Can you hear me now? The moderating effects of procedural justice within consumer-brand relationships

Alexander Blandina

University of New Hampshire, Durham

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CAN YOU HEAR ME NOW?
THE MODERATING EFFECTS OF PROCEDURAL JUSTICE
WITHIN CONSUMER-BRAND RELATIONSHIPS

BY

Alexander Blandina
Psychology B.S., University of Florida, 2010
General Psychology M.A., University of North Florida, 2013

DISSERTATION

Submitted to the University of New Hampshire
In Partial Fulfillment of
the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy
in
Psychology

May, 2018
This dissertation has been examined and approved in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctorate of Philosophy in Psychology by:

Dissertation Director, Ellen S. Cohn, Professor of Psychology

Edward O’Brien, Professor of Psychology
Victoria L. Banyard, Professor of Psychology
Bruce E. Pfieffer, Associate Professor of Marketing
Danielle J. Brick, Assistant Professor of Marketing

On April 6th, 2018

Original approval signatures are on file with the University of New Hampshire Graduate School.
Dedication

This work is dedicated to my wonderful wife, Stephanie, our beautiful boy, Evan, and our courageous corgi, Jax. I would not be here today without their love and support. Thank you for everything you do and I look forward to the rest of our journey together.
Acknowledgments

I would like to acknowledge and thank my advisor, Ellen Cohn. She was integral to the development and writing of this manuscript. Her drive to see her students succeed is unmatched and I have greatly appreciated her mentorship. Her guidance throughout my dissertation and development as a psychological researcher were vital to my success as a doctoral student. Additionally, I would like to thank each of my dissertation committee members for their valuable insight and comments. This completed dissertation is better because of your excellence throughout the dissertation process.

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ABSTRACT

CAN YOU HEAR ME NOW?
THE MODERATING EFFECTS OF PROCEDURAL JUSTICE
WITHIN CONSUMER-BRAND RELATIONSHIPS

by

Alexander Blandina

University of New Hampshire, May, 2018

Consumer-brand relationships have led consumers to expect fair outcomes (i.e., distributive justice) consistent with their relationship norms with a brand. Deviation from these norms produced intuitive consequences such as a reduction of consumer loyalty and trust towards the brand. Yet, 65-85% of consumers still counterintuitively defect to a brand’s competitor. According to consumers, aspects of procedural justice qualitatively appeared to be major components that affected their attitudes towards brands. However, the effect of this construct within relationship norms has been underexamined, producing an empirical gap. The purpose of this dissertation was to bridge this gap by identifying the effect procedural justice has on consumer loyalty and trust within different consumer-brand relationships. In pursuit of this purpose, three studies were conducted. The first two studies examined how consumer-brand relationships influenced the perception of procedural justice. Study 1 replicated previous research. Procedural justice affected participants’ loyalty and trust similarly, while distributive justice affected them depending on their relationship with a brand. Study 2 addressed limitations within Study 1 and produced conflicting results. Study 2 found that positive brand relationships were associated with a larger change in loyalty and trust as perceptions of procedural justice
increased compared to negative relationships. To address the conflicting evidence of Study 1 and Study 2, Study 3 examined initial and post consumers’ expectations of consistent or inconsistent procedural information in relation to their brand relationship to produce changes in consumer loyalty and trust. Inconsistent performance of procedural justice resulted in no change in consumer loyalty and trust. Yet regular performance of these inconsistent procedural actions resulted in reduced consumer loyalty and trust within positive brand relationships. Study 3 conceptually replicated both Study 1 and Study 2 by highlighting how procedural justice was initially discounted by consumers but was used to help maintain or adjust consumers’ relationship with a brand across many encounters with a positive CBR brand. Thus, the results of this dissertation have contributed and extended empirical knowledge within two separate areas of research while also providing evidence which accounted for previously unexpected changes in consumer behaviors and attitudes.
INTRODUCTION

Consumer loyalty and trust are dynamic processes that lead to both positive (i.e., positive word-of-mouth and increased revenue) and negative outcomes (i.e., negative word-of-mouth and decreased revenue; Garbarino & Johnson, 1999; Leischning, Geigenmüller, & Enke, 2012; Mayer, Davis, & Schoorman, 1995; Sirdeshmukh, Singh, & Sabol, 2002). Consumer loyalty is defined as any consumer action (e.g., engaging in word of mouth or repeated purchases) that indicates one’s support for a brand, while consumer trust is the belief that a brand is reliable and capable of fulfilling promises. Brands attempt to increase consumer loyalty and trust through marketing and positive interactions. For example, Budweiser’s advertisements portray fun interactions and increased attraction from others occurring as a byproduct of purchasing their beverage.

Yet, despite a brand’s positive marketing attempts, Reichheld (1996) found 65-85% of consumers counterintuitively defect to a brand’s competitor. Two broad empirical views separately account for such changes in consumer loyalty and trust. The first view examines the expectations consumers form according to norms within consumer-brand relationships similar to an interpersonal relationship (Fournier, 1998; Fournier, Breazeale, & Avery, 2015; Fournier, Breazeale, & Fetscherin, 2012; Valta, 2013). Businesses utilize consumer-brand relationships to elicit interpersonal feelings and trust beyond the ability of advertising, a company spokesperson, or a customer service representative (Gosline, 2015; Labrecque, 2014; Morgan & Hunt, 1994; Sashi, 2012). Following this empirical view, brands form a relationship with consumers using interpersonal constructs such as love (Thomson, MacInnis, & Park, 2005), attachment (Paulssen & Fournier, 2007), and interdependence (Fournier, 1998) to maintain loyalty and trust, thus reducing counterintuitive consumer behavior.
Alternatively, the second empirical view utilizes perceptions of distributive and procedural justice after a service failure. Distributive justice refers to receiving an outcome that is proportional to one’s provided input (Adams, 1965; Deutsch, 1975; Greenberg, 1990; Huppertz, Arenson, & Evans, 1978). Procedural justice refers to how individuals perceived the process in which an outcome decision was made (Brockner & Wiesenfeld, 1996; Konovsky, 2000; Leventhal, 1980; Lind & Tyler, 1988; Tax & Brown, 1998; Tyler, 2005a, 2005b). Following this view, brands focused on providing fair outcomes and treatment through these perceptions increased loyalty and trust in hopes of reducing counterintuitive consumer behavior (Blodgett, Hill, & Tax, 1997; Crisafuli & Singh, 2016; Goodwin & Ross, 1992; Sparks & McColl-Kennedy, 2001; Tax, Brown, & Chandrashekaran, 1998; Teo Thompson & Lim Vivien, 2001).

Researchers have only examined the effects of distributive justice and its interaction with consumer-brand relationships (Aaker, Fournier, & Brasel, 2004; Donovan, Priester, MacInnis, & Park, 2012; Kaltcheva, Winsor, & Parasuraman, 2013; Seiders & Berry, 1998; Severt, 2002). Yet, by narrowly focusing on distributive justice, firms might be missing the moderating effect procedural justice could have with consumer-brand relationships on consumer loyalty and trust. This might be due to procedural justice producing smaller effects compared to distributive justice on consumer behaviors and attitudes (Blodgett et al., 1997; Goodwin & Ross, 1992; Santos & Fernandes, 2008; Severt, 2002; Tax et al., 1998), leading researchers to conclude it is impractical to examine procedural justice further, producing a gap within the literature.

This gap is particularly noteworthy, because firms actively attempt to increase consumer loyalty and trust through expensive marketing campaigns. However, procedural factors can be performed with less expense by ensuring repeated actions that are known to strengthen the bond
between relationship partners (Blader & Tyler, 2003, 2009; Tyler & Bies, 1990; Tyler & Blader, 2003; Tyler, Degoe, & Smith, 1996). According to consumer respondents, aspects of procedural justice qualitatively appeared to be major components that affected their attitudes towards brands (Wollan, Davis, Angelis, & Quiring, 2017). Consumers reported that procedural factors, such as the ability to voice an opinion, are most important in influencing their loyalty and trust for brands. Additionally, procedural justice anecdotally interacted with brands once a relationship was established to affect consumer attitudes. For example, Kickstarter.com is a popular crowd-funding website that allows small businesses to submit proposals to users in hopes of receiving funding. Users or “backers” provide funding based on the proposal’s rough outline of what the business hopes to complete if the funding goal is met. Proposals are written to establish a personal relationship with each “backer,” leading to a feeling of reciprocity and altruism towards the project and brand. However, several reports have found that “backers” of a product often feel betrayed if the brand partnered with a disliked competitor (i.e., changing relationship norms) and ignored “backer” complaints in response (i.e., unfair treatment; Benedictus, 2014; Cranz, 2016; Elahi, 2015). Due to the brand’s actions, consumers reported a loss of trust in the brand and indicated they would not purchase the final product or support the brand in the future.

It is important to consider the moderating effects procedural justice might have within consumer-brand relationships which may further account for strengthened relationships between brands and consumers. Currently, there is no research that fully examines this interaction, despite its ability to potentially uncover a novel explanation as to why consumers reject brands that satisfy and inspire trust (cf. Reichheld, 1996). Therefore, the purpose of this dissertation is to identify if procedural justice can moderate the effect on consumer loyalty and trust through consumer-brand relationships. In pursuit of this purpose, I first conceptualize consumer-brand
relationships based on empirical evidence related to their formation and effects on consumer outcomes. Second, I discuss the empirical history of justice perceptions and how they have accounted for changes in consumer behavior. Third, I combine these areas of literature to predict how perceptions of procedural justice produce differing effects dependent on a consumer’s relationship with a brand. Fourth, I present findings from three studies which support my position. The first study explored the moderating effects of both distributive and procedural justice on consumer-brand relationships when Amazon failed to deliver a book on time. The second study asked participants to report perceptions of distributive and procedural justice based on their pre-existing relationship knowledge. Last, the third study examined how regular presentations of procedural justice which were either consistent or inconsistent with consumer-brand relationship norms produced changes in consumer loyalty and trust, while controlling for perceptions of distributive justice. By doing so, I believe the current research contributes and extends empirical knowledge within two separate research areas while also providing evidence which accounts for previously unexpected changes in consumer behaviors and attitudes.

**Consumer-Brand Relationships**

Initially, consumer-brand relationships (CBR) were thought to be strictly defined by exchanges of resources due to the inherent use of money for services or products (Anderson, 1995; Sheth & Parvatiyar, 1995b). For example, consumers pay money for a service and trust a business to perform it with quality (Golembiewski & McConkie, 1975; Morgan & Hunt, 1994). Therefore, successful fulfillment of an exchange between money and services was thought to be the main determinant of positive consumer outcomes, such as increased trust (Kotler, 1972; Pels, 1999). With this view in mind, businesses gathered demographic information about consumers to target those who were most likely to need/want their products (Avery, Fournier, & Wittenbraker,
2014). By finding such consumers, businesses assumed consumers only cared about the product and did not consider their encounters with branding.

Instead researchers identified additional needs, motives, and goals from consumers that produced more meaningful connections with brands similar to interpersonal relationships (Alvarez & Fournier, 2016; Blackston, 1993; Broom, Casey, & Ritchey, 1997; Fajer & Schouten, 1995; Fournier, 1995, 1998, Fournier et al., 2015, 2012; Peterson, 1995; Schmitt, 2012; Sheth & Parvatiyar, 1995a, 1995b). Within interpersonal relationships, individuals observed a person’s behavior and encoded it to form and predict personality traits. Consumers also thought of brands as having a quantifiable personality built from its perceived sincerity (e.g., Hallmark cards), excitement (e.g., MTV channel), competence (e.g., The Wall Street Journal newspapers), sophistication (e.g., Guess jeans), and ruggedness (e.g., Nike tennis shoes; Aaker, 1997; Batra, Lenk, & Wedel, 2010; Geuens, Weijters, & Wulf, 2009). Three of these brand personality traits (Sincerity, Excitement, and Competence) closely resembled three of the Big Five personality traits (Agreeableness, Extraversion, and Conscientiousness; McCrae & Costa, 1992; Norman, 1963), thus highlighting how consumers think of brands like humans.

Information gathered about a brand’s personality was similar to information individuals collect to create impressions of others when forming interpersonal relationships (Cohen, 1981; Jeffery & Mischel, 1979). Similarly, consumers used several different observations of a brand to form brand personality trait judgements (Kervyn, Fiske, & Malone, 2012; Schmitt, 2012). Consumers observe brand marketing (Mitussis, O’Malley, & Patterson, 2006), responses by other people to their possession of branded products (Belk, 1988; Fournier, 1998; Swaminathan, Page, & Gürhan-Canli, 2007), their encounters with brand representatives (Iacobucci & Ostrom, 1996; Price & Arnould, 1999), and the behavior of other brand users (Belk & Tumbat, 2005;
McAlexander, Schouten, & Koenig, 2002; Muniz & O’Guinn, 2001). Once consumers identified a brand’s perceived personality, they formed CBR analogous to interpersonal relationships (Aggarwal, 2004; Fetscherin & Heinrich, 2015; Swaminathan & Dommer, 2012).

Using consumer case studies, Fournier (1998) was the first researcher to categorize up to 15 different forms of CBR which varied from large in commitment level to almost no commitment: committed partnerships, dependencies, marriages of convenience, best friendships, childhood friendships, casual friends/buddies, arranged marriages, compartmentalized friendships, kinships, courtships, flings, secret affairs, rebounds/avoidance-driven relationships, enemies, and enslavements. Unfortunately, a strong CBR does not ensure a positive one. For instance, abusive CBR can still be viewed as strong, because consumers actively want to leave the relationship but feel forced to continue interacting with the brand due to market restrictions or personal budgets (Miller, Fournier, & Allen, 2012). However, this qualitative research only supported the existence of CBR instead of identifying all the forms such relationships could take.

To aid in the identification of potential relationship types, researchers found that varying dimensions of valence, intensity, passion, and equality defined multiple types of relationships that may occur between a consumer and brand (Fournier, 2009; Wittenbraker, Zeitoun, & Fournier, 2015).

**Interpersonal Relationship Parallels.** Many studies supported the parallel nature between interpersonal relationships and CBR (Esch, Langner, Schmitt, & Geus, 2006; Fournier, 1998; Fournier & Yao, 1997; Grossman, 1998; Hess, Story, & Danes, 2011; Ji, 2002; Story & Hess, 2006; Swaminathan, Stilley, & Ahluwalia, 2009). For example, consumers experienced emotional responses when losing a product similar to losing a relationship partner (Ferraro,
Escalas, & Bettman, 2011). Despite being an abstract relationship partner, consumers use many interpersonal constructs thought only to be pertinent within interpersonal relationships.

One tenet of interpersonal relationships is for interdependence between relationship partners (Kelley & Thibaut, 1978). Specifically, partners must work together to collectively affect, define, and redefine the relationship (Hinde, 1979). This core of interpersonal relationship research is necessary to demonstrate the existence of relationships between consumers and brands. In her seminal research, Fournier (1998) found interdependence between a brand and consumer must exist for a strong CBR. Consumers must perceive that there is two-way communication with the brand which informed actual or anticipated changes in relationship behavior over time. In support of this view, Fournier (2009) then devised a scale which accurately assessed consumer perceptions of brand relationship quality through perceptions of interdependence. Additionally, the scale incorporated several other interpersonal components such as feelings of brand attachment and love.

Attachment to others (Bowlby, 1969), which has been found to influence several interpersonal relationships such as the bond between caregiver and their child (Ainsworth, 1979), close friends (Ainsworth, 1989; Bartholomew & Horowitz, 1991), and romantic partners (Hazan & Shaver, 1987), also strengthened the bond between consumers and brands. Thomson (2006) found that consumers developed strong attachments to brands that provided a “human” element within brand marketing. Additionally, directly paralleling attachment theory, Paulssen and Fournier (2007) found that consumers formed secure attachments to brands. Once a secure attachment was formed, it aided in the production of strong CBR and led to increased consumer loyalty and trust.
Researchers also found that brand attachment aided in the formation of brand love (Fetscherin & Dato-on, 2012; Heinrich, Albrecht, & Bauer, 2012; Schmitt, 2013) similar to the processes found in interpersonal relationships (Hazan & Shaver, 1987). Brand love incorporated emotions of affection, passion, and connection (Thomson et al., 2005) similar to Sternberg's (1986) triangular theory of love. Consumers thus assessed their brand relationship quality using their thoughts, feelings, and behaviors towards a brand based on interrelated aspects similar to those needed within close interpersonal relationships (Bruhn, Eichen, Hadwich, & Tuzovic, 2012; Fetscherin & Dato-on, 2012; Fournier, 1998; Heinrich et al., 2012).

Through repeated encounters with a brand over time, brands elicited love/hate-based affect, intimacy, commitment, loyalty, trust, and interdependency from consumers akin to an interpersonal relationship. By being aware of such emotions and outcomes, consumers produced strong CBR, which aided their purchasing decisions beyond a simple exchange (Bowden, 2009; Fetscherin & Dato-on, 2012; Fournier, 1998; Heinrich et al., 2012; Long, Gable, Boerstler, & Albee, 2012; Price, 2015; White, Breazeale, & Webster, 2012). For example, consumers selectively purchase products from specific brands that elicit positive affect regardless of lower competitor prices (e.g., purchasing Apple over Windows laptops).

Effects of Consumer-Brand Relationships. To understand why relationships with brands produced similar interpersonal outcomes for consumers, researchers turned to social identity theory (Ashforth & Mael, 1989; Tajfel & Turner, 1985; Turner, 1975, 1978, 1982). This theory posited that an individual’s self-concept is formed through two corresponding identities: a personal and social identity. A personal self-identity represents one’s interests, skills, and abilities, while a social self-identity represents group classifications that help signify to others their personal identity. The combination of these identities motivates the formation of social
groups that hold similar views and values of one’s self-concept to satisfy a need to belong and to be distinct from others (Belk, Bahn, & Mayer, 1982; Bhattacharya, Rao, & Glynn, 1995; Bhattacharya & Sen, 2003; Carlson, Suter, & Brown, 2008; Mael & Ashforth, 1992).

Purchasing branded products and interacting with brands allowed consumers to define their personal self and also to express their self to others which aided the formation of social groups around the brand (Belk et al., 1982; Escalas & Bettman, 2003; Fisher & Wakefield, 1998; Mael & Ashforth, 1992; McAlexander, Schouten, & Koenig, 2002; Swaminathan, Page, & Gürhan-Canli, 2007). This was possible because brands extended the self (Belk, 1988) by allowing consumers to use brands and products symbolically (Fournier, 1998; Kleine, Kleine, & Allen, 1995; Reed, 2004; Swaminathan et al., 2007; Weiss & Johar, 2013). For example, a consumer might be more inclined to buy Nike products, because she viewed herself as athletic (i.e., high congruency with personal identity). Alternatively, a consumer might be more inclined to buy Nike products, because he wanted to display that he is athletic to others (i.e., high congruency with social identity; Kimani, 2009). Self-expression through brands can also signal to others in-group status of the individual by purchasing in-group brands and rejecting others’ purchase of out-group brands (Escalas & Bettman, 2003).

Interaction with brands that reflect and represent a consumer’s own self-concept led to positive consumer outcomes in congruence with strong CBR (Allen, Fournier, & Miller, 2008; Belk, 1988; Belk, Wallendorf, & Sherry, 1989; Escalas & Bettman, 2005; Sirgy & Danes, 1982; Trump, 2014). Brand knowledge based on advertising and products helped consumers evaluate the brand’s image and personality. Positive brand impressions that supported consumers’ self-image led to increased brand preferences and initial purchases (Bjerke & Polegato, 2006; Park, Jaworski, & MacInnis, 1986; Rowe & Barnes, 1998; Sirgy, 1986; Sirgy & Danes, 1982; Zinkhan
For instance, congruence between consumers’ self-concept and brand image produced increased emotional brand attachment that furthered loyalty, trust, and product purchasing (Esch et al., 2006; Kressmann et al., 2006; Malär, Krohmer, Hoyer, & Nyffenegger, 2011; Park & Lee, 2005). Matching aspects of one’s self-concept within CBR became such a strong motivator that it influenced consumer loyalty. When one’s personal identity (e.g., I am intelligent) was threatened, consumers were more likely to purchase products (e.g., fountain pen) that were believed to improve upon the threatened view (Gao, Wheeler, & Shiv, 2009; Rindfleisch, Burroughs, & Wong, 2009).

Eventually, maintaining these self-concept views and behaviors reinforced consumer-brand relationship norms which reciprocated the consumer’s personal and social identity (Belk, 1988; Kleine, Kleine, & Allen, 1995; Reed, 2004; Weiss & Johar, 2013). For instance, a consumer may form a video-gamer personal identity, because she exclusively purchased Microsoft products or because she associates herself with others who exclusively bought Microsoft products. Consumers then strengthened their relationship with brands who shared in the same experience with them (Dunn & Hoegg, 2014), which in turn bolstered consumers’ self-concepts (Aaker, 1999; Fournier, 1998; Gao et al., 2009; Rindfleisch et al., 2009; Swaminathan et al., 2009). Thus, consumers used their relationship with brands to influence and infer their own personal and social identities.

Reciprocation/disagreement between one’s self-concept and brand relationship norms leads to the development of a high/low quality relationship that provides multiple benefits/detriments for consumers, such as increased/decreased short and long term revenue (Aaker, 1996), increased/decreased consumer brand loyalty (Algesheimer, Dholakia, & Herrmann, 2005; McAlexander, Kim, & Roberts, 2003), decreased/increased consumer anger
(Forrester & Maute, 2001), decreased/increased desire from consumers to perform negative behaviors, such as boycotts and negative word of mouth (Grégoire & Fisher, 2008), and an increased/decreased ability to overlook service failures (Priluck, 2003).

Considering the positive effects of CBR (see above), researchers accounted for reduced consumer loyalty and trust due to consumers’ dislike for their CBR or the brand’s actions when the brand deviated from their established self-identity (Gao et al., 2009; Rindfleisch et al., 2009). But this did not account for negative consumer behavior and attitudes towards a brand despite high satisfaction and positive experiences with a brand (cf. Reichheld, 1996). CBR based on identity congruency might have unexpected consequences. Specifically, a business must now be aware that consumers expect actions and relationship norms that remain congruent with consumers’ own self-concepts (Valta, 2013). Mishandling CBR by deviating from the brand’s established relationship norms produced revenue loss, reduced consumer loyalty, such as buying from a competitor out of vengeance (Bechwati & Morrin, 2003; Sitkin & Roth, 1993), and undermined consumer satisfaction, trust, and commitment (Avery et al., 2014). For instance, when established positive relationships began to perform exchange-like behaviors such as charging small fees for “favors” (e.g., charging the consumer for paperless billing), consumer positive attitudes and satisfaction with the brand were significantly reduced (Aggarwal, 2004).

Beyond immediate effects, deviation from CBR norms can create long-term consumer issues. Grégoire, Tripp, and Legoux (2009) found that relationship quality reduced a desire for retaliation against the brand. In field observations, consumers who felt the need to complain online about a business had initially high levels of revenge desires that tapered off over time. As expected, when desire for revenge diminished, avoidance increased, causing consumers to effectively punish the brand. However, this effect was moderated by the quality of the initial
relationship towards a company. If a consumer had a more positive relationship with a brand, the diminishing effect of vengeance occurred more slowly and avoidance behaviors increased more rapidly. Consumer perceptions of justice might also moderate consumer loyalty and trust to provide some explanation for counterintuitive consumer actions and beliefs. For instance, consumers might continue to interact with low quality relationship brands, because they receive fair and consistent outcomes (i.e., distributive justice) or satisfied consumers might buy a competing brand’s products due to instances of unfair treatment (i.e., procedural justice).

Interestingly, CBR researchers have unknowingly recognized the effect perceptions of justice have on consumer outcomes while still overlooking the potential combined effects these factors have between them. For instance, Avery and her colleagues (2014) unintentionally wrote several justice perception examples in a summary report for businesses highlighting flaws in CBR management (e.g., a brand’s inflexible policies led to customer loss). In addition, researchers defined types of negative CBR (Miller et al., 2012) as treating consumers with disrespect, a component of procedural justice (Bies, 1987; Tyler & Bies, 1990). Therefore, one must understand how consumers identify justice expectations within the consumer context to understand how they interact with CBR. In the following chapter, I discuss the empirical history of justice constructs and how they have been used within consumer research.

**Perceptions of Justice**

Justice refers to factors within an encounter which portray fairness towards an individual, such as distributing the outcome of a situation proportional to one’s provided input (distributive justice), and providing fair treatment to all outcome recipients (procedural justice; Blodgett, Hill, & Tax, 1997; Colquitt et al., 2013; Colquitt, Conlon, Wesson, Porter, & Ng, 2001; Goodwin & Ross, 1992). Avery and her colleagues suggested that consumer expectations were dictated by
needs formed through CBR; however, they truly highlighted perceptions of justice. “People now expect companies to understand what type of relationships they want and to respond appropriately—they want firms to hold up their end of the bargain.” (Avery et al., 2014, p. 72). The recognition of “hold[ing] up their end of the bargain” echoed perceptions of just treatment.

Assessing distributive and procedural justice components accomplishes several important goals which motivate individuals to perceive justice from others. People are motivated to maximize the resources gained from social interactions (Walster, Berscheid, & Walster, 1973); understanding how individuals are treated when making decisions helps aid this motivation (Thibaut & Walker, 1975, 1978). Ensuring fair treatment from a decision maker leads to increased agreement and satisfaction with the outcome and commitment towards individuals involved with the interaction (Lind & Tyler, 1988; van den Bos, Wilke, & Lind, 1998). Like CBR, perceptions of justice provide information about an individual’s role within a group. A sense of commitment and value is important to people, because of their need to belong and form social relationships with others, allowing for an enhanced self-identity and positive comparisons to others (Baumeister & Leary, 1995; Festinger, 1954; Reimann & Aron, 2009).

Consumer interactions with brands utilized these same motivations (Blodgett et al., 1997; Tax & Brown, 1998; Tax et al., 1998). For example, receiving a refund for a defective product produced a sense of distributive justice leading to increased consumer trust and satisfaction (Oliver & Swan, 1989). Consumer trust and satisfaction also increased when an outcome was decided based on fair procedures (Goodwin & Ross, 1989). Furthermore, despite receiving a refund from a brand, consumers stopped purchasing products due to the lack of respect provided when a complaint was made (Hart, Heskett, & Sasser, 1990). Initially, researchers examined perceptions of justice within consumers indirectly. Some examined who consumers perceived to
be at fault for a service failure and found that consumers’ perceptions of the business being at fault led to increased negative word-of-mouth (Curren & Folkes, 1987; Richins, 1983). Other researchers asked participants whether a given scenario was unfair without examining specific forms of injustice (Campbell, 1999; Goodwin & Ross, 1989; Vaidyanathan & Aggarwal, 2003).

Despite the oversimplification, evidence suggested consumers were aware of unjust scenarios and willing to perform negative behaviors in response. For example, when increased prices for a service were deemed unfair based on a lack of justification from the brand, consumers reported they would punish brands (i.e., switch to a competitor) even when such a behavior was associated with a higher cost (Urbany, Madden, & Dickson, 1989). However, the results of these studies did not explicitly dictate what aspect of the scenario (i.e., the outcome or treatment) made consumers lose their trust and satisfaction with the brand. Below I present a brief history of each form of justice and how they affect consumer behaviors and beliefs.

**Distributive Justice.** The first form of justice examined by researchers was distributive justice (DJ), which refers to receiving an outcome that is proportional to one’s provided input based on equity (Adams, 1965; Lerner, 1974; Leventhal, 1976), equality (Deutsch, 1975), or need (Schwartz, 1975; Schwinger, 1986). Avery and her colleagues (2014) summarized the significance of receiving fair outcomes for consumers below:

> A customer of a grocery delivery service wants [the] business to survive, so he sends in suggestions for fixing operational glitches. But he gets no response—just a stream of promotional e-mails encouraging him to place orders more frequently. Dismayed, the customer cuts back his use of the service, believing that the company isn’t interested in developing a relationship (p. 74-75).

Understanding the importance of fair distribution of resources begins in philosophy (Colquitt et al., 2001; Deutsch, 1975; Greenberg & Cohen, 1982). Aristotle believed that justice could be achieved when distributions of resources were compared subjectively to the level of
merit an individual brought to an interaction. Empirical evidence later supported Aristotle’s ideas through equity theory (Adams, 1965) and the principle of relative deprivation/gratification (Crosby, 1976; Stouffer, Suchman, DeVinney, Starr, & Williams, 1949; Walker & Pettigrew, 1984). Within equity theory, fairness was achieved when a distribution was equal to the proportion of an individual’s “inputs” (i.e., education, experience, or money) placed within the situation compared to the outputs received (Walster et al., 1973; Walster, Walster, & Berscheid, 1978). For example, if an individual performs 30% of the work, one expects to receive 30% or more of the outcome. Within the principle of relative deprivation/gratification, fairness was achieved if one received an outcome that was equal or greater than the outcome of a comparable other independent of their inputs.

Regardless of the specific path towards DJ, each theory provided a common suggestion that the distribution of outcomes was only fair in comparison to the allocation given to others, indicating the value of social exchanges. The distribution of an outcome specified a recipient’s worth and ability for resource management via social exchange theory (Blau, 1964; Smith, Bolton, & Wagner, 1999; Walster et al., 1978). Essentially, perceptions focused on an outcome helped to ensure that one’s personal resources were maintained and maximized similarly to others. If outcomes were distributed unfairly, then people became motivated to perform behaviors which restored balance to the relationship in comparison to others. Within a consumer context, consumers who were provided high prices for a cheap product or poor service upon entering a store perceived inequitable outcomes or distributive injustice (Huppertz et al., 1978). In response to such perceptions, consumers predicted they would buy items from other stores to balance equity within the interaction.
Equity formulation of DJ was an intuitive foundation for consumer researchers to identify antecedents which influenced consumer loyalty and trust. Several encounters between a consumer and brand begin when a consumer desires or purchases a product ensuring that attention is focused on the outcome. For example, when consumers “input” money for a product, they expected a product would be given that was proportional. If the product was not viewed as proportional, then negative consumer actions occurred to provide balance, such as complaining to management, spreading negative word-of-mouth, or buying products from a competitor (Bechwati & Morrin, 2003; Blodgett, Granbois, & Walters, 1993; Blodgett et al., 1997). Alternatively, successful maintenance of DJ ensured several positive benefits, such as increased consumer loyalty, trust, satisfaction, and reduced negative word-of-mouth (Blodgett et al., 1993; Huppertz et al., 1978; Oliver & Desarbo, 1988; Tax et al., 1998).

Social comparisons to balance equity were initially thought to be the only perceptions of fair distribution. With this view in mind, many researchers focused on complaints after a service failure (Blodgett et al., 1993; Huppertz et al., 1978; Oliver & Swan, 1989; Tax et al., 1998) to determine which actions brands performed that indicated unequitable distributions. DJ through equity was only considered fair when the situation was competitive (Griffith & Sell, 1988; Prentice & Crosby, 1987). For instance, consumers compared their outcomes to other consumers in hopes of receiving the best deal and were not interested in outcomes distributed to salespeople (Oliver & Swan, 1989). In support of this competitive nature, Huppertz et al. (1978) inadvertently produced a competitive interaction for consumers by providing them with comparison prices and services, allowing consumers the option to shop elsewhere.

However, not all social encounters that involve justice perceptions are competitive in nature (e.g., collaborating with friends). Therefore, due to its subjectivity, individuals judged the
fair distribution of resources differently if the situation demanded a different goal (Folger, 1986; Griffith & Sell, 1988; Hochschild, 1981). For situations that involved friendships and required group harmony, it was best to distribute outcomes equally among all participants regardless of their inputs (Greenberg, 1990). For situations that required positive wellbeing, such as within a romantic relationship, fair distribution occurred when outcomes were altruistic and provided to recipients based upon individual need (Deutsch, 1975, 1985, Schwinger, 1980, 1986). In other words, specific types of CBR might produce different interaction goals, motivating consumers to evoke equity, equality, or need based principles when considering fair distributions.

To test this view, researchers examined DJ brand actions in combination with a close relationship with a brand when attempting to recover from a service failure (Donovan et al., 2012). After a transgression, consumers with a close brand relationship forgave the brand, overlooked the transgression, purchased a product from the brand in the future, and defended the brand from others, but acted less vengeful in retaliation. Alternatively, if consumers did not receive a distributive outcome that a brand was expected to provide based on their established relationship norms, consumers were more likely to complain and engage in negative word-of-mouth in order to harm the brand (Kaltcheva et al., 2013). In support of these results, researchers found that DJ was the strongest predictor of consumer trust and satisfaction (Santos & Fernandes, 2008; Severt, 2002), suggesting that consumers’ main concern when interacting with brands was receiving fair outcomes for themselves that were also consistent with CBR expectations.

But success in correcting DJ errors can also work against brands. Some who tried to increase consumer satisfaction through DJ experienced lowered consumer satisfaction and loyalty due to the perception of forced reciprocity or indebtedness (Greenberg & Westcott, 1983;
Ono & Chiba, 2010). Consumers might view the distribution of outcomes less as an attempt to right a wrong and more as a manipulative action depending on their relationship with the brand (e.g., abusive). Essentially, consumers may ignore the business’ generosity leading to resentment and increased negative consumer behavior over time. Clearly, consumers are aware of how brands treat them (i.e., procedural justice). Consumers might use this additional information to also increase their loyalty and trust towards brands. Unfortunately, researchers have largely overlooked this factor when considering the moderating effects of CBR and consumer perceptions of justice.

**Procedural Justice.** Within procedural justice (PJ), consumers focus on how a brand treats them independent of its distribution of outcomes (Bies, 1987). Avery and her colleagues (2014) highlighted how consumers could perceive a brand’s actions as unfair in this way:

> A clothing brand popular with plus-size baby boomer women tries to reposition itself as relevant to younger, thinner customers and in so doing alienates established customers, who feel betrayed and disrespected—as though they’ve been dumped for someone more attractive (p. 75).

Until 1975, DJ was believed to be the only indication of fairness for individuals. However, researchers began to uncover situations where distribution allocations (i.e., through equity, equality, or need) should be viewed as fair and positive outcomes, yet the individual perceived the encounter as unfair due to their perception of the *process* in which the decision was made (Brockner & Wiesenfeld, 1996; Konovsky, 2000; Leventhal, 1980; Lind & Tyler, 1988; Tax & Brown, 1998; Tyler, 2005a, 2005b). These concerns about decision procedures led to perceptions of justice that were independent of the received outcome (Folger & Bies, 1989; Folger & Konovsky, 1989; Lind & Tyler, 1988; McFarlin & Sweeney, 1992). For instance, consumers may perceive PJ after posting a negative product review, despite not receiving a
refund, because the business responded to the review, indicating they listened, understood, and considered the consumer’s problem.

To better understand why attention towards procedures may influence perceptions of justice, researchers turned toward the legal system first. In their seminal research, Thibaut and Walker (1975) identified that legal disputants considered an adversarial legal system as fairer than an inquisitorial legal system. Specifically, adversarial systems allowed individuals to explain their position prior to a judgement, providing a sense of process control over the outcome. This elucidates PJ’s evolution from DJ. Process control directly relates to one’s ability to change the process in hopes of gaining the most resources from an encounter (Latour, Houlden, Walker, & Thibaut, 1976; Thibaut & Walker, 1978). Similarly, perceptions of DJ ensure control over “inputs” a person provides to affect the output decision proportionally based on the situational goal (Adams, 1965; Bechwati & Morrin, 2003; Blodgett et al., 1993, 1997).

By providing process control, or the ability to voice an opinion clearly and effectively, decision recipients confirmed that their “inputs” were understood and considered prior to a decision outcome (Thibaut & Walker, 1975). As a result, disputants became more satisfied with legal outcomes, because they were provided with indirect control over the process and potentially future outcomes leading to increased perceptions of fairness (Houlden, LaTour, Walker, & Thibaut, 1978; Tyler, Rasinski, & Spodick, 1985). However, voicing one’s opinion was only effective when it was clear that the decision maker respectfully took inputs into consideration (Goodwin & Ross, 1992; Lind & Tyler, 1988). A lack of respect and consideration eliminated perceptions of PJ (Bies & Moag, 1986; Brockner & Wiesenfeld, 1996; Leung & Li, 1990; Lind, Kanfer, & Earley, 1990; Tyler, 1987; Tyler & Bies, 1990; Tyler & Blader, 2003; Tyler, Degoey, & Smith, 1996), leading to increased perceptions of unfairness (Folger, 1977;
Korsgaard, Schweiger, & Sapienza, 1995), feelings of manipulation (Bies & Shapiro, 1988), or beliefs that the process was corrupt (Cohen, 1985). Conversely, citizens reported more satisfaction with a police officer if he was courteous and showed concern for their rights (Tyler & Folger, 1980). Similarly, when asked to identify important procedures used within corporate recruiting, the most common factors identified by participants were honesty and respectful treatment (Bies, 1987).

Researchers replicated Thibaut and Walker’s ground-breaking results and identified process control, now referred to as voice in recent work, as a common and robust indicator of PJ within several different contexts, including legal (Lind, Kurtz, Musante, Walker, & Thibaut, 1980; Tyler & Folger, 1980), organizational, (Bobocel & Gosse, 2015; Colquitt et al., 2013, 2001) and most recently consumers (Clemmer, 1993). For example, a consumer may perceive injustice despite receiving a refund, if a business begrudges the consumer for their behavior (Hart et al., 1990). Therefore, researchers began incorporating voice to understand changes in consumer loyalty and trust after a service failure. Across several different business types (i.e., dentist, auto mechanic, and restaurant), allowance of voice increased consumer satisfaction (Goodwin & Ross, 1992) and suggested that consumers are aware of a brand’s actions instead of just the outcome of an encounter.

Simultaneously, much like DJ, researchers found additional factors that affected perceptions of PJ (Leventhal, 1980; Leventhal, Karuza, & Fry, 1980). Information used to make a decision must be accurate (Folger & Lewis, 1993; Nathan, Mohrman, & Milliman, 1991). Similar to having an ability to voice an argument, individuals wanted to have an opportunity to ensure that information used in making a decision was correct and accurate, with chances to change or modify the information if it was deemed incorrect (Korsgaard et al., 1995).
Additionally, policies must be applied consistently and remain impartial across all individuals and time (Sheppard & Lewicki, 1987; Sparks & McColl-Kennedy, 2001; Tyler, 1994) because these components indicated the removal of bias from the decision process. The appearance of bias increased perceptions of procedural injustice leading to a lack of trust in the outcome regardless of its distribution (Lind & Lissak, 1985).

Without considering differing CBR, consumer attention towards procedural factors produced changes in loyalty and trust (Blodgett et al., 1997; Choi & Choi, 2014; Santos & Fernandes, 2008; Severt, 2002; Siu, Zhang, & Yau, 2013; Sparks & McColl-Kennedy, 2001; Tax et al., 1998). Commitment and loyalty towards the brand increased when consumer complaints (i.e., voice) led to positive outcomes (Hoffman, Kelley, & Rotalsky, 1995; Smith & Bolton, 1998). Consumers increased their performance of negative word-of-mouth and reported a reduced intention to repatronize a business when treated disrespectfully (Blodgett et al., 1997; Blodgett, Wakefield, & Barnes, 1995). Furthermore, satisfaction with a business increased when either the provided outcome was large due to an impartial procedure or the provided outcome was small but specific to the consumer’s complaint (Sparks & McColl-Kennedy, 2001).

Alternatively, perceptions of procedural injustice caused consumers to perform behaviors intended to hurt a brand, such as purposefully buying from a competitor (Bechwati & Morrin, 2003; Hocutt, Chakraborty, & Mowen, 1997; Maxham & Netemeyer, 2002; Tax et al., 1998).

**Incorporating interactional justice.** A blurred line exists between the process used to make a decision and the manner in which a decision is made. Based on this confusion, some researchers argued that PJ was two distinct constructs instead of one (Bies & Moag, 1986; Blader & Tyler, 2003; Brockner & Wiesenfeld, 1996; Tyler & Bies, 1990). One construct focused on the formal policies which dictated how decisions are made and was entitled PJ. The other
construct focused on how the individual is treated by those responsible for making the decisions and was entitled interactional justice. Therefore, strict adherence to fair procedures might produce perceptions of unfairness independent of if they were provided respectfully.

Examination of previous research revealed interactional justice features were often entwined with PJ factors (Bies & Moag, 1986; Bobocel & Holmvall, 2001; Cropanzano & Greenberg, 1997; Folger & Bies, 1989; Tyler & Bies, 1990). Thus, the delineation between PJ and interactional justice is confounding the closer it is examined. For instance, legal disputants did not perceive PJ if they had evidence that their position was not fully considered (Leung & Li, 1990). Although providing an individual with the ability to voice their opinion was a formal procedure, consideration of one’s inputs and views implicitly provided respectful treatment towards an individual (Shapiro, 1993). This has led to a longstanding debate between researchers about whether they were indeed separate components of justice. As the current research provides a foundation for the moderating effect of PJ, I have adopted the view of Tyler and colleagues in that PJ incorporates both fair policies and respectful treatment (Blader & Tyler, 2009; Tyler & Blader, 2003; Tyler et al., 1996) to maximize the potential effect and for increased parsimony.

**Procedural Justice and Brand Relationships**

There is conflicting evidence within consumer research about PJ and its effect on consumer outcomes. Tax and his colleagues (1998) provided consumers with open-ended questions to explain a negative encounter with a brand, highlighting what a brand could have done to “handle the complaint more fairly.” Consumers did not mention aspects of process control often (i.e., voice), indicating that providing voice or the perception of control was unnecessary. Yet, Goodwin and Ross (1992) found that consumer voice increased consumer satisfaction towards brands during service failures. Additionally, consumers did not mind being
treated selectively (i.e., a lack of impartial treatment) if they were provided with a surprising and positive outcome (Sparks & McColl-Kennedy, 2001). On the other hand, the same researchers found impartiality produced increased consumer satisfaction when they were presented with a large and positive outcome which followed policy. Such inconsistencies, compared to the robust effects of DJ (Blodgett et al., 1997; Goodwin & Ross, 1992; Santos & Fernandes, 2008; Severt, 2002; Tax et al., 1998), provided some explanation to why researchers focus on encounters between CBR and DJ.

However, the conflicting evidence for consumer perceptions of PJ could be explained by incorporating CBR. Within this context, PJ might be an important aspect that dictates ongoing consumer loyalty and trust differently depending on the CBR. In support of this, classic procedural literature has also suggested that PJ interacts within differing relationships. Researchers identified that perceptions of PJ were motivated through the group engagement model (Blader & Tyler, 2009; Blader & Tyler, 2003; Tyler & Bies, 1990; Tyler & Blader, 2003; Tyler, Degoey, & Smith, 1996). Researchers posited that individuals worked to become a part of a group that provided self-image information and knowledge about their selves due to a natural need to belong (Baumeister & Leary, 1995; Festinger, 1954; Lind & Tyler, 1988; Reimann & Aron, 2009). By receiving PJ, individuals learned that they were wanted group members. For instance, offering voice opportunities let consumers know that they were worth listening to and that their opinion meant something to the brand.

Once becoming group members, individuals cooperated with the group and helped it meet its goals to benefit all group members in hopes of increasing their own benefits. For example, once consumers decide to support one of two similar brands, they may defend the brand’s actions and celebrate the brand’s products over competitors to attract more consumers to
the group (i.e., Coke vs. Pepsi; Apple vs. Android; or McDonalds vs. Burger King). However, group cooperation invariably leads to occasional instances of negative personal outcomes (i.e., low DJ), which an individual willingly accepts if it ensures greater long-term gains that are provided through group membership (Lind & Tyler, 1988; Tyler & Bies, 1990; Tyler & Blader, 2003).

Components of PJ signal to an individual the potential for future benefits. Factors of PJ could indicate that the decision maker of the group (i.e., brand) values and respects an individual’s group status (Blader & Tyler, 2009). Providing an individual with respect, voice, impartiality, and accuracy in reference to their group position then strengthens an individual’s relationship with the group leading to increased group harmony, loyalty, trust, satisfaction, and an enhanced self-identity (Blader & Tyler, 2003; Tyler & Bies, 1990; Tyler et al., 1996; Tyler & Blader, 2003).

Furthermore, one’s awareness of and influence over the decision process through PJ components provided information for future encounters (Lind & Tyler, 1988). When procedures were used often and remain unchanged over several encounters, an individual was able to infer future outcomes. Therefore, if brands with negative CBR ensure PJ, an individual might begin to overlook an immediate negative encounter. Alternatively, a brand with positive CBR who provides injustice might experience a buffering effect because of previously gained knowledge from procedural information. Consumers with this knowledge might be more motivated to further and strengthen their relationship with a brand, increasing consumer loyalty and trust.

This motivating effect is quite similar to how social identity theory reinforces CBR (Ashforth & Mael, 1989; Tajfel & Turner, 1985; Turner, 1975, 1978, 1982). Previous researchers found that consumers who interact with self-image congruent brands had increased emotional
brand attachment, furthering loyalty, satisfaction, and product purchasing (Kressmann et al., 2006; Malär et al., 2011; Park & Lee, 2005). Because consumers may be giving up desired outcomes, consumers could be looking for PJ information to inform their selves of their value to the brand and brand-self-image congruency. Brands must then ensure that they maintain awareness of their actions to avoid inadvertently informing consumers that they are unvalued. This could be what occurred when a brand deviated from the brand’s established relationship norms and undermined consumer satisfaction, trust, and commitment (Aggarwal, 2004; Avery et al., 2014; Grégoire & Fisher, 2008; Grégoire et al., 2009). Understanding such perceptions might then account for counterintuitive consumer behaviors, such as why a high-quality relationship reduces consumer trust while a low-quality relationship increases consumer trust.

**Present Dissertation.** Based on the review above, there is a clear gap within consumer literature. Clearly, both CBR and perceptions of justice affect consumer loyalty and trust when they are examined separately. Because consumers naturally remain aware of products and services received from brands, researchers have intuitively examined the interacting effects between CBR and perceptions of DJ. But this combination has been overemphasized leading to an under examination for the moderating effect of PJ in relation to CBR.

Limited evidence does exist, in which PJ played a significant role affecting whether consumers formed a close relationship with brands. Choi and Choi (2014) found that PJ was a significant predictor of consumer affection towards a brand instead of DJ after a service failure. Additionally, Schoefer and Ennew (2005) found PJ significantly increased positive and negative emotions from consumers in response to a service failure. Both pieces of research communicate the importance of PJ in shaping consumers’ loyalty and trust in relation to their feelings for the brand. However, brand love and positive emotions are only one necessary component to forming
CBR (Fournier et al., 2012, 2015). Therefore, it is still unclear how PJ moderates the effects of previously established CBR.

Researchers found that respectful treatment components largely predicted patron intentions (Blodgett et al., 1997), suggesting that consumers paid attention to how they were treated, possibly to predict future encounters in hopes of maintaining a consumer-brand relationship. For instance, different CBR established norms which allowed consumers to form brand encounter expectations (Aggarwal, 2004; Alvarez & Fournier, 2012; Rajeev Batra, Ahuvia, & Bagozzi, 2011; Fournier, 1998; Miller et al., 2012; Valta, 2013). Within an organizational context, researchers suggested that norms formed within an on-going relationship took on procedural policies (Aselage & Eisenberger, 2003; Rousseau, 1998). Therefore, PJ could differentially affect consumers within different CBR given the expectations set forward by the consumer’s brand relationship. Yet, this has never been directly examined.

To bridge this gap, I specifically examined changes in consumer loyalty and trust through CBR and PJ, while controlling for the effects of DJ. To examine this effect, I conducted three studies that investigated how consumers use their consumer-brand relationship to perceive PJ information to influence changes in consumer loyalty and trust. Study 1 utilized an experimental survey, in which participants indicated their changed loyalty and trust towards a brand that established a neutral or positive CBR, provided a fair or unfair distributive response, and used fair or unfair procedural methods to provide a response (Figure 1). Study 2’s methodology was specifically altered to account for pre-existing CBR norms that were maintained through situations independent of service failure scenarios. Participants self-reported their brand experiences by indicating their CBR, perception of DJ, and perception of PJ to predict changes in their loyalty and trust towards the identified brand. It was believed that perceptions of PJ
solidified or weakened CBR prior to a service failure, thus influencing changes in loyalty and trust independent of a brand’s response to a service failure (Figure 2).

Based on Study 1 and 2, it seemed that not accounting for when PJ actions affected consumers might be the cause for suppressed effects of procedural brand actions within previous research. For example, consumers with a negative CBR could ignore one instance of PJ because it might seem manipulative (Greenberg & Westcott, 1983; Ono & Chiba, 2010). Therefore, consumers might use consistent PJ information gained from brand encounters to maintain a relationship with a brand. Study 3 examined initial and post consumers’ expectations of consistent PJ information in relation to their previous brand relationship to produce changes in consumer loyalty and trust. In other words, consumers might initially discount inconsistent behavior from brands with previous relationship knowledge leaving their behaviors and beliefs towards a brand unaffected despite recognizing poor PJ implicitly (Figure 3). However, if inconsistent PJ information were presented consistently over several encounters with a brand, explicit measures of consumer loyalty, trust, and the relationship between consumers and brands should be affected (Figure 4).

**Study 1**

The first study examined how perceptions of DJ and PJ moderated changes in consumer loyalty and trust through CBR after a service failure occurred (Figure 1). In pursuit of this, a neutral CBR (i.e., exchange) and a positive CBR (i.e., communal) were chosen as CBR types, due to their similarity with interpersonal psychological relationships and their common use in previous consumer research (Aggarwal, 2004; Aggarwal & Law, 2005; Anderson, 1995; Clark & Mills, 1979, 1993; Clark & Powell, 1986; Golembiewski & McConkie, 1975; Miller et al., 2012; Morgan & Hunt, 1994; Sheth & Parvatiyar, 1995a). An exchange relationship provides each
relationship partner with necessary outcomes through quid-pro-quo, while communal relationships benefit relationship partners through a concern for the other’s welfare. For instance, consumers may purposefully wear clothes that help promote a brand without an expectation of preferential treatment.

Consumers expected a brand to provide distributive actions in relation to their established relationship norms and were more likely to complain and engage in negative word-of-mouth if their expectations were broken (Kaltcheva et al., 2013). Specifically, when established communal relationship brands began to provide distributive outcomes outside of the relationship’s norms, consumer positive attitudes and satisfaction with the business were significantly reduced (Aggarwal, 2004). Alternatively, consumers with a close brand relationship were more likely to forgive the brand regardless of the brand’s behavior (Donovan et al., 2012) due to aspects of the close relationship, such as identity congruency, brand love, and dependency (Fetscherin & Dato-on, 2012; Fournier, 1998; Heinrich et al., 2012). Thus, a hypothesized distributive interaction was consistent with previous research:

**H1:** Consumers with an exchange CBR who received high DJ will have more loyalty and trust towards the brand compared to those with a communal CBR, while consumers with an exchange CBR who received low DJ will have less loyalty and trust towards the brand compared to those with a communal CBR.

Independent of this interaction, PJ should also interact with CBR, providing an explanation for inconsistent findings within previous research. Tax and colleagues (1998) provided consumers with open-ended questions to explain a negative encounter with a brand, highlighting how a brand could “handle the complaint more fairly.” Consumers indicated that
providing voice was unnecessary. Yet, Goodwin and Ross (1992) found that consumer voice increased consumer satisfaction during service failures. Additionally, consumers did not mind being treated selectively when they were presented with a large and positive outcome (Sparks & McColl-Kennedy, 2001).

PJ might be an important aspect that was perceived differently in various CBR. For instance, because relationship type was not controlled by Tax and his colleagues (1998), it is unclear if aspects of voice were unnecessary to consumers due to more fair treatment or because it already existed in their brand relationship. Additionally, Sparks and McColl-Kennedy (2001) did not consider how impartial treatment could be affected by the loyalty a consumer can build from a positive CBR. This could result in consumers with positive CBR requiring more from brands than a fair outcome, removing the buffer of goodwill. Therefore, a second hypothesis was formed:

**H2:** Consumers with an exchange CBR who received high PJ will have similar loyalty and trust towards the brand compared to those with a communal CBR, while consumers with an exchange CBR who received low PJ will have more loyalty and trust towards the brand compared to those with a communal CBR.

**Method**

**Participants.** Two hundred eighty-four students of the University of New Hampshire completed a survey for course credit through an online university system. Within the sample, 67% reported being female and 89.7% reported being Caucasian. The average age of participants was 19.27 (SD = 1.25) and consisted of mostly college freshman (50.4%) and sophomores (32.6%).
Measures. After reading a vignette in which participants purchased a book from Amazon, participants answered several survey items, such as demographic items and manipulation checks to ensure they fully read the survey instructions and internalized the experiment’s manipulations. Also, anticipated consumer loyalty and trustworthiness towards Amazon were measured as dependent variables.

Demographics. Participants were asked demographic questions regarding their age, sex, ethnic background, and education.

Manipulation checks. Directly after reading the vignette, participants were provided an instructional manipulation check to assess if they were fully reading the survey materials (Oppenheimer, Meyvis, & Davidenko, 2009). Participants were presented with a seven-point Likert scale item which read, “I pay attention to each survey statement and will click four to answer this question.” To pass this check, participants needed to provide the indicated answer. Any participants who did not provide the indicated response were removed from the sample (4% removed).

To ensure that participants perceived high or low levels of DJ, participants indicated on a seven-point Likert scale their agreement (1 = Strongly disagree; 7 = Strongly agree) to five statements. “I did not receive a fair outcome” (reversed), “I deserved to receive the item on time”, “I did not deserve compensation” (reversed), “The seller did their best to get me the item I ordered”, and “I expected a better outcome from the seller (reversed).” These survey items were created using the distributive components described within previous research (above). Higher scores indicated higher perceptions of DJ or a fair outcome ($M = 4.37, SD = .79$).

To ensure that participants perceived high or low levels of PJ, participants indicated on a seven-point Likert scale their agreement (1 = Strongly disagree; 7 = Strongly agree) to five
statements. “Overall, I felt I received fair treatment”, “The seller did not listen to me” (reversed), “Once I made a comment, I felt I received fair treatment”, “I deserved fair treatment”, and “I did not deserve communication from the seller (reversed).” These survey items were created using the procedural components described within previous research (above). Higher scores indicated higher perceptions of PJ or fair treatment ($M = 4.75$, $SD = .96$).

Lastly, a scale developed by Mills, Clark, Ford, & Johnson, (2004) was modified to test participants’ perception of having an exchange or communal relationship with the examined brand based on the provided manipulation. Each item used an 11-point Likert scale (0 = Not at all; 10 = Extremely). “How happy would you feel doing something that helps the seller?”; “How large a benefit of the doubt would you be likely to give the seller?”; “How large a cost would you incur to meet a need of the seller?”; “How readily can you put the needs of the seller out of your thoughts?”; “How high a priority for you is meeting the needs of the seller?”; “How reluctant would you be to sacrifice for the seller?”; “How much would you be willing to give up to benefit the seller?”; “How far would you go out of your way to do something for the seller?”; and “How easily could you accept not helping the seller?” Higher scores indicated higher perceptions of a communal relationship ($M = 4.51$, $SD = 1.30$).

**Consumer loyalty.** Predicted loyal behavior was measured by participants indicating on a seven-point Likert scale their agreement (1 = Strongly disagree; 7 = Strongly agree) with six statements. “After this situation, I would tell others good things about my experience”; “I would encourage others to buy from this seller”; “I would buy from this seller again”; “In this situation, I would not ask for my money back”; “If this happened to me, I would cancel my order”

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1 Because each of the manipulation checks were directly affected by participant condition Cronbach’s $\alpha$ was not calculated for these scales.
(reversed), and “In similar situations, I would write a positive review.” Higher scores indicated higher performances of loyal behavior towards the seller ($M = 3.90, SD = 1.33, \alpha = .83$).

**Consumer trust.** Seller trustworthiness was measured using modified versions of Bhattacherjee's (2002) trust for online firms scale and Gefen's (2002) perceived reliability and benevolence towards an online business. Participants indicated on a seven-point Likert scale their agreement (1 = Strongly disagree; 7 = Strongly agree) with 13 statements. “The seller does not have the skills and expertise to perform transactions in an expected manner” (reversed), “The seller handled the transaction appropriately”, “The seller did not meet my needs” (reversed), “The seller was fair in its conduct throughout the transaction”, “The seller is open and receptive to my needs”, “The seller kept my best interest in mind during this transaction”, “Overall, the seller is not trustworthy” (reversed), “I doubt the honesty of the seller” (reversed), “I expect the seller will keep promises they make in the future”, “I can count on the seller to be sincere”, “I expect that the seller is ready and willing to assist and support me”, “I expect that the seller has good intentions toward me”, and “I expect that the seller is well meaning.” Higher scores indicated higher amounts of trust towards Amazon ($M = 4.16, SD = 1.23, \alpha = .94$).

**Procedure.** Participants signed up to take the survey through a university wide subject pool created through SONA systems. SONA then sent participants a URL to the survey through email, with informed consent information and access to the online survey. Prior to beginning the survey, participants read about the nature of the study and provided consent to continue. Participants then read a hypothetical vignette about buying a book online which manipulated perceptions of justice and relationship type with Amazon. This vignette was chosen because the need to buy books is a common experience for undergraduates and would elicit frustration when a service failure occurred. The combination of each of these conditions produced a 2(DJ: High,
Imagine that you need to buy a book. After searching, you find that Amazon is selling the book online. You have bought items from them in the past and you have never had a problem. Whenever you provide payment, you receive the item in perfect condition. *(Exchange/Communal: But you have no preference to buy items only from them, you are just looking for a deal/Overtime you have developed a preference to buy items only from them, even when you are not getting the best deal.)* You look at the reviews to see how previous transactions have gone for the book you need. Others who have bought the same item from Amazon, say that *(Low/High PJ: different people are treated better than others/everyone is treated well)* if something goes wrong. You decide to buy the item and are told that the item will arrive within five days. However, ten days pass and the book still has not arrived. You leave a comment *(Low/High PJ: but Amazon never reads your message/and Amazon tells you the package will arrive next week due to a mix-up with the shipping address).*(Low/High DJ: The book finally arrives two weeks after you bought it./One day your roommate hands you the book explaining that it arrived on time, a week ago, and he forgot to give it to you sooner).

Afterwards, all participants answered a short questionnaire incorporating the measures described previously. Upon completion of the study, participants were debriefed with an explanation of the study and provided access to one credit hour towards the course of their choice as compensation.

**Results**

First, I assessed whether participants were fully reading the survey materials through the instructional manipulation check (Oppenheimer et al., 2009). Two hundred seventy-two participants passed, while the remaining 4% (N = 12) of the sample who failed were removed from further analyses.

Next, I examined the strength of the manipulations. A univariate ANOVA analysis on perceptions of DJ \((F(1, 270) = 66.17, p < .001)\) found that participants in the high DJ condition

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2 Both aspects of procedural justice were not manipulated separately, meaning there were only high and low procedural justice conditions and not a combination of the two.
(M = 4.78, SD = .78) reported significantly higher DJ perceptions compared to those in the low DJ condition (M = 4.07, SD = .64). Similar results were found within the PJ manipulation check (F(1, 270) = 71.73, p < .001). Participants in the high PJ condition (M = 5.25, SD = .94) reported significantly higher PJ perceptions compared to those in the low PJ condition (M = 4.35, SD = .80). For relationship type (F(1, 270) = 3.70, p = .06), participants in the communal relationship condition (M = 4.67, SD = 1.19) produced a marginally significant increase in communal attitudes compared to participants within the exchange relationship condition (M = 4.37, SD = 1.40).

**Effect on consumer loyalty.** We then performed a three-way (2 [DJ: High, Low] x 2 [PJ: High, Low] x 2 [Relationship: Exchange, Communal]) factorial ANOVA to examine any experimental effects on future loyal consumer behavior. Relationship type did not produce a main effect (F(1, 264) = .63, p > .25) or two-way interactions with either distributive (F(1, 264) = 2.40, p > .10) or PJ (F(1, 264) = .17, p > .25), producing no support for either of my hypotheses. There was also no three-way interaction between the examined factors (F(1, 264) = .05, p > .25).

However, there was a main effect for DJ (F(1, 264) = 134.34, p < .001, η² = .34) and PJ (F(1, 264) = 5.08, p < .01, η² = .02) on consumer loyalty. When participants received an unfair outcome (not receiving the book within an expected timeframe), participants reported significantly less future loyal behaviors compared to those within the high DJ condition (Table 1). Additionally, when participants received unfair treatment (reading reviews which mentioned valuing some customers over others and no response from Amazon towards their question), participants reported significantly less future loyal behaviors compared to those within the high PJ (Table 1).
There was also a significant interaction found between DJ and PJ \((F(1, 264) = 8.01, p < .01, \eta^2 = .03)\). Based on a simple effects analysis, consumer loyalty was significantly higher when perceptions of DJ were high (Table 1) regardless of a participant’s perceptions of PJ, \((p > .25)\). However, among those in the low DJ condition, consumer loyalty was significantly lower when PJ was also low compared to those in the high PJ condition \((p < .001)\).

**Effect on consumer trust.** I then performed a three-way \((2 [DJ: \text{High, Low}] \times 2 [PJ: \text{High, Low}] \times 2 [\text{Relationship: Exchange, Communal}])\) factorial ANOVA, to examine any experimental effects on consumer trust. Relationship type did not produce a main effect \((F(1, 264) = .01, p > .25)\) or a two-way interaction with PJ \((F(1, 264) = .87, p > .25)\), producing no support for my second hypotheses. There was also no three-way interaction between the examined factors \((F(1, 264) = .03, p > .25)\).

However, there was a main effect for DJ \((F(1, 264) = 92.97, p < .001, \eta^2 = .26)\) and PJ \((F(1, 264) = 71.54, p < .001, \eta^2 = .21)\) on consumer trust. When participants received an unfair outcome, there was significantly less trust towards Amazon compared to those in the high DJ condition (Table 1). Additionally, when participants received unfair treatment, there was significantly less consumer trust compared to those in the high PJ condition (Table 1).

Similar to consumer loyalty, there was also a significant interaction found between DJ and PJ on consumer trust \((F(1, 264) = 12.74, p < .001, \eta^2 = .05)\). Based on a simple effects analysis, consumer trust was significantly highest when perceptions of DJ and PJ were high compared to conditions in which perceptions were mixed \((p’s < .001; \text{Table 1})\). Alternatively, receiving low distributive and PJ led to significantly less consumer trust than any other condition \((p’s < .001)\).
Although relationship type did not produce a main effect or interaction with PJ, there was still a significant interaction found between DJ and relationship type, providing support for my first hypothesis ($F(1, 264) = 4.62, p < .01, \eta^2 = .03$). Upon inspection, the interaction produced a crossover effect between the factors. Exchange relationships produced higher consumer trust when DJ was also high compared to communal relationships (Figure 5). Alternatively, while low DJ led to significantly lower consumer trust for both relationship types, communal relationships produced higher consumer trust than exchange relationships. Unfortunately, the simple effects analysis revealed no significant differences between the examined factors. However, I chose to interpret the interaction because simple effects analyses often produce inconsistent findings within crossover effects (Keppel & Wickens, 2004).

Discussion

Overall, these results provided some support for the effects that CBR and perceptions of justice have on consumer loyalty and trust. In truth, these results are a conceptual replication of current empirical knowledge (Aaker et al., 2004; Donovan et al., 2012; Kaltcheva et al., 2013; Mayser & Von Wangenheim, 2012; Santos & Fernandes, 2008; Seiders & Berry, 1998; Severt, 2002). Supporting the first hypothesis, DJ and relationship type interacted to produce changes in consumer trust. Consumers with an exchange relationship had higher consumer trust compared to communal relationships when given a fair outcome. Alternatively, while an unfair outcome (e.g., not receiving the book within an expected timeframe) lowered consumer trust for both relationship types compared to high DJ, communal relationships produced higher consumer trust than exchange relationships.

However, these factors did not interact to similarly affect loyal behaviors towards the brand. Participants who experienced an unfair outcome reported less loyalty towards the brand.
regardless of their relationship type. When consumers received an unfair outcome, loyalty towards the brand was lowered compared to those who received a fair outcome. This difference in responses could be due to participants considering their future behaviors as a chance to restore equity regardless of the relationship (Adams, 1965; Bechwati & Morrin, 2003; Blodgett et al., 1993, 1997) while trust reflects a consumer’s belief that the brand’s behavior will return to “normal” after a single inconsistency (Hegner, Beldad, & Kamphuis op Heguis, 2014; Tax et al., 1998).

These results are consistent with and help to confirm findings from previous research. Within consumer contexts, researchers found that consumers are most concerned with DJ and the reception of a fair outcome (Mayser & Von Wangenheim, 2012; Santos & Fernandes, 2008; Seiders & Berry, 1998; Severt, 2002). When brands work to provide fair outcomes or an equitable solution (Adams, 1965; Kelley et al., 1993; Tax & Brown, 1998) to a consumer problem, consumers will develop a stronger connection to the brand in order to overlook future issues (Blau, 1964; Smith & Bolton, 1998; Smith et al., 1999; Walster et al., 1978). The current study’s results support this conclusion, but there is also evidence to suggest that this effect is a function of consumers’ relationship with a brand. Essentially, an exchange relationship produces more trust due to its quid-pro-quo expectations but such expectations can backfire because consumers are more aware of distributive outcomes. Conversely, establishing a communal relationship does not produce more trust that an outcome will always be handled properly but it provides a better buffer for the brand when something eventually goes wrong.

Previous researchers produced similar findings when they examined how a brand’s personality, aiding the formation of CBR, could be affected by a brand’s attempt to provide DJ after a service failure (Aaker et al., 2004). Despite providing the same compensation for an
identical service failure, an exciting brand personality successfully repaired its relationship with consumers after the transgression when compared to a sincere personality. The researchers proposed that the exciting brand elicited from consumers a calculation of loss versus gain (i.e., restoring equity). Considering the results of the current study and previous research, perceptions of DJ can vary consumer attitudes as a function of CBR.

However, Aaker and her colleagues (2004) also postulated that the sincere brand did not have a similar effect because it broke an emotional trust to treat the consumer well. This suggests that consumers who interacted with the sincere brand required procedural information to forgive the brands transgression. Unfortunately, there was no support for this within the current study due to a lack of evidence for my second hypothesis. These results are also emblematic of current empirical knowledge.

Perceptions of PJ did not produce a change in loyal behaviors or trust within different CBR. This is not to say that participants did not find fair treatment important. PJ only produced main effects on consumer loyalty and trust. When participants received unfair treatment (e.g., reading reviews which mentioned valuing some customers over others and no response from Amazon towards their question), future loyal behaviors and trust were significantly lowered compared to those provided fair treatment from the brand. This effect is consistent with previous research, indicating perceptions of PJ affect consumer behaviors and attitudes (Blodgett et al., 1993, 1997; Goodwin & Ross, 1992; Hocutt et al., 1997; Maxham & Netemeyer, 2002).

Additionally, PJ interacted with perceptions of DJ for both consumer loyalty and trust, albeit in different ways. Consumer loyalty increased when consumers received a fair outcome, regardless of how they were treated by the brand, compared to those who received a poor outcome. When an unfair outcome occurred, consumer loyalty decreased when consumers also
perceived being treated unfairly compared to those who received fair treatment. Alternatively, consumer trust increased the most when consumers received both a fair outcome and fair treatment compared to consumers who received perceptions that were mixed (i.e., high/low DJ with low/high PJ). Consumer trust was lowest when consumers perceived both an unfair outcome and unfair treatment. These interactions and the large effect sizes attributed to DJ indicate that the effects of PJ may be qualified by the outcomes consumers receive, which is consistent with previous research.

From these results, it is possible to conclude that PJ may not have a differing effect on consumer loyalty and trust within different CBR, supporting the assumption that consumers’ main concern when interacting with a brand is receiving a fair outcome for themselves. However, there are several limitations to this first study which must be addressed before making such a conclusion. For instance, following the assumptions of previous research (Blodgett et al., 1997; Choi & Choi, 2014; Goodwin & Ross, 1992; Mccoll-Kennedy & Sparks, 2003; Priluck & Wisenblit, 2009; Smith & Bolton, 1998; Sparks & McColl-Kennedy, 2001; Spreng, Harrell, & Mackoy, 1995; Tax & Brown, 1998; Tax et al., 1998), participants were asked about their perception of PJ within a service failure situation that was focused on service recovery through customer service. Researchers believed these encounters represented instances where perceptions of justice will be most recognized. Yet, CBR are informed through various encounters including, but not limited to, consumer complaint encounters (Dwyer, Schurr, & Oh, 1987; Gosline, 2015). For example, it is possible for consumers to maintain a relationship with a brand without even talking to a brand representative (e.g., Google). Furthermore, many brand encounters are with the brand itself through advertising or social media which can be either positive or negative (Iacobucci & Ostrom, 1996; Mitussis et al., 2006; Price & Arnould, 1999; Schmitt, 2012). Due to
such various encounters with brands, it might be possible that these diverse communications produce examples of PJ which consumers consider their relationship with a brand independent of how customer service helps during a service failure. Therefore, future researchers must account for a brand’s actions interacting with perceptions of justice when the brand is not recovering from a service failure.

Another limitation of the current study was the marginal difference between the exchange and communal conditions. This marginal difference may have occurred because of two reasons which must be addressed with further research. First, participants were forced to consider and incorporate potentially new relationship knowledge for a well-known brand. In 2016, 20% of all U.S. consumers reported being Amazon Prime members (a premium Amazon discount service) while Amazon accounted for 43% of online retail sales in the U.S. (Cassar, 2017). One could assume that many, if not all, of the participants had experience with Amazon and already had a strong relationship with the brand. Consequently, the observed marginal perceptions and lack of a relationship effect could be due to participants’ not forming ecologically valid CBR with the information given to them. Previous research accounted for this by utilizing pre-existing CBR (Aggarwal & Law, 2005; Grégoire et al., 2009; Santos & Fernandes, 2008).

Second, consumers may not have considered an exchange relationship to be a neutral CBR. Exchange relationships were chosen as a neutral control to compare against a positive CBR in hopes of identifying what a brand may gain by providing justice to their consumers. As stated previously, this decision was made based on comparable interpersonal relationships within psychology and their use within previous research (Aggarwal, 2004; Aggarwal & Law, 2005; Anderson, 1995; Clark & Mills, 1993; Golembiewski & McConkie, 1975; Miller et al., 2012; Morgan & Hunt, 1994; Sheth & Parvatiyar, 1995a). Yet, although CBR and interpersonal
relationships are similar, there are some aspects of CBR that are not found within interpersonal relationships (Huang, 2012; Swaminathan & Dommer, 2012). For instance, any relationship between a consumer and brand involves the exchange of money which is atypical within interpersonal relationships. Additionally, researchers found that different brain areas activated when thinking about brands compared to people, suggesting a separation between the relationships between brands and others (Yoon, Gutches, Feinberg, & Polk, 2006).

Therefore, it may be possible that consumers viewed exchange relationships differently within a consumer context; specifically, consumers may consider an exchange brand relationship as positive. Supporting this view, researchers found exchange relationship brands lived up to their business transactions, leading consumers to trust a business more (Golembiewski & McConkie, 1975; Kotler, 1972; Morgan & Hunt, 1994; Pels, 1999). If both CBR conditions were viewed as positive then PJ would behave similarly and not produce differing effects, much like the current findings. As a result, a wider range of CBR must be utilized to truly examine the effects of perceptions of justice within various CBR on consumer outcomes.

Although the results from this first study were supported by previous research, there were discernable limitations which were consistent with previous research to warrant further examination. Based on these limitations, it cannot be concluded that PJ had no differing effects within various CBR. Therefore, a second study was conducted.

**Study 2**

A second study was performed to address the limitations within Study 1 and to examine how perceptions of justice might predict changes in consumer loyalty and trust as a function of various CBR. The previous study’s results led to post-hoc speculation that the lack of a PJ interaction with CBR could be due to the marginal difference between the exchange and
communal conditions and by the potentially confounding effects of customer service within the scenario. To fix these issues, the second study utilized consumers pre-existing relationship knowledge, controlled for the effects of customer service, and provided a wider range of CBR.

To expand the range of CBR within the second study, I utilized eight common CBR which had been identified through previous research (Miller et al., 2012). Below is a short description for each relationship followed by an example which was found to empirically best fit the description. Abusive brands are perceived as going out of their way to take advantage of the consumer by not listening to consumer complaints and making consumers feel unvalued (e.g., American Airlines, Comcast). Adversarial brands are thought of as rivals to the consumer and their self-identity (e.g., Coca-Cola, New York Yankees). Committed brands are those that consumers have chosen to remain loyal to for years despite a competitor’s lower prices (e.g., Nike, Crest Toothpaste). Communal brands elicit feelings of love that motivate consumers to go out of their way to support them (e.g., Boston University, Axe). Dependent brands are those that a consumer feels she cannot live without (e.g., Google, Dove). Exchange brands, as mentioned earlier, provide a product or service for a reasonable cost (e.g., Colgate, Bic). Master-Slave brands make consumers feel trapped or forced to use them and would not be a consumer’s first choice if other options were available (e.g., Starbucks, Wal-Mart). Secret affair brands are hidden by consumers because they do not want others associating the brand with them, even if the brand is purchased often (e.g., Trojan, Payless). These eight CBR will be used in the following study to examine their effects on consumer outcomes and perceptions of justice. Based on these descriptions, some could be perceived as a more negative CBR (e.g., abusive), than others (e.g., communal). Therefore, participants indicated whether they viewed the description as negative or positive.
As mentioned previously, development of positive CBR increased revenue (Aaker, 1996), increased consumer loyalty (Algesheimer, Dholakia, & Herrmann, 2005; McAlexander, Kim, & Roberts, 2003), increased the ability to overlook service failures (Priluck, 2003), decreased consumer anger (Forrester & Maute, 2001), and decreased negative word of mouth (Grégoire & Fisher, 2008). Therefore, I predicted similar findings when comparing brands which are identified by participants as generally positive or negative:

**H1:** Consumers with negative CBR will have less consumer loyalty, trust, and perceptions of distributive and PJ compared to those with positive CBR.

Additionally, based on the previously mentioned limitations and literature (above), I again hypothesized interactions between CBR and each perception of justice similar to Study 1’s hypotheses:

**H2:** Perceptions of high DJ will predict increased consumer loyalty and trust when consumers also have a positive CBR compared to those with negative CBR, independent of the effects of customer service.

**H3:** Perceptions of high PJ will predict increased consumer loyalty and trust when consumers also have a positive CBR compared to those with negative CBR, independent of the effects of customer service.

**Method**

**Participants.** Three hundred thirty-nine students from the University of New Hampshire completed a survey for course credit through an online university system. Within the sample, 67.3% reported being female and 91.4% Caucasian. The average age of participants was 19.20 (SD = 1.35) and consisted of mostly college freshman (41%) and sophomores (34.5%).
Measures. Participants answered several survey items, such as demographic items and manipulation checks to ensure they fully read the survey instructions and internalized the experiment’s manipulations. The survey also contained items to assess participants’ perceptions of distributive and PJ, anticipated consumer loyalty, trustworthiness towards the brand, and the effectiveness of customer service for the brand if it had been contacted. In all measurement items, “[brand]” was replaced by the authentic brand participants provided at the beginning of the survey.

Demographics. Participants were asked demographic questions regarding their age, sex, ethnic background, and education.

Manipulation checks. Participants were required to provide at least one authentic brand. This check was required because participant responses were dependent on previous relationship knowledge based on the brand provided by participants. Additionally, like the first study, participants were given an instructional manipulation check to assess if they were fully reading the survey materials (Oppenheimer et al., 2009).

Distributive justice. Participants indicated on a seven-point Likert scale their agreement (1 = Strongly disagree; 7 = Strongly agree) with 11 statements which examined their perceptions of DJ due to the relationship participants had with the brand. These survey items were created using the distributive components described within previous research (above). “[Brand]’s products are worth their price,” “[Brand] creates products that understand their consumer’s need for them,” “The product I buy from [brand] is equal to what others receive,” “It is fair if [brand] rewards a consumer’s loyalty,” “[Brand]’s product quality is consistent across multiple purchases,” “[Brand]’s business decisions are equally fair to all consumers,” “If consumers need something from [brand], they will get it.” “Increased loyalty to [brand] leads to fair outcomes,”
“Loyalty programs created by [brand] are/would be fair to consumers,” “Priority is given to consumers who need a product from [brand] quickly,” and “[Brand] reacts positively when a consumer needs an outcome.” Higher scores indicated higher perceptions of DJ ($M = 4.22$, $SD = .43$, $\alpha = .92$).

**Procedural justice.** Participants indicated on a seven-point Likert scale their agreement (1 = Strongly disagree; 7 = Strongly agree) with 13 statements which examined their perceptions of PJ due to the relationship participants had with the brand. These survey items were created using the procedural components described within previous research (above). “[Brand] provides consumers with fair treatment,” “[Brand] pays more attention to consumers than making money,” “[Brand] considers their consumer’s views when making decisions,” “After buying [brand]’s products, consumers feel their views are respected,” “[Brand] treats all of their consumers equally,” “Consumers should worry about [brand] treating other consumers more fairly than them (reversed),” “Consumers know [brand] provides fair treatment before engaging with them,” “[Brand] respects its consumers,” “[Brand] listens to consumers if there is a problem,” “When interacting with [brand], consumers will be treated fairly like everyone else,” “Through interactions with [brand], it is clear an effort is made to be fair towards consumers,” “Interactions with [brand] are fair towards consumers,” and “[Brand] changes based on consumer reactions.” Higher scores indicated higher perceptions of PJ or fair treatment ($M = 4.59$, $SD = .36$, $\alpha = .95$).

**Consumer loyalty.** Predicted loyal behavior was measured by participants indicating on a seven-point Likert scale their agreement (1 = Strongly disagree; 7 = Strongly agree) with eight statements. “I tell others about my positive experiences with [brand],” “I write positive reviews about [brand] on social media,” “If given the choice, I would use other brands instead of [brand]
(reversed),” “I say bad things about [brand] to others (reversed),” “I buy as many products as I can from [brand],” “I actively discourage others from using [brand] (reversed),” “If given the choice to use a different brand, I would still use [brand],” “I show off my new purchases from [brand].” Higher scores indicated higher performances of loyal behavior towards the seller ($M = 3.96$, $SD = 1.11$, $\alpha = .88$).

**Consumer trust.** Brand trustworthiness was measured using items from the Partner Quality section of the Brand Relationship Quality scale (Fournier, 2009). Participants indicated on a seven-point Likert scale their agreement ($1 = $Strongly disagree; $7 = $Strongly agree) with four statements. “[Brand] takes care of me,” “[Brand] makes up for its mistakes,” “I can count on [brand] to do what is best for me,” and “[Brand] listens to me.” Higher scores indicated higher amounts of trust towards the brand ($M = 3.17$, $SD = .15$, $\alpha = .93$).

**Customer service.** Participants indicated on a seven-point Likert scale their agreement ($1 = $Strongly disagree; $7 = $Strongly agree) with ten statements to assess how effective customer service was at solving participants’ past issues with the brand. Survey items were created using the distributive and procedural components described previously to control for their effects within customer service. Only participants who reported they had contacted the identified brand’s customer service were presented with the following ten items, “The customer service of [brand] is the best part about the brand,” “[Brand]’s customer service treats consumers fairly,” “[Brand]’s customer service respects consumers,” “The customer service of [brand] treats all consumers equally,” “When consumers call [brand]’s customer service, they know someone will listen to their problems,” “[Brand]’s customer service motto could be ‘The customer is always right’,” “[Brand]’s customer service listens to a consumer’s problem instead of working from a script,” “Decisions made by [brand]’s customer service are equally fair to all consumers,”
“[Brand]’s customer service solve problems fairly,” “[Brand]’s customer service is a place consumers can get solutions to their problems.” Higher scores indicated better customer service from the brand ($M = 4.12$, $SD = .48$, $\alpha = .97$).

**Procedure.** Participants signed up to take the survey through a university wide subject pool created through SONA systems. SONA then sent participants a URL to the survey through email, with informed consent information and access to the online survey. Prior to beginning the survey, participants read about the nature of the study and provided consent to continue.

Participants were then randomly assigned to read one consumer-brand relationship description from a pool of eight (for full descriptions see Miller et al., 2012), creating a between-subjects design. After reading their randomly assigned relationship description, participants indicated whether they viewed the description as negative or positive. Then participants identified five brands they have interacted with in the past year that fit the described relationship. This methodology ensured that participants had multiple opportunities to consider the wide variety of brands which may represent their randomly assigned condition.

Afterwards, all participants picked one brand from their own provided responses that they believed best fit the description. The chosen brand name was then piped into the remainder of the survey, which incorporated the measures described previously. This ensured that previous brand relationship knowledge would affect their subsequent survey responses. Upon completion of the study, participants were debriefed with an explanation of the study and provided access to one credit hour towards the course of their choice as compensation.

**Results**

First, I assessed if participants provided an authentic brand which fit the description they read. Six participants (1.8%) could not provide a brand and were removed from further analyses.
Next, I assessed whether participants were fully reading the survey materials using the instructional manipulation check (Oppenheimer et al., 2009). From the remaining participants, 289 passed (86.8%), while those who failed were removed from further analyses.

Next, I examined participants’ negative or positive perception of each relationship type. Prior to analysis, I decided that at least 60% of participants must agree to form a majority view of how consumers view the relationship type. A majority of participants reported that the following relationship types were negative: Adversarial (94.7%), Abusive (92.1%), Secret Affair (84.8%), and Master/Slave (84.4%). Alternatively, Committed (100%), Communal (100%), Exchange (94.1%), and Dependent (76.3%) were viewed as positive relationship descriptions between consumers and brands. Because many participants identified each relationship as being positive or negative, I used this dichotomy in order to create overall negative and positive CBR conditions for all further analyses.

**Effects of consumer brand-relationships.** I then performed a MANOVA to examine any experimental effects of negative or positive CBR experiences on perceptions of justice, future loyal consumer behavior, and consumer trust. In support of the first hypothesis, positive CBR produced significantly higher perceptions of DJ ($F(1, 287) = 142.17, p < .001, \eta^2 = .33$), PJ ($F(1, 287) = 104.24, p < .001, \eta^2 = .27$), consumer loyalty ($F(1, 287) = 323.28, p < .001, \eta^2 = .53$), and consumer trust ($F(1, 287) = 97.49, p < .001, \eta^2 = .25$) compared to negative CBR (Table 2).

A second MANOVA was also conducted between the communal and exchange conditions to replicate the null results from Study 1 on perceptions of justice, future loyal consumer behavior, and consumer trust. A full replication suggests that the exclusion of more diverse CBR was an accurate limitation of Study 1. However, a partial replication was achieved with communal CBR producing significantly higher perceptions of DJ ($F(1, 68) = 5.76, p < .05, \eta^2 = $
.08) compared to an exchange CBR, while PJ ($F(1, 68) = .10, p > .50$) and consumer trust ($F(1, 68) = 3.06, p > .08$) were not significantly different between the two relationship types. Surprisingly, communal CBR produced significantly higher consumer loyalty ($F(1, 68) = 8.50, p < .01, \eta^2 = .11$) when compared to an exchange CBR. However, the effect of this difference is much smaller than the change in loyalty between negative and positive CBR ($\eta^2 = .53$; Table 2), supporting the decision to compare more extreme CBR within further analyses.

Because I did not manipulate perceptions of justice within this second study, these results do not illustrate how perceptions of justice affect consumer behaviors and attitudes within either positive or negative CBR. Therefore, I performed OLS regressions on consumer loyalty and consumer trust to examine their predicted changes due to relationship type and perceptions of justice, independent of the effect of customer service.

**Predicted effect on consumer loyalty.** Prior to my analysis, relationship type was recoded as a moderating variable (Negative CBR = 0; Positive CBR = 1). Interaction terms for both perceptions of justice were formed using the product of the relationship moderating variable with each perception of justice. Also, any participant who indicated they had not contacted [brand]'s customer service was given a score of zero creating a pseudo-interaction term for customer service.

Next, I examined the zero-order correlations between the predictor variables and consumer loyalty to examine the strength of their relations to each other (Table 3). Loyalty was significantly correlated with relationship type, customer service, DJ, and PJ. Additionally, almost all the predictor variables were highly correlated with each other, except with customer service. Customer service was only moderately correlated with relationship type and DJ. Customer
service was not significantly correlated with PJ \((r = .07, p > .10)\), indicating consumers did not perceive PJ to be a component of their interactions with customer service.

Interaction terms were also included in the correlation matrix to determine if there were potential multicollinearity issues. I expected large correlations between my main effect and interaction terms as they should be naturally correlated (Ganzach, 1998). However, the moderating variable of relationship type was extremely correlated with the DJ interaction \((r = .97, p < .001)\) and the PJ interaction \((r = .97, p < .001)\) indicating the possibility for multicollinearity effects within my planned regression. Therefore, I set an a priori threshold for my multicollinearity diagnostics to be vigilant of potential multicollinearity problems (Variance Inflation Factors (VIF) < 3; Mansfield & Helms, 1982).

I then regressed relationship type, perceptions of distributive and PJ, interactions of each justice perception with relationship type, and the effect of customer service on consumer loyalty behaviors. The overall regression was significantly predictive of changes in consumer loyalty \((R^2 = .67; F(6, 282) = 95.32, p < .001)\). Independent of customer service \((b = .09, \beta = .13, p < .001, sr^2 = .02)\), DJ \((b = .42, \beta = .34, p < .001, sr^2 = .03)\) and PJ \((b = .14, \beta = .12, p < .05, sr^2 = .00)\) predicted significant changes in consumer loyalty within negative relationships. Additionally, positive relationships \((b = 1.29, \beta = .43, p < .05, sr^2 = .01)\) predicted a significant increase in consumer loyalty from negative relationships (Intercept: \(b = .68, p < .05\)). However, the predicted changes due to an interaction between DJ within positive relationships \((b = -.07, \beta = -.12, p > .25, sr^2 = .00)\) and PJ within positive relationships \((b = .08, \beta = 14, p > .25, sr^2 = .00)\) were not significant.

Supporting the highly-correlated findings discussed above, multicollinearity diagnostics reported extreme scores for relationship type (VIF = 28.71) and both interaction terms (DJ: VIF
These results indicated that the values for each of the affected parameter estimates may be artificially inflated which leads to an increased chance of an interpretation error. To adjust for the effects of multicollinearity, I performed three separate regressions which included each of the affected predictors separately (Graham, 2003).

First, I removed both justice interaction terms and only included the effect of relationship. The overall regression was significantly predictive of changes in consumer loyalty ($R^2 = .67$; $F(4, 284) = 143.65, p < .001$). Positive relationships ($b = 1.33, \beta = .44, p < .001, sr^2 = .27$) predicted a significant increase in consumer loyalty from negative relationships (Intercept: $b = .67, p < .01$). Independent of customer service ($b = .09, \beta = .13, p < .001, sr^2 = .05$), DJ ($b = .40, \beta = .32, p < .001, sr^2 = .12$) and PJ ($b = .17, \beta = .15, p < .01, sr^2 = .03$) predicted significant changes in consumer loyalty. This alteration provided acceptable multicollinearity diagnostic scores ($VIF < 3$), while also producing larger effect size calculations indicating that my previous results were highly affected by multicollinearity.

Second, I only included the interaction term between DJ and relationship and removed the main effect of relationship. The overall regression was significantly predictive of changes in consumer loyalty ($R^2 = .66$; $F(4, 284) = 137.49, p < .001, VIF < 3$). Independent of customer service ($b = .09, \beta = .13, p < .001, sr^2 = .05$), PJ ($b = .19, \beta = .16, p < .01, sr^2 = .03$) predicted significant changes in consumer loyalty. Both DJ within negative relationships ($b = .46, \beta = .35, p < .001, sr^2 = .08$) and DJ within positive relationships ($b = .28, \beta = .47, p < .001, sr^2 = .25$) independently predicted significant changes in consumer loyalty, indicating an interaction that supported hypothesis 2. Plotting the predicted equation outcomes due to this interaction term shows that positive relationships predict a significantly steeper slope than negative relationships as DJ perceptions increase (Figure 6).
Third, I only included the interaction term between PJ and relationship. The overall regression was significantly predictive of changes in consumer loyalty ($R^2 = .66$; $F(4, 284) = 139.69, p < .001$, VIF < 3). Independent of customer service ($b = .09, \beta = .13, p < .001$, $sr^2 = .05$), DJ ($b = .41, \beta = .33, p < .001$, $sr^2 = .12$) predicted significant changes in consumer loyalty. PJ ($b = .09, \beta = .08, p > .10$) did not significantly predict changes in consumer loyalty within negative relationships, but there was a significant interaction, which supported hypothesis 3. Increased PJ perceptions were significantly associated with positive relationships ($b = .26, \beta = .47, p < .001$, $sr^2 = .26$). Plotting the predicted equation outcomes due to this interaction term shows that positive relationships predict a significantly steeper slope than negative relationships as PJ perceptions increase (Figure 7).

**Predicted effect on consumer trust.** Using the same variables from the previous analysis, I examined the zero-order correlations between the predictor variables and consumer trust to examine the strength of their relations to each other (Table 3). Trust was significantly correlated with relationship type, customer service, DJ, and PJ.

I then regressed relationship type, perceptions of distributive and PJ, interactions of each justice perception with relationship type, and the effect of customer service on consumer trust. Again, I adjusted for the effects of multicollinearity by performing three separate regressions. But to highlight the effects of multicollinearity on my data, I first included all the affected predictors. The overall regression was significantly predictive of changes in consumer trust ($R^2 = .48$; $F(6, 282) = 44.01, p < .001$). Independent of customer service ($b = .12, \beta = .17, p < .001$, $sr^2 = .05$), DJ ($b = .45, \beta = .34, p < .001$, $sr^2 = .06$) and PJ ($b = .28, \beta = .23, p < .01$, $sr^2 = .03$) predicted significant increases in consumer loyalty within negative relationships. However, positive relationships ($b = -.13, \beta = -.04, p > .50$, $sr^2 = .00$), negative relationships (Intercept: $b =$
or interactions between DJ within positive relationships ($b = .13, \beta = .21, p > .25, sr^2 = .00$) and PJ within positive relationships ($b = -.01, \beta = -.01, p > .50, sr^2 = .00$) were not significantly associated with changes in consumer trust.

Next, to reduce the effect of multicollinearity, I removed both justice interaction terms and only included the effect of relationship. The overall regression was significantly predictive of changes in consumer trust ($R^2 = .48 (F(4, 284) = 66.08, p < .001)$. Positive relationships ($b = .44, \beta = .14, p < .05, sr^2 = .02$) predicted a significant increase in consumer trust from negative relationships (Intercept: $b = -.63, p < .05$). Independent of customer service ($b = .12, \beta = .17, p < .001, sr^2 = .05$), DJ ($b = .50, \beta = .38, p < .001, sr^2 = .11$) and PJ ($b = .27, \beta = .22, p < .001, sr^2 = .04$) predicted significant changes in consumer trust. Additionally, both DJ within negative relationships ($b = .46, \beta = .35, p < .001, sr^2 = .08$) and DJ within positive relationships ($b = .10, \beta = .16, p < .01, sr^2 = .02$) independently predicted significant changes in consumer trust, indicating an interaction that again supported hypothesis 2. Plotting the predicted equation outcomes due to this interaction term shows that positive relationships predict a significantly steeper slope than negative relationships as DJ perceptions increase (Figure 8).

Then, I only included the interaction term between DJ and relationship and removed the main effect of relationship. The overall regression was significantly predictive of changes in consumer trust ($R^2 = .48 (F(4, 284) = 66.46, p < .001)$. Independent of customer service ($b = .12, \beta = .17, p < .001, sr^2 = .05$), DJ ($b = .46, \beta = .35, p < .001, sr^2 = .08$) and PJ ($b = .27, \beta = .22, p < .001, sr^2 = .04$) predicted significant changes in consumer trust. Additionally, both DJ within negative relationships ($b = .46, \beta = .35, p < .001, sr^2 = .08$) and DJ within positive relationships ($b = .10, \beta = .16, p < .01, sr^2 = .02$) independently predicted significant changes in consumer trust, indicating an interaction that again supported hypothesis 2. Plotting the predicted equation outcomes due to this interaction term shows that positive relationships predict a significantly steeper slope than negative relationships as DJ perceptions increase (Figure 8).

Lastly, I only included the interaction term between PJ and relationship. The overall regression was significantly predictive of changes in consumer trust ($R^2 = .48 (F(4, 284) = 66.19, p < .001)$. Independent of customer service ($b = .09, \beta = .13, p < .001, sr^2 = .05$), DJ ($b = .50, \beta =
.38, $p < .001$, $sr^2 = .11$) predicted significant changes in consumer trust. Additionally, both PJ within a negative relationship ($b = .24$, $\beta = .20$, $p < .01$, $sr^2 = .03$) and PJ perceptions within a positive relationship ($b = .09$, $\beta = .15$, $p < .01$, $sr^2 = .02$) significantly predicted changes in consumer trust, which indicated an interaction that supported hypothesis 3. Plotting the predicted equation outcomes due to this interaction term shows that positive relationships predict a significantly steeper slope than negative relationships as PJ perceptions increase (Figure 9).

**Discussion**

The results from Study 2 provided additional evidence that perceptions of DJ could influence consumer outcomes differently within various CBR, supporting previous research. Additionally, these results extended previous research by addressing the limitations from Study 1. By introducing a wider range of CBR and utilizing pre-existing relationship knowledge, perceptions of PJ were found to be associated with changes in consumer loyalty and trust within differing CBR.

Supporting the first hypothesis, positive CBR produced higher perceptions of DJ, PJ, consumer loyalty, and consumer trust compared to negative CBR. These results differed from Study 1, but this difference occurred because of the different CBR that were compared in each study. In Study 1, exchange and communal relationships were considered marginally different by participants and contributed to a lack of significant change within any of the examined factors except when interacting with DJ. When exchange and communal relationships were compared in Study 2, similar results to Study 1 were found. Communal CBR produced higher perceptions of DJ than exchange CBR, while PJ and consumer trust remained similar to each other. This indicated, in Study 1, participants viewed both exchange and communal relationships similarly. This conclusion is also supported by participant judgements for their relationship valence within...
Study 2. Many participants considered both communal and exchange relationships as positive. Clearly, change in the effects between Study 1 and 2 are due to the inclusion of more extreme variations of CBR.

Supporting the second hypothesis, DJ and CBR type predicted changes in consumer loyalty and trust independently and through an interaction with each other. Both higher perceptions of DJ and positive CBR independently predicted an increase in consumer loyalty and trust towards a brand. Additionally, these factors interacted to predict changes in consumer loyalty and trust. Positive CBR were associated with a larger change of loyalty and trust as perceptions of DJ also increased when compared to those with negative CBR. These results are consistent with previous research (Aaker et al., 2004; Donovan et al., 2012; Kaltcheva et al., 2013) and the results from Study 1 indicating that consumers are aware of the outcomes they receive from brands and use this information differently within positive or negative CBR.

Supporting the third hypothesis, PJ and CBR type predicted changes in consumer loyalty and trust, although the analysis produced slightly different interactions. This is the first empirical evidence that PJ is associated with differing changes of consumer outcomes within varying CBR. This greatly extended previous empirical work because the examined effects for PJ within differing CBR were previously overlooked. Within the current research, only perceptions of PJ within positive CBR predicted an increase in consumer loyalty, while both perceptions of PJ in negative CBR and positive CBR predicted an increase in consumer trust. Despite these differences, both perceptions of PJ and relationship type interacted to predict changes in consumer loyalty and trust. Positive CBR were associated with a larger change in loyalty and trust as perceptions of PJ also increased when compared to those with negative CBR.
Yet, these findings are inconsistent with the results from Study 1, which found that PJ produced similar effects within both examined CBR. An explanation for this inconsistency could be the large multicollinearity issue present within the data for Study 2. Although, analysis alterations provided acceptable multicollinearity diagnostic scores, it is unclear which of the analyses produced accurate predictions of change for consumer loyalty and trust. Because it seems perceptions of justice are highly related to the formation of CBR and were not manipulated within this second study, these results may not accurately illustrate how perceptions of PJ affect consumer loyalty and trust within either positive or negative CBR. Therefore, future researchers must perform a fully manipulated experiment to ensure independence between each factor.

However, the different findings may also have alternative explanations beyond the study’s limitation. While predicted changes in consumer loyalty and trust were independent of the effect of customer service, customer service was not related to changes in perceptions of PJ towards the brand. According to the data, consumers do not perceive PJ as a component of their encounters with customer service. Alternatively, the effect of customer service was related to perceptions of DJ. This supported previous researchers’ findings that consumers are largely focused on the reception of a fair outcome within service failure contexts (Mayser & Von Wangenheim, 2012; Santos & Fernandes, 2008; Seiders & Berry, 1998; Severt, 2002). However, these results also illustrated why it was necessary to examine consumer-brand experiences beyond service failure encounters as those prior experiences informed perceptions of PJ (Figure 2).

Furthermore, the conflicting results between Study 1 and 2 could stem from consumers ignoring procedurally just behavior from brands when experimentally presented due to the
brand’s actions being inconsistent with previous relationship knowledge (Schmitt, 2012). For example, consumers with positive CBRs might be willing to ignore one instance of low PJ, because this behavior is not emblematic of the brand to which they have grown closer. Conversely, consumers with a negative CBR could ignore one instance of PJ because it may seem manipulative (Greenberg & Westcott, 1983; Ono & Chiba, 2010). In such scenarios, explicit consumer behaviors and attitudes may not change to reflect how the brand acted, which has led researchers to the conclusion that PJ does not interact with CBR.

If one does not consider that individuals recognize inconsistent brand behavior, one can incorrectly conclude that PJ has little effect on consumer behaviors and attitudes. This conclusion could be made within the first study of the current research and previous research (Blodgett et al., 1997; Goodwin & Ross, 1992; Santos & Fernandes, 2008; Severt, 2002; Tax et al., 1998). Researchers have asked participants to describe a single service failure provided by a brand. This methodology forced participants to focus on a single service failure instead of the various information (i.e., marketing, social media, other consumers) which inform consumers’ relationship with brands. Consideration of this additional information might account for the differences between Study 1 and 2. In Study 1, I provided only one instance of brand action which could have been discounted by participants if it were considered inconsistent with relationship knowledge. This inconsistency could have led to the lack of a moderating PJ effect within Study 1. In contrast, Study 2 utilized participants’ pre-existing relationship knowledge. Participants could have then used their relationship knowledge to make more accurate judgements of how PJ affected their anticipated loyalty and trust towards the brand.

Based on the highlighted limitation and inconsistencies between Study 1 and 2, it is still unclear how PJ affects consumer behavior and attitudes within various CBR. Therefore, I
conducted a third study which addressed these issues, while also conceptually replicating Study 1 and 2.

**Study 3**

Based on the results from the first two studies of the current research, PJ within differing CBR was associated with changes in consumer loyalty and trust independent of DJ in certain conditions. Although PJ had a predictive effect on consumer loyalty and trust within Study 2, it did not significantly affect the same variables in Study 1. These conflicting results raise an empirical question. Do consumers pay attention to procedural information that is inconsistent in relation to their CBR norms? In other words, consumer loyalty and trust might not have been affected by procedural actions within Study 1 either 1) because it is unimportant to the situation formed by different CBR or 2) because consumers discount the information because of its inconsistency with previous relationship knowledge.

Previous research (Blodgett et al., 1993, 1997; Goodwin & Ross, 1992; Hocutt et al., 1997; Maxham & Netemeyer, 2002) seemed to support the former based on their lack of evidence between PJ and CBR. Study 1 also supported this conclusion, because the results indicated no interacting effect with CBR and only a main effect for PJ. Therefore, if procedural information is not dependent upon a consumer’s relationship with a brand, then participants should not pay attention to whether a brand’s procedural actions are consistent or inconsistent with relationship norms. However, I predict the latter to be supported.

Consumers might draw upon several experiences of consistent procedural information (Study 2) instead of one inconsistency (Study 1) to influence their explicit behavior and attitudes towards a brand (Figure 3). In other words, inconsistent procedural information for Amazon in Study 1 was discounted based on participants’ previous relationship knowledge, resulting in a
lack of effect on their self-reported behaviors and attitudes towards the brand (cf. Blodgett et al., 1997; Tax et al., 1998). In contrast, PJ information was not discounted in Study 2 due to participants drawing upon multiple consistent brand encounters based on their CBR, thus affecting consumer behaviors and attitudes toward the brand. Evidence for this predicted effect would account for the conflicted results between Study 1 and 2.

The current study tested these two outcomes by focusing on participants’ implicit awareness of the consistency between their procedural treatment in relation to their CBR with the brand. This method of measurement was chosen, because implicit measurements are useful to determine how individuals process incoming information (Gawronski & Bodenhausen, 2006; Nisbett & Wilson, 1977). Self-reported (i.e., explicit) information can be an inaccurate representation of their perception (i.e., implicit) of incoming information if participants form explanations for how they responded. For example, when implicit and explicit attitudes became highly discrepant, individuals thought about information which reduced the discrepancy to aid congruency between the two attitude forms by reducing the effect of their implicit attitudes (Brinol, Petty, & Wheeler, 2006). Because of this reasoning, individuals are likely to ignore information which maintains the discrepancy between implicit and explicit attitudes. Participants who were presented with both negative subliminal primes and positive explicit information for the same target, reported the target as positive while ignoring implicit information despite implicit measurements suggesting participants held a negative attitude (Rydell, Mcconnell, Mackie, & Strain, 2006). By ignoring their implicit beliefs, participants reported their incorrect attitudes towards the target. Therefore, gathering implicit information should allow identification of procedural information that is important to a consumer in relation to different CBR, despite potentially unaffecting explicit measures of loyalty and trust for a brand.
To measure implicit information, many researchers have relied on the Implicit Association Test (IAT; Greenwald & Banaji, 1995; Greenwald, McGhee, & Schwartz, 1998; Maison, Greenwald, & Bruin, 2001, 2004). In the IAT, participants sort words or pictures into potentially overlapping categories, which are predicted to be similar (e.g., Apple/cool) or dissimilar (e.g., Apple/Cheap). One’s categorizations within each grouping are timed and compared, with the assumption that similar categorizations will take less time to complete than dissimilar categorizations. Unfortunately, the IAT is not useful for the current research because it focuses on implicit attitudes formed from individual traits of the target (Lassonde, 2015).

Additionally, IAT participants attend to specific categorizations rather than the context in which information is presented. For instance, although it may be possible to use the IAT to identify specific brands which are closely associated with PJ keywords, it would be impossible to ascertain how PJ might have been used to form this association. Because PJ is highly contextual and presented through actions instead of the traits of a decision-maker, a different implicit task must be used.

Cognitive researchers created a novel implicit measurement paradigm, entitled the contradiction paradigm, which capitalized on the context in which information was presented using reading comprehension (Albrecht & O’Brien, 1993; Lassonde & O’Brien, 2013; Lassonde, Surla, Buchanan, & O’Brien, 2012; O’Brien & Albrecht, 1992; O’Brien, Rizzella, Albrecht, & Halleran, 1998; Peracchi & O’Brien, 2004). In this paradigm, individuals read scenarios which contained a target sentence that was either consistent or inconsistent with their general world knowledge and memory. For example, imagine a story which follows a protagonist named Mary who is also a vegetarian. If told that she had lunch at a restaurant, a reader would assume that she would order a meal containing only vegetables. If the story about Mary continued with her
ordering a salad for lunch, comprehension of the story would remain intact with little disruption of reading time for that target sentence due to previous knowledge of vegetarians (Albrecht & O’Brien, 1993; O’Brien & Albrecht, 1992; O’Brien et al., 1998). Instead, if the story continued with Mary ordering a cheeseburger and fries, readers’ comprehension would become disrupted (producing a slower reading time by comparison). This disruption occurred independent of an individual’s intentions because their previous knowledge of the protagonist and the world (i.e., what vegetarians eat) was activated automatically and passively (Myers & O’Brien, 1998).

Thus, the contradiction paradigm can be used to examine what information individuals implicitly are aware of based on their expectations from relationship norms within CBR. If the procedural information presented is inconsistent with previous relationship knowledge, individuals will recognize it implicitly, causing a slowdown in their ability to process incoming information. This implicit recognition should then occur despite a lack of reflection in explicit measurements (cf. Study 1’s results) because consumers discount information which is inconsistent with their CBR.

Although the paradigm utilizes elements of cognition and memory, it has been used successfully to identify implicit biases within other social-cognitive constructs, such as gender and age (Lassonde & O’Brien, 2013; Lassonde et al., 2012). Considering this success and the contradiction paradigm’s ability to include contextual information, this method should accurately identify if different CBR create differing expectations of PJ from a brand. If PJ which is consistent with their CBR norms is important to consumers, inconsistent PJ should produce a difference in reading times for target sentences. Therefore, I hypothesized:
**H1a:** Consumers with negative CBR who received high PJ will have slower reading times compared to consumers with positive CBR who received high PJ.

**H1b:** Consumers with negative CBR who received low PJ will have faster reading times compared to consumers with positive CBR who received low PJ.

Presentation of inconsistent PJ should form discrepancies within participants, which leads to consideration for why the discrepancy exists and inaccurate self-report data (Brinol et al., 2006; Nisbett & Wilson, 1977). For instance, a consumer might be likely to discount inconsistent PJ information when self-reporting changes in their loyalty and trust, while considering their positive CBR knowledge and history. Therefore, the hypothesized interaction on reading times between PJ and CBR should occur despite a lack of change in consumer trust and loyalty.

Specifically, I hypothesized two main effects for the explicit measurements:

**H2:** Consumers with a positive CBR will have higher loyalty and trust towards brands compared to consumers with a negative CBR, regardless of their procedural treatment from the brands.

**H3:** Consumers who experience high PJ will have higher loyalty and trust towards brands compared to consumers who perceive low PJ, regardless of their relationship type.

However, it is unclear if discounting would always occur or if procedural information can be utilized by a brand to change consumer behavior and attitudes. Thus, the contradiction paradigm was also used to examine how implicit expectations of PJ in relation to consumers’ relationship with a brand could produce changes in explicit measurements of consumer loyalty.
and trust through multiple presentations of inconsistent or consistent PJ actions. After being presented with similar procedural behavior many times, the initially predicted interacting effect for reading times should disappear, producing similar reading times across all conditions. This would indicate that participants are coming to expect the “inconsistent” brand behavior. These predicted null effects should occur because inconsistent procedural information is now important to consumers in guiding explicit consumer behaviors and attitudes. Because procedural information from brands is no longer discounted, then it should cause changes in consumer loyalty and trust once participants come to expect “inconsistent” brand behaviors (Figure 4). Therefore, I hypothesized:

**H4a:** Consumers with a positive CBR who experienced many instances of low PJ will have less loyalty and trust towards brands compared to consumers with a positive CBR who experienced low PJ once.

**H4b:** Consumers with a negative CBR who experienced many instances of high PJ will have more loyalty and trust towards brands compared to consumers with a negative CBR who experienced high PJ once.

If consumers no longer discount procedural information but use it to affect their loyalty and trust towards a brand, I believe that their perceived relationship with the brand will also change:

**H5a:** Consumers with a positive CBR who received low PJ many times will consider their relationship to be less positive than consumers with a positive CBR who received high PJ many times.
**H5b:** Consumers with a negative CBR who received high PJ many times will consider their relationship to be more positive than consumers with a negative CBR who received low PJ many times.

Additionally, using the contradiction paradigm, reading times for target sentences within different conditions could be compared to examine how quickly the discounting effect disappears within each relationship. Based on the results from Study 1, positive CBR produced a buffer that allowed consumers to discount inconsistent procedural actions longer. This is consistent with the effects of PJ as well. Providing an individual with PJ strengthens an individual’s relationship leading to increased loyalty, trust, satisfaction, and an enhanced self-identity (Blader & Tyler, 2003; Lind & Tyler, 1988; Tyler & Bies, 1990; Tyler & Blader, 2003; Tyler et al., 1996) to bolster their group membership in return for such long-term gains. Therefore, I hypothesized:

**H6:** Consumers with negative CBR who received high PJ will have a faster reduction in disrupted target sentence reading times as encounters increase compared to consumers with positive CBR who received low PJ.

**Method**

**Participants.** Ninety-four students from the University of New Hampshire completed the contradiction paradigm and a survey for course credit through an online university system. The sample reported, 87.23% reported being female and 93.62% being Caucasian. The average age of participants was 19.39 (SD = 2.26) which consisted of mostly college freshman (37.23%) and sophomores (15.96%).

**Contradiction Paradigm Task.** Participants read 20 experimental vignettes (Appendix D) using a 2 (CBR: positive or negative) x 2 (PJ: high or low) between-subjects design that created four conditions (20 passages each): positive CBR with high PJ (consistent expectations),
positive CBR with low PJ (inconsistent expectations), negative CBR with high PJ (inconsistent expectations), and negative CBR with low PJ (consistent expectations).

In each vignette (Appendix D), participants read about a brand that the participant previously identified as having an abusive (i.e., negative) or communal (i.e., positive) relationship. To identify these brands, participants were presented with a list of 245 different brands which varied in product domain (Appendix E). They were instructed to choose all the brands that they had interacted with in the past year. From this self-selected pool of brands, participants were then asked to choose the brands that best fit the description for an abusive CBR or a communal CBR (Miller et al., 2012). Within each passage, the word [brand] was replaced by the brand participants identified, thus modeling experimental realism of interacting with the same brand 20 times across a year.

Within the vignettes, the identified brand had a problem which affected the participant. For example, [brand] was introduced to the reader as selling a product that was faulty. After a description of the problem, a target sentence followed that described the brand’s response to the problem using either high (e.g., acknowledging voice of consumer) or low levels of PJ (e.g., accusing consumer of lying). The target sentence presented PJ that was either consistent (i.e., predicted fast reading times for the target sentence) or inconsistent (i.e., predicted slowed reading times for the target sentence) with the participant’s pre-existing CBR knowledge.

Every target sentence was 56 characters long with every brand available to participants between 4 and 8 characters long. Therefore, each target sentence presented to participants was controlled to between 60 to 64 characters in length to eliminate length of sentences as an experimental confound. A second “spillover” sentence followed the target sentence to capture
any residual effects from reading the target sentence. Reading time for both the target and spillover sentence was measured separately.

**Measures.** In addition to sentence reading times, participants answered several survey items. These items included comprehension checks to ensure they fully read the passage, a perception of DJ, and assessments of anticipated loyal behaviors and trustworthiness towards the brand. In all measurement items, “[brand]” was replaced by the brand participants read about in the previous story. Comprehension checks were assessed after each passage to ensure participants were reading the entire passage, while all other dependent information was gathered after reading one passage and again after reading all 20 passages within the contradiction paradigm. In all measurement items, “[brand]” was replaced by the brand participants identified earlier. Additionally, demographic information was collected at the end of the survey.

**Demographics.** Participants were asked demographic questions regarding their age, sex, ethnic background, and education.

**Comprehension checks.** After each passage, two questions were presented which ensured that participants read each passage (Appendix D). Every question was answered with “yes” or “no” and tested the participant’s knowledge on events that occurred within each story that were unrelated to the CBR or PJ manipulations. Participants who could not answer the comprehension checks correctly were removed from further analyses (0% removed).

**Consumer loyalty.** Predicted loyalty behaviors were measured by participants indicating on a seven-point Likert scale their agreement (1 = Strongly disagree; 7 = Strongly agree) with eight statements similar to the survey items from Study 2: “I tell others about my positive experiences with [brand],” “I write positive reviews about [brand] on social media,” “If given the choice, I would use other brands instead of [brand] (reversed),” “I say bad things about [brand]
to others (reversed),” “I buy as many products as I can from [brand],” “I actively discourage others from using [brand] (reversed),” “If given the choice to use a different brand, I would still use [brand],” “I show off my new purchases from [brand].” Higher scores indicated higher performances of loyal behavior towards the brand ($M = 3.58, SD = 1.36, \alpha = 0.92$).

**Consumer trust.** Trustworthiness for the brand was measured by participants indicating on a seven-point Likert scale their agreement (1 = Strongly disagree; 7 = Strongly agree) with 13 statements similar to items from both of the previous studies: “[Brand] takes care of their consumers,” “[Brand] makes up for its mistakes,” “Consumers can count on [brand] to do what is best for them,” “[Brand] does not have the skills and expertise to perform transactions in an expected manner” (reversed), “[Brand] will handle transactions appropriately in the future”, “[Brand] will be open and receptive to consumer needs in the future”, “Overall, the seller is not trustworthy (reversed)”, “I doubt the honesty of the seller” (reversed), “I expect [brand] will keep promises they make in the future”, “Consumers can count on [brand] to be sincere”, “Consumers can expect that [brand] is ready and willing to assist and support them”, “Consumers can expect that [brand] has good intentions toward them”, and “Consumers can expect that [brand] is well meaning.” Higher scores indicated higher amounts of trust towards the brand ($M = 3.61, SD = 1.42, \alpha = 0.96$).

**Distributive Justice.** A single item was used to control for participants’ perception of DJ. Participants indicated on a seven-point Likert scale their agreement (1 = Strongly disagree; 7 = Strongly agree) to the statement, “How fair is the outcome [brand] would provide?” Higher scores indicated higher perceptions of DJ from the brand ($M = 3.06, SD = 1.67$).

**Relationship Change.** Participants’ relationship with the identified brand was assessed twice during the experiment. Prior to beginning the contradiction paradigm, participants were
asked, “How would you rate your relationship with [brand]?” Participants indicated their rating on a sliding bipolar scale (-50 = Negative; 50 = Positive) with a neutral option available. A similar question was presented after the last passage that asked, “After experiencing these situations with [brand] over a year, how do you feel about the relationship you have with [brand]?” Participants indicated their rating on a seven-point bipolar Likert scale (-3 = Negative; 3 = Positive) with a neutral option available. The differences in item presentation were to eliminate an anchor effect within responses. Both scales were transformed into Z-scores to ensure participant responses were on equal scales.

**Procedure.** Participants signed up to take the survey through a university wide subject pool created through SONA systems. SONA then sent participants a URL to the survey through email with informed consent information and access to the online survey. Prior to beginning the survey, participants read about the nature of the study and provided consent to continue. Participants were then presented with a list of 245 different brands (Appendix E). They were instructed to choose all the brands that they had interacted with in a negative or positive manner (i.e., seen advertisements for, purchased for their self, encountered on social media, or know of someone who has purchased an item) in the past year. Participants were then randomly given the description for an abusive CBR or communal CBR (Miller et al., 2012) and asked to choose all brands from their self-selected pool that best fit the description.

One week later, participants arrived at a computer lab to take the contradiction paradigm. Participants were randomly assigned to one of four conditions based on a 2 (CBR: positive or negative) x 2 (PJ: high and low) between-subjects design. Each passage was presented line-by-line. Participants progressed through each line by pressing the space bar on their keyboard. The time between button presses was recorded for the target and spillover sentences. Presentation of
the stories line-by-line hid the importance of the target sentence because it appeared like any other line in the passage. To ensure participants were ready to begin a new vignette, each passage began with the word “READY” in the middle of the screen. Before reading the experimental passages, participants also read one practice passage which had no connection to the manipulations to ensure familiarity with the experimental procedure.

Prior to beginning the first story of a condition, participants were told to imagine that each of these stories happened over the course of a year. After the first and last passage within each condition, participants answered a short questionnaire which incorporated the measures described previously. Upon completion of the study, participants were debriefed with an explanation of the study and provided access to one credit hour towards the course of their choice as compensation.

Results

Participants’ scores for each passage were selectively removed a priori based on comprehension checks and reading speed. All of a participant’s scores were removed from further analyses if they had over 60% of their reading times removed for any reason. First, I removed participant responses for passages in which participants did not pass the comprehension checks afterwards (0% removed). Next, following the contradiction paradigm’s analysis procedures (Lassonde & O’Brien, 2013; Lassonde et al., 2012), reading times which were too fast (< 750ms) or too slow (> 7500ms) were also removed (1.06% removed). Last, reading times that were over 2.5 standard deviations beyond the mean of the individual’s average reading time were removed from further analyses to reduce the effect of outliers (0% removed). After completing these experimental checks, 93 participants remained for further examination with a minimum of 22 participants within each condition cell.
Next, to test the stated hypotheses, several mixed-design multilevel models were conducted to examine changes over time in reading times, consumer loyalty, and consumer trust. All data was analyzed within R (R Core Team, 2013), using the package “nlme” (Pinheiro, Bates, Debroy, Sarkar, & R Core Team, 2017). Multilevel modeling was chosen because it provided increased flexibility within the analysis for a thorough examination of random effects due to individual differences while eliminating the need to uphold sphericity and homogeneity of regression slope assumptions. DJ was included as a covariate (Table 4) and scores were nested within participants to account for individual differences across passages. Then, to examine the changes in reading times across the multiple presentations of PJ, a growth curve analysis was performed. For each analysis model, a baseline model was formed using maximum likelihood estimation to compare each predictor variable’s change in effect from the grand mean. Each predictor variable was added separately to examine its individual impact to the previous model that came before it through likelihood ratios. The models that included each of the hypothesized predictors while still producing significant change from the baseline were chosen for a full interpretation. Additionally, planned contrasts were tested using two separate 4(CBRxPJ) x 2(Time) mixed-design multilevel models. This method allowed for a more simplified contrast interpretation to compare differences in consumer loyalty due to inconsistent expectations after reading one passage and after reading 20 passages. To limit the chance of a Type I error, the critical alpha value (.05) was adjusted using a Bonferroni correction based on the number of tests performed (three), producing a new critical alpha value (0.02).

**Effects on reading times.** The first 10 passages were examined for initial changes in target sentence reading times. It was expected that initial reading times produced an interaction, in which slower reading times occurred within conditions with PJ actions that were inconsistent
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with CBR norms when compared to consistent conditions. DJ, PJ, CBR, and the interaction between PJ and CBR did not significantly change the baseline model ($\chi^2$s < 2, $p$’s > 0.17). This evidence disconfirmed both hypotheses 1a and 1b. However, progression through the first 10 passages were a significant predictor of target sentence reading times (Subject ICC = 0.33, $\chi^2 (1) = 7.14, b = -29.30, t(666) = -2.68, p < 0.01, r = 0.10$). As participants progressed through the first 10 passages reading time for the target sentences decreased, regardless of condition, suggesting that experience was affecting participants’ expectations. Despite the lack of significance for an interaction, a priori interaction contrasts were still examined between PJ and CBR. Within low PJ, positive CBR brands produced slower target reading times than negative CBR brands ($b = 308.93, t(88) = 1.57, p = 0.12, r = 0.16$), indicating mean differences trended in hypothesis 1b’s predicted direction (Table 5). However, both relationship types produced similar target sentence reading times within high PJ ($b = -74.84, t(88) = -0.37, p > 0.70$), completely disconfirming hypothesis 1a. These mean tendencies suggested that participants were implicitly aware of inconsistent procedural information for positive CBR.

The second set of 10 passages were examined for changes in target sentence reading times after several “inconsistent” experiences with the brand. It was expected that reading times should no longer be different from each other due to experience with the same PJ actions. Story progression, PJ, CBR, and the interaction between CBR and PJ did not significantly change the baseline model supporting the predicted null effect ($\chi^2$s < 2, $p$’s > 0.17). However, perceptions of DJ significantly predicted a reduction in target sentence reading times (Subject ICC = 0.20, $\chi^2 (1) = 5.13, b = -78.20, t(91) = -2.29, p = 0.02, r = 0.23$). Compared to target sentence reading times for the first 10 passages, examination of mean tendencies for progression through the
second set of 10 passages provided evidence that participants learned to expect inconsistent PJ actions from brands similar to consistent actions (Table 5).

Spill-over sentence reading times were also examined to ensure that the contradiction effect did not appear after the target sentences. A baseline model was formed to compare each predictor variable’s change in effect from the grand mean. DJ, story progression, PJ, CBR, and the interaction between CBR and PJ did not significantly change the baseline models for both the first and second set of passages ($\chi^2$s < 3, $p$’s > 0.45). Clearly, participants’ reactions were contained within target sentence reading times.

**Effect on consumer loyalty.** A within-subjects factor for loyalty scores prior to and after reading all 20 passages was added to the analysis by nesting scores within participants nested within time (Table 6). DJ was added first as a control, which significantly affected consumer loyalty from the baseline model ($\chi^2 (1) = 24.29, p < 0.001$). The addition of PJ did not significantly affect the model ($\chi^2 (1) = 0.00, p > .95$), but CBR ($\chi^2 (1) = 18.13, p < 0.001$) and time ($\chi^2 (1) = 14.66, p < 0.001$) produced a significant effect. An interaction between PJ and CBR ($\chi^2 (1) = 0.03, p > 0.85$) and an interaction between PJ and time ($\chi^2 (1) = 0.22, p > 0.60$) did not significantly add to the model but there was a significant interaction between CBR and time ($\chi^2 (1) = 14.72, p < 0.001$). Lastly, there was not a significant three-way interaction between PJ, CBR, and on consumer loyalty ($\chi^2 (1) = 0.01, p > 0.90$). Therefore, the two-way interaction between CBR and time iteration of the model was chosen for a full interpretation.

Within the chosen two-way interaction model (Subject ICC = 0.91; Time ICC = 0.81), PJ ($b = 0.07, t(89) = 0.23, p > 0.80$), time ($b = -0.07, t(89) = -0.37, p > 0.70$), an interaction between PJ and brand ($b = -0.06, t(89) = -0.14, p > 0.85$), and the interaction between PJ and time ($b = 0.08, t(89) = 0.36, p > 0.70$) did not significantly change consumer loyalty behaviors. A lack of
significance for PJ disconfirmed hypothesis three. However, there was a significant main effect for CBR ($b = 1.38$, $t(89) = 4.29$, $p < 0.001$, $r = 0.41$), which provided support for hypothesis two. Participants with a positive CBR reported significantly higher consumer loyalty than participants with a negative CBR. Additionally, there was a significant two-way interaction between CBR and time ($b = -0.78$, $t(89) = -3.91$, $p < 0.001$, $r = 0.38$). Within positive CBR, consumer loyalty significantly decreased after participants completed the contradiction paradigm compared to after reading one passage, while consumer loyalty did not significantly change within negative CBR (Figure 10).

Despite the lack of significance for a three-way interaction, a priori contrasts were still examined between PJ, CBR, and Time. It was expected that initial consumer loyalty would be significantly affected by CBR type in that positive CBR will produce significantly higher consumer loyalty compared to negative CBR, while consumer loyalty would significantly change due to experience with inconsistent PJ actions in relation to CBR norms.

The first model tested hypothesis 4a using positive CBR that provided low PJ as the baseline comparison. Initial consumer loyalty due to inconsistent procedural information from a positive CBR was not found to be significantly different compared to participants who experienced consistent procedural information from a positive CBR ($b = 0.08$, $t(89) = 0.22$, $p > 0.80$). However, consumer loyalty was significantly lowered after participants experienced several encounters of inconsistent actions from positive CBR ($b = -1.03$, $t(89) = -5.25$, $p < 0.001$, $r = 0.49$) compared to after one inconsistent encounter providing support for hypothesis 4a. Furthermore, the change in consumer loyalty after reading one passage to completing the contradiction paradigm produced a marginal difference between inconsistent actions from a positive CBR and consistent actions from a positive CBR ($b = 0.47$, $t(89) = 1.63$, $p = 0.11$, $r =$
0.17). As experience with a positive CBR brand that provided low PJ (inconsistent expectations) increased through the contradiction paradigm, consumer loyalty behaviors decreased at a quicker rate than participants with positive CBR that provided high PJ (Figure 11). Evidence for hypothesis two was also found within the planned contrasts. Initial consumer loyalty was significantly lower for participants who had inconsistent \((b = -1.41, t(89) = -4.00, p < 0.001, r = 0.39)\) and consistent negative CBR \((b = -1.42, t(89) = -3.93, p < 0.001, r = 0.38)\) compared to those with an inconsistent positive CBR.

The second model tested hypothesis 4b using negative CBR that provided high PJ as the baseline comparison. Initial consumer loyalty due to inconsistent procedural information from a negative CBR was not found to be significantly different compared to participants who experienced consistent procedural information from a negative CBR \((b = -0.01, t(89) = -0.02, p > 0.95)\) or compared to consumer loyalty after participants experienced several encounters of inconsistent actions from negative CBR \((b = 0.21, t(89) = 1.07, p > 0.29)\) disconfirming hypothesis 4b (Figure 11).

**Effect on consumer trust.** A within-subjects factor for trust scores prior to and after reading all 20 passages was also added to the analysis by nesting scores within participants nested within time (Table 7). DJ was added first as a control, which significantly affected consumer trust from the baseline model \((\chi^2 (1) = 92.36, p < 0.001)\). The addition of PJ marginally affected the model \((\chi^2 (1) = 2.38, p > .10)\), but CBR \((\chi^2 (1) = 11.85, p < 0.001)\) and time \((\chi^2 (1) = 28.59, p < 0.001)\) produced a significant effect. An interaction between PJ and CBR \((\chi^2 (1) = 0.01, p > 0.90)\) did not significantly add to the model but there was a significant interaction between PJ and time \((\chi^2 (1) = 16.82, p < 0.001)\) and CBR and time \((\chi^2 (1) = 5.41, p = 0.02)\). Lastly, there was a marginal three-way interaction between PJ, CBR, and Time on
consumer trust ($\chi^2 (1) = 2.35, p = 0.13$). Therefore, the two-way interaction between CBR and time iteration of the model was chosen for a full interpretation.

Within the chosen two-way interaction model (Subject ICC = 0.88; Time ICC = 0.84), PJ ($b = -0.08, t(89) = 0.28, p > 0.75$) and the interaction between PJ and CBR ($b = 0.09, t(89) = 0.24, p > 0.80$) did not significantly change consumer trust. A lack of significance for PJ disconfirmed hypothesis three. However, there was a significant effect for CBR ($b = 0.85, t(89) = 3.14, p < 0.01, r = 0.32$), which provided support for hypothesis two. Participants with a positive CBR reported significantly higher consumer trust then participants with a negative CBR. Additionally, time ($b = -0.85, t(89) = -4.77, p < 0.001, r = 0.45$), an interaction between PJ and time ($b = 0.91, t(89) = 4.25, p < 0.001, r = 0.41$), and an interaction between CBR and time ($b = -0.46, t(89) = -2.31, p = 0.02, r = 0.24$) produced significant changes in consumer trust. Consumer trust significantly decreased after completing the contradiction paradigm compared to their reported trust after reading one passage. Participants with low PJ reported significantly lower consumer trust after completing the contradiction paradigm compared to reported trust after reading one passage, while high PJ produced similar consumer trust regardless of time (Figure 12). Meanwhile, participants with a positive CBR reported significantly less consumer trust after completing the contradiction paradigm compared to reported trust after reading one passage, while negative CBR produced similar consumer trust regardless of time (Figure 13).

Despite the lack of significance for a three-way interaction, a priori interaction contrasts were still examined between PJ, CBR, and Time. It was expected that initial consumer trust would be significantly affected by CBR type with positive CBR producing significantly higher consumer trust compared to negative CBR, while consumer trust would significantly change due to increased experience with inconsistent PJ actions in relation to CBR norms.
The first model tested hypothesis 4a using positive CBR that provided low PJ as the baseline comparison. Initial consumer trust due to inconsistent procedural information from a positive CBR was not found to be significantly different compared to participants who experienced consistent procedural information from a positive CBR ($b = 0.02, t(89) = 0.05, p > 0.95$). However, consumer trust was significantly lowered after participants experienced several encounters of inconsistent actions from positive CBR ($b = -1.77, t(89) = -7.97, p < 0.001, r = 0.65$) compared to after one inconsistent encounter providing support for hypothesis 4a. Furthermore, the change in consumer trust after reading one passage to completing the contradiction paradigm produced a significant difference between inconsistent actions from a positive CBR and consistent actions from a positive CBR ($b = 1.89, t(89) = 5.83, p < 0.001, r = 0.53$). As experience with a positive CBR brand that provided low PJ (inconsistent expectations) increased through the contradiction paradigm, consumer trust decreased at a more significant rate than participants with positive CBR that regularly provided high PJ (Figure 14). Evidence for hypothesis 2 was also found within the planned contrasts. Initial consumer trust was significantly lower for participants who had inconsistent ($b = -1.77, t(89) = -7.97, p < 0.001, r = 0.30$) and consistent negative CBR ($b = -1.12, t(89) = -3.28, p < 0.01, r = 0.33$) compared to those with an inconsistent positive CBR.

The second model tested hypothesis 4b using negative CBR that provided high PJ as the baseline comparison. Initial consumer trust due to inconsistent procedural information from a negative CBR was not found to be significantly different compared to participants who experienced consistent procedural information from a negative CBR ($b = 0.08, t(89) = 0.22, p > 0.80$) or compared to consumer trust after participants experienced several encounters of
inconsistent actions from negative CBR ($b = 0.32$, $t(89) = 1.40$, $p > 0.15$) disconfirming hypothesis 4b (Figure 14).

**Consumer-brand relationship change.** Again, a within-subjects factor for relationship change z-scores prior to and after reading through all 20 passages was added to the analysis by nesting scores within participants nested within time. DJ was added first as a control, which significantly affected relationship change from the baseline model ($\chi^2(1) = 649.04$, $p < 0.001$). The addition of PJ ($\chi^2(1) = 2.25$, $p = .13$) and an interaction between PJ and CBR ($\chi^2(1) = 3.28$, $p = .07$) marginally affected the model, while time did not significantly affect relationship change from baseline ($\chi^2(1) = 0.01$, $p > .90$). However, CBR ($\chi^2(1) = 51.21$, $p < 0.001$), an interaction between PJ and Time ($\chi^2(1) = 8.48$, $p < 0.01$), and an interaction between CBR and time ($\chi^2(1) = 58.87$, $p < 0.001$) produced a significant effect. Lastly, there was not a significant three-way interaction between PJ, CBR, and on consumer loyalty ($\chi^2(1) = 0.04$, $p > 0.85$). Therefore, the two-way interaction between CBR and time model iteration model was chosen for a full interpretation.

Within the chosen two-way interaction model (Subject ICC = 0.00; Time ICC = 1), PJ ($b = 0.21$, $t(87) = 1.34$, $p > 0.15$) did not significantly change consumer trust, while the interaction between PJ and CBR ($b = -0.37$, $t(87) = -2.04$, $p = 0.04$) produced a marginal effect. A lack of significance for PJ disconfirmed hypothesis three. However, there was a significant effect for CBR ($b = 1.77$, $t(87) = 11.33$, $p < 0.001$, $r = 0.77$), which confirmed that participants with a positive CBR reported significantly more positive relationship scores then participants with a negative CBR. Additionally, time ($b = 0.47$, $t(87) = 2.92$, $p < 0.01$, $r = 0.30$), an interaction between PJ and time ($b = 0.56$, $t(89) = 2.95$, $p < 0.01$, $r = 0.30$), and an interaction between CBR and time ($b = -1.47$, $t(87) = -8.15$, $p < 0.001$, $r = 0.66$) produced significant changes in
relationship scores. Participants’ perception of their relationship with a brand significantly increased after completing the contradiction paradigm compared to their reported relationship after identifying a brand (Figure 15). Prior to taking the contradiction paradigm, participants who experienced low PJ reported their relationship to be similar to participants who experienced high PJ, while reported relationship scores were significantly increased after regularly experiencing high PJ and significantly decreased after regularly experiencing low PJ (Figure 16). Meanwhile, prior to taking the contradiction paradigm, participants with a positive CBR reported their relationship to be significantly more positive that participants with a negative CBR, while relationship scores were similar after completing the contradiction paradigm (Figure 17).

Despite the lack of significance for a three-way interaction, a priori interaction contrasts were still examined between PJ, CBR, and Time. It was expected that perceptions of one’s CBR would significantly change due to increased experience with inconsistent PJ actions in relation to CBR norms. The first model tested hypothesis 5a using positive CBR that provided low PJ as the baseline comparison. Initial perceptions of CBR within the inconsistent positive CBR condition were not found to be significantly different compared to participants within the consistent positive CBR condition ($b = -0.17$, $t(87) = -0.97$, $p > 0.30$). However, relationship scores were significantly reduced after participants experienced several encounters of inconsistent actions from positive CBR ($b = -1.01$, $t(89) = -5.82$, $p < 0.001$, $r = 0.53$) compared to relationship scores prior to the contradiction paradigm providing support for hypothesis 5a. Furthermore, the change in relationship scores from before the contradiction paradigm to afterwards produced a marginal difference between inconsistent actions from a positive CBR and consistent actions from a positive CBR ($b = 0.59$, $t(86) = 2.29$, $p = 0.03$, $r = 0.24$). As experience with a positive CBR brand that provided low PJ (inconsistent expectations) increased through the contradiction
paradigm, perception of a positive CBR became negative at a quicker rate than participants with positive CBR that regularly provided high PJ (Figure 18).

The second model tested hypothesis 5b using negative CBR that provided high PJ as the baseline comparison. Initial perceptions of CBR within the inconsistent negative CBR condition were not found to be significantly different compared to participants within the consistent negative CBR condition ($b = -0.23$, $t(87) = -1.24$, $p > 0.20$). However, relationship scores were significantly increased after participants experienced several encounters of inconsistent actions from negative CBR ($b = 1.01$, $t(86) = 5.57$, $p < 0.001$, $r = 0.51$) compared to relationship scores prior to the contradiction paradigm providing support for hypothesis 5b. Furthermore, the change in relationship scores from before the contradiction paradigm to afterwards produced a marginal difference between inconsistent actions from a negative CBR and consistent actions from a negative CBR ($b = -0.52$, $t(86) = -1.96$, $p = 0.05$, $r = 0.21$). As experience with a negative CBR brand that provided high PJ (inconsistent expectations) increased through the contradiction paradigm, perceptions of a negative CBR became positive at a quicker rate than participants with negative CBR that regularly provided low PJ (Figure 18).

**Target sentence change across encounters.** A growth curve analysis was performed to examine change in reading times across all 20 passages. It was expected that reading through the contradiction paradigm would decrease target sentence reading times but that this effect was slower for positive CBR compared to negative CBR. A multilevel model baseline was formed by adding passages as a random slope with scores nested within participants. DJ, PJ, CBR, and the interaction between PJ and CBR did not significantly affect the baseline model ($\chi^2$'s < 3, $p$'s > 0.20). However, the addition of number of passages read significantly affected the baseline
model ($\chi^2 (1) = 9.89, p < 0.01$). Therefore, this iteration of the model was chosen for full interpretation.

Within the chosen main effect model, the number of passages read significantly reduced target sentence reading times ($b = -14.79$, $t(1432) = -3.21, p < 0.001$). As participants progressed through the contradiction paradigm, they learned to expect specific PJ actions from the brand regardless of it being consistent or inconsistent. Despite the lack of significance for an interaction, a priori interaction contrasts were still examined between PJ, CBR, and Time. Despite its insignificance ($b = -254.68$, $t(89) = -1.44, p = 0.15, r = 0.15$), there was a visual tendency that showed a slight buffering effect, providing some support for hypothesis six (Figure 19). Participants who read about low PJ actions from a positive CBR (inconsistent expectations) regularly had higher target sentence reading times than any other condition.

**Discussion**

Based on the third study’s results, PJ was found to be an important factor to participants within positive CBR, independent of perceptions of DJ. Due to its importance, participants implicitly recognized when inconsistent PJ (e.g., low PJ from positive CBR) was performed. The effect was not significant; however, this was potentially due to participants learning to expect PJ actions while progressing through the contradiction paradigm. Despite noticing inconsistent PJ actions, participants initially discounted inconsistent procedural information when considering their future behaviors and attitudes towards a brand. Due to PJ’s initial inconsistency with CBR norms, its effects were not represented in participants’ initial explicit reports of loyalty and trust towards brands. In fact, only CBR type significantly changed initial reports of consumer loyalty and trust. Participants with a positive CBR had significantly higher loyalty and trust compared to participants with a negative CBR.
Once PJ actions were presented regularly over a simulated year (i.e., 20 passages), consumer loyalty and trust significantly changed. Both consumer loyalty and trust significantly decreased when a positive CBR regularly performed low PJ actions compared to initial reports after one inconsistency or when compared to positive CBR that performed high PJ. Subsequently, participants’ CBR was significantly changed to reflect the differences in their loyalty and trust. Participants who regularly encountered a positive CBR that provided inconsistent PJ perceived the relationship as significantly more negative. Therefore, consumers used procedural information to inform and shape their positive CBR.

A change in relationship perceptions was also found for participants who experienced an inconsistent negative CBR. Participants who regularly encountered a negative CBR that provided inconsistent PJ perceived the relationship as significantly more positive. But, this significant change did not seem due to changes in consumer loyalty and trust because regular experience with inconsistent PJ from a negative CBR did not significantly affect consumer loyalty and trust or target sentence reading times. One explanation for this could be due to the small cell sizes per condition. With cell sizes ranging from 22-25 participants, the statistical analyses could have suffered from a lack of power. In support of this view, several moderate to small practical effect sizes were identified suggesting the statistical interpretation could suffer from a Type II error.

However, there may also be a theoretical explanation for the lack of an effect within negative CBR, which has not been previously identified within consumer research. Individuals are biased towards negative information, which resulted in a tendency to focus on negative information when engaged in decision-making (Kanouse, 1984; Kanouse & Hanson, 1972). In the current study, participants might be focused on their negative attitudes towards their negative CBR, leading to a lasting hatred which overpowered any positive actions a brand may attempt.
Kucuk (2016) labeled this intense negativity towards brands as “brand hate.” In his work, he operationalized different forms of brand hate. The most common form of brand hate is called cold brand hate. This occurs when a consumer attempts to avoid a brand based on recognition of their negative attitude towards the brand (Lee, Motion, & Conroy, 2009; White et al., 2012). However, Kucuk (2016) postulated that brand hate can have two other forms, which have not been examined previously. Cool brand hate forms when a brand is unavoidable and produces feelings of disgust, dislike, and unhappiness, while hot brand hate is active and evokes strong behavioral responses from consumers. It is possible that participants within the current study identified a brand, which fit the role of an abusive CBR through cool or hot brand hate. Utilization of this hate could have led participants to form a buffer against inconsistent positive actions, suggesting that there might be a point from which negative CBR brands cannot recover. Therefore, the negative relationship change scores were no more than wishful thinking from participants. However, this is post-hoc speculation and must be examined by future researchers by focusing on the effects of various other negative CBR or examining behavioral evidence of relationship change. For instance, abusive CBR might produce this potential buffer, while adversarial CBR or secret affair CBR might become more positive after regular inconsistent PJ actions.

The current study also provided some additional evidence of the positive CBR buffer found with Study 2. Positive CBR aided consumer resistance to relationship change. Specifically, target sentence reading times remained slower for positive CBR brands who provided inconsistent PJ compared to all other factor combinations. This indicated that consumers continued to be surprised by a positive brand’s inconsistent actions throughout the entire experiment. Yet, consumers will eventually no longer provide the benefit of doubt to the
brand and stop discounting its inconsistent behavior. This effect was not reached after participants read through 20 passages, which highlights the potential strength of the buffering effect. Again, this positive CBR buffering effect lacked significance but this may also be tied to improper condition cell size. Future researchers should examine the limit to this potential buffer for positive CBR, while also increasing sample size to identify if the buffer produces a significant difference.

Classical conditioning might help to illuminate how the discounting process occurred within participants. Within this form of learning, individuals formed associations between two events to make predictions for the likelihood of future events (Pavlov, 1927; Pickens & Holland, 2004). Over many encounters, consumers learned what to expect from a brand which informed their CBR. However, this previous relationship knowledge could “block” the ability to learn subsequent information which might be informative to adjusting the relationship (Kamin, 1969). Specifically, classical conditioning posited that when a conditioned stimulus (i.e., providing low PJ) was paired with an unconditioned stimulus (i.e., brand) a relationship is learned (i.e., negative CBR). However, when a second conditioned stimulus (i.e., providing high PJ) was presented with the previously learned relationship, it failed to change the learned association. Although the current studies did not determine if blocking was the mechanism participants may use when discounting, previous research provided evidence for this effect within the consumer context (Osselaer & Alba, 2000). Due to blocking effects from strong brand preferences, participants were unable to accurately determine the quality of a product despite being provided accurate information about the product.

However, blocking only accounted for the existence of discounting and not why positive CBR produced an extended discounting effect compared to negative CBR. These predicted
effects were supported by previous research (Blader & Tyler, 2003; Lind & Tyler, 1988; Reimann & Aron, 2009; Tyler & Bies, 1990; Tyler & Blader, 2003; Tyler et al., 1996). As stated previously, PJ motivates individuals to continue interacting with a group, despite setbacks, in hopes of increasing group value and an enhanced self-identity with the group. Similarly, self-image congruent brands increased consumers’ emotional brand attachment, which increased their loyalty, satisfaction, and product purchasing (Kressmann et al., 2006; Malär et al., 2011; Park & Lee, 2005). Because consumers may be giving up desired benefits for the likelihood of increased harmony in the future, they may be overly discounting PJ information to maintain their brand-self-image congruency.

**General Discussion**

The results from the current set of three studies provided the first pieces of evidence that identified PJ as an important factor to consumers, which differentially influenced consumer loyalty and trust towards a brand. Specifically, the first two studies highlighted conditions where PJ could not (Study 1) and could (Study 2) interact with different CBR effectively to influence consumer loyalty and trust. These conflicting results suggested that Study 1 and previous research it emulated inadvertently focused on situations in which DJ was most important to consumers, while PJ was not (Aaker et al., 2004; Donovan et al., 2012; Kaltcheva et al., 2013; Mayser & Von Wangenheim, 2012; Santos & Fernandes, 2008; Seiders & Berry, 1998; Severt, 2002). Consumers were naturally aware of products and services received from brands. In such scenarios, DJ was the strongest predictor of consumer trust and satisfaction. However, Study 2 identified that perceptions of PJ solidified or weakened CBR prior to a service failure, thus influencing changes in loyalty and trust independent of a brand’s response to a service failure. The third study then conceptually replicated both Study 1 and Study 2 by highlighting how PJ
was initially discounted by consumers but was used to help maintain or adjust consumers’ relationship with a brand across many encounters with a positive CBR brand. Therefore, the results of the current research formed a necessary foundation with important theoretical, methodological, and applied implications that bridged a gap within previous research.

The first study replicated how previous researchers chose to examine consumer perceptions of justice and CBR by comparing an exchange relationship to a communal relationship within a service failure situation (Aggarwal & Law, 2005; Aggarwal & Iacobucci, 2004; Anderson, 1995; Golembiewski & McConkie, 1975; Miller et al., 2012; Morgan & Hunt, 1994; Sheth & Parvatiyar, 1995a). Consistent with previous research, PJ affected consumer loyalty and trust similarly within both exchange and communal relationships (Blodgett et al., 1993, 1997; Goodwin & Ross, 1992; Hocutt et al., 1997; Maxham & Netemeyer, 2002). In addition, DJ interacted with CBR to affect consumer trust, which was consistent with previous research (Aaker et al., 2004; Donovan et al., 2012; Kaltcheva et al., 2013; Mayser & Von Wangenheim, 2012; Santos & Fernandes, 2008; Seiders & Berry, 1998; Severt, 2002). An exchange relationship produced more trust when nothing went wrong due to its quid-pro-quo expectations. But expectations due to the relationship backfired, leading to decreased consumer trust by causing consumers to be more aware of distributive outcomes after a service failure. Conversely, establishing a communal relationship did not produce more trust that an outcome was handled properly; instead it provided a better buffer for the brand when something eventually went wrong.

The lack of an interaction for PJ but a significant interaction for DJ occurred due to the emulation of previous researchers’ experimental choices. Careful post-hoc consideration revealed several limitations that could only appear when simultaneously considering the relationship
between consumers and brands. First, participants were examined within a service failure encounter despite CBR being formed through various encounters outside of the examined situation (Dwyer et al., 1987; Gosline, 2015). Consumers maintain CBR through encounters outside of when a service failure occurs, such as through advertising, social media, or other consumers’ experiences with a brand. Each of these diverse communications could produce PJ information which consumers consider when judging their relationship with a brand independent of customer service and the outcomes it may provide after a service failure. Second, consumers did not view exchange and communal relationships differently. Specifically, both CBR were viewed positively, because exchange relationship brands lived up to their business transactions, leading consumers to trust a business more (Golembiewski & McConkie, 1975; Kotler, 1972; Morgan & Hunt, 1994; Pels, 1999). Because both CBR conditions were viewed as positive, then the lack of a PJ interaction should be expected.

The second study addressed these limitations by examining more diverse CBR and allowing participants to draw from their pre-existing knowledge for these diverse brand relationships. These modifications produced conditions in which PJ interacted with participants’ brand relationships to predict changes in consumer loyalty and trust. As consumers with a negative brand relationship perceived higher PJ, consumer loyalty and trust were predicted to increase. Consumers with positive CBR who perceived higher PJ predicted a steeper increase in positive consumer behaviors and attitudes. These results were also found independent of the effects of customer service and DJ, indicating that PJ is an important component outside of service failure situations. Study 2 produced the first empirical evidence that PJ interacted with different CBR to predict changes in consumer loyalty and trust. Unfortunately, these results conflicted with the first study and much of previous research.
It was speculated that these divergent findings could stem from consumers ignoring procedurally just behavior from brands when experimentally presented due to the brand’s actions being inconsistent with consumers’ previous relationship knowledge (Schmitt, 2012). For example, consumers with positive CBRs may be willing to ignore one instance of low PJ, because this behavior was not emblematic of the brand to which they have grown closer. In such scenarios, explicit consumer behaviors and attitudes may not change to reflect a brand’s actions.

To clear up these conflicting results, Study 3 examined if consumers discount inconsistent PJ actions due to CBR norms by examining changes in explicit scores after one inconsistent PJ action and again after several inconsistent PJ actions. Study three found evidence that consumers initially discounted inconsistent brand procedural actions which led to a predicted lack of change for consumer loyalty and trust, much like findings from the first study and previous research (Blodgett et al., 1993, 1997; Goodwin & Ross, 1992; Hocutt et al., 1997; Maxham & Netemeyer, 2002). Once PJ actions were presented regularly, consumer loyalty and trust significantly changed. Both consumer loyalty and trust significantly decreased when a positive CBR regularly performed low PJ actions. Subsequently, participants who regularly encountered a positive CBR that provided inconsistent PJ perceived the relationship as significantly more negative. These results effectively emphasized the existence of two separate conditions within the current research’s previous studies. Study 1 inadvertently focused on the discounted effect of PJ when a brand acted inconsistent to consumers’ relationship knowledge, while Study 2 focused on the effect of PJ when a brand had become “consistent” over several encounters to maintain consumer relationship knowledge.

The results from Study 3 supported previous findings of this dissertation through experimental and conceptual replication, while also extending the work of previous researchers
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on PJ (Blader & Tyler, 2009; Blader & Tyler, 2003; Tyler & Bies, 1990; Tyler et al., 1996; Tyler & Blader, 2003). It provided an explanation for Study 1 and previous researchers’ difficulty for identifying an effect for PJ. A lack of a strong effect from the manipulated factors in previous research led researchers to conclude that PJ may be unimportant to consumers within different CBR (Blodgett et al., 1993, 1997; Goodwin & Ross, 1992; Hocutt et al., 1997; Maxham & Netemeyer, 2002). Essentially, unfair actions by any brand, regardless of relationship type, led to a lack of loyalty and trust. Based on the results of Study 3, this was a misleading conclusion. Participants discounted procedural information that was inconsistent with their brand relationship, because one instance of inconsistent behavior is not enough to explicitly change consumer behaviors and attitudes. This is intuitive because perceptions are guided by one’s expectations and prior knowledge, leading individuals to ignore inconsistent information (Crocker, Hannah, & Weber, 1983; Norman & Bobrow, 1979; Pennington & Hastie, 1993; Sulin & Dooling, 1974). Additionally, discounting inconsistent information due to prior expectations has been found to affect consumers (Alba, Broniarczyk, Shimp, & Urbany, 1994; Broniarczyk & Alba, 1994; Hoch & Ha, 1986; Hutchinson & Alba, 1991).

Study 3 provided a conceptual replication for Study 2 as well. Within Study 2, participants utilized their relationship knowledge from several different encounters to determine their perceptions of PJ. These perceptions of fair treatment were then associated with changes in consumer loyalty and trust. Participants from Study 3 were provided with several instances of inconsistent knowledge in hopes that it may be used in a similar fashion and form new relationship information. According to previous researchers, this was similar to how consumers form CBR (Fournier, 1998; Schmitt, 2012). Once a brand had been identified, consumers integrated information which supported the original impression leading to a stronger relationship
and identification of brand personality. However, the findings from the current research suggest that multiple exposures of PJ were also a necessary component for maintaining CBR, despite researchers previously overlooking it. Therefore, consistent procedural information was important to consumers and needed to maintain their CBR. Additionally, consumers’ implicit awareness of a brand’s actions revealed a necessary perception of PJ that had been overlooked until now.

**Theoretical Implications**

The current research provided the first evidence of specific situations in which PJ differentially influenced consumer behaviors and attitudes towards a brand, while also providing an explanation for why these effects had not been identified previously. In so doing, the results from the current research not only contributed to, but also extended empirical knowledge within multiple fields in an incremental fashion.

Many researchers previously concluded that consumers were only concerned with receiving fair outcomes for themselves that were also consistent with relationship expectations when interacting with brands (Aaker et al., 2004; Blodgett et al., 1997; Donovan et al., 2012; Goodwin & Ross, 1992; Kaltcheva et al., 2013; Seiders & Berry, 1998; Tax et al., 1998). The results of the current research were consistent with this conclusion. DJ was found to be a significant predictor of consumer trust in all three studies and of consumer loyalty in two of the studies. This supported previous researchers’ attention on instances of service failure because they are naturally a time when consumers are focused most on the outcome (i.e., DJ).

Yet, consumers may be more perceptive of procedural actions while interacting with a brand regularly. The current research provided evidence that the addition of procedural information outside of service failures extended the current understanding of consumers
relationship with a brand. In other words, procedural information may be used to help maintain CBR, while distributive information (due to a service failure) may be used to confirm or test their relationship knowledge. In support of this view, when a service failure was experimentally manipulated in Study 1, only DJ affected consumer loyalty and trust. Similarly, within Study 3, initial inconsistent procedural information from a brand relationship did not affect consumer loyalty and trust towards the brand. However, several encounters of the same “inconsistent” procedural actions unrelated to service failures were used by consumers to ultimately adjust their loyalty, trust, and relationship perception. Similarly, within Study 2, use of several encounters with a brand which informed relationship knowledge predicted an increase in consumer loyalty and trust.

Previous research could not account for the effects of PJ, because it had been limited by the CBR researchers compared (i.e., exchange versus communal) or by only examining the effects of justice perceptions within service failure scenarios (Blodgett et al., 1993; Huppertz et al., 1978; Mccoll-Kennedy & Sparks, 2003; Oliver & Swan, 1989; Santos & Fernandes, 2008; Severt, 2002; Sparks & McColl-Kennedy, 2001; Tax et al., 1998). The current research found PJ to be a significant predictor of consumer loyalty and trust within several novel CBR. Researchers cannot be faulted for this though because each of their methodological decisions were intuitive. For instance, exchange and communal relationships provided a direct comparison to interpersonal relationships, despite the current research finding both relationships were perceived as positive within the consumer context.

The use of multiple encounters to maintain or adjust CBR was consistent with both the PJ group engagement model (Blader & Tyler, 2003, 2009; Lind & Tyler, 1988; Tyler & Bies, 1990; Tyler & Blader, 2003; Tyler et al., 1996) and the self-identity model to strengthen CBR (Esch et
al., 2006; Kressmann et al., 2006; Park et al., 1986; Park & Lee, 2005; Sirgy, 1986; Sirgy & Danes, 1982). Both areas of research suggested that individuals used numerous instances of a relationship partner’s actions to predict the quality of the relationship, albeit through slightly different relationship goals. Within the group engagement model, researchers considered PJ information as predictors of future relationship behavior. Similarly, with the self-identify model consumers identified a brand based on advertising and social media to evaluate the congruency of the brand’s image and personality with the consumer’s self-image and identity (Bjerke & Polegato, 2006; Malär et al., 2011; Rowe & Barnes, 1998; Zinkhan & Hong, 1991). Coupled with the current research, it seems these impressions then motivate individuals to discount inconsistent behavior.

The results of the current studies were consistent with previous research within interpersonal relationships as well, providing another parallel. Within interpersonal relationships, individuals expected a partner’s actions to remain consistent over time which affected their causal attribution of their partner’s behavior (Crocker et al., 1983; Rempel, Holmes, & Zanna, 1985; Stangor & Mcmillan, 1992). When a negative relationship event occurred, individuals summarized the encounter using their expectations, beliefs, and goals, ultimately guiding how the event was processed and later recalled (Fletcher & Overall, 2010). For instance, explanations one generates for an interpersonal relationship partner’s actions are directly affected by one’s satisfaction within the relationship (Fincham, 2001). Unhappy individuals were more likely to attribute negative behavior to stable traits of their partner, while happy individuals were more likely to attribute the same negative behavior to external sources. In this way, individuals discounted their partner’s behavior if it was not consistent with their relationship to maintain consistency within their expectations. Based on the results for Study 3, consumers acted
similarly within their CBR. Inconsistent PJ actions were not considered normal by participants and therefore ignored when judging their loyalty and trust for the brand.

The current research has theoretical implications for classic PJ literature as well. The traditional model of justice perceptions examined PJ within relationships between oneself and other people (Colquitt et al., 2013, 2001), including teachers (Trinkner & Cohn, 2014), employers (Tyler & Bies, 1990), police officers (Tyler & Folger, 1980), and intimate partners (Lerner & Mikula, 1994). Obviously, researchers were aware that one’s perceptions of PJ affected various relationship types. Yet, PJ researchers overlooked the relationship formed between a consumer and a brand. Without acknowledging the relationship consumers had with a brand, consumer justice researchers limited the scope of their empirical work and inadvertently limited their understanding of consumer behavior and attitudes. For instance, not accounting for the interaction between PJ and CBR produced conflicting evidence for consumer perceptions of PJ. Some researchers found that providing voice or the perception of control was unnecessary in affecting satisfaction towards the situation (Tax et al., 1998), while others found that consumer voice increased consumer satisfaction towards brands during service failures (Goodwin & Ross, 1992). However, the differences between these studies may be due to the exclusion of CBR. The current research provided evidence that relationship norms formed by negative CBR produced expectations that PJ will not be provided, therefore loyalty and trust remained unaffected. Alternatively, positive CBR led consumers to expect PJ, producing decreased loyalty and trust when it was not provided consistently.

**Methodological Implications**

The successful use of the contradiction paradigm also highlighted a novel experimental approach which had not been previously used within consumer research. This cognitive

Implicit attitudes represent an individual’s automatic associations formed through past experiences (Greenwald & Banaji, 1995). By presenting participants with contextual information that harnessed their CBR knowledge, the contradiction paradigm highlighted whether implicit and automatic processing of procedural information did not fit participants’ previous knowledge of their relationship with a brand. Testing consumers’ implicit awareness of PJ produced empirical knowledge that suggested how procedural information was processed to affect explicit judgements of consumer loyalty and trust.

The use of the contradiction paradigm was conducted instead of the IAT (Greenwald & Banaji, 1995; Greenwald et al., 1998; Maison et al., 2001, 2004) because it was necessary to present PJ through the context in which the action was performed instead of through the traits of a brand. Utilizing the context of a brand’s actions, the contradiction paradigm specifically captured whether associations between previous relationship knowledge and the contextual pieces of information were consistent or inconsistent with consumers’ relationship knowledge for a brand. It might be possible that other factors are discounted by consumers implicitly as well and the contradiction paradigm was a flexible tool that would assuredly help in this endeavor.

The current research’s results also reinforced the need for additional research focused on understanding implicit consumer attitudes (Batra, Myers, & Aaker, 1996; Gorn, 1982; Maison et al., 2001, 2004). Without examining participants’ implicit information processing, inconsistent
PJ was previously believed to be unrelated to consumers’ relationship to a brand, which is now disputed by the results of the current research. Thus, without considering implicit information, previous researchers inadvertently limited their understanding of potential factors which captured counterintuitive changes in consumer loyalty and trust. Evidently, consumers were aware of brand actions that display PJ, but initially discounted this important information despite its relevancy for aiding CBR maintenance.

**Applied Implications**

In addition to the theoretical and methodological contributions of the current research, there are several lessons and applications that branded businesses can gather from the current research. Using these applications may help businesses understand counterintuitive consumer behavior that previously remained unexplained (cf. Reichheld, 1996). For instance, consumers with positive CBR may defect and buy a competing brand’s products due to many encounters of low PJ. Overall, the gained knowledge from the empirical combination of PJ and CBR can produce real-world applications that reciprocally better the lives of consumers while also helping brands to achieve increased revenue due to loyal and trusting consumers. Specifically, consumers can learn to better identify brands that value and respect them, while brands can identify specific actions that reflect their established CBR norms.

Businesses should focus more on relationship maintenance, in addition to their reaction after a service failure. Although DJ remained a significant predictor of consumer loyalty and trust, the current research provided evidence that PJ was more effective outside of the service failure scenario. Consumers interact with brands through marketing (Mitussis et al., 2006; Schmitt, 2012), observing how others respond to their possession of branded products (Belk, 1988; Fournier, 1998; Swaminathan et al., 2007), and observing other brand users (Belk &
Each of these encounters could produce PJ information that consumers use to help solidify or weaken their relationship with the brand. Therefore, it is imperative for businesses to demonstrate procedurally just actions prior to a service failure.

Displaying PJ ahead of a transgression will provide brands with multiple benefits. First, multiple instances of PJ were associated with increased consumer loyalty and trust towards the brand, which positively influenced the brand’s relationship with consumers. Secondly, PJ provided a necessary buffer and discounting effect that will be useful for brands when a service failure inevitably occurs. If the brand’s actions are considered inconsistent with the consumer’s perceived relationship, consumers will likely ignore the information and continue to act according to their pre-existing brand relationship. However, brands cannot constantly rely on this buffer and discounting because consumers are paying attention and adjusting their expectations.

Branded businesses could also use the components of PJ as a guide for maintaining positive CBR. For instance, they could allow consumers to voice an opinion clearly and effectively (Thibaut & Walker, 1975), while acknowledging that their viewpoint was taken into consideration (Goodwin & Ross, 1992; Lind & Tyler, 1988; Tyler & Folger, 1980). They could ensure transparency for consumers on how opinions are considered or how decisions are made (Folger & Lewis, 1993; Nathan et al., 1991). Additionally, policies must be applied consistently and remain impartial across all individuals and time (Sheppard & Lewicki, 1987; Sparks & McColl-Kennedy, 2001; Tyler, 1994).

Whichever way a brand chooses to display PJ, they must maintain awareness of their actions in relation to the type of relationship they have established with their consumers.
Perceptions of PJ provide a sense of commitment and value (Lind & Tyler, 1988; Tyler & Bies, 1990; Tyler & Blader, 2003), which is important to people, because of their need to belong and form social relationships with others, allowing for an enhanced self-identity and positive comparisons to others (Baumeister & Leary, 1995; Festinger, 1954; Reimann & Aron, 2009). This lack of displayed value might explain why negative CBR had nothing to gain from enacting PJ; their consumers do not expect to receive it. However, it was important for brands with positive CBR to establish and maintain PJ, because they must avoid inadvertently informing consumers they are no longer valued. This was consistent with previous research, because deviating from a brand’s established relationship norms produced revenue loss, reduced consumer loyalty behaviors (Valta, 2013), such as buying from a competitor out of vengeance (Bechwati & Morrin, 2003; Sitkin & Roth, 1993), and undermined consumer satisfaction and trust (Aggarwal, 2004; Avery et al., 2014; Grégoire & Fisher, 2008; Grégoire et al., 2009a).

The current research also uncovered evidence that consumers used PJ information gained from brand encounters to maintain and adjust a relationship type. After many encounters of “inconsistent” PJ, consumers with positive CBR had decreased consumer loyalty, trust, and a more negative relationship. Interestingly, previous researchers already recognized the effect of procedural injustice on brand relationship formation (Miller et al., 2012; White et al., 2012). Consumers paid attention to brand actions, which were similar to PJ factors, and mentioned them as reasons to actively avoid a brand (Wollan et al., 2017). This suggests that maintaining positive procedural brand actions should aid a brand’s ability to avoid consumers changing their relationship with the brand.
Limitations and Future Directions

However, despite the importance and implications of these findings, limitations exist which should be improved upon in future research. Some of the limitations are common methodological issues. For instance, all the studies within the current research were scenario based and measured behavioral intentions. Customer behavioral responses to actual brand encounters might differ from their intentions within hypothetical encounters. Future researchers could utilize a retrospective method, in which consumers think about previous brand encounters and their responses at the time to increase the generalizability of the results. Additionally, two of the experiments conducted were quasi-experiments because relationship type was not fully controlled. Future research should attempt to replicate the current research using hypothetical brands that must establish a new relationship to ensure full experimental control. In doing so, empirical data could be gathered which highlights the role PJ plays within CBR formation.

Additionally, consumer loyalty was operationalized as both purchase and word-of-mouth intentions. Defining loyalty in this way has been debated (El-Manstrly & Harrison, 2013), with some researchers including both to form a multidimensional construct (Sirdeshmukh et al., 2002) and others separating them (Oliver, 1999). It is still unclear which operationalization is correct and this debate is beyond the scope of the current research. However, these different operationalizations might account for the differing changes between consumer loyalty and trust found within the current research. Future research should examine purchase intentions and word-of-mouth separately to account for independent changes in each factor due to the moderating effect of PJ within differing CBR.

Furthermore, the current research utilized a homogeneous sample of undergraduate students. Although the use of this sampling method limited the generalizability of the current
results, it was still worthwhile to examine this consumer group. For instance, Wolburg and Pokrywczyński (2001) argued for the examination of undergraduate consumers due to their status as trendsetters within society, lifelong brand loyalties, and large market size. Additionally, the use of undergraduate students could be considered appropriate given the nature of the studies because brand personality and comfort provided by a brand were noted as largely influential to product purchases for the current generation of college students (Noble, Haytko, & Phillips, 2009). It is not expected for the current results to differ within more heterogeneous samples because the effects for both CBR (Fournier, 1998; Fournier et al., 2015, 2012) and PJ (Bies & Moag, 1986; Blader & Tyler, 2003; Blodgett et al., 1997; Colquitt et al., 2013; Latour et al., 1976; Leung & Li, 1990; Sparks & McColl-Kennedy, 2001; Tax et al., 1998; Thibaut & Walker, 1978; Tyler, 1988; van den Bos et al., 1998) have been found to be ubiquitous. However, future researchers should still examine the interacting effects of CBR and PJ within heterogenous consumer samples to extend empirical knowledge further and help replicate the current foundational research.

There are conceptual limitations which should also be addressed in future research. For instance, realistically brands do not provide extended periods of only one form of PJ. Because consumers gather brand information from a variety of sources (Dwyer et al., 1987; Fournier, 1998; Fournier et al., 2015, 2012; Gosline, 2015; Mitussis et al., 2006; Schmitt, 2013), there is inevitably a mixed perception of both high and low PJ. Such combinations might increase consumers’ ability to discount inconsistent information because it is unclear if the brand will become consistent in its behavior, similar to the effects of spontaneous recovery and variable-ratio reinforcement found within learning. A mixed or more realistic perception of PJ could cause consumers to strengthen their attitudes towards their pre-existing CBR, thus reducing the
generalizability of the current research. Therefore, it is necessary to examine the strength of the predicted discounting effect in the face of a mixed performance of high and low PJ.

The current research did not control for different types of brands. For instance, results could differ between product and service based brands (Berry, 2000; Dawar & Parker, 1994). Product brands focus on consumer experiences with a specific manufactured good (e.g., Doritos). Service brands represent the continuous interactions consumers have with a brand (e.g., Facebook). Due to constant interactions with a service brand which foster an emotional branding experience (Morrison & Crane, 2007), PJ could be more important for service brands similar to its importance within positive CBR found by the current research. Future researchers should consider this additional moderator, because it might provide further explanation for counterintuitive consumer behavior.

Additionally, the current research did not provide opportunities for consumers to communicate with brands after each of the brand’s procedural actions. This is an important limitation because communication between consumers and brands is necessary for both CBR (i.e., interdependence) and PJ (i.e., voice). Communication between consumers and brands might help to increase the effect between CBR and PJ because it signals to consumers increased value from the brand. Specifically, consumers strengthen their relationship with brands who shared in the same experience with them (Dunn & Hoegg, 2014), which in turn bolsters consumers’ self-concepts (Aaker, 1999; Fournier, 1998; Gao et al., 2009; Rindfleisch et al., 2009; Swaminathan et al., 2009). Additionally, individuals will cooperate with a group which showcases the individual’s value (Lind & Tyler, 1988; Tyler & Bies, 1990; Tyler & Blader, 2003). This suggests that the current research’s identified effects could be smaller than what naturally occurs between consumers and brands. Also, ignoring consumer-brand communication limits the
studies’ generalizability because it frames the effects of CBR and PJ inorganically. Therefore, future researchers must incorporate methodologies that allow consumers to provide feedback to a brand’s procedural actions which specifically reciprocates or mishandles consumers’ personal feedback to model more realistic consumer-brand encounters.

Furthermore, interaction effects between DJ and PJ were not examined in much of the current research. Although DJ interacted with PJ within Study 1, it was only controlled for within Study 2 and 3. This was a conscious decision to examine the individual effects of PJ within CBR to provide a foundation for further research. Previous research supports the current findings, because PJ has been found to affect perceptions of justice independent of DJ (Folger & Bies, 1989; Folger & Konovsky, 1989; Lind & Tyler, 1988; McFarlin & Sweeney, 1992). However, it is important for future researchers to examine the potential interactions between both forms of justice within differing CBR to fully understand changes in consumer loyalty and trust. Specifically, negative CBR could be affected more by DJ actions potentially explaining the limited findings within Study 3. This added level of examination should increase the generalizability of future research as the distribution of an outcome is the natural conclusion between consumers and brands, especially within the context of service failures.

The current studies also produced a large effect for PJ over DJ (Study 2), but additional research should be conducted to replicate this result. One way this could be accomplished is by distinguishing the independent effects of each PJ component. As mentioned previously, PJ is formed through voice, impartiality, accurate yet correctable information, and respect. Each of these components might differentially interact with various CBR. It might be that impartiality is important to consumers within adversarial relationships, while voice is most important for committed relationships. In support of this, researchers found that the importance of various
aspects of PJ differed depending on the encounter in which an individual’s problem was resolved (Cohn, White, & Sanders, 2000). Therefore, future researchers should independently examine PJ components and whether each can interact with CBR to affect consumer behaviors and attitudes.

Finally, the current research did not distinguish between the effects of PJ and interactional justice. As mentioned previously, interactional justice focused on how the individual was treated by those responsible for making decisions. The current research adopted the view of Tyler and colleagues for increased parsimony (Blader & Tyler, 2009; Tyler & Blader, 2003; Tyler et al., 1996). But it might be that increases in consumer loyalty and trust found within the current research were due to interactional justice instead of only fair policies. Some CBR might be directly affected by interactional justice. For instance, the negative CBR examined within Study 3 was defined by how they treated consumers (Miller et al., 2012). Manipulating interactional justice might produce stronger effects than what was observed, because it might be what caused the CBR to form. In support of this, interactional justice has been examined to produce significant effects on consumer behavior and attitudes towards a brand (Blodgett et al., 1997; Santos & Fernandes, 2008; Tax et al., 1998). However, these effects were found without considering different CBR, supporting the importance of the current research. Therefore, future researchers should also examine the differential effects that may appear when comparing respectful treatment to fair procedures within differing CBR.

Conclusion

The current research provided an empirical foundation which bridged a newly identified gap within previous research. Researchers examined the interacting effects between CBR and perceptions of DJ, because consumers naturally remain aware of products and services received from brands. However, the combination of CBR and perceptions of PJ were previously under
examined. The current research’s results provided evidence that PJ was an important factor towards affecting consumer loyalty and trust in situations outside of a service failure in relation to CBR norms. Specifically, the first two studies highlighted conditions where PJ could not (Study 1) and could (Study 2) interact with different CBR effectively to influence consumer loyalty and trust. The third study highlighted how PJ is initially discounted by consumers despite their implicit understanding that brands are acting counter to their expectations. These results provided an explanation for the lack of an examined effect within previous research. However, PJ was used to help maintain and adjust consumers’ relationship with a brand across many encounters with a positive CBR brand.

Through the successful use of the contradiction paradigm, the current research’s results reinforced the need for additional research focused on understanding implicit consumer attitudes. Previous research could not account for the effects of PJ, because it had been limited by consumers discounting implicit awareness of PJ. In addition to the methodological contributions of the current research, brands can utilize these results to understand and change counterintuitive consumer behavior through perceptions of justice. For instance, brands must focus on relationship maintenance, in addition to their reaction after a service failure. In conclusion, although distributive justice is helpful for retaining consumers after a service failure, the current research shows that procedural justice is necessary for consumers to maintain their loyalty and trust based on their brand relationship.
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### Tables

Table 1. *Means and standard errors for consumer loyalty and trust due to distributive and procedural justice within Study 1.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Distributive Justice</th>
<th>Consumer Loyalty</th>
<th>Consumer Trust</th>
<th>Procedural Justice</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>High</strong></td>
<td><strong>Low</strong></td>
<td><strong>Main Effects</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High</td>
<td>4.71 (.16)</td>
<td>4.79 (.12)</td>
<td>4.75 (.10)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low</td>
<td>3.55 (.12)</td>
<td>2.67 (.13)</td>
<td>3.21 (.09)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Main Effects</strong></td>
<td>4.13 (.10)</td>
<td>3.83 (.09)</td>
<td>4.76 (.09)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Standard error within parentheses

a, significant main effect of distributive justice

b, significant main effect for procedural

All markers significant at p ≤ .05
Table 2. *Means and standard errors for relationship type effects on DVs within Study 2.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Positive CBR</th>
<th>Negative CBR</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Distributive Justice</td>
<td>4.95 (.07)</td>
<td>3.56 (.09)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Procedural Justice</td>
<td>5.31 (.07)</td>
<td>3.97 (.11)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consumer Loyalty</td>
<td>5.05 (.07)</td>
<td>2.85 (.10)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consumer Trust</td>
<td>3.96 (.12)</td>
<td>2.35 (.11)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Standard error within parentheses; All DV’s were found to be significantly different (p ≤ .05) from the other by condition.
Table 3. *Correlations between predictor variables and the dependent variables of Study 2.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Loyalty</th>
<th>Trust</th>
<th>Customer Service</th>
<th>Distributive Justice</th>
<th>DJ/CBR Interaction</th>
<th>Procedural Justice</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Trust</td>
<td>.702**</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Customer Service</td>
<td>.282**</td>
<td>.271**</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Distributive Justice</td>
<td>.696**</td>
<td>.639**</td>
<td>.155**</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DJ/CBR Interaction</td>
<td>.755**</td>
<td>.558**</td>
<td>.215**</td>
<td>.678**</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Procedural Justice</td>
<td>.610**</td>
<td>.572**</td>
<td>.073</td>
<td>.709**</td>
<td>.569**</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PJ/CBR Interaction</td>
<td>.749**</td>
<td>.546**</td>
<td>.208**</td>
<td>.627**</td>
<td>.976**</td>
<td>.620**</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level.

**Correlation is significant at the 0.001 level.
Table 4. *Correlations between dependent variables and DJ as covariate.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Reading Times</th>
<th>DJ</th>
<th>Loyalty</th>
<th>Relationship Change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>DJ</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Loyalty</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>.42**</td>
<td>.64**</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relationship Change</td>
<td>-.04*</td>
<td>.54**</td>
<td>.69**</td>
<td>.63**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trust</td>
<td>-.00</td>
<td>.64**</td>
<td>.69**</td>
<td>.63**</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level.
** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level.
Table 5. *Means and standard deviations for target sentence reading times as a function of a 2(PJ) X 2(CBR) X 2(Time) design*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Pre</th>
<th>Post</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Negative CBR</td>
<td>Positive CBR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PJ</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>SD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High</td>
<td>2950.19</td>
<td>1077.12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low</td>
<td>2855.69</td>
<td>997.38</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*M* and *SD* represent mean and standard deviation, respectively
Table 6. *Means and standard deviations for consumer loyalty as a function of a 4(Condition) X 2(Time) design*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Condition</th>
<th>Pre</th>
<th></th>
<th>Post</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Inconsistent Positive CBR</td>
<td>4.47</td>
<td>1.08</td>
<td>3.44</td>
<td>1.51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consistent Positive CBR</td>
<td>4.55</td>
<td>0.75</td>
<td>3.99</td>
<td>1.07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consistent Negative CBR</td>
<td>3.05</td>
<td>1.29</td>
<td>2.77</td>
<td>1.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inconsistent Negative CBR</td>
<td>3.06</td>
<td>1.27</td>
<td>3.27</td>
<td>1.39</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note. M and SD represent mean and standard deviation, respectively.*
Table 7. *Means and standard deviations for consumer trust as a function of a 4(Condition) X 2(Time) design*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Condition</th>
<th>Pre M</th>
<th>Pre SD</th>
<th>Post M</th>
<th>Post SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Inconsistent Positive CBR</td>
<td>4.46</td>
<td>1.36</td>
<td>2.69</td>
<td>1.47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consistent Positive CBR</td>
<td>4.48</td>
<td>0.97</td>
<td>4.60</td>
<td>1.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consistent Negative CBR</td>
<td>3.42</td>
<td>0.94</td>
<td>2.30</td>
<td>1.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inconsistent Negative CBR</td>
<td>3.34</td>
<td>1.24</td>
<td>3.65</td>
<td>1.39</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*M and SD represent mean and standard deviation, respectively.*
Figures

Figure 1. *Theoretical model examined within Study 1.*
Figure 2. Theoretical model based on Study 2 results.
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Figure 6. *Interaction effects on consumer loyalty between DJ and relationship type within Study 2.*
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Figure 17. Two-way interaction between Brand and Time on relationship scores within Study 3.
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Figure 19. Growth curve changes in target sentence reading times across each condition within Study 4.
### Appendix A

**Study 1 Scale Items**

| Consumer Loyalty | “After this situation, I would tell others good things about my experience” |
|                 | “I would encourage others to buy from this seller” |
|                 | “I would buy from this seller again” |
|                 | “In this situation, I would not ask for my money back” |
|                 | “If this happened to me, I would cancel my order” (reversed) |
|                 | “In similar situations, I would write a positive review.” |

| Consumer Trust | “The seller does not have the skills and expertise to perform transactions in an expected manner” (reversed) |
|               | “The seller handled the transaction appropriately” |
|               | “The seller did not meet my needs” (reversed) |
|               | “The seller was fair in its conduct throughout the transaction” |
|               | “The seller is open and receptive to my needs” |
|               | “The seller kept my best interest in mind during this transaction” |
|               | “Overall, the seller is not trustworthy” (reversed) |
|               | “I doubt the honesty of the seller” (reversed) |
|               | “I expect the seller will keep promises they make in the future” |
|               | “I can count on the seller to be sincere” |
|               | “I expect that the seller is ready and willing to assist and support me” |
|               | “I expect that the seller has good intentions toward me” |
|               | “I expect that the seller is well meaning.” |
## Appendix B

### Study 2 Scale Items

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Distributive Justice</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“[Brand]’s products are worth their price.”</td>
<td>“[Brand] creates products that understand their consumer’s need for them.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“The product I buy from [brand] is equal to what others receive.”</td>
<td>“It is fair if [brand] rewards a consumer’s loyalty.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“[Brand]’s product quality is consistent across multiple purchases.”</td>
<td>“[Brand]’s business decisions are equally fair to all consumers.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“If consumers need something from [brand], they will get it.”</td>
<td>“Increased loyalty to [brand] leads to fair outcomes.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Priority is given to consumers who need a product from [brand] quickly.”</td>
<td>“Loyalty programs created by [brand] are/would be fair to consumers.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“[Brand] reacts positively when a consumer needs an outcome.”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Procedural Justice</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“[Brand] provides consumers with fair treatment.”</td>
<td>“[Brand] pays more attention to consumers than making money.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“[Brand] considers their consumer’s views when making decisions.”</td>
<td>“[Brand] makes up for its mistakes.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“After buying [brand]’s products, consumers feel their views are respected.”</td>
<td>“I can count on [brand] to do what is best for me.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“[Brand] treats all of their consumers equally.”</td>
<td>“[Brand] listens to me.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Consumers should worry about [brand] treating other consumers more fairly than them.” (reversed)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Consumers know [brand] provides fair treatment before engaging with them.”</td>
<td>“[Brand] changes based on consumer reactions.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“[Brand] respects its consumers.”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“[Brand] listens to consumers if there is a problem.”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“When interacting with [brand], consumers will be treated fairly like everyone else.”</td>
<td>“[Brand] makes up for its mistakes.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Through interactions with [brand], it is clear an effort is made to be fair towards consumers.”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Interactions with [brand] are fair towards consumers.”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“[Brand] changes based on consumer reactions.”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Consumer Loyalty</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“I tell others about my positive experiences with [brand].”</td>
<td>“I write positive reviews about [brand] on social media.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“If given the choice, I would use other brands instead of [brand].” (reversed)</td>
<td>“I say bad things about [brand] to others.” (reversed)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“I buy as many products as I can from [brand].”</td>
<td>“I buy as many products as I can from [brand].”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“I actively discourage others from using [brand].” (reversed)</td>
<td>“I actively discourage others from using [brand].” (reversed)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“If given the choice to use a different brand, I would still use [brand].”</td>
<td>“If given the choice to use a different brand, I would still use [brand].”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“I show off my new purchases from [brand].”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Consumer Trust</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“[Brand] takes care of me.”</td>
<td>“[Brand] makes up for its mistakes.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“[Brand] makes up for its mistakes.”</td>
<td>“I can count on [brand] to do what is best for me.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“[Brand] listens to me.”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Customer Service Experience

“[Brand]’s customer service treats consumers fairly.”
“The customer service of [brand] treats all consumers equally.”
“When consumers call [brand]’s customer service, they know someone will listen to their problems.”
“[Brand]’s customer service motto could be ‘The customer is always right’.”
“[Brand]’s customer service listens to a consumer’s problem instead of working from a script.”
“Decisions made by [brand]’s customer service are equally fair to all consumers.”
“[Brand]’s customer service solves problems fairly.”
“[Brand]’s customer service is a place consumers can get solutions to their problems.”
Appendix C

Study 3 Scale Items

**Consumer Loyalty**
- “I tell others about my positive experiences with [brand]”
- “I write positive reviews about [brand] on social media”
- “If given the choice, I would use other brands instead of [brand]” (reversed)
- “I say bad things about [brand] to others” (reversed)
- “I buy as many products as I can from [brand]”
- “I actively discourage others from using [brand]” (reversed)
- “If given the choice to use a different brand, I would still use [brand]”
- “I show off my new purchases from [brand].”

**Consumer Trust**
- “[Brand] takes care of their consumers”
- “[Brand] makes up for its mistakes”
- “Consumers can count on [brand] to do what is best for them”
- “[Brand] does not have the skills and expertise to perform transactions in an expected manner” (reversed)
- “[Brand] will handle transactions appropriately in the future”
- “[Brand] will be open and receptive to consumer needs in the future”
- “Overall, the seller is not trustworthy (reversed)”
- “I doubt the honesty of the seller” (reversed)
- “I expect [brand] will keep promises they make in the future”
- “Consumers can count on [brand] to be sincere”
- “Consumers can expect that [brand] is ready and willing to assist and support them”
- “Consumers can expect that [brand] has good intentions toward them”
- “Consumers can expect that [brand] is well meaning.”
Appendix D

Story 1
In a recent leak of company documents, [Brand] was revealed to be paying women significantly less money annually than men within the same positions. You read online that [brand] was asked to put out a statement on the issue as soon as possible. However, because they were not prepared to release this information, they stalled on addressing the issue by avoiding any press coverage when [brand] officials made public appearances. Without a statement from [brand] many media outlets began to uncover their own evidence about the situation.

Low Procedural Justice Target Sentence
[Brand] has a history of treating people different in the past. (63 chrs)

High Procedural Justice Target Sentence
[Brand] has a history of treating people similarly in the past. (63 chrs)

Spill-Over
Finally, two weeks after the original reports came out, [brand] issued a statement in a live press conference discussing the leaked documents.

Comprehension Questions
1.) After company documents were released, did [brand] release a statement as soon as they could? (no)
2.) Did [brand] ever respond to the reports? (yes)
Story 2
A celebrity you follow on social media recently used a [brand] image to make a racist statement. The celebrity’s remarks quickly went viral due to outrage and shock at how it made some ethnicities seem worse than others. Soon, you find articles which explain the false logic used within the celebrity’s statement. Other people you know do not see the problem with the statement and come up with reasons to share it beyond the racist tones it portrays. However, there was no immediate response from [brand]. Shortly afterwards, an anonymous source found some new information.

Low Procedural Justice Target Sentence
[Brand] found the situation hilarious and created similar ads. (62 chrs)

High Procedural Justice Target Sentence
[Brand] found the situation appalling and created counter ads. (62 chrs)

Spill-Over
However, this was not an official statement from [brand]. That came later in an email to stock holders.

Comprehensive Questions
1.) Did the celebrity’s remarks go viral? (yes)
2.) Did [brand] email stockholders? (yes)
Story 3
[Brand] is creating a revolutionary product. You heard that to test how well it would sell, [brand] decided to release the product in a test market. Initial reviews were incredibly positive and the item was highly anticipated. Once [brand] products were available in your area, you bought one because of the positive reviews. However, you notice something different between your product and the one discussed in the reviews.

Low Procedural Justice Target Sentence
[Brand] review products had more features that yours did not. (62 chrs)

High Procedural Justice Target Sentence
Yours had more features than what was said in [brand] reviews. (62 chrs)

Spill-over
Other people had noticed this too. Soon news outlets began reporting on this revelation and reached out to [brand] for comment.

Comprehensive Questions
1.) Was the product sent to a test market first? (yes)
2.) Were the reviews for [brand]’s product positive? (yes)
**Story 4**
Recently, you have heard that [brand] has been gaining news attention. Specifically, they have been accused of running illegal production facilities in foreign countries where labor is cheap and the regulations are loose. In one article you read, a person was interviewed who said, "This is disgraceful, I will no longer buy from [brand] if they do not change." The article continued by providing [brand] tax information and discussing the recent price cuts for their products. In response to the news reports, [brand] released a statement to its customers.

**Low Procedural Justice Target Sentence**
[Brand] is not concerned with opinions based on deceptive news. (63 chrs)

**High Procedural Justice Target Sentence**
[Brand] listened to their consumers and understands the issue. (62 chrs)

**Spill-over**
[Brand] continued by saying, “We always do what is best for our consumers.”

**Comprehensive Questions**
1.) Was the [brand] issue in the news? (yes)
2.) Was the interviewed person happy about the news regarding the allegations? (no)
Story 5
[Brand] began advertising what they believed to be a high quality and well-made product for consumers. It was advertised that it would last for years. However, six months later, your product fell apart and broke. When you spoke with friends, they seemed to be having the same problems. You and your friends then decided to complain to [brand]. Soon more people came forward with the same issues and then [brand] released a statement that possible solutions were being discussed with the product development team. Before a solution was announced, you read an article which revealed an idea [brand] was considering.

Low Procedural Justice Target Sentence
[Brand] will not fix the problem and blames careless consumers. (63 chrs)

High Procedural Justice Target Sentence
[Brand] will listen to consumer complaints to tackle the issue. (63 chrs)

Spill-over
This proposal is believed to be the first step [brand] will take but it was not confirmed to be true. Several days later an official announcement was made.

Comprehensive Questions
1.) Was the product falling apart? (yes)
2.) Was the development team consulted? (yes)
Story 6
To boost sales of a new product, [brand] created a limited time promotion for its customers. Upon creating an account on the [brand] website, consumers received the product to test out for three months. After that time, consumers could decide to return it or keep it after paying a discounted price. You thought this deal was a great idea so you quickly created an account. Once you signed up and put in your credit card information the product was sent to you. At the end of the test period, you decide to keep the product. However, you noticed [brand] charged the full price instead of the discounted price. To fix the issue, you contacted [brand] and informed them of the issue. The next day [brand] sent you a message.

Low Procedural Justice Target Sentence
[Brand] seemed to ignore your problem and offered another deal. (63 chrs)

High Procedural Justice Target Sentence
[Brand] valued your input and now knows what led to the error. (62 chrs)

Spill-over
Later you read an article which discovered that there was a miscommunication between [brand] and the credit card companies.

Comprehensive Questions
1.) Did [brand] offer the promotion to boost sales? (yes)
2.) Were you charged a discounted price? (no)
Story 7
[Brand] released a product that required a specific item to use it properly. A year later [brand] required every product to be upgraded to get ready for its newly introduced features. You attempt to upgrade your product but it will not work because you need a new add-on. Unfortunately, the new item costs fifty dollars. This seemed to be a common problem because media outlets reported that the [brand] website was down due to a large amount of demand for the new item and complaints. After these details were revealed news stations reached out to [brand] for comments. [Brand] released a statement which helped to explain the situation.

Low Procedural Justice Target Sentence
[Brand] said the advanced feature was only for loyal consumers. (63 chrs)

High Procedural Justice Target Sentence
[Brand] made a mistake and wanted everyone to upgrade for free. (63 chrs)

Spill-over
[Brand] ended the statement with plans detailing how they were going to accomplish this goal.

Comprehensive Questions
1.) Does the new piece require a new attachment to use it? (yes)
2.) Was [brand] reached out to for comments? (yes)
Story 8
[Brand] has begun to produce “green” products due to recent popularity for earth friendly products from consumers. According to marketing material, any product with a leaf symbol is completely eco-friendly. These products were marketed as better for the Earth and for the people using them. Recently, you have seen rumors on the internet that suggest [brand] “leaf” products are not as environmentally friendly as they claim. In response to this news [brand] contacted consumers through social media.

Low Procedural Justice Target Sentence
[Brand] argued the responsibility to be green was on consumers. (63 chrs)

High Procedural Justice Target Sentence
[Brand] apologized and promised to be more clear in the future. (63 chrs)

Spill-over
To appease their customers, [brand] decided to produce independent reports confirming which of their products were truly eco-friendly.

Comprehensive Questions
1.) Did [brand] just recently begin producing ‘green’ products? (yes)
2.) Are the environmentally-friendly [brand] products marked with a “lizard”? (no)


Story 9
You are the lucky winner of a raffle put on by [brand]. The prize includes one free item and 50% off an item of your choice. When you call the number to claim your prize you are surprised to hear the voice on the other end say, "We are unable to take your call at this time." After waiting a few minutes, you decide to try calling again. After calling five times, your patience is running out and you decide to call [brand] headquarters and explain the situation. Someone picks up right away and says, "Thank you for calling [brand], what may I help you with?" You begin to explain how you are the raffle prize winner and before you can finish the voice on the other end cuts you off.

Low Procedural Justice Target Sentence
"Why did you call us? [Brand] cannot award raffle prizes here." (63 chrs)

High Procedural Justice Target Sentence
"Congratulations from [brand] on winning! Sorry for the delay." (63 chrs)

Spill-over
You are then transferred to another department.

Comprehensive Questions
1.) Did you only call [brand] once? (no)
2.) Did you call [brand] headquarters? (yes)
**Story 10**

[Brand] introduces a new monthly fee for their services. You decide to sign up because it sounds like a good deal. However, after using it for a bit, you receive an email reminder about paying the monthly fee even though you have already paid it. You think this must be a mistake. You speak with [brand] over the phone and explain that you already paid the fee for this month. You even offer to forward the receipt that was emailed to you when you paid.

*Low Procedural Justice Target Sentence*

[Brand] obviously follows a script and does not listen to you. (62 chrs)

*High Procedural Justice Target Sentence*

[Brand] listens carefully to you and apologizes for the error. (62 chrs)

*Spill-over*

You are then transferred to another department. [Brand] tells you your receipts are not necessary, but you decide to keep your receipts nearby just in case.

*Comprehensive Questions*

1. Have you already paid the monthly fee? (yes)
2. Did you offer to provide the company with your receipt? (yes)
Story 11
You hear that [brand] has released a new product and you quickly order one online. When the package arrives, it is not the product you ordered. You contact [brand] and try to exchange your package for the product you originally wanted. After waiting on hold for a short time, you are connected with someone. You explain your issue and that [brand] should exchange the item because it was their mistake. [Brand] responds with an answer quickly.

Low Procedural Justice Target Sentence
[Brand] did not make any errors and will not accept complaints. (63 chrs)

High Procedural Justice Target Sentence
[Brand] apologizes for the problem and admits to their mistake. (63 chrs)

Spill-over
You ask to speak with someone else to see what options are available to you.

Comprehensive Questions
1.) Did [brand] send you the product that you ordered? (no)
2.) Did you ask to speak with a manager? (yes)
Story 12
[Brand] needed help funding a new product. They created a crowd-funding campaign and you looked over their ideas to see if it was worth helping. The product sounded interesting and if you gave enough money that you could contribute to the creation of the product. You decide to back them at this level because of how fun it could be to help the design team. Several months later, [brand] releases a sketch of the new product. But the product does not feature any of the information that you gave them. [Brand] used a different design for the sketch and released a statement explaining their design choice.

Low Procedural Justice Target Sentence
“[Brand] ignored all input because we know our customer needs.” (63 chrs)

High Procedural Justice Target Sentence
“Ignore the sketch, [brand] used your input on a final design.” (63 chrs)

Spill-over
A year later the crowd-funded product was released and was highly profitable.

Comprehensive Questions
1.) Do you back the creation of the product? (yes)
2.) Did [brand] use your input in the sketch they released? (no)
Story 13
You purchased a product from [brand] and later discovered that you were overcharged. When you complain on their social media page, [brand] responds that all sales are final. You write a reply to explain how you were overcharged for the product and that you should not have to pay more than the advertised price. You end your comment asking to be reimbursed for the difference.

Low Procedural Justice Target Sentence
[Brand] deletes your comment and entirely ignores your problem. (63 chrs)

High Procedural Justice Target Sentence
[Brand] apologizes and requests more details about the problem. (63 chrs)

Spill-over
Soon more comments appear with a similar issue of being overcharged.

Comprehensive Questions
1.) Did you complain by writing a letter in the mail? (no)
2.) Did you ask to be reimbursed for the difference? (yes)
Story 14
You receive an email from [brand] to inform you that their accounts have been hacked and your personal information was released online. You quickly contacted [brand] to find out more information. You discover that somebody in another state has been making purchases from [brand] using your stolen information. You furiously explain that this is unacceptable and you expect to be fully compensated. [Brand] explains that they are looking into possible solutions and will email you with answers as soon as possible. After speaking with [brand], you try to get a hold of your bank to fix your financial problem. Later, you find out your friends had the same thing happen to them. When your friends called, [brand] monetarily compensated them for their losses. The next day you receive an email from [brand].

Low Procedural Justice Target Sentence
[Brand] tells you they cannot afford to compensate your losses. (63 chrs)

High Procedural Justice Target Sentence
[Brand] apologized and plans to compensate you for your losses. (63 chrs)

Spill-over
Eventually you and your friends received several discounts for future purchases.

Comprehensive Questions
1.) Was your personal information hacked? (yes)
2.) Did you contact your bank to resolve the issue? (yes)
Story 15
[Brand] recently raised the price of their products significantly. This was concerning because you already thought their prices were high. You begin to look online to see why the prices were raised. One article you find interviewed a market analyst. In the article, she commented, "It may be harmful to [brand] market value to raise their prices so dramatically, they need to realize this is not their best move and drop them soon." Shortly afterwards [brand] released a statement about the new prices through social media.

Low Procedural Justice Target Sentence
Raised prices for [brand] products display our exclusive image. (63 chrs)

High Procedural Justice Target Sentence
[Brand] apologizes, rising material costs forced price changes. (63 chrs)

Spill-over
Within hours there were several comments under the post from [brand]. You decide to look through them to see how other consumer’s feel about the price change.

Comprehensive Questions
1.) Did [brand] recently increase their prices? (yes)
2.) Did the market analyst think it was a good idea to raise prices? (no)
Story 16
You purchased a few products from [brand] online. When your delivery arrived, you received your order and five extra items that you did not purchase. At first, you were excited to get a bunch of extra stuff for free. You had considered getting some of the things you were sent, but they were too expensive for you. Luckily you looked through the bill though. According to the receipt, [brand] charged you for someone else's order on top of your order. After calculating the difference, you see that the bill is three times more expensive than usual. You quickly find the number to call [brand], so you can get this problem fixed.

Low Procedural Justice Target Sentence
[Brand] places you on hold for hours and disregards your call. (62 chrs)

High Procedural Justice Target Sentence
[Brand] answers and listens carefully as you explain the issue. (63 chrs)

Spill-over
Later, you call the bank to try to remove the extra charges from your bank statement.

Comprehensive Questions
1.) Were there extra items delivered to your house? (yes)
2.) Were you charged for the extra items? (yes)
Story 17
The state legislature is voting to ban harmful materials from being used in manufacturing. [Brand] is worried this bill would limit the sale of many of their products that contain the same materials. [Brand] reached out to its consumers to start a grassroots campaign to stop the bill from being passed. You begin to receive newsletters from [brand] in the mail that outline how the materials are harmless in the small amounts used within their products. These pamphlets do not do much to convince you though. [Brand] then decided to release a statement to get more consumers to side with them.

Low Procedural Justice Target Sentence
[Brand] threatened to remove all their products from your area. (63 chrs)

High Procedural Justice Target Sentence
[Brand] vowed to find other material but it would require time. (63 chrs)

Spill-over
The legislature ended up voting to ban the harmful materials and [brand] was forced to decide how to continue producing their products.

Comprehensive Questions
1.) Did the state legislature ban the harmful materials? (yes)
2.) Is [brand] worried about how this will affect sales? (yes)
Story 18
[Brand] released a new product and due to extensive marketing, they sold hundreds right away. After buying your own, you began to read other customer’s reviews to know what to expect when it arrived. However, early reviews revealed that the product was shipped missing a vital part that stopped anyone from using it. When yours arrived, it was also missing the vital part. Upon realizing the scope of this mistake [brand] discovered that it would be very costly to send out the missing piece to every customer. In response, they come up with a plan to help keep profits high.

Low Procedural Justice Target Sentence
[Brand] only sent the piece to reviewers for positive reviews. (62 chrs)

High Procedural Justice Target Sentence
[Brand] spent the money and sent the part to anyone without it. (63 chrs)

Spill-over
The plan worked and reviews became more positive about the product.

Comprehensive Questions
1.) Was [brand] successful in selling the product? (yes)
2.) Would it be expensive to send the missing piece to every customer? (yes)
Story 19
[Brand] is well known for one of its most popular products. However, new leadership within the company has led to changes within the product. You did not like these changes because the product is no longer as useful to you. Looking online, you found many reviewers agreed with your opinion. The changes [brand] made to the product were disliked and considered unnecessary. In response to these reviews [brand] began an internal assessment of their sales to decide their next marketing action.

Low Procedural Justice Target Sentence
[Brand] found complaints unhelpful and decided to ignore them. (62 chrs)

High Procedural Justice Target Sentence
[Brand] listened to all of the complaints to assess the issue. (62 chrs)

Spill-over
[Brand] was satisfied with how they chose to examine consumer feedback and made a decision about the product several weeks later.

Comprehensive Questions
1.) Were you pleased with the changes [brand] made to its product? (no)
2.) Did reviews online agree with your opinion? (yes)
Story 20
[Brand] realized that one of their products was not selling as well as it had in the past. In fact, the company discovered they were losing money on the older product. To maintain high profits, [brand] decided to discontinue production of this item. Of course, this was a product that you needed, and all other options were twice as expensive. You decide to write and complain on social media about the products discontinuation. Your post becomes “liked” by many others and goes viral. [Brand] then responds to your post.

Low Procedural Justice Target Sentence
“Higher prices will bring it back, if not [brand] loses money.” (63 chrs)

Low Procedural Justice Target Sentence
“We agree with your complaints, so [brand] will look into it.” (62 chrs)

Spill-over
The reply from [Brand] was then shared across social media and went viral too.

Comprehensive Questions
1.) Was the company losing money on one of their products? (yes)
2.) Did you complain about [brand] discontinuing a product? (yes)
### Appendix E

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Appendix F

Study 1

This is a request from Alex Blandina to approve the study "In-Person Survey Interpersonal Business Relationships".

Message from Alex Blandina:

I would like to update the approval code from ENov302014 to ENov302015.
Thank you!
Alex Blandina

Study Name: In-Person Survey Interpersonal Business Relationships
Abstract: The purpose of this research is to understand how consumers respond within business interactions.
Detailed Description:
Participants will complete a survey based on a short vignette under researcher supervision. Participation will take no longer than 45 minutes.
Credits: 1Credits
DRC or IRB Approval Code: ENov302014 (expires November 30, 2015)
Researcher:
    Alex Blandina
    Email: ab11@unh.edu

RE: IRB Modification & Extension for ENov302014

Warner, Rebecca

Sent: Monday, November 16, 2015 2:28 PM
To: Alex Blandina [ab11@wildcats.unh.edu]

Hello Alex,

On behalf of the Psychology DRC, I approve the minor modifications and request for extension - you may change the approval code to ENov302015
Becky

Rebecca Warner, Professor
Department of Psychology
418 McConnell Hall
University of New Hampshire
Durham, NH 03824
rebecca.warner@unh.edu
## University of New Hampshire
### Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects in Research
### Departmental Review Committee Exemption Classification Sheet

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<td>Reviewer: Ed O'Brien</td>
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<td>Study:</td>
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### Exempt Review

46.101(b)(1) Research conducted in established or commonly accepted educational settings, involving normal educational practices, such as:
- (i) research on regular or special educational instructional strategies, or
- (ii) research on the effectiveness of or comparison among instructional techniques, curricula, or classroom management methods.

46.101(b)(2) Research involving the use of educational tests (cognitive, diagnostic, aptitude, achievement), survey procedures, interview procedures or observation of public behavior unless:
- (i) information obtained is recorded in such a manner that human subjects can be identified, directly or through identifiers linked to the subjects; and
- (ii) any disclosure of the human subjects’ responses outside the research could reasonably place the subjects at risk of criminal or civil liability or be damaging to subjects’ financial standing, employability, or reputation.

46.101(b)(3) Research involving the use of educational tests (cognitive, diagnostic, aptitude, achievement), survey procedures, interview procedures or observation of public behavior that is not exempt under category (b)(2) if:
- (i) the human subjects are elected or appointed public officials or candidates for public office; or
- (ii) federal statute(s) requires(s) without exception that confidentiality of the personally identifiable information will be maintained throughout the research and thereafter.

46.101(b)(4) Research involving the collection or study of existing data, documents, records, pathological specimens, or diagnostic specimens, if these sources are publicly available or if the information is recorded by the investigator in such a manner that subjects cannot be identified, directly or through identifiers linked to the subjects.

46.101(b)(5) Research and demonstration projects which are conducted by or subject to the approval of department or agency heads, and which are designed to study, evaluate, or otherwise examine:
- (i) public benefit or service programs; (ii) procedures for obtaining benefits or services under such programs; (iii) possible changes in or alternatives to those programs or procedures; or (iv) possible changes in methods or levels of payment for services or benefits under those programs.

46.101(b)(6) Taste and food quality evaluation and consumer acceptance studies, (i) if wholesome foods without additives are consumed or (ii) if a food is consumed that contains a food ingredient at or below the level and for a use found to be safe, or agricultural chemical or environmental contaminant at or below the level found to be safe, by the Food and Drug Administration, or approved by the Environmental Protection Agency, or the Food Safety and Inspection Service of the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

- Protocol is approved as presented in the category checked
- Protocol is approved with the following contingencies/comments (attach sheets if necessary)
- Protocol is referred to the IRB for Expedited or Full Board review
- Protocol cannot be approved as presented (cite reasons on separate sheet)

DRC Reviewer: [Signature]
Date: 9/14/2016
Study 3

University of New Hampshire
Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects in Research
Departmental Review Committee Exemption Classification Sheet

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**Exempt Review**

46.101(b)(1) Research conducted in established or commonly accepted educational settings, involving normal educational practices, such as:

- (i) research on regular or special educational instructional strategies, or
- (ii) research on the effectiveness of or comparison among instructional techniques, curricula, or classroom management methods.

46.101(b)(2) Research involving the use of educational tests (cognitive, diagnostic, aptitude, achievement), survey procedures, interview procedures or observation of public behavior unless:

- (i) information obtained is recorded in such a manner that human subjects can be identified, directly or through identifiers linked to the subjects; and
- (ii) any disclosure of the human subjects’ responses outside the research could reasonably place the subjects at risk of criminal or civil liability or be damaging to subjects’ financial standing, employability, or reputation.

46.101(b)(3) Research involving the use of educational tests (cognitive, diagnostic, aptitude, achievement), survey procedures, interview procedures or observation of public behavior that is not exempt under category (b)(2) if:

- (i) the human subjects are elected or appointed public officials or candidates for public office; or
- (ii) federal statute(s) require(s) without exception that confidentiality of the personally identifiable information will be maintained throughout the research and thereafter.

46.101(b)(4) Research involving the collection or study of existing data, documents, records, pathological specimens, or diagnostic specimens, if these sources are publicly available or if the information is recorded by the investigator in such a manner that subjects cannot be identified, directly or through identifiers linked to the subjects.

46.101(b)(5) Research and demonstration projects which are conducted by or subject to the approval of department or agency heads, and which are designed to study, evaluate, or otherwise examine:

- (i) public benefit or service programs; and
- (ii) procedures for obtaining benefits or services under those programs; or
- (iii) possible changes in or alternatives to those programs or procedures; or
- (iv) possible changes in methods or levels of payment for benefits or services under those programs.

46.101(b)(6) Taste and food quality evaluation and consumer acceptance studies, if wholesome foods without additives are consumed or if a food is consumed that contains a food ingredient at or below the level and for a use found to be safe, or agricultural chemical or environmental contaminant at or below the level found to be safe, by the Food and Drug Administration, or approved by the Environmental Protection Agency, or the Food Safety and Inspection Service of the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

Protocol is approved as presented in the category checked

Protocol is approved with the following contingencies/comments (attach sheets if necessary)

Protocol is referred to the IRB for Expedited or Full Board review

Protocol cannot be approved as presented (cite reasons on separate sheet)

DRC Reviewer: [Signature] Date: 9/22/2017