Mediating effect of organizational equity on freshmen' organizational commitment in the workplace

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Abstract: The fundamental focus of this research is organizational equity theory. The main purposes of this study are to investigate the relationships among compensation satisfaction, organizational equity, organizational commitment, and organizational citizenship behavior. Workplace freshmen were targeted as main participants. Out of 300 distributed questionnaires, 233 valid answers were returned with the response rate of 78%. The utilized statistics analysis methods included descriptive statistics, reliability analysis, validity analysis, and factor analysis. Additionally, multi-regression analysis was employed to prove the hypotheses. The research result proved the mediating effects of organizational equity on the relationship between compensation satisfaction and organizational commitment and of organizational commitment on the relationship between in organizational equity and organizational citizenship behavior. The findings indicated the positive direct impacts of organizational equity on organizational commitment and of organizational commitment on organization citizenship behavior. Generally, the findings implied that the act of obeying has a positive direct impact on organization equity.

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1. Introduction

In the present uncertain society, employers inevitably face increasing pressures from human cost, lay-off, unpaid leaves, scale shrinking, recruitment, etc. to reduce firm cost during the recession period. Therefore, there has been an ongoing debate between employers and employees about how much should be given and paid. However, in practice, employees usually have to work overtime to compensate work lay-off or unpaid leaves. Sometimes, even though the volume of workload increases, employee salary might decrease. Therefore, employees would pay much attention to the payment and welfare system and exhibit more concern whether the system is fair and satisfactory. Nonetheless, even when employees feel dissatisfied with it, they might fear to resign but produce complaints and organizational conflicts. This vicious cycle phenomenon is considered of extremely negative to both employers and employees (Chiu and Chen, 2010).

In the extant literature, many studies have reported the relationship between organizational equity and competitive mentality, which in turn influences employees' involvement and commitment effect in working. Organizational commitment could also affect organizational citizenship behavior. In this slump economy, employee' citizenship behavior can cause more or less effects to the company. Hence, if the organizations create the fair environment, employees would definitely better devote and exceed themselves (Chiu and Chen, 2010; Teng and Chen, 2011)

In practice, freshmen always worry about being hurt in the workplace. Hence, this study aims to target workplace freshmen as the main research focus. This study expects that compensation system could be utilized to influence organizational equity, which in turn promotes organizational commitment, employees' involvement in work as well as citizen behavior. This study hope that the sufficient understanding of the relationships compensation satisfaction, organizational equity, organizational commitment, and organizational citizenship behavior in the case of workplace freshmen can beneficially help reduce their fearfulness in the workplace and enhance their involvement to the organization.

Accordingly, the main purposes of this study are to (1) explore the impacts of compensation satisfaction on organizational equity and

organizational commitment, (2) investigate the impacts of organizational equity on organizational commitment and organizational citizenship behavior, and (3) examine the impact of organizational commitment to organizational citizenship behavior.

2. Literature review

2.1 Equity theory

The equity theory, also known as social comparison theory, was first developed by Adams (1965), mainly proposes that organizational members' incentives could be affected by their perceived equity. However, this theory also supposes that everyone in the organization would compare the involvement of himself/herself with others' salary outcome in order to follow and maintain the equity. Hence, organizational member's compensation satisfaction would depend on the payment and whether their job involvement is fair or not. If the salary distribution rates are equal, it indicates equity and inequity on contrast. It is the imbalance in perception that motivates actions to make it equally. Tax and Brown (1998) suggest that organizational equity can be utilized to assess employees' devotion, perception, and involvement in order to deal with member's opinions and to evaluate whether the employer treat employees equally.

2.2 Salary

Zhu et al. (1995) defines compensation as the amount of salary paid directly to employees by the employer, being established and designed based on the impact of external factors such as consumer price index, living cost, salary survey, etc. In line with this, Lee et al. (2009) refer compensation to the amount of salary the employer pays directly or indirectly to the organizational members; simultaneously present that better salary system can satisfy and provide more incentives to organizational members Henderson (1985)categorizes compensation into salary system and non-salary system, in which the former indicates that firms distribute the monetary and different services recourse pattern to employee while the latter reflects the aspects that firms provide employees with spirit, mental, and physical welfare activities.

2.3 Organization commitment

In the extant organizational management literature, there has been a wide range of studies indicating the important role of organizational commitment between leaders and members. (Eisenberger et al., 2010). Organizational commitment has become an important research issue for contemporary scholars. Mak and Sockel (2001) find out that employee loyalty toward the organization has to consider employees' reactions toward their work under the sensational entrepreneur model, which in turn helps explain the comparative

strength among individual identification toward a specific organization. In other words, employee loyalty is the emotional perception that makes the employee becomes the member of company (Hales and Gough, 2003). On clarifying, Meyer et al. (1990) believe that organization commitment represents the employees' attitude toward their company. Worth noticing, Allen and Gellatly (1990) argue that although employees' organization commitment has never been considered the most important attitude, it is regarded as the fundamental motivation for performance. Further investigating, Powers (2000) and Organ (1988) state that employee loyalty is expressed through their agreement or commitment attitude in service firms. Mowday et al. (1979) believe organizational commitment can help assess organizational members' degree of acceptance and involvement. With higher organizational commitment, members will be willing to put more efforts and exhibit stronger wish in staying at the company in order to actually become organizational members (Ford et al, 2003).

2.4 Organizational citizenship behavior

Konovsky and Pugh (1994) indicate organizational citizenship behavior is one of the employees' positive behaviors which exceed the request of their responsibilities and belong to discretion and are excluded in the formal compensation structure. Similarly, Lin et al. (1994) put forward that the entire organizational citizenship behavior has the direct impact on employees' behavior in achieving mutual goals. Further elaborating organizational citizenship behavior, Xu (2001) clarifies the meaningful behaviors to be the ones that are not the basis for the formation of formal characteristic responsibilities, simultaneously are not constricted to the contract exchange. Instead, it can be delineated as the formal contribution. For ongoing investigating, Smith et al. (1983) and Chiu and Chen (2010) argue that organizational citizenship behavior contains the behavior of altruism and exceeds the obedience behavior of selfness.

2.5 The impact of compensation satisfaction on organizational equity

Lee et al. (2009) consider compensation satisfaction an important factor stimulating organizational equity. In other words, the compensation system has been found to have a strong correlation with organizational equity. Employee would feel dissatisfied when equity is lacked. In addition, Lin et al. (1994) indicates the positive effect of compensation satisfaction and employees' perception toward organizational equity. Based on this premise, Dessler (2000) suggests that the compensation management should emphatically focus on employees' equity perception since this

endeavor will bring about significant long-lasting benefits to organizations. Therefore, the following hypothesis was proposed.

H1: Salary satisfaction has the positive influence of organization justice.

2.6 The impact of organizational equity on organizational commitment

Samad (2006) through exploring procedural and distribution equity proves the positive impacts of procedural and distribution equity on organizational commitment. Additionally, Staley et al. (2003) claim the positive relationships among procedural and distribution equity and organizational commitment. In line with this, Aryee et al. (2003) suggest that organizational equity through fair regulations and environment positively affects organizational commitment, which in turn effectively promotes employees' work involvement. Noteworthy, Chang (2002) through further investigating the relations between organizational equity and organizational commitment argues that procedural equity exerts more impact on organizational commitment than distribution equity. From four samples of America, India, Germany and Hong Kong, Pillai et al. (2001) also affirm the direct impact of organizational equity on organizational commitment, supporting the idea of Lemons and Jones (2001) that organizational equity is the predictor of organizational commitment. Accordingly, the following hypothesis was proposed.

H2: Organization justice will direct influence organization commitment.

2.7 The impact of compensation satisfaction on organizational commitment

Steers and Porter (1983) claim that employees with reasonable salary can better promote their working involvement, strengthen organizational commitment, and increase work satisfaction. In addition, Huddart (1996) finds the positive correlation between compensation satisfaction and employees' organizational commitment. Moreover, Lin et al. (1994) shows the significant correlation between compensation system and organizational commitment; however, firms should aware of the fact whether organizational members actually perceive equity. Once employees are satisfied with the provided salary, they will definitely express more positive commitment to the organization, which in turn benefits the entire organization. Furthermore, Lee et al. (2009) argue that employees' compensation significantly satisfaction influences their commitment, organizational implying that organizational members with better salary will exhibit more willingness in identifying and involving

in their work. Hence, the following hypothesis was established.

H3: Salary satisfaction has positive impact to organization commitment

2.8 The impact of organizational commitment on organizational citizenship behavior

Lin et al. (1994) suggest organizational commitment to be the antecedent variable of citizenship behavior. organizational Further elaborating, Mowday et al. (1982) clarify organizational commitment to include organizational agreement, work involvement, and organization sensation, which beneficially facilitate organizational members' willingness in engaging and promoting their organizational citizenship behavior. Moreover, (1982)indicates that the organizational commitment can easily motivate better organizational citizenship behavior. Accordingly, this study proposed the following hypothesis.

H4: Organization commitment has positive impact to organization citizenship behavior

2.9 The impact of organizational equity on organizational citizenship behavior

Chiu and Chen (2010) indicate that organizational equity exert a partly positive impact on organizational citizenship behavior, implying that the creation of the fair environment is extremely critical once firms attempt to stimulate organizational members to better contribute and exceed themselves. On supporting, Organ (1988) consider the relationship between perceived equity and citizenship behavior as the origin of social exchange, which in turn acts as one of the external contracts obscuring to exchange. In other words, once employees acknowledge they are under the condition of social exchange, the rate of citizenship behavior would considerably increase. From the standpoint of the equity theory, Moorman (1991) finds that once members perceive organizational attitude corresponding to fair principles, they would be more willing to perform better in organizational citizenship behavior. Moreover, Lin et al. (1994) suppose that organizational equity exhibits a positive impact on organizational citizenship behavior, which indicates the important role of organizational equity in promoting organizational citizenship behavior. Therefore, the following hypothesis was put forward as follows:

H5: Organizational equity positively affects organizational citizenship behavior.

2.10 Mediating effects of organizational equity and organizational commitment

From the above hypotheses, compensation satisfaction was proposed to have a positive impact on organizational equity and organizational commitment; organizational equity was proposed to have a positive impact on organizational commitment and organization citizenship behavior; and organizational commitment was proposed to have a positive impact on organization citizenship behavior. Therefore, organizational equity was expected to mediate the relationship between compensation satisfaction and organizational commitment and organizational commitment would mediate the relationship between organizational equity and organizational citizenship behavior. Accordingly, the following hypotheses were proposed.

- H6: Organizational equity mediates the relationship between compensation satisfaction and organizational commitment.
- H7: Organization commitment mediates the relationship between organizational equity and organizational citizenship behavior.

3. Methodology

3.1 Research framework

Based on the above literature review, proposed definitions of each dimension in the extant literature, and domestic and foreign expert discussions, this study aims to sufficiently explore the relationships among organizational compensation satisfaction, organizational equity, organizational commitment, and organizational citizenship behavior as well as the possible mediating effects of organizational equity and organization commitment. Accordingly, the research framework was established as shown in Figure 1.

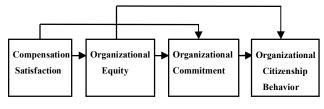


Figure 1. Research framework

3.2 Research subjects and questionnaire survey

This research focuses on giving suggestions to workplace freshmen with one-year working experience. Since the employers were reluctant to provide their employee list and there were no official secondary sources for conducting random sampling

method, the research adopted convenience sampling method. Out of 300 distributed survey questionnaires, 233 valid answers were returned with the high response rate of 78%.

3.3 Scale measurement

This research through opinions of many professional scholars in the fields of compensation satisfaction, organizational equity, organizational commitment, and organizational citizenship behavior designs and modifies the proposed dimensions and variables in the research questionnaire as shown in Table 1. Likert 6-point scale was employed as the main measurement instrument (1= strongly disagree. 6= strongly agree). Since the salary issue is the confidential data for company and the respondents are possibly unwilling to fill the actual salary, this study aims to use satisfaction for measurement. Regarding compensation satisfaction, this study adopts the measurement scale of Lawler (1987) to modify and develop questionnaire items of "I am satisfied with the payment for my technique from company", "I am satisfied with the payment for my performance form company", and "I am satisfied with the payment for my position form company". Concerning organizational equity, this study follows Tax and Brown (1998) to develop the measurement scale, including "I get the same payment from colleagues with similar working content", "I am satisfied with the visible and invisible payment", "I have the direct reaction way in making suggestions", "The firm maintains a variety of ways in dealing with employees suggestions", "Company makes the sincere attitude from employee suggestion and doubt", and "I feel that the firm shows sympathy to employee suggestions or questions". In terms of organizational commitment, this study adopts the measurement scale of Mowday et al. (1979) to develop questionnaire items including "I will tell my friends that the company I am working for worth it", "I will proudly tell others that I am one of the members", "I am grateful to decide to serve in this company", "I am willing to give more contribution to assist the firm's development and success", "I have highly loyalty to company", "I am concerned about the firm future", "", "If the working content changes, it propels me to leave", "I will learn more by staying in the company", "I am honored to assist colleagues in solving difficulties", "I am still concerned about the organization tasks and non-working time", and "I will execute over the basic request of organization".

4. Results

4.1 Descriptive statistic analysis

The demographic analysis results showed that out of 300 respondents, 30.5% were male and

69.5% were female. Concerning age, 12.4% were less than 18 years old, 54.5% belonged to the 19-24 year-old group, and 33.1% were above 25 years old. Regarding monthly income, the less-than-\$NT 20,000 group accounted for 20.6%, \$NT 20,001-40,000 accounted for 47.2%, and above \$NT 40,001 accounted for 32.2%. Finally, in terms of working position, 62.7% were basic employee and 37.3% were holding positions above primary supervisor.

4.2 Reliability analysis, factor analysis, validity analysis

The second, third, fourth, and fifth parts of the questionnaire were measurement scales for compensation satisfaction, organizational equity, organizational commitment, and organizational citizenship behavior, respectively. Cronbach's α value was employed to assess reliability analysis. The results showed that all achieved values for these four aspects were greater than the threshold 0.7 (Chow, 2002) as shown in Table 1, indicating high construct reliability.

Concerning validity analysis, this study mainly operated double-faced content validity analysis and constructed validity to keep the

absolutely rigorous. In this research, dimension scale design of compensation satisfaction, organizational organizational commitment, organizational citizenship behavior were based on the extant literature and scholar references, hence, content validity was assured. For testing construct validity, confirmatory factor analysis was employed. The KMO and Bartlett test was first conducted. As suggested by Chow (2002), if all KMO values were greater than the standard value 0.7 and all the significance were less than 0.01, the constructs would be proven to be suitable to operate factor analysis. Then, the principle component analysis results showed that all achieved factor loading exceeded the suggested standard values of 0.45, which in turn confirming all construct validity. In addition, once the eigenvalue of each variable was greater than 1, the variable would be independent and corresponding with the separated variables listed in the origin scale. In this study, the entire construct explanation variations exceeded the standard 50% of Chow (2002), indicating that the measurement items were explanatory.

Table 1. Questionnaire design and Reliability and validity tests

Dimen-sion	Item	Factor loading	Cronbach's α	KMO & Bartlett test		
				KMO	Bartlett test	
Compensation satisfaction	01	0.870	0.836	0.708	Bartlett significance =0.000***	
	02	0.897			Explained variation =75.369%	
	03	0.836				
Organizational equity	04	0.953	0.797	0.804	Bartlett significance =0.000***	
	05	0.743			Explained variation =73.356%	
	06	0.562				
	07	0.925				
	08	0.617				
	09	0.831				
Organizational commitment	10	0.830	0.826	0.871	Bartlett Significance =0.000***	
	11	0.854			Explained variation =74.280%	
	12	0.720				
	13	0.647				
	14	0.825				
	15	0.818				
	16	0.876				
	17	0.630				
Organizational citizenship	18	0.842	0.784	0.791	Bartlett Significance =0.000***	
behavior	19	0.877			Explained variation =76.076%	
	20	0.828				
	21	0.580				
	22	0.949				

Note: p<0.1+, p<0.05*, p<0.01**, p<0.001***

4.3 Multiple regression analysis

In this step, multiple regression analysis was utilized to test the relationships among compensation satisfaction, organizational equity, organizational commitment, and organizational citizenship behavior under

control variables of age and income. As shown in Table 2, the adjusted R^2 was bigger than cross-section 0.18, indicating that the entire regression pattern was explanatory. All achieved VIF values were smaller than the standardized values of 10 (Chow, 2002), proving that the regression had non-colinearity. Noteworthy, compensation satisfaction was found to exert a significantly direct impact on organizational equity (β = 0.449, t= 7.826), which in turn supported the hypothesis H1.

As shown in Table 3, organizational equity exerted a significantly positive effect on organizational commitment (β = 0.588, t= 11.418), supporting the hypothesis H2.

Table 2. Regression results of compensation satisfaction and organizational equity

Dep	endent variable	Organization justice			
Independent variable		β	Adjusted R ²	t	VIF
Age (control variable)	0	0.097	0.216	1.645	1.088
Income (control variable)	0	0.009		0.151	1.070
Compensation satisfaction	0).449		7.826***	1.028

Table 3. Regression results of organizational equity on and organizational commitment

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Dependent variable	Organizational commitment				
Independent variable	β	Adjusted R ²	t	VIF	
Age (control variable)	0.101	0.369	1.896	1.094	
Income (control variable)	-0.001		-0.015	1.068	
Organizational equity	0.588		11.42***	1.031	

As presented above, the hypothesis H1 proved that compensation satisfaction had a direct impact on organizational equity and the supported hypothesis 2 proved that organizational equity directly affects organizational commitment, indicating three primary standard items for forming the mediating effect of organizational equity. On exploring this mediating effect, Table 4 presented noteworthy results. Specifically, the original compensation satisfaction was found to have significantly positive impact on organizational commitment (β = 0.441, t= 7.702), supporting the hypothesis H3. After adding organizational equity, this impact remained significant; however, t-value dropped to 3.955. Therefore, the mediating effect of organizational equity was proven, supporting H6.

Table 4. Mediating effect of organizational equity

Model	Dependent variable	Organizational commitment				
	Independent variable	β	Adjusted R ²	t value	VIF	
1	Age	0.132	0.220	2.250*	1.088	
	Income	-0.005		-0.087	1.070	
	Compensation satisfaction	0.441		7.702***	1.028	
2	Age	0.085	0.405	1.643	1.101	
	Income	-0.009		-0.184	1.070	
	Compensation satisfaction	0.221		3.955***	1.288	
	Organizational equity	0.489		8.726***	1.292	

As shown in Table 5, organizational commitment exerted a significantly positive effect on organizational citizenship behavior (β = 0.465, t= 8.162), supporting the hypothesis 4.

Table 5. Regression of organizational commitment and organizational citizenship behavior

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Dependent variable	Organizational citizenship behavior					
Independent variable	β	Adjusted R ²	t	VIF		
Age (control variable)	0.111	0.237	1.894	1.107		
Income (control variable)	-0.031		-0.543	1.068		
Organizational commitment	0.465		8.162***	1.042		

It was noted that the supported hypotheses 2 and 6 proved the significantly positive effects of organizational equity on organizational commitment and of organizational commitment on organization citizenship behavior, indicating three primary standard items for forming the mediating effect of organizational commitment. In order to explore this mediating effect, Table 6 presented noteworthy results. Specifically, the original organizational equity was found to have significantly positive impact on organization citizenship behavior (β = 0.441, t= 7.702),

supporting the hypothesis H5. After adding the effect of organizational commitment, this impact remained significant; however, t-value dropped to 0.245. Therefore, the mediating effect of organizational commitment was proven, supporting the hypothesis H7.

Table 6. Mediating effect of organizational commitment

Model	Dependent variable	Organizational citizenship behavior				
	Independent variable	β	Adjusted R ²	t value	VIF	
1	Age	0.156	0.107	2.474*	1.094	
	Income	-0.032		-0.514	1.068	
	Organizational equity	0.285		4.646***	1.031	
2	Age	0.110	0.234	1.875	1.110	
	Income	-0.032		-0.549	1.068	
	Organizational equity	0.017		0.245	1.586	
	Organizational commitment	0.455		6.422***	1.604	

5. Conclusion

Organizational commitment and organizational citizenship behavior have been regarded as crucial issues in the contemporary organizational behavior management. In the research of Malik et al. (2010), organizational commitment has been proven to be the important issue toward organizational behavior. Based on the equity theory, this research mainly focuses on the group of freshmen employee with one-year working experience. The mains purposes of this research are to investigate the relationships among compensation satisfaction, organizational equity, organizational commitment, and organization citizenship behavior, simultaneously explore the mediating effects of organizational equity and organizational commitment. The result shows that compensation satisfaction has significantly positive effects on organization equity and organization commitment. Organization commitment has significantly positive effects on organization commitment and organization citizenship behavior.

Concerning mediating organizational equity was found to mediate the relationship between compensation satisfaction and organizational commitment. This finding is consistent with Samad (2006) that employees' procedural equity and distributed equity perception have positive correlations with organizational equity perception. Noteworthy, distributed equity exhibits stronger impact on organizational commitment than procedural justice. Dessler (2000) proposes the primary perception of equity in compensation management. Accordingly, compensation satisfaction should propel organizational equity perception, which in turn benefits the organizations in the long term. All the inference corresponds with the results achieved from this study. The finding implies that an open equity system should be implemented in each stage from regulating compensation to evaluating

employees' performance. By conducting public meetings for proclaiming or discussing as well as regulating internal activities, firms can make employees feel the fair environment. relationships between members and supervisors should be under an open and fair system. Noteworthy, firms should focus more on not separating the insiders and outsiders in order to make organizational members perceive equity. In this study, organizational equity was found to have mediating effect between compensation satisfaction and organizational commitment. This result can be explained by two main characteristics of workplace freshmen. First, the weaker group dares not to express their frustration in the workplace. Second, freshmen tend to be unfamiliar with organizational system, regulations and culture, hence they are easier to make mistakes or suffer from loss (Teng and Chen, 2011). In addition, organizational commitment was found to have a positive significant impact on organizational citizenship behavior and a complete mediating effect on the relationship between organizational equity and organizational citizenship behavior. As put forward by Organ (1988), the relation between equity perception and organizational citizenship behavior acts as a kind of social exchanges, which belong to external contract and are quite obscure. Since employees freely use it without considering that their rights are deprived, if the employees suppose they are in this condition, rare citizenship behavior would increase. Similarly, Mowday et al. (1982) through exploring the impact of organizational commitment on organizational recognition, working involvement, and organizational sensation claim that organizational commitment benefits firms in propelling extra benefits and stimulate employees in expressing their willingness to engage in organizational citizenship behavior. In other words, employees would be more engaged in and devoted to their work and regulations because of the fair environment in the workplace. As a result, employees will exceed themselves and work more effectively under altruistic hierarchical relationships. Therefore, this finding strongly implies that firms should pay more attention to the establishment of the fair environment in the workplace as well as the remuneration or organizational norms to reduce unfair issues among the members, which in turn helps motivate employees to put more contribution to their work. Furthermore, firms should emphatically hold more educational training courses to make employees fully understand the importance of their work and help them learn how to optimize and identity their work, recognize their work value, and strive to engaged in the tasks with better performance, thus employees would be more willing to express selftranscendence and engage in altruistic behavior to other members in the organization.

This study remains several limitations. First, since the research focus were freshmen who just entered the workplace approximately one year, they were reluctant to provide staff directory. The lack of official secondary data also caused significant difficult in collecting data. Second, as random sampling was difficult to conduct, only surveying with convenience sampling study was employed. Furthermore, since this study is cross-sectional analysis, it is recommended that future studies should include different points of time and time-sequence profile in analysis. Finally, although this research aimed to conduct quantitative scientific research, human resources issues was eventually employed to explore and understand human nature tendency, which in turn made the research partly humanoriented. Therefore, it is suggested that in research that require flexibility, qualitative research methods can also be used to achieve balance between qualitative and quantitative research, so that theory and practice can achieve better standards.

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