

THE ROLE OF ORGANIZATIONAL JUSTICE ON EMPLOYEE COMMITMENT OF SENIOR NON- ACADEMIC STAFF IN THE NIGERIAN UNIVERSITIES.

Munir Shehu Mashi

College of Business, Universiti Utara Malaysia, Malaysia (UUM)
06010 Sintok, Kedah DarulAman Malaysia
Tel: +601126903110, Email: Munirshehu@ymail.com

Olanrewaju Atanda Aliu

Department of Accounting
University of Ilorin
Email: lanre@unilorin.edu.ng

Abstract

Highly committed workers are prerequisite resource for a successful organization. Empirical evidences have shown the impact of distributive justice, interactional justice and procedural justice among the determinants fostering workers' commitment. Grounded in social exchange theory, this study examines the influence of distributive justice, interactional justice and procedural justice on employee's organizational commitment among senior members of non- academic staff in the Nigerian universities. The study applied partial least square structural equation models (PLS-SEM) to analyze data obtained from 201 non- academic staff. The results show that among the hypothesized relationships of the study variables there is significant positive relationship between distributive justices ($\beta=0.1945$; $t=2.33$; $p=0.01$), ($\beta=0.3664$; $t=3.82$; $p=0.00$), ($\beta=0.365$; $t=4.297$; $p=0.00$) on the three dimension of commitment. Additionally, positive relationship exists between interactional justice ($\beta=0.287$; $t=3.54$; $p=0.00$), ($\beta=0.269$; $t=2.97$; $p=0.001$), ($\beta=0.142$; $t=1.61$; $p=0.054$) on the three dimension of commitment. On the contrary, the relationship between procedural justice ($\beta=0.0225$; $t=0.289$; $p=0.386$) and continuance commitment is not supported. This paper contributes to the existing human resources literature on employees' commitment and guides university management on how to improved employees' commitment. The paper recommends that universities should consider as relevant factor aspects of organizational justice in an effort to enhance workers commitment.

Keywords: Distributive justice, interactional justice, procedural justice, organizational commitment, Universities

Introduction

Employees are vital assets towards the success or failure of an organization in a turbulent environment. Employees' commitment has been regarded as significant factor of dedication and loyalty to their organization (Rhoades, Eisenberger & Armeli, 2001). Meyer and Allen (1991) stated that highly committed workers have a sense of identification and belonging that increases their participation in the organization's activities and willingness to contribute to the attainment of organization's goals and objectives and influence their desire to remain with the organization. In addition, committed employees are always proud of their organizational membership

and exhibit higher echelons of productivity (Mowday, Porter & Steers, 1982; Steinhaus & Perry, 1996). Employees' commitment served as fundamental indicator of the effectiveness of an organization (Lincoln & Kalleberg, 1990). Similarly, it is generally agreed that employees' commitment can result to a high-quality exchange between organization and its employee (Colquitt, Baer, Long & Halvorsen-Ganepola, 2014).

Employee perception of organizational justice is generally agreed by organizational researchers as an influencing factor in employee commitment to the organization. Employee perceptions of organizational justice may promote the spirit of organizational commitment whereas absence of organizational justice is likely to lead to low commitment among employees. Employees who perceive unfairly treat from their organization are likely to display limited commitment. On the other hand those who perceive equal treatment will contribute to the organization through their commitment. This paper investigates the relationship between organizational justice and employee commitment in the Nigerian universities to contribute to the countries' effort to achieve Vision 2020. Understanding this relationship is particularly significant in the Nigerian context (Owolabi, 2012) for at least two reasons for a number of reasons. Firstly, there is scarcity of empirical studies on organizational justice, and organizational commitment within Nigerian context (Karatepe, 2011; Owolabi, 2012). Secondly, as Nigeria strives to achieve rapid economic growth, the impact of committed workers as the engine to stimulate this growth cannot be over-emphasised. Besides, majority of the studies related to organizational justice are mainly from western and Asia countries (Agarwal, 2014; Rai, 2015). Only a few studies (Ajala 2016; Owolabi, 2012) were conducted in Africa in general and Nigeria in particular and the findings may not be generalizable due to countries cultural differences (Hofstede, 1980). Similarly, the existing related studies above in Nigeria focused on health and manufacturing industries. To extend the empirical findings, this study focused on higher educational institutions. The introduction section of the study is followed by literature review. Section three explains the methodology of the study while section four presents the results of analyses relating to hypotheses testing. The last section presents the conclusion and policy recommendations

Literature Review

Organizational Commitment (OC)

Organizational commitment has received wide attention in the literature. Organizational commitment is defined as “an individual’s psychological bond to the organization, including a sense of job involvement, loyalty and belief in the values of the organization” (O’Reilly, & Chatman, 1989). Meyer and Allens (1991) conceptualized organizational commitment into three dimensions comprising of continuance (CON), affective (AC) and normative (NOR) commitment. Continuance commitment refers to awareness of the costs associated with leaving the organization. Affective commitment refers to an employee’s emotional attachment to, identification with, and involvement in the organization. Normative commitment reflects a feeling of obligation to continue employment. “Committed employee is one who will stay with the organization through thick and thin, attends work regularly, puts in a full day (and maybe more), protects company assets, and who shares company goals” (Allen, & Meyer, 1997, p.3). This commitment is a psychological force that unites workers to the organization and increases the possibility that the workers may maintain organizational membership (Meyer & Allen, 1991). Allen and Meyer (1997) further opined that the workers who are more commitment to the organization will be valuable than the workers with weak commitment. Therefore, understanding the relationship between organizational justice and organizational commitment is significant to achieve desired workplace outcomes.

Organizational Justice (OJ)

Myriad of studies in organizational behavior have recognized employee perceptions of equity, justice, or fairness in the organizations as significant factor in employee attitudes and behavior (Frenkel, & Bednall, 2016; Ha, & Ha, 2015; Rai, 2015; Shan, Ishaq, & Shaheen, 2015). Workers would likely show positive attitudes about their work and work-related outcomes if they perceived fair treatment from the organization (Moorman 1991; Moorman, Blakey, & Niehoff, 1998). In extant literature, organizational justice was conceptualized in three distinct dimensions of justice, which includes: interactional (INTER), distributive (DIS) and procedural (PRO) justices. Interactional justice is related to the workers perception of quality and equity of their relations with the decision-maker such as treating workers with respect and dignity (Ramamoorthy & Flood 2004). Distributive justice on the other hand refers to the fairness of decision outcomes (Colquitt, Greenberg,

& Zapta-Phelan, 2005; Greenberg 1990). Procedural justice refers to workers perception related to the decision-making procedures used to determine the distribution of the outcome (Greenberg 1990).

Employees with higher commitment usually need to emotionally identify and attach themselves to the organization (Domínguez-Falcón, Martín-Santana, & De Saa-Perez, 2016; Meyer & Allen, 1991). Drawing from social exchange theory, workers can be committed to the organization in line with the fair treatment they get from the organization (Rhoades, & Eisenberger, 2002; Wayne, Shore, Bommer, & Tetrick, 2002). Workers who perceived they received higher level of justice have tendency to demonstrate a higher degree of organizational commitment (Ambrose & Schminke, 2009; Wan, 2016), and are likely to exhibit higher positive work related outcomes such as extra-role behavior and higher job performance (Wan, 2016; Wright & Bonett, 2002). In contrast, workers who are suffering from injustice may have a lower level of both continuance commitment, affective commitment, and normative commitment. Empirical studies have submitted that distributive, interactional and procedural justice predict organizational commitment (Ajala., 2016; Andrews, Kacmar, Blakeley, & Bucklew, 2008; Cohen-Charash, & Spector, 2001; Klendauer, & Deller, 2009; Korsgaard, Schweiger, & Sapienza, 1995).

Methodology

Study Hypotheses

Based on the reviewed literature above the following hypotheses are formulated:

- H01: Distributive justice is positively related to affective commitment of non-academic staff.
- H02: Distributive justice is positively related to continuance commitment of non-academic staff.
- H03: Distributive justice is positively related to normative commitment of non-academic staff.
- H04: Interactional justice is positively related to affective commitment of non-academic staff.
- H05: Interactional justice is positively related to continuance commitment of non-academic staff.
- H06: Interactional justice is positively related to normative commitment of non-academic staff.

H07: Procedural justice is positively related to affective commitment of non-academic staff.

H08: Procedural justice is positively related to continuance commitment of non-academic staff.

H09: Procedural justice is positively related to normative commit

Sample's Descriptive Statistic

The study is cross-sectional in terms of design. Respondents were non-academic staff of university from Nigerian universities. The respondents were drawn using simple random sampling of non-academic staff from Universities in Nigeria. Data collection was conducted using questionnaires with a seven-point Likert scale ranging from "1" "strongly disagree" to "7" strongly agree". A total of 201 filled and returned questionnaires were found usable for analysis. The sample size consisted of 156 (78% male) and 45 (22% female) with average age of 35.55years. Partial least squares structural equation modeling (PLS) was used to analyze the data. The justification for utilizing this technique is that PLS is an advanced statistical technique for testing path relationships and with the capability to handle both reflective and formative constructs (Chin 1998, 2000; Hair, Ringle, & Sarstedt, 2011)). In addition, PLS places minimal limitations on sample size and normality assumption.

Measures

Organizational Commitment

The non-academic staff perception towards organizational commitment was measured with organizational commitment questionnaire (OCQ) adapted from Allen and Meyer (1997). OCQ has 18 items with six items for each of affective (AC), continuance (CON) and normative (NOR) dimensions of organizational commitment. The six items used to measure AC reported internal consistency of 0.82. Example of Items includes: "I feel strong sense of belonging to my organization" and "I fell personally attached to my work organization". CON was measured using six items that reported internal consistency is 0.74. Example of items includes: "Right now, staying with my organization is a matter of necessity as much as desire" and "I believe I have too few options to consider leaving this organization". Similarly, NOR was equally measured using six items from that reported internal consistency of 0.83. Example of items includes: "I would feel guilty if I left my organization now" and "This organization deserves my loyalty".

Organizational Justice

The non-academic staff perception towards organizational Justice (OJ) was measured with items adapted from Colquitt (2001). The dimensions of OJ measured are: interactional (INTER), distributive (DIS) and procedural (PRO) organizational Justice (OJ). Interactional justice was measured using nine items with internal consistency of 0.79. Example of the items includes: "Has (he/she) treated you in a polite manner?" and "Has (he/she) treated you with dignity". Distributive justice was measured using four items that reported internal consistency of 0.92. Example of items includes: "My outcome reflects the effort I have put into my work" and "My outcome is appropriate for the work I have completed". Procedural Justice was measured using seven items that reported internal consistency of 0.78. Example of the items includes: "I have been able to express my views and feelings during those procedures" and "Those procedures have been applied consistently".

Result**Measurement model**

The loadings were achieved as reported from Table 1 after removal of items that did not load properly (Hayduk & Littvay, 2012). The Composite reliability (CR) of each construct were greater than 0.7 as recommended by Nunnally (1978) as reported in Table 2. The average variance extracted (AVE) is above 0.5 as recommended by Fornell and Lacker (1981). In addition, discriminant validity is achieved between the dimensions as evidenced by comparing the square root of the AVE with the correlations among constructs (Fornell & Larcker, 1981).

Table 1
Factor loading and Cross loading

	AC	CON	DIS	INTER	NOR	PRO
AC2	0.5897	0.2202	0.2739	0.1723	0.2534	0.1913
AC3	0.7275	0.2505	0.3304	0.3673	0.3494	0.2099
AC5	0.7488	0.1762	0.2061	0.3454	0.3034	0.3235
AC6	0.7077	0.3469	0.3503	0.3801	0.3949	0.4527
CON2	0.2082	0.7492	0.3293	0.3799	0.3275	0.2708
CON3	0.2399	0.8346	0.4019	0.3689	0.4329	0.254
CON4	0.4371	0.8203	0.3908	0.3454	0.602	0.3185

CON5	0.2947	0.81	0.4601	0.3221	0.5113	0.2644
DIS1	0.3716	0.4589	0.8707	0.3538	0.4714	0.3977
DIS3	0.3012	0.3203	0.7284	0.3475	0.3186	0.4304
INTER1	0.4808	0.3643	0.3724	0.8272	0.358	0.4959
INTER5	0.244	0.3182	0.2688	0.7446	0.2722	0.3325
INTER7	0.3251	0.3272	0.347	0.7304	0.2147	0.2977
NOR3	0.354	0.3866	0.4019	0.2897	0.751	0.2656
NOR4	0.4237	0.4902	0.289	0.2975	0.686	0.3117
NOR5	0.3072	0.4422	0.42	0.257	0.7928	0.3303
PRO3	0.3877	0.3108	0.4003	0.3921	0.2854	0.7679
PRO4	0.348	0.2697	0.3907	0.3452	0.3272	0.8182
PRO5	0.32	0.2311	0.4117	0.4588	0.3502	0.7853

Bold values are loadings for items which are above the recommended value of 0.5.

Table 2
Convergent and reliability analysis

Variables	Item Loadings	CR	AVE
AC	0.590 0.728 0.749 0.708	0.789	0.500
CON	0.749 0.835 0.820 0.810	0.880	0.647
DIS	0.871 0.728	0.782	0.644
INTER	0.827 0.745 0.730	0.812	0.591
NOR	0.751 0.686 0.793	0.788	0.555
PRO	0.768 0.818 0.785	0.833	0.625

CR= Composite reliability AVE= Average variance extracted

Table 3
Correlation Matrix and square root of average variance extracted

Variables	1	2	3	4	5	6
AC	0.707					
CON	0.368	0.804				
DIS	0.422	0.494	0.803			
INTER	0.473	0.439	0.433	0.769		
NOR	0.479	0.585	0.502	0.375	0.745	
PRO	0.446	0.344	0.507	0.503	0.405	0.791

Diagonals (in bold) represent the square root of average variance extracted while the other entries represent correlations coefficients

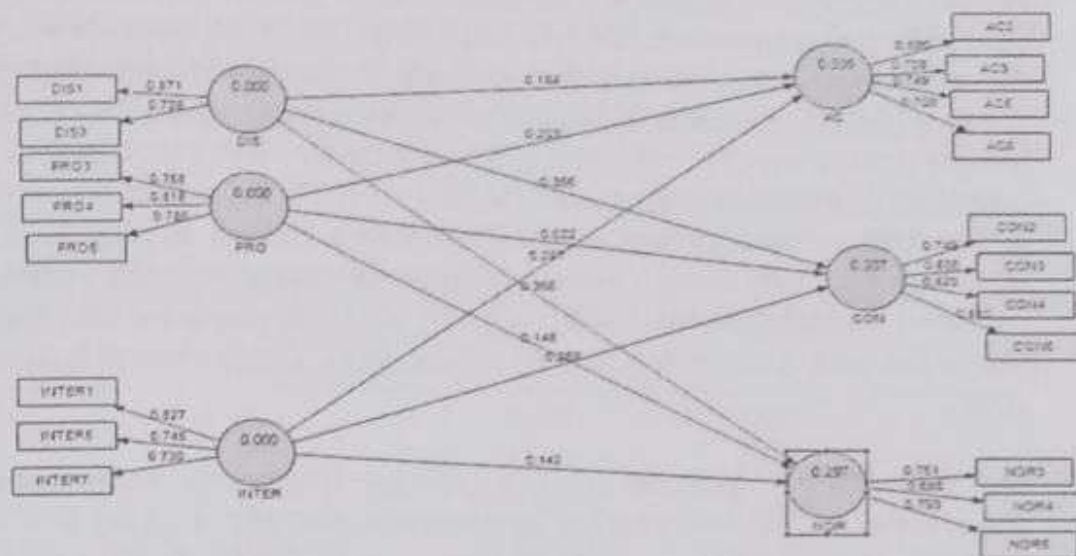


Figure 1: PLS Algorithm

Table 4
Results of Path Coefficients, t-Value and Hypotheses Testing

hypotheses	Hypothetical Path	β value	Standard Error (STERR)	t value	p-value	Inference
1	DIS $\rightarrow$ AC	0.1945	0.0835	2.33	0.010**	Significant
2	DIS $\rightarrow$ CON	0.3664	0.0957	3.8277	0.000***	Significant
3	DIS $\rightarrow$ NOR	0.3658	0.0851	4.297	0.000***	Significant
4	INTER $\rightarrow$ AC	0.2868	0.081	3.5389	0.000***	Significant
5	INTER $\rightarrow$ CON	0.2691	0.0908	2.9621	0.001***	Significant
6	INTER $\rightarrow$ NOR	0.1423	0.0882	1.6127	0.054*	Significant
7	PRO $\rightarrow$ AC	0.2035	0.0789	2.5803	0.005***	Significant

8	PRO -> CON	0.0225	0.0777	0.2893	0.386	Not Significant
9	PRO -> NOR	0.1479	0.0757	1.9541	0.025**	Significant

***p< .01, **p< .05, *p< .10

Source

The study examines the relationship between three dimensions of organizational justice on the perception of university non-academic staff organizational commitment. The summary and interpretation of the results are presented in Table 4. The findings indicated that a positive relationship exists between distributive justice and affective commitment of non-academic staff ($\beta=0.1945$; $t=2.33$; $p=0.01$), thereby supporting H01. This is in consistency with the previous studies (Ajala, 2016; Andrews et al., 2008; Cohen-Charash & Spector, 2001; Klendauer & Deller, 2009; Korsgaard, et al., 1995). The result also showed that a positive relationship exists between distributive justice and continuance commitment ($\beta=0.3664$; $t=3.82$; $p=0.00$). Supporting H02 which is in line with previous studies (Ajala, 2016; Cohen-Charash & Spector, 2001). Moreover, the study found a positive relation between distributive justice and normative commitment ($\beta=0.365$; $t=4.297$; $p=0.00$) supporting H03 which is also in line with the previous findings (Ajala, 2016; Cohen-Charash & Spector, 2001).

The study further indicated that a positive relationship exists between interactional justice and affective commitment ($\beta=0.287$; $t=3.54$; $p=0.00$) Supporting H04 which is congruent with previous studies (Andrews et al., 2008; Klendauer & Deller, 2009). Additionally, the study found a positive relation between interactional justice and continuance commitment ($\beta=0.269$; $t=2.97$; $p=0.001$) supporting H05 which is in line with the previous findings (Cohen-Charash & Spector, 2001; Wang, Liao, Xia, & Chang, 2010). Moreover, the study found a positive relation between interactional justice and normative commitment ($\beta=0.142$; $t=1.61$; $p=0.054$) supporting H06 which is in line with the previous findings (Ajala, 2016; Cohen-Charash & Spector, 2001).

The study further indicated that a positive relationship exists between procedural justices and affective commitment ($\beta=0.204$; $t=2.58$; $p=0.005$) Supporting H07 which is congruent with previous studies (Andrews et al., 2008). The study found a positive relation between procedural justices and continuance commitment but the relationship is not significant in Nigerian context ($\beta=0.0225$; $t=0.289$; $p=0.386$) not supporting H8 which is in line with the previous findings that reported non-significant relationship (Jamaludin, 2009). Moreover, the study found a positive relation between procedural justices and normative

commitment ($\beta = 0.148$; $t = 1.95$; $p = 0.025$) supporting H09 which is in line with the previous findings (Ajala, 2016; McDowall, & Fletcher, 2004).

The coefficient of determination (R^2) of the model are 0.309, 0.297 and 0.215 which implied that distributive justice, interactional justice and procedural justice collectively explained 30.9% of the variations in affective commitment among non-academic staff in Nigerian. Similarly, distributive justice, interactional justice and procedural justice collectively explained 30.7% of the variations in continuance commitment. Likewise distributive justice, interactional justice and procedural justice collectively explained 29.7.9% of the variations in normative commitment. (R^2) values of 0.67, 0.33 and 0.19 are considered as substantial, moderate, and weak respectively (Chin, 1998). Therefore, all the R^2 in this study can be categorized as moderate. Another important criterion for assessing a structural model is effect-size (f^2). Cohen (1988) classified effect-size of 0.02, 0.15 and 0.35 as small, medium, large respectively. The effect sizes (f^2) predictors in this study are as presented in Table 5.

Table 5
Results and Inference of Effect Size f^2 Estimate

Exogenous latent variable	Endogenous latent variable	(f^2).	Inference
DIS	AC	0.03	Small
PRO	AC	0.04	small
INTER	AC	0.07	Small
DIS	NOR	0.15	Medium
PRO	NOR	0.02	Small
INTER	NOR	0.02	Small
DIS	CON	0.15	Medium
PRO	CON	0.00	None
INTER	CON	0.07	Small

Conclusion and Policy Recommendations

Drawing from social exchange theory (SET), it appears that workers with higher perceptions of organizational justice reciprocate to their organization high levels of commitment (Blau, 1964; Emerson, 1976). This study tested relationships via data collected in the university environment in Nigeria. This is significant to the scant literature and data derived from the samples of the developing countries. Therefore, this study addresses this gap in the human resources literature.

From practical perspectives, this study provides insight to university administrators to reinforce organizational justice practices at workplace. Various recommendations can be made for the university especially human resources department. It is significant for both the employees and human resources department to understand the impact of organizational justices on employee commitment as both parties are equally affected by its implications. Thus, the study provides the following recommendations:

1. Universities should put in place the necessary measures to safeguard the employee justice to ensure fair treatment of all staff throughout the organization.
2. The university administrators should send messages to their workers regarding the significance of social exchange relationships.
3. It is recommended to the university management to consider the important of distributive justices such as fair in promotion, incentives and training among others.
4. University administration may appreciate the degree at which they influence employee positive attitude which may lead to commitment through the creation and maintaining high just university environment.

This study is not without limitation. Since this study was only limited to non-academic staff in Nigeria the results cannot be generalizable to other contexts and regions. Future study should focus on using other sample. In addition, this study cannot produce any statements about causation effect because the study was cross sectional. Notwithstanding the limitations, this study should be understood as a step to make a positive contribution to human resources literature in higher educational institution in particular and Nigeria at large.

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