

## Engaging Internal Customers through Justice: A Pilot Study in J&K

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### ABSTRACT

*The purpose of the paper is to examine the impact of Distributive justice (DJ), Procedural justice (PJ), Interactional Justice (INTJ) and Informational justice (INFJ) on Employee engagement (EE) in Telecom industry. The study has taken simple random sampling technique for data collection from various private telecom companies in J&K. The 20-item scale developed to measure distributive justice, procedural justice and interactional justice was taken from the work of Niehoff and Moorman (1993). Employee engagement is measured by 9 item scale developed by Schaufeli and Bakkers (2003). Structural equation modeling (SEM) was used to analyze the data. Results indicated significant and positive impact of Distributive justice (DJ), Procedural justice (PJ), and Interactional Justice (INTJ) and Informational justice (INFJ) on Employee engagement (EE). By exploring the impact of DJ, PJ, INTJ and INFJ on EE, this study presents insight to managers for improving engagement. Findings also highlight the application of concepts like Interactional justice in Indian public sector banks to increase the engagement levels of their employees.*

**Keywords:** *Distributive justice; Procedural justice; Interactional justice; Informational justice; Employee engagement; Telecom industry.*

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### 1.0 Introduction and Need for the Study

In today's dynamic business environment, organizations are operating in highly competitive market situation. They are facing rapid innovation, new technological progression, economic uncertainties, fierce competition, demanding customers and their escalating expectations.

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Globalization and rapidity of changes emphasize the importance of human resources within the organizations (Hamid & Muzaffar, 2015). Every organization wants to reap beneficial features over others and engaged human resource is the supreme tool for it. Rashid, Asad, and Ashraf (2011) argued that Employee engagement is a *modus operandi* that can be used by the organization to handle uncertainty in the business environment. In management literature and academia Employee engagement is considered to be the latest Buzz word (Baumruk, Thurgood, Smith, & Coutright, 2015). Advanced productivity, higher self motivation, reliability, self-reliance to put across innovative ideas, loyalty towards organization, abridged employee turnover and low absenteeism are some of the attributes of entirely engaged employees, who act as precious possessions of an organization. Being a part of service industry customer focus and customer service is the distinctive factors for the telecom companies. To have the satisfied and engaged customer, they must have engaged employees. Companies in India are increasingly devising new ways and means to optimally utilize their workforce. Globally, relatively low levels of Employee engagement continue to be reported in organizations (Albrecht, Bakker, Gruman, Macey, & Saks, 2015). Aon (2013) reported that four out of every ten employees were not engaged, and two out of ten were actively disengaged. Kohli and Grover (2013) reported that only eight percent of the employees in India are engaged in their workplace. Telecom industry is highly competitive and its employees have many options and offerings so they keep on switching their jobs. With the increased competition, telecom service providers find it difficult to engage and retain the existing employee. So it is important for every organization to understand what attracts and retains a potential candidate. This compelled the researcher to understand the factors that enhance employee engagement. Once the factors are known, employers or managers will be able to avoid unnecessary plight in satisfying employee's needs and engaging them in their role. Against, this backdrop, the present study aims is to understand the concept of employee engagement and organizational justice as its important driver.

## **2.0 Literature Review and Hypothesis Development**

### **2.1 Employee engagement**

According to Abraham (2012), Employee engagement is the degree to which the employees are satisfied with their current job. Siddiqi (2015) describe Employee engagement as making employees attentive to work and be focused to achieve their common goal. Employee engagement has been popularized by practitioners as well as the research/academic community and is regarded as the barometer that determines the

association of the individual with the workplace (Sundaray, 2011). Employee engagement is considered as a significant construct which epitomize the emergent importance of human asset and their emotional association with their organization (Ulrich, 1997; Dajani, 2015). Organizations today have only one alternative that is to utilize their human capital. So, they need to engage their employees. Further, Kahn (1990) introduced the concept of engagement and defines Employee engagement as “the harnessing of organization members’ selves to their work roles; in engagement, people employ and express themselves physically, cognitively, and emotionally during role performances” (p.694). He put forward three psychological conditions to explain the phenomenon i.e. meaningfulness (perception that one is being paid a return on the self investment), safety (being able to perform without the fear of negative outcome) and availability (a sense of possessing the all resources needed to perform work). Schaufeli, Salanova, Gonz lez-Roma, and Bakker, 2002 define work engagement as a ‘state of mind characterized by vigor (energy and mental resilience), dedication (feeling proud about one’s job and inspired by it) and absorption (feeling of contentment while performing work)’.

## **2.2 Organizational justice**

French (1964) coined the term organization justice. Organizational psychologists argued that organizational justice is unbiased and ethical treatment of employees by their organization (Cropanzo & Mitchell 2005; Greenberg, 1990). The construct of organizational justice is based on perceptions of equality (Colquitt, Greenberg & Zapata-Phelan, 2005). Saks, (2006) posited that if employees have a perception that their managers are treating them in ethical manner they will reciprocate by absorbing themselves into work, in accordance to the Social Exchange Theory. According to Koyuncu, Burke, & Fiksenbaum (2006) perceived fairness may be the fairness in assigning resources, giving rewards as well as punishment at work. This perception of justice manipulates the attitude and behavior of employees which ultimately influence their performance and the organization’s success (Coetzee, 2005). According to Some scholars (Greenberg, 1990; Greenberg & Colquitt, 2013) organizational justice is multiple dimensional construct which include only distributive and procedural justice, while others look upon interactional justice as a sub-dimension of distributive justice (Suliman & Kathairi, 2013). Yet other scholars see four factors, dividing interactional justice into the sub-dimensions of interpersonal and informational justice (e.g., Scott, Garza, Conlon & Kim, 2015; Crawshaw, Cropanzano, Bell, & Nadisic, 2013; Greenberg, 1993; Colquitt, 2001; Walumbwa, Cropanzano, & Hartnell, 2009). Greenberg (1993) categorized Interactional Justice into two factors: Interpersonal and Informational

justice. Interpersonal justice reflects the extent to which supervisors treat their employees during the execution of various procedures and determining their upshot. According to Pilvinyte (2014), interactional justice is characterized by the sensitivity, politeness and respect employees receive from their superiors during procedures; this serves primarily to alter reactions to outcomes because sensitivity can make employees feel better even if the outcome is unfavorable. The second factor is the Informational Justice which justify the particular ways of implementation of procedures and distribution pattern of outcomes. So Informational justice refers to the explanation, justification or information provided by decision-makers as to why outcomes have been distributed in a certain way (Pilvinyte, 2014). In terms of this type of justice, it is required that the information that is shared or communicated within the organization should be comprehensive, reasonable, truthful, timely and candid.

### **3.0 Employee Engagement and Organizational Justice**

According to researchers (Andrew & Sofian, 2011; Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005) Social Exchange Theory (SET) theoretical foundation validate the rationale for employee's decision to get engage in their work, depending upon the resources (social, emotional and economic) they received from their organization. According to Ghosh, Rai, and Sinha, (2014) it also give an abstract framework for explaining justice perception of employee may manipulate their level of engagement within their current employment. In the light of SET, organizational justice can be directly associated with employee engagement. Therefore, when employees feel they are treated justly and fairly by their managers, they feel indebted to be fair in their behaviour and engage themselves in their job (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005; Saks, 2006). On the other hand, perceptions of biasness escort employees to pull out themselves from their work (Greenberg, 1990; Biswas et al., 2013). Further, Maslach, Schaufelli, and Leiter (2001) also posit that fairness and justice form one of the major work conditions for engagement which they explain through, their engagement model. Further researchers also explained Engagement at work on the basis of job demands-resource (JD-R) model (Demerouti, Bakker, Nachreiner, & Schaufeli, 2001). Moreover burnout researchers considered procedural, distributive justice; interactional justice and informational justice perceptions as influential instrument for enhancing engagement among the employees. Additionally according to Gupta and Kumar (2012) employees who perceive procedural justice and distributive justice positively express more dedication and vigour and highly get absorb in their job. Further more courteous and impartial attitudes of supervisors are believed as an indispensable facet of interactional justice, which enhance the feeling of social

support among employees (Fujishiro & Heaney, 2009). And social support is formerly recognized as an important predecessor of employee engagement (e.g. Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004). On the basis of above literature (See Figure 1), we hypothesize that:

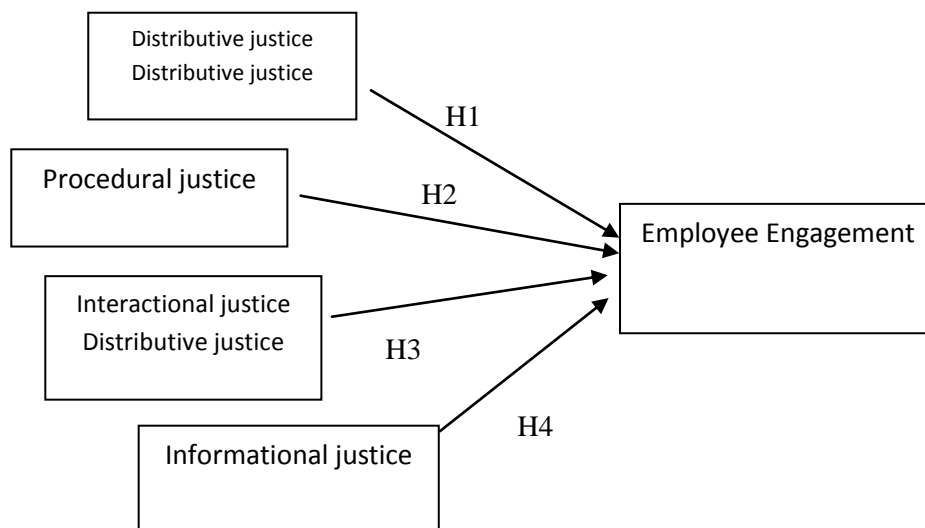
H1: Distributive justice has positive impact on employee engagement.

H2: Procedural justice has positive impact on employee engagement.

H3: Interactional Justice has positive impact on employee engagement.

H4: Informational justice has positive impact on employee engagement.

**Figure 1: Conceptual Model for the Study**



#### 4.0 Research Methodology

##### 4.1 Instrument development and validation

All the constructs of this study have valid scales available in the literature. So, this study adapted already validated scales to measure the constructs. For measuring distributive justice, procedural justice and interactional justice, 20-item scale developed by Niehoff and Moorman (1993) was used. Employee engagement is measured by 9 item scale developed by Schaufeli and Bakkers (2003). Five point Likert scale, is used gather the responses of respondents.

##### 4.2 Sampling and data collection

The sample size was determined according to the number of items to be used (Hair et al. 2008). Study contained a 29-item scale, so a sample of 290 has been

determined for the study. A total of 300 questionnaires were distributed and 265 valid responses were collected, resulting in 88 per cent response rate.

## 5.0 Data Analysis and Result

### 5.1 Demographic information

A descriptive analysis of the respondents indicates that 75 percent were male while 25 percent were female. 47.2 percent of the respondents were between 20 and 30 years of age, 41.1 percent of the respondents were between 31 and 40 years of age, 9.8 percent of the respondents were between 41 and 50 years of age, and 1.9 percent of the respondents were above 51 years of age. 5.7 percent were Higher Secondary, 44.9 percent were graduate, 35.5 percent were post graduate and 5.7 percent were having other professional degrees. 52.1 percent respondents draw annual income less than Rs.5, 00,000, 32.5 percent draw between Rs.5, 00,000 and Rs.10, 00,000, 12.5 percent draw between Rs.10, 00,000 and Rs.15, 00,000 and 3 percent draws more than Rs.15, 00,000. 16.39 percent of respondents have work experience less than 1 year, 35.8 percent have work experience between 1 to 5 years, 35.5 percent have 5 to 10 years job tenure and 15.1 percent have work experience more than 10 years. The overall results are presented in Table 1 given below.

**Table: 1 Demographic Information**

Demographic		No. of Respondents	
		Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	199	75.1
	Female	65	24.5
Total		265	100
Age	20-30 years	125	47.2
	31-40 years	109	41.1
	41-50 years	26	9.8
	More than 50 years	4	1.9
Total		265	100
Marital	Married	151	57.0
	Unmarried	114	43.0
Total		265	100
Educational	Matriculation	22	8.3
	Higher Secondary	15	5.7
	Bachelor's degree	119	44.9
	Master's degree	94	35.5
	other, please specify	15	5.7
Total		265	100

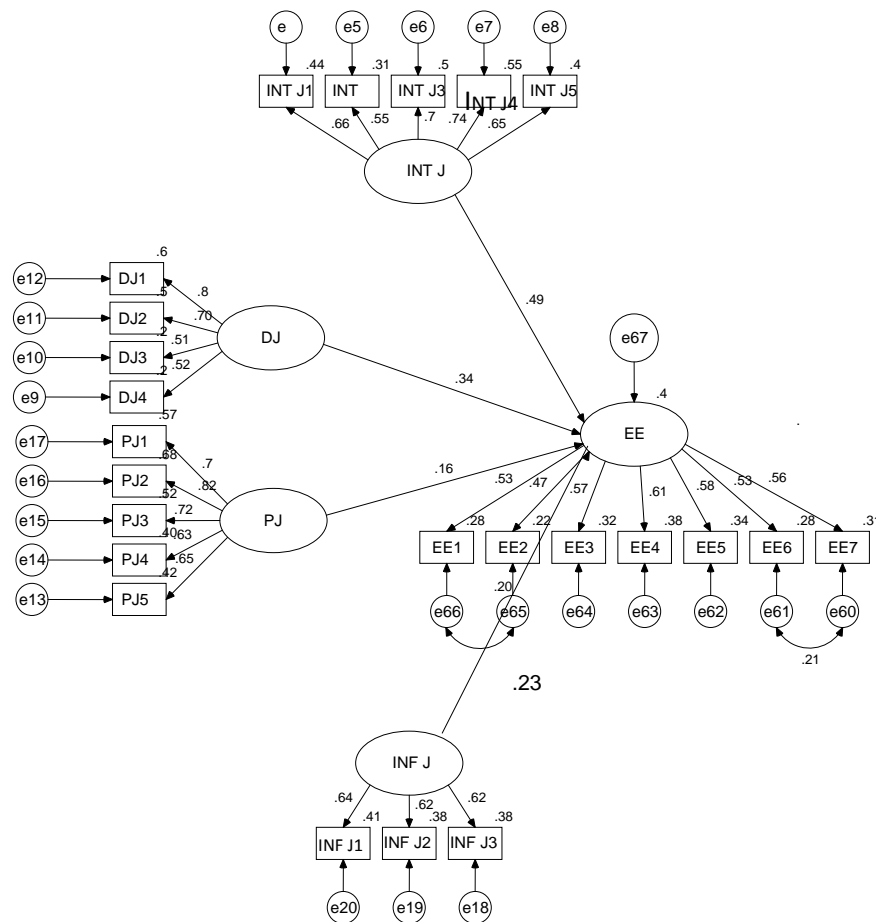
Annual Income	< Rs.5, 00,000	138	52.1
	Rs.5, 00,000- Rs.10, 00,000	86	32.5
	Rs.10, 00,000 - Rs15, 00,000	33	12.5
	> Rs.15, 00,000	8	3.0
Total		265	100
Work experience	Less than 1 year	36	16.39
	1-5 years	95	35.8
	5-10 years	94	35.5
	More than 10 years	40	15.1
Total		265	100

Structural equation modeling was used to analyze the data. CFA assessed the reliability as well as validity of all scales. Convergent validity was confirmed by analyzing the conditions suggested by (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). At first, all CFA factor loadings were statistically significant at  $p < .001$ . After that, the average variance extracted (AVE) for all the study constructs were above the value of 0.50. Further, the indicators for all the measurement constructs are significant (critical values higher than 1.96) and have AVE higher than 0.5, suggesting convergent validity of the scale or unidimensionality of the constructs (Byrne, 2013). Finally, the reliabilities for each construct were above the value of 0.70, fulfilling the general condition of reliability for the research instruments. The result of CFA runs on four antecedent variables i.e. Distributive justice (DJ), Procedural justice (PJ), Interactional Justice (INTJ) and Informational justice (INFJ) results in elimination of three items, indicates an excellent model fit to the data (CMIN/DF = 2.103, RMR = .051, GFI = .893, AGFI = .859, CFI = .918, and RMSEA = .066). The results of the CFA for Employee engagement construct also indicate an excellent model fit to the data (CMIN/DF = 3.017, RMR = .052, GFI = .936, AGFI = .890, CFI = .940, and RMSEA = .059) and results in elimination of 2 items. Model fit indices are within the acceptable range of values, confirming all the factors under study. Further, an integrated model for Distributive justice (DJ), Procedural justice (PJ), Interactional Justice (INTJ) and Informational justice (INFJ) and employee engagement has been developed. The model fit values has been found to be appropriate and fit (CMIN/DF = 1.740, RMR = .053, GFI = .865, AGFI = .838, CFI = .917, RMSEA = .054). SEM analysis indicated significant and positive effect of Distributive justice (DJ), Procedural justice (PJ), Interactional Justice (INTJ) and Informational justice (INFJ) on Employee engagement (EE). So given Hypothesis stand accepted.

It is clear from the Figure.2 that Interactional Justice (INTJ) has larger impact on Employee engagement (SRW=0.49,  $p < 0.01$ ) followed by Distributive justice (DJ), (SRW=0.34,  $p < 0.01$ ) which is further followed by Informational justice (INFJ)

SRW=0.23,  $p < 0.01$ ) and Procedural justice (PJ), has comparatively least influence on Engagement level of employees (SRW=0.16,  $p < 0.01$ ) in Telecom sector in the state of J&K.

**Figure 2: Model Fit Testing Result**



## 6.0 Discussion and Implication

From theoretical and practical point of present research have many implications for academia and practitioners. From the theoretical perspective, the present research contributes to the existing literature by empirically investigating and validating



relationships between organizational justice and employee engagement. Moreover they have capability to decipher demanding organizational situations such as increasing workplace performance and productivity amid widespread economic decline (Macey & Schneider, 2008). Further researchers as well as practitioners believe that engaged employees helps to build up reputation of their company and overall stakeholder value (Sundaray, 2011) But unfortunately the biggest challenge before the organizations today is to engage the intellectual capital. Therefore researchers has been paying due attention on studying engagement as an important predictor of employee performance (Gruman & Saks, 2011; Karatepe & Demir, 2014). Focal point of researchers is to explore organizational justice as key predictors of engagement that is essential for engaging and committing them in their organization (Albrech, Bakker, Gruman, Macey, & Saks, 2015). If employees trust their organization and feel that their organization is treating them impartially, they will definitely engross themselves fully in their job and commit to the organization (Saks, 2006). So this is an implication for managers that they should cultivate a work milieu that focused on element of justice this would ultimately persuade the social exchange attitudes among employees (Ghosh, Rai, & Sinha, 2014).

Further they must focus on maintaining a trust-based liaison with employees, providing employees with more support, fair treatment and care. Two main elements of satisfaction i.e. pay satisfaction and work satisfaction must be focused to boost a fair perception of distributive justice. Therefore innovative changes in the pay structure must be made and work must be made more meaningful to ensure overall work satisfaction of the workforce. Moreover organizations must make employees aware about pay determination methods to boost the justice perceptions by showing them that they sets pay equitably, based on reasonable elements (Hanley, 1988). Furthermore, organization must adopt a strong grievance handling mechanism to enhance perception of distributive justice among employees. On the other hand to enhance procedural justice, the second important dimension of the organization justice, companies must design a transparent structure which involves employee participation in decision-making procedures, should be free, consistently applied and relevant moral standards. Additionally organizations must ensure a proper flow of two-way communication between employee and employer for better perception of procedural justice (Dai & Xie, 2016). Furthermore interpersonal behaviour of the manager reflects the interactional justice towards the employees. So, interactional justice is considered to be related to cognitive, affective and behavioral reactions of these managers (Cohen-Charash & Spector, 2001).

Therefore to improve this dimension of the justice, organizations must train their managers in soft skills that will improve their interpersonal behaviors towards

employees. So having greater distributive, procedural justice and interactional justice, employees may be more motivated and engaged in their work.

**Table 2: Hypothesis Testing Result**

Hypotheses	Structural relationships	SRW(Standard Regression weights )	P-value	Description
<b>H1</b>	<b>DJ EE →</b>	0.34	0.001	Significant
<b>H2</b>	<b>PJEE →</b>	0.16	0.003	Significant
<b>H3</b>	<b>INT J EE →</b>	0.49	0.001	Significant
<b>H4</b>	<b>INF J EE →</b>	0.23	<b>0.008</b>	Significant

Note: Distributive justice (DJ), Procedural justice (PJ), Interactional Justice (INTJ), Informational justice (INFJ) and Employee engagement (EE)

## 7.0 Limitations and Future Scope

The study attempts to examine the relationship between organizational justice and employee engagement, in the context of telecom industry. This study is not free of limitations that should be kept in mind when interpreting the findings. First, the study is restricted only to the state of J&K so, more of research should be done in other states of the India and in other countries so as to uncover similarities and differences in larger set of samples. Only organizational justice has been studied as a predictor of employee engagement, in future other predictors can also be studied in relation to employee engagement.

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