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Knowledge Management, Organizational Health, and Employee Empowerment in Sport and Youth Departments: A Descriptive-Correlational Study

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A B S T R A C T

This study examined the relationships among knowledge management, organizational health, and employee empowerment among employees of the Departments of Sport and Youth Affairs in Yazd Province, Iran. The study used an applied, descriptive-correlational design. The statistical population consisted of all employees working in the provincial Departments of Sport and Youth Affairs, and because the researchers had access to the whole population, a census method was used (n = 142). Data were collected using a demographic questionnaire, Lawson's Knowledge Management Assessment Instrument, the Organizational Health Inventory developed by Hoy and colleagues, and Spreitzer's Psychological Empowerment Questionnaire. Content validity was confirmed by ten sport management experts, and pilot reliability coefficients were 0.70 for knowledge management, 0.91 for organizational health, and 0.83 for employee empowerment. Data were analyzed in SPSS using the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test, Pearson correlation coefficients, and regression analysis. The results showed positive and significant relationships between knowledge management and organizational health and between knowledge management and employee empowerment. All six dimensions of knowledge management—knowledge generation, knowledge acquisition, knowledge organization, knowledge storage, knowledge dissemination, and knowledge application—were positively associated with both organizational health and employee empowerment. Regression findings also indicated that overall knowledge management predicted organizational health ($\beta = 0.295$, $p = 0.002$) and employee empowerment ($\beta = 0.415$, $p < 0.001$). These findings suggest that strengthening knowledge-management processes may be associated with healthier organizational conditions and higher employee empowerment in sport and youth administrative settings.

Keywords: *knowledge management; organizational health; employee empowerment; sport administration; Departments of Sport and Youth Affairs*

1. Introduction

Knowledge has become a strategic organizational resource because administrative and service organizations increasingly depend on the creation, storage, transfer, and application of information for effective decision-making (Alavi & Leidner, 2001; Aljuwaiber, 2026; Davenport & Prusak, 1998; Nonaka & Takeuchi, 1995). Knowledge management provides a systematic mechanism through which organizations identify important information, organize it, make it accessible, and apply it to solve problems, support learning, and improve planning and performance (Abdelrahman et al., 2025; Aujirapongpan et al., 2010; Gold et al., 2001). In sport organizations, where service quality depends strongly on human expertise and interdepartmental coordination, knowledge-management processes can be especially relevant.

Organizational health refers to the capacity of an organization to perform its functions effectively, maintain internal coherence, adapt to environmental demands, and sustain growth and improvement. A healthy organization creates conditions in which employees are motivated, supported, and willing to remain productive members of the workplace (Hoy & Feldman, 1987; Hoy et al., 1991; Talebpour et al., 2013). From this perspective, knowledge management may contribute to organizational health by improving access to work-related knowledge, reducing uncertainty, and supporting informed administrative decisions (Khalilian & Ekrami, 2015).

Employee empowerment is commonly understood as a psychological and organizational condition in which employees experience meaning, competence, self-determination, and impact in their work (Conger & Kanungo, 1988; Spreitzer, 1995; Thomas & Velthouse, 1990). In administrative sport settings, empowered employees are more likely to participate in problem-solving, use professional judgment, and respond effectively to organizational needs. Previous studies have suggested that knowledge acquisition, knowledge sharing, and knowledge use may improve employees' perceived competence and autonomy (Naseem et al., 2025; Ojha et al., 2025; Seibert et al., 2011; Wulandari et al., 2017).

The Departments of Sport and Youth Affairs are responsible for a wide range of administrative, developmental, and service functions. Because much organizational knowledge is experiential and held by employees, it is important to document, organize, and distribute this knowledge across the organization (Alavi & Leidner, 2001; Nonaka & Takeuchi, 1995). Despite the practical relevance of this topic, limited evidence has focused specifically on knowledge management, organizational health, and employee empowerment in the sport and youth administrative context of Yazd Province. Therefore, the purpose of this study was to investigate the relationships between knowledge management and organizational health and between knowledge management and employee empowerment among employees of the Departments of Sport and Youth Affairs in Yazd Province, Iran.

2. Methods and Materials

2.1. Study Design

The study was applied in purpose and descriptive-correlational in design. Data were collected using standardized questionnaires and analyzed quantitatively to examine the relationships among knowledge management, organizational health, and employee empowerment.

2.2. Participants and Sampling

The statistical population consisted of all employees of the Departments of Sport and Youth Affairs in Yazd Province, Iran. According to the latest report available to the researchers, the total number of employees was 142. Because the researchers had access to the entire population, the census method was used, and the sample size was equal to the population size (n = 142).

2.3. Instruments

Data were collected using four instruments. First, a demographic questionnaire assessed sex, age, educational level, academic field, and employment status. Second, Lawson's Knowledge Management Assessment Instrument (KMAI) was used to measure knowledge management (Lawson, 2003). The instrument included 24 items across six components: knowledge generation, knowledge acquisition, knowledge storage, knowledge organization, knowledge application, and knowledge dissemination. Third, the Organizational Health Inventory was used to measure organizational health (Hoy & Feldman, 1987; Hoy et al., 1991). This instrument included 44 items across seven components: institutional integrity, manager influence, consideration, initiating structure, resource support, morale, and academic emphasis. Fourth, Spreitzer's Psychological Empowerment Questionnaire was

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used to measure employee empowerment (Spreitzer, 1995). This instrument included 12 items across four dimensions: impact, meaning, competence, and self-determination. All instruments used a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 to 5.

2.4. *Validity and Reliability*

Content validity of the questionnaires was evaluated and confirmed by ten experts in sport management. A preliminary reliability assessment was conducted with 30 employees of the Departments of Sport and Youth Affairs in Yazd Province. Cronbach's alpha coefficients were 0.70 for the knowledge management questionnaire, 0.91 for the organizational health questionnaire, and 0.83 for the employee empowerment questionnaire, indicating acceptable internal consistency for the study instruments.

2.5. *Statistical Analysis*

Data were analyzed using SPSS. Descriptive statistics were used to summarize participants' demographic characteristics. The Kolmogorov-Smirnov test was used to assess normality. Because the distributions were normal, Pearson correlation coefficients were used to examine relationships among the study variables. Regression analysis was used to assess whether knowledge management and its dimensions predicted organizational health and employee empowerment. The Durbin-Watson statistic was used to evaluate independence of errors, and tolerance and variance inflation factor values were used to assess multicollinearity among independent variables.

3. Findings and Results

The demographic findings showed that most participants were men (68.90%). The largest age group was 30-39 years. In terms of education, 42.70% of participants held a bachelor's degree, 54.40% had a non-physical-education academic background, and 40.80% were permanent employees.

Table 1

Demographic Characteristics of Participants

Characteristic	Category	Percentage
Sex	Male	68.90%
Educational level	Bachelor's degree	42.70%
Academic field	Non-physical-education background	54.40%
Employment status	Permanent employment	40.80%

The Kolmogorov-Smirnov test indicated that the main study variables had normal distributions; therefore, parametric analyses were used.

Table 2

Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test for Normality of Main Variables

Variable	Z	p
Knowledge management	0.108	0.209
Organizational health	1.014	0.255
Employee empowerment	1.204	0.110

Pearson correlation analyses showed positive and significant relationships between all dimensions of knowledge management and organizational health. The highest correlation with organizational health was observed for knowledge generation ($r = 0.30$, $p \leq 0.01$), followed by knowledge organization and knowledge application ($r = 0.27$). Positive and significant relationships were also found between all dimensions of knowledge management and employee empowerment. The strongest correlation with employee empowerment was observed for knowledge generation ($r = 0.46$, $p \leq 0.01$).

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Table 3

Pearson Correlations between Knowledge-Management Dimensions, Organizational Health, and Employee Empowerment

Knowledge-management dimension	Organizational health r	Employee empowerment r
Knowledge generation	0.30**	0.46**
Knowledge acquisition	0.26**	0.28**
Knowledge organization	0.27**	0.39**
Knowledge storage	0.22*	0.34**
Knowledge dissemination	0.24*	0.38**
Knowledge application	0.27*	0.37**

Note. *p ≤ 0.05; **p ≤ 0.01.

Regression analysis showed that each dimension of knowledge management significantly predicted organizational health. Overall knowledge management also predicted organizational health (B = 0.009, β = 0.295, R^2 = 0.087, adjusted R^2 = 0.078, t = 3.106, p = 0.002). Based on the beta coefficient, a one-unit increase in knowledge management was associated with a 0.295-unit increase in organizational health.

Table 4

Regression Models Predicting Organizational Health from Knowledge Management

Predictor	B	β	R^2	Adjusted R^2	t	p
Knowledge generation	0.049	0.303	0.092	0.083	3.199	0.002
Knowledge acquisition	0.040	0.261	0.068	0.059	2.723	0.008
Knowledge organization	0.050	0.275	0.076	0.066	2.873	0.005
Knowledge storage	0.037	0.228	0.052	0.042	2.351	0.021
Knowledge dissemination	0.041	0.247	0.061	0.051	2.556	0.012
Knowledge application	0.049	0.279	0.078	0.069	2.920	0.004
Overall knowledge management	0.009	0.295	0.087	0.078	3.106	0.002

Regression analysis also showed that each dimension of knowledge management significantly predicted employee empowerment. Overall knowledge management predicted employee empowerment (B = 0.018, β = 0.415, R^2 = 0.172, adjusted R^2 = 0.164, t = 4.581, p < 0.001). Based on the beta coefficient, a one-unit increase in knowledge management was associated with a 0.415-unit increase in employee empowerment.

Table 5

Regression Models Predicting Employee Empowerment from Knowledge Management

Predictor	B	β	R^2	Adjusted R^2	t	p
Knowledge generation	0.102	0.460	0.212	0.204	5.213	<0.001
Knowledge acquisition	0.060	0.282	0.080	0.070	2.954	<0.001
Knowledge organization	0.090	0.395	0.165	0.148	4.325	0.004
Knowledge storage	0.078	0.347	0.120	0.111	3.715	<0.001
Knowledge dissemination	0.087	0.386	0.149	0.141	4.204	<0.001
Knowledge application	0.089	0.372	0.138	0.130	4.024	<0.001
Overall knowledge management	0.018	0.415	0.172	0.164	4.581	<0.001

4. Discussion

The purpose of this study was to examine the relationships between knowledge management and organizational health and between knowledge management and employee empowerment among employees of the Departments of Sport and Youth Affairs in Yazd Province. The findings indicated that knowledge management was positively and significantly associated with organizational health. Higher levels of knowledge generation, acquisition, organization, storage, dissemination, and application were

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accompanied by higher levels of organizational health. The regression results also showed that knowledge management predicted organizational health, although the explained variance was modest.

This finding is consistent with prior research in Iranian educational and sport-related organizations that reported positive relationships between knowledge management and organizational health (Abdelrahman et al., 2025; Aljuwaiber, 2026; Hoy & Feldman, 1987; Khalilian & Ekrami, 2015; Talebpour et al., 2013). A plausible interpretation is that knowledge-management practices reduce fragmentation in organizational information, support decision-making, and strengthen administrative coordination. In a sport and youth department, such processes may help employees access previous experience, use documented procedures, and respond more effectively to operational demands.

The second main finding was that knowledge management was positively and significantly related to employee empowerment. Among the knowledge-management dimensions, knowledge generation showed the strongest relationship with empowerment. This result suggests that employees who participate in creating, acquiring, organizing, and applying knowledge may experience greater competence, meaning, and influence in their work. The regression analysis also indicated that knowledge management predicted employee empowerment more strongly than it predicted organizational health. This pattern is consistent with studies showing that knowledge-management processes can support psychological empowerment by increasing employees' access to information and capacity for informed action (Conger & Kanungo, 1988; Guha et al., 2025; Naseem et al., 2025; Ojha et al., 2025; Seibert et al., 2011; Spreitzer, 1995; Thomas & Velthouse, 1990; Wulandari et al., 2017).

The findings should be interpreted within the limits of the study design. Because the research was descriptive-correlational and cross-sectional, causal conclusions cannot be drawn. The study was also limited to employees of the Departments of Sport and Youth Affairs in one Iranian province, which may restrict generalizability. In addition, the results were based on self-report questionnaires. Future studies should use larger multisite samples, report full descriptive statistics, examine possible mediating mechanisms such as organizational learning, and consider longitudinal designs.

5. Conclusion

The results indicate that knowledge management is positively associated with both organizational health and employee empowerment among employees of the Departments of Sport and Youth Affairs in Yazd Province. All six dimensions of knowledge management were significantly related to both outcome variables. Overall knowledge management also predicted organizational health and employee empowerment. These findings support the practical value of strengthening knowledge-generation, knowledge-sharing, knowledge-storage, and knowledge-application mechanisms in sport administrative organizations.

5.1. Practical Implications

Managers of sport and youth departments should create formal mechanisms for documenting employee experience, organizing administrative knowledge, sharing knowledge across units, and applying stored knowledge in decision-making. Training workshops, internal knowledge repositories, structured knowledge-sharing meetings, and links with organizations that have successfully implemented knowledge-management systems may help strengthen both organizational health and employee empowerment (Abdelrahman et al., 2025; Gold et al., 2001; Guha et al., 2025; Seibert et al., 2011).

Authors' Contributions

All authors equally contributed to this study.

Declaration

In order to correct and improve the academic writing of our paper, we have used the language model ChatGPT.

Transparency Statement

Data are available for research purposes upon reasonable request to the corresponding author.

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Declaration of Interest

The authors report no conflict of interest.

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Ethics Considerations

The study protocol adhered to the principles outlined in the Helsinki Declaration, which provides guidelines for ethical research involving human participants.

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