

## **ORGANISATIONAL JUSTICE AND WORKERS BEHAVIOUR: A MODERATING ROLE OF CULTURE IN MANUFACTURING SECTOR IN NIGERIA**

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### **ABSTRACT**

*This paper examined organizational justice and workers behaviour of manufacturing companies in Nigeria. The aim of the paper was to determine the relationship between the dimensions of organizational justice (distributive justice, procedural justice and interactional justice) and the measures of workers' behaviour (organizational citizenship behaviour, workers commitment and employee work attendance). It was concluded that organizational justice has a significant positive relationship with workers behaviour; and that this relationship is significantly moderated by organizational culture. Based on the conclusion, it was recommended that management team of manufacturing companies in South-South Nigeria should ensure that there is distributive, procedural and interactional justice in their organization as it would motivate workers to exhibit good behavior at work.*

**Keywords:** *Organisational Justice, Workers Behaviour, Organisational Culture, Manufacturing Sector*

### **INTRODUCTION**

The behaviour of some workers in manufacturing organizations in Nigeria has become so worrisome to managers in these organizations. A close observation shows that many workers in manufacturing companies do not exhibit good behaviours such as organizational citizenship behaviours, organizational commitment and regular work attendance. There is a high level of absenteeism among workers while those who regularly report to work often resume late at their duty post, resulting in low productivity. Ajala (2015) observed that many Nigerian workers have cultivated the habit of coming to work late and when they arrive at work, they often show lukewarm attitude to work, resulting in low productivity. Many observers of Nigerian workers have always come up with a common impression that generally Nigerian workers are reluctant to act, feel unconcerned, and deceitful in their approach to work. These workers are said to lack the zeal to work, spirit of sportsmanship, courtesy, commitment, and dedication to work.

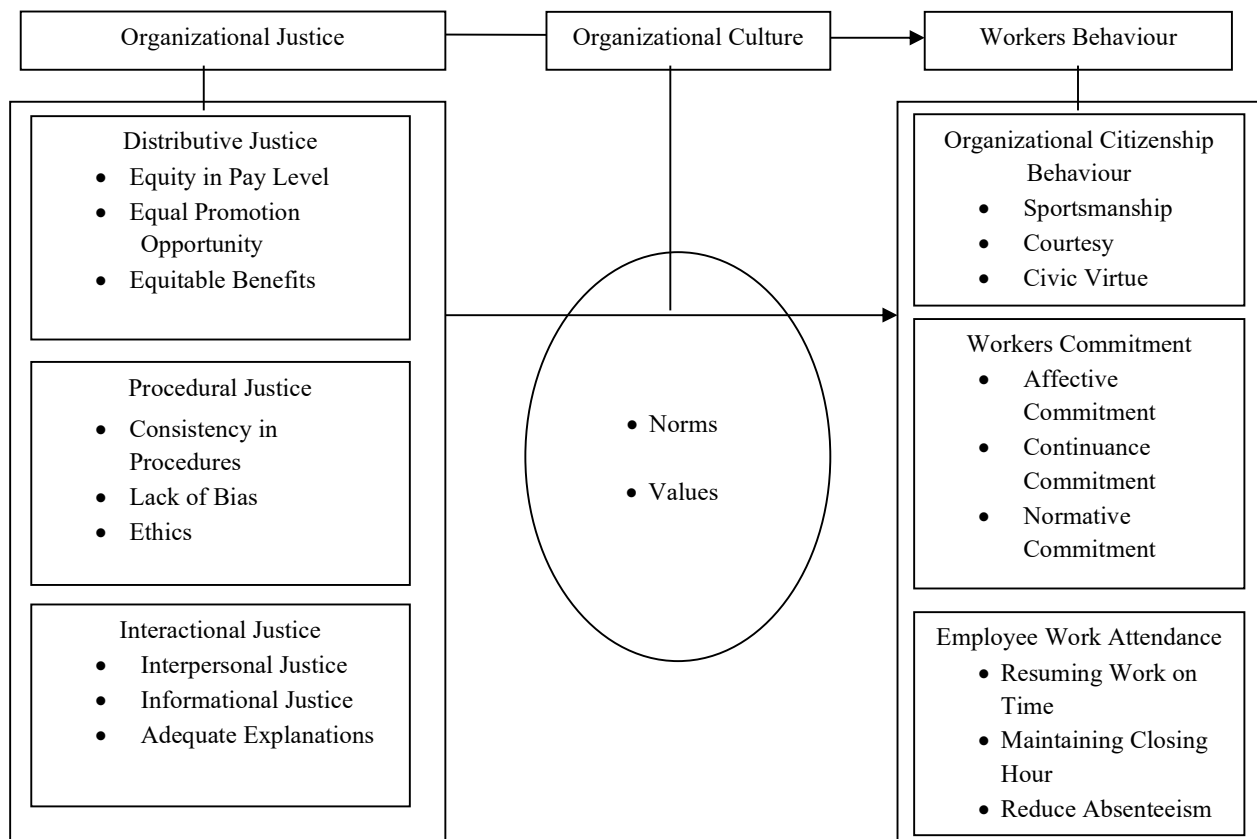
In view of these misbehaviours, many manufacturing companies are finding it difficult to achieve their set goals and objectives. This, some managers blame on workers, accusing them of not exhibiting good behaviours such as organizational citizenship behaviour, organizational commitment and regular work attendance. Workers on the other hand, blame the predicament on managers for not being fair at work. As a way of addressing the misbehaviour of workers, many managers have decided to closely monitor the behaviour of their workers especially their time of resuming work and closing period, as well as their level of commitment to work. In spite of the efforts made by these managers, many workers are yet to exhibit good behaviour at work.

The poor behaviour exhibited by workers in manufacturing companies could be attributed to lack of justice in their organization. Some employees often complaints over the way and manner in which management decisions and actions are taken in their organization while others feel that they are unfairly treated with respect to rewards such as promotion, fringe benefits, allowances, bonuses, incentives and recognition. Some workers also feel that they are not treated with dignity and respect during interactions with management and colleagues, and that they are not being given adequate information regarding the procedures and processes of allocating outcomes. It is

believed that organizational justice can help to encourage good behaviour among workers in manufacturing organizations in the south-south zone of Nigeria. Although there is no empirical evidence that justify this claim as empirical studies that examined the relationship between organizational justice and workers behaviour in manufacturing organizations in south-south Nigeria are absent or scanty. This has created a gap in knowledge which this study intends to fill.

### Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework of organizational justice and workers' behaviour of manufacturing companies with the moderating effect of organizational culture is shown in figure 1.1 below. The predictor variable is organizational justice (distributive justice, procedural justice and interactional justice) while the criterion variable is workers behaviour (organizational citizenship behaviour, workers commitment and employee work attendance). The moderating variable is organizational culture (norms and values).



**Fig.1.1:** Conceptual framework of the relationship between organizational justice and workers' behaviour with the moderating effect of organizational culture

**Sources:** Ajala (2015), Gomes et al (2015), Seyyed Javadein et al (2008) and Cagliyan et al (2017).

### Aim of the Study

The aim of this study was to examine the relationship between organizational justice and workers behaviour of manufacturing companies in south-south zone of Nigeria.

### **Significance of the Study**

This study would be of great importance to different persons, group of persons and organizations. First, the study would be useful to manufacturing companies in Nigeria especially those in the south-south geopolitical zone as it would sensitize them on how organizational justice can help to promote good behaviour among workers in their organization. The study would also broaden their knowledge on top executives on how distributive justice and procedural justice can help to motivate workers to exhibit organizational citizenship behaviour and commitment to the organization. Managers in manufacturing companies would benefit from this study as it would encourage them to treat every employee with respect and dignity during interactions. The study would also sensitize managers on how interactional justice can help to promote good behaviour among workers in their organization.

This study would be beneficial to top managers in manufacturing companies in south-south zone as it brings to their notice the extent to which organizational injustice contributes to poor attitudes and behaviour exhibited by workers and suggest ways in which they can solve this problem. The study would enable top level managers to see the need to ensure that there is justice in their organization. This would help to solve the attitudinal problem and misbehavior among workers in their organization. Manufacturing companies in other parts of Nigeria especially those whose employees are displaying poor attitude to work would find this study relevant as it would broaden their knowledge on how organizational justice can help to shape their attitudes positively and promote good behaviour among their workers.

This study would be relevant to students, academicians and researchers especially those who may intends to carry out further studies on organizational justice and workers behaviour or any other related topic as it would serve as a reference material for their studies. The study is also relevant in the sense that it would fill the vacuum created in empirical literature. To ensure wider application of its findings, efforts would be made to publish this study in academic journals and the internet.

### **Concept of Organizational Justice**

Organizational justice is a concept which was first introduced by Greenberg in 1987. Since then, the concept has attracted several definitions from researchers and management scholars. For instance, Paramanandam (2017) defined organizational justice as an overall perception of what is fair in the workplace. Similarly, Rahman et al (2016) conceptualized organizational justice as the perception of employees regarding fairness in organization. Choi (2010) described organizational justice as the fairness perception of employees regarding what they received, the processes of allocating outcomes and their interpersonal treatment in the organization. Cropanzano et al in Mendryk (2017) defined organizational justice as a positive perception of ethical and moral status of the organization's leaders along with their behaviour and practices. This perception translates into attitudes and behaviours of employees (Colquitt et al, in Mendryk, 2017).

Meanwhile, Greenberg in Rafei-Dehkordi et al (2013) described organizational justice as the fair and equitable behaviour of the organization with their employees. Greenberg in Cagliyan et al (2017) further defined organizational justice as employee's perceptions towards organization's behaviours, decisions and actions and how these impact on the employee's own attitudes and behaviours at work. It refers to employee's perception of fairness with respect to the organizational processes, interpersonal relationships (interaction) as well as the distribution of outcomes (Biswas et al, 2013). Cropanzano and Greenberg in Ali and Jan (2012) posited that organizational justice is the overall fairness of the reward system of an organization and the perceived fairness of the actions of individuals responsible for implementing the rewards allocation. The rewards here refer

to salary, salary rise, promotion, fringe benefits, incentives and recognition (Cropanzano & Greenberg in Ali & Jan, 2012).

Organizational justice has become an important issue for debates in modern management. This is because it has a vital implication on employees and the organization (Greenberg, in Karim & Rehman, 2012). Akanbi and Ofoegbu (2013) stated that organizational justice is a basic requirement for the proper functioning of an organization. It is the key that holds the employees together and keeps them committed to the organization (Cagliyan et al, 2017). However, despite the importance of organizational justice in uniting workers together and increasing their level of commitment to the organization, treating employees fairly and creating an atmosphere of justice has remained a major challenge to human resource management in modern organizations (Cagliyan et al, 2017). This is why trade unions and judicial institutions came into existence to ensure the application of justice in the industrial setting (Cagliyan et al, 2017).

Managers in modern organizations need to ensure that there is justice in the organization. This is because employees' perception of organizational injustice has a negative implication on their work attitude and behaviour (Durrani et al, 2015). Alsalem and Alhajani (2007) noted that employees usually react to inequitable outcomes, lapses in the processes of distributing outcomes as well as unfair interpersonal interactions. To ensure that there is organizational justice, managers need to sensitize all employees on issues relating to outcomes allocations, the processes and procedures for allocating outcomes and interact with all employees in the same manner (Meyer & Smith, 2000). Meyer and Smith (2000) further stated that managers should periodically organize meetings with all the employees and give them the opportunity to express their opinions and grievances, and provide detailed explanations to them to help clarify issues and misunderstanding. This will help to shape employees' perceptions in such a way that they will perceive justice in the organization.

### **Concept of Workers Behaviour**

Worker's behaviour refers to an employee's reaction to a particular situation at the workplace (Juneja, 2015). Jaros (2007) defined worker's behaviour as an employee reaction towards certain decisions taken by management in an organization. Every employee behaves in certain way when they hear or feel that certain decisions have been taken by management or their supervisor. However, irrespective of the decision taken by company's management, employees own the organization the duty to behave in an ethical manner (Cohen-Charash & Spector, 2001). Each employee needs to use their own sense of moral to react to issues arising in an organization. If an employee behaves in a sensible manner, he or she will be appreciated and respected for putting on such behaviour.

Behaving in responsive and sensible manner requires the employee to adhere to the rules and regulations of the company and maintain healthy culture (Suliman in Khaleh & Naji, 2016). The employee is not expected to shout on fellow colleagues, spread fake news about their colleagues or criticize their superior unnecessarily. An employee cannot afford to be rude to his or her team members rather he or she is expected to be polite and speak calmly. The employee is also expected to exhibit organizational citizenship behaviour, report for work at the scheduled time, avoid absenteeism and improve his or her job performance. When an employee exhibits these behaviours, the company will appreciate his or her efforts, but where the reverse is the case, the employee will be described as putting up a negative attitude to work and will not be recognized (Organ, 2008).

Workers' behaviour in any organization is affected by a number of factors. One of such factors is the leadership behaviour. According to Boniface (2001), workers would not develop the feeling of

going to work when they have a boss who is very strict, a leader who do not stand by them, make them feel important, guide and help them in their daily work operations, and help them to upgrade their knowledge and acquire new skills. A good manager needs to inspire his or her subordinates and live by example. If a manager does not reach the office on time, the workers will be tempted to emulate such behaviour and report too late to work on a daily basis.

Another crucial factor influencing workers' behaviour in the workplace is the organizational culture. According to Turkey and Sengul (2014), workers are likely to exhibit a positive behaviour if they feel comfortable at the workplace. When the rules and regulations are consistently applied to everyone in the organization, and everyone is encouraged to follow the code of ethics and respect their bosses, there is bound to be a good behaviour from employees. However, workers are likely to display negative behaviours such as lateness to work, increased absenteeism, lack of job commitment and low productivity if they feel that the reporting systems are complicated and there is no transparency at all levels (Turkey & Sengul, 2014).

Job security is another crucial factor that affects workers' behaviour in the workplace. According to McQuerrey (2018), workers are likely to display a positive behavior at work when they are guarantee of their job security. On the other hand, workers will put up a negative behaviour at the workplace when they are not sure of their job security. Cooper (2019) added that job security is a key issue in every organization and the most important factor that influences workers' behaviour. He explains that workers will put in more efforts at the workplace if managers assure them of their job security. Once workers feel that there is job security, they will remain committed to the organization, demonstrate organizational citizenship behaviour and regularly report for work; but when workers feel that their job is not secured, they will exhibit negative behaviours at work such as increasing absenteeism, lateness to work, lack of commitment, dishonesty and deceitful in their approach to work.

### **Concept of Organizational Culture**

Organizational culture plays a crucial role in moderating the relationship between organizational justice and workers behaviour. According to Schein, in Setyaningrum (2017), culture is a dynamic phenomenon that surrounds our lives at all times, constantly being enforced and created by our interactions with others and shaped by leader behaviour, and a set of structures, routines, rules, and norms that guide and limit behaviour. Within an organization, culture refers to a system of meanings, values and beliefs that serve as reference to action and differentiates one organization from another (Mas'ud in Setyaningrum, 2017). Hofstede in Setyaningrum (2017) defined organizational culture as a collective programming of the mind that differentiates members of one organization from others. Purnama (2013) described organizational culture as the set of beliefs and values that exist in an organization for a long time and which influence workers' attitudes and behaviour.

Culture varies from one organization to another. However, when it comes to corporate character, the cultural dimensions vary from one organization to other. These dimensions according to Goffee and Jones (1998) include distance of power, masculinity versus femininity, individualism versus collectivism, uncertainty versus avoidance of certainty, monumentalism versus self-evasion, indulgence versus restraint, and long-term versus short-term orientation). Culture is important to business organizations; it plays a crucial role in the overall strategy of the organization. It provides the mechanism that institutionalizes the values of the organization and helps to create the impression that the organization will continue to things in certain way (Cornwall, 2011). Culture tends to socialize newly recruited employees with the values of the organization. It enables them to understand how they should act in their new job, how they should treat one another, how they should treat the customers, and how to fit in and be successful alongside with the organization. If

an organizational culture is established and managed properly, it would help to achieve organizational growth (Anders & Henric, 2015).

### **Empirical Review**

#### **Distributive Justice and Workers Behaviour**

The relationship between distributive justice and workers' behaviour is well documented in literature. According to Cropanzano, Bowen & Gilliland (2007), distributive justice has a great influence on workers' behaviour. He explains that when there is distributive justice in an organization, workers are likely to exhibit good work behaviour but where distributive justice is absent in the organization workers tends to display negative attitudes to work. Fuchs & Edwards (2012) supported this position when they stated that distributive justice has the potentials of instigating good work behaviour among workers. It can motivate workers to be punctual at work, increase their level of job commitment and work productivity.

Workers are likely to put up a good and impressive behaviour at work if there is distributive justice in the organization (Alsalem & Alhaiani, 2007). However, their attitudes to work will likely to change if they perceive that there is no distributive justice in the organization. Jawad et al (2012) stated that distributive justice occurs when there is a congruency of actual and expected outcomes. The outcomes include salary, pay rise, promotion, fringe benefits (bonuses and allowances), incentives and recognition (Hassan, 2002).

Employees expect certain outcomes based on their inputs (skills, experience, ability, time and efforts) to ensure that their organization achieve its set goals. If the allocation decisions are perceived to be fair, the employee will exhibit good work behaviours such as organizational citizenship behaviour and job commitment, but where the employee perceives the outcomes or allocation decisions to be unfair and unjust, he or she is likely to react negatively by increasing absenteeism, late coming, non-commitment to work and increased tendency to leave the organization (Hassan, 2002).

#### **Procedural Justice and Workers Behaviour**

Procedural justice has a great influence on workers' behaviour. According to Misuko (2012), procedural justice or injustice influences employees' attitudes and behaviour in the workplace. He explained that if an employee perceives the processes and procedures used in allocating rewards to be fair, he or she is likely to exhibit good work behaviour such as regular work attendance, job commitment, and organizational citizenship behaviours. On the other hand, the employee will display negative work behaviours (such as increased absenteeism, lateness to work, lack of job commitment, etc.) if he or she perceives bias and impartiality in the processes leading to the allocation of rewards. Cropanzano et al in Akanbi and Ofoegbu (2013) stated that if the process is perceived to be fair and just, employees show greater loyalty and more willingness to behave in an organization's best interest.

Procedural justice has the capacity of motivating workers towards exhibiting good behaviour at work. Folger & Konovsky in Ali and Jan (2012) argued that when an organization implement procedural justice, workers are likely to increase their level of commitment to work, reduce absenteeism and increase their productivity to ensure that the organization achieves its goals. Fuchs & Edwards (2012) noted that when an organization displays procedural justice, it gives the workers the feeling of regards and respects and this will make them to exhibit good behaviour in the workplace. Elovaino et al (2002) stated that procedural justice facilitates cognitive, affective and behavioural reactions in the workplace and enhances psychological well-being of employees with a feeling of satisfaction and morale booster. Kim and Maubourgue in Ajala (2015) posited that

fair processes lead to intellectual and emotional recognition which in turn create trust and commitment that build voluntary cooperation in strategy execution goals.

### **Interactional Justice and Workers Behaviour**

The relationship between interactional justice and workers' behaviour has been discussed in literature. According to Balassiano and Salles (2012), interactional justice motivates workers towards exhibiting good behaviour at work. They noted that employees' perception of interactional justice or injustice has crucial implications on their work behaviour. According to them, when employees perceive interactional justice in their organization, they will be satisfied and this will motivate them to put up a good behaviour at work such as displaying organizational citizenship behaviour and job commitment. But when they perceive interactional injustice in the organization, employees are likely to exhibit a negative behaviour in the workplace such as lateness to work, increased absenteeism, lack of job commitment, low productivity and increased tendency to leave the organization (Balassiano & Salles, 2012). Bies and Moag in Ajala (2015) identified some key attributes of interactional justice that can make an employee develops a perception of fair treatments and exhibit good behaviour at work. They include truthfulness, respect, propriety and justification. Rathore and Sen (2017) noted that when an employee perceives a fair interpersonal treatment in the organization, he or she becomes more committed to the organization, arrive at work early and increased his or her productivity.

### **Theoretical Review**

This study was anchored on equity theory which was developed by Adams in 1963. Other supporting theories include the social exchange theory, behavioural management theory, theory of reasoned action, and theory of planned behaviour. These theories are discussed in details below:

#### **Equity Theory**

The equity theory was developed by Adams in 1963. The major components of this theory are inputs and outcomes. According to Adams in Akanbi and Ofoegbu (2013), inputs are what an employee perceives as his or her contributions to the exchange, for which he or she expects a just return. Outcomes are the rewards an employee receives from the exchange which include pay and intrinsic satisfaction (Cohen & Greenberg, in Akanbi & Ofoegbu, 2013). The equity theory argues that social behaviour is influenced by beliefs that rewards allocation within the same level should be equitable i.e. outcomes should be distributed proportional to the contributions of employees in the same level. The theory further argues that an employee is satisfied when his or her input-outcome ratio is equal to the input-outcome ratio of others in comparison (Adams in Akanbi & Ofoegbu, 2013); while perceived inequity through this comparison feels unpleasant, and motivates employee to reduce those unpleasant feelings (Folger & Cropanzano, in Akanbi & Ofoegbu, 2013). The equity theory explains that an employee usually judges equity or inequity based on what he or she contributes to the organization and what he or she receives as outcomes in comparison to what his or her colleagues in the same level receive (Gichira, 2016). Here, what the employee contributes to the organization connotes the knowledge, experience, time, energy and efforts which he or she puts to ensure that the organization achieves its goals while the outcomes refer to the pay, benefits and recognition he or she receives for the contributions (Gichira, 2016). If what the employee receives from the organization is equitable with what his or her colleagues in the same level receive, then the employee will judge the organization to be fair but where the employee receives less of what his or her colleagues receive, the employee will judge the organization to be exhibiting injustice.

The equity theory tries to explain how employees compare what they receive (outcomes) with those of their colleagues having consider their inputs (knowledge, skills, experience, time and energy) and judge the degree of fairness or injustice in the organization (Karriker & Williams,

2009). Sometimes the comparison may be employees in the same department or organization, or those working in other similar organizations (Demirel & Yucel, 2014). Demirel and Yucel (2014) described the former as the perception of internal equity while the latter is referred to as external equity.

The equity theory describes how an employee views his or her colleagues in an organizational setting, assess his or her input-outcome ratio and compares this ratio with that of his or her colleagues to determine the level of fairness (Hassan, 2002; Ololube, 2016). If the employee perceives unequal input-outcome ratio between himself/herself and the referent colleagues, he or she will conclude that there is inequity in the organization's distribution of outcomes (Ololube, 2016). This will bring about the feeling of unfair treatment and exhibit behaviour that will help to correct the discrepancy in outcomes. Loi et al in Ponnu and Chuah (2010) stated that reacting behaviourally or psychologically is usually an attempt to rectify or correct the unjust situation. According to them, an employee who perceives unfair treatment or inequality in their organization may decide to change his or her behaviour by either decrease or increase his or her input or react psychologically to cause a change in the outcomes he or she receives.

Equity theory tends to explain why management should ensure that there is justice in their organization. The theory emphasizes that an employee will always compare his or her efforts and outcomes (pay, benefits and recognition) with the efforts and outcomes of their colleagues (Ponnu & Chuah, 2010). This result of this comparison will produce a perception of justice or injustice. The equity theory explains that if the comparison indicates that the efforts and outcomes are equal, the employee will be satisfied and exhibit a good behaviour by increasing his or her productivity and job commitment. However, the employee will be unsatisfied and behave negatively if he or she perceives that their colleagues work less and receive more outcomes (rewards) from the organization (Karriker & Williams, 2009). Berneth, et al (2007) argued that equity comes into play when an employee's comparison of input-outcome ratio with other employees is equal.

The equity theory is very useful in explaining the relationship between organizational justice and workers behaviour. The theory explains that employees will exhibit good behaviour at work if there is equity and justice in the organization. This implies that if workers are treated equally and fairly, they will behave sensibly at the workplace and put in more efforts and time to ensure that the organization achieves its set goals and objectives. But where workers are treated unfairly, they will put in less efforts and time to ensure that the organization does not realize its goals (Blakely et al, 2005).

Equity theory is developed to provide explanation on distributive justice and how employee judges the outcomes he or she receives in relation to his or her efforts. The theory explains that the way employee perceives justice in their organization influences their work behaviour. As Gichira (2016) rightly stated, employee reacts behaviourally by decreasing his or her inputs if he or she perceives the injustice in the organization. But where the employee perceives justice in the organization, he or she will react positively by exhibiting behaviour that will increase his or her input to ensure that the organization achieves its goals and survive. The theory believes that only justice, equity and fairness in the distribution of outcomes will guarantee positive behaviour among employees in an organization.

## **CONCLUSIONS/ RECOMMENDATIONS**

Based on the review, it was concluded that organizational justice has positive and significant influence on workers' behaviour in manufacturing companies in the south-south Nigeria.



Based on the conclusion, the following recommendations are made:

1. Managers in manufacturing companies in South-South Nigeria should treat all workers fairly and equitably as it would motivate employees to increase their level of commitment to the organization.
2. Managers in manufacturing companies in south-south Nigeria should reward employees based on their contributions toward organizational goals as this would promote distributive justice in their organization.
3. Top level managers in manufacturing companies in South-South Nigeria should provide equal pay, benefits and allowances to workers at the same grade level as this would promote
4. Managers in manufacturing companies in South-South Nigeria should apply the same procedures and processes in treating all workers at the same grade level as this would not only promote procedural justice in their organization but would also encourage workers to go beyond their prescribed role to perform some extra-role to ensure proper functioning of the organization.
5. Top managers in manufacturing companies in South-South Nigeria should apply professional ethics in dealing with all workers in their organization as any form of bias will ruin the efforts of the organization to get the best out of its workers.
6. Managers in manufacturing firms in South-South Nigeria should provide detailed explanations to all workers irrespective of their ethnic background, race or religion affiliations on issues that affect them as this would promote interactional justice in their organization.
7. Top managers in manufacturing companies in Nigeria should ensure that the information given to their subordinates on issues that affect them are truthful, accurate and realistic as this would promote interactional justice in their organization.
8. Finally, it is recommended that manufacturing companies in Nigeria especially those whose workers are behaving in a negative manner towards work should revisit their reward system, streamline their procedures to incorporate some elements of fairness into it and provide adequate explanation to their workforce on issues that affect them as this would help to restore workers' commitment to the organization and increase their productivity.

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