



## **Influence of Perceived Organizational Justice on Teachers' Commitment in Selected Secondary Schools in Lagos State, Nigeria**

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### **Authors' contributions**

*This work was carried out in collaboration between all authors. Author OTA designed the study, and wrote the first draft of the manuscript. Author OHO managed the literature searches and statistical analyses of the study and author ABA edited the study. All authors read and approved the final manuscript.*

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### **ABSTRACT**

This study examined some demographic and psychological predictors of teachers' commitment in Lagos State, Nigeria. The specific objectives of the study were to ascertain if teachers' perceived organizational justice will significantly affect their levels of commitment to the schools; establish the nature of relationships that exists between gender, types of schools and teachers' levels of commitment. In order to achieve these objectives, 200 participants from 16 secondary schools in Lagos State (M=103; F=97) were randomly selected to respond to the Organizational Justice Scale (OJS) and Organizational Commitment Scale (OCS). The data collected were analyzed using correlation, independent *t*-test and regression analysis and the results showed that there is a significant positive relationship between perceived organizational justice and teachers' commitment; female teachers reported a significantly higher level of commitment than their male counterparts, public school teachers were more committed than private school teachers. It was also revealed that gender, types of schools and organizational justice jointly accounted for sixty-

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eight percent (68%) variance in teachers' commitment. The implication of these findings substantiates the need to treat employees fairly in order to sustain their high level of commitment to the organizations.

*Keywords: Organizational justice; teachers and commitment.*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Teaching is a very demanding profession and the success of the educational institution depends on highly committed and dedicated teachers. In Nigeria, the teaching profession is cumbered with a lot of challenges that has the capacity of lowering the level of commitment of the teachers, these challenges ranged from poor remuneration to unfair treatment from Government. Consequently, when teachers experience injustice in any aspect of their work and management's decisions, they are likely to be de-motivated and react with negative attitude such as absenteeism, strikes, high rates of job accidents and lack of commitment to the organization. Thus, there is a need to establish the antecedent organizational commitment.

According to Herscovitch and Meyer [1] organizational commitment refers to the extent to which an employee identifies with the goals and values of the organization, as well as his or her willingness to put efforts to assist the organization achieve her set goals. Moreover, organizational commitment entails the dedication of employees to accept to work towards the realization of the goals and values of the organization. Mowday, Porter, Steers, and Boulian [2] define commitment as the relative strength of an individual's identification with and involvement in a particular organization. Colquitt, Lepine and Wesson [3] define organizational commitment as the desire on the part of an employee to remain a member of the organization. Scholl [4] states that commitment is a stabilizing force that acts to maintain behavioural direction when expectancy or equity conditions are not met or do not function. O'Reilly and Chatman [5] hold that organizational commitment is the psychological attachment felt by the employee for the organization; it reflects the degree to which the individual internalizes or adopts characteristics and perspectives of the organization. Thus, organizational commitment is a psychological state that characterizes employees' relationship with their organization, and has implications for employees' continued membership of the organization [6].

Many studies have been conducted on organizational commitment in recent years in view of its importance to the continued existence of an organization [7,8]. According to Meyer and Allen, [6] there are three distinct components organization commitment namely, affective commitment ( this component of commitment is based on emotional ties the employee develops towards the organization primarily because of the positive work experiences); continuance commitment (this component of commitment is based on fear of loss which entails perceived costs, both economic and social, of leaving the organization) and normative commitment (this component of commitment is based on sense of obligation to stay in the organization). For example, "employees who feel the sense of affective commitment identify with the organization, accept that organization's goals and values, and are more willing to exert extra effort on behalf of the organization" [3]. Loyalty is an affective response, based on a sense of responsibility and duty, usually expressed through identification with the conditions of work, the values and expectations of the employees as well as their decision to either stay or leave. Positive and rewarding features of work are expected to increase loyalty, which in turn will reduce the attrition rate in the organization.

In view of the importance of organizational commitment in the sustainability of business or organization, it is necessary to understand various psychological variables that can influence employees' commitment towards an organization, thus this study is designed to establish the influence of employees' perceived fairness of the employer as it relates to their commitment toward the organization.

The concept of organizational justice refers to the just and fair treatment of employees within an organization [9,10]. In other words, organizational justice as used by Industrial-organizational psychologists refers to the idea that an action or decision is morally right, which entails equity, ethics or fairness. Moreover, employees react to decisions and actions made by management on a daily basis. An employee's perception of these decisions as fair or unfair has

tendencies to influence the worker's attitudes and behaviours on and off the job. Thus, justice or fair treatment of employees should be of central interest to all organizations that desire to succeed because of its implications on job attitudes and employees' commitment to the organization.

Social scientists generally agreed that organizational justice is the extent to which employees' considered the employer's decisions and actions to be objective and whether the processes and results obtained at workplace are fair or not [11,12]. Largely, the fairness of an organization's decision making processes is judged by employees along four dimensions: Distributive justice, procedural justice, interpersonal justice and informational justice [3]. While distributive justice reflects the perceived fairness of decision-making and fostered by authority's adherence to the rules of morality such as equity, equality and needs; procedural justice reflects the perceived fairness of the processes and procedures involved in decision-making, and fostered by authority's adherence to the rules of fair processes such as consistency, voice and bias suppression; interpersonal justice reflects how the employees perceive the treatment they receive from the authority or their supervisors; finally, informational justice reflects the perceived fairness of the communications that authorities make available to their employees and this dimension of justice is fostered by authorities' adherence to the rules of justification and truthfulness [3,13,10].

Several studies have shown that the perception of organizational justice leads to increased levels of commitment that employees feel towards their organizations [12,14-17]. The employees' thinking, feeling and attitude have effects on whether the organization will accomplish her goals and objectives as well as if they will be committed to the organization or not and tendencies to stay or quit the organization. Organizational justice therefore is a key factor associated with the success of any organization [18]. In order to keep employees satisfied and committed, the organization needs to be fair in her dealings with regards to organizational justice. When employees experience fair treatment from the organization in every aspect, they are likely to be motivated to show more positive attitude and behaviors such as commitment to the organization especially when the issues like recruitment selection and placement, allocating monetary resources, policy

making and policy implementation that affect both the decision makers and the employees are done objectively [19].

Conversely, an employee that perceives injustice at the workplace will not only be dissatisfied with his job, but will lose interest in whatever he or she is doing and this ultimately will affect his or her overall performance in the organization [6]. Moreover, Konovsky [20] argue that organization's fair treatment of staff is influential in enhancing higher employees' commitment towards organization while low level of organizational commitment on the other hand such intention to quit the organization and absenteeism from work are traceable to unfair treatment and favoritisms. It is quite clear that discussing issues such as self-management, self-control, cooperation, innovation and comprehensive management in organizations where workers are demoralized is useless and efforts to enhance effectiveness and commitment will reach no end. The issue of organizational justice is paramount in this regard.

When employees have the understanding of injustice or perceive injustice in an organization, they are likely to react by showing negative attitudes such as lack of commitment or low level of organizational commitment. This can be explained in terms of inequality between an employees' input in form of time and efforts to system and the organization's output to the employees in form of rewards and salary [21]. Consequently, the way employees are treated go a long way to affect their level of commitment to any organization. Employees who perceive injustice are more likely to leave the organization or show a lower degree of organizational commitment and may even take some retaliatory measures that are counterproductive in nature. Thus, employer's abilities to recognizing how employees perceive justice in their organization and how they react to both perceived justice and injustice are basic issues of understanding human management [14].

In line with Yavuz [7] it is believed that studies on organizational justice and commitment should be evaluated in different countries and the effects of the perceived organizational justice on organizational commitment should be investigated in view of the diverse cultural environments in different countries of the world. The goal of this paper therefore is to investigate how the perception of organizational justice

influences the commitment of teachers in Lagos State, Nigeria.

### 1.1 Theoretical Framework

This study is guided by equity theory. The variable of organizational commitment and perceived justice can be explained from the perspective of Adams equity theory.

According to Adams [22], equity exists when there is a balance between input and outcomes of an employee, however, if there is perceived differences between the ratios of input compared to that of output, this may lead to tension or conflicts. The main assumption of this theory is that an employee's behavioural outcome is influenced by constantly comparing his or her inputs (contributions to the organization) and outputs (rewards received in return from the organization) with that of the input and output of other employees in similar status.

Consequently, it is not the objective assessment of inputs and output that is so important in determining work motivation but the way an employee perceives his or her input and output ratio as compared to the input and output ratio of another employee considered to be of equal of similar status with the former. The degree of discrepancy is said to be equals to the degree of dissonance the employee experiences; the degree of dissonance also corresponds to the degree of energy an employee expends to reduce the discrepancy. For example, when several employees apply for a vacant position within the organization; the appointment should be given to the person who is most qualified for the position (that is, the person who exhibits highest level of Knowledge, Skills and Abilities (KSAs), or the person who is capable of contributing the most to the organization). However, If inequity is perceived, the employee may experience emotional reactions (such as anger) that will eventually affect productivity and employees' commitment to the organization.

In view of the foregoing, the following hypotheses were tested to determine the antecedents of organizational commitment.

- H<sub>1</sub> Female teachers will be significantly more committed than their male counterpart
- H<sub>2</sub> Public secondary school teachers will be more committed than private secondary school teachers.

H<sub>3</sub> gender, organizational type and Perceived organizational justice will significantly predict variance in teachers' commitment

H<sub>4</sub> There will be a significant positive relationship between perceived organizational justice and teachers' commitment.

## 2. METHODS

The population of this study is made up of secondary school teachers in both public and private schools in Lagos state, Nigeria. A simple random sampling method was used to select two hundred (200) participants which constituted male and female teachers (M=103; F=97) from 8 public secondary schools and 8 private secondary schools. This study adopted a cross-sectional survey design which took into consideration participants of different ages. The Organizational Justice Scale (OJS) and Organizational commitment scale (OCS) were administered to the participants and the successfully completed questionnaires were used in this study.

The Organizational Justice Scale (OJS) was developed by Hoy and Tarter [12], a 10-item scale to assess employees' perception of justice and fairness as well the degree to which organizations' operations are considered to be fair. The participants were asked to describe the behaviour of teachers and administrators along a seven-point Likert scale from strongly disagree to strongly agree, the test items include: The principal's behaviour is consistent; students in this school are treated fairly; The principal does not play favorites and others. According to Hoy & Tarter [12] the factor analysis of the ten items of the scale shows a strong single factor of organizational justice and all the items had factor loadings greater than 0.77 meaning that it has a 78 percent of the variance. The higher the participants' scores, the greater the extent of perceived justice behavior in the school. The reliability of the scale is consistently high - usually 0.90.

The Organizational Commitment Scale developed by Buchanan [23] was adapted and used to assess teachers' level of commitment. The scale consisted of two sections. The first section was to collect the demographic variables of the participants while the second section was meant to collect information to assess the extent to which a worker is affectively attached to the achievement of the goals and values of an

organization. The response format was a seven-point Likert scale ranging from strongly disagrees to strongly agree. The reliability alpha coefficients were 0.86, 0.84, 0.92 and 0.94 for identification, involvement, loyalty and overall test respectively.

The data obtained by the participants were compiled and analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics where applicable and the results are shown below.

Table 1 above shows the vivid description of the socio-demographic attributes of the participants who took part in the study.

**Table 1. Descriptive statistics of the participants**

Variables		Frequency	Percentage (%)
Length of service	0-5	37	18.5
	6-10	88	44.0
	11-15	54	27.0
	16-20	15	7.5
	above 20	6	3.0
Marital status	Single	12	6.0
	Married	188	94.0
Gender	Male	103	51.5
	Female	97	48.5
Types of schools	Public	100	50
	Private	100	50

**2.1 Hypotheses Testing**

**Hypothesis 1:** Female teachers will be significantly more committed than their male counterparts.

In order to test hypothesis one, an Independent sample t-test was computed and the result is as shown below:

Table 2 Independent t-test analysis shows that male teachers (M=103) had a lower mean score of 94.83 on commitment compared to their female counterpart (F=97) who had a higher mean score of 112.92 and  $t = -5.03$ ,  $df = 198$ ,  $P < 0.05$ . This implies that the mean difference of

**Table 2. Independent t-test of teachers' commitment based on gender**

Variable	N	Mean	S.D	Df	T	P
Male teachers	103	94.83	3.83	198		
Female teachers	97	112.92	7.94		-5.03	P<0.05

the two groups is significant at 0.5 level of significance. Thus, the hypothesis one which states that female teachers will be significantly more committed than their male counterpart is accepted.

**Hypothesis 2:** Public secondary school teachers will be more committed than private secondary school teachers. In order to test hypothesis two, an Independent t-test was computed and the result is as shown below:

Table 3 Independent t-test analysis shows public schools (n=100) had a higher mean score of 108.05 on commitment scale compared to their private school counterpart (n=100) who had a lower mean score of 99.15 and  $t = 2.37$ ,  $df = 198$ ,  $P < 0.05$ . This implies that the mean difference of the two groups is significant at 0.5 level of significance. Thus, the Hypothesis 2 which stated that public school teachers will be significantly more committed than private school teachers is accepted.

**Hypothesis 3:** Gender, organizational type and perceived organizational justice will significantly predict variance in teachers' commitment. In order to test hypothesis three, a Linear regression analysis was computed and the result is as shown:

Table 4 Linear Regression Model shows that gender, institution type and perceived organizational justice jointly and significantly accounted 68% variance in teachers' commitment. Moreover, the Model shows that gender contributed  $\beta = 0.19$ , types of schools contributed  $\beta = 0.09$  and perceived organizational justice contributed  $\beta = 0.79$  accordingly to variation in teachers' commitment. Thus, hypothesis 3 is accepted.

**Hypothesis 4:** There will be a significant positive relationship between perceived organizational justice and teachers' commitment. In order to test hypothesis four, a Spearman Rho correlation analysis was computed and the result is as shown below:

**Table 3. Independent t-test of teachers’ commitment based on types of schools**

Types of schools	N	Mean	S.D	Df	T	P
Public	100	108.05	9.29	198	2.37	P<0.05
Private	100	99.15	6.50			

**Table 4. Linear regression model showing summary of the effect of gender, types of schools and perceived organizational justice on teachers’ commitment**

Variable	β	T	r	r <sup>2</sup>	F	P
Gender	0.19	4.57	0.82	0.68	136.55	P < 0.05
Types of schools	0.09	2.07				
Organizational justice	0.79	17.99				

Table 5 Correlation Matrix shows that there is a significant positive relationship between perceived organizational justice and teachers commitment as stated by the researcher with (r = 0.80, P< 0.05). Thus, hypothesis 4 is therefore accepted.

**Table 5. Correlation matrix between perceived organizational justice and teachers commitment**

Variables	N	r	P
Teachers commitment perceived organizational justice	200	0.80	<0.05

### 3. DISCUSSION

The first hypothesis which stated that female teachers will be significantly more committed to schools than their male counterpart was confirmed. The finding revealed that female respondents were significantly committed than the male counterpart. This implies that female teachers have higher tendency of staying on their job as well as being more loyal to the organization than their male counterparts. This finding was supported by Park [24]. According to Borman & Dowling, [25] it was found that female teachers tend to have difficulties in moving from one school to the other especially when they are married and have started raising children. However, Gupta & Gehlawat [26] reported that there was no significant difference between males and female workers in work attitude and motivation.

The second hypothesis which stated that public secondary school teachers will be more committed than private secondary school teachers was confirmed. Studies have divergent reports on teachers' performance and work attitude in private schools, wholly owned by

independent entrepreneurs and non-government agencies most of the time set up for profit ventures and public school usually owned by Government for the good of the society.

Gupta et al. [26] in a study of the correlates of organizational commitment among secondary school teachers reported that private secondary school teachers are more committed to their counterparts in public secondary. According to Akomolafe, [27]; Akpan, Okey and Esirah, [28] the management of private secondary school tends to be more highly effective in managing their teachers thereby maintaining a more disciplined and committed teachers; Adiotomre, and Ekwevugbe, [29] supported them that private schools better equipped with instructional materials thereby providing opportunities for committed teachers compared to their counterparts in Public schools. However, Odigbo [30] reported in contrary that public schools are better staffed with committed staff than private schools because the former is owned by Government and they are usually quality oriented than profit. The finding of the study could be attributed so some of undue pressure from management of private schools as well as poor job security associated with private organizations; thus teachers in private school may tend to have less commitment because of job insecurity.

The third hypothesis which stated that gender, school type and perceived organizational justice will significantly predict a variance in teachers’ commitment was confirmed in the study. The findings revealed that perceived organizational justice, gender and organizational type accounted for 68% variance in teachers’ commitment. This implies that perceived organizational justice, gender and types of schools are significant predictors of organizational commitment. This result is in line

with the finding of Bakshi et al., [31] where they found perceived organization justice as a good predictor of organizational commitment. Furthermore, this finding is in agreement with Adams' equity theory where he postulated that employees compare their input and output as regards the organization's reward. Consequently, where the employee perceives fairness in the organization's policies and that he or she is favorably reinforced; then he or she is likely to be more committed and vice versa.

The fourth hypothesis which stated that there will be a significant positive relationship between perceived organizational justice and organizational commitment was confirmed. The finding shows a positive relationship between perceived organizational justice and organizational commitment. This implies that as perceived organizational justice increases, organizational commitment among employees also increases. This finding agrees with Martínez-tur et. al., [32] in their empirical studies where they found positive relationship between perceived organizational justice and teachers' commitment. When teachers perceive their principal to be fair, respectful and equitable in his or her dealings, they are like to exhibit positive work outcomes such as commitment and dedication. These behaviour may be demonstrated by teachers volunteering to serve beyond the call of duty, providing extra moral classes for students at no cost and giving up pleasure for the service of the institution. Organizational commitment reflects an overall systematic reactions of employees towards the organization for which they work. Thus the finding of this study confirms that when teachers perceive organizational justice, they tend to identify with the organization and its goals as well maintain membership with the organization.

#### 4. CONCLUSION

The specific objective of the study was to ascertain the effects of teachers' perceived organizational justice on their levels of commitment to their schools. Moreover, the study substantiates the importance of fair treatment of workers as postulated by Adams Equity theory among other factors in order to gain maximum commitment from employees to the organization. It is therefore recommended that employers of labour should put in place measures to ensure fairness in decision making so as to enhance employees commitment level to their organization. This include setting objective

standard by human resources management (HRM) for making decisions regarding recruitment, selection and placement of personnel, promotions, transfer and compensation management. An employee can only be committed to the organization if he or she enjoys what he or she is doing and perceives justice in the organization [33]. However, future researches are encouraged to extend the focus of their study to include other socio-demographic variables such as economic and marital status of teachers, states of origin and the like as they affect organizational commitment.

#### COMPETING INTERESTS

Authors have declared that no competing interests exist.

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