

Enhancing organizational citizenship behavior in a non-western context of the UAE: the role of organizational justice, leadership and psychological empowerment

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Abstract

Purpose – The purpose of this study is twofold: first, to examine the direct relationship of organizational justice (OJ), psychological empowerment (PE), Leader Member Exchange (LMX), organizational citizenship behavior (OCB), LMX on PE and OCB and PE on OCB; and second, to investigate the mediating role of PE between OJ and OCB and between LMX and OCB in the service industry in a non-Western context.

Design/methodology/approach – A quantitative questionnaire was used to test the proposed hypotheses of the study. From employees working in service providing organizations in the UAE, 364 usable responses had been collected and data was analyzed using structural equation modeling (SEM).

Findings – OJ significantly influences PE and LMX, while its influence on OCB is insignificant. Also, LMX significantly affects PE and OCB, PE significantly impacts OCB, whereas PE and LMX significantly mediate the relationship between OJ and OCB.

Practical implications – Organizations should promote fairness, psychological empowerment and OCB among employees. Additionally, leaders should develop positive and productive relationships with their employees.

Originality/value – To the best of the authors' knowledge, this study is one of a limited number of studies designed to analyze the hypothesized relationships within a non-Western context, specifically in the UAE.

Keywords Organizational justice, Psychological empowerment, Leader–member exchange, Organizational citizenship behavior

Paper type Research paper

Introduction

Organizational justice (OJ) is a dominating theme in an organization's context and it can yield positive effects on the employees' attitudes and behaviors (Abu Elanain, 2010; Kim and Beehr, 2020). For several decades, exploring an individual's reactions toward the decisions, procedures and relevant authorities has grabbed OJ scholars' attention and interest (Colquitt, 2012), and hence the research in this area has flourished (He *et al.*, 2017). In fact, researchers emphasize the importance of establishing supportive organizational decision-making processes within the organizations, as this aids in providing positive work energy for employees, and thus, they will perform and this gives rise to positive outcomes (Eva *et al.*, 2020; Ng and Ahmad, 2018). OJ can be generally defined as the perception of fairness that affects behavior within organizations (Kuokkanen *et al.*, 2014; Moorman, 1991).

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The concept of empowerment has been used to describe two aspects. First, it is an essential part of human nature and development. Second, it is organizational effectiveness and quality and has been explained based on critical, social, organizational and psychological theories (Kuokkanen *et al.*, 2014). This study will focus on psychological empowerment (PE). The employees have a sense of psychological empowerment when experiencing OJ (Kim and Beehr, 2020).

Scholars also draw attention to the quality and excellence of the relationship between leaders and followers (Anand *et al.*, 2018; Peterson and Aikens, 2017). The quality of this relationship is addressed in the leader–member exchange theory (LMX), which suggests that a high-quality leader–follower relationship is characterized by extended mutual respect, trust and support that exceeds expectations (Elanain, 2014; Stewart and Wiener, 2021). Organizations shall encourage employees to demonstrate positive and altruistic behavior, such as helping others and understanding the organization. This behavior is regarded as organizational citizenship behavior (OCB) (Shanker, 2018). OCB is the concept where employees work for an organization having made a voluntary choice or decision beyond their job description even whilst in difficult situations (Chan and Lai, 2017; Shanker, 2018). Employees who perceive fairness within the organization, for example in decision-making processes, tend to show OCB and support their groups, as they feel valued as members, while when they perceive inequity, they would withdraw their OCB and limit their efforts to only meet their obligations (Elanain, 2010; Gupta and Singh, 2013).

The Social Exchange Theory (SET) was introduced by Blau (1964), and it has been used extensively by many organizational researchers to describe the employees' attitudes and behavior (Chernyak-Hai and Rabenu, 2018; Sungu *et al.*, 2019). SET involves employees' feelings of obligation toward the organizations and their agents (including employer, coworkers, suppliers, customers and their direct manager) as a fundamental association between organizational justice perceptions and outcomes (Roch *et al.*, 2019). Based on SET, the reciprocity inherent is maintained when one party (the organization) provides something valuable to another party (the employee), thus the second party will feel obliged to complete the exchange by giving something valuable in return (Kim and Beehr, 2020). A favorable exchange relationship between the organization and its employees is achieved when the organization provides a healthy working environment and culture; hence, the employees use their skills and knowledge to achieve the organization's goals (Sungu *et al.*, 2019).

Many studies have provided evidence supporting the direct relationship between OJ and different positive behaviors, such as PE (Durrani *et al.*, 2017; Kim and Beehr, 2020; Singh and Singh, 2019), OCB (Chan and Lai, 2017; Das and Mohanty, 2023; Jnaneswar and Ranjit, 2022; Rahman and Karim, 2022; Singh and Singh, 2019) and LMX (Ionescu and Iliescu, 2021; Kieu, 2023; Shan *et al.*, 2015). Drawing attention to OJ helps in promoting PE because employees perceive a sense of competence, self-determination, meaningfulness and impact, which are the four dimensions of PE (Singh and Singh, 2019). On the other hand, the relation between OJ and OCB is cognitive in nature, wherein the employees tend to perform discretionary acts that are beneficial to the organization, show extra conscientiousness and exhibit OCB as reciprocity to the fairness they perceive from their organizations and management (Elamin and Tlaiss, 2015). Furthermore, when employees perceive fairness and justice within their organizations, they tend to show positive attitudes toward organizations and leaders including high-quality LMX (Oren *et al.*, 2012).

It has been proven that LMX influences PE (Aggarwal *et al.*, 2020; Hu *et al.*, 2018; Kuokkanen *et al.*, 2016) and OCB (Anand *et al.*, 2018; Teng *et al.*, 2020; Tremblay *et al.*, 2022), because PE reflects an employee's orientation toward his or her work role, which is strongly impacted by LMX (Zhou *et al.*, 2012). High-quality LMX improves employee access to information, assigns challenging tasks, enhances the perceived meaning of the work, provides leader support, fosters feelings of success and competence, enables autonomous

decision-making and promotes self-determination (Wang *et al.*, 2016). Also, employees experiencing high-quality LMX demonstrate OCB by being diligent in their jobs and offering help to their coworkers and leaders as reciprocity for the treatment they perceive from their leaders (Oren *et al.*, 2012).

Several studies have proven that PE has a significant impact on OCB (Newman *et al.*, 2017; Sridadi *et al.*, 2023; Turnipseed and VandeWaa, 2020). Psychologically empowered employees recognize the power given to them and the importance of their role, hence they will exhibit a high level of involvement, seek to achieve the organization's goals more diligently and yield positive organizational outcomes (Frazier and Fainshmidt, 2012; Zhang and Bartol, 2010). In addition, it was found that PE has a mediating effect between OJ and OCB (Singh and Singh, 2019) and between LMX and OCB (Jaiswal and Dhar, 2016; Lorra and Möltner, 2021; Yusof *et al.*, 2019). Psychologically empowered employees especially, display OCB when perceiving fair treatment, unlike when experiencing inequity (Singh and Singh, 2019). Furthermore, high-quality LMX will increase an employee's OCB, as they will exhibit extra-role behavior once they feel empowered by their leaders (Yusof *et al.*, 2019).

This study aims to test the direct effect of OJ on PE, LMX and OCB, LMX on PE and OCB and PE on OCB in the service industry in a non-Western context. Also, it aims to investigate the mediating effect of PE between OJ and OCB and between LMX and OCB. The objectives of this research are as follows:

- determine the effect of OJ, PE and LMX on OCB; and
- examine if PE and LMX mediate the relationship between OJ and OCB.

The relationships between OJ, PE and OCB have been considered and studied extensively throughout the literature, yet there is still a need to explore those relationships to fill the gaps within the literature (De Clercq *et al.*, 2020; Minai *et al.*, 2020; Trincado-Munoz *et al.*, 2020). Although extensive studies have been conducted on the effect of LMX and its outcomes, researchers call for further development of a deeper understanding of its complex effects (Anand *et al.*, 2018). Therefore, this study attempts to narrow this gap by assessing the relationship between OJ, PE, LMX and OCB collectively. Moreover, those relationships have mostly been explored and analyzed within Western contexts and various scholars have called for additional country-specific studies searching within the same phenomena (Abu Elanain, 2010; Elamin and Alomaim, 2011; Elamin and Tlaiss, 2015; Elanain, 2014). Accordingly, this study is one of the first studies that analyzes those relationships within a non-Western context, in the UAE specifically, thereabouts allowing more understanding in this area of research. Therefore, the study attempts to narrow the gap by answering the following research questions regarding the direct and indirect (mediating) relationships between OJ, PE, LMX and OCB:

RQ1. How does OJ effect OCB in the non-Western service industry?

RQ2. How does LMX effect OCB in the non-Western service industry?

RQ3. Does PE mediate the relationship between OJ and OCB and between LMX and OCB?

From a practical perspective, this study will aid organizations on how they could empower their employees to better fulfill the changing demands of customers, especially in the context of the service industry (Rothman *et al.*, 2019). This study will also examine the assumption that LMX is solely determined by the way leaders are treating their followers (He *et al.*, 2017) by investigating its relationship with the other constructs defined in this study. Thus, the study's results will aid organizational management in enhancing OJ, PE, LMX and OCB practices by identifying opportunities for improvement and developing guidelines for effective leader–follower interactions.

Literature review

Organizational justice

OJ can be defined as the employees' view on the fairness of the treatment they perceive and what they consider fair in their organizations (Navarro-Abal *et al.*, 2018). It has been considered a vital aspect that helps organizations in understanding employees' behavior in the workplace (Sharma and Kumra, 2020). Demonstrating OJ can be beneficial for both employees and organizations (Jehanzeb and Mohanty, 2020); however, neglecting OJ will result in negative outcomes, such as lower performance (Sembiring *et al.*, 2020).

Various scholars have attempted to describe OJ and have developed theories on its characteristics (Navarro-Abal *et al.*, 2018), however, Colquitt and Zipay (2015) integrated the previous theories and developed a model that characterizes OJ by four dimensions, which are as follows:

- Distributive justice: Distributive justice refers to the employee's view on the organization's fairness in allocating the resources (Stelmokienė *et al.*, 2023).
- Procedural justice: Procedural justice defines employees' beliefs that resource allocation, decisions, processes and policies are fair (De Clercq *et al.*, 2020).
- Interpersonal justice: Interpersonal justice refers to the sensitivity and respectfulness employees perceive from the organization's communication (Sharma and Kumra, 2020).
- Informational justice: Informational justice describes the organization's fairness in the explanations communicated with the employees about the organization's procedures and outcomes (Wei *et al.*, 2020).

Psychological empowerment

The concept of empowerment has been defined differently among literature. However, most researchers have defined empowerment, at its core, as the superior's delegation of authority and responsibility to a subordinate (Supriyanto *et al.*, 2023). Researchers observe two fundamental approaches when they examine employee empowerment, which are as follows:

- The behavioral dimension: The behavioral dimension focuses on the role of top management including their tasks, responsibilities and actions to be performed by them to support employees' empowerment.
- The psychological dimension: The psychological dimension considers the employees' receptiveness toward the empowerment and how they perceive the activities of empowerment (Orlowska and Laguna, 2023).

Over the past two decades, the idea of PE has received attention in the field of management (Batool and Batool, 2017). PE is a form of empowerment, which is associated with the intrinsic motivational process of the employee that aids to enhance their self-efficacy, motivation and feelings and encourages them to visualize meaning in their work (Pradhan *et al.*, 2017).

PE was assessed based on four cognitive domains as suggested by Conger and Kanungo (1988) and extended by Thomas and Velthouse (1990), which are as follows:

- Competence: Competence refers to the individual's belief in the ability to perform with skill (Wei *et al.*, 2020).
- Impact: It is the level of impact an individual has on the outcomes (Ali *et al.*, 2020).
- Meaning: This refers to the value that the individual gives to a goal (Ali *et al.*, 2020).

- Self-determination: Self-determination is the freedom an individual has to initiate actions (Pradhan *et al.*, 2017).

Leader–member exchange

LMX has been acknowledged as one of the most successful approaches to understanding and explaining the quality of the relationship between the leaders and their subordinates (Kundu *et al.*, 2019). The theory suggests that the exchange of relationship of the leaders is developed differently with each of their subordinates (Anand *et al.*, 2018). Low-quality leader–member relationships involve basic tasks, achievement and purely economic exchange, whereas high-quality relationships create mutual trust, loyalty, respect and obligation that extends beyond the formal contract (Anand *et al.*, 2018; Ionescu and Ilescu, 2021).

LMX was viewed by Liden and Maslyn (1998) as a multidimensional construct consisting of four dimensions which are as follows:

- Affect: Affect refers to the shared interpersonal affection and attraction between the leader and members as opposed to work or professional values (Keskes *et al.*, 2018).
- Loyalty: Loyalty refers to public support and consistent faithfulness toward an individual in various situations (Stewart and Wiener, 2021).
- Contribution: Contribution represents the level of effort each member puts toward the work activity and mutual goals (Brown *et al.*, 2017).
- Professional respect: Professional respect is the leaders' and the members' perception of the extent to the other member has built a reputation, inside and outside the organization and of excelling in his or her work (Santalla-Banderali and Alvarado, 2022).

Organizational citizenship behavior

The business environment of the modern era is highly competitive and dynamic in nature requiring employees to operate under challenging and ever-changing circumstances within their organizations (Aggarwal, 2016). In the service industry, especially, the employees have a key role in shaping the customers' experience of service quality, as it depends on the interaction between the employees and the customers (Bahadur *et al.*, 2018). Customers' demand is changing and unpredictable causing the organizations to face challenges in delivering a higher quality of service to their customers (Nowak, 2019). Accordingly, employers would seek to hire individuals whom are willing to perform beyond their formal job obligations and spend extra effort for the organization's success, and this behavior is termed as OCB (Aggarwal, 2016; Piatak and Holt, 2020).

OCB was assessed differently by scholars, however, the proposed five dimensions of classification of OCB suggested by Organ (1990) was one of the most commonly used among the literature (Li and Shang, 2023). According to Organ (1990), the five dimensions of OCB include as follows:

- Altruism: Altruism refers to the behavior of voluntarily helping other employees in resolving work-related issues (Aggarwal, 2016).
- Courtesy: Courtesy entails the avoidance of work-related problems by conferring with, reminding and informing other coworkers in advance on decisions and actions that would affect their work (Budur and Demir, 2022).
- Civic virtue: Civic virtue defines the willingness of the employees to participate in organizational affairs actively, attentively and proactively (Meynhardt *et al.*, 2020).

- Sportsmanship: Sportsmanship describes the employees' willingness to tolerate imperfect situations such as inconvenient work, pressure and demand without complaining (Shanker, 2018).
- Conscientiousness: Conscientiousness refers to compliance with the organization's policies and working hard to exceed the minimum work requirements (Budur and Demir, 2022; Rahman and Karim, 2022).

Research model and hypotheses development

Based on SET, individuals will have obligations based on their relationships and interactions (Zeglat *et al.*, 2022). In corporate settings, for instance, the employees feel compelled to reciprocate with something valuable in response to the valuable offerings provided by the organizations (Kim and Beehr, 2020).

Organizational justice and organizational citizenship behavior

When employees perceive fairness from their organizations they would perform beneficial acts, such as higher performance and OCB (Elamin and Tlaiss, 2015). Alternatively, when they sense unfairness, the organizations will endure negative acts from employees (Sembiring *et al.*, 2020). Consequently, several scholars suggested treating employees fairly to promote the employees' positive behavior including demonstrating OCB (Singh and Singh, 2019). Throughout the literature, different studies (Chan and Lai, 2017; Das and Mohanty, 2023; Jnaneswar and Ranjit, 2022; Rahman and Karim, 2022; Singh and Singh, 2019) proved that OJ has a significant and positive relationship with OCB. Hence, the proposed hypothesis testing the relationship between OJ and OCB and their dimensions will be as follows:

- H1. There is a significantly positive relationship between OJ dimensions and OCB dimensions.

Organizational justice and psychological empowerment

Organizations can convey OJ to their employees in different ways, such as through fair allocation of resources, responsibilities, involvement and information sharing, those actions as a result, will foster the employees' sense of PE (Singh and Singh, 2019). OJ was found to have a significantly positive impact on PE (Durrani *et al.*, 2017; Kim and Beehr, 2020; Singh and Singh, 2019). Hence, the proposed hypothesis testing the relationship between the OJ and PE and their dimensions will be as follows:

- H2. There is a significantly positive relationship between OJ dimensions and PE dimensions.

Organizational justice and leader-member exchange

Showing justice and fair behavior to employees within an organization encourages employees to demonstrate positive attitudes, such as high-quality LMX, toward the organization and their leaders (Mumtaz and Rowley, 2020). It was proven by several studies (Ionescu and Iliescu, 2021; Kieu, 2023; Shan *et al.*, 2015) that OJ has a significant and positive relationship with LMX. Hence, the proposed hypothesis testing the relationship between OJ and LMX and their dimensions will be as follows:

- H3. There is a significantly positive relationship between OJ dimensions and LMX dimensions.

Leader–member exchange and psychological empowerment

Various LMX scholars have emphasized the importance of establishing high-quality leader–member relationships by assigning challenging tasks to the followers, increasing their responsibilities, building their decision-making capabilities and providing them with access to information and support (Anand *et al.*, 2018). This, as a result, will increase the followers' sense of meaning, competence, self-determination and impact which are the dimensions of PE (Aggarwal *et al.*, 2020). It has been proven by different researchers (Aggarwal *et al.*, 2020; Hu *et al.*, 2018; Kuokkanen *et al.*, 2016) that there is a significant and positive relationship between LMX and PE. Hence, the proposed hypothesis testing the relationship between LMX and PE and their dimensions will be as follows:

H4. There is a significantly positive relationship between LMX dimensions and PE dimensions.

Leader–member exchange and organizational citizenship behavior

Many researchers provided evidence that LMX plays a major role in shaping important attitudes and behaviors of employees within organizations (Mumtaz and Rowley, 2020). For instance, a good leader–member relationship encourages employees to demonstrate positive and favorable work outcomes, such as OCB (Kundu *et al.*, 2019). Because, when the employees perceive high-quality LMX, they become motivated to contribute and to be engaged in the behavior that improves the organization's effectiveness (Anand *et al.*, 2018). The relationship between LMX and OCB was proven to be significant and positive by several studies (Anand *et al.*, 2018; Teng *et al.*, 2020; Tremblay *et al.*, 2022). Hence, the proposed hypothesis testing the relationship between LMX and OCB and their dimensions will be as follows:

H5. There is a significantly positive relationship between LMX dimensions and OCB dimensions.

Psychological empowerment and organizational citizenship behavior

Psychologically empowered employees feel that their functions are valued, and they tend to develop the required skills to make a difference in their organizations and contribute toward achieving the organizational goals (Singh and Singh, 2019). In addition, they willingly exceed their expected performance and develop OCB in their workplace (Singh and Singh, 2019). Based on several studies (Newman *et al.*, 2017; Sridadi *et al.*, 2023; Turnipseed and VandeWaa, 2020), there is a significant and positive effect between PE and OCB. Hence, the proposed hypothesis testing the relationship between PE and OCB and their dimensions will be as follows:

H6. There is a significantly positive relationship between PE dimensions and OCB dimensions.

Psychological empowerment as mediator

Employees demonstrate OCB when they perceive fair treatment from their organizations (Elamin and Tlaiss, 2015), especially when they are psychologically empowered (Singh and Singh, 2019). OJ was found to have a significantly positive impact on PE (Durrani *et al.*, 2017; Kim and Beehr, 2020; Singh and Singh, 2019) and PE was found to promote OCB (Newman *et al.*, 2017; Sridadi *et al.*, 2023; Turnipseed and VandeWaa, 2020). It was also suggested and proven that PE has a mediating effect between OJ and OCB (Singh and Singh, 2019).

On the other hand, an organization's smooth operation is not solely dependent on employees performing their duties in-role but also heavily dependent on OCB. The employees' feelings of meaningfulness are impacted positively when they have a good relationship with their leaders, thus, they demonstrate higher OCB (Jaiswal and Dhar, 2016).

According to the literature, LMX significantly promotes PE (Aggarwal *et al.*, 2020; Hu *et al.*, 2018; Kuokkanen *et al.*, 2016). Moreover, PE has a mediating effect between LMX and OCB (Jaiswal and Dhar, 2016; Lorra and Möltner, 2021; Yusof *et al.*, 2019). Hence, the proposed hypothesis testing the mediating effect of PE between the OJ and OCB will be as follows:

- H7. PE mediates the relationship between OJ and OCB.
- H8. PE mediates the relationship between LMX and OCB.

Therefore, the hypothesized model is illustrated in Figure 1.

Methods

Sampling and procedure

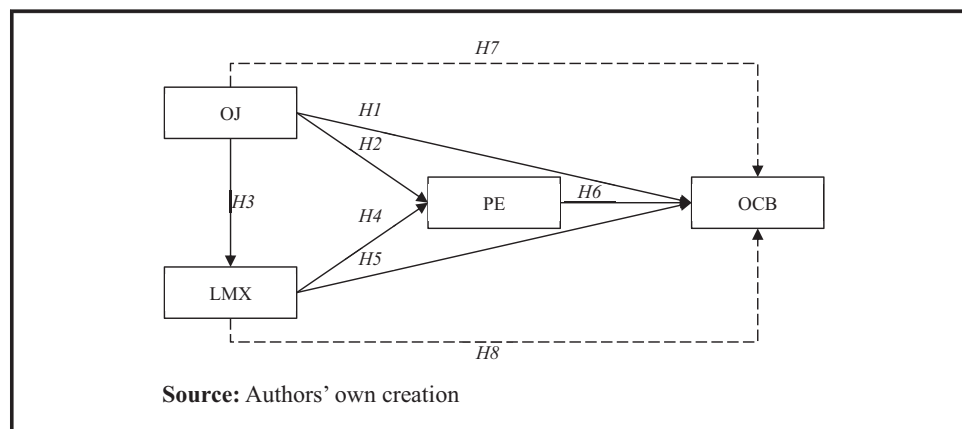
Quantitative research with random sampling and cross-sectional methods were used to test the proposed research hypotheses. The sample included employees from various levels and years of experience in governmental, semi-governmental and private service organizations in the UAE. The human resource department of these organizations was approached to distribute the questionnaire. Participation was voluntary, and respondents' identities remained anonymous with their responses kept confidential.

After obtaining permission from the organizations to collect the responses, 364 usable responses were collected. A total of 59.3% of the participants worked in the governmental sector, whereas 21.2% and 19.5% worked in semi-governmental and private sectors, respectively. Out of all participants, 56.6% of were female and 43.4% were male. The participants were in different age categories, 9.3% were 20–29 years old, 40.9% were 30–39 years old, 41.5% were 40–49 years old and 8.2% were 50 years old or above. Most of the participants (94.0%) have post-graduate level of education. Furthermore, 70.6% were UAE locals, 29.4% were expatriates and 52.7% worked in managerial positions, whereas 47.3% worked in non-managerial positions. In addition, 11.5% of the participants had been working for 0–5 years, 20.9% for 6–10 years, 45.6% for 11–15 years and 22.0% had been working for more than 15 years.

Measurements

A five-point Likert scale where 1 = never to 5 = always is used to measure OJ and 1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree to measure PE, LMX and OCB. Appendix shows the adapted questionnaire items for each construct and their sources.

Figure 1 The hypothesized model



Some changes were made to the questionnaire questions to strengthen their readability and relevance to the targeted sample cultural context to ensure participants provide meaningful and accurate responses. First, the questionnaire was translated into Arabic by using the back translation method to familiarize participants who prefer it as a language of communication. Second, a pilot study was conducted for a sample of 50 participants to validate the questions. As a result, some questions were changed.

- *Organizational Justice (OJ)*. A 20-item adapted scale developed by [Colquitt \(2001\)](#) was used to measure OJ. The scale measures four dimensions of OJ, where procedural justice is seven-items, distributive justice is four-items, interpersonal justice is four-items and informational justice is five-items, of each dimension respectively. Sample items included “Have you been able to express your views and feelings during those procedures?” and “Is your outcome appropriate for the work you have completed?”.
- *Leader-member exchange (LMX)*. A 12-item scale adapted from [Liden and Maslyn \(1998\)](#) was used to assess LMX. The scale measured four dimensions of LMX where affection, loyalty, contribution and professional respect are three items of each dimension. Sample items included “I do not mind working my hardest for my supervisor” and “I admire my supervisor’s professional skills.”
- *Psychological empowerment (PE)*. Measured using a 12-item adapted scale developed by [Spreitzer \(1995\)](#). The scale measures four dimensions of PE, where meaning, competence, self-determination and impact are three items of each dimension. Sample items include “The work I do is meaningful to me” and “I am confident about my ability to do my job.”
- *Organizational citizenship behavior (OCB)*. Is measured using a 22-item adapted scale of [Chiang and Hsieh \(2012\)](#). The scale measures five dimensions of OCB, where altruism, courtesy and sportsmanship are five items, civic virtue is four items and conscientiousness is three items of each dimension, respectively. Sample items include “I keep abreast of changes in the organization” and “I’m one of the most conscientious employees.”

Analysis and results

Common method bias (CMB) is checked using Harman’s single factor test ([Podsakoff et al., 2003](#)), and the results of exploratory factor analysis show that there is no common biasness, as the maximum variance explained by a factor is 49.67%.

Afterward, the hypothesized model is analyzed to understand the nature of the hypothesized relationships among the constructs. The measurement model fit is evaluated based on different fit indices including chi-square (χ^2), comparative fit index (CFI), increment fit index (IFI), Tucker–Lewis index (TLI) and root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA) ([Joreskog and Sorbom, 1989](#)).

Measurement model

A confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) is conducted to confirm the differences of the constructs from each other ([Singh and Singh, 2019](#)). The model fit indices show an unacceptable fit, as they are less than 0.9 (CFI = 0.834; IFI = 0.834; and TLI = 0.828) and RMSEA is acceptable, as it is less than 0.08 (RMSEA = 0.066) and $\chi^2 = 5301.502$, $P < 0.001$ ([Hammad et al., 2017](#)). Therefore, exploratory factors analysis is conducted to identify a correlation among the identified variables ([Hays, 1983](#)). The items with loading below 0.4 ([Hair et al., 2010](#)) are deleted and no item cross-loading above 0.2 exists ([Muthén and Asparouhov, 2012](#)). As a result, 22 items are deleted and the 4 constructs, namely, OJ has 12 items, LMX has 8 items, PE has 9 items and OCB has 14 items. CFA is conducted and

the model fit indices are evaluated again, and they show an acceptable fit, as they are greater than 0.9 (CFI = 0.907; IFI = 0.907; and TLI = 0.900), RMSEA is less than 0.08 (RMSEA = 0.061) and $\chi^2 = 2078.923$, $P < 0.001$ (Hammad *et al.*, 2017). Thus, the constructs in the model are different from each other.

The convergent and divergent validity of the measuring instruments is tested as shown in Table 1; all of the constructs' Cronbach's alphas are above 0.70, which reveals the high overall internal consistency of the items within the constructs (Hammad *et al.*, 2017). Cronbach's alphas of OJ, LMX, PE and OCB are 0.934, 0.923, 0.917 and 0.957, respectively. The average variance extracted (AVE), standardized factor loadings and composite reliability (CR) were calculated for further construct validity assessment. As shown in Table 1, all CR values are greater than 0.7 and AVE values are greater than 0.5 which proves construct validity (Hair *et al.*, 2010). For further proof of discriminant validity, the intercorrelations between all items were found to be lower than the square roots of each item's AVE (Hammad *et al.*, 2017).

Structural model

The structural equation model (SEM) is conducted using AMOS to assess the model fit. According to the results, the criteria of a good model fit are satisfied as long as the model fit indices are greater than 0.9 (CFI = 0.907; IFI = 0.907; and TLI = 0.900), RMSEA is less than 0.08 (RMSEA = 0.061) and $\chi^2 = 2078.923$, $P < 0.001$ (Hammad *et al.*, 2017) in which OJ was taken as an exogenous construct and predicted LMX and PE (directly) and OCB (indirectly).

Tests for direct impact. The results of the hypothesized direct impact are shown in Table 2. According to these results, OJ has an insignificant direct impact on OCB ($H1: \beta = 0.093$; $t = 1.698$; $p < 0.089$), while it has a significantly direct positive impact on PE and LMX as ($H2: \beta = 0.583$; $t = 11.663$; $p < 0.001$) and ($H3: \beta = 0.888$; $t = 28.71$; $p < 0.001$) respectively. The results also suggest that LMX has a significantly direct positive impact on PE and OCB as ($H4: \beta = 0.322$; $t = 6.875$; $p < 0.001$) and ($H5: \beta = 0.095$; $t = 2.021$;

Table 1 Descriptive statistics, coefficients of α and correlations

S. No.	Construct	Mean	SD	Cronbach's α	OJ	LMX	PE	OCB
1	OJ	3.568	1.187	0.934	0.714*			
2	LMX	3.558	1.155	0.923	0.593**	0.773**		
3	PE	3.660	1.176	0.917	0.572***	0.542***	0.731	
4	OCB	3.738	1.140	0.957	0.548**	0.518***	0.557**	0.782*

Notes: * $p < 0.05$; ** $p < 0.01$; *** $p < 0.001$

Source: Authors' own creation

Table 2 Hypothesis testing for direct impact

Impact	Standardized direct effect (β)	SE	t-value	Sig. level (p)	Hypothesis	Result
OJ $\rightarrow$ OCB	0.093	0.055	1.698	$p < 0.089$	H1	Rejected
OJ $\rightarrow$ PE	0.583	0.05	11.663	$p < 0.001$	H2	Accepted
OJ $\rightarrow$ LMX	0.888	0.031	28.71	$p < 0.001$	H3	Accepted
LMX $\rightarrow$ PE	0.322	0.047	6.875	$p < 0.001$	H4	Accepted
LMX $\rightarrow$ OCB	0.095	0.047	2.021	$p < 0.043$	H5	Accepted
PE $\rightarrow$ OCB	0.738	0.049	14.98	$p < 0.001$	H6	Accepted

Notes: OJ – organizational justice; OCB – organizational citizenship behavior; PE – psychological empowerment; LMX – leader–member exchange

Source: Authors' own creation

$p < 0.043$) respectively. Finally, the direct impact of PE on OCB is as significantly positive as ($H6$: $\beta = 0.738$; $t = 14.98$; $p < 0.001$). Hence, $H1$ is rejected, whereas $H2$, $H3$, $H4$, $H5$ and $H6$ are accepted.

Tests for indirect impact. The mediating test was conducted by using the [Preacher et al.'s \(2007\)](#) approach. The results of the hypothesized indirect impact are presented in [Table 3](#). The results suggest that PE positively and significantly has a mediating impact on the effect of OJ on OCB ($H7$: $\beta = 0.430$; $p < 0.001$) and the effect of LMX on OCB ($H8$: $\beta = 0.238$; $p < 0.001$). Thus, the hypothesized indirect influence of $H7$ and $H8$ is accepted. [Figures 2](#) and [3](#) present the hypothesized mediation relationships of $OJ \rightarrow PE \rightarrow OCB$ and $LMX \rightarrow PE \rightarrow OCB$, respectively.

Discussion

The study's findings add to the body of OJ knowledge by investigating the direct and indirect relationship between OJ, PE, LMX and OCB in service providing organizations in a non-Western country, specifically the UAE. Conveying justice to employees can indirectly increase their OCB within organizations, including service providers. More specifically, the results give evidence to the fact that the employees demonstrate OCB when they directly perceive empowerment and a positive leader–member exchange, while they demonstrate OCB when they perceive justice indirectly through PE and LMX.

OJ has a significant influence on PE and LMX consistent with the existing literature ([Durrani et al., 2017](#); [Ionescu and Iliescu, 2021](#); [Kieu, 2023](#); [Kim and Beehr, 2020](#); [Shan et al., 2015](#); [Singh and Singh, 2019](#)). This suggests that promoting fairness and justice in leaders' practices and procedures, organizations can enhance employees' attitudes and behavior, ultimately leading to a more engaged and productive workforce. Based on this scenario, when employees perceive their organization as fair and just, they are more likely to feel psychologically empowered, because they believe that their contributions are valued and that they have a say in important decisions ([Kim and Beehr, 2020](#)). Similarly, when employees perceive justice, they are more likely to develop a positive relationship with their

Table 3 Hypothesis testing for indirect impact

Impact	Standardized direct effect (β)	Sig. level (p)	Hypothesis	Result
$OJ \rightarrow PE \rightarrow OCB$	0.43	$p < 0.001$	$H7$	Accepted
$LMX \rightarrow PE \rightarrow OCB$	0.238	$p < 0.001$	$H8$	Accepted

Notes: OJ – organizational justice; OCB – organizational citizenship behavior; PE – psychological empowerment; LMX – leader–member exchange

Source: Authors' own creation

Figure 2 Mediation analysis of PE between OJ and OCB

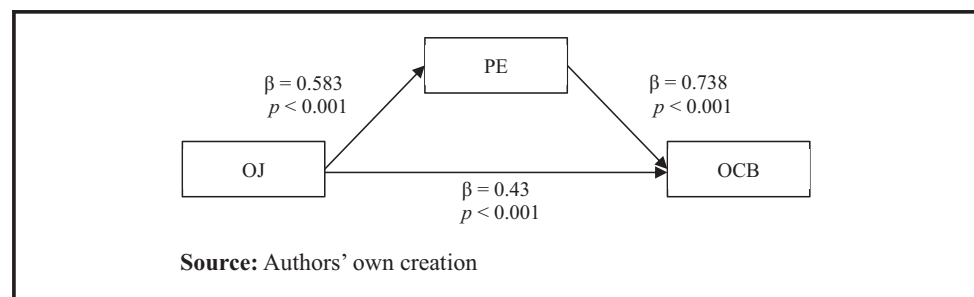
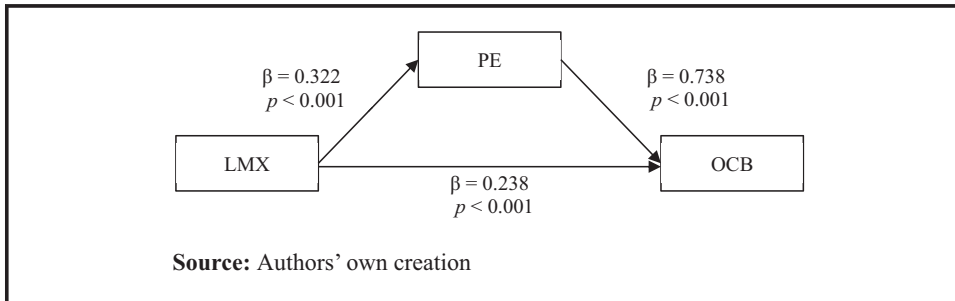


Figure 3 Mediation analysis of PE between LMX and OCB



leader, as they believe that their leader is treating them fairly and that they can trust them (Anand *et al.*, 2018).

While some research suggested that OJ is positively related to OCB (Chan and Lai, 2017; Das and Mohanty, 2023; Jnaneswar and Ranjit, 2022; Rahman and Karim, 2022; Singh and Singh, 2019), other studies (Jehanzeb and Mohanty, 2020; Obedgiu *et al.*, 2020) have found that the relationship between the two constructs is insignificant, similar to the current study. One possible explanation for this inconsistency is that the relationship between OJ and OCB may be complex and depend on a specific dimension of OJ. Distributive justice may be more strongly related to OCB than procedural justice or interactional justice (Raja *et al.*, 2018). Additionally, the relationship may depend on individual differences. For example, employees who are highly committed to their organization may be more likely to engage in OCB regardless of their perceptions of OJ (Saleh *et al.*, 2020).

The results of the impact of LMX on PE and OCB were determined to be significant and in line with previous research (Aggarwal *et al.*, 2020; Anand *et al.*, 2018; Hu *et al.*, 2018; Kuokkanen *et al.*, 2016; Teng *et al.*, 2020; Tremblay *et al.*, 2022), indicating that PE plays an important role in promoting positive relationships between leaders and their employees (LMX) and promoting behavior that contributes to the overall effectiveness of the organization (OCB). When employees feel empowered, they are more likely to have positive relationships with their leaders, as they feel more confident in their abilities and are more willing to take on additional responsibilities. This positive relationship can lead to better communication, higher levels of trust and a greater sense of support between the leader and employee (Anand *et al.*, 2018; Dulebohn *et al.*, 2012). Also, when employees feel empowered, they are more likely to engage in behaviors that go beyond their job requirements, such as helping coworkers or volunteering for additional tasks, because they feel a greater sense of ownership and responsibility for the organization's success and are more willing to take action to contribute to it (Anand *et al.*, 2018).

The influence of PE on OCB was determined to be significant and in agreement with prior research (Newman *et al.*, 2017; Sridadi *et al.*, 2023; Turnipseed and VandeWaa, 2020), implying that by empowering employees, organizations can encourage behavior that contributes to their success and create a more engaged and committed workforce. When employees feel empowered, they are more likely to engage in behavior that goes beyond their formal job requirements, subsequently contributing to the overall success of the organization, as PE enhances employees' motivation, self-efficacy and commitment to their work (Singh and Singh, 2019). In addition, PE can increase an employees' sense of responsibility and accountability for their work, which may lead to a greater willingness to engage in behavior that benefits the organization (Singh and Singh, 2019).

Finally, testing the two mediation hypotheses of the effect of OJ on OCB through PE and LMX were found to be significant and consistent with the existing literature (Jaiswal and Dhar,

2016; Lorra and Möltner, 2021; Singh and Singh, 2019; Yusof *et al.*, 2019). The hypothesized mediation relationships found support, thus confirming that the statements drawn from the SET stated that employees will feel obliged to perform favorably for the organization in return for anything valuable that the organization provides. Notably the results explain the influence of OJ and LMX on OCB through PE. The results were an extension and verification of previous findings in a theoretically grounded context.

Theoretical implication

This research is theoretically unique in its context, as it first focuses on OJ, PE, LMX and OCB. Those constructs have been considered extensively in literature. However, most research did not consider all those constructs consolidated together in their studies. Therefore, this study has an important contribution to the current literature, as it empirically investigates the relationships between those constructs. Second, limited research has been found focusing on the non-Western context and the UAE specifically on the phenomenon of OJ. A non-Western context could be different from a Western context due to several factors, such as cultural differences and the market's needs. Therefore, the research can be a theoretical reference for cross-cultural researchers. Finally, this study expands the understanding of the specific conditions where OJ and LMX are functioning effectively on OCB by concentrating on the mediating effect of employees' PE.

Practical implication

Several practical implications can be derived from this study. First, the findings of this study can help organizations understand the importance of fair and equitable treatment of employees. It can lead to the development of policies and procedures that promote fairness in decision-making processes, which can improve employee satisfaction and trust within the organization. Second, organizations can identify ways to promote psychological empowerment among employees by giving employees more autonomy, providing opportunities for skill development and recognition, involving employees in decision-making and organizations can empower employees to take ownership of their work, which can increase their motivation and job satisfaction. Third, leaders can use the research findings to develop positive and productive relationships with their employees by demonstrating respect, support and fairness to their subordinates, leaders can improve the quality of the LMX and increase employee commitment and loyalty. Finally, organizations can promote OCB among employees by recognizing and rewarding employees who engage in behavior that exceeds their job requirements, organizations can foster a culture of citizenship and encourage employees to contribute to the organization's success.

In the light of the difference between the individuals' perspectives and behaviors among the cultures, individuals' perspectives may differ in non-Western cultures from those in Western cultures when studying OJ, PE, LMX and OCB in non-Western contexts. Service industry organizations in non-Western context should give attention to OJ where employee–customer interactions have a considerable impact on customer satisfaction in service industries. In addition, a culturally specific understanding of PE explains how employees in a non-Western context feel competent and in control, which impacts how they deliver services. In service industries where employees are required to make quick decisions and handle difficult situations, PE is essential for the employees' motivation and engagement. Also, the study results suggest that leaders should identify culturally specific LMX dynamics and emphasize their influence on employees' behaviors and attitudes. Finally, examining the influence of OCB in a non-Western context yielded valuable insights into behaviors that significantly improve service quality, enhance customer satisfaction and increase the organization's overall performance.

Limitations and directions for future research

A new understanding of the relationship between OJ, LMX, PE and OCB have been provided by this study, yet some limitations need to be acknowledged. First, even though robust confirmatory and structural modeling methodologies were applied, causal relations cannot be determined from the cross-sectional data. Second, the lack of temporal information in cross-sectional data makes causal relationships difficult to establish through mediation analysis. Third, the relationships were examined using quantitative approach which offer valuable statistical insights. Qualitative methods, on the other hand, can provide greater depth and context. Fourth, the data was collected through self-report procedures; therefore, this study applied a common method variance. Finally, this study was carried out solely in a non-Western country.

Future studies could use longitudinal designs to investigate the causal relationships between these constructs over time. This would provide more insight into the direction of the relationships and help to establish the temporal sequence of these constructs. In addition, longitudinal designs allow researchers to analyze trends, patterns and causal relationships as they emerge within the subjects over time. Also, future research could explore how the constructs operate at a group or organizational level and how group or organizational-level factors may impact these relationships. For instance, using qualitative methods or mixed methods can offer deep insights, aiding in a better understanding of the relationships studied, particularly within the non-Western service industry. Future studies could examine these constructs in different non-Western contexts to investigate the generalizability of the findings and explore how different contexts may influence these relationships. Finally, they could compare the findings with Western cultures to identify unique patterns or similarities among the different contexts and cultures.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the objective of this study is to examine the direct effects of OJ on PE, LMX and OCB, LMX on PE and OCB and PE on OCB and to examine if PE and LMX mediate the relationship between OJ and OCB in the non-Western service industry. The findings of this study suggest that OJ has a significant influence on both PE and LMX, while the relationship between OJ and OCB is found to be insignificant. However, the impact of LMX on both PE and OCB is determined to be significant, as is the influence of PE on OCB. The assessment of both mediation hypotheses, exploring how OJ impacts OCB through PE and LMX, are determined to be significant. The outcomes of the study enrich the understanding of the complex dynamics within organizations and highlight the important role of OJ, PE and LMX in developing desirable employees' behaviors (OCB). For this reason, organizations should develop work environments that promote OJ, PE and LMX to foster employee empowerment, positive interpersonal relationships and ultimately improved OCB.

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Table A1 Construct measurement scales

Items	Source
<i>Organizational justice – Procedural justice (OJP)</i>	
OJP1	Have you been able to express your views and feelings during those procedures?
OJP2	Have you had influence over the outcome arrived at by those procedures?
OJP3	Have those procedures been applied consistently?
OJP4	Have those procedures been free of bias?
OJP5	Have those procedures been based on accurate information?
OJP6	Have you been able to appeal the outcome arrived at by those procedures?
OJP7	Have those procedures upheld ethical and moral standards?
<i>Organizational justice – Distributive justice (OJD)</i>	
OJD1	Does your outcome reflect the effort you have put into your work?
OJD2	Is your outcome appropriate for the work you have completed?
OJD3	Does your outcome reflect what you have contributed to the organization?
OJD4	Is your outcome justified, given your performance?
<i>Organizational justice – Interpersonal justice (OJInt)</i>	
OJInt1	Has your manager treated you in a polite manner?
OJInt2	Has your manager treated you with dignity?
OJInt3	Has your manager treated you with respect?
OJInt4	Has your manager refrained from improper remarks or comments?
<i>Organizational justice – Informational justice (OJInf)</i>	
OJInf1	Has your manager been candid in his/her communication with you?
OJInf2	Has your manager explained the procedures thoroughly?
OJInf3	Were your manager's explanations regarding the procedures reasonable?
OJInf4	Has your manager communicated details in a timely manner?
OJInf5	Has your manager appeared to tailor his/her communication to each individuals' specific needs?
<i>Psychological empowerment – Meaning (PEM)</i>	
PEM1	The work I do is very important to me
PEM2	My job activities are personally meaningful to me
PEM3	The work I do is meaningful to me
<i>Psychological empowerment – Competence (PEC)</i>	
PEC1	I am confident in my ability to do my job
PEC2	I am self-assured about my capabilities to perform my work activities
PEC3	I have mastered the skills necessary for my job
<i>Psychological empowerment – Self-determination (PES)</i>	
PES1	I have significant autonomy in determining how I do my job
PES2	I can decide on my own how to go about doing my work
PES3	I have considerable opportunity for independence and freedom in how I do my job
<i>Psychological empowerment – Impact (PEI)</i>	
PEI1	My impact on what happens in my department is large
PEI2	I have a great deal of control over what happens in my department
PEI3	I have a significant influence over what happens in my department
<i>Leader–member exchange – Affect (LMXA)</i>	
LMXA1	I like my supervisor very much as a person
LMXA2	My supervisor is the kind of person one would like to have as a friend
LMXA3	My supervisor is a lot of fun to work with
<i>Leader–member exchange – Loyalty (LMXL)</i>	
LMXL1	My supervisor defends my work actions to a superior, even without complete knowledge of the issue in question

(continued)

Table A1

Items		Source
LMXL2	My supervisor would come to my defense if I were “attacked” by others	
LMXL3	My supervisor would defend me to others in the organization if I made an honest mistake	
<i>Leader–member exchange – Contribution (LMXC)</i>		
LMXC1	I do work for my supervisor that goes beyond what is specified in my job description	
LMXC2	I am willing to apply extra efforts, beyond those normally required, to further the interests of my work group	
LMXC3	I do not mind working my hardest for my supervisor	
<i>Leader–member exchange – Professional respect (LMXPR)</i>		
LMXPR1	I am impressed with my supervisor’s knowledge of his/her job	
LMXPR2	I respect my supervisor’s knowledge of and competence on the job	
LMXPR3	I admire my supervisor’s professional skills	
<i>Organizational citizenship behavior – Altruism (OCBA)</i>		Chiang and Hsieh (2012)
OCBA1	I help others who have heavy work loads	
OCBA2	I help others who have been absent	
OCBA3	I willingly help others who have work-related problems	
OCBA4	I help orientate new people even though it is not required	
OCBA5	I’m always ready to lend a helping hand to those around me	
<i>Organizational citizenship behavior – Courtesy (OCBCou)</i>		
OCBCou1	I take steps to prevent problems with other workers	
OCBCou2	I’m mindful of how my behavior affects other people’s jobs	
OCBCou3	I do not abuse the rights of others	
OCBCou4	I try to avoid creating problems for coworkers	
OCBCou5	I consider the impact of my actions on coworkers	
<i>Organizational citizenship behavior – Civic virtue (OCBCV)</i>		
OCBCV1	I attend meetings that are not mandatory, but are considered important	
OCBCV2	I attend functions that are not required, but help the company image	
OCBCV3	I keep up to date with changes in the organization	
OCBCV4	I read and keep up with the organizations announcements, memos, and so on	
<i>Organizational citizenship behavior – Sportsmanship (OCBS)</i>		
OCBS1	I spend a lot of time complaining about trivial matters (R)	
OCBS2	I always focus on what’s wrong, rather than the positive side (R)	
OCBS3	I tend to make “mountains out of molehills” (R)	
OCBS4	I always find fault with what the organization is doing (R)	
OCBS5	I’m the classic “squeaky wheel” that always needs greasing (R)	
<i>Organizational citizenship behavior – Conscientiousness (OCBCon)</i>		
OCBCon1	I obey company rules and regulations even when no one is watching	
OCBCon2	I’m one of the most conscientious employees	
OCBCon3	I believe in giving an honest day’s work for an honest day’s pay	
Note: (R) = reverse-coded items		
Source: Authors' own creation		

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