

## **Relationship between organizational justice and job burnout in employees of Sport and Youth Head Office of Tehran**

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### **ABSTRACT**

The primary objective of this study was to determine the relationship between organizational justice and job burnout in employees of Sport and Youth Head Office of Tehran in Iran. This was a population based study (N= 180). Data were collected using two questionnaires including organizational justice inventory- Todd and Chester (2007) and burnout inventory- Maslach and Hezel (1977). The face and content validity of questionnaires were confirmed with corrective feedback from experts and professors in the sports management field, and Cronbach's alpha reliability test of organizational justice and burnout were 0.94 and 0.72, respectively. Descriptive statistics, Kolmogorov Smirnov, Pearson correlation coefficients, and stepwise multiple regression were used to analyze data. Results showed a significant negative association between organizational justice and employee burnout ( $r = -0.19$ ,  $p = 0.04$ ). In addition, among the subscales of organizational justice, procedural justice was the only subscale that showed the significant negative relationship with burnout ( $r = -0.28$ ,  $P = 0.003$ ). Moreover, regression analysis showed that the distributive justice subscale can be considered as a predictor for job burnout. In conclusion, the findings of this study showed if organizational managers show more equity in their performance, it reduces job burnout among employees and consequently improvement in their job effectiveness, efficiency and performance.

**Keywords:** organizational justice, job burnout, employees.

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### **INTRODUCTION**

Many behavioral scientists believe that organizations are the undeniable aspect of today's modern world. Communities' natures are formed by organization and similarity they are formed by world and its relations. Although various forms of organizations based on various targets are established and organized, undoubtedly all of them are affected by the efforts of mental and physical abilities of their employees who are considered to be the main pillars of each organization (Hooman, 2002). Organizations are social systems and target centers that their stability depends on the existence of strong bonds between their constituent and elements. Perceived inequities in the organization can have

devastating effects on the spirit of collective work, because they affect the effort and motivation of staff (Seyedjavadedin et al, 2008). Injustice and the distribution of unfair gains and output of organization undermine the morale of employees and reduce their spirit of effort and activity. Thus, justice implementing is the code of survival and stability of the organization and the development of its employees (Masudi et al, 2008). Therefore the main task of organization management is to maintain and develop a sense of justice and fair treatment among employees, especially in some of the behaviors of managers with employees such as the distribution of rewards, promotion, supervisory relationships, and appointment that are very important for employees (Ghafuri & Golparvar. 2009). Organizational justice is the degree to which employees feel that rules, procedures and organizational policies related to their work is fair (Neami & Shokrkon, 2004).

The stress among employees and its effects in organizations has been considered recently by many researchers. Stress is essential for staff activity, but distress reduces staff efficiency and undermines the foundations of the organization (Gudarzi. 2002). One of the main employment issues among employees that usually can be seen in the shape of reaction to occupational and organizational stress is the phenomenon of burnout (Verdinejad.2006). Previous research has shown that employees who suffer from fatigue in their jobs, also show decreased productivity and efficiency and thus they show less participation and this directly affect the organization (Bakhtiyari, 2009). Fejgin & Ben-sira (1991) concluded that low salaries, bureaucratic constraints and limitations of the job are three factors that mostly relevant to the job burnout (Fejgin & Ben-sira, 1991). In addition, Leiter & Maslach (2004) suggested that the less proportionality between the individual and his job, the more is the probability of job burnout (Leiter & Maslach, 2004). Burnout causes that people lose interest in their work, reduce their efficiency, undermine inputs and performance of themselves or others, behave in a manner that encourages others to reduce the input, or behave in a manner that change their input and leave their jobs. Valuable employees who leave the organization for misunderstanding, harm the organization as same as the employees who leave due to a reasonable reason (Erabi et al, 2009). According to Maslach and colleagues (2001), job burnout defined as physical experience, emotional and mental exhaustion along with continuous stress. Burnout is a psychological process of cognitive that occurs under conditions of severe stress and declares itself as an emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and decreased motivation and performance improvements (WHO, 1998).

It seems that the feeling of justice is one of the factors affecting staff burnout. From a long time ago social and management scientists have realized the importance and necessity of social justice as an essential base for the effectiveness of organizational processes (Neami & Shokrkon, 2004). Undoubtedly it is not possible to find an employee, who accepts unfairness, and probably he/she will react to this unfairness and if he/she cannot do such a reaction, he/she will feel fatigued and exhausted. Develop and maintain of fairness behaviors and perceived sense in the organization and staff, is essential for increasing the positive attitude of employees, their commitment and loyalty, motivation, effort and their individual and collective performance (Seyedjavaddin et al, 2008).

Masoudi and colleagues (2008) also have identified the degree of inappropriateness, and reward of the work done by employees (index of the distributive justice staff) as the cause of burnout (Masoudi et al, 2008). Moliner (et al. 2005) reported that there was a significant and positive relationship between organizational justice and its dimensions of burnout. Further, among the dimensions of organizational justice, procedural justice has the strongest relationship with burnout (Moliner C, Martínez-Tur V, Ramos J, Peiró JM.2005). Liljegren & Ekberg (2009) investigated 428 Swedish police officers and found a significant and negative relationship between organizational justice and burnout (Liljegren & Ekberg, 2009). Ivone and Helenides (2009), studied 233 university professors and found that organizational justice with a mediating role of commitment can predict the burnout (Ivone Félix de Sousa; Helenides Mendonça. 2009). Lambart and colleagues (2010) also found that distributive justice and procedural justice had not only a significant relationship with burnout, but a significant relationship with intention to employees' turnover (Lambart et al. 2010). Eric and colleagues (2010) in their research examined the relationship between distributive justice and procedural justice with burnout. They studied 450 subjects and found that distributive justice and procedural justice have a negative and significant relationship with burnout (Eric et al. 2010). AL- Zahrani in his study showed that all three dimensions of

organizational justice (distributive justice, procedural justice, and justice is an interactive) could predict 30% of burnout of Private Hospital staff in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia (AL- Zahrani, 2011).

Since in many of employees of sports organizations in Iran there are issues such as lack of motivation, dissatisfaction, emotional exhaustion, and lack of intention to work and organizational goals and somehow they suffer from burnout, we decided to find what the reasons behind these issues are. So based on the literature review that we did on burnout, we concluded it is very likely that injustice in organizations may produce these issues. The purpose of this study, therefore, was to estimate the relationship between organizational justices (including its subscales) with job burnout in employees' of Sport and Youth Head Office of Tehran in Iran. Additionally, we wanted to determine if organizational justice (including its subscales) predicts the job burnout?

### MATERIALS AND METHODS

This was a cross sectional population based study. Statistical population of this research was all employees' of Sport and Youth Head Office of Tehran in Iran (N= 180). 117 participants filled out the questionnaires and returned them. There was no significant difference between responders and non responders on age, gender, marital status, and level of educational.

In order to collect data we used two questionnaires including:

1. Chester and Todd Organizational Justice Questionnaire (2007). This questionnaire has 3 dimensions including procedural justice (from question 1 to 13), distributive justice (from question 14 to 17), and interactive justice (from question 18 to 26). Questionnaire has 26 items and each question has a response option of 1 - 5 Likert scale which range from very low to too much. Total score could be from 26 to 130.

2. Hezel and Maslach Job burnout Questionnaire (1977) which is comprised of 22 questions each with a response option of 1 - 5 Likert scale which range from completely disagree to completely agree. Total score could be from 22 to 110.

The face and content validity of questionnaires were confirmed with corrective feedback from experts and professors in the sports management field, and Cronbach's alpha reliability test of organizational justice and burnout were 0.94 and 0.72, respectively. Descriptive statistics (e.g., mean, standard deviations, and frequency) were calculated to describe the sample and summarize data. Kolmogorov-Smirnov test was used to verify data normality. To verify the association between variables Spearman and Pearson correlation coefficients were used for categorical and continuous variables, respectively. Spearman's correlation was also used when data were continuous but not normally distributed. To find job burnout predictors stepwise multiple linear regression was used. Individuals with missing information from the questionnaire were excluded from the specific analysis. Statistical significance was considered for p values less than 0.05. Statistical analyses were performed using SPSS Version 18.

### RESULTS

117 employees participated in the study including 51 males (43.6%) and 66 females (56.4%). Marital statuses of employees showed that 28 cases (23.9%) were single and 89 (76.1 %) were married. The average age of respondents in this study was  $37 \pm 7/88$  years old. Findings showed that 19 (16.2%) of employees worked 1 to 5 years, 27 (23.1 %) worked for 6 to 10 years, 31 (26.5 %) worked for 11 to 15 years, 23 (19.7%) worked for 16 to 20 years, and 17 (14.5 %) worked above 20 years.

**Table 1: Results of Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test for examination of normal data**

variables	N	Z	sig	results
Organizational justice	117	0.808	0.53	Normal
Job burnout	117	1.44	0.03	Abnormal

To test if data were normally distributed the Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test was used. Results in Table 1 show that organizational justice data ( $z=. /808$ ,  $p=. /532$ ) are normal and data of burnout ( $z=1/44$ ,  $p=. /031$ ) are abnormal.

**Table 2: The correlation coefficient between organizational justice and burnout (N=117)**

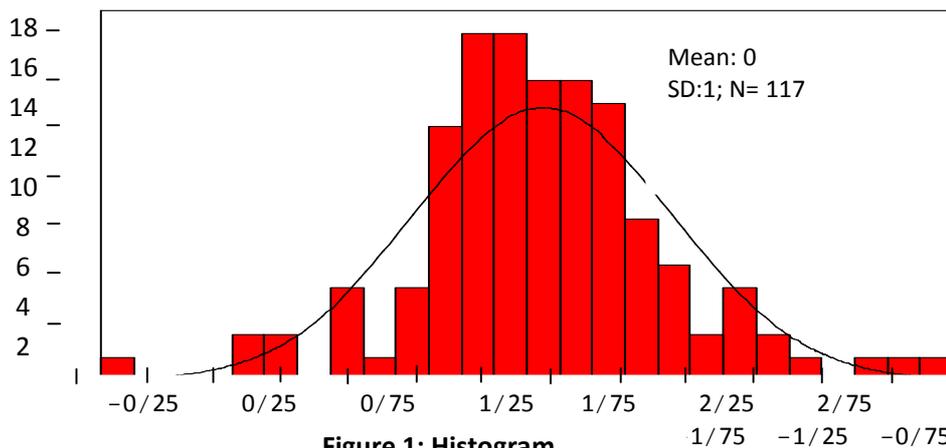
Variable	Index	Organizational justice	Components of Organizational justice		
			Distributive justice	Procedural justice	Interactive justice
Job burnout	Spearman Correlation coefficient	- 0.186	- 0.084	- 0.277	- 0.165
	Significant level	0.04	.369	0.003	0.076

Results of the correlation analysis presented in table 2 show that there is significant and negative relationship between organizational justice and burnout of employees ( $r=-.186$ ,  $p=.04$ ). Also, the results of the correlation test show that there is just significant and negative relationship between the components of Procedural justice and burnout ( $r=-0.277$ ,  $p=0.003$ ). In addition, there is no significant relationship between distributive justice ( $r=-.084$ ,  $p=.369$ ) and interactive justice ( $r=-.165$ ,  $p=.076$ ) with job burnout.

**Table 3: results of Durbin-Watson Test for independence of errors**

model	R-Square	Adjusted R-Square	Standard deviation	Significant level	Durbin-Watson
1	.068	.043	10.58	.04	2.08

According to the results in Table 3, the value of Durbin-Watson Test was 2.08. As a value of 2 means that there is no autocorrelation in the sample, this confirms the use of regression test. According to the coefficient of determination obtained from the output of the test, only 0.068 of the variation in burnout is explained by organizational justice.



**Figure 1: Histogram**

As it is seen in Figure 1, the histogram plot has been used to test the normality distribution of residuals. Having a mean of zero and standard deviation of 0.99 confirmed the regression test.

**Table 4: significance regression equation test**

		Sum of square	df	Mean square	F	Significant level
Step 3	regression	920.453	3	306.818	2.37	.04
	remainder	12666.778	113	112.095		
	Total	13587.231	116	.....		

According to Table 4 and regression test, there is linear and significant relationship between two variables of organizational justice and burnout in the  $p \leq 0/05$ .

**Table 5: significant variables of multiple regressions**

		Non-Standard coefficient		Standard coefficient	t	Significant level
		B	Standard deviation	Beta		
Step 3	Constant value	71.997	4.533	-----	15.88	.001
	Distributive justice	-.666	.273	-.249	-2.442	.016
	Procedural justice	-.125	.112	-.109	-1.122	.264
	Interactive justice	-.3	.153	-.195	-1.96	.052

According to the results in Table 5, multiple linear regression analysis showed that only distributive justice in the third step regression has power to predict burnout. Based on the results of the beta coefficient per unit increase in distributive justice, the burnout rate will show a 25% reduction. Therefore, the regression equation would be as follows:

$$Y = 71.997 - 0.66 (\text{distributive justice})$$

### DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The results of this study showed that there was a negative and significant relationship between organizational justice with employee burnout ( $r = -0.186$ ,  $p = 0.04$ ). This means that if employees perceive higher rates of organizational justice, their burnout will reduce. These research results are consistent with Liljegren & Ekberg (2009), Lambart and colleagues (2010) and Al-zhrani (2011). Andrew and colleagues (2009) states that perceived justice through increased satisfaction among employees can lead to higher levels of commitment. When the level of perceived organizational justice among employees is higher, it significantly affects the burnout and reduces burnout in the workplace and this consequently may increase the effectiveness and efficiency.

Binns (2008) in his study examined the impact of perceived justice on the performance of major league baseball players in America and found that high levels of perceived organizational justice, results in increasing performance. It can be stated that when the organizational management care about organizational justice among their employees, this will reduce the mental (emotional) problems, work discouragement, and personal failure among employees. This consequently will reduce staff burnout and so effectiveness, efficiency and commitment of employees will increase. This, employees' performance increases and organization management can use this opportunity to obtain the short-term and long-term goals and objectives of their organization.

Results of Whisenant & Smucker (2007), Halil & Tanova (2010), Daniel and colleagues (2010) suggests a positive and significant correlation between job satisfaction and organizational justice research. Also Seyed Javadodin and colleagues (2008), Zarifi and colleagues (2010), and Klendauer (2009) found a positive relationship between organizational justice and organizational commitment. Therefore it was determined that justice perception can impact on employees in different situation and this emphasizes the implementation of organizational justice. Managers who do not pay attention to issues of justice are those who believe in minimal time and effort to reach the desired goals. These executives who don't pay attention to the organizational justice seriously will probably face to employees' burnout and their unwillingness to perform the tasks that can have detrimental effects on organizational efficiency. Such organizational managers in the organization deteriorate prestige of organization in the community and do not provide areas for organization development.

Therefore it is suggested that compliance with such as fairness in pay and bonuses to staff, the enforcement procedure, involving employees in organizational decision making, ethical consideration, respect and honesty when dealing with employees, providing suitable and on time feedback, appreciation for their good performance, and furnishing an interactive environment and good communication between staff provide an understanding of organizational justice on behalf of employees. This will cause to reduce burnout and dislocation of manpower to keep the organization active and dynamic environment. The sports organization can reduce the incidence of employees' burnout at least through establishing sports teams and employing athletes in the field. Results showed that there was no significant relationship between distributive justice and burnout ( $F = 2.737$ ,  $P = 0.016$ ,  $R^2 = 0.068$ ) that this findings is inconsistent with the findings of Liljegren, & Ekberg (2009), Eric and colleagues (2010), Lambart and colleagues (2010) and Al-zhrani (2011) ( $r = -0.084$ ,  $p = 0.369$ ). Perhaps the reason for this conflict is due to different construction in sports organizations. Distributive justice reflects the perception of fairness in the distribution and allocation of staff resources and rewards. Masoudi and colleagues (2008) also found that the degree of inappropriateness of salary, and reward which employees received is an index of distributive justice identified as

the cause of burnout. On the other hand the results of regression analysis in this study showed that distributive justice can predict burnout ( $F=2.737$ ,  $P=0/016$ ,  $R^2=0/068$ ). It seems understanding the appropriateness of distributive justice, which includes salary and working with the individual's participation in the organization, may predict staff burnout. Further, Jason and colleagues (2006) found that distributive justice can predict the performance and behavior of individuals in their workplace.

Distributive justice is part of the organizational justice that is dealing with distribution of these results among the staff. Based on social exchange theory, payment is one factor to condensate service and staff performance in any organization that pays them. It seems logical that distributive justice can partly predict staff job burnout. It has been suggested that managers of sports organizations keep the fair distribution of rewards and follow encouragement to staff and pay more attention to them. Also, managers should apply a performance evaluation system to distributive justice with an appropriate Job Description. For this purpose it must be first analyze the job done in a practical way to reduce burnout between the staff.

The results also suggest that there is negative and significant relationship between burnout and procedural justice ( $r=-0.277$ ,  $p=0.003$ ) that is consistent with results of Liljegren & Ekberg (2009), Eric and colleagues (2010), Lambart and colleagues (2010) and A-lzhrani (2011). That means if employees have the more perception of procedural justice of organization, the job burnout will be reduced. In this respect, Fatt and colleagues (2010) in research conducted in Malaysia founded that there is a significant relationship between procedural justice with job satisfaction and organizational commitment. Further, Klendauer (et al. 2009) stated that procedural justice can predict staffs performance. Implemented in procedural justice and equity should provide equal opportunity for everyone. Justice enforcement is fair only when law is the same for everyone. Procedural justice is perception of equal compensation of salaries and benefits (Konvsky& cropanzo, 1993). Nazemi and colleagues (2010), reported positive relationship between distributive justice and empowering employees of the Department of Sport and Youth of Khorasan Razavi province. Ghorbanali Zadeh (et al. 2010) reported a significant relationship between organizational commitment and distributive justice of experts of Physical Education Organization of Iran. The results of this research emphasized the necessity of consideration of sports organization managers to further procedural justice in their organization. It has been suggested that in procedural justice field of area, managers of sports organizations should: first, try to implement the same procedure when dealing with different employees at different levels of organizations. Second, when they want to make a decision they should have the same consideration to different views. Third, they should not make decision based on the false data. Fourth, when they want to put into practical effect of their procedures they should pay more attention to the views of all of their subordinates. Fifth, if they found wrong procedure is going on, they have to be brave enough to correct it and consequently try to resolve the problems related to dissatisfaction, lack of motivation and commitment among staff, and fatigue and depression. By doing this employees may show vigorous and interest to their organization and jobs and can easily take forward steps to achieve organizational goals.

Other results of this study showed that there was not a significant relationship between burnout and interactional justice ( $P = 0.076$ ,  $r = -0.165$ ). This finding is inconsistent with Liljegren & Ekberg (2009) and Al-Zahrani (2011) results. One reason of this conflict can be related to this fact that Iranian employees do not have a good interaction and cooperation with each other. Also, there are various informal groups in each organization and employees follow specific groups based on their own benefits. In addition, in many cases employees try to interfere and produce problems in others objectives to reach their own goals. These issues cause to interactional justice can not affect other variables of organizational behaviors such as job burnout. Researchers consider interactive justice as a behavior that experience within official procedures. Some researchers also believe that the justice due to the interaction between individuals and others in the organization of social interaction is associated with the theory of social behavior change (Stanley, 2003).

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