



INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF ORGANIZATIONAL LEADERSHIP

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journal homepage: <https://www.ijol.cikd.ca>



The Effect of Teachers' Perception of Organizational Justice on their Job Stress

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Keywords:

*Stress, Procedural justice,
Distributive justice, Interactional
justice*

Received

19 May 2021

Received in revised form

16 June 2021

Accepted

17 June 2021

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ABSTRACT

Earlier studies concerning teacher-associated stress about organizational justice indicate that educating and instructing pupils is considered a hectic career, so bearing in mind the massive effect of organizational justice on teachers' stress, it is imperative to study this relationship further. The drive of the present research was twofold: the primary objective is to study how educators view organizational justice, and additionally, it evaluated the extent to which educators' opinions of three dimensions of organizational justice, including procedural justice, interactional justice, and distributive justice are connected to their stress levels. With the help of questionnaires, a quantitative research study was carried out. Data were collected from 200 sample cases of teachers selected by using the random sample selection technique from the private primary schools of Karachi. The regression analysis outcomes showed a significant positive relationship between teacher stress and organizational justice. The results of the independent sample t-test recognized that there is no difference between the mean values of the two groups. Hence, it can be interpreted that stress levels were the same for both males and females. It was thus suggested that institutions contribute to study the factors that can support impartiality and objectivity. There is a strong need to implement some managing policies which facilitate teachers to cope with their increasing stress levels.

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A subject that is hardly studied in association with organizational justice is job stress. Missing from the latest organizational fairness meta-analyses, the impact of justice on anxiety, or stress, as it is widely recognized, is investigated by very few scholars. This scarcity of literature demands further research because stress is worth investigating in terms of organizational justice (Pignata, Winefield, Provis, & Boyd, 2016).

Aloe, Shisler, Norris, Nikerson, and Rinker (2014) identified that teachers suffered from high-stress levels compared to any other profession. Faupel, Otto, Krug, and Kottwitz (2016) further assert that teaching is considered the most stressful occupation in the world. Williams, Kern, and Waters (2015) found that those who suffer from stress are usually not satisfied at their workplace, unwilling to put in their effort, and develop feelings of quitting their jobs. Financial pressure, challenging job demands, and hostilities in a tertiary educational institution (Pignata et al., 2016), inequity at work are important indicators of teacher stress (Liu, Wang, Shen, Li, & Wang, 2015). Inequity at work is one of the most important indicators as it leads to angst and strain and consequently stresses (Faupel et al., 2016).

Torkelson, Holm, Backstrom, and Schad (2016) utilized stress and health theories to explain the impact of organizational justice on stress. The workers experience more stress if an organization has many factors linked with stress. Those possible factors can be work pressure, prolonged working hours, uninformed duties, demotivating school heads, and internal conflicts with coworkers. Akin and Ulusoy (2016) stated that if school leaders exhibit insensitive attitude, they leave stress-related issue unattended and such insensitivity among school leaders force teachers to quit their jobs.

The present research aims to focus on the effect of organizational justice on stress in the teaching profession. Furthermore, this research targets to investigate the role of organizational justice in triggering or minimizing stress in educational institutions. In addition, this study is based on a twofold approach: It investigates how organizational justice is viewed by teachers and how organizational justice relates to stress.

Theoretical Background and Hypothesis

Job Stress

Torkelson et al. (2016) defined job stress as the state in which the jobs are demanding, and results affect both the physical and cognitive health of an individual. Bastas (2016) stated that stress can also be developed if employees do not have clarity in terms of their job responsibilities, there are conflicts among school heads and teachers, they face difficulty in meeting deadlines, and they experience an improper appraisal system and have fewer growth opportunities. In addition, various studies identified that certain factors can aggravate stress and can affect an individual severely (Kobayashi & Kondo, 2019). These can be salaries, overloaded classrooms, lack of teaching material, disrespectful attitudes of students, and pressure of work, but if a supportive and encouraging environment is provided to teachers, then stress and strain can be minimized (Aloe et al., 2014).

In addition, the negative impact of stress can affect teacher's commitment to their jobs. Distress and health-related problems are common in teaching than in any other profession, resulting in retirement really before time (Finne, Christensen, & Knardah, 2014). The well-being of teachers is based on the positive environment of the workplace as it can be a source of motivation and reducing stress (Pan, Shen, Liu, Yang, & Wang, 2015). Ghandi and Hijazi (2017) discussed that it is identified that teachers' increasing level of stress is a matter of serious concern. Semmer et al. (2015) categorized the causes of stress, and these are related to physical aspects, mainly the working environment of an organization. Another source is work that includes prolonged working hours, workload, monotony, and role stressors (Hassard, Teoh, & Cox, 2016). Conflicts can also be a stressor, and lack of career-related opportunities can also

be stressful. However, for Pan et al. (2015), lack of organizational justice is the main cause of stress among employees and thus among teachers.

H₁: Stress is negatively related to organizational justice.

Organizational Justice

Organizational justice is defined as a guide that determines the worker's rights and responsibilities and fair sharing of both benefits and indictment in a planned way (Terzi et al., 2017). The perception of organizational justice is related to the social environment, which means that an occurrence of organizational injustice is said to be fair if the majority perceive it as fair (Kedenburg, 2014). Thus, organizational justice serves the purpose of a catalyst for reducing stress as viewed by many researchers. In educational contexts, lack of organizational justice can demotivate teachers and affect their physical and mental health, which eventually affects their ability to perform (Iden, 2014). Terzi et al. (2017) identified the role of injustice in triggering stress which ultimately results in the development of negative feelings and consequently job stress. Semmer et al. (2015) stated that stressful environment of the workplace and monotonous work lead to job strain such environment and work can increase teachers' turnover ratio. Therefore, organizational justice has gained importance in recent years as it is considered a source of improving employees' health by reducing stress. Yean and Yusof (2016) discussed the equity theory as the higher the level of fairness or equity, the more motivated the employee will be.

Adams Smith's equity theory (1963) is based on maintaining an equilibrium between the employee's input and output. If the input outweighs the output, then employees get demotivated, uncontented and dissatisfied. Therefore, the theory demands the factors that can be incorporated into an organization that can make an employee motivated, contented, satisfied, and above all, free of stress.

H₂: Organizational justice is negatively related to stress such that each justice variable predicts stress differently.

There are three main types of organizational justice: procedural, distributive, and interactional justice (Yean & Yusof, 2016).

Procedural Justice

It is related to the process of being fair, and the employees' output can be witnessed as they feel satisfied (Yean & Yusof, 2016). Procedural justice can be explained as reliable, free from prejudice, just decisions, and fair policies. On the other hand, injustice in the process can be a stressor and can affect organizational commitment (Kedenburg, 2014).

H₃: Procedural justice is negatively related to stress.

Distributive Justice

Based on the equity theory, distributive justice is when employees compare the tasks performed, and rewards received to check fairness and if they perceive it fair, they get satisfied. If an employee witnesses favoritism, then distributive justice becomes a stressor (Costa, 2014).

H₄: Distributive justice is negatively related to stress.

Interactional Justice

Yean and Yusof (2016) explained the two distinctive elements of interactional justice: interpersonal and informational justice. Interpersonal justice refers to just treatment. It includes the factor of giving respect and respectfully treating employees. Informational justice focuses on the element of trust that all procedures are communicated fairly with the employees.

H₅: Interactional justice is negatively related to stress.

Methodology

The study focuses on the impact of organizational justice and its well-known aspects of procedural, interactional, and distributive justice on stress. Some researches show the association of justice and workers' tension, but little is known about teachers' stress. The following research shows the impact of organizational justice on teachers' stress. Using a simple random sample selection technique, 230 sample cases were selected from various private primary schools of Karachi. The survey questionnaire having 16 items to be evaluated on a five-point Likert scale was distributed among the selected teachers, out of which 200 were considered without missing values and thus used for data analysis. The data collected from the study were analyzed by carrying out the reliability, factor, and regression analysis techniques. The following model was developed:

$$ST = \infty + \beta_1 PJ + \beta_2 IJ + \beta_3 DJ + e$$

Where ST represents Stress (dependent variable). PJ is Procedural justice, IJ is Interactional justice, and DJ is Distributive justice.

The model is based on Equity Theory. Although research literature comprises numerous studies related to organizational justice, a subject that is hardly studied in association with organizational justice is job stress. This scarcity of literature demands further research because stress is worth investigating in terms of organizational justice (Pignata et al., 2016). Therefore, to fill this gap in the literature, stress is also included in the theoretical framework of the present study (Usmani & Jamal, 2013).

Materials

The constructs in this research have been adopted from the previous studies (Can, 2012; Costa, 2014). The items measuring the constructs were justified and validated in those earlier studies. Data is collected through these questionnaires. Since the measuring items and constructs have been adopted from previous research, Cronbach's alpha values for each construct range from .75 to .90. The researchers did not conduct a pilot study to confirm the validity and reliability of the instrument.

The items ST1, ST2, ST3, ST4, ST5, ST6, ST7, ST8, ST9, ST10, ST11, ST12, ST13, and ST14 in the questionnaire at 5-point Likert scale response show a high level of stress. Items PJ1, PJ2, PJ3, PJ4, and PJ5 in the questionnaire represent procedural justice, and responses at the 5-point Likert scale show a high level of organizational justice. Items DJ1, DJ2, DJ3, DJ4, and DJ5 represent distributive justice, and responses at the 5-point Likert scale show a high level of distributive justice. Items IJ1, IJ2, IJ3, IJ4, and IJ5 represent interactional justice, and responses at the 5-point Likert scale show a high level of interactional justice.

Respondent Profile

This study considers 230 valid cases for data analysis as seven univariate and multivariate outliers were removed as a part of the data screening process. The outliers were removed as it increases the variability in the data; as a result, the statistical power is decreased. Tabachnick and Fidell (2007) stated that for detecting univariate outliers for continuous variables, standardized values (z scores) could be used outside the absolute value of 3.29. However, two univariate outliers were found in the study as the values were greater than 3.29 of the sample. Therefore, both were removed from the sample. Multivariate outliers were identified using Mahalanobis distance and CDF, CHISQ function (Mahalanobis D2, $p < .001$). The rationale for removing it is to increase the statistical power. If outliers are excluded, then it causes results to become statistically significant, reducing the chances of Type II errors. Out of 200 respondents, 140 (70%) females and 60 (30%) male teachers participated in the study.

Results

The Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 22 was used to analyze the results obtained from the data collection. The reliability of data is explained by using statistical tests. The questionnaire comprised 16 items, including all the variables.

Table 1 indicates that the variable “Procedural justice” has five items and its reliability is .90. The variable “Interactional justice” has four items, and its reliability is .90. The variable “Distributive justice” has three items, and its reliability is .90. The last variable “Stress” has four items, and its reliability is .90, and generally, the reliability of the measure is .91. Thus, all Cronbach’s Alpha values were high and above the cut-off value (Nunnally, 1978).

Table 1

Reliability Statistics

Variable	No. of Items	Cronbach’s Alpha
Procedural justice	5	.90
Interactional justice	4	.90
Distributive justice	3	.90
Stress	4	.90
Overall	16	.91

The majority of the researchers use factor analysis to group variables based on strong correlation. The KMO measures the adequacy of the sample, and the threshold value must be more than 0.5. Since the value of KMO is .83, which is more than 0.5, it is suitable to run factor analysis (see Table 2). Bartlett’s test of Sphericity recounts the impact of the study for the presence of sufficient correlation among the variables. The significance value should be less than .05. Table 2 shows that the significance value is less than .05, indicating the strong relationship among variables which means factor analysis is applicable in this study (see Table 2). In this table, the factor result shows the accuracy of the data of independent variables.

Table 2

KMO and Bartlett’s Test

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy	.83
Bartlett’s test of Sphericity Approx. Chi Square	1070.37
Df	120
Sig.	.000

As presented in Table 3, the correlation in the variables to the dependent variable is defined by the rotated component matrix. Therefore, the highest level of relationship to the dependent variable is depicted by the value with the highest correlation value. In this manner, a grouping of each variable is made.

Table 3

Rotated Component Matrix

Items	Procedural justice	Interactional Justice	Distributive Justice	Stress
- Evaluation is fair and free from favoritism.	.70			
- Performance evaluation is according to the performance of the employees.	.74			
- Outside pressure does not influence performance evaluations.	.71			
- Standard criteria are used for evaluations.	.65			
- Employees, coordinator and school head communicate during the evaluation period.	.68			
- My school head respects my opinion.		.65		
- My school head treats me kindly.		.60		
- My school head respects my rights as a coworker.		.80		
- My school head tries to be honest with me.		.75		
- Rewards are fair and fit with my previous work experience.			.60	
- Performance evaluations reflect my job responsibilities.			.68	
- Performance evaluations reflect my job difficulty.			.81	
- My job requires a high level of skill.				.63
- I get to do a variety of different things on my job.				.81
- My job requires me to be creative.				.73
- My job requires working very hard.				.50

Table 4 describes the statistics of all variables with their beta values, co-linearity value, significant value. The value of β decides the significance level such that the positive value of β depicts a positive significant relationship among variables and vice versa. The procedural justice, interactional justice, and distributive justice positively impact stress contrary to all our hypotheses (see Table 4). β value is used to form regression equation which is:

$$ST = \infty + \beta_1 PJ + \beta_2 IJ + \beta_3 DJ + e$$

$$\text{Stress} = .11 (\text{procedural justice}) + .25 (\text{interactional justice}) + .10 (\text{distributive justice})$$

The significance values of procedural justice, interactional justice, and distributive justice are less than 0.1, which significantly affects stress. Hair (2010) stated that VIF is the variance inflation factor that tells whether multicollinearity exists or not. If VIF is less than 10, there is no multicollinearity, which means the coefficient represents the correct change in variable and independent variables are not correlated with each other (see Table 4).

Table 4

Regression Coefficient (Stress)

Variables	β	t	VIF	p
(Constant)	2.27	9.45		.00
Procedural Justice	0.11	2.24	1.38	.02
Interactional justice	0.25	4.14	1.32	.00
Distributive justice	0.10	1.89	1.39	.05
Adjusted R2	0.23			
F stat (prob)	19.98			

The independent T-test was used since the test comprises two parts, the data of stress and gender. The claim for Levene's test states that H_0 : Variances are equal for both genders. After

applying the test, it can be seen in Table 5 that H_0 is accepted since the significance value is > 0.1 . It can be concluded that stress levels are the same in both genders.

Table 5

Independent T-test

Variables	Gender	Sample Size	F	p	t	df
ST	1	60	1.54	.215	-.372	198
	2	140				

Discussion

This research was carried out to add to the limited investigation of the relationship among each of the three organizational justice variables: distributive, procedural, interactional justice, and perceived stress. Considering the larger setting of how job stress and perceptions of organizational justice are linked with teachers' well-being can assist scholars. The experts comprehend the extensive influence that employment policy and management practices can have on the comfort of their staff members. The results show that these relations must offer organizational leaders a healthier perception of how their leadership practices and the working environment they produce unswervingly influence their teachers' well-being and contentment.

In addition to that, the impact of persistent stress exerted from the prejudicial conduct from one's headteacher, and the negative impact possibly will result in stressful behavior of teachers. The findings of the study show that greater levels of fairness are apparent when educators feel that they have involvement in processes than when workers do not have the opportunity to contribute. This result is consistent with the study carried out by Kedenburg (2014). The excellence of communication by an institute or school head during all stages of the evaluation period in specific can develop impartiality by enlightening teachers' perceptions of school head honesty and decreasing feelings of uncertainty. The people can understand the process of assessments from group fellows, and these can lead to homogeneousness of fairness insights within group members, producing a robust impartial environment. Consequently, group-level perceptions of justice can be hypothesized as a precursor to persons' fairness perceptions. The organizations can take on a more comprehensive, practical attitude to transform their organizational ethos into an impartial working environment. Through this style of leadership, employers can be presented with meaningful companywide plans related to reducing worker stress and enhancing the well-being of teachers through fair evaluation, fair distribution of rewards, and above all, quality communication (Aloe et al., 2014; Muqadas, Rehman, & Aslam, 2017).

Yean and Yusof (2016) stated that the organizations might need to study methods of improving head teacher-teacher relations and communication. For instance, efforts can be made to escalate levels of head teacher-teacher conversation in maintaining harmonious bilateral relations, headteachers can be a part of professional development programs to boost their communication skills, or school-wide strategies that are unambiguous, honest, and fair can be practiced that encourage and improve workers' fairness insights (Viseu, Jesus, Rus, Canavarró, & Pereira, 2016). The results also show that school head involvements intended for decreasing relational stress and conflict, consolidating group dynamics, and clear communications of aims and objectives probably reduce pointless stress and improve employee well-being.

Another interesting finding was that the independent sample t-test showed no difference between the mean values of the two groups. Hence, the stress levels were the same for both males and females. In this regard, the findings of the independent sample t-test brought forward several recommendations for the policymakers of private and public sector educational institutions that the school heads can enhance their skills by focusing on communicating strategies to cope with the stress of staff members, plan for precautionary actions to elude stress particularly in female teachers, present stress management exercises, communicate at every stage of evaluation to reduce ambiguity, encourage the participation of teachers to show their creativity, encourage learning and teaching environment and above all ensure fairness in all aspects as this can lead to the creation of flawless and stress free working environment.

Conclusion

The present research examined the relationship between organizational justice and stress. The current study was destined to discover the influence of organizational justice on stress because the previous research regarding instructor-connected stress concerning organizational justice was limited. For this purpose, the random sampling technique was applied to collect a questionnaire from primary school teachers working in the private sector. The sample size was 200. The tests applied are reliability tests, factor analysis, regression analysis, and independent-sample t-test. The results indicated that other dimensions of organizational justice, such as procedural justice, interactional justice, and distributive justice played a significant role in stress. This relationship indicates that adopting fair evaluation procedures, developing positive interactions with employees, and equity at the workplace can reduce stress.

The study hopes that the results can help the concerned policy designers to focus on organizational justice and its impact on stress levels. This study can also contribute substantially to the professionals associated with organizations to consider the components that can support impartiality in the workplace. There must be some coping strategies that can be applied to reduce stress. Stress-reducing strategies should be designed by psychologists, work-related stress should be treated in the same way as other safety precautions. Tangible and non-tangible support must be provided.

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Acknowledgments

It would not be possible for the authors to complete this study without help from their esteemed colleagues. The authors immensely appreciate the reviewers who have dedicated their precious time and expertise to improve the manuscript. They would like to acknowledge Dr. Syed Tehseen Jawaid and Ms. Lubna Khan for their support and guidance. Lastly, we would like to thank the Managing Editor.

Disclosure Statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the authors.

Funding Acknowledgments

Not applicable.

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