Investigating the Relationship between Perception of Justice and Customer-Oriented Boundary Spanning Behaviors

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Abstract

Service offering organizations in today's complex and competitive world, haver much effort to attract customers and communicate with them. In this context, employees have a vital role in attracting customers. Perceptions of justice in employees is one of the behavioral issues that influences the way employees behave. This study intends to investigate the effect of justice (distributive, interactional, procedural) on the customer-oriented crossborder behavior of the employees (outer face, the inner influence and offering services). The community Studied in this research are the employees of branches of Mellat bank in the city of Kerman. Data were collected through a questionnaire. The results of the study states that perception of justice has a meaningful effect on external prestige and internal influence the effect of perceived justice on the behavior of offering services is negligible.

Key words: procedural justice, interactional justice, distributive justice, external representation, internal influence , service delivery

Introduction and Problem Statement

Along with the increasing development of service industries today, the issue of services marketing and service quality has become an important topic for different organizations (Seyyed Javadin, et al, 2010). The question is whether incidence of citizenship behavior is possible in organizations such as banks or not? The staffs in banks, due to their high officialism and special legal procedures, act weakly considering the incidence of such behaviors. Limited responsibilities are often considered for the employees of banks. Employees have no freedom of action which results in short and long term losses to their customers and organization itself. So we must find the factors that could have relationship with organizational citizenship behaviors of the employees. In this study, factors affecting the behaviors based on social (organizational citizenship behavior) and economic exchange, under the name of customer-oriented boundary spanning behaviors, will be investigated in order to enable employees to use all their power with enthusiasm in the way of achieving organizational goals.

Theoretical framework of research

Services Marketing

Service quality has been one of the *most meaningful constructs* for *explaining customers' future behavioral intentions* and *impacts* on a *firm's financial outcomes* . Reichheld and Sasser (1990) *even argue* that *delivering quality service* is *one* of the fundamental strategies for a *firm's* survival (Hee Yoon, Suh, 2003). Particularly, performance quality refers to the behavior of the staffs offering that service and the howness of the interaction between employees and customers through the process of providing those Services. Activities of the employees in the organization is related to the customers of that organization.

These activities are the critical factors in Development of Effective relationship with customer. So the skills, attitudes and Behavior of the employees, in this regard, are of importance because people are ultimately in charge of providing services with the quality expected by the customer. (Sardari, Norouzi, 2009).

Organizational citizenship behavior

The term organizational citizenship behavior was applied for the first time in 1983 by Organ. According to Organ organizational citizenship behavior is the behavior out of individual will and tending which is not directly and clearly appreciated through formal organizational reward systems, but at almost improves the effective performance of the organization (Haghighi, Mirzadeh, 2009). It is expected from human being as an Organizational Citizen to take an action beyond requirements of their role and more than their official duties, at the service of organization Goals. In other words, the structure of Organizational Citizenship Behavior pursues the identification, administration and Evaluation of ultra-duty behaviors of employees who are working in the organization and due to these behaviors, effectiveness of the organization is improved (Baharifar, Javaheri Kamel, 2010). Citizenship behaviors in the organisation can enhance organizational performance by encouraging efficient and effective organizational practices. OCBs create efficiencies by reducing the need for monitoring and freeing time for more valuable management activities such as scheduling and problem solving (Akfeldt, Coote, 2005). Organization citizenship behaviors will influence customer loyalty and this is due to improved employee–customer interaction which lead to improvement of ''service delivery'' finally. (Nadiri, Tanova, 2010)

Social Exchange Theory

Social exchange theory provides a general approach for understanding how employees are likely to respond when they perceive that their psychological contracts have not been fulfilled. Breach of the psychological contract occurs when employees perceive a discrepancy between what they were promised and what they actually receive. From the employees' perspective, such discrepancies create inequality in employment relationship. Thus, as long as employees perceive that they have adequately met their obligations to their employer, they are likely to feel shortchanged by the organization's failure to live up to its obligations and will be inclined to take actions to rebalance the employment relationship . One way that employees can do this is by reducing the extent of their contributions to the organization. (Turnley et al, 2003).

Social exchange theory provide a compelling rationale for expecting OCBs to result from strong employee-organization relationships and an autonomous work environment. Only after effective internal exchanges have occurred can successful external exchanges between employees and customers take place (Bell, Menguc, 2002). Social exchange theory has been used to explain the various phenomena and processes that occur in organizations, including OCBs. For example, social exchange theory has been used to explain the relationship between employees and the organization . Employers utilizing the social exchange approach seek a long-term relationship with employees and show concern about employees' well-being and career development, and expect the concern and commitment to be reciprocated. From the social exchange perspective, if an employee is treated with respect they would be more likely to engage in OCBs . Researchers also found that leaders' and supervisors' support can lead to employee citizenship behavior because a social exchange relationship is developed between employees and their supervisors. (Ma Qu, 2011).

Organizational justice

Distributive justice is the first dimension of organizational justice, in management texts. Distributive justice refers to a widespread spectrum of attitudes and perceived equity about distribution and allocation of consequences and outcomes of organization, in comparison to the performance and outcomes of employees (Seyyed Javadin et al, 2008).

The first investigations focusing on distributive justice were not able to explain and predict the reaction of individuals to justice, and because of this shortcoming researches moves toward procedural justice (Haghighi, Mirzadeh, 2009).

In the procedural justice approach, the emphasis lies in creating a sense of fairness among subsidiary managers during the strategic decision-making process to constrain their actions (Lin, Hsieh, 2010).

On this Basis, procedures are perceived justly whenever they are considered stably and without any regard to personal interests and whenever they are applied on the basis of detailed information considering the interests of all participant organizational parts with regard to moral standards and norms (Seyyed Javadin et al, 2008).

The third dimension of justice was introduced to justice literature in 1986 by Bias and Moag. They focused on the importance of the quality of interpersonal behaviours throughout the implementation of procedures and called it "interactional justice". This dimension of justice consists of two types first of which is called interpersonal justice that reflects the degree to which supervisors behave people with politeness, dignity, and respect. The second type is called informational justice which focuses on the explanations provided to people that convey information about why procedures were used in a certain way or why outcomes were distributed in a certain fashion (Haghighi, Mirzadeh, 2009).

Importance of Organizational Justice

Fair, logical and justice-based behavior through organization with staff will generally result in their (staff's) higher commitments towards organization and their ultra-duty citizenship behavior. On the other hand, those individuals who feel injustice will probably discard or set aside organization and/or show low levels of organizational commitments. Hence, comprehending this issue i.e. how individuals judge about justice in their organizations or how they respond to perceived justice or injustice, is regarded as basic discussions especially for comprehending organizational behavior. (Yaqubi et al, 2009).

Customer-Oriented Boundary-Spanning Behaviors

The services marketing/management and boundary spanning literatures both suggest three key dimensions of customer-linking behaviors of FSEs that contribute to the development of market-driven capabilities and resources first, FSEs play an important part in representing the organization to outsiders (including customers) and enhancing the firm's image and legitimacy through their advocacy of the firm and its products and services. Second, the boundary spanning position of FSEs provides them many opportunities to share information internally about evolving customer needs and possible improvements in service delivery. Third, service quality perceptions and customer satisfaction are largely dependent on FSE service delivery behaviors such as courtesy, personal attentiveness, responsiveness, and keeping promises.

we investigate three types of behaviors the FSE may perform that are associated with linking the organization to its potential or actual customers : (1) external representation, being vocal advocates to outsiders of the organization's image, goods, and services, (2) internal influence, taking individual initiative in communications to the firm and co-workers to improve service delivery by the organization, co-workers, and oneself , and (3) service delivery, serving customers in a conscientious, responsive, flexible, and courteous manner .
Included among our three dimensions are customer oriented boundary-spanning behaviors (COBSBs) that are likely to be considered relatively more role-prescribed and those that are likely to be considered relatively more extrarole. For the majority of FSEs, service delivery behaviors are likely to be relatively more role-prescribed due to their frequent specification in job descriptions, training materials, and performance evaluation forms whereas external representation and internal influence behaviors are likely to be relatively more discretionary. (Bettencourt et al, 2005)

Research Hypotheses

Procedural justice has a positive and significant relationship with the external representation, the internal influence and service delivery.
Interactional justice has a positive and significant relationship with the external representation, the internal influence and service delivery.
Distributive justice has a positive and significant relationship with the external representation and internal influence but service delivery.

Research Methodology

The present research is descriptive with regard to applicable goal and data collection method. The statistical population are the employees of all the branches of Mellat bank in Kerman city. The number of population is 230, the study sample is taken equal to the whole population. Of the total 230 questionnaires distributed, 200 questionnaires were collected analyzed in the end.

A twenty-six item questionnaire was used in order to collect data which was developed out of existing empirical and theoretical grounds and was set based on a range of 5 degrees Likert scale (1=always, 2=often, 3 =sometimes, 4=seldom, 5=never). The questionnaire content validity was determined as appropriate by investigating the theoretical principles of the field and its formal validity was gained 0.9 by the use of numeral *sigma method* by the help of 5 professors of Shahid Bahonar University in the related field. The total reliability of the questionnaire using Cronbach's alpha coefficient was calculated 80%, the component of procedural justice 0.78,   Interactional justice 0.81, and distributive justice 0.89, external presentation 0.74, the internal influence 0.89 and service delivery 0.89.

Research Findings

First hypothesis: Procedural justice has a positive and significant relationship with the external representation, the internal influence and service delivery.

Data analysis taken from Pearson correlation test, correlation coefficient of procedural justice variables with the external presentation and internal influence and service delivery are 0.406, 0.307 and 0.23 respectively.   With– p the amount (of significance) equals to 0.000 that is lower than the significance level $\alpha=0.01$, so that in this level the assumption of H_0 i.e. "no relationship" is rejected and as a result we can say that procedural justice has a meaningful relationship with external presentation, internal influence and service delivery. Moreover the positive correlation coefficients and slope of the fitted line shows a direct relationship between these two variables.

Table 1: Pearson correlation test statistics related to the relationship of procedural justice with external presentation, internal influence and service delivery

variable Test	Procedural Justice					
	Correlation Efficient	Significance	R^2	Total No.	Relationship Existence	Relationship Type
External Presentation	0.406	0.000	0.165	200	Yes	Direct
Internal Influence	0.307	0.000	0.165	200	Yes	Direct
Service Delivery	0.23	0.000	0.054	200	Yes	Direct

Second hypothesis: Interactional justice has a positive and significant relationship with the external representation, internal influence and service delivery

Data analysis taken from Pearson correlation test, correlation coefficient of interactional justice variables with the external presentation and internal influence and service delivery are 0.504, 0.374 and 0.278 respectively.   With – p the amount (of significance) equals to 0.000 that is lower than the significance level $\alpha=0.01$, so that in this level the assumption of H_0 i.e. "no relationship" is rejected and as a result we can say that interactional justice has a significant relationship with external presentation, internal influence and service delivery. Moreover the positive correlation coefficients and slope of the fitted line shows a direct relationship between these two variables.

Table 2: Pearson correlation test statistics related to the relationship of interactional justice with external presentation, internal influence and service delivery

variable Test	Interactional Justice					
	Correlation Efficient	Significance	R^2	Total No.	Relationship Existence	Relationship Type
External Presentation	0.504	0.000	0.254	200	Yes	Direct
Internal Influence	0.374	0.000	0.14	200	Yes	Direct
Service Delivery	0.278	0.000	0.078	200	Yes	Direct

Third hypothesis: Interactional justice has a positive and significant relationship with the external representation and internal influence but service delivery

Data analysis taken from Pearson correlation test, correlation coefficient of interactional justice variables with the external presentation and internal influence and service delivery are 0.516, 0.323 and 0.11 respectively.

With– p   the amount (of significance) equals to 0.000, 0.000 and 0.123 respectively which show that meaningfulness of the first two relationship is lower than the significance level $\alpha=0.01$, so that in this level the assumption of H_0 i.e. "no relationship" is rejected and as a result we can say that interactional justice has a significant relationship with external presentation, internal influence. Moreover the positive correlation coefficients and slope of the fitted line shows a direct relationship between these two variables. But the third relationship which is the relationship of distributive justice with service delivery, is higher than the significance level $\alpha=0.05$, so that in this level the assumption of H_0 i.e. "no relationship" is not rejected and as a result we can say that interactional justice doesn't have a significant relationship with service delivery.

Table 3: Pearson correlation test statistics related to the relationship of distributive justice with external presentation, internal influence and service delivery

variable Test	Distributive Justice					
	Correlation Efficient	Significance	R^2	Total No.	Relationship Existence	Relationship Type
External Presentation	0.516	0.0001	0.266	200	Yes	Direct
Internal Influence	0.323	0.0001	0.104	200	Yes	Direct
Service Delivery	0.11	0.123	0.012	200	No	-

Discussion

Bettencourt et al (2005), have investigated the impact of justice perception by staff on the incidence of customer-oriented boundary spanning behaviors. The results, in line with discussions of social exchange, provides evidence that shows all three forms of organizational justice have a significant effect on the dimensions of customer-oriented boundary spanning behaviors through organizational commitment and job satisfaction. Their findings confirm the indirect impact of distributive and procedural justice on external presentation and internal influence, and the relationship of interactional justice with service delivery was determined as a direct and non-intermediary relation. The results of this study with regard to investigation of the relationship between perceived justice and customer-oriented boundary spanning behaviors show that procedural justice has a positive and significant correlation with all three dimensions of customer-oriented boundary spanning behaviors, but the findings of Bettencourt et al doesn't confirm any significant relationship between procedural justice and treatment of service delivery. The findings also suggest that interactional justice is positively correlated with all three dimensions of customer-oriented boundary spanning behaviors. Distributive justice has a positive and fairly significant correlation with both external presentation and internal influence, but distributive justice has no correlation with service delivery. These findings are in line with the previous researchers' studies.

Conclusions

According to the study of Bettencourt and his colleagues in 2005 perception of justice has a significant effect on organizational citizenship behaviors (external presentation and internal influence), because the perception of justice by employees increases job satisfaction and organizational commitment and consequently results in ultra-duty behaviors. But the effect of perceived justice on service delivery is negligible since the service delivery behavior is not optional but inter-duty, so it has a lower relationship with social exchange attitudes such as organizational commitment and job satisfaction. What is certain is that perceptions of justice by the employees plays a significant role in incidence of organizational citizenship behaviors. The recent study does not have any confirmation about the impact of internal justice on the internal influence and impact of distributive justice on the service delivery.

Proposals

The results of this research is primarily applicable for branches of Mellat bank in the city of Kerman, and then all the banks and service organizations can take advantage of them in order to improve their organization performance.

• Since the organizational justice has a relationship with customer-oriented boundary-spanning behaviors of employees, managers must consider justice and desert in payments, distribution of facilities, the promotion of employees (distributive justice), in settlement and codification of the regulations, procedures and decision-making and formal structures (procedural justice) and in the communication between employees, howness of dealing with people (interactional justice).

• The supervisor is the closest representative of the organization to a person and thus trust is built in people as a result of his/her fair and reliable behaviour. It is recommended that supervisors behave their employee fairly.

Research Limitations

This study is limited to employees of a particular organization and therefore the results generalization to other organizations should be approached with caution.

One of the main limitations of this study, which is visible in many of other researches too, is the method of data collection which is by questionnaire, because in addition to some disadvantages of the questionnaire itself, it is very difficult to find people that respond to all those questions honestly and without prejudice.

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