Research note – the connection of organizational justice views with Chinese police officer organizational commitment

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Received 20 December 2022
Revised 19 June 2023
Accepted 20 June 2023

Abstract

Purpose – Police officers' attitudes toward their employing organizations are impacted by officers' perceptions of justice within the organization itself, and these perceptions can affect the bond that officers form with their organization. The current study explored how perceptions of three dimensions of organizational justice (i.e. interpersonal, procedural and distributive justice) were related to the affective (i.e. voluntary) organizational commitment of Chinese police officers.

Design/methodology/approach – The data for the current study came from a voluntary survey of 589 Chinese police officers in three areas, one each in southern, central and western China.

Findings – Based on an ordinary least squares (OLS) regression equation, interpersonal, procedural and distributive justice had similar sized positive associations with organizational commitment.

Research limitations/implications – The findings support the contention that perceptions of organizational justice views are related to the commitment of Chinese police officers.

Practical implications – Raising the interpersonal, procedural and distributive justice views should raise the level of affective commitment of officers.

Social implications – Enhancing the justice views of officers should benefit officers by treating them more fairly, as well as benefiting the police organization by increasing commitment of officers.

Originality/value – There has been limited research on how the different forms of organizational justice are related to officer commitment, especially among Chinese officers.

Keywords Police, China, Organizational justice, Organizational commitment, Law enforcement

Paper type Research paper

Introduction

Policing is a human service occupation that requires officers to carry out a wide array of duties and tasks. Officers are a critical resource in the labor-intensive occupation of policing, which exists to protect and serve the community. Investing in officers is important, and improving the work environment is one way to invest in officers. A growing body of literature has examined how working variables affect officers, including how organizational variables are related to important work outcomes, such as organizational commitment. Organizational commitment refers to the bond that is formed between an employee and the employing organization (Jang *et al.*, 2021; Qureshi *et al.*, 2019). The literature supports the contention that organizational commitment is an important work outcome in policing (Marcos *et al.*, 2020; Van Gelderen and Bik, 2016).

The authors thank the Editor, Editorial Staff and the Reviewers for the review of the paper. These comments improved the paper. Janet Lambert is thanked for proofreading the paper.

Policing: An International Journal

1363-951X
DOI 10.1108/PIJPSM-12-2022-0156

Commitment has been negatively related to cynicism, burnout, turnover intent, engaging in corruption and ignoring wrongdoing by fellow officers (Manzoni and Eisner, 2006; Qureshi *et al.*, 2019) and positively related to greater support for community-oriented policing, work engagement and better organizational performance (Ali and Syah, 2019; Marcos *et al.*, 2020; Qureshi *et al.*, 2017, 2019).

A small body of studies has found that organizational fairness may be linked to officer organizational commitment (Crow *et al.*, 2012; Farmer *et al.*, 2003; Frank *et al.*, 2020; Qureshi *et al.*, 2017; Rosenbaum and McCarty, 2017; Sun *et al.*, 2022). Police are a critical part of the justice system (Frank *et al.*, 2020; Qureshi *et al.*, 2019). Perceptions of fairness are important in the justice system, including for the effective operation of the police. Research has revealed that citizen's perceptions of police fairness are related to viewing the police as legitimate, willingness to support the police and higher levels of trust in the police (Mazerolle *et al.*, 2013; Qureshi *et al.*, 2017). Officers are expected to be fair and just when interacting with the public. In turn, officers expect the police organization to be fair with them (Qureshi *et al.*, 2017, 2020). The perception that an employing organization treats its employees in a fair manner is called organizational justice (Colquitt, 2001; Piotrowski *et al.*, 2021; Qureshi *et al.*, 2019).

Additional research on how organizational justice is associated with organizational commitment among police officers in different nations is needed; it is an important area for both theoretical and practical reasons. Theoretically, this study will aid the field because it explored whether justice views relate to the organizational commitment of police officers, which is important for officers, the agency and the community. Practically, this study can provide police administrators with information concerning whether attempting to improve the organizational justice views of officers will result in improved commitment, thus increasing possible positive outcomes. Officers are an expensive and valuable resource for police organizations, and improving views of organizational justice to enhance the commitment of officers could be a viable way to invest in officers. Further, research is needed to replicate the limited research and to determine whether the associations vary across nations. Most past research has involved US officers, even though officers are found in nations around the world. Conducting studies in different settings is crucial. Lindsay and Ehrenberg (1993) indicated that "Replication is little discussed in the statistical literature nor practiced widely by statistically minded researchers. It is needed not merely to validate one's findings, but more importantly, to establish the increasing range of radically different conditions under which the findings hold, and the predictable exceptions" (p. 217). The effects of distributive and procedural justice on commitment for officers may vary across police settings, including nations. Research across different nations provides a better picture of whether and how the association of justice views are related to commitment for police officers in different settings, including nations. Further, additional research provides critical information to help answer the question whether the effects of justice are universal or contextual (varying across settings).

The study examined the relationship with organizational justice views and commitment among Chinese officers. International research is needed to understand whether associations are universal or contextual, varying between nations. As pointed out by Jowell (1998), "the importance and utility to social science of rigorous cross-national measures is incontestable. They help to reveal not only intriguing differences between countries and cultures, but also aspects of one's own country and culture that would be difficult or impossible to detect from domestic data alone" (p. 168).

Literature review

Organizational commitment

As previously noted, organizational commitment is the bond to the overall organization (Qureshi *et al.*, 2019). There are different types of organizational commitment, with

continuance, normative and affective commitment being major types (Lambert *et al.*, 2020; Meyer and Allen, 1991). Continuance commitment occurs when the person commits to the employing organization to protect investments and sunken costs with the organization, such as pay, seniority, pension, social relationships and non-transferable skills (Meyer and Allen, 1991; Qureshi *et al.*, 2019). Normative (moral) commitment occurs because a person is socialized be loyal to the organization before hiring and after hiring (Meyer and Allen, 1991; Lambert *et al.*, 2021). Affective commitment is a psychological bond with the organization because of positive treatment by the organization (Meyer and Allen, 1991; Qureshi *et al.*, 2019). Affective commitment includes pride in the organization, internalization of its goals and acceptance of its core values (Qureshi *et al.*, 2017). This type of commitment tends to result because of positive treatment by the organization and the voluntary psychological bond with the organization is to repay positive treatment at work (Meyer and Allen, 1991; Lambert *et al.*, 2021). Affective commitment represents the affective caring about the organization; continuance commitment represents feeling of protection of investments from either leaving the organization or if something negative happens to the organization, and normative (moral commitment) represents the sense of obligation to stay with the organization (Meyer and Allen, 1991; Lambert *et al.*, 2020, 2021). The three types of organizational commitment can be represented by a metaphor of why people stay married. For continuance commitment, a couple stay married because the cost of divorcing is too high. Under moral commitment, people remain married because they are socialized to remain married even if they want to leave the marriage. Under affective commitment, people remain married because of positive treatment in the relationship, which leads to positive psychological feelings, such as love and they elect to stay married (Lambert *et al.*, 2021). Of the different types of commitment, affective commitment is most frequently studied because it is a more powerful and strongly beneficial force than either continuance commitment (where a person can feel trapped due to the high cost of leaving) or normative commitment, as a voluntary commitment tends to result in more positive outcomes than simply being socialized or expected to bond with the organization (Meyer *et al.*, 2002; Qureshi *et al.*, 2017, 2019). As such, affective commitment is a "good type" of commitment. In their study of Spanish police officers, Marcos *et al.* (2020) indicated that a measure of affective commitment was selected because affective commitment "was the most relevant approach to this construct [organizational commitment], and the heart of organizational commitment is attributable to the emotional ties that bind the individual to the organization in which they work" (p. 7). As such, the authors felt that organizational justice views would be tied to affective commitment; therefore, affective commitment was the type of commitment measured in the current study. Nonetheless, it is important to point out that there are three theorized types of organizational commitment – affective, normative and continuance (Meyer and Allen, 1991). The current study focused on affective commitment for the above noted reasons.

Organizational justice

Organizational justice deals with the views of how fairly employees feel they have been treated by the organization (Colquitt, 2001). The concept of organizational justice started with the equity of employee outcomes, which evolved into perceptions of the fairness of organizational outcomes affecting employees; these outcomes include (but are not limited to) assignments, evaluations, pay, discipline and promotions (Qureshi *et al.*, 2017; Wolfe and Lawson, 2020). Distributive justice is based on equity and not equality, because the perceptions of fair outcomes are influenced by the inputs and outcomes for a person as compared to other employees and their efforts and outcomes (Colquitt and Greenberg, 2005; Qureshi *et al.*, 2017). Later, the concept of procedural justice was proposed and developed (Wolfe and Lawson, 2020). Employees not only pay attention to outcomes, but the process and procedures used to

reach these outcomes, which is procedural justice (Colquitt and Greenberg, 2005; Qureshi *et al.*, 2017). Procedural justice refers to the perceptions that the processes and procedures that the organization uses to reach salient outcomes are fair, clear and transparent (Colquitt, 2001; Colquitt and Greenberg, 2005). Bies and Moag (1986) proposed the concept of interactional justice, which deals with the organization informing and explaining decisions to workers and treating employees with dignity and respect. Later, interactional justice was broken into informational justice (explaining decisions to employees) and interpersonal justice (treating employees with respect and dignity) (Colquitt, 2001; Wolfe and Lawson, 2020). The current study focused on distributive, procedural and interpersonal justice. Both distributive and procedural justice were included because these are the two most common justice dimensions used in research on organizational justice views of criminal justice employees (Lambert *et al.*, 2021; Wolfe and Lawson, 2020). Interpersonal justice was included because respect is an important concept in China, where respect for others is especially important (Liu, 2019). Unfortunately, a measure of measure informational justice was not included in the current study, which is a limitation.

There has been limited research on how organizational justice views are associated with police officer organizational commitment. Management fairness (a measure of distributive justice) was associated with US organizational commitment (Morris *et al.*, 1999). Similarly, an overall measure of organizational justice was a positive predictor of officer organizational commitment in another US study (Rosenbaum and McCarty, 2017). A composite measure of organizational justice was related to Nigerian officer commitment (Sun *et al.*, 2022). Among South Korean officers, distributive justice was positively associated with commitment (Crow *et al.*, 2012). Both distributive and procedural justice had positive links for organizational commitment for Indian officers (Frank *et al.*, 2020; Qureshi *et al.*, 2017). Among US officers, both distributive and procedural justice had positive relationships with commitment (Farmer *et al.*, 2003).

The limited research indicates that justice views, especially distributive and procedural justice are positively linked to the organizational commitment of police officers, at least in India and the United States. There is a need for additional studies on the association between justice views and commitments among officers, particularly in terms of those in different nations. No published study could be found that examined the relationship between distributive and procedural justice views and affective commitment among Chinese officers; therefore, this exploratory study was undertaken.

Research focus

Under the organizational justice theory, views of organizational fairness toward employees influences work outcomes, such as organizational commitment (Wolfe and Lawson, 2020). Organizational justice theory holds that high levels of perceptions of organizational justice tend to lead to positive outcomes, such as a stronger bond to the organization, and low perceptions of organizational justice tend to be linked to negative outcomes, including lower commitment to the organization (Colquitt, 2001; Qureshi *et al.*, 2017). Both distributive and procedural justice are hypothesized to be associated with affective organizational commitment of Chinese police officers. Both forms of justice demonstrate the organization's respect for officers and produce a bridge of trust that should strengthen the commitment to the organization. Further, perceived fairness of processes and outcomes likely lead to a more favorable view of the organization, which allows a stronger affective bond. Similarly, interpersonal justice should result in seeing the organization in a more favorable light since the organization is perceived as treating the officer in a respectful manner. Affective organizational commitment results because of positive treatment by the organization. Perceived fairness in terms of treatment, processes and outcomes should result in seeing the organization in a more favorable light and a higher voluntary bond for being treated in a just manner.

Methods

Participants

This study had human subject's approval and approval of the Chinese governmental agency and the study followed ethical research standards. Data were collected from officers during training programs in three major Chinese areas, located in southern, central and western China. These three areas were selected to represent the different regions of China and because one of the authors had access to the training sites in the three selected cities. Once selected, a list of officers who would be at the training at each of the three areas was obtained. A random sample was taken from each of the three training area lists, and the randomly sampled officers were provided the survey and asked to voluntarily participate. The survey was written in Chinese. A total of 665 questionnaires were distributed in roughly equal proportions in the three programs in each location (i.e. one-third in each area). All participants were informed that the survey was voluntary (i.e. no one was forced to participate), not to put their name or any identifying marks on the survey, and they could stop answering survey questions at any time or skip any question. A total of 586 completed surveys were submitted, which was a response rate of 88%. In terms of location of responses, 32% were from the southern Chinese area, 35% from the central area and 34% from the western area. Only the research team had access to the data from the submitted surveys.

Variables

Dependent variable. Affective organizational commitment was the dependent variable in the current study. Affective organizational commitment was measured based on items used by Qureshi *et al.* (2017): (1) I am proud to tell people that I work for this police agency; (2) I find that my values and values of this police agency are very similar; (3) I really care about the fate of this police agency; (4) This police agency really inspires the best in me in the way of job performance; and (5) I tell my friends that this is a great organization to work for. The response option for the items was 1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = somewhat disagree, 4 = somewhat agree, 5 = agree and 6 = strongly agree. The Cronbach alpha for these items was 0.89. The responses were added to form an index for affective organizational commitment.

Independent variables. Views of distributive and procedural justice were the independent variables of interest in the current study. The justice perception items were adapted from Lambert *et al.* (2020). Views of distributive justice were measured using the following items: (1) How fair has this organization been in rewarding you when you consider the amount of effort that you have put forth? (2) How fair has this organization in you when you consider the responsibilities that you have at work? And (3) How fair has this organization been in rewarding you when you consider the work you have done well? Views of procedural justice were measured with: (1) How fair is the promotion process here? And (2) How fair is the process of the evaluation of your job performance at this organization? Views of interpersonal justice was measured using: How fair is this organization in treating you with respect and dignity? The response option of the views of justice items was: 1 = very unfair, 2 = unfair, 3 = some what fair, 4 = fair and 5 = very fair. Finally, the personal characteristics of gender, age, tenure in the police agency and educational level were included more as control than explanatory variables. Gender was measured as men = 1 and women = 0. Age was measured in years. Tenure at the agency was measured in years. Educational level was coded as a dichotomous variable representing the participant has earning a bachelor's degree or higher (=1) or not (=0) (having a college degree or not).

Results

The descriptive statistics of variables are presented in Table 1. There was significant variation in the variables (i.e. none were constants). The data conformed to an approximate

Variable	Description	Min	Max	Md	Mn	SD
Personal chars						
Gender	16% female (coded 0) 84% male (coded 1)	0	1	0	0.84	0.36
Age	Age in continuous years	21	57	35	36.37	7.35
Tenure	Tenure in years with agency	1	40	8	10.23	7.99
Educ Level	21% less than Bachelor (coded 0) 79% Bachelor or higher (coded 1)	0	1	1	0.79	0.40
Org justice						
Distributive	3-item additive index, $\alpha = 0.92$	3	15	9	9.10	2.73
Procedural	2-item additive index, $\alpha = 0.87$	2	10	6	6.04	1.82
Interpersonal	1-item measure	1	5	3	3.17	0.95
Dependent var						
Org Comm	5 item additive index, $\alpha = 0.89$	5	30	21	20.41	5.42

Note(s): Min stands for minimum value, Max for maximum value, Md for median value, Mn for mean value, SD for standard deviation value, Personal Chars for personal characteristics, Educ Level for educational level, Org Justice for organizational justice, Distributive for distributive justice, Procedural for procedural justice, Interpersonal for interpersonal justice, Org Comm for affective organizational commitment, and α for Cronbach's alpha value, a measure of internal reliability. The number of participants was 586
Source(s): Table created by authors

Table 1.
Descriptive statistics for study variables

normal distribution based on the skewness and kurtosis statistics. Likewise, the median and mean values for the variables are similar to one another, also suggesting a normal distribution. For the latent concept variables (e.g. organizational commitment), the Cronbach alpha value (a measure of internal reliability) was greater than 0.80, which is viewed as good.

Table 2 presents a correlation matrix of the study variables. Among the four personal characteristics, only tenure had a significant correlation. The correlation was positive, which means those with a greater amount of time as members of the organization had a stronger voluntary bond with the organization. All three justice views had positive correlations with the dependent variable, which means that increases in each of these three justice areas was related to greater commitment to the organization.

An Ordinary Least Squares (OLS) regression equation was estimated with organizational commitment as the dependent variable and the personal characteristics and justice views as the independent variables, and the results are provided in Table 3. Multicollinearity (i.e. when two or more predictor variables share too much of an overlap) was not an issue.

Variable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1. Gender	1.00						
2. Age	0.10*	1.00					
3. Tenure	0.05	0.72**	1.00				
4. Educ	−0.17**	−0.15**	−0.22**	1.00			
5. Dist Just	−0.09*	0.12**	0.09*	0.03	1.00		
6. Proc Just	−0.06	0.08	0.04	0.04	0.71**	1.00	
7. Inter Just	−0.09*	0.05	0.01	0.06	0.60**	0.61**	1.00
8. Org Comm	−0.04	0.04	0.09*	−0.01	0.54**	0.54**	0.52**

Note(s): Educ stands for educational level, Dist Just for distributive justice, Proc Just for procedural justice, Inter Just for interpersonal justice, and Org Comm for organizational commitment
*$p \leq 0.05$ **$p \leq 0.01$
Source(s): Table created by authors

Table 2.
Correlation matrix of study variables

Variable	B	SE	β	VIF
Personal characteristics				
Gender	0.26	0.54	0.02	1.06
Age	−0.08	0.04	−0.11*	2.12
Tenure	0.09	0.04	0.13*	2.15
Educational Level	−0.52	0.49	−0.04	1.09
Organizational justice views				
Distributive Justice	0.47	0.13	0.24**	3.34
Procedural Justice	0.37	0.14	0.18**	4.12
Interpersonal Justice	1.31	0.31	0.23**	2.46
F Value	41.79 (7, 534)**			
R-Squared	0.35			

Note(s): B represents the unstandardized regression coefficient, SE for the standard error of the coefficient, β for the standardized regression coefficient, VIF for the variance inflation factor, a measure of multicollinearity, and (df) for degrees of freedom. See Table 1 for a description of the variables, how they were measured and their descriptive statistics
*$p \leq 0.05$ **$p \leq 0.01$
Source(s): Table created by authors

Table 3.
OLS regression results with affective organizational commitment as the dependent variable

Multicollinearity is seen as a problem when variance inflation factor scores (VIF) exceed 5 (Tabachnick and Fidell, 2019). As indicated in Table 3, the highest VIF values was 4.12 for procedural justice. The issues of outliers, influential cases, normality, linearity and homoscedasticity of residuals, and independence of errors, all of which can affect the regression results, were tested (Tabachnick and Fidell, 2019).

The *R*-squared for the full model was 0.35, which means the independent variables as a group accounted for about 35% of the observed variance in the commitment variable. Gender and educational level had nonsignificant associations. Age had a negative association and tenure with the agency had a positive association with affective commitment. All three justice view variables were significant predictors and each had a positive association. The absolute values of the significant standardized regression coefficients (i.e. values in the β column in Table 3) can be ranked to indicate the size of the relationship. Distributive justice had the largest sized effect, followed very closely by interpersonal justice, and then procedural justice. The sized of the effects for the three justice measures were similar in size, suggesting each plays a similar and important role in influencing the voluntary bond to the organization.

Discussion

The current results support the organizational justice theory in terms that positive perceptions of being treated fairly at work will be linked to positive outcomes. Specifically, distributive justice, procedural and interpersonal justice had similar sized positive associations with affective organizational commitment of Chinese police officers. As postulated, when officers perceive the organization treats them fairly likely results in a more positive view of the organization by its members, and this allows for stronger voluntary bond to be formed by the officer with the organization. An organization can be rewarded with higher commitment for treating a person fairly. Perceptions of the organizational justice are also likely linked to the perceived legitimacy of the organization. Organizational justice goes to the heart of the legitimacy of an organization (Lambert *et al.*, 2021). It is probably easier voluntarily bond to an organization viewed as being legitimate because it treats people fairly than it is to commit to an organization that is seen as illegitimate because it treats its employees unjustly. This is only a postulation. Additional research is needed if justice views of Chinese police officers are related to perceptions of the perceived legitimacy of the organization.

The findings of this current study are in line with the limited research to date that have measured different types of organizational justice among police officers to examine how it is connected with organizational commitment. Both distributive and procedural justice had positive links for organizational commitment for Indian officers (Frank *et al.*, 2020; Qureshi *et al.*, 2017) and US officers (Farmer *et al.*, 2003). These studies among Indian and US police officers did not include a measure of interpersonal justice. The current findings indicate that treating Chinese officers with respect also increases commitment to the organization, as do views of distributive and procedural justice. In research focusing on South Korean officers, Crow *et al.* (2012) reported that interpersonal and procedural justice influenced perceptions of distributive justice which had positive effects on organizational commitment mediated by job satisfaction. While the results found among South Korean officers were different, the three prior studies with Indian and US officers and the current study among Chinese officers indicate that procedural and distributive justice are positively linked to commitment of officers. In addition, it is important to note that among South Korean officers, interpersonal, distributive and procedural justice were indirectly positively related to commitment (Crow *et al.*, 2012). Further, the current results indicate interpersonal justice was related to greater voluntary organizational commitment among Chinese officers. Overall, limited research indicates that the views of organizational justice are associated with affective commitment of officers in different nations. While there is a need for far more research among officers in a wide array of nations, the limited past results and the findings of the current study suggest that viewing the organizational treating its members fairly in terms of interactions, processes and outcomes is universal in its connection with organizational commitment, at least in terms of the affective type of commitment bond.

Gender and educational level did not statistically significant associations with commitment in the multivariate regression analysis. On the other hand, age and tenure did have significant relationships with commitment. Age had a negative association, where older officers tended to have less of affective commitment to the organization. This was a surprising finding, particularly in light that tenure with the agency had a positive association. Officers who have been with the organization longer may have stayed with the organization because they enjoyed the job or due to positive treatment. In the end, these officers remained with the organization because they were committed to the organization. What was surprising about the negative association between age and commitment was that age and tenure had a strong positive association ($r = 0.72$, see Table 2); however, how age and tenure are related to position or assignment in the police organization is unknown. Position or assignment in the organization could be influencing the association between age and tenure with the agency with organizational commitment. While not reported in tabular format, a new OLS regression analysis was estimated with tenure in the position being used rather than tenure with the agency, and age was not a significant predictor in this new regression equation but tenure in the position, interpersonal justice, distributive justice and procedural justice still had significant positive associations with commitment, with the three justice measures having larger associations than tenure in the position did. More research is needed on the finding of a negative relationship between age and commitment among the surveyed officers.

Limitations

While the current research adds to the literature, there were study limitations. It was a single preliminary and exploratory study of Chinese police officers. Additional research is needed, particularly among officers in different nations. This additional research will aid in answering the question whether the association of different organizational justice views with affective commitment is universal (i.e. has the same relationships across nations) or is contextual (varying between police organizations and nations). This information is critical for police administrators so changes can be made to the work environment depending on the

location of the police agency. Additional studies across different settings and over time will allow for more conclusive and specific recommendations for police organizations to invest in their most important and valuable resource, officers. As the current study utilized a cross-sectional design, causality cannot be empirically demonstrated. In order to show the temporal ordering of the variables, a longitudinal design is needed. In the current study, measures of interpersonal, procedural and distributive justice were measured. The current exploratory study was limited in the number of items on the survey. Additional items should be used to measure procedural, distributive and interpersonal justice in new research. The current study did not use informational justice, which is a limitation. Future studies should explore the relationship with informational justice with affective commitment. In a meta-analysis of organizational justice among criminal justice workers (including police officers), Wolfe and Lawson (2020) noted the issue that past studies have used different measures of justice and did not measure all four types of organizational justice. Wolfe and Lawson contended that there is the need for a consistent measure of organizational justice, and they recommended using the organizational justice measures from Colquitt (2001) which measure distributive, procedural, interactional and informational justice.

Another limitation is that the current study only examined the connection of organizational justice views with affective commitment. As noted earlier, Meyer and Allen (1991) theorized that there is also continuance and normative (moral) commitment. Due to limitations of the length of the survey and because the authors felt that affective commitment is a more salient form of commitment in terms of being influenced by justice views, only one form of organizational commitment was measured in the current study. Future research is needed to study how justice perceptions are related to continuance and normative (moral) commitment among police officers. The different forms of justice views could have different associations with normative and continuance commitment among police officers. Meyer and Allen (1991) measured all three types of organizational commitment and their items would be a good source for future studies. Additionally, about 35% of the variance of commitment was explained by the independent variables in this study, which means that 65% of the observed variance in the dependent variable was accounted for by other variables. These variables need to be identified and studied. In addition, future studies should analyze the association with justice views with other outcomes for officers, such as job performance, organizational citizenship (i.e. prosocial behaviors of going up and beyond what is expected at work), job satisfaction, job involvement, job stress, job burnout and turnover intent/turnover. Likewise, research should explore the outcomes of affective commitment among Chinese police officers, as well as officers in other nations. Far more research is needed not only among Chinese officers but police in other nations.

Organizational implications

Assuming the current findings are replicated, there are organizational implications. One method to increase affective commitment to the police agency is to raise the level of interpersonal, procedural and distributive justice for officers. Officers need to be asked which organizational processes and outcomes are viewed as fair and why. This communication must be open and honest, and officers should not be penalized for sharing feedback that may be critical of the administration of the police organization (Qureshi *et al.*, 2017). In addition, administrators must be willing to answer questions and provide explanations. Often administrators have more information concerning organizational justice matters than do line officers, and they also have the ability to discuss and explain issues raised by officers, which can aid in raising justice views (Lambert *et al.*, 2020). In addition, supervisors and managers need to be made of the importance of organizational justice and its different dimensions. Supervisors and managers need to be trained in effective ways to treat officers in a fair manner, which should, in the end, raise organizational justice views. Further, supervisors and

managers need to be evaluated and, if appropriate, rewarded for their organizational justice efforts (Qureshi *et al.*, 2017). Research is needed to evaluate the effectiveness of efforts to raise officer organizational justice perceptions. Further, studies should explore how other workplace variables, such as integration, instrumental communication, input into job and organizational matters, and quality supervision (including consideration) are linked to perceptions of fairness in the organization by officers. In the end, there needs to be concerted efforts by police administrators to raise justice perceptions of officers.

Making changes to improve distributive justice views may take time and resources because some outcomes, such as pay and benefits, are often outside the immediate control of administrators. On the other hand, more immediate and less costly efforts can be undertaken to enhance perceptions of interpersonal and procedural justice. As noted by Martin and Bennett (1996), "the economic costs of acting in a procedurally fair manner – treating individuals with respect, providing advance notice of and justification for actions – are minimal" (p. 100). Not doing so can send a message that officers are not valued. Moreover, raising the perceptions of distributive justice should not be ignored. While it may take longer, efforts should be undertaken to raise the level of distributive justice views of officers. Research should explore whether interpersonal and procedural justice views may influence the perceptions of distributive justice of officers. Crow *et al.* (2012) contended that these two dimensions of justice had positive effects on the distributive justice of South Korean police officers. If administrators are willing to invest in improving the organizational justice views of officers, there should be benefits for both officers and the police agency, including greater affective organizational commitment.

Conclusion

In conclusion, police agencies across the globe are labor intensive. Officers are both a valuable and expensive resource. Police organizations need to invest in this resource. The current results indicate that administrators should undertake efforts to raise perceptions of organizational justice of officers. The current study examined the association of interpersonal, procedural and distributive justice with affective organizational commitment among Chinese officers in three different regions of China. The findings indicate three dimensions of justice views are linked to affective commitment. Organizational justice views appear to play a role in the affective organizational commitment of Chinese police officers. Further, the findings among Chinese officers are similar to that found among Indian and US officers, suggesting that the importance of justice views may be universal among officers in different nations. One major implication is the need for more research on how the different types of organizational commitment are related to the affective organizational commitment of police officers in different nations. Before a firmer conclusion can be drawn on the universality of the effects of organizational justice, more research is needed, particularly involving officers in a wide array of nations across the world. The current study indicates that perceptions of organizational justice is important for both police scholars and administrators and needs to be further studied. It is hoped that the current study will spark further research in this relevant area so as to provide police administrations with the needed information to invest in their officers by enhancing perceptions of the different dimensions of organizational fairness. Doing nothing will not be an effective approach.

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