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A comparison of the application of knowledge management in the Department of Youth and Sports of East and West Azarbaijan Provinces

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ABSTRACT

Background: The purpose of this study was to compare the application of knowledge management in the Department of Youth and Sports of East and West Azarbaijan provinces. The population involved all employees (including the managing director, vice president, experts, and others) of the Department of Youth and Sports of East and West Azarbaijan provinces which were 78 and 93 people, respectively. Hence, due to the limited number of subjects, the sample was equal to the total community. To gather data for this study a standard knowledge management questionnaire was used. The results (e.g One-Sample t test, Kolmogorov-Smirnov test and ANOVA) showed that the application amount of knowledge management in the Department of Youth and Sports of the East and West Azarbaijan Provinces is at a low level. Also the results showed that there is no significant difference between application of knowledge management in the Department of youth and Sport of East and West Azarbaijan provinces.

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INTRODUCTION

Although in the past organizations were trying to achieve more information and knowledge, today regarding the vast number of information and different data has changed the administration of the information to be very difficult. Therefore, bypass of time managers has understood that they have lost valuable information and experiences for years. To avoid the repetition of such a crisis through knowledge management, they can achieve the knowledge accumulated in the minds of their employees to be able to share it with others in the organization easily and alter being thought-oriented with being capital-oriented (Martinson, 2003). The current era is the time for astonishing changes and revolutions in technologies. It is an era through which the intellectual structure is full of deepening the information and paying attention to creative and knowledge-oriented human forces instead of performance-oriented human forces (Eskandaripour, 2008). Knowledge management is the systematic and organizational process to achieve, organize, and transfer clear and implied knowledge of the employees aiming at others being able to use knowledge for effectiveness and optimization (Massa & Testa, 2008). Organizations have several resources and assets to realize their goals. Some of these resources and assets are valuable, unique and one and have a very crucial role to get a competitive advantage. Knowledge is among these items in a way that knowledge is considered as the ultimate successor of production, wealth, and monetary capital. In fact knowledge is the only resource which not only is not reduced in its value due to the use but also its value would be enhanced. Also other pioneering theory devisers in organization management believe that an organization focused on knowledge is more profitable than others which rely on materials and particles (Mu & Yu, 2009). The research results of Shakibi-e-Rad, and Hung & *et al* (2005) showed that there is a positive and meaningful relationship between knowledge management and factors such as strategy, organizational structure, organizational culture, information technology, stimulation, training, team work based on reliance, measurement and assessment, supports by your manager, and human resources and there is not a relationship between knowledge management and relationship measurement. The results of Wang & *et al* (2009) emphasize on using different tools such as: discussion, interaction, and information exchange in a virtual atmosphere through weblogs which are utilized as the best communication centers and assemblies contact location and are supported and fall within serious strategic knowledge management strategies. The results of researches carried out by Allameh & *et al* (2011) and Naghavi & *et al* (2010) showed that there is a meaningful relationship between organizational culture dimensions and knowledge management perspectives. Also strategy and organizational culture have a positive and meaningful effect on knowledge management. During recent 2 decades a lot of

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developments have occurred in all aspects of human life and human being has encountered a great deal of developments. Sports fields and especially sport management have not been an exception in this trend and has developed a lot along with these developments in a way that when we have a look at the activities carried out by athletic federations and their managements internationally we can observe that these federations have updated all technologies utilized and this has caused a lot of developments in fields under their authorities. But when we consider macro-management in sports issues in our country it can be observed that not only federations, heads of departments of youth and sports and athletic boards managed by them have not exploited knowledge management and modern developments well and have not adjusted with them but also they have ignored these technologies and knowledge and only a few of heads in departments of youth and sports and athletic boards in some limited areas have exploited knowledge management and modern developments in a limited status. Thus, in the present research it has been proposed to study the reasons of lack of use of these managers of the modern technologies and present some strategies to be used by these managers in the departments of youth and sports in provinces under investigations to use update technologies and knowledge management besides studying about discovering knowledge management in departments of youth and sports of the above provinces. Therefore, a comparison of the application of knowledge management in the department of youth and sports of east and west Azarbaijan provinces was carried out in the present research.

Methodology:

The population involved all employees (including the managing director, vice president, experts, and others) of the Department of Youth and Sports of East and West Azarbaijan provinces which were 78 and 93 people, respectively and the total number were 171 persons. Due to the limited number of participants, the statistical sample in the presence research was equal to its statistical population and the sampling method was a simple random sampling method. To collect data in this research we have used a questionnaire of knowledge management. This questionnaire entailed 6 micro scales and 26 questions using a 5 alternatives scale of Likert (very low, low, average, high, and very high). This questionnaire was created by Sheron Lawson in 2003. The validity of this questionnaire was approved by 6 scholars in the sports management field and its reliability was calculated based on Kronbach's alpha which was equal to 0.94. In the present research we have distributed 85 questionnaires and 78 of them (%91.76) were returned.

Results:

Table 1: Demographic characteristics of participants in the research

	Age				Gender		Educational Field			Educational degree				
	30 years and lower	31 - 40	41- 50	51 and higher	Female	Male	Physical education	Management	Others	Diplo ma and undu e that	2 years colle ge degree	BA	M.A	Ph.D
	Percentage of frequency	Percentage of frequency	Percentage of frequency	Percentage of frequency	Percentage of frequency	Percentage of frequency	Percentage of frequency	Percentage of frequency	Percentage of frequency	Percentage of frequency	Percentage of frequency	Percentage of frequency	Percentage of frequency	Percentage of frequency
East Azarbaijan	14	33.35	18	42.85	10	23.80	0	2.77	1	25	9	52.78	19	7
West Azarbaijan	7	19.45	19	52.78	9	25	12	33.33	1	2.77	1	2.77	12	33.33

Table 2: One-sample t test of the amount of application of knowledge management in East and West Azarbaijan provinces

Test Value = 3							
Knowledge Management		t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	95 %Confidence Interval of the Difference	
						Lower	Upper
						East Azarbaijan	-2.106
West Azarbaijan	-2.191	35	0.035	-0.263	-0.508	-0.019	

In order to answer the question: "To what extent knowledge management has been utilized in the Department of Youth and Sports of East and West Azarbaijan provinces?", we used a one-sample t test. The one-sample t test results regarding knowledge management variable showed that there is a meaningful difference between the average gained for the factor investigated and the presupposed average (3) in an assurance level of 0.05. Studying low limit and high limit of %95 of assurance distance showed that the application of knowledge management has been low in East and West Azarbaijan provinces.

In analyzing the application of knowledge management elements in the Department of Youth and Sports of East Azarbaijan province by using a one-sample t test it was shown that the elements of knowledge creation, knowledge organization, knowledge reserve, knowledge spread, and knowledge application were in an average level and the knowledge absorption element was resided in a low status (Table 3).

In analyzing the application of knowledge management elements in the Department of Youth and Sports of West Azarbaijan province by using a one-sample t test it was shown that the elements of knowledge creation, knowledge absorption, knowledge organization, and knowledge application were in an average level and elements such as knowledge reserve and knowledge spread were resided in a low status (Table 3).

Table 3: The descriptive statistics of knowledge management elements

Elements	Provinces	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	Elements Status
Knowledge Creation	East Azarbaijan	42	2.91	0.664	0.102	Average
	West Azarbaijan	36	2.78	0.678	0.113	Average
Knowledge Absorption	East Azarbaijan	42	2.70	0.718	0.110	Low
	West Azarbaijan	36	2.92	0.820	0.136	Average
Knowledge Organization	East Azarbaijan	42	2.77	0.831	0.128	Average
	West Azarbaijan	36	2.71	0.891	0.148	Average
Knowledge Reserve	East Azarbaijan	42	2.77	0.857	0.132	Average
	West Azarbaijan	36	2.60	0.831	0.138	Low
Knowledge Spread	East Azarbaijan	42	2.75	0.696	0.107	Average
	West Azarbaijan	36	2.65	0.987	0.164	Low
Knowledge Application	East Azarbaijan	42	2.85	0.740	0.114	Average
	West Azarbaijan	36	2.75	0.833	0.138	Average

Discussion and Conclusion:

Regarding the variable knowledge management the results showed that the amount of application of knowledge management is low in both East and West Azarbaijan provinces. Regarding the fact that both East and West Azarbaijan provinces are located in the western part of our country and have cultural and social similarities maybe these similarities have affected the organizational culture of the Department of Youth and Sports of the two provinces. This in turn can affect knowledge management and will result in lack of difference between knowledge managements in the societies under investigations. The results of this part contradict with those in the researches carried out by Allameh & *et al* (2011). By having a more precise look and focusing on the societies under investigations in the present research we may conclude that the type of organization is an effective factor in implementing knowledge management.

The results showed that the amount of application of knowledge management elements (knowledge creation, knowledge absorption, knowledge organization, knowledge reserve, knowledge spread, and knowledge application) is at a low level in both East and West Azarbaijan provinces. Accordingly it seems that the preparation of the culture of an organization for knowledge management is usually the most important and often the most challenging issue because the success in knowledge management relies on incentives, tendencies, and abilities of the individuals to share and utilize others' knowledge. Lack of attention to organizational culture during the administration of knowledge management programs will result in failures in most of such programs in a way that many researchers have a consensus that cultural obstacles are among the main barriers which should be seriously taken into consideration by managers in order to administer knowledge management programs successfully. Managers should know how culture affects the ability of their organizations in production, organization, exchange, and utilization of knowledge within their organizations. The results of the present research contradict with the results in the researches carried out by Naghavi & *et al* (2010) and Wang & *et al* (2009).

In analyzing the application of knowledge management elements in the Department of Youth and Sports of East Azarbaijan province by using a one-sample t test it was shown that the elements of knowledge creation,

knowledge organization, knowledge reserve, knowledge spread, and knowledge application were in an average level and the knowledge absorption element was resided in a low status. Also in analyzing the application of knowledge management elements in the Department of Youth and Sports of West Azarbaijan province by using a one-sample t test it was shown that the elements of knowledge creation, knowledge absorption, knowledge organization, and knowledge application were in an average level and elements such as knowledge reserve and knowledge spread were resided in a low status. Accordingly probably it seems that the presence of an appropriate culture in an organization can prepare for the development of knowledge of individuals and utilizing them in novel conditions.

Also the culture in an organization makes it possible to use knowledge to meet some important competitive requirements and create a rapid communication between knowledge resources in order to solve the problems in the organization. The results of the present research contradict with the results in the researches carried out by Shakibi-e-Rad (2009) and Hang & *et al.* (2011). Probably this contradiction is due to the societies being investigated. By having a more precise look and focusing on the societies under investigations in the present research we may conclude that the type of organization is an effective factor in implementing knowledge management. But due to the limited researches carried out in this field, we cannot make an exact conclusion and this topic requires more researches to be carried out.

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