

EFFECTS OF FORMAL AUTHORITY AND EXPERIENCE ON THIRD-PARTY ROLES, OUTCOMES, AND PERCEPTIONS OF FAIRNESS

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Using a simulated organizational dispute, we contrasted the behavior of intervening third parties who had formal authority over the disputants to that of third parties who had no authority over them and examined the effect on third-party behavior of actual supervisory experience. The study also tested the relationships among third-party behavior, the outcome of the dispute and disputants' perceptions of fairness. Subjects were M.B.A. candidates and executive program participants; 99 percent had full-time work experience and 30 percent had more than five years of supervisory experience. Both the manipulated role and actual supervisory experience affected third-party behavior, which in turn affected outcome and fairness judgments.

Managers spend considerable time and resources resolving organizational disputes (Mintzberg, 1975). Research has shown that when managers become involved in disputes between peers or subordinates, they use a variety of third-party role behaviors (Karambayya & Brett, 1989; Kolb, 1986; Sheppard, 1983, 1984), and these role behaviors have implications for both the outcomes of the disputes and disputants' judgments of fairness (Karambayya & Brett, 1989). This study investigated two issues that may influence managers' third-party dispute resolution behaviors: level of authority vis-à-vis the disputants, and supervisory experience. It also investigated the relationships between third-party role behavior, dispute outcome, and disputants' perceptions of fairness.

The differences between managerial and formal or institutional third parties have stimulated research on roles adopted by managers acting as third parties to a dispute and the implications of those role behaviors. Sheppard (1984) developed a four-role typology of managerial third-party inter-

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vention: inquisitor, judge, mediator, and motivator. In the inquisitor role, a third party retains control over both the presentation of evidence and the decision, in the judge role, the third party controls the decision but allows disputants control over the presentation of evidence. In the mediator role, the third party exercises no direct control over the decision but exercises some control over the presentation of evidence. Although these three roles are similar to legal third-party roles, Sheppard's fourth role, motivator, is unique to managers; in this role, a manager uses threats and incentives to help resolve a dispute.

Studying organizational ombudsmen, Kolb (1986) found that managers used three types of third-party intervention. She called those roles advisor, investigator, and restructurer. Advisors act as counselors to the disputants; investigators search for and report relevant information; and restructurers use their organizational authority to change reporting relationships and responsibilities.

Any role that allows a third party to exercise decision control will ensure a relatively quick resolution of a dispute and so be favored by managers (Sheppard, 1984, 1985), but the resulting outcome may not be as effective as one that the disputants develop (Karambayya & Brett, 1989). In prior research, we found that the role played by a third party had implications not merely for the outcome of a dispute, but for the disputant's perceptions of the fairness of the outcome and the procedure used (Karambayya & Brett, 1989). Fair procedures contribute to the effectiveness of dispute resolution because they improve satisfaction with the resolution, foster better relationships between the parties, and prevent the recurrence of the dispute (Lind & Tyler, 1988; Thibaut & Walker, 1975; Ury, Brett, & Goldberg, 1988). Also, if managers are interested in maintaining an image of fairness (Greenberg, 1990), they are likely to be concerned about whether subordinates and peers see them as fair in all their managerial roles, including that of third party in organizational disputes. Thus, in choosing third-party roles, managers may have to balance such benefits of authoritarian methods as the speed and certainty of resolution against the costs of such methods in terms of the satisfaction of the disputants, post-dispute relationships, and recurrence.

HYPOTHESES

This study investigated whether managerial third parties with formal authority over disputants differ from those with no formal authority and whether managers with supervisory experience differ from those with less experience in the methods they use to resolve disputes. We also tested whether managers' third-party role behavior has implications for the outcomes of disputes and disputants' perceptions of fairness.

We expected managers with formal authority to use it either to decide how a dispute should be resolved, or to motivate the disputants to agree to what the manager wants (Sheppard, 1984). When a powerful actor inter-

venes in an organizational dispute, two issues likely to be important are the intervener's own interests and his or her positional power (Murnighan, 1986).

In contrast, a third party who is the disputants' peer may express an opinion about how the dispute should be resolved but have no formal power to enforce that opinion. Kolb (1986) found that ombudsmen, who do not have formal organizational authority over disputants, take roles that do not involve imposing an outcome on them. Advisors focused on facilitating communication; investigators looked for and presented relevant information. Restructurers used their organizational position to change the situation, by altering either the reporting relationships or the task interdependence of the disputants.

The lack of authority associated with the peer role may cue third-party behaviors focused on helping the disputing managers resolve their dispute, rather than on selling the third party's ideas about how the dispute should be resolved.

Hypothesis 1: Managers with formal authority over disputants are more likely than those with no such authority to take on the roles of decision maker and motivator and less likely to take on the role of mediator.

Managers who are experienced supervisors may have learned by trial and error that disputing subordinates who must work together to implement a decision once it has been made are more likely to do so if they were involved in the development of that decision than if they were merely told what to do. Managers at high organizational levels are more likely than those at low levels to share power with their subordinates (Heller, 1971, 1981). Managers may also resist using their authority if they want to "look fair" (Sheppard, Saunders, & Minton, 1988). Experienced managers may also have a longer time perspective than novice managers and be more likely to use facilitative third-party roles because they lead to better or more durable solutions (Neale, Pinkley, Brittain, & Northcraft, 1990).

Hypothesis 2: Managers with lengthy supervisory experience are less likely than those with little experience to use authoritarian behaviors and more likely to use facilitative behaviors in trying to resolve disputes among subordinates and peers.

In our previous research (Karambayya & Brett, 1989), the behavioral emphases of third parties affected the outcomes of disputes. When a third party emphasized decision-making and motivational roles, the outcome was more likely to be one-sided, favoring one disputant over the other. When the third party emphasized the facilitative role of mediator, the outcome was more likely to be a compromise incorporating at least some of each disputants' demands.

Hypothesis 3: When a third-party manager takes a facilitative, rather than an authoritative role, the outcome of a dispute is more likely to incorporate the concerns of both disputants

If the third party is a peer and emphasizes the role of decision maker or motivator, or both, the disputants may resist being told what is best for them by someone who has no authority and reach an impasse.

Hypothesis 4: When a peer behaves like a decision maker or motivator, the outcome of a dispute is more likely to be an impasse.

Perceptions of distributive, procedural, and third-party fairness are identifiably distinct constructs but are typically intercorrelated (Lind & Tyler, 1988). That interrelationship is probably due to the common effect outcome has on each construct. In general, disputants perceive the outcome of a dispute, the procedure used, and the third party involved as more fair when they win their dispute than when they lose it (Brett & Goldberg, 1983; Karambayya & Brett, 1989). However, disputants also see compromises that are generated through mediation as fair (Brett & Goldberg, 1983, Karambayya & Brett, 1989)

Hypothesis 5: Disputants will rate the outcome of a dispute, the procedure used, and the third party involved higher on fairness when the outcome either favors them or is a compromise than they will when the outcome favors the disputant or is an impasse

In a managerial dispute resolution context, evaluations of fairness appear to be closely associated with the procedure used (Lind & Tyler, 1988) and with interaction between the parties (Greenberg, 1990). Disputants prefer procedures that offer them a chance to express their opinions to those that are unilateral and allow them little or no chance to participate. Third parties who mediate are likely to be rated higher on procedural and third-party fairness than are those who do not. Third parties who use the decision-maker or motivator roles are likely to be rated lower on procedural and third-party fairness than those who do not.

Hypothesis 6: When a third party takes the mediator role, disputants will judge the procedure used and the third party to be fairer than they will when the third party takes the role of decision maker or motivator.

METHODS

Subjects

Subjects were students in the M.B.A. or executive management programs at a large university. They participated in the simulation for this study as a class exercise: completing the post-simulation questionnaire was op-

tional, but less than 2 percent refused. The M.B.A. students (69% of the subjects) were on the average 25 years old. The executive students (31% of the subjects) averaged 35 years of age. Of all subjects, 70 percent were male, 98 percent had at least a college degree, and 99 percent had full-time work experience (4 years for the M.B.A. students, 14 years for the executives). The M.B.A. students averaged 1.53 years of supervisory experience; the executives, 10.73 years.

Simulation

An organizational simulation was created for a research project of which the present study is a part (Brett & Karambayya, 1989). The simulation represents an emotionally charged dispute between members of a project team in which a third party is asked to intervene. The two disputants are at the same organizational level and are responsible for different aspects of the hypothetical project. Two versions of the simulation were used: in one, the third party was the disputants' supervisor; in the other, the third party was a peer at the same level in the organization as the disputants. In both versions of the simulation, the third party had a contingency fund of \$15,000. This fund allowed the third party to use motivational control by offering to use the money to, for example, hire extra programmers to complete the project on budget and meet the deadline. Providing both peers and supervisors with the contingency fund acted as a control, so that differences between the peer and supervisory role could not be attributed to differences in access to resources.

Procedures

Subjects were randomly assigned to the role of disputant or third party and to one of the two experimental conditions (third party a supervisor or third party a peer). We gave each subject a general description of the dispute scenario and specific instructions for the role to which they were assigned. Groups had 45 minutes to resolve the dispute, at the end of which time each subject filled out a questionnaire. In pretests of the simulation, groups that were unable to reach a resolution in that time were generally unable to do so given more time.

Subjects who played the role of disputant reported on the behavior of the third party in their group and evaluated the fairness of the outcome, the procedure, and the third party. Those who played the role of third party completed a manipulation check, reported on the outcome of the simulation, and described their own behaviors in the third-party role. For each analysis, we deleted the responses with missing values on the variables, so the number of responses varied marginally for each analysis. Of the 372 responses, an average 21 were deleted because data were incomplete. The simulation was used as part of a teaching module on organizational dispute resolution. The subjects had no formal training in third-party intervention prior to the session, although most of them had read material on legal third-party roles. We

instructed them to use the simulation material to create any third-party role that might help resolve the dispute.

Measures

Third-party role behavior. Third-party role behavior was measured with 24 items based on those used by Karambayya and Brett (1989) and the typologies developed by Sheppard (1983, 1984) and Kolb (1986). The response format was a five-point scale with anchors ranging from "strongly agree" to "strongly disagree." We factor-analyzed the data provided by the disputants describing the third party's behavior and used the resulting structure to create scales for third-party roles.

Procedural fairness. Two items were used to measure procedural fairness, one on the fairness of the procedure and the other on satisfaction with it. Although satisfaction with a procedure and its fairness are somewhat different conceptually, it is common practice among procedural justice researchers to combine the two (Lind & Tyler, 1988). The interitem correlation coefficient was .67 ($p < .01$). An interitem correlation of .67 for a two-item scale is considered equivalent to a Cronbach's alpha reliability of between .75 and .88 (Carmines & Zeller, 1979).

Distributive fairness. Respondents were asked to assess the fairness of the outcome and their satisfaction with it. We combined answers to these questions. The interitem correlation coefficient was .74 ($p < .01$).

Third-party fairness. Disputants were asked how much the third party had considered their feelings and opinions, how much the third party favored one of them over the other, and how much respect was shown them. The four-point measurement scale for these items was anchored "a lot," "some," "a little," and "not much at all" ($\alpha = .64$). Since validity is a function of reliability, the correlations between the independent variables and third-party fairness may be lower than those between the independent variables and procedural or distributive fairness because of the reliability of third-party fairness.

Outcome. Type of outcome was measured by asking the subjects to place the result of their meeting in one of four categories: impasse, outcome favoring one or the other disputant (two categories), or compromise. Compromises were reported 76 percent of the time; unpasses, 5 percent of the time, and outcomes favoring one or the other disputant, 19 percent of the time.

Who made the decision. Subjects were asked to indicate who made the final decision in their group: the disputants, the third party, or all three parties. Sixteen percent of the disputants reported that they made the decision, 14 percent said that the third party made it, and 70 percent said that the disputants and the third party made the decision jointly.

RESULTS

Manipulation

The manipulation of third-party status was effective. A significant chi-square ($\chi^2 = 227.58$, $p < .01$) indicated that subjects accurately perceived

their third party as a supervisor or a peer. Although 10 percent of the subjects erred in their perception of the manipulation, we nevertheless included them in analyses testing hypotheses. Their inclusion increases error variance and generates a conservative estimate of the effects of the manipulation.

Third-Party Role

Disputants' descriptions of their third-party's behavior were analyzed by maximum likelihood factor analysis. The scree plot showed a sharp drop in eigenvalues after two factors, indicating that a two-factor solution explaining 28.9 percent of the variance was the best fit. Table 1 shows the rotated factor structure. We considered items that loaded at or above .40 on one factor and below .40 on the other factors to define the factor on which they had the high loading and retained them in the scales formed from the factors.

The first factor explained 18.10 percent of the variation and had an eigenvalue of 4.34. It represented use of decision and motivational control

TABLE 1
Results of Factor Analysis^a

| Items | Factor 1 | Factor 2 |
|--|------------|------------|
| 1. Imposed his/her ideas for settlement | .77 | – .18 |
| 2. Forced own preferred decision on disputants | .68 | – .34 |
| 3. Put pressure on disputants to adopt his/her ideas | .65 | – .25 |
| 4. Made the final decision himself/herself | .61 | –.11 |
| 5. Thought his/her approach was best | .61 | – .12 |
| 6. Had his/her unique view of how dispute should be resolved | .58 | .08 |
| 7. Persuaded disputants to adopt his/her preferred solution | .50 | .18 |
| 8. Proposed his/her ideas for a settlement | .48 | .28 |
| 9. Put pressure on disputant he/she thought was wrong | .47 | – .18 |
| 10. Let the disputants work out a settlement themselves | –.55 | .14 |
| 11. Tried to incorporate disputant's ideas | – .03 | .65 |
| 12. Listened to disputant's point of view | –.17 | .55 |
| 13. Asked relevant and insightful questions | –.03 | .55 |
| 14. Allowed each disputant a chance to ask questions and offer rebuttals | – .10 | .49 |
| 15. Encouraged disputants to seek inventive solutions | – .15 | .47 |
| 16. Described the procedure | .13 | .46 |
| 17. Offered resources to help resolve dispute | .21 | .45 |
| 18. Did not always keep track of new information changes and options | .00 | –.47 |
| 19. Showed little concern for views and interests of disputants | .15 | –.56 |
| 20. Predicted the outcome of failure to reach agreement | .29 | –.05 |
| 21. Strictly enforced procedural rules | .10 | .05 |
| 22. Allowed interruptions | .01 | –.07 |
| 23. Kept the procedure focused on resolution | – .06 | –.39 |
| 24. Offered the disputants incentives | –.08 | .33 |
| Eigenvalue | 4.34 | 2.60 |
| Percent of variance explained | 18.10 | 10.80 |

^a Loadings shown in boldface type were retained in the scales formed from the factors.

by the third party. We labeled the scale created from the ten items loading on this factor "autocratic" ($\alpha = .84$).

The second factor explained an additional 10.80 percent of the total variation and had an eigenvalue of 2.60. This factor reflected third-party behaviors geared toward helping the disputants settle their own dispute. The scale created from the nine items loading on this factor was labeled "mediational" ($\alpha = .77$).

Table 2 shows the means, standard deviations, and correlations between the independent and dependent variables. The pattern of correlations reflects the predicted pattern of relationships. For example, the two third-party role behaviors were negatively correlated; autocratic behavior was negatively correlated with procedural fairness and third-party fairness; mediational behavior was positively correlated with procedural, distributive, and third-party fairness; and supervisory experience was correlated negatively with autocratic behavior.

Effect of Third-Party Role Status

The results partially supported Hypothesis 1. Third parties with formal authority over the disputants were more likely to behave autocratically ($\bar{x} = 28.57$, *s.d.* = 7.02, *N* = 171) than those who were peers of the disputants ($\bar{x} = 25.77$, *s.d.* = 6.85, *N* = 186; $F_{1,324} = 11.91$, $p < .01$). However, peer third parties ($\bar{x} = 34.74$, *s.d.* = 4.50, *N* = 186) were no more likely than those with formal authority over the disputants ($\bar{x} = 35.04$, *s.d.* = 4.57, *N* = 171) to engage in the facilitating role behavior of a mediator ($F_{1,324} = .07$, *n.s.*)

A chi-square analysis testing the relationship between third-party role assigned and who made the decision in a group also supported Hypothesis 1. Of the third parties taking the role of supervisor, 22 percent made the decision about how the dispute was to be resolved, compared with only 8 percent playing the role of peer. On the other hand, 24 percent of the peer third parties were reported to have allowed the disputants to participate in making that decision, compared with only 7 percent of the supervisors.

TABLE 2
Summary Statistics and Correlations^a

| Variables | Means | s.d. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
|--------------------------|-------|------|-------|--------|--------|-------|--------|--------|
| 1 Third-party status | 1.46 | 0.50 | | | | | | |
| 2 Supervisory experience | 4.31 | 5.75 | -.03 | | | | | |
| 3 Procedural fairness | 8.17 | 1.59 | -.04 | .12 | | | | |
| 4 Distributive fairness | 7.99 | 1.72 | -.03 | .02 | .70** | | | |
| 5 Third-party fairness | 10.90 | 1.94 | -.14 | .13 | .47** | .37** | | |
| 6 Autocratic role | 27.09 | 7.02 | .21** | -.16** | -.20** | -.12 | -.35** | |
| 7 Mediatlional role | 34.75 | 4.50 | .02 | .06 | .39** | .31** | .57** | -.14** |

N = 351

** $p < .01$

Effect of Third-Party's Supervisory Experience

We conducted a series of regression analyses to determine whether supervisory experience outside the simulation also affected third-party behavior. The results supported Hypothesis 2. Supervisory experience had a direct effect, independent of the effect of assigned role, on autocratic behavior ($F_{2,339} = 10.63, p < .01, R^2 = .06$). Third parties with high supervisory experience were less likely to act autocratically ($\bar{x} = 26.11, s.d. = 6.92, N = 109$) than those who had low supervisory experience ($\bar{x} = 27.64, s.d. = 6.86, N = 247$).

The effect of supervisory experience on the use of the mediational role depended on whether the third party was a supervisor or a peer. The main effects of supervisory experience and third-party status on the use of the mediational role were insignificant; however, the interaction significantly predicted mediational behavior ($\Delta F = 6.7, p < .01; F_{3,338} = 3.07, p < .05, R^2 = .03$). In order to interpret the interaction, we dichotomized supervisory experience at the mean for our data. Third parties who were assigned to the role of supervisor and had greater than the average supervisory experience were the most likely of our subjects to mediate ($\bar{x} = 35.87, s.d. = 4.46, N = 55$). Third parties assigned to the supervisory role who had less than the average supervisory experience ($\bar{x} = 34.64, s.d. = 4.59, N = 116$), and all those assigned to the peer role mediated significantly less ($\bar{x} = 34.74, s.d. = 4.50, N = 186$).

Role Behavior and Dispute Outcome

The data also confirmed Hypothesis 3 (see Table 3) When third parties used authoritarian roles, one-sided outcomes or an impasse were more likely. Groups in which third parties mediated were more likely to reach compromise solutions.

Hypothesis 4 was supported. As predicted, the interaction of third-party role and autocratic behavior affected the type of outcome ($F_{3,337} = 2.91, p < .05$). When peer third parties behaved autocratically, impasses were more likely.

TABLE 3
Role Behavior and Dispute Outcome

| Outcomes | Third-Party Role | | | | N |
|--------------------------------|------------------|------|-------------|------|-----|
| | Autocratic | | Mediational | | |
| | Means | s.d. | Means | s.d. | |
| 1 Impasse | 27.42 | 7.91 | 30.66 | 4.93 | 19 |
| 2 Outcome favoring disputant 1 | 31.78 | 7.86 | 32.34 | 6.65 | 44 |
| 3 Outcome favoring disputant 2 | 27.34 | 8.24 | 34.82 | 4.57 | 28 |
| 4 Compromise | 26.32 | 6.54 | 35.43 | 3.91 | 272 |
| $F_{3,337}$ | 7.06** | | 10.99** | | |

** $p < .01$

Effects of Type of Outcome on Fairness Judgments

Table 4 shows that, consistent with Hypothesis 5, disputants rated the outcome, the procedure, and the third party as more fair when there was a compromise or when they reported winning the dispute than they did when the other party won or there was an impasse.

Effects of Role Behavior on Fairness Judgments

The data supported Hypothesis 6. Judgments of procedural justice were positively associated with mediational behavior ($\beta = .37, p < .01$) and negatively associated with autocratic behavior ($\beta = -.15, p < .01; F_{3,327} = 23.36, p < .01$). Judgments of third-party fairness were also positively associated with mediational behavior ($\beta = .55, p < .01$), and negatively associated with autocratic behavior ($\beta = -.25, p < .01; F_{3,327} = 81.54, p < .01$).

DISCUSSION

This study extends the theory of managerial third-party dispute resolution in three ways. First, it identifies how supervisors and peers differ in their approaches to dispute resolution. Second, it identifies the important role that supervisory experience plays in affecting managers' dispute resolution behaviors. Third, it corroborates prior research on managerial third parties by showing that the use of autocratic and mediational third-party role behavior affects disputants' judgments of fairness. Each of these theoretical extensions has implications for management training.

The results of this study suggest that third parties who are supervisors are likely to use both autocratic and mediational behaviors to resolve disputes. Third parties who are peers, on the other hand, generally refrain from using autocratic behaviors; they rely instead on mediational behaviors and

TABLE 4
Dispute Outcome and Fairness Judgments

| Outcomes | Fairness Judgments | | | | | | N |
|------------------------------------|--------------------|------|------------|------|-------------|------|-----|
| | Distributive | | Procedural | | Third-Party | | |
| | Means | s.d. | Means | s.d. | Means | s.d. | |
| 1 Impasse | 4.53 | 1.23 | 5.70 | 1.82 | 9.23 | 2.53 | 17 |
| 2 Outcome favoring self | 8.65 | 1.05 | 8.22 | 1.43 | 10.19 | 2.57 | 31 |
| 3 Outcome favoring other disputant | 5.84 | 1.72 | 6.36 | 1.73 | 9.24 | 2.81 | 25 |
| 4 Compromise | 8.36 | 1.32 | 8.48 | 1.21 | 11.27 | 1.51 | 256 |
| $F_{3,29}$ | 90.25** | | 52.64** | | 16.85** | | |

* $p < .01$

involve the disputants in constructing a resolution of the dispute. When peers do use autocratic behaviors and try to impose their own ideas for settlement on disputants, an impasse is likely.

Supervisory experience also seems to influence the use of autocratic third-party behaviors. Third parties who have much supervisory experience refrain from using autocratic role behaviors, regardless of their formal authority. Thus, peers—who generally refrain from using autocratic behaviors—may be more effective third parties than low-experience supervisors, if disputants' judgments of fairness and their compliance with the terms of the resolution are used as indicators of effectiveness.

Experienced supervisors are particularly likely to use mediational behaviors to resolve disputes when they have the authority to resolve the dispute. These findings suggest that with increasing supervisory experience, managers may learn that mediational third-party role behaviors pay off in better-quality outcomes.

The interpretation of the results of this study needs to be tempered by a recognition of its strengths and limitations. The study used a simulation of a dispute that ensured experimental manipulation of the formal authority of the third party over the disputants. It provided a setting that required third parties to act and disputants to judge their actions. To be sure, in order to simulate third-party intervention, subjects were asked to assume that the disputants were unable to resolve the dispute and were therefore appealing to the third party for help. It is likely that at least some of the disputants would have been able to resolve the dispute themselves, had they been allowed to try. Pretests of the simulation material indicated, however, that the dispute was not easy to resolve, and some groups were unable to resolve it even with the help of a third party. The level of participant involvement in simulations like this one is typically high. Students self-selected into the classes in which data were collected. And since results were shared with the entire class during debriefing sessions, motivation was high.

The use of a simulation did not allow a replication of the long-term pattern of interaction between parties, an important characteristic of organizational disputes. Previous interaction between the parties to a dispute may form the basis for a third party's role choice (Kolb, 1986). Whether similar disputes are likely to arise in the future, and how much future interaction is anticipated between the parties, may also influence third-party dispute resolution (Lewicki & Sheppard, 1985). Although this study demonstrates that third-party authority and supervisory experience affect role behavior, outcome, and judgments of fairness, it was not designed to identify the range of influences that may affect choice of a third-party role. Future research may provide a thorough assessment of such factors and determine their relative importance (cf. Neale et al., 1990).

The subjects in the study were all students. However, essentially all had work experience upon which to draw in role playing, more than half were working full time, and 30 percent had over five years of supervisory experience.

Subjects had access to reading material on legal third-party roles. However, since both the manipulation and prior supervisory experience influenced third-party behavior, the reading material did not appear to have a leveling effect on third-party behavior.

The study also provides a basis for developing programs to train managers to play third-party dispute resolution roles effectively. The results demonstrating a relationship between third-party behavior and fairness judgments suggest that training programs should emphasize mediational and facilitative roles. Although managers playing third-party dispute resolution roles may ultimately decide to behave autocratically, in doing so they may risk violating norms of fairness. The finding that the autocratic behavior of a third party who is a peer of the disputants was associated with reaching an impasse suggests that managers also should be warned of this negative effect of autocratic behavior. The evidence showing that managers with greater supervisory experience used fewer autocratic behaviors and more mediational behaviors when they had the formal authority to impose a decision suggests that feedback about the success of third-party dispute resolution behavior may be quite important in shaping what third parties do. Thus, training should provide feedback about disputants' perceptions of a third party's behavior and their judgments of the fairness of the process and the third party.

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