

# The effect of Organizational justice on employee turnover with the mediating role of Job embeddedness

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## Abstract

*Employee turnover remains a serious issue among organisations irrespective of their size and nature. In this sense, there is a growing interest in identifying the antecedents of employee turnover to enhance high employee retention. In line with this trend, this study aims to test the mediating role of job embeddedness in the relationship between organisational justice and employee turnover. A cross-sectional empirical study was carried out on stock broking dealers in Chennai city. Hundred and fifty-five participants completed the self-administered questionnaire. Pearson correlation and regression analysis was used to test the hypothesis. The study results indicate that distributive, procedural, and interpersonal justice perceptions relate to employee turnover and job embeddedness mediates the relationship between organizational justice and employee turnover. Business leaders and human resource professionals could consider the research results to implement employee retention strategies to enhance high retention within their organisations.*

**Keywords:** *organisational justice, employee turnover, Stockbroking industry, job embeddedness.*

## Introduction

The high rate of employee turnover has always been one of the critical success factors to the human resource managers and employers in any fast-growing economies, especially in Stockbroking industry. Employees who leave on the organisation's request, as well as those who leave on their initiative, can cause an interruption in operations, work team dynamics and unit performance (Iqbal, 2010). In this sense, voluntary and involuntary turnover create a massive cost for organizations. To retain employees, managers must pursue their organisations to follow fairness about rewards, work environment and productivity standards and then deliver on the promise. An embedded employees stay long with an organisation. Having said that employee turnover is such a severe problem in India, there is limited research exploring it, especially studies on causes and consequences are scanty. This paper examines the mediating role of job embeddedness between organisational justice and employee turnover and suggests few strategies to reduce employee turnover within the Indian business context. Thus, the significance of this research is:

To identify the mediating role of job embeddedness between organisational justice and employee turnover.

To analyse the consequences of employee turnover on productivity.

To find out the possible solutions for reducing turnover.

## Literature review

As defined by Price (1977) Organizational turnover is the ratio of the number of organisational members who resigned during the period being considered divided by the average number of people in that organisation during the period. Heneman and Judge (2009) have described four types of employee turnover under two categories. Turnover is either voluntary being initiated by the employee, or involuntary, being initiated by the organisation. In general, a certain amount of turnover is unavoidable (retirement, the death of an employee) facilitate to bring new blood into the organisation with new ideas and a fresh perspective. However, a massive number of voluntary turnover can ruin a company (Govindaraju, 2018). Several factors determine employee turnover intention. Among these, Organizational justice was one of the most exciting areas of research topic among human resource management research scholars (Govindaraju, 2019). According to Govindaraju (2019), the view of equitable or inequitable treatment may be identified with the correlation made inside or outside the organisation. Few studies investigated the mediating role of job embeddedness role between organisational justice and employee turnover of

stockbroking Industry employees in Chennai region. Therefore, this study intends to fill the gap by investigating the mediating role of job embeddedness role between organisational justice and turnover intention of stockbroking industry employees in Chennai city.

### **Employee turnover of Broking industry in Chennai City**

Chennai is restructuring its economy to adapt innovations in the global marketplace. Chennai has a significant number of private and public stock broking companies. In public sectors, although some fringe benefits are given to the employees regularly do not satisfy them sufficiently. In private sectors, through salary and benefits are high, but the security of a job is less. Moreover, most broking industries were driven by performance pay. Most private companies fix the sales volume target to get basic pay. Beyond this, job stress and overtime work are the major factors inducing the employee to leave the organisations.

Due to these reasons, the turnover rate in the private sectors is higher than in public sectors in broking industry. Few researchers explored Broking industry in Chennai, but little research exists on the mediating role of job embeddedness role between employee turnover and organisational justice. In general, the employee turnover rate also differs from manufacturing to service sectors. The literature on the employee turnover in Chennai organisation is limited so far. Employers and business owners do not focus on organisational justice. They have little idea about how destructive the effect of turnover is into the productivity of their organisations. Organisations that compete globally aim to gain a significant market share, but it depends on less employee turnover and more loyalty, which is associated with hard work, productivity, and high quality (Al-Kahtani, 2002). Therefore, this study aims to focus the mediating effect of job embeddedness between organizational justice and employee turnover.

### **Organisational justice**

Organisational justice refers to employees' perceptions of what is fair and what is unfair within their organisations (Colquitt, 2001). According to Greenberg (1987), organisational justice is a perception of reward distribution, resources, interactions among people within the organisation and distribution of processes. In this sense, past research evidenced that employees who perceive the organisational policies as not just, the employees tend to leave the organisations and start their professional career in other organisations where they feel comfortable and organisation policies as fair and just (Arif, 2018).

According to equity theory, a person perception in a social setting calculates his /her perceived input/outcome ratio. Employee compares their ratio with their co-workers. Equity exists if the individual perceives that his/her proportion of contributions like that of the referent (Govindaraju, 2019a). On the other hand, inequity is a nearness when there is an unequal information result proportion between the individual and the referent other. This will prompt a sentiment of unfairness experienced by the two parties and an endeavour to determine this inconsistency lead to turnover aim (Govindaraju, 2019b).

The concept of organisational justice was first given by Homans (1961). Later on Walster, Berschied, Carlson and Anthony (1999) discussed it thoroughly. Greenberg (1987) further categorised justice in two broad dimensions: 1) reactive and proactive and 2) process and content dimension. Organisational justice was discussed in three dimensions namely distributive, procedural and interaction justice (Colquitt, 2001; Luo, 2007). Few researchers conceptualised justice in four forms (Iyer, 2011). Few researchers (Bakhshi et al., 2009; Imran and Alli, 2016; Kaur, Mohindru, and Pankaj, 2013) studied organizational justice under three heads (i.e., Distributive justice, procedural justice and interactional justice) and few researchers (Duffy et al. (2013); Gupta and Kumar (2012); Iyer (2011) studied justice under four heads which include informational justice. Distributive justice (fairness in outcomes and distributions), procedural justice (fairness of procedures used to determine outcome distributions), interpersonal justice (quality of interpersonal treatment received when procedures are implemented), and informational justice (level of adequacy, honesty and convenience of information conveyed about why procedures are used a certain way or how outcomes are determined). This research approached organisational justice under three heads. Organisational justice has captured the attention of experts due to its effects on a vast repertoire of employee attitudes, cognitions and behaviours towards the organisations and their members (Colquitt et al., 2013; Silva & Caetano, 2016).

### **Distributive Justice**

Distributive justice is often attributed to Adam's theory of equity (1963, 1965), proposed that outcomes are perceived as fair when they seem proportionate to the inputs (e.g., effort and experience) an employee provides his/her organisation and job, in

comparison to others (Usman & Hussain, 2015). The extents to which rewards are distributed legitimately are known as distributive justice (Niehoff & Moorman 1993; Ponnu & Chuah, 2010). It is the fairness that is expected to get from the outcomes of the organisation (Arif, 2018). Generally, there are three rules that people use to decide whether or not their outcomes are fair, equality and need (Deutsch, 1985). According to Greenberg (2001), distributive justice explains the employees' reaction to the actions or distribution of rewards such as salary, extra benefits, up-gradation, job safety and dismissals from the organisation. This form of organisational justice emphasis on people's views about getting a fair amount of work-related outcomes and have an emotional impact on worker satisfaction with their work outcomes, such as remuneration and job tasks (Noruzy et al., 2011). Fairness in allocation provides everyone with the same amount (Cropanzano & Molina, 2015).

### **Procedural justice**

Thibaut and Walker (1975) first introduced the Procedural justice. Procedural justice is to mean by the extent to which employees perceive that the decisions about the distribution of resources are made honestly according to the organisation's formal processes and apply as it was made (Moorman, 1991). Procedural justice means the perceived fairness of the process followed by the authority figures (e.g., supervisors) in the organisation to distribute resources and outcomes (Thibault & Walker, 1975). Procedural justice means by the decision-making process or the set of policies that are used to make allocation decisions (Cropanzano & Molina, 2015). Roch and Shanock (2006) stated that procedural justice refers to fairness in procedures used in decision making about advancement, performance appraisal, bonuses and other organisational opportunities. Leventhal et al. (1980) provided a list of six well-known rules to decide whether a procedure is fair or not. In general, the process should treat all employees consistently without any bias, use accurate information in rendering decisions, take into account the views of all (something like voice), be correctable in the event of an error, and remain consistent with prevailing ethical norms. These six criteria have remained influential, although some additional rules might also be important in specific settings.

### **Interactional justice**

Bies and Moag (1986) introduced interactional justice. Colquitt (2001) divided Interactional justice into two dimensions - interpersonal and informational. Interpersonal justice is the extent to which individuals are treated with respect, whereas informational justice focuses on providing sufficient information about processes employed and why rewards were circulated in such manner (Walumbwa et al., 2009). Greenberg (1990) suggested that the sensitivity, politeness and respect aspects of interactional justice might be more appropriately viewed as inter-personal facets of distributive justice since it alters reactions to decision outcomes. On the other hand, explanation aspect of interactional justice might be more appropriately viewed as informational facets of procedural justice since explanation generally provide information needed for evaluating structural aspects of procedures (Ponnu & Chuah, 2010).

### **Job embeddedness**

Embeddedness is defined as a structure which tries and helps to hold the employees (Mitchell et al., 2001). Individuals having many links in the organisation are highly involved in the organisation and less intent to leave (Arif, 2018). Similarly, many firms are trying to strengthen the connection between female employees and their attachment to the organisation. For this purpose, they are using mentor systems to enhance women participation in organisational activities as a bonding with their organisation (Mitchell et al., 2001). Moreover, social exchange theory also articulates that relationships play an important role in organisational setting and these relations turn into trust, mutual commitments and loyalty if relationships remain stable (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005).

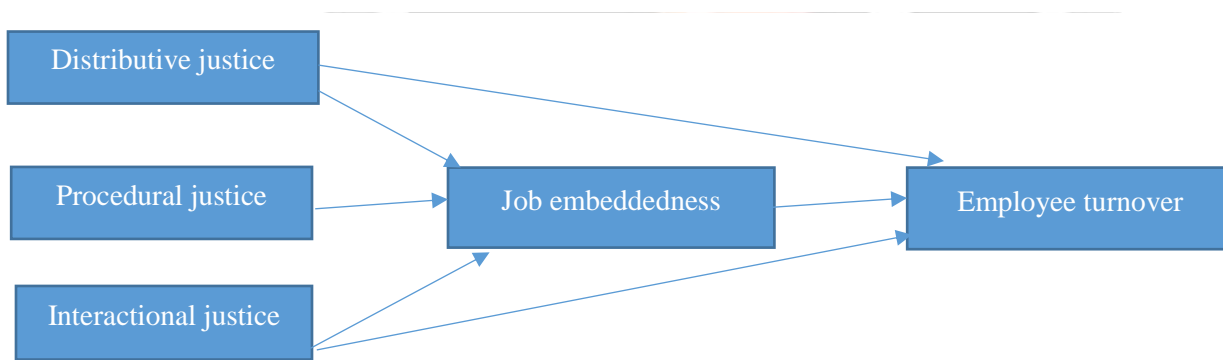
Research scholars have been investigating the reasons as to why people decide to stay in an organisation. Mitchell, Holtom, Lee, Sablinski and Erez (2001b) have answered by introducing the concept of job embeddedness (JE). Job embeddedness dimension aggregate to form on-the-job and off-the-job aspects of one's current state and the dimensions, in turn, combine to become JE (Yao, Lee, Mitchell, Burton and Sablinski, 2004). JE explains beyond what is explained by job satisfaction and organizational commitment in predicting variance in individual turnover across diverse populations in many countries like in the US (e.g., Besich, 2005; Cunningham, Fink & Sagas, 2005; Holtom, Mitchell, Lee & Tidd 2006) India (Ramesh & Gelfand, 2010) and Europe (Tanova & Holtom, 2008). An employee is 'embedded' both their work life and non-work life. This embeddedness has three dimensions like fit, link and Sacrifice. The greater the fit, the greater the embeddedness. Bergiel, Nguyen, Clenney and Taylor (2009) found that JE fully mediated the relationship among compensation, supervisory support, organisational justice, growth opportunity and employee's intention to quit.

## Job embeddedness as a mediator between organisational justice and employee turnover

Organisational justice has a significant relationship with employee turnover (Parker and Kohlmeyer, 2005; Zagladi, Hadiwidjojo, Rahayo and Noermejoti, 2015). Byrne (2005) analysed that organisational justice has positive impacts on employee output level. Harris, Andrews and Kacmar (2007) found that when the attention is paid towards organisational justice, then employee turnover intention becomes weak. In a Meta-analysis, Cohen-Charash and Spector (2001) found dimensions of organisational justice like distributive and procedural justice have a negative relationship with employee turnover intentions. In another study, Byrne (2005) analysed that both procedural and interactional justice have a negative association with employee turnover intentions. In addition to this, Brashear et al. (2005) found that procedural and distributive justice has a negative association with employee turnover intentions.

On the contrary, Arif (2018) study results indicate that job embeddedness does not moderate the relationship between turnover intention and organisational justice. As stated earlier, employees who intend to leave organisation have low levels of interest in their current job. Stockbroking employees work in high stress and their work routine is severe as compared to other employees. Therefore, this study was conducted in order to understand the behaviour in broking sector. In addition to employee turnover, organisational justice and the mediating role of job embeddedness was also analysed.

Figure1- Conceptual Framework



The conceptual model is consistent with the mediation model and leads the hypotheses:

Hypothesis 1a: There will be a positive relationship between Distributive justice and employee turnover.

Hypothesis 1b: There will be a positive relationship between procedural justice and employee turnover.

Hypothesis 1c: There will be a positive relationship between Interactional justice and employee turnover.

Hypothesis 2a: Distributive justice will be positively related to job embeddedness.

Hypothesis 2b: Procedural justice will be positively related to job embeddedness.

Hypothesis 2c: Interactional justice will be positively related to job embeddedness.

Hypothesis 3: Job embeddedness will positively related to employee turnover.

Hypothesis 1: Job embeddedness will act as a mediator between Distributive justice and employee turnover.

Hypothesis 2: Job embeddedness will act as a mediator between Procedural justice and employee turnover.

Hypothesis 3: Job embeddedness will act as a mediator between Interactional justice and employee turnover.

## Methodology:

### Sample

Convenience sampling techniques were used to collect data from the respondents. The author collected the data through a self-administered questionnaire in order to remove the chances of mistakes while filling the questionnaires. The author attached a consent letter to the respondents about the purpose of the study and to keep their responses strictly confidential with the 9619

questionnaires. In total 300 questionnaires were distributed among the targeted employees, out of these questionnaires 155 were received back. The response rate was 51.66%.

**Procedures**

Respondents were contacted through email and phone calls to make sure their availability. A brief overview of the survey was presented before the distribution of the questionnaire.

**Measures**

Data were collected using questionnaires. All the scales were adapted from past literature. The response was taken on five-point Likert Scale starting from 5=strongly disagree to 1=strongly agree.

Niehoff and Moorman (1993) scale were used to measure organisational justice. Five items of distributive justice, six items of procedural justice and nine items of interactional justice were measured with the help of scale. The overall reliability of the scale is 0.90.

Job Embeddedness measure was adopted from Mitchell et al. (2001).

Employee turnover measures were adopted from Nyaga (2015).

**Demographic data**

Majority of the respondents were male that is 61.5%, and rests were females. The reason was that female ratio was comparatively low in stock broking companies. Participants ranged from 20 to 60 years of age. 44% of respondents were single, and 56% were married. The education level of the respondents shows that 65 % of respondents are Master’s Degree holders (16years); 35 % are graduates (14years). 90.2% of respondents have been working for less than ten years, and 9.8% are working for more than ten years. 55.9% of respondents were dealers and remaining 44.1% are trainee dealers.

**Data analysis**

Different statistical techniques were applied to validate the research results. Descriptive statistics and bivariate correlations were calculated between the variables of interest. Cronbach's alpha was calculated to check the study constructs the reliability of the measures used in the study. Validity was checked by exploratory Factor Analysis. Consistent with the work of Arif (2018) Karatepe and Shahriari (2012) and Kimatal. (2009), the relationship between the dependent and independent variable was measured by applying the bivariate Pearson correlation test. The mediating effect was measured by multiple hierarchal regression analysis.

**Descriptive statistics**

The next section describes the correlation analysis of the study.

Table: 1 Correlation Analysis

	DISTRIBUTIVE	PROCEDURAL	INTERPERSONAL	JE
DISTRIBUTIVE	1			
PROCEDURAL	.493**	1		
INTERACTIONALL	.368**	.548**	1	
JE	.225**	.348**	.361**	1

ET	.075	.209*	.065	.357**

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

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

Table 1, shows the correlation between distributive justice, procedural justice, interactional justice, employee turnover and job embeddedness. Correlation analysis revealed that distributive justice had a significant positive relationship with Procedural justice ( $r = 0.493, p < 0.05$ ) and interactional justice ( $r = 0.368^{**}, p < 0.01$ ). Distributive justice had a significant positive relationship with employee turnover ( $r = 0.75^{**}, p < 0.01$ ) and job embeddedness ( $r = 0.225^{**}, p < 0.01$ ). Procedural justice had a significant positive relationship with Interactional justice ( $r = 0.548^*, p < 0.05$ ) and had a positive significant relationship with employee turnover ( $r = 0.209^{**}, p < 0.01$ ). Job embeddedness had a significant positive relationship with employee turnover ( $r = 0.357^{**}, p < 0.01$ ). The results have shown that there is a significant positive relationship between job embeddedness and employee turnover. It means that employee turnover and job embeddedness increase in the dimension of organisational justice (distributive justice, procedural justice and interactional justice). The next section discusses the regression analysis of the variables.

To test the mediation role of emotional exhaustion between organisational justice dimension (distributive justice, procedural justice and interactional justice) and employee turnover, the assumptions of Barron and Kenny (1986) were used, as below.

**Table 2: Regression analysis of Organizational Justice and Employee Turnover**

Predictors	$\beta$	R <sup>2</sup>
Distributive justice	.075	.006
Procedural justice	.209	.044
Interactional justice	.065	.004

Table 2 shows that value of ( $R^2 = 0.006$ ), which explain that 0.06% variation in employee Turnover is due to distributive justice. Based on Beta coefficients the results show that one unit increase in distributive justice (0.075) unit increase in employee turnover. Hence, the results support Hypothesis 1a, which states, “Distributive justice will be positively related to employee turnover”. The above table 2 shows that value of ( $R^2 = 0.044$ ), which explain that 4.4% variation in employee Turnover is due to procedural justice on Beta coefficients the results have shown that one unit increase in procedural justice causes 0.209 unit increase in employee turnover. Hence, the results support Hypothesis 1b, which states, “Procedural justice will be positively related to employee turnover”. The above Table 2 shows that the value of ( $R^2 = 0.004$ ), which explain that 0.4% variation in employee turnover is due to interactional justice. Based on Beta coefficients the results show that one unit increase in Interactional justice causes 0.065 unit increase in employee turnover. Hence, the results support Hypothesis 1c, which states, “Interactional justice will be positively related to employee turnover”.

**Table 3. Main effect and Mediated Regression Analysis of OJ and DJ**

Predictor	$\beta$	Mediator JE		Dependent ET	
		$\beta$	R <sup>2</sup>	$\beta$	R <sup>2</sup>
DJ	.040		40.4	-.028	.218
PJ	.198			.259	
IJ	.237			-.067	

D= Distributive justice, PJ= Procedural justice. IJ= Interpersonal justice, JE= Job embeddedness, ET=Employee turnover

Next, the researcher conducted a mediation analysis as directed by Baron and Kenny (1986). The results in table 3 indicate that distributive justice insignificantly affects employee turnover (Beta = -0.28,  $p < .001$ ). The second step shows a significant relationship between distributive justice and job embeddedness (Beta = 0.040,  $p < .001$ ), which support Hypotheses 2a. Also, the results indicate a significant relation between job embeddedness and turnover intention (Beta = 0.357,  $p < .001$ ). It shows that job embeddedness mediates on the relationship between distributive justice and turnover intention, which supports Hypothesis 4a, which states, “Job embeddedness will act as a mediator between distributive justice and turnover intention”.

Moreover, the Results in table 3. have indicated that procedural justice significantly affects Employee turnover (Beta = -0.455,  $p < .001$ ). The second step shows a significant positive relationship between procedural justice and job embeddedness (Beta = -0.328,  $p < .001$ ) which support hypotheses 2c. Also, the results have indicated that a significant relationship between job embeddedness and employee turnover (Beta = 0.259,  $p < .001$ ). It shows that job embeddedness mediates the relationship between procedural justice and employee turnover, which supports Hypothesis 4b, which states, that "Job embeddedness will act as a mediator between Procedural justice and employee turnover". The Results in table 3. have indicated that interactional justice insignificantly affects employee turnover (Beta = - .067,  $p < .05$ ). The second step shows a significant relationship between interactional justice and job embeddedness (Beta = 0.237,  $p < .05$ ) which support Hypotheses 2e. Besides, the results indicate a significant relationship between job embeddedness and employee turnover (Beta = 0.357,  $p < .001$ ). Next, the role of job embeddedness was taken into consideration (Beta = .357). It shows that job embeddedness mediates on the relationship between Interactional justice and turnover intention, which supports Hypothesis 4c, which states, "Job embeddedness will act as a mediator between Interactional justice and employee turnover".

## Discussion

The regression shown a significant positive relationship between distributive justice and employee turnover. It shows that distributive justice improves employee loyalty and increases employee turnover. The current findings have not supported by the finding of previous researchers like (Brashear, Manolis, & Brooks, 2005; Griffith et al., 2000). The empirical analysis revealed a significant negative relationship between procedural justice and employee turnover. This study revealed a positive relationship between interactional justice and employee turnover. When there are fairness interpersonal communications in the organisational procedural just like truthfulness, justification, respect, etc. then the loyalty of the employees increase and this loyalty decrease intent to leave the organisation (Usman and Hussain, 2015). The current findings of the study have been supported by the previous studies like (Colquitt et al., 2001; Beugre, 2005; Judge et al., 2006) studied the impact of justice on attitude.

The study found a negative relationship between interactional justice and turnover intention. However, few researchers (Govindaraju, 2019a; Govindaraju, 2019b) found a positive relationship between interactional justice and employee turnover. Following the mediation procedure, as directed by Baron & Kenny (1986), results of the study revealed that Job embeddedness mediates the relationship between Distributive justice and turnover intention, procedural justice and turnover intention, interactional justice and turnover intention. Individuals who perceive injustice are more prone to experience emotional exhaustion, which predisposes them to consider leaving their jobs (Usman and Hussain, 2015). This study is the first attempt to investigate the mediating role of job embeddedness between the dimension of organisational justice and employee turnover. Hence, current findings are new to contribute to the literature by fulfilling the gap in the study of organisational justice in a novel context.

## The Theoretical and Practical Implication

Theoretical and practical implications highlight the significance of the study. Majority of the researchers have studied the organizational justice dimension (distributive justice, Procedural justice and interactional justice) and analysed the relationship with different attitudinal and behavioural outcomes like organizational citizenship behaviour, task performance, job satisfaction, commitment, workplace deviance, absenteeism and trust etc ( Arif, 2018; Usman and Hussain, 2015) . However, the current study fulfils the gap in the study of organisational justice dimension (distributive justice, Procedural justice and interactional justice) with its relationship to employee turnover with the mediating role of job embeddedness in a financial market context. This study helps to understand this new concept in the work setting. The study's findings might lead managers to establish organisational procedures that are fair to all employees in order to reduce adverse affective and emotional reactions and to decrease their employee turnover.

Managers should enhance justice perceptions by applying consistent performance standards, giving adequate feedback, and allocating rewards fairly. Although justice perceptions are essential predictors of turnover intentions, emotional exhaustion might also contribute to lower turnover rates. Exhausted employees can be supported by specific training programs directed at defining, diagnosing, and alleviating the causes of their exhaustion (Janssen, Lam & Huang, 2010). In line, this study helps the manager rather than solving problems; these individuals could prevent the occurrence of employee turnover problems.

## Limitations and Future Directions

The sample size is the first limitation identified in the study. The data was collected from Chennai region which does not represent the whole population. The data was collected from the financial market industry. By including other diverse organisation will bring better results.

In this study distributive justice, procedural justice and interactional justice were used as an independent variable, employee turnover as a dependent variable and job embeddedness as a mediating variable. In future studies, this relationship may be checked with different variables like deviance workplace behaviour, absenteeism etc. The current study has only focused on the stockbroking sector of Chennai region. In future, the study may also be conducted in other services and manufacture sectors and other cities of India. However, there are various other variables which may play their role as moderator and mediator like trust in the organisation, affective commitment, employee training, etc. Organisational justice may also be studied with positive outcomes like commitment, organisation citizenship behaviour, loyalty and job performance.

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