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Analyzing The Role Of Organizational Justice And Professional Ethics In Enhancing The Social Sustainability Of Employees At Tehran University Of Medical Sciences

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Abstract

In educational and healthcare organizations, strengthening the sense of fairness and adherence to professional ethical values are key factors in maintaining human capital and promoting employees' social stability. This study investigates the influence of organizational justice and professional ethics on the commitment and social sustainability of employees at Tehran University of Medical Sciences. The research method is descriptive–survey and applied, and the reciprocal effects of the two main constructs were examined within an educational, research, and healthcare center. The statistical population consisted of 20,187 employees, from which a sample of 379 individuals was selected using a random sampling formula. Data were collected through internationally standardized questionnaires and analyzed using Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) in LISREL 8.5. Findings indicate that all three dimensions of organizational justice (distributive, procedural, and interactional) have a positive and significant effect on various forms of employee commitment. Professional ethics also positively influences affective and normative commitment but has no significant effect on continuance commitment. The results reveal that the interaction between organizational justice and professional ethics has the strongest impact on enhancing employee commitment and social sustainability, underscoring the necessity of simultaneous attention to transparent processes and ethical values in human resource management.

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Extended Abstract

Introduction

In today's complex and high-pressure organizational environments, human and social sustainability is recognized as one of the most essential components for maintaining performance continuity and achieving organizational success. Human resources can flourish only when they experience a clear perception of organizational justice, professional security, and behavioral coherence in the workplace. Within such a context, attention to the factors that shape the quality of employees' experiences—particularly organizational justice and professional ethics—becomes crucial, as these variables directly influence satisfaction, engagement, motivation, and organizational belonging. As one of the largest educational and healthcare institutions in the country, Tehran University of Medical Sciences operates in a setting characterized by demanding responsibilities and extensive human interactions, making it highly sensitive to employees' perceptions and lived experiences. Accordingly, the present study aims to examine the mechanisms through which organizational justice and professional ethics affect organizational commitment and the social sustainability of employees, and to identify which organizational dimensions play the strongest role in enhancing retention, cohesion, and professional commitment.

Methodology

This study employed a descriptive-survey design with an applied orientation. The statistical population consisted of all 20,187 employees of Tehran University of Medical Sciences in 2025. Using Cochran's formula and a 95% confidence level, a sample of 379 individuals was selected. Data were collected using standardized questionnaires on organizational justice, professional ethics, organizational commitment, and employee retention. Face and construct validity were confirmed through expert review and confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) using LISREL. Instrument reliability was verified through Cronbach's alpha, ranging from 0.65 to 0.84. Data analysis was conducted in two stages: descriptive statistics and inferential analysis. In the latter stage, Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) was used to assess the direct and indirect effects of independent and mediating variables. Tests of normality, model-fit indices, and multicollinearity diagnostics indicated that the data were appropriate and the findings reliable.

Results And Discussion

Descriptive analysis showed that most respondents were between 30 and 50 years old, held bachelor's or master's degrees, and had 5 to 15 years of work experience. Reliability results indicated acceptable internal consistency, and correlation analysis confirmed a positive and significant relationship between the dimensions of organizational justice and professional ethics, with no evidence of harmful multicollinearity. Regression results and SEM analysis revealed that organizational justice and professional ethics have significant positive effects on affective and normative commitment, while their influence on continuance commitment was not significant. Moreover, organizational commitment served as an important mediating variable in strengthening employees' intention to remain with the organization. Model-fit indices—including χ^2/df , CFI, TLI, and RMSEA—showed that the structural model demonstrated a good fit and effectively explained the relationships among the variables. The findings highlight that organizational justice and professional ethics are two critical drivers in shaping the social sustainability of employees at Tehran University of Medical Sciences. Distributive justice demonstrated the strongest impact on organizational commitment, suggesting that perceived fairness in the distribution of resources and rewards is the most influential factor in fostering positive employee attitude. Professional ethics primarily influenced affective and normative commitment and played a notable role in strengthening employees' sense of belonging and responsibility. The combined implementation of fair policies and an ethical organizational culture can enhance workforce stability, cohesion, and loyalty. Considering the study's limitations—such as individual differences, cultural variables, and access constraints—it is recommended that future research adopt mixed methods, develop context-specific models of justice and ethics, and examine similar organizations. Additionally, managers are encouraged to enhance procedural transparency, strengthen participatory mechanisms, revise reward systems, formalize a professional ethics charter, and establish continuous feedback systems to promote organizational commitment and social sustainability among employees.