

Perceived Justice and Academic Performance of Students of Federal Polytechnic of Oil and Gas Bonny, Rivers State

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Abstract: *This study was carried out to investigate the relationship between perceived justice and students' academic performance. Perceived justice as the independent variable was approached through its dimensions such as distributive justice, procedural justice, and interactional justice, while the dependent variable being students' academic performance was treated as such using a sample size of 137 students of Federal Polytechnic of Oil and Gas, Bonny, Rivers State. Structured questionnaire was used to collect data and analysed with the aid of statistical package for social sciences version 21. The hypotheses were tested using Spearman Rank Order Correlation. The result of the various analysis showed that there is a positive relationship between all dimensions of the independent variables and the dependent variable. That is, there is a positive and significant relationship between distributive justice and students' academic performance; a positive and significant relationship between procedural justice and students' academic performance; and a positive and significant relationship between interactional justice and students' academic performance. The study further recommended that Federal Polytechnic of Oil and Gas, Bonny, should adopt the dimensions of perceived justice used in this study in order to consistently and efficiently improve student's academic performance; offer more attractive communication strategies in order to increase student's academic performance; and must be much concern about perceived fairness of outcomes, procedures, interpersonal treatment and information disseminations as it impact on student's academic performance.*

Key words: *Perceived justice, distributive justice, procedural justice, interactional justice, academic performance.*

Introduction

In recent time, there have been increased interest among researchers on perceived justice and its consequence both on teachers and students alike. However, only few studies exist that have partly considered perceived justice. Perceived justice and students' academic performance. Justice as a concept has attracted many different views from practitioners and researchers, thereby providing numerous insight. For instance, justice is the first virtue of social institutions,

as truth is of systems of thought” (Rawls, 1971) and is the key to understanding corporate behavior (Hussain et. al., 2021). As noted by Cremer (2005) corporate justice is a fundamental principle in every institution's lives, while Cropanzano and Greenberg (1997), promulgated that organisational justice is the “perceptions of fairness and the evaluations regarding the appropriateness of workplace outcomes or process” (as cited in Chory-Assad & Paulsel, 2004b). According to Paulsel et al 2005, justice is the relation between teacher and student with distributive, operational and relational dimensions. In this context however, justice can be viewed as the appropriateness of judgment and fairness in its pronouncement. It therefore implies that while discharging judgment (process) is important, the pronouncement of the judgment (verdict) is even more important.

Despite how the process of justice seems fair, if the pronouncement is provocative, the supposed justice can be considered as injustice and could trigger negative atmosphere which will equally affect the totality of activities. As submitted by Rousseau (1995), fair procedures should reduce adverse reactions to perceived violations, while Caetano & Vala, (1999) stated that, when individuals feel they are exposed to injustice, absenteeism and turnover increase. Following the wide coverage of justice and its application thereof to every facets that involves human, including organisations and even the classroom with students, undermining it or practicing any form of unfairness will affect those involved, which will equally have resultant effect on the entire system. Hence, justice as it concerns students, refers to the extent of fairness administered to students and the true position of such fairness. In another view by Chory-Assad and Paulsel (2004b), classroom justice refers to the “perceptions of fairness and the evaluations regarding outcomes or processes that take place in an instructional context”.

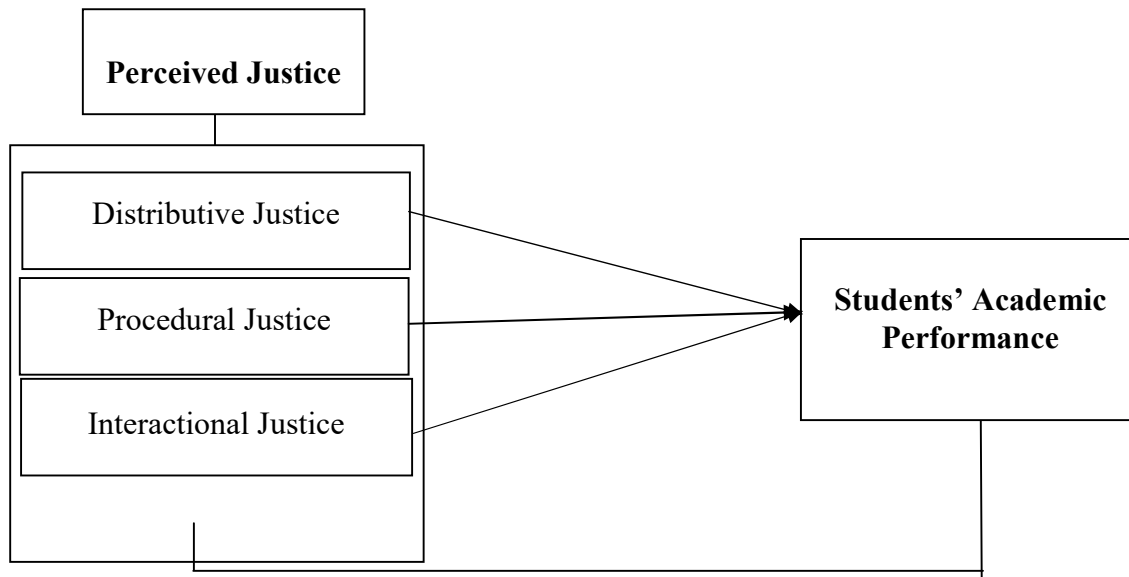
Whether justice in the organisation or corporate justice or classroom justice, all refer to the fairness melted to people which will either motivate the people to be more committed or trigger negative notions, which will definitely affect the people and consequently, the image of the institution concerned. As argued by Cropanzano et al. (2001), people care for justice, and it satisfies a passion expressed in these intentions, while Jameel et al., (2020) concluded that organisational justice can help to alleviate work related stress. Consequently, it is clearer that justice is paramount and can pave way for many positive things. As asserted, high levels of the perceptions of how the organisation values employee’s contributions and provides for their well-being create feelings of obligation within employees, who will work with their ‘heart’, to improve their performance such that organisational goals are met (Aggarwal & Bhargava, 2010; Aqeel and Ahmed, 2014), this the employees achieve through higher performance (Arshadi & Hayavi, 2013).

Purpose of the Study

This study was carried out to investigate the effect of perceived justice on the academic performance of students with respect to Federal Polytechnic of Oil and Gas, Bonny, Rivers State. While there are studies that have considered the subject matter, no study has been carried out in the Federal Polytechnic of Oil and Gas, Bonny, Rivers State. Though it is a relatively new institution established in 2014 by the Federal Government of Nigeria, but commenced full academic activities in the 2017/2018 academic session. The institution and consequently, her students, must have had their fair share of the happenings in higher institutions and how justice

was administered, especially in the classroom, hence this study. To a large extent, justice in the classroom is made by the teachers (lecturers) who on their own part, also expect from the concerned authorities to also administer justice. In the words of Ololube (2006), teachers also ask for justice in their working environment that motivates them to do their best, teach and systematically lead their students. As noted by Sarita and Tomer (2004), highly qualified educators perform well when tested and provided with opportunities to improve their skills. It can therefore be inferred that part of the things lecturers/teachers need is justice and part of the improvement they need is the skill to administer justice.

Conceptual Framework



Source: *Adopted from Leventhal, (1980) and the Researchers (2023).*

Fig. 1: *Conceptual framework of perceived justice and academic performance of students.*

The diagram above is the conceptual framework of the current study, depicting the relationship between perceived justice and students' academic performance. As shown in the diagram, the independent variable also known as the predictor variable is perceived justice with its dimensions as distributive justice, procedural justice and interactional justice, while the dependent variable also known as criterion variable is students' academic performance.

Objectives of the Study

The specific objectives of this study are to;

- i. Examine the relationship between distributive justice and students' academic performance.
- ii. Determine the relationship between procedural justice and students' academic performance.
- iii. Ascertain the relationship between interactional justice and students' academic performance.

Hypothesis

In this study, the hypotheses are presented in the null form, the study hypotheses are as follows

- Ho₁:** There is no significant relationship between distributive justice and students' academic performance.
- Ho₂:** There is no significant relationship between procedural justice and students' academic performance.
- Ho₃:** There is no significant relationship between interactional justice and students' academic performance.

Literature Review

Theoretical framework

Most research subjects are flavoured with theories. In this study the equity theory of justice shall be employed. Equity theory is defined as the evaluations of individuals' contributions/inputs in comparison to benefits/outputs that they receive in their relationships (Adams, 1965). As asserted by Uludağ (2012), equity rule is the benchmark for grade apportioning, and existence of equity in teacher-student relationship (Adams, 1965). Therefore, the importance of equity is stressed. This is because, treating everyone the same way in the same situation will not create any form of tension in anyone, as long as the treatment is justified and in accordance to established norms.

Concept of Perceived Justice

The concept of perceived justice" was coined in 1987 by Greenberg, defining it as the employees' perception of what they consider fair in the organisation (Navarro-Abal et al. 2018). The analysis of justice is vital on the job because it provides a meaningful feeling of striving for justice that helps improve organisational efficiency (Kamil, et al., 2014). The practice of justice in an organisation will undoubtedly promote equity, which jointly, facilitate the attainment of set goals. There have been different theories of justice, such as Adams' Equity theory (1965), Blau's Social Exchange theory about expectations (1964), Thibaut and Walker's Procedural Fairness in Dispute Resolution theory (1975), the Multiple Distribution rules by Leventahal (1976) amongst others. However, Colquitt and Zipay (2015) integrated the various theories on justice by developing a model of organisational justice consisting on four dimensions: distributive justice, procedural justice, interpersonal justice, and informational justice, while Leventhal, (1980) grouped organisational justice into two: distributive justice (DJ) and procedural justice (PJ), and Bies and Moag (1986), promulgated interactional justice. In this study however, emphasis will be on distributive justice (DJ), procedural justice (PJ), and interactional justice.

Distributive Justice (DJ)

Distributive justice (DJ) is founded on the concept of equal opportunities, which states that employee perceptions of unequal work benefits will lead to conflict (Hussain et al., 2021). Just like the employee, students in the classroom also will revolt upon detecting that grades are not distributed equally in similar cases. Therefore, in the classroom, distributive justice refers to the extent to which, students perceived that the distribution of grades are done fairly and evenly in similar instances. Hence the students will perceive justice, only when grade distribution is fair and even. As noted by Jameel et al., (2020) Distributive justice refers to the fairness of one's results compared to others. On the other hand, Uludağ (2012) asserted that distributive justice is

related with the evaluation of the fairness concerning the outcomes. It is therefore pertinent to establish standards on which justice will be anchored, especially in the classroom with respect to students and grading to avoid reactions. As stated by Folger and Konovsky (1989) distributive justice is an initiator of reactions when students evaluate perceptions of fairness.

Procedural Justice (PJ)

According to Hussain et al. (2021) Procedural justice is used to check if the decision-making process is consistent and whether the people concerned are equally handled, while Uludağ (2012) stated that procedural justice refers to the evaluation of the procedures and policies in gathering outcomes. Any process that is biased will not promote justice and as such, the system can be concluded not to be systematic. Every process to justice to a great extent, is expected to be systematic, this way, unfairness and injustice will not thrive and the organisation members (students) will maintain best atmosphere.

Interactional Justice (IJ)

The third dimension is interactional justice (Bies & Moag, 1986) which concerns the fairness of the interpersonal treatment individuals are given during the implementation of procedures. Cropanzano, Prehar and Chen (2002, p. 329) simply refer to interactional justice as “usually operationalised as one-to-one transactions between individuals”. According to Bies (1986) interactional justice focuses on employees' perceptions of the interpersonal behaviour exercised during the representation of decisions and procedures. Interactional justice is related to the quality of relationships between individuals within organisations (Folger & Cropanzano, 1998). Although some scholars view interactional justice as a single construct, others have proposed two dimensions of interactional justice (Bies, 1986; Lind & Tyler, 1988). The two dimensions of interactional justice proposed are interpersonal and informational justice. These two dimensions of interactional justice are related to each other. However, research recommends that both concepts should be looked at differently since it has differential consequence on justice perceptions (Colquitt, 2001; Colquitt et al., 2001).

Methodology

In this study, both the descriptive design and cross sectional research design were employed. The former was employed because it answers the question of how, why and what question. According to Sekaran and Bougie (2013), descriptive research is a design used to answer the what, how and why. On the other hand, the latter was employed because it deals with the collection of necessary data from respondents at different locations, and also, the respondents were independent of the researcher, and this design is suitable when a study is concerned with the test of relationship between two or more variables (Kothari, 2008; Sekaran, 2003).

Population of the Study.

As stated by Anyanwu, (2000), Population refers to the totality of the elements consisting of individuals having characteristics which is of relevance to the researcher from which the sample size was drawn. In this study, the population is made up of all the National Diploma regular students in the running programmes as at July, 2021. This is necessary because the graduating set just finished their final examination and will be busy with other activities, consequently, will not have the time to respond to questionnaire.

Table 1: Distribution of admitted National Diploma students of FPOG, Bonny.

S/N	Department	Number of Students
1	Electrical & Electronics Engineering	88
2	Industrial Safety & Environmental Engineering Technology	59
3	Petroleum Marketing & Business Studies	68
4	Computer Science	45
	Total	260

Source: Admission Unit of FPOG.

Sample and Sampling Technique

In this study, sample size is viewed as the portion of the entire population the researcher will study. The sample size (S) for the current study was ascertained using Taro Yamane (1967) formula (see formula 1). Simple random sampling technique was adopted in this study. This was done to give all members equal chance of being selected. As asserted by Kothari (2008), Simple random sampling technique ensure that every member of the subset has an equivalent probability of being chosen or to assure good representation of every member of the population.

Taro Yamane (1967) formula for Sample Size Determination:

$$n = N / (1 + N (e^2))$$

Where n = number of samples, N = total population and e = error margin/margin of error.

$$N = 260; e = 0.5; n = ?$$

$$n = 260 / (1 + 260 (0.05^2))$$

$$n = 157$$

Sources of Data

This study employed both primary and secondary data. Primary data refers to the data generated by the researcher in the course of the study while secondary data refers to the data that has been generated but was only lifted from the source and applied to the study by the researcher. According to Kothari (2004) secondary data are those data that have been collected by someone else and exist somewhere.

Instrument of Data Collection

Data collection refers to deliberate sourcing and gathering data for the purpose of facilitating decision making. Cooper and Schindler (2008) stated that, data collection is the systematic and calculated gathering of information based on research variables Data for this study was collected with the aid of questionnaire. According to Sansoni et al. (2014), a questionnaire is a data collection tool that is designed to collect structured and unique data from respondents. The questionnaire was divided into two sections A & B. Section A solicit information about the student (Type of programme, department, gender etc.) while section B contains information with

regards to the essence of the study. A modified Likert rating scale consisting of 4 points scale in the following order, strongly agree: 4, Agree: 3, Disagree: 2 and Strongly Disagree: 1, was used.

Method of Data Analysis.

In the current study, the collected data was analysed using Spearman’s Rank Order Correlation Coefficient, with the help of statistical package for social sciences (SPSS) version 21. The study did not employ the parametric data analysis method as the condition for Pearson correlation was not completely met by the study data, hence Spearman’s Rank Order Correlation Coefficient.

Result Presentation and Discussion

A total of 157 questionnaires were given out but only 143 questionnaires were retrieved. Nine of the students were not ready to fill the question, while five of the students could not be reached to retrieve the questionnaire, as all effort proved abortive. Six of the retrieved questionnaires were not filled completely and as a result, they were eliminated from the analysis. Therefore, a total of 137 retrieved questionnaires were valid. The retrieved questionnaire are valid for the current study analysis as it represents 87.26%.

Hypothesis Testing.

In the current study, all three hypotheses were stated in its null form and the rule that guided decision in this context, was to accept the null hypothesis if the p-value turns out to be higher than 0.5, and also, the relationship between variables, indicating whether it is positive/negative and if such relationship is strong, moderate or weak.

Ho₁: There is no significant relationship between distributive justice and students’ academic performance.

Table 1. Distributive Justice and Students’ Academic Performance.

Correlations		Distributive Justice	Students’ Academic Performance
Spearman's rho	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.260**
	Distributive Justice		
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.002
	N	137	137
Students’ Academic Performance	Correlation Coefficient	.260**	1.000
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.002	.
	N	137	137

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

The result of the test of relationship between distributive justice and students' academic performance is depicted on table 1 above. With a correlation coefficient of 0.260 and a p-value of 0.002, which is below alpha level of 0.05, the result showed a positive and significant relationship between distributive justice and students' academic performance. The H_{01} hypothesis which states that there is no significant relationship between distributive justice and students' academic performance is hereby rejected. The result of the relationship between distributive justice and students' performance in the current study, is in agreement with the study of Uludağ (2012). It is expected that students' who are happy with how justice is carried out and distributed will undoubtedly have no negative emotional pain that will definitely have the potency to affect their study. It is therefore imperative to note that in a situation in which justice is equitably distributed and unquestioned by those concerned- especially students, the effect will be to enhance the peoples' zeal and willingness to strive towards achieving better performance, as they are rest assured that their effort will be beneficial. As stated by Colquitt et al. (2001), students are more likely to feel comfortable with the degree that they are studying and the university institution if they value positively the way they are treated otherwise, the reverse will be the case. As promulgated by Kivimäki et al. (2003), unfair treatment is one of the biggest sources of job stress and it increases the probability of physical health hazards. Furthermore, the current study result is also in conformity with the result of Vural and Gomleksiz (2010).

H₀₂: There is no significant relationship between procedural justice and students' academic performance.

Table 2. Procedural Justice and Students' Academic Performance. Correlations

		Procedural Justice	Students' Academic Performance
Spearman's rho	Procedural Justice	Correlation Coefficient	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.225**
		N	.008
	Students' Academic Performance	Correlation Coefficient	137
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.225**
		N	.008
		1.000	
			137

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

The correlation result between procedural justice and students' academic performance is represented in table 2. The result showed a correlation coefficient of 0.225 with a p-value of 0.008. The result showed a positive and significant relationship between procedural justice and students' academic performance. Consequently, hypothesis two is rejected. The current study's

result is in agreement with the result of Ali (2016) who fined a weak but positive relationship between procedural justice and extrinsic performance. However, unlike Ali (2016), the current study result, is significant. Dealing with others and friendship interaction is the result of extrinsic sources (Andreu et al., 2006). Procedural justice appears to be directly related to improve teaching evaluations above and beyond student outcomes (Tyler & Caine, 1981). As noted by Navarro-Abal et al. (2018), students will manifest higher levels of concentration and happiness during their academic activity if they perceive that their university institution is governed by clear, acceptable procedures. Furthermore, clear and open procedure tend to enhance performance, especially when it doesn't change rapidly. According to Leventhal (1980), procedures should be consistent across people and over time. Brockner and Siegel (1996), asserted that, students may infer that faculty care about everyone equally when fair and universal procedures are implemented. As concluded by Okoroafo & Zupancic (1989) Faculty should teach subject matter and students in an impartial way, students should believe the processes for teaching the course or evaluating the course outcomes are not biased.

Ho₃: There is no significant relationship between interactional justice and students' academic performance.

Table 3. Interactional Justice and Students' Academic Performance. Correlations

		Interactional Justice	Students' Academic Performance
Spearman's rho	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.331**
	Interactional Justice		
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000
	N	137	137
	Correlation Coefficient	.331**	1.000
	Students' Academic Performance		
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.
	N	137	137

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

The test of correlation result between interactional justice and students' academic performance, showed a correlation coefficient of 0.331 and a p-value of 0.000. The p-value is less than 0.05, which implies that the test result is significant and correlation coefficient, showed that the relationship is positive. Following the above analysis, the Ho₃ hypothesis is rejected, implying that there is a significant relationship between interactional justice and students' academic performance. This result is in consonance with the findings of Sadeghi et al. (2013) which shows a significant positive relationship between organisational justice (distributive, procedural and interactional justice) and performance. Furthermore, the result of this study revealed that interactional justice is positively related with students' academic performance, though the

relationship is weak. Interactional justice, has been found to be related to employees trust as well as their performance in institutions/organisations (Alexander & Ruderman, 1987; Cropanzano & Folger, 1991; Sweeney & McFarlin, 1993).

Conclusion

Perception of justice is an essential tool for the determination of the performance of any individual or group and carrying out studies on the subject matter and popularising the findings even facilitate the inculcation of this notion. This study rigorously investigated the influence of perceived justice (utilising its dimensions-distributive justice, procedural justice and interactional justice) on the academic performance of students. While this study found a positive and significant relationship between the dimensions of perceived justice, Colquitt, et al. (2001) and Van-Dierendonck et al. (2001) found that these separate constructs (dimensions of justice) lead to different results according to variables that influences people's behaviour and attitudes, and burnout. Many researchers have studied the concept of justice and they all come to a conclusion that fairness perceptions, with its distinct constructs are strongly inter-correlated (Cohen-Charash & Spector, 2001), inevitably posit an impact on behaviors and/or attitudes such as motivation (Chory-Assad, 2002). Therefore, while perceived justice is a factor to enhance students' academic performance, justice on its own may not give all the needed students' academic enhancement, as other variables, such as the socio economic state of the student should equally be considered. Ones all these other variables associated with the students are addressed and with the existence of perceived justice, then better performance can be achieved. As concluded by Tyler et al., (1996) and Virgolino et al. (2017), when individuals feel respected and have a sense of belonging to the group, they tend to improve their commitment and citizenship, which then has a positive impact on performance. The constantly changing learning environment requires higher education institutions to treat students with fairness to enhance their performance.

Recommendations

Based on the results of the study, we suggest the following recommendations to meet the study objectives:

- i. Management of the Federal Polytechnic of Oil and Gas, Bonny, should adopt the dimensions of perceived justice used in this study such as distributive justice, procedural justice and interactional justice in order to consistently and efficiently improve student's academic performance.
- ii. Management of the Polytechnic should offer more attractive communication strategies in order to increase student's academic performance.
- iii. Management of the Polytechnic should be much concern about perceived fairness of outcomes, procedures, interpersonal treatment and information disseminations as it impact on student's academic performance.

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