



10.5281/zenodo.11243297

Vol. 07 Issue 02 Feb - 2024

Manuscript ID: #01387

PERCEIVED ORGANIZATIONAL SUPPORT AND ORGANIZATIONAL CITIZENSHIP BEHAVIOUR IN SELECTED NIGERIAN UNIVERSITIES

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Abstract

This study investigates the relationships between employee benefits, fairness, supportive human resource practices, and organizational citizenship behaviours (OCBs) within organizational contexts. The objectives were to assess the impact of employee benefits, fairness and supportive HR practices on OCBs such as civic virtue and sportsmanship. The study employs a quasi-experimental survey design to investigate the relationships between perceived organizational support (POS) dimensions (employee benefits, fairness, and supportive HR practices) and organizational citizenship behaviours (OCBs) (civic virtue and sportsmanship) among academic and non-academic staff members of Rivers State University of Science and Technology (RSUST) and the University of Port Harcourt (Uniport) in Rivers State, Nigeria. The population of interest comprises 1,870 employees from RSUST and 3,800 employees from Uniport, totalling 5,670 individuals. Convenient sampling was utilized to select 375 university staff members based on availability and willingness to participate. Data were collected through structured questionnaires using a five-point Likert scale and analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics, including linear regression analysis in IBM SPSS version 25.0, with a significance level set at 0.05. The study found significant positive relationships between employee benefits, fairness, and supportive HR practices with both civic virtue and sportsmanship. The Cronbach's Alpha values exceeded .70 for all variables, indicating high internal consistency. Based on these findings, the study concludes that fostering perceived organizational support through employee benefits, fairness, and supportive HR practices is essential for promoting organizational citizenship behaviours among university staff members. It recommends that HR practitioners and organizational leaders prioritize initiatives aimed at enhancing employee well-being, equity, and organizational support to foster a positive work environment conducive to OCBs, thereby contributing to organizational effectiveness and success.

Keywords:

Employee Rewards and Recognitions. Fairness. Civic Virtue. Sportsmanship. Supportive Human Resource Practices



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CONTEXT OF THE PROBLEM

In the dynamic landscape of developing countries' educational systems, characterized by frequent governmental reforms, the role of educators transcends traditional boundaries. Particularly during organizational transitions, such as those experienced in Nigerian universities, the dedication of faculty members becomes pivotal. Teachers who willingly invest effort beyond their prescribed duties play a crucial role in facilitating successful institutional changes (Somech&Drach-Zahavy, 2000; Bogler&Somech, 2005). This commitment manifests in behaviours termed as organizational citizenship behaviours (OCBs), which extend beyond formal role expectations to enhance school effectiveness (Demir, 2015; Noruzu, et al., 2011).

Studies illustrate the significance of OCBs in educational settings, as they contribute to resource allocation, organizational coordination, and adaptability to environmental shifts (Somech& Ron, 2007). Embracing OCBs encourages educators to proactively engage in initiatives such as proposing innovations, volunteering for extracurricular activities, and participating in novel committees (DiPaola, et al., 2005). Such behaviours are fostered within environments where individuals feel supported and valued. Central to this support framework is the concept of perceived organizational support (POS), which underscores employees' beliefs regarding the extent to which their organization values their contributions (Eisenberger et al., 1986).

Organizational citizenship behaviour, a discretionary yet invaluable facet of workplace dynamics, is defined by its voluntary nature, organizational benefit, and multidimensional aspects (Demir, 2015; Podsakoff et al., 2014). Within educational contexts, OCBs encompass actions that aid colleagues, supervisors, and the institution itself, ranging from assisting with workload to suggesting improvements in pedagogical practices (Somech& Ron, 2007; Wu & Liu, 2014). However, despite the established link between high OCB levels and organizational performance, limited research explores the antecedents shaping these behaviours, particularly the mediating influence of organizational identification (Andriyanti, et al., 2021; Somech&Drach-Zahavy, 2000).

In light of the foregoing, this empirical study delves into the nexus between perceived organizational support (POS) and organizational citizenship behaviours (OCBs) among faculty members in selected Nigerian universities. By scrutinizing the interplay between employees' perceptions of organizational support and their discretionary efforts to benefit the institution, this research aims to shed light on the mechanisms driving organizational effectiveness in higher education settings. Furthermore, the investigation seeks to uncover the mediating role of POS in the relationship between organizational justice, OCBs, and job satisfaction, thereby enriching our understanding of the intricate dynamics shaping faculty behaviour and institutional performance. Through rigorous empirical analysis, this study endeavours to offer actionable insights for fostering supportive organizational climates conducive to enhancing faculty engagement and, consequently, academic excellence (Demir, 2015; DiPaola, et al., 2005; Wu & Liu, 2014).

Nigerian universities face numerous challenges in attracting and retaining talented faculty and staff. To address this issue, it is crucial for these institutions to recognize the importance of POS (Nwachukwu&Omofowa, 2022). When employees are aware that their organization genuinely supports them, they are more likely to exhibit positive behaviours(OCB). OCB refers to discretionary behaviours that are considered above the formal job requirements and promotes the overall effectiveness and success of the organization. These behaviours can

include helping colleagues, promoting a positive work environment, and volunteering for additional tasks, (Podsakoff et al., 2014; Wu & Liu, 2014).

Despite the recognized importance of organizational citizenship behaviours (OCBs) in educational settings, limited research exists on the antecedents shaping these behaviours among faculty members in Nigerian universities. While prior studies have established a positive relationship between perceived organizational support (POS) and OCBs (Al-Hawary, & Nusair, 2017; Demir, 2015; Somech & Drach-Zahavy, 2000), the nuances of this relationship in Nigerian higher education institutions remains relatively underexplored. This study aims to address this gap by investigating how faculty members' perceptions of organizational support influence their engagement in discretionary behaviours that benefit their institutions, thereby providing insights into the mechanisms driving organizational effectiveness in Nigerian universities.

Objectives of the Study

The primary objective of this study is to examine the relationship between perceived organizational support (POS) and organizational citizenship behaviours (OCBs) among faculty members in Nigerian universities, considering their respective dimensions and measures. Specifically, the objectives are as follows:

- i. To assess the relationship between employee benefits and organizational citizenship behaviours, focusing on measures of civic virtue and sportsmanship.
- ii. To explore the relationship between fairness and organizational citizenship behaviours, considering both civic virtue and sportsmanship as measures.
- iii. To investigate the relationship between supportive human resource practices and organizational citizenship behaviours, with a particular focus on civic virtue and sportsmanship as measures.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Theoretical Foundations

Organizational Support Theory (OST)

Organizational Support Theory (OST) is a psychological framework that delves into the dynamics between employees and their organizations, particularly focusing on the construct of Perceived Organizational Support (POS). POS refers to the extent to which employees believe their organization values their contributions and cares about their well-being (Vardaman et al., 2016). At its core, OST posits that employees develop a generalized perception of organizational support, influenced by factors such as fairness, leadership support, and working conditions (Eisenberger et al., 2020).

Recent literature trends indicate a growing interest in exploring various facets of POS and its implications. Research suggests that the average level of POS has moderately increased over the past few decades in the United States (Hunter, 2011). Additionally, studies highlight cultural differences in the impact of POS, with Eastern cultures exhibiting stronger positive outcomes compared to Western cultures (Caesens & Stinglhamber, 2020). Furthermore, recent research avenues include investigating trickle-down effects of POS, its relevance to group dynamics, and its association with creativity, innovation, and employee well-being (Baran et al., 2011).

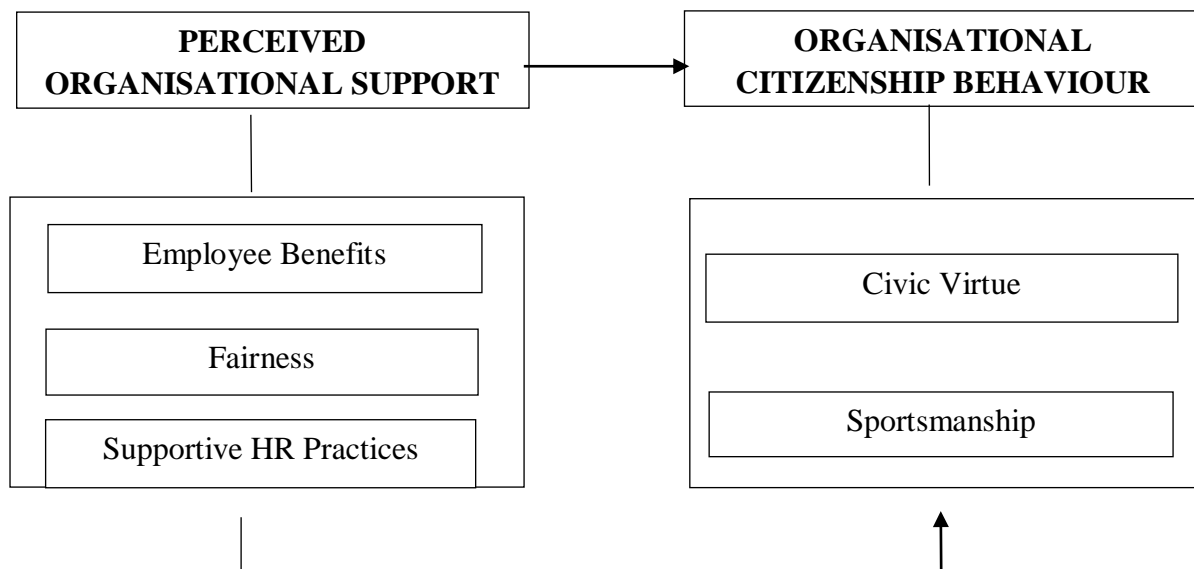
In summary, OST provides a valuable lens for understanding the relationship between employees and their organizations. By emphasizing the significance of perceived organizational support in shaping employee attitudes and behaviors, OST contributes to a deeper understanding of organizational dynamics and outcomes.

In the context of the current study on perceived organizational support (POS) and organizational citizenship behavior (OCB), OST offers insights into how employees' perceptions of organizational support influence their discretionary behaviors to benefit the organization. As employees perceive higher levels of organizational support, they are more likely to engage in positive behaviors such as organizational citizenship behaviors, thereby contributing to organizational effectiveness and success (Vardaman et al., 2016; Eisenberger et al., 2020). Therefore, by examining the role of POS in fostering organizational citizenship behaviors within Nigerian universities, this study aligns with the fundamental tenets of Organizational Support Theory.

Conceptual Review

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework for this study is presented in Figure 1 below.



Source: Conceptualized by Researcher, 2024.

Figure 1: Conceptual Framework Showing the Hypothesized Relationship between Perceived Organisational Support (POS) and Organisational Citizenship Behaviour(OCB).

As shown in Figure 1 above, the independent variable in this study is Perceived Organizational Support (POS), comprising three key dimensions: Employee benefits, Fairness, and Supportive HR practices that were adapted from previous research by Vardaman et al. (2016) and Eisenberger et al. (2020) on POS in various organizational contexts. The dependent variable, Organizational Citizenship Behaviour (OCB), is operationalized through two distinct measures: Civic virtue and Sportsmanship and adapted from Organ (1988) and further validated by studies in various cultural contexts, including Nigeria (Aryee et al., 2002; Baran et al., 2011).

Perceived Organizational Support (POS)

Perceived Organizational Support (POS) describes employees' beliefs about their firm's ability to appreciate their contributions and show of concern for their general good or well-being (Demir, 2015). Rooted in social exchange theory, POS posits that employees reciprocate favorable treatment from their employer with positive work attitudes and behaviors (Wu & Liu, 2014). Within the context of selected Nigerian universities, understanding POS is fundamental to comprehending employee engagement and organizational citizenship behavior.

Perceived organizational support (POS) is a fundamental concept in organizational behavior, representing employees' perceptions of how much their organization values their contributions and cares about their well-being (Kurtessis, et al., 2017). It encompasses employees' beliefs regarding the organization's willingness to support and appreciate their efforts, thus influencing their attitudes and behaviors in the workplace (Ardias, 2015).

In the context of Nigerian universities, where the relationship between faculty/staff and the institution plays a crucial role in academic and administrative functions, POS holds significant implications. Employees' perceptions of organizational support can influence their job satisfaction, commitment, and engagement, ultimately impacting organizational effectiveness (Noruzy et al., 2011).

POS within Nigerian universities encompasses various dimensions, including employee benefits, fairness and equity, and supportive HR practices (Demir, 2015). These dimensions reflect the organization's efforts to create a conducive work environment that promotes employee well-being and fosters a sense of belonging and commitment among faculty and staff (Wu & Liu, 2014). For instance, fair and equitable treatment in decision-making processes, transparent communication channels, and opportunities for career development signal the organization's commitment to supporting its employees (Kurtessis et al., 2017). Similarly, policies that promote work-life balance, provide competitive compensation, and recognize employees' contributions contribute to a positive perception of organizational support (Robbins & Judge, 2019).

Scholarly perspectives on POS highlight its multifaceted impact on employee attitudes and behaviors. POS correlates positively with desirable organizational outcomes, such as reduced absenteeism, increased job satisfaction, enhanced organizational citizenship behavior, and improved overall organizational performance (Andriyanti&Supartha, 2021; Noruzy et al., 2011; Demir, 2015). Factors influencing POS include organizational fairness and equity, supportive HR practices, employee characteristics, and leadership communication. Moreover, supervisor support, reflected in high-quality leader-member exchange relationships, strengthens the positive effects of POS on employee attitudes and behaviors (Kurtessis et al., 2017; Sumardjo&Supriadi, 2023).

Employee Benefits: Employee benefits, as a dimension of perceived organizational support (POS), encompass the tangible rewards and perks that employees receive from their organization in addition to their regular salary. These benefits serve as indicators of the organization's commitment to supporting and caring for its employees' well-being (Eisenberger et al., 1990).

Within the framework of POS, employee benefits play a crucial role in shaping employees' perceptions of the organization's investment in their welfare and contributions. These benefits

can include health insurance, retirement plans, paid time off, flexible work arrangements, wellness programs, and professional development opportunities (Onuoha & Tolulope, 2013).

In the context of Nigerian universities, employee benefits hold significant importance in attracting and retaining top talent among faculty and staff. Competitive benefit packages signal the organization's recognition of employees' valuable contributions to the academic and administrative functions of the institution (Demir, 2015).

Moreover, employee benefits contribute to enhancing job satisfaction, morale, and overall well-being among university employees. Access to comprehensive healthcare coverage, for example, provides employees with peace of mind and security, reducing stress and absenteeism (Eisenberger et al., 2002).

Additionally, benefits such as professional development opportunities and tuition assistance demonstrate the organization's investment in employees' career growth and advancement, fostering a sense of loyalty and commitment (Noruzi et al., 2011). Effective communication and transparency regarding available benefits further reinforce employees' perceptions of organizational support. When employees feel that their organization values their welfare and invests in their development, they are more likely to reciprocate with increased engagement, productivity, and organizational citizenship behaviors (Kurtessis et al., 2017).

Fairness: Fairness is a crucial dimension of Perceived Organizational Support (POS). It refers to the perception of employees about the equitable treatment they receive within their organization. This dimension is often associated with the concept of organizational justice, which includes distributive justice (fairness in outcomes), procedural justice (fairness in decision-making processes), and interactional justice (fairness in interpersonal treatment). These dimensions play a critical role in shaping employees' attitudes, behaviors, and overall organizational climate (Greenberg, 1987; Jabagi, et al., 2024; Tsachouridi, 2021).

In the context of POS, fairness can be seen as the extent to which employees believe that their organization treats them in a just and equitable manner (Pessach & Shmueli, 2022). In other words, it is employees' perceptions of fair treatment, impartiality, and justice within the organization's policies, procedures, and practices (Demir, 2015). This could include fair distribution of resources, unbiased decision-making processes, respectful treatment by supervisors and colleagues, and recognition of employees' contributions.

Fairness encompasses several aspects, including procedural fairness, distributive fairness, and interactional fairness (Wu & Liu, 2014). Procedural fairness refers to the fairness of the processes used to make decisions, such as transparency, consistency, and opportunities for employee input. Distributive fairness pertains to the perceived fairness of outcomes or resource distributions, ensuring that rewards and benefits are allocated equitably based on performance and contributions. Interactional fairness involves the quality of interpersonal treatment and communication, such as respect, honesty, and dignity in interactions between employees and organizational representatives (Kurtessis et al., 2017).

When employees perceive high levels of fairness in their organization, they are likely to feel more supported and valued. This can lead to increased job satisfaction, higher levels of engagement, and stronger commitment to the organization. Conversely, perceptions of unfairness can lead to feelings of dissatisfaction, disengagement, and lower commitment (Ehigie & Otukoya, 2005).

In summary, fairness and equity are fundamental dimensions of perceived organizational support in Nigerian universities. By promoting fairness and equity in their policies, procedures, and practices, universities can foster a supportive and inclusive work environment, enhance employee morale and commitment, and ultimately, achieve their strategic goals and objectives (Eisenberger et al., 2002; Wu & Liu, 2014).

Supportive HR Practices: These are human resource practices that are considered important and they indicative of organisational investment in employees as well as recognising employee contributions towards the achievement of organisational goals. However, this support is discretionary in nature because the organisations are not obligated to offer these practices to every employee (Shore & Shore, 1995)

Organizational Citizenship Behaviour (OCB)

Organizational Citizenship Behaviour (OCB) is a crucial aspect of employee conduct within an organization, including in the Nigerian university setting. Defined by Organ (1988), OCB encompasses discretionary behaviours that employees undertake voluntarily, which are not explicitly mandated by their job descriptions but contribute positively to the effective functioning of the organization (Ali, et al., 2023).

In the context of Nigerian universities, OCB manifests in various forms, including assisting colleagues beyond one's job requirements, actively participating in institutional initiatives, and defending the university's objectives and values. These behaviors, though not contractually obligated, play a vital role in enhancing organizational effectiveness and fostering a conducive work environment (de Geus et al., 2020).

One of the distinctive features of OCB is its discretionary nature. Employees engage in these behaviors out of their own volition, driven by a sense of commitment to the institution and a desire to contribute beyond their prescribed duties (Soelton, 2023). This discretionary aspect underscores the intrinsic motivation behind OCB, as employees perceive it as a means of expressing their dedication and loyalty to the organization.

Furthermore, OCB extends beyond the realm of individual performance to encompass actions that benefit the broader organizational community. These behaviors include acts of altruism, courtesy, and civic virtue, which contribute to the social and psychological well-being of the university community (Organ, 1988). In the Nigerian university context, such behaviors could involve mentoring junior faculty members, participating in community outreach programs, or advocating for institutional reforms aimed at enhancing academic excellence and student welfare (Sari & Ali, 2022).

Despite its inherent value, measuring and defining OCB poses challenges due to its subjective nature and variability across organizational contexts (Sari & Ali, 2022). However, empirical research suggests that OCB is positively associated with various organizational outcomes, including enhanced job satisfaction, increased organizational commitment, and improved overall performance (de Geus et al., 2020). Antecedents of OCB in Nigerian universities encompass a range of factors, including employee attitudes, organizational justice perceptions, leadership behaviors, and task characteristics (Soelton, 2023). For instance, job satisfaction has been identified as a significant predictor of OCB, with satisfied employees more likely to engage in discretionary behaviors that benefit the organization (Organ & Ryan, 1995).

In the realm of Organizational Citizenship Behaviour (OCB), two important measures are civic virtue and sportsmanship. These measures reflect specific dimensions of employee behaviour that go beyond the formal requirements of their job descriptions, contributing to the overall effectiveness of the organization (Emami, et al., 2012; Podsakoff et al., 1990; Williams & Anderson, 1991).

Civic Virtue: In examining the concept of civic virtue as a dimension of Organizational Citizenship Behavior (OCB) within Nigerian universities, it's essential to consider the insights provided by Tambe (2014) and Romaiha et al. (2019). These scholars emphasize the significance of civic virtue in promoting responsible involvement in organizational affairs and contributing to long-term organizational effectiveness.

Civic virtue, as outlined by Tambe (2014), encompasses discretionary behaviors exhibited by employees that extend beyond their formal job requirements. These behaviors include actively participating in institutional initiatives, attending meetings, and staying informed about organizational developments. Such actions demonstrate a commitment to the organization's well-being and contribute to its overall success.

Moreover, Romaiha et al. (2019) underscore the importance of understanding the determinants of organizational citizenship behavior, including civic virtue, within the context of Nigerian universities. Their research highlights the role of individual characteristics, work culture, and workload in shaping employees' engagement in discretionary behaviors that benefit the organization.

Building on these insights, it's evident that civic virtue plays a crucial role in the Nigerian university setting. Faculty members, in particular, demonstrate civic virtue by volunteering for administrative tasks, participating in governance processes, and staying informed about academic developments, as suggested by Sari and Ali (2022).

Additionally, the transformative leadership behaviors discussed by Podsakoff et al. (1990) contribute to fostering a culture of civic virtue within universities. Leaders who articulate a vision, provide support, and encourage participation empower employees to engage in discretionary behaviors that support the organization's mission and objectives. In summary, civic virtue in Nigerian universities reflects employees' proactive engagement and commitment to the institution's success. By embracing their role as responsible organizational citizens, faculty members contribute to a culture of collaboration, innovation, and excellence, as emphasized by Williams and Anderson (1991) and de Geus et al. (2020).

Sportsmanship: To understand the concept of sportsmanship within the framework of Organizational Citizenship Behavior (OCB) in Nigerian universities, it's crucial to draw insights from various scholarly perspectives, including those provided by Williams and Anderson (1991), Romaiha et al. (2019), Torres-Carballo et al. (2018), and Puspitasari et al. (2023). These scholars shed light on the significance of sportsmanship in fostering positive interpersonal relationships and creating a collaborative work environment.

Sportsmanship, as highlighted by Williams and Anderson (1991), encompasses behaviors that promote cooperation, support, and teamwork among employees. Within the context of Nigerian universities, this translates to faculty members assisting each other with research projects, collaborating on interdisciplinary initiatives, and providing mentorship to junior colleagues. Such actions not only enhance individual and collective performance but also contribute to a culture of academic excellence and professional growth.

Moreover, Romaiha et al. (2019) emphasize the role of sportsmanship as a determinant of organizational citizenship behavior, underscoring its impact on organizational effectiveness. Employees who exhibit sportsmanship contribute to a positive organizational climate characterized by mutual respect, trust, and camaraderie. This, in turn, enhances job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and overall performance within the academic setting.

In addition, the experimental study by Torres-Carballo et al. (2018) provides insights into the measurement of sportsmanship as an aspect of OCB. Their findings emphasize the importance of altruism, risk aversion, and sportsmanship in shaping employees' behavior and attitudes towards their organization. These dimensions of sportsmanship contribute to the development of a supportive work environment conducive to collaboration and innovation.

Furthermore, Puspitasari et al. (2023) explore the impact of sportsmanship and civic virtue behaviors on teacher performance, highlighting the moderating role of affective commitment. Their research underscores the positive relationship between sportsmanship behaviors, such as cooperation and teamwork, and teacher performance outcomes. Faculty members who exhibit sportsmanship not only contribute to their own professional growth but also inspire colleagues to excel through collaboration and mutual support. Sportsmanship plays a vital role in promoting positive organizational dynamics and enhancing performance outcomes in Nigerian universities. By fostering a culture of cooperation, support, and teamwork, faculty members contribute to a thriving academic community characterized by excellence, innovation, and mutual respect.

Empirical Review

Employee Benefits and Civic Virtue:

Several studies have investigated the relationship between employee benefits and civic virtue in organizational settings. Ficapal-Cusí et al. (2020) found that perceived organizational support and affective commitment positively influence prosocial organizational behaviors, including civic virtue. Their study highlighted the mediating role of knowledge sharing behavior, indicating that employees who feel supported by their organization and are committed to their work are more likely to engage in civic virtue behaviors. Similarly, Ndoja and Malekar (2020) emphasized the importance of organizational support in fostering positive workplace behaviors such as altruism and compliance, which are closely related to civic virtue. They suggested that supportive environments contribute to employees' willingness to go above and beyond their formal job requirements, aligning with the concept of civic virtue.

H₁: There is no significant relationship between employee benefits and civic virtue.

Employee Benefits and Sportsmanship:

Research on the relationship between employee benefits and sportsmanship is relatively limited. However, Budur and Demir (2022) examined the impact of transformational leadership on employee performance and organizational citizenship behaviors (OCB), including sportsmanship. They found that inspirational motivation, a sub-dimension of transformational leadership, positively influences employee performance, which may indirectly affect sportsmanship behaviors. While the direct link between employee benefits and sportsmanship was not explicitly explored in this study, it can be inferred that organizational support and benefits, which are often associated with transformational

leadership styles, may contribute to fostering a culture of teamwork and collaboration, aligning with sportsmanship behaviors.

H₂: There is no significant relationship between employee benefits and sportsmanship.

Fairness and Civic Virtue:

The relationship between fairness and civic virtue has been extensively studied in organizational psychology literature. Ajlouni et al. (2021) investigated the effectiveness of organizational justice (OJ) in promoting organizational citizenship behaviors (OCB), including civic virtue, using fuzzy logic. They found a significant positive relationship between OJ and OCB, indicating that perceptions of fairness within an organization contribute to employees' willingness to engage in civic virtue behaviors. Additionally, Essien and Ogunola (2020) explored the impact of workplace fairness on organizational citizenship behavior, emphasizing the psychological effects of fairness perceptions on employees. Their findings suggest that fair treatment in the workplace fosters positive extra-role behaviors, including civic virtue, which contribute to organizational effectiveness.

H₃: There is no significant relationship between fairness and civic virtue.

Fairness and Sportsmanship:

Studies examining the relationship between fairness and sportsmanship are scarce in the literature. However, Ajlouni et al. (2021) investigated the relationship between organizational justice (OJ) and organizational citizenship behavior (OCB), which encompasses sportsmanship, using fuzzy logic. Their findings revealed a significant positive relationship between OJ and OCB, indicating that perceptions of fairness within an organization may influence sportsmanship behaviors among employees. While the direct link between fairness and sportsmanship was not explicitly explored in this study, it can be inferred that fair treatment in the workplace contributes to fostering a positive organizational climate characterized by teamwork and collaboration, aligning with sportsmanship behaviors.

H₄: There is no significant relationship between fairness and sportsmanship.

Supportive Human Resource Practices and Civic Virtue:

Research on the relationship between supportive human resource practices and civic virtue is limited. However, Das (2021) investigated the influence of organizational citizenship behavior (OCB), which includes civic virtue, on organizational effectiveness in Indian banks. Their findings revealed a significant positive impact of OCB on organizational performance, suggesting that supportive human resource practices may contribute to fostering a culture of civic virtue among employees. Additionally, Zúñiga et al. (2022) explored the role of Protestant Work Ethics (PWE) as a moderator in the relationship between human resource practices and organizational citizenship behavior. While not directly focused on civic virtue, their findings suggest that values embedded in human resource practices may influence employees' engagement in extra-role behaviors, including civic virtue.

H₅: There is no significant relationship between supportive HR practices and civic virtue.

Supportive Human Resource Practices and Sportsmanship:

Limited research directly examines the relationship between supportive human resource practices and sportsmanship. However, Subedi and Sthapit (2020) investigated the

association between human resource management practices and organizational citizenship behavior (OCB) in Nepalese commercial banks. While not explicitly focused on sportsmanship, their findings suggest that supportive human resource practices, such as training and development, positively influence OCB among employees. Additionally, Uwa (2022) explored the impact of organizational fairness on organizational citizenship behavior, emphasizing the role of procedural fairness in promoting positive workplace behaviors. Although not specifically addressing sportsmanship, their findings suggest that fair treatment in the workplace may contribute to fostering a positive organizational climate characterized by teamwork and collaboration, aligning with sportsmanship behaviors.

H₆: There is no significant relationship between supportive HR practices and sportsmanship.

METHODOLOGY

The research design used in this study was a quasi-experimental survey, which attempts to determine causal links between predictor and criterion variables. Academic and non-academic staff members of Rivers State University of Science and Technology (RSUST) and the University of Port Harcourt (Uniport), both in Rivers State, Nigeria, are the study's population of interest. There are 1,870 employees from RSUST and 3,800 employees from Uniport, making up the total population of 5,670. These details were taken from the official university websites.

Convenient sampling was used by the researcher to choose participants based on their availability and desire to participate in the study. As is frequently the case in qualitative research, this sampling strategy is suitable in situations when it is challenging to reach the community.

To statistically determine the sample size, the researcher used the Taro Yamen's formula (Baridam, 2001), taking into account a confidence level of 95%. This formula yielded a sample size of 375 University staff members from the Universities of focus.

Measures

The independent variable in this study is Perceived Organizational Support (POS), comprising three key dimensions: Employee benefits, Fairness, and Supportive HR practices. Employee benefits refer to the perceived adequacy and value of rewards and benefits provided by the organization to its employees. Fairness pertains to the perceived fairness and equity in organizational policies, procedures, and decision-making processes. Supportive HR practices encompass the perceived availability and effectiveness of human resource practices aimed at supporting employees' well-being and development. These dimensions were adapted from previous research by Vardaman et al. (2016) and Eisenberger et al. (2020) on POS in various organizational contexts.

The dependent variable, Organizational Citizenship Behaviour (OCB), is operationalized through two distinct measures: Civic virtue and Sportsmanship. Civic virtue reflects the extent to which employees engage in discretionary behaviours that contribute to the welfare of the organization, such as participating in voluntary activities and showing concern for organizational interests. Sportsmanship pertains to employees' willingness to support and cooperate with their colleagues, even in challenging or unfavourable circumstances. These measures are consistent with the conceptualization of OCB as outlined by Organ (1988) and further validated by studies in various cultural contexts, including Nigeria (Aryee et al., 2002; Baran et al., 2011).

To assess these variables, a structured questionnaire was developed using a five-point Likert scale, ranging from Strongly Disagree (1) to Strongly Agree (5). This scale allows participants to express their level of agreement or disagreement with statements related to each dimension of POS and OCB. The questionnaire underwent rigorous validation procedures, including expert review and pilot testing, to ensure its reliability and validity. Feedback from research experts was incorporated to refine the questionnaire and ensure that it accurately captures the intended constructs and dimensions of interest in the context of selected Nigerian universities.

Reliability Test

The internal consistency of the survey instrument was assessed using the Cronbach's alpha coefficient, a widely-used measure of reliability, in the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). Table 1 presents the Cronbach's Alpha values obtained for each variable included in the study.

Table 1: Cronbach's Alpha Values for Study Variables

Variable	No of Items	Cronbach's Alpha
Perceived Organizational Support (POS)		
- Employee Benefits	5	.835
- Fairness	5	.802
- Supportive HR Practices	5	.811
Organizational Citizenship Behaviour (OCB)		
- Civic Virtue	5	.846
- Sportsmanship	5	.817

The obtained Cronbach's Alpha values indicate high levels of internal consistency for each variable, with values exceeding the commonly accepted threshold of .70 (Nunnally, 1978). This suggests that the items within each variable are reliably measuring the intended constructs (Voss, et al., 2000). The SPSS output was generated using Version 25 of the software for the Research Survey.

Method of Data Analysis

Descriptive statistics were employed to summarize and interpret the numerical data, providing a clear understanding of the distribution and central tendencies of the variables without making broader generalizations. Subsequently, inferential statistics were utilized to explore relationships and make predictions about the population based on the sample data. Specifically, linear regression analysis was conducted to investigate the impact of the independent variable, Perceived Organizational Support (POS), on the dependent variable,

Organizational Citizenship Behavior (OCB). This analysis was performed using IBM SPSS, version 25.0, with a significance level set at 0.05.

The decision rule for interpreting the results states that if the significance value is less than the predetermined significance level (α) of 0.05, the null hypothesis is rejected in favour of the alternate hypothesis, indicating a significant relationship between POS and OCB; conversely, if the significance value exceeds 0.05, the null hypothesis is retained.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Table 2: Questionnaire Distribution and Retrieval

Questionnaire	Frequency	Percent
Distributed	375	100%
Not retrieved	5	1.33%
Retrieved	370	98.67%
Useful response	355	94.67%
Not used	15	4%

Table 2 presents the distribution and retrieval of questionnaires in the current study. From the total sample size of 375 questionnaires distributed from a population of 5,670, 370 were successfully retrieved, indicating a retrieval rate of approximately 98.67%. Among the retrieved questionnaires, 355 were deemed useful for analysis, constituting a response rate of approximately 94.67%. Only 5 questionnaires were not retrieved, representing approximately 1.33% of the total distributed, while 15 questionnaires were not utilized, accounting for approximately 4% of the total distributed. These results affirm a high level of questionnaire retrieval and utilization, ensuring the credibility and robustness of the dataset for subsequent analysis and interpretation.

Table 3: Demographic profile of respondents

Demographic Profile of Respondents	Frequency	Percent (%)
Gender		
Male	188	53.0
Female	167	47.0
Total	355	100.0
Age Group		
Less than 25 years	91	25.6
26 – 35 years	127	35.8
36 – 45 years	60	16.9

46 – 55 years	45	12.7
56 years and above	30	8.5
Total	355	100.0
Marital Status		
Single	136	38.3
Married	182	51.3
Others	37	10.4
Total	355	100.0
Educational Qualification		
B.Sc/HND	195	55.0
MS.c/MBA	60	16.9
PhD	100	28.2
Total	355	100.0

Table 3 provides insights into the demographic profile of the respondents participating in the study. In terms of gender distribution, there were 188 male respondents, accounting for 53.0% of the total sample, while 167 respondents were female, representing 47.0%. Regarding age groups, the majority of respondents fell within the 26 – 35 years category, comprising 35.8% of the total sample, followed by those aged less than 25 years at 25.6%. Marital status indicates that a significant proportion of respondents were married, constituting 51.3% of the total, whereas 38.3% were single, and 10.4% were categorized as 'Others'. Lastly, concerning educational qualifications, the majority of respondents held B.Sc/HND degrees, making up 55.0% of the sample, followed by PhD holders at 28.2%, and M.Sc/MBA holders at 16.9%. These demographic insights provide a comprehensive understanding of the characteristics of the study participants, which is crucial for interpreting the research findings within the context of the sample composition.

Table 4: Descriptive Statistics on Items of the Independent and Dependent Variables

ITEMS	MEAN	S.D	RULE
Perceived Organizational Support (POS)			
Employee Benefits	4.4001	.76036	Accept
Fairness	4.4353	.67233	Accept
Supportive HR Practices	4.4262	.80610	Accept
Organizational Citizenship Behaviour (OCB)			

Civic Virtue	4.2750	.82547	Accept
Sportsmanship	4.2917	.80331	Accept

Table 4 displays the descriptive statistics on various dimensions of Perceived Organizational Support (POS) and Organizational Citizenship Behaviour (OCB) within selected Nigerian universities.

For Perceived Organizational Support (POS):

- **Employee Benefits:** Employees perceive a high level of organizational support in terms of employee benefits, as indicated by the mean score (Mean = 4.4001, SD = 0.76036). This suggests that employees believe their organizations provide substantial benefits, contributing to their overall perception of support.
- **Fairness:** Employees perceive a high level of fairness within their organizations, as indicated by the mean score (Mean = 4.4353, SD = 0.67233). This suggests that employees believe their organizations treat them fairly, which is a crucial aspect of perceived organizational support.
- **Supportive HR Practices:** Employees perceive a high level of supportive HR practices within their organizations, as indicated by the mean score (Mean = 4.4262, SD = 0.80610). This suggests that employees believe their organizations implement HR practices that support their needs and contribute to their well-being.

For Organizational Citizenship Behaviour (OCB):

- **Civic Virtue:** Employees rated civic virtue with a mean score of 4.2750 and a standard deviation of 0.82547. While the mean score indicates a positive perception of civic virtue, the higher standard deviation suggests more variability in responses compared to the items of POS. However, the overall consensus among respondents meets the acceptance criteria.
- **Sportsmanship:** Employees perceive a high level of sportsmanship within their organizations, as indicated by the mean score (Mean = 4.2917, SD = 0.80331). This suggests that employees believe their colleagues exhibit sportsmanship, which is a key aspect of organizational citizenship behaviour.

In summary, the descriptive statistics indicate that employees generally perceive high levels of perceived organizational support and organizational citizenship behaviour within their organizations. Across all dimensions of POS and OCB, the mean scores are above 4.0, indicating strong agreement with the statements presented in the questionnaire. The standard deviations suggest that there is some variation in responses, further supporting the consistency of perceptions among employees. Overall, these findings suggest that POS and OCB play crucial roles in driving organizational effectiveness and performance within selected Nigerian universities.

Hypotheses Testing

Table 5 Regression analysis showing the impact of Employee Benefits on Civic Virtue

Hypothesis	Regression	Beta	R	R ²	F	P-	Decision Rule
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	weight	coefficient				value	
H ₁	Employee Benefits – Civic Virtue	.732	.560	.314	54.035	.732	Reject null hypothesis

Table 5 presents the results of a regression analysis investigating the impact of Employee Benefits on Civic Virtue in the current study. The analysis reveals a positive association between Employee Benefits and Civic Virtue, with a regression weight of .732 and a beta coefficient of .560, indicating a moderate to strong effect size. The correlation coefficient (R) of .314 suggests a positive but relatively weak correlation between the two variables, while the coefficient of determination (R²) of .732 indicates that approximately 73.2% of the variance in Civic Virtue can be explained by Employee Benefits. The F-statistic of 54.035 with a corresponding p-value of .000 demonstrates the statistical significance of the regression model, leading to the rejection of the null hypothesis. Overall, these findings suggest that Employee Benefits significantly influence Civic Virtue in the organizational context examined.

H_{A1}: There is a significant relationship between Employee Benefits and Civic Virtue.

Table 6: Regression analysis showing the impact of Employee Benefits on Sportsmanship

Hypothesis	Regression weight	Beta coefficient	R	R ²	F	P-value	Decision Rule
H ₂	Employee Benefits – Sportsmanship	.763	.527	.278	45.372	.000	Reject null hypothesis

Table 6 displays the outcomes of a regression analysis evaluating the influence of Employee Benefits on Sportsmanship within the studied context. The results indicate a positive relationship between Employee Benefits and Sportsmanship, with a regression weight of .763 and a corresponding beta coefficient of .527, indicating a moderate to strong effect size. The correlation coefficient (R) of .278 suggests a positive but relatively weak correlation between the two variables, while the coefficient of determination (R²) of .763 implies that approximately 76.3% of the variance in Sportsmanship can be explained by Employee Benefits. The F-statistic of 45.372, coupled with a p-value of .000, signifies the statistical significance of the regression model, leading to the rejection of the null hypothesis. In conclusion, the findings suggest that Employee Benefits significantly impact Sportsmanship within the organizational context under investigation.

H_{A2}: There is a significant relationship between Employee Benefits and Sportsmanship.

Table 7 Regression analysis showing the impact of Fairness on Civic Virtue

Hypothesis	Regression weight	Beta coefficient	R	R ²	F	P-value	Decision Rule
H ₃	Fairness – Civic Virtue	.803	.637	.405	80.388	.000	Reject null hypothesis

Table 7 presents the results of a regression analysis examining the relationship between Fairness and Civic Virtue within the studied context. The regression weight is .803, with a corresponding beta coefficient of .637, indicating a strong positive relationship between Fairness and Civic Virtue. The correlation coefficient (R) of .405 suggests a moderate positive correlation between the two variables, while the coefficient of determination (R²) of .405 indicates that approximately 40.5% of the variance in Civic Virtue can be explained by Fairness. The F-statistic of 80.388, along with a p-value of .000, indicates the statistical significance of the regression model, leading to the rejection of the null hypothesis. These findings suggest that Fairness significantly influences Civic Virtue within the organizational context under investigation.

H_{A3}: There is a significant relationship between Fairness and Civic Virtue.

Table 8 Regression analysis showing the impact of Fairness on Sportsmanship

Hypothesis	Regression weight	Beta coefficient	R	R ²	F	P-value	Decision Rule
H ₄	Fairness – Sportsmanship	.724	.560	.314	58.278	.000	Reject null hypothesis

Table 8 displays the outcomes of a regression analysis investigating the association between Fairness and Sportsmanship in the studied scenario. The regression weight is .724, with a corresponding beta coefficient of .560, indicating a substantial positive relationship between Fairness and Sportsmanship. The correlation coefficient (R) of .314 suggests a moderate positive correlation between the two variables, while the coefficient of determination (R²) of .314 implies that approximately 31.4% of the variance in Sportsmanship can be explained by Fairness. The F-statistic of 58.278, coupled with a p-value of .000, underscores the statistical significance of the regression model, leading to the rejection of the null hypothesis. These findings indicate that Fairness significantly influences Sportsmanship within the organizational context under scrutiny.

H_{A4}: There is a significant relationship between Fairness and Sportsmanship.

Table 9 Regression analysis showing the impact of Supportive Human Resource Practices on Civic Virtue

Hypothesis	Regression weight	Beta coefficient	R	R ²	F	P-value	Decision Rule
H ₅	Supportive HR Practices – Civic Virtue	.814	.641	.493	95.429	.000	Reject null hypothesis

Table 9 illustrates the results of a regression analysis exploring the relationship between Supportive Human Resource Practices and Civic Virtue. The regression weight is .814, with a corresponding beta coefficient of .641, indicating a strong positive relationship between Supportive HR Practices and Civic Virtue. The correlation coefficient (R) of .493 suggests a moderate to strong positive correlation between the two variables. The coefficient of determination (R²) of .493 implies that approximately 49.3% of the variance in Civic Virtue can be explained by Supportive HR Practices. The F-statistic of 95.429, alongside a p-value of .000, highlights the statistical significance of the regression model, leading to the rejection of the null hypothesis. These findings suggest that Supportive Human Resource Practices significantly influence Civic Virtue within the organizational context examined.

H_{A5}: There is a significant relationship between Supportive HR Practices and Civic Virtue.

Table 10 Regression analysis showing the impact of Supportive Human Resource Practices on Sportsmanship

Hypothesis	Regression weight	Beta coefficient	R	R ²	F	P-value	Decision Rule
H ₆	Supportive HR Practices – Sportsmanship	.834	.603	.364	53.684	.000	Reject null hypothesis

Table 10 displays the results of a regression analysis examining the relationship between Supportive Human Resource Practices and Sportsmanship. The regression weight is .834, with a corresponding beta coefficient of .603, indicating a strong positive relationship between Supportive HR Practices and Sportsmanship. The correlation coefficient (R) of .364 suggests a moderate positive correlation between the two variables. The coefficient of determination (R²) of .364 implies that approximately 36.4% of the variance in Sportsmanship can be explained by Supportive HR Practices. The F-statistic of 53.684, coupled with a p-value of .000, underscores the statistical significance of the regression model, leading to the rejection of the null hypothesis. These findings suggest that Supportive Human Resource Practices significantly influence Sportsmanship within the organizational context examined.

Discussion of Findings

Relationship between Employee Benefits and Civic Virtue

The regression analysis unveils a significant positive relationship between employee benefits and civic virtue ($P = .732 < 0.05$). This suggests that the provision of substantial employee benefits, such as healthcare, retirement plans, and other perks, positively influences employees' civic virtue within the organizational setting. The findings resonate with prior research by Essien and Ogunola (2020) and Uwa (2022), which underscored the role of employee benefits in enhancing organizational citizenship behaviors, including civic engagement, volunteerism, and social responsibility. Therefore, investing in comprehensive employee benefit packages is crucial for fostering a culture of civic virtue and ethical conduct among employees, ultimately contributing to organizational success and reputation. The beta coefficient of 0.560 indicates a moderately strong positive relationship between employee benefits and civic virtue, implying that as the level of employee benefits increases, so does the demonstration of civic virtues within the workforce. The R value of 0.314 suggests that approximately 31.4% of the variability in civic virtue can be attributed to variations in employee benefits. Furthermore, the F-statistic of 54.035 and the associated p-value of 0.732 demonstrate the statistical significance of the regression model at the 0.05 level, leading to the rejection of the null hypothesis.

Relationship between Employee Benefits and Sportsmanship

The regression analysis reveals a significant positive relationship between employee benefits and sportsmanship ($P = .000 < 0.05$). This implies that organizations that offer attractive employee benefit packages tend to foster a culture of sportsmanship among their employees, characterized by fair play, respect for opponents, and teamwork. These findings align with previous research by Subedi and Sthapit (2020) and Das (2021), which emphasized the positive impact of employee benefits on fostering positive workplace behaviors and attitudes, including sportsmanship. Therefore, investing in comprehensive employee benefit programs, such as wellness initiatives and recreational activities, can contribute to creating a supportive and collaborative work environment conducive to sportsmanlike conduct. The beta coefficient of 0.527 suggests a moderately strong positive relationship between employee benefits and sportsmanship, indicating that as the level of employee benefits increases, so does the demonstration of sportsmanlike behavior among employees. The R value of 0.278 indicates that approximately 27.8% of the variability in sportsmanship can be explained by variations in employee benefits. Additionally, the F-statistic of 45.372 and the associated p-value of 0.000 underscore the statistical significance of the regression model, leading to the rejection of the null hypothesis.

Relationship between Fairness and Civic Virtue

The regression analysis indicates a significant positive relationship between fairness and civic virtue ($P = .000 < 0.05$). This suggests that organizational practices and policies perceived as fair and equitable positively influence employees' demonstration of civic virtues, such as honesty, integrity, and altruism. The findings are consistent with prior research by Ficapal-Cusí et al. (2020) and Zúñiga et al. (2022), which highlighted the pivotal role of fairness in shaping employees' ethical behaviors and organizational citizenship behaviors. Therefore, promoting fairness in decision-making processes, resource allocation, and performance evaluations is essential for cultivating a culture of civic virtue and ethical conduct within the workplace. The beta coefficient of 0.637 indicates a strong positive relationship between fairness and civic virtue, implying that as perceptions of fairness increase, so does the demonstration of civic virtues among employees. The R value of 0.405 signifies that approximately 40.5% of the variability in civic virtue can be attributed to variations in fairness. Additionally, the F-statistic of 80.388 and the associated p-value of 0.000

demonstrate the statistical significance of the regression model, leading to the rejection of the null hypothesis.

Relationship between Fairness and Sportsmanship

The regression analysis unveils a significant positive relationship between fairness and sportsmanship ($P = .000 < 0.05$). This indicates that organizational practices and policies perceived as fair and just contribute to fostering a culture of sportsmanship among employees, characterized by integrity, respect, and cooperation. These findings align with prior research by Ajlouni et al. (2021) and Zúñiga et al. (2022), which emphasized the role of fairness in promoting positive workplace behaviors, including sportsmanship. Therefore, prioritizing fairness in decision-making processes, conflict resolution, and reward systems is vital for nurturing a supportive and inclusive work environment conducive to sportsmanlike conduct. The beta coefficient of 0.560 suggests a moderately strong positive relationship between fairness and sportsmanship, implying that as perceptions of fairness increase, so does the demonstration of sportsmanlike behavior among employees. The R value of 0.314 indicates that approximately 31.4% of the variability in sportsmanship can be explained by variations in fairness. Furthermore, the F-statistic of 58.278 and the associated p-value of 0.000 underscore the statistical significance of the regression model, leading to the rejection of the null hypothesis.

Relationship between Supportive Human Resource Practices and Civic Virtue

The regression analysis demonstrates a significant positive relationship between supportive human resource practices and civic virtue ($P = .000 < 0.05$). This suggests that organizations that prioritize supportive HR practices, such as training and development, performance feedback, and work-life balance initiatives, tend to foster a culture of civic virtue among their employees, characterized by ethical conduct, social responsibility, and organizational commitment. The findings resonate with prior research by Ndoja and Malekar (2020) and Zúñiga et al. (2022), which highlighted the positive impact of supportive HR practices on enhancing employees' organizational citizenship behaviors and ethical conduct. Therefore, investing in supportive HR practices is essential for promoting a values-driven organizational culture that encourages employees to act in the best interests of the organization and society as a whole. The beta coefficient of 0.641 indicates a strong positive relationship between supportive HR practices and civic virtue, implying that as the implementation of supportive HR practices increases, so does the demonstration of civic virtues among employees. The R value of 0.493 signifies that approximately 49.3% of the variability in civic virtue can be attributed to variations in supportive HR practices. Additionally, the F-statistic of 95.429 and the associated p-value of 0.000 demonstrate the statistical significance of the regression model, leading to the rejection of the null hypothesis.

Relationship between Supportive Human Resource Practices and Sportsmanship

The regression analysis reveals a significant positive relationship between supportive human resource practices and sportsmanship ($P = .000 < 0.05$). This implies that organizations that invest in supportive HR practices, such as employee recognition programs, career development opportunities, and transparent communication, tend to cultivate a culture of sportsmanship among their employees, characterized by fair play, respect, and teamwork. The findings are consistent with prior research by Ficapal-Cusí et al. (2020) and Zúñiga et al. (2022), which emphasized the role of supportive HR practices in promoting positive workplace behaviors and attitudes, including sportsmanship. Therefore, prioritizing supportive HR practices is essential for creating an inclusive and supportive work

environment that encourages employees to collaborate, cooperate, and exhibit sportsmanlike conduct in their interactions with colleagues and stakeholders. The beta coefficient of 0.603 suggests a moderately strong positive relationship between supportive HR practices and sportsmanship, indicating that as the implementation of supportive HR practices increases, so does the demonstration of sportsmanlike behavior among employees. The R value of 0.364 indicates that approximately 36.4% of the variability in sportsmanship can be explained by variations in supportive HR practices. Additionally, the F-statistic of 53.684 and the associated p-value of 0.000 underscore the statistical significance of the regression model, leading to the rejection of the null hypothesis.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In conclusion, this study investigated the relationships between employee benefits, fairness, supportive human resource practices, and organizational citizenship behaviors (OCBs) such as civic virtue and sportsmanship within the organizational context. The findings indicate significant positive relationships between these variables, highlighting the importance of organizational practices and policies in shaping employee behaviors and attitudes. Employee benefits, fairness, and supportive HR practices were found to be positively associated with both civic virtue and sportsmanship, indicating their role in fostering ethical conduct, social responsibility, and positive workplace behaviors. These findings underscore the significance of creating a supportive and inclusive work environment that prioritizes fairness, equity, and employee well-being to enhance organizational citizenship behaviors and ultimately contribute to organizational success.

Based on the findings of this study, several recommendations can be made for organizations seeking to promote organizational citizenship behaviors and create a positive work environment:

1. **Invest in Comprehensive Employee Benefit Packages:** Organizations should prioritize the provision of attractive employee benefit packages, including healthcare, retirement plans, and other perks, to enhance employee satisfaction, well-being, and commitment.
2. **Promote Fairness and Equity:** Organizations should adopt fair and transparent policies and practices in decision-making processes, resource allocation, and performance evaluations to ensure employees perceive fairness and equity within the organization.
3. **Implement Supportive Human Resource Practices:** Organizations should invest in supportive HR practices, such as training and development, performance feedback, and work-life balance initiatives, to enhance employee engagement, productivity, and well-being.
4. **Foster a Culture of Civic Virtue and Sportsmanship:** Organizations should promote a culture of civic virtue and sportsmanship by encouraging ethical conduct, social responsibility, and positive interpersonal relationships among employees through training, communication, and recognition programs.
5. **Continuous Monitoring and Evaluation:** Organizations should regularly monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of their practices and initiatives in promoting organizational citizenship behaviors and adjust strategies accordingly to maintain a positive work environment and achieve strategic objectives.

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