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The Analysis of the Relationship between Communication Skills and the Establishment of Clark's Management Network among Sport Managers

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to analyze the relationship between communication skills and the establishment of Clark's Management Network among sport managers. This applied research is a kind of correlational – survey study. Statistical population consisted of 140 sport managers working for sport organizations in Isfahan Province, which have been selected by stratified random sampling. Measurement tools included two questionnaires of Communication Skill (91%) and Establishment of Clark's Management Network (87%). Descriptive and inferential statistical methods applied for statistical analysis using SPSS software. Results show that there is a relationship between communication skills and the establishment of Clark's Management Network among sport managers. In addition, the feedback component has greater contribution to prediction of Clark's management network ($p \geq 0.05$). In general, it can acknowledge that the communication skills are effective in the establishment of Clark's management network and cause to improve the management process of sport organizations' managers and to achieve to the organizational goals with high level of productivity.

Keywords: Sport Organization, Leadership Style, Managers, Clark's Management, Communication Skills

Introduction

Humans as social beings need to interact with their fellowmen to meet their individual and social needs and to achieve organizational goals (Poczwardowski, 2002: 116 – 140). Scholars recognize the importance and the role of human resources as a factor of development and emphasize on it. They know human resources as the most important asset of any organization. It is also important to note that the performance and development of any organization depends largely on the proper use of human resources (Robbins & Judge, 2010: 431). Since the success and the efficiency of human resources depends on the efficient use of behavioral science and the knowledge of concepts influencing on efficiency of human resources, thus the ability to communicate correctly is one of the basic skills of social life (Gudarzi, Nazari & Ehsani, 2012: 67-82). The importance of communication in human life is to such an extent that some experts have considered the communication process as the basis of human development, individual damages and human progress (Williams and Garrett, 2002: 101-126). In organization, communication connects the warp and woof of the organization and contributes to the integrity of the organization. Communicating is vital and dynamic process in the organization and effective communication can become one of the most important goals of the organization. In an organization where its employees do not communicate effectively with each other, they cannot acquire the necessary skills to perform their duties and in any case, their motivation reduces gradually. Because the communication is an appropriate groundwork for exchange of information, knowledge and experience (Larsen, Mamburg & Ogaard, 2011: 592-597).

It is the responsibility of management to establish proper communication within the organization, thus the managers must be aware of the details of the communication process and know how to communicate effectively. Managers should focus on methods to improve their communication and to foster staff with better understanding, to minimize conflicts, and by influencing on their behaviors and attitudes try to maintain positive reactions that lead to the success of the organization. However, having effective communication skills by all managers and employees of the organization is necessary in this regard (Gudarzi et al, 2010: 11-20). When people do not communicate properly in their workplaces, they actually waste the time and resources, and fail to achieve the objectives and damage their relationship with each other. Considering that communication skills are the most important factor in organizational decision – making and individual success, so having the ability to communicating and interpersonal communication among managers is very important (Nazari and Ehsani, Ganjuyee and Qasemi, 2013: 67-82). The results of several studies in the field of communication skills demonstrate the relationship between communication skills and employee's job satisfaction (Kounenon, Aikaterini & Georgia, 2011: 2230-2234). Moreover, when communication is considered important, it creates commitment (Yukle, 2008: 708-722 and Weiss & Halupnik, 2013: 718-722).

Employment issues, manager's feeling and their beliefs are among factors affecting the communication, so the managers need to attach the importance to interpersonal communication skills of employees. Hence, the ability to communicate is the most important deciding factor for organizations when employing staff and for success of newly employed when start working (Nazari, Nazari and Ehsani, Ganjuyee and Qasemi, 2012: 157 – 174). It is also important to note that managers usually in a two – level matrix; namely, the levels of effectiveness and the amount of information, choose one of the communication strategies (Sullivan, 2004: 1231). Based on the proposed Barton's model, communication skills divide into three parts of verbal, auditory and feedback skills. Although there was significant

difference between the obtained averages for the current situation comparing to the favorable conditions of verbal, auditory and feedback of communication skills among sport managers (Nazari et al, 2013: 67 – 82). In this regard, Nazari and Nasiri (2014) suggest that there is a significant relationship between the age of sport managers and their verbal skills; one of the components of communication skills in Borton model. Nazari, Emami and Yekta yar (2013) studied the impact of communication skills on the management skills and their role in organizational culture in sport organization using structural equation model. The results show that there is a relationship among the managers' communication skills, management skills and organizational culture. Therefore, it should be noted that leadership style is a set of attitudes, characteristics and skills of managers, which is formed based on the four factors of value system, confidence in staff, leadership tendencies and the sense of security in ambiguous situations. Generally, according to the performed studies, it is the management model, which determines the atmosphere, culture, and strategies governing the organization (Zargar, Nazari and Nasiri, 2013: 7-13). Leadership, as one of the five main tasks of management has been considered as a basic process in any organization. Leadership's important role in the organization as director and coordinator of group activities points out the fact that the leader has a considerable impact on group performance and is regarded as a key element in advancing the goals of the organization (Robbins & Judge, 2010: 431). Success and failure of the organizations owes its leaders. It is the leadership's quality, which will be affected the future of the organization and its employees. Thus, one of the fundamental issues and objects of interest of organizations is how to employ, train and maintain individuals who will be the future effective leaders (Zaccoro et al, 2001: 451 – 483). The experts on leadership have chosen different solutions for recognition and understanding the leadership and its relation to the effectiveness of organizations and have provided several theories based on that proposed solutions. In one of these theories, leadership style examined with a five – point scale of management network that is presented the behavior of managers in a continuum from task – oriented to communication – oriented behaviors (Clark, 2004: 355 – 370). Among these, values, desires and expectations of leader and other members of the group are considered. Leadership is regarded as the ability to influence others to achieve organizational goals. Here manager can receive assistance from the both of the main modes of behavior; namely, tendency to task (task – oriented) and tendency to interpersonal communication (communication – oriented) (Nauman, 2010).

In order to achieve efficiency, management style should comply with the requirements of the situation, thus the basic element of leadership is to exercise influence. Therefore, leadership is a kind of relationship in which one tries to influence on others in order to perform a common task. The important thing is that effective leadership depends on that a competent person is in the right place at the right time (Robbins & Judge, 2010: 431). Accordingly, the researchers concluded that leadership styles, training, democratic, social support and positive feedback have relationship with sport and athletic identity dimensions (Aqayee, Moharam zadeh & Hossein Pur, 2013: 51 – 62). Since the occurrence of a behavior is associated with certain conditions, so successful managers are looking for prediction, guidance, control and change the employees ' behavior and also considering the individual differences, development of communication and cultural diversity in order to achieve their organizational goals (Tejari & Sheikh Alizadeh, 2013). Since leadership style represents the intellectual style, worldwide and the character of managers, if the management style chosen by the manager is inappropriate, individual efficiency is reduced and causes to suffer from psychological stress. Among the factors that affect the leadership style is positive attitude of the manager towards his/her role and employees' role. Most leaders have a specific leadership style with its own characteristics;

only a small number of leaders can simultaneously adapt their style to different situations and people. That is why the leadership style of coaches and managers directly affects organizational commitment (Nouruzi et al, 2012: 159 and Weiss & Halupnik, 2013: 718 – 722).

In sports organizations, considering the cultural and social nature of sports, the relationship between the managers and the employees is very important and influencing the effectiveness of activities. In addition, in organizational system, in order to improve the quality of organizational communication, managers need to have effective communication with their superior managers, colleagues and subordinates. However, the managers have insufficient awareness of their own and employees qualities. Therefore, considering the fact that sports organizations are the main sport authorities, the quality of manager's treatment with personnel and the manner s/he adopt to transfer the messages to subordinates, and the way the manager talk with people and communicate properly with them are the foundation and basis of any organization. As a result, the variable of communication skills, its study and reach the conclusion using it is regarded important. Therefore, it seems that the variable of managers' communication skills in organizations is very important. Considering the importance of leadership style and management pattern in an organization that is focused on it, the focus on the variable of Clark's management network, as one of the newest management theories, and the study of the effect of communication skills on the establishment of the mentioned network in the sports organizations can be addressed as a research topic. It seems that appropriate interaction between communication skills and Clark's management network will lead to establish the network in sports organizations. Since the managers place at the highest organizational level of the organizations, their attitudes, communication and decision – making cause an organization be in an uptrend or downtrend. It seems that communication skills can be considered as a variable in the management pattern of Clark's management network, hence the current study is looking for to answer to this question: whether is there any relationship between communication skills and the establishment of Clark's management network among managers in sports organizations?

Methodology

The present research is a kind of correlational – survey study. Data collection was done through field research and by questionnaire. The statistical population consist managers of sport organizations in Isfahan Province who have been selected through stratified random sampling according to Cochran method with permissible error (5%). The statistical population of this research was calculated 220, which was based on the information obtained from Staff Department of the mentioned organizations and their affiliated units. The sample size was obtained 140 managers according to specific methods proportionate to each region. In the present survey, the statistical population of the General Office and its affiliated units regions is 30 subjects, the population of Isfahan's athletics federations is 25 subjects, the population of military and police forces is 10 subjects, the population of Universities and Education is 35 subjects, the population size of municipalities is 20 and clubs is 20 subjects. Measurement tools include demographic questionnaire and the communication skills' questionnaire of Barton J. (1990), which measures three verbal, auditory and feedback dimensions of the communication. Before, during the performed research by Nazari et al (2013), the reliability of the questionnaire was reported 91% based on the Cronbach's alpha. The questionnaire of Clark's management network (2004) investigates the task – oriented and communication –

oriented behaviors and through the assessment of leadership style in a project environment involves with people and tasks. In order to verify the face and content validity was presented a preliminary questionnaire to ten professors in the field of sport management. Then the experts' points of view were collected and after making the corrections, the questionnaire was formulated. To calculate the reliability of the questionnaire was used test – retest method and its Cronbach's alpha was calculated (86%). Statistical methods; data analysis was performed both descriptively and inferentially. For data analysis was used SPSS with a confidence level of 95%. Kolmogorov – Smirnov test, Levin test, regression and single – sample t – test were used.

Findings

According to the obtained results of descriptive statistics on gender and education level, the most observed frequency was related to men group by about 65 percent and BA degree with about 48 percent and the least observed frequency was related to women group by about 35 percent and high school diploma with about 1.6 percent, respectively. In inferential statistics, before examining research hypotheses, initially Kolmogorov – Smirnov Test, for normality of samples and then Levin test for homogeneity of variance ($p \leq 5\%$) were used. Based on the obtained results, the statistical samples follow a normal distribution and the variables show the homogeneity of variance.

Table 1. Pearson correlation test to determine the relationship between the tested variables

| Variables | Pearson Statistic | Coefficient of Determination | Significance Level |
|--|-------------------|------------------------------|--------------------|
| Communication skills with Clark's management style | 0.576 | 0.33 | 0.002 |

According to the above table, because obtained significance level is less than 5% level, therefore, it is concluded that there is relationship between communication skills and the establishment of Clark's management network among sport managers. Since the calculated Pearson statistic is positive, so this relationship is direct.

Table 2. Single – sample t – test for the analysis of the current situation of communication skills of sport managers

| Components | Mean | t-Statistics | df | Significance Level |
|------------|------|--------------|-----|--------------------|
| Verbal | 3.43 | 11.19 | 135 | 0.001 |
| Auditory | 2.86 | -3.01 | | |
| Feedback | 3.47 | 11.68 | | |

With respect to the obtained mean value, it is clear that the dimensions of communication skills of the subjects are significantly more than the average level, but auditory component is below the average level.

Table 3. Variance Analysis of the impacts of communication skills by Clark's management

| The index of the impacts of communication skills by Clark's management | | | | R | R ² |
|--|--------|--------|-------------|-------|----------------|
| Regression Coefficient | | | | 58% | 33% |
| Index | SS | DF | Mean Square | F | P |
| Regression | 3.49 | 3 | 1.16 | 7.14 | 0/001 |
| Remaining | 20.37 | 128 | 0.16 | | |
| Total | 23.86 | 131 | | | |
| Index | B | Beta | T | P | |
| Constant Coefficient | 2.81 | - | 8.49 | 0.001 | |
| Verbal | -0.005 | -0.005 | -0.04 | 0.96 | |
| Auditory | -0.03 | -0.03 | -0.43 | 0.66 | |
| Feedback | 0.37 | 0.39 | 4.09 | 0.001 | |

The results of variance analysis and the statistical properties of regression between dimension of communication skills and the establishment of Clark's management network has been presented. According to these results, approximately 33 percent of variance associated with the establishment of Clark's management network is determined by communication dimensions ($R^2 = 0/33$). The obtained results of significance level suggest that there is a significant relationship between the predictor variables and communication criterion and this relationship is significant at the 5% level. The Analysis of Enter method regression showed that considering that the obtained significant level for verbal and auditory dimensions is more, this means that the component has no significant effect on prediction of Clark's management network. The feedback can also be used to predict the Clark's management network. By using the above information, it is possible to present the prediction model of Clark's network management based on the communication component.

$$\text{Clark's management network} = 2/81 + 0/37 (\text{feedback})$$

Table 4. Test to determine the gender – related differences of communication skills and the establishment of Clark's management network

| components | Mean | | t-statistic | df | Significance Level |
|---|--------|------|-------------|-----|--------------------|
| | Female | Male | | | |
| Communication Skills | 3.15 | 3.34 | 2.87 | 139 | 0.001 |
| Verbal | 3.28 | 3.55 | 3.63 | | 0.001 |
| Auditory | 2.78 | 2.91 | 1.38 | | 0.16 |
| Feedback | 3.35 | 3.50 | 1.81 | | 0.07 |
| Establishment of Clark's Management Network | 3.91 | 4.08 | 2.25 | | 0.02 |

According to the table and the obtained significance level for communication components, verbal and the establishment of management network is less than the %5 level, therefore, it can be concluded that the amounts of these components is different between men and women. The calculated mean value suggest that the amount of these components in men is more than women are.

Discussion and Conclusion

According to the obtained results, there is a relationship between communication skills and the establishment of Clark's management network among sports managers in Isfahan Province. Since the Pearson statistic is positive, therefore, the obtained relationship is direct. The obtained results also refer to the relationship the communication skills with Clark's management network, especially among communication – oriented managers. Moreover, it seems that the contribution of feedback component is more than verbal and auditory components to predict Clark's management network (Table 3). These results are somewhat consistent with findings of Nazari et al (2013), Zaragar et al (2013) which suggest that communication skills has relationship with leadership style and also findings of Nazari & Nasiri (2014) which conclude that managers' communication skills have relationship with their managerial skills. Hence, considering the complex nature of communication process and the necessity to develop interpersonal communication skills, because of their professional requirements, managers should try to improve their communication skills. The conclusion of the present study is somewhat consistent with the findings of Nauman et al (2010) entitled the model of empowerment and leadership style in the project environment. This consistency can be due to the similarity of two sports research environments. Obviously, there is a relationship between communication skills and effective influence of sports managers and thus communication skills can predict a significant part of the effective influence of the subjects. The managers spend much of their time to communicate and to send messages to their superiors and subordinates vertically, so the importance of communicating for managers can lead to create the commitment in them. Therefore, it seems that even a minimum of interpersonal communication skills, which is an important indicator of management, is effective to establish the management model of Clark's management network especially by behavior – oriented managers.

According to Table 2 and considering the obtained mean values of communication skills (verbal, auditory and feedback), the mean value of auditory skill in the participants is lower than the average level. The results of the present study is somewhat in consistent with the findings of Nazari et al (2013) which estimate the communication skills of sports managers, especially at the level of interpersonal communication below the average level. It seems that this consistency is because of the similar approaches of the statistical population, which are sports managers. Although the sport managers have good verbal and feedback skills, their auditory skill is weak. Therefore, it is necessary to address the mentioned weakness by required training. Considering the gender – related differences of verbal communication skills can be said that there is a significant difference between men and women in this case (Table 4). Based on the calculated mean value, it can be said that the amount of this component in men is more than women. It seems that the results of the study is in consistent with the findings of Nazari et al (2013) that suggest that verbal and auditory components of communication skills in sport - men and women are different but there was no difference in terms of feedback skill. Sullivan (2004) also acknowledged the differences of communication skills between men and women's teams. It appears that men tend to be more active in carrying out their duties and have an aggressive behavior. While women often have a tendency to self – disclosure and they reveal reactions that are more expressive. So it can be said that women more than men use non – verbal communications. According to Table 4, the findings of the study showed that the establishment of Clark's management network among male and female managers is significantly higher than the average level. The results of the study is somewhat consistent with Nauman et al (2010) findings which estimated leadership and management

approaches as an important factors in providing customer services. Therefore, it can be acknowledged that the tendency to establish Clark's management network in both the behavior – and task – oriented dimensions among sport managers is high and this pattern was much welcomed by the managers. Considering that the mission of sport organizations is to provide the services of the Public and Championship Sports to their stakeholders, thus this mission will be accomplished better in the space of social interactions. So, the special attention of sport managers to this management model originated from the prevailing organizational culture in sport organization, which focuses on the interaction and interpersonal communications. It should be noted that usually leadership behaviors, management plans, structural forms, external initiatives and how to use them influence on the organizational performance. Results suggest that with respect to educability of communication skills, over time, and with better understanding of human factors (colleagues and sports community as an effective part in the society) by sport managers and through gaining work experience, they show a growing trend in communication skills. In general, since communication skills are considered as a factor affecting the establishment of Clark's management network, and sports managers also tend to have this management model, therefore, the top management of sports organization need to strengthen their communication skills and to provide conditions in which Clark's management network model establish with respect to the nature of sports organizations. The establishment of communication networks between managers and staff leads to increase their efficiency to accomplish their mission in providing sport services to their customers and stakeholders.

Conflict of Interest

The authors have not declared any conflicts of interest.

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