

Influence of Distributive Justice Perceptions on Commitment of employees in Health Sector Non-Governmental Organizations in Kenya

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Abstract: *The purpose of this study was to investigate the influence of distributive justice perceptions on organizational commitment of employees working with Health Non-Governmental Organizations in Kenya. The study adopted descriptive and correlational research designs with a statistical sample of 195 employees responsible for key result areas in 17 health sector non-governmental organizations. Data was collected using a structured questionnaire. Distributive justice perceptions were measured using Colquitt's model while organizational commitment was measured through Meyer's three component model comprising of affective, continuance and normative commitment. Survey data was analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics with the aid of IBM Statistical package for social sciences (SPSS) version 20 for descriptive statistics and factor analysis and Stata version 12.0 for hypotheses testing using ordered logistic regression technique. Qualitative data was analyzed through the use of questionnaires. Results of the study show a low positive significant relationship between distributive justice perceptions and affective commitment (Pseudo $R^2 = 0.0388$) and normative commitment (Pseudo $R^2 = 0.0593$). The study recommends that Health NGOs promote just work practices in order to benefit more from a committed workforce.*

Keywords: *Organizational justice, Distributive Justice, Organizational Commitment, Affective Commitment, Continuance Commitment, Normative Commitment.*

1. Introduction

Organizational justice is concerned with the ways in which employees determine whether they have been treated fairly in their jobs and the ways in which those determinations influence work-related outcomes (Moorman, 1991). Justice perceptions can influence employee attitudes and behaviour for good or ill, in turn having a positive or negative impact on individual, group and the entire organization's performance and success (Baldwin, 2006). Empirical evidence supports the notion that an employee's perception of organizational justice affects their attitude toward the organization (Konovsky, *et al*, 2000). If the perception of organizational justice is positive, individuals tend to be more satisfied and committed to their job (McFarlin & Sweeney, 1992).

Distributive justice implies that, while evaluating the fairness of the organizational decisions, employees are not only interested in what these decisions are but also with the processes which determine these decisions (Folger & Cropanzano, 1998). Distributive justice impacts on employees in organizations since they are the subject of work place decisions virtually every day of their organizational lives (Cohen *et al.*, 2001). Some of these decisions deal with the salaries individuals earn, the projects or programmes they implement while others deal with work place interactions. The importance of those consequences causes individuals to judge the decision making they experience from a justice perspective (Colquitt, 2001).

According to Baldwin (2006) the term organizational justice refers to the extent to which employees perceive workplace procedures, interactions, and outcomes to be fair in nature. He concluded that these perceptions can influence attitudes and behaviours of the employees. Cropanzano, Bowen and Gilliland (2007) defined it as a personal evaluation about the ethical and moral standing of managerial conduct.

1.1. Statement of the Problem

Employees strive for fairness and justice in their work place (Colquitt, 2001). Their justice judgements have empirically been found to influence attitudes and behaviours in various work place settings (Cohen-Charash & Spector, 2001). Empirical evidence indicates that in organizational settings, justice is not always administered through clear and adequate explanations, justifications are not always or adequately given to employees for decisions made, and employees are not always treated with dignity and respect during the implementation of decision procedures (Colquitt, 2001). Perceived unjust treatment of employees leads to low commitment resulting in poor individual, team and organizational performance (Frontela, 2007).

Adoption of effective human resource management (HRM) practices in many Non Governmental organizations (NGOs) is often low in the list of management priority (Batti, 2014). NGO organizations assign a very low priority for investing in nurturing human resource capacities and staff retention measures due to the short term nature of the projects,

funding constraints, and subsequent short term employment practices (Padaki, 2007). Nwaiwu (2013) observed that NGOs are constrained in practicing equity based employment terms, managing human resources and offering competitive terms. In a study carried out by Frontela (2007) in Kenya and other developing countries, the researchers found that irrespective of the affiliation, mission, size, and extent of operations, problems of low morale and low motivation of staff were prevalent in NGOs. These are all indicators of antecedents and outcomes of organizational commitment (Wright, & Kehoe, 2008). They point to a possible absence of organizational justice and low employee commitment. In addition, Padaki (2007) noted that the project based nature of employment in the NGO sector discourages investment in human resources. This affects career growth leading to negative justice perceptions and commitment.

Organizational justice research has predominately involved employees from Western countries, particularly the U.S. (McFarlin & Sweeney, 2001; Morris, Leung, Ames, & Lickel, 1999). As such, the current thinking regarding reactions to organizational justice may not generalize to employees from societies that have cultural and economic characteristics which differ significantly from those commonly found in North American and Western European societies. In addition, in their meta-analytical review of literature on commitment in organizations in the period 1988 to 2011, Iqbal *et al* (2012) found out that most of the research studies published was conducted at the industry or firm level as the unit of analysis. In addition, the organization and management of NGO sector has received relatively little attention from researchers (Lewis, 2005). There is therefore a paucity of information regarding the importance of fairness and employee reactions to organizational (in) justice from different contexts especially Africa and particularly the Health sector NGOs in Kenya. Given this lack of information, the study sought to establish the influence of organizational justice perceptions on organizational commitment of employees in Health Sector NGOs in Kenya.

1.2 Objective of the Study

The objective of the study was to establish the effect of employee's perceptions of distributive justice on organizational commitment in health sector non-governmental organizations in Kenya.

2. Methodology

Based on the research objective, the study adopted descriptive and correlation research design. A descriptive research approach attempts to systematically describe attitudes towards an issue. On the other hand, a correlation research approach attempts to discover or establish the

existence of a relationship/ association/interdependence between two or more aspects of a situation. Mugenda and Mugenda (2008) indicate that descriptive research designs are conducted to establish relationships between a set of study variables. A descriptive research designs is based on the premise that if a statistically significant relationship exist between two variables, then it is possible to predict one variable using the information available on another variable (Kothari, 2008). The study focused on obtaining information on employee organizational justice perceptions and the influence of such perceptions on their commitment to the employing organizations. Through correlation analysis, the study was able to determine the relationships between the independent variables and how they influenced the dependent variable.

3. Results and Discussion

Distributive justice perceptions were measured using a scale comprising of 7 statements), based on Colquitt (2001) justice model. The dependent variable, organizational commitment, was measured using a scale with three dimensions: Affective commitment (6 statements), continuance commitment (7 statements), and normative commitment (5 statements).

3.1 Response Rate

The study conducted a survey using a self-administrated questionnaire which was distributed to 195 sampled respondents. 131 valid questionnaires were returned. This represented a response rate of 67 per cent. According to Mugenda & Mugenda (2008), a response rate of above 50% in quantitative research is considered adequate for analysis and conclusion.

Table 1: Response Rate

Total # of questionnaires distributed	Total number of valid questionnaires returned	Response rate (%)
195	131	67

3.2 Employee perceptions on affective commitment

Respondent's perceptions on affective commitment (table 2) fall under the "to some extent" level of agreement. Respondents agreed with the statement that to some extent: I would be very happy to spend the rest of my career with this organization (39%); I really feel as if this organization problems are my own (37%); I feel a strong sense of belonging to my organization (31%); I do not feel emotionally attached to this organization (31%); I do not feel like part of the family at my organization (25%); This organization has great deal of personal meaning for me (31%).

Table 2: Perceptions on affective commitment

Affective Commitment Rating	Very Little Extent (%)	Little Extent (%)	Some Extent (%)	Great Extent (%)	Very Great Extent (%)	Total (%)
I would be very happy to spend the rest of my career with this organization	12	19	39	22	8	100

I really feel as if this organization problems are my own	13	14	37	30	6	100
I feel a strong sense of belonging to my organization (R)	13	36	31	15	5	100
I do not feel emotionally attached to this organization (R)	13	36	31	15	5	100
I do not feel like part of the family at my organization (R)	7	11	25	22	35	100
This organization has great deal of personal meaning for me.	7	11	31	38	13	100
Average %	10.83	21.17	32.33	23.67	12.00	100

3.3 Perceptions on continuance commitment

As shown on table 3, majority of respondent's perceptions on continuance commitment fall under the "to some extent" level of agreement. Respondents agreed with the statement that to some extent: Right now, staying with my organization is a matter of necessity as much as desire (33%); It would be very hard for me to leave my organization right now, even if I wanted to (26%); Too

much of my life would be disrupted if I decided to leave my organization now (39%); I feel that I have too few options to consider leaving this organization (35%); If I had not already put so much of myself into this organization, I might consider working elsewhere (28%); One of the few negative consequences of leaving this org would be the scarcity of available alternatives (29%).

Table 3: Percentage perception on continuous commitment

Continuous commitment rating	Very Little Extent (%)	Little Extent (%)	Some Extent (%)	Great Extent (%)	Very Great Extent (%)	Total (%)
Right now, staying with my organization is a matter of necessity as much as desire	6	15	33	37	9	100
It would be very hard for me to leave my org right now, even if I wanted to	22	30	26	17	5	100
Too much of my life would be disrupted if I decided that I wanted to leave my organization now	22	18	39	14	7	100
I feel that I have too few options to consider leaving this organization	24	31	35	7	3	100
If I had not already put so much of myself into this org, I might consider working elsewhere	24	31	28	11	6	100
One of the few negative consequences of leaving this org would be the scarcity of available alternatives	29	22	29	11	9	100
Average %	21.16	24.50	31.67	16.17	6.50	100

3.4 Perceptions on normative commitment

Table 4 shows the respondents perceptions on normative commitment. Majority of respondents perceptions on normative commitment fall under the "to some extent" level of agreement (28%). Respondents agreed with the statement that to some extent: I do not feel any obligation to remain with my current employer (34%); Even if it were to my

advantage, I do not feel it would be right to leave my organization now (30%); I would feel guilty if I left my organization now (34%); This organization deserves my loyalty (32%); I would not leave my organization right now because I have a sense of obligation to the people in it (28%).

Table 4: Perceptions on normative commitment

Normative Rating	Very Little Extent (%)	Little Extent (%)	Some Extent (%)	Great Extent (%)	Very Great Extent (%)	Total (%)
I do not feel any obligation to remain with my current employer.	23	27	28	14	8	100
Even if it were to my advantage, I do not feel it would be right to leave my organization now.	17	22	34	17	10	100
I would feel guilty if I left my organization now	29	20	30	12	9	100
This organization deserves my loyalty	8	13	32	28	19	100
I would not leave my organization right now because I have a sense of obligation to the people in it	17	21	28	25	9	100
Average %	18.80	20.60	30.40	19.20	11.00	100

3.5 Reliability

Reliability of a measure indicates the extent to which results are consistent over time and an accurate representation of the total population under study (Golafshani, 2003). If the

results of a study can be reproduced under a similar methodology, then the research instrument is considered to be reliable (Kothari, 2008). Ordinal alpha and Cronbach's alpha were used to test the reliability of the study's ordinal response scales.

Table 4: Reliability

Variable	Number of items	Cronbach alpha	Ordinal alpha
Distributive justice	7	0.907	0.960

3.6 Validity

The validity of measurement refers to how well the answer to a question corresponds with the true value for the construct that is being measured (Golafshani, 2003). Content validity of the study instruments was conducted through expert opinion. The study conducted in depth interviews with subject matter experts in human resource management in academia and practitioners who recommended various modifications of the questionnaire.

3.7 Factor analysis

The study analyzed interrelationships among the study variables using factor analysis in IBM SPSS version 20.

3.7.1 Sampling adequacy

Sampling adequacy provides the researcher with information regarding the grouping of survey items. Sampling adequacy

was assessed by examining the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) statistic and Bartlett's test of sphericity. A KMO of 0.50 and a Bartlett's test of Sphericity chi-square output of ($p < .05$) are considered suitable for factor analysis (Hair, *et al.* 1995; Tabachnick & Fidell 2001). Table 5 shows the results of the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) test for sampling adequacy.

Table 5: KMO and Bartlett's Test

KMO and Bartlett's Test		
Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		0.797
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	1028.811
	Df	130
	Sig.	.000

3.7.2 Normality test

The study tested for normality through One-Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov non-parametric test as well as visually using the q-q plot (quantile-quantile) technique. A one-way sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov test showed that the data followed the normal distribution ($Z = 2.551, 2.899, 2.779, \text{ and } 2.576$, respectively for variables 1-4, $N = 130$ each, and $p \leq 0.01$ each) as shown table 6.

Table 6: One-way sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test for distributive justice

One-way sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test for distributive justice					
		Decision made employer organization reflect work efforts	Decision outcome appropriate/ in line with responsibilities	Outcome reflect contribution	Outcome justified, given performance
N		130	130	130	130
Normal Parameters ^{a,b}	Mean	3.3308	3.3231	3.2846	3.1692
	Std. Deviation	1.04465	0.95003	0.98228	1.01262
Most Extreme Differences	Absolute	0.224	0.254	0.244	0.226
	Positive	0.161	0.184	0.172	0.166
	Negative	-0.224	-0.254	-0.244	-0.226
Kolmogorov-Smirnov Z		2.551	2.899	2.779	2.576
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)		0	0	0	0
a. Test distribution is Normal.					
b. Calculated from data.					

Normality was also assessed visually through Q-Q plot. The normal Q-Q plot presented in figure 1 shows that most of the observed values were falling along the straight line indicating that the variable components were normally distributed. This is consistent with the one-way sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test results.

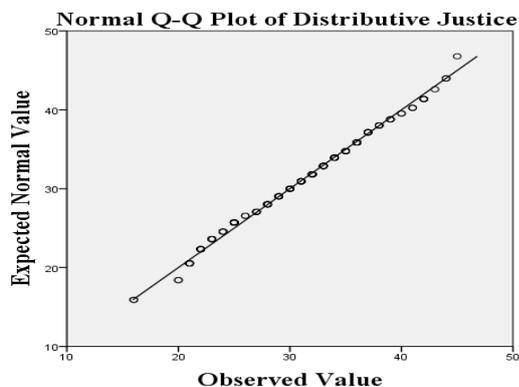


Figure 1: Q-Q plot for distributive justice

3.7.3 Correlations between distributive justice perceptions and organizational commitment

The results of the correlation between distributive justice perceptions and organizational commitment (table 7) show that distributive justice perceptions positively correlated to affective commitment, with r ranging between 0.263 to 0.288 $n = 129, p \leq 0.01$. Distributive justice perceptions were not correlated with continuance commitment, with r ranging between -0.014 to 0.077, $n = 129, p \geq 0.05$. Distributive justice perceptions positively correlated to normative commitment, with r ranging between 0.243 to 0.314 $n = 129, p \leq 0.01$. The study interpreted the low but significant correlation to indicate that in a contractual model of employment, the outcome of employment (e.g. salary, performance valuation and promotion) for many employees remains constant thereby diminishing the influence of distributive justice. This finding collaborates Turgut *et al.*, (2012) who found a positive correlation between distributive justice and affective commitment amongst university employees. Secondly the study finding on continuance commitment contradicted Beckers' side bet theory of reciprocity which states that continuance commitment increases with the accumulation of side bets.

Table 7: Correlation coefficients between distributive justice perceptions and organizational commitment

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1. Affective commitment	1.000						
2. Continuance commitment	.208*	1.000					
3. Normative commitment	.554**	.330**	1.000				
4. Does the decision made by your employer organisation reflect the effort you have put into your work?	.288**	.079	.314**	1.000			
5. Is the outcome appropriate/ in line with your responsibilities?	.269**	.077	.243**	.728**	1.000		
6. Does the outcome reflect what you contributed to the organization?	.278**	-.014	.303**	.640**	.740**	1.000	
7. Is the outcome justified, given your performance?	.263**	.025	.301**	.632**	.703**	.781**	1.000

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).
 **. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

4. Hypothesis Testing

The study hypothesis predicted that perceptions of distributive justice have no significant effect on employee organizational commitment in health sector non-governmental organizations in Kenya. The hypothesis was tested using ordered logistic regression of the form:

$$\text{Logit } z = \ln \left[\frac{F_{ij}}{1-F_{ij}} \right] = \beta_{0j} - (\beta_1 X_1) \dots (1) \text{ where: } Z$$

is organizational commitment, β are parameters to be estimated and X_1 , distributive justice. Table shows 8 and 9 shows the results of the regression analysis of distributive justice on affective and normative commitment. In the first regression, the $\chi^2(4) = 10.07$, $p < 0.05$ indicates that the researcher's model is significantly different from the intercept only model. It indicates existence of significance in explaining the levels of affective commitment by the

independent variable. The distributive justice construct explain 3.88 % of affective commitment. The odds of employees having high affective commitment significantly increases by 1.36434 if the decision made by the employer organisation reflect the effort the employee has put increases by 1. The odds of employees having high affective commitment significantly increases by 1.013567 if the organizational outcome desired is in line with responsibilities increases by 1. The odds of employees having high affective commitment significantly increases by 1.062505 if the organizational outcome matches reflects the employee contribution is increased by 1. The odds of employees having high affective commitment significantly increases by 1.267349 if the organizational outcome reflects the employee's perception of performance is increased by 1..

Table 8: Ordered logistic regression of distributive justice perceptions and affective commitment

Ordered logistic regression of distributive justice perceptions and affective commitment						
Affective commitment index	Odds Ratio	Std. Err.	z	P> z	[95% Conf. Interval]	
Employer Decision	1.36434	0.3490974	1.21	0.225	0.826273	2.252796
Outcome Appropriateness	1.013567	0.3477483	0.04	0.969	0.517382	1.985611
Outcome Contribution	1.062505	0.3993545	0.16	0.872	0.508625	2.219549
Outcome Justification	1.267349	0.4292159	0.7	0.484	0.652556	2.461357
Number of obs = 129			LR $\chi^2(4) = 10.07$			
Pseudo R ² = 0.0388			Prob > $\chi^2 = 0.0392$			
Log likelihood = -124.70029						

Table 9 presents the results of the regression analysis of distributive justice on normative commitment. The $\chi^2(5) = 13.11$, $p < 0.05$ of the regression of distributive justice on normative commitment (table 4.38) indicates that the researcher's model is significantly different from the intercept only model. It indicates that there is significance influence in explaining the levels of organizational normative commitment by the independent variables. The distributive justice construct explain 5.93 % of normative commitment. The odds of employees having high normative commitment significantly increases by 1.64049 if the decision made by the organisation reflect the effort the

employee has put increases by 1. The odds of employees having high normative commitment significantly increases by 0.913 if the organizational outcome desired is in line with responsibilities increases by 1. The odds of employees having high normative commitment significantly increases by 0.924 if the organizational outcome match reflects the employee contribution is increased by 1. The odds of employees having high normative commitment significantly increases by 1.517773 if the organizational outcome reflects the employee's perception of performance is increased by 1.

Table 9: Ordered logistic regression of distributive justice perceptions and normative commitment

Ordered logistic regression of distributive justice perceptions and normative commitment						
Normative commitment index	Odds Ratio	Std. Err.	z	P> z	[95% Conf. Interval]	
Employer Decision	1.64049	0.45596	1.78	0.075	0.95146	2.82851
Outcome Appropriateness	0.91254	0.25228	-0.33	0.741	0.5308	1.56883
Outcome Contribution	0.92439	0.28091	-0.26	0.796	0.50955	1.67696
Outcome Justification	1.51777	0.38761	1.63	0.102	0.92008	2.50374
Number of obs = 127			LR $\chi^2(5) = 13.11$			
Pseudo R ² = 0.0593			Prob > $\chi^2 = 0.0107$			
Log likelihood = -130.57248						

These regression results indicate that distributive justice perceptions have a significant positive effect on organizational commitment and in particular affective and normative components even though their explanatory power is small at less than 10 %. Based on the above finds, the study therefore failed to reject the null hypothesis that there is no relationship between perceptions of distributive justice and employee organizational commitment in health sector non-governmental organizations in Kenya. This result is consistent with previous research findings (Thomas & Nagalingappa (Pseudo $R^2 = 0.463$, $p < 0.001$) on a study of white collar employees and Ponnu & Chuah (Pseudo $R^2 = 0.288$, $p < 0.001$).

5. Conclusion

The results of the study show that a low positive significant relationship exists between distributive justice perceptions and organizational commitment. This indicates that employees in the health NGO sector in Kenya are concerned with fairness in which resources are at the work place. Therefore, with higher perceptions of distributive justice perceptions, employees are more likely to reciprocate with greater organizational engagement. The absence of a relationship between distributive justice perceptions and continuance commitment may be explained by the fixed term contractual nature of employment in the NGO sector. The linking of continued employment with availability of funding may also be a contributing factor to the apparent lack of continuance commitment in the sector. These factors may also explain the low explanatory power of distributive justice.

6. Recommendations

Employees' perception of fairness in decision outcomes and resource allocation are important when explaining employees' organizational commitment. Since employee commitment is a key contributing factor to organizational sustainability, NGOs should foster distributive justice by ensuring that employment outcomes are consistent with implicit norms for allocation, such as equity or equality. When employees have favourable distributive justice perceptions, they are also likely to have more positive emotions and more favorable attitudes and behaviors directed toward the individual or organization that has provided the outcomes.

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