

## A justice framework for understanding how guests react to hotel employee (mis)treatment

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### H I G H L I G H T S

- ▶ Alleged mistreatment of staff and guests is examined.
- ▶ Guests show signs of reduced loyalty when perceiving acts of injustice to staff.
- ▶ Dysfunctional behavior is activated among guests who perceive mistreatment of themselves and staff.
- ▶ These effects are also intensified where a guest stays on an all inclusive package.

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### A B S T R A C T

This study models guests' reactions to a hotel based on the way they perceive management's treatment of staff. First, it is suggested that guests empathize with staff by placing themselves in the staff member's position, and that customers who perceive unfair treatment of staff show decreased loyalty and increased dysfunctional behavior. Second, treatment considered unfair is internalized by guests, thus leading guests who also perceive themselves as victims of unfair treatment to identify even more with hotel staff. Data were collected from 343 guests in seven sampled hotels in the Canary Islands (Spain). Results of hierarchical multiple regressions demonstrate that only reduced loyalty is a substantive reaction to perceived injustice toward employees, whereas engaging in disloyal and dysfunctional behavior are significant reactions to perceived mistreatment of self. These effects on dysfunctional behavior are also found to be intensified among guests who perceive management's mistreatment of them and staff members, and stay in an all inclusive package situation. Managerial implications of these findings are discussed.

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### 1. Introduction

During the last decade, the justice theory framework has received considerable attention in the literature, as a way of explaining how hotel guests evaluate service providers' actions and react accordingly (Chebat & Slusarczyk, 2005; Dewitt, Nguyen, & Marshall, 2008; Karande, Magnini, & Tam, 2007; Karatepe, 2006; Kim, Kim, & Kim, 2009; Ok, Back, & Shanklin, 2005; Wirtz & Kum, 2004; Yi & Gong, 2008). This justice theory has been applied to the tourism and hospitality industry, introducing a research domain that offers extensive opportunities to better understand

hotel service encounters. Although some prior justice research suggests that third parties can also make fairness judgments and react to the way employees are treated (e.g., Skarlicki, Folger, & Tesluk, 1999), the victim's perspective dominates this literature. In other words, there is a lack of models that explain how guests react to a hotel based on the way they perceive management's treatment of staff.

Since the interpersonal aspects in a hotel setting are especially salient (Chebat & Slusarczyk, 2005; Collie, Sparks, & Bradley, 2000; Karatepe, 2006), perceptions of interactional justice appear to loom especially large in the way guests respond to a hotel. Although guests' justice perceptions may encompass other dimensions, i.e., distributive justice and procedural justice (Blodgett, Hill, & Tax, 1997; Smith, Bolton, & Wagner, 1999), prior work indicates that unfavorable perceptions of interactional justice are the most influential dimension of fairness on complainants' repatronage and negative word of mouth intentions (Blodgett et al., 1997). These

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perceptions have a stronger impact on complaint satisfaction and loyalty (Karatepe, 2006), and this is the only type of justice with a direct effect on loyalty exit behavior (Chebat & Slusarczyk, 2005). Furthermore, when guests act as actor victims in the hotel exchange, their negative perceptions of interactional justice or a lack of quality in the communication and treatment received from the hotel or its agents during the service process (Bies & Moag, 1986; Cropanzano & Greenberg, 1997) may lead them to experience social or psychological (rather than material) harm and, hence, judge this specific mistreatment severely (Alicke, 1992). Therefore, in this study, guests' perceptions of themselves as victims of mistreatment will be considered perceptions of unfavorable interactional justice.

A review of the third party literature reveals that punishment of offenders is a prevalent and salient intervention in observers of injustice (Carlsmith, 2006; Okimoto & Wenzel, 2011; Van Prooijen, 2010), and it is able to satisfy the victim's (Gromet, Okimoto, Wenzel, & Darley, 2012) and the observer's demands for "just desserts" (see Darley, 2002). It is unclear, however, whether guests in hospitality settings would intervene if they perceived management's mistreatment of employees, and if so, whether they would act following similar patterns to when they perceive themselves as victims of unfavorable interpersonal justice. Prior literature on third party intervention suggests that uninvolved third parties who witness injustices are willing to respond to mistreatment in a manner similar to that of an actor victim in the situation (e.g., Lind, Kray, & Thompson, 1998; Sheppard, Lewicki, & Minton, 1992; Tyler & Smith, 1998; Walster, Walster, & Berscheid, 1978). Thus, this study suggests that guests will react to the hotel in a similar way to when they suffer (mis)treatment themselves: in both situations, guests will try to redress justice by harming the hotel as the source of injustice. Therefore, this study first aims to test whether third party guests who witness management mistreatment of employees decide to intervene by punishing the hotel.

One way guests can punish a hotel during their stay is by engaging in customer dysfunctional behavior and decreased customer loyalty (hereinafter, loyalty). Reynolds and Harris (2009) refer to customers' dysfunctional behaviors as behaviors within the exchange setting that deliberately violate the generally accepted norms for conduct in such situations. Through customers' dysfunctional behavior, guests can inflict considerable harm on a hotel, since it has been found to have negative consequences for customer contact employees and organizations (Harris & Reynolds, 2003), producing a cost exceeding \$100 billion in the US annually (Fullerton & Punj, 2004). Loyalty, on the other hand, is a behavioral construct (Hallowell, 1996) that, if withdrawn by guests, may also cause harm to the hotel (Reichheld & Teal, 1996). It is defined as "a deeply held commitment to rebuy or repatronize a preferred product or service consistently in the future, despite situational influences and marketing efforts having the potential to cause switching behavior" (Oliver, 1997: 392). Customer dysfunctional behavior and loyalty are behavioral patterns that have been found to be significant reactions to interactional (in)justice experienced by guests (Chebat & Slusarczyk, 2005; Dewitt et al., 2008; Karande et al., 2007; Karatepe, 2006; Kim et al., 2009; Namkung & Jang, 2009; Ok et al., 2005; Yi & Gong, 2008). Nevertheless, it is unclear whether observed unfair treatment of hotel staff will be responded to by decreased loyalty and dysfunctional behavior on the part of guests. This question will be tested in the present study.

There is a body of literature questioning third party intervention, unless observers act under certain conditions, such as social closeness, emotions, the actor's and third party's personality, attributions, and moral evaluations, among others (e.g., Linke, 2012; Skarlicki & Kulik, 2005). Interestingly, Darley and Latane's (1968) classic study on the bystander effect found that third

party intervention decreases in the presence of others from 70% to 12%. Based on Skarlicki and Kulik's (2005) suggestion that the way one individual reacts to another's negative experience often involves the third party's perceptions of injustice toward him/herself, the present study proposes a justice framework that integrates victim and third party perspectives. Treatment thought to be unfair can be internalized by guests, leading guests who also perceive themselves as victims of unfair treatment to identify even more with hotel staff. This reaction may propitiate stronger reactions in the form of dysfunctional guest behavior (hereinafter, DGB) and loyalty. Furthermore, since an increase in the type of board leads guests to be more involved in hotel life, the present study also predicts that type of board may be a further condition in guests' more intense reactions to (in)justice during their stay at the hotel. In fact, guests who have all inclusive (rather than half, and even full board) packages are provided with more opportunities to witness and react to perceptions of management maltreatment of themselves and staff.

In sum, first this paper plans to justify and formulate hypotheses based on the theory and research described above and, using hierarchical multiple regressions, test the main effects of guests' perceptions of (in)justice (H1) for self and (H2) for employees on (a) DGB and (b) loyalty. Next, it will calculate two way interactions between (in)justice for self (H3) and for employees (H4) on (a) DGB and (b) loyalty. The paper will also examine whether the more complete the type of board, the stronger the two way interactions are likely to be, thus suggesting three way interactions on DGB (c) and loyalty (d). Finally, the managerial implications of the results will be discussed.

## 2. Theoretical background and hypotheses

In terms of rational standards that apply directly to behavior, fairness theories have identified two general reasons guests might respond to (in)justice: (a) self interest concerns and (b) moral motivation. Self interest (a) is based on the assumption that people are rationally motivated in their dealings with others (e.g., Miller, 1999). In this regard, social exchange theories (Blau, 1964), for example, propose that guests may exhibit a calculated response to (in)justice in order to try to preserve/restore social exchange dynamics that are positive for them. In contrast to self interest motivation, Folger (2001) proposed that people are motivated to react to fairness simply because it is the "right thing to do", even though they may sacrifice personal gain (Turillo, Folger, Lavelle, Umphress, & Gee, 2002). Folger et al. (Cropanzano, Goldman, & Folger, 2004; Folger, 1998, 2001; Folger, Cropanzano, & Goldman, 2005) refer to this moral behavior in responding to (in)justice as a "deontic response," that is, evolutionary based reactions in the form of moral automatism, emotions (e.g., anger), retributions to restore justice, and even irrationalities, at least in the short term.

Unfavorable perceptions of interactional justice, or what others have described as interpersonal injustice (Greenberg, 1993) or disrespect (Tyler & Blader, 2000), may affect guests' misconduct and loyalty by generating "hot" emotions, such as anger, resentment, or moral outrage (Bies & Tripp, 1998; Bies, Tripp, & Kramer, 1997; Robinson & Bennett, 1997; Skarlicki & Folger, 1997). Given that interpersonal (mis)treatment causes these emotion driven reactions, and that they are particularly ephemeral in nature, guests' responses to unfavorable perceptions of interactional justice are likely to be primarily motivated by moral outrage (rather than self interest concerns). Therefore, they may follow deontic models of fairness in a first stage (Folger, 2001). In this case, DGB and loyalty may be the result of punishment reactions to injustice that aim to restore justice in the form of deontic responses. Conversely, if high levels of favorable interactional justice occur,

moral motivation can lead guests to compensate this “fair hotel” by expressing loyalty or refraining from dysfunctional actions that could potentially harm the hotel (e.g., Linke, 2012; Lotz, Okimoto, Schlösser, & Fetchenhauer, 2011). Once emotional states decrease, guests’ judgments about the (mis)treatment and (mis)communication received would then influence their DGB and loyalty as cognitive driven responses (Yuksel, Yuksel, & Bilim, 2010). Thus, favorable perceptions of interactional justice would predict DGB and loyalty by also eliciting self interest concerns. If guests are interested in revisiting such a “fair hotel,” this interest would consistently lead them to refrain from DGB and express loyalty (Buskens, Raub, & Snijders, 2003). It is reasonable to expect, therefore, that the more guests face perceptions of interactional (in)justice, the more they will engage in DGB and loyalty. Hence,

**H1a.** Guests’ favorable perceptions of justice for self will have negative main effects on DGB.

**H1b.** Guests’ favorable perceptions of justice for self will have positive main effects on loyalty.

Previous third party literature has noted that an observer who witnesses (in)justice and is not an organizational member can also have reactions that substantially impact the success of an organization (Skarlicki & Kulik, 2005), such as intentions to buy the company’s products (Skarlicki, Ellard, & Kelln, 1998) or erode its goodwill and competitive advantage (Bies & Greenberg, 2002), or displaying sympathy and support for the functioning of the organization (Leung, Chiu, & Au, 1993). Prior theory and research (e.g., Lind et al., 1998; Sheppard et al., 1992; Tyler & Smith, 1998; Walster et al., 1978) have concluded that this observer is likely to respond to (mis)treatment in a manner similar to that of an actor victim in the situation, although perhaps less intensely. This less intense response has been described (see, for a review, Skarlicki & Kulik, 2005) as greatly influenced by inhibitors such as fear and vulnerability to subsequent mistreatment. However, given their position of strength in the establishment, this may not be the case of third party guests in a hotel; therefore, it is unlikely that fear or vulnerability to mistreatment would keep them from responding to injustice toward employees. On the contrary, the position of guests as customers in the hotel exchange suggests that they have enough available resources to feel powerful toward the hotel and react unhesitatingly to injustice toward employees (see Fig. 1).

Either moral imperative or self interest concerns can lead guests to react to (in)justice toward employees. Guests who perceive the hotel to be a fair workplace, not only for them but also for employees, may follow self interested rules of exchange (Blau, 1964) and react accordingly. If guests perceive fair treatment for employees, they can feel pride, trust, and goodwill toward the hotel, as well as happiness about their stay at this hotel, which could motivate them to reciprocate with intentions to revisit the hotel (loyalty) and take actions in the form of decreased DGB. In contrast, their disagreement with the way the hotel treats its

employees, from a third party’s perspective, might lead them to increase their DGB and express less loyalty. In addition to seeking self interest when faced with injustice for employees, even at the expense of their own comfort in the hotel, guests may also feel morally compelled “to do something.” They can then base their decisions on certain fairness rules (Skarlicki et al., 1998) and enforce those rules, even at a personal cost (Kahneman, Knetsch, & Thaler, 1986; Turillo et al., 2002). The situation may remind them that “to ignore injustice is to become an accomplice to it.” Also driven by moral imperative, therefore, guests could refuse to comply with the role they are expected to perform in a hotel. These “deviant behaviors” exhibited under an ethical imperative could take the form of DGB. Even though the hotel may still be a nice place for them and deserve a re visit, guests can also rule out this possibility in spite of the personal cost. Consequently,

**H2a.** Guests’ favorable perceptions of justice for employees will have negative main effects on DGB.

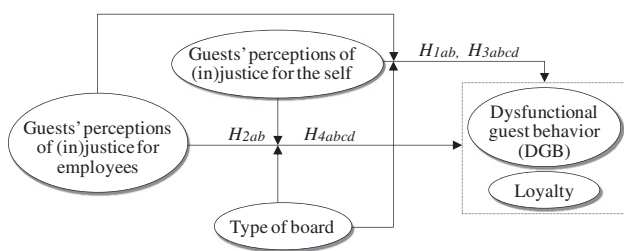
**H2b.** Guests’ favorable perceptions of justice for employees will have positive main effects on loyalty.

Prior literature on third party intervention suggests that observers’ decisions to act when they witness unfavorable events of (mis)treatment may be influenced by certain conditions. In other words, not all guests performing as third parties will necessarily take steps to redress the injustice (Greenberg, 2001). Some authors (e.g., Aquino, Galperin, & Bennett, 2004; Folger & Skarlicki, 1998) have argued that people are unlikely to react to (in)justice received unless they are conditioned by personality and certain social contextual factors, such as aggressiveness and social status. One contextual factor that may also strengthen the responses to (in)justice experienced by individuals in organizations is their perceptions of (in)justice for others. Brockner and Greenberg (1990) found, for example, that layoff survivors who identify with the layoff victims tend to view the layoff as highly unfair, and more importantly, they react more negatively (Brockner, Grover, Reed, Dewitt, & O’Malley, 1987). Furthermore, an identity explanation (Conlon, Meyer, & Nowakowski, 2005) suggests that guests who are faced with injustice for employees identify less with the hotel and, therefore, attribute more responsibility to it in terms of injustice for self. These findings seem to suggest that the more guests perceive injustice toward employees, the stronger the guests’ concerns about and reactions to their own injustice may be. Conversely, if justice for employees is favorable, guests may display more pride and respect for the organization and, hence, show stronger positive reactions to favorable justice received, by displaying loyalty.

The deonance theory of fairness (Folger, 2001) helps to explain the interaction mentioned above by proposing that when confronted with a victim’s suffering, the more third parties experience stronger emotions (like empathy, anger, and compassion), the more likely they are to engage in the desire to punish the wrongdoer in a somewhat irrational fashion (Lerner & Goldberg, 1999). As a result, the more guests are exposed to such experiences, the more they will decide to irrationally respond to injustice toward themselves in the form of DGB, even at a personal cost (Turillo et al., 2002). Driven by moral outrage, fear of the hotel’s subsequent retaliations or putting their enjoyment in the hotel at risk would take a back seat, thus making injustice for self more likely. Therefore,

**H3a.** Guests’ favorable perceptions of justice for employees will strengthen the negative relationship between guests’ favorable perceptions of justice for self and DGB.

**H3b.** Guests’ favorable perceptions of injustice for employees will strengthen the positive relationship between guests’ favorable perceptions of injustice for self and loyalty.



**Fig. 1.** Hypothesized model of guests’ type of board, guests’ perceptions of (in)justice toward employees, guests’ (in)justice for self, Dysfunctional Guest Behavior (DGB) and loyalty.

Self interest based theories of justice (e.g., Thibaut & Walker, 1975; Walster et al., 1978) state that the most potent injustices may be those that threaten a third party's outcomes. In hospitality settings, Collie et al. (2000) found evidence that interactional (in) justice toward the self is the most potent moderator of reactions to unfair outcomes. DGB and loyalty are usually guest responses exhibited *after* (rather than *during*) events of (mis)treatment toward employees and, hence, are more likely to occur under conditions of opacity and anonymity. If guests act "a posteriori" and somewhat isolated from the context, why would the guests threatened by injustice for employees decide to act? What benefits can guests obtain from their responses to injustice for employees? An answer to this question can be found in the idea that unfavorable perceptions of justice toward employees elicit self interest concerns about the risk of experiencing "a similar fate." Guided by logical reasoning, the more guests feel threatened by injustice toward themselves, the more they will fear "being next in line for similar treatment" and engage in DGB and loyalty as a sort of "prevention measure." As Treviño (1992) noted, the sense of personal vulnerability can motivate one to take action in order to prevent or avoid receiving unjust treatment in the future. Therefore,

**H4a.** Guests' favorable perceptions of justice for self will strengthen the negative relationship between guests' favorable perceptions of justice for employees and DGB.

**H4b.** Guests' favorable perceptions of justice for self will strengthen the positive relationship between guests' favorable perceptions of justice for employees and loyalty.

Prior empirical evidence shows that victim visibility can play a role in conditioning third parties' responses. Particularly, Lotz et al. (2011) found that there is a significant interaction between victim visibility and self focused emotions on third party compensation to the victim, which seems to suggest that the opportunity to witness events of justice can play an important role in predicting reactions to (un)just events. Given that guests are like "transient" members of a hotel, the more their type of board favors experiences in the hotel life, the more opportunities they have to be faced with (and witness) injustices and react accordingly. Thus,

**H3c and 3d.** The more complete the type of board, the more guests' favorable perceptions of justice for the self will strengthen the negative relationship between favorable perceptions of justice for employees and DGB (3c) and the positive relationship with loyalty (3d).

**H4c and 4d.** The more complete the type of board, the more guests' favorable perceptions of justice for employees will strengthen the negative relationship between favorable perceptions of justice for self and DGB (4c) and the positive relationship with loyalty (4d).

### 3. Method

#### 3.1. Procedure and sample characteristics

Data were collected from guests at four sampled four star hotels and three sampled five star hotels in Gran Canaria (The Canary Islands, Spain) in early 2012. Guests were chosen who met the criteria of being 18 years of age or older and staying 4 nights or more, so that they had a certain socialization period at the hotel. Based on each 4 and 5 star hotel's capacity, an average occupancy of 80% and 76% for 4 and 5 star hotels, respectively, and an average guest stay of 6.8 nights, a population size of 1,093,540 guests was estimated, and a sample of 384 guests was established for a sampling error of 5%.

Questionnaires were distributed personally and completed during the guests' stay at the hotel. Surveyors asked respondents to fill them out in different places and situations within the hotel, in order to avoid biases in responses due to uncontrolled contextual conditions. Eventually, 343 valid responses were used for analysis, after 41 were rejected due to incorrect completion and incoherent information. The sample comprises 48.4% half board, 21.4% full board and 30.2% all inclusive guests. Guests with an all inclusive package were those who had all their needs met by the hotel, including pool side services, bar, social activities, etc. The average stay was 9.34 nights and, while 28.2% of the respondents were 40 years old or younger, 34.5% were older than 55. With regard to gender and nationality, 57.7% were males and 42.3% females. In terms of nationality, 25% were Germans, 16.2% British, 30.2% Scandinavians (Denmark, Sweden, Norway and Finland), and the remaining 28.2% had other nationalities. Lastly, 54.5% of those responding had finished bachelor/university degree studies or higher.

Multiple hierarchical regression analyses were performed (Aiken & West, 1991) to test the hypotheses, and structural equation modeling (SEM) was used to ensure that the variables below were five separate constructs. To that aim, confirmatory factor analyses (CFA) were conducted to inspect the fit of all the data to the five factor structure, and then determine how it differs from the fit to the one factor structure. The indices used included comparative fit (CFI), normed fit (NFI), and root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA).

#### 3.2. Measures

All the items were scored on a 7 point scale ranging from (1) Strongly Disagree to (7) Strongly Agree, and from (1) Never to (7) Constantly, in the case of DGB. The items are presented in the Appendix B. The Cronbach's alpha values are shown on the main diagonal of the correlations table (see Table 1).

##### 3.2.1. Type of board

Data about the board the hotel guests booked were collected on the questionnaire, and included half board, full board and all inclusive.

##### 3.2.2. (In)justice for the self

Guests' interactional (mis)treatment was assessed with a seven item measure developed by Karatepe (2006) after a review of the literature. Specifically, he combined five items from Severt (2002) and two items from Smith et al. (1999).

##### 3.2.3. (In)justice for employees

A scale of thirteen (13) items was constructed by the authors, adapting scales from the literature on organizational justice (e.g., Moorman, 1991). It included aspects of distributive, procedural, or interactional justice. However, it is unlikely that guests acting as mere observers are in a position to make a clear distinction between these different aspects of the hotel's (mis)treatment of employees. Therefore, a one dimensional scale is expected.

##### 3.2.4. Dysfunctional guest behavior (DGB)

A six item scale was constructed by the authors, taking Bennett and Robinson's (2000) workplace deviance directed at the organization into account. This scale was designed to gauge the extent to which the measured guest behavior violated the norms of the hotel and could harm its well being.

##### 3.2.5. Loyalty

Guest loyalty was assessed with a five item measure developed by Zeithaml, Berry, and Parasuraman (1996).

**Table 1**  
Means, standard deviations, correlations and reliabilities.

Variables	M	SD	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)
1. Gender									
2. Age			-.24***						
3. Type of board	1.7	.90	.19***	-.33***					
4. (In)justice-self	6.1	.90	.05	.22***	.24***	(.957)			
5. (In)justice-employees	5.1	1.05	.06	.14*	.16**	.53***	(.973)		
6. DGB	1.8	1.09	-.07	-.03	.05	-.22***	-.04	(.868)	
7. Loyalty	5.3	1.31	.02	.19***	.30***	.58***	.48***	-.03	(.940)

Note: The numbers in parentheses on the diagonal are coefficient alphas.  
Levels of significance: \* $p < .05$ , \*\* $p < .01$ , \*\*\* $p < .001$ .

3.2.6. Control variable

Based on the literature, gender (1 male, 2 female) and age (1 up to 25 years; 2 more than 25 and up to 40; 3 more than 40 and up to 55; 4 more than 55 and up to 70; 5 70 and older) could covary with our in/dependent variables (e.g., Aquino et al., 2004).

4. Results

An inspection of the CFA results showed that the five factor solution was insufficient ( $\chi^2 = 2251.302$ ,  $p < .001$ ,  $df = 486$ , CFI .855, NFI .823, RMSEA .102), with indices below .90 and the RMSEA clearly over .05. Since the fit of CFA for the five factor solution was low, an exploratory factor analysis (EFA) was also performed, confirming five factors with eigenvalues greater than 1 and no cross loadings over .2 (shown in full detail in the Appendix B). Additionally, the fit of one factor ( $\chi^2 = 6938.479$ ,  $df = 495$ ,  $p < .001$ , CFI .470, NFI .454, RMSEA .195) was compared with the five factor model, and the latter was significantly better ( $\chi^2_4 = 4687.177$ ,  $p < .001$ ), thus providing additional support for the distinctiveness of the five constructs used in this study.

Table 1 shows the scale means, standard deviations, reliabilities and correlations ( $r$ ). Although correlations are just good or bad signs, the results provide support for some of the hypotheses. Thus, the inter correlations between (in)justice employees and DGB ( $r = .05$ ;  $p$  n.s.) and loyalty ( $r = .48$ ;  $p < .001$ ) appear to support H2b but not H2a, whereas the significant associations between (in)

justice self and both DGB ( $r = .22$ ;  $p < .001$ ) and loyalty ( $r = .58$ ;  $p < .001$ ) indicate support for H1a and 1b.

Next, multiple hierarchical regression analyses (Aiken & West, 1991) were performed to test the hypotheses, considering the models with DGB (Models 1 and 2) and loyalty (Models 3 and 4) as the criterion variables (Table 2). In Models 1 and 3 the interactive effects of (in)justice employees and type of board on the links between (in)justice self and both DGB and loyalty were tested, whereas in Models 2 and 4, (in)justice self and board were tested as moderators of the relationships from (in)justice employees to DGB and loyalty. Four steps were followed. First, the control variables were entered in Step 1, followed by (in)justice self, (in)justice employees and board in Step 2. The Step 2 results made it possible to test whether both types of (in)justice have main effects on DGB (H1a and H2a) and loyalty (H1b and H2b). Finally, the calculations end with the addition of the two way interactions in Step 3 and the three way interactions in Step 4. The variables were centered to reduce multicollinearity (Aiken & West, 1991).

As Table 2 Models 1 and 2 shows, only (in)justice self as the independent variable showed a significant main effect on DGB ( $B = .266$ ;  $p < .001$ ) in Model 1. These patterns support H1a, but failed to support H2a. Concerning loyalty, Table 2 Models 3 and 4 reveals how both (in)justice self ( $B = .420$ ;  $p < .001$ ) and (in)justice employees ( $B = .259$ ;  $p < .001$ ) influence loyalty, thus adding support for H1b and H2b. Next, two way and three way interactions were applied to test the remaining H3 and H4 (Steps 3 and 4; Table 2). Models 1 and 2 show how the two way

**Table 2**  
Results of hierarchical regression analyses.

y	Model 1 Link DGB-(in) justice-self		Model 2 Link DGB-(in) justice-employees		Model 3 Link loyalty-(in) justice-self		Model 4 Link loyalty-(in) justice-employees	
	$\beta$	t	$\beta$	t	$\beta$	t	$\beta$	t
<i>Step 1</i>								
Gender	-.107	-1.700*	-.107	-1.700*	.081	1.301	.081	1.301
Age	-.082	-1.312	-.082	-1.312	.204	3.291***	.204	3.291***
R <sup>2</sup>	.014		.014		.040**		.040**	
<i>Step 2</i>								
(In)justice-employees	.112	1.629	.112	1.629	.259	4.750***	.259	4.750***
(In)justice-self	-.266	-3.784***	-.266	-3.784***	.420	7.527***	.420	7.527***
Board	.013	.201	.013	.201	-.163	-3.214**	-.163	-3.214**
$\Delta R^2$	.052**		.052**		.391***		.391***	
<i>Step 3</i>								
(In)justice-employees $\times$ self	-.151	-2.208*	-.135	-2.003*	-.044	-.833	-.025	-.481
(In)justice-employees $\times$ board			.038	.626			.100	2.111*
(In)justice-self $\times$ board	-.055	-.877			-.032	-.646		
$\Delta R^2$	.018**		.017*		.002		.011*	
<i>Step 4</i>								
Employees $\times$ self $\times$ board	-.224	-2.861***	-.144	-2.064**	.002	.029	.024	.431
$\Delta R^2$	.028***		.015**		.000		.000	
Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>	.085***		.070**		.416***		.425***	
F (8, 343)	4.988***		4.105**		24.930***		25.857***	

N = 343. Levels of significance: \* $p < .05$ ; \*\* $p < .01$ ; \*\*\* $p < .001$ .

interactions explained a significant amount of incremental variance in the case of (in)justice employees ( $\Delta R^2 = .018$ ;  $p < .01$ ), and as moderators in the case of (in)justice self ( $\Delta R^2 = .017$ ;  $p < .05$ ). An inspection of the individual two way interactions also revealed a significant moderating effect between the two types of (in)justice on GDB, i.e., in Model 1 ( $B = .151$ ;  $p < .05$ ) and Model 2 ( $B = .135$ ;  $p < .05$ ). These data support H3a and H4a. However, also concerning guests dealing with both types of (in)justice (either for employees or self), two way interactions did not significantly support different engagements in loyalty ( $B = .044$ ;  $p$  n.s.;  $B = .025$ ;  $p$  n.s.). These figures make it necessary to reject H3b and H4b.

An examination of the three way interactions (Step 4; Table 2) revealed that favorable levels of both types of (in)justice performing jointly had a significant moderating effect on the link between (in)justice self and DGB as the type of board increased ( $B = .224$ ;  $p < .001$ ) in Model 1, and also concerning (in)justice employees and DGB ( $B = .144$ ;  $p < .01$ ) in Model 2. Moreover, Step 4 also shows that the three way interaction explains a significant amount of incremental variance in the case of Model 1 ( $\Delta R^2 = .028$ ;  $p < .001$ ) and Model 2 ( $\Delta R^2 = .015$ ;  $p < .01$ ). These results support H3c and H4c. Concerning loyalty, Table 2 Models 3 and 4 indicates in Steps 3 and 4 that out of all the two or three way interactions, only the interaction between guests faced with (in)injustice employees and an intensive (rather than low) type of board ( $B = .100$ ;  $p < .05$ ) was able to significantly increase loyalty. This result makes it necessary to reject H3d and H4d.

Finally, the significant effects of the different interactions on DGB involving (in)justice for self, (in)justice for employees and type of board are represented graphically. Following the method recommended by Aiken and West (1991), values of the variables were chosen 1 SD above and below the mean. Simple regression lines were generated by entering those values in the regression equation. Fig. 2 graphically presents the three way interaction effects on DGB. In Fig. 2, DGB was regressed on justice for self for the three types of board and two different levels of (in)justice for employees. As shown, the slopes are less steep as justice for employees and type of board decrease, and they become reversed in combinations of guests low in justice for employees with full and half boards. This means that the higher the favorable perceptions of (in)justice for employees and the type of board, the more likely the perceptions of (in)justice for self are to discourage DGB.

## 5. Discussion

Famous quotes such as “injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere” by Martin Luther King, Jr., (letter from Birmingham

jail, April 16, 1963) and “and then they came for me and there was no one left to speak out for me” by Martin Niemöller<sup>2</sup> inescapably illustrate the necessary balance that must be achieved between perceptions of justice for self and for others. This balance largely explains the behavior of human beings in many contexts; without it any human activity seems doomed to conflict and failure. The results of this paper open up a new avenue in the study of perceptions of (in)justice in the context of the hospitality industry. Unless actions are undertaken to adequately elicit favorable guest perceptions of (in)justice for both the self and others, positive guest activities for the success of a hotel can result in conflict and failure. Neither type of (in)justice seems innocuous, and the presence of both appears to greatly intensify guest reactions to (in)justice that can lead to the success of a hotel or put it at risk.

First, the results suggest that (in)justice for self significantly predicts DGB and loyalty. This result is consistent with recent work by Yi and Gong (2008), who found that perceived (in)justice for self caused positive customer word of mouth and dysfunctional behavior among 209 executive MBA students and 68 buyer companies. In the present study, favorable perceptions of (in)justice for employees were shown to significantly predict loyalty but, contrary to expectations, did not show main effects on DGB. This latter result challenges some prior theory and research (e.g., Lind et al., 1998; Sheppard et al., 1992; Tyler & Smith, 1998; Walster et al., 1978) suggesting observer responses to (mis)treatment, whereas it is consistent with other research indicating third party inaction to a great extent (e.g., Darley & Latane, 1968). Prior literature on third party intervention (Skarlicki & Kulik, 2005) and (in)justice for self (for example, see Colquitt, Conlon, Wesson, Porter, & Ng, 2001; Treviño, Weaver, & Reynolds, 2006) has aroused a great deal of interest in this issue. These studies question what factors can influence a decision to act when faced with (in)justice, as well as the underlying psychological processes that explain why this connection is possible (Colquitt, Greenberg, & Scott, 2005). The present study supports a moderating role for each type of (in)justice (for self and for employees) with respect to the other in predicting DGB. It provides information about how and when these reactions are possible, thus making a significant contribution to this portion of the justice literature.

Concerning the interaction effects, the results differ. Loyalty, on the one hand, was found in this study to have a strong relationship with guests' perceptions of (in)justice for self and employees, but these significant main effects do not seem to leave room for further interactive influences. Thus, the results did not support significant effects of the interaction between (in)justice for self and (in)justice for employees on loyalty. Concerning DGB, on the other hand, the results suggest that only (in)justice for self significantly predicts DGB, and that (in)justice for self and (in)justice for employees significantly interact on DGB. Why did DGB and loyalty perform as reactions to (in)justice in such different ways? One reason can be found in their distinct behavioral characters. Thus, although loyalty is a behavioral construct (Hallowell, 1996), it only refers to behavioral intentions and, unless moderators strengthen the (in)justice effects on DGB, guests are in a better position to react in the form of loyalty than by engaging in DGB. Furthermore, unlike loyalty, DGB is not beneficial to the hotel; therefore, guests are probably embarrassed (rather than pleased) to reveal or admit these behaviors.

While untested by our data, the inaction of guests whose reactions to (in)justice for employees take the form of DGB may suggest

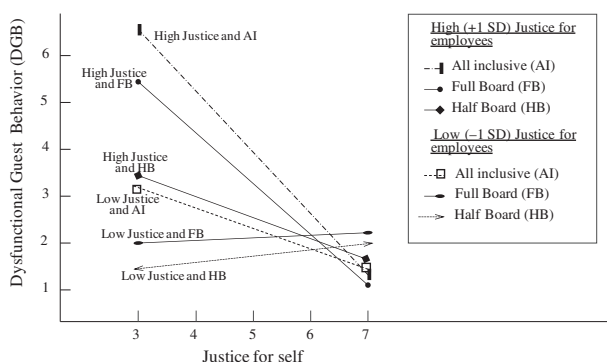


Fig. 2. Three-way interaction effects of favorable (in)justice for self, favorable (in)justice for employees and type of board on Dysfunctional Guest Behavior (DGB).

<sup>2</sup> This is a statement attributed to Pastor Martin Niemöller (1892–1984) about the inactivity of German intellectuals following the Nazi rise to power and the purging of their chosen targets, group after group.

that their dealings with (in)justice for employees can be driven by a logical rationale. In contrast to (in)justice for self, which is a threat to the guests themselves, (in)justice for employees does not threaten the guests' well being, at least not directly. Guests could consistently find reasons not to engage in DGB as a reaction to unfavorable perceptions of (in)justice for employees, since "it is someone's else's problem, not mine." However, the presence of unfavorable (in)justice for self could lead guests to consider what is suggested by Luther King's aforementioned quotation "injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere," or by Niemöller's "and then they came for me [...]." Guests who face unfavorable (in)justice for employees, but are threatened by unfavorable (in)justice for themselves as well, could now consider that unfavorable (in)justice for employees is a problem for someone else that affects them too; therefore, they cannot look the other way. Rather than eliciting emotional states, this significant moderating role of (in)justice for self in the relationship between (in)justice for employees and DGB seems to follow a logical rationale.

Without doubt, the same explanation for the link between (in)justice for employees and DGB could also be given for the significant moderating role of (in)justice for employees in the relationship between (in)justice for self and DGB. In this link, however, (in)justice for self did show significant main effects on DGB; hence, (in)justice for employees cannot perform here as a "full trigger" of the DGB reactions to (in)justice for self. Although a logical rationale might also be present, the significant path between (in)justice for self and DGB leads us to suggest that there are "interacted emotions" that better explain the moderation of (in)justice for employees in the link between (in)justice for self and DGB. Previous research suggests that customers do not calculate justice perception, but rather they experience justice related affect and react to their own affect (Chebat & Slusarczyk, 2005). In any event, this is a topic for future research, as the present study just provides support for the moderating roles that (in)justice for self and (in)justice for employees play in DGB. The case of (in)justice for self as moderator is especially remarkable, since it turns prior null main effects of (in)justice for employees on DGB into significant effects. It is, in its own right, a new moderator influencing a third party's decision to act, particularly among hotel guests who witness (in)justice for employees and then engage in DGB.

Second, based on the main and interacting effects found, type of board and different types of (in)justice, individually or combined, seem to be important pillars in designing a strategy to tackle hotel guests' unfavorable perceptions of (in)justice. Leaving aside for the moment the main effects of (in)justice for employees and self on loyalty, as Fig. 2 shows, the three way interaction between favorable perceptions of (in)justice for self, (in)justice for employees, and high levels of type of board is able to decrease DGB in a very significant way. Undoubtedly, the role that type of board plays here has very important practical implications for hotel managers. As Fig. 2 shows, as the type of board increases, guests show a higher degree of sensitivity to organizational (in)justice. Therefore, hotel managers should consider guests with all inclusive or full board packages who are facing high levels of unfavorable perceptions of (in)justice for self and employees as "the best candidates" for engaging in high levels of DGB. Although the general rule is that visitors should always be treated well, these "high risk" guests should receive the utmost care, and managers must discuss this fact with employees. In addition, in talking to employees, managers should include the idea that, in the presence of guests, episodes of mistreatment toward co workers (or subordinates in the case of bosses) are not innocuous, but can significantly erode the quality of service provided. However, hotel managers can also make erroneous decisions in this regard. For example, having a reduced

house cleaning staff might seem to be an efficient decision at first glance, but it can ultimately cause guests to witness how the house cleaners can barely cope with their tasks. These especially sensitive events can become an embarrassment for guests, given the particularly high guest cleaner proximity with respect to other hotel employees. Furthermore, they can interact with other mistreatment events experienced by guests during their stay at the hotel, and the results of this study provide warnings about special negative reactions toward the hotel when this two way interaction takes place.

This study opens up several avenues for future research. First, there is a need to extend the span of what has been defined here as (in)justice "for others," which can also include (in)justice for "other guests." Second, this extension could also be applied to (in)justice for self, in that perceptions of other types of (in)justice by guests (i.e., procedural and distributive justices) can also be tested following similar patterns to those used in this paper. In addition, there is a need for research on the different effects that guests' perceptions of (in)justice can have, depending on the different areas and services they experience during their stay at the hotel, since they can induce significant differences in the performance of the constructs used in this study. For example, episodes of (in)justice for employees at hotel reception during the guests' check in may be especially influential, since first impressions during the service exchange are widely accepted as more potent. Finally, the significant results of this study on hotel guests' reactions to (in)justice from the third party's perspective should elicit new research that also focuses on both hotel employees and third parties as victims. Hotel employees' reactions to (in)justice for self, for guests and for co workers, from the third party's perspective, could lead to very suggestive research.

The present study has strengths, but it also has several weaknesses. First, it might suffer from mono method/source bias. Second, the surveyed guests are all Europeans; hence, they are influenced by certain cultural conditions that can offer a narrow view of justice and the hotel exchange. Additionally, the questionnaires were distributed in 4 and 5 star hotels, raising concerns about whether the result would be the same in 2 and 3 star hotels. Consequently, the performance of the constructs used in the present study, as well as their implications, could vary in other cultures, hotel categories and countries. Lastly, the data set stems from a limited universe, also raising concerns about the generalizability of the findings.

This paper, on the other hand, contributes to a better understanding of how different (in)justice perceptions among guests can be relevant to the effective functioning of a hotel. The almost exclusive focus on victims of (in)justice in organizations, and inattention to third party reactions to (in)justice in studies involving the hospitality industry, have yielded patterns that do not sufficiently explain the role of guests' perceptions of (in)justice for hotel employees in their responses to (in)justice, particularly those that help the success of a hotel or put it at risk. By uncovering main effects of (in)justice for self on DGB and loyalty, and interacting effects of (in)justice for self and employees which, along with the type of board, ultimately influence DGB, the study contributes to the success of justice strategies in promoting desired guest behavior. The results show that the ability of the hotel staff to treat each other and hotel guests fairly is a key issue in promoting the desired guest behavior, since the perspectives of both victims and third parties matter.

#### Appendix A. Supplementary material

Supplementary material related to this article can be found at <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.tourman.2012.11.010>.

## Appendix B

Exploratory factor analysis of all the variables in this study.

	F1	F2	F3	F4	F5
<b>(F1) (In)justice for employees</b>					
<i>(Eigenvalue 9.9; explained variance % 30.0; Cronbach's alpha .973)</i>					
Under your view, the hotel. . .					
Takes actions that make it easier for employees to fulfill their duties easier	<b>.882</b>	.113	.133	.047	-.122
Allows their employees to make a complaint formally	<b>.875</b>	.134	.142	.001	-.112
Shows concern for the rights of their staff as employees	<b>.875</b>	.114	.217	.019	-.023
Seems to be honest with their employees	<b>.862</b>	.116	.252	-.019	.031
Allows for employees' feedback regarding a decision made by the hotel management	<b>.853</b>	.101	.137	.015	-.107
Pays attention to the concerns of the employees	<b>.853</b>	.178	.177	-.009	-.113
Treats employees with kindness and consideration	<b>.851</b>	.093	.284	.006	.024
Deals with the staff in a truthful manner	<b>.835</b>	.165	.246	-.048	.043
Is fair in appreciating the responsibilities that the employees have	<b>.824</b>	.246	.193	-.059	.094
Considers the stress the employees cope with	<b>.802</b>	.257	.177	-.051	-.010
Values the effort that the employees make	<b>.796</b>	.318	.210	-.062	.108
Appreciates the effort the employees make when they do the work well	<b>.774</b>	.337	.203	-.053	.143
Is fair in assigning the workload that the employees have to cope with	<b>.731</b>	.260	.138	.023	-.067
<b>(F2) Guest loyalty</b>					
<i>(Eigenvalue 5.2; explained variance % 15.7; Cronbach's alpha .940)</i>					
I will say positive things about this hotel to other people	.233	<b>.873</b>	.265	-.006	-.023
I would recommend this hotel to someone who seeks my advice	.213	<b>.872</b>	.284	-.021	-.023
I will encourage friends and relatives to stay in this hotel	.238	<b>.851</b>	.301	-.011	-.032
I consider this hotel my first choice for accommodation	.228	<b>.843</b>	.246	-.013	-.087
I will consider this hotel more for accommodation in the next few years	.281	<b>.826</b>	.257	.000	-.122
I would stay in this Hotel, even if the price of the stay increased by 10%	.298	<b>.682</b>	.119	.102	-.064
<b>(F3) (In)justice for self</b>					
<i>(Eigenvalue 4.9; explained variance % 14.8; Cronbach's alpha .957)</i>					
The hotel's employees show a real interest in trying to be fair	.294	.286	<b>.830</b>	-.108	-.055
They try to help me	.252	.306	<b>.811</b>	-.142	-.047
The hotel's employees show sincere concern	.316	.285	<b>.803</b>	-.092	-.049
The hotel's employees are honest with me	.285	.292	<b>.797</b>	-.103	-.037
The hotel's employees are courteous	.249	.195	<b>.764</b>	-.050	-.174
The hotel employees' communication with me is appropriate	.304	.308	<b>.710</b>	-.141	-.050
They put the proper effort into responding to my requests	.132	.043	<b>.440</b>	-.110	.194
<b>(F4) Dysfunctional Guest Behavior (DGB)</b>					
<i>(Eigenvalue 3.8; explained variance % 11.6; Cronbach's alpha .868)</i>					
I recognize that I consume more resources than are acceptable at this hotel	-.042	.005	-.155	<b>.844</b>	.090
I have refused to follow instructions from the hotel staff	.023	.026	-.020	<b>.820</b>	.001
I recognize that I have misused some services of the hotel	-.019	-.042	-.188	<b>.819</b>	-.042
Sometimes, I have broken the rules of the hotel	.041	-.020	-.006	<b>.763</b>	-.104
I put little effort into my duties as a customer in this hotel	-.064	.100	-.041	<b>.757</b>	.187
I tend to dirty the hotel more than I should	-.003	-.040	-.106	<b>.707</b>	-.083
<b>(F5) Type of board</b>					
<i>(Eigenvalue 1.1; explained variance % 3.3)</i>					
Did you book half board, full board or all included?	-.071	-.232	-.090	.025	<b>.898</b>
Factor loadings in bold are above the cutoff of .2 in absolute value					
Total explained variance % 75.421					
Kaiser Meyer Olkin .939					
Varimax rotation					
Bartlett's sphere test (Chi-squared approx. 9460.767; gl 528; Sig. < .0001)					

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