

Employees' Perceptions of Trust, Fairness, and the Management of Change in Three Private Universities in Cyprus

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Abstract

This paper is aimed at both researchers and academics in the areas of Management and Communication. Researching employees' perceptions of trust, fairness, and the management of change using an organizational justice framework can have significant implications for human resources management during a time of strategic change. The current work aims to give a better understanding of how an organizational justice framework can be used to explore employees' perceptions of trust, fairness, and the management of change during a period of strategic change in three private Universities in Cyprus. However, Cyprus lacks empirical research on organizations' use of organizational justice, trust, fairness, and the management of change. This paper opens the way to building a body of literature and empirical research for in this field in Cyprus, and will contribute to an enriched understanding of employees' perceptions of trust, fairness, and the management of change using an organizational justice framework within three private Universities in Cyprus. This research employs a multiple-case study research design to satisfy the goal of this exploratory research and data was collected through multiple sources, including in-depth individual interviews, and subject matter expert (SME) review and reflection of the data collected.

Keywords: Organizational justice; Organizational Trust; Fairness; Strategic Change; and Management of Change

1. Introduction

Among the many concerns organizations have, an important focus is employee perception of organizational justice given the role it plays in attitudes and behaviors of employees (Greenberg, 1987).

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The concepts of employees' perceptions of trust, fairness, and the management of change have been studied for more than 25 years, and researchers have noted this as one of the most important areas of research in organizational settings (Ambrose & Schminke, 2009; Cohen-Charash & Spector, 2001; Saunders & Thornhill, 2003). In a highly competitive global environment, organizations cannot succeed without their employees' efforts and commitment (Ali, 2010). The results of this study may contribute to a richer understanding of employees' perceptions of trust, fairness, and the management of change, using an organizational justice framework within three private Universities in Cyprus. Research has shown that the organizational justice perspective can be used as a framework to enhance our understanding of employees' perceptions of trust, fairness, and the management of change, and increase overall the successful implementation of strategic change within an organization (Erwin & Garman, 2010; Nicklin & Williams, 2009).

Researchers have extensively analyzed employees' perceived organizational justice showing that organizational fairness has positive and negative impact on various outcomes (Burnes & Jackson, 2011; Frazier, Johnson, Gavin, Gooty, & Snow, 2010; Keren & Kristy, 2011). In organizational science research, justice is considered to be more understandable in its relation to organizational justice (Colquitt, Conlon, Wesson, Porter, & Ng, 2001). Considerable research on organizational justice has evidenced that fairness perceptions are linked to outcomes that are important both to the employees and their employing organization; these include trust, job satisfaction, cooperative work behaviors, and organizational commitment (Cohen-Charash & Spector, 2001; Colquitt et al., 2001). More specifically, prior research in the area of organizational justice revealed that its dimensions correlate negatively to turnover intention (Kim & Leung, 2007), but are positively associated with trust (Bidarian & Jafari, 2012; Colquitt & Rodell, 2011), job satisfaction (Ali, 2010), and commitment to one's organization (Colquitt et al., 2001; Kumar, Bakhshi, & Rani, 2009). Furthermore, knowing how employees perceive organizational justice can help anticipate and manage work-related behavior as well as set a high moral and ethical standard. This in turn works to boost commitment to the organization as well as feelings of trust towards supervisor and the organization as a whole (Colquitt, Scott, Judge, & Shaw, 2006).

Organizations may be able to maintain their competitive advantage by managing employees effectively and seeking out techniques that promote trust and facilitate change as well as minimize resistance to the latter (Karriker & Williams, 2009).

Researchers have endeavored to determine pertinent factors that promote trust during change through the use of the organizational justice framework (Choi, 2011; Croonen, 2010). The organizational justice framework is the degree of perceived fairness of decision outcomes (distributive justice), decision-making processes (procedural justice), and how employees have been treated by their leaders during organizational processes such as in a period of strategic change (Eberlin & Tatum, 2008). Trust in management is driven mainly by how employees perceive fairness and the management of change within an organization (Fard, Rajabzadeh, & Hasiri, 2010; Saunders & Thornhill, 2004). Organizational justice theory provides a means of conceptualizing employees' perceptions of trust, fairness, and the management of change within their organizations. Employees will regard organizational change more favorably when, from their viewpoint, it has been fairly handled and elements of fairness in management's decision-making process are easily observed (Saunders & Thornhill, 2006).

Seminal social psychologists have concluded that trust is psychologically important to organizational life (Rousseau, Sitkin, Burt, & Camerer, 1998). It follows then that scholars call for more dynamic conceptualizations of workplace phenomena, and focus on perceptions of justice and trust assessments for reliably predicting the attitudes and behaviors of employees (Colquitt & Rodell, 2011; Jones & Skarlicki, 2012; Williamson & Williams, 2011). When trustworthiness is operationalized with regard to ability, there is a weaker connection between trustworthiness and justice. The skills, competence, and efficiency of managers do not have significant bearing on whether or not they actually adhere to justice rules (Colquitt & Rodell, 2011). Fairness is deemed a critical element in any aspect of the change process. The perceptions of an entity's fairness can evolve and change through an ongoing cyclical process in which individuals' judgments of justice events are affected by their existing perceptions about the entity involved (Jones & Skarlicki, 2012). Many authors support that the perception of an entity's fairness represents a trait-like and global evaluation that is often informed by a series of judgments of justice events involving that entity that are experienced over time (Ambrose & Schminke, 2009).

Organizational justice scholars concluded that in the absence of unexpected events, perceptions people have about the entity are relatively stable and resistant to change (Lind & van den Bos, 2002).

Researching employees' perceptions of trust, fairness, and the management of change using an organizational justice framework can have significant implications for human resources management during a time of strategic change (Fuchs, 2011). Seminal studies on trust, fairness, and management of change have largely been conducted with public sector employees, and further research is needed to establish if these outcomes can be replicated in other sectors as well as for different events of organizational change (Farndale, Hope-Hailey, & Kelliher, 2010; Saunders & Thornhill, 2006). Many organizations today are under intense economic pressure, and reorganizations, takeovers, mergers, downsizing, and other major changes are extremely common, as organizations try to grow and survive (Fuchs, 2011). Recently, the three private Universities in Cyprus have been under strategic changes due to the competition and economic turbulences in the Cyprus sector.

The specific problem is how an organizational justice framework would address the need raised by scholars of organizational justice (for example, Colquitt & Greenberg, 2003; Mayer, Nishii, Schneider, & Goldstein, 2007) for novel, conceptually derived accounts of non-managerial employee perspectives on organizational justice (Colquitt & Rodell, 2011; Heslin & VandeWalle, 2009) during periods of organizational change (Fugate, Prussia, & Kinicki, 2010) in three private Universities in Cyprus. Following, University institutions may benefit from the study by understanding how employee perceptions of trust, fairness, and the management of change can facilitate change sustainability in the future.

1.1 Organizational Justice and Trust

Despite the emphasis on trust in the relevant research literature, scholars still do not know enough about what makes employees trust organizations (Searle et al., 2011). Studies examining organizational justice have found that fairness perceptions are linked to trust in management and organizations (Ambrose & Schminke, 2003; Cohen-Charash & Spector, 2001). Employees' perceptions of organizational trustworthiness partially mediate the relationships of managerial practices and procedural justice with trust.

Justice has been found to be a stronger predictor of trust in organizations, based on the interactions of organizational justice and managerial practices (Farndale, Hope-Hailey, & Kelliher, 2010; Thornhill & Saunders, 2003).

Furthermore, the dispositional propensity of employees to trust organizational leadership can be explained by their perceptions of organizational integrity and of how the three types of justices are linked to organizational procedures (Searle et al., 2011).

Different authors define trust differently. Organizational trust refers to the expectations of an individual (or group of individuals) that another individual's (or representative group's) word, promise, verbal, or written statement may be relied upon (Bromiley & Cummings, 1995). As such, it follows that trust is the belief or confidence in a person or organization's integrity, fairness, and reliability (Dizgah, Farahbod, & Khoeini, 2011). Organizational trust scholars believe that organizational trust offers many important benefits for organizations and their employees (Salamon & Robinson, 2008; Six, 2007; Zeidner, 2008).

Organizational justice research has suggested that perceptions of justice can be formed with regard to a number of 'targets' within the organizational environment (Cropanzano, Byrne & Bobocel, 2001). For example, an employee receiving fair treatment from a supervisor but not from co-workers will have different justice perceptions about each party. Empirical work using a multifoci perspective of justice has found support for this differentiation of perceptions of justice and outcomes on the basis of different organizational foci (Liao & Rupp, 2005; Rupp & Cropanzano, 2002).

Focus on organizational justice in the workplace can influence organizational trust and support (Ambrose & Schminke, 2009). Overall justice is the proximal driver of outcomes in an organization, with individuals responding to their general justice experiences and thus influencing those outcomes (Shapiro, 2010). The process of organizational justice and excellent employee relationships encourage a positive attitude to create trust in organizations, resulting in risk reduction and operating costs (Krot & Lewicka, 2012; Saekoo, 2011). Perceptions of organizational justice are an important antecedent of organizational trust, job satisfaction, and commitment to the organization (Bakhshi, Kumar & Rani, 2009).

1.2 Organizational Fairness

Organizational psychologists support that within fairness theory social injustice occurs when one person is able to hold another accountable for a situation where their well-being (psychological or material, or both) has come under threat (Folger & Cropanzano, 1998, 2001). Fairness in organizations is important because it affects behaviors and results in the workplace, and can foster effective functioning of organizations (Cropanzano, Bowen, & Gilliland, 2007). Seminal scholars, such as Cohen-Charash and Spector (2001), contend that organizational practices, organizational outcomes, and the characteristics of the perceiver influence employees' perceptions of justice. Perceived justice has been examined by various researchers, and was associated with important and positive organizational variables, such as job satisfaction, job performance, citizenship behaviors, and commitment to an organization (Cohen-Charash & Spector, 2001; Colquitt et al., 2001; Garcia-Izquierdo, Moscoso, & Ramos-Villagrasa, 2012).

Fairness theory has received special attention in the management literature and been put forward as a means of integrating much of the relevant justice research (Folger & Cropanzano, 1998). In this approach, studies incorporate counterfactual thinking and accountability as key roles (Folger & Cropanzano, 1998; Folger & Skarlicki, 2001; Jones & Skarlicki, 2012). Early actions by supervisors or managers can have greatest significant impact on judgments related to fairness (Lind, 2001). When the organizational environment, internally or externally, is undergoing strategic changes, uncertainty is likely to be high and fairness judgments are most likely to be reevaluated (Lind & van den Bos, 2002). In this context, a manager's actions promoting fair treatment are more likely to be incorporated into the general fairness impression of employees in the workplace than would be the case in more stable times (Williamson & Williams, 2011). Research on fairness in the workplace notes that employees, before engaging in meaningful behavior, usually evaluate actions on the part of organizational representatives as well as the resulting outcomes (Bernerth, Armenakis, Feild, & Walker, 2007). Seminal authors support that employees form judgments about fair and unfair treatment by comparing their situations regarding treatment and outcomes with those of others (Dierendonck & Jacobs, 2012; Greenberg, 1987). In addition, other research has shown that individuals recognize and react to discrepancies in justice treatment in relation to others (Colquitt, Greenberg & Zapata-Phelan, 2005).

Current literature supports that employees' perceptions of fairness in the workplace are considered more dynamic when employees receive information and experience justice events throughout their employment tenure (Bernierth et al., 2007). In one study covering three measurement periods, researchers found that within-person variance accounted for 24% and 29% of the overall variance in organizational and supervisory justice, respectively (Holtz & Harold, 2009). In another study, researchers proposed a model of organizational justice that integrates current justice theories with research in sense-making and social cognition to describe the processes through which perceptions of fairness within the workplace change (Jones & Skarlicki, 2012). Employees come to expect fairness or unfairness from higher-level organizational representatives; it is on the basis of such expectations that they manage uncertainty and interpret the justice or injustice of events (Lind & van den Bos, 2002).

1.3 The Management of Change in Organizations

Management's role in the management of executing change is a critical issue for successful outcomes of strategic initiatives (Buss & Kuyvenhofen, 2011). Strategies for the management of change include communication to share information with employees while addressing their concerns to the management, and provide additional training when needed (Rouleau & Balogun, 2011, Self & Schraeder, 2009). Recent research investigated the role of middle management in implementing strategic change in an effort to highlight principles that can improve successful strategic implementation (Buss & Kuyvenhofen, 2011). It is clear that the management of day-to-day functions of middle management is of great importance, and that through their behaviors and thoughts managers can contribute to strategy (Balogun, 2008). Scholars have argued that organizational change is necessary for organizations to survive and prosper (Carter et al., 2012). Researchers support that in cases where change is perceived as threatening, employee resistance may increase, and organizations need management to implement successfully the change procedure (Austin, 2009). Seminal scholars emphasized the important role that human resource practices can play in the management of change, in order to maintain trust (Saunders & Thornhill, 2004). Organizational scholars support that organizations undertake strategic changes to keep up with the demands and rapid pace of environmental changes. Organizational change may take place continuously or incrementally (Burnes, 2004).

Despite the many theories, implementation strategies, and approaches to the management of change proposed, successful organizational change remains elusive (Neves & Caetano, 2006).

The aim of this study was to increase knowledge regarding how an organizational justice framework could address the need raised by justice scholars (e.g., Colquitt & Greenberg, 2003; Mayer et al., 2007) for new, conceptually derived accounts of non-managerial employees' perspectives on organizational justice (Colquitt & Rodell, 2011; Heslin & VandeWalle, 2009) during periods of organizational change (Fugate et al., 2010). A multiple-case study design was used in this study to focus on ten participants from three private organizations in Cyprus that are undergoing a strategic change.

1. Methods

The purpose of the research design selected for this study was to interpret and understand the phenomena that could emerge from in-depth interviews, and this is the reason why a qualitative research methodology was selected. Thirty employees from three private Universities in Cyprus constituted the units of analysis for this study, with the goal being to replicate findings across cases. This research employed a multiple-case study research design to satisfy the goal of this exploratory research and data was collected through multiple sources, including in-depth individual interviews, and subject matter expert (SME) review and reflection of the data collected. In addition, this particular research strategy can be quite useful in illustrating and determining areas for future research. Data were also collected through the maintenance of field notes, and SME of and reflections on the subject matter and data. The in-depth interviews were conducted in January and February 2014 for a sample of 30 non-managerial personnel, including academic administrators and Faculty of three private Universities in Cyprus. The current study employed purposeful selection of participants who were interviewed to generate responses. A qualitative approach was chosen given that the aims of this study were primarily related to questions of how, and secondarily to the extent of use. Another reason for the qualitative focus was the dearth of qualitative research in this area.

2. Results

A total of 30 non-managerial personnel, including academic administrators and Faculty of three private Universities in Cyprus participated in this research study.

Seventeen were women (age range: 26–58) and thirteen were men (age range: 30–51). All respondents indicated that they have been working in the University for an average of 5-14 years, and fourteen of them hold a Bachelor Degree, seven of them hold a Master's degree, and nine of them hold a PhD Degree.

2.1 Research Questions

Data for the study was collected through individual, in-depth, semi-structured interviews. Evaluations of the findings have been provided and focus on participants' responses to the following semi-structured interview questions that were used in this study:

RQ1: Did management inform employees with a thorough explanation of the Management of Strategic Change (MASC) before enacting its agenda? If yes, did you believe the explanation was reasonable and accurate?

All thirty participants (100%) believed that the role of management is very critical in an organization that is undergoing a strategic change, and that management must provide a communication strategy to share information with employees, supporting that in order for change to be sustained, management must try to maintain trust by encouraging meaningful dialogue with subordinate employees and maintain open contact with their managers and University's top management. Eleven participants reported that managers should have had interaction with employees in order to develop trust, since verbal communication promotes the development of trust in the workplace, and that organizational management must take an active role in such situations preparing their employees for the strategic change. Twenty three participants asserted that management informed employees what is expected from them, and that they try to ensure a two-way communication. All of the participants (100%) added that communication is considered a factor that promotes clear guidelines and explanation about the current situation of their organization, and how they will get to the new organization "state" after change, since this is an indication whether the organization will succeed or fail.

Nineteen participants reported that when management controls communication and what kind of information will be shared, monitoring feedback will be a good technique to catch rumors as they surface and trace more easily any gaps that have taken place between managers and employees. More specifically, one participant stated. "Management did give us an explanation or information before enacting this change, because if they just ignored us, they planned change might have been unsuccessful". Six of the participants added that Management did not give enough explanation of information before enacting this agenda for change, and this created confusion between employees, with a result of employing negative behaviors towards change.

One participants noted that, "communicating change is difficult, but our organization offered practical steps in the communication strategy, and I can tell that change is successful." Twelve out of thirty participants reported that when management provides information and is in direct contact with employees during MASC, then trust towards to the organization can be maintained with employees. One participant added that effective communication is a fundamental factor in building trust between employees and managers, and contributes to the creation of a trustful environment motivating employees to work even harder and be more productive, even in times of change. Sixteen participants were dissatisfied with the way their organizations communicated the change to employees, and they stated that because of this change they don't feel secured and are less productive, since Management did not provide them with some kind of information related to the current MASC that is taking place in their institutions. In contrast, nine participants believed that management had provided them with some kind of information related to the current MASC that is taking place in their institutions, by explaining why the change is critical during this period. One participant added "Communication in times of strategic change helps build trust among employees, and among management and employees. Building trust enhances productivity, commitment and employee engagement".

RQ2: Have you been able to express your views and feelings during the Management Agenda of Strategic Change (MASC)?

Most of the participants believed that when employees are treated in a way that they can express their views and feelings during organizational change, this might lead to employee engagement, trustworthy behavior and organizational support on the part of employees towards managers.

Specifically, eight participants noted that “employees’ views and feelings during organizational changes have a direct impact on organizational support from the employees towards the organization. The use of such fair procedures helps employees to have a say in the decision process in the workplace, and employees must have a voice to express their feelings in times of change.” Other participants reported that expressing their views and feelings during strategic organizational changes could promote fairness in the workplace since employees express their perceptions of fairness regarding outcomes, and by this employees have more input in the appraisal process. One participant suggested that in times of strategic changes in organizations people get stressed and frustrated, and organizations must have charismatic leaders that are able to communicate with the employees for the changes and make them understand the context, the purpose, and the need.

Twenty three participants added that they were able to express their feelings and views about change but University management not just ignored them, but they ‘ve answered to them in a way that was rude and made them feel bad for expressing what they thought. Twenty-six participants asserted that they were not asked to express their views about the organizational change, and their credibility towards the University was destroyed, since Management provided them with incorrect and insufficient information, and Management’s behavior did not help at all in support towards the organization and towards their colleagues. Similarly, one participant asserted that “I’m working for nine years in this organization and I never expect that Management’s behavior would have changed so negatively. I understand that we are under changes, and because of the economic problems we have in our country, but Management should encourage employees, involve them in their decisions, so that we generate dynamism and adopt positive behaviors. Unfortunately, Management does the opposite”.

Twenty even participants added that when employees are treated in a way that they can express their views and feelings during organizational change, this might be a reason to positively change their behavior, adapt more easily to change, and employ positive behavior towards change, even help the organization to achieve this change successfully.

RQ3: Do you believe you have been treated with dignity and respect during this period of strategic change in the organization?

Twenty nine of the participants noted that when employees are treated with dignity and respect during organizational changes this could reduce withdrawal behaviors, encourage improved job performance, and increase organizational trust towards Management. Twenty two participants reported that they have been treated with dignity and respect during this organizational change and their attitudes changes positively, by adopting positive behavior towards Management. Seven of them added "when management treats us with dignity and respect during these difficult times, we are willing to work in teams, promoting teamwork spirit and reduce any negative withdrawal behaviors". Eleven of the participants reported that "Management did not treat us with dignity and respect because of the fact that they did not show much concern for the treatment we received from top management, and the adequacy with which formal decision making procedures are well explained". Eight participants said that when employees are treated with dignity and respect during changes in an organization, trust can be developed between managers and employees, and employees are willing to work closer with their colleagues, collaborate more closely with students in the University showing more dedication and interest (as faculty), and be more effective in their tasks. Nine participants reported that when communication is not effective, then the company's goals will be hardly achieved in times of change.

RQ4: Since the enactment of the strategic change how do you perceive that your attitude towards your organization has been affected?

Generally, this question's results indicated that management should promote effective communication and sharing of information in the workplace in order for employees to build trust, commitment and engagement with the organization. Based from the respondent's answers, trust and fairness affect the quality of relationships, and that management should make good-faith-efforts and behave with honesty and respect to employees.

Sixteen participants reported that their attitude towards the organization has changed because of the uncertainty that exists in their organizations, and the fact that psychologically feel very bad. Twelve of the respondents quoted that management didn't establish and maintained the integrity by keeping their promises and telling them the truth with what's really going to happen. As a result, they do not show trust in the management and their attitude changed towards the organization in a negative way, and their commitment have also been reduced. Specifically, one participant asserted, "My attitude towards the organization changed because University management is not honest, and sometimes they do not demonstrate any respect.

When we lose our trust, this affects the quality of relationships, and actually this is what we are experiencing now". Nine participants reported that since the enactment of the strategic change their attitude towards their organization changed, in relation to trust, commitment and employee engagement. "Management keeps a distance from employees, because of these changes, and my attitude is negatively changed, and I feel that I'm not treated fairly from University management, and as a result I do not trust the organization, and I'm not willing to work as hard as before".

Conclusions

The findings of this study offer unique insights that University management should consider regarding the information and explanation that they should give to employees, reasonable and accurate, before enacting the organizational agenda for strategic change (Greenberg & Baron, 2008; Saunders & Thornhill, 2003). Findings indicate that management should build communications channels inside the organization between employees, in order to share information with employees. Study results further indicate that effective communication is a fundamental factor in building trust between employees and managers, and contributes to the creation of trustful environment between managers and employees (Colquitt & Rodell, 2011; Saunders, 2011; Saunders & Thornhill, 2003, 2004). Further findings indicate when employees perceive that there are closed communication channels between management and employees on issues of strategic change that directly affect employees job security, salary, and benefits, employees state they are left with feelings of anger and resentment towards the employer (Croonen, 2010).

Moreover, employees report when finding themselves in this situation, their negative feelings from work affect their personal life leading to irritability, anxiety, and mild depression. In addition, employees indicate that management should encourage them to talk about their feelings and what they believe they will lose as a result of change, in order to establish mutual trust with management (Six, 2007; Zeidner, 2008). Study findings indicate that employees should be able to express their views and feelings during strategic change in order to support the organization in the change initiative and increase their performance and turnover (Jafri, 2010). Other study findings indicate other positive outcomes, such as tighter organizational commitment and positive behavioral change (Croonen, 2010).

Further research results suggest that employees should express their feelings and views during change in order to be heard and have their views taken into account on organization's decisions if they are fair or not, regardless of the outcome (Frazier et al., 2010).

Following, research results indicate that management should promote communication and share of information in the workplace in order for employees to build trust with management and promote organizational relationships (Rouleau & Balogun, 2011; Self & Schraeder, 2009). Further findings suggest that trust is a critical factor in promoting effective communication and commitment towards the organization (Saekoo, 2011). The study's findings reveal that commitment is considered an important factor in organizational functioning and accounts for numerous employee related attitudes and behaviors. Research findings suggest that organizations should promote fair treatment approaches in times of strategic change, since employees' perceptions of fairness are associated with important and positive organizational variables like job satisfaction (Ambrose & Schminke, 2009), job performance (Elanain, 2010), citizenship behaviors (Cohen-Charash & Spector, 2001; Thornhill & Saunders, 2003; Williamson & Williams, 2011), and commitment to an organization (Ambrose & Schminke, 2009; Colquitt et al., 2001), which correlates with literature review. Study findings indicate that a key way to gain employee trust, particularly in times of change, is to seek the opinions of employees and keep the promises made to them, in advance of any changes, particularly those which will have a direct impact on them (Rouleau & Balogun, 2011; Saunders & Thornhill, 2004). Findings indicate that this will help employees adjust to and accept any changes, rather than creating a resistance to change and adopt negative behaviors (Dulac, Coyle-Shapiro, Henderson, & Wayne, 2008).

Other findings indicate the importance of organizations to practice open and honest communication with employees to promote trust, even in the face of difficult change policy enactment. Without such open communication, employees are led to speculate negatively among themselves about management's motives and practices (Saunders, 2011).

This study helped generate insights regarding factors that can help organizational management to consider on fairness as an important element of trust and a critical element in any aspect of a change process.

Universities organizational leadership must understand how to retain valuable employees, increase employees' perceptions of trust and fairness in the workplace, reduce employee turnover, and improve performance of the employees in an organization under strategic change.

Future studies could be performed to analyze how employee engagement, trust, and fairness are linked in organizations in other sectors undergoing strategic change using an organizational justice framework. Since this applied research study took place in Cyprus, national research studies could be performed to assess employees' perceptions of strategic change in other private and public Universities located in other European countries. Also, cross-national studies could be conducted to examine employees' perceptions of trust, fairness, and the management of change using an organizational justice framework in other service organizations undergoing change in other European countries and in other sectors.

Additionally, studies that focus on the relationship between overall justice, specific types of justice, and employee attitudes and behavior in an organization under strategic change, could contribute to the organizational justice literature. Following, future research studies could examine how managerial employees view organizational fairness and how this affects their behavior in the organization that is under strategic change.

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