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Impact of Organisational Justice on Organisational Citizenship Behaviour: The Mediating Role of Organisational Commitment among Employees of Private Universities in NCR

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ABSTRACT: This study examines how perceptions of organisational justice shape organisational citizenship behaviour (OCB) among employees of private universities in the National Capital Region (NCR), and whether organisational commitment carries that effect. The analytical concern is not whether fair treatment matters, which is well established, but how it works: whether employees who feel fairly treated go beyond their formal duties because they have become committed to the institution, or for reasons independent of commitment. The study adopts an exploratory, secondary-evidence and meta-analytic path design. Evidence is drawn from published meta-analyses of organisational justice, commitment and citizenship behaviour, from the All India Survey on Higher Education (AISHE) and University Grants Commission records on the growth of private universities, and from the theoretical literature on social exchange. Pooled correlations reported by Colquitt et al. (2001), Meyer et al. (2002) and Ng and Feldman (2011) are combined to estimate a three-variable mediation model for procedural, distributive and informational justice. The results show that procedural and distributive justice relate more strongly to commitment (corrected $r = .57$ and $.51$) than to citizenship behaviour directed at the organisation ($.27$ and $.25$). Organisational commitment transmits between 24% and 53% of the effect of procedural and distributive justice on OCB, depending on the commitment–OCB estimate used, and between 15% and 25% of the effect of informational justice. Mediation is therefore partial: a direct justice–OCB path remains in every scenario. For private universities in the NCR, where employment is largely contractual and governance is management-driven, the analysis suggests that fair procedures build citizenship mainly through commitment, while respectful and transparent communication by supervisors acts on citizenship more directly. The paper sets out a measurement and sampling protocol for a primary survey that would test these propositions in the NCR.

1. INTRODUCTION

Universities depend on work that no contract can fully specify. A faculty member who mentors a struggling student after hours, covers a colleague's class, serves on an admission committee without complaint or speaks well of the institution to prospective students is doing something that an appointment letter does not require. Organ (1988) called such conduct

organisational citizenship behaviour: discretionary behaviour, not directly recognised by the formal reward system, that in aggregate promotes the effective functioning of the organisation. In teaching institutions, where output is hard to measure and supervision is light, this discretionary effort accounts for much of what distinguishes a good institution from an adequate one.

Private universities have become a large part of Indian higher education. AISHE recorded 1,213 universities in 2022-23 and 1,289 in 2023-24, with the teaching workforce rising from 16.64 lakh to 17.3 lakh over the same period. The number of private universities grew from 87 in 2010-11 to about 510 in 2025, an increase of more than 480% (Careers360, 2025). The NCR, which covers Delhi and adjoining districts of Haryana, Uttar Pradesh and Rajasthan, is one of the densest clusters of this growth: these three states together account for well over a hundred private universities established in the last fifteen years.

This expansion has produced a distinctive employment setting. Private universities rely on student fees, compete for admissions, and are typically governed by a sponsoring trust or society. Faculty and staff are often on fixed-term or at-will contracts, salaries and increments are decided by management, and non-teaching duties such as admission counselling, accreditation documentation and event management are common. In such a setting, employees form strong judgements about whether rewards, procedures and day-to-day treatment are fair. Those judgements are the subject of organisational justice research (Greenberg, 1987).

2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The literature on organisational justice has consistently linked employees' perceptions of fairness with their attitudes and discretionary workplace behaviour. Previous studies have examined how distributive, procedural and interactional justice influence organisational commitment and organisational citizenship behaviour (OCB). The following review focuses on major empirical and meta-analytic studies relevant to the relationship among organisational justice, organisational commitment and OCB, particularly for understanding the mediating role of commitment.

Zhao et al. (2020) examined the structural relationship between organisational justice and organisational citizenship behaviour among university faculty, with organisational commitment considered as an important mediating mechanism. The study showed that employees who perceived greater fairness in organisational practices demonstrated stronger commitment and were more willing to engage in citizenship behaviours that benefited the institution. The study is especially relevant because it investigated the justice–commitment–OCB relationship in a university setting.

Asib et al. (2022) investigated organisational justice and organisational citizenship behaviour among 121 faculty members from ten private universities in Bangladesh. Using PLS-SEM, the study found that organisational justice positively influenced work engagement and that work engagement significantly influenced OCB. Work engagement mediated most of the relationships between the dimensions of organisational justice and OCB, showing that fairness can generate discretionary employee behaviour through an important psychological mechanism in higher education institutions.

Hermanto & Srimulyani (2022) examined the effects of organisational justice on employee performance with organisational citizenship behaviour acting as a mediating mechanism. Their findings indicated that perceptions of organisational fairness encouraged citizenship behaviour, which in turn contributed to improved employee performance. The study reinforced the view that OCB is an important behavioural outcome through which fair organisational practices can contribute to broader organisational effectiveness.

Sunaris et al. (2022) analysed the effects of organisational commitment and organisational justice on organisational citizenship behaviour, with job satisfaction incorporated as a mediating variable. The results showed positive relationships among organisational justice, organisational commitment and OCB. The findings suggested that fair organisational treatment and stronger employee commitment jointly encourage voluntary behaviours beyond formal job responsibilities.

Changaranchola & Samantara (2024) examined the relationship between organisational justice and organisational citizenship behaviour and tested psychological well-being at work as a mediating variable. Their study found that organisational justice was positively associated with employee psychological well-being and OCB. The findings further indicated that positive psychological states help explain why employees who perceive fairness are more likely to demonstrate citizenship behaviour.

Dewi & Wibawa (2024) specifically investigated the influence of organisational justice on organisational citizenship behaviour with organisational commitment as a mediating variable. Using employees of PT Pertamina IT Manggis as the study population, the researchers applied path analysis and found that organisational justice significantly influenced organisational commitment and OCB. Organisational commitment also played a mediating role in the justice–OCB relationship, directly supporting the mediation framework adopted in the present paper.

Joungtrakul & Smith (2024) examined the effect of organisational justice on organisational citizenship behaviour through the mediation of job commitment. Their study emphasized that perceptions of fairness alone do not fully explain discretionary employee behaviour; employees' commitment to their work and organisation provides an important intervening mechanism. The findings provide recent support for explaining OCB through both fairness perceptions and commitment-related attitudes.

3. OBJECTIVES AND RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study pursues four objectives:

- (i) to examine the relationship between organisational justice and organisational citizenship behaviour;
- (ii) to examine the relationship of organisational justice with organisational commitment, and of commitment with citizenship behaviour;
- (iii) to estimate the extent to which organisational commitment mediates the justice–citizenship relationship, separately for the main justice dimensions; and
- (iv) to interpret the findings for private universities in the NCR and suggest institutional responses.

The design is exploratory and analytical, relying on secondary evidence. Three categories of sources were used. The first comprises meta-analyses that report pooled correlations among the three constructs: Colquitt et al. (2001), covering 183 justice studies; Meyer et al. (2002) on the correlates of commitment; and Ng and Feldman (2011) on affective commitment and citizenship behaviour. The second comprises official and published data on higher education in India, mainly AISHE and UGC records. The third comprises the theoretical and scale-development literature used to define and measure the constructs.

The mediation model was estimated by meta-analytic path analysis, in which pooled correlations are treated as the input matrix for a path model (Viswesvaran & Ones, 1995). With justice as the predictor (X), commitment as the mediator (M) and citizenship behaviour as the outcome (Y), the standardised paths follow directly from the three correlations. The path from justice to commitment is $a = r_{XM}$. The path from commitment to citizenship, controlling for justice, is $b = (r_{MY} - r_{XY} r_{XM}) / (1 - r_{XM}^2)$. The direct effect is $c' = (r_{XY} - r_{MY} r_{XM}) / (1 - r_{XM}^2)$, and the indirect effect is the product $a \times b$ (Baron & Kenny, 1986). The proportion mediated is the indirect effect divided by the total effect r_{XY} . Because published estimates of the commitment–citizenship correlation differ, two scenarios were computed: Scenario A uses the corrected correlation of .32 for affective commitment reported by Meyer et al. (2002), and Scenario B uses the more conservative .23 reported by Ng and Feldman (2011) for citizenship behaviour rated by others. All path coefficients are the authors' calculations from the cited correlations. Because the inputs come from different meta-analyses and from cross-sectional primary studies, the results are interpreted as indicative of structure and not as causal estimates.

4. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND HYPOTHESES

Three bodies of theory guide the analysis. Equity theory (Adams, 1965) holds that employees compare the ratio of their outcomes to their inputs with that of relevant others, and that perceived inequity produces tension that they act to reduce. One of the least costly ways to reduce it is to withdraw discretionary effort. Social exchange theory (Blau, 1964) and the norm of reciprocity (Gouldner, 1960) explain the positive side: when an organisation treats employees fairly, they feel an unspecified obligation to reciprocate, and citizenship behaviour is a natural currency for doing so because it is under the employee's control (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005). The three-component model of commitment (Meyer & Allen, 1991) describes the psychological state through which this obligation is held: affective commitment (wanting to stay), normative commitment (feeling one ought to stay) and continuance commitment (needing to stay).

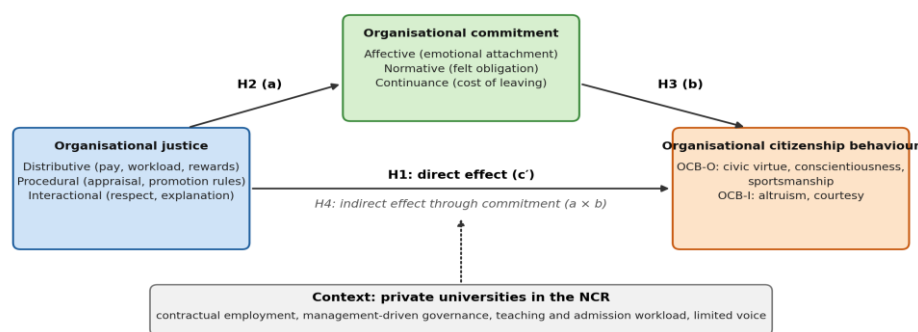
Organisational justice is usually treated as having three or four dimensions. Distributive justice concerns the fairness of outcomes such as pay, workload and promotion. Procedural justice concerns the fairness of the processes that produce those

outcomes. Interactional justice (Bies & Moag, 1986) concerns the quality of interpersonal treatment, and is often divided into interpersonal justice (dignity and respect) and informational justice (adequate and honest explanation) (Colquitt, 2001). Citizenship behaviour is commonly divided by target into behaviour directed at the organisation (OCB-O), such as civic virtue and conscientiousness, and behaviour directed at individuals (OCB-I), such as altruism and courtesy (Williams & Anderson, 1991).

Putting these together gives a chain. Fair treatment signals that the institution values the employee; the employee responds with attachment and a sense of obligation; and that commitment is expressed in behaviour that benefits the institution. Justice may also affect citizenship directly, for example through trust in the supervisor (Konovsky & Pugh, 1994). Four hypotheses follow, shown in Figure 1.

- **H1:** Organisational justice is positively related to organisational citizenship behaviour.
- **H2:** Organisational justice is positively related to organisational commitment.
- **H3:** Organisational commitment is positively related to organisational citizenship behaviour.
- **H4:** Organisational commitment mediates the relationship between organisational justice and organisational citizenship behaviour.

Figure 1. Conceptual model: organisational justice, commitment and citizenship behaviour in private universities



Source: Authors' construction based on Blau (1964), Meyer and Allen (1991), Organ (1988) and Colquitt (2001).

5. CONSTRUCTS AND MEASUREMENT

Table 1 summarises the three constructs, their dimensions and the instruments most widely used to measure them. These instruments have been validated repeatedly and are suitable for a university workforce with minor adaptation of wording.

Table 1. Constructs, dimensions and standard measures

Construct	Dimensions	Standard measure	Illustration in a university setting
Organisational justice	Distributive; procedural; interactional (interpersonal and informational)	Niehoff and Moorman (1993), 20 items; Colquitt (2001), 20 items	Fairness of workload and increments; consistency of appraisal and promotion rules; respect and explanation from the head of department
Organisational commitment	Affective; normative; continuance	Allen and Meyer (1990), 24 items	Pride in the institution; felt obligation to stay; lack of alternatives
Organisational citizenship behaviour	Altruism; courtesy; conscientiousness; sportsmanship; civic virtue	Podsakoff et al. (1990), 24 items; Williams and Anderson (1991) OCB-O and OCB-I	Mentoring students beyond class hours; helping new colleagues; voluntary committee work

Source: Compiled by the authors from the cited scale-development studies.

Two measurement issues matter for interpretation. First, when justice, commitment and citizenship are all reported by the same employee in the same questionnaire, shared method variance inflates the observed correlations (Podsakoff et al., 2003). Estimates based on supervisor or peer ratings of citizenship are lower and more credible, which is why Scenario B is reported alongside Scenario A. Second, the components of commitment behave differently. Meyer et al. (2002) found that affective commitment has the strongest relationship with citizenship behaviour, normative commitment a weaker one, and continuance commitment almost none. An employee who stays only because alternatives are scarce has little reason to do more than the contract requires. This distinction is important in private universities, where continuance commitment may be common.

6. THE INSTITUTIONAL CONTEXT: PRIVATE UNIVERSITIES IN THE NCR

The NCR offers a demanding setting for the model. Several features of private university employment bear directly on the three justice dimensions.

Distributive concerns arise from pay and workload. Salary structures are set by each institution and may not follow the pay scales applied in public universities; increments and promotions are discretionary; and teaching loads are frequently combined with admission, examination and accreditation work that is not separately rewarded. Procedural concerns arise from governance. Decisions on appointment, confirmation, appraisal and renewal are often taken by management with limited faculty participation, and written criteria may be absent or unevenly applied. Interactional concerns arise in daily supervision: how heads of department and administrators communicate decisions, whether explanations are given, and whether staff are treated with respect.

The labour market shapes how employees respond. The NCR contains many institutions within commuting distance of one another, so mobility is high for those with strong qualifications, while others remain because alternatives are limited. The first group expresses dissatisfaction by leaving; the second, more often, by doing only what is required. Citizenship behaviour is therefore a sensitive indicator of how fairly employees believe they are treated, and its withdrawal is costly in ways that do not appear in attrition figures. Accreditation and ranking exercises depend heavily on documentation, student support and committee work, all of which draw on discretionary effort.

7. RESULTS: EVIDENCE ON THE THREE RELATIONSHIPS

7.1 Justice, commitment and citizenship behaviour

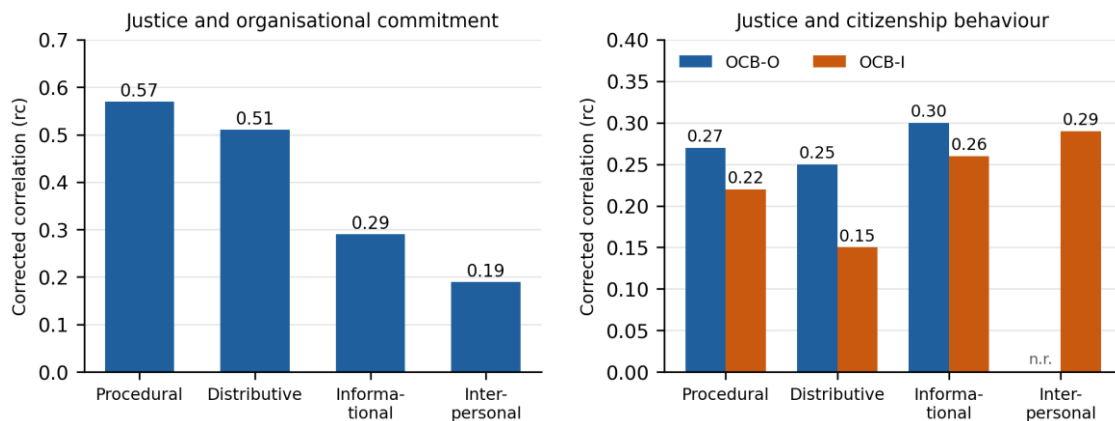
Table 2 reports the pooled correlations from Colquitt et al. (2001), and Figure 2 presents them graphically. Three patterns stand out. First, every justice dimension is positively related both to commitment and to citizenship behaviour, which supports H1 and H2. Second, procedural and distributive justice are much more strongly related to commitment (.57 and .51) than to citizenship behaviour (.15 to .27). Third, the interactional dimensions show the reverse profile: informational and interpersonal justice are only modestly related to commitment (.29 and .19) but are related to citizenship behaviour as strongly as, or more strongly than, the structural dimensions.

Table 2. Meta-analytic correlations of justice dimensions with commitment and citizenship behaviour

Justice dimension	Commitment: k	Commitment: r	Commitment: r _c	OCB-O: r _c	OCB-I: r _c
Procedural	53	.48	.57	.27	.22
Distributive	24	.42	.51	.25	.15
Informational	10	.26	.29	.30	.26
Interpersonal	2	.16	.19	not reported	.29

Source: Colquitt et al. (2001). k = number of samples; r = sample-weighted mean correlation; r_c = correlation corrected for unreliability.

Figure 2. Corrected correlations of justice dimensions with commitment and citizenship behaviour



The estimates for interpersonal justice rest on only two samples and should be read with caution. The broader pattern, however, is consistent with the agent–system view of justice: procedures and outcomes are attributed to the organisation and shape attitudes toward it, while interpersonal treatment is attributed to the supervisor and is reciprocated more directly in behaviour.

7.2 Commitment and citizenship behaviour

The third link in the chain is the relationship between commitment and citizenship behaviour (H3). Meyer et al. (2002) reported a corrected correlation of .32 between affective commitment and citizenship behaviour. Ng and Feldman (2011), restricting the analysis to citizenship behaviour rated by someone other than the employee, found an effect size of .23 across 40 studies and 11,416 respondents. The relationship is thus positive and reliable but moderate, and it is smaller when same-source ratings are excluded. Table 3 places these findings alongside the other evidence used in this paper.

Table 3. Synthesis of selected evidence on justice, commitment and citizenship behaviour

Study	Scope / design	Key finding	Relevance to private universities
Colquitt et al. (2001)	Meta-analysis of 183 justice studies	Procedural and distributive justice strongly related to commitment; all dimensions related to OCB	Fair appraisal and reward systems build attachment
Meyer et al. (2002)	Meta-analysis of the three-component model	Affective commitment most strongly related to OCB; continuance commitment unrelated	Retention through lack of alternatives does not produce extra effort
Ng and Feldman (2011)	Meta-analysis, non-self-rated OCB	Affective commitment–OCB effect of .23	Realistic size of the commitment effect
Organ and Ryan (1995)	Meta-analysis of predictors of OCB	Attitudes, including fairness and commitment, predict OCB better than personality	Citizenship is responsive to management practice
Colquitt et al. (2013)	Meta-analysis of social exchange and affect	Social exchange quality carries much of the justice–OCB effect	Supports the mediation logic of this study
Konovsky and Pugh (1994)	Primary study, hospital employees	Trust in supervisor mediates procedural justice and OCB	A direct, supervisor-based route also exists

Source: Compiled by the authors from the cited studies.

7.3 The mediating role of commitment

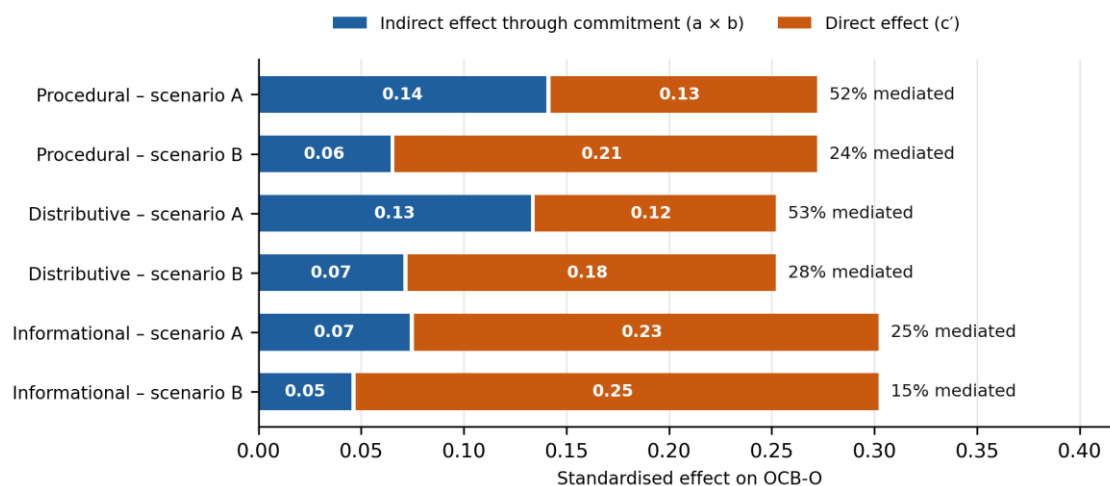
Table 4 reports the path decomposition for the three justice dimensions for which all required correlations are available, with citizenship behaviour directed at the organisation as the outcome. Figure 3 shows the same results as shares of the total effect.

Table 4. Meta-analytic path decomposition of the effect of justice on OCB-O through commitment

Justice dimension	Scenario	a (X→M)	b (M→Y)	Indirect (a × b)	Direct (c')	Total (c)	Proportion mediated
Procedural	A	.57	.25	.14	.13	.27	52%
Procedural	B	.57	.11	.06	.21	.27	24%
Distributive	A	.51	.26	.13	.12	.25	53%
Distributive	B	.51	.14	.07	.18	.25	28%
Informational	A	.29	.25	.07	.23	.30	25%
Informational	B	.29	.16	.05	.25	.30	15%

Source: Authors' calculations from Colquitt et al. (2001), Meyer et al. (2002) and Ng and Feldman (2011). Scenario A: commitment–OCB correlation = .32; Scenario B: .23. Values are rounded; proportions are computed from unrounded figures.

Figure 3. Decomposition of the justice–OCB relationship into indirect and direct effects



Three conclusions follow. First, the indirect effect is positive in all six cases, which supports H4: part of the effect of justice on citizenship behaviour passes through commitment. Second, mediation is partial. Even under the more favourable Scenario A, roughly half of the effect of procedural and distributive justice remains direct, and under Scenario B about three-quarters does. Commitment is an important channel, but it is not the only one. Third, the size of the mediated share depends on the justice dimension. For procedural and distributive justice, commitment carries between about a quarter and a half of the effect. For informational justice it carries between 15% and 25%, because honest and timely explanation is only modestly related to commitment yet clearly related to citizenship. Fair systems appear to work through attachment to the institution; fair communication appears to work more directly, probably through trust in the immediate supervisor.

8. DISCUSSION

The results suggest that justice produces citizenship in private universities through two routes that respond to different levers. The first is institutional. When pay, workload, appraisal and promotion are seen as fair, employees become attached to the

university, and that attachment is expressed in conduct that benefits it: attending to institutional work, protecting its reputation and tolerating inconvenience without complaint. This route is slow to build, because commitment accumulates over repeated experience, but it is also the route most within the control of management and governing bodies. The second route is interpersonal. An employee who receives a clear and honest explanation for a decision, and is treated with respect by the head of department, reciprocates toward that person and toward colleagues, largely regardless of how attached he or she feels to the institution as a whole. This route is faster and depends on the conduct of middle-level academic administrators.

The distinction between forms of commitment sharpens the argument. In the NCR, some employees remain with an institution because they are attached to it and others because the alternatives are worse. The evidence indicates that only the first group can be expected to show citizenship behaviour. A university that retains staff through bonds, notice-period clauses or withheld documents may reduce attrition, but it raises continuance commitment, which is unrelated to citizenship. Retention figures can therefore give a misleading impression of the health of the employment relationship. Fair treatment matters precisely because it builds affective commitment, the form that carries the effect.

The partial nature of mediation also has a practical implication. If commitment carried the whole effect, an institution could in principle compensate for unfair procedures by other means of building attachment, such as branding or facilities. Because a substantial direct effect remains, this substitution is limited: fairness is reciprocated in behaviour whether or not it first produces commitment. Table 5 relates each justice dimension to the practices through which a private university can act on it.

Table 5. Justice dimensions, typical concerns in private universities and institutional responses

Justice dimension	Typical concern	Main route to OCB	Institutional response
Distributive	Pay below comparable institutions; unrewarded non-teaching work	Mainly through commitment	Transparent pay bands; workload norms that count administrative duties
Procedural	Unwritten or uneven criteria for confirmation, appraisal and promotion	Mainly through commitment	Published criteria; faculty representation; an appeal mechanism
Informational	Decisions communicated late or without reasons	Largely direct	Timely written communication; explanation of adverse decisions
Interpersonal	Disrespectful treatment by supervisors	Largely direct	Training and accountability for heads of department; grievance channel

9. Recommendations

- **Codify procedures.** Publish criteria and timelines for appointment, confirmation, appraisal, promotion and contract renewal, and apply them uniformly across departments.
- **Recognise the whole workload.** Count admission, examination, accreditation and committee duties in workload norms and appraisal, so that rewards correspond to actual contribution.
- **Give employees a voice.** Include elected faculty and staff representatives in academic and service-condition committees, and provide an independent appeal mechanism.
- **Explain decisions.** Communicate decisions that affect employees in writing and with reasons, particularly adverse decisions on increments, leave and renewal.
- **Develop academic leaders.** Train deans and heads of department in fair appraisal and respectful communication, and include upward feedback in their own assessment.
- **Build attachment, not lock-in.** Rely on career development, research support and security of tenure to retain staff, and avoid coercive retention devices that raise continuance commitment only.

- **Measure what matters.** Conduct an annual confidential survey of justice perceptions, commitment and citizenship behaviour, and review the results at the level of the governing body.

10. PROPOSED PRIMARY STUDY IN THE NCR

The propositions developed here should be tested with primary data. A suitable design would sample teaching and non-teaching employees of private universities across the four parts of the NCR (Delhi and the NCR districts of Haryana, Uttar Pradesh and Rajasthan), stratified by sub-region and by category of employee. With the three instruments in Table 1 measured on a five-point scale, a sample of about 400 respondents would be adequate for structural equation modelling. Reliability and validity should be established through composite reliability and average variance extracted (Fornell & Larcker, 1981), and the mediation hypothesis should be tested by bootstrapping the indirect effect (Preacher & Hayes, 2008; Hair et al., 2019). To limit common method variance, citizenship behaviour should be rated by the head of department or a peer where possible, and justice and commitment should be measured at separate points in time (Podsakoff et al., 2003). Designation, tenure, type of contract and gender should be included as control variables, and type of contract examined as a moderator.

11. LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH

The study has four principal limitations. First, the correlations combined in the path model come from different meta-analyses, based on different sets of primary studies, so the input matrix is not drawn from a single population and no standard errors are reported for the path coefficients. Second, the underlying studies are largely cross-sectional and were conducted mainly in Western, non-academic organisations; the direction of causality is assumed from theory, and the size of the relationships may differ in Indian private universities. Third, the commitment correlations refer to overall or affective commitment, and the analysis could not separate the three components in the mediation model. Fourth, the description of the NCR context draws on published records and general features of the sector and not on institution-level data.

Future research could conduct the primary survey outlined above and compare private with public universities in the same region. Longitudinal designs would allow the sequence from justice to commitment to citizenship to be observed directly. Further work could examine moderators such as type of contract, tenure and leadership style, and additional mediators such as trust in the supervisor and perceived organisational support, which may account for the direct effect that remains after commitment is controlled.

CONCLUSION

The accumulated evidence supports the view that organisational justice promotes organisational citizenship behaviour and that organisational commitment is one of the mechanisms through which it does so. Fair procedures and fair outcomes are strongly related to commitment, and commitment is moderately related to citizenship behaviour; together these links carry between about a quarter and a half of the effect of procedural and distributive justice. The mediation is partial, and it is weaker for informational justice, which acts on citizenship more directly. For private universities in the NCR, the central implication is that discretionary effort cannot be demanded, and it cannot be secured by retention alone. It is given by employees who believe that the institution's systems are fair and that those who supervise them are honest and respectful. Institutions that invest in both will obtain the citizenship on which academic quality depends; those that rely on contractual control will retain employees without retaining their willingness to contribute.

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