RELATIONSHIPS AMONG SUPERVISORS’ AND SUBORDINATES’ PROCEDURAL JUSTICE PERCEPTIONS AND ORGANIZATIONAL CITIZENSHIP BEHAVIORS

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We developed and tested a model in which supervisors’ procedural justice perceptions lead to supervisors’ organizational citizenship behavior (OCB), supervisors’ OCB leads to subordinates’ procedural justice perceptions, and in turn, subordinates’ procedural justice perceptions directly influence subordinates’ OCB. Using data collected from 373 National Guard members and their military supervisors, we found support for the mediation framework as well as for the prediction that individuals’ OCB role definitions (that is, the extent to which they define OCB as extrarole) moderate the relationships between justice perceptions and OCB performance.

The literature suggests that supervisors and rank-and-file employees perform organizational citizenship behaviors (OCB; discretionary actions that promote organizational effectiveness) with greater frequency when they perceive fairness in the means by which organizations and their representatives make allocation decisions (that is, procedural justice), and that subordinates experience procedural justice when their supervisors perform behaviors akin to OCB (Posdakoff, MacKenzie, Paine, & Bacharach, 2000). However, no research has explored these relationships from the perspective of a unifying conceptual framework. Masterson (2001) recently developed and tested a “trickle-down model” that provides a theoretical basis for investigating relationships among allocators’ and targets’ justice perceptions and OCB. Masterson found that employees’ justice perceptions influenced customers’ justice perceptions and OCB through employees’ OCB. The objectives of our research were: (1) to assess whether supervisors’ justice perceptions “trickle down” to subordinates in a manner consistent with Masterson’s model and (2) to simultaneously account for the notion that the relationship between procedural justice and OCB is stronger when employees define OCB as extrarole behavior, in line with what Tepper, Lockhart, and Hoobler (2001) referred to as “role discretion effects.”

THEORETICAL BACKGROUND AND HYPOTHESES

Toward a Trickle-Down Model of Procedural Justice in Supervisor-Subordinate Relationships

According to the framework guiding our research, which is shown in Figure 1, supervisors’ procedural justice perceptions lead to supervisors’ OCB (mentoring behavior); supervisors’ mentoring behavior leads to subordinates’ procedural justice perceptions; and subordinates’ procedural justice perceptions then lead to subordinates’ OCB.

Supervisors’ procedural justice perceptions to supervisor OCB (mentoring behavior). Figure 1 suggests that supervisors who experience procedural justice perform OCB with greater frequency. According to Organ (1988), employees interpret procedural fairness to mean that their employer can be trusted to protect their interests; this, in turn, engenders an obligation to repay their employer in some fashion. Perceived injustices yield distrust and a desire for restitution. Employees reciprocate favorable/unfavorable treatment by performing/withholding valued behaviors. Organ argued that employees are likely to reciprocate with citizenship behaviors, contributions that are less apt to be constrained by situational factors (such as technology and work flow processes) than are in-role or required behaviors.

We found only two studies that have explored relationships between supervisors’ attitudes and performance contributions akin to OCB: Motowidlo (1984) found that supervisors’ satisfaction correlated positively with the degree to which they show consideration, and Aryee, Chay, and Chew (1996) found a positive correlation between supervisors’ satisfaction and self-reported mentoring. We focused on supervisory mentoring, defined here as promoting subordinates’ socialization, psychosocial development, and career progress. Supervisory mentoring behaviors include helping subordinates with difficult assignments, conveying feelings of...
Supervisors' Procedural Justice Perceptions → Supervisors' OCB (Supervisory) Mentoring Behavior → Subordinates' Procedural Justice Perceptions → Subordinates' OCB

Supervisors' OCB (Mentoring) Role Definitions

Subordinates' OCB Role Definitions

Hypotheses 1a and 1b

Hypothesis 2b

Hypothesis 2a

Respect to subordinates, and helping subordinates build skills (Eby, 1997), actions that have much in common with traditional descriptions of OCB (McManus & Russell, 1997). Supervisors should view mentoring behavior as a way of expressing their attitudes toward their employer, much like rank-and-file employees use OCB to reciprocate the treatment they receive (Organ, 1988). That is, supervisors should perform mentoring behaviors in response to fair treatment, and they should withhold mentoring behaviors in response to unfair treatment.

Supervisor mentoring behavior to subordinates’ procedural justice perceptions. The next link in Figure 1 suggests that subordinates experience procedural justice when their supervisors perform mentoring behaviors with greater frequency. Research suggests that supportive supervisor behaviors produce more favorable procedural justice perceptions than do nonsupportive supervisor behaviors (e.g., Niehoff & Moorman, 1993; Pillai, Schriesheim, & Williams, 1999). In a study closely related to our framework, Scandura (1997) found that mentored persons perceived greater procedural justice than nonmentored persons. Supervisory mentoring behavior enhances subordinates’ salaries, promotability, and productivity (Green & Bauer, 1995; Wayne, Liden, Krainer, & Graf, 1999) and, because it usually involves a substantial investment of supervisors’ time and effort (Eby, 1997), supervisory mentoring behavior informs subordinates that they are appreciated and respected organization members (Tepper, 1995). Hence, one interpretation of Scandura’s (1997) finding is that supervisor mentoring tells subordinates their financial prospects in their organization are good and that they are valued there, experiences respectively captured in the instrumental and relational models of procedural justice (Cropanzano & Ambrose, 2001).

Subordinates’ procedural justice perceptions to subordinates’ OCB. The third link in Figure 1 suggests that employees’ justice perceptions translate into OCB. The explanation for this relationship, which has been supported in many empirical studies (Podsakoff et al., 2000), is similar to the rationale underlying the relationship between supervisors’ procedural justice perceptions and OCB; employees reciprocate fair treatment by performing citizenship behaviors (Organ, 1988). These arguments suggest the following hypotheses:

Hypothesis 1a. Supervisors’ mentoring behavior will mediate the relationship between supervisors’ procedural justice perceptions and subordinates’ organizational citizenship behavior.

Hypothesis 1b. Subordinates’ procedural justice perceptions will mediate the relationship between supervisors’ mentoring behavior and subordinates’ organizational citizenship behavior.

Role Discretion Effects in the Trickle-Down Model

Theory and research suggest that the distinction between required or in-role behavior and discretionary or extrarole behavior (behavior that exceeds job requirements) is too ambiguous to allow iden-
tification of a subset of behaviors that can be regarded as extrarole for different people and contexts. The implication is that OCB research, which is based on the assumption that such a subset can be identified, may not be tenable (Morrison, 1994). Tepper and his colleagues (2001) addressed these concerns by proposing a role discretion hypothesis, a framework that distinguishes between OCB performance, the extent to which employees perform citizenship behaviors, and OCB role definition, the extent to which employees define OCB as in-role or as extrarole behavior. In this framework, OCB role definition moderates the relationship between justice perceptions and OCB performance in such a way that the relationship is stronger among employees who define OCB as extrarole than it is among employees who define OCB as in-role. Employees who define OCB as in-role behavior may be willing to reciprocate the treatment they receive by performing citizenship behaviors, but the situational constraints on in-role behavior Organ (1988) described should interfere with their ability to do so. In contrast, employees who define such behaviors as extrarole should see fewer constraints on OCB, thus allowing them to freely increase their OCB performance (when they feel they have been treated fairly) or decrease it (when they feel they have been treated unfairly). In tests of the role discretion hypothesis, Tepper and colleagues (2001) found that OCB role definitions moderated the effects of procedural justice on OCB performance. With respect to each significant interaction, the role discretion hypothesis was supported—the relationship between procedural justice and OCB was stronger when subordinates defined OCB as extrarole.

Figure 1 depicts these ideas as two moderator effects in the trickle-down model. The first moderator prediction constitutes a replication of Tepper et al.'s (2001) study, which focused on the relationship between subordinates' justice perceptions and OCB.

**Hypothesis 2a.** Subordinates' OCB role definitions will moderate the relationship between subordinates' justice perceptions and OCB; the relationship will be stronger when subordinates define OCB as extrarole.

The second moderator prediction shown in Figure 1 focuses on the relationship between supervisors' justice perceptions and mentoring behavior. Some supervisors will view mentoring as part of their jobs, and some will view it as beyond their job requirements; the relationship between procedural justice perceptions and mentoring behavior will be more pronounced among supervisors who define mentoring behavior as extrarole.

**Hypothesis 2b.** Supervisors' mentoring role definitions will moderate the relationship between supervisors' justice perceptions and mentoring behavior; the relationship between supervisors' justice perceptions and mentoring behavior will be stronger when supervisors define mentoring behavior as extrarole.

### METHODS

**Sample and Procedures**

Members of a midwestern Army National Guard completed surveys during regularly scheduled group meetings. We developed one survey for rank-and-file soldiers (the subordinate survey) and one for the leaders who had supervisory responsibilities (the supervisor survey). We matched supervisors' and subordinates' responses by having subordinates report their military identification (ID) numbers and having supervisors use two referents, the subordinate with the numerically highest military ID and the subordinate with the numerically lowest military ID. Two thousand forty-two soldiers completed the subordinate survey, and 518 military leaders completed the supervisor survey. Eliminating surveys that could not be matched and those with missing data produced a sample of 373 dyads from 278 independent units (183 supervisor-subordinate dyads and 95 triads consisting of one supervisor and two subordinates). Ninety-three percent of the subordinates were male, and the median age was between 25 and 29 years old; 96 percent of the supervisors were male, and the median age was between 30 and 39 years old.

**Measures**

The subordinates completed measures of procedural justice, OCB role definitions, and supervisory mentoring behavior. The supervisors completed measures of procedural justice, mentoring role definitions, and subordinates' OCB.

**Procedural justice.** Subordinates and supervisors completed ten items from Moorman's (1991) measure of procedural justice. Respondents used a five-point scale (1 = "strongly disagree," to 5 = "strongly agree") to indicate their level of agreement with such items as "My organization uses procedures that collect accurate information to make decisions" and "My organization makes decisions in an unbiased manner." We averaged item ratings to form overall scores for subordinates' procedural justice perceptions ($\alpha = .91$) and supervisors' procedural justice perceptions ($\alpha = .93$).
**Organizational citizenship behavior.** Supervisors rated their subordinates' OCB using 20 items from Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Moorman, and Fetter's (1990) measure. Respondents used the same five-point response scale used for procedural justice to rate their level of agreement with such items as "treats coworkers courteously" and "helps coworkers with work-related problems." The OCB scale was designed to measure five behaviors (helping, courtesy, sportsmanship, civic virtue, and conscientiousness), but because many studies have treated similar measures as indicators of a general OCB construct (Podsakoff et al., 2000), we used maximum likelihood confirmatory factor analysis to determine the best way of portraying the item covariance matrix. The best fit was obtained with a higher-order model in which the OCB items loaded on the factors they were intended to measure and the five OCB factors loaded on a second-order factor; hence, we treated the items as indicators of a general construct by averaging the item ratings to form total scores for OCB ($\alpha = .97$).

**OCB role definitions.** Subordinates reported the extent to which they regarded each of the same 20 OCBs to be part of their jobs or beyond their job requirements. The response scale was anchored by two statements, "definitely exceeds my job requirements" (1) and "definitely part of my job" (2). We defined the anchors as follows: "behaviors that are part of your job are those that you may be rewarded for doing or punished for not doing" and "behaviors that exceed your job requirements are those that you don't have to do—you wouldn't be rewarded for doing them, nor would you be punished if you didn't do them." Higher scores meant the respondent regarded the behavior as in-role, and lower scores meant the respondent regarded the activity as extrarole. We averaged the item scores to form total scores for OCB role definitions ($\alpha = .92$).

**Mentoring behavior.** Subordinates reported the extent to which their military supervisors performed 33 mentoring behaviors included in Ragins and McFarlin's (1990) scale. The respondents used the same five-point response scale used for procedural justice to indicate their level of agreement with such items as "uses his/her influence in the organization for subordinates' benefit" and "brings his/her subordinates' accomplishments to the attention of important people." We averaged item ratings to form total mentoring behavior scores ($\alpha = .97$).

**Mentoring role definitions.** Supervisors completed a five-item measure of mentoring role definitions again using the same five-point response scale used for procedural justice. An example item was "I am expected to develop my subordinates for promotion." Higher values meant the respondent defined mentoring behavior as in-role and lower ones, that the respondent defined mentoring behavior as extrarole. We averaged the item scores to form total scores for mentoring role definitions ($\alpha = .81$).

### RESULTS

We tested Hypotheses 1a and 1b following the steps Baron and Kenny (1986) outlined. We first explored the zero-order correlations among supervisors' procedural justice perceptions, supervisors' mentoring behavior, subordinates' procedural justice perceptions, and subordinates' OCB. Table 1 shows that all six correlations were positive and significant ($p < .01$). We then regressed subordinates' justice perceptions on supervisors' justice perceptions (step 1) and supervisors' mentoring behavior (step 2), and we regressed subordinates' OCB on supervisors' procedural justice perceptions (step 1), supervisors' mentoring behavior (step 2), and subordinates' procedural justice perceptions (step 3).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TABLE 1</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Descriptive Statistics and Correlations among Study Variables</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>s.d.</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Subordinates' survey</td>
<td>1. Procedural justice</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>.68</td>
<td>(.91)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. OCB role definitions</td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>.31</td>
<td>-.03</td>
<td>(.92)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Mentoring behavior</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>.69</td>
<td>.62**</td>
<td>-.02</td>
<td>(.97)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supervisors' survey</td>
<td>4. Procedural justice</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>.74</td>
<td>.36**</td>
<td>.03</td>
<td>.48**</td>
<td>(.93)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Mentoring role definitions</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>.67</td>
<td>.35**</td>
<td>.10</td>
<td>.39**</td>
<td>.40**</td>
<td>(.81)</td>
<td>(.97)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Subordinates' OCB</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>.73</td>
<td>.41**</td>
<td>.19**</td>
<td>.27**</td>
<td>.22**</td>
<td>.32**</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*The alpha internal consistency reliability coefficients appear in parentheses along the main diagonal. Three hundred seventy-three subordinates completed the subordinates' survey; two hundred seventy-eight supervisors completed the supervisors' survey.

* $p < .05$

** $p < .01$
Our data involved nonindependent observations (that is, the 95 triads involving data collected from two subordinates who reported to the same supervisor), so the appropriate level of analysis was not the same for all variables. One means of addressing the statistical problems nonindependence engenders is to use hierarchical linear modeling (HLM), a procedure that partitions variance into between- and within-group components. However, because the data from 183 supervisor-subordinate dyads could not be analyzed using HLM, we tested Hypotheses 1a and 1b using two different sets of ordinary least squares regression equations. We randomly assigned the subordinates in each triad to one of the two groups, thus creating two groups of 95 supervisor-subordinate dyads. We combined the data from these groups with the data from the 183 supervisor-subordinate dyads separately to form two groups of 278 supervisor-subordinate dyads. We tested Hypotheses 1a and 1b in each group separately; however, because the results of these analyses were virtually identical, we only report the regression results for the first group.

Table 2 shows the regression results. With supervisors’ procedural justice perceptions controlled for (step 1), supervisors’ mentoring behavior accounted for significant, unique variance in subordinates’ justice perceptions (step 2). A usefulness analysis suggested that controlling for supervisors’ mentoring behavior reduced the variance accounted for by supervisors’ justice perceptions from 11 percent \((p < .01)\) to 0 percent. Hence, Hypothesis 1a was supported: supervisors’ mentoring behavior mediated the relationship between supervisors’ procedural justice perceptions and subordinates’ procedural justice perceptions. Table 2 also shows that supervisors’ procedural justice perceptions, supervisors’ mentoring behavior, and subordinates’ procedural justice perceptions accounted for unique variance in subordinates’ OCB at steps 1, 2, and 3, respectively. Moreover, controlling for supervisors’ mentoring behavior at step 2 rendered the effect for supervisors’ justice perceptions nonsignificant, and controlling for subordinates’ justice perceptions at step 3 rendered the effect for supervisors’ mentoring behavior nonsignificant. These results provide support for Hypothesis 1b: subordinates’ procedural justice perceptions mediated the relationship between supervisors’ mentoring behavior and subordinates’ OCB.

We tested Hypothesis 2a by regressing subordinates’ OCB on OCB role definitions and subordinates’ procedural justice perceptions (step 1) and on an interaction term, the cross-product of subordinates’ procedural justice perceptions and OCB role definitions (step 2). We centered all predictors and treated “subordinate” as the unit of analysis \((n = 373)\). Table 2 shows that, after we controlled for the main effects of subordinates’ procedural justice perceptions and OCB role definitions, the interaction term accounted for an additional 4 percent of the variance in OCB, which was significant \((p < .01)\). We then plotted values respectively plus and minus one standard deviation from the means on procedural justice perceptions and OCB role definitions (Cohen & Cohen, 1983). The interaction, shown in Figure 2, indicates that the relationship between subordinates’ procedural justice percep-

### Table 2
Results of Multiple Regression Tests of Mediation and Moderation*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Predictors</th>
<th>Test of Hypothesis 1a: Subordinates’ Justice Perceptions</th>
<th>Test of Hypothesis 1b: Subordinates’ OCB</th>
<th>Test of Hypothesis 2a: Subordinates’ OCB</th>
<th>Test of Hypothesis 2b: Supervisors’ Mentoring Behavior</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Step 1</td>
<td>Step 2</td>
<td>Step 1</td>
<td>Step 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mentoring role definitions</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supervisors’ justice perceptions</td>
<td>.34**</td>
<td>.08</td>
<td>.22**</td>
<td>.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supervisors’ justice × mentoring role definitions</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OCB role definitions</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supervisors’ mentoring behavior</td>
<td>.59**</td>
<td></td>
<td>.27**</td>
<td>.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subordinates’ justice perceptions</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subordinates’ justice × OCB role definitions</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(\Delta R^2)</td>
<td>.11**</td>
<td>.28**</td>
<td>.05**</td>
<td>.06**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total (R^2)</td>
<td>.11**</td>
<td>.39**</td>
<td>.05**</td>
<td>.11**</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Hypotheses 1a and 1b concern mediation, and Hypotheses 2a and 2b, moderation. Tabled values are standardized beta weights.

** \(p < .01\)
Effects on Subordinates’ OCB of the Interaction between Subordinates’ Procedural Justice Perceptions and OCB Role Definitions

![Figure 2](image_url)

Effects on Supervisors’ Mentoring Behavior of the Interaction between Supervisors’ Procedural Justice Perceptions and Mentoring Role Definitions

![Figure 3](image_url)

...and OCB was stronger for subordinates who defined OCB as extrarole than it was for those who defined OCB as in-role. Hence, Hypothesis 2a was supported.

We tested Hypothesis 2b by regressing supervisor mentoring behavior on supervisors’ procedural justice perceptions and mentoring role definitions (step 1) and on the cross-product of procedural justice perceptions and mentoring role definitions (step 2). We centered all variables and treated “supervisor” as the unit of analysis (n = 278) by averaging mentoring behavior scores for the 95 supervisors who had more than one subordinate (ICC[1] = .63; ICC[2] = .77). Table 2 shows that, at step 2, the interaction term accounted for 2 percent of the variance in OCB, which was significant (p < .01). This interaction, shown in Figure 3, indicates that for supervisors who defined mentoring behavior as in-role, the line representing the relationship between procedural justice and mentoring behavior was positively sloped; however, for supervisors who defined mentoring behavior as extrarole, the corresponding regression line was steeper. Hence, Hypothesis 2b was supported; the relationship be-
between supervisors' justice perceptions and mentoring behavior was stronger for supervisors who defined mentoring behavior as extrarole than for supervisors who defined mentoring behavior as in-role.

**DISCUSSION**

Our findings, which were consistent with predictions derived from a trickle-down model of procedural justice, were that supervisors' justice perceptions were related to supervisors' OCB (mentoring behavior), supervisors' mentoring behavior was related to subordinates' justice perceptions, and subordinates' justice perceptions were, in turn, related to subordinates' OCB. Moreover, consistent with the role discretion hypothesis, the relationship between subordinates' procedural justice perceptions and OCB was stronger when subordinates defined OCB as extrarole, and the relationship between supervisors' justice perceptions and mentoring behavior was stronger when supervisors defined mentoring behavior as extrarole. We discuss our study's implications for justice, OCB, and mentoring theory, research, and practice, identify its limitations, and suggest directions for future research.

**Implications for Theory, Research, and Practice**

Extant research suggests that subordinate procedural justice perceptions and supervisory leadership practices are related to subordinates' OCB and that subordinates' procedural justice perceptions mediate the relationship between supervisory practices and OCB (Podsakoff et al., 2000). Our research extends this literature by providing a unifying framework that implicates supervisors' procedural justice perceptions in a causal chain of variables that lead to subordinates' OCB. Apparently, the treatment supervisors experience trickles down to their subordinates, influencing their fairness perceptions and their willingness to perform actions that contribute to organization effectiveness. These findings complement recent contributions to the justice literature, which suggest that individuals' justice perceptions are shaped, in part, by observations of the treatment others experience (Colquitt, 2000; Lind, Kray, & Thompson, 1998). Trickle-down models of the sort we tested suggest a mechanism by which resource allocators' (that is, supervisors') own justice perceptions influence targets' (that is, subordinates') justice perceptions and OCB.

Second, our findings suggest that trickle-down models may be underspecified to the extent they do not account for the moderating effects of OCB role definitions (the extent to which actors perceive OCB to be a requirement of a job or beyond job requirements). Of course, as a practical matter, our findings suggest that OCB performance is generally higher when employees define OCB as in-role (see Figures 2 and 3). These findings are consistent with Morrison's (1994) observation that the motivation for in-role behavior is greater than the motivation for extrarole behavior and suggest that organizations can facilitate OCB performance by enhancing employees' justice perceptions and by persuading employees to define OCB as in-role.

Our study also suggests that framing mentoring behavior as a form of OCB will benefit the mentoring literature. For example, extant mentoring theory suggests that one's willingness to mentor is a function of the perceived costs (such as time commitments and the risk of a failed mentorship) and benefits (for instance, rejuvenation of one's career and enhanced productivity) of assuming the mentor role (Ragins & Scandura, 1994). Our findings suggest the possibility that senior managers' work-related attitudes also influence their willingness to mentor. Managers who hold more favorable attitudes may choose to reciprocate in a manner akin to what the OCB literature refers to as individual-directed organizational citizenship behavior, or OCBI (Williams & Anderson, 1991). Of course, our contribution to mentoring theory is limited by the fact that we investigated supervisory mentoring behavior rather than mentoring relationships (that is, intense, enduring, developmental relationships involving substantial emotional commitment by both parties). Moreover, our study focused on just one of many sources of development and help, an employee's immediate supervisor (Higgins & Kram, 2001), and one attitudinal precursor, supervisors' justice perceptions. Nevertheless, conceptualizing mentoring using the lens of OCB theory provides the basis for a new direction in mentoring research, one that emphasizes the roles managers' attitudes (such as organizational support, job satisfaction, and organizational commitment) play in the decision to mentor (McManus & Russell, 1997).

A second contribution of our research to the mentoring literature has to do with the theoretical and practical implications of managers' mentoring role definitions. The literature characterizes mentoring behavior as extrarole: "Mentorship is not considered part of a mentoring individual's job in most organizations, and the time demands are in addition to the mentor's normal job requirements" (Ragins & Scandura, 1994: 958). Our results suggest that variance in supervisors' mentoring role definitions should not be unexpected and that managers perform mentoring behaviors with greater fre-
quency when they define mentoring behavior as in-role (Figure 3). Hence, to the extent supervisory training programs cause managers to define mentoring behavior and coaching as parts of their jobs, organizations may reap significant benefits in the form of improved subordinate justice perceptions and citizenship behavior.

Limitations and Suggestions for Future Research

In calling attention to our study’s limitations, we simultaneously suggest directions for future research. A general limitation is that our research design engenders plausible alternative explanations for our findings. One threat to our study’s internal validity is the interpretation problems caused by having collected data on individuals nested within groups. For example, nonindependence among mentoring ratings for our 95 supervisor-subordinate triads could have produced inaccurate estimates of individual-level relationships in our hypothesis tests. We explored this possibility by testing our hypotheses using random coefficient modeling with the 95 triads. We found significant effects attributable to group membership, but the individual-level results were identical to those we obtained using OLS regression. Consequently, our findings do not appear to have been biased by nonindependence among the observations.

Other threats to our study’s internal validity are that we cannot rule out the possibility of reverse causality among the variables in our model and the influence of unmeasured “third” variables. For example, our test of Hypothesis 1b could be reinterpreted to mean that when subordinates performed more organizational citizenship behaviors, their supervisors performed more mentoring behaviors, or that unmeasured third variables like organizational culture or generalized affect drove supervisors’ and subordinates’ OCB. In addition, common method variance cannot be ruled out as a possible explanation for the relationship between supervisors’ mentoring behavior and subordinates’ justice perceptions because these variables were measured from the same perspective. Hence, although the moderating effects we observed are consistent with the causal relationships our model implies, future studies should use longitudinal designs and relevant control variables in order to more definitively establish the causal paths depicted in Figure 1.

A third threat to our study’s internal validity has to do with our scale measuring OCB role definitions, which asked respondents to report whether or not they perceived each of 20 behaviors to be in-role. Collapsing across OCB role definitions for all 20 behaviors produced a measure that essentially captures the percentage of behaviors subordinates perceived to be in-role. This created interpretation problems related to the “ecological fallacy,” because our findings may not generalize to all OCBs. We investigated this possibility by testing Hypothesis 2a for each OCB separately. Hypothesis 2a was supported for 10 of the 20 behaviors, and the signs on all regression weights (significant and nonsignificant) were in the predicted direction (p < .01). These analyses do not rule out the ecological validity concerns our measure evokes; however, the consistency of our findings across behaviors attests to the role discretion effect’s robustness.

A final limitation is that our interaction terms accounted for a small percentage of the variance in employees’ role performance. This problem is not uncommon in field research; in fact, Evans (1985) argued that interactions explaining as little as 1 percent of the variance should be considered important. Hence, the small variance accounted for by our interaction terms does not negate the evidence suggesting that models of employees’ OCB may be underidentified to the extent they do not take into consideration employees’ OCB role definitions. An additional reason for the modest variance accounted for by our interaction terms is that the citizenship behaviors we investigated represent a subset of the many consequences of perceived justice/injustice. Perceived injustices produce a range of responses including psychological distress, sabotage, and withdrawal (Greenberg, 2001). Future research should explore dispositional and contextual moderators in order to improve prediction of employees’ responses to perceived justice/injustice.

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