



Organizational Justice as a Construct of Trust of Public Elementary School Teachers in Davao Del Norte Division

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Abstract— This study unearthed the relationship of organizational justice and trust of teachers since this had never been explored specifically in the local setting. Also, it determined the extent of organizational justice and the trust of public elementary school teachers in Davao Del Norte Division. This used probability sampling. Of which, 150 elementary teachers in the public schools were selected as the respondents. It utilized the descriptive-correlational survey method and the data collated were analyzed through the use of Mean and Product-Moment correlation. In this undertaking, it was revealed that there was an extensive organizational justice heads and an extensive trust of teachers. Furthermore, there was a significant relationship between the two variables. Considering the findings of this study, it was further suggested that higher officials in the Department of Education and school heads may identify means on how to promote organizational justice in the school setting to increase the trust of the teachers towards the organization. More so, future researchers may further explore the involved variables considering other factors and research methods specifically qualitative research or mixed methods research.

Index Terms— Organizational justice, Trust of teachers, Descriptive correlation, Davao del Norte Division, Philippines.

1. Introduction

Trust is a key element for the functionality of a complex and interdependent society and it is one of the important factors in both human relations and human behavior. Trust that eliminates uncertainty is, beyond the feeling of warmth or compassion, the conscious regulation of one's dependence on the other. In schools, students should trust their teachers; teachers should trust their colleagues and managers for collaboration in achieving the school objective. When an environment of trust is created, employees believe that they will be rewarded for the good work they did. This ensures the continuation of positive behaviors, which can lead to an increase in job satisfaction of employees [1]. However, in a school organization, building trust is a big challenge.

In Turkey, it was reported that teachers do not trust their school principal. In general, teachers do not trust their principals' administrative implementations on daily basis. They see their principals as inexperienced administrators and are not aware of school administration. They believed that school

principals were appointed to their posts without having been taken any in-service training in school administration [2]. In Australian schools, teachers come to believe they are distrusted in their professional roles. Denying teachers the sense of themselves as capable professionals risks contributing to the problems of retention that are becoming ever more urgent in the Australian context and elsewhere in the world [3].

In the Philippines, teachers develop lack of trust because of some school issues. A lack of adequate resources and facilities further add the struggles of Filipino teachers. Many schools are struggling with insufficient textbooks, outdated teaching materials, and limited access to technology. Inadequate classroom sizes and overcrowding create challenges in maintaining a conducive learning environment. Teachers often have to be resourceful and make do with what is available, compromising the quality of education they can provide. Teachers in the Philippines face a plenty of issues that impact their ability to provide quality education. Inadequate compensation, heavy workloads, limited resources, classroom management difficulties, and a lack of professional development opportunities contribute to their struggles [4]. These lead to teachers' lack of trust to the Philippine educational system

In the Division of Davao del Norte, it was observed that teachers were starting to lose its confidence towards the Department of Education. Teachers experienced a lack of transparency in administrative decisions, such as resource allocation, promotions, and policy changes. This led to mistrust when teachers feel excluded from important decisions that affect their work. More so, teachers encountered unequal distribution of resources, teaching materials, and facilities among schools. This eroded trust. Teachers had also been provided with limited access to professional development opportunities. This created distrust. They felt unsupported in their career growth when adequate training and development resources were not available.

The aforementioned scenarios were based on casual observations, as the researcher had not encountered a study focusing on the trust levels of teachers in relation to their organizational justice. Given these circumstances, the

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researcher was motivated to delve into understanding the degree of organizational justice and trust, particularly within the public elementary schools of Davao del Norte Division. Moreover, the objective was to analyze the relationship between these two variables.

This initiative also aspired to offer valuable insights to policy makers for shaping policies, programs, interventions, projects, and activities that will incentivize all school leaders to enhance organizational justice within schools. This, in turn, would create a foundation for teachers to build trust.

This study was based primarily on Organizational Justice Theory [5]. The organizational justice theory argues as how people “socially construct the incidents of justice and injustice through the perceptions of employees in organizations who make judgments about the actions of organizational leaders [6]. In this perspective, an act of the organizational head, in the opinion of the employees, is fair only if they perceive that as fair. In this context, the organizational justice looks subjective, as one person perceives an act as just, but the other person may perceive the same act as unjust. However, research indicates that justice is also socially constructed; therefore coherent, long-standing groups (such as employee groups) often develop shared conceptions of what constitutes justice [6].

Theoretically, the effect of organizational justice on trust, “organizational justice has been demonstrated as having impact on different attitudes of the employees like job satisfaction, intention to quit, organizational commitment, job performance, empowerment, proactive behaviors, counter proactive behavior, and organizational trust. This description shows that organizational justice shows an influence on different attitudes, including on organizational trust, in addition to affecting job satisfaction, desire to leave, organizational commitment, performance, empowerment, proactive behavior, and counterproductive behavior [7]. Previous research conducted also provides evidence that organizational justice has a significant effect on trust [8].

It was believed that when the employees are treated fairly concerning the grant of bonuses, and prepared with a chance of making comments within the assessment process, and when their managers deal with them in person based on justice and fairness, the level of trust between the supervisor and subordinate, and, accordingly, the organizational trust increases, which would result in positive achievements [9]. The results of the study indicated that employees’ perception of organizational justice may affect the trust in the organization and managers [10]. There is a significant, large and positive correlation between organizational justice and trust in managers. Also, the results of a study in Iraq indicated that organizational justice affects organizational trust, and the latter is able to predict organizational justice and participation [11]

2. Methodology

A. Research Design

This study was quantitative research specifically descriptive correlational. Quantitative research is the process of collecting and analyzing numerical data. It can be used to find patterns and

averages, make predictions, test causal relationships, and generalize results to wider populations [12]. Meanwhile, descriptive correlational investigations, the focus lies in describing variables and the naturally occurring relationships that manifest among them [13].

This study was categorized as quantitative since it relied on numerical data for data analysis and interpretation. It was descriptive since its goal was to evaluate the organizational justice and trust of teachers. This academic endeavor was also correlational because it evaluated the relationship between organizational justice and trust of teachers in the public elementary schools of Panabo City Division.

B. Research Respondents

In the conduct of this endeavor, the invitations were extended to 150 public elementary teachers to participate and contribute to this study. It was asserted that a sample size of at least 50 was suitable for simple regression analysis, and in most research scenarios, a sample size of 100 was considered optimal [14]. Consequently, the inclusion of 150 respondents was deemed sufficient to fulfill the study's objectives.

The study encompassed all elementary teachers from public elementary schools within the Davao del Norte Division. In the inclusion and exclusion criteria, elementary teachers with 2 years teaching experience were chosen in this endeavor since their 2 years stay in the public school helped them assess the organizational justice in their school and how does it affect their trust towards their school. Respondents who felt awkward and uncomfortable in answering the survey questionnaire were free to withdraw from their participation. They were not forced to be part of the study. Their decision to withdraw was respected. Apparently, the respondents’ welfare was given utmost importance in the conduct of the study.

C. Research Instruments

For data collection, a modified survey questionnaire was utilized in this study. The questionnaire was organized into two distinct sets of questions. The initial set centered on aspects related to organizational justice, while the subsequent set delved into the subject of trust among teachers.

The organizational justice questionnaire consisted of 23 items [15]. It had three indicators, namely: distributive justice (1-5), procedural justice (1-8), and interactional justice (1-10). The questionnaire was subjected to a pilot testing having a result of .73 suggesting that the items have relatively *high* internal consistency.

The trust of teachers questionnaire had a total of 27 items [16]. It had three indicators, namely: trust in heads (1-8), trust in colleagues (1-10), and trust in students (1-9). The questionnaire was subjected to a pilot testing having a result of .74 suggesting that the items have relatively *high* internal consistency.

The instruments in this study were contextualized to achieve the purpose of this study. The researcher integrated all the comments and suggestions of the adviser, panel members and expert validators for the refinement of the tools and to achieve construct validity.

3. Results

Table 1
Summary on the extent of organizational justice

No.	Indicators	Mean	Descriptive Equivalent
1	Distributive Justice	3.38	Extensive
2	Procedural Justice	3.45	Extensive
3	Interactional Justice	3.52	Extensive
Overall		3.45	Extensive

Table 1 provides the summary on the extent of organizational justice. It is exhibited that the overall mean of organizational justice is 3.45, which is in an extensive level. This means that organizational justice is oftentimes evident.

Data show that all three (3) indicators are in an extensive level. As arranged chronologically, interactional justice has the highest mean score (3.52). This is followed by procedural justice (3.45), and distributive justice (3.38).

The results indicate that organizational justice is frequently evident among the participants, with all three indicators assessed at an extensive level. Notably, interactional justice stands out with the highest mean score reflecting positive perceptions regarding the fairness and respectfulness of interpersonal interactions within the organization. Following this, procedural justice is also notably high suggesting that employees perceive fairness in the procedures and processes governing organizational decisions. Lastly, distributive justice reflects a generally positive perception of how resources, rewards, and workload are distributed within the organization. The sequential arrangement of these indicators highlights the importance of interpersonal treatment and clear communication, as indicated by interactional and procedural justice, in shaping overall perceptions of organizational justice. These positive findings are crucial for fostering a supportive and fair organizational environment, which can contribute to employee satisfaction, engagement, and overall organizational effectiveness.

With the extensive organizational justice in the school, this reaffirmed the widely held that justice in organizations can pertain to financial and non-financial rewards, such as fair pay and incentives, equal opportunities for promotion as well as performance evaluation procedures [17]. Therefore, the term 'organizational justice' can refer to employees' perception of the extent to which management's decisions and actions are fair. This perception, in turn, can influence employees' attitude towards management [18].

In addition, as an employee receives instructions from management and reacts to such decisions daily, his or her perceptions of those decisions as being fair or unfair, is very important because it can influence the employees' subsequent behavior that can have a huge impact on the success of carrying out the tasks assigned to them [19]. In essence, the perception of fairness is very important in an organization; how employees perceive justice would greatly affect organizational performance and success by creating greater trust between employer and employees, improving teamwork, increasing the level of employees' citizenship behavior and reducing conflict between employer and employees [20].

Table 2
Summary on the extent of trust of teachers

No.	Indicators	Mean	Descriptive Equivalent
1	Trust in School Head	3.46	Extensive
2	Trust in Colleagues	3.61	Extensive
3	Trust in Students	3.55	Extensive
Overall		3.54	Extensive

Table 2 provides the summary on the extent of trust of teachers. It is exhibited that the overall mean of trust of teachers is 3.54, which is in an extensive level. This means that the trust of teachers is oftentimes evident. Data show that all three (3) indicators are in an extensive level. As arranged chronologically, trust in colleagues has the highest mean score (3.61). This is followed by trust in students (3.55), and trust in school head (3.46).

The results suggest that the trust of teachers is frequently evident across various dimensions, with all three indicators assessed at an extensive level. The data reveal a hierarchical pattern, with trust in colleagues having the highest mean score, followed by trust in students, and trust in the school head. These findings underscore the importance of interpersonal relationships within the educational context, where teachers exhibit a high level of trust in their colleagues, students, and school head. The substantial trust in colleagues suggests a robust sense of reliance and confidence in collaborative efforts among educators. Trust in students indicates a positive perception of student behavior, competence, and discipline. Additionally, trust in the school head reflects teachers' confidence in the leadership and decision-making of the school administration. Overall, the extensive level of trust across these indicators is vital for creating a positive and supportive school culture, fostering effective communication, collaboration, and a conducive learning environment.

The favorable findings of this study supported the findings that trust is a constant value, which plays an essential role toward comprehending the human behavior. For healthy organization, leaders' major role is to develop trust environment, so that every individual works for organizational success [21]. Towards this viewpoint, it was argued that the organizations mostly depend on the success of mutual trust which is rooted in fundamental values of honesty and cooperation. It is concluded that a high trust society has more potential to organize work-place much better [22].

Furthermore, when there was a greater perceived level of trust in a school, teachers had a greater sense of efficacy—the belief in their ability to affect actions leading to success [23]. Trust tended to be pervasive: when teachers trusted their principal, they also were more likely to trust staff, parents, and students. The studies also suggested that faculty trust in parents predicted a strong degree of parent-teacher collaboration. These results have been used to develop a self-assessment tool for schools to measure levels of teacher trust in the principal, their colleagues, students, and parents, as well as levels of principal trust in teachers, students, and parents [24].

Presented in Table 3 are the data on the significance of the relationship between organizational justice and trust of teachers. Reflected in the hypothesis, the relationship was

Table 3

Significance of the relationship between the extent of organizational justice and trust of teachers				
Organizational Justice Indicators	Dependent Variable	r-value	p-value	Decision on Ho
Distributive Justice	Trust of Teachers	0.410	0.000	Rejected
Procedural Justice		0.418	0.000	Rejected
Interactional Justice		0.428	0.000	Rejected
Overall		0.419*	0.000	Rejected

*Significant at 0.05 significance level

tested at 0.05 level of significance. The overall r-value of .419 with a p-value of <0.05 signified the rejection of the null hypothesis. It means that there is a significant relationship between organizational justice and trust of teachers. This shows that organizational justice is correlated with the trust of teachers.

Doing a pairwise correlation among the measures of both variables, it can be gleaned that distributive justice, procedural justice, and interactional justice revealed computed r-values of 0.410, 0.418, and 0.428 respectively with p-values which are less than 0.05 in the level of significance. This implies that as distributive justice, procedural justice, and interactional justice increase, the trust of teachers increases.

The overall findings, with an r-value of .419 and a p-value <0.05, indicate a significant relationship between organizational justice and the trust of teachers, leading to the rejection of the null hypothesis. This implies a robust correlation between organizational justice and the trust placed by teachers in their colleagues, students, and school head. The pairwise correlation among the variables further supports this relationship. These results suggest that as distributive justice, procedural justice, and interactional justice within the organization increase, the trust of teachers in various aspects of their professional environment also increases. The study underscores the crucial role of organizational justice in shaping the trust dynamics within an educational institution, highlighting the need for fair distribution, transparent procedures, and respectful interactions to foster a trusting and supportive work environment for teachers.

The result is in consonance to the study conducted revealing that good interpersonal treatment, a facet of interactional justice, boosts employees' trust in an organization [25]. It was also identified a link between employees' positive views of organizational procedures and increased trust [26]. Fair interpersonal treatment leads to greater trust in leadership [27], while transparent information sharing, another element of interactional justice, enhances organizational trust. These findings emphasize the importance of interactional justice in fostering trust among educators and school staff [28].

Similarly, it was stressed that when teachers and staff perceive that they are being treated fairly, especially in interpersonal interactions and information dissemination, it strengthens their trust in school leadership. This highlights the importance for school administrators to ensure transparent communication, fair treatment, and an inclusive decision-making process to cultivate a trusting and collaborative educational environment [29].

Moreover, a strong connection between procedural justice and both interpersonal and interactional justice, suggesting these factors together predict organizational trust [30]. Echoing

this, it was argued that fairness in organizational procedures and policies significantly influences organizational trust [31]. Without fair interactional justice, trust cannot exist. Numerous studies have reiterated the pivotal role of procedural justice in fostering trust [32]. For instance, procedural fairness is key to building trust [33].

Additionally, it was reaffirmed the critical relationship between organizational justice and trust. For schools to foster a strong sense of trust among teachers and staff, there must be evident fairness in both outcomes (distributive justice) and processes (procedural justice). This trust, in turn, can significantly impact educators' commitment to the institution, their satisfaction with their roles, and their overall performance. Thus, school institution aiming to build cohesive and high-performing educational environments should prioritize practices that underscore fairness and justice at all levels [34].

4. Conclusion

Based on the findings of this study, the following conclusions were offered:

The extent of organizational justice of the public elementary schools implies that it is oftentimes evident. In fact, all dimensions are oftentimes evident, namely, distributive justice, procedural justice, and interactional justice.

Meanwhile, the extent of trust of teachers is oftentimes evident. Apparently, all indicators are found to be oftentimes evident specifically on trust in school head, trust in colleagues, and trust in students.

Based on the findings, organizational justice and trust of teachers are related. All domains of organizational justice are linked to the trust of teachers. This leads to the rejection of the null hypothesis.

5. Recommendations

The following suggestions were offered based on the conclusions of the study:

Based on the extensive evidence of organizational justice and trust of teachers within the educational context, it is recommended that DepEd officials prioritize the continuous cultivation and reinforcement of fair practices across all organizational domains. This includes ensuring equitable distribution of resources and rewards (distributive justice), transparent and unbiased procedures in decision-making (procedural justice), and fostering respectful and supportive interpersonal interactions (interactional justice). Acknowledging and addressing any perceived disparities in these areas may significantly contribute to the enhancement of teachers' trust.

Moreover, in light of the extensive organizational justice and trust of teachers observed in the study, it is recommended that

School Heads proactively engage in practices that reinforce a fair and supportive working environment. Prioritizing transparent communication, unbiased decision-making processes, and equitable resource distribution may contribute to the overall perception of justice among teachers. School Heads may foster a culture that values open dialogue, actively addresses concerns, and ensures that teachers feel respected and heard. Investing in professional development programs may enhance leadership skills, particularly those related to interpersonal relationships and fairness, can further strengthen the organizational justice and trust dynamics within the school.

Furthermore, it is recommended that individual teachers may actively participate in and contribute to maintaining this positive environment. Teachers may continue fostering open communication with colleagues, administrators, and students, ensuring that information is shared transparently. Engaging in collaborative initiatives, such as departmental committees, may further strengthen the sense of procedural justice.

Lastly, for future researchers exploring organizational justice and trust among teachers, it is recommended to delve deeper into the specific factors that contribute to the observed extensive levels of trust and justice. Qualitative studies may provide insights into the unique practices, policies, or leadership strategies that foster a positive organizational culture. Investigating the impact of trust and justice on teachers' job satisfaction, performance, and overall well-being could offer a more comprehensive understanding of these dynamics.

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