Why you should read this article:
- To enhance your knowledge of the concept of organisational justice
- To familiarise yourself with the link between organisational justice and job satisfaction
- To improve your understanding of what motivates nurses to remain in their job roles

Investigating organisational justice and job satisfaction as perceived by nurses, and its relationship to organizational citizenship behaviour

Huda Mohammed Bakeer, Rehab AbdAllah Nassar, Rasha Kamal Mohammed Sweelam

Abstract

Background Organisational justice refers to the extent to which employees perceive workplace procedures, interactions, and outcomes to be fair in nature. Previous research has found that organisational justice has been associated with an employee's commitment to their organisation, job satisfaction, and intention to leave their role. Organisational justice has also been linked to organisational citizenship behaviours, and the likelihood of these behaviours being demonstrated by employees.

Aim To investigate staff nurses' perceptions of organisational justice and job satisfaction and its relationship to their levels of organisational citizenship behaviour.

Method Perceived levels of organisational justice, job satisfaction, and levels of organisational citizenship behaviour were evaluated among 175 nurses working in two hospitals in Egypt. Analysis was undertaken to ascertain whether a correlation existed between organisational justice or job satisfaction and levels of organisational citizenship behaviour.

Results The majority of nurses in this study were found to perceive moderate levels of organisational justice. Organisational justice was positively correlated with levels of organisational citizenship behaviour, as was job satisfaction.

Conclusion This study found that nurses in two hospitals in Egypt perceived moderate levels of organisational justice in their place of work. Nurse managers should pay extra attention to strategies that promote organisational justice among nurses.

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Introduction

Organisational justice refers to the extent to which employees perceive workplace procedures, interactions and outcomes to be fair in nature (Baldwin 2006). It has been considered as an important contributor to employees' commitment towards an organisation (Rahman et al 2016).

In nursing, Kuokkanen et al (2014) found that organisational justice was correlated with empowerment, and that organisational justice increased the extent to which nurses felt empowered in their role, as well as their commitment to their job and motivation to work. Ponnu and Chuah (2010) found that organisational justice contributed to nurses' intentions to leave their role, as well as their job satisfaction and commitment to their organisation.

Organisational justice has three main components: distributive justice, procedural justice, and interactional justice (Altahayneh et al 2014):

1. Distributive justice – defined as an individual's perceived fairness of resource allocation. For example, a nurse may feel their salary is too low based on their output in their role. Alternatively, they may compare their salary with another nurse who they perceive to perform a similar role to them, but who earns more.

2. Procedural justice – an individual's perception of fairness based upon organisational policies and the processes by which these policies are put into action. For example, if a manager only offers pay rises to favoured employees, this would be seen as unfair by others.

3. Interactional justice – the perceived fairness of individuals with regards to organisational interpersonal communications, that is, how a person perceives the quality of an interaction with another person during the implementation of formal policies. This relates to both interactions with managers and interactions with colleagues. For example, when nurse managers keep nurses informed about organisational policies related to salary increases or promotions.

Because organisational justice is strongly linked to an individual's commitment to an organisation and overall job satisfaction, it can also be linked to organisational citizenship behaviours, and the likelihood of an employee demonstrating these behaviours. Organisational citizenship behaviours were described by Organ (1988) as the 'good soldier syndrome' and have been defined elsewhere as 'behaviours that an employee voluntarily engages in that promote the effectiveness of the organisation but are not explicitly rewarded by the organisation' (Velickovska 2017). Informally, organisational citizenship behaviour may be described as a willingness of an employee to go beyond their job description's official responsibilities or undertake extra responsibilities in the interests of the organisation (Velickovska 2017).

Bismala (2019) found that job satisfaction was a factor that influenced organisational citizenship behaviours, along with the quality of leadership and the climate of the organisation. The links between organisational justice and organisational citizenship behaviours suggest that nurses who have a strong perception of organisational justice within their place of work are more likely to be satisfied in their job role, and therefore are more likely to demonstrate organisational citizenship behaviours.

This article describes a study that investigated nurses' job satisfaction and perceptions of organisational justice in their workplace, and whether this was related to their organisational citizenship behaviours.

Significance of the study

Nurses are becoming more aware of their rights and their right to be treated equally, and this means they need to believe that processes and organisations are fair. When healthcare organisations treat their nurses equally and fairly, they are more likely to be committed to their work and experience enhanced job satisfaction. Both organisational justice and job satisfaction are essential to encourage organisational citizenship behaviour in nurses. Nurses who do not believe there is organisational justice at their place of work, or who are not satisfied with their job, are unlikely to engage in organisational citizenship behaviour. Therefore, this study was conducted to examine staff nurses' perception of organisational justice at their place of work, their level of job satisfaction, and its relationship to their levels of organisational citizenship behaviour.

Aim

To investigate staff nurses' perceptions of organisational justice and job satisfaction and its relationship to their levels of organisational citizenship behaviour.

Method

Design

A descriptive correlational research design was used.

Setting

The study was conducted in two hospitals in Menoufia Governorate, Egypt: Menoufia University Hospital and Shebin El-Kom Teaching Hospital.

Participants

It was estimated that a sample of 85 nurses from each hospital should be included in the study, meaning that a total of 170 nurses across both sites would constitute the minimum sample size required for results to be representative and to provide an acceptable margin of error. This estimate was calculated using STATA/SE 11.2 for Windows, with the following assumptions:

» The ratio between the two groups was 1:1.
» The standard normal deviate at 5% type I error ($P<0.05$) was 1.96.
» The effect size (the difference in proportions predicted between the two groups) was estimated to be 25%.
» The study's power was 90%.

All nurses working in the two hospitals were invited to the study by word of mouth. A total of 175 nurses agreed to participate and were selected as a convenience sample. Of these, 86 were based at Menoufia University Hospital and 89 were based at Shebin El-Kom Teaching Hospital. The researchers, who are also the authors of this article, explained the purpose of the study to those who agreed to participate.

Data collection

Three different tools were used to collect data on perceived organisational justice, job satisfaction and the relationship to organisational citizenship behaviours. Data were collected using the tools described in this section over a period of four months, from 1 June 2019 to 30 September 2019. Participants were asked to complete each tool and return it on the same day or the next day. This was either done in person, with one of the researchers returning to the participant to collect the tools or via line managers after participants had handed the completed tools to them.

Organisational Justice Scale

The Organisational Justice Scale (Niehoff and Moorman 1993) is divided into two parts: part one collects information on the participants' sociodemographic characteristics; part two involves an organisational justice scale. This study used a version which measures employees' perceptions of organisational justice with 19 items, separated under three subscales: distributive justice (five items), procedural justice (five items), and interactional justice (nine items) (Abu Tayeh 2012). Each item asks questions related to organisational justice, and each one is scored on a five-point Likert scale, from 'strongly disagree' (1) to 'strongly agree' (5). The total score can range from 19 to a maximum of 95.

Scores of 76 or greater indicate a high perception of organisational justice. Scores of 39-75 indicate a moderate perception. Scores of 38 or lower indicate a low perception of organisational justice.

Job satisfaction scale

The job satisfaction scale (Hagag 2007) consists of 12 items. The items feature statements, for example 'I feel satisfied with my salary', and asks respondents to rate their agreement with each on a five-point Likert scale as per the Organisational Justice Scale. The total score can range from 12 to a maximum of 60. To determine whether a participant was satisfied, the score was converted to a percentage, with 60% or greater (a score of 36 or greater) indicating a nurse is satisfied with their job.

Organisational citizenship behaviour scale

The organisational citizenship behaviour scale was based on unpublished data by Abo Gaser (2010). It measures the level of organisational citizenship behaviours undertaken by an individual. It consists of 30 items, split into five different categories – altruism, conscientiousness, sportsmanship, courtesy, and respect – with six items in each. Each item asked respondents to rate their agreement with a statement using a five-point Likert scale as per the other two tools described in this section.

Statements included 'I help my colleagues who have been absent from work,' and 'I make sure to attend work-related meetings and get-togethers.' Total scores could range from 30 to 150. A score of 90 or greater denoted a high level of organisational citizenship behaviour.

Face validity and reliability of the tools

The content and face validity of the tools were tested by a bilingual group of five experts in nursing administration and psychiatry. In the experts' opinion, the tools were valid.

The reliability of the described tools was evaluated using Cronbach's alpha coefficient. For the Organisational Justice Scale, job satisfaction tool, and organisational citizenship behaviour scale, Cronbach's alpha was measured at 0.94, 0.761 and 0.78 respectively.

Data analysis

SPSS version 20 was used for statistical analysis. The mean and standard deviation (X±SD) were used to express quantitative results. Numbers and percentages were used

to represent qualitative data. The distribution of quantitative data was analysed using the Shapiro-Wilk test for normal data. To detect differences between two groups with non-parametric data, the Mann-Whitney U test was used. The association between organisational justice, job satisfaction and organisational citizenship behaviour was calculated using the Spearman correlation coefficient.

Pilot study

To test accuracy of the tools used for data collection, and ascertain the time required to collect the data, a pilot study was undertaken on 10% of the participants (n=18) who were not included in the main sample. These participants' responses were eliminated from the final analysis.

Ethical considerations

After the purpose of the study was explained to the two hospital directors, the faculty of nursing provided written approval for the research to be conducted and the necessary data to be collected. Researchers confirmed to the participants that participation in the study was voluntary, and informed consent was obtained after a brief description was provided of the aim of the study, the duration of the research, the study's possible benefits, and how data would be obtained. Participants had the right to withdraw from the study at any time.
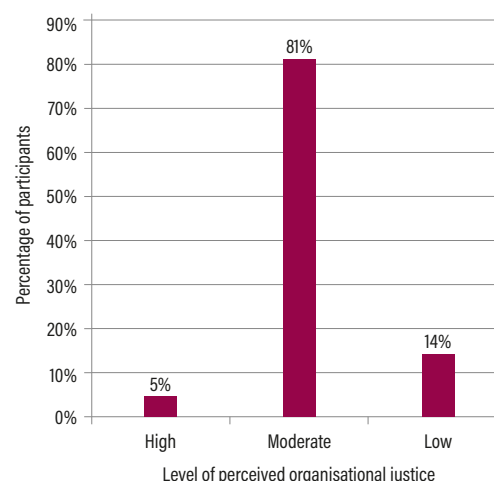
Results

Table 1 shows the sociodemographic characteristics of the 175 participants.

The participants' perceptions of organisational justice, as measured using the Organisational Justice Scale, is displayed in Table 2. Figure 1 displays the participants perceived levels of overall organisational justice. Procedural justice has the lowest mean score of the three dimensions of organisational justice. However, no significant differences were found between the two settings for any of the three dimensions.

Table 3 shows the mean scores of the organisational citizenship behaviour scale, which depicts participants' perceived levels of organisational citizenship behaviours.

Table 1. Sociodemographic characteristics of the participants

Characteristic		n	%	Mean + standard deviation
Age	20-<30 years	92	53	29.07±5.3
	30-<40 years	66	38	
	≥40 years	17	9	
Qualification	Diploma	91	52	
	Technical institute	32	18	
	Bachelor's degree	35	20	
	Master's degree	8	5	
	Doctoral degree	9	5	
Marital status	Married	120	69	
	Single	37	21	
	Divorced	18	10	
Hospital	Menoufia University Hospital	86	49	
	Shebin El-Kom Teaching Hospital	89	51	
Experience	Less than five years	44	25	
	5- <10 years	71	41	
	≥10 years	60	34	

Table 2. Participants' perceptions of organisational justice

Dimension	Shebin El-Kom Teaching hospital (n=89)	Menoufia University hospital (n=86)	Mann-Whitney U test	P-value
	Mean±SD	Mean±SD		
Distributive justice	12.63±2.04	12.42±1.96	0.70	0.48
Procedural justice	11.67±2.68	11.74±2.76	0.27	0.79
Interactional justice	20.47±4.27	20.60±4.23	0.27	0.78
Overall organisational justice score	44.77±6.89	44.77±7.32	0.11	0.91

Figure 1. Perceived levels of organisational justice

No significant differences in organisational citizenship behaviour were found between the two hospital sites.

Organisational justice, job satisfaction and organisational citizenship behaviour, split by high, moderate and low scores, as applicable, are displayed in Table 4. Figure 2 displays the participants' levels of job satisfaction. Figure 3 shows the demonstrated levels of organisational citizenship behaviour. In terms of organisational justice, there was no statistically significant difference between the study settings. Table 4 also shows that most nurses across both hospitals were dissatisfied with their job, and that the majority also demonstrated low levels of organisational citizenship behaviour.

Table 5 demonstrates the results of the Spearman correlation coefficient – that is, the correlation between organisational justice and job satisfaction; organisational justice and organisational citizenship behaviour; and job satisfaction and organisational citizenship behaviour. There was a positive, significant correlation between organisational justice and organisational citizenship behaviour (r_s=.407, P=.000). Additionally, there was a positive significant correlation between staff nurses' job satisfaction and their levels of organisational citizenship behaviour (r=.153, P=.043).

Discussion

This study aimed to assess organisational justice and job satisfaction, and investigate whether there is a link between one or both of these elements and organisational citizenship behaviours. It found that most nurses in both hospitals had a moderate perception of organisational justice. This is similar to

Table 3. Mean scores of the organisational citizenship behaviour scale

Dimension	Shebin El-Kom Teaching Hospital (*n*=89)	Menoufia University hospital (*n*=86)	Mann-Whitney U test	*P*-value
	Mean±SD	Mean±SD		
Altruism	14.77±2.67	14.67±2.67	0.37	0.71
Conscientiousness	14.16±5.92	15.53±6.46	1.87	0.06
Sportsmanship	14.48±2.79	14.66±2.96	0.56	0.57
Courtesy	13.92±3.21	14.28±2.85	0.39	0.70
Respect	14.73±2.68	14.21±2.21	1.75	0.08
Overall citizenship behaviour score	72.07±9.93	73.36±11.53	0.70	0.48

Table 4. Participants' perceptions of organisational justice, job satisfaction, and organisational citizenship behaviour

		Shebin El-Kom Teaching Hospital (*n*=89)		Menoufia University Hospital (*n*=86)		Mean±SD	Chi-square	*P*-value
		n	%	*n*	%			
Organisational justice	High (≥76)	3	5.8	5	3.4	44.77±7.09	.791	.673
	Moderate (39-75)	60	68.6	59	67.4			
	Low (≤38)	26	25.6	22	29.2			
Organisational citizenship behaviour	High (≥90)	7	7.9	18	20.9	72.70±10.73	6.097	.014*
	Low (<90)	82	92.1	68	79.1			
Job satisfaction	Satisfied (≥36)	14	15.7	14	16.3	27.49±5.35	.010	.921
	Dissatisfied (<36)	75	84.3	72	83.7			

* Statistically significant at P≤ 0.05

Implications for practice

- Nurse managers should provide extra attention to strategies that promote organisational justice among nurses. In particular, it may be worthwhile focusing on aspects that improve procedural justice, for example providing clear explanations of organisational policies, rules and regulations

- Ensure nurse managers are aware of the concept of organisational justice, its principles, and how it is applied to nursing

- Consider evaluating nurses' current levels of organisational citizenship behaviours using validated assessment tools. This may provide insight into what motivates staff to engage in organisational citizenship behaviours, and provide nurse managers with ideas to encourage or promote these behaviours

findings from Mohamed et al (2018), whose study also found that nurses had a moderate level of perceived organisational justice.

The current study did not investigate reasons behind the nurses' perceived organisational justice levels, or if there was a link between sociodemographic characteristics and perceived organisational justice. However, previous work by Ghasi et al (2020) found that nurses perceive differences in pay, access to hospital resources, training, work schedule, participation in decision-making, and enforcement of policies between doctors and other healthcare professionals as unfair. Al-Zu'bi (2010) found a relationship between

Figure 2. Level of job satisfaction

■ Satisfied
■ Dissatisfied

16%

84%

Figure 3. Level of demonstrated organisational citizenship behaviour

an employee's age and their perceptions of organisational justice.

Previous studies have found that organisational justice can predict a nurse's intention to leave their job. Tourani et al (2016) found a significant negative correlation between perceived organisational justice and turnover intention, suggesting that lower levels of perceived organisational justice increase the likelihood of a nurse leaving their role.

The majority of nurses in this study were found to be dissatisfied with their job. This is unsurprising, since in the authors' experience, nurses in Egypt often face challenging working conditions, with little institutional recognition or support. They also experience a lack of motivation due to low salaries, as well as other challenges, such as staff shortages, high workloads, and inadequate equipment. Elsherbeny and El-Masry (2018) found that over 60% of nurses working at a hospital in Egypt expressed low job satisfaction, with lack of communication with their colleagues and minimal supervisor support cited as predictors of low rates of job satisfaction.

The current study found no correlation between organisational justice and job satisfaction. However, previous work has identified a link. Nia (2016) found a positive relationship between these two elements, and stated that job satisfaction was a significant predictor of organisational justice. The author claimed that if workers feel organisational justice exists in their workplace, they will be more satisfied with their salaries, future opportunities to progress, work schedule, co-workers and supervisors (Nia 2016). Similarly, Al-Zu'bi (2010) found a positive correlation between job satisfaction and perceived organisational justice, suggesting that an employee's job satisfaction depended directly on the perceived level of organisational justice.

Job satisfaction has also been linked to nurses' commitment to their organisation, and it can act as a mediator between commitment and their performance in the role (Hakami et al 2020).

An employee's commitment to an organisation has been associated with organisational citizenship behaviour, with higher levels of some components of organisational commitment leading to higher levels of organisational citizenship behaviour (Khaleh and Naji (2016). In turn, this means that job satisfaction may also directly and indirectly influence organisational citizenship

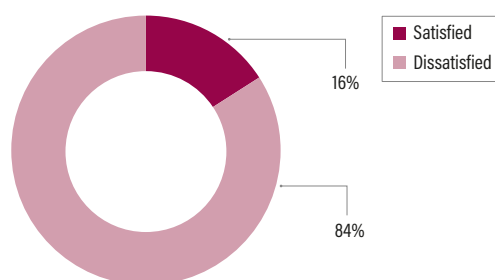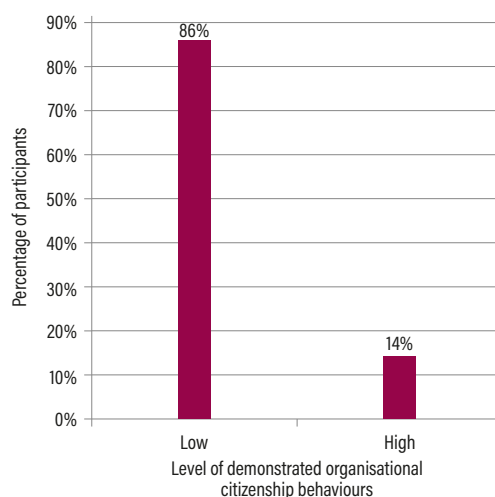**Table 5. Correlation between organisational justice, job satisfaction, and organisational citizenship behaviour**

Variable	Organisational justice		Job satisfaction	
	rs*	P	rs	P
Job satisfaction	.086	.256		
Organisational citizenship behaviour	.407	.000**	.153	.043†

* Spearman correlation coefficient †Statistically significant at P≤ 0.05

behaviour. George and Jones (2012) discussed the link between the two, stating that satisfied employees have higher rates of organisational citizenship behaviour because they belong to an organisation where they are treated well. This has been supported by research into other sectors, for example the banking industry (Prasetio et al 2017).

The nurses in the current study demonstrated low levels of organisational citizenship behaviour, and this was significantly correlated with job satisfaction. Improving job satisfaction could therefore lead to improvements in both a nurse's commitment to the organisation, and their likelihood in engaging in organisational citizenship behaviour.

Limitations
Although the study used validated tools to collect data, the responses from participants are subjective. In addition, the nurses in this study were not blinded as to its intentions, and this may have affected their responses during the data collection phase.

Conclusion
This study found that nurses in two hospitals in Egypt perceived moderate levels of organisational justice in their place of work, and that perceived levels of organisational justice were correlated with organisational citizenship behaviours. In addition, job satisfaction was also found to be correlated with organisational citizenship behaviours.

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