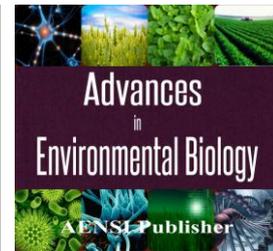




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The Relationship between Creativity and Communication Skills among Esfahan's Sport Managers

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ABSTRACT

Background: This study aimed to investigate the relationship between creativity and communication skills among sports managers of Esfahan province. **Objective:** The statistical population of present study consists of 200 sports manager from Esfahan. By the use of cluster random sampling, 127 samples were calculated. Barthon Jay's communication skills questionnaire and creativity questionnaire were used as data collecting tools. The validity of the questionnaires was approved by experts. Their reliability was also investigated by Cronbach's alpha by which 0.81 was calculated for Barthon Jay's communication skills questionnaires and 0.82 was calculated for creativity questionnaire. The researcher applied parametric tests such as Pearson's correlation coefficient, independent t test, one-way analysis of variance, and one sample t test to analyze the data. All statistical calculations were done by SPSS /20. **Results:** The level of creativity and communication skills of sports managers is medium. **Conclusion:** Therefore, it was concluded that there is a direct and meaningful relationship between managers' communication skills (verbal, listening, feedback skills) and their level of creativity.

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INTRODUCTION

As establishes of the relationship between managers and employees, sports organizations constitute one of the most important and effective factors over organizational production and service activities heavily depending on a proper, favorable communicative atmosphere between different levels of management. Needless to say, communication and its orientation toward organizational goals constitute one of the essential points for managers in this regard [9]. Managers can facilitate the formation of a managerial background effectively contributing to the realization of organizational goals by considering effective communication networks and improving human skills, e.g. developing communication skills[7]. Besides, one of the basic presumptions of organizational behavior is recognizing people's communicative and individual characteristics to access better effectiveness, efficiency and, finally, productivity leading to the realization of organizational goals. This is closely related to different personal, social economic and cultural aspects [13].

Since contain behaviors depend on certain circumstances, successful managers think of predicting, guiding, controlling and changing employees' behaviors to attain organizational goals, and this requires expensive investigation considering personal differences and human relations development in today's world and cultural differences in different societies[3]. Man's social character requires that he relate to society and the institutions within society [14]. In today's communities, man is confronted with unprecedented problems as life process has become more complicated which makes communication even more important. In such communities, communication is one of the most important factors for man's development and success [2]. Managers too, have found out that effective communication with human resources and understanding employee's communicative motives are an effective factor for them to successfully attain their organizations' planned goals. Thus, managers at different levels are responsible to establish proper communication in the organization; therefore, they have to be aware of the communicative process details and know how effective communication takes place [6]. Many studies have dealt with communication skills with various results and findings. For example, when communication is considered important, it brings about commitment. Occupational issues, sentiments and

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specious are considered some of the factors affecting communication. They considered employee's interpersonal relation skills especially important. They believe that the ability to communication is the most important factor for an organization's decision while recruiting and individual's success when starting to work [9].

Sullivan (2004) concluded that females tend to expose themselves and show more meaningful, reactive reaction at work most of time [15]. In this regard, women use non- verbal communication more often than men. A significant difference was observed between sports men and women in verbal and auditory elements [11]. Nazari *et al.* (2014) suggest that there is a significant relationship between participants' age and sports record with their verbal skills. A significant difference based on individuals' schooling was observed in verbal, auditory and feedback skills (14&15).

Since people's characters play a significant part in selecting an indirect relationship in both society and personal relations efficient leaders make bridges through communication, and connect the past to the future with an inspiring viewpoint with their words and deeds. Thus, it seems that sports communication plans must turn into a perspective in scientific development in sports organizations [10]. Yukel indicates that leadership behavior, management plans, structural forms, outer innovations and their use usually affect organizational performance. Among the above- mentioned items, management systems and plans play the most effective part [17]. Papastergiou (2002), too, suggests that recognizing individuals' communication skills and manipulating them in order to have organizational goals realized constitute a basic issue in human behavior studies.

In the light of information exchange and establishing expansive relations, man can discover fresh facts with new thoughts and thus play a role in society's growth and organizational development. Establishing communication revives man's sense of social nature and enables him to obtain new skills and attitudes so much so that, as organizations expand, human relations take on more complicated forms [16].

It seems that a lack of communication skills leads to higher costs and eventually reduces effectiveness [17]. Therefore, managers that enjoy better feedback, spoken and auditory skills will be able to establish effective communication [8]. Thus, communication is considered an indispensable part of management performance, and, to successfully carry out tier duties, managers must enjoy management skills [7]. Identifying individuals' communication skills and manipulating them in order to have organizational goods realized constitute a fundamental issue in human behavior studies [9]. In addition to knowledge, managers must enjoy adequate skills. The educational system certainly enjoys high effectiveness and efficiency, one such management skill is communication skills which constitutes an important educational tool playing a remarkable part in its success and effectiveness [2]. Since human capital's creativity is a competitive organizational advantage, it seems that the most prominent ability of a good human resources manager is the ability to consider strategic aspects. That is, a manager must be able to understand the strategic considerations and challenges of their organization, and look for competitive advantages [6].

In sport organization's communication, managers and employees interact with others at two communicative layers. Part of such interpersonal communication is done at the horizontal layer where individuals relate to their same level employees or managers. The other layer which seems to take up the larger part of all communication includes vertical communication where managers and employees have to relate to their subordinates and superiors. It seems that, in communication, managers with better feedback, auditory and spoken skills will more successfully establish effective communication [14]. Sports organization managers need to know how to communicate. They are responsible for their organization's activities planning, specific goals, and implementation of workers' evaluation and training. Effective communication can turn into one of the most important organizational goal [10].

Today, scholars and researchers believe that man's civilization is based on creativity. Therefore, any society's survival and progress is directly related to the effort they put into having such creativity emerge and develop. Also, one of the most important factors for society's growth and development is to pinpoint talented, creative minds and correctly develop them [8]. One of the factors leading to a more creative society is preparing people to develop a culture where everyone tries to help others grow and contributes to society's progress by reciprocally affecting others [1].

Creativity is present as a higher level need in all stages of one's life and includes oriented encompassing changes in one's thoughts so that a skill is developed to combine previous factors in a new way. Creativity is mostly a mental activity while innovation is mostly practical and is, in fact, the final product of creativity [4]. Although different people have different degrees of creativity, it has not yet been proven that the differences in people's success indicate their abilities against their talents. With these abilities in mind, it seems that individuals consider their success and failure a result of their own efforts in interpreting events [5]. Nguyen & Shanks define creativity as a psychological process including the production of new, unprecedented concepts and ideas. As today's organizations' success depends, to a large extent, on managers' creativity and innovation and their familiarity with this fact, managers have to be aware of creativity management in organizations and encourage it through certain processes so that organizations can become more efficient and effective by employing creative managers, and find better, newer and more creative ways for accomplishing organizational assignments and affairs. When individuals have more creativity in social interactions, they will improve their

psychological skills and, finally, their communication skills will achieve a favorable level. [12]. Since creativity has been studied as an important, effective factor by different researchers, it seems to be a variable affecting communication skills based on which individuals' communication skills can be predicted to an extent. The main question intriguing the researchers: is there a relationship between creativity and communication skills among sports managers? Since creativity can be an effective factor in an organization enhancing individuals' communication skills, one of the most important challenges against today's management is communication skills where innovation, change, and creativity are emphasized. An enhancement of sports managers' creativity makes them more flexible when confronting crises and menaces, and enables them to tackle problems and predicaments more logically. Enjoying minimum levels of interpersonal skills is considered an important management index. It seems that, because a remarkable percentage of provincial sports managers are stationed in the city of Esfahan, the findings of this study will help recognize their creativity and communication skill levels, and guide them to using such skills for their respective organizations' better effectiveness.

Methodology:

As for the objectives, the study is an applied one, and in terms of the method used, it is a correlation one. The statistical society included the sports managers of the city of Esfahan. The statistical society of the study included almost 200 persons based on the information received from the personnel offices of the above-mentioned organizations. The research statistic sample was selected randomly from the statistic society, and Cohen method with a permitted error of 0.05 was employed to determine sample size. A sample size equal to 127 persons was obtained. A classified sampling method was used in this study to select the sample from the society. The measurement tools included Barton J. communication skills questionnaire which evaluates three communication aspects including verbal, hearing and feedback aspects. The reliability of the questionnaire was reported at 81% through a research study by Nazari *et al.* calculated based on Cronbach alpha. The creativity questionnaire included four aspects: fluidity, expansion, innovation and flexibility. The reliability of the questionnaire was reported at 82% based on Cronbach alpha through a study by Abedi. The formal validity was evaluated by experts, and the validity of the questionnaire's contents was confirmed at an agreement factor of 85% according to the opinion of the ten sports managers. The statistic methods and data analysis are done at descriptive and inferential levels. All data were analyzed by SPSS ver. 19 with a confidence level of 95%. Kolmogorov-Smirnoff, Levin, correlation factor, t and f tests was used to analyze data.

Results:

The results of gender distribution descriptive statistics indicate that men constituted about 9% and those women constituted about 81% of sample size. The largest part of the sample size is that of the bachelor's degree holders - about 56%. According to the data obtained from descriptive statistics in creativity dimensions, the fluidity, expansion, innovation and flexibility averages were 2.01, 2.02, 2.02 and 2.01 respectively. The total creativity average was 2.01. Among communication skills, verbal, auditory and feedback averages were 2.98, 2.96 and 2.95 respectively. The total communication skill average was 2.97. as for inferential statistics, before examining research hypotheses, first, the Shapiro Wilk test was used for normality, and the Levin test ($p \leq 0.05$) was used for variance homogeneity. According to the results, the research statistic sample corresponded to normal distribution, and the research variables had variance congruity.

Table 1: Pearson correlation test to examine the relationship between creativity and communication skills.

Variables	Factor	Det. Fac.	Sig. Levels
Creativity/Communication skill	0.471	0.221	0.004

Based on the significance level which was determined at less than 0.05 for this hypothesis, it can be concluded that the hypothesis of relationship between sports managers' communication skills and creativity is confirmed. Since the value of correlation factor is positive, it can be concluded that, as communication skill levels go up, sports managers' creativity levels are heightened, too. On the other hand, the creativity-communication skill correlation factor is determined at 0.221. Therefore, 22% of the communication skill changes can be explained by creativity.

Table 2: Single sample t-test to study sports managers' communication skills and creativity levels.

Variable	Average	SD	df	t-test stat.	Sig
Creativity	2.01	0.22	114	7.625	0.033
Communication skills	2.97	0.36	114	9.938	0.035

Based on the t stat value and significance level obtained, it can be concluded that there is a difference between the existing status and desired status of sports managers' creativity. Also, the average creativity score is lower than the presumed average 3. Therefore, sports executive's creativity status in question falls below

average. The average communication skills score of 2.97 is insignificantly lower than the presumed average 3; therefore, the communication skills status of the sports managers in this study is at an average level.

Table 3: T-test to compare men's and women's averages in research variables.

Variable	Group	Average values	Levin test		Independent T-test	
			f-test stat	Sig	f-test stat	Sig
Creativity	Male	2.01	0.184	0.669	0.678	0.49
	Female	2.06				
Comm. Skill	Male	2.97	1.305	0.256	0.037	0.97
	Female	2.97				

Table 3 shows the results of t-test to compare men and women. The calculated significance level is greater than 0.05. Therefore, there is no significant difference between creativity and communication skills between male and female sports managers.

Table 4: Variance analysis test to compare schooling levels in variables.

Variables	-	Total squares	df	Average squares	f-test stat	Sig
Creativity	Inter group	0.135	4	0.034	0.642	0.634
	Intra group	5.773	110	0.052		
	Total	5.908	114			
Communication skills	Inter group	0.555	4	0.139	1.045	0.388
	Intra group	14.606	110	0.133		
	Total	15.161	114			

As seen in Table 4, there is no significant difference between creativity and communication skills based on schooling levels of individuals because the significance level is greater than 0.05.

Conclusion:

One of the most important problems that organizations are confronted with is selecting merited managers based on necessary criteria and skills for such an important position. Today, as organizations grow larger, and the environment becomes more competitive, having the right communication and management skills are, in a sense, an indispensable prerequisite for appointing managers. It seems that, due to the complicated nature of communication process and the necessity to develop interpersonal communication skills, managers must try to improve their communication skills according to their professional needs. Sports managers are not an exception to this rule, and their correct performance are in line with the nation's sports goals including creativity and innovation for an efficient, effective management. The findings presented in Table 1 show the Pearson correlation coefficient for the relationship between communication skills and creativity. As the correlation coefficient is positive, it can be concluded that, as sports managers' communication skills improve, their creativity grows stronger, too. The results showed that there is a significant relationship between creativity and communication skills; therefore, the findings of this study are in line with Nazari *et al.* [9] and Goudarzi *et al.* [7] and Farid [5] who believe that there is a relationship between creativity, organizational culture and entrepreneurship since it seems that part of organizational culture and entrepreneurship activities approaches depends on intra- and inter-organizational relations, especially interpersonal relationships.

According to the data from descriptive statistics in creativity aspects, the average fluidity, expansion, innovation and flexibility was 2.01, 2.02, 2.02, and 2.01 respectively. The total creativity average was 2.01 which is lower than the hypothesized average. Among communication skills, the verbal, hearing and feedback skill averages were 2.98, 2.96 and 2.95, and the total communication skill average was 2.97 which is lower than the hypothesized average. According to Table 2, the creativity status of the sports managers in this study is below average. There is a difference between the existing and desirable statuses of sports managers' creativity and their communication skills are at average levels. This agrees with Ansari [1] who described the creativity of managers in Tehran Province Physical Education Department as average, Ghafouri *et al.* (2009) who described physical education teachers' creativity as average, Nazari *et al.*, Nazari&Nasri [9], Moeinfar *et al.* who evaluated Iranian sports managers' communication skill levels as average and below average.

According to Table 3, there is no significant difference between female and male sports managers' creativity and communication skills. The variance analysis test results presented in Table 4 indicate no significant difference between creativity and communication skills based on the schooling levels of the sample, nor is there a significant difference between creativity and communication skills based on managers' schooling levels. This is not in agreement with Nazari&Nasri [9] who indicated a significant difference between Iranian sports managers' communication skills based on their schooling levels. It seems that the physical territory of Nazari&Nasri [9] is different from this study's thus the lack of correspondence between results. In the creativity section, the findings of this study are in agreement with Shekhalizadeh *et al.* [4] since they also indicated the creativity status of sports organizations' managers at an undesirable level.

It can be generally stated that, since human resources play a more important part than other resources in organizations and societies, when the human capital is absent, other capitals will lose their effectiveness making it difficult for organizations to move toward sublimity. Enhancing sports managers' creativity will help organizations become more effective. Since communication constitutes the main pillar of any organization in today's world, and it is vital to manage communication with a positive effect on human capital, and since human capital is needed by all organizations today, considering each of these vital variables is not an exception in sports organizations. Developing management activities requires the right conditions and infrastructure. Structure, technology, culture, communication and strategy must all be formed in harmony with organizational management development and be re-designed if necessary. Therefore, it seems necessary to correctly plan organizations to enhance creativity and communication skills in sports managers as effective people in sports organizations. Sports organization managers can contribute to the formation of a strong organizational culture by developing a joint culture in the organization based on the fundamental principles of communication skills and management skills and, finally, make it possible for organizations to move toward sustainable productivity. As one of the most important members of sports organizations, sports managers have a strong tendency to showing their creativity and communication skills, and need to learn and use high creativity and communication skills for better management practice. Thus, managers with high creativity and communication skills must be employed to develop sports managers' personal and organizational learning skills.

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