

Violations of Justice and its Impact on Evaluations of Instructors

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Fairness in the Classroom

Past Research shows that:

- Fairness is one of the most important factors in determining how students evaluate instructors (see Rodabaugh, 1993)
- Perceptions that instructors are unfair are related to negative outcomes such as less student achievement and satisfaction with college. (see Rodabaugh, 1993)
- Perceived fairness impacts instructor evaluations above and beyond students' expected grades or actual grades received. (Wendorf & Alexander, 2005; Rodabaugh, 1993).

Study Purpose

- Would students' perceptions about instructors' fairness predict their class attendance, participation, and their willingness to recommend instructors to other students?

Method

- 21 criteria of justice such as trust, courtesy, and ethicality (see Wendorf, 2000) were manipulated to be low, moderate or high in fairness within scenarios describing student-instructor interactions.
- Students read each scenario and responded to 5 questions about each and then responded to questions about demographics.

Method: Sample Scenario

Scenario 2

At the end of the semester, Dr. Williams knows he really liked some students while really disliking others. Regardless of his liking, he gives all students their grades as determined by the grading criteria given in the syllabus.

Method: Sample Scenario

Scenario 2

At the end of the semester, Dr. Williams knows he really liked one student above all others. Dr. William's favorite student gets a 5% raise on their final grade. No other student gets their grade deducted or raised.

Method: Sample Scenario

Scenario 2

At the end of the semester, Dr. Williams knows he really liked some students while really disliking others. The students Dr. Williams likes get a 5% raise on their final grade. The students Dr. Williams does not like get a 5% deduction on their final grade.

Questions for each of the scenarios

1. Do you think the actions of this instructor were fair? Yes No
2. How would you grade this instructor?
A B C D F
3. Would you recommend this instructor to another student? Yes No
4. Would you attend this class regularly?
Yes No
5. Would you participate in this class regularly?
Yes No

Demographics

- For each participant information was gathered about their age, gender, major, year in school, GPA, and regular attendance and participation habits.
- None of the demographic variables had a significant effect on the determination of fairness or students' intended behavior.

Results

- Questions 1 and 2 (perceived fairness and instructor evaluation) for each of the scenarios worked as both a manipulation check and as predictors of students' reported behavior.
- Logistic Regression analyses were used in order to predict students' recommendation, and their desire to attend and participate in class from their ratings of fairness and their global evaluation of the instructor.

Results: Recommendation

Criteria	R ²	Criteria	R ²
Trust	.552 ^a	Decision Control	.522 ^a
Ethicality	.681 ^a	Voice/Process Cont.	.317 ^a
Consistency	.629 ^a	Correctability	.565 ^a
Neutrality	.464 ^a	Representativeness	.609 ^a
Accuracy	.559 ^a	Need	.486 ^a
Equal Opportunity	.625 ^a	Ability	.514 ^a
Causal Accounts	.577 ^a	Equality (Arithmetic)	.548 ^a
Timeliness	.585 ^a	Status/Tenure	.440 ^a
Honesty	.508 ^a	Equity (Effort)	.518 ^a
Respect	.594 ^a	Equity (Contribution)	.300 ^a
Courtesy	.708 ^d		

a: both predictors were significant
 b: fairness alone was significant
 c: evaluation alone was significant
 d: neither was significant

Results: Attendance

Criteria	R ²	Criteria	R ²
Trust	.001 ^d	Decision Control	.039 ^c
Ethicality	.090 ^c	Voice/Process Cont.	.065 ^a
Consistency	.048 ^c	Correctability	.065 ^c
Neutrality	.093 ^c	Representativeness	.049 ^c
Accuracy	.221 ^c	Need	.069 ^c
Equal Opportunity	.076 ^c	Ability	.122 ^c
Causal Accounts	.169 ^c	Equality (Arithmetic)	.064 ^d
Timeliness	.062 ^c	Status/Tenure	.079 ^c
Honesty	.078 ^a	Equity (Effort)	.150 ^a
Respect	.266 ^c	Equity (Contribution)	.051 ^c
Courtesy	.368 ^c		

a: both predictors were significant
 b: fairness alone was significant
 c: evaluation alone was significant
 d: neither was significant

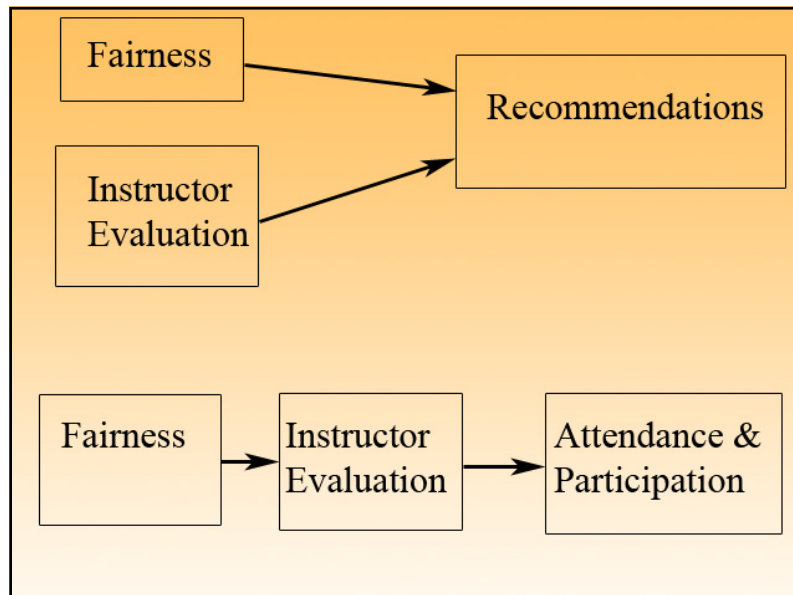
Results: Participation

Criteria	R ²	Criteria	R ²
Trust	.024 ^c	Decision Control	.096 ^a
Ethicality	.088 ^d	Voice/Process Cont.	.100 ^c
Consistency	.070 ^c	Correctability	.139 ^c
Neutrality	.118 ^a	Representativeness	.086 ^c
Accuracy	.171 ^c	Need	.161 ^c
Equal Opportunity	.127 ^c	Ability	.110 ^c
Causal Accounts	.137 ^a	Equality (Arithmetic)	.075 ^c
Timeliness	.139 ^c	Status/Tenure	.065 ^c
Honesty	.057 ^c	Equity (Effort)	.184 ^c
Respect	.317 ^c	Equity (Contribution)	.089 ^c
Courtesy	.497 ^c		

a: both predictors were significant
 b: fairness alone was significant
 c: evaluation alone was significant
 d: neither was significant

Discussion

- Fairness & instructor evaluation contribute directly to the students' willingness to recommend an instructor.
- In situations involving classroom behaviors, the effect of fairness is mediated by the evaluation.
- This research suggests that fairness not only impacts students' evaluations of instructors, but their willingness to attend and participate in class, and also what they say about instructors to other students.



Limitations and Future Directions

- Limitations: The use of a likert scale may be more effective in determining students intentions as opposed to forced-choice responses.
- Future: Identify why students may react more consistently when instructors are not respectful or courteous. Is the negative affect produced the driving force behind the students' actions?
- Are students' recommendations tied to stories students tell, rumors about instructors, and the reputation of the instructor? Is reputation directly determined by fairness?

Appendix

Table 1

Analyses were conducted as logistic regressions with recommendation of instructor as the dependent variable

	Trust	Ethicality	Consistency	Neutrality
Fairness Evaluation	B=2.879***	B=-3.561***	B=-3.842***	B=-2.120***
Instructor Evaluation	B=2.107***	B=3.078***	B=3.078***	B=1.799***
R ²	.552	.681	.629	.464

* indicates significance at .05
 ** indicates significance at .01
 *** indicates significance at .001

Appendix

Table 2

Analyses were conducted as logistic regressions with students' willingness to attend class as the dependent variable

	Trust	Ethicality	Consistency	Neutrality
Fairness Evaluation	B=.096	B=.880	B=-.503	B=-.824
Instructor Evaluation	B=.186	B=.928***	B=.723*	B=.772**
R ²	.001	.090	.048	.093

* indicates significance at .05
 ** indicates significance at .01
 *** indicates significance at .001

Appendix

Table 3

Analyses were conducted as logistic regressions with students' willingness to participate in class as the dependent variable

	Trust	Ethicality	Consistency	Neutrality
Fairness Evaluation	B=.278	B=-.495	B=-.242	B=-1.072*
Instructor Evaluation	B=.522*	B=.336	B=.500**	B=.586**
R ²	.024	.088	.070	.118

* indicates significance at .05
 ** indicates significance at .01
 *** indicates significance at .001

Appendix

Table 4

Analyses were conducted as logistic regressions with recommendation of instructor as the dependent variable

	Accuracy	Equal Opportunity
Fairness Evaluation	B=-1.881***	B=-2.303***
Instructor Evaluation	B=2.185***	B=2.646***
R ²	.559	.625

* indicates significance at .05
 ** indicates significance at .01
 *** indicates significance at .001

Appendix

Table 5

Analyses were conducted as logistic regressions with students' willingness to attend class as the dependent variable

	Accuracy	Equal Opportunity
Fairness Evaluation	B=-.745	B=.779
Instructor Evaluation	B=.972***	B=.969***
R ²	.221	.076

* indicates significance at .05
 ** indicates significance at .01
 *** indicates significance at .001

Appendix

Table 6

Analyses were conducted as logistic regressions with students' willingness to participate in class as the dependent variable

	Accuracy	Equal Opportunity
Fairness Evaluation	B=.357	B=-.398
Instructor Evaluation	B=.822***	B=.561**
R ²	.171	.127

* indicates significance at .05
 ** indicates significance at .01
 *** indicates significance at .001

Appendix

Table 7

Analyses were conducted as logistic regressions with recommendation of instructor as the dependent variable

	Honesty	Courtesy	Timeliness	Respect	Causal Accounts
Fairness Evaluation	B=-2.874***	B=24.361	B=-2.908***	B=-2.480***	B=-2.137***
Instructor Evaluation	B=1.986***	B=.455	B=-2.109***	B=2.646***	B=2.410***
R ²	.508	.708	.585	.594	.577

* indicates significance at .05
 ** indicates significance at .01
 *** indicates significance at .001

Appendix

Table 8

Analyses were conducted as logistic regressions with students' willingness to attend class as the dependent variable

	Honesty	Courtesy	Timeliness	Respect	Causal Accounts
Fairness Evaluation	B=1.886*	B=1.397	B=-.006	B=.205	B=1.091
Instructor Evaluation	B=1.562***	B=1.274***	B=.974**	B=1.961***	B=2.108***
R ²	.078	.368	.062	.266	.169

* indicates significance at .05
 ** indicates significance at .01
 *** indicates significance at .001

Appendix

Table 9

Analyses were conducted as logistic regressions with students' willingness to participate in class as the dependent variable

	Honesty	Courtesy	Timeliness	Respect	Causal Accounts
Fairness Evaluation	B=.739	B=1.878	B=.188	B=.111	B=1.100**
Instructor Evaluation	B=.798***	B=.886**	B=.967***	B=1.343***	B=1.135***
R ²	.057	.497	.139	.317	.137

* indicates significance at .05
 ** indicates significance at .01
 *** indicates significance at .001

Appendix

Table 10

Analyses were conducted as logistic regressions with recommendation of instructor as the dependent variable

	Decision Control	Voice Control	Correctability	Representativeness	Need
Fairness Evaluation	B=-2.854***	B=-1.62**	B=-2.847***	B=-3.913***	B=-2.23***
Instructor Evaluation	B=1.859***	B=2.20***	B=2.060***	B=2.040***	B=1.72***
R ²	.552	.317	.565	.609	.486

* indicates significance at .05
 ** indicates significance at .01
 *** indicates significance at .001

Appendix

Table 11

Analyses were conducted as logistic regressions with students' willingness to attend class as the dependent variable

	Decision Control	Voice Control	Correctability	Representativeness	Need
Fairness Evaluation	B=.697	B=2.050*	B=-.039	B=-.093	B=.348
Instructor Evaluation	B=1.366**	B=1.55***	B=1.008***	B=.877**	B=1.043***
R ²	.039	.065	.065	.049	.069

* indicates significance at .05
 ** indicates significance at .01
 *** indicates significance at .001

Appendix

Table 12

Analyses were conducted as logistic regressions with students' willingness to participate in class as the dependent variable

	Decision Control	Voice Control	Correctability	Representativeness	Need
Fairness Evaluation	B=1.159*	B=.959	B=.060	B=-.431	B=.161
Instructor Evaluation	B=1.284***	B=1.29***	B=.915***	B=.552**	B=.995***
R ²	.096	.100	.139	.086	.161

* indicates significance at .05
 ** indicates significance at .01
 *** indicates significance at .001

Appendix

Table 13

Analyses were conducted as logistic regressions with recommendation of instructor as the dependent variable

	Ability	Equality	Status	Effort	Equity
Fairness Evaluation	B=-2.644***	B=-2.996***	B=-2.205***	B=-2.00***	B=-2.69***
Instructor Evaluation	B=1.911***	B=1.565***	B=2.089***	B=2.087***	B=2.03***
R ²	.514	.548	.440	.518	.300

* indicates significance at .05
 ** indicates significance at .01
 *** indicates significance at .001

Appendix

Table 14

Analyses were conducted as logistic regressions with students' willingness to attend class as the dependent variable

	Ability	Equality	Status	Effort	Equity
Fairness Evaluation	B=-.212	B=-1.046	B=-.003	B=-1.359**	B=-.163
Instructor Evaluation	B=1.119***	B=.517	B=1.256***	B=.582*	B=1.295**
R ²	.122	.064	.079	.150	.051

* indicates significance at .05
 ** indicates significance at .01
 *** indicates significance at .001

Appendix

Table 15

Analyses were conducted as logistic regressions with students' willingness to participate in class as the dependent variable

	Ability	Equality	Status	Effort	Equity
Fairness Evaluation	B=-.332	B=.350	B=-.115	B=-.675	B=.778
Instructor Evaluation	B=.646***	B=.741***	B=.579**	B=.823***	B=1.203***
R ²	.110	.075	.065	.184	.089

* indicates significance at .05
 ** indicates significance at .01
 *** indicates significance at .001