

Organisational Justice and Organisational Commitment among Academic Staff of Some Selected Universities in Edo State

Osazuwa Osazemwinde

Department of Business Administration

University Of Benin

Correspondence: +2348064244385

osazosaz1@gmail.com

Pascal Nwokike

Department of Business Administration

Benson Idahosa University

+2347063176460

pnwokike@biu.edu.ng

Joseph Azage

Department of Business Administration

University Of Benin

+2347034499445

azagejoseph@gmail.com

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Abstract

The influence of perceived organisational justice on the organisational commitment of university academic staff in Edo State, Nigeria was examined in this study. The survey research design was adopted of which Yamane's sample determination formula was then used to determine the sample size of 343 academic staff in three selected universities: University of Benin (UNIBEN), Benin City, Ambrose Alli University (AAU), Ekpoma and Benson Idahosa University (BIU) in Edo State, Nigeria. 343 copies of the structured questionnaire were conveniently distributed via stratified random sampling after which 313 copies were properly filled and retrieved for use. The data collected from the field survey were analysed using descriptive and inferential statistical techniques. The main findings from the study revealed that at a 5% significance level, distributive justice (0.000) and procedural justice (0.000) has a positive significant influence on organisational commitment. This study concludes that organisational justice significantly impacts organisational commitment by 59 % as shown by our empirical finding and thus recommends that administrators of universities should increase and sustain efforts in the fair remuneration of academic staff based on their personal attributes, skills, experience, and professional qualifications, promote fair methods, policies and procedures used to reach decision outcomes/rewards.

Keywords: Organisational Justice, Distributive Justice, Procedural Justice, Organisational Commitment, and Universities.

Introduction

Employees compare the treatment they receive in their workplace with the treatment that others receive and make judgments about the level of justice in the organisation based on their perceptions. It is believed that these evaluations play a key role in the way members perform their organisational duties and responsibilities. Therefore, the concept of organisational justice is frequently included in studies concerning organisations and management (Cohen-Charash & Spector, 2001; Konovsky, 2000).

Organisational justice which is defined as the study of people's perceptions of justice in the organisation (Greenberg & Baron, 2009) has been highlighted as a fundamental aspect of concern for both organisations and employees (Pekurinen et al 2017) and a driving force of employee commitment with a purpose of achieving the goals of the organisation (Rahman *et al* 2016). Perceptions of organisational justice such as distributive justice, procedural justice, interpersonal justice, and informational justice have proven to be some of the most important determinants of organisational commitment because, employees with positive perceptions of organisational justice tend to show positive behaviours such as improved loyalty and performance, while those with negative perceptions of organisational justice are likely to reduce their effort and commitment to their organisation (Cemal, 2014).

Organisational commitment, on the other hand, has been identified as a basic requirement for maintaining the existence of any organisation (Yavuz, 2010). The reason for this is that employees who are highly committed to their organisation are more compatible, satisfied, and productive. Hence, they work with greater loyalty and responsibility, thus attracting less cost for the organisation in terms of training, damages, and turnover (Yavuz, 2010). Today, business and corporate organisations, as well as educational institutions, are required to work in a competitive and complex environment and their success fundamentally depends on staff, who are committed to the goals of achieving values (Somech & Ron, 2007). According to Somech and Bolger (2012), organisational commitment can be represented on three levels, which include: a strong belief in the goals and values of the organisation; a willingness to make an effort on behalf of the organisation; and a strong desire to maintain membership in the organisation.

Universities around the world are created with the mission of producing high-quality human capital through effective teaching and research for economies, cultures, and societies. Consequently, academic staff of universities have the responsibility to live up to the expectations of their job, and to contribute to the growth and development of any nation. Because of the above, the academic staff of universities can be considered the engine room of the university education. In Nigerian universities, several factors can influence the commitment of academic staff, one of which is considered organisational justice. However, the job of the academic staff of universities is complex and multifaceted and therefore involves demanding contexts, physical, mental, social, and emotional, and as a result, commitments of the academic staff require a personal commitment to maintain enthusiasm and active participation in the work (Tayo & Temitope, 2019). Remarkably, the issues of academic staff's commitment in universities have attracted the attention of a lot of stakeholders in the education system. Thus, this study hypothesizes that universities in Nigeria and Edo State in particular are organisations made up of humans whose success or failure depends on the attitude of employees towards work.

Although perceptions of organisational justice and organisational commitment have been studied extensively in Western climes, other sectors and work environments (Edeh & Ugwu, 2019; Ogechukwu et al 2018; Akoh & Amah, 2015; Ajala, 2015; Akanbi & Ofoegbu, 2013), to the best knowledge of the researcher, no work has been done to investigate the influence of

organisational justice perceptions on organisational commitment of the academic staff of University of Benin, Ambrose Alli University and Benson Idahosa University in Edo State. This means that the findings of the studies cannot be generalized to the three selected university settings, given the difference in culture, work environment, and other environmental factors that tend to shape attitudes. Given the fact that academic staff is vital elements, holding various positions of authority and responsibility in the university, it is imperative to study their perceptions of organisational justice and organisational commitment as they constitute the human resources, solely responsible for educating the intellect of nations. Therefore, there is a need to fill the mentioned gap in research and knowledge by examining the level of perceived organisational justice and its influence on organisational commitment of the academic staff of the above-mentioned three universities in Edo State.

Objectives of the Study

The broad objective of this study is to examine the relationship between organisational justice and organisational commitment among academic staff of some selected universities in Edo State.

The specific objectives are:

- i. To determine the relationship between distributive justice and organisational commitment of the academic staff of some selected universities in Edo State.
- ii. To examine the relationship between procedural justice and organisational commitment of the academic staff of some selected universities in Edo State.

Literature Review

Concept of Organisational Justice

The term organisational justice which was originally coined by Greenberg in the eighties got significant attention and focus in behavioural sciences from the works of Hormans (1961), Blau (1964), Adams (1965), and Greenberg (1987) and it is concerned with employees' point of view about justice in job-related matters (Greenberg, 1990). Justice, in general terms, is defined as fairness. This may be part of the reason why scholars in organisational justice are using the two terms (i.e., justice and fairness) interchangeably. McCain, Tsai, and Bellino (2010) noted that the fundamental concept underpinning organisational justice is fairness. In modern times, with the development of organisations, individuals' perception of justice is about fairness in the workplace, such as the distribution of resources, just decision-making procedure, and equal interpersonal dealing for all (Lather & Kaur, 2015). Greenberg and Baron (2009) define organisational justice as the study of people's perceptions of justice in the organization. The term organisational justice is a general word that covers the employees' overall perceptions of fairness regarding organisational decisions and implementations, and the impact of these perceptions on the employees. From a broader perspective, organisational justice describes the individual perception of justice in organizations, their behavioral response to such perceptions, and how these perceptions affect organisational outcomes such as organisational commitment and job satisfaction (Noruzy *et al* 2011). Organisational justice is broadly composed of three or four main dimensions, distributive justice, procedural justice, and interactional (interpersonal and informational) justice. This study examined the influence of organisational justice perceptions on organisational commitment using distributive and procedural to confirm their applicability.

Distributive Justice

Greenberg and Baron (2008) see distributive justice as that aspect of organisational justice that focuses on people's beliefs that they have received fair amounts of valued work-related outcomes

for instance pay, recognition, etc. The basic principle underlying distributive justice is that employees should think that they get a fair share of the distributed resources. Based on equity theory, distributive justice perception refers to individuals' perceived fairness of decision outcomes or perceived equity about their relevance to others as propounded by (Greenberg, 1987). Demirel and Yucel (2013) add that distributive justice perception reflects an individual's interpretation as to whether their employment outcomes are fair, appropriate, and ethical. One of the key outcomes of distributive justice is employee commitment to the organisation (Akanbi & Ofoegbu, 2013).

Procedural Justice

Procedural justice as another dimension of organisational justice was introduced by Thibaut and Walker, (1975) who studied the fairness of processes in legal proceedings. Mirmohamdi and Marefat (2014) note that the word procedure as used in research in the field of organisational justice refers to a series of steps that guide actions and judgments in the allocation of resources. According to Greenberg and Baron (2008), perceptions of the fairness of the procedures used to determine the outcomes people receive are known as procedural justice. Employee procedural justice conclusions are based on the perceived fairness of methods, policies, and procedures employed in decision-making rather than the fairness of outcomes (Greenberg, 1990). Gulliance, Ozer, and Erkilic (2015) note that Procedural justice means the perceived justice of the tools, processes, and methods used in the identification of gains. Greenberg and Colquitt (2005) note that procedural justice criteria include the following important factors: Voice in making decisions, consistency when applying rules, accuracy in the use of information, opportunity to be heard, and safeguards against bias. Leventhal (1980) earlier proposed six criteria for a procedure to be perceived as fair. These include consistency, bias suppression, accuracy of the information in decision-making, correctability, representativeness, and ethicality based on conformity to personal ethical or moral values.

Concept of Organisational Commitment

Herman and Armanu (2013) defined organisational commitment as a situation where the members of an organisation do not only wish to be active players in the organisation, but feel that they have a high status within it, and are ready to exert effort on behalf of the organisation and have an impact on the activities of the organisation beyond and what is expected of them. Lambert, *et al* (2007) refer to organisational commitment as the situation in which employees feel loyal to their organization and are aligned with organisational goals and objectives. Herman and Armanu (2013) argue that commitment to an organization includes the employee's attitude towards the organization and the willingness to pursue everything for the good of the organisation and not just for formal participation in the organization. Gemlik, Sisman, and Signri (2010) add that the term organisational commitment is a multidimensional construct, where a person feels psychologically connected to an organization.

Theoretical Review

This study reviewed and adopted two key theories of organisational justice and organisational commitment: Justice Judgement Theory and Social Exchange Theory. The Justice Judgment Theory describes how people proactively employ justice norms to rationalize administrative decision-making in resource allocation introducing six measures of procedural justice which include consistency across people and time, free from bias, the accuracy of information used in

decision-making, the existence of some mechanism to correct flawed decisions, conforming to standards of ethics and morality and inclusion of opinion of various groups involved in the decision process. The Social Exchange Theory posits that all human relationships and interpersonal interactions are formed by the use of subjective cost-benefit analysis, just like an economic exchange, except that a social exchange deals with the exchange of intangible social costs and benefits like respect, honour, friendship, and caring and is not governed by explicit rules or agreements and this usually involves the comparison of alternatives. These two theories were adopted as the theoretical framework for this study as it was well suited for this study, hopes to offer insights, explore the experiences of these academic staff of universities, and explain the relationship between the two variables.

Empirical Review

This study reviewed previous studies of other researchers who adopted/adapted either one or more dimensions (one, two, three, and four) of organisational justice behaviour.

Ogechukwu, *et al* (2018) explored the relationship between distributive justice and organisational commitment in Rivers State administration. The study revealed that distributive justice affects organisational commitment. Abasimi, *et al* (2014) examined the effect of the perception of procedural justice on organisational commitment of survivors of layoffs in selected organisations in Ghana. The results showed that perception of procedural justice had a positive and significant relationship with affective commitment, but did not positively relate to the continuance and normative commitment.

Akoh and Amah (2015) conducted research on interactive justice and employee involvement with the Nigerian health supervisor. The result of the study showed that there is a positive relationship between the two dimensions of organisational justice (interpersonal justice and information justice) and organisational commitment as employees with a high perception of interpersonal justice and information justice had a higher level of commitment to the supervisor. It was also discovered that the degree of influence of interpersonal justice in the commitment of employees to the supervisor was stronger than that of information. Rahman *et al.*, (2015) examined the effects of organisational justice on organisational commitment in higher education institutions in Pakistan. The result revealed that distributive justice and procedural justice both have a noteworthy and positive relationship with organisational commitment.

Edeh and Ogwu (2019) conducted a study to investigate the relationship between organisational justice and employee participation in selected teachers from private secondary schools in the Nigerian state of Bayelsa. The result showed that distributive justice, procedural justice, and interactional justice were positively and significantly associated with employee commitment. Tafamel and Akrawah (2019) also examined the role of organisational justice and employee commitment to the University of Benin. The results revealed that distributive justice and procedural justice have a positive and significant relationship with employee commitment, while interactional justice has a positive and insignificant relationship with employee commitment.

Alromeedy (2017) investigated the effect of organisational justice on organisational commitment in the Egyptian Travel Agencies. The result showed that organisational justice's dimension of distributive justice, procedural justice, and interactional justice has a positive and significant relationship with affective commitment, continuance commitment, and normative commitment. Ajala (2015) investigated the influence of organisational justice on organisational commitment in manufacturing firms in Ibadan, Oyo State, Nigeria. The findings of the study showed that there

was a significant positive relationship between distributive justice, procedural justice, international justice, and organisational commitment.

Karanja (2016) studied the effect of organisational justice on organisational participation in public secondary schools and commercial banks in Kenya. The objectives of the study were to determine whether perceptions of distributive justice, procedural justice, interpersonal justice, and information justice had an impact on organisational commitment and to determine whether the effects of organisational justice on organisational commitment differed significantly between schools and employees of the banking sector. The result of the study showed that organisational justice significantly affected the organisational commitment of teachers. Procedural justice and information justice are useful predictors of teachers' organisational commitment. Only procedural justice was found to be an important predictor of organisational commitment for bank employees. The result also showed that the effect of organisational justice on teachers' organisational commitment was significantly different from that of bank employees.

Methodology

The cross-sectional survey research design was adopted as a structured questionnaire was designed and distributed to the respondents because the sampled elements and variables being studied are simply observed at a particular time interval without making any attempt to control or manipulate them. The population of this study consisted of all academic staff of three (3) selected universities in Edo State, Nigeria which were chosen due to the proximity to the researchers and sums up to two thousand, four hundred and eight (2408) staff and the sample was gotten from this population.

The stratified random sampling was used to administer copies of the questionnaire to a total of three hundred and forty-three (343) academic staff of these universities, which were conveniently selected and constituted the sample size. The sample size was arrived at by the use of the number estimation formula suggested by Yamane (1981) and the sample size of 343 staff was arrived at.

A structured questionnaire was designed using a five-point Likert scale by administering questionnaires to respondents to obtain data for this study and this is a primary source of data. It comprised two sections. Section A provides for socio-demographic data of the respondents while Section B contains questions on the subject matter which were meant to elicit the data on the independent variables, perceptions organisational justice (distributive justice and procedural justice), and the dependent variable, organisational commitment. The questionnaire-response format on the core subject matter (Section B) consisted of Likert-type questions, with options on a 5-point scale ranging from 1 – 5 i.e. (1) = Strongly Disagree (2) = Disagree, (3) = Neutral, (4) = Agree (5) = Strongly Agree. The administration of copies of the questionnaire to the respondents was done by using online surveys like Google Forms, online monkey survey among others, and physical contact.

To ensure the reliability of the measuring instrument, the test/retest method was used to determine the reliability of the measuring instrument. Copies of the questionnaires for this survey were distributed to the staff of the selected organisations. The same set of questionnaires was administered on a different occasion to the same group of respondents; after which the scores of the respondents from the two tests were examined to establish the degree of consistency between them. The Cronbach's alpha value for each construct as portrayed in the Table is shown below.

Table 1: Reliability Test

S/N	Variables	Number of Items	Cronbach's Alpha Value
1	Organisational Commitment	17	0.895
2	Distributive Justice	4	0.851
3	Procedural Justice	7	0.802

Source: SPSS OUTPUT, 2024.

The value of Cronbach's coefficient alpha of the organisational commitment and dimensions of organisational justice (distributive justice and procedural justice) ranging from 0.802 to 0.895 are within the acceptable values of alpha from 0.70 to 0.95, the criterion suggested by Nunnally (1978) and are therefore considered good indicators of the reliability of the instrument. The study adopted the scale of Allen and Meyer (1997) and Colquitt (2001).

Model Specification

In this study, we employed the multiple regression model to test the relationship between the dependent variable (organisational commitment) based on a change in the independent variable, organisational justice (distributive justice and procedural justice).

The model for the study is expressed functionally as:

$$ORGCMT = f(ORGJ) \dots\dots\dots (1)$$

Where ORGJ = DJS, PJS

$$ORGCMT = f(DJS, PJS) \dots\dots\dots (2)$$

The model is further expressed mathematically as

$$ORGCMT = \beta_0 + \beta_1 DJS + \beta_2 PJS + e \dots\dots\dots (3)$$

Where: β_0 = Constant; β_1 and β_2 = Coefficients of the independent variables; ORGCMT = Organisational commitment; DJS = Distributive justice; PJS = Procedural justice; e = error term

Our Apriori expectation was stated as: $\beta_1 > 0$ and $\beta_2 > 0$ (4)

The Apriori expectation connotes that a unit increase in organisational justice via its' proxies of distributive justice and procedural justice will lead to an increase in organisational commitment leading to a positively significant relationship between the two variables.

Method of Data Analysis

The data obtained from the field survey was analysed via descriptive and inferential statistical techniques such as mean, standard deviation, percentages, and the Ordinary Least Squares Method using the computer software: The Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 21 at a 5% level of significance.

Data Presentation/Analysis

Diagnostic Tests on the relationship between organisational justice and organisational commitment

The Pearson correlation and ordinary Least Squares Regression Analysis were conducted on the collected data and the results are presented below:

Table 2: Mean, Standard Deviation and Pearson's Correlation Coefficient for All Variables

Variables	Mean	Standard Deviation	ORGC MT	DJS	PJS
ORGCMT	4.06	0.89	1		
DJS	3.65	0.99	0.386**	1	
PJS	4.33	0.96	0.042	0.585**	1

Authors’ Computation (2024) (SPSS21) **. Correlation is significant at 0.01 level (1-tailed).

Table 3 shows associations among variables and checks if there is the presence of multicollinearity. It was observed that when organisational commitment (ORGCMT=1) was at perfect unit value, justice system practices proxied with the distributive justice system (DJS=0.386**); procedural justice (PJS= 0.042) were positively associated with organisational commitment at 1% (1-tailed). Consequently, there was no presence of multicollinearity since none of the variables was perfectly correlated at above 0.80 (80%) with organisational commitment as suggested by Bryman and Cramer (2005) for the case of multicollinearity.

Table 3: Regression Analysis Using Ordinary Least Square Estimation Technique

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	-.325	.072		-4.517	.000
1 DJS	.159	.027	.226	5.989	.000
PJS	.210	.060	.160	3.534	.000

R = 0.758^a; R Square = 0.591; Adjusted R Square = 0.588; Standard Error of the Estimate = 0.2692983; F Stat = 205.972; Durbin-Watson = 1.554

Authors’ Computation (2024) (SPSS21)

The regression results showed a high positive correlation coefficient of 0.768 (77%), which is highly and positively correlated with organisational commitment. The coefficient of determination ($R^2 = 0.591$), implied that the explanatory variables in the model accounted for 59% of variations in the dependent variable (Organisational Commitment). Also, the adjusted coefficient of determination ($R^2=0.588$) indicated that about 59% of the variations were explained after adjusting the degree of freedom by the independent variables.

The overall test (F-statistic) (goodness-of-fit measure) which indicated a value of 205.972 units and at the significant level of 1%, compared with the standard error of regression with a minimal value of 0.2692, suggested that the overall result is statistically significant and that a linear relationship exists between organisational justice system practices and organisational commitment. The Durbin-Watson statistic with the value of 1.554, implied the absent of autocorrelation in the result, a further indication that the results are suitable for forecasting and policy decision-making.

Hypothesis One

The distributive justice (DJS) result stood at a t-statistic value (-5.989) and probability value (0%) while the critical value was at a 5% significance level. The result indicated statistical significance. The implication is that distributive justice practice is a strong determinant of the reward system concerning organisational commitment. Distributive justice was at a positive coefficient value (0.159) which is consistent with our apriori expectation. Regarding the decision rule stated earlier, we, therefore, reject the hypothesis formulated as there is a significant relationship between distributive justice and organisational commitment among academic staff of universities in Edo State. Distributive Justice System (DJS) had a positive coefficient value of

0.159 units with organisational commitment, implying that a unit increase in distributive justice (DJS) would lead to an increase in organisational commitment by 16%. This is in line with findings from previous studies done in the Western world (Tyler et al, 1998; Colquitt & Jackson, 2006; Demirel & Yucel, 2013) and studies carried out in Africa (Ajala, 2015; Karanja, 2016; Gichira, 2016; Alromeedy, 2017; Ogechukwu *et al*, 2018)

Hypothesis Two

Procedural justice (PJS) was at a calculated t-statistics value of 3.534 and probability of 0.00(0%) while the critical probability value was 5% significance level. The outcome indicated that procedural justice is statistically significant and its coefficient was positive at 0.210. Following the decision rule, this showed that we reject the hypothesis formulated indicating that there is a significant relationship between procedural justice and organisational commitment among academic staff of universities in Edo State. Procedural justice (PJS) had a positive coefficient value of 0.210 units with organisational commitment suggesting that a unit increase in procedural justice would lead to an increase in organisational commitment by 21%. This is in line with the principle of procedural justice by Greenberg (2002) and also consistent with findings from other studies (Tafamel *et al*, 2019; Alromeedy, 2017; Abasimi *et al*, 2014; Rahman *et al*, 2015)

Discussion of Findings

Having analysed and interpreted the various results, the findings of this study are discussed as follows:

First, it was observed that distributive justice was statistically significant. Distributive justice has a significant and positive influence on organisational commitment, suggesting that it is a critical factor of organisational justice system practices concerning organisational commitment. The result showed a positive coefficient of 0.159, such that an increase in the distributive justice system could lead to an increase in organisational commitment by about 16%.

Second, the study found that procedural justice was statistically significant, implying that it is a strong influencing factor of organisational commitment. Accordingly, procedural justice was found to have a positive coefficient value of 1.136 as indicated in Table 3, suggesting that a unit increase in procedural justice could lead to an increase in organisational commitment by the corresponding value.

Conclusion

This study examined the relationship between organisational justice and organisational commitment of the academic staff of some selected universities in Edo State, Nigeria. Specifically, the study assessed the relationships between each dimension of organisational justice namely, distributive justice, procedural justice, and organisational commitment of the academic staff of the selected universities. The study revealed that the two dimensions of organisational justice (distributive justice and procedural justice) are significantly related to organisational commitment.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations were made:

1. Universities need to promote employee participation by designing employment conditions that are internally consistent with employee efforts and externally competitive by setting clear rules for remuneration, and enforcing rules for increases and promotions so that they can favourably compare to their colleagues in other similar organizations.
2. Employee engagement with the organization should be significantly increased by improving organisational justice, particularly procedural justice by involving academic staff in the

procedures used in making decisions and allocating rewards and through employee involvement which gives employees a voice during a decision-making process, influence over the outcome or by adherence to fair process criteria, such as consistency, lack of bias, correctability, representation, accuracy, and ethicality.

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