

# Perception of Organizational Justice as a Predictor of Organizational Citizenship Behavior: An Empirical Study at Schools in Sri Lanka

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## Abstract

The recent literature, organizational citizenship behavior (OCB) has received much attention by scholars. Organizational justice perception on the other hand comprises the employees perceptions associated with rewards, outcomes, decision making and participation in decision making processes and it is one of the dominating factor in organizational life. Both of these variables directly linked with organizational efficiency and effectiveness. The main objective of this study is to find the impact of organizational justice perception on organizational citizenship behavior. A stratified random sample of 230 school teachers in the eastern region of Sri Lanka participated in this study. The data were collected using validated questionnaire and were analyzed. The results revealed that the perception of justice is a strong predictor of organizational citizenship behavior. The relationship between each dimensions of organizational justice (distributive, procedural and interactive) and organizational citizenship behavior were also tested. As the scope for performing extra role is much more broader for school teachers, considering the findings of this study it is possible to recommend the educational institutions to increase the level of justice to increase their engagement in organizational citizenship behavior.

**Keywords:** Organizational citizenship behavior, Organizational justice perception, Distributive justice, Procedural justice, Interactive justice.

## 1. Introduction

The role of employees in organizational success is well established and the teachers' both in-role and extra- role are very crucial for effective functioning of schools. The scope for performing beyond task performance of school teachers' are very high. In the literature on performance, organizational citizenship behavior (OCB) has received much attention (Lara & Rodriguez, 2007). Organizational citizenship behavior has been considered as an important and developing topic of research in the recent past (Ozturk, 2010). OCB is defined by Organ (1988) as behavior at an individual's discretion that is not directly or explicitly rewarded but that will help the fulfillment of the organization's objectives. The objective of this study is to find out possible existence of any relationship between organizational justice and organizational citizenship in the context of Sri Lankan school teachers.

Organizational citizenship behaviors become important as they assist to achieve organizational goals and contribute to its effectiveness (Allen & Rush, 1998). Many empirical studies have found that organizations receive benefits from OCBs in many ways. They are customer satisfaction, quality of the product, quantity of the product and services, performance in sales, and returns (Podsakoff & MacKenzie, 1994; MacKenzie, Podsakoff & Ahearne, 1998; Walz & Niehoff, 1996; Koys, 2001). There are many significant benefits of OCB for the individual as well as organization. Based on the conceptual work of Organ (1988), Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Moorman and Fetter (1990) found five dimensions of organizational citizenship behavior: They are "*Altruism*: Discretionary behavior on the part of employees that have the effect of helping a specific other with an organizationally relevant problem. *Conscientiousness*: Discretionary behaviors on the part of the employee that go well beyond the minimum role requirements of the organization in the areas of attendance, obeying rules and regulations, taking breaks, and so forth. *Sportsmanship*: Willingness of the employee to tolerate less than ideal circumstances without complaining to avoid complaining, petty grievances, railing against real or imagined slights, and making federal cases out of small potatoes. *Courtesy*: Discretionary behavior on the part of an individual aimed at preventing work related problems with others from occurring. *Civic virtue*: Behavior on the part of an individual that indicates that he/she responsibly participates in, is involved in, or is concerned about the life of the company".(Podsakoff et al., 1990, p.115).

On the other hand researchers and scholars in the area of organizational psychology, human resource management and organizational behavior have more often paid much attention on organizational justice perceptions (Cropanzano & Greenberg, 1997). Elovainio et al., (2005) have defined organizational justice as fairness and honest treatment to employees in the organization. Some other scholars Hubbel & Assad (2005) said that it is about the process of these outcome are fair or not. Cremer (2005) described that organizational justice is the important controlling aspect in all activities of any organizations.

The concept of organizational justice is been related with other important organizational variables such as

organizational citizenship, loyalty, motivation, organizational climate, job satisfaction, absenteeism, productivity and release (Forret & Love, 2008). Study done by Colquitt et al., (2001) have found that organizational justice perceptions strongly affect the attitude of workers. They stated that attitudes such as employee job satisfaction, turnover intentions, organizational commitment, and workplace behavior such as absenteeism and organizational citizenship behavior are found to be correlated with perception of justice in the work place. Engagement with organizational citizenship behaviors by employees are depending some preconditions (Williams & Zainuba, 2002). Aryee et al., (2002) stated that one of such pre condition is workers' perceptions of justice. It is about the decision and practices are fair and these perception create trust among the workers. So then trusted employees are also encouraged to engage in voluntary activities. Perception of justice in the workers may generate a state of mind with a positive attitude. This condition may in turn lead the workers to get engage in performing organizational citizenship behaviors (Williams, Pitre & Zainuba, 2000). Further, Rezaeian and Rahimi (2008) believes that to encourage citizenship behaviors we should find their backgrounds, manage and improve them. One of the important backgrounds which influence citizenship behavior is perceived organizational justice. According to Asgari et al.,(2008) when employee perceive justice practices they behave positively. Moorman(1991) emphasized that, organizational justice is regarding the organizational behaviors. Therefore, it make sense that justice perception has positive relationship with OCB.

Existing literature, has categorized the concept of organizational justice into three dimensions namely "distributive justice", "procedural justice", and "interactional justice" (Martinez-tur et al., 2006). The relationship between these dimensions of organizational justice and organizational citizenship behavior is extensively studied area and emphasized the importance of all forms of organizational justice for organizational effectiveness (Mehmet & Hasan, 2011; Parivash, 2012; Marzieh Heidari et al., 2012; Mohammad et al, 2011; Goudarzvand & Chegini, 2009). The first and foremost dimension of organizational justice identified is distributive justice which largely consider the employees' perception about the fairness perception of outcomes (Greenberg, 1987). For instance employee receiving monetary rewards from the organization (Ramamoorthy & Flood, 2004; Greenberg, 2006; Aryee et al., 2002). This was defined by Moorman (1991) as "the fairness of outcomes an employee receives such as pay and promotions". Wang et al, (2010) described that distributive justice justifies treatment on the basis of ethical and objective criteria among individual workers. As such benefits are distributed similarly among similar individuals and differently to different individuals. Distributive justice is established on the basis of equity theory (Hubbel & Chory-Assad, 2005; Blakely et al., 2005; Alder & Ambrose, 2005). Equity theory explains about the employees' judgments regarding the outcomes (for example, promotion, monetary rewards such as pay) the organization offer for their effort. Distributive justice is very important factor for any types of organizations for their effective function (Tang & Sarsfield-Baldwin, 1996). Therefore, it make sense that belief and trust of people to the fair distribution of outcome can motivate them to willingly engage in organizational citizenship behavior. Individuals with high degree of distributive justice perception will show dedication to the development of organizations, pay attention on their self development, and pay attention to their work. This situation may further boost the employees to exert more effort for the organizational effectiveness and may work more time voluntarily. When people perceive that they enjoy distributive justice they may feel that they are rewarded against their effort fairly for their extra effort which is a form of OCB. Since they are treated according to ethical and objective criteria it encourage them to perform more it may in the form of OCB. Therefore, it make sense that distributive justice has positive relationship with OCB.

Procedural justice is the workers' perception regarding fairness in rules and regulations or procedures which are applied in making decision that will direct the final outcome of the organization (Aryee et al., 2002; Byrne, 2005). Moorman (1991) defined it as "the fairness of the procedures used in determining employee outcomes". Leventhal (1976) stated that normally an individual's evaluations of allocation decisions are affected by both rewards and how rewards are prepared. Konovsky and Pugh (1994) concluded that there is a relationship between procedural justice and organizational citizenship behavior. Konovsky and Folger (1991) have found a significant relationship between the helping dimension of organizational citizenship behavior and procedural justice. Abu Elanain (2010) pointed out that a low level of organizational employees' perceptions of procedural justice and distributive justice will result in increased absenteeism rate, low performance, low loyalty and low citizenship behaviors. When people perceive that they are treated based on fair procedures in determining employee outcome employee may tend to show better performance such as OCB. Because employee may feel they are rewarded fairly based on their actual performance. Therefore, it make sense that procedural justice has positive relationship with OCB.

Interactional justice explain the unfair and fair treatment in the relationship. Therefore, it is considered as a key aspect in workplace settings (Martinez-Tur et al., 2006). Greenberg (1990) defined interactional justice as "the interpersonal treatment employees receive from decision makers and the adequacy with which the formal decision-making procedures are explained". Giap et al., (2005) found a positive relationship between interactional justice perception and citizenship behaviors. Individual's quality of interpersonal relations decides

on the level of perceptions of interactional justice. Therefore, the employees who have good interpersonal relations will engage OCBs such as helping others who are in need, obeying rules and regulations even at the absent of supervisors. Since OCB are behaviors that go beyond the role requirement employees may tend to engage less organizational citizenship behaviors when they experience unfair practices.

The existence of such relationship is based on the view that when employees regard their working environment based on justice and fairness, they will naturally behave in a friendly and politely manner with conscientiousness toward colleagues, customers and others. Moreover, if organizational citizenship behaviors are regarded as employees' inputs to the organization, their distributive perceived justice will lead to an alternation in these behaviors. Considering the importance of maintaining justice and fairness in education and the impact it might have on employees and especially teachers' performances, this study investigates the relationship between perception of organizational justice and organizational citizenship behavior among teachers. Many studies have found supports to the relationship between dimensions of justice perceptions and various forms of OCBs among various samples in different contexts (Moorman et al., 1993; Aquino, 1995; Farh et al., 1997; Moorman et al., 1998; Williams et al., 2002; Blakely et al., 2005; Giap et al., 2005; Chiaburu & Lim, 2008; Chegini, 2009, Young, 2010). But none of the study is done in the context of Sri Lanka. In this way, assessing the impact of organizational justice perception on OCB in Sri Lankan context can help to further understand the relationship between perception of justice and OCB.

On the basis of above discussion and literature review it can be hypothesized that perception of organizational justice has positive relationship with OCB in general and more specifically dimensions of justice perceptions distributive procedural and interactional justice have also positive relationship with OCB. Even though a number of scholars talked about the organizational justice and organizational citizenship behavior linking up with various other variables separately, only a few researches have been done examining these two variables together. Further such a study in Sri Lanka is not done yet as far the literature is concern. So, the aim of this study is to do a research in the context of Sri Lanka at national level and contribute to the international literature with findings from Sri Lanka. Through this study the researcher try to find out possible existence of any relationship between organizational justice and organizational citizenship.

## 2. Methods

The data for this study was collected from teachers employed in government schools in the eastern region of Sri Lanka. The 230 teachers from seven schools participated in this study. All the respondents participated voluntarily. The original questionnaire was in English and it was translated into Tamil for eradicating the language barrier of the respondents. Both male and female participated in this study. Participants ranged in age from 24 to 54 years, with a mean age of 35.5 years ( $SD=4.32$ ). The participants had an average of 8.21 years of tenure with their employing organization ( $SD=7.65$ ).

Data were gathered through a questionnaire. Questionnaire comprises of demographic variables, OCB scale and justice perception scale. Perceptions of distributive justice were measured with a five item scale developed by Neihoff and Moorman (1993). The extent of the agreement or disagreement of the respondents were indicated with each item on a scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). The reliability coefficient alpha for distributive justice was found as 0.81. Perceptions of procedural justice were measured with a scale developed by Neihoff and Moorman (1993). This scale has nine items and responded indicated their level of agreement using 5 points Likert scale. The alpha coefficient for this scale for distributive justice was 0.79 in this study. Perceptions of Interactional justice were measured using the scale developed by Moorman (1993) with nine items measuring the degree of interactional justice. They were also measured using five point Likert scale. The alpha coefficient for distributive justice was 0.83 in this study ensures the reliability and validity of the instrument used.

OCB was measured using Organizational citizenship behavior questionnaire developed and validated by Podsakoff et al., (1990). This questionnaire contains 24 questions with its 5 dimensions altruism (7 items), courtesy (2 items), sportsmanship (4 items), conscientiousness (7 items) and civic virtue (4 items). The questions were answered on a 5 point Likert scale (ranging from 1=strongly disagree, to 5 = strongly agree). The reliability coefficient for this variable was 0.87 in this study.

Data were screened to ensure normality. Test indicated that the variables did not depart from the normal distribution of the data. No multicollinearity was found by testing correlation matrix of the variables. The data were collected by self reporting. This may lead to a question about influence of common method variance on the results of this study. To investigate the possibility of common method variance one factor test was conducted and the results revealed that common method variance is not likely to be a serious threat to validity. Another reason is usually OCBs are not reported to others. It is only a personal choice of spontaneous behavior. Therefore, reporting on behaviors such as OCBs by the self report system is more valid than the others or other method of data triangulation.

To determine teachers' perceptions of organizational justice perception and organizational citizenship behavior

descriptive statistics such as mean and standard deviation of teachers' answers to organizational justice perception and organizational citizenship scales were estimated and Pearson correlation coefficients were calculated to find out the relationship between organizational justice and organizational citizenship behavior. Findings of employees perceptions of justice and organizational citizenship behavior are presented in the Table 1.

Table 1: Descriptive statistics of employee perception of organizational justice and organizational citizenship behavior.

Scores	n	Lowest score	Highest score	×	s
Perception of Organizational justice	230	2.00	4.61	3.06	0.43
Perception of Distributive Justice	230	1.00	4.69	3.04	0.44
Perception of Procedural Justice	230	1.00	4.72	3.11	0.47
Perception of Interactional Justice	230	1.00	4.57	3.14	0.41
Organizational citizenship behavior	230	1.00	4.55	3.42	0.43

According to the Table 1, when participants' perception of organizational justice are considered the score means of interactional justice ( $\times=3.14$ ) were higher than the score means of distributive justice ( $\times=3.04$ ). Therefore, this can be meant that participants' perceptions of organizational justice are positive. This implies that the interpersonal dealing with employees by decision makers are at high level. This also further implies that with which the formal decision-making procedures are explained satisfactorily in Sri Lankan schools. This is related with interpersonal interactions. Individuals focus not only on the procedures themselves they also focus on the treatments against them and explanations made during the practice of procedures.

The mean of teachers' perceptions of organizational citizenship behavior was 3.42. This implies that the level of perceptions of organizational citizenship behavior among Sri Lankan teachers are at moderate level. Therefore, this result also reveals that teachers tend to perform organizational citizenship behavior that are not expected part of their job descriptions and are completely discretionary. Relationship between teachers' perceptions of organizational justice and organizational citizenship behavior are presented in Table 2.

Table 2: Relationship between perception of justice and organizational citizenship behavior

	Organizational justice total score	Distributive justice total score	Procedural justice total score	Interactional justice total score
Organizational citizenship scale total score	0.34**	0.29**	0.37**	0.31**

\*\* $p<0.01$

According to the Table 2, a positive moderate significant relationship ( $r=0.34$ ,  $p<0.01$ ) is observed between teachers' perceptions of organizational justice and organizational citizenship behavior. Results of the study reveals when a positive increase is observed in the organizational justice perception a positive increase can be observed in the organizational citizenship behavior. Further the findings also suggested that 11% of the variance in organizational citizenship behavior is explained by the organizational justice perception ( $r^2=0.11$ ). Generally, moderate level of relationships were found in this study.

The Table 2 also shows that there is a general moderate level, positive and significant relationship ( $r=0.37$ ,  $p<0.01$ ) is observed between Sri Lankan teachers' perception of organizational procedural justice and organizational citizenship behavior. Hence, the findings reveals that when a positive procedural justice perception is observed an increase in organizational citizenship behavior also can be observed. This results also suggested that 12% of the variance in organizational citizenship behavior is explained by procedural justice perception ( $r^2=0.12$ ) of the Sri Lankan school teachers.

According to the results a positive and significant relationship ( $r=0.31$ ,  $p<0.01$ ) between Sri Lankan school teachers' perception of organizational justice and organizational citizenship behavior is observed. Hence, it is possible to conclude that when a positive interactional justice perception is increased an increase on organizational citizenship behavior also can be observed. It is also found that 9% of the variance in organizational citizenship behavior is explained by teachers' procedural justice perception ( $r^2=0.09$ ).

The results also provide evidence for a positive and significant relationship ( $r=0.29$ ,  $p<0.01$ ) between respondents' perception of organizational distributive justice and organizational citizenship behavior. Hence, it is possible to conclude that when distributive justice perception increases the perception of organizational citizenship behavior also increases. It is also found that 8% of the variance in organizational citizenship behavior is explained by distributive justice perception ( $r^2=0.08$ ). These findings are consistent with prior research (Williams et al.,2002; Moorman, 1991).

### 3. Findings and Conclusions

This study tested the relationships between perception of organizational justice and organizational citizenship behavior among a sample of school teachers' in Sri Lanka. First the researcher found the level of participants'

perceptions of organizational citizenship behavior and organizational justice. Results of this study revealed that school teachers' perceptions of organizational citizenship behavior and organizational justice were at moderate level. Further, the relationship between organizational justice and organizational citizenship behavior were found to be moderate, positive and significant. The findings implies that while there have been different findings of studies on organizational justice and organizational citizenship behavior, the possibilities of the individuals who have justice perception for their organizations to perform organizational citizenship behavior's are more. The reason for this is usually the behavior of any individual is affected by individuals' attitudes. Therefore, being aware about the factors that may influence employees' perception of justice is very crucial for every organization. Further, studying on organizational citizenship behavior among educational institutions are very important as employees have lot of scope for performing extra role to make effective functions of educational institutions. This is especially true for teacher who are key people in delivering their services and the scope for performing extra role is much more broader. These behaviors in turn will contribute to educations effectiveness in schools. Considering the findings of this study it is possible to recommend the educational institutions to increase the level of justice to increase their engagement in organizational citizenship behavior.

This current study suggest some areas for further research as a eradication of few limitation. The one important limitation is that the level of justice perceptions of the employees may be differ time to time. This situation suggest that studies on the same sample at different time may provide different results. Therefore, the conceptual and methodological issues related with issue should be addressed by future researchers for further understanding of this important organizational behavior. Because this area of research has been largely neglected, there are many avenues available for future research. The present study conducted only for school teachers in Sri Lanka. This could be extended into many more categories that will give a more realistic picture. The variation of degree of OCB with justice perception can be measured against demographic variables such as background of the employees and educational level. Another possibility is to conduct the same study for different sectors of the economy such as banking, insurance, manufacturing and finance companies to contribute to the literature.

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