

## Does Organisational Justice Truly Ignite Employee Happiness and Propel Citizenship Behaviour? In-Sights From Ghana's Tertiary Landscape

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**Abstract** – This study analysed the impact of employees' organisational justice perception (OJP) on their engagement in organisational citizenship behaviour (OCB) within tertiary educational institutions in Ghana. Furthermore, the study investigated the mediating effect of employee happiness on the relationship between OJP and OCB among employees in tertiary educational institutions in Ghana. A total of 394 respondents from 27 tertiary institutions in Ghana participated in the survey through the administration of questionnaires. The study employed Structural Equation Modelling to examine the hypothesised relationships and Andrews Hayes' Process Model was utilised for mediation analysis. The results indicated that the level of employee happiness in the workplace is a substantial and positive indicator of OCB and served as a full mediator in the link between OJP and OCB. The study recommended that the management of tertiary educational institutions and human resource management practitioners should develop evidence-based interventions aimed at boosting employee well-being and promoting positive perceptions of organisational justice.

**Keywords** – Organisational Justice Perception, Organisational Justice, Organisational Citizenship Behaviour, Employee Happiness, Employee Well-being

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## 1 Introduction

There is a growing emphasis on investigating the various elements that impact employee happiness and citizenship behaviour within the dynamic realm of organisational psychology and management (Malhotra et al., 2022, Straatmann et al., 2020). Available literature suggest that there are multifaceted elements, such as organisational justice, that wield influence over both employee happiness and citizenship behaviour (Straatmann et al., 2020). According to organisational scholars, this influence brings about an intricate interplay between employee attitudes and well-being, organisational justice as well as overall workplace productivity (Suwannawat & Ueasangkomsate, 2023, Nazir et al., 2019, Scrima et al., 2014). Published works have looked at the connection between organisational justice perception (OJP) and organisational citizenship behaviour (OCB) emphasising the effects of fairness beliefs on employees' propensity to engage in discretionary behaviours that are advantageous to the firm and essential to the organisation's success (Khaola & Rambe, 2021, Van Vuuren et al., 2016, Kwak, 2016, Nwibere, 2014). Within the context of Ghana's evolving tertiary education landscape, this study aims to explore the complex correlation between organisational justice and its influence on employee happiness, as well as its capacity to foster pro-social behaviours in the workplace. Ghana, which is known for its diverse cultural heritage and rapidly developing educational establishments, presents an exciting setting for the present research. The tertiary sector in Ghana comprises a wide range of academic institutions including universities and colleges of education.

Organisational justice perception is defined as how employees evaluate the fairness of their workplace concerning the fairness of outcomes and rewards, decision-making processes and procedures and interpersonal treatment and communication (Greenberg, 2017). Organisational citizenship behaviour, on the other hand, is used to describe optional acts and behaviours that support an organisation's efficient operation even when they are not specifically rewarded (Organ et al., 2011). These variables have come to be recognised as crucial elements in establishing and sustaining an atmosphere that promotes employee engagement, job happiness and organisational effectiveness at work. It has been widely acknowledged that employees who believe and perceive that their organisations are fair are more likely to exhibit OCB such as helping coworkers, giving freely of one's time to organisational endeavours and exhibiting loyalty and devotion to the organisation (Van Vuuren et al., 2016). Available literature points towards the importance of organisational justice because how an organisation treats its employees may have a substantial influence on their attitudes including OCB (Khaola & Rambe, 2021, Van Vuuren et al., 2016). Indeed Topbas et al. (2019) asserted that organisational justice positively correlates with organisational citizenship. Organisational justice reveals to employees that the organisation is reliable and neutral with its processes and procedures (Colquitt, 2017); and as a result, it has favourable effects on the attitudes and emotional well-being of diverse employees which adds more meaning to their work-life (Colquitt, 2019, Heffernan & Dundon, 2016, Girish, 2015, Weimann et al., 2015, Ajala & Bolarinwa, 2015). Therefore, justice perceptions have been associated with both OCB (Weimann et

al., 2015, Ajala & Bolarinwa, 2015) and employee happiness (Heffernan & Dundon, 2016, Girish, 2015).

### **Problem Statement**

Though there is a growing importance of OJP and its relationship with OCB, the specific mechanisms through which these constructs are linked remain relatively unexplored especially within the Ghanaian context (Topbas et al., 2019, Sulander et al., 2016, Chang, 2014, Yaghoubi et al., 2012). According to Topbas et al. (2019) and Chang (2014), in the context of Ghana's tertiary institutions, there exists a critical gap in understanding the relationship between organisational justice, employee happiness and citizenship behaviour. Despite the acknowledged significance of fostering a positive work environment, there is a lack of comprehensive research that specifically investigates the impact of organisational justice on employee happiness and its subsequent influence on citizenship behaviour in the unique setting of Ghana's higher educational institutions. Additionally, the mediating role of employee happiness in the link between OJP and OCB has not been thoroughly examined thus this relationship requires further investigation (Sulander et al., 2016, Chang, 2014, Yaghoubi et al., 2012). This study, therefore, aims to address these gaps by exploring the dynamics between organisational justice, employee happiness and pro-social behaviours, offering insights that can inform strategic interventions for enhancing workplace satisfaction and fostering positive organisational citizenship in Ghana's tertiary education sector.

## **2 Literature Review**

### **2.1 Organisational Justice Perception**

Organisational justice perception serves a critical role in shaping the attitudes, behaviours and overall job satisfaction of employees within an organisation. It relates to people's subjective assessments of equity and fairness in the workplace and takes into account the fairness of procedures, results and interpersonal interactions (Colquitt, 2017). Dahanayake et al. (2018) define organisational justice perception as the views and responses of employees to fairness practices and procedures within an enterprise while Heffernan and Dundon (2016) describe it as the extent to which an organisation values fairness in all of its systems and processes. It can therefore be deduced that organisational justice connotes fairness within the processes, systems, procedures and activities of an organisation. In other words, it describes how impartial an organisation's systems and processes are to its employees.

Organisational justice has three primary dimensions, namely distributive justice, procedural justice and interactional justice (Colquitt, 2017, Heffernan & Dundon, 2016, Girish, 2015, Cropanzano & Molina, 2015, Fujimoto et al., 2013). Distributive justice refers to employees' perception of organisational outcomes to be fair (Fujimoto et al., 2013). According to Girish (2015), it is used to describe the fairness of resource allocation and decision-making systems in an organisation. Scholars describe procedural justice as employee perceptions of the fairness of the organisation's rules, procedures, policies,

practices and processes that contribute to work outcomes (Dahanayake et al., 2018, Girish, 2015). In other words, it is how employees view the decision-making processes and procedures of their superiors to be neutral. Fujimoto et al. (2013) describe interactional justice as the fairness in communications and the neutrality of interpersonal relationships between superiors and subordinates within the organisation.

Scholars observed that several variables influence the organisational justice perception of employees (Gilliland, 2017, Ambrose & Schminke, 2017, Cohen-Charash & Spector, 2017). Gilliland (2017) emphasized the influences of procedural transparency, management trust and leadership style on how people perceive justice. It was noted that employees' perceptions of organisational justice tend to be greater when they believe that decision-making processes are open, consistent and fair. Other scholars suggested that the actions of leaders and supervisors, such as giving explanations, being respectful and acting with care, also influence the organisational justice perception of employees in the workplace (Sembiring et al., 2020, Mayer et al., 2012). The influences of these variables have implications for employee and organisational outcomes. For instance, Ambrose and Schminke (2017) suggested that high levels of perceived organisational fairness are linked to better leadership, organisational commitment, job satisfaction and organisational citizenship behaviours. On the other hand, low levels of justice perception are associated with detrimental outcomes, such as increased intentions to leave, poorer job performance and higher absenteeism rates (Cohen-Charash & Spector, 2017). Therefore, managers of organisations must develop and execute suitable strategies that guarantee employees hold favourable views of organisational justice to ultimately benefit from their engagement in extra-role activities and dedication.

## 2.2 The relationship between OJP and OCB

Scholarly sources indicate that organisational justice enhances citizenship behaviour (Khaola & Rambe, 2021, Kwak, 2016, Nwibere, 2014) and that when employees are treated well, they feel obligated to reciprocate. Khaola and Rambe (2021) conducted a study in universities in Lesotho and found that OCB is influenced by the organisational justice perception of employees. Similarly, Kwak (2016) posited that the procedural and interpersonal fairness perceptions of Korean Civil Servants influence their engagement in citizenship behaviours. There is therefore substantial evidence that organisational citizenship behaviours are predicted by organisational justice perception (Van Vuuren et al., 2016).

Further, some scholars investigated the influences of the categories of organisational justice namely distributive, procedural and interactional justice on organisational citizenship behaviour (Van Vuuren et al., 2016, Wee et al., 2014) and noted that fairness and favourable assessments of distributive, procedural and interactional justice promote citizenship behaviour among employees. According to Wee et al. (2014), procedural justice has a strong association with the OCB components. Further, a study conducted by Nwibere (2014) among academic staff members (both teaching and non-teaching) from nine Nigerian Universities in the Niger Delta showed that organisational justice

and OCB have a favourable correlation and that organisational justice has an impact on all the components of OCB. Therefore, based on the foregoing, organisational managers are implored to adopt fair practices and provide even opportunities for all employees to benefit from citizenship behaviours. Thus, to investigate the relationship within the tertiary educational context in Ghana, a hypothesis is formulated as follows:

*H1: Organisational justice perception (OJP) has a direct significant positive impact on organisational citizenship behaviour (OCB)*

### **2.3 The connection between OJP and Employee Happiness (EHAP)**

The linkage between organisational justice perception and employee happiness has not been settled (Behrani, 2017). This is because though available literature confirm that these two variables are related (Mitonga-Monga & Hoole, 2018), the relationship is still contended (Ahmed et al., 2018, Colquitt et al., 2017, Ajala & Bolarinwa, 2015). Ajala and Bolarinwa (2015) found that employees' sense of justice in organisational decisions affect their psychological well-being and social interaction, which is meant to reflect employee happiness. Similarly, Heffernan and Dundon (2016) found that worker attitudes of distributive, procedural and interactional fairness positively increase job satisfaction, affective commitment and well-being. Additionally, Jandaghi et al. (2012) found a high positive correlation between organisational fairness and academic staff happiness. The position of these scholars is supported because positive organisational justice perception means that there are fair practices, systems and procedures that have been instituted in the organisation. These fair practices, systems and procedures are enjoyed by all kinds of employees without any form of discrimination. That certainly will boost employee satisfaction and happiness which will enhance their effectiveness and promote organisational citizenship behaviours.

Other studies have shown that employee happiness has a negative impact on organisational efficiency and performance, notably in academic institutions (Ahmed et al., 2018, Behrani, 2017). Ahmed et al. (2018) asserted that organisational justice perception adversely affects academic employees' well-being, thus, managers of educational institutions should develop understanding, and create awareness and other activities that produce pleasant moods and emotions at the workplace. According to Behrani (2017), organisational fairness decreases employee happiness; and fairness perception and happiness are not influenced by marital status or sexual orientation. Therefore, based on the foregoing, further empirical investigations must be carried out to understand the linkage mechanisms and expand research on organisational fairness and employee happiness. Thus, the second hypothesis is formulated for investigation as follows:

*H2: Organisational justice perception (OJP) significantly positively predicts employee happiness (EHAP)*

### **2.4 The connection between Employee Happiness (EHAP) and OCB**

Management scholars suggest that employee happiness is strongly linked with organisational citizenship behaviour (OCB) (Cek & Eyupoglu, 2020,

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Salas-Vallina et al., 2016, Pryce-Jones & Lindsay, 2014). Salas-Vallina et al. (2016) investigated the mediation impact of organisational learning capability on the link between employee happiness and organisational citizenship behaviour and found that organisational learning capability has a strong impact on the relationship. Similar studies established a positive linkage between employee happiness and organisational citizenship behaviours (Agustina et al., 2020, Palihakkara & Weerakkody, 2019). In addition, Mohammad et al. (2011) measured how two dimensions of organisational citizenship behaviours (OCB for individuals and OCB for organisations) are associated with both internal and external forms of contentment. The study revealed that internal and external job satisfaction is important in predicting citizenship behaviours. These studies are supported by the study of Pryce-Jones and Lindsay (2014), who revealed that happiness at work brings about a return on investment and strategic outcomes such as helpful extra-role behaviours when properly implemented.

There is however a dearth of study of the relationships between these variables within the educational sector (Salas-Vallina et al., 2016). Accordingly, Salas-Vallina et al. (2016) argued that there should be increased and continued inquiries into the dimensions of happiness at work and its linkages in the educational sector. Consequently, a study was conducted in private and public schools in Pakistan on happiness and citizenship behaviour which revealed that female teachers are happier than male teachers and, as such, exhibit more citizenship behaviours than their male counterparts in the educational sector (Sabir et al., 2019). Therefore, to contribute to advancing the literature within the educational sector in Sub-Saharan Africa, particularly in Ghana, this study examines the linkage between employee happiness and organisational citizenship behaviours within tertiary institutions in Ghana by testing the following hypothesis:

*H3: Employee happiness (EHAP) is positively related to organisational citizenship behaviours (OCB).*

## 2.5 Employee Happiness, OJP and OCB

Existing research indicates that perceptions of organisational justice have a significant impact on employee happiness (Colquitt et al., 2017, Bies, 2015). According to Bies (2015), when employees perceive fairness in the distribution of resources, transparency in decision-making processes and respectful treatment, they are more likely to experience higher levels of happiness and job satisfaction which makes them to engage in citizenship behaviours. Thus, organisations should strive to create a culture of fairness and justice to enhance employee well-being and overall organisational performance.

Employee happiness has been identified as a mediator in the relationship between organisational justice and OCBs. Both perceptions of organisational justice and employee happiness independently influence OCBs (Khaola & Rambe, 2021, Kwak, 2016, Nwibere, 2014). Recent research has emphasised the significance of this relationship by suggesting that perceived organisa-

tional fairness may impact positive workplace behaviour through the mechanism of employee happiness (Ahmed et al., 2018, Behrani, 2017, Weimann et al., 2015, Ajala & Bolarinwa, 2015).

Chen et al. (2021) examined the mediating role of employee happiness in the association between organisational justice perception and OCBs. Their findings demonstrated that happiness partially mediated this link, indicating that employee happiness plays a crucial role in understanding why perceived fairness is associated with higher engagement in OCBs. Similar results were found in a study by Smith and Johnson (2019) which revealed that employees who perceived fair treatment were happier and more likely to engage in OCBs compared to their less happy counterparts.

Furthermore, studies have shown that contented employees are more likely to display productive behaviours, including organisational commitment and OCBs (Dorantes et al., 2018). Gonzalez-Morales et al. (2018) found that employee happiness acts as a mediator between organisational justice and OCBs, indicating that individuals are more likely to experience happiness and engage in OCBs when they perceive their organisation to be fair. Similarly, Dorantes et al. (2018) suggested that OCBs and procedural justice were partially mediated by employee happiness.

Understanding the effects of employee happiness on the relationship between organisational justice perception and OCBs has significant implications for organisations aiming to enhance employee performance and well-being (Weimann et al., 2015, Ajala & Bolarinwa, 2015). By establishing a fair and just work environment, organisations can foster employee happiness, consequently increasing engagement in OCBs (Khaola & Rambe, 2021). Although the literature tends to focus more on the organisational level, this study aims to fill an important gap by examining the individual-level interactions of these variables within the Ghanaian higher education sector and thereby contributing to the management literature. Thus, a hypothesis is formulated for investigation as follows:

*H4: Employee happiness (EHAP) significantly mediates the impact of organisational justice perception (OJP) on organisational citizenship behaviours (OCB)*

## 2.6 Theoretical and Conceptual Framework

### 2.6.1 Social Exchange Theory

This research is grounded in the theoretical framework of the Social Exchange Theory (SET). According to Cropanzano and Mitchell (2005), the SET seeks to explain social behaviour by examining the exchange of goods or services among individuals or groups. The underlying premise of this argument is that individuals possess rationality and employ it to make choices that align with their perceived self-interests. Therefore, per the SET, individuals participate in social interactions with the anticipation of deriving benefits from such engagements (Cropanzano et al., 2017). The prevailing perspective posits that individuals evaluate the costs and benefits associated with a particular relationship before deciding to engage in it. The maintenance of relationships

is believed to be facilitated through the exchange of rewards and punishments (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005, Blau, 1964). These rewards encompass various forms of reinforcement, such as monetary compensation, material gifts or intangible attributes like esteem or emotional assistance. Therefore, the present hypothesis aims to explain that individuals exhibit a greater propensity to engage in social exchange relationships when they perceive the advantages to outweigh the disadvantages. In essence, individuals are more inclined to assist others when they expect to receive something in return.

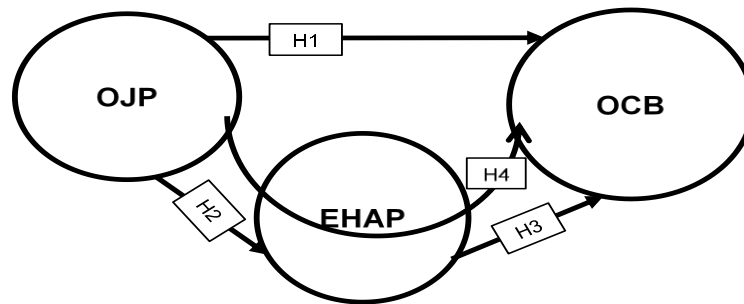
Accordingly, this theory posits that organisations can enhance employee performance, encompassing organisational citizenship behaviour and knowledge sharing, by cultivating an environment characterised by trust, robust job security and equitable social and economic incentives. Research indicates that employees participate in extracurricular activities due to the support, contentment and appreciation they receive from their supervisors and the organisation, thereby promoting organisational citizenship behaviour (Cropanzano et al., 2017). Conversely, inequitable organisational practices or instances of mistreatment can result in employee dissatisfaction, thereby negatively impacting their emotional well-being, productivity and sense of accountability (Cropanzano et al., 2017). According to Miles (2012), the SET offers a theoretical base for comprehending the underlying factors influencing social behaviour. This implies that it facilitates the understanding of interactions among people such as employees and the underlying motivations for specific behaviours such as OCB.

### 2.6.2 Conceptual framework

This study aims to examine the relationships between OJP, EHAP and OCB of staff of tertiary institutions in Ghana. In addition, it investigates the mediating role of employee happiness in the linkage between OJP and OCB. The study contends that when employees have positive perceptions of organisational justice, they will be satisfied and happy. This is because positive justice perceptions mean that procedures, processes and systems within the organisation are non-discriminatory and therefore benefit every kind of employee. The availability and implementation of non-discriminatory processes and procedures are seen by employees as good gestures from the organisation worthy of reciprocation. Thus, it places the employees in an exchange scenario whereby they reciprocate the positive perceptions as a result of the non-discriminatory practices. Thus, the study argues that the implementation of non-discriminatory practices which bring about positive perceptions (serve as benefit worthy of reciprocation) increase employees' happiness and well-being which ultimately influence them to reciprocate by engaging in organisational citizenship behaviours. Thus, according to the conceptual framework shown in Figure 1, the positive perceptions of the organisation (OJP) which make employees satisfied and happy (EHAP), influence them to engage in extrarole behaviours (OCB). This sets the stage for EHAP to serve as a mediator between OJP and OCB. Additionally, the model depicts that OJP has a direct



link with OCB. This means that when employees have a favourable organisational justice perception, it makes them to willingly engage in citizenship behaviours (OCB).



**Figure 1:** Conceptual framework depicting the relationship between OJP, EHAP and OCB.

### 3 Methodology

#### 3.1 Population, Sampling Technique and Sample

The target population of the study was employees of both private and public universities in Ghana. The population was 27,115 (National Accreditation Board, 2020). The study relied on a probability sampling technique and made use of multi-stage probability sampling to determine the sample participants. The multi-stage probability sampling consisted of stratified sampling and simple random sampling methods. The procedure proposed by Yamane (1967) cited in Chaokromthong and Sintao (2021) for determining sample size was used to select the sample size for the study. Thus, with a population of 27,115 and the level of precision of 0.05 which was set at the 95% confidence level, the sample size of 394 employees was determined.

#### 3.2 Data Collection

A structured questionnaire was presented one-on-one to the participants who were selected at random to collect the data. 394 (100%) of the employees returned their completed questionnaires. Before the administration of the questionnaire, letters seeking permission for the participation of employees in the survey were mailed to Registrars of sampled universities. Approval was received from twenty-seven (27) universities.

### 3.3 Measures

#### 3.3.1 Organisational Justice Perception

OJP was measured by three factors namely procedural justice, distributional justice and interactional justice. Procedural Organisational Justice Perception (POJP) was composed of nine items, Distributional Organisational Justice Perception (DOJP) had thirteen items and Interactional Organisational Justice Perception (IOJP) was measured with ten items. A sample item of POJP was 'the HRM policies and procedures in my University eliminate bias and discrimination', a sample item of DOJP was 'in my University, everyone is treated fairly in terms of training opportunities' and a sample item of IOJP was 'all employees are treated politely, with dignity and respect regarding training and development opportunities'. These items were rated on a 7-point scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree).

#### 3.3.2 Employee Happiness at Work

Employee happiness at work was measured by seventeen items. Sample items of employee happiness were 'I feel pleased with the work I do' and 'I feel that my work in the University is very rewarding'. These items were also rated on a 7-point scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree).

#### 3.3.3 Organisational Citizenship Behaviour

OCB was categorised into altruism, conscientiousness, sportsmanship, courtesy and civic virtue. Altruism was measured by five items, conscientiousness and sportsmanship were measured with four items each while courtesy was assessed with five items. A sample item of altruism was 'I often help staff even when it is not required of me', a sample item of conscientiousness was 'I always obey the University's rules and regulations even when no one is watching' and a sample item of sportsmanship was 'I never try to find fault with what the University is doing'. In addition, sample items of courtesy and civic virtue were 'I always take step to prevent problems with others in the University' and 'I always attend University meetings that are not mandatory, but are considered important' respectively. These items were rated on a 7-point scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree).

#### 3.3.4 Data Analysis

Structural equation modelling (SEM) with AMOS (Version 21) was used to analyse the survey data. A combination of path and factor analyses (both exploratory and confirmatory) were carried out in order to identify the relationships between the observed and unobserved variables. The exploratory factor analysis was carried out to identify the underlying causes and to keep elements that had strong connections with the variables for SEM analysis. To eliminate repetition and ensure adequacy of the data, the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin

(KMO) Sampling Adequacy test, Cumulative Variance Explained (CVE) and Bartlett's test of Sphericity (p-value) were obtained and the results showed acceptable standard thresholds (see Table 3).

Further, the confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was used to test the model fit of the measurement model. The outcomes were scrutinised and re-examined repeatedly to fit the measurement model based on the recommended thresholds (Gaskin & Lim, 2016, Hu & Bentler, 1999).

The analysis of the mediation variable was accomplished by utilising the Cause-Effect Model approach as suggested by Baron and Kenny (1986) and aided by Andrew Hayes' process model (Hayes & Rockwood, 2020). Additionally, other analytical procedures such as correlations were done, and executed by using SPSS version 23.

## 4 Results

### 4.1 Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

The results of the distribution of the sample's demographic characteristics is shown in Table 1. It revealed that the proportion of male and female responses was roughly 56% and 44% respectively. Regarding educational attainment, 39% of respondents had a master's degree, 8% had a postgraduate diploma, 34% had a bachelor's degree, 9% had a diploma, and 2% had credentials below the diploma level. Roughly, 9% of respondents had a PhD. Regarding the respondents' line of work, 51% and 49% were academic and support employees respectively.

**Table 1:** Demographic characteristics of respondents

Variable	Sub-category	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	219	55.6
	Female	172	43.7
	LGBTQ+	3	.8
Age	20-30	119	30.2
	31-40	164	41.6
	41-50	94	23.9
	50 and above	17	4.3
Highest Education	PhD	34	8.6
	Masters	154	39.1
	Honours/PGDip	30	7.6
	Bachelor's/AdvDip	133	33.8
	Diploma	36	9.1
	Below Diploma	7	1.8
Length of Service	0-5yrs	139	35.3
	6-10yrs	103	26.1
	11-15yrs	91	23.1
	16-20yrs	50	12.7
	21 and above yrs	11	2.8
Religion	Christian	323	82.19

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	Muslim	45	11.4
	Traditional African	7	1.8
	Hinduism	10	2.5
	Atheist	4	1.0
	Other	4	1.0
Employment Status	Permanent (Full-time)	294	74.7
	Fixed term full-time contract	52	13.2
	Fixed term part-time contract	48	12.2
Nature of Work	Academic	200	50.8
	Support	194	49.2
Rank (Job Position)	Full Professor	5	1.2
	Associate Professor	4	1
	Senior Lecturer	29	7.4
	Lecturer	20	5.1
	Assistant Lecturer	36	9.1
	Executive Management	7	1.8
	Head of Administrative	31	7.9
	Non-managerial senior member	66	16.8
	Senior Staff	122	30.9
	Junior Staff	74	18.8
Total		394	100

#### 4.2 Data Normality

Both univariate and multivariate tests were conducted to test for normality of the data. Based on the results in Table 2, the absolute skewness and kurtosis values were within the range of -2 to +2 confirming data normality (Garson, 2012). Further, the critical ratio (C.R.) which is similar to z-statistics and connected with Mardia's coefficient of multivariate kurtosis was larger than five (> 5.00) which further confirmed that the data is normally distributed (Bentler, 1995, 1990).

**Table 2:** Results showing univariate and multivariate tests of normality

Variable	Min	Max	Skewness	C.R	Kurtosis	C.R
POJP	1.33	7.00	-.38	.12	-.22	.24
DOJP	1.00	7.00	-.32	.12	-.25	.24
IOJP	1.00	7.00	-.64	.12	-.08	.24
HAP	1.28	7.00	-.68	.12	-.08	.24
OCB	1.37	6.83	-1.26	.12	1.58	.24

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5.37

### 4.3 Factor Analysis

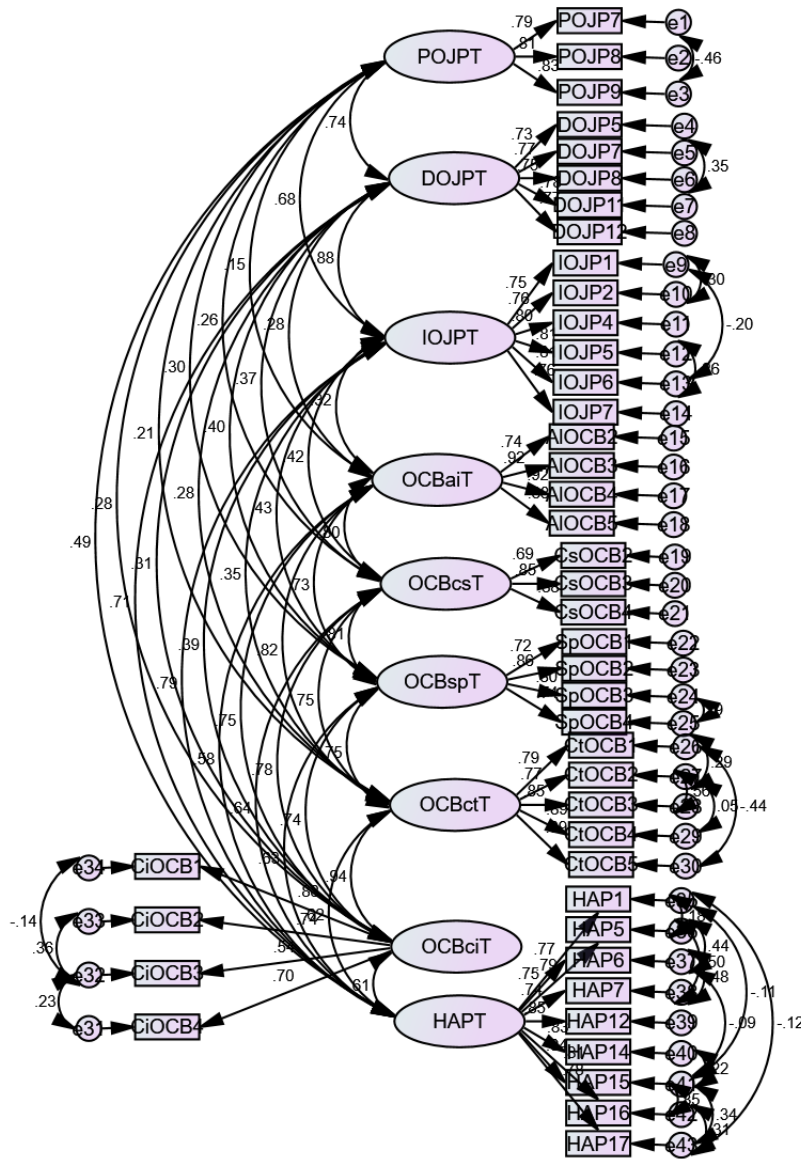
Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA), largely known as Principal Component Analysis, was carried out on the data to identify the underlying causes and to keep elements that had strong connections with the variables for SEM analysis. Based on the results shown in Table 3, the results of the thresholds that were obtained for Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) Sampling Adequacy test (KMO > 0.5), Cumulative Variance Explained (CVE) (CVE > 50%), and Bartlett's test of Sphericity (p-value) (be significant at a 5% confidence level) indicated that the scale has good convergent validity and that the data was adequate for SEM analysis.

**Table 3:** Summary of results showing factor analysis of the study variables

Variables	CVE(%)	KMO	Bartlett's test (P-Value)
POJP	51.60	.84	.000
DOJP	56.39	.91	.000
IOJP	59.86	.91	.000
HAP	63.52	.95	.000
OCB	55.42	.94	.000

### 4.4 Confirmatory Factor Analysis

The CFA was executed per the specified thresholds (Gaskin & Lim, 2016, Hu & Bentler, 1999) to match the measurement model. To get to the final fitting model, six, eight and four components from the POJP, DOJP and IOJP constructions, respectively, were removed. Three of the five dimensions were also dropped from the OCB construct. Nine components were taken out of the measuring model to better accommodate the concept of employee happiness. These items were eliminated because they did not meet the fit indices' requirements and had low loadings in the overall measurement model (Hair et al., 2010). Figure 2 depicts the results, which support the conclusions reached by Kenny (2012) that two is the minimum, three is safer, especially if factor correlations are weak, four gives safety and five or more is good for CFA. The minimum item for each main construct was three and nine was the maximum.



**Figure 2:** Measurement model

*P= Procedural, D=Distributional, I= Interactional, OJP= Organizational Justice Perception, OCB=Organisational Citizenship Behaviour, ai=altruism, ct=courtesy, cs= conscientiousness, sp=sportsmanship, ci=civic virtue, HAP= happiness at work, T=Total*

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#### 4.5 Results of Reliability Analysis

The Cronbach's Alpha ( $\alpha$ ) and Composite Reliability (CR) metrics were used to examine the internal consistency and reliability of the scales. According to Nunnally (1970), the Cronbach's alpha values ranged from 0.847 to 0.966, while the composite reliability values ranged from 0.831 to 0.940, showing good reliability. Furthermore, according to Hair et al. (2010), the study exhibited acceptable levels of discriminant validity, with Average Variance Extracted (AVE) values ranging from 0.577 to 0.755.

**Table 4:** Validity and reliability analysis of the study variables

Variables	Initial items	Final items	A	CR	AVE	MSV	MaxR(H)
POJP	9	3	.879	.831	.622	.566	.844
DOJP	13	5	.935	.874	.580	.789	.874
IOJP	10	6	.924	.899	.597	.789	.900
OCBai	5	4	.910	.925	.755	.677	.940
OCBcs	4	3	.847	.850	.656	.660	.874
OCBsp	4	4	.867	.861	.609	.660	.871
OCBct	5	5	.927	.930	.727	.842	.932
OCBci	5	4	.873	.857	.601	.842	.875
HAP	18	9	.966	.940	.637	.657	.942

#### 4.6 Structural Model Analysis and Validation

The goodness of fit indices (refer to Table 5) of the structural model have satisfied the recommended thresholds (Hair et al., 2010, Hu & Bentler, 1999, Etezadi-Amoli & Farhoomand, 1996), thus, they have all demonstrated adequate fit. For instance, CMIN/df ( $\chi^2/df$ ) of 2.179, which fell below the cut-off point (Hu & Bentler, 1999) recommended for a good fit, was excellent. Also, the RMSEA of 0.055 for the direct and indirect baseline was within the permissible range. In addition, the CFI and GFI of 0.993 and 0.989 respectively, were excellent, as Hu and Bentler (1999) and Hair et al. (2010) suggested. Likewise, the Pclose of 0.514 for the baseline model is excellent and consistent with Hair et al. (2010) and Etezadi-Amoli and Farhoomand (1996) recommendation of Pclose > 0.50 as excellent.

**Table 5:** Goodness of fit indices of the structural model

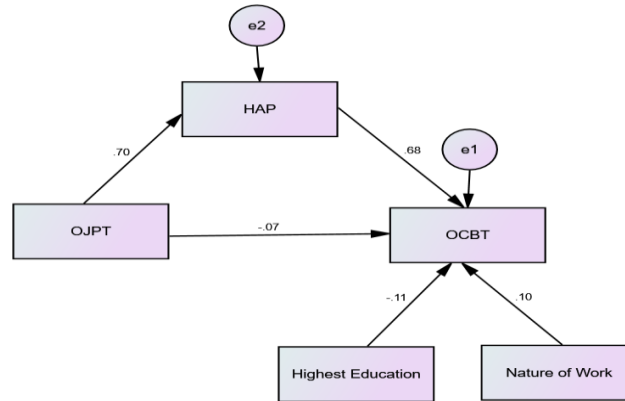
Measurement	Structural Model	Recommended Threshold	Interpretation
CMIN	13.076	---	
DF	6	---	
CMIN/DF	2.179	Btn 1 & 3	Excellent
CFI	.993	>.95	Excellent
GFI	.989	>.95	Excellent
RMSEA	.055	<.06	Excellent
PClose	.514	>.05	Excellent
SRMR	.055	<.08	Excellent
TLI	.982	>.95	Excellent
IFI	.993	>.95	Excellent

The structural model (see Figure 3) was presented based on the conceptual model where OJP predicts overall OCB and EHAP predicts OCB. The model depicted the direct path relationships of the variables under study. Thus, based on the structural model, the direct path relationships of the constructs are depicted in Table 6, firstly, there is a direct path relationship between organisational justice perception and organisational citizenship behaviour, secondly, there is a direct path relationship between organisational justice perception and employee happiness; and finally, that there is a direct path relationship between employee happiness at work and organisational citizenship behaviour.

The results for the first hypothesis revealed that OCB was significantly influenced by OJP ( $\beta = -.07$ ,  $P(.000) < .001$ ). Moreover, the standardised beta value of  $-.07$  shows that the impact of OJP on OCB was negative and significant. This means that OJP has a significant negative influence on OCB. Therefore, the hypothesis is rejected. Additionally, the regression weight ( $\beta$ ) of  $-.07$  indicates that a unit increase of OJP negatively influences 7% variation among OCB practices of staff of tertiary institutions in Ghana indicating a relatively weak relationship.

The outcome for the second hypothesis indicated that EHAP and OJP had a significant beta value of  $0.70$  ( $p < .001$ ). Therefore, this hypothesis was accepted as the data supported the initial prediction. Moreover, the determined beta value of  $0.70$  shows that the effect of OJP on happiness at work was positive and significant. Moreover, the regression weight (beta value) of  $0.70$  indicates that a 70% variation in employee happiness in the organisation is positively influenced by a unit increase in OJP practices (procedural, distributional & interactional) among the staff of tertiary institutions in Ghana indicating a very strong relationship.





**Figure 3:** Structural Model

Further, the third hypothesis showed a statistically significant correlation between OCB and EHAP as evidenced by a positive beta coefficient of 0.68 ( $P < .001$ ). The beta coefficient of 0.68 demonstrated a positive relationship between EHAP and OCB, suggesting that as EHAP increases, so does the level of OCB. Therefore, the hypothesis is accepted. This implies that when employees perceive higher levels of happiness and well-being within their work setting, they are more inclined to exhibit discretionary behaviours that surpass their prescribed job duties.

**Table 6:** Direct path relationships

Hypo	Path Relationship	Structural Model	
		Estimate	P-Value
H1	Organisational Justice Perception ----→ OCB	-.07	.000
H2	Organisational Justice Perception ----→ HAP	.70	.000
H3	Happiness at work ----→ OCB	.68	.000
	Higher Education	-.11	
	Nature of Work	.10	

#### 4.7 Mediating role of EHAP on OJP and OCB

The outcome for the fourth hypothesis which was depicted in Table 7 presented the mediating effect of EHAP on the relationship between OJP and OCB. The indirect effect estimate (.457) represents the effect of OJP on OCB through the mediator EHAP. The total effect estimate (.369) represents the total effect of OJP on OCB without considering the mediator EHAP. The direct effect estimate (-.089) represents the direct relationship between OJP and OCB, without considering the mediator EHAP. These results show that EHAP has a full mediation effect on the link between OJP and OCB. The full mediation implies that EHAP fully mediates the relationship between OJP and OCB. This conclusion is based on the estimates and is supported by the fact that the indirect effect (.457) is much larger than the direct effect (-.089) suggesting that the mediator plays a crucial role in explaining the relationship between the independent variable (OJP) and the dependent variable (OCB).

**Table 7:** Summary of mediation analysis of OJP, EHAP and OCB

	Indirect Effect	Total Effect	Direct Effect	Decision
Estimates	.457	.369	-.089	
SE	.051	.044	.052	
t-value		8.477	-1.716	
P-value	.000	.000	.087	
MH3: OJP --→HAP --→ OCB				Full Mediation

## 5 Discussions

The findings from the first hypothesis present an intriguing insight into the relationship between OJP and OCB. The negative beta value is particularly noteworthy as it suggests that as perceptions of organisational justice increase, organisational citizenship behaviours decrease. This result counters much of the existing literature which typically posits a positive relationship between OJP and OCB. The conventional wisdom is that when employees perceive fairness and justice within their organisation, they are more likely to engage in behaviours that go above and beyond their basic job requirements to support the organisation, reflecting positively on OCB (Moorman, 1998). However, the negative relationship observed in this study suggests a different dynamic at play. The relationship between OJP and OCB may operate differently in this context than traditionally assumed. The specific context in which the study was conducted and factors such as industry sector, organisational size and geographic location could play a role in shaping the dynamics between OJP and OCB (Alhammedi & Abu, 2024). For example, in high-stress envi-

ronments or in cultures where hierarchical structures are strongly emphasised, the relationship between justice perceptions and citizenship behaviours may be more complex (Kula, 2017, Jain, 2015). In addition, employees who frequently engage in citizenship behaviours might develop higher expectations for justice and fairness from the organisation. When these expectations are not met, their perceptions of organisational justice might decline, thus reflecting a negative relationship in the data (Podsakoff et al., 2000, Williamson & Williams, 2011, Lam et al., 2002). Thus, this finding concerning tertiary educational institutions in Ghana calls for further research to explicitly investigate the reverse causality hypothesis, which would enhance understanding of the dynamic interplay between organisational justice perceptions and citizenship behaviours.

Nevertheless, the effects of organisational justice go beyond its influence on employee behaviours, extending into the domains of happiness and well-being, especially within the context of university staff. This study confirms the significant impact of organisational justice on the overall happiness and well-being of university workers, as supported by prior studies (Ahmed et al., 2018, Weimann et al., 2015, Dodge et al., 2012). The need for educational institutions to improve employee understanding, awareness and welfare arises as a crucial factor in the quest for increased employee happiness, as indicated by the results of this study. According to Dodge et al. (2012), one important factor that contributes to employee happiness is the promotion of pleasant emotions in the workplace, together with the perception that one's work contributes to personal growth and fulfilment. Creating a conducive environment where university employees find happiness and personal growth in their work is crucial for enhancing their well-being, happiness and general welfare.

Moreover, this study highlights the essential importance of fairness in organisational decision-making, such as promotions, job assignments and incentive distribution in influencing the happiness, psychological well-being and social connections of university employees (Ahmed et al., 2018). The importance of distributive, procedural and interactional fairness is highlighted, as research has found favourable associations between these aspects of fairness and employee happiness (Weimann et al., 2015). It is important to reiterate that distributive fairness refers to the perceived justice in the distribution of results, such as promotions and incentives while procedural fairness pertains to the impartiality of the decision-making procedures, guaranteeing openness and uniformity. Further, interactional fairness pertains to the level of interpersonal treatment experienced during these procedures. This study's results therefore depict that the presence of these fairness elements in organisational practises has a favourable impact on the contentment and well-being of employees in universities.

Furthermore, relevant studies have emphasised the beneficial influence of employee happiness and well-being on the performance of employees and organisational outcomes (Proto, 2016, Chancellor et al., 2015, Oswald et al., 2015). According to De Waal (2018), happy employees express happy feelings towards their jobs and easily engage in citizenship behaviours. The experience of happiness among employees in the workplace has been found to have a significant impact on their levels of satisfaction, fulfilment and motivation (Proto, 2016). This, in turn, can have a positive influence on their attitudes

and behaviours. Employees who experience happiness are more likely to exhibit elevated levels of job satisfaction. This, in turn, can foster a greater propensity to surpass their prescribed job responsibilities and actively participate in organisational citizenship behaviour (Oswald et al., 2015). Furthermore, there exists a positive correlation between happiness in the workplace and elevated levels of intrinsic motivation, wherein individuals derive pleasure and contentment from the tasks they perform. The presence of intrinsic motivation can serve as a driving force for individuals to willingly engage in organisational activities and display organisational citizenship behaviour.

The mediation study highlights the crucial significance of employee happiness in the complex relationship between OJP and OCB. As revealed by previous scholars (Khaola & Rambe, 2021, Ahmed et al., 2018, Kwak, 2016, Weimann et al., 2015), the results suggested that perceived organisational fairness has a stronger effect on organisational citizenship behaviour when employee happiness is taken into account. The proposition that employee happiness functions as a mediator implies that the connection between OJP and OCB is not immediate, but rather operates through the intermediate impact of happiness. Consequently, when employees observe that there is fairness and justice in the organisational procedures, their ensuing enjoyment acts as a trigger, enhancing the probability of engaging in behaviours that go beyond their prescribed job obligations (Ahmed et al., 2018, Behrani, 2017).

Moreover, the results highlight that the effect of OJP on OCB is heightened when combined with the impact of employee happiness. This implies a mutually beneficial connection in which favourable evaluations of organisational fairness, together with the consequent sense of contentment, foster a heightened drive for employees to surpass their prescribed job responsibilities (Kwak, 2016, Ajala & Bolarinwa, 2015). Thus, the notion that employee well-being and happiness act as intermediary processes serves as a motivation for employees to display constructive civic behaviours. Essentially, promoting fairness and justice in the workplace enhances employee happiness and well-being as well as acts as a motivating factor for employees to actively engage in positive behaviours that go beyond their assigned duties (Behrani, 2017, Kwak, 2016).

## 6 Conclusion

This study empirically investigated the mediating effect of employee happiness at work on the relationship between organisational justice perception and organisational citizenship behaviour among employees of tertiary educational institutions in Ghana. The results depicted that employee happiness fully mediates the link between organisational justice perception and citizenship behaviour. It further revealed that the complex interaction of fairness, transparency and equitable treatment within higher educational institutions not only promotes a favourable work environment but also stimulates increased employee happiness and active participation in citizenship behaviours. Thus, understanding the importance of organisational justice in this context highlights its potential as a crucial factor in fostering a peaceful workplace culture and

enhancing the general happiness and well-being as well as the dedication of employees in Ghana's higher educational institutions. Therefore, the significance of this study lies in its capacity to reveal the connections among these variables within the Ghanaian setting, thereby enriching the existing literature.

## 7 Implications of the Research

### 7.1 Theoretical Implications

The findings suggest that the association between organisational justice perceptions and organisational citizenship behaviour is completely mediated by the level of employee happiness. This discovery is consistent with other research that underscores the significance of affective states in shaping employee actions (Cropanzano & Wright, 2011). The aforementioned remark aligns with the ideas of Social Exchange Theory, a theoretical paradigm that posits that employees demonstrate good attitudes and behaviours in response to their perception of fairness and support from their company (Blau, 1964). Therefore, this study emphasises the considerable significance of employee happiness in mediating the association between perceived organisational fairness and employees' propensity to engage in citizenship actions.

Further, the study's emphasis on employee happiness within the work environment as a mediating factor highlights the interconnectedness between employee happiness and organisational effectiveness. It is regarded as a driving force in attaining organisational success (Wright & Cropanzano, 1998). Thus, organisations that prioritise employee happiness are more likely to see increased levels of employee engagement and improved organisational citizenship behaviours, leading to enhancement of overall performance.

### 7.2 Managerial Implications

The study's findings suggest that management in tertiary educational institutions and human resource management professionals have the potential to support the implementation of evidence-based interventions that aim to enhance positive perceptions of organisational justice and employee well-being. Hence, it is advisable for organisational leadership to adopt human resource management policies and practises that cultivate equity, promote a harmonious work-life and enhance the overall welfare of employees. The implementation of these approaches has been demonstrated to result in a workforce that is more engaged, content and dedicated (Guest, 2017). Furthermore, management must prioritise the implementation of equitable and unbiased policies and practices inside the organisational structure. Accordingly, to augment the perception of organisational justice, it is imperative to build transparent decision-making systems that encourage equal chances and efficiently resolve employee complaints (Colquitt, 2017).

Moreover, tertiary educational institutions should create and establish environments that prioritise justice to enhance employee happiness and satisfaction through the enhancement of their psychological well-being. This is because the presence of fairness in organisational processes, procedures and employee interactions has been found to enhance employee happiness and contribute to the overall performance of the business (Behrani, 2017). Moreover, it has been suggested by previous research that how employees perceive fairness within different areas of an organisation has an impact on their psychological well-being and social connections (Ajala & Bolarinwa, 2015). Consequently, educational institutions must establish workplaces that are characterised by equity, fairness and justice to enhance employee happiness and citizenship behaviours.

Furthermore, the management of higher educational institutions and human resource management practitioners must commit resources towards initiatives that promote employee happiness and well-being. This may involve the facilitation of opportunities for skill development and career progression, the execution of initiatives that promote harmonious integration of work and personal life, and the fostering of a work environment that fosters mutual support and collaboration (Mousa et al., 2021, Guest, 2017). This is due to the presence of empirical evidence that indicates a favourable association between employee happiness and their tendency to demonstrate discretionary efforts and engage in actions that result in favourable outcomes for the organisation (Mousa et al., 2021).

Additionally, the management of tertiary educational institutions should prioritise the cultivation of awareness and the promotion of employee well-being as a means to enhance employee happiness (Ahmed et al., 2018). The impact of employees' perception of fairness in various aspects of the organisation, such as promotions, task assignments and reward distribution, on their psychological well-being and social interactions is significant. This, in turn, has implications for their overall happiness (Dodge et al., 2012). Hence, the management of higher educational institutions must acknowledge and create an equitable atmosphere that cultivates employee contentment by safeguarding and advancing their psychological well-being.

Furthermore, it is vital for management to actively investigate the strategies aimed at engaging and including employees in decision-making processes, while also cultivating a sense of autonomy and ownership in their responsibilities (Salas-Vallina et al., 2021, Aboagye, 2015). This is because employees who are actively involved in their work tend to display a higher inclination towards engaging in citizenship practices. Published works posited that employees who exhibit higher levels of engagement tend to regard the company as being non-discriminatory and are more prone to engage in citizenship behaviours that contribute to communal well-being rather than solely focusing on their interests (Salas-Vallina et al., 2021).

## 8 Limitations and Future Research Direction

The current study has a few limitations that consequently provide directions for future research. The cross-sectional design that was utilised in this study limits the capacity to establish causal linkages. Thus, to establish causal relationships, future empirical studies should adopt a longitudinal research approach. Secondly, the study's reliance on a single research method namely quantitative method, may not have been able to properly investigate and appreciate the views and perspectives of the respondents. Future studies could utilise a technique that makes use of multiple methods to unearth more in-depth findings. Lastly, the sample was restricted to universities in Ghana which may limit the applicability of the findings to other cultural contexts and institutions. Therefore, when applied to other nations, these findings should be interpreted with extreme caution.

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