

## EXPLORING THE MEDIATING ROLE OF AFFECTIVE COMMITMENT ON ORGANIZATIONAL JUSTICE AND TURNOVER INTENTION

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### Abstract

*This study encompasses the association of the three domains of organizational justice and its influence on employee turnover intention. In this cross-sectional study, proportionate stratified random sampling technique was applied. Results showed that distributive justice and interactional justice have an inverse relationship with turnover intention and affective commitment partially mediated the pathway between the dimensions of justice and employee turnover behavior. Conversely, procedural justice has an insignificant linkage with the turnover intention. This study contributes by developing an understanding of linkage between turnover intention and organizational justice and provides insight about mediation of affective commitment.*

**Keywords:** Organizational justice, affective commitment, turnover intention.

**JEL Classification:** Z 000

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### Introduction

In the modern era of globalization, socio-cultural environment increases the importance of organizational justice to brush up the performance and commitment of employees with their organizations (Muqadas, Rehman, & Aslam, 2017). However, in private education sector, there is no linkage between reward and performance, political based recruitments, work overload increase the employees switching from organizations. Therefore, it is inevitable to adopt a strategy of organizational justice to retain the human capital for longer period of time. However, in today's competitive environment, dealing with this human capital is one of the most important critical elements in the progress of any organization (Aslam, Ilyas, Imran, & Rahman, 2016). Now-a-days, lack of justice leads towards employees' turnover intention and it has become major burning issue in developing countries (Aslam et al., 2016; Aslam et al., 2015). Moreover, turnover intention increases the cost of hiring, training and development of employees in any organization (Aslam et al., 2015; Muqadas, Rehman, & Aslam, 2017). So, to overcome this issue, there should be linkage between rewards, compensation, performance, standard procedures of reward sharing, in this context fair rules of career development are the optimal practices in organizations (Chegini, 2009 ; Dess & Shaw, 2001; Reiche, 2008). Apart of it, for management researchers employee turnover is a topic of debate for many decades because organizational growth depends on their human capital to a great extent. Moreover dealing with the issue of turnover intention of competent and experienced employees is a big challenge for human resource officers (Bratton & Gold, 2012). Researcher found that turnover may not merely create an additional cost to organization, but also bring decline in organizational performance (Hayes et al., 2006; Muqadas, Rehman, & Aslam, 2017).

Undoubtedly, with the passage of time this issue is getting worse in Pakistani culture, specifically in education sector. Especially, the private sector is affected by this problem in broader context. Recent researches have also highlighted the injustice behavior as the root cause of employee turnover and dissatisfaction (Aslam et al., 2015; Camerman, Cropanzano, & Vandenberghe, 2007; Goldman, 2003; Shan et al., 2015). In addition, treating employees unfairly; biased selection criteria, unfair reward system, ineffective performance appraisals, lack

of communication and knowledge hoarding are considered as organizational injustice (Sulu, Ceylan, & Kaynak, 2010). Shaw et al., (1998) found more than fifteen hundred studies related to the turnover have been reported. Many researcher link turnover intention with many factors including organizational identification, job attitude, commitment, perceived organizational support, organizational embeddednes, psychological needs, job exhaustion, organization citizenship behavior (Gillet et al., 2015; Madden, Mathias, & Madden, 2015; Aslam et al., 2015; Mauno et al., 2015; Peltokorpi, Allen, & Froese, 2015; Podsakoff, LePine, & LePine, 2007; Muqadas, Rehman, & Aslam, 2017). Besides, a large number of studies however link turnover intention with organizational justice, reward, compensation and commitment separately (DeConinck & Johnson, 2009; DeConinck & Stilwell, 2004; Loi, Hang Yue, & Foley, 2006; Aslam et al., 2016; Mosadeghrad, Ferlie, & Rosenberg, 2008; Paré & Tremblay, 2007; Parker & Kohlmeyer, 2005). But until now, prior researches did not consider all the dimension of justice collectively with turnover in the presence of reward, compensation and affective commitment (Nakra, 2014; Poon, 2012). However, in this context research is insufficient, because it is not clearly defined how organizational justice, reward and compensation system improve the employee behavior and how commitment mediates the relationship among them.

This study attempts to identify the key factors contributing towards the employee turnover in private education sector. Basically, private colleges are playing a pivotal role in providing quality education of new generation paradigms that ultimately contributing in economic growth of the country. Also, employees are unable to play their role up to the standards set by organizations, because of employee with-drawl behavior and lack of commitment and injustice practices in the organization. Above mentioned are the roots that educational standard of private sector is deteriorating day by day. The study focuses on the impact of organizational justice on employee turnover intentions. It also explores how affective commitment mediates organizational justice and turnover intention. Also it helps to understand the reasons behind high turnover rate in private education sector.

This study will facilitate the management of private colleges to overcome the issue of employee dissatisfaction, organizational

injustice, unfair reward system and lack of commitment and consequently. This study will be helpful for academia to achieve the target of providing quality education which would produce competitive edge and skilled human capital for the nation.

### **Literature Review**

Human capital is one of the critical factors that ensure the organizational success and growth in globally uncertain environment. Employees switching can ultimately affect the operational effectiveness and growth of any organization. Therefore, it is important to explore what are the important reasons that can create employees turnover intentions.

#### **Organizational justice ----- Affective commitment**

Organizational justice indicates the fairness of process and distribution of resources (Colquitt, Greenberg, & Zapata-Phelan, 2005; Greenberg, 1987), and these fair procedures also have impact on the employees commitment and organizational outcomes (Cohen-Charash & Spector, 2001; Colquitt et al., 2001). According to the Cohen-Charash and Spector (2001) organizational justice is positively linked to the affective commitment .Additionally, when the employees received adequate earnings , salary and promotion in returns of their efforts then they shows more commitment towards the organization(Crow, Lee, & Joo, 2012). Employees who are treated according to the procedural justice have enhanced affective commitment level (Janssen, Lam, & Huang, 2010). Interactional justice heightened the affection and emotional commitment of the employees, it also developed the feelings of respect and dignity between the employees and managers (Colquitt et al., 2001). Hypotheses proposed on the base of literature are following:

***H1:*** Distributive, procedural, and interactional can increase affective commitment.

#### **Organizational justice ----- Turnover intention**

Many studies have revealed the linkage between organizational justice and turnover intention. Poon (2012) explored

the impact of distributive, procedural and interactional justice on turnover intention. Alexander and Ruderman (1987) studies identified the strong influence of distributive justice on turnover in comparison to the procedural justice. According to the Brashear, Manolis, and Brooks (2005) distributive justice was identified as a strong and direct predictor of turnover intention and their findings revealed that negative relationship exists among the procedural and interactional justice with turnover intention (Byrne, 2005). Cohen-Charash and Spector (2001) explored the strong and negative association of distributive and procedural justice with the turnover intention as compared to the interactional justice. Hypotheses proposed on the bases of literature are following.

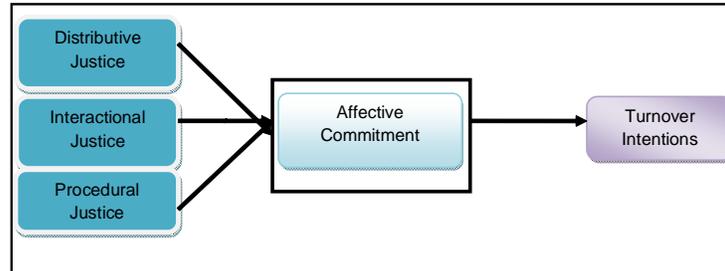
**H2:** Distributive, procedural, and interactional can decrease the turnover intention.

**Organizational justice ----- Affective commitment      Turnover intention**

Affective commitment has strong influence on turnover intention (Meyer, Becker, & Vandenberghe, 2004; Meyer et al., 2002). Colquitt et al. (2001) explored that distributive justice, procedural and interactional justices are positively related to the affective commitment. Affective commitment have been used as a mediator with many variables like psychological contract, performance, dispositional traits, turnover intention, organizational citizenship behavior (Chiu & Francesco, 2003; Purba et al., 2015; Restubog, Bordia, & Tang, 2006). However, there is limited research has been conducted related to the affective commitment as an intervening variable among the organizational justice and turnover intention. Furthermore in this research affective commitment used as a intervening variable between the justice and turnover intention. On the bases of prior studies hypotheses proposed are following.

**H3:** The relationship between the Distributive, procedural, interactional, and turnover intention can mediate by affective commitment

### *Theoretical Research Model*



### **Methodology**

#### *Research Paradigms*

Cavana et al (2001) stated that on the base of philosophical approaches three research paradigms exist i.e. positivism, interpretivism and pragmatism. In this study philosophy of positivism was used, because the aim of the study was to investigate the effects of organizational justice on turnover intention and affective commitment. According to the Blanche and Durrheim (1999), positivism approach belongs to the ontology “*aims to provide an accurate description of the laws and mechanisms that operate in social life*”. Furthermore, for collecting and investigating the numerical data quantitative approach was used. Due to the philosophy of positivism the deductive approach was used to examine the proposed model and hypotheses.

#### *Research design*

Blanche and Durrheim (1999) identified that research design is a frame work, in which the research is conducted in order to achieve the main objective of study. In this study cross-sectional design was applied for data collection, examining the hypotheses and to test the proposed model at once.

#### *Sampling Technique*

Sampling technique selected in this study was proportionate stratified random sampling. Sekaran (2006) stated that proportionate stratified random sampling delivers the complete information about

each segments and group of population. The targeted population was degree colleges of private sector. From the total population, to find out the precise sample size was not an easy task. According to the Hair et al., (2012), 200 to 400 sample size was considered to be outstanding. However in this study 350 sample sizes was selected by using online calculator.

### *Measures*

The construct of organizational justice was measured with the help of Moorman (1991) scale. In this scale 12 items were selected to measure the organizational justice dimensions. For the Turnover intention 3 items were selected from the previous study of (Singh & Kaur, 1996), while for the affective commitment 6 items were adopted by (Meyer & Allen, 1991). Organizational justice, turnover intention and affective commitment were rated on five point likert-scale. Rita Silva and Caetano (2014) stated that 5 to 7 point scale were significant range for data collection. This study represents 1 as “strongly disagree” and 5 as “strongly agree”.

### *Data analysis*

For the calculation of frequency, mean, standard deviation and reliability analysis SPSS were used. Convergent and construct validity was measured by using exploratory factor analysis (Büyüköztürk, 2007; Tavşancıl, 2002). Moreover correlation analysis was applied to examine the connotation between justices, turnover intention and affective commitment. For the acceptance or rejection of the linear hypothesis multiple regression analysis was performed, while for the mediation (Preacher & Hayes, 2004) method was performed to calculate indirect linkage between them.

## **Results**

### *Descriptive Analysis*

For the data collection process a structured questionnaires was used, and the target population selected was employees of private colleges of pakistan. Approximately 350 questionnaire were distributed ,from which 280 were returned. Almost twenty questionnaire were eradicated because of missing information. Mostly participants were male 60.4 % and female participants were 39.6%. In this study the 56.4%. respondents age were between 20-30 years and 60 participants were between the 31-40 years.46.8% respondents were

master level while 39.3% were M.phil and 2.5 % were PhD from the 280 participants, 15% participants were visiting whereas 85.0% were permanent. 163 participants experience fall between 1-3 while 26.8% participants fall between 3-6 years. On the base of designation mostly participants were lecturer 243 and remaining 37% were principal of different colleges.

### *Descriptive Analysis*

The mean value was used to measure the central tendency and standard deviation used to explore the inconsistency from the data. In table the overall distributive justice mean value was 4.04 that shows respondents were satisfied with the distribution of resources. The mean value of Procedural justice was 3.98 that reflects the average response was neutral to agree .As for interactional justice, the mean value of 4.08 showed that respondent were in the range between the neutral to agree. Affective commitment mean value 3.12 reflected that participants agreed to have commitment towards the organization, whereas turnover intention mean value was 2.18 that reflects the high turnover rate. To measure the internal consistency reliability test was performed. To measure the internal consistency cronbach alpha value were conducted. The cronbach alpha values of each variable. The values of organizational justice dimensions, affective commitment and turnover intention were fall within the range of 0.56 to 0.943. According to the Nunnally and Bernstein (1994), the cronbach alpha values within the range of 0.700 to 0.912 were considered to be satisfactory (Nunnally, 1978). In this study interactional justice  $\alpha = 0.66$  and turnover intention  $\alpha = 0.56$  which was not satisfactory.

*Table 1:*

### **Correlation Analysis**

Variables	Correlation Coefficient ( <i>r</i> )	Level of significance ( <i>p</i> )
Turnover intention & Distributive justice	-.174	.003
Turnover intention & Procedural justice	-.099	.097
Turnover intention & Interactional justice	-.260	.000
Turnover intention & Affective commitment	-.280	.000
Affective commitment & Distributive justice	.207	.000
Affective commitment & Procedural justice	.172	.004
Affective commitment & Interactional justice	.161	.007

There was negative relationship identified among the distributive, interactional justice and turnover intentions ( $r = -.174, p < 0.01$ ;  $r = -.260, p < 0.01$ ). On the base of results procedural justice have no relationship with the turnover intention ( $r = -.099, P > .001$ ). Further, affective commitment was negatively associated with the turnover intention ( $r = -.280, p < .000$ ). Moreover organizational justice were linked positively with the affective commitment ( $r = .207, p < 0.01$ ;  $r = .178, p < 0.01$ ;  $r = .161, p < 0.01$ ).

**Table 2:**  
**Multiple Regressions**

Descriptions	Turnover Intention		
	Standardized ( $\beta$ )	Unstandardized ( $\beta$ )	Significance Level
Distributive Justice	-.251	-.156	.037
Procedural Justice	.155	.099	.187
Interactional Justice	-.220	-.219	.000
R <sup>2</sup>		.086	
Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>		.076	
F-Value		8.613	

R<sup>2</sup> value of organizational justice produces 86% variation in turnover intention, while F value shows that the overall model of linear hypotheses is acceptable. The standardized ( $\beta$ ) value proves that employee turnover intentions decreases because of increases in distributive and interactional justice ( $\beta = -.251, P < 0.05$ ;  $\beta = -.220, P < 0.01$ ). While interactional justice has insignificant relationship with employee turnover intentions ( $\beta = .155, P > 0.01$ ).

**Table 3:**  
**Mediation analysis**

Effects	B	S.E	T	P	R2	F
<b>Path-A<sup>1</sup></b>						
Effect of DJ on AC	.1652	.046	3.522	.000		
<b>Path-B<sup>1</sup></b>						
Effect of AC on TI	-.1970	.0453	-4.349	.000	0.092	14.085
<b>Path-C<sup>1</sup></b>						
Total effect of DJ on TI	-.1077	.0365	-2.948	.003		
<b>Path-C<sup>1*</sup></b>						
Indirect effect of DJ on TI through AC	-.0752	.0362	-2.077	.038		
<b>Path-A<sup>2</sup></b>						
Effect of IJ on AC	.2074	.0761	2.7248	.006		
<b>Path-B<sup>2</sup></b>						
Effect of AC on TI	-.1899	.0441	-4.2855	.000	.1257	19.9122
<b>Path-C<sup>2</sup></b>						
Total effect of IJ on TI	-.2592	.0577	-4.4941	.000		
<b>Path-C<sup>2*</sup></b>						
Indirect effect of IJ on TI through AC	-.2200	.0567	-3.8806	.000		

DJ: Distributive Justice, IJ: Interactional justice, AC: Affective commitment, TI: Turnover intention

For the mediation Preacher and Hayes (2004) method was used to discover the indirect effects of distributive, procedural and interactional justice on turnover intention through affective commitment. Paths-A<sup>12</sup> ( $\hat{a}=.1625, T=3.52, P<0.01; \hat{a}=.2074, T=2.72, P<0.01$ ) were proving that organizational justice positively connected with the affective commitment. Whereas Paths-B<sup>12</sup> ( $\hat{a}=-.1970, T=-4.34, P<0.01; \hat{a}=-.1899, T=-4.28, P<0.01$ ), were also proved that affective commitment negatively associated with turnover intention. In Path-C<sup>12</sup> direct negative relationship were identified of organizational justice with turnover intention ( $\hat{a}=-.1077, T=-2.94, P<0.01; \hat{a}=-.2592, T=-4.49, P<0.01$ ). However after assessment of the result of Path-C<sup>12</sup> (C-Paths<sup>12</sup>) it was explored that affective commitment partially mediates the in-direct relationship of organizational justice with turnover intention ( $\hat{a}=-.0752, T=-2.07, P<0.01; \hat{a}=-.2200, T=-3.88, P<0.01$ ).

### Discussion

The study aim was to develop understanding of association between organizational justice and employee turnover intentions. This research also explored the mediating role of affective commitment. It widens our knowledge about the mechanisms through which organizational justice influences the employee turnover intentions.

Findings of the study proved that distributive justice and interactional justice have inverse relationship with the turnover intention and these results were also having some similarities with the previous studies (Gul, Rehman, Usman, & Hussain, 2015; Poon, 2012; Ramamoorthy & Flood, 2004). R<sup>2</sup> value pretends that 86% variations exist in turnover intention due to three main domains of justice. Also the study results showed no relationship of procedural justice and turnover intention exists, and this result has the resemblance with the findings of the Johan et al., (2013) studies.

For the mediation test Preacher and Hayes (2004) method was used and the results proved the mediation effect of affective commitment between the distributive justice, interactional justice and turnover intention. In the mediation test the value of R<sup>2</sup> explained the variation from the distributive and interactional justice to the turnover intention. The findings suggested that fairly treated employees in the organization and then commitment of employees' decreases the high

employee turnover rate. Procedural justice failed to meet the criteria as third rule of mediation test does not apply on it as in this study it had insignificant relationship with the turnover intention, Limited studies available that used the affective commitment as a mediator between the justice in terms of distributive and interactional justice and employee turnover intention.

### **Conclusion**

This cross sectional study revealed the association between organizational justices and turnover intention in employees of private colleges'. It also explored the mediating role of affective commitment in this association. This research highlighted inverse relationship between distributive, interactional justice and turnover intention and found positive association between the organizational justice and affective commitment. This study focused on the employees of private colleges, their commitment level and behavior. The empirical findings of this study revealed that organizational justice in terms of distributive, and interactional justice and affective commitment have affected the private colleges' employees' turnover behavior. Moreover fair practices of distributive and interactional justice can contribute towards the creation of affective commitment in employees and control the turnover behavior of employees in private colleges. This study also proved partial mediation of affective commitment between the distributive and interactional justice and turnover intention. The findings also demonstrated that to ensure the justice practices it is necessary to have fair appraisal outcome, to consider employee efforts and develop fair linkage between reward and performance.

### **Implications**

It highlights the importance of organizational justice and affective commitment that are alarmingly deficient in education sector of Pakistan. By overcoming this deficiency through execution of fair perception of justice among employees there can be remarkable improvement in outcomes of any institutions. It is the need of time to realize the significance of implementation of distributive, procedural and interactional justice in employees of private colleges so that they can perform their duties more efficiently with a sense of affective commitment to the institution.

In literature there are several studies regarding the role of justice with commitment, satisfaction, turnover, organizational citizenship behavior (Fulford, 2005; Sieger, Bernhard, & Frey, 2011; Zeinabadi & Salehi, 2011). However this study brings to light the indirect relationship of distributive and interactional justice with turnover intention through affective commitment. About which there are limited literature available to date. Therefore it will be a good contribution in terms of practical and theoretical implications.

#### **Limitation and Recommendation**

There are few limitations that should be considered before its implication. As in this study based on cross sectional design so In future a longitudinal design can be used as an alternative to deal with the issue of causality.

Moreover this study might not be applicable to all the private colleges of Pakistan, because the data was collected from only one district. Thus increased in the generalizability in the future, outcomes may be different from this study. Also this study is limited on the bases of geographical location. In this study only one district was targeted. In future may be changed in geographical location transformed the results. In future studies, other variables i.e trust, leadership could be used to understand their relationship on employee turnover.

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