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How Does Organizational Justice Work Across National Culture? Effects of Procedural and Distributive Justice on Information Security Policy Compliance Across National Culture

Emergent Research Forum (ERF)

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Abstract

Information security policy non-compliance has been a major issue in organizations. While organizational justice plays an important role in ISP compliance., previous studies have found justice works differently for people in various national cultures. This study investigates how procedural and distributive justices affect information security policy compliance across national cultures.

Keywords

Organizational justice, procedural justice, distributional justice, ISP compliance, National culture.

Introduction

Noncompliance with information security policies (ISPs) by employees has been identified as a common and significant issue in businesses (Willison & Warkentin, 2013). To address this problem, information security researchers have explored a variety of theoretical models, including deterrence theory, protection motivation theory (Darcy et.al, 2009), and neutralization theory (Siponen & Vance, 2010) Among them organizational justice has been found to impact information security policy compliance (Li, Sarathy, Zhang, & Luo, 2014).

There are mainly three types of organizational justice procedural, distributional and interactional (later divided into interpersonal and informational justice) (Greenberg, 1987). It has been found that their impact on employees' behaviors varies (Lambert & Hogan, 2013). For example, Lambert and Hogan (2013) found that procedural justice has a significant association with organizational citizenship behavior (OCB) but distributive has a non-significant association with OCB. Therefore, we attempt to address this discrepancy by incorporating Hofstede's national cultural dimensions as moderators in studying the relationships between organizational justice and ISP compliances.

Culture symbolizes beliefs, norms, and values of people (Schein, 1985) which also strongly affects individuals' thinking and actions. As no previous study has been done to measure how cultural dimensions moderate an individual's procedural and distributive justice perception on organization information policy compliance, our study will focus on this gap and incorporate organizational justice and national cultural dimension into a single model. The research question of this study is: How does procedural and distributive justice impact ISP compliance across national cultures?

The model will have national cultural dimensions such as masculinity/femininity, power distance, uncertainty avoidance as moderates for procedural and distributive justice. As people have justice sensitivity, we will find out how employees based on their cultural dimension perceive organization justice for information policy compliance.

Literature Review

Information system (IS) policy compliance has received much attention from scholars and researchers who have focused on different theories such as deterrence theory (D'Arcy, Hovav, & Galletta, 2009), neutralization theory (Siponen & Vance, 2010), fear appeals, and protection motivation theory (Johnston & Warkentin, 2010), control and mandatoriness (Boss, Kirsch, Angermeier, Shingler, & Boss, 2009), and coping strategies (D'Arcy, Herath, & Shoss, 2014).

Willison and Warkentin (2013) highlighted the importance of employees' intrinsic motivation and organizational justice to increase workplace compliance. Later, Li et al. (2014) found that organization justice, directly and indirectly, impact Information system policy (ISP) compliance. In contrast, Willison, Warkentin, and Johnston (2018) found that not all organizational justice increase ISP compliance. Given the mixed findings in the literature, this study examines the moderating effect of national culture on organizational justice and ISP compliance.

Theoretical framework and Hypothesis development

Organizational Justice

Organizational justice is the perceived fairness in the workplace by the employees (Greenberg & Colquitt, 2013). For having a clear understanding of justice and fairness, it requires having a clear understanding of how people perceive justice in workplaces, families, and society. Concerns about organizational justice are seen in different employee-related activities and the distribution of the resources in the organization such as fairness in payments, rewards, promotions, and punishment (Leventhal, 1976). This is called distributive justice, and this is concerned with the outcomes. Individuals are also concerned about the fairness of the decision-making process regarding those outcomes and this is called procedural justice (Leventhal, Karuza, & Fry, 1980). In this study, procedural and distributive justice will be considered for understanding ISP compliance among national cultural dimensions

Distributive Justice

It is inherent in employees that not all workers are treated the same, from the hiring process to getting benefits and punishments, they are worried about the fairness of the outcome (Greenberg & Colquitt, 2013). Adams (1965) argued that justice perception about distribution occurs to mind when one individual compares their output to input ratio with others ratio of output and input. So, feelings of inequity will happen when one perceives that his outcome and input are not in balance with others. But Leventhal (1976) noted that individuals will perceive fairness in distribution when the benefits of the outcome are balanced with the cost of the input.

Procedural Justice

Procedural justice refers to the fairness of the procedure that generates the outcome. Different authors proposed different criteria to measure procedural justice. Leventhal (1980) identified six criteria for measuring procedural justice in general setting bias suppression, consistency, correctability, representativeness, the accuracy of the information in final decision making, and ethicality. If these criteria are found in a procedure of decision-making, then employees perceive this as procedural justice.

Hofstede's national cultural dimension

Culture epitomizes the opinions, norms, and values of individuals (Schein, 1985) which also strongly affects individuals' beliefs and actions (Leidner & Kayworth, 2006). National culture has four dimensions. The first dimension is power distance which indicates the inequality between the supervisors and the subordinates. The second dimension is uncertainty avoidance, it refers to people's acceptance of uncertainty. The third dimension is individualism-collectivism, which refers to how people value themselves and the people surrounded by them (friends and family) in a society. The fourth dimension of masculinity/femininity indicates the gender role in society. According to Hofstede (1980), culture is the combined programming of

the human brain that differentiates one type of people from another. In this study, how different individuals based on their national cultural values perceive distributive and procedural justice will be investigated. Three cultural dimensions (masculinity/ femininity, power distance, and uncertainty avoidance) will be considered to investigate and analyze to measure if they have any impact in individual's perception of organizational justice.

Masculinity/ femininity cultural dimension

Masculinity, according to Hofstede (2003), signifies a desire for accomplishment, and material goods such as rewards. Femininity, on the other hand, demonstrates more caring, cooperation and honesty. In masculine culture the distinctions between genders are noticeable, men are more tough, ambitious, and assertive but women are sympathetic, family-oriented, and modest. Hofstede (1980) found that masculine culture focuses on building a career as they are more self-centered whereas feminine culture focuses on the balance of work and family.

Power distance cultural dimension

Power distance is a parameter that differentiates individuals, groups, organizations, and nations to the extent of which inequalities in power distribution are accepted either as unavoidable or as functional. Power distance, being a cultural phenomenon, is divided generally into two groups, high power distance and lower power distance, based on how the power is distributed (Hofstede, 1980). Individuals in a high-power distance culture acknowledge an unequal power allocation, while individuals in a low power distance culture readily question authority and expect to participate in decisions that affect them.

Uncertainty avoidance cultural dimension

Uncertainty avoidance (UA) as a cultural dimension, implies the extent that a person or a group of people are comfortable facing an unstructured event. In high uncertainty avoiding cultures, individuals follow and impose particular codes of conduct, policies, laws, and norms to avoid uncertain situations (Hofstede, 2011). According to Hofstede, people high in uncertainty avoidance need clarity and structure whereas people with low uncertainty avoidance are comfortable with ambiguity and chaos (Hofstede, 2011).

Impact of procedural and distributive justice on ISP compliance

Procedural justice has been found to motivate employees to trust their organization and promote the willingness to follow the organization's rules and policies (Tyler, Callahan, & Frost, 2007). Employees are more likely to follow the organization's policies and rules if organizations rely on the fair process while making decisions. Distributive justice has also been applied to study different areas of IS such as cyber loafing (Lim, 2002) and internet usage policy compliance (Li et al., 2014). Li et al. (2014) found that procedural justice and distributive justice have a positive impact on internet usage policy. Based on the finding of these studies we anticipate that both procedural and distributional justice will have a positive impact on information security policy compliance in an organization. Thus, we hypothesize the following:

H1a: Procedural Justices has positive impact on ISP compliance

H1b: Distributional Justice has positive impact on ISP compliance

The Impact of Masculinity/ Femininity on ISP compliance

Masculine people are more into materialistic things such as rewards and achievement whereas femininity culture focuses on the sustainability and quality of the process (Hofstede, 2003). Masculine people are more likely to concern themselves about the future (outcome). On the other hand, feminine people are concerned with the quality of the procedure under which condition the decision is taken place. Steiner (2001) found that masculinity with its focus on achievement is more connected to distributive justice and femininity with its focus on social relationships and equity is more linked with procedural justice. According to Li et al. (2014), both procedural and distributive justice have positive impact on IUP compliance. Based on these prior studies, we can hypothesize the following:

H2. Impact of Distributive justice on ISP compliance is stronger in masculine culture.

H3: Impact of Procedural justice on ISP compliance is stronger in feminine culture

The impact of power distance on ISP compliance

High power distance societies maintain hierarchical order whereas low power distance societies are less hierarchical (Hofstede, 2011). Individuals from low high power distance countries maintain supervisor and subordinate relationships and do not take part in decision making. On the other hand, individuals from low power distance countries are more egalitarian and less likely to submit to the authorities. People high in power distance have less expectation regarding the fair treatment in the process of distribution according to Steiner (2001). Whereas People low in power distance culture are afraid of concentration of power. According to Li et al. (2014) organizational justice has a positive impact on internet usage policy and based on this earlier study we can hypothesize the following:

H4. Impact of Distributive justice on ISP compliance is stronger in high power distance culture.

H5: Impact of Procedural justice on ISP compliance is stronger in low power distance culture

The Impact of uncertainty avoidance on ISP compliance

The degree to which people of a society are uncomfortable with uncertainty and ambiguity is referred to as uncertainty avoidance. According to Gilliland, Steiner, and Skarlicki (2001), high uncertainty culture incites voice in decision-making procedures in the organization by providing a voice to the employees. They also found that people high in uncertainty avoidance prefer clear well-defined rules and are thus more concerned with procedural justice. Where people low in uncertainty avoidance just focus on the outcome. Thus, the following hypotheses based on previous studies are:

H6. Impact of Distributive justice on ISP compliance is stronger in low uncertainty avoidance culture.

H7: Impact of Procedural justice on ISP compliance is stronger in high uncertainty avoidance culture.

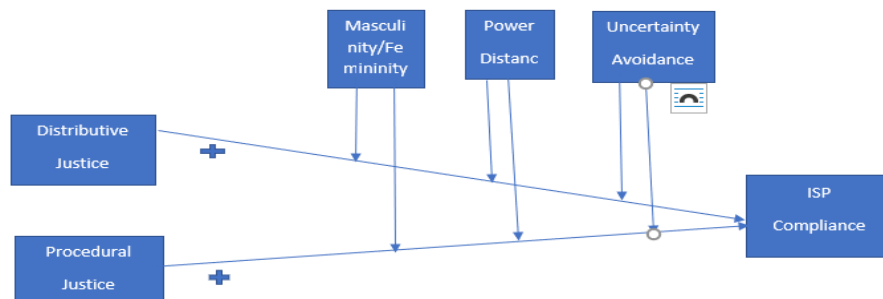


Figure 1: Theoretical Framework

Conclusions

Our study makes the following two contributions. First, it will help managers to understand the justice perception of their employees based on their cultural dimensions. They can use this model to boost the employees' justice perceptions of the organization's process and the outcome so that they feel motivated to comply with the ISP. Second, this study will also enrich the literature by adding individuals' justice perceptions based on their national cultural dimensions. The study shows that organizational justice is not only heterogenous it also works differently for individuals working in the same environment based on their national cultural dimensions.

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