



Role of Justice in Implementation of Organizational Change and the Effect of Resistance to Change on Job Commitment: A Case Study of PTCL

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Abstract: This study aims to examine, perception of employees regarding organizational justice in relations with job commitment in an organizational change situation, especially when the employees show resistance towards the proposed change. Quantitative research methodology is used for the execution of this study, where responses from 140 employees of PTCL across ten major cities of the country were collected through pre-structured questionnaires. Exploratory factor analysis & multiple regression analysis were employed for the study. SPSS data analysis tool is used for the evaluation of these responses, which is then followed by detailed discussion over the results of the statistical evaluation. The results of this study partially supported the conceptual framework because it has strongly rejected the hypothesis related to the mediating role of behavioral resistance in establishing relationship between organizational justice and job commitment, while supporting the other two hypotheses. Finally, at the end certain limitations and future implications of the study are provided for the use of future researchers in evaluation of the subject matter in future.

Key words: Organizational justice, Job commitment, Change initiative, PTCL, Behavior

1. Introduction

Organizations may need to change its culture and structure in response to the environmental changes to protect themselves against the destructive forces and to cope with the increasing competition in their respective industries. The change process in an organization is a highly critical and challenging task that could not be easily achieved and therefore, it needs collective efforts from all the stakeholders of an organization (Shahbazi & Tavrah, 2016). Moreover, in many cases it has been observed that sometimes people also resist organizational change, which causes failure in the change process. Therefore, in view of the mentioned facts, it could be said that modern day managers are exposed to two fundamental issues (Paterson, Green & Cary, 2002). The first is how their organizations can navigate the change process to respond in a better way towards the environmental changes, while the second issue is that how it can manage its resources, especially the human resource that they can meet their personal needs as well as the ultimate goals of the organization through highly aligned strategies with its mission and values.

1.2 Background of the Organization

Pakistan Telecommunication Company Limited is the national telecommunication services provider in Pakistan since 1949. The company is providing telecommunication and internet services throughout the country and established the overall telecommunication infrastructure despite the entry of several other telecommunication corporations in Pakistan (Pakistan Telecommunication Limited, 2015). It operates through more than 2,000 exchanges across various regions of the country. The company was incorporated as a state owned incorporation, while in 2006 it sold out 26% of the shareholding to Ethicalat Telecommunication and 12% to the general public under an intensified privatization program initiated by Prime Minister Shaukat Aziz.

1.3 Research Purpose

Various studies have been conducted to evaluate the negative impacts of emotional state of employees over the change process in an organization, which are also discussed in the literature review section. The present study is aimed to evaluate all the possible factors that could affect the emotional state of an employee and reinforce the awareness about negative correlation among employee's resistance and change initiative (Zafar & Naveed, 2014). Particularly, assessing the role of organizational justice and its impact upon the employee's emotions and the process of shaping the emotions regulation strategies, while shedding lights over the existing research on the relationship between organizational change and the corresponding resistance among employees that results due to such change initiative (Paterson, Green & Cary, 2002). Previous studies were mostly based upon evaluation of employee's commitment towards their jobs and the organization as a whole on the basis of the organizational culture/structure or ethical practices that are being employed by the management (Syahputra, 2014; CHORDIYA, SABHARWAL & GOODMAN, 2017 & Salih & Al.Ibed, 2017). However, very few studies were conducted in relation to evaluation of the impact of organizational change initiatives over the level of commitment among its employees and majority of these studies have only considered one or two of the three dimensions of the resistance to change, i.e. behavioral resistance to change (Cinite & Duxbury, 2018; Alamri & Al-Duhaim, 2017), cognitive resistance to change (Kidron, 2018) and effective resistance to change (Marchalina & Ahmad, 2017; Ling, Guo & Chen, 2018), however, this study is aimed to focus upon evaluation of the impact of all the three dimensions of resistance to change over the overall level of commitment among employees towards their respective jobs and organizations as a whole.

1.4 Research Problem

The privatization of PTCL was a big challenge for the government and Ethicalat Telecommunication because being a state owned entity, PTCL had a considerable number of employees as compared to the extent of its revenues, it were generating at that time, i.e. in 2005 the company reported 21 percent negative growth per annum due to excess number of employees. During the privatization initiative of the government, Ethicalat Telecom showed its concern to cut off the excess labor from the organization (A. Munir, 2009). About 32,000 employees of the company left the organization under the voluntary separation program (VSS), which cost the government with 256 million dollars in lieu of payout to the leaving employees. It had also increased concerns about the remaining or continuing employees regarding their job security because management of the company was then led by Ethicalat Telecom, which in turns negatively affected their commitment towards the organization (A. Munir, 2009). Therefore, the researcher has selected PTCL for the evaluation of the impact of perceived justice on job commitment of employees, especially during a change initiative.

1.5 Research Question

This study could considerably assist the higher management of an organization, since it is very crucial to be aware of the impact of certain actions on the perception of justice among the employees during the execution of a change in an organization. The study aims to examine the impact of perceived justice over the implementation of a change initiative and how resistance towards the change can affect the level of job commitment among employees. Hence, the main research question is formulated as under:

'How perceive justice relates to the employee's job commitment and to what extent is this relationship mediated by resistance to change in a organizational change initiative?'

2. Literature Review

2.1 Job Commitment as Change Commitment

Job commitment is ameliorated for the success of an organization because high level of commitment of employees shows a high level of loyalty to the organization. Lipponen et al. (2004) argued that the increasing competitiveness of the market is motivating the organizations for the implementation of a change in order to increase efficiency and reduce costs. To achieve that change, job commitment of employees can play a key role because employees, who are highly committed to their jobs, can become more committed to the desired change for the well being of the organization. Herscovitch & Meyer (2002) argued that despite the criticalness of change for the success of an organization, it has been observed that majority of the attempts to organizational change usually fails due to lack of commitment among its employees. Resistance to change is another component that has been identified as an important reason for failed change attempts/initiatives Pardo & Fuentes (2003). The difference between organizational commitment and change commitment is that initially employees are committed to change, while in the later one they support their organization throughout the change process (Herscovitch & Meyer 2002). Job commitment as a dependent variable for this study has been categorized into three categories: Affective commitment, Continuous commitment, and Normative Commitment. Allen and Mayer (1990) explained Affective Commitment as emotional ties of employees with their organization mainly due to the positive work experiences. The continuance commitment is defined as the commitment of employees on the basis of perceived costs associated with leaving their organizations. These costs can be either social or economic or both. Normative commitment is defined as a sense of responsibility or obligation to stay with the organization due to personal belief that employees should stay with their organizations without having any emotional or monetary interest. The study conducted by Herscovitch & Meyer (2002) investigated that employees, who possess affective commitment, will do their jobs with their full potential during the change period. Due to the high affective commitment level, such employees will be highly focused to help their employers in the successful execution of change. Similarly, employees having high normative commitment level will either support or oppose the change on the basis of their feelings. Shin, Seo, Shapiro & Taylor, (2015) found that if employees shows a considerable level of commitment towards their organization, they must support any change initiative that is favorable for the sustainability and success of an organization. The authors found that the level of perceived informational and transformational justice has a considerable level of impact over the level of employee's commitment towards a change initiative. Similarly, if employees have a notable level of affective commitment towards their job and organizational as a whole, they will be more likely to perceive the organizational change initiative as part of their overall commitment towards their organization and its long term sustainability.

2.2 Perceived Justice and Change Resistance

In addition to the commitment of employees to an organization, the behavior of employees towards a change can also be affected by their emotional consequences towards perceived justice (Oreg & van Dam, 2009). According to Piderit (2000) resistance to change is highly complex and three dimensional in nature (Affective, Behavioral and Cognitive resistance) and in addition to the job commitment of employees, it can easily be affected by perceived justice in an organization. The Affective Events Theory by Weiss and Cropanzano (1996) best explain the role of perceived justice in resistance to change. According to Affective Events Theory (AET), a number of specific work-related events result in the generation of specific emotions that can further be translated to various behaviors.

Rupp & Spencer (2006) suggested that the fairness perceptions of individual were marked as an Affective event under AET. Similar to job commitment, organizational justice or perceived justice with its several dimensions considered as one of the critical predictor of change resistance (Moorman, 1991). Perceived justice has been divided in several dimensions including Procedural, Distributive and interactional justice to understand its role as a resistant factor towards the organizational change (Colquitt, 2001). Procedural justice can be defined as perceived fairness in the decision making, dispute resolution, and resource allocation processes. It has great importance in organizational change because it matters a lot for employees that how an organizational change has been administered in an organization (Rodell & Colquitt 2009; Oreg & Van Dam, 2009).

Many studies identified that when employees perceive procedural justice as unfair they are more likely to show resistance towards change (Brockner and Siegel, 1996; Rodell & Colquitt, 2009). According to the investigation of

Brockner and Siegel (1996) the perceived fairness of procedures can help in minimizing the negative and unfavorable behavior and resistance of employees towards a change. On the other hand, the studies done by Rodell & Colquitt, (2009) and Van Dam, Oreg (2006) found that procedural justice enhance the provision of information and creates opportunities for the participation of employees. Brockner and Siegel (1996) suggested that provision of such information and the development of opportunities improve the commitment of employees and result in a reduced level of resistance to change. Distributive justice can be defined as the redistribution and allocation of resources in an organization. Distributive justice with respect to its role in resistance to change has not been studied by researchers specifically, however, in many studies it has been discovered that it has a negative relationship with employee's turnover intentions in an organization during a change process (Leventhal, 1977; and Daly & Geyer 1994).

Interactional justice refers to the perceived fairness among employees about the degree of interpersonal treatment in the validation of official methodologies and processes (Bies & Shapiro, 1987). According to Kernan & Hanges (2002) interactional fairness emphasizes upon the need of delivering just and fair information to the employees. It is based on two dimensions identified as interpersonal sensitivity and clarification or explanation that demands for the fair transfer of information and treatment from the leaders to subordinates. Numerous studies including (Folger and Cropanzano, 1998; Kernan & Hanges, 2002; and Paterson & Cary, 2002) identified that employees show less resistance when they have a high level of perceived fairness of the change procedures. According to the study of Spreitzer and Mishra (2002), if employees are informed in advance about any sort of change within an organization they show less resistance to change and high degree of organizational/ job commitment, which shows a strong correlation of the informational and procedural justice with the level of commitment among employees towards their organization.

2.3 Mediated role of Attitudes and Resistance to Change

Resistance to change or attitudes of employees that go against the procedures of change are critical because in majority of the failures in change processes, the emotional state and attitudes of employees are some of the basic causes of such failures (Piderit, 2000; Lapointe & Rivard, 2005). Yousef, (2016) conducted a study over evaluation of the mediating role of employees attitude and resistance to change in establishing the relationship between organizational justice and job commitment in local government organizations. The author found that the individual attitude and resistance towards a change initiative plays a crucial role in deciding whether the employee is satisfied and committed towards his/her organization. According to Wanberg & Banas (2000) resistance to change has also a great impact on the job commitment of employees, especially those that are high at continuance commitment because it triggers their intention to leave the organization. Job dissatisfaction, low loyalty with organization, and reduction in the overall positive feeling towards an organization are a few common outcomes of resistance to change, which in turn affect the perceptions of employees towards prevailing level of justice in their organization and cause reduction in their level of commitment in the long run (Piderit, 2000; Lapointe & Rivard, 2005). Lee & Park, (2015) has divided the overall resistance to change in three-dimensions: affective resistance, cognitive resistance and behavioral resistance. These dimensions are investigated in comparison with the various dimensions of perceived justice, which evaluated that the level of perceived organizational justice is notably affected by the attitude of employees towards the change initiative, i.e. if employees perceive the process of change as their career building exercise or if they see fringed benefits in it, they will support the process and their commitment level will considerably increased. According to Gross & Thompson (2006), the attitudes of employees has a great impact on the degree of resistance towards a change, however, it can be controlled and improved through various strategies. The tridimensional attitudes towards change identified by Oreg (2006) were negative; however, through improvement in perceived justice, the negativity of these attitudes could be improved. Numerous researchers concluded that procedural fairness has comparatively great impact on the attitudes of employees during a change process (Oreg, 2006 and Niehoff and Moorman, 1993) Perceived organizational justice and employee's job commitment has a comparatively positive relationship. Gross & Thompson, (2006); and Kotter & Schlesinger, (2008); are all agreed that the resistance to change attitudes of employees can be minimized through emotions regulatory practices/strategies. They further concluded that it is also in the hand of organizations that with what strategies they can moderate the impact of attitudes on resistance to change.

2.4 Theoretical Framework

For the purpose of this study, researcher used Affective Event Theory (AET) of Weiss & Cropanzano, (1996) to evaluate the impact of organizational justice over the level of job commitment among employees, especially in relation to a change initiative in an organization. The Affective Event Theory states that employees usually exhibit specific emotions in response to certain specific events at workplace, which in turn spontaneously shape their behaviors and overall attitude towards the organization and specifically towards their job. In past individual perceptions regarding fairness at workplace were evaluated as an effective event (Bendick, Jr & Egan, 2014), but this study also viewed resistance to change among employees as an effective event and evaluates its impact over the level of perceived justice and job commitment among employees. On the basis of this theory, the following conceptual framework has been formulated that help the researcher in development of three hypotheses, which are then tested against the data collected from the participants to reach a valid conclusion over the subject matter.

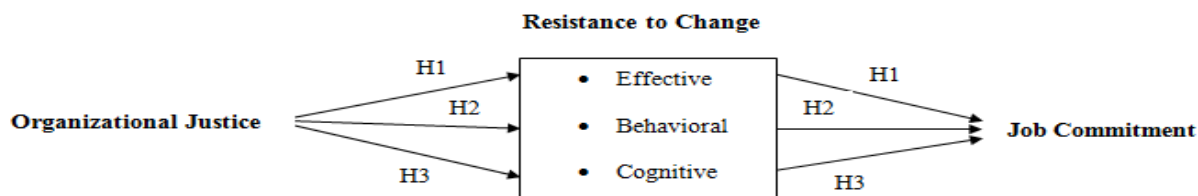


Figure –

Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

2.5 Research Hypotheses

- **H1:** The relationship between perceived organizational justice and level of job commitment among employees is mediated by effective resistance to change.
- **H2:** The relationship between perceived organizational justice and level of job commitment among employees is mediated by behavioral resistance to change.
- **H3:** The relationship between perceived organizational justice and level of job commitment among employees is mediated by cognitive resistance to change.

3. Methodology

The study is conducted through quantitative approach, where the researcher collected data from both the primary and secondary resources and performed experiments for testing its validity. The quantitative approach requires statistical evaluation of the collected data to form a factual conclusion over the subject matter. Primary data is collected through distribution of questionnaires among employees of PTCL while for secondary data, the study used critical evaluation of the past literature and theories for building a strong understanding of the research topic. Population for this study was comprised upon employees of Pakistan Telecommunication Limited (PTCL) in exchanges and offices located across ten major cities of Pakistan including Islamabad, Karachi, Lahore, Queta, Peshawar, Multan, Mardan, Abbotabad, Faisalabad and Rawalpindi, however for the sake of convenience of the researcher a representative sample of 140 employees were selected from the mentioned regions. These ten regions were selected with an objective to make the study more practicable for the researcher because PTCL is one of such organizations in Pakistan that has a considerable spread of network across the country and it could not be possible to get responses from employees of remote areas of the country. Researcher has obtained formal permission and contact details of employees from the head office of PTCL and distributed the questionnaires among employees through e-mail. Questionnaires were developed using Google forms that contain simple and clear directions for the participants to ensure that their responses were used for the purpose of this research only and would be kept confidential afterwards. For the collection of data from the respondents, researcher has used a five point Likert scale for all the dimensions of resistance, fairness and job commitment among employees. For the measurement of responses from the participants, each item was ranged from strongly disagree to strongly agree over the five point Likert scale.

4. Analysis

4.1 Demographic Profile

Table 1: Participant's Demographic Profile

Demographic Variables	Frequency	Percentage %
Age		
20-30	52	37.14
30-40		
40-50	41	29.28
above 50		
Total	26	18.57
Education Level		
illiterate	21	15
high school students	140	100
graduates		
post graduates		
Total		
Occupation	0	0
Operational Level		
Tactical Level	57	40.71
Strategic Level		
Total	45	32.14
	38	27.14
	140	100
	12	8.6
	87	62.14
	41	29.3
	140	100

The above table show that the highest number of respondents fall into age group from 20 to 30 years, exhibiting 37.14%, followed by employees falling into the age group from 30 to 40 years, representing 29.28%. This shows that majority of the employees in PTCL are young and energetic. In terms of educational level, majority of the respondents were high school graduates or college graduates, representing 37.14% and 29.18% of the selected sample, respectively. The respondents having post graduate level qualification were 27.14 percent of the selected sample, which shows that being a technology based company; it has comparatively literate and educated employees. The highest number of respondents belonged to the tactical level, showing 62.14% of the selected sample, followed by strategic level employees with 29.3% and operational level with 8.6%. Reason behind lower response rate from the operational level employees was lack of education and proper understanding of the organizational structure and culture among these employees.

4.2 Exploratory Factor Analysis

Table 2: Exploratory Factor Analysis

Variables	Factor Loading	Cronbach's Alpha
Organizational Justice (OJ)		0.91
OJ1	.579	
OJ2	.621	
OJ3	.663	
Affective Resistance to Change (AR)		0.89
AR1	.631	
AR2	.756	
AR3	.837	
AR4	.911	
Behavioral Resistance to Change (BR)		0.86
BR1	.753	
BR2	.821	
BR3	.836	
Cognitive Resistance to Change (CR)		0.90
CR1	.873	
CR2	.881	
CR3	.790	
Job Commitment (JC)		0.87
JC1	.762	
JC2	.815	
JC3	.912	

The above table is used for checking the validity of measures through exploratory factor analysis, which is followed by a reliability test through application of Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient. The construct validity exploratory analysis is used to measure the appropriateness and suitability of a group of items to measure the latent variable (Chalmers & Yates, 1989). The Exploratory Factor Analysis is applied over a group of variable to evaluate which subset have correlation among each other, but exhibiting differences with other variables. The principal component analysis along with varimax rotation was used for conducting factor analysis over the selected variables of this study. For this purpose, 0.5 were set as a threshold for measuring significance of the items, while all such items that showed less than 0.5 loadings were considered as insignificant. The final set of items contained three items for organizational justice, four items for affective resistance to change, three items for behavioral resistance, three items for cognitive resistance and finally three items for job commitment. Here all such measures were considered as valid, if it was not impacted by random error. Moreover, the acceptability of a variable on the basis of Cronbach's Alpha was measured and a generally accepted limit of 0.7 was devised. Validated scales are then utilized in computation of means, correlation between variables, standard deviation of scales and summated scores, as provided in the given table.

4.3 Descriptive Statistics and Inter Variable Correlation

Table 3: Descriptive Statistics and Inter Variable Correlation

	Mean	Standard Deviation	OJ	AR	BR	CR
Organizational Justice	3.67	0.96				
Affective Resistance to Change	2.38	0.95	.379**			
Behavioral Resistance to Change	3.61	0.89	.568**	.382**		
Cognitive Resistance to Change	3.98	0.84	.670**	.212*	.388**	
Job Commitment	3.63	0.87	.379**	.341**	0.040	.219*

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).
 **. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Test of hypothesis was performed through multiple regression analysis, while keeping job commitment as dependent variable. The given table shows results of the multiple regression analysis, where it is evaluated that organizational justice, affective resistance and cognitive resistance have a significant impact over the level of job commitment among employees ($p < 0.01$), thus supporting the hypothesis H1 and H3. The regression analysis of coefficients was conducted through SPSS analysis tool, which showed a strangely negative correlation regarding the coefficient behavioral resistance and its impact over the level of job commitment as a mediating factor. Therefore, it showed that behavioral resistance doesn't have significant impact over the level of job commitment among employees ($p > 0.05$), therefore rejecting H2. Moreover, the independent variable shows 40.2% variation in the dependent variable, which is exhibited in the given as under.

4.4 Regression Analysis

Table 4: Regression Analysis

	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		
	β	Std. Error	Beta	T	Sig.
(Constant)	2.206	.402		5.675	.000
OJ	.439	.103	.481	4.029	.000
AR	.281	.078	.283	3.360	.001
BR	-.368	.084	-.423	-4.541	.000
CR	.156	.113	-.057	-.530	.090
Adjusted R Square = 0.402					

The regression analysis of the coefficients was used to find the best predictor for change and improvement, therefore, it was evaluated that organizational justice (distributive, procedural and interactional justice) was considered as best predictor with a value of 0.439, followed by Affective resistance with a value of 0.281 and Cognitive resistance with a value of 0.156. Furthermore, the table indicated that defined variables would be positively significant at a significance level of 5%.

4.5 Discussion

This study has considered the coefficients like organizational justice and resistance to change as affective events in the culture of an organization that could affect the attitude of employees towards their organization and more specifically towards their jobs. The results of this study evaluated that organizational justice has a considerable impact over the level of job commitment among employees in case of both effective and cognitive resistance dimensions, which are also in line with the findings of past studies of Totawar & Nambudiri, (2014)&Paterson, Green & Cary, (2002); who found that affective resistance to change could significantly affect the perceptions of employees regarding interactional justice, which in turn affects the level of job commitment among such employees. Similarly, according to the findings of Song, (2016) the cognitive resistance among individuals regarding a change initiative has a considerable level of impact over all the three types of organizational justice because it allow them to carry out self reflection and insight into the past experiences, which in turn shape their attitude towards their organization and measure the level of commitment towards their job. However, the present study specifically addressed the prevailing gap in the study of Song, (2016), i.e. it has identified the interdependence of the cognitive resistance and affective resistance over one another and how they shape the employees attitude towards their jobs and organizations as a whole. Furthermore, the studies conducted by Syahputra, (2014) and Supriyanto, (2013) evaluated that behavioral resistance to change is one of the immediate responses of employees towards any change in the organizational culture or structure and therefore it has a direct impact over their commitment level, however, the findings of this study surprisingly showed negative correlation between the behavioral resistance and job commitment, which is not in line with the previous findings over the same coefficients. Variation with the past studies specifically addresses the inabilities of the past studies in addressing their implications over different economies and cultures, especially in developing third world countries. Therefore, because of certain specific characteristics of employees in Pakistani organizational culture, the study showed significantly different evaluations from the past literature. It is also evaluated that people in third world countries like Pakistan prefer job security and reasonable compensation above all other aspects like just and fair treatment from employer or sound organizational culture, therefore they avoid to exhibit or express negative emotions immediately before their employers.

5. Conclusion

The study was aimed to evaluate the impact of organizational justice over the level of job commitment among employees of Pakistan Telecommunication Limited, while keeping in view the mediating role of resistance to change among employees. For the purpose of this study, 140 employees were selected across ten major cities of the country, responses from employees were collected through pre-structured questionnaires, which were then analyzed through the SPSS data analysis tool. The coefficients and variables of this study was validated through the exploratory factor analysis and then analyzed through descriptive statistics, regression and correlation analysis.

The results shows that there is a strong correlation between the organizational justice and level of employees job commitment, while keeping the effective and cognitive resistance as mediating factors for assessing such correlation, while with respect to the behavioral resistance it showed no correlation among the job commitment and level of perceived justice among employees. Therefore, the study supported only two hypothesis of the conceptual framework, while rejecting the behavioral resistance hypothesis in relation to job commitment and perceived justice among employees of Pakistan Telecommunication Limited.

5.1 Limitations and Future Implications

Although the study has been conducted with considerable supervision and planning, but the findings of this study are subjected to the following limitations, which could be addressed in future studies to get more accurate results.

- The researcher has considered only ten major regions of the country, which are mostly urbanized cities having high literacy rate, therefore its findings could be different, if the study would have been conducted in the remote areas of the country. It is therefore recommended to conduct future research studies in rural areas of the country to get a clear image of the relationship among variables of this study.

- The selected organization has a considerable level of spread across the country and selection of employees from ten regions only may not accurately represent the population. Further, questionnaires were distributed through online e-mail mechanism, so it is also not confirmed that responses were made by the concerned employees or someone else. It is therefore recommended to conduct future evaluations over the subject matter in a comparatively smaller organization and questionnaires should be filled physically for accurate understanding.
- This study was executed under quantitative methodology, which measured the explicit responses or attitudes of employees only, however, for building an understanding of the implicit perceptions of employees, future studies shall be conducted using qualitative methodologies.

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