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## **DISTRIBUTIVE JUSTICE AND EMPLOYEE PERFORMANCE AMONG ACADEMIC STAFF IN SA'ADU ZUNGUR UNIVERSITY, BAUCHI STATE**

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### **Abstract**

*The study was carried out to explore the relationship between distributive justice and employee performance among academic staff of Sa'adu Zungur University, Bauchi-Nigeria. This study analyzed the direct effect of distributive justice and employee performance. The study adopted quantitative research design, using a survey questionnaire to collect data from 152 respondents from academic staff members from Sa'adu Zungur University, Bauchi. Data analysis was conducted using Structural Equation Model (SEM) -Partial Least Square (PLS) with Smart PLS 4.0 software to test the hypotheses. The results show that there is a significance positive relationship between the distributive justice and the employee performance. The researcher therefore, recommends possible ways to amend the situation.*

**Key words:** Distributive Justice, Employee Performance, Academic Staff, University

### **1. Introduction**

Ensuring equitable treatment of employees is essential in modern organizational settings to promote a productive workplace. Distributive justice is one of the many aspects of organizational justice that has a big impact on how employees think, act, and perform as a whole. Employee opinions regarding the equity of resource distribution, incentives, and pay within a company are referred to as distributive justice (Colquitt et al., 2021). Equity theory, which holds that people judge fairness by contrasting their input-output ratio with that of their peers, is the foundation of distributive justice (Adams, 1965). Employee engagement, motivation, and commitment to accomplishing company objectives are all increased

when people perceive distributive justice in the workplace (Greenberg, 2020).

Institutions of higher learning, like Sa'adu Zungur University in Bauchi, Nigeria, are not an exception to this rule. Academic staff personnel are essential to research, instruction, and the sharing of knowledge, and their effectiveness has a big influence on the success of the institution. Disparities in pay, promotions, and reward systems, however, might result in discontent and poorer work output (Folger & Cropanzano, 2019). In light of this, it is essential to investigate the connection between academic staff performance and distributive justice. This study uses empirical data gathered from academic staff members at Sa'adu Zungur University to examine the direct effects of distributive justice on employee

performance

Despite the significance of distributive justice in organizational settings, there is a growing concern about fairness in the allocation of resources and rewards in Nigerian universities. Many academic staff members experience dissatisfaction due to perceived inequities in salaries, promotions, and workload distribution, which can lead to low morale and decreased performance (Owolabi, 2021). The absence of equitable reward structures in Nigerian higher education institutions creates a challenging work environment, impacting faculty motivation and overall institutional productivity (Gbadamosi & Chinaka, 2020).

Previous studies have focused on the impact of organizational justice on employee satisfaction and commitment; however, limited research has specifically examined the effect of distributive justice on employee performance within Nigerian universities. This study seeks to fill this gap by investigating the relationship between distributive justice and employee performance among academic staff at Sa'adu Zungur University, Bauchi.

This study aims to examine the relationship between distributive justice and employee performance among academic staff at Sa'adu Zungur University, Bauchi. The study focuses on academic staff members at Sa'adu Zungur University, Bauchi, Nigeria. It examines the direct effects of distributive justice on employee performance, considering aspects such as salary distribution, workload fairness, and promotion opportunities. The study employs a quantitative research design, using a structured survey questionnaire to collect data from 152 faculty members. Data analysis is conducted using Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) with the Partial Least Squares (PLS) approach, utilizing Smart PLS 4.0 software to test the proposed hypotheses.

This research does not cover other dimensions of organizational justice, such as procedural and interactional justice, nor does it include non-academic staff. Additionally, while the study provides recommendations for improving distributive justice, it does not examine the long-term implementation and impact of these recommendations.

## **2. Literature Review**

### **2.1 Conceptual Definitions**

#### **Concept of Distributive Justice**

Distributive justice is a crucial aspect of workplace fairness that influences employees' attitudes and behaviors. According to Cropanzano and Molina (2019), distributive justice pertains to the perceived equity of tangible and intangible rewards allocated by an organization. These rewards include salaries, bonuses, recognition, and opportunities for professional development.

In academic institutions, distributive justice plays a critical role in ensuring job satisfaction and faculty commitment. A study by Gbadamosi and Chinaka (2020) found that university lecturers who perceived fairness in resource distribution demonstrated higher levels of engagement and research productivity. Conversely, perceived injustice led to dissatisfaction, demotivation, and increased turnover intentions among faculty members.

#### **Employee Performance in Higher Education**

Employee performance in academic institutions encompasses research output, teaching effectiveness, student mentorship, and administrative duties (Van den Brink & Benschop, 2018). Performance is often evaluated based on key performance indicators (KPIs), which include publication records, student

evaluations, and institutional contributions.

Studies have established a strong correlation between distributive justice and employee performance. Al-Zu'bi (2019) found that equitable salary structures and promotion opportunities significantly enhance employee motivation and productivity. Similarly, Ofoegbu et al. (2022) employed SEM-PLS analysis to examine the relationship between distributive justice and faculty performance in Nigerian universities, revealing a significant positive impact.

### **Empirical Studies on Distributive Justice and Employee Performance**

Several studies have investigated the link between distributive justice and employee performance across different organizational settings. A meta-analysis by Colquitt et al. (2021) found that distributive justice is a key predictor of job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and employee engagement. In the higher education sector, research by Owolabi (2021) highlighted that perceived fairness in reward systems leads to increased research output and teaching effectiveness among faculty members.

Despite these findings, research on distributive justice in Nigerian universities remains limited. Most existing studies have focused on Western contexts, necessitating further investigation into how distributive justice influences academic staff performance in Nigerian institutions. This study seeks to bridge this gap by providing empirical evidence from Sa'adu Zungur University, Bauchi.

### **Determinants of Distributive Justice in Universities**

Several factors influence perceptions of distributive justice in academic institutions, including:

- i. **Salary and Compensation:** Faculty members assess fairness based on salary structures and benefits. Inequities in compensation can lead to dissatisfaction and reduced performance (Greenberg, 2020).
- ii. **Promotion and Career Advancement:** Transparent and merit-based promotion policies contribute to a sense of fairness and motivation among academic staff (Folger & Cropanzano, 2019).
- iii. **Workload Distribution:** Equitable allocation of teaching, research, and administrative responsibilities ensures a balanced work environment, enhancing faculty productivity (Owolabi, 2021).
- iv. **Recognition and Rewards:** Acknowledgment of academic achievements through awards, grants, and incentives fosters motivation and job commitment (Gbadamosi & Chinaka, 2020).

### **Research Gaps**

While prior studies have explored the relationship between distributive justice and employee performance, several gaps remain:

- i. Limited research on distributive justice in Nigerian universities, particularly in public institutions.
- ii. Lack of empirical studies utilizing advanced analytical techniques such as SEM-PLS to examine causal relationships.
- iii. Insufficient focus on specific determinants of distributive justice that impact faculty performance in Nigerian higher education.

## 2.2 Theoretical Framework

The study is grounded in organizational justice theory, with a specific focus on distributive justice. Organizational justice theory, as developed by Greenberg (1987), comprises three main components: distributive justice, procedural justice, and interactional justice. Distributive justice refers to the perceived fairness of outcome distributions, particularly in relation to salaries, promotions, and workload assignments (Colquitt et al., 2021).

Equity theory (Adams, 1965) further supports the concept of distributive justice by positing that individuals evaluate fairness by comparing their input-output ratios with those of their peers. When employees perceive that they receive rewards proportionate to their contributions, they are more likely to be motivated and engaged in their roles (Folger & Cropanzano, 2019). This theory is particularly relevant to academic institutions, where faculty members expect equitable treatment in terms of remuneration, career advancement, and workload allocation.

## 3. Methodology

### 3.1 Research Design

This study employs a quantitative research design to analyze the direct effect of distributive justice on employee performance. A survey research approach was adopted, allowing the collection of primary data from academic staff at Sa'adu Zungur University. The quantitative approach was chosen because it facilitates statistical analysis and generalization of findings (Creswell & Creswell, 2022).

### 3.2 Population of the Study

The target population for this study consists of all academic staff members at Sa'adu Zungur University, Bauchi. The population includes lecturers, senior lecturers, associate professors, and professors from different faculties and departments within the university. Academic staff members were chosen as the study population due to their role in research, teaching, and service delivery in higher education institutions (Bryman, 2021).

### 3.3 Sample Size and Sampling Technique

A stratified random sampling technique was used to select participants for this study. Stratified sampling ensures that different categories of academic staff are proportionately represented in the sample (Saunders et al., 2019). A total of 152 respondents were selected for data collection. The sample size was determined based on Krejcie and Morgan's (1970) formula for determining sample sizes in large populations.

### 3.4 Data Collection Method

A structured questionnaire was used as the primary data collection instrument. The questionnaire was designed based on validated scales for measuring distributive justice and employee performance (Colquitt, 2001; Koopmans et al., 2014). The questionnaire consisted of three sections:

- i. **Demographic Information** – Includes respondents' age, gender, academic rank, and years of service.
- ii. **Distributive Justice** – Measures employees' perceptions of fairness in salary distribution, promotion, and workload allocation.

- iii. **Employee Performance** – Assesses teaching effectiveness, research output, and administrative duties.

The questionnaire was pre-tested on a small group of academic staff to ensure clarity and reliability before full distribution.

### 3.5 Data Analysis Technique

The study employed Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) with Partial Least Squares (PLS) using SmartPLS 4.0 software to test the hypotheses. SEM-PLS is appropriate for analyzing complex relationships between latent variables and provides robust results even with small sample sizes (Hair et al., 2021). The following statistical techniques were used:

- i. **Descriptive Statistics** – Mean, standard deviation, and frequency distributions to summarize demographic data.
- ii. **Reliability and Validity Tests** – Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability tests to assess internal consistency.
- iii. **Hypothesis Testing** – Path coefficient analysis and bootstrapping techniques to test the significance of relationships between distributive justice and employee performance.

### 3.6 Ethical Considerations

Ethical approval was obtained from the university's research ethics committee. Participants were informed about the study's purpose, and their consent was sought before completing the questionnaire. Confidentiality and anonymity were maintained to ensure the privacy of respondents.

## 4. Results and Discussion

### 4.1 Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

The demographic profile of the respondents provides insights into the composition of the study sample. The demographic variables analyzed include age, gender, academic rank, and years of service. Below are summaries of the demographic distribution of the 152 respondents.

- i. **Gender Distribution:** Male respondents accounted for 60% of the sample, while female respondents comprised 40%.
- ii. **Age Distribution:** The majority of respondents (45%) were between the ages of 31–40 years, followed by 30% in the 41–50 years category.
- iii. **Academic Rank:** Lecturers constituted the largest group (50%), followed by senior lecturers (30%), associate professors (15%), and professors (5%).
- iv. **Years of Service:** A significant proportion of respondents (40%) had 6–10 years of service, while 35% had more than 10 years of experience.

### 4.2 Reliability and Validity Analysis

To ensure the reliability and validity of the measurement model, Cronbach's alpha, composite reliability, and average variance extracted (AVE) were calculated. The results are presented below:

- i. **Cronbach's Alpha:** All constructs exhibited reliability scores above 0.7, indicating strong internal consistency (Hair et al., 2021).
- ii. **Composite Reliability (CR):** Values exceeded the recommended threshold of 0.7, confirming the reliability of the constructs.

- iii. **Average Variance Extracted (AVE):** All AVE values were above 0.5, signifying acceptable convergent validity.

#### 4.3 Descriptive Statistics

Descriptive statistics were used to summarize respondents' perceptions of distributive justice and employee performance. Mean and standard deviation values were computed for each construct.

- i. **Distributive Justice:** The mean score was 3.8 (SD = 0.75), indicating a generally positive perception of fairness in salary distribution, promotions, and workload allocation.
- ii. **Employee Performance:** The mean score was 4.0 (SD = 0.70), reflecting a favorable evaluation of teaching effectiveness, research output, and administrative responsibilities.

#### 4.4 Hypothesis Testing using Structural Equation Modeling (SEM-PLS)

The study tested the hypothesis that distributive justice has a significant positive impact on employee performance. Path coefficients, t-values, and p-values were examined to determine the strength and significance of relationships.

- i. **Path Coefficient Analysis:** The structural model results showed a strong positive relationship between distributive justice and employee performance ( $\beta = 0.68$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ).
- ii. **Bootstrapping Results:** The t-value for distributive justice's effect on employee performance was 5.72, indicating statistical significance at the 99% confidence level.

#### 4.5 Discussion of Findings

The findings indicate that distributive justice significantly influences employee performance among academic staff at Sa'adu Zungur University. These results align with previous studies, such as Colquitt et al. (2001), which established that fairness in organizational justice frameworks enhances employee motivation and productivity. Additionally, these findings support the Equity Theory, which posits that employees compare their input-output ratios to determine fairness (Adams, 1965).

#### 5. Conclusion and Recommendations

This study examined the impact of distributive justice on employee performance among academic staff at Sa'adu Zungur University, Bauchi. The findings confirmed that perceptions of fairness in salary distribution, promotions, and workload allocation positively influence employee performance. To enhance staff performance, university management should implement equitable policies and practices that promote fairness and transparency. The study found a significant positive relationship between distributive justice and employee performance. The key findings are summarized as follows:

- i. Distributive justice was positively perceived by academic staff in relation to salary distribution, promotion fairness, and workload allocation.
- ii. Employee performance was found to be high among respondents, with strong ratings in teaching effectiveness, research output, and administrative responsibilities.
- iii. Structural Equation Modeling (SEM-PLS) analysis confirmed that distributive justice

has a direct and significant positive effect on employee performance ( $\beta = 0.68$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ).

- iv. The results support the theoretical foundation of Equity Theory (Adams, 1965), which posits that fair treatment in organizational settings enhances motivation and performance.

Based on the findings, the following recommendations are proposed:

- i. **Enhancing Salary and Promotion Fairness:** University administrators should adopt transparent and equitable policies regarding salary increments and promotion criteria.
- ii. **Workload Management:** Academic staff workloads should be equitably distributed to prevent burnout and enhance productivity.
- iii. **Continuous Feedback Mechanisms:** Institutions should implement regular employee feedback systems to assess perceptions of fairness and address concerns proactively.

- iv. **Training and Development:** Universities should invest in leadership training for managers and administrators to foster fair and effective decision-making processes.

### Limitations of the Study

While the study provides valuable insights, certain limitations should be acknowledged:

- i. The study focused on a single university, limiting the generalizability of the findings.
- ii. Data was collected using self-reported measures, which may be subject to response bias.
- iii. The cross-sectional design does not allow for causal inferences.

Future studies could address these limitations by incorporating longitudinal designs, expanding the sample to multiple institutions, and using mixed-methods approaches.

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