The Condition of Knowledge Management in Sport Organizations

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Abstract

In the world where significant changes are made in a matter of seconds instead of centuries, creating ideas and knowledge that are in line with these changes could create competitive advantages. The aim of the present paper is investigating the condition of knowledge management in Mazandaran sport organizations. This is descriptive-survey study in which Madhoushi's questionnaire was used. The population of the study comprises all the employees of Mazandaran Sports and Youth Organization, all the managers in physical education of the department of education and sports board managers in the province. The results show that knowledge management is in a desirable condition, this matter put Mazandaran sport on the map. The components of knowledge acquisition and knowledge creation are not in desirable condition but the other components including knowledge storage, knowledge sharing and knowledge application have been placed in a suitable condition.

Keywords: knowledge management, sport organization, competitive advantages

Introduction

Knowledge management (KM) systems have become an important means of organizational development and survival. The rapid evolution of information technology (IT) has led to a revolution in industrial organization, wherein competitive advantages are generated through the application of ITs to KM systems (Grant, 1996; Kogut & Zander, 1992). Consequently, organizations have begun investing in integrative KM and ITs to remain competitive, innovative, and efficient (Alavi & Leidner, 2001). For example, organizations in diverse industries have developed a range of integration systems for effective internal data sharing (Barua, Ravindran, & Whinston, 2007; Schultze & Boland, 2000; Sugumaran, Tanniru, & Storey, 2008). As a well-known example, Xerox Corporation developed Eureka, a KM system enabling its engineers worldwide to share their practical experiments (Bobrow & Whalen, 2002; Davenport & Prusak, 1997; McDermott, 1999; Nonaka, 1994).

Knowledge management authors have classified ‘knowledge’ in different ways. Some have differentiated it as technical and strategic knowledge (Liebeskind, 1996), but the most common types of knowledge are tacit, explicit and implicit knowledge (Cavusgil et al., 2003; Nonaka, 1994; Nonaka and Konno, 1998). Tacit knowledge resides in people’s brains and explicit knowledge resides in the organizational systems and documents, both electronic and on paper, while implicit knowledge is embedded within an organization’s processes and procedures, products or service (Baptista et al., 2005; Kidwell et al., 2000). On the other hand, ‘management’ is the creation and maintenance of an internal environment in an enterprise where individuals, working in groups, can perform efficiently and effectively towards the attainment of group goals.

The existing literature defines knowledge management as the integration and coordination of individual and organizational knowledge by managing current organizational knowledge and the creating new knowledge (Diakoulakis et al., 2004). It is a process which enables organizations to
learn, create, develop and apply necessary knowledge (Bhatt, 2001). It encompasses any processes and practices concerned with the creation, acquisition, capture, sharing and use of knowledge, skills and expertise (Swan et al., 1999), wherever it resides, to enhance learning and performance in organizations (Quintas et al., 1997).

While many knowledge management case studies and theoretical texts list benefits to an organization after the implementation of a knowledge management strategy, the literature provides little evidence that systems have been devised to measure the status of knowledge management. The adoption of knowledge management practices by sport organizations could equip them to be more competitive and ready to face the challenges of economic problems. This work was carried out in sport organizations of Mazandaran province.

Hypothesis 1: The process of knowledge management is not in a proper condition in Mazandaran sport organizations.

Hypothesis 2: The component of knowledge creation is not in a proper condition in Mazandaran sport organizations.

Hypothesis 3: The component of knowledge acquisition is not in a proper condition in Mazandaran sport organizations.

Hypothesis 4: The component of knowledge storage is not in a proper condition in Mazandaran sport organizations.

Hypothesis 5: The component of knowledge sharing is not in a proper condition in Mazandaran sport organizations.

Hypothesis 6: The component of knowledge application is not in a proper condition in Mazandaran sport organizations.

Materials and Methods

This research is applied in goal and descriptive-survey in method. In addition, the research is cross-sectional because it investigates the data during a period of time. The population of the study comprises all the employees of Mazandaran Sports and Youth Organization, all the managers in physical education of the department of education and sport boards managers in the province. The population is almost 462 people and 213 of them were chosen as samples by the Morgan table. 310 questionnaires were distributed among the people and 250 of them were given back.

The questionnaire of this research was taken from Madhoushi’s questionnaire. The questions contain five variables of knowledge creation, knowledge acquisition, knowledge storage, knowledge sharing and knowledge application. To determine the validity, the method of content validity was used. The questionnaire was edited in three sections of personal specifications, main questions and giving suggestions. After the research subject was confirmed by the professors and to ensure the content validity of the questionnaire and to accurately assess the given concepts and examples, the questionnaire was submitted to the professors of physical education to do the needed concept and content correction so that the questionnaire gets the validity. The questions became clearer in edition and were more comprehensible.

After collection and analyzing data, we came to the following conclusion:

- The Cronbach alpha coefficient test to determine the questionnaire reliability (above 0.7 for all of them)
- The Kolmogorov-Smirnov test to investigate the normal distribution of the variables.
- The Binomial test to determine the desirability or undesirability of the entrepreneurship process and components.
Results

To analyze the data obtained from the research and to gain the answers of the questions, the data were analyzed as follows:

Table 1: The condition of Knowledge management in Mazandaran sport organizations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>T</th>
<th>Sig</th>
<th>Calculated Average</th>
<th>Theoretical Average</th>
<th>N</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8/78</td>
<td>0/001</td>
<td>3/26</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>250</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Considering the fact that the calculated average is bigger than the theoretical average and sig=0/001, hypothesis is rejected, therefore knowledge management in Mazandaran sport organizations is in a proper condition.

Table 2: The condition of Knowledge acquisition in Mazandaran sport organizations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sig</th>
<th>Calculated Average</th>
<th>Theoretical Average</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Group</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0/184</td>
<td>3/15</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>114</td>
<td>=&gt;3</td>
<td>group1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>136</td>
<td>&lt;3</td>
<td>group2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As it is clear from table 2, the calculated average is bigger than the theoretical average and sig=0/184, hypothesis is confirmed, therefore knowledge acquisition in Mazandaran sport organizations is not in a proper condition.

Table 3: The condition of Knowledge creation in Mazandaran sport organizations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sig</th>
<th>Calculated Average</th>
<th>Theoretical Average</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Group</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0/229</td>
<td>3/22</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>115</td>
<td>=&gt;3</td>
<td>group1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>135</td>
<td>&lt;3</td>
<td>group2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

By looking at table 3, it can be observed that the calculated average is bigger than the theoretical average and sig=0/229, hypothesis is confirmed, therefore knowledge creation in Mazandaran sport organizations is not in a proper condition.

Table 4: The condition of Knowledge storage in Mazandaran sport organizations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>T</th>
<th>Sig</th>
<th>Calculated Average</th>
<th>Theoretical Average</th>
<th>N</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7/84</td>
<td>0/001</td>
<td>3/32</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>250</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Considering the fact that the calculated average is bigger than the theoretical average and sig=0/001, hypothesis is rejected, therefore knowledge storage in Mazandaran sport organizations is in a proper condition.

Table 5: The condition of Knowledge sharing in Mazandaran sport organizations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sig</th>
<th>Calculated Average</th>
<th>Theoretical Average</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Group</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0/001</td>
<td>3/28</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>=&gt;3</td>
<td>group1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>196</td>
<td>&lt;3</td>
<td>group2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5 indicates that the calculated average is bigger than the theoretical average and sig=0/001, hypothesis is rejected, therefore knowledge sharing in Mazandaran sport organizations is in a proper condition.
Table 6: The condition of Knowledge application in Mazandaran sport organizations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>sig</th>
<th>calculated average</th>
<th>theoretical average</th>
<th>N</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>T</td>
<td>7/84</td>
<td>0/001</td>
<td>3/32</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>250</td>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As it is evident from table 6, the calculated average is bigger than the theoretical average and sig=0/001, hypothesis is rejected, therefore knowledge sharing in Mazandaran sport organizations is in a proper condition.

Discussion and Conclusion

Reviewing the literature and the related researches related to knowledge management, one can conclude that the researchers have two perspectives towards the factors of the knowledge management. We have named these two perspectives. a) independent investigation of the components of knowledge management and b) systematic investigation of the components of knowledge management.

Since in the organizations under investigation they do not use the knowledge management processes systematically very much and different units have been somehow engaged in the knowledge management processes, the research team decided to use both perspectives in determining the condition of the processes.

Today, knowledge is considered the cornerstone for every organization and its management is of vital importance (Madhoushi, 2010). When this variable is vital in organizations, the sports organizations are also regarded. It seems that one of the factors that made Mazandaran be one of the sports axes of the country is the appropriate use of the processes of knowledge management. Todays, we see the triumph and medals of Mazandaran athletes in various national and international events and also, Mazandaran hosts many national and international events.

The findings of these research corresponds with those of Wenhui (2011), Honari(2011), Rezaee(2004), Ansari(2011). Wenhui (2011) believes that knowledge management has been implemented well in the Olympics in China. Honary’s findings show the desirability of the condition of the sports organizations in the process of knowledge management(where components similar to the ones in this research were used)(Honari, 2011); Ansari’s findings show that the process of knowledge management in the Tehran department of physical education was average(Ansari, 2011). Rezaee(2004) reports the implementation of the knowledge management to be a factor of the success of Iranian volleyball teams, after which, a healthy and safe atmosphere was formed for the athletes, so they did their best for the triumph of the team.

The results of this study showed that two components of knowledge acquisition and knowledge creation, are not in a proper condition in Mazandaran sport organizations.

In an economy where definiteness is the very indefiniteness, a reliable source for consistency of the competitive resources is knowledge. The successful companies are the ones which constantly produce new knowledge or obtain it from out of the organization and in the next step, they extensively distribute it throughout the organization. They also present it quickly in their technology and products (Ashouri, 2013). The point to be considered is the acquisition and production of knowledge is the propelling force of the other steps and it basically needs to be in a proper condition. In Mazandaran sports organizations, it is not easy to encourage the staff to acquire knowledge from out of the organization and to create knowledge. Perhaps these organizations lack the strategic planning of knowledge and the knowledge map, therefore they are not successful in acquiring or creating knowledge.
The results of these two components in Abzari’s research confirm this research. There was a large gap between the existing condition and the desirable condition in Iran Khodro company in implementing the two components and it was undesirable (Abzari, 2011).

Fahi(2000), Grifi (2001) and Diban(2002) declared knowledge acquisition as one of the components of knowledge management in organizations, but they say that their exploitation in organizations is below average.

The implementation of both components were declared desirable in Rezaee’s(2004) research. The two components have a desirable condition among the television staffs. But the condition of knowledge acquiring and knowledge creation in sports organization has been seen differently in the findings of Honary’s research where the acquisition of knowledge was not in a desirable condition while it was the case in the creation of knowledge. The implementation of knowledge acquisition and knowledge creation was done well on China Olympic games (Wenhui et al.,2011)

The results also indicated that three components of knowledge storage, knowledge sharing and knowledge application, are in a proper condition in Mazandaran sport organizations.

The storage and sharing of knowledge can be a guide for the ones who will enter the organization later and will be in charge and run it. In fact, the documentation of experience can also provide alternatives in decision making, i.e., It can be useful for managers while making strategic and operational decisions according to the current situations. In such a condition, the experience of the managers plays an important role in detecting the environmental threats and opportunities and also in finding ways to make proper adaptation with the condition. In fact, the experience of the managers is considered the best way for learning about the ways to encounter the environmental threats and opportunities. The final purpose of managing the knowledge is for the staff to use it as one of its most important aspects. The proper use of knowledge by the sports organizations’ staff in Mazandaran has been an advantage among the aspects of the process and shows their high tendency toward using and actualizing the existing knowledge, therefore, the new and their need knowledge can be presented by using decent ways.

The implementation of all the three components has been done well in China Olympic games (Wenhui et al.,2011). All the three components have been shown to be desirable in Rezaee’s research (Rezaee, 2004).

It also does not correspond with the researches of Abzari(2011). But it corresponds with Honary’s research only in knowledge sharing, i.e., Knowledge storage and knowledge application in sports organizations were declared undesirable (Honari, 2011).

Practical recommendations
By considering the results of this study, the following recommendations can be raised:

- Investigating the demographics features of this research shows that a percentage of the staff in Mazandaran sports organizations have the working record over twenty five years and are about to retire and it is better for their precious experience gained through long years to be written down understandably.
- Considering the fact that quite a few employees of Mazandaran sports organizations (%56) have the work record of below 10 years, it is suggested that the managers hold regular meetings so that the experienced workers share their experience with the less experienced ones.
- According to the results that showed the factor of knowledge acquisition is not in a desirable condition, it is suggested to eliminate the regulations and policies that limit people's access to information and knowledge in order to accelerate the access to knowledge especially the knowledge out of the organization.
According to the results that showed the factor of knowledge acquisition is not in a proper condition, it is recommended that more authority be distributed throughout the organization so that the employees can create knowledge with more independence.

- The resources and bases of knowledge from inside and outside the organizations and even sections of an organization should be detected in order to create knowledge inside the organization and acquiring it from outside the organization.
- Making connection with successful organizations about establishing the management of knowledge and making it possible for the staff to have effective contribution in this issue.
- Enough investment and support of the managers in the related researches is recommended.

References


