A study of relationship between the organizational justice and organizational citizenship behavior among nurses in selected hospitals of Isfahan University of Medical Sciences

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ABSTRACT

Context: Numerous researches have been carried out to indicate that organizational justice (OJ) is a variable that anticipates many other variables in organizations, especially in hospitals. Organizational behavior (OCB) is one of the most important variables.
Aims: We aimed to study the relationship between OJ and OCB of nurses in selected hospitals in Isfahan.
Materials and Methods: This was a descriptive correlational study. The research was conducted among nurses of selected hospitals in Isfahan.
Statistical Analysis Used: Data were gathered using two questionnaires of OJ, and OCB. The t-test, chi-square, and Pearson correlation test were used to analyze the data through SPSS version 13.
Results: In general, the mean score (SD) of OJ among nurses was 41.2 (16.2) and the mean score of OCB was 57.7 (18). Finally, there was no significant relationship between OJ, civil virtue, and sportsmanship. There was a significant relationship between OJ, OCB, courtesy, and conscientiousness.
Conclusion: As the scores of OCB and OJ among nurses were average in selected hospitals, the managers of the hospitals should improve the perception of justice among nurses. Today, organizations need efficient and expert workers to achieve their goals, and to grow and improve in all aspects. In fact, the efficiency and effectiveness of organizations depend on the staffs, especially in hospitals.

Key words: Behavior, hospitals, Iran, nurses

INTRODUCTION

Many practicing managers and organization leaders believe that investment on subordinate morale leads to better employee work performance. One of the most important challenges the organizations face is management and justice. A topic addressed much in management research during the past decade is organizational justice (OJ). OJ can be interpreted as a virtue allowing for mutual consideration and involving both relationships with others and outcomes that affect others'

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physical, psychological, and social welfare.[1]

Researches show OJ can predict many other factors in an organization. For example, it has a relationship with job output and job satisfaction. One of the most important issues which have been surveyed in this study is organizational behavior (OCB).

The development of the equality theory led to "justice in organization" in the 1970s, which means the staffs' perception of fare communications at work. As it is said before, the idea resulted in four kinds of justice.[2] Researches during these years have revealed the important and effective role of OJ in job consequences like job commitment, job satisfaction, OCB, and job quitting.[3] OJ deals with the fare behavior with people in organizations, and in fact, it is as a part of social justice.[4] Other subjects which have been studied in the field of OJ are the types of justice in organizations, their procedural issues, and their consequences. A new chapter started in experimental studies about OJ that resulted in three kinds of justice.[5]

Based on Beugre's study, four kinds of justice have been recognized in the work environments: Distributive justice, procedural justice, interactional justice, and systematic justice.[6]

Distributive justice

Distributive justice involves the receivers' views on how their outcome compares to a referent's outcome, the outcome of other employees.[7] A form of social exchange named distributive justice is used to evaluate the degree of justice in the received rewards.[8] If the employees feel the outputs like their salary and premium do not reflect their skills, knowledge, and values, they pay less attention to distributive justice in organizations.[9,10]

Procedural justice

During the 1970s, researchers began an empirical examination of procedural justice in organizations.

Justice, from this perspective, is defined in terms of fair procedures.[11,12] Organ refers to this type of justice as the way in which an organization applies the relevant criteria to arrive at a decision.[10]

Interactional justice

Folger and Cropanzano refer to the quality of the interpersonal treatment received by an individual, both before and after decisions.[13]

Systematic justice

Muchinsky explains this concept: structural means includes making sure the decisions made (a) are consistent over people and time, (b) are based on accurate information, (c) represent the concerns of all parties, and (d) are compatible with prevailing moral and ethical standards.[14] OCB has a big portion in organizational process and changing the traditional job environment to a modern and dynamic one.[15]

OCB is a collection of voluntary behaviors which are not the main part of staffs' duty, although they do, and has positive effects in roles of organization improvement.[16,17]

Organ also believes OCB is an individual and voluntary behavior that has not been designed and predicted in official bonus systems of organizations, but has a big role in organizational progress. This definition emphasizes on three main parts: firstly, it must be voluntary, not a predetermined duty and not a part of staff's formal duty; secondly, its useful consequences have an organizational aspect; and thirdly, it has a multiple nature.[18]

Organ considers five parts for OCB:
- Altruism: This dimension is associated with behaviors that either directly or indirectly help another worker with a present work-related problem.[7]
- Courtesy: It is closely related to altruism, but is distinctly different from courtesy.[7]
- Conscientiousness: It includes behaviors such as being punctual; maintaining a better-than-average attendance record (i.e. coming to work when you're sick or during severe weather conditions); and following an organization's rules, regulations, and procedures.[7]
- Sportsmanship: Organ described it as tolerating less-than-desirable situations without complaining.[19] This dimension might just be a supervisor's most favorite: a lack of petty grievances.
- Civic virtue: Organ defined this dimension as the "responsible participation in the political life of the organization." An example of such behaviors is staying up-to-date with important issues of the organization.[19] A study conducted by Thompson showed that the three dimensions of justice are positively and significantly related to customers' satisfaction.[20] Mery Lemons indicates a positive relationship between procedural justice and organizational commitment.[21] Erturk shows that trust in supervisor fully mediates the relationship between OJ and OCB.[22]

A study carried out by Wat showed that analyses provide strong support for the direct effects of trust in the supervisor and psychological empowerment on all dimensions of OCBs.[23]

Hawarth showed that procedural justice interacts with both perceived system knowledge and beliefs about OCB to affect the frequency of OCB.[24] Alotaibi by hierarchical regression analysis reveals that only procedural and distributive justice accounts for unique variances in Kuwaiti workers' OCB.[25] Kidder showed the positive relationship between gender and reports of OCB.[26]

Naamy showed that there is a positive correlation between OJ and different areas of civil behavior in a study among industrial workers.[27,28]

Yilmaz found that organizational citizenship perception did not vary according to gender, field of study, and seniority, whereas their OJ perception varied according to seniority, but not gender and field of study. There was a moderate positive relationship between the teacher organizational citizenship and OJ perception.[29]

The main objective of this research is to determine relationship OCB and its association with OJ among nurses in selective hospitals of Medical University of Medical sciences in Isfahan.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

This is a descriptive correlational survey. The population studied was the nurses working in educational hospitals affiliated to Isfahan University of Medical Sciences. Questionnaires were randomly given to 147 nurses who were currently employed.

Data were collected through two questionnaires including Beugre (1996) OJ scale, with four dimensions (distributive, procedural, international, and systemic justice), and the OCB questionnaire made based on Organ (1989) dimensions of citizenship behavior (conscientiousness, altruism, courtesy, sportsmanship, civic virtue).

The questionnaires were given to 10 professors in the fields of nursing and management for validity.

Reliability was calculated via Cronbach's alpha ($r = 0.85$) using 30 questionnaires. Data were analyzed by SPSS version 13 through analysis of variance (ANOVA), *t*-test, and chi-square test. This study was conducted during 2008 and in five educational hospitals (Alzahra, Noor, Kashani, Feiz, and Isabne Maryam).

RESULTS

Preliminary analysis of the data revealed that the mean score of OJ in nurses of selected hospitals was 41.2 (16.4). Distributive justice had the highest score of 56.1,[12] while interactional justice had the lowest score of 28.3 (11.3). The mean number of OCB in the above-mentioned selected hospitals was 57.7.[18] Courtesy had the lowest score while civic virtue had the highest. Men attained greater score in civic virtue compared to women, but women scored more in conscientiousness.

The highest OCB was found in subjects aged over 41–50 years, and the lowest was found in 20–30-year-old subjects. Nurses who had more job experience (over 25 years) had got higher scores in civic behavior. The nurses who were post graduated (Master degree and PhD) had higher scores in OCB.

Based on Table 1, there was no significant relationship between OJ, civil virtue, and sportsmanship. There was a significant relationship between OJ, OCB, courtesy, and conscientiousness. Also, there was a significant relationship between distributive justice, procedural justice, and systematic justice, and OCB.

Based on the findings of Table 2 and according to *t*-test, there was a significant relationship between OJ and sex ($t = 4.50$, $P = 0.02$) and between OJ and age ($F = 6.12$, $P = 0.05$). There was also a significant association with job experience ($F = 3.92$, $P = 0.00$) and level of education ($F = 2.72$, $P = 0.00$) based on ANOVA test. But there was no significant association between OJ and type of employment ($F = 1.63$, $P = 0.18$). According to *t*-test, there was a significant relationship between OCB and sex ($t = 3.50$, $P = 0.04$), between OCB and age ($F = 4.12$, $P = 0.05$) and level of education ($F = 2.72$, $P = 0.00$). Also, there was no significant association between job experience ($F = 2.92$, $P = 0.07$) and type of employment ($F = 1.43$, $P = 0.17$) based on ANOVA test [Table 2].

Table 1: Relationship between OJ and OCB

Variable	Distributive justice	Procedural justice	Interactional justice	Systematic justice	Organizational justice
Organizational citizenship behavior	$r = 0.182$ $P = 0.00$	$r = 0.341$ $P = 0.00$	$r = 0.228$ $P = 0.053$	$r = 0.404$ $P = 0.00$	$r = 0.208$ $P = 0.0$
Conscientiousness	$r = 0.193$ $P = 0.001$	$r = 0.138$ $P = 0.006$	$r = 0.49$ $P = 0.001$	$r = 0.142$ $P = 0.00$	$r = 0.192$ $P = 0.003$
Courtesy	$r = 0.172$ $P = 0.00$	$r = 0.213$ $P = 0.004$	$r = 0.303$ $P = 0.00$	$r = 0.56$ $P = 0.003$	$r = 0.184$ $P = 0.001$
Altruism	$r = 0.242$ $P = 0.00$	$r = 0.275$ $P = 0.00$	$r = 0.133$ $P = 0.032$	$r = 0.148$ $P = 0.008$	$r = 0.143$ $P = 0.00$
Sportsmanship	$r = 0.172$ $P = 0.332$	$r = 0.158$ $P = 0.058$	$r = 0.149$ $P = 0.005$	$r = 0.283$ $P = 0.00$	$r = 0.148$ $P = 0.17$
Civic virtue	$r = 0.337$ $P = 0.00$	$r = 0.359$ $P = 0.00$	$r = 0.67$ $P = 0.250$	$r = 0.169$ $P = 0.22$	$r = 0.302$ $P = 0.166$

P < 0.05 was considered as significant

Table 2: Relationship between OJ and OCB based on demographic factors in nurses

Variable	Sex		Age		Job experience		Level of education		Type of employment	
	t	*P*	*F*	*P*	*F*	*P*	*F*	*P*	*F*	*P*
Organizational justice	4/50	0.020	6/12	0.05	3/92	0.00	2/72	0.00	1/63	0.18
Organizational citizenship behavior	3/40	0.040	4/12	0.053	2/92	0.074	1/82	0.00	1/43	0.177

P < 0.05 was considered as significant

Table 3: The comparison of mean scores of ruling OCB

	Mean	Standard deviation	t	P
Conscientiousness	3/62	4/31	9/6	000/0
Courtesy	6/54	5/27	03/2	134/.
Altruism	61	2/22	0/6	000/0
Sportsmanship	6/47	1/19	5/1	44/0
Civic virtue	8/62	9/2	7	000/0

P < 0.05 was considered as significant

As presented in Table 3, ruling of conscientiousness, altruism, and civic virtue was more than average [Table 3].

DISSCUSSION

The results of this study shed light on important issues for both organizations and researchers. Justice has been introduced as a basic need for human during the different areas. Regarding the multilateral role of organizations in the society, the role of justice has been clarified more than ever nowadays so that it is one of the most important issues today's organizations have started to research on.

Today, organizations need efficient and expert workers to achieve their goals to grow and improve in all aspects. In fact, the efficiency and effectiveness of organizations depend on their staffs, especially in hospitals.

The important duty of health systems is to create potentials to increase the quality of work for the staffs and to plan and manage them. Concerning the justice among employees, it is also essential to pay attention to civic organizational behavior consisting of respect, altruism, etc.

Distributive justice had the highest score of 56.1,[12] while interactional justice had the lowest score of 28.3 (11.3).

As indicated before, interactional justice is the way through which justice is transferred to subordinates by supervisors. In fact, this type of justice is associated with cognitive, emotional, and behavioral reactions to the managers. So, the employees believe they are not behaved justly and the managers do not decide about their job with honesty.[30]

A study conducted by Wat showed that the components of procedural and distributive justice had positively affected OCB.[23] The present study showed similar results. However, four branches of the justice dimensions were investigated in the present study. On the other hand, the systemic and interactive justice had an association with behavior civic organization. Erturk[22] obtained similar results in a research in Turkey.

Distributive, procedural, and interactional justice have been considered in most previous researches,[18,20,27,28]

while the fourth dimension, systematic justice, has not been investigated before, contrary to the present study in which all dimensions were studied. Naamy found a strong positive relationship between OJ and different components of OCB in an industrial company.[27,28] We obtained similar results in the present study. In the present study, there was no relationship found between OJ and the type of employment, and the job experience. The results of Yılmaz[29] differed from those of the present study. Kidder showed a positive relationship between gender and reports of OCB,[26] something consistent with the results of the present study.

Generally, OCB and OJ, as new concepts of the organizational management, are very essential for administrative planning and play a more important role especially in health organizations which need some new procedures and strategies. We hope further researches in this area can assist managers and decision makers in planning the best achievable tasks.

CONCLUSION

Today, organizations need efficient and expert workers to achieve their goals to grow and improve in all aspects. In fact, the efficiency and effectiveness of organizations depend on their staffs, especially in hospitals.

Creation of potentials to increase the quality of work for nurses and to plan and manage them is very important and is the duty of health systems. It is essential to pay attention to the justice among employees and the civic organizational behavior consisting of respect, altruism, etc.

Finally, the role of nurse managers and administrators, especially in hospitals, is very important in increasing the nurses' commitment[31] and to improve their organizational citizenship behaviors. Managers should motivate nurses more than ever, and there should be a more flexible atmosphere at hospitals. Informal groups may play important functions in the development of voluntary behaviors such as organizational citizenship. In this sense, informal groups should be developed and encouraged in hospitals and among nurses. It is essential that nurses be in conflict with justice in their workplace. Therefore, managers in hospitals should be fairer in distribution of

work, tasks, rewards, and promotions. Nurses should be involved in decisions. Finally, organizational justice results in satisfaction in both patients and the nurses, and affects on the organizational behavior and provision of health care services in a more efficient way.

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