A Study of the Relationship between the Team Climate and Attitude toward Knowledge-sharing Behavior of Sports women from Selected Iranian Leagues

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ABSTRACT

Knowledge-sharing is a process through which a message is sent by a person or group and is received by another person or group. The present research objective at studying the relations that such parameters as team climate and attitude may bear to knowledge-sharing behavior among the sportswomen who attended the sport leagues of Iran during the year 2013. The statistical population of the study included all the sportswomen attending the Iranian leagues of football, volleyball, handball, basketball and futsal during the year 2013. Based on the Morgan and Krejcie sampling technique, 270 athletes were randomly selected to form the subjects of the study. Team Climate questionnaire (Langfred, 2004), the questionnaire of Attitude toward Knowledge-sharing (Bock et al. 2005) and Knowledge-sharing Behavior Questionnaire (Hsu et al. 2007) were used for collecting the data. The validity of the questionnaires was confirmed by soliciting the comments of 15 professors of physical education, and reliability of them was also tested using the Cronbach's alpha. Results from Pearson Correlation coefficient test showed that there was a significantly positive relation between trust, innovation, and attitude and knowledge-sharing behavior. Also results from Linear Regression test proved that trust and attitude had the capacity for predicting knowledge-sharing behavior and clarified a 19 percent variance of knowledge-sharing behavior in women’s sports teams.

INTRODUCTION

Nowadays, in order to be actively and effectively enough present at the different sporting, economic and social scenes, teams have no other way than to attend to the various areas of knowledge management especially knowledge-sharing. This is especially true about women’s sports as they are faced with more tangible limitations. Knowledge-sharing is basically a process through which a message is sent by a person or group and is received by another person or group. It is also a process through which a person or group is continually correcting and purifying their thoughts, ideas or comments by consulting true experiences [1]. Knowledge is, therefore, considered a competitive advantage for every organization so that the motto “knowledge is power” has recently changed into “knowledge-sharing power”. Knowledge-sharing is especially important in organizations as it can help them reduce expenses, improve their performance, enhance their services to the customers, reduce the time for developing new products and services, reduce the delays in the delivery of goods, and finally reduce their expenses on finding and accessing valuable knowledge inside and outside the organizations [2].

Regarding this, it is highly important to convince people so that they would correctly and effectively share their knowledge with others. Thus, we must support and acknowledge in others behaviors which can facilitate and enhance the sharing of knowledge in the organization and among the teams and people related to them [3]. Many factors may relate to sharing of knowledge among which are: 1-the features of the knowledge itself, those of management measures such as harmonization mechanisms, and encouraging rewards for sharing knowledge, 2-environmental features first in a large scale such as the dominant culture in a country, technologies and the culture within the organization, and second in a smaller level are interpersonal relations such as common language, common approach, and interpersonal connections, 3-and finally people’s features which help the
knowledge-sharing such as team climate, supportive leadership, viewpoints interpersonal trust and trust, motivation, gender etc. [4]. Among such factors, team climate and environment are more important. Team climate is usually defined as a person’s perception of their team and work place [5]. In fact, team climate refers to a person’s perception of kinds of behavior, customs and conducts which dominate their team. Environment or climate conducive to competition and rivalry may bar the way of knowledge-sharing. In contrast, enthusing people toward team working may increase trust and consequently knowledge-sharing [6]. In a study on management teams, Yajiong, John & Huigang [7] found out that team climate could have significant effects on sharing knowledge. Li et al. [8] have also proved that team climate can bring about an environment appropriate for the sharing of knowledge. Li, Zhu, and Luo [8] in their study on the effects of organizational climate on knowledge-sharing behavior, concluded that organizational climate (encouraging friendly relations and innovation), self-fruitfulness and expecting results bore direct relations with knowledge-sharing behavior in the staff.

Figl and Saunders [9], Xue, Liang, Hauser, O'Hara [10], and Liu, Ma, Ho and Liu [11] have also verified the positive effects of team climate on knowledge-sharing in their respective studies. In traditional models, however, most of people and groups are not willing to share their knowledge because they usually consider knowledge as a source of power, and progress and a guarantee to their jobs' stability not as a source of information that can be exchanged [12]. Therefore, one should enhance the motive among the members of teams, groups and organizations based on which they can share their knowledge with the other members without fear of losing their job positions [13]. One other factor that can affect knowledge-sharing is attitude. Results from studies in this regard have proved that attitude can affect behavioral tendencies. In their study on 30 different organizations, Book et al. [14] have, for example, concluded that attitude can significantly affect the zest for knowledge-sharing. Galet et al. [2000] as quoted in Yajiong et al [7] have also reported the positive relations between attitude and knowledge-sharing. Attitude toward knowledge-sharing is based on the Theory of Reasoned Action. According to this theory, people’s decision for doing a certain behavior is determined by their willingness for doing that, and both of these (decision and willingness) are determined by attitude and mental norms of them. Results from many different studies have pointed to the role of attitude in increasing knowledge-sharing behaviors. In their research entitled “Experimental Studies on Zest for Sharing Knowledge”, Xue et al. [10] have stated that attitude toward sharing knowledge, and past knowledge-sharing have positive effects on zest for sharing knowledge. In a research project for studying attitude toward knowledge-sharing in organized teams in Hong Kong, Zhang and Faing [15] concluded that people’s attitude toward knowledge-sharing positively affected by self-fruitfulness and feedback of knowledge. In fact, attitude toward sharing knowledge could significantly determine willingness for sharing knowledge, and attitude determines knowledge-sharing behavior. In their study of knowledge-sharing behavior in university and professional sports, Liu et al. [11] concluded that knowledge-sharing behavior is indirectly and positively affected by mental norms, attitude toward sharing, willingness for sharing knowledge and perceived behavioral control.

Among the most important reasons justifying the significance of knowledge-sharing in teams is that it decrease the expenditures and enhance their performance, thus it is essential for teams to understand the status of knowledge-sharing behavior in team members [7]. Influential teams rely on sharing knowledge and groups’ need for reaching better performance. As each member of the teams has different experiences which form the teams’ knowledge, proper knowledge-sharing can improve and enhance the performance of the teams. Also, as teams have different levels of knowledge, they may have different ideas for doing their duties and decision-making.

As we live in a competitive environment in which specialization in sports and the penetration of sports and sport organizations in the various layers of human societies, adapting to different conditions and present variable has become inevitable. In such situation, women comprise a considerable portion of workforce in such organizations doing organizational activities and works, and this is highly important and worth attending to in sports affairs especially at global and Olympic levels. In the 2008 Olympic games of China, for instance, from the 100 medals received by the Chinese athletes, 57 ones were won by the sportswomen. And from the 110 medals won by Americans, 55 ones were received by women [16]. This clearly indicates the careful planning that different countries have done about the abilities of women in achieving success. In Iran, however, due to special cultural and social conditions, women are faced with more limitations in their activities among which team (group) sports are even more restricted as they need special places. Despite these limitations, making trustworthy and friendly situations among the team members can greatly make up for these restrictions. Thus, as knowledge-sharing has an important role in the success of sports teams, and on the other hand, as team climate and people’s attitudes are strongly significant in knowledge-sharing among the members of teams [17], the question remains whether there are significant relations between the parameters of team climate such as trust, coherence, innovation and attitude and knowledge-sharing behavior in the sportswomen from the selected group sports? Also, can the parameters of team climate predict the knowledge-sharing behavior in the athletes of women sport teams?

Methodology:
This is a solidarity type research done as a case study whose data was collected through questionnaires. The statistical population of the study included all the sportswomen (N=915) attending the Iranian leagues of football, volleyball, handball, basketball and futsal during the year 2013. Based on the Morgan and Krejcie sampling technique, 270 athletes were randomly selected from among them to form the subjects of the study. Team Climate questionnaire, the questionnaire of Attitude toward Knowledge-sharing [14] and Knowledge-sharing Behavior Questionnaire [18], also used by Yajoing et al. [7], were used for collecting the necessary data. The team climate questionnaire includes 8 questions which measure the three parameters of trust, coherence and innovation. The other two ones have three questions each. The questionnaires of team climate and knowledge-sharing behavior were scaled based on the 5-value Likert scale from quite agree to quite disagree. That of Attitude toward Knowledge-sharing was also scaled based on the 5-value system in which the first question measures from very good [5] to very bad [1], the second question from very valuable [5] to very worthless [1], and the third question from very useful [5] to very useless [1]. The validity of the questionnaires was affirmed by soliciting the comments of 15 professors of physical education. For finding out about the reliability of the questionnaires, 30 ones of them were filled out by the subjects and based on the results thus taken and applying Cronbach’s alpha, the coefficients 0.88, 0.81 and 0.94 were fond for team climate, attitude and knowledge-sharing behavior, respectively. Concurrent validity of the questionnaires was also proved using confirmatory factor analysis. For describing and classifying the characteristics of the subjects and the research data Descriptive Statistics were used. For testing the assumption of data's naturalness, we applied the K-S test which showed that our data bore a natural distribution (P \leq 0.05). We finally used the Pearson correlation coefficient and multi-variable regression in SPSS 21 software for testing the hypotheses of the study.

Results:
Results from our study show that the subjects had a minimum age of 18 years and a maximum age of 34 years making an average of 24.8±3.98. About the variable on their number of years in teams, the subjects ranged from at least 1 year to at most 8 years of presence in the teams making an average of 5.8± 2.92. From the subjects of the study, 26 persons held high school diploma and less (about 10%), 50 more had pro-diploma (18.5%), 144 of them held bachelors (53 %), and 50 others had M A or higher degrees (18.5%). Also, 75 athletes were from football teams, 35 others from volleyball, 70 persons were members of basketball teams, 28 ones did handball and finally 62 others futsal. Results from Pearson Correlation test show that there exists a significantly positive relation between attitude and knowledge-sharing behavior. The same relation is seen between innovation and trust and knowledge-sharing behavior. Knowledge-sharing behavior does not have the same relation to coherence. (table 1).

Table 1: Correlations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Behavior K-S</th>
<th>Attitude</th>
<th>Innovation</th>
<th>Cohesion</th>
<th>Trust</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pearson Correlation</td>
<td>.315**</td>
<td>.245**</td>
<td>.067</td>
<td>.356**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sig. (2-tailed)</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>272</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>270</td>
<td>270</td>
<td>270</td>
<td>270</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

For predicting the knowledge-sharing behavior, we used the variables attitude, innovation and trust, all of which bore a positively linear relation with knowledge-sharing behavior, in Regression equation. Results show that attitude and trust are able to predict knowledge-sharing behavior in women athletes in group sports. (Tables 2 to 4).

Table 2: Model Summary

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model</th>
<th>R</th>
<th>R Square</th>
<th>Adjusted R Square</th>
<th>Std. Error of the Estimate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>.433a</td>
<td>.188</td>
<td>.178</td>
<td>93330</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

a. Predictors: (Constant), trust, attitude, innovation

Table 3: ANOVA

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model</th>
<th>Sum of Squares</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Mean Square</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Regression</td>
<td>53.519</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>17.840</td>
<td>20.481</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Residual</td>
<td>231.699</td>
<td>266</td>
<td>.871</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>285.219</td>
<td>269</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

a. Predictors: (Constant), trust, attitude, innovation
b. Dependent Variable: behavior knowledge sharing

Table 4: Coefficients

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model</th>
<th>Unstandardized Coefficients</th>
<th>Standardized Coefficients</th>
<th>T</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>(Constant)</td>
<td>1.092</td>
<td>.268</td>
<td>4.067</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ATTITUDE</td>
<td>.202</td>
<td>.053</td>
<td>.223</td>
<td>3.837</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
trust is useful in enhancing knowledge, as much as trust is necessary and helpful in sharing useful and high-quality knowledge. A milieu to such a degree that people would come to believe that not only is knowledge-sharing harmless to their status, it can also bring them many advantages. Sandergaard et al. [19] have, however, noted that trust can act as a double-edged sword, that is, as much as trust is useful in enhancing knowledge-sharing, mistrust can keep the user of knowledge from asking about its usefulness and applications, and this can lead to misuse of knowledge. Srivastava et al. [20] have found trust among the members of teams highly necessary and helpful in sharing useful and high-quality knowledge. They state that if there is trust among the members of groups, they would take part in activities more willingly. And this seems to prove the fact that sharing knowledge in sport teams is affected by the beliefs and feelings that members bear toward each other.

On the relations between attitude and knowledge-sharing behavior, our results affirmed those of the past studies by Lin and Lee [21], Yajiong et al. [7], and Liu et al. [11]. Based on the theory of planned behavior [22], how people behave is based on their beliefs and attitudes. One's decision for doing a certain behavior is determined by his/her tendencies toward that behavior, and both of these are determined by mental norms and attitudes.

Peoples' expectations of the usefulness of knowledge and their belief of the fact that through knowledge-sharing they can improve their relationships with others have a positive relation with attitude toward knowledge-sharing which is itself in accord with zest for sharing knowledge [23]. Also, Jarvenpaa and Staples [24] have stated that when people in teams or groups believe that the shared knowledge is for themselves (as opposed to when they think of it as Organization's knowledge), they would more eagerly participate in sharing their knowledge which shows their contentment with this exchange of knowledge.

Therefore, players of sports teams would probably share their knowledge as they consider it personal and useful for others. Although such variables as trust and attitude would account for only 19 percent of knowledge-sharing behavior variance, there are many other factors such as role of leadership, experience, education, etc. that can affect the knowledge-sharing behavior of the athletes from women sport teams. Generally, as our results well prove that trust and attitude can clearly predict knowledge-sharing behavior, we suggest that officials, authorities and coaches of women's sport teams try to provide them with an environment imbued with trust and friendliness so that they can be encouraged toward sharing their knowledge with other members and never fear that this might threaten their status.

REFERENCES