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Modelling succession planning in health-oriented sports in Iran

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Abstract---Background: organizational succession planning as a voluntary process to ensure continued leadership in key positions, maintain and develop spiritual capital and knowledge for the future, and encourage individuals to develop, stems from the overall human resource planning strategy. The concept of succession planning has entered the realm of organization and management for many years; In Iran, this concept is developed gradually and in line with the promotion of strategic planning models and the entry of strategic consultants into organizations, the emergence of succession planning and organizational mission, and the limited skilled workforces as well as the specialized nature of jobs. Therefore purpose of this study was to modelling succession in health-oriented sports in Iran through the grounded theory. Methods: This was qualitative research with the systematic grounded theory approach. The interviewees were selected by the purposive sampling method, while theoretical sampling was performed to identify the number of interviewees and the research path. Data were obtained through several interviews with health-oriented sports informants. After conducting 12 in-depth

unstructured interviews, theoretical saturation was achieved. An open, axial, and selective coding overlap process was used to analyse the data. Results: It was found that succession in health-oriented sports is influenced by causal conditions (talent resources; efficient promotion system; human resources management; organizational support of individuals' efforts), contextual conditions (organizational structure, culture, and climate; management stability; resistance to change) and intervening conditions (environmental environment; social factors; international environment; policy-making). Conclusions: It was also discovered that several strategies including familiarity, participation, organizational learning, organizational trust, foresight, and systematic thinking may result in positive outcomes both at the individual (e.g., personal development, motivation, and satisfaction) and organizational level (e.g., organizational development, resources conservation, and organizational justice).

Keywords---health, succession, human resources management, sports.

Introduction

The expansion of leisure time and advanced technologies has led to the "motor poverty" phenomenon, with intense n physical, psychological, and social effects. In recent decades, governments and policymakers advocate sports combat a wide range of these problems¹ since participation in sports improves both health and social well-being. Exercise also reduces the risk of disease by strengthening the general health of the community.² It is also an important component of a healthy lifestyle and, in addition to physical effects, it produces advantageous social and psychological consequences.³ Finally, sports participation improves physical fitness, well-being, and health.⁴ Therefore, it is not surprising that the policies of developed and under-development countries tend to promote sports. For example, the United Kingdom general policies try to increase sports participation since its positive effects are evident in all angles.⁵

An increase in the severity and share of motor poverty is predicted in the future. Giving importance to health-promoting behaviors is a priority because such behaviors will help reduce health care costs by their positive potential impacts on health promotion and life quality.⁶ Immobility / hyperkinesia is the main risk factor for chronic diseases including cancer, diabetes, cardiovascular disease, hypertension, obesity, and stroke. Thus, the lack of planning to optimize health promotion behaviors leads to the prevalence of chronic diseases.⁷

Given the role of health in the elimination of chronic diseases and reduction of immobility/hyperkinesia, various theories have been proposed about health-related behavior, including the "Biological Theory" for identifying factors affecting health on biological issues and heredity, and the "Life Path Theory" which attributes the health level to life events. According to the recent "Behavioral Health Theory", the individual is free to choose his health behaviors, but these choices are influenced by structural limitations.⁸

Structural conditions are made of various factors, including gender, age, ethnicity, marital status, place of residence, health management, and health system.⁹ Succession-oriented health management has become a strategic priority in health care organizations,¹⁰ because succession planning removes barriers to health advancement and matches existing talents with health-required talents, and therefore, it helps organizations that aim to develop health by addressing strategic and operational.¹¹

Organizational succession planning is the systematic process of determining critical plans in an organization, identifying and evaluating possible successors, and teaching them needed experiences and skills for achieving current and future organizational plans.¹² Therefore, new employees can be replaced with old ones who leave the organization for various reasons such as retirement, leaving the job, or even death.¹³ In addition, organizational succession planning as a voluntary process to ensure continued leadership in key positions, maintain and develop spiritual capital and knowledge for the future, and encourage individuals to develop, stems from the overall human resource planning strategy.¹⁴ Based on such a process, organizations ensure that important vacancies will be filled at the right time and with the right individuals.¹⁵

The concept of succession planning has entered the realm of organization and management for many years; In Iran, this concept is developed gradually and in line with the promotion of strategic planning models and the entry of strategic consultants into organizations, the emergence of succession planning and organizational mission, and the limited skilled workforces as well as the specialized nature of jobs.¹⁶

However, studies manifest a lack of succession planning or weak performance of developed plans in the Iran health system.¹¹ This condition seems to be affected by factors classified into facilitators and inhibitors. Performing succession planning needs to identify facilitator or weakening antecedents to facilitate or weaken it. Of course, these factors have already been mentioned outside of the health field. For example, Sabokroo¹⁷ analyzed the force field in succession planning in the national petrochemical industry, reported that succession planning is a function of various facilitators and deterrents. Lack of honesty in providing information, lack of mutual trust, and jealousy of colleagues, along with universal factors like lack of support from top managers, cost and benefit calculations, and employees' general apathy to develop succession planning are among the deterrents. Dehghanapour¹⁸ examined the pattern of succession planning in companies managed by the Ministry of Defense of the Islamic Republic of Iran. He concluded that in designing succession management, a person's interest may be a lower priority, and strengthening employees' perception of distributive justice and satisfaction with the promotion process is necessary for formally formulating the promotion process and succession. Employees' promotion and turnover according to a pre-defined program are not enough to create a job challenge perception (lack of job uniformity perception) for employees, and other components such as adapting the program to the organization strategy, performance appraisal management, and rewarding are essential to improve a job meaning and importance. Bordbar et al.¹⁹ after identifying components and selection patterns of meritocracy to optimize the

model of staff succession, discovered that education, organizational commitment, and positive attitude played a role in explaining succession. Ghasemi et al.²⁰ studied the challenges of establishing a succession plan in the Iranian administrative system. They reported that lack of senior management support, inconsistency of the succession plan with the organizational strategic plans, instability of management, redundant administrative formalities, traditional perspective, late efficiency, and lack of transparency in the implementation of the plan were among the challenges of establishing succession planning. They also concluded that expanding collective wisdom, management support, assigning a specific unit for successor management, transparency, and changing organizational culture helped overcome these difficulties. Rezaei and Nazari²¹ by examining succession and its challenges in the public sector found that most succession planning in the public sector of Iranian organizations is conceived informal, especially for management positions, and performing succession planning is failed in the whole body of government. They pointed that succession planning is sometimes attended only when senior management positions are vacant. Therefore, managers must intend planning to discover a suitable pattern for the implementation of succession at the organization level. In the study of Maleki Mahmoudabadi and Shadnoush²² about the constructive factors of modeling a successor organization, it was detected that the organizational size, institutional communication, strategic capabilities, dynamic interaction of jobs and environment, network communication, desire for succession, and working in successor organizations are building blocks of succession. Al-Sadat Nasbi et al.²⁴ in an attempt to identify the dimensions of succession and compiling the components of selecting managers in health care networks, spotted management training and skills, specific training and skills, training methods, and skills assessment methods as dimensions of succession planning. Studying the experiences and challenges of succession planning in Indian organizations, Pandey and Sharma²⁵ stated that succession planning had a major role key the market of talents and competitive environment, and directly affected organizational growth. They believed that the development of talents was a necessity for the development of the organization, and although there may be various methods of succession in different industries, the framework of all the succession methods was the same. Donner et al.²⁶ studied the management of organizational succession planning in the radiology department and showed that leadership transfer in radiology operations was often not a planned replacement process with the formal development of potential future leaders. However, to ensure the continued success of the new leadership, developing comprehensive sequencing programs that included a robust development program for potential leaders (including oversight, coaching, 360-degree feedback, assignments developments, job rotation, and formal training) was crucial. Anderson²⁷ studied the feminists' perspective on succession planning in the health organization and concluded that planning for an executive succession in health care executive positions could be an environmental feature that prevented women from achieving leadership positions. Paradoxical leadership, in the absence of the current situation, may be useful for health organizations. He also concluded that strengthening the succession mentality may provide more opportunities for women to reach higher organizational positions. Etemadian et al.²⁸ by examining factors affecting successful performance of succession in hospitals showed that management and leadership (support for managers, stability and maturity, and

rules and regulations), strategic planning (organizational vision and goals, succession planning, evaluating succession planning), organizational culture (effective mutual trust, communication and organizational transparency), organizational learning (development and implementation of successful training programs), staff management (transparency of job duties, talent management, staff participation and employee performance evaluation), patients' management (assessing patients' satisfaction and attending their needs and expectations in consecutive planning), resources management (resources commitment, flexible organizational structure, succession planning committee, and knowledge management) As well as process management (formulating, implementing, and evaluating robust successful planning processes) contribute to prosperous succession planning. By examining succession for college nurses, Tucker²⁹ observed that attending skills and talents of current leaders, and providing a coherent plan for covering needed skills significantly affected the succession process. Martini and Dewi³⁰ after examining the characteristics of successors in succession planning reported the positive significant effects of these characteristics on succession planning. By examining the founder-CEO relationship, LeCounte³¹ studied the role of succession for the success, growth, and profitability of family businesses and found that these firms rarely plan for succession.

A review of previous research discloses that succession planning, regardless of its performing context, is subject to different antecedents that have a reinforcing or debilitating effect. On the other hand, using a single version for succession planning cannot guarantee its success in different contexts due to its different influential factors in different contexts. On the one hand, no study was found about factors affecting succession planning in health-oriented sports in Iran. On the other hand, there is neither a coherent plan for succession in this context, nor as mentioned by Mehrtak et al.¹¹ these plans will be wisely implemented. Seemingly, the reason for inefficiency in performing developed succession plans is neglecting the symmetry between plans' components and specialized features of health-oriented sports. As long as the components of succession plans are not aligned with the performing-intended context, there can be no hope of successful implementation, and ultimately, damages will occur. Given the above and the fact that succession planning is an integral part of management not only in the field of health but also in other areas, in this study, a model for succession in the field of health-oriented sports in Iran will be presented.

Methodology

In this qualitative study, the grounded theory with a systematic approach was used as the operational method. The grounded theory was developed by Glasser and Strauss with the aim of theorizing data based on interpretive-structural foundations (Mohammadpour, 2013). The interviewees (key informants) were selected by purposive sampling, and theoretical sampling was used to identify the number of individuals and find the research path. Data were obtained through several interviews with health-oriented sports experts. After conducting 12 in-depth and unstructured interviews, theoretical saturation was achieved. But the interviews went on for up to 15 people to make sure of saturation. All interviewees were at least 35 years old and had experienced succession planning. Hence, they

could provide a better understanding and interpretation of these programs and the context underlying these changes.

In the grounded theory, three coding steps used to analyze the data included open coding, axial coding, and selective coding, respectively. Coding is the process by which a scholar segregates, conceptualizes, and integrates data. The fundamental unit in this process is "concept. The data can be coded line by line or in paragraphs in the open coding step.

In the axial coding step, these concepts are put together to form central categories based on commonalities, similarities, or semantic overlaps. Finally, the major categories are integrated into a new category called the "core" or "axial" category - which is more abstract than the previous two steps. The most important theme/subject of the research is also selected at this step. The final extracted concept must have analytical power and its semantic inclusion should be enough to include other categories as well. Performing these three steps of coding requires great care because these categories in the final context model are around the selective category or the main theme of the theory³². Here, the mentioned steps were performed in the qualitative analysis, and ultimately, a data-based model was presented to manifest evolutions of organizational succession planning and its underlying factors in sports organizations.

It should be noted that to make sure of the model reliability and generalizability, Lincoln's and Guba's³³ criteria were used, which are based on credibility, transferability, reliability, and verifiability. Various strategies were used for each criterion: the strategies of daily observation, taking notes of observations, maintaining communication with the respondents for the credibility criterion; the strategies of controlling the results by the members throughout the data collection process to confirm the accuracy of the observation based on the scholar's interpretations for the criterion of reliability; and the strategy of appropriate description to provide all the details related to the research process for the criterion of conformity - which is similar to the concept of external validity and refers to the applicability of research findings

Findings

Based on the demographic information, 12 (80%) of the participants were male and 3 (20%) were female. At the occupational level, 1 participant (6.67%) was an expert, 9 (60%) were managers, 5 (33.33%) were university professors. At the education level, 1 participant (6.67%) had a bachelor's degree, 2 (13.33%) had a master's degree, and 12 (80%) had a doctorate. The basic concepts and subcategories inferred from the open, axial, and selective coding steps are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Basic concepts, main categories, and subcategories affecting succession

Main categories	Subcategories	Basic concepts
Causal conditions	Talent resources	Creating a talent bank, selecting talented candidates, identifying capabilities, identifying human resources

		capacities, identifying possible external options, identifying the best management and leadership options for the organization
	Efficient promotion system	Reasonable and efficient promotion system, competency-based promotion system, performance-based promotion system, performance management system, sense of promotion, being in a better position, promotion goal, appointment to senior positions, leadership development capability, promotion of capability recognition
	Human resources management	Planning and formulating the organization's vision regarding human resources development, coherent management system, purposeful dynamic management system, methodical and intelligent human resources system, smartisation of the human resources unit, creating a comprehensive system in human resources planning, encouraging the development of diverse groups for the organization's future jobs, aligning talents with the organization's strategic goals
	Organizational support of individuals' efforts	Supportive work environment, supportive culture, support of senior managers, comprehensive support of organization's employees, integrated support, the guidance of succession planning by CEOs, supportive role of policies and missions
Contextual conditions	Organizational structure	job descriptions, job conditions, employment guidelines, job turnover, legal structure, software aspects, hardware aspects, recruitment, organizational minimization, reorganization
	Organizational culture and environment	Competency-based organizational culture, the cultural context of succession in sports organizations, ethical culture, competitive culture, coordination of succession with organizational culture, sociability, collective organizational spirit, appropriate organizational environment
	Management stability	Stability point, durability, guaranteeing the employees' professional stability
	Resistance against changes	Fear of losing a job, rapid change, management during change, the speed of organizational change, fear of losing a managerial post, maintaining the organizational position, maintaining organizational position as a tool for resisting changes
Intervening conditions	Peripheral environment	Environmental adaptation, sports organizations' environment, changing and turbulent environment, environmental dynamics
	Social factors	Widespread community acceptance, academic values, social democracy
	International environment	International interaction network, globalization, international cooperation of sports organizations
	Policymaking	

		Protecting the organization from political pressures for recruitments and appointments, clear vision of the organization's management future, compiling clear rules and regulations
Interactive conditions	Familiarization	Awareness of succession planning, familiarizing managers with succession planning, familiarizing managers with employees' plans and ideas, familiarizing the employees with succession planning
	Cooperation	Employees' cooperation, participatory decision-making, participatory management, participatory planning, active participation of senior executives in succession planning
	Organizational learning	Presenting new ideas, providing the opportunity to learn in new situations, exposing the talents to learning, learning opportunities, learning organization
	Trust building	Compassionate responsibility, trust in employees, deterrent-based trust, awareness-based trust, trust in talents
	Foresight	Comprehending the direction of future needs, planning for the future organizational leadership and management, a forward-looking perspective for human resources
	Systematic thinking	The gradual and continuous movement of the succession system, macro-interactive system, succession planning versus systematic planning, systematic succession planning
Consequences	Individual Consequences	Individual development, motivation, satisfaction
	Organizational Consequences	Organizational development, resources conservation, organizational justice

As shown in Table 1, succession planning in health-oriented sports in Iran is subject to causal, contextual, and intervening conditions. Also, it was found that by implementing succession strategies (interactive factors) positive consequences may emerge both at the individual and organizational levels.

Causal Conditions

A set of events that form issues related to a phenomenon, and partly explain how and why individuals/groups respond to those conditions. Conditions may be influenced by the time, place, culture, rules and regulations, beliefs, economics, power, gender factors as well as the social environments, organizations, institutions within which we see ourselves, as well as our motivations and past. On the other and, conditions can be micro or macro, and the path of their influence on the action of interactions may be direct, indirect, or relatively linear. According to the participants' views, 4 subcategories in terms of conditions were identified including talent resources, efficient promotion system, human resources management, and organizational support of individuals' efforts.

Contextual conditions

A specific set of conditions coming together at a specific time and place to create a set of issues that people respond to based on their interactions. Contextual conditions are rooted in causal conditions and are the product of their compilation to form different patterns with various dimensions. The interviewees mentioned some contextual conditions such as organizational structure, culture, and environment, management stability, and resistance to change.

Intervening Conditions

General conditions, such as the culture and space, that act as facilitators/inhibitors of strategies. These conditions either facilitate the implementation of strategies or act as barriers and delay the process. The interviewees mentioned policy-making, international environment, social factors, and policy-making as the intervening conditions.

Strategies and actions

Specific actions or interactions that result from a central phenomenon. They are in fact plans and actions that help design the model. Adapted from core coding, effective strategies for succession planning include familiarization, cooperation, organizational learning, trust-building, foresight, and systematic thinking.

Consequences

Tangible / intangible effective outputs produced as the result of designing a succession plan for health-oriented sports. Consequences are also the outputs of implementing strategies. In the present study, these consequences were divided into individual and organizational consequences.

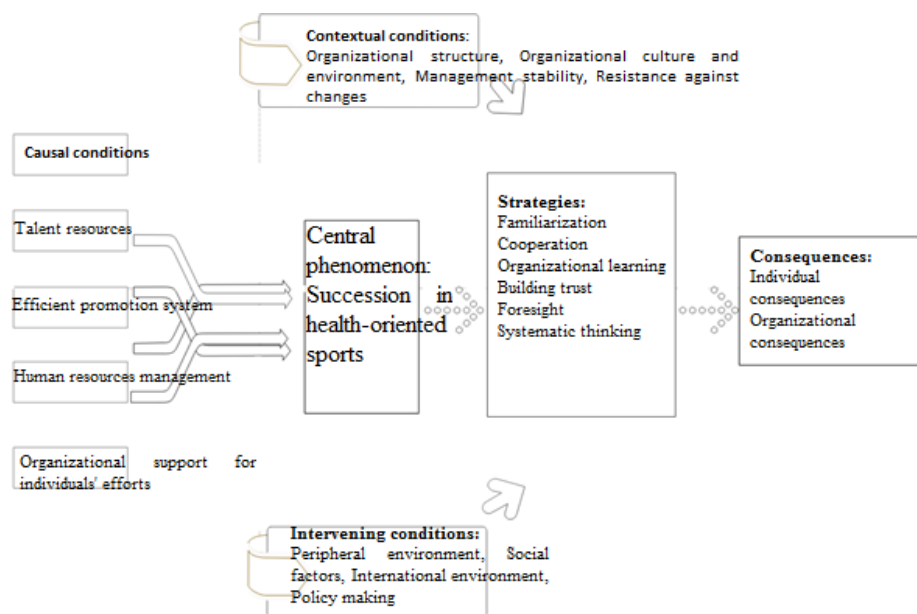


Figure 1. Modeling succession planning in health-oriented sports in Iran

After identifying factors influencing succession planning in the health-oriented sports in Iran through the grounded theory, their mutual relationships were determined based on the paradigm model of grounded theory, and the final model was presented.

Discussion and Conclusion

This study was conducted with the aim of modeling succession planning in health-oriented sports in Iran through the grounded theory. Regarding its findings, succession planning in health-oriented sports is influenced by causal conditions (talent resources; efficient promotion system; human resources management; organizational support of individuals' efforts), contextual conditions (organizational structure, culture, and environment; management stability, resistance to change) and intervening conditions (peripheral environment; social factors; international environment; policy-making). It was also discovered that familiarization, cooperation, organizational learning, organizational trust, foresight, and systematic thinking may emerge positive consequences both at the individual (e.g., personal development, motivation, and satisfaction) and organizational level (e.g., organizational development, resources conservation, and organizational justice).

This finding is in line with that of Sabokroo¹⁷, Dehghanpour¹⁸, Bordbar et al.¹⁹, Ghasemi et al.²⁰, Rezaei and Nazari²¹, Malekia Mahmoudabadi and Shadnoosh²², Naderi²³, Al-Sadat Nasbi et al.²⁴, Pandey and Sharma²⁵, Donner et al.²⁶, Anderson²⁷, Etemadian et al.²⁸, Tucker²⁹, Martini and Dewi³⁰, and LeCounte³¹. No

inconsistent finding was encountered. According to the paradigm model, succession planning based on the central category is affected by various conditions, the absence or improper functioning of which will prevent the implementation of succession planning in health-oriented sports. In other words, in health-oriented sports, talent resource management programs should be performed both to prevent disruption in the process of organizational development and to identify qualified employees for key positions in the organization. Respecting talents and meritocracy in the organization directly affects organizational performance. The level of productivity and profitability, security, presence in the workplace, and survival are higher in properly employed elite staff. In health-oriented sports, successful employees are those who have reached from the abnormality to the normal stage and in the higher state, go beyond this stage and reach self-actualization. This flourishing requires a system that cannot be created without reviving the individual will and organizational support. So, self-actualized employees in health-oriented sports should be provided with organizational support to help organizational improvement.

Several strategies regarding modeling succession planning in health-oriented sports were mentioned by the interviewees. According to these strategies, linking competencies from one job to another may improve employees' satisfaction and learning capacity. Succession requires people who are learning about themselves, their organizations, and their future paths. The creation of these plans begins with the consideration of future goals and strategies, and how current capabilities and performance align with long-term goals. Learning occurs when the employees focus on the impact of long-term goals on strategic and operational behaviors. Trust is the fourth component in sports organization strategies. A manager of a sports organization may not make significant changes in formal succession unless he gains the trust of his employees, since it is the foundation of successful succession. The fifth component is foresight, followed by systematic thinking as the final component. Succession in sports organizations requires systemic thinking to align employees' roles with the organization's prospect. Systematic thinking refers to the whole organization, and simultaneously, attends to each employee's function and cooperation. Succession management should support planning and strategic thinking, and it should define a key starting point for the programs of staff's and management development. In such an organization, new patterns of thinking develop, and ideas, decisions, and collective and group decision-making become prevalent. In such an organization, new patterns of thinking develop, and ideas, decisions, and collective decision-making become prevalent.

After presenting the succession planning and defining its goals, and developing a succession model in health-oriented sports, it is necessary to evaluate and identify qualified employees. It is possible to attract competent candidates from outside the organization whose attitudes are converging with the organizational goals, values, and culture of succession. The findings of this study provide several guidelines for policy-making regarding succession planning in health-oriented sports. It suggested a model suitable to be used as a conceptual framework for the study and policy-making of succession in health-oriented sports. This model is categorically more comprehensive than the previous ones and is made by the majority of interviewees' perceptions and experiences about succession. According

to the findings of this study, serious attention is needed to some social infrastructures; In other words, succession in sports organizations can gradually dominate various dimensions of sports organizations. Achieving this goal requires pursuing through successor organizations, and then implementing succession planning at the sports organization level. Another point is to create systems that help achieve succession, including an evaluation system, accountability system, appointment system, and selection system. Creating these systems needs to establish council and advisory structures in health-oriented sports. Also, each manager should have an advisory council or think tank in accordance with his/her level of management. Defining job duties and reviewing current regulations for selecting managers were among the strategies impacting succession planning. It is suggested that future scholars implement the proposed model at the level of a health-oriented sports organization to turn it from an ideal to a tangible operational model.

Ethical issues*

Ethics Committee of Islamic Azad University, Sanandaj Branch.

Key Messages

Implications for policy-makers

Given the above and the fact that succession planning is an integral part of management not only in the field of health but also in other areas, in this study, a model for succession in the field of health-oriented sports in Iran will be presented. Therefore, policy makers and planners can benefit from the results of this research, long-term horizon in the goals of the organization and improve the performance of the organization, select the elites to better perform the tasks and progress of the organization.

Implications for public

The results of this study can be applied to the general public according to the proposed model for selecting qualified people.

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* If the manuscript is Original Article or Short Communication this field should be filled.

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