

Study of the effects of perceived organizational justice and its components on organizational commitment of administrative and financial employees of Shiraz University of Medical Sciences general hospitals in 2012

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ABSTARCT

Objectives: This study aimed to review the effects of perceived organizational justice and its components on organizational commitment of administrative and financial employees of Shiraz University of Medical Sciences general hospitals in 2012.

Materials and Methods: This was a cross-sectional, descriptive-analytical study conducted in 2012. The population in study was all administrative and financial staff of Shiraz University of Medical Sciences general hospitals. A sample size of 120 staff was selected using stratified sampling proportional to size and simple random sampling methods. The required data were gathered using two questionnaires: The modified Persian version of the organizational justice questionnaire developed by Niehoff and Moorman and the Persian version of the organizational commitment questionnaire developed by Allen and Meyer. Also, respondents were asked about their demographic profiles. The response rate was 82%. The collected data were analyzed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences 16.0 (SPSS) through some statistical tests such as Independent *t*-test, analysis of variance (ANOVA), Pearson correlation coefficient and Multiple Linear Regression (Stepwise method). $P < 0.05$ was considered statistically significant.

Results: The mean score of perceived organizational justice and organizational commitment were 72.80 and 75.93, respectively. The results showed that affective and normative commitment, as well as total organizational commitment had significant positive correlations with total organizational justice and its three components, that is, procedural, distributive, and interactional justice (respectively, $r = 0.544$, $r = 0.476$, $r = 0.463$, $r = 0.509$, and $P < 0.001$). However, continuance commitment had only a significant positive correlation with procedural justice ($r = 0.206$, $P = 0.042$). Stepwise multiple regression analysis also showed that only procedural and interactional justice had statistically significant relationships with total organizational commitment ($B = 0.511$, $B = 0.599$, and $P < 0.05$).

Conclusion: Improving organizational justice can continuously increase employees' commitment. Therefore, hospital administrators should pay more attention to implement and enhance organizational justice and its components especially procedural and interactional justice in the organization, provide opportunities for supervisors to be trained in behaving better towards employees (interactional justice), and develop a fair system for employees' performance evaluation and their promotions (procedural justice), as well as the provision of rewards (distributive justice) based on related standards.

Key words: Administrative and financial staff, general hospitals, organizational commitment, organizational justice

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INTRODUCTION

Viability and sustainability of an organization as a social system are dependent on the existence of a strong relationship among its constituent elements.^[1] Human resources of any organization are the most important elements to achieve its organizational goals.^[2] Also, the development of the economic and social sectors of every country and, overall, its national development is not possible except with the help of efficient human resources.^[3,4]

The importance of human resources in the organization is so high that they are called internal customers.^[5] The existence of dynamic and high quality human resources plays a major role in the achieving organizational goals and its success.^[2] In today's modern society, according to the intense competition and rapid growth, considering the physical and mental aspects of the staff is so essential.^[6]

Having the committed and loyal human resources to the organization is one of the organization superiority criteria over other organizations^[2] because the presence of the committed manpower in the organization results in reducing absenteeism, as well as improving employees' performance and increasing their happiness.^[7] The necessity of employing committed human resources is more in service organizations such as hospitals.^[8]

Organizational commitment is one of the factors influencing the employees' performance in hospitals.^[9] Organizational commitment creates balance between individual and organizational goals, and increases the efficiency of staff.^[10] In hospitals, which try to maintain, restore, and promote human health, organizational commitment is more important than other organizations.^[11] Therefore, it is essential that the heads of organizations, especially hospitals, take actions to maintain and increase the commitment of their employees and minimize the effects of factors decreasing organizational commitment. One of the factors influencing the organizational commitment is perceived organizational justice.^[12]

There is the claim that in social institutions, the observance of organizational justice is the first factor influencing the optimal performance of staff,^[13] and that how to deal with people in organizations may affect the employees' beliefs, feelings, attitudes, and behavior.^[14]

Thus, understanding how perceived organizational justice and its components influence organizational

behavior and organizational commitment is important. By recognizing this, some opportunities can be provided for managers to take appropriate measures to develop the sense of justice in their organizations.^[1] If employees feel that justice is respected in the organization, their intention to leave the organization will be decreased.^[15]

In recent years, some researches have been conducted to study the relationship between perceived organizational justice and organizational commitment. In this regard, Ghafouri (2009)^[1], and Yadegari and Bahramzade (2009)^[12] in Iran, Ehsan Malik and Naeem (2011)^[6] in Pakistan, and Ponnu and Chuah in Malaysia (2010)^[16] have concluded that there are direct and significant relationships between perceived organizational justice and its components and organizational commitment.

Organizational justice

Organizational justice reflects the employees' perceptions of fairness and fair behavior of the job^[1] and usually encompasses three components included distributive, procedural, and interactional justice.^[17] Distributive justice has been originated from the Adams' equity theory and is the perceived justice of outcomes and their distribution. It should be noted that distributive justice is not just limited to the fairness of the payments, but included a wide range of organizational outcomes, such as promotions, bonuses, punishments, benefits, and performance evaluations.^[18]

Since the early 1980s, the procedural justice-related issues were also considered.^[19] Procedural justice is the perceived fairness of the processes by which the outcomes are determined. In other words, fair decisions are ones which are the results of fair procedures.^[20] Procedures are perceived as fair which are used based on accurate information and ethical standards and norms, consider all organizational units interests, and are without regarding to personal interests.^[21] Some principles of procedural justice are to be neutral, have opportunity to make comment and to be heard by others, and participate in the decision making.^[22]

Finally, in the early 1990s, the concept of interactional justice was taken into account by researchers of the organizational justice. Interactional justice focuses on the behavior of supervisors and their role in observing the organizational justice.^[14]

Based on the concept of interactional justice, the quality of inter-personal behavior is very important during

the implementation of procedures, decision-making, and making fair judgements. Inter-personal behavior includes putting trust in relationships and exhibiting respectful and polite behavior which is defined by five characteristics: Devoting enough attention to staff, preventing personal bias, consistent use of decision criteria, timely feedback, and justifying decisions. These factors play an important role in employees' perception of equality, accepting decisions and tendency towards the organization.^[23]

Organizational commitment

The second variable studied in this research was organizational commitment, which has been defined by Allen and Meyer: Organizational commitment is a situation that helps the staff in order to achieve the organizational goals and includes the employee identification, involvement, and loyalty.^[24] Organizational commitment is the sense of identity and affiliation to an organization and can affect important behaviors such as turnover and absenteeism, discipline at work, etc.^[25] Various dimensions of organizational commitment are affective, normative, and continuance commitment. Affective commitment is an emotional attachment, identification, and participation in the organization and its objectives. Employees with a strong affective commitment continue working in their organization because they like that.^[26]

Normative commitment reflects a sense of commitment to continued employment in the organization. Employees with a strong normative commitment continue working in their organization because they see it as their duty and obligation. Employees with high levels of normative commitment feel that they have to remain in the organization.^[24]

Continuance commitment is related to the awareness of the benefits of being involved in the work and organization, as well as the costs associated with leaving the organization. Employees with a strong continuance commitment continue working in their organization because they need to do this. In other words, the employees remain committed to the organization due to high costs of leaving the organization not based on the feeling of emotional attachment to the organization or seeing it as their duty.^[26]

Although all three types of organizational commitment refer to employees staying with the organization, the nature of attachment to the organization of the three types of commitment is quite different and depends

on the types of organizational commitment. A person who has affective commitment may attempt to be upgraded in the organization more than someone who has no such commitment. Such a thing is also true for people with strong normative commitment. However, people with strong continuance commitment tend less to behave based on the principles underlying the affective and normative commitment. Therefore, their intention to remain in their organization is less than people with the other two types of organizational commitment, namely affective and normative commitment.^[25]

The results of studies on organizational commitment conducted in Iran show that perceived organizational justice influences organizational commitment. For example: Madani and Zahedi (2006) in their study showed that perceived organizational justice is one of the independent variables that have relatively strong correlation with organizational commitment and its dimensions other than the continuance commitment.^[25]

Seyedjavadin *et al.*, (2009) also concluded that the effects of various components of organizational justice on organizational commitment and its dimensions were different. However, any sense of justice had a significant impact on organizational commitment.^[14]

Considering the importance of organizational commitment and organizational justice and their effects on staff performance, the organizational health can be improved by using the related findings and determining the relationship between these two variables. However, previous researches studying the relationship between organizational commitment and perceived organizational justice in hospitals have more considered the healthcare workers than administrative and financial staff. Therefore, in this study, researchers reviewed the effects of perceived organizational justice and its components on organizational commitment of administrative and financial employees of Shiraz University of Medical Sciences general hospitals.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Study design, setting, and study population

This was a cross-sectional, descriptive-analytical study conducted in 2012. The population study was all administrative and financial staff of Shiraz University of Medical Sciences general hospitals included two hospitals. A sample size of 120 staff was determined using the findings of previous studies,

the results of the pilot study, as well as the following formula (assuming $\alpha = 0.05$, $\beta = 0.2$, $r = 0.26$):

$$n = \left(\frac{z_{1-\alpha} + z_{1-\beta}}{r} \right)^2 + 3$$

This sample was selected using stratified sampling proportional to size method, so that each of the two hospitals was considered as a stratum in which the studied sample of staff was selected considering the total number of each hospital's staff and using simple random sampling method by random numbers table.

Data collection and evaluation

The required data were gathered using two questionnaires:

- Organizational justice and its three components such as distributive, procedural, and interactional justice were measured using the modified Persian version of the organizational justice questionnaire developed by Niehoff and Moorman (1993)^[27] which the inter-item consistency scores of distributive justice ($\alpha = 0.86$), procedural justice ($\alpha = 0.80$) and interactional justice ($\alpha = 0.70$) had been found to be adequate for the analysis purpose in previous Iranian studies.^[13] Four-point scale was used to assess the perceptions of the staff whereby 1 refers to strongly disagree and 4 as strongly agree.
- Organizational commitment and its three dimensions such as affective, normative, continuance commitment were measured using the Persian version of the organizational commitment questionnaire developed by Allen and Meyer (1996)^[28] which the inter-item consistency scores of affective commitment ($\alpha = 0.85$), normative commitment ($\alpha = 0.79$) and continuance commitment ($\alpha = 0.83$) had been found to be adequate for the analysis purpose in previous Iranian studies.^[29] Five-point Likert scale was used to measure the employees' commitment to their hospitals whereby 1 refers to strongly disagree and 5 as strongly agree.

Also, respondents were asked about their demographic profiles such as sex, age, marital status, education level, and job experience.

Statistical analysis

The response rate was 82%. The collected data were analyzed using SPSS 16.0 through some statistical tests such as Independent *t*-test, Anova, Pearson correlation

coefficient and Multiple Linear Regression (Stepwise method). $P < 0.05$ was considered statistically significant.

RESULTS

The findings showed that among 120 participants only 98 employees (82% of participants) responded to the questionnaires. Most respondents ($n = 62$, 63.3%) were female, 79.6% ($n = 78$) were married, and 66.3% had a bachelor degree ($n = 65$). The respondents' ages ranged from 22 to 49 years, with a mean age of 34.62 years and an SD of 6.75 years and their job experience ranged from 1 to 29 years, with a mean of 10.86 years and an SD of 7.21 years.

In this study, the studied demographic characteristics including sex, age, education level, marital status and job experience did not have any statistically significant relationships with the organizational justice and organizational commitment ($P > 0.05$).

The mean and standard deviation of the organizational justice and organizational commitment and their components have been shown in Table 1. The results showed that among the components of organizational justice, procedural justice and interactional justice had the highest (26.6, SD = 5.07) and lowest (22.58, SD = 5.89) mean score, respectively. Among the organizational commitment dimensions, also, the affective commitment and normative commitment had the highest (26.42, SD = 5.42) and lowest (23.80, SD = 3.53) mean score, respectively.

Also, the results showed that affective and normative commitment, as well as total organizational commitment had significant positive correlations with total organizational justice and its three components (procedural, distributive, and interactional justice). However, continuance commitment had only a significant positive correlation with procedural justice [Table 2].

Table 1: Mean and SD of organizational justice, organizational commitment and their components

| Variables | Mean | SD |
|---------------------------------|-------|-------|
| Procedural justice | 26.06 | 5.07 |
| Distributive justice | 24.34 | 6.13 |
| Interactional justice | 22.58 | 5.89 |
| Total organizational justice | 72.98 | 15.16 |
| Affective commitment | 26.42 | 5.42 |
| Continuance commitment | 25.71 | 4.55 |
| Normative commitment | 23.80 | 3.53 |
| Total organizational commitment | 75.93 | 10.19 |

The results of stepwise multiple linear regression showed that among the three components of organizational justice, only procedural and interactional justice had statistically significant relationships with affective commitment ($P < 0.05$) which explained 33.7% (Adjusted $R^2 = 0.337$) variance in affective commitment of general hospital administrative and financial staff whereas 72.3% of the variance was unexplained. The identified equation to explain this relationship was:

$$Y = 10.594 + 0.339X_1 + 0.31X_2$$

Where, Y = Affective commitment, X_1 = Procedural justice and X_2 = Interactional justice.

Also, among the three components of organizational justice, only distributive justice had statistically significant relationships with continuance commitment ($P < 0.05$) which 32% of the variance in continuance commitment can be explained by the employees' perception of distributive justice, whereas 68% of the variance was unexplained. The identified equation to explain this relationship was:

$$Y = 20.907 + 0.184X_1$$

Where, Y = Continuance commitment and X_1 = Procedural justice.

On the other hand, among the three components of organizational justice, only interactional justice had statistically significant relationships with normative commitment ($P < 0.05$) and Adjusted R^2 indicated that of 20.5% of the variance in normative commitment could be explained by the employees' perception of interactional justice, whereas 79.5% of the variance was unexplained. The identified equation to explain this relationship was:

$$Y = 17.546 + 0.277X_1$$

Where, Y = Normative commitment and X_1 = Interactional justice.

Finally, among the three components of organizational justice, only procedural and interactional justice had statistically significant relationships with total organizational commitment ($P < 0.05$) which explained 28.2% (Adjusted $R^2 = 0.282$) variance in total organizational commitment of general hospital administrative and financial staff, whereas 71.8% of the variance was unexplained. The identified equation to explain this relationship was:

$$Y = 49.09 + 0.511X_1 + 0.599X_2$$

Where, Y = Total organizational commitment, X_1 = Procedural justice and X_2 = Interactional justice [Table 3].

Table 2: Pearson's correlation between organizational justice, organizational commitment and their components

| Organizational justice components/ Organizational commitment dimensions | Procedural justice | | Distributive justice | | Interactional justice | | Total organizational justice | |
|--|--------------------|--------|----------------------|--------|-----------------------|--------|------------------------------|--------|
| | r | P | r | P | r | P | r | P |
| Affective commitment | 0.533 | <0.001 | 0.515 | <0.001 | 0.540 | <0.001 | 0.597 | <0.001 |
| Continuance commitment | 0.206 | 0.042 | 0.111 | 0.275 | 0.139 | 0.173 | 0.168 | 0.099 |
| Normative commitment | 0.291 | 0.004 | 0.401 | <0.001 | 0.462 | <0.001 | 0.439 | <0.001 |
| Total organizational commitment | 0.476 | <0.001 | 0.463 | <0.001 | 0.509 | <0.001 | 0.544 | <0.001 |

Table 3: The effects of organizational justice components on organizational commitment and its dimensions using multiple linear regressions (Stepwise method)

| Coefficients | | B | Std. error | Beta | T | P value | Adjusted R ² |
|---------------------------------|-----------------------|--------|------------|-------|--------|---------|-------------------------|
| Dependant variables | Independent variables | | | | | | |
| Affective commitment | Constant | 10.594 | 2.364 | | 4.481 | <0.001 | 0.337 |
| | Procedural justice | 0.339 | 0.115 | 0.317 | 2.946 | 0.004 | |
| | Interactional justice | 0.310 | 0.099 | 0.337 | 3.130 | 0.002 | |
| Continuance commitment | Constant | 20.907 | 2.379 | | 8.790 | <0.001 | 0.32 |
| | Procedural justice | 0.184 | 0.090 | 0.206 | 2.059 | 0.042 | |
| Normative commitment | Constant | 17.546 | 1.266 | | 13.855 | <0.001 | 0.205 |
| | Interactional justice | 0.277 | 0.054 | 0.462 | 5.099 | <0.001 | |
| Total organizational commitment | Constant | 49.09 | 4.628 | | 10.607 | <0.001 | 0.2820 |
| | Procedural justice | 0.511 | 0.225 | 0.254 | 2.27 | 0.025 | |
| | Interactional justice | 0.599 | 0.194 | 0.346 | 3.091 | 0.003 | |

DISCUSSION

Organizational commitment is a multidimensional concept. It has been shown that organizational commitment has effects on positive job outcomes, including reduced absenteeism and turnover, and increased organizational citizenship behavior, efforts related to the job, job performance, as well as the organization's effectiveness in providing quality health services.^[30] On the other hand, the observance of justice is the key to the organization and its employee's survival and development.^[14] Therefore, this study aimed to review the effects of perceived organizational justice and its components on organizational commitment of administrative and financial employees of Shiraz University of Medical Sciences general hospitals.

The results of current study showed that there was a correlation between organizational justice and organizational commitment ($P < 0.05$). In other words, if employees feel that justice is not respected in their organization, it will cause tensions for them and they will reduce their attachment and commitment to the organization to reduce these tensions. Conversely, if employees feel that justice is observed in their organization, they will be highly motivated to perform more duties and accept more responsibilities in their organization and, consequently, their commitment to the organization will be increased.

The relationship between organizational justice and organizational commitment can be explained by equity theory. That is, if employees perceive their input-outcome ratio to be equal to those of the relevant others with whom they compare themselves, a state of equity exists and their commitment to the organization will be increased. Edalati *et al.*, (2010) also showed that organizational justice and its three components had positive and significant correlations with any of the organizational commitment dimensions.^[31]

Madani and Zahedi (2006) in their study showed that perceived organizational justice was one of the independent variables which had relatively strong correlation with organizational commitment and its dimensions other than the continuance commitment.^[25] Amirkhani (2009) in his study concluded that workers who felt injustice had lower levels of organizational commitment and created great difficulties for the organization in achieving its goals and, conversely, the high commitment of staff guided the justice-oriented organization towards its purposes and goals.^[32]

Choi also states that when employees perceive their organization as a just and fair one, a relationship is developed between their perceptions of justice and their behavior towards the organization including organizational commitment and organizational citizenship behavior.^[33] Results of these studies confirm the results of present study.

In addition, the results of this study showed that there were significant positive correlations between different components of organizational justice and organizational commitment except for continuance commitment, which only had a correlation with procedural justice because the employees with high continuance commitment continue working in their organization only owing to the high costs of leaving the organization for them, not because of seeing it as their duty and obligation or having good feel about their organization. Procedural justice is the primary characteristic of organizational justice, and fair allocation of employee outcomes is a product of fair decision processes through procedural justice. Furthermore, procedural justice includes giving employees the opportunity to participate in the decision-making procedure and, therefore, they can be more empowered and motivated to continue cooperating with the organization. All of these characteristics can prevent the employees with high continuance commitment from leaving the organization. The results of other studies have also shown that distributive justice and procedural justice improve the organizational commitment.^[6,14,16,34-37]

Also, Van Dayn and Graham (1994), Podsakoff (1990), and Cohen-Krash and Spector (2001) in their studies have concluded that the observance of the justice in the organization and workplace means to put a high value on employees (interactional justice) and due to this interactional justice, the employees will more trust in their supervisors and assess them as just supervisors, and will be more willing to work with them. In such circumstances, the commitment of employees to the organization will be increased.^[13,38,39]

The other result of this study was that there were not any statistically significant relationships between employees' demographic variables (age, sex, education level, marital status, and job experience) with organizational justice and organizational commitment ($P > 0.05$).

The results of Madani and Zahedi's study (2006) showed that there was not any relationship between

employees' organizational commitment and their education level which confirm the results of this study.^[25] İrfan YAZICIOĞLU and Işıl Gökçe TOPALOĞLU (2009) also showed that although the organizational justice and its components (particularly interactive justice) had significant relationships with the organizational commitment, sex did not affect the organizational justice and organizational commitment, which is consistent with the results of this study. However, they concluded that the job experience and education level had significant relationships with organizational justice and its dimensions, as well as organizational commitment.^[10] Sajjadi *et al.*, (2009), also, in their study showed that some employees' demographic variables such as age, sex, and job experience had relationships with the organizational commitment,^[2] which confirm the results of the present study.

Limitations

The sample size in this study was relatively small due to the low number of general hospitals in Shiraz, which may result in reducing the statistical significance of the results, and can restrict the generalization of the findings. Therefore, generalization of the findings should be done with caution. Also, a causal relationship cannot be determined due to the cross-sectional nature of the study.

CONCLUSION

The findings of this study showed that the organizational justice was a motivational tool and a factor influencing the employees' organizational commitment. Thus, improving organizational justice can continuously increase employees' commitment and retain the organization's capabilities and competitive advantages.

Considering the effects of the organizational justice and its components on the employees' organizational commitment, hospital administrators should pay more attention to implement and enhance organizational justice and its components especially procedural and interactional justice in the organization, provide opportunities for supervisors to be trained in behaving better towards employees (interactional justice), and develop a fair system for employees' performance evaluation and their promotions (procedural justice), as well as the provision of rewards (distributive justice) based on related standards. It should be remembered that human resources are the main assets of organizations and their managers should pay more

attention to their commitment and attitudes. Future researches should be carried out to study the effects of staff-related variables (including sex, age, and education level, etc.), occupational variables (including income, job experience, employment status, insurance status, etc.), family variables (including location, number of children, etc.), and structural variables related to the organization (including the number of organizational levels, the extent of resorting to the rules and regulations, the extent of clarity of employees' duties and job description, etc.) on employees' organizational commitment in larger sample sizes. Studying these variables may help to explain part of the unexplained variance in organizational commitment.

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