



# Perceived organizational justice and work-related attitudes: a study of Saudi employees

Perceived  
organizational  
justice

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## Abstract

**Purpose** – The purpose of this paper is two-fold: first, to examine the influence of perceived organizational justice on Saudis' work-related attitudes, namely, job satisfaction and organizational commitment. Second, to examine the differential effects of distributive and procedural justice on the above-mentioned work-related attitudes.

**Design/methodology/approach** – Using a self-administered questionnaire, 600 Saudi employees from 24 organizations operating in an Eastern province in Saudi Arabia were surveyed. Correlation and hierarchical regression analyses were used to examine the hypotheses of the study.

**Findings** – The paper revealed that justice plays a significant role in influencing Saudi employees' level of job satisfaction and commitment. An examination of the differential affects of justice revealed that distributive justice tends to be a stronger predictor of job satisfaction compared to procedural justice. Moreover, despite the significant positive correlation between procedural justice and organizational commitment, there was no influence of procedural justice on organizational commitment when the influence of inter-actional justice and distributive justice had been controlled.

**Practical implications** – The theoretical and practical implications of the results are discussed in the paper. Recommendations are provided to managers in Saudi organizations to enhance perceptions of justice in the workplace.

**Originality/value** – The paper contributes to the knowledge of the topic of organizational justice in Saudi Arabia, which is under-studied in academia. The paper not only advances the literature pertaining to organizational justice theories by empirically demonstrating the importance of organizational justice for developing positive work outcomes in a non-Western developing context, but also elucidates the differential effects of distributive and procedural justice on work-related attitudes.

**Keywords** Saudi Arabia, Employees behaviour, Job satisfaction, Justice, Work-related attitudes, Saudi employees, Organizational culture

**Paper type** Research paper

## Introduction

Organizational justice, job satisfaction, and organizational commitment are important foci of management research. The concept of organizational justice is important for understanding and predicting organizational behavior (Hartman *et al.*, 1999). Most previous studies on organizational justice and its impact on work-related attitudes and behavior have been conducted in western countries, and the generalizability of these findings to other parts of the world is questionable (Wong *et al.*, 2006). Moreover, few studies were conducted in Middle Eastern contexts have examined the influence of organizational justice on job satisfaction and organizational commitment. For development of more universal and generalizable theories of justice, therefore, the nature, significance, and strength of the relationships between organizational justice and these constructs, should be a subject for in-depth investigations in non-western contexts (Suliman, 2007; Leung and Stephan, 2001). As far as the Saudi Arabia is concerned, the library search revealed that there is no studies in this field. This is likely



attributable to several factors such as burgeoning research cost, funding difficulties, cultural limitations which limit access to adult education (particularly with females), and data gathering problems that range from sampling to fieldwork issues (Robertson *et al.*, 2001).

This study attempts to achieve two objectives. First, to examine the influence of perceived organizational justice on job satisfaction and organizational commitment of Saudi employees in 24 organizations operating in the Eastern province of Saudi Arabia. Second, to examine the differential effects of distributive and procedural justice on the above-mentioned work-related attitudes for the same sample. The term organizational justice used in this study to denote the degree to which employees perceive the overall organizational rules, procedures, and policies that are related to their work to be fair (Greenberg, 1987). It encompasses three components, namely, distributive justice, procedural justice, and interactional justice (Cropanzano *et al.*, 2001; Masterson *et al.*, 2000; McDowall and Fletcher, 2004). Job satisfaction is used to refer to the degree of positive emotions an employee has toward a job (Kalleberg, 1977; Locke, 1976). Organizational commitment stands for employees' interest in, and connection to, an organization (Hunt *et al.*, 1989; Meyer and Allen, 1997; Mowday *et al.*, 1979). The study speculates that all components of perceived organizational justice (i.e. distributive justice, procedural justice, and interactional justice) to be significantly related to job satisfaction, and organizational commitment. It also speculates that distributive justice and procedural justice may have differential effects on job satisfaction and organizational commitment.

### The context

Saudi Arabia is an Islamic Middle Eastern developing country with an oil-based economy, and strong government controls over major economic activities. The revenues from oil exports have provided the foundations for the accelerated development of its economy.

Saudi Arabia has a population of over 24 million, approximately 6.5 million of whom are foreigners. According to the latest study (Saudi Arabian Monetary Agency's (SAMA) (2008) *Forty-Fourth Annual Report*), the total number of workers in Saudi Arabia is 8,229,654 including 6,959,490 men and 1,270,164 women. The local Saudi labor force is largely employed by the public sector and overwhelmingly male (Madhi and Barrientos, 2003). There are rigid boundaries in social roles and expectations for women compared to men in Saudi Arabia and thus there are fewer women in Saudi workforce (8.1 percent, SAMA, 2008) and engage in sectors that are traditionally female: teaching and nursing. The majority of local Saudi workforce is young, under the age of 40 and well educated (Al-Ghahtani *et al.*, 2007). In 1990s, government concern to increase participation of local Saudi workers in the private sector and to reduce its reliance on foreign workers led to the adoption of policies aimed at substituting foreign workers for local Saudi workers. These policies are known as Saudization and include restrictions on employment of foreign workers in the public sector, the requirement that private firms reduce their foreign workers by 5 percent annually and making some occupations open to Saudi nationals only (Sadi and Al-Buraey, 2009; Madhi and Barrientos, 2003).

The Saudi Arabia is a conservative country where Islamic teachings and Arabian cultural values are strictly followed. The country falls along a spectrum of cultural characteristics of GCC countries, distinctly tribal, conservative in its adherence to Islam and influenced by significant exposure to the west (Dadfar *et al.*, 2003). Moreover,

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Saudi Arabia's culture manifests high power distance, high uncertainty avoidance, collectivist, and femininity characteristics along Hofstede's (1980) cultural dimensions (Al-Khaldi and Wallace, 1999; Robertson *et al.*, 2001).

### **Theoretical background**

#### *Organizational justice*

Organizational justice describes the individuals' (or groups) perception of the fairness of treatment received from an organization and their behavioral reaction to such perceptions (James, 1993). Organizational research traditionally distinguishes between three types of justice: distributive, procedural, and interactional (Cohen-Charash and Spector, 2001).

Distributive justice refers to the concern expressed by employees with regard to the distribution of resources and outcomes (Greenberg, 1990; Cropanzano and Folger, 1989). Studies pertaining to distributive justice are mainly concerned with the extent to which outcomes are equitable (McMillan-Capehart and Richard, 2005). Distributive justice is grounded in equity theory (Adam, 1965). Accordingly, in assessing fairness, individuals evaluate the value of their work inputs relative to the outcomes received from organizations. Inputs relate to items such as hard work, enthusiasm, skills level, commitment and dedication, whereas outcomes are the rewards achieved such as pay, benefits and recognition (Bibby, 2008). Individual determines the fairness of their input/outcome ratio by comparing their ratio to the ratios of referents such as co-workers. If the person feels inequitable through this comparison, he or she is motivated to reduce that inequality by reducing inputs or increasing output. For instance, when employees believe the outcomes of a decision is unfair, they may engage in a counterproductive work behavior (Hopkins and Weathington, 2006). On the other hand, when the distributions of organizational outcomes are considered fair higher levels of satisfaction and commitment are likely to ensue (Cohen-Charash and Spector, 2001; Colquitt *et al.*, 2001).

Whereas distributive justice is concerned with the fairness of distribution and outcomes, procedural justice is concerned with the fairness of the procedures that are used to distribute these outcomes (Alexander and Ruderman, 1987; Cropanzano and Schminke, 2001). The means of reaching an outcome may be just as important as outcome in terms of impacting employees (Alexander and Ruderman, 1987; Folger and Greenberg, 1985). Employees judge the equity of procedures by the amount of bias, the breadth and accuracy of information gathering, number of relevant parties given voice in the decisions, ethical standards applied, and the consistency and universality of decision implementation (Stecher and Rosse, 2005). When a process leading to a certain outcome is perceived to be unfair, the person's reactions are predicted to be directed at the whole organization, rather than at his/her tasks or the specific outcome in question (Cohen-Charash and Spector, 2001). The consequences of procedural justice include variables such as organizational commitment, trust satisfaction, compliance with decision and performance (Suliman, 2007).

Interactional justice refers to perceptions concerning the way authorities treat their subordinates, and how these subordinates respond to these perceptions (Bies and Moag, 1986; Masterson *et al.*, 2000; Cohen-Charash and Spector, 2001). It is also concerned with how the information was communicated and whether the individual affected by a decision were treated in a courteous and civil manner, i.e. being treated with respect and dignity (Bies and Moag, 1986). All in all, perceptions of interactional justice result from supervisor trust-building behaviors such as "availability,

competence, consistency, discreetness, fairness, integrity, loyalty, openness, promise fulfillment, receptivity, and overall trust” (Deluga, 1994, p. 317).

Many studies have analyzed the relationships among these three types of organizational justice and their effects on various work-related outcomes including job satisfaction, work motivation (Suliman, 2007; Fernandes and Awamleh, 2006; Cropanzano *et al.*, 2001; Moorman, 1991), intention to turnover (Colquitt *et al.*, 2001), work performance (Suliman, 2007; Fernandes and Awamleh, 2006; Phillips *et al.*, 2001), commitment (Folger and Konovsky, 1989), organizational citizenship behavior (Moorman, 1991). This study examines the influence of perceived organizational justice on job satisfaction and organizational commitment.

#### *Job satisfaction*

Job satisfaction is one of the most widely studied and measured constructs in industrial and organizational psychology (Spector, 1997). Job satisfaction is defined as “a pleasurable or positive emotional state resulting from the appraisal of one’s job or job experience” (Locke, 1976, p. 1,300). Satisfaction with one’s job is an important component in overall well-being. If employees are satisfied they would produce superior quality performance in optimal time and lead to growing profits. Satisfied employees are also more likely to be creative and innovative and come up with breakthroughs that allow an institution to grow and change positively with time and changing market conditions (Sharma and Jyoti, 2009). Previous studies have revealed that job satisfaction is examined as a potential cause, correlate and consequence of both work-related and non-work variables (Bowling and Hammond, 2008). In terms of measurement, job satisfaction can be considered as a global feeling about the job or as a related constellation of attitudes about various facets of the job (Currrivan, 2000; Price, 1997). The global approach is used when the overall attitude is one of interest (Lee, 2000). This study used the global approach over facets approach, conceptualizing job satisfaction as the degree of positive emotions an employee has toward a job (Kalleberg, 1977; Locke, 1976).

#### *Organizational commitment*

Organizational commitment is defined as having the core elements of loyalty to the organization, identification with organization and desire for involvement in the organization (Cook and Wall, 1980; Mowday *et al.*, 1979). Employees who are committed to their firms tend to identify with the objectives and goals of their organizations and wish to remain with their organizations (Hunt *et al.*, 1989). Meyer and Allen (1991) have proposed the three component model of organizational commitment including: affective commitment (emotional attachment to one organization), continuous commitment (attachment based on the accumulation of valued side bets such as pension, skills transferability, relocation, and self-investment that co-vary with organizational membership) and normative commitment (attachment based on motivation to conform to social norms regarding attachment). Various studies have examined relationships between organizational commitment and its antecedents and outcomes (Allen and Meyer, 1990; Chen and Francesco, 2003; Tsai and Huang, 2007). This study will examine commitment as an outcome of organizational justice.

#### **Literature review and hypotheses**

In organizational justice, the dominant approach to examining the relationship between justice and attitudes has been to examine how different types of justice affect

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different types of attitudes (Ambrose *et al.*, 2007). While these three components of justice perceptions are correlated, several meta-analyses have elucidated they are empirically distinct and account for unique incremental variance (Cohen-Charash and Spector, 2001; Colquitt *et al.*, 2001; Hauenstein *et al.*, 2001). The relationship of the three components of organizational justice with individual outcomes like job satisfaction and organizational commitment has been proposed by various researchers. In this regard, the literature survey has suggested two broad strands of arguments.

The first strand surmises that all organizational justice components (distributive, procedural and interactional) effect job satisfaction and organizational commitment. Previous studies have provided ample evidence that has supported this strand. For example, Hendrix *et al.* (1998) and McFarlin and Sweeney (1992) found strong positive relationships between justice and commitment. Hendrix *et al.* (1998), for instance, stated that fair procedures allow employees to have faith in the organization and, therefore, increase their organizational commitment. Their results suggest that organizational justice is positively related to organizational commitment and satisfaction. Similarly, Lee (2000) investigated the relationships between organizational justice, job satisfaction, organizational commitment and turnover intentions in the lodging industry. He concluded that distributive justice and procedural justice have direct positive impact on job satisfaction. Two meta-analyses of mainly US studies (Cohen-Charash and Spector, 2001; Colquitt *et al.*, 2001) showed that greater perceived organizational justice was associated with higher satisfaction, greater commitment to the workplace and extra-role behavior. Lambert (2003) studied the impact of organizational justice on correctional staff. The result indicated that both distributive and procedural justice have significant positive effect on job satisfaction. Robinson (2004) examined the role of organizational justice in predicting four organizational outcome variables including job satisfaction, organizational commitment, motivation and performance. The result indicated that the four components of organizational justice were significant predictors of the four organizational outcome variables. Survey results from 76 accountants at large public accounting firms, suggested that fairness perceptions influence turnover intentions through the intermediaries of organizational commitment and job satisfaction (Parker and Kohlmeyer, 2005). Samad (2006) examined the differential effects of procedural and distributive justice on employees' work outcomes (organizational commitment and job satisfaction) in a Malaysian sample. The result revealed that both procedural justice and distributive justice made significant effects on organizational commitment and job satisfaction. Fernandes and Awamleh (2006) investigated the impact of justice on job satisfaction and self-assessed performance in United Arab Emirates (UAE) by comparing UAE nationals and expatriates. The result indicated that while all justice facets have a significant impact on satisfaction of expatriate group, only distributive and interactional justice has a significant impact on satisfaction and performance of UAE nationals group. Similarly in a survey conducted in the UAE and Arabic context about the link between justice, satisfaction and performance in the workplace, Suliman (2007) found that organizational members who tend to show positive feelings toward distributive, procedural and interactional justice are likely to report higher level of job satisfaction. Nadiri and Tanova (2009) explored the relationship of organizational justice perceptions of hotel employees in North Cyprus with various work-related variables. The result indicated that organizational justice is the key factor that has strong effect on job satisfaction. In a study based on Malawian sample, perceptions of

justice correlated strongly with employees' level of job satisfaction, and in particular perceptions of how well employees were treated by their managers and the extent to which they were informed about decisions and changes (McAuliffe *et al.*, 2009). In a sample consisted of 125 accountants who had survived recent workforce reductions at a US aircraft manufacturer in the wake of reduced demand following 9/11, the results of structural equation analyses indicated that accounting survivors' perceptions of procedural justice affected their post-layoff stress and job insecurity, which in turn directly and indirectly influenced job satisfaction, affective commitment, and intent to turnover (Sweeney and Quirin, 2009).

The above literature review indicates that when perceptions of fair treatments are high, employees are likely to be satisfied and committed to their organizations. The following hypotheses designated to examine the extent to which this assumption holds in the case of Saudi employees:

- H1. Perception of distributive, procedural and interactional justice will be significantly related to employees' job satisfaction.
- H2. Perception of distributive, procedural and interactional justice will be significantly related to employees' organizational commitment.

The second strand proposes that different components of justice differentially affect attitudes, the trend that labeled as "differential effects approach" (Ambrose *et al.*, 2007). To explicate this approach, Ambrose *et al.* (2007) drawing on Cropanzano's *et al.* (2001) research used the terms "event attitudes" and "system-related attitudes." Event attitudes refer to individual's assessment of a single event or closely related clusters of events (e.g. job satisfaction). System-related attitudes refer to the organization (or system) as whole (e.g. organizational commitment). Previous studies have provided ample empirical evidence to support this strand, suggesting that some of the justice components accounted for more of the variance on outcomes like job satisfaction and organizational commitment compared to others. For example, McFarlin and Sweeney (1992) argued that distributive justice was a better predictor of personal outcome than procedural justice, whereas procedural justice predicted organizational commitment better than distributive justice. By the same token, Cobb *et al.* (1995) contended that distributive justice appears to have more influence on satisfaction with the outcomes, while procedural justice appears more related to attitudes about the relevant institution or authorities. Similarly, Lee's (2000) study on lodging industry indicated that distributive justice plays a more vital role in employees' work-related outcomes than procedural justice. In a similar vein, Robinson (2004) found that distributive justice accounted for the most variance in job satisfaction, while procedural justice accounted for most variance in organizational commitment, motivation and performance. Similarly, Folger and Konovsky (1989) found that procedural justice accounted for more variance in organizational commitment and trust in a supervisor compared to distributive justice. Likewise, Lambert's (2003) study on correctional staff revealed that procedural justice, but not distributive justice, has a significant positive effect on organizational commitment.

The above literature review have shown that prior studies do provide strong evidence that distributive justice affects personal or individual outcomes such as job satisfaction, whereas procedural justice affects attitudes about the system such as organizational commitment. This study will examine the extent to which this

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assumption holds in the case of Saudi employees by proposing the following hypotheses:

- H3.* Distributive justice perceptions of employees will account for more of the variance on job satisfaction of employees as compared to the variance accounted by procedural justice.
- H4.* Procedural justice perceptions of employees will account for more of the variance on employees' organizational commitment as compared to the variance accounted by distributive justice.

## Method

### *Sample*

The sample for this study was drawn from 24 organizations (nine public, 12 private and three joint ventures) operating in the Eastern province of Saudi Arabia. These organizations represented a wide range of industries including banking, healthcare, education, manufacturing, transportation and communication. Using a self-administered questionnaire, a total of 600 Saudi employees were randomly selected and surveyed in order to examine the study hypotheses. The participants were representing top, middle and bottom levels of management. The scales were translated to Arabic from the English language. The Arabic version was also back translated to English and the two versions were compared by an independent linguist to ensure equivalence. The Cronbach's  $\alpha$  reliability coefficients were comparable with the original scales. Usable surveys were returned from 315 respondents for a response rate of 52.5 percent.

### *Measures*

*Distributive, procedural and interactional justice.* The 20 items scale developed by Niehoff and Moorman (1993) was used to measure distributive justice, procedural justice and interactional justice. The measure was assessed on a five-point scale ranging from 0 "strongly disagree" to 4 "strongly agree." The Cronbach's  $\alpha$  for the 20 items was 0.926. The five items were related to distributive justice ( $\alpha$  value 0.701), six items to procedural justice ( $\alpha$  value 0.871), and nine items for interactional justice ( $\alpha$  value 0.925). An item scale for distributive justice is "My work schedule is fair." An item scale for procedural justice is "My supervisor is neutral in decision making." An example item for interactional justice measure is "My supervisor provides explanations for the decisions related to my job."

*Job satisfaction.* Job satisfaction was measured with a seven-item scale developed and validated by Al-Damour and Awamleh (2002). The measure was assessed on a five-point scale ranging from 0 "strongly disagree" to 4 "strongly agree." An example of the item format is "I find that my opinions are respected at work." The Cronbach's  $\alpha$  was found to be 0.832.

*Organizational commitment.* Organizational commitment was measured with a nine-item short version of Organizational Commitment Questionnaire developed by Porter *et al.* (1974). The measure was assessed on a five-point scale ranging from 0 "strongly disagree" to 4 "strongly agree." An example of the item format is "I am willing to put in a great deal of efforts beyond that normally expected in order to help this organization be successful." The Cronbach's  $\alpha$  was found to be 0.869.

*Demographic, career and sector variables.* The study used demographic, career and sector variables as control variables. Gender, marital status, education and age were measured using four different scales. Gender was coded 1 for “men” and 2 for “women”; marital status was coded 1 for “married” and 2 for “single.” Respondents also indicated their level of education obtained, where 1 = “high school and less,” 2 = “intermediate diploma,” 3 = “first degree and beyond.” Respondents’ age also was considered and measured, where 1 = “35 years and less,” 2 = “36-46,” and 3 = “47 and above.” Likewise, career variables – job level and job tenure – were measured using two different scales. Job level was coded 1 = “top level,” 2 = “middle level,” and 3 = “bottom level.” Respondents noted their job tenure, where 1 = “7 years and less,” 2 = “8-13,” and 3 = “14 years and more.” Sector was measured by a single scale, where 1 = “private sector,” 2 = “public sector,” and 3 = “joint venture.” It is important to control these variables because they have been found to influence the level of employee attitudes in the organization (Meyer and Allen, 1991).

**Results**

The SPSS version 16.0 was used to analyze data and examine hypotheses. Table I presents the distribution of study sample according to the demographic and career factors as well as the sector (private, public and joint venture). As shown in Table I, the majority of respondents were males, married, educated to the first

Variables	Frequency	Percent
<i>Demographic</i>		
Gender		
Male	277	87.9
Female	38	12.1
Marital status		
Married	196	62.2
Non-married	119	37.8
Education		
High school or less	76	24.1
Diploma	95	30.2
First degree and above	114	45.7
Age		
35 years and less	229	72.7
36-46 years	67	21.3
47 years and above	19	6.0
<i>Career</i>		
Job tenure		
Seven years and less	212	67.3
8-13 years	58	18.4
14 years and above	45	14.3
Job level		
Top level	19	6.0
Middle level	157	49.8
Bottom level	139	44.1
<i>Sector</i>		
Private sector	457	57.6
Public sector	228	28.8
Joint venture	108	13.6

**Table I.**  
The description of the  
study sample



degree or above, and aged 35 years or less and had seven years of job tenure or less. The majority of participants were from middle management and work for private organizations.

Table II presents means, standard deviations and correlations for the study variables. Results of the correlation analysis provide support for the discriminant validity of the study. When correlation coefficient matrix between constructs is examined, no correlation coefficient is above 0.90. This means that all the constructs are different/distinct. Prior research has also demonstrated that these scales predict different dependent measures and suggest that they are distinct variables representing different constructs (McFarlin and Sweeney, 1992; Cohen-Charash and Spector, 2001; Colquitt *et al.*, 2001; Hauenstein *et al.*, 2001).

Hierarchical regression and correlation analyses were employed to test hypotheses. Four-step hierarchical regression analysis was employed for testing *H3* and *H4*. In addition, correlation analysis was conducted for testing *H1* and *H2*. The variables were checked for multicollinearity. The VIF scores reported in the tables shows that the VIFs are well below 10 indicating that there is no cause for concern about multicollinearity.

Table III presents the hierarchical regression results of the influence of control variables and interactional justice followed by procedural justice and distributive justice on job satisfaction. The control variables were regressed, then interactional justice followed by procedural justice and finally distributive justice. The objective of Table III was to see the influence of distributive justice when procedural justice was controlled. In Table III at step 1, seven control variables were entered: gender, marital status, age, education, job tenure, job level and sector. As the table indicated none of them predicted job satisfaction. At step 2, interactional justice was entered; at step 3, procedural justice was entered; and at step 4, distributive justice was entered. In all steps the additional justice dimension contributed significantly to the model.

Table IV shows the hierarchical regression results for the influence of control variables and interactional justice followed by distributive justice and procedural justice on organizational commitment. The control variables were regressed, then

Variables	Mean	SD	Distributive justice	Procedural justice	Interactional justice	Job satisfaction	Organizational commitment
Gender	1.12	0.326	-0.037	0.043	0.020	-0.093	-0.162**
Marital status	1.38	0.486	-0.051	0.100	0.082	0.060	0.006
Education	2.22	0.809	0.093	-0.027	-0.032	-0.031	-0.061
Age	1.33	0.586	0.083	0.008	-0.038	0.008	0.006
Job tenure	1.47	0.732	0.087	-0.081	-0.084	0.023	0.053
Job level	2.38	0.598	-0.045	-0.074	-0.123*	-0.113*	-0.052
Sector	1.76	0.774	0.028	0.000	0.042	0.013	-0.111*
Distributive justice	2.05	0.779		0.360**	0.364**	0.560**	0.440**
Procedural justice	1.83	0.997			0.796**	0.684**	0.382**
Interactional justice	2.04	0.919				0.713**	0.449**
Job satisfaction	2.03	0.854					0.583**
Organizational commitment	2.37	0.784					

**Notes:**  $N = 315$ ; \*\* $p < 0.01$  (two-tailed); \* $p < 0.05$  (two-tailed)

**Table II.**  
Means, standard  
deviation and  
correlations

**Table III.**

Hierarchical regression results of the influence of control variables and interactional justice followed by procedural justice and distributive justice on job satisfaction

Variables	$\Delta R^2$	$\beta$	Job satisfaction <i>t</i> -statistics	<i>p</i> -value	VIF
<i>Step 1: controls</i>	0.027			0.303	
Gender		−0.091	−1.567	0.118	1.062
Marital status		0.069	1.104	0.270	1.242
Education		−0.011	−0.191	0.848	1.070
Age		−0.011	−0.191	0.848	1.358
Job tenure		0.038	0.563	0.574	1.464
Job level		−0.109	−1.917	0.056	1.012
Sector		0.032	0.555	0.579	1.052
<i>Step 2</i>	0.500			0.000	
Interactional justice		0.717	17.965	0.000	1.028
<i>Step 3</i>	0.040			0.000	
Procedural justice		0.334	5.309	0.000	2.789
<i>Step 4</i>	0.085			0.000	
Distributive justice		0.321	8.605	0.000	1.212
<i>N</i>	315				
<i>R</i> <sup>2</sup>	0.651				
Equation <i>F</i> -value	56.776			0.000	

**Table IV.**

Hierarchical regression results of the influence of control variables and interactional justice followed by distributive justice and procedural justice on organizational commitment

Variables	$\Delta R^2$	$\beta$	Organizational commitment <i>t</i> -statistics	<i>p</i> -value	VIF
<i>Step 1: controls</i>	0.040			0.081	
Gender		−0.138	−2.397	0.017	1.062
Marital status		−0.003	−0.054	0.957	1.242
Education		−0.033	−0.572	0.568	1.070
Age		−0.025	−0.391	0.696	1.358
Job tenure		0.053	0.784	0.434	1.464
Job level		−0.056	−1.002	0.317	1.012
Sector		−0.092	−1.598	0.111	1.052
<i>Step 2</i>	0.209			0.000	
Interactional justice		0.464	9.240	0.000	1.028
<i>Step 3</i>	0.084			0.000	
Distributive justice		0.316	6.186	0.000	1.191
<i>Step 4</i>	0.000			0.858	
Procedural justice		0.014	0.179	0.858	2.837
<i>N</i>	315				
<i>R</i> <sup>2</sup>	0.333				
Equation <i>F</i> -value	15.190			0.000	

interactional justice followed by distributive justice and finally procedural justice. The objective of Table IV was to see the influence of procedural justice when distributive was controlled. In Table IV at step 1, seven control variables were entered: gender, marital status, age, education, job tenure, job level and sector. As the table indicated none of them predicted organizational commitment. At step 2, interactional justice was entered; at step 3, distributive justice was entered; and at step 4, procedural justice was entered. In steps 2 and 3, the additional justice dimension contributed significantly

to the model. In step 4, when procedural justice was entered to the model, there was no significant contribution to the model.

The first hypothesis that the perception of distributive, procedural and interactional justice will be significantly related to employees' job satisfaction was supported ( $r = 0.56, p < 0.01$ ), ( $r = 0.68, p < 0.01$ ), ( $r = 0.71, p < 0.01$ ), respectively (see Table II). The second hypothesis that perception of distributive, procedural and interactional justice will be significantly related to employees' organizational commitment was supported ( $r = 0.44, p < 0.01$ ), ( $r = 0.38, p < 0.01$ ), ( $r = 0.45, p < 0.01$ ), respectively (see Table II). The third hypothesis that the distributive justice perceptions will account for more variance on employees' job satisfaction than procedural justice was supported. This result suggests that job satisfaction will be high when procedural justice are perceived to be high, but when procedural justice is controlled for, distributive justice still accounts for significant variance in job satisfaction (see Table III). Distributive justice tended to be more important predictor of job satisfaction as compared to procedural justice, where distributive justice was entered in step 4 resulted in 0.085 change in  $R^2$  ( $F(1, 304) = 74.052, p < 0.001$ ). The fourth hypothesis that the procedural justice perceptions will account for more of the variance on employees' organizational commitment as compared to the variance accounted by distributive justice was not supported. Table IV shows that procedural justice entered after distributive justice is already in the model ( $R^2$  change = 0.000,  $F(1, 304) = 0.032, p = 0.858$ ). Results have indicated that after distributive justice have been accounted for; the additional contribution of procedural justice is not significant on the employees' organizational commitment.

## Discussion

The purpose of this study was twofold: first, to examine the influences of organizational justice on work-related attitudes, namely, job satisfaction and organizational commitment of Saudi employees. Second, to examine the differential effects of distributive and procedural justice on the above-mentioned work-related attitudes. Correlations between employees' organizational justice perceptions were positively and significantly related to job satisfaction and organizational commitment. The study's findings indicate that organizational members who tend to show positive feelings toward distributive, procedural justice and interactional justice are likely to report higher level of job satisfaction and organizational commitment. These findings seem to support the studies of some scholars in this field (Lee, 2000; Cohen-Charash and Spector, 2001; Colquitt *et al.*, 2001; Lambert, 2003; Robinson, 2004; Parker and Kohlmeyer, 2005; Samad, 2006; Fernandes and Awamleh, 2006; Suliman, 2007; Nadiri and Tanova, 2009; McAuliffe *et al.*, 2009; Sweeney and Quirin, 2009). These findings are important, given that job dissatisfaction and low level of commitment are associated with many negative outcomes, *interalia*, low productivity, absenteeism, and higher intention to quit (Hopkins and Weathington, 2006). Furthermore, recent research has shown that the effects of job attitudes on task performance, contextual performance, and withdrawal behavior may be stronger than previously thought when criterion is measured at a more abstract level (Harrison *et al.*, 2006). Enacting and fostering perceptions of justice in the workplace, therefore, would seem to be especially critical for managers and organizations in Saudi Arabia.

Most of the researchers (Ambrose *et al.*, 2007; Alexander and Ruderman, 1987; McFarlin and Sweeney, 1992; Folger and Konovsky, 1989; Cobb *et al.*, 1995; Lee, 2000; Lambert, 2003; Robinson, 2004) had suggested that distributive justice would be a

more important predictor of individual or personal outcomes such as job satisfaction, where as procedural justice would be more related with organizational outcomes and attitudes of employees toward the institution such as organizational commitment. Consistent with these findings, results of the present study revealed that distributive justice tends to be stronger predictor of job satisfaction compared to procedural justice. Fairness of personal outcomes that employees' receive explains more of the variance on employees' job satisfaction even after the part played by the impact of perceived fairness of interpersonal treatment, and fairness of the firm's procedures, have been considered. This result has indicated that, for Saudi employees, the role of perception of fairness of interpersonal treatment and fairness in firm's procedures are very important with regard to individual outcomes such as job satisfaction. However, the fairness of personal outcomes like fair distribution of workload, pay, and other rewards still impact the employees' job satisfaction.

As apposed to the mainstream research findings, the present study indicated that procedural justice did not tend to predict organizational commitment. The fairness of procedures was not a better explanatory variable for organizational commitment in Saudi Arabian context. This finding has suggested that the fairness of a firm's procedures may have insignificant impact on organizational commitment compared to the fairness of personal outcomes that employee receives, and the fairness of interpersonal relationships at the workplace. Fairness of firm's procedures accounted for no variance on organizational commitment extra to the variance accounted for by fairness of interpersonal treatment and fairness of personal outcomes. One possible explanation of this intriguing finding might be attributed to the Saudi Arabian employment practices and socio-cultural setup of Saudi Arabia. Previous research has supported the existence of cultural differences regarding relationships between justice perceptions and the outcomes variables (Cole, 2009; Pillai *et al.*, 2001; Reithel *et al.*, 2007; Leung and Lind, 1986). The socio-cultural and employment practices influences are summarized in the following points: first, Saudi culture is high in "power distance" (Hofstede, 1980). Therefore, Saudi employees may not share the expectation of fair procedures that employees in a low power distance cultures such as western contexts. For instance, no procedural justice is expected when subordinates interact with supervisors. Since high power distance is a cultural norm in Saudi Arabia, having the lack of input or appeal regarding organizational decisions may not be seen as unfair to the same extent as it would in a culture low in power distance, such as the western milieus. Second, Saudi culture is also more collectivist in nature, focussing on the good of the group and group harmony. This dimension is reinforced by Islamic teachings, where the majority of Saudis are Muslims. Therefore, fairness of procedures may not matter as long as group members are treated with respect (Fields *et al.*, 2000). Criticism of unfair procedures may be seen as disruptive to group harmony (Reithel *et al.*, 2007). Third, Saudi people had little faith in institutional arrangements, but had strong faith in personal judgments and attitudes. Procedures represent the institutional method for making decisions and distributing outcomes. Notwithstanding, decisions processes in Saudi Arabian work setting are extensively based on personal judgments and attitudes of top people as opposed to formal institutions and arrangements (Robertson *et al.*, 2001). Consequently, distribution of outcomes is attributed to a person rather than to a system. Therefore, the fairness of procedure may not matter as long as employees are securing cordial relationships with their direct supervisors or top people. Whitley (2001) found that trust in formal institutions and reliance on formal procedures for managing exchange relationships and disputes seemed rather low in

developing societies. This cultural dimension is reinforced by the tribalistic and extended family nature in which family and clan name, promoted preference for strong personalized – as opposed to institutionalized – leadership in the Saudi organizations. Fourth, employment practices in Saudi Arabia are very flexible toward Saudis. Saudi employees can move freely between organizations (Al-Meer, 1989). Moreover, according to the Saudization program, businesses are required to demonstrate good efforts to recruit and maintain Saudi nationals (Madhi and Barrientos, 2003; Sadi and Al-Buraey, 2009). These arrangements may lessen the importance of procedural justice for Saudi employees, as they know that their employment and promotion is generally a matter of government policy.

### **Implications**

This study advances the literature pertaining to organizational justice theory by empirically demonstrating the importance of organizational justice for developing positive work outcomes in a non-western developing context. It also contributes to the organization justice theory by empirically demonstrating that in non-western developing settings such as Saudi Arabia, the role of distributive justice in job satisfaction is stronger than the role of procedural justice. Moreover there is a significant relationship between procedural justice and organizational commitment. However there was no influence of procedural justice on organizational commitment when the influence of interactional justice and distributive justice had been controlled. These findings contribute to a better understanding of differential effects of distributive and procedural justice on job satisfaction and organizational commitment in a non-western context.

For practitioners, the results of this study indicates that managers and organizations in Saudi Arabia need to understand the significant role justice plays in influencing employees' work-related attitudes. Managers in Saudi Arabia should give great attention to the methods they use to distribute work loads, responsibilities, rewards and alike among employees. Moreover, managers need to focus not only on the ends but also on the means used to achieve these ends. They need to pay significant attention to the process and procedures by which outcomes are distributed taking into consideration the cultural norms of Saudi society. Furthermore, managers need to continuously assess and develop the way they manage their relationships with employees. This may include the way they act and interact with subordinates, the level of respect and trust, handling disputes, conflict and/or misunderstanding. Knowing how perceived justice differentially affect employees' level of satisfaction and commitment allow management and organizations to take appropriate actions to improve the satisfaction as well as commitment level at the workplace. Managers in Saudi Arabia need to adopt a more "systemic approach" (Whittington, 1993) in understanding justice-work-related attitudes relationships that take in consideration the cultural norms and peculiarities of Saudi society.

### **Limitations and future research**

There are several limitations of this study that should be addressed. First, this study was limited in its scope by concentration on the influence of organization justice on only job satisfaction and organizational commitment. Second, the results are specific to one geographical area (Eastern province). Procurement of data from other parts of Saudi Arabia, would undoubtedly add to the appeal of existing database. Third, common variance problem cannot be ruled out since data on both independent and

dependent variables were collected at the same time and using same questionnaire. Fourth, the impact of cultural dimensions was not controlled in this study and may have influenced justice perception and work-related attitudes relationship.

Future research should explore the impact of organizational justice on individual attitudes and behaviors including organizations from all provinces in Saudi Arabia. Future research using other methodologies such as longitudinal approach to prevent the potential bias resulted from the common variance problems is highly recommended. The relationships between procedural justice and organizational commitment need further investigation. Also, worthy of scholarly attention is the affect of culture on justice perception. An in-depth examination of the mediating affects of cultural norms, mores, tribe, family name, clan, and other social groups between justice and individual attitudes and behaviors may also represent an interesting stream of future research. Moreover, a future research should also consider contextual aspects such as type of job, specialization, accountability, work pressure, norms, and organizational culture that could potentially influence justice perceptions and employees' attitudes and behaviors. Of utmost importance is deeper investigation of Saudization policy and its implications on justice perceptions, attitudes and behaviors of Saudi workforce.

### Conclusions

This study has examined for the first time, in Saudi Arabia, the role of organizational justice in influencing Saudi employees' level of job satisfaction and organizational commitment. The results revealed that justice plays significant role in affecting Saudi employees' level of satisfaction and commitment. Also, the study has examined the differential effects of distributive and procedural justice on job satisfaction and organizational commitment. In this regard, the results have discovered that distributive justice tends to be stronger predictor of job satisfaction compared to procedural justice. Furthermore, the results have uncovered that despite the significant relationship between procedural justice and organizational commitment, there was no influence of procedural justice on organizational commitment when the influence of interactional justice and distributive justice had been controlled. The implications of this study outcome were outlined and discussed, as well as limitations and future research directions.

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#### Further reading

- Elamin, A.M. and Alomaim, N. (2011), "Does organizational justice influence job satisfaction and self-perceived, performance in Saudi Arabia work environment?", *International Management Review Journal*, Vol. 7 No. 1, pp. 38-49.

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