



Original Research Paper

Vol. 05 Issue 01 Jan - 2022

Manuscript ID: #0543

ORGANIZATIONAL JUSTICE AS A CORRELATE OF TEACHERS' ENGAGEMENT IN PUBLIC SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN ANAMBRA STATE

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ABSTRACT

This study investigated organizational justice as a correlate of teachers' engagement in public secondary schools in Anambra State. It adopted a correlational research design. Two research questions guided the study and two hypotheses were tested at a 0.05 level of significance. Out of a population of 4,947 teachers in the 263 public secondary schools in the State, a sample of 989 teachers was drawn using proportionate stratified and simple random sampling techniques. Two structured questionnaires developed by the researcher titled: "Organizational Justice Questionnaire" (OJQ) and Engagement Questionnaire (EEQ) were used for data collection. The instrument was validated by experts in Educational Management and Measurement and Evaluation. Cronbach's Alpha reliability statistics were used to determine the internal consistency of the instrument and this yielded a coefficient value of 0.75 and 0.80 respectively. The researcher with the aid of three research assistants administered a total of 989 copies of the questionnaires to the respondents. Out of this number, 951 copies representing 97% were completed, successfully retrieved, and used for data analysis. Data relating to both the research questions and hypotheses were analyzed using Pearson Product Moment Correlation. The results of the findings revealed that there is a significantly high positive correlation between teachers' perceived distributive and procedural justice and their engagement in public secondary schools in Anambra State. Based on the findings, it was recommended among others that the management of public secondary schools in Anambra State should initiate, encourage and foster the practice of both distributive and procedural justice in their schools for improved teacher engagement. Implications of the study were drawn and conclusions were made.

KEYWORDS

Organizational justice, distributive justice, procedural justice and engagement.



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Introduction

The school as a social system is considered an ideal environment for the transformation of lives. Education is perceived as an essential tool for social and economic development of the nation and of the individual. Teaching as a core aspect of education is a very demanding profession, encumbered with a lot of challenges that have the capacity of lowering the level of engagement of teachers. These challenges faced by teachers in public secondary schools especially in Anambra State include injustice, poor remuneration, job turnover and lack of job satisfaction.

Organizational Justice provides an insight into how decisions are taken concerning the distribution of outcomes and the sense of justice people have over the production of those outcomes (Sujono, Tunas, Sudiarditha, 2020). Organizational justice as a concept represents the teachers' perceptions of fairness in the school system and their reactions to the various types of treatment they receive and how they respond to it (Kim and Chung, 2019). Organizational justice is a key element for the advancement of the educational sector and a means to protect the human and psychological development of individuals in the workplace. The practice of organizational justice in the school system, seeks to ensure that teachers, do not feel emotionally and psychologically traumatized in the workplace as result of feelings of injustice which may be meted on them by their employers. Reacting, Robbins and Judge (2018) stressed that organizational justice is concerned with how employees feel about the management and decision makers and how they treat them at work.

Rupp and Thornton (2017) asserted that organizational justice can be classified into four categories namely: distributive, procedural, interactional and informational justice. But for the purpose of this study, the researcher is focused on the distributive and procedural aspects of organizational justice. Speaking further, Rupp and Thornton (2017) stated that distributive justice in the school system reflects the perceptions of the teachers regarding the fairness of outcomes. Distributive justice is more concerned with ensuring that there is a fair allocation of resources in the school. Fairness in allocation typically takes into cognizance the total amount of resources available for distribution, the distributing procedure and the pattern of distribution. In distributive justice the teachers' perceptions of justice in the sharing of organizational resources, expenditure, promotions, are prioritized. It also lays emphasis on issues of status, seniority, productivity, effort, needs, and the determination of payment.

Corroborating, McShane and Von Glinow (2018) posited that distributive justice is all about the employee's perception of fairness in the manner the organization reward employees for their various contributions, service and personal sacrifice for the growth and development of the organization.

In the school system, teachers perceive distributive justice to involve fairness and justice as it relates to promotions, appointments, job schedule, pay and other important indices of personal development. Supporting this, Jones and George (2016) asserted that distributive justice is concerned with worker's view about the fairness of promotions, job assignments, pay as well as working conditions in the workplace.

Another form of organizational justice is Procedural justice. Procedural justice is defined as the fairness of the processes that lead to various outcomes. When teachers in a school feel that they have a voice in the process, or that the process involves positive characteristics such as consistency, accuracy, ethics, and lack of bias; then procedural justice will be said to be enhanced. The educational implication of this, is that, if decisions made in the school are equally and consistently stated and performed by the administration, irrespective of who is involved, then the teachers' perceived level of procedural justice will increase (Hoy and Miskel, 2005). Also, teachers who perceive that there is a

sense of equality regarding the method and procedures adopted in the decision making tend to perceive the distribution of rewards and punishments as fair.

McShane and Von Glinow (2018) posited that procedural justice refers to the fairness of the procedures adopted in distribution of resources in the organization. It seeks answer to the question, was due process followed or not? Others viewed it as the perception of equity with respect to whether rules and regulations were followed in the process of rewarding or punishing a worker (Choudhry, Philip and Kumar, 2011). Jones and George (2016) see procedural justice as the workers' perception of the fairness of the procedures used in determining how rewards are distributed within the organization.

In every work environment, it is expected that the employers of labour would treat all their employees equally and fairly irrespective of their ethnic, cultural or religious affiliations. Unfortunately the reverse seems to be the case in public secondary schools in Anambra State. The government as a result of some of their actions (favouritism in postings and promotions) and inactions (poor salary structure and remunerations, poor working environment), have left the teaching profession riddled with dissatisfied and poorly engaged workers. This abnormality has caused many graduate teachers to withdraw their services from teaching while many of those who remain in the profession tend to develop an attitude of cynicism and resignation due to the perceived injustice meted on them.

Reacting to the statement above, Odunayo, Ayodeji, Omotolani and Oyebanji (2015) observed that when teachers experience fair treatment from the school organization, they are more likely to show a more positive attitude, good behaviour and increased commitment to the school system. Continuing, Odunayo et al argued that when it comes to issues like recruitment, selection and placement, promotion, allocation of monetary resources, policy making and policy implementation that affect both the decision makers and the employees; it has to be done objectively.

Speaking of objectivity, Micheal (2015) stated that a culture of ethics, fairness and compliance cannot exist in the workplace without organizational justice. Corroborating, Iqbal, Rehan, Fatima and Nawab (2017) acknowledged that the existence of organizational justice seems to be imperative for the success of any organization since it may have a direct link with the performance of employees. Suifan (2019) further affirmed that it is important for organizations to focus on implementing organizational justice and to view it as a priority for cultivating a sense of satisfaction and fair treatment among employees. This will likely increase their level of commitment and as such achieve organizational goals and objectives.

For the goals and objectives of the school system to be achieved, it is important that organizational justice should be practiced in the workplace. This is so because teachers, who perceive any form of unfairness in the treatment meted to them by the system may sooner than later begin to exhibit varying degrees of negative behaviour. Such negative behaviours may influence the teachers' level of engagement and performance in the school.

The concept of engagement has received increasing attention as an indicator of the outcomes of individual, team and organizational performance (Rana, 2015). Rana further noted that engagement in the workplace results to right conditions for all members of an organization to give of their best each day while being committed to their organization's goals and values. Engagement is the extent to which employees feel passionate and enthusiastic about their jobs and also how committed and motivated they are, to put in extra effort for the organization. The concept of engagement is therefore all about how to satisfy employees, and how happy the employees are with their jobs as well as the environment in which the employees work with their colleagues. Speaking further, Wong

(2020) opined that engagement is hinged on the emotional connection and commitment workers have towards their workplace. She stated further that engaged employees care about the goals of the organization and tend to identify with their work on a personal level. For the most engaged employees, organizational goals and personal goals begin to blend together.

Speaking of engagement and performance in the school, the teachers were interviewed by the researcher and they opined that there was a lot of dishonesty, insincerity, inequity and injustice within the system and that some people on top of the management of secondary schools placed their personal interests over and above those of the school system. They further stated that there seemed to be a lot of unjust practices and attitudes amongst top management staff in public secondary schools in Anambra State that negatively affect the teachers' performance. And these, amongst others, include: denial or delay in the promotion of duly qualified teachers, victimization for standing for the truth, self-aggrandizement and favouritism in appointments to strategic positions (Obiekwe and Ezeugbor, 2019).

Continuing they stated that some school managers, continually favour one or a few teachers over the others, thereby missing out on the talents and skills the others bring to the table. This also comes to play when the managers, keep promoting someone who is not ready for more responsibilities over someone who is ready and able to take on additional challenges. Furthermore, in one of the secondary schools used for this study, it was revealed that there were certain teachers whose promotions had been held back for several years even when they are duly qualified for the promotion.

Asuzu (2019) stated that the basic task of schools is teaching and that public secondary schools in Anambra State are experiencing a high rate of attrition of teachers due to poor funding, poor working conditions, inadequate facilities, lack of incentives for teachers etc. As such, for teachers to be satisfied, justified and do away with every form of cynicism in their job, they have to be satisfied with the various aspects of the job situation, such as the pay and promotion, among others, that encourage proper employee engagement.

Statement of the problem

High attrition rate seems to be rife amongst teachers in public secondary schools in Anambra State. This could be evidenced with the large number of teachers that exited the teaching profession in Anambra State in the last five years. (As at 2015/2016 academic session, Anambra State government had 6,396 teachers in their employ; but presently, in 2020/2021 academic session, the number of teachers drastically reduced to 4,947 teachers. It therefore seem logical to opine that some teachers fail to see anything good about their job as a teacher in secondary schools in the state, they constantly and inadvertently criticize every activity or happening in the school through badmouthing, sarcastic humour and other acts aimed at disparaging the school. This behaviour could be as a result of the treatment meted to them either directly or indirectly by the school management. In recent decades, the complexity of work life, excessive workload, differences between social and individual expectations, environmental conditions and problematic time management issues, have all created anxiety and tension for employees of many organizations as well as institutions of learning such as secondary schools in Anambra State. This was confirmed by Khan (2014) when he posited that, in this 21st century, things have greatly changed in line with globalization, technology, and work force diversity. Thus in this contemporary time, one of the biggest challenges in the face of leaders/managers is to retain the best people in the organization.

Again, some of the administrators of these secondary schools seem to be more concerned with the productivity level of the organization and fail to take into consideration the total well-being, attitudes and emotions of the teachers in their schools. These teachers overtime, take note of this trend and may become disconcerted, thereby developing negative sentiments towards their workplace. It is against this backdrop that the researcher deemed it necessary to embark on this research study that seeks answer to the question, what is the teachers' perception of the correlation between organizational justice and their engagement in public secondary schools in Anambra State?

Purpose of the study

The main purpose of this study is to ascertain the teachers' perception of organizational justice scores as correlates of their engagement scores in public secondary schools in Anambra State. Specifically, this study seeks to determine the nature of:

1. Teachers' perception of distributive justice as correlate of their engagement in public secondary schools in Anambra State.
2. Teachers' perception of procedural justice as correlate of their engagement in public secondary schools in Anambra State.

Research questions

The following research questions guided the study:

1. What is the correlation between the teachers' perceived distributive justice and their engagement in public secondary schools in Anambra State?
2. What is the correlation between the teachers' perceived procedural justice and their engagement in public secondary schools in Anambra State?

Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance.

1. Teachers' perceived distributive justice will not significantly correlate with their engagement in public secondary schools in Anambra State.
2. Teachers' perceived procedural justice will not significantly correlate with their engagement in public secondary schools in Anambra State.

Method

The research design employed in this study is the correlation survey research design. This study was carried out in the state government owned public secondary schools in Anambra State. The population of the study is 4,947 teachers in the 263 public secondary schools in Anambra State. The sample for the study is 989 respondents drawn using multi-stage sampling procedure. The sample represents 20% of the population. Two researchers developed questionnaires titled: "Organizational Justice Questionnaire" (OJQ) and Engagement Questionnaire (EEQ) were used for data collection. The literature was developed from literature and consultation with stake-holders. The organizational justice questionnaire was divided into two sections A and B. Section A seeks to obtain the personal data of respondents while section B which contains 18 items seeks to obtain necessary information from the respondents on organizational justice operating in their schools. The second questionnaire tagged: Engagement questionnaire (EEQ) contains a total of 19 items which seeks to find out the various forms of teachers' engagement in public secondary schools in Anambra State. The response option for both questionnaires is a four point response scale of strongly agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D), Strongly Disagree (SD); which were weighted 4,3,2,1 respectively. The

instruments were subjected to face validation using three experts, two from the Department of Educational Management and Policy and the other from Educational Measurement and Evaluation in the Department of Educational Foundations, all in the Faculty of Education, NnamdiAzikiwe University, Awka. The reliability of the two questionnaires was determined by conducting a pilot test using 20 teachers from two governments owned public secondary schools in Enugu State. The scores obtained from the 20 respondents were collated using Cronbach Alpha reliability coefficient for test of internal consistency. The Organizational Justice Questionnaire" (OJQ) yielded a coefficient score of 0.75 whereas the Engagement Questionnaire (EEQ) yielded a coefficient score of 0.80. These scores were deemed high enough for the instrument to be taken as reliable and adequate for the study. The researcher adopted the direct method of administration of the questionnaire. A total of 989 copies of the questionnaire were distributed and a total of 951 copies were retrieved back and used for data analysis. The data collected was analyzed using Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient for the research questions. The critical table of Pearson r was used to test the two null hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. For the purposes of interpretation of the correlation coefficient, the rule posited by Nworgu (2015) for the interpretation of the correlation coefficients, was adopted, namely: 0.80 and above = very high relationship, 0.60 to 0.80 = high relationship, 0.40 to 0.60 = medium relationship, 0.20 to 0.40 = low relationship, 0.00 to 0.20 = very low or no relationship. Then calculated probability value (P) was compared with the level of significance. Where the P value is less than the stipulated level of significance (0.05), the null hypotheses was not accepted but where the P value is equal to or greater than the stipulated level of significance, the null hypothesis was accepted

Results

Research Question One: What is the correlation between teachers' perceived distributive justice and their engagement in public secondary schools in Anambra State?

Table 1: Pearson r on the Correlation between Teachers' Perceived Distributive Justice and Their Engagement

Source of Variation	N	r	Remark
Distributive Justice	951	0.940	Very High Positive Relationship
Engagement			

Table 1 show that there is a very high positive relationship existing between teachers' perceived distributive justice and their engagement in public secondary schools in Anambra State. This is evident by the size of the Pearson's Correlation Coefficient r, which is 0.940.

Research Question Two: What is the correlation between teachers' perceived procedural justice and their engagement in public secondary schools in Anambra State?

Table 2: Pearson r on the Correlation between Teachers' Perceived Procedural Justice and Their Engagement

Source of Variation	N	r	Remark
Procedural Justice Engagement	951	0.888	Very High Positive Relationship

The analysis in Table 2 reveals that there is a very high positive relationship of 0.888 between teachers' perceived procedural justice and their engagement in public secondary schools in Anambra State.

Hypotheses

Hypothesis One: There is no significant correlation between teachers' perceived distributive justice and their engagement in public secondary schools in Anambra State.

Table 3: Test of Significance of Pearson Correlation between Teachers' Perceived Distributive Justice and Their Engagement

Source of Variation	N	r	p-value	Remark
Distributive Justice Engagement	951	0.940	0.00	Sig

Analysis in Table 11 shows that there is a significant correlation between teachers' perceived distributive justice and their engagement in public secondary schools in Anambra State. The calculated r (0.940) had $P.value < 0.05$. The 1st null hypothesis was therefore rejected.

Hypothesis Two: There is no significant correlation between teachers' perceived procedural justice and their engagement in public secondary schools in Anambra State.

Table 4: Test of Significance of Pearson Correlation between Teachers' Perceived Procedural Justice and Their Engagement

Source of Variation	N	r	p-value	Remark
Procedural Justice Engagement	951	0.888	0.00	Sig

Table 4 shows that there is a significant correlation between teachers' perceived procedural justice and their engagement in public secondary schools in Anambra State. The calculated r (0.888) had $P.value < 0.05$. The 2nd null hypothesis was therefore rejected.

Discussion of Findings

From the findings of this study as seen in table 1, it shows that there is a very high positive relationship existing between teachers' perceived distributive justice and their engagement in public

secondary schools in Anambra State. This is evident by the size of the Pearson's Correlation Coefficient r , which is 0.940.

Again, the analysis in Table 1 shows that there is a significant correlation between teachers' perceived distributive justice and their engagement in public secondary schools in Anambra State. The calculated r (0.940) had $P.value < 0.05$. The 1st null hypothesis was therefore not accepted. This means that the correlation between distributive justice and engagement of teachers is not only very high positively but as well in significant proportion. This finding was supported by the findings of Muhammed, Rehan, Fatima and Nawab (2017) that revealed that there is a significant positive relationship between distributive justice and employee performance. This is because in distributive justice, the teacher believes that there should be sharing of organizational resources and appropriate reward for efforts. This means that teachers in public secondary schools in Anambra State believe that distributive justice is highly positively correlated to their engagement. Supporting this findings, Ohioyenoye and Eguavoen (2019) further revealed that organizational justice with distributive justice as one of the dimensions of the concept, have a positive influence on engagement in tertiary institutions in Edo State. Their findings further stated that employers should increase their efforts in rewarding their employees and also ensure that all employees are treated and supported equally.

This goes to show that when teachers feel that their job schedule and take-home pay is fair, that their workload is manageable and that they are rewarded accordingly as and when due, that resources are evenly distributed, that there is adequate representation for all; that they are allowed to make input before decisions are made; then distributive justice will be said to have been met and this will have a positive correlation to their engagement in public secondary schools in Anambra State. Corroborating this, Tafamel and Akrawah (2019) posited that distributive justice has a positive and a significant relationship with employee commitment. They further stated that school managers should ensure that distributive justice is practiced in the educational system so as to enhance the commitment level of employees especially when it comes to the allocation of resources in the educational system.

These findings are appropriate and in line with the findings of the present study. Thus school managers and administrators are encouraged to practice the tenets of distributive justice for improved teacher engagement. This is so because, distributive justice lays emphasis on the proper allocation of resources and as such, any school where inequalities in outcome distribution does not arise would be considered a school guided by the principles of distributive justice and teachers in such schools would be seen as properly engaged.

Procedural justice as correlates of teacher engagement in public secondary schools in Anambra State.

The analysis in Table 2 revealed that there is a very high positive relationship of 0.888 between teachers' perceived procedural justice and their engagement in public secondary schools in Anambra State.

Table 2 also showed that there is a significant correlation between teachers' perceived procedural justice and their engagement in public secondary schools in Anambra State. The calculated r (0.888) had $P.value < 0.05$. The 2nd null hypothesis was therefore not accepted. This therefore suggests that teachers in public secondary school in Anambra State are of the perception that imbibing the tenets of procedural justice in their schools will significantly correlate to improvement in their engagement. It

is important to note, that procedural justice is enhanced when there is adequate representation of teachers in the decision making process and their inputs and suggestions are taken into consideration. Most teachers in public secondary schools in Anambra state agreed that fair hearing, consistency in the manner they are treated, will positively correlate to their engagement. This is in agreement with the opinions of Efanga and Akpan (2015) which stated that if decisions are equally and consistently stated and performed by the administrators, that teachers' procedural justice will increase.

Procedural justice thus gives the teacher the right to be heard without bias while also ensuring that there is fairness in the work procedures. Speaking further in agreement, the researcher from the findings noted that teachers in public secondary schools in Anambra State believe that there is a correlation between procedural justice and their engagement. This goes to show that if teachers are given the opportunity to explain their situation, if they perceive that the management is sensitive, fair, impartial and transparent, that they will not feel polarized or withdrawn. Edeh and Ugwu (2020) conducted a correlational study that revealed that procedural justice as one of the dimensions of organizational justice has a positive significant association and as such enhances employee commitment. This finding further proves that teachers in public secondary schools in Anambra State are right to assert their stand on the existing correlation between procedural justice and their engagement. Corroborating, the study conducted by Efanga, Aniedi and Idente (2015) further revealed that there is a significant positive relationship between the sub-dimensions of organizational justice and teachers' citizenship behaviour. The reveal of these findings is thus at par with the perception of teachers in public owned secondary schools in Anambra State. In summary, the findings of this study connotes that an increase in procedural justice variables, will lead to increase in teacher engagement while a decrease in procedural justice variables, will lead to a decrease in teacher engagement in public secondary schools in Anambra State.

Conclusion

From the findings of this research an inference can be made is that the majority of the teachers perceive that the two dimensions of organizational justice who include: distributive justice and procedural justice, have a significant and a high positive correlation with their engagement in public secondary schools in Anambra State. The reason for this perception from the teachers is because most of them in the employ of government owned secondary schools in the state yearn for a workplace where the tenets of organizational justice are in place. This they believe will lead to greater levels of engagement for teachers.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are made:

1. The management of public secondary schools in Anambra State should initiate, encourage and foster the practice of distributive justice, procedural justice, interactional and informational justice in their schools which can lead to improvement in the present levels of teachers' engagement.
2. The government who are the owners of these schools, should regularly organize workshops, seminars and conferences aimed at revealing the importance of encouraging the fostering and practicing of organizational justice in the school system.
3. Educational policy makers should ensure that organizational justice is inculcated and enshrined in the various educational policies made. They should also ensure that the formulated policies are adhered to by all stakeholders in public secondary schools in Anambra State.

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