

Justice Perceptions, Organizational Citizenship Behavior, Intention to Quit & Affective Commitment

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Drawing on the social exchange and equity theories, the present study investigated distributive and procedural justice as antecedents of organizational citizenship behavior and intention to quit, with affective commitment as a potential mediator. A conceptual path model was developed and tested using structural equation modeling and hierarchical linear regression on a sample of 295 practicing managers in India. The results demonstrated that both distributive and procedural justice had significant association with the outcomes and that affective commitment did indeed mediate the relationship between the antecedent and the consequent variables.

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Introduction

Research in organizational behavior has long argued that organizational justice is an important explanatory construct of work attitudes and behavior (Cropanzano, Byrne, Bobocel & Rupp, 2000). This has led to investigations regarding applications of justice interventions to advance organizational effectiveness. The validity of such interventions is corroborated by meta-analytic findings linking justice perceptions to employees' behaviors and performance at work (Cohen-Charash & Spector, 2001; Colquitt, Conlon, Wesson, Porter & Ng, 2001). Indeed, past studies have called for further research into the processes through which justice perceptions influence work attitudes and behaviors (Cropanzano, et al., 2000). According to one of the process theories namely, the fairness heuristic theory (Lind, 2001; Van den Bos, Lind & Wilke, 2001), employees react to a global assessment of organizational justice and this is reflected in processes and attitudes such as organizational commitment, trust, turnover, and job satisfaction (Jones & Martens, 2009; Li & Cropanzano, 2009). Addi-

tionally, two other theoretical perspectives that is, the social exchange theory (SET) and the organizational support theory (OST) have suggested an inter-relationship between employees' observations regarding organizational justice and the extent to which they are socio-emotionally attached to their organizations (Dailey & Kirk, 1992). When employees view organizational decision-making procedures to be accurate, consistent, unbiased, and correctable, they are more likely to believe that the organizational system follows processes that meet the justice criteria (Colquitt, Scott, Judge & Shaw, 2006; Leventhal, Karuza & Fry, 1980). Furthermore, studies have also found that the procedural justice dimension of organizational justice has a significant relationship with attitudinal and behavioral reactions of employees (Colquitt, 2001).

Thus, the objectives of the present study are three-fold. First, by incorporating affective commitment as a mediator, an attempt is made to provide explanations to the processes that govern the linkages between justice perceptions and behavioral and procedural work outcomes such as OCBs and intention to quit. Next, by including affective commitment as a mediator in the proposed model, an essential addition is made to published research that has mostly examined affective commitment as a critical outcome variable. Finally, this study explores the generalizability of western theoretical frameworks in a non-western context by using a sample of practicing managers and executives from India.

Distributive & Procedural Justice

According to Greenberg and Colquitt (2005), distributive justice refers to an employee's perceptions regarding the fairness or equity of outcome allocation. That is, it deals with the anticipated parity in apportionment of rewards and benefits and it has the potential to have important consequences in the organizational context.

Clearly, accumulated evidence suggests that justice perceptions influence a variety of an individual's behavior and attitudes towards his/her organization (Leow & Khong, 2009). Further, it has been observed that distributive justice may be a significant predictor of employees' OCBs because if employees believe outcomes to be unfair, then even if there is procedural fairness, the overall perceptions of equity and justice shall be undermined leading to employees' withdrawal from undertaking prosocial activities (Johnson, Holladay & Quinones, 2009). In this connection, studies related to the linkage between justice perceptions and intention to quit, have consistently demonstrated a negative relationship between the two constructs (Loi, et al., 2006). Based upon the Referent Cognitions Theory (RCT) which argues that outcomes (distributive justice) and procedures (procedural justice) co-exist in predicting a sense of overall justice or injustice. Folger and Cropanzano (1998) noted that when there is distributive injustice, it usually implies a mismatch between the individuals' input and his/her return of outcomes. Thus, employees may choose to leave their jobs in order

to end their perceived inequity (Hendrix, Robbins, Miller & Summers, 1998). This argument confirms the findings of Fields, Pang, and Chiu (2000) who reported a significant relationship between employees' perceptions of distributive justice and their intention to stay. As such, it is proposed that:

Hypothesis 1: Distributive justice will be significantly and positively related to affective organizational commitment.

To continue, while distributive justice is mainly concerned with instrumental responses, procedural justice comprises instrumental as well as non-instrumental components (Robbins, Summers, Miller & Hendrix, 2000). It has been indicated that when employees perceive procedural justice, they are likely to reciprocate with OCBs as these contributions are less likely to be hindered by situational factors (Tepper & Taylor, 2003). Additionally, when employees consider organizational rules and practices to be fair and ethical, they are more prone to demonstrate pro-social behaviors as it suggests to them that they are valued and cared for (Lund, Kulik, Ambrose & DeVera, 1993). As such, their positive perceptions of procedural justice shall encourage them to engage in OCBs (Mohammad, Habib & Alias, 2010). In this connection, affective commitment has been consistently highlighted as a key construct in the literature, either as a consequence of procedural justice or as an antecedent of OCBs (Flaherty & Pappas, 2000; Malatesta & Byrne, 1997; Rhoades, Eisenberger & Armeli, 2001; Spector & Fox, 2002; Zellars, Liu,

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Bratton, Brymer & Perrewew, 2004). Therefore, it was decided to examine its role as a mediator in the link between procedural justice and OCBs. Moreover, it has been found that cognitive assessment by an employee regarding his/her relationship with the organization is based on procedural fairness at work (Rousseau, 1995). As such, when individuals identify unfair procedures and treatment, it results in feelings of anger and frustration (Morrison & Robinson, 1997). This leads to negative attitudinal and behavioral outcomes including reduced job satisfaction and enhanced intention to quit (Kickul, Lester & Finkl, 2002). As per the above discussion, it is proposed that:

Hypothesis 2. Procedural organizational justice will be significantly and positively related to affective organizational commitment.

Affective Commitment, OCBs & Intention to Quit

In connection with the discussion above, it has also been suggested that affectively-committed employees shall engage in OCBs based on their intrinsic motivation and their self-concept levels that are central to their self-regulatory processes (Lord & Brown, 2004; Meyer, Becker & Vandenberghe, 2004). Based

on the preceding discussion, the following hypothesis is proposed:

Hypothesis 3: An employee's affective commitment will have significant positive relationships with his/her OCBs.

In this connection, another proposition linking affective organizational commitment negatively to actual or intended turnover is based upon intrinsic motivation that is, employees' positive internal feelings while working for their organization and a desire to continue the experience of attachment as opposed to harboring intention to quit (Eby, Freeman,

Rush & Lance, 1999). Accordingly, the following hypothesis is proposed:

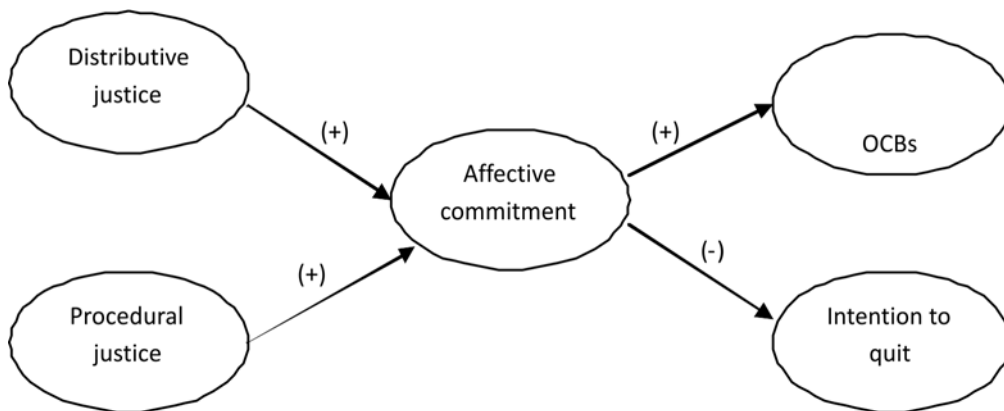
Hypothesis 4: An employees' level of affective commitment will have a significant and negative relation with his/her intention to quit the organization.

Based on the discussion above, it is also posited that:

Hypothesis 5. Affective commitment will mediate the relationship between employees' perceptions of distributive and procedural justice, and their OCBs and intention to quit.

The hypothesized conceptual model is depicted in fig.1.

Fig.1 Hypothesized Model



Sample & Procedure

For the present study, data were collected from managers of various organizations all over India. Initially 20 organizations were contacted of which nine agreed to participate in the survey. These organizations were selected through the author's contacts. Five of these organizations belonged to the

manufacturing sector such as steel manufacturing, cement manufacturing, steel plating, cable manufacturing, and refractories. The rest belonged to the service sector such as banking, insurance, healthcare, and information technology. The process of data collection involved approaching the contacts in the HR departments of the selected firms, explaining the purpose of the study and

the variables of interest, and obtaining permission to collect data.

A total of 295 usable responses were received indicating a response rate of 49.2%. Out of the 295 participants, 217 (73.6%) were males and 78 were females. Further, 27.1% of the respondents belonged to junior-level, 50.5% to the middle-level, and 22.4% to senior-level management. The average age of the respondents was 33.3 years. The average years of work experience of the respondents was 9.8 and their average tenure with their current organization was 6.5 years.

Measures

For the purpose of measurement, items were selected from the standardized questionnaires to make up a survey instrument consisting of 49 items of which six were related to the respondents' demographic details. The other 43 items related to the study variables used a 5-point Likert-type scale (1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree). A variable-wise summary of the questionnaire is presented below.

Distributive justice was measured through a scale developed by Niehoff and Moorman (1993). This scale consisted of five items. An example of the scale item is: 'I consider my workload to be quite fair'. The reliability coefficient of this scale was .76.

Procedural justice was also measured through the scale developed by Niehoff and Moorman (1993). This scale

consisted of six items. An example of the scale item is: 'To make formal job decisions, my manager collects accurate and complete information'. The reliability coefficient of this scale was .84.

Affective commitment was measured through the eight-item scale drawn from the Organizational Commitment Scale (Meyer & Allen, 1997). Examples of items used are: 'I would be very happy to spend the rest of my career with this organization' and 'I really feel as if this organization's problems are my own'. The Cronbach's alpha of this scale was .81.

OCBs were measured using 20 items of the OCB Scale reported by Moorman (1993). Out of the 20 items, four items measured conscientiousness, four items measured courtesy, three items measured altruism, four items measured sportsmanship, and five items measured civic virtue. Items included statements such as: "Help others who have heavy workloads" and "Keep abreast of changes in the organization". The Cronbach's alpha of this scale was found to be .87.

Intention to quit: Four items used originally by O'Reilly, Chatman and Caldwell (1991) were used to measure intention to quit. A sample item from this scale is: "To what extent would you prefer another, more ideal job than the one you are *now* engaged in?" The reliability index for this scale was .69.

Control variables: In keeping with prior studies (Ang, Dyne & Begley, 2003;

Avolio, Zhu, Koh & Bhatia, 2004; Loi, Hang-yue & Foley, 2006), age, gender, total work experience, organizational tenure and job position were treated as control variables for all statistical analyses.

Results

The analysis begins with confirmatory factor analyses (CFAs) to establish the distinctiveness of the measures of the variables used in this study. For this purpose, the model fit of a five-factor measurement model (i.e. distributive justice, procedural justice, affective commitment, OCBs, and intention to quit) was assessed using AMOS 16.0. As the chi-square (χ^2) test is susceptible to sample size, an overall model fit was also examined using various fit indices including the incremental-fit-index (IFI) (Bollen, 1989), the Tucker-Lewis index (TLI) (Tucker & Lewis, 1973), the comparative-fit-index (CFI) (Bentler, 1990), and the root-mean-square error of approximation (RMSEA) (Steiger, 1990). According to literature (Byrne, 2001; Hair, Andersen, Tatham & Black, 1998; Browne & Cudeck, 1993), the recommended fit values for all the fit indices are $\geq .90$ and that of RMSEA is $\leq .08$. In our analysis, chi-square of the five-factor model was 1678.80 ($df = 204$). The other fit indices were: GFI = .91, IFI = .95, TLI = .90, CFI = .94 and RMSEA = .06. All the fit indices were within the recommended range, indicating an acceptable model. We compared this model with another model where we linked all the indicators of the five constructs to one single factor and performed the Harman's one-factor test. We found that the chi-square

for the one-factor model was 2661.58 ($df = 209$). The fit indices of the one-factor model were: GFI = .55, IFI = .39, TLI = .34, CFI = .39 and RMSEA = .15 which showed a poor model fit. The significant chi-square change ($\Delta\chi^2$ ($df = 5$) = 982.78) implied that the five constructs under study were distinct.

Table 1 reports the means, standard deviation, internal reliabilities, and the inter-correlations among the study variables. All measures showed acceptable levels of internal reliabilities, with coefficient alphas ranging from .69 to .87. The pattern of correlations was consistent with the hypothesized relationships. The five study variables were also significantly correlated with each other. Distributive and procedural justice were positively correlated to OCBs ($r = .08$, *ns*; $r = .32$, $p \leq .01$) and affective commitment ($r = .17$, $p \leq .01$; $r = .39$, $p \leq .01$), but negatively to intention to quit ($r = -.28$, $p \leq .01$; $r = -.36$, $p \leq .01$). It may be noted that affective commitment was more strongly correlated to OCBs ($r = .39$, $p \leq .01$) and intention to quit ($r = -.51$, $p \leq .01$) than the two justice perceptions. Finally, OCBs had a significant negative correlation with intention to quit ($r = -.25$, $p \leq .01$).

In Table 2, the regression results from testing the hypotheses for the sample are presented. Initially, each predictor was entered along with the control variables in separate regression models. Consistent with our expectations, distributive justice ($\beta = .17$, $p \leq .01$) and procedural justice ($\beta = .34$, $p \leq .01$) were positively associated with af-

Table 1 Means, Standard Deviations, Alpha Reliabilities, and Inter-correlations Among Variables

Variables	Mean	S.D.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1. Job position	1.95	.70	—									
2. Gender	1.26	.44	-.05	—								
3. Age	33.32	7.92	.48**	-.11	—							
4. Work experience	9.76	8.08	.35**	-.02	.81**	—						
5. Organizational tenure	6.48	7.00	.17**	.06	.68**	.63**	—					
6. Distributive justice	2.98	.56	.08	.13*	.13*	.10	.12*	—				
7. Procedural justice	3.07	.71	.05	-.03	.16*	.20**	.16**	.35**	—			
8. Affective commitment	3.13	.70	.09	.06	.29**	.21**	.25**	.17**	.39**	—		
9. OCBs	3.28	.49	-.05	.01	.25**	.21**	.12*	.08	.32**	.39**	—	
10. Intention to quit	3.14	.66	-.14*	-.08	-.34**	-.30**	-.27**	-.28**	-.36**	-.51**	-.25**	—

* $p \leq .05$; ** $p \leq .01$, all two-tailed tests ($N = 295$).
Values in parentheses represent Cronbach's alpha.

fective commitment. This led to the acceptance of hypotheses 1 and 2. Furthermore, the two justice variables were also related positively to OCBs ($\beta = .16$, $p \leq .05$ and $\beta = .29$, $p \leq .01$, respectively) and negatively to intention to quit ($\beta = -.19$, $p \leq .01$ and $\beta = -.27$, $p \leq .01$, respectively). The results satisfied the first two conditions of mediation testing as suggested by Baron and Kenny (1996). Next, affective commitment was introduced in the model and OCBs and intention to quit were regressed on affective commitment, which was found to be linked positively to OCBs in the presence of distributive justice ($\beta = .36$, $p \leq .01$) as well as procedural justice ($\beta = .29$, $p \leq .01$). Similarly, affective commitment was negatively linked to intention to quit in the presence of distributive ($\beta = -.41$, $p \leq .01$) as well as procedural justice ($\beta = -.37$, $p \leq .01$). Accordingly hypotheses 3 and 4 were accepted.

To test hypothesis 5, the regression results of distributive justice and procedural justice on OCBs and intention to quit in the presence of affective commitment was evaluated. It was found that although they were still related positively to OCBs ($\beta = .01$, ns and $\beta = .19$, $p \leq .01$, respectively) and negatively to intention to quit ($\beta = -.15$, $p \leq .01$ and $\beta = -.15$, $p \leq .01$, respectively), their effects were significantly reduced compared to the previous results. Thus, hypothesis 5 that is, affective commitment fully mediates the relationship between distributive justice and OCBs and is a *quasi*-mediator between distributive justice and intention to quit, procedural justice and

Table 2 Results of the Hierarchical Regression Testing Hypotheses 1-5

Predictors	Criterion variables			
	Affective commitment	Affective commitment	Intention to quit	Intention to quit
Step 1				
Gender	.05	.08		
Organizational tenure	.09	.09		
Job position	-.03	-.02		
Age	.32**	.28*		
Work experience	-.08	-.11		
Distributive justice	.17**			
Procedural justice		.34**		
Adjusted R ²	.10	.20		
F statistic	5.56**	11.53**		
	OCBs	OCBs		
Step 2				
Gender	.09	.10	-.07	-.10
Organizational tenure	-.22*	-.22**	-.08	-.07
Job position	-.31**	-.30**	.02	.01
Age	.54**	.50**	-.16	-.14
Work experience	.03	.01	-.15	-.13
Distributive justice	.16*		-.19**	
Procedural justice		.29**		-.27**
Adjusted R ²	.13	.23	.18	.19
F statistic	7.29**	12.26**	8.79**	11.04**
Step 3				
Gender	.07	.08	-.04	-.07
Organizational tenure	-.25**	-.25**	-.04	-.04
Job position	-.29**	-.29**	.01	-.01
Age	.43**	.42**	-.03	-.04
Work experience	.06	.03	-.18	-.17
Distributive justice	.01		-.15**	
Procedural justice		.19**		-.15**
Affective commitment	.36**	.29**	-.41**	-.37**
Adjusted R ²	.24	.27	.30	.30
F statistic	12.52**	14.57**	16.74**	16.46**

Notes. * $p \leq .05$ and ** $p \leq .01$ (standardized regression coefficients are reported); $N = 295$

OCBs, and procedural justice and intention to quit was also accepted.

Discussion & Conclusion

The results supported the hypotheses that distributive and procedural justice

significantly influences employees' OCBs and their quit-intentions when mediated by their affective organizational commitment. Furthermore, organizational citizenship and employees' intention to quit or stay can be viewed as a reciprocity norm which they fulfill as a result of eq-

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uity in outcome allocation and fairness of policies and procedures. They exhibit such reciprocal tendencies by augmenting their emotional attachment and involvement with their organization. Thus, to reduce staff turnover and encourage pro-social behavior organizations should implement policies and practices that reinforce their justice perceptions. Such policies may include increasing compensation and benefits, promotions, special assignments that are viewed as status incentives, and learning and development opportunities (Kupperschmidt, 2000; Swoboda, 1999). Additionally, organizations can employ non-monetary rewards to motivate and retain their key employees such as increase in flexibility through flextime and/or work-at-home options, opportunities to develop skills and knowledge during work time, and employer-funded executive education programs (Cole, 1999; Cox, 1999; Kennedy, 1998; Withers, 1998). Thus, organizations should convey clear messages to employees that they value them and feel responsible for them.

The findings of the present study reflect that, in addition to procedural justice, Indian managers and executives placed strong emphasis on distributive justice before being emotionally involved with their organizations and thereafter, prolonging their organizational tenure

and discharging responsibilities beyond their formal role requirements. Thus, it may be inferred that local employees tend to focus upon the implications of the outcome-input allocation in their organization and as such, distributive justice play a significant role for them in assessing their organization. In terms of practical implications, this study suggests that local firms should incorporate appropriate practices that emphasize socially complex activities that facilitate synergistic interactions between members and assure performance-oriented subsystems that induce high levels of affective commitment (Barney & Wright, 1998).

In terms of the Indian context, it is clear that organizations operating in India, both domestic and foreign, need to be cognizant of the importance of justice perceptions and the resultant impact on critical organizational processes and employee behaviors. Further, given India's continuing rise on the global economic scene, and its complex and multi-dimensional cultural ethos, it would behoove organizations to pay special attention to employee perceptions, needs, and feelings. While these may not demand such close attention in western cultures, research consistently demonstrates that Indian employees are often guided by their actual and perceived treatment in deciding the level of input they bring to their tasks.

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Limitations

Despite these interesting and critical findings, the present study has some limitations. First, the research design was cross-sectional which precludes making causal inferences. Second, in this study though intention to quit was investigated actual turnover of employees was not analyzed. Future research using longitudinal research design could address the above limitations. Third, continuance and normative organizational commitment was excluded from the conceptual model. Future research may contribute to the existing literature by exploring the role of continuance and normative organizational commitment in the application of the fairness heuristics and the social exchange process. Finally, the participants of this study were managers from Indian business organizations. Their background and professional practices may limit the generalizability of our findings in other cultural and occupational settings.

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