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THE MODERATING ROLE OF INNOVATIVE CULTURE ON THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN ORGANIZATIONAL JUSTICE AND ORGANIZATIONAL CYNICISM: A CONCEPTUAL PAPER

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Abstract

Organizational cynicism is viewed as a general or specific attitude that is characterized by frustration, anger and also a tendency to distrust individuals, groups and organizations. It is not only detrimental to employees but also to organizations. Hence, this paper emphasizes to develop a framework which explaining the relationship between organizational justice and organizational cynicism with addition to determine the moderating effect of innovative culture. An extensive review on the literatures is discussed to develop the possible relationship between the variables. The proposed framework of this study could be beneficial for the future research to expand more studies on organizational cynicism and therefore, to fill the gap and inconsistencies found in the past studies.

Keywords: Organizational Cynicism, Organizational Justice, Innovative Culture,

INTRODUCTION

Public sector in Malaysia has dealt with vast rapid transformation in terms of its human capital development. A major transformation in the Malaysian economic and social environment has also resulted with the changing of attitudes among the employees towards being more vocal and aware of their rights. This awareness may increase employees' expectations regarding their rights, and if their rights are not fulfilled, it could potentially bring negative influence on the employees attitude, where a good employee will give less commitment and refuse to work harder. The issues that involve employees' attitude need to be highlighted seriously, as it is really alarming. This is due to the fact that the influence of work attitude problems also bring negative impacts to the public sector (Mat & Zabidi, 2010). With regards to this matter, it is very crucial for the organization to address and to have a deep understanding in terms of the needs of employees in order to retain and keep them motivated (Patra & Singh, 2012). This is because employees' contribution is the key factor that brings towards organizational effectiveness and as stated by Ahmad and Spicer (2013), employees play a significant role in determining the organizational survival.

In discovering problems that relates to employees attitude, the individuals alone cannot be blamed for things to happen, it is rather more importantly to look into the factors that cause the unpleasant and find the right solutions to solve the problems. The issue that relates with employees unfavourable behaviour; organizational cynicism for instance, is currently expanding in organization. Organizational cynicism is defined as general or specific attitudes symbolized by disappointment, insecurity, hopelessness, anger and gravitating to the mistrust of institutions or person, group, ideology and social skills (Andersson, 1996). The changing environmental condition, gaps between individuals and social expectations, complexity of work life and difficulties in time management of today's workplace create tension for employees which consequently contributes to the existence of cynicism in organizations. For examples, employees who have a strong belief that organization practices lack of justice and sincerity may believe that their organization, including the top management, cannot be trusted and is incoherent in terms of their behaviours. With such problems, employees may also feel discomfort, angry, and have less respect towards their organizations.

Eventually this may lead to the presence of negative behavioural tendencies such as gossiping and giving strong critical expressions to the organization.

Although there is a sizable body of studies has identified issues relating to people becoming more cynical in a number of domains, including at work. Research acknowledges and understands cynicism effects, but we have less evidence about the development of cynicism (Enciso, Maskaly, Maskaly, Donner, & Donner, 2017). Employees believe that their opportunity is being exploited, rewards are not equally distributed (Tekin, & Bedük, 2015) and this indicates that organizational cynicism is triggered due to lack of justice in a workplace, (Tayfur et.al, (2013); Moliner, Martínez-Tur, Peiró, Ramos & Cropanzano, 2005; Thompson, Bailey, Joseph, Worley, & Williams (1999). Previous studies also have addressed the influence of organizational justice on organizational cynicism, but there is need to emphasize on which types of organizational justice (procedural, distributive and interactional) have a dominance influence on organizational cynicism (Tayfur et al., 2013).

It is also believed that employees withdrawal behavior is rampant due to the organization cultural factors, as it has potential to impact on employees' attitudes and beliefs (Khan & Rashid, 2012; Ababaneh, 2010). The culture of the public sector organization is known as less innovative oriented and focus more on the formalization practices (Fischer, Ferreira, Assmar, Baris, Berberoglu, Dalyan, Wong, Hassan, Hanke, & Boer, 2014).

LITERATURE REVIEW

Organizational Cynicism

Ferris, Arthur, Berkson, Kaplan, Harrell-Cook and Frink, (1998) refer organizational cynicism as something that is associated with employees' perceptions of self-centeredness, misuse, exploitation, partiality and nepotism at work. It is also related with a learned and defensive attitude that is directed at the organization (Abraham, 2000; Kanter & Mirvis, 1989). This can be characterized by employees feeling of injustice, frustration, disillusionment and the belief that organization has poor integrity and cannot be trusted. Eaton and Struthers (2002) in their study described cynical employees as the individuals who have given up hope and express that through anger and frustration. It is therefore risky for any organization to have employees who are cynical as they can influence the entire organization and hinder the organization to reach its goals (Barefoot et al., 1989; as cited in Nafei, 2014).

Essentially, the term of organizational cynicism as defined by Dean et al. (1998) is known as the most commonly cited in the literature and it is conceived as representing an attitude rather than an enduring trait. This is because organizational cynicism is known as a state variable which may change depending on the experience faced by employees. In addition, Dean et al. (1998) listed the three basic dimensions of organizational cynicism which are cognitive, affective and behavioural. The cognitive dimension is built on the belief of individuals that organization lacks integrity. Affective cynicism is associated with the negative feelings toward the organization, as it involves emotional reactions such as aggravation, angry, tension and anxiety. The third dimension which is behavioral refers to tendencies and mainly negative disparaging behaviour that includes sarcastic humor, criticism of the organization, negative nonverbal behaviour, cynical interpretations of organizational events and pessimistic predictions regarding the organization's future cause of action. Therefore based on Dean et al. (1998), organizational cynicism can be generally referred to as "a negative attitude toward one's employing organization, which involves a 'belief' that organization lacks of integrity and negative affect toward the organization which has tendencies to disparaging critical behaviors toward the organization that are consistent with these beliefs and affect" (p.345).

Organizational Justice and Organizational Cynicism Relationship

Generally, organizational justice is broadly known as “how the individuals or groups perceive the fairness treatment that they obtained from an organization, which is related with the reaction of their behavior to such perceptions” (Aryee, Budhwar & Chen, 2002, p. 269). This reaction involves individuals’ judgment on whether the treatment they received from employers is perceived as fair or unfair (Sjajruddin, Armanu, Sudiro & Normijati, 2013).

A number of scholars such as Colquitt (2001); Greenberg (1990) and Moorman (1991) have listed several sub-dimensions of organizational justice that are measured with three dimensions. These dimensions consist of distributive justice, which refers to the process by which outcomes such as financial rewards or promotion opportunities are allocated. Procedural justice refers to the justice perception that is associated with the process by which the allocations were made. The other listed dimension is interactional justice which refers to the fairness of the manners in which the procedures were carried out. On the other hand, Elovainio, Linna, Virtanen, Oksanen, Kivimäki, Pentti and Vahtera (2013) stated in their research that organizational justice which focuses on an individual’s perception of organizational fairness has two general factors. First, what individual perceives as being fair in organization. Second, what are the outcomes of such perception might be. In this regard, it has long been indicated that the organizational justice perception is influenced by combination of norms and rules that are associated with decision making principles (procedural justice) and organization practiced treatments (interactional justice) which people generally experienced as fair or unfair. Moreover, according to Elovainio and colleagues, organizational perception justice refers to fairness of the rules and social norms concerning distribution of resources and benefits. This also includes the process of interpersonal and distribution of benefits.

It can be generally assumed that low level of organizational justice may trigger organizational cynicism. This is because employee may feel satisfied from what they have obtained based on the effort they have contributed. In contrast, employees might feel devalued if they receive the imbalance compared with what they have given. . The imbalance in the ratio of what somebody perceives from the effort they have given and the rewards they receive may cause distress and counterproductive behaviours (Colquitt, 2008). As to overcome cynicism in a workplace, organizational justice could be a useful mechanisms to foster a general positive orientation towards achieving the aims of the organization (Myhill et al., 2013). Research also found that organizational justice was significantly related to organizational commitment and job satisfaction. It is shown that individuals who tend showing positive feeling towards distributive, procedural and interactional justice are more satisfied with their job and having a good level of organizational commitment (Elamin, 2012). On the other hand, it has been supported that Organizational justice also shown a good indicator to foster psychological wellbeing and positive affectivity (Heponiemi, Kuusio, Sinervo & Elovainio, 2011; Nadiri & Tanova, 2010).

The role of Innovative Culture

Innovative culture is generally seen as an organizational culture that embodies risk-taking, challenges, stimulating, results-oriented and enterprising work environment through which employees are encouraged to be dynamic and creative (Wallach, 1983). It can also be described as openness, creativity and responsiveness to new ideas and risk taking (Brettel & Cleven, 2011).

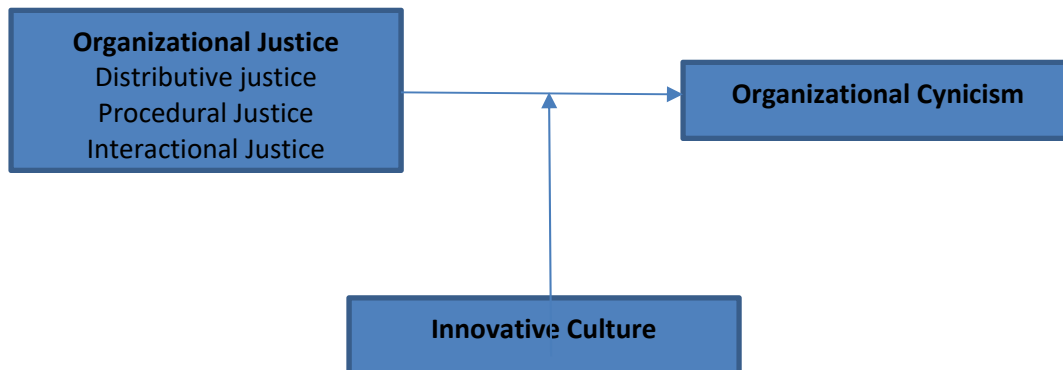
Additionally, the innovation oriented culture also related with the aims to be innovative together with the creation of supportive climate towards innovation (Dobni, 2008; Lægreid, Roness & Verhoest, 2011), where the important aspect of innovation is focusing on the implementation and development of better services, and work processes and procedures (Hun & Lien, 2005).

innovative culture is crucial to support change and improving quality (Bass & Avolio, 1990). Creativity and risk taking are believed to be a primary value of the innovative culture that are taking into account towards the competition survival (Ertkutlu, 2012).

Additionally, a research conducted by Watts, Robertson, and Winter (2013) found that innovative organizational culture is positively correlated with personal accomplishments. It is also said that innovative culture reflects the employees' attitude, which it may contribute a link between effective practices and high quality productivity (Cramm, Srating, Bal & Nieboer, 2013). In this regard, employees may experience a greater sense of satisfaction in their roles by having more dynamic and innovative workplace. Therefore, in this study context, the role of innovative culture is relevant to undergo for a further research, as it could potentially hinder hostile, monotony, suspicious and disparaging attitudes toward work situations and social interactions (Kaya, N., Ergün & Kesen, 2014).

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Figure 1: Proposed Conceptual Framework



A research framework is proposed after an extensive literature review as discussed previously. The linkages shown in the framework in figure 1 are grounded in the literature. Organizational justice may act as a source of motivation, and allows the employees to trust and respect their organization even during unstable situations (Manaf, Latif & Ali, 2014; Brockner & Wiesenfeld, 1996). Furthermore, organizations that pay attention to the importance of fairness could reduce the level of organizational cynicism among the employees. In addition, the role innovative culture as a moderating variable is highlighted. It is because any critical issues and challenges that affect the public organizations require employees who are more innovative to shape the future of their organizations in becoming more open and dynamic (Public Service Department of Malaysia, 2015). Hence, creating an innovative culture in the organization could be one of the effective ways that enables employees to have a greater chance of involvement and efficiency, especially when the organizational culture matches and meets their current needs and motivation. On the contrary, if there is any mismatch and unsuitable culture to meet the current needs and environment, employees may not be able to accomplish their job tasks productively, as they may feel like not having 'a sense of belonging'. This would result in confusion, frustration, less morale and ineffectiveness at work (Hon & Leung, 2011).

CONCLUSION

This study could be useful as a guidance for public sector organizations top management, and policy makers to overcome issues that are associated with organizational cynicism among the employees. In the mean time, the investigation of organizational cynicism, organizational justice, and innovative culture could also support the Government initiative to produce highly committed employees, in order to better serve the organizations and the communities that deal with public organizations .

Therefore, in this paper, we attempt to posit a framework to explain possible relationships on the focused variables. This is an issue that future research should focus in determining the relationship between the variables. In fact, this paper aims in striving for the direction at this stage of research. With this temporary conclusion, it can be properly described as what Runkel and Runkel (1984) called "Interim struggles" .

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