THE ROLE OF LMX IN EXPLAINING RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN ORGANIZATIONAL JUSTICE AND JOB PERFORMANCE

Ali Zeb, Nor Hazana Abdullah, Majed Bin Othayman, Muazam Ali

Abstract
The main aim of this empirical study is to explore the mediation role of the leader-member exchange (LMX) between organizational justice and job performance in several tobacco companies in Pakistan. Two models are represented in this study, the first showing the influence of the dimensions of organizational justice on job performance, and the second the influence of organizational justice on job performance with the mediating role of LMX. The data was collected from 290 employees working within several tobacco companies in Pakistan. The results of the statistical analysis found that the dimensions of organizational justice had both a direct and indirect stronger effect on job performance. It was proved empirically that LMX plays a vital role not only on organizational justice but also on employee performance. This is one of the first studies to empirically examine the mediating role of LMX in the relationship between the dimensions of organizational justice on job performance in tobacco companies in Pakistan. The study highlights the importance of job performance theory when designing strategies to promote performance.

Keywords: organizational justice, LMX, job performance, competency

JEL Classification: M12, M54

1. INTRODUCTION
Murphy (1989) defined the concept of job performance as performing the duty and responsibility of a given task encompassing already-known factors like time, speed and efficiency (Borman & Motowidlo, 1997). Campbell et al. (1990), who introduced a job performance theory, put forth that performance is an observable behavior of employees which enable the achievements of a particular task in any organization. In every corporate sector in different countries, research into the job performance of employees is a highly valuable resource for any organization, as performance can build or destroy the reputation as well as the profitability of the organization (Hameed & Waheed (2011).

The effects of organizational justice on job performance has been examined by numerous stud-
cies (Ambrose & Schminke, 2009). Organizational justice is widely observed as an interpreter of employee behavior and attitudes within the workplace atmosphere in several empirical studies of French organizations (Muller & Djuatio, 2011; Doucet, 2004). Organizational justice is one of the most studied areas of organizational behavior & social psychology (Homans, 1961; Adams, 1965; Parker & Kohlmeyer, 2005; Aryee et al., 2015). Prior researchers Cropanzano and Greenberg (1997) and Cropanzano & Folger (1991) have stressed that organizational justice is one of the main issues with regard to employee behavior and productivity at every organization (Folger & Cropanzano, 2001; Colquitt et al., 2012; Zhang et al., 2014). It is clear that fair justice procedures encourage employees and promote organization development (Wegge et al., 2011). The social exchange theory of Blau (1964) explains the link between organizational justice and job performance. Moreover, fair activities in the social exchange process encourage employees to help and cooperate when needed as well as to support administrative decisions, while unfair activities discourage high employee performance in the workplace (Bies & Tripp 2001). Examining the effect of justice on the work atmosphere, according to Gouldner (1960) and Blau (1964) the social-exchange prospective has become one of the basic approaches of organization management.

A study by Masterson et al. (2000) recommends that social exchanges provide a way towards organizational justice and it is an effective antecedents of enhancing the productivity and morale of an organization. Furthermore, Liden & Maslyn (1998) have explained that LMX is basically concerned with ethical and moral values, e.g. self-esteem, respect, and devotion, further stressing that both organizational justice and job performance are positively associated with these values. LMX is used as a mediator variable and supports the relationship between organizational justice and job performance, as also explained by prior research.

The influence of organizational justice on job performance with the role of LMX in the context of Pakistan has not been previously examined. Earlier, Van Den Bos & Lind (2002) focused on organizational justice as a single construct. On the other hand, several researchers categorized organizational justice as a series of multidimensional constructs (Muller & Djuatio, 2011; Doucet, 2004). These authors stressed that multidimensional concepts cover every angle of justice, thus the present study employs multidimensional concepts, with the main aim to examine the effects of organizational justice on job performance by the mediation role of LMX. Our survey was conducted with a sample of 290 respondents in different tobacco companies in Pakistan to study the effects of organizational justice on job performance with the role of LMX. The first section of this study explains the conceptual model and generation of the study hypotheses, the second the method of the study, including the instruments of reliability and results of the empirical findings, and the third describes respectively the study findings, major applications, and future research limitations.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

This section describes previous research to form the conceptual model and hypotheses for the present study.
2.1 Organizational justice and job performance

Organizational justice is considered valuable for both individual employees and organizational effectiveness in developing and underdeveloped countries (Folger & Cropanzano, 1998). Greenberg (1987) defined organizational justice as balanced and fair activities between employees and administration. Prior studies have discovered the importance of employer and worker relationships in comparing organizational justice to employee job performance (Suliman & Kathairi, 2013). Aslam et al. (2015) suggest that organizational justice is the basic foundation for retaining loyal workers and helping assure a proper work atmosphere for organization members. Organizational justice enables employees to work together in one group and it enhances employee collectivism, while, as a destructive aspect, injustice divides the group of co-workers (Greenberg, 1990; Cropanzano et al., 2007).

Prior studies have concluded that organizational justice can predict employee loyalty, organizational commitment, organization support, organizational citizenship behavior, as well as job performance, while it negatively predicted employee larceny and workplace sabotage (Greenberg, 1993; Ambrose et al., 2002; Cropanzano et al., 2007; Suliman & Kathairi, 2013). The studies of Brockner et al. (1992) and Cropanzano et al. (2007) concluded that an unfair procedure or treatment directly harms loyal employees. Masterson et al. (2000) stressed that organizational justice has been studied in previous studies from the perspective of employee job performance (Cropanzano et al., 2002), i.e. when employees are paid well, the performance level increases, and vice versa. Organizational justice includes three dimensions; distributive justice, procedural justice and interactional justice (Adams, 1965; Leventhal, 1980; Bies, 1986; Cohen-Charash & Spector, 2001).

The concept of equity theory (Homans, 1961) is related to distributive justice, i.e. when employees compare their input (efforts) to output (organizational rewards) and find discrepancies, they perceive distributive injustice. Different employees work with different capabilities, as mentioned by Cropanzano (2007), and their level of performance within the organization also varies. Sometimes employee outcomes are high due to high needs, while at times employee outputs are low due to low needs (Cropanzano, 2007). Although Cropanzano (2007) has stressed that the course of distributive justice within an organization needs to be reanalyzed, all employees should receive their compensation based on their job performance. Ambrose and Schminke (2003) noted that social exchange and economic exchange theory is closely linked to distributive justice. Moorman (1991), Noblet & Jepsen (2011) concluded that job performance is positively influenced by distributive justice and they further outlined the importance of distributive justice in the improvement of employee behaviors.

The concept of procedural justice of Masterson et al. (2000) concerns the path of social exchanges; these influence employee perceptions regarding their strong association with the work environment. The meta-analysis study of Cohen-Charash & Spectro (2001) stressed that job performance is predicted by procedural justice as compared to distributive justice in the organization. Sweeney and McFarlin (1993) also confirmed that procedural justice influences employees and organization internal perceptions to a greater extent as compared to distributive justice. Moreover, Colquitt et al. (2001) as well as Cohen & Spector (2001) also endorsed that notion that procedural justice has a positive, significant association with internal organization and employee
perception, while Cropanzano et al. (2007) argued that prior research shows that perceptions of fair procedures decreases the negative effect of inauspicious results, and leads to building charitable assistance regarding strategy implementations in the organization. The study conducted by Lind & Tyler (1988) has confirmed a strong association between procedural and distributive justice in the organization. However, Tyler (1990) noted that employees need to perceive fairness in terms of distributive justice.

Barling & Phillips (1993) claimed that interactional justice is related to treating workers with dignity, politeness, respect, and honesty as well as sharing information among employees in the organization (Tata & Bowes-Sperry, 1996; Skarlicki & Folger; 1997; Bies 2001). The social exchange process and interactional justice are closely related to each other, i.e. they are based on appropriate information sharing and avoiding odious observations (Cropanzano & Greenberg, 1997; Bies, 1986). Furthermore, Folger (2001) highlights that excellence of communication between a manager and employees is linked with interactional justice and it usually depends on the direction shown toward employees by the manager. In different Chines companies, Cheung (2013) conducted a research study and found that the majority of employees mostly do not pay more attention to rewards as compared to a quality relationship, fair information and personal treatment in the organizations. Wang et al. (2010), Ashraf (2018) found positive that job performance is enhanced by interactional justice.

According to Lamm et al. (2015) many types of research include the impact of organizational justice on other variables, like organizational communication, organizational citizenship behavior, trust, organizational commitment (Lv et al., 2012; Zhang & Agarwal, 2009; Caetano & Vala, 1999), few studies have examined the links between organizational justice and employees’ job performance (Greenberg, 1987). The following hypotheses are proposed on the base of supporting literature.

\[ H1: \text{Distributive justice is positively associated with job performance.} \]

\[ H2: \text{Procedural justice is positively associated with job performance.} \]

\[ H3: \text{Interactional justice is positively associated with job performance.} \]

2.2 The mediating role of LMX

The LMX is concerned with several characteristics such as respect, loyalty, fairness which represent the leader and member relationship (Liden & Maslyn, 1998). A leader’s fairness in the organization is basically an increasing the role of LMX (Colquitt, 2001). The study of Cohen-Charash & Spector (2001) and Scandura (1999) determined that justice is a fundamental factor in making jointly supportive LMX. A study was conducted by Wang et al. (2010), which concluded that job performance is directly and indirectly predicted by the role of LMX. Employees deliver different services to gain a favorable output like pay and self-esteem (Wang et al., 2010). Those employees having a high-level quality of LMX relationships have a higher efficiency to deliver high employees’ output (Gerstner and Day, 1997). Walumbwa et al. (2011) concluded that LMX mediated the relation between organizational justice and job performance. The study of Choy et al. (2016) examined the effects of LMX on job performance by mediating roles of delegation and participation. They stress that LMX has direct and indirectly predicted job performance.
by the mediating role of delegation and participation. Breevaart et al. (2015) also conducted a study at Dutch police and concluded that high-LMX relationships promote work engagement and job performance. Masterson et al. (2000) further argued that organizational justice is an antecedent of an organization in the procedures of social and economic exchange relationships. The relationship between organizational justice and job performance mediated by LMX is supported by the above literature. The literature on the topic found a gap in the context of Pakistan. The indirect relationship between organizational justice and LMX has been discussed in several previous studies. This study will explore the role of LMX in explaining organizational justice-job performance relationships in different tobacco companies in Pakistan. The conceptual model of the study is shown in Fig. 1. The below tentative statements are proposed on the base of supporting literature.

H4: Distributive justice is positively associated with LMX.
H5: Procedural justice is positively associated with LMX.
H6: Interactional justice is positively associated with LMX.
H7: LMX is positively associated with job performance.
H8: LMX mediate a positive association between distributive justice and job performance.
H9: LMX mediate a positive association between procedural justice and job performance.
H10: LMX mediate a positive association between interactional justice and job performance.

Fig. 1 – Conceptual model. Source: own research

3. SAMPLE AND PROCEDURE
The first section of the questionnaires used consists of demographic questions and the second section of the questionnaires consist of questions related to the dimensions of organizational justice, LMX, and job performance. The five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 to 5 (strongly disagree; to strongly agree) was used to get the responses of respondents. The quantitative approach was employed to fulfill the study objectives. Overall four hundred questionnaires were circulated for data accumulation in various sections of tobacco companies in Pakistan. Out of the four hundred, total of 290 (72% response rate) were completed questionnaires and received
from respondents. The suitability of data for the factor analysis, Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin’s (KMO) measure of sampling adequacy was .734, above 0.6 (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007) and Bartlett’s test of Sphericity was 2527.698*** at .001 level of significance as given in Table 1. All the study constructs factor loadings are ranging from .566 to .898. As earlier used by various researchers Zeb et al. (2018),Javaid et al. (2018), Hussain et al. (2018) and Zeb et al. (2018), various statistical analyses were employed in this study.

Tab. 1– Exploratory factors analysis of constructs. Source: own research

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<th>Factors loading</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>S.D</th>
<th>Alpha reliability</th>
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Note: Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin’s (MSA) was .734> 0.6, Bartlett’s test of Sphericity was 2527.698*** at .001 level of significant
3.1 Measure

For all study constructs, different scales were adopted. The previous scale of Niehoff and Moor- 
man (1993) was used to measure organizational justice dimension. Distributive justices were 
measured with 5-items scale, evaluating the impartiality of job performances including job load, 
salary scale, work timing, work responsibilities, and rewards. The scale’s alpha reliability of dis-
tributive justice was .86. The procedure justice was measured using 6-items evaluating the level 
of fairness in procedures perceived by workers. The scale’s alpha reliability of procedural justice 
was .87. The last dimension of organizational justice, interactional justice, was measured by 
7-items scale. These items measured fairness, in supervisors’ interaction and decision about the 
job perceived by employees. The scale’s alpha reliability of interactional justice was .88. LMX 
was measured by 7-items scale which is developed by Scandura & Graen (1984). This scale was 
proposed to measure the extent of relationship between manager and employees. The coefficient 
alpha score of LMX .89 showed a strong reliability of the measure. Odle-Dusseau et al. (2012) 
developed 17-items scale for job performance to be used. The job performance scale’s alpha reli-
ability was .85 respectively.

4. RESULTS

The descriptive statistics show mean, standard deviation of the entire study variable as shown in 
Table 1. The results of the descriptive statistics are based on the score from data collection scales. 
Table 2 shows that the demographic variables were not correlated with LMX and job performance. The organizational justice; distributive, procedural, interactional (r = 0.25, p < 0.01; r = 0.21, p < 0.01; r = 0.23, p < 0.01) are positive and significantly correlated with job performance. Furthermore, correlational values (r = 0.35, p < 0.01; r = 0.22, p < 0.01; r = 0.34, p < 0.01) of or-
ganizational justice; distributive, procedural, interactional were positive and significantly related 
to LMX. Last, LMX was also significantly correlated with job performance and is explained by 
(r = 0.33, p < 0.01) respectively.

Tab. 2 – Correlation analysis. Source: own research

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In order to verify the hypothesized relationships of variables, regression tools were employed. The results of the direct and indirect effects of the relationships between the dimensions of organizational justice (distributive, procedural and interactional), LMX and job performance are shown in Table 3 and Table 4. The hypothesized relationships were divided into three steps. In the first step, the dimensions of organizational justice and job performance were merged and the results were significant and positive. The second step, LMX was regressed against the dimensions of organizational justice. The methodology of Baron and Kenny (1986) was used in the third step to show the mediation role of LMX.

Tab. 3 – The impact of organizational justice on LMX and job performance. Source: own research

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<th>Indirect effect (step 4)</th>
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β : standardized path coefficients; R² : squared multiple correlation; t > 1.96, *p < 0.05; **p < 0.01

Tab. 4 – The impact of LMX and job performance. Source: own research

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</table>

β : standardized path coefficients; R² : squared multiple correlation; t > 1.96, *p < 0.05; **p < 0.01

The results of Table 3, (step 1) show that the dependent variable (job performance) was affected by the independent variable (distributive procedural & interactional justice) as explained by β = 0.21, p < 0.01, β = 0.23, p < 0.01, and β 0.24, p < 0.01 respectively. The organizational justice dimensions showed a statistically significant positive relation with job performance, thus the results proved H1, H2, and H3. The results in Table 3 (step 2) show that the dimensions of organizational justice (distributive, procedural and interactional justice) significantly influence LMX as explained by statistical values (β = 0.14, t = 2.31, p < 0.01; β = 0.15, t = 2.21, p < 0.01; β = 0.29, t = 4.12 p = 0.01), thus H4, H5 and H6 were confirmed. Next, the mediator variable (LMX) (β = 0.31, t = 3.58 p < 0.01) was significantly affected by the dependent variable (job performance).
H7 is confirmed as shown in (step 1) Table 4. The results of Table 3 (step 4) show the impact of organizational justice dimensions (distributive, procedural, interactional) with the task performance partially mediated by LMX by (β = 0.16, 0.15, 0.18, t = 2.12, 2.10, 2.04, p < 0.01); it is quite low (β = 0.14, 0.15, 0.29, t = 2.31, 2.21, 4.12, p < 0.01) Thus the results confirm the hypotheses H8, H9 and H10. The R² value shows that job performance has a 16 percent influence on both organizational justice dimensions and LMX, while LMX has a 18 percent influence on organizational justice dimensions.

5. DISCUSSIONS AND CONCLUSION

The major objective of this research is to examine the role of LMX between organizational justice and job performance. This study enables us to describe the varying attitudes and behaviors of employees, e.g. LMX and work performance. In this research, we revealed the significance of organizational justice for the improvement of job performance. The previous study also confirmed that organizational justice is statistically significant for job performance (β = .53, .28, .20; p = .000) as did the study of Virgolino et al. (2017), which emphasized the significance (β = .162, C.R=.185 and p = .000). Similarly, the findings of Suliman & Kathairi (2012) indicated that organizational justice influences job performance with a statistically significant result (β = .304, .309, .317 and p = .000). Colquitt (2001), Cohen-Charash & Spector (2001) also support the finding that organizational justice dimensions predict job performance. A French study by Swalhi et al. (2017) confirmed the significant positive effects of procedural and interactional justice (β = .13, .24, t = 2.07, 3.45, p = 0.005, .01) on job performance. The finding of this study was partially confirmed by Kalay (2016) in Turkey in an investigation which dealt with the impact of organizational justice on task performance. They confirmed the findings of this research study, and concluded that procedural and interactional justice β = -.07, .10 t = 0.78, 1.07) are not significantly important for the task performance while distributive justice is important for the task performance, as explained by (β = .31, t = 5.08). Furthermore, Al Rawashdeh (2013) further validated that organizational justice has an impact on job performance, with the accessibility of organizational justice leading to high employee performance (β = -.210, .339, .101, t = 4.132, 8.325, 2.143 and p = 0.05) respectively.

Moreover, different dimensions of justice have a positive impact on LMX. The result of a study confirmed by a previous researchers Shan et al. (2015) and Al-Shammari & Ebrahim (2014) stresses that the dimensions of organizational justice were positively associated with their perception of the level of the exchange of information by a leader towards his/her subordinates. The research of Sindhu et al. (2017) revealed that a significant association with (β = 0.20, R² = 0.24 p = 0.01) exists between LMX and job performance.

In the present study, LMX was shown to play a partial mediation role between organizational justice dimension and job performance. Research by Shan et al. (2015) explained that LMX is concerned with social exchanges and LMX is a pathway between an employee and employer. Prior empirical studies highlight the mixed effects of the multidimensional nature of justice (Colquitt, et al., 2001; Cohen-Charash & Spector, 2001). A research study carried out by Ambrose & Schminke (2003; 2009) found that different dimensions of organizational justice have
varying effects on employees. A study by Iqbal (2017) also emphasized that specific dimensions of organizational justice promote job performance. Aryee et al. (2015) stressed that organizational procedures, the level of transparency as well as sharing information with employees are the best predictors of organizational justice. Nevertheless, Ohana, (2014) recommends that a well-qualified and trained manager is needed to create the quality of justice between employees and the organization itself to increase employee job performance in every corporate sector. On the other hand, Skarlicki & Latham (1997) also concluded that development programs participated equally by all managers empowered them to perform better and improve their involvement in the organization.

Theoretically, this research recommends a model that shows the importance of organizational justice and a partial mediation role of LMX. This study was not only conducted to determine information about manpower behavior and attitudes, but it also shows its applicability to tobacco companies as well as other corporate sectors within Pakistan. For policymakers and HR managers, this study should generate improvements in the development of any business model.

The specific limitations and conclusions of this study and their implications must be interpreted for future purposes. To measure the organizational justice, LMX and job performance, that fact that self-administered questionnaires were used are the first limitation of the study. The use of previously-set scales, as explained by Podsakoff et al. (2003), causes the possibility of an increase in positive results indicating the relationship between the studied constructs. To minimize this problem and to avoid any type of bias, a scale for different constructs from other particular sources (Chang et al., 2010) could be used, in which case justice could be appraised more precisely according to employee perception. Niehoff and Moorman (1993) argued that interactional justice can be assessed among colleagues or by a supervisor. Job performance in the present study was measured by self-ratings, which might have created a self-inflation effect. The second limitation of this study is the scope of job performance. Van Scotter et al. (2000) emphasized that assessments concerning job performance should be task specific rather than measured in general terms.

In order to provide a comprehensive image of the difficulties of the organizational justice to job performance, Colquitt et al. (2012) proposed a more integrated model to determine the relationship between organizational justice and job performance. Other researchers have evaluated organizational citizenship behavior, organizational deviance and job performance (Ambrose & Schminke, 2009).

This study seeks to determine some directions for further research. The first idea is by controlling organizational factors that occur concurrently within a study and its context (Tyler & Smith, 1998). Some authors highlight that finding that the role of justice might be influenced by several factors, e.g. Ehrhardt et al. (2012), who take into consideration employee position in the chains of command, whereas Luk & Shaffer (2005) incorporate social values, while Sweeney & McFarlin (1997) emphasized that the role of justice is linked to individual factors, e.g. gender. All these variables could provide help to understand the reactions of employees within the framework of tobacco companies in Pakistan.

In the same way, a study conducted by Cropanzano et al. (2001) stressed the fact that perception matters, i.e. how employees perceive affects interpersonal relationships. The connection between
employees and justice in terms of diverse responses as a nature of mutuality has been described by social exchange theory (Blau, 1964). Furthermore, Tyler and Smith (1998) emphasized in a different manner that taking a seemingly impartial action persuades employees to collaborate and support an organizational decision, while Bies & Tripp (2001) stressed that a perception of biased dealings leads to employees seeking revenge. We concluded from the following arguments that strategies such as salary and financial incentives reduction to reduce smoking among employees could cause employees to retaliate towards the organizations (Schaubroeck et al., 1994; Greenberg, 1994). Particularly, an organization should manage these kinds of issues by providing appropriate channels for employees to complain and otherwise voice out their grievances. Most importantly, rules and regulations must be clearly communicated to ensure compliance and prevent any violations of the code, and finally, activities in the organization which could be perceived to be detrimental to employees should be addressed fairly (Cropanzano et al., 2001).

The validity of this study model is related to the sampling context, which is tobacco companies in Pakistan. The model we propose in this study could be extended to incorporate other variables. In any organization in Pakistan, future research should be expanded to include the influence of retention approaches to job performance, an approach which would prove to be more useful. Based on the findings regarding the above-linked factors concerning work atmosphere, Grimshaw & Rubery (2015) emphasized that it should prove more effective to determine the other factors regarding work-life balance that could influence employee job performance positively. The direct and indirect relationships regarding work-life balance could be examined in a long-term study and measured systematically.

References


**Contact information**

Ali Zeb, Ph.D.
Universiti Tun Hussein Onn Malaysia
Faculty of Technology Management and Business
Malaysia
E-mail: alizeb_nasafi@yahoo.com

Nor Hazana Abdullah, Ph.D.
Universiti Tun Hussein Onn Malaysia
Faculty of Technology Management and Business
Malaysia

Majed Bin Othayman Ph.D.
King Khalid University Saudi Arabia
Saudi Arabia

Muazam Ali, Ph.D.
Universiti Tun Hussein Onn Malaysia
Faculty of Technology Management and Business
Malaysia