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ABSTRACT

Organisational events trigger a range of emotional experiences for employees. This paper provides a two-by-two matrix that places an inclusive set of emotions in a grid of perceived outcomes and perceived justice. In so doing, it highlights emotional intelligence as an important course of further study regarding organisational change events. Specifically, it provides a series of propositions about the likely emotions arising from the combination of perceived outcomes and justice and the individual differences in these responses to organisational change events.

INTRODUCTION

The tide of criticism regarding the neglect of emotions in organisations (e.g. Fineman, 1993; Ashforth and Humphrey, 1995) has been answered with a wave of recent texts and articles on emotions at work (Ashkanasy, Hartel, and Zerbe, 2000; Ashkanasy, Zerbe and Hartel 2002; Fineman, 2000; Fisher and Ashkanasy, 2000; Lord, Klimoski and Kanfer, 2002; Payne and Cooper, 2001; Jordan, Ashkanasy and Hartel, 2002). Most relevant to this paper is work linking emotive responses to change events (Gersick, 1991; George and Jones, 2001) and more specifically to the perceptions of outcomes and fairness in change events (Carr, 1999; Duck, 1993; Paterson and Hartel, 2002). The paper serves primary two purposes. First and foremost, we seek to develop an exploratory analytical framework that relates the emotions that arise during organisational events to employee perceptions of outcomes and justice. Second, we seek to signal the value of such a framework for new empirical studies that extend our understanding of employees' affective responses to change and the value of emotional intelligence in leading organisational change.

After briefly reviewing literatures on organisational justice and emotions, the paper combines these to create the exploratory analytical framework in the form of a two-by-two matrix of emotions. Putting the framework to use, the paper then provides a series of propositions for empirical investigation and a review of the framework's relevance to the literature on emotional intelligence.

ORGANISATIONAL JUSTICE AND PERSONAL OUTCOMES

Employees naturally develop perceptions regarding the fairness of decisions surrounding change (Cobb, Folger and Wooten, 1995). The body of work on organisational justice yields a useful framework for understanding emotions in the context of change. Acknowledging that there is significant debate about typologies of justice (for an overview see Greenberg, 1987; Folger and Cropanzano, 1998; Konovsky, 2000; and Colquitt, Yee Ng, Wesson and Porter, 2001), the following briefly explains

the six most oft-cited types of justice and provides a schematic representation of their relationship.

First, Homans (1961) related *distributive justice* to the outcomes of decisions. Perceptions of distributive justice are based on the relationship between costs and rewards in an exchange and in comparison to others (Adams, 1965). Second, perceptions of *procedural justice* form in light of the processes and procedures by which decisions are made (Thibaut and Walker, 1975; Lind and Tyler, 1988). Bies and Moag (1986) identified a third type, *interactional justice.* Perceptions of interactional justice develop from how the outcomes of decision, and the processes by which they are made, are communicated to employees. Greenberg (1993) suggested that interactional justice could be further divided into two separate sub-types: informational and interpersonal. The fourth type of justice, *informational justice,* rests on perceptions of the specificity and timeliness of explanations about decisions separate from the decision outcome or process (Schweiger and Denisi, 1991). The fifth type, *interpersonal justice,* rests on perceptions of the sincerity and sensitivity of employee treatment separate from the decision outcome or process. Finally, the sixth type of justice, *systemic justice*, was suggested by Harlos and Pinder (2000: 259) as encompassing "the larger organisational context" within which "pervasive but diffuse perceptions" of distributive, procedural, and interactive justice form. Essentially, systemic justice serves as an organisationwide umbrella of justice, covering each of the other five types of justice. A schematic conceptualisation of all six types of justice and their relation to each other is presented in Figure 1.
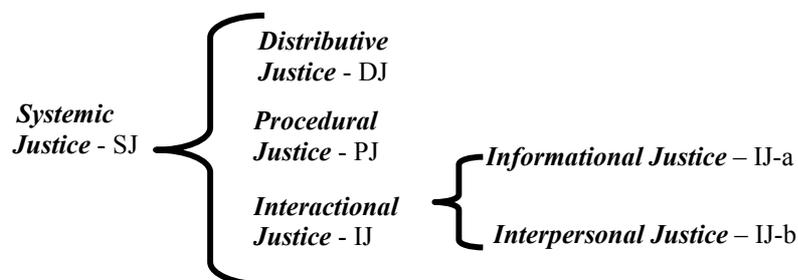

Figure 1. Relating six types of organisational justice

As can be seen in Figure 1, systemic justice can be broken down into at least three more precise types of justice. Moreover, one of these three, interactional justice, can be further broken down into two sub-types. Thus, working from our limited review of organisational justice, we can reasonably suggest that the most precise and comprehensive typology of justice consists of distributive, procedural, informational and interpersonal justice.

Using a simple framework of justice that includes four different types, begs the question as to whether one perceives justice or injustice overall or whether one perceives combinations of justice and injustice across the four types. To illustrate this point, consider perceptions of justice surrounding the allocation of a corner office to a new staff member. It may be perceived as fair with regard to distribution and process but unfair with regard to informational and interpersonal justice. In this instance, does one perceive outright justice or injustice? Does one perceive a degree of justice or injustice? Does one perceive a combination of justice and injustice? For the purpose of this paper, we subscribe to Lind's (2001) Fairness Heuristic Theory, which suggests that people use whatever information from the cueing events that they find most salient and then arrive at an outright justice evaluation. Thus, even if one perceives a mix of justice and injustice across the four types, he or she will employ a justice heuristic to arrive at an overall perception of justice or injustice.

At this point, it is important to distinguish the perception of justice from the perception of personal outcomes — implications of change for the individual. Following an event, an individual could perceive his or her personal outcome as positive while at the same time perceiving injustice in the distribution, process, informational and/or interpersonal handling of change. Returning to our example, receiving a corner office may be perceived as a positive personal outcome while at the same time the distribution of office space is seen as unjust. Similarly, a person may perceive his or her personal outcome as negative while perceiving that the change event was just in every way. Confusing perceptions of justice, particularly distributive justice, with perceptions of personal outcomes is easy to do, but doing so obscures detail that may prove useful in explaining emotional responses to change events.

Having established a framework of justice and distinguished outcomes as a separate consideration, we will now turn our attention to a broad review of the organisational literature on emotions.

EMOTIONS EXPERIENCED

Watson and Clark (1994: 89) define emotion as "an organized and highly structured reaction to an event that is relevant to the needs, goals or survival of an organism." The literature provides a number of typologies to account for the diversity of emotions people experience. Shaver, Schwartz, Kirson, and O'Connor's (1987) empirically derived 135 separate emotions and categorised these into six basic families: joy, love, surprise, anger, fear, and sadness. These six emotions appear repeatedly in typologies derived by Izard (1977), Ekman (1992), Plutchik (1994) and Gray and Watson (2001). These six appear also in lists of emotions experienced as a result of perceptions of justice and personal outcomes.

A variety of researchers provide insights into the emotions experienced as a result of perceptions of injustice. Homans (1961) and Adams (1965) both commented on anger as an outcome of distributive injustice. Homans (1961) also commented on the guilt experienced by people who perceive they have been undeservingly advantaged. Lind and Tyler (1988: 39) assert that "violations of procedural justice are viewed as violations of basic or individual values", therefore, "we would expect procedural justice to be a potent source of anger and dislike with respect to whoever is seen as producing the injustice." More definitively, research across 37 countries by Mikula, Scherer and Athenstaedt (1998) on emotions resulting from perceived organisational injustice found that those most frequently cited were anger and disgust, followed by sadness, fear, guilt and shame.

To gain insight into the emotions associated with personal outcomes following change events, we engaged the literature on organisational downsizing (e.g. Brockner, 1992; Cascio, 1993; Cameron, Freeman and Mishra, 1993; Worrall, Campbell and Cooper, 2000). This line of inquiry found that victims may suffer

anger, frustration, social isolation, helplessness and anxiety while survivors may experience the gamut of shock, anger, fear, relief, guilt and excitement (Ryan and Macky, 1998).

To this point in the paper, we have identified a range of emotions experienced and lenses of justice and personal outcomes through which these emotions are experienced. In the next section we put these elements together to develop an exploratory analytical framework.

DEVELOPING AN EXPLORATORY ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORK

Figure 2 provides a two-by-two matrix for classifying emotions experienced as a result of employees' perceptions of organisational change events. We took an inclusive approach when identifying what emotions to place in the matrix. We included the six families of emotions from Shaver, et al. (1987) and the additional 11 emotions identified as stemming from perceptions of injustice or personal outcomes.

	Perceptions of **DISTRIBUTIVE** Justice	Perceptions of **PROCEDURAL** Justice	Perceptions of **INFORMATIONAL** Justice	Perceptions of **INTERPERSONAL** Justice
Change events lead to . . .	**PERCEPTIONS** of Justice		**PERCEPTIONS** of Injustice	
Perceptions of **FAVOURABLE** Outcomes	Joy Love Relief Surprise Excitement 1		2 Fear Guilt Shame Shock Relief	Anger Sadness Anxiety Surprise Excitement
Perceptions of **UNFAVOURABLE** Outcomes	Sadness Anxiety Frustration 3		4 Fear Disgust Dislike Isolation	Anger Sadness Anxiety Frustration Helplessnes

Figure 2. Exploratory Framework of Emotion Related to Perceptions of Justice and Outcomes

To classify the emotions into one or more of the four quadrants, we evaluated the probability that one would experience a discrete emotion, for instance joy, when

perceiving a positive personal outcome and justice (Quadrant 1), when perceiving a positive personal outcome and injustice (Quadrant 2), when perceiving a negative personal outcome and justice (Quadrant 3) and when perceiving a negative personal outcome and injustice (Quadrant 4). When experience of an emotion seemed probable in more than one quadrant, we included it more than once. While our decision rules regarding which emotions to include and their placement are by no means scientific, we believe the resulting matrix to be helpful for change agents, employees and scholars who want to better understand emotions arising from change events.

PUTTING THE EXPLORATORY FRAMEWORK TO USE

The matrix presented in Figure 2 provides a good starting point for understanding the emotions experienced by organisational members when confronted with change events. From our review, the exploratory framework can make two distinct contributions to the emotion literature: first, the complexity of emotional responses lends support to the growing interest in emotional intelligence; second, the matrix leads to a series of research propositions and signals fertile ground for empirical testing. We elaborate on these contributions in our final section of the paper.

THE ROLE OF EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE IN MANAGING CHANGE EVENTS

The framework suggests that employees are likely to experience emotions in response to organisational events. It follows then, that employees and leaders of organisational change would benefit from enhanced understanding of emotions: why one experiences emotions, how one can cope with the experienced emotions and how one can anticipate and respond to another's experience of emotion. Formally defined, emotional intelligence (EI) is the ability to understand and regulate one's own emotions and to understand and respond appropriately to the emotions of others (Salovey and Mayer, 1990; Goleman, 1998). Mayer and Salovey (1997) highlight the ability to first, label and recognise emotions; second, understand why emotions are experienced; third, understand the complexity of blends of emotions and fourth, use

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this knowledge to manage emotions. Each of their four levels of EI can be directly addressed through the use of our exploratory framework.

Perception Appraisal and Expression of Emotion, Mayer and Salovey's (1997) first element, relates to awareness of emotions in self and others. Empathy and self-awareness are significant features of emotional intelligence (Goleman, 1998). The exploratory framework presented in Figure 2 identifies a number of emotions that could arise when viewing change through the lens of organisational justice. Organisational agents (such as managers and internal and external consultants) who initiate and implement change would be wise to anticipate the likelihood of experienced emotions stimulated by the perceived justice of outcomes, procedures and methods of communication used in change.

While assumptions can safely be made about certain types of emotion-provoking events (such as an insulting communication from a manager producing anger in most employees), change agents have to be aware of differing individual responses. A limitation of the framework lies in its inability to explain why two people may experience different emotions in response to the same change. Moreover, the model does not account for how the same person may experience different emotions at different times when confronted with what appears to be the same condition of perceived justice and outcomes. It is beyond the scope of this paper to provide a full treatment of these questions but the work of Piderit (2000), Carr (1999), and Weiss and Cropanzano (1996) provide three distinct and useful explanations.

Emotional Facilitation of Thinking, Mayer and Salovey's (1997) second element, *relates* to connecting emotions in self and others to conditions that may evoke the emotions. The framework not only helps to predict and discern emotions arising from change and perceptions of justice but also reveals *why* an employee is experiencing an emotion.

Understanding and Analysing Emotions, Mayer and Salovey's (1997) third element, relates to understanding related emotions (e.g. anger and disgust),

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conflicting emotions (e.g. love and hate), and the possibility of transition among emotions (e.g. from fear to anger, from anxiety to hope, and from pride to guilt). While the framework reveals a spectrum of likely emotions across the four conditions, particularly within the conditions of perceived injustice, it does not address transitions from the experience of one emotion to another. The framework is intended to reflect emotions stemming from discernable change events. As noted by Frijda (1993), individuals may transition through a series of emotions but these tend to reflect a single theme. Thus, while the exploratory framework is limited in identifying the transition, it does provide a range of related emotions under each condition that is likely to be experienced in that emotion episode.

Reflective Regulation of Emotions, Mayer and Salovey's (1997) fourth element, refers to the management of emotion of oneself and others. The management of emotion implies that the emotion be regulated such that it is experienced when useful and suspended when not. Given that the framework addresses only the response to change events rather than the purpose of change, its scope does not include the management of emotion as referred to in Mayer and Salovey (1997). That said, their earlier work (Salovey and Mayer, 1990) included a related concern, which the matrix does partially address. Specifically, they indicated that EI requires the ability to respond appropriately in interaction, thus managing the emotions of others. Our exploratory framework helps to identify *what* emotions may arise, inter alia, from perceptions of interpersonal justice during change. It does not, however, indicate *how* another person's emotions could be managed.

STUDYING EMOTIONS ARISING FROM CHANGE EVENTS

The four conditions represented in the matrix provide some complexity for further study. A review of the matrix provides a number of immediate propositions that may be empirically tested and some points of interest that merit exploration.

PROPOSITIONS FROM THE EXPLORATORY FRAMEWORK

1.   Emotions are derived from combinations of perceived justice and perceived personal outcomes.

    1a.   When a change event is perceived to be just and to provide a positive personal outcome, employees experience joy, love, relief, surprise or excitement.

    1b.   When a change event is perceived to be just and to provide a negative personal outcome, employees experience sadness, anxiety or frustration.

    1c.   When a change event is perceived to be unjust and to provide a positive personal outcome, employees experience fear, anger, guilt, sadness, shame, anxiety, shock, relief, surprise, or excitement.

    1d.   When a change event is perceived to be unjust and to provide a negative personal outcome, employees experience fear, anger, disgust, sadness, dislike, anxiety, isolation, frustration or helplessness.

2.   Individual differences determine the emotions experienced.

    2a.   Different individuals may experience different emotions when exposed to the same change event.

    2b.   The same individual may experience different emotions when exposed to the same change event at a different time.

POINTS OF INTEREST FOR FURTHER EXPLORATION

Temporal Unit of Analysis – Can an emotion episode be characterised by a single theme even when the individual experiences a range of related or conflicting emotions and when the individual transitions between these?

Role of EI in Change Management – Are emotionally intelligent change agents, managers, and employees better equipped and more successful in managing change?

CONCLUSION

The conditions of justice and outcomes presented in this paper are central to the experience of emotion in organisational change. The proposed framework provides a significant attempt to identify and classify the emotions likely to arise in light of varied perceptions of fairness and outcomes. The framework appears to support the increasing attention given to emotional intelligence. Finally, our work provides a number of propositions worthy of testing and yet even more areas of interest worthy of exploration.

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