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Assessment of Educational Needs in Iranian Sports Organizations Based on the ISO 10015 Standard

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ABSTRACT

The aim of this study was to evaluate the needs assessment component of service education programs for the managers and staff at the Department of Youth and Sports based on the ISO 10015 standard. The research method was a descriptive survey conducted as a case study. The statistical population consisted of all managers and staff, consisting a total of 120 of the Esfahan Province General Directorate of Youth and Sports facility. Selection was made by random sampling. The statistical total size was 92, determined by application of the Krejcie & Morgan table, and questionnaires were distributed accordingly. 88 of these questionnaires were returned and then were used for statistical assessment. Data collection was done using questionnaires for evaluating the component of needs assessment of the training programs based on the ISO 10015 standard and were designed by the researcher. Experts confirmed validity of the questionnaire; its reliability value on the Cronbach Alpha was 0.86. Results showed that the mean of responses of managers and staff to the aforementioned component was higher than average. Also, no significant difference was determined between the means of viewpoints of managers and staff in this aspect. It should be mentioned that demographic variables showed no difference between viewpoints of managers and staff.

KEY WORDS: *Educational Needs, ISO 10015 Standard, Education Assessment, Sport Organization.*

INTRODUCTION

Staffing is considered as the most important and most strategic resource in an organization. Nowadays, staffing is more important in an organization than capital, technology, machinery and raw materials. It is having professional and efficient staff that gives an organization a distinctive edge. Market competition among organizations particularly in terms of employment has led changes in staffing such that the individuals that constitute staff in a organization are now considered as superior strategic means and the most important factor in

achieving a competitive advantage (1). A well-equipped and technologically advanced organization would not succeed without the benefit of fully trained and skilled staff. Hence a key to success for many organizations is its emphasis on developing a skilled staff. For this reason, many organizations have designed and implemented service education programs.

Some researchers such as Rowls and Swick (2000) have considered the terms of service education and education team training as synonymous and maintain the view that service education constitutes the set of all activities

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designed to improve, expand and renew the skills, knowledge and abilities of an educational team (2).

Nowadays there is increasing development of communication and exchange of information on a very broad level that is transforming the social role of individuals such that people are required to acquire knowledge throughout their life. Hence, Yamani, Hasanzadeh Barani Kord, and Khorasani (2012) notes the following reasons for which an organization needs to provide training: 1) to utilize equipment, processes and implement new policies; 2) to eradicate poor performance among staff; 3) to resolve shortcomings in generic and fundamental skills; 4) to introduce new staff; 5) to promote and upgrade staff; 6) to change outlook among staff members; and 7) to meet staff requirements (3). Based on these goals, education is one of the most important management tools to coordinate and align staff with the goals of an organization: as well as to increase job satisfaction and to improve staff morale; to reduce incidence of injuries at work; to update knowledge and power among staff and to develop an enhanced spirit of cooperation among staff in an organization. Given the importance of education in the restoration and improvement of staff as the most important and integral element of any organization, managers must always have done the necessary work that supports education.

However, it is noteworthy that education and training courses alone will not help an organization to achieve its goals. Education should be established according to scientific principles and methods so that results meet existing needs. This subject is important because it is crucial for both governmental and other enterprises and organizations that rely on effective staff training programs as such this. Therefore, in order for agencies and organizations to provide an effective service, they should follow effective assessment models. One of the best strategies to maintain staff in an organization is to provide suitable and quality training programs for its members. Despite importance of quality in staff training and the need to ensure the quality of such training, some reports have suggested that staff training often faces serious issues and challenges in terms of quality (4).

Conversely, Holton and Swanson (2011) have argued that modern organizations and companies have acknowledge that what they spend on staff education will be reflected in organizational operations and achievements and that the benefits and effectiveness of such education is best realized when it is linked to good management practice. The research claims that without good quality management is needed to facilitate efficient education and only then will the desired goals of an organization be met; otherwise education would simply be a waste of staff resources (5).

There are several standards and tools that have been established in order to ensure quality of staff education and improvement; examples are ISO 9000, EFQM or some sort of Total Quality Management (TQM). Several governments are using all the three of the aforementioned quality tools and using the results in combination. Some feel that these standards are adequate, but others have mentioned that they are too bureaucratic or related to industrial activities and so inappropriate for special education processes (6). The important thing is that education should be used at the same time to help resolve the problems of an organization and to improve staff performance. And we should not just be worried about the form and quantity of education. Good quality education will always be effective and useful, so it is necessary to create a new model of performance-based education with an emphasis on training programs so that the staff is properly trained and education benefits are guaranteed (7). According to several findings, the standardizing model of education based on ISO 10015 can be effective in facilitating serving organizations, agencies and departments.

ISO 10015 helps organizations to link assessment and training to an organization's performance objectives. This approach provides ongoing feedback from education provision in terms of investment in staff, competence and improved efficiency (8). The role of this standard is to provide guidance to assist an organization to identify and analyze its requirements, design, plan and to evaluate the results of education, monitor and improve the process of staff training that emphasizes continuous improvement of an organization's

activities, and plans to help organizations by providing recommendations for increased efficiency and to make training more effective. The ISO 10015 standard provides an ideal training process through organizations to design a process-oriented education system, one with efficiency as its distinguishing feature (9). Overall, ISO 10015 is used as a quality management tool to identify operational requirements at each level of education and serves as a quality assurance standard for education that guarantees effectiveness of the systems and training programs of an organization.

Based on the ISO 9000 standard, educational stages and processes of service education courses include: educational need assessment, design and planning, implementation of education, results assessment and inspection on improvement of the education process. Jen-Chia, Tseng-Chang, and Chen (2012) states that the main focus of education managers usually designing, planning and implementing education so they educational need assessment and the results of education provision is often neglected (10).

The first step in planning a training course is to analyze needs. In other words, needs assessment should be done in order to identify gaps in learner performance, a clear understanding of learners' current status and decisions on learning resources and methods that would serve the goals of an organization (11). However, education administrators often spend very little time on training needs assessment. Among many educational programs, only 6% had been assessed regarding training needs (12). It is evident that training needs are the main intake of an education system and are considered as the base of planning, performing and assessing a system's activities.

In fact, training needs assessment aims to achieve information on main and obvious duties necessary for work; knowledge, skills and the necessary decisions to perform those duties. So it can be said that assessment is actually a data collection tool that promote educational activities if applied properly. Based on the ISO 10015 standard, the education process should implement only after a needs assessment has been done based on proper records of the related

issues. Based on this standard, organizations should determine the level of competency required for any job that affects the quality of its products or services, evaluates competency among the personnel that do the job and to provide plans to resolve possible incompetence. Determining training needs should be based on an assessment of the current findings and expected needs of an organization in relation to competence of the existing staff. As stated before, correct determination of educational needs can guarantee the success of a program. Many researchers have emphasized this subject. For example; Brown (2002) suggests that a staff audit be done to realize the educational needs and educational strategies and believes that education assessment is the key step for education and its outcomes (13). Furthermore, Froughi Abari, Nadi, and Ebrahimpour (2008) acknowledges that one factors affecting quality improvement and effectiveness of staff service education is in accordance with training courses that meet the needs of learners (14). Saner and Yiu (2003) conducted research and concluded that the ISO 10015 standard provided a particular guaranteed quality management tool that links up the educational and administrative needs of an organization (6). Research cited in Haslinda and Mahyuddin (2009) demonstrates that training needs assessment and compliance of programs with jobs was successful in generating new ideas from training programs and meeting the needs of staff (15).

The subject of service education, in its many aspects has been given much attention however most studies have reported a shortfall in consideration of education needs assessment and highlighted contradictions between the training needs assessment and the existing standards in organizations. This subject has been widely discussed in the studies of Mosavi Nasab (2010) and Hekmat sharaf (2011) (16, 17). However, in today's competitive world in which human resources are considered an organizations' superior strategic weapon, it is the work of expert and trained staff that facilitate a competitive advantage in an organization. Therefore we see huge investments from private and government organizations in this sector. Among them, sports organizations are not exempt from this rule and each year they spend part of their budget on

education. Based on our observations, for many years training programs have been delivered to staff in sports organizations. But the question is; how successful is this education and is it able to compensate and return the cost to an organization? It is noteworthy that if the education process is designed and implemented according to appropriate standards and models, then such education is likely to be successful. The main purpose of this study was to examine the needs assessment of service education programs based on the ISO standard 10015 in sports organizations. The basic question addressed in this study was as follows: To what extent does the needs assessment process of service education programs in the Esfahan Province General Directorate of Youth and Sports (as a case study) correspond with requirements of the ISO 10015 standard. The average opinion among respondents regarding needs assessment regarding the demographic variables was also examined.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The method of the present study was descriptive – survey and data were collected by field questionnaires.

Participants. The statistical population consists of 120 managers and staff of Esfahan Province General Directorate of Youth and Sport that had passed service education training courses at least once. The sample size was determined by application of the Krejcie and Morgan (1970) table (18). Based on this table, for a community sample of 120 subjects, 92 subjects should be considered. Therefore, 92 were chosen as the sample size and questionnaires were distributed accordingly. But given that a percentage of the distributed questionnaires are not usually returned, of the total 92 questionnaires distributed, 88 questionnaires were returned that was considered as acceptable and thus set as the baseline (8.31% of managers in

and 2.60% of staff). The random sampling method was used in this study.

Tools. The data collection tool for this study was a needs assessment questionnaire based on the ISO 10015 standard education containing 7 sections of determining training needs, determining the requirements related to competence, reviewing competence, determining the shortcomings related to competence, identifying the solutions to overcome the shortcomings related to competence and to determine the specifications related to educational needs. This questionnaire was made up of five-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree) based on the needs assessment requirements of the ISO 10015 Standard. Reliability of the questionnaire was confirmed by experts. The Cronbach's Alpha was used to determine reliability of the test. Its value for the total questionnaire was determined as 0.86.

Statistical Analysis. Normality assumption was analyzed using Kolmogorov-Smirnov, and one-sample t-test and two-sample t-test and ANOVA were used to examine the hypothesis of the study. Significance levels were accepted at $p < 0.05$. All statistical analyses were performed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) software.

RESULTS

Table1 shows that results of the t-test results had an average (33.3) which is higher than the average level (3) with significance level of $p < 0.05$ indicating that the null hypothesis was rejected and based on International ISO 10015 Standard, the average of needs assessment dimension of service educations was not equal to 3, and we can say that based on ISO standard, the dimension of staff service education needs assessment programs was higher than average.

Table 1. Results of one sample t-test for the components of the education needs assessment based on the ISO 10015 Standard

Components	Mean	SD	t	p
Determining educational needs	3.562	0.73	7.225	0.001
Determining requirements related to competence	3.267	0.707	3.539	0.001
Reviewing competence	3.272	1.047	2.442	0.017
Determining the shortcomings related to competence	3.17	0.925	1.729	0.087
Identifying the solutions to overcome the shortcomings related to competence	3.34	0.969	3.299	0.001
Determining the specification related to educational needs	3.272	0.893	2.863	0.005
Total components related to educational needs	3.33	0.63	4.921	0.001

The assumption of homogeneity of variance regarding staff opinions on the component of educational needs was accepted on the basis of demographic variables. Also, Table 2, shows that based on the test results of equality of averages, the t-test significance level was greater

than 0.05. Thus, based on the international ISO 10015 Standard, the average of needs assessment dimension of service education programs was not different according to the demographic variables (gender, marital status, place of employment and the nature of employment).

Table 2. Results of independent t-test to compare means of educational needs in terms of demographic variables

	Number	Mean	SD	t	p
Woman	35	3.24	0.548	-0.648	0.519
Man	53	3.25	0.554		
Married	12	3.17	0.46	0.032	0.947
Single	76	3.26	0.56		
Training Unit	11	3.24	0.54	-0.035	0.972
Other units	77	3.25	0.55		
Managerial	28	3.507	0.106	1.818	0.073
Official	60	3.248	0.0838		

The results of Table 3 show the variance analyzing examination of the needs assessment component considering the variables of age, education, work experience and type of employment. Given that significance level of the F-test was greater than 0.05, the null hypothesis of equality

between the averages of several populations was accepted. So based on the international ISO 10015 Standard in terms of age, education, work experience, type of employment and hours spent on education, the average of service education needs assessment component showed no difference.

Table 3. Results of variance analyzing examination of needs assessment with regard to the demographic variables

variable	change resources	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Squares	F	p
Age	between the groups	1.561	6	0.260	0.638	0.7
	within the groups	33.034	81	0.408		
education	between the groups	1.838	3	0.613	1.571	0.202
	within the groups	32.765	84	0.390		
work experience	between the groups	2.503	6	0.417	1.053	0.398
	within the groups	32.091	81	0.396		
type of employment	between the groups	0.997	3	0.332	0.831	0.481
	within the groups	33.598	84	0.400		
spent educational hours	between the groups	0.464	3	0.155	0.381	0.767
	within the groups	34.130	84	0.406		

DISCUSSION

The purpose of this study was to analyze service education programs needs assessment based on the ISO 10015 Standard in sports organizations in Iran. Results of this study showed that the service education programs conformed to ISO standard 10015 more than average on the dimension of needs assessment.

These findings are close to those reported in Haslinda and Mahyuddin (2009) (15).

But the results of this study were inconsistent with those reported in Mosavi Nasab (2010) and Hekmat Sharaf (2011) (16, 17). Strategic approach to the subject of education, assessment of quantitative and qualitative goals, needs assessment commensurate with career, the employed, needs assessment commensurate with

new technologies and conformation of educational needs with the organization's goals and career goals, educational needs assessment based on the current and anticipated needs of the discussed components in the context of service education needs assessment.

The findings of the second research question also showed no significant difference in any dimension. That is, among participants in the study, none of the demographic factors influenced people's perspective. Among the results of the performed research, results of this study were consistent with those reported in Froughi Abari, Nadi, and Ebrahimpour (2008), but were not consistent with the results reported in Ramachandran (2010); because in in that it was stated that the experience and qualifications of staff were the determining and effective factors on educational programs (14, 19).

CONCLUSION

In general, it can be stated that the main task in developing a training program is to identify educational needs, and to justify its cost and benefit for an organization. Without a clear understanding of the needs, any training efforts will be only randomly useful at best, and possibly useless. Training courses and training programs are only successful when the educational needs are carefully considered and training programs are provided to meet those needs. As noted earlier, coordinating and aligning staff with the goals of an organization; reducing accidents and work injuries and updating the knowledge and abilities of the staff are the most important purposes of an organization in relation to providing training

courses. For this reason, propriety of training programs with the staff profession can improve the performance and effectiveness among staff in an organization and serve to strengthen competence. Training should empower an organization to resolve any problems it may have. This could be the best solution if the organization problems are arising from the staff incompetence or from discrepancy between staff skill levels and the identified expectations from the jobs. When an organization invests in training its staff, it ensures the staff that it respects the value of their work. Service education is an investment, and the more it is consistent with needs of its staff and the goals of the organization then the greater impact on its staff.

APPLICABLE REMARKS

- Using of the ISO 10015 standard as a tool for ensuring the quality of training programs.
- ISO 10015 offers a clear roadmap in the training departments to guide management to focus on the needs of their staffs and meet their needs by modifying the training programs.
- ISO 10015 helps organizations to associate training and evaluation to the organizations' performance goals and use it as a strategic tool to improve and meet the educational needs of the organizations' staff.

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