Organizational Justice a Key Driver of Employee Well-Being and Performance in the Service Sector

*Aarti Sharma & **Dr. Himani Sharma

Abstract

The study aims to examine the role of organizational justice on employee performance, as well as the mediating role of employee psychological well-being. In addition, the study made use of COR theory to explain the proposed model. The cross-sectional data of 456 service sector employees from India was collected through snowball sampling. The study tested the proposed model using PLS-SEM approach. The findings of the study confirm the positive association between organizational justice and employee performance. The study also supports the mediating role of employee psychological well-being. The study will help organizations to understand the importance of justice and well-being for better performance in the workplace.

Keywords Organizational Justice, Employee Well-being, Employee Performance, Service Sector, India.

* Research Scholar, Haryana School of Business, Guru Jambheshwar University of Science & Technology, Hisar, Haryana, India, Email Aartisharma0897@gmail.com.

**Professor, Haryana School of Business, Guru Jambheshwar University of Science & Technology, Hisar, Haryana, India, Email himanisharma.gju@gmail.com.

Introduction

Any organization's ability to survive is mostly dependent on the people that work there (Ajala & Bolarinwa, 2015). Similarily, there is no doubt about the fact that a person's health is the most precious possession they can have in this fast-paced world of uncertainty (Changaranchola & Samantara, 2024). It is the well-being of the employees that determines whether they will work for the organization or not (Ajala & Bolarinwa, 2015). Thus, employee well-being has become a strong factor for organizations to sustain in this competitive environment (Danna & Griffin, 1999; Sharma & Kumar, 2020). Considering the importance of well-being, the present study aims to empirically test the construct (interactional justice) that may affect employee well-being and how well-being further affect employee's performance.

Organizational justice is commonly conceptualized as "the extent to which people perceive organizational events as being fair" (Colquitt and Greenberg, 2003). The studies in the area of human resource management have examined the positive effect of justice on employee wellbeing (Heffernan & Dundon, 2016), performance (Wang et al., 2010). However, when employees perceive injustice at workplace and are treated insensitively by the manager, they feel exhausted and suffer from poor health. The positive outcomes are more likely to take place when employees feel they are treated fairly in the organization (Ndjanboue et al., 2012). However, the literature review on the association between justice and employee shows that, while there is evidence that organizational justice may have a significant impact on performance, the degree to and the mechanism underlying this influence is still not exhaustive (Wang et al., 2010). The current study examined interactional justice's direct impact on performance in addition to indirect effect of psychological well-being.

The present study has considered service sector due to its importance in fostering economic growth of India. For example, the sector produces 8.12 million new jobs in the year 2023 particularly in IT, banking and finance sector whereas, the service export amounts for US \$ 31.6 billion (IBEF, 2024). The service industry accounts for sixty six percent of the nation GDP (IBEF,2024). However, a recent study in the service sector by Delloitt (2023) highlights that 80 percent of employees are facing some kind of health issue. Furthermore, a number of scholars have long noted that management strategies lack ethical consideration for employees and are more inclined towards profit and performance (Neubert, 2011). The post-covid era is also recognised by two phenomena (a) deteriorating employee's well-being and (b) "Great Resignation" (Aubouin-Bonnaventure et al., 2024; Tassema et al., 2022). Therefore, it is important for organizations to investigate what factors influence employee well-being and how it can be improved to sustain in such a competitive business environment. Furthermore, the study of Kundi et al (2020) has also highlighted the need to conduct more empirical studies to understand the influence of psychological well-being on employees performance.

Thus, the study aims to address the following questions:

- (1) Is organizational justice directly or indirectly related to employee performance?
- (2) What role does employee well-being plays in the context of organizational justice and employee performance?

The present study thus aims to highlight the importance of justice at workplace and examine how justice impact employee well-being and their performance. To answer the study questions, an intensive review of literature was done. This might be the first study that attempts to examine the mediating role of employee well-being in the association of justice and employee performance. The literature review on study constructs, together with their theoretical foundations and the supporting evidence for the hypothesis that has been put is listed in the following section of the study. This is followed by a robust methodology and results of the proposed model. The final section of the current paper includes the limitations of the study, followed by the discussion and recommendation for future research and finally the conclusion of the study.

Review of Literature and Hypothesis Development

Organizational Justice and Employee Psychological Well-Being

The term "organizational justice" which was first introduced by Wendell (1964) has been frequently used by organizational psychologists to define the impartial and ethical treatment of employees at workplace (Cropanzano, 1993; Greenberg, 1990). Distributive, procedural, interactional justice are the three dimensions that make up the construct of organizational justice (Hermanto & Srimulyani, 2022). According to Colquitt (2001), distributive justice is related to the perceived fairness of decision outcomes, whereas procedural justice is concerned with the perceived fairness of decision-making procedure. Interactional justice, usually referred to interpersonal treatment employee receives at workplace such as respect and sincerity (Greenberg, 1993). In the present study, we have considered the interactional justice, as this form of justice differs from other two (Bies, 2015). In comparison to the other two forms (distributive and procedural) of justice, which are more focused on outcomes, interactional justice is concerned with the treatment of employees in the workplace (Cohen-Charash & Spector, 2001). Furthermore, among the three types, interactional justice is a significant predictor of employee performance (Wang et al., 2010). Numerous studies have thoroughly examined the significant impact of justice on a wide range of employee attitudes and behaviors, including job satisfaction, job performance (Haryono et al., 2019), and employee well-being (Heffernan & Dundon, 2016), psychological well-being (Garg et al., 2015). Accordingly, the present study proposes a positive association between justice and psychological well-being:

H1. Interactional justice has a positive effect on PWB.

Organizational Justice and Employee Performance

Abdirahman et al. (2018) defined employee performance as "achievement of targets of the tasks assigned to employees within particular period of time" (p.no 13). Employee performance is one of the key issues that researchers, and practitioners continues to investigate, because employee performance plays a major role in determining the existence of any business (Hermanto & Srimulyani, 2022). Therefore, it is important to examine what factors influence employee performance at workplace. The association between organizational justice and employee performance has drawn the attention of justice scholars (Wang et al., 2010). For example, the perception of organizational justice in an organization is one of the key variables that can influence employee performance (Hermanto & Srimulyani, 2022). The importance of organizational justice in affecting employee behavior and performance is also emphasized by Hameed and Anwar (2018). The following hypothesis is developed based on these earlier research studies:

H2. Interactional justice has positive effect on employee performance.

Psychological Well-being as a Mediator

Employees are more emotionally invested in the organization when they perceive justice at workplace and deliver the expected performance (Garg et al., 2015). Perception of justice is positively associated with 'human psychological process' including personal growth, positive mental and emotional state, also a meaningful life. These positive results of justice lead to improved psychological well-being of employees. The degree to which people are functioning at their best represents the psychological well-being (Diener et al., 2009). Psychological well-being places more emphasis on development, growth and a sense of accomplishment than on subjective feelings alone. The study of Cankir and Sahir on the basis of 322 textile employees highlighted psychological well-being as an important predictor of performance. The present paper aims to examine whether organizational justice could enhance employee performance by improving their psychological well-being. As a result, the following hypothesis was developed:

- H3. PWB has positive effect on employee performance.
- H4. PWB mediates the relationship between interactional justice and employee performance.

Methodology

Sample and data collection

The data was collected from service sector employees working in India. Both Google link and pen & paper mode were used for data collection. Data was collected from March 2021 to May 2022. Different platforms were used to collect the required data such as LinkedIn, E-mail, WhatsApp. Data from number of industries were collected to depict the landscape of service sector of India as shown in Table 1. For data collection, snowball sampling method was used. Out of 700 questionnaires, which were sent for data collection, after eliminating the incomplete questionnaires, 456 final surveys (resulting into a response rate of 65.14 percent) were considered to test the hypothesized model. Of 456 respondents, 66.90 percent were males and 33.10 percent were females; 49.1 percent were married, 50.9 percent were unmarried, whereas 24.30 percent of the respondents were below the age 25 years, 40.60 percent belongs to 26 -30 years age group, 28.30 percent were from 31-40 years age group, while the remaining 6.80 percent respondents were above age 40 years. More than half of the respondents were graduates (53.50 percent), while 35.74 percent were post-graduates and only 10.74 percent of the respondents were having professional degree. Further, 57.20 percent of respondents had work experience of below 5 years, 23.70 percent had an experience of 5–10 years and 9.90 percent had10-15 years of work experience, while the remaining 9.20 percent had above 15 years of working experience. In terms of industry, 16.89 percent of respondents were from tourism and hospitality industry, 17.98 percent were from finance, accounting and auditing industry, 26.32 percent were from banking and insurance industry, and the remaining 26.54 percent and 12.28 percent were from IT, ITES & Telecommunication and Logistics & transportation industry respectively. The study has utilized the structural equation modelling (SEM) and carry out the analysis using PLS software. Table 1 presents the demographic profile of the study respondents.

Table 1- Descriptive Information

Variables	Counts	Percentage total
Gender		
Female	151	33.100%
Male	305	66.900%
Marital Status		
Married	224	49.100%
Unmarried	232	50.900%
Age Group		
Below 25 years	111	24.300%
26-30 years	185	40.600%
31-40 years	129	28.300%
40 years or above	31	6.800%
Education		
Graduation	244	53.500%
Post-graduation	163	35.745%
Professional degree	49	10.745%
Work Experience		
Upto5year	261	57.200%
5-10year	108	23.700%
10-15year	45	9.900%
Above 15year	42	9.200%
Industry		
Tourism & Hospitality	77	16.890%
Finance & Accounting & Auditing	82	17.980%
Banking & Insurance	120	26.320%
IT& ITES &Telecommunication	121	26.540%
Logistics & Transportation	56	12.280%
Total	456	100.000%

Source: Author's Work

Measurement scale

Interactional Justice: Moorman (1991) scale was used to measure interactional justice which was then modified by Niehoff and Moorman (1993). Interactional justice was measured using five statements, for example "when decisions are made about my job, the manager treats me with respect and dignity". Cronbach alpha value was 0.902.

Psychological well-being: The scale of Diener et al. (2009) was used to measure psychological well-being of employees. The scale consists of eight statements, for example "I am engaged and interested in my daily activities". Cronbach alpha value was 0.921.

Employee Performance: The scale of William and Anderson (1993) was utilized to measure employee performance. The scale consists of five statements, for example "I meet formal performance requirements of the job". Cronbach alpha value was 0.877.

Respondents reported their response on a five-point Likert scale, where one represented "strongly disagree" and five represented "strongly agree."

Figure 1 presents the structural model of the study.

Common Method Bias

The issue of common method biasness (CMB) cannot be ruled out as data was collected from single source and in a cross-sectional study. To avoid or to minimize the issue of common method biasness, we have incorporated recommendations given by Podsakoff, (2012) i.e., use of established scales, participants are pre-informed about the purpose of the study and anonymity was guaranteed to the participants. Moreover, Harman's single-factor test was also used to investigate the potential effect of CMB. The test highlighted that one single component does not account for more than 50 percent of variation in the study, indicating that the present study does not suffer from CMB issue (Podsakoff et al., 2012). The outcome of the test indicates that a single component accounts for 44.275 percent of the overall variance which is below the threshold limit of 50 percent.

Analytical Approach

Partial Least Square Structural Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM) and SPSS software were used for data analysis. SPSS was used for descriptive analysis, whereas PLS-SEM a variance-based approach was used to examine the reliability and validity of the study constructs and also to

examine the hypothesis. Table 1 presents the descriptive information about the study respondents. Further under the measurement model, Cronbach's alpha, rho A and composite reliability were checked, to assess the reliability, which were above the prescribed limit of 0.70 (Hair et al., 2019; Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994) (See Table 2). Convergent validity was ensured with help of average variance extracted (AVE) value, which was above the threshold limit of 0.50 (Hair et al., 2014).

Table 2 – Reliability and Validity Analysis

Variables	Cronbach's alpha	rho_A	rho_c	AVE
Interactional Justice	0.902	0.902	0.927	0.718
Psychological well-Being	0.921	0.923	0.936	0.646
Employee Performance	0.877	0.882	0.910	0.669

Source: Author's Work

Outer loadings of the constructs were also above 0.708, thus establishing the convergent validity of the study constructs (See Table 3). In further analysis discriminant validity of the study was examined with help of fornell-Larcker criterion (the root of AVE should be greater than the constructs correlation value) and HTMT ratio (values of 0.85 or 0.90 is acceptable upper limit) (Fornell & Larcker, 1981; Henseler et al., 2015). Table 4 presents the discriminant validity of all the study variables. The study does not face issue of multicollinearity as the variance inflation factor (VIF) value was below 5 (Hair et al., 2014) (See Table 3). The findings indicates that the study construct organizational justice, psychological well-being and employee performance are valid, and reliable. After the examination of measurement model, study hypothesis was examined.

Table 3 - VIF and Outer Loading Value

Constructs	Items	VIF	Outer Loadings
Interactional Justice (IJ)	IJ1	2.299	0.825
	IJ2	2.441	0.845

	IJ3	2.375	0.849
	IJ4	2.661	0.859
	IJ5	2.731	0.860
Psychological well-Being (PWB)	PWB1	2.121	0.782
	PWB2	2.214	0.792
	PWB3	2.573	0.830
	PWB4	2.529	0.827
	PWB5	2.841	0.852
	PWB6	2.663	0.833
	PWB7	1.979	0.733
	PWB8	1.998	0.774
Employee Performance (EP)	EP1	2.116	0.838
	EP2	2.273	0.823
	EP3	2.181	0.817
	EP4	2.057	0.825
	EP5	1.750	0.786

Source: Author's Work

Table 4 – Discriminant Validity

F&L	EP	IJ	PWB
Employee Performance (EP)	0.818		
Interactional Justice (IJ)	0.332	0.848	
Psychological Well-Being (PWB)	0.537	0.660	0.803
HTMT-Ratio			

Employee Performance (EP)		
Interactional Justice (IJ)	0.366	
Psychological Well-Being (PWB)	0.590	0.722

Source- Author's Work

Note: F&L= Fornell-Lacker's Criterion; HTMT= Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio.

Findings

In PLS-SEM, to assess the structural model, bootstrapping technique with a sub-sample of 10,000 was utilized to achieve statistical significance as suggested by Chin (1998) and the level of significance at 0.05 was established. All the path coefficients were statistically significant at p < 0.005, except the association between interactional justice and employee performance.

The path coefficient between interactional justice and psychological well-being is β =0.662. The coefficient is statistically significant with t value 18.425, at p<0.005. Thus, the findings indicate that hypothesized relation is statistically significant. Therefore, the hypothesis H1 is supported. The findings highlight the significance of employee's treatment at workplace in affecting their psychological well-being. Interpersonal interaction that is based on politeness and honesty are of utmost importance for employee

The path coefficient between interactional justice and employee performance is β = -0.040. This coefficient is statistically insignificant at p<0.005. Thus, the findings depict that there is no direct and positive relationship between interactional justice and employee performance. Thus, H2 was not supported.

The path coefficient between psychological well-being and employee performance is β =0.564. The coefficient is statistically significant with t value 10.485, at p<0.005. Thus, the findings indicate that hypothesized relation is statistically significant. Therefore, the hypothesis H3 is supported. The findings highlight the significance pf psychological well-being in influencing the performance of the employees.

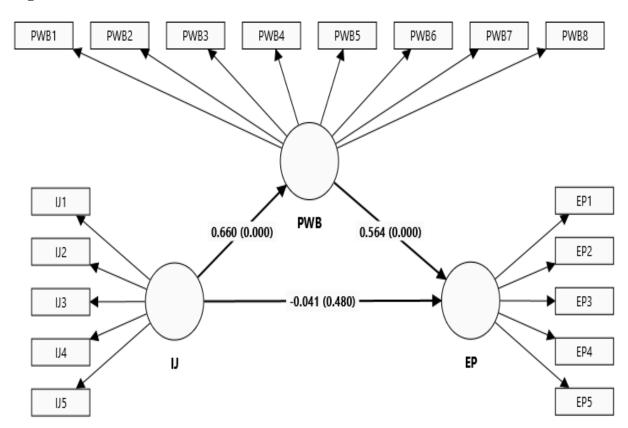


Figure 1- Structural Model with P-Values

Source: PLS-SEM generated graphical output

Notes: IJ= Interactional Justice; EP= Employee Performance; PWB= Psychological Well-Being.

Table 5 - Hypothesis Testing

Hypothesis	Structural Path	Beta	S.D.	T-stat	P value	Result
H1	IJ → PWB	0.662	0.036	18.425	0.000	Supported
H2	$IJ \longrightarrow EP$	-0.040	0.057	0.707	0.480	Not Supported
Н3	PWB → EP	0.564	0.054	10.485	0.000	Supported

H4	IJ → PWB →EP	0.373 0.041	9.004 0.000	Supported
				TI.

Source: Author's Work

Notes: IJ= Interactional Justice; EP= Employee Performance; PWB= Psychological Well-Being.

The mediating role of psychological well-being was examined in hypothesis 4. The results highlights that there is no direct association between interactional justice and psychological well-being but only indirect mediation exists in presence of psychological well-being with β = 0.373 at p<0.005 (See table 5). Therefore, the hypothesis H4 was supported. The result highlights the importance of psychological well-being as an important mediating variable.

Discussion

If an organization treat its employees with kindness, honesty and without biasness, it may lead to improve employee well-being and helps organization to leverage its human capital leading to better employee performance. Through the mediating role of employee psychological wellbeing, the present study adds to the body of literature by identifying the role of interactional justice in the workplace for improving the performance of service industry employees with help of well-being as an intervening variable in the Indian context. To the best of our knowledge no previous study have tested the impact of organizational justice on employee performance through psychological well-being. The study result does not support the direct association between interactional justice and employee performance, the findings are in line with the meta-analysis study of Cohen-Charash and Spector (2001) based on 190 research studies with 64,757 respondents. However, the finding does not coincide with the study of Wang et al (2010), that highlights interactional justice as the most important factor to influence employee performance, out of the three forms of justice. The study highlights that it could be possible that employees are less sensitive to factors like interactional justice when it comes to their performance. For example, the meta-analysis study of Cohen-Charash and Spector (2001), highlighted that when an employee experiences interactional injustice, they are more likely to react negatively towards their supervisor rather than the whole organization. Therefore, interactional injustice might lead to poor performance. It is important to highlight that, interactional justice is an important to determine the psychological well-being of the employees which further influence their performance. The study provides an important view-point in

understanding how interactional justice can impact employee performance and what role psychological well-being plays in the association.

The results of this study emphasize how employing organizational justice policies at workplace can help in improving psychological well-being which further increases employee performance. The study emphasizes the significance of enhancing employee psychological well-being in organizations through higher levels of justice at workplace. The findings help HR practitioner, managers to know how interactional justice can improve employee performance.

Limitation and Future Directions

The study is subject to few limitations. Firstly, the study only considers the interactional justice dimension of the organization justice, future studies can check the influence of all three dimension and see which dimension is more important. Second, the cross-sectional nature of the study is a general problem when it comes to causal inference, thus longitudinal studies can be conducted in future. Lastly, the fact that this study was carried out in an Indian setting may limit the theoretical model relevance in other cultural settings. In order to address this problem, the model should be tested in other cultures.

Conclusion

Given that the majority of people spend more time on their jobs, employers need to show that they care about the health and well-being of their employees. Organizations should strive to create an atmosphere where creating a healthy organization is primary goal and profitability and growth are secondary, achieved through wellness initiatives and the promotion of justice at workplace. The findings of the study highlight that employee well-being is something that is desired by both employees and employer as it help organizations to improve their overall productivity and performance.

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