The Organizational Justice and Privacy Policy Strategies on Information Platform - A Case Study from a Campus Intern Media

Chia Sung YEN

Department of Cultural and Creative Industries (Master Program), National Chin-Yi University of Technology, Taiwan.

Email: jsn1003@gmail.com.

Abstract. The purpose of this study is to identify the justice strategies that power the intern-media organization. It reviewed the literature of intern education and digital multi-media platform to organize the questions of in-depth interview as well as getting the information by making an in-depth interview. Organizational justice and privacy policy may affect all the report quality. News organizations are facing so less time that they cannot make justice strategies very well. Thus, this study found the ways to make it fair in news organizations.

Keywords: Organizational justice, privacy policies, human resource management, organization behavior, intern education, news information platform.

INTRODUCTION

According to many studies, a fair organization system is helpful for the interaction and resource sharing among the members, enhancing cohesion and efficiency at the same time. Media is an industry which races against time. So, if the media employees can't finish their work in time, the employer will have to face a large amount of loss. In the decades, technology have changed the outlook of media job, especially when Information Communication Technologies (ICTs) are widely used among media. For example, digital news platform claimed to be instrumental in communication, and indicates that the employees have more work to do in the same hours than it was.

Presses are time-conscious organizations, but they have to face the difficulty of resource distribution. The main purpose of this study is to examine organizational justice in presses. Because presses are so different from other organizations, and there must be some kinds of important elements composing their organizational justice.

In the procedure of news gathering, reporters always have to face the uncertainty of those events. If presses emphasize too much on the equity of distribution, it is possible that they may miss the deadline, or even lose the news. So presses seem to need another kind of evaluation to appraise their organizational justice. This study would focus on the campus media, trying to find out about how students perform in campus media when they face the assignments of news gathering, and what strategies to do justice in this media could affect students' self-efficacy.

Literature review

Organizational justice referred to the extent to which people perceive organizational events as being fair (Kim, 2007). In organizations, justice was thought to be related

to the antecedents and consequences of the procedures used to determine outcomes and the fairness of outcome allocations (Folger & Cropanzano, 1998). It is widely regarded that organizational justice takes three major forms: distributive justice, procedural justice, and interactional justice.

A. Distributive justice: It was considered to be the first justice dimension and referred to employee perceptions of specific outcomes (Greenberg, 2005). For example, the perceived fairness of decision outcomes such as pay (Kim, 2007). Distributive justice was promoted by following appropriate norms (e.g., equity, equality, or need) to allocate resources（Greenberg, 2003). It was more than a ranking system, for example, an individual's economic or social compensation for their work contributions, but rather it attempted to precisely quantify the relative equity of the comparison (Casas *et al.*, 2007).

B. Procedural justice: It referred to employee perceptions of whether the process used to make the decision was fair itself (Cole & Latham, 1997). Procedural justice was fostered by the use of certain procedural rules such as granting voice in the decision-making processes (i.e., process control) and making decisions in a consistent, accurate, and correctable manner which suppresses bias (Leventhal, 1980; Thibaut and Walker, 1975). Unlike distributive justice perceptions that focused on outcomes, the perspective of procedural justice was on the perceived fairness of the processes used to render decision (Casas *et al.*, 2007). As part of Thibaut and Walker's (1975), procedural justice theory and procedural justice perceptions arising from work was thought to be fundamental to personnel research and practice (Cropanzano *et al.*, 2001). Folger and Greenberg (1985） believed that procedural justice was best understood and studied from within an organizational context.

C. Interactional justice: It referred to employee perceptions of whether organizational agents implement procedures fairly by treating individuals respectfully and by explaining decisions adequately (Folger and Cropanzano, 1998). That is, the perceived fairness of how decisions are made by authority figures (Kim, 2007). Interactional justice had an interpersonal component, fostered by dignified and respectful treatment, and an informational component, fostered by adequate and honest explanations (Kim, 2007; Bies, 2001; Bies & Moag, 1986).

Mayer *et al.*, (2008) suggested that people were concerned about justice because it helped to satisfy their needs. There were study that found that organizational justice was positively related to job satisfaction.

Another dimension of organizational justice study was to focus on the relationship between justice and product efficiency. Many studies had found that positive organiza-

tional justice could improve internal communication, thus optimizing organizational performance (Konovsky, 2000). Justice was the reflection of contemporary society and the right way towards improving organizational efficiency (Greenberg, 1990). Justice was the purpose itself and guidance for other operations (Beugre, 1996). Justice is important to both organizations and employees (Poole, 2008). As a result, justice is an important factor in an organization due to its impact on work effectiveness (Sheppard *et al.*, 1992). In addition, justice was a social phenomenon which will not only affect the social life of employees but their professional activities (Beugre, 1998).

Many studies had proved that crews' perception of justice could improve their work attitude and behaviors (Skarlicki & Folger, 1999; Moorman & Neihoff, 1998; Farh *et al.*, 1997; Skarlicki & Folger, 1997; Barling and Phillips, 1993; Moorman, 1991). In campus, most studies of organizational justice were emphasized on teachers and students. Robbins and Jeffords (2009) indicated that students major in management education were long concerned about the fairness of procedures used, as well as the outcomes and treatment they received in the classroom (Robbins & Jeffords, 2009). McDonald (2005), found that school teachers could have better performance when they have fair opportunities to learn. Geist and Hoy (2003), suggested that teacher's trust towards the organization provided various advantages such as encouraging cooperation, reducing conflict and dissatisfaction, and building teachers' self-confidence.

Guy (2007) proposed that school leaders might influence students' achievement through the governance structure established within the school, supervision and support from the instructional program, thus creating a positive school climate that defined the school's mission. A significant positive relationship was found between organizational justice and academic press. Robbins and Jeffords (2009) indicated that procedural justice was the only prominent predictor of overall course evaluations in the research of classroom justice and management education (Robbins & Jeffords, 2009).

When employees felt unfairly treated, it would have a negative effect on their organizational commitment, job performance and employee satisfaction, thus reducing their willingness to assist their coworkers (Ambrose, 2002). Moreover, they might engage in deviant behaviors like sabotage in the workplace (Ambrose *et al.*, 2002). However, there were many studies (Coleman, 1990; Hart & Daniels, 1989) which explored the fairness of education, and these studies aimed at how to make education resources distributed fairly, but the points of view were seldom from intern education units.

Many of the studies pointed out that the contents that journalists reported on newspaper could damage the privacy of people, since such studies seldom focus on the

privacy of journalists. As a matter of fact, journalists' privacy could also be an important factor that from the above overview, we may find that current research on organizational justice focuses on whether "justice" can boost members' morale in an organization or not. Still, news media is defined as "a typical organization". It diverges from typical organizations for its constant facing of "crisis-tackling". This paper, as a result, selects campus media, which simulates media framework in Taiwan, as subjects, and aims to examine following research questions:

(1) Whether the overall work efficiency will be lower or not if the soundness of organizational justice is taken into account?

(2) Whether student media workers' self-efficacy will decline or not if organizational justice is taken into account?

(3) Whether digital information platform can elevate student media workers' achievements as well as their consciousness of organizational justice or not?

(4) What privacy aspect is the most important in student media workers' mind?

METHODOLOGY

The subject of this research is a group of juniors in department of communication at a national university in Taiwan. These students took a media practice course, which divided them into different groups according to the current framework in media industry within Taiwan, including editors-in-chief, associate editors, editors, interview directors and reporters. Students performed their interview and writing works, and presented news story in form of text, and published online on a weekly basis. So far, there are 54 people in that campus media group, from which 40 people took a part in the real news production, 14 are indoor office workers responsible for such works as website maintenance, visual arts design of web pages, broadcasting and so on.

In this course, each student had to hand in a work report as feedback. To serve as a reference for the instructor to adjust teaching, the work report may include difficulties they encountered while doing interview, interaction problems between reporters and cadre members and so forth.

The design methodology for this study includes both content analysis and depth (in-depth) interview. First, students that took this course had to compose a work report every week, on which researcher would later employ the content analysis. The researcher had collectively read 355 work reports from past 7 weeks (yet some students fail to submit it on time) and then identified the problems about organizational justice in campus

media from the bunch. The interview outline of this study will be presented after fixing the above mentioned problems.

There are 7 objects, including 1 editor-in-chief, 2 interview directors and 4 reporters, involved in this in-depth interview, and they are randomly selected by category. The student reporters of the campus media are divided into four branches which covers political, social, life, sport and recreation issues. Each branch contains 6 to 8 reporters, from which the researcher randomly chooses 1 reporter. Furthermore, each of 2 interview directors within 4 branches, are selected in accordance with the principle of proportionality. To understand the administrative aspects, either the editor-in-chief or the associate editor has to participate in the interview.

Therefore, the total number of interviewees in this in-depth interview is 7. The idea of this interview is mainly about organizational justice and organizational management, and it takes approximately 30 minutes. To prevent the interviewees from feeling stressed or disturbed by other external elements, the interview takes place in the researcher's laboratory and they won't be informed of the research topic and orientation in advance. Throughout the interview, the researcher can figure out whether the website background system of this campus media is applicable for editing, interview and communication.

Aiming to avoid meaning distortions due to the transcript of the interview, the interview record is first transcribed by a student and a teacher who are familiar with the course. Next, the third person helps guarantee that there is no difference between the interview record and the transcript. While interviewing, the researcher has strived to record interviewees' every eye contact and body language to avoid errors.

RESULTS AND FINDINGS

This research contains 355 work reports from students and 54 of which have mentioned about the equity and justice concerning the operation of campus media. The average number of words regarding equity and justice is 255, approximately one-third, in every work report. After finishing analyzing the content of students' work reports, the researcher then proceeds to conduct in-depth interviews with 3 cadre members (naming A, B, C) and 4 reporters (naming D, E, F, G). The research results are as follows:

A. Even though the reporters think highly of equity and justice in campus media, the fact that the reporters are classmates with cadre members limits them from behaving bureaucratically, thus causing difficulties in administration. Moreover, the equity issue will be emphasized more often.

…Equity is a highly subjective notion. Regardless of being fair or not, people would complain about the cadre members anyway. In my opinion, we might as well make sure that everyone has the chance to be a cadre member, so they would have nothing to complain about. (Work report No. 38)

…The equity issue doesn't affect me much. We should do whatever needs to be done with consistent attitude despite of the system. Besides, absolute equity is hard to achieve and the most important thing for me is to adjust myself. (Work report No. 202)

Some cadre members don't think that job assignment should be totally based on the organizational justice in order to operate the student media.

…What's on the surface must be the rule. But under the table, I can put up with a little violation such as giving someone a favor, that's fine with me. (Interviewee C)

The cadre member can be a nodding acquaintance or a close confidant with the reporter. If justice is all we think about, not only will we fail to improve the communication but influence the friendship.

…If the reporter only visits when something bad happens, I will get a little upset about that. (Interviewee C)

Sometimes when the cadre members of the campus media are working, they have to consider about their relationship with others. That's why they may give the job to those they are close with.

…The stuff art editor is working right now should have been assigned to the production team. But I will ask the engineer to do it because of our personal friendship. I want to find someone I can trust so that my work can be done sooner. (Interviewee A)

In this research cadre members and reporters are taking the job in rotation, so reporters will be able to show their understanding and consideration for the cadre member's decisions even if something unfair may happen.

…I respect cadre members' clues, because I know it's a tough job to be a cadre member and I don't want to make things difficult for them…. Although we may see things from different perspectives, I still respect their opinions. (Interviewee D)

Some interviewees believe that in emergencies, flaws in justice are accepted in order to save time and meet the deadline, though cadre members should provide explanations for the event afterwards to avoid distrust among students.

…they should explain their considerations afterwards, not everyone was there after all. But it's not necessary to gather all the students to take a vote on this issue, I can accept it! (Interviewee D)

The findings of the interviews show that considering organizational justice will indeed reduce the student media's work effectiveness and the overall operational efficiency.

B. Whether the overall work efficiency will be lower or not? If the soundness of organizational justice is taken into account? According to the interviews, a student's attitude toward curriculum, instead of the organizational justice, turns out to be the main factor in determining one's learning efficacy.

…I would regard justice as the minimum standard for reporters. But if you are asking better performance, you have to encourage them according to their individual differences. (Interviewee B)

Some cadre members think that some injustices are systematically inevitable. Diligent students will try their best to overcome injustices, while students escaping their lessons are the major complainer of the flaws in justice.

…I think responsible people will always do things as perfectly as possible, while those reluctant to make efforts will merely criticize when their rights are violated. (Interviewee A)

…within a fairer system, irresponsible people will become much more irresponsible. Now that everyone, superior or inferior, is treated the same, why should I perform better? If a fairer system actually exists, then people may be content with the status quo and refuse to make progress. (Interviewee E)

C. Whether digital information platform can elevate student media workers' achievements as well as their consciousness of organizational justice or not? The result of interviews shows that students think the digital platform lacks the immediacy badly, which is why the platform fails to help improve students' perception of organizational justice.

…I think the system lacks the immediacy. Users off-line may not see the reporter's response at once, so they still need to be informed by phone calls. It seems that the platform does not work as effectively as expected. Not everyone will pay attention to it. For those who don't bother to read the posts, how could they receive the new information? (Interviewee G)

…my requests posted on the platform for further corrections are often ignored. I have no idea if it is the reporter's fault, but errors will be corrected immediately if I orally ask the reporter to correct….I just don't know why, so I usually have to repeat my request through phone calls or MSN. (Interviewee C)

(D) When journalists face some kind of controversial issues in their story, what kind of reflect activities would they do? Media journalists said that controversial issues is common in their story, but sometimes the respondents could have the picture that they could face the danger. So how to protect these people from being known that they are

"Whistleblower" is something important.

…I guess that people who told stories to us, are not always willing to have their names on papers or web. So, how to keep them private is very important. If I do not do that properly, the man would not to tell me any stories next time, and that could be a massive loss for me. So, to keep them in private is important, and in ICT era, that is something hard to do (Interviewee D)

CONCLUSION

The microscopic discussion of organizational justice is focused on individual member of the organization, and the macroscopic part is focused on how the strategic alliance works, which is not included in the present study. The three dimensions of organizational justice proposed in this research are "procedural justice," "distributive justice," and "interactional justice." Previous studies mostly apply an integrative thinking to the organizational justice and emphasize that the organizational justice has positive effects on the businesses. However, the present study based on campus media finds that, in fact, the implementation of organizational justice doesn't necessarily have positive effect on campus media nor improve individual workers' self-efficacy. The main reason is that the characteristics of media are different from those of general organizations'.

Related researches often include the "leadership style" of an organization as one of the variables, but given that the subjects of this research are students taking the campus media course instead of full time job workers, and that the ranks in campus media, such as managers and workers, do not exist actually, as "leadership style" is not included in the present research. Furthermore, applying the theory of leadership style to the on-line media generates limited results which is only for media educators' reference.

As to private policy, media workers put it into an important role in ICT era. However, it is not easy to reach the goal. If they don't reach that, the influence power of media will decline and these people would not be willing to tell all the stories. This could be something trouble to manage a campus media.

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