PREDICTING ORGANIZATIONAL COMMITMENT: ROLE OF DISTRIBUTIVE, PROCEDURAL AND INTERACTIONAL JUSTICE

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ABSTRACT

The significance of organizational commitment is well documented in research. Its impact on turnover intention, productivity, absenteeism and motivation have enthused scholars to understand it in great depth. This study is an attempt to further comprehend organizational commitment. This is done by exploring the relationship of commitment with organizational justice and its three dimensions. Fairness in organization is keenly observed and responded to by the employees. The data in this study is collected from employees of public sector banks. Data is analyzed by using statistical tools of correlation and simple linear regression. The results indicate that organizational justice and its three dimensions-distributive, procedural and interactional significantly predict organizational commitment. Out of the three dimensions, interactional justice predicts commitment most strongly. Results are elaborated upon in the discussion section. Managerial implications, limitations and future research areas are also discussed.

Keywords: Organizational Commitment, Organizational Justice, Distributive, Procedural, Interactional Justice, Linear Regression

INTRODUCTION

Blau (1964) and Adams (1965) work on fairness has had a very substantial impact on the study of justice in organizational behavior literature. The significance of justice for people in organizations is evident form Folger and Cropanzano's (1998) assertion that "justice keeps people together whereas injustice can pull them apart". Cohen-Charash and Spector (2001) advocate that perception of justice due to its association with forceful individual and organizational outcomes, is very significant.

Organizational justice refers to "the just and ethical treatment of individuals within an organization" (Cropanzano, 1993). As per Greenberg (1990b), organizational justice is "the term commonly used by organizational psychologists to refer to the just and fair manner in which organizations treat their employees".

Organizational justice has three dimensions: Distributive justice, procedural justice and interactional justice. Greenberg (1990) asserts that distributive justice is a perception of justness of resource distribution among employees, with regard to their input and output. It has its base on the theory of equity propounded by Adams (1965). To resolve if justness of resource allocation has occurred, individuals gaze on the norms of allocation settled by their group/organization. (Forsyth, D. R. 2006). If the rewards are distributed in line with the existing norms, individuals perceive that fairness exists. (Deutsch,1975). The concept of distributive justice is relevant as often organizations do not treat all employees fairly and allocation of benefits is unequal and biased at the workplace.

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Thibaut and Walker (1975) were the earliest contributors to the concept of procedural justice. Procedures that are adopted to make decisions should be fair (Leventhal, 1980), and individuals ought to have a certain degree of 'voice' and 'control' over the process adopted (Lind & Tyler, 1988). Procedures are perceived to be just when they encourage fair outcomes. When the outcomes of allocation of benefits do not match individuals' needs and wishes, the process adopted to reach those outcomes comes under scrutiny, and here just procedures can dilute the effect of discontentment. (Thibaut and Walker, 1975; Greenberg, 1987; Bies and Shapiro, 1987; Lind and Tyler, 1988, McFarlin and Sweeney, 1992).

Lind and Tyler (1988) & Tyler and Lind (1992) assert that importance of procedures does not solely lie in its relation with positive outcomes but they are critical by themselves. They explain the importance of procedures in relation to the concept of group process, where the freedom to express one's opinion is seen as giving respect and status to individual as a formidable part of the group/organization.

Blau (1964) believed that employees expect honest, cordial and helpful behavior from the organization. The 1980s witnessed a new shift in an attempt to understand organizational justice holistically. The "social side of fairness" (Bies & Moag, 1986; Greenberg, 1993) was also given importance in the literature. Interactional justice came to fore as the third dimension of justice, with two sub-dimensions. Interpersonal dimension focused on the elements of respect and dignity, and the informational facet centres round transparency and openness (Greenberg, 1993). According to Cropanzano & Mitchell (2005) social exchange theory and the concept of reciprocity are the grounds on which interactional justice is firmly secured. Studies have found that managerial behavior, which is one of the important indications of interpersonal sensitivity in communication with employees had a fairness enhancing consequence on employees understanding of the decision making process. (Brockner, 1990; Tyler & Bies, 1990)

ORGANIZATIONAL COMMITMENT

Porter et. al (1974) describes organisational commitment as "an attachment to the organisation, characterised by an intention to remain in it; an identification with the values and goals of the organisation; and a willingness to exert extra effort on its behalf". Hall et. al (1970) defines organizational commitment as a "mechanism by which the objectives of the organization and employees become compatible". Sheldon (1971) emphasized that commitment is an attitude towards the organization which knits the identity of an individual to his organization.

Meyer, Allen, and Smith (1993) says that there are three types of commitment: normative, continuance and affective , and they are psychological states which determine the employees' relationship with the organizations or the plausibility that the employee will stay with the organization or not. According to Allen & Meyer (1990) affective, continuance and normative commitment are best seen as separate components, rather than types, of attitudinal commitment. Meaning, in varying intensity these psychological states may be experienced by the employees.

Allen and Meyer (1990) defined affective commitment as a want or desire to remain with the organization. They saw affective commitment as a part of overall organizational commitment, differentiating from previous research that saw affective commitment as explaining whole organizational commitment. Allen and Meyer (1990) noted that AC means employee's emotional bonding to, assimilation with, and involvement in the organization.

Meyer & Allen (1984, 1991) proposed that continuance commitment is employee's assessment of the costs related with the act of withdrawing from the organization. Continuance commitment is based on Becker's (1960) side-bet theory. Those costs or side bets could be anything related to leaving the organization like tenure, pay, benefits, moving out of city, pension, accumulated sick leave and family commitment, etc. Kanter (1968) also asserted on similar lines when he explained commitment as "profit associated with continued participation and cost of leaving."

Early definitions described normative commitment as "the moral obligation to stay with the company" (Marsh & Mannari, 1977). Normative commitment refers to an employee's obligation to stay with the organization (Meyer & Allen, 1991). The employee stays with the organization as he/she feels loyal to the organization and thinks he should stay. In its understanding, normative commitment is quite familiar to what Wiener (1982) referred as the "totality of internalized normative pressures to act in a way which meets organizational goals and interests". A normatively committed employee, therefore, will retain his association with the organization as it would be morally right to do so. As Scholl (1981) points out, the cultural and socialization process creates reciprocation and a resultant motivation to stay with the organization.

Organizational commitment is linked to important outcomes, both for individual and organization. The view that OC is a major determinant of turnover is supported by literature. Existing research submits that OC is negatively associated to actual turnover (Price and Mueller, 1981; Mowday et. al, 1982). Scholars found that high degree of organizational commitment are related with low levels of absenteeism (Mowday et al., 1979). Studies (Mathieu and Zajac, 1990; Becker, Billings, Eveleth, & Gilbert, 1996) indicate that affective commitment is positively related to job performance. Meyer and Allen (1997) advocate that employees having firm commitment would supposedly engage in OCB than those with weak commitment. The meta-analysis done by Organ and Ryan (1995) reported that organizational commitment would be significantly associated with altruism and compliance dimensions of OCB. A meta-analysis of Riketta (2002) put forward the view that organizational commitment was very meaningfully related to extra-role behaviours.

JUSTICE AND COMMITMENT

Konovsky, Folger, and Cropanzano (1987) and Hartman et. al (1999) assert that organizational justice is seen as affecting many important attitudes and behaviours in the organization. In many of the researches, positive relationships have been established between the organizational justice and organizational commitment (Lemons and Jones, 2001: 269). Ansari et al. (2000) found that fairness in employees' relations, compensation and training was positively related to organizational commitment and its dimensions.

Colquitt et al., (2001) in their study found the strong association between procedural justice and organizational commitment. Masterson et. al (2000) reported that procedural justice perceptions predicted organizational commitment. Loi et. al (2006), Clay, A., & Paul (2005) , Hassan (2002) and Tang and Sarsfield-Baldwin (1996) found that both distributive and procedural justice positively predicted organizational commitment.

Folger and Konovsky (1989) assert that the appraisal process tends to move the focus from distributive justice (outcomes) to procedural justice, which becomes the base to establish commitment. Dubinsky and Levy (1989) in their research found that level of pay, the rules governing these pay and the task of distribution (all forms of distributive justice) were positively related to organizational commitment. Quarles' (1994) study of internal audit

supervisors and staff level auditors revealed that contentment with promotion avenues (a distributive justice aspect) and satisfaction with the process of evaluation undertaken (a form of procedural justice) directly correlated with organizational commitment.

Interpersonal fairness perceptions is seen as having positive effect on individuals' attitudes and behaviours (Cropanzano & Greenberg, 1997). Wasti (2002) assert that perception of positive interactive justice coming from the organization significantly enhances the commitment that employees feel towards the organization. In addition, Otto and Mamatoglu (2015) investigated the effect of interactional justice in light of social exchange theory in the electronic information industry and found that employees' feeling about interactional justice would accentuate the organizational commitment of employees and decrease the turnover intention. Cohen-Charash and Spector (2001) see a moderate correlation between the perception of interactional justice and organizational commitment.

The social information processing theory explain that organizational practices that encourage transparent communication within an organization, extensive access to information and free and wide sharing of information is significant in increasing organizational commitment (Thornhill & Saunders, 1996). Interactional justice promotes transparency and sharing of information with employees and finds support from social information processing theory in explaining commitment. Similarly social exchange theory (Blau, 1964) is very vital in explaining the linkage between justice and commitment. The core of social exchange theory is the integration of the intent of the employees to work as a form of mutual reciprocity between employees and employers in the organization (e.g., Bateman & Organ, 1983; Brief & Motowidlo, 1986) . It is mutual reciprocation between employee and the organization. The organization provides fairness in the outcomes, its procedural aspects and interaction with the employees, who respond with commitment towards the organization.

Based on the extant literature, the following hypotheses are formed:

Hypothesis 1: Organizational Justice significantly predicts organizational commitment
Hypothesis 2: Distributive justice significantly predicts organizational commitment
Hypothesis 3: Procedural justice significantly predicts organizational commitment
Hypothesis 4: Interactional justice significantly predicts organizational commitment

Model (Figure 1)

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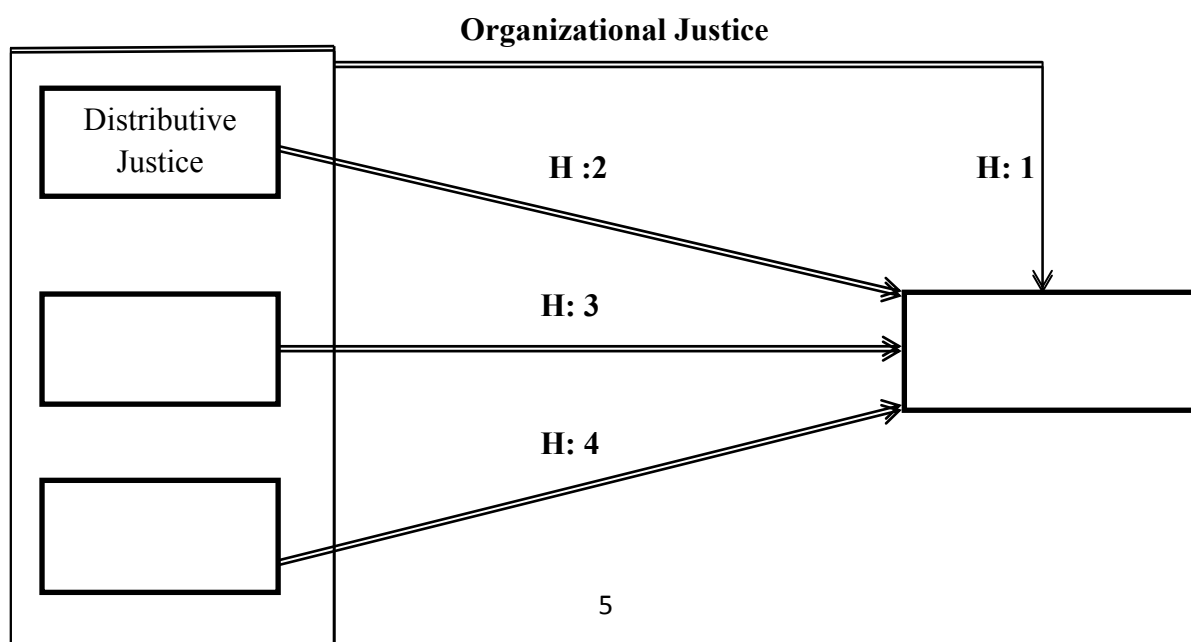
RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

SAMPLE AND DATA COLLECTION

The respondents were employees of public sector bank at the branch level. These public sector bank branches were located in small and big cities of Uttar Pradesh. Some questionnaires were administered personally and some were distributed through the bank manager. A total of 415 questionnaires were sent, out of which 344 were received back with a response rate of 83%. On further analysis 328 were found to be fully correct and this set of data was used for analysis. Data was analyzed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) 21.

MEASUREMENT SCALES

Likert scale was used in the survey to collect data for both the variables. It is one of the most prescribed formats in measuring attitudes or opinions in a quantitative study (Creswell, 2003).

Organizational Commitment was measured using the 18 item scale developed by Meyer and Allen (1990). The scale has three dimensions: Affective commitment, continuance commitment and normative commitment. A sample item is as follows, "I really feel as if this organization's problems are my own". The Cronbach alpha of the scale was .82

Organizational justice was measured by using the 20-item scale developed by Niehoff and Moorman (1993). The scale consists of three factors: distributive, procedural and interactional justice. A sample item is, "Overall, the rewards I receive here are quite fair". The scale demonstrated an internal consistency (alpha) reliability of .91

RESULTS

Table 1: Mean, Standard Deviation & Correlation Coefficients

SCALES	MEAN	SD	OC	OJ	DJ	PJ	IJ
Organizational Commitment(OC)	3.69	.53	1				
Organizational Justice(OJ)	3.35	.56	.39*	1			
Distributive Justice(DJ)	3.25	.90	.36*	.81*	1		
Procedural Justice(PJ)	3.37	.75	.33*	.89*	.61*	1	
Interactional Justice(IJ)	3.39	.48	.31*	.82*	.44*	.66*	1

* p<.01 (one tailed)   N = 328

Table 1 indicates the mean, standard deviation and correlation coefficients. Organizational justice correlates positively with organizational commitment , r (328) = .39, p< .01 , distributive justice with OC , r(328)=.36 ,p<.01 , procedural justice with OC ,r(328)=.33,p<.01 and interactional justice with organizational commitment , r(328)=.31 , p<.01

Table 2: Regression: Model, ANOVA & Coefficients

Predictor	Dependent Variable	Model Summary		ANOVA		Coefficients	
		R^2	Adj. R^2	F Value	Sig.	UC	Sig.
Organizational Justice		.15	.15	61.11	.00	.37	.00
Distributive Justice	Organizational Commitment	.31	.12	49.08	.00	.21	.00
Procedural Justice		.11	.10	40.30	.00	.23	.00
Interactional Justice		.09	.09	35.79	.00	.34	.00

UC: Unstandardized Coefficient (β)

Table 2 shows that this study found that organizational justice significantly predicted organizational commitment, $b = .37, p < .001$, distributive justice significantly predicted organization commitment, $b = .21, p < .001$, procedural justice predicts OC, $b = .23, p < .001$ and interactional justice also predicted organisational commitment, $b = .34, p < .001$. Based on the above all the four hypotheses are accepted.

DISCUSSION

This study attempted to find the relation between organizational justice and organizational commitment. The three dimensions of justice were also studied in relation to their impact on organizational commitment. Results indicate that organizational commitment is significantly predicted by organizational justice perceptions and all the three dimensions of justice – distributive, procedural and interactional. The results in this study reinforce the existing literature on organizational justice, dimensions of justice and organizational commitment. (Lemons and Jones, 2001; Colquitt et al., 2001; Quarles, 1994; Cohen-Charash and Spector 2001). Organizational commitment, which is a predictor of significant workplace variables (Price and Mueller, 1981; Mowday et. al, 1982) is explained by organizational justice. The preeminence of fairness in organizations (Yadav & Yadav, 2016) and its ability to predict organizational commitment is supported. Interestingly, the results show that interactional justice ($b = .34$) comes out as a stronger predictor of organizational commitment in comparison to distributive($b = .21$) and procedural justice($b = .23$) , which are considered as stronger predictors of commitment in previous researches. (Tyler, 1990; Greenberg, 1994; Lowe and Vodanovich, 1995).

Ando and Matsuda (2010) assert that employees perceive high interaction justice when they are treated well during the process/procedure that are adopted and executed by the organisations at various points of time. Thus, it can be a case that fairness in procedures may indirectly push interactional justice perceptions. Bies & Moag (1986) advocated truthfulness, respect and justification as key aspects of interactional justice which influence employee's perceptions. These are valuable human qualities that every employee would cherish in an organization. These become even more admirable when the employees are facing various pressures and challenges due to changes in the organization and its eco-system, as is the case with employees of public sector banks which are the respondents in this study. Studies by

Rodell and Colquitt (2009) & Van Dam et. al (2008) found evidence that perception of interactional justice helps in acceptance of change and lessens the resistance to change.

The results strengthen the social exchange theory of mutual reciprocation in relation to the presence of organizational justice and employee's organizational commitment. With specific reference to interactional justice's relation with organizational commitment it adds to the literature on social information processing theory.

MANAGERIAL IMPLICATIONS, LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH

The importance of fairness in organizations is getting due attention and this study also propels managers and leaders to devote their time and effort in understanding and imbibing fairness in their organizations. Special effort should be made in dealing with employees in a transparent and trustful manner. Organizations can reap the rewards of employee commitment by being fair in outcomes, procedures and interactions with reference to employees.

Some limitations in this paper could be on the following grounds. As it is a cross-sectional study, conclusions that are made with respect to the directions of causality as seen in the model (figure 1) should be made with caution. Common method variance could be one potential problem as data is on self-reported basis. This work is specifically related to employees of public sector bank in the state of Uttar Pradesh, therefore generalizations across sectors and cultures cannot be made. Further research could target other sectors of the economy to know the relation between these variables. Longitudinal studies could be undertaken to effectively report and re-affirm these results.

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