



# The Relationship Between Components of Organizational Justice and Human Resources Productivity

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## Abstract

The present study aims to investigate the relationship between the three components of organizational justice (distributive, procedural and interactional) and human resources productivity in the employees with Nowshahr University of Marine Sciences. The participants consisted of all the employees with this university. The study adopts a descriptive-correlational method. Niehoff and Moorman's Organizational Justice Questionnaire (1993) was used to examine the distributive, procedural and interactional components. Goldsmith Productivity Questionnaire was used to measure human resources productivity and its subscales. Pearson correlation formula was used to analyze the data. The results revealed a significant correlation between organizational justice and productivity. As a component of organizational justice, interactional justice had a significant correlation with productivity. Generally speaking, organizational efficiency depends on the efficiency and effectiveness of human resources, particularly organization managers. Therefore, organizations are primarily responsible to move toward increased justice among human resources.

**Keywords:** Organizational Justice; Human Resources Productivity

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## 1. Introduction

Modern age requires greater attention to organizations and organizational individuals. Research has shown that employees' behavior may be influenced by their attitudes as the organizational roles and structures turn to be more complicated. Experts contend that learning and training as well as acquisition of relevant skills in specialized fields are considered as an unequivocal social requirement, which plays a crucial role in development and increased productivity. The factors contributing to final productivity goals include motivation, employees' participation in decision-making, job security and training as well as developing a pleasant workplace environment, addressing the needs, and appointing qualified personnel to top positions [1].

In scientific management developed by Taylor, organizational rationalism or rational

organizational behavior is the equivalent of productivity and efficiency. Indeed, management entails the knowledge of productivity and optimal use of available resources to achieve the determined goals. Productivity is a comprehensive concept that is considered as a necessity to improve the quality of life, welfare and comfort, which are essential priorities for authorities in every country. Productivity is an important index in economic development. In this regard, measurement of productivity across various economic sectors may not only reveal national economic performance but also demonstrate production capacities in different sectors. The main element in improved productivity is human resources that are the only type of resources peculiar to every organization and that may not be duplicated by competitors. Therefore, human resources bring about sustainable competitive advantage to an organization [2]. Human resources productivity is

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the main criterion of productivity since it is associated with most of the organizational analyses. Besides, it is easiest to measure. Thus, human resources are the main element involved in any effort to improve productivity [3].

Organizational justice is one of the factors that may affect human resources productivity. Justice is a socially-embedded concept involved in most aspects of life. It is commonly held that justice should accompany the outcomes of every effort. Justice is also conceptualized within organizations, which is referred to as organizational justice [4]. Sociologists have long identified and addressed the importance of organizational justice as an essential element contributing to the effectiveness of organizational processes [5]. Research on organizational justice may potentially account for many variables pertaining to the outcomes of organizational behavior. Organizational justice is the degree to which the employees feel that rules, procedures and organizational policies are fair enough toward them [6]. Specifically, employees' perception of equity and fair behavior may affect other relevant factors as well. In humanities, justice is considered as a construct developed in the atmosphere of social relations. In a specific approach, once a behavior is considered as fair, most people tend to perceive it as fair. Over the last thirty years or so, research on organizational justice has considerably increased so that many laboratory and field studies have addressed this issue. Interestingly, organizational justice has been one of the most cited topics of organizational research over the last decades. Theorists of cognitive sciences consider behavior as subject to beliefs, expectations, values and other mental perceptions. In other words, behavior is the result of human conscious, logical choices.

Equity theory is one of the cognitive theories of work motivation, which proposes that employee perceptions are the key to understanding their motivation. In equity theory, an employee compares her own employer with other employers as to whether organizational rewards are enough to compensate for her invested competence and skills. Some authorities call it the *theory of justice development* since equity theory focuses on the fair distribution of incomes among people to achieve a high level of motivation [7]. Research has shown that justice processes play a crucial role in the organization so that behaviors toward employees may influence their beliefs, emotions, attitudes and behaviors [8]. Research findings suggest that fairness to employees on the part of the organization typically results in their higher productivity and better citizenship behavior. On the other hand, those who feel they are exposed to injustice are more likely to leave the organization or to show lower levels of organizational

commitment and productivity. They may even set out to show abnormal behaviors such as revenge. Therefore, an important issue contributing to the perception of organizational behavior is to recognize how employees judge their organizational justice or how they respond to perceived justice/injustice.

As long as managers seek to develop and improve their organization, they should be able to ingrain perceived justice in their employees [9]. Perceived organizational justice is an essential requirement for effective employee performance, which plays a significant role in shaping their attitudes and behaviors [10]. The earliest studies on organizational justice date back to the 1960s. In early 1990s, a new trend of empirical research on organizational justice began, which delineated three components of organizational justice including distributive justice, procedural justice and interactional justice (Shayan Jahromi, 2010). Distributive Justice refers to the fairness of outcomes that employees receive. This type of organizational justice originated from Adams equity theory (1965). It focuses on the employees' responses to unfair management intervention in distributing facilities and rewards throughout the organization [11].

Procedural justice refers to the justice perceived through a process that is used to determine the distribution of rewards. The question here is that whether an employee who receives fewer rewards than her colleagues can feel no injustice. In terms of procedural justice, the answer would be "yes". Suppose, for example, two employees at the same level of competencies carry out similar job-related tasks and duties. Still, one receives a higher wage than another does. Organizational payment policies entail several legal factors such as working time, working shifts, etc. These two employees are familiar with payment policies and have equal opportunities. In this regard, one may be better paid while the other one –though she thinks she earns less than she likes – may think her pay is not unfair since she considers the organizational compensation policy as an open policy that is used accurately and impartially [11].

Interactional justice is the third type of organizational justice, which includes a process whereby supervisors hand down organizational justice to employees. It is associated with aspects of interaction processes between the senders and recipients of justice. As interactional justice is determined through management behavior, it is associated with cognitive, emotional and behavioral reactions toward the supervisors. Therefore, when an employee experiences interactional injustice, she most probably sets off a negative reaction to her supervisor rather than to the organization. Thus, the employee is expected to

experience a sense of dissatisfaction with her direct superintendent rather than the organization so that she feels less commitment to her superintendent than to the organization. Besides, while she typically holds negative attitudes toward her superintendent, a small part of this negative attitude is directed at the organization.

Investigation of justice and its characteristics in organizational performance may reveal that justice is an inseparable requirement for the survival of an organization [12]. Thus, the management commits to justice to increase organizational commitment and innovation in employees and to increase their presence in the organization and productivity. Thus, justice is one of the essential requirements of organizational behavior so that it is particularly important among organizational theories [13]. Nowadays, organizations need effective employees to achieve their goals and comprehensive development. Overall, organizational efficiency depends on workforce efficiency, particularly management efficiency. Therefore, moving toward increased justice, commitment and satisfaction among human resources is one of the main duties of an organization [14]. In this regard, the present study aims to investigate the relationship of organizational justice and its components with productivity in the employees with Nowshahr University of Marine Sciences.

## 2. Methodology

The study adopted a descriptive- correlational method. The study investigated the relationship between the components of organizational justice (distributive, procedural and interactional) and productivity in the employees with Nowshahr University of Marine Sciences. The participants consisted of all employees with this university (N=300).

### 2.1 Instruments

**Organizational Justice Questionnaire:** Niehoff and Moorman developed the questionnaire in 1993. It comprises 20 items and three subscales including distributive justice, procedural justice and interactional justice that are addressed by 5, 6 and 9 items, respectively. The scores obtained on every subscale together make up the sum total of organizational justice score. Naami and Shokrkon

(2005) calculated the reliability of the questionnaire to be 0.85 for overall organizational justice, 0.78 for distributive justice, 0.82 for procedural justice and 0.69 for interactional justice. They also reported the validity of the questionnaire to be 0.42 for overall organizational justice, 0.46 for distributive justice, 0.57 for procedural justice and 0.40 for interactional justice. In the present study, the reliability of the questionnaire was calculated to be 0.90 for overall organizational justice, 0.81 for distributive justice, 0.76 for procedural justice and 0.84 for interactional justice. The items are on a 5-point Likert scale.

**Productivity questionnaire:** Goldsmith Productivity Questionnaire was used to measure productivity and its subscales in the employees. The questionnaire consists of seven subscales including Ability (knowledge and skills), Clarity (conception or imagination of the role), Help (organizational support), Incentive (intention), Evaluation (operation feedback), Validity (justice) and Environment (environment proportionality). The items are on a 5-point Likert scale. The validity of questionnaire was approved by experts. The reliability of the questionnaire was calculated to be 0.91 using Cronbach alpha formula.

### 2.2 Statistical analysis

Pearson correlation formula was run to analyze the data and examine the relationship among distributive, procedural and interactional justice.

## 3. Results

As illustrated in Table 1, procedural justice (27.45) obtained the highest mean score followed by distributive justice (24.34) followed by interactional justice (24.22). This shows that the employees had an average-level perception of different types of justice.

Concerning employee productivity, the results showed that incentive (24.29) and validity (5.95) obtained the highest and lowest mean scores, respectively. The results showed a significant correlation between overall organizational justice and human resources productivity ( $r=0.19$ ,  $P\leq 0.05$ ). From among the components of organizational justice, interactional justice had a significant correlation with human resources productivity ( $r=0.10$ ,  $P\leq 0.05$ ).

**Table 1.** Mean scores of organizational justice and employee productivity.

Variable	Mean	SD	Variable	Mean	SD
Overall organizational justice	74.20	8.62	Validity	5.95	1.45
Distributive justice	24.34	3.13	Incentive	24.29	4.69
Procedural justice	27.45	4.54	Clarity	9.98	2.18
Interactional justice	24.22	5.38	Help	7.79	2.49
Employee productivity	81.49	12.80	Environment	10.1	2.76
Ability	14.18	2.46	Evaluation	8.58	2.63

**Table 2.** Relationship of organizational justice and its components with human resources productivity.

Variables	Overall organizational justice		Distributive justice		Procedural justice		Interactional justice	
	r	P	R	P	r	P	r	P
	Human resources productivity	0.19	0.003	0.07	0.25	0.014	0.098	0.10

#### 4. Discussion and Conclusion

Justice has always been an essential need for social life throughout the course of human history. Nowadays, considering the leading role of organizations in social life, justice finds a specific niche in organizations. Modern organizations are indeed miniatures of the society so that their realization of justice represents the realization of justice within the society. Thus, as with other factors contributing to organizational behavior such as organizational commitment and job satisfaction, organizational justice is broadly addressed in management literature. There is a growing body of research on this topic and new findings have contributed to new achievements in this domain. Therefore, managers should not neglect organizational justice, as it is a persistent human need. Once the managers seek to improve their organizations, they should ingrain the perception of justice in their employees. Another significant issue addressed in industrial and organizational psychology as well as other relevant fields is to make employees have higher performance and productivity. There are various approaches to the study of motivation. Organizational justice is one of these approaches, which is specifically addressed recently. Organizational justice and its components predict a variety of organizational variables such as absenteeism, turnover and, above all, human resources productivity. A review of literature showed that many researchers have studied the relationship between organizational justice and its behavioral outcomes [15].

According to the theory of organizational justice, one may expect that employees react to either presence or absence of organizational justice in the workplace. Once the employees see justice is not done within the organization, they feel a sense of tension that thwarts their productivity and efficiency. On the contrary, once the employees perceive adherence to organizational justice in the workplace, they would be encouraged to undertake more duties, tasks and responsibilities [16]. Organizational justice is a positive indication of the fact that the organization values her employees. Thus, both productivity and efficiency are expected to increase in the employees. The present findings revealed interesting points. The results showed that different components of organizational justice exert variable effects on different aspects of human

resources productivity. This may help managers improve perceived justice in their organization. In other words, recognizing the fact that what component of organizational justice affects what type of attitude in the employees would pave the way to planning and improving productivity in the organization.

The present findings showed a significant positive correlation between overall organizational justice and human resources productivity. This is consistent with the findings of Masterson (2000) [17], Rupp (2002) [18] and Heponiemi (2007) [19]. The results showed that the three components of organizational justice exert variable effects on productivity. In other words, interactional justice has a different impact on human resources productivity comparing with distributive and procedural justice so that interactional justice exerts a significant effect on human resources productivity, but other components do not do so. One may reason that procedural justice is more about the organization and its policies while interactional justice is associated with superintendents. Therefore, interactional justice may encourage the employees to consider their supervisors as fair and trustworthy so that they may be more inclined to continue working with them, hence the improvement of employee productivity. As Podsakoff (1990) contends, when employees are treated fairly, and there is a good relationship between management and employees, employees tend to be more committed to the organization, hence the improvement of productivity. Generally speaking, the results showed a relationship between organizational justice and human resources productivity. In order to establish and secure this relationship within organizations, managers are recommended to set the stage so that human resources productivity may increase within the organization. This requires the establishment of procedural, interactional and distributive justice in the organization. In order to establish distributive justice, managers should try to utilize a suitable performance appraisal system derived from appropriate job specification guidelines. To this end, every position needs to be scientifically analyzed. Besides, in order to establish procedural justice, organizational procedures and guidelines need to be clear and transparent. Moreover, the already made decisions should be submitted to the employees in good manner to facilitate interactional justice. In order to

increase productivity in the organization, training programs should be developed to introduce managers into the principles and application of organizational justice. Managers should be encouraged to apply the findings of organizational justice theory in their interactions with employees.

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