

The Relationship Between Organizational Justice and Employee Engagement: The Mediating Role of Psychological Capital in The Egyptian Banking Sector

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ABSTRACT:

Objective: In an era of rapid technological advancement and automation, organizations face increasing turbulence where human focus and purpose are under threat. Constant distractions and stress make it difficult for employees to be fully engaged—physically, emotionally, and intellectually. Organizations now recognize that their people are their primary sustainable competitive advantage. This study examines how perceptions of Organizational Justice—fair distribution of rewards, transparent processes, and respectful treatment—influence Employee Engagement and clarifies the mediating role of Psychological Capital (hope, efficacy, resilience, and optimism).

Design/Methodology/Approach: A quantitative survey was conducted with 380 white-collar employees in Egypt's banking sector. Validated scales measured Organizational Justice, Psychological Capital, and Employee Engagement. Structural equation modelling (SEM) tested the direct and mediating effects within this context.

Results: The results show that Distributive Justice is the strongest positive predictor of Employee Engagement, reflecting the impact of Egypt's economic conditions and power-distant culture. Procedural and Informational Justice also have positive effects, while Interpersonal Justice shows a weaker—but still positive—impact, suggesting respectful interaction is viewed as a basic standard. The findings highlight a dual role of Organizational Justice: directly boosting engagement and indirectly enhancing Psychological Capital, which, in turn, sustains engagement over time. Combined, these effects explain more than 50% of the variance in Employee Engagement.

Practical Implications: These insights emphasize the need for organizations to design and communicate fair policies and practices that nurture employees' psychological strengths and commitment in demanding rapidly changing work environments.

KEYWORDS: Organizational Justice; Psychological Capital; Employee Engagement; Fairness; Resilience; Positive Organizational Behavior; Banking Sector; Egypt.

INTRODUCTION

In today's rapidly evolving business environment, organizations face unprecedented challenges driven by automation, digital transformation, and mounting economic pressures. These changes have intensified the demand for resilient, fully engaged employees who can contribute their best — physically, emotionally, and cognitively — despite increasing workplace distractions and stressors. As the limitations of traditional mechanistic management approaches have become evident, modern organizations increasingly recognize human capital as a critical and sustainable competitive advantage (Sweetman & Luthans, 2010).

This recognition has directed attention towards Positive Organizational Behavior (POB), which shifts the focus from merely avoiding deficits such as burnout to proactively developing employees' psychological resources (Luthans et al., 2006). In this context, Psychological Capital (PsyCap) — comprising hope, self-efficacy, resilience, and optimism — has emerged as a vital individual-level resource linked to positive workplace outcomes, including higher job satisfaction, improved performance, and sustained engagement (Sweetman & Luthans, 2010).

Equally, Organizational Justice — employees' perception of fairness in reward distribution, decision-making processes, respectful treatment, and transparent communication — has been consistently linked to desirable employee attitudes and behaviors (Viseu et al., 2015). However, research exploring how and why perceptions of justice translate into higher employee engagement remains limited, especially in non-Western contexts. In line with the Social Exchange Theory, the Broaden-and-Build Theory, and the Job

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Demands-Resources (JD-R) model, this study proposes that Psychological Capital explains how organizational justice boosts employee engagement.

Despite growing scholarly interest, empirical research addressing this mechanism in developing economies remains scarce. Moreover, the Egyptian banking sector — a cornerstone of the national economy — provides a context where economic challenges and cultural norms, such as high power distance, may shape how justice perceptions influence engagement. This study, therefore, addresses this gap by investigating the relationship between perceived organizational justice and employee engagement and testing the mediating role of Psychological Capital in the Egyptian banking sector.

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Organizational Justice

Organizational justice refers to employees' perceptions of fairness within their workplace. It encapsulates how resources are allocated, the fairness of decision-making processes, the quality of interpersonal treatment, and the adequacy of information provided. Over the past decades, organizational justice has gained prominence as a key factor influencing employee attitudes and behaviors. The construct is commonly broken down into four dimensions: distributive, procedural, interpersonal, and informational justice (Fortin, 2008).

Distributive justice centers on the perceived fairness of outcome distributions, such as pay, rewards, and promotions. Equity theory (Adams, 1965) supports this view, highlighting that employees compare their input/output ratio with that of others. Procedural justice pertains to the fairness of the processes used to determine outcomes, emphasizing consistency, bias suppression, and ethicality (Leventhal, 1980). Interpersonal justice relates to respectful and dignified treatment of employees by authority figures, while informational justice concerns the transparency, adequacy, and timeliness of information provided (Greenberg, 1990).

The significance of organizational justice lies in its profound impact on employees' trust, commitment, satisfaction, and performance. Injustice is often seen as a workplace stressor that impedes employees' psychological well-being and their ability to cope with work demands (Cole et al., 2010).

2.2 Employee Engagement

Employee engagement is characterized by an employee's psychological presence and investment in their job, encompassing emotional, cognitive, and physical dimensions (Kahn, 1990). Unlike fleeting moods or fixed personality traits, engagement is a state-like condition that can be influenced by organizational and individual factors.

Schaufeli et al. (2002) defined engagement as a positive, fulfilling, work-related state marked by vigor, dedication, and absorption. Vigor refers to high levels of energy and mental resilience; dedication involves a sense of significance, enthusiasm, and pride; absorption means being fully concentrated and happily engrossed in work.

Engagement has been positively linked with various organizational outcomes, such as increased job satisfaction, improved performance, organizational citizenship behaviors, and reduced turnover intentions (Soane et al., 2012). As a result, understanding and fostering engagement has become a central concern for HR professionals and organizational leaders.

2.3 Psychological Capital

Psychological capital (PsyCap) is a core construct within positive organizational behavior, reflecting an individual's positive psychological state of development (Luthans et al., 2007). It comprises four components: self-efficacy (confidence to take on and put in the necessary effort to succeed at challenging tasks), hope (perseverance toward goals and the ability to find pathways to achieve them), resilience (ability to bounce back from adversity), and optimism (positive attribution about succeeding now and in the future).

PsyCap is distinct from other forms of human capital due to its state-like nature—meaning it can be developed and enhanced over time. It has been associated with various favorable work outcomes, including job satisfaction, performance, commitment, and engagement (Sweetman & Luthans, 2010).

2.4 Relationship between Organizational Justice and Employee Engagement

The link between organizational justice and employee engagement has been extensively studied, with consistent findings highlighting a positive relationship. The social exchange theory (Blau, 1964) provides a theoretical basis for this relationship, positing that fair treatment by the organization fosters a sense of obligation and reciprocity among employees, leading them to invest more of themselves in their work.

When employees perceive fairness in outcome distributions (distributive justice), decision-making processes (procedural justice), interpersonal interactions (interpersonal justice), and information sharing (informational justice), they are more likely to feel valued and respected. This perception enhances their emotional connection to the organization, motivating them to engage more deeply with their roles (Saks, 2006).

H1: Organizational justice is positively related to employee engagement.

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2.5 Relationship between Organizational Justice and Psychological Capital

Organizational justice not only influences employee engagement directly but also plays a crucial role in fostering psychological capital. Fair treatment contributes to the development of employees' self-efficacy, optimism, hope, and resilience, thereby enhancing their overall psychological resources (Luthans et al., 2008).

Distributive Justice and Psychological Capital: Fair distribution of rewards and recognition enhances employees' optimism and self-efficacy. When outcomes align with employees' expectations of fairness, they are more likely to feel confident in their abilities and hopeful about future opportunities.

H2a: Distributive justice is positively related to psychological capital.

Procedural Justice and Psychological Capital: Transparent and consistent processes instill a sense of control and predictability, boosting employees' hope and resilience. Knowing that procedures are fair enables employees to trust in the system and persevere through challenges.

H2b: Procedural justice is positively related to psychological capital.

Informational Justice and Psychological Capital: Timely, transparent, and adequate information supports employees' understanding of organizational decisions, enhancing their optimism and resilience. Clear communication fosters trust and reduces uncertainty.

H2c: Informational justice is positively related to psychological capital.

Interpersonal Justice and Psychological Capital: Respectful and dignified treatment by supervisors and colleagues strengthens employees' self-esteem, resilience, and overall psychological well-being. Interpersonal fairness creates a supportive work environment conducive to personal growth.

H2d: Interpersonal justice is positively related to psychological capital.

2.6 Relationship between Psychological Capital and Employee Engagement

Psychological capital has been consistently linked to employee engagement across various organizational contexts. According to the broaden-and-build theory (Fredrickson, 2001), positive psychological states expand individuals' thought-action repertoires, enabling them to build enduring personal resources. PsyCap equips employees with the resilience, confidence, and optimism needed to face workplace challenges, thereby fostering deeper engagement (Sweetman & Luthans, 2010).

Employees with high PsyCap are more likely to demonstrate vigor, dedication, and absorption in their work. They are better equipped to manage stress, adapt to change, and maintain high performance, all of which contribute to sustained engagement.

H3: Psychological capital is positively related to employee engagement.

2.7 The Mediating Role of Psychological Capital

The mediating role of psychological capital in the relationship between organizational justice and employee engagement is grounded in both the social exchange theory and the job demands-resources (JD-R) model. Justice perceptions act as job resources that enhance PsyCap, which in turn fosters engagement. This indirect pathway suggests that while fairness directly encourages engagement, its effect is amplified when employees' psychological resources are also strengthened (Xanthopoulou et al., 2007).

By cultivating a fair and supportive environment, organizations can build employees' PsyCap, leading to higher levels of engagement. This mediating effect highlights the importance of investing in both fair practices and psychological resource development for optimal employee outcomes.

H4: Psychological capital mediates the relationship between organizational justice and employee engagement.

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Design and Approach

This study adopts a quantitative, descriptive research design aimed at investigating the relationship between perceived organizational justice and employee engagement, with psychological capital acting as a mediating variable. The design is grounded in Social Exchange Theory (Blau, 1964), Conservation of Resources Theory (Hobfoll, 1989; 2011), and the Job Demands-Resources Model (Demerouti et al., 2001), offering a structured framework for hypothesis testing.

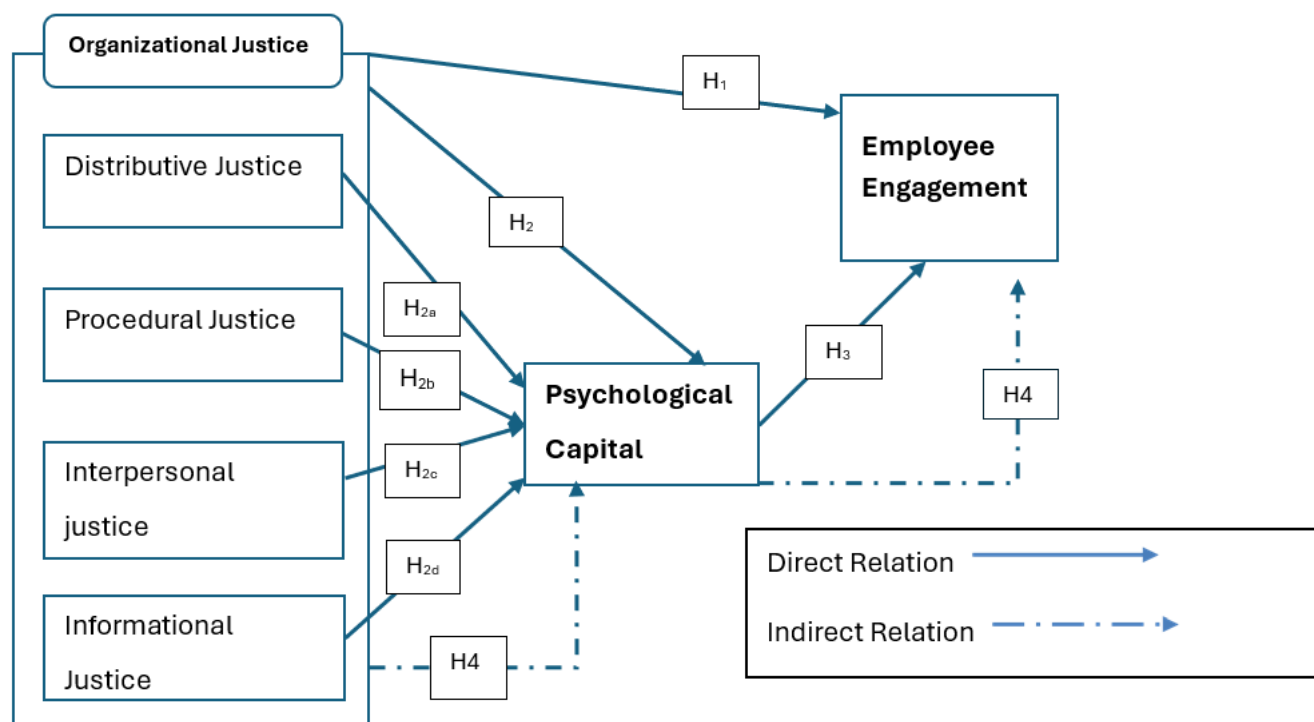
The research follows a deductive approach, starting from established theoretical foundations and progressing toward empirical validation through structured data collection and analysis. This ensures methodological rigor and the potential for practical insights applicable to organizational settings.

3.2 Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework proposes that the four dimensions of perceived organizational justice—distributive, procedural, interpersonal, and informational justice—positively influence employee engagement, both directly and indirectly through the mediating role of psychological capital (hope, efficacy, resilience, and optimism).

This model positions organizational justice as a contextual resource that strengthens employee engagement by enhancing individual psychological resources, following positive organizational behavior theories.

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3.3 Research Population and Sampling

The study targeted white-collar, full-time employees in Egypt's banking sector, including staff from both public and private banks across various hierarchical levels—staff, first-line management, middle management, and senior leadership.

A convenience sampling technique was employed based on accessibility and willingness to participate. While this method carries limitations in generalizability, the diverse sample composition enhanced the study's relevance to the banking sector context.

The final sample included over 380 respondents, which aligns with statistical requirements for survey-based research in large populations, ensuring sufficient data for structural equation modelling. Data was collected via a structured questionnaire incorporating established, validated measurement scales:

Organizational Justice was assessed using Colquitt's (2001) scale, measuring distributive, procedural, interpersonal, and informational justice.

Employee Engagement was measured using the Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (UWES-9) (Schaufeli et al., 2006).

Psychological Capital was evaluated using the PCQ-12 (Luthans & Youssef-Morgan, 2017), encompassing hope, efficacy, resilience, and optimism.

Responses were recorded on a 5-point Likert scale, and demographic variables were also collected to profile the participants.

3.4 Data Analysis Methods

The data analysis employed both SPSS and AMOS (SEM) to ensure a robust examination of the hypothesized relationships. Descriptive statistics summarized respondent characteristics and provided a profile of the study variables. Normality tests (Kolmogorov-Smirnov and Shapiro-Wilk) assessed data distribution.

Reliability analysis (Cronbach's alpha and Composite Reliability) confirmed the internal consistency of the scales.

Correlation analysis evaluated relationships between variables. Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) tested both direct and indirect relationships, specifically examining the mediating role of psychological capital.

4. DATA ANALYSIS, FINDINGS, AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Chapter Preface

This chapter outlines the data analysis procedures employed in the study, encompassing both descriptive and inferential analyses. The primary objective is to systematically examine the data collected through a structured questionnaire, which utilized a Likert scale to capture respondents' perceptions of organizational justice, psychological capital, and employee engagement. This chapter also provides empirical evidence to evaluate the theoretical framework through hypothesis testing and path analysis.

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4.2 Descriptive Data Analysis

4.2.1 Demographic Profile

The sample (n = 280) consists of a balanced gender mix (56.1% male, 43.9% female), predominantly mid-career professionals aged 31–50 (61.1%). Positions ranged from employees to top management, with most in middle management (32.1%) and first-line management (27.9%). Tenure analysis shows a concentration in the 1–20 years range, with 32.5% having 11–20 years of service. Over half of the participants had 11–30 years of experience in the sector.

4.2.2 Reliability Analysis

Reliability analysis was conducted to examine the internal consistency of the measurement scales using Cronbach's alpha. The results, as presented in Table 4.1, indicate high reliability for all constructs.

Table Error! No text of specified style in document.-1 Reliability Statistics all Variables

Variables	Cronbach's Alpha	N of questions per variable
Psychological Capital	0.843	12
Organizational Justice	0.945	20
Employee Engagement	0.906	9
Distributive Justice	0.946	4
Procedural Justice	0.912	7
Interpersonal Justice	0.909	4
Informational Justice	0.917	5

Source: SPSS Data Analysis

All scales exceeded the 0.7 threshold (Hair et al., 2019), confirming excellent internal consistency and reliability for further analysis.

4.3 Inferential Data Analysis

4.3.1 Correlation Analysis

Correlation analysis using Spearman's rho was conducted to examine the relationships between organizational justice, psychological capital, and employee engagement. The results are shown in Table 4.5.

Table Error! No text of specified style in document.-2: Spearman's rho Correlation Test

		Psychological Capital	Employee Engagement
Distributive Justice	Correlation Coefficient	.530**	
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	
	N	280	
Procedural Justice	Correlation Coefficient	.426**	
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	
	N	280	
Interpersonal Justice	Correlation Coefficient	.356**	
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	
	N	280	
Informational Justice	Correlation Coefficient	.398**	
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	
	N	280	
Psychological Capital	Correlation Coefficient		.513**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		0.000
	N		280
Organizational Justice	Correlation Coefficient	.534**	.571**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	0.000
	N	280	280

Source: SPSS Data Analysis

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All variables exhibited significant positive correlations, supporting hypothesized relationships.

4.3.2 Regression Analysis

Multiple regression was used to assess the predictive power of organizational justice and psychological capital on employee engagement.

Table Error! No text of specified style in document.-3: Regression Analysis Model

	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	.531	.400		1.325	.186
Psychological Capital	.541	.090	.321	5.987	.000
Organizational Justice	.503	.069	.390	7.266	.000
R square = 0.368					
F= 80.756					
a. Dependent Variable: Employee Engagement					

Source: SPSS Data Analysis

4.3.3 Mediation Analysis

The mediation analysis in this study follows the Baron and Kenny approach (1986), which involves testing a series of regression models to establish the presence of mediation. Additionally, bootstrapping is used to assess the significance of the indirect effect, as it provides more robust and reliable estimates compared to traditional methods (Preacher & Hayes, 2008). By examining both the direct and indirect effects of organizational justice on employee engagement, this analysis provides a comprehensive understanding of the mechanisms driving employee engagement in the banking sector. The following figure presents the path analysis using AMOS software.

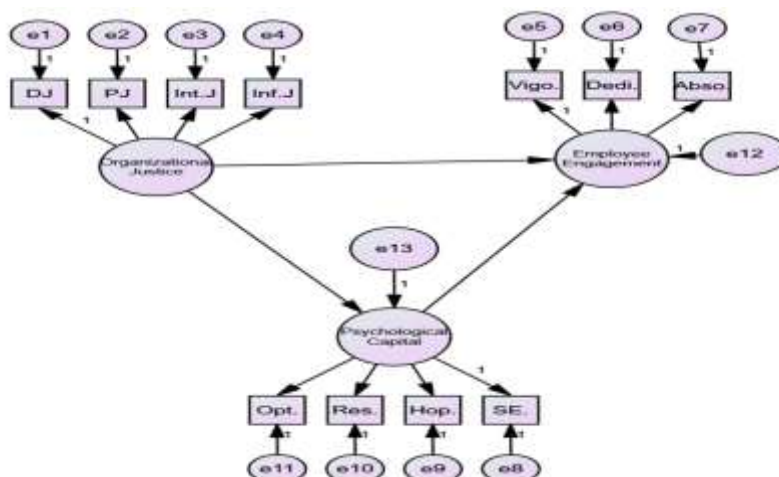


Figure 4.1: Mediation Path Analysis. Source: AMOS

The standardized regression weights indicate the strength and direction of the relationships between the variables which is presented in Table 4.7

Table Error! No text of specified style in document.-4: Standardized Regression Weights

			Estimate	P	Conclusion
Psychological Capital	<-	Organizational Justice	.690	***	Significant
Employee Engagement	<-	Organizational Justice	.304	.002	Significant
Employee Engagement	<-	Psychological Capital	.490	***	Significant

***: P<0.001

Source: AMOS

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Organizational Justice → Psychological Capital: The standardized coefficient is 0.690 ($p < 0.001$), indicating a strong positive relationship. This suggests that higher perceptions of organizational justice are associated with higher levels of psychological capital.

Organizational Justice → Employee Engagement: The standardized coefficient is 0.304 ($p = 0.002$), indicating a moderate positive relationship. This suggests that organizational justice directly influences employee engagement, independent of psychological capital.

Psychological Capital → Employee Engagement: The standardized coefficient is 0.490 ($p < 0.001$), indicating a strong positive relationship. This suggests that psychological capital plays a significant role in enhancing employee engagement.

Table 4 -5: Direct and Indirect Effect

	Organizational Justice			SMC Estimate
	Direct Effect	Indirect Effect	Total Effect	
Employee Engagement	0.304	0.338	0.643	0.539

Source: AMOSAMOS

Path analysis confirmed partial mediation of psychological capital in the relationship between organizational justice and employee engagement. Organizational justice had both a direct effect ($\beta = 0.304$, $p = 0.002$) and an indirect effect via psychological capital ($\beta = 0.338$, $p = 0.020$).

4.4 Summary of Hypotheses Testing

Table Error! No text of specified style in document.-6: Hypothesis Testing

Hypothesis	Test	Hypothesis Acceptance
H1: There is a positive relationship between Organizational Justice and Employee Engagement among professionals of the Egyptian banking sector	Correlation/Regression	Accept H1a
H2: Perceived Organizational Justice is positively related to Psychological Capital among professionals of the Egyptian banking sector	Correlation	Accept H2
H2a: There is a positive relationship between Distributive Justice and Psychological Capital among professionals of the Egyptian banking sector	Correlation	Accept H2a
H2b: There is a positive relationship between Procedural Justice and Psychological Capital among professionals of the Egyptian banking sector	Correlation	Accept H2b
H2c: There is a positive relationship between Interpersonal Justice and Psychological Capital among professionals of the Egyptian banking sector	Correlation	Accept H2c
H2d: There is a positive relationship between Informational Justice and Psychological Capital among professionals of the Egyptian banking sector	Correlation	Accept H2d
H3: There is a positive relationship between Psychological Capital and Employee Engagement among professionals of the Egyptian banking sector	Correlation/Regression	Accept H3
H4: Psychological Capital mediates the relationship between Organizational Justice and Employee Engagement among Egyptian banking professionals	Path Analysis	Accept H4

Source: Developed by the researcher

All hypotheses (H1–H4 and sub-hypotheses) were accepted, validating the proposed model.

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4.5 Discussion of Findings

The findings confirm the critical role of organizational justice in enhancing employee engagement both directly and through the mediation of psychological capital.

H1 confirmed that perceptions of fairness strongly correlate with higher engagement, echoing findings from Saks (2006) and Colquitt et al. (2001). The Middle Eastern hierarchical context amplified the importance of justice.

H2 and its sub-hypotheses reinforced that all justice dimensions positively influence psychological capital, with distributive justice having the strongest effect, likely due to Egypt's economic pressures. This supports Equity Theory and the Broaden-and-Build Theory.

H3 validated that psychological capital significantly predicts engagement, highlighting the strategic importance of resilience, hope, optimism, and self-efficacy.

H4 demonstrated the partial mediating role of psychological capital, confirming theoretical models like COR and JD-R. The findings stress the intertwined impact of organizational justice and psychological capital on employee engagement.

The insights gathered suggest that HRM practices in the Egyptian banking sector should focus on enhancing fairness perceptions and investing in psychological capital development to drive engagement.

5. CONCLUSION, LIMITATIONS AND CONTRIBUTIONS

5.1 Conclusion

This study explored the relationship between organizational justice and employee engagement, focusing on the mediating role of psychological capital within the Egyptian banking sector. Grounded in Positive Organizational Behavior theories—including Social Exchange Theory, the Broaden-and-Build Theory, and the JD-R Model—the research proposed that fairness in the workplace enhances psychological resources, thereby fostering employee engagement. A quantitative, descriptive research design was employed, collecting data from 280 full-time employees across various hierarchical levels in Egyptian banks using a structured Likert-scale questionnaire. A pilot study with 30 respondents ensured clarity and reliability before the main data collection. Validated measurement scales underwent rigorous reliability and validity testing. Cronbach's alpha scores exceeded the 0.70 threshold, and confirmatory factor analysis confirmed both convergent and discriminant validity. Despite some deviations from normality, data analysis using Spearman's rho and SEM via AMOS provided robust findings.

The study confirmed that all dimensions of organizational justice—distributive, procedural, interpersonal, and informational—positively influence psychological capital, with distributive justice showing the strongest correlation ($r = 0.530$). This highlights the critical role of perceived fairness in rewards and outcomes, particularly relevant in the performance-driven banking sector. Psychological capital also emerged as a significant predictor of employee engagement, validating the Broaden-and-Build Theory's assertion that positive psychological resources enhance engagement levels. Furthermore, organizational justice directly influenced engagement, emphasizing fairness as a key driver of involvement, dedication, and energy at work.

Importantly, the mediation analysis revealed that psychological capital partially mediates the relationship between organizational justice and engagement. This finding underscores organizational justice's dual role: directly enhancing engagement and indirectly fostering it through strengthened psychological resources—a contribution particularly relevant to emerging Middle Eastern markets. Although interpersonal and informational justice scored highest in descriptive analysis ($M = 4.91$ and $M = 4.48$), they showed weaker correlations with psychological capital compared to distributive justice. This suggests that while respectful treatment and clear communication are valued, fairness in tangible outcomes exerts a stronger motivational influence. In conclusion, this study presents a validated framework demonstrating how organizational justice fosters employee engagement, directly and through psychological capital. The methodological rigor, including pilot testing, validated instruments, and multivariate analysis, ensures the credibility of the results. By shedding light on this dynamic within the Egyptian banking context, the study advances theoretical understanding and offers practical insights for HRM in similarly structured environments. As the banking sector faces increasing performance demands and digital transformation, fostering psychological capital through fair organizational practices emerges as a strategic priority for sustaining engagement and performance.

5.2 Study Limitations

Despite its contributions, this study has certain limitations. Its cross-sectional design precludes causal inferences, suggesting that longitudinal research is needed to explore temporal dynamics. The use of convenience sampling limits generalizability, although the sample included a diverse professional profile. Reliance on self-reported data may introduce bias, which future research could address by incorporating multi-source data. Lastly, findings are context-specific to the Egyptian banking sector and may not directly translate to other industries or cultures.

5.3 Theoretical and Practical Contributions

This study offers three key theoretical contributions:

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It integrates organizational justice and psychological capital within a unified model, explaining how fairness perceptions translate into internal resources that foster engagement. It validates the mediating role of psychological capital, reinforcing its importance in linking organizational practices to behavioral outcomes. It provides culturally relevant insights from Egypt's banking sector, contributing to the broader discourse on justice and engagement in non-Western contexts.

Practically, the findings emphasize the need for:

Transparent and equitable HR practices that reinforce fairness perceptions. Development initiatives focused on psychological capital to sustain engagement and resilience. Clear, consistent internal communication strategies. Continuous employee feedback systems to monitor engagement and adjust policies accordingly.

5.4 Recommendations for Future Research

Building on this study's insights, future research could:

Adopt longitudinal or experimental designs to explore causality and the evolution of organizational justice, psychological capital, and engagement over time. Use probability sampling and larger, more diverse populations to enhance generalizability, both within and beyond the Egyptian banking sector. Incorporate multi-source data, including supervisor evaluations or objective performance metrics—to mitigate common method bias. Conduct cross-cultural studies to examine whether cultural factors (e.g., power distance, collectivism) influence the observed relationships in different contexts. Explore additional mediators and moderators, such as organizational commitment, trust, leadership styles, or job characteristics, to deepen understanding of the mechanisms at play. Extend the model to other industries, such as healthcare, manufacturing, or education, to assess the robustness and sector-specific relevance of the findings.

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