

The Mediating Role of Organizational Commitment on the Relationship between Procedural Justice and Public Service Motivation: A Case of Public Universities in Pakistan

Professor Xu Xiaolin

School of Public Administration, Huazhong

University of Science and Technology, Wuhan 430074 P.R China

Email: xiaolin@hust.edu.cn

Ph.D Scholar Nagina Gul

School of Public Administration, Huazhong

University of Science and Technology, Wuhan 430074 P.R China

Email: najiehust@gmail.com

Ph.D Scholar Arshad Mahmmod Sadozai

School of Economics and Management China University of Geosciences,

Wuhan, P.R. China

E-mail: 2032621332@qq.com

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Abstract

This study aims to unearth the interactive role of OC on the relationship between PJ of the PA and PSM in public universities in Pakistan. The study not only discusses that PJ is imperative for the overall PSM, but also discusses how to retain a motivated workforce via OC.

Qualitative as well as quantitative research methodology has been adopted in this study. Questionnaire was designed to get the view of employees working in the public universities. The results obtained from 980 employees show that the discharge of PJ is highly correlated with employee perception of OC and that the level of OC is highly correlated with PSM. The results further show that OC has a mediating effect on the relationship between PJ and PSM. The implications of our findings are discussed.

Keywords: organizational commitment, procedural justice, public service motivation, Pakistan

1. Introduction

Organizational justice (OJ) is an essential concept in organizational behavior and human resource management (Cloutier, J and L. Vilhuber, 2008). It is the factor that determines the behaviors and attitudes of employees at the work place and also employees' assurance towards their institutions (Chang, E. 2002). Justice is explained by Greenberg (1990) to mean fairness rendered to people on the basis of implied and clear nature of the roles and duties of the organizational. Researches had been done on OJ by researchers for decades. OJ tends to influence a number of behaviors and attitudes such as organizational commitment (OC), management satisfaction, pay satisfaction, leadership evaluation and job performance and employee theft (Colquitt, J.C., and M.P. Wesson, 2001; Richard et al., 2002). The equity and fairness given to employees in an organization goes a long way in influencing their reaction in that particular organization. OJ has 3 components namely distributive, procedural and interactional justice. Distributive justice (DJ) is the apparent fairness of outcome that a person gets from his organization and it is based on equity theory by Adams (1965). Procedural justice (PJ) refers to the fairness of procedures that are used to establish the outcomes and interactional justice (IJ) is defined as the equality in the interpersonal communication relating to organizational procedures (McDowall, A., and C. Fletcher, 2004; Lahkar, K. & Mahanta, R. 2012).

Organizational Commitment plays an important role in the survival of organization (Farndale et al., 2011) and the reason is that individuals or employees having high level of Organizational Commitment are more industrious and fulfilled in personality and thus have a better loyalty in their organization. Diverse authors have defined the Organizational Commitment in their literatures. Meyer and Allen (1991) defined organizational commitment as a behavior that occurs as a result of individual's relationship with its organization and makes individuals to decide whether they want to become a permanent member of the organization or not. Many studies have been done on organizational commitment in recent years (Hammer, T. and A.A. 2005). Organizational Commitment characterizes the employees' behavior towards organization rather than the intentions to quit organization (Jaramillo et al., 2005).

Research outcomes propose that when employees recognize a high level of fairness in performance they become more dedicated towards their organizations and performance is achieved (Cowherd and Levine, 1992). When workers are in doubt of Organizational Justice, they easily lose interest in the organization and express reluctance to pursue the goals of the

organization through frequent absenteeism and strange conduct (Cropanzano et al., 1997).

The prosperity and survival of a company is achieved when they are successful in retaining and maintaining their skilled employees. In maintaining a competitive advantage of a company or an organization, loyalty of employee inevitably becomes an essential element. In order to maintain and increase employees' loyalty, superior values need to be given to employees via fair organizational procedures.

However, the culture of Pakistan in many organizations has been identified as a repelling environment for Pakistanis, forcing many Pakistanis to quit their jobs, and for others not to be so much committed. This study examines possible effects of PJ on public service motivation (PSM) and the interactive role of OC in the context of Pakistani public universities.

After the introduction, the rest of the paper starts with the literature review and the hypothetical framework. This is followed by the description of the methodology. The experimental outcomes and discussion are then offered. We end the paper with some concluding remarks.

2. Literature Review and Hypothesis Development

Organization is a social system that its vitality and stability depends on the strong ties between its constitutive element and components. One of the essential factors in generating this tie is OC. From the traditional viewpoint in management, that have the conviction that at any time a worker is mandated to work can yield efficiency, in new approaches having motivated and appreciative worker, not only decrease controlling expenditures, but improve worker performance. OC influence worker and show his or her identity and attachment to the organization. Organization cannot be successful without worker's commitment and effort. Workers that have commitment and adherent, are more disciplined at their work, stay more in organization and works (Yaghoubi, Maryam, 2006). On the other hand, injustice has a destructive impact on the group work morale; because underestimate human force efforts and workers' motivation. Keeping and developing the equal behaviors in managers and feeling of parity in workers is one of the main responsibilities of management. By achieving correct knowledge of organizational justice component and how to influence on the diverse component of commitment, managers find this possibility that should plane and manage suitable actions for developing justice feeling in organization. Owing to this rationale, the goal of this research is to unearth by practical test how PJ affects PSM via OC. First of all, by developing the hypothesis for this relationship, we will investigate the outcome of this research.

3. Organizational Commitment

By definition, Organizational commitment is referred to "a psychological state that (i) describes the employee's relationship with the organization, and (ii) has insinuation for the decision to continue or discontinue membership in the organization" (Meyer et al., 1993, pp. 538-551). It has been increasingly argued that organizational commitment better measures human behaviors than other related measures as job satisfaction and job involvement (Moon, 2000, pp. 177-194). According to J. P. Meyer and N. J. Allen (1991), organizational

commitment consists of distinct components: (a) affective commitment (identification with, emotional attachment to, and involvement in the organization), (b) continuance commitment (perceived costs associated with leaving the organization), and (c) normative commitment, which concerns a feeling of (moral) responsibility to remain in the organization. Organizational commitment has a positive impact on job performance and work motivation (Meyer, Allen 1997; Naff, Crum, 1999, pp. 5–16). Committed employees are also more likely to engage in extra-role behaviors, such as innovativeness or creativeness which are the basis for an organization's proactive attitude (Katz, Kahn, 1978). Thus the culture of an organization has a profound influence on the behavior of individuals within an organization (Barney, 198; Trice and Beyer, 1993). The lack of OC can have serious negative implications. It may lead to a possible situation in which employees will withdraw from extra contractual activities (Grimshaw et al., 2003), it may also result in high or unwanted turnover, adding to the cost of recruitment, selection, and training. The instability caused by high turnover may also trigger problems with the quality of services (Allen, 2000).

4. Public Service Motivation

Employee motivation plays a pivotal role in management, both practically and theoretically. In the era of restricted funding for public organizations, motivating public employees is becoming an arduous challenge where nonmonetary ways of motivating people are required. PSM describes individuals' pro-social motivation to do good for others and society through the delivery of public services (Perry, Hondeghem, 2008). It has been defined as “the beliefs, values, and attitudes that go beyond self-interest and organizational interest, that concern the interest of a larger political entity and that motivate individuals to act accordingly whenever appropriate” (Vandenabeele, 2007, p. 547). According to J. Perry (1996) PSM is based on three motives that fall into three analytically distinct categories: rational, norm-based, and affective. Rational motives refer to actions grounded in individual utility maximization. Norm-based motives involve actions generated by efforts to conform to norms. Affective motives present emotional triggers of behavior. J. Perry's conceptualization of PSM is based on a multifaceted dimensional construct that includes the following:

- ❖ the attraction for policy making: desire to participate in formulation of public policy which reinforces one's image of self-importance (rational motives),
- ❖ commitment to the public interest, attachment to ideas of civil duty and social justice (normative motives),
- ❖ compassion, desire to protect citizens, attachment to the patriotic values (affective motives),
- ❖ Personal sacrifice: a strong desire to protect and work for the good of the public (affective and normative motives).

The level and type of an individual's PSM and the motivational composition of a public service organization's workforce affect individual job choice, job performance, and organizational effectiveness. Individuals with high PSM consistently demonstrate intrinsic motivation and have been shown to value a sense of accomplishment over money (Bright,

2005). That is why public service organizations are more likely to employ individuals whose values are consistent with the public service organization mission (Perry, 1996). The influence of PSM on organizational trust, productivity, or managerial practices makes PSM one of the most important constructs in public management (Brewer et al., 2000).

5. Procedural Justice and Public Service Motivation (Hypothesis 1)

by shifting in the social psychology studies, studying justice in organizations by mere emphasis on the reward allocation outcomes distributive justice shift to emphasize on the procedure that cause such allocations procedural justice (Charash, V. C. & Spector, P.E. 2001). Procedural Justice is a kind of perceived justice of the procedure that is use to determine distributing rewards (Robbins, S.P. 2001). Now, let us pose this question, can one worker receive lower reward than another and don't feel inequality or injustice? Our answer based on the procedural justice is will be positive and will illustrate this subject with an example. Suppose, there are two qualified workers for doing a job and occupational responsibility, but one of them receive more wage than the other.

Organization payment includes diverse policies and legal factors that encompass work time, work shift and so on. These two workers are aware of organization payment policy and have equal opportunities, by considering these factors perhaps one worker receive more wage than the other, meanwhile can the other worker feels that lower to his /her desire had paid, though, but this payment isn't injustice, because of organization's compensation policy is a Politician and had employed as a strict manner and without any prejudice and discrimination. So by employing this justice system, payment system sounds justice even so, payment seems too low (Greenberg, J. 2004). By rising awareness about PJ, worker look more optimistically at the upper workmates and their organization, even though, show dissatisfaction toward the payments, encouragement and other special penalties (Robbins, S.P, 2001). By moving to the social psychology studies, study justice in organizations by just emphasizing on the reward allocation outcomes (DJ) shift to emphasize on the procedure that cause such allocations (PJ). Based on the PJ theory, whenever people consider present procedure in making decision for distributing incomes as equal and fair they become motivated for better performance, because, their performance will be assessed strictly: in contrast, if they think that supervisors are not aware of their services, as well as don not assess their performance strictly, or intrude their personal feelings in the assessment, as a result they don't show little motivation. PJ theory is finding the reasons for fair and unfair procedures consideration and its consequences by the people (Rezaeian, Ali, 1384). We therefore hypothesized that:

H₁: PJ positively affects PSM of public universities in Pakistan

6. Mediating Role of Organizational Commitment (Hypothesis 2)

OC had gained momentum in the past years as a specialized and organizational loom, by many organizational behavior scholars and psychology scholars, especially social psychologist, in a way that diverse definition for that is provided. "OC means power and identity that each individual feels with the organization" (Mowdy et al., 1979). In the other definition OC includes "the attachment or the interest to the organization that feels by the

person”. There is a common subject in the diverse definition of OC: the attachment, interest or individual and its organization (Handlon, R.L .2009). OC is a multi-dimensional structure, that has a relationship with the occupational and professional outcomes include decreasing absenteeism and job quit (Riketta, M. 2002), increasing civic-organizational behavior, job striving and improvement in job performance (Dawley et al., 2004). A good number of studies such as Razak, N. A et al., (2010) show that commitment about worker payment, implies that we have gratified worker in the reflective and behavioral facet to the organization.

After preliminary works by the Porter, Estirs, Moody and Bolian, about OC and its measurement, many researchers at an attempt for accurate and scientific investigation of this structure, introduce types of OC: most famous and all too familiar endeavors revert back to Allen and Mir studies., which by being hesitant on one-dimension OC, and by establish stable and efficient tools, introduce three dimensional commitment; i.e. affective commitment, continuance commitment and normative commitment (Stallworth , L. 2004). This study has aggregated these three dimensional commitments to see how they mediate between PJ and PSM in the Pakistan context. We therefore hypothesized that:

H₂: OC has a mediating effect on the relationship between PJ and PSM of public universities in Pakistan

7. Hypothetical Framework

The structure explains the relationship between the independent variables and the dependent variable. The framework presents a suitable model to explore how PJ of the performance appraisal affects PSM while capturing the mediating role of OC.

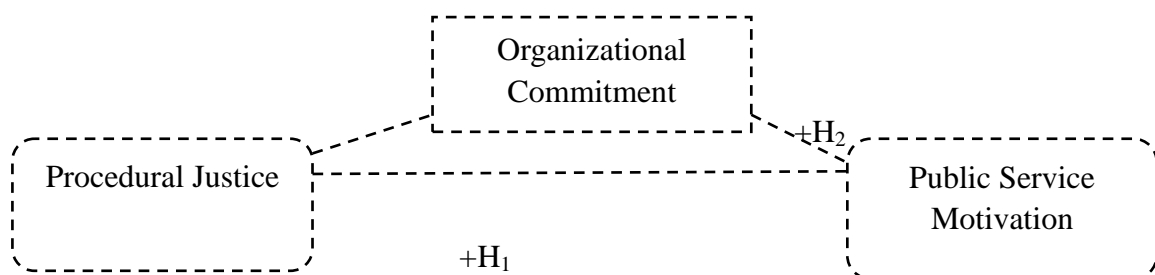


Figure 1. Hypothetical framework illustrating the proposed relationship between PJ and PSM when mediated by OC.

8. Methods

All data that were used to develop the model of this research are primary data obtain from faculty/administrative members working in Public Sector Universities of Pakistan. Data were collected through In-depth interviews and questionnaires. The sampling method used in this research was Simple Random Sampling. The results of the questionnaire were discussed to identify the kind of relationship that exists among the variables and which factor contributes the most towards PSM in these institutions so as to increase reliability of current research in depth.

The research model consists of three variables, i.e., dependent variable, moderating variable, and independent variable. Hypothesis testing uses a regression interaction or moderated regression analysis (MRA) because MRA can explain the effect of OC in moderating the relationship between PJ and PSM. The research model consists of two (2) equations, as follows,

$$PM = \alpha_0 + \beta_1PJ + \varepsilon \quad (\text{Model 1})$$

$$PM = \alpha_0 + \beta_1PJ + \beta_2OC + \beta_3PJ * OC + \varepsilon \quad (\text{Model 2})$$

Where,

PM = Public service motivation

PJ = procedural justice

OC = organizational commitment

PJ * OC = interaction of PJ and OC disclosure.

Prior to the estimation of the MRA model, traditional postulations were experimented. In the multiple linear regression analysis, four basic postulations must be satisfied, namely, the assumptions of multicollinearity, normality, heteroscedasticity and autocorrelation. The test results indicate that all assumptions were met. Table 2 presents the results of the statistical tests of the first model related to the first hypothesis tested in this study.

9. Hypothesis Testing

Table 2 below illustrates the results of descriptive statistics and Pearson correlation analysis for the study variables. The table presents that the values of the mean for the variables are from 5.2274 to 5.6757, suggesting that the levels of PSM, as well as the levels of PJ and OC are ranging between this bandwidth. The correlation coefficients for the relationship between the dependent variable (i.e., PSM) and the independent variable (i.e., PJ), and the relationship between the mediating variable (i.e., OC) and the dependent variable (i.e., PM) were less than 0.90, which signifies that the data was not affected by any severe problem of collinearity (Hair et al., 2005). Participants in the research reported a mean level of PSM of 5.2970 (4 is the midpoint on the 7-point Likert-type scale used). Bivariate correlations of the independent variables with PSM were statistically significant and in the direction of the stated hypothesis. As illustrated in table 2, PJ was positively related to PSM ($r = .391, p < .01$). Thus, the first hypothesis (Hypothesis 1) was supported by the study.

Table 2. Descriptive statistics and correlation results for the study variables

Variable	Mean	Standard deviation	Pearson correlation analysis		
			1	2	3
1. PSM	5.2970	1.83540	(.84)		
2. PJ	5.6757	1.57744	.391**	(.77)	
3. OC	5.2274	1.74378	.251**	.438**	(81)

Note: N = 980, Significant level: $p < 0.01^{**}$ (2-tailed). Reliability estimation was shown in a diagonal matrix (1)

The test result of the first model shows that the R^2 value is 51.3%, which implies that PJ can explain 51.3% of the variation of public service motivation; the rest is explained by other

factors not included in the model. The first hypothesis indicates that the coefficient of the variable representing PJ is positive (4.709) and statistically significant at the 1% level, thus showing that PJ has a positive influence on the public service motivation of the universities; this outcome is empirically supported. This finding shows that public universities that practice PJ have increasing public service motivation. Universities play a significant role as they act not only as knowledge industries but also as providers of justice to their employees. Universities can increase public service motivation by implementing various policies related to PJ in human resources and public service activities.

Table 3. Results of moderated regression analysis

Variable	Model 1			Model 2		
	coefficient	t-statistics	Prob.	coefficient	t-statistics	Prob.
Intercept	0.854	2.697	0.004	1.043	3.706	0.002
PJ	4.709	3.441	0.000**	3.616	2.591	0.000**
OC				0.344	2.446	0.007**
PJ*OC				0.632	3.001	0.001**
N	980			980		
R ²	0.513			0.633		
Adj. R ²	0.411			0.503		
F	17.113			9.361		
P(F-statistics)	0.000*			0.000**		

Note: N = 980, Significant level: $p < 0.01^{**}$ (2-tailed).

Table 3 also shows the value of the R-test result of the second regression model. The value is 63.3%, which implies that PJ, OC, interaction between OC, and PJ could explain 63.3% of the public service motivation; the rest is explained by other factors not captured by the study. The variance result analysis shows that F-statistic is significant at the 1% level, which implies that the regression model is suitable for use as the predictive model on public service motivation. PJ, OC, and interaction between OC and PJ can also be said to concurrently influence public service motivation of the universities.

The second hypothesis indicates that the correlation coefficient of OC and PJ (PJ*OC) is positive (0.632) and statistically significant at the 5% level. This result empirically shows that, PJ and OC are positively related to public service motivation of the universities. Thus, the second hypothesis of this study interprets that a higher level of OC increases the PJ course and strengthen PSM. Thus, OC is proven to strengthen the influence of PJ on the motivation of employees at the public universities.

10. Discussion and Implication

This sub section discusses the results. The data, extracted from the responses in the questionnaires administered to the targeted respondents, as well as some information extracted from various publications and the literature review provide the basis for the results and discussions in this study. The study examined the relationship between procedural justice and public service motivation and in the process explores the moderating role of organizational commitment between them. This is important because when employees have little or no concern in the value and purpose of the PA, then the appraisal system will not be

effective. The way to create its effectiveness and getting employees support is built upon the credence of enhancing the perceptions of employees of the usefulness of the appraisal process and its importance in building their career development. The study underscored the importance of perceived PJ in influencing employees' motivation. The finding show that large number of the employees perceived PJ as fair and consequently may lead to an increase in their level of motivation. This finding is in line with theories and also in conformity with previous empirical studies (see for e.g. Greenberg, 2011) who found that PJ increases employees' affective reactions to work. See also Leventhal (1976) found DJ influenced extrinsic work motivation. However, the mediating role of OC had shown a stronger positive contribution to PSM as reported in table 3. This result confirms that OC plays an important role as a mediating variable in the motivation models of the public sector sample. Thus the findings draw attention to the relevance of OC in the absence of perceived PJ. An important policy implication emerging from this study is that public administrators should not underestimate the power of OC in influencing employees' motivation in an institution.

11. Limitation and Further Research Direction

This paper has some limitations as in every study. First and foremost, the research made up of 980 staffs working at public universities in Pakistan, the sample might not be adequate for generalization. Secondly, the justice perceptions of the employees are sensitive to location. That means, surveys with the same sample in different locations may result in different outcomes. It is suggested that further researchers take the current constraints into consideration and use different measurement scales to measure the connection between the perceptions of justice and employees' motivation. Moreover, these three variables must be examined from the view point of other variables such as moderating role of DJ, IJ, leadership, personality, management styles, organizational culture and the demographic characteristics of the employees along with the research in different public and private sectors including private universities, entertainment, manufacturing, health etc, to contribute to the existing literature.

12. Concluding Remarks

Organizations as well as public institutions are responsible for providing the great part of human needs. Better performance of these institutions led to better provision of human and societal needs and will contribute to personal and public welfare. Having committed workers is one of the main factors in organization's promotion and improvement. OJ and OC led to workers strive more and maximize their power and strength and show suitable performance of the organization. Committed workers attempt to improve their activities continually and promote organization performance more as ever.

Based on the previous studies that refer to them in this article formerly, OJ is one of the influencing factors in creating and promoting OC. Justice or observing equality led to creating positive approaches in workers to the institutions, but the most important matter here is how the workers perceive justice in the institutions. In this research we attempted to emphasize on the PJ and investigate its relation with PSM through OC in public universities in Pakistan.

In other words, this paper focused on the mediating role of OC on the relationship between PJ and PSM of public universities in Pakistan. Based on previous studies, this research provides empirical evidence on how PJ influences the PSM, as well as the interactive role of OC. The results show that PJ is highly correlated with employee perception of OC and that the level of OC is highly correlated with PSM. The regression results further show that OC has a mediating effect on the relationship between PJ and PSM.

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