

The Mediating Effect of Employee Motivation on Organizational Justice and Work Engagement in the Public Sector

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Abstract

This study examined the influence of organizational justice on work engagement in the public sector, with employee motivation as a mediator. This study collected data using a structured questionnaire administered to middle and senior cadre staff of selected ministries in the public service in Nigeria. Data collected were analysed through PLS-SEM. The findings of the study revealed that the dimension of organisational justice has a significant influence on employee motivation and work engagement except for the influence of interactional justice on work engagement which cannot be confirmed. More so, the result also revealed that employee motivation partially mediates the relationship between the dimensions of organizational justice and work engagement, except for the relationship between interactional justice and work engagement, which shows a full mediation. The findings implied organizations' need to promote fairness in decision-making about employee motivation and engagement should be considered. More so, employees must be treated fairly following the resources they have invested in the workplace. Public organization managers need to add efforts to comply with administrative rules and procedures, consult with the public, advance public interests, and implement fair procedures for decision-making and compensation.

Keywords: *Organizational Justice; Motivation; Work Engagement; Public Service; Distributive Justice*

INTRODUCTION

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Only about 15% of employees globally are work engaged, this estimate is based on a survey by Gallup (2017) in 155 countries. Organizations are, therefore, increasingly seeking strategies to increase their workers' work engagement. Findings from past studies suggest that staff that are more engaged in their job have more energy, devotion, and absorption in their work, which is critical for increasing and maintaining an organization's competitiveness and success (Afsar et al., 2020; Van der Walt, 2018)). Employee engagement is especially important in the public sector where taxpayers' money is used to pay employees to provide quality services to the citizens (Theriou et al., 2020). More importantly, employees that are engaged are more likely to do their jobs and obligations with greater zeal, going above and beyond to solve customers' issues and meet their expectations, resulting in higher customer satisfaction (Al-dalalmeh et al., 2018).

In today's competitive environment, having engaged employees is extremely desirable for improving individual and organisational performance results (Karim &

Majid, 2017; Rai, 2018). Employees that are physically, cognitively, and emotionally invested in their jobs are said to be engaged (Murthy, 2017). Employees that are passionate, energetic, devoted, and interested in their work are more likely to demonstrate desired attitudes and behaviours at work (Wang et al., 2020). Work engagement is rapidly being recognised as a major predictor of a variety of positive outcomes, including increased job satisfaction, organisational citizenship behaviour, proactive behaviour, job performance, innovation, and customer satisfaction (Jiatong et al., 2022; Naveed et al., 2022). Therefore, to get employees engaged, organizations must put organizational justice in place.

Researchers have been increasingly interested in examining how employees' views of justice at work impact attitudes and behaviour toward their jobs during the past decades. To ascertain the forms of behaviour that take place and how advantageous they are to the organizations, more study is required. For instance, work engagement has been linked to perceptions of result fairness. Assuring justice is an essential management feature of public organizations since it promotes individuals' absorption in their obligations and organizations (Romadhoni & Haryono, 2021). Perceptions of justice impact members' psychological perceptions of the organization, acting as a fundamental factor in the shaping of employees' behaviour. Members' psychological perceptions of an organization are influenced by their perceptions of fairness (Farid et al., 2021; Gambhir & Kkan, 2022; Sharma & Yadav, 2018). Justice is classified into many categories based on its focus, such as the output-to-input ratio or the availability of circumstances and opportunity. By categorizing distinct forms of justice, this study attempts to determine the link between work engagement and organizational justice. This paper presents justice as an organizational strategy aimed to improve employees' motivation and work engagement in public organizations.

Organizational justice becomes an important predictor in assessing work engagement in the public sector due to the hierarchical and bureaucratic nature of the public organization, especially in a developing country like Nigeria, where procedures are rigid (Ohioenoya & Eguavoen, 2019). Moreso, in Nigeria's public sector, bureaucratic corruption has been identified to be a major challenge due to nepotism and discrimination in appointments, promotions and remuneration (Abdulkareem et al., 2021). Motivation and satisfaction among public sector employees have also been a critical challenge as fairness in wages and remunerations has been poor. Therefore, employees feel demotivated and cannot dedicate their best to work, which contributes significantly to the decline in work engagement of public sector employees. Therefore,

the combined effects of the stringent rules and the poor reward system employed by the public sector make employees tend to react to influence their dedication and zeal to work.

However, numerous studies have demonstrated that an enhanced sense of justice among employees plays a crucial role in fostering effective human resource functions within organizations. These functions include improved job satisfaction (Purwanto, 2020; Singh & Singh, 2018), enhanced organizational commitment (Novitasari et al., 2020), and increased organizational trust (Abdulkareem & Ramli, 2021; Chegini et al., 2019). Despite the existence of these studies, there is a noticeable scarcity of research focusing on organizational justice and work engagement specifically in the Nigerian public sector. This knowledge gap leaves unanswered questions regarding the extent to which organizational justice can positively influence employee motivation and foster a genuine sense of work engagement, especially in light of the challenges prevalent in the Nigerian public service such as nepotism, favouritism, and inadequate motivation and compensation (Bello et al., 2020; Oyedele & Aluko, 2018).

Therefore, the primary objective of this study is to investigate the various aspects of organizational justice and their impact on work engagement among public sector employees in Nigeria. To accomplish this, the study aims to explore the mediating role of employee motivation. Employing a quantitative research approach, data will be collected and analyzed. The paper's structure comprises several sections, starting with the introduction, which provides an overview of the research topic. This is followed by a thorough examination of the theoretical background and the formulation of hypotheses. The methodology section outlines the research design and data collection methods. Subsequently, the analysis and discussion section presents the findings and their implications. Finally, the paper concludes with a discussion of the practical implications of the research findings, its limitations, and suggestions for future studies in this area.

This study holds significant potential for shedding light on the relationship between organizational justice, employee motivation, and work engagement within the Nigerian public sector. By exploring the specific context of Nigeria and its unique challenges, the findings of this study can provide valuable insights for both scholars and practitioners in the field of organizational behaviour and human resource management. Additionally, the research can contribute to the existing literature by filling the gap in knowledge regarding the role of organizational justice in driving work engagement in the Nigerian public sector.

THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

The Social Exchange Theory was used for this study (SET). It was first proposed for studies in psychology and sociology, but it was later applied to management (Cortez & Johnston, 2020; Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005). The theory of SET in the workplace assumes that the organization's encouraging factors drive the relationship between employees and their organization. Employees in an organization expect certain things from their employers to ensure their commitment and fulfilment to their jobs and the organization (Lee & Cadogan, 2009). Employees choose to use their skills and energy to help the organization achieve its goals. As a result, employers must exchange a favourable working environment for resources to achieve the organization's goals.

The value exchange between employers and employees is usually guided by the cost and benefits attached, which in this case could be tangible or intangible (Cortez & Johnston, 2020; Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005). As a result, employees frequently weigh the benefits and drawbacks of joining and remaining in an organization based on the decision from the benefit-cost analysis (Kemp et al., 2021; Molm et al., 2006). When employees obtain specific resources from their employers, they are eager to pay them forward by being engaged at work (Cropanzano and Mitchell, 2005; Saks, 2006). Therefore, the theory guides this study by explaining the importance of organizational justice in influencing work engagement, mediated by employee motivation. Scholars have acknowledged that it is also crucial to achieving high levels of performance and efficiency.

This theory explains why employees choose to get connected with their organizations and their jobs. As a result, it offers an established theoretical framework for clarifying how workers' opinions of organisational justice influence their involvement with their jobs and organisations. According to this theory, a sequence of exchanges between parties who are dependent on one another results in loyalty, trust and commitments if the parties involved follow the rules of exchange (Cropanzano and Mitchell, 2005). Therefore, in this study, we develop a causal model based on SET (Figure 1), organizations with better organizational justice (distributive, procedural, and interactional justice) will create an enabling environment that influences employees' motivation and leads to positive work engagement.

Organizational Justice

Organisational justice is the employees' perceptions of the fairness of the results of choices which are influenced by the judgments made, the processes used to make those decisions, and the interactional effects in the process of decision-making (Salam, 2020). Organizational justice is typically divided into three categories: distributive justice, procedural justice and interactional justice (Stamenkovic et al., 2018). The

principle of distributive justice is anchored on the equity theory which dictates the social behaviour of employees, typically based on the distribution of outcomes. Individuals in the workplace, tend to perceive the distribution of rewards based on equity and justice such as promotion, appraisal and compensation (Monteiro et al., 2021). Employees in organizations gauge the time, cost, and other resources they expend on their work in relation to the rewards they receive, they feel some level of injustice if they find results different from the resources they invested. On the other hand, procedural justice entails the perception of employees about the fairness of procedures considering the decision-making (Zehir & Yildirim, 2015). It focuses more on how the process outcomes emerge in organizations (Imamoglu et al., 2019). Therefore, fairness in how processes and procedures are used to decide results is the main thrust of procedural justice. While fairness in the relationship among employees in an organization is the main essence of interactional justice (Pirzada et al., 2020). This relationship tends to test the level of fairness in the respect of individual interactions with reference to decision making in an organization. Such type of relationships can be between the superior and subordinates (Dai & Xie, 2016).

There have been studies on organizational justice, and most conclude that when organizations are just in terms of processes, rewards, and relationships, employees will react positively, become committed, satisfied, motivated, enthusiastic, and dedicated to their jobs (Mangundjaya, 2020; Yu et al., 2020). Organizational justice governs employees' social exchange relationships by representing their observed fairness at work (DeConinck & Johnson, 2009; Deepa, 2020). According to existing research, organizational justice is closely related to the quality of social interchange between individuals and their organizations within the scope of the SET (Ghosh et al., 2014; Saad & Sudin, 2020), which may lead to employee engagement. Employees are more likely to feel obligated to carry out their responsibilities fairly by giving more of themselves via higher levels of involvement if they perceive justice in their workplace (Cropanzano and Mitchell, 2005). Employees are more inclined to retreat and disengage from their professional tasks when they have low perceptions of fairness. Furthermore, fairness and justice are job requirements in Maslach et al. (2001)'s engagement model, which suggests that fairness judgements can promote engagement.

Motivation

Employee motivation is a critical aspect of organizational success and performance. It refers to the internal drive and desire that individuals possess to take action, put in the effort, and achieve their work-related goals. Motivated employees are more likely to be engaged, productive, and committed to their work, leading to higher levels of job satisfaction and overall organizational performance (Oladimeji & Abdulkareem, 2022). Motivation theories provide insights into understanding the factors that drive employee motivation. One of the most well-known theories is Maslow's

Hierarchy of Needs, which proposes that individuals are motivated by a hierarchy of needs, ranging from basic physiological needs to higher-level needs such as self-actualization (Lim, 2008). According to this theory, organizations can motivate employees by addressing their diverse needs, ensuring a safe and satisfying work environment, providing opportunities for growth and recognition, and offering fair compensation and benefits.

In addition, the Self-Determination Theory (SDT) emphasizes the importance of intrinsic motivation in driving employee behaviour (Deci & Ryan, 2000). SDT posits that individuals have innate psychological needs for autonomy, competence, and relatedness. When these needs are fulfilled, individuals are more likely to experience intrinsic motivation and engage in activities willingly. Organizations can support intrinsic motivation by fostering a sense of autonomy, providing opportunities for skill development and growth, and creating a positive and supportive work environment.

Several strategies and practices can be employed to enhance employee motivation. Effective communication is crucial in ensuring that employees understand their roles, goals, and expectations. Clear and meaningful goals provide a sense of direction and purpose, motivating employees to strive for excellence (Yilmaz et al., 2020). Moreover, providing regular feedback and recognition for achievements can boost motivation and reinforce desired behaviours (Schwarz et al., 2020). Intrinsic motivation can be encouraged by offering opportunities for skill development, job rotation, and participation in decision-making processes (Asaari et al., 2019).

Work Engagement

Work engagement refers to the positive, fulfilling, and energized state of mind that individuals experience when they are fully absorbed and dedicated to their work tasks (Sopiah et al., 2020). Engaged employees are characterized by high levels of vigour, dedication, and absorption, leading to increased job satisfaction, commitment, and performance (Bakker & Demerouti, 2017). The concept of work engagement has gained significant attention in organizational research due to its positive impact on individual and organizational outcomes. It is considered a key factor in promoting employee well-being and enhancing organizational effectiveness. Several theories and models have been developed to explain and understand work engagement. Organizational support and leadership play crucial roles in promoting work engagement. Supportive supervisors who provide feedback, recognition, and opportunities for growth and development can significantly enhance employee engagement (Schaufeli et al., 2002a). Additionally, a positive organizational climate that encourages collaboration, trust, and open communication can foster work engagement among employees (Bakker & Demerouti, 2017).

Organizational Justice, Motivation and Work Engagement: The Nexus

Since a shortage of resources has been linked to employee disengagement, employee engagement is widely explored in the context of the job demands-resource (JD-R) paradigm (Demerouti et al., 2001). The social, physical, organisational and psychological features of a job that are either advantageous or essential for attaining work goals are referred to as job resources (Bakker and Demerouti, 2007). Additionally, the dimensions of organizational justice (procedural, distributive, and interactional justice) views may be thought of as instruments that might aid in boosting work engagement based on the functional significance of target fulfilment. According to many scholars, fairness has a significant role in influencing the emotions and behaviours of employees. According to Maslack et al., (2021), a factor out of the six work-life factors which, according to the burnout research, causes work engagement as a work consequence is fairness and justice. Organizational justice is significant to organizations, as employees who feel that organisational choices and managerial actions are unfair or unjust feel angry, outraged, and resentful, and they could even take revenge or retaliate in some other way. More so, employees who feel strongly about justice at work are more likely to be fair in their duties and put more of themselves into their job (Saks, 2006), and return with corporate citizenship practices (Mehmood et al., 2021; Moorman, 1991).

The examination of relationships between organizational justice, employee motivation and work engagement have been examined for instance Pirzada et al. (2020) applied organizational justice as a mediator which fully mediates the relationship between employee silence and work engagement, and a significant but negative direct relationship. More so, the study of Rahman and Karim (2022) found a positive and significant relationship organizational justice and work engagement and organizational citizenship behaviour. Pakpahan et al. (2020)'s study also found that the dimensions of organisational justice, have a considerable impact on work engagement. Additionally, employee performance is significantly impacted by work engagement. Therefore, based on the foregoing, it is hypothesized thus:

H1. Employee motivation is significantly predicted by the dimensions of organizational Justice (distributive, procedural and interactional)

H2. Work engagement is significantly predicted by the dimensions of organizational Justice (distributive, procedural and interactional)

H3. Employee motivation significantly influence work engagement

H4. The relationship between the dimensions of organizational justice and work engagement is mediated by employee motivation

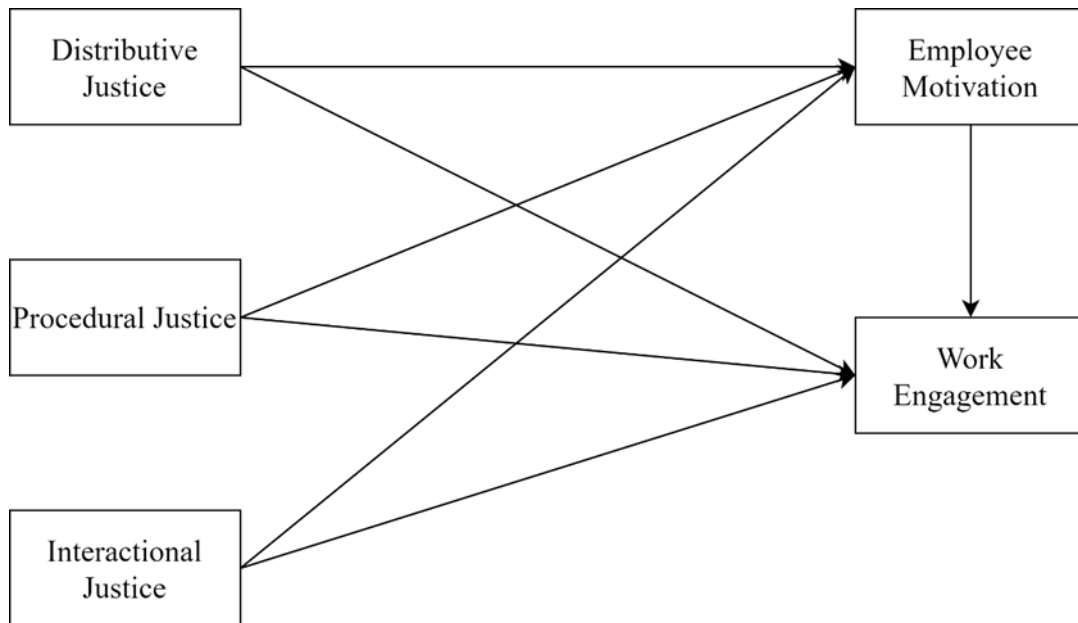


Figure 1: *Conceptual Model*

METHODOLOGY

We examined the influence of organizational justice on employee engagement. The staff of Kwara State Civil Service within levels 08 to 16 (Middle and Senior Cadre Officers) across three ministries through a purposive sampling technique. The minimum sample size estimation was done using the G*power software based on three predictors, predictive power of 0.95 and effect size of 0.15 (Alzahrani et al., 2019), the minimum required sample size resulted in 105. However, we distributed 280 copies of questionnaires, and 179 were returned and useful for further analysis. We divided the questionnaire into two sections. The first section consists of closed-ended questions, which include the biodata of the respondents, while the second section consists of questions regarding the researched topic. A seven-point Likert scale agreement scale was designed for the study. The respondents' anonymity was guaranteed. There are no identifying questions in the questionnaire that could be used to identify the respondents. Also, the respondents were allowed to withdraw their participation at any time. The results were first entered into a statistical package for social sciences (SPSS) for initial

data coding and preliminary analysis. Then, the screened data were transferred into SmartPLS for PLS-SEM analysis. The measurement and structural models were analyzed accordingly. Table 1 shows the demographic characteristics of the survey respondents. The demographic characteristics of the respondents showed that there are more males than females. Also, the majority of the respondents have a bachelor's degree as their highest qualification and a considerable number with post-graduate certificates. The majority of the respondents have spent between 11-20 years in the public service, and within the executive and professional class. More so, we checked for the common method bias, and the result as shown in Table 1 showed that all the Variance Inflation Factors (VIF) values are below the 3.3 thresholds (Kock, 2017); therefore, our instrument has no common method bias.

Measures

The Niehoff and Moorman (1993) scale items were used to assess distributive justice, procedural justice, and interactional justice. The measure was graded on a five-point scale, with 0 indicating "strongly disagree" and 5 indicating "strongly agree". For distributive justice, example of scale items includes "My organization rewards my efforts fairly", "My organization compensates me based on the degree of responsibility I take", "My organization rewards me based on the work I do". Example of procedural justice scale items include "My organization involves me in decision making" "The promotion procedure in my organization is fair" "My organization explains laid down procedures properly for employees". While the example of interactional justice scale items includes "My superior and I have a good working relationship", "My supervisor values my opinion", "I am treated kindly by my supervisor". Similarly, work engagement was measured using Schaufeli et al. (2002b). Examples of work engagement include "I am passionate about my work", "I am dedicated to my job". Employee motivation is measured Björklund et al. (2013) which has been tested and used in previous studies. Example of items used are "I am stimulated to work," "I am inspired by my work," "I would spend more time at work", "I have a strong will to work," and "I am proud of my work"

Measurement Model

We evaluated the measurement model based on the assessment of the composite reliability (CR), average variance extracted (AVE) and item loadings. The result showed that the assessment criteria met their respective thresholds as AVEs, items loading and the CRs were greater than 0.500, 0.708 and 0.7, respectively as shown in Table 1. More so, to assess the discriminant validity, we applied the Heterotrait-Monotrait ratio (HTMT). The result, as shown in Table 2, indicates that the HTMT values are lower than 0.85 thresholds; therefore, the discriminant validity can be confirmed.

Table 1:
Summary of the Measurement Model

Constructs	Items	Loadings	CA	CR	AVE	VIF
Distributive Justice	DDJ1	0.681	0.892	0.911	0.510	1.021
	DDJ2	0.782				
	DDJ3	0.788				
	DDJ4	0.785				
	DDJ5	0.767				
	DDJ6	0.592				
Procedural Justice	PDJ1	0.681	0.861	0.892	0.509	2.132
	PDJ2	0.648				
	PDJ3	0.778				
	PDJ4	0.612				
	PDJ5	0.768				
	PDJ6	0.671				
Interactive Justice	IDJ1	0.847	0.823	0.866	0.526	1.231
	IDJ2	0.515				
	IDJ3	0.792				
	IDJ4	0.772				
	IDJ5	0.542				
	IDJ6	0.811				
Employee Motivation	EMM1	0.770	0.835	0.879	0.550	1.169
	EMM2	0.765				
	EMM3	0.630				
	EMM4	0.784				
	EMM5	0.820				
	EMM6	0.661				
Work Engagement	WEE1	0.775	0.813	0.866	0.523	2.043
	WEE2	0.581				
	WEE3	0.763				
	WEE4	0.612				
	WEE5	0.769				
	WEE6	0.806				

Table 2:
Discriminant Validity

	DJ	EM	IJ	PJ	WE
DJ					
EM	0.716				
IJ	0.367	0.448			
PJ	0.722	0.786	0.323		
WE	0.828	0.826	0.382	0.755	

Structural Model

For the structural model, we account for the path coefficients, effect sizes, coefficient of determination, confidence intervals, and t-statistics for all paths using a subsample of 5000 bootstrapping as shown in Table 3 and Figure 2. All hypotheses can be confirmed as distributive justice has a significant and positive relationship with employee motivation ($\beta = 0.340$; $t = 6.357$) and work engagement ($\beta = 0.439$; $t = 6.333$). Similarly, procedural justice influences employee motivation ($\beta = 0.462$; $t = 7.759$) and work engagement ($\beta = 0.149$; $t = 2.670$). However, interactional justice influences employee motivation ($\beta = 0.154$; $t = 3.004$) but is not significant with work engagement ($\beta = 0.032$; $t = 0.722$). Employee motivation also mediates the relationship between organizational justice (distributive justice ($\beta = 0.104$; $t = 3.586$) procedural justice ($\beta = 0.142$; $t = 3.951$) and work engagement.

Correspondingly, we examined the effect sizes of the relationships using the Cohen (1988) guideline ($F2 \geq 0.35 =$ Substantial effect size; $0.15 =$ Medium effect size and $0.02 =$ Small effect size). The $F2$ results showed that there are medium effect sizes in the relationship between distributive justice and work engagement, procedural justice, and employee motivation. More so, small effect sizes were recorded in the relationships between distributive justice and employee engagement, employee motivation and work engagement as well as procedural justice and work engagement. The coefficient of determination (R^2) can also be confirmed as both distributive justice and procedural justice explain 55% ($R^2 = 0.552$) variance total for employee motivation. Also, distributive justice, procedural justice and employee motivation explain 62% ($R^2 = 0.616$) variance total for work engagement.

Table 3:
Result of the Structural Model

Confidence interval

	β	Std Error	T-Value	P-Value	5.00%	95.00%	F ²
DJ -> EM	0.300	0.057	5.275	0.000	0.202	0.385	0.111
DJ -> WE	0.424	0.071	5.962	0.000	0.308	0.538	0.234
EM -> WE	0.298	0.063	4.726	0.000	0.192	0.397	0.104
IJ -> EM	0.154	0.051	3.004	0.001	0.068	0.238	0.046
IJ -> WE	0.032	0.044	0.722	0.235	-0.046	0.099	0.002
PJ -> EM	0.439	0.060	7.337	0.000	0.330	0.533	0.245
PJ -> WE	0.149	0.060	2.476	0.007	0.056	0.257	0.026
DJ -> EM -> WE	0.090	0.027	3.380	0.000			
IJ -> EM -> WE	0.046	0.018	2.560	0.005			
PJ -> EM -> WE	0.142	0.036	3.931	0.000			

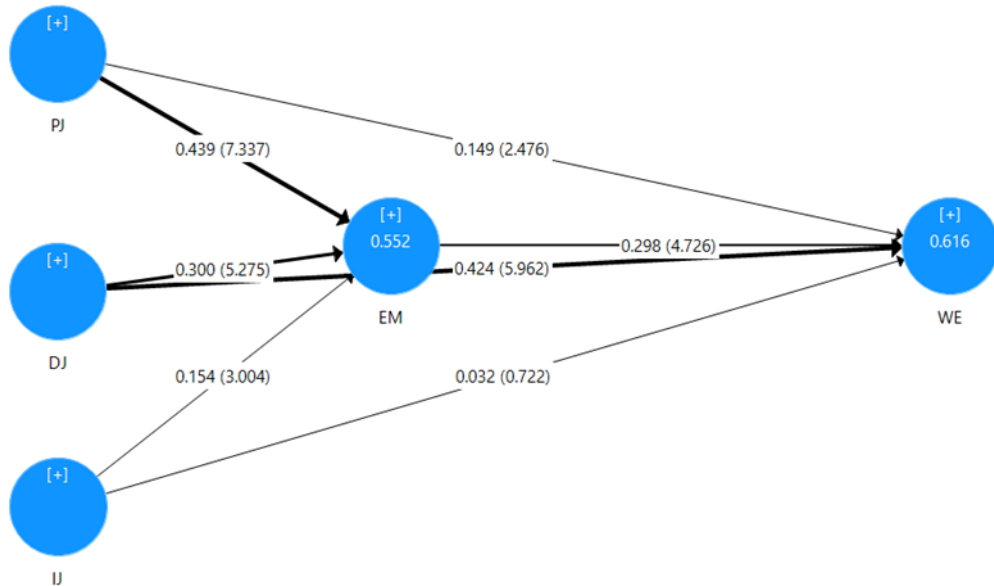


Figure 2: Result of the Structural Model

DISCUSSION

This study examines the influence of organizational justice on work engagement and the mediating influence of employee motivation on the relationship. The findings from the questionnaire administered showed that procedural justice influences employee motivation and work engagement. The result confirms the efficacy of procedural justice, which emphasizes the level of attention employees pay in the process of decision-making in the workplace. Employees typically perceive the fairness of the policies and practices that determine their results at work as a critical factor in deciding how enthusiastic and committed they are to their work. These processes comprise the techniques, strategies, and approaches used to decide results (Murphy, 2021; Nagtegaal, 2021). This finding, therefore, implies that when employees view decision-making processes to be fair, just, and consistent, they assume such organizations' systems to be fair and they become more dedicated to work (Colquitt et al., 2006; Fridell et al., 2021).

The findings from this study also show that distributive justice influences employee motivation and work engagement positively and significantly. The results confirm the main impression about distributive justice, which is anchored on the equity theory. These results depict that the social behaviour of employees is based on the distribution of outcomes. Individuals in the workplace, tend to perceive the distribution of rewards based on equity and justice such as promotion, appraisal, allowances and appraisals (Monteiro et al., 2021). Employees in organizations gauge the time, cost and other resources they expended on their work in relation to the rewards they receive, they feel some level of injustice if they find results different from the resources they invested. These results also, confirm the results of previous studies on the efficacy of distributive justice towards fairness in the allocation of outcomes (Charman & Williams, 2021; Imamoglu et al., 2019; Jayus, 2021). When employees perceive organizations to be fair and equitable in the distribution of outcomes and rewards within the organization, they put in more effort expecting more rewards from dedication and enthusiasm to work. When promotions are not delayed, compensations and other benefits accrued are paid adequately and justly majorly based on their inputs, it motivates the employees to increase their work rate and become more dedicated to work. The implication of this study can be inferred from the context of the Nigerian public service. The public service has a strict and regular mode of assessment of employees, and compensation. Employees have been used to the regular promotion exercise after every three years, therefore, the ability of the public service managers to conduct a regular promotion as and when due will encourage employees to be engaged and identify with the organization.

More so, this study also finds that the relationship between organizational justice and work engagement is mediated by employee motivation. Employee motivation, specifically, fully mediates the relationship between interactional justice and work engagement while only partially mediates the relationship between distributive and procedural justice and work engagement. This finding suggests that employees are motivated by a variety of things, including organizational justice. Employees tend to react to how their organization rules and regulations as well as reward system influence their dedication and zeal to work. Individuals who engage with their jobs have elevated levels of passion and enthusiasm about the job. Individuals' dedication to work tends to fluctuate over time, more often engineered by the levels of motivation they receive from their workplace. Therefore, organizational justice plays a critical role in motivating employees to be dedicated to work. A vital factor in determining the behaviour of employees in the workplace is organizational justice, which is reflected as the perception of an individual's view of fairness and equity in their workplace. The perception of justice, particularly, in the public service influences the level of efficiency of its employees (Bouazzaoui et al., 2020; Sheeraz et al., 2020). Similarly, some studies with similar outcomes to this study such as Salam (2020) find organizational justice

concerning compensation, allocated resources and motivational factors to be correlated with improved performance in the workplace performance

The findings from this study also show that comparatively, procedural justice has a greater effect on work engagement in an organization than distributive justice, implying that procedural justice strategies are required to boost the dedication, motivation and enthusiasm to work. To improve procedural justice, organizations must consider developing an open workplace culture. Although, it is often noted that public organizations are typically developed to be more rigid and authoritative, where employees are forced to accept organizational decisions at face value, and there is a tendency for the organization to overlook procedural justice issues. However, in decision-making processes, organizations should make mechanisms available to avert the abuse of power. The public sector should also encourage greater participation in decision-making, which will enhance procedural justice which is applicable in the private sector.

Similarly, the relationship between interactional justice and work engagement cannot be confirmed. However, the relationship is fully mediated by employee motivation. The findings showed that the public service is characterised by hierarchical and structural arrangements, more often dictatorial due to statutory and rigid laid-down procedures. Therefore, the non-significant influence of interactional justice might be affected by the rigidity of the rules and procedures. Therefore, individuals' level of interaction might be limited as hierarchy plays more important roles than rules flexibility. As such employees in the public service might be more concerned with just procedures and fair rewards than satisfaction from interactions with superiors or colleagues. However, public organizations, especially in a developing country like Nigeria, are enjoined to limit the excessive administrative bottlenecks involved in procedures to enhance proper interactions.

More so, the mediation analysis performed through the bootstrapping procedure showed the confirmed effect of employee motivation's partial mediation between organizational justice and work engagement. This implication of this finding further suggests that in the typical Nigerian public service, often ridden with nepotism and injustice, employees feel demotivated to cannot dedicate their best to work. To correct this anomaly, it is confirmed, in particular, that the motivation of employees, particularly in the public sector, acts as a factor in the strengthening of work engagement. To motivate and engage employees, organizations' fair decision-making procedures and participation opportunities should be taken into account. More so, employees must be treated fairly following the resources they have invested in the workplace. The implication is that public organizations should pursue a process of conformity with administrative laws and procedures, public interest pursuit and

consultation, fair processes for decision-making participation, and a fair compensation system.

Limitations and Suggestions for Future Studies

This study is first limited by the mode of data collection which is limited to questionnaire administration, which does not allow for in-depth discussion with government employees on issues surrounding organizational justice and work engagement. Although the questionnaire was useful and valid, future studies might employ in-depth interviews to probe further into organizational justice within the public sector. Secondly, the generalization of the result can also be limited to the Nigerian public service, as a developing country. The respondents were drawn mainly from the civil service. The respondents were experienced civil servants which gives some credence to the sampled data. Also, there may be differences in the value of civil service justice and engagement and the private sector, therefore, the generalization might also be limited.

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