

Dealing With Organizational Transformation: A study on role of Fairness and Emotional – Social Intelligence

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Abstract

Based on Weiss and Cropanzano's (1996) Affective Events Theory, the present study proposed a model to examine the mediating role of Emotional & Social intelligence on the relationship between Organizational Change and Organizational Justice perception. The proposed conceptual model explains how resistance to Organizational Change is related to Organizational justice perception and to what extent this relationship is mediated by Emotion - Social Intelligence. This study contributes to the understanding of the role of emotion intelligence in an organizational change situation and shows the importance of employees' justice perception on their responses in a change initiative.

Keywords: Organizational Justice, Emotion Regulation Strategies, Resistance to Change, Affective Events Theory

Introduction

In today's world, there is a mounting need to apply changes on a steady basis (Kalleberg, 2009; Cummings & Worley, 2009). These changes are required because of rapid developments in the environment such as escalating globalization, emergence of innovative technologies. Especially in times of an economic downfall, organizations are forced to amend their plan, policies, culture and internal processes (Cummings & Worley, 2009). Bernerth, et al. (2007) studied the reasons of organizational change. According to them, there are various reasons for a change in organizations which guides how organizations can react to these set of reasons or just be aware of them and plan ahead accordingly. The following reasons about organizational change are found in various studies: responding to crisis, meeting performance gaps, introduction of new technology, identification of new opportunities, and reaction to internal or external pressure, mergers and acquisitions and planned abandonment. Because change has become so pervasive and rapid in organizations, it is becoming increasingly important for managers to understand the individual, group level and organizational level dynamics of change.

No matter what causes a change to take place, it always requires some level of demands and pressures on the social variables involved in the change process. People generally have the tendency to avoid change, as adjusting to new conditions mostly requires some adjustments, losses and unlearning of dearly learned skills (Beerel, 2009). However, in the current environment, change is something which cannot be avoided. Therefore, it is extremely

important for managers to hire and maintain a workforce which is ready and proactive towards change.

Regardless of the fact that the organizations make immense efforts for implementation of change, many change initiatives turn out to be big disappointment. Balogun and Hope-Hailey (Balogun, J., & Hailey, 2008) report a failure rate of approximately 70 per cent of change situations. This indicates the need to study the reason of such failure. According to Foster (2010), the first thing to ensure in a change management procedure is adequate motivation in the employees. Whenever people encounter change, resistance is one of the most natural reactions and complacency can easily create pitfalls for an otherwise precise change initiative. When change is viewed from the perspective of employee resistance, it is found as the primary reason of failure or improper execution of a change initiative. As the resistance of an employee has significant consequences for the management and employees' involvement plays a considerable part in the accomplishment of change in an organization, the engagement of the employees during organizational change program is considered an extremely significant factor (Avey, et al., 2008).

In such circumstances, where change is unavoidable and managers must ensure an engaged workforce, it is essential to identify and explore such conditions, individual traits and employee behaviors which render a person to show greater acceptance to change initiatives. Managers need a workforce which facilitates the change processes, rather than creating a hindrance in them. Therefore, this study explores the relationship of an important individual trait, i.e. perception about organizational change with resistance towards organizational change directly and indirectly through the effect of emotional social intelligence. Emotional intelligence and psychological capital are both important individual level variables and have been studied in various organizational contexts. However, their relationship with resistance to change through a mediation model has not been tested before. This makes this study unique and innovative which makes a significant contribution to theory and knowledge.

Rationale of the study

The main **objective** of the study was to understand the relationship between resistance to change, perceived organizational justice and employees' emotional – social intelligence quotient. Further, the study aimed at proposing a model to explain the mediation effect of Emotional – Social Intelligence on the relationship between resistance to organizational change and organizational justice perceptions.

Review of Literature

“Change can be defined as a phenomenon in which the new state of things is different from the old state of things” (French & Bell, 1999). According to Williams (1969) “change is a modification of the existing relationships, but it is a change in the status quo”. Bridges (1986) states that change starts when something begins or ends, or when there is something that was occurring in the way begins to happen in another way or style, and this is happening at a specific time or in stages at different times.

As stated by Cummings & Worley (1993), organizational change begins from a divergence with the surroundings and is provoked by the discrepancies between the business's

aim and recent outcomes. This organizational change is equally vital for managers in relation to efficient execution and for workers in relation to engagement and acceptance.

Change sometimes involves complete organizational modification or in the systems and quality of work done by the employees. It is common knowledge that it is not an easy job to manage change as it involves a number of facets to deal with. Most of the organizations are familiar with the complications involved in implementing changes in the system or procedure of organization.

In the opinion of French & Bell (1999), the requirement for modification may begin from numerous different sources that may be both from outside and inside the firm. Some external forces may include regulators, customers, technology and competitors while internal forces may include outdated products and services, opportunities provided in a new market, new strategic policies and diversified personnel. Lippitt, et al. (1958) concluded that decision of change may be made either by firm itself after facing problems or inventing better opportunities for a bright future or by a change that results from outside agent that takes an initiative to change the current system.

Resistance of Change

The literature on organizational change has primarily focused on organization based issues, while human based issues are often neglected. Most of the models of change focus on problem solving, but emotional impact is usually under-estimated (Saruhan, 2013). As the organizational change is strongly connected to how people in the organization react about it, some researchers have taken the initiative to investigate the emotional issues involved (Vakola, et al., 2004). O'Neill & Lenn (1995) interviewed leaders and concluded that anyone who is involved in change displays different types of emotions and in varying intensity (e.g. anxiety, stress, resignation and suspicion).

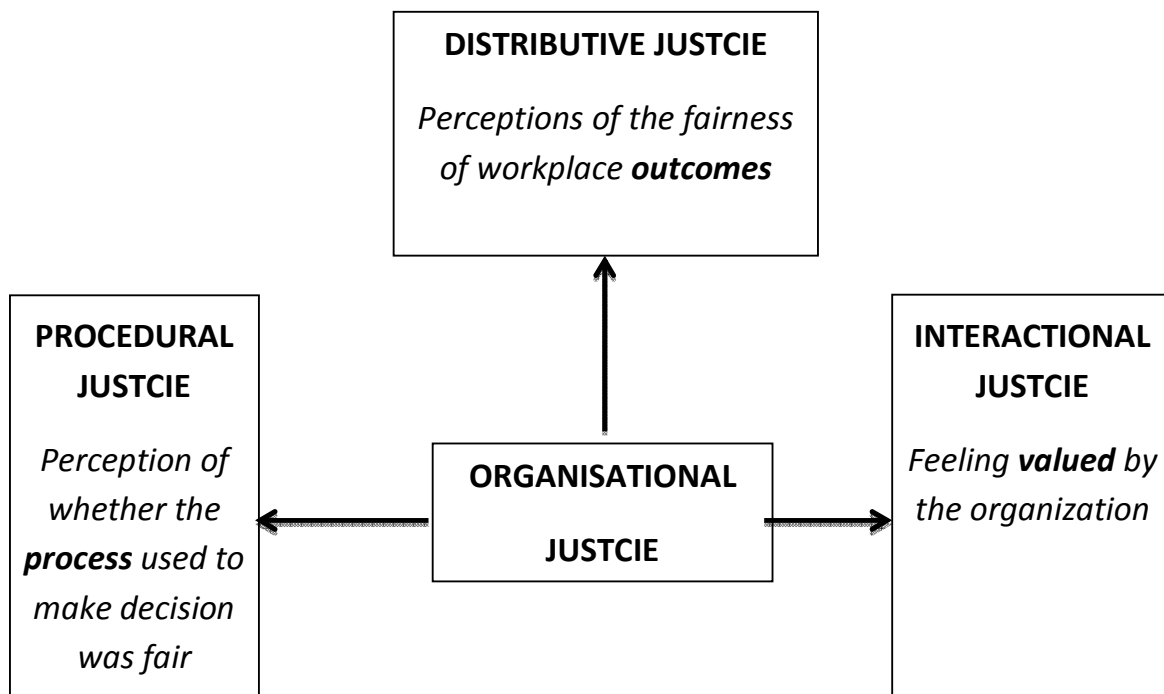
On the other hand, resistance is the resultant employee's reaction of opposition to organizational change (Keen, 1981). The degree of resistance of an employee may vary from lack of concern, or perhaps a negative view and outlook, and strong contrary views, to violent strikes, boycotts and bad behavior. Oreg (2003) proposed that for taking on new ways of working, participation provides employees with the essential motivation.

Managers should be well aware that the employees require learning of new skills, tasks and programs when they view the change as difficult. Piderit (2000) classifies resistance into three major dimensions. In the first aspect, he worked on the definitions that consider resistance as behavior. In view of Williams (1969), resistance is "a behavior which protects an individual from the change". Del Val & Fuentes (2003) considered resistance as an employee behavior that looks for challenges, interrupts the existing assumptions, discourses, and power relations". Like this proposition, Ashforth & Mael (1998, p.30) describe resistance as "intentional acts of commission (deviance) or omission". In the second aspect, Piderit (2000) considers emotional issues as a basis of resistance. Carnall (1990) describes that resistance is a reaction of disappointment which is originated by initiative of change. In the third aspect, resistance is seen as cognition, which refers to beliefs and attitudes.

Organizational Justice

Organizational Justice is a key concern for all employees at workplace. Concerns about fairness in organization exist in different aspects of employees' work life. Employees are concerned about the fairness in distribution of resources like rewards, pay, and so on. This is called **Distributive Justice** (Homans, 1901; Adams, 1963; Deutsch, 1975; Leventhal, 1976). Employees are also concerned about fairness in decision making process. This is termed as **Procedural Justice** (Thibaut and Walker, 1975; Leventhal, 1980). Finally employees also pay attention to fairness in interpersonal treatment. This is known as **Interactional Justice** (Bies and Moag, 1986; Greenberg, 1993). Collectively Distributive Justice, Procedural Justice and Interactional Justice are known as **Organizational Justice**.

The term Organizational Justice was first coined by Greenberg (1987b). Organizational Justice refers to people's perception about organization's fairness and its reactions towards such perception. Unfair treatment not only decreases job performance but also reduces quality of work and degree of cooperation among workers (Fatimah, Amiraa and Halim, 2011).



Dimensions of Organizational Justice(18)

Emotional Social Intelligence

Emotional and Social Intelligence refers to the competencies linked to self-awareness, self-management, social awareness and relationship management, which enable people to understand and manage their own and others' emotions in social interactions. The study of ESI came out of research on multiple intelligences, personality studies, psychology of emotion and neuroscience.

According to Huy (1999), the success or failure of a change program depends upon the emotional dynamics. He states that emotional dynamics refer to the emotional states suggested or expressed by the organizational behavior. The extent of

emotional capability in an organization and the possibility of grasping fundamental change are determined by the extent of organization's ability to execute such emotional dynamics. In general, these 'emotional dynamics' reflect the attitude of an 'emotional intelligent' individual.

Emotional intelligence (EI) is a combination of two words, i.e. one is 'emotion' and the other is 'intelligence'. Mayer, et al. (2000) referred to "emotions as feelings that a person possesses while intelligence as the ability to reason with something. Hence, they described EI as the capacity to reason with emotions and emotional signals, and the capacity of emotions to enhance thought. EI involves the ability to understand emotions in one-self and others, related to peers and family members, and adapt emotionally to changing environment concerns and demands".

Davies, et al. (1998) presented the view that EI should not be considered as a human ability unless such relatedness can be empirically defined. Bar-On (1997, p.16) defines a non-cognitive model of EI as "an array of non-cognitive capabilities, competencies and skills that influence one's ability to succeed in coping with environmental demands and pressures". Salovey and Mayer's (1990) definition of EI is most widely accepted, however that does not assume that EI has only one working definition (Zeidner, et al., 2004). "Emotional = intelligence is different from general intelligence, it is the intelligence applied to the life domain of emotions. There is an individual difference and EI can be developed throughout a person's life, training can enhance the development. EI involves particular abilities to reason intelligently about emotions; those who have mastered it can identify, perceive, understand and manage emotions in themselves and others" (Palmer et al., 2006).

As reiterated by Mayer et al. (2000) concepts like EI need to fulfill a certain criteria in order to be deliberated as true intelligence:

- Conceptual, meaning this intelligence can be described as a set of abilities.
- Correlation, meaning that the measures correlate with other measures which reflect similar skills and abilities
- Developmental, meaning that it develops with age and experience

Bradberry and Greaves (2005) stated that "EI consists of four dimensions, which are self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, and relationship management, where each dimension represents different abilities associated with emotions. However, there are two types of EI proposed by Petrides & Furnham (2000) which are ability EI and trait EI.

Ability EI and trait EI are two different theories measuring different EI aspects of a person by using different instrumentations. Also the procedures used in their operational definition are fundamentally different. They are different in measuring approaches even though their theoretical domains might overlap".

It is generally understood that numerous benefits can be reaped from the incorporation of EI in companies, or so the research dictates. Elevating problems from job stress to team compatibility, organizational control to individual commitment, personality development to organization progression, EI measures have started to crop up everywhere (Vakola et al., 2004; Tonder, 2004; Zeidner et al., 2004).

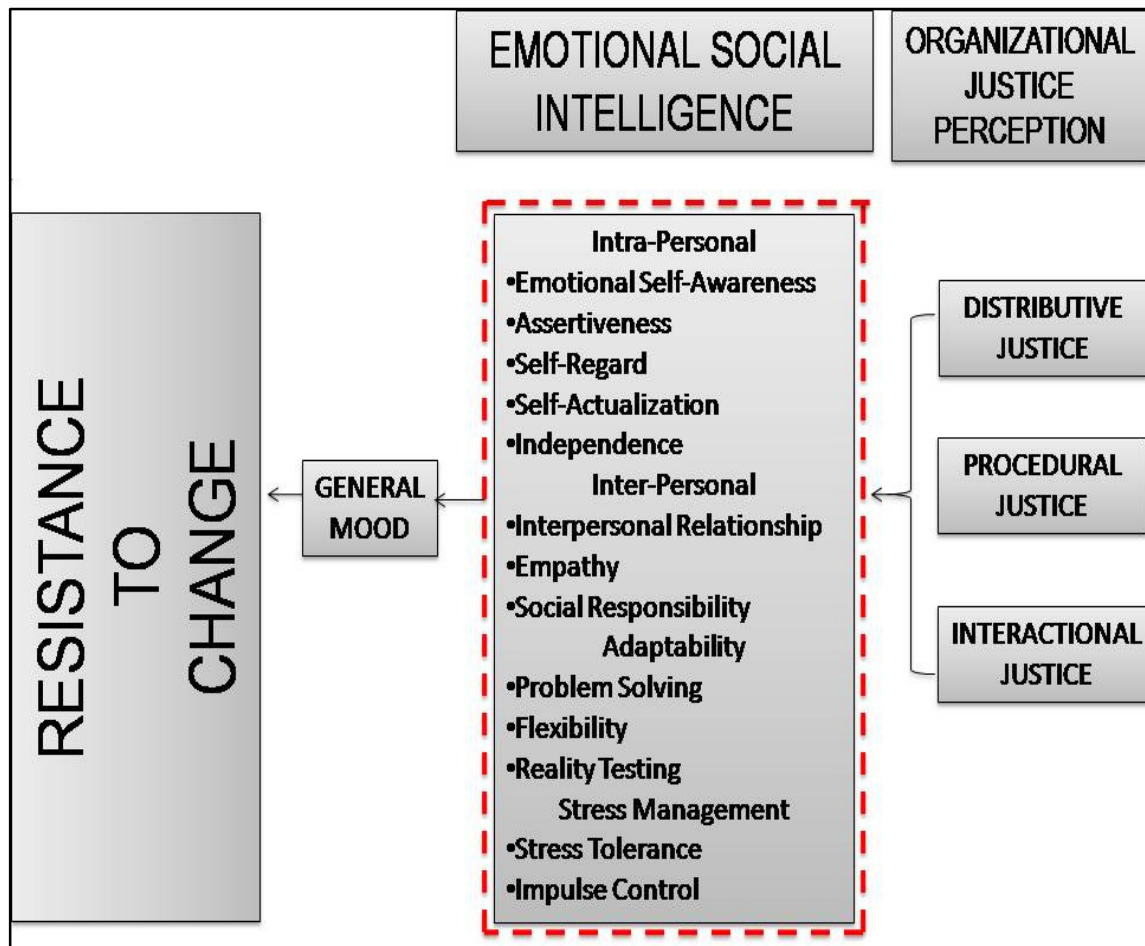
A study by Wong & Law (2002) in the food service industry showed a positive relationship between ability EI and job satisfaction. Weisinger (2000) points out the consequences that lack of EI can have in a work environment. If emotions are allowed to be unexpressed and the system of award/punishment is highly defective, it gives an outlet for people to manage their emotions and consequently, that decreases work efficiency and threatens a company's success.

Emotional intelligence can become a contributor to foster team engagement and individual development. This will provide an opportunity to enhance the organizational culture and environment to become proactive towards the problems of change (Saruhan, 2013). Vakola and Nikolaou (2006) suggested that "emotional intelligence can help individuals learn to cope with occupational stress and to control strong emotions". Since coping is also considered as a stabilizing factor, Tonder (2004) suggest that emotional intelligence is extremely important to facilitate the acceptance of organizational change. Emotional intelligence also enhances a person's ability to enhance his skills and also to become more competent in certain job-related emotional and social skills, which can in turn lead to result improved performance at work (Zeidner et al., 2004).

Research Methodology

Present study tries to establish relationship between Resistance to Organizational Change and Organizational Justice perceptions, by proposing a model. The model also tries to explain the mediation effect of Emotional – Social Intelligence on the relationship between resistance to organizational change and organizational justice perceptions. These relationships are explained by Affective Events Theory (AET) of Weiss and Cropanzano.

Based on above mentioned review of literature and logical translation to an organizational change situation, the following Model is proposed:



Proposed Model: A & S Model

Resistance to Change and Organizational Justice Perceptions: Affective Events Theory

In most of the situations of organizational change, the prime concern of employees emerge due to perception of organizational justice (Kiefer, 2005), which in turn causes resistance to change (Rodell & Colquitt, 2009). By implementing a change in any organization, employees are taken out of their comfort zone as they need to do lot of adjustments according to the changed situation.

Resistance to change is a concept that has been widely researched, and is typically seen as a reason for Organizational failure (2006). However, resistance to change is more complex than most studies specifies. According to Piderit (2000), responses to organizational change are structured along three dimensions, **emotional, cognitive, and behavioural**. All these dimensions are interdependent (Oreg, 2006) because how an individual feel about the change will relate with what they think. Oreg (2006) found support for the three dimensional attitude towards change, which proves that resistance cannot be treated as a single dimension concept. Therefore, this study adopts the tridimensional conceptualization whereby resistance to change consists of emotional, cognitive, and behavioural components.

Relation between justice perceptions and resistance to change can be explained by Affective Events Theory (AET) of Weiss and Cropanzano (Weiss, & Cropanzano, 1999). AET defines that specific event at work causes specific emotions, which in turn leads to impulsive, affectively driven behaviours. In earlier research regarding AET, individual fairness perceptions were distinguished as an affective event (Rupp & Spencer, 2006). In this research, justice perceptions of employees are also viewed as an affective event. Emotional Social Intelligence of employees is seen as the emotional reaction caused due to affective event. Eventually, following the model, people will pass into affectively driven behaviours, such as resistance to change.

The relationship between organizational justice perceptions and resistance to change has been broadly deliberated. Most of the employees' concern for organizational change arises due to organizational justice perception, thus justice is treated as one of the most important predictors of resistance to change (Krikman, Shapiro, Novelli, & Brett, 1996; Kiefer, 2005; Folger & Skarlicki, 1999). Organizational justice refers to the conditions of the employment relationship that lead employees to believe they are treated fairly or unfairly, and whether those beliefs influence other work-related outcomes (Moorman, 1991).

In general, past research pointed that negative reactions of employees are caused when an event is perceived as unfair (Greenberg, 1994; Cropanzano & Folger, 1989). Distributive justice refers to the perceived fairness of the outcomes or allocations that an individual receives (Leventhal, 1977). Distributive justice can be of concern in an organizational change, because resources are potentially redistributed (Oreg & Van Dam, 2009). In the literature the specific relationship between distributive justice and resistance to change has not been investigated yet, however several studies did observe a negative relationship between distributive justice in an organizational change and turnover intentions (Alexander & Ruderman, 1987; Daly & Geyer, 1994). In this case turnover intentions are compared with resistance to a change, since it is argued that turnover is a primary indicator of resistance to change (Daly & Geyer, 1994), implying the importance of fair outcomes.

Procedural justice refers to the employees' perception of fairness in procedures (Rodell & Colquitt, 2009). Procedural justice has gained a lot of interest in the organizational change literature. Procedure for implementation of change is of immense importance to employees (Oreg & Van Dam, 2009). A study by Cropanzano and Folger (1989) revealed that when procedures are perceived as unfair, individuals are more likely to show a defensive response. Moreover, Brockner and Siegel (1996) found that perceived procedural justice can moderate the relationship between counterproductive work behaviour and organizational change. Van Dam, Oreg and Schyns (2008) established that additional information and the chance for participation will result in less resistance to change. This reflects the significance of procedural justice in preventing resistance to change.

Interactional justice was introduced as a third type of fairness and refers to the perceptions of employees about the quality of the interpersonal treatment in the enactment of formal procedures (Bies & Shapiro, 1987). According to Folger and Cropanzano (1998), interactional justice consists of two components, interpersonal sensitivity and explanations. Interpersonal sensitivity relates to the idea that a fair treatment should be truthful, polite, respectful and proper, and explanations provide employees with a rationale, it tells them why something is happening. The way people are treated interpersonally and the provision of an explanation

for the change, is considered to account for a substantial proportion of the perceived justice (Mikula, Petrik&Tanzer, 1990). As mentioned earlier in the study of Van Dam et al.(2008) was found that employees who received more information, which in this study is assumed to account for better explanation, reported less resistance to change. Other studies who investigated employees' reactions on interactional justice found that higher interactional justice perceptions increased the acceptance of a change, such as a smoking ban (Greenberg, 1994; Rodell& Colquitt, 2009). Interestingly, when an adequate justification is provided, employees appear to be much more tolerant of an outcome even if it is unfavourable for them (Bies& Shapiro, 1988). This implies that in an organizational change, employees should be treated in the right way and that a clear understandable explanation is crucial, since this makes individuals more understanding even when the outcomes are unfavourable for them. Thus, there is strong evidence suggesting that perceptions of justice appear to have a major role in the generation of recipients' reactions to organizational change. Employees tend to be more open to the change when they perceive the outcomes and procedures of the change and interpersonal treatment during the change as just.

Emotional - Social Intelligence as Mediator

On the basis of AET (Weiss & Cropanzano, 1996), it is proposed that emotions will mediate the link between the affective event, perceptions of justice, and the affective driven behaviour- resistance to change. Particularly, employee's perceptions of distributive injustice and interactional injustice will result in emotion regulation which will effect resistance to change. Further, several researches provide empirical support for this indirect relationship. A research conducted by Schoefer and Diamantopoulos (2008b), revealed that emotions are a mediator in the relationship between perceived justice and subsequent behavior. Chebat and Slusarczyk (2005) discussed that emotions mediated the relationship between perceived justice of customers and their loyalty. (Gordijn, Yzerbyt, Wigboldus and Dumont (2006), found that emotional reactions mediated the emotional relationship between evaluation of the situation and action tendencies. Based on the AET model and other researches, an indirect relation is likely to occur between emotion regulations strategies as mediator.

Managerial Implications

This study have theoretical and practical implication, the role of emotion regulation in the area of organizational change is still in its early phase. Providentially, in recent research, more awareness has arisen of the impact of emotions on the progression of a change process (Smollan& Sayers, 2009; Fugate, Harrison, & Kinicki, 2011). Proposed model can be tested in an organizational change situation. Moreover it might be interesting to investigate the role personality characteristics play in the prediction of emotion regulation strategies. Based on Affective Events Theory (AET), it can be analyzed which other affective events may regulate emotion and what other specific behaviour this might result. Examining additional outcomes, such as performance, organizational citizenship behaviour or turnover would extend the contributions of current study. In addition, with the aim to steer emotions of employees in the right direction, for managerial purposes it would be very interesting to investigate the influence of specific actions taken in the change process on emotion regulation.

This study will help in improving employees' justice appraisals in organizational change situations. Given the fact that 70 percent of all change initiatives end up in failure (Balogun & Hope-Hailey, 2008), there is significant scope for convalescing the effectiveness of change processes. This study indicates that, fair outcomes, timely and clear explanations and treating employees with respect contribute to the use of the adaptive emotion regulation strategy, reappraisal, by employees during the change process. In turn reappraisal contributes to lower levels of resistance to change. Therefore, to improve the effectiveness of a change initiative, it is important for managers to be aware of the influence their decisions and actions have on employees' perceptions of justice.

Conclusion

Organizational changes are essential for existence of organizations in today's competitive era. Environment is so dynamic that nothing is permanent but change. However, the emotional suffering of employees with respect to organizational changes is often ignored. It is not wrong to say that it is only employees of the organization who are responsible for the success of the organizational change. Employees, who have an aversion to the change or consider it to be unfair, will have pessimistic opinion, which can further result in resistance to change. Being sensitive to the feelings of employees prevents resistance and therefore can have a major effect on the success of the change. More consideration for the employees' emotions in organizational change situations can give effective results. Employees' perception about fairness in change process can improve the effectiveness of change initiative.

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