

Organizational Justice and Being a Woman; What Female Lecturers Say

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Abstract

This study aims to offer a detailed foresight on organizational justice concept and define organizational justice from the perspective of women, female lecturers specifically, to unveil the views on the concept of organizational justice. The research was patterned after one of the qualitative research models namely phenomenologic method. Research population comprised of 10 volunteering female lecturers currently teaching in 2 state universities. In data analysis, descriptive analysis technique was employed. Findings of the research pinpointed that female lecturers defined organizational justice as securing interpersonal equality and added that in the absence of organizational justice this failure would render a negative effect on their personal happiness, job satisfaction, motivation and performance. Moreover they claimed that there was prevailing gender discrimination in organizations. For suggestions the next studies can be conducted to raise the awareness of all employees of the organization on organizational justice. This study, carried out for participants from different universities, can be developed and applied to measure the perception of organizational justice in a single organization. In order to end the genderist perspective and bring women to the position where they should be important, women employees may be able to realize their power.

Key Terms: Organizational Justice, Descriptive Analysis, Female Lecturers

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INTRODUCTION

In modern age, organizations are the bodies centered in all lives and key actors playing a role in the process. Formed after the merging of institutes or individuals to realize a common goal or task (Hasanoğlu, 2004) these bodies are required to entail a wide range of factors to secure their continuity and efficiency. It is doubtless that justice concept is the most crucial of these factors. Justice concept has been a recurrent theme in different historical periods and different scientific branches; thereby a long list of meanings has been associated with the said concept. One of the first names having termed organizational justice concept, Greenberg (1990), had defined organizational justice as “the role of justice in any workplace”.

Literature Review

Organizational justice is a concept having originated from Equity of Theory by Adams and generically referred to the practices conducted in a person's currently affiliated-organization (Şahin & Taşkaya, 2010). It is thus viable to define organizational justice as individuals' perceptions towards the fairness of an organization's attitude and conduct since organizational justice has been a sine qua non condition to let an organization perform its duties effectively and to boost the personal satisfaction of employees in the organization. According to Gelens et al., (2013) organizational justice concept can be analyzed under three different groups namely promotion opportunities or distributive justice in reference to the distribution of financial awards; process justice in reference to the way these distributions are executed; interaction justice in reference to the perceptions on the relations established during this process. In any given place inhabited and any event faced, and against all efforts and costs paid for them and other people a human being tends to measure a specific value of deserving while also expects that his/her earning is proportional with the said value (Keklik & Coşkun, 2013). Distributive justice ensures that an award, punishment and payment is shared in line with the equity principle to the end of meeting such expectations of employees. Process justice, on the other hand, questions to what extent the said factors in distributive justice are allotted by fair methods and policies. Process justice focuses on the methods and operations followed in taking organizational decisions (Atalay, 2010).

Organizational justice is a highly effective factor in determining employees' organizational loyalty, job satisfaction, performance and motivation. Employee feelings that there is lameness in achieving organizational justice in their corporation can directly be affected in a negative way through these factors. Perception on organizational justice, which is on the agenda of most of the organizations at work, is negatively impacted when it comes to gender discrimination. In relevant literature gender discrimination prevalent in organizations has been a recurrent theme of analysis with many of its dimensions. Gender discrimination refers to different treatment towards individuals despite having equal competency due to merely their difference in sex (HRDC, 2002). Gender discrimination is a readily apparent problem pushed against women when they are newly recruited in a workplace, waged and promoted. A woman seeking to start a job is doomed to be the 2nd best choice due to her female identity by ignoring her personal skills and performance. In addition to preliminary discrimination faced in getting a job, receiving unproportional salaries between male and female employees despite the sameness of conducted work is also another source of discrimination (Alparslan et al., 2015).

In relevant literature, there is a significant body of research focusing on many aspects of organizational justice (Us and Keklik, 2013, Irak, 2004, Temel et al., 2006, Töremen and Tan, 2016, Gözde, 2018, Cohen and Spector, 2001). Furthermore, in literature, there are numerous studies related with gender discrimination and female sex (Gelegen, 2001, Hale, 1994, Skuratowiczlarry and Hunter, 2004). Despite all this abundance, there is, nonetheless, a scarcity of studies that entails the views of female lecturers in Turkey on organizational justice. Based on this detection, this study aims to offer a detailed foresight on organizational justice concept and define organizational justice from the

perspective of women, female lecturers specifically, to unveil the views on the concept of organizational justice.

METHOD

Research Model

The research was patterned after one of the qualitative research models namely phenomenologic method. Phenomenologic (phenomenology) pattern focuses on cases, events, notions, phenomenon, experiences, attitudes or approaches pervasive in everyday life that everyone has some awareness about but without further understanding or a clear explanation of (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2016). Phenomenologic model openly displays participants' perceptions and experiences (Ersoy, 2016).

Population

Research population comprises of 10 female lecturers currently teaching in 2 different state universities. Of the participant female lecturers in this research, 4 academicians are research assistants, 4 academicians hold Assoc. Prof title and 2 academicians hold Dr. title. Distribution of participants' tenure is such; 2 academicians with a tenure of 1-5 years, 3 academicians with a tenure of 5-10 years, 2 academicians with a tenure of 10-15 years, 3 academicians with a tenure of 15 years and above.

Data Collection Tool

In this research, semi-structured interview form developed by the researcher to function as a more flexible and effective tool to unearth personal experiences has been employed (Rabionet, 2011). Applied interview form was then sent to participants either face to face or as an online interview form. Interview form comprised of a total of 8 questions categorized as personal information part and organizational justice concept. Questions listed in the interview form are as numbered below:

- In your viewpoint what is organizational justice? Please provide your definition.
- Do you feel that in your current organization organizational justice is ensured? What is your criteria/criterion in deciding if organizational justice is ensured in any given organization?
- How can organizational justice affect your job satisfaction, motivation and performance positively and adversely?
- Do you think administrators adopt a sexist approach in relation to organizational justice? What are your personal views on this matter?
- Have you ever experienced a personal case that can be categorized “organizational injustice stemming from a sexist perspective”? If yes, please provide a brief description.
- In situations you deem not to be aligned with organizational justice, what would your reactions be like?

Data analysis

Descriptive analysis was employed in the analysis of data for this research. The aim of descriptive analysis is; by employing several data collection techniques that seek to present obtained findings to readers in an organized and interpreted manner, to outline and interpret based on predetermined theme the data provided by respondents (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2016). In this research, inductive model was employed and participants' views were classified accordingly with organizational justice contents in relevant literature. Each participant's view is reported in quotes, the ordered number of a participant is indicated next to *letter A* in parenthetical mark. Below is a diagram on the way views of participants are stated as findings of the research.

Figure 1. Organizational justice diagram on the views of participants



Validity and Reliability of Data

In this research, validity of interview questions was examined by employing “content validity ratio” of Lawshe (1975). In this research one of the questions was examined by a specialist in Turkish language, 1 question was examined by a specialist in Educational Management and 1 question was examined by a specialist in Program Development branch; hence a total of 3 specialists were commissioned. Next, content validity ratio was computed as +1. After coding the views, reliability of the research was tested by 3 lecturers specialized in the field of qualitative research and upon employing Miles and Huberman (1994) formula, the outcome was computed as 88%.

FINDINGS

In line with the research objective, this section provides a list of participants' views as obtained findings on organizational justice. Firstly, female lecturers' views on organizational justice have been listed. For the question; "In your viewpoint what is organizational justice? views on this concept as stated by participants are; securing interpersonal equality, sharing the means, distribution of employees based on their area of expertise, organizations established to warrant public justice, implementing corporate operations and applications in line with the framework of merit, fair allotment of resources and responsibilities, unfavored execution of discipline rules, absence of favoritism, annulling intra-group separations. Some of the participant views on organizational justice are as below:

“I believe that organizational justice is putting concept of justice into action. Justice, in essence, involves in itself the notion of morality, abiding by rights and laws. It is a salient concept that parallels with accuracy principle. If I should explain this notion within the context of organizational

justice, it relates to the fact that the organization or organizations I work for can truly protect my personal rights above anything else; caters for a work environment that can offer conducive and equal opportunities while also feature individual differences; offering the kind of settings that help me feel safe both legally and emotionally and adopting appropriate codes of conduct. I expect that decisions taken on corporate base are actualized within the framework of fair administration of specified regulations and directives.” (A9)

“I have no idea about this matter but if I should come up with an opinion, I would say that it must refer to achieving equality among people working on a micro level.”(A1)

“It means application of corporate process and practices within the framework of merit and equality.”(A6)

An analysis of participants' views indicates that one of the participants, A9, deemed organizational justice as putting concept of justice into action by prioritizing rights and laws, and while ensuring justice in organization, protecting personal rights of individuals; catering for a work environment that offers conducive and equal opportunities by also considering individual differences; offering the kind of settings that help employees feel safe both legally and emotionally and adopting appropriate codes of conduct. Code-A1 participant, on the other hand, delineated organizational justice as achieving equality. The view of code-A6 participant was in parallel with A1 and organizational justice was defined by the respondent as merit and equality.

Another finding in the research is related to the views of lecturers for the question "Do you feel that in your current organization, organizational justice is ensured?" Most of the lecturers reported that their current organization provided organizational justice while others asserted that organizational justice went unnoticed and some others reported that despite the fact that there are some incomplete aspects efforts are paid to maximize the implementation of organizational justice. Only one lecturer reported that organizational justice was not achieved particularly in sub-departments. Code A5 and A10 stated that organizational justice was ensured. Participant with Code A9 however stated that efforts are paid to maximize the implementation of organizational justice but in the distribution of lessons at most, certain practices were harmful for healthy-functioning of organizational justice. Below are some of the participants' views:

“I don't think my current organization can ensure organizational justice. I believe committed crimes are not punished aversively enough.” (A5)

“Yes there is, because everyone acts in line with their assigned role and status.”(A10)

“I believe that in my current organization all efforts are paid to maximize the implementation of organizational justice. I think we have good work environments, the kind of substructure that can provide all moral and material support on a scientific and cultural ground and I believe that we, the employees, are granted with equal opportunities. However, in sub-departments, I can see and feel that there is a poor practice of fair conduct. As an example, I think course distributions of departmental bodies is not conducted equally. This is a common reality we encounter in both undergraduate and graduate courses. In undergraduate courses, for example, professors never physically attend classes. I think the greatest injustice is the unfair distribution in course sharing and inequality. Aside from that, all the other means provided to me/us in my institute are fair and aligned with equality and accuracy principle. That being said, although top management strives hard to establish justice, since managers in sub-departments fail in fixing justice notion and approach and even have poor professional ethics, plans may go wrong at times.”(A9)

Female lecturers responded differently to the question of “What is your criteria/criterion in deciding if organizational justice is ensured in any given organization?” As the answers related to these criteria are examined they are detected as such; professional stance without favoring personal gains, solution-orientation, equal salary, equal physical spaces, equal opportunities, securing job satisfaction, securing job fulfillment, term of tenure in current organization, nondiscrimination, absence of mobbing, mutual respect between senior and subordinate positions, employees' involvement in decision-making process, democratic attitude. A6 and A7 coded participants shared their views as below;

“The way relevant law and regulations is applied and form of application ...Nondiscrimination among all employees.” (A6)

“I believe that the most determining outcome is psychological welfare of members in an organization. Some of these determinants can be named as appropriateness of assigned tasks and allocation duty, equal share of used resources, mutual respect between members and senior and subordinate positions, absence of mobbing.” (A7)

Another finding is about the way organizational justice can affect job satisfaction, motivation and performance. Participants' views on the way organizational justice is likely to affect job satisfaction, motivation and performance reveal that organizational injustice disrupted organizational culture and organizational injustice adversely affected motivation and performance while presence of justice created a positive effect. In line with the expectations for organizational justice, job satisfaction would diminish if efforts paid no yield, injustice triggered unhappiness, justice positively affected job satisfaction and personal joy and justice ensured a more efficient and positive performance.

As for the same question A1-coded participant reported that *“Interpersonal conflicts and double standard are negative factors that impede justice concept. They severely undermine organizational culture which can be directly linked with lowered motivation and performance.”*; besides when organizational culture is weakened the individual may cope with decreased motivation and performance. A7- coded participant revealed that if organizational justice is unsecured, a person's psychological state would be adversely affected both at work and in private life. The view of participant with code A7 is, *“If justice is harmed the member is also psychologically harmed. Particularly in collective communities if a person's sense of belonging is torn down, I believe it will take a toll on that person's professional and private life.” (A7)*

Participants' answers for the question "Do you think administrators adopt a sexist approach in relation to organizational justice? What are your personal views on this matter?" indicated that some administrators adopted a sexist approach, and certain directors specifically demanded to cwork with a male or female employee. Other participants claimed that administrators did not adopt a sexist approach but it was worth noticing that administrator and vice administrator positions were always reserved to men and male administrators tended to adopt a more tolerant approach towards their same-sex colleagues. Below are the views of participants on the same issue:

“They absolutely adopt a sexist approach. What we currently face is a management system that is built upon male hegemony. (A4)

“No they don't. I haven't felt that way, but it is worth noticing that administrator and vice administrator positions are always reserved to men.” (A2)

Interestingly an analysis of participant views signals that A4-coded participant believed that in organizations administration style favored male hegemony and administrators tended to adopt a

sexist approach. A2-coded participant also reported that since administrator and vice administrator positions are almost always reserved to men there is gender discrimination prevalent at workplace.

Another finding attested in the research was related to the question "Have you ever experienced a personal case that can be categorized "organizational injustice stemming from a sexist perspective"? If yes, please provide a brief description" A vast majority of participants claimed not to have met an organizational injustice stemming from a sexist perspective. Yet a few number of participants reported to have met such discrimination and some others argued that this discrimination was bound to mobbing which could reasonably be viewed as the greatest discrimination based on gender. Participants' views regarding this question are as below.

"Although I haven't faced such discrimination one-to-one I have seen many times in school life that in most cases male teachers were the favorite choice for representative positions or for select duties." (A1)

"I personally have experienced many problems due to gender discrimination. The problems I had stemmed from gender-based mobbing and they were all the kind of problems causing so much distress throughout the entire process."(A4)

Last finding attained in this research entailed participants' views towards the question "In situations you deem not to be aligned with organizational justice, what would your reactions be like?". It was detected that participants entertained different views on this matter. Most of them confessed that if theoretically the situation was not directly related to them they would then remain silent but if the situation could ever occur against their interest, they would object to the treatment and claim their legal rights. Other participants reported that if such a case ever occurred they would spread the news wherever possible and if the administration kept on ignoring raised objection, they would terminate their contract in currently employed institution. Only a minority of participants stated that their attempts ended in a negative outcome, hence they would defend their legal rights till the last minute. Some participants' views are as quoted below:

"If it is not directly related to me personally, I mostly remain silent but if it is something directly related to me I will cry my objection loud and clear." (A1)

"I would file a suit, and bring a complaint. If my complaint is ignored or left unpunished because of favoritism etc. I will totally cease my service for the relevant person or institute." (A5)

"I think it is solution oriented and I think attempts to overcome injustice end up in a satisfactory result (most of the times)." (A6)

"If I had an institutional injustice I think I would go after my rights. I would seek my legal rights." (A9)

As can be inferred from the participants' views above A1-coded participant mostly remained silent if the situation involved organizational injustice. A5 and A9 coded participants shared a similar viewpoint. A5-coded participant reported that she would file a suit and bring a complaint to combat unfair practices and if her complaint was ignored or left unpunished because of favoritism etc. she would totally cease her service for the relevant person or institute. A6-coded participant entertained a positive perspective and stated that all unjust practices could rightfully bring to a solution within the organization itself.

CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION

In this research conducted to unearth the views of female academicians on organizational justice, below are the obtained results. Most of the female academicians hold the belief that organizational justice basically referred to securing interpersonal equality. Next their statements signaled fair distribution of resources and liabilities and putting concept of justice into action (Sharon and Kubala, 2018, Greenberg, 1993). Likewise Atalay (2010) defined organizational justice such; “employees' perception that distribution of attained organizational gains and the procedure followed in the process of distribution are all fair”. Another finding of the research is that a vast majority of female academicians believed that in their current organization justice prevailed but a few others reported that justice was disrupted or certain problems emerged. A few of the criteria that female academicians considered in deciding if organizational justice was achieved or not related to the practices in which obtained means and opportunities were equalized for all, nondiscrimination, democratic attitude, absence of mobbing, equal salary, and ensuring job satisfaction. All of the obtained results revealed that distribution justice dimension of organizational justice mattered most for the employees. As seen in the research findings female academicians hold varied views about same application of organizational justice among different people. They agreed that organizational justice was not practiced the same among different people but should not be that way or else injustice could prevail, they reported. In relevant literature organizational justice concept is elaborated within the framework of personal perception (Dordevic et al, 2019). Organizational justice perception focuses not on the way the individual is treated fairly in reality but rather focuses on to what extent the person perceives this behaviour as fair (Taşkıran, 2011, Sharon and Kubala, 2018, Greenber, 1993). Female academicians asserted that if any case in which organizational justice loosened their personal happiness, job satisfaction, motivation and performance would be affected adversely. Overall, in relevant literature too, a linear relationship between organizational justice perception and job satisfaction was indicated and it was accentuated that a high level of justice perception fueled employees' job satisfaction (Bin, 2016, Yürür, 2008, Sezgin and Yıldızhan, 2013, Eker, 2006). In this study as well, researchers concluded that a relationship prevailed between employees' perception towards the functioning of an organization and their performance. In this research a vast majority of female academicians agreed not to have faced a sexist approach from the administrators but a few others claimed to have witnessed a sexist approach. In a study conducted by Hale (1999) it was revealed that men felt uncomfortable to cooperate with female colleagues. Indeed the statement “in organizations job-related duties and responsibilities are defined not on the basis of performance but rather on the basis of gender-related associations” is a crystal-clear manifestation of the dominant sexist viewpoint in organizations (Skuratowiczlarry and Hunter, 2004).

Suggestions

The following suggestions can be provided by the results of the research. Studies can be conducted to raise the awareness of all employees of the organization on organizational justice. This study, carried out for participants from different universities, can be developed and applied to measure the perception of organizational justice in a single organization. In order to end the genderist perspective and bring women to the position where they should be important, women employees may be able to realize their power.

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