

Four Forms of Organizational Justice - A Literature Review

Elizabeth Ruiz

University of Houston Downtown

### **Abstract**

This literature review will look into different studies that investigate various aspects of organizational justice. Some of the studies assessed will have looked at the impact of three of the four forms of organizational justice on job satisfaction of the employees, based on the responses gathered from different companies all over the world. Questionnaires were used as a tool for data collection by most of the studies. Management officials were the most sampled out outfit. Data was analyzed and coded using the SPSS version 16. This particular research was aimed at linking the functionality of the four types of organizational justice in enabling decision-making, especially within the human resource department. The research would thus, enable organizational leaders to come up with effective methods of maintaining organizational justice to improve employee performance and also to reduce turnover rate.

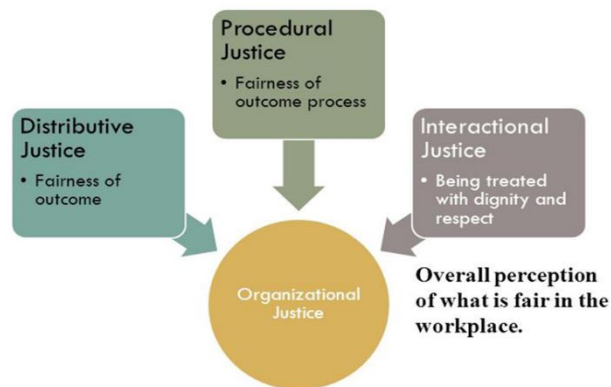
Other articles studied in this review looked at the relationship between three of the four forms of organizational justice and job satisfaction among the employees in the workplace. The three organizational justice types studied in this article are distributive justice, procedural justice, and interpersonal justice. One such study by Alsalem and Alhaiyani (2007), took place in Jordan. Sample size selected was 229 employees of an Electrical Industrial company. The study revealed a significant relationship between perception of the organization and the age of the people who participated in the study. Also, there was a positive correlation found between the forms of organizational justice and job satisfaction among the employees.

The articles reviewed in this literature have findings, and the conclusions reached apply to a much broader audience, as long as there are no cultural or religious barriers that state otherwise. This paper also includes some suggestions for future adjustments in the field of organizational justice.

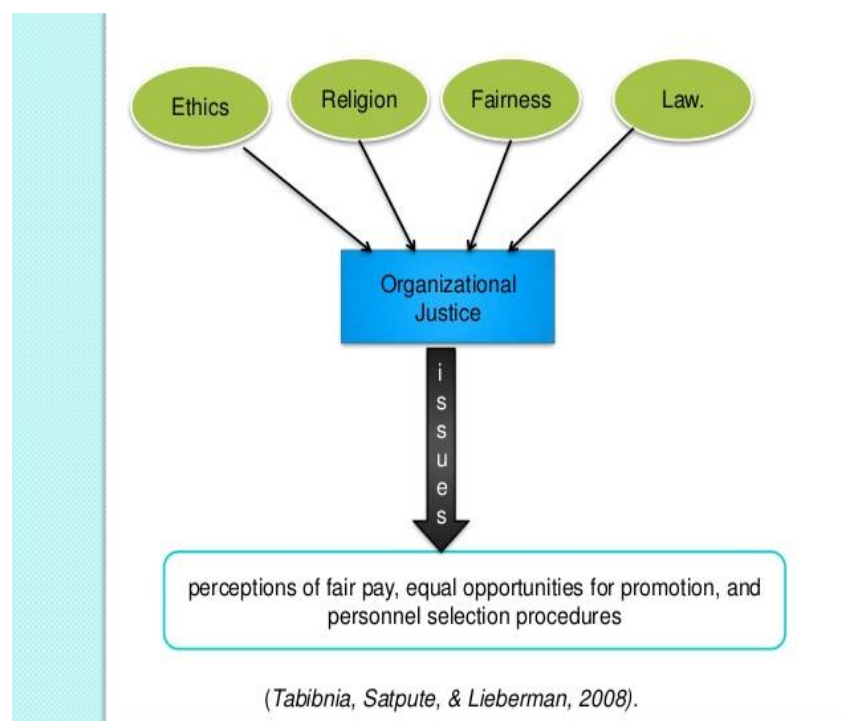
## Introduction

For the most effective and efficient operational systems, organizations need the input of human labor. Both managers and employees are a necessary component of business success. Without the skills and expertise of their staff, organizations may not be able to sustain operations (Bakhshi & Kumar, 2009). Among the top measures of any team's performance are the level of customer satisfaction and the rate of employee job performance. Most businesses assume that monetary gain and financial security is the only thing that employees care about while in the business environment (Sania & Siraj, 2013). It has, however, been discovered that besides personal financial gain, employees look for other intangible aspects that are not measurable in monetary terms. Organizational justice is the tool that satisfies this large need. It gives employees the sense of belonging and the kind of loyalty that comes with fair treatment from employers. Whether it is in the way, rewards are distributed (distributive justice) in the processes undertaken to spread (procedural justice), or in the interpersonal communication among all member of staff regardless of their position (interpersonal justice), or in the networking of information within the organization (informational justice).

## Justice and Equity Theory



Therefore, with the rate of global competition rising on a daily basis, organizations are tasked with the role of finding a balance between satisfying their customer needs and ensuring their employees are happy and content within their professions. The organizational justice concept outlines the aspect of fairness and proper behavior of the organization towards their employees (Fernandes & Awamleh, 2006). It clearly describes the conditions under which employees feel most wanted and rewarded. A reward-based system of operation is one-way employees feel motivated to be a part of their organization. These awards are usually based on employees' contributions made to their organization, aside from the salaries they receive. The rewards could be in the monetary form or non-monetary forms, such as an employee of the month traditions, additional leave days, free holidays at the organization's expense, and much more. Such organizational forms of justice have proved to have a positive effect on the employees' morale and quality of the work produced in the long run. The company becomes more productive as a result and gets to reduce its turnover rate (Sania & Siraj, 2013).



This paper will be looking at several articles that investigate the issue of organizational justice in different areas, focusing on the four broad types of organizational justice.

### The Four Types of Organizational Justice

Sania & Siraj (2013), state that organizational justice is the process by which firms can evaluate their methods of treatment of employees by following both the stated and the unstated rules and laws of morals and professional ethics. They go on to explain that for organizational justice to be achieved, employers must be in a position to view things from the perspective of the employees. They must only take those actions that attain justice. Organizational justice follows what people feel is fair and just in their perspective. With this method, the organization’s employees are more loyal, faithful, act as though they own the organization, become more committed to their jobs, and as such, petty cases as theft and resignations are reduced. Justice within the workplace is a significant influence of professional job satisfaction. Mahmud et al., (2015), state that job satisfaction is the amount of joy, pleasure, and pride that is derived from one performing assigned tasks at their place of work. They also add that it may be defined as the emotional attachment that one develops towards his or her profession. To determine the factors that lead to job satisfaction in this content, Mahmud et al. looked into three forms of organizational justice about the level of job satisfaction of employees.

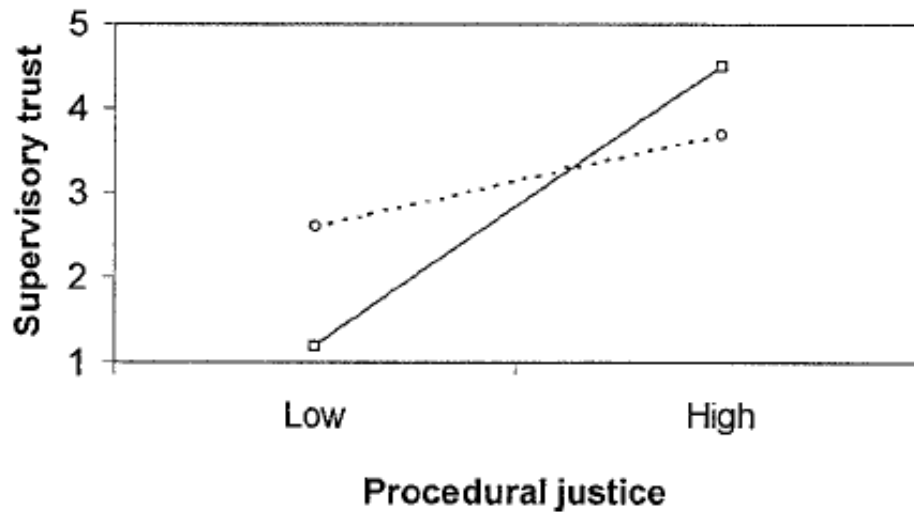
#### 1. Distributive Justice as a Determinant of Job Satisfaction



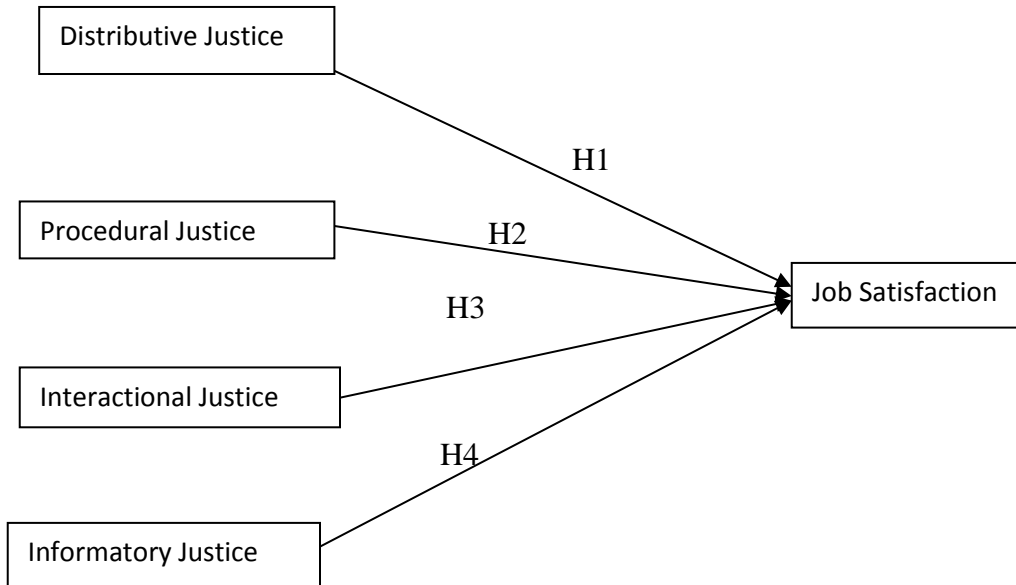
Mahmud et al. state that people not only look at the physical or monetary aspects of their particular jobs, it is also important to establish whether or not the reward or the pay that was acquired as a result of performing a specific task was earned. This literature review has obtained the studies of Russell et al. (2007) and Sania & Siraj (2013) all of which correspond the fact that distributive justice is one of the key factors to attaining job satisfaction. Fatt, Knin, and Heng (2010) add that distributive justice impacts the ample amount of contentment that an individual gets from performing his tasks in addition to the pay they get. DeConick and Stilwell (2004), add that distributive justice is the best way to tell that your employees are content with their payment regime. Therefore, it is a very critical influencer of employee job satisfaction. A study by Azam Ismail et al. (2009), proved that there is indeed a link between job satisfaction and the amount of pay that employees received. It is, therefore, safe to define distributive justice as the assumption of fairness in the eyes of employees from the outcomes of their labor. These findings include payments (salaries or wages), the amount of work performed within a day or a specified period, the working hours stipulated by the organization, frequency, and availability of promotions for employees among other miscellaneous benefits that are accrued as a result of working within the organization.

Studies conducted in the banking sector by Alvi & Abbasi (2012), aimed to figure out what factors motivated employees to adopt customer-oriented functions. They discovered that employees were more willing to satisfy customer needs, if and when they realized that their banking institutions rewarded all employees fairly. It is, therefore, right to hypothesize that distributive justice impacts employee satisfaction positively.

## **2. Procedural Justice as a Determinant of Job Satisfaction**



There has been a lot of literature supporting procedural justice over the years. Yang, Brown & Byongook (2011); Awamleh & Fernandes (2006); Saresheh, Ghaziani, & Tayebi (2012), all may have different dimensions of study, but they tend to agree on the fact that, if there is equality in the process of maintaining and upholding law and order in any state, organization, or situation, the level of confidence in the body in charge is boosted. Regarding job satisfaction, when the employees of an individual institution are of the opinion that all decisions made in their workplace are free, fair and open to suggestions, they will be more willing to abide by the decisions made, as well as will become more involved in their jobs. Bakhshi, Kumar & Rani (2009), are also of the opinion that to determine how effectively employees take the decisions made within the firm, they need to feel like they were considered in the process as this avoids feelings of dissatisfaction. Procedural justice best explains the dynamics of employee satisfaction with their jobs. Other related studies have also supported this thesis stating that, if employees feel that decision-making is open to all and that it is meeting their needs, then there is a higher commitment to the decisions made. The hypothesis formulated in this case is that procedural justice is a positive influence on the level of job satisfaction.



### 3. Interactional Justice as a Determinant of Job Satisfaction

Sania & Siraj (2013), define interaction as a primary ingredient of any job environment. It is the only way people get to communicate and share helpful ideas. When employees within a firm feel that the kind of interaction they have with their bosses is fair, they can freely communicate with them. This interaction, in turn, leads to higher employee performance. On the flip side, in the event of sour relationships between employees and their employers, there is no flow of information, and bad blood prevails. Studies have proven this fact, showing the significance of the interactional justice on employee job satisfaction. Al Zu'bi (2010); Bakhshi, Kumar & Rani (2009), all note in their articles that there is a high correlation between companies that have aspects of interactional justice incorporated into their system and the level of employee correspondence to their superiors. Interactional justice involves discussing the issues that directly affect the workplace regarding the wellbeing of employees. Such matters include the working conditions, the working hours, pay regarding salaries and wages, and other factors such as bonuses and leaves. Involving employees in such cases gives them a sense of belonging and



the feeling of having some control over their working environment. Yang, Brown & Byongook (2011), encourage interactional justice even among co-workers, not just between superiors and their juniors. Co-workers who have a good relationship with one another, tend to be more enthusiastic and in general, usually have a positive attitude toward their job, thus better outcome. The hypothesis formulated in this case is that interactional justice is a positive influence on the level of job satisfaction.

#### **4. Informational Justice as a Determinant of Job Satisfaction**

This justice is the least focused type of justice of all the four types. Informational justice is, however, as important as the other three. The trait looks at the way an organization relays information and whether or not it is in the right way, at the right time and gives timely feedback to its employees on matters affecting them and their work. Employees work under instructions. It is, therefore, important to be as efficient as possible when relaying information across the organization to ensure that all staff is reached and informed promptly. Providing a functional information system is key to ensuring that the organization is in perfect harmony regarding the transmission of information, starting from the top-level management to the lowest level. A functional informational system assures employees that their thoughts, views, and complaints reach the intended authorities, in spite of the fact that they need to follow a chain of command in communicating their needs. Not only will they feel heard but also their organization's management can react to their needs promptly and appropriately. Efficient sharing of information not only maintains the level of employee retention within an organization but also enables management to stay on top of all matters due to up-to-date knowledge. The hypothesis formulated in this case is that informational justice is a positive influence on the level of job

satisfaction. The model below represents the relationship between informational justice and level of loyalty among employees.

### Organizational Justice and Culture

Russell, David, and Stephen (2007) have focused on organizational justice and the manner in which they are perceived in all the different cultures. The existing forms of organizational justice are representative of either western or non-western culture.

There has been little research done on the concept of organizational justice in non-western regions. However, the little that has been conducted has focused on the cultural influences that impact these types of organizational justice. There are two ways in which culture is perceived to affect organizational justice. Culture influences the choice of consequences regarding judgments returned about professional conduct. It also determines the methods used to gauge the severity of these effects. The two cultural dimensions that have been concentrated on are power distance and collectivism-individualism. Power distance focuses on the extent to which the less powerful members of institutions and organizations expect and accept power to be exercised over them (Hofstede, 2001). To that end, they hope the authority to use power



responsibly to distribute justice equally (Yang, Brown & Byongook, 2011). On the other hand, collectivism-individualism concentrates on the level to which the group needs and interest will be put forward by all the members, before putting their needs first. Collectivism thus stands for the period where group interests are paramount while individualism is whereby group members put their needs first.

Abrowa, Ardakanib, Haroonic and Pourd (2013), examine how the different types of organizational justice are affected by organizational behavior. Usually, organizational behavior is formatted according to the makeup of the environment within which the business operates. Cultural diversity varies rationality and viewpoints with changes in demographics regarding ethnicity and religious convictions. In non-westernized countries, and in some parts of westernized countries, there is still an emphasis on filial piety, male domination and a general powerlessness of those who are subordinate (Yang, Brown & Byongook, 2011). Therefore, they are more inclined to power distance, given their strict observance of hierarchical relationships in the workplace. On the contrary, modernized westernized states are more open minded, and stress on the importance of assertiveness, self-reliance, and egalitarianism in the workplace. Where self-initiative is preferred over the micro-management of business affairs by top managers, they are more focused on collectivism-individualism. Consequently, Yang, Brown & Byongook (2011), discovered that the four types of organizational justice had less impact on the lives of employees in the non-western world. In such like countries, the managerial focus is on power distance. Yang, Brown & Byongook (2011), go ahead to explain that the relationship between employees and employers within organizations with a power distance set up is covenantal. This relationship means that employees perform their duties towards the organization only because they are contractually obligated, and society expects them to do so,

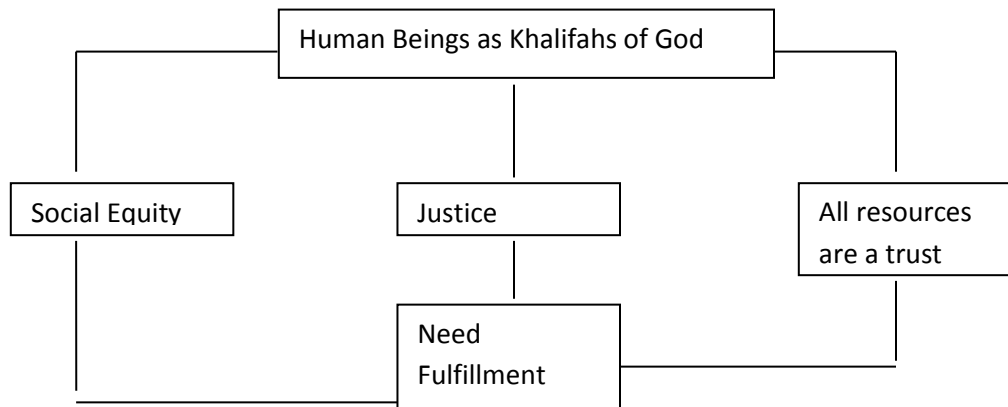
and not because they feel a sense of ownership of their team. Employees in the modernized countries, on the other hand, have a more functional relationship with the team. Their effort and work are based on the real cohesion and trust that the employees have towards their managers and various areas of the company.

Different studies have looked at distributive justice under different circumstances how the different approaches render different results for the same form of organizational justice. Yang, Brown & Byongook (2011) concluded that the western group of organizations prefer equity as the mode of their operations. This preference means that the gains made by the organization are all shared according to the members' contribution to the group. All members get what they deserve. Non-western countries view distributive justice in a different manner. They take a less equitable angle in the distribution of resources. This angle means that their form of distributive justice is a bit lump sided to favor individuals in positions of power as opposed to equal sharing according to contribution. This contribution automatically leads to a weaker relationship between the employers and employees who feel that despite their hard work, their efforts go unappreciated since rewards are based on the position of power and not on merit. Westernized cultures prefer systems of equitable distribution since they result in improved productivity and the achievement of goals due to the incentive of rewards at the end of it all. On the other hand, non-westernized cultures view their method of non-equity as a way of maintaining harmonious working relationships due to the fact rewarding employees differently, compromises their relationships.

Religion in some cases also determines an organization's choice of its preferred kind of distributive justice. For example, Islamic groups believe in fairness and social justice, and will

thus be more inclined towards the collectivism-individualism method of distributive justice.

Bakhshi & Kumar (2009), illustrated in theory in the model below.



Bakhshi & Kumar (2009), have examined cultural interference on procedural and interactional justices. The relationship between culture and these two types of justices look at the dependence and interdependence of employees to their organizations. Different cultures have different ways of showing a connection between employees within an organization. Some researchers have found that the interaction of procedural justice with interpersonal justice, is stronger in cultures where people are encouraged to be dependent on one another rather than to work alone. Social interactions and exchanges between organizations and their employees or among employees themselves are a sure way to improve the trust levels within an organization. Employees can believe the employers' decisions since they are involved in decision making while the companies can trust employees to do their jobs diligently as they are provided with favorable conditions for operations. This belief is prevalent in the modernized countries which attach significance to the fairness of outcomes of their organizations.

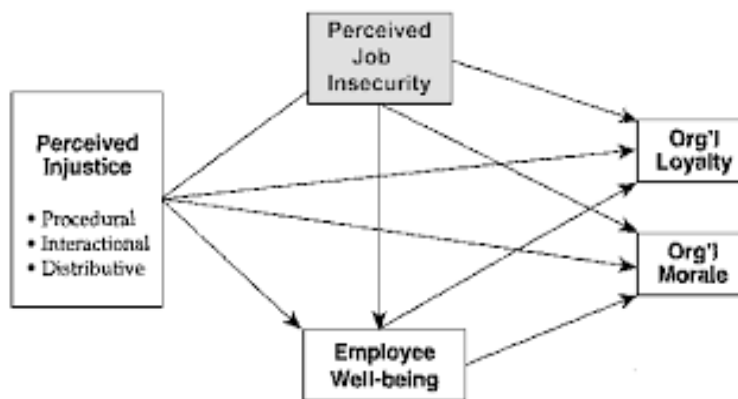
Kaplan and Norton (2004), feel that linking culture to organizational justice has not necessarily been a critical area of concern in previous years. They, however, have been used to showing the relationship between the forms of organizational justice and the reactions the

organizations have in the different cultures. Power distance and collectivism-individualism are the tools that show the correlation rates and responses of organizations to organizational justice.

**Future Research Areas that need to be addressed in Organizational Justice**

There has been so much concentration on the four types of organizational justice that other parts in the field have been neglected. Researchers need to put in more focus on the justice required in corporate procedures. DeConinck & Stilwell, (2004), have all researched distributive justices and its efforts to post a balance between the inputs ration and outputs of employees as well as the rewards from the cause-and-effect relationship. Due to the failure of mathematical formulations to determine the equity in organizational behaviors, there is a need to focus on alternative methods, which in this case should be the fairer application of distributive justice. The use of mathematical formulations in distributive justice is erroneous since distributive justice is based on non-explainable actions and behaviors. Mathematical formulae apply equality rather than equity in determining the levels of social exchanges and whatever organizations consider as fair in determining factors of distributional outcomes such as welfare, liberty, among other factors in an organization’s reward system (DeConinck & Stilwell, 2004).

Perception and Employee Well-being



It should also be observed that more research needs to be focused on the influence of procedural justice on the employees' reactions and responses within an organization. There should also be increased efforts to merge available research, both past, and present, with the social identity that is currently owned in justice studies. In the development of theory, social identity reconciles the gap that exists between the behavior of people and the justice that is now perceived. The justice that is currently identified with is that which gives people a sense of security within any group or community they associate. In case any of the social justice elements are violated, the people who draw their sense of security from it feel vulnerable, leading to unprecedented and unexplainable behavior. Research concentrated on maintaining the social identity and culture of an organization should be key to researchers to stabilize the fragility of the matter for better integration with organizational justice.

Research on behavioral responses within organizations is also needed to observe the response of the employees towards organizational justice systems. This research is to be done for purposes of identifying which work best to the unique organization's needs. The studies available so far only concentrate on the social and formal aspects of organizational justice, and not on the employees' in-depth behavioral observation.

### **Implications of Organizational Justice to Work Commitment and Ethics**

Fernandes & Awamleh (2006), state that about the operations of a firm, organizational justice holds and plays the critical role of effective governance. The four types of organizational justice considered in this literature review, influence the attitude of employees towards their organizations in a positive way. The level of performance is also seen to improve drastically courtesy of well-planned organizational justice. Fatt, Knin, and Heng, (2010), feel that for firms to ensure that the quality and competence levels they experience are maintained, they have to

keep the state of organizational justice at a level where there is the assurance of constant quality of performance. There are some key uses of organizational justice that bring about the positive outcome of the firm such as improved organizational citizenship behavior, more employee contribution to organization work, improved organizational goodwill, improved organizational productivity, innovation and invention opportunities for employees, easy running of the organization, reduced friction in organizational activities, better and faster decision making processes among others. It is, therefore, evident that the four types of organizational justice discussed in this article, give organizations a multidimensional aspect with regards to functionality. It is inspired by the Equity Theorem of Adam (1963-1965) which does not perceive equity and inequity as a comparison between oneself and others by their inputs and outputs.

For an organization to be run both effectively and efficiently, the four types of justice must be incorporated into the managerial culture. This incorporation is more so for a company that looks to improve their employees' commitment and productivity levels. Organizational justice promotes the competency and the self-reliance and motivation needed to reduce turnover rate.

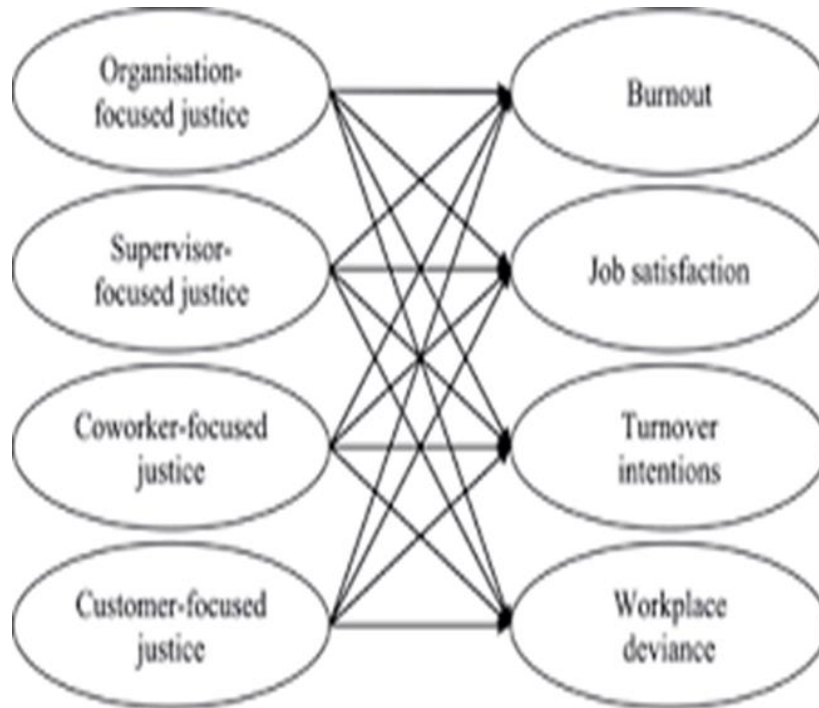
Improved work commitment will be noted when the organization makes its employees feel that the fruits of their labor are well appreciated in the form of rewards, good salaries amongst other benefits. Not only will their commitment be strengthened but also their competency levels will be improved. This strength and improvement are because employees will have been made more comfortable in their workplace.

Self-motivation among employees is also a product of good organizational justice. Self-motivation is the emotion triggered in employees when they are provided with the right



conditions and environment for work. The employees need to have an attachment to their jobs for this factor to be manifest.

Butterfly Diagram showing Implications of Organizational Justice to Work Commitment



### **Conclusion: Limitations and Suggestions for Future Works**

This study was aimed at discussing the four facets of organizational justice and how they affect employee's performance in the workplace. The variety of articles used is not representative of all the research that has been previously done on the subject. The study also relied on statistics done by other researchers and may not be a hundred percent accurate at this point. However, no study is free from little limitation, especially one based on secondary sources. Future works on this same aspect could be focused on larger sample sizes to be more representative of the actual plight of workers on systems of organizational justice.

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