

Relationship Between Organisational Justice and Commitment: Role of Leader-Member Exchange

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Abstract

Existing research indicates that leader-member exchange (LMX) mediates the relationship between interactional justice and various outcomes, without studying mediation separately for the two components of interactional justice—interpersonal and informational. In one study on interpersonal justice, LMX was found to moderate its relationship with felt obligation. Evidence also links interactional justice to organisation-referenced outcomes like commitment, beyond higher unique effects on supervisor-referenced outcomes like LMX. The present research attempts to synthesize these findings by studying all four justice dimensions—distributive, procedural, interpersonal, and informational. A total of 205 responses were collected from 3 organisations in India. Support was found for the hypothesized role of LMX both as a mediator of the relationship between informational justice and affective commitment, and as a moderator of the association between interpersonal justice and affective commitment. Distributive justice was linked to continuance commitment, as hypothesized. Employees may perceive distributive and procedural justice aspects to be less open to modification, and identify greater opportunity for managerial discretion in the interpersonal and informational aspects. Organisations can benefit by training their managers to ensure fairness in these two important dimensions for creating and maintaining affective commitment, within a given procedural and distributive justice environment.

Keyword: LMX, Justice, Organisational Commitment.

Introduction

Justice is a critical concern for organisations operating in both formal and informal economies because employees' perceptions of justice can impact their workplace behaviour and attitudes. The four justice dimensions—distributive, procedural, interpersonal, and informational—have been found to be associated with different outcomes and to explain unique effects (Thurston Jr. and McNall, 2010). Specifically, existing research has found that procedural justice has a stronger impact on organisation-referenced outcomes like organisational commitment; distributive justice has a stronger impact on person-referenced outcomes like pay satisfaction; and interpersonal and informational justice have a strong association with supervisor-referenced outcomes like leader-member exchange quality (Colquitt, Conlon, Wesson, Porter, and Ng, 2001; Cropanzano, Prehar, and Chen, 2002; Masterson, Lewis, Goldman, and Taylor, 2000).

Additionally, there is evidence of LMX mediating the relationship between interactional justice and outcomes like organisational citizenship behaviour, work performance, job satisfaction, and supervisory satisfaction (Cropanzano et al., 2002; Xinyan, Jianqiao, Degen, and Tao, 2010). This evidence seems to indicate the association of interactional justice with outcomes beyond supervisor-referenced ones. Furthermore, this body of research has focused on interactional justice as a single construct and has not considered separately its individual dimensions of interpersonal and informational justice. In one exception, Piccolo, Bardes, Mayer, and Judge (2008) studied interpersonal justice, though not informational

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justice, as a separate construct and found that LMX moderated the relationship between interpersonal justice and felt obligation.

This pattern of results indicates the importance of studying LMX to understand its role as a moderator or mediator of the relationship between interactional justice dimensions and work outcomes. Research on the role of interpersonal and informational justice is underrepresented in literature, and needs to be pursued more vigorously. The present research is an attempt to explicate the impact of LMX on the association between the interpersonal and informational justices and commitment. At the same time, all four justice dimensions are considered together in order to understand their relative significance in determining commitment levels of employees.

Theory and Hypotheses

In the field of social research, organisational justice is one area that has significant potential for describing and explaining a variety of work attitudes and behaviour. This is because receiving fair treatment at work is a crucial concern for employees, and influences the quality of the relationship that an employee develops and shares with his or her supervisor. The quality of this exchange relationship, also called leader-member exchange (LMX), together with the perceived fairness of procedures, reward distribution, and interactions, is a critical determinant of the level of commitment of an employee towards the organisation.

Organisational Justice

The term organisational justice was coined by Greenberg (1990) who defined it as a field devoted to describing and explaining the role of fairness as a consideration in the workplace. According to Cropanzano, Bowen, and Gilliland (2007), organisational justice – members' sense of the moral propriety of how they are treated – is the glue that allows people to work together effectively.

Over the years, different dimensions of justice have been theorized and researched. Spanning the 1950s through the 1970s, research on justice focused on fairness of outcome distributions or allocations, also called distributive justice. The focus on procedural justice took root in the mid-1970s, and continued through the mid-1990s. Then, beginning in the mid-1980s, attention was

paid to the interactional aspects of justice. Greenberg (1990) suggested that interactional justice is comprised of two separate constructs – informational justice and interpersonal justice. Informational justice focuses on the explanations provided to people that convey information about why procedures were used in a certain way or why outcomes were distributed in a certain fashion. On the other hand, interpersonal justice reflects the extent to which people are treated with respect, dignity, and politeness by authorities involved in executing procedures or determining outcomes.

Colquitt (2001) developed measures of distributive, procedural, informational, and interpersonal justice and found that a four-factor confirmatory model provided the best fit to the data and that the four justice dimensions predicted different outcomes. Colquitt et al. (2001), in a meta-analytic review of 183 justice studies done between 1975 and 2000, found that all the four justice dimensions explained significant incremental variance in fairness perceptions. More recently, Thurston Jr. and McNall (2010) explored employees' justice perceptions about their organisations' performance appraisal practices and found the four justice dimensions to be separate, but highly correlated constructs. Justice perceptions can be expected to be linked to the quality of the LMX relationship that develops between a supervisor and a subordinate.

Leader-Member Exchange

Leader-member exchange theory suggests that leaders develop a different type of relationship or exchange with each subordinate, rather than using the same style in dealing with all subordinates. The supervisor assesses the competencies and motivation of each subordinate, and offers different material and non-material inducements based on these assessments. Subsequently, leaders treat subordinates differently depending on whether the latter are part of the in-group (high-quality relationship) or out-group (low-quality relationship). According to Cropanzano et al. (2002), high-LMX relations are supportive and informal whereas low-LMX relations are more distant, less supportive, and characterized by less trust.

The quality of LMX can be expected to determine the extent to which the leader reciprocates with work-related resources such as information, task assignments, and autonomy. Dansereau, Graen, and Haga (1975), in

a longitudinal study, examined LMX relationship (in-group or out-group membership) that developed early on in the leader-member dyad and its impact on various social exchanges over a seven-month period. In-group members were found to receive more leadership attention and leadership support, reported higher levels of job satisfaction, and stated more positive attitudes towards their interpersonal interactions with the supervisor. Kacmar, Witt, and Gully (2003) found that frequently communicating subordinates in a high-quality LMX relationship received higher performance ratings than did subordinates in a low-quality LMX relationship. There are differences in opportunities to interact with the leader between in-group and out-group members, because of which the out-group may feel that they are not given sufficient opportunities and/or information. Thus, for the out-group, there is not only an unequal distribution of rewards but also of opportunities. In such a situation, social comparison processes may occur and perceptions of justice may become salient in the work group. For example, Vecchio, Griffeth, and Hom (1986) found LMX quality to be closely associated to felt equity, and Bhal and Ansari (2007) found LMX quality to be positively associated with justice.

There has been much debate on whether LMX is a one-dimensional or a multidimensional construct. Graen and Uhl-Bien (1995) reviewed 25 years of LMX literature and concluded that although the LMX construct has multiple dimensions, the dimensions are so highly correlated that they can be tapped into with a single measure of LMX (the seven item LMX-7 scale).

Organisational Commitment

Mowday, Steers, and Porter (1979) defined organisational commitment in terms of the strength of an individual's identification with and involvement in a particular organisation. According to these authors, commitment is characterized by at least three factors: (a) a strong belief in and acceptance of the organisation's goals and values; (b) a willingness to exert considerable effort on behalf of the organisation; (c) a definitive desire to maintain organisational membership. Thus, commitment involves an active relationship in which individuals are willing to make considerable investments for the good of their organisations. Meyer and Allen (1991) suggested that commitment, as a psychological state, has at least three

separable components reflecting (a) a desire (affective component), (b) a need (continuance commitment), and (c) an obligation (normative commitment) to maintain employment in an organisation.

The affective component view of commitment emphasizes the individual's emotional attachment to the organisation and describes commitment as an affective orientation towards the organisation. The continuance commitment view emphasizes the economic costs that an individual must incur because of leaving a current employer. A less common approach of normative commitment views commitment as an obligation to remain with the organisation. Wiener (1982) defined commitment as the totality of internalized normative pressures to act in a way that meets organisational goals and interests.

Employees with strong affective commitment continue employment with the organisation because they want to do so. Employees whose primary link with the organisation is based on continuance commitment remain because they need to do so. Employees with a high level of normative commitment feel that they ought to.

The outcomes showing the strongest relationships with commitment include turnover and intention to stay in the organisation. For example, O'Reilly and Chatman (1986) found commitment to be positively related to prosocial behaviours and negatively related to turnover. In a meta-analytic study on commitment research covering 155 studies, Meyer, Stanley, Herscovitch, and Topolnysky (2002) found that all three forms of commitment relate negatively with withdrawal cognition, turnover intention, and turnover.

An employee's commitment levels are linked to the fairness of treatment received by him or her. Cropanzano et al. (2002) found interactional justice to be related to the quality of the manager who treated the employees either fairly or unfairly, and procedural justice to be related to trust in upper management and performance appraisal system satisfaction. Masterson et al. (2000) showed interactional justice to be a stronger predictor of leader-member exchange than other forms of justice. The authors also found that interactional justice predicted supervisor-referenced outcomes (e.g., citizenship behaviours directed at supervisor and supervisor rating of performance), whereas procedural justice predicted organisation-referenced outcomes (e.g., citizenship behaviours directed at the organisation and organisational

commitment). Similarly, Cropanzano and Prehar (1999) showed interactional justice to be a stronger predictor of satisfaction with one's supervisor. Cohen-Charash and Spector (2001) conducted a meta-analysis of the role of justice in organisations using 190 studies. The authors found that leader-member exchange quality was more strongly related to interactional justice than it was to procedural justice. In a similar vein, Goodwin, Bowler, and Whittington (2009) found that LMX quality might be considered positive even if interactions of the subordinate with the leader are infrequent, provided these interactions result in valuable information when they do occur.

In a quasi-experimental study, Skarlicki and Latham (1996) trained union leaders to behave more justly. Among other things, these leaders were taught to provide explanations and apologies (informational justice) and to treat their direct reports with courtesy and respect (interpersonal justice). When work groups were examined three months later, individuals who reported to trained leaders exhibited more helpful citizenship behaviours than individuals who reported to untrained leaders. Manogran et al. (1994) suggested that in most organisations, aspects of distributive justice and formal procedures are determined by the organisation and are less amenable to modifications by the supervisors. Thus, supervisors have to rely on interpersonal relations when dealing with members of the in-group.

We suggest a model proposing mediating and moderating role of LMX on the association between interactional justice and commitment. Existing research has found LMX to mediate the relationship between interactional justice and significant work outcomes like citizenship behaviour, supervisory satisfaction, job performance, and job satisfaction. Manogran et al. (1994) studied the mediating role of LMX on the relationship between the three dimensions of fairness (distributive, procedural, and interactive) and organisational citizenship behaviour. Out of the three justice dimensions, interactional justice had the highest positive effect on LMX. Moreover, only interactive justice was found to have an indirect significant positive effect on organisational citizenship behaviour through LMX. Xinyan et al. (2010) found that the relationship of organisational justice to work performance was mediated by LMX. They also found that among distributive, procedural, and interactional justice, interactional justice was the best predictor of performance. Cropanzano et al. (2002) found that LMX mediated

the relationship between interactional justice and many outcome variables—notably, supervisory satisfaction, job performance, and job satisfaction. Masterson et al. (2000) found that interactional justice predicted supervisor-referenced outcomes via the mediating variable of LMX.

Most studies have not considered the separate effects of interpersonal justice and informational justice on work outcomes. They collapse these two separate dimensions into a single construct of interactional justice. However, Piccolo et al. (2008) studied interpersonal justice as a separate construct, and found interpersonal justice perceptions to be significantly associated with an employee's felt obligation to the organisation, only when that employee enjoyed a high-quality LMX relationship with the supervisor.

We propose that research is needed which not only studies the effect of all the justice dimensions, but also looks at the differential effects of interpersonal and informational justice, on commitment via LMX quality. It may be expected that the sharing of relevant information by a supervisor would enhance LMX quality, which in turn would lead to enhanced affective and normative commitment. On the other hand, enhanced interpersonal treatment would lead to higher commitment only in high quality LMX relationships, since enhanced treatment by itself does not change the employee's perceptions about the quality of the relationship that has been established with the supervisor. If, however, the supervisor starts sharing information with a subordinate, this would be seen as a substantial input towards enhancing the relationship quality. Specifically, we hypothesized the following:

Hypothesis 1: *LMX* mediates the relationship between informational justice and affective commitment.

Hypothesis 2: *LMX* moderates the relationship between interpersonal justice and affective commitment such that the relationship will be stronger at higher levels of *LMX*.

Hypothesis 3: *LMX* mediates the relationship between informational justice and normative commitment.

Hypothesis 4: *LMX* moderates the relationship between interpersonal justice and normative commitment such that the relationship will be stronger at higher levels of *LMX*.

We expect continuance commitment to have a significant association only with distributive justice. Existing research has found distributive justice to be strongly associated with

pay satisfaction. For example, Roch and Shanock (2006) studied the relationship of the four justice dimensions with a variety of outcomes like supervisor relationship quality, organisational support and pay satisfaction. The authors found a unique association of distributive justice with pay satisfaction. Jawahar and Stone (2011) studied the relationship of the four justice dimensions to four aspects of pay level satisfaction namely, satisfaction with pay levels, satisfaction with benefits, satisfaction with raises, and satisfaction with structure and administration. The authors found distributive justice to be uniquely related to pay satisfaction.

This pattern of results is expected, as distributive justice is perceived fairness in the distribution of rewards. We can expect distributive justice to be associated with continuance commitment since it is commitment that arises based on the individual's perception of costs associated with leaving the organisation. It was therefore hypothesized that:

Hypothesis 5: Out of the four types of justice, distributive justice is the best predictor of continuance commitment.

METHOD

Sample and Procedure

Data were collected from three organisations in the manufacturing sector using internet-based questionnaire. Organisation 1 (employee strength of 550) is a major manufacturer of bearings with its main manufacturing facility located in Northern India. It is part of a large Indian conglomerate with operations in several sectors all over India. Organisation 2 is part of the same conglomerate and has employee strength of 250. It manufactures industrial chemicals and its plant is located in Central India. Organisation 3 has 80 employees and manufactures specialized industrial equipment. It is part of a multinational and its factory is located in Western India. Its parent company is based in Europe.

For Organisation 1, employees were informed by the HR Department regarding the organisation's decision to participate in the survey. After they received this communication from HR, the organisation's employees were contacted by the researcher through email inviting their participation. For Organisations 2 and 3, participation

was invited directly by the HR department by sending the employees the survey link. A total of 205 respondents participated in the survey – 66 from Organisation 1, 91 from Organisation 2, and 48 from Organisation 3.

The median age of participants was 38 years (range = 19 to 64 years). Out of the total 205 respondents, 91.2 percent were men, and 98% reported to a male supervisor. The median organisational tenure of respondents was 5 years (range = 2 months to 41 years). The median duration in their current role was 2 years (range = 2 months to 20.8 years). The respondents' median relationship duration in current role with current supervisor was 1.5 years (range = 2 months to 20.8 years). Based on their designations, the respondents were categorized into top management (level 1), middle management (level 2), and supervisory (level 3). Approximately 3.4% of the employees belonged to level 1, 27.8% to level 2, and the remaining 68.8% to level 3.

Measures

Organisational justice: Organisational justice was measured using Colquitt's four-dimensional measure of justice (Colquitt, 2001). The scale has 20 items – 7 for procedural, 4 for distributive, 4 for interpersonal, and 5 for informational justice. To allow for applicability in different contexts, the scale requires substituting appropriate outcome(s) or procedure(s) in the parentheses contained in each of the items used for measuring distributive and procedural justice (Colquitt, 2001). For the present research, "rewards" (defined as compensation, praise, recognition, resources, opportunities, etc.) was specified in the place of outcomes. Sample items include 'To what extent do your rewards reflect what you have contributed to the organisation?'

Commitment: Affective, normative, and continuance commitment were measured using Allen and Meyer's scales for the three components (Allen and Meyer, 1990). The affective commitment scale comprises six items; sample item is 'I would be very happy to spend the rest of my career with this organisation.' Normative commitment scale comprises eight items; sample item is 'I was taught to believe in the value of remaining loyal to one organisation.' There are eight items in the continuance commitment scale; sample item is 'I feel that I have too few options to consider leaving this organisation.'

Leader-member exchange: Measurement of LMX was done using the seven-item LMX-7, developed by Graen and Scandura (1987). Sample item is ‘ My leader understands my job problems and needs.’

Responses for items under each scale were recorded on a five-point rating scale (1 = strongly disagree and 5 = strongly agree). An internet based survey questionnaire was created consisting of four parts – part 1 consisted of items on distributive justice and procedural justice, part 2 contained items on interpersonal justice, informational justice and leader-member exchange, and part 3 had items on affective commitment, normative commitment, and continuance commitment. The items contained under each of these three parts were in random order. Part 4 gathered demographic information about the respondents – age, gender, name of organisation, designation, department, organisational tenure (in months), duration in current role in current organisation, duration in current role with current supervisor (in months), and supervisor’s gender.

Common Method Variance

In the present study, all data were collected from a single source, which can lead to common method bias. To test for the presence of common method bias, we used Harman’s one factor (or single-factor) test, which is one of the most widely used techniques. This method involves loading all the variables in the study into an exploratory factor analysis and examining the unrotated factor solution to determine the number of factors that account for the variance in the variables (Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Jeong-Yeon, and Podsakoff, 2003). The basic assumption of

this technique is that if a substantial amount of common method variance is present, either (a) a single factor will emerge from the factor analysis or (b) one general factor will account for the majority of the covariance among the measures. For the present study, we conducted principal components analysis on the seven variables, and found that two factors emerged (eigen value >1). This gives us confidence that common method bias may not have significantly affected the results.

Results

Table 1 presents the means, standard deviations, reliabilities (Cronbach alphas), and correlations between all variables in the study. PASW Statistics 18 (SPSS) was used to perform all the statistical analyses.

Separate regression analyses were performed for each outcome variable— affective commitment, normative commitment, and continuance commitment—first using the forward-selection method and then using the enter method (Judge, Griffiths, Hill, Lutkepohl, and Lee, 1985). The forward-selection technique begins with no variables in the model. For each independent variable, it calculates F statistics that reflect the variable’s contribution to the model if it is included. The variable that would produce the largest F statistic is added to the model. The evaluation process is repeated with the variables remaining outside the model. Once a variable is entered into the model, it stays. Thus, variables are added one by one to the model until no remaining variable produces a significant F statistic. Each of the three outcomes (affective commitment, normative commitment, and continuance commitment)

Table 1: Correlations between Variables a

(N = 205)	M	S.D.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1. Distributive Justice	3.29	0.90	(.91)							
2. Procedural Justice	3.20	0.77	***.82	(.90)						
3. Interpersonal Justice	3.81	0.64	***.49	***.49	(.81)					
4. Informational Justice	3.54	0.74	***.64	***.73	***.75	(.86)				
5. Leader-Member Exchange	3.64	0.73	***.61	***.62	***.79	***.84	(.88)			
6. Affective Commitment	3.37	0.66	** .19	***.27	***.30	***.38	***.43	(.80)		
7. Normative Commitment	3.41	0.49	*.14	** .23	*.18	***.27	***.30	***.59	(.58)	
8. Continuance Commitment	3.10	0.50	***.29	***.28	*.15	***.27	** .24	***.28	** .21	(.61)

a Alphas are in parentheses along the diagonal.

* = p < .05

** = p < .01

*** = p < 0.001

was separately modeled against distributive justice, procedural justice, informational justice, and interpersonal justice using the forward option. In the second set of regression analyses, each of the three outcomes (affective commitment, normative commitment, and continuance commitment) was separately modeled against the four justice dimensions using the enter method.

We next followed the procedures recommended by Baron and Kenny (1986) to test the mediation hypotheses. To test for mediation, one should estimate three regression equations and satisfy three conditions. First, the independent variable must significantly affect the mediator. Second, the independent variable must significantly affect the dependent variable. Finally, while regressing the dependent variable on both the independent variable and the mediator, the mediator must significantly affect the dependent variable. Mediation exists if the effect of the independent variable on the dependent variable is less in the third equation than in the second. Perfect mediation holds if the independent variable has no significant effect on the dependent variable in the third equation.

The next step was testing the hypothesized moderating effect of LMX on the relationship between interpersonal justice and affective commitment, and on the relationship between interpersonal justice and normative commitment. To test the moderating effects, raw scores on all these variables were mean centered. A multiplication term of

the independent and moderator variable was used as an additional predictor of the outcome variable.

For all analyses involving LMX, only those respondents were considered who had worked with the manager for six months or more. This was done to ensure that the relationship with the leader had stabilized (Bhal and Ansari, 2007).

Affective Commitment

The results of all statistical analyses for affective commitment are presented in Table 2. First, regression test was performed using forward method. Informational justice was the best predictor of affective commitment and so it entered the model in step 1. No other variable entered the model. Using the enter method, only informational justice was found to be a significant predictor of affective commitment—a result consistent with that obtained using the forward method.

Before the inclusion of LMX as the mediator, the direct effect of informational justice on affective commitment was significant. When affective commitment was regressed on both LMX and informational justice, the effect of informational justice was not significant. This shows that the impact of informational justice on affective commitment was fully mediated by LMX, as depicted in Fig. 1, supporting Hypothesis 1.

Table 2: Regression Analyses for Predicting Affective Commitment

	<i>Dependent variable</i>	<i>Step</i>	<i>Independent variable</i>	β	<i>t</i>	<i>Model R²</i>	<i>Model F</i>
Forward Method	Affective Commitment	1	Informational Justice	.37	***5.60	.14	***31.38
Enter Method	Affective Commitment		Distributive Justice	-.12	-1.02	.14	***8.09
			Procedural Justice	.07	0.51		
			Interpersonal Justice	.05	0.50		
			Informational Justice	.36	**2.82		
Mediation Test	LMX		Informational Justice	.84	***21.60	.71	***466.51
	Affective Commitment		Informational Justice	.37	***5.60	.14	***31.38
	Affective Commitment		Informational Justice	.06	0.50	.18	***21.20
			LMX	.37	**3.10		
Moderation Test	Affective Commitment		Interpersonal Justice	-.02	-0.20	.20	***16.42
			LMX	.52	***4.94		
			LMX x Interpersonal Justice	.17	*2.28		

* = $p < .05$

** = $p < .01$

*** = $p < 0.001$

Fig. 1: Mediation Model: LMX as a Mediator between Informational Justice and Affective Commitment

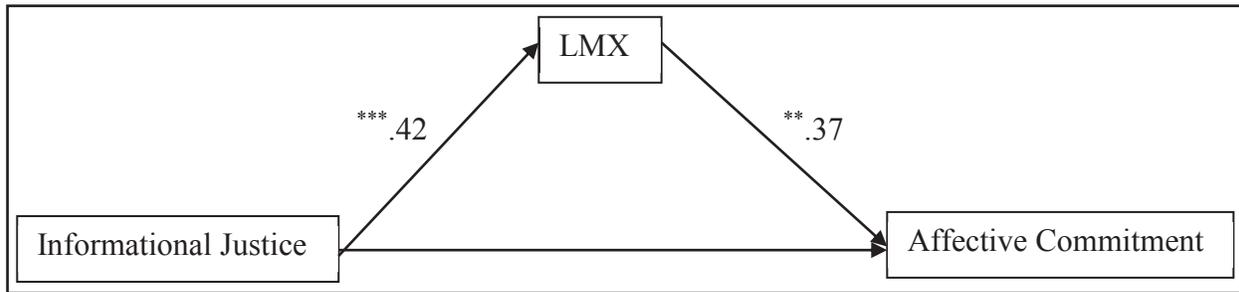
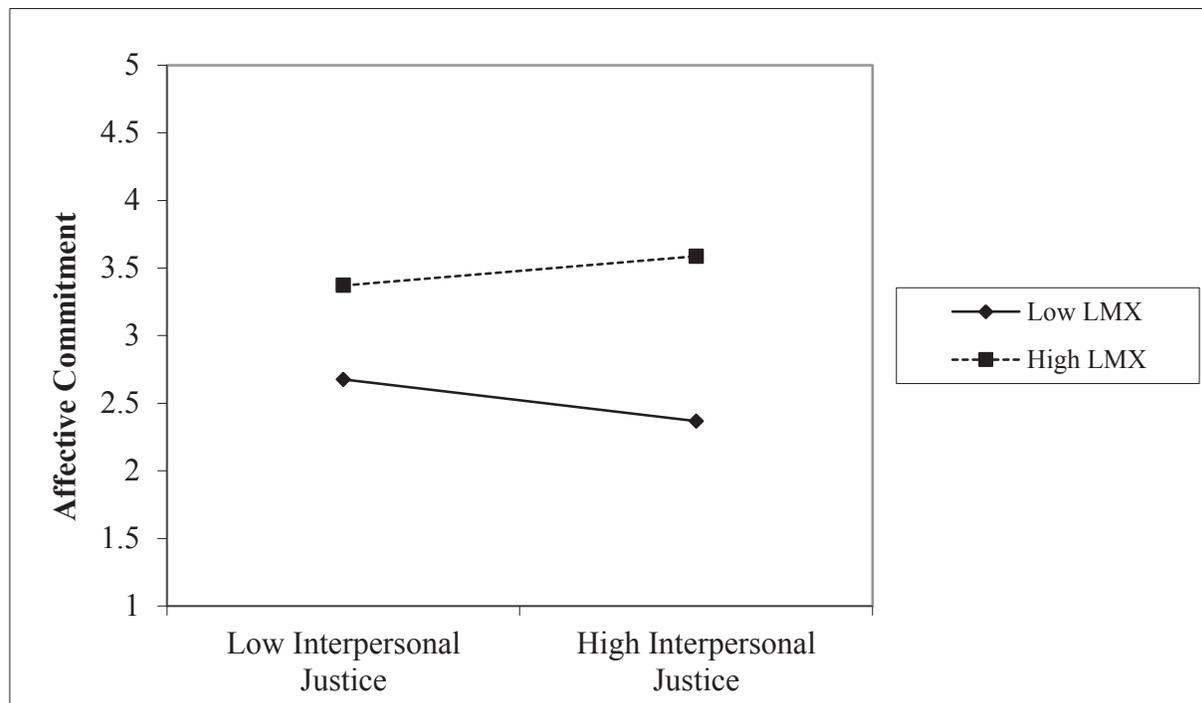


Fig. 2: LMX as a Moderator of the Relationship between Interpersonal Justice and Affective Commitment



To test for moderation, affective commitment was regressed on interpersonal justice, LMX, and the product term of LMX and interpersonal justice. The product term was found to be a significant predictor of affective commitment, thus providing support for Hypothesis 2. The interaction effect is depicted in Fig. 2, indicating that the relationship between interpersonal justice and affective commitment was stronger for those who reported high-quality LMX than for those who reported low-quality LMX.

Normative Commitment

Table 3 presents results of regression analyses for normative commitment. Normative commitment was

regressed on the four justice dimensions using the forward method. Informational justice was the best predictor of normative commitment and so it entered the model in step 1. No other variable entered the model. Using the enter method, none of the justice dimensions was found to be a significant predictor of affective commitment. Thus, the significant association with informational justice when informational justice was the only independent variable disappeared when all four dimensions were entered in the model simultaneously.

The effect of LMX on normative commitment was not significant when normative commitment was regressed on both informational justice and LMX. Therefore, the third condition of mediation was not satisfied. Thus, Hypothesis 3, stating that the impact of informational

Table 3: Regression Analyses for Predicting Normative Commitment

	<i>Dependent variable</i>	<i>Step</i>	<i>Independent variable</i>	β	<i>t</i>	<i>Model R²</i>	<i>Model F</i>
Forward Method	Normative Commitment	1	Informational Justice	.25	***3.64	.06	***13.24
Enter Method	Normative Commitment		Distributive Justice	-.13	-1.08	.07	**3.76
			Procedural Justice	.18	1.28		
			Interpersonal Justice	-.02	-.22		
			Informational Justice	.23	1.69		
Mediation Test	LMX		Informational Justice	.84	***21.60	.71	***466.51
	Normative Commitment		Informational Justice	.25	***3.64	.06	***13.24
	Normative Commitment		Informational Justice	.06	0.48	.08	***8.29
			LMX	.23	1.79		
Moderation Test	Normative Commitment		Interpersonal Justice	-.13	***4.05	.09	**5.97
			LMX	.39	**3.44		
			LMX x Interpersonal Justice	.02	0.29		

** = $p < .01$

*** = $p < 0.001$

justice on normative commitment is mediated by LMX, was not supported.

To test for moderation, normative commitment was regressed on interpersonal justice, LMX, and the product term of LMX and interpersonal justice. The product of LMX and interpersonal justice was not found to be a significant predictor of normative commitment. Thus, Hypothesis 4 was not supported.

Continuance Commitment

Table 4 presents results of regression analyses conducted with continuance commitment as the criterion variable. Using the forward method, continuance commitment was regressed on the four justice dimensions. Only distributive justice entered the model in step 1. No other variable entered the model. Thus, distributive justice was found

to be the best predictor of continuance commitment, thereby providing support for Hypothesis 5. None of the justice dimensions was found to be a significant predictor of affective commitment using the enter method of regression. Thus, distributive justice ceased to be a significant predictor when all four justice dimensions were entered into the model simultaneously.

Discussion

The present study examines the association of the four justice dimensions with the three components of organisational commitment – affective, normative, and continuance. Leader-member exchange is also studied to assess its impact on the relationship between justice and commitment. As hypothesized, LMX is found to mediate the relationship between informational justice and affective commitment, and to moderate the relationship

Table 4: Regression Analyses for Predicting Continuance Commitment

	<i>Dependent variable</i>	<i>Step</i>	<i>Independent variable</i>	β	<i>t</i>	<i>Model R²</i>	<i>Model F</i>
Forward Method	Continuance Commitment	1	Distributive Justice	.30	***4.38	.09	***19.14
Enter Method	Continuance Commitment		Distributive Justice	.24	1.93	.10	***5.48
			Procedural Justice	.00	0.00		
			Interpersonal Justice	-.12	-1.19		
			Informational Justice	.20	0.29		

*** = $p < 0.001$

** = $p < .01$

*** = $p < 0.001$

between interpersonal justice and affective commitment. Distributive justice is found to be the best predictor of continuance commitment, as predicted. However, contrary to expectations, LMX neither mediates the relationship between informational justice and normative commitment, nor moderates the relationship between interpersonal justice and normative commitment.

Theoretical Contributions of the Study

The simultaneous consideration of all four justice dimensions in the present study reveals the relative importance of informational justice based on its strong association with both affective commitment and normative commitment. The other three justice dimensions do not have significant association with affective and normative commitment. Distributive justice ensures that employees stay on in the organisation because of perceived high costs associated with leaving, as indicated by the strong association between distributive justice and continuance commitment. However, it is the nature of interaction with the supervisor that is critical in determining the extent to which employees feel emotionally attached to the organisation.

One explanation for these results could be that the processes and procedures of an organisation are perceived by employees as fixed and less amenable to modification, as was suggested by Manogran et al. (1994). In contrast, providing explanations that convey information about why procedures were used in a certain way or why outcomes were distributed in a certain fashion is viewed as more open to the discretion of the manager.

Existing research has shown interactional justice to have a strong association with LMX quality (Cohen-Charash and Spector, 2001; Masterson et al., 2000; Cropanzano and Prehar, 1999). Evidence also exists on the mediating role of LMX on the relationship between interactional justice and outcomes like organisational citizenship behaviour, work performance, job satisfaction, and supervisory satisfaction (Cropanzano et al., 2002; Xinyan et al., 2010). The present research extends these results to study interpersonal and informational justice as separate constructs and finds mediation by LMX of the association between informational justice and affective commitment. The results point to the need to extend the agent-system model and look at ways in which informational justice could affect system-referenced outcomes via LMX.

In addition, LMX moderates the association between interpersonal justice and affective commitment such that high interpersonal justice would lead to enhanced commitment only when the LMX quality is high. Perhaps members enjoying high-quality LMX attribute the leader's behaviour to the quality of relationship shared with him or her. On the other hand, a member who has a low-quality LMX may perceive the same behaviour as an attempt to ingratiate or manage impressions without providing any 'real' benefit to him or her. An alternative explanation could be that high LMX affords the leader more latitude in the expression of interpersonal exchange, and therefore, even low quality of interpersonal exchange is viewed less unfavourably by members who perceive high LMX. For example, Dansereau et al. (1975) found that members who enjoyed high-quality LMX stated more positive attitudes towards their interpersonal interactions with the manager.

The present study does not find support for the hypotheses stating a mediating role of LMX on the relationship between informational justice and normative commitment, and a moderating role on the relationship between interpersonal justice and normative commitment. According to Wiener (1982), employees who have been led to believe that the organisation expects their loyalty would be more likely to feel an obligation to continue in the organisation. Perhaps, for the organisations studied in the present study, the supervisors did not convey such a sense of obligation, thereby accounting for the lack of support for the hypothesized relationships for normative commitment. Studying the socialisation practices and culture of the organisation may shed more light on these relationships.

Managerial Implications

There are implications of the present study for managers for both maintaining and enhancing the quality of the exchange relationship with subordinates. Creating and maintaining fairness perceptions on all four dimensions can be a daunting task. The present study indicates that out of the four justice dimensions, leaders need focus especially on interpersonal and informational justice. Focusing on more dimensions may possibly dilute the effects as indicated by the disappearance of the association between informational justice and normative commitment when all four dimensions are considered simultaneously.

Thus, even if procedural and distributive injustices prevail, leaders can probably mitigate their ill-effects by enhancing informational and interpersonal justice. Skarlicki and Latham (1996) found that training managers to behave more justly by providing explanations (informational justice) and treating subordinates with respect (interpersonal justice) enhanced citizenship behaviour. Trainability on these factors enhances our confidence in the practical applicability of this research.

Further, the mediating role of LMX on the association between informational justice and affective commitment indicates that creating justice perceptions by disseminating relevant information could be one way that managers can enhance the quality of their relationship with subordinates, and also impact commitment levels. This result is in line with Goodwin et al.'s (2009) finding that if interactions of the subordinate with the leader are infrequent but result in valuable information when they do occur, then LMX quality may be considered positively.

There is a different implication of the role of interpersonal justice, or the extent to which people get treated with respect, dignity and politeness by their manager. For subordinates who already enjoy high-quality LMX, fair interpersonal interactions could ensure continued commitment to the organisation.

Limitations and Suggestions for Future Research

The present study focuses on the three components of commitment as outcomes. More research should be undertaken to explore the differential association of interpersonal and informational justices with commitment, and also explore other outcomes. It would be interesting to observe if the obtained pattern of results holds true for other work outcomes like job satisfaction, intent to stay, and turnover.

A cross-sectional design, used in the present study, does not allow us to establish causal relationships. Future research should attempt to replicate the obtained findings and also include longitudinal and experimental studies to establish cause-effect relationships. A longitudinal study would allow examination of how the nature of the relationships between justice, LMX and commitment evolve over time.

The justice dimensions and LMX quality are studied from the perspective of the subordinate in the present study. It would be interesting to examine these variables from the perspective of both the manager and the subordinate. This would help understand the extent of agreement between manager and subordinate on these perceptions and explore their differential associations with work outcomes.

Conclusion

The intent of this study was to examine the role of LMX in determining the association of interpersonal and informational justices with commitment. Results indicate that LMX mediates the relationship between informational justice and affective commitment, and moderates the relationship between interpersonal justice and affective commitment. Distributive justice is the best predictor of continuance commitment. These results indicate the importance of interpersonal and informational justice out of the four justice dimensions in creating and maintaining affective commitment. These results may hold particular relevance for the informal economy where lack of regulation could raise more concerns on fairness and also increase chances of procedural and distributive injustices. Future research should replicate this study in organisations operating in the informal economy, and also consider other outcomes besides commitment.

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