

Relationship between Organizational Perceived Justice and Organizational Citizenship Behavior among an Iranian Hospital's Employees, 2013

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Abstract

Background: Organizational citizenship behavior just referred to a set of discretionary workplace behaviors that exceed one's job requirements. The main objective of this study was to determine the relationship between organizational perceived justice and organizational citizenship behavior.

Methods: This cross-sectional study was done in Shahid Sadoughi Hospital in Yazd, Iran in 2013. A total of 100 hospital employees contributed in the study. The required data was gathered using 2 valid questionnaires, including the Moorman & Niehoff organizational perceived justice questionnaire and the McKinsey organizational citizenship behavior questionnaire. Data were analyzed using SPSS version 16. Descriptive statistics, Chi square, and Pearson's correlation coefficient were used for data analysis.

Results: There was a significant positive relationship between organizational perceived justice and organizational citizenship behavior among the studied hospital's employees ($P \leq 0.05$, $R = 0.33$).

Conclusion: This study confirmed that any policy that leads to better organizational justice perception will contribute in better organizational citizenship behavior which will increase the hospital's productivity.

Keywords: organizational perceived justice, organizational citizenship behavior, hospital

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1. Introduction

In the era of organizational behavior, organizational perceived justice is defined as a kind of perception that reflects the employees' feelings about decisions, decision makers and managers in organizational settings (1, 2). In 1987 Greenberg defined organizational justice as the "individuals' perception of fairness in the organization or the employees' perspective in relation to the distribution of available resources" (3, 4). Organizational justice theory has been derived from Adams' equity (or similarity) theory. According to this theory, individuals compare their ratio of inputs to results with that of others (within or without the organization) and, if they see a kind of inequality in these ratios, they will consider it an organizational injustice (4, 5). Also, the concepts of social exchange theory have been used in the development of organizational justice theory. According to social exchange theory, people expect to receive fair compensation in any social exchange (4). Thus, the concept of organizational justice can be used to explain why employees consider some organizations more reliable than others (2). In general, researchers of organizational justice have stressed three important issues in justice evaluations: outcomes, processes, and

interpersonal interactions (4). Accordingly, it is said that perceived organizational justice has four dimensions as follows:

- **Distributive justice:** the fairness of outcomes or allocations that an individual receives. In other words, distributive justice refers to a person's judgment about the fairness or reasonableness of the allocation of the results (4, 5).
- **Procedural justice:** refers to the fairness of the procedures that are used in decision making about results' allocation. In other words, procedural justice reflects the evaluation of organizational justice in relation to policies and processes (4, 5). For example, an individual may ask how decisions concerning employees' promotions are made (5). In summary, distributive justice refers to outcomes (results or ends) while procedural justice refers to means or methods (6).
- **Interactional justice:** perhaps the most important advance in organizational justice literature is consideration of the importance of interpersonal behaviors in the organization, which is called interactional justice (1). Interactional justice reflects the employees' evaluation of the fairness of administrators' behavior (2). According to this definition, employees (in addition to a tendency to get fair results and to ask about the fair procedures for decision making about results allocation) evaluate their managers' behavior and then consider the results of this evaluation in decision making about their social exchange with the organization (5).
- **Informational justice:** the last dimension of perceived organizational justice. This dimension reflects the employees' perception of their managers' openness and honesty in providing information to them in comparison with others (5). Also, informational justice reflects the individuals' perception of the fairness of information that is used in organizational decision making (7).

In general, when an individual feels that the organization is dealing with him/her unfairly, he/she is likely to try to reduce his/her inputs through some kinds of behaviors such as absenteeism, reduced organizational commitment, turnover, and deviant behaviors with this assumption that social exchange with the organization has been damaged. In contrast, if an employee feels that he/she is treated fairly, he/she will have better performance (5). Several studies have shown that employees' perception of organizational justice has an effect on many variables such as job attitudes (3), performance (3), organizational citizenship behavior (8-16), job satisfaction (13, 17-19), organizational commitment (20-24), trust in management and organization (8, 25-27), intention to leave the job (21, 25), and the organization's social responsibility (28, 29). It should also be noted that perceived organizational justice is a kind of perception, and thus it can be affected by the perceiver's personal and demographic characteristics, needs, values and ethical frameworks (1, 30). That is why it is said that the results of studies on perceived organizational justice that have been done in one society cannot be generalized to other communities and cultures (1). Therefore, different studies are necessary in any society. Thus, the aim of this study was to investigate the relationship between perceived organizational justice and organizational citizenship behavior in an Iranian hospital as an example of the Iranian working environment.

The concept of organizational citizenship behavior (OCB) was first presented by Dennis Organ (1983). He defined OCB as individual behavior in an organizational environment that goes beyond formal roles and responsibilities of the organizational structure. Since Organ's definition, several dimensions of organizational citizenship behavior have been defined by various researchers in order to conceptualize OCB. The OCB model of Organ has been the most commonly used model over the past two and a half decades, until now. OCB includes five dimensions: courtesy, civic virtue, sportsmanship, altruism and consciousness (31). Organizational citizenship behavior includes both behaviors directed at individuals (OCBI) and behaviors directed toward the organization (OCBO) (32). Organizational citizenship behavior, because of its importance in the survival and performance of organizations, is currently one of the most widely studied topics in the field of organizational behavior (33). Therefore, many studies have already been done on the factors related to organizational citizenship behavior and its consequences (34, 35). In this study, we attempted to investigate the possible relationship between perceived organizational justice and organizational citizenship behavior.

2. Material and Methods

This analytical study was done with the cross-sectional method in an educational hospital in Yazd, Iran (Shahid Sadoughi Hospital) in 2013. We used the stratified random sampling method. Required data was gathered by using 2 valid questionnaires as follows:

- *Moorman & Niehoff organizational perceived justice questionnaire:*

This questionnaire contains 24 questions in relation to 3 dimensions of organizational perceived justice (distributive justice, procedural justice, and interactional justice) with the 5-point Likert scale for responding, which obtains

scores of 1 to 5 (very high to very low, respectively). The reliability of the Persian version of this questionnaire has been obtained through Cronbach's alpha as 0.86 by Mardani et al. (13).

- *McKinsey et al. OCB questionnaire:*

This questionnaire contains 29 questions for the evaluation of OCB in 5 dimensions, including altruism, conscientiousness, sportsmanship, courtesy, and civic virtue with 4-point scale for responding, which obtains scores of 1 to 4 (rarely, sometimes, a lot of times, and always). The reliability of the Persian version of this questionnaire has been obtained through Cronbach's alpha as 0.76 by Mardani et al. (13).

We used SPSS16, descriptive statistics (percent, mean, and standard deviation), Chi square, and Pearson's correlation coefficient for data analysis. It is notable that all samples were informed of the study objectives and contributed to the research with informed consent. Also, their personal data were kept confidential. Also, the research was approved by the public health faculty of Shahid Sadoughi University of Medical Sciences prior to study.

3. Results

Of all contributing employees in this study, 64% were females and 36% were males. In terms of profession, clinical professionals formed 45% of our samples. Also, 66% of the study samples had professional experience of less than 10 years and 60% of them had a BSc degree. Also, 86% of contributors were married. The frequency and percent of low, moderate, and high scores of organizational perceived justice and its dimensions are presented in Table1. As presented in the table1, 93, 96, and 95 percent of studied employees believed that distributive, procedural, and interactional justice in their organization, respectively, are in moderate situation. Also, only 2% of contributors gave high scores to their organization in procedural justice. Indeed, organizational justice in the studied hospital was in the average range from the viewpoint of 98% of study contributors

Table1. Frequency and percent of low, moderate and high scores of organizational perceived justice and its dimensions

Variables	Score range		
	Low n (%)	Moderate n (%)	High n (%)
Distributive justice	7 (7%)	93 (93%)	00 (00%)
Procedural justice	2 (2%)	96 (96%)	2 (2%)
Interactional justice	5 (5%)	95 (95%)	00 (00%)
Organizational perceived justice	2 (2%)	98 (98%)	00 (00%)

Table2. The frequency and percent of weak, moderate and strength situation of OCB and its dimensions

Variable	Score range		
	Weak n (%)	Moderate n (%)	Strong n (%)
Altruism	39 (39%)	52 (52%)	9 (9%)
Conscientiousness	27 (27%)	71 (71%)	2 (2%)
Sportsmanship	64 (64%)	34 (34%)	2 (2%)
Courtesy	39 (39%)	52 (52%)	9 (9%)
Civic virtue	38 (38%)	52 (52%)	10 (10%)
OCB	31 (31%)	68 (68%)	1 (1%)

The frequency and percent of weak, moderate, and strong situations of OCB and its dimensions among the studied hospital's employees are presented in Table2. Table 2 shows that 68% of contributors to the study had moderate organizational citizenship behavior. Also, the majority of contributors received moderate scores in four dimensions of OCB including altruism (52%), conscientiousness (71%), courtesy (52%), and civic virtue (52%). Nevertheless, in the sportsmanship dimension, 64% of samples were in the weak range.

Table 3 shows the relationship between organizational perceived justice and OCB among the studied hospital's employees. As presented in Table3, in the studied population, organizational perceived justice had a statistical relationship with OCB ($P=0.00$, $R=0.33$) and its three dimensions, including altruism ($P=0.00$, $R=0.43$), sportsmanship ($P=0.00$, $R=0.43$), and civic virtue ($P=0.00$, $R=0.38$).

Table3. The relationship between organizational perceived justice and OCB

OPJ	OCB	Altruism	Conscientiousness	Sportsmanship	Courtesy	Civic virtue	OCB
	R	R	R	R	R	R	R
Distributive justice	0.29*	0.68	0.04	0.25	0.25	0.25	0.93
Procedural justice	0.07	0.03	0.20*	0.53	0.06	0.06	0.04
Interactional justice	0.25*	0.41	0.08	0.00	0.49*	0.49*	0.13
OPJ	0.43*	0.14	0.14	0.00	0.43*	0.43*	0.96

* $P \leq 0.05$; OCB: Organizational Citizenships Behavior; OPJ: Organizational Perceived Justice

4. Discussion

Findings showed that perceived organizational justice in Yazd's Shahid Sadoughi Hospital were moderate. Findings also showed that dimensions of perceived organizational justice (distributive, procedural, and interactional) were moderate. Moderate score in these dimensions in this hospital reflects the situation of perceived fairness of decision-making outcomes and processes and the treatment received by employees from authorities. Among the perceived organizational justice dimensions, the highest and lowest scores were related to procedural and distributive justice, respectively. In previous research, perceived organizational justice was moderate, in line with this research (8, 10, 12, 20, 24, and 36-38). In some studies, the highest score was related to interactional justice and the lowest score was related to distributive justice (24, 28). However, in some studies contrary to this study, the highest and lowest scores were related to distributive and interactional justice (10, 39). In brief, our findings demonstrated that although the perception of studied hospital's employees was acceptable, it can be improved. As noted previously, the perception of employees about the organizational justice level in their workplace can affect different individual and organizational outcomes such as job satisfaction and job performance. Therefore, our findings have a practical value for health managers. This research indicated that hospital managers and health policy makers should formulate suitable strategies for addressing the perceived organizational justice among hospital employees.

Also, this study has found that mean scores of OCB and its dimensions among hospital staff in Yazd's Shahid Sadoughi Hospital were moderate in accordance with previous studies (1, 6, 8, 12, 20, and 30). Also, among OCB dimensions, conscientiousness and sportsmanship were the highest and lowest scores in this study. These findings suggest that citizenship behavior among the studied hospital's employees can be improved. As noted previously, some organizational variables can affect the organizational citizenship behavior of employees. Based on the findings of other studies about determinants of OCB, we can suggest that some structural and cultural changes can improve organizational citizenship behavior among employees. Also, in-service educational courses about citizenship behavior and the rising of leadership support can be suggested as strategies for improving the organizational citizenship behavior.

Our findings show that perceived organizational justice was positively and significantly ($P=0.00$) correlated with OCB ($R=0.33$) in accordance with previous studies (1, 2, 3, 6, 8, 12, 20, and 36). Indeed, findings showed that overall perceived organizational justice has a positive and significant correlation with conscientiousness, civic virtue, altruism, and sportsmanship. Distributive justice has been found to predict overall OCB, sportsmanship, altruism, and conscientiousness. This result is in line with Devasagayam's finding (3). Also, procedural justice has been found to predict civic virtue and altruism; it is also negatively related to courtesy. But some researchers have shown that procedural justice is significantly related to overall OCB (3, 8, and 12). Other research has shown that procedural justice acts as a determinant of an employee's trust in their organization and subsequently of OCB (8). Finally, findings of this study show that interactional justice was positively and significantly correlated with overall OCB, similar to Farahbod's findings (37). Therefore, organizational justice seems to be the key factor that has a strong effect on OCB. The results of studies suggest that extra-role behaviors such as OCB are somewhat practiced within learning environments. Organizations should increase employees' justice perception because it plays a key role in motivating employees to engage in OCB while reducing deviant behaviors.

5. Conclusion

In conclusion, this study showed that employees' perception about organizational justice and its dimensions can be taught as a determinant of OCB. This study confirmed that any policy that leads to better organizational justice perception will contribute to better OCB that will help the hospital to be more productive. Therefore, in practice, our research can help the studied hospital to make more appropriate actions to improve the OCB among its employees, which in turn will lead to improved organizational performance. Also, our results contribute to a better understanding of organizational behavior in hospital settings; future studies should determine other determinants of

organizational behavior among hospital employees. Also, they should address the best solutions and strategies of organizational behavior improvement.

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Conflict of Interest:

There is no conflict of interest to be declared.

Authors' contributions:

All of authors contributed to this project and article equally. All authors read and approved the final manuscript.

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