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## Investigating the Relationship between Perceived Organizational Justice in Collegiate Sport Teams and Sport Achievement Motivation

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### ABSTRACT

Justice as a basic necessity of social life, plays a critical role in administration of sport teams and sport organization. The aim of the present study was to investigate the relationship between Perceived Organizational Justice in Collegiate Sport Teams and Sport Achievement Motivation. In this descriptive –correlative study, 102 student athletes (56 males, 46 females) who were selected as statistical sample from Northern Khorasan and Razavi Khorasan provinces responded to Organizational Justice Questionnaire developed by Niehoff & Moorman (1993) and sport achievement motivation Questionnaire developed by Gill et al. (1983). Conducting correlation coefficient for data analysis revealed that perceived organization justice and its subscales significantly correlated to sport achievement motivation in collegiate sport teams. Moreover, the results of the stepwise regression revealed that, among perceived organization justice subscales, interactional justice was the strongest predictor of sport achievement motivation.

### Introduction

Today, sports organizations in any country must have efficient goals in order to be motivated enough to move towards the success (Moradi & Shabani, 2020). Justice and its implementation is one of the basic and natural needs of human beings, which has always provided a motivating platform for the development of human societies. Theories of justice have evolved in parallel with the expansion and progress of human society, and its scope has stretched from the theories of religions and philosophers to empirical research. Ethical issues in organizations are one of the most important issues in achieving the goals (Salimi, 2020) and the implementation of organizational justice is one of these ethical issues. The implementation of justice in society depends on the existence of justice in organizations (SeiedJavadian et al., 2008). In organizational justice, it is discussed how employees should be treated

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in order to feel that they have been treated fairly (Shekarkan and Naami, 2004). Alvania (2004) states that organizational justice refers to the organization's fair and equitable treatment of its employees and usually involve three different components: distributive justice, procedural justice, and interactive justice (quoted in Lambert, 2006). Mahony et al. (2010) examined the perception of distributive justice between athletic and non-athletic students in an inter-college sports environment (150 people) and a business sports environment (150 people) and concluded that in both of these environments were equal in behavior and the need for the fairest methods of resource allocation. They also found that women advocated strong equal distribution, while men advocated decision-making based on need and program participation. In principle, justice is an important motivating factor for employees. When people feel unfair, their morale also falls. At this time, most employees tend to quit and may even confront the organization, but instead behave appropriately. And justly cultivates talents and increases commitment and desire to stay in the organization (Khatibi, 2009; Avrahami, 2008). Organizations are always looking for ways to create sports commitment in their stakeholders (Asadollahi et al., 2020), and addressing organizational justice is one of these ways. Issues such as: discrimination or unfair treatment of players, personal misbehavior or abuse of players, inconsistencies in the way players are treated and not used equally in games, leaving players out and abusing those who deserve it Choice, unfair distribution of financial resources and rewards between sports, teams and players (quoted in Chenevert et al., 2007). The results of confirmatory factor analysis of Nikbin et al. (2014) entitled "Effects of perceived organizational justice of coaches on athletes' trust, motivation, commitment and perceived performance (Case study: Futsal and volleyball players)" showed support for the measurement model. Dimensions of organizational justice had a significant positive relationship with dependent variables. Commitment and motivation had a significant positive relationship with perceived individual and team performance.

Sport, as an important part of education, plays a fundamental and decisive role in universities, and with its emphasis on physical, mental, emotional and social development, it is considered as an indicator for the development of universities and plays an important role in healthy manpower building is the future of society. Given that students are the main focus of all cultural, social, economic and political development programs, one of the basic requirements for human development in students is to have physical and mental health, so it should be noted that physical education and sports university has a special place in the life and leisure of students who need motivation to participate in sports (Gheshmi Meimand et al., 2019).

One of the challenges of understanding the skillful behavior of athletes is to identify the components and dimensions that are effective in acquiring and maintaining athletic success. A study of research on the success of athletes shows that many factors play a role in the athletic development of athletes. Researchers consider these factors to include motivation, exercise, training, inner ability, age, psychological skills, commitment and enjoyment of exercise. Sports success is an active learning process that is achieved through purposeful practice and improvement of skills necessary to achieve a high level of sports performance (Mousavi & Vaez Mousavi, 2015). One of the important topics in sports psychology that affects the amount and intensity of athletes' performance is motivation. Motivation is a structure that is assumed to describe internal or external forces and creates intention, direction, intensity and stability of behavior. One of the types of motivations that has been considered by researchers in recent years is the sport achievement motivation, which includes the desire to succeed and persevere in the face of failure and experience pride when winning the opponent (Eslami et al., 2017).

In the study of Pilha and Jaehyun (2015) entitled "Organizational Justice - Emotional Commitment with the Mediating Role of Group Cohesion (Structural Equation Model) in American University Sports Teams, the results of multiple regression analysis showed that all three dimensions of organizational justice There is a significant positive relationship with - emotional commitment and group cohesion. Group cohesion plays a mediating role between distributive justice and interaction with emotional commitment. Achievement motivation is a kind of motivation that is of particular importance in the field of psychology and sports. Achievement motivation seems to affect many behaviors, thoughts, and feelings, including choosing the type of activity, striving for goals, and

persevering in the face of failure (Youn, 2007). In fact, doing anything, especially in the field of sports, has a source of motivation and the purpose of motivation is to strengthen the desirable actions and feelings of athletes (Norouzi Seyed Hosseini, 2013). An indicator that is considered as an influential factor in the motivation of sports progress in this study is the understanding of organizational justice. The perception of injustice has a devastating effect on the morale of collective work, because it overshadows the diligence and motivation of employees (Kanshiro, 2008). The results of a study by Liver Orn et al. (2013) entitled "The relationship between organizational justice with work motivation and self-efficacy" found a positive and significant relationship between these variables, meaning that organizations can work motivation and self-efficacy of employees through improving organizational justice (cited in Jordan et al., 2004).

De Backer et al. (2017) in their study entitled "The effect of athletes' perception of justice applied by the coach on the intrinsic motivation and satisfaction of handball and volleyball players" found that the perception of organizational justice has a significant effect on intrinsic motivation and satisfaction of handball and volleyball players and the components of organizational justice can predict these two variables. In fact, the importance of observing organizational justice in the organization and sports teams is that if athletes feel inequality, they will be a potential source of dissatisfaction in the organization and the team, and this in itself will have irreparable consequences (Mahony et al., 2010). Fair treatment by athletes by managers and coaches with athletes generally leads to their higher commitment to the organization, team and their extra-role behaviors (Moradi Chaleshtari, 2008). Due to the above explanations and in general, the lack of sufficient knowledge about the issues raised, especially in relation to sports teams and athletes and the existence of research shortcomings in this area, as well as the importance of athletes' perceptions of justice in groups, university sport and its effect on the attitude, motivation and performance of athletes, the researcher in this study, while describing the understanding of the dimensions of organizational justice and sport achievement motivation, sought to investigate the relationship between these variables in selected student-athletes from Khorasan universities. Therefore, the research question is whether organizational justice has a significant effect on students' sport achievement motivation? The findings may provide a platform for further studies as well as necessary recommendations in this regard.

### **Methodology**

The present study is an applied research in terms of nature and purpose, and a descriptive-correlational research in terms of analysis method. Data collection was done in the field. The research population consisted of 140 student athletes of Khorasan Razavi and North Khorasan provinces who participated in sports olympiads of universities and higher education institutions. According to Morgan table 102 students (56 boys and 46 girls) were studied through random sampling. To measure organizational justice, the standard 17-item questionnaire of Niehoff and Morman (1993) with the subscales of distributive, interactive and procedural justice and the standard 35-item questionnaire of motivation for sport achievement by Gill et al. (1983) with the subscales of competitiveness, desire to Victory and purposefulness were used. In the present study, a standard questionnaire was used and also the validity of the instrument was confirmed by experts. To measure the reliability of the questionnaires in a pilot study on 20 athletes, the reliability was found to be 0.87 for organizational justice and 0.84 for the motivation of sports achievement. In order to organize, summarize, classify raw scores and describe sample sizes, descriptive statistical method was used to calculate (frequency, means, percentages, standard deviation). Cronbach's alpha was used to estimate the internal reliability of the research instrument. Since the purpose of this study was to investigate the correlation between variables and predict them from each other, correlation methods (Pearson and stepwise multiple regression) were used.

### **Findings**

Out of 102 subjects, 56 (54.9%) were male students and 46 (45.1%) were female students. 30 (29.4%) were master students, 56 (54.9%) were undergraduates and 16 (15.7%) did not answer these questionnaires. 60 of the statistical sample (59.8%) participated in team sports and 42 (41.17%)

participated in individual sports. Table 1, shows the statistical description of research variables in terms of central indicators.

**Table 1.** Statistical Description of Research Variables in Terms of Central Indicators

	<b>Motivation for sports progress</b>	<b>Distributive justice</b>	<b>Procedural justice</b>	<b>Mutual justice</b>
<b>Average</b>	3.3934	2.0882	2.2905	3.6464
<b>mode</b>	3.3333	1.7000	2.5000	3.6667
<b>Fashion</b>	3.17	1.40	1.67	3.17
<b>Standard deviation</b>	0.75834	1.02666	0.64573	0.68373
<b>Variance</b>	0.575	1.054	0.417	0.467
<b>Domain</b>	4.00	4.00	2.33	3.00
<b>Minimum</b>	1.00	1.00	2.00	2.00
<b>Maximum</b>	5.00	5.00	4.33	5.00
<b>Period</b>	1-5	1-5	1-5	1-5

According to the data in this table, the average perception of athletic students towards distributive justice (2.08) and procedural justice (2.29) (below the maximum possible score of 5 in university sports groups was lower than average. In this study, students reported instances of injustice that were asked in the form of open-ended questions, including: offering a very small discount on registration fees as a scholarship, discrimination in the amount of these payments based on gender and type of sport They considered indifference and lack of a written plan to provide student loans to student-athletes and to make the inter-university championship sports competitions insignificant and lack of sufficient information and publicity in the university environment to attract spectators. 3.39 of the maximum possible score 5) was relatively high in this study, despite the relatively low perception of organizational justice in sports teams from the perspective of students, student-athletes had a lot of desire, enthusiasm and effort to achieve sports goals in their teams.

In the study of the relationship between the perception of organizational justice and its components with the motivation of sports development, which was done using Pearson correlation coefficient, the results showed a positive and significant relationship between organizational justice and its components with the motivation of sports development, meaning that The more student-athletes understand equality, equity, justice, and fairness in their organization and sports teams, the more motivated they will be to work and succeed in sports (Table 2).

**Table 2.** The Relationship between Organizational Justice and its Components with the Motivation of Sports Achievement

	Pearson correlation	p-value	n
Organizational justice and motivation for sporting progress	0.453	0.0001	102
Distributive justice and the motivation for sporting progress	0.431	0.0001	102
Procedural justice and motivation for sporting progress	0.435	0.0001	102
Interactional justice and motivation for sporting progress	0.493	0.0001	102

Tables 3 and 4 show the simultaneous effect of predictor variables on the criterion variable using multiple stepwise regression test. According to the findings of Table 3, the predictor variables are 57% correlated with the criterion variable, ie the motivation for sports development. This variable also explains 32% of the variance of the criterion variable. According to the results of Table 4, interactive justice and distributive justice of the components of organizational justice to the extent of 0.356 and 0.242, respectively, have the power of predicting the motivation of sports progress, but procedural justice of the components of organizational justice to the extent of 0.12 It has little effect on predicting athletic achievement motivation.

**Table 3.** Investigation of the Simultaneous Effect of the Independent Variable on the Dependent Variable

Total correlation	Explanation coefficient	Adjustment coefficient	Standard estimation error	F	Sig.
0.577	0.332	0.312	0.62902	16.266	0.001

**Table 4.** The Effect of Independent variable on the Dependent Variables

	standardized	Non-standardized		Sig.	t
	Beta	fault	B		
Width of origin	-	0.387	0.988	0.012	2.555
Distributive justice	0.242	0.076	0.179	0.021	2.352
Procedural justice	0.120	0.130	0.141	0.280	0.087
Justice of communication	0.356	0.104	0.395	0.001	3.786

### Discussion

The administration of justice in sports organizations and teams is undoubtedly one of the best motivators for athletes, coaches, supervisors and staff to strive for excellence and progress and achieve their rights based on their ability, competence and effort. The present study, while describing the extent of understanding the dimensions of organizational justice and the motivation for sports progress, examined the relationship between these variables in selected student-athletes from the free universities of Region 9. As mentioned in the descriptive part of the research, the level of perceived organizational justice and its components from the perspective of students in the universities under study were moderate and low. In other words, students had a sense of injustice in the organization and organizational processes. Findings of research in this field are consistent with the results of research by Moradi Chaleshtari (2008), Khatibi (2009) and Abubakr & Majid (2012). The results of the above researchers showed that 60.3% of employees have little understanding of distributive justice. The study of descriptive results related to sports achievement motivation showed high athletic achievement motivation in student-athletes.

Based on the inferential findings of the study, a significant positive relationship was observed between the perception of organizational justice and its dimensions with the motivation of sports development, which means that if athletes understand the existence of organizational justice in sports teams, they are equally committed to the organization and team. And a two-way pact is created between the players and the organization and the team, which leads to more effort and motivation to work. Organizational justice affects work motivation through participation in work and job satisfaction. That is, with increasing organizational justice, participation in work and, consequently, job satisfaction increases, and this increases the motivation for sports success (Coetzee, 2005). Existence of justice in sports organizations and teams causes extra-role behaviors, ie players' perception and judgment of fair and equitable behaviors of the team and team officials with players, the degree of fairness and equality in behaviors and working relationships, from fair Existence of consequences and results, as well as relationships and relationships with respect for politeness, honesty and respect, increases the motivation of players to work harder (Nazemi, 2013; Lambert, 2003).

This result is also consistent with the findings of Nikbin et al. (2014) entitled "The Effects of Coaches' Perceived Organizational Justice on Athletes' Perceived Trust, Motivation, Commitment, and Performance (Case Study: Futsal and Volleyball Players), and De Backer et al. (2017) "The effect of athletes' perception of justice applied by the coach on the inner motivation and satisfaction of handball and volleyball players".

Examination of statistical results in relation to predicting sports achievement motivation based on organizational justice components (multiple stepwise regression) showed that interactive (interactive) and distributive justice have the highest predictive power, respectively. The research findings are

consistent with the results of Avrahami (2008) and Lambert (2006). Organizational justice and its various dimensions (distributive, procedural and interactive justice) predict many organizational variables such as absenteeism, leaving the job, organizational commitment and organizational citizenship behavior, etc. (quoted in 20). Athletes' perception of polite and respectful behavior of managers and coaches (interactive justice) has a significant positive effect on the motivation of sports progress. The results of this study are consistent with the findings of Coetzee (2005) and Nazemi (2013). Interactive justice is the way in which organizational justice is passed on to subordinates by supervisors. In order to establish interactive justice, the decisions made in the organization should be provided to the employees with good treatment and appropriate procedures, dealing with politeness, honesty and respect (Nazemi, 2013). The results of the present study in this field (prediction of sports motivation based on the components of organizational justice) are in line with the results of research by Livavern et al. (2013) and De Backer et al. (2017).

Therefore, according to the research findings, it is suggested that, besides considering factors such as coaching styles and strengthening psychological toughness, desire to win, commitment, challenge and competitiveness in athletes, the coaches should pay attentions to the justice in the collegiate sport teams to improve the team motivations and performance. Moreover, considering the theoretical foundations of the research topic and the results of the above research based on the effect of organizational justice on the sport achievement motivation, observing issues such as fairness in paying bonuses (student grants, student loans) to players should be taken in granted. Providing respect and honesty when dealing with players and avoiding lying, giving timely feedback, appreciating the performance of successful players, providing an environment with good communication, giving equal opportunities to all players to play, provide the ground for players to perceive organizational justice.

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