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Influence of Organizational Justice, Supervisor Support, and Group Cohesiveness on Organizational Commitment: Mediated Role of Ethical Behavior

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Present study contributes to the ethical behavior field by assessing the role of justice, supervisor support, and group cohesiveness indirectly effecting organizational commitment through ethical behavior. Data were collected through onsite administration of a survey on individuals working in 12 companies of three different sectors including Pakistan Airlines, banks, and a Fast Food Services in Pakistan. Measures related to Organizational Commitment (Meyer & Allen, 1997), Ethical Behavior (Hunt, Chonko, & Wilcox, 1984), Distributive Justice (Price & Mueller, 1986), Procedural Justice (Moorman, 1991), Supervisor Support (Greenhauset al.,1990), and Group Cohesion Seashore's (1954) were administered on the sample. The results supported the role of ethical behavior as a mediator. Organizational justice, supervisor support, ans group cohesiveness depicted significant association with organizational commitment. The findings showed that initiating action factors like supervisor support, justice in the organization, and harmony among employees tasks reciprocate through affirmative employees' behaviour as honesty, fairness, equality, dignity, etc. which enhances the attachment level of

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employees with organization as well as employees' stress level is reduced in encouraging work environment. The results provide useful insights for managers and consultants, especially, of human resource (HR) to design training programs for employees to resolve novel issues related to ethical trepidations.

Keywords. Distributive justice, procedural justice, supervisor support, work group cohesiveness, ethical behavior, organizational commitment

According to Bandura (1977), there are several factors that help to shape human behavior and those factors may be environmental and cognitive. Such factors actively get involved in the learning process for shaping a new responses. Thus, the social learning theory explains that human beings are vigorous information processors and can critically evaluate the relationship between their behavior and its consequences.

In contemporary work environment organizations are facing diverse challenges that create deep impact on organizational outcomes including employees' commitment level with an organization. These challenges are embedded around many factors including employees' motivation, fair treatment by supervisor, dealing with diverse work force (Meghan, Thornton, & Rupp, 2016), group cohesiveness; which is consensus among the employees' enabled groups in an organization to endure and get maximum productivity and to be committed and loyal with organization (Demirer, Gures & Akgul, 2010). These factors shape ethical behavior of employees in organization which induces them to conduct their business with integrity and honesty (Monga, 2018; Ud din Khan, Zhiqiang, Sadick, & Ibn Musah, 2018). Such ethical behavior guarantees the satisfactory attitude of the employees toward work in the form of organizational commitment (Monga, 2018; Trevino, Nieuwenboer, & Kish-Gephart, 2014). According to social learning theory, integration of these internal organizational environmental stimulus affects human cognition through shaping ethical behavior which is the accepted standards in terms of personal and social welfare of employee, their work attitudes, self-discipline; which in turn creates the positive effect on their commitment level (Cascio, 2013).

Generally, ethical behavior is doing the right thing and observing professional standards. There are essential collated set of ethical standards for any business that provide employees examples of moral quandaries which they may come across and give ideas about handling various challenging situations. However, employees may need to embark on a do-it-themselves journey as their ethical guide, however,

it may be flatly impossible to get employees to act morally if they see unreasonableness in the organization's system (Bazerman & Gino, 2012).

Employees' clear perception regarding organization's supportive and fair policies leads to organizational commitment (Flint & Haley, 2013). Hence, researchers on organizational behavior focused at organizational justice because employees who found that their organizations follow fair procedures in allocation of resources, their loyalty toward the organization induces them to be committed with their organizations (Haider, Ahmad, & Malik, 2014). The researches proved that distributive and procedural justice (Haider et al., 2014) are main predictors of positive attitude of the employees and strong correlation is found between distributive and procedural justice with organizational commitment (Haideret al., 2014**).** Employees' relation with organization becomes stronger when they find justice in their organization (Loi, Hang, & Foley, 2010).

Distributive and procedural dimensions of organizational justice are strongly related to the evaluations of supervisors and trust relationships in management (Alexander & Ruderman, 1987). This creates a very strong influence on the ethical behavior of employees. Common factor between organizational justice and ethical behavior is fairness which influences employees' perception about organization (Sert, MeralElci, Uslu, & Irgeener, 2014).

Same likely flexibility of supervisory style is an influencing feature in the employees' job satisfaction and their commitment level (Grant, Fried, Parker, & Frese, 2010). Committed employees always show loyalty to organization goals and values. Furthermore, subordinates are likely to imitate supervisors' behavior because supervisors infer and make judgments about the behavior of subordinates (Grant et al., 2010).

Group cohiseveness more likely improve the employees' relationship with the organization and such cohesion in all probability is positively associated with positive attitudinal and behavioral outcomes. Group cohesion refers to bonding amongst members of a group (Mullen & Cooper, 1994). Group cohesion is not unidimensional construct. There are two main components of group cohesion including *social cohesion* that refers to bonding on the basis of social relations and in *task cohesion,* group members make bond to remain committed to achieve goals (Carless & DePaola, 2000).

When employees consider their organizational authorities supportive and fair, they are likely to show positive ethical behavior in response (Monga, 2018). This is being suggested that positive

expectations from supervisors is likely to alter self-concern into other-concern which leads to prosocial behaviors. These affirmative actions may restraint employees from vulnerable behaviors (Monga, 2018). A supervisor promotes trust among employees; for the reason employees feel prestige in the form of approval, rewards or respect from their supervisors and they behave fairly in the organization (Chughtai, 2013).

In social sciences, very rigorous research has been conducted on the groups. The influence of group on ethical side has not been properly highlighted.When the group members have strong desire to remain with a group and mutually influencing one another, then they are showing strong consensus among themselves. This consensus compels them to suppress self-interest (Carron & Brawley, 2012).

Cohesive groups develop interpersonal attraction and show various affirmative outcomes. These groups normalize odd behavior (Ariely, 2014). Strengthening group cohesiveness decreases the likelihood of employees to engage in any anti-social conduct (Yokouchi & Hashimoto, 2019). A group tied employees encourage respect for others, making it less likely to intentionally harm others. This moral protection encourages responsible ethical actions for fulfilling organizational commitment (Forsyth, 2009).

Factors like justice in the organization, supervisor support, and unanimity among employees are integrated under the umbrella of social exchange theory such factors are reciprocated through hedonic values like shaping ethical behavior in compliance. In return, commitment of employees at workplace increases (Cropanzano, Erica, Anthony, Daniels, & Hall, 2017).

No broader theoretical link is created among these factors to find their impact on organizational outcomes. Prominent contribution of existing study is to check the interwoven effect of these three factors on ethical behavior and organizational commitment. Such broadly linked theoretical model is being checked in Pakistani work settings. However, it is surprising; no study to researcher's knowledge has examined complete mediated model in such a way in other culture as well.

Hypotheses

Above mentioned argumentation leads to specification of the following hypotheses:

1. A positive association exists between justice (distributive and procedural) with organizational commitment.

2. Justice (distributive & procedural) is positively associated with ethical behavior.
3. Ethical behavior mediates the relationship between justice (distributive and procedural) with organizational commitment.
4. There is a positive relationship between supervisor support and organizational commitment.
5. Supervisor support is positively related with ethical behavior of employees.
6. Ethical behavior mediates the relationship between supervisor support and organizational commitment.
7. Positive association exists between group cohesiveness and organizational commitment.
8. Group cohesiveness is positively associated with ethical behavior.
9. Ethical behavior mediates the relationship between group cohesiveness and organizationalcommitment.

On the basis of literature, a proposed conceptual framework is derived which is given in Figure 1.

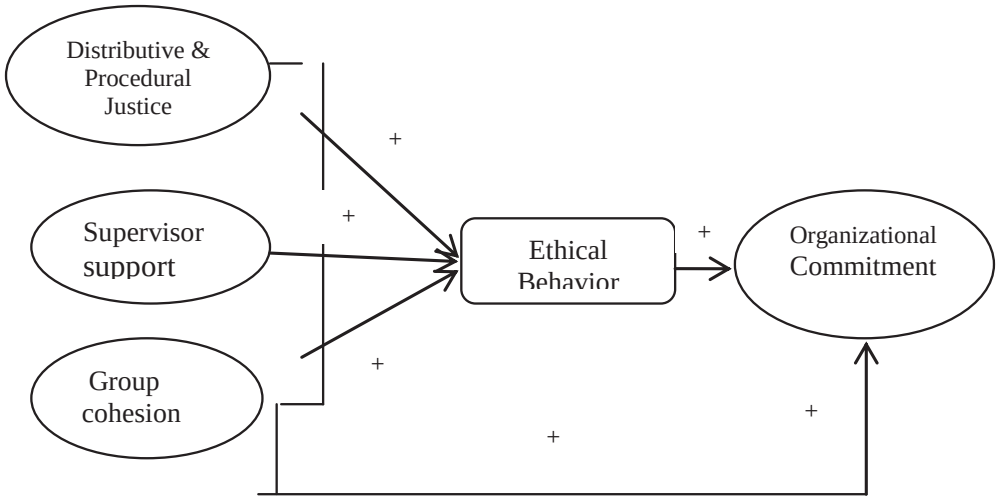

Figure 1. Research model.

Method

Sample

The data were collected through onsite administration of a survey to 400 employees who were working in banks, Pakistan International Airline, and a Fast Food companies in Pakistan.After removing

incomplete questionnaires and ones with missing responses, 220 complete data on all measures were available for analyses. The contributors were randomly selected across departments and ranks. The reasons for selecting simple random sampling technique for the collection of data was that first it was not easy to collect data from only one particular sector because people in Pakistan are not research oriented. Thus, for the collection of quality data it was decided that those sectors should be focused from where the chance of collection of quality data would be higher; secondly, to ensure less biasness in the responses of adequate number of respondents with less time and budget constraints. Most of the participants were male, middle positioned in their organization, age between 25-35 years and employed in Fast Food companies.Table 1 below presents data about demographic characteristics of respondents.

Table 1

Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

Demographic Variable	*n*	%
Gender		
Male	127	58
Female	93	42
Level of Position		
Low level	52	24
Middle level	130	59
Upper level	38	17
Age		
>25 years	29	13
25-35 years	92	42
36-45 years	79	36
Above	20	9
Organization Type		
Pakistan International Airlines	48	22
Fast food companies	92	42
Banks	80	36

Measures

Following self-reported questionnaires in English language were used to measure study variables.

Organizational commitment (OC). The seven-item scale of Meyer and Allen (1997) was used for work place organizational

commitment measuremen consisting of three dimensions: Affective Commitment, Continuous Commitment, and Normative Commitment. Affective Commitment dimension was selected because it shows psychological committment of the employee's desire to remain in the company. Rating of this scale was in Likert format from *strongly Disagree* (1) to *strongly Agree* (7). Reportedly alpha value for Affective commitment ranged from .77 to .88 (see Meyer & Allen, 1997). The reliability in current study is .82.

Ethical behavior (EB). Hunt, Shelby, Chonko, and Wilcox's (1984) Ethical Behavior Scale Sensitivity was used in this study. This scale has been frequently used in various studies to measure ethical behavior (Deshpande et al., 2000). Each response was measured using a five-point Likert type scale ranging from *Strongly Disagree* (1) to *Strongly Agree* (5). The reliability of this Scale in current study is .85.

Distributive justice (DJ). Distributional justice was assessed by using Price and Mueller's Justice Index (DJI) (1986). Each response was measured using a five-point Likert type scale ranging from *Strongly Disagree* (1) to *Strongly Agree* (5). Alpha reliability of this scale lie from .94 to .95 (Moorman, 1991; Price & Mueller, 1986). The reliability in this study is .98.

Procedural justice (PJ). Moorman's (1991) Organizational Justice Scale was used including Distributive Justice (5 items) and Procedural Justice with its further two sub-dimensions including Interactional (9 items) and Formal Procedural Justice (6 items). In present study Procedural Justice was measured by using Moorman's Formal Procedural Justice Scale (1991) of 6 items. Each item was measured using a five-point Likert type scale ranging from *Strongly Disagree* (1) to *Strongly Agree* (5). The reliability in the current is .92.

Supervisor support (SS). For measuring supervisor support, 9 items were taken from the Career Satisfaction Scale of Greenhaus et al. (1990). Reported alpha reliability of the scale was .93 (Greenhaus et al., 1990). Each response was measured using a five-point Likert scale ranging from *Strongly Disagree* (1) to *Strongly Agree* (5). The reliability in this study is .90.

Group cohesion (GC). Seashore's (1954) five item self-reported scale was used to measure work group cohesion. Each item was scored using a four-point Likert type scale ranging from *Strongly Disagree* (1) to *Strongly Agree* (4). The reliability of the Measure in this study is .92.

Procedure

Data were collected through survey distributed to twelve different organizations of three miscellaneous sectors. The business activities and operations of the organizations included the banks Pakistan International Airlines and Fast Food Services Companies in Pakistan. With written permission from the concerned authorities questionnaires were handed over to the respondents who volunteered to participate in the study. It was assuring to respondents strict confidentiality. The questionnaires were distributed by hand as well as through mail.A cover letter was attached which made clear the main objective and scope of the study. Furthermore, it was made sure in the covering letter that any information which obtained from respondents will be retained safe and confidential.The queries respondents were resolved timely.

Total 400 questionnaires were distributed. With three follow-ups, 255 questionnaires were returned and in which 220 responses were completed, yielding a response rate of 55%. It is being identified that people in Pakistan have low orientation toward research, thus, serious responses rate was not very high in present study but the quality responses were attained which have depicted statistically significant results. According to Cohen (1992) there is the importance of power analysis and the power is high not on the basis of big sample size rather than it based on how statistically significant results.

Results

The data was analyzed to test the hypotheses of study. The descriptive statistics, correlations and regression analysis were computed.

Descriptive Analyses and Correlations

In order to check the degree of relation among the variables Pearson Prodcut Moment Correlation analysis was done. Table 2 shows the correlation among the variables. The statistics show that distributive, procedural justice, supervisor support, ethical behavior, and group cohesion are significantly ($p < .05$) correlated with organizational commitment and also with each other.

Table 2

Descriptive Statistics and Correlations of Study Variables (N = 220)

	Measures	1	2	3	4	5	6
1	Organizational Committment		.34**	.43**	.52**	.35**	.23**
2	Ethical Behavior			.21**	.42**	.37**	.31**
3	Distributive Justice				.44*	.38*	.23*
4	Procedural Justice					.35*	.45*
5	Supervisor Support						.34**
6	Group Cohesion						
	M	1.5	1.2	2.1	1.6	4.0	5.1
	SD	.98	1.5	.95	.44	.87	1.3

*$p < .05$. **$p < .01$.

Regression Analyses

Regression method suggested by Preacher and Hayes (2004) is used which deploys bootstrap models to test mediation. The model 4 of Hayes was employed to test the mediation.

Table 3

Mediating Role of Ethical Behaviour for Distributive Justice in Predicting Organization Commitment (N = 220)

Variables	β	*t*	*F*	*p*	R^2	ΔR^2	95% *CI*	
							LL	*UL*
Direct effect of DJ on OC	.34	7.72	122	.000	.43	.31	.24	.45
Direct effect of DJ on EB	.47	3.37	86	.000	.81	.30	.34	.60
Direct effect of EB on OC	.28	2.64	111	.000	.65	.24	.38	.51
Mediation of EB b/w DJ &OC	.11	5.90	120	.012	.44	.10	.45	.82

Note. CI = Confidence Interval; LL = Lower Limit; UL = Upper Limit; DJ = Distributive Justice; OC = Organizational Commitment; EB = Ethical Behaviour.

Results in Table 3 and 4 show that distributive and procedural justice are positively predicts organizational commitment and ethical behaviour, which is confirming hypotheses 1 and 2. Mediation results are also in expected direction; ethical behaviour mediates the relationship between distributive justice with β = .11, 95% CI [.14, .36] and procedural justice with β = .14, 95% CI [.17, .35] and organizational commitment. Bootstrap results with indirect effect not containing zero support the mediation of ethical behaviour. Thus, Hypothesis 3 is confirmed.

Table 4

Mediating Role of Ethical Behaviour for Procedural Justice in Predicting Organization Commitment (N = 220)

Variables	β	t	F	p	R^2	ΔR^2	95% CI	
							LL	*UL*
Direct effect of PJ on OC	.21	8.22	236	.000	.56	34	.36	.47
Direct effect of PJ on EB	.39	4.38	113	.000	.87	40	.37	.56
Direct effect of EB on OC	.28	2.64	111	.000	.65	24	.38	.51
Mediation of EB b/w PJ & OC	.02	5.07	123	.011	.40	.12	.40	.62

Note. CI = Confidence Interval; LL = Lower Limit; UL = Upper Limit; DJ = Procedural Justice; OC = Organizational Commitment; EB = Ethical Behaviour.

Table 5 shows that supervisor support is positively related to organizational commitment. These results support Hypothesis 4. Supporting Hypothesis 5 is also evident where supervisor support is positively related with ethical behavior which is meeting the condition. Lastly, the mediation based Hypothesis 6 is also confirmed that is ethical behaviour mediates the relationship between supervisor support and organizational commitment. Bootstrap results with 95% CI [.27, .46] around the indirect effect β = .11, not containing zero is supporting the mediation of ethical behaviour.

Table 5

Mediating Role of Ethical Behaviour for Social Support in Predicting Organization Commitment (N = 220)

Variables	β	t	F	p	R^2	ΔR^2	95% CI	
							LL	*UL*
Direct effect of SS on OC	.15	8.22	199	.02	.36	.24	.46	.76
Direct effect of SS on EB	.51	40.3	253	.000	.45	.30	.32	.58
Direct effect of EB on OC	.28	2.64	111	.000	.65	.24	.38	.51
Mediation of EB b/w SS & OC	.16	5.07	81	.08	.33	.10	.44	.80

Note. CI = Confidence Interval; LL = Lower Limit; UL = Upper Limit; SS = Social Support; OC = Organizational Commitment; EB = Ethical Behaviour.

Table 6 shows that group cohesion is positively related to organizational commitment. These results support Hypothesis 7. Supporting Hypothesis 8 is also evident where group cohesion is positively related with ethical behavior which is meeting the condition. Lastly, the mediation based Hypothesis 9 is also confirmed that is ethical behaviour mediates the relationship between group

cohesion and organizational commitment. Bootstrap results with 95% CI [.24, .48] around the indirect effect β = .10, not containing zero is supporting the mediation of ethical behaviour.

Table 6

Mediating Role of Ethical Behaviour for Group Cohesion in Predicting Organization Commitment (N = 220)

Variables	β	*t*	*F*	*p*	R^2	ΔR^2	95% CI	
							LL	*UL*
Direct effect of GC on OC	.39	8.22	181	.06	.26	.14	.42	.80
Direct effect of GC on EB	.73	40.3	294	.000	.34	.21	.37	.63
Direct effect of EB on OC	.28	2.64	111	.000	.65	.24	.38	.51
Mediation of EB b/w GC & OC	.24	5.07	120	.08	.30	.11	.40	.81

Note. CI = Confidence Interval; LL = Lower Limit; UL = Upper Limit; GC = Group Cohesion; OC = Organizational Commitment; EB = Ethical Behaviour.

Discussion

This study examined the influence of integrated model of environmental factors (organizational justice, supervisor support, and group cohesiveness) on commitment level of employees through the cognitive mechanism that is ethical behavior of employees. Such relationship was conceptualised under the umbrella of social learning theory, which is based on positive or negative reinforcement.

Overall, there were three mediation based hypotheses and these hypotheses were confirmed. More specifically, results pertaining to the hypothesized relations can be summarized as follows; all predictions related to direct relation of organizational justice, supervisor support, and group cohesiveness with organizational commitment and mediation model that hypothesized that ethical behavior would mediate the relationship of integrated environmental factors (i.e., organizational justice, supervisor support, group cohesiveness) with organizational commitment, were confirmed.

In challenging work environment, various factors shape the positive and negative outcomes among the employees. These factors are employees' motivation, fair treatment by supervisor, dealing with diverse work force (Meghan et al.,2016) and group cohesiveness (Demirer et al., 2010). Since the emergence of studies on ethical behavior, researchers have failed to properly recognize the significance of integrating these crucial aspects that contribute to shape the ethical behavior of employees which in turn enhances employees' commitment level (Monga, 2018).

This paper started by highlighting the richness and breadth of social exchange theory as it has been investigated numerous constructs that have been examined within the context of this theoretical paradigm. According to social exchange theory, there are initiating actions factors like supervisor support, justice in the organization, and unanimity among employees which are reciprocated through hedonic values like a fairly general standard of good conduct to be in compliance (Vadera, Pratt, & Mishra, 2013), hence, commitment of employees at workplace increase (Cropanzano, et al., 2017). Moreover, it is being identified that organizational commitment is insufficiently explained if studied in isolation of other referents (e.g. co-worker, supervisor, organization) (Cropanzano et al., 2016). Additionally, Cropanzano et al. (2017) identified that there may be some "empty cells" with respect to certain social exchange constructs and these cells might be filled by future investigations. In the present study, an integrated model of various social exchange affirmative initiating constructs were taken depending upon positive reciprocating responses.

The data were collected from Pakistani participants who may have social values and behaviors unusual from people in others cultures (Hofstede, 1991); they have collectivists culture where more emphasis is given on strong social norms and group identity (Shahzad, et al., 2014) as well as on fairness of justice, which create impact on the affirmative attitudinal and behavioral outcomes for people (Iqbal, 2013) and implication for these results are very useful for Pakistani companies' policy makers that they should enforce ethical values to create affirmative culture in the organization.

Conclusion

This study demonstrated an association among perceived justice, social support, and work group cohesion; those factors are considered as pathway for shaping ethical behavior of employees and their commitment level with organization. The findings also suggest that such internal organizational factors may enhance the employees' work place ethical practices that enhances their attachment with their organization.

Limitations and Suggestions

First, Distributive Justice Scale has too high reliability. A high value of alpha may depict that every item in the instrument was measuring something similar to some of the other items, but the scale

may be composed of several clusters of items each measuring a distinct factor (Taber, 2016). Same may be likely present in case of Distributive Justice Scale shortened version that was used. These items have high reliability of .94 to .95 in existing studies (Moorman, 1991; Price & Mueller, 1986). Thus, in future such issue must be looked into seriously.

Second, it is not easy to collect data from only one particular sector due to low research orientation of people in Pakistan.Thus, for the collection of quality data, it was decided that those sectors should be focused from where the chance of collection of quality data would be higher. Response rate was not very high, however, data had high power and the results were meaningful. Therefore, such results of the study can be generalized due to this heterogeneous sample and due to high statistical value of results. In future research, big sample size may give more robust result, but for increasing sample size some incentives should be provided to respondents, so they could voluntarily participate in the study.

Third, the results may have been subject to common method bias owing to the measurement method used. In existing study, all the measures were self-reported, which can have a confounding impact on associations between variables. Future study can be based on peer or supervisory reported response for more robust results.

Implications

Findings of this study have implications for organizational and employees' improvement. Providing encouraging environment to employees can increase their commitment level. Particularly, when fair justice system exist in the organization and supervisors frequently share work related information with their employees and employees are working in teams/groups with consensus then such factors cumulatively articulated in employees key moral principles (including their honesty, fairness, equality, dignity, diversity, and individual rights) increase the commitment level of employees. Pakistan being an emerging economy is facing main fairness and ethical challenges. Thus, such research may crucially contribute to identify the importance of these factors for Pakistani organizations.

Second, endorsement of such initiating actions from the organization that are desirable (high justice, high support, and group unity) have the strong causal relationship which reflects high trust level and high level of affiliation with organization. Collectively such factors may help to lessen the stress level of employees.

Third, considering the potential benefits of the ethical conduct, the study results provide useful insights for managers and consultants, especially, HR Professionals to design training programs to promote ethical behaviour for employees. These programs should cover ethical issues required to be addressed on day to day basis in the organizations and awareness to employees can be provided through newsletters, networking sites, meetings, or mentoring.

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