Article

Does Trust in Citizens Mediate the Relationship Between Internal and External Procedural Justice: A Comparison Between China and Taiwan Police

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Abstract
This study investigates the roles of trust in citizens and compliance with agency policies in mediating the direct and indirect relationships between internal procedural justice and external procedural justice among Chinese and Taiwanese police officers. Based on survey data collected from 1,253 police officers, this study comparatively analyzes whether supervisory treatment of officers is predictive of trust in citizens and willingness to follow agency policies, which in turn is linked to their willingness to act fairly and justly toward citizens on the street. The results indicate that officer trust in citizens mediates the relationship between internal and external procedural justice in both China and Taiwan, but compliance with agency policies does not. Internal procedural justice directly predicts external procedural justice among Taiwanese officers, but such a connection is not found among Chinese officers. Implications for future research and policy are discussed.

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Introduction

An increasing number of recent studies on policing have highlighted the importance of exercising fair and just treatment toward rank and file within police organizations. This vein of inquiry found that organizational justice is instrumental in generating greater job satisfaction, trust in the public and compliance with rules and polices, lowering job turn-over, and alleviating the influence of negative events on police officers (Bradford et al., 2014; Carr & Maxwell, 2018; Haas et al., 2015; Nix & Wolfe, 2016; Rosenbaum & McCarty, 2017; Tankebe, 2010; Wolfe & Nix, 2016; Wolfe et al., 2018). Extending the same line of arguments, studies demonstrated a direct linkage between officers being treated fairly and justly by their supervisors (i.e., internal procedural justice) and their willingness to apply procedurally fair actions toward the citizenry (i.e., external proce-dural justice) (Bradford & Quinton, 2014; Tankebe & Mesko, 2015; Trinkner et al., 2016; Van Craen & Skogan, 2017; Wu et al., 2017). Other studies also showed that the association between internal and external procedural justice was at least partially medi-ated by officers' emotional states and moral alignment with and trust in citizens (Kutajak Ivkovic et al., 2020; Sun et al., 2018; Van Craen & Skogan, 2017; Wu et al., 2019).

This study comparatively assesses the linkage between internal and external proce-dural justice and whether such a connection can be mediated by trust in citizens and compliance with agency policies among Chinese and Taiwanese police officers. Based on the "fair policing from the inside out" approach (Van Craen, 2016), we propose and test a theoretical model (see Figure 1) that centers on the relationships among four key concepts, including internal procedural justice, trust in citizens, compliance with agency policies and external procedural justice. This article advances the criminologi-cal literature by expanding our understandings about both the direct and indirect con-nections between internal organizational treatment of officers and intended external treatment of citizens in non-Western settings. Indeed, although a few recent studies have investigated the consequences of procedural justice from both citizens' and police officers' views (Liu & Liu, 2018; Sun et al., 2017, 2019; Wu et al., 2017), pro-cedural justice remains an under-researched topic in Chinese societies. Our findings are likely to reveal the applicability of Western-based theoretical frameworks in the Chinese context where the political and legal traditions as well as the police systems and police-community relations are different from Western democracies.

This study focuses on two largest Chinese societies in the world. Despite of sharing some cultural traditions and commonalities in the police system, China and Taiwan have become two separate political and economic identities since the late 1940s. China has undergone drastic economic developments over the past few decades, but continues to be a secretive and authoritarian regime where all aspects of social life are tightly regulated. During the same period of time, Taiwan has successfully evolved from an authoritarian society to a full democracy where political pluralism and democratic val-ues have been firmly established. The two societies differ fundamentally in their politi-cal systems, which could lead to variations in how internal and external procedural justice are exercised by police officers in China and Taiwan. For example, one may speculate that the connection between internal and external procedural justice is more pronounced in Taiwan than in China because fairness and equality in interpersonal
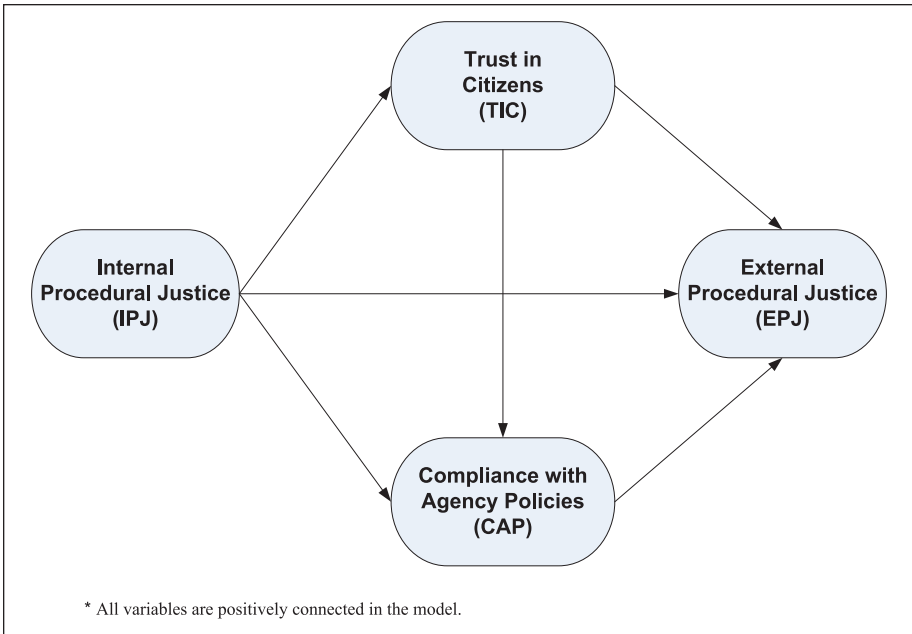
* All variables are positively connected in the model.

Figure 1. Theoretical model of internal procedural justice, trust, compliance and external procedural justice.*

relations and interactions are commonly emphasized in a democracy and fair and just supervisory treatments experienced and learned by officers are likely to directly promote their similar behavior toward citizens. Indeed, a comparative study of China and Taiwan would enrich our knowledge about how supervisory propensities under distinctive political and organizational climates may be transformed into different forms of behavioral orientations on the street.

Drawing upon survey data collected from 1,253 police officers in China and Taiwan, this study aims at addressing two research questions: (1) Is internal procedural justice linked to external procedural justice directly or indirectly through trust in citizens and compliance with agency policies; and (2) Is external procedural justice predicted by a distinctive or similar set of variables for the Chinese and Taiwanese police?

Linking Internal and External Procedural Justice

Past research on procedural justice relied predominately on citizen survey data to gauge its influence on public perception of police legitimacy and willingness to cooperate with the police. Focusing on police officers', rather than citizens', standpoints, this study analyzes the connections between procedural justice within police agencies and subsequently officers' intended procedural justice for the public. As depicted in Figure 1, we hypothesize that fair and just treatments received from supervisors are

likely to be directly accompanied by fair and quality dispositions rendered to the public, and also indirectly relate to external procedural justice through the mediation of officers' trust in citizens and compliance with agency policies. We elaborate these associations in the following paragraphs.

The key element in the "fair policing from the inside out" approach is first-line police supervisors. Research has long pointed out the essential role of immediate supervisors in shaping officers', particularly newcomers', experience of socialization into the police culture (Van Maanen, 1974). Supervisors are not a monolithic group of individuals; they tended to vary in leadership styles, managerial practices and professional knowledge (Engel, 2001). Variation in styles of supervision is thus anticipated within police organizations. Supporters for the inside out approach would favor supervisory styles that stress procedurally fair treatments and fair decision-making toward subordinates, which form the foundation for trustworthy relationships and compliance behaviors both within and outside police agencies.

We expect that officers' experience of fair supervision directly cultivates their proper fairness when dealings with citizens. Such an association can be explained by the social learning theory (Bandura, 1971), arguing that officers tend to imitate their supervisors' procedurally fair behaviors during their encounters with citizens. The supervisory modeling process involves officers observing their supervisors engage in procedurally fair actions and learning how to conduct similar behaviors that are most likely to be expected, endorsed, and rewarded by managers. Such understanding motivates officers to act in accordance with their supervisors when interacting with citizens. Recent studies found that police officers in the U.S. (Van Craen & Skogan, 2017), China (Sun et al., 2019), and Taiwan (Wu et al., 2017) indeed model procedural justice after supervisors in their preferred actions toward citizens.

Besides the mechanism of learning supervisory justice and mimicking it on the street, the transmission from internal to external procedural justice can also occur through two additional channels. First, internal procedural justice can be linked to external procedural justice through officers' trust in citizens. Following the arguments of the institutional theory of generalized trust (Rothstein & Stolle, 2008), one may speculate that officers' views of internal procedural justice are positively related to their specialized trust in supervisors and generalized trust in other people including the citizenry (Van Craen, 2016). Supervisors' fair and just behaviors send important messages to officers about the moral standards of society. Routinely exposing to supervisors' fair and rule-respecting behaviors fosters the belief that most people can be trusted. The belief of citizen trustworthiness, in turn, can influence the way that officers handle the public. That is, officers will be more prone to listen to citizens' explanations, treat them with respect, and take their mishaps into consideration when they internalize public trustworthiness. Two recent studies offered evidence from China (Sun et al., 2019) and the U.S. (Van Craen & Skogan, 2017) supporting the role of perceived citizen trustworthiness in mediating the relationship between internal and external procedural among police officers.

A second channel linking internal and external procedural justice involves officers' willingness to comply with agency rules and policies. Research has demonstrated that

organizational justice including procedural justice promotes officer adherence to agency and policies (Bradford et al., 2014; Haas et al., 2015). Relatedly, perceived organizational justice is found to lower the likelihoods of officers being subjects of citizen complaints (Mastrofski et al., 2016).

Considering these two lines of inquiry together, it is reasonable to anticipate that internal procedural justice is predictive of officers' procedurally fair treatment of citizens via both trust in citizens and compliance with organizational policies with respect to regulating police-citizen interactions and furnishing procedural justice to citizens. In addition, between the two mediating variables, we hypothesize that trust in citizens is positively connected to officers' willingness to comply with agency policies. The trustful bonds developed between officers and citizens can promote the willingness of officers to voluntarily buy into departmental rules and policies directly related to how they should behave during contacts with the public. This study empirically tests these nuanced relationships between supervisory procedural justice, trust in citizens, compliance with agency rules, and external procedural justice, controlling a variety of officer demographic and work experience variables.

Policing in China and Taiwan

Hofstede's (2001) cultural concept "power distance" can be used to explain how differences in the nature of the political system between China and Taiwan could potentially shape police-community relations in general and police trust in and treatment of citizens in particular. The concept signals the extent to which less powerful people expect that power is distributed unevenly in society. Despite its successful economic growth, China remains a "high power distance society" where the public expects legal authorities to exercise decisions with little input from citizens. In such a society, police-community relations are largely autocratic and paternalistic in the public eye, with the police being the superiors and citizens the subordinates. In recent years, China has moved unprecedentedly toward the most authoritarian society with a complex system of public security organs exercising extremely tight control over the entire populace. Concerning about citizen compliance with public security regulations is clearly a more important task to the Chinese police than delivering fair and just treatments to the public.

Taiwan was a "high power distance society" under the authoritarian rule of the nationalist party before 1987. Due to its democratic transformation, Taiwan has evolved into a "low power distance society," with citizens having ample opportunities to partake in decision making in public policy. The protection of individuals' rights, rather than the maintenance of the status quo, has emerged as the primary police role in Taiwan (Sun & Chu, 2006). Police administrators and rank and file are subject to a stronger local control and have become much responsive to community expectations. Indeed, police-citizen relations have become more equal and consultative in nature and a higher degree of police accountability and transparency has been observed (Cao et al., 2014).

Both mainland China and Taiwan inherit a police system first developed in the late Qing Dynasty and then institutionalized during the Republic era (1911–1949; Cao et al., 2014; Sun & Wu, 2010). Even after the Communist Party took over the control

of the mainland in 1949, both regions have continued to depend upon the traditional approach of policing that emphasized public participation in crime prevention activities through the operation of neighborhood field stations (i.e., the so called *Paichusuo* in Chinese). Organizational structures as well as command and control systems in policing remain centralized in both China and Taiwan, though local autonomy and diversity in terms of crime fighting strategies and practices have been increasingly observed (Sun & Chu, 2006; Sun & Wu, 2010). Compared to the Taiwanese police, the Chinese police are empowered with greater authority as they are able to sanction minor offenses without any judicial reviews and approvals.

Police-community relations have faced more challenges in China than in Taiwan. Police forces in mainland China have tremendous power and little oversight, resulting in pervasive misconduct and abusive behavior and subsequently a crisis of police legitimacy (Sun & Wu, 2010). Public opinion surveys nonetheless showed that the majority of Chinese still rated the police favorably, with approximately 60% to 70% of respondents viewing the police as satisfactory or trustworthy (for example, see Jiang et al., 2012; Sun et al., 2012). The Taiwanese police meanwhile have maintained a more stable relationship with the public over the past two decades due mainly to enhanced police accountability and professionalism and fewer police-citizen confrontations resulting from large-scale demonstrations (Wu et al., 2012). Recent studies have consistently found that Taiwan residents expressed overall favorable attitudes toward the police with the majority of respondents expressing general trust in or satisfaction with the force (Sun et al., 2016; Wu, 2014). A few studies have comparatively assessed public attitudes toward the police in China and Taiwan. People in China consistently displayed a higher level of confidence or trust in the police than their counterparts in Taiwan (Hsieh & Boateng, 2015; Lai et al., 2010; Wu et al., 2012), suggesting that people in a low power distance democracy (e.g., Taiwan) tend to be more critical of the police than their counterparts in a high power distance country (e.g., China).

Officer-supervisor relationships within Chinese police agencies partially reflect the authoritarian nature of the regime. Supervisors are more concerned about agency performance than officer welfare, and the structure of the police bureaucracy provides frontline officers with few opportunities to voice their opinion, participate in policymaking, and exercise discretion on individual cases (Scoggins & O'Brien, 2016). With the exceptions of two recent studies (Sun et al., 2019; Wu et al., 2019), little scholarly research has scrutinized the issue of organizational justice within police departments and its potential in promoting trust and compliance among officers in Chinese societies.

The democratic transformation of policing in Taiwan has brought greater judicial and local control and pervasive media and public scrutiny to frontline officers. Like their counterparts in the U.S., rank and file act like street-corner politicians (Muir, 1977), who base their behavior on moral terms and scrupulously enforce the law to maintain a delicate balance between sentiment, reason and law (Martin, 2007). A heavy workload and a performance-first culture however make officers, particularly those who work at urban settings, feel powerlessness and experience high job stress (Cao et al., 2014). Although two recent studies have touched on the connections between internal and external procedural justice in Taiwan (Sun et al., 2018; Wu et al., 2017),

neither has assessed whether supervisory procedural justice is predictive of officers' trust in citizens and compliance with agency policies, and whether these factors successively promote officers to engage in procedurally fair behaviors toward citizens.

Methodology

Data Collection and Sample

The study used part of the data collected by an international project intended to assess police officers' views of internal and external procedural justice across cultures (see Haas et al., 2015; Van Craen & Skogan, 2017). A survey questionnaire in both simplified Chinese (for mainland China) and traditional Chinese (for Taiwan) was first developed by two U.S.-based scholars, following closely an English instrument applied in other countries. To ensure accurate translation, the Chinese survey questionnaire was translated back into English by a bilingual police scholar and the translated version was compared to the original English version. Minor revisions were made to enhance the comparability between the Chinese and English survey items. The simplified and traditional Chinese instruments are identical with the exceptions of a few minor places where different phrases or words with same meanings were used to reflect their common usages in China and Taiwan.

The China data were gathered from a municipal police college located in southwest China. The college is a higher education institution that furnishes bachelor's degrees to police cadets as well as in-service, short-term training courses or programs to the rank and file officers. The college was chosen mainly because of the researchers' connections with school officials. Survey data were collected between the fall of 2015 and spring of 2016 from police officers who were attending mandatory on-the-job training courses/programs in the police college. Surveys were distributed and collected by an instructor of the college, who informed officers in various training courses in advance about the opportunity to participate in this research project. Before distributing the survey to officers, the instructor explained the purpose of the study and emphasized the voluntary and confidential nature of their participation. A total of 850 surveys were distributed and 768 surveys were returned, resulting in a response rate of 90.4%.

The Taiwan data were collected from the New Taipei City Police Department (NTCPD) in northern Taiwan between April and October, 2015, by a team of researchers from the Central Police University in Taiwan. Seven out of the 16 police districts within the NTCPD were selected as sampling units mainly because of the researchers' familiarity with these stations and their connections to district commanding officers. The research team first contacted district commanders to obtain their approval of surveying officers and then scheduled data-collection visits to their stations once the permission was granted. The researchers arrived at the station at the scheduled day and distributed the questionnaire to front-line officers after either their mandatory monthly joint training seminars or seasonal police knowledge training seminars held at district stations. District commanders were asked to leave the

meeting room during survey administration. The researchers then clearly explained the purpose of the study and emphasized the voluntary and anonymous nature of their participation. A total of 608 surveys were handed out to officers, and 590 were returned to the researchers, resulting in a response rate of 97%. After merging the China and Taiwan data and dropping cases with missing values, the final sample consisted of a total of 1,253 officers, including 722 Chinese officers and 531 Taiwanese officers.

As shown in Table 1, there is a lower percentage of male officers in the Chinese sample (88%) than in the Taiwanese sample (94%). The sample Chinese officers were better educated, and much less likely to be married, have served in the military and work in a field station, compared to their Taiwanese counterparts. There is virtually no difference in the year of police experience, with both groups reporting an average of 11 years of service. Due to the lack of official demographic data on officers in both populations, the representation of sample officers could not be assured unfortunately, suggesting the preliminary nature of findings of this study.

Measurement

The key variables used in the study include an exogenous variable, two mediating variables and an endogenous variable. As displayed in Table 2, all these core theoretical concepts were measured as additive scales using multiple indicators. Factor analysis results indicated that all items loaded to their respective factors. Additionally, the Cronbach's alphas showed that the items constituting every factor have good internal consistency among them.

The exogenous variable, internal procedural justice (IPJ), was constructed based on five items that reflect mainly the aspects of voice and accountability embedded in the concept of internal procedural justice (Van Craen, 2016). The first mediating variable, trust in citizens (TIC), was a four-item scale that signals the respondents' reported levels of trust in citizens. Based on four items, the second mediating variable, compliance with agency policies (CAP), denotes officers' levels of willingness to follow departmental policies and rules in interacting with citizens. Drawing on five items, the endogenous variable, external procedural justice (EPJ), demonstrates the extent to which officers are likely to treat citizens during encounters in a procedurally fair manner.

To better analyze the associations among the key factors, five variables were also controlled in the analysis. Gender, marital status, military experience and assignment were coded as dummy variables with 1 representing male, married, having served in the military and currently working in a field station respectively. Education is an ordinal variable with values ranging from 1 (high school degree or lower) to 6 (master's degree or higher). Police experience was measured in years. Table 1 displays the descriptive statistics for all variables used in this study. Multicollinearity among the independent and control variables was not a problem as the variance inflation factors (VIFs) were all below 2.5 and the highest correlation between any two predictors is .56 (between year of police experience and marital status).

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics for Variables in Analysis.

Variables	Whole (N = 1,253)			China (N = 722)			Taiwan (N = 531)			t-value for mean diff.
	Mean	SD	Range	Mean	SD	Range	Mean	SD	Range	
Independent and mediating										
Internal procedural justice	18.45	4.56	5–30	18.81	4.49	5–30	17.95	4.62	5–30	−3.28*
Trust in citizens	16.86	3.58	4–24	17.55	3.34	4–24	15.91	3.69	4–24	−8.19*
Compliance with agency policies	18.30	3.20	4–24	19.19	3.24	4–24	17.09	2.71	7–24	−12.14*
Dependent										
External procedural justice	16.92	4.48	5–30	17.28	4.80	5–30	16.42	3.95	5–30	−3.39*
Control										
China	.58	.49	0–1	—	—	—	—	—	—	
Male	.88	.32	0–1	.83	.38	0–1	.94	.23	0–1	6.17*
Educational attainment	3.60	1.07	1–6	4.02	.95	1–6	3.03	.95	1–6	−18.19*
Married	.33	.47	0–1	.18	.38	0–1	.54	.50	0–1	14.36*
Year of police experience	10.91	8.09	1–36	10.56	6.23	1–28	11.38	10.08	1–36	1.78
Military experience	.24	.42	0–1	.12	.32	0–1	.40	.49	0–1	12.32*
Field station	.47	.50	0–1	.25	.44	0–1	.76	.43	0–1	20.65*

Note. *p < .05.

Table 2. Construction of Key Variables Through Factor Analysis and Reliability Test (N = 1,253).

Scales and items	Whole Factor loading	α	China Factor loading	α	Taiwan Factor loading	α
Internal procedural justice (IPJ) (1 = strongly disagree; 6 = strongly agree)		.85		.83		.88
My supervisors show an interest in what their people have to say	.66		.59		.75	
My supervisors are open to proposals and suggestions from their people	.77		.74		.81	
When making policy choices, my supervisors sufficiently explain why these choices are being made	.83		.83		.85	
When implementing changes, my supervisors sufficiently explain why these changes are necessary	.85		.84		.86	
My supervisors give explanations for decisions they make that affect me	.83		.84		.81	
Trust in citizens (TIC) (1 = strongly disagree; 6 = strongly agree)		.83		.81		.83
I trust that most citizens will behave correctly	.89		.88		.90	
Most citizens have good intentions	.89		.87		.91	
Citizens mostly can be trusted to do the right thing	.79		.79		.79	
Most citizens mean well	.66		.65		.62	
Compliance with agency policies (CAP) (1 = never; 6 = always) (reversed coded)		.76		.75		.70
In my contact with citizens I do not follow the policy guidelines of my organization in detail	.77		.74		.74	
The way I act toward citizens differs from the policy of my organization	.78		.74		.81	
In interacting with citizens I go about it differently than is described in the procedures drawn up by my organization	.82		.83		.76	
In my contact with citizens I do not follow my supervisors' instructions in detail	.67		.73		.58	
External procedural justice (EPJ) (1 = never; 6 = always)		.81		.81		.81
I make time to listen to the improvements citizens want with regard to safety or livability	.70		.70		.71	
I take time to listen to the suggestions of citizens with regard to problems that need to be dealt with	.79		.78		.80	
I explain to citizens why the police act in a certain way	.69		.67		.71	
I explain to citizens why certain actions and measures are necessary	.80		.79		.82	
I explain to a citizen why the police see to it that he or she abides by the laws and rules	.80		.82		.75	

Table 3. Multiple Regression of External Procedural Justice for China[a] (*N* = 722).

Variables	Model 1 TIC	Model 2 CAP	Model 3 CAP	Model 4 EPJ	Model 5 EPJ	Model 6 EPJ
IPJ	.24***	.21***	.16***	.12***	.06	.06
	(.03)	(.03)	(.03)	(.04)	(.04)	(.04)
Male	−.05	−.16***	−.15***	.03	.04	.04
	(.33)	(.31)	(.31)	(.47)	(.46)	(.47)
Educational attainment	−.01	−.06	−.05	.06	.06	.06
	(.14)	(.13)	(.13)	(.20)	(.19)	(.19)
Married	.02	.02	−.02	.02	.01	.01
	(.40)	(.38)	(.37)	(.57)	(.55)	(.55)
Year of experience	.01	.04	.04	.09*	.09*	.09*
	(.02)	(.02)	(.02)	(.03)	(.03)	(.03)
Military experience	.04	.08*	.07*	.12**	.11**	.11**
	(.39)	(.37)	(.36)	(.56)	(.55)	(.55)
Field station	−.01	−.01	−.01	.07*	.08*	.08*
	(.29)	(.28)	(.27)	(.41)	(.40)	(.40)
TIC	—	—	.22***	—	.23***	.23***
			(.04)		(.05)	(.05)
CAP	—	—	—	—	—	.01
						(.06)
F-test	6.92***	9.42***	13.06***	4.35***	8.98***	7.99***
*R*²	.07	.09	.13	.04	.09	.09

Note. IPJ = internal procedural justice; TIC = trust in citizens; CAP = compliance with agency policies; EPJ = external procedural justice.
[a]Entries are standardized coefficients from OLS regression with standard errors in parentheses.
*p < .05. **p < .01. ***p < .001.

Results

A series of six regression models were first estimated for China and then for Taiwan to analyze the direct and indirect (through trust in citizens and compliance with agency policies) connections between internal procedural justice and external procedural justice. Table 3 summaries the results from these analytic models for China. In Model 1, consistent with our expectation, internal procedural justice is positively related to trust in citizens among Chinese officers. Also as hypothesized, in Model 2 internal procedural justice is positively connected to officers' willingness to compliance with agency policies. Regarding control variables, female officers and officers with military experience were more likely to express a higher degree of compliance with agency policies than their respective counterparts. When trust in citizens entered the analysis in Model 3, the magnitude of the IPJ effect reduced from .21 to .16, but it remained a significant predictor of compliance with agency policies, suggesting that trust in citizens partially mediates the relationship between internal procedural justice and compliance with agency policies.

Model 4 results show that higher levels of internal procedural justice are directly accompanied by higher degrees of external procedural justice, which is consistent with

Table 4. Multiple Regression of External Procedural Justice for Taiwan[a] (*N* = 531).

Variables	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5	Model 6
	TIC	CAP	CAP	EPJ	EPJ	EPJ
IPJ	.19***	.19***	.16***	.19***	.16***	.16***
	(.03)	(.03)	(.03)	(.04)	(.04)	(.04)
Male	−.01	−.04	−.04	.05	.05	.05
	(.70)	(.51)	(.50)	(.74)	(.73)	(.73)
Educational attainment	.01	.01	.01	.04	.04	.04
	(.18)	(.13)	(.13)	(.19)	(.19)	(.19)
Married	−.08	−.14*	−.12*	.07	.08	.08
	(.45)	(.33)	(.32)	(.48)	(.47)	(.47)
Year of experience	.10	−.03	−.04	.22***	.20***	.20**
	(.02)	(.02)	(.02)	(.03)	(.03)	(.03)
Military experience	.02	.08	.07	.02	−.02	−.02
	(.34)	(.25)	(.24)	(.36)	(.35)	(.35)
Field station	.01	−.10*	−.10*	.04	.04	.04
	(.40)	(.29)	(.29)	(.43)	(.42)	(.42)
TIC	—	—	.20***	—	.17***	.18***
			(.03)		(.05)	(.05)
CAP	—	—	—	—	—	−.04
						(.06)
F-test	4.90***	5.87***	7.98***	5.77***	7.24***	6.52***
R^2	.06	.07	.11	.07	.10	.10

Note. IPJ = internal procedural justice; TIC = trust in citizens; CAP = compliance with agency policies; EPJ = external procedural justice.
[a]Entries are standardized coefficients from OLS regression with standard errors in parentheses.
*p < .05. **p < .01. ***p < .001.

our hypothesis. Although our China and Taiwan samples differ significantly in their gender, educational attainment and marital status, regression analyses revealed that these three background characteristics were not related to external procedural justice in both societies. In China, police officers who were more seasoned, had military experience and were assigned to field stations are also more likely than their respective counterparts to engage in external procedural justice. After adding trust in citizens into Model 5, the correlational strength between internal procedural justice and external procedural justice decreased from .12 to .06 and became insignificant, indicating that the relationship between IPJ and EPJ is fully mediated by trust in citizens. Model 6 is the final model where compliance with agency policies was added into analysis. With the addition of CAP, the results associated with Model 6 are virtually the same as those in Model 5, implying that compliance with agency policies has no mediating effect on the connection between internal and external procedural justice.

Table 4 reports the regression results for Taiwan. The results in Model 1 supports a direct linkage between internal procedural justice and trust in citizens among Taiwanese officers, net of all controls. Also as expected, Model 2 results show a significant

positive relationship between internal procedural justice and compliance with agency policies, controlling demographic and experiential variables. Unlike in the corresponding model for Chinese officers where gender and military experience are significant predictors, marital status and field station assignment are predictive of Taiwanese officers' compliance with departmental policies. When trust in citizens entered Model 3, the magnitude of the effect of internal procedural justice decreased from .19 to .16 but stayed significant. Meanwhile, consistent with the hypothesis, trust in citizens is positively related to compliance with agency policies.

Switching to Model 4, internal procedural justice is positively linked to external procedural justice. Similar to what was found in the Chinese sample, there was a significant relationship between year of police experience and external procedural justice among study Taiwanese officers. Unlike the results in the China model, military experience and field station assignment are not associated with external procedural justice for Taiwanese officers. When trust in citizens was included in Model 5, the significant connection between internal and external procedural justice stayed though reduced a bit in magnitude, suggesting some mediating effect of trust in citizens. Finally, the results in Model 6 are nearly identical to those in Model 5, indicating that compliance with agency policies does not mediate the linkage between internal and external procedural justice.

Discussion

This study adds more evidence to a relatively new vein of research concerning the possible consequences resulting from fair and just supervisory treatment toward police officers. We comparatively assessed the association between internal and external procedural justice and its mediating factors among Chinese and Taiwanese police officers. We found that our hypotheses are largely supported by the results from data analysis. First, officers who experienced higher degrees of fair and just supervisory treatments are more willing to engage in similar behaviors toward citizens. The mechanisms underlying such a linkage however are different between the two groups. Although we do not have direct evidence to support the linkage between political system and the relationship between internal and external justice, our findings seem to suggest such a possibility. While a direct relationship between internal and external procedural justice is found among the study Taiwanese officers, the association between internal and external procedural justice is almost exclusively indirect among the Chinese officers. It appears that supervisors' direct modeling effect is stronger among Taiwanese than Chinese officers. As mentioned above, this finding can be attributed to a more equal relationship between supervisors and officers in a democracy that can be learned by officers and transmitted directly to officer-citizen encounters. It is also possible that Chinese officers may be more stressful and frustrated at work, making the modeling effect of supervisors less apparent. Thinking from a different perspective, this finding is somewhat unexpected given China's emphasis on an exemplary pedagogical approach of establishing social norms and behaviors (Bakken, 2000), suggesting that public security organizations may actually exempt themselves from such a method of

social engineering. Furthermore, previous studies have yet to produce consistent evidence supporting a direct link between internal and external procedural justice (see Van Craen & Skogan, 2017; Wu et al., 2017). Future research therefore ought to further explore factors that explain the existence (or lack) of this relationship.

We found that trust in citizens mediates the relationship between internal and external procedural justice particularly in China. As we have articulated, it is likely that being treated fairly by supervisors cultivates officers' trust in the general public, which in turn leads to great commitment to fair treatment toward citizens. It should be noted that previous studies have identified other variables, such as officers' emotional states and moral alignment with supervisors and citizens, as mediating factors between internal and external procedural justice (Sun et al., 2019; Wu et al., 2017). Considering these findings together, it appears that multi-mechanisms exist in connecting internal and external procedural justice. An interesting question for future research is to investigate the associations among multiple mediating variables and to compare their predictive power of external procedural justice.

Second, our analysis of separate samples revealed that Chinese and Taiwanese officers' inclination to engage in external procedural justice is predicted by some common and different variables. For example, trust in citizens is positively related to external procedural justice for both Chinese and Taiwanese officers, while compliance with agency policies is not connected to external procedural justice for either groups. For another example, officer year of experience is positively linked to external procedural justice for both groups of officers, but two other variables, military experience and field station, are significant predictors of external procedural justice for Chinese officers only. Future research should continue to take these relevant variables into account when assessing the relationship between internal and external procedural justice.

Two limitations associated with this study should be acknowledged. First, we utilized survey data gather from convenience samples from China and Taiwan to address our research questions. Caution should be exercised in terms of the generalizability of our findings to police officers in other localities. Future research should consider collecting more diverse and encompassing samples from multiple jurisdictions in Chinese societies. Second, it's also unclear to us whether and how the issue of social desirability bias may influence our findings. Although one may speculate that Taiwanese officers are less likely than their Chinese counterparts to subject to the responding bias, we are uncertain about the extent and impact of the bias nor do we know whether, for example, police cultures may mitigate bias between the two societies. Future comparative research, if possible, should continue to ensure the anonymity and confidentiality of data collection and consider using specialized questioning techniques to minimize bias across societies. Third, strictly speaking our main dependent variable, external procedural justice, measures officers' occupational attitudes toward proper ways of handling citizens, rather than their actual operational behaviors on the street. Given that officers' occupational beliefs do not automatically translate into their field practices, more research efforts are needed to test and confirm the attitude-behavior linkage among rank and file. Using data garnered from other approaches, such as systematic social observation and officer body worn

cameras, allow a stronger test of the association between fair treatment within police agencies and fair treatment of citizens on the street.

Our findings bear some potential implications for policy. First, our findings seem to indicate that supervisors' exemplary practices of procedural justice can be linked to officers' willingness to engage in procedurally fair actions toward the public, directly and/or indirectly. Top police brass, especially these in Taiwan, should prioritize organizational justice and implement relevant policies to encourage first-line supervisors to exercise fair and just behaviors toward subordinates. In addition, training on accountable, participative and transactional leadership styles is likely to promote effective interpersonal communication and managerial skills among supervisors. Although the quasi-military nature of police organizations poses some challenges to introduce democratic principles of supervision (e.g., voice, neutrality, respect, and accountability), police administrators ought to have a good vision statement and concrete strategic plan to systematically cultivate exemplary supervision among immediate supervisors.

Second, besides promoting internal procedural justice, strengthening officers' views on citizen trustworthiness appears to be another key mechanism in enhancing external procedural justice among police officers. This is particularly a crucial pathway for Chinese police to facilitate procedurally fair treatment of citizens on the street. Building solid police-community relations serves as the foundation to establish trustworthy relationships between police officers and local residents. Cultivating officers' tragic perspectives that understand the nature of human suffering (Muir, 1977) prepares the proper mentality for officers to deal with citizens in mishaps. Voluntary or non-enforcement-related contacts should be encouraged to break social barriers and potential conflicts resulting from law enforcement activities between officers and citizens.

Finally, two groups of Chinese officers, these who had military experience and who were serving at a field station, display stronger willingness to perform external procedural justice toward the public. Some Chinese legal scholars argued against the use of military veterans as judges, because most of these veterans had little formal legal training and because compliance has become their second nature that prevents them from being independent (He, 2012). Our study focuses of police officers, who are quite different from judges. While there is great value in judicial independence, there is no such emphasis on police independence. Working in a chain of command system, police officers who have a tendency and habit to follow procedures and rules in the departments are often considered professionals. That's why we don't find it totally surprising that our findings suggest the potential benefit of employing individuals with military experiences. Police administrators should continue to admit qualified veterans who are willing to join the forces. Policymakers should also consider introducing rules requiring all rank and file to have assignments with field stations during early years of their career.

Declaration of Conflicting Interests

Funding

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