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## The relationship between organizational learning culture and job satisfaction and Internal service quality in sport organizations in Iran

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### ABSTRACT

To investigate the relationship between organizational learning culture and job satisfaction and Internal service quality in sport organizations in Iran, 371 managers and sport organization experts were selected using random sampling and based on Kerjsey table and they answered the standard questionnaires in this area. For the form and content validity, we used the opinions of the specialists. For construct validity, we used exploratory factor analysis, and for confirmation and reliability, we used Cronbach's coefficient. For data analysis, descriptive and inferential statistics [multiple regression and correlation] were adopted using the appropriate [LISREL] version [8/52] and SPSS [version 20]. Results of correlation test and regression analysis showed that there is a significant positive relationship between organizational learning culture and internal service quality and also between job satisfaction and internal service quality.

**Keywords:** organizational learning culture, job satisfaction, internal service quality.

### INTRODUCTION

Today, people live in an environment that is increasingly moving towards services-based economy. The concepts of service quality and satisfaction in marketing activities during the past decades have been the focus of attention. Researchers appreciate the advantages of satisfaction and consider them as indicators of the competitive advantage of organizations, although the exact nature of customer judgments and the relationship between these two is still hung in the balance [1]. Willingness to provide quality services in today's world plays an important role in the service industries. Because service quality is considered crucial for organization's survival and profit making. Service quality plays a significant role in customer's satisfaction, maintenance, and stability. In addition, the chain of services - profit - income is associated with the stated factors [20]. Findings of some researchers have proved the strategic benefits of quality, market share and return on investment in partnership development and in reducing production costs and in enhancing productivity [8]. But before discussing service quality, it is essential to understand the concept of quality. Quality is the customer's satisfaction and enjoyment or simply fulfilling or surpassing customer's expectations [13]. Based on Heskett's model [1994], internal service quality leads to the satisfaction of staffs [maintenance of staffs] which in turn leads to external service quality and customer satisfaction whose final product is profitability, growth, and development. Internal service quality is the most essential element to achieve high quality of external services and it is imperative that be reviewed in most sport environments. Several factors contribute to the Internal service quality in a sports organization. Among these factors, organizational learning culture, job satisfaction, organizational commitment, learning motivation, organizational atmosphere and organizational justice. Most researchers agree that organizational learning leads to competitive advantage for the staff who have a clear vision of the importance of quality service. Organizational learning can be defined as a dynamic process of creating, acquiring and gathering knowledge and resources to develop the capacity and

resources, which leads to better performance of the organization [6]. Certainly the culture of organizational learning will play a significant role in the internal service quality [24]. Bavaghar's research results [2008] showed that there is a significant relationship between organizational learning culture and internal service quality in the staff of the physical education department. Qanbarpur[2011] pointed out that here is a significant positive relationship between organizational learning culture and internal service quality in selected sport federations. Di Xie's studies[2005] showed that there is a significant relationship between organizational learning culture and internal service quality; and organizational learning culture would account for 5% of the variance of internal service quality. Hays and Hill [2001] showed that organizational learning is positively related with perceived service quality. The past research also showed that for having a superior external service quality, organizations need staffs [internal customers] committed to the goals and prospects of the company and require customer oriented behavior and the internal service quality [satisfaction of organizational units from each other]. The past research shows that there should be a close interaction between internal service quality and external quality. Recently, attention to internal service quality in sports and healthy recreation has grown [23]. Mohammad Asif Khan [2011] in the study under the subject of the relationship between internal service quality in human resources management and staff maintenance found that in human resource management, internal service quality had a significant positive effect on staff retention due to the role of job satisfaction. Job satisfaction increases when internal service quality increases. Satisfaction of internal customers is a strongly associated with internal service quality which in turn has strong relationships with customers who receive external service. Management should meet the needs and expectations of internal customers so that the staff have high levels of satisfaction and give high quality external service to external customers[Elsie Obeng, 2009]. Today, the study of service quality has been significantly extended to different sectors of industry such as sports, professional sports, fitness programs, spectator sports and recreation, healthy recreation and tourism [10]. The range of studies in the sports industry has focused on supporting the staff's role in customer's evaluation of the internal service quality and performing it in service sports organizations [7]. Most organizations are looking out for the perception of external customers but the problem is that they pay no attention to the communications within the organization and interactions among the staff. Like other organizations, sports organizations follow the same principles and regulations in the related sections; however, the main objectives of the sport organization are directed to humans and to giving optimal service to them. In this respect, the factors such as internal service quality for the staff can influence staff's organizational learning and thus affect the quality of the entire external service. Using scientific knowledge and its management in sport organizations in our country has been less than desired. This study provides the opportunity for staffs and human resources to pay special attention to this issue and be aware of its role and impact. Accordingly, this study is to explore the relationship between organizational learning culture and job satisfaction and internal service quality in Iran's sport organizations.

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

The present study was of correlation type. Its population consists of 574 managers and staff experts of the Ministry of Youth and Sports and Physical Education Department of the schools of the Ministry of Education and the managers of sport federations. Using random sampling, based on the tables of Morgan and Kerjsay, 371 people were selected. This selection was due to their effectiveness in decision making and policy making in these areas of the country. The tools for measuring variables include: 1 – researcher-made questionnaires for individual features, 2- Marsyk and Vikins standardized questionnaires for organizational learning culture [2003], which include 21 questions, Egan's job satisfaction [2004] included 3 questions and Karuna and Pitt internal service quality [1997]. For the face and content validity, expert opinions, and for construct validity, exploratory and confirmatory factor analysis were used. Results of exploratory factor analysis for internal service quality questionnaire were [KMO = 0/89, P= 0/001] and for organizational learning culture questionnaire [KMO = 0/95, P = 0/001]. For confirmatory factor analysis of questionnaire and service quality was [GFI = 0/96, df =20, p = 0/001], organizational learning culture questionnaire [GFI = 0/92, df =44, p = 0/001] and job satisfaction questionnaire [GFI =1, df =0, p= 0/001] were obtained. In addition, for determining the reliability, Cronbach's alpha was used. Its results for organizational learning culture questionnaire were [ $\alpha = 0/98$ ], for job satisfaction questionnaire [ $\alpha = 0/91$ ] and for internal service quality questionnaire [ $\alpha = 0/89$ ]. The alpha coefficients obtained are acceptable and measurement tools have internal consistency. In order to organize, summarize and classify the raw scores, descriptive statistics were used; in inferential statistics, exploratory factor analysis and confirmatory factor analysis were used to assess construct validity, multiple correlation, multivariate regression of data by means of the softwares [LISREL] version 8/52 and [SPSS] version 20 for data analysis.

RESULTS

Table 1. Demographic features of the staff of sport organizations

Organizational position		Age				Gender		Education					Service record					
manager	Expert	30>	31-40	41-50	50>	femal	male	diplo	tactful	B. A	M. A	P.H .D	5<	6-10	11-15	16-20	21-25	25>
53/4 %	46/6 %	19/6 %	40/8 %	32/8 %	6/8 %	44/1 %	55/9 %	10%	13%	49 %	24 %	4%	26/4 %	29/3 %	16/2 %	17/4 %	7/5 %	3/2 %

According to Table 2, the results of the correlation between variables showed that there is a significant positive relationship between organizational learning culture and quality of staffs' [managers and experts] service-giving in all three organizations, which shows that the increase in staffs' organizational learning culture will increase the quality of their internal service-giving. There was a significant positive relationship between job satisfaction and quality of staffs' [managers and experts] service-giving in all three organizations.

Table 2, Mean , standard deviation and correlation matrix of organizational learning culture, job satisfaction and internal service quality in sports organizations

Sport organizations	Variables	M ± sd	Service-giving quality (M ±sd)	r	P
Ministry of youth and sports	organizational learning culture	63/16 ± 14/28	76/49 ± 10/4	0/535	0/001
	job satisfaction	10/3 ± 3/02	76/49 ± 10/4	0/517	
Sport federations	organizational learning culture	19/78 ± 13/81	84/99 ± 7/96	0/583	
	job satisfaction	12/04 ± 2/65	84/99 ± 7/96	0/522	
Physical Education Department	organizational learning culture	67/3 ± 12/74	81/10 ± 7/08	0/643	
	job satisfaction	11/63 ± 2/6	81/10 ± 7/08	0/548	

Results of multivariate [stepwise] regression analysis in the Ministry of Youth and Sports showed that the correlation coefficients between organizational learning culture has the highest relationship with service quality which first entered the equation. It should be noted that the correlation between job satisfaction and service quality was [r=0/479] but it is a false relationship and is due to the effects of other variables. Because based on differential correlation coefficients, there is no significant relationship between these two variables, and the variable of satisfaction as a variable that can determine a part of the variance in service quality of the Ministry of Youth and Sports has not been entered in the equation. [r<sup>2</sup> = 0/417, p = 0/001, f<sub>(4,197)</sub> = 35/2] the possibility to predict the internal service quality based on each of the independent variables in the Ministry of Youth and Sports have been listed separately in the table [3]. The results of the regression analysis of the sport federations show that organizational learning culture and job satisfaction as independent variables can be significant predictors of internal service quality. [r<sup>2</sup> = 0/457, p = 0/001, f<sub>(3,109)</sub> = 30/6] the possibility to predict the internal service quality based on each of the independent variables in sport federations have been listed separately in the table [3]. According to the calculated correlation coefficients between the dependent variable and independent variables, it was determined that in the Department of Physical Education in the Ministry of Education, like in other organizations, the variable of the culture of organizational learning has had the highest correlation with service quality, and the variable of organizational learning culture has been entered as the first variable into the regression equation, and the squared multiple correlation coefficient was equal to [r<sup>2</sup> = 0/37] which shows that 37% of the variability of the variable of service quality in the Department of Physical Education in the Ministry of Education was caused by the variable of organizational learning culture. [r<sup>2</sup> = 0/490, p = 0/001, f<sub>(2,27)</sub> = 12/6] the possibility to predict the internal service quality based on each of the independent variables in the Ministry of Youth and Sports have been listed separately in the table at [3].

Table 3 Regression coefficients and the steps of entering variables associated with the prediction of the service quality in sports organizations

Organizations	Entering steps	Predictor variables	R <sup>2</sup>	B	Beta coefficient	t	p	Differential coefficient
Ministry of Youth and Sports	1	organizational learning culture	0/32	0/412	0/565	9/6	0/001	0/565
Sport federation	1 2	organizational learning culture	0/36	0/347	0/602	7/9	0/001	0/602
		organizational learning culture job satisfaction	0/46	0/227 0/796	0/394 0/227	4/4 2/5	0/001 0/011	0/395 0/241
Department of Physical Education of schools	1	organizational learning culture	0/37	0/337	0/606	4/03	0/001	0/606

**DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION**

Findings showed that there is a significant relationship between organizational learning culture and internal service quality in any organization. All researchers in their researches concluded that good learning culture can help staff provide better service quality. And good learning environment can also encourage the staff to learn and to stay in the organization for a long period of time. In this area, we can pay attention to the studies carried out by [1, 2, 19, 21]. Therefore, creating a good learning culture not only helps staffs to remain at a high level of internal service-giving, but also maintains them as a good staff in the organization. Organizational learning culture is closely associated with other positive outputs within the organization, economically and psychologically. And because a continuous learning program should be able to properly meet the needs of staffs, it seems that organizational learning culture can also have a positive effect on the quality of external services. Some researchers in their research concluded that job satisfaction is not a factor that can influence the quality of internal services and there is no correlation between these two components [18]. In contrast to these investigations, many researchers concluded that job satisfaction is one of the factors affecting service quality and the relationship is positive and significant. In addition, there is close relationship between internal service quality and organizational performance. In fact, the investment of quality should lead to better performance. Variables of service quality lead to managerial commitment and satisfaction of internal customers, and satisfaction of internal customers has a positive effect on the quality of internal services and better performance, and the staff who have higher levels of job satisfaction offer higher internal service quality. Finally, the desirable conditions of work causes the staff's job satisfaction and finally it leads to a higher level of the internal service quality based on equity in social interactions. In this area we can refer to researches of [5, 2, 3, 22, 19, 8, 9, 11, 16, 17]. Today, the researchers focus their attention mostly on the internal service quality due to its significant effect on external service quality, growth and profitability of the organization or company. Internal service quality and organizational learning culture which influence other variables affecting internal service quality rely on the support of leaders and managers, especially human resource managers. Regarding the role of sports in physical and psychological growth and development of the society in one hand, and the role of sport as an industry for economic growth of sports organizations and communities, it should be noted that factors listed above will not be achieved unless the competent staff be employed to implement programs and provide appropriate services to internal customers and external organizations, and this will not be actualized except through focus on and providing the strategic planning of human resources by human resources managers and leaders of organizations to improve internal service quality and creating a culture of organizational learning. Considering the research carried out so far, it can be said that by increasing the quality of internal services and recognizing the importance of learning and culture in sporting organizations, we can providing a better service to customers and increase their satisfaction provided so that this will benefit the organization. It should be added that internal service quality will be different according to the type of organization and even the gender of workers, therefore, this issue can be considered a limitation in generalizing the results to other organizations. It is suggested that future researchers investigate the impact of other non-financial variables such as motivation, learning, organizational atmosphere and demographic variables on internal service quality to in the sport organization of Iran.

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