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A Research Study For Procedural Justice As A Factor in Employee Retention

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ABSTRACT

This study firstly aims to explore the relationship between employees' perceptions for procedural justice and their intentions to stay with an organization by an applied research in a motorcycle firm. Secondly, it tries to determine and compare the effects of employees' perceptions for procedural justice and demographic variables on their intentions to stay in an organization. For these aims, a survey questionnaire designed by the author was used in the study. A total of 106 completed questionnaires were returned, representing a response rate of 81.5%. And the study results indicate that there was a positive relationship between employees' procedural justice perceptions and their intentions to stay. But there was a negative relationship between employees' perceptions for procedural justice and two demographic variables; vocational experience and educational degree. Also study results indicate that procedural justice had the strongest impact on employee intention to stay, and followed by vocational experience and educational degree. The main result of the study for organizations was employees' intentions to stay could be increased through promoting employees' perceptions for procedural justice in an organization.

Key Words: Procedural justice, employee retention, vocational experience.

İşgöreni Örgütte Tutma Aracı Olarak Prosedürel Adaletle İlişkin Bir Araştırma Çalışması

ÖZET

Bu makalenin ilk amacı işgörenlerin örgütte kalma niyetleri ile prosedürel adalet algılamaları arasındaki ilişkinin bir motosiklet işletmesinde yapılan uygulama ile ortaya konmasıdır. Araştırmadaki ikinci ana amaç ise işgörenlerin prosedürel adalet algılamaları ile demografik özelliklerinin örgütte kalma niyetlerine olan etkilerinin belirlenmesi ve kıyaslanmasıdır. Belirtilen amaçlara uygun olarak yazar tarafından hazırlanan anket çalışması araştırmada kullanılmıştır. Araştırmada toplam 106 adet anket değerlendirmeye alınmış, anketlerin geri dönüşüm oranı % 81.5 olarak gerçekleşmiştir. Araştırma sonuçları işgörenlerin örgütte kalma niyetleri ile prosedürel adalet algılamaları arasında pozitif yönlü bir ilişki olduğu gerçeğini ortaya koymaktadır. Ancak işgörenlerin örgütte kalma niyetleri ile mesleki deneyim ve eğitim düzeyi kontrol değişkenleri arasında da negatif yönlü bir ilişki olduğu araştırmada belirlenmiştir. Diğer yandan işgörenlerin örgütte kalma niyetleri üzerindeki en büyük etkiye prosedürel adalet algılamaları değişkeninin sahip olduğu ve bunu mesleki deneyim ve eğitim düzeyi kontrol değişkenlerinin takip ettiği de araştırmanın bir diğer sonucudur. İşgörenlerin örgütte kalma niyetlerinin, prosedürel adalet algılamalarının desteklenmesi ile artırılacağı da araştırmadan örgütler adına çıkarılabilecek temel sonuç olarak öne çıkmaktadır.

Anahtar Sözcükler: Prosedürel Adalet, İşgöreni Örgütte Tutma, Mesleki Deneyim.

INTRODUCTION

In the face of increased global competition, organizations are more dependent upon the positive work attitudes and behaviors that typically emanate from employee commitment (Lavelle et al., 2008). Thus, numerous studies has

been made for relationships between employee commitment and other organizational variables such as job satisfaction, motivation, organizational citizenship behavior, productivity (McFarlin and Sweeney, 1992; Moorman, 1991; Mayer and Schoorman, 1998; Masterson et al., 2000; Rupp and Cropanzano, 2002; Martinson et al., 2006). And employee perceptions about the fairness of processes applied in an organization is an outstanding issue for both scholars and practitioners as it has an influence on many critical organizational outcomes. Moreover, organizational justice literature suggests that perceived fairness of rewards, decision-making procedures, and interpersonal treatment are related to outcomes such as organizational commitment, job satisfaction, performance, and citizenship behaviors (Erdogan and Liden, 2006; Cohen and Spector, 2001; Colquitt et al., 2001). On the other hand, a multitude of factors explains why employees remain in or leave an organization, but scholars have consistently recognized employees' expressed intentions to stay as a reliable precursor to actual turnover and as reflective of employee commitment to the organization (Maertz and Campion, 1998; Griffeth et al., 2000; Hom and Kinicki, 2001; Brown and Yoshika, 2003). Also many studies have shown that employee perceptions about procedural justice may predict an employee's intention to stay, job satisfaction, evaluation of supervision and organizational commitment (Fields et al., 2000; Folger and Konovsky, 1989; McFarlin and Sweeney, 1992). So, in this study we aim to examine how procedural justice perceptions of employees have an influence on their intentions to remain in an organization with an applied research in a motorcycle firm located in Aydın city.

THEORETICAL GROUNDING

Procedural Justice

A widely used construct defining the quality of social interaction at work is organizational justice. In other words, the term organizational justice refers to the extent to which employees are treated fairly at their workplace (Lind and Tyler, 1988; Moorman, 1991; Heponiemi et al., 2007). As organizational injustice may create many unwanted organizational outcomes such as lower job satisfaction, retaliation, turnover, misbehavior, low productivity, and lower work commitment (Folger and Konovsky, 1989; McFarlin and Sweeney, 1992; Martinson et al., 2006; Heponiemi et al., 2007), perceived fairness of rewards, decision-making procedures, and interpersonal treatment in an organization is very important for the development of high quality work relationships (Erdogan and Liden, 2006). Furthermore, recent studies have found that low organizational justice is associated with increased rates of mental distress, psychiatric disorders, sickness absence, sleeping problems, cardiovascular death, and poor self-rated health status (Elovainio et al., 2002; Kivimaki, 2003; Elovainio et al., 2006; Heponiemi et al., 2007). Meanwhile, much of justice literature divides the term of organizational justice into two components; procedural justice and distributive justice. Procedural justice is the extent to which the dynamics of the decision process are judged to be fair. In other words, Procedural justice implies the perceptions of fairness about organizational procedures (Lind and Tyler, 1988;

Kim and Mauborgne, 1998). On the other hand, distributive justice refers to a person's perceptions of the extent to which outcomes he or she receives (e.g., pay) are fair (Greenberg, 1990). Explicitly, distributive justice implies the perceptions of fairness about the outcomes of all procedures applied in an organization. So, procedural justice is seen as more strategic than distributive one as it determines the outcomes.

Procedural justice theory focuses on six principles that promote perceptions of procedural justice: consistent application of criteria, suppression of bias, use of accurate information, opportunity for error, representativeness, and ethical treatment (Johnson, 2002; Fassina et al., 2008; Heponiemi, 2007). And many empirical researches indicate that procedural justice has a substantial impact on organizational attitudes and behaviors. For example, many scholars (e.g., Moorman, 1991; Brockner, 1994; Rupp and Cropanzano, 2002; Masterson et al., 2000) concluded that procedural justice is the strongest unique predictor of organizational citizenship behavior, as well as field studies show that there is a strong relationship between work performance and procedural justice (Lavelle et al., 2008; Cohen and Spector, 2001). But, one of the most significant and widespread findings of procedural justice is the positive effect perceptions of procedural justice exert on individuals' higher-order attitudes of trust and commitment (Kim and Mauborgne, 1998; Cascardi et al., 2000; Johnson et al., 2002; Aryee et al., 2002). The trust engendered by perceptions of procedural justice can be expected to act as an antecedent to voluntary cooperation. For example, Konovsky and Paugh (1994) found that procedural justice is a significant predictor of trust, which in turn is a predictor of higher-order citizenship behaviors including sportsmanship, conscientiousness, civic virtue, altruism, and courtesy. While not identical voluntary cooperation, such organizational citizenship behaviors do demonstrate the ability of procedural justice to induce individuals' willingness to exert energy and override personal self-interest on behalf of the organization (Kim and Mauborgne, 1998). Likewise, Korsgaard, Schweiger, and Sapienza (1995) found that the exercise of procedural justice had a positive effect on executive participants' reported levels of felt committed and trust. Also, in their researches, Kim and Mauborgne, (1991; 1993) found that procedural justice positively enhances subsidiary top managers' commitment to support decisions.

Consequently, as justice perceptions are related to attitudes and behaviors toward all the processes, policies, decision makings and outcomes in organizations, we think that employees' perceptions of procedural justice also may have an influence on their intentions to stay with their organizations. So, we propose that

Hypothesis 1: There is a positive relationship between employee perception of procedural justice and intention to stay.

Of final consideration is the extent that procedural justice might account for employees' intentions to stay with or leave the organization. In particular, we

would expect the influence of procedural justice to be the most salient in the organization

Hypothesis 2: Procedural justice will explain employees' intentions to stay, above and beyond aspects of demographic variables.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Sample

Analyzing the relationship between employee perceptions for procedural justice and their intentions to stay with the organization was the main purpose of this study. Also control variables such as gender, age, working experience, salary, marital status and educational level were included in the analysis to measure their influences on employee intentions to stay. The target organization selected (because of population size and convenience as one of the biggest motorcycle firm of Turkey) for this research was a firm, located in Aydın and employed 130 people, has producing motorcycles since 2004. Employees worked in departments such as sales, manufacturing, motorcycle-driving experts. After having a written permission from the firm administration, an anonymous questionnaire was distributed to these 130 employees. Each questionnaire was accompanied by a letter explaining the purpose of the research, the voluntary nature of participation, and the confidentiality of the data. And a total of 106 completed questionnaires were returned (81.5 percent response rate) from 130 employees. The responses given by the employees were anonymous and confidential. All analyses described below are based on the data from these 106 subjects.

Measures and Statistical Instruments

The employees were handed a demographic and a field survey questionnaire designed for this study. Demographic survey part of the questionnaire was composed of 9 variables to control the effect on employee intentions to stay with the organization. And 10 variables (prepared by the author using from Greenberg, 1990 and Moorman, 1991) existed on the second part of the questionnaire to measure the degree of procedural justice perceptions of employees and additionally 5 variables (prepared by the author using from Brown and Yoshioka, 2003) to measure their intentions to stay with the organization. The instrument consisted of these 15 items answered on a seven-point Likert scale anchored by the terms “strongly disagree/very low/the worst” (1) and “strongly agree/very high/the best” (7).

In statistical analyses, SPSS pc + version 15.0 was used. Sequentially, factor analysis “varimax rotation” to condense the number of items, Cronbach’s alpha test for the internal consistency, Spearman rank correlation coefficient to calculate the correlation between the variables were used in the study. And multiple regression analysis was used because it provided estimates of net effects and explanatory power. The adjusted explained variance (the adjusted R^2) was used in this research to measure explanatory power.

RESEARCH RESULTS

Demographic Statistics

Several demographic variables were used to measure or control the effect on expressed intentions to stay with the organization (Mayer and Schoorman, 1998; Brown and Yoshioka, 2003). So, demographic statistics of the respondents were presented in Table 1.

As can be seen from this table, the majority of our respondents were male employees (85.8%); and 13.2% were female. And 52.8 percent of the respondents were married, 45.3 percent were single, and 0.9 percent (one employee) was divorced. Employees were categorized by age: 18-30 years (76.4%), 31-40 years (19.8%), 41-50 years (0.9%), and 51 years and over (0.0%).

Vocational experience was also assessed using categorical brackets. 60.4 percent (majority) of the respondents reported they were between the experience of one to five years; 19.8 percent indicated they were six to ten; 9.4 percent were eleven to fifteen; 3.8 percent were sixteen to twenty and only 0.9 percent were twenty-one and over. And 16.0 percent of the respondents had a managerial position.

Table 1. Demographic Statistics of The Respondents

Item	Frequency	Percent (%)	Item	Frequency	Percent (%)
<i>Gender</i>			<i>Age</i>		
Male	91	85.8	18-30	81	76.4
Female	14	13.2	31-40	21	19.8
Missing	1	0.9	41-50	1	0.9
Total	106	100	51 and over	0	0.0
			Missing	3	2.8
<i>Vocational Experience</i>			Total	106	100
1-5 years	64	60.4			
6-10 years	21	19.8	<i>Managerial Status</i>		
11-15 years	10	9.4	No	78	73.6
16-20 years	4	3.8	Yes	17	16.0
21 years and over	5	0.9	Missing	11	10.4
Missing	6	5.7	Total	106	100
Total	106	100			
			<i>Education Level</i>		
<i>Marital Status</i>			Primary School	53	50.0
Married	56	52.8	High School	29	27.4
Single	48	45.3	University	23	21.7
Divorced	1	0.9	Missing	1	0.9
Missing	1	0.9	Total	106	100
Total	106	100			
			<i>Tenure: Total Working Time in the Firm</i>		
<i>Salary</i>			1-3 months	16	15.1
0-550 YTL	92	86.8	4-6 months	13	12.3
551-1000 YTL	10	9.4	7-11 months	9	8.5
1001-1500 YTL	2	1.9	12-24 months	37	34.9
1501 and over	-	-	25 months and over	28	26.4
Missing	2	1.9	Missing	3	2.8
Total	106	100	Total	106	100

YTL: New Turkish Lira

Also as presented in Table 1, half (50.0%) of the respondents held primary school degrees, 27.4 percent high school degrees, and 21.7 percent university degrees. Additionally, employees were categorized by salary and total working time in the firm. Salary: 0-550 YTL (86.8%), 551-1000 YTL (9.4%), 1001-1500 YTL (1.9%), 1501 YTL and over (0.0%); and tenure (total working time): 1-3 months (15.1%), 4-6 months (12.3%), 7-11 months (8.5%), 12-24 months (34.9%), 25 months and over (26.4%). Consequently, demographic results indicate that salary, experience and educational levels of employees were low, as well as their age average (76.4% in 18-30 years).

Tablo 2. Factor Loadings and Reliability (Cronbach Alpha) Values of Research Items

Variables and Factor Groups	F1	F2	Alpha
Procedural Justice	0.922 0.864 0.811 0.745 0.684 0.649 0.648 0.545		0.936
Intention to Stay		0.795 0.665	0.679

Factor loading below 0.500 deleted

The Results of Factor Analysis

15 items of the questionnaire were included in a factor analysis. At the end of the factor analysis, items of the questionnaire (prepared using from Brown and Yoshioka 2003; Moorman, 1991; Greenberg, 1990) were collected in two factor groups which were labelled as: procedural justice, and intention to stay.

The results (presented in Table 2) of the factor analysis show that our factor groups were rather reliable and consistent. Because 5 items of the questionnaire were deleted as their factor loadings were lower than 0.500 and alpha coefficient values of all factor groups were higher than 0.678. Furthermore, alpha coefficients of two factor groups, namely procedural justice, and intention to stay were satisfactory; 0.936, and 0.679.

Intercorrelations Among Research Variables

Intercorrelations among research variables and demographic (control) variables are reported in Table 3. As seen from Table 3, there was a significant positive relationship between employee perceptions for procedural justice and their intentions to stay ($rs = 0.477$, $p < 0.01$). This result provided support for our hypothesis 1: There is a positive relationship between employee perception of procedural justice and intention to stay. Additionally, there were statistically

negative relationships between employee intention to stay and two control variables. The results in Table 3 indicated that intention to stay was related to vocational experience ($rs = -0.216, p < 0.05$), and educational level ($rs = -0.212, p < 0.05$), but no significant relationship with age, gender, marital status, managerial status, salary and tenure. On the other hand, correlation analysis indicated that there was a weak negative relationship between employees' procedural perceptions and educational level ($rs = -0.233, p < 0.05$). Interestingly, there was a weak positive relationship between employees' procedural perceptions and their gender groups ($rs = 0.283, p < 0.01$). Also correlation analysis results indicated that there was a strong negative relationship between employees' vocational experiences and their ages ($rs = -0.451, p < 0.01$), but a positive relationship between their marital status and educational levels ($rs = 0.327, p < 0.01$). Similarly, a positive relationship between employees' salary and educational levels was one of the interesting results of the research ($rs = 0.237, p < 0.05$).

Table 3. Means, Standard Deviations and Correlations Among Research Variables

	(Mean)	(SD)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1.Procedural Justice	3.539	1.943	-									
2.Intention to Stay	4.208	2.044	0.477**	-								
3. Gender	1.133	0.341	0.283**	0.182	-							
4. Age	1.223	0.441	0.037	0.177	0.135	-						
5. Tenure	3.466	1.412	0.212*	-0.030	0.100	0.222*	-					
6. Educational Level	1.714	0.805	-0.233*	-0.212*	-0.160	-0.124	0.046	-				
7. Vocational Experience	1.570	0.901	0.093	-0.216*	-0.217*	-0.451**	0.074	-0.451**	-			
8. Marital Status	1.476	0.520	-0.067	-0.100	-0.118	-0.253*	0.014	0.327**	-0.190	-		
9. Managerial Status	1.178	0.385	0.106	0.052	-0.178	-0.004	0.244*	0.191	-0.132	0.155	-	
10. Salary	1.134	0.395	0.000	-0.126	-0.142	-0.048	0.015	0.237*	0.030	0.083	0.187	-

*Correlation (Spearman's rho) is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

**Correlation (Spearman's rho) is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Regression Analysis Results

As can be seen from Table 4 (adjusted $R^2 = 0.286$), 28.6 % of variance in employee intention to stay could be explained by the set of independent variables (determinant and control variables): sequentially procedural justice, vocational experience, educational level, age, marital status, managerial status, tenure and salary. Procedural justice had the strongest influence on employee intention to stay ($\beta = 0.435, p < 0.01$), followed by vocational experience ($\beta = -0.277, p < 0.05$).

Table 4. Model of Intention to Stay-Simultaneous Multiple Regression

Model [†]	Unstandardized coefficients		Standardized coefficients		
	β	SE	β	t	P-value
(Constant)	2.624	1.577		1.664	0.100
Procedural Justice	0.468	0.109	0.435	4.299	0.000
Educational Level	-0.417	0.285	-0.166	-1.463	0.148
Marital Status	-0.164	0.433	-0.040	-0.379	0.705
Tenure	-0.142	0.148	-0.097	-0.960	0.340
Managerial Status	0.285	0.537	0.056	0.532	0.596
Age	0.605	0.468	0.127	1.293	0.200
Vocational Experience	-0.620	0.246	-0.277	-2.523	0.014
Salary	0.064	0.517	0.012	0.123	0.902

[†]R² = 0.362, adjusted R² = 0.286; dependent variable: Intention to stay, F= 4.788, p< 0.05.

On the other hand, the contribution of each variable to employee intention to stay, using stepwise multiple regression, is presented in Table 5. By itself, procedural justice explained 19.7% of the variance in intention to stay. Entering vocational experience also added a 5.8 % explanation to the variance, educational level had a 3.3% influence on employee intention to stay.

Table 5. Model of Intention to Stay-Stepwise Multiple Regression

Model [†]	Unstandardized coefficients		Standardized coefficients		
	β	SE	β	t	P-value
Model 1 [†] (Constant)	2.410	0.409		-5.886	0.000
Procedural justice	0.489	0.105	0.455	4.681	0.000
Model 2 ^{††} (Constant)	3.105	0.469		-6.618	0.000
Procedural Justice	0.549	0.103	0.511	5.329	0.000
Vocational Experience	-0.587	0.214	-0.262	-2.736	0.008
Model 3 ^{†††} (Constant)	4.477	0.773		5.794	0.000
Procedural Justice	0.510	0.102	0.474	4.990	0.000
Vocational Experience	-0.759	0.224	-0.339	-3.394	0.001
Educational Level	-0.559	0.253	-0.222	-2.207	0.030

[†]R² = 0.207, adjusted R² = 0.197, dependent variable: Intention to stay, F= 21.908, p< 0.05.

^{††}R² = 0.272, adjusted R² = 0.255, dependent variable: Intention to stay, F= 15.544, p< 0.05.

^{†††}R² = 0.313, adjusted R² = 0.288, dependent variable: Intention to stay, F= 12.469, p< 0.05.

Consequently, all the results told above indicate that our two hypotheses were supported. Our first hypothesis (H1) expected a positive association between employee perception for procedural justice and intention to stay. And Spearman correlation and regression analysis results confirmed that there was a significant positive association between employee perception for procedural justice and

intention to stay, mission attachment and communication satisfaction ($p<0.01$). Moreover, the results of regression analyses (presented in Table 5 and 6) indicate that procedural justice was the first major determinant of employee intention to stay. In other words, Hypothesis 2, which predicted procedural justice will explain employees' intentions to stay, above and beyond aspects of demographic variables, also supported ($p<0.05$). Additionally, Spearman correlation and regression analysis results indicated that two control variables; vocational experience and educational level were related employee intention to stay with his organization.

CONCLUSION

At first, the most outstanding finding in this study indicate that there is a significant relationship between employees' perceptions for procedural justice and their intentions to stay with an organization. In other words, employees' perceptions for procedural justice have an influence on their intentions to stay with or leave from an organization. The study results confirm the empirical investigations of many researches (For example, Johnson et al., 2002; Kim and Mauborgne, 1998; Rupp and Cropanzano, 2002) which state that when people feel the processes of an organization are fair, they display a high level of voluntary cooperation based on their attitudes of trust and commitment. Conversely, when people feel that the processes are unfair, they may refuse to cooperate and search for an opportunity, or an alternative to leave. Thus, the study results confirm that procedural justice is a key, or a tool for managers to keep employees in an organization, as well as to increase their satisfaction and productivity.

Secondly, the study results indicated that two control variables; vocational experience and educational level were negatively related to employee intention to stay with his organization. In other words, the more experience in work, or degree in education has an employee, the more tendency he has to leave. Or it may be interpreted that vocational experience and a higher degree in education give employees a power to search for an alternative or to leave. Owing to the reality of high unemployment level in our country and the region which the firm has been operating in, the correlations between employee intention to stay and two control variables; vocational experience and educational level may be interpreted or faced as a usual finding. Consequently, the study results indicate that practitioners should be aware of how procedural justice and other potential determinants have an influence on employee intention to stay in an organization and they must be careful to use these elements more efficiently and strategically. Also both scholars and practitioners should make researches periodically to explore determinants for employee intention to stay, as well as to control, measure and compare the results of all struggles or transactions in organization to increase employee intention to stay.

Finally, it must be known that some limitations exist in this study for practitioners and readers to interpret the results. At first, the study includes the

analyses of only one (leader firm of Turkey's motorbike market coming to about a billion dolar sales volume) organization's employees and the results reflect the nature and character of this organization, not a trend for all organizations. And the model for employee intention to stay and determinants was developed for this study, thus it requires continued validation and further applications. So, the model needs to be tested in further researches. In other words, additional researches using the same or other instruments in other organizations or industries are needed to explore antecedents of employee intention to stay and compare all results.

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