

ORGANIZATIONAL CHANGE AND JUSTICE: THE IMPACT OF TRANSPARENT AND ETHICAL LEADERS

INTRODUCTION & PURPOSE

Since leaders play a central role in the implementation and support through an organizational change (Whelan-Berry, Gordon, & Hinings, 2003), employees require the guidance and integrity of leaders (Li, 2005; Porras & Robertson, 1992). The belief that a leader has integrity provides followers with the confidence that “the leader will lead honestly, appropriately, and consistently in line with current plans and promises” (Moorman, Darnold, & Priesemuth, 2013, p. 427). Since Durand and Calori (2006) indicate the importance of ethical behaviors during a change process, **this study explored organizational change and the role transparent ethical leaders have on employees’ perception of organizational justice.**

FRAMEWORK

Transparency is a virtue accompanied by clarity, openness (Murphy, Laczniak, & Wood, 2007), disclosure of information or availability (Palanski, Kahai, & Yammarino, 2011). During the change efforts employees feel they have direct involvement when they can voice their opinions (Fedor, Caldwell, & Herold, 2006), which gives them a greater sense of control (Morgan & Zeffane, 2003). As such, the role transparent leaders have during an organizational change may deepen our understanding of employees’ perception of organizational justice, which is “grown around attempts to describe and explain the role of fairness as a consideration in the workplace” (Greenberg, 1990, p. 400).

METHOD

The research site was a large NCAA Division I university that consolidated its eight men’s sports and 10 women’s sports under one athletic department. Separated since the late 1970s, divergent policies, philosophies, management, and websites were finally consolidated in 2011 after almost a decade of transitional change.

Personal interviews were conducted to investigate the experience of nine (N= 9) administrators and staff members. The researchers used open and axial coding (Corbin & Strauss, 2008) to categorize themes and concepts in NVivo 10.

Interview Participant’s Demographics

Pseudo Name	Gender Identity	Prior Position	Post Position	Degree	Organizational Tenure (in years)
Brady	Male	Men’s Athletic Administrator	Athletic Administrator	Bachelor	20
Diana	Female	Women’s Athletic Administrator	Athletic* Administrator	Master	16
Rosie	Female	Academic Administrator	Academic Administrator	Doctorate	30
Jasmine	Female	Women’s Athletic Administrator	Academic* Administrator	Master	30
Alexis	Female	Women’s Athletic Administrator	Athletic* Administrator	Master	20
Tubby	Male	Men’s Athletic Administrator	Athletic* Administrator	Master	18
Danielle	Female	Women’s Athletic Administrator	Athletic Administrator	Master	23
Maxwell	Male	Academic Administrator	Academic Administrator	Doctorate	9
Raymond	Male	Coach	Coach	Bachelor	15

Note. To protect the anonymity of our participants we were unable to be more specific in specifying job titles. From an organizational chart perspective each of the athletic administrators was at the Assistant Athletic Director level or higher. One of the academic administrators reports to the President and the other two report to Chancellors.

*Denotes a change in scope of the job description and title

RESULTS

Buy In: We’re not operating in solace with all our goals, with what we want to do, and goals in the athletic department, but we’re all on board now. (Alexis)

Transparency: The day when he [AD] first came in, he met with every single senior staff member and talked about things. He met and gathered us and said, ‘We have people working in solitude and not communicating’ and he said, ‘We’re not going to do that and if you don’t want to be a part of that then you’re not going to last here’. He laid that out there within the first month of him being here. (Brady)

Justice: It benefited the students. One didn’t have better facilities than the other, they all had excellent facilities. (Rosie)

DISCUSSION & FUTURE RESEARCH

During an organizational change understand the security and well-being needs of stakeholders. For future research, a deeper exploration of the informational justice dimension is needed.

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