

Received Date: 22 February 2026

Accepted Date: 14 March 2026

Published Date: 2 April 2026

Contributions from theories of organisational justice: A narrative and critical literature review

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Abstract

Organisational justice is a prolific field of research in management sciences and work psychology. This article provides a narrative and critical review of the literature on the theoretical and empirical contributions of this multidimensional construct. Drawing on a body of work selected through a transparent protocol (including seminal meta-analyses, empirical studies conducted across diverse geographical and sectoral contexts (Morocco, Japan, Hong Kong, Ghana, Tunisia, Turkey), and foundational integrative models), we examine the conceptual foundations of organisational justice, the explanatory mechanisms identified (social exchange theory, affective perspective, social identity), the main attitudinal and behavioural consequences documented, and contemporary extensions of the concept, particularly in the context of digital transformation. The cross-sectional analysis reveals consensus on the validity of the four-dimensional model and the significant effects of perceived justice on commitment, satisfaction, and turnover intention, whilst identifying recurring methodological limitations and persistent theoretical gaps. An integrative conceptual framework is proposed, articulating the antecedents, dimensions, mediating mechanisms, and

consequences of organisational justice. Priority directions for future research are formulated.

Keywords: organisational justice; distributive justice; procedural justice; interactional justice; social exchange; organisational commitment; well-being at work; literature review

1. Introduction

Organisational justice, defined as the set of perceptions of fairness relating to decisions, procedures and interactions within the workplace (Greenberg, 1987; Byrne and Cropanzano, 2001), is one of the most widely studied constructs in management science and occupational psychology. Since Adams' (1963, 1965) seminal work on equity theory, this concept has undergone considerable theoretical development, culminating in a multidimensional model incorporating distributive, procedural, interpersonal and informational dimensions (Colquitt, 2001). Three decades of empirical research have demonstrated that perceptions of fairness significantly influence employees' attitudes and behaviours, whether in terms of their organisational commitment, satisfaction, intention to leave the organisation, or work performance (Cohen-Charash and Spector, 2001;

Colquitt et al., 2001; Colquitt et al., 2013; Rupp et al., 2014; Özkan, 2022).

Despite the richness of this body of research, the field of organisational justice presents persistent theoretical and methodological challenges. The multiplicity of theoretical frameworks employed (social exchange theory (Blau, 1964), affective perspective (Weiss and Cropanzano, 1996), social identity theory (Tajfel and Turner, 1979), the demands-resources model (Bakker and Demerouti, 2007)) raises the question of whether they complement or compete with one another in explaining the mechanisms through which perceived justice influences work outcomes (Colquitt et al., 2013; Ho, 2025). Persistent dimensional discrepancies between studies, the predominance of cross-sectional designs and the under-representation of non-Western contexts undermine the validity of certain conclusions (El Akremi, Nasr and Camerman, 2006; Adamovic, 2023; Silva and Caetano, 2016). Furthermore, contemporary changes in the world of work, notably the growing integration of artificial intelligence into human resource management decision-making processes, raise novel questions regarding perceived justice (Bennett and Martin, 2025; Borgesano et al., 2025).

The aim of this article is to provide a narrative and critical synthesis of the literature on the contributions of organisational justice theories. Going beyond a simple review, this study aims to: (a) map the conceptual and theoretical foundations of the construct; (b) identify and compare the explanatory mechanisms through which perceived justice influences attitudes and behaviours at work; (c) synthesise the empirical and meta-analytical evidence on its main consequences; (d) analyse contemporary extensions of the concept; (e) propose an integrative conceptual framework; and (f) formulate guidelines to guide future research. The article is structured into ten sections covering, in turn, the review methodology, theoretical foundations, explanatory mechanisms, empirical consequences, antecedents and moderators, contemporary extensions, critical cross-sectional analysis, the integrative conceptual framework, discussion and outlook, before concluding.

2. Methodology of the literature review

This review adopts a narrative approach, aiming to integrate, synthesise and critically evaluate the main theoretical and empirical contributions in the field of organisational justice (Green, Johnson and Adams, 2006; Snyder, 2019). This methodological choice is justified by the objective of covering a broad theoretical spectrum, including works of different types (meta-analyses, quantitative and qualitative empirical

studies, integrative models, book chapters), which makes meta-analysis or strict systematic reviews less suitable.

2.1. Literature search strategy

The literature review was conducted between September 2024 and March 2025 in the following databases: Scopus, Web of Science, PsycINFO, Google Scholar and the French-language portals Cairn and HAL. The search queries combined the following keywords: ‘organisational justice’, ‘distributive justice’, ‘procedural justice’, ‘interactional justice’, ‘fairness perceptions’, crossed with ‘organisational commitment’, ‘job satisfaction’, ‘turnover intention’, ‘well-being’, ‘performance’, ‘OCB’, ‘social exchange’. The searches were supplemented by a review of the reference lists of key articles (backward snowballing) and a check of subsequent citations of the foundational works via Google Scholar (forward snowballing).

2.2. Inclusion and exclusion criteria

The inclusion criteria were as follows: (a) articles published in peer-reviewed journals or chapters in academic books; (b) direct theoretical or empirical contribution to the field of organisational justice; (c) articles written in French or English; (d) relevance to the examination of the mechanisms, consequences or extensions of organisational justice. Exclusion criteria included: (a) conference papers not published in journals; (b) master’s theses; (c) articles with no direct link to perceptions of justice at work. Doctoral theses were included where they constituted key theoretical sources. The period covered ranges from the seminal works (Adams, 1963) to the most recent publications (2025), with particular attention paid to contributions from the last decade.

2.3. Final corpus and classification

The selection process resulted in a corpus of 65 analysed references, comprising: 4 meta-analyses, 12 quantitative empirical studies, 2 qualitative studies, 8 literature reviews and integrative models, 5 conceptual or theoretical articles, 3 chapters from academic books, and seminal works in the field. The articles were analysed using a structured evaluation framework comprising eight dimensions: reference, objective, methodology, theoretical framework, dimensions of justice studied, main findings, limitations, and contribution to the field. The results of this analysis are summarised in Tables 1, 2 and 3.

3. Conceptual and theoretical foundations of organisational justice

3.1. Origins and conceptualisation

The term 'organisational justice' was introduced by Greenberg (1987) to refer to the body of theories relating to fairness in the workplace. This concept is fundamentally concerned with how individuals perceive fairness within their working environment, emphasising from the outset the subjective nature inherent in perceptions of justice: it is not a matter of objective fairness, but of an individual cognitive construct (Byrne and Cropanzano, 2001). Conceptually, organisational justice encompasses the social rules and norms governing three fundamental aspects of organisational functioning: the distribution of resources and benefits, the mechanisms and procedures governing this distribution, and the nature of the interpersonal relationships accompanying decision-making processes (Folger and Cropanzano, 1998). Cropanzano et al. (2007) propose a complementary conceptualisation by distinguishing three components of justice: justice events (what happens), justice judgements (evaluations) and justice reactions (responses). This distinction highlights that organisational justice is both an objective phenomenon and a perceptual process.

3.2. From the theory of relative deprivation to the theory of equity

The theoretical roots of organisational justice lie in the concept of relative deprivation (Stouffer et al., 1949), according to which individuals' reactions depend not only on the absolute level of outcome achieved, but also on the comparison made with relevant benchmarks. A sense of deprivation arises when the perceived reward falls short of expectations or when the social comparison proves unfavourable.

Equity theory, formulated by Adams (1963, 1965), provides the foundational framework for organisational justice. As Maia, Raymondie and Steiner (2024) outline in their analysis of Adams's work, this theory posits that equity results from the perception of the contribution-reward ratio compared to that of a reference point. Contributions include the intensity of effort, skills, experience and time invested; rewards encompass salary, recognition, benefits and promotions (Bouraoui, 2019). Inequity (whether favourable or unfavourable) creates motivational tension, prompting the individual to restore balance through behavioural means (modifying contributions, withdrawal) or cognitive means (re-evaluating perceptions, changing the reference point). Subsequent research on remuneration has confirmed that

over-remuneration leads to increased productivity, whilst under-remuneration results in a decline in performance and can lead to counterproductive behaviour (Maia et al., 2024).

Although foundational, equity theory has been subject to methodological criticism regarding the experimental manipulation of inequity and the potentially transient nature of certain effects (Maia et al., 2024). More fundamentally, as it focuses on the distributive dimension, it has proved insufficient to account for the complexity of perceptions of justice, necessitating the development of procedural (Thibaut and Walker, 1975; Leventhal, 1980) and interactional (Bies and Moag, 1986) dimensions. The cognitive theory of referents (Folger, 1987) has also enriched our understanding of comparison processes by showing that the referent may be a colleague, a past experience, or even a fictional referent (Kulik and Ambrose, 1992).

3.3. The multidimensional model

Organisational justice is now understood as a multidimensional construct. Whilst the literature reveals several positions regarding the number of dimensions (the two-factor model of Sweeney and McFarlin (1992), the three-dimensional distinction adopted by Moorman (1991), and the four-dimensional model validated by Colquitt (2001)), the latter has gradually established itself as the dominant conceptualisation. El Akremi et al. (2006) point out, however, that the divergence in the dimensional structures used constitutes an obstacle to the integration of empirical research.

Distributive justice represents the oldest dimension, deriving directly from Adams's equity theory. It refers to the perception of the fairness of the economic or socio-emotional rewards received in relation to individual contributions (Greenberg, 1990; El Akremi et al., 2006). The subjective nature of this assessment is worth highlighting: the same reward may satisfy one individual whilst leaving another indifferent (Bouraoui, 2019). The study by Lahlou-Kassi and Eddakir (2025) in the Moroccan banking sector confirms the empirical relevance of this dimension by demonstrating its positive and significant effect on overall organisational commitment ($\beta = 0.576$), explaining 33.2% of its variance.

Procedural justice, introduced by Thibaut and Walker (1975) in the legal field and transposed to the organisational context by Leventhal (1980), refers to the subjective perception of the rules and procedures used to determine the allocation of rewards. It concerns two complementary aspects: the sense of being able to influence decision-making processes (*voice*) and the assessment of the inherent qualities of procedures, evaluated against Leventhal's six rules: consistency, bias

elimination, fairness, correctness, representativeness and ethics. Ait Essbaa and Bachelard (2021) illustrate, in the context of Moroccan local authorities, how the lack of the 'voice' principle and the glass ceiling phenomenon for women constitute concrete manifestations of procedural injustice.

Interactional justice, introduced by Bies and Moag (1986), comprises two components. **Interpersonal justice** relates to the respect, dignity and sensitivity demonstrated by the line manager when implementing decisions (Colquitt, 2001). **Informational justice** concerns the perception of fairness regarding the explanations and justifications provided, based on the principles of sincerity, honesty and adequate justification (Bies and Moag, 1986; Greenberg, 1993). Bies and Moag (1986) identify four fundamental rules governing interactional quality: justification, sincerity, respect and civility.

3.4. Debates surrounding the dimensional structure

The question of the optimal dimensional structure remains a subject of debate. The empirical study by Dahmen et al. (2023), conducted within a Tunisian public administration, reveals that employees do not perceive distributive justice and procedural justice separately, but merge them into a distinct 'institutional justice' separate from interactional 'justice'. This finding, consistent with the agent/system model (Bies and Moag, 1986; Rupp et al., 2014) according to which employees primarily distinguish between justice emanating from the organisation and that emanating from the supervisor, suggests that the relevance of a given dimensional structure may vary across contexts. Nevertheless, the meta-analysis by Colquitt et al. (2013), covering 493 independent samples, confirms the discriminant validity of the four dimensions, which have distinct relationships with the outcome variables. Colquitt et al. (2001) had already demonstrated, in their first meta-analysis, that the four-factor model fits the data significantly better than two- or three-factor models.

4. Explanatory mechanisms: how does justice influence attitudes and behaviours?

Beyond identifying the consequences of justice, a central issue in the literature concerns understanding the mechanisms through which perceptions of justice exert their effects. El Akremi et al. (2006) identify the 'procedural black box' linking justice to its consequences as an area requiring substantial further investigation. Several theoretical frameworks have been employed to shed light on these mechanisms.

4.1. Social exchange theory

Social exchange theory (Blau, 1964; Gouldner, 1960) is the dominant paradigm for explaining the effects of organisational justice. According to this perspective, employees assess the quality of their exchange relationship with the organisation and respond reciprocally: treatment perceived as fair generates positive attitudes and beneficial behaviours, in accordance with the norm of reciprocity. The meta-analysis by Colquitt et al. (2013) provides substantial empirical support by demonstrating that indicators of social exchange quality (trust, organisational commitment, perceived organisational support (POS) and leader-member exchange (LMX)) mediate the relationship between the four dimensions of justice and positive behaviours. The correlations between the dimensions of justice and the indicators of social exchange are substantial: 0.50 for procedural justice, 0.48 for interpersonal justice, 0.45 for informational justice and 0.42 for distributive justice.

This theoretical framework is also applied in non-Western contexts. The study by Benbahia and Rajaa (2022), conducted among 471 Moroccan employees from diverse sectors, confirms the relevance of social exchange theory by demonstrating that individual performance is on how HRM practices are perceived and 'converted' by employees. Significantly, remuneration and recognition constitute the strongest predictor of individual performance ($\beta = 0.237$; $p = 0.001$), suggesting that the distributive dimension of justice is of particular importance in the Moroccan context. However, the authors acknowledge that direct relationship models are insufficiently robust and explicitly recommend the inclusion of mediating variables such as satisfaction and commitment.

4.2. The affective perspective

Whilst social exchange theory constitutes the dominant framework, the meta-analysis by Colquitt et al. (2013) demonstrates that affect represents a complementary rather than a competing mechanism. This distinction is of considerable theoretical importance: whilst social exchange effectively explains the relationships between justice and organisational citizenship behaviour (OCB), affect (and specifically negative affect) mediates the relationship between justice and counterproductive behaviour (CWB) more effectively. No significant indirect effect of social exchange is observed for CWB, suggesting that these behaviours are driven by an emotional mechanism. This dual mediation (cognitive pathways for positive behaviours, emotional pathways for negative behaviours) offers a more nuanced integrative framework than previous models. It resonates with affective event theory (Weiss and Cropanzano, 1996),

according to which experiences of justice at work constitute 'affective events' that generate emotional reactions.

4.3. Organisational identification and social identity

Ho's (2025) prospective study, conducted in three waves over a year with 400 Hong Kong employees in the social services sector, proposes an integrative framework combining the JD-R model (Bakker and Demerouti, 2007) and social identity theory (Tajfel and Turner, 1979). The results demonstrate that organisational identification plays a significant mediating role between the four dimensions of justice and work attitudes. Notably, the indirect effect is strengthened when job demands are high for three dimensions (procedural, distributive, informational), with the exception of interpersonal justice, which positively influences commitment regardless of stress levels. This asymmetric result suggests that interpersonal justice operates via a distinct mechanism, likely linked to the fulfilment of fundamental relational needs that transcend working conditions.

4.4. The multi-level approach: climate of justice

The longitudinal study by Ito et al. (2023), conducted over two years in nine Japanese hospitals with 385 nurses and 42 managers, enhances our understanding of the mechanisms by distinguishing the effects of justice at the individual and collective levels. The results reveal that affective commitment is positively associated with *the climate* of procedural and interactional justice (unit level), whilst procedural justice at the individual level shows no significant effect. This finding suggests the existence of an emergent phenomenon: the climate of justice appears to exert an influence of its own, beyond individual perceptions. Furthermore, managers' psychological distress has a negative effect on staff engagement, revealing an interdependence between managers' well-being and their teams' attitudinal outcomes.

4.5. Towards an integration of theoretical perspectives

A comparative analysis of these mechanisms suggests complementarity rather than competition between theoretical perspectives. Social exchange accounts for the processes of reciprocity that guide positive behaviours; affect explains emotional reactions, particularly counterproductive behaviours; organisational identification sheds light on the cognitive-affective process of internalising organisational values; and the multi-level approach demonstrates that the effects of justice manifest themselves at different levels of analysis. Colquitt et al. (2013) acknowledge that they were unable to integrate the perspectives simultaneously into a

single model, due to gaps in the combined correlation matrix. This theoretical integration remains a key challenge.

5. Consequences of organisational justice: a synthesis of empirical evidence

5.1. Organisational commitment

Organisational commitment, particularly its affective component, is the most systematically studied dependent variable. The integrative model by El Akremi et al. (2006), drawing on the meta-analyses by Cohen-Charash and Spector (2001), Colquitt et al. (2001) and Viswesvaran and Ones (2002), establishes correlations ranging from 0.19 to 0.51 depending on the dimension of justice, with procedural justice exhibiting the highest predictive power. Lahlou-Kassi and Eddakir (2025) confirm this finding in the Moroccan banking sector, demonstrating that distributive justice has a positive effect on affective commitment ($\beta = 0.349$), normative commitment ($\beta = 0.486$) and commitment linked to perceived sacrifice ($\beta = 0.343$), whilst the relationship with commitment linked to a lack of alternatives proves to be non-significant. This latter finding suggests that justice strengthens voluntary attachment without creating instrumental dependence.

The study by Ito et al. (2023) enriches this understanding by showing that affective commitment is determined more by the *climate* of justice at the unit level than by individual perceptions, highlighting the collective dimension of the phenomenon. Ho (2025) further identifies organisational identification as a mediator between justice and commitment, suggesting a sequential process: perceptions of justice strengthen identification with the organisation, which in turn increases affective commitment.

5.2. Departure intention

Turnover intention is a major negative consequence of perceived injustice. Özkan's (2022) meta-analysis, covering 83 correlation coefficients, establishes that all dimensions of justice have a moderate negative effect on turnover intention: overall organisational justice ($r = -0.436$; $k = 9$), distributive justice ($r = -0.396$; $k = 25$), procedural justice ($r = -0.367$; $k = 28$), interpersonal justice ($r = -0.361$; $k = 5$), informational justice ($r = -0.358$; $k = 7$) and interactional justice ($r = -0.341$; $k = 17$). These results confirm the reactive theory of justice (Van Avermaet et al., 1978), according to which employees seek to distance themselves from situations of perceived injustice. El Akremi et al. (2006) report comparable correlations ($r = -0.24$ to -0.40), confirming the stability of these relationships across time and contexts.

Overall organisational justice has the highest effect size, suggesting that the holistic experience of justice is the strongest determinant of the intention to leave. Geographical region is a significant moderator: the effect of distributive justice varies across continents (more pronounced in the Americas ($r = -0.439$), intermediate in Asia ($r = -0.391$), and weaker in Europe ($r = -0.352$)) (Özkan, 2022). This variation confirms the need to contextualise the models, in line with the work of Silva and Caetano (2016).

5.3. Performance and organisational citizenship behaviours

The meta-analysis by Colquitt et al. (2013) establishes positive correlations between the four dimensions of justice and performance (r ranging from 0.13 to 0.19) as well as OCB (r ranging from 0.17 to 0.32), and negative correlations with CWB (r ranging from -0.20 to -0.23). The hierarchy of effects is revealing: interpersonal and informational justice show the highest correlations with OCB ($r = 0.32$ and 0.30), whilst distributive and procedural justice show the highest correlations with role performance ($r = 0.19$ each). These results are consistent with the agent/system model: dimensions related to the supervisor have a greater influence on person-oriented discretionary behaviours.

The qualitative study by Ait Essbaa and Bachelard (2021) sheds further light on the issue by revealing a *pyramid-shaped structure of injustice* within Moroccan local authorities: distributive injustice (linked to formal aspects and outcomes), procedural injustice (lack of participation, glass ceiling) and interactional injustice (favouritism, lack of recognition) lead to a multifaceted decline in performance, ranging from reduced contribution to recourse to corruption. These qualitative findings enrich the quantitative evidence by revealing the diversity of behavioural manifestations of perceived injustice.

5.4. Job satisfaction and psychological well-being

El Akremi et al. (2006) establish substantial correlations between dimensions of justice and job satisfaction (r ranging from 0.35 to 0.56), with distributive justice being a particularly strong predictor of satisfaction with remuneration, in line with the two-factor model (Sweeney and McFarlin, 1992). In a longitudinal study, Provost Savard and Dagenais-Desmarais (2018) identified distributive and informational justice as the only significant predictors of psychological well-being at work, excluding procedural and interpersonal justice. This finding suggests that well-being is determined more by the fairness of outcomes and the transparency of information than by the fairness of procedures. Minibas-Poussard et al.

(2023) add to this picture by establishing that self-related variables (organisational self-esteem, self-efficacy) moderate the relationship between procedural justice and negative emotions, acting as a protective factor against injustice rather than an amplifying factor in the presence of justice.

5.5. Extensions: pro-environmental behaviours

The study by Dahmen et al. (2023) offers an original perspective by demonstrating that organisational justice influences pro-environmental behaviours in organisational settings. Institutional justice has a substantial positive effect on conservation behaviour ($\beta = 0.72$), mediated by environmental commitment, whilst interactional justice has no direct effect ($\beta = 0.06$, ns) despite its influence on environmental commitment ($\beta = 0.41$). The conservation climate positively moderates these relationships. These results broaden the scope of the consequences of justice beyond strictly organisational attitudes and behaviours.

6. Antecedents, moderators and contextual variables

Whilst the literature has largely focused on the consequences of justice, El Akremi et al. (2006) highlight that understanding of antecedents (why individuals care about fairness and how they form their judgements) remains insufficient, responding to the call made by Van den Bos (2001). Their model identifies four categories of antecedents: organisational *outcomes* (value and adherence to norms of fairness, equality and need), decision-making procedures (*voice and control*, Leventhal's principles), the roles of authority figures (informational and interpersonal facets), and the social influence of colleagues (social contagion of fairness judgements). Individual determinants play a moderating rather than a direct role.

Several moderators have been identified in recent literature. At the contextual level, Özkan (2022) demonstrates that geographical region moderates the relationship between perceived justice and turnover intention. El Akremi et al. (2006) identify power distance, individualism/collectivism and organisational structure as cultural and structural moderators. Ho (2025) shows that job demands moderate the effects of three dimensions of justice, with the exception of interpersonal justice. At the individual level, Minibas-Poussard et al. (2023) establish that organisational self-esteem and self-efficacy moderate the relationship between procedural justice and negative emotions, without, however, moderating the relationship with positive emotions (an asymmetry suggesting a protective rather than an amplifying role).

A notable finding by Colquitt et al. (2013) concerns *focus matching*: contrary to theoretical expectations, this moderator proves insignificant in the vast majority of cases (3 out of 36). This finding simplifies modelling by suggesting that it is not essential to systematically match the source of justice with the target of the measured behaviour. However, Rupp et al. (2014) maintain that identifying the source of justice (supervisor versus organisation) is an important criterion for predicting outcomes (), in line with the predictor-criterion correspondence principle (*bandwidth-fidelity*).

7. Contemporary extensions: organisational justice and digital transformation

The extension of the scope of organisational justice to the context of digital transformation constitutes a substantial contribution from recent literature. Bennett and Martin (2025) propose a structured approach, based on the four dimensions of justice, to analyse employees' reactions to talent management decisions informed by artificial intelligence. Their analytical framework reveals several critical issues: in terms of distributive justice, AI-related job cuts raise major concerns; informational justice is challenged by the problem of the algorithmic 'black box'; procedural justice is threatened by biases in training data; and interpersonal justice is compromised by the absence of a human element in decisions. Leventhal's six rules of procedural justice are systematically assessed: AI offers no guarantee of their full compliance, with hallucinations threatening accuracy and biases compromising impartiality.

A fundamental paradox emerges: employees, uncomfortable with algorithmic opacity, are calling for human oversight, yet such oversight risks reintroducing the subjective biases that AI is supposed to eliminate. Bennett and Martin (2025) recommend maintaining human oversight, involving employees in the design of AI tools, creating equity charters and establishing transparent appeal mechanisms. However, their article remains purely conceptual and requires empirical validation across diverse cultural and institutional contexts. The lack of distinction between types of AI (generative, machine learning, rule-based systems) and their differing implications for fairness constitutes a gap that needs to be addressed.

Furthermore, other extensions merit attention. Fall (2014) establishes the mediating role of supervisors' recognition between organisational justice and intrinsic motivation, linking two previously compartmentalised fields of research. Ben Fekih Aissi and Neveu (2015) draw on the framework of justice to understand the acceptability of electronic performance monitoring. Dahmen et al. (2023) extend the

concept to pro-environmental behaviours. These studies demonstrate the flexibility and contemporary relevance of the theoretical framework of organisational justice.

8. Critical cross-sectional analysis of the literature

8.1. Summary tables

The following tables present a structured summary of the studies analysed in this review, classified by type of contribution.

Table 1. Summary of the meta-analyses analysed

Authors	k / N	Theoretical framework	Key findings	Main limitations
Colquitt et al. (2013)	493 samples, 413 manuscripts	Social exchange; Affect	Social exchange mediates the relationship between justice and citizenship behaviours and performance. Affect mediates the relationship between justice and counterproductive behaviours. Focus matching not significant.	Self-reported measures. Residual heterogeneity. Integration of the two perspectives impossible.
Özkan (2022)	83 correlations	Reactive theory of justice	Overall organisational justice $r = -0.436$; distributive justice $r = -0.396$; procedural justice $r = -0.367$ on initial intention. Region = moderator.	Limited number of studies on interpersonal and informational justice. No correction for artefacts. No mediators.
Rupp et al. (2014)	Multiple samples	Multifocal; moral accountability	Source of justice (organisation versus supervisor) as important as type. Bandwidth-fidelity principle.	Complexity of the multifocal model. Limited generalisability.

k = number of samples; N = total sample size; OCB = organisational citizenship behaviours; CWB = counterproductive work behaviours; perf. = performance.

Source: Compiled by the authors based on the literature.

Table 2. Summary of the main empirical studies analysed

Authors	Context	Method / Sample	Dimensions of justice	Key findings	Limitations
Lahlou-Kassi & Eddakir (2025)	Banking, Morocco	Quantitative PLS-SEM N=226	Distributive justice	Distributive justice → overall commitment $\beta=0.576$. Distributive justice → affective commitment $\beta=0.349$.	Cross-sectional. Convenience. No contextual variables.
Ito et al. (2023)	Hospital, Japan	Multilevel longitudinal N=385+42	Procedural justice, interactional justice	Organisational justice climate outweighs individual perceptions. Distress among managers → negative commitment.	Response rate 16.7%. Pre-pandemic data.
Ho (2025)	Social services, Hong Kong	Prospective 3 waves N=400	Distributive, procedural, interpersonal and informational justice	Organisational identification = mediator. Requirements = moderator (except interpersonal justice).	Self-selection. Specific sector.
Benbahia & Rajaa (2022)	Multi-sector, Morocco	Quantitative PLS N=471	HRM practices (5 dimensions)	Remuneration and recognition = best predictor of performance ($\beta=0.237$).	2 performance items. No mediators. Structural bias.
Dahmen et al. (2023)	Public administration, Tunisia	Quantitative SEM N=223	Institutional justice, interactional justice	Institutional justice → conservation behaviour $\beta=0.72$. Interactional justice not significant. Climate = moderator.	Cross-sectional. Social desirability. Specific context.
Ait Essbaa & Bachela	Local authorities, Morocco	Qualitative, interviews N=24	Distributive, procedural and	Pyramidal structure of injustice. Multifaceted decline in	Cross-cutting. Social desirability. Limited

rd (2021)			interactional justice	performance.	generalisability.
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PLS-SEM = Partial Least Squares - Structural Equation Modelling; SEM = Structural Equation Modelling; N = sample size.

Source: Compiled by the authors based on the literature.

8.2. Convergences

The cross-sectional review reveals a remarkable consensus on several fundamental points. All studies confirm the validity of the multidimensional model, although some group the interpersonal and informational dimensions under the term ‘interactional justice’ (Dahmen et al., 2023; Ait Essbaa and Bachelard, 2021). Meta-analyses (Özkan, 2022; Colquitt et al., 2013), empirical studies (Lahlou-Kassi and Eddakir, 2025; Ho, 2025; Ito et al., 2023) and integrative reviews (El Akremi et al., 2006) converge to establish that perceptions of justice have significant effects on organisational commitment, job satisfaction, turnover intention, performance and OCB. Social exchange theory constitutes the most systematically employed and empirically supported explanatory framework (Colquitt et al., 2013; Benbahia and Rajaa, 2022; Dahmen et al., 2023).

8.3. Differences

Despite these similarities, significant differences emerge. The first concerns the relative importance of the dimensions: Provost Savard and Dagenais-Desmarais (2018) identify only distributive and informational justice as predictors of well-being, whereas Colquitt et al. (2013) confirm the contribution of all four dimensions. Dahmen et al. (2023) find no direct effect of interactional justice on pro-environmental behaviours. These differences can be explained by variations in context, dependent variables and levels of analysis.

The dimensional structure itself is subject to empirical variations: Dahmen et al. (2023) show that Tunisian employees merge distributive and procedural justice, contrasting with the findings of Colquitt et al. (2013). Ho (2025) reveals an unexpected asymmetry: interpersonal justice operates independently of stress levels, unlike the other three dimensions. These results suggest that the optimal dimensional structure and underlying mechanisms may vary across cultural and organisational contexts.

8.4. Recurring methodological limitations

The cross-sectional analysis reveals five recurring methodological limitations. **Firstly**, the predominance of cross-sectional designs limits causal inferences (Lahlou-Kassi and Eddakir, 2025; Dahmen et al., 2023; Benbahia and Rajaa, 2022). The longitudinal studies by Ito et al. (2023) and Ho (2025) remain exceptional. **Secondly**, the almost exclusive use of self-reported measures exposes the research to common variance bias (Podsakoff et al., 2003). **Thirdly**, generalisability is limited by the specific contextual setting of each study. **Fourthly**, the frequent absence of control variables and the use of convenience samples undermine internal validity. **Fifthly**, direct relationships are favoured at the expense of models incorporating mediating variables, as explicitly acknowledged by Benbahia and Rajaa (2022).

9. Proposal for an integrative conceptual framework

Following this review, we propose an integrative conceptual framework that brings together the various contributions analysed. This framework, illustrated below in descriptive form, aims to organise the relationships identified in the literature into a coherent model.

Figure 1. Integrative conceptual framework of the antecedents, dimensions, mechanisms and consequences of organisational justice

Antecedents	Dimensions Of Justice	Mediating Mechanisms	Consequences	Moderators
Organisational outcomes (rewards, recognition) [El Akremi et al., 2006; Benbahia & Rajaa, 2022]	Distributive justice [Adams, 1965; Colquitt, 2001]	Quality of social exchange (trust, POS, LMX, commitment) [Colquitt et al., 2013]	Organisational commitment [Lahlou-Kassi & Eddakir, 2025; Ito et al., 2023]	Culture / Region [Özkan, 2022; Silva & Caetano, 2016]
Decision-making procedures (voice, Leventhal's principles) [Thibaut & Walker, 1975]	Procedural justice [Leventhal, 1980; Colquitt, 2001]	Positive/negative affect [Colquitt et al., 2013; Weiss & Cropanzano, 1996]	Job satisfaction [El Akremi et al., 2006]	Job demands [Ho, 2025]
Role of authority figures (respect, justification) [Bies & Moag, 1986]	Interpersonal justice [Bies & Moag, 1986; Colquitt, 2001]	Organisational identification [Ho, 2025; Tajfel & Turner, 1979]	Intention to leave [Özkan, 2022]	Self-related variables (self-esteem, self-efficacy) [Minibas-Poussard et al., 2023]
Social influence of colleagues / Climate of justice [El Akremi et al., 2006; Ito et al., 2023]	Informational justice [Colquitt, 2001; Greenberg, 1993]	Climate of justice (collective level) [Ito et al., 2023]	Performance / OCB / CWB [Colquitt et al., 2013; Ait Essbaa & Bachelard, 2021]	Organisational structure [El Akremi et al., 2006]
Technological context (AI, algorithms) [Bennett & Martin, 2025]	Global justice [Özkan, 2022]	Environmental commitment [Dahmen et al., 2023]	Psychological well-being [Provost Savard & Dagenais-Desmarais, 2018]	Managers' mental health [Ito et al., 2023]

POS = Perceived Organisational Support; LMX = Leader-Member Exchange; OCB = Organisational Citizenship Behaviours; CWB = Counterproductive Work Behaviours; AI = Artificial Intelligence.

Source: Developed by the authors based on the literature.

Note. The framework is organised according to a sequential model: Antecedents → Dimensions of organisational justice → Mediating mechanisms → Consequences, the whole being modulated by moderating variables. The arrows represent direct and indirect relationships established in the analysed literature. References in square brackets indicate the empirical or theoretical sources for each component.

This integrative framework highlights several key characteristics of the field. Firstly, it confirms the *multidimensional and multi-mechanism* nature of organisational justice: the four dimensions operate through different channels (cognitive, emotional, identity-based) to produce distinct outcomes. Secondly, it highlights the importance of *contextual moderators* (culture, demands, climate, managers' well-being) which determine the intensity and, at times, the direction of relationships. Thirdly, it identifies *areas* requiring further investigation: the simultaneous integration of mediating mechanisms, the effects of AI as a antecedent, and the role of emerging dimensions (leadership justice, client justice) (Özkan, 2022).

10. Discussion and research perspectives

10.1. Summary of major contributions

This review highlights three major contributions from the literature on organisational justice. The first is the demonstration of the **dual mediation of social exchange and affect** (Colquitt et al., 2013), which reconciles two theoretical perspectives by showing that they account for different mechanisms: social exchange for positive behaviours, and affect for counterproductive behaviours. The second is the highlighting of **cultural and contextual variations** (Özkan, 2022; Ait Essbaa and Bachelard, 2021; Silva and Caetano, 2016), which confirms that models of justice must be contextualised. The third is **the extension of the concept to the context of artificial intelligence** (Bennett and Martin, 2025), which demonstrates the flexibility and contemporary relevance of the theoretical framework.

10.2. Priority directions for future research

Firstly, the adoption of longitudinal designs. The predominance of cross-sectional studies constitutes the most critical methodological weakness. The studies by Ito et al. (2023) and Ho (2025) provide encouraging models, but remain exceptional. Multi-wave prospective designs are needed to establish causal direction and capture the temporal dynamics of perceptions of justice (Bouazzaoui et al., 2020).

Secondly, exploration of technological contexts. The conceptual framework of Bennett and Martin (2025) offers a

promising framework, but empirical validation is lacking. The paradox of human oversight of algorithmic decisions is a particularly fruitful avenue of inquiry. Distinctions between types of AI (generative, machine learning, rule-based systems) and their differing implications for fairness need to be established.

Thirdly, systematisation of the multi-level approach. The findings of Ito et al. (2023) demonstrate that the effects of the climate of justice differ from those of individual perceptions. Extending the sources of justice beyond the supervisor-organisation dyad (to include colleagues, clients and algorithms (Rupp et al., 2014)) opens up considerable theoretical prospects.

Fourthly, rigorous cross-cultural comparisons. Studies conducted in Morocco (Lahlou-Kassi and Eddakir, 2025; Ait Essbaa and Bachelard, 2021; Benbahia and Rajaa, 2022), in the U Japan (Ito et al., 2023), Hong Kong (Ho, 2025) and Tunisia (Dahmen et al., 2023) suggest contextual variations, but methodologically rigorous comparisons remain rare. Multi-country studies using cross-culturally validated instruments would help determine which dimensions and mechanisms are universal and which are culturally contingent.

Fifth, integration with related constructs. The study of links between organisational justice, workplace recognition (Fall, 2014; Benbahia and Rajaa, 2022) and psychological well-being (Provost Savard and Dagenais-Desmarais, 2018) warrants further exploration. The question of whether organisational justice acts as an effective mediator between recognition practices and well-being at work represents a particularly promising avenue, capable of bringing together two research fields that have hitherto been relatively compartmentalised.

Sixthly, exploration of emerging dimensions. Özkan (2022) explicitly identifies constructs that have been insufficiently explored: leadership justice (Cao et al., 2020), interactional injustice stemming from clients (Holmwall and Sidhu, 2007) and the general perception of justice. The limited number of available studies serves as a call to the academic community.

11. Conclusion

This narrative and critical review of the literature has provided an in-depth overview of the contributions of organisational justice theories, synthesising the findings of seminal works, recent meta-analyses and empirical studies conducted across diverse geographical and sectoral contexts.

Theoretically, the concept of organisational justice, introduced by Greenberg (1987) and expanded upon by

Colquitt (2001), has established itself as a major analytical framework for understanding perceptions of fairness at work and their consequences. The four-dimensional model enjoys solid empirical support. Social exchange theory constitutes the dominant explanatory framework, complemented by affective and identity-based mechanisms. Meta-analyses establish robust relationships with organisational commitment, satisfaction, turnover intention and performance, with substantial and replicated effect sizes (r ranging from -0.34 to -0.44 for turnover intention; r ranging from 0.19 to 0.51 for commitment).

In practical terms, these theories offer organisations concrete levers for action: pay equity, procedural transparency, the quality of managerial interactions and sincerity in communication. Organisational justice emerges as a factor in the prevention of psychosocial risks and the promotion of well-being, the relevance of which now extends to the challenges of digital transformation.

However, the literature exhibits persistent methodological limitations. The integrative conceptual framework proposed in this article, linking antecedents, dimensions, mediating mechanisms, consequences and moderators, provides a structuring basis for organising future research. The identified priority areas (longitudinal designs, exploration of the AI context, multi-level approaches, cross-cultural comparisons, integration with recognition and well-being, and exploration of emerging dimensions) represent avenues for advancing this fruitful field of research towards a more integrative, dynamic and culturally sensitive understanding of perceptions of fairness at work.

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