The Mediating Role of Employee Engagement in the Effect of Organizational Justice on Employee Performance in the Digital Work Transformation Era

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ABSTRACT

Digital work transformation has changed how organizations are set up and how they measure performance. However, unclear processes, excessive monitoring, and decisions made solely by automated systems can make outcomes less fair and reduce engagement and performance. This study looks at how organizational justice, employee engagement, and employee performance are linked in digital work environments. We reviewed 56 English-language journal articles from Scopus and Web of Science published between 2016 and 2026. Our approach included a search protocol, eligibility criteria, an extraction matrix, and a quality checklist. We used reference management and visualization tools to organize and map the data, then analyzed the findings by theme. The results show that organizational justice usually leads to higher employee engagement and better individual performance. Employee engagement often acts as a link, but this effect is usually partial and depends on the situation. Procedural and informational justice are especially important for digital decisions, while distributive and interpersonal justice still matter for resource allocation and respectful treatment. Technology can be helpful or stressful, depending on how transparent, accountable, and fair the processes are, and whether employees have a say. In short, sustainable performance in digital workplaces depends on fair, transparent, participatory, and human-centered practices.

Keywords: Organizational Justice, Employee Engagement, Employee Perforrmance, Digital Work Transformation Era.

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INTRODUCTION

Digital work transformation has changed how organizations design jobs, assign tasks, evaluate work, and connect with employees. This change is more than just using digital tools. It includes artificial intelligence, remote and hybrid work, electronic performance monitoring, algorithmic management, and digital labor platforms. These technologies can make decisions faster, more flexible, and more consistent, but they can also create information gaps, reduce autonomy, and make accountability less clear. So, the success of digital transformation should not be measured only by how much technology is used. It is also important to consider the quality of employees' work experiences and whether organizational decisions are fair and legitimate.

A major issue from these changes is organizational justice, which is how employees judge the fairness of outcomes, processes, treatment, and information in workplace decisions. The four main types are distributive, procedural, interpersonal, and informational justice (Adamovic, 2023). In digital workplaces, fairness is shaped not only by managers or policies but also by systems that assign tasks, give scores, screen applicants, suggest promotions, or track work. Even if a system works correctly, employees may see it as unfair if its rules are hard to understand, there is no way to appeal, it collects too much data, or it leads to unequal results.

Organizational justice matters because it shapes how employees see their relationship with the organization. Social Exchange Theory says that fair treatment shows employees they are valued and supported, which leads to more trust, commitment, and effort (Blau, 1964; Demerouti & Bakker, 2023). However, fairness does not always lead straight to better performance. Fair treatment first needs to become energy, dedication, and focus at work. This is called employee engagement.

Employee engagement is about how much physical, mental, and emotional energy people put into their work (Saks, 2022; Lee & Jo, 2023). In the work engagement model, this means showing energy, dedication, and focus (Reig-Botella et al., 2024). When employees feel energized and find meaning in their work, they can keep up their effort, learn new things, adapt, help customers, and come up with new ideas. Engagement is the way that feelings of fairness lead to better performance in different areas.

Research supports this idea, but the results are not always the same. Faris and Lubis found that work engagement explained the link between organizational justice and employee performance in the public sector (Faris and Lubis, 2024). Aggarwal et al. also found that engagement connected perceived justice with both adaptive performance and innovative work in EdTech companies (Aggarwal et al. 2025). Zhou et al. 2026 saw a similar pattern in China's technology sector. However, some studies show that justice can also act as a buffer, moderator, or another kind of link, so engagement is not the only factor (Zhou et al. 2026). For example, De Angelis et al. showed that justice can protect against the negative effects of job insecurity on burnout and performance (De Angelis et al., 2021).

Digital environments make these differences even more noticeable. AI-based virtual assistants can increase employee engagement if people believe the systems are fair (Dutta & Mishra, 2025). Electronic monitoring can help employees learn and grow if it feels fair, but it can also become a burden if it threatens privacy and control. Soomro et al. found that the link between electronic monitoring and engagement depends on how fair employees think it is and how connected they feel to the organization (Soomro et al., 2026). On digital labor platforms, fair pay, autonomy, and information sharing support engagement, while job insecurity, poor algorithmic interactions, and unfair algorithms lead to burnout (Hajiheydari & Soltani Delgosha, 2024). This shows that technology is not neutral. How it is designed and managed determines if it helps or harms employees.

Research in this area is still divided in several ways. Many studies focus on just one part of the relationship, such as justice and engagement or engagement and performance. Definitions of engagement and how performance is measured also vary between studies. Research on AI, remote work, electronic monitoring, and algorithmic management is often done separately. Most studies use cross-sectional designs and self-reported data, which makes it hard to prove cause and effect. Because of these gaps, there is a need for a review that clearly separates direct evidence from supporting and context-specific evidence.

This study addresses three research questions: (1) How does empirical evidence explain the relationships among organizational justice, employee engagement, and employee performance? (2) To what extent does employee engagement serve as a mediator? and (3) How does digital work transformation shape or alter these relationships? The novelty of this review lies in integrating justice as an antecedent, engagement as a psychological mechanism, individual performance as an outcome, and digital transformation as a sociotechnical context within a single framework. In practical terms, the review seeks to formulate principles for digital governance that are fair, transparent, human-centered, and performance-oriented.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Organizational Justice in Digital Work

Organizational justice includes four main parts, each with its own focus. Distributive justice examines whether outcomes such as pay, workload, opportunities, and rewards are fair. Procedural justice focuses on ensuring processes are consistent, fair, accurate, and allow people to have a say or challenge decisions. Interpersonal justice means treating people with dignity, courtesy, and respect. Informational justice deals with how honest, complete, and timely explanations are (Adamovic, 2023). In digital human resource management, all four types can happen at the same time. Algorithms can decide distributions, set up procedures, replace some human interactions, and provide information for decisions.

In remote work settings, unequal access to information and delayed explanations can generate negative perceptions of work-from-home policies (Lane & Aplin-Houtz, 2023). In digital performance appraisal, fairness is shaped by the transparency of criteria, the relevance of the data used, the proportionality of monitoring, and opportunities to challenge or correct outcomes. Uraon and Kumarasamy found that procedural, distributive, interpersonal, and informational justice in performance appraisal all enhanced job engagement. These findings indicate that fairness is not an optional attribute but a source of legitimacy for digital policies (Uraon & Kumarasamy, 2024).

Employee Engagement

Kahn, Lee, and Jo describe engagement as a state where people express themselves physically, mentally, and emotionally in their work roles (Kahn, 1990; Lee & Jo, 2023). Later, the work engagement tradition defined this state using vigor, dedication, and absorption (Reig-Botella et al., 2024). Although the terms employee engagement, work engagement, and job engagement are related, they do not mean exactly the same thing. Employee engagement can include a person's connection to both their job and the organization. Work engagement usually refers to a motivational state during work activities, while job engagement focuses on how much a person invests themselves in a specific role. This review uses the terms from each original study to keep these differences clear.

Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) Theory says that engagement grows when job resources like justice, autonomy, information, support, feedback, and psychological safety help employees reach their goals and balance job demands (Bakker et al., 2023). In digital settings, technology is a resource if it gives more access to information, speeds up coordination, and lets employees have a voice. But it becomes a demand if it increases surveillance, complexity, insecurity, or confusion in decision-making. Engagement is a response to how well the social and technical parts of work fit together, not just a result of using more technology.

Employee Performance

Employee performance has several parts. Task performance is about completing main job duties. Contextual performance includes actions that support the social and psychological work environment. Adaptive performance is the ability to handle change well (Bravo-Duarte et al., 2025). Innovative work behavior means coming up with and using new ideas (Srirahayu et al., 2023). Service performance focuses on the quality of service given to customers (Dong & Hon, 2025). Organizational citizenship behavior is seen as contextual performance when it includes contributions beyond official job duties. Organizational performance is not the same as individual performance because they are measured at different levels (Bravo-Duarte et al., 2025).

These differences in outcomes explain why the observed magnitude of the engagement–performance relationship varies across studies. Energy and concentration may more directly benefit routine task execution, whereas adaptive and innovative performance also depend on autonomy, leadership, a supportive climate for errors, and space for experimentation. On digital platforms, service performance is influenced by algorithmic transparency through task crafting and reduced negative work rumination—yet this effect shifts depending on perceptions of algorithmic injustice (Liu et al., 2025). Consequently, this synthesis does not treat all performance measures as a homogeneous outcome but acknowledges their distinct conceptual and empirical boundaries.

Differences among performance outcomes help explain why the strength of the engagement-performance relationship varies. Energy and concentration may more directly support routine tasks, whereas adaptive and innovative performance also depend on autonomy, leadership, an error-tolerant climate, and opportunities to experiment. On digital platforms, service performance is influenced by algorithmic transparency through task crafting and reduced negative work rumination, while this effect varies according to perceived algorithmic injustice (Liu et al., 2025). This review does not treat all performance measures as the same.

Theoretical Integration and Conceptual Framework

Social Exchange Theory explains that fairness shows employees they are valued, which encourages them to give back through engagement and effort. JD-R Theory describes how fairness, transparency, voice, and autonomy act as resources that help employees stay energetic and dedicated. Organizational justice theory adds that employees judge not just outcomes, but also procedures, treatment, and explanations. Taken together, these ideas suggest a main pathway: organizational justice leads to employee engagement, which then leads to better employee performance.



Figure 1. Conceptual Framework

However, there may also be a direct link between justice and performance. This direct effect could happen through factors like trust, identification with the organization, commitment, or less burnout. Keeping this direct path in the analysis helps determine if mediation is partial or complete, which is important for research. In addition, digital work transformation is seen as a broad influence that affects all the concepts and their relationships, not just as one simple variable. This approach helps capture the complex social and technical changes that come with digitalization in the analysis.

RESEARCH METHODS

Research Design and Prisma Framework

This study used a systematic literature review along with bibliometric analysis. The identification, screening, eligibility, and inclusion steps followed PRISMA 2020 (Page et al., 2021), and the search strategy was made transparent using PRISMA-S (Rethlefsen et al., 2021). Bibliometric analysis mapped the structure of terms, while thematic synthesis explored the mediating mechanism. This approach ensured that word frequencies were not mistaken for causal evidence and that conclusions were based on the actual content and findings of the included studies.

The final search was conducted on July 24, 2026, in Scopus and Web of Science. It covered titles, abstracts, and keywords of English-language journal articles published between January 1, 2016, and July 24, 2026. Study selection proceeded in stages using the PRISMA 2020 flow diagram. After removing 5 duplicate records, 146 records remained for screening. Three records were excluded for not being in English, so 143 reports were considered for retrieval. Of these, 28 could not be retrieved, leaving 115 full-text articles for eligibility assessment by three researchers. The first researcher checked each article against the inclusion and exclusion criteria. The second and third researchers reviewed the articles for topical relevance, methodological suitability, disciplinary fit, and whether they included analyzable findings. If there were disagreements, the researchers discussed them until they reached agreement. At this point, 59 articles were excluded: 43 were not relevant to organizational justice, employee engagement, individual performance, or digital work; 13 did not meet the methodological criteria or lacked analyzable findings; and three were outside the relevant fields of management, business, human resource management, organizational psychology, economics, or other social sciences. In the end, 56 articles met all the criteria and were included in the final synthesis.

Search Strategy and Data Retrieval

Scopus and Web of Science were used to find articles about employee engagement as a mediator between organizational justice and employee performance during digital work transformation. Both databases offer multidisciplinary metadata and citation information suitable for management reviews and bibliometric analysis (Pranckutė, 2021). The search included titles, abstracts, and keywords, focusing on four main topics: organizational justice, employee engagement, employee performance, and digital work transformation. Boolean operators, keyword synonyms, wildcards, and truncation were used to expand the search while keeping it relevant.

Table 1. Database Specific Search Strings

Data Base	Search String
Scopus	TITLE-ABS-KEY("organizational justice" OR "organisational justice" OR "workplace justice" OR "organizational fairness" OR "organisational fairness" OR "workplace fairness" OR "distributive justice" OR "procedural justice" OR "interactional justice" OR "interpersonal justice" OR "informational justice") AND ("employee engag*" OR "work engag*" OR "job engag*" OR "staff engag*" OR "personal engag*") AND ("employee perform*" OR "job perform*" OR "work perform*" OR "individual perform*" OR "task perform*" OR "contextual perform*" OR "adaptive perform*" OR "innovative perform*" OR "in-role perform*" OR "extra-role perform*" OR "employee productiv*" OR "work productiv*") AND ("digital transform*" OR "digital work*" OR "digital workplace*" OR digitali?ation OR digiti?ation OR "remote work*" OR telework* OR "virtual work*" OR "hybrid work*" OR "flexible work arrangement*" OR "technology-mediated work*" OR "technology-enabled work*" OR "ICT-enabled work*" OR "e-HRM" OR "electronic human resource management")
Web of Science	TS= (organi?ational justice) OR (workplace justice) OR (distributive justice) OR (procedural justice) OR (interactional justice) OR (interpersonal justice) OR (informational justice)) AND ((employee engag*) OR (work engag*) OR (job engag*)) AND ((employee perform*) OR (job perform*) OR (work perform*) OR (task perform*) OR (contextual perform*) OR (adaptive perform*) OR (innovative perform*) OR productiv*) AND ((digital transform*) OR (digital workplace*) OR (digital work*) OR digitali?ation OR digiti?ation OR (remote work*) OR telework* OR telecommut* OR (hybrid work*) OR (virtual work*) OR (technology mediated work*) OR (technology enabled work*) OR (digital monitor*)

Source: Primary Data, 2026

The search results were exported in RIS format with metadata on titles, authors, publication years, journals, abstracts, keywords, affiliations, DOIs, and citations. A total of 151 journal articles were retrieved: 110 from Scopus and 41 from Web of Science. All records were then imported into Mendeley Reference Manager to consolidate the collection, verify metadata, remove duplicates, annotate records, and organize full texts.

Analysis Tool Preparation

Mendeley Reference Manager was used to manage metadata, identify duplicates, store full texts, add annotations, and assign tags. The tags captured justice dimensions, types of engagement, forms of performance, digital contexts, theories, research designs, and evidence categories: direct mediation, justice-engagement relationships, engagement-performance relationships, and contextual evidence. Mendeley was not used as a statistical analysis tool.

VOSviewer was used to analyze how terms co-occur and to create network, overlay, and density visualizations. Metadata were standardized using a thesaurus that combined different spellings, such as merging OCB with organizational citizenship behavior. General or methodological terms like author, paper, survey, hypothesis, work, impact, and participant were left out. Gamification was also left out unless the article specifically discussed fairness, engagement, or performance at work. After checking the

context, ADM was defined as either algorithmic decision-making or algorithmic management. The analysis used full counting, association-strength normalization, and required at least two occurrences.

Data Extraction, Quality Appraisal, and Synthesis

The data extraction matrix included details such as the author and publication year, country, research sector, sample characteristics, research design, analytical method, theoretical foundation, organizational justice dimensions, definitions and measures of employee engagement, types of performance, digital work transformation context, relationship coefficients, mediation test results, key findings, and study limitations. The quality appraisal process was adjusted based on the type of article. For primary studies, we used the 2018 Mixed Methods Appraisal Tool, focusing on the clarity of the research question, the appropriateness of the sampling strategy, measurement validity, the suitability of the analytical method, how completely results were reported, and any potential risk of bias (Hong et al., 2018). Review articles were evaluated separately using a suitable tool, such as A Measurement Tool to Assess Systematic Reviews 2 (AMSTAR 2). We recorded appraisal results for each criterion and presented them in a quality appraisal matrix, rather than combining them into a single score. This approach helped us assess the strength of the evidence, identify different levels of reliability, and ensure that weaker studies did not carry the same weight as stronger ones.

The synthesis took place in three steps. First, we described how studies were selected and outlined the main terms used. Second, we used bibliometric mapping to find key concepts and see how they developed over time. Third, we carried out a thematic synthesis that combined both deductive and inductive approaches. Deductive codes followed the pathway from justice to engagement to performance, while inductive codes included trust, identification, autonomy, job insecurity, burnout, remote work, EPM, AI, and algorithmic management. We classified mediation evidence as direct, partial, full, nonsignificant, or not tested. We did not conduct a meta-analysis because the studies were too different in terms of constructs, outcome measures, designs, units of analysis, sectoral contexts, and how coefficients were reported.

RESULTS

Study Selection and Evidence Base

After applying the PRISMA process, 37.1% of the 151 initially identified articles were included, along with 48.7% of the 115 full-text articles reviewed. Most exclusions resulted from articles not addressing the primary relationships (n = 43) or the inability to retrieve full texts (n = 28). These findings indicate that references to engagement or performance in titles or abstracts do not necessarily signify relevance to an employee-level mediation model.

Table 2. Quantified Evidence Streams

Evidence category	n	Operational interpretation
Complete direct mediation model	3	Organizational justice → employee/work engagement → individual performance was tested in one model.
Justice–engagement	17	A justice construct and employee, work, or job engagement were related in the tested model.
Engagement–performance	5	Engagement was related to an individual task, adaptive, innovative, service, or overall performance outcome.
Digital contextual evidence	26	The study examined AI, EPM, algorithms/platforms, remote or virtual work, gamification, or technology-mediated work.

Note: Keempat aliran bukti tersebut tidak saling eksklusif; satu artikel dapat berkontribusi pada lebih dari satu aliran dan jumlahnya tidak boleh dijumlahkan menjadi 56.

The final set of articles was categorized into four groups: studies testing the full mediation pathway, those examining the justice-engagement link, those focusing on the engagement-performance link, and digital studies explaining sociotechnical conditions. This classification ensured that studies providing only a digital context were not misinterpreted as direct evidence of mediation.

Table 3. Selected Recurring Terms Before Final Synonym Consolidation

Term	Occurrences	Analytical role
engagement	73	Core motivational construct
work engagement	39	Work-focused engagement
job satisfaction	22	Attitudinal outcome
job engagement	16	Role-focused engagement
trust	16	Relational mechanism
EPM	15	Electronic performance monitoring
justice perception	15	Fairness evaluation
interpersonal justice	13	Justice dimension
innovative work behavior	13	Innovative performance
job performance	12	Individual performance
organisational justice	11	Spelling variant of organizational justice
technology / COVID	11 / 11	Digital-disruption context
job insecurity	10	Digital/job demand
virtual assistant	9	AI-enabled work context
remote work	6	Flexible-work context

Source: Primary Data, 2026

Engagement emerged as the most frequently used term, with work engagement also appearing regularly. This reflects the centrality of engagement but also highlights fragmentation in terminology. Justice was referenced both generally and specifically, while performance was described as job performance, innovative work behavior, and organizational citizenship behavior. Terms such as EPM,

virtual assistant, remote work, technology, and ADM confirmed the digital context, although these appeared less frequently than the primary psychological terms.



Figure 2. Network Visualization of Justice, Engagement, Performance, and Digital-Work Terms

Figure 2 does not depict a fully interconnected relationship among all constructs. Instead, engagement serves as a bridge between justice and performance, while trust links fairness experiences to digital governance. This configuration supports the mediation model and indicates that the literature continues to develop within distinct subthemes.

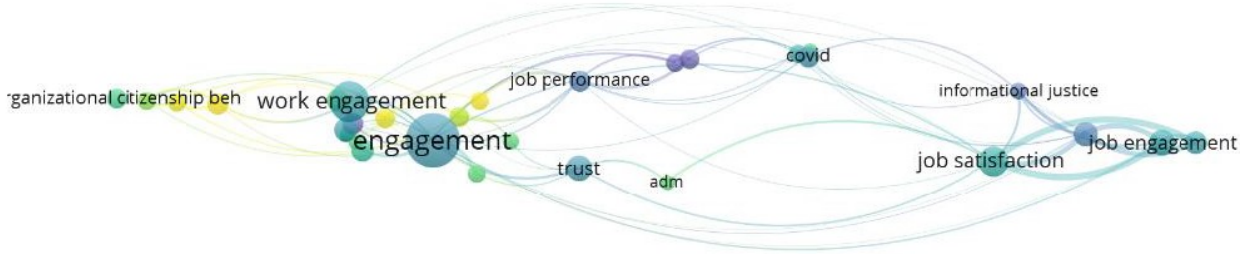


Figure 3. Overlay Visualization of Thematic Development

Figure 3 illustrates a shift from job performance and traditional work attitudes toward work engagement, organizational citizenship behavior (OCB), and digital work governance. ADM and technology-related terms have emerged more recently than traditional performance concepts. This trend suggests that research is transitioning from examining whether fairness affects performance to investigating how digital systems influence fairness and engagement.

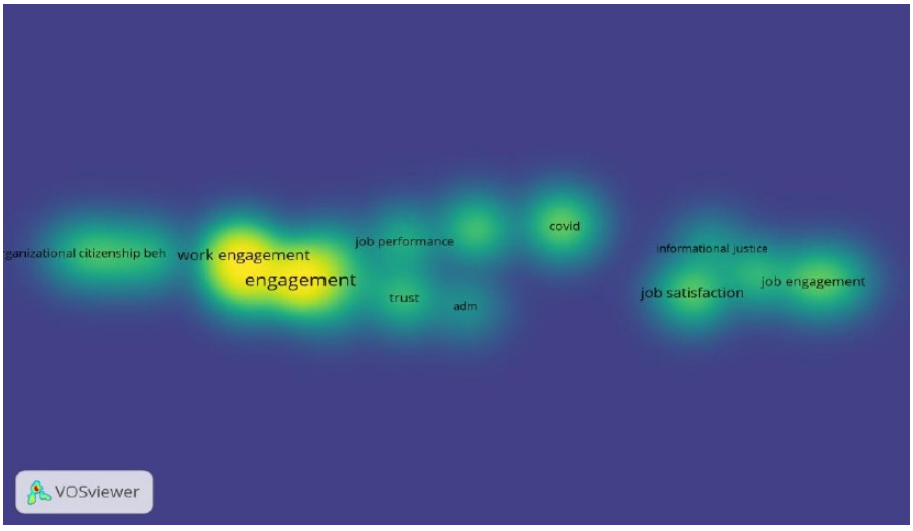


Figure 4. Density Visualization Of The Research Field

Figure 4 demonstrates that engagement and work engagement are the most prominent topics. Job performance and job satisfaction are also frequently addressed, whereas informational justice, job engagement, trust, ADM, and OCB are less central. This distribution reveals a research gap: although the justice-engagement link is well studied, its association with specific performance outcomes and technologies remains inconsistent.

Table 4. Representative Evidence Streams

Study	Context/design	Path	Interpretation
Ibrahim et al. (2024)	Public sector, Indonesia; SEM-PLS; n = 101	OJ → WE → employee performance	Direct mediation supported; indirect effect = 0.218, p = 0.004. Direct OJ → performance remained significant, indicating partial mediation.
Aggarwal et al. (2025)	EdTech; SEM; n = 489 digital natives	POJ → EE → adaptive performance / IWB	Employee engagement mediated the relationship; AI use and metaverse intention formed the digital boundary context.
Zhou et al. (2026)	ICT sector, China	Justice dimensions → WE → IWB	Work engagement mediated the effect of justice on innovative work behavior; authentic leadership operated as a boundary condition.
Cenkci et al. (2021)	IT professionals, Türkiye; SEM; n = 201	Procedural justice → WE	Procedural justice was positively associated with work engagement and mediated inclusive leadership effects; supports the first stage of the focal model.
Uraon & Kumarasamy (2024)	50 Indian IT firms; PLS-SEM; n = 503	Appraisal justice → job engagement → attitudes	All four justice dimensions supported job engagement; partial mediation appeared for job satisfaction and intention to stay, not individual performance.
Dutta & Mishra (2025)	AI-based virtual assistant	AI use → fairness → EE	AI-enabled assistance enhanced engagement and fairness perceptions; contextual evidence for the justice–engagement stage.
Soomro et al. (2026)	Electronic performance monitoring	EPM → POJ → identification → WE	Justice and identification explained how monitoring could foster engagement; not a direct test of employee performance.
Hajiheydari & Soltani Delgosha (2024)	Digital labor platforms / gig work	Algorithmic resources and demands → engagement / burnout	Algorithmic compensation, autonomy, and information sharing supported engagement; insecurity and algorithmic injustice increased burnout.
Liu et al. (2025)	Food-delivery riders, China; two-wave survey; n = 265	Algorithm transparency → crafting / rumination → service performance	Fairness perceptions conditioned the performance effects of transparency; engagement was not the tested mediator.
De Angelis et al. (2021)	Italian social cooperative; n = 370	Job insecurity → WFC / burnout → performance; OJ as buffer	Shows a justice-based alternative mechanism and cautions against treating engagement as the only pathway.

Source: Primary Data, 2026

The most robust evidence for the justice-engagement link is associated with procedural and informational justice. Within digital systems, employees require transparency regarding decision-making processes and opportunities to respond or challenge outcomes. Distributive justice becomes significant when technology determines rewards, workloads, or access to work. Interpersonal justice is particularly important when automation reduces human interaction or shifts communication to digital platforms.

Evidence for the engagement-performance link varies by performance type. Task performance is associated with energy and focus, whereas adaptive and innovative performance also require autonomy, supportive leadership, and opportunities for experimentation. OCB represents a form of contextual performance but is distinct from organizational performance. In direct mediation studies, the justice-performance link frequently remained significant after controlling for engagement, indicating partial mediation rather than engagement as the sole mediating factor.

The digital context presents two contrasting aspects. Transparency, fairness, voice, feedback, autonomy, and access to information can position technology as a job resource. In contrast, excessive surveillance, opaque criteria, job insecurity, and the lack of appeal mechanisms can transform technology into a demand that depletes psychological resources.

DISCUSSION

Employee Engagement as a Mediating Mechanism

The first research question identifies a consistent positive association between organizational justice and employee engagement (Uraon & Kumarasamy, 2024). Higher levels of employee engagement contribute to improved workplace performance, and this engagement partially mediates the relationship between justice and performance outcomes (Faris & Lubis, 2024). However, the strength of this effect varies according to the specific type of justice and the performance dimension assessed (Zhou et al., 2026). In digital environments, procedural and informational justice are particularly salient, as employees are more likely to accept algorithmic decisions when processes are transparent and perceived as fair (Liu et al., 2025). Distributive justice is especially critical when algorithms determine compensation or allocate resources (Hajiheydari & Soltani Delgosha, 2024). Interpersonal justice remains essential for ensuring respectful treatment, as negative algorithmic interactions can increase the risk of employee burnout (Hajiheydari & Soltani Delgosha, 2024).

The response to the second research question is more nuanced. Existing research indicates that employee engagement functions as a mediating variable, though evidence more strongly supports partial or conditional mediation rather than full mediation in all contexts. Faris and Lubis demonstrated that organizational justice continues to exert a direct effect on performance, even when engagement is accounted for (Faris and Lubis, 2024). Studies within EdTech and ICT domains have observed similar

patterns for adaptive and innovative performance outcomes (Aggarwal et al., 2025; Zhou et al., 2026). Additional research identifies trust, organizational identification, burnout, task crafting, and negative work rumination as further mediating or moderating factors. Thus, while engagement is significant, it is not the sole mechanism influencing the relationship between justice and performance.

This perspective aligns with Social Exchange Theory, which posits that fairness enhances relationships and motivates reciprocal contributions. However, Social Exchange Theory alone does not fully account for the sustained energy employees exhibit when confronting technological challenges. The Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) Theory addresses this limitation by conceptualizing fairness, information, autonomy, and support as critical workplace resources. Collectively, these theories elucidate both the evaluative processes underlying perceptions of fairness and the motivational resources that enable high performance.

Digital Work Transformation as a Boundary Context

The third research question reveals that digital transformation constitutes a multifaceted interplay of social and technical elements, rather than a singular influence. Digital transformation alters the relationships among organizational justice, engagement, and performance by shaping control, transparency, interaction, and autonomy within technologies such as artificial intelligence, electronic monitoring, remote work, and algorithmic management (Dutta & Mishra, 2025; Soomro et al., 2026; Lane & Aplin-Houtz, 2023; Hajiheydari & Soltani Delgosha, 2024; Liu et al., 2025). The impact on employees is highly contingent upon the design, explanation, and management of these systems.

These findings extend organizational justice theory to encompass not only interpersonal relationships but also interactions between individuals and technological systems. In this context, perceptions of fairness are influenced by the processes through which machine-generated decisions are formulated and communicated (Dutta & Mishra, 2025; Soomro et al., 2026; Hajiheydari & Soltani Delgosha, 2024; Liu et al., 2025). Regardless of whether decisions are made by algorithms or external technologies, organizations retain both ethical and managerial responsibilities. To uphold fairness, systems should provide transparent explanations, accessible appeal mechanisms, bias audits, explicit data usage policies, and opportunities for human oversight.

Theoretical Contributions

This review makes three primary contributions. First, it distinguishes between evidence of direct mediation and that of partial or contextual mediation, thereby preventing overgeneralization regarding the applicability of the full model in digital contexts. Second, it demonstrates that digital work transformation comprises both social and technical dimensions, which can generate job resources as well as demands.

Third, it maintains conceptual clarity by differentiating among various performance outcomes, rather than conflating task, contextual, adaptive, innovative, and service performance.

The proposed model constitutes a partial and conditional mediation framework. Organizational justice can enhance performance both directly and indirectly via employee engagement; however, these effects are contingent upon factors such as technology design, leadership, trust, organizational identification, autonomy, and the risk of burnout. This nuanced approach more accurately reflects the diversity observed in empirical research compared to models that posit a singular pathway from justice to performance.

Managerial Implications

The principal implication for managers is the need to integrate fairness into digital transformation initiatives from the outset. Justice considerations should be embedded within the design of policies and systems, rather than addressed only in response to emerging issues. Organizations can operationalize this principle through the following five strategies:

1. Clearly communicate the purpose, data, criteria, and limits of digital systems in language employees can understand;
2. Provide human oversight, employee voice, and appeal procedures for automated decisions;
3. Audit system bias and distributive effects across demographic groups, job categories, and employment arrangements;
4. Limit monitoring to data that are relevant, proportionate, secure, and governed by a clearly defined retention period; and
5. Evaluate transformation outcomes through a balanced set of indicators covering fairness, engagement, well-being, task performance, adaptability, innovation, and service quality.

The findings further underscore that digital tools cannot entirely substitute for face-to-face communication. Maintaining fairness requires clear explanations, mutual respect, and opportunities for dialogue in both interpersonal interactions and information sharing. In remote work settings, equitable access to information and participation must be ensured. Within digital platforms and electronic performance management (EPM) systems, feedback should be designed to support employee development rather than function solely as a mechanism of control.

CONCLUSION

This study Systematic Literature Review that organizational justice is a critical factor in enhancing employee engagement and performance. When employees perceive outcomes as fair, decisions as just, interpersonal respect as present, and information as openly shared, they are more likely to exert greater effort. Such effort contributes to improved job performance, adaptability, innovation, and service quality.

Employee engagement can mediate the relationship between fairness and performance, although this effect varies by type of justice, performance dimension, sector, and research context. The increasing prevalence of digital work environments introduces additional complexity to these relationships. Technologies such as artificial intelligence, electronic monitoring, remote work, and algorithmic management may enhance efficiency and performance if implemented transparently and consistently, with respect for employee autonomy. Conversely, these technologies may diminish engagement and elevate stress if perceived as mechanisms of constant surveillance, unfair task allocation, or unchallengeable decision-making. Digital transformation does not diminish the significance of organizational justice; rather, it necessitates extending fairness principles to human-technology interactions. Achieving sustainable performance in digital workplaces requires organizations to invest in technology and develop work systems that are fair, transparent, people-centered, and inclusive.

SUGGESTION

Future research should employ longitudinal or intervention-based designs and collect data from multiple sources to strengthen causal inference and minimize bias. Qualitative approaches, such as interviews or mixed methods, are recommended to gain deeper insights into employee experiences with artificial intelligence, electronic monitoring, remote work, and algorithmic management. Each dimension of organizational justice distributive, procedural, informational, and interpersonal should be examined independently and linked to specific performance outcomes, including task, adaptive, innovative, and contextual performance. Comparative studies across countries and sectors are necessary to enhance the generalizability of findings. Additionally, future reviews should expand database coverage, include non-English articles, and apply more rigorous quality assessment to mitigate publication and representation bias.

Future research should account for factors such as the extent of artificial intelligence adoption, hybrid work models, employee autonomy, organizational culture, digital readiness, and industry-specific characteristics. Integrating organizational justice theory with frameworks such as Social Exchange Theory, Job Demands-Resources Theory, and sociotechnical systems theory is encouraged. Relevant influences to examine include trust in technology, algorithmic transparency, digital competencies, psychological safety, autonomy, and technostress. Studies should investigate the effects of technology introduction, adaptation, and sustained use at the individual, team, and organizational levels. Beyond examining variable relationships, future research should evaluate whether organizational interventions support fairness, foster engagement, and enhance performance during digital transformation.

CREDIT AUTHORSHIP CONTRIBUTION STATEMENT

Ary Rahim Maulana: contributed to conceptualization, methodology, investigation, literature search, data curation, formal analysis, visualization, drafting the original manuscript, reference management, operating analytical software, research administration, and ensuring alignment with journal guidelines. **Arif Firmansyah, and Cindy Shangri Kinanti:** provided supervision, validation, and contributed to the review and editing of the manuscript.

DECLARATION OF COMPETING INTEREST

The authors declare no financial or personal conflicts of interest that could have influenced the conduct of the research, the analysis or interpretation of the findings, or the preparation of this article.

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DATA AVAILABILITY

This study utilized data from published articles indexed in Scopus and Web of Science. The article details the search strategy, selection criteria, and screening process. The bibliographic data and extraction matrix supporting the findings are available upon request from the corresponding author.

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This study was conducted in accordance with ethical standards, and informed consent was obtained from all participants prior to data collection.

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