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Cracking the code: How procedural justice drives employee engagement in Nigerian banks

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Abstract

This study investigates the influence of procedural justice on many aspects of employee engagement including affective, behavioral, cognitive and physical engagement specifically within the banking business in Nigeria. The sector has consistently faced difficulties in maintaining employee engagement with major issues such as high rates of absenteeism and turnover. Implementing an effective employee engagement strategy can help in retaining and developing a team that is prepared for the future, thereby reducing absenteeism and turnover. This study employed survey methodology and used stratified sampling techniques to choose participants. We collected the necessary data from primary sources. The study considered 209 of the 231 distributed questionnaires legitimate and appropriate. The results indicate that how employees perceive the fairness of procedures in the chosen bank has a substantial impact on their high levels of emotional, cognitive, physical and behavioral involvement. This demonstrates that ensuring fair treatment when creating clear and reliable policies and processes results in increased employee engagement. Banks should create an environment that promotes fairness by ensuring transparency and reliability in all rules and procedures to enhance overall satisfaction among workers and performance. It is possible to reduce high rates of absence and turnover resulting in a more stable and productive workforce by using these measures. This study highlights the significance of procedural justice in attaining greater employee engagement and offers significant insights for banks seeking to enhance their staff retention efforts.

Keywords: Absenteeism, Bank, Employee engagement, Employee retention, Employee turnover, Procedural justice.

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Transparency: The authors confirm that the manuscript is an honest, accurate, and transparent account of the study; that no vital features of the study have been omitted; and that any discrepancies from the study as planned have been explained. This study followed all ethical practices during writing.

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1. Introduction

Organizations worldwide face numerous challenges in the current dynamic and complex business environment. These challenges include turbulence, complexity, intense competition and uncertainty. As a result, organizations must prioritize employee engagement if they want to observe improvements in both individual and organizational performance [1]. Employees who are physically, intellectually and emotionally devoted to their job are said to be engaged. Two out of ten employees globally are actively disengaged, only 13% of employees globally are actively engaged at work and roughly 63% of the workforce globally is either engaged or disengaged which leads to an engagement gap that costs organizations a low productivity level [2]. Employee engagement is gaining widespread recognition as a significant indicator of various favorable results. These include higher levels of job contentment, proactive actions, effective task performance, innovation, a willingness to go above and beyond for the organization and greater client satisfaction.

Ojebola et al. [3] contend that an organization's existence, success and prosperity are inextricably related to the behaviors, perspectives and contributions of its workforce. Additionally, some researchers such as Ghasi et al. [4] contend that employees' perceptions of fairness in the workplace have a significant impact on the profitability and viability of organizations. Improved job satisfaction, organizational citizenship, employee performance and loyalty to the company are just a few of the organizational behaviors that may benefit from higher employee views of justice. These actions may then impact the loyalty and satisfaction of customers. Therefore, it is essential to understand how people in firms perceive and respond to justice especially if one wants to understand the results of employee behavior.

Gololo's [5] investigation reveals that the Nigerian banking sector faces multiple challenges in executing its regular activities. The banking business in Nigeria faces numerous internal and external challenges. These challenges encompass other factors, a dearth of technological advancements in banking transactions, inadequate development of human resources, issues with work ethics and organizational culture, deficient leadership and corporate governance, and a scarcity of professionalism. These constraints hinder the industry's ability to compete with the financial systems of industrialized nations, restrict opportunities for growth and expansion and contribute to issues such as fraud, presenteeism and absenteeism, all of which negatively impact overall performance. The banking industry must ensure that its employees possess a robust understanding of organizational justice to maintain competitiveness.

Procedural fairness involves providing individuals with the opportunity to participate in work-related procedures and decision-making that directly impacts them. Issues like biases in job decision-making, unfair handling of complaints and lack of consultation when supervisors are making job decisions related to employees are peculiar to procedural justice. This can lead to a lack of trust within the organization. When people have a better sense of procedural fairness, they are more motivated and dedicated to their jobs. There is a lack of knowledge on the precise pathways through which procedural fairness affects employee engagement. Most of the existing studies have emphasized the relevance of procedural justice but failed to explain its impact on employees' engagement in the banking industry. Furthermore, Nigeria has not conducted research on the relationship between procedural justice and employee engagement. Therefore, this study evaluates the impact of procedural justice on employees' engagement and formulates the following research questions to bridge the knowledge gap:

- i. To assess the influence of procedural justice on affective engagement.
- ii. To investigate the impact of procedural justice on behavioural engagement.
- iii. To evaluate the role of procedural justice on cognitive engagement.
- iv. To analyse the influence of procedural justice on physical engagement.

This paper is structured as follows: introduction, literature review, methodology, findings, discussion of findings, conclusions, practical implications and references.

2. Literature Review

Procedural justice stresses the need to give thought to and respect the decision-making process. The way people feel about the rules and processes that determine their work outcomes is central to this aspect of justice [6]. Folger and Cropanzano [7] define procedural justice as the fairness of the processes, techniques and procedures used to determine outcomes [7]. Ion-making processes are precise, consistent, impartial and amenable to correction; they see organizational systems as conforming to processes that fulfill justice needs [8].

The fairness of the procedures used determines the outcome of procedural justice. This involves distributing resources, resolving conflicts and making decisions. There are six factors that institutions should evaluate to deliver fair procedural justice [8]. Decisions institutions must make decisions by personal or prevailing standards of ethics or morality, apply the procedure consistently across people and time, base decisions on accurate information, use the correct mechanism to rectify flaws or inaccurate decisions and consider the opinions of various affected groups Jiang et al. [9]. Colquitt [10] suggested that seven decision rules including those processes be consistent and devoid of prejudice that information is accurate and well-practiced with strong ethics that voices are heard and that decisions are adequately controlled and determine whether or not an organization's methods are fair.

Debus et al. [11] investigated the significance of perceived feedback quality in connecting employees' perceptions of procedural justice in performance reviews to their level of commitment to the company. The results showed a favourable relationship between employees' opinions of the fairness of performance reviews, the quality of their feedback and their commitment to their jobs. Another mediating factor between procedural fairness and employee engagement was found to be the quality of feedback received. 246 German employees representing various businesses and groups were surveyed for the study. The authors examined data from a cross-sectional survey using structural equation modelling. It is recommended

that organisations promote fairness and transparency in their performance assessment processes to enhance the quality of feedback employees receive and consequently, raise employee engagement. Moreover, they advise employers to provide employees ample feedback to enable them to improve.

Chong et al. [12] conducted a study to investigate the effect of procedural fairness on employee engagement through mediators of peer and leader trust. The proposed model was assessed using structural equation modelling (SEM). According to research findings, process fairness and high levels of employee engagement are causally related. Trust in leaders and peers were found to act as a mediator in this relationship. Companies can increase worker satisfaction by giving procedural justice enhancements top priority based on the study findings. When it comes to making decisions, leaders who wish to instill trust in their team members should encourage transparency and employee involvement.

The study of Razzak et al. [13] explores the impact of non-family employees' inclusion in family firms on employees' engagement (intellectual, social and affective engagement) with procedural justice as the moderating variable. It used self-determination theory and social exchange theory to test hypotheses using survey data from 654 non-family employees in Malaysia. Results show that inclusion positively influences these engagements with procedural justice moderating the relationship between inclusion and intellectual and affective engagement but not social engagement. The study suggests that family firm managers should create a work environment where non-family employees feel valued and appreciated promoting a sense of belonging and engagement.

Kuvaas and Dysvik [14] examined the intermediary role of job crafting in the relationship between employees' perceptions of procedural fairness and their level of organizational loyalty. The findings indicate that job crafting, procedural fairness and employee engagement are positively correlated. It has been demonstrated that job crafting and procedural justice are related to employee engagement. 246 employees from diverse companies were polled for the study which was conducted in Norway. The authors of this study evaluated data from a cross-sectional survey using structural equation modelling. The authors conclude that companies should stress fair and transparent decision-making processes to boost employee engagement. Furthermore, they support giving employees more influence over how their workplaces are designed because research suggests that doing so boosts motivation.

Ghalamkari et al. [15] looked at the relationship between procedural fairness and employee motivation while accounting for the mediating role of organizational trust. The *International Journal of Organizational Leadership* has published an article detailing the study's findings. The study revealed that trust within the organization mediates this connection. The authors recommend that businesses prioritize treating their workers fairly during the decision-making process and cultivating an environment that values their ideas. Leaders may increase trust in the workplace by being open with information and including people in decision-making.

Procedural fairness is an important predictor of how employees will feel about their workplace and may have a positive impact on morale [16]. In order for employees to have confidence in the organization's commitment to its policies and fair treatment, it is essential for them to perceive a culture built on trust and honesty. Therefore, procedural fairness helps promote engagement by influencing extrinsic motivation in a roundabout way. Most of the existing studies have emphasised the relevance of procedural justice but failed to explain its impact on employees' engagement in the banking industry. Hence, this study assesses the role of procedural justice in employees' engagement.

3. Methodology

3.1. Research Design

This study aims to investigate the impact of procedural fairness on employees' involvement using a survey-based research methodology. This study employed a descriptive survey research design to precisely define and summarize the characteristics, inclinations, attitudes or opinions of participants. Additionally, it aimed to provide comprehensive information about each variable using a quantitative approach to elucidate the impact of fairness on workers' engagement. This study seeks to use descriptive methods to create a structured design that is appropriate for statistical analysis. This design will enable a comprehensive investigation of the relationship between procedural justice and employees' involvement.

3.2. Participant Selection

The target population of this research was bank workers of 544 but specifically 231 as study samples.

3.3. Sampling Method

This research employed stratified sampling techniques as its methodology. This approach was used since it enables the focus of data collection efforts on certain subgroups, hence enhancing the precision and efficacy of the research. Significant attributes or differences within the overall population are well represented by systematically choosing individuals from each distinct subgroup. The margin of error in sampling is minimized resulting in more accurate estimates for each specific grouping by implementing this targeted approach. There is an improved representation due to the bank's substantial size and correspondingly large strata. This approach also contributes to improving the representativeness of the sample, minimizing sampling bias, enhancing statistical efficiency and increasing the generalizability of the findings.

3.4. Data Collection

A questionnaire structured around the research hypothesis was used to compile the necessary data and respondents were asked to provide their opinions, assumptions and views. The major data source served as the principal tool for data collection and information gathering for the study which was verified by earlier research.

3.5. Ethical Consideration

Ethical clearance was obtained by Covenant University's CUREC in Nigeria ensuring adherence to ethical norms. The participants had full disclosure of the study's objectives and their anonymity was maintained. The study complies with ethical standards because all respondents gave their informed consent.

3.6. Validity and Reliability

Construct validity is used in this study to ensure that the research instrument is valid. The research supervisor and other subject matter experts carefully examined the questionnaire to determine its suitability and degree of alignment with the study's goals. The research instrument was approved in this study based on their recommendations and expert judgement. Cronbach's alpha can be used to determine the validity and reliability of a scale or questionnaire. Higher values imply better reliability while lower or absent values indicate less reliability for the Cronbach's alpha coefficient which has values ranging from 0 to 1.

3.7. Methods of Data Analysis and Presentation

The statistical software SPSS was used to arrange, encode and evaluate the gathered data. The data received from the study was analysed using frequency counts and percentages. Hypothesis testing entailed using regression analysis to investigate the influence of the independent variable on the dependent variable. The data analysis was performed using IBM SPSS version 26 software in contrast to previous studies like the study of Kuvaas and Dysvik [14] that focused on using Structural Equation Modelling (SEM). This study employed structural equation modelling (SEM) using Smart_PLS (Partial Least Square) 3.0 software. Structural equation modelling (SEM) is a statistical technique used to determine and predict the correlations between the independent variable which in this case is procedural justice and the dependent variable which is employee engagement. Both the measurement and structural models were used to assess these correlations. This extensive analysis facilitates a more profound comprehension of the interaction among the factors.

Respondent data was collected for this study through a questionnaire. Two components make up the questionnaire. The bio-data section (section A) consists of questions regarding the respondent's data, e.g., age, marital status and educational history. Section B is an attempt to use the 5-likert scale approach. In section B, participants would be presented with a question followed by a request to indicate their level of agreement on a scale ranging from "strongly agree" to "strongly disagree." To develop the research instrument, questions were adapted from various sources; the sources of the research instrument are detailed in Table 1.

Table 1.
Items in the questionnaire and their sources.

Variables	Number of items	Sources
Procedural justice (Independent variable)	5	Waribo, et al. [17] and Sari and Palupiningdyah [18]
Cognitive engagement	3	Osibanjo, et al. [19] and Rasool, et al. [20]
Affective engagement	3	
Behavioural engagement	3	
Physical engagement	3	

Table 1 showed that the questionnaire items were taken from existing research and used to verify survey responses from earlier researchers. The studies of Waribo et al. [17] and Sari and Palupiningdyah [18] were incorporated into the items for procedural justice. Similarly, items pertaining to employees' engagement (cognitive, affective, behavioural and physical) were taken from the research of Osibanjo et al. [19].

Table 2.
Response frequency.

Questionnaire	Frequency	Valid percentage
Valid	209	90.48%
Invalid and unfilled	22	9.52%
Total	231	100%

Source: Researcher's survey, 2023.

4. Results

The response rate is detailed in Table 2. The researcher consistently followed up with the respondent which resulted in a high response rate. The employees of banks in Nigeria Plc Ikeja local government were provided with an online survey link. The link was sent to 231 people but only 209 copies were fully completed which is 90.48% of the total. Unfortunately, 22 of the questionnaires could not be included in the analysis due to incomplete or incorrect completion. This indicates that 209 copies were reliable, substantial and usable enough to establish a baseline and derive conclusions.

Table 3.

Distribution of the respondents based on demographics (n = 209).

Items		Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	76	36.4
	Female	133	63.6
Total		209	100.0%
Marital status	Single	74	35.4
	Married	126	60.3
	Divorced	7	3.3
	Widow	2	1.0
Total		209	100.0%
Highest educational qualification	WAEC/O-level	1	0.5
	OND/NCE	21	10.0
	B.Sc./HND	119	56.9
	MBA/MSc	56	26.8
	PhD	12	5.7
Total		209	100.0%
Age	20-29	85	40.7
	30-39	95	45.5
	40-49	19	9.1
	50-59 and above	10	4.8
Total		209	100.0%
Work position	Management staff	20	9.6
	Senior staff	39	18.7
	Junior staff	81	38.8
	Contract staff	69	33.0
Total		209	100.0%
Number of years spent in organization	0-4	57	27.3
	5-9	113	54.1
	10-14	22	10.5
	15-19	9	4.3
	20 years and above	8	3.8
Total		209	100.0%

Note: OND/NCE means ordinary national diploma and national certificate in education.
 WAEC means West Africa examinations council.
 HND means higher national diploma.

Source: Researcher's survey, 2023.

According to Table 3, 133 (63.6%) of the participants were females and 76 (36.4%) were males. According to the table, 126 (60.3%) of the respondents were married, 74 (35.4%) were single, 7 (3.3%) were divorced and 2 (1.0%) were widows. The data presented in the table also indicates that 119 (56.9%) of the respondents held a B.Sc./HND degree, 56 (26.8%) possessed an MBA/MSc degree, 12 (5.7%) has a PhD, 21 (10.0%) has an OND/NCE and 1 (0.5%) has a WAEC/O-Level qualification. The table also shows that 95 (45.5%) of the participants were between the ages of 30-39, 85 (40.7%) were between 20-29 years, 19 (9.1%) were between 40-49 years and 10 (4.8%) were between 50-59 and above. Additionally, the table shows that 81 (38.8%) of the respondents were junior staff, 69 (33.0%) were contract staff, 39 (18.7%) were senior staff and 20 (9.6%) were management staff. The table also reveals that 113 (54.1%) of the majority of the participants had been employed in the organization ranging from 5 to 9 years, 57 (27.3%) have been employed ranging from 0-4 years, 22 (10.5%) of the participants had been employed in the organization for a period of 10-14 years, 9 (4.3%) have spent 15-19 years and 8 (3.8%) have spent 20 years and above.

4.1. Measurement Model and Model Fit Summary

According to Table 4, the factor loadings for all procedural justice and employee' engagement components exceeded the minimum threshold of 0.70 recommended by Fornell and Larcker [21].

Table 4.

Factor loading for procedural justice and employees' engagement.

Variables	Factor loading	Error variance	Composite reliability	AVE	Cronbach's alpha	No. of indicators
Indicators	>0.7	<0.3	≥0.8	≥0.5	≥0.7	
Procedural justice (PJ)						
PJ			0.929	0.775	0.927	5
PJi	0.844	0.156				
PJii	0.887	0.113				
PJiii	0.874	0.126				
PJiv	0.885	0.115				
PJv	0.912	0.088				
Employees' engagement						
Affective			0.922	0.864	0.922	12
Behavioural			0.919	0.860	0.918	12
Cognitive			0.893	0.823	0.892	12
Physical			0.918	0.858	0.917	12

Note: The factors are labelled as follows: AVE: Average variance extracted
PJ-procedural justice.

Table 4 displays the factor loadings of various measurement items for procedural justice and employees' engagement. These factor loadings came from the survey that was used to evaluate Nigerian banking industry personnel. Cronbach's alpha, average variance extracted (AVE) computations and composite reliability were used to evaluate the instrument's validity and reliability. Notably, factor loadings, composite dependability, AVE, and Cronbach's alpha all complied with the suggested standards. As a result, there is a significant degree of common variation across all of the measuring items for procedural justice and employee engagement.

4.2. Common Method Bias

The variation inflation factor (VIF) was used to investigate the possibility of common technique bias. According to Kock [22] as reported in Sharma and Kumra [23], a variance index of more than 3.3 suggests that common method bias affects the model. In contrast, the model does not exhibit common method bias if all of the components' VIF values obtained by a thorough collinearity test are equal to or less than 3.3. All of the assessment variables and items in the current study that are connected to procedural fairness and employee engagement have VIF values that are smaller than 3.3. According to this finding, common technique bias has no effect on the model shown in Figure 1.

4.3. Hypotheses Testing and Structural Model

The path coefficients in the structural model, both direct and indirect indicate the statistical significance of the relationships between variables. The coefficient of determination is frequently employed in evaluating structural models to assess the overall impact of independent variables on dependent variables. Procedural justice explains the variation in affective engagement (64.4%), behavioural engagement (70.6%), cognitive engagement (61.6%) and physical engagement (69.9%). The dimension of procedural justice explains 70.6% variation of behavioural engagement more than the other dimensions of employees' engagement.

Various indicators were considered including the path coefficients, t-statistics, R-square values and p-values to interpret the results. Figure 1 illustrates how the path coefficient reflects the strength and degree of association between the observed variables. On the other hand, the R-square value indicates the extent to which employees' engagement is explained by interpersonal justice. In statistics, the p-value indicates the level of probability that needs to be below 0.05 to be considered statistically significant. On the other hand, the t-statistics represent the measured differences between variables in terms of standard error units. The path coefficients, measurement and structural models are represented in figures.

Figure 1 presents the PLS algorithm model illustrating the relationship between procedural justice and employees' engagement (cognitive, affective, behavioural and physical) within the banking sector in Nigeria. The figure displays the loading values of each measurement item for procedural justice and employee's engagement as well as the path coefficient values and R-square values.

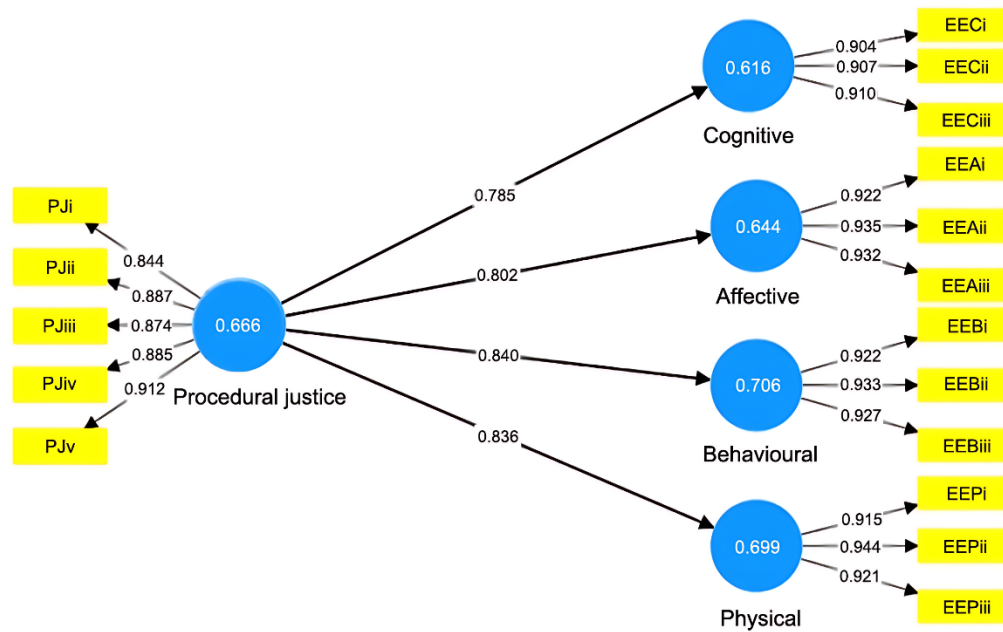


Figure 1.
Path analysis of procedural justice and employees' engagement (Cognitive, affective, behavioural and physical).

Figure 2 depicts the Partial Least Square (PLS) bootstrapping model showcasing the B and P values associated with the relationship between procedural justice and employees' engagement. It also displays the p-value which indicates the level of probability required for significance. The p-value must be less than 0.05 to be considered significant. All the measurement items related to procedural justice and employees' engagement (cognitive, affective, behavioral, and physical) obtained p-values below 0.05 signifying their significant contributions. This implies that procedural justice has a notable impact on employees' engagement across these dimensions.

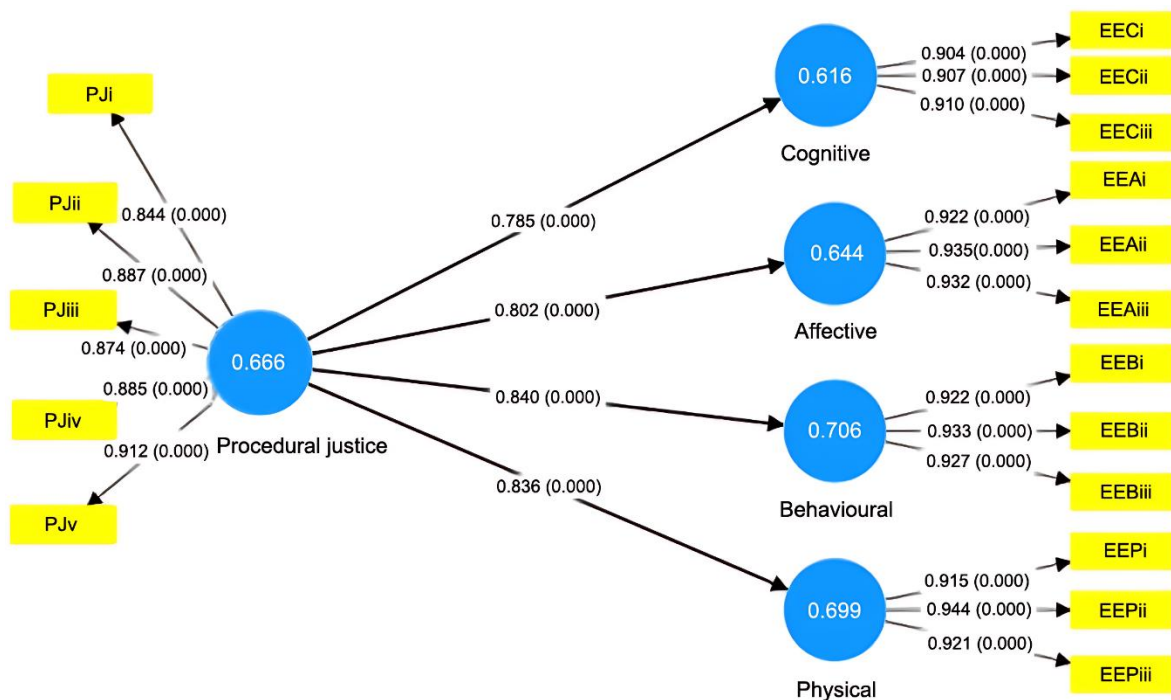


Figure 2.
Path analysis, p values and effect of procedural justice on employees' engagement (Cognitive, affective, behavioural and physical).

Figure 3 illustrates the path analysis, T values of procedural justice on employees' engagement (cognitive, affective, behavioral and physical) which represents the calculated differences expressed in terms of standard error units.

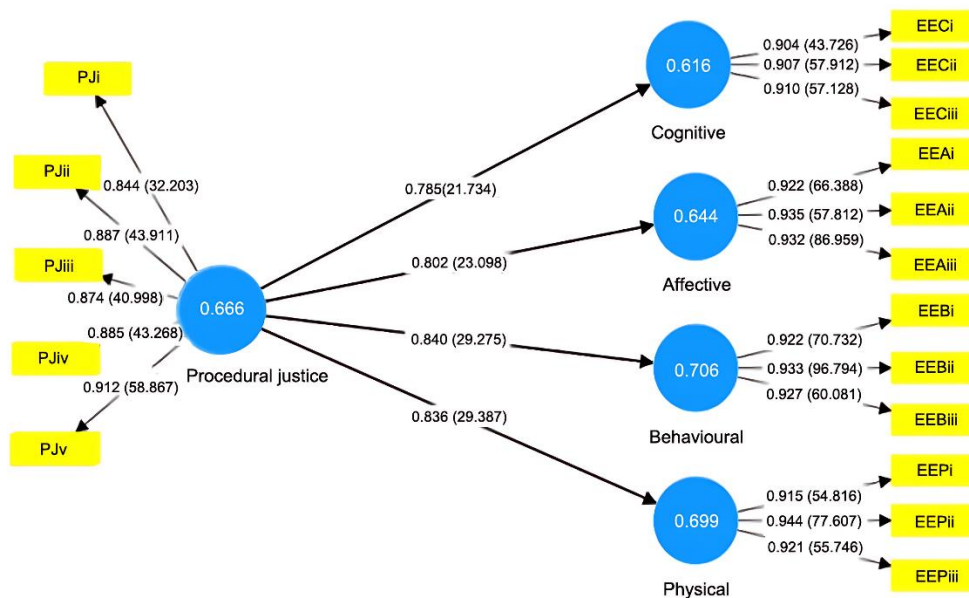


Figure 3.
Path analysis: t values of procedural justice on employees' engagement (Cognitive, affective, behavioural and physical).

Table 5. Path coefficients for procedural justice and employees' engagement (Cognitive, affective, behavioural and physical).

Path	Path coefficient	R-square	Standard deviation	T-statistics	P value	Decision
PJ→EEA	0.802	0.644	0.035	23.098	0.000	Significant
PJ→EEB	0.840	0.706	0.029	29.275	0.000	Significant
PJ→EEC	0.785	0.616	0.036	21.734	0.000	Significant
PJ→EEP	0.836	0.699	0.028	29.387	0.000	Significant

Source: PLS-SEM statistical outputs.

Note: PJ means procedural justice

EEA means employees' engagement (Affective)

EEB means employees' engagement (Behavioral)

EEC means employees' engagement (Cognitive)

EEP means employees' engagement (Procedural)

Table 5 reveals the smart partial least squares results for hypothesis four. This hypothesis explores the relationship between procedural justice and employees' engagement (cognitive, affective, behavioural and physical). The result shows that procedural justice has an influence on employees' engagement.

5. Discussion and Findings

According to the first hypothesis, affective employees' engagement of employees in the bank is significantly influenced by procedural justice. The result obtained from the structural equation modelling analysis demonstrated a correlation between affective employees' engagement and procedural justice. This suggests that workers have higher levels of emotional engagement at work due to the fairness of the processes involved in decision-making. According to Jiang et al. [9], this encourages emotionally invested bank staff.

A favourable relationship between procedural justice and behavioural engagement was the hypothesis put forward in the second one. It is possible to change people's behaviour by giving them a voice in the procedures they must follow to perform their jobs and make decisions that will directly impact them. According to the findings of the structural equation modelling study, employee behavioural engagement is influenced by their view of procedural justice. The study conducted by Razzak et al. [13] collaborates on this finding because the study demonstrates how perceptions of inclusion of non-family employees with procedural justice as a moderating variable in family firms lead to positive firm-centric behavior among non-family employees and it provides clues to family firm managers for creating a work environment where non-family employees perceive a sense of belongingness while their uniqueness is appreciated in order to be more engaged at the workplace.

According to the third hypothesis, procedural fairness and cognitive employee' involvement are positively correlated. When it comes to their jobs and obligations, personnel in the banking business can analyse and consider them more carefully when there is good communication concerning procedures. When there is more procedural justice, these workers are more inclined to offer creative ideas and solutions. This is in line with Kuvaas and Dysvik's [14] research. According to this study, job crafting, procedural fairness and employee engagement are positively correlated. Job design and procedural justice have been demonstrated to be related to employee engagement.

The fourth hypothesis predicted a significant influence of perceived procedural justice on physical engagement in banks in Nigeria. The result derived from the analysis of the data showed that uneven application of procedures in

physically demanding jobs like banking jobs can lead to physically disengaged employees. This supports a study by Ghalamkari et al. [15] that looked at the relationship between employee motivation and procedural fairness. They recommended that companies prioritize treating their employees equally at every stage of the decision-making process and cultivate an environment where decisions are made transparently and employees' physical expectations are communicated.

6. Conclusion

Procedural fairness includes several crucial elements including decision-making that is transparent and open, fair and consistent that fosters worker input and explains decisions made.

Research indicates that a positive perception of fair treatment by employers was positively correlated with worker engagement. Loyalty, work satisfaction, productivity and well-being have all been demonstrated to rise with positive employee engagement. Additionally, there is a higher probability of their making innovative contributions, exceeding expectations and exhibiting excellent corporate citizenship.

Ultimately, procedural justice fosters a culture of hard work and ownership over the company's performance which in turn encourages employee involvement. This describes how emphasizing fairness among banks' key values can boost their overall company success, staff happiness and productivity. A positive work environment is also influenced by how people view procedural justice in an organisation which tends to increase employee commitment, trust, and contentment.

6.1. Implications

- i. When decision-making procedures are seen as fair by staff members, they are more likely to be trusted.
- ii. Equitable practices lower turnover rates by fostering a feeling of justice and equity among staff members. Employee retention is higher in organisations when employees perceive that their concerns are acknowledged and their contributions are recognised.

6.2. Limitations

- i. Research findings may not be universally applicable across all industries, organizational sizes or cultural contexts.
- ii. The relationship between procedural justice and employee engagement may vary over time due to factors like leadership changes, organizational policies or external factors that can influence perceptions of fairness and their level of engagement.

6.3. Future Research Suggestions

- i. A future study can investigate how cultural factors influence the perception of procedural justice and its effect on employee engagement. Comparing findings across diverse cultural contexts can help identify cultural differences and inform the development of culturally sensitive practices.
- ii. Future researchers can explore moderating and mediating variables that may explain the relationship between procedural justice and employee engagement.

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