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THE EFFECT OF ORGANIZATIONAL JUSTICE ON HAPPINESS AT WORK: THE MEDIATING ROLE OF WORK MOTIVATION AND PROFESSIONAL PERFORMANCE AT CARE ETHIOPIA.

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APPROVAL STATEMENT

This is to confirm that the thesis entitled **"The Effect of Organizational Justice on Happiness at Work: The Mediating Role of Work Motivation and Professional Performance at Care Ethiopia"** prepared by Lidya Getachew complies with the requirements of the University and conforms to the usual definition of originality and quality.

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I certify that the thesis entitled "**The Effect of Organizational Justice on Happiness at Work: The Mediating Role of Work Motivation and Professional Performance at Care Ethiopia.**" is my own original work and has not been submitted for the award of any other degree at any university or institution. It is submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Business Administration in Management at Addis Ababa University.

All sources of information and assistance have been properly acknowledged.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

Abbreviation	Full meaning
AM	Amotivation
AOC	Affective Organizational Commitment;
AVE	Average Variance Extracted
CP	Contextual Performance
CR	Composite Reliability
DJ	Distributive Justice
EN	Engagement
ER	External Regulation
H1	Hypothesis 1
H2	Hypothesis 2
H3	Hypothesis 3
H4	Hypothesis 4
H5	Hypothesis 5
HAW	Happiness at Work
HTMT	Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio
IdR	Identified Regulation
IJ	Interactional Justice
IjR	Introjected Regulation
IM	Intrinsic Motivation
INGO	International Non-Governmental Organization
InR	Integrated Regulation
JS	Job Satisfaction
OJ	Organizational Justice
PJ	Procedural Justice
PLS-SEM	Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling
PP	Professional Performance
TP	Task Performance
WM	Work Motivation

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this research was to investigate the effect of organizational justice on happiness at work among CARE Ethiopia's employees with work motivation and professional performance as mediating factors. The study aimed at understanding how the perceptions of fairness may affect employee happiness. Quantitative research methodology and cross-sectional study design were used for conducting the research. The information was gathered from the employees using a structured questionnaire. Data analysis was conducted using the Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) method with SmartPLS 4 software. The study found that organizational justice has no significant direct effect on happiness at work. However, organizational justice has a significant positive effect on work motivation and professional performance, and both work motivation and professional performance significantly affect happiness at work. These results indicate that work motivation and professional performance mediate the relationship between organizational justice and happiness at work. Therefore, it can be concluded that employee happiness depends more on motivation and performance than directly on organizational justice perception. The findings of this study indicate that increasing organizational justice can positively affect the level of employee happiness because of motivating employees and improving their professional performance.

Keywords: *Organizational justice, happiness at work, work motivation, professional performance*

CHAPTER ONE

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1.Background of the Study

Happiness at work is increasingly recognized as a vital component of organizational success, encompassing positive attitudes, well-being, and overall life satisfaction among employees (Sudibjo & Manihuruk, 2022). According to Fröhlich et al. (2025) with the changing nature of work in line with globalization, technological, and organizational dynamics, it is now more critical than ever to comprehend what determines employee happiness, as empirical studies show that happiness in work life not only contributes to individual happiness but also has a significant, positive relationship with work engagement, work performance, and citizenship behaviors.

Organizational justice refers to how employees or third party observers in an organization perceive fairness in organizational decisions, processes, and interactions (Wiseman & Stillwell, 2022). Organizational Justice dimensions such as employees' perceptions of fairness in outcomes (distributive), procedures (procedural), and interpersonal treatment (interactional), fundamentally shape workplace happiness and performance worldwide. Meta-Analyses confirm Organizational Justice dimensions strongly predicate workplace happiness across sectors. (Ravina- Ripoll et al., 2024). However, critical mediators between organizational justice and happiness at work remain underexplored despite established direct effects.

Ravina-Ripoll et al. (2024) specifically call for the testing variables such as professional performance and work motivation as mediators between organizational justice and happiness at work. Recent studies confirm work motivation mediates organizational justice and job satisfaction relationship (Herawati & Sunaryo, 2023). Recent research also indicate that organizational justice is positively related to job performance, with evidence suggesting that employees' perceptions of fairness also influence their professional performance through increased job satisfaction (Ekingen, 2021). Similarly, Ethiopian research shows all justice dimensions significantly predict employee engagement (Habore, 2024). However, dual-

mediation models integrating both motivation and performance remain theoretically untested within this framework.

In Ethiopia organizations face persistent organizational justice challenges that compromise employee retention across sectors. Mengstie (2020) concludes that distributive justice emerges as the strongest predictor of turnover intention among hospital health workers signaling critical fairness gaps in hierarchical structures. It also indicates substantial fairness gaps that not only threaten organizational stability but also negatively influence employee happiness and morale. Addressing these fairness concerns is thus crucial for fostering a satisfied and committed workforce. Zerihun (2025) concludes procedural justice as the key predictor of job satisfaction among public sector employees in East Gojjam. These findings highlight systemic fairness deficiencies within hierarchical Ethiopian organizations. Despite International NGOs employing diverse, multicultural staff in demanding humanitarian contexts, no published research examines the organizational justice and happiness dynamics in this critical sector.

This study examines work motivation and professional performance as mediators between organizational justice and happiness at work within CARE Ethiopia an International NGO found in Ethiopia. It directly responds to Ravina-Ripoll et al. (2024) call for testing these specific mediators in happiness management frameworks. The research targeted CARE Ethiopia's employees in Ethiopia facing multicultural team challenges and mission pressures. Findings will guide INGO managers toward justice practices that enhance staff well-being and organizational effectiveness. This investigation extends happiness management theory into humanitarian development contexts previously unexplored.

1.2.Statement of the Problem

Organizational justice is important because employees' perceptions of fairness in decisions, procedures, and treatment shape how they respond to their work environment. Previous studies have established a strong relationship between organizational justice and employee happiness and positive work outcomes (Tsounis, 2025). Broad empirical evidence, including seminal meta-analyses by Colquitt et al. (2001) and Cropanzano et al. (2005), establishes that these fairness perceptions fundamentally shape organizational behavior. Quantitative data from these studies reveal that when employees perceive injustice, it directly relates with measurable drops in

performance and increases in withdrawal behaviors. Research has also demonstrated that fairness perceptions are closely linked to employee attitudes and workplace behavior, indicating that justice is not only a moral issue but also an organizational one (Adamovic, 2023). Studies highlight that perceptions of fairness in resource distribution, decision-making procedures, interpersonal interactions, and performance appraisals are key factors in shaping employees' overall job satisfaction, strengthening trust and loyalty, and contributing to better organizational performance (Al-frijawy J., 2025). According to Adugna et al (2022) empirical survey reveals fairness perceptions are important in contexts such as Ethiopian organizations, which strengthen the relevance of examining the issue in local settings.

However, what remains unknown is how organizational justice specifically happiness at work as a distinct construct, rather than just job satisfaction or general performance outcomes. Broader literature distinguishes happiness at work as a holistic concept encompassing engagement, meaningfulness, and positive affect, which goes beyond traditional cognitive evaluations of job satisfaction (Fisher, 2009). Recent discussions highlight that happiness at work remains only partially understood within the framework of organizational justice, indicating that current studies do not fully capture the complexity of this relationship (Ravina-Ripoll et al., 2024). Existing literature primarily focuses on general outcomes such as job satisfaction or performance, often overlooking happiness at work as an independent and important construct. This represents a significant gap, as understanding happiness as a distinct variable can offer deeper insights into employee well-being and organizational effectiveness (Honu et al., 2024). Furthermore, while separate statistical analyses have examined motivation as a mediator (Herawati & Sunaryo, 2023) and that professional performance is significantly influenced by justice (Iqbal et al., 2017), dual-mediation models integrating both to explain happiness remain theoretically untested.

This gap is particularly pronounced in international NGO settings, where employees operate under high pressure, strict donor expectations, and limited resources. These challenging conditions significantly influence their perceptions of fairness and overall happiness at work (Barua & Siddique, 2025). The review by Adamovic (2023) highlighted that most organizational justice research has been conducted within Western and corporate contexts, and calls for the need for further studies in diverse cultural and emerging economy settings. In the Ethiopian

context, empirical studies confirm systemic fairness deficiencies within hierarchical organizations. For example statistical regression analyses by Mengstie (2020) found distributive justice to be a strong predictor of turnover intention among health workers, while survey data from Zerihun (2025) identified procedural justice as key for public sector satisfaction. However, there is limited evidence on these dynamics within the Ethiopian INGO sector. It is also unclear how other factors, such as work motivation and professional performance, mediate the relationship between organizational justice and happiness at work, especially in emerging economies where organizational conditions and employee experiences differ from those in most existing studies (Ravina-Ripoll et al., 2024).

Therefore, there is a critical need for targeted research examining how organizational justice affects happiness at work, particularly within international NGO environments. According to Ravina-Ripoll et al. (2024), further research on the relationship between organizational justice and happiness at work in different organizational contexts should be explored. This study is needed now to address this gap by examining the direct effects of organizational justice on happiness at work and exploring how work motivation and professional performance mediate this relationship in the unique context of Ethiopian international NGOs, specifically at CARE Ethiopia. CARE Ethiopia was chosen intentionally since it is a good example that shows all difficulties that may arise during the work of INGOs due to the diverse multinational team, which is responsible for performing crucial tasks in accordance with specific rules set by the donors of the international community. In such an environment, there are a lot of psychological stresses associated with the issue of fairness. If employees perceive some unfair actions regarding workloads, decision-making in stressful situations, or treatment among other cultures, they will lose their motivation, professional abilities, and happiness at work.

1.3.Research Questions

The study is guided by the following research questions.

1. To what extent does organizational justice influence happiness at work among employees in international NGOs?
2. To what extent does organizational justice influence work motivation among employees in international NGOs?

3. To what extent does organizational justice influence professional performance among employees in international NGOs?
4. To what extent does work motivation influence happiness at work among employees in international NGOs?
5. To what extent does professional performance influence happiness at work among employees in international NGOs?
6. Does work motivation mediate the relationship between organizational justice and happiness at work?
7. Does professional performance mediate the relationship between organizational justice and happiness at work?

1.4.Research Objective

1.4.1. General Objective

The main objective of this study is to assess the effect of Organizational Justice on Happiness at Work with a focus on the Mediating role Work Motivation and Professional Performance.

1.4.2. Specific Objective

To achieve this, the study is guided by the following specific objectives.

1. To examine the effect of organizational justice on happiness at work among employees in international NGOs.
2. To examine the effect of organizational justice on work motivation among employees in international NGOs.
3. To examine the effect of organizational justice on professional performance among employees in international NGOs.
4. To examine the effect of work motivation on happiness at work among employees in international NGOs.
5. To examine the effect of professional performance on happiness at work among employees in international NGOs.
6. To assess the mediating role of work motivation in the relationship between organizational justice and happiness at work.

7. To assess the mediating role of professional performance in the relationship between organizational justice and happiness at work.

1.5. Significance of the Study

This study holds significant value for both academic theory and organizational practice, particularly within the context of International NGOs. From a theoretical standpoint, this research will contribute to the body of knowledge of organizational behavior in terms of incorporating Social Exchange Theory, Self-Determination Theory, and Affective Events Theory to shed light on the underlying processes involved in organizational justice. With regard to testing work motivation and professional performance as parallel mediators, this research is able to respond to recent empirical to go beyond direct-effect models and explore how fairness translates into happiness. In addition, this research utilizes the happiness management framework in the case of an International NGO based in Ethiopia. Practically, this study provides actionable insights for management, HR leaders, and decision-makers at CARE Ethiopia and similar International NGOs. By knowing the particular ways fairness takes towards happiness, organizations may be able to come up with specific interventions rather than vague fairness policies whose effects cannot be measured. The study will provide useful information on how to manage the distribution of organizational resources, crafting of transparent decision making procedures, and the training of supervisors on interpersonal justice.

1.6. Scope of the Study

This study's scope is limited to CARE Ethiopia and focuses on examining the effect of organizational justice on happiness at work, with particular attention to the mediating roles of work motivation and professional performance. The target population includes employees of CARE Ethiopia who have direct experience with workplace processes relevant to the study variables. Organizational justice has been considered through its main dimensions: distributive justice, procedural justice, and interactional justice, in order to assess employees' perceptions of fairness in the organization. Happiness at work is the dependent variable, while work motivation and professional performance are examined as mediating variables.

1.7. Limitation of the Study

The study's findings may not be generalizable to other organizations in Ethiopia due to its focus on CARE Ethiopia and the specific characteristics of its employees. Differences in organizational culture, management practices, and employee experiences may limit the extent to which the results can be applied to other settings. In addition, the data collected through the self-response method might have some limitations, as the there is a risk of bias and subjectivity on the data collected. However, these limitations have been addressed through careful questionnaire design, rigorous data collection procedures, and clear interpretation of the findings. Recognizing these constraints openly helped place the results in proper context and support future research in similar organizational settings.

1.8. Organization of the Paper

The organization of the paper is structured into five chapters. Chapter One introduces the study by outlining the background, problem statement, research questions, objectives, significance, scope, and limitations. Chapter Two reviews relevant literature and provides an overview of previous scholarly work related to the research topic. Chapter Three details the research methodology, including the research design, population, data sources, instruments, variable measurement, and data analysis techniques. Chapter Four presents the findings, along with their analysis, interpretation, and discussion. Finally, Chapter Five summarizes the study, offers conclusions, recommendations and future work directions.

CHAPTER TWO

2. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

In this chapter the researcher has examined the concept of Happiness at Work definition and key components and then review Organizational Justice to study the influence of Organizational Justice on Happiness of Employees. This chapter has also examined the roles of Work Motivation and Professional Performance as possible factors to examine Organizational justice effect on Happiness at Work. Finally a conceptual Model has been presented by being developed from the literature and the gaps identified.

2.1.Organizational Justice

The concept of organizational justice has its foundation in Adams' (1963) equity theory, which proposes individuals assess fairness by putting in to comparison their input and outcome with those of relevant others. Therefore, when perceived inequities arise, employees experience psychological tension which motivates them to restore balance through behavioral or cognitive adjustments. This foundational perspective was later expanded to recognize that fairness encompasses not only the distribution of outcomes but also the processes through which decisions are made and the interpersonal treatment employees receive (Colquitt, 2001). Today, organizational justice refers to how employees or third-party observers in an organization perceive fairness in organizational decisions, processes, and interactions (Wiseman & Stillwell, 2022).

The importance of organizational justice in contemporary organizations has intensified due to the dynamic nature of work environments that are influenced by different factors like globalization, and technological disruption. According to Adamovic (2023), fairness perceptions in the attitudes and behaviors of the workforce in the organization indicates the significance of organizational justice not just as a moral imperative but also as a strategic organizational factor. When the workforce in an organization perceives the organization as just, they are more likely

display positive attitudes and behaviors in the organization. They tend to be engaged in behaviors that benefit the organization and show high levels of well-being. On the other hand, if they perceive injustice in the organization, they may display negative behaviors such as resentment, withdrawal behaviors, and even counterproductive work behaviors (Tsounis, 2025).

According to Al-frijawy J. (2025) organizational justice significantly impacts job satisfaction within organizations by emphasizing perceptions of fairness in resource distribution, decision-making procedures, interpersonal interactions, and performance appraisals are key factors in influencing employees' overall satisfaction with their jobs. The study also found that encouraging organizational justice can strengthen employees' trust and loyalty, which can ultimately contribute to the overall performance of the organization. A Meta-analytic study done by Ravina-Ripoll et al. (2024) confirms that the dimensions of organizational justice strongly predict workplace happiness across different industries, further supporting the importance of fairness perceptions for employee well-being and organizational success.

In the context of developing economies, organizational justice has been found to be a significant concern. Adugna et al. (2022) argues that in Ethiopia where there are hierarchical structures, resource constraints, and evolving management practices, fairness perceptions are important, which creates the need to investigate Organizational Justice in the region. Among the dimensions of Organizational Justice, Mengstie (2020) assessed that distributive justice is the strongest predictor of turnover intention among hospital health workers in Ethiopia, signaling critical fairness gaps that threaten organizational stability and employee morale. Procedural justice has been found to be the key predictor of job satisfaction among public sector employees in East Gojjam, Ethiopia (Zerihun, 2025). These findings show that the systematic fairness with in Ethiopian organizations are lacking and highlight the need to examine organizational justice in the context of local settings.

Despite the expanding research on organizational justice, its use within international NGO settings is still largely unexplored. Diverse and multicultural employees at International NGOs work under demanding humanitarian conditions, strict donor requirements, and constrained resources (Barua & Siddique, 2025). These challenging conditions significantly influence employees' perceptions of fairness and overall happiness at work. Yet, no published research to date has examined the organizational justice and happiness dynamics in this critical sector,

particularly within the Ethiopian context. This study addresses this gap by examining how organizational justice dimensions influence happiness at work among employees of international NGOs in Ethiopia.

Organizational justice has been conceptualized as a multidimensional construct in the literature. Colquitt (2001) proposed the most commonly used four-dimensional model of organizational justice in terms of distributive justice, procedural justice, interpersonal justice, and informational justice. However, recent studies have employed the three-dimensional model of organizational justice in terms of distributive justice, procedural justice, and interactional justice, in which interactional justice includes both interpersonal and informational justice (Wiseman & Stillwell, 2022). Therefore, the current study has adopted the three-dimensional model of organizational justice in accordance with the majority of the literature.

2.1.1. Distributive Justice

Distributive justice is defined as the perceived fairness of the outcomes or resources provided by the organization to the employees (Adams, 1963). Distributive justice is based on equity theory, which asserts that employees perceive the fairness of their outcomes by comparing their ratio of inputs to outcomes with other referent groups. If the ratio is fair and similar to that of other groups, then distributive justice is experienced by the employee. If the ratio is unfair and different from that of other groups, then psychological distress is experienced by the employee. According to Colquitt (2001) Distributive justice is defined as the degree to which the outcomes received by the employee are fair, equitable, and consistent with their contributions, efforts, and performance.

Distributive justice is very important when it comes to organizational-related issues such as pay, performance review, promotion, and resource allocation. Pay, bonuses, promotion, recognition, job assignment, and other organizational rewards, to name a few, are all tangible and intangible organizational rewards. According to Akram et al. (2019), workers who feel that rewards are distributed fairly tend to be more satisfied, committed to, and affiliated with the organization. Conversely, workers who feel that results are distributed unfairly tend to be more dissatisfied, less committed to, and more likely to quit the organization (Mengstie, 2020).

Recent empirical studies have consistently shown that distributive justice is significantly related to various positive outcomes in the work domain. Akram et al. (2019) conducted an empirical study to explore the relationship between organizational justice dimensions and employee performance in the banking sector. The results revealed that distributive justice was significantly and positively related to both employee performance and satisfaction. These findings support the idea that when employees feel that outcomes are distributed fairly, they are more likely to perform better at work. Another study conducted by Karam et al. (2019) was a meta-analytic investigation that revels that distributive justice was a strong predictor for job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and trust. According to Al-frijawy J. (2025) the perceptions of fairness in the distribution of resources are considered to be one of the significant factors in the overall satisfaction of the job by the employees. The importance of the distribution of resources has been emphasized in the study in terms of the fostering of trust and loyalty in the workplace.

In their research on the role of justice perceptions in the public sector, Rubel et al. (2021) observed the significant direct impact of distributive justice on employee engagement and organizational citizenship behaviors. This indicates the importance of distributive justice in the international NGOs sector in terms of motivating the workforce to go beyond the call of duty in the execution of their work. In the Ethiopian context, the role of distributive justice was further emphasized in the research by Mengstie (2020), which observed the significant role of distributive justice as the strongest predictor of turnover intention in the health workforce of the hospital, which indicates the critical role of distributive justice in the organizational setting.

Equality implies that everyone should receive the same amount of outcome despite their contribution, while the need principle implies that everyone should receive according to their needs. In humanitarian organizations like international NGOs, where the values of the mission are often based on social justice and equality, the interplay of the three principles of distributive justice might have some unique effects on the organizational setting. In organizations like international NGOs, where employees have different cultural backgrounds, the perception of distributive justice might play a significant role in the happiness of the employees and harmony in the organization (Barua & Siddique, 2025).

2.1.2. Procedural Justice

Procedural justice relates to the opinion of the organization's workforce about the fairness of the processes employed in decision-making in the organization (Leventhal, 1980). Unlike distributive justice, which relates to the outcome of the decision-making process in the organization, procedural justice relates to the process of decision-making. According to Leventhal (1980), the following six criteria must be met in the decision-making process in the organization for the process to be considered fair: consistency in the decision-making process over time and across individuals, absence of bias in the decision-making process, accuracy of the information used in decision-making in the organization, the capacity to correct the decision-making process if it goes wrong, the representation of all the individuals involved in the decision-making process in the organization, and the ethical nature of the decision-making process in the organization.

According to Suifan (2019) the effect of organizational justice on employees' affective commitment and established that procedural justice, such as providing voice in the decision-making process, was a significant predictor of employees' emotional connection to the organization. The study concluded that when employees take part in the decision-making process in the organization, a stronger psychological connection and commitment to the organization ensue. Procedural justice in the organizational setting encompasses a broad range of processes, such as the employees' evaluation system, promotion system, grievance system, decision-making process in strategy planning, policy implementation, and allocation of resources. Al-Frijawy J. (2025) argues that the perception of procedural justice in the decision-making process in the organization has a crucial impact on the employees' job satisfaction and the leadership's trust. When the procedure in the decision-making process in the organization is transparent and employees take part in the process, employees develop a stronger psychological connection with the organization and are more willing to act in a manner that benefits the organization.

Recent research has again underscored the significance of procedural justice in the achievement of favorable workplace outcomes. Iqbal et al.'s (2017) study focused on the relationship between procedural justice and employee performance in the public sector. The study revealed that procedural justice significantly impacted employees' task performance and citizenship behavior.

The study emphasized the significance of procedural justice in the workplace by highlighting that when employees feel that the organization is fair in its procedures, they feel more secure in their roles and thus become more motivated to succeed. Adenike et al. (2024) examined the relationship between procedural justice and employee commitment in the Nigerian banking industry. The study found that employees who perceived higher procedural fairness reported higher affective commitment and lower turnover intentions. The study revealed the importance of procedural fairness in creating a sense of predictability and trust in the organization, which is vital in retaining the best talents.

In the context of the public sector in East Gojjam, Ethiopia, Zerihun (2025) found that the strongest predictor of job satisfaction was procedural justice. Similarly, in the private sector, Habore (2024) has recently reaffirmed the importance of perceived procedural fairness in boosting employee engagement. For international NGOs in the region of Ethiopia, the importance of procedural justice cannot be overstated because of the complexities involved in the governance system. The key areas in which the employees would judge the organization as fair or unfair would be the transparency in the funding of the organization, the inclusiveness in the planning process, the consistency in the human resource policies, and the consistency in the performance appraisal system (Barua & Siddique, 2025).

2.1.3. Interactional Justice

On the other hand, interactional justice, which was first conceptualized by Bies and Moag (1986), describes the quality of interpersonal treatment received by employees in the course of implementing organizational processes and communicating decisions. This dimension of organizational justice includes the human aspect of fairness, which involves how much respect, dignity, and honesty employees experience in their interactions with organizational authority. Colquitt (2001) further distinguished interactional justice into two sub-dimensions: interpersonal justice, which measures how much employees are treated politely and with respect, and informational justice, which measures how much employees are provided with honest information regarding organizational decisions.

Although some studies considered interactional justice as a two-dimensional construct, a number of recent studies still considered it as a single dimension of organizational justice (Wiseman & Stillwell, 2022). This study considered interactional justice as a single dimension, in line with the three-dimensional model of organizational justice. According to Song and Yang (2020), Interactional justice is defined as the quality of interpersonal treatment provided to the employees during the implementation of organizational processes and the communication of organizational decisions. It is the human aspect of organizational justice, which includes the respect, dignity, and candor with which the employees are treated by the authorities of the organization.

Recent empirical studies have highlighted the important impact of interactional justice on employee attitudes and behaviors. Asadullah et al. (2021), in their research observed that employees who experienced respectful and dignified treatment from their supervisors reported significantly higher levels of work engagement and job satisfaction. Their findings emphasized that interpersonal fairness is essential in fostering a positive psychological environment, which encourages employees to fully invest themselves in their work. Similarly, Farid et al. (2019) examined the influence of interactional justice on organizational citizenship behavior and discovered that employees perceiving greater interpersonal fairness were more likely to go beyond their formal job responsibilities and contribute actively to the organization's broader goals.

Recent empirical studies have revealed the significant effects of interactional justice on employee attitudes and behaviors. Pham et al. (2024) revealed that when employees felt they received dignified treatment from their superiors, they reported a significant increase in their work engagement and job satisfaction. The study revealed the critical role that interpersonal justice can play in building a positive psychological climate for the employee, which allows them to fully invest in their work. The importance of interactional justice was also revealed in situations where the organization is going through a change. Ozturk et al. (2021) revealed that when employees received honest and dignified treatment during the change process, they reported a significant decrease in their stress, burnout, and change resistance. This is particularly important for international NGOs, which are constantly going through a change in their strategies.

In the context of Ethiopia, Habore (2024) reported that interactional justice, together with distributive and procedural justice, was significant in predicting employee engagement. Similarly, in international NGOs where multiculturalism and hierarchical diversity are salient, interactional justice is important because of the high pressure and resource constraints that affect relationships. Thus, if managers treat subordinates with respect, openness, and sensitivity to their cultures, they can increase subordinates' happiness because they will be able to trust each other. If there is a lack of interactional justice, subordinates may feel that they are being marginalized or alienated at work (Barua and Siddique, 2025).

2.2. Happiness at Work

The topic of happiness at work has become an important discussion in recent years, reflecting a broader shift in organizational research from a deficit-focused approach centered on reducing dissatisfaction and problem in the work place to a strengths-based approach that emphasizes positive experience of employees and their well-being (Salas-Vallina et al., 2020). According to Sudibjo and Manihuruk (2022), the concept happiness at work includes positive attitudes, well-being, and overall life satisfaction among employees. Unlike traditional constructs like job satisfaction that focus more on cognitive assessments, Happiness at Work is a broader and holistic concept which encompasses experiences, engagement, meaningfulness, and positive relationships in the workplace (Fisher, 2009).

Happiness at Work differs from happiness generally because workplace happiness is about the work dimension and what people experience at work. According to Ravina-Ripoll et al. (2024), workplace happiness includes of hedonic components like pleasure and positive affect, as well as eudemonic components such as meaning, growth, and self-actualization. It is important to understand that workplace happiness not only means the lack of any negative experiences at work but also the existence of positive psychological experiences that allow individuals to succeed at work.

According to Fröhlich et al. (2025), because of the dynamic nature of work as a result of globalization, technological advancements, and organizational transformations, it is crucial to recognize the determinants of worker happiness in light of all these changes. Research findings

have shown that worker happiness contributes to a number of favorable organizational consequences. In particular, according to Salas-Vallina et al. (2020), more satisfied workers were found to be more productive, demonstrate greater organizational citizenship behavior, and be more creative than their counterparts. Furthermore, work happiness does not only lead to worker well-being, but also plays a very vital role in work engagement and performance (Fröhlich et al., 2025).

The increasing attention to Happiness at Work has led to the development of happiness management, an approach that considers organizational practices that ensure the happiness of employees as a tool for achieving positive individual and organizational results (Ravina-Ripoll et al., 2024). In this context, scholars have examined organizational predictors of workplace happiness, such as leadership style, organizational culture, work-life balance, job design, and organizational justice. According to Ravina-Ripoll et al. (2024), meta-analysis has shown that the dimensions of organizational justice are strong predictors of workplace happiness regardless of industry, while also advocating for more studies to examine the mediating role of work motivation and professional performance in the relationship between justice and happiness.

According to Honu et al. (2024), existing literatures mostly concentrate on overall outcomes like job satisfaction or performance while paying little attention to happiness at work as an independent variable. This is a major drawback since considering happiness as a separate independent outcome variable helps to gain better insight into employee well-being and organizational efficiency. There are different organizational aspects affecting the state of happiness among workers. However, for this study the emphasis has been put on organizational justice as the key antecedent, while work motivation and professional performance were considered as mediating variables as formulated by Ravina-Ripoll et al. (2024).

2.2.1. Dimensions of Happiness at Work

There are various factors that form happiness at work as defined by researchers. Salas-Vallina et al. (2017) have put forward a framework of three dimensions of happiness at work, which include engagement, job satisfaction, and affective organizational commitment. This framework has been widely adopted in recent happiness management research and provides the basis for the present study's construct. Although happiness at work can be considered to mean job satisfaction

or well-being according to many studies done on the subject, there is more to it as compared to other concepts.

It is important to distinctly differentiate happiness at work from other similar variables such as job satisfaction, employee engagement, and general well-being before going in the dimensions. While job satisfaction is largely determined by cognitive evaluations of several job-related factors, including monetary rewards, working conditions, and interpersonal relations, happiness at work represents a complex multi-dimensional construct which also includes employees' emotions and experiences. Job satisfaction can be described as an evaluation of an individual's job performance against certain criteria, whereas happiness at work represents a state of being where employees are happy not only because their job fulfills certain criteria and standards, but also because of positive feelings associated with their job. Therefore, the latter concept is a better indicator of employee's well-being than the former since it embraces all aspects important to make employees happy (Farooq et al., 2024).

Similarly, Jinzhan and Rahman (2024) emphasizes that employee engagement includes aspects such as vigor, dedication, and absorption indicating high levels of energy, commitment, and involvement with respect to work, while happiness at work is associated not only with these aspects but rather with a prolonged psychological state defined by positive emotions and life satisfaction concerning one's occupation. According to the findings presented in the literature review, employee engagement assumes active participation, mental and emotional engagement with the tasks performed but it does not always mean happiness since workers may be highly involved and show vigor in activities, and still be dissatisfied with their work because of stress, non-recognition, and emotional exhaustion. On the other hand, an employee may be quite satisfied with their salary and benefits, however may still not feel any happiness or positive emotions concerning their work environment. Therefore, it is obvious that despite being somehow interconnected, employee engagement and happiness are different concepts and states. Employees may experience one but fail to enjoy the other.

Workplace well-being is a related but different concept from happiness at work. Well-being is broader and covers physical, psychological, and social aspects of life (Ruggeri et al., 2020). Happiness at work is specifically about experiencing positive emotions and satisfaction with

work, and it is defined as a state characterized by a high level of life satisfaction, a high level of positive emotions, and fewer negative emotions in the workplace (Fitriana et al., 2022).

Engagement, job satisfaction, and affective organizational commitment are key dimensions of workplace happiness (Salas-Vallina et al., 2017). Engagement involves a positive, energetic, and absorbed state of mind characterized by vigor and dedication (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004). In the Ethiopian context, according to Habore (2024) this dimension is significantly affected by the perceptions of organizational justice. On the other hand, Job satisfaction reflects employees' overall contentment with their work and conditions (Herawati & Sunaryo, 2023). Zerihun (2025) found that procedural justice is the most significant determinant of job satisfaction among public servants in Ethiopia, while Ekingen (2021) showed how perceptions of justice affect satisfaction through improved performance and motivation. The concept of affective organizational commitment is described as the emotional attachment employees feel toward their organization, which is influenced by their perceptions of organizational justice, organizational support, and positive work experiences. Fair perceptions of such an organization lead to stronger emotional ties (Song & Yang, 2020).

The difference between happiness at work and related concepts becomes important when talking about high-stress humanitarian environments, where international NGOs operate. Research indicates that happiness at work functions is a valuable resource helping avoid the problem of emotional exhaustion and burnouts of aid workers in conditions of stressful loads and emotional overload. Unlike to job satisfaction that is rather stable and evaluative, happiness at work can be defined as a dynamic resource helping workers cope with constant stress. In humanitarian environments that involve the experience of the sufferings of other people and scarce resources, happiness at work acts as a resource mediating the relationship between job demands and organizational performance. Moreover, happiness at work enhances workers' productivity and creative abilities while reducing their stress and absenteeism (Thompson & Bruk-Lee, 2021). The cross-cultural validation of the happiness at work scale indicates that the construct shows strong psychometric characteristics and is reliable to be used in different cultural settings, including developing countries (Fitriana et al., 2022).

Together, these three dimensions, engagement, job satisfaction, and affective organizational commitment, provide a comprehensive framework for understanding and measuring happiness at

work within Ethiopian international NGOs, recognizing that happiness at work offers a more complete picture than any other constructs, particularly in high-stress humanitarian contexts where emotional resilience and positive affect are critical for sustained performance and retention. By adopting Salas-Vallina et al.'s (2017) framework, this research contributes to the growing literature on happiness management while addressing the gap in understanding workplace happiness in Ethiopian humanitarian organizations.

While the existing literature establishes a positive relationship between organizational justice and favorable employee results, a critical review highlights some contradictions and contextual differences. For instance, while study like Akram et al. (2019) found significant direct influence of organizational justice on performance and satisfaction, other have pointed out that these relationship does not exist universally. Some researches observes that in highly resource-constrained or bureaucratic environments, the positive effect of procedural justice on employee attitudes is significantly diminished since employees become skeptical whether fair procedures can actually lead to fair outcomes (Adamovic, 2023). Furthermore, there are contradictory findings as far as the direct effect of organizational justice on happiness is concerned. While meta-analysis by Ravina-Ripoll et al., (2024) proves direct relationship between organizational justice and happiness at work, other studies show that under stressful conditions of humanitarian and health care organizations, perception of justice is not sufficient enough to promote happiness and should be transferred through a psychological mediator such as motivation (Herawati & Sunaryo, 2023). These inconsistencies clearly reveal an important gap in the current literature where it is apparent that the connection between organizational justice and happiness does not follow a straightforward direct effect but involves a complex interaction, contingent upon organizational environment and psychological states, which is why a dual-mediation model becomes justified in this study.

2.3.Work Motivation

Work motivation refers to the psychological forces that direct, energize, and sustain work-related behavior, encompassing both the internal desires and external factors that initiate, guide, and maintain goal-directed actions in the workplace (Kanfer et al., 2017). Understanding work motivation is critical because it influences not only how much effort employees invest in their work but also the quality, direction, and persistence of that effort. In contemporary

organizational research, motivation is recognized as a dynamic construct shaped by individual characteristics, organizational practices, and contextual factors (Gagné et al., 2022).

In recent years, a number of studies have been conducted on the effect of organizational justice on employee motivation. Herawati and Sunaryo (2023) present contemporary research evidence showing that organizational justice has a positive effect on work motivation. They found that workers experiencing higher degrees of distributive, procedural, and interactional justice displayed higher motivation to put more effort into their work. The researchers found that workers would be more motivated to make effective contributions towards organizational goals when they perceive that they are treated equitably by the organization. This finding is also consistent with other literatures suggesting that fair organizational practices satisfy employees' psychological needs for autonomy, competence, and belonging, which in turn foster greater motivation (Gagné et al., 2022).

There are numerous ways in which the dimensions of Organizational Justice affect Work Motivation. For instance, distributive justice creates an impression of equality when rewards are distributed to individuals who show high levels of effort and performance. This leads to the perception that the system is just and fair, motivating employees to maintain and improve their efforts (Akram et al., 2019). Procedural justice motivates employees by ensuring that they have a say, are well-informed, and are consistent when decisions are made. Employees will be motivated since they have control and trust during decision-making (Iqbal et al., 2017). Interactional justice will motivate employees by creating an environment of respect and support among individuals. When employees feel valued and treated with respect, they are more likely to respond positively by showing their efforts and engaging more fully in their work (Song & Yang, 2020).

2.3.1. Intrinsic and Extrinsic Motivation

According to recent researches on Motivation, it can be classified into two categories: Intrinsic motivation and extrinsic motivation. Intrinsic motivation develops in those employees who participate in activities for personal interest, meaning, or ones aligning with their values. Extrinsic motivation occurs in those people who experience some kind of pressure from extrinsic

rewards, penalties, or commitments (Gagné et al., 2022). The concept of intrinsic verses extrinsic motivation is fundamental in comprehending the effects of organizational justice on work motivation and subsequent happiness. The differentiation between this two is very important for the well-being of employees since numerous studies prove that intrinsically motivated workers are more happy, engaged, and satisfied than those motivated extrinsically (Howard et al., 2016). In the study done by Kotera et al. (2022) the importance of measuring Amotivation, which is the lack of intention to act to has been highlighted to provide a complete psychological profile of workforces.

Intrinsic motivation involves an actual interest in and passion for work-related activities. Employees with intrinsic motivation have jobs that they enjoy doing and feel fulfilled by engaging in them rather than simply completing them for the sake of achieving rewards. According to Van den Broeck et al. (2021), intrinsic motivation was highly correlated with positive work outcomes, such as high levels of job satisfaction, creativity, well-being, and low burnout. Their research highlighted the importance of creating an environment that promotes intrinsic motivation among employees, which includes providing them with autonomy, meaning in work, and fair treatment.

In contrast, extrinsic motivation stems from outside forces, including remuneration, incentives, promotion, recognition, and punishment. Although extrinsic motivation can help facilitate actions and performance, it tends to have a relatively low association with well-being and engagement as compared to intrinsic motivation (Howard et al., 2016). As highlighted by Kotera et al. (2022), extrinsic motivation can be further categorized into specific categories including Integrated Regulation, which is motivation from identification with the individual's sense of self; Identified Regulation, which is motivation through personal importance of the task; Introjected Regulation, which is motivation through guilt or self-esteem; and External Regulation, which is motivation through rewards or threats of punishment. Recent studies, however, acknowledge that extrinsic motivation does not necessarily have an unfavorable influence. According to Gagné et al. (2022), extrinsic motivation forms part of a motivational continuum, from external regulation, which means that people act based on either receiving a reward or avoiding punishment, to integrated regulation, when the external motives become integrated into personal motives. When

perceived as fair and just, extrinsic motivators tend to work in coordination with intrinsic motivation.

There are two ways in which organizational justice affects extrinsic and intrinsic motivation. For example, distributive justice impacts the extrinsic motivation of employees by ensuring that rewards are equitably distributed depending on the input made by workers. In situations where employees feel that what they get in terms of rewards is fair in relation to their contributions, they feel motivated extrinsically (Akram et al., 2019). Procedural justice motivates the intrinsic motivation of employees by giving them a sense of autonomy in decision-making and transparency in processes. The more employees feel that procedures in an organization are fair, the higher their level of motivation intrinsically (Iqbal et al., 2017). On the other hand, interactional justice motivates both forms of motivation through fostering a friendly environment characterized by respect. The feeling that employees are treated fairly by their supervisors and get adequate reasons for whatever is being done leads them to be attached to their jobs, thereby motivating them extrinsically and intrinsically (Song & Yang, 2020).

It is even more complicated for international NGOs since in terms of this organization the interaction between intrinsic and extrinsic motivations may have an even greater impact on employee behavior and work performance. People working at NGOs are typically driven by intrinsic motivations related to helping others, doing something meaningful and sharing organizational values. Intrinsic motivations should, however, be complemented with appropriate extrinsic motivations such as fair wages, transparent systems for promotion, and a reliable human resources system ((Barua & Siddique, 2025). According to Herawati and Sunaryo (2023), organizational justice positively impacts both types of motivations as well as increases job satisfaction. In other words, when both motivational aspects are ensured in the course of organizational practices, employees become motivated and happier at work.

The connection between work motivation and workplace happiness has been proven by research studies. Employees who experience both intrinsic and balanced extrinsic motivation exhibit greater workplace happiness, motivation, and well-being (Fisher, 2009). More specifically, intrinsic motivation has been identified as an important predictor of happiness at work since it fulfills three critical psychological needs, such as autonomy, competence, and relatedness, thus

promoting positive affect at work and well-being (Howard et al., 2016). As intrinsic motivation refers to work engagement for its own sake and meaning-making during work activity, employees are more likely to feel happier when engaging in activities (Ryan & Deci, 2000). On the other hand, low workplace happiness is connected to low motivation and high burnout and disengagement (Kotera et al., 2022). Based on the findings above, it may be suggested that work motivation has a positive relationship with happiness at work and is also a key mechanism in the connection between organizational justice and workplace happiness since fairness fosters employee motivation.

2.4. Professional Performance

Professional performance may be defined as the manner in which employees behave at work in relation to how they work towards achieving an organizations objective (Koopmans et al., 2014). Professional performance is among the topmost researched constructs in organizational behavior and human resource management since its importance towards organizational efficiency cannot be underestimated. Contemporary research has revealed that professional performance is not only multidimensional but is also much broader than simply doing things (Carpini et al., 2017).

Recent literature defines two broad types of performance, Task Performance and Contextual Performance. The term Task Performance denotes the competency of the employees in performing their technical job tasks and responsibilities as defined in the job description. The concept of Contextual Performance includes the actions taken by employees that have an impact on the organizational, social, and psychological context within which task performance takes place, such as cooperation with colleagues, volunteering, perseverance, and organizational citizenship behaviors (Harari et al., 2016). Furthermore, De Azevedo Andrade et al. (2020) note that both forms of performance can be shaped by personal dispositions and situational elements. This highlights the necessity to evaluate both types when conducting a performance appraisal. By understanding these differences, an organization is able to promote a balanced process for managing performance, whereby technical proficiency and socially behavior are equally developed organizations success.

The relationship between organizational justice and professional performance has been empirically explored for some time now. Ekingen (2021) shows the positive association between organizational justice and job performance, where perceptions of fairness impact professional performance via several mediating mechanisms such as improved job satisfaction, motivation, and organizational commitment. Employees understanding that the company follows consistent procedures view all personnel equally when distributing results, and shows respect will encourage them to make efforts in fulfilling organizational goals. Similarly Swalhi et al. (2022) identified a significantly positive impact of organizational justice on the performance of employees, with the correlation partially mediated by organizational citizenship behavior. It means that people who understand the value of organizational justice not only fulfill their obligations effectively but also show discretionary behaviors that positively affect the organization.

Organizational justice affects professional performance in various ways. From a motivational viewpoint, organizational justice motivates people to be more willing to work hard and be persistent during difficult times, in turn affecting performance (Herawati & Sunaryo, 2023). Procedural justice ensures transparency and understanding of the standards for evaluating performance, thus allowing workers to channel their efforts in the right direction (Iqbal et al., 2017). Interactional justice fosters trust and positive relationships with supervisors, which facilitates feedback, coaching, and support that enhance performance (Song & Yang, 2020).

Recent research has also highlighted the role of professional performance as a pathway to employee well-being and happiness. According to Alessandri et al. (2018), good professional performance by an employee leads to increased self-efficacy, feelings of achievement, and positive effects, all leading to increased employee happiness. On the other hand, happy employees exhibit higher levels of engagement, creativity, and problem-solving abilities, which translate into better task performance and contextual performance (Fisher, 2009). From this, one can deduce that professional performance does not only result from favorable conditions of work but it can actually lead to happiness among employees. This mutual relationship generates a positive cycle whereby professional performance boosts workplace happiness and vice versa. When employees meet their objectives in the course of work and their efforts are recognized by others, they derive psychological satisfaction which in turn enhances their happiness at work.

Therefore, professional performance acts as an important mediating variable linking organizational justice to workplace happiness. This mutual relationship between professional performance and happiness becomes the theory base to study professional performance as a mediator of happiness at work.

Professional performance in international NGO contexts is a broad term that involves various actions which may be different from those in a corporate environment. The personnel working in an NGO will have to prove themselves competent in handling programs, engaging stakeholders, communicating across cultures, reporting to donors, organizing communities, and solving problems creatively, alongside regular office duties. Performance in the NGO context can be affected by various factors like the demands of the donors, the mission of the organization, and the needs of the beneficiaries served, making it a very dynamic performance arena (Barua & Siddique, 2025). Justice within organizations influences professional performance in international NGOs significantly. If the employees feel that performance standards are justly set and fairly evaluated, that reward mechanisms consider all workers' input equally, and that the supervisors show respect for them while offering truthful comments, the personnel will work towards meeting organizational objectives. Creating equity in performance assessment and resource allocation promotes organizational loyalty, encouraging high levels of performance (Al-frijawy J, 2025).

Ravina-Ripoll et al. (2024) clearly state the need for researching professional performance as a mediator between organizational justice and happiness at work. Although it is proven that organizational justice has positive consequences on happiness, there is still not enough theoretical or empirical research regarding the indirect mechanisms through which organizational justice may lead to happiness. By introducing professional performance as a mediator, Ravina-Ripoll et al. (2024) suggest that happiness can be achieved indirectly due to improved professional performance.

2.5. Theoretical Framework

The theoretical foundation of this study is grounded in several complementary theories that collectively explain the relationships among organizational justice, work motivation, professional performance, and happiness at work. The theories have been used to provide a

framework for understanding the connection between Organizational Justice and Happiness at Work via direct and indirect pathways.

2.5.1. Social Exchange Theory

One of the commonly used theoretical approaches to study organizational justice is social exchange theory. This theory assumes that people create and sustain social relationships through mutual exchanges involving giving something in return to get something back (Blau, 1967). In the organizational setting, a sense of organizational justice makes employees feel a responsibility to give back positive responses such as improved motivation and performance, as well as better well-being (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005).

The proposed mediating roles of work motivation and professional performance can be sufficiently explained by social exchange theory. The perceived organizational justice creates an impression that the organization contributes to the employees live by offering resources. As a result, employees feel responsible for giving back something of value to the organization in return, such as increased motivation and better performance. These activities make the employees feel accomplished, happy, and satisfied meaning they become happier at work.

2.5.2. Self-Determination Theory

Another theory that can be combined with social exchange theory to explain why organizational justice leads to happiness is self-determination theory. It offers a motivational explanation of how organizational justice causes happiness among employees. As stated by self-determination theory, three psychological needs must be fulfilled in order to motivate and maintain an employee's level of happiness and satisfaction: autonomy, competence, and relatedness (Deci & Ryan, 1985). These needs can be met by using three types of organizational justice as follows: procedural justice fulfills the need for autonomy, distributive justice fulfills the need for competence, and interactional justice fulfills the need for relatedness (Gagné & Deci, 2005). If the needs are met and therefore intrinsic motivation achieved, then employees will have more engagement, better performance and happiness. Therefore, self-determination theory explains work motivation as a mediator for organizational justice and happiness (Ryan & Deci, 2000).

2.5.3. Affective Events Theory

Another theoretical viewpoint is provided by the affective events theory proposed by Weiss and Cropanzano (1996), which explains the impact of events in the workplace, particularly those involving justice issues, on employees' emotions, which in turn affect their attitudes and behavior. The theory suggests that employees encounter specific affective events at work, such as an unfair evaluation, being treated poorly, or receiving equitable rewards, which result in emotions. The cumulative effect of these emotions forms general attitudes at work, including happiness.

One of the most crucial categories of affective events concerns organizational justice perceptions. Fairness evokes positive emotions like pride, gratitude, and satisfaction, whereas unfairness produces negative emotions like anger, frustration, and disappointment. Not only do these emotions directly affect happiness, but they also influence motivation and performance.

2.5.4. Equity Theory

The concept of equity theory (Adams, 1963) is concerned explicitly with the issue of distributive justice and its implications on employee behavior and attitudes. This theory holds that employees' assessment of the fairness of their outcomes is based on the comparison of the ratio of their inputs to their outcomes with the ratio of the inputs to the outcomes of other individuals who are considered relevant in their environment. An assessment of equity results in positive attitudes, while an assessment of inequity triggers distress and behavioral adjustment actions.

2.5.5. Theoretical Integration and Justification of Mediators

The integration of Social Exchange Theory, Equity Theory, Self-Determination Theory and Affective Events Theory is used to provide a solid and multilayered basis for comprehending how organizational justice impacts happiness within organizations, which helps to justify the mediating impact of work motivation and job performance. Social Exchange Theory and Equity Theory explain the antecedent stage as emphasized by Cropanzano et al. (2001) and Adams (1963), employees who experience justice consider social exchange with the employer as being balanced and equitable. However, feelings of justice do not mean automatic happiness but they activate psychological processes. (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005).

Affective Events Theory justifies the second mediator which is professional performance. Weiss and Cropanzano (1996) suggest the occurrence of certain events in an organization (like feelings of injustice or fairness) elicits emotions that affect work behavior and performance. Motivated by fair treatment, the workers try harder and achieve higher performance levels. Attainment of these goals produces positive emotions like pride, satisfaction, joy, and finally happiness at work. Through these theories, the model proposed suggests that the role of organizational justice is that of the environment, the function of work motivation is that of the psychology, and the role of professional performance is that of behavior. The justification of these theories in terms of supporting evidence for the suggested direct and indirect effects will be explained in detail in the following section.

2.6. Empirical Literature Review and Hypothesis Development

2.6.1. Direct Effect

2.6.1.1. Organizational Justice and Happiness at Work

The relationship between Organizational Justice and Happiness at Work has been examined across different empirical literature. Ravina-Ripoll et al. (2024) in a meta-analysis confirmed there is evidence that Organizational Justice variables act as significant predictors of Happiness at Work. These findings revealed that workers perceiving high levels of distributive, procedural, and interactional justice tend to be happier at work, making the concept applicable universally to workers' happiness. According to Tsounis (2025), the correlation between organizational justice and happiness among employees is further support by the findings that perceptions of justice impact the way employees react to the working environment. It has been revealed that organizational justice not only influences cognitive elements of happiness in terms of perceived satisfaction but also involves the affective and eudemonic components of happiness.

Al-frijawy J. (2025) in the study indicated that fairness in resource allocation, decision-making processes, relationships among colleagues, and employee evaluation plays an important role in defining the overall satisfaction and happiness that employees derive from their employment. Organizational justice was also seen to contribute to building employees' trust and loyalty leading to higher levels of organizational efficiency.

On the other hand in Ethiopia, research directly associating organizational justice with happiness at work has been rare but some related literature indicates that organizational justice contributes to work happiness constructs. According to Habore (2024), all aspects of justice positively predicted employee engagement, which is considered a crucial part of employee happiness at work, in Ethiopian organizations. This implies that organizational justice plays a role in happiness constructs in Ethiopia.

Based on the theoretical foundations and empirical evidence reviewed above, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H1: Organizational justice has a significant and positive effect on happiness at work among employees in international NGOs.

2.6.1.2.Organizational Justice and Work Motivation

The link between organizational justice and work motivation has also been empirically analyzed by several scholars. Based on the self-determination theory, it has been claimed that organizational justice satisfies workers' psychological needs for autonomy, competence, and relatedness, resulting in intrinsic motivation (Gagné & Deci, 2005). Thus, when individuals believe that outcomes are equally distributed among group members (distributive justice) the process of decision making is fair (procedural justice), and their status and dignity are respected (interactional justice), their motivation for contributing to organizational activities is significantly higher.

According to a current research done by Herawati and Sunaryo (2023), it empirically confirmed the positive impact of organizational justice on work motivation. According to their findings, workers, who felt justly treated at work, were more motivated both intrinsically and extrinsically. It means that perception of justice is essential for energizing and channeling workers' behavior, which is a generalizable result.

Organizational justice perception becomes especially significant in the case of international NGOs due to the nature of their operations. Workers who perceive that their organizations are run on a fair basis tend to identify with their organization’s mission and become motivated to support the organization’s humanitarian goals. On the other hand, workers who do not think that

their organizations are managed on an ethical basis may be unable to align their values with organizational processes (Barua & Siddique, 2025).

Based on the above theoretical and empirical evidence, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H2: Organizational justice has a significant and positive effect on work motivation among employees in international NGOs.

2.6.1.3. Organizational Justice and Professional Performance

There have been numerous studies highlighting the connection between organizational justice and professional performance in organizational behavior. The meta-analysis conducted by Colquitt et al. (2013) reveals the presence of significant positive correlations between all three aspects of organizational justice and task performance and organizational citizenship behaviors. This finding indicates that individuals perceiving their workplace as fair are more likely to put more effort into their job performance. Ekingen (2021) explains this link by identifying several paths through which perceptions of justice affect professional performance, such as job satisfaction, improved motivation, and organizational commitment. In particular, the results show that perceived justice creates a psychologically favorable environment, allowing employees to concentrate on their tasks and perform better.

Accordng to Blau's (1967) Social Exchange Theory, people working within organizations who experience organizational justice feel obliged to return the favor in terms of increasing their own level of performance. Organizational justice in terms of outcome distribution increases employees' feeling that there is an actual connection between putting effort into something and getting rewarded for that effort. Therefore that is encourages them to improve their performance.

Based on the theoretical and empirical evidence reviewed, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H3: Organizational justice has a significant and positive effect on professional performance among employees in international NGOs.

2.6.1.4. Work Motivation and Happiness at Work

The relationship between work motivation and happiness at work has received much attention in organizational behavior studies in recent years with a direct positive relationship established. Employees who are intrinsically and extrinsically motivated feel happier at work, engaged, and more satisfied (Fisher, 2009). It is especially important that intrinsic motivation has proven itself to be an excellent predictor of happiness at work since it satisfies core psychological needs for autonomy, competence, and relatedness necessary for psychological well-being and positive affectivity at work (Ryan & Deci, 2000). When employees are motivated to perform certain actions simply because they enjoy doing them and gain satisfaction from doing something, they feel happier while performing those actions. It has also been found that the lack of happiness at work is related to decreased motivation, greater risk of burnout, and less engagement in actions (Kotera et al., 2022). This relationship suggests that work motivation is an important variable that fosters workplace happiness.

In the context of international NGOs, where employees are often driven by intrinsic motivation related to helping others and fulfilling meaningful work, the relationship between motivation and happiness is particularly important. When employees are motivated both intrinsically and extrinsically, they experience higher levels of job satisfaction and happiness at work (Herawati & Sunaryo, 2023).

Based on the theoretical and empirical evidence reviewed, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H4: Work motivation has a significant and positive effect on happiness at work among employees in international NGOs.

2.6.1.5. Professional Performance and Happiness at Work

Recent researches have assessed the relationship between professional performance and workplace happiness. According to Alessandri et al. (2018), professional performance among workers leads to high self-efficacy, achievements, and positive emotions among others that contribute to worker happiness. One would thus deduce that professional performance is not only an outcome of good working conditions since it can also bring happiness among employees. As

such, when employees achieve their goals at work and their contributions are acknowledged by other people, they become psychologically fulfilled which makes them happier at work. In addition, employees who are happy tend to be more engaged, creative, and skilled at solving problems which contribute to effective performance of tasks and contextual performance (Fisher, 2009). This shows a mutual positive relationship whereby professional performance influences workplace happiness and vice versa.

Professional performance within international NGOs is different from that in business organizations. Professional performance includes skills for managing projects, working with stakeholder groups, intercultural communication, and reporting to donors, in addition to routine work tasks. Professional performance is influenced by donor requirements, organization objectives, and client expectations, making it a dynamic area (Barua & Siddique, 2025).

Based on the theoretical and empirical evidence reviewed, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H5: Professional performance has a significant and positive effect on happiness at work among employees in international NGOs.

2.6.2. Mediating Effects

2.6.2.1. Work Motivation as a Mediator between Organizational Justice and Happiness at Work

The mediating role of work motivation in the relationship between organizational justice and happiness at work is grounded in the theoretical integration of Social Exchange Theory (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005) and Self-Determination Theory (Deci & Ryan, 1985). According to this integrated framework, organizational justice satisfies employees' psychological needs and creates conditions for reciprocal exchange, which enhances work motivation. This heightened motivation, in turn, leads to more positive work experiences, greater engagement, and ultimately, higher levels of happiness at work. In Herawati & Sunaryo (2023) research the result proves the mediatory influence of work motivation on the justice-satisfaction relationship. The researchers show that organizational justice affects both job satisfaction and work motivation of employees and impacts the satisfaction levels indirectly.

According to Ravina-Ripoll et al. (2024), there is a need to empirically verify the influence of work motivation on the relation between organizational justice and happiness at work in the context of happiness management. This means that while the way justice affects happiness is not sufficiently understood, there is a possibility to explore this issue via the motivational pathway. Thus, this study can be seen as responding to the call to action by the authors.

The rationale behind this mediation effect can be explained by the following theoretical argument. If employees believe that their organization is just toward them, then their core psychological needs for autonomy, competence, and relatedness are fulfilled (Deci & Ryan, 1985). The fulfillment of such psychological needs results in the formation of Intrinsic Motivation, where there is a genuine interest in performing tasks. As a result of Intrinsic Motivation, there is the occurrence of positive affective states, engagement, and enhanced well-being, leading to Happiness at Work (Ryan & Deci, 2000).

Based on the above theoretical reasoning and empirical evidence, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H6: Work motivation mediates the relationship between organizational justice and happiness at work among employees in international NGOs.

2.6.2.2. Professional Performance as a Mediator between Organizational Justice and Happiness at Work

This innovative research examines the mediating effect of professional performance on the connection between organizational justice and happiness at work. The theoretical basis for such an effect lays in the fact that organizational justice forms conditions under which professionals can achieve better performance levels, and in turn, helps make them happy at work due to satisfaction from success and achievements. According to Ekingen (2021), organizational justice affects professional performance, which, in turn, affects job satisfaction and positive attitudes at work. Such indirect effect may be considered possible in terms of linking the concepts in question. With the perception of organizational justice, employees become ready and motivated to concentrate on meeting work objectives, and successful performance produces positive results, including recognition, feeling of self-efficacy, and other factors contributing to happiness.

Ravina-Ripoll et al. (2024) highlight the need to study the role of professional performance as a mediator in the relationship between organizational justice and happiness at work. While it is clear that there exists an established association between justice and happiness, the underlying mechanisms explaining the indirect linkages have yet to be sufficiently theorized or studied empirically. By proposing professional performance as a potential mediator, researchers seek to understand if employees can experience happiness due to justice partly because of enhanced performance.

A theoretical explanation for this mediating effect is based on social exchange theory and psychological capital. The idea behind organizational justice is that employees receive a favorable environment through fair treatment, procedural justice, and just distribution of benefits, thus being provided with an opportunity to realize their true potential. In particular, a supportive organizational environment makes it possible for individuals to use psychological capital such as self-efficacy, hope, optimism, and resilience to boost their performance (Luthans et al., 2006).

Based on the theoretical and empirical foundations reviewed, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H7: Professional performance mediates the relationship between organizational justice and happiness at work among employees in international NGOs.

Table 1: Summary of Hypothesis, Theoretical Basis and Key Supporting Studies

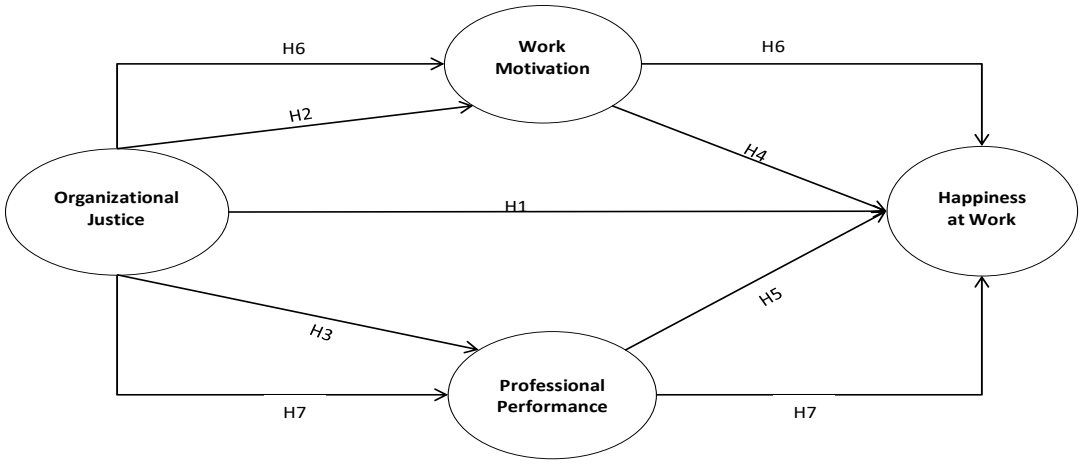
Hypothesis	Relationship	Theoretical Basis	Key Supporting Studies
H1	Organizational Justice and Happiness at Work	Social Exchange Theory; Affective Events Theory; Equity Theory	Ravina-Ripoll et al. (2024); Tsounis (2025); Al-frijawy J. (2025); Habore (2024)
H2	Organizational Justice and Work Motivation	Self-Determination Theory	Gagné & Deci (2005); Herawati & Sunaryo (2023); Barua & Siddique (2025)
H3	Organizational Justice and Professional Performance	Social Exchange Theory	Colquitt et al. (2013); Ekingen (2021); Blau (1967)

Hypothesis	Relationship	Theoretical Basis	Key Supporting Studies
H4	Work Motivation and Happiness at Work	Self-Determination Theory	Fisher (2009); Ryan & Deci (2000); Kotera et al. (2022); Herawati & Sunaryo (2023)
H5	Professional Performance and Happiness at Work	Affective Events Theory	Alessandri et al. (2018); Fisher (2009); Barua & Siddique (2025)
H6	Organizational Justice, Work Motivation and Happiness at Work	Social Exchange Theory; Self-Determination Theory	Herawati & Sunaryo (2023); Ravina-Ripoll et al. (2024); Deci & Ryan (1985); Ryan & Deci (2000)
H7	Organizational Justice, Professional Performance and Happiness at Work	Social Exchange Theory	Ekingen (2021); Ravina-Ripoll et al. (2024); Luthans et al. (2006)

2.7. Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework for this study is developed based on the theoretical foundations and empirical evidence reviewed in the preceding sections. The framework integrates organizational justice as the independent variable, happiness at work as the dependent variable, and work motivation and professional performance as mediating variables. The model is grounded in social exchange theory (Blau, 1967), self-determination theory (Deci & Ryan, 1985), affective events theory (Weiss & Cropanzano, 1996), and equity theory (Adams, 1963), and is directly informed by the research agenda proposed by Ravina-Ripoll et al. (2024).

The framework proposes that organizational justice directly influences happiness at work (H1). Additionally, organizational justice is proposed to influence work motivation (H2) and professional performance (H3). Happiness at work was also proposed to be positively influenced by both constructs, work motivation (H4) and professional performance (H5). The framework further proposes that work motivation mediates the relationship between organizational justice and happiness at work (H6), and that professional performance similarly mediates this relationship (H7). These mediating pathways suggest that the effect of organizational justice on happiness operates not only through direct perceptual and affective channels but also through motivational and performance-related mechanisms.



Note: H1-H5 are Direct Effects; H6-H7 are indirect effects

Figure 1: Conceptual Framework adopted and modified from Ravina- Ripoll et al. (2024)

CHAPTER THREE

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The current chapter covers the target population and sampling strategy, research approach and design, measures development, sampling procedures and data collection, and data analysis. All these methodological decisions are made in reference to research objectives concerning Organizational Justice effect on Happiness at Work via work motivation and professional performance among employees of CARE Ethiopia.

3.1. Target Population and Sampling Technique

The target population for this study comprises all employees of CARE Ethiopia. CARE Ethiopia is an international non-governmental organization operating across multiple regions in Ethiopia, engaged in humanitarian and development programs including food security, health, education, gender equality, and economic empowerment. CARE Ethiopia employs a diverse, multicultural workforce operating under demanding humanitarian conditions, strict donor requirements, and constrained resources, making it a particularly relevant context for examining organizational justice and employee happiness.

The research focuses on employees in different organizational hierarchical levels, such as the program level, support/administration level, and management level, whose job involves processes directly related to the study's variables. Only those employees who have been with the organization for not less than six months have taken part in the study, since six months would be enough time for the employees to develop perceptions concerning organizational justice, work motivation, and performance within the organization.

According to the Human Resources record at CARE Ethiopia's the organization currently has approximately 850 staff members across its country office in Addis Ababa and various field offices throughout Ethiopia. This figure constitutes the total population from which the sample has been drawn.

The method of stratified random sampling would be used in conducting the research. The use of stratified random sampling is achieved by classifying the population under investigation into separate groups called strata that are determined according to one common characteristic before randomly choosing respondents from each stratum in proportion to their size in the entire population (Sekaran & Bougie, 2016). In the current case, the strata has been formed on the basis of employment status and can consist of three groups of program staff, support/administrative staff, and management staff. In the case of this paper, the use of stratified random sampling is preferable since this approach makes the sample more representative and decreases sampling error while taking into account proportional representation of various subpopulations in the organization (Bryman, 2016). In order to choose individual respondents within strata, the technique of simple random sampling has been used.

The minimum sample size for this research was determined through the sample size determination formula formulated by Krejcie and Morgan (1970). This approach is the benchmark procedure when determining sample sizes from a known finite population, taking into account the confidence level at 95% with a margin of error of 5%. According to the Krejcie and Morgan (1970) chart for a population size of 850, the necessary sample size is 265 respondents. This study used SmartPLS 4 for PLS-SEM analysis, and according to Hair et al. (2017), PLS-SEM requires a minimum sample size of 10 times the largest number of structural paths directed at any latent construct, including direct paths only. The dependent variable in this study, which is happiness at work, has 3 structural paths directed at it, meaning it requires a minimum of 30 respondents. Therefore, this enabled the researcher to have a large enough sample size from the entire CARE Ethiopia employees to meet the requirements for analysis using SmartPLS 4.

$$s = \frac{X^2 N P(1-P)}{d^2(N-1) + X^2 P(1-P)}$$

Table 2: Sample Size Determination for the study

Confidence Level	95%
Population Proportion **(P)**	0.5
Margin of Error **(*d*)**	0.05
Population Size (N)	**850**
Confidence Level value **(X)**	1.96
Sample Size **(s)**	**265**

This sample size is proportionally allocated based on the number of employees found in each status. This ensures proportional size to population representation of respondents. The formula used for this proportional allocation is:

$$n_i = \left(\frac{N_i}{N}\right) \times n$$

Where Ni is the population size of each stratum, N is the total population (850), and n is the total sample size (265).

Table 3: Sample Size allocation

S.No.	Stratum	Population (N)	Targeted Sample (n)
1	Management Staff	42	13
2	Operation/Administrative Staff	169	53
3	Program Staff	639	199
	Total	**850**	**265**

3.2. Research Approach and Design

This study employed a quantitative research approach as it is an ideal research approach for situations where there is a need to determine the relationship between variables, to test hypotheses, and to generalize results using numeric measurements and statistical techniques (Creswell & Creswell, 2017). This is because the current study is intended to analyze how organizational justice affects happiness at work and test the mediation effects of work motivation

and professional performance. The use of quantitative research methods in the study enables the gathering of numerical data from many participants, making it possible to apply statistics to verify the hypothesized statements made by the researcher (Saunders et al., 2019).

This particular research study adopted a deductive reasoning methodology, where hypotheses generated based on the existing theories and empirical researches are tested using the available data. This type of methodology is aligned with the positivist philosophy of research, which presumes that the social realities can be objectively measured and that the relationship between different variables can be found through systematic observation and statistical analysis (Bryman, 2016). It is applicable in the current study since the theoretical foundation and the hypotheses of the study were formed on the basis of known theories such as the Social Exchange Theory, the Self-Determination Theory, the Affective Events Theory, and the Equity Theory.

The study adopted a cross-sectional design, since it was intended to measure the organizational justice perception of the employees, their level of work motivation, professional performance, and happiness at work at a particular period. The cross-sectional design does not enable the researcher to make causal inferences between variables over time unlike the longitudinal design. However, it is an economical and practical approach for testing hypotheses using statistical methods such as correlation, regression, and mediation (Creswell & Creswell, 2017). The use of the mediation model within a cross-sectional design has been widely applied in organizational studies where the theory behind the hypothesized causations is strong, which is true in this case (Hayes, 2018). The explanatory nature of this research is reflected in the study's primary goal, which is not merely to describe the variables but to explain the relationships between organizational justice and happiness at work and to identify the mechanisms through which these relationships operate via work motivation and professional performance.

3.3.Measurement Development

To achieve the objectives of this study, a structured questionnaire was developed as the primary data collection instrument. The measurement item for each construct was adapted from well-established and validated scales in the existing literature. Adapting validated instruments enhances the reliability and validity of the measurements while ensuring relevance to the specific research context (Creswell & Creswell, 2017).

The questionnaire was divided into two main parts:

Section One, Demographic Questions: This part of the survey includes questions that capture background information about the participants, such as their gender, age, education, length of service at CARE Ethiopia, employment status, and work site (Country Office or Field Office). This information has been utilized to profile the study participants during the description phase.

Section Two, Study Variables: This part includes questions on measurement of the constructs of the study. Every question in this section has been measured using a five-point Likert scale with 1 indicating "Strongly Disagree" and 5 "Strongly Agree". Five-point Likert Scale is common in organizational behavior studies and it is considered appropriate for measuring respondent perception differences in an easy way (Sekaran & Bougie, 2016).

The reasoning behind the measurement instruments for each variable are described below:

Table 4: Measurement Development of the study

Variable	Source from Literature	Number of Items	Justification
Demographic	-	**5 Items**	
Organizational Justice	(Hansen et al., 2013)	12 items	The study is a systematically reduced version of the original 20-item Organizational Justice Scale by Colquitt (2001). It has been developed and validated by the study done across multiple samples.
Work Motivation	Kotera et al. (2022)	12 items	The SWEIMS a scale used to evaluate in accordance with Self-Determination Theory and due to its relatively recent validation process and the capacity to effectively identify the whole range of motivations adopted from the Work Extrinsic and Intrinsic Motivation Scale (WEIMS) by Tremblay et al., 2009.
Professional Performance	(De Azevedo Andrade et al., 2020)	10 items	The study utilizes the Short Version of Self-Assessment Scale of Job Performance by Sonnentag (2002), which is a 10 item scale

Variable	Source from Literature	Number of Items	Justification
			validated to measure professional performance through task and contextual dimensions.
Happiness at Work	Salas-Vallina et al. (2020)	9 items	The foundation for the three-dimensional Happiness at Work model in the literature review. The study adopted the scale from the original study by Salas-Vallina et al., (2018).
TOTAL		**48**	

The questionnaire was given to the target respondents in the Ethiopian NGO context, without any pre-testing which shows there is a study limitation. Typically, pilot tests help spot unclear questions, gauge cultural suitability, and check reliability before diving into full-scale data collection (Sekaran & Bougie, 2016). However, the measurement items for this research were based on validated tools from earlier studies as described in the above table. A post-hoc reliability analysis using Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability was done to make sure our measures are solid. It still recommended future research must run pilot tests to strengthen up their measurement development.

It must be noted in this study that organizational justice, happiness at work, work motivation, and professional performance were treated as higher order constructs consisting of their underlying dimensions. This aggregation is justified from both theoretical and statistical perspective. Theoretically, employees do not experience workplace phenomena in isolation. For instance, they form a global perception of fairness based on the combined evaluation of outcomes, processes, and interpersonal treatment (Colquitt, 2001). Similarly, happiness at work is a holistic experience encompassing engagement, satisfaction, and commitment (Salas-Vallina et al., 2017), while motivation and performance are integral constructs made up of interconnected behavioral and psychological components. Statistically, considering these constructs as higher-order constructs simplifies the structural model and prevents problems of multicollinearity which may result from considering highly correlated dimensions as separate independent constructs

predicting the same dependent variable (Hair et al., 2017). This approach provides a more conceptually sound representation of the relationships being tested.

3.4. Data Collection and Estimation Techniques

The study relied primarily on primary data collected directly from employees of CARE Ethiopia through the structured self-administered questionnaire described in the previous section. Primary data is preferred for this study because it enables the researcher to collect information that is directly relevant to the research objectives and tailored to the specific context of the study (Sekaran & Bougie, 2016).

To ensure efficiency and broad accessibility across the organization's diverse locations, data collection for this study was conducted exclusively through an electronic survey format. An electronic questionnaire was created using Google Forms. The process of distributing the survey took place through internal means at CARE Ethiopia. In particular, this entailed distribution of the survey link through official email accounts and internal mailing lists directed to those individuals included in the sample. Furthermore, since some employees reside in distant branches and thus pose difficulties in accessing them directly, departmental heads and coordinators were requested to assist in sending the link through organizational-approved channels, such as groups in Telegram. The decision to employ this digital approach to data collection was informed by the need to cope with the scattered nature of the workforce at CARE Ethiopia. Such a strategy helped avoid issues related to logistics and transportation, which may have hinder effective data collection if physical questionnaires were used.

The estimated duration of the data collection process was four weeks. At the end of each week during the data collection period, the researcher sent reminders via electronic mail and face-to-face interaction to encourage participant involvement. In addition, the researcher developed a mechanism for monitoring responses in order to facilitate the achievement of the predetermined sample size. After collecting all data, the researcher conducted a review of all questionnaires to determine their quality before conducting further data analyses. If a questionnaire has missing data meaning more than 10% of the questions are not answered, or if it indicates some form of response bias, for instance the same answer to all questions, the researcher would have discard it from further analyses. Out of the 265 questionnaires distributed to employees according to

sample size determination, 249 were completed and found usable for analysis. Accordingly, the study obtained a valid response rate of 93.9%, which was sufficient for further statistical analysis.

Analysis of the data was conducted via SmartPLS 4 based on Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM). PLS-SEM is a variance-based estimation technique suitable which is appropriate for complex models, including those involving latent constructs, mediating effects, as well as direct and indirect relationships between constructs. The use of PLS-SEM for analyzing these data sets is justified by its prediction-based nature and lack of multivariate normality assumption.

The estimation process involved two phases. Firstly, an evaluation of the measurement model took place to establish indicator reliability, internal consistency reliability, convergent validity, and discriminant validity. Secondly, an examination of the structural model was conducted in order to confirm the relationships between organizational justice, work motivation, professional performance, and happiness at work. The significance of the path coefficients and mediation effects was established by bootstrapping.

3.5. Data Treatment

The questionnaire data that had been collected using Google Forms were downloaded and thoroughly checked before analysis. Given that all questions were mandatory, all the questionnaires received were complete, thus there was no need to eliminate any questionnaire from further analysis based on the lack of information provided. After that, all responses were checked for consistency and coded appropriately, after which the prepared data set was ready for analysis and imported into SmartPLS 4.

Regarding non-response bias, while it is not conducted the study achieved a response rate of 93.9% which is considered robust in survey research and helps mitigate concerns regarding non-response bias (Sekaran & Bougie, 2016). To also ensure the strength of the data, Common Method Bias (CMB) was considered as a potential concern due to the single-source, self-reported nature of the survey. Procedural remedies were implemented during data collection, which included guaranteeing respondent anonymity to encourage honest responses. Statistically, a full

collinearity Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) test was conducted in SmartPLS 4. As presented in the structural model assessment, all VIF values were well below the conservative threshold, indicating that both multicollinearity and the results suggest that Common Method Bias (CMB) is unlikely to pose a serious threat to the validity of the findings.

3.6. Data Analysis

The collected data has been analyzed using Smart PLS 4, a statistical tool that implements Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM). PLS-SEM was specifically selected over traditional Covariance-Based SEM (CB-SEM) for several theoretically and practically justified reasons. The proposed structural model is relatively complex, incorporating multiple parallel mediators. PLS-SEM is component-based and handles complex predictive models efficiently while CB-SEM is covariance-based and often struggles with model convergence when handling complex mediation paths. Another reason CB-SEM requires strict assumptions about multivariate normality and large sample sizes. However, survey data collected in organizational settings rarely follows a perfectly normal distribution. PLS-SEM does not impose these strict normality assumptions, making it more fitting for this study (Hair et al., 2022). Finally, while CB-SEM is primarily used for strictly confirming established theories, the primary objective of this study is predictive aiming to maximize the explained variance in happiness at work by testing a relatively new dual-mediation model. Because of this reasons PLS-SEM has become a popular choice of analysis in disciplines such as Organizational Behavior and Human Resource Management among others (Iqbal et al. 2021).

Smart PLS 4 is preferred because it combines prediction oriented modeling with a user friendly interface, where one can easily define latent variables, calculate the corresponding path coefficients, and conduct testing of mediating hypotheses in a single environment. Karnadi (2023) highlights that Smart PLS allows conducting PLS-SEM analysis while providing the researcher with more sophisticated approaches such as bootstrapping and multi-group analysis, which are useful for applied research in management and related subjects. In this study, the first step included checking the measurement model in order to confirm the reliability and validity of the indicators used for measuring each construct under consideration. Next, a structural model was estimated in order to confirm the expected relationships between the constructs. The role of mediators in the relationship between organizational justice and happiness at work has been

verified by applying the bootstrapping procedure in SmartPLS. According to Iqbal et al. (2021), PLS-SEM has been extensively adopted in the field of empirical research analyzing similar mediating effects in organizational behavior and other disciplines. Thus, the application of SmartPLS 4 has a strong empirical basis that provides a sufficient rationale for its use in this study.

CHAPTER FOUR

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1. Respondents Demographic Characteristics

As shown in the demographic profile, the sample consists of 249 employees from CARE Ethiopia who completed the survey. Out of the 265 questionnaires distributed to employees according to sample size determination, 249 were completed and found usable for analysis. Thus, the study obtained a valid response rate of 93.9%, which was sufficient for further statistical analysis. Female respondents numbered 121 (49%) and male respondents 128 (51%), indicating a nearly balanced representation of both genders. The age distribution shows that 42% of respondents are aged 36–45 years and 34% are 26–35 years, suggesting that the majority are mid-career professionals with relatively stable work experience. In terms of education, 76% of the respondents hold a Master's degree, 21% hold a Bachelor's degree, and only 4% have a Doctoral degree, reflecting a highly educated workforce typical of an international NGO. Regarding tenure at CARE Ethiopia, 24% have more than 10 years of experience, 21% have 7–

10 years, 21% have 4–6 years, 27% have 1–3 years, and 6% have less than one year, indicating a mix of long-term and more recent staff. Finally, by employment category, 76% are program staff, 20% are operation/administrative staff, and 4% are management staff, which highlights that the findings are largely driven by employees involved in program implementation, making the results highly relevant to the frontline humanitarian and development work context of CARE Ethiopia.

Table 5: Respondents Demographic Characteristics

Demographic Variable	Groups	Frequency	Percent
Gender	Female	121	49%
	Male	128	51%
Age	18-25 Years	12	5%
	26-35 Years	85	34%
	36-45 Years	104	42%
	45-55 Years	48	19%
Highest Educational Qualification	Bachelor's Degree	52	21%
	Doctoral Degree (PhD)	9	4%
	Master's Degree	188	76%
Years of Experience at CARE Ethiopia	Less than 1 year	15	6%
	1-3 Years	68	27%
	4-6 Years	53	21%
	7-10 Years	53	21%
	More than 10 years	60	24%
Employment Category	Management Staff	11	4%
	Operation /Administrative Staff	49	20%
	Program Staff	189	76%

4.2.Descriptive Statistics

As shown in the descriptive statistics, all 43 survey items, excluding the demographic part, have median values of 3.0 on the five-point Likert scale, and the majority of items have mean values clustered very close to 3.0, ranging roughly from 2.96 to 3.24, which indicates that respondents generally chose the neutral option rather than strongly agreeing or disagreeing. The standard deviations are relatively uniform across items (around 1.4 to 1.6), suggesting moderate variability in responses without extreme outliers. Skewness values are close to zero (mostly between –0.20 and +0.07), and excess kurtosis values are clearly negative (between about –1.5

and –1.2), indicating that the item distributions are nearly symmetric and slightly flatter than a normal distribution (light tails). The Cramér-von Mises test statistics are all relatively large and the associated p-values are reported as 0.000, which implies that the item distributions significantly deviate from a perfect normal distribution. However, this is expected for Likert-scale data and does not invalidate the use of PLS-SEM, which is robust to non-normality and typically relies on item means and composite scores rather than strict normality of individual items.

Table 6: Descriptive Statistics

Indicators	Mean	Median	MIN	MAX	N	SD	Excess kurtosis	Skewness	Cramér-von Mises test statistic	P-value
AM1	3.000	3.000	1.000	5.000	249.000	1.486	-1.395	0.007	1.351	0.000
AM2	3.076	3.000	1.000	5.000	249.000	1.549	-1.512	-0.102	1.744	0.000
AOC1	3.120	3.000	1.000	5.000	249.000	1.459	-1.394	-0.063	1.447	0.000
AOC2	3.116	3.000	1.000	5.000	249.000	1.507	-1.469	-0.030	1.650	0.000
AOC3	3.076	3.000	1.000	5.000	249.000	1.528	-1.507	-0.034	1.735	0.000
CP1	3.153	3.000	1.000	5.000	249.000	1.568	-1.538	-0.079	1.917	0.000
CP2	2.984	3.000	1.000	5.000	249.000	1.544	-1.503	0.014	1.626	0.000
CP3	3.237	3.000	1.000	5.000	249.000	1.522	-1.455	-0.200	1.782	0.000
CP4	3.165	3.000	1.000	5.000	249.000	1.558	-1.481	-0.187	1.764	0.000
CP5	3.185	3.000	1.000	5.000	249.000	1.504	-1.461	-0.097	1.696	0.000
DJ1	3.120	3.000	1.000	5.000	249.000	1.457	-1.392	-0.070	1.450	0.000
DJ2	3.092	3.000	1.000	5.000	249.000	1.427	-1.308	-0.064	1.248	0.000
DJ3	3.036	3.000	1.000	5.000	249.000	1.530	-1.469	-0.034	1.527	0.000
EN1	3.124	3.000	1.000	5.000	249.000	1.458	-1.381	-0.085	1.412	0.000
EN2	3.080	3.000	1.000	5.000	249.000	1.492	-1.439	-0.022	1.515	0.000

Indicators	Mean	Median	MIN	MAX	N	SD	Excess kurtosis	Skewness	Cramér-von Mises test statistic	P-value
EN3	3.112	3.000	1.000	5.000	249.000	1.538	-1.512	-0.023	1.795	0.000
ER1	3.044	3.000	1.000	5.000	249.000	1.457	-1.367	-0.038	1.317	0.000
ER2	3.056	3.000	1.000	5.000	249.000	1.452	-1.367	-0.003	1.345	0.000
IJ1	3.012	3.000	1.000	5.000	249.000	1.466	-1.369	0.010	1.309	0.000
IJ2	3.080	3.000	1.000	5.000	249.000	1.432	-1.337	-0.010	1.321	0.000
IJ3	3.052	3.000	1.000	5.000	249.000	1.443	-1.337	-0.019	1.272	0.000
IJ4	3.124	3.000	1.000	5.000	249.000	1.399	-1.277	-0.064	1.253	0.000
IJ5	2.960	3.000	1.000	5.000	249.000	1.433	-1.302	0.071	1.236	0.000
IJ6	3.040	3.000	1.000	5.000	249.000	1.445	-1.333	0.010	1.277	0.000
IM1	2.996	3.000	1.000	5.000	249.000	1.427	-1.337	0.049	1.333	0.000
IM2	3.016	3.000	1.000	5.000	249.000	1.492	-1.438	0.053	1.537	0.000
IdR1	3.141	3.000	1.000	5.000	249.000	1.462	-1.385	-0.106	1.437	0.000
IdR2	2.976	3.000	1.000	5.000	249.000	1.505	-1.451	0.070	1.546	0.000
IjR1	3.068	3.000	1.000	5.000	249.000	1.486	-1.388	-0.044	1.361	0.000
IjR2	3.052	3.000	1.000	5.000	249.000	1.495	-1.411	-0.024	1.397	0.000
InR1	3.096	3.000	1.000	5.000	249.000	1.499	-1.437	-0.079	1.494	0.000
InR2	3.096	3.000	1.000	5.000	249.000	1.480	-1.396	-0.122	1.437	0.000
JS1	2.984	3.000	1.000	5.000	249.000	1.486	-1.373	0.065	1.376	0.000
JS2	3.205	3.000	1.000	5.000	249.000	1.508	-1.428	-0.176	1.617	0.000
JS3	3.201	3.000	1.000	5.000	249.000	1.502	-1.429	-0.146	1.602	0.000
PJ1	3.040	3.000	1.000	5.000	249.000	1.433	-1.324	0.020	1.277	0.000
PJ2	3.161	3.000	1.000	5.000	249.000	1.431	-1.310	-0.120	1.301	0.000

Indicators	Mean	Median	MIN	MAX	N	SD	Excess kurtosis	Skewness	Cramér-von Mises test statistic	P-value
PJ3	3.040	3.000	1.000	5.000	249.000	1.494	-1.423	-0.047	1.423	0.000
TP1	3.116	3.000	1.000	5.000	249.000	1.520	-1.449	-0.095	1.531	0.000
TP2	3.149	3.000	1.000	5.000	249.000	1.469	-1.383	-0.114	1.417	0.000
TP3	3.088	3.000	1.000	5.000	249.000	1.494	-1.424	-0.050	1.448	0.000
TP4	3.116	3.000	1.000	5.000	249.000	1.515	-1.444	-0.108	1.524	0.000
TP5	3.165	3.000	1.000	5.000	249.000	1.454	-1.333	-0.108	1.352	0.000

Note: AOC: Affective Organizational Commitment; EN: Engagement; JS: Job Satisfaction; DJ: Distributive Justice; IJ: Interactional Justice; PJ: Procedural Justice; AM: Amotivation; ER: External Regulation; IM: Intrinsic Motivation; IdR: Identified Regulation; IjR: Introjected Regulation; InR: Integrated Regulation; CP: Contextual Performance; TP: Task Performance

4.3.The PLS-SEM Algorithm and Bootstrapping

The study used the PLS-SEM approach to analyze the data and test the relationships among the latent constructs. PLS-SEM was chosen because it is suitable for prediction-oriented research, can handle complex models, and does not require strict normality of the data, making it appropriate for Likert-scale survey responses. (Hair et al., 2022). PLS-SEM consists of two parts: the measurement model and the structural model. The measurement model shows the relationship between constructs and their indicators, while the structural model examines the relationships among the constructs. The study employed a reflective measurement model to assess the relationships between the latent constructs and their respective indicators. In the reflective model, the indicators are viewed as manifestations of the underlying construct, where changes in the construct are reflected in the observed measures. The significance of the hypothesized paths was tested using bootstrapping with 5,000 resamples, which is a non-parametric resampling technique that generates standard errors, t-values, and confidence intervals without relying on normality assumptions. This procedure is widely recommended in PLS-SEM because it provides robust significance testing even when the data deviate from

normality. Overall, PLS-SEM allowed the study to assess both the measurement quality and the proposed relationships in a reliable way (Hair et al., 2022).

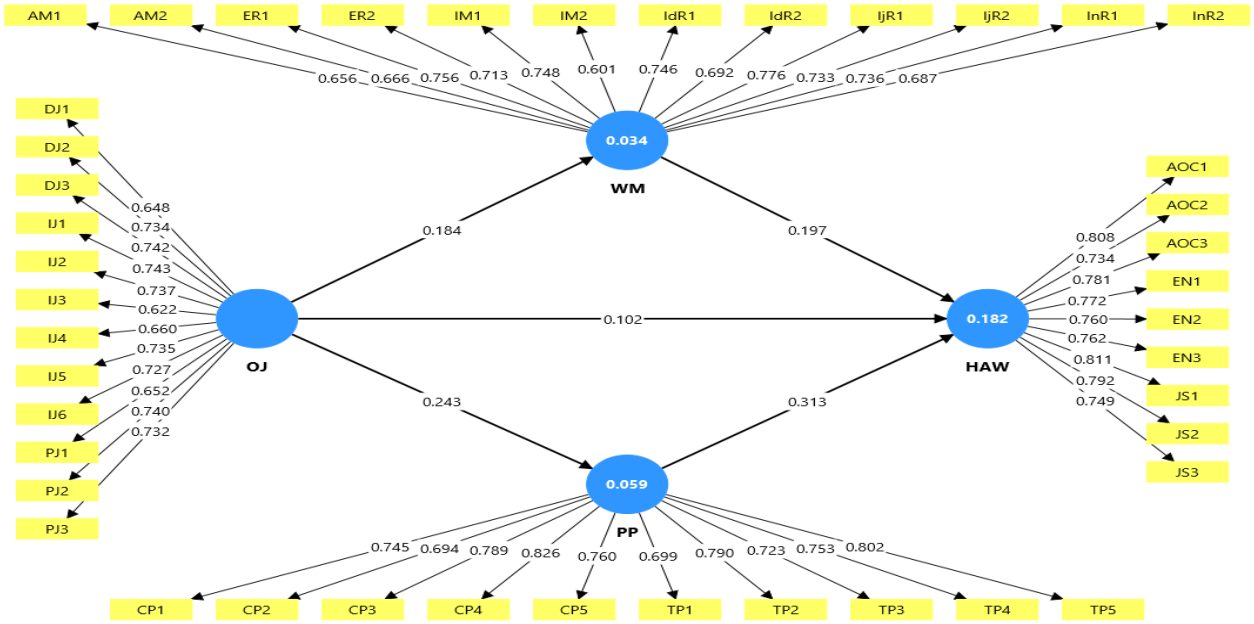


Figure 2: PLS-SEM Model

4.4. Measurement Model Assessment

The measurement model assessment in this study was conducted to confirm that the indicators reliably and validly measured their intended latent constructs before testing the structural relationships. In PLS-SEM, this assessment typically examines indicator reliability, internal consistency reliability, convergent validity, and discriminant validity for reflective constructs, while formative constructs are evaluated through indicator relevance and collinearity. For thesis writing, this section can be stated as a confirmation that the measurement instruments were adequate and therefore suitable for hypothesis testing.

Specifically, indicator loadings are expected to be sufficiently high, composite reliability should exceed 0.70, average variance extracted should be above 0.50, and discriminant validity is commonly assessed using the HTMT criterion, with values below 0.85 or 0.90 indicating acceptable separation between constructs. When these conditions are met, the constructs are considered sound for further structural analysis, meaning the model is measuring the right concepts in a consistent way (Hair et al., 2022).

4.4.1. Indicator Loadings and Reliability

The first step in the measurement model analysis involves examining the outer loading of indicators for each construct to test their reliability in measuring the underlying constructs. Hair et al. (2022) recommend that standardized outer loadings should ideally be 0.70 or higher, as this indicates that the construct explains more than half of the indicator's variance. However, indicators with loadings ranging from 0.40 to 0.70 can be accepted when their exclusion does not enhance the overall measurement model quality. The decision to retain or eliminate indicators should not rely exclusively on loading thresholds but should be guided by whether their removal strengthens or weakens construct reliability and convergent validity. Indicators are removed only when their deletion improves reliability and validity coefficients. If this is not the case, they are retained to preserve the content validity of the construct.

As shown in the below Table 7, all indicators for Happiness at Work (HAW) exhibit outer loading values above the 0.70 threshold, ranging from 0.734 to 0.811, indicating strong indicator reliability. For Organizational Justice, four indicators fall below the 0.70 threshold, while the remaining nine indicators meet the criteria. For Work Motivation, five indicators are below 0.70, while the remaining seven indicators exceed the threshold. For Professional Performance, two indicators fall slightly below 0.70, while the remaining eight indicators meet the criteria. Despite so of these loadings being below 0.70, these indicators are retained because their values are close to the acceptable range and their removal would not significantly improve the construct reliability and validity results.

Table 7: Indicators Loading

Construct	Indicator	Loading	P values
Happiness at Work (HAW)	AOC1	0.808	0
	AOC2	0.734	0
	AOC3	0.781	0
	EN1	0.772	0
	EN2	0.760	0
	EN3	0.762	0
	JS1	0.811	0
	JS2	0.792	0
	JS3	0.749	0

Construct	Indicator	Loading	P values
Organizational Justice (OJ)	DJ1	0.648	0
	DJ2	0.734	0
	DJ3	0.742	0
	IJ1	0.743	0
	IJ2	0.737	0
	IJ3	0.622	0
	IJ4	0.660	0
	IJ5	0.735	0
	IJ6	0.727	0
	PJ1	0.652	0
	PJ2	0.740	0
	PJ3	0.732	0
Work Motivation (WM)	AM1	0.656	0
	AM2	0.666	0
	ER1	0.756	0
	ER2	0.713	0
	IM1	0.748	0
	IM2	0.601	0
	IdR1	0.746	0
	IdR2	0.692	0
	IjR1	0.776	0
	IjR2	0.733	0
	InR1	0.736	0
	InR2	0.687	0
Professional Performance (PP)	CP1	0.745	0
	CP2	0.694	0
	CP3	0.789	0
	CP4	0.826	0
	CP5	0.760	0
	TP1	0.699	0
	TP2	0.790	0
	TP3	0.723	0
	TP4	0.753	0
	TP5	0.802	0

Note: *AOC: Affective Organizational Commitment; EN: Engagement; JS: Job Satisfaction; DJ: Distributive Justice; IJ: Interactional Justice; PJ: Procedural Justice; AM: Amotivation; ER: External*

Regulation; IM: Intrinsic Motivation; IdR: Identified Regulation; IjR: Introjected Regulation; InR: Integrated Regulation; CP: Contextual Performance; TP: Task Performance

4.4.2. Internal Consistency Reliability

Reflective measurement requires that items intended to measure the same construct do so in a consistent manner. The study assessed internal consistency using Cronbach's α, composite reliability rho_a, and composite reliability rho_c. According to Hair et al. (2020) and Karnadi (2023b), values ≥ 0.70 indicate satisfactory reliability. As Table 8 shows, all constructs exceed these thresholds. Cronbach's α for all constructs ranged from 0.909 to 0.918, well above the 0.70 benchmark. Both rho_a (0.915–0.929) and rho_c (0.923–0.931) exceed 0.70, confirming that each set of items consistently measures its intended latent variable. These results demonstrate that each construct exhibits strong internal consistency reliability.

According to Hair et al. (2022) high internal consistency is desirable, but Cronbach's α and composite reliabilities above roughly 0.90 can sometimes signal that items overlap too heavily and fail to cover the full breadth of a construct. In extreme cases of result >0.95 researchers recommend cutting highly redundant items to preserve construct validity. However in this study all reliability indices fall below that 0.95 redundancy threshold. This indicates very strong consistency among items without extreme overlap (Diamantopoulos et al., 2012). Furthermore, our cross-loading and HTMT checks confirm that each item still taps a unique facet of its construct rather than merely echoing another item.

4.4.3. Convergent Validity

Convergent validity indicates the degree to which a construct's indicators share variance in common. The study evaluated this using the Average Variance Extracted (AVE), which should exceed 0.50 (Hair et al., 2020). Table 8 shows AVE values for all constructs exceeds 0.50, indicating that more than half of the variance in its indicators is captured by the latent construct. Together with the strong composite reliabilities, these AVE values confirm adequate convergent validity for all measurement scales.

Table 8: Constructs Reliability and Convergent Validity

Constructs	Cronbach's alpha	Composite reliability (rho_a)	Composite reliability (rho_c)	Average variance extracted (AVE)
Happiness at Work (HAW)	0.917	0.922	0.931	0.600
Organizational Justice (OJ)	0.909	0.915	0.923	0.501
Professional Performance (PP)	0.918	0.929	0.931	0.576
Work Motivation (WM)	0.911	0.918	0.924	0.505

4.4.4. Discriminant validity

Discriminant validity is an important critical measurement model assessment standard which measures the extent to which a construct is empirically distinct from other constructs in the structural model (Hair et al., 2021). This means that every construct measures something unique and unrelated to other constructs in the model.

4.4.4.1.The Fornell-Larcker Criterion of Testing

The Fornell-Larcker criterion as proposed by Fornell and Larcker (1981) is a traditional method for testing discriminant validity. It compares each construct's AVE (squared variance within) and measure of shared variance between constructs. According to this approach the square root of the AVE of each construct should be higher than correlation between that construct and any other construct (Hair et al., 2021).

For Example, as shown in the table below, the square root of AVE for OJ is 0.707 is higher than its correlation with other constructs, like correlation between OP and HAW which is 0.214. This is true for other constructs as well. This confirms that each construct is distinct and captures phenomena not represented by other constructs in the model

Table 9: Fornell Larcker Criterion of Testing

Construct	HAW	OJ	PP	WM
Happiness at Work (HAW)	**0.775**			
Organizational	0.214	**0.707**		

Justice (OJ)				
Professional Performance (PP)	0.357	0.243	**0.759**	
Work Motivation (WM)	0.246	0.184	0.097	**0.711**

4.4.4.2.Heterotrait-monotrait (HTMT) ratio matrix

Discriminant validity was further assessed using the Heterotrait-monotrait (HTMT) ratio of correlations (Henseler et al., 2015), which provides a more stringent test than the Fornell-Larcker criterion by accounting for measurement error. The HTMT ratio is a more rigorous test of discriminant validity than Fornell-Larcker, particularly effective at detecting situations where the Fornell-Larcker test might fail. It measures the ratio of correlations between different constructs and correlations within the same construct. According to Henseler et al. (2025), HTMT values very close to the 0.85 threshold suggest a lack of discriminant validity, whereas values substantially below 0.85 indicate the presence of discriminant validity.

According to the below table, All HTMT values were well below the conservative threshold of 0.85, with the highest ratio being 0.371 between HAW and PP and the lowest being 0.118 between PP and WM. This demonstrates discriminant validity across all construct pairs, confirming that the four latent variables measure distinct concept.

Table 10: HTMT Ratio Matrix

Construct	HAW	OJ	PP	WM
Happiness at Work (HAW)				
Organizational Justice (OJ)	0.224			
Professional Performance (PP)	0.371	0.248		
Work Motivation (WM)	0.258	0.203	0.118	

4.4.4.3.Cross-Loading

Each item loading (bolded) of the latent variables is bigger than the cross loading (with other scale items), as seen in table below.

Table 11: Cross-Loading Result

Indicators	Happiness at Work (HAW)	Organizational Justice (OJ)	Professional Performance (PP)	Work Motivation (WM)

Indicators	Happiness at Work (HAW)	Organizational Justice (OJ)	Professional Performance (PP)	Work Motivation (WM)
AM1	0.101	0.128	0.115	**0.656**
AM2	0.109	0.129	0.068	**0.666**
AOC1	**0.808**	0.174	0.33	0.197
AOC2	**0.734**	0.165	0.333	0.221
AOC3	**0.781**	0.171	0.243	0.194
CP1	0.3	0.225	**0.745**	0.09
CP2	0.235	0.136	**0.694**	0.08
CP3	0.328	0.3	**0.789**	0.088
CP4	0.28	0.186	**0.826**	0.055
CP5	0.242	0.214	**0.76**	0.146
DJ1	0.135	**0.648**	0.047	0.197
DJ2	0.16	**0.734**	0.19	0.152
DJ3	0.135	**0.742**	0.192	0.13
EN1	**0.772**	0.212	0.335	0.182
EN2	**0.76**	0.19	0.221	0.197
EN3	**0.762**	0.061	0.23	0.158
ER1	0.215	0.141	0.118	**0.756**
ER2	0.151	0.1	0.064	**0.713**
IJ1	0.161	**0.743**	0.196	0.081
IJ2	0.151	**0.737**	0.195	0.094
IJ3	0.138	**0.622**	0.079	0.189
IJ4	0.131	**0.66**	0.203	0.031
IJ5	0.17	**0.735**	0.202	0.176
IJ6	0.141	**0.727**	0.2	0.089
IM1	0.241	0.083	0.075	**0.748**
IM2	0.131	0.089	0.076	**0.601**
IdR1	0.177	0.209	0.06	**0.746**
IdR2	0.174	0.117	0.047	**0.692**
IjR1	0.157	0.143	0.062	**0.776**
IjR2	0.208	0.174	0.07	**0.733**
InR1	0.179	0.135	0.025	**0.736**
InR2	0.192	0.083	0.059	**0.687**
JS1	**0.811**	0.22	0.262	0.182
JS2	**0.792**	0.166	0.254	0.207
JS3	**0.749**	0.091	0.223	0.161
PJ1	0.095	**0.652**	0.102	0.173
PJ2	0.232	**0.74**	0.169	0.188

Indicators	Happiness at Work (HAW)	Organizational Justice (OJ)	Professional Performance (PP)	Work Motivation (WM)
PJ3	0.134	**0.732**	0.242	0.055
TP1	0.225	0.152	**0.699**	0.002
TP2	0.272	0.168	**0.79**	0.077
TP3	0.232	0.08	**0.723**	0.114
TP4	0.213	0.098	**0.753**	0.026
TP5	0.321	0.184	**0.802**	0.046

Note: AOC: Affective Organizational Commitment; EN: Engagement; JS: Job Satisfaction; DJ: Distributive Justice; IJ: Interactional Justice; PJ: Procedural Justice; AM: Amotivation; ER: External Regulation; IM: Intrinsic Motivation; IdR: Identified Regulation; IjR: Introjected Regulation; InR: Integrated Regulation; CP: Contextual Performance; TP: Task Performance

4.5. Structural Model Analysis

This section presents the following step after measurement model, which is the structural model, analysis to evaluate the hypothesized relationships between the latent constructs. The structural model assessment focuses on the significance and magnitude of the path coefficients, the R^2 values for endogenous constructs, the effect size (f^2) and the overall predictive relevance (Q^2) of the model. SmartPLS was used with a bootstrap procedure (5,000 bootstraps) to generate t-statistics and p-values for assessing the statistical significance of the relationships at the 0.05 level.

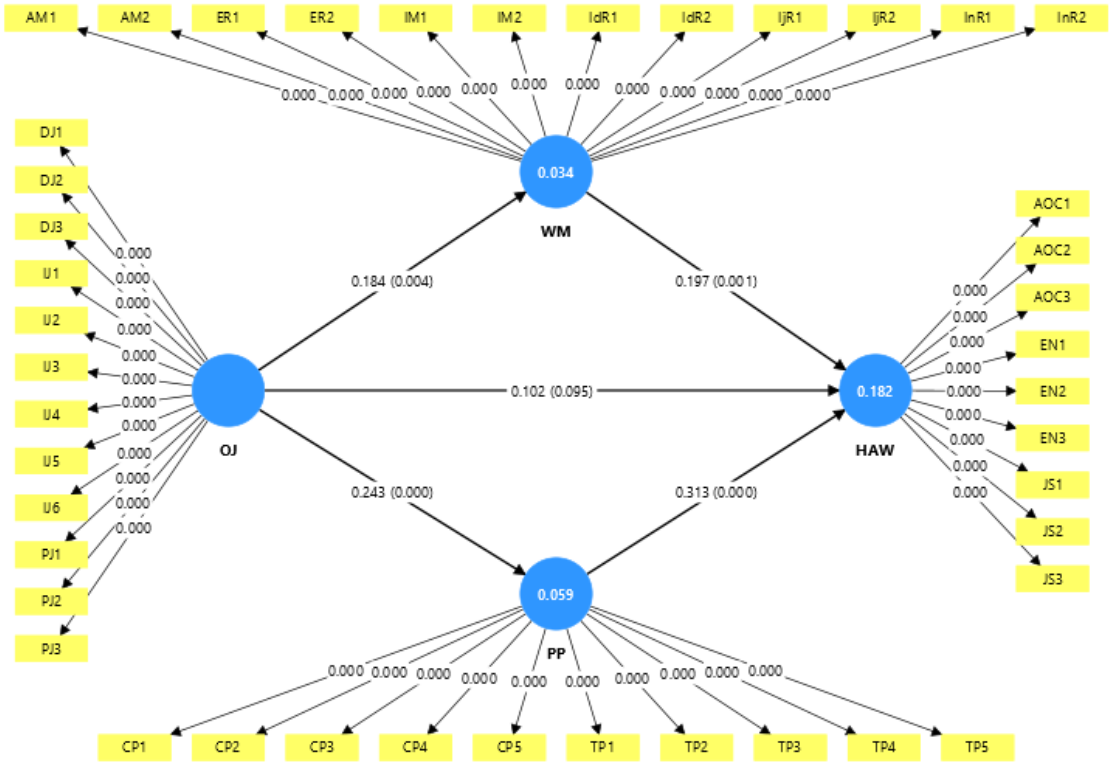


Figure 3: Bootstrapped Structural Model Results

Note: OJ: Organizational Justice; WM: Work Motivation; PP: Professional Performance; HAW: Happiness at Work; AOC: Affective Organizational Commitment; EN: Engagement; JS: Job Satisfaction; DJ: Distributive Justice; IJ: Interactional Justice; PJ: Procedural Justice; AM: Amotivation; ER: External Regulation; IM: Intrinsic Motivation; IdR: Identified Regulation; IjR: Introjected Regulation; InR: Integrated Regulation; CP: Contextual Performance; TP: Task Performance

4.5.1. Multicollinearity analysis (VIF)

Multicollinearity occur when predictor constructs in a structural model are highly correlated, inflating standard errors and making path coefficients unstable and unreliable. The Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) quantifies this inflation and is calculated as VIF = 1 / (1 − R^2) from regressing each predictor on all other predictors, with a minimum value of 1 indicating no multicollinearity. In PLS-SEM, the widely accepted threshold is VIF ≤ 5 (Hair et al., 2011).

According to the below table, for this study All VIF values are below the conservative threshold of 3 (or below 5), indicating no problematic multicollinearity among predictors.

Table 12: Multicollinearity Analysis (VIF)

Construct	HAW	PP	WM
Happiness at Work (HAW)			
Organizational Justice (OJ)	1.093	1.000	1.000
Professional Performance (PP)	1.066		
Work Motivation (WM)	1.038		

4.5.2. Assessment of the Significance and Relevance of Structural Relationships

Bootstrapping was employed in Smart PLS to assess the significance of the structural paths in the model, using a sample size of 249 respondents and 5,000 resamples. This helps researchers determine whether path coefficients are statistically significant at conventional levels. Strong relationships are indicated by path coefficient values close to +1, and vice versa (Hair et al., 2022). This procedure is commonly applied in PLS-SEM because it allows the estimation of standard errors, t-values, p-values, and confidence intervals for the hypothesized relationships without relying on normality assumptions. In this study, bootstrapping was used to test the direct effects and indirect effects among organizational justice, work motivation, professional performance, and happiness at work, thereby determining whether the proposed structural paths were statistically significant.

For hypothesis testing, the bootstrapping results were evaluated using the path coefficients, t-statistics, and p-values. Paths with t-values above 1.96 and p-values below 0.05 were considered statistically significant at the 5% level.

4.5.2.1. Hypothesized Direct Relationship

The hypothesized direct relationships in PLS-SEM can be defined as the immediate cause and effect relationships between the dependent and Independent variables, and testing them is an important step in determining the workings behind a theory. As discussed above the importance and significance of direct relationships are tested via bootstrapping tests, which involve using repetitive resampling procedures to construct confidence intervals for the path coefficients

without making any assumptions regarding the underlying distribution of the variables. With the help of Smart PLS, employing bootstrapping techniques 5,000 replications, researchers can determine whether path coefficients are statistically significant at conventional levels. Strong relationships are indicated by path coefficient values close to +1, and vice versa (Hair et al., 2022).

According to the below table 13, the hypotheses were accepted and rejected based on the path coefficient, p-value, and t-statistics values. The bootstrapping results of the structural model revealed that organizational justice had a positive but statistically insignificant direct effect on happiness at work. This was because the direct path from OJ to HAW was not significant (β=0.10, t=1.668, p=0.095). However, organizational justice showed significant positive relationships with work motivation (β=0.184, t=2.902, p=0.004) and professional performance (β=0.243, t=3.933, p<0.001). Furthermore, both work motivation (β=0.197, t=3.355, p=0.001) and professional performance (β=0.313, t=5.365, p=0.001) significantly and positively influenced happiness at work.

Table 13: Hypothesized Direct Relationship

Hypothesis		Path Coeff.(β)	Mean (M)	Standard deviation	T-Values	P-values	95% CI	Decision
H1	OJ -> HAW	0.102	0.105	0.061	1.668	0.095	0.196	Rejected.
H2	OJ -> WM	0.184	0.199	0.063	2.902	0.004	0.267	Accepted.
H3	OJ -> PP	0.243	0.256	0.062	3.933	0.000	0.327	Accepted.
H4	WM -> HAW	0.197	0.205	0.059	3.355	0.001	0.279	Accepted.
H5	PP -> HAW	0.313	0.317	0.058	5.365	0.000	0.400	Accepted.

Note: HAW: Happiness at Work; OJ: Organizational Justice; WM: Work Motivation; PP: Professional Performance

The first hypothesis (H1), which proposed that organizational justice has a significant and positive effect on happiness at work among employees in international NGOs, was rejected (β = 0.102, t = 1.668, p = 0.095). However, the finding differ from the findings of Ravina-Ripoll et al. (2024) whose meta-analysis proved organizational justice variables as critical predictors of happiness at work among all general workers. The finding is also different from those of Tsounis (2025) on how justice affects the cognitive and affective dimensions of happiness, as well as from those of Al-frijawy J. (2025) on how the process of making fair decisions leads to employee satisfaction and happiness. However, the current findings can be accounted for by the

indirect-only mediation process identified in this study. That is, organizational justice influences happiness at work through work motivation and performance without acting directly. As suggested in the integrative theoretical framework used in this study, justice fulfills psychological needs and creates reciprocity conditions, which then boost motivation and performance that culminate in happiness (Deci & Ryan, 1985; Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005). In regard to the context in Ethiopia, Habore (2024) found justice aspects to predict employee engagement, which is an essential component of happiness at work. However, the direct influence of justice on happiness may not be as strong when dealing with humanitarian organizations as stressful situations dominates there.

The second hypothesis (H2), which proposed that organizational justice has a significant and positive effect on work motivation among employees in international NGOs, was supported ($\beta = 0.184$, $t = 2.902$, $p = 0.004$). This finding confirms the self-determination theory claim that organizational justice satisfies workers' psychological needs for autonomy, competence, and relatedness, resulting in intrinsic motivation (Gagné & Deci, 2005). When individuals believe outcomes are equally distributed (distributive justice), decision-making processes are fair (procedural justice), and their dignity is respected (interactional justice), their motivation significantly increases. This result empirically confirms Herawati and Sunaryo's (2023) finding that workers who feel justly treated are more motivated both intrinsically and extrinsically. This result is especially important in relation to the international NGO context because it shows that workers who view the operations of their organization as fair are likely to identify with the mission of the organization and hence get motivated towards its goals while those who see the organization as having unethical management will not be able to align themselves with such organizations (Barua & Siddique, 2025).

The third hypothesis (H3), which proposed that organizational justice has a significant and positive effect on professional performance among employees in international NGOs, was supported ($\beta = 0.243$, $t = 3.933$, $p < 0.001$). This finding is consistent with Colquitt et al.'s (2013) meta-analysis, which found a significant positive correlation between all the justice dimensions and employee task performance as well as organizational citizenship behavior. It also aligns with Ekingen's (2021) whereby justice helps create an environment where employees can focus and achieve high task performance. The result also supports Blau's (1967) social exchange theory

where employees receiving organizational justice feel that there is a need to reciprocate the gesture by increasing performance since organizational justice enhances the effort-reward relationship.

The fourth hypothesis (H4), which proposed that work motivation has a significant and positive effect on happiness at work among employees in international NGOs, was supported ($\beta = 0.197$, $t = 3.355$, $p = 0.001$). This finding supports the self-determination theory intrinsic motivation through fulfilment of employees psychological needs of autonomy, competence, and relatedness create positive affective states and better well-being at work places (Gagné & Deci, 2005). This result practically confirms findings by Herawati and Sunaryo (2023) that more motivated employees report higher job satisfaction and positivity in their experiences at work. This finding aligns with Ravina-Ripoll et al. (2024) systematic review which listed work motivation as an important predictor of happiness at work amongst general workers from all sectors. This finding is particularly relevant to the international NGOs context as it indicates that motivated workers will likely have a sense of belonging to organizational objectives. This makes employees motivated towards meeting organizational objectives, while less motivated workers will fail to relate to such organizations (Barua & Siddique, 2025).

The fifth hypothesis (H5), which proposed that professional performance has a significant and positive effect on happiness at work among employees in international NGOs, was supported ($\beta = 0.313$, $t = 5.365$, $p = 0.001$). This finding confirms the theoretical perspective which suggests that high performance leads to a happy state for employees through their satisfaction due to goal attainment, supervisor and peer recognition, and increased self-efficacy (Ekingen, 2021). This result is also in agreement with Colquitt et al. (2013) meta-analysis that found task performance showed high positive associations with job satisfaction and positive affect as measures of employee well-being. But these results are in contrast with finding from Tsounis (2025) who suggested that work engagement but not work performance was the best predictor of employee happiness. The stronger effect of professional performance on happiness ($\beta = 0.313$) compared to work motivation ($\beta = 0.197$) suggests that successfully completing work tasks and achieving performance targets is a more powerful driver of happiness than motivation alone. This aligns with Blau (1967) social exchange theory where employees who demonstrate high performance receive reciprocal benefits including recognition, rewards, and enhanced status. The importance

of this finding for humanitarian NGOs is that those employees whose performance results meet organizational goals and objectives feel happier and more satisfied, which may prove crucial in keeping them motivated in their jobs even in the middle of high levels of stress and burnout risk (Tsounis, 2025).

4.5.2.2. Mediation Analysis

Mediation takes place when the relationship between an independent variable and a dependent variable is explained by a third variable known as the mediator, which gives the explanation behind the cause and effect of a relationship (Hayes, 2018). In a mediation analysis, the independent variable is related to the mediator (Path a) and the mediator is related to the outcome (Path b), which is the indirect (mediated) effect of the independent variable on the dependent variable. As stated by Zhao et al. (2010) mediation can be classified into three types. The first is no mediation which means indirect effect is not significant. The second is partial mediation where both direct and indirect effects are significant. Last full or complete mediation (indirect effect is significant but direct effect is not significant. Full mediation occurs when the independent variable affects the dependent variable entirely through the mediator, with no direct effect remaining. According to the hypotheses of this research, PLS-SEM was used to assess the mediating effects of Work Motivation (WM) and Professional Performance (PP) on the link between Organizational Justice (OJ) and Happiness at Work (HAW). The goal here is to demonstrate important indirect relationships aside from validating the significant path coefficient (β), specifically the original sample (O) in the mediation table.

According to table 14 below, the first mediation hypothesis was supported since the data demonstrated that WM significantly mediates the effect of OJ on HAW ($\beta = 0.036$, $t = 2.131$, $p = 0.033$). The second mediation hypothesis (OJ &PP& HAW) was also supported since the data demonstrated that PP significantly and favorably mediates the effect of OJ on HAW ($\beta = 0.076$, $t = 3.204$, $p = 0.001$). This shows the existence of mediation, and the path coefficients of 0.036 and 0.076 explain how OJ affects HAW through the mediators. This suggests that OJ has an indirect effect on HAW through the mediation of WM ($p = 0.033$, $t = 2.131$, $\beta = 0.036$) and through the mediation of PP ($p = 0.001$, $t = 3.204$, $\beta = 0.076$). As a result, it is said that the hypotheses have validity.

It is also important to note that the direct effect of Organizational Justice (OJ) on Happiness at Work (HAW) was non-significant while both indirect effects were significant. According to Zhao et al. (2010) criteria, the pattern shows the existence of full or complete mediation. This implies that that organizational justice affects happiness at work entirely through the mediators with no direct influence.

Table 14: Mediation Analysis through Indirect Effect

Hypothesis		Original sample (O)	Sample mean (M)	Standard deviation (STDEV)	T statistics (|O/STDEV|)	P values	Mediation
H6	**OJ -> WM -> HAW**	0.036	0.04	0.017	2.131	0.033	Supported
H7	**OJ -> PP -> HAW**	0.076	0.081	0.024	3.204	0.001	Supported

Note: OJ: Organizational Justice; WM: Work Motivation; PP: Professional Performance; HAW: Happiness at Work

The sixth hypothesis (H6), which proposed that work motivation mediates the relationship between organizational justice and happiness at work, was supported ($\beta = 0.036$, $t = 2.131$, $p = 0.033$). This findings support the theoretical integration of social exchange theory and self-determination theory presented in this study, as the satisfaction of employees' psychological needs through organizational justice provides an enabling situation for the establishment of reciprocity that fosters motivation, thereby generating positive work experience and happiness among employees. Such empirical evidence supports the findings by Herawati and Sunaryo (2023) concerning the mediating role played by work motivation in the relationship between justice and satisfaction. Additionally, the results answer the need for empirical evidence of work motivation's effect on the relationship between organizational justice and happiness identified by Ravina-Ripoll et al. (2024) concerning happiness management. The theoretical mechanism is clear, when employees believe their organization is just, their core psychological needs for autonomy, competence, and relatedness are fulfilled (Deci & Ryan, 1985), resulting in intrinsic motivation that generates positive affective states, engagement, and enhanced well-being (Ryan & Deci, 2000).

The last hypothesis (H7), which proposed that professional performance mediates the relationship between organizational justice and happiness at work, was supported (β = 0.076, t = 3.204, p = 0.001). This finding confirms the theoretical basis that organizational justice creates the environment in which professionals can perform well, and this ensures their happiness as a result of being satisfied due to success. This is consistent with Ekingen's (2021) theory that organizational justice impacts professional performance, which subsequently influences job satisfaction and positivity. The stronger indirect effect through performance (β = 0.076) compared to motivation (β = 0.036) suggests performance is a more powerful mechanism linking justice to happiness. This aligns with the social exchange theory and psychological capital explanation that fair treatment provides opportunities to realize true potential and use psychological capital to boost performance and successful performance produces recognition, self-efficacy, and other factors contributing to happiness. This finding also responds to Ravina-Ripoll et al.'s (2024) call to study professional performance as a mediator in the justice-happiness relationship, addressing the gap in understanding underlying mechanisms explaining indirect linkages.

4.5.3. Regression analysis or R-squared value (R^2)

Regression analysis uses the coefficient of determination (R^2, or R-squared) to quantify the proportion of variance in dependent construct that is explained by its predictors; it ranges from 0 to 1, with higher values indicating stronger explanatory power. Adjusted R^2 corrects R^2 for the number of predictors and sample size, penalizing the addition of predictors that do not meaningfully improve the model, and is therefore preferred when comparing models with different numbers of predictors. In SMART-PLS R^2 is a primary indicator of the structural model's explanatory power and is typically reported together with effect sizes (f^2), predictive relevance (Q^2), and bootstrapped path coefficients to provide a complete assessment of model quality (Hair et al., 2022) .

As shown on table 15, the studies model yields R^2 = 0.182 (adjusted = 0.172) for HAW, 0.059 (adjusted = 0.055) for PP, and 0.034 (adjusted = 0.030) for WM, meaning that 18.2%, 5.9%, and 3.4% of the variance in these constructs is explained by their predictors, respectively. Using widely accepted PLS-SEM cut-offs, R^2 values of 0.75, 0.50, and 0.25 are interpreted as

substantial, moderate, and weak explained. Therefore, these results indicate a weak explanatory power for all three constructs.

Table 15: Regression Analysis

Construct	R-square	R-square adjusted
Happiness at Work (HAW)	0.182	0.172
Professional Performance (PP)	0.059	0.055
Work Motivation (WM)	0.034	0.03

According to Hair et al. (2022), R^2 values in exploratory research can be lower and including additional predictors that are relevant may improve explanatory power. In this study the weak explanatory power suggest that important predictor variables are missing from this model. Therefore, the low values for Work Motivation (WM) and Professional Performance (PP) in this study can be explained by several theoretical factors like leadership style, employee burnout, psychological capital and maybe others.

First, leadership style represents a critical unmeasured variable. Transformational leadership has been demonstrated to significantly enhance work motivation and unit performance, surpassing the predictive power of organizational justice alone (Bass & Riggio, 2006). Employee burnout is a critical factor affecting happiness at work, particularly in high-pressure environments such as international NGO settings, where chronic demands and organizational stressors can lead to diminished workplace well-being and job satisfaction (Maslach & Leiter, 2016). Third, psychological capital comprising hope, efficacy, resilience, and optimism may explain additional variance in work motivation and professional performance (Luthans et al., 2006).

The relatively low R^2 for Happiness at Work (HAW) suggests that happiness at work is a multifaceted construct influenced by numerous factors beyond organizational justice, work motivation, and professional performance. Recent researches indicate that happiness at work is a multifaceted construct influenced not only by in-work factors, but also influenced by outside work factors like personal life, work-life balance, and social support (Fisher, 2009). Despite the weak explanatory power, the significant relationships found in this study remain theoretically and practically meaningful. The full mediation effects demonstrate that organizational justice

influences happiness at work through work motivation and professional performance pathways, even if the overall variance explained is limited.

4.5.4. F-squared analysis

F^2 (f-squared) is the effect-size measure for individual predictors in PLS-SEM, indicating how much an exogenous construct increases the R^2 of an endogenous construct when included in the model. Conventional cutoffs are $f^2 = 0.02$ (small), 0.15 (medium), and 0.35 (large); values below 0.02 are considered negligible (Hair et al., 2022).

According to table 16 below, the studies f^2 results show that the value between Professional performance and happiness at work has the largest effect (0.112) which is small-to-medium. The result between organizational justice and professional performance (0.063), organizational justice and work motivation (0.035) and work motivation and happiness at work (0.045) are regarded as small. The value between organizational justice and happiness at work (0.012) is negligible because it's below 0.02.

Table 16: F-Squared Analysis

	HAW	OJ	PP	WM
HAW				
OJ	0.012		0.063	0.035
PP	0.112			
WM	0.045			

Beyond statistical significance, the effect sizes (f^2) were examined to determine the practical significance of the predictors. As presented in Table 16, organizational justice showed a small effect size on work motivation (f^2 =0.35) and professional performance (f^2=0.063). This practically implies that targeted interventions by CARE Ethiopia management to improve fairness will not just result in a statistically noticeable change, but a practically meaningful gain in employee motivation and performance. Most importantly, both work motivation ($f^2 = 0.045$) and professional performance (f^2= 0.112) demonstrated meaningful effect sizes on happiness at work. This indicates that when employees are motivated and successfully achieve their performance targets, it yields a tangible and real-world boost to their daily workplace happiness,

rather than being merely a statistical product. Even small improvements in these areas can yield noticeable benefits for employee well-being in the demanding humanitarian context.

4.5.5. Predictive relevance (Q^2)

Predictive relevance (Q^2) is a measure of a model's out of sample predictive power in PLS-SEM, indicating whether it represents the ability of the model to make accurate predictions regarding new data points that were not included in the estimation of the model. According to Hair et al. (2021), predictive relevance measures how well the model predicts values of the endogenous constructs, and it acts as an important validation tool along with R^2, which measures the in-sample explanatory power. Predictive relevance can be established if the model meets the criteria that all Q^2 values for endogenous latent variables must be greater than zero ($Q^2 > 0$). Q^2 values exceeding 0.25 indicate medium predictive relevance and values above 0.50 indicate high predictive relevance (Hair et al., 2021)

According to the below table, the Q^2 values obtained through the PLS-SEM for all endogenous constructs in this researches model exceeded zero (Professional Performance = 0.044, Work Motivation = 0.018, Happiness at Work = 0.033), indicating the existence of predictive relevance for these three constructs according to the criterion established. Although the Q^2 values falling below 0.25 and are relatively low for medium predictive relevance, they meet the minimum requirement of $Q^2 > 0$. Therefore, it is sufficient to claim that the model has adequate predictive relevance. This finding is consistent with earlier observations that Happiness at Work has a relatively low R^2 of 18.2%, as both the low R^2 and low Q^2. This suggests that while organizational justice, work motivation, and professional performance explain some variance and can predict these constructs, happiness at work is likely influenced by additional factors beyond these three predictors.

Table 17: Predictive Relevance

Construct	Q^2predict
Professional Performance (PP)	0.044
Work Motivation (WM)	0.018
Happiness at Work (HAW)	0.033

4.6. Discussion of Findings

The findings of this study provide a deeper understanding of how organizational justice influences happiness at work. It reveals that the relationship is more complex than previously reported in the literature. Rather than a simple direct effect, the results indicate a full mediation model, which critically advances our understanding of happiness management in high-stress organizational contexts.

A critical review of the results shows notable contrasts with several differences with what exists in the literature. The most important difference is that organizational justice does not have any direct significant impact on happiness at work (H1), which contradicts the consensus that exists. For instance, a meta-analysis by Ravina-Ripoll et al. (2024) proved the direct relationship between organizational justice and happiness at work for general employees. Similar conclusions have also been made by Tsounis (2025) and Al-frijawy (2025), who revealed direct relationships between fair decision-making and happiness at work. However, the difference revealed by this study serves as an important boundary condition. According to other scholars, in the case of organizations operating in high-stress humanitarian and healthcare environments, the perception of justice is not enough to promote happiness directly because it has to pass through the psychological mediation channel of motivation (Herawati & Sunaryo, 2023). In contrast to corporations, where fair pay and processes may directly increase mood, humanitarian organizations operate in extremely stressful environments where justice should be perceived as a matter of course.

The rejection of H1 requires further theoretical analysis to understand why organizational justice would not directly cause happiness at CARE Ethiopia. Building on the contrasting evidence, the explanation can be derived from the psychological requirements of the humanitarian industry. At INGOs, workers are subject to secondary trauma, high pressure from donors, and a heavy workload (Barua & Siddique, 2025). Under such conditions, organizational justice functions like a "hygiene factor," not as a motivational element of happiness. Workers might accept the fact that there are some fair processes, but the recognition alone is not enough to make them happy due to the overwhelming nature of the operational stress they experience. However, justice is a basis upon which certain psychological needs are met (Deci & Ryan, 1985), and those needs should be utilized to motivate people in their work.

Theoretical contributions of this study include the integration of three major theories including Social Exchange Theory, Self-Determination Theory and Affective Events Theory. In other words, the complete mediation model provides empirical evidence that the theories cannot be applied in isolation. Although Social Exchange Theory (Blau, 1967), explains the reasons why employees behave reciprocally when facing justice, it fails to elaborate the underlying mechanism of happiness. By integrating Self-Determination Theory, this study shows that justice meets the needs of autonomy and competence and thus creates the intrinsic motivation (H6) needed for happiness. Furthermore, the finding that professional performance was a stronger mediator (H7) than motivation enhances Affective Events Theory (Weiss & Cropanzano, 1996). It confirms that the successful achievement of tasks and goal attainment generates powerful positive affective states that are pride and self-efficacy. This becomes the real driver of happiness at workplace. Thus, organizational justice is antecedent, requiring the proximal psychological (motivation) and behavioral (performance) mechanisms to realize employee happiness.

CHAPTER FIVE

5. CONCLUSION, RECOMMENDATION AND LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE SCOPE OF THIS STUDY

5.1. Conclusion

The objective of this study was to examine the relationships between organizational justice, motivation, professional performance, and happiness at Work among employees of CARE Ethiopia. It also explores the role of work motivation and professional performance in the association between organizational justice and work-related happiness as mediating variables. The findings suggest that while organizational justice does not have a direct relationship with happiness at work, it does indirectly through work motivation and professional performance.

The study's hypothesis testing results show that organizational justice has a significant positive association with work motivation by helping employees develop motivation because their psychological needs of autonomy, competence, and relatedness are fulfilled. In addition, this concept has been shown to positively relate to professional performance of employees by helping them concentrate and deliver task performance effectively.

The results for the direct relationship between work motivation and happiness at work has been found to be significant and positive. This implies that motivated workers derive greater levels of happiness at work from experiencing positive affective states and improved levels of well-being. Another significant and positive result has been found in relation to the direct relationship between professional performance and happiness at work, with a stronger relation compared to work motivation. This suggests that successful task completion and achievement of performance targets is a more important factor driving happiness than motivation alone. Employees who are high performers gain reciprocal rewards such as appreciation, awards, and increased status that lead to their happiness at work.

Work motivation and professional performance were also found to have a mediating role on the relationship between organizational justice and happiness at work. The result also suggested a full mediation which means that organizational justice works entirely through work motivation

and professional performance with no direct effect. Even though, the direct relationship of organizational justice on happiness at work was found to be statistically insignificant, this does not diminish the importance of organizational justice. Instead, it shows that organizational justice influences happiness at work entirely through the mediators explored rather than directly. This finding is crucial for understanding the process through which justice influences employee happiness in the Ethiopian INGO context.

5.2. Recommendation

Based on the research findings, the researcher proposes the following recommendations for CARE Ethiopia management, HR specialists, and decision-makers, as well as other international NGOs operating in similar contexts.

First of all, the focus should be the mediators' not just organizational justice or fairness. Since organizational justice by itself did not directly increase happiness, management can no longer think that fair practices will lead automatically to their employees being happy. Managers must actively ensure that fair treatment is transformed into practical performance in a job position. Therefore, HR has to make sure that jobs are such that the employees can use their fair treatment to perform.

Second, leverage professional performance for happiness is important. Because professional performance was the strongest driver of happiness at work and the strongest mediator, managers should prioritize facilitating the performance of their subordinates. That means setting up KPIs, giving employees prompt feedback, allocating sufficient resources for humanitarian activities, and praising employee success.

Third, enhancing motivational pathways should also be considered. While motivation was a weaker mediator than performance, it remains vital. Management should ensure that procedural and interactional justice practices, such as transparent communication and respectful supervision, satisfy employees' psychological needs, thereby boosting intrinsic motivation.

Lastly, targeted supervisor training is also recommended. Since interactional justice drives motivation, CARE Ethiopia should train line managers specifically in cross-cultural

communication, respectful interpersonal treatment, and transparent decision-making, as these are the daily triggers for employee motivation in a multicultural INGO setting.

5.3. Limitations and Future Scope of this Study

While the findings of the current study show how the relationships between organizational justice, work motivation, and professional performance with happiness at work and each other, there are several limitations that need to be acknowledged. First, due to the study's cross-sectional design, it does not allow making any causal claims despite the theoretical assumptions made in the conceptual model. Second, the sample used in this study consists of CARE Ethiopia employees only, meaning that this single-organization setting limits generalizability to other organizations, both non-governmental and corporate. Third, all the variables involved were assessed based on self-report surveys, making this study vulnerable to Common Method Bias. Therefore, further studies should collect objective performance-related data and measure organizational justice in multiple ways. Fourth, the explained variance is relatively low. Therefore, additional contextual, organizational, and individual-level variables, such as donor pressure, leadership style or personality traits could have been incorporated to improve the predictive power of the model.

To overcome these challenges, several additional paths may be followed by future research. First, the use of longitudinal data, including more than one observation period, will make it possible to assess the validity of the hypotheses more reliably. It will also examine the dynamic implementation of the measures that can facilitate motivation and performance over time. Second, research designs incorporating multiple organizations in various sectors of business, and diverse cultural contexts, would be useful in validating the theoretical model developed in this study and exploring its boundary conditions. Third, using mixed-methods approaches like combining surveys, interviews, daily experience sampling, and analysis of specific cases would provide a deeper understanding of the psychological mechanisms behind the model. Finally, carrying out interventional studies, for instance running experimental training programs aimed at developing procedures of justice in humanitarian organizations, would be valuable for identifying best practices for fostering motivation and happiness in employees.

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Appendix A. Supplementary Material

Research Questionnaire

Dear Respondent,

I am conducting a research study on *"**The Effect of Organizational Justice on Happiness at Work: The Mediating Role of Work Motivation and Professional Performance**"* at CARE Ethiopia. This questionnaire is designed to collect data solely for academic purposes.

Your participation in this study is entirely voluntary. All responses will be kept strictly confidential and anonymous, and no personally identifiable information will be collected. The questionnaire will take approximately 10–15 minutes to complete.

There are no rights or wrong answers. Please respond honestly based on your personal experiences and perceptions.

Thank you very much for your time and cooperation.

SECTION ONE: DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION
Please tick (✓) or circle the appropriate option for each question.

1. Gender:
a) Male ( )
b) Female ( )
c) Prefer not to say ( )

2. Age:
a) 18–25 years ( )
b) 26–35 years ( )
c) 36–45 years ( )
d) 46–55 years ( )
e) Above 55 years ( )

3. Highest Educational Qualification:
a) Diploma ( )

b) Bachelor's Degree ( )
c) Master's Degree ( )
d) Doctoral Degree (PhD) ( )
e) Other (please specify): _____

4. Years of Experience at CARE Ethiopia:
a) Less than 1 year ( )
b) 1–3 years ( )
c) 4–6 years ( )
d) 7–10 years ( )
e) More than 10 years

5. Employment Category:
a) Program Staff ( )
b) Operation /Administrative Staff ( )
c) Management Staff ( )

SECTION ONE: DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION
Please tick (✓) or circle the appropriate option for each question.

1. Gender:
a) Male ( )
b) Female ( )
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2. Age:
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a) Diploma ( )
b) Bachelor's Degree ( )
c) Master's Degree ( )
d) Doctoral Degree (PhD) ( )
e) Other (please specify): _____

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a) Less than 1 year ( )

b) 1–3 years ( )
c) 4–6 years ( )
d) 7–10 years ( )
e) More than 10 years

5. Employment Category:
a) Program Staff ( )
b) Operation /Administrative Staff ( )
c) Management Staff ( )

SECTION TWO:

PART I: ORGANIZATIONAL JUSTICE (12 Items)						
Please indicate your level of agreement with each of the following statements regarding Organizational Justice at CARE Ethiopia.						
A. Distributive Justice (3 Items): This Refers to your Outcome based on Salary/Rewards						
No.	**Statement**	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
DJ1	My outcome reflects the effort I have put into my work.					
DJ2	My outcome reflects what I have contributed to the organization.					
DJ3	My outcome is justified, given my performance.					
B. Procedural Justice (3 Items): Refers to the procedures used to determine your outcome						
No.	**Statement**	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
PJ1	The procedures have been applied consistently.					
PJ2	The procedures have been based on accurate information.					
PJ3	I have been able to appeal the outcome arrived at by those procedures.					
C. Interactional Justice (6 Items)						
Interpersonal Justice (3 Items): Refers to the authority figure who enacted the procedure						
No.	**Statement**	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
IJ1	He/She has treated me in a polite manner.					
IJ2	He/She has treated me with respect.					
IJ3	He/She has refrained from improper remarks or comments.					
Informational Justice (3 Items) : Refers to the authority figure who enacted the procedure						
No.	**Statement**	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
IJ4	He/She has explained the procedures thoroughly.					
IJ5	His/Her explanations regarding the procedures were reasonable.					
IJ6	He/She has tailored communications to my specific needs.					
PART II: WORK MOTIVATION (12 Items)						
Please indicate your level of agreement with each of the following statements regarding your Motivation to Work at CARE Ethiopia.						
No.	**Statement**	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**

A) Intrinsic Motivation						
IM1	For the satisfaction I experience from taking on interesting challenges					
IM2	For the satisfaction I experience when I am successful at doing difficult tasks.					
B) Extrinsic Motivation						
Integrated Regulation						
InR1	Because it has become a fundamental part of who I am.					
InR2	Because it is part of the way in which I have chosen to live my life.					
Identified Regulation						
IdR1	Because I chose this type of work to attain my career goals.					
IdR2	Because it is the type of work I have chosen to attain certain important objectives.					
Introjected Regulation						
IjR1	Because I want to succeed at this job, if not I would be very ashamed of myself.					
IjR2	Because I want to be very good at this work, otherwise I would be very disappointed.					
External Regulation						
ER1	For the income it provides me.					
ER2	Because it allows me to earn money.					
C) Amotivation						
AM1	I don't know why, we are provided with unrealistic working conditions.					
AM2	I don't know, too much is expected of us.					
PART III: PROFESSIONAL PERFORMANCE (10 Items)						
Please indicate your level of agreement with each of the following statements regarding your professional performance at CARE Ethiopia.						
A) Task Performance						
No.	**Statement**	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
TP1	I perform hard tasks properly					
TP2	I do my job according to what the organization expects from me					
TP3	I plan the execution of my job by defining actions, deadlines and priorities.					
TP4	I plan actions according to my tasks and organizational routines.					
TP5	I seize opportunities that can improve my results at work.					
B) Contextual Performance						
No.	**Statement**	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
CP1	I try to update my technical knowledge to do my job.					
CP2	I take initiatives to improve my results at work.					

CP3	I seek new solutions for problems that may come up in my job					
CP4	I work hard to do the tasks designated to me					
CP5	I execute my tasks foreseeing their results					
PART IV: HAPPINESS AT WORK (9 Items)						
Please indicate your level of agreement with each of the following statements regarding your professional performance at CARE Ethiopia.						
A) Engagement						
No.	**Statement**	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
EN1	At my job, I feel strong and vigorous					
EN2	I am enthusiastic about my job					
EN3	I get carried away when I am working					
B) Job Satisfaction						
No.	**Statement**	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
JS1	How satisfied are you with the nature of the work you perform?					
JS2	How satisfied are you with the pay you receive for your job?					
JS3	How satisfied are you with the opportunities which exist in this organization for advancement or promotion?					
C) Affective Organizational Commitment						
No.	**Statement**	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
AOC1	I would be very happy to spend the rest of my career with this organization					
AOC2	I feel emotionally attached to this organization					
AOC3	I feel a strong sense of belonging to my organization					

End of Questionnaire