

EMPIRICAL STUDY OF THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN ORGANIZATIONAL POLITICS AND PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT SYSTEM IN PUBLIC HIGHER EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS IN NIGERIA: MODERATED BY DISTRIBUTIVE FAIRNESS

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Abstract

The study examines the moderating role of distributive fairness on the relationship between organizational politics on performance management system effectiveness. Extant literature on the study's variables were reviewed under conceptual and theoretical frameworks and, empirical review. The research work was anchored on Equity Theory. Survey research design was employed in conducting the study. The population of the study was 246. Krejcie and Morgan (1970) was used to determine and arrive at a 148 and to avoid low response rate from disobliging respondents, 40% was added. PLS SEM was employed analyze data. Findings revealed that there is a positive relationship between organizational politics and performance management system effectiveness in tertiary institution under study. Organizational fairness and performance management system effectiveness has no direct relationship as demonstrated by the findings of the study. The study concluded distributive fairness moderated the relationship between performance management system effectiveness and organizational politics. Academics participation in performance management system policy formulation in the institution under study is one of the recommendations the study offered.

Keywords: Performance Management Effectiveness, Organizational Politics, Distributive Fairness, Performance Appraisal, Higher Educational Institutions

INTRODUCTION

Performance management system effectiveness (PMSE) is an area that is receiving prominence due to limited focus on the area (Botha, Blom & Modipane, 2019), especially performance management (PM) practices in higher education institutions (HEIs) (McCormack, Propper & Smith, 2014). However, some scholars made efforts to see how or why PM systems impact on academics (Ringelhan, Wollersheim, and Welpel 2015). This may not be unconnected with the challenges HEIs face towards adopting a robust performance management system (PMS) (Decramer, Smolders, Vanderstraeten & Christiaens, 2012). In the academic environment, head of departments are vested with the responsibility of applying PMS for academics (Bauwens, Audenaert, Huisman

& Decramer, 2019), especially in Nigeria's HEIs.

It could be argued that the effectiveness of PMS could be established by employees' perceived accuracy and fairness of the system. Hence, research concerning the effectiveness from the employees' perception is critical. Very critical to note also is employees' perceptions regarding transparent and consistent application or execution of PMS by those that matter (Bowen & Ostroff, 2004). Additionally, PMS fairness might be linked to its effectiveness. Organizational justice theory (Greenberg, 1987) buttresses the prominence of perceptions of PM fairness. Even though it is argued that employees' decision to either stay or quit an organization might be as result of numerous reasons, nonetheless, employees view fairness and equity as crucial stimulators of PM systems (Bowen, Gilliland & Folger

1999). However, lately, PM systems have been observed to be inclined to inadvertent effects on employee well-being as well as behavior (Van Waeyenberg, Decramer, Desmidt & Audenaert 2017).

Also, theory and research have established the negative impacts of organizational politics (OP) on outcomes, for example; staff turnover have been well established (Poon, 2003). Conversely, PM fairness could moderate some of these inadvertent consequences (Decramer, Smolders & Vanderstraeten 2013; Dewettinck & van Dijk 2013). Thus, it is imperative to build up our understanding of the likely inadvertent effects of PM systems and come to terms with how these systems can be drawn up to further both academics and HEIs (Kallio & Kallio, 2014).

Hence, the current study covers earlier research by exploring the relationships between OP and PMSE. This study also integrates previous studies and reasonably, recent empirical evidence (e.g., Lau & Scully, 2015; Iqbal, Akbar & Budhwar, 2015; Dello Russo, Miraglia & Borgogni, 2017; Fu, Flood, Rousseau & Morris, 2020) to evaluate these relationships supported by Equity Theory (Adams, 1965). The study likewise examines the possible moderating effect of distributive fairness on the proposed relationships (Harris, Andrews & Kacmar, 2007; Saad & Elshaer, 2017).

LITERATURE REVIEW

Performance Management System Effectiveness

Performance management (PM) have been an area of considerable interest in both research and practice with 91% of organizations having formal PM systems (Schleicher, Baumann, Sullivan, Levy, Hargrove & Barros-Rivera, 2018). PM systems embrace different interconnected PM practices that supports outlining, overseeing as well as evaluating employees' performance in a continuous process and, streamlining employee performance with the overall organizational goals (Bauwens, Audenaert, Huisman &

Decramer, 2019). Thus, Bratton and Gold (2017) explained PM as an organized set of practices anticipated to evaluate an individual's overall competences and proficiencies in relation to positioning appropriate responsibilities and developmental goals ensuing from the evaluation, information on job performance as well as behavior that can be generated and assessed.

Haines, St-Onge and Marcoux (2004) observed that performance appraisals (PA), being one of the PM practices, are regularly seen as conflicting with quality management values, though a properly designed PMS could support quality maintenance. Moreover, Botha, Blom and Modipane (2019) noted that an essentially significant duty in people management is ensuring employees turn out to be effective in their responsibilities. Since PA is about assessing employees' performance, employee effectiveness and thus, productivity is of paramount importance. Also, Thomas and Lazarova (2014) posited that PMS has a combination of evaluative and developmental components as element of its goal. In a nutshell, PMS, in addition to evaluating employees' performance, supports their development. So, pursuing effective PMS is of paramount importance to organizations. Besides, Naseer and Ahmad (2016) further observed that political behavior is an everyday feature of PM particularly concerning to PAs procedures which are considerably susceptible to politics. Along these lines, Curtis, Harvey and Ravden (2005) contend that some errors subsist that has to do with the appraisers' political agenda. Moreover, research suggests that fairness of PMSE is achieved when consistently employed continuously (Matta, Scott, Colquitt, Koopman, and Passantino 2017), implying that, employee's perception of PM consistency (Bauwens, et al. 2019).

Organizational Politics

Organizational politics (OP) is all over in organizations. This might have informed

the reason why Asrar-ul-Haq, Ali, Anwar, Iqbal, Iqbal, Suleman and Haris-ul-Mahasbi (2019) submit that OP seems to be a detrimental, nonetheless, inevitable truth concerning organizational life. This is because employees continually struggle for esteemed resources, status and influence in organization for self-interests (Chukwu, Aguwamba & Ezeabogu, 2019). Thus, drawing from Kacmar and Ferris (1991), Bhattarai (2021) contend that perceived OP relates to the perception of an individual's self-interest actions or ways of others, typically associated to maneuvering corporate processes and, frequently engaging coercive ways to the extent of inducing others for the self-desired intentions. These positions are consistent with that of Kacmar and Baron (1999) who correspondingly maintained that OP "involves actions by individuals that are directed toward the goal of furthering their own self-interests without regard for the well-being of others or their organization" (p. 4).

Typically, organizations' PA (a component of PMS) processes are most times political in nature, particularly on issues for example, promotion (Chukwu, et al, 2019). Besides, OP are mostly examined from the viewpoint of employees' perception developed from the organization's political behaviors (Bhattarai (2021). In addition, Saad and Elshaer (2017) stresses on feeling of fairness in organizations as being connected with OP.

Although, PMS play substantial positions in organizations (Franco-Santos, Lucianetti & Bourne, 2012), there are fears concerning the aptness of the existing paradigm for increasingly complex and dynamic environment (Bourne, Franco-Santos, Micheli & Pavlov, 2018), particularly, academic environment (Babagana, 2019). Thus, accuracy in employees' PA is a foremost issue most organizations pursue to perfect their PMS. Moreover, Naseer and Ahmad (2016) argued that the "overall atmosphere of all organizations has an

influence on the effectiveness of the PMSE".

Organizational Fairness

Fairness in organizations relates to employees' trusts on an organization as well as its processes and procedures (Iqbal & Ahmad, 2016). Organizational fairness is applied to explain the function of fairness having direct influence on employees' performance as well as workplace behaviour (Akenzua & Igbinomwanhia, 2022). It is a sphere of emotional inquiry which emphasizes on perceptions of fairness in workplace (Byrne & Cropanzano, 2001). Linking this to PM, employees' perception concerning targets, outcomes as well as exploits of outcomes of the employee appraisal system; influences their performance, involvement and motivation (Zwiech, 2021).

Distributive fairness is an element of organizational fairness which concerns feelings relating to objectivity of outcomes or distributions (Zwiech, 2021). In other words, it is the felt fairness concerning outcomes distribution encompassing circumstances and matters that impacts on interests of individuals (Deutsch, 1985). Hence in pursuing a PMSE, employees' perception on PA fairness and coherence is typically related with perceptions held on distributive fairness (Thurston & McNall, 2010).

Theoretical Framework

This study is premised on Adams Equity Theory (1965). Greenberg (1986) submit that the theory relates to an employee's outcomes inputs to specified measure of comparison as basis for assessing fairness of a relationship. In other words, the theory assumes that, individuals are stimulated by inputs assessment alongside outcomes, proportionate to that of others. Typically, the theory implies that, appraisal process fairness supports the success of the PA system and thus, its acceptance or otherwise is dependent on held perceptions and this influences employees' job

performance. This theory for instance, supports Sudin's (2011) findings that distributive fairness considerably impacts on employee satisfaction with PA. Additionally, concerning OP, Murphy and Cleveland (1991) contend that not much would diverge on the argument that political behaviors benefit from a substantial influence on PA processes and outcomes. Once employees become intolerable, especially concerning their perceptions on OP, they tend to exhibit nonchalant behaviors as well as leave the organization (Vigoda, 2003).

Empirical Review

Saad and Elshaer (2017) examined employees' perceptions of OP, distributive justice of a PMS and validity of layoff decisions in a work setting in Egyptian hotels. 400 questionnaires were used for data collection. Structural equation modeling (SEM) was used to analyze data and the results indicated insignificant distributive justice of PA mediated the negative relationship between OP and validity of layoff decisions.

Utami, Bangun and Lantu (2014) studied the perceptions of employees concerning OP and its impact on organizational fairness and decisions concerning employee turnover rates. 259 surveys were filled. Confirmatory factor analysis, correlation and regression analyses were exploited to establish the relations among these variables. The result demonstrated that OP has a significant impact on perceived organizational fairness and intention to quit.

Yusof, Zulkifli, Padlee and Yusof (2018) assessed the relationship between OP, employee's job satisfaction and turnover intention in the public maritime-related agencies and reported a significant positive relationship between OP and turnover intention.

Naseer and Ahmad (2016) investigated effects of PA politics using a sample of 100 Islamabad's aviation industry employees

and found negative employees' perception on PMS ensuing from OP.

Labrague, McEnroe-Petitte, Gloe, Tsaras, Arteché and Maldia (2017) investigated the influence of OP perceptions on nurses' work outcomes. Self-report questionnaires were used to gather data from 166 nurses in private and government-owned hospitals with a response rate of 81.5%. Findings revealed positive relationships between perceived organizational politics and job stress, turnover intention and job burnout. However, negative relationships were established among perceived organizational politics and job satisfaction. Lau and Scully (2015) examined the roles of OP and fairness in the relationship between PMS and trust. Specifically, the aim of the study was to, among others, establish if performance measures affect OP and; if OP, on the other hand, impacts on procedural and interpersonal fairness. From a sample of 104, the partial least squares results suggest that OP and fairness perceptions considerably mediate the *non-financial* performance measures and trust relationship.

Getnet, Jebena and Tsegaye (2014) implemented a cross-sectional survey to investigate the impact of employees' fairness perception on PA practices satisfaction among 230 employees from University of Gondar, Ethiopia. Statistical analysis utilizing SPSS disclosed distributive fairness was not significantly linked with PA practices satisfaction.

Abubakar and Ahmad (2014) examined the existence of a relationship among perceived OP, organizational trust, perceived human resource management (HRM) practices and employee turnover and 175 Registered Nurses were engaged in the study where multiple regression analysis was employed in testing the hypotheses. Analysis revealed that perceived organizational politics has significant positive on employee's turnover intentions.

Ibeogu and Oztüren (2015) had in a study carried out among the employees of the banks of Northern Cyprus found non-

significant relationship between perception of distributive justice and satisfaction with the PM system. Similarly, Warokka, Gallato Thamendren and Moorthy (2012) reported same findings among distributive fairness and study variables.

RESEARCH METHOD

Research Design

Survey research method was adopted for this study as it scientifically explains phenomena and their relations in the real environment over a specified period of time, such that a survey depends on samples of respondents taken from the population as a representative of the population. Thus, quantitative research design supports scientific study of large sample of respondents' opinions on a propositioned phenomenon that allows the researcher to posit on a human behavior's standpoint (Lakshman, Sinha, Biswas, Charles & Arora, 2000). Additionally, the study engages cross sectional survey so as to collect data that suggest respondents' opinion at a particular point in time. This method supports data collection from a sample/population covering the study period (Clark & Creswell, 2010).

Sample and Sampling Technique

The study sample is drawn from a HEI in North-East Nigeria. 151 participants whom are academics were drawn from a population of 246. According to Krejcie and Morgan (1970), a sample size of 148 is appropriate for a population of 246. However, to avoid low response rate from disobliging respondents, decision was made relying on extant literature. Salkind (1997) suggested 40% to be added. Therefore, the sample size of 148 was added by 40%. Consequently, with this addition, the total sample size becomes 207 and finally was rounded to be 210 so as to account for disobliging respondents and unusable questionnaires. Out of this number, 189 were completed and returned representing 90% response rate. Of this number, 38 copies were discarded due to

improper completion and 151 copies only were used for data analyses.

Measures

Except PMSE that was measured on seven-point Likert scale, others were measured on the five-point Likert scale. Respondents were invited to demonstrate their agreement or disagreement on a scale from one (strongly disagree) to five with the items. All the constructs were measured from the already developed and tested measure in another context. However, some items were rephrased to understand better and cover the content of this study.

Performance Management System Effectiveness (PMSE)

Twelve items were used to assess PMSE adapted from Sharma, Sharma and Agarwal (2016). The composite reliability of the PMSE construct was determined and the scale was 0.96.

Organizational Politics (OP)

OP was measured based on Labrague, et al's (2017) nine items scale which has three dimensions. The adapted scale is the short-form of Kacmar and Ferris's (1991) Perception of Organizational Politics Scale (POPS). The three facets of OP measured are general political behavior consisting of two items, go along to get ahead was measured with three items, and pay and promotion policies were measured with four items. The composite reliability of the construct OP was 0.95 in this study.

Distributive Fairness (DF)

Four items measured distributive fairness. Colquitt's (2001) measurement were adapted in this study. Composite reliability of the construct is found to be 0.83 and thus, good.

Data collection

The current study was conducted using an adapted questionnaire to collect responses from 151 academics. The data was gathered from respondents in a HEI in North-East

Nigeria. The final response received from the respondents was 189 which represents a response rate of 90%. After data validation and removing of univariate and multivariate outliers, the data analysis was executed with 151 usable responses. The study was conducted between the period of September, 2022 to November, 2022.

Data analysis

Descriptive statistics

Table 1 explains the demographic features of the respondents. Among 151 respondents, 125 were male and 26 were female. Majority of the respondents are male and constituted 82.78% of the respondents. Additionally, a large number of the respondents were found within the age group of 46–50 years representing 25.17% of the respondents.

Table: 1

Demographic Characteristics of the Respondents (n = 151)

Variable	Frequency	Percentage
Gender		
Male	125	82.78
Female	26	17.22
Age		
31-35	18	11.92
36-40	31	20.53
41-45	22	14.57
46-50	38	25.17
51-55	18	11.92
56-60	15	09.93
61-65	09	5.96
Education		
Bachelor	75	49.67
Masters	63	41.72
PhD	13	08.61

Source: Survey, 2022

Assessment of measurement model

The PLS SEM model is analyzed in two steps. The first step assessed the measurement model by running the PLS Algorithm which measures the validity and reliability of each of the construct in the model (**Figure 1**). The second stage test the structural model by estimating the paths coefficient between the constructs, thus determining their significance and the

model's predictive ability. The measurement model shows the associations between the latent variables and the measures of each original construct. It also examined the individual item reliability, internal consistency and reliability, convergent validity and discriminant validity of the model (Hair Jr, Sarstedt, Hopkins & Kuppelwieser, 2014).

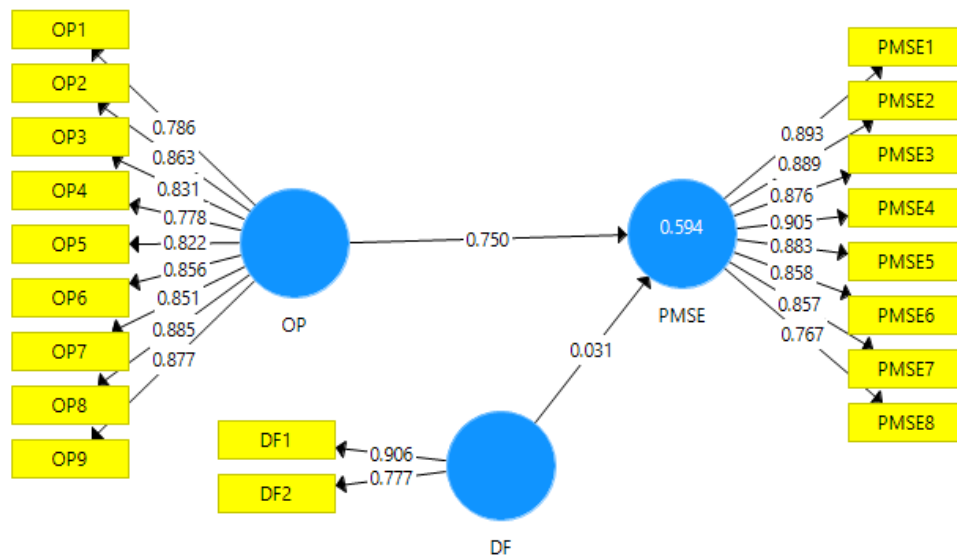


Figure 1: Measurement Model

Thus, the measurement model was assessed by using internal consistency and reliabilities, composite reliability and Cronbach alpha for reflective constructs

(Table 2), All the construct fall within the threshold range of 0.70–0.95 (Hair, Risher, Sarstedt & Ringle, 2019).

Table 2: Internal Consistency and Reliability

Construct Reliability and Validity	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)
DF	0.607	0.831	0.712
OP	0.947	0.955	0.705
PMSE	0.952	0.960	0.751

The convergent validity is measured by assessing the average variance extracted (AVE) of each latent construct as recommended by Fornell & Larcker (1981).

The AVE value is calculated as the mean of the squared loadings for all indicators associated with a construct as follows:

Table 3: Fornell & Larcker criterion

Laten Variable	DF	OP	PMSE
DF	0.844		
OP	0.654	0.839	
PMSE	0.522	0.770	0.867

The findings indicate that all the square root of AVE were higher compared to the correlations between the latent constructs (Table 3) indicating adequate discriminant validity within the latent constructs in the model (Fornell & Larcker, 1981).

The second method for verifying discriminant validity is examining the cross loadings of the indicators. Table 4 presents how the indicator loadings relate with other indicators. The result shows that all indicator loadings were higher than the cross loadings signifying that the discriminant validity is fit for further analysis in the main model.

The second method for verifying discriminant validity is examining the cross

Table 4 Cross Loading

Cross Loadings	DF	OP	PMSE
DF1	0.906	0.660	0.513
DF2	0.777	0.406	0.345
OP1	0.473	0.786	0.689
OP2	0.516	0.863	0.692
OP3	0.500	0.831	0.559
OP4	0.521	0.778	0.631
OP5	0.522	0.822	0.534
OP6	0.625	0.856	0.690
OP7	0.596	0.851	0.630
OP8	0.588	0.885	0.656
OP9	0.587	0.877	0.696
PMSE1	0.474	0.646	0.893
PMSE2	0.446	0.683	0.889
PMSE3	0.395	0.656	0.876
PMSE4	0.473	0.691	0.905
PMSE5	0.459	0.675	0.883
PMSE6	0.536	0.710	0.858
PMSE7	0.478	0.697	0.857
PMSE8	0.336	0.569	0.767

Assessment of structural model

The structural model assessments were performed in line with Hair et al.’s (2019) guidelines. The PLS-SEM generates T-statistics for testing of the structural model (inner and outer model) using a method

called bootstrapping. Bootstrapping is a non-parametric process which permits the testing of statistical significance of different PLS-SEM results (Figure 2).

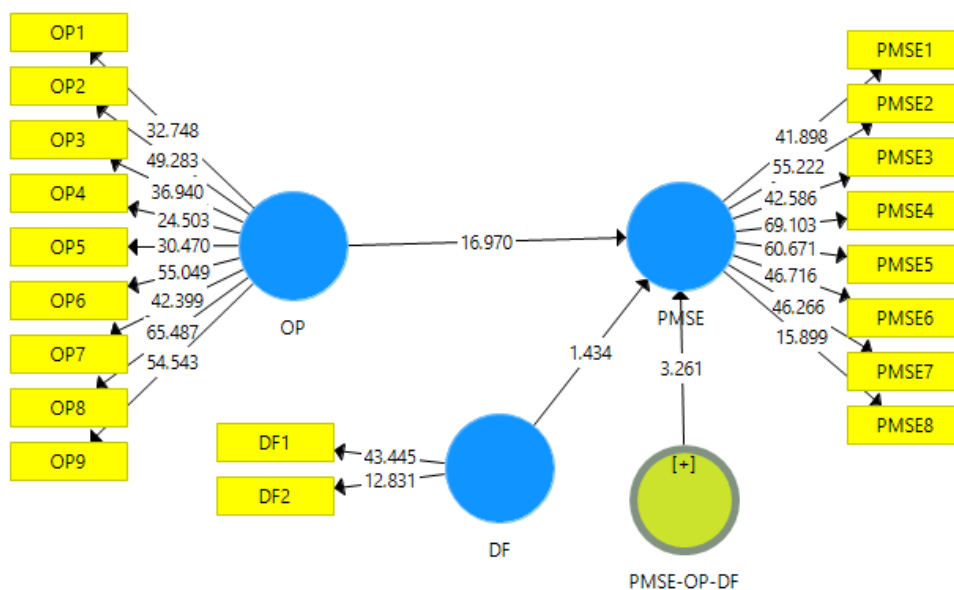


Figure 2: Structural Model

The PLS path estimates for the inner model indicate that hypothesis (H1) was supported

suggesting that PMSE significantly predict OP ($\beta=0.708$, $t=16.970$, $p<0.05$). However,

the direct relationship of DF has no impact on PMSE ($\beta=0.071$, $t=1.434$, $p>0.05$). Moreover, DF moderate the relationship

between PMSE and OP ($\beta=-0.126$, $t=3.261$, $p<0.05$).

Table 5: Path coefficient of

Relationship	B	Standard Deviation	T-Value	P-Value	Decision
DF → PMSE	0.071	0.049	1.434	0.152	Not Supported
OP → PMSE	0.708	0.042	16.970	0.000***	Supported
OP→DF →PMSE	-0.126	0.039	3.261	0.001**	Supported

Note: *Significant at 1%,
Significant at 5%,

Figure 3 below shows the simple slope analysis express the moderating effect of DF on the relationship between OP and

PMSE. The result obtained shows a strong moderating effect between the variables in the model.

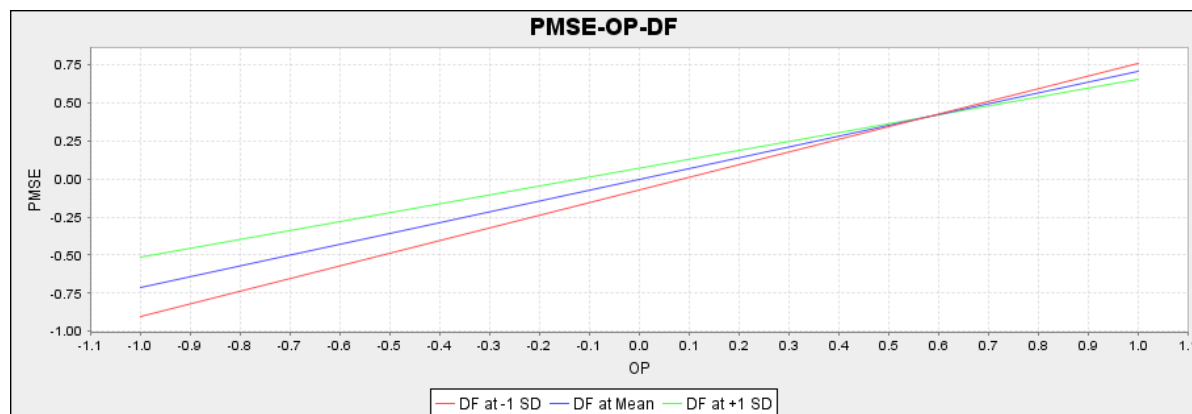


Figure 3: Simple slope analysis

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The result of this study demonstrated that PMSE significantly predict OP ($\beta=0.708$, $t=16.970$, $p<0.05$) among academics of the institution the study was conducted. This suggests that OP play a vital role in predicting employees’ reactions to PMSE. The finding is consistent with existing literature that there are employee turnover intentions resulting from OP (Labrague, et al., 2017; Utami, et al., 2014; Yusof, et al., 2018). This finding aligns with the postulation of Equity theory that employees demonstrate indifferent behaviors resultant from perceptions on OP to the extent of quitting their jobs (Vigoda, 2003). However, the study found and reported the absence direct relationship between

Organizational Fairness and PMSE ($\beta=0.071$, $t=1.434$, $p>0.05$). This is not surprising as prior studies reported similar results. Getnet, Jebena and Tsegaye (2014) reported distributive fairness was not significantly linked with PA practices satisfaction. Additionally, similar findings were reported in other studies (e.g., Ibeogu & Ozturen, 2015; Warokka, et al., 2012). Concerning the moderating effect, the findings revealed DF moderated the relationship between PMSE and OP ($\beta=-0.126$, $t=3.261$, $p<0.05$).

LIMITATIONS

Given the high response rate, the results can be generalized to the total population of the

AND

RECOMMENDATIONS

HEI studied. However, the results cannot be generalized to HEIs in Nigeria. Based on the results, the following recommendations are made for the institution's management and head of departments in particular in order to improve the implementation of the PMS:

- Concerning OP, it is evident there are misgivings from academics on the institution's implementation of PMSE. Therefore, sentiments and all forms of biases should be avoided. Fairness should be imbibed in the execution of PM for academics. Academics should have the feelings there is consistency and objectivity in the execution of PM.
- Distributive fairness principles are not being imbibed as evident from the results. Head of departments should recognize efforts of academics objectively by employing objective performance indicators and standards. Academics contributions should be objectively quantified.
- Academics should be encouraged to participate in drawing PMS policy in order to ensure its effectiveness.

CONCLUSION

The main objective of this study was to determine academics' perceptions on PMSE in a HEI in North-East Nigeria. The study presents theoretical and empirical evidence for the moderating effect of distributive fairness on the relationship between OP on PMSE. The study further accomplished its objective by evaluating how distributive fairness theoretically moderates the relationships between the exogenous and endogenous variables. The results of this study offer a motivation for improving prevailing and future PMS execution by management of HEIs and other organizations alike.

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