Discipline in the organizational science literature is a broad concept encompassing a wide variety of management activity in reaction to employee behavior that deviate from organizational rules or procedures. The necessity of managing ineffective performance through various disciplinary actions has been acknowledged as a ubiquitous reality in organizations throughout the 20th century (e.g., Arvey & Jones, 1985; Huberman, 1964; Miner & Bresman, 1976; Thordalde, 1973).

Little empirical research on punishment has been conducted in organizational settings despite Arvey & Ivancevich's (1986) review of this subject nearly 2 decades ago. They concluded that the application of punishment within organizations is a neglected area of research inquiry and, hence, severely limits our understanding of this phenomenon.

In an effort to guide research efforts regarding discipline in organizations, Arvey and Jones (1985) proposed a model that suggests that employees who are disciplined develop perceptions of the intent and legitimacy of disciplinary sanctions as well as perceptions about the fairness of the sanctions. Those perceptions, in turn, affect employees' responses to disciplinary action.

A framework for investigating perceptions of fairness regarding organizational discipline is procedural justice theory (Thibaut & Walker, 1975). This theory states that concerns about the processes or procedures through which decisions are made affect perceptions of justice or fairness.

The systematic investigation of the contribution of procedural justice theory to an understanding of discipline is still in its early stages. A recent program of research including theory building (Trevino, 1992), research propositions (Ball, Trevino, & Sims, 1992), and empirical studies (Ball, 1991; Ball, Trevino, & Sims, 1991, 1993; Trevino & Ball, 1992) has strengthened the theoretical link between organizational justice theories and the discipline's process. In particular, a second-order factor analysis of 17 procedural justice characteristics yielded six factors related to fairness in disciplinary action (Ball, 1991). These factors were the explanation of the performance problem, the supervisor's demeanor, subordinate control, employee counseling, arbitrariness, and privacy. These factors relate directly to specific variables, including consistency, provision of a rationale, and voice, which have been identified in the punishment literature as being in...
important for the effective use of discipline in organizations (Terry & Lavey, 1990).

Significant correlations between perceptions of procedural justice and both attitudinal (organizational commitment) and behavioral (performance) reactions to punishment events have been found (Ball et al., 1993, 1994). In particular, negative reactions to discipline were highly correlated with perceptions of unfairness. On the other hand, employees who felt they had been disciplined fairly had positive reactions to discipline. Thus, more emphasis on fair treatment of employees by the supervisors who discipline them may reduce negative reactions to discipline.

These correlational findings suggest the need for further research to investigate whether a training program to enhance disciplinary fairness behavior on the part of supervisors would increase perceptions of justice on the part of employees being disciplined. Thus, a training program on disciplinary fairness was designed (for this study, based on Ball's (1990) procedural justice factors for discipline situations. The training is similar to that used by Skarlicki and Latham (1996), who found that training union leaders in procedural justice principles increased citizenship behavior of their members toward the union.

The purpose of the present study was twofold. First, it investigated whether training in procedural justice would affect subsequent perceptions of disciplinary fairness by both unionized employees who were disciplined and subject matter experts (SMES), namely managers, union officials, and attorneys. The discipline concerned employee behavior that violated organizational rules.

Gist and Mitchell (1992) have argued that two cognitive variables may affect the effectiveness of training, namely self-efficacy: the conviction that one can execute the behaviors that are being taught, and outcome expectancy: regarding one’s belief that execution of certain behaviors will lead to desirable outcomes (Bandura, 1986). People are more likely to translate self-efficacy into action if they believe such action will lead to attractive or beneficial outcomes (Bandura, 1992). The training program used in this study was designed to enhance these two cognitive-motivational variables through the use of enactive mastery, modeling, and persuasion. Thus, a second purpose of the study was to investigate whether these two variables would mediate the relationship between procedural justice training and perceptions of disciplinary fairness.

Supervisors and employees in a unionized workplace were used as participants because formal disciplinary procedures are incorporated into virtually all collective agreements in North American organizations, creating a heightened awareness of disciplinary matters relative to that which may occur in nonunion workplaces. Therefore, any change in supervisory approaches to discipline should be noticed by employees who are familiar with the disciplinary process.

The hypotheses tested in this study were as follows:

1. Employees who are disciplined in a role-play situation by supervisors who have had training in procedural justice theory perceive the disciplinary process to be more fair than do employees who are disciplined by supervisors in the control group.

2. Employee discipline given in a role-play situation by supervisors with training in procedural justice theory is perceived by SMES to be more fair than is disciplinary action taken by untrained supervisors.

3. Supervisors with training in procedural justice theory have higher self-efficacy regarding administering employee discipline than do untrained supervisors.

4. Supervisors with training in procedural justice theory have higher outcome expectations related to administering employee discipline than do untrained supervisors.

5. Self-efficacy with respect to fairness in disciplinary action mediates the effect of training on perceptions of procedural justice.

6. Outcome expectancy regarding employee discipline mediates the effect of training on perceptions of procedural justice.

Method

Participants

The participants consisted of 72 Canadian supervisors of unionized employees, sixty-five men and 17 were women. The supervisors were randomly assigned to either the training (n = 36) or the control group (n = 36). The mean age was 46.18 (SD = 6.56), the mean number of employees was 33.56 (SD = 35.91), and the mean years of employment with their current employer was 17.31 (SD = 6.10). The participants were employed in a municipal government works department (n = 44), a school board (n = 19), or a hospital (n = 8). The unions representing employees in these organizations were the Canadian Union of Public Employees (n = 65), the Ontario Nurses' Association (n = 3).

Procedure

In each organization, supervisors were trained in small groups of 4 to 11 people. The training, conducted over 5 half-day sessions, included an assessment of existing policies, group discussions, and role-plays. This was done because a meta-analysis (Birke & Day, 1986) found that this combination of techniques brought about a relatively permanent change in the job behavior. The training focused on six procedural justice factors for discipline identified by Ball (1991).

A pool of 42 generic role-plays was developed on the basis of interviews that elicited disciplinary grievances described by Roddecker (1989). Prior to conducting the training, these role-plays were measured for their face validity. One of these role-plays was conducted for each group. The trainers kept a log of the feedback received from the participants and supervisors.
plays were put in place with human resource managers in each organization to determine whether they would adopt such organization’s policies on disciplinary matters. Each training session incorporated experiential learning through a variety of role-playing exercises. Three role-plays were designed to identify the role-play privacy factor. These three role-plays were conducted in groups of three. The supervisor obtains playing the role of the supervisor, the employee, and the affirmative.

Role-plays were designed by human resource managers to be an effective training method for helping people develop and apply problem-solving skills, and because they provide focused feedback (Corker, 1987). Role-plays have been found to be particularly effective when individuals play themselves in a familiar situation (Gesten and Exner, 1993).

The role-playing experience was intended to increase supervisors’ self-efficacy when counseling employees with performance problems. The role-plays also provided an opportunity for participants to give each other feedback and to refine the skills being learned.

Learning outcomes. The behaviors related to each of the six factors were observed as key learning points because written learning points have been shown to improve recall and acquisition of desired behavior (Mann & Durfee, 1984).

Prospects for accurate causal accounts. This module emphasized the necessity of providing a clear rationale for why the behavior is a concern to the supervisor. The supervisors were taught to give an adequate explanation in demonstrating a sincere attempt at helping the employee improve performance. Finally, the supervisors were taught to focus on the undesired behavior rather than on the person.

Supervisor control over disciplinary process and outcome. The supervisors were taught to give employees the opportunity to appeal to a neutral third party and to allow them to discuss the disciplinary procedures.

Supervisory discretion. The need to use a normal level and part in speaking during a disciplinary discussion was emphasized.

The counseling role of the supervisor. The specific behavior required for effective counseling included establishing uncertainty, identifying the problem behavior, and then specifying, interpreting, and modifying the alternative behaviors and encouraging employee participation or voice in the disciplinary process. Privacy. Discussion centered on the rationale for taking action in a private setting; whether or not others can see or hear the disciplinary session.

Nonverbal messages. The importance of adapting to organizational disciplinary rules and procedures, particularly the provisions of the collective agreement regarding employee discipline, was explained.

Behavioral measures. Videotapes were suggested by Arvey and Jones (1985) as a method of evaluating behavioral aspects of disciplinary action. However, in 1991 the human resource managers were asked by the knowledge that they were being taped. Consequently, when the training of the 35 supervisors was completed, each supervisor in the training and control groups asked a unionized employee to role-play a hypothetical discipline scenario. The scenario had not been discussed during the training session. It was explained that the videotaping was solely for the purpose of allowing SMEs to evaluate the effectiveness of the training. The participants were informed that management would not have access to the tapes and that the videotapes would be reviewed at the end of the study.

Post session. Depicting typical discipline problems were used. Specifically, three scenarios described: (a) a phenomenon due to a second job, (b) drug/alcohol use, and (c) tardiness. During the scenarios, the supervisors were observed with a writing machine. Observations and recordings were kept by a co-supervisor following a co-supervisor's sensor was substituted. The write and the training and control groups were randomly assigned to one of the four groups.

The level of pretraining group displayed by the supervisors when taking disciplinary action was assessed by two sources, namely, unionized employees who participated in the videotaped role-play and SMEs who viewed the videotapes. The unionized employees completed a 16-item, five-point Likert-type questionnaire based on the instrument used by Ball et al. (1991). The questionnaire items required the evaluation of the procedures used in the behavior which the participant was concerned, subordinate control, and arbitrariness.

The SMEs were a group who practice labor law, 4 managers, and 14 senior officials. They participated in a workshop to submit rating errors (Latham, Wexley & Panch, 1975). Most of the SMEs knew any of the individuals that they appraised. After viewing the videotapes, they completed the same questionnaire and by the unionized employees.

Cognitive Measures. The supervisors completed self-efficacy, and outcome expectancy questionnaires before and after the training, but before the videotaped role-play. The measure of self-efficacy used a 10-point Likert-type scale to assess self-efficacy strength (Garst & Mitchell, 1992) and outcome expectancy that they could perform the level of learning goals in the training program.

Outcomes expectancy were measured immediately before and immediately after training in terms of perceived control over the program as well as self-evaluation expectation. A likert-type scale of the questionnaire also included authentic outcomes found by Ball et al. (1995) as to be related to perceptions of procedural fairness and their stress on the supervisory organizational commitment, and intention to quit the job.

Results. Cronbach's coefficient alpha for the questionnaires ranged from .64 to .89 and SMEs (n = 7) for the procedure was and were found to be 83 and 90, respectively. The SME interview reliability was .75 (n = 68). The sample size for the employees was less than 71 because
of nursing data due to three individuals overlooking items on the back of a double-sided questionnaire.

Table 1 shows that both unionized employees and SMEs perceived-employee discipline given in a role-play by supervisors treated in procedural justice to be more fair than disciplinary action taken by unarmed supervisors. Thus, the first two hypotheses were supported. An unexpected finding was that the 10 female supervisors (M = 3.80, SD = 0.29) were observed by the SMEs to be more fair than the 61 male supervisors (M = 3.46, SD = 0.31) when applying disciplinary action (t = 3.31, p < .001). In addition, female participants (M = 8.92, SD = 0.73) reported higher post-training outcome expectancy levels than the male participants (M = 5.34, SD = 0.31, t = -3.36, p < .01).

Coefficient alphas for measures of self-efficacy and outcome expectancy were .85 (n = 64) and .70 (n = 62), respectively. The respective coefficient alphas immediately following the training were .85 (n = 69) and .75 (n = 62).

Self-efficacy scores were high in all four cells in Table 2 because most participants had many years of supervisory experience. The correlation between the self-efficacy scores (r = .71) of the supervisors after the training with the procedural justice ratings from unionized employees (r = .71) was .85 (p < .001) and .39 (p < .011), respectively. Table 2 shows that with posttraining self-efficacy scores as the covariate, training had a significant main effect on self-efficacy. Thus the third hypothesis was supported. In a similar manner, Table 3 shows that using pretraining outcome expectancy scores as the covariate, there was a significant main effect for training on outcome expectancies. Thus the fourth hypothesis was also supported.

The correlations (see Table 4) and the analysis of covariance suggested that self-efficacy might be a mediating variable. Table 5 shows that a three-part regression analysis conducted by Baron and Kenny (1986) indicated

Table 1

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<td>Control</td>
<td>M</td>
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<td>Training</td>
<td>6.11</td>
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Table 2

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<td>M</td>
<td>SD</td>
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Table 3

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<td>Training</td>
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<tr>
<td>Control</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>1.63</td>
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** p < .01

The training was a significant predictor of (a) posttraining self-efficacy and (b) procedural justice ratings from both SMEs and unionized employees. Finally, self-efficacy was a significant predictor of procedural justice ratings from SMEs and from unionized employees when training was also included in the regression equation. This last regression equation showed that the beta weight for training was reduced for both SMEs and employees from its level in the second equation. Self-efficacy fully mediated the effect of training on SME ratings because the beta weight was reduced to zero and partially mediated the effect on employee ratings as the reduced beta weight was still greater than zero. These results support the fifth hypothesis that self-efficacy mediated the effect of training on procedural justice.

The correlation between the supervisors' outcome expectancy scores after the training with the procedural justice ratings from unionized employees and SMEs is also shown in Table 4. A regression analysis revealed that two of the three results required to establish mediation were present. Specifically, training was a significant predictor of outcome expectancy (β = 0.07, p = .01). Training was, however, a significant predictor of procedural justice ratings from both SMEs (β = .27, p < .03) and employees (β = .31, p < .001). Finally, outcome expectancy was a significant predictor of procedural justice ratings from SMEs (β = .34, p < .003) and employees (β = .43, p < .001) when training was also included in the regression equation. The beta weights for training were reduced significantly for both SMEs (β = .24, p < .03) and employees (β = .78, p < .001) from its level in the second equation. Thus, the fifth hypothesis that outcome expectancies mediate the effects of training was rejected.
Discussion

Five of the six hypotheses in the present field-based study were supported. Employee discipline conducted by supervisors who were trained in procedural justice was perceived by both their own unionized employees and SMEs to be significantly more fair than discipline carried out by untrained supervisors. The trained supervisors also had higher self-efficacy related to employee discipline than did untrained supervisors. Furthermore, this heightened self-efficacy mediated the effect of training on perceptions of procedural justice by unionized employees and SMEs that included managers, union officials, and attorneys.

The hypothesis that outcome expectancies would increase as a result of the training was supported. Moreover, the measures of outcome expectancies correlated significantly with effective disciplinary behavior as observed by both SMEs and unionized employees. Thus, the mediating effect of outcome expectancies on training warrants further research.

Beer and his colleagues (e.g., Beer, Eisenstaedt, & Spector, 1990) have argued that there is a "great training lobby" in that most training programs are too general and thus fail to meet the specific objectives for which they were designed. In contrast to this argument, Latané and Crandall (1991) stated that training that has a theoretical foundation is likely to be effective because theory allows understanding on the part of organizational decision makers, especially trainers, of the necessary steps required for training to be effective in attaining the objectives for which it was designed.

This field study is responsive to both of these points of view because it is specific to the context of employee discipline, and it is based on procedural justice theory. The theoretical significance of the present research is two-fold. First, to our knowledge, the study is the first to show that training, based on procedural justice theory, increases perceived fairness of disciplinary actions. This result is consistent with previous studies linking positive reactions to discipline with perceptions of fairness (Bill et al., 1993, 1994). Second, this field-based study with a Canadian sample enhanced the generalizability of earlier findings (e.g., Eden & Ariman, 1993, Saks, 1995) of the value of drawing on social cognitive theory (Bandura, 1982, 1986) as a source of mediating variables for increasing training effectiveness. Self-efficacy fully mediated the relationship between training and SME perceptions of procedural justice and partially mediated the relationship between training and employee perceptions of justice. The difference in the extent of mediation may be that employees have other factors affecting their judgments of procedural justice, such as their historical relations with their supervisor that third party SMEs do not. The study was designed to enhance self-efficacy by

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<th>Table 2</th>
<th>Correlations Among Procedural Justice Scores, Self-Efficacy, and Outcome Expectancies</th>
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<td>M</td>
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<tr>
<td>1. Employee Procedural Justice scores</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. SME Procedural Justice scores</td>
<td>3.51</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. Positioning self-efficacy</td>
<td>8.17</td>
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<tr>
<td>4. Mediating outcome expectancy</td>
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Note: SME = subject matter experts.

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<th>Table 5</th>
<th>Analysis of Self-Efficacy as a Mediating Variable</th>
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<td>Occupational sample</td>
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<td>Part 1</td>
<td>Posttraining self-efficacy</td>
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<td>Part 2</td>
<td>SME Procedural Justice scores</td>
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<td>Employee Procedural Justice scores</td>
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Note: SME = subject matter experts.
using positive masters through role-playing, modeling by observing other supervisors in their role-plays, and per-
suasion through group discussion. By focusing on increas-
ing self-efficacy, trainers gain confidence that they can
apply the concepts and principles that are being taught in the
training classroom. Social cognitive theory, the main
effect obtained in this study, and the correlation coeffi-
cients all indicate the potential of outcome expectancy as
a mediating variable of training.

The practical significance of this study is that it shows
that supervisors can be trained to see fair as well as
reasonable and ethical behavior in their work. As such, the
results indicate that the training intervention had a positive
impact on the supervisors' perceptions of fairness. The results
also suggest that the training intervention had a positive
impact on the supervisors' intentions to engage in fair
behavior in the future.

The study's findings have several practical implications.
First, they suggest that supervisors can be trained to see
fairness in their work, which can improve organizational
climate and performance. Second, the results indicate that
the training intervention had a positive impact on the
supervisors' intentions to engage in fair behavior in the
future. Finally, the study's findings suggest that the training
intervention had a positive impact on the supervisors' perceptions of fairness.

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