



Procedural justice and employee morale in commercial banking sector in port Harcourt Nigeria

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Abstract

Background: Since the banking industry is essential to any country's economic growth, its management is crucial to all money-related transactions. In light of this, it is important to recognize the need for organizational justice in the banking industry. The study used two dimensions of procedural justice fair process and equitable organizational policies and employee attitude as its measure. **Purpose:** This study looked at the connection between employee attitudes and procedural justice in Port Harcourt, Nigeria's commercial banking industry. **Design and methods:** Five Port Harcourt commercial banks were examined in the study. Ninety-two bankers answered the questionnaires for the data analysis in this empirical study, which had a sample size of 106. 27 out of 28 bank employees at First Bank (29.3%), 16 out of 22 bank employees at Sterling Bank (17.4%), 18 out of 18 bank employees at Zenith Bank (19.6%), 13 out of 15 bank employees at UBA bank (14.1%), and 18 out of 23 bank employees at Guarantee Trust Bank (19.6%) SPSS version 22 was used to analyze the study's data using Spearman's correlation coefficient. **Results:** The findings revealed a substantial positive correlation ($\rho=0.962$) between equitable organizational policy and employee attitude, as well as a positive correlation ($\rho=0.955$) between fair process and employee attitude. **Recommendation(s):** According to the survey, banks should make sure that their corporate procedures follow fair procedures and make an equal effort to uphold equitable organizational principles. **Research limitation-** The studies may be impacted by the bankers' hectic schedules because of how carelessly the questionnaires were completed. **Originality/value -**In order to ascertain the relationship between procedural justice and employee attitude in the Port Harcourt banking industry, the study focuses on the impact of fair procedure and equitable organisational rules on employee attitude. **Conclusion-** The study's conclusions made it abundantly evident that banks' management may boost productivity by encouraging their staff to retain a positive work attitude through the implementation of fair procedures and equal organisational norms.

Keywords: Procedural justice, Employee attitude, Fair process, Organizational policies, Banking sector

Introduction

The banking industry plays a crucial role in the economic growth of any country, and when everything is taken into account, the management of these financial institutions is essential to the entire economy and financial transactions. Financial services are becoming more and more demanding, but there has been fierce competition in the economic sector. The region is now one of the economy's unavoidable needs (Ahmad, Sulaman, & Hussain, 2015). The banking industry has created a significant amount of employment in recent years, offering its employees a range of benefits and compensation. This strategy may have an impact on bank employees' productivity. Accordingly, it is remarkable to learn that the banking industry needs organisational justice. This essay focuses on procedural justice and how it affects employees' attitudes in Port Harcourt's commercial banking industry.

One of the key components of any organization's success is its workforce. Employee attitudes toward work and perceptions of justice within the company have a significant impact on the accomplishment of organisational goals. The management of an organization's human resources and the attitudes of its personnel determine whether it is effective or ineffective. As a result, an organization's ability to succeed or fail depends on how its policies, tactics, and methods affect employees' perceptions of justice (Kwasi 2014). To achieve their objectives, organisations need motivated and productive managers and staff since they cannot function effectively without their sustained efforts and dedication.

Employee attitude refers to how employees behave within the company as it relates to their

work. It involves guiding employees to improve both organisational and personal viability (Issifu 2014). It plays a significant role in determining employees' attitudes toward their employment. If they enjoy their work, they are more likely to give it their all. According to Bagherian, Bahaman, Asnarulkhadi, and Shamsuddin (2009), attitudes are people's positive or negative viewpoints. Procedural justice, which deals with treating employees fairly, is one of the factors that affects an employee's attitude and job satisfaction. According to Peele III (2007), procedural justice shows if organisational policies are equitable to provide a fair distribution of resources among employees.

Problem of the Study

The purpose of this study is to examine how procedural justice affects employees' attitudes in Port Harcourt's banking industry. The problem statement is explained by the following points:

- 1) What is the standard of procedural justice in Port Harcourt's banking industry?
- 2) Does procedural justice affect how employees feel about handling an account at Port Harcourt?
- 3) What variables influence the attitude of employees in Port Harcourt's banking sector?

Objectives of Study

The following objectives will be achieved during this study;

- 1) To examine the effect of a fair process on employee attitude in the banking sector of Port Harcourt.
- 2) To evaluate the effect of equitable organizational policies on employee attitude in the banking sector of Port Harcourt.

Research Hypotheses

In this study, the following null hypotheses shall guide the researcher in providing answers to the stated research questions.

Ho1: There is no significant relationship between fair process and employee attitude.

Ho2: There is no significant relationship between equitable organizational policies and employee attitude.

Literature Review

Theoretical Framework

John Rawls' theory of justice serves as the theoretical cornerstone. It acknowledges three types of procedural justice:

i. Perfect procedural justice, ii. Pure procedural justice, and iii. Inadequate procedural justice (Rawls, 1999).

Adams' equity theory (1965) is an additional hypothesis. Adam's equity theory relies on a ratio that includes both inputs and outcomes. Results are the benefits of the inputs, whereas inputs are human contributions. Six requirements for a fair procedure were the focus of Leventhal, Karuza, and Fry's (2001) theory of procedural justice: Protocols ought to:

- 1) Always be operational,
- 2) Be impartial,
- 3) Adhere to moral principles;
- 4) Ensure accurate information for decision-making;
- 5) Ensure that the opinions of relevant groups have been taken into consideration; and
- 6) Create a system to correct incorrect decisions.

Applying criteria consistently, suppressing bias, using accurate information, allowing for mistakes, using representatives, and treating people ethically are the six guiding principles of procedural justice theory (Fassina, 2008; Heponiemi, 2007). However, Konovsky and

Pugh (2004) discovered that a significant measure of trust is procedural justice.

The Concept of Procedural Justice

Procedural justice theory, which focuses on assessments of the process by which designation decisions are made, was developed as a result of Thibaut and Walker's (1975) research on people's reactions to dispute resolution techniques. Their main argument was disputants' reactions to the judicial system.

According to Muhammad & Zahid (2014), employees are more likely to be content with their jobs and to be more dedicated to the company when they perceive that the organization makes appropriate decisions regarding the allocation of resources and the process. Thus, procedural justice focuses on the methods and techniques used to examine yield, result, and outcome.

When employees draw conclusions about overall organisational fairness, it has been suggested that the fairness of procedures is what matters most (Tyler & Blader, 2000). Therefore, it is often believed that procedural fairness depends on employees' willingness to accept organisational policies and judgements based solely on procedures (Akoh & Amah 2016). When an organization's procedures are perceived as fair, its employees will be more committed and eager to fulfil their responsibilities.

Dimensions of Procedural Justice

Folger Cropanzano's (1998) fair process and Peele III's (2007) equitable organisational policies were used as the procedural justice dimensions in this study.

Fair Process

A fair decision-making process is procedural fairness. According to Folger and Cropanzano (1998), procedural justice refers to equity with regard to the methods, elements, and processes

used to determine outcomes. According to Tsai (2012), people involved in conflicts have a propensity to accept rulings based on the processes they were allowed to approve or add to the institution.

The "fair process effect" refers to the inevitable tendency for people to exhibit better work attitudes and behaviours, such as greater organisational commitment, when they perceive a higher level of procedural fairness in the planning and execution of decisions (Folger & Konovsky, 2009). Lavanthal, Karuza, and Fry (2001) identified six elements of a fair process: consistency, correctness, ethics, representation of all parties involved, rectification, and lack of bias. According to Kim and Mauborgne (2011), people's cooperation and job involvement increase when they believe that the decision-making process is fair.

Equitable Organizational Policies

Decisions and policies are influenced by procedural justice. Whether organisational policies are equitable to provide a fair distribution of resources among employees is demonstrated by procedural justice (Peele III, 2007). However, Cropanzano, Bowen, and Gilliland (2010) emphasised that morality arises from establishing policies that instill a sense of equality and trust in workers.

Ensuring equity and fair treatment for all employees, regardless of their experience, background, or perceived value, is one of the challenges organisations face. Everyone who works in a unit is subject to any policies that are developed collectively. When a policy is created within the organization, employees are required to adhere to its requirements. Procedural justice is not carried out correctly if the policy is altered or exempted for certain individuals.

Similarly, procedural justice should be taken into account while creating policies. The policy must be equitable for all members of the organization,

with minimal consideration given to factors such as gender, race, age, position, or level of education. We should look into a few cases in order to further analyse procedural justice. Everyone at every level must abide by an organization's strict tardiness policy, which may include specific penalties for employees who habitually arrive late. Procedural justice is not being applied if a small number of people are not covered by the norm.

The Concept of Employee Attitude

Employee attitudes and behaviours regarding organisational policies, procedures, decision-making, and outcomes are influenced by their perception of justice. According to Eisenberger, Fasolo, and Davis-LaMastro (2000), employees' perceptions of their worth within the company are crucial for figuring out whether any attitudes or behaviours within the company resulted from social exchange relationships. An employee will reciprocate by carrying out their duties efficiently and being devoted to the company when they perceive that it treats them fairly. According to Shore and Shore (1995), worker mindset will undoubtedly be impacted by the decision and the associated employees' perceptions of organisational caring.

Relationship between Procedural Justice and Employee Attitude

The following section will address the relationship between the independent and dependent variables.

Fair Process as a determinant of Employee Attitude

Researchers have focused a lot of attention on the idea of justice or fairness, which penetrates many actions and reactions in organisations today (Nowakowski and Conlon, 2005). According to Colquitt (2001), new research has shown a direct correlation between the perception of fairness and a number of organisational antecedents, including work

satisfaction and organisational commitment. Therefore, any policy that is put into place that results in an organisational shift may be viewed as sinister by those who are impacted. Careful thought must be given to prevent sentiments of unfairness, which are suspicious and a sense of insecurity.

Nevertheless, according to Deconinck and Bachmann (2007), referenced by Kwasi (2014), employee attitudes were positively correlated with perceptual fairness. Therefore, employees' perceptions of procedural justice may also influence their desire to stay with the company, since justice observations are linked to employees' attitudes and behaviours toward policies, procedures, decision-making, and outcomes in organisations (Dogan, 2008).

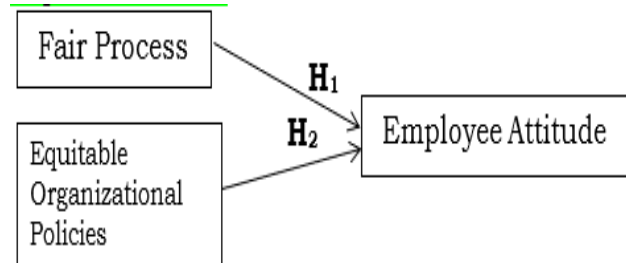
Ho1: Fair process is not positively related to employee attitude.

Equitable Organizational Policies as a determinant of Employee Attitude

According to Ahmad, Sulaman, and Hussain (2015), organisations that need to retain their employees should implement policies and practices that promote job happiness. The majority of analyses anticipate that organisational policies can have an impact on job satisfaction. According to Memon, Panhwar, and Rohra (2010), effective organisational policies and HR strategies targeted at staff retention can boost output and contentment. Policies are then linked to job satisfaction. According to Mosaderghard and Yamohammadian (2006), managers can influence employees' loyalty to the organization by employing suitable leadership styles.

Ho2: Equitable organizational policies are not positively related to Employees attitudes.

Conceptual Framework



Source: Desk Research, 2017.

The conceptual framework for this investigation is shown in Figure 1.1 above. The independent variable, procedural justice, has two components: equitable organisational policies by Peele III (2007) and fair procedure as defined by Folger and Konovsky (1989).

Empirical Review

The study "Distributive and Procedural Justice as Predictors of Job satisfaction and Organisational Commitment of the banking sector employees in Balochistan" was carried out by Muhammad & Zahid (2014). The investigation's findings demonstrated that distributive and procedural fairness had an impact on employees' job satisfaction and organisational commitment in the banking industry.

The study "Procedural Justice and Employees Commitment to Supervisors in Nigeria Health Sector" was carried out by Akoh and Amah (2016). They collected information from 99 medical professionals. The study discovered a largely favourable relationship between employee dedication and procedural justice. They discovered that employees prefer to relate well to directors that implement equitable practices. They advise organisations to refine or, in the absence of any other changes, modify policies, methods, and programs in accordance with the fairness guideline.

Mahmud, Mahbubul, Farzana, and Miah (2015) investigated employee job satisfaction and organisational justice at a specific Bangladeshi

pharmaceutical company. 76 executives provided them with data. SPSS version 16 was used to code the gathered data. Regarding the reliability scales, every study variable has sufficient internal consistency.

Methodology

Research Design

Population of Study

All of Port Harcourt's commercial banks make up the study's target population. However, because of the study's time constraints, it might not be feasible to deal with all of Port Harcourt's commercial banks; instead, an accessible segment of the population was chosen. Five commercial banks in Port Harcourt would be accessible: First Bank Rumuokwurushi, Zenith Bank Rumuokwurushi, Guarantee Trust Bank (GTB) Shell RA bus stop Aba road, Stanbic IBTC Artillery, Aba road, and Sky Bank Oluobasanjo, off GRA Port Harcourt. Both management and employees make up the population. However, only completed questionnaires were deemed legitimate and used in this study. The data was analysed using the Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS).

Sampling Technique

The study employed both basic random sampling and stratified sampling. 145 senior, medium, and lower level employees from the five commercial banks made up the study's sample. From the five commercial banks that

were the subject of the investigation, a sample representation of 106 was selected. The use of both simple random sampling and stratified random sampling is justified by the fact that simple random sampling gives every respondent in the research population a chance of being chosen, while stratified sampling guarantees the presence of important subgroups within the sample, increasing population efficiency overall. The sample size can be calculated using Taro Yamen's formula as follows:

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2}m$$

Where:

n = sample size

N = Population (145)

e = Level of significant (0.05)

$$n = \frac{145}{1 + 145(0.05)^2}$$

$$n = \frac{145}{1 + 145(0.0025)}$$

$$n = \frac{145}{1 + 0.3625}$$

$$n = \frac{145}{1.3625}$$

$$n = 106.4$$

$$= 106$$

Method of Data Collection

The research questionnaire served as the study's measuring tool. The distribution and retrieval of the questionnaires are displayed in the table below.

Table 1.1 Questionnaire distribution

S/N	Banks	Number Given	Number Retrieved	Number Not Retrieved	% of total Not retrieved
1	First Bank	28	27	1	29.3
2	Sterling bank	22	16	6	17.4
3	Zenith	18	18	—	19.6
4	UBA bank	15	13	2	14.1
5	GTB	23	18	5	19.6
	Total	106	92	14	100

Measures

For the convenience of the respondents, the demographic data was not collected in the structured questionnaire for this study, which will only have one section on the study variables. The data gathering equipment measured both independent and dependent variables. The aspects of fair procedure and equitable organisational justice were used to measure the independent variable, procedural justice, while employee attitude was used to measure the dependent variable. For each of them, a four-item scale and a four-point Likert-type scale ranging from Strongly Disagree (SD) to Strongly Agree (SA) were created.

Reliability of the Instrument

The Cronbach's alpha coefficients tool was used to test for the reliability of this study. According to Bryman and Bell, (2003), an alpha coefficient of 0.70 was considered reliable for this study.

Method of Data Analysis

Using straightforward table frequencies and percentages, the Spearman's Rank Order

Correlation Coefficient tool was applied in response to the study's hypotheses.

Results and Discussion

The dependent variable, employee attitude, was associated with the procedural justice elements of fair procedure and equitable organisational policy. The objective was to ascertain if these aspects of procedural fairness and employee attitude are significantly related, as well as the direction of that link. With the help of SPSS version 22, the data gathered for the study was analysed using the Spearman's correlation coefficient statistic. Only one hundred and one (101) of the 106 copies of the research questionnaire that were distributed to respondents from the five banks chosen for this study were recovered, and only ninety-two (92) of those copies were valid, yielding an 86.8% response rate. We conducted our analysis using these legitimate copies.

Hypothesis One

HO1: There is no significant relationship between fair process and employee attitude.

Statistical Analysis for Hypothesis One

Correlations				
Spearman's rho	Fair	Correlation Coefficient	Fair	Attitude
		Sig. (2-tailed)	1.000	.955
		N	92	92
	Attitude	Correlation Coefficient	.955	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.044	.
		N	92	92

The results of the above table, which demonstrate a very significant and positive correlation ($r = 0.955$) between fair process and employee attitude, led to the rejection of the null hypothesis. A strong correlation is indicated by the significant value of 0.044 ($p < 0.05$).

Hypothesis Two

HO2: There is no significant relationship between equitable organizational policies and employee attitude.

Statistical Analysis for Hypothesis Two

Correlations				
Spearman's rho	Equit	Correlation Coefficient	Equit	Attitude
		Sig. (2-tailed)	1.000	.962
		N	.	.038
	Attitude	Correlation Coefficient	92	92
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.962	1.000
		N	.038	.
			92	92

According to the above table, there is a very strong and positive correlation ($r = 0.962$) between equitable organisational policies and employee attitude. A significant relationship is shown by the significant value of 0.038 ($p < 0.05$). This leads to the rejection of the null hypothesis.

Conclusion

This study evaluated the relationship between procedural justice and employee attitude. It looked at how fair processes affect employee attitude and how equitable organisational policies affect employee attitude. Data collected were tested empirically using the Spearman's Rank Order Correlation Coefficient statistical tool. The results showed that there is a positive and significant relationship between the dimensions of procedural justice and employee attitude, which were the variables used for this study. It was evident from the findings that banks that successfully implement fair processes and equitable organisational policies in their procedural justice process will encourage their employees to maintain a positive work attitude.

Additionally, the results showed that banks that have a strong foundation in the application of equitable organisational principles and the practice of fair process in their interactions with employees likely to have positive employee attitudes toward work over time.

Recommendations

The researcher suggests the following actions in light of the study's findings:

- 1) In order to preserve an indifferent attitude toward their company, banks should make sure that they follow fair process in their procedural justice practices. This will allow them to treat all employees equally.
- 2) In order to prevent employees from feeling discriminated against in areas where they are not treated similarly with other employees within the same company, banks should make an equal effort to uphold equitable organisational rules in their procedural justice processes.

Contribution to Knowledge

The following are some ways that the results of this study are thought to have positively impacted the literature on procedural justice and employee attitude. First, this work has helped to resolve current difficulties regarding procedural fairness and employee attitude in banks since, to the best of the research's knowledge, the gap indicated with the literature has been solved.

Additionally, based on the results of this study, we have made constructive recommendations that, if implemented, are thought to assist the banks in upholding a standard procedural justice structure that will foster a positive attitude among employees in carrying out their duties. It is equally important to note that the results may be a source of knowledge that encourages additional study in this field of interest.

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