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Inclusion and affective wellbeing: Roles of justice perceptions

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Inclusion and affective wellbeing: roles of justice perceptions

Abstract

Purpose – This paper examines the mediating roles of procedural justice and distributive justice in the organizational inclusion–affective wellbeing relationship.

Design/methodology/approach – Data were collected from 253 Australian employees using an online survey. The study used confirmatory factor analysis and structural equation modeling to analyze the data.

Findings – Organizational inclusion was positively related to both distributive justice and procedural justice. The relationship between organizational inclusion and affective wellbeing was mediated by both distributive justice and procedural justice.

Research limitations/implications – The cross-sectional design may have limited the empirical inferences; however, the proposed model was based on robust theoretical contentions, thus mitigating the limitation of the design. Data were collected from a single organization, thus limiting generalizability.

Practical implications – Implementation of inclusion training activities at organizational, group, and individual levels is important to enhance perceptions of organizational inclusion and subsequently improve employee affective wellbeing.

Originality/value – Based on the group engagement model and group-value model of justice, this paper adds to the literature by demonstrating two mediating mechanisms driving the organizational inclusion–affective wellbeing relationship.

Keywords Organizational inclusion, Procedural justice, Distributive justice, Wellbeing.

1. Introduction

Based upon the group engagement model (Tyler and Blader, 2003) and group-value model of justice (Lind and Tyler, 1988; Tyler and Lind, 1992), this study examines the relationship between organizational inclusion and affective wellbeing. Creating inclusive climates is critical to the workplace given its relationship with employee wellbeing. We argue that such an inclusive climate enhances affective wellbeing because it can lead employees to perceive fairness in the organization. Organizational inclusion denotes the degree to which employees feel “a part of critical organizational processes such as access to information and resources, involvement in work groups, and ability to influence the decision-making process” (Mor Barak and Cherin, 1998, p. 48). Inclusion is also about having a voice (Sabharwal, 2014), belongingness (Shore *et al.*, 2011; van Prooijen *et al.*, 2004), and the individual feeling of being accepted and valued in the workplace (Pelled *et al.*, 1999; Roberson, 2006). It is often viewed from a workplace environment perspective (Fujimoto *et al.*, 2014), which suggests that inclusive work environments may drive employees’ perceptions about the organization and thus influence their affective states (Leary and Downs, 1995).

Although Findler *et al.* (2007) found that workplace inclusion tends to increase employees’ wellbeing, their focus was on general wellbeing (depression and strain) and stress (role conflict, role ambiguity, and role overload) that mix psychological or affective aspects with physical health, and therefore do not enable a clear understanding of the unique contribution of inclusion to the affective component of wellbeing. This paper advances this area by specifically focusing on affective wellbeing (i.e., a worker’s positive psychological state of mind). This is not only due to the lack of empirical evidence on affective wellbeing but also because it is a critical

factor that helps reduce negative work attitudes such as job dissatisfaction (Colquitt *et al.*, 2001) and turnover intentions (Simons and Roberson, 2003), and prevent negative work behaviors such as absenteeism and poor performance (e.g., Ybema and van den Bos, 2010).

Building on previous studies that have shown that inclusion can positively affect wellbeing (Greenhaus *et al.*, 1990; Mor Barak *et al.*, 1998), the present study models two mediating mechanisms proposed to drive the influence of inclusion on wellbeing. Prior literature suggests that when employees feel that they are included in important workplace activities or processes, they are likely to perceive fairness (Findler *et al.*, 2007), which facilitates the development of wellbeing (e.g., Elovainio *et al.*, 2005; Lawson *et al.*, 2009; Le *et al.*, 2016; Ybema and van den Bos, 2010). According to the group engagement model, which is an expansion of the group-value model of justice (Lind and Tyler, 1988), the perceived fairness resulting from inclusive climates can shape employees' social identity and cooperation in the organization and foster their positive state of mind (Tyler and Blader, 2003). Consistent with this perspective, we argue that justice perceptions mediate the relationship between organizational inclusion and affective wellbeing. Among the three dimensions (distributive, procedural, and interactional) of organizational justice, procedural and distributive justice are particularly relevant to organization-oriented variables, whereas interactional justice (both interpersonal and informational components) is more relevant to variables related or specific to supervisors (Cropanzano *et al.*, 2002; Jiang *et al.*, 2016). Because organizational inclusion is an organization-oriented variable that is referenced to the organization or system as a whole, we focus only on the mediating roles of distributive and procedural justice.

This paper has novel contributions to the literature in two aspects. First, the current study identifies a new antecedent (i.e., organizational inclusion) of employee affective wellbeing.

Despite a variety of factors that have been theorized to influence affective wellbeing, empirical studies are still yet to demonstrate specifically whether organizational inclusion can improve affective wellbeing. This examination is particularly critical for the workplace because it will advance and strengthen our understanding of how important inclusion is for both the employee and the organization, and thus prompt employers to revisit their inclusion policies and practices (Shore *et al.*, 2011). Second, this study extends justice theories such as the group engagement theory (Tyler and Blader, 2003) and the group-value model of justice (Lind and Tyler, 1988), by establishing the justice-based mechanisms underlying the inclusion–wellbeing relationship. Stepping beyond prior studies that focus on the simple interrelations between inclusion- and wellbeing-related variables (e.g., Correa-Velez *et al.*, 2010), these mediation mechanisms expand our theoretical and empirical insights regarding why inclusive climates can benefit employees' affective wellbeing. In this way, the current study also sheds light on future research that is required to further understand additional mediation processes that transmit the effects of inclusion to employee wellbeing.

2. Literature review and hypotheses development

2.1. Organizational inclusion, and justice perceptions

Organizational inclusion, which highlights the inclusive decision-making process, is a critical factor that contributes to employees' sense of shared identity, positive social interactions, and cooperation amongst employees with diverse backgrounds (Shore *et al.*, 2011). The key benefits of inclusion for individuals include higher levels of employee wellbeing and productivity, job satisfaction, and lower levels of turnover and absenteeism. These benefits can also be extended to the organizational level in the form of profits and performance (Sabharwal, 2014). This study

examines how perceived organizational inclusion contributes to affective wellbeing, arguing that organizational inclusion influences affective wellbeing because it can influence employees' relational perceptions regarding organizational processes (i.e., procedural justice) and outcomes (distributive justice). The following section discusses the relationships between organizational inclusion and justice perceptions, and then theorizes the relationships between justice perceptions and affective wellbeing.

Procedural justice refers to perceived fairness about processes, including decision-making processes and having voice in those processes, which are used to determine employees' work outcomes, such as promotions and pay (Greenberg, 2004). Distributive justice refers to perceived fairness of employees' decision outcomes, which result from these processes, in relation to their work contributions (Adams, 1965; Cropanzano *et al.*, 2002). According to the group-value model (or relational model of authority) (Lind and Tyler, 1988) and group engagement model (Tyler and Blader, 2003), group membership is essential as people have strong needs of belonging, security, and socialization (Tyler, 1989; Tyler *et al.*, 1996). In alignment with the perspective of the need to belong (Baumeister and Leary, 1995), these two models focus on the extent to which people are treated well in groups. The assumption of both models is that members of a group can judge whether they are respected and valued in their group, and based on this judgment, they exhibit positive or negative attitudes toward their group (i.e., organizations) and develop varying degrees of shared social identity with their group. For example, applying the group-value model to workplace justice phenomena, Tyler (1989) implies that fair procedures are usually perceived as symbolic messages of group inclusion, whereas unfair procedures tend to be perceived as symbolic messages of being excluded from, or rejected by, a group. This implication suggests that inclusion in a group shapes a group member's perception of procedural justice. Considering

that it has been shown that procedural justice is likely to be accompanied by distributive justice (although the reverse might not be always be the case [McFarlin and Sweeney, 1992]), it is logical to expect that inclusion in a group should increase the likelihood that employees perceive distributive justice.

These theoretical perspectives generated from the group-value model and group engagement model have obtained some initial empirical support. For instance, Findler *et al.* (2007) found that workplace inclusion can increase the overall fairness perceived by organizational members. Unfortunately, their research did not provide clear information regarding how fairness was defined and measured, nor did it examine justice at the dimensional level (e.g., distributive and procedural justice). However, Wenzel's (2000) study has, to some extent, complemented Findler *et al.*'s findings, implying that inclusion is important in promoting employees' justice motives (e.g., distributive and procedural justice). Although Wenzel operationalized inclusion based on social categorization in a broader context, the similar connotation that underlies the various conceptualizations of inclusion makes it feasible to extend the study implications to organizational settings. Despite the lack of direct empirical evidence, the above theoretical arguments and empirical evidence indicate that the levels of perceived or experienced inclusion should contribute to employees' perceptions of procedural and distributive justice. Taken together, the study proposes the following hypothesis:

H1. Organizational inclusion is positively related to distributive justice (H1a) and procedural justice (H1b).

2.2. Justice perceptions and affective wellbeing

As discussed, the theoretical perspective of the group-value or relational model (Tyler, 1989; Tyler *et al.*, 1996; Tyler and Lind, 1992) can help to explain how justice perceptions build upon

inclusion practices. The literature suggests that the group-value model can also extend to explaining the influence of justice perceptions on employee outcomes (e.g., affective wellbeing). The group-value model proposes that procedural justice has important effects on an individual's psychological state, attitudes, and behaviors in a group, as it to some extent reflects the quality of people's social connection with their group members and group authorities (Tyler *et al.*, 1996). That is, fair treatment or reward recognition by authorities or senior managers signifies that individuals are respected and valued within their group. The feelings of pride and respect in a group as a consequence of fair treatment may lead to employees' group-serving behaviors or attitudes, which are likely reflections and products of their positive psychological states (e.g., affective wellbeing and work satisfaction) (Farh *et al.*, 1990).

The above viewpoint is supported by Martin and Bennett's (1996) insights that distributive and procedural justice perceptions are sources of satisfaction at work, which can lead to employee positive attitudinal outcomes (e.g., commitment to the group or organization) that benefit groups and reflect employees' feeling of being valued in their group. These views suggest that if a group (or its representatives) and its policies and practices are characterized as positive and just, it is likely that individuals will perceive their work situations and conditions to be enjoyable, which leads to a sense of belonging, attachment, and comfort in the group or organization. Such individual psychological processes and feelings initiated by fair and favorable treatment are, in turn, likely to foster employees' psychological wellbeing (Haslam *et al.*, 2009). These theoretical bases suggest that perceptions of organizational justice may shape employee affective wellbeing.

Past research has provided empirical evidence to support the association between procedural justice and psychological wellbeing (Elovainio *et al.*, 2005; Judge and Colquitt, 2004;

Kausto *et al.*, 2005; Le *et al.*, 2016; Tepper, 2001). For example, Ybema and van den Bos (2010) found that employees who perceived procedural injustice reported more depressive symptoms than those who did not. Qin *et al.* (2014) found that procedural unfairness can negatively affect employees' psychological wellbeing. Considering procedural justice as a type of social support or a means of social integration of employees within a group (Elovainio *et al.*, 2001), prior studies also found that when employees perceive organizational processes as fairer, they tend to have a greater sense of social support, experience less stress in work roles, and report a higher level of wellbeing (Findler *et al.*, 2007; Le *et al.*, 2016).

The association between distributive justice and employee psychological wellbeing has also been documented in empirical research. The findings vary in the literature. Although a few studies have found that distributive justice had no effect on employee wellbeing (e.g., Moliner *et al.*, 2008; Rodwell *et al.*, 2011), much research supports a positive (or negative) relationship between distributive justice (or injustice) and wellbeing. The overall conclusion that can be drawn from the latter stream of research is that those who report low levels of distributive justice often experience low levels of wellbeing (de Boer *et al.*, 2002; Le *et al.*, 2016; Tepper, 2001). For example, Judge and Colquitt (2004) found that distributive justice can shape employees' affective states that are related to psychological wellbeing (e.g., increased job satisfaction, decreased perception of work–family conflict), despite the lack of support for their proposition regarding the distributive justice–stress relationship. From the perspective of equity theory, Adam (1965) and Greenberg (1990) theorized that employees feel dissatisfied with job outcomes if they perceive that their outcomes are less than their expectation or less than the reward of their referents. Building on this contention, Greenberg (2004) argued that perceptions of distributive unfairness can lead to poor employee affective wellbeing or various deviant behaviors. Tepper

(2001) and Greenberg (2004) affirmed that distributive injustice, like procedural injustice, can be linked to various stress-related issues. Taken together, we propose:

H2. Distributive justice (*H2a*) and procedural justice (*H2b*) are positively related to affective wellbeing.

H3. The relationship between organizational inclusion and affective wellbeing is mediated by distributive justice (*H3a*) and procedural justice (*H3b*).

3. Methods

3.1. Sample and procedure

Data were collected through a 20-minute online survey. An email invitation containing a hyperlink to the online survey was sent to employees, and a follow-up email was sent two weeks later. Prospective participants were assured that participation was voluntary and anonymous and that results would only be published in aggregate. The purpose of the study was described as “to capture a clearer understanding of the justice perceptions held by employees at the university, and to generate diversity initiatives to enhance the fairness of the university’s diversity practices, policies and work relationships.” Before the launch of the main survey, a pilot study was conducted to test content validity of the items with 60 randomly selected full-time employees in the higher education industry in Australia.

The final sample consisted of 253 usable responses, representing a valid response rate of 16%. The gender distribution of the respondents was 37.5% male and 62.5% female. Age had the following distributions: 3.6% below 25 years, 26.9% between 25 and 39, 45.5% between 40 and 54, 23.7% between 55 and 70, and 0.4% above 70. Most of the survey participants (77.9%) had permanent employment status. Organizational tenure had the following distribution: 12.3% had

been employed for less than one year, 38.3% for between one and five years, 20.9% for between six and 10 years, and 28.5% for more than 10 years. Sixty-eight percent were in a non-academic role. Seventy-six percent held a full-time position.

3.2 Measures

3.2.1. Organizational inclusion

The three-item instrument developed by Bortree and Waters (2008) was employed to measure organizational inclusion. Participants responded to a five-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree and 5 = strongly agree). A sample item was “I am usually invited to important meetings in my organization.” The Cronbach’s alpha for this measure was 0.67.

3.2.2. Procedural and distributive justice

Colquitt’s (2001) seven-item measure was employed to assess employees’ perceptions of procedural justice. Participants responded on a five-point Likert scale ranging from “1 = to a small extent” to “5 = to a large extent.” A sample item was “Have you been able to express your views and feelings during those procedures?” Participants were advised that the “procedures” in these items referred to the procedures used to arrive at their outcomes. The Cronbach’s alpha for this measure was 0.86.

Distributive justice was measured by the four-item scale developed by Colquitt (2001). In the study, the term “outcomes” is defined as work outcomes, such as rewards, promotions and performance appraisal ratings. Sample items are “Is your (outcome) appropriate for the work you have completed?” and “Does your (outcome) reflect what you have contributed to the organization?” The Cronbach’s alpha for distributive justice was 0.93.

3.2.3. *Affective wellbeing*

The study measured affective wellbeing using the six-item scale developed by Warr (1990). Respondents were asked to rate six wellbeing states described as “tense,” “uneasy,” “worried,” “calm,” “contented,” and “relaxed.” A sample item is “Thinking of the past few weeks, how much of the time has your job made you feel each of the following?” Responses ranged from 1 (never) to 5 (all of the time). Responses to the first three items were reverse-coded. The Cronbach’s alpha for this six-item scale was 0.92.

3.2.4. *Control variables*

The study controlled for the demographic characteristics of the respondents, namely age, gender, employment status, organizational tenure, cultural identity, and disability.

3.3. *Data analysis*

Anderson and Gerbing’s two-step procedure, which involves confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) and structural equation modeling (SEM), was employed to analyze the data. SEM was employed because it has been more effective than traditional regression analyses in capturing interrelationships among latent variables (Schreiber *et al.*, 2006). For example, it allows researchers to specify and test the path model of latent constructs as well as the measurement model that denotes the relationships between latent variables and their observed indicators (Kline, 2015). In particular, scholars contend that SEM is better suited for testing models with two or more mediators, such as the current model that contains two mediators: distributive justice and procedural justice (LeBreton *et al.*, 2009). Prior to hypothesis testing, a series of CFAs was performed to test the discriminant validity of the four variables (i.e., organizational inclusion, distributive justice, procedural justice, and affective wellbeing). Then, two sets of

SEMs were performed and compared to identify the best structural model based on the hypotheses.

For the CFA and SEM used in the current study, the item parceling strategy recommended by predecessors (e.g., Little *et al.*, 2002; Nasser-Abu Alhija and Wisenbaker, 2006) for those variables measured with four or more items was used. This approach has been employed and proved reliable in numerous studies (Chen *et al.*, 2005; Jiang, 2016; Jiang *et al.*, 2017). An advantage of item parceling is that it can reduce the number of indicators for latent variables, and thus reduce the potential inflated measurement errors caused by too many indicators on a single latent variable (Nasser-Abu Alhija and Wisenbaker, 2006). Adopting the item-to-construct balance approach (Little *et al.*, 2002), items with the highest and lowest loadings were bundled successively until every item was assigned to a parcel. The mean score of the items within the same parcel was used as the score for the parcel indicator. Three item parcels were finally created for distributive justice, procedural justice, and affective wellbeing.

The following indexes were used to evaluate model fit: the ratio of chi-square to the degree of freedom (χ^2/df), which is less influenced by sample size relative to chi-square (χ^2) (Jöreskog and Sörbom, 1996); the standardized root mean residual (SRMR); the root mean square error approximation (RMSEA); and the comparative fit index (CFI). As per prior research (Kline, 2015), for adequate model fit, χ^2/df should be smaller than 5.0, SRMR and RMSEA should be smaller than or close to 0.08, and CFI should be over 0.90.

4. Results

To test the measurement model, the baseline model (four-factor) was compared with several competing models, which were composited in line with the underlying conceptual foundation. The literature suggests that individuals may occasionally mix the feelings of different types of

justice, and in certain cases the perceived inclusion may not be rationally distinguished from justice perceptions (Wayne *et al.*, 2002). For these reasons, it is important to ensure these concepts or constructs are empirically distinct. Accordingly, the three-factor model was set up by combining any two of the three constructs (distributive justice, procedural justice, and organizational inclusion) and the two-factor model by combining distributive and procedural justice. The CFA results (see Table 1) demonstrated that the hypothesized four-factor model was preferred based on the fit indexes outlined above.

INSERT TABLE 1 HERE

Since all data were collected from a single source (e.g., self-reported by respondents), common method bias (CMB) was also checked. First, the most frequently used Harman's one-factor test was employed to examine the potential bias (Podsakoff *et al.*, 2003). The CFA results showed that the four-factor model fit the data much better than the one-factor model (see the fit indexes in Table 1). Second, the study conducted CFA for a four-factor model with a latent method factor added, which is considered a stronger and more rigorous procedure to test CMB (MacKenzie and Podsakoff, 2012; Podsakoff *et al.*, 2003). In this model, all parcel indicators were loaded on their own factors as well as the method factor. Results showed that this model fit the data slightly better than the four-factor model (see Table 1). However, the model improvement was negligible. For example, CFI was nearly the same for both models and the CFI difference (0.003) was far from the cut-off value of 0.05. Thus, CMB was not a significant issue in this study.

These results suggested that the study variables, namely, organizational inclusion, distributive justice, procedural justice, and affective wellbeing, could be empirically

distinguished from one another. Therefore, it would be appropriate to treat them as separate variables or constructs in subsequent analyses. The means, standard deviations, and correlations of variables are shown in Table 2.

INSERT TABLE 2 HERE

SEM in AMOS 23.0 was conducted to test the hypotheses. Compared with traditional correlation and regression analyses, SEM performs better, since latent variables are constructed based on multiple items that measure the same construct, and in this way, the construct is defined with only common variance and free of measurement errors (Engle, 2002). Two structural models (i.e., the partial and full mediation models) were compared to identify the best fitting model. As shown in Table 3, although SRMR, RMSEA, and CFI were almost the same for both models, the value of χ^2/df was smaller for the full mediation model ($\chi^2/df = 1.39$) than for the partial mediation model ($\chi^2/df = 1.40$). Given the high similarity of these indexes across the two models, further comparisons were carried out employing Akaike information criterion (AIC) (Akaike, 1987) and the expected cross-validation index (ECVI) (Browne and Cudeck, 1993). A model with smaller values of AIC and ECVI is considered to fit the data better (Blunch, 2008). As demonstrated in Table 3, the AIC (283.11 vs 284.00) and ECVI (1.12 vs 1.13) values were smaller for the full mediation model. Further, it was found that in the partial mediation model, the estimate for the direct path from organizational inclusion to affective wellbeing was not significant ($\beta = 0.11$, $p = 0.29$). Taking into account these results, the full mediation model was selected as the final structural model.

INSERT TABLE 3 HERE

The standardized estimates for the final model are displayed in Figure 1. After demographics were controlled, organizational inclusion was found to positively and significantly affect both distributive justice ($\beta = 0.59, p < 0.001$) and procedural justice ($\beta = 0.66, p < 0.001$), supporting *H1a* and *H1b*. When demographics and organizational inclusion were controlled, both distributive justice ($\beta = 0.35, p < 0.001$) and procedural justice ($\beta = 0.22, p < 0.001$) were significantly and positively related to affective wellbeing. Thus, *H2a* and *H2b* were supported.

INSERT FIGURE 1 HERE

In light of the methodology for testing mediating effects (Hayes, 2009), the support of *H1* and *H2* provided initial signs for the mediation roles of distributive justice and procedural justice. The study further used the PROCESS macro code (Hayes, 2013) to calculate the unstandardized indirect effects and their corresponding bias-corrected confidence interval (CI) (5,000 bootstrap samples). The indirect or mediating effect is significant when the bootstrap-based CI does not include zero (Hayes, 2013; Preacher *et al.*, 2007). Results showed that the indirect effect of organizational inclusion on affective wellbeing via distributive justice was significant ($b = 0.18, SE = 0.05, 95\% CI = [0.09, 0.29]$), as was the indirect effect via procedural justice ($b = 0.11, SE = 0.05, 95\% CI = [0.02, 0.22]$). Therefore, *H3a* and *H3b* were supported. The comparison of these two indirect effects did not show a significance difference ($\Delta b = 0.07, SE = 0.08, 95\% CI = [-0.09, 0.24]$), indicating that distributive justice and procedural justice played comparably strong mediating roles in the relationship between organizational inclusion and affective wellbeing.

5. Discussion and implications

This study examined the relationship between organizational inclusion and affective wellbeing and the mediating role of procedural and distributive justice. Results indicated that organizational inclusion is positively related to procedural and distributive justice and that the relationship between organizational inclusion and affective wellbeing is mediated by procedural and distributive justice. These findings have important theoretical implications.

The study has added to the inclusion literature by confirming the role of organizational inclusion in contributing to employees' affective wellbeing. Extending the group-value model (Tyler, 1989; Tyler *et al.*, 1996), the results illustrate how employees' perceptions of being included in a group and being treated with respect and dignity by group members and group authorities positively influence their affective wellbeing. Specifically, the findings show that distributive justice and procedural justice transmit the influence of organizational inclusion to affective wellbeing, offering an explanation for the process through which inclusion might assist in improving wellbeing.

These results support the theoretical perspective of the group-value model (Tyler, 1989; Tyler *et al.*, 1996), which highlights the important role of group effects on individuals in organizational settings. The results suggest that organizational practices that symbolize inclusion of group members send out the message that members are valued, and this symbolic information leads employees to feel respected and well treated, which in turn makes them judge inclusion practices as fair and favorable. The findings are in line with those of Haslam *et al.* (2009), highlighting that when the group provides individuals with meaningful direction and support, this can lead to improvements in their affective wellbeing.

Additionally, this study has provided support for equity theory (Adams, 1965; Greenberg, 1990) by testing how distributive justice perceptions are formed and how they exert influences on individual outcomes (i.e., affective wellbeing). As discussed above, justice perceptions serve as mediators linking inclusion and wellbeing. The results in relation to distributive justice indicate that organizational inclusion practices may be able to reduce members' negative reactions to their feelings of inequity when comparing their own with others' work outcomes, and further maintain affective wellbeing. To a certain degree, these findings have extended both theoretical perspectives (i.e., the group-value model and equity theory) by empirically indicating two paths that link organizational inclusion to affective wellbeing.

The study provides important practical implications for managers in maximizing the effects of inclusion on the workforce. To facilitate inclusion in the workplace, organizations and managers will benefit from creating inclusive environments that allow all employees, regardless of their differences (e.g., in age, gender, ethnicity, and job positions), to work well together and participate in decision-making processes that affect their work outcomes. Sabharwal's (2014) findings show that productive workplaces are ones where employees are encouraged to voice their views and where their views are sought before important organizational decisions are made. Shore *et al.* (2011) proposed a model of the antecedents and consequences of inclusion that include various contextual factors contributing to inclusion in organizations. Specifically, the findings, along with those generated from past research, have provided informed evidence that guides management practices. First, developing an inclusive work context is important at the organizational level. Diversity researchers have argued that organizational diversity initiatives are most effective if managers can address the sources of inequality (DiTomaso *et al.*, 2007). Justice pertaining to fair procedures, distributions of outcomes, and treatment among group

members is particularly relevant to inclusion (Shore *et al.*, 2011). For example, managers may create an inclusive climate by actively seeking advice and suggestions from minority members through promoting their equal opportunity to speak up in meetings, or to provide de-identified feedback on workplace issues. Top management can also deliberately enhance the representative participation across hierarchy, roles, and social groups to enhance employees' perceptions of procedural and distributive justice (Fujimoto and Härtel, 2017). To ensure managerial effectiveness in these processes, diversity and inclusion policies and practices should be in place so that all employees can be encouraged and incentivized to be involved in decision-making processes that directly affect their job content, outcomes, or working environments (Sabharwal, 2014).

Second, for the inclusive organizational decision-making process to take place, managers should be educated about the importance of organizational inclusiveness through various channels such as CEO talks, company newsletters, flyers and websites. There is empirical evidence of the importance of the values and philosophy of top management in relation to diversity and equal employment opportunity (Avery *et al.*, 2007), which can then facilitate inclusion in organizations. When managers value inclusiveness, organizations may benefit from employees' positive judgments and reactions that are particularly related to organizational decision-making processes. Indeed, the group-value model (Tyler *et al.*, 1996) and group engagement model (Tyler and Blader, 2003) both suggest that fair treatment from organizational managers who endorse inclusion and diversity conveys a message that employees are respected and valued within the organization, and that this message can shape employee wellbeing (i.e., Shore *et al.*, 2011; Tyler *et al.*, 1996).

Third, as discussed previously, the findings have demonstrated the important roles of inclusion in generating positive employee outcomes. In light of Bortree and Waters' study (2008), as non-discriminative organizational practices to a large extent drive the conceptualization of inclusion, our results further suggest that a discrimination-free environment in the workplace can also facilitate launching and implementing inclusive management practices. For example, group leaders (e.g., department managers) can deliberately create inclusive heterogeneous participation in departmental meetings that actively invite employees to learn about different perspectives and provide suggestions on how the department can function better.

There are several limitations that should be addressed in future research. First, since data were collected from a single university in Australia, the findings may not be generalizable to other types of organizations because of potential differences in organizational culture. However, given that universities tend to have similar cultures, the results may be generalizable to the university sector (Jiang *et al.*, 2016). Future research may endeavor to further understand the mediating role of organizational justice in the influence of inclusion on employee outcomes using employee samples from other types of workplaces. Second, although the hypotheses were grounded in solid theoretical contentions, the cross-sectional data may have limited the causal inferences of the relationships between inclusion, justice perceptions, and affective wellbeing. Future research might consider using a longitudinal or experimental design to provide more robust findings in respect of the causal relationships among these variables. Third, due to the single-source data collected at the same time point, this study may have been affected by CMB. Although the CFA results showed that the CMB might not be a significant issue in this research, this limitation of the study design may mean that the risk of CMB cannot be completely ruled out. Future research may endeavor to collect data from multiple sources, and attempt to compare

the findings with those that are based solely on self-report data. Finally, the study included only distributive and procedural justice. Although theoretically these two types of justice are more relevant in studying organization-oriented practices (i.e., organizational inclusion), interpersonal and informational justice may nonetheless also be affected by these practices given that authorities often serve as representatives of the organizational system. Future research may examine all types of justice and empirically explore whether organizational inclusion has differential effects on other justice dimensions.

Accepted

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Table 1. CFA results for the measurement model

Models	χ^2	<i>df</i>	χ^2/df	SRMR	RMSEA	CFI
1-factor model	925.15	54	17.14	0.13	0.25	0.59
2-factor model	379.77	53	7.17	0.09	0.16	0.85
3-factor model A	309.25	51	6.06	0.08	0.14	0.88
3-factor model B	170.27	51	3.34	0.07	0.10	0.94
3-factor model C	136.81	51	2.68	0.06	0.08	0.96
4-factor model	70.00	48	1.42	0.03	0.04	0.99
4-factor model with a method factor	48.66	36	1.35	0.02	0.04	0.99

Note: N = 253. 1-factor model: the four variables were loaded on a single factor; 2-factor model: organizational inclusion, distributive justice and procedural justice were loaded on one factor; 3-factor model A: distributive justice and procedural justice were loaded on one factor; 3-factor model B: organizational inclusion and distributive justice were loaded on one factor; 3-factor model C: organizational inclusion and procedural justice were loaded on one factor; 4-factor model: all four variables were treated as independent factors; 4-factor model with a method factor: all four variables were treated as independent factors, with all indicators also being loaded on the method factor.

Table 2. Means, standard deviations, and correlations

Variables	M	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1. Gender	0.38	0.49									
2. Age	2.91	0.81	0.22***								
3. Job category	0.32	0.47	0.08	0.10							
4. Employment status	0.78	0.42	0.06	0.23***	-0.16**						
5. Work type	0.76	0.43	0.09	0.03	-0.09	0.37***					
6. Organizational tenure	2.66	1.02	0.08	0.41***	-0.08	0.32**	0.08				
7. Organizational inclusion	2.97	0.85	-0.06	-0.00	-0.03	-0.07	0.04	-0.10			
8. Distributive justice	3.11	1.09	-0.07	-0.15*	-0.13*	-0.05	-0.02	-0.06	0.48***		
9. Procedural justice	3.16	0.70	-0.03	-0.10	-0.19**	-0.08	-0.07	-0.08	0.52***	0.60***	
10. Affective wellbeing	2.93	0.98	-0.20	-0.09	-0.12 ⁺	-0.10	-0.09	-0.07	0.34***	0.48***	0.43***

Note: N = 253. *** $p < 0.001$, ** $p < 0.01$, * $p < 0.05$, + $p < 0.10$.

Table 3. Fit indexes for competing structural models

Fit indexes	Full mediation model	Partial mediation model
χ^2	135.11	134.00
df	97	96
χ^2/df	1.39	1.40
SRMR	0.03	0.03
RMSEA	0.04	0.04
CFI	0.98	0.98
AIC	283.11	284.00
ECVI	1.12	1.13

Note: N = 253. Full mediation model has two indirect paths: organizational inclusion → distributive justice → affective wellbeing, and organizational inclusion → procedural justice → affective wellbeing. The partial mediation model adds the direct path from organizational inclusion to affective wellbeing to the full mediation model.

Accepted

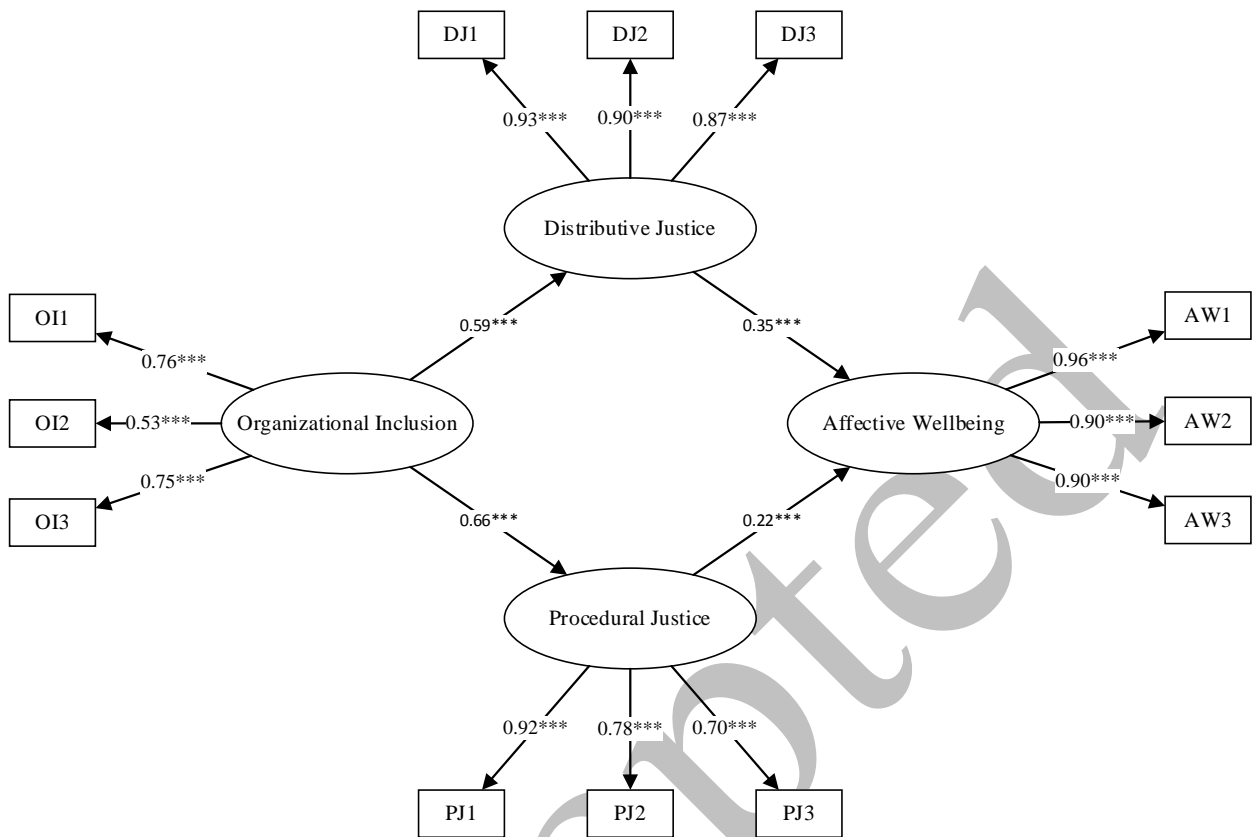


Fig. 1. The final structural model. *Note:* Standardized estimates are reported. Gender, age, job category, employment status, work type, and organizational tenure were controlled. *** $p < .001$.