

INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF ORGANIZATIONAL LEADERSHIP

WWW.CIKD.CA

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



Distributive Justice, Psychological Empowerment and Job Autonomy's Influences on the Organizational Commitment of Tertiary School Leaders

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ABSTRACT

Keywords:

Distributive justice, Job autonomy, Organizational commitment, Psychological empowerment, Tertiary school leaders

Received

23 August 2023

Received in revised form

08 October 2023

Accepted

15 October 2023

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This research generally intended to ascertain how organizational commitment was influenced by psychological empowerment, job autonomy, and distributive justice of tertiary school leaders in selected colleges and universities in Southern Philippines. Two hundred fifty-two (252) tertiary school administrators with at least three years of experience in Southern Philippines as program heads, deans, directors, vice presidents, and presidents made up the participants. The "Basic Social Justice Orientations Scale," "Psychological Empowerment Scale," "Job Autonomy Scale," and "Organizational Commitment Scale" were employed to collect data needed for this study. Then, Pearson r product-moment correlation, multiple regression analysis, and path analysis were applied to evaluate the data. Research findings supported the hypotheses that were developed in the theoretical model. The findings demonstrated that job autonomy acted as a mediator between distributive justice and psychological empowerment, which has direct and indirect consequences on the organizational commitment of school leaders. Additionally, it was discovered that both psychological empowerment and job autonomy greatly affected organizational commitment. Therefore, it can be said that the distributive justice, psychological empowerment, and job autonomy of selected tertiary school leaders in Southern Philippines had influences on their organizational commitment. This means that distributive justice, psychological empowerment, and job autonomy are good predictors of the organizational commitment of tertiary school leaders.

Organizational commitment has become a much bigger problem over time, especially with the increase in work opportunities brought on by globalization. Organizations compete to entice talented workers away from their competitors in addition to the traditional goal of keeping them. Brown (2016) revealed that three out of five teachers were not committed to their job. Moreover, Önder et al. (2019) stated that teachers' organizational commitment is at a moderate level, and they perceived that the organizational commitment of teachers accounted for only 24 percent of their job satisfaction. Educational institutions around the globe are not spared problems with their employees' organizational commitment. The degree of organizational commitment of university lecturers was the subject of studies. In particular, Bashir and Gani (2020) found that about 38% of teachers in some Indian colleges stressed their strong loyalty to their institutions and willingness to stick with them even if it was to their advantage. Additionally, Fako et al.'s (2018) study revealed that nearly three out of every five academic employee samples in Botswana showed loyalty to their universities as institutions.

Teachers and non-teaching employees at Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) in the Philippines did not exhibit a high or ideal degree of commitment to their assigned jobs or the organization as a whole, according to a disturbing finding from research by Poliquit et al. (2018). Labrague et al. (2018) stressed that Filipino nurses were moderately committed to their organizations and undecided about whether to leave their organizations. Moreover, Chavez (2012) emphasized that instructors with institutional and leadership support had better organizational commitment. Moreover, according to Gempes et al. (2008), Baby Boomer professors in Davao City, Philippines, exhibit greater levels of affective commitment than Generation X faculty. Furthermore, Baby Boomer and Generation X instructors both continuance commitment at the same level (Gempes et al., 2008). There were many studies conducted to improve the organizational commitment of employee. One of these is that of Lamba and Chaudhari (2013); by fostering a long-term commitment to keeping their workforce efficient and employee-friendly, HR policies can bridge the gap between the existing situation and an organization's needs. According to Cohen (1993), increasing employees' affective commitment depends greatly on their involvement in decision-making. The main problems with participation and commitment relationships in organizations are a variety of HR strategies and a mix of different approaches (Cox et al., 2006).

Job training is a great factor on employee retention in their workplaces (Hassan et al., 2013). Thus, practices for training and development guarantee employees' growth, which raises the level of devotion. Compensation policies impact commitment, productivity, and greater levels of performance within a business (Rizal & Idrus, 2014). This includes a bundle of amenities such as wages, medical coverage, lodging, and travel. Studies have also been done to ascertain how committed employees are to their organizations, notably in higher education institutions. In a study by Malik et al. (2010) on the organizational commitment of public university lecturers in Pakistan, they did not figure out whether job autonomy, psychological empowerment, and distributive justice can predict organizational commitment. Another problem is that the research excluded responses from private universities and only included staff of state universities. Last but not least, no mention of school leaders was made in the investigation, which only included faculty members as responders. Another study by Butt et al. (2017) indicated that organizational commitment mediated between job autonomy, psychological empowerment, and distributive justice on employees' propensity to quit their jobs. The results revealed that independent

variables negatively correlated with individuals' intentions to quit their jobs, but organizational commitment, which served as a mediating variable, mitigated this effect. In this case, organizational dedication is seen as a mediating factor. Job autonomy, psychological empowerment, and distributive fairness are only a few factors that affect employees' loyalty to their employers.

Distributive justice strongly predicts organizational commitment, according to Lowe and Vodanovich (1995), whereas Kirkman and Benson (1999) discovered a connection between empowerment levels and organizational commitment. On the other hand, Breugh and Becker (1987) regarded job autonomy as the most important element of a job's design. Numerous studies have discovered a connection between rising job autonomy and rising organizational commitment (Bono & Judge, 2003; Kemp et al., 1983; Parker et al., 2001). Job autonomy was considered a mediating variable in determining the connections of distributive justice to organizational commitment and psychological empowerment. Since it was established in the previous research that psychological empowerment, distributive justice, and job autonomy have significant relationships with organizational commitment, the goal is to identify if both psychological empowerment and distributive justice can significantly influence the job autonomy of the respondents. This is to satisfy the criteria set by Baron and Kenny (1986). This study was conducted to offer suggestions for potential solutions to problems with organizational commitment by strengthening human resource practices, such as including middle-level school leaders in the hiring, training, and policy-making processes. Employees experience distributive justice when they feel the allocations are consistent with all of them in an implicit norm (Colquitt, 2001). On the other hand, different situations can inspire a variety of perceptions of distributive justice. The rule on equality emphasizes that distributive justice is a comparative standard requiring employees to receive the same treatment (Konow, 2003). It can be compared that the equality rule is the same as egalitarian, and the equity rule is non-egalitarian, where efforts, skills, and experiences are considered.

Distributive justice and organizational commitment have a substantial association, according to McFarlin and Sweeney (1992). After adjusting for demographic factors (tenure, gender, age, salary, and job type) in a hierarchical regression analysis, McFarlin and Sweeney discovered that distributive justice provided an R^2 of .23 ($p < .001$) with organizational commitment as the outcome variable. According to Lowe and Vodanovich (1995), distributive justice is a reliable indicator of organizational commitment.

Psychological empowerment was characterized by Seibert et al. (2011) as a worker's internal task motivation when they exhibit self-control related to their job description and their participation in their positions within the organization. The two perspectives that influence psychological empowerment are psychological and rational. While enabling processes represent the psychological viewpoint, interactions between organizational leaders and subordinates indicate the rational viewpoint. Instead of giving the followers more power than the leaders, empowering followers focuses on the psychological aspect of empowerment. According to Kirkman and Benson (1999), increasing organizational commitment was correlated with increasing levels of empowerment. According to Konczak et al. (2000), psychological empowerment mediates the link between leader behaviors and organizational commitment.

Lastly, Naqvi et al. (2013) claimed that employees' organizational commitment is positively and significantly related to their job autonomy. Gagné and Deci (2005) expounded that job autonomy and organizational commitment are not only related, but job autonomy predicted organizational commitment. This finding was supported by a more recent meta-analysis by Humphrey et al. (2007). According to Gagné and Deci's (2005) explanation, autonomy and commitment are not just interdependent, but autonomy also promotes commitment. This was established through a longitudinal research design in which, but not in the other direction, autonomy at the start of the study predicted organizational commitment at the end.

With all this literature, the researcher became interested in conducting the study in Southern Philippines, particularly in SOCCSKSARGEN Regions because of his intentions to help school leaders in higher education institutions strengthen their commitment to their organizations. Since the researcher failed to come across available research that explains factors that influence the organizational commitment of tertiary school leaders in Southern Philippines, the researcher became interested in conducting the study to validate whether the organizational commitment's relationships with distributive justice and psychological empowerment are mediated by job autonomy and proposed a model that would explain such relationships.

Review of Related Literature

Distributive justice is based on Adams' (1965) social exchange theory and is centered on individual gain. Adams noted that people frequently evaluate the justice of the rewards they receive in terms of ratios. They believe that the rewards they receive should be in line with the effort they expend to obtain those rewards. The rewards could be monetary, such as salary, bonuses, vacation time, etc. In addition, there are social rewards, such as vows to return favors in the future. When an allocation appears to be in line with implicit norms, distributive fairness is felt (Colquitt, 2001). However, conceptions of distributive fairness may be influenced by several conventions. Distributive justice can be determined using both an equality rule and an equity rule. Justice is felt when an individual's outcome is equal to their input in an exchange relationship. It is necessary to treat relevantly comparable cases similarly and relevantly dissimilar cases differently in order to satisfy the requirements of distributive equality, which call for outcomes to be proportional to contributions, rights, and deserts. Justice is a comparable norm that demands that two or more individuals obtain the same result when seen from an equality rule (Konow, 2003). Thus, by definition, the rule of equality is egalitarian, whereas the rule of equity is a non-egalitarian standard that considers factors like skill, effort, and experience.

Two different perspectives, one relational and one psychological, have been used to address the concept of empowerment (Conger & Kanungo, 1988). While the psychological method focuses on the enabling process, the relational approach emphasizes the interaction between leaders and followers. The power shift from leaders to followers is the main focus of the relational approach to empowerment. According to this strategy, power is passed down by leaders, giving followers authority or control over resources. This strategy pays little regard to whatever potential influence the follower may have. Instead of merely assigning or distributing "power" to followers, the psychological approach to empowerment focuses on empowering them. Early on, this idea received little consideration, probably in part because the phenomenon

was so subjective. The psychological approach focuses on the motivational structures involved in strengthening one's feeling of meaning and control as well as one's sense of personal efficacy.

Job autonomy, at its most fundamental, refers to the latitude that employees have in carrying out their duties. According to Khoshnaw and Alavi (2020), the most significant aspect of a job's design may be its autonomy. It was described as "the discretion the worker is expected to exercise... in carrying out the assigned task". In addition, it refers to "the degree to which the job provides substantial freedom, independence, and discretion to the individual in scheduling the work and in determining the procedures to be used in carrying it out." While some of the intricacies of how job autonomy is built have evolved over time, the fundamental idea of job autonomy—the freedom to choose one's own techniques and schedule for work—has stayed constant. Oldham and Hackman (1981) examined job autonomy in their early research in terms of the independence and discretion that people have in choosing how and when to complete their task. Control over the nature of the work and control over the terms of the labor were two aspects of job autonomy that were covered. Breugh (1985) and Breugh and Becker (1987) added a third dimension, autonomy over evaluation criteria, to Oldham and Hackman's (1981) idea of job autonomy as a two-dimensional construct. Based on Hackman and Oldham's control over the substance of work, the first dimension, method autonomy, also includes control over the job-related processes and procedures. Based on Hackman and Oldham's control over the conditions of labor, the second component, schedule autonomy, gives people the freedom to decide when and how long to work. Breugh introduced a third feature called criteria autonomy, which gives employees the power to choose the standards and criteria that will be used to evaluate their performance. Brady et al. (1990) discovered that the first two dimensions have strong support, whereas the third dimension has mixed support. According to Hodson (2001), "without some minimum of control, without dignity, work becomes unbearable" (p. 4). According to Greenhaus and Callanan (1994), "having substantial freedom to select work projects, to decide how a job gets accomplished, and to set work schedules are crucial to a large number of employees in today's world". Freidson (1970) claimed that having significant control over one's primary duties is a defining characteristic of a profession, even at the occupational level of analysis.

Because of the solid links that have been developed over many years of research, organizational commitment is a crucial factor in organizational theory (Mathieu & Zajac, 1990). Compared to job satisfaction, it is a more consistent variable; the latter is more like the everyday weather, while the former is more like the seasons (Perryer & Jordan, 2005). According to Mowday (1998) and Mowday et al. (1982), devoted employees are more likely to perform better, work harder and more effectively, and stay in their positions. It is in an organization's best interest to keep on to valuable people during these difficult economic times when businesses must try to accomplish more with less, and boosting organizational commitment is one way to do that. Some have even asserted (Angle & Perry, 1981; Lincoln & Kalleberg, 1990; Randall, 1990; Steers, 1977) that organizational commitment may be a sign of a company's effectiveness. Organizational commitment was defined by Porter et al. (1974) as the relative degree of one's identification and involvement with a specific organization. They claimed that this commitment was made up of three elements. One must first firmly believe in the organization's core beliefs. Second, one must be prepared to work hard for the company. Third, one must have a strong motivation to keep their membership in the group. Numerous

definitions, metrics, and foci have been used in the study of organizational commitment since the late 1980s. Age and education are personal traits that affect organizational commitment. Job challenges and the volume of on-the-job feedback are two traits of a job that influence organizational commitment. Group attitudes toward the organization and organizational dependability and trust are examples of work experiences that have an impact on organizational commitment. Many years later, in a thorough meta-analysis of the causes, factors, and effects of organizational commitment, Mathieu and Zajac (1990) classified the causes similarly, with the addition of role states and group-leader relationships. Significant relationships with a variety of organizational commitment antecedents were discovered by Mathieu and Zajac in 1990.

Theoretical Framework

This research was anchored on the Social Exchange Theory (Blau, 1964, as cited in Cortez and Johnston, 2020), a fundamental concept in social psychology and organizational behavior, offers insights into how individuals engage in social interactions, relationships, and organizations based on the principles of reciprocity and mutual benefits. This theory explains that individuals assess the potential rewards and costs of engaging with others or organizations and make rational decisions to maximize their benefits. This discussion delves into the key components and principles of Social Exchange Theory, as well as its applications in various domains.

Social Exchange Theory emerged in the mid-20th century and was significantly shaped by the works of prominent sociologists, including George Homans and Peter Blau. Homans, considered one of the founding figures of social exchange theory, outlined the core principles in his seminal work "Social Behavior: Its Elementary Forms" (1961). He emphasized the role of rewards, costs, and outcomes in shaping social interactions and relationships. Blau expanded on Homans' ideas and elaborated on the importance of social structure and power in exchange relationships in his book "Exchange and Power in Social Life" (1964).

At the heart of Social Exchange Theory is the principle of reciprocity, wherein individuals expect that their actions will be reciprocated by others. When engaging in social exchanges, individuals assess the rewards and costs associated with a relationship or interaction. Rewards can include tangible gains (e.g., financial benefits, emotional support) and intangible benefits (e.g., social approval, friendship), while costs involve efforts, time, sacrifices, or potential negative outcomes. The perceived balance between rewards and costs influences an individual's commitment to and satisfaction with the relationship.

Equity theory, proposed by J. Stacy Adams in the early 1960s, is closely related to Social Exchange Theory. Equity theory suggests that individuals strive for a fair and equitable balance between their inputs (efforts, contributions) and outcomes (rewards, benefits) in comparison to others. When individuals perceive an imbalance, either in the form of over-reward or under-reward, they may experience feelings of inequity, leading to adjustments in their behaviors to restore a sense of fairness.

Furthermore, Social Exchange Theory introduces the concept of comparison levels, representing an individual's expectations regarding what they should receive in a particular relationship or situation. If the actual outcomes surpass these expectations (positive outcome), the individual is likely to experience satisfaction and may invest more in the relationship.

Conversely, if the outcomes fall short of expectations (negative outcome), dissatisfaction may ensue, potentially leading to reduced commitment or efforts in the relationship.

The applications of Social Exchange Theory are diverse and extend to various domains, including interpersonal relationships, organizational behavior, economics, and marketing. In organizational settings, the theory helps to understand employee-employer relationships, job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and decision-making processes. Employees evaluate their work experiences based on the perceived rewards (e.g., salary, recognition, opportunities for growth) and costs (e.g., workload, stress) associated with their jobs. Organizations, in turn, strive to create an environment where employees perceive the benefits as outweighing the costs, enhancing overall employee satisfaction and commitment.

Method

Research Design

A quantitative research approach was used to conduct this research. According to Creswell (2020), quantitative research is used to establish the general descriptions of the trend of responses from individuals and note how this trend differs among persons in order to identify a topic grounded on the sequences in the field or the requirement to discuss why something occurs. Moreover, according to Babbie (2020), quantitative research is concerned with numbers, logic, and an objective viewpoint. It is also focused on numerical and static data, in-depth, convergent reasoning, and the production of several ideas for a certain research subject.

Specifically, this study utilized the descriptive-correlational research design. Shuttleworth (2019) emphasized that descriptive research design was utilized to gather data that concern the modern status of a phenomenon to describe. Furthermore, Calmorin et al. (2004) stated that descriptive research focuses on finding facts that researchers are given the opportunity to examine participants' experiences, behaviors, and characteristics. On the other hand, correlational research is a study that determines the association of two or more variables (Creswell, 2020).

Sample

A total of 252 school leaders of public and private tertiary institutions in Southern Philippines were the respondents of this study, particularly those who were designated as program head/department head, dean, and directors. The respondents should have at least three years of administrative experience. School leaders with long administrative experience who have mastered a variety of skills in communication, organization, research, scheduling, and office support were included in the study.

With the help of the head of higher education institutions, respondents were chosen using the purposive sampling method. This is a non-probability sampling method in which the researcher selected qualified people to include in the sample based on factors like expertise in the research topic or their capability and willingness to participate in the study (Oliver & Jupp, 2006). According to the data from the Commission on Higher Education (List of Higher Education Institutions, 2021), there were 102 higher education institutions located in the SOCCSKSARGEN Region, Southern Philippines, and the researcher randomly selected three (3) respondents from each institution, which came from the lists provided by the heads of the institutions. From the 306 randomly selected respondents, only 252 tertiary school leaders

responded to the survey. This number was compliant with the minimum number of respondents for path analysis, which is 200 (Boomsma, 1982). Only those school leaders with at least three years of administrative experience were chosen as study participants in order to achieve uniformity. Moreover, all respondents were master's degree holders, and only a few had doctorate degrees.

Instruments

The tools employed were modified from those in previous research, incorporating the suggestions of the experts who validated the questionnaires. Negative statements were restated into positive forms. The modified questionnaires also underwent pilot testing on 30 selected tertiary school leaders to ensure their validity and reliability. The four components of the questionnaire were Distributive Justice Questionnaire, Psychological Empowerment Questionnaire, Job Autonomy Questionnaire, and Organizational Commitment Questionnaire.

Distributive Justice Questionnaire. The Basic Social Justice Orientations (BSJO) scale was utilized to examine respondents' perceptions toward the four fundamental distributive principles of need, equality, equity, and entitlement. This questionnaire has eight (8) items, with two (2) items each for need, equality, equity, and entitlement. According to Hülle et al. (2018), this tool had four indicators with Cronbach's alpha values of .61 for equality, .41 for need, .35 for equity, and .47 for entitlement, which indicated that the tool was demonstrated to be valid and reliable examining respondents' distributive justice. Additionally, Cronbach's alpha value of .83 was established after pilot-testing the modified distributive justice questionnaire, indicating that it was valid and reliable.

Psychological Empowerment Questionnaire. When Thomas and Velthouse's (1990) concepts were broadened, Spreitzer (1995) evaluated psychological empowerment with four elements. The instrument consisted of questions drawn from the following scales: competence (Jones, 1989), meaning (Tymon, 1988), impact (Ashforth, 1989), and self-determination (Hackman & Oldham, 1974). Spreitzer made some changes to the information from its original sources. Competency components were added to the self-efficacy scale that Jones developed in 1986. The final questionnaire was composed of 12 items, with three (3) items each for emotion, cognition, and relation. Moreover, based on the results of the pilot testing, Cronbach's alpha value is .81, which is considered the questionnaire valid and reliable.

Job Autonomy Survey. The job autonomy measure created by Breugh in 1985 served as the foundation for this tool. Further studies looked at the instrument's dependability after Breugh (1985) established the validity of the tool (Breugh, 1999; Breugh & Becker, 1987; Evans & Fischer, 1992). This questionnaire had nine (9) items with three (3) items for each indicator: method, scheduling, and criteria. Consequently, a Cronbach's alpha value of .88 for job autonomy was established in the pilot testing, proving that it was a valid and reliable questionnaire.

Organizational Commitment Questionnaire. A version of Meyer and Allen's (1991) technique with a total of 18 items, this one has three indicators: affective commitment, continuing commitment, and normative commitment, with six (6) items for each of them. After pilot testing, the modified organizational commitment questionnaire had a Cronbach's alpha value of .85, which indicated its validity and reliability.

Procedures

The researcher used a Google Form to manage the data collection on the web platform personally. The following procedures were used to accomplish the objectives of the study. The responses received the approved letter in addition to the school president's recommendation. The researcher was provided a precise date or timetable for the data collection, which was completed without interfering with the researcher's work and with enough time to facilitate the provision of instructions on how to complete the questionnaire using a Google form. The researcher also conferred with experts for the technical parts of the article. The respondents were asked to sign informed consent forms before the data collecting process because it is required by the instrument for their voluntary participation in the study. The study only included people who signed the informed consent form. The researcher assured the respondents that their answers were confidential and their names would not be included elsewhere in the study. Additionally, the respondents' signatures on the informed permission form were obtained before the scheduled time for data collection. As a result, no coercion, undue influence, or incentive was used in the recruitment process. After each respondent had completed the Google form questionnaire, a data screening was done to reduce any outliers throughout the analysis. The information was then encoded, tabulated, and examined.

Data Analysis

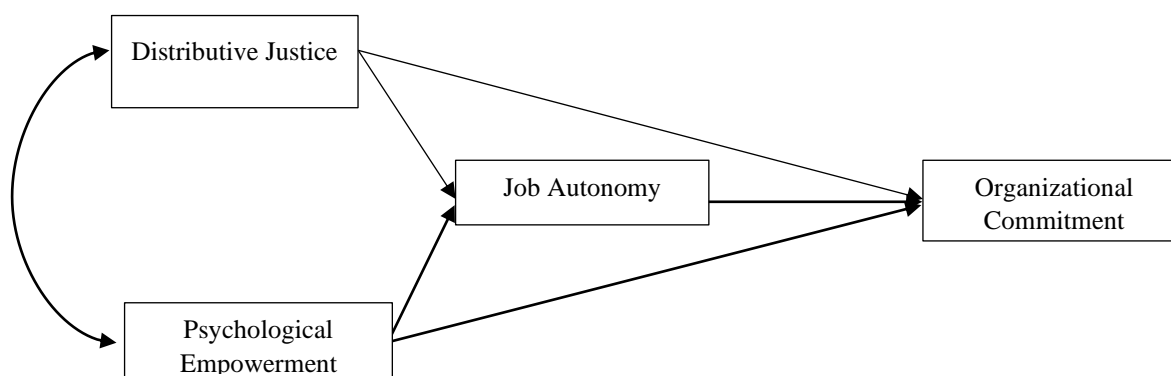
Pearson r product moment correlation was used to ascertain the connections between distributive justice, psychological empowerment, job autonomy, and organizational commitment. The significance of the independent variables' association with the dependent variable was also determined using it. The influences on organizational commitment to distributive justice, job autonomy, and psychological empowerment were evaluated using multiple regression analysis. The variables' interrelationships were evaluated using a path analysis. The CMIN/DF, Comparative Fit Index (CFI), Tucker-Lewis Index (TLI), Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA), and P of Close Fit indices were computed to assess the models' goodness of fit (PCLOSE).

Results

In this research, the model (Figure 1) predicted that distributive justice, psychological empowerment, and job autonomy had directly and indirectly influenced the organizational commitment of the tertiary school leaders.

Figure 1

Hypothesized Model Showing the Correlation between Distributive Justice and Psychological Empowerment, and their Direct Effect on Job Autonomy and Organizational Commitment of Higher Education School Leaders



Significance of the Relationship between Independent and Dependent Variables

Table 1 describes the association of organizational commitment of tertiary school leaders' distributive justice, job autonomy, and psychological empowerment. The result revealed that exogenous variables (job autonomy, distributive justice, and psychological empowerment) were significantly related to the respondents' organizational commitment ($p < .05$).

Table 1

Significance of the Relationship between Variables

| Paired Variables | R | p | Remarks |
|---|-----|------|-------------|
| Distributive Justice and Organizational Commitment | .29 | .000 | Significant |
| Psychological Empowerment and Organizational Commitment | .58 | .000 | Significant |
| Job Autonomy and Organizational Commitment | .63 | .000 | Significant |

Note. R correlation coefficient

In particular, the respondents' organizational commitment was significantly and directly related to their distributive justice ($r = .29$, $p < .05$). Similarly, there was a significant association between the respondents' psychological empowerment towards their organizational commitment ($r = .58$, $p < .05$). In the same way, a significant relationship was observed between job autonomy and organizational commitment among tertiary school leaders ($r = .63$, $p < .05$).

Significance of the Influence of Independent Variables to the Dependent Variables

Table 2 describes the regression analysis results to show distributive justice, psychological empowerment, and job autonomy's significant effects on the organizational commitment of tertiary school leaders. The results affirmed that both psychological empowerment and job autonomy were found to be significant determinants of organizational commitment ($p < .05$). On the other hand, based on the result, distributive justice did not significantly predict organizational commitment ($p > .05$).

Table 2

Significance of the Influence of Distributive Justice, Psychological Empowerment, and Job Autonomy on the Organizational Commitment of School Leaders

| | Standardized Coefficients (β) | t | p | Interpretation |
|---------------------------|---------------------------------------|------|-----|-----------------|
| Distributive Justice | .09 | 1.90 | .05 | Not Significant |
| Psychological Empowerment | .30 | 5.13 | .00 | Significant |
| Job Autonomy | .41 | 6.96 | .00 | Significant |

R = .68

R² = .46

F = 73.09

p = .000

Specifically, psychological empowerment significantly predicted the organizational commitment of tertiary school leaders, demonstrating a statistically significant connection ($\beta = .30$, $p < .05$). This means that the regression weight assigned to psychological empowerment in anticipating school leaders' organizational commitment has statistical significance at the .05 level (two-tailed). This result translates into a useful insight: for every incremental unit rise in psychological empowerment, an increase in organizational commitment of .30 units can be expected.

Similarly, job autonomy significantly predicted the tertiary school leaders' organizational commitment ($\beta = .41$, $p < .05$), indicating that the regression weight associated with job

autonomy in forecasting such leaders' commitment is statistically significant at the .05 level (two-tailed). As a result, job autonomy's 1-unit increase corresponds to a .41-unit increase in organizational commitment among tertiary school administrators. This result emphasizes the positive influence of job autonomy on organizational commitment. In contrast, despite a positive connection ($\beta = .09$, $p = .05$), distributive justice failed to predict school leaders' organizational commitment meaningfully.

Hypothesized Model's Goodness of Fit

Figure 1 depicts the conceptual framework of the proposed model, which provides a thorough description of the interactions and interplay among the variables under research. The empirical findings shed light on the extent to which these variables contribute to explaining organizational commitment.

When the results are analyzed, it is clear that a large part, precisely 45 percent, of the variance in organizational commitment can be attributable to the synergistic impact of distributive justice, psychological empowerment, and work autonomy. This emphasizes how important these three elements are in determining employees' commitment to the firm. Furthermore, the analysis shows that a significant 38 percent variation in job autonomy can be attributed to the combined influences of distributive justice and psychological empowerment. This research emphasizes the interdependence of these elements and their impact on employees' perceived autonomy in their roles. Importantly, the model demonstrates significant direct effects of specific factors. Job autonomy ($\beta = .16$, $p < .05$) and organizational commitment ($\beta = .09$, $p < .05$) are both statistically significant direct effects of distributive justice. This shows that perceptions of fairness in resource distribution have a direct impact on employees' feelings of autonomy and commitment to the firm.

Similarly, psychological empowerment is identified as a substantial factor, with a direct effect on work autonomy ($\beta = .59$, $p < .05$) and organizational commitment ($\beta = .31$, $p < .05$). This highlights the critical significance of psychological empowerment in not just increasing employees' sense of autonomy but also in cultivating a stronger loyalty to the firm.

In conclusion, the proposed model and its standardized estimates, as seen in Figure 2, shed light on the complex linkages between distributive justice, psychological empowerment, work autonomy, and organizational commitment. The findings show the cumulative effects of various variables as well as the precise direct consequences, offering a thorough picture of the dynamics driving employee attitudes and behaviors within the corporate setting.

Figure 2

Hypothesized Model on Organizational Commitment in Standardized Estimates

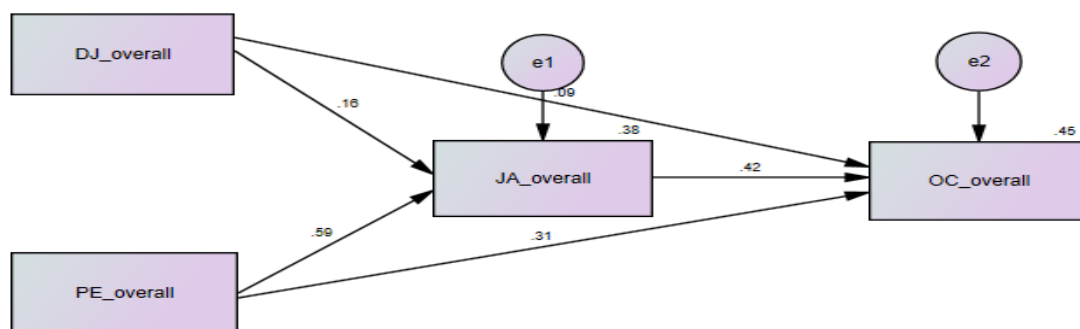


Table 3 summarizes the exogenous variables' direct and indirect influences on school leaders' organizational commitment. According to the findings, distributive fairness ($\beta = .09, p < .05$), psychological empowerment ($\beta = .31, p < .05$), and job autonomy ($\beta = .41, p < .05$) have significant effects on the respondents' organizational commitment. Furthermore, through job autonomy as mediating variable, it was revealed that there were significant indirect influences of both distributive justice ($\beta = .06, p < .05$) and psychological empowerment ($\beta = .24, p < .05$) on the organizational commitment of the respondents.

Table 3

Standardized Direct and Indirect Effect Estimates on Organizational Commitment

| Independent Variable | Direct Effect | <i>p</i> | Indirect Effect | <i>p</i> |
|---------------------------|---------------|----------|-----------------|----------|
| Distributive Justice | .09 | .02 | .06 | .01 |
| Psychological Empowerment | .31 | .02 | .24 | .00 |
| Job Autonomy | .41 | .00 | -- | -- |

Goodness of Fit Measures

It was revealed that the robustness of model's fit is obvious in **Table 4**, where all of the model fit values easily exceed the stated standards given by each index. The Normed Fit Index (NFI), Comparative Fit Index (CFI), Tucker-Lewis Index (TLI, Incremental Fit Index (IFI) and Goodness of Fit Index (GFI) all above the .90 criterion, demonstrating a solid match between the model and the actual data. Furthermore, the Standardized Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR) is less than .08, demonstrating the overall goodness of fit of the proposed model.

Table 4

Goodness of Fit Measures of the Hypothesized Model

| Index | Criterion | Model Fit Value |
|-------|-----------|-----------------|
| NFI | > .90 | .94 |
| TLI | > .90 | .94 |
| CFI | > .90 | .95 |
| GFI | > .90 | .97 |
| IFI | > .90 | .95 |
| SRMR | <.08 | .02 |

Note. NFI Normed Fit Index, TLI Tucker-Lewis Index, CFI Comparative Fit Index, GFI Goodness of Fit Index, IFI Incremental Fit Index, SRMR Standardized Root Mean Square Residual

Discussion

The results of the study discussed how distributive justice, psychological empowerment, and job autonomy influenced the organizational commitment of tertiary school leaders. There was a significant positive correlation between distributive justice and organizational commitment. This means that the positive correlation coefficient suggests that an increase in the respondents' distributive justice would likely increase their organizational commitment. This is in support of the study of Ghimire (2017) that distributive among employees of banking and finance, professional services, and educational institutions in Nepal had increased their organizational commitment. Also, a positive correlation coefficient indicated that psychological empowerment is significantly and directly related to the organizational commitment of tertiary school leaders, which implied that an increase in the respondents' psychological empowerment would likely increase their organizational commitment. Kebriaei et al. (2014) conducted a study and established that the results of this study were aligned with them when they said that employees' psychological empowerment had positively and significantly influenced their organizational commitment. They even emphasized that in-service education programs should concentrate on improving and increasing organizational commitment. In addition, employees manifested

higher levels of organizational commitment when they professed higher levels of psychological empowerment (Joo & Shim, 2010). Lastly, the result suggests that the positive correlation coefficient implied that job autonomy was directly related to their organizational commitment, which resulted in an increase in the respondents' job autonomy would likely increase their organizational commitment. This was in support of Naqvi et al. (2013), who argued that employees' increase in job autonomy would likely improve their organizational commitment.

On the influences of the dependent variables to the independent variable, psychological empowerment significantly predicted the organizational commitment of tertiary school leaders, demonstrating a statistically significant connection. This result translates into a useful insight: for every incremental unit rise in psychological empowerment, an increase in organizational commitment of .30 units can be expected. To put it another way, psychological empowerment has positively influenced the organizational commitment of tertiary school leaders. This result is consistent with the study of Kebriaei (2014), who discovered a comparable, positive link between psychological empowerment with organizational commitment. According to Kebriaei's research, psychological empowerment can explain 37.1 percent of the organizational commitment's variance among employees, implying a partial confirmation of psychological empowerment's impact on tertiary school leaders' commitment. It does, however, imply the presence of other factors beyond psychological empowerment that influence organizational commitment. This result, on the other hand, contradicts the findings of Moynihan and Pandey (2008), who discovered that psychological empowerment is strongly and negatively related to organizational commitment. Similarly, job autonomy significantly predicted the tertiary school leaders' organizational commitment, indicating that the regression weight associated with job autonomy in forecasting such leaders' commitment is statistically significant at the .05 level (two-tailed). As a result, job autonomy's 1-unit increase corresponds to a .418-unit increase in organizational commitment among tertiary school administrators. This result emphasizes the positive influence of job autonomy on organizational commitment. This discovery is consistent with the results of Sisodia and Das (2013), who proposed job autonomy positively and significantly predicted organizational commitment. They contended that increased autonomy in carrying out job obligations might potentially lead to increased loyalty to the organization. Furthermore, the evidence supports this viewpoint, as multiple studies have found a positive relationship between psychological empowerment and organizational commitment (Joo & Shim, 2010). Rawat (2011) provides additional support, confirming that psychological empowerment is an important characteristic of an employee, especially in developing organizational commitment among professionals in the service business. In contrast, despite a positive connection, distributive justice failed to meaningfully predict school leaders' organizational commitment. It supported the claims of Rivai et al. (2019), who argue that employees' perceptions of distributive justice and its impact on organizational commitment may be statistically insignificant. This point of view is supported by an earlier study by Konovsky and Cropanzano (1991), which found that organizational commitment is less strongly related to distributive justice than procedural fairness. Lastly, these findings were apparent in the regression analysis results, in which 46.9 percent of the organizational commitment variance can be explained by the model since $R^2 = .46$. This also means that 53.1 percent can be credited to other factors aside from the independent variable in the regression model.

Psychological empowerment and distributive justice have manifested direct and indirect influences on the organizational commitment of tertiary school leaders, with job autonomy as the mediating variable. This finding has been consistent with the existing literature, which stresses the important links between these characteristics and organizational commitment. Notably, prior research has highlighted that distributive justice had significantly predicted organizational commitment, as demonstrated by studies such as Lambert et al. (2005). Similarly, this research revealed that psychological empowerment had significantly impacted organizational commitment, as evidenced by Ibrahim's (2020) findings. Furthermore, Sisodia and Das (2013) stressed job autonomy was significantly related to organizational commitment. These findings not only add to our understanding of the direct effects of these variables but also underscore the significance of work autonomy as a moderating factor in the complex interaction that shapes leaders' commitment within the educational setting. The outcomes of this study supported the premise that the interaction between distributive justice, psychological empowerment, and job autonomy shapes the organizational commitment of tertiary school administrators. This complicated relationship highlights a positive perspective, in which these leaders believe the company not only recognizes their accomplishments but also shows real concern for their entire well-being. This explanation is consistent with Kurtessis et al.'s (2017) theory of organizational support. Employees, in this example, tertiary school leaders, demonstrate higher levels of dedication when they believe their efforts are valued, and their welfare is prioritized, according to this notion.

In practice, the findings indicate that these leaders feel nourished and validated in their responsibilities, generating a stronger bond with the organization. This increased dedication can be interpreted as a manifestation of a social covenant made between these leaders and their particular institutions. This implies that leaders respond to positive organizational treatment and support by putting more of themselves into their responsibilities and displaying more dedication. This symbiotic and mutually advantageous relationship between commitment and organizational practices is consistent with the concept of a social covenant, in which both parties—leaders, and schools—play active roles in preserving a symbiotic and mutually beneficial relationship.

This comprehension has significant ramifications for educational institutions. Recognizing the important roles that distributive justice, psychological empowerment, and work autonomy play in increasing organizational commitment among tertiary school leaders, institutions can intentionally focus on creating these characteristics within their organizational culture. Schools may establish a supportive climate that not only supports leaders' commitment but also contributes to their overall pleasure and engagement by regularly displaying justice, empowerment, and autonomy.

Finally, the findings of the study shed light on how distributive justice, psychological empowerment, and job autonomy all contribute to tertiary school leaders' organizational commitment. This agreement with organizational support theory emphasizes the organization's critical role in establishing a positive view among leaders, leading to sustained commitment and a reciprocal social covenant that benefits both the leaders and their schools.

On the goodness of fit of the proposed model, the result emphasizes the model's ability to successfully explain school leaders' organizational commitment, as it meets the required criteria stated by Arbuckle and Wothke (1999). As a sign of a well-fitting model, these researchers urge

for NFI, GFI, IFI, and CFI values to approach or exceed .90. Similarly, Lei and Wu (2007) argue that an SRMR value of less than .08 resulted in a good model fit.

The model's good alignment with the data confirms the model's dependability and ability to offer a meaningful representation of the complicated interactions between the variables under consideration. This high level of fit indicates that the proposed framework appropriately represents the factors impacting school leaders' organizational commitment.

In practice, these findings provide academics and practitioners hope for the model's ability to explain the complex influences of distributive justice, psychological empowerment, and job autonomy in developing leaders' commitment inside educational institutions. It also emphasizes the model's effectiveness in facilitating a deeper understanding of organizational support theory and its implications for fostering commitment and positive job outcomes among school leaders.

Finally, the model's goodness of fit, as indicated by the alignment of multiple indices with set thresholds, demonstrates the model's great explanatory power and aptness in illuminating the factors impacting school leaders' organizational commitment. This agreement with accepted standards validates the model and improves our knowledge of the dynamics at work in educational leadership environments.

Conclusions

This study's findings have revealed numerous key conclusions that shed light on the complex dynamics affecting school leaders' organizational commitment. For starters, an increase in distributive justice, psychological empowerment, and job autonomy among school leaders is likely to correspond with an increase in their organizational commitment. This shows that when leaders perceive justice in resource allocation, feel empowered, and have more autonomy in their responsibilities, they are more likely to be loyal to the firm. This is consistent with the concept of a constructive work environment that values and encourages the well-being and contributions of leaders.

In addition, psychological empowerment and job autonomy were crucially important in predicting organizational commitment among school leaders. This indicates that these two elements have significant influences on leaders' levels of organizational commitment. They are more committed when they feel empowered, have a sense of autonomy in their jobs, and are encouraged to actively create their work environment. These findings highlight the importance of cultivating an organizational culture that fosters psychological empowerment and allows leaders to exercise greater autonomy, ultimately leading to increased commitment.

Furthermore, the proposed model sheds light on the interrelationships between distributive justice, psychological empowerment, job autonomy, and organizational commitment. The twin benefits brought by distributive justice and psychological empowerment on organizational commitment are particularly remarkable, both directly and indirectly, via job autonomy's mediation role. This implies that not only do these variables have direct influences on commitment, but they also have indirect effects via job autonomy, which functions as a mediator.

The proposed model's goodness of fit reinforces these findings. The model's components' conformity with recognized indices of fit underlines its suitability for describing the complex interactions between various variables. This successful alignment strengthens the model's

credibility and capacity to serve as an effective framework for understanding the bases of organizational commitment among tertiary school leaders.

In conclusion, the results highlighted the reputation of distributive justice, psychological empowerment, and job autonomy in promoting organizational commitment among school leaders. These findings add to our understanding of the complicated interplay of organizational characteristics and leaders' commitment. Finally, the study provides a complete framework for understanding the numerous processes that drive leaders' commitment in the educational context.

Organizational commitment within tertiary educational institutions holds significant implications for enhancing school leadership. When leaders within tertiary schools are deeply committed to the organization's mission, values, and goals, they are more likely to exhibit a strong work ethic and dedication. This commitment instills a sense of ownership and responsibility, fostering a culture of excellence and accountability. Committed leaders tend to stay with the institution longer, providing stability and continuity, vital for long-term planning and implementation of strategic initiatives. Their commitment often translates into better decision-making, increased innovation, and a proactive approach to challenges.

Moreover, organizational commitment positively influences team cohesion and collaboration among faculty and staff. It cultivates a sense of unity and shared purpose, which in turn leads to a more harmonious and productive work environment. Committed leaders are also more likely to engage in professional development and encourage growth among their team members, promoting a culture of continuous improvement. Ultimately, the ripple effect of organizational commitment within tertiary school leadership results in higher educational standards, a more engaged and motivated workforce, and a conducive environment for both academic and personal development. Lastly, since this study was only limited to determining the levels of the variables of this study and the significant influences of the independent variables on the dependent variable, qualitative research should be conducted to explore deeply distributive justice, psychological empowerment, job autonomy, and organizational commitment of tertiary school leaders in order to support or negate the findings of the existing literature. Moreover, increasing the sample size is another way of improving the results of the study.

Declarations

Acknowledgements

Not applicable.

Disclosure Statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the authors.

Ethics Approval

Not applicable.

Funding Acknowledgements

Not applicable.

Citation to this article

Ongcoy, P. J. B. (2023). Distributive justice, psychological empowerment and job autonomy's influences on the organizational commitment of tertiary school leaders. *International Journal of Organizational Leadership*, 12(4), 329-348. <https://doi.org/10.33844/ijol.2023.60381>

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