

Physiology

Investigating the Relationship between Organizational Justice and Employees' Mental Health Status

Hassan Fahim Devin*, Majid Arji*, Davood Farbod**

* Department of Physical Education and Sport Sciences, Mashhad Branch, Islamic Azad University, Mashhad, Iran.

**Department of Mathematics, Quchan University of Advanced Technology, Quchan, Iran.

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ABSTRACT. Organizational justice was proposed as a new way to examine the impact of psychological work environment on the employee mental health. Low organizational justice was shown to be a risk to the health of employees. The aim of this study was to examine the relationship between organizational justice and mental health status in employees of sport organizations. The participants were 160 employees (130 male and 30 female) who responded to Niehoff and Moorman's organizational justice and Goldberg's GHQ28 mental health questionnaires. Results of the study by using Pearson's correlation, stepwise multiple regression and independent "t" tests showed a significant inverse relationship between organizational justice and its subscales with mental health status. There was significant difference between male and female employees regarding their mental health status, but no significant difference was observed between those employees regarding perceived organizational justice. There are many social, psychological and biological factors determining the level of mental health status of a person at any point of time. There is also a specific work-related factor, such as perceived organizational justice, that makes people vulnerable to mental health or mental disorders. © 2014 Bull. Georg. Natl. Acad. Sci.

Key words: employee, mental health, organizational justice.

Organizational justice. One of the most important topics in human resource management of every organization including sport organizations is fairness and impartialness of managerial acts. Managers must notice that they should be impartial and unprejudiced against all the people affected by their acts who might be organization employees or outside beneficiaries (e.g. customers or clients, suppliers, etc.) connected to the organization for various reasons. Organizational justice is one of the main and most important factors in satisfaction of organization members. Re-

searchers have investigated the concept of justice in sports for the first time in universities physical education management. Hums and Chelladurai [1] for the first time drafted a tool in order to investigate distributive justice in collegiate sports. Findings of researches show that employees appraise three families of workplace events. They examine the justice of outcomes (distributive justice), the justice of formal allocation processes (procedural justice), and the justice of interpersonal transactions they encounter with others (interactional justice) [2].

Table 1. Results of Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test for examination of normality of data

Variable	N	Z	p-value	Results
Organizational Justice	160	0.811	0.425	Normal
Mental Health	160	1.065	0.207	Normal

Mental health status. Good mental health is crucial to the overall well-being of individuals, communities and societies. Positive mental health is a resource for everyday living that enables people and communities to realize their fullest potential and to cope with life transitions and major life events. Unfortunately, around the world mental health problems are common affecting men and women of all ages, nations and cultures. Estimates suggest mental disorders affect more than 25 percent of all people at some time during their lives and are present at any point in time in about 10 percent of a given adult population (World Health Organization Report [3]).

Mental health problems such as stress, depression, mental disorders and burnout and their effects in organization have been considered recently by many researchers. Stress is essential for staff activity, but distress reduces staff efficiency and undermines the foundations of the organization [4,5].

Organizational justice & Mental health status. The findings of many researches show that organizational justice play an important role in the health and well-being of employees [6,7]. Unfair behavior toward employees associated with job dissatisfaction, retaliation, workplace aggression lower work commitment and withdrawal [2]. Previous research also suggests that low perceived justice is related to factors that influence susceptibility to illness, such as elevated unfavorable serum lipids and negative feeling (see [8]). Since in many employees of sports organizations in Iran there are issues such as lack of motivation, dissatisfaction, emotional exhaustion and lack of intention to work and achieve organizational goals, and somehow they suffer from mental disorders, we decided to find what the reasons behind these issues are. So, based on the literature review

that we did on mental health, we concluded it is very likely that injustice in organizations may produce these issues. The purpose of this study, therefore, was to explore the relationship between organizational justices (including its subscales) with mental health status in employees of Sport and Youth Head Offices of Great *Khorasan Province* in Iran. Additionally, we wanted to determine if organizational justice (including its subscales) predicts the mental health status in employees?

Note. Great *Khorasan Province* includes three Provinces. *Khorasan Province* was the largest Province of Iran until it divided into three Provinces in September 2004: Razavi *Khorasan Province*, North *Khorasan Province*, South *Khorasan Province*.

Methods

Participants. In this descriptive (correlative) study statistical sample was employees of sport and youth head offices of Great *Khorasan Province* (N=160, N is the sample size) with age range of 25 to 59 years old (M=38, M is the mean; SD = 38.631, SD is the standard deviation).

Measures. Organizational justice. Niehoff and Moorman's organizational justice questionnaire [9] was used to obtain data on three dimensions of organizational justice. The instrument consisted of 17 items dealing with the subject beliefs and perception of organizational justice which was practiced in organization.

Mental health status. Goldberg and Hiller [10] GHQ-28 questionnaire was used to measure the employees, mental health status.

Statistical Analysis and Results

Statistical analysis was done by using *Pearson's*

Table 2. The correlation coefficient between organizational justice and its subscales with mental health

			Components of Organizational Justice		
Variable	Index	Organizational Justice	Distributive Justice	Procedural Justice	Interactive Justice
Mental health	Pearson correlation coefficient	- 0.282	- 0.081	- 0.422	- 0.208
p-value		0.001	0.307	0.001	0.008

correlation and *multiple regression analysis* (for details about such methods see, for example, [11]). Compare to Fahim et al. [12], the first statistical analysis to be performed was coefficient alpha to measure the reliability of instruments. Although the instruments were proven to be reliable and have been used in so many researches, reliability tests were needed for this study, since the instruments were translated into Farsi, and were used in a different culture at a different span of time. The alpha value for organizational justice and mental health were respectively 0.82, 0.80.

Descriptive statistics. 160 employees participated in the study including 130 (81%) males and 30 (19%) females. Marital status of employees showed that 50 cases (31%) were single and 110 (69%) were married.

The average age of respondents in this study was 43+6.84 years old. Findings showed that 18 employees (11.3%) worked for 1 to 5 years, 32 (20%) worked for 6 to 10 years, 40 (25%) worked for 11 to 15 years, 50 (31.2%) worked for 16 to 20 and 20 (12.5%) worked above 20 years. The mean score of perceived organizational justice from employees' perspective was 53.398 (from 100 maximum possible) which is slightly above average. The mean score of mental health status in employees was 25.03 which was high, or in other words they were more prone to mental disorders. To test if data were normally distributed the *Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test* was applied (for details about *Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test* see, for example, [13]). Results in Table 1 show that organizational justice and mental health data were normally distrib-

uted ($Z = 0.811$, $p\text{-value} = 0.425$ / $Z = 1.065$, $p\text{-value} = 0.207$).

Correlation analysis. Results of the correlation analysis presented in Table 2 show that there is significant negative relationship between organizational justice and mental health of employees ($r = -0.282$, $p\text{-value} = 0.001$). Also, the results of the correlation test show that there are significant negative relationship between the components of procedural and interactive justice with mental health ($r = -0.422$, $p\text{-value} = 0.001$ / $r = -0.208$, $p\text{-value} = 0.008$). In addition, there is no significant relationship between distributive justice and mental health ($r = -0.081$, $p\text{-value} = 0.307$).

Multiple regression analysis. A stepwise *multiple regression analysis* was conducted to determine predictors of mental health. Results presented in Table 3 show that both interactive and procedural justice were the best predictors of mental health ($\beta = 0.521$, $p\text{-value} = 0.001$). Interactive justice ($\beta = 0.524$, $t = 5.898$, $p\text{-value} = 0.001$) was the strongest predictor of mental health, followed by procedural justice ($\beta = 0.315$, $t = 3.551$, $p\text{-value} = 0.002$).

Independent "t" test results. Table 4 shows significant differences at the level of $\alpha = 0.05$ between male and female employees regarding the mean scores of mental health ($p\text{-values} < 0.05$). Male employees had better mental health status or were less prone to psychological disorders, but there was no significant difference between these two groups regarding the perceived organizational justice ($p\text{-value} > 0.05$).

Regarding the perceived organizational justice

Table 3. Coefficient for predictive sources of mental health

Model		Unstandardized Coefficient		Standardized Coefficient	t	p-value
		β	SE	β		
1	Constant	1.242	0.211	0.521	5.898	0.001
2	Interactive Justice	1.242	0.211	0.524	5.898	0.001
3	Procedural Justice	0.434	0.124	0.315	3.551	0.002

from employees (male and female) perspective, either group perceived the same amount of justice in organization. If justice practiced in organization everyone could benefit from it. As far as mental health concerns, female employees were more prone to mental disorders. According to the studies women are more likely to have been treated for a mental problem than men (29% compared to 17%). (Better or worse; A longitudinal study of the mental health of adults in Great Britain National Statistics).

Discussion

Mental health is an integral and essential component of health. The WHO constitution states Health is the state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity (factsheet). There are many social, psychological and biological factors determining the level of mental health status of a person at any point of time. There are also some organizational vari-

ables such as organizational justice that act as predictor of employee mental health. The results of this study showed a significant negative relationship between organizational justice with employees and mental health status ($r = -0.282$, $p\text{-value} = 0.001$). This means that if employees perceive higher rates of organizational justice they feel less stress at work. The result in this respect is in consistent with those of Keilitz and Roesch [14], Kivimaki and Ferrie [15] who studied the relationship between perceived organizational justice and mental health. Results of Whisenant and Smucker [16], Halil and Tanova [17] suggest a positive and significant correlation between job satisfaction and organizational justice. It is also believed that practice of justice in organization leads to personal growth and based on this thought, maintained fairness and impartialness in organization enhances a sense of personal enhancement and growth at work place which motivates employees to meet daily tasks and to feel more self-

Table 4. Comparison of variables in male and female employees

Variables	Group	N	M	SD	“t” Test		
					“t” value	Degree of freedom	p-value
Perceived organizational justice	Male	130	65.841	11.230	1.724	158	0.138
	Female	30	64.561	10.841			
Mental health	Male	130	27.312	8.970	3.459	158	0.001
	Female	30	30.516	9.106			

worthy and trusted and less anger and insecurity [18]. According to a negative and significant relationship between organizational justice and mental health that was observed in this study it is suggested that compliance with such a fairness in pay and bonuses to staff, the enforcement of procedure, involvement of 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 and management provide an understanding of organizational justice on behalf of employees. This in return will cause a reduction in absenteeism and displacement from work, accompanied by high rate of job satisfaction, loyalty and organizational commitment.

Conclusion

The extent to which people are treated with justice in work places seems to predict their health inde-

pendently of established stressors at work. Evidence on reduced health risk after favorable change in organizational justice implies a promising area for health interventions at workplace.

Limitation

Like all researches there are some limitation to this study that must be taken into consideration. First, these results are based on self-reports of employees in three different organizations (geographically) with different culture and believes. Second, our result may also be affected by some bias attitude that participants might take toward variables.

Implication

The study provides valuable implication for researchers and management body to better understand work related factor such as perceived organizational justice that make people vulnerable to mental health. This study also adds to the growing body of knowledge and research on organizational justice and mental health, focusing on sport organizations.

ფიზიოლოგია

საორგანიზაციო სამართალი და თანამშრომელთა გონებრივი ჯანმრთელობის მდგომარეობა

პ.ფ. დევინი*, მ. არჯი*, დ. ფერბოდი**

* აზადის ისლამური უნივერსიტეტის მაშჰადის ფილიალი, ფიზიკური განათლებისა და სპორტის დეპარტამენტი, მაშჰადი, ირანი

**ქუჩანის ტექნოლოგიური უნივერსიტეტი, მათემატიკის დეპარტამენტი, ქუჩანი, ირანი

(წარმოდგენილია აკადემიკოს ნ. მითაგვარიას მიერ)

თანამშრომელთა გონებრივ მდგომარეობაზე შრომის ფსიქოლოგიური გარემოს ზეგავლენის შესწავლის მიზნით შემოთავაზებულია კვლევის ახალი საშუალება - საორგანიზაციო სამართალი. აღმოჩნდა, რომ ცუდი საორგანიზაციო სამართალი საფრთხეს უქმნის თანამშრომელთა ჯანმრთელობას. ნაშრომი მიზნად ისახავს საორგანიზაციო სამართლის ზეგავლენის შესწავლას სპორტული დაწესებულებების თანამშრომელთა გონებრივი ჯანმრთელობის მდგომარეობაზე. გამოკვლევაში მონაწილეობდა 160 თანამშრომელი (130 მამაკაცი და 30 ქალი) მათ უპასუხეს ნეიოფისა და მურმანის საორგანიზაციო სამართლისა და გოლდბერგის კითხვარს GHO28 გონებრივი ჯანმრთელობის მდგომარეობის შესახებ. პირსონის კორელაციის, ეტაპობრივი მრავალმხრივი რეგრესიისა და ცალკეული “t” ტესტების გამოყენებით ჩატარებულმა გამოკვლევებმა აჩვენა, რომ საორგანიზაციო სამართალი უკუკავშირშია გონებრივი ჯანმრთელობის მდგომარეობასთან. გონებრივი ჯანმრთელობის მდგომარეობის მხროვ მნიშვნელოვანი სხვაობა იყო ქალებსა და მამაკაცებს შორის, მაგრამ მათ შორის არავითარი განსხვავება არ აღინიშნებოდა საორგანიზაციო სამართლისადმი დამოკიდებულების თვალსაზრისით. არსებობს მრავალი სოციალური, ფსიქოლოგიური და ბიოლოგიური ფაქტორი, რაც ადამიანის გონებრივი ჯანმრთელობის მდგომარეობას განაპირობებს. არსებობს აგრეთვე კონკრეტულად სამუშაოსთან დაკავშირებული ფაქტორი, მაგალითად, საორგანიზაციო სამართალი, რაც ადამიანს მოწყვლადს ხდის გონებრივი ჯანმრთელობის ან ფსიქიკური აშლილობის თვალსაზრისით.

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