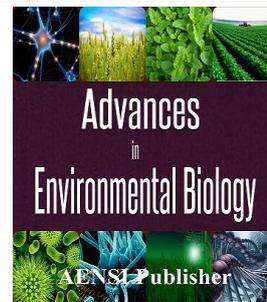




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### The Relationship Between Conflict Management Styles and Organizational Justice

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#### ABSTRACT

The relationship between conflict management styles and organizational justice has received very little attention in the literature. The aim of this study was to investigate the relationship between conflict management styles and organizational justice in sport organizations. The research is a correlational research design and conducted survey method. 85 employees of Sport and Adolescents organization of West Azerbaijan in Iranian selected randomly. Participants completed the strategies of conflict management and organizational justice questionnaire. The Pearson coefficient and Stepwise Regression test was used to analyze the data. The correlation results showed that there are positive significant relationships between conciliation, cooperation, and negative relationship between avoidance conflict styles with organizational justice and its three dimensions. Also, the regression results showed that only the cooperation conflict style significantly predicted the Organizational Justice with .60 of total variance.

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#### INTRODUCTION

In the organizational behavior aspects, the relationships between the individual and the group behaviors in the organization and the interaction between the members of organization and external environment had been examined [5]. Nowadays, understanding and coping with the staff's needs are one of the important issues in management of organizations. Organizational activities are needed to interaction between organizational individuals and groups that may leads to some conflicts. It is necessary to manager to control these conflicts to prompt the justice in organization.

Organizational conflict is a state of discord caused by the actual or perceived opposition of needs, values and interests between people working together [18]. Conflict management is the process of limiting the negative aspects of conflict while increasing the positive aspects of conflict. The aim of conflict management is to enhance learning and group outcomes, including effectiveness or performance in organizational setting [17]. According Thomas-Kilmann [22] proposed five dimensions of conflicts including competing, collaborating, compromising, avoiding, and accommodating. These five modes can be described along two dimensions, assertiveness and cooperativeness. Assertiveness refers to the extent to which one tries to satisfy his or her own concerns, and cooperativeness refers to the extent to which one tries to satisfy the concerns of another person [22]. Competing is assertive and not cooperative and accommodating is cooperative and not assertive. Avoiding is neither assertive nor cooperative, while collaborating is both assertive and cooperative. Compromising falls in the middle on both dimensions. The previous results showed that properly managed conflict can improve group outcomes [7].

Justice is one of the most important variables in organizational behavior [10]. Dessler [8] described organizational justice as "the processes and procedures being measured, regular and that the staffs and their leaders impartial, sincere and that they find the deeds logical". Three main proposed components of organizational justice are distributive, procedural, and interactional justice [10]. Distributive justice is conceptualized as the fairness associated with decision outcomes and distribution of resources. Procedural justice is defined as the fairness of the processes that lead to outcomes. When individuals feel that they have a voice in the process or that the process involves characteristics such as consistency, accuracy, ethicality, and

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lack of bias then procedural justice is enhanced. Interactional justice refers to the treatment that an individual receives as decisions are made and can be promoted by providing explanations for decisions and delivering the news with sensitivity and respect.

There has also been considerable interest in examining the antecedents of justice perceptions in hopes of promoting justice in organizations. It has been showed that work-related outcomes have a significant impact on the content and magnitude of fairness perceptions. In justical environment in organizations, the staffs percept the mangers' behavior as fair, moral and rational. The findings showed relationship between conflict management styles and organizational justice in some organizations [13,2,16,3,1]. Despite this, some findings showed that organizational justice is not essential source of management conflict [21].

#### Methodology:

The study is a Descriptive-Correlational research that conducted in survey method. Statistical population consists of all employees in West Azerbaijan Province sport and youth organizations. 85 employees were selected by stratified sampling method.

#### Measures:

##### Organizational Justice:

To assess organizational justice the 21-items organizational justice questionnaire that assess the three dimensions of distributive (5 items), procedural (6 items) and Interactional organizational justice (11 items) was used. The questions are answered on a 5 point Likert-scale (ranging from 1= strongly disagree to 5= strongly agree). The reliability coefficient was 0.87 in Niehoff and Moorman's study. The reliability coefficient alpha for distributive, procedural, and Interactional justice in this study was 0.81, 0.72, and 0.78, respectively.

##### Conflict Management Style:

Conflict management style was measured by the 30-item Organizational Communication Conflict Instrument (Form B) developed by Putnam and Wilson. The items were measured on a 5-point Likert type scale ranging from (1=Never to 5 = Always), which was modified from the original 7-point scale to allow for Consistency throughout the questionnaire. For the current study, employees reported on their immediate supervisor's conflict management style. Cronbach's alpha for non-confrontation, solution oriented strategies, collaboration, compromise, and control strategies were 0.73, 0.68, 0.71, 0.79, and 0.72, respectively. Collected data were analyzed by Pearson correlation test by SPSS software.

#### Results:

##### Descriptive Statistics and Correlations:

In terms of demographic findings, (43.4%) of respondents were males, and the remaining (56.6%) were females. In terms of the age group of respondents, it is interested to note that (21.1%) of them fell into (25-34), (34.2%) fell into the (35-44), whereas (44.7%) fell into the (35-44) age groups. As for the educational levels of these employees, the majorities (63.1%) were university certificate holders, (11.8%) of these, have Higher Education degree, and (25 %) didn't have any academic background.

Table 1 shows means, standard deviations, and correlations for the study's variables.

**Table 1:** Correlations Among and Descriptive Statistics for Key Study Variables.

	M (SD)	Competitive Conflict	Yielding Conflict	Conciliation Conflict	Cooperation Conflict	Avoidance Conflict	Distributive Org. Just.	Procedural Org. Just.	Interactional Org. Just.	Total Org. Just.
Competitive Conflict	3.21 (.6)	1	.54**	.09	.15	.22	.01	-.06	.07	.01
Yielding Conflict	3.04 (.69)		1	.35**	.32**	.70**	.1	.15	.21	.11
Conciliation Conflict	2.92 (.85)			1	.90**	.55**	.37**	.69**	.83**	.75**
Cooperation Conflict	2.93 (.93)				1	.50**	.38**	.71**	.86**	.78**
Avoidance Conflict	2.91 (.67)					1	.01	-.25**	-.42**	-.27**
Distributive Org. Just.	2.81 (.78)						1	.48**	.46**	.73**
Procedural Org. Just.	2.85 (.89)							1	.82**	.91**
Interactional Org. Just.	2.91 (.97)								1	.93**

Note. Org. Just. = Organizational Justice. \*  $p < .05$ . \*\*  $p < .01$ .

**Table 2:** Summary of Stepwise Regression Analysis for variables predicting Organizational Justices.

Variable	Model1				
	B	SE B	$\beta$	R <sup>2</sup>	F
Cooperation Conflict	.63	.05	.78	.60	115.01**

#### Conclusion:

The aim of this study was to examine the relationship between conflict management styles and organizational justice. The results showed that there are positive relationships between conciliation, cooperation,

and negative relationship between avoidance conflict styles with organizational justice. Also, the results showed that the cooperation conflict style significantly only predicted the Organizational justice with .60 of total variance.

The significant relationship between cooperation conflict with organizational justice and its dimensions is consistent with findings of previous researches [12,14]. In Cooperation Strategy the goals of two sides of the conflict is considered and Managers by choosing this strategy tries to find a solution involving their and employees interests. Therefore, it causes to provide the organizational distributive, Interactional, and procedural justice in sport organizations.

In addition, the positive relationship between conciliation conflict with organizational justice and its dimensions is in line with previous findings [12,14]. The purpose in conciliation strategy is to finding some solutions that acceptable to both sides, which causes partial fulfillment of interests and goals of both parties. In this strategy, the parties agree that ignore portion of their positions. Therefore, this can lead to increase the organizational distributive, Interactional, and procedural justice in sport organizations.

Also, other finding of this study is the positive significant relationship between avoidance conflict style with organizational justice and its three dimensions. In this strategy, the manager does not follow own or others' interests and goals. The manager tries to evade or to postpone or withdraw conflict situations [12]. Therefore, in terms of organizational justice, the manager is not sensitive to justice issues of staff.

The competitive and yielding dimensions of conflict styles do not have any significant relationship with organizational justice. In this strategy, the manager just emphasis on own interests and goals and ignore the others.

Our results should be interpreted in light of several limitations. Our three measures of organizational justice did not capture all dimensions of their related constructs. For example, we measured distributive justice with respect to the equity criterion, but other possible criteria for distributive justice include equality and need (Deutsch, 1975). Also, we measured interactional justice in terms of interpersonal justice. Another dimension of interactional justice is informational justice, which focuses on the extent to which decision makers explain and provide adequate justification for their decisions [10]. If our measures had addressed these other dimensions of the justice variables, relationships between the forms of justice and the criterion variables may have been different from those reported here.

The findings of this research could have implications for sport organization's managers. Armstrong suggest that managers who are willing to to conflict resolution should listen and seeing carefully, help people in diagnosing problem solution, allow people to express their feelings, offering the alternatives to solution, and ask the people to develop their own action plans.

Finally, it should be noted that there are many variables that can be considered in the research field of organizational conflict. The structural variables (eg., culture) and the assessment of the effects of conflict on organizational factors such as stress, decision making, risk-taking, absenteeism, handling, dispensing and staff are recommended.

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