

The Role Of Lifelong Learning In Mediating The Effect Of Organizational Justice On Lecturer Engagement In Private Universities

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to examine and analyze the influence of organizational justice on lecturer engagement, as well as to examine the mediating role of lifelong learning in the relationship. The focus of this study is lecturers at private universities in Mamuju Regency, a developing area facing the challenge of limited resources. This study uses a quantitative approach by collecting data through questionnaires distributed to permanent lecturers in two PTS totaling 165 permanent lecturers with proportional convenience sampling techniques. The analysis technique uses Structural Equation Modeling (SEM-PLS). The results of the study indicate that organizational justice has a positive and significant effect on lifelong learning and lecturer engagement. Then lifelong learning affects lecturer engagement. In addition, lifelong learning is proven to significantly mediate the influence of organizational justice on lecturer engagement. These findings emphasize the importance of creating a fair work environment and supporting continuous learning to improve the quality of the tridharma of higher education.

Keywords: Organizational Justice, Lifelong Learning, Lecturer Involvement, Private Universities

1. INTRODUCTION

Lecturers have a strategic role in creating competent, innovative, and adaptive human resources to changing times. This role is realized through the implementation of the Tridharma of Higher Education which includes education and teaching, research, and community service (Kasule, 2015; Yubilianto, 2020). Within the framework of this Tridharma, lecturers not only function as teachers, but also as researchers and agents of social change. They are required not only to deliver teaching materials, but also to develop knowledge and apply it in society (Hidayat & Bayudhigantara, 2023). Therefore, the involvement of lecturers in all aspects of the Tridharma is very important to encourage the quality of competitive higher education.

However, the optimal implementation of Tridharma is still a challenge, especially in the environment of Private Universities (PTS) in developing areas such as Mamuju Regency. Lecturers in this area often face limitations in terms of research funding, access to scientific publications, and minimal institutional support (Aboramadan, 2022). Many of them tend to prioritize teaching activities due to administrative pressures and high workloads, so that research and community service are neglected (Siregar et al., 2016; Syahza, 2019). This imbalance in the implementation of Tridharma can reduce the overall quality of the institution.

In such situations, lecturer engagement becomes very important (Assefa et al., 2023; Kashyap et al., 2022). Work engagement, as explained by Schaufeli et al. (2006), is a positive psychological condition characterized by vigor, dedication, absorption, and real contribution to the institution. Lecturers who have high work engagement will be more motivated, show greater loyalty, and contribute maximally in carrying out tridharma tasks (Bailey et al., 2017; Aboramadan et al., 2020).

One of the factors that influence work engagement is the perception of organizational justice. Organizational justice refers to an individual's perception of fairness in the distribution of resources (distributive justice), fairness in the decision-making process (procedural justice), fairness in interpersonal relationships (interpersonal justice), and fairness in the delivery of

information (informational justice) (Greenberg, 1990; Colquitt et al., 2001). When lecturers feel treated fairly in various



aspects of the organization, they tend to be more satisfied and actively involved in their work (Byrne, 2005; Ehrhart, 2004; Mukherjee & Bhattacharya, 2013). Furthermore, personal factors such as motivation and meaning in work also contribute to lecturer engagement. Strong intrinsic motivation and perceptions of work as meaningful strengthen lecturers' commitment to carrying out their roles optimally (Cook & Deutsch, 1986; Jiang et al., 2017). A study conducted by Lin et al. (2024) also support this finding by showing that a strong sense of justice and organizational support can encourage lecturers' proactive involvement in positive work behaviors in public higher education institutions in China.

In addition to organizational justice, lifelong learning is also believed to be able to strengthen lecturer engagement. Lifelong learning includes all learning activities carried out by individuals throughout their lives to improve personal, social, and professional competencies (Aspin & Chapman, 2000; White, 2009). In the context of lecturers, lifelong learning is important to maintain the latest knowledge, follow technological and curriculum developments, and increase self-efficacy. Lifelong learning also encourages lecturers to continue to develop, be reflective about their work practices, and be active in seeking information and increasing their own capacity (Kirby et al., 2010; Bilgiç et al., 2021). Lecturers who are active in lifelong learning will feel more prepared to face challenges, more confident, and more involved in carrying out tridharma duties, both in teaching, research, and community service (Marsick & Watkins, 2003; Bandura, 2006; Larsen & James, 2022).

This study focuses on analyzing the influence of organizational justice on lecturers' work engagement by considering the mediating role of lifelong learning. This study is important because there are not many studies that specifically examine the relationship between these three variables in the context of private universities, especially in developing areas such as Mamuju Regency. Thus, this study is expected to provide theoretical and practical contributions in efforts to improve lecturers' work engagement through improving organizational justice and strengthening the culture of lifelong learning.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Lecturer Engagement

Job involvement is a positive, satisfying, and energetic psychological condition that is closely related to an individual's job role, where a person is completely physically, cognitively, and emotionally involved in their work activities (Kahn, 1990; Schaufeli et al., 2006). Schaufeli et al. (2006) explained that job involvement consists of three main dimensions, namely vigour, dedication, and absorption. Vigour refers to a high level of energy and mental resilience while working, as well as a strong desire to try and not give up easily in facing work challenges. Dedication reflects emotional involvement in work, which is characterized by a sense of pride, enthusiasm, inspiration, and perceived meaning from the work being done. While absorption describes a state when an individual is completely immersed in work, finds it difficult to detach from it, and feels that time passes very quickly due to intense focus.

In the context of higher education, especially in Indonesia, Helmi et al. (2020) developed a work engagement approach by adding a fourth dimension, namely contribution. This dimension reflects the extent to which lecturers feel that their work makes a positive contribution to the institution and students, either through ideas, energy, knowledge, or active involvement in the tridharma activities of higher education. Contribution also involves the affective, cognitive, and psychomotor aspects of lecturers in providing a meaningful impact on institutional development. Thus, work engagement in the context of lecturers includes more than just individual enthusiasm for work, but also includes real participation in achieving institutional goals through responsible, reflective, and mutually progress-oriented contributions.

Understanding the work engagement of lecturers cannot be separated from the factors that influence it. One relevant approach to explain this is the Job Demands–Resources model (Bakker & Demerouti, 2008), which emphasizes the importance of a balance between job demands and job resources. Lecturers who have access to resources such as organizational support, feedback, and autonomy tend to be more engaged in their work. In higher education, lecturer engagement plays a major role in the quality of education, research productivity, and student satisfaction (Aboramadan et al., 2020; Bailey et al., 2017). Lecturers who are emotionally, physically, and cognitively involved in their work tend to have high enthusiasm, dedication to the tridharma, and active contributions to institutional development.

Organizational Justice

Organizational justice is an individual's perception of the extent to which treatment, distribution of outcomes, and decision-making processes within an organization are viewed as fair. This concept is an important focus in the study of organizational behavior because it has a major influence on individual motivation, satisfaction, performance, and involvement in work (Greenberg, 1990; Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005). Colquitt et al. (2001) classify organizational justice into four main indicators, namely: (1) distributive justice, which refers to the perception of fairness of outcomes or rewards received, such as compensation and promotion, based on proportionality or equality between contributions and outcomes; (2) procedural justice, which relates to the extent to which the decision-making process is carried out consistently, objectively and transparently; (3) interpersonal justice, which reflects the quality of treatment between individuals in the organization, including respect, politeness, and appreciation in daily interactions; and (4) informational justice, which refers to the extent to which information is conveyed honestly, completely, and timely to members of the organization. These four indicators are interrelated in forming the overall perception of justice and become the foundation for creating a healthy organizational

climate.

Perceptions of the four indicators of justice play an important role in shaping lecturers' attitudes and behaviors towards the institution. In the context of higher education, especially in developing regions, organizational justice is not only understood as a moral principle, but also as a strategic factor that influences the psychological well-being and professionalism of lecturers. When lecturers feel that organizational decisions are made fairly, interactions between individuals take place respectfully, and policy information is conveyed openly, they will be more motivated to carry out the tridharma duties optimally. This is in line with the view of Cropanzano & Mitchell (2005) in Social Exchange Theory, that individuals who feel treated fairly will provide returns in the form of increased performance and work engagement. In this study, high perceptions of justice also encourage the emergence of enthusiasm to continue learning and developing oneself, which ultimately improves the quality of the implementation of the tridharma and strengthens loyalty to the institution. Therefore, organizational justice is not just an administrative issue, but an important key in creating a productive and sustainable academic culture.

Lifelong Learning

Lifelong learning is a learning process that continues throughout a person's life, which aims to renew, improve, and expand individual knowledge, skills, and competencies in various contexts, both personal, professional, and social (Aspin & Chapman, 2000; White, 2009). In the context of higher education, this concept is very important because it allows lecturers to remain relevant and adaptive to the development of science, technology, and the demands of changing times.

According to Kirby et al. (2010), lifelong learning consists of five main indicators: (1) goal setting, namely the ability to set clear learning goals; (2) application of knowledge and skills, namely the ability to apply knowledge and skills in real contexts; (3) self-direction and evaluation, namely the ability to direct and evaluate the learning process independently; (4) locating information, namely the ability to find relevant information effectively; and (5) adaptable learning strategies, namely the ability to use flexible learning strategies according to the situation and needs. Furthermore, lifelong learning is not just about the accumulation of information, but also includes learning how to learn, namely metacognitive awareness of how someone thinks and learns, as well as the ability to manage the learning process reflectively and independently (Kirby et al., 2010). This concept positions individuals as active learners who continue to adapt to new needs and opportunities throughout their careers.

In the context of lecturers, lifelong learning provides a real contribution to work engagement. Lecturers who have a lifelong learning spirit tend to be more innovative in teaching, active in research and community service, and demonstrate high professional responsibility. Lifelong learning also forms a growth mindset, which is a developing mindset that encourages lecturers to be open to challenges and continue to develop their capabilities. Theoretically, lifelong learning can be understood as a personal resource in the Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) model that increases individual capacity in facing work demands (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007). In addition, based on Self-Determination Theory (Deci & Ryan, 2000), lifelong learning is driven by intrinsic motivation such as the need to feel competent, autonomous, and socially connected. Lecturers who are active in lifelong learning generally have a high level of self-efficacy and feel that self-development is part of their professional actualization. The research variables consist of three variables built based on three hypotheses. The complete conceptual framework and research hypotheses can be seen in Figure 1 below:

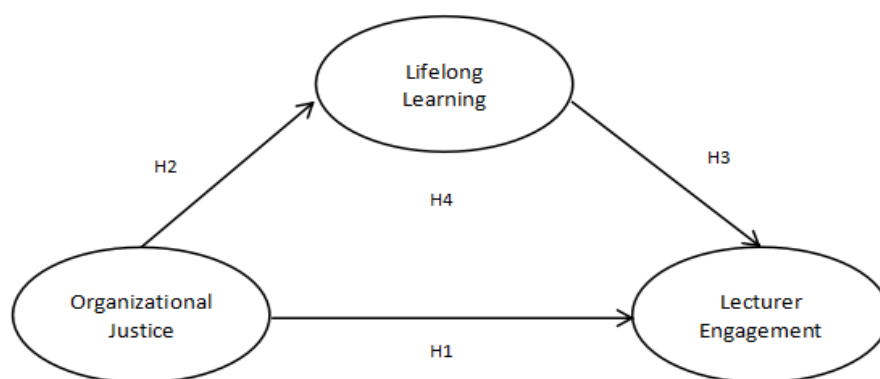


Figure 1. Conceptual framework and Research Hypothesis

Research Hypothesis:

- H1: Organizational Justice berpengaruh positif dan signifikan terhadap Lecturer Engagement
- H2: Organizational Justice berpengaruh positif dan signifikan terhadap Lifelong Learning

H3: Lifelong Learning berpengaruh positif dan signifikan terhadap Lecturer Engagement

H4: Lifelong Learning memediasi pengaruh Organizational Justice terhadap Lecturer Engagement

3. METHODS

This study uses a quantitative approach with an explanatory design that generally aims to identify factors that influence a life indicator and understand the relationship between the variables studied (Sugiyono, 2018). The population in this study were all permanent lecturers at private universities in Mamuju Regency, West Sulawesi, totaling 282 lecturers from two universities. Sampling used the proportional convenience sampling method, which is a combination of ease of access and proportions that represent the population (Arikunto, 2010; Sugiyono, 2018). Then the number of samples was determined using the Slovin formula which is appropriate for large and finite populations, so that 165 respondents were obtained. Data collection was carried out using a 5-point Likert scale questionnaire, namely a scale of "1" representing "strongly disagree" to "5" representing "strongly agree".

The instruments in this study were used to measure three main variables, namely organizational justice, lifelong learning, and lecturer engagement. The measurement of organizational justice refers to the instrument developed by Colquitt (2001), which includes indicators of distributive, procedural, interpersonal, and informational justice. Meanwhile, lifelong learning was measured using an instrument from Kirby et al. (2010) which emphasizes the goal setting aspect, namely setting goals; application of knowledge and skills, namely applying appropriate knowledge and skills; self-direction and evaluation, namely engaging in self-direction and self-evaluation; locating information, namely finding the information needed, and adaptable learning strategies, namely adapting their learning strategies to various conditions that can be applied in the workplace. Lecturer engagement was measured using an instrument from Schaufeli et al. (2006), which consists of three main indicators, namely vigour, dedication, and absorption, and is adjusted to the approach of Helmi et al. (2020) for the context of lecturers in Indonesia, namely adding a contribution indicator as a reflection of lecturer involvement in the workplace.

To answer the research problem and prove the hypothesis proposed previously, it was analyzed using descriptive statistics and inferential statistics. The analysis technique used Structural Equation Modeling with Partial Least Square (SEM-PLS) with Smart PLS 4 software.

4. RESULTS

This study aims to test and analyze the effect of organizational justice on lecturer engagement with lifelong learning as a mediating variable. Model testing was carried out using the SEM-PLS approach, and produced the following findings: The quality test of the measurement model in this study was carried out by referring to the guidelines from Hair et al. (2021), which includes testing construct validity, discriminant validity, and construct reliability. Construct validity is tested through convergent validity as seen from the loading factor value and Average Variance Extracted (AVE). Hair et al. (2021) suggest that a good loading factor value is above 0.70, and the AVE value must be greater than 0.50 so that the construct can be said to have adequate convergent validity. The results showed that all indicators had a loading factor value ≥ 0.70 , with the highest values in the vigour indicator (0.973) and goal setting (0.961), while the lowest value remained above (0.726). In addition, all constructs have AVE values that meet the requirements, namely Organizational Justice of 0.824, Lifelong Learning of 0.734, and Lecturer Involvement of 0.875, so they meet the requirements for convergent validity.

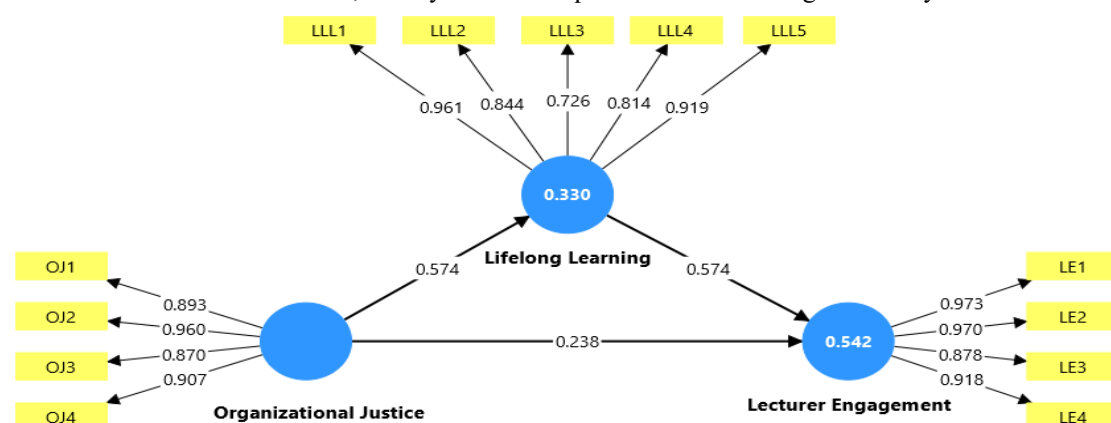


Figure 2. Results of the PLS-SEM output analysis

Figure 2 shows the results of the Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) analysis, which includes a structural model (inner model) and a measurement model (outer model). The structural model describes the relationship between latent constructs, while the measurement model shows the contribution of each indicator to its construct. Further

information on construct reliability and convergent validity is presented in Table 1, which contains the values of Cronbach's Alpha, Composite Reliability, and Average Variance Extracted (AVE).

Table 1 Construct Reliability and Convergent Validity

Variables	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability (rho_c)	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)
Lecturer Engagement	0,952	0,966	0,875
Lifelong Learning	0,907	0,932	0,734
Organizational Justice	0,929	0,949	0,824

Based on the test results, it can be concluded that the research instrument shows high reliability and adequate convergent validity, which means that each construct is measured consistently and its indicators successfully explain the variance of the construct in question. To ensure that each construct is truly different from each other (discriminant validity), further testing is carried out using the Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio (HTMT) method. Hair et al. (2021) recommends that the HTMT value should be below 0.85.

Table 2. Discriminant Validity of HTMT

Variables	Lecturer Engagement	Lifelong Learning	Organizational Justice
Lecturer Engagement			
Lifelong Learning	0,757		
Organizational Justice	0,600	0,619	

The test results show that all HTMT values between constructs are in the range of 0.600 to 0.757, which means that discriminant validity is met and the constructs in the model differentiate each other well. Thus, all instruments in this study can be declared valid and reliable and are suitable for use in the structural testing stage. The results of the structural model test will show the direct and indirect effects of organizational justice on lecturer engagement through lifelong learning mediation. Further analysis will be conducted to identify the significance and strength of the relationship between these constructs. These findings are important for understanding the factors that influence lecturer work engagement and provide insight into the development of educational policies in higher education.

Table 3. Direct Path Analysis

	Original Sample	STDEV	t-statistics	p-values	Decision
Lifelong Learning -> Lecturer Engagement	0,574	0,057	10,019	0,000	Accepted
Organizational Justice -> Lecturer Engagement	0,238	0,068	3,502	0,000	Accepted
Organizational Justice -> Lifelong Learning	0,574	0,064	8,967	0,000	Accepted

Direct path analysis shows that the effect of organizational justice on lecturer engagement is significant ($\beta = 0.238$; $t = 3.502$; $p = 0.00$), which means that the higher the lecturers' perception of organizational justice, the higher their level of involvement in carrying out the tridharma tasks in higher education. Then, organizational justice is proven to have a positive and significant effect on lifelong learning ($\beta = 0.574$; $t = 8.967$; $p = 0.00$), which means that the higher the level of justice perceived by lecturers in the organization, the greater their tendency to engage in lifelong learning activities to improve their knowledge and competence. Meanwhile, lifelong learning shows a significant effect on lecturer work engagement ($\beta = 0.574$; $t = 10.019$; $p = 0.00$), which means that the higher the lecturers' participation in lifelong learning, the higher their level of involvement in carrying out the tridharma tasks.

Table 4. Indirect Path Analysis

	Original Sample	STDEV	t-statistics	p-values	Decision
Organizational Justice -> Lifelong Learning -> Lecturer Engagement	0,329	0,049	6,754	0,000	Accepted

The mediation effect test shows that lifelong learning significantly mediates the relationship between organizational justice and lecturer engagement ($\beta = 0.329$; $t = 6.754$; $p = 0.000$). Since the direct effect of organizational justice on work engagement remains significant, and the indirect effect through lifelong learning is also significant, it can be concluded that there is a partial mediation. Organizational justice not only has a direct impact on increasing lecturer engagement, but also indirectly further enhances this effect through increasing lifelong learning activities. This means that lecturers who feel treated fairly tend to be more active in learning, and this learning activity encourages higher work engagement.

The coefficient of determination (R^2) value shows that 54.2% of the variation in lecturer work engagement can be explained by organizational justice and lifelong learning. Meanwhile, 33% of the variation in lifelong learning is explained by organizational justice. The R^2 value is in the moderate to strong category according to Hair et al. (2017), which indicates that the model has sufficient explanatory power for endogenous variables. Furthermore, the Q^2 predict value of 0.315 for lecturer work engagement and 0.321 for lifelong learning indicates that the model has good predictive power for new data. Based on Chin's (1998) criteria, a Q^2 value > 0 indicates that the model has predictive relevance, and a value above 0.3 can be categorized as moderately strong. Thus, the model is not only able to explain the relationship between variables well, but also has a level of predictive accuracy that is suitable for use in a practical context.

Furthermore, the effect size (f^2) shows that the influence of organizational justice on lifelong learning is in the large category ($f^2 = 0.492$), and the influence of lifelong learning on lecturers' work engagement is also included in the large category ($f^2 = 0.481$). Both indicate that these variables provide a strong contribution in explaining their respective endogenous variables. Meanwhile, the direct influence of organizational justice on lecturers' work engagement is in the small category ($f^2 = 0.083$). Based on Chin's (1998) classification, the f^2 value of 0.02 is categorized as small, 0.15 as medium, and 0.35 as large. Therefore, it can be concluded that although organizational justice contributes directly to work engagement, its influence is relatively small compared to the indirect influence through lifelong learning which is much more dominant.

5. DISCUSSION

The Relationship between Organizational Justice and Lecturer Engagement

The results of this study indicate that organizational justice has a positive and significant influence on the work engagement of lecturers at private universities in Mamuju Regency. This finding indicates that when lecturers feel treated fairly by the institution, both in terms of workload distribution, decision-making processes, interpersonal relationships, and information communication, they will show a higher level of work engagement. Organizational justice creates a positive psychological climate, which encourages the emergence of a sense of trust, belonging, and commitment to institutional tasks. This finding strengthens the view of Colquitt et al. (2001), which explains that the perception of justice in the organization consisting of procedural, distributive, interpersonal and informational justice is an important predictor of various positive attitudes of organizational members, including work engagement. Lecturers who feel that justice is upheld in the organization will tend to be more intensely involved in carrying out the functions of the tridharma of higher education. Theoretically, this result is also in accordance with the Social Exchange Theory proposed by Blau (1964), which states that individuals will respond to fair treatment from the organization with positive behavior as a form of reciprocity. In this case, lecturers who feel appreciated, recognized, and treated fairly will respond by increasing their dedication, enthusiasm, and contribution to the institution. Furthermore, Byrne (2005) stated that justice in an organization can strengthen a sense of togetherness and collaboration, as well as foster loyalty and a spirit of participation in work. In line with that, Ehrhart (2004) emphasized that high perceptions of justice can create deep job satisfaction and intrinsic motivation, which are the foundation for continued work engagement. In the context of the academic world, these results are important because they show that the implementation of the principle of organizational justice as a whole is one of the keys to building lecturer engagement. Justice is not only related to compensation or formal rules, but also includes how policies are enforced, how communication is carried out, and how lecturers are treated in daily interactions. When all these aspects run fairly, lecturers will be more motivated to be actively, enthusiastically, and responsibly involved in every tridharma activity. Thus, organizational justice plays a role not only as an administrative structural factor, but also as a psychological and moral factor that forms a positive work climate, strengthens social relations within the institution, and encourages the creation of full lecturer involvement—both cognitively, affectively, and behaviorally. The practical implication of this finding is the importance for private higher education institutions to ensure that justice is not only understood as a formal principle, but also implemented in real terms in daily managerial practices and organizational culture.

The Relationship between Organizational Justice and Lifelong Learning

The results of this study indicate that organizational justice has a positive and significant effect on lifelong learning in lecturers at private universities in Mamuju Regency. This finding confirms that a fair and supportive work environment is an important foundation for the growth of lecturers' enthusiasm and commitment to continue learning and developing their competencies. When lecturers feel that they are treated fairly, both in terms of resource distribution (distributive justice), decision-making processes (procedural justice), interpersonal treatment (interpersonal justice), and information delivery (informational justice), they will be more motivated to be active in various forms of continuous learning. This finding is in line with previous studies by Seok Kang et al. (2006) which confirmed that a fair work environment encourages active participation in self-development, as well as findings from Gozukara & Yildirim (2016) which stated that organizational justice contributes to innovative capacity and learning in institutions. The theoretical explanation of this finding can also be linked to several theoretical foundations. Equity Theory by Adams (1965) states that individuals will be motivated to maintain positive behavior if they feel that their contributions are treated and rewarded fairly. In the context of lecturers, fairness in access to training, further study, and job promotion are important elements that encourage involvement in lifelong learning. This is also reinforced through the Social Exchange Theory by Blau (1964), where the relationship of mutual giving between individuals and organizations in this case fair treatment from the institution can give rise to the lecturer's commitment to reciprocate through increasing self-capacity and professionalism, including through lifelong learning activities. Furthermore, from the perspective of the Job Demands-Resources (JDR) Model by Bakker and Demerouti (2007), organizational justice can be positioned as a job resource that functions as a motivating psychological resource. When institutions provide these resources in the form of a fair and transparent work system, lecturers will respond with higher involvement in self-development, which ultimately has an impact on improving the quality of education in higher education. Overall, the results of this study emphasize that organizational justice not only creates a healthy work environment, but is also a major driving factor for lecturers to continue learning and developing sustainably. Therefore, higher education institutions need to pay special attention to the implementation of the principles of justice in various managerial and HR development aspects, as a strategic strategy to improve the quality of lecturer resources and the sustainability of the institution as a whole.

The Relationship between Lifelong Learning and Lecturer Engagement

The results of this study indicate that lifelong learning has a positive and significant influence on the involvement of lecturers in private universities in Mamuju Regency. This finding confirms that lecturers who have a high commitment to continuous learning tend to be more actively involved in the implementation of the Tridharma of higher education. Lifelong learning forms an important foundation for work involvement because it encourages lecturers to continuously update their knowledge, skills, and academic insights, both in the context of education, research, and community service. Commitment to lifelong learning allows lecturers to be more adaptive to changes in the times, more innovative in delivering teaching materials, and more proactive in responding to academic challenges. This is in line with the concept of growth mindset, where lecturers see learning as a meaningful and enjoyable endless process. Thus, work involvement is no longer just an administrative obligation, but becomes a form of lecturer self-actualization to contribute optimally to the development of institutions and society. From a theoretical perspective, this finding is consistent with the Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) Model proposed by Bakker and Demerouti (2007), which places lifelong learning as a personal resource that can increase individual capacity in facing high job demands. When lecturers have personal resources in the form of a desire to continue learning, they will be better able to manage their workload, and ultimately increase overall work engagement. In addition, this approach is also relevant to the Self-Determination Theory (SDT) by Ryan and Deci (2000) which emphasizes that intrinsic motivation such as the need to feel competent and independent drives directed and sustainable behavior. Lifelong learning in this context not only functions as a competency development strategy, but also becomes an expression of the lecturer's intrinsic motivation to grow and develop. These results are also supported by previous studies, such as those conducted by Azeem et al. (2013), Chaudhry et al. (2017), and Assefa et al. (2023), which all emphasize that active participation in training and continuous learning can significantly increase work engagement. In other words, lifelong learning is not just a complement, but a strategic component that strengthens the professionalism of lecturers in the long term.

The Role of Lifelong Learning in the Relationship between Organizational Justice and Lecturer Engagement

One of the important findings of this study is that lifelong learning acts as a partial mediator in the relationship between organizational justice and lecturer engagement in private universities in Mamuju Regency. This finding indicates that organizational justice affects lecturer work engagement not only directly, but also indirectly through increased lifelong learning. This means that organizational justice creates a conducive psychological and structural foundation for lecturers to learn continuously, and in turn, the results of this learning strengthen their work engagement. Statistically, this is supported by the results of the effect size measurement (f^2) which shows that the effect of organizational justice on lifelong learning is relatively large ($f^2 = 0.492$), and lifelong learning on work engagement is also large ($f^2 = 0.481$). On the other hand, the direct effect of organizational justice on work engagement is only in the small category ($f^2 = 0.083$). This means that the indirect influence mechanism through lifelong learning has a greater weight than its direct effect. This shows that the lifelong learning process plays an important role in bridging and strengthening the influence of organizational justice on lecturer work

behavior. This finding can also be explained within the framework of Social Cognitive Theory (Bandura, 1986), which states that human behavior is the result of reciprocal interactions between the environment, personal factors (cognitive), and the behavior itself, a concept known as reciprocal determinism. In this context, organizational justice is an environmental factor, while lifelong learning reflects cognitive processes and personal development, which together contribute to lecturers' work engagement as behavioral output. Thus, lifelong learning functions as a cognitive bridge that internalizes organizational justice values into productive, enthusiastic, and contributive work behavior. This result also strengthens the position of lifelong learning as a personal resource as described in the Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) model expanded by Bakker and Demerouti (2008, 2014). In this model, personal resources such as self-efficacy, resilience, and learning motivation are seen as important for maintaining work engagement, especially in demanding work environments. Lifelong learning enables lecturers to equip themselves with skills, knowledge, and adaptive strategies to deal with curriculum changes, demands for educational digitalization, and institutional expectations—all of which can increase their work engagement. Furthermore, these results are in line with the views of Viterouli et al. (2022) and Billett (2001) who stated that continuous learning in the workplace does not solely depend on external support, but also on the active participation of individuals in taking advantage of learning opportunities. In this case, organizational justice acts as a “trigger” that creates a sense of security and internal motivation, which then encourages individuals to continue learning independently. This explains why organizational justice has a significant indirect effect on work engagement through lifelong learning.

6. CONCLUSION

The results of this study make it clear that lecturers' engagement cannot be separated from their perceptions of organizational justice and continuous learning enthusiasm. Organizational justice provides a very important psychological and structural basis in encouraging lecturers' learning enthusiasm and work engagement. When lecturers feel treated fairly in the process, results, and social interactions in the workplace, it creates a safe, comfortable, and professionally meaningful inner atmosphere. A fair environment not only encourages work motivation, but also strengthens a sense of belonging and belief in the values of the institution. Meanwhile, lifelong learning acts as a strategic bridge that strengthens lecturers' readiness, resilience, and enthusiasm in facing the complexity of work. Through continuous learning, lecturers develop competence, adaptability, and reflective capacity, so that they are able to carry out the role of tridharma more effectively and innovatively. The combination of organizational justice and lifelong learning is an important prerequisite in forming comprehensive work engagement. In this case, engagement is not only reflected in high work enthusiasm (vigor) and affective commitment to work (dedication), but also in the ability to fully immerse themselves in academic activities (absorption), and the willingness to make real contributions to the institution and society (contribution). With these four indicators, lecturer involvement is not merely a momentary psychological response, but a reflection of a deep attachment that includes cognitive, affective, and behavioral aspects. Lecturers who feel justice and continue to learn will find it easier to maintain work focus, engage in academic innovation, and distribute their knowledge for the advancement of the institution. Therefore, in the context of private universities in developing areas such as Mamuju, strategies for improving organizational justice and strengthening a culture of lifelong learning need to be designed in an integrated manner. Interventions that only target one side, such as administrative justice without strengthening self-development, or vice versa, will not be enough to create lecturers who are fully involved. In fact, with the synergy of the two, lecturers will become individuals who are not only active and productive, but also able to become agents of change who are creative and have a broad impact on institutions and the wider community.

This study has shown the importance of organizational justice and lifelong learning in increasing lecturer engagement in private universities, especially in developing areas such as Mamuju Regency. However, there are several things that can be considered and developed in further research, including, this study is limited to private university lecturers in Mamuju Regency. Further research is suggested to test this model in a broader context, such as state universities, vocational institutions, or areas with different socio-economic characteristics, so that the results are more generalizable and can be compared between regions or types of institutions. Then, subsequent researchers are suggested to explore other variables such as leadership support as a moderator variable in the relationship between organizational justice and lifelong learning and lecturer engagement. Leadership support has the potential to strengthen or weaken the influence of perceived justice on learning enthusiasm and work engagement, especially since perceptions of organizational justice are often formed through direct interaction between leaders and subordinates. In the context of higher education institutions, the role of leaders, both rectors, deans, and heads of study programs, is very central in determining whether lecturers feel appreciated, facilitated to develop, and supported in implementing the tridharma. When this support is strong, perceived organizational justice is more likely to encourage lecturers to engage in continuous learning and demonstrate high work engagement. Conversely, when leadership support is weak, perceived justice may not be enough to trigger optimal work engagement. The use of leadership support as a moderator is also in line with the approach in the Job Demands–Resources Model (JD-R), where social resources (such as supervisor support) can strengthen the relationship between work factors and psychological outcomes. Thus, the addition of this variable in the conceptual model in the future will not only expand theoretical understanding but also provide practical contributions in designing managerial strategies to improve lecturer engagement in higher education environments.

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