

# ORGANIZATIONAL JUSTICE IN INDIAN UNIVERSITIES: EXPLORING MEDIATION AND MODERATION EFFECTS

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*[The study is intended to explore indirect effects of organizational justice across industries and to identify the possibility of its application in Indian universities. Existing work falls in the category of exploratory research based on literature review adopted from **Tranfield et al. (2003)**. Relevant highly cited literature has been downloaded from database of Google Scholar, Web of Science and Elsevier etc.*

*The study found that although organizational justice has good number of antecedents and outcomes, and its direct effects has been studied by different scholars across industries. But moderating and mediating role searched across industries are very minimal and in higher education institutions is completely silent. Accordingly, the scholar has identified important dimensions of organizational behavior and human resources like as HR practices, leadership style, organizational politics, and job insecurity etc., as an independent factors whereas institutional as well as employee outcomes as dependent factors of testing mediating and moderating effects of organizational justice for Indian higher educational institutions.*

*Institutions of higher learning can be hub of knowledge creation, so that they can provide community-driven multi-disciplinary approach to problem solving only through establishing baseline of organizational justice to different stakeholders.*

**Keywords:** *Organizational Justice, Mediation, Moderation, Higher Education Institutions]*

## Scientific Review and Problem Formulation

Fifty years ago, Adams(1963, 1965) sparked an interest in organizational justice based on equity theory that has continued to grow over the intervening decades and has come to represent one of the dominant theoretical orientations for understanding attitudes, emotions, and motivation in the workplace

(Gilliland, 2018). Organizational justice is also rooted in social exchange theory, which treats social life as a series of sequential transactions between two or more parties (Blau,1964).It is found that the perception of organizational justice comprises the sub-dimensions of 'distributive justice', 'procedural justice' and 'interactive justice' (Greenberg, 1990), and the perception of overall

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organizational justice emerges from a combination of these three sub-dimensions (Colquitt, 2001; Cohen, Charash and Spector, 2001). Many existing researches studied organizational justice by using the three factor or four-factor model (Cohen-Charash and Spector, 2001; Colquitt et al., 2001; Tessema et al., 2014; Akram et al., 2016a,b). Employee's perception of justice determines the quality of exchanging relationship with organization (Swalhi et al., 2017). Studies suggested that organizational justice effect positively employee attitude like job satisfaction (Usmani and Jamal, 2013; Saifi and Shahzad, 2017; Tammy et al., 2010; Yijuan et al., 2011; Khan et al., 2015) turnover intention (Parker and Kohlmeyer, 2005; Zagladi, Hadiwidjojo, Rahayo and Noermejoti, 2015; Byrne, 2005) and organizational commitment (Siegel, Post, Brockner, Siegel, et al 2005); Ölçer, 2015; Sökmen and Ekmekçioglu, 2016) and behaviors such as organizational citizenship behavior (Karriker and Williams, 2009; Tziner and Sharoni, 2014; Gurbuz et al., 2016. Demirkiran et al. 2016; Karriker and Williams, 2009) and task performance (Köse, 2014; Wang et al. 2010). On the contrary organizational injustice, will display negative attitudes and behavior outcomes (Adams, 1965; Greenberg, 1990, 1993, 2001; Li and Shi, 2003; Pi, 2006; Ceylan and Sulu, 2011; Mingzheng et al., 2014; Chih et al., 2016).

Higher education in Asian countries is becoming more prominent according to higher education researchers (Levin, 2010; Marginson, Kaur, & Sawir, 2011). Higher education in Asia is also being influenced by globalization, resulting in two types of structural inequality in higher education (Naidoo, 2010). There are two types of organizational justice in Asian countries, e.g., firstly it focuses on the fairness and justice of organizational policies and regulations, whereas second type involves internal members' perceptions of the fairness and justice of these policies and regulations (Aryee, Budhwar, & Chen, 2002). Organizational members perceive organizational justice as positively relating to their job satisfaction, trust, commitment, and performance (Aryee, Budhwar, & Chen, 2002). Tyagi and Singh (2019) of their study revealed that there exist a significant influence of distributive justice, procedural justice and interactional justice on managerial effectiveness in higher educational institutions. Another Indian study of Patrick et al (2014) found that the fruits of positive perception of organizational justice by teachers do lead to higher commitment, citizenship behaviour, productivity, job satisfaction, and lower intent to quit and tardiness.

### Research Questions and Methods

The main context of the study is to explore the indirect effects (moderation and mediation) of organizational justice in

Indian higher education institutions. Exploration of future research agenda as mediation and moderation role of institutional justice is another objective of the study. The study is purely exploratory in nature based on prior studies which have been gathered from google scholar citations, SCOPUS and Web of Science indexed journals. Prior studies have been reviewed of three phases adopted from **Tranfield et al. (2003)**. Initially, papers have been downloaded related to mediation and moderation effects of organizational justice from leading databases such as Google Scholar, Web of Science, and Elsevier. Secondly, the contents of these papers were classified based on year of publication, indirect effects, type of dependent and independent variable, country of research, research methodology etc. Finally, conclusions and scope for future research, especially moderation and mediation effects have been projected separately.

#### **Role of Organizational Justice as Moderator**

**Greenberg (1987)**, who first used the term specifically to refer to people's perceptions of fairness in the organization. The terms "justice and "fairness are used interchangeably in the literature (**Cohen-Charash and Spector,**

**2001; French 1964; Sheppard et al.1992**). In this study the scholar will stick to the term "justice. Preceding literature defined organizational justice as perceived justice in three types namely, distributive justice, procedural justice and interactional justice (**Colquitt, Conlon, Wesson, Porter & Ng, 2001; McDowall & Fletcher, 2004; Fuchs & Edwards, 2012**). Table:1 listed few most cited literatures that justice has great impact in defining the relationship between Job insecurity and Job performance; emotional exhaustion and organizational loyalty; Organizational Politics and workplace attitudes; etc., across industries in different countries. One important study by **Shahid et al (2018)** concludes that distributive and procedural justice moderates the relationship between emotional exhaustion and job-related outcomes. It means if an academician perceives the fairness of outcomes, he/she receives, then organizational loyalty and commitment in relation with exhaustion will weaker in diminishing. Some previous studies have also supported the findings such as (**Konovsky & Cropanzano, 1991; Schaufeli, 2006; Janssen, Lam, & Huang, 2010, Hur et al., 2014; Barclay, Skarlicki, & Pugh, 2005; Barclay et al., 2005; Baron, Harris, & Ennew, 2005; Janssen et al., 2010; Colquitt, Conlon, & Ng, 2001**).

**Table 1: Moderation Effect of Organizational Justice**

Sl. No	Author and Year	Link	Country	Industry	Methodology		
					Sample	Statistics	Measures
1	Shahid et al (2018)	Emotional Exhaustion and Job-Related Outcomes	Pakistan	Education	250	SEM	Price & Mueller (1986); Daly, (1995)
2	Wong et al (2018)	Job insecurity and Job performance	China	Insurance	265	Multiple Regression Analysis	Ambrose & Schminke, (2009).
3	Pradhan, & Pradhan, (2014)	Transformational Leadership and Deviant Workplace Behaviours	India	Multi-Industries	Literature based	Theoretical	Multi-Measures
4	Hur and Moon (2014)	Emotional exhaustion and organizational loyalty	South Korea	Airlines	247	Hierarchical moderated regression analysis	Colquitt (2001)
5	Saraihet al (2014)	Job performance factor and Career Satisfaction	Malaysia	Education	390	Hierarchical Multiple Regression	Colquitt (2001)
6	Harris et al (2007)	Organizational Politics and Workplace Attitudes	USA	Water Management	311	Hierarchical moderated regression analyses	Moorman's (1991). Price and Mueller's (1986)
7	Sora et al (2010)	Job insecurity and its outcomes	Spain	Spanish Organization	942	Hierarchical moderated regression analyses	Guest and Conway (2002).
8	Stella et al (2012)	Age, Locus of Control and Employee Outcomes	Kenya	Multi-Organizations	384	Regression Analysis	Self-structured
9	Montañezm et al (2019)	Work design and job satisfaction	Spain	42 Spanish Companies	593	SEM	Moliner et al (2008).
10	Tadesse (2019)	corporate governance and employee's organizational commitment	Ethiopia	Insurance	181	Multiple regression	Wesolowski & Mossholder (1997)

**Role of Organizational Culture as Mediator**

In general, a given variable functions as a mediator to the extent that it accounts for the relationship between the predictor and the criterion (**Baron & Kenny, 1986**). This study identified that organizational justice mediates the relationships among performance appraisal and organizational commitment; organizational democracy and employee outcomes; transformational leadership and QWL; LMX and job satisfaction; organizational commitment, and turnover intentions etc. (Table-2); in different industry settings. According to

**Zhang and Agarwal (2009)**, organizational justice acts as a mediator between HR practices and workplace outcomes. Several previous studies also ensured the mediating role of organizational studies like work ethics and turnover intentions (**Green berg, 1990**)ethical climate and workplace(**Lau and Wong, 2009**), job satisfaction, organizational commitment and turnover intention (**Koh and Boo,2004**); performance pay performance of employees (e.g. **Gerhart and Fang, 2014**; **Engellandt and Riphahn, 2011**; **Della Torre et al., 2014**).

**Table 2: Mediating Effect of Organizational Justice**

Sl. No	Author and Year	Link	Country	Industry	Methodology		
					Sample	Statistics	Measures
1	<b>Shih (2014)</b>	Performance appraisal practices and organizational commitment	Taiwan	Manufacturing firms	623	SEM	<b>Kang (2007), Moorman (1991) and Niehoff and Moorman (1993).</b>
2	<b>Ahmed et al (2019) Seyed et al (2016)</b>	Organizational democracy and employee outcomes	Pakistan	Manufacturing Companies	262	SEM	<b>Niehoff and Moorman (1993).</b>
3	<b>Lv, A., Shen, (2012)</b>	Organizational Politics with Turnover Intentions, Job Performance, and OCB	Azerbaijan	Welfare organization	200	Pearson Correlation	<b>Niehoff and Moorman (1993).</b>
4	<b>Sanjaghi, et al (2014)</b>	Conscientiousness and Organizational Citizenship Behavior	China	Health Care	241	<b>Sobel's (1982) SEM</b>	<b>Colquitt (2001).</b>

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Sl. No	Author and Year	Link	Country	Industry	Methodology		
					Sample	Statistics	Measures
5	Sanjaghi, et al (2014)	Entrepreneurial Orientations on Organizational Commitment	Iran	Education	500	SEM	Colquitt, et al. (2001)
6	Gillet (2013)	Transformational leadership and QWL	France	Healthcare	343	Indirect effect (Preacher and Hayes, 2008).	Niehoff and Moorman (1993)
7	Kiersch, (2012)	Authentic leadership and affective commitment	USA	Multi-Industries	211	SEM	Colquitt's et al (2001)
8	Durrani, (2017)	Islamic Work Ethics and Employee Turnover Intention	Pakistan	Corporate Sector	550	SEM	Niehoff and Moorman (1993).
9	Lee (2000)	LMX and Job Satisfaction, Organizational Commitment, and Turnover Intentions	Virginia	Hospitality Industry	500	SEM	Price and Mueller (1986) Niehoff and Moorman (1993)
10	Abbas, Qamar. (2017).	Workforce Diversity and Organizational Outcomes:	Pakistan	Government Organizations	239	Multiple Regression Analysis	Colquitt (2001)

### Conclusions and Future Research Direction

As the prime motive behind this study is to explore the existing researches of organizational justice nationally and globally with regard to mediation and moderation effects in Indian university

system. Literature shows that organizational justice (OJ) is a multi-dimensional term that is first developed in commercial organizations and comprises distributive, procedural and interactional justice (Silva and Caetano, 2014; Elamin, 2012; Erkutlu, 2011; Cohen

**Charash and Spector, 2001; Williams et al., 2002).** The main stream of research on organizational justice in higher education focuses on organizational justice outcomes such as job satisfaction, employee commitment, organizational citizenship behaviour and intentions to leave (**Diekmann et al., 2004; Al-Zu'bi, 2010; Hassan and Hashim, 2011; Erkutlu, 2011, Hassan and Hashim , 2011, Mohammad et al. 2010;Cohen-Charash and Spector,2001; SE Alfy, SA David, 2017).** Direct effect of organizational justice has been studied across the globe in various industries is very common, but indirect effect (moderation and mediation) is rarely studied particularly in India. The present study has identified probable areas where study is needed in Indian higher education sector (Fig.1 and 2).

India's higher education system is the world's third-largest in terms of students, next to China and the United States has witnessed a tremendous increase in the number of Universities/University level Institutions & Colleges since independence (**Sarkar, 2020**). Despite the increased access to higher education in India, challenges remain: low employability of graduates, poor quality of education, and complex regulatory norms continue to plague the sector (**Gupta and Ravi, 2019**). As a result in the prestigious **Quacquarelli Symonds (QS) World University Rankings 2020**, only three Indian Universities- IIT-Bombay, IIT-Delhi and IISc (Bangalore)- have been included in the top 200 institutes (**Sarkar, 2020**).The Indian

higher education system was always haggard by bureaucracy, chiefly in financial and procedural matters. For the first time since 2012, there was no Indian institution among the top 300 in the Times Higher Education (THE) World University Rankings list (**Chaudhuri, 2020**).Research indicates that in one form or the other, higher education across the world has been experiencing the massification phase, although in varying degrees (**Trow 2006**). A growing body of literature (**Trow 2000; Guri-Rosenblit et al 2007; Mok et al 2013; Chan and Lin 2015; Varghese 2015; Ahmed 2016; Gandhi 2018**) suggests that the massification of higher education is to be treated both as a process and a result.

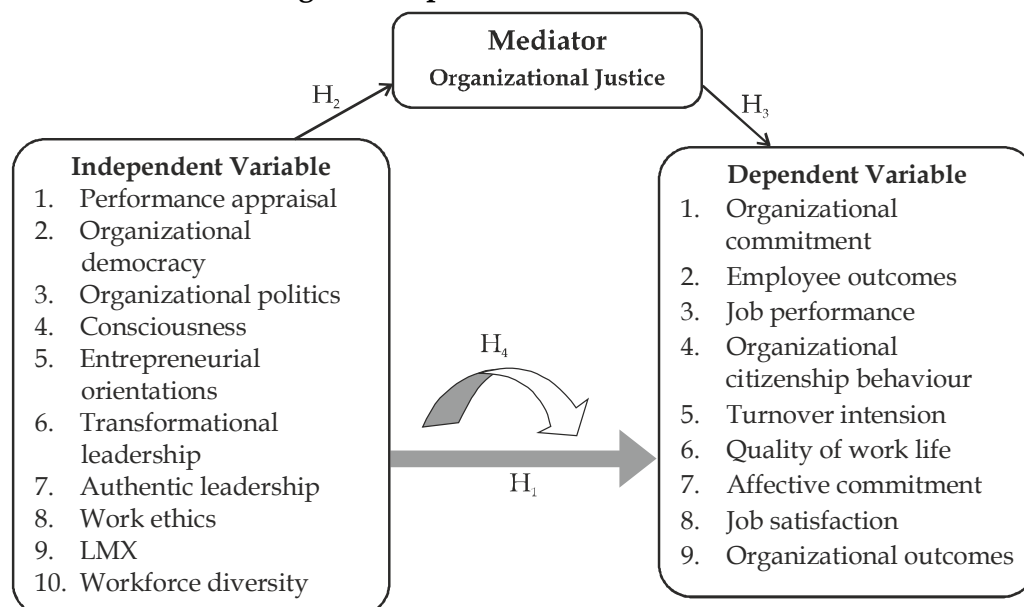
On the basis of above backdrop, the study has identified couple of organizational behavior and human resources issues for further researches. Institutions can be developed and nurtured as world class educational centers only when all the stakeholders of a university become active participants in its evolution. Establishing organizational justice can play a revolutionary role in this regard. Out of several measures suggested by different scholars three measurements for organizational justice are divided into three constructs, distributive justice, procedural justice and interactional justice, based on the studies conducted by **Moorman(1991) and Niehoff and Moorman (1993)**. **Colquitt, et al. (2001)** are widely accepted. Literature had shown that organizational justice is one of the vital elements in organizational success (**Kashif, Mohmood and Aijaz,**

2016). Infact, organizational justice has been a popular research topic among researchers in the last three decades and that is due to its reported impact on performance, trust, organizational citizenship behavior, ownership and commitment (Cheung, 2013 and Chou & Lopez-Rodriguez, 2013).

Since organizational justice is a multi-dimensional construct it has several predictors and outcomes, so it's an opportunity of conducting researches through indirect effects which is very rare in higher education sector. In fact, relations between variables namely predictors and outcomes of organizational justice are often more complex than simple bivariate relations between a dependent and an independent variable. Sometimes, these relations may be modified by, or informed by, the addition of a third variable in the research

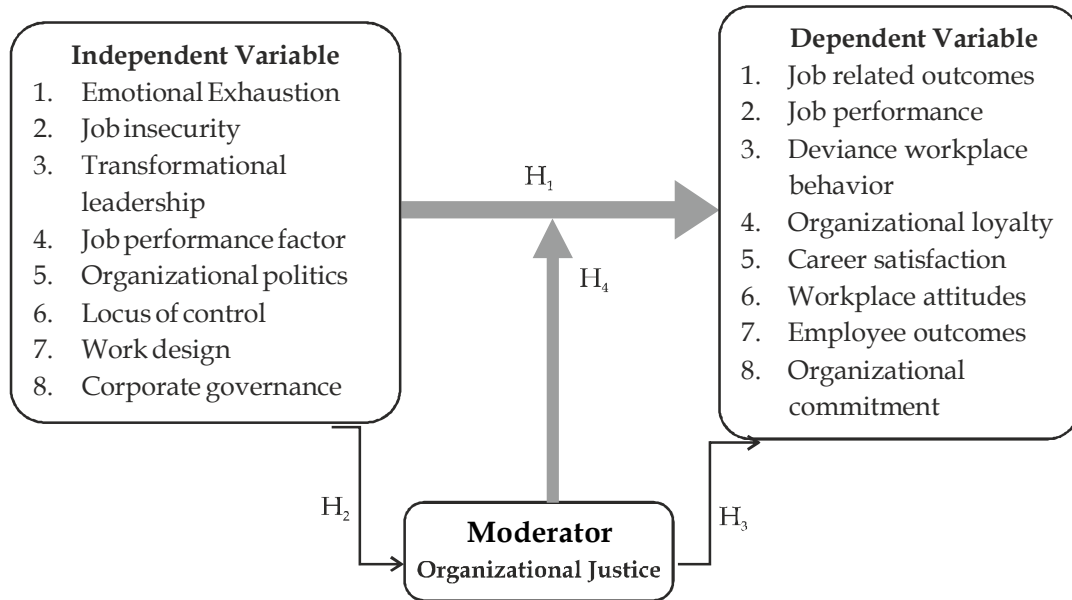
design. Examples of third variables include suppressors, confounders, covariates, mediators, and moderators (MacKinnon, et al, 2000). Mediation, or an indirect effect, is said to occur when the effect of an independent variable (X) on a dependent variable (Y) is transmitted by a mediator (M). In other words, X affects Y because X affects M, and M, in turn, affects Y (Hayes, 2013). Mediation analysis facilitates a better understanding of the relationship between the independent and dependent variables when the variables appear not to have a definite connection (Kenny, 2016). Mediators speak to how or why such effects occur. Preacher & Hayes (2004) argued that the discovery that two variables are related to each other is only one small part of the aim of research; deeper understanding is gained when we comprehend the process that produces the effect.

**Fig. 1: Prospective Mediation Model**





**Fig. 2: Prospective Moderation Model**



On the other hand, Fig.2 defines probable moderating role of organizational justice in relationship between dependent and independent variable. Above probable causal factors have been tested different industries, but in higher education sector it is not appeared, although now a lot of discussion to promote world class institutions in India. Higher education institutions, in particular, have a central role to play in achieving a new sense of individual consciousness and intellectual orientation towards creating sustainable futures. Universities must serve as bastions for academic and scholarly work they must also serve as models of organizational innovation, agility in a complex world, creative negotiation with change, and representative in

demographic, identity and design with local and national communities. A moderator is a variable that specifies conditions under which a given predictor is related to an outcome. Organizational justice (moderator) explains ‘when’ a DV and IV are related. Moderation implied an interaction effect, where introducing a moderating variable changes the direction or magnitude of the relationship between causal and outcome variables.

**Acknowledgement**

The publication has been financially supported by the MHRD/ICSSR, New Delhi and responsibility for the facts stated, opinion expressed or conclusions reached is entirely that of the author and the MHRD/ICSSR accepts no responsibility for them.

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