Chapter 21
Organisational Justice Perception: A Work Attitude Modifier

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ABSTRACT

The mutual relationship between employer and employee develops at the workplace on the premise of reciprocity of expectations from each other. Fulfilment of these expectations is the perception of either of the two. When an employee perceives prevalence of justice in the organization, he correlates the perception with all organisational stimuli. This chapter shows that work attitude varies in employees as a result of the difference in perceived justice in the organization. It also hypothesizes the relationship among justice perception, responses to organisational facilities, and interpersonal interactional opportunities. The chapter is a correlation analysis of variables through a self-administered questionnaire consisting of responses in Likert's scale. Some of the responses and attitudes in the study significantly correlated with the perceived level of a component of organisational justice. The study re-establishes significance of non-pecuniary means in determining work attitudes.

INTRODUCTION

Perception is a process by which people select, organize and interpret external sensory stimuli and information impression in terms and categories which were consistent with their own frames of reference and personal views of the world in order to give meaning to their environment (Kakabadse et al., 1987). The interpretation is influenced by three categories of factors.

1. The target along with its relevant background.
2. The situation, time and ambience.
3. Attitudes, interests, values, past experiences and expectations of the perceiver himself.

Apparent characteristics of an individual are influenced by his perceptions and categorization of the people he interacts with. When an individual joins an organisation both the member and the organisation hold certain mutual expectations.
Organisational Justice Perception

which may or may not be in congruence with each other (Kakabadse et al., 1987, pp. 77, 86). The expectation motivates voluntary actions of individuals (and organisations) in a process of social exchange (Blau, 1964). An organisation expects loyalty and sincerity form its members and on the other hand, the member expects reciprocal fairness in outcomes of their efforts for the organisation. This expectation of fairness is fulfilled when they perceive fairness in amount and allocation of rewards.

Scope of justice refers to the group of people who affects one’s belief for getting fair treatment. This group is described as an individuals’ social identity group (Brockner, 1990). When people perceive that members of their identity group experience unjust outcomes, they judge themselves being unfairly treated even though they were observers rather than victims of the injustice.

The scope of justice is an important consideration in enhancing individuals’ fairness perceptions and the commitment to justice (Lerner, 1981). Direct experience of the justice may not be a prerequisite for perceptions of fairness; it depends on one’s scope of justice (Mollica et al, 1999).

Dimensions of Organisational Justice

An act is defined as just in organisational sciences if, on the basis of empirical research, most individuals perceive it to be so (Cropanzano & Greenberg, 1997). Thus, one of the first questions they ask in the wake of decisions is “what is fair” (Colquitt, 2001). The importance of these decisions is due to their economic and Socio-emotional consequences (Cropanzano & Schminke, 2001). Naturally, justice of decision outcomes attracted researchers first, referred to as Distributive Justice (Adams, 1965; Deutsch, 1975; Homans, 1961; Leventhal, 1976). More recent work has focused on justice of the processes that lead to decision outcomes, termed Procedural Justice (Leventhal, 1980; Thibaut & Walker, 1975).

Interactional Justice is fostered when decision makers treat people with respect and sensitivity and explain the rationale for decisions thoroughly (Colquitt, 2001). Interactional Justice has been considered a separate justice from procedural justice (Aquino, 1995; Barling & Phillips, 1993; Bies & Shapiro, 1987; Skarlicki & Folger, 1997; Tata & Bowes-sperry, 1996). Moorman (1991), Niehoff and Moorman (1993), and Tyler and Bies (1990), however, argued that it is a subset of Procedural Justice. Some others (Mansour-Cole & Scott 1990; Skarlicki & Latham, 1997) found high inter-correlations in Procedural and Interactional Justice.

Interactional Justice, more recently, has been refined into Interpersonal Justice (Greenberg, 1990, 1993,a, 1993b) and Informational Justice that focuses on dissemination of information about why procedures were used in certain way or why outcomes were distributed in certain fashion (Colquitt et al., 2001).

Distributive Justice

Adams (1963) used the social exchange theory framework to evaluate fairness of outcomes. According to the theory, accepting something of value from another obligates the receiver to reciprocate. Overtime, the role making process augments voluntary exchange interactions by producing enhanced functional interdependence based on trust and fairness (Graen, 2003; Sanchez & Byrne, 2004). According to Adams (1965) people are more concerned about fairness of outcome than the absolute level of outcomes that is determined by applying mainly three rules:

1. Equity rule.
2. Equality rule.
3. Need rule (Leventhal, 1976)

Equity rule of fair distribution of outcomes suggests that people perceive the degree of equity or inequity in major inputs into job performance.
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