

## Prioritization of Core Competencies for Appointment of Operational Sport Managers in Iranian Ministry of Youth and Sports

Received: 2021-04-15

Accepted: 2021-07-13

Vol. 2, No.1. Winter. 2021, 33-40

Fahimeh Momenifar<sup>1</sup>  
Amin Raji<sup>2\*</sup>  
Hamid Ghasemi<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Assistant Professor of Sport Management, Payame Noor University, Tehran, Iran.

<sup>2</sup>Assistant Professor of Sport Management, Payame Noor University, Tehran, Iran.

<sup>3</sup>Associate Professor of Sport Management, Payame Noor University, Tehran, Iran.

\*Correspondence:

Amin Raji Assistant Professor of Sport Management, Payame Noor University, Tehran, Iran

Email: [amin.raji91@gmail.com](mailto:amin.raji91@gmail.com)

Orcid: [0000-0001-8701-8104](https://orcid.org/0000-0001-8701-8104)

### Abstract

**Purpose:** The aim of the present study was to analyze and prioritize core competencies for appointment of operational sport managers in Iranian ministry of youth and sports.

**Methods:** The main data collection tool was a researcher made questionnaire including competency components which was designed and edited by applying theoretical principles and frameworks. In order to validate this questionnaire, an expert's panel composed of management professors was applied. For testing its reliability, 15 questionnaires were completed and the Cronbach's alpha was calculated to be 0.95 which was an appropriate reliability coefficient for this study. Statistical population of this study was composed of all sport management professors in universities, chairman of the federations and also elected leaders and experts of the ministry of youth and sports (N=450). Due to the large population of the study, the random sampling method was used (n=209). Data analysis was done by descriptive and inferential statistics, factor analysis and Friedman's ranking in LISREL and SPSS software.

**Results:** The results revealed the approval of 57 competency indications in 11 components and that personal component and having motivation ranked above other components.

**Conclusion:** According to the identified indicators, it is recommended that the criteria used in appointing executive sport managers in Iranian Ministry of Youth and Sports to good and proper rearing was done at this level.

**Keyword:** competency, operational managers, appointment.

## Introduction

Managers can play an important role in guiding and leading organizations regarding their duties and authority. Competence is one of the elements that has been introduced recently to the world of management. Firstly, it was defined by MC Celland (1973) as employee's element of success and their yardstick to be selected. Competence consists of personal and organizational traits such as skill, ability and knowledge by means of which a person can succeed in fulfilling his duties (Bucur, 2013). Competence should be considered in all levels, what's more is that it had better be started from superior ranks; it means that in order to meet organizational targets, competent and knowledgeable people should be appointed for top levels. A competent manager should pose managerial knowledge as well as desirable experiences to be applied. Also organizations related to physical training deal with people of all ages. Therefore, it ought to be able to train huge number of people and encourage them to exercise. Moreover, such organizations should make people ready for international competitions. In order to achieve this, there should be measurable criteria for selecting competent people. In order not to waste energy and assets, primary options should be regarded (Bazyari & Amirtash, 2006). Currently, in Iran, managers are appointed based on their experience and their academic education and unfortunately their competence as a criterion is almost overlooked.

Studies show that competence is also ignored in choosing managerial jobs. In this regard, Bazyari and amirtash(2006) came to the conclusion that there is no standard to appoint superior managers. Geravand (1999) expressed in his research that 46% of educational managers were appointed not based on regulations. In order to avoid this situation, we can define competence criteria by which a fundamental revolution can be possible. Goudarzi

(2002) stated that good temper, respect and grace, decision making skills and political understanding should be primary standards in selecting physical education managers. Vilkinos(2000) referred to competence in doing duties, role, activities, skills and personal traits as elements important to appoint managers. Dulewicz(2003) identified 15 factors of competence in emotional, managerial and thinking competence. Sheikh (2010) stated managerial capabilities in skills, personal traits, knowledge and values applying 12 indications and 41 indices. Zapiatis (2010) pointed out superior managers ought to have technical, conceptual, interpersonal, official and managerial competence. Bonyadi (2012) reported police force manager's competence should have 713 code, 84 concepts and 4 general entities which are personal, interpersonal, and organizational and insight competence according to Imam Khomeini and our supreme leader's perspectives. Shiri (2012) presented in addition to competence, duty, social and cognitive competence with 11 indications and 66 indices from which, evaluation, activity management, honesty and technical knowledge are of utmost importance. Bucure (2013) concluded that managerial competence is closely related to their activities prioritizing cooperation, efficiency, strategic thinking, leadership, motivation and education.

Oldnat (2014) believed leadership competence should have mentorship, innovation and guidance. Management induction is so important that different elements such as experience and academic education as well as competence factors have been mentioned in chapter 8 of managerial national service rules which are mandatory. If we take competence into account for selecting operational manager in the ministry of youth and sports, we will pave the way for justice and meritocracy. In this paper, Islamic thoughts including Koran, the prophet's sayings and Imam's narrations are merged with scientific models of

choosing competent managers.

Studying researches done related to competency in and out of the country reveals that by regarding needs and type of activity and the nature of organization, effective environmental variables, researcher's point of view, each researcher has considered one aspect of competency in such a way that they cannot be classified in a single category. The main aim of the present study was to prioritize core competencies for appointment of operational sport managers in Iranian ministry of youth and sports. The main specific goals of this study are as follows:

1. To identify competency components of executive managers;
2. To prioritize competency components of executive managers;

In addition to the study of theoretical concepts, principles, history, and all types of competencies required for managers in general, this study tries to examine executive managers' competencies in details. In order to carry out this task, 57 competency components in 11 competency clusters were identified and according to their importance, a field research was performed.

### Materials and Methods

This research is a descriptive-survey research and based on target based category of researches, it is a developmental research. The statistical sample were 450 people of physical training board in universities, physical training executives in federations and knowledgeable managers of the ministry of youth

and sports. Sampling was random – classified and 209 people were selected based on Morgan's table. For data collection, some questionnaires were presented to experts. For the narrative report, a first round factor analysis has been applied. The results showed 57 case of competence; 24 questions for being beyond competent, 12 questions for duty competence, 6 questions for cognitive competence and 14 ones for social competence. Validity of the questionnaire has been approved by 15 experts and its consistency has been tested by 30 people and the result was 0.95. For data analysis, interpretive as well as descriptive indices were applied. For interpretive data analysis, SPSS, KMO test and factor analysis have been used appropriately. Using Lisrel and SPSS software, indices prioritization was done. In order to confirm the model, Factor-analysis was used. To answer the research questions, Friedman's rank test was applied after determining competency components.

### Results

Descriptive results showed that the average age for 209 participants is 37.13. Among the participants (15.13%) have B.A.s, 66 people have M.A.s (31.57%) and 111 people have ph.ds (53.11%).

After collecting data from the questionnaires and analyzing them by related software, required model competencies for appointing operational managers were determined. The weight of indices concerning components was obtained by dividing findings from expert's opinions as illustrated in Table 1.

**Table1. Prioritization of operational manager's competencies**

| Cluster                                     | competency component  | Priority | Ranking |
|---|---|----------|---------|
| Belief competencies                         | 1.adherence and compliance with Islamic values                        | 48       | 25.82   |
|   | 2. bound to carry out imperatives and Leaving forbidden affairs       | 42       | 26.89   |
| Moral competencies                          | 1. Having Good behavior   | 25       | 29.70   |
|   | 2. Having faith in God  | 6        | 34.20   |
|   | 3. Being humble   | 46       | 26.42   |
|   | 4. Devotion   | 52       | 24.87   |
|   | 5. Tendency toward justice  | 13       | 32.22   |
|   | 6. Honesty  | 6        | 34.20   |
| Personal competencies                       | 1. Self-awareness   | 8        | 33.87   |
|   | 2. Self-confidence  | 9        | 33.47   |
|   | 3. Time management  | 15       | 31.66   |
|   | 4. Having motivation  | 1        | 37.26   |
| Entrepreneurship competencies               | 1. Having interests in creativity and innovation                      | 27       | 29.43   |
|   | 2. Having courage to take risk  | 55       | 21.10   |
|   | 3. Having mental stability  | 21       | 30.17   |
|   | 4. Strategic thinking   | 47       | 26.04   |
|   | 5. Understanding Organizational Culture                               | 17       | 30.73   |
| Competencies of strengthening mental health | 1. Trying to develop and improve Counseling centers                   | 54       | 23.02   |
|   | 2. Creating opportunities for sports activities                       | 34       | 28.37   |
|   | 3. Cooperation based on trust between staff                           | 12       | 32.44   |
|   | 4. Having skills to make mental tranquility in workplace              | 10       | 33.44   |
|   | 5. Making a healthy field for growth                                  | 14       | 32.07   |
| Professional competencies                   | 1. Knowledge of sport management                                      | 18       | 30.52   |
|   | 2.Having knowledge about applying information technology              | 31       | 28.53   |
|   | 3. Having knowledge about sport legal issues                          | 40       | 26.96   |
|   | 4. Having knowledge about handling a meeting                          | 38       | 27.15   |
|   | 5. Being aware of policies and organizational guidelines              | 36       | 28.20   |
| Behavioral competencies                     | 1. Independency in thinking and action                                | 49       | 25.61   |
|   | 2. Being hard working   | 2        | 37.14   |
|   | 3. Having courage and being decisive                                  | 19       | 30.50   |
|   | 4. Organizational citizenship behavior                                | 20       | 30.21   |
|   | 5. Social accountability and responsibility                           | 3        | 34.69   |
|   | 6. Being law-oriented   | 4        | 34.34   |
|   | 7.Having flexibility  | 45       | 26.52   |
| Political and social competencies           | 1. Having political insight and analyzing Political environment       | 57       | 17.32   |
|   | 2. Managing political flows influencing the unit                      | 56       | 17.99   |
| Cultural and Communication competencies     | 1. Positive imaging unit performance                                  | 41       | 26.92   |
|   | 2. Having influence upon others                                       | 22       | 30.11   |
|   | 3. Having skills of effective listening, understanding and responding | 5        | 34.33   |
|   | 4. Having skills of negotiation and persuasion                        | 23       | 29.92   |
|   | 5. Being able to trust-making   | 7        | 33.94   |
|   | 6. Having empathy and understanding toward others                     | 26       | 29.60   |
|   | 7. Understanding and managing cultural differences                    | 50       | 25.28   |
| Leadership                                  | 1. Anticipation and foresight   | 32       | 28.44   |

|   |  |                                     |       |
|---|--|-------------------------------------|-------|
| competencies                              | 2. Conflict management                       | 53                                  | 23.74 |
|   | 3. Building teams and team leadership        | 33                                  | 28.39 |
|   | 4. Change leadership                         | 51                                  | 25.16 |
|   | 5. Stress management                         | 29                                  | 29.16 |
|   | 6. Effective use of power                    | 16                                  | 31.50 |
|   | 7. Applying contingency theory of leadership | 39                                  | 27.14 |
|   | Managerial competencies                      | 1. Skills of targeting and planning | 30    |
| 2. Being able to organize                 |  | 37                                  | 28.05 |
| 3. Training and improvement               |  | 28                                  | 29.27 |
| 4. Having sport management experience     |  | 35                                  | 28.22 |
| 5. Ability to develop a good strategy     |  | 44                                  | 26.75 |
| 6. Ability to delineate favorable outlook |  | 43                                  | 26.80 |
| 7. Supervisory Skills                     |  | 11                                  | 32.78 |

## Discussion

The purpose of this paper is to prioritize core competencies for the appointment of executive sport managers in Iranian ministry of youth and sports.

Meritocracy has deep roots in Islam and has been merged with our religion. Although competence has been widely discussed in human resource management, such models have been edited from a particular and limited point of view. Competence has not been taken in to account in Iran. Research indicates that success in organizations is highly dependent on executive managers' competence in implementation of decisions (Bonyan, 2014). Physical training organizations play a major role in physical training expansion and development. Indulgence in executive manager's expertise, experience, efficiency and capabilities end in inappropriate decisions, ineffective activities and weakening or ending physical training fields. Personal element includes self-awareness, confidence, time management and having motivation. These are fundamental parts of human personality. A manager who relies on his power and awareness, puts only himself in charge of his own activities and finds himself confident because he depends on diligence, will power and being active and hopes to progress. Strengthening mental health includes trying to develop and improve counseling

centers, making opportunities for sports activities and cooperation based on trust among staff, having skills to make mental tranquility in workplace and making a healthy field for growth. If improving mental hygiene is paid attention to, employees can feel socially secure. Moreover, if a manager is capable of keeping a workplace energetic and paves the way for physical training activities, he helps improve the mental hygiene (Ey, 2006). Entrepreneurship includes having interests in creativity and innovation, having courage to take risk, having mental stability, Strategic thinking and finally understanding organizational culture. Nowadays, the birth and death of organizations depend on the founder's insight and abilities. Growth and survival of organizations is also dependent on the ability and innovation of human resources (Azizi, 2010). Entrepreneurs as managers in the ministry of youth and sports can comprehend economic opportunities better; therefore, they can devote their available supplies to innovation and survival. As a result, entrepreneurship should become dominant in the ministry of youth and sports. Moral competencies include devotion, honesty, good behavior, humbleness, tendency toward justice, and having faith in God. Faith in God and humbleness are among desirable traits of managers. In Anfal, verse 2, it is stated, "Believers are God fearing and as reading Koran verses they have more faith and trust in God." Our prophet Mohammad said, "To be the

strongest, rely in God." Social-political indication consists of having political insight and analyzing political environment and managing political flows influencing the unit. Social responsibilities should be based on ethics rooted in social responsibilities; beneficial activities should be done and harmful ones ought to be avoided (Sheykh, 2010). Cultural-communicational indication expresses the relation of a manager with his employees and their effort to meet his aims. Negotiability is a factor that makes a manager a desirable person in a way that others get encouraged to consult with a manager. The larger the scope a manager has, the more power he must have over his negotiability. Behavioral indication includes independency in thinking and action, being hardworking, having courage and decisiveness in making decision, organizational citizenship behavior, Social accountability and responsibility, being law-oriented and having flexibility diligence. Managers with behavioral competence should lead genuinely and flexibly. They should keep their mental and practical independence but in a way that it does not end in limited and entangled relations. In order to succeed in fulfilling aims, managers ought to be diligent. Determinism is the other interesting trait of managers that is referred in Al-e-Emran, verse 159. Professional indication includes having the knowledge of sport management, applying information technology, sport legal issues, handling a meeting and being aware of policies and organizational guidelines. Executive managers in the ministry of youth and sports should pay attention to expanding official relations within all parts of an organization. Managerial indication includes skills of targeting and planning, being able to organize, training and improvement, having sport management experience, ability to develop good strategies, Ability to delineate favorable outlook and supervisory. Executive managers of the ministry of youth and sports should reach a comprehensive solution

to evaluate their organizations. Also, they should make sure the implementing effective strategies to improve physical training in the country. If executive managers in the ministry of youth and sports have proper experience and well-structured knowledge, they can be of huge influence in physical training progress (Salgughi, 2007). Setting aims means prudence, knowing how to make a desirable vision, aim setting skills and planning and implementing useful strategies. Long-term prudence is important in identifying modern events and making fundamental strategies (Carson, 2000). Nowadays, relations and interactions become complicated, so change in the workplace atmosphere and prudence are remarkable in physical training organizations. They can also administer strategies in their organizations and supervise on organization activities (Amini, 2009). Vision is the target of that organization, its destination and the key to management. Managers should be familiar with handling power to advance reaching aims (Shariati & Arabiyon, 2007). Management competence means applying suitable mechanism to destroy inapplicable and nonfunctional controversy and also using functional and applicable controversy in organizations. Being prognostic is a basic need for operational managers by which they can improve physical training in Iran through applying facilities. Hence, executive managers of the ministry of youth and sports should be prognostic to judge the vision and evolution wisely. Empowering and talent development means applying human resources and their energy desirably, so competence settlement in the ministry of youth and sports needs cultural preparation and some activities to be done.

## Conclusion

In this regard, it is suggested that having motivation, being hardworking, social accountability and responsibility, being law-oriented,

having skills of effective listening, understanding and responding, are the criteria of executive manager's induction through which we can implement meritocracy in the ministry youth and sports. We should change the criteria from considering the managers' experience in the past to considering their competence today. If a database existed for competent managers in the ministry of youth and sports, the gap of identifying and employing competent managers would be filled. Regarding the importance of this issue, internal evaluation can be done in organizations to improve executive managers in the ministry of youth and sports.

## References

1. Amini, M. (2009). Strategy formulation method comprehensive framework strategy, *Journal of Business Administration* 5(2), 17-32.
2. Azizi, B. (2010). Determining power sources Physical Education Organization and its relation to the level of preparedness and employee satisfaction. *Journal of Sport Management* 6(3), 119-133.
3. Bazyari, A., & Amirtash, A.M. (2006). Appointment of directors with terms of meritocracy in Physical Education Organization. *Journal of Motor and Sport Science*, 7(2), 1-10.
4. Bonyadi- Naini, A. (2012). Designing of the competence's pattern of managers and NAJA commanders from the perspective of Imam Khomeini (rah) and Supreme Leader journal of Supervision and inspection 7(19), 7-19.
5. Bonyan, A. (2014). The Different Legal Viewpoints Between Male and Female Sport Coaches in the Sport Events. *Journal of Applied Sport Management* 8(4), 79-90.
6. Bucur, I. (2013). Managerial core competencies as predictors of managerial performance, on different levels of management, *Journal of Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 72, 365-369.
7. Carson, D., & Gilmore, A. (2000). SME marketing management competencies, *International Business Review*, 9(3), 363-382.
8. Dulewicz, F., Chamopoulou, P., & Mentzas, G. (2003). A Semantic web architecture for integrating competence management and learning paths, *Journal of Knowledge Management*, 12(6), 121-136.
9. Ey, P. (2006). A track-by-track approach to performance competence Modeling, a dissertation to faculty of the college of business administration of Touro University International in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of philosophy, 5-10.
10. Geravand, O. (1999). Designing a model for investigation and research on the effectiveness of management in education, *Journal of management culture*, 11, 75-86.
11. Goudarzi, M. (2002). Design and explain patterns of triple managerial skills of PEO in Physical Education Organization, PhD thesis, Tarbiyat Modares University.
12. McClelland, D.C. (1973). Testing for competence rather than for intelligence, *American Journal of Psychology*, 28(1), 1-14.
13. Oldnat, K.M. (2014). Leadership competencies profiles and managerial effectiveness in Greece. *Procedia Economics and Finance*, 9, 380-390.
14. Salgughi, S. M. (2007). Principles of supervision. Publications Cultural Services Kerman, 40-41.
15. Shariati, M.T., & Arabiyon, A. (2007). Method of selection and appointment of directors of research units (With emphasis on Jihad), *Research and construction in agriculture and horticulture* (76), 185-196.

16. Sheykh, E. (2010). Iranian Islamic model management capabilities in the public sector, PhD thesis, Allameh Tabatabai University.
17. Shiri, A. (2012). A prioritization of competency components of operational managers from management experts' view a case study, Tehran, Iran, International business research, 5, 203-209.
18. Vilkenos, T. (2000). Changing Competences of public managers: tensions in commitment, The Public Sector Management, 13, 333-341.
19. Zopiatis, A. (2010). Is it art or science? Chefs competencies for success, International journal of hospitality management, 29, 459-467.