Vol 14, Issue 8, (2024) E-ISSN: 2222-6990

Intervention Role of Psychological Capital and Benefit Satisfaction on the Relationship between Organizational Fairness and Employee' Job Performance

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To Link this Article: http://dx.doi.org/10.6007/IJARBSS/v14-i8/22409 DOI:10.6007/IJARBSS/v14-i8/22409

Published Date: 26 August 2024

Abstract

The objective of this study was to explore the significance of the relationship between organizational fairness and employee job performance. Specifically, it examined the mediating role of psychological capital and the moderating effect of benefit satisfaction in this relationship. Using a quantitative research design and Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM), the study successfully developed and tested a model. The survey instrument utilized a five-point Likert scale for data collection. The findings indicate that psychological capital acts as a mediator between organizational fairness and job performance among regular employees working in science and technology small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in Sichuan Province. Furthermore, the study confirms the moderating influence of benefit satisfaction on the relationship between organizational fairness and job performance. With 494 valid responses collected from Sichuan SMEs, the research acknowledges its regional scope but provides valuable theoretical and empirical insights for managers aiming to enhance organizational justice and improve job performance. **Keywords:** Organizational Fairness, Job Performance, Psychological Capital, Benefit Satisfaction.

Background of the Study

In the realm of enterprise management, organizations strive to foster harmonious and stable work environments. However, to cut costs, they sometimes reduce various employment commitments, which can lead to employee burnout, decreased productivity, and a diminished sense of accomplishment, all of which have negative repercussions on job

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performance. When employees perceive unfair treatment, this psychological imbalance can undermine their motivation and creativity, negatively impacting job performance, and severe fairness issues may even prompt employee turnover.

It is essential to study the impact of organizational fairness on job performance in science and technology SMEs. Organizational fairness enhances employee satisfaction and loyalty, promotes innovation, stabilizes the core talent pool, optimizes resource allocation, and improves employee adaptability and flexibility, all of which will ultimately be reflected in improved employee performance, which is critical for science and technology SMEs because job performance is one of the key indicators of business success.

To achieve sustainable growth, improve operational efficiency, and succeed in a competitive market, organizations must enhance employees' perceptions of organizational fairness, foster a stronger sense of belonging and trust, and ultimately improve job performance. From this standpoint, this study examines the crucial link between organizational fairness and employee job performance within science and technology SMEs in Sichuan Province.

In today's highly competitive landscape, organizations seek to enhance their market competitiveness by optimizing human resources and improving performance. Organizational justice is recognized as the foundation of an organization's social and psychological functioning (Faeq & Ismael, 2022). Employees' perceptions of fairness within the workplace are central to organizational justice(Ahmed & Faeq, 2020). Job performance is a critical topic in research due to its significant impact on organizational success. Decision-makers should focus on ensuring equitable distribution of resources, compensation, promotions, and training to improve job performance(Jameel & Ahmad, 2020). According to Carlson(2018), job performance is a dynamic, multidimensional variable characterized by observable behaviors aligned with organizational objectives and goals. Task performance specifically relates to the primary duties assigned.

o maintain a competitive edge, SMEs must enhance distributive, procedural, and interactional justice during policy formulation and implementation. Doing so positively influences pay satisfaction, ethical decision-making, job satisfaction, emotional communication, and employee commitment (Hadi et al., 2020).

Psychological capital, a key personality trait indicator, significantly affects individuals' attitudes toward work, organizational citizenship behavior, and job performance(Newman et al., 2014). In this study, psychological capital serves as a mediating variable. Organizations can motivate employees to work harder through incentive programs or other means to achieve desired outcomes (Sitopu et al., 2021). Giancola (2014), found that benefit satisfaction is not only positively correlated with job performance but also effectively predicts employees' jobrelated behaviors. Benefit satisfaction is used as a moderating variable in this study.

Employee job performance is a pivotal factor in organizational success and reputation enhancement (Anesukanjanakul et al., 2019; Haseeb et al., 2019). Over the past few years, the significance of employee job performance has grown and become deeply rooted, emerging as a critical and rapidly evolving variable in any organization. It now holds the

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highest priority across all aspects of employment and administrative contexts (Gridwichai et al., 2020).

Job performance is not confined to a single dimension but encompasses a broader concept focused on employees' overall life satisfaction. It highlights the provision of satisfactory and safe environmental conditions in the workplace, which in turn reflect positively on employees and contribute to achieving the organization's strategic goals(Jalagat, 2017). Therefore, organizations must analyze and study these factors and work to enhance them, as job performance is the primary outcome that drives employee productivity. It represents an integrated set of skills, capabilities, motivation, and opportunities supported by the organization's performance(Gridwichai et al., 2020).

Initially, researchers believed that financial incentives were the sole motivator for employees. However, subsequent studies have shown that multiple factors, including motivation, job satisfaction, and fairness, play a significant role in performance(Sherwani, 2018).

This study explores the relationship between organizational fairness and job performance, introducing psychological capital as a mediating variable and benefit satisfaction as a moderating variable. The aim is to understand how these variables influence the relationship between organizational fairness and job performance. The ultimate goal is to assist SMEs in enhancing organizational fairness and improving employee job performance, thereby strengthening the lifecycle and market competitiveness of these enterprises. Additionally, this study provides a theoretical foundation and empirical insights for future research on organizational fairness.

Research Questions

This study contributes to the existing literature by examining the mediating effect of psychological capital and the moderating effect of benefit satisfaction in the context of organizational fairness.

Therefore, this study asks the following questions:

- 1. Is there a relationship between organizational fairness factors and Job performance?
- 2. Does Psychological capital effect employee Job performance?
- 3. Does Benefit satisfaction effect employee Job performance?
- 4. Does Psychological capital mediate the relationship between organizational fairness factors and Job performance?
- 5. Does Benefit satisfaction moderate the relationship between organizational fairness factors and Job performance?

Research Objectives

This study aims to determine the relationship between the four factors of organizational fairness perception and job performance of SMEs in Sichuan Province, and fills the resulting gap in empirical evidence, industry, and related theories.

- 1. To study the relationship between organizational fairness and Job performance.
- 2. To research the effect of Psychological capital on employee Job performance.
- 3. To investigate the effect of Benefit satisfaction on employee Job performance.
- 4. To examine the mediating role of Psychological capital between organizational fairness and Job performance.

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5. To assess the moderating role of Benefit satisfaction between organizational fairness and Job performance.

Scope of the Study

The sample for this study was drawn from a random selection of employees working at science and technology SMEs in Sichuan Province, China. The participants were chosen from those who have been employed by these SMEs for at least one year and have a clear understanding of the company's benefit system. The focus was primarily on frontline employees, as they are currently the backbone of the enterprise and have a significant impact on its sustainable development. Employee job performance was assessed using questionnaires distributed to SMEs in Sichuan Province.

Significance of the Study

Theoretical Significance

Framework Validation: This research applies the principles of fairness theory, psychological capital theory, and the Stimulus-Organism-Response (SOR) model to validate their efficacy in elucidating the relationship between organizational justice and employee job performance. Theoretical Synthesis: By synthesizing these three theoretical perspectives into a cohesive framework, the study offers novel insights into the mechanisms through which organizational justice influences job performance and contributes to the advancement of knowledge in this domain.

Practical Significance

Management Improvement: The study underscores the significance of fostering a just organizational climate, guiding organizations in recognizing the pivotal role of enhancing organizational justice to boost employee job performance and ensure organizational stability. Performance Improvement: Through delineating the linkage between organizational justice and job performance, the research provides actionable strategies for organizations to optimize employee performance.

Literature Review

Job Performance

While earlier research tended to concentrate on specific job responsibilities, contemporary studies consider broader factors affecting job performance in more dynamic organizational settings(Faeq et al., 2021). According to Akram (2020), job performance is the observable behavior of employees, reflecting their ability to accomplish organizational tasks. It is the primary outcome of employee contributions to productivity, encompassing a combination of skills, abilities, motivation, and opportunities supported by organizational performance (Novitasari et al., 2020).

Employee job performance is crucial in fostering creativity and maintaining competitiveness in a rapidly changing business environment(Gridwichai et al., 2020). It is also a key factor in enhancing organizational performance and reputation(Kim et al., 2021). In recent studies, the importance of employee job performance has become increasingly prominent, making it a top priority for managers across all organizational aspects(Corrêa dos Santos & Maria Beuren, 2021).

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Organizational fairness and Job performance

In a fair organizational environment, enhanced organizational commitment can directly or indirectly influence employee job performance(ÇELİKT, 2022). Organizational fairness is considered a crucial characteristic contributing to organizational success, having a positive and significant impact on job performance (Sembiring et al., 2020).

Social exchange theory posits that the perception of being treated fairly explains why perceptions influence employee job performance and organizational citizenship behavior. Perceptions can be translated into employee behaviors that benefit the organization(Roch et al., 2019). Positive perceptions of organizational fairness are important for job satisfaction, which moderates the relationship between employee justice perceptions and organizational performance. The relationship between organizational fairness and job performance is often indirect (Ekingen, 2023).

Factors related to organizational fairness have a strong direct and indirect influence on job performance(Zeb et al., 2019). Employees who perceive fairness in interactions and procedures tend to have higher job satisfaction, which in turn affects their task and contextual performance(Hayati & Caniago, 2023). Anwar & Abdullah (2021), found that procedural fairness is a more accurate predictor of job performance success compared to distributive fairness.

Therefore, this study proposes the following hypotheses:

- H1: Sense of distributive fairness has a significant influence on Job performance in SMEs in Sichuan Province, China
- H2: Sense of procedural fairness has a significant affects on Job performance in SMEs in Sichuan Province, China
- H3: Sense of interpersonal fairness has a significant effect on Job performance in SMEs in Sichuan Province, China
- H4: Sense of information fairness has a significant effect on Job performance in SMEs in Sichuan Province, China

Psychological Capital

Psychological capital refers to an individual's positive mental state during personal growth and development(Goldsmith et al.,1998). Luthans (2004), initially introduced the concept of positive psychological capital. Psychological capital is a state-like construct that influences an individual's positive attitudes and behaviors (Çavuş & Gökçen, 2015).

At the individual level, psychological capital acts as an internal determinant of a specific psychological state and external performance. It affects an individual's positive disposition towards themselves and their surroundings(Yasmeen et al., 2022). The psychological capital of organizational members is positively associated with individual-level job satisfaction and job performance (Doci et al., 2023).

Xue & Woo (2022), investigated the job performance and psychological capital of Chinese employees and found that psychological capital can enhance employee performance and career success. To effectively foster innovation among employees, it is necessary to manage their transformational leadership and psychological capital to stimulate innovative work

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behavior (Patnaik et al., 2023). These findings suggest that an employee's mental state significantly influences their behavior at work.

Therefore, this study proposes the following hypotheses:

- H5: Benefit satisfaction significantly influences Job performance.
- H6: Psychological capital significantly influences Job performance.
- H7: Psychological capital Mediates the relationship between distributive fairness and Job performance.
- H8: Psychological capital Mediates the relationship between procedural fairness and Job performance.
- H9: Psychological capital Mediates the relationship between interpersonal fairness and Job performance.
- H10: Psychological capital Mediates the relationship between information fairness and Job performance.

Benefit Satisfaction

The concept of benefit satisfaction was initially introduced by the American scholar Locke (1976), who viewed it as a component of job satisfaction. Miceli & Lane(1990) extended the theoretical model of compensation satisfaction to benefit satisfaction, proposing a two-dimensional structure comprising benefit level satisfaction and benefit system satisfaction. They defined benefit system satisfaction as "the degree to which an employee positively responds to the benefit management system."

In terms of job and organizational satisfaction, benefit satisfaction is considered more important than the sense of distribution fairness (Cordón-Pozo et al., 2023). Employees' work attitudes and work behavior are affected by two major factors: 1) job salary and 2) benefits other than salary Employees' work attitudes and behaviors are influenced by two key factors: 1) job salary and 2) non-salary benefits (Schlechter et al., 2015). Effective benefits communication can have both direct and indirect positive effects on employees' satisfaction with benefit levels, impacting this satisfaction through their perceived organizational support and the comparative evaluation of their benefits against others (Jolly et al., 2020). According to organizational support theory, when a company offers higher benefits, it becomes more appealing to new employees, based on their exchange ideology (Jolly et al., 2021).

Companies that elevate the level of benefits offered are particularly attractive to new employees with a high level of communication ideology (Cordón-Pozo, 2023). Previous studies have examined whether employee satisfaction with compensation and benefits directly affects their work outcomes (Torre-Ruiz et al., 2019). However, there is no consensus on the relationship between benefit satisfaction and employee job performance in the theoretical field (Jie et al., 2023).

Therefore, this study proposes the following hypotheses:

- H11: Benefit satisfaction Moderates the relationship between the sense of distributive fairness and Job performance.
- H12: Benefit satisfaction Moderates the relationship between the sense of procedural fairness and Job performance.

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- H13: Benefit satisfaction Moderates the relationship between the sense of interpersonal fairness and Job performance.
- H14: Benefit satisfaction Moderates the relationship between the sense of information fairness and Job performance.

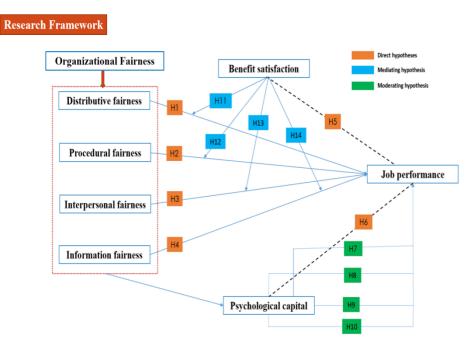


Figure: Research framework

Methodology

Research Paradigm and Research Design

This study aims to examine the relationship between organizational fairness and its dimensions (distributive, procedural, interpersonal, and informational fairness) with employee job performance. The quantitative research approach is used to test and reflect this relationship through data collection from the target population. The research design follows a quantitative cross-sectional study format with two data collection periods within the research timeframe (Mohammadi et al., 2021; Rogers, 2017).

Adhering to the positivist paradigm, the study primarily employs quantitative methods and scientific hypothesis testing to conduct empirical analysis. The variables of interest include distributive fairness, procedural fairness, interpersonal fairness, information fairness, employee job performance, psychological capital, and benefit satisfaction. The design of these variables is tailored to fit the objectives of the study.

Research design is crucial for aligning research objectives, methodology, and results within the constraints of time, available knowledge, and resources (Mohammadi, 2019; Tingfeng et al., 2022). Through a well-designed research plan, we can systematically collect and analyze data, ensuring the research's purpose is met. Any flaws in the design could undermine the reliability of the study's findings. Thus, the research design serves as the foundation of the entire study and facilitates a clearer understanding by other scholars.

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Population and Sampling Technique

The sample for this study was drawn from a pool of 18,693 science and technology SMEs in Sichuan Province, China, employing a total of 577,214 individuals. Given that the study focuses on the relationship between perceptions of organizational fairness and employee performance in these SMEs, the respondents must be current employees within the companies.

The sample size for this study was determined following standard guidelines in academic research, utilizing the sample size calculation model (Krejcie & Morgan, 1970):

$$n = \frac{\chi^2 N p (1 - p)}{e^2 (N - 1) + \chi^2 p (1 - p)}$$

n=sample size, N=population, e=acceptable sampling error, x2=chi-square of freedom 1 and confidence 95%=3.841, p=proportion of population (if unknown, 0.5). The model calculated from the model (Krejcie & Morgan, 1970) yields a sample size of 384.

For this study, a random sampling technique will be employed to investigate the correlations and potential relationships among the independent variables and other variables. Data collection will be conducted using an online survey instrument.

Scale Measurement of Variable

Job performance was measured using the scale developed by(Ingold et al., 2016). A 5-point Likert-type scale was utilized, with the following response options: 1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Neither Agree nor Disagree, 4 = Agree, 5 = Strongly Agree.Ingold et al. (2016)reported an internal consistency coefficient of α = 0.84 for the task-based job performance scale and the same coefficient for the German Organizational Citizenship Behavior (OCB) scale.

The four factors of organizational fairness—distributive, procedural, interpersonal, and informational fairness—were assessed using scales consistent with prior research (Colquitt, 2001), The rating criteria for these scales were as follows: 1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Neither Agree nor Disagree, 4 = Agree, 5 = Strongly Agree. The confirmatory factor analysis showed that $\chi 2/df=1.90$, IFI = 0.92, CFI=0.92, RMSEA=0.055 (0.049, 0.060) of the four-factor model.

Psychological capital was measured using the scale developed by Luthans et al.(2008). The language of the scale was adapted to fit the workplace context, assessing state-like individual characteristics. The scale used a 5-point Likert-type format. Respondents indicated their level of agreement with the statements, using the following criteria: 1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Neither Agree nor Disagree, 4 = Agree, 5 = Strongly Agree. Benefit satisfaction was assessed using a 5-point Likert-type scale containing six items, based on the scale by Barber et al.(1992). The same evaluation criteria were applied: 1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Neither Agree nor Disagree, 4 = Agree, 5 = Strongly Agree.

Based on the reliability and validity analysis values and the established standards for each scale, it was confirmed that the predictive scales had good reliability and validity, making them suitable for the study's survey samples. Following factor analysis, items with low factor loadings and those causing aggregation dissatisfaction were removed. This process led to the final determination of the test scales for the questionnaire survey.

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Data Analysis

This study employed the structural equation modeling (SEM) approach using the Partial Least Squares (PLS) technique, implemented with SmartPLS 4.0.8, for path analysis. Path regression, an extension of multiple regression(Fornell & Bookstein, 1982), was used to evaluate the path coefficients and significance between variables. The assessment of the structural equation model included the following criteria: coefficient of determination (R²), cross-validation redundancy (Q²), and path coefficients(Hair Jr et al., 2014). The reporting and analysis of results followed the guidelines suggested by (Joseph et al., 2021; and Mohammadi, 2019). SEM-PLS is particularly suitable for complex path models and can handle smaller sample sizes, making it a robust choice for this study. Additionally, since this study separates interpersonal fairness and information fairness from interaction fairness, which is an exploratory aspect, SEM-PLS is the most appropriate method for this type of research. Resampling techniques will be used to test for possible indirect effects, and existing mediation validation procedures will be applied. This method is well-suited for SEM-PLS and can accommodate small sample analyses..

The collected data will be analyzed using SPSS 22. The analysis will involve verifying the reliability and validity of the scales, assessing the fit between the data and the model, and conducting correlation and regression analyses to determine if the data support the hypotheses(Song et al., 2023). Reliability analysis is crucial for ensuring the stability and consistency of the results when measuring the same variables.

	Table 3.1: Analytical techniques for hypothesis testing
Hypothesis	Technique
H1	
H2	
H3	
H4	Path analysis
H5	
Н6	
H7	Resampling Meditation(bootstrapping)
Н8	
Н9	
H10	
H11	Two-stage
H12	
H13	
H14	

Contributions

Studying the impact of organizational fairness on employee job performance in science and technology SMEs is important and useful for several aspects. For corporate management, the results of the study can help them understand how to improve employee job performance by enhancing organizational fairness, so that they can formulate more effective management policies and measures. For human resource departments, the findings can provide guidance to help them design and implement fair compensation systems, promotion mechanisms, and employee evaluation criteria to enhance employee satisfaction and loyalty. For employees, a fair working environment can enhance their motivation and satisfaction at work and help them realize their personal career development goals. By supporting such research,

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governments and policymakers can better understand how to support the development of science and technology SMEs through policy, including the formulation of policies that are conducive to the creation of a fair work environment. For scholars and researchers, such studies can enrich the theoretical framework in the field of organizational behavior and provide empirical evidence for subsequent studies. In conclusion, this study contributes to improving the competitiveness, innovation, talent stability and resource optimization of science and technology SMEs, which is ultimately reflected in the enhancement of employee job performance.

Conclusion & Future Study Recommendation

Employee job performance is a critical concern in enterprise management, impacting not only profitability but also the long-term sustainability of organizations. This research addresses the industry context, practical issues, and challenges faced by the sector. The research questions and objectives are centered around exploring the relationship between organizational fairness and job performance in science and technology SMEs in Sichuan Province, China. The study introduces psychological capital as a mediator and benefit satisfaction as a moderator in the relationship between organizational fairness and employee job performance.

The scope of the study is defined, and the significance of the research is clarified through an analysis of the industry overview, practical problems, and industry challenges. By examining the mediating mechanism of the impact of organizational fairness on job performance from the perspective of individual psychological states, this study offers a fresh focus. Existing research has typically concentrated on specific psychological states that influence job performance. This study proposes a mediating hypothesis for the role of psychological capital in the relationship between organizational fairness and job performance and hypothesizes the moderating effect of benefit satisfaction on the relationship between organizational fairness and employee job performance.

Given that SMEs account for over 80% of the market, it is essential to study the relationship between perceptions of organizational fairness and employee job performance. This research aims to help managers better understand the underlying mechanisms connecting these two constructs. The findings can also assist business leaders in comprehending and explaining the relationship between perceptions of organizational fairness and employee job performance, guiding future managerial practices and interventions.

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