



PERSONALITY TRAITS AS PREDICTORS OF ORGANIZATIONAL JUSTICE PERCEPTIONS: AN EMPIRICAL WORK AMONG IT PROFESSIONALS

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Abstract: This research work has explored the impact of personality traits in shaping the employee perception towards the various dimensions of organizational justice (distributive, procedural and transactional). Management of justice within the organization needs for identification of causal factors that shape the formation of justice perception among employees and one such causal factor is personality traits. The traits taken up for investigation are agreeableness and conscientiousness. The sample size for the study is 173 which were collected from the employees working in the information technology industry based in Coimbatore District in the state of Tamilnadu. The collected data was analyzed by Regression method using SPSS version 23. The results supported the role of personality traits (agreeableness and conscientiousness) in significant relationship with the dimensions of organizational justice and also as influencing factor in shaping the justice perception among employees.

Index Terms: Agreeableness, Conscientiousness, Distributive Justice, Procedural Justice, Transactional Justice.

I. INTRODUCTION

Organizational justice has been established to have strong relation with job performance, enhancing employee trust, loyalty and commitment and promoting organizational citizenship behaviors (Cropanzano et.al., 2007). Due to the above positive benefits of organizational justice it is required to manage and promote organizational justice within the organization. Justice in organization is about the employee perception of fairness towards the following factors – fairness in outcome (reward) distribution (distributive justice), fairness in organizational procedures (procedural justice) and fairness in the communication process (transactional justice). Organizational justice management requires identification of factors that are instrumental in the formation of perception towards the dimensions of organizational justice. The perception that an employee develop towards the above dimensions is based on reward distribution, organizational procedures and perceiver characteristics (demographic factors and personality traits) (Charash & Spector, 2001).

In this study the perceiver characteristic (personality traits) is taken up for its predictive value in shaping the employee perception of organizational justice. This research work has examined the role of personality traits as a cause for differences in justice perception. Personality is defined as the innate psychological characteristics that determine and reflect an individual's response to his/ her environment. Hence perceptual differences arise out of the personality traits that make them. With personality traits instrumental for governing human behavior, identification of personality traits that are pivotal in formation of justice perception in employees will help the organizations to employ appropriate personality tests during their employee selection process. This research work has taken up two specific traits (agreeableness and conscientiousness) for its predictive value in causing perceptual differences towards the dimensions of organizational justice. Differences in traits lead to perceptual differences among employees in their conception of justice.

1.1 Objectives of the study

To examine the personality traits as a cause for differences in the employee perception of organizational justice.

II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE AND HYPOTHESIS DEVELOPMENT

2.1 Organizational Justice

Organizational Justice is a term coined by (Greenberg, 1987) and defined as the employee evaluation of the fairness of the organizational outcome (distributive aspect), organizational procedures (procedural aspect) and communication process (transactional aspect). Organizational justice is three dimensional encompassing within its fold the elements of distributive justice, procedural justice and transactional justice.

Research works on organizational justice in its early days was one dimensional concentrating on the distributive aspect and as time progressed the shift was on procedural and transactional aspects. Justice from the perspective of organizations has its roots in the Equity theory of Adam. This was the time during which the study of justice (fairness) within organization was limited to the fairness in the distribution of organizational rewards. It was the fairness in the end results (outcomes) which was evaluated by the employees. Distributive justice (fairness in reward distribution) remained the key area of concern in the initial period, which neglected the fairness in the organizational process and procedures used to arrive at the distribution. The importance of fairness in the procedures and decisions connected with determination of outcomes first came in to prominence in the judicial sphere, when (Thibaut and Walker, 1978) opined that disputant's reaction to legal outcomes is based on their reaction to the process employed in the judicial system. Thus it gave credence to the notion that perception of justice is shaped by evaluation of the methods/ process employed to determine the outcome. Procedural justice (fairness in the organizational procedures) which was identified in the judicial environment later found its applicability in organizations. The importance of fairness in the communication process was emphasized by Bies and Moag. Fairness in communication is concerned with information accuracy, sensitivity and respect shown in the communication process by the managers during their communication with subordinates. Transactional justice (fairness in interpersonal communication) is the employee perception of fairness in the interpersonal communication. The work of (Colquitt, 2001) has also confirmed that organizational justice must be studied in terms of four dimensions (distributive, procedural, interpersonal and informational). The three dimensional constitution of organizational justice was also confirmed in the work of (Charash & Spector, 2001). The meta analytic work of (Nowakowski & Conlon, 2005) have analyzed the roots of organizational justice and the three dimensional constructs that makes it and they have concluded by suggesting for more research works that involve the moderating effect of individual and contextual variables in the organizational justice – outcome relation.

2.2 Organizational Justice and Personality Traits

Literature pertaining to the studies that analyzed the relation between personality traits and organizational justice perception are very few. Though the research work of (Charash & Spector, 2001), have put forward personality traits as an influencing factor in the formation of justice perception there is a dearth of research work in this aspect. (Stouten et.al., 2013) examined the role of specific personality traits in shaping the employee perception of distributive justice. The authors have posited that two traits that determine the anger of an individual when they face unfavorable outcomes (reward distribution) are neuroticism and agreeableness. The authors have investigated how the two traits play a role in emotional reaction towards unjust distribution practices. Neuroticism was prone to trigger anger when individuals experience unjust situations and conversely agreeableness helps the individual to deal with the unjust situation and control their emotion and conceal their anger. It was found that individuals high in neuroticism and low in agreeableness are more prone to display anger in the unjust distribution of organizational outcomes. (Di Fabio & Palazzeschi, 2011) examined the relation of personality traits and emotional justice with organizational justice and the traits taken up for investigation were extraversion, neuroticism and psychoticism. The researchers established that personality traits accounted for variances in the dimensions of organizational justice. The moderating effect of personality traits (trust, propensity, risk aversion and morality) in the relation between employee evaluation of fairness and their response was explored by (Colquitt et.al., 2006) and the moderating effect was proven. The work of (Lilly & Virick, 2006) analyzed the impact of the trait “work locus of control” on procedural justice and interactional justice. From a survey of 679 respondents collected from university staff the authors have confirmed the personality trait to affect justice perception.

2.3 Agreeableness and Organizational Justice dimensions

Based on the work of (Stouten et.al, 2013), this research work has taken up for investigation the trait “agreeableness”, as employees high in agreeableness can better manage their emotions in the work place without distorting their justice perception. The personality trait agreeableness is characterized by co-operative, compassionate, generous, tolerant and accommodating qualities. Given their sympathetic and flexible nature, employees high on agreeableness can better balance their emotions and their perception towards organizational justice dimensions will not be diluted by minor infractions in the justice management of the organization. Hence it is hypothesized that employees who score high in agreeableness must be strongly related to distributive, procedural and transactional justice.

H₁: Agreeableness is significantly related with distributive justice.

H₂: Agreeableness is significantly related with procedural justice.

H₃: Agreeableness is significantly related with transactional justice.

2.4 Conscientiousness and Organizational Justice dimensions

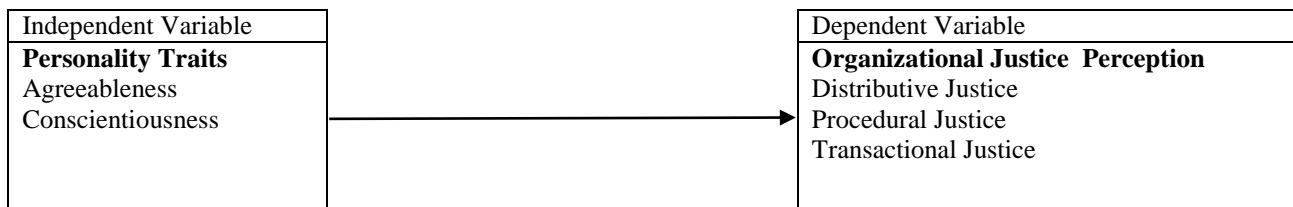
Conscientiousness as a trait is characterized by responsible, persistence, goal directed and organized behavior. As conscientiousness individuals set their own targets and put in higher performance, they expect the organization to value their contributions appropriately. With distributive justice concerned with the employee perception of the fairness of organizational rewards and procedural justice dealing with the fairness in the organizational processes and procedures that determine the distribution, the perceived fairness towards the distributive and procedural

components creates a sense of feeling among the employees that their efforts are valued by their organization which lends credence to the relation between the trait conscientiousness with the distributive and procedural justice dimensions. Hence employees high in conscientiousness will strongly value distributive and procedural justice.

H₄: Conscientiousness is significantly related with distributive justice.

H₅: Conscientiousness is significantly related with procedural justice.

III. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK



IV. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

4.1 Sample

The respondents for the study are professionals employed in the Information Technology industry in the Coimbatore district of Tamilnadu state. The sample size taken is 173. Convenience sampling method was used to approach the respondents.

4.2 Instrument for Data Collection

Questionnaire was constructed to tap the personality trait of the respondent and also the respondent opinion towards the dimensions of organizational justice.

4.3 Tools for Data Analysis

Regression using SPSS version 23 was employed to analyze the collected data.

4.4 Personality Trait Questionnaire

The questionnaire on personality trait consisted of two traits (agreeableness and conscientiousness) based on 7 attributes. Likert scale was employed to rate the attributes.

4.5 Organizational Justice Questionnaire

The questionnaire on organizational justice measures 3 dimensions on 11 attributes. Likert scale was used to rate the attributes in which the respondents recorded their ratings on the scale of 1 to 5. (1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = neutral, 4 = agree and 5 = strongly agree).

Distributive Justice was measured on the following aspects (fairness in outcome distribution based on experience, fairness in outcome distribution based on efforts, fairness in workload and fairness in promotion).

Procedural Justice was measured on the following aspects (unbiased decisions, consultative decision making, decision based on accurate information and equality of treatment).

Transactional Justice was measured on the following aspects (politeness, dignity in interpersonal communication and timely communication).

V. ANALYSIS

Table 1 Regression Table of Distributive Justice

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.905	.819	.817	1.81102

Predictor: (Constant), agreeableness

Table 2 Coefficients

Model		Unstandardized coefficients		Standardized coefficients	t	sig
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	Constant	1.729	.643		2.688	.009
	Agreeableness	3.231	.180	.905	17.930	.000

Table 3 Regression Table of Procedural Justice

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.913	.834	.832	1.67965

Predictor: (Constant), agreeableness

Table 4 Coefficient

Model		Unstandardized coefficients		Standardized coefficients	t	Sig
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	Constant	2.421	.596		4.059	.000
	Agreeableness	3.159	.167	.913	18.905	.000

Table 5 Regression Table of Transactional Justice

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.803	.644	.639	1.65054

Predictor: (Constants) agreeableness

Table 6 Coefficients

Model		Unstandardized coefficients		Standardized coefficients	t	sig
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	Constant	5.269	.586		8.990	.000
	Agreeableness	1.863	.164	.803	11.345	.000

Table 7 Regression Table of Distributive Justice

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.902	.814	.811	1.83744

Predictor: (Constant) conscientiousness

Table 8 Coefficients

Model		Unstandardized coefficients		Standardized coefficients	t	sig
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	Constant	1.180	.684		1.725	.089
	Conscientiousness	1.707	.097	.902	17.615	.000

Table 9 Regression Table of Procedural Justice

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.907	.822	.819	1.74102

Predictor: (Constant) conscientiousness

Table 10 Coefficients

Model		Unstandardized coefficients		Standardized coefficients	t	sig
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	Constant	1.931	.648		2.980	.004
	Conscientiousness	1.663	.092	.907	18.104	.000

IV.CONCLUSION

The significance value ($p < .05$) from the Table 2, 4 and 6 indicates a significant relation between the personality trait agreeableness with distributive, procedural and transactional justice respectively, leading to the acceptance of hypothesis H₁, H₂ and H₃. The significance value

($p < .05$) from Table 8 and 10 indicates a significant relation between the personality trait conscientiousness with distributive and procedural justice leading to the acceptance of hypothesis H₄ and H₅.

The R² value from Table 1, 3 and 5 indicates that the personality trait agreeableness accounts for 81.9%, 83.4% and 64.4% variance in the perception towards distributive, procedural and transactional justice respectively. The R² value from Table 7 and 9 indicates that the personality trait conscientiousness accounts for 81.4% variance in the perception towards distributive justice and 82.2% variance in the perception towards procedural justice.

Agreeableness as a trait is significant in shaping the justice perception among employees. Organizations can select employees who rank high in the trait agreeableness as they can control their emotions when they feel unfair events by reason of which their perception towards organizational justice will not take a darker hue.

VII. MANAGERIAL IMPLICATIONS

Identification and selection of employees with appropriate personality traits would be helpful for the organizations to better manage the formation of justice perception among employees. As employee perception towards the specific dimensions of organizational justice (distributive, procedural and transactional) is linked to the personality traits, selection and placing the right employee with the appropriate trait will enhance their justice perception. As employee perception of justice affects their performance and behavior, organizations can decide on the requisite traits and select employees accordingly to enhance organizational effectiveness.

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