

GENDER DIFFERENCES IN THE PERCEPTION OF ORGANISATIONAL JUSTICE AMONG SELECTED EMPLOYEES IN LAGOS STATE

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ABSTRACT

Organisations across the globe have had to contend with equity issues stimulated by the changing work demography. Such issues are very sensitive and can impact negatively on organisational outcomes. This study examined the differences in male and female employees' perception of organisational justice and affective commitment among employees in Lagos State. The ex-post facto design and the systematic random sampling technique were adopted in this study. A questionnaire was administered to three hundred and fifty-nine (359) employees between the ages of 19 and 59 years. Forty-two percent (42%) of the participants were males; fifty-six percent (56%) were females while the remaining two percent (2%) did not indicate their gender. Telecom staff accounted for 16% of the total sample, while teachers, health workers and bankers accounted for 28% each. Two hypotheses were raised and tested using t-test. The result revealed a significant difference between male and female perception of overall organisational justice and a significant difference in male and female perception of the dimensions of organisational justice: procedural justice and interactional justice. There was no significant difference in perception of distributive justice by male and female respondents. Consequently, findings from this study tend to suggest that gender has a significant effect on employees' perception of organisational justice, with male having better perception of justice than their female counterparts. It was recommended that fairness in reward allocation, procedures and interpersonal treatment be ensured and made transparent to both male and female employees.

Keywords: Gender, Differences, Perception, Organisational, Justice, Employees.

INTRODUCTION

In today's highly competitive and dynamic business environment, organisations require the services of resourceful and committed men and women for their survival and relevance. However, employees' commitment to the achievement of set organisational goals may be influenced by perceived justice in organisation's procedure and allocation of resources. Where there is no justice, problems such as intentional turnover, poor performance, absenteeism etc. prevails Omonijo et al. (2015). Therefore, justice is one critical factor in human existence that influences the way people behave or react in diverse contexts including the workplace.

Perception of justice in workplace policies and procedures underlies many employee behaviours and work attitudes (Omonijo et al., 2019). In corroboration, Owolabi (2012) affirmed that perceived injustice can exert negative influence on employees' job attitudes and behaviours. Perceived organisational justice is the construct used to describe employees' perception of fairness in the procedure and distribution of resources in an organisation. Perceived organisational justice is characterised by absolute fairness in the procedures and allocation of resources, decision making and interpersonal relationship between employees and management of organisation (Colquitt, 2001).

Although studies have found perceived organisational justice to be linked with employee satisfaction and positive work attitudes (Moorman, 1991; Organ & Moorman, 1993, Hassan, 2002); other studies suggested the possibility of gender differences in job-related perceptions (Siguaw & Huneycutt, 1995; Piercy et al., 2001; Miao & Kim, 2009). According to Mathieu & Zajac (1990), gender may exert significant influence on employees' work attitudes and perceptions. Furthermore, past studies have noted that men and women use different parameters to appraise work. In other words, gender differences affect the way individuals view and interpret work (Suki & Suki, 2011). It appears each employee's devotion to the overall success of the organisation is based on his/her perception of fairness in the procedure and distribution of organisational resources. Presently, there is paucity of empirical evidence on the effect of gender on perception of organisational justice. These assertions necessitate empirical investigation of the influence of gender on employees' perception of organisational justice (Figure 1).

Statement of Objectives

- i. To establish the influence of gender on overall perceived organisational justice
- ii. To ascertain the influence of gender on the separate dimensions of perceived organisational justice

Research Hypotheses

H_1 *There will be no significant difference in male and female perception of organisational justice.*

H_2 *Male and female will significantly differ in separate dimensions of perceived organisational justice.*

LITERATURE REVIEW

Gender

The word gender refers to the socially acceptable terminology for classifying the attributes of men and women (Momsen, 2009). Crawford & Unger (2004) metaphorically described gender as a kind of performance in which the actors must learn their lines and cues. There are different expectations of the roles and rights of men and women in varying contexts. Traditionally, women are considered to be weaker and inferior to men; they are socialized to be submissive and content with whatever they are offered. In many contexts, women are treated as second class citizens in men's world. Darwin (1874) cited in Hergenbahn & Henley (2013), considered women to be intellectually inferior to men.

Several researches have been conducted to identify peculiar behaviours associated with men and women. From findings, there seem to be a general consensus on the behavioural expectation of men and women. Behaviours attributed to women are such that reflect kindness, affection, cooperation, gentleness and weakness. On the other hand, behaviours attributed to men

are those that depict strength, bravery, dominance and aggression among others (Spence & Helmreich, 1980). Kite (2001) asserted that men and women discharge their duties in the workplace in line with gender role stereotypes. According to Crawford & Unger (2004), roles conferring authority and power are played by men while women occupy subordinate positions. This explains why direct disagreement by a woman tends to evoke more overt expressions of hostility or tension than the same behaviour by a man.

Perceived Organisational Justice

Perceived organisational justice may refer to employees' subjective evaluation of fairness in organisation's policies, procedures, interactions and allocation of resources Olowookere et al., (2020). Perceived organisational justice was further divided into subsections that included: distributive justice, procedural justice, interpersonal justice and informational justice (Colquitt, 2001; Golparvar & Rafizadeh, 2010). Distributive justice refers to perception of fairness in the allocation of organisational resources and outcomes. This dimension of organisational justice is associated with the equity theory proposed by Adams (1965). The equity theory suggested that employees focus more on the fairness in the allocation procedures than the quantity of rewards received. Distributive justice involves fairness in the allocation of various categories of organisational resources and outcomes such as pay, recognition, performance appraisal, punishments and sanctions (Folger & Cropanzano, 1998).

The concept of procedural justice budded from the research findings generated by Thibaut and Walker (1975) on the ways persons reacted to dispute resolution procedures. Procedural justice describes the perception of fairness in the procedure used to determine the distribution of rewards (Robins, 2001). According to Cohen-Charash & Spector (2001), it is very unusual to produce fair outcomes from unfair procedures. Likewise, Rezaeian (2005) observed that individuals' reaction to fairness in organisational procedures is based on their perception of fairness rather than the actual presence of fairness in the procedures. Cropanzano et al. (2002) noted a link between procedural justice and interactional justice. Also, Tyler and Bies (1990) concluded that employees' perception of procedural justice affects interpersonal relationships and perception of interactional justice within organisations.

Bies & Moag (1986) described the concept of interactional justice as the social dimension of procedures. It is concerned with perceived fairness in the treatment employees receive from management as regards information, decision making and organisational procedures (Hassan, 2002). Studies have reported an association between interactional justice and employees' attitude towards their superiors (Malatesta & Byrne, 1997; Masterson et al., 2000). Interactional justice was subsequently split into two subdivisions which are interpersonal justice and informational justice (Greenberg, 1990 & 1993). Interpersonal justice focused on the perception of fairness in employee acceptance, recognition, appreciation and esteem. Interpersonal relationship also describes fairness in social interactions as perceived by employees. Equally, informational justice is concerned with fairness in information sharing as regards decision making, procedures, and distribution of resources (Ishak & Alam, 2009).

Gender and Perceived Organisational Justice

The fact that one is male or female has been theorised to affect the importance attached to the different dimensions of justice (Tata & Bowes-Sperry, 1996). Studies have also found gender to determine behavioural expectations, perceptions and interpretations (Cooper & Lewis, 1995; Willians & Best, 1982). Owolabi (2012) found that male and female employees did not

significantly differ their perception of organisational justice. Gbadamosi & Nwosu (2011) also reported no significant gender difference in employees' reaction to perceived organisational justice while Simpson & Kaminski (2007) found that women significantly ranked distributive justice higher in order of priorities, and procedural justice lower compared with men. However, no significant gender difference was found in the ranking of interactional justice.

CONCEPTUAL MODEL

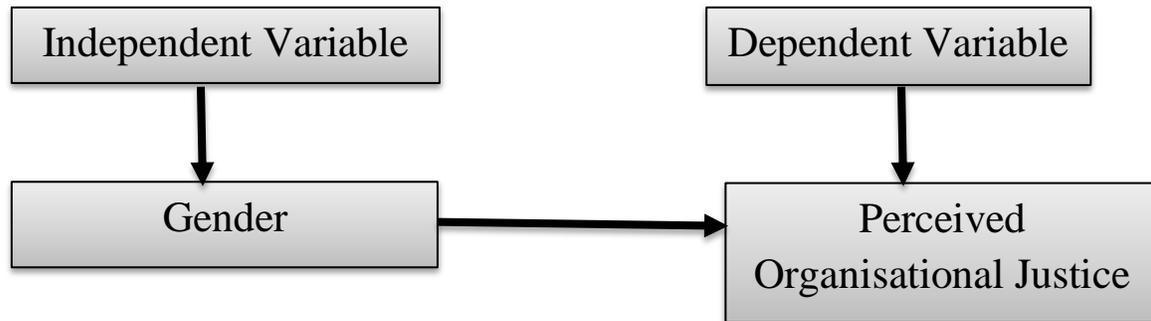


FIGURE 1
A CONCEPTUAL MODEL OF THE INFLUENCE OF GENDER ON PERCEIVED ORGANISATIONAL JUSTICE

METHOD

This study employed the ex-post facto design. The study participants were non-managerial employees selected from seventeen (17) service-oriented organisations in Lagos State. One hundred and fifty-one (151) out of the total of three hundred and fifty-nine (359) participants were male, two hundred and one were females and the remaining seven (7) did not specify their gender. The ages of these participants ranged between 19 and 59 years. Systematic sampling technique as the research design and sampling technique respectively

The 20-item Organisational Justice Scale (OJS) developed by Colquitt (2001) was used as the measure of perceived organisational justice. The scale has three sub-scales that included distributive (4 items), procedure (7 items) and interactional (9 items). The items were scored on a scale of 5 to 1, where, To a very large extent=5, To a large extent=4, To some extent=3, To a low extent=2, To a very low extent=1. The Cronbach alpha for distributive justice dimension, procedural justice dimension and interactional justice dimension were 0.86, 0.86 and 0.89 respectively. Gender was measured as specified by the participants in the demographic section of the questionnaire.

RESULTS & DISCUSSION

As presented in Table 1, the three hundred and fifty-nine (359) employees that participated in this study were between 19 to 59 years old. One hundred and fifty-one (42%) of the participants were male; two hundred and one (56%) were female while the remaining seven (2%) did not specify their gender.

Table 1 showed the composition of the study respondents; and served as the basis for the hypotheses raised and tested. The results are as follows:

H₁ There will be no significant difference in male and female perception of organisational justice

Gender	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Male	151	42
Female	201	56
Not indicated	7	2

This hypothesis was tested and confirmed using t-test for independent samples. The result in Table 2 revealed a significant difference in male and female perception of overall organisational justice [$t(350) = 2.402, P < .05$]. From the mean comparison, males ($\bar{X} = 71.7$) had better perception of organisational justice than females ($\bar{X} = 67.8$). The implication of this is that more males perceived fairness in interpersonal relations, communication, procedure and allocation of resources in their organisations more than the females.

H_2 Male and female will significantly differ in separate dimensions of perceived organisational justice.

The result in Table 2 revealed that males ($\bar{X} = 24.3$) scored higher on the procedural justice dimension [$t(350) = 2.435, P < .05$] than females ($\bar{X} = 22.7$). Also when compared on interactional justice, males ($\bar{X} = 32.7$) were found to report greater level of the dimension [$t(350) = 1.947, P = .05$] than their female counterparts ($\bar{X} = 31.3$). By implication, male employees perceived greater fairness in organisational procedures and interactions than female employees. However, the result revealed no significant difference in males' ($\bar{X} = 14.7$) and females' ($\bar{X} = 14.1$) perception of distribution justice [$t(350) = 1.612, P > .05$]. This implies that male and female employees reported almost the same perception of distributive justice; although males insignificantly had better perception of this dimension.

Variables	N	\bar{X}	SD	Df	t	P
OJSTOTAL						
Male	151	71.7	13.233	350	2.402	<0.05
Female	201	67.81	16.3			
OJSD						
Male	151	14.72	3.264	350	1.612	>0.05
Female	201	14.1	3.762			
OJSP						
Male	151	24.34	5.765	350	2.435	<0.05
Female	201	22.79	6.039			
OJSI						
Male	151	32.79	6.599	350	1.947	=0.05
Female	201	31.28	7.621			

Note: OJSTOTAL= Organisational Justice; OJSD= Distributive Justice; OJSP= Procedural Justice; OJSI=Interactional Justice

The current study found male employees to perceive greater fairness in procedural justice and interactional justice than their female counterparts. On the contrary, Ansari et al. (2016) found that female employees had higher perception of all the dimensions of organizational justice than their male counterparts. Also, Wan & Chan (2018) found that male casino dealers

reported higher perception of distributive and procedural injustices than the females. And that female dealers reported higher perception of interactional injustice than their male counterparts.

Gender differences in perception of organisational justice may be similar across the different sectors of the economy. Although the current study focused on service sector, similar experiences may be expected in the manufacturing, transportation, commercial and even agricultural sector. Some of these sectors are male dominated; therefore female penetration of such terrain will attract some kind of resistance. For instance, access to funding facilities and other benefits may not be evenly distributed between male and female participants.

The current study found no significant gender difference in distributive justice among service sector employees. Females across sectors seem to be more concerned about the fairness in procedures for resource allocation and interpersonal treatment received than the actual amount of resource allotted to them. On the other hand, male employees may pay closer attention to pay equity than female employees as a result to gender stereotypes. This assumption was supported by Khoreva & Tenhiälä (2016) who reported that male employees showed more concern for pay inequity than female employees, and that the demonstration of organizational commitment was very much linked to procedural justice for females than for males. However, Ramamoorthy & Stringer (2017) compared male and female employees on distributive justice perceptions and organisational commitment and found that females in some instances reported greater equity perceptions than males and responded with greater affective and normative commitments.

Males' perception of greater organisational justice in the current study implied that females' do not perceive much fairness in organisational procedures and interaction. By implication, females are not particular with fairness in the outcome they received but the procedure involved and the treatment received from the organisation. The current findings buttressed this claim in the sense that males and females were not significantly different in their perception of distributive justice.

CONCLUSIONS

This study concluded that gender has a significant effect on employees' perception of organisational justice, with male having better perception of justice than their female counterparts. The insignificant gender difference in the perception of distributive justice may be linked to the current economic hardship and the quest for survival by members of both genders. According to Darwin (1874) cited in Hergenhahn & Henley (2013), environmental changes because species to develop capabilities that would enable them adapt to and survive in the changing environment. Gender stereotype notwithstanding, women have learned to combine the traditional roles of a home maker with that of a bread winner; and to compete favourably for scarce organisational resources even with their male counterparts. This is a case of the survival of the fittest.

Recommendations

Therefore, it was recommended that since female employees are as important to organisational success as their male counterparts, fairness in reward allocation, procedures and interpersonal treatment should be ensured and made transparent to both male and female employees.

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