Validation of a Conceptual Model of Perceived Organizational Cruelty in the Hospitals of the Social Security Organization

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ABSTRACT

The present study aimed to validate the conceptual model of Perceived Organizational Cruelty that had been developed during the qualitative phase of a mixed-method doctoral dissertation using the systematic grounded theory approach. In the qualitative stage, semi-structured interviews were analyzed through open, axial, and selective coding, leading to the identification of core categories and the construction of the initial conceptual model. To empirically validate this model, the quantitative phase was conducted using survey data collected from employees of hospitals affiliated with the Social Security Organization in Tehran Province (N = 359). Following expert confirmation of content validity, exploratory factor analysis was applied to refine the constructs and determine the initial measurement structure. Subsequently, confirmatory factor analysis within the structural equation modeling framework was employed to assess the model's goodness of fit and the relationships among its constructs. The results indicated that all factor loadings met acceptable thresholds, and both Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability values exceeded 0.70. Moreover, the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) for all constructs was above 0.50, demonstrating adequate convergent validity, while discriminant validity was supported by the HTMT criterion. Overall model fit indices confirmed the adequacy of both the measurement and structural models. The findings provide empirical support for the grounded-theory-based conceptualization and suggest that the validated model serves as a robust framework for understanding perceived organizational cruelty in hospital settings.

Keywords: Perceived organizational cruelty; model validation; grounded theory; confirmatory factor analysis; Social Security Organization hospitals

1. Introduction

Organizational justice has become one of the most influential constructs in contemporary organizational behavior research, reflecting employees' perceptions of fairness in procedures, interactions, and outcomes within the workplace. Fairness is not merely a normative expectation but a foundational determinant of employee performance, well-being, resilience, and organizational sustainability. Over the past two decades, studies have repeatedly

confirmed that employees interpret fairness through multidimensional lenses—procedural, distributive, interpersonal, informational, and ethical—and that these dimensions play pivotal roles in shaping their motivation, commitment, citizenship behavior, and willingness to contribute to organizational goals (Shore & Coyle-Shapiro, 2012). As work environments have grown more complex and competitive, justice perceptions have evolved from being limited evaluations of fair treatment to encompassing broader notions of respect, dignity, professional recognition, and organizational virtue. This evolution underscores the critical need for organizations to understand how employees cognitively, emotionally, and behaviorally interpret justice-related cues, particularly in high-stress and service-intensive sectors such as healthcare.

One major reason for the growing focus on organizational justice is its demonstrated impact on employee performance across diverse cultural, industrial, and institutional settings. A range of empirical studies show that when employees perceive justice, their performance improves, whereas perceptions of injustice diminish motivation, increase turnover, and negatively affect work engagement. For instance, research examining employee performance in Iranian firms found that justice directly enhances productivity and reduces withdrawal behaviors, emphasizing the essential role of fairness in shaping employee outcomes (Bahreini, 2025). Likewise, work in insurance companies has shown that justice perceptions significantly predict job performance, even after controlling for contextual and individual differences (Shrestha et al., 2024). These findings underscore that fairness is not merely desirable; it is integral to effective organizational functioning.

Organizational justice is also closely linked to ethical and cultural conditions within organizations. Studies demonstrate that justice is intertwined with organizational virtue, ethical leadership, and professional ethics, shaping how employees view their roles and relationships within the workplace. In public sector organizations, particularly governmental and service-oriented institutions, organizational virtue models have been shown to emerge from justice-based norms that guide interactions between managers and employees (Shirvani et al., 2024). Procedural fairness, respect, and ethical conduct from leaders all contribute to employees' perceptions of justice in their daily activities. These findings illustrate that justice is not merely about formal procedures; it is deeply embedded in organizational culture and leadership practices.

Turnover intentions, job dissatisfaction, and identity-based withdrawal behaviors are also significantly shaped by perceived organizational justice. Procedural justice has been found to reduce employees' intentions to leave by strengthening trust and demonstrating fairness in decision-making and resource allocation (O'Callaghan, 2024). Similar evidence suggests that justice perceptions moderate the relationship between workplace stressors and employee well-being, especially in contexts where leadership practices influence employees' psychological safety and engagement. For example, Islamic leadership styles have been shown to enhance employee well-being primarily through their positive effects on perceived justice (Mu'ammal & Mohyi, 2024). These studies collectively highlight that justice is not only a structural requirement but a psychological process that shapes employees' interpretation of organizational life.

Expanding beyond leadership, justice influences the motivational and emotional dimensions of work. For instance, research indicates that emotional intelligence, motivation, and justice together shape performance outcomes, particularly when organizational citizenship behavior (OCB) functions as a mediating construct (Lusiana & Dini, 2024). Similarly, the influence of inclusive leadership on challenge-oriented OCB among nurses demonstrates that justice perceptions are crucial in high-intensity environments such as hospitals, where emotional labor and workload demands are exceptionally high (Li, 2024). These results are significant for healthcare organizations, which rely heavily on teamwork, ethical conduct, and alignment between organizational values and employee expectations.

The importance of justice extends to work engagement, which has emerged as a central indicator of employee well-being and organizational performance. Empirical evidence demonstrates that procedural justice enhances trust, commitment, and engagement by signaling stability and reliability in decision-making processes (Kurniawati & Ramli, 2024). In educational institutions, perceived fairness has been shown to support teacher engagement through increased professional achievement, highlighting justice as a cross-sector predictor of sustainable workforce performance (Huang, 2024). These findings emphasize that justice is integral to fostering organizational climates where employees feel valued and capable of performing effectively.

Beyond individual and psychological outcomes, the structural features of organizations also interact with justice to shape work life quality. Workforce diversity,

organizational resilience, optimism, and adaptability are increasingly recognized as contextual resources that influence justice perceptions. A systematic review of workforce diversity in Iranian organizations revealed that justice plays a central role in shaping employees' attitudes in diverse environments, suggesting that fairness serves as a balancing mechanism in heterogeneous workplaces (Davoudzadehmoghaddam et al., 2024). Similarly, the development of quality of work life models indicates that justice enhances resilience, optimism, and organizational adaptability, making it a critical component of modern human resource strategies (Jandaghi et al., 2024).

Organizational justice is also deeply intertwined with managerial performance, job performance, and organizational effectiveness. Studies show strong relationships between justice and performance outcomes across sectors. For instance, empirical research in Esfahan Steel Company showed that justice significantly predicts both simple and multiple dimensions of job performance (Barati et al., 2023). In the business sector, justice predicts job commitment, with conscientiousness acting as a mediator—indicating that justice not only shapes outcomes but also interacts with individual traits (Babakhanloo & Babakhanloo, 2023). Similarly, research in Indonesian companies shows that justice significantly influences organizational citizenship behavior and contributes to performance optimization (Artatanaya & Widhari, 2023). The consistency of these findings across industries supports the applicability of justice-based models to various organizational settings.

Corporate-level studies also demonstrate the significance of justice. For example, research examining corporate social responsibility (CSR) gaps reveals that organizational justice perspectives help explain variations in firm performance, illustrating that fairness perceptions influence not only employee-level outcomes but organizational-level competitiveness and sustainability (Cao et al., 2023). Furthermore, the presence of career plateaus, which often contribute to stagnation and turnover, can be mitigated through justice and positive psychological capital, showing that fairness helps buffer negative career-related experiences (Chang et al., 2024). In addition, high-performance environments such as retail sectors demonstrate that justice and social interaction are essential mechanisms to mitigate negative effects of competitive dynamics on integration and collaboration (Park & Lee, 2023).

Communication patterns and trust dynamics also intersect with justice. Organizational trust and distributive justice have been found to strongly predict employee voice behavior—demonstrating that fairness encourages employees to express concerns, share ideas, and participate in decision-making processes (Park & Kim, 2023). Employee loyalty is also shaped by justice, with union effectiveness acting as a moderator in some contexts, showing that collective structures influence how justice is perceived and acted upon (Jaime & Encabo, 2024). These relational outcomes illustrate that justice fosters constructive social environments that enhance communication, collaboration, and mutual understanding.

Justice also plays a decisive role in mitigating work stress and improving the quality of work life. Studies conducted in high-stress environments such as police organizations indicate that justice helps reduce stress and support career development, thereby improving employees' perceived work life quality (Darmoko, 2024). In banking environments, justice is related to psychological well-being and citizenship behaviors, suggesting that employees who perceive fairness are more likely to remain committed and psychologically healthy (Kiranmayi et al., 2024). This points to justice as a protective factor in emotionally demanding and operationally intensive workplaces.

The technological transformation of organizations also intersects with justice, particularly in public service institutions such as social security systems. The integration of blockchain technology into such systems has been shown to improve transparency and efficiency, which are fundamental components of procedural and informational justice (Yaroshenko et al., 2025). Similarly, advances in artificial intelligence in social security organizations reshape fairness perceptions by altering the transparency, speed, and accuracy of decisions that directly affect citizens and employees (Zaber et al., 2024). These developments highlight that modern organizational justice must be understood not only in traditional human-centered contexts but also in emerging socio-technical systems.

Given the critical role of justice in shaping employee well-being, performance, engagement, and organizational effectiveness, there is an increasing need for context-specific models that capture how fairness is perceived in different institutional settings. Healthcare organizations—particularly hospitals under the Social Security Organization—represent complex environments characterized by high emotional labor, procedural ambiguity, and hierarchical operational structures. These environments require precise, empirically validated models that explain how employees interpret fairness and how these perceptions influence both individual

and organizational outcomes. Existing models, although informative, may not adequately reflect the unique structural, cultural, and operational realities of such institutions. Therefore, developing a comprehensive and empirically grounded conceptual model is essential for enhancing justice perceptions and improving organizational functioning.

The aim of this study is to validate a conceptual model of perceived organizational injustice in hospitals affiliated with the Social Security Organization in Tehran.

2.   Methods and Materials

The present study is applied in terms of purpose and descriptive–survey in terms of the method of implementation, and it was conducted using a quantitative approach. This research was carried out as the continuation of the qualitative phase of a dissertation in which the conceptual model of perceived organizational injustice had been developed using grounded theory and the systematic approach of Strauss and Corbin. In the quantitative phase, the main objective was to validate the conceptual model extracted from the qualitative stage and to examine its empirical fit among employees of hospitals affiliated with the Social Security Organization in Tehran Province.

The statistical population consisted of all employees working in hospitals of the Social Security Organization in Tehran Province. The sample size was determined based on common criteria in structural equation modeling and the minimum sample-to-item ratio. Ultimately, 359 individuals were selected using simple random sampling. The data collection instrument was a questionnaire whose items were designed according to the components, concepts, and main categories extracted during the qualitative phase. This questionnaire was finalized after face and content validity were reviewed and approved by experts and faculty members specializing in organizational behavior and human resource management.

To assess construct validity, confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was first conducted. The results indicated that all items had factor loadings above the acceptable threshold and that the factor structure was appropriate. The composite reliability (CR) and the indicators of convergent validity (AVE) were also within the standard range. Instrument reliability was examined using Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability, and the total Cronbach's alpha for the questionnaire was 0.856, indicating satisfactory reliability.

In addition, the reliability values of all individual constructs were reported to exceed the desirable level (0.70).

To assess data normality, the Kolmogorov–Smirnov test was used. The results showed that the significance level of the research variables was less than 0.05, indicating that the data distribution was non-normal; therefore, partial least squares (PLS)-based modeling methods were used for data analysis. Given the nature of the data, the number of constructs, and the presence of latent variables with multiple factor loadings, this method was considered appropriate.

SPSS 23 and SmartPLS software were used to analyze the data. In the descriptive stage, indicators such as mean, standard deviation, variance, skewness, and kurtosis were calculated for the main constructs. Based on the data presented in Chapter Four, the mean values of the research variables ranged from 3.855 (organizational factors) to 4.376 (organizational constraints). The skewness and kurtosis values of all variables were within the acceptable range, indicating that the data distribution was suitable for PLS analyses.

In the inferential stage, the measurement model was evaluated through the examination of factor loadings, discriminant reliability, composite reliability, AVE, and discriminant validity. Subsequently, the structural model—including path coefficients, significance levels (t-values), R^2 values, the predictive relevance index (Q^2), and the overall model fit index (GoF)—was analyzed. All analyses were conducted in accordance with the standards of structural equation modeling.

3.   Findings and Results

The findings of this study are presented in two parts: descriptive results related to the characteristics of the participants and the statistical properties of the main constructs, followed by inferential findings that assess the measurement and structural models using the PLS method. The demographic analysis indicated that out of 359 respondents, 223 participants (62.1%) were male and 136 participants (37.9%) were female. The age distribution showed that the largest group consisted of employees between 36 and 40 years old (n = 144; 40.1%), while only 22 individuals (6.1%) were older than 45. Employment status varied across permanent, contractual, and probationary staff, ensuring that the model was tested across a diverse range of hospital employees. These demographic patterns provide strong support for the generalizability of the

model across different groups within the Social Security Organization hospitals.

Descriptive statistics for the main constructs demonstrated that employees' perceptions of the components of the proposed model were generally high. Mean scores ranged between 3.855 and 4.376 on a five-point scale, with "Organizational Factors" having the lowest mean and "Organizational Constraints" having the highest. All skewness and kurtosis values fell within the acceptable ±3 range, indicating suitable distributional properties for structural equation modeling. Table 1 summarizes the descriptive statistics of the principal constructs.

Table 1

Descriptive Statistics of Main Constructs

Construct	Mean	SD	Skewness	Kurtosis
Organizational Factors	3.855	0.742	-0.88	0.41
Organizational Culture	4.102	0.693	-0.73	0.28
Managerial Factors	4.210	0.701	-0.66	0.12
Environmental Conditions	4.188	0.728	-0.71	0.19
Organizational Constraints	4.376	0.685	-0.94	0.52
Perceived Organizational Injustice	4.020	0.755	-0.59	-0.04

Results of the Kolmogorov–Smirnov test revealed that the distribution of all variables significantly deviated from normality (Sig = 0.000), justifying the use of the PLS estimation method. Following confirmation of distributional properties, the measurement model was assessed. All indicators showed factor loadings above the acceptable threshold of 0.70, demonstrating strong convergent representation of their latent constructs. For example, the indicators "Humiliation" (0.750), "Intentionality" (0.762), "Inhumane Behavior" (0.786), and "Malicious Intent" (0.871) strongly loaded on the perceived organizational injustice dimension. Likewise, "Existence of Laws" (0.871) and "Legal Enforcement" (0.841) demonstrated strong loadings on the rule-of-law dimension, while "Weak Communication" (0.855) and "Weak Supervision" (0.843) were among the highest loadings for the organizational constraints construct. Very high loadings were observed for "Productivity Improvement" (0.933) and "Social Capital Enhancement" (0.940) under organizational outcomes. These strong loading patterns confirm the clarity, internal coherence, and conceptual accuracy of the selected indicators. Table 2 provides a sample of the key factor loadings.

Table 2

Sample Factor Loadings of Indicators

Construct	Indicator	Loading
Perceived Organizational Injustice	Humiliation	0.750
	Malicious Intent	0.871
Rule of Law	Existence of Laws	0.871
	Implementation of Laws	0.841
Organizational Constraints	Weak Communication	0.855
	Weak Supervision	0.843
Organizational Outcomes	Productivity Improvement	0.933
	Social Capital Enhancement	0.940

Reliability analysis indicated that the instrument demonstrated very strong internal consistency. Cronbach's alpha for the entire scale was 0.856, and all constructs exhibited composite reliability (CR) values greater than 0.70. Convergent validity was supported with AVE values ranging from 0.580 to 0.850. Discriminant validity was confirmed through the Fornell–Larcker criterion, where the square root of each construct's AVE exceeded its correlations with other constructs, and HTMT ratios were within acceptable limits. These indices collectively confirm that the measurement model possessed strong psychometric soundness. Table 3 summarizes the reliability and validity indicators.

Table 3

Reliability and Validity Indicators

Indicator	Value Range	Interpretation
Cronbach's Alpha	0.856	Excellent overall reliability
Composite Reliability	> 0.70	High reliability for all constructs
AVE	0.580–0.850	Strong convergent validity
Fornell–Larcker	Satisfied	Discriminant validity confirmed

Upon confirming the robustness of the measurement model, the structural model was evaluated. All exogenous constructs exhibited significant and positive effects on perceived organizational injustice. For example, managerial factors (β = 0.293, t = 3.075), organizational culture (β = 0.293, t = 3.075), rule of law (β = 0.339, t = 3.956), organizational constraints (β = 0.159, t = 2.685), and environmental conditions (β = 0.442, t = 2.886) all significantly predicted perceived injustice. External and internal organizational factors (β = 0.462 and β = 0.228, respectively) further contributed significantly, while individual and organizational consequences also demonstrated significant effects. All t-values exceeded 1.96, confirming the statistical significance of the hypothesized relationships. Table 5 presents the results of the structural paths.

Table 4

Path Coefficients and Significance Levels

Pathway	β	t-value	Sig.
Managerial Factors → Perceived Injustice	0.293	3.075	0.000
Organizational Culture → Perceived Injustice	0.293	3.075	0.000
Rule of Law → Perceived Injustice	0.339	3.956	0.000
Organizational Constraints → Perceived Injustice	0.159	2.685	0.000
Environmental Conditions → Perceived Injustice	0.442	2.886	0.000
Internal Organizational Factors → Perceived Injustice	0.228	3.735	0.000
External Organizational Factors → Perceived Injustice	0.462	8.336	0.000
Individual Outcomes → Perceived Injustice	0.154	2.619	0.000
Organizational Outcomes → Perceived Injustice	0.199	2.777	0.000

The coefficient of determination (R^2) for the endogenous construct "Perceived Organizational Injustice" was 0.599, indicating that nearly 60% of the variance in perceived injustice is explained by the model's predictors. This value represents a strong explanatory power in organizational behavior studies. In addition, the model achieved a GOF value of 0.90, far exceeding conventional thresholds and signaling excellent model fit. These results collectively demonstrate strong empirical support for the conceptual framework originally developed in the qualitative phase.

In summary, the analysis confirmed the reliability, validity, and structural coherence of the proposed model. All constructs displayed strong psychometric characteristics, all structural paths were significant, and the model demonstrated excellent explanatory power and fit. The quantitative phase therefore validates the theoretical model developed in the qualitative phase, confirming its robustness and applicability to the hospital context of the Social Security Organization.

4. Discussion and Conclusion

The purpose of this study was to validate a conceptual model of perceived organizational injustice within hospitals affiliated with the Social Security Organization in Tehran. The findings obtained from the quantitative phase provide strong empirical support for the theoretical model developed during the qualitative stage. Specifically, the results indicate that managerial factors, organizational culture, rule of law, organizational constraints, environmental conditions, internal and external organizational factors, and individual and organizational outcomes all significantly contribute to shaping employees' perceptions of organizational injustice. The discussion below interprets these findings in light of existing research and examines the extent to which they align with, extend, or challenge prior empirical evidence.

The positive and significant influence of managerial factors on perceived injustice supports the widely documented role of leadership behavior in shaping fairness perceptions. Effective managerial practices—including transparent communication, consistent decision-making, and ethical conduct—have been shown to reduce perceptions of unfairness across organizational settings. This finding is consistent with earlier research showing that ethical leadership behaviors significantly shape employees' justice perceptions and overall evaluations of fairness within organizations (İncekara et al., 2024). Moreover, scholarly work highlights the importance of leadership in safeguarding employees' psychological well-being through justice-based interactions; studies show that justice mediates the relationship between leadership styles and employee well-being, particularly in culturally or religiously informed leadership frameworks (Mu'ammal & Mohyi, 2024). The current study's findings echo these observations by demonstrating that managerial deficiencies or inconsistencies contribute to heightened feelings of injustice within hospital settings.

The significant role of organizational culture in predicting perceived injustice further underscores the deep connection between cultural norms and fairness perceptions. Organizational culture—through shared values, norms, and expectations—directly influences how employees interpret the fairness of decisions and interactions. Research demonstrates that justice is intrinsic to the development of virtuous organizational cultures and professional ethics, reinforcing employees' belief in the integrity and fairness of the institution (Shirvani et al., 2024). A justice-oriented culture encourages trust, cooperation, and collective responsibility, mitigating perceptions of bias or inequity. The alignment between the current findings and previous research suggests that the presence—or absence—of fairness norms embedded in culture plays a decisive role in forming employees' judgments about organizational justice.

One of the strongest predictors in this study was the rule-of-law construct, which reflects the clarity of organizational rules, adherence to formal procedures, and consistency of enforcement. The significance of this factor aligns with studies emphasizing procedural justice as a powerful determinant of employees' turnover intentions and trust in organizational mechanisms (O'Callaghan, 2024). When employees perceive that laws are applied inconsistently or lack transparency, perceptions of injustice increase. This echoes extensive evidence demonstrating that structural fairness and procedural clarity are necessary for retaining employees and minimizing conflict. The results also resonate with findings from social security and public service sectors, where transparent procedures are central to maintaining trust and minimizing citizens' or employees' perceptions of arbitrariness (Yaroshenko et al., 2025). Given that hospitals under the Social Security Organization operate within highly regulated environments, procedural fairness becomes even more critical due to the sensitivity and complexity of healthcare services.

Organizational constraints also showed a significant association with perceived organizational injustice. Structural barriers—such as weak communication channels, insufficient supervision, or unclear job expectations—can amplify perceptions of unfairness by creating environments where employees feel unsupported or marginalized. Research supports this observation; constraints and structural deficiencies often exacerbate work-related stress and diminish employees' sense of control, as demonstrated in high-stress settings such as policing organizations (Darmoko, 2024). Furthermore, in educational environments, structural and procedural justice contribute to professional achievement and work engagement (Huang, 2024). In hospital settings, where clarity and supervision are crucial for patient safety and effective teamwork, organizational constraints become even more impactful in shaping perceptions of fairness.

Environmental conditions, including external pressures, social dynamics, and contextual factors, also significantly influenced perceived injustice. These findings highlight that justice perceptions are not isolated from broader contextual realities. High-intensity or high-pressure environments, such as those found in nursing or retail sectors, tend to heighten employees' sensitivity to fairness cues. For example, nurse populations working in high-intensity hospital units have been shown to respond strongly to justice-related factors that influence their citizenship behaviors and emotional regulation (Li, 2024). In retail settings, organizational justice and social interaction mitigate the negative effects of performance pressure on integration and cooperation (Park & Lee, 2023). The present study reinforces the idea that hospitals—particularly those operating under the Social Security Organization—face external stressors that make justice perceptions especially salient for employee well-being and organizational functionality.

Internal organizational factors, such as work processes, professional relationships, and internal support systems, also contributed significantly to perceived injustice. This finding aligns with research showing that organizational trust and

fairness strongly predict voice behavior and willingness to participate in organizational improvements (Park & Kim, 2023). When internal systems are perceived as inconsistent or inequitable, employees often disengage or refrain from offering constructive feedback. Similarly, evidence from career development literature suggests that justice can reduce the negative effects of internal barriers such as career plateaus by reinforcing a sense of fairness and recognition (Chang et al., 2024). Within the healthcare context, where employees rely heavily on cohesive internal systems and support mechanisms, deficits in internal fairness may have widespread effects on job performance, teamwork, and patient safety.

External organizational factors also emerged as strong predictors of perceived injustice, echoing findings from workforce diversity research. Diverse organizations face added pressures to allocate resources and opportunities equitably, and justice perceptions become vital for maintaining cohesion and minimizing conflict. A systematic review of workforce diversity in Iranian organizations emphasized that justice plays a critical role in shaping employee relations and managing intergroup dynamics (Davoudzadehmoghaddam et al., 2024). Corporate-level studies also show that external influences such as CSR expectations affect performance through fairness perceptions; firms with CSR gaps often experience reduced performance due to diminished justice perceptions among employees (Cao et al., 2023). Hospitals under a national social security system similarly operate under public scrutiny and external accountability, which heightens the importance of maintaining justice.

The findings also show that individual outcomes such as well-being, stress, and motivation significantly relate to perceived organizational injustice. This result is consistent with research showing that justice plays a mediating role in the relationship between leadership styles and employee psychological well-being (Mu'ammal & Mohyi, 2024). Moreover, organizational justice has been linked to positive emotions, motivation, and psychological functioning, particularly in high-demand roles such as those in banking and education sectors (Kiranmayi et al., 2024). Within hospitals, where emotional demands are substantial, perceived injustice may manifest in greater psychological strain, impaired communication, and reduced patient-centered care.

Organizational outcomes were also found to have a significant relationship with perceived injustice, suggesting that the broader consequences of organizational functioning—such as productivity, engagement, or social capital—can themselves influence perceptions of fairness. Studies have consistently demonstrated that justice contributes to improved organizational citizenship behavior (Artatanaya & Widhari, 2023), work motivation (Lusiana & Dini, 2024), and job commitment (Babakhanloo & Babakhanloo, 2023). High levels of justice also correlate with stronger performance outcomes (Bahreini, 2025), resilience (Jandaghi et al., 2024), and loyalty (Jaime & Encabo, 2024). When organizations demonstrate improvements in these areas, employees may interpret the broader organizational environment as fair and supportive, further reinforcing justice perceptions.

Finally, the model's strong explanatory power ($R^2 = 0.599$) and excellent fit index (GOF = 0.90) indicate that perceptions of injustice are shaped by a complex interplay of structural, managerial, cultural, psychological, and environmental factors. This multidimensionality is supported across diverse empirical streams, including studies that highlight justice as a multidimensional predictor of job performance (Shrestha et al., 2024), quality of work life (Kurniawati & Ramli, 2024), and citizenship behavior (Wang, 2023). The empirical validation of the proposed model confirms its utility for understanding how injustice is perceived in complex organizational systems such as hospitals under a public social security structure. These findings collectively extend existing literature by integrating multiple predictors and consequences into a unified model of perceived organizational injustice.

This study, while robust in methodology and empirical rigor, faces several limitations. First, the data were collected only from hospitals affiliated with the Social Security Organization in Tehran, which may limit the generalizability of the findings to hospitals in other provinces or to private healthcare institutions. Second, the use of self-report questionnaires introduces the possibility of response bias, particularly social desirability bias, which may affect the accuracy of employee perceptions. Third, the cross-sectional design restricts the ability to infer causality, as perceptions of injustice may fluctuate over time based on contextual or organizational changes. Fourth, although the sample size was adequate for PLS analysis, larger and more diverse samples could provide even stronger validation of the conceptual model. Finally, cultural and contextual variables specific to Iranian healthcare settings may limit the applicability of the model to other national or institutional contexts.

Future research should consider conducting longitudinal studies to examine how perceptions of organizational injustice evolve over time and how changes in leadership practices or policy reforms influence these perceptions. Expanding the study to include hospitals in multiple provinces or private medical institutions could improve generalizability and reveal context-specific differences in justice perceptions. Future researchers may also incorporate qualitative phases to further explore the emotional and cognitive aspects underlying employee experiences of injustice. Comparative studies across countries or sectors could help identify cultural or structural patterns that shape justice perceptions globally. Additionally, further research may examine moderators such as personality traits, resilience, or organizational support mechanisms to better understand the individual differences influencing justice-related judgments.

Organizations should invest in strengthening leadership development programs that emphasize fairness, transparency, and ethical decision-making. Hospitals should ensure clear communication channels, consistent enforcement of policies, and structured supervisory practices to reduce ambiguity and perceptions of inequality. Creating inclusive organizational cultures that value employee voice and participation can significantly enhance fairness perceptions. Additionally, improving workflow systems, providing adequate resources, and reducing structural barriers can help mitigate perceptions of organizational constraints. Finally, institutions should regularly assess justice perceptions through surveys and feedback mechanisms to identify emerging issues and implement timely interventions.

Authors' Contributions

Authors contributed equally to this article.

Declaration

In order to correct and improve the academic writing of our paper, we have used the language model ChatGPT.

Transparency Statement

Data are available for research purposes upon reasonable request to the corresponding author.

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Declaration of Interest

The authors report no conflict of interest.

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Ethics Considerations

In this research, ethical standards including obtaining informed consent, ensuring privacy and confidentiality were considered.

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