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**Benjamin E. Baran¹, Linda Rhoades Shanock²,
Steven G. Rogelberg², and Cliff W. Scott²**

Abstract

This study focuses on a common-yet-understudied group process: supervisor-led group meetings at work. Specifically, the study explores the relationships among employees' perceptions and reported behaviors with regard to such meetings. Respondents are 291 adults working in different organizations. Structural equation modeling of the data largely supports the hypothesized model. Employee perceptions of relationship quality with their supervisors (leader–member exchange) fully mediates the relationship between perceptions of supervisors' fairness (interactional justice) in group meetings and perceived organizational support. Leader–member exchange also fully mediates the relationship between interactional justice perceptions and meeting citizenship behaviors—a new construct describing extra-role behaviors that support meeting processes—and between good meeting practices by the supervisors and meeting citizenship behaviors. Leader–member exchange partially mediates the relationship between good meeting practices and perceived organizational support. These findings highlight the importance both of supervisors' behaviors within meetings that they lead

¹Northern Kentucky University

²University of North Carolina at Charlotte

Corresponding Author:

Benjamin E. Baran, Department of Management, Haile/U.S. Bank College of Business,
Northern Kentucky University, Highland Heights, KY 41099

E-mail: baranb1@nku.edu

and of the supervisor-led group meeting itself as a phenomenon worthy of future exploration.

Keywords

workplace group meetings, group leadership, supervision, leader–member exchange, perceived organizational support

Group meetings at work are ubiquitous (Rogelberg, 2006; Rogelberg, Leach, Warr, & Burnfield, 2006). Furthermore, research suggests a strong relationship between meeting satisfaction and overall job satisfaction (Rogelberg, Allen, Shanock, Scott, & Shuffler, 2010), highlighting how meetings can shape perceptions of the organization overall. In this study, we investigated the leadership of group meetings. Specifically, we focused on leader–member exchange as mediating the relationship between two supervisor variables in group meetings (interactional justice displayed by supervisors in meetings and the use of good meeting practices) and two relevant outcomes (perceived organizational support and meeting citizenship behaviors).

Meetings are important processes through which superior–subordinate relationships are constituted, reified, and potentially altered. In addition, employees often attribute their supervisors' behaviors and attitudes to the organization at large (Eisenberger, Stinglhamber, Vandenberghe, Sucharski, & Rhoades, 2002). A natural focus point that informs both theory and practice, therefore, is group meetings led by one's supervisor. In this study, we explored such group meetings, providing insight into the phenomenon of group meetings at work by highlighting relationships among aspects of managerial behaviors and employee reactions within the meeting process.

This study contributes to research on meetings in several ways. First, it explores the role of group leaders and their behaviors within the meeting. Studying what leaders do in group meetings they lead informs how what happens in a specific group process (the process of meeting) may influence outcomes both within and outside of the meeting. As such, this study highlights how localized practices within work groups can shape employees' global perceptions of not only relationships with group leaders but also of the organization overall. This study also contributes two useful measures: one for good meeting practices and one for meeting citizenship behaviors, providing important tools for future research.

In addition, this study builds on the literature on team or group leadership. Namely, we (a) highlight the importance of leadership within teams and

extend the small groups literature by examining the group meeting as a specific group process, (b) illustrate how group meetings are embedded in organizations, and (c) provide evidence regarding specific leader behaviors within group settings that have implications both within and outside of the group meeting. To the first point, team leadership has been suggested as one of the five pillars of teamwork (Salas, Sims, & Burke, 2005) and different leadership styles within groups help to explain variance in group outcomes (DeRue, Barnes, & Morgeson, 2010; Kotlyar & Karakowsky, 2006). To the second point, a number of group researchers have theorized and empirically examined the nature of groups within their organizational context. It appears that group meetings function as key venues for sense making that shape global perceptions and attitudes about the organization and its members (Raes, Glunk, Heijltjes, & Roe, 2007). In addition, "intragroup processes are inextricable from the wider intergroup context" (Hogg, Abrams, Otten, & Hinkle, 2004, p. 254), which further advocates consideration of both global perceptions and group-intensive processes in tandem.

Finally, this study demonstrates the relationships among leader behaviors within a group meeting and perceptions of the leader, likelihood of group members to provide valuable meeting input, and perceptions of the overall organization. This builds on and extends prior small group research, such as studies demonstrating how leaders' behavior in meetings influence group culture and how what happens in meetings can influence perceptions and attitudes outside the meeting (Galanes, 2003), the role of justice perceptions in meetings (Phillips, 2002), and the relationships among functional leadership behaviors and relevant outcomes (Kane, Zaccaro, Tremble, & Masuda, 2002).

Theoretical Background and Hypotheses

Theoretical Perspectives: Relational Systems and Social Exchange

Two theoretical perspectives informed our hypotheses. First, relational systems theory (Watzlawick, Beavin, & Jackson, 1967) posits that messages possess both content and relationship dimensions: "Every communication has a content and relationship aspect such that the latter classifies the former and is therefore metacommunication" (p. 54). For example, any statement a leader makes in a meeting not only expresses content (what is said) but also indicates something (intentionally or not) about the speaker's perceived relationship with his or her follower(s) (how it is said). This occurs because

meeting messages inevitably connote the leader's motivation for making such a statement and his or her attitude toward the receivers of the message. As such, perceptions developed in group meetings likely influence not only perceptions about the meeting but also about relationships among meeting participants and leaders as well as the organization overall. Therefore, some of what happens in meetings influences outcomes that are global and not meeting-specific in nature.

Second, social exchange theory (Blau, 1964) holds that behavior by one party in an exchange relationship engenders a felt obligation to respond in kind to the other party, conforming to the norm of reciprocity. Given this study's focus on supervisors and their employees, the concept of leader-member exchange is of particular relevance. Leader-member exchange represents the social exchange relationship between supervisors and their employees and is an indication of supervisor-employee relationship quality (e.g., Wayne, Shore, Bommer, & Tetrick, 2002). High-quality leader-member exchanges are characterized by high levels of mutual respect, trust, and understanding regarding role expectations (e.g., Dienesch & Liden, 1986). Employees with high-quality exchange relationships with supervisors should be more likely to reciprocate with behaviors that aid the supervisor (Lavelle, Rupp, & Brockner, 2007).

Interactional Justice in Supervisor-Led Meetings and Leader-Member Exchange

Organizational justice refers to employees' perceptions of fairness at work (Colquitt, Conlon, Wesson, Porter, & Ng, 2001). Of particular interest for this study is interactional justice displayed by supervisors in meetings that they lead, referring to the quality of interpersonal treatment employees receive during the enactment of organizational procedures and the quality of information communicated about such procedures (Cohen-Charash & Spector, 2001). Of the various types of justice, interactional justice is most likely to involve supervisors because they often have direct control over it (Masterson, Lewis, Goldman, & Taylor, 2000; Stinglhamber, De Cremer, & Mercken, 2006). Prior research has shown that interactional justice relates positively with leader-member exchange (e.g., Masterson et al., 2000) and evaluation of authority (Colquitt et al., 2001). The group meeting as a process through which leaders may display interactional justice and thereby influence relationships with their followers, however, has not been considered.

Interactional justice perceptions are highly relevant in group meetings, perhaps even more than in one-on-one meetings. In a one-on-one meeting,

for example, an employee cannot compare how his or her supervisor responds to his or her thoughts and ideas with how the supervisor responds to those of another subordinate. That comparison is more easily made in a group meeting.

In addition, supervisor-led group meetings are processes during which supervisors publicly display (or fail to display) a wide variety of behaviors, giving supervisors the opportunity to enact interactional justice for their employees. According to relational systems theory (Watzlawick et al., 1967), these displays of fairness (or unfairness) will likely influence not only how employees feel about their supervisors within the group but also how employees feel about their supervisors in general. This is because such fairness displays convey both relationship and content information to meeting attendees. As such, we expect that these justice perceptions in meetings would contribute to one's perception of the quality of relationship with one's supervisor (leader-member exchange).

Hypothesis 1: Interactional justice displayed by supervisors in supervisor-led meetings will positively relate to leader-member exchange quality.

Good Meeting Practices and Leader-Member Exchange

Prior research has shown that specific practices within meetings—including, for example, setting an agenda, asking for input, and starting meetings on time—allow meetings to run more smoothly (Rogelberg, 2006) and bolster attendees' perceptions of meeting effectiveness (Leach, Rogelberg, Warr, & Burnfield, 2009). In addition to the influence of supervisor actions on what happens within group meetings, supervisory communication behavior in meetings may influence global perceptions of the supervisor. Consistent with relational systems theory (Watzlawick et al., 1967), good meeting practices initiated or overlooked by a supervisor communicate both relationship and content information to group meeting members. For example, when supervisors speak to an employee in a group meeting, message content is expressed (e.g., what do you think about this idea?), but this same message also indicates characteristics of the supervisor-employee relationship (e.g., the supervisor cares enough or trusts the employee enough to ask for his or her input). Furthermore, relational systems theory assumes that "one cannot not communicate," so leader actions (e.g., asking for agenda items in advance) can have message value that reifies or alters follower perceptions of the sender/leader to the extent that leaders' actions are understood as having some

comparative bearing on the leader's relationship with the receiver/follower. Therefore, almost any action a supervisor carries out in a meeting potentially means something to a subordinate about his or her relationship with the supervisor.

Supervisors' actions, in addition, (e.g., starting on time, having an agenda, etc.) when leading meetings potentially indicate to employees whether the supervisor desires high-quality exchanges with them or not. Related research suggests that specific managerial practices such as contingent rewards (Wayne et al., 2002) and participative communication (Yrle, Hartman, & Galle, 2002) significantly relate to high-quality leader-member exchanges. Such findings are consistent with the notion that specific leader practices likely to make meetings meaningful may also influence leader-member exchange. This process likely occurs because these actions likely communicate both content and relationship information to meeting attendees (e.g., Watzlawick et al., 1967). Therefore, we expect that supervisors who adhere to good meeting practices may expect to develop higher-quality relationships with their employees.

Hypothesis 2: Specific good meeting practices in supervisor-led meetings will positively relate to leader-member exchange quality.

Meeting Outcomes: Perceived Organizational Support and Meeting Citizenship Behavior

Supervisors' interactional fairness in meetings and good meeting practices may have effects beyond employees' relationships with their supervisor. Through their contribution to leader-member exchange, supervisor actions in meetings may affect employees' perceptions about the organization overall. In particular, such actions likely influence group members' perceived organizational support, defined as global beliefs that employees develop about the degree to which their work organization values their contributions and cares about their well-being (Eisenberger, Huntington, Hutchison, & Sowa, 1986). Organizational support theory (Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002) maintains that employees form global beliefs regarding perceived organizational support on the basis of actions by their supervisors (because supervisors are often viewed as representing the organization overall). Supervisors function as a type of lens through which employees view the organization; thus, employees liken supervisor actions to be indicative of the organization's malevolent or benevolent intent toward them (Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002). This view is also consistent with relational systems theory (Watzlawick

et al., 1967). Although this theory was not designed with leadership studies in mind, the framework can be used to explain how perceptions of leader–member exchange quality would result from the relationship dimensions of meeting messages and generalize to members’ perceptions of the organization overall. Therefore, congruent with prior research (e.g., Wayne, Shore, & Liden, 1997), we would expect that how the supervisor communicates in meetings may affect leader–member exchange quality and high-quality supervisor–employee relationships would relate positively to perceived organizational support.

Supervisor-led meetings have not been previously considered as an important group process in which leader–member exchange may mediate the relationship between supervisor actions and fairness in meetings and perceptions of organizational support. Organizational support theory holds that discretionary favorable treatment received from the organization’s agents, beyond what is required by such factors as contractual obligations or government regulations, is especially influential on employees’ perceived organizational support because it signifies the organization’s strong positive valuation of them (Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002). Given that supervisors are often perceived as agents of the organization, the prevalence of supervisor-led meetings in organizations, and the salience of supervisor actions in such meetings, interactional justice displayed in supervisor-led meetings may be a particularly useful vehicle for enhancing perceived organizational support.

Hypothesis 3a: Leader–member exchange will mediate the relationship between interactional justice displayed by supervisors in meetings and perceived organizational support.

Hypothesis 3b: Leader–member exchange will mediate the relationship between good meeting practices and perceived organizational support.

Supervisor actions in meetings may also affect employees’ willingness to contribute by being good citizens during meetings. Due to the norm of reciprocity, the favorable treatment connoted by leader–member exchange results in a sense of obligation for subordinates to reciprocate (Wayne et al., 2002). People expect others to direct their reciprocation behaviors to benefit the exchange partner providing the support (e.g., Erdogan, Sparrowe, Liden, & Dunegan, 2004; Lavelle et al., 2007). According to Lavelle et al.’s proposed target similarity model, we can expect employees to reciprocate behavior such as interactional fairness and good meeting practices toward what or whom they perceive to be the source of that treatment. Research

suggests that a common way for employees to reciprocate leader–member exchange is through enhanced citizenship behavior (Ilies, Nahrgang, & Morgeson, 2007).

Organizational citizenship behavior refers to behaviors that contribute “to the maintenance and enhancement of the social and psychological context that supports task performance” (Organ, 1997, p. 91) or as “individual behavior that is discretionary, not directly or explicitly recognized by the formal reward system, and in the aggregate promotes the efficient and effective functioning of the organization” (Organ, Podsakoff, & MacKenzie, 2006, p. 8). In supervisor-led meetings, leader–member exchange may predict higher levels of citizenship behavior within meetings themselves. These behaviors include those that go above and beyond what most might expect as typical participation in a meeting.

Consistent with the definitions of organizational citizenship behavior given previously, we define meeting citizenship behaviors as meeting attendees’ discretionary actions that maintain and enhance a positive social and psychological context in support of meeting objectives. Much like organizational citizenship behavior, meeting citizenship behaviors attend to actions employees perform in meetings such as speaking up about issues, volunteering helpful information, providing input to agendas, eliciting participation from others, and otherwise assisting in the meeting process. Good meeting citizens, therefore, are people who assist the meeting facilitator by actively engaging in creating an effective meeting environment. Employees with high-quality relationships with their supervisors will be more likely to exhibit these types of behaviors.

Hypothesis 4a: Leader–member exchange will mediate the relationship between interactional justice displayed by supervisors in meetings and meeting citizenship behaviors.

Hypothesis 4b: Leader–member exchange will mediate the relationship between good meeting practices and meeting citizenship behaviors.

Method

Sample and Procedure

This study took place as part of a larger study of work meetings, communication patterns, and job attitudes. Relevant to this study, we tested our hypotheses using survey data from 291 working adults employed at various levels within a wide range of organization types. Organization types included

publicly traded, for-profit (25%); privately held, for-profit (38%); private, not-for-profit (15%); and public sector (22%). Organization size ranged from having less than 10 employees to having more than 100,000 employees, with a mean size of approximately 41,000 employees. Mean tenure with current organization was 8.04 years ($SD = 7.66$). Respondents ranged in age from 18 to more than 65; most (87%) were aged between 25 and 54 years. Most respondents were female (70%) and highly educated, with 37% having earned an undergraduate degree and 22% having earned a graduate degree. Individual job levels included the employee associate (staff/line) level (54%); the supervisor, manager, and director level (40%); and the senior/top management level (6%). Many (45%) indicated they supervised others. A small minority were self-employed (3%). The mean number of meetings attended each week varied ($M = 2.79$, $SD = 5.08$), as did the number of hours spent in meetings during a typical week ($M = 3.45$, $SD = 5.32$). Twenty-three respondents indicated that they attend no meetings on average during a typical week; however, given that they also indicated that they did have regular meetings at work (albeit presumably less frequently) we did not exclude these cases from our analyses.

Respondents were recruited using StudyResponse (Stanton & Weiss, 2002), an academic, nonprofit organization that connects social science researchers with a large panel of potential survey respondents. StudyResponse provides small incentives to survey takers, such as gift cards and cash prizes. For this study, we limited the sample to potential respondents located in the United States and who worked at least 20 hours per week, spoke English, and had regular meetings with their supervisors. In an attempt to maximize response rate, we sent a prenotification to a random selection of panel members who met these criteria. Of the 678 respondents who matched these criteria and agreed to participate, 291 responded with usable data (a response rate of approximately 43%). Given that our primary analyses used structural equation modeling, which requires data with no missing values, we evaluated the frequency of missing data for all relevant variables. Less than 5% of the data were missing for study variables, thus below the 5% level that Tabachnick and Fidell (2001) deem potentially problematic. To maintain our sample size at 291, we followed Tabachnick and Fidell's suggestion and replaced any missing data at the item level with the item mean.

Measures

With the exception of interactional justice displayed by supervisors in supervisor-led meetings, all measures involved scales with 5-point response

options ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 5 (*strongly agree*). We contextualized all measures, with the exception of leader–member exchange and perceived organizational support to focus on face-to-face supervisor-led group meetings at work. Contextualizing the leader–member exchange and perceived organizational support measures was not necessary given that those measures target the assessment of global, not contextual, perceptions.

Leader–member exchange. We used Scandura and Graen's (1984) 7-item leader–member exchange—7 measure. Sample items include, "I usually feel that I know where I stand with my immediate supervisor," and "I feel that my immediate supervisor understands my problems and needs." Reliability statistics suggested an acceptable level of internal consistency for the scale within our sample ($\alpha = .93$).

Interactional justice displayed by supervisors during supervisor-led meetings. We used Colquitt's four-item measure of interpersonal justice and five-item measure of informational justice to assess interactional justice displayed by supervisors during supervisor-led meetings. The former asks the extent to which respondents' supervisors treat them with dignity and the latter asks the extent to which respondents' supervisors provide them with information about decisions. These measures comprise the two aspects (interpersonal and informational aspects) of the overall concept of interactional justice (Cohen-Charash & Spector, 2001; Colquitt, 2001). For this study, we contextualized the measures by wording the stem of the question as "The following items refer to *group meetings* that your direct supervisor runs. To what extent. . ." followed by questions including, for example, "Does (he or she) treat you with dignity?," and "Does (he or she) explain the procedures thoroughly?" (*italics in original*). Responses were on a 5-point scale ranging from 1 (*to a small extent*) to 5 (*to a large extent*). Reliability statistics suggested an acceptable level of internal consistency for the scale within our sample ($\alpha = .95$).

Perceived organizational support. Six items from Eisenberger et al.'s (1986) survey of perceived organizational support were used. These items are the same high-loading items used by Roch and Shanock (2006). Sample items include "My work organization strongly considers my goals and values," and "My work organization really cares about my well-being." Reliability statistics suggested an acceptable level of internal consistency for the scale within our sample ($\alpha = .93$).

Good meeting practices and meeting citizenship behaviors. Our assessment of good meeting practices and meeting citizenship behaviors builds on work by an interdisciplinary research team in which we participated. The research team comprised, in addition to us, three faculty members and two graduate students. Three undergraduate students also assisted with this item creation process. Our data source was a prior open-ended survey about meetings at work in which working adults from different organizations ($N = 493$)

responded to a series of open-ended questions about meetings, including, for example, “I walk out of a meeting feeling like we got something accomplished when . . .,” and “I look forward to a meeting when. . . .” With the undergraduate students, we coded these responses for relevant themes and chose statements that we thought best represented respondents’ ideas regarding desirable meeting practices and desirable ways of participating in meetings. From these statements, the research team developed 10 *good meeting practices* items and 8 *meeting citizenship behaviors* items. The stem preceding each set of items read, “In meetings that your direct supervisor runs,” followed by the items. Table 1 lists the items and factor loadings, and reliability statistics suggested an acceptable level of internal consistency for the scales within our sample ($\alpha = .89$ for good meeting practices, $\alpha = .91$ for meeting citizenship behaviors). Our use of an assessment of good meeting practices that developed out of open-ended responses about what constitutes good and bad meetings builds on those outlined in Rogelberg (2006) or Leach et al. (2009) by adding a number of practices to those they describe and by providing a systematic measure of those practices.

Results

Discriminant Validity of the Constructs

Using LISREL 8.80 software (Jöreskog & Sörbom, 2006) with maximum-likelihood estimation, we first examined the distinctiveness of interactional justice displayed by supervisors in supervisor-led meetings, good meeting practices, leader–member exchange, meeting citizenship behaviors, and perceived organizational support. We compared the fit of four nested models from a one-factor model to the hypothesized five-factor model (see Table 2). Each subsequent model fit the data better, as indicated by chi-square difference tests (James, Mulaik, & Brett, 1982). The hypothesized model treating all five constructs as distinct factors had the highest comparative fit index (CFI) and nonnormed fit index (NNFI) values and the lowest root-mean-square error of approximation (RMSEA) value of all models tested. All items exhibited loadings on their respective factors at 0.48 or above.

Factor Correlations

Table 3 lists descriptive statistics, reliability estimates, and zero-order correlations among measures of latent variables. All measures correlated as expected. The reliability estimates for all measures were high, suggesting strong internal consistency.

Table 1. Confirmatory Factor-Item Loadings

Scale	Statement	Loading
Good meeting practices	The meetings that I attend are well run.	0.87
	Meetings are usually scheduled in plenty of time for me to fit them into my schedule.	0.76
	My direct supervisor is interested in the opinions of others.	0.73
	Meetings end when you expect them to end.	0.72
	The meetings I attend are worth my time.	0.70
	The times of meetings scheduled are convenient.	0.67
	Meetings start on time.	0.65
	We are informed about our meetings well in advance.	0.64
	I usually receive meeting agendas ahead of the meeting.	0.55
	The meetings I attend typically have agendas.	0.48
Meeting citizenship behaviors	I express my true opinions in meetings.	0.88
	I communicate my ideas in meetings.	0.84
	I speak up in meetings.	0.83
	During meetings, I volunteer information that may help solve someone else's problem.	0.80
	I try to make our meetings more productive.	0.78
	If I don't agree with the group during a meeting, I say so.	0.75
	If given the opportunity beforehand, I provide input regarding the meeting agenda.	0.59
	I come prepared to meetings.	0.57

Note: $N = 291$. All loadings are standardized.

Mediating Role of Leader–Member Exchange

We used structural equation modeling to test the role of leader–member exchange as a mediator of the relationships of interactional justice displayed

Table 2. Confirmatory Factor Analyses Model Fit Indices

Model							
Comparative fit index	Nonnormed fit index	Goodness-of-fit index	Adjusted goodness-of-fit index	Chi-square	Degrees of freedom	Difference	Root-mean-square error of approximation
One-factor model, 0.89	0.88	0.42	0.36	4896.99	740	—	0.18
Two-factor model, 0.90	0.89	0.43	0.37	4455.51	739	441.48	0.18
Three-factor model, 0.92	0.91	0.51	0.45	3767.63	737	687.88	0.15
Five-factor model, 0.97	0.96	0.71	0.67	1987.04	730	1780.59	0.09

Note: $N = 291$. One-factor model includes all five constructs; two-factor model combines interactional justice displayed by supervisors in supervisor-led meetings, meeting citizenship behaviors, and good meeting practices (Factor 1) and perceived organizational support and leader-member exchange (Factor 2); three-factor model includes interactional justice displayed by supervisors in supervisor-led meetings and good meeting practices (Factor 1), leader-member exchange (Factor 2), and perceived organizational support and meeting citizenship behaviors (Factor 3); five-factor model includes all five constructs as individual factors. Difference = difference in chi-square values from the previous model. All chi-square and difference statistics are significant at the $p < .05$ level.

Table 3. Means, Standard Deviations, Reliabilities, and Zero-Order Correlations for Study Variables

	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	1	2	3	5	6
Interactional justice displayed by supervisors in supervisor-led meetings	3.71	1.08	(.95)				
Good meeting practices	3.40	0.75	.56	(.89)			
Leader-member exchange	3.59	0.93	.70	.60	(.93)		
Meeting citizenship behaviors	3.68	0.72	.32	.30	.46	(.91)	
Perceived organizational support	3.50	0.88	.55	.59	.66	.36	(.93)

Note: $N = 291$. All correlations listed are significant at $p < .001$. Parentheses enclose coefficient alpha reliability estimates.

by supervisors in supervisor-led meetings and good meeting practices with perceived organizational support and meeting citizenship behaviors. Individual scale items served as indicators of latent variables in the model.

Our hypothesized model is a full-mediation model, in which we specified structural paths from interactional justice displayed by supervisors in supervisor-led meetings and good meeting practices to leader-member exchange and from leader-member exchange to perceived organizational support and meeting citizenship behaviors. We tested this against a partially

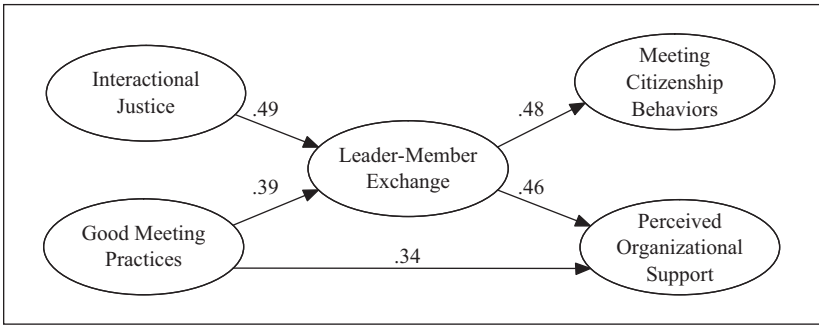


Figure 1. Final model displaying standardized path coefficients, $N = 291$. This model is simplified and does not show indicators, error terms, or exogenous factor variances. All coefficients are significant at the $p < .001$ level. Interactional justice refers to interactional justice displayed by supervisors in supervisor-led meetings.

mediated model, in which we specified additional direct paths from informational justice and good meeting practices to each of the outcome variables. The partially mediated model— $\chi^2(770, N = 291) = 2,148.43, p < .05$, RMSEA = 0.09, goodness-of-fit index (GFI) = 0.70, adjusted goodness-of-fit index (AGFI) = .67, CFI = .97, NNFI = .96—fit the data better than the fully mediated model, according to the chi-square difference, $\chi^2(4, N = 291) = 26.13, p < .001$. However, only the direct path between good meeting practices and perceived organizational support was significant, contributing to the better fit of the partial mediation model over the full mediation model. Regarding our hypotheses, the paths between interactional justice displayed by supervisors in supervisor-led meetings and good meeting practices and leader–member exchange were significant, supporting Hypotheses 1 and 2.

We used the approach outlined by Kenny, Kashy, and Bolger (1998) to test for mediation via structural equation modeling. Kenny et al. stipulates that the first step in demonstrating mediation is to show that the exogenous variables (interactional justice displayed by supervisors in supervisor-led meetings and good meeting practices) significantly relate to the mediator (leader–member exchange), which was supported for all three variables (see Figure 1). The second step involves showing that the mediator significantly relates to the endogenous variables (perceived organizational support and meeting citizenship behaviors) while controlling for the exogenous variables. With the direct relationships with the outcome variables controlled for, leader–member

exchange did have a significant relationship with both perceived organizational support and meeting citizenship behavior (see Figure 1).

Kenny et al.'s (1998) final condition requires testing the significance of the indirect effects of the exogenous variables (interactional justice displayed by supervisors in supervisor-led meetings and good meeting practices) on the endogenous variables (perceived organizational support and meeting citizenship behaviors). Using the Sobel test, we found significant indirect effects between interactional justice displayed by supervisors in supervisor-led meetings and perceived organizational support, $b = .23$, $z = 4.70$, $p < .001$; interactional justice displayed by supervisors in supervisor-led meetings and meeting citizenship behaviors, $b = .23$, $z = 4.01$, $p < .001$; good meeting practices and perceived organizational support, $b = .18$, $z = 4.31$, $p < .001$; and good meeting practices and meeting citizenship behaviors, $b = .18$, $z = 3.75$, $p < .001$. In addition, we followed the bootstrapping methods outlined by Preacher and Hayes (2004) as another test of the indirect, or mediated, effect. Table 4 displays relevant estimates of the indirect effects, standard errors, z scores, and confidence intervals. All estimates of indirect effects were significant, and none of the corresponding confidence intervals included zero, providing additional support for our hypotheses.

The findings of significant indirect relationships, combined with a lack of significant direct relationships, suggest that leader-member exchange fully mediates the relationships between interactional justice displayed by supervisors in supervisor-led meetings and both perceived organizational support and meeting citizenship behaviors and the relationship between good meeting practices and meeting citizenship behaviors. Hypotheses 3a and 4a, therefore, were supported. Leader-member exchange partially mediated the relationship between good meeting practices and perceived organizational support, because both the indirect relationship through leader-member exchange and the direct relationship of good meeting practices with perceived organizational support were significant. Thus, Hypotheses 3b was supported. Leader-member exchange fully mediated the relationship between good meeting practices and meeting citizenship behaviors, supporting Hypothesis 4b.

Given the three nonsignificant paths found in the partially mediated model, we fixed the nonsignificant paths to zero. The final model adequately fit the data: $\chi^2(773, N = 291) = 2149.08$, $p < .05$, RMSEA = 0.09, GFI = 0.70, AGFI = 0.67, CFI = .97, NNFI = 0.96. Figure 1 displays the final model. Altogether the final model explained 62% of the variance in leader-member exchange and 25% and 55% of the variance in meeting citizenship behaviors and perceived organizational support, respectively.

Table 4. Mediation Results for Leader–Member Exchange Using Bootstrapping Methods

Independent variable	Dependent variable	Indirect effects parameter estimate	SE	z	95% confidence interval	
					Lower	Upper
Interactional justice	Perceived organizational support	0.31	0.04	7.76	0.23	0.38
Interactional justice	Meeting citizenship behaviors	0.22	0.04	5.86	0.14	0.29
Good meeting practices	Perceived organizational support	0.33	0.05	7.36	0.24	0.42
Good meeting practices	Meeting citizenship behaviors	0.26	0.05	5.97	0.17	0.34

Note: $N = 291$. All indirect effects are significant at $p < .001$.

Discussion

This study explored supervisor-led meetings, an important group process through which supervisors' actions can shape perceptions of supervisor–employee relationship quality, perceptions of the overall organization, and how employees behave during meetings. We found that leader–member exchange fully mediated the relationships of interactional justice displayed by supervisors in supervisor-led meetings with both perceptions of organizational support and meeting citizenship behaviors. Leader–member exchange also fully mediated the relationship between meeting practices and meeting citizenship behavior and partially mediated the relationship between meeting practices and perceived organizational support.

Theoretical Implications

This study extends theory related to group meetings by providing preliminary evidence regarding the role of supervisors in meetings that they lead. We outline these implications in what follows, speaking first to the importance of high-quality leader–member exchanges as they pertain to group

meetings. We then discuss how what happens in group meetings relates with global perceptions of the organizations in which they are embedded.

Group meetings and leader–member exchange. Our findings should be of interest to those interested in team effectiveness and team leadership. We identified interactional justice displayed by supervisors as well as specific types of behavior (meeting practices) within the meeting process that may bolster leader–member exchange. If supervisors display interactional fairness, our findings suggest that employees will develop better relationships with their supervisors, have better impressions of the organization overall, and will be more willing to contribute to goal accomplishment during meetings.

In addition, the mediating role of leader–member exchange in linking meeting practices and meeting citizenship behaviors emphasizes the importance of supervisor–employee relationships in promoting active meeting participation. The supervisor may be an important link in the process of encouraging meeting participants to engage in meeting citizenship behaviors. This may include, for example, volunteering information and preparing adequately.

In addition, these findings pertain to actions testing the target similarity model, which assumes that employees will reciprocate fair treatment with actions directed toward the target that provided the fair treatment (Lavelle et al., 2007). Supervisors' interactional fairness during meetings may result in greater helpfulness and participation in meetings by subordinates. For the present study, we took a first step by focusing on the overall interactional fairness of supervisors in meetings they lead as a potential predictor of employees' perceptions of the quality of leader–member exchange.

Group meetings and global perceptions. As relational systems theory suggests, every message exchanged in a meeting has the potential to convey a range of meanings, intentionally or not. Because these messages have both content and relationship dimensions, leader-facilitated meetings have tremendous capacity to shape global perceptions of leader–member exchange. Given that team supervisors serve as agents of the organization (e.g., Levinson, 1965; Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002), they play an important role in shaping perceptions of the organization overall and the team's role within it. What a leader says or does in a meeting contributes to how followers construe their relationship with the leader, the group, and the organization as a whole.

Our findings also highlight how group meetings appear to be specific processes through which relationships among individuals, tasks, resources, roles, and responsibilities are developed and perceived through interaction

(Mirivel & Tracy, 2005; O'Halloran, 2005). Meetings are powerful symbols of the organization, because in work meetings people assemble for the purpose of organizational action (Schwartzman, 1986). Such meetings may be particularly meaningful in shaping leader-member exchange and support from the organization overall. In addition to operating as vehicles of activity coordination and information sharing, work meetings also are salient sites of superior-subordinate interaction through which perceptions of qualities of the supervisor and organization are developed and reinforced (e.g., Fulk & Collins-Jarvis, 2001).

In our data, leader-member exchange partially mediated the relationship between good meeting practices and perceived organizational support. Because employees often perceive supervisors as agents acting on behalf of the organization and because meetings are an important venue for shaping attitudes about the organization, it makes sense that how one's supervisor behaves during meetings would relate positively to perceived organizational support. Good meeting practices also related directly with perceived organizational support, implying that people may view good meeting practices as indicative of a supportive organization, perhaps because these are viewed as procedurally fair, which employees may attribute to the organization (e.g., Stinglhamber et al., 2006).

Summary of theoretical implications. This study suggests that relational systems theory and social exchange approaches such as leader-member exchange and organizational support theory address many of the dynamics inherent in work meetings. The findings presented here suggest that social exchange principles predict relationships between supervisors' actions and leader-member exchange and between leader-member exchange and both perceived organizational support and employees' meeting behavior. Although leader-member exchange helps to explain the origin and outcomes of superior-subordinate exchange relationships, it often stops short of helping to identify specific interactive behaviors that contribute to perceptions of exchange quality. By integrating this exchange framework with relational systems theory, we can account for the manner in which meeting messages—intentionally or unintentionally, via both content and relationship dimensions—reflect, constitute, and reify leader-member exchanges.

Future Research Directions

Our recommendations for future research include investigating potential moderators of the relationships that we tested. For example, leader-member exchange might moderate the relationship between interactional justice and

good meeting practices and an outcome like meeting satisfaction. It could be that employees with low leader–member exchange are unsatisfied with the meeting regardless of the level of fairness or good meeting practices shown. Such practices may result in higher meeting satisfaction only for employees with high leader–member exchange.

In addition, if a group member needs the meeting and the information it provides to perform well, the group member would be more frustrated if the leader is inadequate at running the meeting than if the group member did not view the meeting as connected to his or her performance. Thus, the expected pattern of results might be that good meeting practices relate more strongly to outcomes such as meeting satisfaction, frustration with the meeting, and meeting citizenship behaviors for employees who rely on the meetings to be able to do their jobs than for employees whose jobs do not depend on a well-run and informative meeting. A related third potential moderator that should be examined is that of meeting content. For example, if the topic of the meeting is emotionally charged and negative (e.g., budget cuts, layoffs, disciplinary issues), then we would expect being provided timely and accurate information and being treated with respect (both aspects of interactional justice) to be even more crucial to leader–member exchange than if the meeting dealt with routine matters.

Finally, like others (e.g., Rupp & Cropanzano, 2002) we did not divide interactional justice into its separate components of interpersonal and informational justice. Although justice researchers agree that both of these are aspects of interactional justice, they are still divided on whether interactional justice should be treated as one overall construct or divided into its two components (Roch & Shanock, 2006). One reason they may be treated as one overall construct is that the two components tend to be highly correlated (e.g., $r = .76$, for the present study). Future research, however, might explore whether the results involving interactional justice would hold when considering interpersonal and informational justice separately. As a post hoc analysis, we tried this and found that the results involving interactional justice held for informational justice but not for interpersonal justice when considered simultaneously in our model. Given the high correlation between the two constructs there was a great deal of overlapping variance between them, and thus, these post hoc results are not surprising.

Practical Implications

Employees spend an average of 6 hours per week in scheduled meetings, and employees of larger organizations have even more meetings (Rogelberg et al., 2006). Because this study investigated specific behaviors and attitudes

within a specific process, the supervisor-led meeting, its practical implications are clear. Supervisors who lead meetings have a direct opportunity to behave in such a way that they encourage high-quality relationships with their employees.

Our results suggest that meetings are a process through which supervisors may influence relationships with group members and shape group members' global perceptions of the organization. Supervisors should pay attention to three distinct areas: the meeting process, fair interpersonal treatment of meeting participants, and fair explanations regarding decisions and procedures. Within the meeting process, supervisors should attempt to schedule meetings with care, taking into account employees' preferences. Supervisors should also pay attention to starting and ending meetings on time, planning ahead, and soliciting input on the meeting agenda beforehand. During meetings, it may benefit supervisors to discuss meeting goals at the beginning of the meeting and revisit those goals near the end of the meeting to ensure they appropriately addressed necessary tasks. Finally, supervisors should strive as much as is practical to explain procedures thoroughly, communicate candidly and in a timely manner, and modify their communications to match employees' specific needs.

Organizations may benefit from educating their supervisors on leading meetings effectively. In addition to addressing some of the points raised above, organizations could incorporate meeting management into its mentoring and coaching programs for current supervisors and other high-potential employees. Such training could involve both specific good meeting practices and focused skill development. For example, training supervisors to exhibit interactional justice in meetings that they lead could involve direct observation of the supervisor leading a meeting, followed by specific feedback with critical incidents to demonstrate the supervisor's strengths and areas for improvement.

Limitations

Although this study demonstrated strong relationships among key behaviors and attitudes that have compelling implications for theory and practice, it has limitations. The cross-sectional design of the study and its dependence on a single source (the respondent) makes it susceptible to common-method bias and limits our ability to draw causal conclusions. Although we cannot definitively rule out common-method bias as a contributing factor to our results, several factors suggest that its effects, if present, were minimal.

First, our confirmatory factor analyses suggested that a one-factor model fit the data poorly and that the most differentiated model fit the best. Demonstrating such evidence of discriminant validity is consistent with the recommendation of Conway and Lance (2010) as a way to rule out common-method effects. Also, we heeded the recommendation of Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Lee, and Podsakoff (2003) to ensure anonymity for respondents because social desirability tendencies are a contributing factor to common-method bias. Participants were explicitly told not to include any identifying information on the survey, and the use of our type of sample (a respondent panel) should make it clear to participants that the organization they work for was not involved in anyway.

Furthermore, our data were limited to the perceptions of one group member and do not allow for testing of causality. Future research using longitudinal designs and multiple sources of data, including data about meetings characteristics and processes from multiple group members, could provide further insight into these conclusions. Finally, this study implies a process of organizing within supervisor-led meetings, but its methodology only provided a snapshot of perceptions. Future research that incorporated multiple time points and mixed qualitative and quantitative methods could provide additional valuable insights.

Conclusion

The present study took an important step by using the theories of social exchange and relational systems to build on previous work and test relationships within an important process: supervisor-led group meetings in organizations. The results indicate that how employees perceive fairness regarding information from their supervisors and how they judge meeting effectiveness and the use of good meeting practices have a direct relationship with their supervisor–employee relationship quality. Having high-quality supervisor–employee relationships appear to have positive outcomes such as increased perceived organizational support and meeting citizenship behaviors. In addition to advancing theory, this study provides practical recommendations for current supervisors who lead group meetings with their employees.

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Bios

Benjamin E. Baran is assistant professor of management at Northern Kentucky University. His major research interests include leadership, teams, occupational safety, and high-reliability organizing. A military veteran, he continues his service as a lieutenant commander in the U.S. Navy Reserve.

Linda Rhoades Shanock is associate professor of psychology and organizational science at the University of North Carolina at Charlotte. Her major research interests include organizational support theory, employee-employer relationships, supervisor job attitudes, and employee well-being.

Steven G. Rogelberg is professor and director of organizational science at the University of North Carolina at Charlotte. He is the editor of the *Journal of Business and Psychology*, and his interests include leadership, research methods, meetings and teams, and dirty work.

Cliff W. Scott is associate professor of communication studies and organizational science at the University of North Carolina at Charlotte. His major research interests include organizational communication, high-reliability organizing, occupational safety, sense making, organizational socialization, and meetings.