

## Organizational Justice and Job Satisfaction of High School Coaches of Boys' and Girls' Sports

Michael Smucker, University of Tampa

Warren Whisenant, University of Miami

**Organizational theory**

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An important factor in the success of organizations revolves around the concept of justice. Organizational justice research emerged in the early 1990's as a robust means of assessing how and why people feel about their jobs (Bies, 1993). Colquitt, Greenberg, and Zapata-Phelan (2005) refer to the development of organizational justice research as a distinctive set of waves' beginning in the 1950's with distributive justice; followed by the procedural justice wave in the mid-1970s; and then interpersonal justice in the 1980s. Distributive justice has been aligned with perceptions of fairness held by organizational members with regards to the distribution of resources or decided outcomes (Adams, 1965; Colquitt, 2001). Procedural justice dealt with the perceived fairness of the processes used to achieve those outcomes or decisions (Moorman, 1991; Sweeney & McFarlin, 1997; Thibaut & Walker, 1975). And interpersonal justice focused on how members were treated during the decision making process (Bies & Moag, 1986; Moorman, 1991). Those perceptions of fairness held by organizational members towards those three dimensions and the integration of the dimensions formed the foundation for the organizational justice construct (Greenberg, 1987, 1990; Greenberg & Cropanzano, 2001).

In its early stages of acceptance as an emerging line of research in the field of organizational behavior, Greenberg, Mark, and Lehman (1985) wrote, "Sports may be special in many ways related to justice. Alternatively, sports may represent a miniature social system from which conclusions about justice in society can be drawn. In either case, the future study of justice in sports will increase our understanding of behavior in sports as well as our understanding of justice in general" (p. 30). Recently their recommendation was set into action through the works of Jordan, Gillentine, and Hunt (2004). Jordan followed with works linking organizational justice to job satisfaction among head basketball coaches at the collegiate level (Jordan, Turner, Fink, & Pastore, 2007) and among student employees in a university recreation department setting (Jordan, Turner, & DuBord, 2007). In addition to the work by Jordan, Whisenant has contributed to the justice literature in sport with studies which focused on interscholastic athletics, namely coaches and student athletes (Whisenant, 2005; Whisenant & Jordan, 2006; Whisenant & Smucker, 2006).

Since organizational justice and its dimensions have repeatedly been directly linked to performance, commitment, citizenship behavior, and job satisfaction (Colquitt et. al., 2001; Diekmann, Sondak, & Barsness, 2007; Jordan, Turner, & DuBord, 2007) further study within high school athletic departments was warranted. Therefore, the purpose of this study was to expanded upon a previous investigation of organizational justice and job satisfaction of high school coaches of girls' teams (Whisenant & Smucker, 2007) with the inclusion of high school coaches of boys' teams. Specifically, this study explored the relationship between organizational justice and job satisfaction among high school coaches (boys' and girls' teams) based independently upon four criteria coaches as a whole, gender of the coaches, gender of the sport coached, and the gender of the coaches' athletic director. This study solicited participation from high school coaches (N=2400) across the state of Texas at two different intervals. The two stratified random samples were comprised of head coaches listed in the Texas Sports Guide for High School and Colleges (Coynor & Lo Presto, 2002). The sample was equally divided (n=1200) among both coaches of girls' teams and boys' teams. The fairness measure used to assess the three justice dimensions (distributive, procedural, and interpersonal) was drawn from the work of Colquitt (2001). To ensure the coaches utilized their athletic departments as their referent point the introductory statement for each dimension was adapted to indicate "your athletic department." Each statement was followed by a six-point Likert scale where by 1=Strongly Disagree and 6=Strongly Agree. The justice measures used in this study produced a Cronbach's alpha of .912 which fell within the range of the instrument developed by Colquitt (2001) which had a reliability range of .90 to .93 (Colquitt & Shaw, 2005). Satisfaction was measured utilizing both the Job Descriptive Index (JDI) which was developed by Smith, Kendall, and Hulin (1969) and the Job in General (JGI) which was developed to be used in conjunction with the JDI (Ironson, Smith, Brannick, Gibson, & Paul, 1989). While the JDI measures satisfaction across five facets of the job individual pay, opportunity for promotion, level of supervision, co-workers, and the work itself the JIG measures overall job satisfaction. Scores for both instruments range from 0 to 54.

In addition to descriptive statistics being obtained for each measure, the independent samples t-test, general linear modeling, and analysis of variance were used for analyses where most appropriate. Post hoc comparisons were also made utilizing a Dunnett C test since equal variances were not assumed in some instances. An alpha of .05 was used for all analyses. The high school coaches (N=392) who participated in the study indicated that, as a whole their athletic departments maintained a fair operating climate. However, perceptions of some fairness dimensions did differ significantly ( $p < .05$ ) based upon the gender of the coach (procedural and interpersonal justice), gender of the team coached (interpersonal justice), and gender of the athletic director

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(procedural and distributive justice). The coaches were satisfied with each of the five facets and their jobs in general, however the female coaches were significantly ( $p < .05$ ) less satisfied with supervision and promotion as compared to the male coaches. When taking into account the gender of the sport, coaches of girls' teams were significantly ( $p < .05$ ) less satisfied with their supervision, pay, and promotions. A linear relationship ( $p < .05$ ) between each of the three fairness dimensions and each of the job satisfaction facets as well as the job itself were also present.

The implications for athletic administrators at the high school level are two-fold. First, understanding that there is a relationship between organizational justice and the satisfaction of coaches is a significant step in providing better strategies for instituting fairness throughout the organization. Second, by addressing the perceptions of female coaches and coaches of girls teams regarding procedural and interpersonal justice and promotion and supervision satisfaction, high school athletic directors can create a better working environment. As it exists, the environment is not bad but could easily be improved with a simple recognition and understanding of the cultural environment and the resulting feelings of fairness and satisfaction. Departments should strive for more than simple diversity among its coaches and administrators by fostering an environment of inclusiveness to capitalize on the equity which can be leveraged through interpersonal and procedural justice to sustain a fair workplace climate. Providing these strategies administrators can create a better organizational climate which may lead to a greater avoidance of coaching burnout and turnover.