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Organisational Justice and Psychological Well-Being of Employees in the Local Government Service of Osun State, Nigeria

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Abstract

An individual's perception of and reactions to fairness in an organisation, is fundamental to human psychological and social interaction. The feeling of justice, be it promotional decision, assignment of tasks, allocation of rewards are germane to the psychological well-being of employees. It is against this background that the research looks into organisational justice and psychological well-being of employees in the local government service of Osun State, Nigeria. The descriptive research design of the ex-post facto was used for the research. The population of this study consisted of staff of

the Ministry of Local Government and all employees of the thirty Local Government Councils in Osun State. A multi-stage sampling technique was used for the selection of the 317 respondents used for the research. The main instrument used for the study is a questionnaire tagged "Organisational Justice and Employees' Psychological Well-being Questionnaire (OJAEPWQ)" with four sub-sections namely Distributive Justice Scale (DJS), Procedural Justice Scale (PJS), Interactional Justice Scale (IJS), Psychological Wellbeing Scale (PWS) with reliability coefficient of 0.79, 0.90, 0.86 and 0.87 respectively. Two research questions and three hypotheses were analyzed using multiple regression analysis and Pearson Product Moment Correlation at 0.05 level of significance. Findings showed the joint contribution of the three independent variables to the prediction of the dependent variable is significant ($F_{(3, 313)} = 181.203$). The relative contribution of the three independent variables to the dependent variable, expressed as beta weights are Distributive justice ($\beta = .150$, $t=3.436$, $P<.05$), Procedural justice ($\beta = .247$, $t=5.537$, $P <.05$) and Interactional justice ($\beta = .511$, $t=10.305$, $P<.05$). Furthermore, it was revealed that there was a significant relationship between distributive justice and psychological well-being ($r=.583$, $n=317$, $P < .05$). There was a significant relationship between procedural justice and psychological well-being ($r=.643$, $n=317$, $P < .05$) and that there was a significant relationship between interactional justice and psychological well-being ($r = .760$, $n = 317$, $P < .05$). Based on the above findings it was recommended that managements in organisations should give room for justice in such a way that the psychological well-being of employees in terms of their thoughts, feelings, emotions, understanding, perception and interpersonal relations are protected among others.

Key Words: Procedural justice, Distributive justice, Interactional justice, Psychological well-being, Local government service

Introduction

The survival of any organisation depends largely on the individuals working with the organisation. The feeling, thinking, attitude and behaviour of these employees have a far reaching effect on whether the organisation will achieve its goals and objectives. The feelings of the employees and their perception of the organisation determine whether they will continue to work for the organisation or not. Bonn and Forbriger (2012) contended that as essential as the technical competence of employees is, it is not a sufficient condition for the success of an organisation. People as social beings require that organisations in which they work have to create settings for them so as to be able to interact socially. Therefore, one concept that is fundamental to human social interaction is feeling of justice, be it promotional decision, assignment of tasks, allocation of rewards or any other type of social exchange. Employees' perception of fairness in organisation settings also known as organisation justice, influence their attitude and behaviour, consequently, their intention to stay or quit

(Sharpe, 2006). Therefore, it is important for management to provide for organisational justice so as to help in the retention of good employees and guarantee their wellbeing.

The presence of justice in an organisation positively affects the psychological well-being of workers. For instance, distributive justice, which is appropriateness of outcomes, breeds 'equity', meaning rewarding employees based on their contributions; it also breeds 'equality' referring to providing each employee roughly the same compensation, therefore, equal treatment which raises group spirit (Cropanzano, Bowen & Gilliland, 2007); it also breeds 'need' meaning providing a benefit based on one's personal requirements, which in turn makes the employee to be very committed to the organisation (Tyler & Blader, 2000) and be psychologically fit for duty assigned. Furthermore, Perceived procedural justice which is appropriateness of allocation process in an organisation has a positive effect on the psycho-social well-being of employees (Folger, 2001). It emphasises, 'consistency', meaning that all employees are treated the same; it also emphasises 'lack of bias', stipulating that no person or group is singled out for discrimination or ill-treatment; then 'accuracy', indicating that decisions are based on accurate information; 'representation of all concerned', emphasising that appropriate stakeholders have input into a decision thereby workers' voice creates commitment to a decision by workers, and access creates a loyal ally, 'correction' stating that there is an appeal process or other mechanism for fixing mistakes, and 'ethics' stressing that norms of professional conduct are not violated (Folger, 2001, Ambrose & Arnaud, 2005).

In the same vein, perceived interactional justice means appropriateness of the treatment one receives from authority figures in treating an employee with dignity, courtesy, and respect. Informational justice indicates sharing relevant information with employees, increases intrinsic motivation within employees, confidence, perceived growth, autonomy and competence thereby establishing healthy relationship in professional and personal life (Greenberg, 1993). In other words, perception of interactional justice promotes positive attitudes of job satisfaction, commitment and trust, which in turn breeds healthy and constructive professional and inter-personal behaviour (Sheppard, Lewicki, & Minton, 2002; Storey, 2000).

On the other hand, perceived injustice (absence of justice) in an organisation negatively affects the psycho-social well-being of employees (Robin, 2012). In as much as employees are not rewarded according to their contributions, each employee is not provided roughly the same compensation, all employees are not treated the same, a single worker or group is discriminated or maltreated at the expense of others, work decisions are not based on accurate information, appropriate stake-holders are not allowed to have input into a decision, there is no appeal process for addressing mistakes and above all, employees are not treated with dignity, courtesy and respect, their job performance, job satisfaction, attitudes, work moods,

job involvement and behaviours will be adversely affected (Robin, 2012). Therefore, justice sets the tone for an organisation. Unfair treatment undermine the effectiveness of the best programmes, policies and services which were intended to support the workforce, thereby creating more stress, which lowers employees' well-being. For instance, an imbalance between effort and reward is a significant contributor to burnout and emotional distress leading to a range of psycho-social and physical disorders (Gopanzano & Stein, 2009). Also, if employees do not believe they have a voice in the affairs of the organisation, they tend to feel a sense of indifference or helplessness. Job alienation or non-involvement is associated with cynicism and distress, greater turnover, and burnout (Robin, 2012, Cropanzano et al., 2007). So, organizational justice is perceived from distributive, procedural and interactional justice.

Over the years in Nigeria, and in particular the employees of the local government have nurtured grudges as to the way and manner by which managers or/and supervisors deal with them as regards inappropriateness of outcomes (distributive justice), inappropriateness of the allocation process (procedural justice) and inappropriateness of treatment of workers by authority figures (interactional justice) has made them experience psychological distress leading to depression, anxiety, irritability, emotional exhaustion and disengagement from fell ow workers.

It is of paramount importance to look into how the three components of organizational justice will affect the psychological welling of employees. Since organisational justice is a major concern for many employees because it affects their daily lives and psychological well-being at the workplace, employees are now concerned about the fairness of resource distributions such as pay, promotions, and rewards (Colquitt, Greenberg, & Zapata-Phelan, 2005). Besides resource distributions, employees are also concerned about the decision making procedures that lead to the outcomes and the interpersonal treatment received from authorities in the organisations (Colquitt et al., 2005). Therefore, the promotion of justice at the workplace is important to ensure that the needs of its employees are met with fairness and adequately guarantee psychological well-being.

Researchers have shown how perceived organisational injustice has adversely affected the psychological and social well-being of employees, as well as the negative responses of the employees to such injustice. For instance, perceived unfairness from a supervisor and coworker erode an employee's self-esteem and cause a feeling of personal deprivation that culminates in aggressive reactions (Fortado, 2001; Neuman, 2000). This means that an employee suffering from negative emotions can easily be induced to aggress on members in the workplace. Procedural justice has been found to positively associate with the cognitive, affective and behavioural reactions at workplace, and enhances employees' psychological wellbeing with reputation feeling

of life satisfaction by the employees (Elovainio, Kivimaki & Vahtera, 2002). For instance, Neuman and Baron (1997) revealed that injustice at workplace, be it procedural or distributive injustice, prompt employees to engage in workplace aggressive behaviours such as harming coworkers or the organization in which he/she is employed. Workplace aggression, poor psychological well-being, is rapidly becoming a workplace malady owing to unfairness at the workplace (Aitkinson, 2000; LeBlanc & Kelloway, 2002; Namie, 2003). Workplace aggression is believed to impact heavily on employees' psychological well-being in terms of diminished job satisfaction and self-confidence, disruption of career and burnout (Salin, 2003; Vartia, 2001; Wahl, 2002). Furthermore, Turnley and Feldman (1999) showed that employees reacted to dissatisfaction especially to organizational injustice at the workplace by engaging in exit behaviours such as leaving the organisation, withdrawal behaviours like reducing their efforts, voice behaviours such as filing a grievance as well as loyalty behaviours like ignoring or trying to rationalise the injustice. Also, employees in a way of recompensing themselves for perceived unfair treatment at the workplace, venture into theft by stealing from the company, they also waste company materials, take erroneous sick days, disobey instructions and spend time on personal matters at work (Skarlicki & Folger, 1997). Perceived interactional injustice provides the motivation for employees to support (or perhaps engage in) violence as a form of redressing unfairness in the workplace (Kennedy, Homant, & Homant, 2004).

Over the past years, the significance of insights of justice has been emphasized for employees' psycho-social well-being (Loi, Hang-yue, & Foley, 2006; Colquitt, et al., 2001). Perceived procedural and/or distributive unfairness at the workplace are associated with lower psychological well-being and other forms of psychological and social distress (van Der Doef, & Maes, (1999), and significantly impact employee well-being (Noblet, 2003). Therefore, perceived injustices at the workplace adversely affect the psycho-social well-being of employees which in turn breeds higher absenteeism among employees (Gimeno, Benavides, Benach, & Martinez 2004). Thus, the effect of organisational justice on employees' psycho-social well-being determines an employee's attitude towards the organization. In order to keep employees satisfied, committed, and loyal to the organisation, it needs to be fair in its system of distributive, procedural, and interactional justice (Kumar, Bakhshi, & Rani, 2009).

In Nigeria situation, employees, especially in the local government, the perceived absence of organizational justice have negatively affected the psychological well-being of staff of local government establishment in terms of their thoughts, feelings, emotions, understanding, perception and interpersonal relationships. Often, there is a desire from them to name and blame persons, procedure or system they believed to be at fault. In an attempt to react to the injustice, dissatisfying employees engage in the exhibition of behaviours like stealing as a way of recompensing themselves for their disproportionately low gains, redressing unfairness

by wasting company materials, taking erroneous sick days, disobeying instructions and spending time on personal matters at work. Therefore, the problem of this study is to investigate the relationship between organizational justice and the psychological well-being of employees in the local government service of Osun State, Nigeria. To this end, the following research questions and hypotheses are raised for the research work.

Research Questions

1. What is the joint effect of the independent variables (Distributive Justice, Procedural Justice and Interactional Justice) on psychological well-being of the respondents?
2. What is the relative contribution of independent variables (Distributive Justice, Procedural Justice and Interactional Justice) on psychol ogical well-being of the respondents?

Hypotheses

Ho1: There is no significant relationship between distributive justice and psychological well-being of employees.

Ho.2: There is no significant relationship between procedural justice and psychological well-being of employees.

Ho.3:There is no significant relationship between interactional justice and psychologi cal well-being of employees.

Methodology

Research Design

The descriptive research design of the *ex-post facto* was used for the research. The method presents a description of event as they were and the variables were not manipulated. The design also enhanced easy collection of factual information about the research problems.

Population

The population of this study consists of all staff at the Ministry of Local Government at the State Head Quarter in the State Secretariat and all employees of the thirty Local Government Councils in Osun State, Nigeria.

Sample and Sampling Technique

A multi-stage sampling technique was used for the research. The state was clustered into the three political senatorial divisions of Osun Central, Osun West and Osun East. Purposive sampling technique was used to select a local government from

each of the three political senatorial districts in Osun State been one of the first set of created local government in Osun State, Nigeria. The selected local governments are Osogbo Local Government (Osun Central), Iwo Local Government (Osun West) and Ife Central Local Government (Osun East). From the selected units (ministry and three local government staff), the staff were clustered into senior, middle, and junior cadres. From each cluster, thirty respondents were randomly selected to give a total of three hundred and sixty respondents.

Instrumentation

The main instrument used for the study is a questionnaire tagged "Organisational Justice and Employees' Psychological Well-being Questionnaire (OJAEPWQ)" with four sub-sections namely Distributive Justice Scale (DJS), Procedural Justice Scale (PJS), Interactional Justice Scale (IJS), Psychological Wellbeing Scale (PWS) with a responding format of a 4-point rating scale ranging from strongly agree (SA) = 4 to strongly disagree (SD) = 1.

Distributive Justice Scale (DJS): The instrument consists of 10 items measuring employees' perceptions of distributive justice. The items were adapted from Al-Zu'bi (2010); Usmani, & Jamal, (2013) Distributive Justice Scales. The revalidated scale had reliability coefficient of 0.79.

Procedural Justice Scale (PJS): The instrument consists of 10 items adapted from Al-Zu'bi (2010); Usmani, & Jamal, (2013) to measure the employees' perceptions of procedural justice. The revalidated scale had reliability coefficient of 0.90.

Interactional Justice Scale (IJS): The instrument consists of 10 items measuring the perceptions of the employees on interactional justice. The items were drawn from Al-Zu'bi, (2010); Usmani, & Jamal, (2013) scales. The revalidated scale had reliability coefficient of 0.86.

Psychological Well-being Scale (PSWS): The instrument contains 10 items adopted from the psychological well-being scale developed by Ryff and Keyes (1995). The revalidated scale had reliability coefficient of 0.87.

Instrument Administration

Permission was sort and got from Local Government Service Commission before the administration of questionnaire on the employees of the local government. The instruments were personally administered by the researcher and the research assistants at the designated centres. Out of three-hundred and sixty (360) questionnaires administered, three hundred and seventeen (317), 88.1% were properly filled and used for data analysis.

Method of Data Analysis

The data were analysed using simple percentages for demographic characteristic of the respondents while the research questions and hypotheses were analyzed using multiple regression analysis and Pearson Product Moment Correlation at 0.05 level of significance.

Results

Demographic characteristics: Of the three hundred and seventeen respondents, findings from the study showed that 174 (54.9%) were male and 143(45.1) were female. The ages of the respondents ranged between 17 and 65 years with a mean age of 27.6 years. 84 (25.5%) were junior staff, 170 (53.6%) were middle level while 63 (19.9%) were management level. 196(61.8%) respondents had higher and first degrees qualifications, 61(19.2%) had secondary school certificates, 39(12.3%) had first school leaving certificate and 21(6.6%) had no formal education. The implication is that most of the respondents are literate and could understand the questionnaire properly. The minimum work experience of respondent is 3 years, hence the issue of organisational justice is familiar to them.

Research Question 1: What is the joint effect of the independent variables (Distributive Justice, Procedural Justice and Interactional Justice) on Psychological Well-being of the respondents?

Table 1: Multiple Regression analysis showing the joint effect of independent variables (Distributive Justice, Procedural Justice and Interactional Justice) on psychological well-being of the respondents

R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate			
.797	.634	.631	3.04772			
A N O V A						
Model	Sum of Squares	DF	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Remark
Regression	5049.351	3	1683.117	181.203	.000	Sig.
Residual	2907.324	313	9.289			
Total	7956.675	316				

Table 1 shows the joint contribution of the three independent variables to the prediction of the dependent variable i.e. psychological well-being. The table also shows a coefficient of multiple correlation of .797, R^2 of .634 and adjusted R^2 of .631. This means that 63% of the variance was accounted for by three predictor variables when

taken together. The significance of the composite contribution was tested at $P < .05$. The table also shows that the analysis of variance for the regression yielded F-ratio of 181.203 (significant at 0.05 level). This implies that the joint contribution of the independent variables (distributive, procedural and interactional justice) to the dependent variable (psychological well-being) was significant and that other variables not included in this model may have accounted for the remaining variance.

Research Question 2: What is the relative contribution of independent variables (Distributive Justice, Procedural Justice and Interactional Justice) on psycho logical well-being of the respondents?

Table 2: Multiple Regression analysis showing the relative contribution of independent variables (Distributive Justice, Procedural Justice and Interactional Justice) on psycho-social well-being of the respondents

Model	Unstandardized Coefficient		Stand. Coefficient	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta Contribution		
(Constant)	.158	1.387	.150	.114	.910
Distributive Justice	.171	.050	.247	3.436	.001
Procedural Justice	.284	.051	.511	5.537	.000
Interactional Justice	.550	.053		10.305	.000

Table 2 reveals the relative contribution of the three independent variables to the dependent variable, expressed as beta weights, viz: Distributive Justice (β = .150, t=3.436, P<.05), Procedural Justice (β = .247, t=5.537, P <.05) and Interactional Justice (β = .511, t=10.305, P<.05). This showed that all the three dimensions of organizational justice have significant predictive values of psychological well-being of local government employees starting with interactional justice, followed by procedural justice and finally distributive justice.

Hypotheses Testing

Ho$_1$: There is no significant relationship between distributive justice and psychological well-being of employees.

Table 3: Pearson Product Moment Correlation showing the significant relationship between distributive justice and psychological well-being of employees

Variable	Mean	Std. Dev.	N	R	P	Remark
Distributive Justice	31.2713	4.40392	317	.583	.000	Sig
Psychological Well-being	30.4574	5.01790				

It is shown in the above table that there was significant relationship between distributive justice and psychological well-being (r=.583, n=317, P <.05). The result shows that distributive justice influenced the psycho-social well-being of employees. Hence, the null hypothesis is rejected.

Ho 2: There is no significant relationship between Procedural Justice and psychological well-being of employees

Table 4: Pearson Product Moment Correlation showing the significant relationship between procedural justice and psychological well-being of employees

Variable	Mean	Std. Dev.	N	R	P	Remark
Procedural justice	28.4574	4.36712	317	.643	.000	Sig
Psychological Well-being	30.4574	5.01790				

It is shown in the above table that there was significant relationship between procedural justice and psychological well-being (r = .643, n = 317, P < .05). The result shows that procedural justice influenced the psycho-social well-being of employees. Thus, the null hypothesis is rejected.

Ho 3: There is no significant relationship between interactional justice and psychological well-being of employees.

Table 5: Pearson Product Moment Correlation showing the significant relationship between interactional justice and psychological well-being of employees

Variable	Mean	Std. Dev.	N	r	P	Remark
Interactional Justice	30.6215	4.65675	317	.760	.000	Sig
Psychological Well-being	30.4574	5.01790				

It is shown in the above table that there was significant relationship between interactional justice and psychological well-being (r = .760, n = 317, P < .05). The result shows that interactional justice influenced the psycho-social well-being of employees. Thus, the null hypothesis is rejected.

Discussion of Findings

From Tables 1 and 2 it is clear that perception of justice at the workplace (especially in local government settings) plays a significant role in determining the six phases of well-being (autonomy, self-acceptance, environmental mastery, developing healthy relationship with others, feeling of growth and making life more meaningful) which in combination constitutes the psychological well-being. This is in consonance with the finding of Rani, Garg and Rastogi (2012) that there is significant and positive relationship between organizational justice and psychological wellbeing.

The result from Table 3 that distributive justice influenced the psycho-social well-being of employees corroborates the finding of Fortado, (2001) and Neuman, (2000) that perceived unfairness from a supervisor eroding an employee's self-esteem or cause a feeling of personal deprivation that may culminate in aggressive reactions (poor psychological well-being). This means that an employee suffering from negative emotions can easily be induced to aggress on members in the workplace. Also, the above finding is in line with the finding of Gimeno, Benavides,Benach, and Martinez, (2004) that perceived injustices at the workplace adversely affect the psychological well-being of employees which in turn breeds higher absenteeism among employees. Furthermore, the above result corroborates the finding of Colquitt, Greenberg and Zapata-Phelan, (2005) that employees show more positive attitude and behavior towards their work if they feel they are treated impartially by their organization. It is therefore inferred from the finding that decision makers must always give special attention to issues like safeguarding the psychological well-being of workers,

allocating monetary resources, hiring employees in organisations, policy making and its implications in respect of justice as they affect other people in the organisation.

The result in Table 4 is supported by the findings of Doef and Maes (1999); Noblet (2003) that perceived procedural unfairness at the workplace are associated with other forms of psychological and social distress which significantly impact employee well-being. The above finding is in line with the finding of Escriba-Aguir and Tenias-Burillo, (2004) that jobs characterized by high psychological demands and low social support have a negative impact on employees mental health, vitality and burnout, coupled with anxiety, stress and depression. The result above, also corroborates the findings of Kim and Mauborgne, (1998) that when decision-making processes are perceived to be fair, employees show high level of voluntary cooperation based on commitment and trust. Whereas they show resistance in executing strategic decisions and refuse to cooperate when they feel that the processes are unfair.

The result in Table 5 is in tandem with the findings of Kennedy, Homant, and Homant, (2004) that perceived interactional injustice provides the motivation for employees to support or perhaps engage in violence as a form of redressing unfairness in the workplace, an employee who is involved in interpersonal conflict with coworkers and supervisor is likely to engage in harmful behaviours directed at other employees and the organisation. Furthermore, the finding is buttressed by the finding of Turnley and Feldman, (1999) that employees react to dissatisfaction in the workplace by engaging in exit behaviours, withdrawal behaviours, voice behaviours, loyalty behaviours (all psychological behaviours) by rationalising the injustice that emanate from organisation.

Implications of the Findings for Industrial Social Work

1. Industrial social workers should ensure that every individual employee receives fairness in the workplace, so as to make him/her experience adequate psychological well-being and develop a positive attitude towards the organization.
2. Industrial social workers should allow managers realise that organisational justice is a serious issue for many employees because it affects their daily lives in the workplace because employees are concerned about the fairness of resource distributions such as pay, promotions, and rewards, besides resource distributions.
3. Since employees are concerned about the decision-making procedures that lead to the outcomes and the interpersonal treatment received from authorities in the organisations, employers, managers / supervisors, social workers and other stakeholders should make adequate provisions for promotion of justice at the organisations in order to ensure that the psychological wellness of their employees are met with fairness.

4. Industrial social workers should ensure that there is adequate provision for ideal channel to approach injustice by the employees in the workplace in order to enhance their life satisfaction which will make them experience autonomy, environmental mastery, feel accepted, grow personally and maintain healthy and positive relationships within the organisation as well as in personal domains.

5. Industrial social workers should design interventions that will protect to a large extent the psycho-social well-being of employees as well as redesigning related variables in the workplace like task autonomy, task variety and workloads in order to facilitate life satisfaction of employees.

Recommendations

1. Organisational managements should give room for justice in such a way that the psychological well-being of employees in terms of their thoughts, feelings, emotions, understanding, perception and interpersonal relations are safeguarded to facilitate their stay in such workplace.

2. Managers or supervisors should always treat the employees with respect; politeness and dignity in the workplace to enable them have a sense of belonging and therefore contribute up to their maximum fullest.

3. Employees should be made to feel that they are treated impartially by their organisation in every aspect. Decision makers must always give special attention to issues like safeguarding the psychological and social well-being of workers, allocating monetary resources, policy-making in respect of justice as they affect employees in the organisation. This will make employees show more positive attitude and behaviour towards their work.

Conclusion

For organisations to achieve desired goals there is the need to keep employees satisfied, functional at their duty posts and committed. Hence, there is the need to be fair in the distributive justice, procedural justice and interactional justice so that employees will perceive workplace procedures, interactions and outcomes to be fair in nature. It can be concluded that when fairness is positively perceived in an organization, the psychological and social well-being of employees will be greatly enhanced. It is imperative therefore that organisational justice should be vehemently pursued in workplace in order to guarantee the sustanance of organization and the employees.

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