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Determine the Important Competencies for Top, Middle and Lower Level Mangers in Sport Centers of Isfahan Province, Iran

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ABSTRACT

This study systematically assessed the various essential components of competency to managers on different levels of the Physical Education and Sports Centres in Isfahan Province, Iran Therefore the aim of this study is to explore the differences of competencies among top, middle and lower levels of sport managers of Physical Education and Sports Centres in Isfahan Province, Iran. Since this study was done in from both large and small sport centers, it is crucial to find out in a variety of sport centers was asked to rate the various roles required by their positions to the components and items identified previously will be suitable to reflect the situation of sport managers' base on organizations in Iran. And to investigate which components of competencies are considered important by top, middle, and low level sport managers. The Sport Managers Competency instrument (SMC) instrument was used that 0.967 was determined as the reliability coefficient of the instrument. Also the quantitative design was used for this paper. One-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was conducted on the 546 managers. The analysis of variance results indicate *that* there was a statistically significant difference in the means of competencies of sports managers at different levels *($p<0.01$).* And show that there were significant differences between competencies in three levels of management *($P<0.01$).* However, the most important components of competencies required for high-level managers are business procedure component of competencies of managers at different levels *($p<0.01$)* Likewise, communication *($p<0.05$).* By contrast, for lower-level managers, sports foundation *($P=.008$)* was considered the most important component.

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INTRODUCTION

In all of the organizations for achieving organizational goals being effective which is most important is management. Manager as the Official representative of the organization to make coordinate and enhance the effectiveness and success of the organization is for meeting the goals depends on how the management practices (Yazdi, 1997). Hersey & Blanchard (1996) stated that successful organizations have feature by it is which is recognized from unsuccessful organization is and it is nothing except a dynamic and effective leadership and management. If the top of the organizations were efficient, competent, skilled, experienced managers and completely to be aware of management techniques and principles would guarantee the organizational success in meeting organizational goals (Robins, 1998).

Competencies are a collection of abilities and capacities that enable the individual to have a desirable performance in the framework of internal and external limitations of the organization in doing of his role and working tasks (Saadat, 2007). Moreover, they guarantee organizational success.

The definition and interpretation of the term competent are relatively clear and consistent while the term of competency is not that easy to understand (Nielsen, 1991). One of the reasons is that the competency approach is a 1980s phenomenon which is not known by most people (Bennett, 1991). Another reason is the lack of a consistent definition of the term competency (Parkhouse, 1991).

Recognizing the hidden talents of employees is often difficult. However, in the future, systematic

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education will be a necessary and effective method for training managers (Taheri Borujeni, 2004). Today every organization that has more than three hundred (300) employees must apply for one type of human resource competency development model. based on what discussed by Boyatzis (2008), if the establishment of a universal model of competency is intended, companies such as Personnel Decision Incorporated, Hay Groups and Development Dimensions International which are very distinguished and important consulting institutions as well as the countless minor agencies and individual Counsellors follow, on a universal level, the similar plans.

Currently, there are numerous and varying jobs. It is very interesting because capabilities of people and their priorities vary greatly. Some people like to assume the responsibility of senior manager and make important decisions. Others may not be suitable for this selection. Money is the first priority for many people and they want to earn a significant income. Others want to help their society and money has less of an importance for them. Some people like to deal with statistics and numbers but others become nervous while reading profit and loss statements. It is very important that employment specialists hold educational workshops and study how a job which could be useful for a person may not be usable for another person. Needs, demands, interests, values and personalities of individuals are different and these must be considered while choosing people for jobs (Tieger & Baron Tieger, 2009). In another research in Iran indicated that there are not any compliance and adaptation between the disciplines, capabilities and specialty jobs (Moshref Javadi, 2004). Hence, the present research attempts to find out concerning the lack of attention given to specific competencies for sport managers in three levels of management in Physical education offices in Isfahan Province. And also which competency is more important for every level of management in sport organization.

Managerial Competency Categories:

Since the tasks assigned to the manager were found to vary widely (Lambrecht, 1987, 1991), it is difficult to define a comprehensive set of competencies. Initially the level of precision at which competencies should be defined had to be established. Katz (1974) developed an early model for classifying management skills. He noted three basic categories of managerial skills similar to those later developed by Zeigler and Bowie (1983). They are a) conceptual, b) technical, and c) human. These aspects of the manager's job were found to be widely accepted as the building blocks of management.

Researchers became interested after Katz (1974) had elaborated upon this original conception of managerial skills. Chelladurai (1985), for example, noted that there were four functions worth emphasizing from the perspective of modern sport management-planning, organizing, leading, and evaluating. Chelladurai plotted a table incorporating these perspectives for the function, Katz's three types of managerial skills, and Mintzberg (1975) ten managerial roles. The finding of this comparison, with parallel functions, skills, and roles divided accordingly. Researchers found that the functions favoured by Chelladurai were similar in terms of goal and method of those categories developed by Katz and Mintzberg although a different language was used to discuss these classification systems. However, the research showed that all three models were inadequate.

As it has been mentioned by Cheng (1993), in the literature, diverse definitions has been given for the concept of competence. In most studies that have been carried out to date, competencies have been regarded as a connection and amalgamation of commands related to knowledge, experience, skill, behavior, output, responsibility, processes, role playing, and special job (Bulter, 1978; Ellard, 1984; Hall & Jones, 1987; Tungiaroenchai, 2000; Maclean, 2001). Eight sources of the identification of competency have been discussed by Hall and Jones (1987). These sources are identified as the lists that are present, translation courses for safeguards, profession input, taxonomic examination, theoretical construct, client's input and task analysis. The concept of competency is also regarded by Butler (1978) as knowledge, abilities, values and characteristics. However, for these features to be considered as competency they must be carried out in a way that will lead to the success of an individual in his or her personal or career life. According to Butler (1978) competency is viewed from the perspective of the roles, functions and abilities that are for an effective job performance.

According to Dempsey's (1987) point of view, being competent has been viewed as knowledge application and attainment as well as the development of the required and assumed abilities and behaviors. Accordingly, four methods were mentioned by him in the evaluation of the competencies. These methods are:

1) Personal opinion, 2) Reinforced opinion, 3) Consensus in one's profession, and, 4) the attainment of the student. Nadler and Nadler (1991) also defined competency as something required is to be known and the skills required to be attained by the training directors.

In 1993, Quain and Park's (1986) study was applied in Taiwan by Cheng to determine the competencies needed by sport manager (1993). Cheng modified Quin and Park's (1986) instrument and translated into Chinese for data collection. The subjects were 334 sport managers in Taiwan, who were selected from athletic settings, sport agencies,

the national governing body, and professional sport. The subjects were asked to rank the importance of the provided competencies. The findings indicated that the professional competencies for sport manger in Taiwan from most important to least important were knowledge of sport, human relations, public speaking, personnel management, writing, money management, professional fitness, time management, and others. In this study, the finding also revealed that there were significant differences between athletic directors, sport agencies, national governing bodies, and professional sport mangers in related question.

In addition, his results were very similar to those of Quain and Park's study. Therefore, in spite of different subjects, the competencies needed of sport manager in the United States and Taiwan are very similar.

In a study conducted by Hatfield, Wrenn, and Bretting (1987), the researchers compared athletic directors and general managers who were professionals in sport based on their job responsibilities perspective. The study's instrument included three sections: demographic items, items relating to job competences, and a listing of 40 academic courses. The subjects included 105 athletic directors of NCAA division 1-A football programs and 116 professional general sport managers of major spectator sport leagues in the United States and Canada. They were asked to rate the importance of job competencies, and to select academic preparatory coercers that were necessary for the job competences needed. This study included six areas consisting of 50 job competences. The included fields were labour associations, advertising, budget management, supervision, the assessment of the personnel, and publications. The result of the study showed a great difference between general sport directors and athletic directors. While advertising, financial management, and administrators were confident as the most important areas, general managers viewed labor association and the assessment of the personnel as the most significant ones. In order to examine the competencies needed of sport program directors, Quin (1994) conducted a study to identify qualifications for becoming sport program directors. Sport programmer directors and sport management practitioners were selected as the subjects of this study.

Lin (1998) surveyed the competencies required by sport mangers in Taiwan. The selected subjects grouped into the subjects of the study were classified into three groups of academic sport and athletic directors, sport supervisors, and managers in sport commerce. All of the selected groups rated the first five competencies as the important and significant ones. These five competencies were the management of the marketing, management, health and fitness management, guidance and leadership, the supervision and control of human resources, and organization management and administration of physical education and athletics.

Case and Branch (2003) developed a survey instrument which was used to identify the required job competencies for sport facility managers at primary and upper levels. The areas included in the instrument were financing, interaction capabilities, significance settings, delegation capabilities, decision abilities, the setting of objectives, problem solving abilities problems, knowledge of legal matters, and personal assessment abilities . The required competencies for sport facility managers at primary levels were the ability to interact orally and in written mode, ability in the recognition of facility safety risks, capabilities in solving problems, ability to make decisions, understanding about computer, time management, and hazard and risk management abilities.

In 2003, the same year, a study was conducted by using a questionnaire and interview by Horch and Schutte (2003). The purpose of the study was to determine the required competencies for club and federations sport managers of Germany. The findings showed that sport club managers perceived the following competencies as important: publications, personnel management, and basic knowledge about sport, financing, budgeting, event management, resource management, sport science, and information technology.

Goodarzi *et al* (2012) used a questionnaire survey to identify the competencies prioritizing the competencies of sport event managers from the viewpoints of managers holding national sport competitions in the Federations. His finding according to the prioritization of the Components in a descending order included event management, facilities management, research and marketing management, business procedures, governance, public relations, management techniques, risk management and computer skills. The findings were consistent with those of previous studies.

Hurd *et al*. (2009) examined the competencies development for entry-level public parks and recreation professionals. In their research, competencies were referred to as skills, knowledge and personal characteristics required for successful performance in a job. There are several means of implementing competencies in an organization such as (a) to identify training and development needs for employees; (b) to infuse hiring criteria including job descriptions, interview questions, and screening benchmarks; (c) to establish employee appraisal standards; and (d) to aid in career self-management.

Case and Branch (2003) developed a survey instrument to survey job competencies needed for first or entry level and upper level sport facility managers. The results showed that sport facility management professional preparation programs were

comprised of writing, business communications, public speaking, public relations, media relations, and computer courses. Ko, Henry and Kao (2011) studied the importance of sport management competencies by academics and practitioners in Taiwan's cultural/industrial context.

Methodology:

A quantitative method in the form of survey was used in this study. According to Morgan's Table, the total population of sports managers in Physical Education Centers of all cities in Isfahan province were 5101 managers. However, the expected sample size in this research was 546 managers of sports centers in cities in Isfahan province, Iran. The sample of this study was selected through the stratified random sampling technique through any level separately. In this study, a survey instrument was used. The instrument of Sport Managers Competency (SMC) 0.967 was determined as the reliability coefficient of the instrument. This is to say that the reliability and internal consistency of the revised instrument was satisfactory. This questionnaire consist of 9 components with 55 items these nine component including (1) business procedure, (2) communication, (3) supervision & Evaluation, (4) management technique & risk management, (5) sports foundation, (6) programming technique, (7) professional ethics & culture, (8) performance management & improving, (9) responsibility & result oriented.

Research Findings:

According to demographic information, the majority sport managers in Sport centers are male, with bachelor's degree, ranging in age between 26 to 35 years and having less than 10 years' work experience.

To establish the significance of the mean differences of components of competencies among the high, middle, and low sport managers, descriptive statistics were calculated and a one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was conducted on the 218 managers. As can be seen in Table that there was a statistically significant difference in the means of business procedure component of competencies of sports managers at different levels *($p<0.01$).* It means, the level of importance of business procedure component of competencies of sports managers at different levels (top, middle and lower) is different. Post- hoc analysis was done to deal with tow by two comparisons. According to the achieved results, the mean of business procedure is significantly different among all three level of managers. High level managers found business procedure important significantly higher than the other two level of managers. In addition, the importance of business procedure from middle managers viewpoints is significantly higher than low level managers.

There was a statistically significant difference in the means of communication component of competencies of sports managers at different levels *($p<0.05$).* It means, there is a significant difference between the means of communication component of competencies of sports managers at different levels. The post-hoc result showed that the middle level managers found communication important significantly higher than high and low managers. There is no significant difference between the communications from high and low managers' point of views.

Regarding the importance of supervision/ evaluation, the result of ANOVA test indicated that there is significant difference between the viewpoints of sports managers at different level of the managements *($p<0.05$).* As same as communication, the middle level managers found the importance of supervision significantly higher than high and low managers. There is also no significant difference between the supervision from high and low managers' point of views.

The results of ANOVA statistical test represented that there was a statistically significant difference in the means of technique management/risk management component of competencies of sports managers at different levels *($p<0.05$).* The post-hoc analysis reports a significant difference among the high, middle and low ranking managers. The high level of managers found technique management/risk management significantly more important than low and middle level managers. In addition, technique management/risk management is significantly more important in viewpoint of low level managers compare to middle level ones.

Furthermore, the results of ANOVA statistical test showed that there was a statistically significant difference in the means of sports foundation component of competencies of sports managers at different levels. The low level of managers found sports foundation significantly more important than middle and high level managers. In addition, sports foundation is significantly more important in viewpoint of middle level managers compare to high level ones.

Based on the ANOVA results, the importance of programming techniques is also significantly different from the viewpoint of managers at different level *($p<0.05$).* The post-hoc analysis showed, middle level managers found programming techniques significantly more import than low and high level managers. In addition, the importance of programming techniques is significantly higher among low level managers compared to high level ones.

Regarding to importance of organizational culture and professional ethic and performance Management and learning improvement, the

ANOVA results showed no significant difference between different levels of managers. However, the mean values of both components are high among all management levels which indicated these components are important for managers at all levels.

Finally, the results showed, the importance of responsibility /result oriented is significantly different from the viewpoint of managers at different level *(p<0.01)*. The managers at high level found responsibility /result oriented significantly more important than low and middle level managers. In addition, the importance of responsibility /result oriented is significantly higher among low level managers compared to middle level ones.

Table 1: One-Way ANOVA Results.

Construct	Groups	Mean	SD	Df	F	P
Business Procedure (BP)	High Level	4.681	.4618	2	6.311	.003
	Middle Level	3.987	.5151			
	Low Level	3.186	.4619			
Communication (CM)	High Level	4.231	.4693	2	4.289	.041
	Middle Level	4.887	.4649			
	Low Level	4.006	.4439			
Supervision/Evaluation (SE)	High Level	4.354	.4893	2	5.009	.038
	Middle Level	4.967	.4838			
	Low Level	4.143	.4842			
Technique Management/Risk Management (TM)	High Level	4.867	.4369	2	6.249	.018
	Middle Level	3.998	.4962			
	Low Level	4.433	.4436			
Sports Foundation (SF)	High Level	3.852	.4686	2	7.102	.008
	Middle Level	4.255	.5053			
	Low Level	4.961	.4677			
Programming Techniques (PT)	High Level	3.721	.4429	2	6.981	.011
	Middle Level	4.833	.5319			
	Low Level	4.418	.4859			
Organizational Culture & Professional Ethic (OR)	High Level	4.164	.4662	2	.210	.810
	Middle Level	4.126	.4964			
	Low Level	4.106	.5080			
Performance Management & Learning Improvement (PM)	High Level	4.209	.4713	2	1.006	.230
	Middle Level	4.186	.4737			
	Low Level	4.168	.4668			
Responsibility /Result Oriented (RO)	High Level	4.788	.4670	2	7.023	.003
	Middle Level	3.689	.5408			
	Low Level	4.213	.4389			

The Mean Ranking among the Variables:

In the previous section, ANOVA tests were performed to identify the differences in the level of the importance of each component of competencies required for sports managers at different levels in sports centers in Isfahan province. More specifically, it was used to determine which components of competencies are considered the most important for sports managers at each level. As interpreted earlier, the results of ANOVA tests indicated that the level of importance of some components of competencies of sports managers at different levels were the same. However, the most important components of competencies required for high-level managers are business procedure, technique management/risk management, responsibility /result oriented components. Likewise, communication ،supervision/evaluation and programming technique components are the most important components of competencies required for middle-level managers. By contrast, for lower-level managers, sports foundation is considered the most important component. More specifically, two components of competencies, namely organizational culture/professional ethic and performance management/learning improvement have the same level of importance to all levels of sports managers in sports centres in Isfahan province. In this study, to continue prioritizing the most important components of competencies for sports managers at each level with respect to the results of previous sections, Friedman test was performed.

The obtained results showed that three components of competencies, namely business procedure, technique management/risk management, and result oriented /responsibility were more important for the top-level managers, and the level of importance of two components, namely organizational culture/professional ethic and performance management learning improvement was the same for sports managers at all levels. According to ranking among the five components, it is necessary to determine the level of importance of components of competencies for the top-level managers. Friedman ranking test was therefore performed, and the results are presented in Table. The chi-square was significant which indicate, that importance of competencies required for the top-level managers are different, and the components have different ranks. The results also indicated that the business procedure component with an average rating, at 3.22, was considered the most important component of competencies and the organizational culture/professional ethic component with the average rating, at 2.62, was considered the least important component of the competencies required for high-level managers among the important competencies investigated followed by business procedure responsibility/result oriented, technique management/risk management, performance management, learning improvement, and organizational culture/ professional ethic.

Furthermore, the results of the ANOVA test showed that communication, supervision/evaluation

and programming technique components were more important for the middle-level sport managers. Meanwhile, the level of importance of the two components of organizational culture/professional ethic and performance management/learning improvement was the same for sports managers at all levels. The Friedman ranking test on these five components showed there is a significant difference in the average rank among the components of competencies. It means, the level of importance of components of competencies required for the middle-level managers were different, and the components had different ranks. The results also indicated that the component of programming techniques with an average rating, at 3.21 was the most important component of competencies. On the other hand, organizational culture/professional ethic component with the average rating, at 2.54 was the least important component of the competencies required for middle-level managers among the important competencies investigated followed by programming technique, communication, supervision evaluation, performance management, learning improvement, and organizational culture/ professional ethic.

The results of ANOVA also showed sport foundation component was more important for the lower-level managers, and two components of organizational culture/professional ethic and performance management/learning improvement had the same level of importance for all levels of managers. Accordingly, the Friedman ranking test was conducted on these three components. The result showed that there is a significant difference in the average rank among competency components. The results also indicated that the component of sports foundation with an average rating, at 2.19 is the most important component of competencies. Meanwhile, organizational culture/professional ethic average rating, at 1.73 is the least important component of the competencies required for lower-level manager followed by sport foundation, performance management/learning improvement, and organizational culture/ professional ethic.

Table 2: Friedman Test Rakings.

Manager Level	Component	Mean Rank	df	Chi-Square
High Level Managers	Business Procedure	3.22	4	22.388***
	Responsibility/Result Oriented	3.18		
	Technique Management/Risk Management	3.03		
	Performance Management/ Learning Improvement	2.89		
	Organizational Culture/Professional Ethic	2.62	4	31.860***
Middle Level Managers	Programming Techniques	3.21		
	Communication	3.16		
	Supervision Evaluation	3.11		
	Performance Management/Learning Improvement	2.99		
	Organizational Culture/Professional Ethic	2.54		
Low Level Managers	Sport Foundation	2.19	2	31.928****
	Performance Management/Learning Improvement	2.08		
	Organizational Culture/Professional Ethic	1.73		

Note: ***p<0.001

Conclusion And Result:

In order to determine the competency for top, middle, and low level of sport managers and explore whether there were significant differences of competencies between top, middle and lower level sport managers a One-Way ANOVA was conducted to analyze the nine components between three levels. The ANOVA tests and post-hoc results of indicated that the level of importance of some components of competencies of sports managers at different levels were the same. However, the most important components of competencies required for high-level managers are business procedure, technique management/risk management, responsibility /result oriented components. Likewise, communication ،supervision/evaluation and programming technique components are the most important components of competencies required for middle-level managers. By contrast, for lower-level managers, sports foundation is considered the most important component. More specifically, two components of competencies, namely organizational culture/professional ethic and performance management/learning improvement have the same level of importance to all levels of sports managers in sports centres in Isfahan province. In this study, to continue prioritizing the most important components of competencies for sports managers at each level with respect to the results of previous sections, Friedman test was performed. The results also indicated that the business procedure component was considered the most important component of competencies and the organizational culture/professional ethic component was considered the least important component of the competencies required for high-level managers among the important competencies investigated. The results also indicated that the component of programming techniques was the most important component of competencies. On the other hand, organizational culture/professional ethic component was the least important component of the competencies required for middle-level managers among the important competencies investigated. The results also indicated that the component of sports foundation is the most important component of competencies. Meanwhile, organizational culture/professional ethic is the least important component of the competencies required for lower-level manager. The nine components of competencies derived in this study constitute a solid

basis for the scope of knowledge and performance needed by sport managers in Iran. They provide foundation for design of curriculum and the managers' evaluation and provide pattern for succession planning and selecting the managers for future. However, they provide beginning information for knowledge base.

The finding of this paper is in line with the finding of Lin (1998), in this study examined the competencies needed for the collegiate directors and found that the top competencies were those related with health and safety. According to Katz (1974), decision making becomes important when moving toward higher levels of management. Establishing competencies in both the technical and human factors is crucial for logical decision making and broad-scale action. The research conducted by Barcelona (2001), this study that revealed for full time administrator (top and middle level of managers) working with campus recreational sport programs, sport programming and business procedures was rated more importantly compared to the other groups while the theory and foundations factors was rated as less important. The result of study conducted by Chen (2004), was show that. For top, middle level managers in sport agencies more emphasis competencies on communication and sport event management and sport foundation competencies reported for lower level managers. The results of two studies that above mentioned are similar with the result of the current study so, it could because of the similarity of the contexts of three these studies.

On the other hand, the results is somehow different with the results of the study done by Kim (1997), the result showed that top level managers rated more competencies to their work than did mid-level or entry level managers. Budgeting and programming competencies were shown to have the most difference opinion between managers of different levels as the top level managers emphasized these competencies, while entry level emphasized fair treatment of clients. And also Jamieson (1987), in her research found that top level managers were concerned with budgeting and staff management while entry level were more concerned client interaction. The reason of such difference could be due to the differences in population, culture, policy and guideline in organization between these two studies with current study.

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