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Original Article

The Effect of Organizational Justice on Organizational Citizenship Behavior: A Diary Study on the Mediating Role of Challenge and Hindrance Stressors

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Abstract: Understanding the dynamic interaction between organizational environments and employee work outcomes is essential for developing effective policies and practices that encourage positive workplace behavior. This study investigates the relationship between organizational justice and organizational citizenship behavior (OCB), with challenge and hindrance stressors serving as mediating variables. Utilizing a diary study design, data were collected from 31 employees across 310 daily entries to capture both within-person (Level 1) and between-person (Level 2) variations. The multilevel structure enabled a nuanced analysis of daily experiences and their impact on individual work behavior. The findings reveal a significant positive relationship between distributive justice—a component of organizational justice—and OCB. Specifically, when employees perceive fairness in the distribution of resources and rewards, they are more likely to engage in discretionary behaviors that benefit the organization. The mediation analysis further suggests that perceived stressors influence how justice perceptions translate into citizenship behaviors, offering insight into the psychological mechanisms underlying this relationship. These results underscore the importance of fostering distributive justice within organizational settings to cultivate a more supportive and productive work environment. By highlighting the role of daily workplace experiences and individual perceptions, this study contributes to the growing body of literature on organizational behavior, particularly within the Malaysian context. It provides practical implications for managers aiming to enhance employee engagement and organizational performance through justice-oriented practices.

Keywords: Organizational justice; Organizational citizenship behavior; Stressors; Diary study; Malaysia context

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1. Introduction

Organizations citizenship behavior (OCB) is one of the core concepts that reflect on how employees keep their organization's best interests in mind and go above and beyond their job requirements. However, while OCB is important,

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but with job characteristics sometimes places employees into challenging and hindering situation, it is remaining unclear how positive and negative job stressors might influence OCB. Nevertheless, as stressors mainly are part of job characteristics and created by organizational initiative, it remains imprecise on how organizational justice is precursor to OCB, mainly via challenges and hindrance stressors. In general, organizational justice is a specific facet of organizational climate but also influences how managers allocate job demands to the employees in the workplace Thus, the main aim of the current study is to investigate the effect of different dimension of organizational justice on the hindrance-challenge stressors, and the indirect influence on organizational citizenship behaviors. Our research contributes to literature in several ways. First, while majority of the study utilized a longitudinal approach that able to provide causality association, the short-term fluctuation effect of organizational justice on OCB remains questionable.

In the context of the current study, to capture the short-term fluctuations of individual experience, we utilize a diary approach. Some researchers have recently proposed that organizational environment such as organizational commitment has a day-specific effect on employee work behavior (Rivkin et al., 2015); nevertheless, to our knowledge, only a few studies have investigated such day-specific associations. Hence, studying the day-to-day mechanisms and processes that underpin the postulated relationships could add value to organizational justice research. Second, so far most of the research on organizational justice has focused on overall justice (Crow, 2012), but not using a specific dimension of organizational justice yields different impact work behavior. While the previous studies uncovered distinct findings, investigation each of the three dimensions of organizational justice (distributive justice, procedural justice and interactional justice) separately could enhance the opportunity in discovering possible impact of justice in the work environment especially in the presence of challenging and hindering stressors. Third, the current research investigates both the challenge (positive) and hindrance (negative) perspective of stressor as a mediator between organizational justice and organizational citizenship behavior due to lack of empirical explanations from existing studies that associate stressors as antecedents to organizational behavior.

Challenge and hindrance stressors as a mediator plausibly produce more significant findings in relation to existing to body of knowledge. Finally, most of organizational justice research were widely tested in Western context but remain little evidence from the perspective of Asian countries. The Hofstede Insights (2021) revealed that Western nations have more individualistic cultures who place greater emphasis on personal autonomy and ambition. However, Asian country like Malaysia is known for their collectivist societies whereby individuals belong to wider communities that care for them in exchange for their allegiance. The tendency for organizational justice's effects between collectivist- and individualist-cultured employees could differ because they perceive justice in different perspective. For instance, Hofstede and Hofstede (2005) indicated the existence of 'high power distance' among Malaysian employees and employer to be very evident. This implies that Malaysian employees may place a higher emphasis on principles of fairness and deference towards authority people within the professional setting. It is also vital for organizations functioning in Malaysia to comprehend and adjust to the cultural principles of collectivism and high-power distance in order to establish a cohesive work atmosphere. Hence, this research would be an eye opener to answer the question if organizational justice and stressors would yield a favorable or negative effect on organizational citizenship behavior among Malaysian employees. Our research model is illustrated in Figure 1.

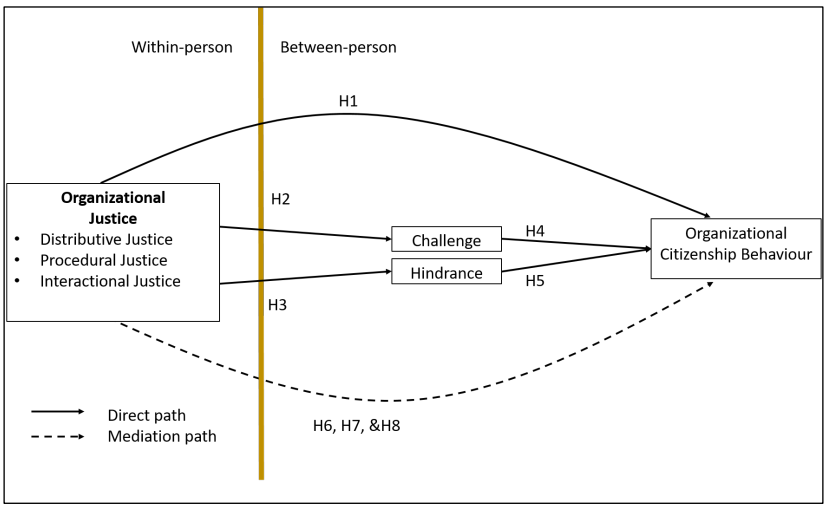

Figure 1. Hypothesized model.

Note: H = hypothesis

2. Literature Review

2.1. Organizational Justice and Organizational Citizenship Behavior

Employees who perceive fair and just treatment are more inclined to exhibit organizational citizenship activities, such exceeding job expectations or assisting colleagues. If employees feel that there is unfairness in the workplace, they could disengage and be less inclined to make constructive contributions to the firm. In line with the Social Exchange Theory (SET) by Blau (1964), when an organization treats an employee well, the employee is more likely to exhibit favorable behavior in return. Similarly, Adams's (1965) equity theory posits that employees are motivated by the remuneration they receive in exchange for their work-related contributions. Using this assumption, we expect that, organization who focuses on organizational justice may promote equality in work distribution, and processes.

Despite having two well-grounded theories (SET and Equity Theory), prior research has yet not produced consistent findings regarding the correlation between the dimensions of organizational justice and OCB. For instance, Momeni et al. (2014) examined the impact of organizational justice on organizational behavior using a four-factor model of organizational justice and observed significant associations between all dimensions of OJ and organizational citizenship behavior. However, Jehanzeb and Mohanty (2020) found no significant association between organizational justice and OCB. The existing research on the impact of organizational justice dimensions on employees' OCB contains restrictions that hinder its congruence. Scrutinizing this phenomenon through daily experience analysis would yield much comprehensive findings. Hence, more empirical investigations should be undertaken to achieve definitive results. Therefore, we propose that:

Hypothesis 1: (a) Daily distributive justice, (b) daily procedural justice and (c) daily interactional justice is positively related to daily organizational citizenship behavior.

2.2. Organizational justice and Stressors

Various types of stress might be experienced in the workplace. In this context, stressors are categorized as challenge and hindrance stressors. Challenge stressors are typically seen as opportunities for growth and development, while hindrance stressors can impede progress and hinder performance (Cavanaugh et al., 2000). The viewpoint of stressors largely depends on the circumstance of when, where and how one encounters the stressor. For instance, an equitable and ethical workplace atmosphere fosters the cultivation of positive work habits among employees who view each task as an challenge for growth and continually demonstrate a drive to improve. This concept is basically explained in the uncertainty management theory. The theory posits that all manifestations of justice hold value as they furnish the necessary information to effectively navigate ambiguous work circumstances (Lind & Van den Bos, 2002). They succinctly encapsulated the central principle of the theory by stating that individuals employ fairness to regulate their responses to uncertainty. For instance, when an employee is exposed to unfair or biased treatment at workplace, he would exert negative emotions like anger and anxiety over certain work demand that will be reflected in their work-related approaches. Individuals working in situations that exhibit distributive unfairness will experience an absence of resources, support, and motivation. Consequently, they will have fewer resources available to them, making them more susceptible to hurdles and tensions. There are many research addressing significant findings on the impact of organizational justice on stress but there is a lack of research in looking at the phenomenon with the presence of two types of stressor. Hence, we propose that:

Hypothesis 2: (a) Daily distributive justice, (b) daily procedural justice and (c) daily interactional justice is positively related to daily challenge stressors.

Hypothesis 3: (a) Daily distributive justice, (b) daily procedural justice and (c) daily interactional justice is negatively related to daily hindrance stressors.

2.3. Stressors and organizational citizenship behavior

According to organizational role theory by Kahn et al. (1964), when an employer assigns tasks that are physically or intellectually demanding to an employee, it can significantly impact the employee's performance. Role’s stressors are viewed as obstacles to achieving work-related success and it comprises role ambiguity, role conflict, and role overload (Katz & Kahn, 1978). While OCBs are typically perceived as extra roles that fall outside of one's regular job duties, they can be adversely affected by workplace stress. It is undeniable that OCB is greatly influenced by work settings and situation-based factors such as role-stressors whereas role ambiguity and conflict specifically trigger negative emotions, leading to a decrease in the likelihood of engaging in OCB. The continuous and persistent negative expectations placed on employees can result in a shift in their focus and energy towards dealing with the causes of stress rather than engaging in productive behavior. Conversely, being overloaded with responsibilities and work challenges is associated with a greater sense of ownership over one's work and can motivate higher levels of performance (LePine et al., 2005). It is important to acknowledge that role overload, when viewed as a stressor that

presents a challenge, may have a positive correlation with OCB due to increased motivation and self-efficacy. Therefore, we propose that:

Hypothesis 4: Daily challenge stressors is positively related to daily organizational citizenship behavior.

Hypothesis 5: Daily hindrance stressors is negatively related to daily organizational citizenship behavior.

2.4. Mediation Hypotheses

Several studies have highlighted the influential role of organizational contexts, which ultimately affect work outcomes. This circumstance can be explained by Blau's (1964) Social Exchange Theory (SET). SET comprise of three components: an employee's engagement towards a goal, a reciprocal behaviour reaction from the goal, and the resulting relationship between the two parties (Cropanzano et al., 2017). Employees are more likely to engage in behaviours that benefit the organization when they have superior social exchange relationships. Employees who consider organizational justice as a crucial factor, approaches stressors at work with a positive mindset as return for the fair treatment he received which then is reflected on their behavior at workplace. They see the organization's success as their own and feel a sense of obligation to support it. Consistent with a series of prior studies that have provide substantial evidence that employees who hold the perception of organizational fairness handles circumstances at workplace more proactively that induces better performance and constructive workplace behavior (Colquitt et al., 2001). As postulated by the social exchange theory, it is anticipated that challenge and hindrance stressors would mediate the relationship between dimensions of OJ and OCB. Therefore, we propose the following mediation hypotheses:

Hypothesis 6: (a) Daily challenge stressors and (b) daily hindrance stressors would mediate the association between daily distributive justice and daily organizational citizenship behavior.

Hypothesis 7: (a) Daily challenge stressors and (b) daily hindrance stressors would mediate the association between daily procedural justice and daily organizational citizenship behavior.

Hypothesis 8: (a) Daily challenge stressors and (b) daily hindrance stressors would mediate the association between daily interactional justice and daily organizational citizenship behavior.

3. Materials and Methods

3.1. Participants and procedure

A diary booklet questionnaire was distributed to 31 employees in various manufacturing companies, to be completed over ten working days. Referring to Scherbaum and Ferreter (2009), the sample size at the person level should not be any lower than 30 to avoid producing biased results as well as at least five days per individual with the goal of identifying predictors at the day level. We decided to stay with this notion, so a sample size of 31 at person level and 10 days at lower (days) level was administered for the diary study. A daily reminder was sent to each participant to avoid missing any scheduled working days. Three weeks after the diaries were sent, we collected the completed diaries from participants. Through the professional network connection, the response rate was overwhelming with a rate of 100% obtained whereby all 31 participants successfully completed the diary questionnaire booklet for ten working days closing at 310 data received.

3.2. Instruments

Organizational justice for all three dimensions of justice was assessed by justice measures validated by Colquitt et al. (2001). The measures included 15 items in total and a 5-point Likert scale was used with anchors of 1=strongly disagree and 5=strongly agree. The justice scale consists of three dimensions measuring perceptions of distributive justice, procedural justice and interactional justice. The reliability of each dimension, namely distributive justice, procedural justice and interactional justice were all same whereby $\alpha = 0.95$, respectively. Challenge and hindrance-related stress were assessed using scales adapted from a direct measure of job stress developed from existing measures by Judge, Boudreau, and Bretz (1995). The original scale comprised 16 items which later was reduced to 11 items by Cavanaugh et al. (1998). For this research the shortened version consisting of 11 items was adapted. Subjects were asked to respond to how much stress each of the job-related items was causing them using a 5-point Likert scale (1=produces no stress, 5=produces a great deal of stress). The reliability of challenge stressors and hindrance stressors was $\alpha = 0.94$ and $\alpha = 0.73$ respectively. OCB was measured using the three scales developed by Podsakoff and MacKenzie (1994). The three scales operationalize helping behavior (6 items) followed by the civic virtue (3 items) and finally, the sportsmanship (4 items: scores reversed). For all items, a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree) was devised. The reliability of organizational citizenship behavior was $\alpha = 0.87$.

3.3. Data Analysis

The data was analyzed using Hierarchical Linear Modelling (HLM) software version 7.0. We partitioned the data into two sets that were exported from SPSS to HLM. More precisely, the diary analysis method was administered with level 1 (L1) variables (within-persons) were nested in daily events through 310 occasions, level 2 (L2) variables (between-persons) were nested in persons through 31 individuals. The L1 data was collected from 31 participants over a period of 10 working days utilizing the diary booklet. The objective is to analyses how the dependent variable, organizational citizenship behavior, interacts with the independent variables, namely distributive justice, procedural justice, and interactional justice, while being mediated by challenge stressors and hindrance stressors. We computed the mean, standard deviation, and correlation coefficients between the variables as well as the Cronbach's alpha values, F value, rWG(J) value, and intra-class coefficient (ICC).

3.4. Hypotheses Testing

Following Mathieu and Taylor (2007), we incorporated standardized coefficient value for (within persons) (Level 1) and (between person) (Level 2) levels. To test the hypotheses, the recommendation of Aguinis, Gottfredson, and Culpepper (2013) was used to evaluate the proportion of the total variance that resided within-persons, and between-persons. First, we initiated the testing of Hypothesis 1a, 1b and 1c, finding that diary level distributive justice, procedural justice and interactional justice are related to daily level organizational citizenship behavior using the following HLM equation. We regressed daily organizational citizenship behavior on all the dimensions of diary level organizational justice. For example:

Model testing was undertaken for Hypothesis 1a as follows:
Level 1 Model

$$\textit{Organizational Citizenship Behavior}_{ij} = \beta_{0j} + r_{ij}$$

Level 2 Model

$$\beta_{0j} = \gamma_{00} + \gamma_{01}*(\textit{Distributive Justice}_j) + u_{0j}$$

Similarly, we tested Hypotheses 2a, 2b, 2c, 3a, 3b and 3c and it emerged that dairy level distributive justice, procedural justice and interactional justice are related to daily level challenge as well as daily level hindrance stressors following the HLM equation. The researcher regressed daily challenge and hindrance stressors on all three dimensions of diary level organizational justice.

Model testing was undertaken for Hypothesis 2a in this way:
Level 1 Model

$$\textit{Challenge Stressors}_{ij} = \beta_{0j} + r_{ij}$$

Level 2 Model

$$\beta_{0j} = \gamma_{00} + \gamma_{01}*(\textit{Distributive Justice}_j) + u_{0j}$$

Next, we tested Hypotheses 4 and 5 and it was shown using the following HLM equation. We regressed daily level challenge and daily level hindrance stressors on daily level organizational citizenship behavior.

Model testing was undertaken for Hypothesis 4 in this way:
Level 1 Model

$$\textit{Organizational Citizenship Behavior}_{ij} = \beta_{0j} + \beta_{1j}*(\textit{Challenge Stressors}_{ij}) + r_{ij}$$

Level 2 Model

$$\beta_{0j} = \gamma_{00} + u_{0j}$$
$$\beta_{1j} = \gamma_{10}$$

For the final analysis, mediation analysis was embraced. Mediation hypotheses 6a, 6b, 7a, 7b, 8a and 8b showcase the indirect effect of all three dimensions of dairy level organizational justice (X) on daily level organizational citizenship behavior (Y) through daily level challenge and daily level hindrance stressors (M), respectively.

Model testing was undertaken for Hypothesis 6a in this way:
Level 1 Model

$$\textit{Organizational Citizenship Behavior}_{ij} = \beta_{0j} + \beta_{1j}*(\textit{Challenge Stressors}_{ij}) + r_{ij}$$

Level 2 Model

$\beta_{0j} = \gamma_{00} + \gamma_{01}*(Distributive\ Justice_j) + u_{0j}$

$\beta_{1j} = \gamma_{10}$

The Monte Carlo Method (MCM) was used to determine the significance level of the mediation analysis in the multi-level model (MacKinnon, Lockwood, & Williams, 2004), as it is considered the most appropriate approach for this purpose. We examined the mediation routes by utilizing the outcomes of X→M (Path a) and M→Y (Path b). The Monte Carlo method (MCM) is known for its heightened sensitivity to small sample sizes, especially in the context of multilevel modelling (Selig & Preacher, 2008). The mediation effect is said to be achieved if there are no values of zero (0) found within the range of values between the lower and upper levels. For this study, we employed the MCM test, using a 95% confidence interval (CI) and conducting 20,000 repeats. In the context of evaluating significance using confidence intervals (CI), the null hypothesis is often rejected when the CI does not include zero.

4. Results

Table 1 presents the descriptive statistics, internal consistency reliability (Cronbach's alpha), number of items, and Table 2 intercorrelations among six key study variables: distributive justice, procedural justice, interactional justice, organizational citizenship behavior (OCB), challenge stressors, and hindrance stressors. All variables demonstrate acceptable to excellent internal consistency, with Cronbach's alpha values ranging from 0.81 (OCB) to 0.95 (challenge stressors). The highest mean score is observed for interactional justice (M = 3.92, SD = 0.76), suggesting that respondents perceive interpersonal fairness most positively, while OCB has the lowest mean (M = 3.13, SD = 0.54). Challenge stressors have the highest variability (SD = 0.94), indicating a wide range of responses. Correlational analysis reveals strong and statistically significant relationships among the three dimensions of justice. Distributive justice is positively correlated with procedural justice (r = .68, p < .01) and interactional justice (r = .55, p < .01), while procedural justice also shows a strong positive correlation with interactional justice (r = .73, p < .01). All three justice dimensions are positively and significantly associated with OCB, with distributive justice showing the strongest link (r = .34, p < .01), followed by procedural (r = .25, p < .01) and interactional justice (r = .20, p < .01). These findings indicate that perceptions of fairness in organizational processes and interactions are important predictors of discretionary, citizenship-like behaviors among employees.

In terms of stressors, challenge stressors display weak but positive correlations with procedural justice (r = .14, p < .05) and interactional justice (r = .17, p < .05), suggesting that such stressors may be perceived as opportunities for growth under fair conditions. However, they do not significantly relate to OCB (r = .11). Interestingly, hindrance stressors, which are typically associated with negative outcomes, show a significant positive correlation with OCB (r = .38, p < .01) and with challenge stressors (r = .34, p < .01), although their correlations with justice variables are weak and non-significant. This counterintuitive finding regarding hindrance stressors may indicate a unique organizational or cultural context in which such stressors stimulate compensatory prosocial behavior. Overall, the results highlight the crucial role of organizational justice in fostering positive employee behaviors and call for further exploration of the nuanced effects of workplace stressors.

The rWG(J) value for distributive justice was 0.71, followed by procedural justice with rWG(J) value of 0.72 and interactional justice showing a value of 0.75 rWG(J). These values are in line with the notions by Mathieu et al. (2007) who proposed that >0.70 value is adequate. Results obtained from ANOVA proposed significant F values between the participants for all three dimensions of organizational justice. For distributive justice it was F= 1.634, p < 0.05, procedural justice with the value of F= 1.712, p < 0.05 while interactional justice reported F= 1.443, p < 0.05. The intra-class correlation coefficient (ICC) value for procedural justice was .19 whereas for distributive justice it was 0.19. Lastly the ICC value for interactional justice was 0.20.

Table 1. Result of Mean, Standard Deviation, and Alpha Cronbach

Variable(s)	M	SD	α	Items
Distributive Justice	3.37	0.96	0.94	4
Procedural Justice	3.61	0.77	0.88	5
Interactional Justice	3.92	0.76	0.89	6
Organizational Citizenship Behavior	3.13	0.54	0.81	13
Challenge Stressors	3.66	0.94	0.95	6
Hindrance Stressors	3.07	0.84	0.86	5

Table 2. Result of Correlation between the Variables

Variable(s)	1	2	3	4	5
1. Distributive Justice					
2. Procedural Justice	0.68**				
3. Interactional Justice	0.55**	0.73**			
4. Organizational Citizenship Behavior	0.34**	0.25**	0.20**		
5. Challenge Stressors	0.05	0.14*	0.17*	0.11	
6. Hindrance Stressors	0.06	-0.09	-0.07	0.38**	0.34**

Hypotheses 1(a), (b) and (c) predicted that all three dimensions of diary level organizational justice had a positive relationship with daily level organizational citizenship behavior. Hypothesis 1(a) found a significant relationship ($p<0.05$), observed in Model 1a, with $\gamma=0.35$, standard error [SE] = 0.14. However, hypothesis 1(b) revealed insignificant relationship p = ns (not significant) in model 1b, with $\gamma=0.27$, standard error [SE] = 0.14. Hypothesis 1(c) indicated an insignificant p = ns (not significant) in Model 1c, with $\gamma=0.22$, standard error [SE] = 0.13. Hypotheses 2(a), 2(b) and 2(c) which predicted the relationship between the three dimensions of diary level organizational justice and daily level challenge stressors. Hypothesis 2(a) found an insignificant, p = ns (not significant) which can be observed in Model 2a, with $\gamma=0.10$, standard error [SE] = 0.16. This is followed hypothesis 2(b) also insignificantly association, p = ns (not significant) in Model 2b, with $\gamma=0.18$, standard error [SE] = 0.18. Then, hypothesis 2(c) found an insignificant relationship p = ns (not significant) in Model 2c, with $\gamma=0.19$, standard error [SE] = 0.19.

Subsequently, Hypotheses 3(a), 3(b) and 3(c) predicted the relationship between the three dimensions of diary level organizational justice and daily level hindrance stressors. However, the results obtained indicated an inconsistency with the earlier prediction whereby hypothesis 3(a) found an insignificant relationship as observed in Model 3a, with $\gamma=0.05$, p = ns (not significant), standard error [SE] = 0.18. Next, hypothesis 3(b) which also had an insignificant negative association as indicated in Model 3b, with $\gamma=-0.08$, standard error [SE] = 0.18, p = ns (not significant). Hypothesis 3(c) also found an insignificant as in Model 3c, with $\gamma=-0.04$, standard error [SE] = 0.19, p = ns (not significant). For Hypothesis 4, the daily level challenge stressors are positively related to daily level organizational citizenship behavior, whereas in Hypothesis 5, daily level hindrance stressors are negatively related to daily level organizational citizenship behavior. Hypothesis 4 found an insignificant relationship as stated in Model 4, with $\gamma=-0.03$, standard error [SE] = 0.12, p = ns (not significant. Similarly, hypothesis 5 also had an insignificant relationship as observed in Model 5, with $\gamma=-0.15$, standard error [SE] = 0.10, p = ns (not significant).

For hypothesis 6(a), path a assessed the link from diary level distributive justice to daily level challenge stressors in Model 2a, with $\gamma=0.10$, SE=0.16, p-ns (non-significant) and path b assessed the link from daily level challenge stressors to daily level organizational citizenship behavior ($p<0.05$) in Model 6a with diary level distributive justice ($\beta=0.36$, SE=0.14) present. Bridging these two paths, a non-significant mediation relationship between diary level distributive justice and daily level organizational citizenship behavior was noted through daily level challenge stressors, 95% CI [-0.084, 0.1795]. Meanwhile, for Hypothesis 6(b), path a assessed the link from diary level distributive justice to daily level hindrance stressors in Model 3a, with $\gamma=0.05$, p = ns (not significant), standard error [SE] = 0.18. Path b assessed the link from daily level hindrance stressors to daily level organizational citizenship behavior ($p<0.01$) in Model 6b with the presence of diary level distributive justice ($\beta=0.34$, SE=0.12). However, the result produced an insignificant mediation relationship between diary level distributive justice and daily level organizational citizenship behavior through daily level hindrance stressors, 95% CI [-0.008, 0.236].

Next, for Hypothesis 7(a), path a assessed the link from diary level procedural justice to daily level challenge stressors p = ns (not significant) in model 2b, with $\gamma=0.18$, standard error [SE] = 0.18. Path b assessed the link from daily level challenge stressors to daily level organizational citizenship behavior p = ns (not significant) in Model 7a with diary level procedural justice ($\beta=0.28$, SE=0.15) present. The Monte Carlo test revealed a non-significant relationship with 95% CI [-0.052, 0.200]. For Hypothesis 7(b), path a assessed the link from diary level procedural justice to daily level hindrance stressors in Model 3b, $\gamma=-0.08$, standard error [SE] = 0.18, p = ns (not significant), and path b assessed the link from daily level hindrance stressors to daily level organizational citizenship behavior ($p<0.05$) in Model 7b with diary level procedural justice ($\beta=0.28$, SE=0.14) present. However, no significant relationship attained as 95% CI [-0.085, 0.147].

In Hypothesis 8(a), path a assessed the link from diary level interactional justice to daily level challenge stressors p = ns (not significant) in Model 2c, with $\gamma=0.19$, standard error [SE] = 0.19, and path b assessed the link from daily level challenge stressors to daily level organizational citizenship behavior p = ns (not significant) in Model 8a with diary level interactional justice ($\beta=0.23$, SE=0.13) present. Bridging these two paths, a non-significant mediation relationship was evident with 95% CI [-0.049, 0.186]. Finally, for Hypothesis 8(b), path a assessed the link from diary level interactional justice to daily level hindrance stressors in Model 3c, with $\gamma= -0.04$, standard error [SE] = 0.19, p = ns (not significant). Path b assessed the link from daily level hindrance stressors to daily level organizational citizenship

behavior (p<0.05) in Model 8b with diary level interactional justice (β=0.23, SE=0.11) present. An insignificant relationship was attained with 95% CI [-0.082, 0.109]. The final model is shown in Figure 2. The results discovered from piloting the hierarchical linear modelling analysis are showcased in subsequent Tables 3, 4, 5, 6, & 7.

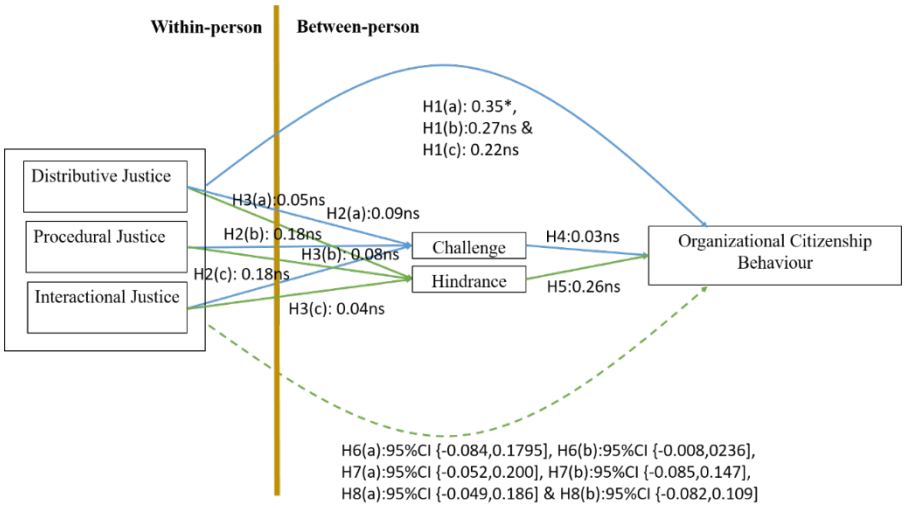

Figure 2. Final Model indicating Direct and Mediation Effects

Note: A mediated impact of organizational justice and organizational citizenship behaviour via stressors is displayed through the dotted line at the bottom. Solid paths indicate the direct impacts of the studied variables.

Table 3. Result of Model predicting Organizational Citizenship Behavior

	Organizational Citizenship Behavior		
	Null	**Model 4**	**Model 5**
Level 1 (within-person)			
Intercept	0.00(0.15)	0.00(0.15)	0.00(0.14)
Challenge Stressors		-0.03(0.12)	
Hindrance Stressors			0.15(0.10)
Variance Component			
Within-team (L1) variance	0.36	0.36	0.36
Additional information			
-2 log likelihood	652	658	654
Number of estimated parameters	2	2	2

Note: N = 310, L2 sample size = 31; L1 = Level 1; L2 = Level 2; ns. = not significant. Numbers in parentheses are standard errors. *p < 0.05; **p < 0.01; ***p < 0.001.

Table 4. Result of Multilevel model predicting Organizational Citizenship Behavior

	Organizational Citizenship Behavior				
	Null	**Model 1a**	**Model 1b**	**Model 1c**	**Model 1d**
Level 2 (between-persons)					
Intercept	0.00(0.15)	0.00(0.13)	0.00(0.13)	0.00(0.14)	0.00(0.14)
Distributive Justice		0.35(0.14)*			0.37(0.16)*
Procedural Justice			0.27(0.14)		-0.03(0.26)
Interactional justice				0.22(0.13)	0.04(0.18)
Variance Component					

	Organizational Citizenship Behavior				
	Null	**Model 1a**	**Model 1b**	**Model 1c**	**Model 1d**
Within-team (L1) variance	0.36	0.36	0.36	0.35	0.36
Additional information					
-2 log likelihood	652	650	653	654	652
Number of estimated parameters	2	2	2	2	2

Note: N = 310, L2 sample size = 31; L1 = Level 1; L2 = Level 2; ns. = not significant. Numbers in parentheses are standard errors. *p < 0.05; **p < 0.01; ***p < 0.001.

Table 5. Result of Multilevel model predicting Challenge Stressors

	Challenge Stressors				
	Null	**Model 2a**	**Model 2b**	**Model 2c**	**Model 2d**
Level 2 (between-persons)					
Intercept	0.00(0.16)	0.00(0.16)	0.00(0.16)	0.00(0.15)	0.00(0.15)
Distributive Justice		0.10(0.16)			-0.12(0.22)
Procedural Justice			0.18(0.18)		0.16(0.28)
Interactional justice				0.19(0.19)	0.12(0.29)
Variance Component					
Within-team (L1) variance	0.28	0.28	0.28	0.28	0.28
Additional information					
-2 log likelihood	582	586	585	585	586
Number of estimated parameters	2	2	2	2	2

Note: N = 310, L2 sample size = 31; L1 = Level 1; L2 = Level 2; ns. = not significant. Numbers in parentheses are standard errors. *p < 0.05; **p < 0.01; ***p < 0.001.

Table 6. Result of Multilevel model predicting Hindrance Stressors

	Challenge Stressors				
	Null	**Model 3a**	**Model 3b**	**Model 3c**	**Model 3d**
Level 2 (between-persons)					
Intercept	-0.00(0.16)	-0.00(0.16)	-0.00(0.16)	-0.00(0.16)	-0.00(0.17)
Distributive Justice		0.05(0.18)			0.31(0.20)
Procedural Justice			-0.08(0.18)		-0.38(0.30)
Interactional justice				-0.04(0.19)	0.05(0.28)
Variance Component					
Within-team (L1) variance	0.18	0.18	0.18	0.17	0.18
Additional information					
-2 log likelihood	465	468	469	469	469
Number of estimated parameters	2	2	2	2	2

Note: N = 310, L2 sample size = 31; L1 = Level 1; L2 = Level 2; ns. = not significant. Numbers in parentheses are standard errors. *p < 0.05; **p < 0.01; ***p < 0.001.

Table 7. Result of Multilevel model predicting Organizational Citizenship Behavior

			Organizational Citizenship Behavior			
	Model 6a	**Model 6b**	**Model 7a**	**Model 7b**	**Model 8a**	**Model 8b**
Level 1 (within-person)						
Intercept	0.00(0.14)	0.00(0.12)	0.00(0.14)	0.00(0.12)	0.00(0.14)	0.00(0.13)
Challenge Stressors	-0.03(0.11)		-0.03(0.11)		-0.03(0.11)	
Hindrance Stressors		0.16(0.10)		0.16(0.10)		0.16(0.10)
Level 2 (between-person)						
Distributive Justice	0.36(0.14)*	0.34(0.12)**				
Procedural Justice			0.28(0.15)	0.28(0.14)*		
Interactional Justice					0.23(0.13)	0.23(0.11)**
Variance Component						
Within-team (L1) variance	0.36	0.36	0.35	0.36	0.36	0.36
Intercept (L2) variance	0.56	0.46	0.61	0.50	0.64	0.93
Additional information						
-2 log likelihood	652	648	655	650	656	651
Number of estimated parameters	2	2	2	2	2	2

Note: N = 310, L2 sample size = 31; L1 = Level 1; L2 = Level 2; ns. = not significant. Numbers in parentheses are standard errors. *p < 0.05; **p < 0.01; ***p < 0.001.

5. Discussion

The primary objective of the current research was to investigate the impact of organizational justice and stressors, specifically challenge and hindrance, on organizational citizenship behavior among employees in Malaysia. The proposed model indicated that most of the data was inconsistent with the forecast. Specifically, only distributive justice showed a notable correlation with organizational citizenship behavior. Different expectations may arise due to varying assumptions regarding the definition of contractual connections within a community. Employees may see justice differently in short-term intervals based on daily response identification. Exchanges that priorities expressive or covenantal relationships are typically rooted in a specific sense of need or social status allocation, rather than a universal belief in equitable result distribution. Traditional Chinese behavior is situational, and individuals' behaviors are not significantly influenced by their perception of being treated properly, as demonstrated in a story from Confucius' Analects.

Employees may exhibit OCB differently depending on the situation. A leader's perception of fairness and equality might motivate colleagues to engage in OCB and enhance work quality in some Asian cultures that priorities interpersonal ties. Asian women's engagement in citizenship activities is not driven by ideas of fairness, but rather by socialization and role expectations. Perceptions of justice will influence citizenship behavior by establishing a relationship between the employee and the organization. Cultural values significantly influence the prediction of the relationship between organizational justice and organizational citizenship behavior.

Furthermore, monetary rewards are more concrete, allowing employees to easily observe their impact since it is evident in their compensation package. Employees demonstrate a stronger feeling of duty through OCB when they believe distributive justice is present. Unconventional forms of workplace behavior could be a more successful approach to identifying connections between perceptions of fairness and employee conduct. These unusual behaviors are actions performed at work that are not commonly included in traditional job descriptions and are therefore more likely to be considered as part of an individual's personal characteristics. Therefore, employees can relate this subject to their everyday responsibilities and act according to what they consider gratifying and what is not. This is a key factor influencing the results of this research, as only distributive justice was significantly associated with organizational citizenship behavior.

Additionally, external factors may have a greater impact on OCB than stressors. It is important to note that the researcher only examined two types of stresses and did not separate the specific characteristics of OCB. Therefore, the outcomes may vary for different variables. Challenge and hindrance stressors can both be present in a workplace, as shown by the challenge and hindrance stressor paradigm. For instance, a stressor in the form of excessive workload and tight timeline can be both an opportunity and a barrier. The following may best elucidate the cause for the inconsequential outcomes produced in this investigation. One overarching result is that individuals' perceptions of pressures and strains differ among people. At times, individuals may have a positive attitude towards their job on one day and a bad one the following day. It is conceivable for an individual to perceive certain aspects of their employment as challenge stressors on one day and as hindrances the next day. The structure of a diary study, where data is collected over several days, can significantly influence its findings when there are substantial variations in a participant's daily responses.

6. Conclusions

In conclusion, it is evident that distributive justice plays a significant role in shaping employee behavior and organizational outcomes. Organizations that prioritize fairness in their distributive approach are more likely to cultivate a positive work environment and enhance overall performance. Moving forward, it is essential for organizations to continue exploring ways to promote distributive justice and foster a culture of fairness to maximize employee engagement and productivity. One crucial aspect to be considered for future research is the utilization of analytical tools employed in the present study. The use of multilevel modelling with HLM has a constraint that must be addressed. The hierarchical linear modelling (HLM) approach permits the prediction of Level 1 variables by Level 2 variables, but not the other way around. Hence, it is recommended that forthcoming studies employ sophisticated tools, such as Mplus, to examine multilevel data. It is anticipated that utilizing this technology in the future would yield more precise estimations of research discoveries.

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