

Perceived Procedural Justice and Organizational Commitment of Higher Education Teachers in Cameroon: The Case of Teachers at the University of Dschang

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Abstract

This study examined the link between perceived procedural justice and the organizational commitment of teachers at the University of Dschang in West Cameroon. It was guided by the social exchange theory of Blau (1964). Using a questionnaire, data was collected from one hundred and five (105) teachers from different faculties of the University of Dschang. However, ninety-one (91) questionnaires were used in the analysis, due to incomplete and missing figures from other questionnaires. The reliability of the questionnaire was tested using Crombach's Alpha technique with coefficients of 0.90 and 0.80 respectively for procedural justice and organizational commitment. Statistical processing was performed using SPSS version 23 statistical software, descriptive analyzes and correlation tests were performed. The results revealed the existence of a positive and significant link between the perception of procedural justice and affective commitment ($r=.378^{**}; p < .01$). There is no significant link between procedural justice and the normative commitment ($r=.161, p > .05$). However, the existence of a negative and significant link was established between the perception of procedural justice and the calculated commitment ($r=-.234^{*}; p < .05$). It was recommended that, institutions, policy makers and employers should ensure that the applications of reward distribution procedures are the same for all employees within the organization in order to stimulate their organizational commitment.

Keywords: Organizational justice; Distributive justice; Procedural justice; Organizational commitment; Affective commitment; Normative commitment; Calculated commitment.

1. Introduction

In a constantly changing world of work where the demands of work and the complexity of tasks are increasingly enormous, organizations need committed workers to face the major challenges linked to this reality. According to Duchesne (2005), organizational commitment is defined as a strong belief and acceptance by the employee of the goals of the organization and his willingness to act to achieve them. It describes the relationship between the individual and his organization. According to Boundenghan (2015), it is a central variable in understanding organizational behavior, and appears to be the best predictor of employee stability. It directly influences the final results of the company by improving work performance (Hunt & Morgan, 1994). In other words, employees who demonstrate strong organizational commitment perform better at their jobs.

Many workers find it difficult to live their commitment to work for many reasons: the demands of the work, the difficulty of the tasks, the difficult living and working conditions, etc. In the field of education, and particularly at the level of higher education in Cameroon, this reality is very present. Indeed, for many years, the constant renewal of teaching practices and growing demands from all sides seem to exert significant pressure on teachers; the decisions taken by the decision-makers are sometimes imposed on the teachers who are responsible for putting them into practice; the dissatisfaction of teachers both in terms of working conditions and in terms of bonuses and salary. In addition, teachers are increasingly complaining about their living and working conditions through strikes; the latter demand each year the allocation of offices to teachers,

the rehabilitation of toilets, the replenishment of running water, the payment by all establishments of the share to be used for teacher insurance (Tankeu, 2018). The teachers of the University of Dschang (UDs) are not left out. All the teachers questioned are unanimous on the question. Indeed, in the face of constantly growing numbers, there is a glaring shortage of classrooms, lecture halls and offices. Teachers are forced to share offices in twos, or even threes. In addition, even the smallest work equipment (pen, ream of paper, diary, etc.) is sometimes lacking. In addition, the laboratories and lecture halls have become cramped and are no longer suitable for teaching due to the lack of table-benches, microphones and air conditioning. The teacher is very often forced to scream to be heard by the students in overheated rooms. At a time when ICT (Information and Communication Technology) is developing all over the world, most offices do not have access to the Internet. Alongside this, many teachers deplore the unavailability of resources to carry out or finance research, especially in the social sciences and humanities. These teachers believe that their often derisory research bonuses are not granted regularly, however, research is a fundamental activity for the development of any nation. Dissatisfied with their situation, the teachers show on the whole a mortgaged commitment, which can be seen through certain moods such as: strikes, laxity at work, absences, cheating consisting in being replaced in one's duties by a third party, failure to respect the timetables allocated to teaching units, laxity and delay in the execution of tasks, refusal to supervise dissertations and theses, refusal of certain members of the jury to attend defenses. All this reveals a problem of commitment of teachers in their function.

Several studies have shed light on the determinants of employee engagement within organizations (Colquitt, 2001; Manville, 2008; Tsouli Moustaked & Drissi Saidi, 2021) According to Manville (2008) and Tsouli Moustaked & Drissi Saidi (2021) Perceptions of justice are powerful determinants of organizational commitment. In other words, understanding how employees perceive justice or injustice in the workplace helps to understand their organizational commitment. Studies conducted in different business sectors and for different categories of personnel first confirm that organizational justice is linked to organizational commitment, then these studies show that organizational justice impacts the organizational commitment of employees (Colquitt, 2001; Behson, 2011; Chèvrefils, 2015 ; Manville, 2008; Rahman, Shahzad, Mustafa, Khan & Qurashi, 2016; Kutche Tamghé, 2019; Tsouli Moustaked & Drissi Saidi, 2021). However, the results of these studies are not unanimous on the nature of the links between organizational justice and organizational commitment. Also, we note in the literature the absence of work on the organizational commitment of employees in an educational context and particularly at the level of higher education. Moreover, very few studies have linked organizational justice and the different dimensions of organizational commitment (affective, normative and continuous) in this same context. The objective of this study is to verify the link between procedural justice and the different dimensions of organizational commitment among higher education teaching staff in Cameroon.

2. Literature Review and Hypothesis Development

2.1. Procedural justice

The notion of procedural justice was developed by Thibault and Walker (1975), in the context of legal conflict (Boundenhan, 2015). Defined as the justice of the procedures and methods used to make decisions at work, procedural justice refers to the formal characteristics of a system (Konovsky, 2000). It affects the decision-making processes used to determine the distribution of resources (Ambrose, 2002; Cohen-Charash & Spector, 2001; Colquitt, 2001; Cropanzano, Goldman, & Benson 2005; Greenberg, 2011; Leventhal, 1980; Thibaut & Walker, 1975). It emphasizes how, not what, decisions are made. It can therefore be seen as being the comparison that an individual makes of the decision-making procedures of which he is the object in relation to generalized organizational rules and procedures. According to Leventhal (1980) there are six determining criteria in the perception of procedural justice: the criterion of consistency, the criterion of impartiality, the criterion of adaptability or flexibility, the criterion of representativeness and the criterion of ethics. When these criteria are met, individuals are more likely to evaluate procedures as well as authority positively (Didry, 2008). But when a worker perceives injustice with regard to the procedure having allowed the distribution of the resources, this one reacts negatively towards the organization for which he works (Cropanzano & Prehar, 1999, Masterson et al., 2000 cited by Cohen-Charash & Spector, 2001).

2. 2. Organizational commitment

Porter Steers and Mowday (1974) define the concept of organizational commitment as the degree of identification and involvement of an individual within a given organization. According to Allen and Meyer (1990), organizational commitment is also a psychological state experienced by an individual towards an organization. These authors propose to distinguish three components of organizational commitment: the affective component, which focuses on the emotional attachment to the organization; the continuation component which measures the associated costs for the individual of a voluntary departure and a normative component which refers to the feeling of loyalty and the notion of moral duty to characterize the behavior of the individual (Duchesne, 2005). Meyer and Allen (1997) insist on the fact that, these three components coexist to varying degrees in each individual and that they are observable and measurable.

2.3. The link between Procedural justice and organizational commitment

According to Minibas-Poussard and Le Roy (2013), the feeling of perceived injustice emerges as an important factor in organizational commitment. Many authors indicate that, there is a positive and significant relationship between procedural justice and organizational commitment (Behson, 2011; Chèvrefils, 2015; Kumar, Bakhski, & Rani, 2007; Kwon, 2006; Rahman et al., 2016; Tsouli Moustaked & Drissi Saidi, 2021). However, according to Kwon (2006) and Behson (2011), the relationship between these notions is weak. However, Sulu, Ceylan, and Ramazan (2010) state that, the strength of this relationship is rather moderate. Studies on the link between procedural justice and affective commitment show that there is a positive and significant relationship between these two concepts (Charash & Spector, 2001; Fischer & Smith, 2006; Meyer et al., 2002; Simard et al., 2005; Simons & Roberson, 2003; Tsouli Moustaked & Drissi Saidi, 2021). Cohen-Charash and Spector (2001) specifies that this association is strong. While Meyer et al. (2002), rather indicate that it is moderate strength. The work of Paré and Tremblay (2007) and Chèvrefils (2015) indicates that there is no significant relationship between these variables. Studies on the link between procedural justice and calculative and normative commitment show that there is a negative and weak (Cohen-Charash & Spector, 2001), even moderate (Meyer et al 2002) link between procedural justice and calculative commitment. On the other hand, it is positive between procedural justice and normative commitment (strong for Cohen-Charash & Spector, 2001 and moderate for Meyer et al., 2002). For Kutche Tamghé (2019), procedural justice positively and significantly influences the organizational commitment of teachers.

2.4. Perceived organizational justice, organizational commitment and social exchange theory

According to Colquitt (2001), the quality of the relationship that an individual has with his work environment largely determines his perceptions, attitudes and behaviors within the company. The perception of a climate of justice, leads to satisfaction and trust in the organizational system, and the superior encourages employees to engage in behaviors that go beyond the formal framework of prescribed conduct (Didry, 2008). Conversely, feelings of injustice can lead to behaviors that have a negative impact on both the well-being of employees and the functioning of the company. Lee (2004) showed that employees develop a sense of organizational commitment when they have an attachment to their supervisors. It is an act of reciprocity in a relationship between employee and supervisor. Thus, it would be useful for a supervisor to develop and encourage effective communications with his subordinates (Truckenbrodt, 2000) because the quality of this relationship influences the attitude of the employee and the climate at work. Indeed, for this author, the superior-subordinate relationship is positively associated with the performance of the employee and can have different impacts: a strong organizational commitment, a better satisfaction of the employee vis-à-vis his supervisor and a better level of performance.

Researchers argue that high-quality social exchange relationships are likely to motivate individuals to engage in citizenship because they will feel a relational obligation to engage in behaviors that have positive consequences for their partners (Lavelle, Rupp, & Brockner, 2007, cited by Boundenghan, 2015). According to Blau (1964), work constitutes a relationship of exchange between an employer and a worker. In his theory of social exchange, this author helps to understand the decisions of employees to contribute or not, in an active way, to the proper functioning of the organization in reaction to the exchange relationships they experience at work. For Blau (1964), social exchange refers to the voluntary actions of individuals motivated by the rewards they expect to receive, and receive from others. The need to “reciprocate” for benefits received, so as to be able to continue to receive them, makes it possible to maintain and strengthen social exchanges. This theory has two principles: the voluntary exchange of resources which corresponds to the advantages offered by the organization to the employee and the norm of reciprocity which holds that the interactions between two parties

are interdependent and sequential: a person offers services of value to another and, in doing so, creates a sense of obligation in her (Blau, 1964). Thus, a worker (a teacher for example) who considers that he is treated fairly, that is to say that he always receives his salary, his bonuses, his allowances etc., will work in a committed way in the perspective of returning the favor to his employer.

2.5. Perceived organizational justice and organizational commitment of teachers at the University of Dschang (UDs)

The analysis of the literature on organizational justice and organizational commitment presented above has shown the existence of a link between these two variables. However, some limitations have been noted. The first limitation relates to the scarcity of work on the organizational commitment of employees in an educational context and particularly at the higher education level. The second limitation is related to the lack of studies linking organizational justice and the dimensions of organizational commitment (affective, normative and continuous) in this same context. For example, the study by Rahman et al (2016) on the impact of procedural and distributive justice on the organizational commitment of higher education teachers in Pakistan and the study of KutcheTamghé (2019) which assesses the impact of justice organizational analysis on the commitment of secondary school teachers in Cameroon did not take into account the different dimensions of organizational commitment. They showed that procedural justice and distributive justice have a positive impact on the organizational commitment of teachers. According to these authors, the more teachers perceive justice at the distributive and procedural level, the more engaged they are. This means on the one hand that, when the contribution/reward ratio is evaluated as proportional by the teachers, the latter are committed. Compensation is perceived as fair when it seems to be commensurate with the effort or work provided (contributions) by the teacher.

On the other hand, teachers are engaged when they feel involved in making decisions that affect them. If we have to limit ourselves to the results of the work of Rahman et al., (2016) and KutcheTamghé (2019), we could not precisely determine the relationships that exist between procedural justice and the different dimensions of organizational commitment among higher education teachers; this is because these previous studies were not carried out with the objective of establishing this relationship. This research is carried out to achieve this objective, which stems from the following questioning: given that previous studies have revealed that the best working conditions (fair remuneration, involvement in decision-making concerning them) for teachers are a source of commitment of the latter, what about the perceived procedural justice and the organizational commitment of the teachers of the Universities in Cameroon? To provide some answers to this concern, this research predicts that:

- perceived procedural justice has a positive and significant relationship with affective commitment;
- perceived procedural justice has a negative and significant relationship with calculated commitment;
- Perceived procedural justice has a positive and significant relationship with normative commitment.

3. Methodology

3.1. Participants

For this study, a sample of 91 participants was randomly selected from teachers at the University of Dschang. These participants are 70 male teachers, or 76.93% of the total participants and 21 female teachers, or 23.07% of the total participants. In this sample, different grades are represented; assistants, lecturers, full professors. Their age range varies between 29 and 50 years and the most represented age group is in the 30-39 range (52.74% of participants).

3.2. Data collection instruments

The survey was conducted using two tools: the organizational justice scale developed by Colquitt (2001) and the organizational commitment scale constructed by Allen et al (1993). The first has 7 items with response modalities that are presented on a 5-level Likert scale ranging from 1 in (a low extent) to 5 (to a great extent) and measures procedural justice (example: Have you been able to express your views and feelings during the proceedings?). The alpha coefficient of this scale is .90. The second scale is made up of three parts that are used to assess the three dimensions of organizational commitment (affective, normative and calculated). This instrument has good metrological qualities ($\alpha = .80$). It is composed of 18 items, i.e. 6 items for each dimension. The Affective Commitment Scale (ACS) measures an individual's affective commitment to the

organization. The individual is then called upon to react to statements such as: I would be very happy to spend the rest of my career at the University of Dschang; as for the continuity or calculated commitment, it is measured by the “Calculative Commitment Scale” (CCS). The participant is confronted with statements such as: too much of my life would be disrupted if I decided to leave the University of Dschang now. Finally, normative commitment is assessed using the Normative Commitment Scale (NCS). The individual positions himself in relation to statements such as: the University of Dschang deserves my loyalty. The responses to this tool are positioned on a seven-point Likert-type scale (1= strongly disagree to 7= strongly agree). The alpha coefficient for each of the subscales is .81 for affective commitment, .66 for normative commitment, .62 for calculated commitment and .72 for organizational commitment.

3.3. Procedure

Teachers were asked individually within the Dschang University campus to complete the questionnaire. After explaining the purpose of the study to them, the rules of anonymity and confidentiality were guaranteed. Thus, a questionnaire of 25 items was administered to them individually. The participants filled it out according to their availability (either directly and returned it to us or they collected it and asked us to come by later to collect it). Those who were available had about fifteen minutes to complete the questionnaire. The investigation lasted 3 months. Once the data was collected, it was analyzed so as to meet the expectations and objectives for our study. Data were coded, entered and analyzed using SPSS version 23 software.

4. Results

The results of this study are presented through the analyzes of descriptive statistics, represented by means (M) and standard deviations (SD), of correlations represented by the indices r, and of regressions represented by the indices of β effect. These analyzes will lead to the determination of the link between perceived procedural justice and the different dimensions of organizational commitment (affective, calculated and normative) among the teaching staff of the University of Dschang.

Table 1: Mean, standard deviation of teacher’s perception of procedural justice and their affective, normative and calculated commitment.

Measure	N	Mean	standard deviation
Procedural justice	91	17,10	40,80
Normative commitment	91	28,15	69,06
Affective commitment	91	32,95	75,22
Calculated commitment	91	24,03	68,69

Source: author

The table above representing the results of the descriptive statistics shows that teachers have a positive and strong perception of procedural justice (M= 17.10; S-T= 4.08). This trend is also high for the other measures administered. Specifically, the results indicate that teachers are positively and strongly engaged in a calculated (M= 24.03; S-T= 6.86), affective (M= 32.95; S-T= 7.52) and normative (M= 28.15; S-T= 6.906). These data show that teachers at the University of Dschang have positive tendencies for the measures administered. First, they support the predictions of this study. The results obtained are verified from the statistics presented in the following table.

Table 2: Correlation between teacher’s perception of procedural justice and their affective, normative and calculated commitment.

Measure	N	1	2	3	4
Procedural justice	91	1			
Normative commitment	91	.378**	1		
Affective commitment	91	.161	.652**	1	
Calculated commitment	91	-.234*	.541**	.573**	1

Note : **. La corrélation est significative au niveau 0.01 (bilatéral) * La corrélation est significative au niveau 0.05 (bilatéral)

Source: author

Table 2 indicates that there is a positive and significant correlation between perceived procedural justice and affective commitment ($r=.378^{**}$; $p < .01$). This means that a higher level teacher who views procedural justice positively is able to engage affectively in their workplace. This result effectively supports research hypothesis 1, which argues that the perception of procedural justice is positively and significantly linked to the affective commitment of teachers at the University of Dschang. In addition, the data show a negative and significant correlation between the perception of procedural justice and calculated commitment ($r=-.234^*$; $p < .05$). This means that the positive perception of procedural justice by university teachers would imply a reduction in calculated commitment in the organizational environment. This supports the idea of hypothesis 2 which implied that the perception of procedural justice is negatively and significantly related to the calculated commitment of teachers at the University of Dschang. The data in this table also indicate a positive relationship between perceived procedural justice and normative commitment ($r=.161$, $p>.05$). This result partially supports hypothesis 3 of this study, which predicted that the perception of procedural justice is positively and significantly linked to the normative commitment of teachers at the University of Dschang. These results support the various predictions of the present research whose tendencies were already revealed at the level of the results of the descriptive statistics presented in table 1 above. The data in the following table further verify the predictions of effects between variables.

Table 3: Linear regression statistics between perceived procedural justice and dimensions of organizational commitment

Mesures	β	S.E.	t	p
Affective commitment	.697	.181	3.854	.000
Normative commitment	.273	.177	1.540	.127
Calculated commitment	-.395	.173	-2.275	.025

Note : Variable indépendante (Prédicteur) : justice procédurale perçue
Source: author

The table above presents the regression analysis between perceived procedural justice and the different dimensions of organizational commitment. These analyzes make it possible to verify the strength of the effect between these variables. The results indicate a positive and statistically significant effect of procedural justice on affective commitment ($\beta= .697$, $S.E.= .181$, $t=3.854$, $p<.01$). The results in this table show a negative effect between perceived procedural justice and calculated commitment ($\beta= -.397$, $S.E.= .173$, $t=2.275$, $p<.05$). The table finally presents the results of the effect of perceived procedural justice on normative commitment. It indicates that perceived procedural justice positively predicts normative commitment ($\beta= .273$, $S.E.= .177$, $t=1.540$, $p>.05$).

5. Discussion

The objective of this study was to determine the link between perceived procedural justice and the different dimensions of organizational commitment (affective, calculated and normative) among teaching staff at the University of Dschang. To date, the majority of research that has studied these variables is not unanimous on the strength of the link that exists between them. The current literature does not provide information on the explanatory weight of procedural justice on the categories of commitment of Cameroonian workers in the educational field and precisely at the higher level. Thus, in order to better understand the relationship between these variables, a study was conducted among higher education teachers, specifically those in UDs. In an effort to determine the correlations between procedural justice and types of organizational commitment of UDs teaching staff, three research hypotheses were formulated; these hypotheses have been developed on the basis of empirical and theoretical studies. The data collected made it possible to carry out descriptive and inferential analyzes using SPSS version 23 software. The data were collected at two different times. The analyzes shed more light on the link between perceived procedural justice and the different dimensions of organizational commitment among UDs teachers.

The results indicated that there is a positive and significant link between perceived procedural justice and the affective commitment of UDs teachers, hence the confirmation of hypothesis 1 which states that: the

perception of procedural justice has a positive and significant link with the affective commitment of UD teachers. These results are in line with the results of the meta-analyses of Colquitt et al (2001), the studies of Behson (2011), Cohen-Charash and Spector (2001), Fischer and Smith (2006), Meyer et al (2002), Simard et al. (2005), Simons and Roberson (2003) and Tsouli Moustaked and (2021) who show the existence of a positive and significant relationship between procedural justice and affective commitment. Cohen-Charash and Spector (2001) indicate a strong association between these two variables while Meyer et al (2002) rather indicate that it is of moderate strength. The results of this analysis indicate a weak association between these two variables. Indeed, the results of hypothesis 1 make it possible to understand on the one hand that, when the procedures apply in the same way to all the teachers and that they are stable over time; when they are unbiased, free from personal bias, decision makers are neutral; when based on accurate and precise information (decision-makers use accurate information when making decisions); when they present opportunities for correction based on new information, consider the interests of all teachers, and follow ethical and moral standards in the organization, teachers identify with and connect more with UDs.

Hypothesis 2 is also confirmed as the results indicate a negative and significant correlation between perceived procedural justice and calculated commitment. These results agree with those of Cohen-Charash and Spector (2001) and Meyer et al (2002). We can therefore understand through these results that teachers do not stay in UDs out of necessity or by calculation when they perceive the procedures as fair. Furthermore, Hypothesis 3 is partially confirmed, due to the positive relationship between perceived procedural justice and normative commitment. These results are in agreement with the literature. Indeed, meta-analyses by Cohen-Charash and Spector (2001) and Meyer, et al (2002) have shown that there is a positive and significant relationship between procedural justice and normative commitment. The first authors specify that the strength of this association is moderate while the second explain that it is weak. . In the case of the present study, this relationship is positive but weak. This observation follows the same logic as Meyer et al. (2002) and contributes to the extension of his study to people belonging to the teaching body of the higher level.

Conclusion

This research has proposed to extend the research on the relationship between organizational justice and organizational commitment on a sample of higher education teachers in Cameroon. The choice of this sample was determined by the desire to deepen this subject in the educational context, a context relatively little explored in the panorama of research on organizational justice. The results of the correlations show, in this study, that the modes of management of organizational justice by management have a link or even a differentiated impact on the affective, normative and calculated commitment of teachers. From these results we can understand that to increase the affective commitment and the normative commitment of teachers, managers should pay more attention to organizational justice

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