

Original article

Organizational Justice and Employee Performance in the Public Sector in Uganda: A Correlational Study

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Abstract: The purpose of this study was to establish the relationship between organisational justice and employees' performance in Pakwach district. It specifically sought to establish the relationship between distributive justice and employee performance in the Pakwach district, to determine the relationship between procedural justice and employee performance in the Pakwach district, and to examine the relationship between interactional justice and employee performance in the Pakwach district. This study was anchored on equity theory (Adams, 1965). Correlational design was used. The sample was selected using stratified random sampling and simple random sampling techniques. Data was collected using a self-administered questionnaire. The response rate was 85.6%. Computer-aided data analysis was performed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) software, version 22, for Windows. Descriptive statistics were generated, and correlation analysis was done. The study established a weak, positive, and statistically significant relationship between distributive justice and employee performance; a weak, positive, but statistically insignificant relationship between procedural justice and employee performance; and a moderately positive, statistically significant relationship between interactional justice and employee performance. The study concluded that organisational justice dimensions have a weak to moderate relationship with employee performance. Recommendations for further study are made herein.

Keywords: Distributive Justice, Employee Performance, Interactional Justice, Local Government Context, Organisational Justice, Procedural Justice, Task Performance and Uganda.

I. INTRODUCTION

Organizational Justice (OJ) has become a key factor in understanding employee behavior and performance in modern organizational studies. OJ refers to how employees perceive the fairness of workplace procedures, interactions, and outcomes (Baldwin, 2006). OJ is particularly important in the public sector, where performance is shaped by bureaucracy, stakeholder demands, and limited resources.

In the context of Uganda, the public sector plays a pivotal role in the delivery of essential services such as healthcare, education, and public administration. However, persistent challenges such as resource shortages, systemic inefficiencies, and perceptions of unfair treatment have raised concerns about employee performance and overall service delivery. This makes the study of OJ within this sector both timely and pertinent. Fair treatment in areas such as promotion, workload allocation, and recognition can influence not only the morale of public sector employees but also their commitment to organizational goals and their ability to perform effectively.

OJ is a multidimensional concept encompassing distributive, procedural, and interactional justice (Colquitt, 2001). These dimensions have been shown to significantly affect employee attitudes, including job satisfaction, employee performance, trust in management, and organizational citizenship behavior. Despite its established relevance in developed contexts, there remains a paucity of research exploring these dynamics in Sub-Saharan Africa, particularly within Uganda's public sector.

The relationship between organizational justice and employee performance is particularly significant in Uganda, where the public sector is characterized by unique challenges. These include limited financial and human resources, corruption, and politicization of administrative processes, all of which can adversely affect perceptions of fairness among employees. Understanding how organizational justice influences employee performance is critical to addressing these challenges and improving the efficiency and effectiveness of public service delivery.

This study aims to explore the interplay between organizational dimensions and employee performance in Uganda's public sector. It seeks to identify the specific dimensions of justice that most significantly impact performance and to examine how these dimensions can be leveraged to foster a motivated and high-performing workforce. By doing so, this research intends



to provide actionable insights for policymakers and administrators striving to enhance the performance of public institutions in Uganda.

The purpose of this study was to establish the relationship between organisational justice and employees' performance in Pakwach district. The following specific objectives guided this study:

- a. To establish the relationship between distributive justice and employee performance in Pakwach district.
- b. To determine the relationship between procedural justice and employee performance in Pakwach district.
- c. To examine the relationship between interactional justice and employee performance in Pakwach district.

The following hypotheses were proposed to be tested in this study:

- H₀₁: There is no significant relationship between distributive justice and employee performance in Pakwach district.
H₀₂: There is no significant relationship between procedural justice and employee performance in Pakwach district.
H₀₃: There is no significant relationship between interactional justice and employee performance in Pakwach district.

In the sections that follow, the study presents a comprehensive review of existing literature, the research methodology, results and discussion, conclusions, and recommendations. The findings and recommendations are expected to contribute to the broader discourse on organisational behaviour and public administration in developing countries, with practical implications for improving fairness and productivity in Uganda's public sector.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

A) Theoretical Underpinnings

This study was anchored on equity theory of Adams (1965). Equity Theory (ET) is the most suitable foundation for this study due to its strong explanatory power regarding the impact of organizational justice on employee performance, its primacy over derivative theories, and its direct relevance to the study's variables.

The assumptions of Equity Theory are that individuals assess justice through social comparison, strive for equity, and experience tension from perceived inequities (either under-reward or over-reward). They respond to these inequities through cognitive adjustments, motivational reactions, and evaluations of inputs and outcomes.

ET posits that employees seek fairness by comparing their input-outcome ratios (e.g., skills and effort versus pay and benefits) to those of referent others within and outside the organization. Perceived equity arises when these ratios are similar, while perceived inequity—whether under-reward or over-reward—occurs when they differ.

Perceived inequity creates tension, motivating individuals to restore equity by adjusting their inputs or outcomes, such as altering their work behavior. Equity fosters motivation, job satisfaction, and high performance. Conversely, perceived injustices—distributive, procedural, or interactional—result in poor performance and low productivity.

ET is relevant to this study as it explains and interprets the variables and their relationships, highlighting that perceived inequity (organizational injustice) leads to low performance and vice versa. It also guided the discussion of results and the formulation of recommendations.

According to Adams (1965), Equity Theory's strengths include intuitive appeal, predictive power, motivational utility, cognitive insights, and managerial applications. Additional strengths, identified by other scholars, include contextual applicability (Berscheid & Walster, 1978) and research support (Colquitt, Conlon, Wesson, Porter, & Ng, 2001).

Davlembayeva and Alamanos (2023) identified several limitations of Equity Theory, including its disregard for individual differences in preferences for equity, oversimplification of social comparisons, and questions about its cross-cultural applicability. Additional criticisms include neglecting individual inputs (Berscheid & Walster, 1978), overemphasizing economic exchanges (Messick & Cook, 1983), and limited predictive power (Colquitt, Greenberg & Zapata-Phelan, 2005).

B) Unpacking of key constructs

The central ideas in this study are organizational justice and employee performance, both of which are crucial for understanding workplace dynamics. To build a clear understanding, it is important to unpack these concepts.

There are numerous definitions of Organisational Justice (OJ) (Atikbay & Öner, 2020). For instance, OJ has been defined as “the extent to which employees perceive workplace procedures, interactions and outcomes to be fair in nature” (Baldwin, 2006, p.1). On their part, Silva and Madhumali defined OJ as “the existence or lack of justice in the workplace” (2014, as cited in Dewantoro et al. 2022, p. 67). Finally, Dike, et al. (2021, p.29) define OJ as “an employee’s perception of his/her organization’s behavior, decisions and actions and how these influence his/her attitude and behavior at work.” Arising

from foregoing definitions, in this study, OJ is conceptualized as the perceived fairness in the style and manner in which employees are treated at work.

OJ is a multidimensional construct. The dimensions of OJ are distributive justice, procedural justice and interactional justice (Bies & Moag, 1986; Cropanzano & Folger, 1991). According to Cropanzano, Bowen, and Gilliland (2007), distributive justice refers to the "appropriateness of outcomes," which they operationalized as equity, equality, and need. Furthermore, Cropanzano, Bowen, and Gilliland (2007, p. 36) described procedural justice as the "appropriateness of the allocation process," highlighting six key elements: consistency, lack of bias, accuracy, representation, correction, and ethics. Finally, Cropanzano, Bowen, and Gilliland (2007, p. 36) defined interactional justice as the "appropriateness of the treatment one receives from authority figures," comprising two elements: interpersonal justice and informational justice.

Job performance or employee performance has many definitions. For instance, Motowildo and Kell (2013, p.92) defined job performance as "total expected value to the organization of the discrete behavioral episodes that an individual carries out over a standard period of time." Based on the conceptualization by Chapparo and Ranka (1997), Adekiya (2023, p. 1343) defined job performance as "the ability to perceive, desire, recall, plan and carry out roles, routines, tasks and subtasks for self-maintenance and productivity in response to demands of the internal and/or external organizational environment." Finally, employee performance refers to the total amount of quantitative and qualitative contributions of an individual or a group (Atatsi, Stoffers, & Kil, 2019). In this work, the researcher operationally defines job performance as the measure of the extent to which an employee has done their work well or poorly.

Job performance is a multidimensional construct (Sonnentag, Volmer, & Spychala, 2008). The first two dimensions labelled as task performance and contextual performance were coined by Borman and Motowildo (1993). The third dimension labelled as adaptive performance was added by Pulakos, Arad, Donovan, and Plamondon (2000). The last dimension, called counterproductive-behaviour, was introduced by Sinclair and Tucker in 2006. Thus, employee performance has four dimensions. In this work, the researcher studied task performance. Task performance, as the cornerstone of public sector performance measurement, is the most critical and relevant dimension for this context.

Task performance can be described as a multidimensional construct in itself. In his 1990 hierarchical model, Campbell identified eight performance factors, five of which relate to task performance: job-specific task proficiency, non-job-specific task proficiency, written and oral communication proficiency, supervision, and management/administration. These five factors formed the focus of this research.

C) Distributive Justice and Employee Performance

Distributive justice, the first dimension of organizational justice, pertains to the fairness of outcomes based on equity, equality, and individual needs (Cropanzano, Bowen, & Gilliland, 2007). This distributive justice plays a crucial role in shaping job performance. In this work, the researcher defines distributive justice as the perceived fairness in the distribution of outcomes (rewards) in an organisation.

Shiba (2021) analyzed the impact of organizational justice on job performance in Nepalese quality assurance-accredited colleges, identifying a strong, positive, and statistically significant correlation between distributive justice and job performance. Similarly, other studies, such as those by Khan, Mehr, Shah, & Qazi (2020) and Sarwary, Banayee, Faiq, & Azimi (2023) have also demonstrated strong, positive, and statistically significant correlations between distributive justice and job performance. These findings suggest that distributive justice significantly enhances job performance, highlighting its critical role in organizational effectiveness.

Another strand of studies has consistently found a moderate, positive, and statistically significant correlation between distributive justice and job performance. For example, Yousaf, Tatlah, & Mahmood (2019) investigated the impact of organizational justice on performance of faculty members in Pakistani universities, confirming this relationship. Similar findings were reported by Tran (2020), Krishnan, Loon, Ahmad, and Yunus (2018), Pattnaik and Tripathy (2022) and other scholars. These findings suggest that perceptions of fairness in the distribution of resources and rewards within an organization can significantly enhance employee job performance across diverse contexts. Faeq and Ismael (2022) also found a moderate, positive, and statistically significant correlation between distributive justice and job performance in the Iraqi sample.

This subsection will conclude by examining research on correlation that has revealed weak or negative correlations, as well as statistically insignificant relationships, between distributive justice and employee performance. For instance, Badawy, Shazly, and Elsayed (2022) investigated the relationship between distributive justice and employee performance among a sample of Egyptian nurses, identifying a weak but statistically significant positive correlation. Another study by Stankevičiūtė and Savanevičienė (2021), using a Lithuanian sample, found only limited positive effects of distributive justice on work engagement and overall performance, indicating that other factors likely play a larger role in these outcomes. Hermanto and

Srimulyani (2022) made similar findings from their study in the United States. These studies suggest that while distributive justice is a key aspect of workplace fairness, it does not significantly influence employee performance alone in public-sector settings. Other elements, such as procedural and interactional justice, as well as contextual variables, may have a more substantial impact on task performance. Conversely, Pekel (2021) investigated the relationship between organizational justice and the performance of physical education and sports teachers in Istanbul, Turkey, and discovered a weak negative correlation between distributive justice and job performance that was also statistically significant. These findings highlight the variability in the DJ-EP relationship across different cultural contexts and professions, suggesting a complex interplay that warrants further exploration.

From the foregoing literature discussion, we can identify some research gaps. That is, existing research on distributive justice and job performance reveals inconsistent findings across different contexts, with variations in correlation strength and limited exploration of underrepresented sectors, regions, and moderating factors. Future studies should adopt standardized methodologies, investigate longitudinal effects, and examine mediators or moderators to provide a more comprehensive understanding of this relationship.

D) Procedural Justice and Employee Performance

Researchers have studied the relationship between procedural justice and job performance for decades. However, the findings remain mixed and inconclusive. The relationships vary in strength, ranging from strong to weak, and can be either positive or negative in nature. Additionally, some findings are statistically significant, while others are not.

We will begin our review with studies that have identified strong, positive, and statistically significant correlations between procedural justice and employee performance. For instance, Sarwary, Banayee, Faiq, & Azimi (2023) examined the relationship between procedural justice and employees using a sample from Kabul University and established a strong positive and statistically significant correlation between procedural justice and employee performance. An earlier study by Khatatbeh, Mahomed, Rahman, and Mohamed (2020), using a Jordanian sample, established a strong positive relationship between procedural justice and job performance.

Another strand of studies has found moderate correlations between procedural justice and employee performance. For instance, a study by Yousaf, Tatlah, and Mahmood (2019) examined the relationship between organizational justice and the performance of faculty members in Pakistan. The researchers found a moderate, positive, and statistically significant correlation between procedural justice and job performance. This suggests that fair decision-making processes within academic institutions have a notable, though not exceptionally strong, impact on faculty members' performance. The earlier study by Sapkota (2021) examined the relationship between organizational dimensions and job performance among Nepalese workers. It found a moderate, positive, and statistically significant correlation between procedural justice and job performance, indicating that fair decision-making processes contribute to enhancing employee performance in this context. Finally, Krishnan, Loon, Ahmad, and Yunus (2018) investigated the relationship between organizational justice and job performance in Malaysia, revealing a moderate, positive, and statistically significant correlation between procedural justice and job performance. Other studies which found moderate correlations between procedural justice and employee performance are Tran (2020) and Pattnaik and Tripathy (2022), among others. These findings imply that when employees perceive fairness in organizational procedures, their work performance tends to improve, with the relationship being moderate in strength, positive in direction, and reliably observed across various research studies. Faeq and Ismael (2022) also found a moderate, positive, and statistically significant correlation between procedural justice and job performance in the Iraqi sample.

We end literature review in this section by reviewing studies indicating weak correlations between procedural justice and employee performance. For example, Luswata (2021) examined the correlation between procedural justice and job performance using a sample from Uganda. The findings showed a significant but weak positive relationship between procedural justice and job performance. Similarly, Kaley (2016) identified a weak positive correlation between procedural justice and performance in a Turkish sample. Finally, Pekel (2021) investigated the relationship between organizational justice and the performance of physical education and sports teachers in Istanbul, Turkey. This study found a weak, negative, and statistically insignificant correlation between procedural justice and job performance. These findings suggest that the relationship between procedural justice and employee performance is generally weak and may vary in direction and significance across different contexts.

Studies have found weak, positive, but statistically insignificant correlations between procedural justice and employee performance in public sector settings. That is, several studies have examined the relationship between procedural justice and job performance within public sector contexts, with generally similar findings. Hermanto and Srimulyani (2022) analyzed the Indonesian public sector and found a weak positive but statistically insignificant correlation, attributing the lack of significance

to complex organizational dynamics. Another study by Stankevičiūtė and Savanevičienė (2021) in Lithuania also identified weak positive correlations that did not reach statistical significance.

The researcher concludes the discussion on the relationship between procedural justice and employee performance by examining studies that have found negative correlations between procedural justice and job performance within the public sector context. Arounleuth, Jo, Kim, and Kim (2023) found a weak negative correlation between procedural justice and employee performance in Lao public organizations, indicating that perceived fairness in decision-making may not significantly enhance performance in that context. Similarly, Pattnaik and Tripathy (2023), in their study of Indian public sector units, found that while procedural justice typically has a positive influence on employee performance, factors such as organizational identification can mediate or dampen this relationship, leading to scenarios where the correlation might even be negative. This highlights the complexity of how perceptions of fairness interact with other organizational dynamics to affect performance outcomes. Finally, a study by Pekel (2021) examined the relationship between organizational justice and performance using a sample from Turkey, revealing a weak, negative, and statistically insignificant correlation between procedural justice and job performance. This finding suggests that, in this particular context, perceptions of procedural fairness may not have a meaningful impact on employee performance.

The analysis herein reveals clear research gaps in understanding the relationship between procedural justice and job performance. The relationship between procedural justice and employee performance remains inconsistent, with studies showing varying strengths, directions, and significance influenced by contextual, cultural, and methodological differences. Future research should focus on dimensional analysis, longitudinal studies, and the role of moderating factors to clarify and generalize these findings across diverse settings.

E) Interactional Justice and Employee Performance

Several scholars have investigated the correlations between interactional justice and job performance of public sector employees. The findings are mixed. Some correlations are strong while others are moderate or weak.

A number of studies have established strong correlations between interactional justice and employee performance. For instance, a study by Sapkota (2021) using a Nepalese sample confirmed strong correlations between interactional justice and employee performance. A later study by Sarwary, Banayee, Faiq, & Azimi (2023) among faculty members of Kabul University corroborated strong correlations between interactional justice and employee performance.

A streak of correlation studies has demonstrated a moderate relationship between interactional justice and employee performance. For instance, Krishnan, Loon, Ahmad, and Yunus (2018) examined the relationship between interactional justice and employee performance using a Malaysian sample and established a moderate relationship between interactional justice and employee performance. Another study by Yousaf, Tatlah, and Mahmood (2019), which used a sample of Pakistani faculty members, also found a moderate relationship between interactional justice and employee performance. An earlier Pakistani study by Iqbal, Rehan, Fatima, and Nawab (2017) using a sample of employees from a public sector organization had found a moderate relationship between interactional justice and employee performance. A study by Pattnaik and Tripathy (2022), using a sample of Indian public sector employees, found a moderate correlation between interactional justice and employee performance. Faeq and Ismael (2022) also found a moderate, positive, and statistically significant correlation between interactional justice and job performance in the Iraqi sample.

Finally, a streak of correlation studies has found weak correlations between interactional justice and employee performance. For instance, Ali and Mohammed (2024) examined the relationship between interactional justice and employees, using a sample drawn from public sector employees in Iraq. These researchers found a weak but statistically significant positive correlation between interactional justice and employee performance. Another study by Pekel (2021) analysed the relationship between organisational justice and performance of physical education and sports teachers in Istanbul (Turkey). It established a weak, negative, but statistically significant correlation between interactional justice and job performance. These recent studies corroborate findings of an earlier study by Kalay (2016).

Existing research on the relationship between interactional justice and employee performance yields mixed findings, influenced by regional, sectoral, and methodological differences. Key gaps include the need for cross-cultural and longitudinal studies, the exploration of mediators and moderators, and a deeper understanding of weak or negative correlations, particularly in diverse and technologically mediated work environments.

F) Summary Of Literature Review and Research Gaps

Recent studies examining the nexus between organizational justice and employee performance reveal mixed and often conflicting results. While some studies report strong positive correlations, others identify moderate or weak associations. In certain cases, the relationship is found to be statistically significant, while in others, it is statistically insignificant. Additionally,

a few studies even suggest a negative relationship between these variables, highlighting the variability in findings across different contexts and methodologies.

From the literature, research on distributive, procedural, and interactional justice reveals inconsistent findings regarding their relationship with employee performance, driven by contextual, cultural, and methodological differences. Future studies should focus on standardized methodologies, cross-cultural and longitudinal analyses, and the role of mediators and moderators to enhance clarity and generalizability across diverse sectors and regions.

III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

A) Research Approach and Research Design

The researcher adopted a quantitative approach in this study, employing a correlational research design to examine the relationships between the dimensions of organizational justice and employee performance. Creswell and Guetterman (2018, as cited in Creswell & Creswell, 2023) explained that a correlational research design uses correlational statistics to describe and measure the strength and direction of the relationship between two or more variables.

B) Scope of the study

This study was conducted in Pakwach District, located in the West Nile subregion of the Republic of Uganda. The headquarters of Pakwach District are located in Pakwach Town Council, approximately 370 kilometres from Kampala, the capital city of the Republic of Uganda. Data collection took place in September 2024. This study focused on the dimensions of organizational justice—distributive justice, procedural justice, and interactional justice (independent variable)—and their relationship to employee performance, specifically task performance (dependent variable). Other determinants of employee performance, such as HR practices, work environment, and leadership styles, were excluded due to space and program design limitations.

C) Study Population

The target population for this study comprised all 1,398 employees of Pakwach District Local Government. However, the accessible population was limited to the 200 civil servants (salary scales U7 to U1) working at the district headquarters, town councils, and sub-counties. Primary school teachers (837), health workers (179), and secondary school teachers (149) were excluded because their remote duty stations made them difficult to access, which would have been costly and time-consuming. Additionally, employees in salary scale U8 (33) were excluded, as the researcher deemed the questionnaire potentially beyond their linguistic capabilities.

D) Sample size

Techniques for determining sample size include manual calculation using statistical formulas, the use of sample size software, reference to statistical tables, application of various statistical formulas, and following rules of thumb, such as researcher convenience (Mugahed, 2022). In this research project, the researcher used one of the statistical tables (Krejcie & Morgan, 1970 Generalized scientific guidelines for sample size decisions). This table gives sample size(s) against population size (N). To select your sample size, simply obtain your population size and check the sample size provided against it. Given an accessible population of 200 employees from Pakwach District Local Government, the sample size determined was 132. This sample size is appropriate, as it follows the general scientific guidelines for determining sample sizes outlined by Krejcie and Morgan (1970).

E) Sampling techniques

To ensure a reliable and representative sample, the researcher employed both stratified random sampling and simple random sampling techniques, which are probability sampling methods. These techniques were chosen for their effectiveness in generating representative and generalizable data, as they provide each individual with a known chance of selection, thereby reducing bias and allowing for precise comparisons across population subgroups (Babbie, 2021; Creswell & Creswell, 2023; Trochim & Donnelly, 2020).

From the accessible study population, a sampling frame containing serial number, occupational category (cadre), and salary scale was constructed. The study employed stratified random sampling and simple random sampling techniques to select 132 respondents. Stratified random sampling and simple random sampling techniques were used to ensure proportionate representation of employees from all cadres and salary scales. The share of each stratum in the 132 was calculated and obtained from the sampling frame by simple random sampling (draw method).

F) Instrumentation

The primary data collection instrument in this study was a self-administered questionnaire, chosen for its appropriateness given the nature of the research topic. Self-administered surveys offer benefits such as cost-effectiveness, ease of implementation, and improved confidentiality for respondents (Song et al., 2015 as cited in Taherdoost, 2022).

The questionnaire consisted of three sections. Section A collected demographic information from the respondents, including gender, age, marital status, level of education, professional category, and tenure. Sections B and C utilized existing and validated scales. The first scale used was the Organisational Justice Scale (Moorman & Niehoff, 1993), which measured dimensions of organizational justice on a 5-point Likert scale (1=Strongly Disagree to 5=Strongly Agree). The second scale was the Job Performance Scale (Çalışkan & Koroğlu, 2022), which assessed task performance dimensions on a 5-point Likert scale (1=Strongly Disagree to 5=Strongly Agree).

G) Validity and reliability of the instruments

Huck (2008 as cited in Gates, Johnson, & Shoulders, 2018) defined instrument validity as the degree of accuracy achieved by the instruments used within a study. Although the researcher used existing scales with established reliability and validity, these scales were retested to ensure their relevance and accuracy in new contexts or populations, thereby gaining the benefits of revalidated measures (Boateng, Neilands, Frongillo, Melgar-Quinonez, & Young, 2018).

The researcher used expert judgement method to revalidate the instruments. Content validity via expert judgment involves having experts evaluate each item for relevance and clarity, with adjustments made based on consensus to ensure comprehensive coverage of the construct (Yusoff, 2019). The questionnaire was presented to two consultants from IUIU for expert review and technical feedback. Each consultant rated each item on a 4-point Likert scale, where 1 indicated 'Not relevant,' 2 indicated 'Somewhat relevant,' 3 indicated 'Quite relevant,' and 4 indicated 'Highly relevant.' An item is classified as relevant if it receives a score of 3 or 4 on the rating scale. Conversely, any item that receives a score of 1 or 2 is deemed irrelevant.

The following formula was used to calculate content validity index (CVI):

$$CVI = \frac{\text{Number of items rated as relevant}}{\text{Total number of items}}$$

Given:

Total number of items=25.

Number of items rated as relevant by Consultant 1: 25.

Number of items rated as relevant by Consultant 2: 25.

Calculations:

Consultant 1 CVI: $CVI_1 = 25/25 = 1.0$

Consultant 2 CVI: $CVI_2 = 25/25 = 1.0$

Summary of results:

Consultant 1 CVI: 1.0 (or 100%)

Consultant 2 CVI: 1.0 (or 100%)

Both consultants achieved a CVI of 1.0, signifying that all items in the questionnaire were considered relevant. As a result, the consultants approved the instrument for use without any modifications. This approval aligns very well with Lynn's (1986) recommendation, which established a minimum acceptable CVI of 0.78 or higher.

Reliability, as described by Rozali, Puteh, Yunus, Hamdan, and Latif (2022), emphasizes the consistency of results. Expanding on this, Haradhan (2017, as cited in Karnia, 2024) highlights reliability as a measure of consistency, precision, repeatability, and trustworthiness, underscoring its role in ensuring research is free from bias.

To ensure the reliability of the instrument, despite the researcher adopting existing scales with established reliability and norms, it was considered necessary to conduct reliability testing due to differences in context and culture. Consequently, the instrument underwent a reliability test. For the pretest reliability assessment, ten questionnaires were distributed to staff members who were not included in the study sample. The completed questionnaires were collected and analyzed using SPSS. The reliability of the instrument was determined using the Cronbach's alpha coefficient method, and the results are presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Reliability of the research instrument

<i>Variable</i>	<i>Number of items</i>	<i>Cronbach alpha values</i>
Organisation justice	20	.895
Distributive justice	5	.611
Procedural justice	6	.731
Interactional justice	9	.877
Employee performance	5	.837
Whole instrument	25	.897

Source: Primary data, (2024).

This 25-item instrument had an overall Cronbach alpha value of .897. This value is far above the minimum Cronbach alpha value threshold of 0.7 recommended by Nunnally (1978). Therefore, this instrument was considered reliable and used in this study.

H) Methods of Data Analysis

The data from questionnaires was entered into a computer using SPSS version 22 for Windows. Preliminary data analysis was done to see if editing, coding and data entry are done well. Descriptive statistics on demographic characteristics were generated and presented using a table. Correlation analysis was used to test the hypotheses. The results are presented in Chapter 4.

I) Ethical Considerations

The research adhered closely to essential ethical guidelines, including voluntary participation, informed consent, anonymity, confidentiality, minimizing harm, and transparent communication of results. Participants were fully informed about the study's purpose and willingly chose to participate. Anonymity was ensured by allowing respondents to remain unnamed, and confidentiality was maintained by securely handling personal information and reporting findings in aggregate form to prevent individual identification. Overall, the researcher adhered to key ethical standards in social research, ensuring respect for participants and maintaining integrity in reporting.

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A) Response Rate

The study involved a sample size of 132, resulting in the distribution of 132 questionnaires. Of these, 113 questionnaires were returned, all in a usable condition. This corresponds to a response rate (referred to as RR) of 85.6%. While there is no universal agreement on an acceptable RR, Kothari and Gang (2014, as cited in Ali & Simba, 2018) suggest that a response rate of 50% is adequate for analysis and reporting; 60% is good, and 70% or higher is excellent. Therefore, the achieved RR of 85.6% is considered excellent and suitable for analysis. Several factors likely contributed to this high response rate. Most respondents were easily accessible and were reminded to return the questionnaires. Additionally, follow-ups were conducted through phone calls and text messages for respondents located farther away.

B) Demographics of the Respondents

Data on the demographics of the respondents were collected. These demographic characteristics of the respondents are summarized in Table 2.

Table 2: Demographics of respondents

Variable	Frequencies	Percentages
Gender		
Male	72	63.7
Female	41	36.3
Total	113	100
Age		
26-30	4	3.5
31-35	24	21.2
36-40	27	23.9
41-45	26	23.0
45+	32	28.3
Total	113	100
Marital status		
Single	16	14.2
Married	91	80.5
Divorced	3	2.7
Cohabiting	1	0.9
Others	2	1.8
Total	113	100
Education		
Certificate	5	4.4
Diploma	37	32.7
Bachelors	46	40.7
Postgraduate diploma	16	14.2
Masters	9	8.0

Total	113	100
Professional categories		
Administrative officers	32	28.3
Secretarial cadre	7	6.2
Accountants	21	18.6
Extension workers	16	14.2
Health workers	9	8.0
Community workers	5	4.4
Other cadres	23	20.4
Total	113	100
Tenure		
1-5	61	54.0
6-10	39	34.5
11-15	6	5.3
16-20	3	2.7
21-25	2	1.8
26+	2	1.8
Total	113	100

Source: Primary data, (2024).

Table 2 reveals that there were 72 male respondents (63.7%) and 41 female respondents (36.3%), demonstrating a greater representation of male participants. This distribution mirrors the existing gender disparities in employment within local governments in Uganda.

As shown in Table 2, 4 respondents (3.5%) were aged 26–30 years, while 24 respondents (21.2%) were aged 31–35 years. Furthermore, 27 respondents (23.9%) were in the 36–40 age group, and 26 respondents (23.0%) fell within the 41–45 age bracket. The remaining 32 respondents (28.3%) were aged 45 years or older.

According to Table 2, the majority of respondents were married, with 91 individuals (80.5%) reporting this status, compared to 16 respondents (14.2%) who identified as single. This underscores that a significant proportion of the respondents were married.

An in-depth review of Table 4.1 provides information about the respondents' educational qualifications. Five respondents (4.4%) possessed certificates, 37 (32.7%) held diplomas, and the majority—46 respondents (40.7%)—had bachelor's degrees. Furthermore, 16 respondents (14.2%) reported holding postgraduate diplomas, while the remaining 9 respondents held master's degrees. This distribution highlights a qualifications-oriented approach to employment in the public sector, indicating that the participants were well-educated and competent within the context of the study.

Table 2 provides further details on the professional categories of respondents. Administrative officers made up 32 respondents (28.3%), accountants accounted for 21 (18.6%), extension workers totaled 16 (14.2%), and health workers numbered 9 (8%). Additionally, the secretarial cadre included 7 respondents (6.2%), community workers comprised 5 (4.4%), and other categories had 23 respondents (20.4%). In terms of tenure, 61 respondents (54.0%) had spent five years or less in district service, while 39 respondents (34.5%) had between six and ten years of experience. This distribution highlights the relatively recent establishment of the district.

C) Descriptive Analysis

The following table, Table 3 summarises some descriptive statistics of the main study variables.

Table 3: Descriptive statistics

Variable	Disagreed		Neutral		Agreed		Mean	SD
	Freq.	Percent	Freq.	Percent	Freq.	Percent		
Distributive justice (DJ)								
Fair work schedule	7	6.2	4	3.5	102	90.3		
Fair pay	69	61.1	7	6.2	37	32.7		
Fair workload	25	22.1	16	14.2	72	63.7		
Fair rewards	52	46.0	21	18.6	40	35.4		
Fair job responsibilities	11	9.7	8	7.1	94	83.2		
DJ perception (overall)	33	29.2	11	9.7	69	61.1	3.2920	.65084
Procedural justice (PJ)								
Unbiased decision making	41	36.3	12	10.6	60	53.1		
Concerns heard before decision-making	32	28.3	18	15.9	63	55.8		

Decisions based on accurate information	20	17.7	21	18.6	72	63.7		
Feedback provided on decisions	10	8.9	13	11.5	90	79.6		
Consistent application of decisions	28	24.8	17	15.0	68	60.2		
Effective appeal mechanism	48	42.5	13	11.5	52	46.0		
PJ perception (overall)	30	26.5	16	14.2	67	59.3	3.3643	.73751
Interactional performance								
Treatment with kindness and consideration	16	14.2	21	18.6	76	67.2		
Treatment with respect and dignity	22	19.5	15	13.3	76	67.2		
Sensitivity to personal needs	38	28.6	24	21.2	51	45.2		
Dealing in a truthful manner	20	17.7	10	8.9	83	73.4		
Concern for employees' rights	19	16.8	10	8.9	84	74.3		
Implications of decisions discussed	24	21.2	16	14.2	73	64.6		
Decisions adequately justified	20	17.7	20	17.7	73	64.6		
Explanations for decisions make sense	14	12.4	18	15.9	81	71.7		
Clear explanation of decisions	12	10.6	18	15.9	83	73.5		
Overall IJ perceptions	20	17.7	17	15.0	76	67.3	3.5742	.70937
Employee performance (EP)								
Have competences	5	4.4	0	0	108	95.6		
Work efficaciously	3	2.7	5	4.4	105	94.6		
Understand procedures	3	2.7	4	3.5	106	93.8		
Work in a planned and organised manner	2	1.8	6	5.3	105	92.9		
Eager to acquire new skills	2	1.8	0	0	111	98.2		
Overall perception of EP perceptions	3	2.7	3	2.65	107	94.6	4.3186	.53361

Source: Primary data, (2024).

a. Distributive justice

A large majority of respondents perceived several aspects of their work conditions as fair: 102 respondents (90.3%) rated their work schedule as fair, 72 (63.7%) considered their workload fair, and 94 (83.2%) viewed their job responsibilities as fair. Regarding overall perceptions of distributive justice, 69 respondents (61.1%) believed it was present, with a mean score of 3.2920 and a standard deviation (SD) of 0.65084. This indicates that most employees shared relatively similar views, leaning slightly toward neutrality. However, 69 respondents (61.1%) felt their pay was unfair, and 52 (46%) perceived other rewards as unfair. These results highlight a perception of distributive injustice, particularly concerning pay and additional rewards.

b. Procedural Justice

Most respondents had a positive view of various aspects of procedural justice. Specifically, 60 respondents (53.1%) agreed that decision-making was unbiased, 63 (55.8%) felt that their concerns were considered before decisions were made, and 72 (63.7%) believed that decisions were based on accurate and complete information. Furthermore, 90 respondents (79.6%) agreed that feedback was provided on decisions, 68 (60.2%) felt decisions were applied consistently, and 52 (46%) recognized the presence of an effective appeals mechanism. With a mean score of 3.3643 and a low standard deviation (SD) of 0.73751 on a 5-point Likert scale, respondents generally agreed, reflecting a consistent perception of procedural justice.

c. Interactional Justice

The majority of respondents agreed on various aspects of interactional justice. Specifically, 76 respondents (67.2%) felt they were treated with kindness and respect, and an equal number believed they were treated with dignity and respect. Other areas of agreement included sensitivity to personal needs (51 respondents, 45.2%), truthful communication (83 respondents, 73.4%), and concern for employee rights (84 respondents, 74.3%). Additionally, 73 respondents (64.6%) agreed that the implications of decisions were discussed with them and that decisions were adequately justified. Similarly, 81 respondents (71.7%) found the explanations for decisions sensible, and 83 respondents (73.5%) believed the decisions were clearly explained. The mean score of 3.5742 reflects an overall positive perception of interactional justice, while a low standard deviation (SD) of 0.70937 on a 5-point Likert scale indicates consistent responses among participants. These findings suggest a strong sense of interactional justice within the district.

d. Employee Performance

The descriptive statistics on employee performance reveal strong outcomes. A significant majority of participants reported excelling in key aspects of task performance: 108 respondents (95.6%) indicated they had the necessary competencies, 105 (94.6%) reported working effectively, and 106 (93.8%) stated they understood procedural requirements. Furthermore, 105 respondents (92.9%) confirmed they worked in a planned and organized manner, while 111 (98.2%)

expressed eagerness to learn new skills. Each performance metric exceeded 90%, with an overall mean score of 4.3186 and a low standard deviation (SD) of 0.53361, reflecting consistent responses among participants. These findings highlight a high level of employee performance within the district.

D) Testing of research hypotheses

The following hypotheses were formulated for testing in this study and were subsequently tested:

H₀₁: There is no significant relationship between distributive justice and employee performance in Pakwach district.

H₁: There is a significant relationship between distributive justice and employee performance in Pakwach district.

H₀₂: There is no significant relationship between procedural justice and employee performance in Pakwach district.

H₂: There is a significant relationship between procedural justice and employee performance in Pakwach district.

H₀₃: There is no significant relationship between interactional justice and employee performance in Pakwach district.

H₃: There is a significant relationship between interactional justice and employee performance in Pakwach district.

These hypotheses were tested using correlation analysis, with Pearson correlation coefficients calculated using SPSS. The Pearson correlation coefficient assesses the strength and direction of the linear relationship between two variables. In this study, it was used to measure the relationships between dimensions of organizational justice and employee performance. The results of the Pearson product-moment correlations are summarized in Table 4.

Table 4: Pearson product correlations

Variables	DJ	PJ	IJ	EP
1. Distributive justice	1			
2. Procedural justice	.482**	1		
3. Interactional justice	.462**	.733**	1	
4. Employee performance	.188*	.179	.331**	1

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

* . Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Source: Primary data, (2024).

The correlation results in this study were interpreted using interpretation rules provided by Rafter et al. (2003). Rafter et al. (2003, p. 194) stated:

One way to describe the strength of the correlation between two variables is to categorize the possible values of the correlation coefficient. A general rule of thumb is to call the correlation weak for values between -0.25 and 0.25, moderate for values between 0.25 and 0.75 in absolute value, and strong for values over 0.75 in absolute value.

The above rules were used to interpret and report the results as follows:

A Pearson correlation was conducted to examine the relationship between distributive justice and employee performance in Pakwach district. The results indicated that there was a weak positive correlation ($r=.188$) and the relationship is statistically significant ($p<.01$). This result does not support the null hypothesis (H₀₁) that there is no significant correlation/relationship between distributive justice and employee performance. Hence, H₁ was supported. Specifically, as perceptions of distributive justice increase, employee performance increases. However, the weak correlation also implies that other factors may have a stronger influence on employee performance, and distributive justice alone may not be a strong predictor. Descriptive statistics for distributive justice were $M=3.2920$, $SD=.65084$, and employee performance were $M=4.3186$, $SD=.53361$.

A Pearson correlation was conducted to examine the relationship between procedural justice and employee performance in Pakwach district. The results indicated a weak positive correlation ($r=.179$), but it was statistically insignificant ($p>.005$). This result supports the Null Hypothesis (H₀₂) that there is no significant correlation/relationship between procedural justice and employee performance. Hence, H₂ was not supported. Although not statistically significant, the positive correlation suggests that as perceptions of procedural justice increase, employee performance tends to increase slightly as well; however, the relationship is not strong. The statistically insignificant relationship means the observed correlation might be due to chance rather than a true relationship between the variables. Descriptive statistics for procedural justice were $M=3.3643$, $SD=.73751$, and employee performance were $M=4.3186$, $SD=.53361$.

A Pearson correlation was conducted to examine the relationship between interactional justice and employee performance in Pakwach district. The results indicated that there was a moderately positive correlation ($r=.331$) and the relationship is statistically significant ($p<.001$). This result does not support the null hypothesis (H₀₃) that there is no significant correlation/relationship between interactional justice and employee performance. Hence, H₃ was supported. Specifically, this positive correlation suggests that as perceptions of interactional justice increase, employee performance tends to increase as well, and the relationship is moderately strong. The statistically significant relationship implies that the observed relationship

is unlikely to be due to chance, and there is a strong likelihood that interactional justice is indeed related to employee performance. Descriptive statistics for interactional justice were $M = 3.5742$, $SD = .70937$, and for employee performance, $M = 4.3186$, $SD = .53361$.

E) Discussion of results

The primary objective of this study was to investigate the relationship between distributive justice and employee performance in Pakwach District. This study established a *weak, yet statistically significant, positive* relationship between distributive justice and employee performance. This suggests that as employees perceive greater fairness in resource distribution, there will be a slight but consistent improvement in employee performance. A majority of respondents viewed their work schedule, workload, and job responsibilities as fair. Many respondents perceived a sense of distributive injustice, especially concerning their pay and other rewards. However, the weak correlation suggests that while distributive justice is a factor, it likely interacts with other variables, and its impact may be limited when considered alone. Despite the weak correlation, the statistical significance indicates that the relationship observed is unlikely to be due to random chance.

This finding is consistent with earlier studies by Badawy, Shazly, and Elsayed (2022) and Stankevičiūtė and Savanevičienė (2021). These studies found a weak positive and statistically significant relationship between distributive justice and task performance, implying that while distributive justice contributes to workplace fairness, it typically shows a weak or negative correlation with employee performance, suggesting that other factors like procedural and interactional justice may play a more significant role across various cultural contexts and professions. However, it contradicts findings of studies that found strong correlations (Khan, Mehr, Shah, & Qazi, 2020; Sapkota, (2021) and Sarwary, Banayee, Faiq, & Azimi, 2023) or moderate correlations (Krishnan, Loon, Ahmad, and Yunus, 2018; Tran, 2020; and Yousaf, Tatlah, & Mahmood, 2019).

The above finding could be attributed to the limited impact of distributive justice on employee performance. Although a relationship exists, the weak correlation suggests that other factors likely play a more significant role in influencing employee performance. Thus, distributive justice may be one of several factors that contribute to employee performance in Pakwach district. This finding could also be attributed to variations in cultural and institutional contexts. The local governments' context could mean that perceptions of distributive justice are influenced by specific cultural, economic, or institutional factors, which could explain the weak correlation. For instance, other forms of justice or external factors (such as political influence or resource availability) might be more critical in this context. Finally, the weak correlation could be attributed to complex relationships. That is, the weak correlation might indicate a complex relationship in which distributive justice interacts with other variables to influence employee outcomes.

The second objective of this study was to determine the relationship between procedural justice and employee performance in Pakwach district. According to descriptive statistics, most respondents viewed procedural justice positively, perceiving the decision-making process as unbiased. They felt that their concerns were taken into account, and that decisions were based on accurate and complete information. Additionally, they agreed that feedback was provided on decisions, felt that decisions were applied consistently, and recognized the existence of an effective appeals mechanism. From inferential statistics, this study established a *weak positive correlation that was statistically insignificant*. The positive correlation suggests that as perceptions of procedural justice increase, employee performance tends to increase as well. However, the correlation is weak, meaning that the relationship between the two variables is not strong. A weak correlation implies that the relationship between procedural justice and employee performance is minimal. Changes in procedural justice perceptions have only a slight effect on employee performance. The lack of statistical significance means that the observed weak correlation might be due to random chance rather than a true underlying relationship. This suggests that the positive correlation, while weak, is not strong enough to be considered reliable or meaningful in this context.

This finding aligns with the research of Hermanto and Srimulyani (2022) and Stankevičiūtė and Savanevičienė (2021), all of which reported weak positive but statistically insignificant correlations between procedural justice and employee performance in various public sector contexts. However, it contrasts with studies that identified strong positive and statistically significant correlations, such as those by Pattnaik and Tripathy (2023) and Sarwary, Banayee, Faiq, & Azimi, (2023), as well as research indicating moderate correlations (Krishnan, Loon, Ahmad, and Yunus, 2018; Sapkota, (2021); Tran, 2020 and Yousaf, Tatlah, and Mahmood, (2019) and weak positive but statistically significant correlations (Luswata, 2021; and Pattnaik and Tripathy, 2023). Additionally, it does not support studies that found negative correlations between procedural justice and job performance (Arounleuth, Jo, Kim, & Kim, 2023; Pattnaik and Tripathy, 2023; Pekel, 2021).

The combination of a weak correlation and statistical insignificance suggests that procedural justice is not strongly or reliably related to employee performance in this study. This could be attributed to the limited influence of procedural justice, the potential influence of other determinants of employee performance, variations in cultural and institutional contexts, among others.

The third objective of this study was to examine the relationship between interactional justice and employee performance in Pakwach district. Findings from descriptive statistics reveal that the majority of respondents expressed a positive perception of interactional justice, indicating that they felt treated with kindness, respect, and dignity. Many reported sensitivity to personal needs and valued truthful communication. Respondents also noted that the implications of decisions were discussed with them and felt that decisions were adequately justified. A significant number agreed that explanations for decisions were sensible and articulated. Overall, these findings suggest a strong sense of interactional justice among participants within the district.

Using inferential statistics, this study established a moderate positive correlation between interactional justice and employee performance, and this relationship is statistically significant. A moderate positive correlation suggests a noticeable relationship between interactional justice and employee performance. As perceptions of interactional justice increase, employee performance tends to increase as well. The moderate strength indicates a meaningful connection, though not the strongest possible. The statistical significance of the correlation indicates that the relationship is unlikely to be due to random chance. This adds confidence that the observed correlation reflects a real underlying pattern in the data.

This finding is consistent with previous findings, which found moderate correlations (Iqbal, Rehan, Fatima, & Nawab, 2017; Krishnan, Loon, Ahmad, and Yunus, 2018; and Yousaf, Tatlah, & Mahmood, 2019). However, it contradicts earlier findings, which found strong correlations (Sarwary, Banayee, Faiq, & Azimi, 2023; Sapkota, 2021). This finding further contradicts earlier studies, which reported weak correlations (Ali & Mohammed, 2024; Kalay, 2016; Pekel, 2021).

VI. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

A) Conclusion

Based on the findings of this study, the following conclusions were drawn:

First, the study found a weak, yet statistically significant, positive relationship between distributive justice and employee performance in Pakwach District. While a majority of respondents viewed aspects such as work schedules and workloads as fair, many perceived injustices regarding pay and rewards. This suggests that distributive justice may contribute to employee performance, but its impact is likely limited and interacts with other factors. The finding is consistent with previous studies that report weak correlations, but it contradicts studies that found stronger correlations.

Second, the study established that procedural justice has no statistically significant effect on employee performance. Although most respondents perceived procedural fairness positively, the weak correlation indicates that procedural justice alone does not significantly influence performance outcomes. This aligns with other research that reported weak, statistically insignificant correlations, while contradicting studies that found stronger relationships or negative correlations.

Third, a significant positive correlation was found between interactional justice and employee performance, suggesting that when employees feel respected and valued in their interactions, their performance improves. This finding is supported by previous research indicating moderate correlations; however, it contrasts with studies that have identified either stronger or weaker correlations.

Forth, the study suggests that variations in cultural and institutional contexts may explain the differing impacts of organizational justice dimensions on employee performance. The local government and organizational dynamics could influence perceptions of justice and their subsequent effect on performance outcomes.

Fifth, the weak correlations found in some cases indicate that organizational justice may interact with other variables in complex ways, affecting employee performance. Thus, while distributive and procedural justice are relevant, their influence may be mitigated by additional factors that are critical in the local context.

These conclusions highlight the nuanced relationship between organizational justice and employee performance, emphasizing the need for organizations to consider the specific contextual factors at play when addressing employee motivation and effectiveness.

B) Recommendations

Arising from findings and conclusions of this study, the following recommendations are made to improve policy and practice:

This study found that respondents perceived their pay and rewards as unfair. The Ministry of Public Service should enhance the pay of all civil servants. Otherwise, the current selective pay raises have caused considerable discontent. The district local governments should distribute other rewards fairly in line with the rewards and sanctions framework. The Ministry of Public Service should increase salaries for all categories of local government employees in Uganda to promote pay equity and improve employee motivation and performance. Accounting officers and managers in local governments in Uganda should

implement the rewards and sanctions framework to ensure equitable recognition and discipline, ultimately enhancing employee motivation and performance.

Local governments should enhance procedural justice by increasing transparency and involving employees in decision-making through regular feedback sessions and clear communication, fostering trust and morale while potentially boosting engagement, satisfaction and performance. Local government authorities should create and implement a Standardized Employee Participation Policy to ensure fair, transparent, and consistent involvement in decision-making processes, thereby fostering a supportive and trustworthy work environment. Managers in local governments should prioritize training in communication and interpersonal skills to foster a respectful environment that enhances employee motivation, commitment, and performance.

The Ministry of Public Service should establish and implement an Employee Interaction Standards Policy to set clear expectations for respectful communication, create grievance mechanisms, and conduct regular evaluations, thereby promoting a supportive culture that enhances employee performance.

This study further found that perceived organisational justice translates to better employee performance. The district's local governments should put in place mechanisms to promote all dimensions of organisational justice.

Conflict of interest statement

The author declares that this research was conducted in the absence of any commercial or financial relationships that could be construed as a potential conflict of interest.

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