

## Perception of Organizational Justice and A Tendency to Administrative Corruption in the Sport Employees

Received: 2022-05-28

Vol. 3, No.2. Spring .2022, 33-42

Accepted: 2022-07-18

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### Abstract

**Purpose:** This study aims to investigate the relationship between the perception of organizational justice and a tendency to administrative corruption in the employees of the Youth and Sports Administration of East Azarbaijan province.

**Methods:** For this purpose, 63 sports employees voluntarily filled out two standard questionnaires, namely the Niehoff & Moorman's (1993) organizational justice questionnaire and the researcher-made questionnaire on the tendency to administrative. After data collection, the data were analyzed using One-Sample t-Test, Pearson's correlation coefficient, and ANOVA.

**Results:** The results showed that the level of perception of organizational justice, distributive justice, and procedural justice are average and interactional justice is above average in sports employees' viewpoint. The level of administrative corruption is low. The results showed that there is a significant negative correlation between organizational justice perceptions and the tendency to administrative corruption. Also, there is a significant negative correlation between procedural justice and interactional justice components and the tendency to administrative corruption. However, no significant relationship was found between distributive justice and the tendency to administrative corruption at  $P \leq 0.05$ .

**Conclusions:** According to the results found in the present study, it can be stated that, in the case of understanding the various types of injustice, employees' needs, proportionate to the type of injustice, may be damaged and not be satisfied. In this case, if the sports organizations do not take corrective actions needed to repair the damage, staff may take action to satisfy their needs through others and this would lead to administrative corruption.

**Keywords:** Organizational Justice Perception, Administrative Corruption, Sport Employees, Youth and Sport Administration, East Azarbaijan Province

## Introduction

The study of people's behavior in the workplace has attracted the attention of researchers in the past decade to a large extent. In general, from an organizational point of view, individuals exhibit different behaviors in the organization, some of which are considered desirable and some of which are considered undesirable. The managers of the organization are trying to use the ability to achieve some of the goals of the organization by perceiving the human resources and predicting their reactions while influencing the behavior of members. Some of these undesirable behaviors are behaviors that are intended to harm the organization or members of the organization. These actions may include avoiding work, doing incomplete work, corruption, and so on.

Corruption is a phenomenon that has a long history and so it can be said that corruption can be an interdisciplinary issue. Corruption also covers a wide range of activities, including actions outside the scope of authority, illegal activities, and deviant behavior of employees. (Salimi & Pourezzat, 2010). So far, a lot of research has been done with political, economic, managerial, and legal approaches to find and solve the problem of corruption. Much of this research has been proposed to eradicate corruption by institutionalizing oversight in the political system, expanding civil society, increasing the accountability of political officials, increasing competition in the economy, and reforming public administration, and public finances. But corruption is still one of the most important issues of the present age. Corruption puts many obstacles in the way of economic growth and negatively economic development. This effect is greater on the open economy than on the closed economy (Blackburn & Forgues-Puccio, 2010). In general, corruption refers to behavior in which a person acts outside the formal framework of a government role to pursue his or her private interests and to achieve greater prosperity or a better position. Corruption is not limited to one country and a particular social system and has been feasible throughout the system and all time periods. In fact, corruption is a sign of weakness and miscommunication between the government and the people, which is characterized by

symptoms such as extortion, bribery of officials, partisanship, selfishness, and administrative fraud (Alatas, 2006). The perception of justice and injustice in the organization, by stimulating the different needs of individuals, motivates employees to positive and negative behavior. In fact, trying to meet the needs of the people sometimes makes them inclined to commit corruption. Justice is one of the basic needs of individuals. The discussion of justice in the organization is usually considered with different distributive, interactive and procedural dimensions. Distributive justice theory focuses on the content or achievements of the decision and this theory predicts how people react to decisions about resource allocation. In procedural justice, attention is paid to justice in the processes that lead to decision-making. (Shapiro, 2008). The fairer the procedures in the organization, the more accepted the other actions of the organization. If the procedure is fair, people will feel satisfied when faced with an undesirable consequence (Salimi & Pourezzat, 2010), for example, when salary increases are implemented more equitably than in the past, the negative reaction of employees is reduced (Shapiro, 2008: 68). Therefore, it can be said that distributive justice refers to the perceived justice in the results and consequences that individuals receive, but procedural justice is the perceived justice in terms of tools and procedures that are used to assign consequences to individuals (Nadiri & Tanova, 2010). Some researchers also consider interactive justice as one of the dimensions of procedural justice, But Bies has considered the concept of interpersonal justice as the third type of justice, indicating people's concern about the quality of interpersonal behavior in the adoption of organizational procedures (Bies, 2001). Feelings of injustice or unfair treatment are often cited as a cause of sabotage, so in some studies, the perception of injustice sometimes leads to deviant behavior such as theft and destruction. In fact, people react to the feeling of being treated unfairly in different ways. A significant part of this reaction is harmful to the organization and leads to negative consequences (Reb et al., 2006; p. 55). Therefore, the perception of organizational justice is necessary

for the effective functioning of the organization and the personal satisfaction of employees and plays an important role in shaping its attitude and behavior (Ghaderi et al., 2012). Various studies have shown that justice is a variable that can predict many organizational variables (Merton, 2011).

Mir Khalili et al. (2020) in a study entitled the role of organizational justice in preventing corruption found that if distributive justice is not established, according to Merton's theory of pressure, the organization employee will resort to illegal tools such as bribery and embezzlement to achieve their goal. If there is no procedural justice in the organization, a feeling of injustice will be formed in individuals, and according to Hirsch's theory of social control, the two factors of commitment and belief in the individual towards the organization will be shaken. If there is no justice in the relationship, there will be social deviations such as underemployment and lack of commitment in the individual. Mohammadi et al. (2022) in a meta-analytic study of the perception of justice and organizational citizenship behavior concluded that the magnitude of the effect of organizational justice has a strong effect on organizational citizenship behavior. Yorulmaz, & Karabacak (2021) concluded in a study that the perception of organizational justice has an effect on organizational recognition and organizational citizenship behavior, and emotional intelligence has a mediating role in the relationship between perception of organizational justice and organizational citizenship behavior. Narouei et al. (2020) found that job satisfaction has an effect on spiritual intelligence and on reducing corruption, as well as spiritual intelligence on reducing the variability of corruption among employees. The results of the research of Tayyebi Sani et al. (2019) showed that the efforts of federation presidents to treat employees equally (theory of equal pay) and to establish justice in the workplace can make them attached to their jobs and this leads to employee loyalty to the organization and enhances their job commitment. Amrolahi Biuki et al. (2017) in analyzing the effects of organizational justice on organizational health found that organizational

justice and its components, especially interpersonal justice have the greatest impact on organizational health. Taghizadeh & Soltani-Fesaghandis (2017) in their research concluded that distributive justice and procedural justice are directly involved in the tendency of individuals to corruption in the organization. Cropanzano et al. (2002) and Masterson et al. (2005) stated that interactive justice predicts job performance better than procedural justice. Procedural justice is more about the organization and organizational policies, while interactive justice is more about the supervisor (Rupp & Cropanzano, 2002). Moshiri et al. (2013) in their research concluded that the level of organizational justice and the components of distributive justice and procedural justice in the Tehran province General Directorate of Sports and Youth is lower than the average, but the level of interactive justice is moderate. There is no significant difference between organizational justice according to marital status (single and married). There is no significant relationship between age and perception of organizational justice and there is no significant relationship between employees' work experience and their perception of organizational justice (Moshiri et al., 2013). Elçi et al. (2015) concluded in their study that distributive and procedural justice has a positive and significant effect on the moral climate. Shams Ahmar et al. (2011) and Shaker & Moharramzadeh (2011) showed that there is no significant relationship between distributive and procedural justice and social capital, but there is a positive and significant relationship between social justice and social capital (Shaker and Moharramzadeh, 2011). Ramin Mehr et al. (2009) and Marieke et al. (2013) concluded in their research that there is a positive and significant relationship between the perception of organizational justice and organizational citizenship behavior. Ghafouri Varnosfaderani & Golparvar (2009) and Zarifi et al. (2014) showed that there is a positive and significant relationship between organizational justice and organizational commitment. A review of previous research reveals that the programs proposed to combat corruption were in the political, economic, and legal spheres. Therefore, according to the results of research, it

can be said that a lack of understanding of organizational justice can lead to corruption. Examining the literature on organizational justice, it was found that individuals are motivated toward organizational justice due to their instrumental, interpersonal, and moral needs; therefore, if injustice is perceived in the organization, the process of satisfying these three needs will be harmed. In this case, if the organization does not compensate, its employees will take action. Given the importance of the issue and since the development and planning to take appropriate measures to improve the perception of justice in the organization, it is necessary to understand the status of organizational justice and how each of its dimensions relates to different attitudes and behaviors of employees, including corruption. Therefore, the questions that have been created for the researchers of this study is what is the status of the variable of organizational justice and its component (Distributive, procedural and interpersonal justice) and the variable of corruption from the perspective of the employees of the studied sports organization? Is there a relationship between the perception of organizational justice and the tendency to corruption in the staff of the General Directorate of Sports and Youth of East Azerbaijan Province?

### **Material and Methods**

The research method is descriptive-correlation and data collection was done in the field using a questionnaire. The statistical population of the present study includes all employees of the Youth and Sports Administration of East Azarbaijan province. According to the inquiry, the number of the statistical population was 73. In this study, due to the limited number of employees, all staff were considered as a statistical sample, so in this study, the statistical sample size is equal to the statistical population ( $n=N=73$ ). In this study, three questionnaires of participants' demographic information, Niehoff & Moorman (1993) organizational justice and a researcher-made questionnaire on corruption were used. The organizational justice questionnaire has 20 items on a five-point Likert scale (from strongly disagree to strongly agree)

and has three components: distributive justice (5 items), procedural justice (6 items) and interactional justice (9 items). In this reliability, the organizational justice questionnaire was calculated by Cronbach's alpha method equal to 0.937, for the component of distributive justice equal to 0.725, for the component of procedural justice equal to 0.889 and for the component of interactional justice equal to 0.952. The researcher-made corruption perceptions questionnaire has 23 items on a Likert scale of five choices (strongly disagree to strongly agree). The researcher designed a questionnaire for the corruption variable by reviewing the research literature and with the guidance of the supervisor and professors of sports management. Then, after the initial design of the questions, a questionnaire was distributed to assess the content and face validity of 10 professors of sports management and management with the degree of assistant professor and associate professor. In this study, the reliability of the corruption perceptions questionnaire was calculated by Cronbach's alpha method and according to the number of 30 samples equal to 0.797. In the present study, in order to describe the data from the tables of frequency, percentage, mean and standard deviation and also for inferential data analysis and hypothesis testing, one-sample t-test, Pearson correlation coefficient, independent t-test, and one-way ANOVA were used. SPSS software version 20 was used for data analysis.

## Results

**Table 1.** Demographic variables of the studied employees (N = 63)

Demographic variables	Descriptive Statistics	Frequency
<b>Gender</b>	Man	74.6
	Female	25.4
<b>Age</b>	30-20	15.9
	40-30	44.4
	50-40	27.0
	50 years and more	12.7
<b>Educational Level</b>	Diploma	9.5
	A. D	7.9
	B. A	49.2
	M.A	30.2
	Ph.D.	3.2
<b>Work Experiences (Year)</b>	Under 5 years	17.5
	5-10 years	25.4
	10-15 years	12.7
	15-20 years	20.6
	20 years and older	23.8
<b>Marital Status</b>	Single	15.9
	Married	84.1
<b>Field of Study</b>	Physical Education	38.1
	Non-physical education	61.9
<b>Employment status</b>	Permanent	54.0
	Temporary to Permanent	19.0
	Contract	25.4
	Transfer (Hiring)	1.6

One-sample t-test was used to examine the status of the variable of perception of organizational justice and its components and the variable of a tendency to corruption. The results showed that the average perception of organizational justice is 3.16 which is not significant at the significance level of  $p < 0.05$ , as a result, the level of perception of organizational justice from the perspective of the employees of the target

community is moderate. Examination of the status of components of organizational justice also shows that the status of the two components of distributive justice and interactional justice is moderate and procedural justice is above average. The average tendency to corruption is equal to 2.56 which is significant at the level of  $p < 0.05$ , so it can be said that the tendency to corruption is low (Table 2).

**Table 2.** Examining the status of the variable of perception of organizational justice and its component and the variable of propensity for corruption

Variable and component	Mean	Standard deviation	t	p
<b>Distributive justice</b>	3.08	0.83	0.754	0.454
<b>Procedural justice</b>	3.25	0.83	2.34	0.022
<b>Interactional justice</b>	3.14	0.90	1.21	0.230
<b>Organizational Justice</b>	3.16	0.714	1.73	0.089
<b>Desire for corruption</b>	2.56	0.555	-6.35	0.01

Pearson correlation coefficient test was used to investigate the correlation between organizational justice and the tendency to corruption. The correlation coefficient between the perception of organizational justice and the tendency to corruption is equal to  $r = -0.347$  which is significant at the level of  $p < 0.01$  and we

conclude that between the perception of organizational justice and the tendency to corruption in the staff of Youth and Sports Administration of East Azarbaijan province. There is a negative and significant relationship (Table 3).

**Table 3.** Correlation between the perception of organizational justice and the desire for corruption

	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Standard deviation</i>	<i>Minimum</i>	<i>Maximum</i>	<i>Correlation coefficient (r)</i>
<b>Organizational Justice</b>	3.1556	0.71404	1.55	5	$r = -0.347^{**}$
<b>Desire for corruption</b>	2.5562	0.55483	1.39	4.39	$sig = 0.005$
<i>Significant level **</i>	<i>P &lt; 0.01</i>	<i>n = 63</i>			

Pearson correlation coefficient test was used to examine the correlation between the components of organizational justice (distributive justice, procedural justice, and interactional justice) with the tendency to corruption. Table 4 shows that the correlation coefficient of corruption tendency with procedural justice is  $-0.346$  and with interactional justice is  $-0.359$  which are significant at the level of  $p < 0.01$  and we conclude that between the two there is a negative

and significant relationship between procedural justice and interactional justice with the desire for corruption. But the correlation coefficient of distributive justice with the tendency to corruption is equal to  $-0.073$  which is not significant at the level of  $p \leq 0.05$ . As a result, there is no significant relationship between the component of distributive justice and the tendency to corruption in the staff of the Youth and Sports Administration of East Azarbaijan province.

**Table 4.** Correlation between the components of organizational justice with the desire for corruption

Classes of age	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Standard deviation</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>sig</i>
<b>30-20 years</b>	2.73	0.184	10			
<b>40-30 years</b>	2.42	0.153	28	3	5.950	0.001
<b>50-40 years</b>	2.38	0.282	17			
<b>50 years and more</b>	3.18	0.213	8			

Examination of the difference in the tendency of corruption according to gender, education, service history, and employment status showed that none of the variables are significant at the level of  $p \leq 0.05$ , so there is a significant difference in the tendency to corruption in terms of gender, educational level, work experiences, and employment status was not observed.

## Discussions

The purpose of this article was to investigate the perception of organizational justice and the tendency to corruption in sports staff that the results showed the level of perception of organizational justice from the perspective of the employees of the target community is moderate. Also, the level of distributive justice and interactive justice is moderate and procedural justice is above average. The results of this section regarding the variables of organizational

justice and the components of distributive justice and interaction justice are consistent with the results of Naderi and Mozaffari (2018). Also, the results of this section do not match the results of Moshiri et al. (2013). The reason for the discrepancy can be related to the different populations studied. According to the results, it can be noted that in the Department of Sports and Youth of East Azerbaijan Province, the level of employees' perception of organizational justice is not at the desired level and top managers of the organization do not perform well in implementing justice among employees. It is possible that the managers of the sports organization in question do not have the necessary knowledge and familiarity with the observance of justice in the organization, and this may be the reason for the lack of understanding of justice in the employees of this organization. In this regard, in order to understand how to observe justice in the organization, it can be suggested that the payment system be operated in such a way that a correct and proportionate relationship is established between how duties and responsibilities as well as the type of performance with the salary received. The goal of justice in the organization can be achieved by developing incentive payments and rewarding the effective performance of employees.

The results showed that there is a negative and significant relationship between the perception of organizational justice and the desire for corruption in the staff of the General Directorate of Sports and Youth of East Azerbaijan Province. The results of this section are consistent with the results of Vedadi & Akhondi (2010), and Taghizadeh & Soltani-Fesaghandis (2017). Justice plays an important role in the organization and the way people are treated in the organization may affect the behavior and attitude of employees in the organization. Feelings of injustice reduce the motivation for job success in employees to the extent that it reduces their purposeful efforts in the organization (Shafiepour Motlagh et al., 2010). The results of Seif et al, (2017) showed that perceived organizational justice leads to improved job attachment of employees in the organization and thus strengthens the motivation

to succeed in it.

Studies by Pan and Nagi (2009) showed that the motivation for organizational success is affected by the way the organization treats employees. As long as employees are not satisfied with the way the organization and managers treat it, they do not want to stay in the organization and therefore do not seek promotion. Therefore, organizational justice is a motivational engine in the organization for individuals and managers in all organizational jets and situations need to consider organizational justice and avoid unnecessary bias that leads to discouragement and the desire for corruption. The results showed that there was no significant relationship between distributive justice and the desire for corruption in the staff of the General Directorate of Sports and Youth of East Azerbaijan Province. The results of this section do not agree with the results of Vedadi & Akhondi (2010), and Taghizadeh & Soltani-Fesaghandis (2017) researches. Probably, this discrepancy is due to the difference between the statistical population of the present study and the mentioned researches. Kanko et al. (2006) also believe that the CEO's humane behaviors are an important factor in increasing work motivation and if managers treat the people in the organization properly, conflicts can be prevented.

The results of this study showed that there is a negative and significant relationship between procedural justice and the desire for corruption of the staff of the General Directorate of Sports and Youth of East Azerbaijan Province. The results of this section are consistent with the results of Vedadi & Akhondi (2010), and Taghizadeh & Soltani-Fesaghandis (2017). Positive consequences of procedural justice include organizational commitment, willingness to stay in the organization, satisfaction with decisions made, and work effort. Research shows that the procedure of employment, reward, etc. are among the most important demands of procedural justice in the organization. When individuals evaluate behavior, they appear to be sensitive to two distinct structural and social factors (Shapiro Coyle, 2008). At the same time, the perception of injustice in practice, sometimes more than an unjust consequence, causes resentment and

anger among employees (Lambert, 2006).

There is a negative and significant relationship between Moravadi justice and the desire for corruption of the staff of the General Directorate of Sports and Youth of East Azerbaijan Province, which is consistent with the results of Vedadi & Akhondi (2010), Amrolahi Biuki et al. (2017), and Golparvar et al. (2007) reported that participation in decision-making in a justice-based organization is more visible. Salanova et al. (2005) concluded in their research that in order to motivate and motivate employees, it is necessary to provide transparency in providing information and make the information available to everyone. Therefore, when the discussion of interactive justice can enhance job satisfaction, organizational commitment can also be effective in reducing the tendency to corruption.

### Conclusion

According to the results of this study and the relationship between perceptions of organizational justice and the tendency to corruption, we can expect that with the promotion of organizational justice, the tendency to corruption will also decrease. Therefore, managers should pay more attention to organizational justice, which is very effective in the formation of corruption and affects the performance of individuals and the process of the organization. Because with some measures and even minor procedures, it is possible to influence people's attitudes and reduce the desire for corruption. Therefore, managers must observe justice in how to distribute resources and organizational results, including how to distribute rewards, consider benefits, how evaluate periodically, etc. (distributive justice), in the procedure used when distributing resources and results Organizational (procedural justice) and in their daily interactions and considering the feelings and desires of employees (interactive justice) as an important and effective factor in reducing the tendency to corruption more than before.

### Acknowledgement

The authors declare no conflicts of interest in this work. The authors would like to acknowledge the people who assisted in this study.

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