

ORGANIZATIONAL JUSTICE AS AN ANTECEDENT OF JOB SATISFACTION OF ADMINISTRATIVE STAFF IN SRI LANKAN STATE UNIVERSITIES

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ABSTRACT

The construct of job satisfaction is widely acknowledged as an important requirement for the effective functioning of any organization. One important antecedent of Job satisfaction is justice perception. Universities in Sri Lanka are facing challenges in improving job satisfaction of administrative staff and thus, their commitment to gain competitive advantage and retention of the efficient administrative staff. Further the level of justice perception is found to be low among the administrative staff. Therefore, objective of this study was to find out the influence of justice perception on the job satisfaction. Self administered questionnaire was used to collect the data from a sample of 250 administrative staff members employed in 15 national universities in Sri Lanka. Analysis of this study revealed that the state university administrative employees were generally satisfied with their job. However, satisfaction with opportunity for independent thought, feedback on performance, pay for job, promotion opportunities, benefits received were very low among the staff. The findings of the study also showed positive relationship of justice perception with job satisfaction. Implications of findings, limitations and areas for future research also discussed.

Keywords: *Job satisfaction, Organizational justice perception, distributive justice, procedural justice, interactional justice, administrative staff in universities.*

Introduction

The concept of job satisfaction according to Robbins (2001) can be described as a general attitude towards one's job; the difference between the rewards received and what they actually believe they should have received. In organizational studies, Currivan (2000) claimed that job satisfaction is widely studied as work outcomes in organizational settings. Numerous researchers (for instance Goris et al., 2000) conceptualized job satisfaction as multifaceted instrument that consisted of "work itself", "quality of supervision", "relationships with coworkers", "promotion opportunities", and "pay". The job satisfaction can therefore be defined as a collection of attitudes, feelings, beliefs and behavior one has towards his or her job.

Employees with higher job satisfaction are important as they believed that the organization would be of tremendous future for them. Hence they are more committed to the organization, have higher retention rates and tend to have higher productivity (Fatt, Khin & Heng, 2010). Therefore, organizations must strive to identify antecedents that influence the job satisfaction of employees. One such antecedent is organizational justice which describes the individual's perception of the fairness of treatment received from an organization and their behavioural reactions to such perceptions (Fernandes & Awamleh, 2006). It has shown to be associated with several outcomes such as job satisfaction, work motivation (Suliman, 2007;

Fernandes & Awamleh, 2006; Cropanzano et al., 2001; Moorman, 1991), intention to turnover (Colquitt et al., 2001), work performance (Suliman, 2007; Fernandes & Awamleh, 2006; Phillips et al., 2001), commitment (Folger & Konovsky, 1989), organizational citizenship behaviour (Moorman, 1991).

Organizational justice is typically conceptualized with three components: distributive, procedural, and interactional justice (Cropanzano et al., 2001; Masterson et al., 2000; McDowall & Fletcher, 2004). Distributive justice, recognized as first sub-dimension of organization justice, mainly considered with the workers' perception in the fairness of outcomes, such as monetary rewards obtained by the workers from the organization (Elovainio et al., 2005; Ramamoorthy & Flood, 2004; Greenberg, 2006; Aryee et al., 2002). This is defined by Moorman (1991) as "the fairness of outcomes an employee receives such as pay and promotions". This type of justice is based on equity theory which emphasized on the judgments made by the employees about the outcomes (for example, promotion, pay) offered by the organization against their effort by which they work or in accordance with given criteria (Cropanzano & Greenberg, 1997; Hubbel & Chory-Assad, 2005; Blakely et al., 2005; Alder & Ambrose, 2005). Distributive justice is also considered as the leading factor towards organizational effectiveness (Tang & Sarsfield-Baldwin, 1996).

Procedural justice refers to the perceived fairness of the processes used to determine organizational outcomes (Colquitt et al., 2001; Folger & Konovsky, 1989). It derives from the perceived equity of organizational policies and procedures determining resource allocation and other managerial decisions (Peele III, 2007). Employees judge the equity of procedures by the amount of bias, the breadth and accuracy of information gathering, number of relevant parties given voice in the decisions, ethical standards applied, and the consistency and universality of decision implementation (Stecher & Rosse, 2005).

Interactional justice focuses on employees' perceptions about the fairness of the interpersonal treatment received during implementation (Bies & Moag, 1986). It refers to the quality of interpersonal processes and treatment of individuals (i.e. being treated with dignity and respect), as well as the extent to which reasons behind the outcomes are explained (Bies & Moag, 1986). Perceptions of interactional justice result from supervisor trust-building behaviours such as "availability, competence, consistency, discretion, fairness, integrity, loyalty, openness, promise fulfillment, receptivity and overall trust" (Deluga, 1994, p. 317).

Effects of Organizational Justice on Job Satisfaction

The influence of different dimensions of organizational justice (procedural, distributive, interactional) on job satisfaction is a widely researched topic and hence explains the importance of organizational justice in an organization (Cohen-Charash & Spector, 2001; Colquitt et al., 2001; Viswesvaran & Ones, 2002). A basic element in employee's satisfaction and organizational productivity is organizational justice (Aydin & Kepenekci, 2008).

Organizational justice puts stronger impact on different attitudes of the employees like job satisfaction and organizational commitment (e.g. Bakhshi & Kumar, 2009; Colquitt et al., 2001). Folger and Konovsky (1989) found positive association among the dimensions of organizational justice with job satisfaction. The studies of Colquitt et al., (2001), Folger and Cropanzano (1998), Cohen-Charash and Spector (2001) also found that justice dimensions have positive and significant impact on job satisfaction.

Fernandes and Awamleh (2006) conducted a research to find the impact that three dimensions of organizational justice (procedural, distributive and interactional justice) have on job satisfaction and self assessment performance. The results of

the study revealed that all three dimensions of organizational justice were significantly influenced job satisfaction. A meta-analysis found that distributive justice is a crucial predictor of job satisfaction (Colquitt et al., 2001; Lambert, 2003). Distributive justice is among various determinants of job satisfaction (Feinstein & Vondrasek, 2001). Folger and Konovsky (1989) and McFarlin and Sweeney (1992) found that perceptions of distributive justice are significantly correlated with pay raise satisfaction as well as with job satisfaction (Martin & Bennet, 1996). Contemporary studies noted that employees have a tendency to display feeling of dissatisfaction as they perceive an unfair content of rewards (Cropanzano & Greenberg, 1997).

Past researches showed that procedural justice also has a relationship with employee satisfaction (Konovsky & Cropanzano, 1991; Lambert, 2003), because when employees observe that performance rating and chances of promotion are not based on justice practices but on political and biased motives, and their performance is not truly considered, they become de-motivated and their satisfaction with job decreased. In another study, Bakhshi, Kumar and Rani (2009) reported the positive and significant association of distributive justice and procedural justice with organizational commitment and job satisfaction. Consistent with the prior findings, Najafi et al. (2011) also concluded that educational experts of different universities reported higher job satisfaction on the provision of organizational justice. Fatt et al. (2010) reported that “the higher level of employee’s perception towards procedural justice and distributive justice tended to increase the level of employees’ job satisfaction and organizational commitment” (p.13). Findings from empirical studies in a variety of settings provide evidence that the three types of organizational justice have significant effects on the job satisfaction. Based on the above literature, this study seeks to investigate how significance is the perceptions of organizational justice on the job satisfaction of administrative staff in Sri Lankan state universities.

Study Context

Although academic staff and students are undoubtedly integral to the higher education enterprise, another relevant stakeholder group in higher education is administrative staff members. Administrative staff in universities undertakes a wide variety of duties, including those performed by analysts, secretaries, personal assistants and executives.

Universities in Sri Lanka are facing challenges in improving the job satisfaction of their administrative staff and thus, their commitment to gain competitive advantage and at the same time retention of the efficient administrative staff. There are many changes occurring in Sri Lankan higher education sector today. According to the proposals for the university reforms introduced by the government in 1998, and some of the potential activities such as expansion of university education, diversification of university courses and curriculum reforms, private sector linkage, staff training and development, quality improvements and the growth of student intake for universities etc., have been identified to be strengthened in the university education in the future.

Therefore, in this rapidly changing environment, all administrators in the system should be encouraged and motivated to face the new challenges associated with their jobs, which will be helpful to increase their job satisfaction. Because all administrative functions depend on administrative staff to perform them whereby the satisfied administrators can provide good service to the institution and thus the institution can function smoothly.

The findings of the survey conducted by Luo, Fan and Premakumara (2008) on Job Satisfaction of University Administrators: Empirical Evidence from Sri Lanka show that most of the university administrators were dissatisfied with their present salary, promotions and career advancement. List of present pay related factors explaining the job dissatisfaction of the

respondents included but not limited to the following: not reflecting their work performance and responsibility, not matching with the market value, same salary scales offered to officers who do not bear any responsibility or accountability, not matching with the cost of living, insufficient when compared with the private sector, and not matching with their qualifications. The factors which they were dissatisfied on promotion are as no performance based system, long delays in the promotions, no proper procedure and scheme, more weight given for experience than qualifications, third party interventions which open avenues for unsuitable persons to get promotions, and no uniformity and no transparency in circulars and the policies. An examination of the respondents' responses revealed the list of factors, which contribute mostly to dissatisfaction with personal career growth and advancement: limited prospects for career advancement, no formalized training, no equal opportunities in training, favourites getting opportunities even for unwanted training, no training need analysis, and superiors considering their own advancement.

According to a primary survey conducted by the researchers among the administrative staff in Sri Lankan state universities in August 2013, it was found that there have been a number of problems existing among them which contribute to job dissatisfaction related to justice perceptions. Some of them are: extra working hours without additional payment, work pressure, low level of treatment by top management, bad working environment, less promotion opportunities, work unfairness, low salary level, etc. It was also found in the survey that many administrative staff members have shown intentions to exit from their administrative positions and join other better jobs if they could gain. The job requires higher standard of qualifications and a tough recruitment system. However, the benefits are not much attractive when compared to some other comparable positions which require the same level of qualifications.

Further, according to the existing scheme, the promotional opportunities for administrative staff in Sri Lankan state universities seem to be unfair. For example, an Assistant Registrar after completion of the necessary required qualifications to become a Senior Assistant Registrar has to wait until a cadre falls vacant in the university system. The promotion does not depend only on merit. This is the case for a Senior Assistant Registrar to become a Deputy Registrar. This unfair situation of less promotion opportunities tends to push the administrative staff into job dissatisfaction. Therefore, it is necessary to study the effects of justice perception on the job satisfaction of the administrative staff and find solutions to eliminate or minimize these problems for the smooth functioning of the universities.

Therefore, objectives of the study are to find out the general influence of justice perception on the job satisfaction of administrative staff in Sri Lankan state universities and also to find out the relationship between dimensions of justice perception and job satisfaction. It is also aimed to determine which dimension of the justice perception has more effects on the job satisfaction of administrative staff in Sri Lankan state universities. Although many researches have been carried out on employee job satisfaction in general, no research has been done so far related to the effects of justice perception on the job satisfaction of administrative staff in Sri Lankan universities. In this research, through combining theoretical and empirical research, it is aimed to find out the effects of justice perception dimensions on university administrators' job satisfaction, thereby laying the theoretical foundation for the practice and for future research.

Based on the review of literature on the effects of organizational justice on the job satisfaction and the existing problem of administrative staff in Sri Lankan state universities the following conceptual framework (Figure :1) is developed.

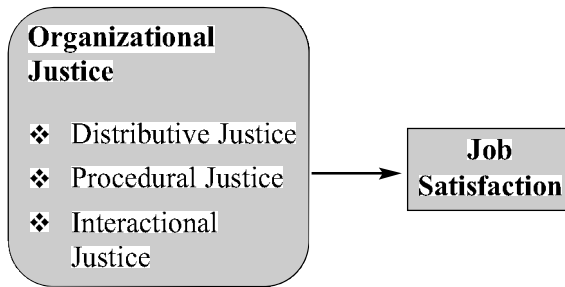


Figure 1: Conceptual Model

Based on the aforementioned conceptual model, the following hypotheses have been developed.

H₁. Distributive justice perception is positively associated with the job satisfaction of administrative staff in Sri Lankan state universities.

H₂. Procedural justice perception is positively associated with the job satisfaction of administrative staff in Sri Lankan state universities.

H₃. Interactional justice perception is positively associated with the job satisfaction of administrative staff in Sri Lankan state universities.

Methods

The study used a correlational design to examine the relationship between two quantitative variables. The aim of this study is to determine the degree of the relationship between justice perception and job satisfaction.

Sample characteristics

Sampling method employed was stratified. Data were collected from 250 administrative staff members employed in 15 national universities coming under the purview of the University Grants Commission of Sri Lanka through a questionnaire.

Table 1: Characteristics of Respondents (N=139)

| | | Frequency | Percentage |
|--------------------|------------------------|-----------|------------|
| Gender | Male | 83 | 59.7 |
| | Female | 56 | 40.3 |
| Age groups | Below 30 years | 09 | 6.5 |
| | 31 – 40 years | 52 | 37.4 |
| | 41 – 50 years | 57 | 41.0 |
| | 51 – 60 years | 21 | 15.1 |
| Education Level | G.C.E (A/L) | 08 | 5.8 |
| | Bachelor Degree | 47 | 33.8 |
| | Postgraduate Diploma | 35 | 25.2 |
| | Master Degree | 49 | 35.3 |
| Position | Registrar | 05 | 3.6 |
| | Bursar | 02 | 1.4 |
| | Deputy Registrar | 13 | 9.4 |
| | Deputy Bursar | 04 | 2.9 |
| | Senior Asst. Registrar | 32 | 23.0 |
| | Senior Asst. Bursar | 12 | 8.6 |
| | Asst. Registrar | 51 | 36.7 |
| | Asst. Bursar | 20 | 14.4 |
| Year of Experience | Less than 02 years | 27 | 19.4 |
| | 02 – 05 years | 33 | 23.7 |
| | 06 – 10 years | 30 | 21.6 |
| | 11 – 15 years | 27 | 19.4 |
| | 16 – 25 years | 15 | 10.8 |
| | More than 25 years | 07 | 5.0 |

Source: Survey Data

139 questionnaires were returned, comprising a response rate of 58.4%. Seven responses were eliminated due to excessive missing data. Table.1 presents the profile of the respondents with regard to gender, education, employment status, job title, and years of experience. Most of the respondents (60.43%, n=84) had completed postgraduate Diploma and Master Degree. Of this sample, 83 (59.7%) were male and 56 (40.3%) were female. With regard to years of employment, most of the respondents (n=60, 43.1%) had 0 - 5 years of experience.

Data were collected using questionnaire. While the first part of the questionnaire intended to collect the demographic variables of the respondents the second part was intended to collect the data about independent and dependent variables.

Measures

Perceptions of distributive justice were measured with the Distributive Justice Index, developed by Price and Mueller (1986). This five-item scale measures the degree to which rewards received by employees are perceived to be related to performance inputs. Each item asks for the degree to which the respondent believes that he or she is fairly rewarded on the basis of some comparison with responsibilities, education and training, effort, stresses and strains of job, and performance. Items were re-worded to accommodate the use of a 5-point scale ranging from (1) "strongly disagree" to (5) "strongly agree." For example, the item, "How fair has the company been in rewarding you when you consider the responsibilities you have?" was changed to "I am rewarded fairly in view of the responsibilities I have".

Perceptions of procedural justice were measured using six items. This scale is based on one used by Moorman (1991). These six items were designed to measure the fairness of procedures in the organization as revealed by procedures which promote consistency, bias suppression, accuracy,

correctability, representativeness, and ethicality. For example, "My organization's procedures generate standards so that decisions can be made with consistency". Items measure the response using a 5-point scale ranging from (1) "strongly disagree" to (5) "strongly agree".

Perceptions of interactional justice were measured using 15 items. This scale is based on one used by Moorman (1991). The items were designed to measure supervisor consideration of employee rights, treatment of employees with respect and kindness, and provision of explanations and justification for decisions. For example, "My immediate supervisor treats me with kindness and consideration". Items measure the response using a 5-point scale ranging from (1) "strongly disagree" to (5) "strongly agree".

Job satisfaction was measured using twenty three items. This scale is based on Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire (MSQ). This scale uses multiple items. There are two good reasons to use multiple items. First, multiple item scales are more reliable than single items. This is because respondents can make mistakes when filling out questionnaires. Errors can be made when a respondent interprets a question differently than intended. Second, multiple items allow for a more complete assessment of a facet. A single item may not do a good job of covering all aspects. For example, an employee may be able to indicate their overall satisfaction with pay in a single item, but pay includes many aspects that would take several items to cover. The questionnaire includes a 23-item scale to measure seven specific satisfactions; pay and benefits, job security, social, supervisory, growth satisfaction, work environment and nature of the job. The format for the facet items is a five-point scale ranging from (1) "very low" to (5) "very high".

The questionnaires were prepared in English since the sample were able to understand English language which is a compulsory component for recruitment of administrative staff in Sri Lankan university system. Contact information of the

researcher was provided to the participants in case any questions or concerns arise. The researcher visited universities and distributed surveys to participants. Also the questionnaires were sent to participants and received back through email and fax. A covering letter from the researcher accompanied each survey.

Data Analysis

In order to achieve acceptable levels of measurement reliability and validity, a pilot study was conducted among 38 respondents to refine the original survey instrument.

it had distributed normal in the Z curve. Table 2 reports the descriptive statistics for the measures used, including Mean, standard deviation, and internal consistency reliability for each measure. These values show that the constructs achieved are all excellent and high reliabilities and the alpha values indicated that the study's instrument and data were reliable.

Correlations between the independent and dependent variables of this study are also given in Table 2. To examine the relationship between distributive justice perception (DJP) and overall satisfaction (OAS), this study performed correlation and regression analysis. A significant

Table 2: Correlations among Variables (N=139)

| | M | SD | Alpha | DJP | PJP | IJP | INS | ENS | OAS |
|-----------------------------|------|------|-------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|-----|
| Distributive Justice | | | | | | | | | |
| Perception (DJP) | 2.72 | 1.06 | 0.94 | 1 | | | | | |
| Procedural Justice | | | | | | | | | |
| Perception (PJP) | 2.97 | 0.89 | 0.90 | 0.11 | 1 | | | | |
| Interactional Justice | | | | | | | | | |
| Perception (IJP) | 3.29 | 0.91 | 0.87 | 0.33** | 0.44** | 1 | | | |
| Intrinsic | | | | | | | | | |
| Satisfaction (INS) | 3.19 | 0.93 | 0.90 | 0.49** | 0.36** | 0.50** | 1 | | |
| Extrinsic | | | | | | | | | |
| Satisfaction (ENS) | 3.13 | 0.93 | 0.89 | 0.45** | 0.48** | 0.55** | 0.79** | 1 | |
| Overall | | | | | | | | | |
| Satisfaction (OAS) | 3.12 | 0.92 | 0.90 | 0.45** | 0.44** | 0.52** | 0.87** | 0.93** | 1 |

Source: Survey Output

The collected questionnaires were then subjected to primary analysis in order to ascertain whether the respondents understood the instructions clearly and they followed them simply and easily and to judge the time taken to complete the scale, and specially, whether the scale items were appropriate for the target respondent population. Tests of internal consistency (Cronbach's alpha) were conducted to assess the reliability of each of the scales used. All of the measures included in the questionnaire showed adequate levels of internal consistency reliability. Normality was checked with data collected and was found that

correlation was found between distributive justice perception (DJP) and overall satisfaction (OAS), $r = 0.456$, $p = 0.000$. A significant correlation between procedural justice perception (PJP) and overall satisfaction (OAS), $r = 0.448$, $p = 0.000$, between interactional justice perception (IJP) and overall satisfaction (OAS), $r = 0.521$, $p = 0.000$, and between distributive justice perception (DJP) and intrinsic satisfaction (INS), $r = 0.493$, $p = 0.000$ were also found in this study.

A significant correlation between procedural justice perception (DJP) and intrinsic satisfaction (INS), $r = 0.360$, $p = 0.000$, between interactional justice perception (IJP) and intrinsic satisfaction (INS), $r = 0.507$, $p = 0.000$, between distributive justice perception (DJP) and extrinsic satisfaction (ENS), $r = 0.453$, $p = 0.000$, between procedural justice perception (PJP) and extrinsic satisfaction (ENS), $r = 0.483$, $p = 0.001$. and between interactional justice perception (IJP) and extrinsic satisfaction (ENS), $r = 0.550$, $p = 0.000$ were also found from the analysis.

Discussion of Findings

Organizational justice perceptions i.e. distributive justice perception, procedural justice perception and interactional justice perception are positively correlated with the overall satisfaction of the administrative staff in Sri Lankan state universities. These findings are consistent with the studies of Folger and Konovsky (1989), Colquitt et al., (2001), Folger and Cropanzano (1998), Cohen-Charash and Spector (2001) who found positive and significant association among the dimensions of organizational justice with job satisfaction.

The results of the regression analysis suggest that the interactional justice was the best predictor of overall satisfaction ($\beta = 0.204$, $t = 3.712$, $p = 0.00$) as well as intrinsic satisfaction ($\beta = 0.252$, $t = 3.841$, $p = 0.00$) and extrinsic satisfaction ($\beta = 0.250$, $t = 4.133$, $p = 0.00$) of the administrative staff in Sri Lankan state universities, followed by procedural and finally the distributive justice. This finding indicate that the quality of treatment that administrative staff receives from their top management when policies and procedures are implemented at the workplace are the most important predictor of their level of satisfaction. Honesty, courtesy, timely feedback, respect for rights and the chances to express viewpoints are the most critical components for securing satisfied administrative members in the Sri Lankan university system. Administrative staff members are satisfied when their immediate

supervisors interact with them in a transparent manner and the procedures are clear in generating standards to make consistent decisions, and being able to request for clarification or additional information about the decision. The more the universities improve the interactional justice in the university system, the more the administrative staff will be satisfied both intrinsic and extrinsic.

Procedural justice perception also influences the overall, intrinsic and extrinsic satisfaction of the administrative staff significantly. Overall satisfaction ($\beta = 0.150$, $t = 3.860$, $p = 0.00$), intrinsic satisfaction ($\beta = 0.113$, $t = 2.436$, $p = 0.00$) and extrinsic satisfaction ($\beta = 0.186$, $t = 4.368$, $p = 0.00$).

Distributive justice perception also plays an important role in the overall, intrinsic and extrinsic satisfaction of the administrative staff. Overall satisfaction ($\beta = 0.118$, $t = 4.685$, $p < 0.05$), intrinsic satisfaction ($\beta = 0.156$, $t = 5.217$, $p = 0.00$) and extrinsic satisfaction ($\beta = 0.128$, $t = 4.638$, $p = 0.00$). The results of this study support previous research conducted to explain the importance of the allocation phenomenon in organizations (Alexander & Ruderman, 1987; Cropanzano & Greenberg, 1997; Folger & Konovsky, 1989). For example, people tend to be more satisfied with outcomes they perceive to be fair than with those they perceive to be unfair. In addition, people may compare the adequacy of the rewards they receive to their expectations, or referent standards. Thus, if employees feel discontent with what they receive compared to those doing similar jobs, they are more likely to quit. This supports the contemporary studies which noted that employees have a tendency to display feeling of dissatisfaction as they perceive an unfair content of rewards (Cropanzano & Greenberg, 1997).

Administrative staff members in Sri Lankan state universities are generally satisfied with their job. However, satisfaction with opportunity for independent thought, feedback on performance,

pay for job, promotion opportunities, benefits received were low among the staff. The study's findings indicate that administrative staff who tend to show positive feelings towards distributive, procedural and interactional justice are likely to report higher level of job satisfaction. These findings support the studies of some scholars in this field (Cohen-Charash & Spector, 2001; Colquitt, et al., 2001; Lambert, 2003; Fernandes & Awamleh, 2006; Suliman, 2007).

Generally, all the administrative staff members have indicated their dissatisfaction with their level of pay. Among them, the administrative staff with more than 25 years of service have shown very low satisfaction with their pay ($M = 1.43$), the next group which is less satisfied with pay is those who have less than 02 years of experience. With respect to supervision, the administrative staff have generally indicated their satisfaction, however, the new recruits of administrative members have shown dissatisfaction ($M = 2.81$). The most experienced staff members are the most satisfied ones with the supervision facet.

Conclusions and Recommendations

This study explores perceptions of the administrative staff towards organizational justice in the form of distributive justice, procedural justice, and interactional justice. This study was conducted to examine the relationship between organizational justice perceptions and the job satisfaction of the administrative staff in Sri Lankan state universities.

In view of the essential role of administrative staff members in the effective functioning of the universities, one might ask whether administrative staff members' perception of organizational justice and their level of job satisfaction should be an issue of concern to leadership of universities. As the findings of this study revealed, the answer is yes. Interestingly, the use of pay as the main source of motivation to increase the level of job satisfaction among administrative staff members might not work.

Through the analysis of this study it can be concluded that the state university administrative employees were generally satisfied with their job. However, satisfaction with opportunity for independent thought, feedback on performance, pay for job, promotion opportunities, benefits received were very low among the staff. The findings of the study showed positive relationship of distributive justice, procedural justice and interactional justice with overall job satisfaction as well as intrinsic and extrinsic satisfaction of administrative staff in Sri Lankan state universities. The findings were consistent with the prior researchers that the organizational justice dimensions foster the overall job satisfaction of the employees (Bakhshi et al., 2009; Zaman et al., 2010; Ramamoorthy & Flood, 2004; Aryee et al., 2002; Najafi et al., 2011). These findings supported the studies of Folger and Konovsky (1989), Colquitt et al., (2001), Folger and Cropanzano (1998), Cohen-Charash and Spector (2001) who found positive and significant association among the dimensions of organizational justice with job satisfaction.

Interactional justice was found to have more effect on overall job satisfaction of administrative staff members serving in state universities. The results of this study support previous researches on the impact of the quality of the supervisor-subordinate relationship on the fairness perceptions of subordinates (Dansereau, Graen, & Haga, 1975; Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Moorman, & Fetter, 1990). Thus, the administrative staff would probably receive more justification for procedural justice as well as distributive justice due to the relative advantage of higher quality interactions and a closer relationship with the higher level management. Administrative staff's perceptions of fairness are enhanced when they feel that they are valued members of the university system.

As this study found perceived fairness as a predictor of job satisfaction, a higher level of perception leads to a high level of job satisfaction, which in turn contribute to individual and organizational performance /

outcomes. With the understanding of the influence of organizational justice perception on job satisfaction, leadership of universities can effectively improve administrative employees' perception of organizational justice through the communication of critical institutional values, needs and expectations and on how these values, needs, and expectations align with that of the administrative staff.

This study would recommend that the top management of the universities and policy makers like University Grants Commission could boost the overall job satisfaction of their administrative staff members by promoting distributive, procedural and interactional justice practices in their respective universities.

Implications of findings

The results of this study provide both theoretical and practical implications. Despite the fact that organizational justice is an important factor as a basic requirement for the effective functioning of organizations, there have been no empirical research of organizational justice in the Sri Lankan university sector. As anticipated, this study revealed the importance of justice perception on job satisfaction in Sri Lankan state universities. Thus, this study provides further support for the past findings on these constructs from the Sri Lankan sample. The present study found that organizational justice emerged as the stronger predictor of the job satisfaction. Therefore, the management concerned with the effectiveness and vitality of their institution, should be concerned with this phenomenon.

Although this study was conducted in a university environment the results are applicable to organizations such as non profit, and business entities, because the issues of justice perception and job satisfaction are relevant to employee and organizational level outcomes in all types of organizations. Policy makers may institute

policies or programs to recognize and reward the employees, and increase their overall job satisfaction.

The results have several valuable practical implications for the managers. Managers need to apply rules fairly and consistently to all employees, and reward them based on performance and merit without personal bias in order to create a positive perception of justice. The perceptions of unfairness can result in negative reactions to the organization, due to poor job satisfaction. The present findings suggest that procedural fairness has more effect on their job satisfaction than distributive justice does. Hence, management should pay more attention to the means or the process of decision making for the distribution as it will lead to substantial pay-offs in individual job satisfaction. Therefore, management can influence important work attitudes through creation and maintenance of a procedurally fair climate.

Limitations and Areas for Future Research

As with any research, this study too has some limitations that should be acknowledged. First, the study examined administrative staff members only in Sri Lankan state universities, and therefore the generalizability of the findings is limited to state universities of Sri Lanka coming under the purview of the University Grants Commission. There are many other universities established under various acts and also there are some private universities currently operating in Sri Lanka. Future research should extend covering these universities too. Further, all these factors constrain the ability to make causal statements about the examined relationships, and the exclusive use of self-reported data may create the potential for common method biases. In addition, qualitative data could be collected to provide further explanations for the findings.

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