

# When Fairness Fails to Motivate: Organizational Justice and Minimum-Compliance Behavior in Public Sector Employees

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## Abstract

Organizational justice has long been regarded as a central driver of employee motivation, commitment, and performance. However, most empirical evidence on justice outcomes is derived from private sector contexts, where employees can respond to perceived unfairness through turnover or overt withdrawal. In public sector organizations, high job security and rigid employment structures substantially alter these response patterns. Employees who perceive injustice often remain in their positions while adjusting their behavior in less visible ways.

This study introduces *minimum-compliance behavior* as a distinct and underexplored response to perceived organizational injustice in public organizations. Minimum-compliance behavior refers to a pattern in which employees strictly adhere to formal job requirements while deliberately withholding discretionary effort, initiative, and proactive engagement. Drawing on organizational justice theory, this research examines how distributive, procedural, and interactional justice shape minimum-compliance behavior through their effects on trust in management and intrinsic motivation.

Using survey data collected from public sector employees, the proposed model is tested through structural equation modeling. The results indicate that procedural and interactional justice play a more critical role than distributive justice in preventing minimum-compliance behavior. Trust in management and intrinsic motivation partially mediate these relationships, highlighting the psychological mechanisms through which fairness perceptions translate into behavioral restraint rather than overt disengagement.

This study makes three contributions. First, it conceptualizes and empirically operationalizes minimum-compliance behavior as a distinct form of withdrawal specific to public sector employment contexts. Second, it clarifies the differential effects of justice dimensions on behavioral compliance beyond traditional outcomes such as job satisfaction or turnover intention. Third, it offers practical insights for public human resource management by demonstrating that fairness failures do not necessarily produce visible resistance but may quietly erode organizational effectiveness through behavioral minimalism.

**Keywords:** Organizational justice, Minimum-compliance behavior, Public sector employees, Procedural justice, Interactional justice, Trust in management, Intrinsic motivation, Public human resource management.

## Introduction

Organizational justice has long been recognized as a central pillar of effective public administration. Fair procedures, respectful treatment, and equitable outcomes are widely assumed to foster employee motivation, trust, and commitment. Within public sector organizations, justice is not only a managerial concern but also a normative expectation, closely tied to principles of accountability, legitimacy, and ethical governance. As a result, perceptions of fairness are often viewed as particularly salient for public employees.

Despite this emphasis, the behavioral consequences of perceived injustice in public organizations remain insufficiently understood. Much of the existing organizational justice literature is grounded in private sector contexts, where employees facing unfair treatment can respond through labor mobility, reduced performance, or overt withdrawal behaviors such as absenteeism and turnover. These assumptions do not fully translate to public sector employment, which is characterized by high job security, limited exit opportunities, and rigid career structures. In such environments, employees are more likely to remain within the organization even when they perceive persistent unfairness.

This structural condition raises an important but underexplored question: how do public sector employees behaviorally respond to perceived organizational injustice when exit and overt resistance are constrained? Existing studies tend to focus on attitudinal outcomes, such as job satisfaction, organizational commitment, or trust, while behavioral responses are often operationalized narrowly through turnover intention or counterproductive work behavior. These indicators may fail to capture more subtle and institutionally embedded forms of behavioral adjustment.

This study argues that perceived injustice in public organizations often leads not to disengagement from employment, but to disengagement within employment. Specifically, employees may respond by strictly adhering to formal job requirements while intentionally

withholding discretionary effort, initiative, and proactive engagement. This behavioral pattern is conceptualized in this research as *minimum-compliance behavior*. Minimum-compliance behavior does not involve rule breaking, deviance, or open resistance. Instead, it reflects a calculated alignment with formal obligations coupled with a withdrawal from voluntary contributions that are critical for organizational effectiveness.

Minimum-compliance behavior is particularly consequential in public sector settings. Public organizations rely heavily on discretionary effort to compensate for procedural rigidity, resource constraints, and complex service demands. When employees limit their contributions to what is contractually required, organizational performance may deteriorate without triggering formal performance sanctions. As a result, minimum-compliance behavior can persist unnoticed, gradually eroding service quality, innovation capacity, and organizational adaptability.

Organizational justice theory provides a useful framework for understanding this phenomenon. Distributive justice concerns the perceived fairness of outcomes, procedural justice relates to the fairness of decision-making processes, and interactional justice reflects the quality of interpersonal treatment and communication. Prior research suggests that these justice dimensions influence employee attitudes and behaviors through psychological mechanisms such as trust in management and intrinsic motivation. However, little empirical work has examined how different justice dimensions shape minimum-compliance behavior in public sector contexts.

This study addresses this gap by developing and empirically testing a model that links organizational justice dimensions to minimum-compliance behavior among public sector employees. The model proposes that perceptions of procedural and interactional justice are particularly influential in shaping behavioral restraint, as they signal respect, voice, and legitimacy within hierarchical public organizations. Trust in management and intrinsic motivation are examined as mediating mechanisms through which fairness perceptions translate into compliance-based behavioral withdrawal rather than overt disengagement.

By focusing explicitly on minimum-compliance behavior, this research advances the organizational justice literature in three ways. First, it introduces a behaviorally grounded construct that captures a common but under-theorized response to perceived injustice in public employment. Second, it shifts analytical attention from attitudes to observable behavioral patterns that are highly relevant for public sector performance. Third, it provides a context-sensitive understanding of fairness outcomes that reflects the institutional realities of public organizations rather than private sector assumptions.

In doing so, the study offers both theoretical and practical contributions. Theoretically, it refines justice-outcome relationships by incorporating employment context as a conditioning factor. Practically, it highlights the risks of interpreting formal compliance as genuine engagement and underscores the importance of fairness-oriented human resource practices in sustaining discretionary effort within public organizations.

## 2. Conceptual Framework and Hypotheses Development

### 2.1 Organizational Justice in Public Sector Contexts

Organizational justice theory distinguishes among distributive, procedural, and interactional justice, each reflecting a different aspect of fairness perceptions in the workplace. In public

sector organizations, these dimensions carry particular significance due to formalized rules, hierarchical decision-making structures, and strong expectations of legitimacy and impartiality.

Distributive justice concerns the perceived fairness of outcomes such as pay, promotion, and workload allocation. Procedural justice refers to the fairness of decision-making processes, including consistency, transparency, and opportunities for employee voice. Interactional justice captures the quality of interpersonal treatment employees receive from supervisors, including respect, dignity, and adequacy of explanations.

While all three dimensions are theoretically relevant, their behavioral consequences may differ substantially in public organizations, where outcomes are often constrained by regulation and discretion is limited.

## 2.2 Minimum-Compliance Behavior as a Context-Specific Response

This study conceptualizes *minimum-compliance behavior* as a deliberate pattern of behavior in which employees fulfill formal job requirements while withholding discretionary effort, initiative, and proactive engagement. Unlike counterproductive work behavior, minimum-compliance behavior does not violate rules or norms. Unlike disengagement or absenteeism, it does not involve withdrawal from attendance or task completion. Instead, it represents a rational adaptation to perceived unfairness under conditions of constrained exit.

In public sector contexts, minimum-compliance behavior is a particularly viable response because employees face limited external labor mobility and strong employment protection. When fairness expectations are violated, employees may seek to restore perceived equity not by leaving the organization, but by recalibrating their effort to the minimum level required.

## 2.3 Distributive Justice and Minimum-Compliance Behavior

Distributive justice reflects the perceived fairness of tangible outcomes. In public organizations, however, outcome distributions are often standardized, regulated, and weakly differentiated. As a result, employees may perceive distributive injustice as difficult to challenge or correct through behavioral adjustment.

Although unfair outcomes may generate dissatisfaction, they may not directly translate into minimum-compliance behavior, particularly when outcomes are perceived as structurally fixed. This suggests that distributive justice may play a weaker role in shaping behavioral restraint compared to other justice dimensions.

### Hypothesis 1 (H1):

Distributive justice is negatively associated with minimum-compliance behavior among public sector employees.

## 2.4 Procedural Justice and Minimum-Compliance Behavior

Procedural justice is especially salient in public organizations, where decision-making processes signal legitimacy, respect, and institutional integrity. When employees perceive procedures as fair, transparent, and consistently applied, they are more likely to accept unfavorable outcomes and remain behaviorally engaged.



Conversely, when procedures are perceived as biased, opaque, or exclusionary, employees may respond by reducing discretionary effort. Procedural injustice undermines employees' sense of voice and agency, making minimum-compliance behavior a rational and low-risk response.

### **Hypothesis 2 (H2):**

Procedural justice is negatively associated with minimum-compliance behavior among public sector employees.

## **2.5 Interactional Justice and Minimum-Compliance Behavior**

Interactional justice captures the interpersonal dimension of fairness and reflects how decisions are communicated and enacted by supervisors. In public organizations, daily interactions with immediate supervisors often shape employees lived experience of fairness more directly than formal policies.

Disrespectful treatment, inadequate explanations, or dismissive communication can signal a lack of recognition and value, even when formal procedures are followed. Such experiences may prompt employees to withdraw discretionary effort while maintaining formal compliance.

### **Hypothesis 3 (H3):**

Interactional justice is negatively associated with minimum-compliance behavior among public sector employees.

## **2.6 The Mediating Role of Trust in Management**

Trust in management reflects employees' belief that organizational authorities act with integrity, competence, and concern for employee interests. Organizational justice perceptions are a primary antecedent of trust, particularly in hierarchical public sector environments.

When employees perceive fairness, they are more likely to trust management and interpret organizational demands as legitimate. In contrast, perceived injustice erodes trust, increasing the likelihood that employees will comply minimally rather than invest discretionary effort.

### **Hypothesis 4 (H4):**

Trust in management mediates the relationship between organizational justice dimensions and minimum-compliance behavior.

## **2.7 The Mediating Role of Intrinsic Motivation**

Intrinsic motivation refers to engagement in work for its inherent interest, meaning, or satisfaction. Fair treatment reinforces intrinsic motivation by signaling respect, autonomy, and meaningful participation. In public organizations, intrinsic motivation is a critical driver of discretionary effort, given the limited role of performance-based incentives.

Perceived injustice undermines intrinsic motivation by framing work as externally imposed and psychologically unrewarding. As intrinsic motivation declines, employees may continue to comply with formal requirements while disengaging from voluntary contributions.

### **Hypothesis 5 (H5):**

Intrinsic motivation mediates the relationship between organizational justice dimensions and minimum-compliance behavior.

### **2.8 Differential Effects of Justice Dimensions**

Given the structural characteristics of public organizations, this study expects procedural and interactional justice to exert stronger effects on minimum-compliance behavior than distributive justice. These dimensions directly shape perceptions of legitimacy, respect, and voice, which are central to sustaining discretionary effort in constrained employment contexts.

### **Hypothesis 6 (H6):**

Procedural and interactional justice have stronger indirect effects on minimum-compliance behavior than distributive justice.

### **2.9 Summary of the Conceptual Model**

The proposed framework positions minimum-compliance behavior as a context-specific behavioral outcome shaped by organizational justice perceptions in public sector employment. By incorporating trust in management and intrinsic motivation as mediating mechanisms, the model explains how fairness perceptions translate into behavioral restraint rather than overt disengagement or exit.

## **3. Methodology**

### **3.1 Research Design**

This study employs a quantitative, cross-sectional research design to examine the relationship between organizational justice dimensions and minimum-compliance behavior among public sector employees. A survey-based approach was selected to capture employees' perceptions of fairness, trust, motivation, and behavioral responses within institutional contexts characterized by limited exit options and high employment stability.

Structural equation modeling was used to test the proposed conceptual framework, allowing simultaneous estimation of direct and indirect effects and enabling robust mediation analysis.

### **3.2 Sample and Data Collection**

Data were collected from employees working in public sector organizations across multiple administrative units. To ensure meaningful exposure to organizational procedures and supervisory practices, participation was limited to full-time employees with a minimum organizational tenure of one year.

A purposive sampling strategy was applied to target employees across different job levels and functional roles. The survey was distributed electronically, and participation was voluntary and anonymous. Respondents were informed about the academic purpose of the study and assured that no identifying information would be collected.

After data screening and removal of incomplete or inconsistent responses, the final sample size was sufficient for structural equation modeling in line with established methodological guidelines.

### 3.3 Measures

All constructs were measured using established scales adapted to the public sector context. Responses were recorded on a five-point Likert scale ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree.

**Distributive Justice** was measured using items assessing perceived fairness of outcomes such as workload allocation, performance evaluation, and recognition. Items were adapted from widely used organizational justice scales, with wording adjusted to reflect public sector compensation and reward structures.

**Procedural Justice** was measured through items capturing consistency, transparency, neutrality, and opportunities for employee voice in organizational decision-making processes.

**Interactional Justice** was assessed using items reflecting respectful treatment, adequacy of explanations, and interpersonal sensitivity demonstrated by supervisors.

**Trust in Management** was measured using items assessing employees' confidence in managerial integrity, competence, and fairness.

**Intrinsic Motivation** was measured using items capturing enjoyment, interest, and personal meaning derived from work tasks, independent of external rewards.

**Minimum-Compliance Behavior** was operationalized as a behavioral construct reflecting strict adherence to formal job requirements combined with reduced discretionary effort. Items focused on behavioral tendencies such as limiting initiative, avoiding extra-role tasks, and performing only what is explicitly required.

Scale adaptation followed standard translation and back-translation procedures where applicable to ensure conceptual equivalence.

### 3.4 Control Variables

Several control variables were included to account for alternative explanations. These included age, gender, organizational tenure, job level, and perceived job security. Job security was included due to its relevance in shaping behavioral responses to perceived injustice in public sector employment.

### 3.5 Data Analysis

Data analysis proceeded in two stages. First, the measurement model was assessed to examine reliability and validity. Internal consistency was evaluated using composite reliability and Cronbach's alpha. Convergent validity was assessed through factor loadings and average variance extracted values, while discriminant validity was evaluated using established criteria.

Second, the structural model was tested to examine hypothesized relationships among constructs. Direct effects, indirect effects, and mediation paths were assessed using bootstrapping procedures. Model fit was evaluated using multiple fit indices consistent with best practices in structural equation modeling.

### 3.6 Common Method Bias

Given the self-reported nature of the data, procedural remedies were implemented to reduce common method bias, including assured anonymity, careful item wording, and psychological separation of constructs. Statistical assessments were conducted post hoc to evaluate the potential influence of common method variance.

### **3.7 Ethical Considerations**

The study followed standard ethical guidelines for social science research. Participation was voluntary, informed consent was obtained electronically, and respondents were free to withdraw at any time. No sensitive personal data were collected, and all analyses were conducted using aggregated data.

### **3.8 Methodological Summary**

The methodological approach provides a rigorous foundation for examining how organizational justice perceptions shape minimum-compliance behavior in public sector contexts. By integrating validated measurement instruments with robust analytical techniques, the study ensures methodological transparency and empirical credibility.

## **4. Results**

### **4.1 Preliminary Analysis**

Prior to hypothesis testing, the dataset was examined for missing values, outliers, and distributional assumptions. No severe violations of normality or multicollinearity were detected. Descriptive statistics indicated sufficient variability across all constructs, supporting their suitability for multivariate analysis.

Correlation analysis revealed that distributive, procedural, and interactional justice were negatively correlated with minimum-compliance behavior, while trust in management and intrinsic motivation was positively correlated with justice perceptions and negatively correlated with minimum-compliance behavior. These initial patterns provided preliminary support for the proposed conceptual framework.

### **4.2 Measurement Model Assessment**

The measurement model was evaluated to assess reliability, convergent validity, and discriminant validity.

All constructs demonstrated satisfactory internal consistency, with Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability values exceeding recommended thresholds. Standardized factor loadings were statistically significant and above acceptable levels, indicating strong item reliability. Average variance extracted values met established criteria, supporting convergent validity.

Discriminant validity was confirmed through comparison of construct correlations and variance extracted values, indicating that each construct captured a distinct conceptual domain. Overall, the measurement model exhibited an acceptable fit to the data, providing a sound basis for testing the structural relationships.

### **4.3 Structural Model and Hypothesis Testing**



The structural model demonstrated an acceptable overall fit based on multiple goodness-of-fit indices. Path coefficients were estimated to test the hypothesized relationships between organizational justice dimensions, mediators, and minimum-compliance behavior.

Distributive justice was negatively associated with minimum-compliance behavior, providing support for Hypothesis 1. However, the magnitude of this relationship was relatively modest compared to other justice dimensions.

Procedural justice exhibited a strong and significant negative association with minimum-compliance behavior, supporting Hypothesis 2. Employees who perceived decision-making processes as fair and transparent were substantially less likely to engage in minimum-compliance behavior.

Interactional justice was also negatively and significantly associated with minimum-compliance behavior, supporting Hypothesis 3. Respectful treatment and adequate communication by supervisors were associated with lower levels of behavioral minimalism.

#### 4.4 Mediation Analysis

Mediation effects were tested using bootstrapping procedures to estimate indirect effects and confidence intervals.

Results indicated that trust in management partially mediated the relationships between organizational justice dimensions and minimum-compliance behavior, supporting Hypothesis 4. Higher perceptions of fairness were associated with greater trust, which in turn reduced the likelihood of minimum-compliance behavior.

Intrinsic motivation also emerged as a significant mediator, supporting Hypothesis 5. Fair treatment was associated with higher intrinsic motivation, which reduced employees' tendency to limit their effort to formal job requirements.

Consistent with Hypothesis 6, procedural and interactional justice demonstrated stronger indirect effects on minimum-compliance behavior through trust and intrinsic motivation than distributive justice. This finding highlights the central role of legitimacy, voice, and interpersonal respect in shaping behavioral responses to fairness in public sector contexts.

#### 4.5 Summary of Results

Overall, the results provide strong empirical support for the proposed model. While all three justice dimensions were relevant, procedural and interactional justice emerged as the most influential predictors of minimum-compliance behavior. Trust in management and intrinsic motivation were confirmed as key psychological mechanisms linking fairness perceptions to behavioral restraint.

These findings validate minimum-compliance behavior as a distinct and empirically observable response to perceived injustice in public sector employment.

### 5. Discussion

This study set out to examine how public sector employees behaviorally respond to perceived organizational injustice under conditions of constrained exit and high employment stability. The

findings provide consistent support for the proposed framework and offer several important insights that extend organizational justice theory into public sector contexts.

First, the results confirm that organizational justice remains a critical determinant of employee behavior in public organizations. However, the nature of the behavioral response differs from patterns commonly observed in private sector settings. Rather than leading primarily to turnover intention or overt withdrawal, perceived injustice in public organizations manifests as minimum-compliance behavior, a subtle yet consequential form of behavioral restraint. These findings challenge implicit assumptions in the justice literature that unfairness necessarily produces visible resistance or disengagement.

Second, the differential effects of justice dimensions provide important theoretical clarification. Procedural and interactional justice emerged as stronger predictors of minimum-compliance behavior than distributive justice. This pattern reflects the institutional realities of public sector employment, where outcomes such as pay and promotion are often standardized and difficult to influence. In contrast, fair procedures and respectful treatment signal legitimacy, voice, and recognition, which are central to sustaining discretionary effort in hierarchical and rule-bound organizations.

Third, the mediating roles of trust in management and intrinsic motivation shed light on the psychological mechanisms underlying minimum-compliance behavior. When employees perceive fairness, they are more likely to trust management and experience intrinsic motivation in their work. These psychological states reduce the likelihood that employees will restrict their effort to formal job requirements. Conversely, perceived injustice erodes trust and intrinsic motivation, making behavioral minimalism a rational and low-risk adaptation rather than an act of defiance.

Importantly, minimum-compliance behavior should not be interpreted as apathy or laziness. The findings suggest that it is a calculated response shaped by institutional constraints and perceived inequity. Employees continue to meet formal expectations, protecting themselves from sanctions, while withdrawing voluntary contributions that are not explicitly rewarded or recognized. This interpretation aligns with equity-based perspectives, in which individuals seek to restore balance by adjusting their inputs when outcomes or processes are perceived as unfair.

The findings also contribute to public administration scholarship by highlighting a behavioral blind spot in public sector performance management. Formal compliance is often interpreted as engagement, particularly in digitally monitored or procedure-driven environments. However, the results indicate that compliance can coexist with disengagement, masking deeper motivational erosion. This distinction is critical for understanding why public organizations may experience declining innovation, responsiveness, or service quality despite stable staffing and formal performance indicators.

Overall, this study advances organizational justice theory by incorporating employment context as a conditioning factor in justice-behavior relationships. It demonstrates that the consequences of fairness perceptions are not uniform across sectors and that public sector employment structures fundamentally shape how employees translate injustice into behavior.

## **6. Practical Implications for Public Human Resource Management**

The findings of this study offer several important implications for public human resource management and administrative practice. They suggest that fairness failures in public organizations do not necessarily lead to visible resistance or turnover, but may quietly erode organizational effectiveness through minimum-compliance behavior.

First, public sector managers should avoid equating formal compliance with genuine engagement. Employees who strictly meet procedural requirements may still be behaviorally disengaged. Performance management systems that focus exclusively on rule adherence, output completion, or attendance are likely to overlook early signs of motivational erosion. Incorporating indicators of discretionary effort, initiative, and problem-solving engagement can provide a more accurate assessment of workforce effectiveness.

Second, the results underscore the central importance of procedural justice in public organizations. Transparent decision-making, consistent rule application, and meaningful opportunities for employee voice play a critical role in sustaining discretionary effort. Public managers should ensure that employees understand how decisions are made, why certain outcomes occur, and how concerns can be raised and addressed. Even when outcomes cannot be altered, fair procedures can prevent the emergence of minimum-compliance behavior.

Third, interactional justice emerges as a key managerial lever that is often underestimated. Respectful communication, timely explanations, and interpersonal sensitivity from supervisors significantly reduce employees' tendency to withdraw discretionary effort. Public sector leadership development programs should therefore place greater emphasis on interpersonal competence and communication skills, not merely technical or regulatory expertise.

Fourth, trust in management should be treated as a strategic resource rather than an abstract attitude. The findings suggest that trust acts as a psychological buffer against behavioral withdrawal. Public organizations can strengthen trust by aligning stated values with actual managerial behavior, addressing perceived inconsistencies in decision-making, and responding constructively to employee concerns. Once trust is eroded, restoring discretionary effort becomes substantially more difficult.

Fifth, intrinsic motivation should be actively protected within public sector work environments. While public organizations often rely on intrinsic motivation to compensate for limited financial incentives, perceived injustice can quickly undermine this resource. Job design practices that enhance task meaning, autonomy within procedural limits, and recognition of voluntary contributions can help sustain intrinsic motivation and reduce the likelihood of minimum-compliance behavior.

Finally, public HR policies should explicitly recognize minimum-compliance behavior as a risk indicator rather than a disciplinary issue. Addressing behavioral minimalism through stricter monitoring or punitive measures may reinforce perceptions of unfairness and accelerate disengagement. Instead, fairness-oriented interventions focused on procedures, communication, and trust repair are more likely to restore discretionary effort and organizational vitality.

## 7. Limitations and Future Research

Several limitations of this study should be acknowledged. First, the cross-sectional design restricts the ability to draw strong causal conclusions. Although the proposed relationships are

theoretically grounded and empirically supported, longitudinal research would allow for a more precise examination of how justice perceptions evolve over time and how minimum-compliance behavior develops or stabilizes in response to sustained unfairness.

Second, the study relies on self-reported data, which may introduce perceptual bias. While procedural remedies were implemented to reduce common method bias, future research could strengthen validity by incorporating alternative data sources, such as supervisor assessments, peer evaluations, or behavioral indicators of discretionary effort.

Third, the study focuses on public sector organizations within a specific institutional context. Variations in administrative traditions, employment protection regimes, and cultural norms may influence how justice perceptions translate into behavior. Comparative studies across different public administration systems or between public and quasi-public organizations would provide valuable insight into the generalizability of minimum-compliance behavior.

Future research could extend this work in several directions. Scholars may further refine the measurement of minimum-compliance behavior and examine its long-term organizational consequences, such as impacts on service quality, innovation capacity, and organizational learning. Additional mediators or moderators, including leadership style, perceived organizational support, or ethical climate, could also be explored to identify conditions under which fairness failures are more or less likely to result in behavioral minimalism.

## 8. Conclusion

This study advances understanding of organizational justice in public sector employment by highlighting a subtle but consequential behavioral response to perceived unfairness. Rather than disengaging through absenteeism, turnover, or overt resistance, public sector employees facing injustice may remain fully compliant while deliberately restricting their effort to formal job requirements.

By introducing and empirically validating the concept of minimum-compliance behavior, this research challenges conventional assumptions about justice outcomes and underscores the importance of employment context in shaping employee behavior. The findings demonstrate that procedural and interactional justice play a particularly critical role in sustaining discretionary effort, operating through trust in management and intrinsic motivation.

The study contributes to public administration and human resource management literature by shifting attention from visible compliance to underlying behavioral engagement. For public organizations, the results underscore a central lesson: fairness failures may not provoke immediate disruption, but their long-term costs can be substantial. Sustaining effective public service delivery requires not only rule adherence, but also fairness-based management practices that preserve trust, motivation, and voluntary contribution.

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