

The Impact of Organizational Injustice on Work Alienation: Moderating Role of Overqualification

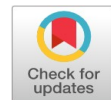
SHUJA UL ISLAM ^{1*}, DANIYAL JAWAD ², RAJA M. SHEHROZE, ³
HAROON BASHARAT ⁴

^{1,2,3,4} NUCES-FAST, Islamabad, Pakistan

Abstract: This study aims to study the impact of four dimensions of organizational justice on work alienation and how individual overqualification interacts with it. There is substantial research studying the organizational factors impact on work alienation. However, no study has focused on the impact of Organizational justice on work alienation. The data was collected from 150 employees working in the telecom sector. The study confirms that there is a significant impact of informational and procedural justice on work alienation. Also, there is a highly significant impact of overqualification on work alienation. Change is necessary for better results managers can benefit by altering the job descriptions of their subordinates from time to time; this keeps employees always on their toes and brings the best out of them..

Keywords: Work alienation, Distributive justice, Informational justice, Procedural justice, Interpersonal justice, Overqualification

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INTRODUCTION

The term alienation means being powerless, meaningless and self-estrangement. Some organizations provide satisfying jobs, and employees have freedom of making decisions but not every organization is the same. So the employees in the organizations which don't provide employee empowerment and satisfying jobs feel alienated there. There are many factors which cause work alienation, including internal and external factors. In the present study, we are putting light on a few drivers (overqualification and organizational injustice) which cause alienation and later in the study, we will check their impact on alienation. Overqualification means being skilled and educated beyond what is required for a job. A job where your skills are not fully utilized leads to a stage of your career when you feel alienated. An environment has a great impact on an employee's performance, so if there is injustice in an organization, then all the workers there will feel alienated. The injustice can be of any kind; social, racial, gender, etc. The issue of distance in today's society is also considered a reason behind the alienation of workers. The nature of human relations, motorization level of the association, impression of social advantage in regards to the association, level of being occupation arranged and ease level of the employment make the workers get distanced (Cetin, Ozdemirci, & Kartaltepe, 2009; Tahir & Athar, 2018). The bosses in an organization enjoy all the powers; thus, the lack of power with the employees makes them distanced in the hierarchical level of organization, and they might feel less important for the firm. The principal commitment of this review is the exposure of the measurements of criticism, which influence the measurements of distance that are communicated as frailty, negligibility, self-alienation, and separation (Agustin, 2019; Blauner, 1964; Raditya, 2018).

Alienation

The term alienation has a long history. Latin in the beginning, estrangement highlights in the

*Corresponding author: Shuja ul Islam

†Email: Shujaul.islam@nu.edu.pk

work of early scholars; for example, Calvin and Luther. Estrangement, in philosophical terms, implies an alienation of humankind from God taking Adam and Eve's expulsion from Eden. From that point on words, researchers have studied how people get alienated from their social and political world, their work and themselves. Hegel (1977) is considered as the head of the concept for alienation; he presented two German words, namely *Entfremdung* and *Enttauberung*, to allude to the development of a man's "soul. Moses Hess and Karl Marx linked the terms *Entfremdung* and *Enttauberung* to economic and social life. Hess (1843) expressed that a man feels estrangement due to his or her actual being and society through the trading of money. Marx further worked on the concept of alienation after Hess; he explained the relationship between capitalist production and alienation. He told that people work hard for their survivor instead of self-fulfilment. They like to see their reflection in the products they make. If the workers are not given credit for what they make by the organization, they might feel alienated. According to Marx, alienation is a separator between capital and labor (McLeod, 2012). Blauner also added to the concept of meaninglessness and powerlessness that meaninglessness, happens when the people are unable to see the connection between their work exercises and the last item. Aimlessness increments when the people see themselves just as a little piece of an entirety (Blauner, 1964) while powerlessness is feeling weak in an organization, weakness alludes that the work procedures are under the control of the technology and individuals up in the hierarchy who have power of making decisions and have all type of freedom. Other scholars also added to the concept of alienation and contended that the heart of alienation is antagonism or a detachment between a man and his or her work. They characterized alienation as "antagonism, or disengagement from work, the unique situation, or self" (Nair & Vohra, 2009).

This definition is upheld by Marx's composition, whereby he expressed that during the time spent making items, a man's self is tied up with the protest that is created. (Nair & Vohra, 2009) built up a measure of alienation that mirrors this feeling of detachment; this measure is utilized as a part of the present review. Since most meanings of alienation allude to a feeling of partition. Other compelling scholars held comparable assessments to Marx on estrangement. For example, in the second 50% of the nineteenth century, Durkheim (1951) utilized the expression "anomie" which is frequently nearly connected with distance. Considerations of Weber and Mills (1946) an individual's lost all-inclusiveness, on justification, and the decrease of qualities, connections, also, culture to a solid, common, utilitarian organization likewise dovetails with Marx's perspective of the present, Even in the 21st century, many scholars have emphasized the concept of alienation. Braveman (1974) said that alienation is a constant condition on humanity; therefore, every employee in a capitalist society feels alienated.

The objective of our research is to check the relationship between our dependent variable and independent variables. In some organizations, the employees are satisfied but not in every organization; so, we are going to target those organizations which have employees who are dissatisfied with their jobs. Alienation is driven by many drivers, but we are going to check the effect of overqualification and organizational injustice on work alienation.

Research objectives

The objectives of our research are to check whether there is any relation between the independent and dependent variables of our research that are the organizational injustice and work alienation. Moreover, we are also aimed towards checking whether overqualification of an employee has some kind of effect on the two variables, which means does overqualification act as a moderator or only affects the dependent variable (work alienation)?

The gap between topic and existing literature

The purpose of our research is to identify the drivers of alienation and their impact on work alienation. The factors we selected are overqualification of an individual and organizational injustice in an organization. In the past, studies were done on many drivers of alienation including task repetition, employee autonomy, task variety etc. but the uniqueness of our research is to study those factors that are still understudied. Organizational injustice has been studied only on two dimensions of alienation which are powerlessness and social isolation (Sulu, Ceylan, & Kaynak, 2010), so we are going to check the

relation of all dimensions of organizational injustice with alienation as a whole. We are using the latest scale of the year 2000 for work alienation (Hirschfeld, Feild, & Bedeian, 2000). Secondly, our another variable of overqualification is still understudied with respect to alienation, no work has been done to check the relationship between alienation and overqualification as overqualification often results in work alienation. This gap sets us apart from other studies done on alienation.

Theoretical and practical implications

It is now a proven fact that human psychology dislikes repetition. Change is what is necessary for better results managers can benefit by altering job descriptions of his or her subordinates from time to time; this keeps employee always on their toes and bring the best out of them. So to remain relevant, they will always be thinking creatively and working on new ideas and problems enhances their mental capability, so it is a win-win situation for all and on larger convers organization is beneficial. Change is not merely a slogan; it can be benefited from, provided the will is there.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Alienation

The alienation is a feeling of an employee who feels dissatisfied from his/her job and no more interested in it. Alienation occurs due to many reasons, e.g., repetition of work, powerlessness, meaningfulness etc. “one of the earliest definitions of alienation refers to it as an estrangement from self”. (Fromm, 2012). “The concept of alienation finds reference across a broad range of subjects such as theology, philosophy, sociology, psychology and psychiatry” (Johnson & Johnson, 1997). Evaluated alienation in terms of socio-psychological view and postulated five dimensions -powerlessness, meaningfulness, normlessness, isolation, and self-estrangement (Seeman, 1959). Authors defined its drivers in the following ways. “Powerlessness is the absence of control over events in a person’s life” (Banai & Reisel, 2007). Meaninglessness is the failure of individuals to see the connection between their own work activities and the final product (Yıldız & Şaylıkay, 2014). “A socially isolated employee is not supported or helped by his or her colleagues or superiors” (Yang, 2001). Moreover, Weber’s and Marks work on alienation was almost the same; they both perceived that alienation emerges through a lack of freedom and control of work. The notion of alienation became popular only through sociological and political writings of Karl Marx. Alienation at the workplace means that employees may not be able to fulfil their social needs (Nasarudin, Ramayah, & Kumaresan, 2005). Research on work alienation has also focused on its nature and predicting its antecedents and consequences, Such as isolation in organizations, organizational leadership, organizational citizenship behavior, organizational commitment, work experience and drinking behavior (Miller, 1975; Oetomo, Satrio, & Lestariningsih, 2016). Fifth and final dimension of alienation is self-estrangement, which, as the term suggests, refers to the sense of estrangement from self. Seeman (1959) defines self-estrangement as the loss of intrinsic meaning or pride in work”.

In a previous study, four dimensions of work alienation were tested. Further, we checked the impact of alienation on deviance behavior and performance of an employee. There results that there are hypothesis were correct (Shantz, Alfes, Bailey, & Soane, 2015). In another study, the relation between organizational cynicism and alienation was tested on the basis of demographic changes of bank employee (Yıldız & Şaylıkay, 2014). Another study puts emphasis on the relationship between alienation and employee engagement; this study was conducted on an advertising agency. They found that there is an inverse relationship between alienation and engagement. They also mentioned that either the employees are less aware of the concept of alienation or are more engaged in their work (Shantz et al., 2015). The impact on alienation is also seen on highly educated workers that are white-collar workers, and they have studied the bank employees who are well-educated and mostly do their work on computers (Cetin et al., 2009). In 1964, a study was conducted on textile workers who studied the levels of alienation with respect to the family, community attachment and traditionalism. Author used powerlessness, social isolation and self-estrangement to explain the relationship (Leiter, 1985). Another article mentioned the alienation in the distribution channel; many factors like power, dependence, and conflict role performance were investigated except for alienation. Thus, this article showed the impact of alienation on distribution

channel (Gaski & Ray, 2001). A study was done to check the relationship between procedural injustices and job stress while alienation acted as a mediator in this relationship. Two dimensions of alienation (powerlessness and social isolation) were included in this relationship. The hypothesis states that procedural injustice is responsible for job stress (Ceylan & Sulu, 2010). Another study examined the impact of work alienation and organizational support in a state-owned enterprise when ERP is implemented in organization. They also compared the impact with private owned companies (Hou, Chen, & Shang, 2016). The researched focused on the relationship between affective labor and alienation, and how the alienation could be overcome (Trott, 2017). The study emphasizes the development of alienation under state socialism, moreover the endurance of mass alienation and its aftermath. The paper also argues that mass alienation might result in the establishment of a democratic political system, but it neither supports to form a normal market system nor to create stable democratic institutions (Tong, 1995). The articles researched on the perception of school teacher regarding alienation behavior with respect to some variables (gender, marital status and seniority) (Dağlı & Averbek, 2017). The paper examines the relationship between alienation and the tourism industry; this paper first briefs the evolution of alienation concept and then links it with tourism (Xue, Manuel-Navarrete, & Buzinde, 2014).

Organizational injustice

Organizational justice means the extent to which employees are treated justly (Elovainio et al., 2005). It defines the social interaction quality between employees at work (Greenberg, 1990). Early organizational justice literature distinguished between three types of justice as distributive, procedural and interactional justice (Greenberg, 1990). Distributive justice is the first justice construct and means the perceived fairness of decision outcomes such as pay, bonus or promotion employees receive in an exchange relationship with the organization (Ambrose, Seabright, & Schminke, 2002). Procedural justice means most generally that how an allocation decision is made (Konovsky, 2000). Interactional justice is defined as the interpersonal treatment people receive as procedures are enacted (Bies & Moag, 1986). Informational justice is the fair amount and timeliness of shared information (Loi, Yang, & Diefendorff, 2009).

Two studies were conducted which examined the relationship between employees justice perception and their psychological well-being. They worked on two dimensions of justice-the procedural and distributive justice - and checked the effect on psychological distress (Tepper, 2001). The study was done to check the relationship between dimensions of organizational justice and stress while keeping family conflict as a mediator between these variables. The results showed that there is a strong relationship between stress and two dimensions of justice that are procedural and interpersonal justices. The study examined the relationship between organizational justice and organizational citizenship behavior. The study ended up with a positive relationship between both variables (Chegini, 2009). Another study was done on marketing employees who focused on the relationship between perception of organizational justice and employees work attitude. Perceived support was used as a mediator (DeConinck, 2010).

Over-Qualification

Overqualification means having more knowledge, education and experience than required for a job. A considerable number of empirical studies analyze mismatches between worker education and educational requirements for jobs (Buchel & Battu, 2003). Another type of rigidity that may lead to overqualification is geographical immobility. According to Frank (1978) theory of differential overqualification, married women may move to their husbands' job location, thereby impairing their own career opportunities and foregoing potentially better job matches. As a result, they face a situation of enduring overqualification. A different theoretical approach to qualification mismatch assumes that individuals systematically acquire more skills than they can productively use in their jobs (Frank, 1978).

Overqualification is still an understudied topic with respect to alienation; not a single study examined the relationship between overqualification and work alienation. One study was conducted which put emphasis on the effect of overqualified employees on organization but not on workers alienation.

Alienation has many drivers; overqualification and organizational injustice are few of them. Many

researches have shown that alienation is affected due to many factors in an organization. So we have checked the effect of overqualification and organizational injustice on work alienation. We worked on these two variables because they were studied with alienation. Organizational injustice was studied only on two dimensions of alienation, but we checked its effect on overall alienation, including all dimensions.

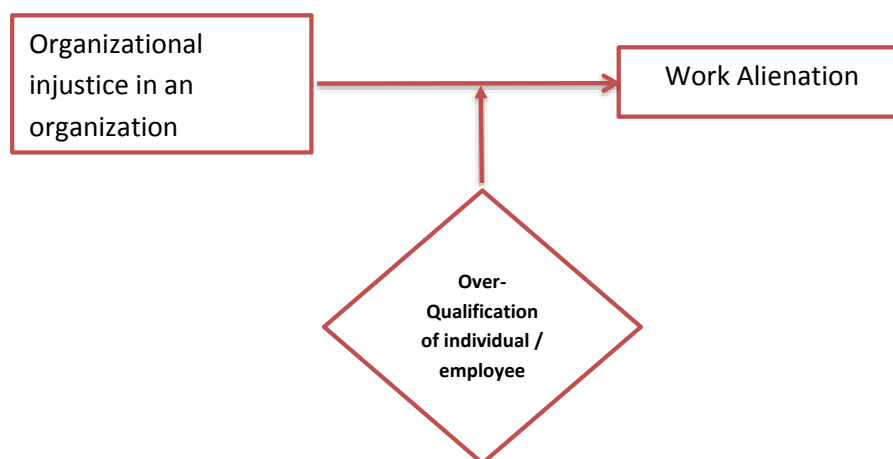


Figure 1. Theoretical framework

Hypothesis

H1: Procedural injustice significantly affects alienation

H2: Informational injustice significantly affects alienation

H3: Interpersonal injustice significantly affects alienation

H4: Distributive injustice significantly affects alienation

H5: Overqualification strengthens the relationship between Organizational Injustice and work alienation in such a way that when Over qualification is low.

METHODOLOGY

Work alienation was assessed by 10 items which were taken from [Hirschfeld et al. \(2000\)](#). Overqualification was also assessed by 10 items which were taken from [Johnson and Johnson \(1997\)](#). Organization injustice was assessed by 21 items from which we chose 20 of them, which were taken from [Olsen, Eidhamar, Myrseth, and Hystad \(2012\)](#). Our sample size which we would be using is 150 employees. The inspecting procedure we are utilizing is simple random examining strategy. We are utilizing this strategy since we are picking restricted measure of individuals from a particular association or any organization. As we are gathering information from twin urban communities of Pakistan and our specimen size is restricted, so that is the reason we are utilizing simple random examine procedure. And we are gathering information through surveys we outlined. In our questionnaire, we have questions in regards to various factors that incorporate alienation, overqualification and justice, and we are utilizing 5-point Likert scales which were taken from [Colquitt \(2001\)](#). We are scaling each question from 1 to 5 (1 strongly disagree, 5 strongly agree) through which we will get diverse assessments of association specialists that how alienation is affecting them. The unit of examination is Individual. Since we are utilizing our surveys from laborers who are working in private and public organizations, and such organizations are available within the twin cities of Pakistan to realize about the scales which include overqualification and organizational injustice to check the effect on work alienation.

Study method

We are utilizing the quantitative review strategy since we need to stress the target estimations and the numerical examination of date, which we will gather by doing an overview and utilizing the

questionnaire we have put forth for our problem expression. In our review, a five-point scale was connected in which 1 (strongly disagree) and 5 (strongly agreed) will be used. The survey is adopted with the references and attempt which look at the sentiments and considerations of workers in association with thinking about alienation and what impacts are causing more alienation. A questionnaire comprising of a few inquiries identified with each of our factors is intended to gather the information.

Analysis

To check the impact of our variables, we did correlation and regression analyses. To check the relationship between variables, we have applied the correlation test and to check the impact of independent variables on the dependent variable (Alienation), we have applied the regression test. We also checked whether gender and experience have any effect on alienation.

Table 1: Correlations

	Alienation	OQ	DI	Inter. I	Info. I	PI
Alienation	1					
Over qualification	.342**	1				
Distributive injustice	.182*	.223**	1			
Interpersonal injustice	-.095	.161*	.175*	1		
Informational injustice	-.102	.311**	.308**	.425**	1	
Procedural injustice	.203*	.212**	.275**	.249**	.234**	1

Note: ** Correlation significant at 0.01, * Correlation significant at 0.05, $N=150$

Correlation analysis was performed to examine the relationship in Table 1. Alienation was shown to have a significant correlation with Overqualification, Distributive Justice and Procedural justice whereas insignificance with Interpersonal and Informational injustice. Overqualification is significantly correlated with distributive injustice, Interpersonal, Informational, and procedural Injustice. Distributive Injustice has also shown significance with all the other injustice. Same is the case of interpersonal informational and procedural injustice, which all are correlated with each other significantly.

Table 2: Regression analysis

	B	Sig.	R^2	Change in R^2
Step 1				
D.justice	.203	.024		
I.justice	-.101	.202	0.107**	
Info.justice	.235	.011		
P.justice	-.148	.070		
Step 2				
D.justice	1.361	.043		0.189
I.justice	-1.167	.034		
Info.justice	-.064	.921		
P.justice	-.526	.391	0.296*	
Overqualification	-.046	.949		
OVxDJ	-.370	.069		
OVxIJ	.320	.0527		
OVxInfo.J	-.047	.811		
OVxPJ	.223	.2327		

Table 2 illustrates the result of the regression analysis. Overqualification acts as a moderator between organizational injustice and work alienation. In Table 2, R^2 in step 1 was 0.107 and 0.296 in step 2. The overall R^2 change was 0.189. Table 2 further explains the effect of the moderator on the four elements of the independent variable when checked individually. Distributive justice and Interpersonal justice were found significant with beta (1.361 and -1.167), respectively. The hypothesis of this study H5 is accepted.

Table 3: Regression analysis. Dependent variable: Alienation

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Corrected Model	1.606a	3	.535	1.941	.126
Intercept	749.018	1	749.018	2715.41	.000
Gender	.748	1	.748	2.711	.1027
Type	.250	1	.250	.905	.3437
Gender * Type	.015	1	.015	.053	.819
Error	40.272	146	.276		
Total	1488.323	150			
Corrected Total	41.879	149			

We also check the significance of gender and type of organization that whether they have any impact on alienation. But we found that gender is irrespective of alienation. The graphs below show the effect between all the elements of organizational injustice (distributive justice, interactional, procedural and informational injustice) and overqualification when it is high and low.

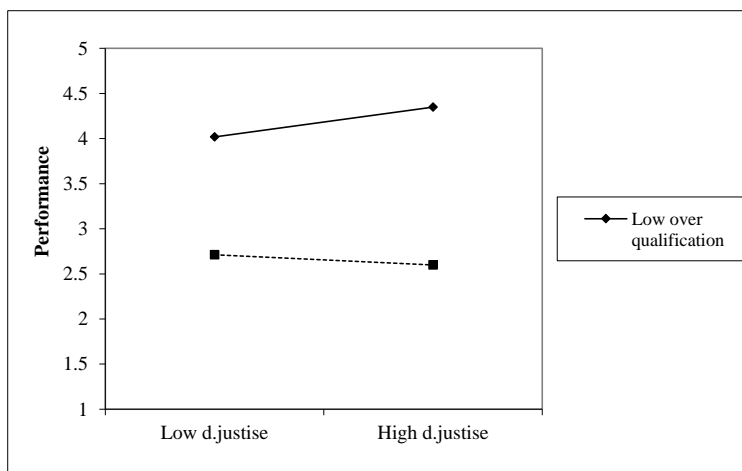


Figure 2. Effect of qualification on the relationship between distributive injustice and performance

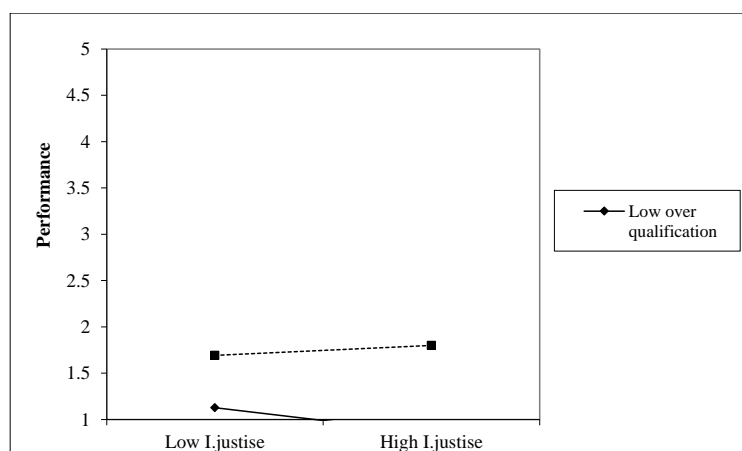


Figure 3. Effect of qualification on the relationship between interaction injustice and performance

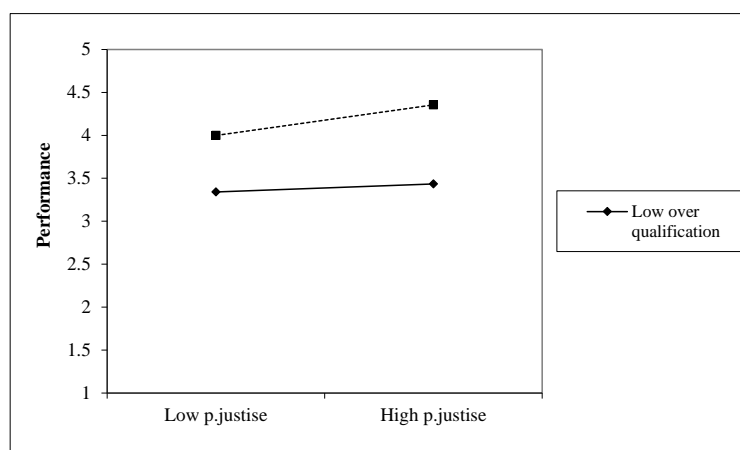


Figure 4. Effect of qualification on the relationship between procedural injustice and performance

CONCLUSION

We check the effect of overqualification and organizational injustice on alienation. We applied different tests on a sample of 150 (employees) to check the effect of our independent variables on our dependent variable. We have researched on employees of different telecom organizations, including government and privately owned organizations. We also checked the effect of gender and type of organization on alienation, but they were found insignificant. We applied the regression test; the results show that overqualification, Informational Injustice and Procedural injustice have a significant impact over alienation. While the others were found insignificant. Our two hypotheses (H1 and H2) were accepted while two hypotheses (H3 and H4) were rejected.

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