

The Impact of Promotion Justice on Occupational Health and Turnover Intention

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Abstract—As one of daily management practices, promotion is an important tool that motivates employees in a company, and the fairness promotion justice of employees perceived significantly influences their organizational behavior. The aim of this study is to explore the impact of promotion justice on employees' occupational health and turnover intention as well as its functioning mechanism. By literature reviewing and analyzing, this study suggests that promotion justice influences employees' occupational health and turnover intention, and emotions will regulate these influences.

Keywords—Promotion justice; Emotions; Occupational health; Turnover intention

I. INTRODUCTION

As one of the ways of internal selection, promotion plays a vital role in the human resource management practices in an organization, which is not only an important way for employees to develop their careers, but also a long-term incentive for companies. However, there may be some problems in the promotion process. For the employees that fail to promote, both the facts that they don't realize their desire for promotion and the effort is not rewarded would produce negative emotions. Especially when employees find out that people who are equal or even worse than them are promoted, but, by contrast, they are standing still, they will tend to believe that the company violates justice principle, which will not only cause dissatisfaction, and also affect occupational health, reduce organizational trust, and increase turnover intention [1]. Therefore, promotion justice is the core issue of the organization, which determines the organization's human capital, thus affecting organizational performance.

Occupational health is the topic concerns to both the businesses and society, relating to individual's mental health and life security. The influencing factors of occupational health can be divided into objective and subjective aspects: working environment and individual differences. The working environment is determined by hardware (such as working conditions, work hazard, etc.) and software (interpersonal relationships, corporate culture, etc.). It is easier for hardware facilities to improve due to the openness, but the corporate climate as a hidden factor is sometimes overlooked in human resource management practices. Organizations should create a fair cultural atmosphere and a healthy working environment for employees. In the process of promotion, the transparency and

fairness of procedures and results will improve job satisfaction, but unfairness will lead to negative emotions, such as sadness, frustration, and resentment. These negative emotions further result in a decrease in sense of self-worth, the lack of work confidence, and persistent tension and depression, which affects the occupational health of employees. The negative emotions will also increase the employee's turnover intention, and the dissatisfaction and distrust of the organization are the main reasons for employees to choose to quit. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to explore the impact of perceived fairness on occupational health and turnover intention as well as the mediating role of emotions in the context of promotion, in order to help organizations understand the mechanism of promotion justice, and focus on employee sentiment to reduce human capital loss.

II. PROMOTION JUSTICE

From the perspective of human resource management, promotion refers to the process of employees' upward mobility. Not only do employees have greater authority, but they also have to take on more responsibilities and face higher challenges after promotion. The concept of promotion justice initially roots in organizational justice, which refers to perceptions of an individual's overall fairness in the process of promotion. According to Gilliland, organizational justice in the context of selection can be divided into two dimensions: procedural justice and distributive justice[2]. As we have talked above, promotion justice can also be divided into promotion distributive justice and promotion procedural justice. In other words, promotion justice is an individual's perceived fairness of both the promotion results and decision-making process.

By analyzing researches about promotion justice, this study found that the antecedents mainly involve promotion system standards [3], managers' taking responsibility initiatively, gender differences[4], etc., and the consequences include job satisfaction [5], organizational commitment[6], turnover intention [7], etc. However, research about the impact of fairness perception in promotion on turnover intention and occupational health is relatively limited, and the mechanism of promotion justice influencing employees' organizational behavior remains to be explored. Therefore, this study examines the impact of promotion justice on employees' turnover intention and occupational health as well as the mediating effect of emotions.

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III. PROMOTION JUSTICE AND OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH

In 1950, the International Labor Organization and the World Health Organization jointly gave a definition of occupational health: occupational health should aim to improve and maintain the physical, psychological and social aspects of workers of all industries in the best state, protect the health of employees from being harmed by various factors, and arrange for them to work in an environment suitable for their physical and psychological conditions, in order to prevent the health of employees from being affected by the working environment. Fairness perception as an important social psychological factor may induce employees' occupational health problems, which influence has been proved by relevant research. Tepper studied the relationship between employee's fairness perception and mental health, and found that procedural justice has a greater impact on employee psychological distress when distributive justice is lower [8]. After surveying 416 men and 3357 female in medical workers of Finland, Elovainio's study have shown that unfairness affects employees' occupational health and verified insomnia's mediating role [9].

In the process of promotion, employees' fairness perception of the promotion process and results will influence their behaviors and attitudes. When employees face unfair promotion results, they may have dissatisfaction, depression and even anger, as well as unhealthy behaviors of smoking and alcoholism. Negative emotions and unhealthy behaviors will have an adverse effect on mental and physical health, and even lead to individual diseases. When employees feel unfair due to factors such as the vague organizational promotion system and the lack of justice in the promotion process, they may have health problems such as work stress, excessive oppression, job burnout, and emotional disorders. To summarize, following propositions are advanced:

A. Proposition 1

Employees' perceptions of procedural justice in promotion will be positively associated with occupational health.

B. Proposition 2

Employees' perceptions of distributive justice in promotion will have positive effect on occupational health.

IV. PROMOTION JUSTICE AND TURNOVER INTENTION

When it comes to the definition of turnover intention, different researchers hold various opinions. According to Porter and Steers, turnover intention is a withdrawal behavior when employees feel dissatisfied[10]. Mobley also put forward that the turnover intention is the psychological tendency of employees who are dissatisfied with certain aspects of the organization and want to leave the organization after comparing external work opportunities with current work. Moreover, Mobley, Horner and Hollingsworth further suggested that turnover intention is a combination of job dissatisfaction, plans to quit, and the tendency and likelihood of finding other jobs^[11]. In summary, this study defines the turnover intention as the psychological tendency of employees to leave their jobs automatically at uncertain time in the future.

Work factors such as work environment, organizational commitment, organizational justice, organizational culture and managerial leadership are associated with turnover intention. For example, Alexander and Ruderman found that organizational distributive justice and procedural justice exert profound influence on employees' job satisfaction and turnover intention^[12]. After surveying employees from technology enterprises, Ma Fei and Kong Fanjing discovered that there is a negative correlation between organizational justice and turnover intention. That is to say, when employees feel they are treated fairly in the organization, their dissatisfaction will be reduced, and so will their turnover intention^[13]. Furthermore, Tian Hui's study also shows that improving employees' distributive justice will help to reduce their turnover intention^[14].

In the context of promotion, employees' fairness perception also influences their turnover intention, which can be illustrated in some relevant researches. Schwarzwald et al. studied the perceived fairness in promotion from the perspective of organizational justice, and found that the perceived fairness of promotion results significantly affect employees' absence rate and organizational commitment^[6]. In a longitudinal research, Ambrose and Cropanzano studied the impact of distributive justice and procedural justice in promotion on the attitudes and behaviors of university teachers, and the results turned to be somewhat interesting. It is indicated that just in the short period before and after decision-making process, procedural justice in promotion makes greater difference to university teachers' turnover intention, while one year after promotion decision, distributive justice in promotion affects their attitude more^[7]. In another study of Bagdadli and Paoletti, findings showed that promotion justice was negatively correlated with managers' turnover intention [5]. Therefore, when employees feel that the procedure and system are fair and ultimately achieve impartial results in the process of promotion, it is very likely that they will recognize the decision-making process, thereby improving organizational trust and reducing turnover intention. To summarize, following propositions are listed:

A. Proposition 3

Employees' perceptions of procedural justice in promotion will be negatively associated with turnover intention.

B. Proposition 4

Employees' perceptions of distributive justice in promotion will have negative effect on turnover intention.

V. REGULATING ROLE OF EMOTIONS

In academic literature, existing research about emotions is relatively mature. According to Izard, emotions are composed of three parts: physiological awakening, psychological feeling and external behavior^[15]. Physiological awakening is the physiological response of individuals when they react to something emotionally, while psychological feelings refer to the inner experiences of a person, and different emotions have different psychological feelings such as loss and excitement. For external behavior, it is defined as the external manifestation of the individual, such as expressions and movements. Emotions can be divided into positive emotions

and negative emotions on the basis of valence dimension. It is believed by Watson that positive emotions reflect the degree of a person's pleasant interaction with the environment, including joy and enthusiasm. The higher their positive emotions, the stronger their sense of happiness, and the more likely they are to self-affirm and make cooperative behaviors. Negative emotions, by contrast, refers to the subjective and painful experience, including fear, anxiety, sadness, disgust, etc., which will influence a person's self-cognition and worldview. The higher the negative emotions, the stronger their negative attitude towards the external environment [16].

The researches about emotions in organization originated from the Affective Event Theory, officially proposed by Weiss and Cropanzano in 1996. Organizational environment or event affects the behavior of employees by acting on their emotions, which is consistent with the logical process of "event-emotion-event"[17]. When faced with different events, employees express different emotions both in positive(excitement, excitement, etc.) and negative aspects (anxiety, anger, etc.), which have an effect on their mental health and behaviors. This suggests that emotions play a mediating role between work events and behavior.

Employees' fairness perception of the organization will be associated with their emotions. It is demonstrated in Adams's theory of justice that organizational justice both has an effect on employees' emotional experience and working enthusiasm[18]. Furthermore, Bal et al. argued that employees would generate the sense of unfairness and frustration when they receive less than their input, stimulating their negative emotions[19]. Another survey of 514 security personnel by Boer et al. also indicated that employees who feel unfair would have complaints, be angry with their superiors and desperate for the organization, or may be self-denying, continuing to be nervous and suffering physical and mental health problems[20]. Similarly, the perceived fairness in promotion also exerts great effects on emotional changes. Fair promotion procedures and outcomes make employees reduce dissatisfaction with less complaints and anger, even if they fail the promotion; otherwise unfair treatment will lead to more negative moods.

Emotions triggered by unfair promotion or organizational experience would in turn have certain impacts on the psychological and physical health of employees. When a person is in a positive mood, the coordination within his body is pleasurable, but emotions such as anxiety and depression, by contrast, will influence individual's mental health. Negative emotions will disrupt the normal physiological mechanism of individuals and affect the health of the body as well. Existing researches also prove this point. For example, from the perspective of medicine, Schwartz et al. argued that anger leads to a decrease in vagal tone, which may result in cardiovascular disease in the long term. Emotional changes in promotion process will have something to do with subsequent work status

and turnover intention, and employees who maintain positive emotions will have better working status and relatively lower turnover intention. According to Price-Mueller turnover model, positive and negative emotions can be attributed to individual factors that influence employee turnover intentions [21]. It is also demonstrated in Mobley's research that employees' dissatisfaction at work can drive them to think of leaving their jobs, start looking for other suitable jobs, and compare them with current work to determine whether to leave[22]. In summary, this study puts forward following proposition:

A. Proposition 5

Emotions mediate the relationship between promotion justice and occupational health as well as turnover intention. Fair procedures and results will help employees reduce negative emotions and intensify positive ones, which in turn enable employees to reduce or avoid occupational health problems and lower their turnover intention. If feel unfairly, employees will become anxious, angry, disappointed, and desperate about their work, and consequently emotions will trigger or worsen occupational health problems and increase their turnover intention.

VI. CONCLUSION

According to above analysis, this study explores the impact of promotion justice on employees' occupational health and turnover intention, and explains how this perceived fairness influences employees' occupational health and turnover intention through the mediating role of emotions.

From a practical perspective, it is worthwhile for enterprises to ensure justice both in promotion process and results, otherwise each employee would feel they are faced with unfairness in their daily work. This study has the following implications for the organizations: Firstly, organization managers should make it possible that it is fair to each employee when designing the promotion system procedures, and the procedures are transparent and open as well, so that employees can understand and make their own suggestions for their company. Secondly, organizations should also pay attention to the emotional changes of employees after promotion, especially to those who have not been promoted, in this way that managers communicate with them timely to better understand their emotions and psychological states, ensure their occupational health, and examine their turnover intention. Last but not least, organizations should look at employees' views on this promotion after the whole process, whether they need to improve the procedures and systems, which can help subsequent management and long-term development. This study is a theoretical analysis of the impact of promotion justice on occupational health and turnover intention. More findings and conclusions need further revision and supplementation in future empirical studies.

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