

# **Effects of Childcare Teacher's Perception of Organizational Justice, Collectivism and Job Burnout on Turnover Intention**

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## **Abstract**

This study is focused on the factors that reduce the high turnover rate of early childhood teachers against the backdrop of their poor work environment including long hours, work overload and low wage by identifying the effects of three sub-factors of justice on the collectivistic tendency and those of the job burnout on their turnover intention. To conduct this study, a survey was carried out childcare teachers of the Seoul and Metropolitan Area. Total of 283 valid female questionnaires were collected and utilized for analysis. According to the analysis, both procedural justice and interpersonal justice have positive effects on the collectivistic tendency and decrease the turnover intention. The interpersonal justice decreases the job burnout, whereas the distributive justice statistically significantly increases the job burnout. Also, the collectivistic tendency reduces the turnover intention. The job burnout increases the turnover intention, which is consistent with previous studies. Hence, increasing the interpersonal justice and the collectivistic tendency could be an option for dealing with the issue.

**Keywords:** Childcare Teacher, Justice, Collectivism, Job burnout, Turnover Intention.

## **1. Introduction**

As of 2015, a total of 1,452,813 infants and toddlers receive childcare service at 42,517 childcare centers where 321,067 early childhood teachers work around the nation (Ministry of Health and Welfare, 2016). Early childhood teachers are important personnel undertaking parenting roles for infants and toddlers who spend long hours at childcare centers and professionals coming second to parents (Byeon & Jang, 2015). Thus, early childhood teachers constitute a crucial factor influencing the quality of care and education for infants and toddlers, and a key factor impacting on their growth, development and learning as agents taking the place of their parents (Lee & Kang, 2014). Yet, poor childcare environment involving long working hours, work overload and low wage has not improved (Lee, 2011), with the high turnover rate hampering the stability and expertise (Kwon & Kim, 2015).

Domestic and overseas researcher's (Ahn et al., 2007; Chan & Huim 1995; Han, 2007; van Dick & Wagner, 2002; Yoo & Lim, 2007; Yoon, 2001) reported that teachers are subjected to more stress in comparison to other occupational groups. In particular, early childhood teachers are reported to experience more stress than other categories of teachers. Their job stress increases their turnover rate.

This study is focused on three sub-factors of justice perceived by early childhood teachers as well as their collectivism and burnout. Most of all, justice is a very important concept that determines if early childhood teachers are to have affinity toward childcare centers where they work, and an important factor that helps them to cope with the job stress and reduces their burnout and turnover intention despite the unfavorable work environment. In the same vein, the collectivistic tendency as an Oriental value may be considered an important factor that could decrease the turnover intention on the grounds that the tendency toward 'being together' rather than 'being alone' is expected to serve as an important energy to win over stress while supporting and comforting one another. Therefore, this study investigates the effects of three sub-factors of justice on early childhood teachers' turnover intention as well as the roles of collectivistic tendency and job burnout. The present findings have some implications for directors of childcare centers to encourage long service of early childhood teachers and thus to increase the quality of care and education for infants and toddlers despite the poor work environment.

## **2. Theoretical Background**

Organizational justice has recently emerged as a topic in organizational management. Cropanzano et al.(2007) argued that justice is one of the most significant concerns to humans. Top management often perceive justice from the perspective of employees as organizational members being desirably rewarded for their hard work, confusing the outcome justice with the outcome favorability. Also, Skitka et al.(2003) argued that the outcome justice involving the moral judgment is distinct from the outcome favorability involving the individual value judgment.

Moorman (1991) refers to the organizational justice as a way of determining if members are treated fairly for their jobs. Greenberg (1996) defines the organizational justice as the human perception of justice within the frame of an organization. Justice is rooted in the social exchange theory and sub-classified into different types. This study sub-classifies the organizational justice into distributive justice, procedural justice and interpersonal justice. The distributive justice refers to the perception of justice in gain sharing (Homans, 1958) or the appropriateness of rewards, and involves rewarding employees for individual contribution (equity), equally rewarding individuals (equality) and offering benefits based on individual needs (need). The procedural justice refers to the justice of means used to determine the performance (Thibaut & Walker, 1975) and the appropriateness in the distribution process, involving equally treating all employees (consistency), prohibiting any discrimination or unfair treatment (lack of bias), making decisions based on accurate information (accuracy), engaging stakeholders in decision making (representation of all concerned), including a process for raising an objection and rectifying mistakes (correction) and complying with a professional code of conduct (ethics). The interpersonal justice is a factor concerning the social exchange process between parties involved in decision making rather than structural quality (Baron, 1993; Bies & Moag, 1986), refers to the appropriateness of treatment from the other party, and involves treating members with dignity, manners and respect and sharing appropriate information (informational justice).

The individualistic-collectivistic tendencies that are classified as individual differences in culture or value orientation were suggested as the value distinguishing the East from the West, serve as a factor consistently influencing thoughts, behaviors and affects, and are used in a range of studies as a control variable. The present study is concerned with the collectivistic tendency, given that the different perception of social units, i.e., interpersonal relationships or collectivities viewed as the ultimate units of social composition (Hui & Triandis, 1986), could become the power for early childhood teachers to get over the unfavorable work environment. That is, people in a collectivistic culture where an interdependent and public self-view is predominant (Markus & Kitayama, 1991; Triandis, 1989; Triandis et al., 1990) tend to have a strong social identity (Cho & Myung, 2001). Thus, early childhood teachers are to identify themselves in relation to the directors of childcare centers and co-workers, which will increase their interest in harmony and integration and public self-consciousness rather than individualism.

Job burnout refers to a state of physical and emotional depletion resulting from the perception that work demand exceeds an individual's capacity while internal and external pressure for successful job performance increases (Gold & Roth, 1993). Burnout progressively develops into long-term stress, mental and emotional strain, frustration and a sense of being alienated, resulting in lower productivity, cynicism, a sense of being depleted and helplessness (Gorkin, 2004). Pines and Maslach(1978) define burnout as a physical and emotional exhaustion syndrome involving a negative self-concept, a negative attitude toward a job, and an indifference to others, and assert the presence of one's burnout is highly contagious, culminating in a collective burnout.

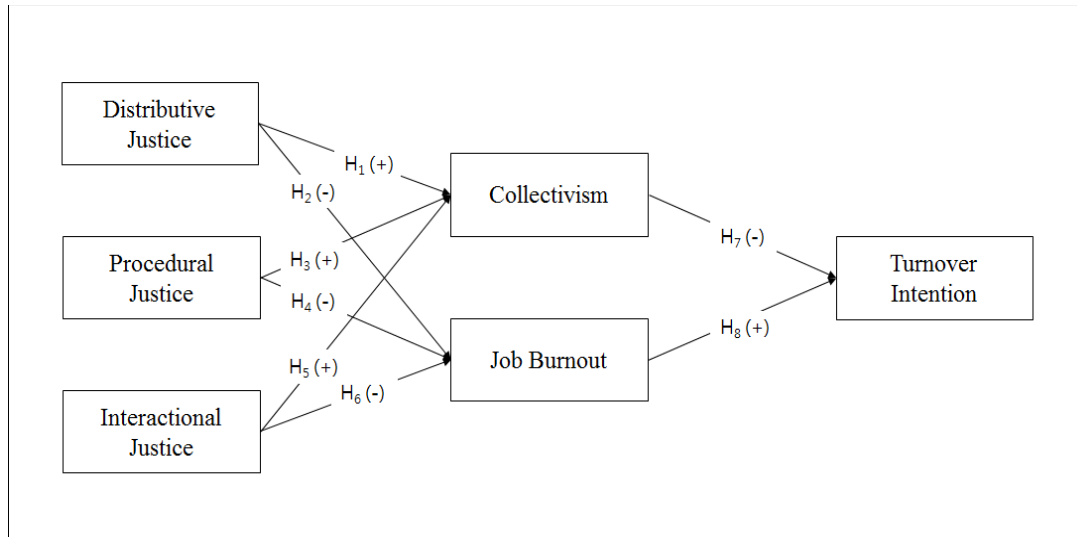
Turnover is a concept of labor mobility involving accession and separation and widely explored in organizational behavior, sociology, economics and psychology. In general, intention refers to one's plan to act out a certain idea when an opportunity arises or a condition is met, and implies motivational factors affecting a behavior (Moon, 2010). Thus, turnover intention means an individual member's psychological reaction of leaving his/her current organization under certain circumstances. Turnover intention is based on one's voluntary willingness and defined as the thought of changing workplace for the same job, the willingness to change jobs, and the subjective estimation of leaving an organization at a certain point in time (Vandenberg & Nelson, 1999). Also, turnover intention is defined as an employee's intention to quit an organizational membership and leave the current organization (Meyer & Allen, 1991), and as a prudent deliberation about leaving an organization (Tett & Meyer, 1993). Hence, the present study defines the turnover intention as an early childhood teacher's psychological reaction of leaving to escape from the current situation and as a factor causing the turnover behavior.

## **3. Research Model & Hypotheses**

According to Adams' (1963) equity theory, employees perceive justice when they are satisfied with the rewards for their efforts exerted, and weigh the fairness of rewards they receive from their organizations against those of the workers in other organizations or colleagues. Also, research has highlighted employees' perceived unfairness despite their efforts in terms of the sub-factors of justice leads to a sense of deprivation and anxiety, which triggers off the turnover intention as a means of restoring the justice (Bae et al., 2009; Cho & Kim, 2009; Fields et al., 2000; Jung et al., 2011; Lee & Lee, 2012). In addition, justice has negative effects on the burnout (Yoon, 1991), which in turn has positive effects on the turnover intention (Lee & Lee, 2012; Cho & Kwon, 2014).

Despite the paucity of research on the roles of job burnout and collectivistic tendency in the relationship between justice and turnover intention, given the previous reports that job burnout moderates the relationship (Lee & Lee, 2012) and that collectivistic tendency is characterized by the inter-dependence and public self-view (Markus & Kitayama, 1991; Triandis, 1989; Triandis et al., 1990), job burnout and collectivistic tendency are highly likely to play some roles in the relationship.

Therefore, early childhood teachers' positive perception of justice in childcare centers will have positive effects on their collectivistic tendency and reduce their turnover rate despite negative factors including stress. Furthermore, burnout is likely to have significant effects on the relationship. Hence, the following model and hypotheses are set up.



**Figure 1:** Research Model & Hypotheses

- Hypothesis 1. Distributive justice is positively related to the collectivism.
- Hypothesis 2. Distributive justice is negatively related to the job burnout.
- Hypothesis 3. Procedural justice is positively related to the collectivism.
- Hypothesis 4. Procedural justice is negatively related to the job burnout.
- Hypothesis 5. Interactional justice is positively related to the collectivism.
- Hypothesis 6. Interactional justice is negatively related to the job burnout.
- Hypothesis 7. Collectivism is negatively related to the turnover intention.
- Hypothesis 8. Job burnout is positively related to the turnover intention.

## 4. Methodology

### 4.1. Methods and Data collection

To conduct this study, a survey was carried out childcare teachers of the Seoul and Metropolitan Area. Total of 283 valid female questionnaires were collected and utilized for analysis. Frequency analysis, descriptive statistic analysis,

correlation analysis and structured equation modeling(SEM) for path analysis were conducted using SPSS 19.0 and AMOS 19.0.

In this study we investigated 6 variables as follow: Justice was measured 9 items, Likert 5-point scale based on McFarlin and Sweeney(1992), Colquitt(2001) and Niehoff and Moorman (1993). Collectivism was measured 4 items, Likert 5-point scale based on Triandis(1993). Job Burnout was measured 5 items, Likert 7-point scale based on Maslach and Jackson(1981). Turnover intention was measured 4 items, Likert 5-point scale based on Becker(1992). All variables were converted into z-score to make correction of difference of the scales.

The demographic characteristics of the participants are presented in <Table 1>.

**Table 1:** Demographic Characteristics

Items	Sub-items	Frequency	Ratio(%)
Marital Status	Married	163	57.6
	Unmarried	118	42.4
Age	less than 30	96	33.9
	30-39	116	41.0
	more than 40	71	25.1
Continuous service year	less than 2 years	166	58.7
	3-9	102	36.0
	more than 10 years	15	5.3

#### 4.2. Reliability, Validity and Correlation analysis

To find out if measurement items are internally consistent, reliability was verified using Cronbach  $\alpha$ . Nunnally(1978) argued that if Cronbach  $\alpha$  is over 0.7, it is considered reliable. In this respect, the reliability of variables in this study was found to be 0.741~0.937.

**Table 2:** Reliability and Validity

Variables	First item	Final item	Cronbach's $\alpha$	Construct Reliability	AVE
Distributive justice	3	3	0.937	0.843	0.849
Procedural justice	3	3	0.833	0.840	0.636
Interactional justice	3	3	0.914	0.921	0.796
Collectivism	4	4	0.741	0.796	0.496
Job burnout	5	5	0.861	0.750	0.377
Turnover intention	4	4	0.793	0.780	0.472

As a result of CFA(confirmatory factor analysis) to verify feasibility of variables, three Sub-factor of Justice was more than 0.5. However, collectivism, job burnout and turnover intention was less than 0.5 to confirm validity by comparing between coefficient of determination and AVE, respectively.

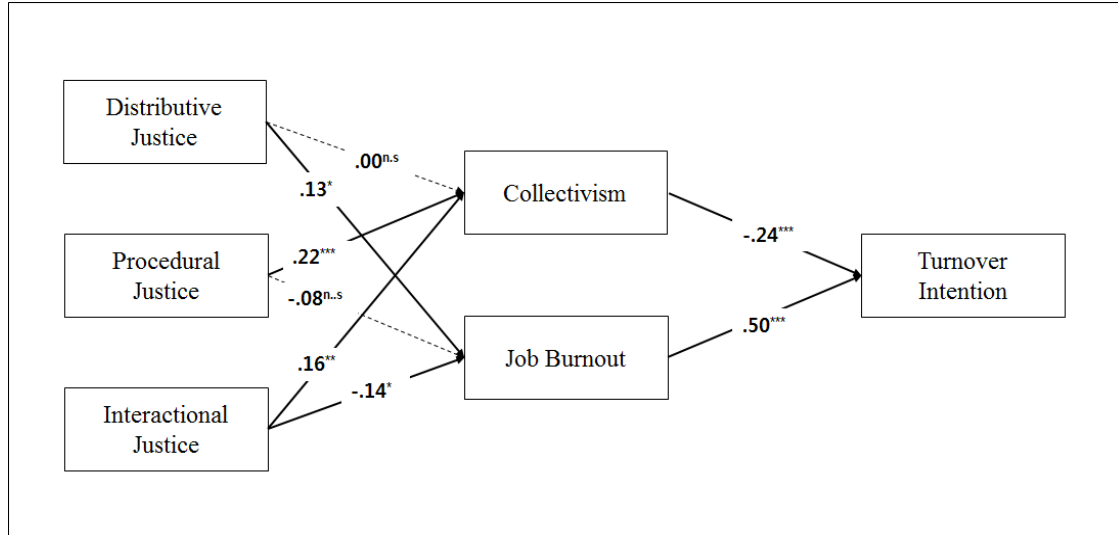
**Table 3:** Results of Correlation analysis(n=283)

	1	2	3	4	5	6
1. Distributive justice	(.849)					
2. Procedural justice	.686**	(.636)				
3. Interactional justice	.767**	.753**	(.796)			
4. Collectivism	.272**	.335**	.322**	(.496)		
5. Job burnout	-.039	-.103	-.108	-.113	(.377)	
6. Turnover intention	-.226**	-.252**	-.326**	-.304**	.516**	(.472)
Mean	2.38	2.33	2.54	3.87	4.11	2.80

Standard Deviation	0.90	0.86	0.88	0.64	1.16	0.83
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Note) \*\* p<.01, AVE marked in ( ).

### 5. Empirical Analysis



Note) \* p<.05, \*\* p<.01, \*\*\* p<.001

Figure 2: Results of Path Analysis

The path analysis for the verification of the hypothesis was presented in <Figure 2> and <Table 4>. According to the verification result of the suitability of this model, the values were  $\chi^2 = 525.665$ ,  $d.f = 7$ ,  $p = .000$ ,  $NFI = .227$ ,  $CFI = .221$ , and  $RMSEA = .513$  etc and they did not reach each suitability index proposed. As in <Figure 2>, the distributive justice increases the job burnout and raises the turnover intention. This result is a bit surprising and need be interpreted cautiously. Thus, both <Hypothesis 1> and <Hypothesis 2> are rejected. By contrast, the procedural justice does not have statistically significant effects on the job burnout while having positive effects on the collectivistic tendency, decreasing the turnover intention. Therefore <Hypothesis 3> is accepted, whereas <Hypothesis 4> is rejected. Meanwhile, the interpersonal justice has positive effects on the collectivistic tendency, reducing both turnover intention and job burnout. Thus, both <Hypothesis 5> and <Hypothesis 6> are accepted. As expected, the collectivistic tendency decreases the turnover intention, while the job burnout increases the turnover intention. Hence, both <Hypothesis 7> and <Hypothesis 8> are accepted. <Table 4> shows the statistics from the path analysis.

Table 4: Statistics of Path analysis

H	Path	Estimate	S.E	t-value (C.R.)	p	Result
H1	Distributive justice → Collectivism	.004	.056	.062	.951	rejected
H2	Distributive justice → Job burnout	.127	.059	2.184	.029	rejected
H3	Procedural justice → Collectivism	.219	.056	3.820	.000	adopted
H4	Procedural justice → Job burnout	-.082	.059	-1.409	.159	rejected
H5	Interactional justice → Collectivism	.164	.056	2.858	.004	adopted
H6	Interactional justice → Job burnout	-.142	.059	-2.443	.015	adopted
H7	Collectivism → Turnover intention	-.244	.050	-4.962	.000	adopted
H8	Job burnout → Turnover intention	.498	.048	10.120	.000	adopted

## 6. Discussion and Limitations

The present study explores the factors that reduce the high turnover rate of early childhood teachers against the backdrop of their poor work environment including long hours, work overload and low wage by identifying the effects of three sub-factors of justice on the collectivistic tendency and those of the job burnout on their turnover intention.

According to the analysis, both procedural justice and interpersonal justice have positive effects on the collectivistic tendency and decrease the turnover intention. The interpersonal justice decreases the job burnout, whereas the distributive justice statistically significantly increases the job burnout. Also, the collectivistic tendency reduces the turnover intention. The job burnout increases the turnover intention, which is consistent with previous studies.

The present findings suggest justice plays pivotal roles in organizations. Behcher's (1974) exchange model sees rewards and members' contribution as part of exchange relationships, where justice is secured by the act of exchange involving the fair rewards to employees for their efforts to contribute to the organization. Therefore, the perceived fair exchange motivates employees for their jobs, whereas the perceived unfair exchange fails to motivate employees and triggers them to avoid the causes of the unfairness including averting their jobs. Given the foregoing perspective, the finding that the distributive justice increases the job burnout should be translated from a different point of view. That is, as in Folger and Konovsky (1989), in that the distributive justice refers to organizational members' perception of the appropriateness of the total rewards they receive from their organizations in comparison to their contribution to the organizations, any dissatisfaction with the distribution per se could increase the job burnout, which is evidenced by early childhood teachers' low wage and unfavorable work condition. As mentioned in the section on theoretical rationales, given the distributive justice not just implies the appropriateness of rewards but also involves the rewards to employees based on individual contribution (equity), the equal rewards to individuals (equality), and the benefits offered based on individual needs (need), any perceived inappropriate or insufficient rewards for individual needs could not meet all positive aspects of the distributive justice despite the equal rewards being given to individuals. Thus, unless early childhood teachers perceive their wage is appropriate and sufficient to cover living costs, the challenge relevant to distribution in the field of education will hardly be addressed.

Hence, increasing the interpersonal justice and the collectivistic tendency could be an option for dealing with the issue. As aforementioned, given the interpersonal justice is a factor relevant to the social exchange process between two parties (Baron, 1993; Bies & Moag, 1986), treating early childhood teachers in a way that they feel respected and sharing diverse information with them including the management of childcare centers could be conducive to increasing their collectivistic tendency.

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