Study of Barriers to Development of Organizational Justice

Mohammad Farzanjou

Shahid Bahonar Technical and Vocational Faculty, Technical and Vocational University, Zahedan, Iran

ABSTRACT

Justice has always been considered as a basic requirement for collective life of human beings throughout history. Today, given the pervasive and comprehensive role of organizations in human's social life, the role of justice in organizations has been more and more obvious.

The development of organizational justice aims to develop a proper theory and the attempt to achieve consensus about. Accordingly, after being reached to a consensus on theory and objective and strategies and policies, success in accomplishing organizational justice depends on the factors such as environment, size, technology, context of power and control and the common language and culture in the organization. Theories related to justice have been developed in parallel to the development and progress of human society and its range has been drawn from theories on religions and philosophies to empirical research. After the Industrial Revolution and the mechanization of human society, organizations have as dominated on human life as they directly depends on organizations from birth to death and life today is unimaginable without the existence of organizations. Therefore, the application of justice in a community depends on justice in organizations. The result achieved is recognizing three types of justice namely distributive justice, procedural justice and interactional justice in organizations. It has been tried in this article to take into consideration these three types of justice and the issues associated with.

KEYWORDS: distributive justice, procedural justice, interactional justice, barriers, organizational justice.

1. INTRODUCTION

One of the fundamental human aspirations is to apply justice and accomplish it in the society throughout history. Various human and divine schools and thoughts have been proposed different solutions to explain and establish it, and some organizational theorists believe that organizational structure is the most important factor to determine human's behavior (1), while some maintain that organizational structure is determined by humans' behavior, especially the concerned groups active in the organization (2).

Doing justice is one of the most important factors affecting organizational survival and its health maintenance in the long run; thus, the concept of organizational justice has been paid a special attention throughout the process of organization theories (3), especially when achieving dynamic stability is aimed by managers, establishing justice is one of the basic requirements of organizational behavior, for doing justice increases sense of belonging, loyalty and trust of people to the organization and increases social and human capital of the organization.

However, despite a long history of organizations' regard to the significance of justice and continuous efforts to accomplish it, there are few organizations which are successful in achieving the requirements of justice. The first definitions of justice are attributed to Socrates, Plato and Aristotle.

One of the most important questions raised by Socrates was about the nature of justice. After Socrates, his disciples as Plato assigned justice in his book, Republic, as the most important discussion (4). According to Plato, justice is achieved when everyone in the government is dealt with for what he/she is worthy of (5).

Literal Concept of Justice

One of the difficulties regarding justice is the ambiguity in its definitions and meanings. There are more than ten synonyms for some words in Arabic language and the term justice is also eligible to such synonyms. So there are several meanings for every aspect of justice which amongst them are perhaps installment, intention, persistence, center, portion, share, rate, fair, etc. the equivalent term in French and English is justice and in Latin justitia (5). In Oxford Dictionary, justice has been described as maintaining the rights with the authority and power and defending the rights determined by reward or punishment. But what is more close to our intentions in the definitions of this word is that the concept of justice is equality, fairness and judgment with integrity and rectitude and other similar concepts.

Corresponding Author: Mohammad Farzanjou, Shahid Bahonar Technical and Vocational Faculty, Technical and Vocational University, Zahedan, Iran. farzanjoom@yahoo.com

Centers of Organizational Justice

New works in this area show that employees are faced at least with two sources of accomplishing justice in the organization or violating it. The most obvious of these sources is the supervisor or the direct manager. This supervisor has total control over subordinates. He/she can be effective on significant outcomes such as increased payments or promotion opportunities of subordinates. The second source which can be attributed by employees as justice or injustice is the organization itself as a whole. Although this source is more intangible, it is also important to note. Often people consider their organizations as independent social factors that are able to accomplish or violate justice.

For example, when employees (organizations) are in breach of contract, employees will react to this action. Thus, according to the investigations related to discrimination in organizations, employees distinguish between discrimination by the head of organization and the one done by organization (6).

Another direction taken into consideration in the field of studies and research related to justice is types of justice in organizations, prerequisites and their consequences. According to research done in this area, three types of justice have been identified in workplace as follows:

1.   Distributive Justice

About 40 years ago psychologist named J. Stacy Adams offered his theory of equality and showed in this theory that people intend to receive fair rewards for the works performed; in other words, they are benefit from the rewards of dong their works the same amount as their colleagues (7). According to Adams, equality is achieved when employees feel the ratio of inputs (efforts) to outputs (rewards) is as the same as this ratio in their colleagues (8).

The employees who feel inequality will respond to this inequality with negative reaction, including refusal of effort, doing little works and poor organizational citizenship behavior, and in its radical form, resigning from work (7). Historically speaking, equity theory is focused on the perceived justice of the rewards distributed among individuals (9). This kind of justice has had many applications in the organizational environment and researchers reviewed the relationship between this kind of justice and many variables such as quality and quantity of works.

Due to the focus of this justice on outcomes, it is anticipated that this form of justice is mainly associated with cognitive, emotional and behavioral reactions.

Therefore, when a particular outcome of injustice is perceived, this injustice must affect a person's emotions (like anger, satisfaction, feeling pride or guilt), cognitions (distortive cognition of the one's inputs and outputs or others) and finally their behavior (such as performance or leaving the job) (10).

2.   Procedural Justice

Due to the change of research in social psychology, the study on justice in organizations has also been changed from the mere emphasis on reward allocation outcomes (distribute justice) to emphasis on the processes that cause this assignment (procedural justice) (10).

Procedural justice means perceived justice of the process that is used to determine the distribution of rewards (9). Here, this question can be raised that is it possible that the employee who receives less reward than others does never feel inequality or injustice. With regard to procedural justice, the answer is true. This issue can be clarified with an example:

Let suppose that there are two employees with a similar efficiency and competence to perform a work and occupational responsibility, but one of them is more paid than the other. Organizational payment policies and manners include many legitimate factors such as duration of work, working shift, etc. These two employees are fully aware of payment policies of organization and have the same opportunities. According to this factors, it is possible one employee is paid more than the other, however the other employee may feel though he/she is paid less of his/her willingness, this payment is not fair, for the organization's compensation policy is an open policy and is applied in an accurate ways and without prejudice and bias. Therefore, payment resulted from applying this fair procedure is probably seen justly, even if it seems too low. With increased understanding of procedural justice, employees deal with their supervisors and organization with a positive attitude, even if they express dissatisfaction regarding rewards, promotions and other personal consequences (9).

3.   Interactional Justice

The second type of justice in organizations is called interactional justice. Interactional justice includes a method by which organizational justice is transferred from supervisors to subordinates (11). This type of justice is related to dimensions of communications process (such as courtesy, honesty and respect) between transmitter and receptor of justice. Considering the fact that interactional justice is determined by management behavior, this type of justice is associated with cognitive, emotional and behavioral reactions to management, or in other words, supervisor. So when an employee feels interactional injustice, he/she will most likely show a negative reaction to supervisors than organization. It is therefore anticipated that the employee is dissatisfied with his/her

direct supervisor than the organization in general and the employee feels less commitment to the organization within oneself than the organization. A large part of one's negative attitude is mainly towards the supervisor and less of these negative attitudes are related to organization (10). According to Mormon, distributive, procedural and interactional justices are correlated with each other and each one is a distinctive aspect of organizational justice. He maintains that organizational justice is defined as the sum of distributive, procedural and interactional justices (11).

Lack of Theory of Justice

The attempt to establish justice requires having a relative consensus about its contents. A document should be first provided to allow for consistency of action based on it to accomplish the desired goals. Until members of an organization have reached to an agreement over the coordinates and properties (righteous organization), it is not expected that their collective effort is focused on its accomplishment.

In fact, lack of consensus regarding the coordinates of objectives, righteous organization and a fair position in the organization badly affected on the process of its accomplishment and acts as a barrier more than anything else. One reason for the lack of basic consensus concerning justice is the diversity of theoretical perspectives, when the diversity of our views is high and we cannot select one of them it as a base. A situation may be occurred when there is no theory and method to makes us unified on promise (confederate) and the strategy (unified). Thus, the dispersed efforts of some managers and employees interested in establishing justice will not come to a conclusion and the overall performance of the organization will be null and foil. Therefore, before any do an action to establish justice in the organization, a relative consensus must be achieved regarding the theory of justice and the concepts and examples resulted from.

Therefore, theory of justice should be comprehensive and universal and can define details of behaviors and various intercourses between organizations and individuals, managers and employees, colleagues together, people and clients, organization, environment, and active sub-systems within, especially organization and government.

It is noteworthy that the theory of justice should have a definition of justice regarding every type of possible communications, for wherever a behavior is occurred, a court can be formed and express an opinion regarding the fairness or unfairness of the behavior.

Theories presented about justice have a considerable range of diversity. Perhaps in one of the most general category, justice can be investigated in terms of theoretical liberal, socialist, liberal democrats, community orientation, ultra-modernism, feminism, Fatalism and righteousness perspectives (12).

Competing and conflicting opinions are expressed in these views that the custodians of organizational justice should first reach consensus aboutfor each of them.

By developing a theory of justice and consensus on the content, coordinates and its requirements, a discussion can be raised regarding the spread of justice in organizational behavior and structure.

Form and Structure of Equity-Oriented Organization

Taking into consideration the definition and analyses of method of the form and structure of organizational justice according to Robbins point of view, it can be claimed that structure deals with three content dimensions and five binding factors.

Content factors of structure include concentration, formalization and complexity and its binding factors include goals, strategies, technology environment, size and owners of power and control (13).

Thus, the theory developed regarding justice should be interpreted in such a way that the coordinates of each dimension be defined.

In this regard, theory of justice regarding concentration should be defined in such a way to facilitate the achievement of fair behaviors, that is to say, concentration should be focused on both organization and justice accomplishment.

The required complexities should be determined with a fair approach. Structure complexity severely increases administrative costs. It must be specified in the theory of justice that how much an organization can increase their complexities and yet remained committed to justice. Formalization is also associated with justice. Establishing justice in an optimal level of organization's formalization is worth being reflected. Formalization-based definition of justice should be considered in such a way that any misuse of the laws, regulations and documents should be avoided.

It can be observed that the method for establishing justice is related to content dimension of structure, especially with the concept if procedural justice. With this introduction, the most important factors on failure of organizations in justice accomplishment can be followed in the concepts below:

1. Not centrality of goals for the establishment of organizational justice

In fact, one of the main obstacles to accomplish justice in organizations is that the goals are not based on justice; especially that in mechanical bureaucracy, most aspect of organization's efforts and energy is focused on

establishing goals. Therefore, if the establishment of goals is imagined in an unjustified manner, then most aspects of organizational efforts will inevitably be focused on injustice. In fact, if the goals of justice are achieved with injustice, behaviors will becomecommon and prevalent in the organization that continuously vilified justice. Thus, goals, strategies, policies and programs not only have an effect on the process of organization's structure designation, it will also be directed on its behaviors.

2. The reality of environment and its impact on justice

Whether true or false, organization's environment is one of the most important resources to establish justice within or overshadow organizational justice. Environmental impacts have a direct, and sometimes indirect, effect on the process of establishing justice. In an organizational justice-based righteous approach, the stipend of one work shift should be truly led to meeting the needs of employee's life and providing their subsistence (14).

Therefore, the reality of environment has a dramatic impact on justice's understanding in organization and may be led to distortion of truth. In fact, truth and truthfulness requires that the minimum wage paid per a shift of work is the amount of one's subsistence, while man-made or random reality of environment requires that a more or less amount of stipend is paid to individuals.

3. Development of Technology on Labor Market

The impact of development of technology on the structure of labor market has been noted by economists since several years ago and has been analyzed and evaluated in terms of the impact of economy on labor by which the need for labor force will be decreased with the development of technology. However, in most cases, the created facts do not confirm this impression; hence technology is divided into two types of capital accumulation and the one influencing on employment and labor-creating effective on reduced employment. But the final effects of technology on organization was not limited to this extent so that the significance of the impact of technology on text, texture, environment, construction of language, culture and organizational communication were gradually been considered. It was even noted that technology is effective on the structure of power and hierarchy of authority in organization and has an influence on it; particularly, with the development of information technology, the network of new professional and specialized authority were formed in the organizations and hardware and software professionals were of higher importance and authority.

4. Implementation of Rules and Regulations in the establishment of Organizational Justice

Organization and being organized is the inseparable component of our life, organization is a social system which its vitality and sustainability depends on a strong linkage between the components and elements of its constituent parts, which perceived injustice has devastating effects on the spirit of collective work (15).

Although the size of variable organization is so importantwhich is effective on the establishment of organizational justice both through the impacts on the structure and context of organization's internal and external communications and through the impacts on the processes, methods and the scope of laws and regulations. However, accomplishing justice was never an easy matter and never will be, but obviously, the more the amount and variety of occupations, professions, status of conditions in the organization, the more will be available evidences and judgment cases and the adaptation of the theory of justice and its accepted definition on these cases and examples will be more difficult. For example, if all employees do the same thing and have the same amount of effort, they can be paid in a similar fashion to meet their needs. So, the smaller the size of organization, the definition of justice based on less diverse jobs and less number of employees will be simpler.

Also, when the number of employees in an organization is low but each has a variety of works to do, it can be expected that a simple plan, though distinguishing one, can provide a relatively fair condition in the face of "organization with employees" and "employees with each other".

5. The Impacts of Individuals and Groups on the Establishment of Organizational Justice

The more the diversity of individuals and powerful groups affecting the context of organization, the level of authoritarian behavior will be probably reduced and the likelihood of the development of interactional justice will be increased. The construction of power has an impact on the process of establishing organizational justice both indirectly through the impact on structure and directly through the impact on social communications of individuals and groups. Pressure groups and benefit and influential groups have a significant impact on the process and the distribution structure of power in the organizations. Supposing if there are not such groups in the organization, the structure of organization will be authoritarian and dictatorial and the power will be concentrated in the hands of the director; however, if the number of individuals constituent these groups are limited in the organization, the centralization of power will be removed from the hands of a person and is transferred to one or some other groups and a group tyranny with the characteristics similar to aristocracy will be created, while with the plurality of powerful groups, the authoritarian structure will become more flexible,

responsive and democratic. Sometimes oligarchic nested network is formed. In this case, the process of development and diversity of groups is artificial and is formed based on a plan for hidden domination (14).

6. Culture and Language for the Establishment of Organizational Justice

The more the language and culture in a society accepts justice, the more will be increased the likelihood of development of fair behaviors within and therefore the words inclined to justice are more used in the organization.

Moreover, if the employees, and generally population forming organization, is more acquired with linguistic authority, the more will be increased the likelihood of development and spread of more polite and just behaviors. In fact, development of justice and promoting justice-driven culture affects behaviors, states, variables and the factors affecting on organizational justice and people's expectations from each other and of organization's authorities will be more transparent and precise and based on justice and its various manifestations and the likelihood of occurring righteous behaviors and approval of more equitable laws and regulations will be increased.

Conclusion

Considering what has so far been mentioned, it has been observed that its constituent elements and binding factors affects the process of justice development in all distributive, procedural and interactional dimensions. However, the nature of this its effect, severity and weakness is much vague and cannot be carefully defined and anticipated.

Here it merely emphasizes that probably some of the structural aspects have more effects on the special types of justice in the organization. For example, there is stronger and more strength relationship between culture and language; moreover, a more authentic relationship can be observed between the structure of power and control and interactional, procedural and justice. The mote complex the structure, the more will be difficult the development of procedural justice. It can be observed that the barriers to the development of justice are numerous and have a complex relationship with each other. It can be accordingly imagined that size of organization can strongly affect the establishment of justice. Therefore, accomplishing justice in a country's level is large and extensive and has different ethnicities, nationalities, cultures and languages and a high level of racial diversity, it is much harder than establishing justice in a small organization.

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