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The Mediating Role of Professional Ethics in the Relationship of the Organizational Culture with Social Responsibility and the Organizational Commitment in Sports Organizations

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of the present study was to investigate the mediating role of professional ethics in the relationship of the organizational culture with social responsibility and the organizational commitment in sports organizations. 201 staff of sport and youth departments in Esfahan province completed the research questionnaires through stratified random sampling approach according to geographical distribution. For data analysis, structural equation modeling by Lisrel software was used. Results showed that organizational culture has a positive and significant effect on organizational commitment, by coefficient of 0.36, indirectly according to professional ethics mediator variable and on social responsibility by coefficient of 0.37. According to the research findings the mediator role of professional ethics variable as well as the research conceptual model was confirmed.

Introduction

The social responsibility of organizations is often divided into four sub-systems of economic, legal, ethical, and public responsibility (altruism and charity) that are voluntarily carried out (Mashbaki and Khalili Shojae, 2010, p. 43). These affairs show the commitment of organizations, managers, employees, and others to maximize benefits and minimize social costs. Today, moral, benevolent, and religious dimensions related to social responsibility have become more prominent. These are behaviors that the society expects from organizations and their employees, but they have not been

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codified in the law (Qasemzadeh et al., 2014, p. 70). Regarding the interaction between professional ethics and social responsibility, some scholars believe that morality emphasizes how an individual behaves within the organization, but social responsibility considers how the organization and employees interact with clients and stakeholders (Mashbaki and Khalili Shojaee, 2010, p. 43). But what is certain is that organizations are expected to respect the values, norms, and beliefs of the people, and pay attention to ethical issues in their activities and in dealing with people. Of course, this is possible when professional ethics are institutionalized (Asghari, 1394, p. 4). Organizations need to feel that the community's problems are part of their problems, and they have to work towards their solution and use some of their financial and human resources in this way. There are many indications that if organizations go to their goals without curbing it, they will undermine society and its interests, and public good will be sacrificed for the benefit of the organization (Mir Mohammadi and Rajai, 1393, p. 2).

Now, if social responsibility can be regarded as one of the most important expectations of organizations of its employees in the external environment and in relation to its customers, the organizational commitment of employees can also be considered as one of the key organizational variables in the internal environment and in relation to the organization itself. Because organizational commitment results from the commitment, effort, and willingness of employees to survive in an organization and results in the organization's survival (Paglis & Green, 2002, p. 216). Organizational commitment involves the relative power of the individual's identity by being present in a particular organization (Norouzi Seyed Hosseini and Kalateh Seiferi, 2014, p. 91). This definition involves three concepts: a strong belief in the adoption of organizational goals; the great passion for significant effort in the organization; and, finally, the willingness to continue the organization's membership (Tung, 2005, p. 5). In an organizational commitment, the person sees the organization as his/her representative and wishes to be in continuous membership of that organization. But what is becoming increasingly widespread in the context of organizational commitment is a moral conundrum (Dehghani Firoozabadi et al., 2015, p. 41). Inattention of the organizations to working ethics and the weakness of ethical principles in dealing with the human resources of the organization and external stakeholders can create problems for the organization and question the legitimacy of the organization and its actions (Valentine, 2010, p. 908). Employees prefer to work in professional organizations because a professional ethical environment reduces unpleasant factors in the group working and increases job satisfaction and relationships between colleagues (Niaz Azari et al., 2014, p. 35). Accordingly, professional ethics has an impact on people's attitude toward the job, and organizational commitment is one of the three pillars of job attitudes (Behravan and Saeedi, 2009, p. 184).

The existence of professional ethics in government agencies can help them reduce tensions and achieve goals, and increase the accountability of the organization. Therefore, having professional ethics today is considered a competitive advantage (Shoorvarzi and Lotfi, 2012, p. 76). However, in order to achieve the excellence and effectiveness of professional ethics in organizations, special attention should be paid to organizational culture, because culture refers to the way in which human beings understand the environment in which they live and represent their views and behavior. If the rules and regulations in organizations form the formal behavior of employees, organizational culture also dictates the informal behavior of employees (Nasrabadi and Soleimani, 2013, p. 88) and is the base of their professional ethics.

In today's changing conditions, the main emphasis of sports organization managers is on the effort to prepare their organization to make appropriate changes in order to respond to environmental interactions, because the continuity of the organization's life depends on coordinating the goals with the state of the day or updating the goals and Improving methods for achieving these goals (Golgar, 2015, p. 3). Sports and youth departments as the sub-divisions of the Ministry of Sports and Youth are major sport administrators in the country and since they must be directly and indirectly responsive to a wide range of different strata of society, they have a lot of social responsibility, including expanding mobility and physical activity of the people; reducing anxiety, loneliness, impatience, and reducing mental disorders (Rai, 2015, p. 69); and, in general, improving the mental and physical health of individuals and society (Mirsafian et al, 2013, p. 43). The social responsibilities of the sports

and youth departments are not limited to the above, and in addition to their common responsibilities toward all groups of society in sport, they also have other social responsibilities in smaller sectors of society in the form of championship sports. On the other hand, since the sport environment is multifaceted and open, and employees of the sports and youth departments deal with a wide range of people and other organizations, and also the existence of multiple factors can play a role in misleading staff and sports organizations. The level of organizational commitment seems to be a key factor in promoting the micro and macro goals of the sports and youth departments. Therefore, considering the importance of the role of the two variables of social responsibility and organizational commitment of employees on organizational productivity of sport and youth departments, the impact of organizational culture and professional ethics on many organizational variables, as well as the existing gap in the relationship between these variables in sport organizations, the present study tries to investigate the effect of organizational culture on social responsibility and organizational commitment of the employees of the sports and youth departments, considering the mediator role of professional ethics.

Methodology

The present research, in terms of purpose, method of data collection, and, type, is applied, survey, and causal-descriptive, respectively and is specifically based on the structural equation modeling. In the analytical model of research, organizational culture as an independent variable, social responsibility and organizational commitment as dependent variables, and professional ethics are introduced as intermediary variables.

The research area was Isfahan province and the statistical population included all the staff of the sport and youth departments of this province, which according to the report of the General Directorate in 2015 were 404 people. The sample size was 201 people selected according to Krejcie and Morgan tables. Due to the fact that the sport and youth departments of Isfahan province have wide spatial dispersion, a stratified random sampling method was used to determine the geographic distribution of the service location.

A standard Denison questionnaire (2000) containing 12 components and 60 questions was used to collect data about the organizational culture variable. Based on the characteristics of organizational culture from Denison's perspective, the characteristics of job involvement is measured by three components of empowerment, team building, and capability development; the characteristics of consistency by three components of fundamental values, agreement, and coherence and coordination; the characteristics of adaptability by three components of creating change, customer orientation, and organizational learning; and the characteristics of mission three components of strategic tendency and direction, goals and objectives, and vision.

To measure the social responsibility variable, a standard questionnaire of Heidarzadeh and Rahpeima (2013) including 5 components of commitment to employees, commitment to customers, commitment to laws and regulations, commitment to social programs, and commitment to society; in the form of 19 questions were used.

Data collection on the organizational commitment variable was based on Allen Mayer's (1990) standard questionnaire. This questionnaire, which is the basis of many researches on the organizational commitment variable, has 24 questions in terms of three components of continuous commitment, emotional commitment, and normative commitment.

Also, for gathering data about the professional ethics of employees, Kadvezier's 16-item standard questionnaire (2004) including 8 components of accountability, honesty, justice and fairness, loyalty, superiority and competitiveness, respect for others, empathy/ sympathy with others, and observing and respecting values and social norms was used.

Despite the fact that all four questionnaires are standard, however, the validity of the questionnaires in the present study was confirmed by the views of the professors in term of form and content. Cronbach's alpha were 0.91, 0.88, 0.90, and 0.84, respectively for the organizational culture questionnaire, the social responsibility questionnaire, the organizational commitment questionnaire,

and the social responsibility questionnaire; using a sample of 30 people, which showed the desired reliability of research tool.

In order to analyze the data obtained from questionnaires, Structural Equation Modeling and LISREL software were used.

Findings

Table (1) shows the fitting indices of the model derived from the data analysis based on the proposed structural equation model. In this table, the Chi-square ratio to the degree of freedom is equal to 81/1, which, given that the number is less than 2, represents the fit of the proposed model. The Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA) in this model is 0.77. Since this number is below 0.08, it shows that the fit is not poor. The Root Mean Square Residual (RMR) (02/0) also confirms the fit of the model, since it is close to zero. Other indicators that are often used to analyze the fit of the model in structural equations are also presented in Table (1) along with their accepted range (Abdolmaleki and Rashidi, 2012, p. 214).

Table 1. Model fitting indicators

Index	Value	Acceptable domain	Result
X ² /df	1.81	< 2	Confirmed
RMSEA	0.07	> 0.8	Accepted error
RMR	0.02	0 < > 1	Confirmed
AGFI	0.92	> 0.9	Confirmed
GFI	0.93	> 0.9	Confirmed
NFI	0.93	> 0.9	Confirmed
CFI	0.94	> 0.9	Confirmed

According to the findings of Table (1), it can be said that the general indexes show a good fit of the pattern by the data, or, in other words, it can be said that the collected data support the pattern.

In the final model extracted from LISREL software, all relationships between the latent variables are significant, which means that, in addition to confirming the effect of these variables on each other, the model reports the significance of the existing relations. Also, in this model, the relationships between latent and observed variables are also significant, which shows that all latent variables are supported by their observed variables. Figure 1 shows the model of research based on a standardized structural model (Standardized Solution).

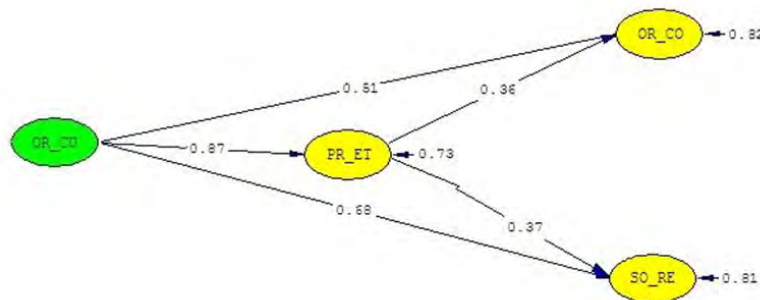


Figure 1. Standardized Structural Model (Standardized Solution)

Based on the results of the standardized structural model in Figure 1, the latent variable of the organizational culture has directly a positive and significant effect on organizational commitment and social responsibility with coefficients of 0.51 and 0.68, respectively. Also, organizational culture regarding the professional ethics mediator variable has indirectly a positive and significant effect on organizational commitment and social responsibility with coefficients of 0.36 and 0.37, respectively. Thus, although the indirect impact factor of organizational culture has decreased on the two variables of organizational commitment and social responsibility, the mediating role of the professional ethics variable is confirmed. Table (2) represents the observed coefficients in the final standardized structural model.

Table 2. Standard coefficients in the final structural model

Path	Type	Standard Coefficient	Result
Organizational Culture-Organizational Commitment	direct	0.51	Confirmed
Organizational Culture-social responsibility	direct	0.68	Confirmed
Organizational Culture-Professional Ethics	direct	0.87	Confirmed
Organizational Culture-Organizational Commitment	indirect	0.36	Confirmed
Organizational Culture -social responsibility	indirect	0.37	Confirmed

The final results of modeling confirm the conceptual model of the research.

Discussion and Conclusion

The final model of research states that the organizational culture variable as an independent variable has a significant positive effect on organizational commitment, which is consistent with the findings of Afkhami Ardakani and Farahi (2012), Ziaee et al (2011), Maleki et al. (2009), Shim, Jo, Hoover (2015), Kengboon, Aramugam (2006), and Silverthorne (2004). Because in all of these studies the relationship between organizational culture and organizational commitment has been confirmed. The world in which we live is changing rapidly, and in this complex environment, successful organizations will be able to design appropriate strategies to ensure their survival and their effective implementation. The most important factor for success in this movement is organizational culture, because any small movement may be delayed or denied due to the opposition of the organizational culture that sets the organization's beliefs and determines the lifestyle of that organization. On the other hand, no organization can succeed unless its employees have an adequate commitment to that organization, and endeavor to achieve these goals (Ziaee et al., 2011, p. 50). But what can justify the link between culture and organizational commitment in the sports and youth departments is that if employees of this organization have shared goals, beliefs, and values, they will be required to engage in work and participate in solving affairs and problems; to adapt to the environmental conditions of the organization and traditions; to adapt to the changing environment inside and outside the organization, and also to understand and meet the needs of the organization's internal and external environment. In this conditions, undoubtedly, their organizational commitment will be increased. Employees who have a profound knowledge of the organization and its environment, naturally have this kind of organizational culture and often go beyond their roles and responsibilities and present a high organizational commitment.

Based on the results of the final model, organizational culture has a direct, positive, and significant effect on the social responsibility of the staff of the sports and youth departments. These results are consistent with the findings of the Daraei and Parsaamal (2013), Mashbaki and Khalili Shojaei (2010), and Koene et al. (2002). The association between organizational culture and social responsibility has also been confirmed in this research; however, it does not coincide with the findings of Jackson et al. (2012), since they stated that organizational culture does not anticipate changes in social responsibility. However, during a recession, it can be one of the variables that positively affects social responsibility. Existence of high culture among the employees of the organization leads to

cooperation with customers in order to solve their problems and creates a passion and motivation for carrying out social programs. Also increases their commitment to laws and regulations, society, as well as other human resources of the organization. All of these, together, form the social responsibility of the staff.

In the final model, the mediating role of professional ethics in the relationship of the organizational culture with the organizational commitment was confirmed, although the impact of the professional ethics on organizational commitment with a coefficient of 0.36 was lower than the impact of organizational culture on organizational commitment. Nevertheless, this is a positive and significant effect. These findings are in line with the findings of Niazazari et al. (2014), and Okpara, Wynn (2008), which confirm the relationship between these two variables. Ethics in organizations is considered to be the focal point of organizational behavior, and moralization is an essential principle for managing organizations. In addition to organizational and legal criteria, managers need their own moral and value guidelines in their professional field to help them in their administrative practices and behaviors. Therefore, professional ethics can be considered as the basis of many positive organizational features such as the sense of responsibility, belonging, and affiliation, and emotional belonging and identification of the organization members are among the most important factors in creating their organizational commitment. Weak professional ethics is effective on people's attitude towards the job, organization, and managers and can negatively affect the performance of each member of the organization. On the other hand, the existence of professional ethics in an organization can lead to a better emotional relationship between employees and organization, so that they know the organization as their representative and make their best efforts to achieve the goals of the organization. This leads to an increase in organizational commitment, and the employees with an organizational commitment are not satisfied to leave work. This outcome can be considered as an advantage for any organization.

Another remarkable result in the final model is the confirmation of the mediating role of the professional ethics in the relationship of the organizational culture and social responsibility. The organizational culture regarding the professional ethics mediator variable has indirectly a positive and significant effect on social responsibility with coefficients of 0.37. Probably the reason for the relationship between professional ethics and social responsibility is that morality is recognized as a component of the body of social responsibility, and responsibility and attention to the issues of the external environment and society are not possible without professional ethics. If managers of sports and youth departments create a work environment with high ethical standards, employees will show a high level of accountability and social responsibility, but if employees are discouraged by the ethical climate of the organization, they will show a low level of social responsibility. But now, unfortunately, our society does not pay much attention to professional ethics. While in the secular West, in the knowledge of management and organization, there is a branch called professional ethics, in our religious community, in management, attention has not been paid to morality and professional ethics (Asghari, 1394, p. 92). Therefore, in our country, one of the main concerns of efficient managers at different levels is how to create suitable platforms for human resources employed in all professions, in order to give them a sense of responsibility and commitment to the issues of their society and profession to observe the ethical principles in their profession and workplace. Dealing with this issue in the departments of Youth and Sports and in the complex and highly variable environment of sport is difficult. Because the existence of sufficient grounds for corruption in various sport fields makes it very difficult for managers to create a professional and ethical-based environment for employees. Managers in sports organizations must emphasize ethical prerequisites and provide methods that based on them, employees can take on ethics as a habit in their work and repeat them every day. Also, managers of these departments can use it as a major criterion in reward structures to encourage employees to observe professional ethics and to reduce the probability of an organization leaving professional ethics. But the creation of a foundation based on rich organizational culture undoubtedly leads to the development of professional ethics in the organization, which is clearly visible in the research model, since organizational culture with a high coefficient of 0.87 affects professional ethics. Nasrabadi and Soleimani (2013) state that organizational culture based on

the trust in God in important affairs leads to the strengthening of the spirit of tolerance in hard working conditions and by increasing the work interest in employees, strengthens the organization. Also, with increasing interest in work, team spirit is enhanced to meet the goals of work and ultimately leads to the adoption of values and norms by the staff and as a result, the professional ethics institutionalize within the organization.

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