

The Moderating Impact of Job Suitability on The Relationship between Organizational Justice and Employee Performance

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Abstract

Employee performance in the public sector in emerging economies has received less attention, and there is a gap in the performance between developed and non-developed countries. The purpose of this study is to investigate the impact of organizational justice (procedural justice, distributive justice, and interactional justice) on employee performance and to examine the moderating role of job suitability in the Omani public sector. A total of 420 responses were collected from five selected ministries in Oman using a stratified sampling technique. Data was analysed using Smart PLS 4. The findings indicated that procedural, distributive, and interactional justice have a positive effect on employee performance. Job suitability moderated only the effect of distributive justice on employee performance. Assigning jobs appropriately and creating a fair working environment can lead to better employee performance.

Keywords: Organizational Justice; Job Suitability; Employee Performance; Public Sector.

1. Introduction

Human capital is the most important asset in an organization. This capital relies heavily on employees. Employee performance (EP) has become one of the main issues that organizations to increasing their organizational performance and effectiveness. [1], and its importance increases in the public sector, which relies on EP to offer key services, including education, healthcare, and other transactions [2]. Thus, public sector employees' performance benefits the sector performance, citizens, and other stakeholders. [3]. The public sector is vital to the economy because it creates employment and provides high-quality public services. [4]. Against this approach, most prior research studied private sector EP, whereas few examined public sector performance. [5]. In a production-based economy, organizations incentivize EP. Therefore, employees work longer hours yet feel more stressed and unfulfilled, which lowers productivity, increases absenteeism, and makes them want to quit.

EP depends on organizational justice (OJ). OJ theory states that fairness and justice in procedures, distribution, and interaction motivate and commit employees and improve performance. Several studies found that OJ improved EP. [6]–[8]. Other research revealed no substantial influence of OJ on EP. [9], [10]. In their comprehensive assessment of nine nations, [11] Found that the Middle East, mostly Arab countries like Oman, is one of the least studied areas in OJ literature. Another issue that has the potential to contribute to EP is the job suitability (JS). Poor JS complicates performance assessment and increases job dissatisfaction. [12]. Lack of JS causes work overlap, conflict, and poor performance. [13]. To address these difficulties, organizations must assess the suitability of work for employees; therefore, employees can understand their jobs and assess their performance. [14]. Nevertheless, the results are mixed in terms of the impact of JS on EP. [15], and few studies have examined the role of JS as a moderator [16].

The public sector is inflexible. [4], and it has inferior EP than the private sector because workers are less motivated and engaged [17]. Oman has public sector EP difficulties. Oman's public sector EP is lower than the regional and international level of EP. [18]. Nevertheless, public sector studies are few in the Middle East and Oman. [18], [19]. Existing studies examined the OJ and EP in different industries, such as hotels, manufacturing, banking, and small and medium enterprises (SMEs) [12], [20]–[22]. [20] found that procedural justice mediates the job analysis-performance relationship. To address these gaps, this study examines how procedural, distributive, and interactional organizational justice affects EP. We also analyse how JS moderates the impact of OJ on EP. Next, we discuss the literature review, methodology, results, discussion, and conclusion.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Theoretical framework

This study examines the effect of OJ on EP and the moderating role of JS. Therefore, two theories, which include the OJ theory and the job characteristic model (JCM), can explain the association between the variables. The justice theory was initially derived from the equity theory. [23], [24]. Equity theory assumes that employees compare their input with the output. [25]–[27]. OJ focuses on all aspects of work and includes the justice and fair treatment between employee and their supervisors, as well as the justice in pay, duties, training, and gender equality, as well as justice in performance appraisal and workload. [28], [29]. Researchers indicated that there are various operationalizations of OJ, and they considered OJ to include three dimensions: distributive, procedural, and interactional justice. [30]–[32]. OJ has been used in a few studies in the context of work attitude and outcome (Ismail et al., 2018). [33] Deployed the OJ theory to explain the effect of OJ on project performance and client satisfaction. The OJ theory was also deployed to explain the effect of OJ on EP. [34], [35]. Therefore, this study uses OJ theory to explain the effect of procedural, distributive, and interactional justice on EP.

[36] Developed JCM and stressed that work experiences strongly impact employee motivation. There are five essential characteristics of a job that include work qualities, which are skill diversity, task identity, task importance, autonomy, and feedback. These traits influence job satisfaction, absenteeism, and work motivation by affecting perceived meaningfulness, accountability for outcomes, and awareness of real results. [37] and [38] Have extensively studied the influence of job design on employee outcomes, repeatedly finding a substantial correlation between well-defined work features and EP. [36] Recommended utilizing JS to solve job design concerns, illustrating how JCM might improve organizational performance. Finding fit between employees and JS can lead to placing the right employee in the right position. [39]. Clear JS improves employee engagement, satisfaction, and performance by offering a disciplined framework for reviewing and enhancing job responsibilities. [40]–[42]. This study uses the JCM to explain the moderating role of JS between OJ and EP.

2.2. Employee performance

EP is important for organizations for several reasons. It is critical because it can contribute directly to the organizational performance, and it is also important because management of human resources can use it as a criterion to assess pay, promotion, and awards. [43], [44]. Employee effort and ability result in actions related to creating products and services and accomplishing organizational objectives. Task performance involves job-specific duties, whereas contextual performance improves organizational success. [45], [46]. EP is defined by the quality and amount of work, obligations, responsibilities, and results tied to an organization's objective. EP measurement expanded beyond output amount to quality, efficiency, and effectiveness. Measurement of EP includes unidimensional and multidimensional. Multidimensional metrics include quality, timeliness, effectiveness, independence, and job dedication. [47]. This research uses [48] and [49] Measurement to assess EP using a multidimensional measurement.

2.3. Job suitability

The core function of HRM is to assign the right employee to the right job. [50]. Therefore, JS is critical for enhancing the performance of employees. [51]. Organizations, particularly those in the public sector of developing nations, struggle with JS. [15]. Poor job fit can lower productivity, job satisfaction, organizational efficiency, and increase turnover. [51]. Understanding work needs and staff competencies is essential to reducing mismatches between job duties and personnel capabilities. This mismatch can confuse, demotivate, and underperform staff by assigning unprepared duties. [39]. Lack of ongoing training and development lowers JS. Even well-matched staff might become unsuitable without frequent training. [52]. Therefore, creating a fit between the job requirement, specification, and description, as well as the capability of employees in terms of education, qualification, skills, and experience, can enhance the EP. This study examines the moderating role of JS.

2.4. Organizational justice

OJ includes workers' views of workplace fairness in processes, interactions, and results. [9], [53]. These beliefs strongly impact employee behaviour, attitudes, and organizational performance. [54]. OJ involves distributive, procedural, and interactional justice. Distributive justice compares inputs and outcomes among peers to allocate resources fairly. Management-focused procedural justice investigates decision-making fairness. [55]. The third component, interactional justice, promotes management interaction with employees. It includes respect and decency, and proper explanations. [56]. Adam's Equity theory states that perceived justice motivates and improves productivity and work attitudes. [57]. In contrast, unfairness demotivates and undermines workplace performance [55]. OJ is examined in this study using three dimensions that include procedural, distributive, and interactional justice. Although a substantial body of evidence supports the positive link between organizational justice and employee performance, the literature also presents conflicting results. For instance, [9] found no significant association between certain dimensions of OJ and performance, suggesting that contextual factors such as cultural norms, sectoral differences, and job role expectations may weaken or nullify the effect. These inconsistencies underscore the need to examine OJ in underexplored contexts, such as the Omani public sector, where institutional structures and employee expectations may differ from those in the private sector or Western economies.

2.5. Conceptual framework and hypotheses

Based on the theories of JCM and OJ, as well as a review of existing frameworks in the literature, this study proposes that the effects of procedural, distributive, and interactional justice on EP are positive and significant. The study also proposes that JS moderates positively the effect of procedural, distributive, and interactional justice on EP. Figure 1 shows the conceptual framework. The conceptual framework in Figure 1 illustrates the relationships between procedural justice, distributive justice, and interactional justice with employee performance, and the moderating role of job suitability. Adapted from Organizational Justice Theory and the Job Characteristics Model.

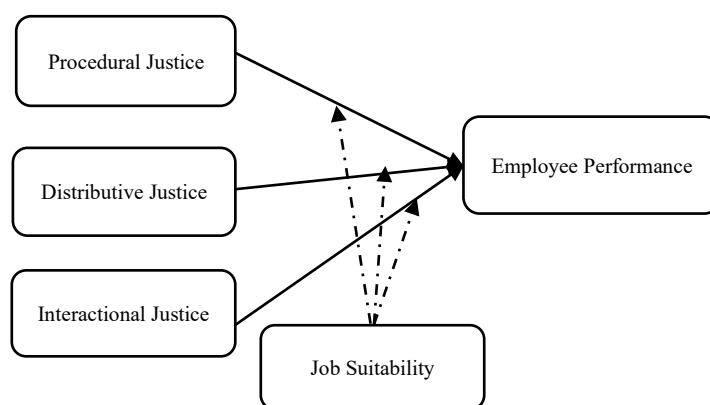


Fig. 1: Conceptual Framework.

2.5.1. Organizational justice and EP

Procedural justice is the fairness of decision-making procedures. [58]. Employee satisfaction and performance improve when they believe their organization's procedures and processes are fair. [59]. Fair processes assess workers' contributions and distribute promotions, incentives, and other advantages equally. [60]. When processes seem fair, confidence in the organization and dedication grow, leading to greater performance. [61], [62]. Fair methods, including transparent processes, increase procedural justice and performance. [63]. Therefore, it is proposed that a positive link exists between procedural justice and EP.

H1: Procedural justice has a positive impact on EP.

Distributive justice refers to the perceived fairness of employee results and incentives. [64]. Employees who feel that incentives, salary, and recognition are fair and based on their efforts perform better [65]. Distributive justice addresses the issue of resource equality, which in turn impacts employee morale and work satisfaction. [66]. Distributive justice enhances performance because workers feel respected and fairly compensated. [9], [67]. Research repeatedly shows that distributive fairness improves performance. Fair compensation and resource allocation boost employee engagement and productivity. [9], [62]. Thus, in this study, the following is proposed:

H2: Distributive justice has a positive impact on EP.

Respect, dignity, and sufficient information from supervisors and managers are examples of interactional justice. [60]. Fair and honest communication fosters workers' perceptions of justice. [58]. Interactional justice fosters a respectful and valued workplace, enhancing job satisfaction and performance. Respect and clear explanations for decisions help increase trust in leaders and enhance EP. [67], [68]. Interactional justice enhances performance because courteous and honest supervisor communication fosters trust and improves performance. [67], [68]. Therefore, the following is proposed:

H3: Interactional justice has a positive impact on EP.

2.5.2 JS as a moderator

Several studies have investigated the impact of JS on EP, yielding conflicting results. JS affected work attitude, employee behaviour, job satisfaction, and organizational commitment. [52], [69], [70] Positively. JS positively affected the EP. Limited studies examined the moderating role of JS between variables. For instance, [71] Found that JS moderated the effect of life satisfaction and organizational commitment. Therefore, in this study, JS is proposed as a moderating variable.

H4: JS moderates the effect of procedural justice on EP.

H5: JS moderates the effect of distributive justice on EP.

H6: JS moderates the effect of interactional justice on EP.

3. Methodology

This research employed positivism, which emphasizes the collection and analysis of quantitative data before drawing generalizations. This research uses deductive reasoning. The population of this study consists of Oman's public sector employees. This study exclusively includes government servants from five ministries that provide services to citizens in Oman. The number of employees in these five ministries is 106,102, which constitutes the population of this study. Stratified random sampling is used. This is because there are differences in the number of employees in each ministry. We used the Slovin technique to determine the sample size. This procedure yields 399 samples. To prevent poor response rates and eliminate missing data and outliers, [72] Advised doubling the sample. This research has 798 samples (399*2).

This research collected the data using a questionnaire. JS measurement was adopted from previous studies. [73]–[75]. The measurement of EP was adopted from Tabouli et al. (2016) and Arinanye (2015). OJ encompasses procedural, distributive, and interactional justice, and it was adopted from Elçi et al. (2015) The following source. Back-to-back translation was used to translate the questionnaire into Arabic, and it was validated by seven experts. A pilot study was conducted, and all the measurements have a reliable Cronbach's Alpha above 0.70. Five ministries received 798 questionnaires. In total, 432 responses were collected. No missing values were reported, and 12 responses were deleted due to outliers. This yields 420 valid responses. No multicollinearity or normality issues were reported.

4. Findings

4.1. Descriptive statistics of respondents

A total of 420 public sector employees participated in this study. The highest percentage of 54.8% is females, while males accounted for 45.2%. Most of the respondents had bachelor's degrees (56.9%), while a lesser minority had master's (20.3%), PhDs (5.2%), or high school diplomas (6.4%). The Ministry of Education (62.9%) employed most of the respondents, followed by the Ministry of Health (26.2%). The

Ministries of Labour (4.5%), Housing and Urban Planning (4.3%), and Commerce and Industry (2.1%) reported lower percentages. The respondents are mainly staff or subordinate workers (69.8%), heads of departments (19.3%), deputy managers (4.5%), and managers (6.4%). The highest percentage of respondents, 46.7% had over 17 years of experience, followed by 11 to 16 years (29.5%), five years of experience (6.4%), and five to 10 years (17.4%).

4.2. Measurement model

Table 1 summarizes statistical measures needed to assess measurement model reliability and validity. Cronbach's Alpha (CA) and Composite Reliability (CR) reveal measurement item internal consistency. CA values, around 0.9, indicate strong item internal consistency. CR shows good internal reliability above 0.70, indicating that the reliability is high. Average variance extracted (AVE) is a key indication of convergent validity, showing how much latent constructs explain variation in measured variables. The AVE values, which range from 0.55 to 0.80, show that latent constructs explain a significant part of observed variable variation. It suggests strong convergent validity in the measurement model. Following the suggestions of [77], Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio (HTMT) was used to examine discriminant validity. HTMT evaluates model constructions' uniqueness. It compares construct correlations with AVE square roots. Discriminant validity is often acceptable below 0.85 [77], suggesting significant concept differentiation.

Table 1: Evaluation of Measurement Model

Variable	CA	CR	AVE	DJ	EP	IJ	JS	PJ
DJ	0.847	0.859	0.552	-				
EP	0.952	0.958	0.554	0.213				
IJ	0.937	0.952	0.799	0.516	0.647			
JS	0.934	0.942	0.558	0.563	0.674	0.765		
PJ	0.889	0.922	0.749	0.404	0.648	0.774	0.681	-

Note: DJ: Distributive justice, EP: Employee performance, IJ: Interactional justice, JS: Job suitability, PJ: Procedural Justice.

4.3. Structural model

The structural model yielded an R-squared value of 0.553, as illustrated in Figure 2. This implies that 55.3% of the variation in EP can be explained using OJ and JS. In addition, the F-square showed an acceptable value, except for two paths related to the moderating effect of JS on the relationship between procedural and interactional justice, and EP. Figure 1 shows the structural model. Figure 2 presents a structural model showing standardized path coefficients (β) and significance levels ($p < 0.05$). Solid lines represent direct relationships; dashed lines represent moderating effect relationships. $R^2 = 0.553$ indicates that 55.3% of the variance in employee performance is explained by the model.

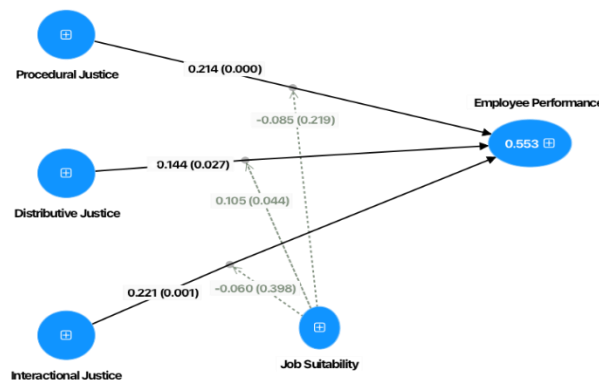


Fig. 2: Structural Model of the Study.

Based on Figure 2, the results of hypothesis testing are given in Table 2. Hypothesis testing reveals organizational elements that affect EP. Path coefficients (β), standard deviation (Std.), t-values (T), and p-values (P) indicate connection significance and directionality.

Table 2: Results of Hypothesis Testing

Path	B	Std.	T	P	Label
Procedural Justice \rightarrow EP	0.214	0.051	4.189	0.000	Accepted
Distributive Justice \rightarrow EP	0.144	0.065	2.219	0.027	Accepted
Interactional Justice \rightarrow EP	0.221	0.064	3.421	0.001	Accepted
JS x Procedural Justice \rightarrow EP	-0.085	0.069	1.232	0.219	Rejected
JS x Distributive Justice \rightarrow EP	0.105	0.052	2.019	0.044	Accepted
JS x Interactional Justice \rightarrow EP	-0.06	0.071	0.845	0.398	Rejected

A substantial positive link exists between procedural justice and EP ($B = 0.214$, $t = 4.189$, $p < 0.001$). This suggests that justice in corporate decision-making significantly impacts EP. This supports the research that procedural justice increases employee involvement and commitment, improving performance. Distributive justice, which ensures fair allocation of resources and incentives, also significantly affects EP ($B = 0.144$, $t = 2.219$, $p = 0.027$). This shows that perceived resource allocation fairness affects employee engagement and productivity. Interactional justice also predicts EP ($B = 0.221$, $t = 3.421$, $p = 0.001$), highlighting the significance of interpersonal treatment and communication. Interaction effects between JS and Justice dimensions are mixed. The clarity of JS moderates the effect of distributive fairness on EP ($B = 0.105$, $t = 2.019$, $p = 0.044$), but the interaction effects of JS with procedural justice and interactional justice are negative and insignificant. These results imply that JS accuracy can increase distributive fairness's impact on performance outcomes, but not procedural or interactional fairness.

5. Discussion and Implications

OJ is a key aspect of employee effectiveness. Procedural, distributive, and interactional justice positively affect EP, echoing past research across industries. [9], [62], [67]. These findings demonstrate the general relevance of justice in organizational decision-making, resource allocation, and interpersonal treatment. The findings are in line with the OJ theory, which suggests that OJ has an essential role in employee behaviour and attitude. [23], [24]. The study's examination of JS's moderating influence enriches the knowledge of OJ impacts. The interactional impact of distributive justice is considerable, whereas the impact of procedural and interactional justice is not. This subtle conclusion implies that JS precision can affect fairness judgments and EP. Accurate JS can enhance performance after fair resource allocation, highlighting the importance of aligning organizational policies with fairness beliefs. [52], [69], [70]. However, the non-significant interaction effects with procedural and interactional justice dimensions suggest that JS may not alleviate the harmful impacts of these injustices on EP. These results align with prior literature and the theory of JCM. [37], [38].

The finding that job suitability moderates only the relationship between distributive justice and employee performance, but not procedural or interactional justice, can be explained by the nature of fairness perceptions in resource allocation. In public sector contexts, employees often view distributive fairness, such as equitable pay, workload, and promotions, as directly tied to their job roles and capabilities. When job suitability is high, these distributive outcomes are perceived as more deserved and motivating, thus amplifying their positive effect on performance. Conversely, procedural and interactional justice are influenced more by organizational processes and interpersonal conduct, which may be less dependent on an employee's fit to the job. This suggests that aligning job roles with employee competencies primarily strengthens the fairness–performance link in tangible resource outcomes rather than in procedural or relational domains.

This study provides practical guidance for practitioners and policymakers seeking to enhance organizational productivity and employee well-being in similar contexts by building upon past research and offering novel insights. This research discussed the direct effect of OJ and the moderating role of JS in the public sector, particularly in Oman. Considering Oman's public sector, this study enhances OJ research. It explores studies outside manufacturing, tourism, finance, and SMEs. This research adds to the OJ and JCM theories in the context of the public sector. This study also addresses the absence of public sector JS studies, particularly in developing nations. The study of how JS impacts public sector EP fills a major research gap. Different studies have shown different effects of JS on EP.

Beyond the organizational behaviour perspective, these findings have economic implications. Poor job suitability and perceived unfairness can lead to higher turnover, reduced productivity, and increased recruitment and training costs. In contrast, ensuring high job suitability and fairness in distributive outcomes can enhance operational efficiency, improve service delivery, and optimize the use of public funds. In resource-constrained public sectors, these efficiency gains contribute directly to fiscal sustainability and better allocation of government budgets.

The study's results can inform the organizational methods of developing countries to boost EP. This emphasizes the importance of justice and transparency in decision-making, resource allocation, and respectful employee-management relations. To improve EP, organizations should emphasize justice efforts. Organizations are recommended to match employees with their jobs in terms of qualifications, education, skills, and capabilities. However, JS may not be sufficient to mitigate the effects of procedural or interactional inequalities on EP. Addressing these OJ features requires additional strategies. Organizations should emphasize accurate JS that represent distributive justice. Organizational practices and culture should also support procedural, distributive, and interactional justice. The public sector of developing nations must continuously evaluate and adapt organizational strategies to overcome inconsistencies between JS and justice aspects and optimize performance.

6. Conclusion

This study was conducted in the Omani public sector. The study selected five ministries that are in direct contact with citizens, providing education, healthcare, and other essential services. This research highlighted the role of JS, OJ, and public sector EP in Oman. Findings indicated that procedural, distributive, and interactional justice are crucial for enhancing employee performance in the Omani public sector. JS moderated only the effect of distributive justice on EP. Therefore, the findings of this study are limited to the Omani public sector and cannot be generalized to other sectors or countries. The findings are also limited to the variables that are investigated in this study. To enhance the generalizability of the findings, future studies can examine the effect of JS, OJ, and EP in different sectors, such as the private sector. A comparison between two or more countries can be a direction of future work. This study is quantitative. Future studies could conduct a qualitative study by interviewing the head of the department or supervisors in the public sector to gain a deeper understanding of the role of OJ and JS in determining EP. Future studies are also recommended to conduct a focus group with five experts to better understand the nature of EP in public organizations. In terms of variables, future studies can test the moderating effect of other variables such as gender, experience, and education. Additional variables, such as leadership style and organizational commitment, can also be included to predict the EP.

While the study is grounded in the Omani public sector context, the findings carry implications for broader human resource management strategies and economic policy beyond national boundaries. From an HRM perspective, the demonstrated importance of aligning job roles with employee capabilities, alongside fostering fairness in processes, resource allocation, and interpersonal interactions, offers a replicable model for improving employee performance in both public and private sectors. Policymakers in other developing countries can adopt similar justice-oriented frameworks to optimize human capital deployment, enhance employee engagement, and reduce inefficiencies, thereby supporting national productivity goals.

At the economic policy level, embedding organizational justice principles into civil service reforms can contribute to better resource utilization, cost containment, and sustainable service delivery, particularly in sectors where budgetary constraints are significant. The model tested in this study can be adapted and evaluated across different cultural, institutional, and economic environments, enabling cross-country comparisons that identify context-specific enablers and barriers. Such comparative research could strengthen the evidence base for global HRM and governance practices aimed at improving organizational performance while promoting equity and fairness in the workplace.

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