

# **The Impact of Interactional Justice on Employees' Job Performance and Assisting Behaviour**

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*Although a growing body of work has focused on the effect of organisational justice and employee outcomes, such as job performance and OCB, little attention has been paid to the mechanisms underlying this effect. Drawing on social exchange theory, the study focused on the effects of interactional justice on job performance and assisting behaviour occur via social exchange. The data were collected from two sectors (telecommunication and banking), with 499 responses being from telecommunication sector. Generally, the findings of the study showed that the interactional justice was significantly related to job performance and assisting behaviour via social exchange. Support was also found for the moderating effect of ethical leadership, with the pattern of results showing that the relationship between interactional justice and social exchange with supervisor.*

*Keywords: interactional justice, social exchange, job performance and assisting behaviour, ethical leadership*

## **INTRODUCTION**

*“Justice is the set and constant purpose, which gives every man his due”.*

Marcus Tullius Cicero

The above quote highlights the importance of justice for individuals in their everyday lives. Consequently, organisational justice has witnessed a flurry of research attention in organisational behaviour, industrial-organisational psychology, and human resource management (e.g., Colquitt, Conlon, Wesson, Porter & Ng, 2001; Latham & Pinder, 2005; O'Reilly, 1991). “Research on organisational justice has been guided by the notion that employees who believe they are treated fairly will be favourably disposed toward the organisation and engage in prosocial behaviour on behalf of the organisation” (Barling & Phillips, 1993, p. 649). The term justice refers to “oughtness” or “righteousness” (Colquitt, Conlon, Wesson, Porter, & Ng, 2001: p. 425), while organisational justice refers to the fairness of social interactions, procedures and outcomes in the workplace (Greenberg, 1990b; Konovsky, 2000; Moorman, 1991).

Organisational justice is a multidimensional construct and can be assessed along three dimensions: distributive, procedural and interactional (Moorman, 1991; Niehoff and Moorman, 1993; Cohen-Charash & Spector, 2001; Wang, Liao, Xia & Chang., 2010; Colquitt et al., 2001). Distributive justice reflects the fairness of outcomes and resources among group members (Cohen-Charash & Spector, 2001). Procedural justice reflects the fairness of decision-making procedures and is judged by evaluating if the procedure is

correct, unbiased, consistent and accurate (Leventhal, 1980). Interactional justice refers to the fairness of the application or implementation of those procedures (Bies & Moag, 1986). This research focuses on interactional justice rather than comparing strengths or weaknesses of either sub- dimension (i.e., interpersonal and informational justice) and examines organisational justice along three dimensions, including distributive, procedural and interactional justice. These three justice dimensions have been related to a number of attitudinal and behavioural outcomes, such as: job satisfaction (Cohen-Charash & Spector 2001; Colquitt et al., 2013); organisational commitment (Konovsky & Cropanzano, 1991); trust (Folger & Konovsky, 1989; Konovsky & Cropanzano, 1991; Konovsky & Pugh, 1994); turnover intentions (Masterson et al., 2000); counterproductive work behaviours (Cohen-Charash & Spector 2001; Colquitt et al., 2013); performance (Colquitt et al., 2001; Cohen-Charash & Spector 2001; Skitka et al., 2003; Viswesvaran & Ones, 2002; Colquitt et al., 2013); and OCB (Cropanzano & Rupp, 2008; Cropanzano, Rupp, et al., 2001).

Despite the extensive body of research on organisational justice, a number of important issues remain unaddressed. First, even though a substantial number of empirical studies have examined the effect of one or two types of justice (i.e., distributive, procedural, interactional) and two foci of justice sources (i.e. organisation & supervisor) on work outcomes (e.g., Byrne, 1999; Cohen-Charash & Spector, 2001; Cropanzano, Prehar & Chen, 2002; Malatesta & Byrne, 1997; Masterson, Lewis, Goldman, & Taylor, 2000; Rupp & Cropanzano, 2002; Liao & Rupp, 2005; Cheng, 2014), we are still not clear about how the interactional justice affect job performance and OCB, especially assisting behaviour, a key dimension of OCB (Colquitt, 2001; Katz & Kahn, 1966; Wang et al., 2010). Assisting behaviour is a robust predictor of group and organisational performance (Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Paine, & Bachrach, 2000), as it includes actions by which employees positively affect others (Flynn, 2006; LePine & Van Dyne, 2001; Settoon & Mossholder, 2002; Mossholder, Richardson & Settoon, 2011). Thus, the current study addresses this limitation by examining the link between interactional justice and the work outcomes of job performance and assisting behaviour. This examination would allow a more in-depth understanding of similarities and differences between the effects of different justice dimensions (Olkkonen & Lipponen, 2006; Colquitt et al., 2013; Rupp, Shapiro, Folger, Skarlicki & Shao, 2014). Thus, by drawing on social exchange theory (SET: Blau, 1964), this research posits social exchange with supervisor as sequential mechanisms through which interactional justice relate to job performance and assisting behavior.

Second, over the last decade there has been an exponential increase in the use of social exchange theory to account for the effects of organisational justice (Konovsky & Pugh, 1994; Colquitt, 2008; Cropanzano & Rupp, 2008; Masterson, Lewis, Goldman, & Taylor, 2000; Rupp & Cropanzano, 2002; Aryee et al., 2002; Karriker & Williams, 2009).

Third, although a paucity of prior research has examined boundary conditions of the much-documented effects of organisational justice, leadership-related factors have yet to be examined as boundary conditions in this stream of research. This is surprising, given the centrality of leaders in shaping employees' experience of work. (Collins & Mossholder, 2014; Lee & Wei, 2017). (De Cremer, van Knippenberg, van Knippenberg, Mullenders, & Stinglhamber, 2005; Lee & Wei, 2017; van Knippenberg, De Cremer, & van Knippenberg, 2007). As van Knippenberg et al., (2007) observed, characteristics of the leader may have implications for the effects of organisational justice.

Ethical leadership is considered a key predictor affecting employees' moral attitude and behaviour in organisations (Mo & Shi, 2017; Mayer, Aquino, Greenbaum & Kuenzi, 2012; Brown, Treviño & Harrison, 2005). Xu, Loi and Ngo (2016) recently suggest that organisational justice perceptions and ethical leadership are underpinned by a set of ethical values that affect leaders' actions and increase or decrease organisational outcomes. In line with this notion, research has focused mainly on the role of leadership competence and improving justice perceptions (e.g., Mo & Shi, 2017; Xu, Lio Ngo, 2016; Zoghbi-Manrique-de-Lara & Suárez-Acosta, 2014).

The study contributes to the justice and leadership literatures in several ways. First, this study contributes to the justice literature by examining the theoretical perspectives (i.e., social exchange) to explicate the relationship between interactional justice and workplace outcomes (i.e., job performance and assisting behaviour). Second, this research contributes to organisational justice and leadership literatures by

examining the moderating role played by ethical leadership in the mediating chain connecting interactional justice to job performance and assisting behaviour. Van Knippenberg and his colleagues urged justice scholars to integrate insights of justice with leadership (van Knippenberg & Hogg, 2003b; van Knippenberg et al., 2007). This integration is particularly important, as ethical leaders are the most important moral agents to influence subordinates' behaviours and attitudes (Brown & Treviño, 2006). Thus, this study answers this call by examining how ethical leadership style at the team level moderates the relationship between organisational justice dimensions and employees' job performance and assisting behaviour. The current study addresses this issue by focusing clearly on the link between interactional justice dimensions and outcomes (i.e. job performance and assisting behaviour).

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **Organisational Justice and Its Dimensions**

James (1993) and Campbell & Finch (2004) describe organisational justice as the individual's and group's perception of fair treatment received from their organisation and their behavioural reaction to those perceptions. A running theme in the varied definitions of organisation justice is the notion of fairness of the treatment received from an organisation and its representatives.

To decide if an event or action is fair, people refer to a number of criteria. These criteria are called justice rules (e.g., Leventhal, 1980). If the action, outcome, or event matched these rules, then the event can be judged as fair, but if the event did not match the justice rules, and specifically, if hurt has been done, the event is judged to be unfair. The judgment of fairness is often made through the use of heuristic processes, rather than effortful considerations. For example, individuals are more likely to judge an event or outcome as fair when they are in a good mood as opposed to when they are in a bad one. Similarly, individuals tend to judge an event or outcome as fair depending on its benefits and their self-interest (Cropanzano, Rupp, Thornton & Shao, 2016). The concept of justice has witnessed much research activity in the social sciences over the last three decades (Colquitt, 2001). Initially, justice research focused on the degree to which outcomes were decided according to justice rules, which was referred to as distributive justice (Adams, 1965; Leventhal, 1976). Distributive justice is promoted when outcomes are based on certain equality criteria. Later, attention turned to the degree to which decision-making processes were conducted according to just principles, termed procedural justice (Leventhal, 1980; Thibaut & Walker, 1975). Procedural justice is promoted during decision-making processes (Thibaut & Walker, 1975) or by accordance with criteria of fair process, such as accuracy, consistency, lack of bias, ethicality, correct ability, and so on (Leventhal, 1980; Leventhal et al., 1980). An additional conceptualization focusing on interactional justice emerged (Bies & Moag, 1986). Interactional justice is focused on the interpersonal side of organisational practices, especially the interpersonal treatment and communications by top management to employees. While overall justice reflects a complete evaluation of an individual's perceptions of fairness, based on both personal experiences and the experiences of others (Ambrose & Schminke, 2009). In the last 20 years, justice research has showed that distributive, procedural, and interactional justice lead to an overall perception of justice. This is because justice is often defined as an individuals' perceptions of the fairness of outcome, procedure, and interaction measured together (Ambrose & Schminke, 2009; Ambrose, Wo & Griffith, 2015; Holtz & Harold, 2009; Rupp et al., 2014).

### **The Effects of Justice: Job Performance and Organisational Citizenship Behaviour (OCB)**

As the primary objective of this study is to examine the effect of organisational justice dimensions on job performance and assisting behaviour, it is worth highlighting the importance of this examination. The rationale behind the choice of these two outcomes is that job performance and OCB are the main organisational outcomes resulting from justice in the workplace, which have considerable explanatory power in explaining employees' behaviour and attitudes (Colquitt et al., 2013; Greenberg & Colquitt, 2014).

### *Job Performance*

Over the last two decades, the concept of job performance in organisational behaviour research has received considerable attention. Traditionally, job performance was concerned by evaluating the capability of employees to do the required tasks and responsibilities that were stated in their job description (Griffin, Neal & Parker, 2007). Scholars have agreed that performance should be viewed as a multi-dimensional construct containing two distinctive aspects: behaviour and outcomes (Campbell, 1990). Campbell (1990) defined job performance as an individual-level variable, or action performed by single person. This distinguishes it from more encompassing concepts such as organisational performance, which is a higher-level variable. Furthermore, Campbell identified the differences between performance and outcomes as the main feature of conceptualization of job performance that help explain its meaning.

### **Organisational Citizenship Behaviour**

Many terms have been used to describe OCBs, including prosocial organisational behaviour (Brief & Motowidlo, 1986); contextual performance (Borman & Motowidlo, 1993), extra-role behaviours (Van Dyne & Cummings, 1990; Organ, Podsakoff & MacKenzie, 2006) and organisational spontaneity (George & Brief, 1992); OCB was conceptualised as a special type of workplace behaviour and defined by Organ (1988,p.4) as “individual behaviour that is discretionary, not directly or explicitly recognised by the formal reward system, and that in the aggregate promotes the effective functioning of the organisation”. This definition emphasises three elements of OCB: first, this behaviour is voluntary and discretionary (i.e., it is neither a given responsibility nor part of individual’s formal duties); second, the benefits of this behaviour have organisational facets which can promote effective performance, and third, these behaviours are not directly rewarded (Cohen and Kol, 2004). Williams and Anderson (1991), divided OCB into two types: (1) OCBI refers to behaviours that directly benefits particular individuals in the organisation, like courtesy and altruism (2) OCBO refers to behaviours that focus on benefiting the organisation as a whole, like conscientiousness, sportsmanship and civic virtue.

This study focuses on one specific dimension of OCBI, assisting behaviour. Assisting behaviours are actions directed at other employees and therefore fall under the umbrella of OCBI. This has elsewhere been referred to as altruism or cooperation, and includes assistance provided directly to other co-workers (Organ, 1988; Chou & Stauffer, 2015; Mossholder, Richardson & Settoon, 2011). The rationale for choosing this dimension in the current study rather than OCB is consistent with previous literature on this topic which, as we saw, assisting behaviour includes actions by which employees positively affect others, many organisational studies have sought to examine its antecedents and consequences. (Flynn, 2006; LePine & Van Dyne, 2001; Settoon & Mossholder, 2002; Mossholder et al., 2011). Often organisations rely on assisting behaviours to deal with different aspects of work. assisting behaviour is a powerful predictor of group and organisational performance (Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Paine, & Bachrach, 2000), organisational justice (e.g., Aquino, 1995; Colquitt, et al, 2001) and has become more crucial for employees’ engagement (e.g., Boxall & Macky, 2009), effective work outcomes (e.g., Frenkel & Sanders, 2007), and human resource practices (Mossholder et al., 2011).

### *Assisting Behaviour (Extra Role Behaviour)*

As mentioned previously, this study focuses on examining help assisting behaviour. Ng and Van Dyne (2005:515p) define assisting behaviour as “voluntarily assisting other group members in work-related areas”. Assisting is a core construct in OCB, and is a dimension of altruism (as described above) that provides aid to specific individuals, including co-workers. Assisting behaviours are viewed as promotive, affiliative behaviours that are essentially cooperative in nature (Mossholder et al., 2011). Although assisting behaviour is considered as extra-role behaviour (not part of employees’ job requirements) (Colquitt et al., 2001), Van Dyne and LePine (1998) noted that assisting is not always an extra role behaviour, as some jobs require assisting (i.e., nursing requires caregiving). That is not, however, the case in this study, wherein ‘assisting others’ is not part of the job description and is therefore entirely discretionary.

## **Leadership Literature**

### *Leadership Construct*

This study focuses on the role of ethical leadership as a boundary condition of the relationship between interactional justice and the outcomes and also as an antecedent of justice perception. Thus, the next section presents an overview of the concept of ethical leadership and its main characteristic, and seeks to justify the choice of ethical Leadership. Finally, it compares ethical leadership with other leadership theories (namely, authentic leadership and transformational leadership).

### *The Concept of Ethical Leadership*

Ethical leadership is defined by Brown et al., (2005:120) as “the demonstration of normatively appropriate conduct through personal actions and interpersonal relationships and the promotion of such conduct to followers through two-way communication, reinforcement, and decision making”. This definition highlights two dimensions of ethical leadership (Brown & Mitchell, 2010; Brown & Treviño, 2006; Brown, Treviño & Harrison, 2005): (a) The moral personal dimension, which reflects the abilities of the ethical leader as a person, such as trustworthiness, fairness, honesty, self-control, approachability and their care for other people’s interests. Employees know their voice will be heard if they come to these individuals with concerns and problems. A moral person has a reputation for being fair and ethical. Finally, a moral person is seen as consistently moral in both their personal and professional life. (b) The moral manager dimension reflects how leaders use the tools and techniques of the leadership position to stimulate ethical conduct at the workplace, such as listening to subordinates, using rewards and punishments and considering collective ethics. Strong moral managers consider themselves to be role models at work. They create noticeable morals by promoting ethical conduct in their workers. In sum, moral managers engage in two-way communication with employees, both “walk the talk” and “talk the walk”, modelling their behaviour and organisational practices on the fulfilment of ethical standards (Brown & Mitchell, 2010).

Brown et al., (2005) highlighted the significant effect of three features of ethical leadership: an ethical model, treating individuals justly, and effectively managing morality. These unique characteristics of ethical leadership can make employees more motivated and can increase their work performance. Likewise, Xu, Loi and Ngo (2016) argue that the unique characteristics of ethical leadership make employees more enthusiastic and treat their leaders’ decisions and actions as originating from the organisation itself.

### *Justification of the Choice of Ethical Leadership*

As mentioned previously, ethics is closely related to justice, as justice is a part of morality and ethical standards (Greenberg & Colquitt, 2014). Research on ethics and justice share similar concerns; first, both literatures are concerned with how individual perceptions and beliefs influence organisational outcomes. Treviño and Weaver (2001) propose that there is a significant relationship between perceived overall fair treatment and ethical outcomes. Their study demonstrates that unethical reactions can appear in the workplace if employees believe that their organisation, in general, treats them unfairly. Second, justice plays a noticeable role in the philosophical treatment of ethics (Brown & Treviño, 2006). Leventhal (1980) argued that ethicality is one of the most significant factors in justice rules. Surprisingly, the concept of ethics remained separated from the justice literature for several decades, because justice has its roots in social psychology rather than philosophy (Colquitt & Zipay, 2015). Prior research, (Manrique-de- Lara & Suárez-Acosta, 2014) argued that interactional justice is the best predictor of ethical leadership. This is because it is the most reverent form of organisational justice as it reflects the degree to which employees are treated with respect and dignity by authority figures in the workplace (Bies & Moag, 1986).

## **CONCEPTUAL MODEL**

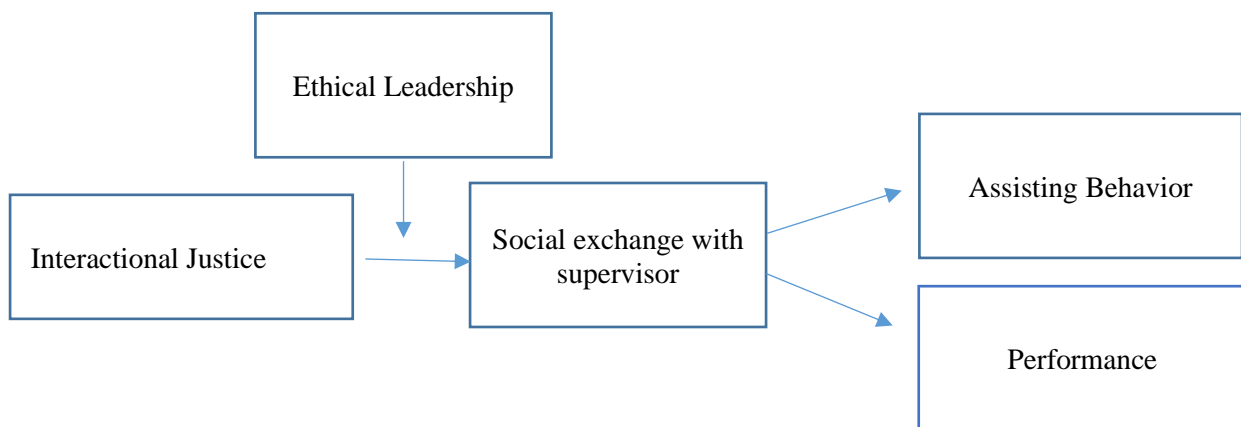
Figure 1 shows the mechanisms through which social exchange with a supervisor link organisational justice to work-related outcomes. In line with previous studies, social exchange (e.g., Aryee et al., 2002; Colquitt, 2008; Cropanzano Rupp, 2008; Cropanzano et al., 2002; Masterson, Lewis, Goldman, & Taylor, 2000; Moorman, 1991) has been examined as robust mediators of the relationship between interactional

justice and employee's behaviours. Supervisor's fair treatment and the resulting quality of supervisor-subordinate relationship motivates job performance and assisting behaviour (Chang & Johnson, 2010; He & Brown, 2013; Lee et al., 2015; Wang & Jiang, 2015; Zhang & Chen, 2013).

Therefore, In the research model employee perceptions of interactional justice indirectly relate to individual job performance and assisting behaviour through the mediating effects of social exchange with the supervisor. Furthermore, the study suggests that the ethical leadership at the team level to have a cross-level moderating effect on the relationship between interactional justice and social exchange with the supervisor. Justice is the core antecedent of ethical leadership. Ethical leaders are concerned about issues of fairness and justice (Brown & Treviño, 2006a; Mayer et al., 2012). If the leader is fair and just then they are able to treat all of their subordinates in a fair and equal way.

For the theoretical reason, interpersonal and informational justice are treated as similar constructs because they are considered to be social aspects of justice. Interpersonal and informational justice came from the same source (supervisor), which means there would be a rationale to combine them. Moreover, interpersonal and informational justice tend to be correlated (Cohen-Charash & Spector, 2001; Colquitt et al., 2001; Cropanzano et al., 2001) and several scholars have found that interpersonal and informational justice leads to the same effect (e.g., evaluation of authority, individual citizenship behaviour and withdrawal) (Cohen-Charash & Spector, 2001; Cropanzano et al., 2001). For the statistical reason, these two constructs were strongly correlated, (53.).

**FIGURE 1  
RESEARCH MODEL**



### **Interactional Justice and Social Exchange**

The first attempt to integrate social exchange and organisational justice emerged in Organ and Konovsky's (1989) study of the antecedents of organisational citizenship behaviour, which focused on the effect of justice in fostering a sense of trust amongst employees. Organ (1988), drawing on the work of Blau (1964), argued that justice is an essential part of the organisation and can be used to explain situations of an employee being a "good soldier". From this view, justice serves as a benefit that is positively related to the social exchange relationship, with that relationship positively influencing the reciprocative behaviour of citizenship.

As discussed earlier, a social exchange relationship refers to the degree to which the exchange relationship between two parties is characterised by respect, trust and mutual obligations (Blau, 1964). Employees build trust in their supervisors when they treated with politeness, respect and dignity and provided information about why procedures were used and why outcomes were distributed in a certain way (interactional justice), leading to the development of social exchange relationships with the supervisors.

Indeed, there is much empirical evidence supporting the effect of interactional justice perceptions on social exchange (e.g. Aryee et al., 2002; Colquitt, 2008; Cropanzano Rupp, 2008; Cropanzano et al., 2002; Masterson, Lewis, Goldman, & Taylor, 2000; Moorman, 1991). For example, Bajaj and Krishnan (2016)

found a positive impact of employees' interactional justice on social exchange with supervisors in numerous organisations in the U.S. Likewise, Masterson and her colleagues (2000) reported that employee's interactional justice perceptions led to positive relationships between employees and their supervisors (i.e., LMX). I anticipate a positive relationship between Interactional justice and social exchange with the supervisor.

*H1: Interactional justice is positively related to social exchange with the supervisor.*

### **The Moderating Role of Ethical Leadership**

Examining the individual-level model only may provide an incomplete picture as it does not capture sufficient richness (Hitt, Beamish, Jackson, & Mathieu, 2007). For instance, a large number of organisations have recently begun to use a team-focused work structure (i.e. employees nested within teams or units). Thus, it is argued that considering individual-level relationships and neglecting the influence of team-level variables on individual-level variables leads to lack of understanding.

As a growing number of organisations have adopted team-based work structures (Parker, 1994), leaders have become important in the organisations at both individual and team levels. Judge and Colquitt (2004; p 402) note that 'even the best procedure cannot overcome supervisors who forbid their employees from using it'. Unfortunately, there is scarcity of research that examines the effect of team-level leadership on individual level processes that engender work outcomes. Thus, this study examined cross-level ethical leadership as a boundary condition of the indirect effect of interactional justice on individual level outcomes, assisting behaviour and job performance (See Figure 1).

An ethical leader is a moral person who is fair, honest, trustworthy, building respect and two ways communications (Bedi, Alpaslan & Green, 2016; Brown & Treviño, 2006a; Brown et al., 2005). A leader high in ethical leadership is also viewed as a principled decision-maker who cares more about the best interests of employees and the organisation (Brown & Treviño, 2006a; Brown et al., 2005). All of these ethical characteristics can promote positive relationships between leader and subordinates (Walumbwa et al., 2011) and employees can strengthen their relationship with ethical leaders. In line with this reasoning, employees feel indebted to highly ethical leaders as they are fair, trustworthy and care about their needs.

In contrast, low ethical leadership suggests an absence of fair treatment, trust and honesty, which negatively impacts on the willingness of employees. Employees do not align in any way with the leader's values or strategies, or view their concept of self as being defined by their leader as a result of the unethical conduct seen in the organisational setting. Brown and Mitchell delineate unethical leadership "as behaviours conducted and decisions made by organisational leaders that are illegal and/or violate moral standards, and those that impose processes and structures that promote unethical conduct by followers" (Brown, Mitchell, 2010:588). Detert, Treviño, Burris and Andiappan (2007) stated that unethical leadership influences employee behaviour and their relationship with their leader. Thus, low levels of ethical leadership are not only damaging to leader-subordinate relationships, but it can damage the whole organisation (Brown and Mitchell, 2010). Applying this rationale to the role of the interactional justice in enhancing the social exchange with supervisor, the following was made:

*H2: The positive effect of interactional justice and social exchange with supervisor is stronger when ethical leadership is higher.*

### **Mediated Effects of Interactional Justice, Social Exchange, Job Performance and Assisting Behaviour**

Following from the previous hypotheses, the study examined that the effect of interactional justice on job performance and assisting behaviour is mediated by social exchange.

Several studies have reported that a social exchange relationship with the supervisor influences both job performance and organisational citizenship behaviour (OCB) (e.g., Early and Lind, 1987; Konovsky and Cropanzano, 1991; Lind et al., 1990; Masterson et al., 2000; Rupp and Cropanzano 2002; Burton et al., 2008; Masterson et al., 2000). Rupp and Cropanzano (2002) found that social exchange with supervisors is

strongly related to job performance and OCB. The relationship between justice and performance has been examined in a number of studies (e. g., Early and Lind, 1987; Konovsky and Cropanzano, 1991; Lind et al., 1990; Masterson et al., 2000), with findings revealing that justice and performance are related. Some scholars have founded a significant relationship between interactional justice and performance via LMX (Cropanzano et al., 2002; Masterson et al., 2000). Interactional justice is driven by the interpersonal relationship and communication between the employee and one's supervisor or other organisational member. Thus, if supervisors treat employees fairly, these employees will reciprocate through better performance.

The significant relationship between employees' organisational justice and assisting behaviour has been examined in a number of studies (e.g., Ehrhart 2004; Karriker and Williams 2009; Lavelle et al., 2009; Moorman 1991). Employees who feel they are treated fairly will show assisting behaviour and go beyond their job requirements. Although scholars of OCB have noted the importance of various types of justice, most frequently procedural justice, in examining assisting behaviour, there is still ambiguity on several issues related to the relationship between interactional justice and assisting behaviour. Scholars have highlighted the need to pay more attention to the relationship between assisting behaviour and organisational justice (Becton et al., 2008; Markoczy et al., 2009; Kabasakal et al., 2011; Bolino et al., 2013; Shin et al., 2015). Shin and his colleagues (2015) indicate the need for further research to determine how interactional, impact not the only OCB in general but specifically assisting behaviour.

Combining these arguments, I hypothesis the following:

*H3a: Interactional justice has a positive effect on job performance, mediated by social exchange with the supervisor.*

*H3b: Interactional justice has a positive effect on helping behaviour mediated by social exchange with the supervisor.*

### **Moderated Mediation Effects of Ethical Leadership on the Relationship Between Social Exchange and Outcomes (Job Performance and Assisting Behaviour)**

Based on the above proposed moderated mediation effects, the study also examined a moderated mediation model whereby ethical leadership moderates the relationship between social exchange and outcomes (i.e., job performance and assisting behaviour). The relationship between social exchange and both job performance and OCB (i.e., assisting behaviour) is well-known in the literature (Colquitt et al., 2013; Aryee et al., 2002; Aryee & Chay, 2001; Karriker & Williams, 2009; Konovsky & Pugh, 1994; Lavelle et al., 2009; Masterson et al., 2000; Moorman et al., 1998; Rupp & Cropanzano, 2002; Wayne et al., 2002; Wang, Liao, Xia & Chang, 2010; Asamani & Mensah, 2013; Chen & Jin, 2014). Social exchange includes the exchange of benefits, such as acceptance, support, trust, and assistance (Liao et al., 2010). As employees start to develop better relationships with their supervisor, they will perform well and be motivated to undertake additional responsibilities in order to continue the positive relationships they have with the supervisor.

*H4a: The positive effect of social exchange on job performance is stronger when ethical leadership is high as compared to low.*

*H4b: The positive effect of social exchange on assisting behaviour via stronger when ethical leadership is high as compared to low.*

Based on the above proposed mediation and moderation effects, the study also suggests a moderated mediation of ethical leadership on the relationship between employee's interactional justice and the outcomes (job performance and assisting behaviour) through social exchange. As explained previously, social exchange (Blau, 1964) theory has been used as explanatory frameworks to account for the effect of organisational justice on work outcomes, such as job performance and OCB. (e.g., Aryee et al., 2002; Aryee



& Chay, 2001; Karriker & Williams, 2009; Konovsky & Pugh, 1994; Lavelle et al., 2009; Masterson et al., 2000; Moorman et al., 1998; Rupp & Cropanzano, 2002; Wayne et al., 2002; Wang, Liao, Xia & Chang, 2010; Asamani & Mensah, 2013; Chen & Jin, 2014).

As previously discussed, highly ethical leaders convey their ethical expectations to subordinates through open two-way communications, listening to their employees (Brown et al., 2005). Furthermore, highly ethical leaders set ethical examples of how to do things using the right method in terms of fair outcome distribution, reward ethical behaviours and discipline unethical behaviours in the workplace (Xu et al., 2016). Ethical leadership emphasises enhancing interactional justice. As Loi et al., (2012) found, subordinates under highly ethical leaders perceive higher organisational justice. When employees develop trust in their leader based on ethical leadership behaviour, their perception of interactional justice will enhance and they will display positive attitudes towards their supervisor. Applying this rationale to the moderating effect of ethical leadership on the relationship between interactional justice and employees' outcomes (i.e., job performance and assisting behaviour) via social exchange with the supervisor, I make the following predictions:

***H5a:** The positive effect of interactional justice on employee job performance via social exchange with the supervisor is stronger when ethical leadership is high as compared to low.*

***H5b:** The positive effect of interactional justice on assisting behaviour via social exchange with the supervisor is stronger when ethical leadership is high as compared to low.*

## **METHOD**

### **Data Collection Method**

Data were collected by using a self-administrated questionnaire, which was completed by employees in seven organisations in Saudi Arabia at one time point. These participating organisations were located in Riyadh and operated in two different sectors: telecommunication and banking.

Concerning data access, in relation to the banking sector, the researcher visited the branch managers of the five banks (The Saudi British Bank (SABB), the Saudi American Bank (SAMBA), Arab national Bank, Alinma, and Alahili) in order to invite them to participate in this study. Access to the Telecom companies was facilitated by a personal contact (a regional manager in STC and Mobily) who introduced the researcher to the Directors of Human Resources of Telecom Companies. In the ensuing meetings in both sectors, the researcher explained the objectives of the study and described the contribution expected from each organisation if they wished to partake. A senior human resource manager in both telecom companies (13 in STC and 15 in Mobily) was nominated to randomly select the participating team members.

Once the logistics of the study execution were agreed, the questionnaires were distributed amongst participants by hand by the researcher. Attached to each questionnaire was an information sheet explaining the objectives of the study, assuring participants of the confidentiality of their answers, asking them for their participation consent, and clarifying that their participation was entirely voluntary and that they could withdraw of the study at any time. Participants were asked to seal their questionnaires in self-addressed envelopes provided by the researcher and to drop them in secured locked boxes only accessible by the researcher available in each location. Contact details of the researcher were also provided to all participants should they want to clarify any questions or withdraw participation.

### **Sample**

In total, 500 questionnaires were distributed to all full-time employees working as part of a team, 500 (52%) questionnaires were received but 1 blank questionnaire was excluded. This study involved 499 participants distributed across 43 teams and one team was excluded because of having just one participant. The number of team members per team varied between 2 and 8. 250 participants belonged to the banking sector (75.2%) and 199 respondents (25. %) were from telecommunication sector. The majority of the participants were male (59.9%), their average age was 30-39 years and their average job tenure was 3 years

and less. Attached to both team members' and supervisors' questionnaires was an information sheet explaining the objectives of the study, offering reassurance regarding the confidentiality of the answers, and informing respondents of the voluntary character of their participation and that they could withdraw from that study at any time. In order to match supervisor ratings to subordinate responses, the indication of their names (i.e., supervisors and their subordinates) was used. All completed questionnaires were returned in envelopes provided by the researcher to a locked box, only accessible to the researcher, located in the Human Resources Department in each company.

## **Measures**

### *Interactional Justice*

Interactional justice was formed by averaging the four items capturing interpersonal justice and the five items measuring informational justice (Colquitt et al., 2001). The merging of interactional justice scales was suggested by Cohen-Charash and Spector (2001), who argued that these scales were best used combined because interactional justice is considered to be related to interpersonal communication and behavioural reactions (i.e., cognitive and affective) between the direct supervisor or source of justice and the employees or the recipient of justice. As in this study the objective was not to conduct a fine-grained analysis of both interpersonal and informational justice types but instead to examine the effects of a more general construct, tapping into both aspects of workplace interaction, this approach was also adopted here. Response options ranged on a seven-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree to 7 = strongly agree). Sample items "Has (he/she) treated you in a polite manner?", and "Has (he/she) been candid in (his/her) communication with you? The Cronbach's alpha for this study was 0.92.

### *Social Exchange with the Supervisor*

Bernerth's Armenakis, Feild, Giles & Walker (2007) scale was used to measure social exchange relationships with the supervisor. The scale consists of 8 items, with response options using a seven-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree to 7 = strongly agree). Respondents were asked to indicate the extent to which the items characterised the quality of their exchange relationships with their supervisors. Sample items are: "My supervisor has made a significant investment in me," "The things I do on the job today will benefit my standing with my supervisor in the long run". The Cronbach's alpha for this study was .95.

Individuals with previous work experience may have preconceived ideas about the types of organisations for which they enjoy working. Therefore, I controlled for years of full-time work experience and organisations. Besides, I also controlled for gender, age and education, as the perception of justice may differ among men and women or the old and young, or those who are educated. Prior studies (Bott et al., 2003; Chen and Francesco, 2003; Jones and Schaubroeck, 2004; Hochwarter et al., 2004; Williams et al., 2002) indicated that personal attributes affect employee job performance and the perception of justice in the workplace. These were used to assess the effect of control variables on organisational justice employees' perceptions, as they might influence the perception of organisational justice through egotistic bias or self-interest (Cohen-Charash and Spector, 2001). Gender was coded as 1 for male and 0 for female. Age was coded as Under 30, 30-39, 40-49 and 50 – Above. Education was coded as 1 for High School- below, 2 for Diploma, 3 for undergraduate, 4 for Postgraduate). Tenure was coded as 1 for 3 years or less, 2 for 4-5 years, 3 for 6-10 years, 4 for 11-15 years, and 5 for More than 15 years. Organisations were coded 1 for SABB, 2 for SAMBA, 3 for Arab national Bank, 4 for Alinma, 5 for Alahili, 6 for STC and 7 for Mobily.

### *Individual Job Performance*

Supervisors were asked to rate the performance of their employees. Williams and Anderson's (1991) in-role behaviour scale (IRB) was used to capture individual job performance. The scale consisted of 7 items rated options ranged as the following: 1 (never), 2 (seldom), 3 (occasionally), 4 (often), or 5 (always/frequently). Sample items are '[employee name] fulfils the responsibilities specified in his/her job description', '[employee name] performs the tasks that are expected as part of the job', and '[employee name] meets performance expectations'. The Cronbach's alpha for this study was .83.

### *Assisting Behaviour*

Supervisors were also asked to rate the assisting behaviour of their employees. Van Dyne and LePine (1998) scale was used to measure assisting behaviour of the employees. The scale consisted of 7 items with response options as the following: 1 (never), 2 (seldom), 3 (occasionally), 4 (often), or 5 (always/frequently). Sample items are 'This particular employee/ co-worker volunteers to do things for this work group', 'this particular employee /co-worker helps orient new employees this group'. The Cronbach's alpha was .95.

### *Ethical Leadership*

Brown et al.'s (2005) scale was used to measure ethical leadership. The scale consists of 10 items, with response options using a five-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree). Sample items are 'He/she discusses business ethics or values with employees', 'He/she can be trusted' and 'He/she makes fair and balanced decisions. The Cronbach's alpha for this study was .96

As leadership can be conceptualised as a team-level variable with team members sharing the same perceptions of their leader's behaviour (Morgeson, DeRue, Karam, 2010), a direct consensus model was used to aggregate team members' individual responses at the team level (Chan, 1998).

### **Data Analysis**

First, the description of means, standard deviations, correlations and internal consistencies (Cronbach's alpha) between all variables was examined using IBM SPSS version 21.

Next, the distinctiveness of the variables was tested in MPLUS using a series of CFAs. Hypotheses were then tested using MSEM (multilevel structural equation modelling) in MPlus Version 7.3 (Muthén & Muthén, 2015). MPlus is a statistical modeling software that enables us to simultaneously conduct structural equation modelling and multilevel analysis (MPLUS team reference). A benefit of MPlus is testing mediation and moderation simultaneously and being able to include multiple moderators and mediators, which is highly relevant in this study. I adapted Stride, Gardner, Catley and Thomas's (2015) syntax codes to test these models, as these authors developed a number of syntax codes which are relevant to the models tested in this study. All individual variables were included at the within level, while the team level variables (i.e., ethical leadership) was included at the between level of analysis. The indirect effects (i.e., mediations) were calculated by multiplying the sequential effects under model constraints. In terms of the conditional indirect effects (moderation and moderated mediation), were calculated by adding the interaction term to the mediation at the mean, -1 and +1 SD. This method of assessing mediation has been proposed by Preacher, Zhang and Zyphur (2011). The interactional effect was plotted by using an Excel spreadsheet (Dawson, 2015).

### **RESULTS**

Table 1 Descriptive statistics and correlations Means, standard deviations, correlations and internal consistencies (Cronbach's alpha) between the measures from the study are reported in (Table.1) below.

**TABLE 1**  
**DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS, RELIABILITY ESTIMATES, AND INTERCORRELATIONS BETWEEN MEASURES OF THE VARIABLES**

No	Variable	M	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
1	Gender	0.74	0.43														
2	Age	1.76	0.68	-.15													
3	Education	2.21	0.92	.17**	-.37*												
4	Tenure	2.11	0.78	.17**	.33*	.14*											
5	Organisation	1.69	0.46	.38**	.14*	.08	.05										
6	Interaction al justice	4.20	0.82	.07	.26*	.12*	.10	.22*	.51*	.63*	(.92)						
7	Social exchange	4.16	0.80	.02	.38*	.17*	.15*	.17*	.47*	.59*	.74*	(.95)					
8	Job performance	3.16	0.59	-.08	.18*	.06	-.05	.07	.26*	.13*	.25*	.31**	.32**	(.83)			
9	Assisting behaviour	3.47	1.06	.40**	.08	.15*	.24*	.33*	.25*	.24*	.38*	.45**	.46**	.21*	(.95)		
10	Ethical leadership	4.25	0.82	.08	.03	.19*	.23*	.24*	.54*	.56*	.62*	.66**	.65**	.55*	.60*	.41*	(.96)

*Note.*  $n = 499$ . \*\* Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed). \* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed). Cronbach's alpha coefficients are in parentheses. Organisations from technology sector.

Table 1 presents the descriptive statistics and intercorrelations between the eighteen variables. Using Cohen's (1988) criteria in the interpretation of small ( $r = .10$  to  $.29$ ), medium ( $r = .30$  to  $.49$ ), and large ( $r = .50$  to  $1.0$ ) values to determine the magnitude of the strength of the intercorrelations among the variables.

The relationship between interactional justice and social exchange was significantly positive ( $r = .79$ ,  $p < .01$ ). In addition, the relationship between the relationship between interactional justice and job performance was positive ( $r = .29$ ,  $p < .01$ ). With regard to assisting behaviour, there was a positive relationship between assisting behaviour and interactional justice ( $r = .38$ ,  $p < .01$ ).

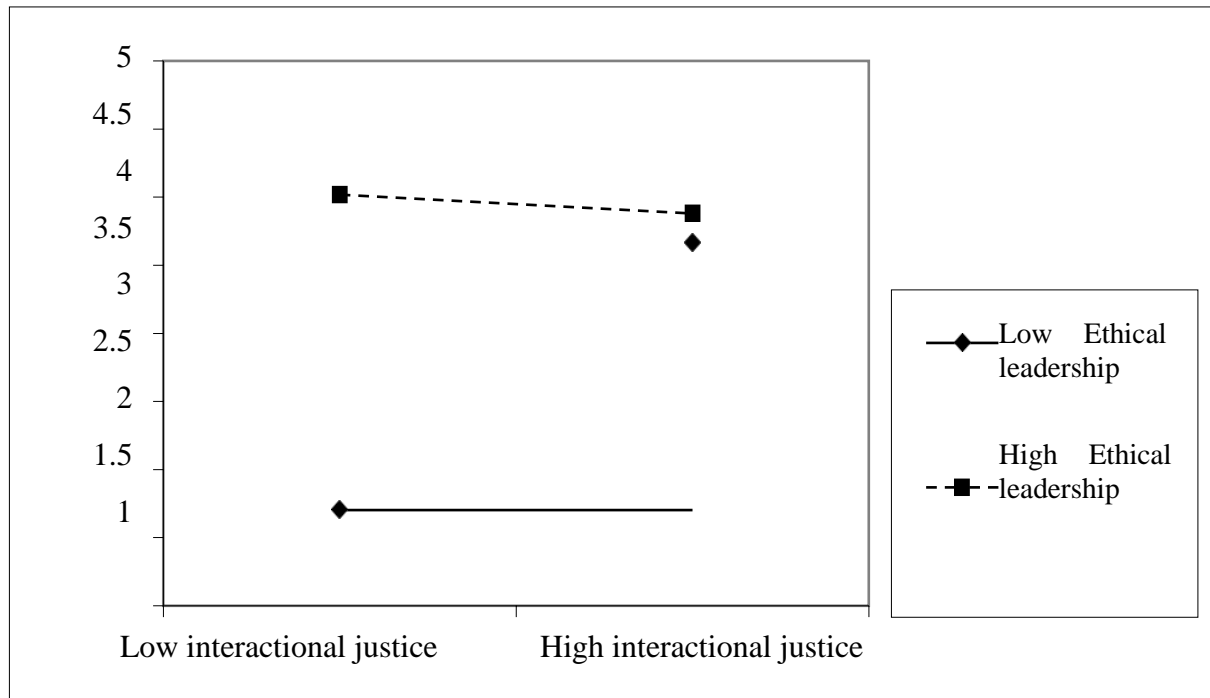
### Cross Level Analysis Moderation Effect (H2)

Hypothesis 2 suggests that ethical leadership moderates the relationship between interactional justice and social exchange with supervisor. As shown in Table 2, this interaction is significant ( $B = -.480$ ,  $SE = .111$ ,  $p < .001$ ,  $[-.765, -.298]$ ), simple slope tests show that the effect of interactional justice on social exchange was significant when ethical leadership was low ( $B = .604$ ,  $SE = .071$ ,  $p < .001$ ,  $[.421, .721]$ ) but not significant when ethical leadership was high ( $B = -.142$ ,  $SE = .166$ ,  $p = .392$ ,  $[-.571, .131]$ ). This result provides support for hypothesis 2 in the sense that it identifies an interaction effect. This interaction is shown in Figure 2.

**TABLE 2**  
**RESULTS OF CROSS-LEVEL MODERATION EFFECT OF ETHICAL LEADERSHIP ON THE**  
**RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN INTERACTIONAL JUSTICE SOCIAL**  
**EXCHANGE AND (HYPOTHESIS 2)**

No	Hypothesized model	Betas	SE	t	P value	95%CI lower	Upper
H5	Ethical leadership X interactional justice social exchange with supervisor (interaction) →	-.480	.111	-4.332	.000	-.765	-.298
	Ethical leadership X interactional justice Social exchange with supervisor- 1 SD (3.999) →	.604	.071	8.508	.000	.421	.721
	Ethical leadership X interactional justice social exchange M (4.253)	.482	.068	7.052	.000	.306	.595
	Ethical leadership X interactional justice social exchange +1 SD (5.555)	-.142	.166	-.856	.392	-.571	.131

**FIGURE2**  
**INTERACTION BETWEEN INTERACTIONAL JUSTICE AND ETHICAL LEADERSHIP ON**  
**SOCIAL EXCHANGE**



**DISCUSSION**

The results showed that the relationship between interactional justice and social exchange was moderated by team perceptions of ethical leadership. It also revealed that the social exchange with supervisor as a mediating mechanism for the relationships between interactional justice, and these outcomes (i.e. job performance and assisting behaviour), and the role played by the perceptions of ethical leadership in this mediation effect. The results of the direct effects between the interactional justice and social exchange demonstrate that the interactional justice was strongly and positively related to social exchange. The test for the moderating effect of ethical leadership on the relationship between interactional justice and social exchange revealed that this relationship becomes stronger when ethical leadership is low rather than high, and, although this shows that there is an interaction effect as expected, this effect follows a different pattern from what was originally hypothesised. As explained previously, this finding then suggests that, instead of an incremental effect, ethical leadership has a compensatory effect on the relationship between international justice and social exchange.

Additionally, the indirect effect of interactional justice on job performance via social exchange with supervisor was conditional on ethical leadership, although the pattern, reflecting the interaction effect described before, did not reflect the predicted pattern (the enhancement as a result of the indirect effect of interactional justice on job performance via social exchange with supervisor, which is moderated by ethical leadership), but instead showed that the effect was stronger when ethical leadership was low. In more detail, the effect of interactional justice on job performance via social exchange with supervisor was significant when ethical leadership was low, but not significant when ethical leadership was high. This relationship did not reflect the predicted pattern (the enhancement as a result of the indirect effect of interactional justice on job performance via social exchange with supervisor, which is moderated by ethical leadership). One possible interpretation is that Western people focus more on the rules of leadership, which is in contrast to Asian people, who give more consideration to the interpersonal relationship with their supervisor. As a

collective society, it can also be noted that in Saudi Arabia the influence of the social relationship with managers is much stronger than that in Western countries. obviously associated with one's individual manager (Cropanzano et al., 2002) and therefore more likely to influence social exchange. In addition, empirical studies show that social exchange mediates the relationship between each of the justice dimensions and different outcomes (e.g. Masterson et al., 2000; Rup and Cropanzano, 2002; Cropanzano, Prehar and Chen, 2002; Colquitt et al., 2001; Cohen-Charash and Spector, 2001; Aryee et al., 2002). Wang and his colleagues (2010) observe that interactional justice is positively related to social exchange with a supervisor, however, distributive and procedural justice tend to be more related to organisational commitment. Thus, this study adds to this literature by providing clear evidence for the higher relevance of procedural and interactional justice in predicting social exchange with supervisor.

Furthermore, the results of the mediation effects demonstrated that there was a significant relationship between interactional justice and the outcomes (i.e. job performance and assisting behaviour) via social exchange.

These results mirror existent literature. For example, Organ and Konovsky (1989) suggested that employees' perception of justice in their organisation is leading to the presence of OCBs in the workplace, since just treatment is expected to lead to an effective change in the employees' mindsets concerning their relationship with their supervisor. Likewise, the results of Asamani and Opoku Mensah's (2013) field study showed that organisational justice can influence employees' OCB differently. As they found that interactional justice was significantly related to OCB.

This study also builds upon and extends work by Masterson and his colleagues (2000), Cropanzano et al., (2002), and Wang et al., (2010), who examined the role of social exchange with supervisor as a mediator on the relationship between justice and work outcomes. This study examined this relationship in greater detail and add an additional step in this causal chain, social exchange as the link between interactional justice and performance and assisting behaviour.

Furthermore, the research findings showed that demographic variables have little or no major effect on employees' justice perceptions. Employees' perceptions of justice were unrelated to their gender, education and tenure, except age. The research findings showed that there is significant relationship between age and employees' perceptions of justice, in contrast with Study 1 but similar to a study by Al-Zu'bi (2010), who found a strong relationship between age and organisational justice. This is because most responses were from younger people (aged 30-39) in study 1. Studies found that younger people were more concerned about organisational justice than older people (Brienza & Bobocel, 2017).

By examining all organisational justice dimensions as done in this study, scholars can better understand how justice perceptions influence employees' performance and behaviours (Masterson et al., 2000; Rup and Cropanzano, 2002; Cropanzano, Prehar and Chen, 2002; Colquitt et al., 2001; Cohen-Charash and Spector, 2001; Aryee et al., 2002). The findings highlight the importance of the role of ethical leadership as a moderator in enhancing the relationships among two of the three organisational justice dimensions and supervisor. These relationships appear to be the most direct antecedents of employees' attitudes and behaviours, and they provide a mechanism to explain how the perceived interactional justice from one single event can have long-term effects within organisations. To illustrate, within the entity framework, the single event justice must first be evaluated before they can affect the judgments of the social entity. Put differently, the justice event can come first before social entity justice. The paradigm of event justice informs us events can be viewed as unjust. While the paradigm of social entity informs us individual and people can be seen as unjust. Thus, it is possible that the perceptions events impact more global evaluations of social entities. The event paradigm focused on issues that occur early in the process, and the social entity paradigm focused on issues that occur later the process (Cropanzano et al., 2001).

In this research, the hypothesised model provides important insights into the study of the relationship between interactional justice and employees outcomes. First, the results indicated that interactional justice affects job performance and assisting behaviour indirectly through the mediating effects of social exchange. Second, interactional justice is the best predictors of job performance and assisting behaviour. Finally, although social exchange variables have popularly been examined as the mediators between organisational justice and workplace outcomes (e.g. Aryee et al., 2002; Colquitt, 2008; Cropanzano and Rupp, 2008;

Cropanzano et al., 2002; Masterson et al., 2000; Moorman, 1991), this research suggests that social exchange with supervisor is important to fully understand the mediating mechanism. This further develops the relationship between organisational justice and job performance by extending the mediating mechanisms of the organisational justice's influence on the work outcomes. In particular, the social exchange theory explains a lot of the consequences of employees' organisational justice perception work outcomes. Theoretical implications.

The findings across the two studies presented in this study have a number of theoretical implications. First, the significant relationship between interactional justice and employees' outcomes (i.e., job performance and assisting behaviour) through the mediating effect of social exchange with supervisor highlights the utility of integrating the two theoretical perspectives (i.e., social exchange) to explain the effects of organisational justice on employees' outcomes. These social exchange constructs have widely been seen as mediators between organisational justice and employee outcomes (e.g., Aryee et al., 2002; Aryee & Chay, 2001; Masterson et al., 2000; Rupp & Cropanzano, 2002; Wayne et al., 2002; Wang, Liao, Xia & Chang, 2010). The research findings presented here showed that employees' attitudes and behaviours can be affected by interactional justice via social exchange with supervisors. This finding is consistent with previous results (e.g., Loi et al., 2014; Rupp et al., 2014; Huang, Wang & Xie, 2014), and supports the notion that when employees received equal reward and were fairly treated by their supervisor, they tended to have better relations with the supervisor. It is thus an important factor in their decision to devote more to the organisation in order to maintain this relationship by engaging in OCB. This finding provides new insights into the relationship between interactional justice and employees' performance by illustrating the mechanisms behind the effect of organisational justice on work performance. In particular, the findings illustrate the importance of core motives – high quality social exchange – that drive job performance and assisting behaviour. Second, this study sheds new light on the moderating effect of team ethical leadership on the relationship between employees' perception of interactional justice and employees' performance. This is consistent with existing research, which has highlighted the importance of understanding leadership-related factors as boundary conditions of interactional justice (van Knippenberg et al., 2007; Collins & Mossholder, 2014; Lee & Wei, 2017). This study found that team ethical leadership played a boundary role in the indirect effect of interactional justice on social exchange (i.e., moderated mediation). This study shows empirically that high levels of ethical leadership serve as a compensatory boundary condition. In other words, where there is a high level of ethical leadership, interactional justice was related to social exchange supervisor. Consistent with social exchange theory, the findings showed that employees feel indebted to highly ethical leaders as they are fair, trustworthy and care about their needs. Thus, ethical leaders can influence the relationship of employees with their supervisor. As noted by van Knippenberg et al., (2007) the characteristics of the leader have implications for organisational justice especially interactional justice. Moreover, Brown & Treviño (2006) highlight the importance of linking justice with ethical leadership, because ethical leaders are the most important moral agents influencing subordinates' behaviours and attitudes.

Finally, justice plays an important role in developing ethical behaviour (Brown et al., 2005; Mo & Shi, 2017). Perceived overall fairness in the organisation, such as fair treatment from the supervisor, is extremely important in triggering ethical leadership. Employees working under ethical leaders were more prone to perceive respect and dignity and receive fair outcomes. As a result, creating a fair climate in the workplace means developing ethical behaviours in leaders. This finding is consistent with prior studies by Liu & Loi (2012) and Xu, Lio & Ngo (2016), who found a positive relationship between justice and ethical leadership. Indeed, the finding showed that employees' perceptions of the overall justice of a supervisor can enhance the leaders' ethical behaviour and decision making. As Elçi et al., (2015) point out, employees' organisational justice perceptions are strongly related to ethical contexts. Thus, this finding contributes to the ethical leadership literature, as there is a lack of research on the antecedents of ethical leadership, especially on the relationship between justice and ethical leadership (van Knippenberg, van Dick, & Tavares, 2007). This finding also offers an opportunity to determine the extent to which a supervisor treating subordinates fairly shapes perceptions of ethical leadership.



## CONCLUSION

The findings of this study bring about a number of practical Implications. First, the significant relationship between interactional justice and employees' outcomes (i.e., job performance and assisting behaviour), through the mediating effect of both social exchange with the supervisor, highlights the importance of investing in social exchange in order to enhance employee performance. This in turn promotes positive outcomes in the organisation. As the findings revealed that social exchange with supervisors has a direct effect on job performance and assisting behaviour, high-quality supervisor-subordinate relationships are a fundamental element for employees to perform well and being willing to help others. Prior studies have proven that social exchange relationships with the supervisor are associated with supervisors' behaviours and personality (Loi et al., 2014 Choi et al., 2014). Therefore, it is important for the organisation to hire and train managers that reinforce quality supervisor-subordinate relationships. We know we are hiring leaders with strong morals when leaders demonstrate proper conduct through their actions and relationships and promote this kind of conduct to employees via interaction, communication and decision making. Some characteristics of an ethical leader would appear, such as listening to what employees saying, making fair decisions whilst having the best interest of employees in mind. In addition, organisations may find it useful to select and recruit more ethical leaders, who are able to build employees' trust and increase the organisational outcomes. To do so, organisations should strongly hold their ethics codes and hire leaders with high moral intensity. Furthermore, organisations should also train the leaders about the importance of having ethical norms and behaviours.

Second, the findings of this study reinforce the practical value in fostering ethical leadership behaviour in organisations. Managers might find it fruitful to hire and promote more ethical leaders who are able to enhance fair perceptions in the workplace. To do so, organisations should hire leaders with strong morals. The findings of this study thus reinforce the practical value in fostering ethical leadership behaviour in the organisations. Managers might find it fruitful to hire and promote more ethical leaders, who will thus be able to enhance fair perceptions in the organisations (Brown & Treviño 2006).

As an ethical leader acts as a moral agent in the organisation to promote justice in the workplace, it is expected that ethical leaders' behaviour plays an important role in influencing employees' perceptions of organisational justice (Brown & Treviño, 2006a; Brown et al., 2005; Brown & Mitchell, 2010; Walumbwa et al., 2011). Fien, et al., (2013) argue that ethical leaders have the most powerful impact on employees' perceptions of organisational justice. Therefore, organisations should consider hiring ethical leaders and provide an ethical training programme for leaders that focuses on the importance of role modelling and ethical standards in the organisation. By doing this, employees can build trust, develop strong relationships with their supervisor. This will, in turn, make the employees more willing to engage in extra- role behaviour by assisting others. As stated by Treviño et al., (2006), two-way communication between employees and the leader can positively influence their behaviour in this regard.

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