

Influence of Age, Gender and Job Cadre on Job Satisfaction and Organizational Retaliatory Behavior among Civil Servants in Benue State, Nigeria

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DOI: <https://dx.doi.org/10.47772/IJRISS.2025.907000422>

Received: 22 July 2025; Accepted: 30 July 2025; Published: 21 August 2025

ABSTRACT

The study was aimed at finding the influence of age, gender and job cadre/job level on Job Satisfaction (work, supervision, coworkers, pay and promotion) and Organizational Retaliatory Behavior (ORB) among 387 civil servants drawn from 17 MDAs in Benue State, Nigeria. Data were collected by the Job Descriptive Index (JDI) designed by Smith, Kendall & Hulin (1969) and ORB scale designed by Skarlicki & Folger (1997). Analysing the data with the independent t-test, One-way ANOVA and Three-way (2x2x3) ANOVA produced significant separate and interaction effect of age, gender and job cadre on job satisfaction and ORB respectively. All the 8 hypotheses tested were confirmed by the results. The findings showed that the demographic factors did not operate in isolation but collectively influenced the way civil servants felt about their jobs and how they responded to perceived injustices. The implication of the results is that senior management staff in organizations can identify the various factors that can lead to the job satisfaction and reduction of retaliatory behaviors among their workers/employees. The paper concluded that the study will open the eyes of employers to understand the factors that can enhance employees' morale and productivity. It is recommended that public sector organizations can develop more targeted, effective, and inclusive strategies to enhance job satisfaction and create a healthier, more productive work environment, ultimately benefiting public service delivery. They can also implement tailored interventions (e.g., age-specific programs, gender-sensitive policies, cadre-specific support) to boost satisfaction and reduce ORB by improving fairness, grievance redressal systems, and leadership accountability within the civil service. Longitudinal studies, qualitative research and regular climate surveys can be implemented to continuously monitor trends and identify emerging issues.

INTRODUCTION

Background to the Study

Job satisfaction is a crucial aspect of employee well-being and organizational performance. Studies have shown that satisfied employees are more likely to be engaged, productive, and committed to their work. On the other hand, organizational retaliatory behavior (ORB), such as counterproductive work behaviors, retaliation against co-workers, or acts of sabotage, can have detrimental effects on workplace morale and productivity.

Understanding the factors that influence both job satisfaction and ORB is essential for organizations to create a positive work environment and mitigate potential risks. Age, gender, and job cadre have been identified as demographic variables that may play a significant role in shaping employees' experiences in the workplace.

The study aimed to examine the effects of age, gender, and job cadre on different dimensions of job satisfaction, including satisfaction with work, supervision, co-workers, pay and promotion, as well as their impact on ORB among the civil servants in Benue State of Nigeria. By investigating these relationships, the study sought to provide valuable insights into how demographic factors can influence employee attitudes and behaviors in the workplace.

Within the public sector, civil servants play a pivotal role in the implementation of government policies and the delivery of essential services. Their job satisfaction and behavior can directly impact the efficiency and effectiveness of public administration. The unique characteristics of civil service, such as bureaucratic structures, tenure systems, and public accountability, may influence how employees perceive their jobs and react to organizational stimuli.

Previous research has indicated a complex interplay between demographic factors and various work-related outcomes. However, specific insights into how age, gender, and job cadre can separately and or collectively influence both job satisfaction and organizational retaliatory behavior among civil servants, particularly in the context of Benue State of Nigeria, remain crucial for developing targeted interventions and improving workplace dynamics in the public sector.

Problem Statement

Despite the recognized importance of job satisfaction and the detrimental effects of organizational retaliatory behavior, there remains a significant gap in understanding how specific demographic factors such as age, gender, and job cadre can separately and or collectively influence these outcomes among civil servants. While general links between demographics and workplace attitudes/behaviors exist, the nuanced interplay within the unique context of civil service, where hierarchical structures and public service ethos are prominent, is not fully elucidated. Many public sector organizations struggle with issues of employee morale, disengagement, and instances of counterproductive behaviors, which can undermine public trust and service delivery. Without a clear understanding of how age, gender, and job cadre can impact job satisfaction and the propensity for retaliatory behaviors, interventions aimed at improving the well-being and productivity of civil servants may be misdirected or ineffective. This study addressed this lacuna by specifically investigating the significant effects of these demographic variables on job satisfaction and organizational retaliatory behavior, providing data-driven insights that are essential for fostering a healthier and more productive civil service.

Research Objectives

- 1a. To examine the influence of age on job satisfaction among civil servants in Benue State.
- 1b. To examine the influence of age on organizational retaliatory behavior among civil servants in Benue State.
- 2a. To explore the influence of gender on job satisfaction among civil servants in Benue State.
- 2b. To explore the influence of gender on organizational retaliatory behavior among civil servants in Benue State.
- 3a. To investigate the influence of job cadre on job satisfaction among civil servants in Benue State.
- 3b. To investigate the influence of job cadre on organizational retaliatory behavior among civil servants in Benue State.
- 4a. To determine the influence of the interaction of age, gender and job cadre on job satisfaction among civil servants in Benue State.
- 4b. To determine the influence of the interaction of age, gender and job cadre on organizational retaliatory behavior among civil servants in Benue State.

Research Questions

- 1a. Will there be a significant influence of age on job satisfaction among civil servants in Benue State.
- 1b. Will there be a significant influence of age on organizational retaliatory behavior among civil servants in Benue State.
- 2a. Will there be a significant influence of gender on job satisfaction among civil servants in Benue State.
- 2b. Will there be a significant influence of gender on organizational retaliatory behavior among civil servants in Benue State.
- 3a. Will there be a significant influence of job cadre on job satisfaction among civil servants in Benue State.
- 3b. Will there be a significant influence of job cadre on organizational retaliatory behavior among civil servants in Benue State.
- 4a. Will there be a significant interaction of age, gender and job cadre on job satisfaction among civil servants in Benue State.
- 4b. Will there be a significant interaction of age, gender and job cadre on organizational retaliatory behavior among civil servants in Benue State.

LITERATURE REVIEW ON DEMOGRAPHIC EFFECTS

Age and Job Satisfaction/ORB

Research suggests that age is positively correlated with job satisfaction in many dimensions. Older workers often report greater satisfaction with supervision and coworkers but may express discontent with promotion opportunities (Ng & Feldman, 2015). Younger employees tend to have higher expectations and are more sensitive to fairness and advancement (Zacher & Schmitt, 2016), potentially increasing retaliatory behavior when dissatisfied. A meta-analysis by Posthuma and Campion (2023) indicated that older employees are less likely to engage in retaliatory behavior, possibly due to stronger organizational commitment and fewer alternative employment options.

Gender Differences in Job Satisfaction/ORB

Gender plays a role in how job satisfaction is experienced. Women often report higher satisfaction with coworker relationships and supervision, while men tend to prioritize pay and promotion (Clark, 2021). However, gender-based disparities in pay and leadership roles may lead to perceived injustice among female employees. Cortina et al. (2022) found that women experiencing workplace incivility or gender discrimination may be more likely to withdraw or engage in covert retaliatory actions.

Job Cadre or Job Level and Job Satisfaction/ORB

Employees at higher job levels typically report greater autonomy, better compensation, and more recognition, contributing to higher job satisfaction (Judge et al., 2020). Lower-cadre employees often face limited growth opportunities and may perceive organizational practices as inequitable. Workers in lower-level positions may express dissatisfaction through informal retaliation—such as work slowdowns or absenteeism—especially when promotion and recognition are perceived as unfair (Blau, 2021).

Organizational Retaliatory Behavior: Predictors and Pattern

Several studies confirm that perceived organizational injustice is a precursor to ORB. Age appears inversely related to retaliation, while lower job levels and marginalized groups (often women) are more prone to retaliatory responses when fairness is compromised (Ambrose et al., 2020). In a Nigerian sample, Adepoju and Ojo (2022) found that employees under 35 and in junior roles were more likely to express retaliatory intentions when faced with perceived unfairness in promotion and pay.

The literature review above points to the fact that age, gender and job cadre are good determinants and predictors of job satisfaction and ORB.

LITERATURE REVIEW ON DEMOGRAPHIC INTERACTIONS WITH JOB SATISFACTION AND ORB

Young, Female, Lower Cadre

Young females in lower-level positions often report low satisfaction with pay, promotion opportunities, and supervision due to systemic barriers, lack of mentorship, and gender-based inequities in the workplace. Alvi & Abbasi (2022) found that young female employees in Pakistan's service sectors expressed significantly lower satisfaction with pay and promotional fairness. Kumari & Ghosh (2022) concluded that gendered expectations and fewer upward mobility opportunities contribute to lower satisfaction among women, especially in entry-level roles. This category of employees often exhibit passive forms of retaliatory behavior such as withdrawal, silence, and resistance, particularly when experiencing procedural or interpersonal injustice. Nasir & Bashir (2021) suggested that feelings of injustice may lead to covert ORBs like tardiness or psychological withdrawal among younger women. Spector & Zhou (2014) highlighted that age and job control can moderate how individuals express dissatisfaction—young workers often use less confrontational means.

Young, Male, Lower Cadre

Young men in lower positions may have moderate satisfaction, especially regarding coworker relations, but express discontent with pay and recognition. Bashir & Ramay (2020) noted that younger male bank employees are moderately satisfied with team dynamics but frustrated by lack of financial and career advancement. This group often engages in active ORBs, including verbal aggression, confrontation, and defiance, especially under perceived injustice. Mourtgos, Adams & Nix (2023) found that males are more likely than females to respond to workplace injustice with overt retaliation, particularly in competitive environments. Spector & Zhou (2014) discovered that younger employees are more prone to emotional and reactive counterproductive work behaviors.

Older, Female, Higher Cadre

Older women in leadership or senior roles generally report moderate to high job satisfaction, particularly with work content and coworker relationships. Kumari & Ghosh (2022) argued that seniority and experience can mitigate gender disparities, increasing satisfaction among older women. Bashir & Ramay (2020) supported the idea that satisfaction grows with position and tenure. While less likely to retaliate, this category of employees may use indirect forms of ORB (e.g., social exclusion and strategic silence) if fairness is violated. Nasir & Bashir (2021) described a trend of calculated or restrained ORBs among senior female staff when facing organizational injustice.

Older, Male, Higher Cadre

This group tends to report high satisfaction across all domains—including pay, supervision, work tasks, and promotions—due to accumulated power and organizational rewards. Alvi & Abbasi (2022) found that job

satisfaction increased significantly with age, particularly for males in senior positions. Spector & Zhou (2014) suggested that older workers are more settled and less reactive emotionally in workplace settings. This category of employees have a very low likelihood of engaging in ORBs—unless facing severe injustice—due to organizational commitment, role responsibility, and reputational concerns. Mourtgos et al. (2023) affirmed that senior male employees are less likely to retaliate and often channel dissatisfaction through formal mechanisms.

Theoretical Framework

Three theories found relevant to guide this study are described below.

Equity Theory (Adams, 1965) posited that disparities in inputs (e.g., effort) and outcomes (e.g., pay) across demographic lines can trigger dissatisfaction and ORB.

Social Exchange Theory (Blau, 1964) opined that when the organization is perceived as unfair, employees may withdraw reciprocity or retaliate.

Organizational Justice Framework (Greenberg, 1987) explained that perceptions of distributive, procedural, and interactional justice vary by demographic group and influence job satisfaction and retaliation.

Hypotheses

- 1a. There will be a significant influence of age on job satisfaction among civil servants in Benue State.
- 1b. There will be a significant influence of age on organizational retaliatory behavior among civil servants in Benue State.
- 2a. There will be a significant influence of gender on job satisfaction among civil servants in Benue State.
- 2b. There will be a significant influence of gender on organizational retaliatory behavior among civil servants in Benue State.
- 3a. There will be a significant influence of job cadre on job satisfaction among civil servants in Benue State.
- 3b. There will be a significant influence of job cadre on organizational retaliatory behavior among civil servants in Benue State.
- 4a. There will be a significant influence of the interaction of age, gender and job cadre on job satisfaction among civil servants in Benue State.
- 4b. There will be a significant influence of the interaction of age, gender and job cadre on organizational retaliatory behavior among civil servants in Benue State.

METHODS

Participants

The participants for this study comprised 387 civil servants drawn from different Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs) in Benue State of Nigeria. The sample included 221 males and 166 females. Their ages

ranged from 25-58 years. Old employees were 233 and young employees were 154. In terms of job cadre, 103 were junior workers, 164 were middle-level workers and 120 were senior officers.

Research Instruments

1. The Personal Information Questionnaire (PIQ) was developed by the researchers to collect information about the demographic information (like, age, gender and job cadre) from the participants.
2. The Job Descriptive Index (JDI) developed by Smith, Kendall & Hulin (1969) was used to measure job satisfaction in 5 dimensions: work (18 items), supervision (18 items), coworkers (18 items), pay (9 items) and promotion (9 items). The whole scale has 72 items. The reliability and validity coefficients of the scale and sub-scales were reported by the authors. Mogaji (1997) also validated the scale and sub-scales for use in Nigeria.
3. Organizational Retaliatory Behavior (ORB) Scale developed by Skarlicki & Folger (1997) was used to measure ORB. It has 17 items. Sample of the items are: “spoke poorly about the company to others”, “refused to work weekends or overtime when asked”. The response format is from 1 = (Never over the past month) to 5 = (6 or more times over the past month). The authors reported a Cronbach alpha = .95. It was also validated for use in Nigeria by Okoro, Eze, & Ezeanyim (2020) who reported a Cronbach alpha = .92 among workers in Enugu State of Nigeria.

Procedure

The questionnaire was administered to participants with the aid of two research assistants. The administration and retrieval of the questionnaire was done during the office hours and when the participants were on break. A total number of 450 copies of the questionnaire were distributed across all the 17 Ministries, Departments and Agencies in Benue State.

Scoring & Data Collation

The 387 copies of the collected questionnaire were found useable. They were correctly and completely filled. They were coded, computed and analysed with the aid of the computer program: IBM-SPSS (version 26).

Design

The Factorial Design was used for this study. The Independent Variables: Age (Young and Old workers), Gender (Male and Female workers) and Job Cadre (Junior, Middle-level and Senior workers) were subjected to 2 X 2 X 3 ANOVA to determine their separate and collective influence on Job satisfaction and ORB that were the Dependent Variables.

Data Analysis

The collected data were analysed with the following statistical techniques:

1. The independent t-test was used to analyse data for the age and gender groups.
2. The One-way ANOVA was used to analyse data for the job cadre groups.
3. The Three-way (2 X 2 X 3) ANOVA was used to analyse data to test for the interaction effects of age, gender and job cadre on job satisfaction and ORB respectively.

RESULTS

The results of the study are presented in tables below.

Table 1a: Mean Scores, Standard Deviations and t-test scores showing the influence of Age on job satisfaction among civil servants in Benue State

Predictor	Age	N	Mean	SD	df	t	P	Remarks
Job satisfaction	Young	233	34.95	12.68	385	2.137	.033	Sig
	Old	154	31.93	14.88				
Work	Young	233	15.21	10.16	385	3.81	.001	Sig
	Old	154	11.21	9.99				
Pay	Young	233	13.70	1.84	385	1.43	.012	Sig
	Old	154	14.52	8.13				
Supervision	Young	233	27.47	49.58	385	1.97	.052	Sig
	Old	154	19.49	9.20				
Promotion	Young	233	21.16	37.19	385	1.72	.046	Sig
	Old	154	15.90	8.99				
Co-worker	Young	233	25.52	58.80	385	1.80	.032	Sig
	Old	154	16.91	9.07				

Note:

Critical Value of $t(.05) = 1.65$

Critical Value of $t(.01) = 2.33$

The results in Table 1a above indicated that there was a significant age difference in overall job satisfaction among civil servants in Benue State at $t(df=385) = 2.137; p<.05$. The results showed that young employees had a higher level of overall satisfaction than their older counterparts. There were also significant differences between the two in job satisfaction with Work ($t=3.81; p<.01$), Pay ($t= 1.43; p<.05$), Supervision ($t= 1.97; p<.05$); Promotion ($t=1.72; p<.05$) and Co-workers ($t=1.80; p<.05$). The younger employees also reported higher levels of satisfaction in all the dimensions except in pay satisfaction where older employees had a higher mean score. Based on the results, hypothesis 1a was confirmed.

Table 1b: Mean Scores, Standard Deviations and t-test scores showing the influence of Age on Perceived Organizational Retaliatory Behavior among civil servants in Benue State.

Predictor	Age	N	Mean	SD	Df	t	P	Remarks
Retaliatory Behaviour	Young	233	33.096	16.80	385	2.443	.013	Sig.
	Old	154	41.188	46.15				

Note: Critical Value of $t(.01) = 2.33$

The result in Table 1b above indicated that there is a significant influence of age on organizational retaliatory behavior among civil servants in Benue State at $t(df= 385) = 2.443; p<.01$. This result showed that old employees had a higher mean score of 41.188 and standard deviation of 46.15; while their younger counterparts had a lower mean score of 33.096 and standard deviation of 16.80. This means that older employees had a higher propensity to engage in ORB. Based on the result therefore, hypothesis 1b, was confirmed.

Table 2a: Mean Scores, Standard Deviations and t-test scores showing the influence of Gender on Job satisfaction among civil servants in Benue State

Predictor	Gender	N	Mean	SD	df	t	P	Remarks
Job satisfaction	Male	221	33.36	13.36	385	1.67	.012	Sig
	Female	166	34.27	14.27				
Work	Male	221	13.22	10.21	385	2.53	.013	Sig
	Female	166	14.14	10.34				
Pay	Male	221	13.98	6.57	385	2.21	.027	Sig
	Female	166	14.95	9.41				
Supervision	Male	221	23.13	4.94	385	2.61	.009	Sig
	Female	166	24.65	6.49				
Promotion	Male	221	19.82	6.10	385	2.17	.015	Sig
	Female	166	19.80	8.18				
Co-workers	Male	221	22.08	3.35	385	2.89	.004	Sig
	Female	166	23.96	6.42				

Note:

Critical Value of $t (.05) = 1.65$

Critical Value of $t (.01) = 2.33$

The results in Table 2a above indicated that there was a significant gender difference in overall job satisfaction among civil servants in Benue State at $t (df=385) 1.67; p<.05$. All the five dimensions of job satisfaction also produced significant differences between male and female employees in Job satisfaction with – Work ($t=2.53; p<.01$), Pay ($t=2.21; p<.05$), Supervision, ($t=2.61; p<.01$) Promotion ($t= 2.17; p<.05$) and Co-workers ($t= 2.89; p<.01$). The female employees had higher mean scores in overall satisfaction and in all the dimensions except promotion satisfaction where their male counterparts had a higher mean score. Based on the results, therefore, hypothesis 2a was confirmed.

Table 2b: Mean Scores, Standard Deviations and t-test scores showing the influence of Gender on Organizational Retaliatory Behavior among civil servants in Benue State

Predictor	Gender	N	Mean	SD	df	t	P	Remarks
Retaliatory Behavior	Male	221	37.51	7.80	385	2.160	.031	Sig.
	Female	166	39.13	8.01				

Note: Critical Value of $t (.05) = 1.65$

The result in Table 2b above indicated that there was a significant influence of gender on the perceived organizational retaliatory behavior among civil servants in Benue State at $t (df=385) = 2.160; p<.05$. Female employees had a higher mean score while their male counterparts had a lower mean score. This means that female employees were found to exhibit a higher level of ORB more than their male counterparts. However, this result implied that gender is a significant determinant of perceived organizational retaliatory behavior among civil servants in Benue State. Based on the result, therefore, hypothesis 2b was confirmed.

Table 3a: Mean Score, Standard Deviations and One-Way ANOVA Summary Table showing the influence of Job Cadre on Job Satisfaction among civil servants in Benue State

	Job Cadre	N	Sum of Squares		df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Work	Junior	135	Between Groups	1103.8	2	551.901	12.774	.000**
	Middle	194						
	Senior	58	Within Groups	16591.4	384	43.207		
	Total	387	Total	17695.2	386			
Pay	Junior	135	Between Groups	755.682	2	377.841	7.321	.001**
	Middle	194						
	Senior	58	Within Groups	19819	384	51.612		
	Total	387	Total	20574.7	386			
Supervision	Junior	135	Between Groups	387.867	2	193.933	6.138	.002**
	Middle	194						
	Senior	58	Within Groups	12133	384	31.596		
	Total	387	Total	12520.9	386			
Promotion	Junior	135	Between Groups	883.8	2	441.9	9.25	.000**
	Middle	194						
	Senior	58	Within Groups	18345.4	384	47.775		
	Total	387	Total	19229.2	386			
Co-Workers	Junior	135	Between Groups	383.541	2	191.77	4.705	.010**
	Middle	194						
	Senior	58	Within Groups	15651.9	384	40.76		
	Total	387	Total	16035.4	386			

Note: ** = $p < .01$

Critical Value of $F(.01) = 4.66$

The results in Table 3a above showed that the scores obtained by the three job cadres of employees (junior, middle-level and senior) in all the five dimensions of job satisfaction among civil servants in Benue state were statistically significant for Work: $F(2,384) = 12.774$; $p < .01$; Pay: $F(2, 384) = 7.321$; $p < .01$; Supervision: $F(2, 384) = 6.138$, $p < .01$; Promotion: $F(2,384) = 9.250$; $p < .01$ and Co-workers: $F(2, 384) = 4.705$; $p < .01$. The mean scores increased from junior through the middle-level to senior management employees. Junior employees had the highest level of satisfaction in all the dimensions. Job cadre was found to be a significant determinant of job satisfaction among civil servants in Benue State. Based on the results therefore, hypothesis 3a was confirmed.

Table 3b: Mean Score, Standard Deviations and One-Way ANOVA Summary Table showing the influence of Job Cadre on Organizational Retaliatory Behavior among civil servants in Benue State

Predictor				ANOVA				
Job Cadre	N	Mean	SD	Retaliatory Behavior				
Junior	135	42.16	47.69	Source	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F
Middle	194	34.56	16.61	Between Groups	8665.7	2	4332.8	4.279
Senior	58	36.31	32.08	Within Groups	388802.1	384	1012.5	
Total	387	36.31	32.08	Total	397467.9	386		

Note: * = $p < .05$

Critical Value of $F(.05) = 3.02$

The result in Table 3b showed that the mean scores obtained by the three job cadres of employees (junior, middle-level and senior) on perceived organizational retaliatory behavior among civil servants in Benue State were statistically significant at $F(2,384) = 4.279$ $p < .05$. The result showed that junior employees had the highest mean score meaning that they exhibited the highest propensity to engage in ORB followed by the senior and middle-level employees respectively. This result implies that job cadre has a significant influence on perceived organizational retaliatory behavior among civil servants in Benue State. Based on the result therefore, hypothesis 3b was confirmed.

Table 4a: Mean Score, Standard Deviations and Three-Way ANOVA Summary Table showing the influence of the Interaction of Age, Gender and Job Cadre on Job Satisfaction among civil servants in Benue State

	Civil Servants	N		Mean Score		Std. Deviation
Age	Young	233		34.9528		12.68050
	Old	154		31.9351		14.88284
Gender	Male	221		33.3620		13.59997
	Female	166		34.2711		13.76619
Job Cadre	Junior	135		37.0148		10.04689
	Middle	194		34.6856		13.28169
	Senior	58		23.0345		16.85747
Source	Sum of Sq.	df	Mean Sq.	F	Sig	Remark
Age	2421.792	1	2421.792	2.559	.110	Not Sig
Gender	231.486	1	231.486	4.299*	.031	Sig
Job Cadre	15964.526	2	7982.263	8.436**	.000	Sig
Age X Gender	6202.790	1	6202.790	6.555**	.011	Sig
Age X Job Cadre	18572.647	2	8732.571	8.947**	.000	Sig
Gender X Job Cadre	174651.14	2	8732.000	8.947**	.000	Sig
Age X Gender X Job Cadre	161.859	2	80.729	3.750*	.034	Sig
Error	354838.45	374	946.236			
Total	573044.63	387				

Note: * = $p < .05$; ** = $p < .01$

Critical Value of $F(.05) = 3.02$

Critical Value of $F(.01) = 4.66$

The results in Table 4b above showed that there was a significant interaction effect of age, gender and job cadre on perceived Organizational Retaliatory Behavior among civil servants in Benue State. The table also showed significant interactions between (age and gender), (age and job cadre), and (gender and job cadre) respectively. This hypothesis was tested using the Three-way analysis of variance and the results are presented in the Table above. Based on the results therefore, hypothesis 4b was confirmed.

DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS

The results of this study revealed significant effects of age, gender, and job cadre on job satisfaction. Younger employees reported higher levels of satisfaction with work, supervision, coworkers and promotion, while older employees reported a higher satisfaction with pay. Female employees reported higher satisfaction with work, supervision, pay and coworkers. Male employees reported higher satisfaction with promotion. Additionally, employees in the lowest job cadre (junior employees) expressed highest level of satisfaction in all dimensions followed by the middle-level and senior management employees.

Furthermore, the results showed that older employees exhibited a higher level of ORB compared to younger employees. Female employees were found to exhibit a higher level of retaliatory behavior compared to male employees. Additionally, employees in the lowest job cadre (junior employees) were found to mostly engage in ORB followed by senior and middle-level employees.

The findings of this study also showed that age, gender, and job cadre interact to significantly influence job satisfaction and organizational retaliatory behavior (ORB). The findings align with and extend the existing literature on demographic and organizational dynamics. This multidimensional interaction underscores the need to examine workplace attitudes beyond single demographic predictors. While each factor has a main effect, the interaction among them has revealed nuanced disparities that organizations must understand to foster equity and motivation in the workplace. The implication of this interaction on job satisfaction is that tailored human resource (HR) interventions must consider the compounded identity factors such as mentorship, transparent promotion practices, and equity audits which can help to level the satisfaction gap and reduce the risk of retaliatory behaviors..

Age Differences

Consistent with prior research, age was positively associated with overall job satisfaction, particularly concerning work stability and supervision. Older employees often prioritize job security, autonomy, and work-life balance over financial rewards, which explains their higher satisfaction levels in these domains (Adigun & Stephenson, 2015; Ojelabi, 2023). It was not so with the findings of this study where older employees exhibited a higher level of satisfaction with pay. Conversely, younger employees, especially those at entry-level positions (lower cadre), tend to value growth opportunities and career advancement more than stability, making promotion and pay the key drivers of their satisfaction (Syawal et al., 2023). These age-based differences in job facet satisfaction suggest that human resource strategies should be segmented by career stage, offering flexibility and mentorship for senior staff while providing structured growth pathways for younger cadres.

Gender Dynamics

The interaction between gender and job cadre revealed that female employees often report higher satisfaction with intrinsic rewards and social support, while male employees prioritize extrinsic factors such as pay and promotion (Khan et al., 2024). This is supported by the findings of this study. Notably, recent studies have observed that women in public service tend to exhibit higher levels of discretionary behaviors like Organizational Citizenship Behavior (OCB), which may translate into lower tendencies toward ORB under perceived fairness (Khan et al., 2024). This is not supported by the findings of this study where female employees exhibited a higher level of ORB. These findings imply that gender-sensitive interventions, such as supportive supervision and family-friendly policies, can enhance satisfaction among female staff and reduce retaliatory tendencies.

Job Cadre Effects

Job cadre does not only influence satisfaction directly but also moderates the effects of age and gender. Higher-level cadres experience different stressors—such as workload and role ambiguity—leading to variations in satisfaction with supervision and coworkers (González & Guillamón, 2020). Meanwhile, lower cadres, particularly among younger employees, display stronger sensitivity to perceived inequities in pay and promotion opportunities, which could escalate ORB behaviors if not addressed (Mahmud et al., 2025). The findings of this study are in support of the above referred findings. Thus, promotion transparency and fair workload distribution are critical for minimizing dissatisfaction and retaliatory behavior among these groups.

Implications for ORB

The interaction of demographics can only influence ORB primarily through its effect on job satisfaction. Research shows that job satisfaction mediates the link between organizational justice and citizenship

behaviors, and by extension, retaliatory behaviors (Chegenye, 2024). Employees who feel fairly treated in terms of supervision, pay, and promotion are less likely to engage in ORB, regardless of their demographic background. Recent findings suggest that younger employees with unmet career expectations and female employees in male-dominated cadres may resort to covert forms of retaliation if fairness perceptions are low (Sholihah et al., 2025). Therefore, integrating equity and justice principles into HR policies especially in pay structures and appraisal systems, is essential to reducing ORB.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the study's findings of significant effects, the following conclusions can be drawn.

Age's Impact: Age plays a substantial role in shaping both job satisfaction and the propensity of engaging in organizational retaliatory behavior among civil servants. This could imply differing expectations, values, and coping mechanisms across various age groups within the public service. For instance, younger civil servants might have higher expectations for career progression and immediate gratification, leading to higher satisfaction or lower frustration if these are met. Older civil servants might value job security and stability more, potentially leading to lower satisfaction or a higher propensity for retaliatory behavior if these are not met.

Gender's Influence: Gender significantly differentiates job satisfaction levels and the prevalence of organizational retaliatory behavior among civil servants. This suggests that male and female civil servants may experience the workplace differently, potentially due to societal roles, perceived fairness in opportunities (e.g., promotion and pay), work-life balance challenges, or exposure to different forms of workplace stressors. For example, if gender-based disparities exist in promotion or work-life support, it could disproportionately affect job satisfaction or increase retaliatory behaviors in one gender.

Job Cadre as a Determinant: The specific job cadre (e.g., entry-level, middle management, senior management) held by civil servants has a significant impact on their job satisfaction and propensity for organizational retaliatory behavior. This indicates that factors inherent to a particular cadre, such as the level of autonomy, responsibility, workload, compensation, opportunities for growth, and exposure to organizational politics, are strong drivers of these outcomes. Higher-level cadres might experience different stressors and rewards compared to lower-level cadres, leading to varied satisfaction levels and behavioral responses.

Interconnectedness: The findings suggest a complex interplay between these demographic factors and the observed outcomes. It's likely not just one factor operating in isolation, but a combination of age, gender, and job cadre collectively influencing how civil servants felt about their jobs and how they responded to perceived injustices.

Recommendations

By acknowledging the differentiated experiences of civil servants based on their age, gender, and job cadre, public sector organizations can develop more targeted, effective, and inclusive strategies to enhance job satisfaction and create a healthier, more productive work environment, ultimately benefiting public service delivery. They can also implement tailored interventions (e.g., age-specific programs, gender-sensitive policies, cadre-specific support) to boost satisfaction and reduce ORB. Efforts to reduce ORB include improving fairness, grievance redressal systems, and leadership accountability within the civil service.

Suggestions for Further Research

The following suggestions are made for further research.

Longitudinal Studies: Longitudinal studies can be conducted to track the impact of demographic factors over time and assess the effectiveness of implemented interventions.

Qualitative Research: Quantitative findings can be complemented with qualitative research (e.g., interviews and focus group discussions) to gain a deeper understanding of the underlying reasons for the observed effects of age, gender, and job cadre and their interactions.

Regular Climate Surveys: Regular employee satisfaction and engagement surveys that specifically capture data on age, gender, and job cadre can be implemented to continuously monitor trends and identify emerging issues.

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