



Organizational Justice and Organizational Citizenship Behavior (OCB): A Systematic Literature Review

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ABSTRACT

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This study aims to examine organizational justice as a predictor of Organizational Citizenship Behavior (OCB) through a systematic synthesis of empirical evidence and to explain the relationship using Social Exchange Theory. The study focuses on how fairness perceptions influence employees' voluntary behaviors and the psychological mechanisms underlying this relationship. This research employs a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) following the PRISMA 2020 guidelines to ensure methodological rigor and transparency. Data were collected from the Scopus database using keywords related to organizational justice and OCB. From 215 identified articles, 14 empirical studies met the inclusion criteria and were analyzed. The results indicate that organizational justice consistently has a positive and significant effect on OCB across various organizational contexts. Employees who perceive distributive, procedural, and interactional justice are more likely to engage in extra-role behaviors such as helping colleagues and voluntarily contributing to organizational effectiveness. The relationship is strengthened by mediating factors such as job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and psychological ownership. Additionally, organizational justice reduces negative outcomes such as burnout and turnover intention. These findings support Social Exchange Theory, which explains that fair treatment encourages reciprocal positive employee behavior. The study implies that organizations should prioritize fairness in decision-making, reward distribution, and interpersonal treatment to enhance employee citizenship behavior and overall organizational effectiveness.

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INTRODUCTION

In today's increasingly dynamic and competitive organizational environment, employee attitudes and behaviors play a crucial role in determining organizational effectiveness and sustainability. One of the most

important behavioral constructs in organizational studies is Organizational Citizenship Behavior (OCB), as it significantly contributes to organizational success across sectors (Organ, 1988; Podsakoff et al., 2000). OCB refers to voluntary employee behaviors that are not formally rewarded but provide substantial benefits to organizations (Organ, 1988; Nguyen, N. D. P., & Le, N. T. D., 2021). These behaviors include altruism, conscientiousness, civic virtue, sportsmanship, and courtesy, all of which enhance productivity and organizational climate (de Geus, 2020). Empirical evidence shows that OCB contributes to innovation, employee retention, service quality, and competitive advantage (Butt et al., 2020; Donglong et al., 2020). Studies such as Kinanti and Budiani (2024) also demonstrate that meaningful work significantly increases OCB, indicating that positive employee perceptions are essential for fostering voluntary contributions in organizations.

Despite the importance of OCB, organizations continue to face challenges in consistently encouraging employees to engage in extra-role behaviors. Many employees limit their contributions to formal job descriptions, especially in environments characterized by high workload, perceived inequality, and weak organizational support. This situation indicates a gap between organizational expectations and employee willingness to contribute beyond contractual obligations. Previous studies suggest that negative psychological states and low perceived fairness can reduce employees' motivation to engage in voluntary behaviors. As a result, organizations struggle to maintain consistent levels of cooperation, loyalty, and proactive behavior among employees. This problem is particularly critical because OCB is closely linked to organizational performance, yet it cannot be enforced through formal rules or incentives alone. Therefore, understanding the underlying factors that encourage or inhibit OCB becomes essential for improving organizational effectiveness in both public and private sectors.

In practice, variations in Organizational Citizenship Behavior (OCB) can be observed across different organizational settings such as education, healthcare, government, and industry. Some employees actively help colleagues, contribute beyond their job scope, and support organizational goals, while others only perform minimal required tasks. Empirical findings show that positive perceptions such as meaningful work significantly enhance OCB, as demonstrated by Kinanti and Budiani (2024), who found a strong relationship between work meaningfulness and OCB ($r = 0.782$; $p < 0.05$). This suggests that employees who perceive their work as meaningful are more likely to engage in voluntary, extra-role behaviors. However, such positive behavior does not

emerge uniformly across all employees, indicating that psychological and organizational factors play a key role. This variability highlights the importance of examining deeper antecedents of OCB, particularly those related to employee perceptions of fairness and organizational treatment.

One of the most widely studied antecedents of OCB is organizational justice (OJ), which refers to employees' perceptions of fairness in outcomes, procedures, and interpersonal treatment (Greenberg, 1987; Colquitt, 2013). Based on Social Exchange Theory (SET) proposed by Blau (1964), organizational justice is a key mechanism shaping employee behavior through reciprocal social exchange. When employees perceive fair treatment, they tend to respond with positive behaviors beyond formal job requirements (Sunyoto et al., 2021). Fairness in distributive, procedural, and interactional dimensions fosters high-quality social exchange relationships between employees and organizations, which in turn encourages OCB (Cropanzano et al., 2017). Recent research also confirms that perceptions of justice create norms of reciprocity that motivate employees to contribute voluntarily to organizational well-being (Ahmad et al., 2023). These findings indicate that organizational justice is a strong predictor of OCB across various theoretical and empirical studies.

Empirical studies further show that organizational justice not only influences OCB directly but also operates through various psychological and relational mechanisms. Prior research has identified mediating variables such as job satisfaction, organizational commitment, psychological ownership, leader-member exchange (LMX), perceived organizational support (POS), and psychological empowerment. However, these studies are often fragmented, focusing on specific organizational contexts, sectors, or countries. As a result, there is still limited synthesis that integrates how organizational justice consistently predicts OCB across different contexts and mechanisms. Moreover, the role of mediating and moderating variables has not been comprehensively mapped in a unified framework. This fragmentation limits the generalizability of findings and reduces theoretical integration. Therefore, a systematic synthesis is needed to provide a more holistic understanding of how organizational justice operates as a predictor of OCB within the framework of Social Exchange Theory across diverse organizational environments.

This study argues that Organizational Justice is a central construct that consistently influences Organizational Citizenship Behavior (OCB), both directly and indirectly through psychological and relational mechanisms. However, existing literature lacks a comprehensive synthesis that integrates empirical findings across sectors and identifies consistent patterns of mediation and moderation. Therefore, this study aims to systematically analyze empirical evidence on organizational justice as a predictor of OCB using the PRISMA 2020

approach. The study also seeks to identify key mediating and moderating variables and explain how Social Exchange Theory (SET) accounts for the relationship between the two constructs. The main contribution of this research is to provide a structured and integrated understanding of organizational justice–OCB relationships, offering both theoretical enrichment and practical implications for improving organizational effectiveness through fair management practices and strengthened employee–organization relationships.

RESEARCH METHODS

This study employed a qualitative research design in the form of a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) to synthesize empirical evidence on Organizational Justice as a predictor of Organizational Citizenship Behavior (OCB). The qualitative approach was chosen because the study does not aim to test causal hypotheses statistically, but rather to interpret, integrate, and critically analyze existing scholarly findings to identify patterns, relationships, and conceptual developments across studies. This design enables a comprehensive understanding of how organizational justice influences OCB across different contexts and theoretical frameworks. The review followed the PRISMA 2020 guidelines to ensure methodological rigor, transparency, and replicability in the literature selection process (Haddaway et al., 2022), as illustrated in Figure 1.

The literature search was conducted using the Scopus database, selected for its multidisciplinary coverage and high credibility as a source of peer-reviewed scientific publications. The study setting is conceptualized as the global body of Scopus-indexed scholarly literature, since no primary field data collection was involved. The search strategy used keywords such as “*organizational justice*” and “*organizational citizenship behavior*”, limited to English-language journal articles. The selection process followed PRISMA stages, beginning with 215 identified articles. After removing duplicates (4 articles) and irrelevant titles or mismatched variables (22 articles), 189 articles remained for screening. Further screening excluded 26 articles, resulting in 163 articles assessed for full-text eligibility. However, only 90 full-text articles were accessible, while 99 were unavailable. From the accessible full texts, 25 articles were evaluated in detail, and finally 14 articles met all inclusion criteria and were included in the final synthesis.

Data collection was conducted through document analysis techniques, while data analysis followed a structured qualitative procedure consisting of data condensation, data reduction, data display, and conclusion verification. In the first stage, relevant information was extracted from each study, including author, year, research context, sample characteristics, variables, and key findings. In the second stage, the data were systematically reduced and organized to focus on

patterns relevant to the relationship between organizational justice and OCB. The third stage involved presenting the synthesized findings narratively, highlighting similarities, differences, and emerging themes across studies. Finally, conclusions were verified through iterative cross-checking among the included studies to ensure consistency, credibility, and validity of the synthesized findings.

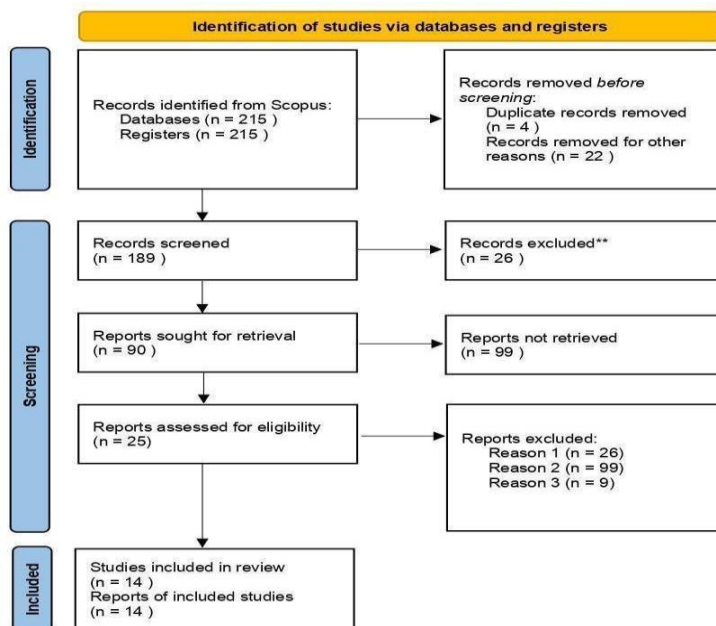


Figure 1. PRISMA Diagram

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

After completing the selection process, 14 empirical studies examining Organizational Justice as a Predictor of Organizational Citizenship Behavior (OCB) were included in this systematic literature review. The selected studies are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Selected Articles

No.	Author (Year)	Sample	Focus/Variables	Main Findings
1	(Ji et al., 2025)	1,325 teachers (primary, secondary, and vocational schools). Demographic characteristics: 494 male respondents and 831 female respondents.	The relationship between organizational justice and organizational citizenship behavior (OCB), with job burnout as the mediating variable.	Organizational justice positively predicts prosocial organizational behavior (OCB), with job burnout acting as a partial mediator of this relationship among

				teachers.
2	(Jnaneswar K. & Gayathri Ranjit, 2022)	301 full-time employees from 30 Information Technology (IT) organizations. Demographic characteristics: 184 male respondents and 117 female respondents (India).	Organizational justice and organizational citizenship behavior (OCB), with psychological ownership as the mediating variable.	Organizational justice positively predicts proactive organizational behavior (OCB) through discretionary authority, strengthened by transformational leadership.
3	(Nguyen-Viet, B. & Vo Tri Chau, T., 2025)	379 employees working in State-Owned Enterprises in Ho Chi Minh City. Demographic characteristics: 167 male respondents, 192 female respondents, and 20 non-binary respondents (Vietnam).	The relationship between Counterproductive Work Behavior (CWB) and Organizational Citizenship Behavior (OCB), with organizational justice as a contextual moderating variable.	Organizational justice moderates emotional exhaustion, shaping how negative behavior affects organizational citizenship behavior (OCB).
4	(Donkor & Segbenya, 2023)	636 public and private sector employees across education, healthcare, finance, and other sectors. Demographic characteristics: 317 male respondents and 319 female respondents (Ghana).	Organizational justice and organizational citizenship behavior (OCB).	Dimensions of organizational justice significantly predict prosocial organizational behavior (OCB), with distributive justice serving as the primary mediating mechanism.
5	(Hannani et al., 2022)	183 surgical technologists employed at educational and medical hospitals of Iran University of Medical Sciences (IUMS). Demographic characteristics: 116 male respondents and 67 female respondents (Iran).	Perceived organizational justice, organizational citizenship behavior (OCB), and organizational trust.	Organizational justice strongly and positively predicts organizational citizenship behavior among healthcare employees.
6	(Nguyen, P. N. D., & Le, D. N. T., 2023)	317 university employees (faculty members, academic	Organizational justice as a predictor of organizational	Organizational justice enhances OCB through job

		staff, and managerial staff). Demographic characteristics: 156 male respondents and 161 female respondents (Vietnam).	citizenship behavior (OCB).	satisfaction and organizational commitment as the primary mediators.
7	(Zayed et al., 2022)	360 non-managerial employees from nine government ministries. Demographic characteristics: 256 male respondents and 102 female respondents (Kuwait).	Organizational justice as a predictor.	Organizational justice positively predicts proactive organizational behavior (OCB) through affective commitment among public sector employees.
8	(Novitasari et al., 2021)	302 academics (lecturers) from private universities in Yogyakarta. Demographic characteristics: 155 male respondents and 147 female respondents (Indonesia).	Organizational justice as the main predictor of Organizational Citizenship Behavior (OCB), with professional commitment as an additional predictor and ethical leadership as a moderating variable.	Organizational justice significantly predicts OCB; however, its effect weakens when moderated by ethical leadership.
9	(Engdaw & Kebede, 2024)	328 employees (blue-collar and white-collar) from publicly owned regional government enterprises. Demographic characteristics: 191 male respondents and 137 female respondents (Ethiopia).	Organizational justice, organizational citizenship behavior (OCB), and organizational success.	Organizational justice significantly predicts proactive organizational behavior (OCB) by encouraging employees to engage in extra-role behaviors through perceptions of fairness.
10	(Waskito et al., 2023)	182 contract lecturers from five Muhammadiyah universities (Indonesia). Demographic characteristics: 95 male respondents and 87 female respondents.	Organizational justice and organizational citizenship behavior (OCB), mediated by exchange quality, namely leader-member exchange (LMX) and perceived	Organizational justice indirectly predicts prosocial organizational behavior (OCB) through trust mechanisms and exchange quality among contract employees.

			organizational support (POS).	
11	(Majali et al., 2025)	298 nurses from several hospitals in Chris Hani District, Eastern Cape, South Africa (172 valid questionnaires). Demographic characteristics: 55 male respondents and 117 female respondents.	The relationship among Organizational Justice (OJ), Organizational Citizenship Behavior (OCB), and Turnover Intention (TI) among healthcare nurses.	Organizational justice positively predicts proactive organizational behavior (OCB) and significantly reduces turnover intention among nurses.
12	(AlHammadi, A. & Abu Elanain, H. M., 2024)	364 employees from service organizations (government, semi-government, and private sectors) in the United Arab Emirates.	Organizational justice (OJ) as a predictor of employees' extra-role behavior, namely organizational citizenship behavior (OCB), in a non-Western context.	Organizational justice indirectly predicts prosocial organizational behavior (OCB) through psychological empowerment and leader-member exchange relationships.
13	(Bakeer et al., 2021)	175 nurses working in two public hospitals (Egypt).	Organizational justice as a predictor of organizational citizenship behavior (OCB), considering job satisfaction.	Organizational justice positively predicts nurses' organizational citizenship behavior, with higher perceptions of justice increasing the level of OCB.
14	(Sharma, A., & Sharma, A., 2021)	87 middle-level managerial employees in private-sector manufacturing organizations (Northern India).	Organizational justice as a predictor of organizational citizenship behavior (OCB), with job involvement as a work-related attitude also influenced by organizational justice.	Organizational justice positively predicts prosocial organizational behavior (OCB), with distributive justice showing a stronger influence than procedural justice.

The findings from these 14 articles demonstrate that organizational justice consistently has a significant positive effect on Organizational Citizenship Behavior (OCB). Perceptions of distributive, procedural, and interactional justice encourage employees to exhibit extra-role behaviors, such as helping coworkers,

complying with organizational rules, and voluntarily contributing to organizational effectiveness. In addition to its direct effect, several studies found that the relationship between organizational justice and OCB is mediated by employees' attitudinal and psychological factors, such as job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and work engagement. Several studies also identified the role of contextual variables, such as leadership and organizational culture, in moderating the strength of this relationship. Overall, these findings confirm that organizational justice is an important factor in promoting OCB across various organizational contexts.

Based on the synthesis of the fourteen analyzed articles, most studies show that organizational justice is positively related to organizational citizenship behavior (OCB). These findings can be explained by Social Exchange Theory (SET) proposed by Peter M. Blau (1964), which states that organizational relationships are based on reciprocal social exchange. When employees perceive fairness in distributive, procedural, and interactional justice, they tend to respond with extra-role behaviors beyond formal job requirements, such as helping coworkers, supporting a positive work environment, and demonstrating organizational loyalty. Such behavior reflects reciprocity for fair treatment received from the organization (Sunyoto et al., 2021). Furthermore, when social exchange relationships become high-quality, employees are more motivated to contribute beyond their formal roles as reciprocal exchange (Cropanzano et al., 2017). Overall, the reviewed studies confirm that this social exchange mechanism underlies the relationship between organizational justice and OCB, both directly and through psychological processes.

The Role of Organizational Justice in Reducing Negative Psychological Conditions and Promoting OCB

Based on Social Exchange Theory (SET) proposed by Blau (1964), relationships between organizations and employees are built on the principle of reciprocity, where fair treatment from the organization generates positive responses from employees. In this context, organizational justice not only encourages positive behaviors but also helps reduce negative psychological conditions that may hinder employees from contributing voluntarily. Therefore, the studies in this section examine how perceived justice suppresses negative psychological states, thereby fostering Organizational Citizenship Behavior (OCB).

The study by Ji et al. (2025) found that organizational justice positively predicts OCB among teachers, with job burnout acting as a partial mediator. This indicates that when employees perceive fairness in the organization, their level of burnout tends to decrease, leading to higher engagement in positive behaviors

such as helping colleagues and contributing beyond formal job requirements. From a SET perspective, fair treatment strengthens positive social exchange relationships, reduces psychological strain, and encourages employees to reciprocate through constructive behaviors (Sunyoto et al., 2021).

Similarly, Nguyen-Viet and Vo Tri Chau (2025) showed that organizational justice moderates the relationship between counterproductive work behavior (CWB) and OCB. High levels of perceived justice reduce negative behaviors and support the development of OCB. Overall, these findings suggest that organizational justice functions not only as a direct driver of OCB but also as a protective mechanism that reduces negative psychological conditions such as burnout and counterproductive behavior, thereby strengthening employees' constructive contributions to organizational effectiveness (Cropanzano et al., 2017).

Factors Shaping Positive Psychological Attitudes

Social Exchange Theory explains that fair social exchange relationships not only generate direct positive behaviors but also shape psychological conditions that strengthen the relationship between employees and the organization. Fair treatment enhances employees' sense of ownership, job satisfaction, and organizational commitment, which in turn encourages them to reciprocate through extra-role behaviors. Therefore, the studies in this subsection emphasize the psychological mechanisms that mediate the relationship between Organizational Justice and Organizational Citizenship Behavior (OCB).

Several studies indicate that the influence of organizational justice on OCB is often indirect and operates through psychological mechanisms. Jnaneswar and Gayathri Ranjit (2022) found that psychological ownership mediates the relationship between organizational justice and OCB, where perceived fairness strengthens employees' sense of belonging and ownership toward the organization. From a Social Exchange Theory perspective, this reflects internalized exchange relationships that encourage proactive and voluntary behaviors.

Similarly, Nguyen and Le (2023) and Zayed et al. (2022) show that job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and affective commitment function as key mediators between organizational justice and OCB. Fair treatment enhances employees' satisfaction and emotional attachment to the organization, which is then reciprocated through extra-role behaviors such as helping colleagues and improving organizational effectiveness. Overall, these findings confirm that organizational justice strengthens employee–organization relationships through psychological mechanisms that ultimately foster OCB.

Organizational Justice as a Direct Predictor of Organizational Citizenship Behavior

From the perspective of Social Exchange Theory, organizational justice represents a form of social investment by the organization that is reciprocated by employees through positive behavioral responses. In certain conditions, perceived fairness alone is sufficient to directly trigger Organizational Citizenship Behavior (OCB), without the need for psychological mediators. Therefore, this subsection highlights studies that position organizational justice as a direct predictor of OCB.

Donkor and Segbenya (2025) found that dimensions of organizational justice significantly predict OCB, with distributive justice playing a dominant role. Fairness in reward distribution and organizational resources creates the perception that employees are valued, which encourages them to reciprocate through extra-role behaviors.

Similarly, Hannani et al. (2022) reported a strong positive relationship between perceived organizational justice and OCB among healthcare workers. In high-pressure work environments, fairness becomes a critical factor that sustains positive employee behavior, leading workers to engage in helping behaviors and service improvement as a form of reciprocity.

Furthermore, Bakeer et al. (2021) confirmed that organizational justice positively predicts OCB among nurses in public hospitals, with job satisfaction strengthening this relationship. Fair treatment enhances employees' sense of appreciation, which motivates them to contribute beyond formal job responsibilities. Overall, these findings indicate that organizational justice consistently functions as a strong and direct predictor of OCB across different organizational settings.

High-Quality Social Exchange Relationships

Social Exchange Theory emphasizes that the quality of social exchange relationships between organizations, leaders, and employees plays an important role in shaping positive work behaviors. When organizations demonstrate fairness, employees develop higher-quality relationships characterized by trust, support, and a sense of moral obligation to reciprocate. Therefore, this subsection discusses how organizational justice strengthens social exchange relationships that ultimately promote Organizational Citizenship Behavior (OCB).

Several studies indicate that organizational justice enhances the quality of relationships between employees and the organization, which in turn fosters OCB. Waskito et al. (2023) found that the effect of organizational justice on OCB

is mediated by leader–member exchange (LMX) and perceived organizational support (POS). From a Social Exchange Theory perspective, fair treatment strengthens the relational quality between employees and leaders, leading employees to reciprocate through positive extra-role behaviors.

Similarly, Al-Hammadi and Abu Elanain (2024) showed that organizational justice indirectly influences OCB through psychological empowerment and high-quality exchange relationships between leaders and employees. Fair treatment increases employees' confidence and perceived ability to contribute effectively. In return, employees respond with more positive work behaviors. Overall, these findings show that organizational justice strengthens social exchange quality, which becomes an important mechanism in encouraging OCB.

Factors Enhancing Organizational Effectiveness

Based on Social Exchange Theory, positive social exchange relationships not only generate beneficial individual behaviors but also contribute to overall organizational effectiveness. When employees perceive fairness, they are more likely to respond with behaviors that support organizational goals, such as cooperation, loyalty, and Organizational Citizenship Behavior. Therefore, this subsection highlights how organizational justice contributes to organizational effectiveness through OCB.

Engdaw and Kebede (2024) found that organizational justice significantly predicts organizational success through increased OCB. This indicates that fair treatment encourages employees to engage in behaviors that support organizational performance. From a Social Exchange Theory perspective, positive exchange relationships between employees and organizations enhance not only individual behavior but also organizational-level outcomes.

Similarly, Majali et al. (2025) demonstrated that organizational justice positively predicts OCB while also reducing turnover intention among nurses. When employees perceive fairness, they are more likely to remain in the organization and engage in citizenship behaviors, indicating a stronger long-term exchange relationship between employees and the organization.

Furthermore, Sharma and Sharma (2021) found that organizational justice positively affects OCB, with distributive justice being the strongest dimension. In manufacturing contexts, fair distribution of rewards is crucial in maintaining strong social exchange relationships. Overall, the synthesis shows that organizational justice not only enhances individual extra-role behavior but also contributes to organizational effectiveness through improved loyalty, cooperation, and sustainable employee relationships.

CONCLUSION

Based on the systematic literature review of 14 empirical studies, the most important finding of this study is that organizational justice consistently serves as a strong and significant predictor of Organizational Citizenship Behavior (OCB) across various organizational contexts, including education, healthcare, government, and industry. The key lesson derived from this study is that perceptions of distributive, procedural, and interactional justice encourage employees to engage in extra-role behaviors such as helping colleagues, demonstrating loyalty, and voluntarily contributing to organizational effectiveness, thereby confirming the explanatory power of Social Exchange Theory (SET). The main academic contribution of this study lies in its integrative synthesis of empirical evidence, which not only confirms the direct relationship between organizational justice and OCB but also highlights the mediating roles of psychological mechanisms (e.g., job satisfaction, organizational commitment, psychological ownership, LMX, POS, and psychological empowerment) and the buffering role of justice in reducing negative outcomes such as burnout, counterproductive work behavior, and turnover intention. However, this study is limited by its reliance on secondary data from Scopus-indexed articles only and the absence of quantitative meta-analytic estimation, which restricts the generalizability and statistical strength of the findings. Therefore, future research is recommended to expand the scope by incorporating cross-cultural comparisons, longitudinal designs, and meta-analytic approaches, as well as exploring additional contextual factors such as organizational culture, leadership styles, and generational differences to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the justice–OCB relationship.

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