



Perceived Organisational Politics and Organisational Justice as Predictors of Work Performance among Support Staff of Joseph Sarwuan Tarka University Makurdi

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Abstract

This research explored how perceived organisational politics and justice predicts work performance among support staff at Joseph Sarwuan Tarka University, Makurdi. A cross-sectional survey design was employed, involving 322 support staff selected through proportionate sampling. Data were gathered using the perception of organisational politics scale, organisational justice scale, and the Individual Work Performance Questionnaire. Three hypotheses were tested, with the data analysed using descriptive statistics, inferential statistics, and both multiple linear and standard multiple regression analyses. Results from the first hypothesis indicated that organisational politics had a significant influence on work performance among the support staff [$R=.832$, $R^2=.693$, $F(3,318)=239.061$, $p<.01$]. The second hypothesis revealed that organisational justice significantly influenced work performance among the support staff [$R=.553$, $R^2=.306$, $F(3,318)=46.682$, $p<.01$]. Conversely, hypothesis three indicated that organisational politics and organisational justice, when considered together, did not significantly influence work performance among the support staff [$R=.790$, $R^2=.624$, $F(2,319)=264.367$, $p<.01$]. It was therefore recommended that there is an important need to promote transparent communication by enhancing communication channels to ensure transparency in decision-making processes. Also, government, public, and private sectors should develop and enforce policies that promote fairness, transparency, and equity in educational institutions.

Key words: Organisational justice; organisational politics; support staff; work performance

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1. Introduction

The work performance of employees has over the years been instrumental to the survival of universities. In every university across the globe, the general performance of staff especially the support staff depends on the culture of the university (Kremer et al., 2019). This explains why top management of universities ends up seeking different ways of improving their Organisational culture (Ogwuche et al., 2019). University education exerts direct influence on the productive capacities of a country and this largely determines the level of economic development and its ability to compete in the global economy. The said sustainable economic development is not possible without the contribution of a high-performing staff who serves as the bedrock of every university (Taylor et al., 2019).

Work performance is a multidimensional concept because it is determined by more than one form of behaviour and influenced by lots of determinants (Alromaihi et al., 2017). According to Armstrong and Taylor (2014), employee performance consists of two aspects namely the behavioural, which entails the process, and the outcome, which entails the result aspect. The behavioural aspect is what people do at work while the outcome aspect refers to the results of individual behaviours. Similarly, Robbins and Judge (2013) opined that three major types of behaviour constitute work performance namely; task performance, citizenship, and counter-productive performance. They defined task performance or in-role performance as the execution of duties and responsibilities that directly contribute to the delivery of quality services or administrative tasks. In contrast, organisational citizenship or contextual behaviour is described as actions that enhance the psychological environment of the organisation, such as voluntarily assisting others (Onah et al., 2019), supporting organisational goals, and treating colleagues with respect. The third type of employee behaviour is termed 'counter-productivity' and negative behaviour entails actions that actively damage the organisation which includes stealing, damaging company property, and behaving aggressively towards co-workers (Robbins & Judge, 2013).

Universities have an incontrovertible role in the development of every society (Duan et al., 2018). They are not only known for changing the pattern of society but also for providing visionary leadership and new policies to the government. Therefore, the importance of university education in any country, particularly in developing countries such as Nigeria cannot be overrated. The survival of universities in this competitive era depends on innovation, and this can be achieved with the help of a creative workforce (Kremer et al., 2019). Higher education institutions employ a diverse workforce comprising various professionals who undertake a wide array of tasks (PwC & AHEIA, 2016). Over the past three decades, global shifts in the higher education landscape have significantly influenced both the workforce and the nature of their work. Notably, there has been a shift in the composition of staff within higher education, with an increasing number and broader range of professional staff, alongside those employed in academic roles. These changes have been driven by factors such as heightened government pressures due to reduced funding and greater accountability, a growing number of students entering higher education, advancements in technology that enhance learning and teaching, rising expectations for innovative and job-ready graduates, and increased demands from accreditation and professional bodies, among other influences.

Universities are thus part of the larger academic delivery system that serves the fundamentals of research and education. In the two-way legacy process of knowledge exchange, research is the inception of lessons. In line with this essential research and teaching practice, Nigerian universities emphasise two core functions: the creation of knowledge and its dissemination (Yousefi & Abdullah, 2019). As the delivery standard of higher education changes according to the needs of globalization, it goes parallel with the responsibilities of university staff (Basarudin et al., 2016). University support staff is required to perform complex work such as creating a supportive environment where academics will conduct competitive research, and publications, fulfil teaching and supervision duties, execute research funding applications, and

attend to administrative tasks. In this atmosphere of increased demands and loads, non-academic staff has professed concerns regarding declining career commitment on the back of management-centric universities (Dorenkamp & Ruhle, 2019). With mounting loads and pressure, support staff find that their commitment and satisfaction at work have dipped (Jameel & Ahmad, 2020). An increased workload has been reported as a major stressor especially when earnest work is not given due recognition (Chinelo & Caleb, 2019). Despite the crucial role of support staff in human capital development and nation-building, their welfare and concern in tertiary institutions particularly the public universities appear to have been neglected and treated with disdain by the government at all levels in Nigeria (Kenny, 2018). The Nigerian government's neglect of the welfare and concerns of non-academic staff has led to ongoing discord and frequent confrontations between the federal government and these staff members. This dissatisfaction is evident in the recurrent strikes by various non-academic staff unions.

According to Aransi (2019), the federal government through its annual budgetary allocation accrued to the education sector 7.25% in 2009; 6.16% in 2011; 8.55% in 2013; 9.94% in 2014; 7.74% in 2015; 6.10% in 2016; 7.38% in 2017 and 7.03% in 2018. Further, According to Aidelunuoghene (2014) Nigeria in the year 2012 was ranked the least with 8.4% allocation to the education sector compared to other African countries like Ghana with 31%, Cote D'Ivoire (30%), Uganda (27%), Morocco (26.4%), South Africa (25.8%), Swaziland (24.6%) and Kenya (23%). Similarly, in the year 2020, a meagre 6.7% of the nation's annual budget was earmarked for the education sector (Budget Office of the Federation, 2020). These figures not only undermine the welfare of non-academic staff and the integrity of public universities but are also far from the 26% benchmark contribution to the education sector recommended by the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organisations (UNESCO). The bad precedent of a low level of succeeding federal and state government commitment towards public universities and non-academic staff leaves much to be desired and, unless nipped in the bud, will degenerate into worsening work performance among support staff of universities in Nigeria. The need for adequate funding and revitalization of public universities as well as welfare package commensurate with non-academic staff input in tertiary institutions remain pivotal for optimal job performance. The dissatisfaction with the issues surrounding their job may affect the overall job performance of support staff. Many factors, both psychological and organisational, have been associated with the performance of support staff in public universities (Kaya et al., 2016). One variable involved in the prediction of work performance is organisational politics. Over the years, the concept of organisational politics has become a subject of study by many scholars and practitioners within the field of psychology and management (Kaya et al., 2016).

Moreover, the interplay of politics is inevitable because of its applications in every part of organisational life; politics, wherever practiced, should be managed and handled with care, sincerity, and maturity before it escalates. In the university system, organisational politics can manifest as manoeuvring that negatively impacts job performance, leading to conflict, hostility, and discord within an unfriendly work environment. If not properly managed, this can result in reduced productivity. An organisation's success largely hinges on how its workforce interacts with other key factors of production, such as land, capital, and entrepreneurship. The presence of both formal and informal groups within an organisation naturally leads to the development of politics and solidarity within the institution (Sule et al., 2015). Given that organisations are social entities where employees, both individually and collectively, compete for valuable resources and power, it is unrealistic to expect the absence of politics. Employees frequently employ various strategies to secure advantages and pursue personal interests (Ogwuche, 2014). Both individuals and groups may become involved in office politics, which can be particularly detrimental when personal gains take precedence over organisational objectives (Attah, 2016). In the contemporary landscape, organisations are vital to human progress (Abbas & Awan, 2017). Consequently, it is crucial to achieve organisational goals both effectively and efficiently for the overall well-being of individuals and society (Kaya et al., 2016). Organisational politics is significant due to its

potential impact on various work outcomes, including job satisfaction, employee motivation, organisational commitment (Ogwuche et al., 2023), work performance, and organisational citizenship (Donald et al., 2016). While other work outcomes are also important, it is argued that in today's volatile work environment—marked by increased ambiguity in daily tasks and reduced job security—ensuring employee commitment is a significant challenge for both private and public universities (Nidhi & Prerna, 2015). One factor influencing work performance is the presence of organisational politics (Zhang et al., 2019). Organisational politics can negatively affect employees' job attitudes (Shahani et al., 2019). Employees' perceptions of politics can impact their views about their institution, colleagues, and mentors, thereby affecting their job satisfaction and work performance (Robb, 2012)

Perceived organisational politics are considered unhealthy for individuals as they may begin to face difficulties in their behaviours (Khan et al., 2020). Previous research (Ogwuche, 2020; Zhonghua & Chen, 2014) has reported that organisational politics negatively affects work performance. The perception of employees of organisational politics leads to different adverse outcomes, including decreased work performance. Other studies have also found a negative relationship between organisational politics and work performance (Yang, 2017; Bai et al., 2016). While previous studies have suggested that perceived organisational politics influenced both performance and organisational outcomes, its linkage relationships are not fully understood. Furthermore, prior studies highlighted that perceived organisational politics had a direct impact on work performance. However, this nexus is yet to be confirmed among the support staff of Joseph Sarwuan Tarka University Makurdi. Another likely predictor of work performance among support staff is organisational justice.

Organisational justice refers to the evaluation process of administrative decisions by employees in the frame of factors such as task distribution of employees, compliance with shifts, empowerment, wage levels, distribution of awards, experiencing fair economic and social working environments, and employees' perceptions of internal decision-making processes and how these decisions are shared with employees (Kaneshiro, 2018). Some scholars approach Organisational justice as comprising only distributive and procedural justice, while others regard interactional justice as a sub-dimensional aspect of distributive justice (Suliman & Kathairi, 2013). Yet other scholars see four factors, dividing interactional justice into the sub-dimensions of interpersonal and informational justice (Scott et al., 2015). More recently, some scholars have examined organisational justice as a whole (Ogwuche et al., 2019). According to Sert and colleagues (2014), enforcement of rules, policies, and procedures upon employees may create the perception of injustice/unfairness which may result in workplace problems. In the academic setting, employees evaluate justice in their workplace and respond to justice or injustice (Yaghoubi et al., 2019). In an injustice-free environment, the ability to accomplish goals (either personal or organisational) by using organisational resources proficiently leads to increased employee performance. People respond positively to their work-associated outcomes if they receive impartial treatment from their leaders (Cho, 2017).

Organisational justice is becoming one of the leading research subjects in the fields of organisational behaviour, work psychology, and human resource management (Cojuharenco & Patient, 2013). Employees are attentive to the sense of justice within their organisation, and their perceptions of organisational justice can significantly influence various aspects such as organisational commitment, job satisfaction, withdrawal behaviours, organisational citizenship, entrepreneurial activities, and overall trust in the organisation (Zhang et al., 2014; Ogwuche et al., 2023). Additionally, organisational justice is a key internal factor influencing the emotional responses, behaviours, and overall performance of human resources (Scott et al., 2015). However, previous studies have not explored how these variables interact specifically among support staff in public universities. Furthermore, the combined effect of organisational politics and organisational justice on work performance remains unexamined. Therefore, this study aims to

fill this gap by evaluating organisational justice and organisational politics as predictors of work performance among support staff. Further, the objectives of the study are as follows:

1. to assess the influence of organisational politics on work performance among the support staff of Joseph Sarwuan Tarka University, Makurdi;
2. to evaluate the influence of organisational justice on work performance among the support staff of Joseph Sarwuan Tarka University, Makurdi;
3. to explore the combined influence of organisational politics and organisational justice on work performance among the support staff of Joseph Sarwuan Tarka University, Makurdi.

The hypotheses guiding the study are:

1. organisational politics will have a significant influence on work performance among the support staff at Joseph Sarwuan Tarka University, Makurdi.
2. organisational justice will have a significant influence on work performance among the support staff at Joseph Sarwuan Tarka University, Makurdi.
3. organisational politics and organisational justice will interactively influence work performance among the support staff at Joseph Sarwuan Tarka University, Makurdi.

2. Methods

This study employed a cross-sectional survey design to examine organisational politics and organisational justice as predictors of work performance among support staff at Joseph Sarwuan Tarka University, Makurdi. The research was conducted at Joseph Sarwuan Tarka University, located in Makurdi, Benue State, Nigeria. It is one of the two premier institutions that started as a university of Agriculture, established in 1988. It succeeded the Makurdi Campus of the University of Jos (established in 1984), which in turn had succeeded the former University of Technology, Makurdi (established in 1980). The population in this study is the entire support staff of Joseph Sarwuan Tarka University Makurdi. This includes all individuals who are employed in a support staff role at the university, regardless of their department or position.

2.1. Participants

Table 1. The summary table below provides the demographic characteristics of the sample population in this study

Variables	Category	N	%
Gender	Male	171	53.1%
	Female	151	47.8%
Age Distribution	20-26 years	159	49.4%
	34-40 years	105	33.5%
	42-47 years	58	18.0%
Ethnicity	Idoma	133	41.3%
	Tiv	115	36.6%
	Others	74	23.0%
Religion	Christian	189	59.6%
	Islam	117	36.3%
	Others	16	5.0%
Educational status	BSc/HND	243	76.4%
	MSc/PhD	71	22.0%
	NCE/ND	8	3.4%
Marital status	Married	191	59.3%
	Singles	60	19.5%
	Separated	71	22.0%

Duration of work	1-10 years	278	86.3%
	11-20 years	32	10.8%
	Above 20 years	12	4.6%

2.2. Sampling

This study used the proportionate sampling technique in drawing the actual sample for the study. Thus, the respondents were sampled in proportion to their original population in every unit/department. The proportionate distribution is shown below:

Clinic	$\frac{102 \times 322}{1991} = 16.50 \approx 17$
Library	$\frac{270 \times 322}{1991} = 43.66 \approx 44$
Registry	$\frac{158 \times 322}{1991} = 25.55 \approx 26$
Bursary	$\frac{194 \times 322}{1991} = 31.38 \approx 31$
ICT	$\frac{101 \times 322}{1991} = 16.33 \approx 16$
Security	$\frac{256 \times 322}{1991} = 41.40 \approx 41$
Admin	$\frac{121 \times 322}{1991} = 19.57 \approx 20$
Departments	$\frac{347 \times 322}{1991} = 56.12 \approx 56$
PG School	$\frac{143 \times 322}{1991} = 23.13 \approx 23$
Maintenance	$\frac{92 \times 322}{1991} = 14.88 \approx 15$
Other unit	$\frac{207 \times 322}{1991} = 33.48 \approx 33$

Thus, the sample as summed above was 322 respondents.

2.3. Instruments

The Organisational Politics Perception Scale: The Perception of Organisational Politics Scale, developed by Kacmar and Carlson (1997), was used to measure organisational politics. The scale comprises three dimensions: General Political Behaviour for items (1 & 2), Go Along to Get Along for items (3-9), and Pay and Promotion Policies for items (10-15). The reliability coefficients for the overall scale and its dimensions were reported to be above .70.

Organisational Justice Scale: Organisational justice was measured using the Organisational Justice Scale developed by Castano and Garcia-Izquierdo (2018). The 12-item scale is measured using a format of 5 (strongly agree) to 1 (strongly disagree). The scale has a reliability coefficient of .923 and measures three dimensions of workplace justice; Distributive Justice (items 1-4, $\alpha=.865$), Procedural Justice (items 5-8, $\alpha=.929$), and Interactional Justice (items 9-12, $\alpha=.903$).

Work Performance Questionnaire: Work performance was assessed using the Individual Work Performance Questionnaire, developed by Koopmans, Bernaards, Hildebrandt, Van-Buuren, Van-der Beek, and De-Vet (2013). This 47-item questionnaire is rated on a 5-point scale, ranging from 1 (Always) to 5 (Never). It consists of four dimensions: Task Performance (items 1-

13), Contextual Performance (items 14-29), Adaptive Performance (items 30-37), and Counterproductive Work Behaviour (items 38-47). Reported Cronbach's alpha values were as follows: Task Performance ($\alpha = .71$), Contextual Performance ($\alpha = .75$), Adaptive Performance ($\alpha = .63$), and Counterproductive Work Behaviour ($\alpha = .83$), with an overall scale reliability of .91 among employees of Dangote Cement Plc., Nigeria.

Pilot Study: To adopt the scale for the Nigerian sample, the instruments above were tested in a pilot study conducted among 60 support staff of the University of Mkar, Mkar. The result indicated that there were 46 (76.7%) male and 14 (23.3%) female participants. Their ages ranged from 30-65 years with a mean age of 45.80 years ($SD=12.52$). Among them, 17 (28.3%) were Tiv, 13 (21.7%) were Idoma, and 30 (50%) were of other ethnic groups. Considering their religion, 46 (76.7%) were Christians, 2 (3.3%) were Muslims, and 12 (20%) were practicing other religions. As for their educational qualifications, 17 (28.3%) had ND/NCE, 28(46.7%) had B.Sc/HND, and 15 (25%) had M.Sc/Ph.D. Concerning their marital status, 9 (15%) were single, 21 (35%) were married, 17(28.3%) were separated, and 13(21.7%) were divorced. In terms of their work seniority, 32 (53.3%) had worked for 1-10 years, 22 (36.7%) had worked for 11-20 years, and 6 (10%) had worked for over 20 years.

The results also showed that the perceived organisational politics scale had an overall alpha coefficient of .79. The individual dimensions had alpha coefficients of .85 for general political behaviour, .77 for go along to get along, and .67 for "pay and promotion policies." The item total correlation indicated that item 3 had the highest correlation of .93 while item 10 had the lowest correlation of .32. These scores are above the minimum figure of .30 as recommended by Nunnally and Bernstein (1994). The result also indicated that the organisational Justice Scale had an overall alpha coefficient of .72, while the dimensions had .68, .72, and .76 for the distributive justice, procedural justice, and interactive justice dimensions respectively. The item total correlation indicated that item 4 had the highest correlation of .98 while item 12 had the lowest correlation of .35. These scores are above the minimum figure of .30 as recommended by Nunnally and Bernstein (1994).

The results also showed that the work performance questionnaire had an overall alpha coefficient of .81. The reliability coefficients for the dimensions were as follows: Task Performance (.84), Contextual Performance (.73), Adaptive Performance (.81), and Counterproductive Work Behaviour (.81). The item total correlation indicated that item 39 had the highest correlation of .91, whereas items 40 and 42 had the lowest correlation of .30; these scores are above the minimum figure of .30 as recommended by Nunnally and Bernstein (1994).

2.4. Procedure

This research was carried out at Joseph Sarwuan Tarka University, Makurdi. The researcher acquired an introduction letter from the Head of the Psychology Department at Benue State University, Makurdi. This letter served to formally introduce the researcher to the management of Joseph Sarwuan Tarka University, Makurdi, where permission for the study was requested and obtained. In every department/unit of the university, the consent of the support staff was sought and if obtained, they were assured of the ethical considerations of the study. Those who consented were exposed to the questionnaires for data collection. The researcher recruited two research assistants to aid in the data collection process. The researcher prepared 350 copies of the questionnaire for administration, after the entire process, those questionnaire copies that were well filled in and submitted were considered for data analysis. Hence, the data collected in this study were analysed using descriptive and inferential statistics. The researcher used mean, standard deviation, frequencies, and simple percentages to describe the attributes of the respondents. On the other hand, multiple linear regressions were used to test hypotheses one and two while standard multiple regressions were used to test hypothesis three.

3. Results

Hypothesis 1: Organisational politics will have a significant influence on work performance among the support staff of Joseph Sarwuan Tarka University, Makurdi.

Table 2. Results of the multiple linear regression analysis indicating the influence of organisational politics on work performance among support staff at Joseph Sarwuan Tarka University, Makurdi

Variables	R	R ²	F	B	t	p
Constant	.832	.693	239.061		.000	.000
General Political Behaviour				.127	3.682	.000
Go along to get along				.712	17.454	.000
Pay and promotion policies				.100	2.669	.008

Note: p<.05 & p<.01

The results presented in Table 2 revealed that organisational politics and its dimensions significantly influence work performance among support staff at Joseph Sarwuan Tarka University, Makurdi [R=.832, R²=.693, F(3,318)=239.061, p<.01]. Organisational politics, encompassing general political behaviour, go along to get along, and pay and promotion policies, collectively accounted for 69.3% of the total variance observed in overall work performance among the support staff. Analysing the individual dimensions, the findings indicate that each dimension of organisational politics had a significant impact on work performance. Specifically, general political behaviour ($\beta = .127$, $t = 3.682$, $p < .01$), go along to get along ($\beta = .712$, $t = 17.454$, $p < .01$), and pay and promotion policies ($\beta = .100$, $t = 2.669$, $p < .01$) all had a statistically significant effect on work performance. Importantly, each of these dimensions—general political behaviour, go along to get along, and pay and promotion policies—significantly influenced the work performance of support staff at Joseph Sarwuan Tarka University, Makurdi. Consequently, hypothesis one is confirmed.

Hypothesis 2: Organisational justice will significantly influence work performance among support staff of Joseph Sarwuan Tarka University Makurdi

Table 3. Multiple linear regression analysis showing the influence of organisational justice on work performance among support staff of Joseph Sarwuan Tarka University Makurdi

Variables	R	R ²	F	β	t	P
Constant	.553	.306	46.682		.000	.000
Interactional Justice				-.281	-6.014	.000
Procedural Justice				.325	6.203	.000
Distributive Justice				-.515	-9.834	.000

Note: p<.05 & p<.01

Table 3 illustrates that organisational justice and its dimensions have a significant influence on work performance among support staff at Joseph Sarwuan Tarka University, Makurdi [R=.553, R²=.306, F(3,318)=46.682, p<.01]. The combined influence of Interactional Justice, Procedural Justice, and Distributive Justice accounted for 30.6% of the total variance in work

performance among these staff members. Detailed analysis revealed that all three dimensions of organisational justice significantly impact work performance. Specifically, Interactional Justice ($\beta=-.281, t=-6.014, p<.01$), Procedural Justice ($\beta=.325, t=6.203, p<.01$), and Distributive Justice ($\beta=-.515, t=-9.834, p<.01$) were found to have significant effects. Each dimension—interactional justice, procedural justice, and distributive justice—demonstrates a statistically significant influence on work performance among the support staff at Joseph Sarwuan Tarka University, Makurdi. Thus, hypothesis two is confirmed.

Hypothesis 3: Organisational politics and organisational justice will jointly influence work performance among support staff of Joseph Sarwuan Tarka University Makurdi.

Table 4. Multiple regression analysis showing the joint influence of organisational politics and organisational justice on work performance among support staff of Joseph Sarwuan Tarka University Makurdi

Variables	R	R ²	F	B	t	p
Constant	.790	.624	264.367		.000	.000
Organisational politics				.789	.22.503	.000
Organisational justice				-.002	-.048	.962

Note: $p<.05$ & $p<.01$

The results displayed in Table 4 indicate that organisational politics and justice together serve as significant predictors of work performance among the support staff at Joseph Sarwuan Tarka University, Makurdi. The analysis yielded [$R = .790, R^2 = .624$], with an F-value of 264.367 for (2,319) degrees of freedom, and the result is statistically significant at $p < .01$. Additionally, the value of $R=.790$ shows the level of relationship between work performance, organisational politics, and Organisational justice. $R^2=.624$ shows that organisational politics and organisational justice explain a 62.4% variance in work performance. Further, the result revealed that organisational politics positively influence work performance ($\beta=.789, t=22.503, p<.01$), whereas organisational justice negatively influences work performance ($\beta=-.002, t=-.048, p>.05$). Based on the above results, hence hypothesis three is rejected.

4. Discussion and conclusions

Based on the demographic characteristics, the gender distribution within the sample reveals a slight predominance of females 171(53.1%) over males 151(46.9%). The age distribution, a key demographic indicator, illustrates that the majority of participants fall within the age range of 20-26 years 159 (49.4%), followed by those aged 34-40 years 105 (32.6%) and 41-47 years 58 (18.0%). Ethnic diversity is evident in the sample, with the largest ethnic group being the Idoma 133 (41.3%), followed by the Tiv 115 (35.7%) and other ethnicities 74 (23.0%). The religious composition of the sample reveals a predominantly Christian population 189 (58.7%), followed by Islam 117 (36.3%) and other religions 16 (5.0%). Educational attainment, a crucial socio-economic indicator, demonstrates that the majority of participants hold a BSc/HND degree 243 (75.5%), while a smaller proportion has attained M.Sc/Ph.D. qualifications 71 (22.0%). The lower percentage of participants with NCE/ND qualifications 8 (2.5%) suggests a relatively higher level of educational attainment within the study population. Marital status distribution indicates that a considerable portion of participants are married 191 (59.3%), followed by single individuals 60 (18.6%) and separated individuals 71 (22.0%). The final demographic variable, duration of work, portrays a workforce primarily concentrated within the 1-10 years range 278 (86.3%), with smaller percentages in the 11-20 years 32 (9.9%) and above 20 years 12 (3.7%) range. This distribution informs about the

employment tenure of individuals within the community, emphasising the predominance of relatively newer entrants into the workforce.

The first hypothesis proposed that organisational politics comprising of general political behaviour, go along to get along, and pay and promotion policies would have a significant influence on work performance among support staff at Joseph Sarwuan Tarka University, Makurdi. The findings confirmed that organisational politics, including these three dimensions, significantly impacted the work performance of the support staff at the university. The result particularly shows that staffs who engage in organisational politics tend to be affected in how they perform at work. This is consistent with the explanation of the Control theory as used by Lord and Kernan (1989). The Control theory has multiple applications in understanding workplace dynamics related to cultural, commitment, and communication influences (Onah et al., 2020). Further, the theory allows lower-level employees the ability to change their behaviour engage in the occasion, and bypass any hazards which may come up (Femi, 2013). The relevance of this theory to the research study is that it explains the importance of feedback on workers' performance and also centers on feedback as a determinant of behaviour. This theory also relates to the role of feedback on employees' performance; thus when employees receive feedback on their behaviour, they are aware of the difference between their actual performance and expected performance for them to take corrective action where necessary. However, the finding also agrees with the result of many other studies conducted in this area. For instance, Oladejo et al. (2022) conducted a study and examined the effect of perceived organisational politics on the work performance of employees. They found out that perceived workplace politics relates to employee performance and concluded that perceived workplace politics affect employee performance. Also, Elameyi and Ikonne (2021) found out that the level of librarians' job performance in public university libraries in North-West, Nigeria was high on a scale of 4. The findings further revealed that organisational influence, personal influence, and job context influence were the prevalent organisational politics practiced among librarians in public universities and libraries in North-West, Nigeria. Abun et al. (2022) found that a moderate level of organisational politics can positively influence individual work performance, supporting the notion that organisational politics is not inherently negative or detrimental. Similarly, Ahmed et al. (2020) discovered that organisational politics significantly affects and is closely related to the performance of university teachers.

The second hypothesis which proposed that organisational justice would significantly influence work performance among the support staff at Joseph Sarwuan Tarka University, Makurdi. The results revealed that organisational justice, encompassing interactional justice, procedural justice, and distributive justice, had a statistically significant effect on the work performance of the support staff at the university. This result is consistent with the goal theory which proposes that a reward at the end of a task acts as a motivation for the performance of that said task. The reward, however, should be clearly stated. The end state can be the reward itself. It is proposed that to have an efficient goal, three components must exist; proximity, difficulty, specificity, and feedback (Femi, 2013). This finding aligns with other research on the topic. For example, Fasakin (2021) found that procedural, distributive, informational, and interactional justice were strong predictors of employee commitment. These various forms of justice were shown to have a positive effect on employee commitment, which subsequently influenced their work performance. On the other hand, Pakpahan et al. (2020) reported that only distributive and interactional justice had a meaningful impact on work performance, whereas procedural justice did not exhibit a significant effect. Their study also highlighted that work engagement has a significant effect on work performance. Additionally, Ha-Tran (2020) investigated the connections between organisational justice, employee satisfaction, and work performance, confirming that organisational justice positively affects job satisfaction and that job satisfaction further enhances work performance. The study also found a direct positive relationship between organisational justice and work performance. In their study, Orishede and Bello (2019) also concluded that fair treatment in workplaces leads to considerable performance among relative employees given the environmental context of Nigeria where tireless efforts are being made

by managements of banks to get the best out of their employees; each aiming to have an advantage over competitors. Further, Pracha et al. (2017) also designated that organisational justice is positively associated with work performance. Also, Kalay (2016) investigated the effects of procedural justice, and distributive justice, as well as interactional justice on work performance and found that, of the three aspects of organisational justice, distributive justice had a positive and significant effect on work performance. In contrast, procedural justice and interactional justice did not show a significant impact on work performance, indicating inconsistency in their effects.

Hypothesis three suggested that organisational politics and justice would have a combined effect on work performance among support staff at Joseph Sarwuan Tarka University, Makurdi. However, the findings revealed that organisational politics and justice did not jointly predict work performance in this setting. This outcome diverges from findings in other studies, such as Ullah-Khan et al. (2020), which examined the mediating role of organisational politics in the relationship between organisational justice and teachers' performance. Their study found that organisational justice had a significant impact on teachers' performance, and organisational politics played a mediating role in this relationship. Similarly, Kaya et al. (2016) reported that organisational politics significantly affected perceived organisational justice and employees' intention to leave. Their study also found a significant joint effect of organisational politics and organisational justice on work performance, although the primary focus was on turnover intention rather than actual work performance.

5. Recommendations

For university administrators; it is important to promote transparent communication by enhancing communication channels to ensure transparency in decision-making processes. Further, university administrators should develop and implement fair and transparent policies for promotions and pay. They can address political behaviour by fostering a positive organisational culture that discourages negative political behaviours. As well as provide training programs to raise awareness about the impact of politics on the work environment.

Government or Public Sectors should develop and enforce policies that promote fairness, transparency, and equity in educational institutions. Regularly assess and audit universities to ensure compliance with these policies (Ogwuche et al., 2023). They invest in employee well-being by allocating resources to support employee well-being programs, including mental health initiatives and work-life balance policies. As well as establish mechanisms for holding universities accountable for maintaining a fair and just work environment.

Encourage universities to adopt best practices in organisational justice. Thus, individuals specifically (support staff and non-support staff) should advocate for fairness appropriately. They speak up against unfair practices and advocate for transparent and fair organisational policies. This will encourage a culture of openness and collaboration within the workplace. All staff themselves should invest in continuous professional development to enhance skills and increase opportunities for career advancement (Onah et al., 2019). This can be done when they stay informed about organisational policies and are proactive in seeking clarification when needed.

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