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Organizational Justice and Job Satisfaction among Different Employee Groups: The Mediating Role of Trust

Jacqueline Ngeleshi[1] and Theresia Dominic[2]

ABSTRACT

In an increasingly volatile labor market, organizations need to find ways to improve employees' trust in order to retain them. This study uses data from 212 employees from the Tanzania Revenue Authority (TRA) in Tanzania to examine the effect of organizational justice and level of trust on job satisfaction across different groups of employees by gender and tenure. The study proposed that the level of trust would mediate the influence of organizational justice on job satisfaction levels of all employees and within employee sub-groups categorized by gender and tenure. The study then confirms the hypotheses by using structural equation modeling (SEM). The findings highlight the importance of trust in the organization but within groups, the effect is more profound in female than male employees, and more on employees with longer work tenure. Implications of the findings are discussed.
Key words: *Organizational trust, Satisfaction, Organizational Justice, PLS-SEM.*

INTRODUCTION

Organizations need to develop strategies to make employees happy and satisfied, as they are crucial in achieving organizational goals (Elrehail et al., 2020). In doing so, organizations need to manage employees' perceptions of firm operations (Zeffane & Melhem, 2017). The level of trust in a supervisor is one of the critical issue in managing employees because it has been associated with outcomes such as job satisfaction, organization citizenship behavior, turnover intention, and work performance, etc. (Braun et al., 2013; Jiang & Probst, 2019; Zeffane & Melhem, 2018, 2017). The concept of trust relates to individual attributions to other people's intentions underlying their behavior. It involves better expectations from others and the treatment they will receive from others. For example, when there is a healthy relationship between employees and their supervisors or employers, then there is trust in the organization (Jiang, Gollan & Brooks, 2015; Mayer & Davis, 1999).

Also, the concept of organizational justice has been associated with trust in work settings. This is because the organizations control the allocation of rewards, resources, and implementation of procedures. If procedures are not fair, some employees are likely to develop low levels of trust in their future obligations (Oh, 2019; Sahoo & Sahoo, 2019). The organizational justice research starts from how fair the organization system is, in estimating the employees' level of satisfaction (Greenberg & Lind, 2000). In the issue of organizational justice there are two aspects of organizational fairness; *distributive justice* –the fairness in who gets what - and *procedural* justice – the fairness in the mechanisms of distribution (Ibid). The two differ in their effects on the employees' perception about organizational fairness. This study explores the *distributive justice* because it involves judgment about the fairness of managerial decisions concerning the distribution

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of pay and promotions, so it has much influence on satisfaction than procedural justice. Procedural justice is the perceived fairness of the processes used to make decisions about employees; and whether the employees were given an opportunity to provide their inputs (Jiang et al., 2015; Mittal, Shubham, & Sengupta, 2019; Sousa-Lima, Michel, & Caetano, 2013).

Organizational justice is viewed as an essential factor in enhancing job satisfaction because it strengthens the quality of relationships between employees and the organization (Swalhi, Zgoulli, & Hofaidhllaoui, 2017). If the employees are not compatible, conflicts will arise and that will obstruct organizational life and productivity. However, research on the predictors of job satisfaction has produced mixed results. On one side, they indicate a direct effect of organizational justice on job satisfaction has not yet well clarified. Still, on the other side, they are well clarified through factors like employee empowerment (Braun et al., 2013), job commitment (Boateng & Hsieh, 2019), and pay and rewards (Riza, Ganzach, & Liu, 2015). In all previous studies, the issue of interpersonal relationship in work settings was given more priority than tangible rewards (e.g. salary). Hence, this study attempts to use trust as a mediator to explain the relationship between organizational justice and job satisfaction.

In work settings, if the trust is breached, employees feel intimidated, defensive, and manipulated. The feelings are more intense if the trust was breached over a long period i.e. trust might vary based on the years of experience (Haq et al., 2017). On the other side, if the trust is not breached, then its impact over time is right for the organization (Yang, Kuria, & Gu, 2020). Also, the magnitude of the feelings can differ from one employee to another. For example, Cho (2015) and Son (2019) indicate that women tend to display a low level of trust towards management teams which are male-dominated due to preconceived ideas relating to gender discrimination. The mediation effect could produce different results if the employees are males. Furthermore, the issue of tenure can affect the job satisfaction level, i.e. those with more years of experience could display a high level of trust whether there is justice or not (Chang et al., 2016; Kim et al., 2019). Therefore, this study tested the mediation effect of trust in different groups by gender and work tenure.

Fundamentally, the study seeks to understand the extent to which trust mediates the relationship between organization justice and job satisfaction. Specifically, the study aims to achieve four objectives. These are to examine the influence of organizational justice on job satisfaction and to investigate the influence of organizational justice on the level of trust. Others are to investigate the influence of level of trust on job satisfaction, and to explore the mediating effect of the level of trust between organizational justice and job satisfaction in the aggregate group, and within sub-groups by gender and work tenure. The mediation analysis is useful in predicting how the causal effect of organizational justice on job satisfaction is intervened by level of trust and thus has practical managerial implications. Figure 1 presents the proposed mediation model and multi-group analysis.

The study intends to contribute in four ways (i) highlighting the role of organizational justice perception in the employee's trust formation; (ii) analyzing the justice-satisfaction relationship through existing level of trust; and (iii) examining the mediating role of trust towards immediate supervisors on the relationship between organizational justice and job satisfaction (iv) exploring the group differences in behaviors in the issue of trust in work settings.

LITERATURE REVIEW
This research adopts several theories proposed in employees' attitudes literature in three ways. First, it shares the perspective of equity theory, which claims that justice occurs when members

feel that they are treated equally in the allocation of resource or through their participation in procedures (Adams, 1965). This is true, for example, when employees do not have a clear understanding of how the organization system works (e.g. performance appraisal process) they tend to react positively based on the information about how their colleagues have been treated i.e. distributive justice (Boateng & Hsieh, 2019). But, once they get a clear understanding of how the system works, they will react negatively (e.g. less trust, job dissatisfaction) because of the realization that they are not treated fairly.

Due to the notion of equity; when the employees are rewarded equally based on their contribution, the level of trust and job satisfaction in the workplace increase. This behavioral outcome at workplace enables employees to overcome anxiety regarding performance ratings given to them in comparison to their colleagues. However, the theory might not fit our conceptual framework entirely because the issue of equity and fairness cannot only be perceived on a person-to-person basis, but also by reference to the fairness of organizational procedures. This is based on laboratory rather than real-life research (Bell & Martin, 2012; Huseman, Hatfield, & Milis, 1982). Therefore, the study adopts another theoretical perspective.

Second, this study adopts Blau's social exchange theory (1964) on the relationship that an individual develops with his/her manager, e.g. trust relationship (Sue-Chan, Au, & Hackett, 2012). The theory argues that relationships evolve into trusting, loyal and mutual commitment as long as the employees abide by specific 'rules' of exchange (O'Boyle et al., 2012). In this view, trust is seen as the core of social exchange because it brings positive exchanges among employees and between employees and the management (Heidi, Mika, Pia, & Kirsimarja, 2015; Sousa-Lima et al., 2013). If there is fair treatment in comparison to others (justice), then positive exchanges will occur, and employees will be satisfied at work. Also, the theory implies that the organizations which prioritize justice will be repaid with a higher level of trust from their employees (Kim, 2019; Wei & Cheah, 2020). However, the studies do not adequately provide theoretical justification that applies to employees in the service industry; that trust has a direct effect on job satisfaction. Therefore, based on the theoretical perspective, it is important to test the level of trust as a mediator.

Third, this study also shares the position of expectancy theory to explain how employees achieve high job satisfaction. The theory states that motivation to perform will be high when people know what they have to get a reward, expect that they will be able to get a reward and expect that the reward will be worthwhile (Porter & Lawler, 1968; Vroom, 1964). But if there are injustice and rewards are unclear, if the criteria for distributing rewards are unclear, and if the employees do not trust the system in place that their efforts; it will lead to an unfair appraisal of their performance. Eventually, the employees will lose interest in their work and eventually will perform below their potential. In other words, employees are satisfied based upon their work evaluation of whether their outcome was appraised well and received justice as they expected (Ferrin & Dirks, 2002; Zeffane & Melhem, 2018).

Empirical Literature
Zeinabadi and Salehi (2011) indicated that the topic of organizational justice appears in administrative issues at workplaces but it is inadequately addressed in managing employees. Taking an example of managing the performance appraisal process; employees express injustice with the appraisal process because of the underlying factors such as ineffective policies, interpersonal trust, and lack of training (Cropanzano, Bowen, & Gilliland, 2007; Mittal et al.,

2019). Also, performance measures have been unreliable and have a controversial impact on job satisfaction. In this case, Boateng and Hsieh (2019) recommended that it is important to dig deeper to see to what extent these factors affect employees' behavior which eventually change their job attitude. The explanation could bridge a gap between theory and practice in enhancing organizational justice for this study.

Rawls (2005) in his explanation about the theory of justice indicated that organizational justice refers to the perception of fairness in the organizations. So employees seek fairness because it provides the number of ratings they deserve in comparison to other colleagues in the same work settings. In supporting this claim, other researchers added that, when individuals are rewarded for completing a task successfully, they report being satisfied with the job aspects (Krasnova, Veltri, & Garah, 2014; Rawls, 2005). This indicates that employees want to see that they are appraised equitably in comparison to others, and according to their contribution (equity theory). The ratings that they receive are what were expected earlier (expectancy theory).

Generally, Cook and Wall (1980) and Oh (2019) explained that perceptions about justice could potentially influence employees' attitudes towards employers/supervisors, such as level of trust. This study uses the term trust to refer to the extent to which one is willing to ascribe good intentions to and have confidence in the words and actions of other people. Hence employees trust the organization because they reciprocate the fair treatment received from the organization (Wayne, Shore, Bommer, & Tetrick, 2002). Employees perceiving a higher level of justice are likely to show a higher level of trust (Jiang & Probst, 2019). Also, they may demonstrate more positive work outcomes, such as job satisfaction and satisfactory job performance (Wei & Cheah, 2020; Zeffane & Melhem, 2017). In contrast, Zeffane and Melhem (2018) argued that employees experiencing injustice may have a lower level of trust because they are less likely to exchange their hard work with the organizations' unfair handling. The same was also claimed by Zhu, Newman, Miao, and Hooke (2013). As a consequence, they are likely to engage in counterproductive behaviors (e.g. absenteeism, conflicts, etc.) which to a large extent is caused by a lower level of trust (Langfred, 2004). Other studies have shown that organizational justice might be more related to employees' attitudes and beliefs towards the organization as a whole because overtime fairness leads to strong trustworthy relationships (Cropanzano et al., 2007; Mittal et al., 2019). Thus, the study proposed the following hypothesis:

H$_1$: Organizational justice has an influence on the level of trust between the employees and their immediate supervisors.

Other studies have demonstrated that trust in management is related to positive workplace attitudes, i.e. job satisfaction (Dirks & Ferrin, 2001; Ferrin & Dirks, 2002). However, research has provided less theoretical justification on the desired outcomes of trust in the employees' well-being. For example, when a supervisor is periodically assessing a subordinate, outcomes might be different depending on whether the treatment was unfair or not. If the subordinates are treated unfairly, the level of trust can descend, and the employee is apt to experience job dissatisfaction. Still, others might not experience any effect on their job satisfaction. Theoretically, the explanation could be well-understood if the equity-theory was bought into the picture.

While the effects of trust on employees' attitudes have been found to be positive, its effects on behavior and performance have been "weaker and less consistent" (Dirks & Ferrin, 2001, p. 455). According to Bell and Martin (2012), individuals are faced with the choice of whether to trust when reward outcome correlated with how others were equally treated (equity theory). It was also

previously supported by Lewicki and Bunker (1996). Therefore, employees who trust the management are predictable and dependable rather than uncertain and unreliable. Eventually, the job satisfaction level will change because employees believe that the top management has concern for their well-being, their career, and their contribution to the organization goals (Pieters, 2018; Zeffane & Melhem, 2017). As such, trust is likely to affect the extent to which individuals are satisfied with their work and their supervisors. Thus, we propose the following hypothesis:

H₂: The level of trust that the employees have in their immediate supervisors has an influence on job satisfaction.

As discussed earlier, when individuals are rewarded for completing a task successfully, they report being satisfied with the job aspects (Krasnova et al., 2014; Rawls, 2005). Also, if the perception of the appraisal process is good, i.e. the interview procedures are well justified, employees agree with the ratings, and the appraisal system; ultimately, it will have a direct influence on job satisfaction (Braun et al., 2013; Zeffane & Melhem, 2017). Hence once the outcome is achieved as expected (expectancy theory), the job satisfaction level will increase. On the contrary, other researchers indicated that employees expect an adequate consideration of their views, adequate explanation of ratings, application of consistent criteria to all employees, and getting feedback in a timely manner; but it won't matter if they are available or not because in some cases employees' priorities are in other aspects such as career growth, trust, and salary increase (Oh, 2019; Sahoo & Sahoo, 2019). Hence, based on these arguments the study hypothesizes that:

H₃; Organizational justice has an influence on job satisfaction among the employees in the revenue authority.

The Mediating Role of Trust
Studies that found support for predictions that trust will mediate the effect of some predictors on outcomes are reviewed. However, there were differing exceptions depending on some other demographic and job-related factors such as age, gender, marital status, years of experience, and work environment. Research conducted by Zhu et al. (2013) indicated that the level of trust in the supervisors mediated the effect of supervisors' leadership behavior on employees' commitment; and had a negative effect on job performance. Interestingly opposite effects were seen in different groups of employees based on gender, age and years of experience (Chang et al., 2016; Saris & Gallhofer, 2007). Hence, it will be essential to test this effect in this study area in the public sector.

Other studies found support for the mediated effects of supervisors' justice behaviors in appraising an employee, on their subordinates' job satisfaction (Xu, Loi, & Ngo, 2016; Yang, Mossholder, & Peng, 2009). However, due to the resulting partial mediation effect, more investigation is still needed to assess where the mediation effect mostly lies. This study will go further to conduct a multi-group analysis to capture where the full mediation lies. For example, van Dijke, De Cremer, and Mayer (2010) found that trust in a supervisor mediated the effect of members' procedural justice behavior on the trustor's level of charisma. However, this effect was significant only for those who had many years of experience, not for those with fewer years of experience. Therefore, the study proposes the following hypothesis:

H₄: Level of trust will have a mediating effect on the relationship between organizational justice and job satisfaction.

Justice perceptions can potentially impact employees' attitudes towards employers/supervisors as long as there are signs of trust. However, the relationships predicted are likely to differ across demographic groups, depending on how they were treated over time (tenure). Furthermore, Khazanchi and Masterson (2011) presented a structural equation model indicating different groups of mediation in which supervisors' justice behaviors influenced subordinates' trust in their supervisors, which in turn influenced a better job environment. Also, Chen et al. (2014), found that subordinates' trust towards their supervisors mediated the effects of supervisors' less authoritarian behaviors on subordinates' job satisfaction. However, since these studies presented a mixture of full and partial mediation, they did not specify the actual category of the groups that indicated full, partial, or no mediation (Xu et al., 2016). For example, was the effect more substantial in one gender group than the other? This study will not only assess the mediation but will also go further to check the effects according to different groups of employees such as gender and years of experience. Therefore, by considering gender and tenure differences, the study proposes the following hypotheses:

H5: Level of trust will have a mediating effect on the relationship between organizational justice and job satisfaction for the employees who are (a) female (group1) (b) male (group 2).

H6: Level of trust will have a mediating effect on the relationship between organizational justice and job satisfaction for the employees who have (a) less than 6 years (group1) (b) 6 to 10 years (group 2) and, (c) more than 10 years at work in the same job position (group 3).

The conceptual framework has been constructed based on the hypotheses based on the literature review regarding organizational justice, level of trust, and job satisfaction (see Figure 1). The Figure displays that the level of trust is a mediator that exerts an intervening effect on the relationship between organizational justice and job satisfaction.

Figure 1: Research Framework
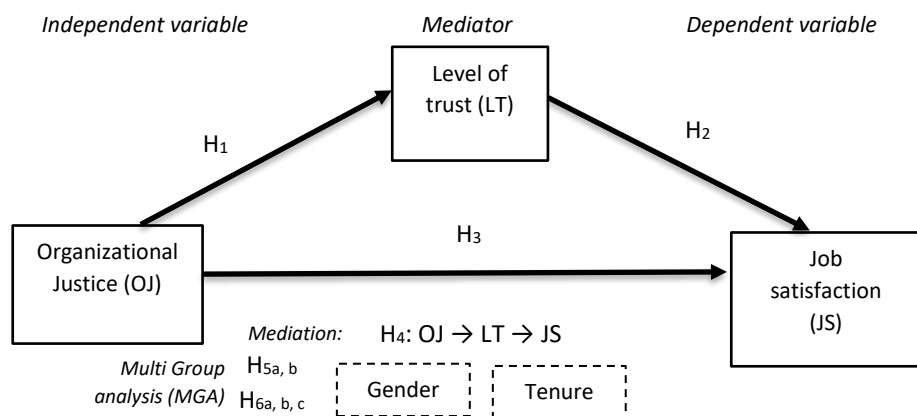
METHODOLOGY

A structured survey questionnaire was used to collect data. A total of 258 questionnaires were distributed physically to the employees from the Tanzania Revenue Authority (TRA) headquarters in the Dar es salaam region. The employees have a collective responsibility to collect tax according to the existing tax laws, regulations, and procedures. Therefore, human resource management issues need to be investigated to enhance a better taxation system in Tanzania. The respondents were randomly picked from each department (i.e. departments of domestic revenue; large

taxpayers; tax investigation; customs; and excise). The self-reported methods are commonly adopted in behavioral studies and their use had been proven not to affect the validity of the findings (Wittenbrink & Schwarz, 2007, p. 265).

At the end of the survey, 212 questionnaires were collected physically from June to August 2019, giving a final response rate of 82.2 percent. The researchers excluded 46 questionnaires with errors, unanswered questions, and those that had chosen the same answer for each item. The study applied IBM SPSS v.23 to enter the data set and undertook partial least squares- structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM) to diagnose the research model by using SmartPLS v.3.2.9 software (Ringle, Wende, & Becker, 2015). The respondents' perceptions of the organizational justice were evaluated during the appraisal process on the job satisfaction level with the consideration of trust in their supervisors.

Measures

The measurement items of the constructs were adopted from existing literature but adapted to fit this study's context. Apart from the demographic variables, the main constructs used in this study were measured on the 5-point Likert scale with anchors ranging from strongly agree (5) to strongly disagree (1). *The outcome variable* is job satisfaction (JS). It has been defined as a positive feeling about a job or positive emotional state resulting from an appraisal of one's job (Spector, 1997) and a sense of pride or inner fulfillment achieved when doing a particular job (Pinikahana & Happell, 2004). The variable was measured with 11 items on a 5-point Likert scale adapted from the work by Spector (1997).

The predictor variable is organizational justice (OJ). The variable represents the perceived fairness of processes in the distribution of rewards in organizational justice. The issue of justice was considered during the performance review exercise to eliminate potential response biases. The variable was measured with 7 items on a 5-point Likert scale, adapted from the work by Sweeney and McFarlin (1997). The mediating variable is the level of trust in the supervisor (LT). It is described as a willingness to be vulnerable to the actions of another party i.e. in this study we consider the actions of the supervisor during the performance review. It was measured with four items on a 5-point Likert scale, adapted from the work by Schoorman, Mayer and Davis (2016).

Gender and tenure were chosen as dimensions for running a multigroup analysis (MGA). The female group comprised of 72 respondents and the male group comprised of 140 respondents. Tenure represented the length of time employees spent in their organizations. It was measured by asking the respondents to report their years of experience. The following ranges were used; below 6 years; 6 to 10 years; and above 10 years at work, whereby each group comprised of 72, 71 and 69 respondents respectively.

Before proceeding to PLS-SEM analysis, data screening was performed to assess missing values, outliers, and common method bias in the data. Missing values were dealt with 'expectation maximization' in SPSS. Then the software was used to detect the outliers by checking the standardized residuals through a case-wise diagnostic table (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2013), there were no outliers in this study. Then, the Harman's single factor test was employed to test whether there was an existing single or common method covariance among the variables. If the total variance of the single factor is between 20 and 40 percent, then common method bias does not affect the data. All items were loaded into one common factor. The test result from the SPSS software output revealed that the general factor explained 28.83% of the overall variance, which meant that common method bias was not an issue (Babin, Griffin, & Hair, 2016).

PRESENTATION AND INTERPRETATION OF ANALYSIS RESULTS
Descriptive Statistics
Table 1 presents the demographics of the respondents. Males represented 66 percent of the respondents. The age group that was the most represented in the study was 20 to 35 years of age (35.8%). Most of the respondents were married (76.9%) and the large educational background groups were employees with Master's and Bachelor's degrees by 45.8 and 44.3 percent respectively. There were almost an equal number of respondents in each group based on years of experience in the same job position.

Table 1: Demographic Details of the Respondents

Demographic	*Items*	*Frequency*	*%*
Gender	Female	72	34.0
	Male	140	66.0
Age	20-35	76	35.8
	36-45	66	31.1
	46-55	58	27.4
	56-65	12	5.7
Marital status	Married	163	76.9
	Not married	49	23.1
Level of education	High school Diploma	11	5.2
	Bachelor degree	94	44.3
	Master's degree	97	45.8
	Ph.D.	5	2.4
	Others	5	2.4
Years of service at work (tenure)	Below 6 years	72	34.0
	Between 6 and 10 years	71	33.5
	Above 10 years	69	32.5

N=212

Thereafter, the PLS algorithm was run followed by PLS bootstrapping with 5,000 resamples on the full model to generate the path coefficient and their corresponding t-values (Hair, Hult, Ringle, & Sarstedt, 2017). As required by PLS-SEM analysis the measurement model was assessed first and then the structural model.

Measurement Model
The measurement model was assessed by inspecting reliability (i.e. indicator reliability and internal consistency) and validity (i.e. convergent validity and discriminant validity). The indicator reliability was assessed by observing the outer loadings because all constructs' indicators were reflectively measured. After items deletion, the loadings ranged between 0.712 and 0.925, so the outer loadings were kept above the threshold value of 0.708 (Chin, Gopal, & Salisbury, 1997). Hence the loadings had satisfactory indicator reliability. Composite reliability for each construct was used to assess the internal consistency of the constructs. Results from Table 2 indicate that the scores were above the suggested minimum value of 0.6 (Hair, Black, Babin, & Anderson, 2014) and Cronbach alphas for each construct were above the threshold of 0.7 (Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994).

Then the convergent validity was assessed by looking at the average variance extracted (AVE). All AVE values of constructs were greater than the minimum threshold value of 0.5 (Hair et al.,

2014), indicating that each measurement item is related to its assumed theoretical construct (see Table 2).

Table 2: Convergent Validity and Internal Consistency Reliability

Latent Variable (Construct)	Cronbach's Alpha	rho_A	Composite Reliability	AVE
Job Satisfaction (JS)	0.946	0.947	0.954	0.699
Level of Trust (LT)	0.929	0.931	0.949	0.825
Organizational Justice (OJ)	0.885	0.887	0.913	0.636

Then, we used the Fornell–Larcker criterion (1981) to assess the discriminant validity of the measurement model. Table 3 indicates that the discriminant validity is verified because the square root of the AVE of each latent variable is higher than its correlation with all other variables. Also, as indicated in Appendix 1, the HTMT ratios of correlations were below the recommended threshold of 0.85 (Henseler, Ringle, & Sarstedt, 2015; Kline, 2011). As a result, the measurement model was found to be discriminately valid.

Table 3: Latent Variable Correlation and Fornell-Larcker Criterion

Latent Variable (Construct)	Mean	SD	Job Satisfaction	Level of Trust	Organizational Justice
Job Satisfaction	2.795	1.119	**0.836**		
Level of Trust	3.371	1.143	0.637	**0.908**	
Organizational Justice	3.059	1.194	0.733	0.759	**0.798**

Note: The bolded diagonals represent the square roots of the AVE while the other entries below the diagonal values, represent the latent variable correlations. M= Mean, SD= standard deviation of the latent variable.

Structural model

The assessment of the structural model was conducted after the assessment of the measurement model. In this stage, the relationships between the constructs indicated in the structural model were assessed i.e. organizational justice (OJ), job satisfaction (JS), and the level of trust (LT). Subsequently, the mediator (LT) was tested, and the full structural model was analyzed. Based on the findings, the multigroup analysis was conducted to assess the differences in mediation effects by gender and tenure.

First, an assessment of collinearity was performed to examine whether the predictor constructs were closely correlated with endogenous constructs (Hair et al., 2011). that the VIF values were below 5, indicating the absence of collinearity. Additionally, the R^2 for LT and JS were 0.576 and 0.553 respectively. According to Hair et al., the values are found to be strong ones hence we suggest that the endogenous constructs are explained well by their respective exogenous variable, for example, LT can explain the variance of JS by 55.3 percent (Table 4). Moreover, the effect sizes f^2 indicated in Table 4, reveal a range of high and medium effects. The Q^2 values generated by the blindfolding procedure were larger than zero, indicating the predictive relevance of the structural model. Finally, the model fit was assessed, and the SRMR value was 0.062 indicating a good fit as the threshold value should be less than 0.08 (Hair, Sarstedt, Ringle, & Gudergan, 2018). Also, the NFI value is 0.903, which is higher than the threshold value of 0.9 (Bryne, 2016), indicating a good fit as well.

Path Coefficients and Hypotheses testing

In support of H_1 and H_3 (Table 4), higher levels of organizational justice indicated a significant effect on the level of trust ($\beta=0.759$, $p<0.001$) and higher levels of job satisfaction ($\beta=0.588$, $p<0.001$). Also, in support of H_2, the level of trust indicated a significant effect on job satisfaction ($\beta=0.191$, $p<0.05$). Further details are illustrated in Appendix 2.

Mediation

To test the mediating role of the level of trust between organizational justice and job satisfaction (H_4), we adapted the regression analysis approach by the Baron and Kenny (1986). They postulated four conditions for the evaluation of mediation: (1) the independent variable (IV) must have significant association with the dependent variable (DV), (2) the IV must have significant association with the mediator, (3) the mediator must have a significant association with the DV, after controlling the IV, (4) after controlling the effect of the mediator, the effect of the IV on the DV is no longer significant indicating full mediation or if it is still significant but substantially reduced then it indicates partial mediation.

After applying Baron and Kenny's approach, Table 4 shows that all conditions of mediation for the OJ were met with LT being as a mediator and JS as a dependent variable. First, the OJ →JS path was significant ($\beta=0.588$, $p<0.001$), second, the OJ →LT path was significant ($\beta=0.759$, $p<0.001$). Third, LT →JS path was significant after controlling OJ ($\beta=0.191$, $p<0.05$) and fourth, after controlling the effect of the mediator, the effect of the OJ on JS ($\beta=0.145$, $p<0.05$) was still significant but significantly reduced from 0.588 to 0.145. Thus, H_4 is supported since the analysis indicates a partial mediation effect of the level of trust between organizational justice and job satisfaction.

Table 4: Path Coefficients, Significant values and Effect size

Structural Paths	Path Coeff. β	Std. dev.	t-values	p-values	f^2	*Hypotheses*
Organizational Justice -> Level of Trust	0.759***	0.029	26.548	0.000	1.356	**$H_{1\ accepted}$**
Level of Trust -> Job Satisfaction	0.191**	0.077	2.474	0.014	0.035	**$H_{2\ accepted}$**
Organizational Justice -> Job Satisfaction	0.588***	0.069	8.514	0.000	0.328	**$H_{3\ accepted}$**
Specific direct Effect (Mediation path)						
Organizational Justice -> Level of Trust -> Job Satisfaction	0.145**	0.059	2.445	**0.015**	0.328	**$H_{4\ accepted}$**
R^2 values						
Level of trust = 0.574						
Job satisfaction = 0.548						

Note $0.02 \leq f^2 < 0.15$; weak effect, $0.15 \leq f^2 < 0.35$; moderate effect and $f^2 \geq 0.35$; strong effect (Cohen, 1988)

R^2 value equal to 0.12, 0.13-0.25 and above 0.26 represents low, medium and high effect size respectively (Hair et al., 2011)

*p<0.1 ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.001$. n.s.= not significant.

OJ - Organizational Justice; LT - Level of Trust; and JS – Job Satisfaction

Mediation effects within groups

Based on the previous mediation test, a multigroup analysis (MGA) was performed to analyse a mediation effect from each group. Initial analysis containing the full sample (N=212) indicated that there is a partial mediation effect of the level of trust between organizational justice and job satisfaction. The MGA was run to compare the effect of OJ on JS through LT as a mediator for the gender and tenure groups. Five models were run based on the following sub-groups indicated in Table 5; i.e. female (n=72), male (n=140), those with less than 6 years of experience at the current position (n=72), between 6 and 10 (n=71), and those with more than 10 years of experience (n=69). For each group, the same approach was applied in the full model for the mediation test. Table 5 indicates that the full mediation effect was found in a group containing female employees but there was no mediation in the group containing male employees i.e. H_{5a} is accepted and H_{5b} is rejected. Additionally, out of the three groups based on tenure, a partial mediation effect was found in only one group i.e. a group containing employees with less than six years of experience at work in the same position (<6yrs). However, there was no mediation effect among the groups of employees with six or more years of experience (i.e. "*6-10yrs*", and "*>10yrs*" groups). Therefore, H_{6a} is accepted but H_{6b} and H_{6c} are rejected.

Table 5: MGA results for the employees' gender and tenure

Structural Paths	Path Coefficients by Gender		Δ_{12}	Path Coefficients by Tenure			Sig difference		
	Female n=72 **(1)**	Male n=140 **(2)**		<6yrs n=72 **(3)**	6-10yrs n=71 **(4)**	>10yrs n=69 **(5)**	Δ_{34}	Δ_{35}	Δ_{45}
Direct effects									
OJ -> LT	0.824***	0.733***	n.s.	0.664***	0.823***	0.753***	**	n.s.	n.s.
LT -> JS	0.485***	0.087	***	0.433***	0.086	-0.086	**	***	n.s.
OJ -> JS	0.249	0.715***	***	0.411***	0.690***	0.831***	n.s.	**	n.s.
Indirect effect									
OJ -> LT -> JS	0.399**	0.064	**	0.288***	0.071	-0.065	*	**	n.s.
Hypotheses	**H_{5a} Accepted**	**H_{5b} Rejected**		**H_{6a} Accepted**	**H_{6b} Rejected**	**H_{6c} Rejected**			
	Group (1)	(2)		(3)	(4)	(5)			
R-squared values									
R^2 for LT	67.9%	53.7%		44.1%	67.7%	56.6%			
R^2 for JS	49.6%	61.1%		59.3%	58.1%	59.0%			
f^2 values									
OJ -> LT	2.112	1.162		0.79	2.098	1.306			
LT -> JS	0.15	0.009		0.257	0.006	0.008			
OJ -> JS	0.04	0.609		0.231	0.366	0.729			

Note: Δ_{nn} = significant difference between group n and group n

n.s. = not significant

Group 1(female), group 2 (male), group 3 (tenure below 6 years), group 4 (tenure between 6 and 10 years), and group 5 (tenure above 10 years).

DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS

This study provides an empirical evidence for the effect of organizational justice on employee satisfaction in public institution context involving service sector. Results largely support the research hypotheses and suggest that organizations could improve employees' level of trust and job satisfaction by creating an environment of fairness, despite the difference in levels of trust preferred across different gender and tenure. In addition, although trust is a significant mediator in the *justice – satisfaction* relationship, its role tends to be distinctive for different groups of employees. That is, its effect is more profound in female than male employees, and more on employees who have fewer years of experience than those who have more years of experience at work.

This research contributes to previous human resource management literature on positive work outcomes by adding that trust is an essential feature in enhancing employees' satisfaction levels through organizational justice, and has a significant effect as a mediator. The researchers maintain the notion that employees who have high trust towards their supervisors exhibit high levels of job satisfaction. Therefore, managers should not only develop better supervisory skills in appraising their employees but also cultivate a good working environment with an intention to develop trust, which in turn leads to high job satisfaction.

There are theoretical and practical implications. Theoretically, the study offers an understanding of how important trust is, in ensuring that employees' satisfaction level is at a good level among government workers. Prior studies have indicated the direct relationships of work antecedents on employees' job satisfaction in almost all sectors but lack a deeper understanding of the role of trust that underlies this relationship. The causal mediation analysis in this study indicates that trust mediates the relationship between organizational justice and job satisfaction among supervisors and subordinates. In other words, the level of trust cannot be detached when investigating the issues of organizational justice and job satisfaction phenomena in the service sector.

Practically, the study implies that the matters of justice and fairness in the workplace should not be taken lightly in any work procedure. Managers should be concerned with how they treat their subordinates because their perception of that treatment could affect the level of job satisfaction. By taking an example of the performance appraisal process, employees are always nervous before filling their appraisal especially when the work environment is filled with unfair treatment. If there is a lack of trust with in their immediate supervisor, then counterproductive behaviors such as tardiness, sabotage, workplace bullying, gossiping, bribing, and theft at work might occur ultimately leading to job dissatisfaction.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This study insists on an open door-policy which allows workers who have a complaint to talk directly to someone in a senior position. However, there should be procedures that show unbiased, timely and fair outcomes. In that case, managers will earn employees' trust. This reasoning was picked from the equity theory, which reminds us that; employees assess what they put into a job situation against what they get from it. Hence, managers need to know that it's the system that is creating the outcome and not the individuals. If the system is improved, then the individual within the system will improve as well. Also, it is worthy for organizations to embrace demographic

differences in the perception of trust and to know how they relate to work behaviors. For example, in the gender group, women might take the issue of trust more seriously than men because they tend to be more open, collaborative, and democratic in their leadership style. Lack of trust might lead to different levels of job dissatisfaction because this study has shown that trust significantly mediated the effect of justice on job satisfaction in women but not in men group. It seems that men strive easier than women in an untrustworthy and biased system without affecting their work. However, they can accept an unfortunate outcome as long as the process is fair and are treated with interpersonal dignity (e.g. Cropanzano et al., 2007).

Furthermore, the perception of trust can vary across tenure groups (Chang et al., 2016). There should be close attention to employees with fewer years of experience because the issue of fair ratings and trust is more crucial to them than those who have stayed in the organization for many years. Social exchange theory predicts that the younger employees would be satisfied in the organization, as long as the 'rewards' outweigh the 'cost'. In other words, the issue of justice is essential to their career development (rewards) compared to the cost of remaining unemployed (Sahoo & Sahoo, 2019). They are unlike the elderly employees who seem to avoid putting the issue of trust as their prior agenda to achieve job satisfaction. These group differences imply that the managers need to create tailored communication to handle employees differently because there is continued call for equity (Chang et al., 2016).

Organizations need to start by understanding where they are to gender or age equity and build from there. Consequently, if the expected justice is fairly distributed across diverse groups, some group of employees are likely to trust their managers because they are satisfied with the interpersonal-relationship outcomes, but not satisfied with pay levels and promotions opportunities. In other words, interpersonal outcomes seem more attractive than the costs of receiving less pay (social exchange theory). Hence, it's crucial to explore the behaviors of separate groups of employees. The issue of employees' expectations is also looked at, which comes at different levels depending on gender and tenure. Expectancy theory argues that the magnitude of a tendency to act in a certain way is dependent on the level of an expectation that they will receive a given reward (Porter & Lawler, 1968; Vroom, 1964). Hence, as the employees expect fair treatment, this study recommends that the organizations should position organizational justice as a core value that defines an organization's identity with its employees and all stakeholders, both internally and externally. Lastly, organizations need to give fair ratings during the appraisal to generate positive outcomes in terms of trust and job satisfaction in the organizations.

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## APPENDICES
Appendix 1: Discriminant Validity using HTMT criterion

(a) Heterotrait – Monotrait Ration (HTMT$_{0.85}$)

	Job Satisfaction	Level of Trust	Organizational Justice
Job Satisfaction (JS)			
Level of Trust (LT)	0.678		
Organization Justice (OJ)	0.797	0.831	

(b) HTMT inference

Confidence Intervals	Original Sample (O)	Sample Mean (M)	2.5%	97.5%
Organization Justice -> Level of Trust	0.759	0.761	0.704	**0.810**
Level of Trust -> Job Satisfaction	0.191	0.191	0.027	**0.341**
Organizational Justice -> Job Satisfaction	0.588	0.590	0.453	**0.724**

Appendix 2: Structural Model indicating Path Coefficients, R² values and Outer Loadings
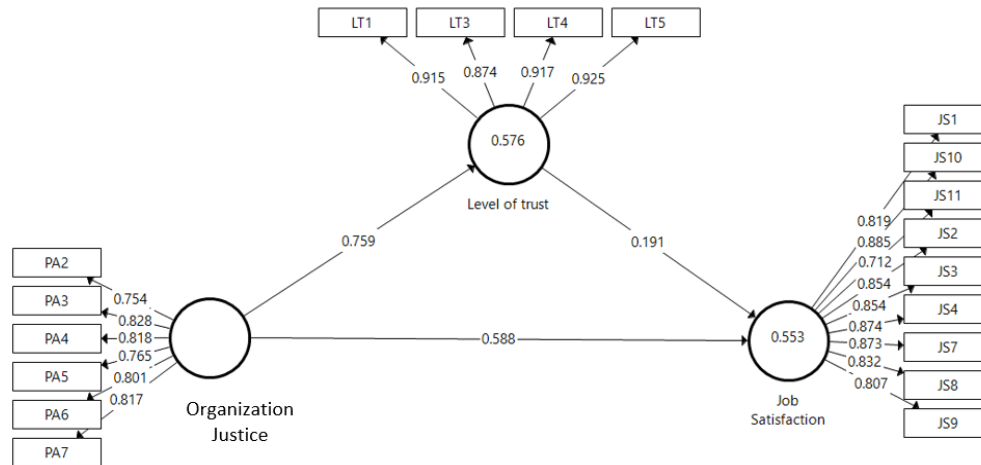
Note: R^2 and f^2 Values of the structural model (N=212)

Latent Variable (Construct)	f^2 Values		R^2	R^2 Adjusted
	JS	LT		
Job Satisfaction (JS)			0.553	0.548
Level of Trust (LT)	0.035		0.576	0.574
Organizational Justice (OJ)	0.328	1.356		