



Trust, Cynicism, and Organizational Change: The Role of Management

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Management summary

This paper elaborates upon the factors that create trust and cynicism in an organizational change. We predict that distributive justice, procedural justice, and interactional justice are three antecedents of organizational trust and cynicism about organizational change. In addition, it was expected that the moderator supervisory communication has a positive effect on the level of trust in the organization and that the moderator supervisory communication leads to a lower level of cynicism in an organizational change. Moreover, the concept of organization-based self-esteem was taken into account, expecting that this construct mediates the relationship between distributive, procedural, and interactional justice and organizational trust, and the relationship between distributive, procedural, and interactional justice and cynicisms about organizational change.

Data were gathered through Verander Visie bv. A longitudinal analysis, comprising two time moments, investigated the relationships between the constructs. Results show that the concepts of procedural justice and interactional justice measure the same underlying construct. Procedural justice was excluded from the analyses. The results of this research show that distributive justice and interactional justice are two antecedents of organizational trust and cynicism about organizational change. Supervisory communication moderates the relationships between distributive justice and organizational trust, and the relationship between interactional justice and organizational trust. Moreover, empirical evidence was found to conclude that supervisory communication moderates the relationship between distributive justice and cynicism about organizational change. In addition, organization-based self-esteem completely mediates the relationship between distributive and interactional justice and cynicism about organizational change. Empirical evidence was also found to conclude that organization-based self-esteem completely mediates the relationship between distributive justice and organizational trust.

The reverse ordering of the initial studied relationships was also investigated. Empirical evidence was found to conclude that organization-based self-esteem completely mediates the relationship between organizational trust and distributive justice, the relationship between cynicism about organizational change and distributive justice, and the relationship between cynicism about organizational change and interactional justice. Moreover, we found that organization-based self-esteem partially mediates the relationship between organizational trust and interactional justice.

The construct of supervisory communication was developed for this research. Its moderating effect on the relationship between distributive and interactional justice and organizational trust and cynicism about organizational change has not been researched so far. Moreover, within this study, the mediating effect of organization-based self-esteem on the relationship between distributive and interactional justice and organizational trust and cynicism about organizational change was studied for the first time. Furthermore, the reverse ordering of these relationships was not studied in prior research.



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1. Introduction

70% of all change programs do not succeed (Beer & Nohria, 2000). A major reason why changes fail is because of increased feelings of anxiety, negative emotions, and uncertainty by employees (Bordia, Hobman, Jones, Gallois, & Callan, 2004; Kiefer, 2005). Some studies focusing on change, have suggested that these feelings are an indicator of an individual unwillingness to support the change (Judson, 1991). The affectivity of an organizational change effort depends heavily on the commitment, openness, and the motivation to change of the organizations' employees (Armenakis, Harris, & Mossholder, 1993; Backer, 1995; Bernerth, 2004; Eby, Adams, Russell & Gaby, 2000). As Schneider, Brief, and Guzzo (1996, p.7) claim, 'If people do not change, there is no organizational change'.

Several researchers believe that the establishment of a trusting relationship between management and employees is the basis for organizations (Gomez & Rosen, 2001; Schneider et al., 1996). If employees feel that management shows fairness and consideration, they will have more trust in management (Devos, Buelens, & Bouckennooghe, 2007). Trust plays an important role in successful organizational changes (Tyler & Kramer, 1996; Gambetta, 1988). In this study, successful is defined as meeting stakeholders' expectations. In particular the expectations of managers and reporting employees. Moreover, organizational change is explained as the employees' perception of change by an organization. In addition, Oreg (2006) found that trust in management was the only variable that significantly influenced the affective, cognitive, and intentional components of resistance to change. Lack of faith in the organization's management was strongly related to increased employees' anger, frustration, and anxiety with regard to the change. Once distrust is created, cynicism may arise (Thompson, Bailey, Joseph, Worley, & Williams, 1999) and employees will develop a cynical attitude toward change (Reichers, Wanous, & Austin, 1997). Some studies claim that cynicism can be viewed as a resistance to change (Bommer, Rich, & Rubin, 2005). Organizational cynicism was found to have negative relationships with organizational commitment, organizational citizenship behavior, and job satisfaction (Abraham, 2000; Andersson & Bateman, 1997). Since these components are of importance in order to make a change a success, cynicism may result in a failure of a change.

The goal of this research is to get a better understanding of the development of trust and cynicism in an organizational change context. The specific research question driving this study is:

'Which factors create organizational trust and decrease organizational cynicism among employees within the context of organizational change?'

In order to address this question, the following sub questions will be answered:

- What is organizational trust?
- What is organizational cynicism?
- Which factors create trust among employees in an organizational change context?
- Which factors decrease organizational cynicism in an organizational change context?
- How can management influence these factors?

The level of organizational trust and organizational cynicism is proposed to depend on the following factors: organizational justice, supervisory communication, and organization-based self-esteem. Organizational justice explains the perceptions of employees about the fairness of the outcomes of organizational decisions (distributive



justice), the procedures used to make them (procedural justice), and the treatment of those affected' (interactional justice) (Greenberg, 1990). Supervisory communication is a specific form of organizational communication. The latter is explained as the communication that occurs within an organization (Roberts & O'Reilly, 1974). Supervisory communication refers to communication of supervisors to employees. Organization-based self-esteem is the degree to which an individual believes him/herself to be capable, significant, and worthy as an organizational member (Pierce, Gardner, Cummings, & Dunham, 1989).

To address the central research questions, this research consists of a literature analysis part and a field study part. On the basis of the literature analysis we develop a conceptual model and hypotheses. The field study provides the data for testing the hypotheses. A longitudinal analysis, comprising two measurement moments, has been applied in order to get a deeper understanding of the underlying relationships regarding organizational trust and cynicism. The field study data were gathered through Verander Visie bv., a Dutch consultancy firm focusing on organizational changes. The background of the respondents varied from financial industries to healthcare industries. Most respondents experienced an organizational change at the moment of their participation in this study.



2. Theoretical background

These days many organizational changes occur. Management and supervisors continuously make efforts to make organizational changes a success. Despite their effort, only 30% of the changes are successful (Beer & Nohria, 2000). Reorganizations have major consequences for employees. That is why many of them experience feelings of anxiety and negative emotions when they are confronted with organizational change (Bordia, Hobman, Jones, Gallois, & Callan, 2004; Kiefer, 2005). Employee support and trust is required for making changes a success. If employees are cynical about an organizational change, they will have a pessimistic attitude toward the change, which may result in a failure of the change (Wanous, Reichers, & Austin, 2000). Thus, this study focuses on the role of management in organizational changes and identifies how trust and cynicism may arise among employees in the dynamics of a change. In the following section we will define the constructs which will form the conceptual model.

2.1 Organizational trust (O.Trust)

Trust is an important factor of successful business practices, both between and within organizations (McKnight et al., 2002; Tyler & Kramer, 1996; Gambetta, 1988). Trust significantly reduces the uncertainty in organizations and improves the cooperation among the various parties that need to work together, e.g. the cooperation of employees and managers (Dirks & Ferrin, 2002; Zaheer et al., 1998; Bromiley & Cummings, 1995). The construct of trust has attracted conflicting evidence and debate across the social science literature. Rousseau et al. (1998, p.395) formulates trust as “a psychological state comprising the intention to accept vulnerability based upon positive expectations of the intentions or behavior of another.” Trust is not a behavior, but is ‘a condition that can cause or result from action’ (Rousseau et al., 1998, p.396). Trust arises from the interaction of a trustor and a trustee within a social system. The trustor is vulnerable toward the actions of the trustee and is not able to control the trustee’s behavior. In addition, the trustee has the choice to act in a way that benefits or harms the trustor (Dasgupta, 1988). Said differently, trust arises from judgments people make about the likelihood that another party will behave in a trustworthy manner as well as assessments they make about the possible damage they suffer if the other party turns out to be untrustworthy (Currall & Epstein, 2003). Trust is a complex social concept and becomes even more complicated in an organizational change setting, since the dynamics of a change involves high levels of interdependency and willingness toward risk taking. In such changing circumstances a high level of trust is needed (Harwood & Ashleigh, 2005).

A lot is written about the concept of O.Trust; however no single definition covers all explanations concerning this construct. For this thesis, the definition of Gilbert and Li-Pang (1998, p.322) is used. They formulate O.Trust as ‘a feeling of confidence and support in an employer; it is the belief that an employer will be straightforward and will follow through on commitments’. Some studies found that O.Trust is a significant predictor of organizational commitment (Gilbert, 1995) and job satisfaction (Dong & Howard, 2006). Moreover, O.Trust has also positive relationships with important work behaviors such as job performance and citizenship behavior (Aryee, Budhar, & Chen, 2002; Watson & Papamarcos, 2002). Three antecedents of O.Trust are: positive results, managerial integrity, and managerial concern (Wong, Then, & Skitmore, 2000). O.Trust is a fragile thing. It holds people together and it is earned and tends to grow at a slow pace. If solid evidence of untrustworthiness emerges, trust is destroyed rapidly and distrust emerges in organizations. Once distrust is created, it demands even more compelling evidence of



trustworthy behavior compared to the evidence required during the initial trust building phase of the organization. As a matter of fact, once distrust is created it is nearly impossible to rebuild the former level of trust (Currall & Epstein, 2003). Since McKnight et al. (2002), Tyler and Kramer (1996), and Gambetta (1988) indicated that trust is an important factor that influences successful business practices, both between and within organizations, an organization should develop a high level of trust in the organization.

Applying the role of the trustor and the trustee in this study, the organization is seen as the trustee, and the employee is seen as the trustor. The employee is vulnerable to the actions of the organization and cannot control its behavior. Moreover, the organization has the freedom to act in a way that benefits or harms the employee.

2.2 Cynicism About Organizational change (CAOC)

Research on organizational cynicism is comparatively new (Cole et al., 2006). However, this does not say anything about the importance of the topic. Organizational cynicism has only increased in recent years (Bommer, Rich, & Rubin, 2005). Organizational cynicism is defined as “a negative attitude toward one’s employing organization, comprising three dimensions: (1) a belief that the organization lacks integrity; (2) negative affect toward the organization; and (3) tendencies to disparaging and critical behavior toward the organization that are consistent with these beliefs” (Dean, Brandes, & Dharwadkar, 1998, p.345). People who are cynical toward their organization believe that fairness, honesty, and sincerity are sacrificed to the self interests of managers. This leads to actions based on hidden motives and deception (Abraham, 2000). Research evidence shows that organizational cynicism has some undesirable consequences. Some of these undesirable outcomes include apathy, resignation, hopelessness, distrust of others, disillusionment, poor performance, and burnout (Andersson, 1996; Dean et al., 1998). Naus, van Iterson, and Roe (2007) studied the antecedents of organizational cynicism. Their research found that value incongruence, that is the lack of fit between employees’ personal and organizational values (Kristof, 1996) is a significant predictor of organizational cynicism. In addition, job autonomy was also been found to be an antecedent of organizational cynicism. Job autonomy is the “degree to which the job provides substantial freedom, independence, and discretion to the individual in scheduling the work and determining the procedures to be used in carrying out” (Hackman & Oldman, 1976, p.258).

For this study, we analyzed organizational cynicism in the dynamics of an organizational change. The construct of CAOC is defined as ‘a real loss of faith in the leaders of change’ (Reichers, Wanous, & Austin, 1997, p.48). CAOC is a response to a history of not entirely or clearly successful changes (Reichers, Wanous, & Austin, 1997). Employees who are cynical about an organizational change have a pessimistic attitude toward the change and blame ‘those who are responsible’ for lacking the ability and the motivation to make the change a success (Wanous, Reichers, & Austin, 2000). All stakeholders involved need to support the organizational change in order to make it a success, since few changes can be mandated from the management team and put into place without the need for acceptance by other employees. The lack of support may bring about failure or very limited success (Reichers, Wanous, & Austin, 1997). This may lead to reinforcement of cynical beliefs, which further holds back the willingness to support another change. Being cynical about organizational change may also have other consequences. Cynicism about change can spill over into other aspects of work life. Cynical employees may lose their motivation, commitment, and dedication to work. Absenteeism and grievances may increase as well (Reichers, Wanous, & Austin, 1997). Based on these reasons, a firm should go to great lengths to minimize or prevent cynicism among its employees in order to make the organizational change a success.



2.3 Organizational justice

Individuals have to make and endure many decisions in their organizational lives. These decisions vary from salary deals to social decisions, such as how to communicate with a supervisor. The importance of those consequences causes employees to ask themselves 'Was that fair?' (Colquit, 2001). Organizational justice explains the perceptions of employees about the fairness of the outcomes of organizational decisions (distributive justice), the procedures used to make them (procedural justice), and the treatment of those affected' (interactional justice) (Greenberg, 1990).

In addition, this concept can help management to understand the fairness as perceived by employees toward the decisions made in an organizational change. An organization should not underestimate the importance of employees' perceptions of the fairness of the decisions that are made in an organizational change, since an organizational change cannot succeed without the acceptance from employees (Reichers, Wanous, & Austin, 1997). That is why an organizational justice perspective may serve as a guide to management in order to implement the organizational change (Novelli, Kirkman, & Shapiro, 1995).

Organizational justice offers a useful perspective to understand and explain employees' feelings of trust or mistrust in an organization (Saunders & Thornhill, 2004). It also explains whether employees have a cynical attitude toward change (Bernerth, Armenakis, Feild, & Walker, 2007). The next sub sections elaborate upon the three dimensions that form the construct of organizational justice, i.e. distributive, procedural, and interactional justice, and their relationships with organizational trust and cynicism about organizational change.

2.3.1 Distributive Justice

Distributive justice integrates perceptions of fairness about organizational outcomes (Saunders & Thornhill, 2004). Distributive justice is fostered where outcomes are consistent with implicit norms for allocation, such as equity or equality (Colquit, 2001). In managing change, an organization should strive to be aware of employees' perceptions of the fairness of the organizational outcomes in order to make the organizational change a success (Novelli, Kirkman, & Shapiro, 1995). For instance, employees should perceive that new responsibilities, authority, and level of pay are fair outcomes of the organizational change. If they do not perceive these outcomes as fair, this may result in lack of support toward the organizational change and this may cause very limited success (Reichers, Wanous, & Austin, 1997).

Effect of distributive justice on O.Trust and CAOC

The perceptions about organizational outcomes are based upon subjective assessments of outcomes in relation to investments made. Such assessments may be based on comparisons with other employees (Cropanzano & Greenberg, 1977; Greenberg, 1990). According to Saunders and Thornhill (2004), distributive justice has a close relationship to trust since feelings of trust are affected by comparison to the relative treatment and outcomes of others. When employees experience distributive justice, they have more trust toward management (Sheldon & Ruderman, 1983). That is why this study predicts a positive relationship between distributive justice and O.Trust. In addition, Bernerth, Armenakis, Feild, and Walker (2007) found a negative relationship between distributive justice and organizational cynicism. Since organizational cynicism and CAOC do have close relationships with one another (Reichers, Wanous, & Austin, 1997), we predict that distributive justice is negatively related to CAOC.



2.3.2 Procedural Justice

Procedural justice refers to the perceived fairness of procedures used to determine who gets what outcomes, not the fairness of the outcomes themselves (Novelli, Kirkman, & Shapiro, 1995). Procedural justice is fostered by having an influence over the outcome (Thibaut & Walker, 1975) or by the presence of fair process criteria, such as consistency, accuracy, and ethicality (Leventhal, 1976; Karuza & Leventhal, 1976). With respect to an organizational change, employees should perceive that they have a voice in the decision making process. For instance, employees need to perceive that they have influence in determining what changes need to be implemented. When some employees are retained, and others are laid off, employees should agree with the criteria by which these decisions are made. In order to support the organizational change, employees must perceive that they have a certain influence in the change. If they do not perceive that they have a voice in the decision making process, lack of employees' support may occur which may lead to a failure of the organizational change (Novelli, Kirkman, & Shapiro, 1995).

Effect of procedural justice on O.Trust and CAOC

It has been found that procedural justice is strongly related to trust (Konovsky & Pugh, 1994; Mayer & Davis, 1999; Blader & Tyler, 2003). Employees are likely to trust management more and are more committed to their organization when they perceive procedural justice (Folger & Konovsky, 1989). In addition, Reichers et al. (1997) demonstrated that procedural justice has a negative relationship with CAOC. Employees are more likely to be cynical about change when they experience a lack of opportunities to participate in the decision making process (Reichers et al., 1997). We predict that procedural justice has a positive relationship with O.Trust and a negative relationship with CAOC.

2.3.3 Interactional Justice

Interactional justice refers to the perceived fairness of the interpersonal treatment received in a decision process (Bies & Moag, 1986; Shapiro, Buttner, & Barry, 1994). When employees perceive interactional justice, they experience equal treatment compared to other people who are in the same position. Interactional justice is also fostered when management adequately explains decisions. Some criteria that employees use to evaluate interactional justice in decision making processes include neutrality, honesty, lack of bias, and trust (Bies & Tyler, 1993). In the dynamics of a change process, management must provide clear and accurate information on those decisions that have consequences for employees. Employees should also perceive that management shows respect and dignity toward employees when taking decisions in the change. For instance, management needs to give sincere and adequate explanations about the changing roles and responsibilities as a result of a change. Employees should experience that management listens to and respects employees' questions and concerns regarding the consequences of their job responsibilities (Novelli, Kirkman, & Shapiro, 1995). Since the treatment of people is closely related to trust (Mayer et al., 1995; Kernan & Hanges, 2002) and employees' trust is required in an organizational change, management should take interactional justice seriously in the dynamics of a change (Novelli, Kirkman, & Shapiro, 1995).



Effect of interactional justice on O.Trust and CAOC

Mayer et al. (1995) and Kernan and Hanges (2002) found a close relationship between the way employees are treated by management and employees' trust in management. In addition, empirical evidence was found regarding the negative relationship between interactional justice and organizational cynicism (Bernerth, Armenakis, Feild, & Walker, 2007). If employees perceive interactional justice in times of change, in the form of respectful and reasonable explanations, this should prevent feelings of cynicism. Hence, we predict that interactional justice has a positive relationship with O.Trust and a negative relationship with CAOC.

In summary, the following relationships are hypothesized:

Hypothesis 1a: Distributive, procedural, and interactional justice are positively related to organizational trust.

Hypothesis 1b: Distributive, procedural, and interactional justice are negatively related to cynicism about organizational change.

2.4 Supervisory communication

Supervisory communication is a specific form of organizational communication. Organizational communication is explained as the communication that occurs within an organization (Roberts & O'Reilly, 1974). The construct of supervisory communication is developed for this research and refers to communication of supervisors to employees. Much attention has focused on supervisors' treatment of employees, because the latter forms the basis of the relationship between supervisors and employees. In addition, favorable treatment of employees has some desirable outcomes such as greater commitment, job satisfaction, citizenship behavior, and task performance (Cohen-Charash & Spector, 2001; Colquitt et al., 2001). Moreover, accuracy in information was found to be positively related to overall job satisfaction (Roberts & O'Reilly, 1974), and accuracy in information and interaction of management and employees were found to be positively related to organizational commitment (Roberts & O'Reilly, 1974). The way a manager or supervisor communicates with his or her personnel has an important effect on employees' perceptions of trust in the organization (Whitener, Brodt, Korsgaards, & Werner, 1998). Since an organizational change causes uncertainty (Novelli, Kirkman, & Shapiro, 1995), effective performance of communication is even more necessary and important in order to promote employees' trust in the organization.

Effect of supervisory communication on O.Trust and COAC

In this research supervisory communication refers to accurate information, explanations for decisions, and openness. Many studies have shown that accuracy in information has the strongest relationship with trust in the supervisor when compared with other variables, such as desire for interaction (Mellinger, 1956; Munchinsky, 1977; O'Reilly, 1977, O'Reilly & Roberts, 1974, 1977; Roberts & O'Reilly, 1974a,b, 1979; Yeager, 1978). Evidently, supervisors who provide explanations and feedback on decisions enhance perceptions of trust (Folger & Konovsky, 1989; Sapienza & Korsgaard, 1996). Finally, open communication, in which supervisors exchange thoughts and ideas freely with their employees, leads to higher levels of trust (Butler, 1991; Farris, Senner, & Butterfield, 1973; Gabarro, 1978; Hart, Capps, Cangemi, & Caillouet, 1986). Although prior research has found positive relationships between communication and trust, no studies elaborated upon the relationship between supervisory communication and O.Trust. In addition, the consequences of communication problems have been widely recognized for some time. One



serious consequence of communication problems involves cynicism among employees (Buchanan, Claydon, & Doyle, 1999). However, the direct effect of supervisory communication on CAOC has not been studied so far. Accordingly, this study hypothesizes:

Hypothesis 2a: Supervisory communication will moderate the relationship between distributive, procedural, and interactional justice and O.Trust such that the relationship will be stronger for effective supervisory communication than for less effective supervisory communication.

Hypothesis 2b: Supervisory communication will moderate the relationship between distributive, procedural, and interactional justice and CAOC such that the relationship will be stronger for effective supervisory communication than for less effective supervisory communication.

Note that effective supervisory communication is defined as providing accurate information, giving explanations for decisions, and having an open attitude toward employees.

2.5 Organization-Based Self-Esteem (OBSE)

OBSE was introduced by Pierce, Gardner, Cummings and Dunham (1989) as the degree to which an individual believes him/herself to be capable, significant, and worthy as an organizational member. Employees with high OBSE perceive themselves as important, meaningful, effectual, and worthwhile within their organization. Employees with low OBSE perceive themselves as less important, meaningful, effectual, and worthwhile within their organization (Pierce et al., 1989). Hui and Lee (2000) found that employees with a high level of OBSE were more capable of managing the uncertainty associated with organizational change than employees with a lower level of OBSE. Pierce and Gardner (2004) mention some positive relationships between OBSE and intrinsic motivation, job performance, general job satisfaction, organizational citizenship, organizational commitment, and organizational satisfaction. Managerial respect, job complexity, and conditions of environmental stability over time, are three important antecedents of OBSE (Pierce et al., 1989).

Effect of OBSE on O.Trust and CAOC

OBSE is influenced by the organizational treatment of employees. The way an employee is treated by management provides the 'integrated experiential base' upon which employees develop their self esteem in the organization (McAllister & Bigley, 2001). Organizational justice offers a useful means to explain the organizational treatment of employees, which has an effect on OBSE. This research predicts that perceived organizational justice is positively related to OBSE. In addition, the relationship between OBSE and O.trust has not been researched so far, however Dyne, Vandewalle, Kostova, Latham, & Cummings (2001) found that OBSE has a positive relationship with propensity to trust. This study predicts that OBSE has a positive relationship with O.Trust. In addition, Naus, van Iterson, and Roe (2007) found a negative relation between OBSE and organizational cynicism. Once employees have a cynical attitude toward the organization, CAOC arises as well (Reichers, Wanous, & Austin, 1997). That is why a negative relationship of OBSE and CAOC is predicted in this research. As such, this research hypothesizes:



Hypothesis 3a:

The relationships between distributive, procedural, and interactional justice and organizational trust are mediated by organization-based self-esteem.

Hypothesis 3b

The relationships between distributive, procedural, and interactional justice and cynicism about organizational change are mediated by organization-based self-esteem.



The hypothesized relationships are illustrated in figure 1

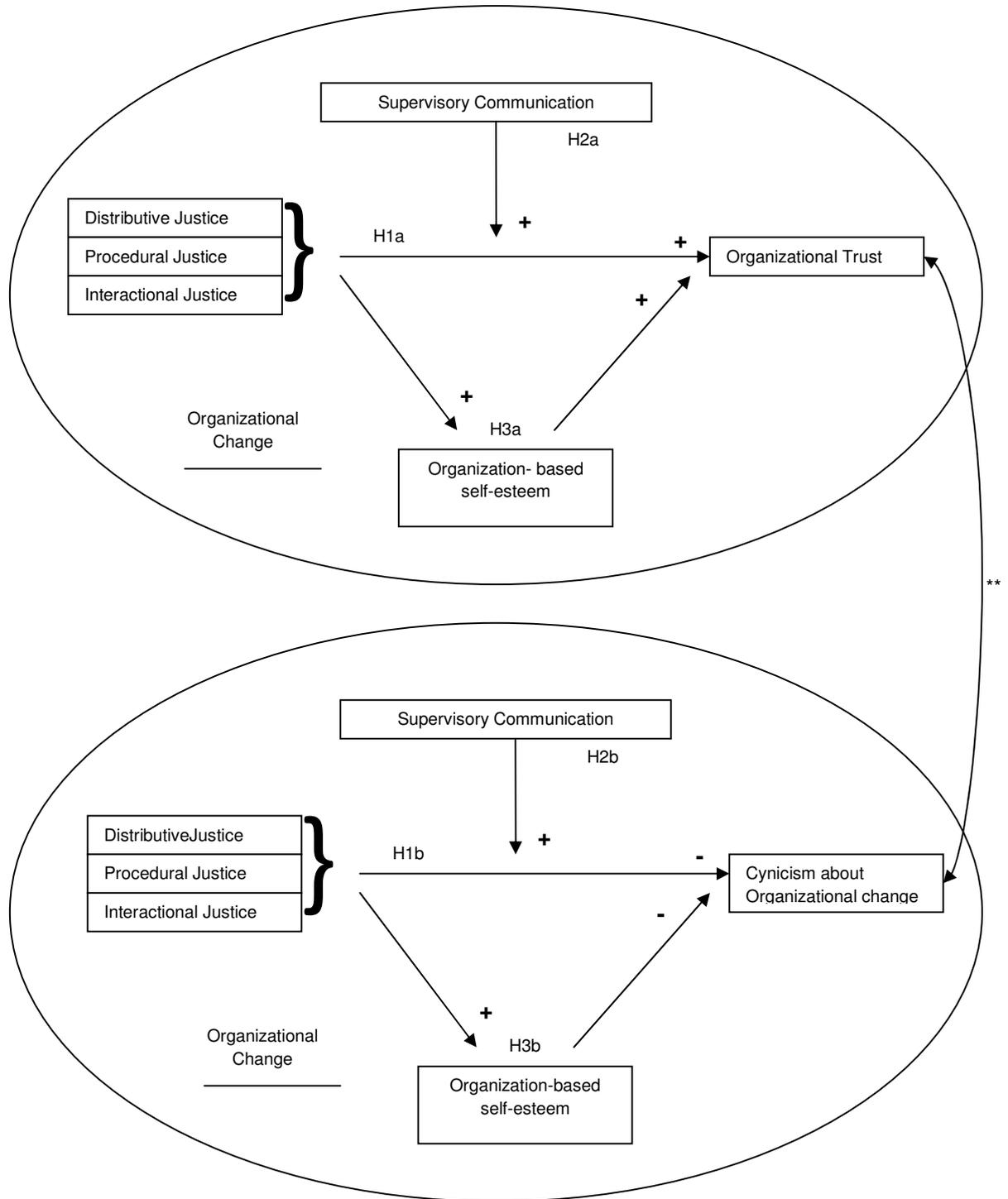


Figure 1 The symbols + and - indicate the hypothesized directions of the relationships.

** O.Trust and CAOC are correlated with one another, however, in this study the concepts are investigated separately.



3. Method

3.1 Sample and procedure

Data were gathered via a Dutch consultancy firm named Verander Visie bv. Their business connections were asked to participate in this research including a 2-wave survey. The study was announced by e-mail including a brief explanation about the goal of the study and the approximate time needed for completion of the survey (maximum of 10 minutes). We also assured respondents anonymity and they were offered to receive feedback on the results of the study. If they wanted to obtain a deeper understanding of the purpose and the importance of this research, they were referred to the following website: www.inesribbers.nl In addition, the website of Verander Visie bv also provided more information regarding this research (<http://www.verandervisie.nl/index.php?pid=70>). It is important to mention that the term cynicism was avoided at both websites in order to minimize sample bias of respondents giving socially desirable answers. If respondents announced that they were not willing to participate in this study, they were removed from the respondents file. One month later, the business connections of Verander Visie bv received an e-mail containing the following text: "What is trust? And what is the role of trust in organizational changes? If you want to participate in this research on trust and organizational change, please go to the online questionnaire..." With the URL of the website.

At T1, we distributed 486 online questionnaires by e-mail. A total of 124 questionnaires were returned (25.5% response rate). From these 124 questionnaires, 82 questionnaires were complete. At T2, five weeks later, the second survey was distributed to those who completed the first survey. Of the 82 participants who completed the first questionnaire, 68 returned the second survey (82.9% response rate). 25 cases were dropped due to incomplete responses, yielding a total of 43 useful responses. E-mail addresses were used to match the surveys of test moment one and two in order to analyze the causal relationships between the constructs.

The final sample consisted of 43 Dutch employees. 39 (90.6%) of them were male, and four (9.4%) of them were female. The respondents were employed in various sectors: banking and insurance (41.9%), business (20.9%), technology and telecom (11.6%), real estate and construction (9.3%), and others (16.3%). None of the respondents fulfilled a position as general manager and all of them had at least one supervisor at the moment of their participation in this study. The context of this research is an organizational change. 32 (74.4%) respondents experienced an organizational change at the moment of their participation in this study, the remaining 11 (25.6%) respondents were asked to recall the last organizational change they experienced when answering the questions.

The survey was initially written in English and then translated into Dutch. 25 persons tested the questionnaire in order to make sure that the items of the questionnaire were formulated in such a way that the essence of the questions was clear. Their background varied from students to employees working in different work fields. By means of feedback coming from the test, questions were reformulated more precisely to avoid misunderstanding of the items.



3.2 Measures

Except for the control variables, all the variables in this study were assessed on a seven point Likert scale (where 1 = *strongly disagree* and 7 = *strongly agree*).

3.2.1 Dependent variable: Organizational trust (O.Trust)

Organizational trust was measured with five items, taken and adapted from the instrument developed by Cummings and Bromiley (1996). They initially developed 12 items in order to measure the construct of organizational trust. For this research five items were used: "In my opinion, this organization is reliable", "We feel that this organization will keep its word", "We think that this organization does not mislead us", "We feel that this organization tries to get out of its commitments (reverse-coded)", and "We feel that this organization negotiates with us honestly". We obtained a cronbrach's alpa of 0.84 for T1 and 0.86 for T2.

3.2.2 Dependent variable: Cynicism About Organizational Change (CAOC)

We measured COAC using the measurement of Reichers, Wanous, James, and Austin (1997). Five of the eight items were taken for this study: "Most of the programs that are supposed to solve problems around here won't do much", "The people who are responsible for solving problems around here don't try hard enough to solve them", "The people who are responsible for making improvements around here don't know enough about what they are doing", "The people who are responsible for solving problems around here don't have the skills needed to do their jobs", and "Plans for future improvement won't amount to much". A cronbrach's alpha of 0.9 was obtained for T1, and a cronbrach's alpha of 0.85 was obtained for T2.

3.2.3 Independent variable: Organizational justice

For this variable the measures developed by Niehoff and Moorman (1993) were taken. They developed three different scales in order to assess distributive, procedural, and interactional justice.

Distributive justice

Niehoff and Moorman (1993) suggested five items to measure distributive justice and these were used in this study: "My work schedule is fair", "I think that my level of pay is fair", "I consider my workload to be quite fair", "Overall, the rewards I receive here are quite fair", and "I feel that my job responsibilities are fair". The cronbrach's alphas of both tests were 0.89

Procedural justice

Niehoff and Moorman (1993) developed six items to measure procedural justice. For this study, five items were used: "Job decisions are made by the general manager in an unbiased manner", "My general manager makes sure that all employee concerns are heard before job decisions are made", "All job decisions are applied consistently across all affected employees", "My general manager clarifies decisions and provides additional information when requested by employees", and "To make formal job decisions, my general manager collects accurate and complete information". The cronbrach's alphas of both tests were 0.88



Interactional justice

Eight items were suggested to measure interactional justice (Niehoff & Moorman, 1993). Five of them were used in this research: “When decisions are made about my job, the general manager treats me with respect and dignity”, “When decisions are made about my job, the general manager deals with me in a truthful manner”, “When decisions are made about my job, the general manager shows concern for my right as an employee”, and “Concerning decisions about my job, the general manager discusses the implications of the decisions with me”. A cronbrach’s alpha of 0.91 was obtained for T1, and a cronbrach’s alpha of 0.94 was obtained for T2.

3.2.4 Moderating variable: Supervisory communication

For this study, a scale of supervisory communication was developed. Communication researchers have identified three factors that influence perceptions of trustworthiness as a consequence of communication: accurate information (Mellinger, 1956; Munchinsky, 1977; O’Reilly, 1977, O’Reilly & Roberts, 1974, 1977; Roberts & O’Reilly, 1974a,b, 1979; Yeager, 1978), explanations for decisions (Folger & Konovsky, 1989; Sapienza & Korsgaard, 1996), and openness (Farris, Senner, & Butterfield, 1973; Gabarro, 1978; Hart, Capps, Cangemi, & Caillouet, 1986; Butler, 1991). Based on these factors an instrument to measure supervisory communication consisting of six items was developed. The following two items measure ‘accurate information’: “My supervisor provides clear information about those decisions that have consequences for my job”, and “My supervisor provides comprehensive information about those decisions that have consequences for my job”. The two items that measure ‘explanations for decisions’ are: “My supervisor always provides explanations why certain decisions are made that have consequences for my job”, and “My supervisor explains the underlying reasons why certain decisions are made that have consequences for my job”. Finally, the following two items measure ‘openness’: “My supervisor openly informs me about those decisions that have consequences for my job”, and “My supervisor gives me the feeling of confidence that I can ask anything I want about those decisions that have consequences for my job”. A cronbrach’s alpa of 0.96 was obtained for the first survey, and a cronbrach’s alpa of 0.97 was obtained for the second survey.

3.2.5 Mediating variable: Organization-Based Self-Esteem (OBSE)

Pierce et al. (1989) developed a 10-item instrument for OBSE. We used five of them in this study: “I count around here”, “I am taken seriously”, “I am important”, “There is faith in me”, and “I am valuable”. At T1 the cronbrach’s alpa was 0.84 and at T2 a cronbrach’s alpa of 0.91 was obtained.

3.3 Control Variables

We controlled for gender, branch, position (manager or employee), whether the participants experienced an organizational change at the moment of their participation in this study, and the size of the organization measured in number of employees.

Table 1 presents an overview of the definition of each construct and the items used to assess these constructs.



Construct	Definition	Items
O.Trust	A feeling of confidence and support in an employer; it is the belief that an employer will be straightforward and will follow through on commitments.	In my opinion, this organization is reliable, We feel that this organization will keep its word, We think that this organization does not mislead us, We feel that this organization tries to get out of its commitments, We feel that this organization negotiates with us honestly.
CAOC	A real loss of faith in the leaders of change.	Most of the programs that are supposed to solve problems around here won't do much, The people who are responsible for solving problems around here don't try hard enough to solve them, The people who are responsible for making improvements around here don't know enough about what they are doing, The people who are responsible for solving problems around here don't have the skills needed to do their jobs, Plans for future improvement won't amount to much.
Distributive justice	Perceptions of fairness about organizational outcomes.	My work schedule is fair, I think that my level of pay is fair, I consider my workload to be quite fair, Overall, the rewards I receive here are quite fair, I feel that my job responsibilities are fair.
Procedural justice	The perceived fairness of procedures used to determine who gets what outcomes.	Job decisions are made by the general manager in an unbiased manner, My general manager makes sure that all employee concerns are heard before job decisions are made, All job decisions are applied consistently across all affected employees, My general manager clarifies decisions and provides additional information when requested by employees, To make formal job decisions, my general manager collects accurate and complete information.
Interactional justice	The perceived fairness of the interpersonal treatment received in a decision process.	When decisions are made about my job, the general manager treats me with respect and dignity, When decisions are made about my job, the general manager deals with me in a truthful manner, When decisions are made about my job, the general manager shows concern for my right as an employee, Concerning decisions about my job, the general manager discusses the implications of the decisions with me.
Supervisory communication	Communicating of supervisors to employees.	My supervisor provides clear information about those decisions that have consequences for my job, My supervisor provides comprehensive information about those decisions that have consequences for my job, My supervisor always provides explanations why certain decisions are made that have consequences for my job, My supervisor explains the underlying reasons why certain decisions are made that have consequences for my job, My supervisor openly informs me about those decisions that have consequences for my job, My supervisor gives me the feeling of confidence that I can ask anything I want about those decisions that have consequences for my job.
OBSE	The degree to which an individual believes him/herself to be capable, significant, and worthy as an organizational member.	I count around here, I am taken seriously, I am important, There is faith in me, I am valuable"

Table 1 Construct definitions and items



5. Results

5.1 Descriptive statistics

Descriptive statistics and correlations of T1 are reported in Table 2a, and of T2 in Table 2b. Cohen and Cohen (1983) classified correlations as high, moderate, and weak according to r values of .50, .30, and .20, respectively. Table 2a and 2b show high correlations for distributive-, procedural-, and interactional justice. Interactional justice and distributive justice correlate .79 ($p < .01$) and .86 ($p < .01$) at T1 and T2 respectively. In addition, distributive justice and procedural justice correlate .71 at T1 ($p < .01$) and .82 at T2 ($p < .01$). Sweeney and McFarlin (1993) also found a high correlation of .72 for procedural and distributive justice. Moreover, Welbourne, Balkin, and Gomez-Mejia (1995) found a correlation of .74. These high correlations are consistent with the theoretical arguments made by Cropanzano and Ambrose (2001). They argue that procedural evaluations are based in large part on outcomes attained (Thibaut & Walker, 1975), and that the same event can be seen as a process in one context and an outcome in another. However, they argue that this distinction is necessary and valuable. In addition, the construct distinction discussion applies to an even greater degree to procedural and interactional justice (Colquitt, Conlon, Wesson, Porter, & Ng, 2001). Studies claim that interactional justice is a social form of procedural justice and that is why many researchers have measured procedural and interactional justice in one combined scale (e.g., Brocker, Siegel, Daly, & Martin, 1997; Brockner, Wiesenfeld, & Martin, 1995; Folger & Konovsky, 1989). However, other research has shown that the two constructs have different correlations or independent effects, or both (e.g., Blader & Tyler, 2000; Cropanzo & Prehar, 1999; Barling & Philips, 1993). In this study, procedural justice and interactional justice correlate .87 at T1 ($p < .01$) and .92 at T2 ($p < .01$). Since these correlations indicate a nearly perfect relationship between the two constructs, they seem to measure the same underlying construct. The standard deviations of both test moments came out higher for the construct of interactional justice than for the construct of procedural justice. Based on these results the construct of procedural justice was decided to be excluded from the first formulated hypotheses. In addition, the concept of procedural justice was excluded from analyses.

5.2 Hypotheses testing at T1 and T2 separately

Due to the small sample size ($n=43$), it was difficult to obtain statistically significant results. Therefore, statistical significance was not the main objective. However, if the results proved to be statistical significant, it is mentioned.

Table 2a and 2b show that none of the control variables had any significant influence on the constructs, except for position. Table 3 presents the mean scores of the constructs of managers and employees at T1 and T2. Table 3 shows that managers have greater mean scores for distributive justice, interactional justice, supervisory communication, OBSE, and O.trust than for employees. In addition, table 3 also shows that managers are less cynical toward organizational changes than employees. Therefore, we controlled for position in the analysis.

Hypothesis 1a predicts that distributive and interactional justice are positively related to O.Trust. We performed a correlational analysis in order to test hypothesis 1a for T1 and T2, and controlled for position. Table 2a and 2b show that the direct association between distributive justice and O.Trust (.70 at T1, and .73 at T2, $p < .001$) are rather strong and in the expected direction at T1 and T2. This is in line with the results of Saunders and Thornhill (2004) who found that distributive justice is an antecedent of trust. In addition, the relationship between interactional justice and O.Trust (.85 at T1, and .88 at T2, $p < .001$) was also found to be strong and in the expected direction at both time moments. Kernan and Hanges (2002) and Mayer et al. (1995) found empirical evidence for the positive



relationship between the way employees are treated by management and trust in management. Since this relationship is comparable to the relationship between interactional justice and O.Trust, we conclude that the results of Kernan and Hanges (2002) and Mayer et al. (1995) are consistent with the findings of this study with respect to the relationship interactional justice and O.Trust. As such, hypothesis 1a is supported.

Hypothesis 1b predicts that distributive and interactional justice are negatively related to CAOC. A correlational analysis was conducted in order to test hypothesis 1b at both time moments, and we controlled for position. Table 2a and 2b show a negative relationship between distributive justice and CAOC (-.47 at T1, and -.46 at T2, $p < .001$). This result is in line with the findings of Berneth, Armenakis, Feild, and Walker (2007) who found empirical evidence for the negative relationship between distributive justice and organizational cynicism. In addition, the results of this study show a negative relationship between interactional justice and CAOC (-.50 at T1, and -.51 at T2, $p < .001$). This result is consistent with the results of Berneth, Armenakis, Feild, and Walker (2007) who found a negative relationship between interactional justice and organizational cynicism. Hence, we found empirical evidence to support hypothesis 1b.



Table 2a**Means, standard deviations, and intercorrelations T1**

	M	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
1. Org.Change ^a	1.26	0.44	—										
2. Gender ^b	1.09	0.3	.18	—									
3. Size Organisation	4.91	2.01	-.21	-.23	—								
4. Position ^c	1.31	0.47	-.23	.23	.31	—							
5. Dis.Jus	5.5	1.03	-.2	-.19	-.12	-.41**	—						
6. Pro.Jus	4.44	1.15	.06	-.15	-.14	-.44**	.71**	—					
7. Int.Jus	4.92	1.20	.12	-.15	-.20	-.47**	.79**	.87**	—				
8. O.Trust	4.89	0.99	.13	-.10	-.08	-.43**	.70**	.87**	.85**	—			
9. CAOC	4.2	1.39	-.16	-.11	.25	.49**	-.47**	-.60**	-.50**	-.50**	—		
10. OBSE	5.06	0.79	.19	-.19	-.03	-.53**	.68**	.75**	.80**	.70**	-.55**	—	
11. Sup.Com	5.46	1.33	.07	-.14	-.10	-.34*	.69**	.75**	.80**	.66**	-.40**	.72**	—

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, Org.Change^a = Organizational change, coded as 1 = yes, 2 = no, Gender^b, coded as 1 = male, 2 = female, Position^c, coded as 1 = manager, 2 = employee

Table 2b**Means, standard deviations, and intercorrelations T2**

	M	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
1. Org.Change ^a	1.26	0.44	—										
2. Gender ^b	1.09	0.3	.18	—									
3. Size Organis.	4.91	2.01	-.21	-.23	—								
4. Position ^c	1.31	0.47	-.23	.23	.31	—							
5. Dis.Jus	5.02	1.11	.07	-.18	-.19	-.32*	—						
6. Pro.Jus	4.44	1.18	.17	-.01	-.29	-.49**	.82**	—					
7. Int.Jus	4.80	1.34	.20	-.06	-.29	-.47**	.86**	.92**	—				
8. O.Trust	4.77	1.12	.23	-.04	-.21	-.55**	.73**	.83**	.88**	—			
9. CAOC	4.26	1.2	-.21	-.14	-.23	.41**	-.46**	-.61**	-.51**	-.60**	—		
10. OBSE	5.43	0.87	.19	-.10	-.09	-.25	.78**	.72**	.77**	.67**	-.41**	—	
11. Sup.Com	4.94	1.43	.16	-.02	-.18	-.26	.78**	.80**	.86**	.74**	-.45**	.75**	—

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, Org.Change^a = Organizational change, coded as 1 = yes, 2 = no, Gender^b, coded as 1 = male, 2 = female, Position^c, coded as 1 = manager, 2 = employee



Table 3 Mean scores of constructs of managers and employees

	Distributive justice	Interactional justice	Supervisory communication	OBSE	CAOC	Trust
<i>T1 Manager</i>	5.3	5.3	5.5	5.7	3.8	5.2
<i>T1 Employee</i>	4.3	4.2	4.5	4.8	5.2	4.3
<i>T2 Manager</i>	5.3	5.2	5.3	5.6	3.9	5.2
<i>T2 Employee</i>	4.5	3.9	4.5	5.1	5.0	3.9

Next, the moderated hypotheses were tested. In order to test the hypotheses, we split the sample in two sub samples by the median of supervisory communication. For T1 we obtained a sub sample of 'high' scores (>5.5) of supervisory communication and a sub sample of 'low' scores (<5.5) of supervisory communication. In addition, the same was done for T2, and a sub sample of 'high' scores (>5.0) of supervisory communication, and a sub sample of 'low' scores (<5.0) of supervisory communication was created. Table 4a and 4b present the means, standard deviation, and intercorrelations of the constructs at T1 based on supervisory communication smaller than 5.5, and supervisory communication larger than 5.5 respectively. Moreover, table 4c and 4d present the mean scores, standard deviations, and intercorrelations of the constructs at T2 based on supervisory communication smaller than 5.0, and supervisory communication larger than 5.0 respectively.

First hypothesis 2a was tested. Hypothesis 2a predicts that the relationships between distributive and interactional justice, and O.Trust are moderated by supervisory communication. The correlation between distributive justice and organizational trust has the value of .47 ($p < .05$) for 'low' supervisory communication and a value of .74 ($p < .01$) for 'high' supervisory communication at T1. In addition, the obtained value of the correlation between distributive justice and O.Trust was .60 ($p < .05$) for 'low' supervisory communication, and .68 ($p < .01$) for high supervisory communication at T2. Moreover, the relationship between interactional justice and O.Trust is also moderated by supervisory communication at both time moments. (.72, $p < .01$, for 'low' supervisory communication at T1, and .86, $p < .01$, for high supervisory communication at T1) (.78, $p < .01$, for 'low' supervisory communication at T2, and .88 $p < .01$, for high supervisory communication at t2). Therefore, hypothesis 2a is supported.

In addition, hypothesis 2b predicts that the relationships between distributive and interactional justice, and CAOC are moderated by supervisory communication. The results show that the relationship between distributive justice and CAOC is moderated by supervisory communication. At T1, the correlation between distributive justice and CAOC is -.40 for 'low' supervisory communication and -.60 ($p < .01$) for 'high' supervisory communication. At T2, the correlation of distributive justice and CAOC is -.28 for 'low' supervisory communication and -.50 ($p < .05$) for 'high' supervisory communication. Moreover, the relationship between interactional justice and CAOC was not moderated by supervisory communication for both time moments (-.55, $p < .05$, for 'low' supervisory communication, and -.50, $p < .05$, for 'high' supervisory communication at T1) (-.50, $p < .05$, for 'low' supervisory communication, and -.52, $p < .05$, for 'high' supervisory communication at T2). As such, hypothesis 2b is partly supported.



Table 4a means, standard deviations for sup.communication <5.5 at T1

	M	SD	1	2	3	4	5
1. position	-	-	-				
2. disjus	4.3	1.04	-.25	-			
3. intjus	4.1	0.90	-.09	.65**	-		
4. trust	4.3	0.74	-.12	.47*	.72**	-	
5. caoc	4.6	1.1	.57*	-.40	-.55*	-.64*	-

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, disjus = distributive justice, intjus = interactional justice,
trust = organizational trust

Table 4b means, standard deviations for sup.communication > 5.5 at T1

	M	SD	1	2	3	4	5
1. position	-	-	-				
2. disjus	5.6	0.60	-.28	-			
3. intjus	5.8	0.93	-.50*	.71**	-		
4. trust	5.3	0.98	-.45*	.74**	.86**	-	
5. caoc	3.8	1.50	.48*	-.60**	-.50*	-.56**	-

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, disjus = distributive justice, intjus = interactional justice,
trust = organizational trust

Table 4c means, standard deviations for sup. communication <5.0 at T2

	M	SD	1	2	3	4	5
1. position	-	-	-				
2. disjus	4.3	1.11	-.19	-			
3. intjus	3.8	1.07	-.50	.73**	-		
4. trust	4.1	0.92	-.52*	.60*	.78**	-	
5. caoc	4.7	0.96	.56*	-.28	-.50*	-.70**	-

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, disjus = distributive justice, intjus = interactional justice,
trust = organizational trust

Table 4d means, standard deviations for sup. communication >5.0 at T2

	M	SD	1	2	3	4	5
1. position	-	-	-				
2. disjus	5.7	0.61	-.37	-			
3. intjus	5.8	0.85	-.47*	.83**	-		
4. trust	5.6	0.83	-.61**	.68**	.88**	-	
5. caoc	3.9	1.36	.48*	-.50*	-.52*	-.53*	-

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, disjus = distributive justice, intjus = interactional justice,
trust = organizational trust



Next, both mediation hypotheses were tested. Hypothesis 3a predicts that the relationships between distributive and interactional justice and O.Trust are mediated by OBSE. A hierarchical multiple regression analysis was conducted to test this hypothesis for T1 and T2. Table 5a presents the results of the regression analysis regarding the mediation effect of OBSE on the relationship between distributive justice, interactional justice, and O.Trust for both time moments. The β value of distributive justice is .61 ($p < .01$) at T1 in model 2 of table 5a. This value decreased to .44 ($p < .01$) when OBSE was added in model 3. In addition, model 3 of table 5a shows that OBSE obtained a value of .31. This analysis presents that the relationship of distributive justice and O.Trust is partially mediated by OBSE at T1. The same occurred at T2. The β value of distributive justice is .62 ($p < .01$) at T2 in model 2 of table 5a. This value decreased to .46 ($p < .01$) when OBSE was added in model 3. Model 3 of table 5a shows that OBSE obtained a value of .22 at T2. This analysis shows that the relationship of distributive justice and O.Trust is partially mediated by OBSE at T2. The same was done for the mediation effect of OBSE on the relationship between interactional justice and O.Trust, presented in table 5b. No mediation effect exists of OBSE on the relationship between interactional justice and O.Trust for both time moments. Therefore, hypothesis 3a is partly supported.

Hypothesis 3b predicts a mediation effect of OBSE on the relationships between distributive and interactional justice, and CAOC. A hierarchical multiple regression analysis was performed to test hypothesis 3b for T1 and T2. Table 5c presents the results of the regression analysis regarding the mediation effect of OBSE on the relationship between distributive justice and CAOC for both time moments. The relationship between distributive justice and CAOC is completely mediated at T1, however, no mediation effect occurred at T2. Moreover, the relationship between interactional justice and CAOC was partially mediated by OBSE at T1, whereas no mediation effect occurred at T2, presented in table 5d. As such, hypothesis 3b was partly supported.



Table 5a Results multiple regression analysis on O.Trust

model	dv: trust-1	β	dv: trust-2	β
1	(constant)		(constant)	
	position	-.43*	position	-.55**
2	(constant)		(constant)	
	position	-.16	position	-.36**
	disjus-1	.61**	disjus-2	.62**
3	(constant)		(constant)	
	position	-.07	position	-.36**
	disjus-1	.44**	disjus-2	.46*
	obse-1	.31	obse-2	.22

Table 5b Results multiple regression analysis on O.Trust

model	dv: trust-1	β	dv: trust-2	β
1	(constant)		(constant)	
	position	-.43*	position	-.55**
2	(constant)		(constant)	
	position	-.05	position	-.19*
	intjus-1	.81**	intjus-2	.78**
3	(constant)		constant)	
	position	-.05	position	-.19*
	intjus-1	.81**	intjus-2	.75**
	obse-1	.002	obse-2	.04

Table 5c Results multiple regression analysis on caoc

model	dv: caoc-1	β	dv: caoc-2	β
1	(constant)		(constant)	
	position	.49**	position	.41**
2	(constant)		(constant)	
	position	.39**	position	.29
	disjus-1	-.24	disjus-2	-.38*
3	(constant)		(constant)	
	position	.31*	position	.29
	disjus-1	-.09	disjus-2	-.31
	obse-1	-.28	obse-2	-.09

Table 5d Results multiple regression analysis on caoc

model	dv: caoc-1	β	dv: caoc-2	β
1	(constant)		(constant)	
	position	.49**	position	.41**
2	(constant)		(constant)	
	position	.35*	position	.21
	intjus-1	-.31	intjus-2	-.44**
3	(constant)		constant)	
	position	.30	position	.22
	intjus-1	-.17	intjus-2	-.40
	obse-1	-.21	obse-2	-.05

Note that: * $p < .01$, ** $p < .01$, 1 = T1, 2 = T2, disjus = distributive justice, intjus = interactional justice, trust = organizational trust



5.3 Hypotheses testing with difference score method

In order to test hypotheses 3a and 3b based on the samples as they are related in time, the difference score method was used, presented in table 6.

First we tested hypothesis 3a, predicting that the relationships of change in distributive and interactional justice and O.Trust are mediated by OBSE. In the first step of the multiple regression analysis the dependent variable included O.Trust at T2. We controlled for position in order to obtain the unique variance of O.Trust not explained by position. In the second step we controlled for O.Trust at T1 (in table 6 indicated as 'trust-1'). Next, the difference score of distributive justice was included in the third step (in table 6 indicated as Ddisjus). The latter is calculated by the difference of distributive justice at T2 and distributive justice at T1. Finally, we entered OBSE. Table 6 shows that the β value of the difference score of distributive justice is $-.25$ ($p < .01$) in model 3. This value decreased to $-.01$ when OBSE was added in model 4. In addition, model 4 shows that OBSE obtained a value of $.33$. This analysis shows that the relationship between distributive justice and O.Trust is completely mediated by OBSE. In addition, table 6 presents that OBSE explains 2% of the unique variance in O.Trust at T2, and the difference of distributive justice of T2 and T1 explain 6% of O.Trust at T2.

The same was done for the relationship between interactional justice and O.Trust. Table 6 shows no mediation effect of OBSE on the relationship between interactional justice and O.Trust. OBSE did not explain any extra unique variance in O.Trust at T2. The difference of interactional justice of T2 and T1, resulted in a unique variance of 17% in O.Trust at T2. Based on this longitudinal analysis, we conclude that hypothesis 3a is partly supported.

Hypothesis 3b predicts that the relationships between distributive and interactional justice and CAOC are mediated by OBSE. Table 6 shows that the relationship between distributive justice and CAOC is completely mediated by CAOC. OBSE explains 5% of the unique variance in CAOC at T2 and the difference of distributive justice of T2 and T1 explained 4% of the unique variance in CAOC at T2. Moreover, the results show that the relationship between interactional justice and CAOC is also completely mediated by OBSE. This is in line with the results of Pierce et al. (1989) and Naus, van Iterson, and Roe (2007). Pierce et al. (1989) found that managerial integrity, which is comparable with interactional justice, is an antecedent of OBSE. Moreover, Naus, van Iterson, and Roe (2007) found that a high level of OBSE leads to a lower level of organizational cynicism. As such, we found empirical evidence to support hypothesis 3b. In addition, the results of table 6 show that OBSE and the difference between interactional justice of T2 and T1 explain 6% and 2% of the unique variance in CAOC at T2 respectively.



5.4 Additional results

In this section we provide additional results based on the reverse ordering of some prior studied relationships. We tested the mediation effect of OBSE on the relationship between distributive and interactional justice and O.Trust, and distributive and interactional justice and CAOC. Below the conceptual model of these relationships is provided in figure 2.

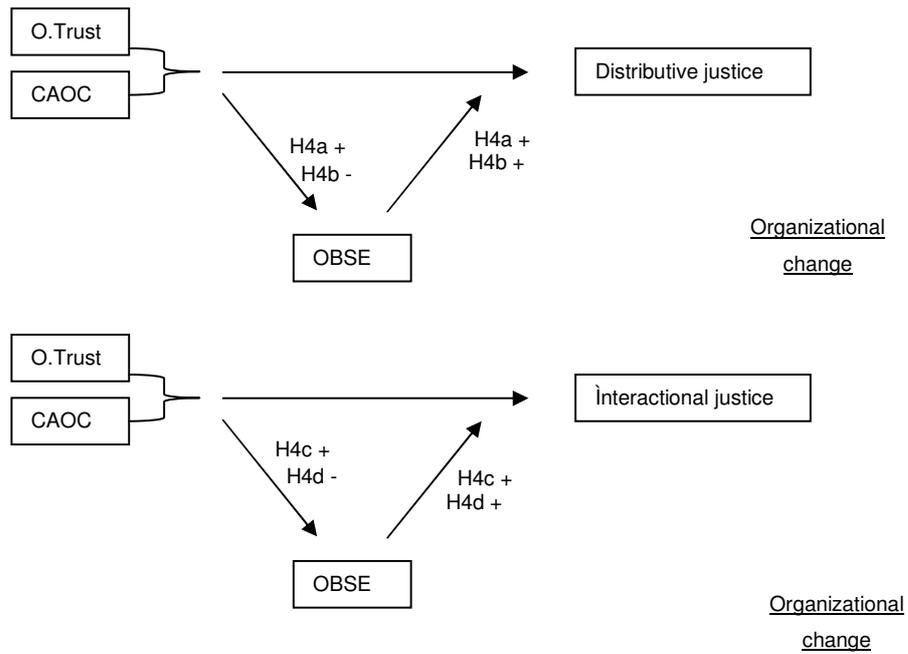


Figure 2

The following hypotheses can be formulated:

Hypothesis 4a: The relationship between O.trust and distributive justice is mediated by OBSE.

Hypothesis 4b: The relationship between CAOC and distributive justice is mediated by OBSE.

Hypothesis 4c: The relationship between O.trust and interactional justice is mediated by OBSE.

Hypothesis 4d: The relationship between CAOC and interactional justice is mediated by OBSE.



The results of the tested hypotheses are presented in table 7. First we tested hypothesis 4a. The dependent variable used in this multiple regression analysis included distributive justice at T2. In the first step, we controlled for position in order to obtain the unique variance of distributive justice not explained by position. In the second step we controlled for distributive justice at T1 (in table 7 indicated as 'disjus-1'). Next, the difference score of O.Trust was included in the third step (in table 7 indicated as Dtrust). The latter is calculated by the difference of O.Trust at T2 and O.Trust at T1. Finally, we entered OBSE. Table 7 shows that the β value of the difference score of trust is $-.26$ ($p < .05$). This value decreased to $-.09$ when OBSE was added in model 4. In addition, model 4 shows that OBSE obtained a value of $.54$ ($p < .01$). This analysis shows that the relationship between O.Trust and distributive justice is completely mediated by OBSE. As such, hypothesis 4a is supported. OBSE explained an additional 24% of the unique variance in distributive justice at T2. The difference in trust explained an additional 6% of the unique variance in distributive justice at T2.

The same was done for hypotheses 4b, c, and d. The next subsection elaborates upon the results of hypotheses 4b, c, and d. Hypothesis 4b was also supported. The relationship between CAOC and distributive justice is completely mediated by OBSE. The additional unique variance of OBSE explained in distributive justice at T2 obtained a value of 24%. The difference in CAOC explained an additional 4% of unique variance in distributive justice at T2. Then hypothesis 4c was tested. The relationship between O.trust and interactional justice is partly mediated by OBSE. As such, hypothesis 4c was supported. 11% of the additional unique variance of OBSE is explained in interactional justice at T2. In addition, 20% of the unique variance of the difference of trust was explained in interactional justice at T2. Finally, the relationships between CAOC and interactional justice is completely mediated by OBSE as well, supporting hypothesis 4d. OBSE explained a 20% of the unique variance in interactional justice at T2 and the difference in CAOC explained another 3% of the unique variance in interactional justice at T2.

We conclude that the mediation effect of OBSE tested in hypotheses 4a, b, c, and d are significantly stronger than the mediation effect of OBSE tested in hypotheses 3a and b. In addition, table 6 shows brackets that present the unique variance of O.Trust and CAOC at T2 explained by OBSE and distributive justice, and explained by OBSE and interactional justice. The brackets of table 7 show the unique variance of distributive justice and interactional justice at T2 explained by O.Trust and OBSE, and explained by CAOC and OBSE. The unique variance of trust and cynicism at T2 explained by justice and OBSE is smaller than the unique variance of justice at T2 explained by trust, cynicism, and OBSE. Based on these results, we can conclude that the model of justice explained by trust, cynicism, and OBSE is much stronger, than the reverse ordering.



Table 6 Results hypotheses 3a and 3b

Hypotheses	H3a			H3a			H3b			H3b			
	model	dv: trust-2	β	ΔR^2	dv: trust-2	β	ΔR^2	dv: caoc-2	β	ΔR^2	dv: caoc-2	β	ΔR^2
1	(constant) position				(constant) position			(constant) position			(constant) position		
2	(constant) position' trust-1				(constant) position' trust-1			(constant) position' caoc-1			(constant) position' caoc-1		
3	(constant) position' trust-1 Ddisjus				(constant) position' trust-1 Dintjus			(constant) position' caoc-1 Ddisjus			(constant) position' caoc-1 Dintjus		
4	(constant) position' trust-1 Ddisjus obse-2		8%		(constant) position' trust-1 Dintjus obse-2		17%	(constant) position' caoc-1 Ddisjus obse-2		9%	(constant) position' caoc-1 Dintjus obse-2		8%

$p < .01$, ** $p < .05$, 1 = T1, 2 = T2, D = difference of T2-T1, dv = dependent variable, trust = organizational trust, disjus = distributive justice, intjus = interactional justice

Table 7 Additional results

Hypotheses	H4a			H4b			H4c			H4d			
	model	dv: disjus-2	β	ΔR^2	dv: disjus-2	β	ΔR^2	dv: intjus-2	β	ΔR^2	dv: intjus-2	β	ΔR^2
1	(constant) position				(constant) position			(constant) position			(constant) position		
2	(constant) position disjus-1				(constant) position disjus-1			(constant) position intjus-1			(constant) position intjus-1		
3	(constant) position disjus-1 Dtrust				(constant) position disjus1 Dcaoc			(constant) position intjus-1 Dtrust			(constant) position intjus-1 Dcaoc		
4	(constant) position disjus-1 Dtrust obse-2		30%		(constant) position disjus-1 Dcaoc obse-2		28%	(constant) position intjus-1 Dtrust obse-2		31%	(constant) position intjus-1 Dcaoc obse-2		23%

$p < .01$, ** $p < .05$, 1 = T1, 2 = T2, D = difference of T2-T1, dv = dependent variable, trust = organizational trust, disjus = distributive justice, intjus = interactional justice



6. Discussion

6.1 Discussion initial results

Most of the hypotheses were supported. However, supervisory communication did not have a moderating effect on the relationship between interactional justice and CAOC, and the relationship between interactional justice and O.Trust was not mediated by OBSE. We do not have a clear argument to explain why these hypotheses were not supported. However, it is remarkable that both relationships include the construct of interactional justice and not the construct of distributive justice. A motive explaining why the resulting relationships were not in line with the expectations may be due to the composition of the sample. Most of the respondents (70%) hold a managerial position. Managers may speak more often and at a different level with management than employees. Therefore, interactional justice may have a lower impact on the self esteem of managers than on the self esteem of employees, and that is why communication of supervisors may have less impact on managers than on employees. Moreover, managers have less influence on distributive justice than on interactional justice, since factors including salary and job responsibilities usually are fixed. This may explain the reason why the hypotheses that are not supported include the concept of interactional justice and not the concept of distributive justice. However, the results of this study show that OBSE does mediate the relationship between interactional justice and CAOC, and the relationship between interactional justice and O.Trust is moderated by supervisory communication, which is in contrast with the former explanation. Hence, we do not have a clear view why these hypotheses were not supported.

The last three research questions can be answered:

Which factors create trust among employees in an organizational change context?

We found that distributive justice and interactional justice are antecedents of O.Trust. In addition, the results show that the effective performance of supervisory communication resulted in a positive effect on the relationship between distributive justice and O.Trust and interactional justice and O.Trust. Moreover, this research asserts that OBSE is an important factor for creating O.Trust. This factor has such a strong influence that it completely mediates the relationship between distributive justice and O.Trust. This indicates that if management makes sure that employees perceive fairness about organizational outcomes, e.g. salary and job responsibilities, they will have a higher level of OBSE resulting in a higher level of trust in the organization.

Which factors decrease organizational cynicism in an organizational change context?

The direct factors that decrease organizational cynicism in an organizational change are distributive justice and interactional justice. In addition, the results show that effective performance of supervisory communication resulted in a positive effect on the relationship between distributive justice and CAOC. We found that OBSE was an important antecedent of CAOC. OBSE completely mediates the relationship between distributive justice and CAOC, and the relationship between interactional justice and CAOC. Said differently, if management makes sure that employees perceive fairness about organizational outcomes, e.g. salary and job responsibilities, they will obtain a higher level of OBSE resulting in a lower level of CAOC. The same applies to distributive justice. If management makes sure that employees perceive fairness of the interpersonal treatment received in a decision process, this will lead to higher levels of OBSE resulting in a lower level of CAOC.



How can management influence these factors?

According to this study, the role of management is important in creating trust or cynicism among employees in an organizational change. Management needs to make sure that employees perceive fairness about organizational outcomes, and that employees perceive fairness of the interpersonal treatment received in a decision process. Both factors have an important influence on O.Trust and CAOC. Moreover, distributive justice and interactional justice have a strong influence on OBSE. If management makes sure that employees perceive fairness about organizational outcomes, and that employees perceive fairness of the interpersonal treatment received in a decision process, they will develop a higher level of OBSE than when they do not perceive fairness about organizational outcomes and interpersonal treatment in a decision process. In addition, supervisors play a significant role in the creation of trust in an organizational change context. If they make sure that they have an open attitude toward the employees, provide accurate information, and give explanations for decisions, this will result in a positive effect on trust in the organization. Moreover, we found that supervisors can reduce the level of cynicism in an organization if they make sure that they have an open attitude toward the employees, provide accurate information, and give explanations for decisions.

The research question driving this study can be answered: The factor distributive justice, interactional justice, OBSE, and supervisory communication create organizational trust and decrease organizational cynicism within an organizational change context.

6.2 Discussion additional results

We also found some interesting mediating relationships of OBSE on the relationship between O.Trust and COAC and distributive- and interactional justice. OBSE has such a strong influence that it appears to completely mediate the relationship between O.Trust and distributive- and interactional justice. Said differently, if employees have a high level of trust in the organization, this leads to a high level of OBSE, resulting in employees' perceptions of fairness about organizational outcomes, and fairness of the interpersonal treatment received in a decision process. The power of this relationship compared to the initial relationship studied (distributive/interactional justice → OBSE → O.Trust) is much stronger. In addition, the same occurred for the mediation relationship of OBSE on the relationship between CAOC and distributive- and interactional justice. If employees have a cynical attitude toward organizational changes, this leads to a lower level of OBSE, resulting in that employees perceive less fairness about organizational outcomes, and less fairness of the interpersonal treatment received in a decision process. The power of this relationship studied was much stronger than the initial relationship investigated (distributive/interactional justice → OBSE → CAOC). Thus, we found stronger support for causality running from trust and cynicism to perceptions of justice in the workplace, than for the reverse ordering

6.2 Contribution to theory and practice

For this study the measurement of supervisory communication was developed. In addition, the moderating effect of supervisory communication on the relationship between distributive and interactional justice and O.Trust and CAOC has not been researched so far. Moreover, within this study, the mediating effect of OBSE on the relationship between distributive and interactional justice and O.Trust and CAOC was studied for the first time. Furthermore, the reverse ordering of these relationships was not studied in prior research.

This study indicates that management and supervisors have an essential role in creating trust or cynicism in organizational changes. According to this research, management needs to make sure that employees perceive distributive and interactional justice in order to create O.trust and to decrease the level of CAOC. Supervisors need to communicate in such



a way that employees perceive an open attitude of their supervisors. In addition, they need to provide explanations for decisions and accurate information should be given to employees in an organizational change. This leads to higher levels of trust and lower levels of cynicism in organizations.

6.4 Limitations and further research

This research has some limitations. The sample size is rather small ($n=43$). The consequence of a small sample size is that not all relationships are statistically significant. In addition, another limitation of this study is that we do not have any information regarding the type of organizational change the respondents experience. An acquisition of an organization by another organization may result in different outcomes regarding the level of trust and cynicism than a change in supervisor.

70% of the respondents hold a managerial position. If the sample included only employees without fulfilling a managerial position, we suspect that the results would be rather different. For instance, we believe that the relationship between interactional justice and O.trust is mediated by OBSE among employees. This relationship needs to be further investigated in future research. In addition, the concept of OBSE should be further involved in the organizational justice literature. The level of OBSE is developed by an organization and organizational justice offers a useful means to explain the perceived fairness of organizational outcomes of the decisions made, the organizational procedures used to make these decisions, and the interpersonal treatment of employees in a decision process of an organization. Organizational justice may serve as an important antecedent of OBSE. That is why future research should deeper investigate that relationship. In this study we did not focus on the relationship between supervisory communication and OBSE. Further research should study this relationship since supervisory communication may be an important antecedent of OBSE. In addition, we believe that the concept of OBSE is undervalued in the current academic literature. This research shows that OBSE is an important construct that effects O.Trust and CAOC. We believe that OBSE plays an important role in organizational settings. This construct should be studied more extensively in order to provide management a guideline how to make their subordinated feel like valued members of their organisation.



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