

## **Reassessing Procedural Justice and Workplace Deviance: The Unexpected Role of Gender and Tenure**

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### **Abstract:**

The purpose of this research is to critically examine whether procedural justice in Training and Development (T&D), gender, and tenure meaningfully influence employee deviance in the South African public sector, thereby testing the relevance of established organizational behaviour theories in a setting characterized by bureaucratic challenges, historical inequities, and persistent mistrust. A quantitative, cross-sectional approach was adopted, utilizing structured questionnaires distributed to public sector employees. The data were analysed using Structural Equation Modelling to assess both direct and moderating effects. The results indicate that, within the South African public sector's bureaucratic environment where procedural reforms exist alongside persistent inequalities, procedural justice in T&D has a negative but statistically insignificant association with various forms of employee deviance. Furthermore, neither gender nor tenure significantly influenced deviant behaviour versus procedural justice. This indicates the limited role of procedural justice, gender, and tenure in predicting workplace deviance in this context, suggesting that broader systemic and contextual factors may be involved. The research was limited to one South African province, procedural justice and did not consider distributive or interactional justice. Future research should explore alternative justice dimensions, integrate other personal and organisational variables as mediators or moderators, and adopt longitudinal and mixed-method designs to enhance understanding of deviant behaviour. By questioning the generalizability of established justice theories and demographic moderators, this study adds to the organisational behaviour literature, particularly in the public sector. The findings suggest that public sector organisations should not rely solely on procedural justice in T&D to address deviant behaviours.

### **Keywords:**

Procedural Justice, Training and Development, Employee Deviance, Gender, Tenure

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## **Introduction**

Fair and equitable treatment of employees remains a pressing issue in South Africa's public sector, especially considering legislative efforts to redress historical discrimination and systemic inequality. Procedural justice-particularly as it is applied in human resource management activities like training and development-shapes how employees perceive fairness and can influence their behavior at work. However, behaviors such as chronic lateness, time misuse, and withholding effort continue to disrupt operations, reduce productivity, and undermine the delivery of public services.

Theory and empirical research have linked employee deviance to factors such as procedural justice, gender, and tenure. For example, procedural justice theory posits that fair decision-making processes foster trust and reduce workplace deviance by ensuring employees perceive organizational practices as legitimate (Mabusela, Ngonyama-Ndou & Mmako, 2024). However, gender differences have been found in deviant behaviour research. For example, Steyn and Jackson (2014) found that men more likely to engage in direct rule-breaking behaviours such as theft and sabotage while women in indirect forms (e.g., gossip, social exclusion) (Steyn & Jackson, 2014). Tenure also shows some dichotomy where traditionally long-serving employees often internalize organizational norms compared to those with shorter tenure (Haricharan, 2023). The added complexity is that these relationships are sometimes mediated by contextual factors as evidenced in the South African public sector-a setting grappling with systemic challenges such as resource shortages, post-apartheid equity gaps, and inconsistent disciplinary practices (Mabusela et al., 2024; Bosch, 2025). The legacy of apartheid also heightens sensitivity to procedural injustices, especially in diverse teams (Obadele & Mtembu, 2024).

Despite expectations that procedural justice in training and development, along with gender and tenure, should reduce workplace deviance by building trust and legitimacy, evidence from South Africa and similar settings points to a more complex and context-dependent reality (van der Heyde, Faull & Sycholt, 2023). Against this backdrop, this study investigates whether procedural justice, gender, and tenure have a meaningful influence on employee deviance in the South African public sector-a sector marked by rigid hierarchies (Haricharan, 2023), gendered promotion patterns (Steyn & Jackson, 2014), and ongoing perceptions of managerial unfairness (Mabusela et al., 2024). The aim is to test the relevance of established organizational behavior theories in an environment shaped by bureaucracy, historical inequities, and persistent mistrust.

Building on the work of Mrwebi et al. (2018) and Obadele et al. (2023), the study sets out to achieve the following objectives.

- Examine the relationship between perceived procedural justice in training and development practices and different forms of workplace deviance (such as lateness, time misuse, and withholding effort) among public sector employees in South Africa.
- Assess whether gender moderates the relationship between procedural justice in T&D and workplace deviance.
- Investigate the moderating effect of tenure on this relationship.
- Offer practical recommendations for HR professionals and organizational leaders to enhance procedural fairness and reduce deviance in the South African public sector.

## **Theoretical Framework**

This study integrates Procedural Justice Theory, Social Exchange Theory, and Equity Theory to examine how perceptions of fairness in training and development practices relate to employee deviance in South Africa's public sector, considering gender and tenure as moderators. Procedural Justice Theory emphasizes fair processes in allocating training, grounded in the four pillars of voice, neutrality, respect, and trustworthiness (Towler, 2019; New York State Criminal Justice Department, 2023). Social Exchange Theory posits that employees respond to fair treatment with positive behaviors, fostering reciprocal and trusting relationships (Balu, 1964). Equity Theory explains that employees assess fairness by comparing their input and rewards to those of peers; perceived inequity can lead to resentment and deviant acts as attempts to restore balance (Adams, 1965; Davlembayeva & Alamanos, 2023). Together, these frameworks provide insight into how fairness perceptions in training may shape workplace behavior.

## **Hypotheses Development and Conceptual Framework**

### **Misuse of Time and Procedural Justice**

Employees may misuse organizational time-such as taking long breaks or doing personal tasks at work-as a response to perceived procedural injustice in HRM. According to Adams' (1965) Equity Theory and Blau's (1964) Social Exchange Theory, fair procedures, such as in T&D, encourage positive work behaviors, while unfairness can prompt time-related deviance as a form of retribution or entitlement (Colquitt et al., 2001). Research shows that procedural justice predicts workplace deviance, including time misuse (Colquitt et al., 2001; Henle et al., 2005), and that fair procedures reduce social loafing (Edrees et al., 2023). Thus, H1 posits that procedural justice in T&D is negatively associated with employee misuse of organizational time.

## **Poor Attendance and Procedural Justice**

Poor attendance, including lateness and absenteeism, can be a response to perceived procedural injustice in HR practices. Employees may arrive late or miss work as a form of protest or to regain a sense of control when they feel undervalued or unfairly treated, especially regarding access to development opportunities (Tyler & Bies, 1990; Greenberg, 1990). Affective Events Theory (Weiss & Cropanzano, 1996) suggests that negative experiences, like being excluded from T&D, can trigger emotional reactions that reduce commitment to attendance. Research confirms this link. For instance perceptions of injustice predict withdrawal behaviors such as tardiness and absenteeism (Greenberg, 1990; Colquitt et al., 2001), and procedural injustice fosters disengagement and avoidance (Ferris et al., 2009). Studies by Syaebani and Sobri (2011) and Jeewandra and Kumari (2021) further show that fair procedures promote better attendance. Thus, H2 proposes that procedural justice in T&D is negatively associated with poor attendance.

## **Reduced Effort and Procedural Justice**

Employees may reduce their effort or productivity when they perceive procedural injustice in HR practices, especially if they feel their contributions are not fairly recognized or rewarded (Blau, 1964; Organ 1988; Colquitt et al., 2001). This perceived unfairness in processes like T&D can lower motivation and engagement, leading to withheld effort. Social Exchange Theory (Blau, 1964) and Organ's (1988) Organizational Citizenship Behaviour framework suggest that employees respond to inequity by decreasing discretionary effort and disengaging from organizational goals. Research supports this. For example, Colquitt et al. (2001) found procedural justice predicts engagement, Tyler and Bies (1990) linked injustice to lower commitment and effort, and Tepper (2000) showed unfair treatment leads to reduced performance. Edrees et al. (2023) also found that fair procedures decrease social loafing, further illustrating the impact of procedural justice on effort. Thus hypothesis (H3) states, procedural justice in T&D practices is negatively associated with employee withholding of effort.

## **Gender and Tenure on Deviant Behaviour and Procedural Justice Relationship**

Demographic factors such as gender and tenure can significantly moderate how employees experience and respond to perceived procedural injustices, potentially influencing their engagement in deviant behaviours such as withholding effort, misuse of time, and poor attendance.

### **Gender as a Moderator**

Social Role Theory (Eagly, 1987) and Equity Theory (Adams, 1965) suggest women are generally more sensitive to fairness and interpersonal treatment at work, leading to higher expectations for equity in T&D opportunities. As a result, women may perceive injustice more acutely and are more likely to

respond with protest or deviant behaviors than men (Gilliland & Chan, 2001). Affective Events Theory (Weiss & Cropanzano, 1996) further indicates that gender can moderate how procedural justice impacts deviance, as workplace events trigger emotional reactions that shape behavior. Women may internalize procedural injustices more deeply, resulting in actions like absenteeism or time misuse to express dissatisfaction (Kidder & McLean Parks, 2001). Empirical studies confirm gender's moderating effect: Colquitt et al. (2001) and Kidder & McLean Parks (2001) found women are more likely to withdraw or reduce effort in response to injustice, and Ki, Xu, and Liu (2023) observed significant gender differences when controlling for this variable. These findings show that gender's moderating role is context dependent. Thus, the following hypotheses.

- *H4: Gender significantly moderates the relationship between procedural justice in T&D and withholding effort.*
- *H5: Gender significantly moderates the relationship between procedural justice in T&D and poor attendance.*
- *H6: Gender significantly moderates the relationship between procedural justice in T&D and misuse of time.*

### **Tenure as a Moderator**

Both theory and empirical evidence highlight tenure's moderating role in the link between procedural justice in T&D and employee deviance. According to Organisational Socialisation Theory and the Job Embeddedness Framework, long-tenured employees are more assimilated into workplace norms and better equipped to address injustices through formal channels, rather than through deviant acts (Feldman, 1981; Mitchell et al., 2001). In contrast, newer employees, lacking such integration and influence, are more likely to respond to perceived unfairness with deviant behaviors (Feldman, 1981; Mitchell et al., 2001). Empirical studies support this: Ng and Feldman (2010) found that long-tenured staff tolerate procedural inequities better, while Colquitt et al. (2001) and Ki et al. (2023) confirm that tenure significantly moderates how employees react to perceived injustice. These insights highlight how tenure shapes both coping mechanisms and behavioral outcomes in response to procedural justice challenges. Based on the above, the following hypotheses emerge.

- *H7: Tenure significantly moderates the relationship between procedural justice in T&D and withholding effort.*
- *H8: Tenure significantly moderates the relationship between procedural justice in T&D and poor attendance.*
- *H9: Tenure significantly moderates the relationship between procedural justice in T&D and misuse of time.*

## The Conceptual Framework

The study's conceptual framework (see Figure 1) posits that procedural justice in HRM, especially in training and development (T&D), is a key factor influencing employee behavior in South Africa's public service. When T&D procedures are seen as unfair, employees may engage in deviant behaviors such as withholding effort, misusing organizational time, or poor attendance (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005; Henle et al., 2005). The framework also suggests that gender and tenure shape these responses: Social Role Theory (Eagly, 1987) indicates women may react more strongly to perceived injustice, while longer-tenured employees, embedded in organizational norms (Mitchell et al., 2001), are less likely to respond with deviance than newer employees, who may lack such support and resort to rule-breaking (Ng & Feldman, 2010).

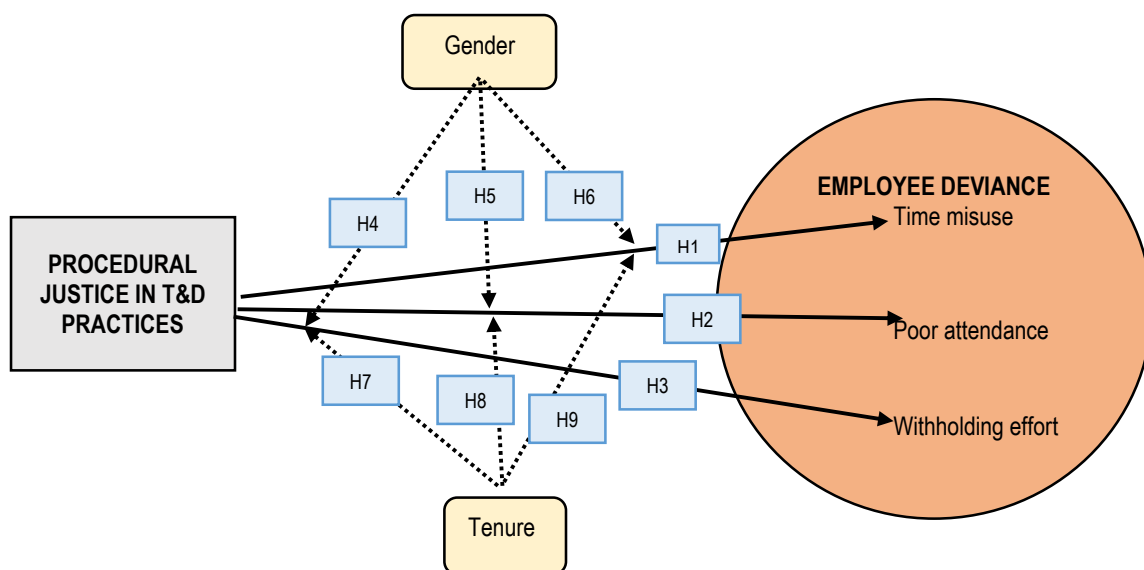


Figure 1: The conceptual Framework

## Methods and Data

The study followed the positivist paradigm. Consistent with the positivist philosophy, the deductive approach was adopted which allowed the researchers to fall on the selected theories mentioned in the theoretical framework above and empirical literature to generate hypotheses around the variables under investigation for testing. The quantitate cross-sectional survey design was followed, utilizing structured questionnaires distributed to 500 public sector employees in the Limpopo Province, one of the nine South African provinces. Respondents were given two weeks to fill out the questionnaire at their own time and convenience. Out of the 500 questionnaire sent out only 175 were fully completed and returned

constituting 35% response rate. Despite this low response rate, this number (175) is more than the minimum 150 recommended by Hair, Black, Babin and Anderson (2014), for structural equation modelling (SEM) when measuring less than seven constructs. The data were analysed using SEM to assess both direct and moderating effects. The primary reason for applying SEM in this study is its ability to execute simultaneous multiple predictions (Hair et al., 2014). Besides the analysis done to verify the relationships, various statistical tests were also performed to determine the validity and reliability of the measurement. The details of these tests and their results are provided in the next section.

## Results and Discussion

The first part of the results includes descriptive statistics.

### Descriptive Statistics

The descriptive statistics report on the distribution of the dependent (time misuse, withholding effort, and time misuse), the independent variable (procedural justice), the moderating variable (demographics: gender and length of tenure) and the normality assessment. Table 1 shows the demographic distribution of gender where females represented the majority at 65.1%, while males comprised 34.3%. Coming to the length of service, Table 1 shows that most of the respondents (38.9%) had been in service for more than 15 years.

Variable	Category	f	%
Gender	Male	60	34.3
	Female	114	65.1
	Other	1	0.6
	Total	175	100
Length of tenure	Less than 1 year	25	14.3
	1-3 years	23	13.1
	4-6 years	12	6.9
	7-10 years	19	10.9
	10-15 years	28	16

	More than 15 years	68	38.9
	Total	175	100

Table 1: Demographic profile of respondents

The next descriptive statistics is the results of the normality test. According to the normality test results in Table 2, procedural justice, misuse of time, poor attendance, and withholding effort did not meet the criteria for normality. Consequently, nonparametric tests were used for further analyses.

Variable	Kolmogorov-Smirnov <sup>a</sup>			Shapiro-Wilk		
	Statistic	df	Sig.	Statistic	df	Sig.
Procedural Justice in T&D Practices	0.109	175	0.000	0.938	175	0.000
Misuse of Time	0.186	175	0.000	0.831	175	0.000
Poor Attendance	0.274	175	0.000	0.670	175	0.000
Withholding Effort	0.291	175	0.000	0.682	175	0.000

Table 2: Normality test

Next is the frequency distribution of the variables. The findings shown in Table 3 above revealed that "Procedural Justice in T&D Practices" received the highest median score of 5.00, indicating that most respondents somewhat agree with the statement related to the construct.

First and second order constructs	Median	Std. Deviation
PROJ1	5.00	1.857
PROJ2	5.00	1.830
PROJ3	5.00	1.762
PROJ4	5.00	1.655
PROJ5	6.00	1.556
PROJ6	5.00	1.681

PROJ7	5.00	1.661
PROJ8	5.00	1.753
PROCEDURAL JUSTICE IN T&D PRACTICES	5.00	1.238
MIST1	2.00	1.986
MIST2	2.00	1.687
MIST3	2.00	1.627
MIST4	2.00	1.462
MIST5	2.00	1.492
MIST6	2.00	1.460
MISUSE OF TIME	2.00	1.312
PA1	1.00	1.391
PA2	1.00	1.469
PA3	1.00	1.320
PA4	1.00	1.425
POOR ATTENDANCE	1.50	1.264
WE1	1.00	1.336
WE2	1.00	1.450
WE3	1.00	1.456
WE4	1.00	1.525
WE5	1.00	1.500
WITHHOLDING EFFORT	1.40	1.330

Table 3: Variable Statistics

## Inferential Statistics

Various inferential statistical techniques were applied in the data analysis and the results are provided in the following sections.

### Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA)

The results in Table 4 show that the Cronbach's Alpha ( $\alpha$ ) ranges from 0.816 to 0.950 and the composite reliability (CR) coefficients range between 0.846 and 0.957 indicating that the instrument is reliable since the norm is .07 and above. Moreover, convergent validity test results in Table 4 show all the factor loadings and the Average Variance Extracted (AVEs) estimates are all above or equal to 0.5.

Constructs	Items	Factor loadings	P-value	Cronbach's Alpha ( $\alpha$ )	Composite Reliability (CR)	Average variance extracted (AVE)	Final number of items and initials
Poor Attendance	PA1	0.850	***	0.920	0.943	0.807	4(6)
	PA2	0.926	***				
	PA3	0.949	***				
	PA4	0.864	***				
Procedural Justice	PJ2	0.640	***	0.816	0.846	0.583	4(8)
	PJ3	0.708	***				
	PJ6	0.935	***				
	PJ8	0.740	***				
Time Misused	MT1	0.845	***	0.894	0.871	0.537	6(6)
	MT2	0.898	***				
	MT3	0.711	***				
	MT4	0.646	***				
	MT5	0.547	***				

	MT6	0.691	***				
<b>Withholding Effort</b>	WE1	0.936	***	0.950	0.957	0.815	5(5)
	WE2	0.939	***				
	WE3	0.794	***				
	WE4	0.917	***				
	WE5	0.920	***				

Table 4: Statistical evidence of reliability and convergent validity

To further assess the validity of the instruments, discriminant validity was performed. Discriminant validity assesses the extent to which a latent construct remains empirically distinct from other variables in a model (Taherdoost, 2016). Following the criterion proposed by Fornell and Larcker (1981), discriminant validity is established when the square root of a construct's Average Variance Extracted (AVE) exceeds its correlation coefficients with all other constructs. To evaluate this, researchers compare the square root of the AVE for each construct against its correlations with every other construct in the model (Malhotra et al., 2017). If any correlation surpasses the corresponding AVE square root, it indicates insufficient discriminant validity, implying overlapping measurement between constructs. As shown in Table 5, all constructs in this study met the Fornell-Larcker criterion, confirming adequate discriminant validity. This result demonstrates that the constructs are sufficiently distinct and not redundantly measuring the same underlying phenomenon.

	Gender	Tenure	Poor Attendance	Procedural Justice	Time Misused	Withholding Effort
Gender	1.000					
Tenure	-0.070	1.000				
Poor Attendance	-0.092	0.108	0.898			
Procedural Justice	0.175	-0.150	-0.086	0.764		
Time Misused	-0.032	0.138	0.593	-0.022	0.733	

<b>Withholding Effort</b>	-0.070	0.061	0.823	-0.026	0.520	0.903
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Table 5: Fornell and Larker assessment

The HTMT results in Table 6 with constructs having common variances not exceeding 0.9 demonstrates that the constructs are sufficiently distinct (Henseler, Ringle and Sarstedt, 2015:115).

	<b>Gender</b>	<b>Length Of Service</b>	<b>Poor Attendance</b>	<b>Procedural Justice</b>	<b>Time Misused</b>
<b>Length Of Service</b>	0.070				
<b>Poor Attendance</b>	0.092	0.113			
<b>Procedural Justice</b>	0.202	0.212	0.073		
<b>Time Misused</b>	0.054	0.071	0.744	0.074	
<b>Withholding Effort</b>	0.057	0.050	0.900	0.064	0.647

Table 6: HTMT statistics

### Measurement Model Analysis

The measurement model calculated the path coefficients ( $\beta$ ), Coefficient of determination ( $R^2$ ), effect size ( $f^2$ ), and predictive relevance ( $Q^2$ ). The measurement model in Figure 2 assessed the significance of the predictors. According to the results in Figure 2, the empirical model explains 2.2% ( $R^2$ ) of Poor Attendance variance and 2.8% ( $R^2$ ) of Time Misused and accounts for 1.6% ( $R^2$ ) of Withholding Effort. These findings are also summarised in Table 7.

<b>Variables</b>	<b>R-square</b>
Poor Attendance	0.022
Time Misused	0.028

Withholding Effort	0.016
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Table 7: The measurement model

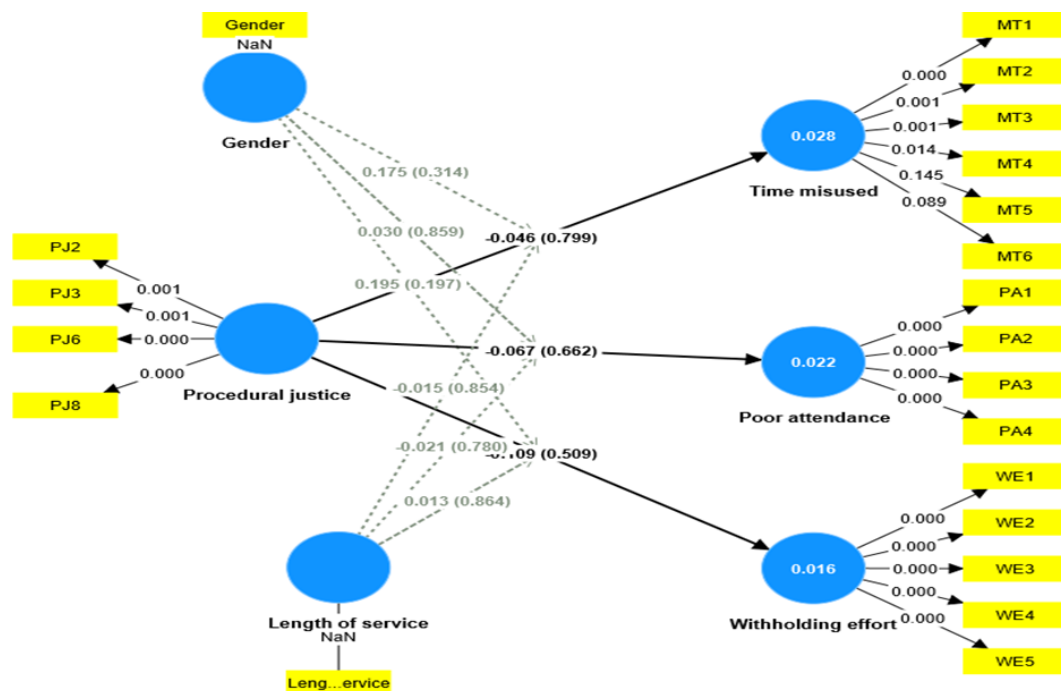


Figure 2: The measurement model

## Hypothesis Testing

Table 8 reveals interesting results from the hypotheses testing. Firstly, the findings in Table 8 reveal that procedural justice in T&D has negative but non-significant effects on all three forms of employee deviant behaviour misuse of time ( $\beta = -0.046$ ), poor attendance ( $\beta = -0.067$ ), and withholding effort ( $\beta = -0.109$ ). These results suggest that while there is a theoretical tendency for higher perceptions of procedural justice to reduce deviant behaviours, the effects are weak and statistically insignificant in this context. This contradicts earlier studies and theoretical assumptions rooted in Equity Theory (Adams, 1965) and Social Exchange Theory (Blau, 1964), which posit that perceptions of fairness in organisational practices, including T&D, foster positive workplace behaviours and discourage deviance (Colquitt et al., 2001; Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005). The lack of significant findings may indicate that procedural justice in T&D is not a primary concern for public sector employees in South Africa, or that other organisational justice dimensions such as distributive or interactional justice) play a more critical role in shaping their behaviour. However, the findings align with research suggesting that in highly bureaucratic and resource-constrained environments like the South African public sector, employees may have lower

expectations for fair T&D opportunities and thus do not directly translate perceptions of procedural fairness into behavioural outcomes (Theron, Barkhuizen, & du Plessis, 2014).

As shown in Table 8, the study also found that gender does not significantly moderate the relationship between procedural justice and any of the deviant behaviours examined, as all p-values were well above the 0.05 threshold. These finding challenges prior assumptions based on Social Role Theory (Eagly, 1987), which suggests that women are more sensitive to fairness considerations and more emotionally reactive to perceived injustices, leading to different behavioural outcomes compared to men (Kidder & McLean Parks, 2001). Recent empirical studies (e.g., Qi et al., 2023) have shown that while gender differences in justice perceptions exist, their influence on behavioural outcomes may be context dependent. In the South African public service context, where employment security and standardised HRM practices are prevalent, gender-related differences in workplace deviance may be less pronounced, as both male and female employees operate within the same rigid bureaucratic structures with limited scope for behavioural variation.

Similar to gender effects, the findings in Table 8 show that tenure does not moderate the relationship between procedural justice and deviant behaviours, with all p-values again indicating non-significance. This contradicts the Organisational Socialisation Theory (Feldman, 1981) and the Job Embeddedness Framework (Mitchell et al., 2001), which propose that employees with longer tenure are better socialised into organisational norms and thus less likely to respond to perceived injustices with deviant behaviours. The absence of significant moderation effects could be due to the unique characteristics of the South African public sector, where longer-tenured employees may become disillusioned with systemic inefficiencies and limited career growth opportunities, rendering their tenure less effective as a buffer against negative behavioural responses (Ng & Feldman, 2010). Conversely, newer employees might enter the organisation with already low expectations regarding procedural fairness, particularly in relation to T&D, thereby reducing the likelihood of strong emotional or behavioural reactions to perceived injustices.

Hypotheses	$\beta$	P Value	Decision
1. Procedural Justice -> Time Misused	-0.046	0.799	P > 0.05 therefore reject
2. Procedural Justice -> Poor Attendance	-0.067	0.662	P > 0.05 therefore reject
3. Procedural Justice -> Withholding Effort	-0.109	0.509	P > 0.05 therefore reject
4. Gender X Procedural Justice -> Withholding Effort	0.195	0.197	P > 0.05 therefore reject
5. Gender X Procedural Justice -> Poor Attendance	0.030	0.859	P > 0.05 therefore reject

6. Gender X Procedural Justice -> Time Misused	0.175	0.314	P > 0.05 therefore reject
7. Tenure X Procedural Justice -> Withholding Effort	0.013	0.864	P > 0.05 therefore reject
8. Tenure X Procedural Justice -> Poor Attendance	-0.021	0.780	P > 0.05 therefore reject
9. Tenure X Procedural Justice -> Time Misused	-0.015	0.854	P > 0.05 therefore reject

Table 8. The hypothesis test results

## Conclusion

This study set out to critically examine whether procedural justice in T&D, alongside demographic factors such as gender and tenure, play meaningful roles in explaining employee deviant behaviours within the South African public sector. Contrary to established theoretical expectations based on Equity Theory (Adams, 1965) and Social Exchange Theory (Blau, 1964), the empirical findings revealed that procedural justice in T&D exhibited weak and statistically insignificant effects on deviant behaviours, including misuse of time, poor attendance, and withholding effort.

Similarly, the moderating roles of gender and tenure were found to be non-significant, suggesting that these demographic factors do not substantially alter the relationship between perceived procedural justice and employee deviance in this context. These findings suggest that, at least within the bureaucratic and highly regulated environment of the South African public service, procedural justice perceptions related to T&D may be overshadowed by other more immediate organisational factors or systemic constraints.

Thus, while classical theories predict a strong link between justice perceptions and workplace behaviour, the outcomes of the study lead to the conclusion that, at least within the South African public sector, procedural justice, gender, and tenure may indeed be less influential or even irrelevant predictors of employee deviance. Put differently this study's findings indicate that procedural justice, gender, and tenure may indeed be less influential or even irrelevant predictors of employee deviance in the South African public sector. Instead, it is likely that other organisational and psychological factors exert a stronger influence, warranting further exploration.

## Implications of the Study

### Practical Implications

Firstly, the results highlight rethinking focus on procedural justice in T&D. Given the non-significant influence of procedural justice in T&D on employee deviance, public sector HR managers should reconsider the assumption that fair T&D practices alone can meaningfully reduce deviant behaviours.

Instead, greater emphasis should be placed on addressing systemic workplace stressors, improving day-to-day managerial interactions, and fostering a more engaging organisational climate. Secondly, prioritizing other HR interventions becomes critical since T&D-related procedural fairness appears to have limited behavioural impact. Human resources departments in the public sector should consider investing in broader initiatives that improve employee engagement and satisfaction, such as recognition programmes, work-life balance policies, and transparent performance management systems. Obviously, gender and tenure are not reliable segmentation variables. The findings suggest that policy interventions aimed at reducing workplace deviance should not overly focus on tailoring solutions based on gender and tenure alone. Instead, public sector organisations should consider psychographic factors such as employee motivation, stress resilience, and perceived organisational support, which may have a stronger behavioural influence.

### **Theoretical Implications**

The study reveals contextual limitations of social exchange and equity theories. The results challenge the universal applicability of Social Exchange Theory (Blau, 1964) and Equity Theory (Adams, 1965) in explaining workplace deviance, particularly within rigid, hierarchical environments like the South African public sector. This suggests that the predictive power of these theories may diminish in contexts where employees have low expectations of procedural fairness or limited alternative employment opportunities. The results also call for expanded justice models. The findings highlight the importance of exploring other organisational justice dimensions especially interactional justice and distributive justice as more proximal drivers of employee behaviour in bureaucratic environments like the South African public sector. Finally, there is need to re-examining demographic moderators. The absence of significant moderating effects from gender and tenure calls into question the continued reliance on these demographic factors as key moderators in behavioural models. This supports emerging views that psychological and situational factors may better explain variations in employee responses to workplace justice perceptions.

### **Limitations of the Study**

Despite its contributions, this study has some limitations. Firstly, the research focused exclusively on the South African public sector, limiting the generalizability of the findings to other sectors or cultural contexts. Secondly, the cross-sectional nature of the study limits the ability to establish causality. Third is the use of self-administered questionnaires which may have introduced common method bias and social desirability bias, potentially affecting the accuracy of the reported behaviours. Fourth, the study focused solely on procedural justice in T&D, neglecting other potentially influential justice dimensions such as distributive and interactional justice. Five, only gender and tenure were examined as moderators. Other relevant demographic, psychological, and organisational factors were not included,

which may have limited the model's explanatory power. Lastly, the small effect sizes and non-significant relationships suggest that the examined variables explain only a limited portion of deviant behaviours, indicating the presence of other unexamined influencing factors.

## **Recommendations for Future Research**

As a result, of the above limitations, future studies should investigate the following. First research should investigate the roles of distributive and interactional justice in influencing deviant behaviour, which may offer stronger explanatory power in the South African public sector and similar bureaucratic environments. Secondly, future researchers should incorporate variables such as emotional intelligence, coping styles, perceived organisational support, and leadership quality as potential moderators or mediators in the justice–deviance relationship. To better understand causality and underlying mechanisms, future research should employ longitudinal designs and mixed method approaches that capture the evolving nature of justice perceptions and deviant behaviours over time. Finally, comparative research between the public and private sectors, or across different cultural contexts within South Africa, could offer deeper insights into how environmental and structural factors condition the relevance of justice perceptions.

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