

2017

Seniority and Transparency in the Perceived Fairness of Seniority-Based Police Promotion

Michael Edward Carter
Walden University

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholarworks.waldenu.edu/dissertations>

 Part of the [Quantitative Psychology Commons](#)

This Dissertation is brought to you for free and open access by the Walden Dissertations and Doctoral Studies Collection at ScholarWorks. It has been accepted for inclusion in Walden Dissertations and Doctoral Studies by an authorized administrator of ScholarWorks. For more information, please contact ScholarWorks@waldenu.edu.

Walden University

College of Social and Behavioral Sciences

This is to certify that the doctoral dissertation by

Michael Edward Carter

has been found to be complete and satisfactory in all respects,
and that any and all revisions required by
the review committee have been made.

Review Committee

Dr. S. David. Kriska, Committee Chairperson, Psychology Faculty

Dr. Bernadette Dorr, Committee Member, Psychology Faculty

Dr. Marlon Sukal, University Reviewer, Psychology Faculty

Chief Academic Officer
Eric Riedel, Ph.D.

Walden University
2017

Abstract

Seniority and Transparency in the Perceived Fairness of Seniority-Based Police

Promotion

by

Michael E. Carter

MA, Louisiana Tech University, 2001

BGS, Louisiana Tech University, 1999

Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

Organizational Psychology

Walden University

December 2017

Abstract

Perception of fairness is a key construct affecting job performance, and perceptions of promotional processes are related to employees' sense of justice in private organizations. In police departments, negative perceptions of procedures can be detrimental to departmental effectiveness. The purpose of this quantitative quasiexperimental study was to compare Louisiana officers' perceptions of fairness of a seniority-based promotion system in relation to Louisiana deputies' perceptions of fairness of a merit-based promotion system. Organizational justice theory, including procedural justice, was the theoretical foundation. The research questions were designed to examine whether seniority, transparency, knowledge of the promotion systems, gender, and race predicted levels of perceived fairness. Data were analyzed using an independent samples *t* test, a MANOVA, and a multiple linear regression. Participants in the seniority-based system perceived it as being fairer than participants in the merit-based system viewed their merit-based system. There were significant differences in knowledge of promotion systems and perceived fairness for rank and system type, but not race and gender. Collectively, predictor variables correlated with perceived fairness. Type of promotion system was not significant when examined with other variables suggesting confounding of predictor variables. Human resources should make employees aware of promotion procedures. Hybrid systems might help address both employee fairness and the promotion of qualified individuals. Officers viewing promotion as fair could lead to positive social change by motivating officers and positively influencing how they serve the public.

Seniority and Transparency in the Perceived Fairness of Seniority-Based Police
Promotion

by

Michael E. Carter

MA, Louisiana Tech University, 2001

BS, Louisiana Tech University, 1999

Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree of
Doctor of Philosophy
Organizational Psychology

Walden University

December 2017

Table of Contents

List of Tables	v
List of Figures	vi
Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study.....	1
Background of the Study	3
Problem Statement	6
Purpose of Study	7
Research Questions and Hypotheses	8
Theoretical Foundation for the Study	10
Nature of the Study	11
Definitions.....	12
Assumptions.....	14
Scope	15
Limitations	15
Significance.....	17
Summary	18
Chapter 2: Literature Review.....	20
Introduction.....	20
Literature Search Strategy.....	22
Theoretical Framework.....	23
Promotion Systems	26

Perceived Fairness	32
Organizational Justice.....	35
Organizational Justice and Performance Appraisal	36
Organizational Justice and Innovative Behavior	38
Reconceptualizing Organizational Justice	40
Organizational Justice and Discretionary Work Effort.....	42
Organizational Justice in the Public Sector	43
Procedural Justice	47
Distributive Justice.....	49
Summary	50
Chapter 3: Research Method.....	53
Introduction.....	53
Research Design and Rationale	55
Population	56
Sampling and Sampling Procedures	57
Procedures for Recruitment, Participation, and Data Collection	58
Instrumentation and Operationalization of Constructs	60
Demographic Information.....	60
Organizational Justice Questionnaire	60
Transparency.....	61
Knowledge of Organizational Procedures Scale.....	61

Data Analysis Plan	62
Threats to Validity	66
Ethical Procedures	67
Summary	68
Chapter 4: Results	70
Introduction.....	70
Data Collection	72
Descriptive Statistics.....	72
Reliability.....	75
Results.....	75
Research Question 1	75
Research Question 2	77
Research Question 3	81
Exploratory Analysis	84
Summary	88
Chapter 5	90
Introduction.....	90
Interpretation of the Findings.....	91
Research Question 1	92
Research Question 2	94
Research Question 3	95

Limitations of the Study.....	98
Recommendations for Further Research.....	99
Implications for Practice and Social Change	101
Conclusion	103
References.....	105
Appendix A: Survey Instruments.....	115
Appendix B: Instrument Permission Letters.....	119

List of Tables

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics for Demographic Characteristics	74
Table 2. Descriptive Statistics and Reliability Coefficients for Study Subscales.....	75
Table 3. Independent Samples T-Test for Research Question 1.....	77
Table 4. MANOVA for Knowledge of Promotion System and Perceived Fairness	79
Table 5. Estimated Marginal Means for Knowledge of Promotion System and Perceived Fairness by Rank.....	79
Table 6. Post Hoc Tests for Knowledge of Promotion System and Perceived Fairness by Rank	80
Table 7. Estimated Marginal Means for Knowledge of Promotion System and Perceived Fairness by Type of Promotion System	81
Table 8. Multiple Linear Regression Predicting Perceived Fairness	83
Table 9. Exploratory Multiple Linear Regression Predicting Perceived Fairness.....	86
Table 10. Correlation Matrix of Regression Variables.....	87

List of Figures

Figure 1. Normal P-P plot for Research Question 3	82
Figure 2. Residuals versus predicted values for Research Question 3	83
Figure 3. Normal P-P plot for Exploratory Model.....	85
Figure 4. Residuals versus predicted values for Exploratory Model	85

Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study

Researchers have used perceived fairness in organizational psychology to understand work behavior and judgment formation in relation to organizational procedures and outcomes (Cojuharenco & Patient, 2013; Jelley, Bonaccio, & Chiochio, 2014). Perceived fairness involves a perception of the rules and methods organizations use to make decisions about outcomes, such as pay raises and promotions, to be just and equitable (Cloutier, Pascale, & Bilodeau, 2012). Perceived fairness of organizational procedures can influence employees' behaviors (García-Izquierdo, Moscoso, & Ramos-Villagrasa, 2012), motivation (Mckinney, Mulvaney, & Grodsky, 2013), and judgments about the organizations for which they work (Cojuharenco & Patient, 2013), all of which can affect employee performance (García-Izquierdo et al., 2012) and employees' relationships to an organization (Qin, Ren, Zhang, & Johnson, 2015). García-Izquierdo et al. (2012) found that seniority and transparency, or the formalization of procedures, predicted perceptions of fairness in their study of both supervisors and employees of 31 various private sector organizations. García-Izquierdo et al.'s finding supports fairness heuristic theory (Lind, 2001), which holds that individuals perceive seniority to be fair because seniority involves clear-cut criteria for advancement, whereas merit-based promotion is perceived as being potentially unfair because it involves the evaluation of employees' performance by superiors. According to fairness heuristic theory (Lind, 2001), individuals believe decisions, such as those involving promotions, under another individual's control raises the possibility of unfairness.

However, little information was found in organizational psychology on public service employees, including law enforcement officials, perceptions of fairness in seniority-based promotion systems compared to their perceptions of fairness in merit-based promotion systems. It may be that although promotion based on seniority may be outmoded (Thompson, 2005; Tobias, 2004), police officers may be resistant to changing to a merit-based promotion system. Officers may perceive a merit-based promotion to be unfair because it relies on the evaluation and interpretation of employees' performance by superiors (Dragos, Ispas, Sulea, & Ilie, 2014). It was unclear how law enforcement officials perceive the fairness of seniority- and merit-based promotional systems in relation to one another.

Therefore, the purpose of this quantitative study was to examine Louisiana municipal police officers' perceptions of fairness of the bona fide seniority promotion system in relation to Louisiana sheriffs' deputies' perceptions of fairness of the merit-based promotion system. The design of this study allowed the researcher to examine whether the independent variables of seniority, transparency, and knowledge of the promotion systems, in addition to the demographic variables of gender and race, predict levels of perceived fairness. Information collected from this study may lead to social change by providing information that may enhance police officers' relationship with their organization, thereby potentially and positively influencing how they serve the public. Officers acting in alignment with organizational principles is especially important in light of recent racial tensions between civilians and law enforcement.

I found little information on how police officers perceive seniority-based promotion systems to be fair in comparison to merit-based promotion systems. Information collected from this study can add to literature in organizational psychology on the factors that influence public service employees' perceptions of organizational justice and promotion systems. The remainder of Chapter 1 includes the Background of the Study, the Purpose, the Research Questions, the Theoretical Framework, and Definitions. Chapter 1 also includes sections on Assumptions, Scope and Delimitations, Limitations, Significance, and a Summary.

Background of the Study

Previous employee-based research offers insight to how individuals rationalize their ability to fit into an organization (Dragos et al., 2014). Further, employee-based research has allowed researchers insight to pro-organizational behavior and how supervisor ethics lead to trust or the lack of trust within the workplace (Graham, Ziegert, & Capitano, 2015). Graham et al. (2015) theorized that the ability of employees to understand and proactively advance within an organization was fashioned according to the ethical guidelines set forth and enforced from within the workplace. Such procedural guidelines are important components of organizational culture and organizational justice (Dragos et al., 2014). The current study was designed to examine two separate promotional systems with the same occupation and the same region (Cojuharenco, Patient, & Bashshur, 2011). Employees' ability to understand the method of promotion is critical for the basis of trust (Dragos et al., 2014). Researchers have addressed the

procedural justice of promotional systems and how those procedures are perceived with emphasis on employee evaluations (Jelley, Goffin, Gowell, & Heneman, 2012; Harrington & Lee, 2015). The current research lacked specific data in regards to promoting law enforcement professionals, workers focused on law abidance, and presumably fairness and justice. This study was designed to measure the perception of fairness for these skilled workers regarding their comparative promotional systems. The first promotional system was seniority-based, with the comparative system being merit-based.

Perceived fairness influences the relationship between employees and organizations, and can be crucial to employee performance (Cojuharenco & Patient, 2013; García-Izquierdo et al., 2012; Jones & Skarlicki, 2013). Negative perceptions of fairness and organizational justice can be detrimental to organizational effectiveness, and in public service organizations, such as police departments, negative perceptions can influence the ways in which departments serve the public (Armeli, Eisenberger, Fasolo, & Lynch, 1998; Qin et al., 2015). The State of Louisiana offered a unique opportunity to examine law enforcement officials' perceptions of fairness in seniority-based promotion systems compared to their perceptions of fairness in merit-based promotion systems.

The current seniority-based promotion system used by Louisiana to promote municipal police officers has been labeled archaic and nonserving to employees, departments, and the profession as a whole (Thompson, 2005; Tobias, 2004). However, whether officers perceive this system to be fair in relation to merit-based systems used by

Louisiana sheriff's deputies was unknown. Seniority-based promotion refers to an employee's length of service or time in an organization (García-Izquierdo et al., 2012), and seniority-based promotion systems stand in contrast to competitive promotion systems, such as merit-based systems, wherein promotion is based on employee achievement and performance (Louisiana State Legislature Revised Statutes [LA R.S.] 33, 2016). Whereas merit-based systems are one of the most widely accepted ways to encourage and reward positive job performance, they are also susceptible to favoritism and cronyism (Thau & Mitchell, 2010). On the other hand, while in theory seniority-based systems can help maintain workplace harmony by eliminating perceptions of favoritism (Lind, 2001), they do not motivate employee productivity and performance like merit-based systems can (McKinney et al., 2013). However, whatever system an organization uses, employees' perceptions of fairness of organizational procedures, such as promotion, are crucial to their sense of organizational justice (García-Izquierdo et al., 2012).

Public service organizations, such as fire and police departments, are often steeped in tradition and, consequently, procedures are often entrenched and accepted, making employees resistant to organizational change (Calo, 2012; Karp & Stenmark, 2011). The law enforcement profession has a long history, and police departments often operate within entrenched traditions, using established procedures (Karp & Stenmark, 2011). Consequently, change in law enforcement agencies may be difficult to achieve if agencies perceive new procedures are at odds with established ways of doing things

(Karp & Stenmark, 2011). Karp and Stenmark (2011) analyzed articles on police culture and police training material and concluded that training and professional life (e.g., ideologies and codes) are the mechanisms that help inform and maintain a culture in law enforcement that maintains established traditions. Through this research, I found that although police officers do not perceive promotion based on seniority to be fair, police officers may be resistant to change because of tradition and their perceptions that merit-based promotion promotes increased unfairness in the form of favoritism (Dragos et al., 2014).

Currently, the promotion of Louisiana municipal police officers is based on tradition, and seniority holds the greatest weight in promotion decisions of Louisiana municipal police officers. Ramshaw (2013) argued that structural and operational changes regarding promotion were necessary to retain experienced and skilled officers. Research on the fairness of promotion systems exists in relation to private sector organizations (Cloutier et al., 2012; García-Izquierdo et al., 2012). However, research is lacking on perceived fairness and procedural justice concerns among law enforcement officers working in seniority-based promotion systems in relation those working to merit-based promotion systems (Arthur & Villado, 2008; Friesen, Kay, Eibach, & Galinsky, 2014).

Problem Statement

Perceived fairness is a well-known construct in organizational psychology (Jones & Skarlicki, 2013), and has become a key component of organizational justice theories to

help explain work behavior in relation to organizational procedures (Cojuharenco & Patient, 2013). Especially important to organizations is the perception of fairness of promotion procedures (García-Izquierdo et al., 2012). Perceptions of fairness in promotion can influence an employee's sense of organizational justice (i.e., how employees judge the behaviors and procedures of an organization to be fair and equitable; Cojuharenco & Patient, 2013), which can affect employees' performance (García-Izquierdo et al., 2012) and relationships with organizations (Qin et al., 2015). In public service organizations, such as police departments, negative perceptions of fairness and organizational procedures can be detrimental to departmental effectiveness and negatively influence how the organization serves the general public (Qin et al., 2015). García-Izquierdo et al. (2012) recommended further research on fairness perceptions and promotion in public sector organizations. As shown in Chapter 2, research was lacking on perceived fairness of promotion systems in public service organizations, including law enforcement agencies.

Purpose of Study

The purpose of this quantitative comparative quasiexperimental study was to compare Louisiana municipal police officers' perceptions of fairness of their bona fide seniority promotion system to Louisiana sheriff's deputies' perceptions of fairness of their merit-based promotion system. In addition, this study's design was designed to investigate whether the independent variables of seniority, transparency, and knowledge of the promotion systems, in addition to the demographic variables of gender and race,

predict levels of perceived fairness. This study provided new comparative information on the seniority-based promotion system that has left many unanswered questions in relation to employee perceptions of organizational justice and perceived fairness. In addition, the study added to literature in organizational psychology on the perceptions of fairness of organizational procedures in public service organizations.

The focus of this study was Louisiana municipal police officers and Louisiana sheriff's deputies. Louisiana municipal police officers are governed by a strict set of civil service laws that pertain to their employment status, and, currently, all line rank promotions for Louisiana Municipal Police Officers are based on bona fide seniority (LA R.S. 33, 2016). Bona fide seniority refers to a system in which length of service is the primary criterion for employee promotion among municipal police. Louisiana sheriff's deputies, on the other hand, are promoted based on a merit-based system, which is be described more completely in Chapter 2.

Research Questions and Hypotheses

Research Question 1: Do officers in a seniority-based promotion system and officers in a merit-based promotion system differ in their perceived fairness of the promotion system?

H₀1: On average, officers in a seniority-based promotion system and officers in a merit-based promotion system do not significantly differ in their perceived fairness of their promotion system as measured by the Organizational Justice Questionnaire (Colquitt, 2001).

H_{a1}: On average, officers in a seniority-based promotion system and officers in a merit-based promotion system significantly differ in their perceived fairness of their promotion system as measured by the Organizational Justice Questionnaire (Colquitt, 2001).

Research Question 2: Are there differences in knowledge of the promotion system and perceived fairness of the promotion system based on demographic characteristics (i.e., race, gender, and rank) and type of promotion system (i.e., seniority or merit-based)?

H₀₂: There are no significant differences in knowledge of the promotion system and perceived fairness of the promotion system, as measured by the Organizational Justice Questionnaire (Colquitt, 2001), based on demographic characteristics (i.e., race, gender, and rank) and type of promotion system (i.e., seniority or merit-based).

H_{a2}: There are significant differences in knowledge of the promotion system and perceived fairness of the promotion system, as measured by the Organizational Justice Questionnaire (Colquitt, 2001), based on demographic characteristics (i.e., race, gender, and rank) and type of promotion system (i.e., seniority or merit-based).

Research Question 3: Do type of promotion system (i.e., seniority or merit-based), knowledge of the promotion system, seniority, and perceived transparency predict perceived fairness of promotion system?

H₀₃: Type of promotion system (i.e., seniority or merit-based), knowledge of the promotion system, seniority, and perceived transparency do not significantly predict

perceived fairness of promotion system as measured by the Organizational Justice Questionnaire (Colquitt, 2001).

H_{a3}: Type of promotion system (i.e., seniority or merit-based), knowledge of the promotion system, seniority, and perceived transparency significantly predict perceived fairness of promotion system as measured by the Organizational Justice Questionnaire (Colquitt, 2001).

Theoretical Foundation for the Study

Organizational justice theory, with an emphasis on procedural justice (García-Izquierdo et al., 2012), served as the theoretical foundation for this study. Organizational justice refers to how employees judge the behaviors and procedures of an organization to be fair and equitable (Cojuharenco & Patient, 2013). Employees' perceptions of organizational justice can influence an array of work behaviors, including productivity, job performance, job satisfaction, and cooperative work behavior (Cojuharenco & Patient, 2013; García-Izquierdo et al., 2012; Jones & Skarlicki, 2013). Procedural justice is an aspect of organizational justice and involves the perceived fairness of the rules and methods organizations use to make decisions about outcomes, such as pay raises and promotion (Cloutier et al., 2012). Perceived fairness and procedural justice in relation to promotion systems are core issues for organizations (García-Izquierdo et al., 2012). In addition, outcomes, such as job performance and organizational commitment, can be enhanced if employees perceive organizational procedures to be fair and just (Cojuharenco & Patient, 2013; García-Izquierdo et al., 2012; Jones & Skarlicki, 2013;

Scott, Daisley, Wheeler, & Boyer, 2014). Consequently, theories of organizational and procedural justice are appropriate as fairness heuristic approaches (Lind, 2001) to help understand whether employees perceive seniority-based or merit-based promotion as fair procedural mechanisms. Theories of organizational and procedural justice are also appropriate for investigating the role of the knowledge of the promotion system, seniority, and transparency in perceptions of fairness.

Nature of the Study

The nature of this study was a quantitative comparative quasiexperimental design through an employee survey containing self-report measures of knowledge of the promotion system, seniority, perceived transparency, and perceived fairness of the promotion system. A quantitative approach was chosen for this study because the goal is to investigate the relationships among numerically and objectively measurable concepts (Howell, 2010). Because one of the goals of this study was to determine if officers in a seniority-based promotion system differ from officers in a merit-based promotion system in terms of perceived fairness, a comparative quasiexperimental design is appropriate. Specifically, a quasiexperimental design was appropriate to compare preexisting groups that are not randomly assigned. A true experiment requires random assignment of participants to groups (Pallant, 2013). In this study, the participants were not randomly assigned to one promotion system or the other. This study was also designed to determine if knowledge of the promotion system, seniority, and perceived transparency significantly predict perceived fairness.

The independent variables under investigation in this study were the type of promotion system (seniority-based or merit-based), knowledge of the promotion system, seniority, perceived transparency, officer race, and officer gender. The dependent variable in this study was perceived fairness. The data were collected using an online survey of officers in Louisiana who work in either a seniority-based or merit-based promotion system. The analysis for Research Question 1 was an independent sample *t*-test to compare officers in the seniority-based and merit-based promotion systems on perceived fairness. The analysis for Research Question 2 was a multivariate analysis of variance to determine if there are differences in knowledge and perceived fairness of the promotion system based on race, gender, and type of promotion system. Finally, the analysis for Research Question 3 was a multiple linear regression to determine if type of promotion system, knowledge of the promotion system, seniority, and perceived transparency significantly predict perceived fairness.

Results were limited to officers who received and completed the survey regarding their promotion system. The method of distribution consisted of sworn police personnel throughout police departments on the given date of survey collection. This survey measured a cross section of seniority tenure and had direct access to the target population. The research could provide contrasting views among individuals with different tenures within the same seniority structure.

Definitions

The following terms were defined for specific use in the study.

Distributive justice: A component of organizational justice, distributive justice refers employees' perceptions of fairness of work-related outcomes and resource distribution (Harrington & Lee, 2015).

Interactional justice: Another component of organizational justice, interactional justice refers to the interpersonal treatment of employees in explaining procedures and outcomes, as well as the accuracy and timeliness of the information they receive (Cojuharenco & Patient, 2013).

Merit-based promotion: Merit-based promotion refers to an organizational system for advancing employees in rank, based primarily on employee achievement and accomplishment (McKinney et al., 2013).

Organizational justice: Organizational justice is a major theory used by researchers in organizational psychology and human resource management research to help explain employee motivation and behavior in relation to work psychology (Cojuharenco & Patient, 2013). For the purposes of this study, organizational justice includes distributive justice, interactional justice, and procedural justice (Cojuharenco & Patient, 2013).

Perceived fairness: A well-known and often used construct in organizational psychology, perceived fairness refers to employees' perceptions of the equity involving the organizational procedures and criteria used for promotion (Cloutier et al., 2012).

Procedural justice: A component of organizational justice, procedural justice refers to the perceived fairness of the rules, methods, and guidelines organizational

leaders use to make decisions about outcomes, such as employee promotion (Cloutier et al., 2012).

Seniority-based promotion: Seniority-based promotion refers to an organizational system for advancing employees in rank based primarily on an employee's length of service or time spent in an organization (García-Izquierdo et al., 2012).

Transparency: Transparency refers to the degree to which employees are aware of the criteria and procedures necessary for promotion; ideally, transparency should help to reduce employees' ambiguity and confusion about the criteria and procedures necessary for promotion (García-Izquierdo et al., 2012).

Assumptions

The Louisiana municipal police promotion system has been entrenched in Louisiana Civil Service law since the 1940s (LA R.S. 33, 2016). It has often been assumed that a strong degree of institutionalization and tradition exists within the statewide Civil Service system. The fear of potential change to an individual's ability to be promoted after years of accruing seniority may cause distrust in research that could lend credibility to legislative change. However, after informing participants of the scholarly nature of the study, I assumed they would respond honestly. In addition, participants were informed of the confidentiality, security, and anonymity of the data, which could also help them to respond honestly. On the other hand, the Louisiana Sheriffs have had complete control over whom they promote and what salary is set for each individual. The Sheriff is the final decision on the merit based promotion, and has

been since the onset of the Louisiana Sheriff's system. I also assumed that a person does not decide to apply for a job initially with one police agency over another because of the promotion system.

Scope

The focus of this study were Louisiana municipal police officers and Louisiana sheriff's deputies who work in either a seniority-based or merit-based promotion system. These two organizational structures are confined to the geographical location of law enforcement organizations within the State of Louisiana; however, the findings may still transfer to law enforcement officials in other regions and with different organizational procedures. The validity of measuring the comparative promotional systems within Louisiana municipal police officers (e.g., seniority-based promotion) and the Louisiana Sheriff's deputies (e.g., merit-based promotion) provided the basic illustration of perceived fairness in quantitative form. The research was designed to provide a scope of comparison for law enforcement officials within the same geographical region. The basic job tasks were applicable for the entry-level worker in both organizations; however, the difference of supervisory selection was drastically different.

Limitations

One limitation of a quantitative study is that it does not involve examination of the depth of police officers' subjective experiences with their promotional system. A second limitation of the present design was the possibility that a confounding variable could account for any observed differences in perceived fairness. Because the

participants in this study were not randomly assigned to one promotional system or the other, it is possible that a confounding variable could be responsible for any differences in perceived fairness. Another limitation of the design was that survey responses were susceptible to response bias. In this case, because participants answered questions about perceptions of their promotional system, they may have been biased toward reporting favorable perceptions out of concern about professional repercussions. In addition, participants may have feared that their answers might have led to organizational change or cast their departments in a negative light. Some participants also may have used the survey as an opportunity to vent their dissatisfaction. However, participants were informed that their responses would be anonymous and kept confidential, which helped to mitigate response bias.

Other limitations existed within this study on both comparative sides. Those limitations include methodological weakness of autonomy with each individual Louisiana Sheriff. There are 64 parishes within the State of Louisiana. In each of those 64 parishes, one person is elected as the Sheriff. The elected Sheriff has the legitimate authority by law to design and set up the individual merit-based promotion system at their will. Measuring a Sheriff's promotion system can differ as many as 64 different ways in the State of Louisiana alone. In measuring the Louisiana municipal police officers, Louisiana revised statute, Title 33, sets the parameters and defines the bona fide seniority promotion system. Distinguishing factors such as breaking a tie may vary from one jurisdiction (city) to another, but the basic seniority promotion is the same standard by hire date and

or adjusted seniority date. Deviations from the established procedure could have caused social unrest and distrust within the rank-and-file, from within either organization. A complete explanation of the seniority promotions system appears in Chapter 2.

Significance

Although García-Izquierdo et al. (2012) found that seniority predicted perceptions of fairness in employees of private sector organizations, I found little information in organizational psychology on civil service employees' perceptions of fairness of seniority-based promotion systems, largely considered to be outmoded (Tobias, 2004; Thompson, 2005), in comparison to merit-based promotion systems. Examining law enforcement officials' perceptions of the fairness of promotion systems and the factors that contribute to perceptions of fairness may produce findings that add to literature on organizational justice and organizational psychology of employee judgement formation concerning organizational procedures and the factors that influence perceived fairness. Information collected from this study may also add to literature on the connections between organizational justice, perceived fairness, and promotion in public service organizations, such as police departments. Findings from this study have implications for practice by adding information on understanding what employees perceive as fair in public service organizations, leading to measures to ensure equitable organizational processes and enhance organizational justice. The study also leads to social change by providing information that may help enhance organizational commitment and performance of police officers, thereby potentially and positively influencing how they

serve the public. Additionally, officers committed to effective policing is crucial in an atmosphere of increasing racial tensions between civilians and law enforcement.

Summary

The State of Louisiana afforded an opportunity to investigate law enforcement officials' perceptions of fairness in seniority-based promotion systems compared to their perceptions of fairness in merit-based promotion systems. Researchers have used perceived fairness in organizational psychology to understand work behavior and judgment formation in for-profit organizations (García-Izquierdo et al., 2012). In addition, researchers have examined perceived fairness in the distribution of merit pay in municipal agencies (McKinney et al., 2013). However, a limitation of research on organizational justice and psychology was that researchers had not looked at perceptions of fairness of promotion systems in civil service organizations, such as law enforcement departments.

This comparative study provided basic research data that has been long overlooked within the realm of Louisiana law enforcement, data that can add to the literature in organizational psychology on organizational justice and the perceptions of fairness of promotion systems in civil service sectors. In addition to adding to research in organizational psychology on perceived fairness in civil service promotion systems, information from the study could also provide for a positive social change within the organization, and lead to change that may influence how the general public perceived the organization. The study might lead to positive social change by providing information

for future research that is germane to the recruitment and retention of law enforcement professionals in the State of Louisiana. Chapter 2 includes an expanded discussion of the organizational justice theory and a review of literature relevant to merit-based and seniority-based promotion systems in law enforcement.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Introduction

For the past 20 years, researchers in organizational psychology have used organizational justice to examine employees' perceptions of the fairness of organizational procedures and outcomes (Cojuharenco & Patient, 2013; Jelley et al., 2014).

Organizational justice stems from equity theory (Adams, 1965), which social science researchers used to explain perceived inequities in social interactions generally and not in organizational settings specifically (Rowland & Hall, 2012). Recognizing that employees' sense of justice could be a fundamental component of effective organizational functioning, researchers in organizational psychology began to study employees' perceptions of fairness in relation to employee-organizational variables, such as employee performance and employee satisfaction (Greenberg, 1990). Perceived fairness has become an important construct in the study of organizational justice in the field of organizational psychology, and researchers have used perceived fairness to examine employees' perceptions of equity in an array of organizational settings (Cloutier et al., 2012).

Perceived fairness can influence employees' behaviors (García-Izquierdo et al., 2012), motivation (Mckinney et al., 2013), and judgments about the organizations for which they work (Cojuharenco & Patient, 2013). Perceived fairness involves perceptions of the procedures organizations use to make decisions about outcomes, such as pay raises and promotions, to be just and equitable (Cloutier et al., 2012). Procedural transparency

and perceptions of fairness are crucial to employees' perceptions of organizational justice (García-Izquierdo et al., 2012; Phelan & Lin, 2001; Wan, Sulaiman, & Omar, 2012). In addition, researchers have found links between seniority and fairness in private sector organizations (García-Izquierdo et al., 2012) and between perceptions of fairness and transparency in promotion procedures (Wan et al., 2012). Patten, Caudill, Bor, Thomas, and Anderson (2015) studied organizational justice in relation to organizational change among employees of the Golden County Sheriff's Office in California. Patten et al. found that employees farthest removed from the decision-making process were less likely to support change than those employees hierarchically closer to decision-making processes. Patten et al., however, did not focus on promotion systems. Buker and Dolu (2011) studied supervisee satisfaction with their supervisors in a unique two-track promotion system in Turkish law enforcement agencies. Buker and Dolu found that supervisees were more satisfied with supervisors who were promoted based on specialized police training than supervisors who were promoted based on prior experiences as line officers. Buker and Dolu also did not study employee perceptions fairness of the promotion system.

The purpose of this quantitative comparative quasiexperimental study was to examine whether Louisiana municipal police officers perceive the bona fide seniority promotion system to be fair and, in comparison, whether Louisiana sheriff's deputies perceive the merit-based promotion system to be fair. In addition, this study was designed to investigate whether the independent variables of seniority, transparency, and

knowledge of the promotion systems predict levels of perceived fairness. The study was also designed to examine relationship between the demographic variables of gender, race, and levels of perceived fairness. The study added to literature in organizational psychology on the perceptions of fairness of promotional systems and organizational procedures in public service organizations in general and in law enforcement departments specifically. Chapter 2 provides the literature search strategy used for the study, a discussion of the theoretical foundation of the study, analysis and synthesis of current peer reviewed literature related to perceived fairness, and a chapter summary.

Literature Search Strategy

I used several online databases through the Walden University library to conduct a comprehensive search for relevant peer reviewed material mostly current within five years and to locate the majority of the literature included in this literature review. However, older foundational studies were also included. These databases included Academic Search Premier, EBSCOhost, FirstSearch, PsycARTICLES, PsycINFO, ProQuest, and SAGE. In addition, Google Scholar was also searched with a preference for peer-reviewed journal articles to obtain further full-text articles for this review. It was necessary to use combinations of the following key terms to sharpen and refine my search to obtain studies on organizational justice and perceived fairness in organizational contexts, both outside of and within public service: *Police promotion, employee promotion, promotion systems, procedural justice, organizational justice, distributive justice, perceived fairness, public service, and transparency*. My search revealed that

there is more research on organizational justice and perceived fairness in private sector organizations than on perceived fairness in public sector organizations and law enforcement agencies.

My search revealed that researchers in organizational psychology continue to study both perceived fairness and organizational justice. Recent research has focused on validating existing models of perceived fairness (Cloutier, et al., 2012), forwarding new models (Nicklin, McNall, Cerasoli, Strahan, & Cavanaugh, 2014), and using perceived fairness as a mediating variable (Susanj & Jakopec, 2012). Recent research on organizational justice has included examining the relationship between innovative work behavior and organizational justice (Juin-Lan & Jeng-Hwan, 2015), reconceptualizing organizational justice (Jones & Skarlicki, 2013; Shahzad & Muller, 2016), organizational justice and discretionary work effort (Frenkel & Bednall, 2016), and organizational justice and employee performance appraisal (Dusterhoff, Cunningham, & MacGregor, 2014; Rowland & Hall, 2012). Still, little was known about law enforcement officials' fairness perceptions of their promotions systems.

Theoretical Framework

Organizational justice theory, focusing on procedural justice (García-Izquierdo et al., 2012), served as the theoretical foundation for the study. Organizational justice refers to how employees judge the behaviors and procedures of an organization to be fair and equitable (Cojuharenco & Patient, 2013). Employees' perceptions of organizational justice can influence an array of work behaviors, including productivity, job performance,

job satisfaction, and cooperative work behavior (Cojuharenco & Patient, 2013; García-Izquierdo et al., 2012; Jones & Skarlicki, 2013). Researchers in organizational psychology have used organizational justice to help understand employee perceptions of fairness regarding organizational procedures that can impact employee outcomes and employee-organization relationships (Cloutier et al., 2012).

Organizational justice is a multidimensional construct consisting four types of justice: distributive, procedural, interpersonal or relational, and informational (Colquitt, 2001). Procedural justice refers to perceptions of fairness regarding organizational rules and their application. Distributive justice refers to fairness concerning the results and outcomes of organizational decisions (e.g., those concerning pay raises and promotion). Distributive justice involves whether employees perceive of outcomes as distributed fairly, but not necessarily equally, among individual employees (Cloutier et al., 2012). Interpersonal, or relational, justice involves employee perceptions of fairness regarding the interactions and interpersonal relationships within organizations. Informational justice refers to perceptions of fairness about the information given to appraise employees of organizational rules and explain decisions (Colquitt, 2001).

Procedural justice involves the perceived fairness of the rules, methods, and channels organizations use to make decisions about employee outcomes, such as pay raises and promotion (Cloutier et al., 2012). Perceived fairness and procedural justice in relation to promotion systems are core issues for organizations (García-Izquierdo et al., 2012). In addition, outcomes, such as job performance and organizational commitment,

can be enhanced if employees perceive organizational procedures to be fair and just (Cojuharenco & Patient, 2013; García-Izquierdo et al., 2012; Jones & Skarlicki, 2013; Scott et al., 2014). For example, Wan et al. (2012) studied procedural justice in promotion decisions of managerial staff in nine Malaysian multinational companies and found that perceived procedural injustices in promotion decisions had undesirable influence on career satisfaction, job performance, and employee commitment. Their findings also suggested that perceived procedural injustices in promotion decisions could enhance employees' intent to leave. In another example, Sholihin (2013) studied procedural justice in a police force in the United Kingdom, focusing on inspectors' perceived fairness of their performance evaluations systems and found that perceived fairness was associated with performance evaluation system satisfaction, suggesting that perceived fairness may be associated with promotion system satisfaction as well.

Organizational justice theory, focusing on procedural justice, is appropriate to help understand whether employees perceive seniority-based or merit-based promotion as fair procedural mechanisms. Additionally, a key component of employee perceptions of fairness and procedural justice is transparency (García-Izquierdo et al., 2012; Wan et al., 2012). In their study of procedural justice in promotion decisions of managers in Malaysian companies, Wan et al. (2012) found that transparency was of the utmost importance in promotion decisions and recommended that practitioners develop more transparent procedures for promotion decisions. García-Izquierdo et al. (2012) found that employees in private sector organizations in Spain who perceived promotional

procedures as transparent reported high levels of perceived justice. Additionally, the transparency of organizational procedures can provide organizations with confidence in the validity of employee outcomes, as well as employees with a sense of organizational fairness (Phelan & Lin, 2001). Procedural justice, with a focus on transparency, is an appropriate theoretical foundation to help understand employees' perceptions of fairness of merit- and seniority-based promotions systems.

Promotion Systems

Stemming from research in human resource management (Ferris, Buckley, & Allen, 1992), promotional processes have represented a long-standing area of study for organizational and industrial psychologists. This is because “getting the right person for the right position” (Sells, 1999, p.62) can be crucial for optimal organizational performance and employee satisfaction; however, getting the right person in the right position can be difficult. Finding the right person for the right position has become not only about the best way to promote employees, but the fairest way to promote employees as well (Cojuharenco & Patient, 2013).

Organizations may use one of several types of promotion systems (e.g., seniority-based systems, merit-based systems, up-or-out systems; Phelan & Lin, 2001). The study represented a unique opportunity to examine public service employees' perceived fairness of seniority-based and merit-based promotion systems. Seniority-based promotion refers to a promotion system wherein leaders use employees' length of service or time in an organization as the basis for employee promotion (García-Izquierdo et al.,

2012). The promotion of Louisiana municipal police officers is based on tradition, and seniority holds the greatest weight in promotion decisions of Louisiana municipal police officers. There is no legal way to promote an employee other than by seniority once employees pass a civil service exam. The minimum required score on the exam is 75% out of 100%, and employees are then placed on an eligibility list (West's LA Title 33). For each vacant position, the organization is required to promote the person who is then currently standing highest on the seniority list (West's LA Title 33).

According to the Louisiana Municipal Police Civil Service Law (West's LA Title 33), officers must complete a competency test for each rank of sergeant, lieutenant, captain, and assistant chief of police, the four ranks of seniority promotion. Candidates must pass a multiple choice test of 100-120 questions with a minimum of a 75% in order to be placed on an eligibility list. If they pass the test, they are placed on a promotional eligibility list based on a seniority list. If an individual scores 100% on the test and another scores 75% has a date of hire before the individual who scored 100%, the individual who was hired first receives a promotion regardless of test score. That is bona fide seniority.

Conversely, the East Baton Rouge Sheriff's Office (EBRSO) promotes individuals to comparable ranks of the municipal police based on performance. For the promotion of sergeants and lieutenants, an assessment board is formed, and individuals interested in promotion are interviewed, ranked, and placed in a data bank for possible promotion (Colonel McLeary, EBRSO, personal communication, September 30, 2016). The board is

composed of sheriff's office personnel designated by the elected sheriff to conduct formal interviews with applicants, assess applicants' performance based on job-related criteria, and form promotion files (McLeary, personal communication, September 30, 2016). Captains, majors, and colonels, however, are politically appointed by the sheriff without assessment or written exam (McLeary, personal communication, September 30, 2016).

Ramshaw (2013) argued that structural and operational changes regarding promotion were needed to retain experienced and skilled officers. However, within seniority-based systems, there are no guarantees that employees promoted have acquired the skills and knowledge required to adequately fill their new positions. Seniority-based promotion systems have their advantages and drawbacks. A key benefit of seniority-based promotion systems is that they can help maintain workplace harmony by eliminating perceptions of favoritism and cronyism (Webster & Beehr, 2012). Phelan and Lin (2001) observed that the procedures of seniority-based promotion were typically clear and transparent and led to objectivity in promotion and low turnover. Seniority-based promotion systems eliminate subjective interpretation of employee performance and accomplishments; consequently, employees largely view seniority-based promotion systems as being procedurally just (Wan et al., 2012). However, because seniority-based systems are primarily based on length of service and not employee performance, seniority-based systems may not motivate employee productivity and performance like other promotions systems, such as those based on employee accomplishments and meritorious behavior (McKinney et al., 2013). Additionally, employees may be promoted

through seniority-based systems to positions they cannot adequately fill and whose duties they cannot adequately perform (McKinney et al., 2013).

Seniority-based promotion systems stand in contrast to merit-based systems, wherein leaders base employee promotion on employee achievement and performance (García-Izquierdo et al., 2012). Merit-based systems are further subdivided into absolute and relative systems (Phelan & Lin, 2001). Absolute merit-based promotions systems are those wherein candidates measure up to a predetermined arbitrary level of performance to become eligible for promotion (Phelan & Lin, 2001). Since employees strive for predetermined levels of performance, employees are not in competition with one another (Phelan & Lin, 2001). In relative-based promotion systems, candidates' performances are ranked in relation to the performances of other candidates, and the highest performing candidate is promoted, which is competitive (Phelan & Lin, 2001). Although merit-based systems are one of the most widely accepted ways to encourage and reward positive job performance (Cojuharenco & Patient, 2013), merit-based promotion systems are also susceptible to favoritism, cronyism, and nepotism (Thau & Mitchell, 2010). According to Lind (2001), employees believe organizational decisions, such as those involving promotions, that rest in the hands of others (e.g., supervisors) introduce the possibility of unfairness because such decisions involve some degree of subjective interpretation. Regardless of whatever promotion system an organization uses, employees' perceptions of fairness of organizational procedures and the transparency of those procedures are crucial to employees' sense of organizational justice (García-Izquierdo et al., 2012; Wan

et al., 2012). From a distributional justice perspective, the study may reveal that police officers perceive their seniority-based promotion system to be unfair because it allows for promotion of employees who may be incompetent. However, from an informational justice perspective, the study may also reveal that police officers may be reluctant to change to a merit-based system that may decrease transparency and introduce subjective interpretation of performance into the system.

Recent research on promotion has focused on why employee promotions in merit-based systems often fail (Romaine, 2014) and promotion in relation to cultural understandings of advancement (Ma, Tang, & Yan, 2015). For example, Romaine (2014) invoked the Peter Principle to theorize alternative approaches to merit-based promotion and forward a series of propositions. The Peter Principle is named after Laurence Peter (Peter & Hull, 1969), who theorized that in a hierarchy, employees continue to rise to the level at which their competence no longer suffices. Peter sought to explain why employees were promoted to positions in which their performance deteriorated or declined. Using the Peter Principle, Romaine forwarded a model based on employee-organization fit, or how employees connect with their jobs, contexts, and supervisors. Romaine's model is also based on analyzing antecedents to promotion, such as psychosocial factors to do the job, including extroversion and introversion, and employees' perceptions of fairness of their supervisors. Romaine also illustrated how employees may become stuck at the last promoted level without corrective change and forwarded an employee-organization fit model to help human resource professionals develop fair and

successful promotion within merit-based systems. Romaine, however, did not consider seniority-based promotion systems, which potentially pose the crucial organizational issue of employees being unable to perform the duties of their new positions, due to the continual promotion of the individual based solely on their date of hire.

Researchers have also recently looked at promotion systems in the civil service sector. For example, Ma et al. (2015) studied public employees' perceptions of promotion channels in China as being either merit-based or guanxi-orientated. *Guanxi* refers to the network of personal relationships that individuals forge to leverage social advancement. The researchers observed that while guanxi is an integral component of Chinese culture in general, as the basis of a promotion system it has the potential to undermine organizational commitment and trust. A guanxi-orientated promotion system based on personal relationships has the potential to introduce issues of favoritism, nepotism, and cronyism into promotions systems, even more than merit-based systems.

Cultural beliefs can influence employees' perceptions of fairness of their promotion systems. Ma et al. (2015) collected information via questionnaire from 551 employees working in local governments in the Hunan province of China. The researchers hypothesized that participants would generally perceive merit-based promotion to be fair and guanxi-orientated systems to be unfair. Ma et al. found that approximately 40% of participants perceived merit-based promotion to be fair, while 20% perceived guanxi-orientated systems to be fair. In addition, the researchers also found that 10% perceived both systems to be fair and that 30% perceived neither system

to be fair. This study was important to the present study because it highlighted the influence of interpersonal and cultural dimensions perceived fairness of promotion. Participants of the present study were reluctant to change from a seniority-based promotion system with transparent procedures out of fear of the influence of personal relationships and subjective interpretation of performance in promotion decisions.

Perceived Fairness

Perceived fairness, a commonly used construct in organizational psychology, stems from equity theory (Messick & Sentis, 1983) and is an important component of organizational justice. In organizational psychology, perceived fairness refers to individuals' beliefs that they are treated justly in terms of organizational processes, procedures, policies, and relationships (Cloutier et al., 2012). Researchers have shown that perceived fairness of organizational procedures can influence employees' behaviors (García-Izquierdo et al., 2012), motivation (Mckinney, et al., 2013), and judgments about the organizations for which they work (Cojuharenco & Patient, 2013), all of which can affect employee performance (García-Izquierdo et al., 2012) and employees' relationships to an organization (Qin et al., 2015).

Recently, researchers have validated existing models of perceived fairness (Cloutier et al., 2012), forwarded new models (Nicklin, et al., 2014), and used perceived fairness as a mediating variable (Susanj & Jakopec, 2012). For example, Cloutier et al. (2012) sought to validate Colquitt's (2001) multidimensional conceptualization of perceived fairness in relation to collective bargaining in the context of a Canadian

university union system. For Colquitt, perceived fairness is a construct similar to organizational justice and likewise consists of four types of justice perceptions: procedural, distributive, relational, and informational. Noting a paucity of research on organizational justice in labor relations, Cloutier et al. surveyed 1000 union members of a Canadian university (receiving completed surveys from 296) to examine perceived fairness in the context of collective bargaining. Cloutier et al. used confirmatory factorial analysis and hierarchical regressions to analyze data. Cloutier et al. found support for predictive, divergent, and discriminant validity of Colquitt's model. Additionally, the researchers found that employees differentiated between different kinds of justice. Employees formed justice perceptions about process results (distributive justice), about collective bargaining procedures (procedural justice), about interpersonal relationships (relational justice), and about the information they received about negotiations (informational justice). The study was important for helping to validate perceived fairness as a multidimensional construct that can be used in various organizational settings.

Perceived fairness is an important construct of organizational justice, but interestingly researchers have also studied perceived fairness as mediator of leadership style and organizational commitment, or whether perceived fairness explained the relationship between leadership style and organizational commitment. For example, Susanj and Jakopc (2012) found that perceived fairness mediated the relationship between leadership style, job satisfaction, and organizational commitment. Active leadership style positively predicted job satisfaction when mediated by fairness

perceptions. The researchers used structural equation modeling to analyze data collected from 537 employees from 17 Croatian companies from various sectors. Susanj and Jakopec measured employees' perceptions of fairness in relation to the leadership style of different managers and leaders and found that employees' job satisfaction and organizational commitment depended on employees' levels of perceived fairness. Additionally, findings showed that active leadership styles of supervisors were significantly positively linked to organizational commitment and job satisfaction through employees' perceptions of fairness. Susanj and Jakopec concluded that perceived fairness and organizational justice had positive correlations with active leadership style, increased organizational commitment, and job satisfaction. Active leadership style, defined as vigilance of a leader to ensure organizations standards are met, increased employees' levels of organizational commitment, and employees' job satisfaction increased as levels of perceived fairness increased. The researchers also found that job satisfaction significantly positively contributed to organizational commitment.

Like Cloutier et al. (2012), Nicklin et al. (2014) also sought to validate perceived fairness as a multidimensional construct. However, Nicklin et al. also sought to validate the inclusion of an additional factor, overall justice, to create a five-dimensional framework from Colquitt's (2001) four-dimensional framework. Nicklin et al. observed that distinct individual dimensions may not accurately capture perceptions of justice. *Overall justice* refers to general perceptions of fairness that remain relatively stable and exert influence on individuals' attitudes and behaviors. Individuals use general justice

perceptions when heavy cognitive processes related to workplace responsibilities prevent individuals from processing distinct judgment formations in specific domains. The researchers used confirmatory factorial analysis and hierarchical regressions to analyze data from two studies; one included a sample of college students and the other included a sample of working adults who worked a minimum of 20 hours per week. Comparative analysis revealed support for the five-factor model and that overall justice is likely an independent construct that researchers can use to expand Colquitt's four-dimensional framework.

Organizational Justice

Researchers in organizational psychology have used organizational justice to understand and explain employees' perceptions of fairness regarding organizational procedures and behaviors that can impact employee outcomes and employee-organization relationships (Cojuharenco & Patient, 2013). Organizational justice stems from equity theory (Adams, 1965), which holds that similar cases (e.g., individuals or groups) should be treated similarly or receive similar outcomes (Rowland & Hall, 2012). Despite receiving criticism for its lack of applicability, researchers in organizational psychology began to use equity theory as a theoretical foundation for studying employees' perceptions of fairness in relation to employee-organizational relationships in organizational settings, giving rise the concept of organizational justice (Greenberg, 1990). Colquitt (2001) developed a four-factor model of organizational justice, including procedural, distributive, relational, and informational justice. As noted earlier, procedural

justice involves perceptions of fairness concerning organizational rules and their application. Distributive justice concerns employees' perceptions of fairness regarding the results and outcomes of organizational decisions, and whether employees perceive of outcomes as distributed fairly, not necessarily equally, among individual employees (Cloutier et al., 2012). Relational justice refers to perceptions of fairness regarding the inactions and interpersonal relationships involving organizational decisions. Informational justice refers to perceptions of fairness about the information given to appraise employees of organizational rules and explain decisions (Colquitt, 2001). However, most research has focused on organizational justice in private sector organizations. Research on organizational justice includes study of employee performance appraisal (Dusterhoff et al., 2014; Rowland & Hall, 2012), innovative work behavior (Juin-Lan & Jeng-Hwan, 2015), reconceptualizing organizational justice models (Jones & Skarlicki, 2013; Shahzad & Muller, 2016), and discretionary work effort (Frenkel & Bednall, 2016).

Organizational Justice and Performance Appraisal

Performance appraisal has long been a focus of researchers in organizational psychology and human resource management. Performance appraisal systems represent an important way that organizations can enhance employee performance by evaluating the task accomplishments of individual employees (Harrington & Lee, 2015). However, performance appraisal can have the opposite effect if (a) employees perceive appraisal systems as not being fair and (b) supervisors use appraisal meetings to manage employee

performance and encourage employee engagement simultaneously (Rowland & Hall, 2012). Rowland and Hall (2012) observed that appraisals have become almost universal in modern organizations and that it is crucial that employees perceive appraisals as fair to help ensure organizational commitment.

Rowland and Hall (2012) looked at organizational justice and performance appraisal, which has implications for promotion and organizational advancement, in two private sector manufacturing and service companies. Rowland and Hall's study consisted of a mixed methods investigation of organizational justice in two large service and manufacturing companies. The researchers analyzed organizational documents and surveyed both managers and employees and found that appraisal interviews often led to perceived injustice because of tensions stemming from supervisors attempting to use appraisal sessions to simultaneously manage employee performance and encourage employee engagement. The researchers concluded that attempts to achieve both aims (e.g., evaluation and development) are incompatible and that efforts on the part of supervisors to develop and guide employees are undercut by perceptions of mistrust and unfairness when supervisors also negatively evaluate employee performance. Employees seeking to explain negative performance evaluations may rationalize, accurately or inaccurately, that negative evaluation was the result of an unfair evaluation leading to employees mistrusting their supervisors.

Performance appraisal may also have implications for employee promotion. Performance appraisal is an evaluation mechanism focused on developing employees

through feedback on performance, which is an integral component of employee promotion. Dusterhoff et al. (2014) also studied the effects of organizational justice on employee performance appraisal satisfaction. The researchers hypothesized that there would be a direct relationship between perceived organizational justice and appraisal satisfaction. Dusterhoff et al. surveyed 71 government employees using a five-point Likert scale similar to the one used for the present study in police promotions.

Similar to Rowland and Hall (2012), Dusterhoff et al. (2014) found that perceived fairness did affect appraisal satisfaction and, consequently, concluded that employees' reactions to their performance appraisals would be based, in part, on whether employees perceive the appraisal process and its procedures to be fair. The study supported the construct of procedural justice as an important part of organizational justice and raises the question for the present study about what employees perceive is justifiable within the field of law enforcement promotion. In addition, what is perceived as acceptable may differ between organizations, especially between organizations with different promotional systems, such as those with seniority- and merit-based systems. Leadership styles and managerial hierarchy are much different in municipal police departments than they are in sheriff's offices, which may be linked to employees' perceptions of promotion systems.

Organizational Justice and Innovative Behavior

Researchers have also studied organization justice in relation to innovative work behavior and organizational support. For example, Juin-Lan and Jeng-Hwan (2015)

investigated the relationships between three components of organizational justice (distributive, procedural, and interactional justice), employees' innovative behavior, and organizational support in hospitality industry workers in Taiwan. Perceived organizational support of employees can be important to organizational success and positive organizational outcomes (Harrington & Lee, 2015). Additionally, innovative behavior involves flexibility and creativity when meeting challenges associated with industry change that can enhance organizational performance (Juin-Lan & Jeng-Hwan). The target population of Juin-Lan and Jeng-Hwan's study were hospitality industry workers within a specific organization known as the Landers Group. The researchers collected data via questionnaires from 263 employees and found that perceived organizational justice was significantly positively related to innovative behavior, and that organizational support moderated the relationship between organizational justice and innovative behavior. The researchers concluded that employees who perceive they are supported and treated fairly by their organizations feel more comfortable and trusted in thinking and acting creatively on the job. Not only can organizational justice be important to employees' sense of satisfaction and motivation, the findings of Juin-Lan and Jeng-Hwan's study indicated that organizational justice could be important to work behaviors that involve employee innovation, flexibility, and creativity when meeting work-related challenges.

Reconceptualizing Organizational Justice

Researchers have almost exclusively focused on fairness perceptions at one point in time; however, in reality, fairness perceptions can change and evolve over time as individuals encounter new workplace experiences (Jones & Skarlicki, 2013; Schminke, Arnaud, & Taylor, 2015). Consequently, researchers in organizational psychology have recently focused on reconceptualizing organizational justice models. For example, observing that fairness perceptions can change and evolve over time, Jones and Skarlicki (2013) forwarded a dynamic model of organizational justice that allows researchers to account for change in fairness perceptions over time. The researchers theorized organizational justice as involving a cyclical sense-making process. In this process employees' cognitive processing and judgment formation of organizational events (e.g., promotions, pay raises, etc.) are guided by perceptions about the organization. However, individuals' judgments of events may alter individuals' knowledge about the organization, which, subsequently, may have implications for individuals' perceptions of fairness. Such a model might be suitable for the study of seniority because seniority is based on an employees' time in an organization.

In reconceptualizing organizational justice, researchers have also provided insight into connections between organizational values and organizational justice climates. Schminke et al. (2015), for example, examined the connection between values and justice at the organizational level rather than at the individual level. An organizational justice climate involves perceptions of fairness shared by employees of their treatment by

organizational authorities (Schminke et al., 2015). Schminke et al. observed that the overall justice of the organization is derived from accepted organizational norms. Additionally, the collective acceptance of values by multiple individuals and diverse personnel is conceptualized to be related to, yet distinct from, individual perception and values. Therefore, an organizational justice climate is composed of a collective of individual employee perceptions (Schminke, et al., 2015).

The sample of Schminke et al.'s (2015) study included 619 employees who ranged across 101 private sector organizations and 114 departments in the southeastern United States. The sample was measured in three dimensions, first with a five-point Likert scale, a procedural justice climate scale, and a 6-item overall justice scale. The researchers in part attempted to address the gap in the literature on organizational justice climates by removing the specific individual interpretations of organizational justice and direct their investigation toward the influence of shared employee values. The researchers found that organizational values influenced organizational justice climates and recommended more study on the origin of the collective values of organizations. Collective moral values had a significant positive effect on overall justice climate ($B = .67$) and on procedural justice climate ($B = .72$). The study was important to the present study because participants accepting the current promotion systems as an organizational norm based on organizational values may consider the promotion system beyond their individual sense of justice or as an unalterable organizational feature.

Alternatively, Shahzad and Muller (2016) forwarded a model of organizational justice integrated with organizational compassion, a model they dubbed compassionate organizational justice. The researchers theorized that the ethics of compassion and those of justice overlap in organizational contexts. Without compassion, organizational life has the potential to be miserable, and without justice, employees perceive organizations to be unfair. Both ways of perceiving of organizations have the potential to diminish employee organizational commitment and job satisfaction. Compassion also introduces the concept of caring for the organizational outcomes of others into the construct, and has the potential to expand how employees make judgments about their own organizational outcomes in relation to the outcomes of others (Shahzad & Muller, 2016). Researchers, however, have yet to test Shahzad and Muller's new compassionate organizational justice model.

Organizational Justice and Discretionary Work Effort

Researchers have also studied organizational justice in relation to discretionary work effort, and discretionary work is important in policing because of the physical distance between officers and supervisors. Discretionary work effort can also be an important factor in organizations maintaining competitive advantage, which may be linked to employees' sense of organizational justice (Rowland & Hall, 2012). Frenkel and Bednall (2016) examined how fairness perceptions related to discretionary work effort, defined as employee effort above the expected level and extant custom. Working above one's expectations can often be motivated through inducements from organizations or

supervisors. However, the researchers sought to investigate whether perceptions of organizational justice related to employees working above their expected levels. Frenkel and Bednall surveyed 201 bank employees and using structural equation modeling found that levels of discretionary work effort were significantly positively related to employees' sense of procedural and interactional justice. The findings support those of previous literature that showed that organizational justice, including the components of procedural and interactional justice, can lead to positive employee-organization outcomes and relationships.

Organizational Justice in the Public Sector

Although most research on organizational justice has focused on private sector organizations (Enoksen, 2015), researchers have also begun to focus on organizational justice in the public sector as well. In an early study of organizational justice in law enforcement, Farmer, Beehr, and Love (2003) found that applicants selected for undercover assignments reported higher levels of distributive and procedural justice perceptions than those applicants not selected for undercover work. In addition, Basar and Unsal (2015) studied teachers' organizational justice perceptions in relation to organizational identification and intention to quit among public school teachers in the school district of Ankara, Turkey. Through random sampling, the researchers collected data from questionnaires completed by 292 teachers who participated in the study.

Through correlation analysis, the researchers found a positive relationship between organizational justice perceptions and organizational commitment, suggesting

that fair organizational practices strengthened teachers' commitment to their institutions. In addition, distributive and relational, or interpersonal, justice perceptions were negatively related to teachers' intentions to quit. Basar and Unsal concluded that teachers felt committed to their institution because of the perception that resources were distributed fairly and that teachers felt they were treated courteously and with respect. Because of this fair treatment, teachers did not intend to quit their positions. However, Basar and Unsal's study was important for showing the relevance of organizational justice to employees' perceptions of fairness in relation to the practices and procedures of public service institutions.

Enoksen (2015) sought to validate Colquitt's (2001) four-factor Organizational Justice Scale for use in the public health sector. Enoksen observed that many previous studies examining Colquitt's four dimensions of organizational justice occurred in the private sector. The sampling frame of Enoksen's study consisted of 224 employees in five different public health clinics in Norway. Specifically, Enoksen tested the validity of Colquitt's scale, consisting of distributive, procedural, interpersonal (i.e., relational), and informational dimensions. The researcher also modified Colquitt's model into two three-factor models by combining informational justice with interpersonal justice in one instance and with procedural justice in the other. Through confirmatory factor analysis, Enoksen found that results supported the use Colquitt's four-factor model over the modified three-factors models in the public health sector. Enoksen concluded that more research is necessary on organizational justice in the public health sector. Furthermore,

more research is necessary in on organizational justice in the public sector in general, and Enoksen's findings suggest that Colquitt's four-factor model may be a good fit for further study in this area.

Observing that few studies have focused on organizational justice in sheriff's departments, Patten et al. (2015) studied organizational justice in relation to organizational change in response to California Assembly Bill 109. The bill involved revisions to the state's Electronic Custody Supervision (ECS) program that affected line-level personnel at state and county levels and deputies directly. With the passing of Assembly Bill 109, felony criminals who would have been sent to state prisons would go to county jails. As result, deputies involved in the ECS program were now required to supervise more serious offenders than they previously were. However, Assembly Bill 109 was implemented without administration seeking input from the employees who were directly affected. According to Patten et al., the study was driven by a clear sense of organizational justice.

Patten et al. (2015) surveyed 229 employees of the Golden County Sheriff's Office using a five-point Likert Scale designed to measure the perception of fairness in regards to organizational justice based on the lack of decision-making input from personnel. The potential organizational implications included issues about the types of channels, procedures, and authorizations used for change implementation. Patten et al. used two factors of organizational justice (procedural and relational, or interactional, justice) and found that these justice factors were nonsignificant. However, they did find a

connection between change support and organizational hierarchy. Employees farthest removed from the decision-making process were less likely to support change than those employees hierarchically closer to decision-making processes. The researchers concluded that unilateral decision making regarding organizational change may be an issue of organizational justice for line-level employees; however, more research is needed confirm this.

Researchers have also studied organizational justice as a determinant of organizational citizenship behavior among civil service employees. For example, Ayinde and Oladele (2016) examined the connection between organizational justice (including distributive, procedural, and interactional, or relational, justice) and organizational citizenship behavior. The researchers surveyed a sample of 422 civil servants from four ministries in Ekiti State, Nigeria. The four ministries included those of Culture, Arts, and Tourism; Health; Justice; and Youth and Sports. Using multiple regression analysis, Ayinde and Oladele found that organizational justice and organizational citizenship behavior were linked. The researchers concluded that organizational psychologists, as well as human resource and personnel managers, should pay close mind to employees' sense of organizational justice in relation to organizational citizenship and employee-organization relationships. The study was important for showing connections between organizational justice and employee-organization relationships in civil service employees, which researchers had shown in private sector organizations (Cojuharenco & Patient, 2013; García-Izquierdo et al., 2012; Jones & Skarlicki, 2013). Examining

perceived fairness and organizational justice in promotions systems of police officers and sheriff's deputies in the present led to information on factors connected to employee-organization relationships in law enforcement employees.

Procedural Justice

Procedural justice is an important component of organizational justice that can be key to employees' sense of fairness. The transparency and formalization of performance evaluation procedures can greatly influence perceptions of fairness of the means and procedures used to determine the amount and kinds of reward or compensation, including promotion, that employees receive (Sholihin, 2013; Wan et al., 2012). Procedural justice perceptions can also lead to increased employee satisfaction, performance, and organizational commitment (Sholihin, 2013). Procedural justice is also important to government, legal institutions, and law enforcement agencies because the internal procedural mechanisms of these organizations may be seen, accurately or inaccurately, as a reflection of how these organizations interact with the public, thereby potentially influencing the public trust (Wan et al., 2012).

Recent research shows that procedural justice is the most important component of organizational justice that can influence organizational commitment (Cojuharenco & Patient, 2013) and an array of employee behaviors (García-Izquierdo et al., 2012; Jones & Skarlicki, 2013). García-Izquierdo et al. (2012) measured the workers' perceptions of promotional systems and found that seniority and transparency, or the formalization of procedures, predicted perceptions of fairness in their study of employees and supervisors

of 31 different private sector organizations in Spain. García-Izquierdo et al.'s (2012) finding supports fairness heuristic theory (Lind, 2001), which holds that individuals perceive seniority to be fair because seniority involves clear-cut or transparent criteria for advancement, whereas merit-based promotion is perceived as being potentially unfair because it involves the evaluation of employees' performance by superiors. According to fairness heuristic theory (Lind, 2001), individuals believe decisions, such as those involving promotions, resting on the subjective interpretation of others raises the possibility of unfairness.

Wan et al. (2012) studied procedural justice in promotion decisions of managerial staff in nine Malaysian multinational companies. The sample included 28 managers with 12-25 years of managing experience. Through in-depth interviews, the researchers found that perceived procedural injustices in promotion decisions had undesirable influence on career satisfaction, job performance, and employee commitment. The findings also suggested that perceived procedural injustices in promotion decisions could enhance employees' intent to leave. The researchers concluded that employees are discontented when they perceived that the procedures for promotion are unfair, and that procedural justice is crucial to retain satisfied and committed employees. The present study revealed that although police officers perceived promotion based on seniority to be fair, police officers may nevertheless be resistant to change because of embedded tradition and their perceptions that merit-based promotion opens the door for increased unfairness in the form of favoritism and subjective interpretation of employee performance.

Sholihin (2013) studied procedural justice in a police force in the United Kingdom, focusing on inspectors' perceived fairness of their performance evaluations systems. Sholihin surveyed 112 detective inspectors and chief detective inspectors, and through structural equation analysis found that perceived fairness was associated with performance evaluation system satisfaction. Further analysis revealed that trust mediated the relationship between procedural justice and perceived fairness of performance evaluations systems. Sholihin concluded it was important that employees perceive their performance evaluation systems as fair and transparent. In addition, Sholihin also concluded that it was integral that employees trust their supervisors to be objective when evaluating employee performance.

Distributive Justice

Distributive justice is one of the more important components of organizational justice, which stems from equity theory (Adams, 1965) and involves social comparison (Suls & Wheeler, 2012). Social comparison refers to seeking out and using information about other people's standings for the purpose of self-assessment (Suls & Wheeler, 2012). Distributive justice is a type of social justice wherein individuals feel they get their "just desert" in the socioeconomic sphere (Guoqing, 2016, p. 61). Social comparison as it relates to distributive justice in organizational psychology is based on perceptions of fairness of the distribution of organizational resources and employee outcomes (Guoqing, 2016). Employees make fairness judgments in part based on outcomes in relation to the outcomes of other employees (Suls & Wheeler, 2012). Perceived distributive justice

among employees of an organization can play an important part in the success of the organization (Suls & Wheeler, 2012). Distributive justice is felt in the workplace when workers perceive outcomes such as pay raises, bonuses, promotions, and other rewards to be distributed based fairly and equitably (Kim, Edwards, & Shapiro, 2014).

Kim et al. (2014) have recently studied distributive justice in various companies East Asia. Kim et al. (2014) surveyed 393 employees of large urban companies in China, Japan, and South Korea to test social comparison and equity they in distributive justice. The researchers used a referent outcome model based on the employees' perceptions of fairness in relation to other employees with similar experience and job responsibilities and found that participants did base their sense of fairness of employee work outcomes on other employees with similar experience and job responsibilities. Kim et al. also found that employees perceived receiving fewer rewards than others at similar levels as unfair. Seniority was not a focus of the study, and in relation to the present study, it was interesting to see whether participants perceive seniority as unfair because seniority is a system of promotion wherein employees have the same requirements (e.g., time in the organization) but may have differing job responsibilities.

Summary

Organizational justice theory served as the theoretical foundation to examine employees' perceived fairness within two separate promotional systems within the profession of law enforcement. Procedural transparency and perceptions of fairness are crucial to employees' ideas of organizational and procedural justice (García-Izquierdo et

al., 2012; Phelan & Lin, 2001; Wan et al., 2012). Researchers have also revealed links between seniority and fairness (García-Izquierdo et al., 2012) and between perceptions of fairness and transparency in promotion procedures (Wan et al., 2012) among employees in private sector organizations. Even though seniority-based promotion may allow employees to be promoted who may not be qualified for promotion, employees may still perceive seniority-based promotion systems as fair because seniority typically involves clear-cut, transparent promotional procedures.

Although researchers have focused on organizational justice and perceived fairness in private sector organizations, there is some research on organizational justice and perceived fairness in public sector organizations as well. Research on organizational justice and perceived fairness among public sector employees has included investigation of fairness perceptions of law enforcement officials in being chosen for undercover assignments (Farmer et al., 2003) and of administration making policy decision without the input of line-level employees (Patten et al., 2015). Recent research in the public sector has also included examination of fairness perceptions in relation to organizational identification and intention to quit among public school teachers (Basar & Unsal, 2015) and connections between organizational justice and organizational citizenship behavior in civil servants in Nigerian ministries (Ayinde & Oladele, 2016). Clearly, researchers in organizational psychology are concerned with organizational justice and perceived fairness among public sector employees; however, there is a lack of research on organizational justice and perceived fairness in relation to the promotional systems used

in law enforcement. The present study was designed to target and compare two promotional systems within Louisiana law enforcement. Findings from the present study can add to the literature in organizational psychology on employee work behavior and judgment formation in relation to organizational procedures and outcomes, and offer potential avenues for further research.

Chapter 3 includes a discussion of the methodology to be used for the present study. The methodology includes the research design and rationale; population, sampling, and sampling procedures; procedures for recruitment, participation, and data collection; as well as an overview of instrumentation and operationalization of constructs. Chapter 3 also includes discussions of the data analysis plan, potential threats to validity, and ethical concerns associated with the study.

Chapter 3: Research Method

Introduction

Perceived fairness is a well-known construct in organizational psychology (Jones & Skarlicki, 2013), and has become a key component of organizational justice theories to help explain work behavior in relation to organizational procedures (Cojuharenco & Patient, 2013). Especially important to organizations is the perception of fairness of promotion procedures (García-Izquierdo et al., 2012). Perceptions of fairness in promotion can influence an employee's sense of organizational justice (i.e., how employees judge the behaviors and procedures of an organization to be fair and equitable; Cojuharenco & Patient, 2013), which can affect employee performance (García-Izquierdo et al., 2012) and employees' relationship to the organization (Qin et al., 2015). In public service organizations, such as police departments, negative perceptions of fairness and organizational procedures can be detrimental to departmental effectiveness and negatively influence how the organization serves the general public (Qin et al., 2015). However, research was lacking on perceived fairness of promotion systems in public service organizations, including law enforcement agencies. The law enforcement profession has a long history, and police departments often operate within entrenched traditions, using established procedures (Karp & Stenmark, 2011). Consequently, change in law enforcement agencies may be difficult to achieve if agencies perceive new procedures are at odds with established ways of doing things (Karp & Stenmark, 2011). Ramshaw (2013) argued that structural and operational changes regarding promotion

were needed to retain experienced and skilled officers. However, there was little research on how law enforcement officials perceive either seniority-based or merit-based promotional systems to determine whether change may be needed. In addition, information regarding the influence of demographic variables, such as race and gender, on perceptions of fairness in law enforcement agencies was also lacking.

The focus of this study was Louisiana municipal police officers and Louisiana sheriff's deputies. Louisiana municipal police officers are governed by a strict set of civil service laws that pertain to their employment status, and, currently, all line rank promotions for Louisiana Municipal Police Officers are based on bona fide seniority (LA R.S. 33, 2016). Bona fide seniority refers to a system in which length of service is the primary criterion on which employee promotion is based for municipal police. Louisiana sheriff's deputies, on the other hand, are promoted based on a merit-based system. Prior to this current study, there were no data on the perception of perceived fairness of Louisiana Municipal Police Officers with regard to the bona fide seniority system, or on whether Louisiana sheriff's deputies perceive the merit-based system of promotion to be fair. Basic demographic information and factors that influence perceptions of fairness in these groups are also lacking. Information collected from this study added to understanding of the psychology of judgement formation in relation to organizational procedures, such as promotion, in public service organizations.

The purpose of this quantitative comparative quasiexperimental study was to examine whether Louisiana municipal police officers perceive the bona fide seniority

promotion system to be fair and, in comparison, whether Louisiana sheriff's deputies perceive the merit-based promotion system to be fair. In addition, this study was designed to investigate whether the independent variables of seniority, transparency, and knowledge of the promotion systems, in addition to the demographic variables of gender and race, predict levels of perceived fairness. This study provided new comparative information on the seniority-based promotion system that has left many unanswered questions in relation to employee perceptions of organizational justice and perceived fairness. In addition, the study added to literature in organizational psychology on the perceptions of fairness of organizational procedures in public service organizations.

This chapter contains the details of the research design and the methodological issues of the study. First, a discussion of the research design and rationale is presented, followed by descriptions of the population, sample, data collection, and instrumentation. Then, the plan for data analysis is described. This is followed by discussions of validity and ethical issues relevant to the study. Finally, this chapter concludes with a summary.

Research Design and Rationale

The independent variables in this study were the type of promotion system (seniority-based or merit-based), knowledge of the promotion system, seniority, perceived transparency, officer race, and officer gender. The dependent variable in this study was perceived fairness.

A quantitative comparative quasiexperimental design was selected for this study. A quantitative approach is appropriate when goal of the researcher is to investigate the

relationships among numerically and objectively measurable concepts (Howell, 2010). The independent variables (i.e., type of promotion system, knowledge of the promotion system, seniority, perceived transparency, officer race, and officer gender) and the dependent variable (i.e., perceived fairness) in this study can be objectively measured and quantified; therefore, a quantitative approach is appropriate for this study.

A comparative quasiexperimental design is appropriate because one of the goals of the researcher is to determine if officers in a seniority-based promotion system differ from officers in a merit-based promotion system in terms of perceived fairness. Because the research questions involve assessing differences between groups, a comparative design is appropriate for this study. Specifically, a quasiexperimental design is appropriate to compare preexisting groups that are not randomly assigned. A true experiment requires random assignment of participants to groups (Pallant, 2013). In this study, the participants were not randomly assigned to one promotion system or the other. Because the participants could not be randomly assigned to groups, this study is considered a quasiexperimental study.

Population

The general population under investigation includes law enforcement officers who are promoted by either merit or seniority-based systems. The first target sampling frame is municipal police officers in the Baton Rouge Police Department that operates using seniority based promotions. The Baton Rouge Police Department consists of 646 sworn law enforcement officers (Baton Rouge Police Department, Personnel Bureau).

The second target sampling frame for survey is law enforcement officers in the East Baton Rouge Sheriff's Office (EBRSO), Baton Rouge, Louisiana. The EBRSO consists of 780 sworn law enforcement officers (EBRSO personnel bureau). Both organizational populations were sampled by electronic survey. The first organization provided a sample of Louisiana Municipal Police Officers from the Baton Rouge Police Department (BRPD), Baton Rouge, Louisiana. The BRPD is a large municipal police department within the Capitol City of Louisiana. The Officers are governed by Louisiana Civil Service Law (West's LA Title 33), and provided survey data for the first measure of this study. The second organization provided a sample of Louisiana Deputies from the East Baton Rouge Sheriff's Office (EBRSO), Baton Rouge, Louisiana. The Deputies within the EBRSO were surveyed in regards to the merit based promotional system that is ultimately determined unilaterally by the Sheriff of East Baton Rouge, Louisiana.

Sampling and Sampling Procedures

The sampling method utilized in this study was availability sampling. An availability sample is appropriate when a probability sampling method (e.g., random sampling) is not feasible. For this study, I was unable to randomly sample from all law enforcement officers in the population of interest. Therefore, an availability sample of accessible law enforcement officers was appropriate. During recruitment, all potential participants were informed that the study is voluntary, and that their decision to participate (or not participate) would have no effect on their job status.

The survey was a convenience sample with the target population receiving electronic mail containing the entire survey package, a link to take the survey, and the method to submit at the end of the electronic survey. The lists of potential candidates were determined by tenure and provided by internal personnel at each organization after written permission was obtained by the Sheriff of East Baton Rouge, Louisiana and the Mayor of Baton Rouge, Louisiana.

Municipal law enforcement Officers and Sheriff's Deputies with 0-30 years of tenure were targeted. Individuals with more than 30 years of experience were excluded. All nonsworn personnel to include Jailors, Police Communication Officers, Dispatchers, 911 Operators, and Administrative personnel were excluded.

A power analysis was conducted using G*Power 3.1.9.2 in order to determine the minimum sample size required to obtain statistically valid results. The power analysis was conducted based on a MANOVA with two dependent variables assuming a medium effect size, a power level of .80, and a significance level of .05. The results of the power analysis showed that the minimum required sample size for this test is 158 participants, with 79 participants from each type of promotion system.

Procedures for Recruitment, Participation, and Data Collection

Demographic criteria covered the full range of employment diversity within each organization. The demographic variables collected included gender, race, and tenure. Prior to data collection, a letter of cooperation was obtained from each organization that indicated their agreement to assist in recruitment. Internal consultants were determined

by the approving authorities, and those consultants were given the guidelines of the survey. The survey was delivered once the internal consultants provided the electronic mail addresses of the target population to the data recovery provider.

Informed consent for the survey was provided at the beginning of the electronic mail survey invitation and consisted of pertinent information for participants to make an informed decision to participate or not participate in the study. Specifically, the informed consent included information about the purpose of the study, what the participants were asked to do, and a description of participants' rights, including the right to withdraw from the study at any time. Participants also were informed that the results of the study would be made available to them once the study is completed. The first page of the study survey contained an item that participants answered to indicate whether or not they agreed to participate after reading the informed consent.

The data were gathered through an online survey using Survey Monkey distributed to participants via electronic mail. When participants first accessed the survey, they were reminded to read the informed consent information provided in the invitation e-mail before they answered an item that indicated whether or not they agreed to participate. If the participants agreed to participate, they were then presented with the survey containing study instruments (see Appendix A for the study instruments and Appendix B for permissions to use the instruments).

After all survey questions were completed, the participants were presented with a debriefing message. The debriefing message described the intent of use for the data, just

as the introduction had already described. Details about the purpose of the study were explained and participants were thanked for their time.

Instrumentation and Operationalization of Constructs

Demographic Information

The demographic information collected in this study included gender, race, rank, and tenure (i.e., seniority). Gender was a dichotomous variable where participants were asked to indicate if they are “male” or “female”. Participants were also asked to choose which of the following categories best describes their race: White/Caucasian, Black/African American, Asian, Native American/Alaskan Native, Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander, or Other. Finally, participants were asked to indicate their current rank, as well as the number of years of tenure they have in their current organization.

Organizational Justice Questionnaire

The Organizational Justice Questionnaire created by Colquitt (2001) was used to measure perceived fairness (see Appendix A). The questionnaire consists of 20 items that are rated on a 5-point Likert scale where 1 (*to a small extent*) and 5 (*to a large extent*). The instrument measures facets of organizational justice including distributive, procedural, interpersonal, and informational justice. The item responses for each facet are averaged to create composite scores that operationalize each construct. For this study, perceived fairness was operationalized using the procedural justice subscale that includes seven items. Colquitt found high inter-item reliability coefficients for the

procedural subscale across multiple studies (ranging from .78 to .93) and conducted confirmatory factor analyses to demonstrate validity. Adequate model fit was demonstrated for the four facets and procedural justice items loaded onto their respective factor with loadings ranging from .35 to .85 across multiple studies (Colquitt, 2001).

Transparency

Transparency was measured using a single item ordinal-level measure created by García-Izquierdo et al. (2012; see Appendix A). For this item, participants are asked to indicate how transparent the criteria for most promotions in their company are by selecting from one of the following choices: (a) “Published in the collective agreement”, (b) “Published, so employees may know them”, (c) “Partially hidden, employees know them only if they are connected with the decision makers”, and (d) “Totally hidden, nobody knows until after the decision is made.” Because this is a single-item measure, inter-item reliability is not applicable. However, García-Izquierdo et al. demonstrated validity of the measure through correlations with related constructs, including procedural justice, supervisor’s decisions, competence assessment methods, and experience evaluations.

Knowledge of Organizational Procedures Scale

Knowledge of the promotion system was measured using the Knowledge of Organizational Procedures Scale developed by Schappe (1996; see Appendix A). This instrument consists of eight items that are rated on a 5-point Likert scale. Participants are asked to rate the extent that they are knowledgeable or familiar with the procedures their

organization uses to make decisions about a given procedure (e.g., determining pay raises). The responses to the items are averaged to create a composite score representing procedural knowledge. Schappe found high inter-item reliability for the instrument (.94). Validity was demonstrated through correlations with related constructs, including procedural justice, job satisfaction, and organizational commitment.

Data Analysis Plan

The survey data was downloaded as an electronic spreadsheet file and imported into SPSS 22.0 for data analysis. Prior to the analysis, the data was checked for missing cases and the presence of outliers. Any participants missing large numbers of responses (i.e., greater than 50% of the survey questions) were excluded from the data analysis. All other participants with missing data were included in the analyses for which they provided complete data. The presence of outliers was tested using standardized values. According to Tabachnick and Fidell (2013), scores with standardized values greater than 3.29 or less than -3.29 should be considered outliers and removed from the data.

Descriptive statistics were computed and reported for the study variables. Means and standard deviations were computed for continuous variables. Frequencies and percentages were reported for categorical variables. Additionally, a Cronbach's alpha reliability analysis was conducted to assess the inter-item reliability of each study subscale. According to George and Mallery (2016), Cronbach's alpha coefficients of .7 or greater indicate acceptable reliability.

The research questions and hypotheses that were addressed in the data analysis are as follows:

Research Question 1: Do officers in a seniority-based promotion system and officers in a merit-based promotion system differ in their perceived fairness of the promotion system?

H₀1: On average, officers in a seniority-based promotion system and officers in a merit-based promotion system do not significantly differ in their perceived fairness of their promotion system as measured by the Organizational Justice Questionnaire (Colquitt, 2001).

H_a1: On average, officers in a seniority-based promotion system and officers in a merit-based promotion system significantly differ in their perceived fairness of their promotion system as measured by the Organizational Justice Questionnaire (Colquitt, 2001).

Research Question 2: Are there differences in knowledge of the promotion system and perceived fairness of the promotion system based on demographic characteristics (i.e., race, gender, and rank) and type of promotion system (i.e., seniority or merit-based)?

H₀2: There are no significant differences in knowledge of the promotion system and perceived fairness of the promotion system, as measured by the Organizational Justice Questionnaire (Colquitt, 2001), based on demographic characteristics (i.e., race, gender, and rank) and type of promotion system (i.e., seniority or merit-based).

H_{a2}: There are significant differences in knowledge of the promotion system and perceived fairness of the promotion system, as measured by the Organizational Justice Questionnaire (Colquitt, 2001), based on demographic characteristics (i.e., race, gender, and rank) and type of promotion system (i.e., seniority or merit-based).

Research Question 3: Do type of promotion system (i.e., seniority or merit-based), knowledge of the promotion system, seniority, and perceived transparency predict perceived fairness of promotion system?

H₀₃: Type of promotion system (i.e., seniority or merit-based), knowledge of the promotion system, seniority, and perceived transparency do not significantly predict perceived fairness of promotion system as measured by the Organizational Justice Questionnaire (Colquitt, 2001).

H_{a3}: Type of promotion system (i.e., seniority or merit-based), knowledge of the promotion system, seniority, and perceived transparency significantly predict perceived fairness of promotion system as measured by the Organizational Justice Questionnaire (Colquitt, 2001).

In order to address Research Question 1, an independent samples *t*-test was conducted. An independent samples *t* test is an appropriate statistical analysis when the goal of the research is to determine if two groups differ on a single continuous dependent variable. In this analysis, the groups being compared were the seniority-based promotion group and the merit-based promotion group. The dependent variable was perceived fairness. Prior to the analysis, the assumptions of normality and homogeneity of variance

were tested. Normality means that the dependent variable is normally distributed. This was tested using a Kolmogorov-Smirnov (KS) test. Homogeneity of variance means that the variability in the dependent variable is equal across groups. This was tested using Levene's test. The *t*-test was evaluated using a significance level of .05.

In order to address Research Question 2, a multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) was conducted. A MANOVA is appropriate when the goal of the research is to determine if there are differences on multiple continuous dependent variables based on one or more categorical independent variables. In this analysis, the independent variables were race, gender, rank, and type of promotion system. The dependent variables were knowledge of the promotion system and perceived fairness. Prior to the analysis, the assumptions of normality, homogeneity of variance, and homogeneity of covariance were tested. The assumptions of normality and homogeneity of variance were tested using KS tests and Levene's test respectively. Homogeneity of covariance means that the covariance between the dependent variables are equal across levels of the independent variables. This was tested using Box's M test, per Tabachnick and Fidell's (2013) recommendations for assumption testing. If the MANOVA results were significant at the .05 level, univariate analyses of variance (ANOVAs) associated with the analysis were interpreted (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2013).

In order to address Research Question 3, a multiple linear regression was conducted. Multiple linear regression is an appropriate analysis when the goal of the research is to determine if multiple continuous or categorical independent variables

predict a single continuous dependent variable. The independent variables in this analysis were type of promotion system (i.e., seniority or merit-based), knowledge of the promotion system, seniority, and perceived transparency. The dependent variable was perceived fairness. The standard method of variable entry was used, meaning that all independent variables were entered into the regression simultaneously. Prior to the interpreting the significance tests, the assumptions of normality, homoscedasticity, and absence of multicollinearity were tested. Normality means that the regression residuals are normally distributed. This was tested by examination of a normal P-P plot. Homoscedasticity means that the data are equally distributed around the regression line. This was tested by examination of a scatterplot of residuals versus predicted values. Absence of multicollinearity means that the independent variables are not too highly correlated with each other. This was tested using Variance Inflation Factors (VIF). Stevens (2009) suggests that VIF values greater than 10 indicate the presence of multicollinearity. The overall regression model was evaluated using a significance level of .05. If the overall model was significant, the individual predictors (independent variables) were interpreted.

Threats to Validity

External validity refers to the extent that the results of the study may be applied to other populations or contexts. Because this study only included law enforcement officers in merit-based and seniority-based promotion systems, the results of this study may not generalize to law enforcement officers who work under different promotion systems.

The results from these surveys could also be seen as unilateral, rendering them interesting but nonapplicable to civilian promotional systems.

Internal validity refers to the extent that the results of the study are attributable to the independent variables under investigation as opposed to confounding factors not controlled by the researcher. Internal validity could be jeopardized if the introduction to the survey does not adequately convey that the survey is for scientific research purposes and not a solid intent to permanently change an existing promotional system that the target is relying upon, or expecting in their career path. Participants were assured that their responses would be anonymous and kept confidential in order to increase the likelihood that the participants would respond truthfully to the survey questions. This also helped reduce the likelihood that participants would refuse to participate or withdraw from the study out of concern about potential consequences for their jobs.

Statistical conclusion validity refers to the extent that the results of the data analysis are statistically valid. To help ensure statistical conclusion validity, a power analysis was conducted to determine the minimum sample size needed to obtain valid results.

Ethical Procedures

IRB approval was obtained prior to conducting this study. Special considerations were made prior to the approval to move the target population for the Municipal Police from Shreveport, Louisiana to Baton Rouge, Louisiana due to the rank and position held by the researcher at the Shreveport Police Department. The ethical issues that remain

after moving the previously mentioned target population is the internal consultants. Ensuring the proper demographic target within the organization is paramount to a quality study and was monitored and compliance was obtained.

The informed consent (see Appendix C) was provided at the beginning of the electronic survey prior to the survey questions. The information provided explained the confidentiality of the individual data and assured the participant that neither their supervisors nor the administrative official from either population would have access to individual survey data. All collected information was electronically kept under password protected computer access by the researcher. The initial consent form signed by the administrative officials, both the Mayor of Baton Rouge and the Sheriff of East Baton Rouge, informed them of data privacy. Each individual was provided directions at the beginning of the survey that the process is voluntary and their input is appreciated; however, they could elect to stop the survey at any point during the survey. Appreciation was expressed, but no further compensation was provided to participants.

Summary

This chapter contained the details of the research design and the methodological issues of the study. A quantitative comparative quasiexperimental design was selected in order to answer the research questions. After the description of the research design, details regarding population, sample, recruitment, and data collection procedures were presented. In this study, law enforcement officers in Louisiana were recruited to complete an online survey. The instruments and data analysis plan were presented,

followed by discussions of validity and ethical concerns. Chapter 4 contains the details of the data analysis conducted to address the research questions, as well as the findings of the study.

Chapter 4: Results

Introduction

The purpose of this study is to examine whether Louisiana municipal police officers perceive the bona fide seniority promotion system to be fair as compared to Louisiana sheriff's deputies. More importantly, this study also was designed to investigate whether the independent variables of seniority, transparency, and knowledge of the promotion systems, in addition to the demographic variables of gender and race, predict levels of perceived fairness. The research questions and hypotheses of the study are:

Research Question 1: Do officers in a seniority-based promotion system and officers in a merit-based promotion system differ in their perceived fairness of the promotion system?

H_01 : On average, officers in a seniority-based promotion system and officers in a merit-based promotion system do not differ in their perceived fairness of their promotion system as measured by the Organizational Justice Questionnaire (Colquitt, 2001).

H_{a1} : On average, officers in a seniority-based promotion system and officers in a merit-based promotion system differ in their perceived fairness of their promotion system as measured by the Organizational Justice Questionnaire (Colquitt, 2001).

Research Question 2: Are there differences in knowledge of the promotion system and perceived fairness of the promotion system based on demographic characteristics

(i.e., race, gender, and rank) and type of promotion system (i.e., seniority or merit-based)?

H₀₂: There are no differences in knowledge of the promotion system and perceived fairness of the promotion system, as measured by the Organizational Justice Questionnaire (Colquitt, 2001), based on demographic characteristics (i.e., race, gender, and rank) and type of promotion system (i.e., seniority or merit-based).

H_{a2}: There are differences in knowledge of the promotion system and perceived fairness of the promotion system, as measured by the Organizational Justice Questionnaire (Colquitt, 2001), based on demographic characteristics (i.e., race, gender, and rank) and type of promotion system (i.e., seniority or merit-based).

Research Question 3: Do type of promotion system (i.e., seniority or merit-based), knowledge of the promotion system, seniority, and perceived transparency predict perceived fairness of promotion system?

H₀₃: Type of promotion system (i.e., seniority or merit-based), knowledge of the promotion system, seniority, and perceived transparency do not predict perceived fairness of promotion system as measured by the Organizational Justice Questionnaire (Colquitt, 2001).

H_{a3}: Type of promotion system (i.e., seniority or merit-based), knowledge of the promotion system, seniority, and perceived transparency predict perceived fairness of promotion system as measured by the Organizational Justice Questionnaire (Colquitt, 2001).

This chapter will begin with a description of the data collection and the descriptive statistics of the obtained sample. Then the results of the data analyses conducted to address the research questions and hypotheses will be presented. Finally, this chapter will end with a summary of the results.

Data Collection

The data were collected in February and March of 2017. A total of 214 individuals from two different organizations responded to the survey. The first organization was a police department with a seniority-based promotion system, and the second organization was a sheriff's office with a merit-based promotion system. Thirty-one respondents did not complete the entire survey, and three additional respondents were excluded for having 30 or more years of tenure. Therefore, a final total of 180 participants were included in the data analysis. Before conducting the analysis, the presence of outliers was tested using standardized values. Tabachnick and Fidell (2013) suggest that scores with standardized values greater than 3.29 or less than -3.29 should be considered outliers. No outliers were identified for the variables of perceived fairness, knowledge of the promotion system, or transparency.

Descriptive Statistics

Table 1 displays descriptive statistics for the demographic characteristics of the sample. The participants consisted mostly of men ($n = 143$, 79.4%), and most participants identified their race as White/Caucasian ($n = 121$, 67.2%). The participants had between 1 to 29 years of tenure with their organization ($M = 13.53$, $SD = 7.79$), and

the largest proportion of participants held a rank of sergeant ($n = 52$, 28.9%). Eighty-four participants (46.7%) were in the police department that has a seniority-based promotion system, and 96 participants (53.3%) were in the sheriff's office that has a merit-based promotion system. When asked how transparent the criteria for their promotions were, most participants selected the answer options indicating that the criteria were published in the collective agreement ($n = 74$, 41.1%) or published so employees may know them ($n = 71$, 39.4%).

Table 1

Descriptive Statistics for Demographic Characteristics

Variable	Frequency	Percent
Gender		
Male	143	79.4
Female	37	20.6
Race		
White/Caucasian	121	67.2
Black/African American	47	26.1
Asian	7	3.9
Native American/Alaskan Native	1	0.6
Other	4	2.2
Rank		
Officer/Deputy	46	25.6
Corporal	44	24.4
Sergeant	52	28.9
Lieutenant	25	13.9
Captain	11	6.1
Major	1	0.6
Colonel	1	0.6
Type of promotion system		
Seniority-based	84	46.7
Merit-based	96	53.3
Transparency of promotion criteria		
Published in the collective agreement	74	41.1
Published, so employees may know them	71	39.4
Partially hidden, employees may know them only if they are connected with the decision makers	24	13.3
Totally hidden, nobody knows until after the decision is made	11	6.1

Reliability

A Cronbach's alpha reliability analysis was conducted to assess the interitem reliability of each study subscale, which includes perceived fairness (measured by the procedural justice subscale of the Organizational Justice Questionnaire) and knowledge of promotion system (measured by the Knowledge of Organizational Procedures Scale). According to George and Mallery (2016), Cronbach's alpha coefficients of .7 or greater indicate acceptable reliability. Table 2 displays the reliability coefficients for the study subscales (i.e., perceived fairness and knowledge of promotion system). The interitem reliability of both subscales exceeded .70, indicating that both measures were sufficiently reliable. The items corresponding to each measure were averaged to create composite scores representing perceived fairness and knowledge of promotion system (see Table 2).

Table 2

Descriptive Statistics and Reliability Coefficients for Study Subscales

Variable	Mean	Std. Deviation	Number of Items	Cronbach's Alpha
Perceived fairness	2.76	0.87	7	.88
Knowledge of promotion system	2.70	0.78	8	.88

Results

Research Question 1

In order to address research question 1, an independent samples *t*-test was conducted. In this analysis, the groups being compared were the seniority-based promotion group and the merit-based promotion group. The dependent variable was

perceived fairness. Prior to the analysis, the assumptions of normality and homogeneity of variance were tested. Normality was tested using a Kolmogorov-Smirnov (KS) test. The results of the KS test were significant ($p = .028$), indicating that the distribution of scores for perceived fairness was significantly different from a normal distribution. However, the t -test is considered robust against violations of normality when the sample size is greater than 30 (Pallant, 2013), so the analysis was continued. Homogeneity was tested using Levene's test. The results of the Levene's test were significant ($p = .001$), indicating that the variance in perceived fairness scores was significantly different between groups. Specifically, the merit-based promotion group ($SD = 0.97$) had greater variability than the seniority-based promotion group ($SD = 0.69$). Because the homogeneity of variance assumption was violated, the t -test was conducted with equal variances not assumed.

Table 3 displays the results of the independent samples t -test. The results of the test were significant ($t(171.27) = 3.27, p = .001, d = 0.48$), indicating that there was a significant difference in perceived fairness between participants in seniority-based and merit-based promotion systems. Specifically, participants in the seniority-based promotion system perceived their promotion system as fairer ($M = 2.97, SD = 0.69$) than participants in the merit-based system ($M = 2.57, SD = 0.97$). A Cohen's d of 0.48 indicated a small to medium effect size. Therefore, the null hypothesis (H_0) was rejected.

Table 3

Independent Samples T-Test for Research Question 1

Variable	Seniority-based		Merit-based		<i>t</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>p</i>
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>			
Perceived fairness	2.97	0.69	2.57	0.97	3.27	171.27	.001

Research Question 2

In order to address research question 2, a multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) was conducted. In this analysis, the independent variables were race, gender, rank, and type of promotion system. The dependent variables were knowledge of the promotion system and perceived fairness. Although the difference in perceived fairness between the promotion systems was tested in research question 1, this test was conducted to further examine the issue. The independent variables provide information about factors that may affect views on promotion. Prior to the analysis, the assumptions of normality, homogeneity of variance, and homogeneity of covariance were tested. The assumptions of normality and homogeneity of variance were tested using KS tests and Levene's tests respectively. The results of the previous KS tests (see Research Question 1) indicated that normality was violated for perceived fairness. However, the MANOVA is considered robust against violations of normality when the sample size is greater than 30 (Pallant, 2013), so the analysis was continued. The results of the Levene's tests indicated that the homogeneity of variance assumption was met for both knowledge of promotion system and perceived fairness (all *p*-values > .05). This outcome differed

from the outcome in research question 1 due to the inclusion of multiple independent variables. Homogeneity of covariance was tested using Box's M test. Tabachnick and Fidell (2013) recommend evaluating Box's M at a significance level of .001 due to the high sensitivity of the test. The results of the test were not significant at the .001 level ($p = .021$), indicating that the assumption appears to have been met.

Table 4 displays the results of the MANOVA. The results were significant for rank ($F(12, 334) = 3.76, p < .001$) and type of promotion system ($F(2, 166) = 14.06, p < .001$), indicating that there were significant differences in knowledge of promotion system and perceived fairness based on rank and type of promotion system. Therefore, the null hypothesis (H_0) was rejected. Because the results of the MANOVA were significant, individual ANOVAs were examined. The individual ANOVAs revealed that there were significant differences in both knowledge of promotion system ($F(6, 167) = 5.42, p < .001$) and perceived fairness ($F(6, 167) = 4.91, p < .001$) based on rank. Descriptive statistics for knowledge of promotion system and perceived fairness by rank are displayed in Table 5. Generally, participants with higher ranks tended to have higher knowledge and perceptions of fairness (see post hoc tests presented in Table 6). The individual ANOVAs also revealed that there were significant differences in both knowledge of promotion system ($F(1, 167) = 10.70, p < .001$) and perceived fairness ($F(1, 167) = 10.64, p < .001$) based on type of promotion system. Estimated marginal means of knowledge of promotion system and perceived fairness for the two kinds of promotional systems are displayed in Table 7. Participants in the seniority-based

promotion system had higher knowledge and perceptions of fairness than participants in the merit-based system.

Table 4

MANOVA for Knowledge of Promotion System and Perceived Fairness

Independent Variable	Pillai's Trace	<i>F</i>	Hypothesis <i>df</i>	Error <i>df</i>	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
Race	0.05	1.15	8	334	.327	0.03
Gender	0.01	0.86	2	166	.424	0.01
Rank	0.24	3.76	12	334	< .001	0.12
Type of promotion system	0.15	14.06	2	166	< .001	0.15

Table 5

Estimated Marginal Means for Knowledge of Promotion System and Perceived Fairness by Rank

Rank	<i>n</i>	Knowledge of promotion system		Perceived fairness	
		Mean	Std. Error	Mean	Std. Error
Officer/Deputy	46	2.40	0.20	2.39	0.23
Corporal	44	2.40	0.18	2.32	0.21
Sergeant	52	2.83	0.19	2.67	0.22
Lieutenant	25	2.57	0.23	2.49	0.26
Captain	11	3.40	0.28	3.39	0.32
Major	1	3.18	0.73	5.06	0.84
Colonel	1	4.31	0.73	3.92	0.84

Table 6

Post Hoc Tests for Knowledge of Promotion System and Perceived Fairness by Rank

Comparison	Knowledge of promotion system		Perceived fairness	
	Mean Difference	Sig.	Mean Difference	Sig.
Officer/Deputy				
vs. Corporal	0.00	.977	0.07	.690
vs. Sergeant	-0.43*	.003	-0.28	.091
vs. Lieutenant	-0.17	.333	-0.11	.600
vs. Captain	-1.00*	< .001	-1.01*	< .001
vs. Major	-0.78	.276	-2.68*	.001
vs. Colonel	-1.90*	.008	-1.53	.064
Corporal				
vs. Sergeant	-0.44*	.003	-0.35*	.039
vs. Lieutenant	-0.17	.332	-0.17	.399
vs. Captain	-1.00*	< .001	-1.07*	< .001
vs. Major	-0.78	.275	-2.74*	.001
vs. Colonel	-1.91*	.008	-1.60	.054
Sergeant				
vs. Lieutenant	0.26	.130	0.17	.388
vs. Captain	-0.57*	.018	-0.73*	.008
vs. Major	-0.35	.625	-2.40*	.004
vs. Colonel	-1.47*	.040	-1.26	.128
Lieutenant				
vs. Captain	-0.83*	.001	-0.90*	.003
vs. Major	-0.61	.396	-2.57*	.002
vs. Colonel	-1.73*	.017	-1.43	.086
Captain				
vs. Major	0.22	.767	-1.67	.050
vs. Colonel	-0.91	.218	-0.53	.534
Major				
vs. Colonel	-1.13	.254	1.14	.315

Note. *Difference is significant at $p < .05$.

Table 7

Estimated Marginal Means for Knowledge of Promotion System and Perceived Fairness by Type of Promotion System

Type of promotion system	<i>n</i>	Knowledge of promotion system		Perceived fairness	
		Mean	Std. Error	Mean	Std. Error
Seniority-based	84	3.27	0.24	3.44*	0.28
Merit-based	96	2.76	0.23	2.92*	0.27

Note. *Differences from Table 3 means are due to estimated marginal means being weighted based on race, gender, and rank.

Research Question 3

In order to address Research Question 3, a multiple linear regression was conducted. The independent variables in this analysis were type of promotion system, knowledge of the promotion system, seniority, and perceived transparency. The dependent variable was perceived fairness. The standard method of variable entry was used, meaning that all independent variables were entered into the regression simultaneously. Prior to the interpreting the significance tests, the assumptions of normality, homoscedasticity, and absence of multicollinearity were tested. Normality of residuals was tested by examination of a normal P-P plot (see Figure 1). The data did not deviate strongly from the normal line, so this assumption appears to have been met. Homoscedasticity was tested by examination of a scatterplot of residuals versus predicted values (see Figure 2). The data were approximately evenly distributed around zero, so this assumption appears to have been met. Multicollinearity was tested using Variance

Inflation Factors (VIF). All VIF values were below 10 (see Table 8), indicating the multicollinearity was not present among the independent variables.

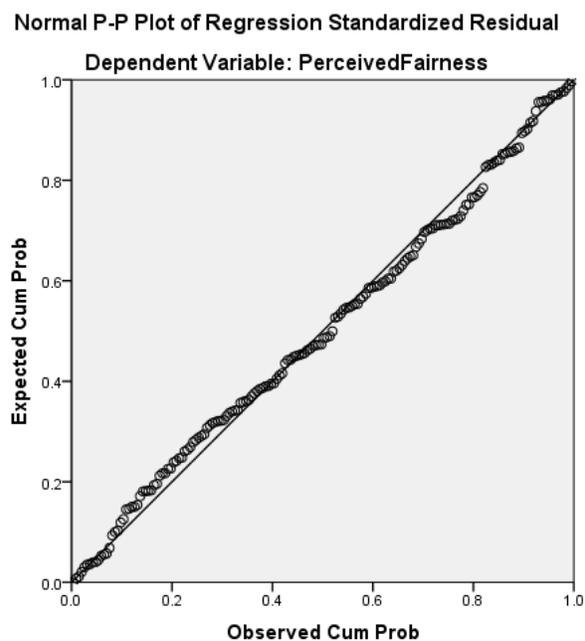


Figure 1. Normal P-P plot for Research Question 3.

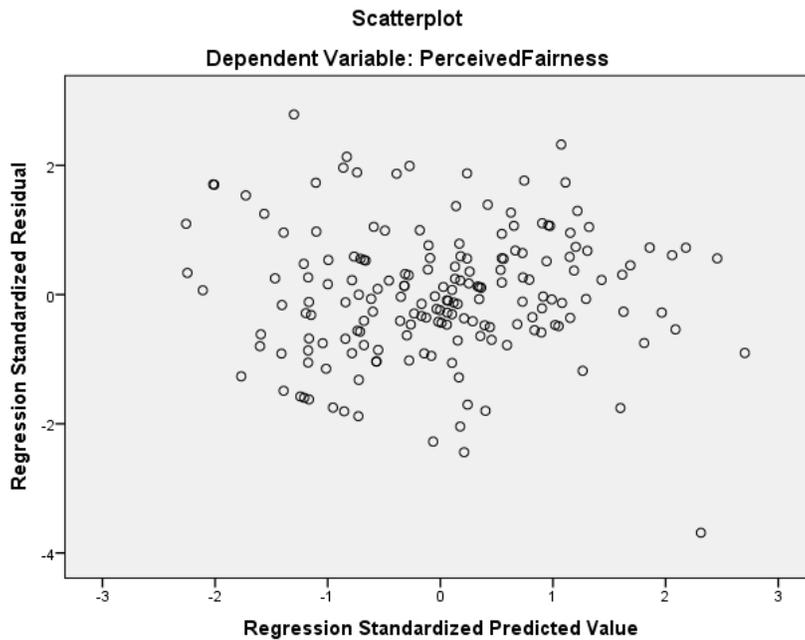


Figure 2. Residuals versus predicted values for Research Question 3.

Table 8

Multiple Linear Regression Predicting Perceived Fairness

Variable	<i>B</i>	Std. Error	Beta	<i>t</i>	Sig.	VIF
Type of promotion system	-0.02	0.16	-0.01	-0.15	.878	1.89
Knowledge of promotion system	0.49	0.08	0.44	6.42	< .001	1.12
Seniority	0.01	0.01	0.06	0.92	.357	1.05
Transparency	0.16	0.09	0.16	1.78	.077	1.84

Note. $F(4, 175) = 15.74, p < .001, R^2 = .27$.

The results of the overall regression model were significant ($F(4, 175) = 15.74, p < .001, R^2 = .27$), indicating that collectively the set of independent variable significantly predicted perceived fairness. Therefore, the null hypothesis (H_03) was rejected. The R^2

value shows that the independent variables explained 27% of the variability in perceived fairness. Knowledge of promotion system was a significant positive predictor of perceived fairness ($B = 0.49, p < .001$), meaning that participants with higher knowledge of the promotion system tended to perceive their promotion system as fairer. No other predictors were significant (all p -values $> .05$).

Exploratory Analysis

As an exploratory analysis, the multiple linear regression analysis conducted for research question 3 was replicated with rank included as an independent variable. This exploratory analysis was conducted because of the significant result for type of promotion system for Research Question 1, but the lack of a significant result for type of promotion system for Research Question 3. Thus, the independent variables in this regression were type of promotion system, knowledge of the promotion system, seniority, perceived transparency, and rank. The rank variable was dummy coded with Officer/Deputy serving as the reference group. The dependent variable was perceived fairness. The assumptions of the analysis were tested in the same manner as the previous regression analysis, and all assumptions appeared to be met (see Figures 3 and 4, and Table 9).

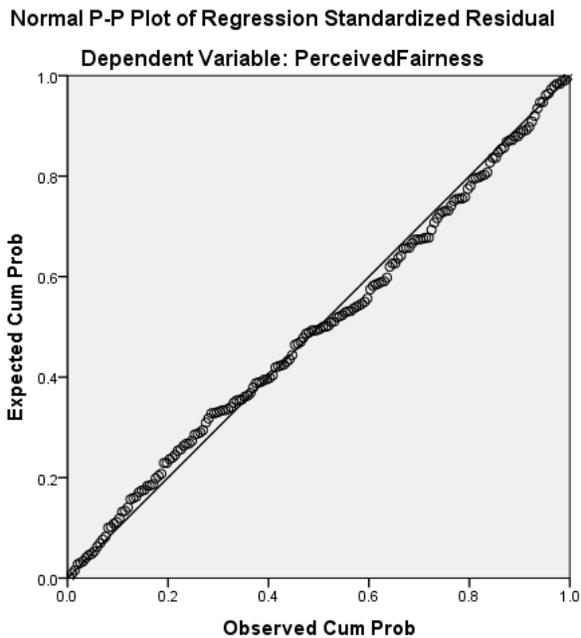


Figure 3. Normal P-P plot for Exploratory Model.

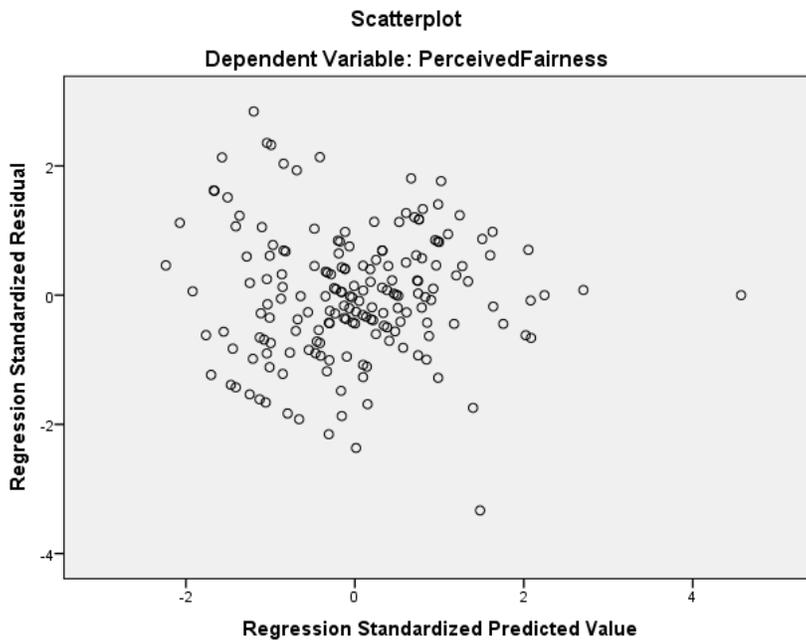


Figure 4. Residuals versus predicted values for Exploratory Model.

Table 9

Exploratory Multiple Linear Regression Predicting Perceived Fairness

Variable	<i>B</i>	Std. Error	Beta	<i>t</i>	Sig.	VIF
Type of promotion system	-0.21	0.17	-0.12	-1.28	.201	2.19
Knowledge of promotion system	0.42	0.08	0.37	5.14	.000	1.30
Seniority	-0.01	0.01	-0.05	-0.52	.603	2.33
Transparency	0.10	0.09	0.11	1.17	.243	1.97
Rank						
Corporal vs. Officer/Deputy	-0.04	0.16	-0.02	-0.21	.831	1.57
Sergeant vs. Officer/Deputy	0.15	0.20	0.08	0.76	.446	2.57
Lieutenant vs. Officer/Deputy	0.12	0.25	0.05	0.50	.621	2.35
Captain vs. Officer/Deputy	0.71	0.32	0.19	2.22	.028	1.90
Major vs. Officer/Deputy	2.21	0.81	0.19	2.74	.007	1.17
Colonel vs. Officer/Deputy	0.60	0.78	0.05	0.77	.440	1.08

Note. $F(10, 169) = 7.77, p < .001, R^2 = .32$.

The results of the overall regression model were significant ($F(10, 169) = 7.77, p < .001, R^2 = .32$), indicating that collectively the set of independent variable significantly predicted perceived fairness. The R^2 value shows that the independent variables explained 32% of the variability in perceived fairness. Knowledge of promotion system was a significant positive predictor of perceived fairness ($B = 0.42, p < .001$), meaning that participants with higher knowledge of the promotion system tended to perceive their promotion system as fairer. Rank was also a significant predictor. Specifically, participants who were captains ($B = 0.71, p = .028$) and majors ($B = 2.21, p = .007$)

tended to perceive their promotion system as fairer relative to participants who were officers or deputies. No other predictors were significant (all p -values $> .05$).

Finally, a correlation matrix was constructed to present the bivariate relationships between the variables used in the regression analysis. Table 10 displays the correlation matrix. Type of promotion system was significantly correlated with knowledge of the promotion system ($r = -.26, p < .001$), transparency ($r = -.67, p < .001$), and rank ($r = .15, p = .049$). This may explain why type of promotion system was not a significant predictor in the regression analysis, despite having a significant relationship with perceived fairness in RQ1. This high correlation between transparency and type of promotion system may indicate multicollinearity among these variables. However, the VIF values for the regression models were well within the acceptable range (i.e., less than 10; Stevens, 2009). Additionally, perceived fairness was significantly positively correlated with knowledge of the promotion system ($r = .49, p < .001$), and rank was significantly positively correlated with seniority ($r = .72, p < .001$).

Table 10

Correlation Matrix of Regression Variables

Variable	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.
1. Perceived fairness	-				
2. Type of promotion system	-.23**	-			
3. Knowledge of promotion system	.49**	-.26**	-		
4. Seniority	.14	.00	.20**	-	
5. Transparency	.25**	-.67**	.19**	-.05	-
6. Rank	.19*	.15*	.23**	.72**	-.09

Note. * $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. Spearman correlations reported for Rank.

Summary

An independent samples *t*-test was conducted to address research question 1, which addressed if officers in a seniority-based promotion system and officers in a merit-based promotion system differ in their perceived fairness of the promotion system. The results showed that there was a significant difference in perceived fairness between participants in seniority-based and merit-based promotion systems. Specifically, participants in the seniority-based promotion system perceived their promotion system as fairer than participants in the merit-based system. Therefore, H_{01} was rejected. A MANOVA was conducted to address research question 2, which examined if there are differences in knowledge of the promotion system and perceived fairness of the promotion system based on demographic characteristics and type of promotion system. The results showed that there were significant differences in knowledge of promotion system and perceived fairness based on rank and type of promotion system, but not based on gender or race. Therefore, H_{02} was rejected. Finally, a multiple linear regression was conducted to address research question 3, which addressed if type of promotion system, knowledge of the promotion system, seniority, and perceived transparency predict perceived fairness of promotion system. The results showed that collectively type of promotion system, knowledge of the promotion system, seniority, and perceived transparency significantly predicted perceived fairness. Specifically, knowledge of promotion system was a significant positive predictor of perceived fairness. Therefore, H_{03} was rejected. Chapter 5 contains a discussion of these finds in relation to previous

literature and the theoretical framework guiding the study. Additionally, Chapter 5 contains an evaluation of the findings in light of the hypotheses and existing literature, as well as recommendations for future research based on these findings.

Chapter 5: Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations

Introduction

The purpose of this quantitative comparative quasiexperimental study was to compare Louisiana municipal police officers' perceptions of fairness of their bona fide seniority promotion system to Louisiana sheriff's deputies' perceptions of fairness of their merit-based promotion system. The study was also designed to investigate whether the independent variables of seniority, transparency, and knowledge of the promotion systems, in addition to the demographic variables of gender and race, predicted levels of perceived fairness. Perceived fairness refers to individuals' perceptions of organizational rules and procedures concerning decisions about outcomes, such as promotions and pay raises, being equitable and just (Cloutier et al., 2012). It was not known, however, how law enforcement officials perceived the fairness of seniority- and merit-based promotional systems in relation to one another.

Study results revealed a difference in perceived fairness between participants in seniority-based and merit-based promotion systems. Participants in the seniority-based promotion system perceived their promotion system as being fairer than participants in the merit-based system did. Results also revealed that there were significant differences in knowledge of promotion system and perceived fairness based on rank and type of promotion system, but not based on race and gender. Lastly, results revealed that, collectively, type of promotion system, knowledge of the promotion system, perceived transparency, and seniority significantly predicted perceived fairness. Examination of the

individual regression coefficients in the model showed, however, only knowledge of their promotional system was found to be a significant predictor of perceived fairness. Most importantly, kind of promotional system was not a significant predictor in the multiple regression model when other variables were included in the model. Chapter 5 contains sections on the interpretation of the findings in light of existing literature, study limitations, recommendations for further research, implications for practice and social change, and a conclusion.

Interpretation of the Findings

The following research questions were designed to examine whether Louisiana municipal police officers perceived the bona fide seniority promotion system to be fair as compared to Louisiana sheriff's deputies, as well as to investigate whether the independent variables of seniority, transparency, and knowledge of the promotion systems, in addition to the demographic variables of gender and race, predicted levels of perceived fairness. Researchers in organizational psychology have used perceived fairness to understand work behavior and explain judgment formation in relation to organizational procedures and outcomes (Cojuharenco & Patient, 2013; Jelley et al., 2014). Promotional procedures represent a long-standing focus for organizational psychologists because "getting the right person for the right position" (Sells, 1999, p. 62) continues to be crucial to optimal organizational performance and employee satisfaction. However, with increased emphasis on organizational justice, finding the right person for

the right position has become not only about the best way to promote employees, but also the fairest way to promote employees (Cojuharenco & Patient, 2013).

Research Question 1

Research Question 1 was designed to determine whether officers in a seniority-based promotion system and officers in a merit-based promotion system differed in their perceived fairness of the promotion system. Participants in the seniority-based promotion system perceived their promotion system as fairer than participants in the merit-based system, and H₀₁ was rejected. This finding supports the research of Lind (2001), García-Izquierdo et al. (2012), and Wan et al. (2012), who found that individuals perceived seniority as fairer than merit-based promotion in private-sector environments because seniority involved clear-cut criteria and procedures for promotion. García-Izquierdo et al. focused on supervisors and employees of 31 various private sector organizations; Wan et al. studied procedural justice in promotion decisions of managerial staff in nine Malaysian multinational companies. Transparency, or the clear formalization of promotion criteria and procedures, is a salient predictor of fairness perceptions (García-Izquierdo et al., 2012). Lind (2001) extrapolated that merit-based promotion may be perceived as being potentially unfair because it involves the evaluation of employees' performance by other individuals, specifically their superiors.

According to fairness heuristic theory (Lind, 2001), individuals believe decisions regarding promotions based on subjective interpretation introduce the possibility of unfairness. Individuals may perceive merit-based promotion systems, for example, as

unfair because they rely on the evaluation and interpretation of employees' performance by superiors (Dragos et al., 2014). Although merit-based systems can encourage and reward positive job performance (Cojuharenco & Patient, 2013), merit-based promotion systems are also susceptible to perceptions of favoritism (Thau & Mitchell, 2010). On the other hand, employees largely view seniority-based promotion systems as being procedurally just because seniority-based promotion systems typically eliminate subjective interpretation of employee performance and achievements (Wan et al., 2012). The correlation coefficient between procedural justice and transparency in the García-Izquierdo et al. study was .30, which is a medium effect size; this is similar to the effect size for the present study ($r_{\text{kind of system-perceived fairness}(178)} = -.23$). The studies of Lind (2001), García-Izquierdo et al. (2012), and Wan et al. (2012) were conducted on employees within private sector organizations.

Participants under the seniority system perceived greater fairness than those in the merit-based system, which may be attributable to transparency and objectivity of seniority-based promotion systems. Merit-based promotional systems can be perceived as being subjective and less transparent than seniority-based systems. The seniority-based system has been found in Louisiana municipal police departments since 1940, and the state upholds this long-standing tradition (West's Louisiana Statutes, Title 33, 2016). Although seniority-based systems may be seen as outmoded (Calo, 2012), they have the benefit of reducing perceptions of subjectivity and opaqueness, which can lead to enhanced perceptions of fairness and organizational justice. The unique contribution of

the present study is support for the perceived fairness of seniority-based promotion systems in the public sector.

Research Question 2

Research Question 2 was designed to determine whether there were differences in knowledge of the promotion system and perceived fairness of the promotion system based on demographic characteristics and type of promotion system. There were significant differences in knowledge of promotion systems and perceived fairness based on rank and type of promotion system, but not based on race and gender. The perceptions of captains and higher ranks were different from those of officers and deputies. However, perceptions of sergeants and lieutenants did not differ significantly from those of officers and deputies. This finding partially aligns with the research of García-Izquierdo et al. (2012), who found that employees' position or level in the organization was significant to the perceived fairness of the promotion system. Managers perceived the promotion system as fairer than subordinates did (García-Izquierdo et al., 2012). However, promotion systems based on evaluation of performance were perceived as fairer than seniority-based systems, regardless of individuals' positions in the organization. García-Izquierdo et al. (2012) suggested *self-assessment bias* as a possible explanation for why higher ranking individuals perceive their promotion system as fair. Self-assessment bias is basically a circular and self-serving way of thinking, wherein individuals remember events positively because they led to positive individual outcomes for themselves (García-Izquierdo et al., 2012).

It may also be that individuals of higher rank perceive their promotion system as fair because they likely have more knowledge of the promotion system and more direct experience with it than individuals of lesser rank. Experience with a promotion system, especially because of years of tenure inside a seniority system, may likely provide an increased understanding of the process regarding promotions, leading to increased perceived transparency and fairness. Individuals who have achieved promotion and seniority are likely to feel that they deserve promotion because of self-assessment bias and because they perceive the system to be fair based on their tenure within the system that leads to familiarity. Individuals within merit-based systems, however, are not afforded guarantees regarding promotional selection within the system itself. Consequently, individuals may perceive merit-based systems as being unfair if they did not receive promotion, citing erroneous or subjective evaluations of their performance (García-Izquierdo et al., 2012; Wan et al., 2012). The findings that higher ranking individuals perceived their promotional system as fair supported the research of García-Izquierdo et al. who found that individuals perceived seniority as fairer than merit-based promotion in the private sector. However, higher ranking individuals perceiving their promotional system as fair is novel in relation to Louisiana municipal police officers and sheriff's deputies, warranting further research in other law enforcement agencies.

Research Question 3

Research Question 3 was designed to determine whether type of promotion system, knowledge of the promotion system, seniority, and perceived transparency

collectively predicted perceived fairness of promotion system. Collectively, type of promotion system, knowledge of the promotion system, perceived transparency, and seniority significantly predicted perceived fairness; however, within the equation, only knowledge significantly predicted perceived fairness. While type of promotion system was significant for Research Question 1, it was not significant for Research Question 3, which was not expected. That is, when knowledge and transparency are controlled for, type of promotion system is no longer significant. Therefore, it may be that knowledge of promotion system is the most salient factor in predicting perceived fairness of promotion systems in Louisiana municipal police officers and sheriff's deputies when all factors are considered together. Type of promotion system was significantly correlated with knowledge, transparency, and rank, which suggests that further research may be warranted to understand better the role of knowledge, transparency, and rank.

García-Izquierdo et al. (2012) and McKinney et al. (2013) argued that whatever type of promotional system an organization uses, employees' perceptions of fairness of organizational procedures regarding promotion are crucial to their sense of organizational justice. García-Izquierdo et al. found that individuals who perceived promotion procedures as transparent indicated high levels of perceived justice. The finding for Research Question 3 along with the simple correlation between knowledge of the promotional system and perceived fairness ($r_{\text{knowledge-perceived fairness}(178)} = -.49$) suggest that knowledge of a promotion system, including its procedures, may affect perceived fairness of the system. Knowledge of the system supported that the more senior the

personnel are within the system, the more knowledgeable and satisfied they are based on the survey results. It may also be that individuals who want to be promoted make an effort to learn the system. The seniority system is a simple method to learn and interpret (Lind, 2001). However, if each employee is given the information on the competitiveness of a merit-based system and how the system is utilized within the organization, greater satisfaction can be achieved by employees. The perception of fairness could be obtained through greater understanding at a lower tenure within the organization.

Procedural justice, a component of organizational justice, refers to perceptions of individuals regarding the decisions and processes involving work-related outcomes such as pay raises and promotion (Cloutier et al., 2012). Researchers in organizational psychology have used procedural justice to examine perceived fairness of workplace decisions regarding promotion (Cojuharenco & Patient, 2013; Lind, 2001). Research has shown that seniority is perceived as fair because seniority-based promotion involves clear-cut criteria and procedures for advancement (Lind, 2001). Additionally, seniority involves a relatively easy to understand promotion system, facilitating knowledge of the promotion system. The finding of the present study that knowledge of promotion system may be the most salient factor in predicting perceived fairness of promotion systems in Louisiana municipal police officers and sheriff's deputies extends understanding of procedural justice. Knowledge of promotion system may also be the most salient factor in predicting perceived fairness of promotion systems in other public sectors organizations, including those of law enforcement.

Limitations of the Study

All studies have limitations, and the present study is no exception. Study findings should be interpreted with the following limitations in mind. The study was conducted by electronic mail in the form of a Likert scale survey. The law enforcement professionals that participated undoubtedly volunteered their time to participate while performing patrol and investigative duties at work. The lack of organizational structure required the detailed gathering of individual email accounts of a diverse employee sample within two target populations. Furthermore, because of the uniqueness of Louisiana police departments using seniority-based promotion, findings from this study may not generalize to other law enforcement agencies in other states.

Additionally, the law enforcement profession has often operated from a perspective of distrust of external perceptions and evaluations, especially in times of tension between law enforcement and the citizenry. Key personnel were recruited within the target populations and put at ease by the researcher in regards to participating in the research. The perception of detrimental change is a constant concern for law enforcement, which is steeped in long-standing traditions resistant to change (Calo, 2012). Information can be difficult to acquire from target populations, especially regarding sensitive topics such as promotion, and this study proved to be challenging in the beginning. However, perseverance was key, and information was collected through surveys from demographically diverse employees. I was able to measure demographic variables adequately. Finally, the study was not designed to account for the confounding

factors of type of organization and management effectiveness on perceived fairness of promotion systems, which led to difficulties in interpretation and identification of salient factors in predicting perceived fairness because of the correlations among predictors.

Recommendations for Further Research

The study has offered a baseline of initial research that provided comparative information on the seniority-based promotion system and the merit-based promotion system within Louisiana law enforcement. Therefore, because there is little extant research on promotion and law enforcement, one recommendation is for researchers to conduct further research on the fairness of perceptions of organizational procedures, including promotion, to confirm the findings of the present study.

In the United States, law enforcement agencies are challenged with filling their rank-and-files with qualified applicants. More research could be conducted in organizational psychology regarding promotion and law enforcement to better understand work behavior and judgment formation in relation to organizational procedures and outcomes. Such information might provide practical assistance to the leaders who are striving to find the best applicants. The perception of law enforcement promotions and promotion systems could be a factor in attracting applicants when they consider their overall benefit package while considering a career. Additionally, qualitative research could provide in-depth insight to the individual perceptions of and experiences with promotion systems within law enforcement.

One finding of the present study was that knowledge of a promotion system predicted perceived fairness. It is recommended that further research be conducted in law enforcement on whether merit-based systems may be perceived as fair if individuals are made knowledgeable about the system and its procedures. Additionally, findings of the present study confirmed that self-assessment bias remains a challenge when examining promotion in relation to rank. Further research on self-assessment bias is recommended as it relates to rank and perceptions of fairness in promotion. Finally, issues of race and gender can be central to perceptions of fairness within the workplace (Cojuharenco & Patient, 2013). Although findings indicated that race and gender did not predict fairness perceptions, additional research is recommended on race, gender, and promotion within law enforcement because issues of race and gender are often central to perceptions of fairness within organizations (Cojuharenco & Patient, 2013). Lastly, determining whether merit-based systems result in qualified individuals being promoted was outside the scope of this study. However, future research might focus on employee qualifications and promotion systems in law enforcement. While individuals may perceive seniority-based promotion as being fairer than merit-based promotion (García-Izquierdo et al., 2012; Webster & Beehr, 2012), seniority allows employees to be promoted who may not be qualified. Questions remain about how to balance individuals' interests in fair promotion procedures with organizational interests in promoting qualified individuals, or, as Sells (1999) stated, "getting the right person for the right position" (p.62).

Implications for Practice and Social Change

This study has offered data on the perceived fairness of promotions within Louisiana law enforcement. The research provided scientific survey results that revealed the perceptions of working police officers and sheriff's deputies actively serving in the occupation of law enforcement in 2017. The data are current and provide insight into perceived fairness in promotional methods within law enforcement. Research Question 3 showed that knowledge of a promotional system is linked to perceived fairness of the system. Therefore, practical implications include police leaders and human resource personnel making employees aware of their promotion system and its associated procedures. Awareness strategies could include formal one-on-one meetings with employees, training in organizational procedures, and human resource informational seminars.

Perceptions of fairness of promotion systems are also key to developing positive organizational culture, which may lead to positive social change. Employees who lack trust in their organizations in issues related to career advancement and the ability to manage their career advancements may be demotivated and may perform at substandard levels. Facilitating police officers' relationships with their organization by helping to enhance fairness perceptions and organizational trust could lead to positive social change by motivating officers and positively influencing how they serve the public. Making officers aware of organizational expectations and procedures, including promotion, may also help to improve perceptions of fairness within the organization and create a positive

image for the organization, potentially enhancing police-citizen relations. Whatever promotion system is used, fairness should be maintained through transparency, creating the perception that fairness exists. However, the study was not designed to examine organizational aspects beyond perceptions of fairness, such as employee performance.

Public service is a high form of service, and citizens should expect the best candidates to be considered for promotion within public service organizations, which is not always ensured with seniority. García-Izquierdo et al. (2012) offered insight into the perceptions of fairness held by private sector employees, but also noted the lack of research on fairness perceptions in public service sectors, such as law enforcement. It was the goal of this research to add to public sector research, specifically within law enforcement, that could lead to a positive social change within the field and reflect positive social change in the communities law enforcement officials serve.

The present study was also designed to examine a defined system of bona fide occupational seniority. In an occupation that is constantly subjected to external political scrutiny, the research has offered insight to internal perceptions of fairness and organizational justice. The present study adds to the literature in organizational psychology in that seniority can be perceived as fair and just because it is viewed as transparent and objective. Seniority-based promotion can also help prevent prevents cronyism and favoritism in employee promotion (Thau & Mitchell, 2010). However, seniority still poses organizational challenges because it allows for employees to be promoted who may not be qualified. Perhaps hybrid promotion systems based on job

tenure and employee performance might be suited to address employees' perceptions of fairness and organizational needs for promoting qualified individuals. It is inconclusive whether bona fide seniority promotion contributes to better management and organizational results. Further research is encouraged. However, considering the political issues surrounding workplace discrimination, seniority-based systems may provide some protection to an organization when legally challenged over employee selection.

Conclusion

This comparative study provided basic research data that have been long overlooked or ignored within the realm of Louisiana law enforcement. Information collected from this study may add to understanding in organizational psychology of judgement formation in relation to organizational procedures, such as promotion, in public service organizations. Although seniority-based promotion may be outmoded, seniority-based systems were perceived to be fairer than merit-based systems because seniority involves clear-cut procedures and does not rely on interpretations of employee performance, which can be perceived as subjective. While understanding that seniority systems contribute to organizational justice is important, without the ability to evaluate employees who have specific knowledge, achievements, and abilities, the organization is simply required to take the next most senior person. Although perceived as fair among employees, the finding poses organizational and management challenges. Organizational psychologists and researchers must continue to investigate "getting the right person for

the right position” (Sells, 1999, p. 62) to help ensure organizational performance and employee satisfaction.

Additionally, knowledge of the system predicted perceptions of fairness and confirmed that whatever promotion system is used, knowledge of the system and transparency concerning its procedures are crucial to perceptions of fairness. It may be that employees perceive merit-based systems as fair if they are trained in and informed of the promotion system. Finally, type of promotion system was significantly correlated with knowledge, transparency, and rank; further research is recommended to understand better the role of knowledge, transparency, and rank in promotion systems.

References

- Adams, J. S. (1965). Inequity in social exchange. In L. Berkowitz (Ed.), *Advances in experimental social psychology* (pp.267-299). New York, NY: Academic Press.
- Armeli, S., Eisenberger, R., Fasolo, P., & Lynch, P. (1998). Perceived organizational support and police performance: The moderating influence of socioemotional needs. *Journal of Applied Psychology, 83*(2), 288-297.
- Arthur Jr., W., & Villado, A. J. (2008). The importance of distinguishing between constructs and methods when comparing predictors in personnel selection and research and practice. *Journal of Applied Psychology, 93*(2), 435-442.
- Ayinde, A. T., & Oladele, O. P. (2016). Perceived organizational justice and work locus of control as determinants of organizational citizenship behavior among civil servants in Ekiti State, Nigeria. *Revista de Asistentia Sociala, anul XV*(1), 111-122.
- Basar, U., & Unsal, S. (2015). Effects of Teachers' Organizational Justice Perceptions of Intention to Quit: Mediation role of Organizational Identification. *Educational Sciences: Theory & Practice, 15*(1), 45-59.
- Buker, H., & Dolu, O. (2011). Police job satisfaction in Turkey: effects of demographic, organizational, and jurisdiction factors. *International Journal of Comparative and Applied Criminal Justice, 34*(1), 25-51. doi: 10.1080/01924036.2010.9678816
- Calo, J. (2012). The changing role of leadership in the fire service. *International Journal of Emergency Mental Health, 14*(4), 283-288.

- Cloutier, J., Pascale, D. L., & Bilodeau, H. (2012). Collective Bargaining and Perceived Fairness: Validating the Conceptual Structure. *Relations Industrielles*, 67(3), 398. doi:10.7202/1012537ar
- Cojuharenco, I., & Patient, D. (2013). Workplace fairness versus unfairness: Examining the differential salience of facets of organizational justice. *Journal of Occupational and Organizational Psychology*, 86(3), 371–393. doi:10.1111/joop.12023
- Cojuharenco, I., Patient, D., & Bashshur, M. R. (2011). Seeing the ‘forest’ or the ‘trees’ of Organizational Justice: Effects of Temporal Perspective on employee concerns about unfair treatment at work. *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes*, 116(1), 17-31.
- Colquitt, J. A. (2001). On the dimensionality of organizational justice: A construct validation of a measure. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 86, 386-400.
- Detrick, P., & Chibnell, J. T. (2013). Revised NEO Personality Inventory normative data for police officer selection. *Psychological Services* 10(4), 372-377. doi:10.1037/a0031800
- Dragos, I., Ispas, D., Sulea, C., & Ilie, A. (2014). Vocational Fit and Counterproductive Work Behaviors: A Self-Regulation Perspective. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 100(1), 21-39.
- Dusterhoff, C., Cunningham, J. B., & MacGregor, J. N. (2014). The effects of performance rating, leader-member exchange, perceived utility, and

organizational justice on performance appraisal satisfaction: Applying and Moral judgment perspective. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 119, 265-273. DOI 10.1007/s10551-013-1634-1

Enoksen, E. (2015). Examining the dimensionality of Colquitt's Organizational Justice Scale in a public health sector context. *Psychological reports: employment Psychology & Marketing*, 116, 3, 723-737.

Farmer, S. J., Beehr, T. A., & Love, K. G. (2003). Becoming an undercover police officer: A note on fairness perceptions, behavior, and attitudes. *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, 24(4), 373–387. doi:10.1002/job.196

Ferris, G. R., Buckley, M. R., & Allen, G. M. (1992). "Promotion Systems in Organizations," *Human Resource Planning*, 15, 47-68.

Frenkel, S., & Bednall, T. (2016). How training and promotional opportunities, career expectations, and two dimensions of organizational justice explain discretionary work effort. *Human Performance*, (29)1, 16-32. DOI: 10.1080/08959285.2015.1120306.

Friesen, J. P., Kay, A. C., Eibach, R. P., & Galinsky, A. D. (2014). Seeking structure in social organization: Compensatory control and the psychological advantages of hierarchy. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 106(4), 590-609.

García-Izquierdo, A. L., Moscoso, S., & Ramos-Villagrasa, P. J. (2012). Reactions to the Fairness of Promotion Methods: Procedural justice and job satisfaction.

International Journal of Selection and Assessment, 20(4), 394–403.

doi:10.1111/ijsa.12002

George, D., & Mallery, P. (2016). *SPSS for Windows step by step: a simple guide and reference, 11.0 update* (14th ed.). Boston, MA: Allyn and Bacon.

Graham, K. A., Ziegert, J. C., & Capitano, J. (2015). The effect of leadership style framing, and promotion regulatory focus on unethical pro-organizational behavior. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 126(3), 423-436.

Greenberg, J. (1990). Organizational Justice: Yesterday, Today, and Tomorrow, *Journal of Management*, 16(2), 399–432.

Grover, S. L., Nadisic, T., & Patient, D. L. (2012). Bringing together different perspectives on ethical leadership. *Journal of Change Management* 12(4), 377-381.

Guoqing, Z. (2016). Distributive justice and social desert. *Social Sciences in China*, 37:2, 61-76. DOI: 0.1080/02529203.2016.1162004.

Harrington, J. R., & Lee, J. H. (2015). What Drives Perceived Fairness of Performance Appraisal? Exploring the Effects of Psychological Contract Fulfillment on Employees' Perceived Fairness of Performance Appraisal in U.S. Federal Agencies. *Public Personnel Management*, 44(2), 214–238.

doi:10.1177/0091026014564071

Howell, D. C. (2010). *Statistical methods for psychology* (7th ed.). Belmont CA: Wadsworth Cengage Learning.

- Hsu, J., & Wang, J. (2015). Exploring the effects of Organizational Justice on employee' innovative behavior in hospitality industry from the aspect of organizational support. *Revista de cercetare si interventie sociala*, 49.
- Jelley, R. B., Goffin, R. D., Gowell, D. M., & Heneman, R. L. (2012). Incentives and alternative rating approaches: Roads to greater accuracy in job performance assessment? *Journal of Personnel Psychology* 11(4), 159-168.
- Jelley, R. B., Bonaccio, S., Chiochio, F. (2014). Educating industrial-organizational psychologists for science and practice: A Canadian perspective. *Industrial and Organizational Psychology: Perspectives on Science and Practice*, 7(1), 51-54.
- Jones, D. A., & Skarlicki, D. P. (2013). How perceptions of fairness can change: A dynamic model of organizational justice. *Organizational Psychology Review*, 3(2), 138–160. doi:10.1177/2041386612461665
- Juin-Lan, H., & Jeng-Hwan, W. (2015). Exploring the effects of organizational justice on employees' innovative behavior in hospitality industry from the aspect of organizational support. *Revista de Cercetare si Interventie Sociala*, 49, 113-126.
- Karp, S., & Stenmark, H. (2011). Learning to be a police officer. Tradition and change in the training and professional lives of police officers. *Police Practice and Research*, 12(1), 4–15. doi:10.1080/15614263.2010.497653
- Kim, T. Y., Edwards, J. R., & Shapiro, D. L. (2014). Social comparison and distributive justice: East Asia Differences. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 132, 401-414

- Lind, E. A. (2001). Thinking critically about justice judgements. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 58, 220-226. doi:10.1006/jvbe.2001.1793
- Louisiana State Legislature Revised Statutes. (2016). Retrieved November 06, 2017, from https://legis.la.gov/Legis/Laws_Toc.aspx?folder=75&level=Parent
- Ma, L., Tang, H., & Yan, B. (2015). Public Employees' Perceived Promotion Channels in Local China: Merit-based or Guanxi-orientated? *Australian Journal of Public Administration*, Vol 4, (3), 283-297.
- McCarthy, J., Hrabluik, C., Jelley, R. B. (2009). Progression through the ranks: Assessing employee reactions to high-stakes employment testing. *Personnel Psychology*, 62(4), 793-832.
- Mckinney, W. R., Mulvaney, M. A., & Grodsky, R. (2013). Pay Increase Monies for Municipal Agencies : A Case Study. *Public Personnel Management*, 42, 471-492. doi:10.1177/0091026013495766
- Messick, D. M., & Sentis, K. (1983). Fairness, preference, and fairness biases. In D. M. Messick & K. S. Cook (Eds.), *Equity theory: Psychological and sociological perspectives* (pp. 61-94). New York: Praeger.
- Nicklin, J. M., McNall, L. A., Cerasoli, C. P., Strahan, S. R., & Cavanaugh, J. A. (2014). The Role of Overall Organizational Justice Perceptions within the Four-Dimensional Framework. *Soc Just Res* 27, 243-270. doi:10.1007/s11211-014-0208-4
- Pallant, J. (2013). *SPSS Survival Manual* (5th ed.). New York, NY: McGraw-Hill.

- Patten, R., Caudill, J. W., Bor, S. E., Thomas, M. O., & Anderson, S. (2015). Managing a criminal justice crisis: An organizational justice understanding of change in a sheriff's office. *American Journal of Criminal Justice, 40*, 737-749.
- Peter, L., & Hull, R. (1969). *The Peter Principle: Why Things Always Go Wrong*. New York: William Morrow and Company.
- Phelan, S. E., & Lin, Z. (2001). Promotion Systems and Organizational Performance: A Contingency Model. *Computational & Mathematical Organization Theory, 7*, 207–232.
- Qin, X., Ren, R., Zhang, Z., & Johnson, R. (2015). Fairness heuristics and substitutability effects: Inferring the fairness of outcomes, procedures, and interpersonal treatment when employees lack clear information. *Journal of Applied Psychology, 100*(3), 749-766.
- Ramshaw, P. (2013). Community policing and lateral career paths. *Police, Practice and Research, 14*(6), 464–477. doi:10.1080/15614263.2012.729701
- Romaine, J. (2014). The Peter Principle resuscitated: are promotion systems useless? *Human Resource Management Journal, 4*, 410-423.
- Rowland, C. A., & Hall, R. D. (2012). Organizational justice and performance: is appraisal fair? *EuroMed Journal of Business, 7*(3), 280–293.
doi:10.1108/14502191211265334

- Schappe, S. P. (1996). Bridging the gap between procedural knowledge and positive employee attitudes: Procedural justice as keystone. *Group & Organization Management, 21*(3), 337-364.
- Schminke, M., Arnaud, A., & Taylor, R. (2015). Ethics, values, and organizational justice: Individuals, organizations, and beyond. *Journal of Business Ethics, 130*, 727-736.
- Scott, B. M., Daisley, R. L., Wheeler, M., & Boyer, P. (2014). A meta-Analysis of the Relationship between Individual Assessments and Job Performance. *Journal of Applied Psychology, 100*(1), 5-20.
- Sells, P. (1999). How to get the right person for the right job. *Fire Engineering, 152*, 62-67.
- Shahzad, K., & Muller, A. R. (2016). An integrative conceptualization of organizational compassion and organizational justice: a sensemaking perspective. *Business Ethics: A European Review, 25*.
- Sholihin, M. (2013). How does procedural fairness affect performance evaluation system satisfaction? (evidence from a UK Police Force). *Gadjah Mada International Journal of Business, 15*(3), 231–247.
- Stevens, J. P. (2009). *Applied multivariate statistics for the social sciences* (5th ed.). Mahwah, NJ: Routledge Academic.

- Susanj, Z., & Jakopec, A. (2012). Fairness Perceptions and Job Satisfaction as Mediators of the Relationship between Leadership Style and Organizational Commitment. *Psychological Topics, 3*, 509-526.
- Suls, J., & Wheeler, L. (2012). Social comparison theory. *Handbook of theories of social psychology, 1*, 460-482.
- Tabachnick, B. G., & Fidell, L. S. (2013). *Using Multivariate Statistics, 6th ed.* Boston: Allyn and Bacon.
- Thau, S., & Mitchell, M. S. (2010). Self-gain or self-regulation impairment? Tests of competing explanations of the supervisor abuse and employee deviance relationship through perceptions of distributive justice. *Journal of Applied Psychology, 95*(6), 1009-1031.
- Thompson, J. A. (2005). Proactive personality and job performance: A social capital perspective. *Journal of Applied Psychology, 90*(5), 1011-1017.
- Tobias, L. (2004). The thriving person and the thriving organization parallels and linkages. *Consulting Psychology Journal: Practice and Research, 56*, (1), 3-9.
- Wan, H. L., Sulaiman, M., & Omar, A. (2012). Procedural justice in promotion decisions of managerial staff in Malaysia. *Asia Pacific Business Review, 18*(1), 99-121.
- Webster, J. R., & Beehr, T. A. (2012). Antecedents and outcomes of employee perceptions of intra-organizational mobility channels. *Journal of Organizational Behavior, 34*, 919-941.

West's Louisiana Statutes Annotated, Revised Statutes Sections (2016) 33:1481 to

33:2620. 19(b).

Appendix A: Survey Instruments

Organizational Justice Questionnaire

The following items refer to the procedures used to arrive at your (outcome). To what extent:

1. Have you been able to express your views and feelings during those procedures?
2. Have you had influence over the (outcome) arrived at by those procedures?
3. Have those procedures been applied consistently?
4. Have those procedures been free of bias?
5. Have those procedures been based on accurate information?
6. Have you been able to appeal the (outcome) arrived at by those procedures?
7. Have those procedures upheld ethical and moral standards?

The following items refer to your (outcome). To what extent:

1. Does your (outcome) reflect the effort you have put into your work?
2. Is your (outcome) appropriate for the work you have completed?
3. Does your (outcome) reflect what you have contributed to the organization?
4. Is your (outcome) justified, given your performance?

The following items refer to (the authority figure who enacted the procedure). To what extent:

1. Has (he/she) treated you in a polite manner?
2. Has (he/she) treated you with dignity?
3. Has (he/she) treated you with respect?
4. Has (he/she) refrained from improper remarks or comments?

The following items refer to (the authority figure who enacted the procedure). To what extent:

1. Has (he/she) been candid in (his/her) communications with you?
2. Has (he/she) explained the procedures thoroughly?
3. Was (his/her) explanations regarding the procedures reasonable?
4. Has (he/she) communicated details in a timely manner?
5. Has (he/she) seemed to tailor (his//her) communications to individuals' specific needs?

Measure of Transparency (García-Izquierdo et al., 2012)

Please indicate how transparent the criteria for most promotions in your company are:

- a. Published in the collective agreement
- b. Published, so employees may know them
- c. Partially hidden, employees may know them only if they are connected with the decision makers
- d. Totally hidden, nobody knows until after the decision is made

Knowledge of Organizational Procedures Scale

Use the following scale to answer the questions in this section:

1 = Not at All Knowledgeable

2 = Slightly Knowledgeable

3 = Moderately Knowledgeable

4 = Quite Knowledgeable

5 = Extremely Knowledgeable

To what extent are you knowledgeable or familiar with the procedures your organization uses to make decisions in the following areas?

1. Making hiring decisions
2. Determining pay raises
3. Evaluating employee performance
4. Promoting/advancing employees
5. Resolving employee conflicts/disputes
6. Allocating resources
7. Assigning work/projects
8. Terminating/laying off employees

Appendix B: Instrument Permission Letters

From: Jason A. Colquitt <colq@uga.edu<mailto:colq@uga.edu>>

Date: Saturday, October 8, 2016

Subject: Permission to use Measurement

To: Michael Carter <mcarter2@waldenu.edu<mailto:mcarter2@waldenu.edu>>

Hi Michael,

No permission is needed, as that instrument is published in the public domain and is not copyrighted. Of course, my permission is granted.

Best,

Jason

From: Antonio León García-Izquierdo

<anGarcía@uniovi.es<mailto:anGarcía@uniovi.es>>

Date: Monday, October 10, 2016

Subject: Permission to use Measure

To: Michael Carter <mcarter2@waldenu.edu<mailto:mcarter2@waldenu.edu>>

Good morning Michael. You can use the measure. The item is in Spanish, and I have not translated into English but it is not difficult. I could help you with that.

Best,

Antonio.

On Wed, Oct 12, 2016 at 11:15 AM, Steve Schappe

<sxs28@psu.edu<mailto:sxs28@psu.edu>> wrote:

Dear Mr. Carter,

You're welcome to use the scale. It was an ad hoc measure that, as I recall, fortunately had decent psychometric properties. I hope it proves useful to you.

Do you have access to it? I used it originally for my dissertation, so it's in there if you have access to it online; I know it's not included in the Group & Organization Management article that subsequently was published.

Just let me know if you need a copy and I can dig it out.

Regards,

Steve