positive perceptions of fair interpersonal treatment in workplace. This information may be useful in enhancing a fair workplace environment for the benefit of the retail organization. Retailers may benefit from a better understanding of the role of fair interpersonal treatment between employees in an organization.

Recommendation for Future research

The results of this study provide useful information related to perception of fair interpersonal treatment, organizational commitment, and employee deviance. However, this study is limited in scope, and further research is needed to overcome the limitation. One of the recommendations for future study is to use a larger and random sample of retail salespeople working in various geographic areas and working in organizations of varying sizes to test the external validity of the findings for this study. Also, further research is recommended using multiple measures and longitudinal or field experimental design to improve the reliability of scales and to alleviate limitations of self-reported data. In addition, several new directions concerning this important topic are recommended for future study. Investigate the ways other aspects of interactional justice can influence organizational commitment and employee deviance, investigate the relationship between a salesperson's perceptions of his or her supervisors and co-workers deviance and that salesperson's organizational commitment and his or her employee deviance. Also, investigate the way in which salespeople rationalize employee deviance in relation to individual characteristics and situational factors could be recommended.

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CHAPTER V

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The purpose of the study was to investigate the relationship among the retail salespeople's perceptions of fair interpersonal treatment by an organization, organizational commitment, and employee deviance. Previous studies have investigated the relationship of organizational justice, particularly distributive fairness and procedural fairness, and organizational attitudes or behaviors, such as organizational commitment and employee theft. There were no studies found that investigate the relationship among interactional justice (interpersonal relations), organizational commitment, and employee deviance. The present study was designed to investigate these relationships in the context of a retail setting. Specifically, the objective of the research were: (1) to investigate the relationship between the salesperson's perception of the fair interpersonal treatment by his or her supervisor and co-workers and that salesperson's level of commitment to the organization; (2) to investigate the relationship between the salesperson's perception of the fair interpersonal treatment by his or her supervisor and co-workers and that salesperson's frequency of property and production deviance; (3) to investigate the indirect relationship between a salesperson's perception of the fair interpersonal treatment by his or her supervisor and co-workers through the mediating effects of his or her level of commitment to the organization and that salesperson's frequency of property and production deviance.

Summary of Findings

The first hypotheses concerned a salesperson's perception of fairness in interpersonal treatment and the relationship organizational commitment. Results indicated the salesperson's perception of fair interpersonal treatment is a predictor of organizational commitment, with 8.6 percent of the variance in employee organizational commitment explained by the perception of fair interpersonal treatment. The salesperson's organizational commitment is higher when that salesperson perceives fair interpersonal treatment from both supervisors and co-workers. A salesperson that perceived fair treatment by his or her supervisor and co-workers consequently showed higher organizational commitment. The influence of the salesperson's perception of his or her fair interpersonal treatment by supervisors was more important in explaining organizational commitment than his or her perception of fair interpersonal treatment by co-workers. This is consistent with work by others (Baring & Phillips, 1993; McFarlin & Sweeney, 1992; Martine & Bennett, 1996). They found that organizational fairness (procedural, distributive, or interactional justice) was significantly related to employee's organizational commitment. The results of this study have shown that a salesperson's positive perception in interpersonal treatment by both supervisor and co-workers are predictive of a salesperson's higher organizational commitment. It is important to note that a salesperson who perceives he or she is treated fairly by his or her supervisor and co-workers will show higher organizational commitment.

The second group of hypotheses concerned a salesperson's perception of fair interpersonal treatment as it relates to employee deviance. Results revealed a negative relationship between the perception of fair interpersonal treatment and employee

deviance. A salesperson's perception of fair interpersonal treatment is a predictor of employee deviance, explaining 9.6 percent of the variance in employee deviance by a salesperson's perception of fair interpersonal treatment. If the salesperson perceives that he or she is treated fairly by either supervisors or co-workers, he or she is less likely to engage in employee deviance. This finding is similar to those of Greenberg (1990) and Skarlicki and Folger (1997). Greenberg (1990) found that the employee's theft rate and level of organizational fairness were negatively related. Skarlicki and Folger (1997) found that there is negative relationship between organizational justice and organizational retaliation behavior. This study found that a salesperson's perceptions of interpersonal fairness and organizational commitment do influence a salesperson's likelihood of engaging in deviant behaviors. A salesperson's perception of fair interpersonal treatment by his or her supervisor and co-workers and organizational commitment are possible antecedent variables in employee deviance. The perception of fair interpersonal treatment also was a predictor for the two sub-scales concerning employee deviance, production deviance and property deviance. There is a negative relationship between a salesperson's perception of fair interpersonal treatment by his or her supervisor and co-workers and that salesperson's property deviance. If the salesperson perceives that he or she is not treated fairly, he or she is more likely to engage in property deviance. The same holds true for production deviance. If the salesperson perceives that he or she is not treated fairly by his or her supervisors and co-workers, he or she is more likely to engage in production deviance. Overall, results show that a salesperson's perceptions of interpersonal fairness do influence a salesperson's likelihood of engaging in deviant behaviors. The influence of the salesperson's perception of his or her interpersonal

treatment by co-workers was more important in explaining deviant behavior than their perceptions of the fairness of interpersonal treatment by supervisors. This may be due to the closeness of co-workers as opposed to supervisors and the amounts of time salespeople are exposed to their co-workers.

The third group of hypotheses concerned the indirect effect of a salesperson's perception of fairness in interpersonal treatment and his or her organizational commitment, predicting a negative relationship to employee deviance. The salesperson, who perceives fairness in interpersonal treatment and highly committed organization, is less likely to engage in either production or property employee deviance. Overall, results showed that a salesperson's perceptions of interpersonal treatment and his or her organizational commitment have an indirect effect on frequency of that salesperson's deviant behavior. Specifically, a salesperson's perception of fair interpersonal treatment most strongly affected the salesperson's production deviance indirectly mediating effects of his or her organizational commitment, explaining the higher percent of the variance.

Based on this study, perceived fairness is one of the important influences on employee's organizational attitudinal and behavioral outcomes. Among the possible attitudinal and behavioral outcomes, it is important to know that organizational commitment and employee deviance are important outcomes. In addition, interactional justice in interpersonal treatment is one of the important types of organizational justice as an antecedent of organizational commitment and employee deviance. In addition, this study found that interactional justice in interpersonal treatment has indirect effect on employee deviance mediating effect of organizational commitment.

Results showed that a salesperson's perception of fair interpersonal treatment positively influenced on his or her organizational commitment and negatively impacted on his or her employee deviance. Findings also showed that the salesperson's deviance may be a consequence of the salesperson's perception of fair interpersonal treatment by supervisors and co-workers and his or her organizational commitment. The present findings are similar to those of previous studies. McFarlin and Sweeney (1992) found that procedural justice was a good predictor of organizational commitment, and Martin and Bennett (1996) found that procedural fairness had a direct influence on organizational commitment. Skarlicki and Folger (1997) have demonstrated a relationship between the perception of unfairness and aggressive responses, and organizational injustice and organizational retaliatory behavior were directly related. Greenberg and Scott (1996) suggested that employee theft from a company is a reaction to inequities and unfair treatment. Greenberg (1993b) found that uncaring and inconsiderate supervision are important determinants of employee theft. Thus, perception of fair interpersonal treatment in an organization may lead to higher organizational commitment and less employee deviance.

From a practical standpoint, the findings from the present study are important to retail management. Most organizations wish to increase their employees' organizational commitment and reduce employee deviance. Wimbush and Dalton (1997) suggested that organizations should be concerned with reducing the incidence of employee deviance through organizational control. This study's findings suggest that fair interpersonal treatment should play an important role in retailers' attempts to improve organizational commitment and reduce employee deviance.

These findings provide a better understanding of the influence of employees' perception of fair interpersonal treatment in the workplace and provide new knowledge to retail organizations regarding the organizational commitment and employee deviance among salespeople. The present study raises awareness of the importance of positive perceptions of fair interpersonal treatment in workplace. This information may be useful in enhancing fair workplace environment for the benefit of the retail organization. Retailers may benefit from a better understanding of the role of fair interpersonal treatment between employees in an organization.

Conclusions

There has been much research concerning employees' perceptions of fair interpersonal treatment, organizational commitment, and employee deviance, but no studies were found investigating the relationship of all three concepts in a retail setting. This study's conclusions may not apply to all retail salespeople as data were obtained from a convenience sample in only two cities and relied on self-reported data. However, the results of this study provide the possible relationship between a retail salesperson's perception of fair interpersonal treatment, his or her organizational commitment, and that salesperson's deviance.

For this group of salespeople, organizational commitment and employee deviance was influenced by their perception of fair interpersonal treatment by their supervisor and co-workers. These relationships suggest several possibilities for retail organizations. Retail organizations trying to increase employees' organizational commitment and to

reduce employee deviance should make efforts to increase the perception of fair interpersonal interactions between employees.

Recommendations for Future Research

This study provides useful information related to perception of fair interpersonal treatment, organizational commitment, and employee deviance. However, this study is limited in scope and further research is needed more in-depth and new direction to overcome the limitation of this study and to better understand of this important topic. One of the recommendations for future study is to use a larger random sample of retail salespeople working in various geographic areas and working in organizations of varying sizes to test the external validity of the findings for this study. In addition, several new directions for this important topic are recommended for future study. Study how other aspects of interactional justice can influence organizational commitment and employee deviance, and investigate the relationship between a salesperson's perceptions of his or her supervisor and co-workers deviance and that salesperson's organizational commitment and his or her employee deviance. Finally, investigate the way in which salespeople rationalize employee deviance in relation to individual characteristics and situational factors could be recommended.

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APPENDIXES

APPENDIX A:
SALESPERSON QUESTIONNAIRE

Salesperson Survey

Your confidentiality will be maintained at all times and you may feel free to stop answering questions at any time.

Please respond to the following statements with respect to your own feelings about the particular organization for which you are presently working. What is your organization (retail store) like most of the time? Circle: Yes if the item describes your organization; No if it does not describe your organization; and ? if you cannot decide.

In your organization...

- | | | | |
|---|-----|---|----|
| 1. Employees are praised for good work | Yes | ? | No |
| 2. Supervisors yell at employees | Yes | ? | No |
| 3. Supervisors play favorites | Yes | ? | No |
| 4. Employees are trusted | Yes | ? | No |
| 5. Employees' complaints are dealt with effectively | Yes | ? | No |
| 6. Employees are treated like children | Yes | ? | No |
| 7. Employees are treated with respect | Yes | ? | No |
| 8. Employees' questions and problems are responded to quickly | Yes | ? | No |
| 9. Employees are lied to | Yes | ? | No |
| 10. Employees' suggestions are ignored | Yes | ? | No |
| 11. Supervisors swear at employees | Yes | ? | No |
| 12. Employees' hard work is appreciated | Yes | ? | No |
| 13. Supervisors threaten to fire or lay off employees | Yes | ? | No |
| 14. Employees are treated fairly | Yes | ? | No |
| 15. Co-workers help each other out | Yes | ? | No |
| 16. Co-workers argue with each other | Yes | ? | No |
| 17. Co-workers put each other down | Yes | ? | No |
| 18. Co-workers treat each other with respect | Yes | ? | No |

Listed below are a series of statements that represent possible feelings that individuals might have about the company or organization for which they work. With respect to your own feelings about the particular organization for which you are now working, please indicate the degree of your agreement or disagreement with each statement by circling one of the seven alternatives below each statement

19. I am willing to put in a great deal of effort beyond that normally expected in order to help this organization be successful.

| | | | | | | |
|----------------|------------------|----------------|----------------------------|-------------------|---------------------|-------------------|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Strongly agree | Moderately agree | Slightly agree | Neither agree nor disagree | Slightly disagree | Moderately disagree | Strongly disagree |

20. I talk up this organization to my friends as a great organization to work for.

| | | | | | | |
|----------------|------------------|----------------|----------------------------|-------------------|---------------------|-------------------|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Strongly agree | Moderately agree | Slightly agree | Neither agree nor disagree | Slightly disagree | Moderately disagree | Strongly disagree |

21. I feel very little loyalty to this organization.

| | | | | | | |
|----------------|------------------|----------------|----------------------------|-------------------|---------------------|-------------------|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Strongly agree | Moderately agree | Slightly agree | Neither agree nor disagree | Slightly disagree | Moderately disagree | Strongly disagree |

22. I would accept almost any type of job assignment in order to keep working for this organization.

| | | | | | | |
|----------------|------------------|----------------|----------------------------|-------------------|---------------------|-------------------|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Strongly agree | Moderately agree | Slightly agree | Neither agree nor disagree | Slightly disagree | Moderately disagree | Strongly disagree |

23. I find that my values and the organization's values are very similar.

| | | | | | | |
|----------------|------------------|----------------|----------------------------|-------------------|---------------------|-------------------|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Strongly agree | Moderately agree | Slightly agree | Neither agree nor disagree | Slightly disagree | Moderately disagree | Strongly disagree |

24. I am proud to tell others that I am a part of this organization.

| | | | | | | |
|----------------|------------------|----------------|----------------------------|-------------------|---------------------|-------------------|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Strongly agree | Moderately agree | Slightly agree | Neither agree nor disagree | Slightly disagree | Moderately disagree | Strongly disagree |

25. I could just as well be working for a different organization as long as the type of work was similar.

| | | | | | | |
|----------------|------------------|----------------|----------------------------|-------------------|---------------------|-------------------|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Strongly agree | Moderately agree | Slightly agree | Neither agree nor disagree | Slightly disagree | Moderately disagree | Strongly disagree |

26. This organization really inspires the very best in me in the way of job performance.

| | | | | | | |
|----------------|------------------|----------------|----------------------------|-------------------|---------------------|-------------------|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Strongly agree | Moderately agree | Slightly agree | Neither agree nor disagree | Slightly disagree | Moderately disagree | Strongly disagree |

27. It would take very little change in my present circumstances to cause me to leave this organization.

| | | | | | | |
|----------------|------------------|----------------|----------------------------|-------------------|---------------------|-------------------|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Strongly agree | Moderately agree | Slightly agree | Neither agree nor disagree | Slightly disagree | Moderately disagree | Strongly disagree |

28. I am extremely glad that I chose this organization to work for over others I was considering at the time I joined.

| | | | | | | |
|----------------|------------------|----------------|----------------------------|-------------------|---------------------|-------------------|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Strongly agree | Moderately agree | Slightly agree | Neither agree nor disagree | Slightly disagree | Moderately disagree | Strongly disagree |

29. There's not too much to be gained by sticking with this organization indefinitely.

| | | | | | | |
|----------------|------------------|----------------|----------------------------|-------------------|---------------------|-------------------|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Strongly agree | Moderately agree | Slightly agree | Neither agree nor disagree | Slightly disagree | Moderately disagree | Strongly disagree |

30. Often, I find it difficult to agree with this organization's policies on important matters relating to its employees.

| | | | | | | |
|----------------|------------------|----------------|----------------------------|-------------------|---------------------|-------------------|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Strongly agree | Moderately agree | Slightly agree | Neither agree nor disagree | Slightly disagree | Moderately disagree | Strongly disagree |

31. I really care about the fate of this organization.

| | | | | | | |
|----------------|------------------|----------------|----------------------------|-------------------|---------------------|-------------------|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Strongly agree | Moderately agree | Slightly agree | Neither agree nor disagree | Slightly disagree | Moderately disagree | Strongly disagree |

32. For me this is the best of all possible organization for which to work.

| | | | | | | |
|----------------|------------------|----------------|----------------------------|-------------------|---------------------|-------------------|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Strongly agree | Moderately agree | Slightly agree | Neither agree nor disagree | Slightly disagree | Moderately disagree | Strongly disagree |

33. Deciding to work for this organization was a definite mistake on my part.

| | | | | | | |
|----------------|------------------|----------------|----------------------------|-------------------|---------------------|-------------------|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Strongly agree | Moderately agree | Slightly agree | Neither agree nor disagree | Slightly disagree | Moderately disagree | Strongly disagree |

Instructions: Please indicate how often you engage in each of the below activities in your current job. Please use the scale provided and circle one number to indicate your response.

| | | | | |
|--------------|-------|-----------|--------|-------|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| all the time | often | sometimes | rarely | never |

- | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 34. Misuse employee discount privilege (e.g. give employee discount privilege to friends or other people) | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 35. Take store merchandise | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 36. Get paid for more hours than worked | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 37. Damage merchandise | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 38. Claim excess expense reimbursement | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 39. Purposely under-ring purchases | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 40. Unauthorized taking of money | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 41. Take long lunch or coffee breaks | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 42. Perform slow or sloppy work | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 43. Work while influenced by alcohol or drugs | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 44. Come late and leave early from the work | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

- | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 45. Sick leave when not sick | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 46. Use personal phone calls on work time | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 47. Do personal business on work time | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 48. Surf the net or play computer game on work time | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

Please give the appropriate answer for the remaining items.

How many supervisors presently work at your store? _____ supervisors

How many co-workers presently work at your store? _____ co-workers

How long have you been with your current organization? _____ months

Are you: Male _____ Female _____

In what year were you born? _____ year

Are you : Part-time worker _____ Full-time worker _____

How are you paid?

Hourly _____ Salary _____
 Straight commission _____ Base plus commission _____

Does your store have personal sales goals or quotas? Yes No

If yes, how often do you make your sale goals or quotas? (Circle one)

1 2 3 4 5
 all the time often sometimes rarely never

Type of store you are working in is

Department store _____
 Specialty store _____
 Other (List) _____

The time you have taken to fill out this questionnaire has been greatly appreciated! Thank you for your help!

APPENDIX B:
LETTERS TO RETAIL MANAGERS

January 20, 2000

Dear retail Manager,

Working within a retail organization involves balancing great number responsibilities and requires managerial diplomacy. As a manager you come into contact with customers, sales staff, and upper management on a daily basis. In addition, your involvement in the retail environment exposes you to various situations that may include interpersonal relationship with sales staff. Studies have been conducted concerning the interpersonal relationship posed for the retail sales staff, but none has attempted to relate this interpersonal relationship to organizational commitment and employee deviance. We are interested in researching interpersonal relationship, organizational commitment, and employee deviance within retail setting because we feel there are important factors in the organizational overall success.

The retail organization for which you work, for without a doubt, value its employees and effort they extend to help the organization meet its goals. Therefore, your retail organization has been selected as part of a convenience sample to complete a questionnaire regarding sales staff's perceptions of interpersonal treatment, organizational commitment, and employee deviance. It is important that your sales staff complete the questionnaire in its entirety as accurately as possible. Please allow me to ask your sales staff take questionnaire to their home and complete the questionnaire in private then place the questionnaire into the stamped, addressed envelop and mail it to the researcher.

Your confidentiality is assured. Neither your name nor the name of your organization will be disclosed.

If you are interested, I will be happy to provide a summary of the research findings upon completion of my thesis.

Please call (405) 372-1399 or write if you have questions of any kind.

Thank you again for your assistance,

Sincerely,



Sun-Hye Jang
Graduate Student,
Oklahoma State University



APPENDIX C:
INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD
HUMAN SUBJECTS REVIEW

OKLAHOMA STATE UNIVERSITY
INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD

Date: January 12, 2000 IRB #: HE-00-113

Proposal Title: "THE RELATIONSHIP AMONG SALES PERSONS' PERCEPTION OF FAIR INTERPERSONAL TREATMENT, EMPLOYEE ORGANIZATIONAL COMMITMENT, AND EMPLOYEE DEVIANCE IN THE RETAIL ENVIRONMENT"

Principal Investigator(s): Nancy Stanforth
Sun-Hye Jang

Reviewed and Processed as: Modification

Approval Status Recommended by Reviewer(s): Approved

Signature:



Carol Olson, Director of University Research Compliance

January 12, 2000

Date

Approvals are valid for one calendar year, after which time a request for continuation must be submitted. Any modification to the research project approved by the IRB must be submitted for approval with the advisor's signature. The IRB office MUST be notified in writing when a project is complete. Approved projects are subject to monitoring by the IRB. Expedited and exempt projects may be reviewed by the full Institutional Review Board.

VITA

Sun-Hye Jang

Candidate for the Degree of

Master of Science

Thesis: THE RELATIONSHIP AMONG RETAIL SALESPERSONS' PERCEPTIONS OF FAIR INTERPERSONAL TREATMENT, ORGANIZATIONAL COMMITMENT, AND EMPLOYEE DEVIANCE.

Major Field: Design, Housing, and Merchandising

Biographical:

Education: Received Bachelor of Science degree in History from Seoul Women's University, Seoul, Korea, in Feb 1988. Received Bachelor of Science degree with a major in Apparel Design at Oklahoma State University in May 1997. Completed the requirements for the Master of Science degree with a major in Apparel Merchandising at Oklahoma State University in July 2000.

Experience: Apparel Designer, Han-Mam Knit Enterprise, Seoul Korea, Summer 1996; Manager, Kyoto Japanese Restaurant, Stillwater, OK, May 1999 to present.