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Relationship between Organizational Culture, Knowledge Management and Innovation: A Case of Employees in Sports Organizations of Lorestan (Iran).

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ABSTRACT

This study aims at examining relationship of organizational culture and knowledge management with innovation of employees in offices of sports and the youth in Lorestan (a city of Iran). In this descriptive, correlational study, the population consisted of 100 organizational members in offices of sports and the youth in Lorestan in 2014. By using personal information questionnaire and three surveys including Organizational Culture Survey (Denison, 2000), Knowledge Management Survey (Lawson, 2003), and Innovation Evaluation Survey (Soltani, 2007), we gathered our data. Data analysis was done by Pearson's correlation coefficient and stepwise multiple regression ($P \leq 0.05$). Our findings demonstrated a significantly positive relationship between organizational culture ($r=0.696$), its components including involvement ($r=0.700$), consistency ($r=0.638$), adaptability ($r=0.707$), and mission ($r=0.624$) and innovation among employees of offices of sports and the youth in Lorestan. Additionally, knowledge management ($r=0.471$) and its components i.e. knowledge creation ($r=0.286$), knowledge absorption ($r=0.392$), knowledge organization ($r=0.303$), knowledge conservation ($r=0.438$), knowledge distribution ($r=0.481$), and knowledge application ($r=0.511$) were significantly and positively correlated with innovation of these employees.

Keywords: Organizational culture, knowledge management, innovation, employees, offices of sports and the youth.

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INTRODUCTION

Due to their sociality, a set of actions, beliefs, values, and norms are made up among humans, which exert impact upon their behaviors. This set is called dominant culture of that community. Additionally, it is called organizational culture in organizational context (Niknami&Hematpoor, 2009). Organizational culture brings about effect upon organizational members to the extent that we can gain a clear understanding of organizational members' behaviors, feelings, and attitudes by examining its facets. Also, their possible reactions can be judged, predicted, and guided. Organizational culture makes contribution to extensive alteration and stabilized organizational orientation (Alvani, 1999). In recent decades, remarkable developments have occurred in organizations, which establish principles, devise methods, and improve skills particularly knowledge management (AbaszadehShahri&Rajabloo, 2009). Organizational culture is an underlying cause for knowledge management. Knowledge management –for usability- should have compatibility with organizational culture because each organization has its own culture developing ways and means of understanding of events among its members. Poor organizational culture makes barriers against sharing and spreading knowledge among organizational members because they attempt to establish a strong base of its own. Organizational culture is significant to more active participation and development of knowledge (Hosseini, 2006). The only method for changing patterns of interaction among organizational members and gaining competitive advantage of knowledge management is a flexible and proper culture (Debut, 1998). Organizations in which knowledge management acts as one of main components are very different from other organizations. Three main differences are identification of changes and compatibility with them, development and maintenance of intellectual property, and stabilized competitive advantage by encouraging continuous innovation (Niaz Azari et al, 2011). Since accomplishments take place mainly due to innovative thinking, attempts for encouragement of innovation in organizations are considered essential (Hosseini, 2001). Knowledge management is required to be intertwined with innovation and creativity. Otherwise, it loses effectiveness and impairs efficiency (Samadian&SeyyedAlavi, 2011). Organizational culture can exert impact upon rate of innovation in organizations (Martins & Blanche, 2003) because it is a necessity for compatibility with environmental changes and a proper context for new thoughts in organizations (Taro, 2002). Organizations fail to provoke fresh thoughts and shape ideas and innovation process is a vain attempt unless they offer proper cultural context and encourage proper values. In most cases, innovation does not occur in organizations because they regard it risk-taking. They view it as a deviation from main performance and as an untried action (Osborne, 1992). Consequently, organizational culture and knowledge management are essential to innovation process in organizations.

A large number of studies in Iran and other countries has covered relationship between organizational culture and knowledge management, knowledge management and innovation, and organizational culture and innovation in industrial and non-industrial countries; yet, as regards sports organizations, small number of studies has concentrated on relationship between organizational culture and knowledge management (Goodarzi et al., 2009; Nazari et al., 2011), between organizational culture and innovation (GhahramanTabrizi et al., 2005; Dehghan et al., 2009), and between knowledge management and innovation (PoorsoltaniZarandi&IrajiNaghandar, 2013; Nazari et al. 2011). As a result, further attempts by employees in organizations of sports and the youth are to be made in this regard.

The researchers in this study intend to examine relationship between organizational culture, knowledge management, and innovation in offices of sports and the youth in Lorestan (a city of Iran) as underlying causes of provincial sports success in order to draw up related effective strategies. This study can supply scholars, managers, and authority figures of sports organizations with detailed information regarding relationship between organizational culture, knowledge management and innovation, on the basis of which they can do planning, optimize organizational environment, and accomplish their objectives at their best. Perhaps, its findings call forth responses to questions about relationship between organizational culture, knowledge management, and innovation and fill gaps in this area of study to some extent.

METHODOLOGY

This study is an applied, correlational, descriptive research. Our population consisted of 100 participants including employees of offices of sports and the youth in Lorestan (2014). Due to limited size of population, we selected all of them for our sample. By using personal information questionnaire and three surveys including Organizational Culture Survey (Denison, 2000), Knowledge Management Survey (Lawson,

2003), and Innovation Evaluation Survey (Soltani, 2007), we gathered our data. Personal information questionnaire includes question items about gender, marital status, level of education, employment status, career, and experience. For evaluation of organizational culture, we distributed Organizational Culture Survey (Denison, 2000) which contained 36 items on the basis of Likert's five-point scale from 5 (I completely agree) to 1 (I completely disagree). This questionnaire had 4 main components and 12 minor components: (1) Involvement (empowerment, team orientation & capability development), (2) consistency (core values, agreement, & coordination, and integration), (3) adaptability (creating change, customer focus & organizational learning), and (4) mission (strategic intention and direction, goals and objectives & vision). In Knowledge Management Survey (Lawson, 2003), there were 24 question items on the basis of Likert's five-point scale from 5 (I completely agree) to 1 (I completely disagree) and 6 components i.e. knowledge creation, knowledge absorption, knowledge organization, knowledge conservation, knowledge distribution, and knowledge application. Additionally, we used Innovation Evaluation Survey (Soltani, 2007) for evaluation of innovation, which contained 40 items on the basis of Likert's five-point scale from 5 (I completely agree) to 1 (I completely disagree). Content validity of three surveys were assessed and confirmed by professionals in sports management. For assessment of their reliability, we performed Cronbach's alpha test on 30 participants of our population. As far as Organizational Culture Survey was concerned, we gained a value of 0.90 for total reliability. Particularly, in cases of involvement, consistency, adaptability, and mission, we gained reliable values of 0.77, 0.81, 0.87, and 0.83 respectively. The total reliability of Knowledge Management Survey was 0.91. The reliable values of knowledge creation, knowledge absorption, knowledge organization, knowledge conservation, knowledge distribution, and knowledge application were respectively 0.83, 0.78, 0.79, 0.83, 0.82, and 0.80. As concerns Innovation Evaluation Survey, we gained a reliable value of 0.83.

Then, we analyzed data by performing Pearson's correlation coefficient and multiple stepwise regression and by using SPSS software (version 21) ($P \leq 0.05$).

DATA ANALYSIS

Table 1 shows general information of employees in offices of sports and the youth in Lorestan. As shown in Table 3, there is significantly positive relationship between organizational culture ($P=0.001$; $r=0.696$), its components including involvement ($P=0.001$; $r=0.700$), consistency ($P=0.001$; $r=0.638$), adaptability ($P=0.001$; $r=0.707$), and mission ($P=0.001$; $r=0.624$) and innovation among employees of offices of sports and the youth in Lorestan. Similarly, knowledge management ($P=0.001$, $r=0.471$) and its components i.e. knowledge creation ($P=0.001$; $r=0.286$), knowledge absorption ($P=0.001$; $r=0.392$), knowledge organization ($P=0.001$; $r=0.303$), knowledge conservation ($P=0.001$; $r=0.438$), knowledge distribution ($P=0.001$; $r=0.481$), and knowledge application ($P=0.001$; $r=0.511$) are significantly and positively correlated with innovation among employees of offices of sports and the youth in Lorestan.

Table 1: General Information of Employees in offices of sports and the youth in Lorestan

Gender		Age Range				Marital Status		Level of Education				Employment Status				Career		
Female	Male	Younger than 30 years old	From 31 years old to 40 years old	From 41 years old to 50 years old	Older than 51 years old	Single	Married	Diploma	Associate of Arts	BA	MA & PhD	Contractual Employment (1)	Contractual Employment (2)	Formal employment in a trial period	Formal definite employment	Manager	Expert	Others
30	70	26	42	22	10	67	33	14	29	39	18	42	25	15	18	18	62	20
%30	%70	%26	%42	%22	%10	%67	%33	%14	%29	%39	%18	%42	%25	%15	%18	%18	%62	%20

Table 2: Coefficient of Correlation between Organizational Culture & Innovation & between Knowledge Management and Innovation among Employees of offices of sports and the youth

Hypotheses	Spearman's Correlation Coefficient	Margin of error	P-Value	Result
Relationship between organizational culture & Innovation	0.696	0.05	**0.001	Accepted
Relationship between Involvement & Innovation	0.700	0.05	**0.001	Accepted
Relationship between consistency & Innovation	0.638	0.05	**0.001	Accepted
Relationship between adaptability & Innovation	0.707	0.05	**0.001	Accepted
Relationship between Mission & Innovation	0.624	0.05	**0.001	Accepted
Relationship between Knowledge Management & Innovation	0.471	0.05	**0.001	Accepted
Relationship between Knowledge Creation & Innovation	0.286	0.05	**0.001	Accepted
Relationship between Knowledge Absorption & Innovation	0.392	0.05	**0.001	Accepted
Relationship between Knowledge Organization & Innovation	0.303	0.05	**0.001	Accepted
Relationship between Knowledge Conservation & Innovation	0.438	0.05	**0.001	Accepted
Relationship between Knowledge Distribution & Innovation	0.511	0.05	**0.001	Accepted
Relationship between Knowledge Application & Innovation	0.481	0.05	**0.001	Accepted

Test Statistics (F=92.157; P=0.001, ME= 0.05) is an indication of significantly linear relationship. The calculated coefficient of determination is 0.485 i.e. %48.5 of observed difference in innovation result from difference in organizational culture.

Table 3: Variance & Regression Analysis for Organizational Culture, Knowledge Management & Innovation

Model	Multiple Correlation Coefficient	Coefficient of Determination	Level of Significance	F	P
1	0.696	0.485	1.98	92.157	0.001

Predictions: Organizational Culture (Independent Variable) & Innovation (Dependent Variable)

As Table 4 shows, absolute value of Beta for organizational culture is a more powerful predictor. As a result, in compliance with stepwise regression table, regression equation can be written as follows: Innovation= 70.591 + Organizational Culture (0.529)

Table 4: Stepwise Regression Calculation as regards Organizational Culture, Knowledge Management & Innovation

Model	Predictors	B	Beta	t	P
1	Intercept	70.591		10.781	0.001
	Organizational Culture	0.529	0.696	9.600	0.001

As shown in Table 5, test statistics (F=97.928; P=0.01; ME= 0.05) suggests a significantly linear relationship. Calculated coefficient of determination i.e. 0.500 indicates that %50 of observed difference in innovation arise from difference in adaptability.

Table 5: Variance & Regression Analysis for Organizational Culture & Innovation

Model	Multiple Correlation Coefficient	Coefficient of Determination	Level of Significance	F	P
1	0.707	0.500	1.98	97.928	0.001

Independent Variable: Adaptability

Table 6 shows that only Beta's absolute value of adaptability is a more powerful predictor for innovation. Consequently, due to stepwise regression table, regression equation can be written as follows:

Innovation= 79.989 + Adaptability (2.135)

Table 6: Stepwise Regression Calculation as regards Organizational Culture & Innovation

Model	Predictors	B	Beta	t	P
1	Intercept	79.989		11.236	0.001
	Adaptability	2.135	0.707	9.896	0.001

In Table 7, test statistics (F=34.690; P=0.01; ME= 0.05) suggests a significantly linear relationship. As calculated coefficient of determination i.e. 0.261 shows, %26.1 of differences in innovation lie in differences in knowledge distribution.

Table 7: Variance & Regression Analysis for Knowledge Management Components & Innovation

Model	Multiple Correlation Coefficient	Coefficient of Determination	Level of Significance	F	P
1	0.511	0.261	1.98	34.690	0.001

According to Table 8, Beta's absolute value is the only powerful predictor as compared with other components of knowledge management. Therefore, we can write regression equation on the basis of stepwise regression table as follows:

Innovation= 95.765 + Knowledge Distribution (2.831)

Table 8: Stepwise Regression Calculation as regards Knowledge Management Components & Innovation

Model	Predictors	B	Beta	t	P
1	Intercept	95.765		15.029	0.001
	Knowledge Distribution	2.831	0.511	5.890	0.001

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Our findings demonstrate a significantly positive relationship of organizational culture and its components including involvement, consistency, adaptability, and mission with innovation among sport offices' employees and the youth in Lorestan. Alteration of organizational culture can make contribution to encouragement of innovation. Also, due to significant relationship between organizational culture components and innovation, improvements in organizational culture components can stimulate innovation in organizations. Indeed, organizational culture acts as a facilitator and exert direct and indirect impact upon innovation

(GhahramanTabrizi et al., 2005). Our findings about relationship between organizational culture and innovation are consistent with findings of Dehghan et al. (2009), GhahramanTabrizi et al. (2005) and Denison et al. (2007). As far as correlation between organizational culture components and innovation is concerned, this study confirms findings of Dabaghi and GholamNejad(2012), Tejari, et al. (2011) and GhahramanTabrizi et al. (2005). Organizational culture as a system of shared values and beliefs which bring about effect upon behaviors and thoughts of organizational members is a fountain of innovative environment in organizations. Culture acts as a context for stimulation of innovation. In the case that organizational culture places no value to formation of ideas, innovation process does not take place. Innovation is stimulated when the whole organization strengthens its support because organizational culture and environment play significant role in innovation of employees (Amabile, 1998). The following help organizations stimulate employees' innovation and constitute a solid achievement: Desirable organizational culture, employees' freedom of action, delegation of power to them, flexibility in rules and regulations, participative decision making, greater mutual cooperation, and meritocracy.

Our findings on relationship between organizational culture and innovation conflict with study of SeyyedNaghavi&Abbaspoor (2010). In their studies over impact of organizational culture upon innovation of employees in National Company of Oil Product Distribution, their hypothesis is not directly accepted. Perhaps, traditional (governmental) management culture in this company prevents employees from formation of ideas and innovation and managers do not convey immense enthusiasm about ideas. Therefore, all members are absolutely bound by rules and strict controls are established over them.

Woodman et al. (1999) discover a significantly negative relationship between hierarchical and bureaucratic culture and innovation, which is inconsistent with our findings. This occurs perhaps because of variety of cultures in different sectors especially in small work groups and variety of underlying structures. For meeting environmental threats and taking advantages of possible opportunities, organizations are required to identify their internal capacities, minimize their weakness, and increase their strength. To offer encouragement for stimulation of innovation in working environment, they should create an innovative-supportive culture because controlling culture makes barriers against innovation.

Furthermore, our findings show significantly positive correlation between knowledge management components (knowledge creation, knowledge absorption, knowledge organization, knowledge conservation, knowledge application and knowledge distribution) and innovation. Consequently, employees who experience higher level of knowledge management stimulate a larger number of innovation. Improvements in knowledge management components make contribution to innovation facilitation and formation of fresh ideas. As pointed out by Fathian et al. (2005), tacit knowledge as a powerful stimulus to creativity and innovation process plays significant role in organizational aims and successes. As a result, authority figures of sports organizations should find ways and means for setting knowledge management into appropriate context, overcoming related barriers, and taking human resources into more careful consideration (PoorsoltaniZarandi&IrajiNaghandar, 2013). As concerns relationship between knowledge management and innovation, our findings agree with studies of PoorsoltaniZarandi and IrajiNaghandar (2013) and Jokar&Nayer(2012). Additionally, in case of relationship between knowledge management components and innovation, our findings are in line with PoorsoltaniZarandi and IrajiNaghandar (2013).

Knowledge is circulation of blood in organizational body, which give life to it. Today, knowledge is viewed as one of considerable resources in organizations because information is a necessity for thinking which itself is a fundamental component of innovation and creativity. Employees attempting to share knowledge with their colleagues can encourage innovation (Shoara, 2010). This finding confirms study of NiazAzari et al. (2011) suggesting that knowledge management, knowledge refinement, knowledge organization, knowledge application, and knowledge distribution are correlated with innovation of teachers. Similarly, findings of Samadian and SeyyedAlavi (2011) show significant correlation of participation in knowledge, knowledge organization, knowledge application, evaluation of knowledge performance, and knowledge creation with employees' innovation. Likewise, Hind (2008) finds significant correlation between knowledge management and innovation. Therefore, findings of Samadian and SeyyedAlavi (2011) and Hind (2008) are consistent with findings of this study. In management of human resources, capacities of knowledge management bring about significant effect upon innovation and creativity of employees (Özbağ et al., 2013). Niaz Azari et al. (2011) does not suggest any relationship between knowledge acquisition and innovation of teachers, which contradicts

with our findings. Perhaps, this contradiction is caused by conditions of organizational environment and population.

Today, alteration is made and growth is encouraged with greater rapidity. And, all organizational members gain understanding of importance of organizational improvement. Organizational development and optimization are essentials for compatibility with social changes. Traditional and bureaucratic models are no longer acceptable in thrived organizations and they are subject to revision. Innovation is one of effective means for making environmental changes. Period of inactivity ends with fresh, practical ideas and excellence is pursued. On the other hand, in recent years, different organizations and firms started knowledge-related trends. New concepts such as knowledge-related works, knowledge management, knowledge-related forces, and knowledge-oriented organizations are instances of these trends. Peter Drucker speaks of a new organizational type in which power of mind is taken into account rather than physical ability. Consequently, organizations with greater emphasis upon knowledge can expect to achieve progress (Taghizadeh&Tari, 2009). Moreover, our findings about formulated equations in this study reveal predicative power of organizational culture as regards innovation among employees of offices of sports and the youth in Lorestan. To put it differently, organizational culture can provide %48.5 of account of changes in innovation. Addition of one organizational culture unit, innovation is encouraged by 0.529 and vice versa. Organizations can encourage innovation by common consent to organizational values and beliefs (organizational culture), adaptability to changes, collaboration, and agreement between personal objectives and organizational objectives. Planners cannot establish standards in innovation facilitation, unless they put emphasis on organizational culture (GhahramanTabrizi et al., 2005). Specifically, adaptability is a powerful predictor of innovation among employees of offices of sports and the youth in Lorestan i.e. adaptability causes employees' responsiveness to their customers' demands and environmental changes and their encouraged innovation for the purpose of improving organizational effectiveness.

Additionally, knowledge distribution is a powerful predictor of innovation in employees of Lorestans' offices of sport and the youth. Due to knowledge distribution, innovation is stimulated in different sectors to a great extent. Bulletins, news groups, domestic networks, and emails make contribution to distribution of knowledge in organizations and employees can exchange their views about different matters of concern. A proper culture should be created in organizations in a way that employees can improve their performance and can encourage innovation. In such culture, members should treat each other with respect, share confidence, and join in discussions for distribution of knowledge (PoorsoltaniZarandi&IrajiNaghandar, 2013).

Our findings demonstrate significant impact of organizational culture and knowledge management upon innovation of employees in offices of sports and the youth in Lorestan. As a result, managers in these offices should concentrate their attention to proper organizational culture creation and sound knowledge management in order to facilitate innovations since facilitated innovations increase organizational efficiency, improve employees' performance, and promote organizational growth.

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