

## **DOES ORGANIZATIONAL JUSTICE A MATTER? THE IMPACT OF DIFFERENT JUSTICE PERCEPTIONS ON ORGANIZATION COMMITMENT**

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### ***Abstract***

*This study examines the impact of organizational justice on the organizational commitment of managerial employees in XYZ company in the service sector in Sri Lanka. The study was done using a sample of 132 managerial employees. Justice perceptions were measured using distributive, procedural, interpersonal, and informational justice, while organizational commitment was measured through affective, continuance, and normative commitment. Inferential statistics comprising correlation and linear regression were applied to test the relationship between the independent and dependent variables. Based on the findings, the study concluded that all considered organizational justice perceptions positively influence organizational commitment. It is hard to find studies on the impact of different justice perceptions on employee commitment in the Sri Lankan context, especially in the service industry. Therefore, the study results will fill the contextual gap in the study area. This study provides in-depth practical insights for organizations to implement distributive, procedural, informational, and interpersonal justice practices to increase employee commitment.*

**Keywords:** *Procedural Justice, Distributive Justice, Interpersonal Justice, Informational Justice, Employee Commitment, Service Sector*

### **Introduction**

The human factors play the most important role in maintaining the organization's existence. Therefore, the emotions, attitudes, motivations, and behavior of the employees are critical for the organization. Thus, organizations need to have a committed workforce to achieve organizational goals. Organizational commitment is a psychological concept reflecting the relationship between the employees and the organization (Becker, 1960). Organizational commitment in management and organization is one of the most researched organizational behaviors studied in organs and organizations for a long time (Cohen, 2007). When there are no committed employees in an organization, the organization faces several adverse effects, such as high absenteeism, turnover, intention

to leave, and poor performance, which negatively affect the organization's efficiency and effectiveness (Bartlett, 2001; Fornes et al., 2008). Commitment relates to the binding strength that leads a person to a certain course of action to achieve specific objectives (Meyer & Herscovitch).

Even though previous researchers have tested the impact of concepts such as rewards (e.g., Nazir et al., 2016; Uraon, 2018), Training and Development (e.g., Aladwan et al., 2015; Hemdi, 2009), performance appraisal (e.g., Camilleri & Van Der Heijden, 2007; Sholihin et al., 2010) and job security (e.g., Mihirani & Sangarandeniya, 2021) on employee's organizational commitment etc, still other employee work-related aspects need to be considered in new studies to explore more strategies on

improving employee commitment.

Wang et al. (2010) stated that according to the reciprocity explained in social exchange theory, apart from the economic exchange relationships that exchange concrete and frequent material resources, employees form social exchange relationships with their organization. Supporting this notion, another important aspect suggested by Rahman (2016) is organizational justice, which may influence organizational commitment. When employees believe they are treated fairly and equitably in all aspects of their work experience, they are more likely to feel emotionally connected and may have a higher level of commitment (Lee et al., 2016; Qureshi et al., 2016). Some other researchers in different contexts have also argued that organizational justice may increase employee commitment, productivity, efficiency, quality of tasks, pro-social behaviors, etc. (Sheppard et al., 1992; Ismail et al., 2018). Similarly, Klendauer and Deller (2009) stated that more sensitive employees always seek fairness, and organizational justice provides the chance for employees to feel satisfied and committed to the organization.

However, the previous studies related to organizational justice and organizational commitment have been conducted in different countries and different sectors, such as education, Health, and national security, and their results showed that organizational justice positively relates to organizational commitment (Lambert et al., 2005; Moorman, 1991; Organ & Ryan, 1991). However, no previous study discussed the impact of organizational justice on organizational commitment in the Sri Lankan context, especially in the service sector of Sri Lanka. Organizational justice has four main aspects: procedural justice, distributive justice, informational justice, and interactional justice (Colquitt et al., 2001), and it is important to study the impact of these different perspectives of organizational justice on organizational commitment.

Therefore, in this study, the authors have focused on understanding whether these four main aspects of organizational justice significantly affect organizational commitment.

### **Aims of the Study**

The study's general objective is to identify the impact of organizational justice on organizational commitment. Thus, researchers considered the impact of the main aspects of organizational justice and organizational commitment.

Thus, the specific objectives of the study are to

- explore the impact of procedural justice on organizational commitment,
- identify the impact of distributive justice on organizational commitment,
- explore the impact of informational justice on organizational commitment and
- identify the impact of interactional justice on organizational commitment among the managerial-level employees in the selected organization in the service sector in Sri Lanka.

### **Literature review**

#### *Organizational Commitment*

Organizational commitment is an important aspect of human resource management literature. The success of an organization depends on the commitment of employees towards the organization. As defined by Lambert et al. (2005), organizational commitment is "the intensity of the bond that ties a person with the whole organization." However, it is more generally recognized to be multi-dimensional (Meyer and Allen, 1991). The affective element of organizational commitment passes on as to an emotional attachment, identification, and association of an employee with the organization in which he/she is working. The normative component reveals the feelings of employees to stay obliged with the organization. The continuance element of organizational commitment refers to the

costs that one bears while leaving the organization in which one is working (Meyer and Allen, 1991; Solinger et al., 2008; Hart, 2010; Qureshi et al., 2015).

Gemlik et al. (2010) state that structure commitment could be a multi-dimensional construct during which a person feels psychologically hooked up to the organization. Analysis utilizing this emotive approach to commitment has disclosed an associate degree inverse relationship between commitment and turnover intention (Gemlik et al. 2010) in addition to a positive relationship between commitment and regular worker attending. In the service industry, establishing justice can be a significant measure to improve job performance, efficiency, job satisfaction, and organizational commitment. Some research scientists proposed that when employees are treated with equally fair procedures and structure, it results in high organizational commitment because it is perceived that they are equally valued members of the same organization (Tremblay et al., 2010). Any organization where justice is perceived to be missing will bring some negative consequences, such as a decrease in individual performance, an increase in turnover rate, and a low level of organizational commitment (Haar et al., 2009). For both employers and employees, a high level of commitment is very desirable. Research has proved that employees show a higher level of organizational commitment when they feel the decision-making process is based on fairness to its contrary situation (Tyler, 1990).

### *Organizational Justice*

The term organizational justice has been defined in various ways by different researchers. As put by Okocha and Friday (2016), it refers to the role of equity in the workplace, and it is an examination of the conduct of an institution against its workers considering general moral and ethical values. Organizational justice has the potential to produce enormous benefits for organizations and employees; benefits include increased

trust and commitment (Cropanzano et al., 2007). Greenberg and Baron (2009) defined organizational justice as the study of people's perceptions of fairness within the organization. Organizational behavior researchers have identified four types of organizational justice: distributive, procedural, interactional, and informational justice (Colquitt et al., 2001). When employees believe their employers provide them with quality assistance, reward enhanced commitment, and provide them with equal knowledge on how results are measured, they experience fairness in the interactional nature of the work. Lind and Tyler (1988) suggest that people are more worried about the issues of processes than they are about matters of outcomes. Even if a decision results in a favorable and positive outcome, when an employee feels the process is unjust is more expected to be unhappy with the end results even if it proves to be beneficial for that employee (Cohen & Tyler, 1989).

### *Impact of organizational justice on organizational commitment*

Organizational justice was regarded as a key contributor to organizational commitment to their organization (Rahman et al., 2016). Several studies empirically confirm the impact of Organizational justice on organizational commitment. According to Akanbi et al. (2013), Hassan (2002), Jawad et al. (2012), and Sareshkeh et al. (2012), there is a direct relationship between organizational commitment and organizational justice. In addition, Akanbi et al. (2013) and Jawad et al. (2012), a significant and positive relationship exists between organizational justice and organizational commitment.

The connection between organizational justice and organizational commitment could be discussed from different perspectives. The first view is the theoretical similarity of commitment to continuity and distributive justice. Both aspects require comparing the employee's benefits with his/her contributions to organizational development.

The second view is a theoretical result of the organizational justice-organizational commitment connection associated with Adams' Equity Theory.

Employees feel more allegiance to the organization, feel pride in their employment, take care of the organization's destiny, and are motivated by job performance when they perceive that they have been impartially and similarly rewarded regarding the quantity of effort. The literature shows that procedural justice has its own importance because it has a likely effect on the attitudes of organizational members and the organizational commitment of employees (Sholihin & Pike, 2010). Blader and Tyler (2005), in an organizational study, established a hub role of procedural justice judgments in affecting organizational behavior and attitudes, such as organizational commitment.

According to Fatt, et al. (2010), Olkkonen and Lipponen. (2006), Aryee et al. (2002), justice in the distribution of rewards and resources (distributive justice) is positively related to job satisfaction and organizational commitment. The higher the levels of employees' perception towards the fairness of the outcomes an employee receives (distributive justice), the higher the resulting commitment of employees toward their organization. Distributive justice, as elaborated by Lambert et al. (2005), is not restricted to only concentrating on employee's rewards or desirable results but is also considered the fair and just way of punishment given to employees.

Though procedural justice and distributive justice are a couple of different notions, research conclusion reveals that both are essential for determining the perceptions of employees with respect to justice and have an important effect on managerial outcomes (Greenberg, 1987; Folger and Konovsky, 1989; McFarlin and Sweeney, 1992).

However, the third and fourth type of organizational justice have not been widely discussed as procedural and distributive

justice. Interactional justice is the combination of interpersonal and informational justice. In some studies, informational and interpersonal justice are mentioned separately but are sometimes indicated as interactional justice. Perceptions of respect, politeness, and dignity in one's treatment or when making decisions are a part of interpersonal justice, while the sufficiency of the explanations given in terms of their specificity, timeliness, and truthfulness comes under informational justice (Colquitt, 2001).

Rafei-Dehkordi et al. (2013), in investigating the relationship between organizational justice and organizational commitment of the staff of the Directorate of Youth and Sport of Chahar Mahal va Bakhtiari, have found that distributive justice, procedural justice, and interactional justice have a significant relationship with organizational commitment. Similarly, Olumide (2021), Karanja (2017), and Gichira (2016) have found a positive significant impact of procedural justice, distributive justice, informational justice, and interactional justice on organization commitment.

Based on the literature reviewed, the following hypotheses were formulated for the study.

H1: Procedural justice positively affects the organizational commitment of managerial-level employees in the XYZ company in Sri Lanka.

H2: Distributive justice positively affects the organizational commitment of managerial-level employees in the XYZ company in Sri Lanka.

H3: Informational justice positively affects the organizational commitment of managerial-level employees in the XYZ company in Sri Lanka.

H4: Interpersonal justice positively affects the organizational commitment of managerial-level employees in the XYZ company in Sri Lanka.

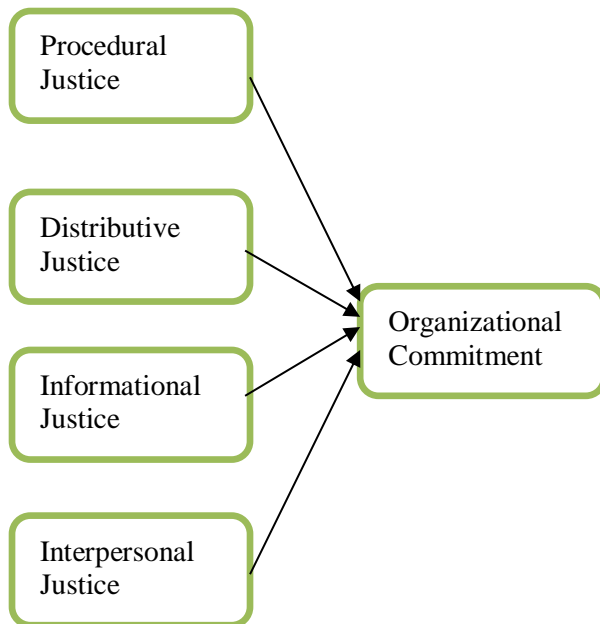


Figure 1 : Conceptual Framework

## Methods

### Sample and Procedure

This research is a cross-sectional study, and it has tried to find out the impact of organizational justice on organizational commitment. There are a large number of service sector organizations in Sri Lanka. Therefore, the researchers focus on a leading service sector organization and investigate its managerial-level employees in this study. There are six factories in this organization, and there are 203 managerial-level employees. According to Krejcie & Morgan (1970), was selected 132 employees as a sample. Managerial-level employees were randomly selected from each division (i.e., HR and Admin, Production, Technical, Mechanical, Quality Assurance, and stores) using stratified sampling. Data were collected using a self-administrated structured questionnaire.

### Measures

**Organizational Justice:** Organizational justice is measured by an instrument consisting of 22 statements developed through the scales developed by Colquitt (2001). Organizational justice was measured in four aspects (i.e., distributive justice, procedural justice, interpersonal justice, and informational justice (Jawad et al. 2012).

Organizational justice is measured by their responses to questionnaires with five-point Likert scales of "Very Little Extent, Little Extent, Some Extent, Great Extent, Very Great Extent."

### Organizational

**Commitment:** Organizational commitment was measured by an instrument consisting of 19 statements developed through the questionnaire of Meyer and Allen (2004). Organizational commitment was measured by their responses to the questionnaire with seven-point Likert scales of "Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Slightly Disagree, Undecided, Slightly Agree, Agree, Strongly Agree."

## Data Analysis and Presentation

### Demographic Data Analysis

Participants were taken from a selected service sector organization in Sri Lanka. A total of 150 questionnaires were distributed, and a total of 132 valid responses were received. The resulting response rate is 88%. The summary table of the preliminary analysis is as follows.

Table 1: Summary of Demographic Data

Variables	Categories	Frequency	Presentation %
<b>Gender</b>	Male	67	52
	Female	65	48
<b>Marital Status</b>	Married	85	64
	Unmarried	47	36
<b>Age</b>	20-30	54	41
	31-40	37	28
	41-50	32	24
	50 above	9	7
<b>Work experience</b>	Less than 5 years	48	37
	5-10 years	44	33
	11-15 years	31	23
	16 years and above	9	7

Source: Author, 2022

*Reliability & Validity Data*

The reliability of the instrument is measured with Cronbach's alpha, and the test results are presented in Table 2. The Cronbach's Alpha coefficient of the organizational justice and organizational commitment instruments are respectively 0.989 and 0.715, indicating that the instruments' content reliability is satisfactory.

Table 2: Summary of Reliability

Instruments	Cronbach's Alpha
<b>Organizational Justice</b>	0.989
Procedural justice	0.974
Distributive justice	0.960
Informational justice	0.951
Interpersonal justice	0.950
<b>Organizational Commitment</b>	0.715

Source: Author 2022

*Correlation Analysis*

The results of Pearson's correlation analysis, as shown in Table 3, illustrate a strong positive and significant relationship between all four organizational justice aspects and organizational commitment. The relationship between procedural justice and organizational commitment is stronger than the relationships between the other three aspects of organizational justice (i.e., distributive justice, informational justice, and interactional justice) have with organizational commitment.

*Regression Analysis*

The results of regression analysis, which shows the impact of each aspect of organizational justice and organizational commitment, are shown in Table 4.

Table 3: Results of the Correlation Analysis

	PJ	DJ	INF J	INTP J
<b>Correlation Coefficient</b>	0.875	0.850	0.864	0.858
<b>Sig. (2-tailed)</b>	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000

\*\*Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (1-tailed)

Source: Author 2022

Table 4: Regression Analysis

Variables	PJ	DJ	INF J	INTP J
<b>Method</b>	Linear	Linear	Linear	Linear
<b>R Square</b>	0.785	0.723	0.746	0.736
<b>Adjusted R Square</b>	0.777	0.72	0.744	0.734
<b>F</b>	115.128	338.692	381.593	362.012
<b>Significance</b>	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
<b>B- constant</b>	-0.526	-0.503	-0.677	-0.667
<b>Beta Value</b>	1.479	1.441	1.510	1.497

Source: Author 2022

According to the results depicted in Table 4, this research tested the impact of each aspect of organizational justice on employee commitment using the simple regression analysis. The results illustrated that the present Procedural, Distributive, Informational, and Interpersonal explain

78.5% (R Square =.785, p=0.0000), 72.3% (R Square =.723, p=0.0000), 74.6% (R Square =.746, p=0.0000) and 73.6% (R Square =.736, p=0.0000) of organizational justice respectively. Therefore, all the Hypotheses, i.e., H1, H2, H3, and H4, were accepted based on these regression results.

## Discussion

H1: Procedural justice positively affects the organizational commitment of managerial-level employees in the XYZ company in Sri Lanka

Procedural justice is one of the independent variables identified in the present study. Many scholars have evidenced that Procedural justice affects positively and significantly organizational commitment (Sholihin and Pike, 2010; Blader and Tyler, 2005; Olumide, 2021; Karanja, 2017; Gichira, 2016). Therefore, the researchers chose this variable to test its impact on organizational commitment. The regression analysis results revealed a significant impact of procedural justice on organizational commitment (Adjusted R square = 0.785,  $P= 0.000$ ,  $P<0.005$ ). Thus, the H1 hypothesis was accepted. Therefore, besides the identified positive and significant correlation between the two variables ( $r= .875$ ,  $P<0.000$ ), regression results indicate that procedural justice significantly impacts organizational commitment, explaining a 78.5% variance in employee commitment. In addition, the Beta Value is positive ( $\beta =1.479$ ,  $p=.000$ ); therefore, these results substantiate the hypothesis that procedural justice positively impacts employee commitment.

H2: Distributive justice positively affects the organizational commitment of managerial-level employees in the XYZ company in Sri Lanka

Several previous works of literature have evidenced that distributive justice has a positive significant impact on organizational commitment (Fatt et al. 2010; Olkkonen & Lipponen, 2006; Olumide., 2021; Karanja., 2017; Gichira, 2016 ). With that empirical evidence, the researchers chose this variable to test its impact on organizational commitment. The regression analysis results revealed a significant impact of distributive justice on organizational commitment (Adjusted R square = 0.723,  $P= 0.000$ ,  $P<0.005$ ). Thus, the H2 hypothesis was accepted. Therefore, besides the identified

positive and significant correlation between the two variables ( $r= .850$ ,  $P<0.000$ ), regression results indicate that distributive justice significantly impacts organizational commitment, explaining a 72.3% variance in employee commitment. In addition, the Beta Value is positive ( $\beta =1.441$ ,  $p=.000$ ); therefore, these results substantiate the hypothesis that distributive justice positively impacts employee commitment.

H3: Informational justice positively affects the organizational commitment of managerial-level employees in the XYZ company in Sri Lanka

previous scholars have evidenced that informational justice positively impacts organizational commitment (Muzumdar., 2012; Colquitt., 2001; Olumide, 2021; Karanja., 2017; Gichira., 2016). With that empirical evidence, the researchers have chosen this variable to test its impact on organizational commitment. The regression analysis results revealed a significant impact of informational justice on organizational commitment (Adjusted R square = 0.746,  $P= 0.000$ ,  $P<0.005$ ). Thus, the H3 hypothesis was accepted. Therefore, besides the identified positive and significant correlation between the two variables ( $r= .864$ ,  $P<0.000$ ), regression results indicate that informational justice significantly impacts organizational commitment, explaining a 74.6% variance in employee commitment. In addition, the Beta Value is positive ( $\beta =1.510$ ,  $p=.000$ ); therefore, these results substantiate the hypothesis that informational justice positively impacts employee commitment.

H4: Interpersonal justice positively affects the organizational commitment of managerial-level employees in the XYZ company in Sri Lanka

Interpersonal justice is the final aspect of organizational justice, and previous researchers in different contexts have found that interpersonal justice positively impacts organizational commitment (Olumide, 2021;

Karanja., 2017; Gichira., 2016). With that empirical evidence, the researchers have chosen this variable to test its impact on organizational commitment. The regression analysis results revealed a significant impact of interpersonal justice on organizational commitment (Adjusted R square = 0.736, P= 0.000, P<0.005). Thus, the H4 hypothesis was accepted. Therefore, besides the identified positive and significant correlation between the two variables ( $r = .858$ ,  $P < 0.000$ ), regression results indicate that interpersonal justice significantly impacts organizational commitment, explaining a 73.6% variance in employee commitment. In addition, the Beta Value is positive ( $\beta = 1.497$ ,  $p = .000$ ); therefore, these results substantiate the hypothesis that interpersonal justice positively impacts employee commitment.

### **Conclusion**

A committed workforce is essential in gaining competitive advantages through employees' talents and capabilities and reaching the organization's strategic objectives. This study aimed to explore the impact of organizational justice in terms of procedural justice, distributive justice, informational justice, and interactional justice on employee commitment. The results revealed that each of the four aspects of organizational justice significantly positively impacts organizational commitment, while procedural justice has the highest influence on employee commitment.

These results indicate that those who perceive injustice in the workplace can exhibit varying degrees of lower commitment, while those who perceive fairness within the organization are likely to be more committed to the organization. Thus, organizations must focus their attention on organizational justice in every activity and procedure within the organization, and the employees may reciprocate to be committed to the organization. Further, it specifies that procedural justice has a greater effect on

organizational commitment, and therefore, organizations can pay more attention to establishing fair procedures at work for all, and it may lead to higher employee commitment towards the organization.

### **Implications**

The study results will benefit organizations seeking strategies to enhance the commitment of their employees toward their organizations. It provides an important practical insight to the organizations in different industries (the service industry in particular) to propose organizations to improve the level of employee organizational commitment through ensuring organizational justice within the organizations. Employees who perceive the organizational justice mechanism as positive will likely have positive attitudes toward an organization. Study results further suggest considering procedural justice, distributive justice, informational justice, and interactional justice while emphasizing procedural justice to make employees feel obliged to reciprocate, which leads them to be more committed to the organization.

This study is unique in its nature as the model has never been tested in the Sri Lankan context. Thus, the study results have a significant theoretical contribution in this study area related to the Sri Lankan context, and it contributes to filling the contextual gap in the specific study area. In addition, the study results will be useful for future researchers who will conduct further studies related to the same study area.

### **The Study Limitations and Direction for Future Research.**

This study was done as a cross-sectional study; the specific time might impact the employees' response. Thus, it is better to conduct the same research as a longitudinal study that will enable us to see the variations in responses with time. This study's sample comprises managerial employees in a selected service sector organization. Future research on this area can consider different industries by comparing varying levels of



employees, such as managerial-level employees, operational-level employees, etc. This study only focused on one variable that may impact employee commitment. Future research can consider individual factors such as self-efficacy and other personal

characteristics as moderators between organizational justice and employee commitment. Further, it is suggested to test the psychological contract as a mediator between this relationship in future studies.

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