

# The Perceptions of Fair Interpersonal Treatment Scale: Development and Validation of a Measure of Interpersonal Treatment in the Workplace

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The Perceptions of Fair Interpersonal Treatment (PFIT) scale was designed to assess employees' perceptions of the interpersonal treatment in their work environment. Analyses of the factor structure and reliability of this new instrument indicate that the PFIT scale is a reliable instrument composed of 2 factors: supervisor treatment and coworker treatment. It was hypothesized that the PFIT scale would be positively correlated with job satisfaction variables and negatively correlated with work withdrawal, job withdrawal, experiences of sexual harassment, and an organization's tolerance of sexual harassment. Results based on 509 employees in a private-sector organization and 217 female faculty and staff members at a large midwestern university supported these hypotheses. Arguments that common method variance and employees' dispositions are responsible for the significant correlations between the PFIT scale and other job-related variables were eliminated. The implications of these results are discussed.

Fair treatment in the workplace has received increased attention by organizational researchers (Cropanzano & Randall, 1993). Although research on the general construct of justice has a long research tradition in psychology (for a review, see Cohen, 1991), Greenberg (1987) noted a growing domain of research he coined *organizational justice*, which referred to research on the role of fairness in the workplace. Much of the early research on organizational justice explored employees' perceptions of the distributive and procedural fairness of specific organizational policies and decisions (Greenberg, 1988). For example, researchers have examined employee perceptions of the fairness of selection decisions (Gilliland,

1993, 1994; Smither, Reilly, Millsap, Pearlman, & Stoffey, 1993), pay systems (Folger & Konovsky, 1989; Greenberg, 1987), performance appraisal systems (Dipboye & de Pontbraind, 1981; Greenberg, 1986; Landy, Barnes-Farrell, & Cleveland, 1980), job loss and layoffs (Brockner & Greenberg, 1990; Konovsky & Brockner, 1993), and even an employee drug testing program (Konovsky & Cropanzano, 1991) and work site smoking ban (Greenberg, 1994).

Beginning in the late 1980s, organizational justice researchers expanded beyond the traditional procedural and distributive types of justice and began to explore the interpersonal side of organizational justice (Greenberg, 1993). In fact, in a study of injustice events, Mikula, Petrick, and Tanzer (1990) reported that "a considerable proportion of the injustices which were reported did not concern distributional or procedural issues in the narrow sense but referred to the manner in which people were treated in interpersonal interactions and encounters" (p. 133). Similarly, Bies and Moag (1986) noted that employees are heavily influenced by "interactional justice," which refers to an individual's evaluation of the quality of interpersonal treatment experienced when organizational procedures are enacted. Others, however, have noted that a broader concept of interpersonal treatment, which includes treatment outside of organizational procedures and policies, needs further research attention (Messick, Bloom, Boldizar, & Samuelson, 1985; Mikula et al., 1990). This broader concept of interpersonal treatment, encompassing supervisor and coworker behaviors, is the focus of the present study.

Despite the interest in the interpersonal aspects of orga-

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nizational justice, there is little research on the development of instruments to measure this construct. In fact, Greenberg (1990) noted that a major limitation in organizational justice is the lack of evidence of construct validity for many of the instruments used by organizational justice researchers. The present study addresses this problem with the development of the Perceptions of Fair Interpersonal Treatment (PFIT) scale. This scale is designed to assess employees' perceptions of the fairness of interpersonal treatment in their work environment. Whereas previous researchers focused on perceptions of fair treatment at the individual level, we have conceptualized interpersonal treatment as a climate variable; the PFIT scale assesses an employee's perceptions of how employees, in general, are treated by supervisors and coworkers in an organization.

### Related Measures

Several researchers have developed instruments designed to tap constructs related to employee perceptions of interpersonal treatment in the workplace. For example, Moorman (1991) developed a 6-item scale focusing on the interpersonal behavior of one's supervisor. Although this scale was based on previous research (Bies & Moag, 1986; Tyler & Bies, 1990), its construct validity has not yet been critically examined. Similarly, Keashley, Trott, and MacLean (1994) developed an instrument to measure the extent to which undergraduates experienced hostile (nonsexual, nonphysical abusive) interpersonal behaviors on their jobs. Although Keashley et al.'s (1994) research was an important first step in addressing the importance of examining unfair or hostile behaviors experienced in the workplace, it is limited by its reliance on undergraduates with limited job experience. In addition, the length of their inventory (48 items) limits its use in industrial settings.

Finally, the Survey of Perceived Organizational Support (SPOS; Eisenberger, Huntington, Hutchinson, & Sowa, 1986) was designed to measure employees' perceptions of their organization's support and commitment to employees and includes "evaluative judgments of the employee by the organization and discretionary actions the organization might take in diverse situations to benefit or harm the employee" (p. 501). Although the SPOS focuses on the organization's actions toward employees, it differs from the PFIT scale in several important ways. First, the SPOS focuses on evaluative judgments, whereas the PFIT scale emphasizes perceptions of behaviors, without any evaluation. Moreover, the 18-item PFIT scale is shorter than the 36-item SPOS, the items have fewer words (SPOS items range in length from 6–21 words), and the PFIT scale has a simple response scale that is easily understood by employees with lower reading abilities.

In sum, none of the existing instruments designed to measure various aspects of fairness in the workplace tap employee perceptions of interpersonal treatment in their daily work environment. To address the lack of a reliable and valid measure of employee perceptions of interpersonal treatment, the PFIT scale was developed. In this article, we report on the factor structure and reliability of this new scale and describe an initial examination of this scale's construct validity by exploring its relationship with several critical work-related attitudes and behaviors.

*Hypothesis 1.* The PFIT scale is reliable and composed of two factors: (a) how supervisors treat employees and (b) how coworkers treat each other.

### Attitudes, Behaviors, and Perceptions of Fair Interpersonal Treatment

Evidence suggests that perceptions of interpersonal treatment are related to critical job-related attitudes, such as job satisfaction. Keashley et al. (1994) found that experiences of hostile interpersonal behaviors were related to lower job satisfaction. Further empirical evidence supports this relationship between perceptions of fair treatment and job satisfaction (Cobb & Frey, 1996; Fryxell & Gordon, 1989).

Researchers have also demonstrated a relationship between interactional justice and important organizational behaviors. For example, Skarlicki and Folger (1997) established interactional justice's negative relationship with organizational retaliation behavior (a construct similar to Hanisch & Hulin's, 1990, 1991, "work withdrawal behaviors"); other researchers have found that perceptions of fair treatment are related to decreased turnover intentions (Keashley et al., 1994; Konovsky & Cropanzano, 1991) and actual turnover (Dittrich & Carrell, 1979).

To explain the relationship between employees' perceptions of fair interpersonal treatment and job-related attitudes and behaviors, equity theory (Adams, 1965) and social-exchange theory (Blau, 1964) are most often cited. Equity theory, for example, can be used to argue that employees who have negative perceptions of interpersonal treatment may decide to lower their inputs to the organization (e.g., by being absent or quitting) to increase the ratio of outcomes to inputs. Similarly, Moorman (1991) argued that employees might react to perceived inequities in their organization by decreasing their organizational citizenship behaviors. Social-exchange theory can also explain this relationship; when employees perceive they are treated positively by an organization or its leaders, they are motivated, based on a norm of reciprocity (Gouldner, 1960), to have positive reactions, such as increased job satisfaction and organizational citizenship behaviors and decreased turnover (Eisenberger, Fasolo, &

Davis-LaMastro, 1990; Eisenberger et al., 1986; Konovsky & Cropanzano, 1991). Malatesta and Byrne (1997), for example, cited social-exchange theory as responsible for their finding that interactional justice was related to both commitment and citizenship behaviors.

*Hypothesis 2a.* The PFIT scale, for which high scores indicate positive perceptions of the fairness of interpersonal treatment, will be positively correlated with supervisor satisfaction, coworker satisfaction, and work satisfaction.

*Hypothesis 2b.* It is further hypothesized that the PFIT Supervisor subscale will be more highly correlated with supervisor satisfaction than with coworker or work satisfaction. The PFIT Coworker subscale should demonstrate a similar differential pattern; this subscale should be more highly correlated with coworker satisfaction than with supervisor or work satisfaction.

*Hypothesis 3.* The PFIT scale will be negatively correlated with work withdrawal and job withdrawal. That is, when employees perceive they are treated unfairly, they will also report engaging in more work withdrawal behaviors, such as being absent and taking long breaks, and report intentions to leave their current job.

We also predict that perceptions of fairness will be related to a variety of perceptions about an organization. Consider, for example, the climate for sexual harassment. Bernstein (1997) argued that sexual harassment, especially hostile environment sexual harassment, "is a type of incivility or . . . disrespect" (p. 449). We contend that work groups have norms about how supervisors and coworkers treat each other in interpersonal interactions; moreover, norms about sexual harassment are a subset of these norms about interpersonal interactions.

Empirical research supports the notion that perceptions of climate for sexual harassment are related to employees' experiences of sexual harassment (Hulin, Fitzgerald, & Drasgow, 1996; Zickar, Munson, & Hulin, 1998). These authors found that when organizations are perceived as tolerant of sexual harassment (e.g., when employees believe that victim's complaints are not taken seriously or that perpetrators are not punished), employees report experiencing higher levels of sexual harassment than employees in less tolerant organizations. They argued that Naylor, Pritchard, and Ilgen's (1980) theory of organizational behavior drives this finding.

*Hypothesis 4a.* The PFIT scale will be negatively correlated with perceptions of an organization's tolerance of sexual harassment. That is, when employees perceive that they are treated fairly, they will also believe that their organization is intolerant of sexual harassment.

*Hypothesis 4b.* The PFIT scale will be negatively correlated with employees' self-reports of experiences of sexual harassment.

Finally, to address the argument that common method variance is responsible for these findings, we conducted

work group analyses that remove common method variance inherent in single-source, self-report data.

*Hypothesis 5.* The differential relationships between the PFIT subscales and supervisor, coworker, and work satisfaction, as predicted in Hypothesis 2b, will remain significant in analyses based on the work group without the focal employee.

## Study 1

### Method

#### Participants

Data were collected from 541 employees in a food-processing and distribution company located in the western United States. Employees who responded to the surveys were randomly selected from a list of current employees using a stratified random-sampling procedure based on job category, gender, and ethnicity. Usable data were obtained from 509 of the 541 surveys. Of the usable surveys, 256 of the participants were male, 74% were White non-Hispanic, 17% were Hispanic, and 9% cited another ethnicity. The average tenure was 11 years, and the modal age category was 35 to 39 years.

#### Materials

*PFIT scale.* The development of items for the PFIT scale relied on a combination of three techniques: literature review, content analysis, and critical incidents. First, a literature review was conducted, and a few items from related scales (e.g., Keashley et al., 1994) were modified and included in the PFIT scale. Second, a content analysis of employees' responses to open-ended questions on workplace behaviors in interviews ( $n = 51$  in a building products distribution company;  $n = 45$  in a large insurance company;  $n = 24$  in a manufacturing company) and questionnaires ( $n = 53$  in a building products distribution company;  $n = 160$  in a food distribution company) was conducted; the responses were analyzed for any content pertaining to unfair treatment in the workplace. Third, Flanagan's (1954) critical incidents method was applied. To this end, employees in the building products distribution company and insurance company were asked to describe their positive and negative (successful and unsuccessful) experiences with supervisors and coworkers. On the basis of these incidents, a list of positive and negative interpersonal behaviors for both supervisors and coworkers was generated. Finally, the lists of behaviors from the three techniques were aggregated into a large pool of items, and redundant or highly similar items were eliminated.

In the development phases of the PFIT scale, two dimensions of fair interpersonal treatment in the workplace were apparent: Employees' perceptions of fairness not only were directed at how supervisors treated employees but also included perceptions of how coworkers treated each other. Because related research (Cook & Wall, 1980) also indicated that both coworkers and supervisors contribute to a fair workplace, the final 18-item scale ( $\alpha = .90$ ) consisted of two subscales. The Supervisor subscale consists of 14 items ( $\alpha = .91$ ) and the Coworker subscale consists of 4 items ( $\alpha = .76$ ); the scale is presented

in the Appendix. Proportionately more items were dedicated to assessing perceptions of supervisor's interpersonal treatment because an employee's perceptions of the fairness of supervisors' interpersonal treatment may be more critical to his or her perceptions of the overall fairness of the work environment. To assess how employees perceive the climate of interpersonal treatment in their organization, the PFIT scale presents statements that refer to "employees" (e.g., "Employees are lied to" rather than "You are lied to"). Finally, a response scale based on the Job Descriptive Index's (JDI; Smith, Kendall, & Hulin, 1969) response options (yes, ?, no) was used, which created a simple scale requiring low levels of reading ability. Positively keyed PFIT scale items are scored as follows: positive responses receive a +3, negative responses receive a +1, and the "?" responses receive +2.

**Job satisfaction.** Job satisfaction was measured with three 9-item scales derived from the JDI (Smith et al., 1969) as revised by Roznowski (1989): Satisfaction with the Work Itself ( $\alpha = .88$ ), Supervisor Satisfaction ( $\alpha = .87$ ), and Coworker Satisfaction ( $\alpha = .87$ ). The JDI is a frequently used measure of job satisfaction and has been subjected to rigorous psychometric evaluation (Smith et al., 1969); higher scores indicate higher levels of satisfaction.

**Work withdrawal and job withdrawal.** Hanisch and Hulin (1990, 1991) developed the 13-item Work Withdrawal scale ( $\alpha = .71$ ) to assess behaviors that avoid tasks associated with one's work (e.g., taking long breaks, being tardy). These authors also created the 7-item Job Withdrawal Scale ( $\alpha = .76$ ) to assess an employee's intentions to leave his or her job (e.g., planning to quit or retire early). Both scales include a 5-point multiple-choice response scale; higher scores indicate higher levels of withdrawal.

**Organizational Tolerance for Sexual Harassment Inventory (OTSHI).** The 18-item OTSHI (Hulin et al., 1996; Zickar et al., 1998) measures the extent to which respondents perceive that sexually harassing behavior is associated with negative consequences in their organization. It contains six scenarios followed by three questions assessing the riskiness of reporting sexual harassment, the likelihood of being taken seriously, and actions the organization would take against the perpetrator. High scores indicate the organization is tolerant of sexual harassment;  $\alpha = .96$  in the present study.

**Sexual Experiences Questionnaire-Revised (SEQ-R).** The SEQ-R (Fitzgerald, Gelfand, & Drasgow, 1995; Fitzgerald et al., 1988) contains 23 behavioral items measuring the three factors of sexual harassment: gender harassment, unwanted sexual attention, and sexual coercion (overall  $\alpha = .93$ ). The response scale is a 5-point Likert scale, ranging from *never* (1) to *most of the time* (5), assessing the frequency of the harassing experience. The words "sexual harassment" do not appear until the last item on the questionnaire to minimize demand characteristics.

The scales were part of a survey that was administered to groups of employees in sessions scheduled in advance. At each session, employees were assured that their responses were anonymous and that their participation was completely voluntary.

## Results

The correlation matrix for the PFIT scale was factor analyzed using maximum likelihood estimation as imple-

mented in LISREL 8 (Jöreskog & Sörbom, 1993). To examine the first hypothesis, one- and two-factor models were fitted to the correlation matrix based on half of the data set (Subset I); factor loadings for the two-factor model were specified via Hypothesis 1. To examine each model's fit, we relied on a variety of fit indices, including the chi-square and the chi-square-to-degrees of freedom ratio. Because the chi-square is dependent on sample size, three additional indicators of fit were examined, including the goodness-of-fit index (GFI), the adjusted goodness-of-fit index (AGFI), and the nonnormed fit index (NNFI; a measure that indexes the incremental fit of the tested model from a baseline model, excluding the influence of sample size); for each of these fit indices, a value of 1 indicates the best fit, whereas a 0 indicates the poorest fit. In addition, the root mean squared residual (RMSR; a measure of the magnitude of the differences between the fitted and observed correlation matrices) was examined.

Results of the one-factor model tested in Subset I of this sample indicated  $\chi^2(135, N = 254) = 427.44$ , a  $\chi^2$ -to-degrees of freedom ratio of 3.17, a GFI of .82, an AGFI of .78, an NNFI of .80, and an RMSR of .08 (see Table 1); in sum, these fit indices suggest that two or more factors may be needed to describe the correlation matrix adequately. The two-factor model tested on Subset I indicated  $\chi^2(134, N = 254) = 240.64$ , a  $\chi^2$ -to-degrees of freedom ratio of 1.80, a GFI of .90, an AGFI of .87, an NNFI of .93, and an RMSR of .05.

Based on the fit indices obtained in Subset I, as well as an examination of the correlations of the two factors ( $r = .37$ ), we concluded that the two-factor model provided a good fit to the data. Accordingly, the two-factor model was cross-validated in Subset II of the data. Results yielded indices of fit reasonably similar to those found in the two-factor model tested in Subset I,  $\chi^2(134, N = 255) = 300.99$ , a  $\chi^2$ -to-degrees of freedom ratio of 2.25, a GFI of .87, an AGFI of .84, an NNFI of .89, and an RMSR of .06; again, these indices suggest the two-factor model provides a good fit to these data. In addition, the correlation between the supervisor and coworker factor was modest ( $r = .47$ ), suggesting that two separate factors are required. An examination of the standardized residuals and modification indices further indicated that no other factors were necessary to describe the correlation matrix accurately. Finally, to address criticisms that confirmatory factor analysis may simply reify a hypothesized structure, Kroonenberg and Lewis's (1982) "confirmation through exploration" approach was also applied; results again supported the hypothesized two factor scale. Table 2 presents the estimated factor loadings.

In terms of reliability, the PFIT scale produced a coefficient alpha of .90 and the "alpha if item deleted" analysis indicated that the internal consistency would not be improved if any of the items were deleted. Alphas for the

Table 1  
*Goodness-of-Fit Indices Obtained in Factor Analyses*

Analysis	$\chi^2$	<i>df</i>	$\chi^2/df$	GFI	AGFI	NNFI	RMSR
Subset I of data set ( <i>N</i> = 254)							
One-factor model	427.44	135	3.17	.82	.78	.80	.08
Two-factor model	240.64	134	1.80	.90	.87	.93	.05
Subset II of data set ( <i>N</i> = 255)							
Two-factor model	300.99	134	2.25	.87	.84	.89	.06

*Note.* GFI = goodness-of-fit index; AGFI = adjusted goodness-of-fit index; NNFI = nonnormed fit index; RMSR = root mean square residual.

14-item Supervisor subscale and 4-item Coworker subscale were .90 and .74, respectively. The 18 items were also substantially correlated with each other (interitem correlation mean of +.32). In addition, the two items that we believed were most related to the construct of perceptions of fair interpersonal treatment, "Employees are treated fairly" and "Employees are treated with respect," had very high factor loadings (.75 and .80, respectively in Subset II of the data) on the supervisor factor. The three items with the lowest factor loadings (.38–.54) represented items that referred to very specific behaviors with low base rates.

Next, we examined the correlations among the variables. The means, standard deviations, reliabilities, and intercorrelations are presented in Table 3. As predicted in Hypothesis 2a, the PFIT scale was significantly correlated with Supervisor Satisfaction ( $r = .56, p < .001$ ), Co-

worker Satisfaction ( $r = .44, p < .001$ ), and Satisfaction with the Work Itself ( $r = .41, p < .001$ ). As predicted in Hypothesis 2b, the PFIT Supervisor subscale had the highest correlation with Supervisor Satisfaction ( $r = .55, p < .001$ ), but was also related to Coworker Satisfaction ( $r = .37, p < .001$ ) and Satisfaction with the Work Itself ( $r = .41, p < .001$ ). The correlation between the PFIT Supervisor subscale and Supervisor Satisfaction was significantly higher than its correlation with Coworker Satisfaction ( $t = 4.37, p < .001$ ) and its correlation with Satisfaction with the Work Itself ( $t = 3.53, p < .001$ ).

Similarly, the PFIT Coworker subscale's highest correlation was with its corresponding satisfaction scale, Coworker Satisfaction ( $r = .46, p < .001$ ), and was significantly related to the other two satisfaction scales: Supervisor Satisfaction ( $r = .23, p < .001$ ) and Satisfaction with the Work Itself ( $r = .18, p < .05$ ). The correlation be-

Table 2  
*Factor Loadings Obtained From Factor Analyses*

Perceptions of Fair Interpersonal Treatment (PFIT) scale item	Factor loadings	
	Factor 1 supervisor	Factor 2 coworker
1. Employees are praised for good work.	.67 (.56)	
2. Supervisors yell at employees.	.52 (.49)	
3. Supervisors play favorites.	.60 (.61)	
4. Employees are trusted.	.68 (.64)	
5. Employees' complaints are dealt with effectively.	.68 (.64)	
6. Employees are treated with children.	.71 (.70)	
7. Employees are treated with respect.	.80 (.81)	
8. Employees' questions and problems are responded to quickly.	.61 (.69)	
9. Employees are lied to.	.62 (.71)	
10. Employees' suggestions are ignored.	.66 (.66)	
11. Supervisors swear at employees.	.38 (.36)	
12. Employees' hard work is appreciated.	.71 (.70)	
13. Supervisors threaten to fire or lay off employees.	.54 (.49)	
14. Employees are treated fairly.	.75 (.70)	
15. Coworkers help each other out.		.50 (.47)
16. Coworkers argue with each other.		.64 (.63)
17. Coworkers put each other down.		.82 (.72)
18. Coworkers treat each other with respect.		.65 (.78)

*Note.* Factor loadings were obtained in the factor analysis conducted on Subset II. Values in parentheses indicate factor loadings obtained in the factor analysis conducted on Subset I. The standard errors for both sets of factor loadings ranged from .04 to .07.

Table 3  
Means, Standard Deviations, Reliabilities, and Intercorrelations

Scale	$M_1$	$SD_1$	$M_2$	$SD_2$	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
1. PFIT	35.55	17.75	28.43	10.62	.90 (.92)	.99	.61	.67	.49	.46	-.20	-.18	-.53	-.46	.24
2. PFIT-Sup	28.40	7.95	25.94	6.47	.97	.91 (.92)	.53	.69	.47	.46	-.21	-.19	.54	-.46	.22
3. PFIT-Cow	7.03	2.46	2.49	0.77	.59	.37	.76 <sup>a</sup>	.28	.48	.30	-.15	-.03	-.24	-.28	.16
4. JDI-Sup	17.30	8.27	41.19	12.33	.56	.55	.23	.87 (.90)	.39	.32	-.26	-.13	-.44	-.26	.15
5. JDI-Cow	20.19	7.28	43.91	10.22	.44	.37	.46	.35	.87 (.87)	.49	-.14	-.15	-.34	-.31	.26
6. JDI-Work	15.73	8.50	43.11	10.04	.41	.41	.18	.39	.29	.88 (.86)	-.18	-.33	-.24	-.30	.08
7. Job withdrawal	15.49	5.43	15.49	4.53	-.30	-.29	-.13	-.31	-.28	-.32	.76 (.70)	.14	.08	.05	-.23
8. Work withdrawal	11.71	9.48	23.83	9.01	-.21	-.19	-.16	-.11	-.17	-.18	.24	.71 (.69)	.11	.18	-.06
9. OTSHI	38.14	9.20	40.62	17.33	-.35	-.36	-.12	-.29	-.18	-.25	.16	.08	.96 (.98)	.49	-.06
10. SEQ-R	28.53	8.84	20.03	3.62	-.28	-.28	-.15 <sup>b</sup>	-.19	-.21	-.11 <sup>c</sup>	.13 <sup>c</sup>	.26	.41	.93 (.81)	.01
11. Disposition	---	---	33.06	3.81	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	.77

Note. Correlations for Study 1 ( $N = 509$ ) appear below the diagonal, and correlations for Study 2 ( $N = 217$ ) appear above the diagonal. Alphas are presented on the diagonal with the values for Study 2 in parentheses. In Study 1, for  $|r|s \geq .22$ ,  $p < .001$ ; for  $|r|s \geq .19$ ,  $p < .01$ ; for  $|r|s \geq .12$ ,  $p < .05$ . In Study 2, for  $|r|s \geq .23$ ,  $p < .001$ ; for  $|r|s \geq .18$ ,  $p < .01$ ; for  $|r|s \geq .14$ ,  $p < .05$ . PFIT = Perceptions of Fair Interpersonal Treatment scale; PFIT-Sup = PFIT Supervisor subscale; PFIT-Cow = PFIT Coworker subscale; JDI = Job Descriptive Index; JDI-Sup = Supervisor Satisfaction; JDI-Work = Work Satisfaction; OTSHI = Organizational Tolerance for Sexual Harassment Inventory; SEQ-R = Sexual Experiences Inventory-Revised;  $M_1$  ( $SD_1$ ) = mean (standard deviation) in Study 1;  $M_2$  ( $SD_2$ ) = mean (standard deviation) in Study 2.

<sup>a</sup> Only one item was administered in Study 2, therefore,  $\alpha$  could not be assessed. <sup>b</sup> Indicates that this scale was only administered to women ( $N = 253$ ); therefore, this correlation is significant at  $p < .05$ . <sup>c</sup> Indicates that this scale was only administered to women ( $N = 253$ ); therefore, these correlations are not significant.

tween the PFIT Coworker subscale and Coworker Satisfaction was significantly higher than its correlation with Supervisor Satisfaction ( $t = 5.13$ ,  $p < .001$ ) and its correlation with Satisfaction with the Work Itself ( $t = 5.96$ ,  $p < .001$ ).

As predicted in Hypothesis 3, the PFIT scale was significantly negatively correlated with Work Withdrawal ( $r = -.21$ ,  $p < .01$ ) and Job Withdrawal ( $r = -.30$ ,  $p < .001$ ). Similarly, as predicted in Hypotheses 4a and 4b, the PFIT scale was significantly negatively correlated with the OTSHI ( $r = -.35$ ,  $p < .001$ ) and the SEQ-R ( $r = -.28$ ,  $p < .001$ ).

Finally, work group scores were computed for the two PFIT subscales by averaging scores within each individual's work group without the focal individual; for results, see Table 4. As predicted in Hypothesis 5, the work group PFIT Supervisor subscale was most strongly correlated with the focal individual's Supervisor Satisfaction score ( $r = .26$ ,  $p < .001$ ,  $n = 299$ ); the correlation between the work group PFIT Supervisor subscale and Coworker Satisfaction was not significant ( $r = .06$ ,  $ns$ ); these two correlations were significantly different ( $t = 4.02$ ,  $p < .001$ ). The correlation between this work group score and Satisfaction with Work Itself was significant but not as strong ( $r = .15$ ,  $p < .05$ ); this correlation was also significantly lower than the correlation between the work group PFIT Supervisor subscale score and Supervisor Satisfaction ( $t = 2.28$ ,  $p < .05$ ). The PFIT Coworker subscale work group score was marginally related to Coworker Satisfaction ( $r = .11$ ,  $p < .10$ ), but was significantly related to both Supervisor Satisfaction ( $r = .17$ ,  $p < .05$ ) and Satisfaction with Work Itself ( $r = .14$ ,  $p < .05$ ); none of these correlations were significantly different. The findings for the PFIT Supervisor subscale supported the differential pattern predicted in Hypothesis 5, whereas the findings for the PFIT Coworker subscale did not.

## Study 2

A second study was conducted to address Keashley et al.'s (1994) concern that employees' perceptions of fairness in the workplace may be attributed to employees' dispositions. We explored the PFIT scale's relationship with important job-related variables after controlling for employees' dispositions. It was hypothesized that the significant correlations between the PFIT scale and the variables examined in Study 1 will remain significant after controlling for employees' dispositions.

## Method

### Participants

Data were collected from 217 women at a large midwestern university as part of a follow-up study on sexual harassment.

Table 4  
Correlations Between PFIT Subscales and Satisfaction  
Variables (Based on Work Groups)

Scale	Work group PFIT subscale score	
	Supervisor	Coworker
Work Satisfaction	.15*	.14*
Coworker Satisfaction	.06	.11
Supervisor Satisfaction	.26**	.17*

Note. PFIT = Perceptions of Fair Interpersonal Treatment scale.  
\*  $p < .05$ . \*\*  $p < .01$ .

Of these participants, 143 were nonacademic employees, and 74 held academic positions; 94% were Caucasian, 5% were African-American, and 1% cited another ethnicity. The modal age category was 50 to 54 years.

### Procedure and Scales

Because of time constraints, a shortened 12-item version of the PFIT scale, which was developed based, in part, on factor analytic results in Study 1, was administered; see the Appendix. As in Study 1, the PFIT scale was included in a larger survey designed to assess a variety of variables related to sexual harassment. Surveys were administered to employees via laptop computers that were brought to their workplace. There were only three additional changes in the scales administered in Study 2: an eight-item (vs. the seven-item scale in Study 1) job withdrawal scale was administered, the full-length 18-item JDI scales were used, and a scale assessing affective disposition was added.

A 13-item version of the Neutral Objects Satisfaction Questionnaire (Weitz, 1952), which asks respondents how they feel about neutral objects (e.g., no. 2 pencils,  $8\frac{1}{2} \times 11$ -in. [ $21.59 \times 27.94$  cm] paper, the color of stop signs), was used. Participants respond to each item by indicating whether they are satisfied, dissatisfied, or neutral; negative feelings about the neutral objects indicate negative affectivity. A high score indicates a positive disposition;  $\alpha$  in the present study was .77.

### Results

Once again, the PFIT scale's coefficient alpha was high (.92), and the reliability could not be improved if any of the 12 items were deleted. As predicted, when disposition was controlled, the PFIT scale remained significantly correlated with Supervisor Satisfaction ( $r = .66, p < .001$ ), Coworker Satisfaction ( $r = .46, p < .001$ ), and Satisfaction with the Work Itself ( $r = .46, p < .001$ ). Similarly, when disposition was partialled out, the PFIT scale's correlation with Work Withdrawal ( $r = -.20, p < .01$ ), Job Withdrawal ( $r = -.15, p < .05$ ), the OTSHI ( $r = -.53, p < .001$ ), and SEQ-R ( $r = -.47, p < .001$ ) remained significant.

### General Discussion

In Study 1, the analyses show that the PFIT scale is a reliable scale assessing two aspects of perceptions of fair treatment in the workplace. Moreover, the PFIT scale's pattern of significant relationships with supervisor, coworker, and work satisfaction indicates that employees' perceptions of interpersonal treatment in their work environment is an important variable. It was also encouraging to find that each PFIT subscale was most highly correlated with the corresponding job satisfaction scale. Further evidence of the PFIT scale's validity was demonstrated in the finding of a mean on the 12 common items of 24.80 for the manufacturing sample (Study 1) and a mean of 28.43 for the university sample (Study 2); an independent sample  $t$  test revealed that these two means were significantly different ( $t = 6.46, p < .001$ ); based on interviews and observations during data collections, it is our opinion that these mean differences accurately reflect the different interpersonal treatment environments. Although more work exploring the validity of this new scale is needed, these patterns of results provided encouraging initial support for the PFIT scale's validity.

The strong correlations between the PFIT scale and job-related variables such as job satisfaction, work and job withdrawal suggest that perceptions of unfair treatment may lead to important outcomes (i.e., behaviors). Similar results obtained in Study 2 from employees working in a very different organization (a university vs. a food-processing company) suggest that employees' perceptions of interpersonal treatment is an important construct in organizational research, regardless of occupation or industry. Furthermore, the PFIT scale's strong negative correlations with the OTSHI and SEQ-R suggest that perceptions of interpersonal relations are related to other forms of abuse that may be present within organizations, such as a hostile work environment or even other more overt forms of sexual harassment. Although the present correlational research does not investigate the causality of these perceptions, these results indicate the importance of perceptions of fairness in the workplace. Future research exploring the causal relations between perceptions of interpersonal fairness and other critical job-related variables is needed.

To address the issues and problems of common method variance that occur frequently in self-report data, analyses of work groups (without the focal individual) were conducted in Study 1. The significant correlation between the work group PFIT Supervisor subscale and employees' satisfaction with supervision demonstrates that common method variance is not an explanation for our results: Significant correlations remain when the focal individual is excluded from the measure of fair treatment. Unfortunately, the PFIT Coworker subscale's work group score

was not significantly correlated with employees' satisfaction with coworker scores; this may be because this subscale is very short (four items). Numerous issues surround the use of work groups as a unit of analysis (including work group size and identification of work group members); however, using them here seems justified because the PFIT scale attempts to measure perceptions of fairness as an organizational climate variable influenced by the cohort with which one works (Zickar, 1994).

To address Keashley et al.'s (1994) concern that disposition may be responsible for significant correlations between an employee's perceptions of fairness and his or her job satisfaction and turnover, partial correlations controlling for employees' affective dispositions were computed in Study 2. Results revealed that affective disposition did not explain the correlations between the PFIT scale and other job-related variables. This finding, along with the finding for work groups discussed previously, suggests that employees' perceptions of the fairness of their work environment is an important variable that is related to other critical job-related variables.

### Conclusions and Future Research

To date, research on employees' perceptions of the fairness of interpersonal treatment in the workplace has been neglected. The present article summarizes the development of an instrument that may be used to study this important topic. Future research on this topic is critical because modifying supervisors' interpersonal treatment of employees (via training) may be more feasible than modifying an entire organizational system or policy, such as a pay system or layoff. This notion is further supported by the finding that procedural justice and interactional justice can serve as substitutes for each other (Skarlicki & Folger, 1997).

Findings based on this instrument indicated that perceptions of interpersonal treatment are related to job satisfaction, work and job withdrawal, an organization's climate for sexual harassment, and experiences of sexual harassment. Future research should focus on untangling the causality between these variables. Future research should also be directed at obtaining responses to this scale and other job-related variables (e.g., organizational commitment, job performance) from employees in different industries and organizations. Finally, a longitudinal study tracing the PFIT scale scores of new employees through their organizational tenure (to the point of turnover) would help gain an understanding of how these perceptions develop, the variables that causally affect fairness perceptions, and the relation of fairness perceptions to other critical job-related variables over time.

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(Appendix follows on next page)

## Appendix

## Perceptions of Fair Interpersonal Treatment Scale

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, and ? if you cannot decide.

IN THIS ORGANIZATION . . .

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

Note. R = the item is reverse scored.

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<sup>a</sup> Item included in the 12-item version of the scale administered to the midwestern university.

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