

ORGANISATIONAL JUSTICE AND DEVIANT WORKPLACE BEHAVIOUR AMONG LECTURERS IN THE UNIVERSITY OF BENIN, BENIN CITY, EDO STATE, NIGERIA

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Abstract

This study investigates the influence of organisational justice on deviant workplace behaviour among lecturers at the University of Benin, Edo State, Nigeria. A structured questionnaire was administered to 103 academic staff members, measuring perceptions of distributive, procedural, and interactional justice alongside workplace deviance. Analytical tools for data analyses included descriptive statistics, correlation analysis, and multiple regression. The results indicate significant negative relationships between both distributive and interactional justice and deviant workplace behaviour; while procedural justice showed no statistically significant relationship with workplace deviance. These findings suggest that perceived fairness in reward distribution and interpersonal treatment are stronger deterrents of workplace deviance than procedural fairness within Nigerian public university settings. The study recommends enhancing transparent reward systems, clarifying job roles, fostering inclusive decision-making, and implementing regular justice perception audits. These measures can improve organisational climate, reduce deviant behaviours, and support better staff outcomes.

Keywords: *Academic Staff Behaviour, Organisational Justice, Distributive Justice, Procedural Justice, Interactional Justice, Workplace Deviance.*

Introduction

Organisational justice is a pivotal construct in organisational behaviour, fundamentally shaping employee attitudes, motivation, and overall organisational performance (Yeoman & Santos, 2016). It encompasses employees' perceptions of fairness and equity in organisational actions, policies, and interpersonal interactions, which directly influence their behaviours and engagement levels (Abbasi et al., 2021; Ohiorenoya & Eguavoen, 2019; Kadiri & Umemezia, 2018). The relevance of

organisational justice lies in its capacity to foster organisational commitment, increase job satisfaction, and enhance both productivity and performance over the long term (Onyeizugbe et al., 2021). Conversely, the absence of fairness and transparency in organisational processes often leads to dissatisfaction, reduced morale, and increased tendencies toward deviant workplace behaviour (Kadiri & Umemezia, 2018).

Given the adverse consequences of perceived injustice—including erosion of trust, reduced work engagement, and resistance to organisational goals—organisations have increasingly prioritised the establishment of justice-based systems and cultures (Hany et al., 2020). Organisational justice is typically conceptualised in three interrelated dimensions: distributive justice (perceived fairness in outcomes and rewards), procedural justice (fairness of decision-making processes), and interactional justice (quality of interpersonal treatment and communication). These dimensions collectively shape how employees interpret their treatment within the organisation and subsequently respond behaviourally and emotionally (Salsabil et al., 2023; Abbasi et al., 2021; Kadiri & Umemezia, 2018).

Workplace deviance refers to intentional behaviour that violates significant organisational norms and threatens the well-being of the organisation or its members (Bennett & Robinson, 2000; Robinson & Bennett, 1995). It is broadly categorised into two forms: interpersonal deviance, which targets individuals and includes behaviours such as gossiping, verbal aggression, and blame-shifting; and organisational deviance, which targets the organisation and involves actions like tardiness, theft, and misuse of resources. These behaviours disrupt organisational harmony, reduce operational efficiency, and compromise both individual and organisational performance (Kadiri & Umemezia, 2018).

Numerous factors have been identified as antecedents to workplace deviance. These include ineffective leadership, inadequate remuneration, poor working conditions, limited career advancement opportunities, and a failure to uphold employment agreements (Amazue et al., 2016). Elevated stress levels also contribute significantly, as they negatively impact psychological and physical well-being, potentially leading employees to engage in deviant acts as coping mechanisms. The resulting consequences—such as absenteeism, reduced work quality, interpersonal conflicts, and property damage—can impose substantial financial and reputational costs on organisations (Kadiri & Umemezia, 2018; Adeoti & Shamsuddin, 2020).

Recent empirical investigations have placed increased emphasis on the role of justice perceptions in mitigating deviant behaviour. Research demonstrates that when employees perceive organisational practices as fair, they are less likely to engage in counterproductive behaviours (Salsabil et al., 2023; Hany et al., 2020). On the contrary, perceived injustice often elicits feelings of resentment and disengagement, prompting retaliatory or equity-restoring behaviours that violate organisational norms (Ughamadu et al., 2024). The continued interest in this area is driven by the persistent and wide-ranging implications of deviance—not only on organisational performance but also on employee well-being and organisational culture (Adeoti & Shamsudin, 2020).

In the Nigerian context, workplace deviance has become a growing concern, particularly within public sector institutions. Empirical evidence suggests that systemic issues such as inequitable reward systems, poor interpersonal dynamics, and opaque organisational policies contribute significantly to perceptions of injustice in Nigerian organisations (Oge et al., 2015; Kadiri & Umemezia, 2018). This perception, in turn, triggers deviant responses as employees seek to restore perceived equity through non-conforming actions. Against this backdrop, the present study seeks to examine the influence of organisational justice—specifically distributive, procedural, and interactional justice—on deviant workplace behaviour among lecturers at the University of Benin, Edo State, Nigeria.

Statement of the Research Problem

Although existing literature consistently identifies organisational justice as a critical determinant of workplace behaviour, empirical findings on its relationship with deviant workplace behaviour remain inconclusive and context-sensitive. For

instance, studies by Salsabil et al. (2023) and Kadiri and Umemezia (2018) reported no statistically significant association between organisational justice and workplace deviance, whereas other investigations, such as those by Abbasi et al. (2021) and Hany et al. (2020), found robust negative correlations. This divergence in empirical evidence suggests that the justice–deviance nexus is likely moderated by contextual factors—including cultural, institutional, and organisational dynamics—that remain insufficiently explored in the literature.

A significant proportion of existing research on organisational justice and workplace deviance has been conducted in non-African settings, particularly in Southeast Asia, North America, and the Middle East (e.g., Abbasi et al., 2021; Al-Zu'bi, 2010; Mahmood et al., 2019). These regions are characterised by socio-cultural and institutional environments that differ markedly from those found in Sub-Saharan Africa, particularly Nigeria. As a result, extrapolating findings from such contexts may yield limited theoretical or practical relevance for African organisational settings.

Although studies on organisational justice and workplace deviance in Nigeria is growing (e.g., Adeoti & Shamsuddin, 2020; Eze, 2023; Ohioyenoya & Eguavoen, 2019), the empirical scope of these studies has often been constrained. Many focus narrowly on general public sector organisations or local government institutions, with relatively few exploring higher education environments—particularly public universities—despite their unique institutional cultures and employment dynamics.

Moreover, a methodological gap persists in the treatment of organisational justice as a monolithic construct. While some studies adopt Colquitt's (2001) multidimensional framework—disaggregating organisational justice into distributive, procedural, and interactional components—many others do not examine how these distinct dimensions differentially influence specific types of deviant workplace behaviour (e.g., interpersonal vs. organisational deviance). This lack of granularity obscures a more nuanced understanding of the justice–deviance relationship and limits the formulation of targeted interventions. In response to these gaps, this study seeks to disaggregate organisational justice into its core dimensions and examine their individual effects on deviant behaviour among academic staff in a Nigerian public university.

Objectives of the Study

The broad objective of the study is to examine the influence of organisational justice on deviant workplace behaviour among lecturers at the University of Benin, Edo State, Nigeria. The specific objectives are to:

- i) Determine the relationship between procedural justice and workplace deviance among academic staff at the University Of Benin University Of Benin.
- ii) Ascertain the relationship between distributive justice and workplace deviance at the University of Benin.
- iii) Ascertain the relationship between distributive justice and workplace deviance at the University of Benin.

Research Hypotheses

The hypothesis for the study which was stated in the null form is listed below:

H₀₁: There is no significant relationship between procedural justice and workplace deviance

H₀₂: There is no significant relationship between distributive justice and workplace deviance

H₀₃: There is no significant relationship between interactional justice and workplace deviance

Literature Review

Organisational Justice

The concept of organisational justice is fundamentally rooted in Adams' (1965) Equity Theory, which posits that individuals evaluate fairness by comparing the ratio of their inputs (e.g., effort, skill, loyalty) to outcomes (e.g., salary, recognition) with those of comparable peers. When individuals perceive an imbalance—such as exerting more effort yet receiving fewer rewards—they experience a sense of inequity, which may prompt behavioural adjustments aimed at restoring balance. These responses can range from reducing work input, demanding better compensation, influencing colleagues to modify their efforts, or seeking alternative employment perceived as more equitable (Adams, 1965).

Equity Theory assumes that individuals are motivated by a drive for fairness in social and organisational exchanges. Employees who perceive that their commitment and contributions are not equitably rewarded are likely to interpret this disparity as unjust, which can lead to reduced motivation, lower engagement, and increased dissatisfaction (Juchnowicz & Kinowska, 2018). Importantly, perceptions of unfairness may arise not only from under-reward situations but also, albeit

less frequently, from over-reward contexts—though the psychological effects and thresholds for perceiving injustice may differ between these two conditions (Michałkiewicz, 2009).

Furthermore, the perception of fairness is influenced by individual norms, personal values, and cultural orientations. Adams (1965) emphasised that what constitutes a fair input–outcome ratio varies across individuals and social contexts, highlighting the subjective nature of justice evaluations.

In the organisational setting, organisational justice refers to employees' perceptions of fairness in decision-making processes, resource allocation, and interpersonal treatment (Greenberg, 1990; Kadiri & Umemezia, 2018; Adeoti & Shamsudin, 2020). It encompasses evaluations not only of policies and procedures but also of the quality of communication and both tangible (e.g., pay, benefits) and intangible (e.g., respect, recognition) exchanges between employees and the organisation (Nabatchi et al., 2007).

Initially conceptualised as a two-dimensional construct—comprising distributive justice (fairness of outcomes) and procedural justice (fairness of the processes that produce outcomes)—organisational justice was later expanded to include a third dimension, interactional justice, introduced by Bies and Moag (1986). This third dimension captures the quality of interpersonal treatment individuals receive, particularly in terms of respect, dignity, and transparency during interactions with authority figures or decision-makers.

Together, these three dimensions provide a comprehensive framework for understanding how fairness perceptions shape employee attitudes and behaviours, particularly within hierarchical and policy-driven institutions such as universities.

These dimensions of organisational justice are discussed below:

Distributive justice pertains to employees' perceptions of fairness in the allocation of organisational resources and outcomes, particularly in relation to their individual contributions and relative to others (Greenberg, 2005). This dimension encompasses both tangible rewards—such as salaries, bonuses, and promotions—and intangible outcomes, including recognition and praise. Assessments of distributive justice are typically informed by various normative principles, such as equity (distribution based on merit or performance), equality (equal allocation regardless of input), and

need (distribution based on individual circumstances) (Adams, 1963). Employees are more likely to perceive justice when they believe that their input–outcome ratio is consistent with that of their peers. To promote distributive fairness, organisations must adopt transparent reward systems, ensure impartiality in resource allocation, and align compensation structures with job demands, industry standards, and employee expectations.

Procedural justice refers to the perceived fairness of the processes, rules, and mechanisms used to make organisational decisions and allocate outcomes (Moorman et al., 1991; Dabbagh et al., 2012). Unlike distributive justice, which concerns outcomes, procedural justice emphasises the legitimacy and consistency of the methods used to reach those outcomes. Fair procedures are characterised by the consistent application of rules, neutrality, accuracy of information, voice (opportunity for input), correctability (appeal mechanisms), and ethicality (moral appropriateness), as outlined by Leventhal (1976). When employees perceive that organisational procedures are just—even if the resulting outcomes are unfavourable—they are more likely to accept decisions and comply with organisational norms (Cremer, 2005). Thus, procedural fairness enhances organisational trust, fosters legitimacy, and mitigates conflict, particularly in hierarchical institutions.

Interactional justice is the interpersonal dimension of organisational justice, focusing on the quality of treatment individuals receive during the implementation of organisational procedures and the communication of decisions (Greenberg & Colquitt, 2015). It comprises two subcomponents: interpersonal justice, which involves treating employees with dignity, respect, and courtesy; and informational justice, which concerns the provision of timely, adequate, and truthful explanations about organisational decisions (Colquitt, 2001). Effective interactional justice requires transparency, sincerity, and consistency in communication from supervisors and organisational leaders. According to Bies and Moag (1986), respectful interpersonal treatment fosters perceptions of fairness by enhancing employee trust and psychological safety. Similarly, providing comprehensive and honest information helps employees make sense of decisions and reduces uncertainty (Colquitt & Rodell, 2011). Research has shown that when employees are treated with respect and provided with clear, accurate, and timely information, their perceptions of justice are significantly enhanced, leading to higher

engagement and lower incidences of deviant workplace behaviour (Ledimo & Hlongwane, 2017).

Together, these three dimensions—distributive, procedural, and interactional justice—offer a comprehensive framework for understanding how employees evaluate fairness in the workplace and how these evaluations influence behavioural and attitudinal outcomes.

Workplace Deviance

Deviance, in a general sociological sense, refers to behaviours that diverge from societal norms and expectations. These behaviours may range from relatively minor infractions—such as dishonesty or rule violations—to more severe acts like fraud or criminal misconduct (Bennett & Robinson, 2000; Robinson & Bennett, 1995). In the organisational context, workplace deviance is defined as voluntary, intentional behaviour that violates established organisational norms, ultimately threatening the interests and well-being of the organisation and its stakeholders (Robinson & Bennett, 1995; Bowling & Gruys, 2010; Zoghbi-Manrique-de-Lara, 2020).

Such behaviours encompass a broad range of actions, including mistreating coworkers, chronic absenteeism, misuse of organisational property, and non-compliance with work policies (Kadiri & Umemezia, 2018; Omar & Ahmad, 2019). Deviant behaviour is inherently counterproductive as it disrupts social cohesion, erodes trust, lowers morale, and impairs team performance (Henle et al., 2020; Qureshi et al., 2023). Studies have indicated that between 33% and 75% of employees engage in some form of deviant workplace conduct during their careers (Harper, 1990; Robinson & Bennett, 1995; Javed et al., 2019).

Robinson and Bennett (1995) introduced a widely accepted typology of workplace deviance, which distinguishes between two primary forms: interpersonal deviance and organisational deviance.

- **Interpersonal Deviance** refers to behaviour directed at individuals within the organisation—usually coworkers or supervisors. Examples include verbal abuse, bullying, gossiping, scapegoating, favouritism, and disrespectful communication. Subcategories include political deviance, such as manipulation, withholding information, and favouritism, and personal aggression, such as verbal hostility, sexual harassment, and physical threats (Amazue et al., 2022; Greenbaum et al., 2018).
- **Organisational Deviance**, on the other hand, is targeted at the organisation itself. It comprises

two subtypes: production deviance (e.g., excessive breaks, reduced effort, presenteeism, and intentional inefficiency) and property deviance (e.g., theft, sabotage, misuse of confidential information, or vandalism). These actions directly undermine productivity, financial stability, and the organisation's ethical reputation (Naseer et al., 2018; Majeed et al., 2020).

Both types of deviance have substantial organisational and psychological costs. Consequences include diminished job satisfaction, increased turnover intentions, emotional exhaustion, and erosion of organisational commitment (Bennett & Robinson, 2000; Omar & Ahmad, 2019; Kadiri & Umemezia, 2018). Additionally, workplace deviance often thrives in organisational cultures marked by poor leadership, perceived injustice, weak accountability mechanisms, and toxic interpersonal dynamics (Henle et al., 2020; Qureshi et al., 2023).

From a managerial and policy standpoint, understanding the antecedents and manifestations of workplace deviance is vital to maintaining an ethical and efficient work environment. Preventive strategies may include promoting organisational justice, enhancing leadership integrity, improving communication structures, and instituting fair grievance systems (Zoghbi-Manrique-de-Lara, 2020; Javed et al., 2019).

Theoretical Framework: Social Exchange Theory (SET)

This study is anchored in Social Exchange Theory (SET), originally formulated by Blau (1964) and subsequently advanced by scholars such as Emerson (1976), Homans (1958), and Cropanzano and Mitchell (2005). SET provides a foundational lens for analysing reciprocal interactions and relational dynamics within organisational settings. At its core, the theory posits that social relationships are governed by a cost-benefit calculus, where individuals engage in mutual exchanges aimed at maximising personal or collective gains while minimising losses.

A pivotal element of SET is the norm of reciprocity (Gouldner, 1960), which asserts that individuals are psychologically and socially compelled to return favours or respond proportionally to positive or negative treatment. Within organisations, employees enter into exchange relationships with their employers, where they contribute time, effort, skills, and loyalty in return for fair compensation, respectful treatment, recognition, and opportunities

for advancement (Colquitt et al., 2013; Foa & Foa, 1974).

When employees perceive fairness in organisational practices—whether in the distribution of resources (distributive justice), the transparency of procedures (procedural justice), or the quality of interpersonal treatment (interactional justice)—they are more likely to reciprocate with positive work behaviours, such as organisational citizenship behaviour, job satisfaction, and loyalty (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005; Cropanzano et al., 2017). Conversely, perceived injustices disrupt the exchange balance and may elicit negative reciprocity, where employees retaliate through deviant workplace behaviours—including absenteeism, withdrawal, sabotage, and interpersonal hostility—as a form of psychological rebalancing (Kadiri & Umemezia, 2018; Adeoti & Shamsudin, 2021).

SET consists of three core components:

- **Resources:** These include tangible rewards (e.g., salary, promotions, benefits) and intangible outcomes (e.g., trust, respect, recognition) (Foa & Foa, 1974).
- **Actors:** Individuals or groups who engage in the exchange process, guided by rational evaluations of perceived returns and fairness (Thibaut & Kelley, 1959).
- **Exchange process:** The dynamic interaction involving the giving and receiving of valued resources, which may be governed by formal contracts or implicit psychological agreements (Macneil, 1980; Coleman, 1990).

SET assumes that actors are self-interested but rational, and that fairness within these exchanges builds relational cohesion, while violations of reciprocity norms—particularly via organisational injustice—erode trust and trigger retaliatory behaviours (Obalade & Mtembu, 2023).

Applied to this study, SET provides a useful explanatory mechanism for understanding how perceptions of distributive, procedural, and interactional justice affect employee behaviour. When employees perceive justice in organisational policies and interactions, they view the exchange relationship as balanced and trustworthy, reducing the likelihood of deviance. However, when they perceive inequities—such as favouritism, lack of transparency, or inequitable treatment—they may interpret these violations as social debts, thereby increasing the probability of workplace deviance as a form of negative reciprocity (Cropanzano et al., 2017; Ughamadu, Akintayo, & Osibanjo, 2024).

Empirical Evidence on Organisational Justice and Workplace Deviance

A growing body of empirical research highlights the pivotal role of organisational justice in shaping employee behaviour, particularly concerning workplace deviance. Conceptualised through three core dimensions—distributive, procedural, and interactional justice (Colquitt, 2001; Greenberg, 1990)—organisational justice reflects employees' perceptions of fairness in outcome distribution, decision-making procedures, and interpersonal treatment. While a consistent inverse relationship between justice perceptions and deviance has been reported, findings remain contextually contingent, varying by organisational setting, cultural norms, and individual dispositions.

For instance, Salsabil et al. (2023), studying Indonesian SMEs, found a negative but statistically insignificant relationship between justice and deviance, suggesting the influence of intervening variables such as leadership style, psychological contract breach, or organisational climate. Conversely, Abbasi et al. (2021), in a study of Malaysian higher education institutions, reported a significant inverse relationship, demonstrating that transparent and equitable treatment mitigates deviant behaviours. Hany et al. (2020) also found that procedural and interactional justice significantly predicted lower levels of deviance, reinforcing the argument that perceived fairness fosters pro-social conduct.

Related constructs—organisational commitment and job satisfaction—have also been examined as predictors or outcomes of workplace deviance. Ugwu and Okafor (2017) revealed a negative correlation between organisational commitment and deviant behaviour, suggesting that stronger affective and normative attachments reduce employees' propensity for misconduct. Similarly, Onyeizugbe, Ndubuisi-Okolo, and Chinedu (2021) demonstrated that political deviance negatively influences job satisfaction among staff in Nigerian tertiary institutions, emphasizing the detrimental effects of incivility and favouritism.

Evidence from the Nigerian public sector remains mixed. Kadiri and Umemezia (2018), investigating local government workers, reported no significant relationship between justice and deviant workplace behaviour, mirroring the inconclusive results of Salsabil et al. (2023). These findings may be explained by Nigeria's entrenched bureaucratic norms, which can weaken the behavioural impact of fairness perceptions.

In contrast, Ohiorenoya and Eguavoen (2019) observed that all three dimensions of justice positively influenced employee engagement in Nigerian public universities, suggesting that fairness promotes both performance and citizenship behaviours. Adeoti and Shamsudin (2020) identified job pressure and opportunity as key predictors of workplace deviance, highlighting that even under fair conditions, stress-inducing environments can trigger counterproductive work behaviours.

Additional research deepens our understanding of the justice–deviance nexus. Eze (2023) found that organisational career growth negatively correlates with organisational deviance, while inequitable remuneration and low perceptions of professional competence are associated with interpersonal deviance. In the international context, Al-Zu'bi (2010) demonstrated that procedural and interactional justice enhance job satisfaction, indirectly reducing deviance, while Aubé, Rousseau, and Morin (2007) found that perceptions of fairness reduce workplace aggression—a subset of interpersonal deviance. Likewise, Mahmood et al. (2019) established that justice perceptions significantly predict reductions in counterproductive work behaviour in Pakistani manufacturing firms.

Recent work by Ughamadu, Akintayo, and Osibanjo (2024) underscores the importance of distributive and procedural justice in promoting positive organisational behaviour among public school teachers in Nigeria. Their findings support justice-based policy interventions as a viable mechanism for enhancing work climates and reducing deviance.

Moreover, studies such as Al Halbusi et al. (2022) and Khalid et al. (2023) emphasize the role of mediators (e.g., job satisfaction, psychological ownership) and moderators (e.g., ethical climate, emotional intelligence) in the justice–deviance relationship, offering more nuanced explanations of variability in employee responses across sectors and cultures.

In summary, the literature converges on the assertion that perceived injustice—whether in outcomes, procedures, or interpersonal treatment—can act as a catalyst for deviant behaviour. However, the variability in empirical findings underlines the need to contextualise justice research, especially in developing economies where institutional dynamics, corruption perceptions, and employment precarity may attenuate justice mechanisms. Understanding these contingencies is essential for developing

targeted, culturally responsive interventions aimed at mitigating workplace deviance and enhancing organisational performance.

Methodology

This study employed a survey research design. This approach is particularly effective for soliciting respondents' honest opinions and perspectives while guaranteeing the anonymity of the respondents. The target population for this study consisted of all lecturers at the University of Benin, Benin City, Nigeria, totalling 3000 academic staff members (Record and Statistics, 2023). To determine the sample size, Yamane's formula (1967) was applied, which is a statistical method for calculating sample size. The formula is expressed as:

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

Where:

n = minimum sample size

N = Total Population

e = constant (0.05)

$$n = n, = \frac{3000}{1 + 3000(0.05)^2} = 352.941 \cong 353$$

Hence, approximately 353 respondents were selected for the study using the convenience sampling technique. Convenience sampling technique enables the researchers to recruit respondents from convenient locations such as their offices, staff cafeterias, union building during ASUU meetings and departmental offices. The organisational justice scale was adapted from Niehoff and Moorman (1993). This scale, which is largely based on Moorman's (1991) organisational justice scale assessed respondents' perceptions of organisational justice along three dimensions: distributive justice, procedural justice and

interactional justice. Workplace deviance was measured with Bennett and Robinson (2000) workplace deviance scale. The research instrument consisted of a structured questionnaire with closed-ended questions in a five-point Likert format, ranging from Strongly Agree (5) to Strongly Disagree (1). The questionnaire was divided into two sections: Section A gathered demographic information, while Section B comprised questions on organisational justice and workplace deviance. Out of 353 distributed questionnaires, 103 copies of the questionnaire were retrieved and found useful for data analysis. This study employed descriptive statistics (i.e. frequency counts, percentages, mean, and standard deviation), and inferential statistics (i.e. correlation, and regression analyses) to investigate perceptions of organisational justice and workplace deviance. Data analysis was conducted using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 25.0.

Model Specification

The perception of organisational justice and workplace deviance is represented in the model below, with organisational justice as a function of workplace deviance characterized by distributive justice, procedural justice, and interactional justice.

This can be written in an explicit econometric form as:

$$WD = \alpha_0 + \alpha_1 DJ + \alpha_2 PJ + \alpha_3 IJ + C$$

Where;

WD = Workplace Deviance

DJ = Distributive Justice

PJ = Procedural Justice

IJ = Interactional Justice

C= Constant

Results and Discussion

Demographics of Respondents

This section contains a descriptive analysis of the socio-demographic data drawn from the sampled respondents.

Table 1 Respondents' Demographic Profile

SN	VARIABLES	OPTION	Responses	
			FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE (%)
1	Gender	Male	64	62.1
		Female	39	37.9
		Total	103	100
2	Age	Less than 25 years	-	-
		25-40 years	27	26.2
		41-65 years	75	72.8
		66 years and above	1	1.0
		Total	103	100

3	Marital Status	Single	8	7.8
		Married	84	81.6
		Divorced/Separated	11	10.7
		Total	103	100
4	Educational Qualification	BSc	1	1.0
		MSc/MBA	19	18.4
		PhD	83	80.6
		Total	103	100.0
5	Working Experience	Less than a year	-	-
		1-5 years	16	15.5
		6-10 years	20	19.4
		11-15 years	58	56.3
		16 years and above	9	8.7
		Total	103	100
6	Job-status/title	Graduate Assistant	6	5.8
		Assistant Lecturer	8	7.8
		Lecturer II	15	14.6
		Lecturer I	27	26.2
		Senior Lecturer	26	25.2
		Associate Professor	12	11.7
		Professor	9	8.7
		Total	103	100

Table 1 presents the demographic profile of the respondents. The gender distribution shows a predominance of male participants ($n = 64$; 62.1%), with female respondents accounting for 37.9% ($n = 39$) of the sample. In terms of age, 26.2% ($n = 27$) of respondents fall within the 25–40 age bracket, while the majority ($n = 75$; 72.8%) are between 41–65 years old, and a small fraction ($n = 1$; 1.0%) are aged 66 years and above.

Regarding marital status, most respondents are married ($n = 84$; 81.6%), followed by divorced/separated ($n = 11$; 10.7%) and single respondents ($n = 8$; 7.8%). Educational qualifications reveal a highly educated sample, with the majority holding doctoral degrees ($n = 83$; 80.6%), followed by Master's/MBA holders ($n = 19$; 18.4%) and a single respondent ($n = 1$; 1.0%) possessing only a Bachelor's degree.

Work experience varies, with 15.5% ($n = 16$) having served for 1–5 years, 19.4% ($n = 20$) for 6–10 years, 56.3% ($n = 58$) for 11–15 years, and 14.6% ($n = 15$) for 16 years or more. Job status distribution indicates that the largest groups are Lecturer I ($n = 27$; 26.2%) and Senior Lecturer ($n = 26$; 25.1%), followed by Lecturer II ($n = 15$; 14.6%), Associate Professor ($n = 12$; 11.7%), Professor ($n = 9$; 8.7%), Assistant Lecturer ($n = 8$; 7.8%), and Graduate Assistant ($n = 6$; 5.8%).

Relationship Between Perceived Organisational Justice and Workplace Deviance.

This section examines the relationship between the three dimensions of organisational justice—distributive, procedural, and interactional—and the dependent variable, workplace deviance. The analysis focuses on elucidating how variations in these justice dimensions influence patterns of employee behaviour within the organisational context.

Correlations Matrix on Relationship Between Organisational Justice and Workplace Deviance

This section examines the correlational relationship between organisational justice (encompassing distributive justice, procedural justice, and interactional justice) and workplace deviance among university lecturers. Specifically, it assesses the strength and direction of the relationship, as well as the extent to which changes in one variable influence the other.

Table 2: Correlation Matrix of study variables

Correlation Matrix of study variables						
Variables	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4
Deviant Workplace Behaviour	2.78	0.686	1			
Distributive Justice	3.14	0.760	-0.296**	1		
Procedural Justice	3.78	0.638	-0.219*	0.242*	1	
Interactional Justice	3.97	0.557	-0.303**	0.254**	0.524**	1

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).
* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).
N=103

Table 2 presents the correlation matrix between the study variables, revealing significant relationships between organisational justice dimensions and deviant workplace behaviour (DWB). Specifically, results indicate that distributive justice exhibits a strong negative correlation with DWB ($r = -0.296$, $p < 0.01$), indicating that higher levels of DWB are associated with lower levels of distributive justice. In addition, the results show that procedural justice has a significant negative correlation with DWB ($r = -0.219$, $p = 0.026$), suggesting that variations in one variable are accompanied by opposite changes in the other. Similarly, Interactional justice displays a strong negative correlation with DWB ($r = -0.303$, $p = 0.002$), implying that decreased interactional justice is linked to increased DWB.

Table 3: Relationship Between Organisational Justice and Deviant Workplace Behaviour

Relationship Between Organisational Justice and Deviant Workplace Behaviour							
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	Remark
		β	Std. Error	Beta			
1	(Constant)	4.698	0.504		9.313	0.000	
	Distributive Justice	-0.206	0.087	-0.228	-2.354	0.021	S
	Procedural Justice	-0.052	0.118	-0.049	-0.443	0.658	NS
	Interactional Justice	-0.270	0.136	-0.219	-1.987	0.050	S

a. Predictors: (Constant), Interactional Justice, Distributive Justice, Procedural Justice
b. Dependent Variable: Workplace Deviance
c. NS: Not Significant, S: Significant
d. $R^2 = 0.452$; $Adj R^2 = 0.411$.; F-Statistic = 5.584; F-Statistic (Prob) = 0.001
e. Durbin-Watson: 1.623

Table 3 presents the multiple regression results for the study variables at the 5% significance level.

The adjusted R-squared value of 0.411 (41.1%) indicates that organisational justice explains approximately 41.1% of the variance in deviant workplace behaviour, while the remaining 58.9% is attributable to other factors not captured in this study. This reflects a moderate explanatory power, suggesting that the model is reasonably well specified and yields reliable results. The Durbin-Watson statistic of 1.623, being close to the ideal value of 2, suggests minimal autocorrelation, thereby supporting the model's validity. Moreover, the F-statistic of 5.584, with an associated p-value of 0.001 (< 0.05), provides strong evidence against the null hypothesis, confirming a statistically significant overall relationship between organisational justice and workplace deviance.

The coefficient estimates reveal that distributive justice has a statistically significant negative

relationship with workplace deviance ($\beta = -0.206$; $t = -2.354$; $p < 0.05$). This indicates that lower levels of distributive justice are associated with higher levels of deviant workplace behaviour; specifically, a one-unit decrease in distributive justice is expected to correspond to a 0.206-unit increase in workplace deviance. Similarly, interactional justice also shows a significant negative association with workplace deviance ($\beta = -0.270$; $t = -1.987$; $p < 0.05$), suggesting that reduced fairness in interpersonal treatment and communication is linked to an increase in deviant behaviours. In contrast, procedural justice is not significantly related to workplace deviance ($\beta = -0.052$; $t = -0.443$; $p > 0.05$), implying that the mere presence of procedural policies may not meaningfully influence deviant behaviour among lecturers in this context.

Discussion of Findings

The present study examined the influence of distributive, procedural, and interactional justice on deviant workplace behaviour (DWB) among lecturers at the University of Benin. Findings indicate that all three justice dimensions are negatively associated with DWB, underscoring the importance of fairness perceptions in shaping employee conduct.

Distributive justice showed a strong inverse relationship with deviance, suggesting that lecturers who perceive equitable allocation of rewards, resources, and opportunities are less inclined to engage in counterproductive acts. This is consistent with Equity Theory (Adams, 1963, 1965), which posits that individuals assess fairness by comparing their contributions and outcomes relative to others. Perceived inequity can lead to behavioural responses aimed at restoring balance (Greenberg, 1990; Oge, Ifeanyi, & Charles-Gozie, 2015; Rawls, 2019). Similar results have been reported by Alessandri et al. (2020), who found that distributive justice was a significant predictor of reduced counterproductive work behaviour in Italian public organisations.

Procedural justice was also negatively associated with DWB, aligning with Leventhal's (1976) framework, which highlights the role of fair and transparent processes in fostering compliance and organisational commitment. However, when considered alongside other justice dimensions, procedural justice did not significantly predict deviance. This echoes the findings of Qureshi et al. (2023) in Pakistani higher education, where procedural fairness alone failed to reduce deviance in contexts marked by weak enforcement mechanisms. In Nigerian public universities, procedural systems may be perceived as symbolic or inconsistently applied, limiting their behavioural impact (Kadiri & Umemezia, 2018).

Interactional justice emerged as both negatively related to and a significant predictor of DWB. This highlights the importance of respectful interpersonal treatment and transparent communication. As Bies and Moag (1986) contend, interactional justice encompasses both the manner and content of interpersonal exchanges. Positive experiences in this regard encourage cooperation and deter misconduct (Colquitt & Rodell, 2011; Hany, Hassan, & Badran, 2020; Peng et al., 2021). Cross-national evidence from Meng et al. (2024) and Greenbaum et al. (2020) confirms that respectful treatment fosters pro-social behaviour across sectors.

Theoretically, these results integrate Equity Theory and Social Exchange Theory (SET) (Blau, 1964; Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005). From an equity perspective, fair distribution of outcomes reduces retaliatory motives. From an exchange perspective, high interactional justice signals respect and value, prompting reciprocal positive behaviours, while perceived injustice disrupts the exchange balance, increasing deviance (Moorman, Niehoff, & Organ, 1993; Chernyak-Hai & Rabenu, 2018).

The relatively weak predictive role of procedural justice may be culturally contingent. In high power-distance, collectivist contexts such as Nigeria, tangible outcomes and daily interpersonal experiences may hold greater salience than abstract procedural mechanisms (Cremer, 2005; Juchnowicz & Kinowska, 2018; Hofstede, 2011). Nigerian public sector challenges—such as bureaucratic inefficiency, politicised decision-making, underfunding, and inconsistent rule enforcement (Adeoti, Shamsudin, & Mohammad, 2021; Oge et al., 2015)—likely reinforce the primacy of distributive and interactional justice over procedural fairness.

The present findings align with Nigerian evidence showing that organisational justice reduces deviance (Adeoti et al., 2021; Ugwu & Okafor, 2017; Amazue, Nwatu, Ome, & Uzuegbu, 2016) and with Akinbobola (2022), who reported similar patterns in Nigerian federal institutions. Internationally, they resonate with Khattak et al. (2019) in Pakistan and Peng et al. (2021) in China, both confirming that distributive and interactional justice exert stronger behavioural influence than procedural justice in collectivist cultures. These consistencies reinforce the universality of the fairness–deviance link while highlighting cultural and institutional moderators.

Implications for Policy and Practice

The findings carry significant implications for both policymakers and university administrators. At the policy level, emphasis should be placed on enhancing distributive justice through transparent promotion criteria, equitable reward allocation, and merit-based resource distribution (Adams, 1965; Greenberg, 1990). These measures can help mitigate perceptions of inequity that often drive deviant behaviour.

At the managerial level, leadership development programmes should focus on cultivating interactional justice. Training in respectful communication, active listening, and transparent decision-making can foster trust and goodwill

among staff, reducing the likelihood of misconduct (Bies & Moag, 1986; Moorman et al., 1993).

Although procedural justice did not emerge as a significant predictor of deviance in this study, strengthening its legitimacy remains important. Efforts to ensure consistency in policy application, encourage participatory decision-making, and provide clear grievance procedures could, over time, improve employee trust in formal systems (Leventhal, 1976).

Recommendations

Based on the study's findings, several evidence-based recommendations are proposed for policymakers, university administrators, and other stakeholders in Nigerian public universities to address workplace deviance through the promotion of organisational justice.

1. First, enhancing fairness in resource allocation is critical. University management should ensure that remuneration, research funding, promotions, and workload assignments are distributed in a transparent and equitable manner. This can be achieved by implementing clear, measurable criteria for promotions and performance appraisals to minimise perceptions of favouritism and bias. Additionally, regular reviews of salary structures and benefits should be undertaken to align them with prevailing industry standards and cost-of-living adjustments.
2. Second, strengthening respectful and transparent communication is essential for fostering a positive organisational climate. Institutions should promote a culture of civility, respect, and open dialogue between academic staff and management. Timely, accurate, and comprehensive explanations should be provided for administrative and policy decisions that affect staff. Furthermore, training programmes in effective interpersonal communication, conflict resolution, and emotional intelligence should be offered to department heads and administrators to enhance their capacity for constructive engagement.
3. Third, while procedural justice did not significantly predict workplace deviance in this study, the legitimacy and perceived fairness of procedural mechanisms remain important for organisational harmony. Universities should encourage the active involvement of academic staff in decision-making processes, such as through faculty

committees and consultative forums. Such participatory approaches can increase perceptions of fairness and foster greater acceptance of institutional outcomes.

4. Fourth, it is important to address broader organisational and individual factors that influence workplace behaviour. Justice perceptions often interact with variables such as job pressure, leadership style, and organisational culture. Consequently, universities should implement stress management interventions, mentoring programmes, and leadership development initiatives to cultivate supportive and ethical work environments.
5. Finally, the institutionalisation of monitoring and feedback systems is vital for sustaining fairness. Regular surveys or other feedback channels should be established to assess staff perceptions of organisational justice and the overall workplace climate. Data from these assessments should be used proactively to identify and address early warning signs of dissatisfaction that may escalate into deviant behaviours, thereby enabling timely and targeted interventions.

By adopting these recommendations, Nigerian public universities can create a more equitable, respectful, and participatory organisational environment, which is likely to reduce deviant behaviours and enhance institutional performance.

Future Research Directions

Comparative studies across Nigerian tertiary institutions could investigate variations in perceptions of organisational justice and workplace deviance. Longitudinal research could explore the long-term impacts of justice perceptions on job satisfaction, well-being, and organisational commitment. Cross-cultural comparisons could further identify universal versus context-specific justice determinants. Additionally, examining the role of leadership styles, management practices, and institutional policies in shaping fairness perceptions would deepen theoretical and practical understanding. Experimental evaluations of organisational justice interventions could provide causal evidence of their effectiveness in reducing deviance and enhancing positive organisational outcomes.

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