

Organizational Justice in Higher Education Institutions: A Comparative Study of Public and Private Sector in Punjab

Dr. Abdul Hameed Qamar

Lecturer, Department of Education, The Islamia University of Bahawalpur, Bahawalnagar
Campus
hameed.qamar@iub.edu.pk

Dr. Umer Farooq

Lecturer, Department of Education, The Islamia University of Bahawalpur, Bahawalnagar
Campus
umerfarooq@iub.edu.pk

Dr. Muhammad Sohail Akhtar

Assistant Professor, Department of Sociology, Ghazi University Dera Ghazi Khan
msakhtar@gudgk.edu.pk

Abstract

This study examined organizational justice perceptions among university faculty in public versus private higher education institutions in Punjab, Pakistan. A sample of 315 faculty members from comparable public and private universities completed an Organizational Justice scale. Results found private university teachers perceive higher overall organizational justice compared to public university teachers. Specifically, private university teachers feel more fairly treated regarding distributive justice (fairness of rewards) and interactional justice (interpersonal treatment). Procedural justice (fairness of evaluation processes) was viewed equally. On average, private university teachers agreed more strongly that they get fair rewards for their services, performance appraisals are fair, they enjoy respect in their university, their opinions are respected, and there is a lack of bias. It indicates private universities are better at linking compensation and rewards to performance while providing superior interpersonal treatment. Public universities need to improve reward structures, show more respect, value opinions, and minimize bias. By addressing these gaps in organizational justice perceptions relative to private universities, public institutions can increase teacher satisfaction and retention.

Keywords: University Faculty, Organizational Justice, Public vs. Private Institutions, Distributive Justice, Interactional Justice.

1. Introduction

Organizational Justice (OJ) is an integral part in an institution for smooth working. It maintains the stability, health and fame of an organization among employees. In any organization, justice is a pillar of productivity due to its linkage with employees, satisfaction, interest and performance that may cause human assets improvement of an organization. (Karaca, 2017). In the view of Rawls (1973), justice in an organization is its first most feature which cannot be overlooked. On the other hand, injustice in an organization cause physical as well as mental harm to an institution or organization. It has been found that organizations which fails in implementing justice within its functioning, cause employees to show destructive attitude to the organizational

results(Choi, 2011). It has also been found that displeased workers respond to organizational decisions by stealing, harm to property, abstraction of organizational commitment, disobey and conflict behaviours (Deutsch, 2011).

Equity theory has been seen as origin for the concept of organizational justice that governs the delivery of organizational resources (Adams, 1965). Furthermore, it was acknowledged by Greenberg (1987) who considers that organizational justice is concerned with workers' observation of behaviours on the basis of justice. Robbins and Judge (2016) highlight that organizational justice is the difference between true and false actions accomplished by management. Employees deliberate their organization as just when they observe that the benefits and the actions are practical and sustaining(Nix & Wolfe, 2016a). Research focusses three types of organizational justice as distributive justice, procedural justice, and interactional justice which are prevalent in the organizational milieu.Distributive justice refuges the financial facets of the employees. Greenberg (1987) describes that distributive justice governs all the benefits that an employee receives from an organization.Procedural justice is connected with the measures which are used to allocate and evaluate benefits to employees (Karaca, 2017). Use of just and fair procedures in organizational matters is instrumental in increasing organizational output. Workers who allocated with procedural justice always support organizational decisions and work eagerly to increase efficiency(Choi, 2011). Concerning interactional justice, it is found that it isconnected with respectful dealings with the workers in the entire course of organizational matters (Deutsch, 2011). Respected social values such as morality, respect, truth, and reciprocated care are the basic pillars of interactional justice. It guides managers to be caring and see humane features like politeness, courtesy and kind attitude while dealing with their subordinates (Ebeh et al., 2017).

2. Objectives of the study

The following were the objectives of the study.

1. To probe the teachers' opinions about organizational justice.
2. To compare the organizational justice of faculty from public and private sector HEIs.

3. Research Questions

1. What are the teachers' opinions about organizational justice?
2. What is the comparison between faculty of public and private sector HEIs about organizational justice?

4. Literature Review

Organizational justice refers to employee perceptions of fairness within their workplace across multiple dimensions including distribution of resources, processes to determine outcomes, interpersonal treatment, and informational transparency (Greenberg, 1987). How just or fair employees believe their organization treats them has significant implications on satisfaction, commitment, retention, and performance(Nix & Wolfe, 2016b). As such, understanding organizational justice is pertinent for human resource management. This literature review analyzes research on organizational justice specifically within higher education institutions, concentrating on faculty perceptions in public versus private universities.

Early organizational justice frameworks emerged from equity theory regarding how employees judge inputs relative to outcomes (Adams, 1965). But current conceptualizations outline four key forms of organizational justice. Distributive justice involves perceived fairness of resource allocation including compensation, rewards, workloads and other tangible outcomes (Alexander & Ruderman, 1987). Procedural justice concerns the processes, mechanisms and policies used to determine those distributions. Interactional justice relates to dignity, respect and propriety in

interpersonal treatment from leadership. Informational justice focuses on explanations from decision makers regarding procedures and distributions (Colquitt, 2001).

As public sector institutions, government universities face bureaucracy and resource constraints that can limit organizational justice (Andrews et al., 2019). Private universities may have more flexibility in compensation policies, evaluation approaches and interpersonal dynamics. This likely contributes to research finding higher overall justice perceptions among faculty in Nigerian private universities compared to public counterparts, including better distributive and procedural justice specifically. However, contrasting evidence in Saudi Arabia did not reveal differences in organizational justice between private and public university faculty (Ab Ghani, 2021). This highlights that relationships likely depend on cultural contexts.

In the Pakistani higher education landscape, faculty retention and performance issues have been attributed partly to organizational justice deficiencies, but few studies directly assess differences between public and private institutions (Asrar-ul-Haq et al., 2017). Evidence outside academia shows government employees in Pakistan perceive lower organizational justice than private companies (Iqbal, 2017). Extrapolating findings, faculty may report greater fairness in resource allocation, decision-making processes, interpersonal treatment and informational transparency within growing private universities compared to public institutions facing structural and financial challenges. But with faculty organizational commitment also conditional on public service motivations (Jin et al., 2018), associations merit dedicated investigation.

Scholars are ever concerned in finding a connection between the justice perceptions of the workers and the level of their obligation. Linkage has been found among organizational justice and OC in a positive way (Buluc & Gunes, 2014; Karaca, 2017). Similarly, Bilal et al. (2017) also explored that while workers are conscious of the being of justice based situation, it is contributory in improving their obligation to the organization and advancement of organizational citizenship behavior (OCB). Buluc and Gunes (2014) also explored that justice practical in connections with the employees is reflected in the procedure of improved organizational commitment and gratification over managerial choices.

5. Research Methodology

This descriptive study utilized a survey approach to assess organizational justice among university faculty in Punjab, Pakistan. The target population included all teaching faculty across 64 public and private general universities in the province. A multistage sampling technique was used to draw the sample. In stage one, one public and one private university were randomly selected from each of Punjab's nine divisions, with an additional private university chosen from the Lahore division. In stage two, seven departments were conveniently sampled from each selected university based on faculty reemployment potential. Lastly, five faculty members were randomly sampled from the seven departments at public universities and six from private universities, generating samples of 315 public sector faculty and 315 private sector faculty. In total, 630 questionnaires were distributed, with 487 completed questionnaires returned, achieving a satisfactory 77% overall response rate. University teachers' Organizational Justice perceptions were measured by adapting the Organizational Justice Scale (OJS) made by Niehoff and Moorman (1993). OJS was modified according to the requirements of the study as well as local settings. Changes were made to make the scale suitable for administering to university teachers. Data was gathered through online forms, mail, university contacts, and in-person visits.

6. Findings of the Study

Table 1: Teachers' Opinion about Procedural Justice

Items	Public	University	Private	University
-------	--------	------------	---------	------------

	Teachers		Teachers	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
Evaluation is fair regardless of Social status.	4.10	5	4.56	0
Evaluation is fair regardless of Education.	4.10	1	3.11	9
Evaluations are free from any kind of pressure.	3.83	9	4.15	4
Average Score	4.01	2	3.94	8

The above table describes that overall, teachers at both public and private universities feel that there is reasonably fair procedural justice, with average scores above 3 on a 5-point scale where 5 represents strong agreement. Specifically, teachers believe performance evaluations are generally fair regardless of social status. Private university teachers (mean 4.56) agree more strongly with this than public university teachers (4.10). Regarding evaluations being fair regardless of education level, public university teachers agree (mean 4.10) while private university teachers are more neutral (mean 3.11). Teachers are somewhat confident evaluations are free from pressure, with public university teachers slightly less sure (3.83) compared to private university teachers (4.15).

Table 2: Teachers' Opinion about Interactional Justice

Items	Public Teachers		Private Teachers	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
I enjoy respect in this university.	3.74	7	4.79	3
My opinion is respected by the management.	3.93	0	4.15	5
There is no biasness in this university.	3.85	4	4.56	8
Average Score	3.84	0.7	4.5	2

The above table indicates that private university teachers perceive higher levels of interactional justice compared to public university teachers. Specifically, private university teachers agree more strongly (mean 4.79) that they enjoy respect in their university than public university teachers (mean 3.74). Similarly, private university teachers feel more strongly (mean 4.15) that their opinions are respected by management compared to public university teachers (mean 3.93). There is a sizable difference regarding perceived bias, with private university teachers agreeing more firmly (mean 4.56) that there is no biasness compared to public university teachers (3.85). Overall, the average interactional justice score is substantially higher for private university teachers (mean 4.5) versus public university teachers (mean 3.84).

Table 3: Teachers' Opinion about Distributive Justice

Items	Public Teachers		Private Teachers	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
I get fair rewards for my services.	3.72	6	4.08	7

I am rewarded according to my qualification and experience.	3.95	7	0.7	3.43	1	0.5
Performance appraisals are fair.	2.95	4	1.0	4.11	0	0.5
Average Score	3.54	6	0.8	3.87	6	0.4

This table indicates private university teachers perceive higher overall distributive justice compared to public university teachers. Specifically, private university teachers agree more strongly (mean 4.08) that they get fair rewards for their services versus public university teachers (mean 3.72). However, public university teachers agree more firmly (mean 3.95) that they are rewarded according to qualifications and experience compared to private university teachers (mean 3.43). Private university teachers believe performance appraisals are fair (mean 4.11) substantially more than public university teachers (mean 2.95). In summary, private university teachers perceive greater distributive justice overall (mean 3.87 vs 3.54), driven by views of fair rewards and performance appraisals. But public university teachers feel more strongly that pay aligns with qualifications and experience. This suggests private universities may better link rewards to performance reviews. Public universities may need to re-evaluate both performance ratings and how compensation is tied to teacher credentials and experience.

Table 0: Mean and SD of Organizational Justice Subscales

Items	Public University Teachers		Private University Teachers	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
Procedural Justice	4.01	0.72	3.94	0.78
Distributive Justice	3.54	0.86	3.87	0.46
Interactional Justice	3.84	0.7	4.5	0.52
Overall Organizational Justice	3.8	0.76	4.1	0.59

According to the above table, overall, private university teachers have a higher perception of organizational justice (mean 4.1) than public university teachers (mean 3.8). This indicates private university teachers feel more fairly treated overall. Public (mean 4.01) and private (mean 3.94) are nearly equal, indicating similar perceptions that performance evaluation processes are fair. Private university teachers (mean 3.87) believe rewards and compensation are more fair compared to public university teachers (mean 3.54). There is a sizable difference with private university teachers (mean 4.5) perceiving much higher levels of respect and lack of bias than public university teachers (mean 3.84).

6. Conclusions

Private university teachers perceive higher overall organizational justice compared to public university teachers. Private university teachers feel more fairly treated in general across procedural, interactive, and distributive justice dimensions. Procedural justice is viewed rather equally, with both public and private university teachers agreeing that performance evaluation processes are reasonably fair. This suggests evaluations are being conducted objectively. However, private university teachers see greater distributive justice in how rewards and compensation align with evaluations and credentials. Public universities may need to reassess pay structures. The largest gap is in interactional justice. Private university teachers believe there is far greater respect for their opinions and lack of bias. Public universities should focus on improving interpersonal treatment of teachers. While procedural justice is on par, private university teachers perceive better distributive and interactional justice. Public

universities must enhance compensation policies and interactional treatment to improve organizational justice perceptions to match private university levels. Addressing these gaps could increase teacher satisfaction and retention.

7. Discussion

The purpose of this study was to compare perceptions of organizational justice among public and private university teachers in Punjab. The current study assessed procedural, interactional, and distributive justice, and found significant gaps, particularly that private university teachers perceive higher levels of distributive and interactional justice than public university teachers. It suggests that private universities must better address interpersonal respect, lack of bias, and fair rewards and compensation. This is in line with previous research finding that higher education teachers in private universities report better quality of work-life which encompasses satisfaction with organizational policies (Rehman et al., 2009). However, evaluation processes in both sectors were rated as fairly equal. The deficiencies in public universities in those areas contribute to a lower overall justice perception than private universities. There are several practical implications of these findings. Public universities need to reassess and strengthen reward structures to align with teacher performance reviews and qualifications (Khan et al., 2020). Doing so could enhance perceptions of distributive justice. There is also room for improvement in interactional justice via increasing respect, valuing teacher opinions and contributing to them feeling less bias in interpersonal treatment (Shkoler et al., 2021). This could entail better communication from administrators, providing rationale for policies that impact faculty. Private universities also have room to better link rewards and pay to performance measures and credentials. As such, the gap in distributive justice can be attributed partly to public university teachers feeling their experience and qualifications are not properly reflected in compensation. A limitation of the current study was that it did not measure actual differences in policies or measures of respect in the two types of institutions. Future research should incorporate more objective assessments of interpersonal dynamics, performance review procedures, and pay structures in public versus private universities. Qualitative data on teacher perceptions could also provide more depth to understand gaps in organizational justice perceptions and how best to address them. Longitudinal data could determine whether efforts to improve rewards or interactional treatment successfully close those gaps in organizational justice.

8. Recommendations

On the basis of current findings and conclusions, the following are the recommendations of the current study.

1. Public universities need to conduct an audit of their compensation and rewards systems to assess how pay aligns with faculty qualifications, experience, and performance evaluations. Adjustments should be made to enhance distributive justice.
2. Training programs should be implemented for public university administrators and managers on improving interactional justice. Content should focus on showing respect, minimizing bias, and effectively communicating rationale behind policies impacting faculty.
3. Private universities must also evaluate how well their reward structures and pay correlate to faculty performance reviews in addition to credentials. Findings showed room for improvement in linking rewards to evaluations.
4. While procedural justice is satisfactory, both public and private universities should regularly survey faculty after performance reviews to monitor perceptions of fairness in evaluation processes. Maintaining these positive perceptions is important.

5. Public universities in particular need to solicit teacher input and feedback on policies and demonstrate that faculty opinions are valued in decisions affecting them. This can enhance interactional justice views.
6. Future research should delve deeper into pinpointing specific policies or practices that contribute to lower organizational justice perceptions in public institutions compared to private counterparts. Qualitative data can help identify problem areas.

References

- Ab Ghani, H. (2021). The effect of organizational justice on organizational commitment at arar technical college in Saudi Arabia. *International Journal of Management (IJM)*, 12(1).
- Adams, J. S. (1965). Inequity in social exchange. In *Advances in experimental social psychology* (Vol. 2, pp. 267-299). Elsevier.
- Alexander, S., & Ruderman, M. (1987). The role of procedural and distributive justice in organizational behavior. *Social justice research*, 1, 177-198.
- Andrews, R., Rosenberg Hansen, J., & Huxley, K. (2019). Senior public managers' organizational commitment: Do private sector experience and tenure make a difference? *International Public Management Journal*, 2(1), 1-32.
- Asrar-ul-Haq, M., Kuchinke, K. P., & Iqbal, A. (2017). The relationship between corporate social responsibility, job satisfaction, and organizational commitment: Case of Pakistani higher education. *Journal of Cleaner Production*, 142, 2352-2363.
- Bilal, A. R., Rafi, N., & Khalid, S. (2017). Detrimental causes and consequences of organizational injustice in the workplace: evidence from public sector organizations. *Pakistan Business Review*, 19(1), 114-137.
- Buluc, B., & Gunes, M. (2014). Relationship Between Organizational Justice and Organizational Commitment in Primary Schools. *The Anthropologist*, 18(1), 145-152. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09720073.2014.11891530>
- Choi, S. (2011). Organizational justice and employee work attitudes: The federal case. *The American Review of Public Administration*, 41(2), 185-204.
- Colquitt, J. A. (2001). On the dimensionality of organizational justice: a construct validation of a measure. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 86(3), 386.
- Deutsch, M. (2011). Justice and conflict. In *Conflict, Interdependence, and Justice* (pp. 95-118). Springer.
- Ebeh, R. E., Njoku, E. C., Ikpeazu, O. C., & Benson, L. (2017). Organizational commitment and job involvement among casual workers: the role of organizational justice. *Global Journal of Human Resource Management*, 5(4), 17-32.
- Greenberg, J. (1987). A taxonomy of organizational justice theories. *Academy of Management review*, 12(1), 9-22.
- Iqbal, M. Z. (2017). The impact of organizational justice on employee performance in public sector organization of Pakistan.
- Jin, M. H., McDonald, B., & Park, J. (2018). Does public service motivation matter in public higher education? Testing the theories of person-organization fit and organizational commitment through a serial multiple mediation model. *The American Review of Public Administration*, 48(1), 82-97.
- Karaca, A. (2017). The Relationship Between Organizational Justice and Organizational Commitment. *Journal of Multidisciplinary Developments*, 2(2), 82-91.

- Khan, H., Rehmat, M., Butt, T. H., Farooqi, S., & Asim, J. (2020). Impact of transformational leadership on work performance, burnout and social loafing: A mediation model. *Future Business Journal*, 6, 1-13.
- Niehoff, B. P., & Moorman, R. H. (1993). Justice as a mediator of the relationship between methods of monitoring and organizational citizenship behavior. *Academy of Management journal*, 36(3), 527-556.
- Nix, J., & Wolfe, S. E. (2016a). Sensitivity to the Ferguson Effect: The role of managerial organizational justice. *Journal of criminal justice*, 47(6), 12-20.
- Nix, J., & Wolfe, S. E. (2016b). Sensitivity to the Ferguson Effect: The role of managerial organizational justice. *Journal of criminal justice*, 47, 12-20.
- Rawls, J. (1973). Some ordinalist-utilitarian notes on Rawls's theory of justice. *The Journal of Philosophy*, 70(9), 245-263.
- Rehman, S., Gujjar, A. A., Khan, S. A., & Iqbal, J. (2009). Quality of teaching faculty in public sector universities of Pakistan as viewed by teachers themselves. *International Online Journal of Educational Sciences*, 1(1), 48-63.
- Robbins, S. P., & Judge, T. A. (2016). Organizational Behavior. In (17th ed.). London: Pearson Education.
- Shkoler, O., Tziner, A., Vasiliu, C., & Ghinea, C.-N. (2021). A moderated-mediation analysis of organizational justice and leader-member exchange: Cross-validation with three sub-samples. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 12, 616476.