



Cross-Cultural Perspectives on Fairness in Classroom Assessment: A Scoping Review

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ABSTRACT

This scoping review examines cross-cultural differences in students' perceptions of procedural and interactional fairness in classroom assessment (CA), drawing on organizational justice theory. A systematic search of five databases (1965–2023) identified 34 studies comparing fairness perceptions across Western and Eastern contexts. Cultural dimensions such as individualism–collectivism and power distance shaped how students interpreted assessment procedures and interpersonal treatment. Findings show that, while fairness is a universal concern, the principles guiding fairness judgments vary across cultural settings. Research on cross-cultural CA fairness remains limited and theoretically fragmented. This review synthesizes conceptual and methodological trends, identifies key gaps, and highlights implications for developing culturally responsive assessment practices that better support diverse learners in globalized educational environments.

Keywords: Classroom assessment, fairness perceptions, cross-cultural comparison, procedural fairness, interactional fairness, justice theory

INTRODUCTION

Fairness in classroom assessment (CA) is foundational to effective teaching and learning, influencing student motivation, engagement, trust, and academic success (see Brookhart & Chism, 2025). As higher education institutions become increasingly multicultural—driven by global mobility, immigration, and internationalization—the ways in which culturally varied learners interpret fairness of assessment practices have become an urgent concern (see Brookhart & McMillan, 2020; Falavarjani & Mousavi, 2024; Ntumi, et. al., 2025). Despite long-standing calls for equitable and culturally responsive assessment, research has only recently begun to explore how cultural values shape fairness perceptions in CA (see Falavarjani, 2025).

Although culturally responsive CA practices have been a center of fairness studies in education (see Bennett, 2023; Brookhart & Chism, 2025; Middleton & Haynes 2025), much of this work has not sufficiently considered how fairness itself may be understood differently across cultures. Existing research tends to assume that fairness principles are universal, even though organizational justice scholarship suggests that cultural values significantly influence how individuals interpret procedural and interpersonal treatment. This overlooked the increasing diversity of classroom contexts and the role of cultural values in shaping fairness perceptions. Although the *organizational justice framework* has been adopted in CA research (see Rasooli et al., 2018, for a review), its application has not fully integrated insights from the broader organizational fairness and justice literature, particularly regarding cultural influences on perceived fairness.

Research in organizational fairness and justice increasingly emphasizes the role of cultural values in shaping perceptions of fairness. For example, Greenberg (2001) argued that while concerns about fairness and justice are universal, the norms that define fairness vary significantly across cultural contexts. Cultural norms shape shared expectations about appropriate treatment, meaning that fair behavior is interpreted relative to culturally accepted standards rather than universal principles.

To advance the understanding of students' perceptions of fairness in today's multicultural classrooms—and to align with growing emphasis on culturally responsive CA practices (Evans & Taylor, 2025), this review builds upon the *organizational justice framework*, focusing on procedural, and interactional fairness. While prior research has examined distributive fairness (Falavarjani & Yeh, under review), the present study focuses on the psychosocial dimensions of fairness that emerge through assessment procedures and teacher-student interactions. These dimensions are inherently context-dependent and examining them through a cultural lens helps clarify how fairness is constructed across diverse student populations.

This review adopts Hofstede’s cultural model as the primary framework for understanding cross-cultural differences in perceptions of CA fairness. Hofstede’s five cultural dimensions: *Individualism-Collectivism index (CI)*, *Power Distance index (PD)*, *Uncertainty Avoidance index (UA)*, *Masculinity-Femininity index (MF)*, and *Confucian Dynamism (CD)*, have been widely applied in cross-cultural research and offer a well-tested foundation for interpreting variability in fairness perceptions (Fischer & Maplesden, 2006; Leung, 2005). This framework is particularly relevant given the extensive empirical attention it has received in organizational psychology and related fields (Hofstede, 1991; Kirkman et al., 2006; Sivakumar & Nakata, 2001).

The central argument advanced here is that while fairness is a universal concern, the principles and expectations that define fairness differ across cultural contexts, influencing how students interpret both assessment procedures and interpersonal treatment by instructors. This review contributes to higher education scholarship by 1) Identifying what is known about cultural variability in procedural and interactional CA fairness; 2) Synthesizing theoretical approaches used across disciplines and noting gaps in CA-specific theory; 3) Mapping methodological trends in cross-cultural fairness studies; and 4) Highlighting implications for culturally responsive assessment practice.

RESEARCH METHOD

Search Procedures

We searched EBSCOhost, PsycINFO, Scopus, Web of Science, and ERIC (1965–2023) using combinations of terms such as “justice or fairness,” “classroom assessment,” and “cross-cultural or multicultural.” The start year (1965) aligns with the publication of Adams’ equity theory (Adams, 1965). The initial search yielded very few results, prompting refined terms such as “classroom assessment fairness,” “teacher fairness/justice,” and “cross-cultural psychology.” This process ultimately identified eight relevant articles, four of which were excluded for lacking cross-cultural comparisons. The remaining four empirical studies are summarized in Table 1. Only one (Tata, 2000) directly examined procedural and distributive CA fairness using Hofstede’s model.

To improve generalizability and address the limited number of CA-specific studies, we also included organizational justice studies involving student samples. This decision aligns with three considerations: (a) extensive cross-cultural fairness research in organizational contexts, (b) parallels between classroom and workplace fairness, and (c) student samples are commonly used in organizational justice studies. Studies without student participants were excluded. A snowball method was used to identify additional studies from relevant reviews, and duplicates were moved via EndNote.

This process yielded 72 studies addressing distributive, procedural, and interactional fairness across cultures. Nine were excluded for using alternative cultural frameworks. Of the remaining 63 studies, 33 focused on distributive fairness. Therefore, 30 articles met criteria for inclusion in this review: 24 examining procedural fairness (Table 2) and six examining interactional fairness (Table 4). Most studies compared Asian and American students and emphasized Hofstede's cultural dimensions (i.e., IC and PD). Scenario-based designs dominated the literature, although a small number of studies measured cultural values directly (e.g., Brockner et al., 2001; Curtis et al., 2012; Hui & Au, 2001; Leung & Lind, 1986; Tata, 2000). Many studies inferred cultural attributions using established cultural typologies. Figure 1 presents a flow diagram summarizing the study selection process.

Analysis

The included studies were analyzed to identify cultural similarities and differences in students' fairness perceptions across five key areas: (1) levels of perceived fairness, (2) principles of each fairness dimension, (3) emerging themes or trends, (4) Hofstede's cultural dimensions affecting perceived fairness (e.g., IC and PD), and (5) unexpected cultural patterns. This review also aimed to identify (1) methodological approaches, (2) research gaps, and (3) theoretical implications for CA.

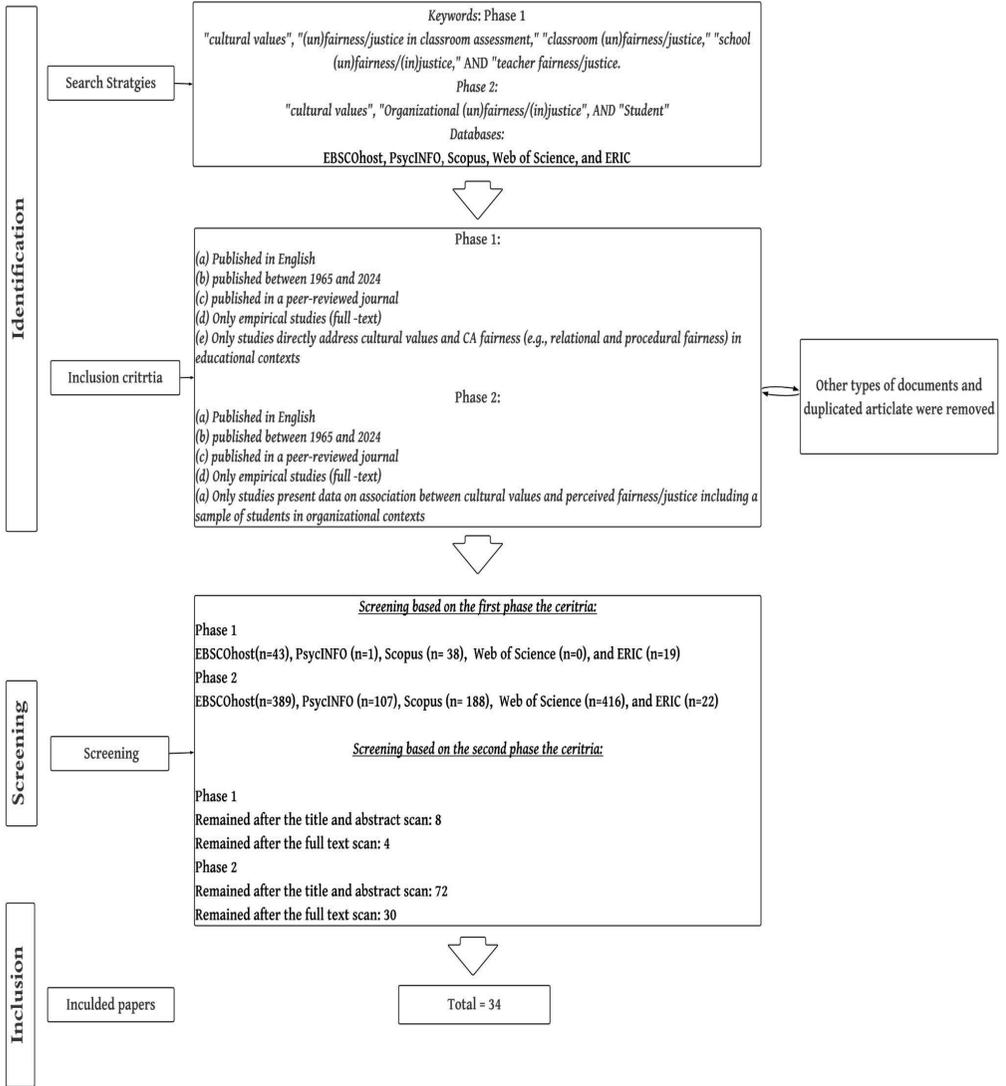
Studies were classified into two themes—procedural and interactional fairness—consistent with organizational justice theory. While much research treats cultural values as independent variables and perceived fairness as dependent variables, some studies explored fairness perception's mediating or moderating effects on outcomes (e.g., satisfaction, well-being). This review focuses primarily on cross-cultural variability in fairness perceptions, while also considering relevant theoretical models used to interpret cultural and contextual influences.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Although cultural attentiveness has been recognized in educational psychology for two decades (Pajares & Schunk, 2000), this is the first review of cross-cultural fairness perceptions in CA contexts. Overall findings confirm meaningful cultural differences across Western and non-Western settings. Studies comparing fairness across cultures—through paired comparisons (Liu et al., 2017) or large cross-national studies (e.g., Ng et al., 2019)—suggest students from collectivist Asian cultures tend to perceive higher levels of fairness than students from individualist Western cultures.

Figure 1

Flow diagram of the study selection process



These patterns likely reflect cultural values such as collective goals, high power distance, and tolerance for status-based differences. At the same time, fairness perceptions remain context-dependent, shaped by specific classroom and relational dynamics (Poole, 2007).

Scenario-based studies also reinforce earlier critiques in the procedural and interactional justice literature, including the *process-control effect* (Thibaut & Walker, 1978), the *voice effect* (Folger, 1977), and aspects of the *relational justice model* (Lind & Tyler, 1988). While this review confirms cross-cultural differences, several studies do not fully align with these expected trends (see nonsignificant results in Tables 1-3). These inconsistencies may stem from overlapping fairness dimensions, for example, when procedural fairness becomes more salient than interactional fairness, or vice versa. Lind and colleagues (1997), for instance, observed that students from hierarchical cultures sometimes discount procedural fairness because their social position is understood in culturally determined ways. Although fairness in organizational settings is well-documented (e.g., Colquitt, 2001), its role in CA contexts remains underexplored. Whether fairness operates similarly across cultures in educational settings remains unclear. The studies included here suggest that fairness is broadly universal in concern, but culturally variable in principle and interpretation.

Perceived fairness in CA contexts

This review identified relatively few studies that examined cross-cultural fairness perceptions in CA contexts (Table 1). This small body of literature limits the extent to which broad cross-cultural conclusions can be drawn. Only four studies met criteria, each comparing student groups from different cultural backgrounds. Scenario-based designs were common across these studies.

Among these, Tata (2000) was the only study to directly examine procedural fairness in CA using cultural values such as IC and PD. Findings indicate significant cross-cultural variation in both procedural and interpersonal fairness between Chinese and American students. Erkan and Walker (2016) explored the influence of religiosity on fairness perceptions among Muslim and non-Muslim Canadian students, also reporting significant differences.

Some studies found fewer cultural differences in fairness perceptions. Liu and Meng (2009) reported that Chinese and American students shared similar expectations regarding “good teaching,” despite differences in cultural values. Resh and Dalbert (2007) found no gender differences in distributive fairness among German and Israeli students, despite distinct cultural contexts. Overall, these mixed findings suggest that while cultural values shape fairness perceptions (e.g., Erkan & Walker, 2016; Tata, 2000), some aspects of teaching-related fairness appear consistent across cultures.

Table 1*Cross-Cultural Comparisons of Fairness Perceptions of Students in Educational Contexts*

Author	Cultural comparison	Evaluation task or domain	Research question	Fairness dimension	Cultural values	Result
Tata (2000)*	The US and China	Perceived fairness of grading procedures (scenario-based approach)	Are there cultural differences in perceptions of grading fairness between the US and China?	Procedural and interpersonal fairness	IC and PD	S
Resh and Dalbert (2007)*	Germany and Israel	Sense of justice regarding grades (scenario-based design)	Does sense of justice differ by gender across countries?	Grade distribution	Systemic Difference	NS
Liu and Meng (2009)*	The US and China	Qualities of a good teacher (list-based evaluation)	Do students in China and the US differ in their views on qualities of a good teacher?	Perception of a good teacher quality (a fair person)	IC	NS
Erkan and Walker (2016)*	Muslim and non-Muslim in Canada	Perceptions and experiences of fairness (mixed-method approach: qualitative & quantitative)	Are Muslim students' perceptions of fairness in Canada different from those of non-Muslim students?	All four dimensions	Religious values	S

Note. 1. * represents the studies used in the content

2. IC: Individualism-Collectivism index, PD: Power Distance.

Theoretical findings: Fairness in education

Most cross-cultural fairness studies in education rely on organizational justice frameworks rather than CA-specific theory. Tata (2000) drew on Hofstede's model and procedural justice theories (e.g., voice effect), while Erkan and Walker (2016) applied organizational justice concepts to explore fairness among Muslim and non-Muslim students in Canada. Other studies examined teaching quality or gender fairness without explicit links to cross-cultural justice theory, indicating a gap in theoretical grounding within the CA domain. These findings collectively highlight the need for more explicit theorizing about CA fairness across cultural contexts, especially given the increasing emphasis on culturally responsive assessment practices in global higher education (see Brookhart & Chism, 2025; Evans & Taylor, 2025).

Perceptions of procedural fairness

Of the 24 studies reviewed (see Table 2), 22 included participants from Western countries, primarily North America (the U.S. and Canada), Western Europe (Germany, France, and Spain), South America (Mexico), and Australia. In contrast, studies representing Eastern perspectives focused on students from China, Hong Kong, Japan, Taiwan, and India, with additional representation from Vietnam, Malaysia, the Philippines, and Turkey. Most studies sampled participants within their own cultural contexts, though some included both home and host country samples (e.g., Summereder et al., 2013). IC was the most commonly examined cultural value, followed by PD, while a smaller number of studies considered UA, CD or MF. Collectively, these studies show that procedural justice concerns take different forms depending on cultural norms and theoretical assumptions.

Procedural justice: Theoretical findings

Research on procedural fairness largely builds on the process-control effect (Thibaut & Walker, 1975) and the voice effect (Folger, 1977). The voice effect suggests that being allowed to present relevant information enhances perceived fairness in decision-making procedures (Lind et al., 1990). According to Thibaut and Walker (1975), fairness is not only about outcome distribution but also about allocation procedures. A procedure is perceived as fair when it allows individuals both process control (i.e., the opportunity to present their perspective) and decision control (i.e., the ability to influence outcomes).

However, findings on the instrumental role of voice have been inconsistent (e.g., Lind et al., 1990). Some work suggests that the meaning of voice may vary across cultural settings, shaping how individuals interpret participation in decision-making (e.g., Kidder & Muller, 1991). This suggests that perceptions of procedural justice vary across cultures, with distinct interpretations emerging in different cultural settings (e.g., Bidder et al., 2001).

The *group value theory of procedural justice* highlights relational concerns, suggesting that fair procedures communicate respect, social standing, and belonging (Tyler, 1989; Tyler & Lind, 1992). For example, Hui and Au (2001) found that Chinese students responded more strongly to opportunities to express dissatisfaction (i.e., the *voice effect*) while Canadian students placed greater emphasis on compensation after voicing concerns. These findings underscore the role of cultural values such as face, harmony, social status, and conflict avoidance—key IC aspects.

Expanding on cultural influences, Van den Bos et al. (2010) examined MF values shape procedural fairness judgments among Dutch and U.S. students. U.S. students—coming from a more masculine, achievement-oriented culture—reported

stronger preferences for voice opportunities, while Dutch students emphasize inclusion and support for lower-capacity individuals, consistent with feminine cultural orientations.

Critiques of early procedural justice research led to the development of the *expectancy-valence model* (Atkinson, 1964; Leung et al., 1995). This model proposes two pathways for understanding procedural preferences: (1) *Valence Hypothesis* – individuals may seek procedures that reduce conflict or increase influence, depending on cultural context; (2) *Expectancy Hypothesis* – fairness judgments depend on both the perceived fairness of the procedure and the favorability of the resulting outcome.

Studies applying this model across cultures found varied patterns. Bond et al. (2007) reported that harmony and performance were central to fairness judgments, whereas conflict resolution relied more on reduced retaliation and perceived control. Brockner et al. (2016) found that the association between procedural fairness and outcome favorability was stronger among individuals with interdependent self-construals. Brockner et al. (2001) also reported that students from lower-PD cultures (e.g., the U.S., Germany) showed weaker voice effects, whereas high-PD cultures showed stronger sensitivity to procedural differences.

Brockner et al. (2016) further demonstrated that students from high-UA cultures preferred consistent procedures across contexts, consistent with Leventhal's (1980) argument that procedural consistency reduces uncertainty. Additional studies reveal cultural variations in the interpretation of fairness. For example, Taiwanese students balanced relational and instrumental concerns when evaluating procedural fairness (Bidder et al., 2001), whereas American students viewed fairness primarily through relational concerns. Similarly, Tyler et al. (2000) reported that students from low-PD cultures prioritized the quality of their treatment by authorities, while those from high-PD cultures placed greater emphasis on outcome favorability. These findings suggest that respectful treatment, shaped by cultural values, influences the acceptance of authority. Moreover, mediation procedures—informal alternative dispute resolution methods—were more effective among students from low-PD cultures. Accordingly, reactions to procedural justice were stronger among low-PD students compared to their high-PD counterparts (Summereder et al., 2013).

However, several theories have expanded the relational perspective of procedural justice by integrating procedural and outcome interactions. *Referent cognitions theory* (Folger, 1987) suggests that fairness judgments arise from comparisons between actual and expected outcomes. Later, *fairness theory* (Folger & Cropanzano, 1998) broadened this view, proposing that fairness judgments emerge from a combination of instrumental and non-instrumental concerns. *Fairness heuristic theory* (Lind, 2001; Van den Bos et al., 2001) further proposes that individuals rely on fairness judgments as cognitive shortcuts, particularly

when outcome information is ambiguous. Supporting this theory, many researchers (i.e., Van den Bos, Lind et al. (1997a) and Van den Bos, et al. (1997b) demonstrated that judgments of procedural fairness depend on the conditions under which outcome information is provided.

Cross-cultural evaluations of procedural justice

Research on the relational aspects of procedural justice has produced mixed cross-cultural findings. Lind and colleagues (1997) examined whether relational variables—such as status recognition, neutrality, and trust—equally influenced procedural justice evaluations across cultures. Their findings showed no significant cultural differences in how participants assessed both personal and scenario-based dispute resolutions. Similarly, Weng (2009) found no differences between Taiwanese and U.S. students in service recovery fairness evaluations using the Critical Incident Technique.

Finally, Van den Bos (2005) introduced the concept of the *fair process effect*, which describes the influence of procedural fairness on individuals’ attitudes and behaviors in workplace settings. Fair decision-making procedures by authorities were found to be crucial in fostering trust within organizations (Dirks & Ferrin, 2002) and reducing withdrawal thoughts among employees (Griffeth et al., 2016).

Table 2

Procedural Justice in Organizational Settings Using Samples of Students (24 studies)

Author	Cultural comparison	Evaluation task or domain	Research question	Cultural orientations	Result
Leung (1987)	The US and Hong Kong	Conflict resolution (scenario-based scale)	Are there cross-cultural differences in conflict resolution approaches?	IC	S
Leung et al. (2007)*	Japan and Spain	Harmony-enhancing procedures for conflict resolution (scenario-based design)	How do individuals across cultures approach disputes?	Both C	NS
Bond et al. (2007)*	Israel and Hongkong	Conflict resolution (scenario-based design)	Does the valence-expectation model of justice vary across cultures?	IC	S
Chiu and Kosinski (1994)	The US and Hong Kong	Conflict-handling behaviors (questionnaire-based)	Are there cross-cultural differences in conflict-handling behaviors?	IC	S

Sugawara and Huo (1994) Study 1&2	The US and Japan	Fairness of dispute resolution procedures (scenario-based design)	Is procedural justice perceived similarly in non-Western countries?	Western VS non-Western	S
White et al. (2016)*	The US and Korea	Reward allocation procedures (scenario-based design)	Are rules of justice culturally bound or universal?	IC, PD, UA, MF and paternalism	S
Lind et al. (1997)*	The US, Germany, Japanese, and Hong Kong	Dispute resolution recall (scenario-based design)	Does the ethnicity of the other party influence procedural fairness judgments?	PD	S
Leung et al. (2016)*	The US and Hong Kong	Feedback acceptance as a function of interpersonal treatment	When is criticism not constructive?	PD	S
Brockner et al. (2001)* Study 2&3	The US and China	Negotiation skills in conflict resolution (scenario-based survey)	Are there cultural differences in perceptions of negotiation outcome favorability?	IC	S
Bidder et al. (2001)*	The US and Taiwan	Retaliatory behaviors (scenario-based design)	Does national culture moderate employees' definitions of fair organizational processes?	IC, PD	S
Hui and Au (2001)*	Canada and China	Complaint-handling behaviors (scenario-based design)	Do people from different cultures use different complaint-handling strategies?	IC	S
An et al. (2001)	Canada and China	Complaint-handling behaviors (scenario-based design)	Do people from different cultures use different complaint-handling strategies?	IC	S
Brockner et al. (2001)* Study 1-3	The US, Germany, China, Mexico, and Hong Kong	Voice in decision-making (questionnaire-based)	Does the magnitude of voice effects vary across cultures?	PD	S
Morris et al. (2004)	The US and Hong Kong	Dispute resolution decisions	How do cultural variations impact	IC	S

Ramamoorthy et al. (2007)	The US, Ireland, and India	(scenario-based design) Preference for fairness in appraisal and rewards (scenario-based design)	preferred dispute resolution methods? Is individualism positively related to preference for procedural fairness in appraisals and rewards?	IC	S
Petrova et al. (2007)	The US and Asia regions (China, South Korea, Japan, Taiwan, and Vietnam)	Willingness to comply with subsequent requests (questionnaire-based)	Are there cultural differences in choice-congruent behavior and compliance?	IC	S
Weng (2009)*	The US and Twain	Reaction to service recovery (Critical Incident Technique)	How do individuals with different cultural values react to service recovery?	IC, UA, CD	S
Finkelstein et al. (2009)*	French and Turkish	Cross-cultural differences in perceptions of organizational justice (questionnaire-based)	Are there cross-cultural differences in perceptions of organizational justice?	IC	NS
Van den Bos et al. (2010)*	The US and the Netherland	Voice provision (experiment-based design)	How do cultural norms shape reactions to voice vs. no-voice procedures?	MF	S
Curtis et al. (2012)*	The US, China, Japan, and Mexico	Ethical decision-making (scenario-based survey)	How do ethical attitudes differ within and between Eastern and Western regions?	IC	S
Summender et al. (2013)*	Austria, Germany, Australia, China, Japan, Indonesia, Malaysia, India, Vietnam, and the Philippines	Effect of received and violated procedural fairness (scenario-based design)	Do cultures with varying power distance differ in reactions to voice and consistency?	PD	S

Lucas et al. (2015)	The US, Canada, India, and China	Structure, endorsement, and wellness-promoting functions of distributive and procedural justice	Are there similarities and differences in justice beliefs' structure and wellness-promoting functions across cultures?	IC	S
Ng et al. (2019)* Study 1	43 countries	Perception of voice instrumentality (experiment-based design)	How does cultural distance impact voice behaviors toward supervisors?	Cultural distance (cultural intelligence)	S
Lilly et al. (2022)	The US and China	Cross-cultural differences in perceptions of organizational justice (questionnaire-based)?	Are there cross-cultural differences in perceptions of organizational justice	IC	S

Note. 1. * represented articles used in the analysis
 2. S: Significant; NS: Non-significant,
 3. IC: Individualism-Collectivism, PD: Power Distance, UA: Uncertainty Avoidance, MF: Masculinity-Femininity, and CD: Confucian Dynamism

Perceptions of interactional fairness

Cross-cultural research on interactional fairness remains limited. Most studies focus on Western participants, particularly from the United States and France, while research on Eastern participants has examined students from China, Hong Kong, Taiwan, and, to a lesser extent, Turkey. Despite the foundational work of Bies and Moag (1986), only four empirical studies on cross-cultural perceptions of interactional fairness were identified in this review, highlighting a significant gap in the literature.

To assess students' perceptions of interactional justice, researchers have employed both questionnaire-based and scenario-based methods. These studies primarily examine cultural values such as IC, PD, UA, and CD. Across these studies, group harmony is frequently cited as a key factor influencing fairness perceptions.

Theoretical foundations of interactional justice

Interactional justice, the most recent addition to *organizational justice theory* (Bies & Moag, 1986), consists of two dimensions: interpersonal fairness and informational fairness (Greenberg, 1993). Colquitt (2001) demonstrated that these dimensions are distinct and influence outcomes differently. However, many studies, particularly in service recovery contexts, continue to treat interactional

justice as a single dimension alongside procedural and distributive fairness (Weng, 2009). Fairness perceptions are shaped not only by interpersonal treatment but also by the quality of information shared during decision-making. Cross-cultural research consistently highlights the importance of relational concerns in shaping these perceptions.

Several theoretical models further inform our understanding of interactional fairness. The *relational model of justice* (Lind & Tyler, 1988), together with the *group-value model of justice*, the *relational model of authority* (Tyler & Lind, 1992), and the *group engagement model* (Tyler & Blader, 2003), suggests that individuals assess procedural fairness through their interactions within and across social groups. Fair procedures tend to strengthen group relationships, while unfair ones weaken them. This pattern implies that interactional fairness may play a role in shaping perceptions of procedural fairness (Weng, 2009).

Cultural values further shape these perceptions. Patterson et al. (2006) and Weng (2009) found that collectivist cultures, such as Taiwan, place greater emphasis on interactional fairness than individualist cultures. This suggests that fairness perceptions and related outcomes, such as satisfaction, are culturally contingent rather than uniform.

Cultural differences in interactional fairness

In collectivist cultures, procedural fairness plays a central role in how individuals evaluate their relationships with authorities and group members (Tyler & Lind, 1992). Because procedural fairness reflects group dynamics, perceptions of fairness are often shaped by relational and interactional concerns. Since authorities symbolically represent the group, how individuals perceive fairness toward authority figures shapes their broader relationships within the group.

Three key relational concerns shape fairness evaluations: trust, status recognition, and neutrality. Trust reflects perceptions of an authority's motivation and willingness to act fairly. Status recognition is the treatment of individuals with dignity and respect as valued group members. Neutrality involves the belief that decisions are based on an accurate and unbiased assessment of facts.

Cross-cultural studies suggest that PD moderates these concerns. Lind and colleagues (1997) found that in high-PD cultures, authority relationships define social interactions, leading individuals to emphasize trust and status recognition, while neutrality is more relevant in low-PD cultures. Their findings further suggest that individuals in hierarchical cultures attend less to procedural justice information because social status is culturally regulated.

White et al. (2016) demonstrated that although both collectivist and individualist groups recognized unfair outcomes, South Korean students (from a high-PD culture) rated these outcomes as less unfair than American students. This difference was attributed to cultural norms that emphasize deference to authority, hierarchical relationships, and reluctance to challenge authority figures.

Supporting these findings, Leung and colleagues (2016) examined PD’s influence on responses to feedback. Compared with U.S. students from a low-PD culture, Chinese students from a high-PD culture reacted less negatively to criticism from supervisors and viewed unjust treatment as less unfair. Chinese students also reported higher levels of trust, satisfaction, and commitment toward authorities. Similarly, Liu et al. (2017) applied the *Harmony Model of Interpersonal Justice* to examine cross-cultural differences in conflict resolution among U.S. and Chinese students. While harmony predicted justice perceptions among high-harmony U.S. students, its effect was even stronger among Chinese students.

Empirical findings in student samples

Cultural differences in interactional fairness perceptions have been consistently documented. Weng (2009) found that Taiwanese students perceived higher levels of both interactional and procedural fairness than U.S. students, who placed greater emphasis on distributive fairness in scenario-based studies. Finkelstein et al. (2009) examined how cultural values moderate the relationship between social support and interactional justice. They found that Turkish students (who exhibit high collectivism) perceived organizational interactions as fairer than French students when they had positive perceptions of social support. Together, these findings indicate that cultural values, particularly IC and PD, shape how students interpret interactional fairness, influencing their responses to authority, feedback, and group dynamics.

Table 4

Relational Justice in Organizational Settings Using Samples of Students (6 Studies)

Author	Cultural comparison	Evaluation task or domain	Research question	Cultural values	Result
White et al. (2016)*	The US and Korea	Discussions (scenario-based study design)	Are rules of justice culturally bound or universal?	IC, PD, UA, MF, paternalism	S
Lind et al. (1997)*	The US, Germany, Japanese, and Hong Kong	Dispute resolution recall (scenario-based study design)	Does the ethnicity of the other party influence procedural fairness judgments?	PD	S
Leung et al. (2016)*	The US and Hong Kong	Feedback acceptance as a function of interpersonal treatment (scenario-based study design)	When is criticism not constructive?	PD	S

Weng (2009)*	The US and Taiwan	Reaction to service recovery (Critical Incident Technique and scenario-based design)	How do individuals with different cultural values react to service recovery?	IC	S
Finkelstein et al. (2009)*	French and Turkish	Cross-cultural differences in perceptions of interactional justice (questionnaire-based study design)	Are there cross-cultural differences in perceptions of organizational justice?	IC	S
Liu et al. (2017)*	The US and China	Conflict-handling interpersonal procedures (scale-based)	Are there cross-cultural or cross-national differences in the association between interpersonal justice and conflict?	IC (Harmony)	S

Note. 1. * represented articles used in the analysis
2. S: Significant; NS: Non-significant,
3. IC: Individualism-Collectivism, PD: Power Distance, UA: Uncertainty Avoidance, MF: Masculinity-Femininity and CD: Confucian Dynamism

Limitations

This study is not without limitations. First, examining cross-cultural differences in students perceived fairness across cultural values (e.g., IC) should not imply hierarchical comparisons between Western and non-Western cultures. We caution against overly simplified classifications that assume uniform characteristics within broad cultural groups (Murphy-Berman & Berman, 2016).

Second, several studies relied on national differences as proxies for cultural values. Although these studies interpreted findings through Hofstede’s framework, they did not directly measure cultural values at the individual level, limiting conclusions to national rather than cultural distinctions.

Third, most studies used small, relatively homogeneous samples, typically college or university students from a single institution in each country. Fairness perceptions were also primarily assessed through self-report questionnaires or scenario-based designs, which limits the generalizability of findings beyond these specific populations and methods.

Fourth, many studies relied on hypothetical scenarios rather than real-life assessment experiences (Berman & Murphy-Berman, 1996). In these studies, students read narratives describing allocation procedures and interactions, but these scenarios lacked real-world consequences for decision-makers or recipients. In actual classroom settings, students interact with instructors and peers, considering how assessment decisions may impact future relationships and

outcomes. The long-term implications of fairness perceptions in real-world settings are therefore not fully captured in scenario-based studies.

Finally, although students' fairness perceptions were examined, many studies were grounded in organizational contexts, treating students as workers or managers. Since fairness perceptions are context dependent (see Poole, 2007; Song, 2026), findings from workplace settings may not fully translate to CA, where fairness is shaped through grading and instructional feedback. Future research should therefore examine fairness perceptions directly within CA contexts to strengthen theoretical and applied relevance.

Implications

Procedural perception of CA fairness

CA is both central to teaching and learning and a frequent source of fairness-related concerns. The CA fairness literature emphasizes the importance of allowing students to express concerns about assessment outcomes and procedures (e.g., Tierney, 2013). However, to date, no empirical studies have directly examined cross-cultural differences in CA procedures. As a result, how voice provision influences procedural control (i.e., students' ability to present their perspectives) and decision control (i.e., their ability to influence assessment outcomes) across cultures remains unclear. Students' opportunities to voice concerns serves both instrumental (i.e., influencing outcomes) and non-instrumental (i.e., relational) roles in CA fairness. Yet how cultural values shape these perceptions is unknown. The *expectancy-valence model of justice* provides a theoretical framework for understanding students' preferences for CA procedures. According to the *valence hypothesis*, students perceive CA as fair if it reduces conflicts and gives them more control in disputes with instructors. The *expectancy hypothesis*, on the other hand, suggests that fairness perceptions are influenced by both procedural fairness and outcome favorability. That is, students who receive better assessment outcomes are more likely to perceive the process as fair. However, these perceptions may operate differently across cultures, underscoring the need for further cross-cultural research on CA fairness.

Interactional perception of CA fairness

Several principles from *organizational justice theory* inform the interactional dimensions of fairness, yet few studies have explored these processes explicitly within cross-cultural CA contexts. Current findings suggest that interactional fairness may play a more substantial role in collectivist cultures than in individualist ones, as collectivist societies prioritize group harmony, trust, and relational sensitivity.

The *relational model of justice* proposes that procedural fairness is primarily interpreted through within-group or cross-group interactions that signal social inclusion and authority legitimacy. However, this model may not fully apply to CA contexts. Unlike many organizational settings, classroom environments—particularly in higher education—do not always involve sustained relationships between students and instructors. Instructors may change each term, and students may interact primarily through coursework and feedback rather than long-term relational engagement.

Moreover, authority relationships differ across organizational and educational settings. In workplaces, fairness perceptions shape career advancement and long-term occupational outcomes, whereas in academic contexts, fairness is experienced primarily through grading, feedback, and course-based evaluation. These structural differences suggest that interactional fairness theories from organizational contexts may not fully translate to CA fairness, highlighting the need for more research in this area.

CONCLUSION

As universities continue to diversify, culturally responsive CA practices must attend to how students from different cultural backgrounds interpret fairness (Bennett, 2023; Brookhart & Chism, 2025). This scoping review synthesizes cross-cultural findings on procedural and interactional fairness and highlights how cultural values shape students' fairness perception in meaningful ways. Although fairness is a universal concern, the principles that guide judgments about fair treatment differ across cultural contexts.

Without explicit attention to these cultural differences, generalized fairness guidelines may be insufficient for increasingly multicultural classrooms. This review underscores the need for future CA research to examine fairness perceptions directly within classroom settings and to integrate culturally grounded theory more fully. Doing so will strengthen the development of assessment practices that are not only equitable in principle, but also responsive to the lived experiences of culturally diverse learners.

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