



INFLUENCE OF WORKERS'-ENVIRONMENT ON EQUITY IN HUMAN RESOURCE PRACTICES IN KENYA'S PUBLIC SECTOR. THE MODERATING ROLE OF ORGANIZATION CLIMATE

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ABSTRACT

This study sought to determine influence of workers'-environment being a dimension of perceived organizational politics (POP) on equity in human resources practices in Kenya's Public Sector and, the moderating role Organization Climate (OC) on the relationship between workers'-environment and equity in human resource practices in Kenyan public sector. The study involved 384 respondents drawn from Kenya's public sector and, developed a model which was empirically tested. Primary data was collected using a questionnaire which was analyzed using multiple approaches involving; Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA), Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) and, Structural Equation Modelling (SEM). The findings were as follows; workers'-environment had negative influence on equity in human equity in human resource practices and all its dimensions namely, procedural justice, distributive justice and interactional justice; Organization Climate did not moderate the relationship between Perceived organization politics and equity in human resource practices. Based on these findings, the study recommended among others; team work, re-engineering of HR systems and procedures, adoption of high performance work practices and recruitment of 'politically' low employees.

Key Words: *Workers'-environment; Equity in Human Resource Practices; Organization Climate*

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INTRODUCTION

Perceived organizational politics remains an area of key interest to many organizations. From previous research, it presents both positive and negative effects (Vigoda & Meisler, 2010; Munyon Summers, Thompson and Ferris, 2014). Being a product of the social integration process, POP has diverse effects of organizational outcomes including; lowering job satisfaction and organizational commitment (Liu & Wu, 2010), reduce overall organizational performance (Vigoda & Meisler, 2010), improve individual employee performance (Blickle & Schnitzler, 2011), increase employee extra- role performance (Munyon *et al.*, 2014) and result in emergence of retrogressive employee behaviors (Harris & Kacmar, 2012). Specifically, Perceived organizational politics influence human resource practices in various ways including; fairness of pay (Aino & Jamsen, 2010); employee performance (Giauque, Biget & Varone, 2013), fairness in recruitment (Brindley, 2010) and, performance rating (Holtz, 2013).

Co-workers behavior and organizational political environment were identified as part of the dimensions of POP (Kacmar & Ferris, 1991; Kacmar & Carlson, 1997). Indeed, co-workers behavior characterized by among others; self- interest, impression management, witch-hunting aimed at seeking loyalty, blaming and attacking others, soliciting for others' support being 'one of them', exclude the opposition from meetings, dress for success' by associating themselves with successful accomplishments of others and or in extreme cases, take credit for others' success (Bolino, Turney & Bloodgood, 2010; Rosen Levy & Hall, 2011; Gotsis & Kortezi, 2011). Organizational political environment has been observed as a source of POP where organizational members compete for resources, are rewarded based on perceived loyalty or support, given privileges on grounds of being members of the in-group and where the system is defective and

decisions are influenced by 'other factors' (Kassra, 2015; Kwok and Alk, 2016).

LITERATURE REVIEW

This study reviewed both theoretical and empirical literature. The theoretical underpinnings of this study were anchored on the following theories; Procedural justice theory, Social exchange theory, Perceived Organizational Support (POS) theory and, Impression Management Theory. The postulations of the aforementioned theories were relevant in developing sufficient understanding on the broad constructs of the study including; workers'-environment, Equity in human resources and organizational climate.

Empirically, this study discussed previous similar studies. Kamdar and Johnson (2013) observed that Individuals employ various tactics to impress their supervisors including; appearing to work especially hard when others are looking, working for longer hours and suggest work related solutions which can be helpful to the organization and, Job-focused tactics which involve self-promotive behaviors designed to make other employees appear more competent at their job as some of the strategies that serve to define an organization's political environment.

Kassra (2015) noted that unfavorable political environment characterized by internal conflicts and discrimination will not support any form organizational justice and recommended adoption of contemporary management practice to make an organization's political environment supportive and all inclusive. On the other hand, Gotsis & Kortezi (2011) found out that pro-social behavior among employees with strong reciprocity led to development of constructive politics that was beneficial of all organizational actors. The study observed that organizational systems which are open resulted in effective management of self- and group interests through trust-formation processes thus

facilitating the reconciliation of diverse stakeholders' interests and competing views.

MacCormick and Parker (2010) explain that organizational climate concept is multi-dimensional consisting of a relatively enduring quality of an organization's internal environment that; (a) is experienced by its members, (b) influences their behavior and (c) can be described in terms of values of a particular set of characteristics of the organization. This study considered human resource practices as one of the variables whose performance would be influenced by organization climate. The study argued that the effective and fair execution of human resource practices could be realized faster in situations of conducive climate driven by identity and value system than a case where the climate was largely unconducive.

Equity in human resource practices is reflected from procedural, distributive and interactional justice in an organization. De Ceiri, Kramer, Noe, Hollenbeck, Gerhart, and Wright (2011) observe that effective human resource practices are crucial for an organization's success because they influence employees' behavior, attitudes and performance. Human resource practices are anticipated to enhance fairness in among others; recruitment, appraisal, compensation and reward management. The Conceptual model for the study is detailed in Figure 1.

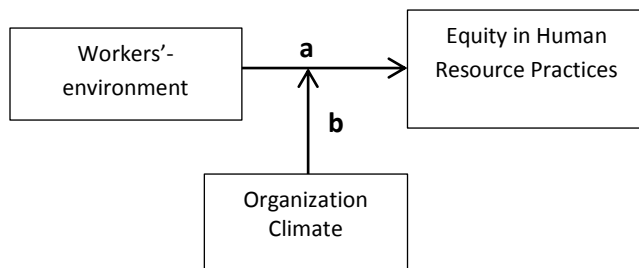


Figure 1: Study Conceptual Model

Study Hypotheses

The following were the hypotheses for the study;

(a) H_{01} : *Workers'-environment positively influence perceptions of equity in human resource practices in Kenya's public sector.*

Sub hypotheses included;

$H_{01(a)}$: *Workers'-environment positively influence perceptions of Procedural justice in human resource practices in Kenya's public sector.*

$H_{01(b)}$: *Workers'-environment positively influence perceptions of distributive justice in human resource practices in Kenya's public sector.*

$H_{01(c)}$: *Workers'-environment positively influence perceptions of interactional justice in human resource practices in Kenya's public sector.*

(b) *Organization climate moderates the relationship between perceived organizational politics and equity in human resource practices in Kenya's public sector*

RESEARCH METHODS

This study was a descriptive survey involving employees working in Kenya's public sector. This research design was appropriate because Kombo and Tromp (2011) observe that descriptive surveys are useful when collecting information about people's attitude, opinions, habits and social issues. Therefore, this research design was adopted in this study because it extensively assisted in analysis and testing of relationships between variables of the study and explained how workers'-environment influenced equity in human resource practices on one hand and, on the other, whether organization climate moderated the relationship between workers'-environment and equity in human resource practices. Data was collected using a questionnaire and this was considered appropriate since it enabled the study to effectively collect data since by getting respondents' opinions concerning the research problem (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2013). It also provided a relatively simple and straight forward approach for collecting the required- both qualitative and quantitative - data for the study. Workers'-environment was measured

using indicator questions adapted from Kacmar and Ferris (1991) POP validated scale $\alpha=0.81$, equity in human resource practices indicator questions adapted from Colquitt (2001) validated scale $\alpha=0.76$ and Organization climate was measured using Patterson, West, Shackleton, Dawson, and Wallace (2001) validated scale $\alpha=0.73$.

Stratified random sampling method was used to select a total of 263 public sector employees who participated in the study. In order to confirm the validity and reliability and of the scales, exploratory factor analysis (EFA) and confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was conducted. Data analysis and hypotheses testing were performed using structural equation modelling (SEM).

In the initial analysis through EFA, indicator factors for all the respective latent constructs namely; workers'-environment, equity in human resource practices and organization climate were extracted until it was ascertained to be valid and reliable. The extracted indicator factors had factor loadings of above 0.5, communalities of greater than 0.3 and these loadings converged into measuring something in common indicating presence of convergent validity (Hair et al., 2010). Moreover, the indicator factors for respective constructs loaded in a pattern that discriminated themselves and, the correlation matrix of the extracted factors showed that all the loadings were below 0.7 and this indicated presence of discriminant validity. The Cronbach's alpha coefficient for the extracted factors was above 0.7 (George & Mallery, 2010) indicating that the extracted factors were reliable.

Data was analyzed through structural equation modelling and, regression weights (Beta coefficients) and model fit indices including; the chi-square ratio; $CMIN/DF < 3$ (Meydan & Sen, 2011), Comparative fit index; $CFI \geq 0.90$ (Schermelel-Engel & Moosbrugger,

2003), Goodness of fit index; $GFI \geq 0.90$ (Bayram, 2013), Root mean square error of approximation; $RMSEA 0.05 \leq RMSEA \leq 0.08$ (Byrne, 2010) and $P-CLOSE \geq 0.05$ were used to report findings and draw conclusions based on the results.

FINDINGS

Out of 384 respondents who were provided with questionnaires, 263 returned their questionnaires and this represented a response rate of 68.4%. This response rate was high enough to yield the anticipated results (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2009). Analysis of the Second Order CFA model revealed that out of 43 indicator factors which were extracted through EFA, twenty one factors were confirmed having satisfied the following model fit indices; $CMIN/DF = 1.92$; $CFI = 0.93$; $GFI = 0.90$; $RMSEA = 0.06$ and $P-CLOSE = 0.135$. These model fit indices indicated good fit since they were within acceptable range.

The study found out that there exist a relationship between workers'-environment and equity in human resource practices in Kenya's public sector. The results in Table 1 indicated that workers'-environment has a negative relationship (regression weight = -0.67) with equity in human resource practices and this relationship was significant at 95% confidence ($P < 0.05$). This implied that workers'-environment had destructive influence of equity in human resource practices in Kenya's public sector. The model fit indices for this relationship as shown in Figure 1 were within acceptable limits; $CMIN/DF = 2.45$, $CFI = 0.94$, $GFI = 0.92$ and $RMSEA = 0.07$ implying goodness of fit. Further, as shown in Table 2 study also found out that workers'-environment had negative relationship with the respective the dimensions of equity in human resource practices namely; procedural justice, distributive justice and informational justice.

Table 1: Workers'-Environment and Equity Regression Weights

Indicator	Latent Variable	Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	P
EQUITY	<-- WORKERS_ENVIRONMENT	-.666	.086	-7.374	***

Table 2: Coefficients for Relationship between Workers'-Environment and Dimensions of Equity in Human Resource Practices

Aspect of Equity	Coefficient
Distributive Justice	-0.63
Procedural Justice	-0.48
Interactional Justice	-0.36

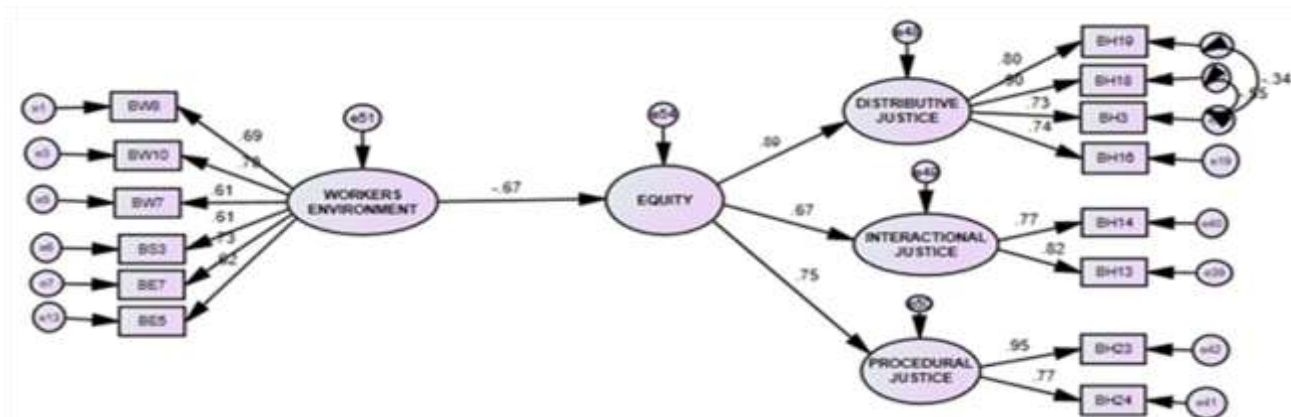


Figure 1: Model for Workers'-environment –Equity Relationship

CMIN/DF=2.45, CFI= 0.94, GFI= 0.92 and RMSEA= 0.07

FINDINGS

The objective of this study was to determine influence of workers'-environment on equity of human resource practices and, whether organization climate moderated the aforementioned relationship. From the findings of the study, workers-environment was destructive (negative relationship) to attainment of equity in human resource practices in Kenya's public sector. Based on this study, workers'-environment was a composite variable consisting of aspects of co-workers' behavior and organizational political environment which, loaded together during Exploratory Factor Analysis and Confirmatory Factor Analysis procedures. Collectively, as shown in Figure 1 worker's-environment prevented attainment of equity in human resource practices by close to 70%.

Moreover, referring from the results in Table 2, Interactional justice was affected least by workers'-environment and distributive justice was affected most by close to 65%. Due to political behaviors related to workers' conduct and the political nature of the environment they work in, attainment of equity in issues related to pay, promotion, recruitment and opportunities for career development was nor realized. These findings were consistent to those of previous similar studies (Holtz, 2013; Meltzer, 2012; Kwok & Alk, 2016). Holtz (2013) found out that perceived organizational politics relating to workers' behavior influenced decisions relating to pay and procedures. Meltzer (2012) observed that organizational political environment encouraged self-serving behaviors among employees, fraudulent achievements and use of political skill to

endeavor to the powers and this hampered attainment of distributive justice.

Hypotheses Testing

This study tested all hypotheses using structural equation modelling; where model fit indices were compared with regression weights and their significance levels. The results were as follows;

H₀₁: Workers'-environment positively influences perceptions of equity in human resource practices in Kenya's public Sector.

The results in Table 3 indicated that there was a negative (Beta Coefficient -0.67) between workers'-environment and equity in human resource practices. Therefore H₀₁ was rejected. This was supported by the scientific generation of the model relationship shown in Figure 2 and the accompanying model fit indices which were all within acceptable range. The model was significant at 95% level of significance since P < 0.05. The study therefore concludes that based on the data of this study, *workers'-environment negatively influenced perceptions of equity in human resource practices in Kenya's Public Sector.*

Table 3: Testing causal Effects of Workers'-Environment on Equity in Human Resource Practices

			Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	P
EQUITY	<---	WORKERS_ENVIRONMENT	-0.666	.086	-7.4	***

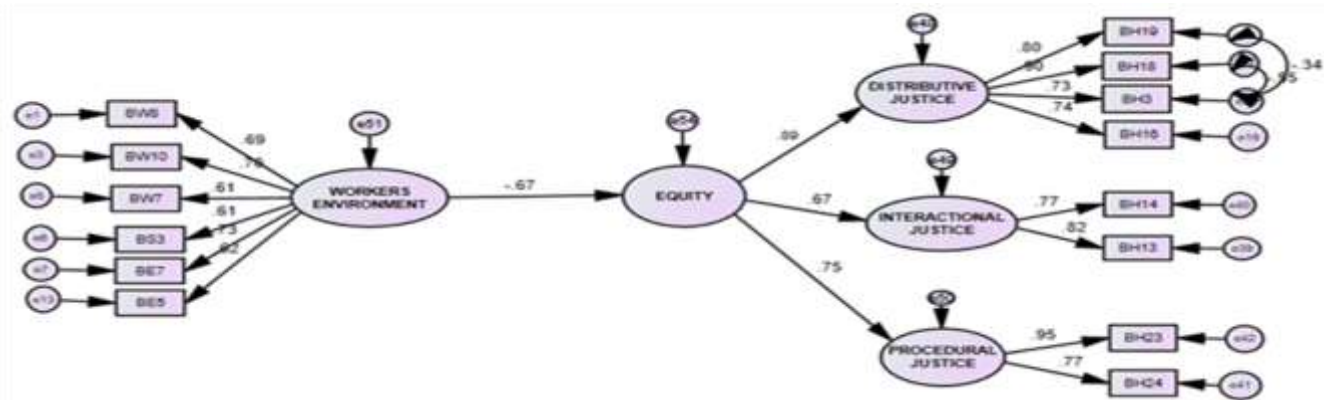


Figure 2: Model for Testing Hypothesis -Workers'-environment Versus Equity

CIMN/DF= 2.49; CFI= 0.94; GFI= 0.92; RMSEA= 0.07; P-Clouse= 0.03

Since equity construct was multidimensional, three sub hypotheses each relating to procedural justice; interactional justice and distributive justice were tested as follows;

H_{01(a)} Workers-environment positively influenced procedural justice as related to human resource practices in Kenya's Public Sector.

The results in Table 4 and Figure 3 indicated that there was a negative (Beta coefficient= -0.48)

relationship between workers'-environment and procedural justice as related to human resource practices. Therefore, *H_{01(a)}* was rejected. The model fit indices for the model in Figure 3 were within the acceptable limits implying goodness of fit. Further, the model was significant at 95% level of significance since P < 0.05. The study therefore concludes that based on the data of this study, *workers'-environment negatively influenced perceptions of procedural justice in human resource practices in Kenya's Public Sector.*

Table 4: Testing causal Effects of Workers'-Environment on Procedural Justice in Human Resource Practices

			Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	P
PROCEDURAL_JUSTICE	<---	WORKERS_ENVIRONMENT	-.482	.090	-5.494	***

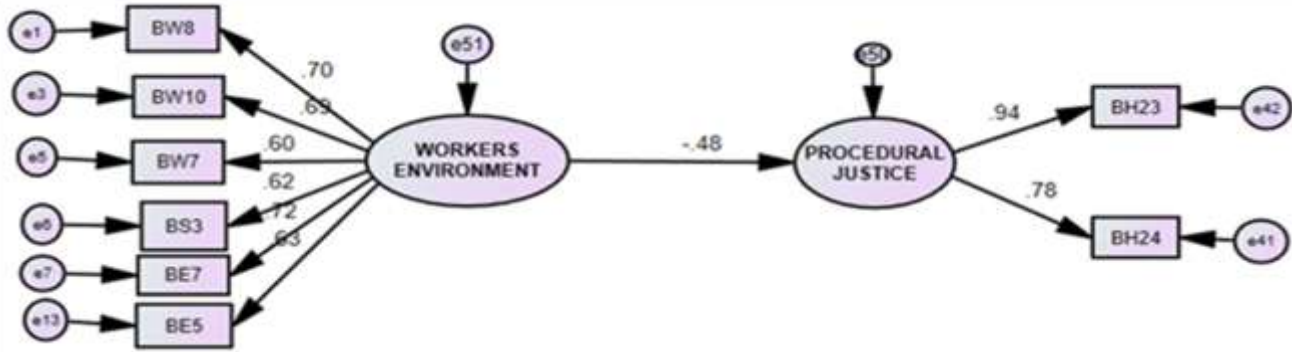


Figure 3: Model for Testing Hypothesis -Workers'-environment Versus Procedural

CIMN/DF= 2.14; CFI= 0.97; GFI= 0.97; RMSEA= 0.07; P-Close= 0.16

The second sub- hypothesis that was tested read as follows;

H_{01(b)} Workers-environment positively influences Distributive justice as related to human resource practices in Kenya's Public Sector.

The results in Table 5 indicated that there was a negative (Beta coefficient= -0.63) relationship between workers'-environment and distributive justice as related to human resource practices.

Therefore, *H_{01(b)}* was rejected. The model fit indices for the model in Figure 4 were within the acceptable limits implying goodness of fit. Further, the model was significant at 95% level of significance since $P < 0.05$. The study therefore concludes that based on the data of this study, *workers'-environment negatively influenced perceptions of distributive justice in human resource practices in Kenya's Public Sector.*

Table 5: Testing causal Effects of Workers'-Environment on Distributive Justice in Human Resource Practices

			Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	P
DISTRIBUTIVE_JUSTICE	<---	WORKERS_ENVIRONMENT	-.629	.089	-7.606	***

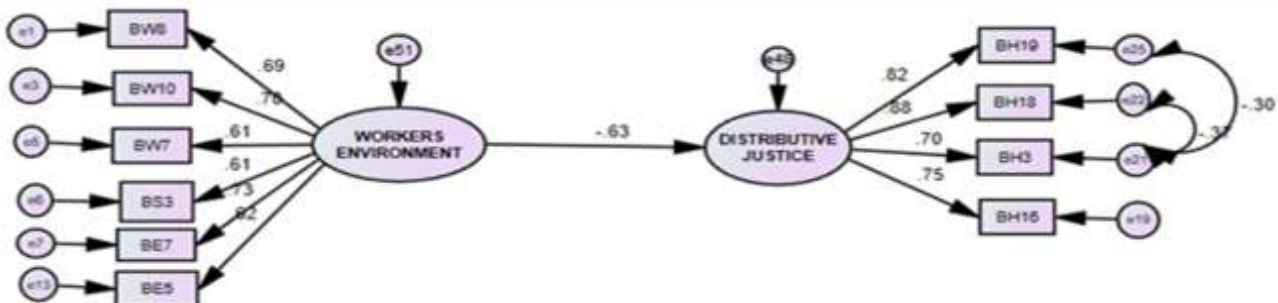


Figure 4: Model for Testing Hypothesis -Workers'-environment Versus Distributive Justice

CIMN/DF= 2.28; CFI= 0.96; GFI= 0.95; RMSEA= 0.07; P-Close= 0.06

The third sub- hypothesis that was tested read as follows;

H_{01(c)} Workers-environment positively influenced interactional justice as related to human resource practices in Kenya’s Public Sector.

The results in Table 6 showed that there was a negative (Beta coefficient= -0.36) relationship between workers’-environment and interactional justice as related to human resource practices.

Therefore, *H_{01(c)}* was rejected. The model fit indices for the model in Figure 5 were within the acceptable limits implying goodness of fit. Further, the model was significant at 95% level of significance since P< 0.05. The study therefore concludes that based on the data of this study, *workers’-environment negatively influenced perceptions of interactional justice in human resource practices in Kenya’s Public Sector.*

Table 6: Testing causal Effects of Workers’-Environment on Interactional Justice in Human Resource Practices

		Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	P
INTERACTIONAL JUSTICE	<--- WORKERS_ ENVIRONMENT	-.356	.095	-5.132	***

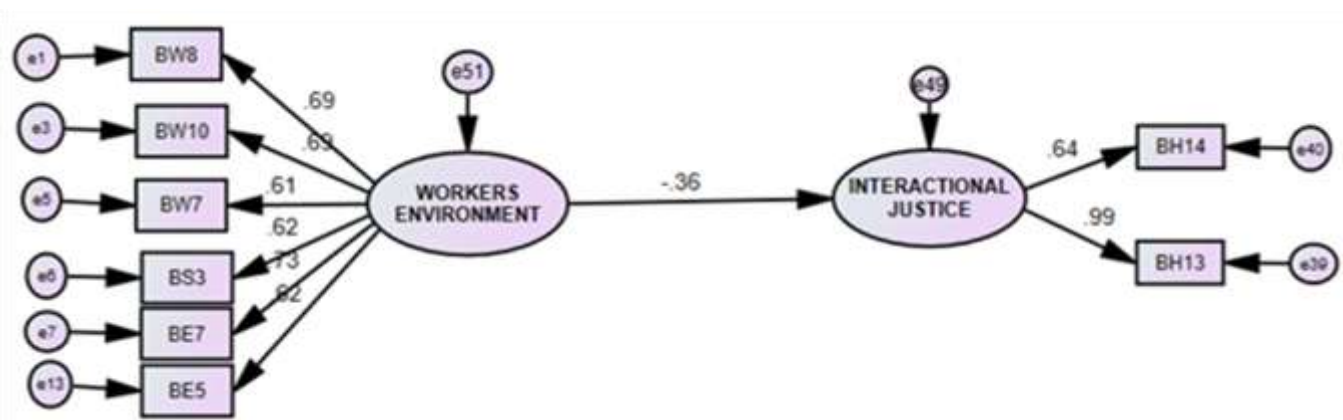


Figure 5: Model for Testing Hypothesis -Workers’-environment Versus Interactional Justice

CIMN/DF= 1.90; CFI= 0.97; GFI= 0.97; RMSEA= 0.06; P-Close= 0.281

Testing moderation of Organization climate on the Relationship between Workers’-environment and Equity in Human Resource Practices

This procedure first involved formulating two models; the constrained and unconstrained model. Secondly, the models were compared and difference in chi-square value was computed. Lastly, a determination was made as to whether or not there existed moderation based on evaluation using the aforementioned criterion.

The hypothesis that was tested read as follows:

H₀₂: Organization climate moderates the relationship between workers’-environment and perceptions of equity in human resources practices in Kenya’s public Sector.

The results in Tables 7 indicated that there was a positive relationship between workers environment and equity when the former was constrained with the effect of organization climate. However this changed (Table 8) when the model was not constrained to

negative (regression weight= -0.44). The difference in Chi-square values as shown in Table 9 was above the Chi-square value at degree of freedom 1 at 95% confidence level (3.84). The model fit indices (Figures, 6 &7) for the respective models-constrained and unconstrained - were fairly good since most of them fall within the acceptable limits. Therefore H_{02} is

accepted. The study concluded that *the test of hypothesis for moderation that has been carried out found that the moderator variable "organization climate" moderates the causal effects of workers'-environment on equity in human resource practices in Kenya's Public sector.*

Table 7: Regression Weights for Constrained Model

			Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	P
EQUITY	<---	WORKERS_ENVIRONMENT	0.952			
EQUITY	<---	ORGANIZATIONAL_CLIMATE	1.777	.293	8.290	***

Table 8: Regression Weights for Unconstrained Model

			Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	P
EQUITY	<---	WORKERS_ENVIRONMENT	-.435	.081	-5.075	***
EQUITY	<---	ORGANIZATIONAL_CLIMATE	.446	.083	5.003	***

Table 9: Comparison of Chi-Square Values and DF for Constrained and Unconstrained Model

	Constrained Model	Unconstrained Model	Chi-square difference	Result on moderation	Result on Hypothesis
Chi-Square	316.7	234.1	82.6	Significant	Accepted
Degrees of Freedom (Df)	112	111	1		

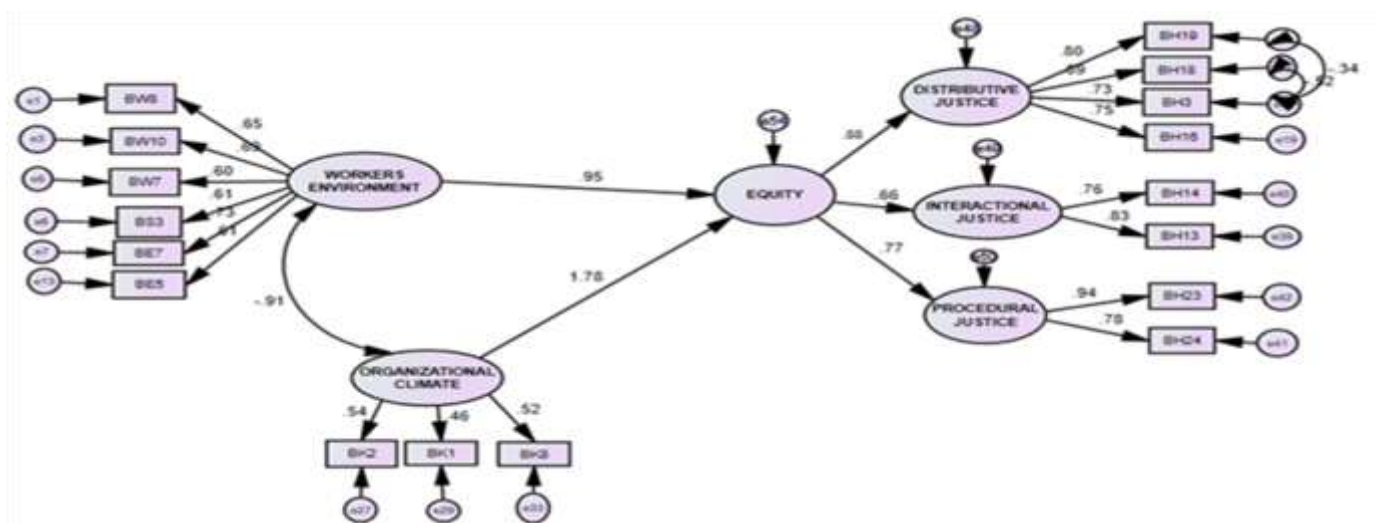


Figure 6: Constrained Model; (CIMN/DF= 2.82; CFI= 0.90; GFI= 0.90; RMSEA= 0.08)

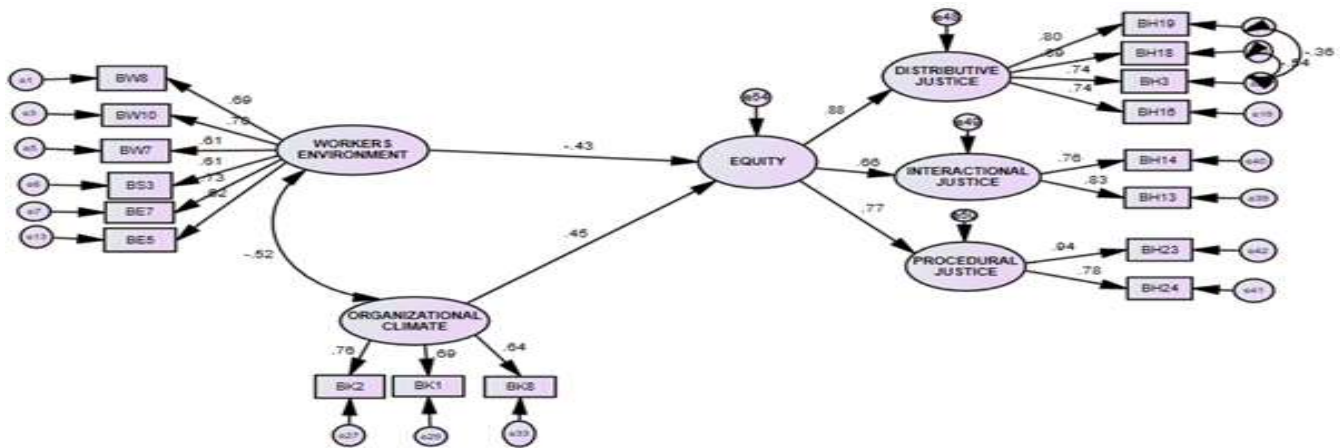


Figure 7: Unconstrained Model (CIMN/DF= 2.11; CFI= 0.94; GFI= 0.91; RMSEA= 0.06)

CONCLUSION

Public sector employees are drivers of destructive politics in Kenya's public sector. Indeed, workers' political behaviors and organizational political environment have destructive influence towards realization of equity in human resource practices in Kenya's public sector. From the study, it is evident that the organization climate is supportive to efforts geared towards the realization of equity in human resource practices in Kenya's public sector. The study also concludes that Kenya's public sector is no different from others where past similar studies have been conducted. Aino *et al.* (2010) studying on how employees' perceptions of politics impacted the setting and implementation of a new merit pay system in Finland's public sector found that high levels of favouritism in performance appraisal impeded implementation of merit pay system.

RECOMMENDATIONS

In view of the above findings, the study proposes the following;

Kenya's public sector should consider reorienting its human resource development strategy and implement a paradigm shift in terms of scope and content to include aspects of modern human resource development including; talent management, employee proactivity, employee

engagement and high performance work practices. This will in the long run assist in changing the perceptions and conduct of public sector employees at work. This will also enhance strategic fit during HR strategy formulation and implementation on issues relating to curbing destructive perceptions of organizational politics.

Secondly, the Government and related public institutions being the employer of public servants should consider implementing feasible and transformative work-environment related reforms so as to cure the challenge of the political nature of the work environment. The reform programmes (Jamsen,2010) should among others; focus on aligning work ethics to support implementation of human resource management practices, embrace the spirit of teamwork among public sector employees in order to curb emergence of self-serving behaviors such as distorting information and facts, impression management for ones benefit, formation of groupings outside the formal structure of the organization, gossip for self-gain, favoritism and build self-confidence on the part of individual employees.

Third, public institutions in Kenya should continuously improve their human resource policies, systems and procedures to support and accommodate the dynamics of contemporary practice of human

resource management. This would assist in addressing any likely negative impact of perceived organization politics (Kacmar & Harris, 2012) on organizational outcomes and, specifically address issues related to equity in human resource practices. This will include; adopting a consultative approach in HR policy formulation and system related reforms to

avoid inbuilt gaps or aspects that may promote self-interest at the level of employees or supervisors at work, inculcate a culture that foster teamwork among employees, develop a criteria for hiring politically under-skilled employees and, develop a criteria that will enhance objectivity in human resource decisions.

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