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The Impact of Organisational Justice on Ethical Behaviour

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Under his leadership, Brunel Business School received the 2013/14 Times Higher Award – Business School of the Year.

Abstract

Within the workplace, justice is influenced by the interpersonal relationships between colleagues and/or management among other things. The main reason for this research is to examine the correlation between organisational justice and the ethical behaviour of employees. Based on the literature, the conceptual model developed in this paper integrates distributive, procedural, interpersonal and informational justice in relation to ethical behaviour. By applying an adapted survey questionnaire, data were collected from teaching staff at public sector higher education institutions. Multiple regression analysis was applied to 360 samples and this showed that distributive and procedural justice have a more positive and significant impact than informational and interpersonal justice on the ethical behaviour of employees. This is an empirical study which may contribute to the literature on ethical behaviour, organisational development and employee development.

Key words: organisational justice, distributive justice, procedural justice, interpersonal justice, informational justice, ethical behaviour.

1 Introduction

One feature of the global economic crisis has been that many organisations have had to face the hurdle of downsizing and occasional collapse as a result of unethical behaviour by some of their employees. These include Arthur Anderson, British Petroleum, Enron, Toyota, Tyco and WorldCom (Kulik et al., 2008). The role of organisational injustice in provoking dissatisfaction among employees working in such companies resulted in unethical behaviour in the shape of fraud, theft, betrayal and corruption (Bullard and Resnik, 1993; De Cremer et al., 2010). An important part of any organisation is to consider the situation where good employees develop unethical choices because their environment does not support ethical values. On the contrary,

some organisations support short-term financial objectives at any cost (Ethics Resource Center, 2010). To the extent that ethical values and practices are put into practice in any organisation, the human resources involved in such organisations consider themselves more loyal to the working place, and may be willing to compromise in some way in order to sustain the values of the organisation as they feel free to work in such an environment. According to Treviño et al. (1998), an ethical culture plays an important role in developing organisational behaviour. This culture also influences employees' self-set aspirations towards their personal organisational work goals (Huhtala et al., 2012) Organisational justice refers to the extent that individuals working in an organisation perceive that they are being treated justly and properly. In fact, fairness was cited as the most popular topic of papers submitted to the organisational behaviour division of the Academy of Management in the United States (Colquitt and Greenberg, 2003). Fairness that can be measured is one of the governing principles which most organisations find a desirable attribute (Reithel et al., 2007). It explains how a workforce feels about the justice they receive from their employer and about their feedback towards such observations (Greenberg, 1993). There are, almost inevitably, issues in organisational decision making when management deals with their employees in a way that employees consider being unfair. In the past few years research has revealed some relatively appalling results caused by the ineffective management of organisations and through feedback from their employees (Andrews, Kacmar, and Kacmar, 2013). Thus, a large number of organisations have applied different training tools in the hope of improving such issues only to find that they were still unable to achieve favourable results and the problem of unethical behaviour remained constant. (O'Connell and Bligh, 2009). Where poor managerial decisions increase the level of frustration among employees, the result is an unwillingness to work, lower production, workforce exhaustion and high nervous tension (Detert

et al., 2007; Prottas, 2008; Rafferty et al., 2010; Kim and Brymer, 2011; Carlson et al., 2012; Andrew et al., 2013). On the other hand, employees who feel fairly treated exhibit decreased absenteeism, and increased job performance, satisfaction and motivation all of which cut staff turnover (Colquitt et al., 2001; Trevino et al., 2006; Johnson, 2007; Leroy et al., 2012). Managers who use this knowledge to make and implement decisions in a manner that maximises employee perceptions of fairness can anticipate such positive outcomes (Loi and Nogo, 2010; Loi et al., 2012).

As organisations increasingly rely on employees to deal with complex issues and make critical decisions, it is imperative to understand the factors that affect them. More specifically, what factors involved in fair treatment or organisational justice determine whether an employee will act in an ethical manner? A review of the literature, to date, provides little research on examining ethical behaviour at work via distributive, interactional, and procedural justice factors (Brockner et al., 2000; Wittmer et al., 2010; Greenberg, 2001; Heslin and VandeWalle, 2011). The purpose of this study is to contribute to the ethical behaviour literature by adopting an interactive approach to empirically examine the impact of organisational justice factors such as distributive, procedural, informational, and interpersonal justice on ethical behaviour. The scope of this research is intended to contribute in general literature and particular to the literature of developing countries.

2 Literature review

Organisational justice can be pinpointed as the key source for the generation of maximum profits for an organisation as well for the human resources involved in it . . It has been postulated as one of the main sources of any organisation's success (Cropanzano 1993). Organisational justice

illustrates the thinking of people working in an organisation both for the way they have been treated and their reactions towards such treatment (James, 1993). From a psychological perspective, the treatment of employees by their employers can result in an emotional response that makes justice the centre of attention (Lind and Tyler, 1998; Cropanzano et al., 2001; p.5). Organisational justice research focuses on key dimensions such as distributive justice, procedural justice, interpersonal justice and informational justice, as mentioned above.

Among these four categories of organisational justice, the two that have the greatest influence in research are procedural and distributive justice (Kim, 2009; Wittmer et al., 2010). Theorists like Tornblom (1992), differentiate between procedural and distributive justice by arguing that distributive justice is about the method and incentives that are offered to employees, while procedural justice is about distributing them in a proper manner. However, Schminke et al. (1997) point out the differences between procedural and distributive justice as formalist (outcome) and utilitarian (process) decision-making. Apart from these two major elements of organisational justice, some research has focused on other elements of organisational justice, namely interpersonal and informational justice, which are related to the human side of organisational practices. Interpersonal justice is concerned with the level of loyalty, respect and good manners with which employees are treated by their managers. Researchers have focused on this element as a fundamental construct for developing perceptions of fairness (Greenberg, 1993; Cohen-Charash and Spector, 2001). Meanwhile, informational justice has been defined as the communication process between the recipients of justice and the source (Tyler and Bies, 1990; Cohen-Charash and Spector, 2001).

It has been argued in the literature that the observation of organisational justice has a positive and significant impact on employee job satisfaction (Alomaim, 2011). Koonmee (2008)

maintains that the first two factors of organisational justice have more importance with regard to fulfilment of performance incentives and his findings explore the idea that the influence of distributive justice is greater than that of procedural justice. Whisenant and Smukker (2009) carried out research on high school coaches, both male and female. Here, the results indicated that an environment can easily be improved by simple recognition and understanding of the cultural environment, which resulted in feelings of fairness and satisfaction. Klendauer and Deller (2008) examined the significance of distributive, procedural and interactional justice in respect of the low organisational commitment of managers during corporate mergers. The major purpose of this study was the examination of the justice dimensions which were significantly and uniquely related to affective commitment. While the results showed that each justice dimension correlated positively with affective commitment, only interactional justice showed a unique relationship with it. Ahmadi (2011) found a positive relationship between distributive and procedural justice with job involvement. With regard to an individual's intention to leave his or her organisation, some studies have found a significant relationship between both distributive and procedural justice and turnover intentions (Alexander and Ruderman, 1987; Aryee et al., 2002) The research is quite hopeful, there are some controversies regarding the impact of perceived fairness on job outcomes across cultures and across various dimensions of organisational justice (Colquitt et al., 2001; Shao et al., 2013) which need to be addressed (Khan, Abbas, Gul, and Raja, 2013). Khan et al (2013) examined the main effects of the Islamic Work Ethic (IWE) towards organisational justice on turnover intentions, job satisfaction, and job involvement. The research concludes that the Islamic Work Ethic is positively related to satisfaction and involvement but negatively related to turnover intentions. It further argues that

distributive justice is negatively related to turnover intentions for those with a low Islamic Work Ethic but was positively related to turnover intentions for those with a high Islamic Work Ethic.

Andrew (2013) scrutinized the influence of employee perceptions of behavioral integrity (BI) with reference to the effect of job tension on senior management. The outcome of this research indicated a negative relationship between job tension and behavioral integrity because of the involvement of procedural justice. Huhtala (2012) has investigated different kinds of personal work goals that managers have. Furthermore, the researcher examined different ethical organisational cultures related to these goals. Results indicate that the personal work goals of managers can be promoted by ethical organisational cultures, which also benefit the organisation.

Organisational justice involves the moral behaviour of individuals within an organisation (Khan et al., 2013); organisational justice has great worth because of the influential linkage between critical organisational processes such as citizenship, job satisfaction, commitment, and performance (Greenberg, 1993; Colquitt et al., 2001, 2002; Tatum et al., 2002). Furthermore, in the more recent literature, researchers have proposed links between leadership style, organisational justice, and decision-making (Bradberry and Tatum, 2002; Tatum et al., 2002, 2003) and social rewards/punishments which have a positive impact on ethical decision making (Zhao and Tian, 2009).

Hence, to summarise: researchers have identified a correlation between distributive justice and procedural justice in incentive satisfaction (Koonmee, 2008); the impact of informational justice when downsizing organisations (Kim, 2009); the relationship between ethics and justice (Singer, 2000); the influence of distributive justice or lack of it on unethical behaviour (Umphress et al., 2009); the role played by organisational justice in job satisfaction and self-perceived performance (Whisenant and Smukker, 2009) and organisational justice and employee readiness

for organisational change (Shah, 2011) in Islamic work ethics and perceived organisational justice (Khan et al., 2013), and employee perceptions of behavioral integrity on job tension (Andrew, 2013). However, to the knowledge of the authors, the ethical behaviour factor has been largely neglected in the domain. There is therefore a need to investigate organisational justice factors with employees' ethical behaviour. In organisations, ethics has been related with good and bad human behaviour in morally challenging situations (Barry, 1979; McLeod, Payne, and Evert, 2014) and what we ought and ought not to be (Beauchamp and Bowie, 2000). Ethical behaviour refers to appropriate standards of behaviour by individuals (Runes, 1964). The researcher have identified a research gap in this area in that, to date, no researcher has highlighted the influence of distributive, procedural, informational and interpersonal justice together with ethical behaviour. In addition, the academic literature on organisational justice has largely been conducted by Western researchers from a Western perspective (Brockner et al., 2000; Greenberg, 2001; Koonmee, 2008; Kim, 2009; Wittmer et al., 2010), whereas this research will be carried out in a developing country.

3 Conceptual framework

Organisational justice can be explained as the different thoughts of members of staff in regard to their organisation's decision-making policies, and the effects of such policies on members of staff (Greenberg, 1987). A perception of fairness can influence organisational results. Justice is a combination of a constructed analysis that creates the expectation of being treated fairly universally; hence the function of justice is to be scrupulous (Morris et al., 1999; Greenberg, 2001). Many researchers including Schminke et al. (1997); Weaver (2011); Baker et al. (2006); McCain et al. (2010) argue that the perception of fairness underpins organisational justice and

ethics. However, employees' experience in an organisation also develops through organisational policies, procedures and decision-making, or, their experience of fairness, justice innovation and trust at work and this supports their ethical behaviour (Hunt and Vitell, 1986; Baker et al., 2006; Pournaras and Lazakidou, 2008). The logic behind the idea of fairness suggests that organisational justice practices enhance ethical behavior (Mowday, 1983; Greenberg, 1987; Schminke et al., 1997; Baker et al., 2006). Beauchamp and Bowie (2000) define ethical behaviour as the behaviour that directs people to understand what is right from what is wrong. This aspect of behaviour is created when the circumstances within an organisation help to make it clear (Thaw et al., 2012).

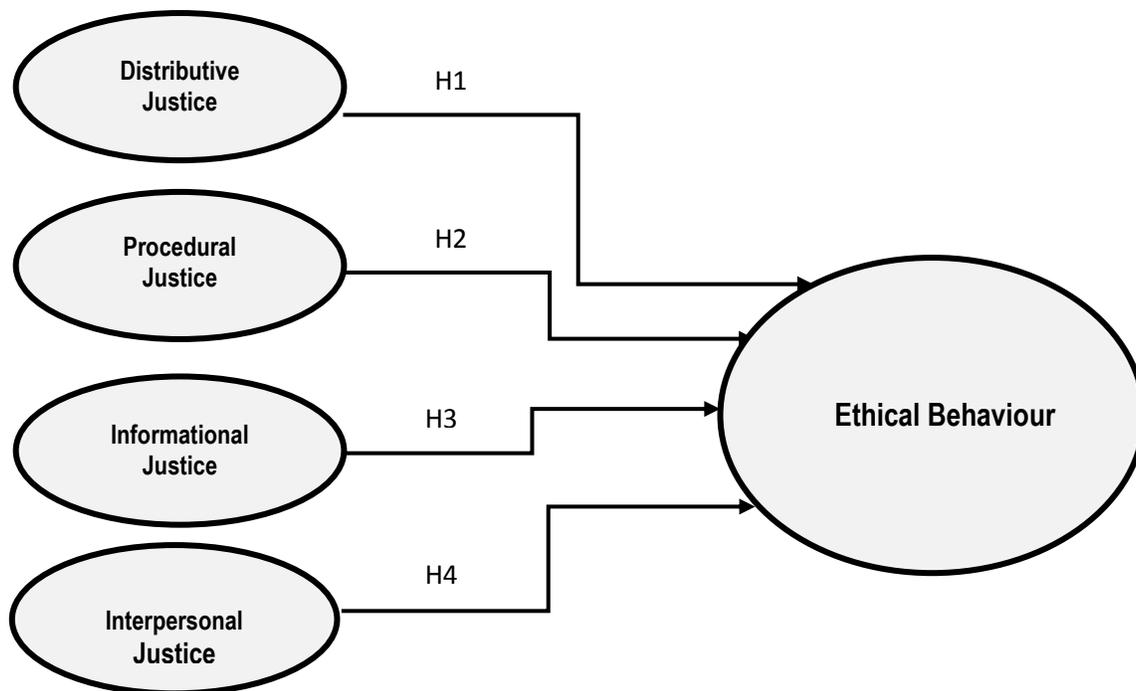
Organisational justice can be considered as human resource observations of being honestly treated which in this competitive era has become an important factor.(Reithel et al., 2007). It describes employees' awareness of the treatment they receive from an organisation's senior management and its results (Greenberg, 1993). Thus the elements of organisational justice such as procedural, distributive, interpersonal and informational are entrenched in the concept of fairness and that certainly involves making decisions about what is correct and what is not. Colquitt (2001) describes justice perceptions in terms of employees' reactions to outcomes which is known as distributive justice; the process that led to those outcomes is known as procedural justice, and their treatment during the process is interactional and informational justice. To this extent, when outcomes are due with reference to the individual's expectations and desired outcomes, employees expect to receive distributive justice. In this way, distributive justice portrays the perceived fairness of decision outcomes with reference to pay, salary, and other fringe benefits. It is also supported by equity, equality, or the need to allocate resources (Colquitt and Greenberg, 2003). However, procedural justice is referred to when an employee has a voice

and a measure of influence in the decision-making process based on consistent, unbiased processes. Procedural justice can be promoted by setting high standards in policy making in regard to decisions and making decisions in such a way that the outcome should be crystal clear (Leventhal, 1980; Thibaut and Walker, 1975). Interactional justice refers to the interpersonal treatment an employee receives during the process. In the literature, interpersonal justice is fostered by respectful treatment (Bies and Moag, 1986; Bies, 2001). Informational justice refers to the receiving the appropriate amount of information, and how such information should be conveyed (Bies and Moag, 1986; Bies, 2001).

This concept of fair treatment leads us to ethics. Ethics can be explained as the just or appropriate standards of behaviour by individuals in certain conditions (Runes, 1964; Treviño et al., 2014; Sekerka et al., 2014). Synthesising different definitions, Lewis (1985) defines business ethics as comprising the rules, standards, principles or codes that give guidelines for morally right behaviour and truthfulness in a specific situation. Ethics is a philosophical term derived from the Greek word "ethos" meaning character or custom. Hence, ethical behaviour is that which is morally accepted as 'good' and 'right' as opposed to 'bad' or 'wrong' in a particular setting.

In this research, the authors would like to highlight that involving all these four elements of organisational justice with ethical behaviour will satisfy employees working in different public sector organisations (see Figure 1). The authors conceptualise organisational justice as referring to the fair distribution of incentives among employees which gives them job satisfaction and encourages ethical decision-making by them.

Figure 1: Conceptual Framework



Distributive justice is encouraged by different values (for example: equity, equality, or need) for allocating resources (Adam, 1965; Colquitt and Greenberg, 2003). It is concerned with the expectation of return which employees receive for their efforts (Adam, 1965; Saunders et al., 2002). Organisations take decisions for the welfare of their employees and inform them about the productive results which the organisation receives because of the efforts of employees by distributing rewards fairly according to their efforts (Peele III, 2007). Distributive justice is highly valued because of the comparisons that can be made within organisations, and similarly, the employees of different organisations can compare their benefits with those of other companies in the same sector. A positive or negative effect on employees depends upon the response they receive from their employer. If employees feel satisfied, they feel it because of the

performance of the organisation's management and, again, if it is negative then that is also because of the poor performance of management. (Greenberg, 1987; Bonache, et al., 2001; Tremblay and Roussel, 2001; Suliman, 2007). Furthermore, due to poor performance of an organisation employees can be victimised and/or create absenteeism which creates problems of increased staff turnover (Folger and Cropanzano, 1998). Hence, all these factors have an influence on individual perceptions and how employees can react. On the basis of this perception, the researchers propose the following hypothesis:

H1: Distributive justice is positively and significantly related to employees' ethical behaviour.

Procedural justice is concerned with the procedures which are adopted by organisations for incentive distribution, as well as the policies which are adopted for the payment of salaries and other benefits. A medium or high level of incentive is received when the procedures which are adopted by organisations are justified and fair. (Greenberg 1986, 1987, 1990; Leventhal, 1980; Thibaut and Walker, 1975). This originates from the fact that the strategies and standards for resource allocation and other managerial decisions are fair and honestly adopted (Peele III, 2007). Employees consider the procedures of an organisation to be justified when they feel they are free from favouritism, as well as their worth at the time of any decision making, the ethical standards applied, and the consistency and universality of decision implementation (Stecher and Rosse, 2005). The stability of the procedures adopted by organisations has become an important factor because such stability ensures the fairness of decisions across different circumstances (Greenberg, 1987). Fair or unfair standards will determine whether employees will behave ethically or will react unethically. Based on this argument, the researchers propose the following hypothesis:

H2: Procedural justice is positively and significantly related to employees' ethical behaviour.

Informational justice can be explained as the process of receiving essential information in an appropriate manner and through clear communication. (Colquit, 2001; Bies, 2001; Bies and Moag, 1986). This is often considered as one of the unrestricted factors of organisational justice because of the different communication strategies adopted by organisations, as this may affect the different perceptions of employees. Therefore, informational communication can play a vital role in any organisation's success or failure. Hence, it may also be assumed that given clear communication, the probability of unethical activities can be minimised. On the basis of this argument, the researchers propose the following hypothesis:

H3: Informational justice is positively and significantly related to employees' ethical behaviour.

Interpersonal or interactional justice is, quite simply, a name for the way in which employees expect to be treated by their peers and by management, namely with respect (Bies and Moag, 1986). It demonstrates the quality of the process by which individuals are treated with courtesy, as well as the extent to which the reasons behind a given outcome are explained (Bies and Moag, 1986). Interpersonal justice can be seen as an outcome of perceptions that may occur due to the efficient and competent behaviour of employees working in organisations, which may include "availability, competence, consistency, discreetness, fairness, integrity, loyalty, openness, promise fulfilment, receptivity, and overall trust" (Deluga, 1994; p. 317). Interpersonal justice can be considered as the degree to which one party feels respected, such he/she is happy to make or sustain social contacts within the organisation in order to complete particular tasks. (Caldwell and Clapham, 2003; Rousseau, 1995). According to Mayer et al. (1995), trustworthiness is an

individual expectation that one can expect from colleagues and/or management in terms of their capabilities and reliability in order to fulfil the organisation's goals efficiently. In the literature, the concept of ability is defined as the group of skills, competencies, and characteristics that enable a party to have influence within a specific domain; while benevolence is related to the extent to which a trustee is believed to want to perform well for the trustor, aside from an egocentric profit motive; integrity is defined in terms of the trustor's perception that the trustee adheres to a set of principles that the trustor finds acceptable (Mayer et al., 1995; p.717-719). From the above concept of interpersonal trustworthiness, it may also be argued that if employees have trust in the ability, integrity and benevolence of management then ethical behaviour is likely to increase. On the basis of this argument, the researchers propose the following hypothesis:

H4: Interpersonal justice is positively and significantly related to employees' ethical behaviour.

4 Research methodology

This study examines the relationship between organisational justice factors such as distributive, informational, procedural and interpersonal justice factors and ethical behaviour. A cross-sectional approach has been adopted in which a survey questionnaire was used for data collection.

4.1 Sample and procedure

This study was conducted in a public sector organisation in Pakistan. The reason for selecting this study context is that today public sector organisations in the country are facing issues such as low growth, corruption, politicisation, ethnic problems and religious issues (Nadvi and Robinson, 2004). Thus, investigating employee behaviour is important for employers and

researchers. Currently, limited studies exist like that of Shah (2010), who examined employees' attitudes and behaviour using psychological and financial factors. However, justice and fairness factors need to be examined further. The motive behind this study is to investigate the influence of organisational justice factors on ethical behaviour in public sector universities. The survey instrument was distributed directly to the participants during a personal visit. Before distributing the survey for data collection, the researchers ensured that the sample was willing to participate on a voluntary basis. Each participant was handed over a packet containing the questionnaire, a formal consent form and a covering letter explaining the purpose of the exercise.. The survey instrument was in the English language.

4.2 Measurement scales

The researchers applied the independent variables, namely distributive, procedural, informational, and interpersonal justice as well as demographic information and the dependent variable, ethical behaviour. By applying a five-point Likert scale, the various items of these variables were used to measure responses.

Ethical behaviour: Six items taken from Baker et al. (2006) and Fraedrich (1993) were used to measure ethical behaviour. Originally the scale was developed by Forrell and Skinner (1988).

Distributive justice: This scale was measured by using four items originally developed by Leventhal (1976) and moderated by Colquitt (2001).

Procedural Justice: A seven-item scale developed by Colquitt (2001), which was originally based on Leventhal (1976) and Thibaut and Walker (1975), was applied for this variable.

Informational justice: This variable was measured by five items developed and validated by Colquitt (2001).

Interpersonal justice: This variable was measured by a four-item scale adapted from Moorman (1991), based on Bies and Moag (1986) and Colquitt (2001).

Demography: In the demographic scale only gender and age range were used.

4.3 Data analysis

By applying Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 21.0 for Windows, data were recorded, coded and cleaned. We applied descriptive statistics, reliability and correlation tests, Cronbach's coefficient alpha reliability for the overall instrument and individual factors and Pearson's correlation test. Finally, hypotheses were tested by applying Multiple Regression Analysis (MRA).

5 Results

5.1 Factor analysis

Exploratory factor analysis was carried out in which the dimensions of each scale were assessed because they comprised a different family of items. Here principal component analysis was used with a varimax rotation and groups of factors were loaded (see Table 1). Different items from all five factors were loaded and results showed that the ethical behaviour factor was originally loaded with five out of six original items, distributive justice factors with four original items, procedural justice with five out of seven original items, informational justice with four out of five original items and, finally, interpersonal justice was originally loaded with three out of four items. The variance explained by each factor was 42.12% for ethical behaviour, 20.21% for

distributive justice, 18.45% for informational justice, 13.08 for procedural justice and 8.83% for interpersonal justice. The cumulative variance explained was 64.22% in total.

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Table 1. Factor loadings of the items in scales

Items	ETB	DIJ	PRJ	IFJ	ITJ
ETBE1	.884				
ETBE2	.872				
ETBE3	.861				
ETBE4	.833				
ETBE5	.817				
DISJ1		.855			
DISJ2		.831			
DISJ3		.815			
DISJ4		.805			
INFJ1			.854		
INFJ2			.825		
INFJ3			.820		
INFJ4			.813		
PROJ1				.861	
PROJ2				.832	
PROJ3				.821	
PROJ4				.811	
PROJ5				.804	
INTJ1					.872
INTJ2					.846
INTJ3					.813

7 Note: ETBE = Ethical Behaviour; DISJ= Distributive Justice,

8 PROJ=Procedural Justice, INFJ=Informational Justice,

9 INTJ=Interpersonal Justice

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10.2 Descriptive statistics, reliability and Pearson's correlation

Through the mean and standard deviation results overall, participants showed ethical behaviour (Table 2). Overall reliability of the survey instrument was found to be .93 and the highest reliability was found for procedural justice and the lowest for interpersonal justice factors (see

Table 2). However, Pearson's Correlation test was conducted and significant correlations between the scales were determined at two levels such that $p=0.01$ and $p=0.05$. The result showed that ethical behaviour had a significant and positive relationship with all factors. In this test the highest correlation was found between ethical behaviour and distributive justice ($r=.437$; $p \leq 0.01$) (see Table 2).

Table 2. Descriptive statistics, reliability and Pearson's correlation (N=360)

Variable	M	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1 Ethical Behaviour	3.95	0.87	(.89)						
2 Distributive Justice	3.77	0.95	.437**	(.86)					
3 Procedural Justice	2.85	1.12	.364**	.310**	(.91)				
4 Informational Justice	3.13	0.72	.302**	.423**	.211*	(.79)			
5 Interpersonal Justice	2.93	0.84	.215*	.121	.085	.312**	(.83)		
6 Gender	---	---	.012	.008	.074	.011	-.011	---	
7 Age	---	---	.003	.026	.005	-.003	-.003	.005	---

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Note: M = Mean, SD = Standard Deviation

10.3 Testing hypotheses

Hypotheses were tested by using beta and t values (critical ratio = t) applying multiple regression analysis. The results showed that procedural justice had a positive impact on ethical behaviour ($\beta = .258$, $p < 0.01$, $t = 9.453$) (see Table 3), thus H1 was accepted. For the second hypothesis, the influence of procedural justice showed a positive impact on ethical behaviour ($\beta = .212$, $p < 0.01$, $t = 6.361$), thus H2 was accepted. The influence of informational justice had a positive impact on ethical behaviour ($\beta = .182$, $p < 0.01$, $t = 4.784$), hence H3 was accepted. Finally, the impact of interpersonal justice showed a positive impact on ethical behaviour ($\beta = .085$, $p < 0.05$, $t = 1.874$), thus H4 was accepted. According to the data, all four organisational justice variables accounted for ethical behaviour in adjusted R^2 of 0.371.

Table 3. Multiple regression results

Variables	Model 1	Model 2
	B	B
Step 1: Control variables		
Gender	0.013	
Age	0.103	
Step 2: Main effects		
Distributive Justice		.258**
Procedural Justice		.212**
Informational Justice		.182**
Interpersonal Justice		.085*
F value	.089	41.212**
R ²	.011	.426
Adjusted R ²	.020	.371
Change in adjusted R ²	.004	.298

Note: p* < 0.10; p** < 0.05

11 Discussion

Ethics are the standards, norms, and values which govern an individual's behaviour (Treviño et al., 2014; Bright et al., 2014). The importance of ethical behaviour in our society is that as human beings we all need to be treated with respect. Fair treatment from our peers, subordinates and employers is required by everyone in the workplace. Generally, unethical behaviour occurs when an individual pursues a perceived injustice that has taken place. Almost all unethical incidents that take place in organisations like fraud, stealing, corruption, and betrayal are the result of some organisational injustice that creates dissatisfaction among employees and they react unethically. This indicates that ethical behaviour is simply a response to organisational justice/injustice.

The main purpose of this study was to examine employees' ethical behaviour through the lens of organisational justice. In this study, organisational justice is defined as the perception of fairness that satisfies individual needs by means of distributive justice that gives the perception of fair treatment in the distribution of incentives among the employees working in an organisation, while procedural justice fosters fair treatment in terms of the process used in the allocation of incentives, interpersonal justice promotes the concept of respectful treatment of employees and, finally, informational justice is the provision of ample and accurate communication with employees.

The findings show that the four factors of organisational justice (Colquitt, 2001) have a positive and significant impact on developing employee attitudes and behaviours. This study proved from the sets of data received from public sector higher educational institutions that, in a developing country, organisational justice factors can be used to encourage ethical behaviour by employees. In this study, the first factor, distributive justice, had a positive and significant impact on employees' ethical behaviour. In the literature, distributive justice has been widely used to examine the experience of stress, long-term commitment, trustworthiness, and turnover intentions (McFarlin and Sweeney, 1992; Colquitt et al., 2001; Meyer et al., 2002; Judge and Colquitt, 2004; Lang et al., 2011). A satisfied employee is one who perceives that s/he has received fair treatment in terms of incentives from his/her organisation. The findings of this research also support previous studies. The second factor used was procedural justice for ethical behaviour. In this study, the procedural justice factor refers to fair treatment in terms of the process used in the allocation of incentives. The results of our study support the hypothesis that procedural justice is positively and significantly related with ethical behaviour. In the literature, procedural justice has been widely used to examine the experience of stress, commitment, and

turnover intentions (Cohen-Charash and Spector, 2001; Spreitzer and Mishra, 2002; Judge and Colquitt, 2004; Lang et al., 2011). The third factor used was informational justice that provides employees with ample and accurate communication. In the literature, informational justice has been widely used by Cohen-Charash and Spector (2001); Colquitt (2001); and Lang et al. (2011) to examine altruism, withdrawal, job satisfaction and trust. Again, this factor showed that if an employee develops positive perceptions as a result of communication from the organisation, it will have a positive impact on ethical behaviour. Finally, interpersonal justice was used to examine ethical behaviour. In this study, the interpersonal justice factor refers to the respectful treatment of employees. The results of our study supported the hypothesis that interpersonal justice has a positive and significant impact on the ethical behaviour of employees. In the literature, interpersonal justice has also been widely used to examine the experience of stress, trust, commitment, job satisfaction, altruism, and performance (Cohen-Charash and Spector, 2001; Colquitt, 2001; Judge and Colquitt, 2004; Lang et al., 2011). The results of this study supported the literature.

Research has shown that organisations that use ethical norms and standards to accomplish their goals are likely to achieve their goals effectively and efficiently with regard to a firm's reputation and development (Reithel et al., 2007; Colquitt, 2001). Hence, ethics have a considerable influence on organisational justice.

Researchers have noted the impact of different organisational justice factors on job satisfaction and commitment, but a review of the literature indicated that the factor of ethical behaviour has been largely neglected in the domain (Whisenant and Smukker, 2009, Elamin, et al., 2011). Thus, the authors, after reviewing the literature, proposed to highlight how the interaction of

these four elements of organisational justice with ethical behaviour can satisfy employees working in public sector organisations.

12 Conclusions and future research

Today, many organisations face the hurdle of downsizing or collapse because of unethical behaviour. Organisational justice is the extent to which people perceive organisational events as being fair. Employees' perception and reaction to the fairness with which they are treated can have a dramatic effect on absenteeism and turnover and increase employee job performance, job satisfaction and motivation. Ethical behaviour is an essential issue for discussion by researchers today. In this study, the researchers investigated the influence of all four factors of organisational justice on ethical behaviour. Results showed that organisational justice has a positive and significant impact on employees' ethical behaviour. In addition, it is worth noting that there was a particularly strong relationship between distributive justice and ethical behaviour. However, the interpersonal justice factor was found to have a less significantly positive effect on ethical behaviour. We believe that the major implications of our research may have a significant effect on employees working in organisations. This research may also help employers to motivate their peers, so that their efforts can be utilised effectively for the achievement of organisational goals. Moreover, the research implications can also be helpful in the reducing organisational injustice that causes dissatisfaction among employees which can result in unethical behaviour like fraud, stealing, betrayal and corruption. The study may also contribute to the literature on organisational behaviour, and organisational and employee development. In conclusion, the results of this study provide theoretical and empirical support for the hypotheses that favourable distributive, procedural, informational, and interpersonal

justice may have a positive impact on employees' perception of fairness. Though these factors a high degree of job control protects employees against the development of adverse symptoms. However, longitudinal research using various methods is still needed to confirm that the results reported here are substantive.

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