



## IMPACT OF ORGANIZATIONAL JUSTICE ON EMPLOYEE PERFORMANCE OF ACADEMIC STAFF OF PUBLIC UNIVERSITIES IN NIGERIA

HAFIZU BARDE<sup>1</sup>; ABUBAKAR SADIQ  
ABDULLAHI<sup>2</sup>; & ISMAILA ADEDEJI<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1&2</sup>Department of Business Education, Aminu Saleh College of Education, Azare, Bauchi State. <sup>3</sup>Department of Business Administration, Federal University of Lafia, P.M.B 146, Lafia Nasarawa State

### ABSTRACT

In University education, the performance of academic staff is one of the fundamental factors determining university effectiveness and learning outcomes. They play a pivotal role in creating and nurturing younger ones that are capable of advancing their society. This study examined the impact of organizational justice on employees' performance in University of Maiduguri in Borno State. The study utilized the survey method, through the distribution of questionnaires to a sample of 384 staff of University of Maiduguri. The collected data were

### INTRODUCTION

#### Background of the study

In this era of globalization that is full of challenges, universities are excluded, the challenges faced are very tight competition between universities across the globe. Universities that will compete in global competition must have a strong competitive advantage (Ridwan, Mulyani, & Ali, 2020). To achieve this, the academic staff which are the most valuable asset of the universities must also be competitive (Vomberg, Homburg & Bornemann, 2018; Millar, Homburg & Bornemann, 2019). Therefore, academic staff could be a competitive advantage if their university provides more attention and invest in developing staff' skills at the workplace to improve job performance of employees (Zaharie & Osoian, 2017). Employee performance is what contributes to organization's competitive advantage (Wolor, Supriyati, & Purwana, 2019). It is important in all organizations, but its importance increases in educational settings in general and in universities in particular, because the pivotal role played by the academic staff of the universities in creating and nurturing future generations through education cannot be disputed (Ahmad, & Jameel, 2021). Education is the most important strategy for countries to achieve economic and prosperous life for citizens. The importance of education increases in the university level because the graduates are the future workforce of the country and their level of knowledge has essential role in all the economic and social aspects of a society (Jameel & Ahmad, 2020). Academic staff performance is important for the performance of such universities due to the need to improve the educational level as well as the social and economic activities in the country ((Ahmad, & Jameel, 2021; Jameel & Ahmad, 2020; Adamu, 2019). According to



*analyzed using multiple regression analysis to test the hypotheses. The result reveals that distributive, procedural and interactive justice have positive impact on the performance of academic staff. However, procedural justice is found to be a stronger predictor of performance. The study therefore, concludes that fair treatment in academic setting improve performance of academic staff. The study recommends that the management of the university should openly describe the fair procedures they are using and explain decisions thoroughly in a manner demonstrating dignity and respect using fair and accurate information, management.*

Andani, and Rivalani, (2020), the most important component of a university is its employees, and the success or failure of the university is determined by staff performance. They further noted that academic faculty member of any academic institution is implicitly responsible for the institution's success or failure.

However, Organizational justice play vital role to increase the performance of academic staff that are capable of advancing the country and the society. Some of the past studies (e.g., Kalay,2018; Adeoye, 2019; Andani, & Rivalani, 2020) indicate that poor performance of employee is triggered due to lack of justice in a workplace, as organizational justice is among the major issues which is cared most by the employees (Al Rawashdeh, 2013). Injustice in rewards, compensation and unfair treatment against other employees affect the performance of employee in the organization. People respond positively towards their work associated outcomes if receive impartial treatment from their managers and additionally efforts by management in the area of organizational justice results in low level of discrimination (Cho, 2017).

Adams (1965) theorized that discrepancy exists whenever an employee perceives that the ratio of his job outcomes to job inputs, in comparison with reference to a person's outcomes to inputs, is unequal. In equity theory, inputs include among others, effort skills, education and performance that an academic staff brings to or put into the job (Efanga, Aniedi & Idente, 2015). Outcomes on the other hand are those rewards that result from task accomplishment such as pay, promotion and recognition. Merit pays advocates postulate that our best academic staff are dissatisfied with the uniform salary schedule because academic staff who are identical in experience and education are paid the same salary regardless of variation, that is unequal effort yields equal reward and academic staff whose performances are identical will be compensated differentially if they differ in experience and education (Efanga, et al. 2015). That is equal effort yields unequal reward.

Extant studies (e.g., Suliman & Kathairi 2013; Costa & Costa, 2014; Yousaf, Manouchehri, Branch, & Katoul, 2014; Yeganegi & Tajdani, 2017; Kalay,2018; Afridi, & Baloch, 2018; Haryono, et al 2019; Tatlah, & Shumaila, 2019; Ridwani, et al, 2020; Andani & Rivalani, 2020; Pekel, 2021; Rehman, Arsalan, & Usman, 2021) that linked organizational justice and employee's performance have noted that organizational justice has an influence on employee performance.

The literature so far has extensively researched organizational justice from an industrial and corporate perspective. It has been observed that little effort has been made in the field of justice in the workplace in higher education institutions especially Universities (Afridi, & Baloch, 2018; Yousaf, et al. 2019; Andani & Rivalani, 2020; Rehman, et al. 2021). Thus, there is dearth of literature



on impact of organizational justice on academic staff performance in Nigerian universities. It is based on this backdrop that the current study investigated the impact of organizational justice on employee performance at University of Maiduguri, in the current context.

Though findings of the studies on organisational justice may be important because they apply in some situations, it is unclear whether these findings would hold true in other countries and sectors, as well as for all classes of employees, as to Lok and Crowford (2004) stressed that, culture can influence study findings, resulting in a current knowledge gap. Based on this gap and ideas from research, the current investigation aims to examine the impact of organizational justice on the performance of academic staff at University of Maiduguri.

The findings of this study may be a resource for the university and other universities across the globe in the management and administration of organizational justice. It help the management to establish and implement policies to improve academic staff performance and educational quality by changing their attitudes about their work and improving teaching procedures. Academics are likely to benefit from the outcomes of this study in comprehending various patterns in employee performance. Theoretically, the study by concentrating on educational setting might enhance the body of knowledge on the relationship between organizational justice and employee performance. Based on the background and statement of problem, the following hypothesis is formulated:

Ho<sup>1</sup> There is no significant relationship between distributive justice and employees' performance in University of Maiduguri.

Ho<sup>2</sup> There is no significant relationship between procedural justice and employees' performance in University of Maiduguri.

Ho<sup>3</sup> There is no significant relationship between interactional justice and employees' performance in University of Maiduguri.

## **Literature Review and Theoretical Framework**

### **Concept of Organizational Justice**

According to Muharram-Zadeh (2012), organizational justice refers to an organization's fair and equitable treatment of its employees. Organizations that aim to achieve their objectives must have a clear mission, effective strategies, organizational structures, and efficient job design, as well as competent and committed individuals (Muharram-Zadeh, 2012). Organizational justice can give major benefits to both employers and employees, such as greater trust and commitment (Cropanzano & Rupp, 2008). Organizational justice is a notion that describes an individual's perspective of fairness in organizations, as well as his behavioral responses to these beliefs, and how these perceptions influence

organizational outcomes like organizational commitment and job satisfaction (Noruzy, Shateri, Rezazadeh, & Hatami-Shirkouhi, 2011).

### **Types of Organizational Justice**

Organizational behavior scholars have identified four types of organizational justice: distributive, procedural, and interactional (Colquitt, 2001; Colquitt, Greenberg, & Zapata-Phelan, 2005).



### **Distributive Justice**

Distributive justice indicates fair apportionment of benefits excavated from various activities in order for each organizational member to acquire fair portion based on the amount of inputs, cooperation and capabilities (Pourezat & Ghoulipour, 2008). Outcomes in a work context might take the form of wages, job security, promotion and career opportunities, while inputs would include education, training, experience and effort, as it thus it could be hard to appropriate reward level to a particular degree of input, people make this judgment in a relative term, looking for a contribution-outcome ratio that is similar to that of their peers (Baldwin, 2006).

### **Procedural Justice**

Procedural justice is defined as participants' perceptions about the fairness of the rules and procedures that regulate a process in an organization (Folger & Cropanzano, 1998; Nabatchiet, 2007). It refers to fairness in distribution of wages, participation during decision making as well information distribution within organization (Colquitt & Chertkoff, 2002).

### **Interactional Justice**

It is the extent that the employee feels with the fairness of the transaction obtained when they apply some formalities, the transactional justice is dealing through sensitivity and personal interpretations or social accounting (Diab, 2015). It refers to quality of interindividual behaviours to which a person is exposed before and after decision-making (Poole, 2007). Interactional justice, regards fairness on how subordinates are treated (Robbins & Judge, 2009).

### **Concept of Employee Performance**

Performance is the art to complete the task within the defined boundaries. It is defined as the way to perform job task according to the prescribed job description. (Saeed, 2013). Motowidlo (2003), argued that employee's performance is the behaviour that the organization expects of the employees when they are doing the job. Employees' performance is how the employees understand the task, the ability to do it and how much they exert effort to complete it. (Williams & Anderson, 1991). Singh (2018) asserts that performance of employees depends on the ability; work effort and employment is considered from the output. It was further buttressed that employee performance is the result of the maximum achieved by the employee to do the job based on skills, experience and seriousness as well as time. Simsek and Ozturk (2018) found that there is a strong and positive effect of organizational justice on the organization's success and employee performance.

Employee performance is therefore the result of work include: quality of work, quantity of work, workplace behavior, and nature - a personal nature relating to the work done within the organization in helping the organization achieve the goals set. It can be concluded employee performance consisted of employee performance dimensions based on the employee's performance consisted of six dimensions, namely: the quality of work, quantity of work, initiative, honesty, cooperation, and responsibility (Raharjo & Sulistiasih, 2019)

Academics have made significant progress in explaining and broadening the concept of performance (Campbell, 1990). Employee performance is made up of an employee's actions and



the results that occur when job tasks are completed using certain skills and these outcomes are measured using a variety of measures (Imran & Tanveer, 2015).

### **Organizational justice and Employees' Performance**

According to Wang, Lioa, Xia and Chong (2020) organizational justice are the fair treatment of employees. Justice is divided into three: "distributive justice" focuses on the reasonableness or fairness of an organization evaluate the work of the payment and promotions, "procedural justice" stressed the reasonableness or fairness of the decision process based on the work accomplished, and "interactional justice" describes the concerns of interpersonal behavior provided by the organization for the implementation of the circular. Organizational justice is therefore been regarded as valuable for both individual employee and organization effectiveness (Pan, Chen, Hao & Bi, 2018). It plays an extensive role in assisting the organization to gain a competitive advantage over competitors; it is possible with the role of a fair and balanced relationship between employers and employees (Randeree, 2008; Pan, et al 2018).

The term organizational justice is derived from equity theory and expectancy theory. Employees are motivated and satisfied whenever they feel that their inputs are being fairly rewarded means that there is a fair balance between input and output. Expectancy theory process exchange of relationship between performance and outcomes and great effort increase the motivation. Previous studies have found that organizational justice is important in influencing employee's job out-comes (Suliman & Kathairi, 2013; Al Rawashdeh, 2013; Abbasi, Bradari, Sheghariji, & Shehreki, 2020). Cropanzano et al. (2007) and Greenberg (1990) posited that injustice in the organization split up the bonds of a group of employees and affect their performance. They further stated that organizational justice promotes involvement and collectivism and makes a sense in employees to work in one team. The organizational justice has a negative link to workplace sabotage and employees' larceny (Greenberg 1993; Ambrose, Seabright & Schminke, 2002; Suliman and Kathairi, 2013), Prior literature has proved that unfair treatment in the organization discourages committed employees (Brockner, Tyler, Cooper, & Schneider 1992; Cropanzano et al., 2007). Furthermore, Cropanzano et al. (2007) have also proved a positive association between organizational justice and job performance, employees' satisfaction, organizational citizenship behavior, and employees' commitment.

Several studies have been conducted on the relationship between organizational justice and employee performance, and it has been proved that when employees are overpaid, the performance of employees will start to increase, and when they are underpaid the performance of employees will start decrease (Masterson et al., 2000; Adams & Freedman, 1976; Greenberg, 1982; Cropanzano & Prehar, 1999). Fields, Pang, and Chiu (2000), Cohen-Charash and Spector (2001) and Zeb et al. (2019) studied three types of organizational justice; distributive justice, Procedural justice, and interactional justice respectively. Distributive justice is related to equity theory and it explained that employees compare their performance with reward if there is any difference occurs in the results, they feel injustice (Homans, 1961). The substantial role of distributive justice brings satisfaction that all employees' received incentives and rewards base on their services concerning employee's needs. Podder and Ferdousy (2014), Saeed et al. (2017), UYSAL and Metin (2018), Nandedkar and Brown (2018), Muhammad et al. (2018) found that distributive justice has positively enhanced job performance.





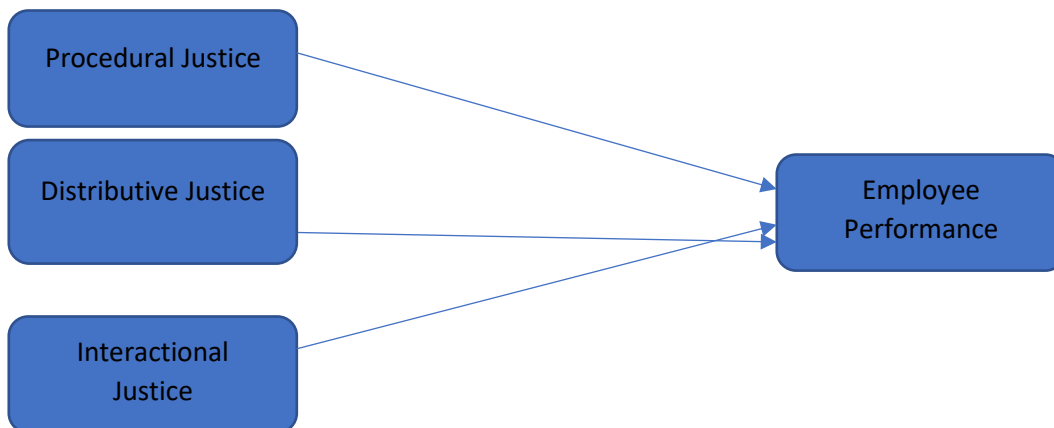
The above-mentioned studies concluded that when employees are satisfied from distributive justice, performance of the employees will be increased. Procedural justice is considered at the path of social exchange, and directly influences the individuals' perception of the excellence of their strong association with the organization environment (Masterson et al., 2000). The meta-analysis study of Cohen-Charash and Spector (2001) found that Procedural justice was the most cultivated factor of job performance as compared to distributive justice. Burton et al. (2008) illustrated that Procedural justice concern with equality or fair-ness of the procedure which is helpful to get results from employees (Lam Schaubroeck & Aryee 2002). Interactional justice is related to the fairness of treatments during the social exchange process (Masterson et al., 2000). Skarlicki and Folger (1997) and Masterson et al. (2000) argued that Interactional justice is related to dignity, politeness, respect and honest relationships among employees in the organization.

### **Underpinning Theory**

#### **Equity theory**

Primarily, the concept of this theory is that people will feel satisfied or dissatisfied based on whether they perceive equity in a situation. This theory contains four main components, according to Adam's notion of justice input, outcome, comparison person, and equity-inequity. According to this theory, employees' satisfaction or dissatisfaction is determined by comparing their input-output with the input-output of other employees. The employee will be satisfied if he believes the comparison is fair.

#### **Conceptual Framework**



### **Research methodology**

#### **Research Design**

This study is a survey research study with a quantitative design. A systematic questionnaire was used to obtain data from participants. A total of 320 samples were drawn from the population of 1930 using Krejcie and Morgan's (1970) formula. The study employed simple random sampling method was used. The reason for this option is that the findings may be generalized, it saves time, and it is reasonably inexpensive. Using the aforesaid technique, 320 academic staff was picked



from the university. However, the study increased the sample size by 20%, as advised by Israel (2013), bringing the total sample size to 384. Data was collected from academic staff university of Maiduguri. 384 questionnaires were administered among academic staff. A total of 309 out of 384 survey questionnaires were returned and found valid for further analysis.

Instruments from previous studies were modified to measure the study's constructs. The measure utilized in this study for academic staff performance was adapted from Koopman's (2014) individual performance scale. It consists of five items, each of which is rated on a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1- strongly disagree to 5-strongly agree. The measure for all three dimensions of organizational justice was adopted from the work of Colquitt et al., (2001) and tested on 5-likert scale ranging from 1- to a very small extent to 5- to a very large extent. Procedural justice measure contained 7 items reflecting respondent's perception of fairness regarding the procedures and decisions adopted to determine their outcomes. Interpersonal justice measure contained 4 items which ask respondents about their perceptions of fairness in interpersonal treatment received by the organization while communicating procedures and decisions. Distributive justice consisted of 5 items which reflected about respondent's perceptions of fairness in reward allocation.

#### **Data Analysis**

Reliability of the instrument was verified through commonly used technique of Cronbach's Alpha value. Cronbach's Alpha is considered as a better technique to measure reliability of the scale (Green et al., 1988; Hair, Sarstedt, Hopkins, & Kuppelwieser, 2014). Descriptive analysis was carried out to determine the central tendencies of all the variables used in this study. Pearson correlation coefficient was applied to carry out bivariate analysis which provided the strength of relationship between two variables. Furthermore, multiple regression analysis provided the amount of variance in dependent variable caused by a particular set of independent variables and it is denoted by  $R^2$  known as coefficient of determination. The regression coefficient value (b) of each independent variable determined its effect on dependent variable.

#### **RESULTS**

##### **Descriptive, Correlation, and Regression Analysis**

Descriptive analyses usually indicate the central tendencies in calculated responses against variables. Mean values for interpersonal justice (3.0964) and distributive justice (3.5184) exhibited that the average responses lied between "to a small extent" and "to a large extent" except interpersonal justice (3.1327) which ranged from "to some extent" to "to a large extent". Descriptive values for employee performance (2.9893) were measured on 5-point Likert scale and ranged between disagree and somewhat agree with a considerable deviation. Descriptive statistics revealed that academic staff in Maiduguri are moderately concerned about the procedures and decisions made concerning their outcomes, rewards, and interpersonal treatment.

Correlation statistics as shown in table-4.1 below determined the association between two variables. The correlation values for procedural justice ( $r=0.61$ ), interpersonal justice (0.60), and distributive justice ( $r=0.63$ ) are positively correlated with employees' performance which show that all three of the organizational justice dimensions are significantly associated with employees' performance.



**Table 4.1**

Variables	Mean	Std.	Procedural	Interpersonal	Distributive
<b>Procedural</b>	3.1327	.25584	(0.72)		
<b>Interpersonal</b>	3.0964	.41703	.70**	(0.74)	
<b>Distributive</b>	3.5184	.58026	.72**	.77**	(0.77)
<b>Performance</b>	2.98 93	.59564	.61**	.60**	.63**
<b>Mean, Standard Deviation, Pearson Correlation and Reliability Statistics</b>					

### The regression values

The regression values as contained in table 4.2 below show the moderately strong relationship between all dimensions of organizational justice and employee performance. The value of R<sup>2</sup> (0.463) shows that 46% variation in employee performance is due to explanatory variables (procedural, distributive, and interpersonal justice) which could explain that all three dimensions of organizational justice together are significant but moderate predictors of employee's performance. The model used for this study was found fit as determined by the F value (87.704) and its significance indicated by P value (0.000).

**Table 4.2 Model Summary**

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R	Std. Error of the	F Value	Sig.
<b>1</b>	.681	.463	.458	.35352	87.704	<b>0.000</b>
<b>Predictors: (Constant), Distributive Justice, Procedural Justice, Interpersonal Justice</b>						

### Multiple Regression

The coefficient or beta values contained in table 4.3 below indicated that the number of variations in employees' performance caused by procedural justice (37%) showed relatively more significant than interpersonal justice (24%) and distributive justice (29%). This significance is also justified in t statistics and p values.

It can be fairly assumed based on these statistics that faculty members or academicians in University of Maiduguri are more concerned with process of managerial decision making when resources and outcomes are being determined for them. Managers and supervisors in universities, when taking decision regarding faculty's jobs and outcomes, must consider their concerns and should encourage participations in goals setting for them.

**Table 4.3**

Model	Unstandardized		Standardized	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	.553	.184		3.004	<b>.003</b>
Procedural Justice	.370	.093	.259	4.000	<b>.000</b>
Interpersonal Justice	.242	.084	.199	2.853	<b>.005</b>
<b>Distributive Justice</b>	<b>.297</b>	<b>.075</b>	<b>.291</b>	<b>4.043</b>	<b>.000</b>





### **Discussions of findings**

The objective of this study was to investigate the relationship between organizational justice dimensions (procedural justice, interpersonal justice, and distributive justice) and employee performance among academic staff in University Maiduguri. The results of this study indicated that all the justice dimensions are positively related to employees' performance endorsing the previous studies (Efanga, et al., 2015; Mehmood, Norulkamar & Ahmad, 2016; Cho, 2017; Afridi, & Baloch, 2018; Ahmad & Jameel, 2021).

Procedural justice is significantly contributing towards the overall performance of the academic staff in the university. The findings of this study supported the notion that procedural justice is positively related to teacher's performance and such affect is produced by fairness of process and procedures when determining outcomes of employees (Cropanzano et al., 2001; Efanga, et al., 2015; Mahmood, et al., 2016; Cho, 2017;). Although the task and contextual performance were not differentiated in this study rather to consider performance as variable generally perceived by the employees. However it can further extend support to the notion of justice and both task and contextual performance (Campbell, 1990; Arye et al., 2004). Meta-analysis (Colquitt et al., 2001) has also reported that procedural justice is a stronger predictor of performance than distributive and interpersonal aspects of justice. Based on the findings of this study, it can be fairly stated that, in general, academicians in higher education sector are strongly inclined to consider fairness in procedures and decisions involved to determine their outcomes and performance. Furthermore, the fairness also encompasses the role of other stakeholders such as supervisors and managers being organizational representatives.

Interpersonal justice is also found positively related to performance of the academic staff in universities. Positive and fair interpersonal treatment can create quality in relationships and behaviors. Since the interpersonal justice advocates the fairness in communication and information involved in an interpersonal work relationship, thus the element of fairness is expected to regulate behaviors, mutual relationship and treatment of academicians at workplace. These behaviors ultimately lead to greater performance in the form of employees output (Cohan-Charash & Spector, 2001; Efanga, et al., 2015; Mahmood, et al., 2016;). Persistence in fairness of treatment by managers and supervisors for managing interactivity will determine the sustainability, quality, and future direction of interpersonal relationship that will eventually be reflected in employees' outcomes (Rupp and Cropanzano, 2002). Interpersonal justice provides necessary input for establishing the leader-member exchange in terms of interpersonal relationships when fairness in manager's behaviors is perceived positively by the employees (Efanga, et al., 2015; Mahmood, et al., 2016; Cho, 2017).

Thus, the role of fair interpersonal communication between university management and academicians can bring a positive change in behaviors which could eventually be translated into better performance.

Distributive justice is defined as perceived fairness in allocating resources and distributing rewards among employees. The present study concluded that distributive justice can play an important role to predict performance and positively related to the academicians' outcomes in Nigeria universities. The findings of this study provided support for past studies with similar empirical investigations. For example, Efanga, et al., (2015) and Mahmood, et al., (2016) explained that underpaid employees will reduce their input which will result in decreased output. This may create



a situation where employees develop immediate reactions and perceptions. Equity theory (Adams, 1965) also explains the comparative nature of individuals judging their rewards against others which makes it difficult to satisfy everyone. However distributive justice as compared to procedural and interpersonal justice, showed a moderate predictor of performance. This has reflected those outcomes of academicians in University of Maiduguri, are more affected by procedural fairness and quality of interpersonal treatment rather in rewards allocated.

### **Recommendation**

Based on the findings of the study recommendations were made.

- i. Academic managers at university should pay more attention to the fair distribution of resources, payment, promotion and training to increase job performance
- ii. They should openly describe the fair procedures they are using and explain decisions thoroughly in a manner demonstrating dignity and respect using unbiased and accurate information.

### **Limitations and Recommendations for Future Studies**

The present study is limited in scope as the study concentrates on public university only and the respondents represented small population of a region in Nigeria. Therefore, future studies may develop a larger sample size from different geographic regions and use private university as its domain. The study It is also suggested that longitudinal studies should be conducted in near future to reflect whether changes over time alter the perceptions of academicians regarding fairness. Future studies may also include mediation or moderation role of different possible variable such as stress, organizational and supervisory support, work climate, and others as an attempt to develop a broader understanding of the concept particularly in the academic settings.

### **Conclusion**

This study investigated the three dimensions of organizational justice on employee performance and found all three of the justice dimensions such as procedural, interpersonal, and distributive, are significantly related to employees' performance. However, procedural justice is found to be a stronger predictor of employee's performance. The findings of this study provide several insights to the administrators and managers of the universities in designing policies and procedures that will determine outcomes of the academic staff.

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