

*Full Length Research Paper*

# Faculty members' perceptions of organizational justice in Institutes of Higher Learning of Pakistan

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**The current study attempted to determine whether or not demographic groups of faculty in the Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) differ significantly in their perceptions regarding organizational justice and its three dimensions. Since relationship of organizational justice with teachers' demographic characteristics has rarely been investigated up till now in academic organizations of higher learning so, the findings of this study helped bridging the gap in organizational justice literature particularly in collectivistic culture of South Asian country like Pakistan. Self-administered questionnaires were distributed to collect data from regular and contractual teaching staff serving in four private and one public HEIs of Pakistan. Analysis of variance and independent samples t-test were employed to address research question of the study. All the demographic groups expect of gender and academic qualification differed significantly in their perceptions regarding either organizational justice or its dimension(s).**

**Key words:** Organizational justice, distributive justice, procedural justice, interactional justice, demographic groups, faculty, higher education institutions (HEIs), Pakistan.

## INTRODUCTION

Organizational justice is about the rules and social norms governing how work outcomes should be distributed, the procedures to be used for making such distribution decisions and how people are treated interpersonally (Lee et al., 2004). It has been of major concern not only to corporate managers and business owners but also to the academic administrators and policy makers both in the East and the West. Faculty members who perceive a lack of fairness, experience decline in their morale, intend more likely to leave their jobs and even retaliate against their academic institutions. On the other hand, distributive, procedural and interactional fairness breed commitment, intentions to remain on the job and helpful citizenship behaviors while going beyond the call of formal job

responsibilities (Alam et al., 2010). Concerns about fairness have been expressed in organizational domains such as conflict resolution, personnel selection, labor disputes and wage negotiation, etc. Greenberg (1990) noted that justice has been claimed to be the first virtue of social institutions due to diverse concerns regarding fairness in the organizations. Its importance at workplace is evident because it can affect long term viability of any organization especially in term of relationship between employer and employees (Alam, 2009).

Wide range of human behaviors in the context of organizations can be explained by how the workforce perceives distributive, procedural and interactional fairness. That is why numerous researchers investigated the role of justice perceptions on job satisfaction, withdrawal behaviors, organizational citizenship behavior, organizational commitment and productivity (Cohen-Charash and Spector, 2001; Colquitt et al., 2001; Viswesvaran and Ones, 2002).

Though individual demographic characteristics such as

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age, gender and education have long been studied in connection with workplace phenomena (Kacmar and Ferris, 1989; McEvoy and Cascio, 1989; Waldman and Avolio, 1986, 1991), their importance for understanding organizational behaviors and attitudes has been the subject of greater attention in recent years. As regards perceptions of organizational justice, rarely any study has been conducted on demographically diverse teaching staff employed by institutes of higher learning in Pakistan. Hence, the researchers attempted to ascertain if demographically diverse faculty differ significantly in their perceptions regarding organizational justice and its three dimensions. Moreover, it was aimed to determine their perception levels of distributive, procedural and interactional justice. This investigation strived to contribute to the existing literature plugging the gap in the domain of fairness perceptions of teaching staff in HEIs of developing country like Pakistan. Findings of the study could facilitate the academic administrators and policy makers in nurturing strategic relations with their critical human resource.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

Studies in the field of organizational justice has centered on how people feel about either the distribution of rewards or the process by which these rewards allocation decisions are made and the quality of interpersonal processes (Alam et al., 2010). According to Adams (1965), distributive justice is the perceived fairness of outcomes that an individual receives. The research regarding the perceived distributive fairness focused primarily on individuals' reactions to pay equity and inequity (Mowday, 1983), however individuals' reactions to equity have been shown to be important for a variety of other variables, including job challenge (Oldham et al., 1982), job security, supervision (Oldham et al., 1986), office space (Greenberg, 1988), and layoffs (Brockner et al., 1986). Cohen-Charash and Spector (2001) found that fairness in rewards distribution was significantly related not only with pay satisfaction, organizational citizenship behavior, job satisfaction, trust in one's supervisor and organization and satisfaction with the management but counterproductive behaviors also. Recent investigations have also endorsed relationship between perceived fairness in rewards allocation decisions and organizational identification (Olkonen and Lipponen, 2006) satisfaction with pay (Roch and Shanock, 2006), satisfaction with job (Samad, 2006; Viswesvaran and Ones, 2002), and trust in one's organization (Aryee et al., 2002). Moreover, Stecher and Rosse (2005) recently observed significant negative association of perceived distributive fairness with negative emotion, intent to reduce one's efforts and intention to leave. Rahim et al. (2000) found out that when perceived distributive justice was high, employees used more cooperative conflict management

styles while interacting with their supervisors.

Lind and Tyler (1988) as well as Greenberg (1990) defined procedural justice as fairness in policies and procedures of an organization used to ascertaining one's rewards. Such procedural fairness is considered as one of the vital factors in order to make organizational change efforts effective (Chawla and Kelloway, 2004). Recent meta-analyses found that procedural fairness predicted satisfaction with rewards and job, performance, withdrawal and counterproductive work behaviors (Viswesvaran and Ones, 2002; Cohen-Charash and Spector, 2001; Colquitt et al., 2001). Many other researchers have found out that procedural fairness explains variance in perceived organizational support (Roch and Shanock, 2006), cooperative conflict management behavior (Rahim et al., 2000), aggression towards supervisor (Greenberg and Barling, 1999) and satisfaction with performance appraisal systems (Cropanzano et al., 2002).

As regards interactional justice, it refers to the quality of interpersonal treatment of individuals; to what extent they are spoken with empathy and sincerity and rationale of actual work outcome allocations are explained (Bies and Moag, 1986). It was found to be related to perceptions of the treatment quality (Cropanzano et al., 2002; Roch and Shanock, 2006), quittal intentions (Kickul et al., 2002), organizational commitment, job and outcome satisfaction, performance, organizational citizenship behavior and withdrawal behavior (Colquitt et al., 2001). Recently, it was concluded (Stecher and Rosse, 2005) that interactional justice had stronger influence on, intent to leave, negative emotions and intent to reduce work efforts than distributive fairness.

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Self-administered questionnaires were used to collect the data from the study participants. The detailed methods and procedures are presented hereunder for addressing the following research question:

Research Question: Do perceptions regarding organizational justice and its three dimensions (distributive, procedural and interactional justice) differ significantly across diverse demographic groups of the faculty serving in HEIs of Pakistan?

### Sample

Data was collected from five Higher Education Commission of Pakistan (HEC) accredited universities and degree awarding institutes operating in Lahore (Punjab). One of them was a public sector university considered as one of the largest institution of higher learning in Pakistan. On the other hand, four universities and institutes were operating in private sector. The study participants were the faculty members who were either having the regular or contract employment status in these academic institutions. Multiple follow ups resulted in 467 (63 %) statistically usable questionnaires.

### Survey instrument

Organizational justice and its three dimensions such as distributive,

procedural and interactional justice were measured by using the scale developed by Niehoff and Moorman (1993). Distributive justice scale describes the extent to which faculty believe that their work outcomes such as reward, recognition, pay level, work schedule, workload, and responsibilities are fair, whereas procedural justice covers the extent to which formal procedures are implemented in a way that takes faculty needs into consideration. Interactional justice scale was used to measure the degree to which the faculty perceives that their needs are taken into account in making job decisions and they are provided with adequate explanations when decisions are finalized. The inter-item consistency scores of organizational justice ( $\alpha=0.95$ ), distributive justice ( $\alpha=0.84$ ), procedural justice ( $\alpha=0.90$ ) and interactional justice ( $\alpha=0.93$ ) were found to be adequate for the analysis purpose. Five point Likert scale was used to assess the perceptions of the faculty members whereby 1 refers to strongly disagree and 5 as strongly agree. Respondents were also asked about their demographic profile such as gender, age, designation, education and job experience, etc.

### Procedures

About 750 survey questionnaires were distributed personally by research field staff and BBA students (registered with course titled Business Research Methods) of Institute of Business Administration (IBA), University of the Punjab (PU) during November - December, 2009 to the faculty of the selected public private HEIs. Faculty was assured of anonymity and confidentiality of their individual responses. One way ANOVA and independent samples t-test were employed to determine whether or not any significant differences exist in the perceptions regarding organizational justice and its three dimensions among demographic categories of the faculty members serving in HEIs.

## RESULTS

### Analysis and interpretation

In this part of the paper, demographics profile of the study participants, results of independent samples t-test and one-way ANOVA are presented.

Table 1 reflects the demographic characteristics of the four hundred and sixty-seven faculty employed by Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) in Pakistan. Majority of the respondents were male (66%) whereas females accounted for about thirty four percent only. As regards age, forty three percent (202) faculty members were between 31 to 44 years. Three hundred and twenty one (69%) study participants were married. Most faculty held Master degree (187) followed by M. Phil (172) and PhD (105). Of the respondents, about 53% had job experience up to 5 years, 26% between 6 to 10 years, 9% between 11 to 15 years and 11% more than 15 years. About 63% of the faculty (292) was working as Lecturer, 27% (124) as Assistant Professor, 9% as Associate Professor and Professor. Sixty two percent (288) of the faculty was serving in public sector and about 36% (166) in private sector HEIs of Pakistan.

The result of independent samples t-test (Table 2) indicates the means comparison of the organizational justice and its three dimensions separately for male and

female faculty members. Both gender groups did not differ significantly in their perceptions regarding organizational justice (Male: Mean=3.84, S.D=0.82, N=310; Female: Mean=3.75, S.D=0.83, N=157) distributive justice (Male: Mean=3.82, S.D=0.90, N=310; Female: Mean=3.69, S.D=0.89, N=157), procedural justice (Male: Mean=3.56, S.D=0.96, N=310; Female: Mean=3.51, S.D=0.93, N=157) and interactional justice (Male: Mean=4.12, S.D=1.02, N=310; Female: Mean=4.04, S.D=0.99, N=157) because of their insignificant t-values even when  $\alpha$  is set at 0.10 level.

The means comparison (Table 3) illustrates that there were no statistically significant differences between married and unmarried faculty pertaining their perceptions about organizational justice (Married: Mean=3.84, S.D=0.83, N=321; Unmarried: Mean=3.73, S.D=0.77, N=140), procedural justice (Married: Mean=3.57, S.D=0.97, N=321; Unmarried: Mean=3.50, S.D=0.89, N=140) and interactional justice (Married: Mean=4.11, S.D=1.02, N=321; Unmarried: Mean=4.09, S.D=0.97, N=140) except distributive justice because their respective t-statistics were found to be insignificant even when alpha is set at 0.10 level. Fairness in rewards distribution decisions was found to be significantly lesser among unmarried faculty members (Mean=3.62, S.D=0.83, N=140) than their married counterparts (Mean=3.85, S.D=0.90, N=321) as marked by significant t-statistic ( $t=2.54$ ,  $\alpha=0.05$ ).

The result (Table 4) indicates that public and private sector faculty differed significantly in their perceptions regarding organizational justice (Public: Mean=3.58, S.D=0.74, N=288; Private: Mean=4.26, S.D=0.69, N=166,  $t$ -statistic=9.79), distributive justice (Public: Mean=3.53, S.D=0.74, N=288; Private: Mean=4.27, S.D=0.86, N=166,  $t$ -statistic=9.16), procedural justice (Public: Mean=3.27, S.D=0.89, N=288; Private: Mean=4.06, S.D=0.78, N=166,  $t$ -statistic=9.38) and interactional justice (Public: Mean=3.91, S.D=1.02, N=288; Private: Mean=4.45, S.D=0.82, N=166 and  $t$ -statistic=6.31) at  $\alpha=0.01$ . Teaching staff serving in public sector Institutions perceived significantly lesser distributive, procedural, interactional and organizational fairness than their counterparts in private sector.

One way ANOVA (Table 5) reflects that diverse age groups of faculty had significantly different perceptions regarding distributive and procedural fairness which is clearly marked by their significant F statistics ( $F=2.90$ ,  $p<0.05$  and  $F=2.35$ ,  $p<0.10$ ). Faculty having age less than 25 years felt significantly lesser fairness in rewards distribution decisions (Mean=3.39, S.D=0.73, N=34) than their counterparts above 44 years of age (Mean=3.94, S.D=0.83, N=72) since t-value of their means difference was significant at 5% alpha. However, teaching staff having age between 25 to 30 years experienced significantly higher degree fairness in rewards distribution procedures (Mean=3.66, S.D=0.80, N=148) than their counterparts above 44 years (Mean=3.31, S.D=0.98,

**Table 1.** Demographic profile of respondents (N=467).

<b>Characteristic</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Perecent</b>
<b>Gender</b>		
Male	310	66
Female	157	34
<b>Age</b>		
<25 years	34	07
25-30 years	148	32
31-44 years	202	43
> 44 years	72	16
Missing	11	02
<b>Designation</b>		
Lecturer	292	63
Assistant Professor	124	27
Associate Professor and Professor	44	09
Missing	07	01
<b>Type of HEI</b>		
Public sector	288	62
Private sector	166	36
Missing	13	02
<b>Marital status</b>		
Married	321	69
Unmarried	140	30
Missing	06	01
<b>Education</b>		
Master degree	187	40
MS / M. Phil	172	37
PhD	105	23
Missing	03	00
<b>Job experience</b>		
1-5 years	249	53
6-10 years	119	26
11-15 years	44	09
>15 years	49	11
Missing	06	01

N=72) as marked by significant t-value of their means difference at  $\alpha=0.10$ .

ANOVA (Table 6) reflects that faculty holding either Master degree, M Phil or PhD did not differ significantly in their perceptions regarding organizational justice and its three dimensions as evident by their insignificant F-statistics even at 10% alpha level.

Table 7 indicates that perceptions regarding distributive justice were statistically different ( $F=3.93$ ,  $p<0.05$ ) across different teaching tenures of the faculty members.

Teaching staff having job experience up to 5 years felt significantly lesser fairness in rewards distribution decisions (Mean=3.66, S.D=.90, N=249) than those with teaching experience between 11 to 15 years (Mean=4.05, S.D=0.77, N=44) as marked by significant t-statistic of their means difference at  $\alpha=0.05$ .

One way ANOVA (Table 8) illustrates that perceptions regarding distributive justice were statistically different (F-statistic 4.47,  $p<0.05$ ) across diverse designation groups of the faculty. Lecturers felt significantly lesser fairness in

**Table 2.** Differences in perceived organizational justice and its dimensions between male and female faculty.

Gender	Organizational justice	Distributive justice	Procedural justice	Interactional justice
<b>Male</b>				
N	310	310	310	310
Mean	3.84	3.82	3.56	4.12
Standard deviation	0.82	0.90	0.96	1.02
<b>Female</b>				
N	157	157	157	157
Mean	3.75	3.69	3.51	4.04
Standard deviation	0.83	0.89	0.93	0.99
t-statistic	1.09 <sup>†</sup>	1.53 <sup>†</sup>	0.51 <sup>†</sup>	0.84 <sup>†</sup>

<sup>†</sup> Not significant at 0.10 level.

**Table 3.** Differences in perceived organizational justice and its dimensions between married and unmarried faculty.

Marital status	Organizational justice	Distributive justice	Procedural justice	Interactional justice
<b>Married</b>				
N	321	321	321	321
Mean	3.84	3.85	3.57	4.11
Standard deviation	0.83	0.90	0.97	1.02
<b>Unmarried</b>				
N	140	140	140	140
Mean	3.73	3.62	3.50	4.09
Standard deviation	0.77	0.83	0.89	0.97
t-statistic	1.39 <sup>†</sup>	2.54 <sup>*</sup>	0.91 <sup>†</sup>	0.21 <sup>†</sup>

\* Significant at 0.05 level, two-tailed, <sup>†</sup> Not significant at 0.10 level.

**Table 4.** Differences in perceived organizational justice and its dimensions between public and private sector faculty.

Nature of HEIs	Organizational justice	Distributive justice	Procedural justice	Interactional justice
<b>Public sector</b>				
N	288	288	288	288
Mean	3.58	3.53	3.27	3.91
Standard deviation	0.74	0.74	0.89	1.02
<b>Private sector</b>				
N	166	166	166	166
Mean	4.26	4.27	4.06	4.45
Standard deviation	0.69	0.86	0.78	0.82
t-value	-9.79 <sup>*</sup>	-9.16 <sup>*</sup>	-9.38 <sup>*</sup>	-6.31 <sup>*</sup>

\* Significant at 0.01 level, two-tailed.

**Table 5.** Differences in perceived organizational justice and its dimensions across age categories of faculty.

Dependent variable	< 25 years (A)	25 – 30 years (B)	31 – 44 years (C)	> 44 years (D)
<b>Organizational justice</b>				
N	34	148	202	72
Mean	3.59	3.88	3.79	3.72
Standard deviation	0.68	0.76	0.88	0.82
F-statistic			1.47 <sup>†</sup>	
<b>Distributive justice</b>				
N	34	148	202	72
Mean	3.39	3.78	3.77	3.94
Standard deviation	0.73	0.86	0.95	0.83
Mean difference (A-D)			-0.54 <sup>**</sup>	
F-statistic			2.90 <sup>**</sup>	
<b>Procedural justice</b>				
N	34	148	202	72
Mean	3.40	3.66	3.54	3.31
Standard deviation	0.85	0.80	1.03	0.98
Mean difference (B-D)			0.34 <sup>*</sup>	
F-statistic			2.35 <sup>*</sup>	
<b>Interactional justice</b>				
N	34	148	202	72
Mean	3.96	4.21	4.07	3.92
Standard deviation	0.95	0.90	1.06	1.09
F-statistic			1.56 <sup>†</sup>	

\* Significant at 0.10 level, \*\* Significant at 0.05 level, <sup>†</sup> Not significant at 0.10 level.

rewards distribution decisions (Mean=3.69, S.D=0.88) than Assistant Professors (Mean=3.96, S.D=0.94) as evident by significant t-statistic of their means difference at 5% alpha level.

## CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

It was found that teaching staff employed by public sector HEIs perceived significantly lesser degree distributive, procedural, interactional and organizational justice than their counterparts in private sector. So it is advisable for the policy makers and administrators of public sector universities to design and execute impact generating change programs for rewards allocation, its procedures and interpersonal treatment process to come up to the expectations of their teaching staff (Alam et al., 2010; Alam and Hoque, 2010). Fairness perceptions in rewards allocation and its procedures were found to be significantly different across diverse age groups of the faculty. Teachers having age up to 25 years perceived significantly lesser degree fairness in actual rewards allocation than their counterparts above 44 years whereas those who aged above 44 years felt significantly lesser fairness

in rewards allocation procedures than their counterparts belonging to age group of 25 to 30 years.

Teaching staff having different marital status, job positions and experience differed significantly in their perceptions of fairness in rewards allocation decisions. Lecturers and unmarried faculty felt lesser fairness in their rewards allocation than Assistant Professors and their married counterparts respectively. Whereas, faculty members who had job experience between 11 to 15 years perceived higher degree fairness in rewards allocation than those having experience up to 5 years. It was interesting to note that male and female faculty having different level of academic qualification perceived somewhat equivalent level of distributive, procedural and interactional justice. In summary, these results have implications for the policy makers and administrators of public as well as private sector universities of Pakistan in gaining considerable insights of crucial issue of how demographically diverse teaching staff perceives fairness in their outcome decisions, its procedures and interpersonal processes. The findings regarding justice perceptions could be strategically employed by senior management of these academic institutions to nurturing not only teachers' affective work-related attitudes and

**Table 6.** Differences in perceived organizational justice and its dimensions across qualification levels of faculty.

Dependent variable	Master degree (16 years schooling)	M. Phil / MS	PhD
<b>Organizational justice</b>			
N	187	172	105
Mean	3.88	3.74	3.80
Standard deviation	0.85	0.83	0.78
F-statistic		1.21 <sup>†</sup>	
<b>Distributive justice</b>			
N	187	172	105
Mean	3.78	3.69	3.92
Standard deviation	0.94	0.93	0.75
F-statistic		2.19 <sup>†</sup>	
<b>Procedural justice</b>			
N	187	172	105
Mean	3.64	3.50	3.43
Standard deviation	0.93	0.96	0.97
F-statistic		1.80 <sup>†</sup>	
<b>Interactional justice</b>			
N	187	172	105
Mean	4.20	4.03	4.02
Standard deviation	1.01	0.99	1.03
<b>F-statistic</b>		1.60 <sup>†</sup>	

<sup>†</sup>Not significant at 0.10 level.

**Table 7.** Differences in perceived organizational justice and its dimensions across teaching tenure of faculty.

Dependent variable	1- 5 years (A)	6 – 10 years (B)	11 – 15 years (C)	> 15 years (D)
<b>Organizational justice</b>				
N	249	119	44	49
Mean	3.76	3.84	3.94	3.83
Standard deviation	0.81	0.84	0.82	0.89
F-statistic			0.71 <sup>†</sup>	
<b>Distributive justice</b>				
N	249	119	44	49
Mean	3.66	3.85	4.05	3.97
Standard deviation	0.90	0.92	0.77	0.90
Mean difference (A-C)		-0.40*		
F-statistic			3.93*	
<b>Procedural justice</b>				
N	249	119	44	49
Mean	3.52	3.57	3.69	3.50
Standard deviation	0.91	0.95	1.09	1.03
F-statistic			0.47 <sup>†</sup>	
<b>Interactional justice</b>				
N	249	119	44	49
Mean	4.11	4.11	4.07	4.01
Standard deviation	0.99	1.01	0.97	1.17
F-statistic			0.14 <sup>†</sup>	

\* Significant at 0.05 level, <sup>†</sup> Not significant at 0.10 level.

**Table 8.** Differences in perceived organizational justice and its dimensions across faculty positions.

Dependent variable	Lecturer (A)	Assistant Professor (B)	Associate Professor and Professor (C)
<b>Organizational justice</b>			
N	292	124	44
Mean	3.79	3.88	3.78
Standard deviation	0.81	0.86	0.84
F-statistic			0.56 <sup>†</sup>
<b>Distributive justice</b>			
N	292	124	44
Mean	3.69	3.96	3.92
Standard deviation	0.88	0.94	0.85
Mean difference (A-B)		-2.68*	
F-statistic			4.47*
<b>Procedural justice</b>			
N	292	124	44
Mean	3.55	3.58	3.40
Standard deviation	0.91	1.05	0.97
F-statistic			0.61 <sup>†</sup>
<b>Interactional justice</b>			
N	292	124	44
Mean	4.12	4.10	4.03
Standard deviation	0.98	1.05	1.03
F-statistic			0.17 <sup>†</sup>

\* Significant at 0.05 level, <sup>†</sup> Not significant at 0.10 level.

behaviors but to mitigating their counterproductive behaviors also. Considering significant differences among demographic groups of the faculty members serving particularly in public and private sector HEIs, it is advisable for the researchers to explore logical underpinnings of such perceived fairness based on teachers' external, internal and individual referents. Besides demographic variables, other antecedents as well as consequences of perceived organizational justice and its dimensions should be investigated in the context of institutes of higher learning in western as well as eastern cultures. Replication studies are suggested for researchers of higher education to improve the generalizability of the study results.

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