Effect of Social Intelligence on OCB and EB, with Effect on Social Capital as a Mediating Variable, in a Sport Organization in Iran

Authors' contribution:
A) conception and design of the study
B) acquisition of data
C) analysis and interpretation of data
D) manuscript preparation
E) obtaining funding

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ABSTRACT

This study aimed to measure the effect of *social intelligence* on *organizational citizenship behavior* and *entrepreneurial behaviors* among staff members in a sport organization in Iran, with the effect on *social capital* as a mediating variable. The method of this study was survey, and 205 staff members were selected using stratified random sampling. The instrument in this study included four standard questionnaires measuring social intelligence (Silvera, Martinussen & Dahl, 2001), social capital (Nahapiet & Ghoshal, 1998), OCB (Organ, 1988), and EB (Mirsafian & Salimi, 2016). The data was analyzed by employing SPSS and AMOS Graphics software. The results indicated that the staff's *social intelligence* had a direct effect on improving the *social capital* of the organization ($\beta = 0.63$). Also, *social capital* had a direct effect on increasing the staff's *OCB* ($\beta = 0.20$) and *EB* ($\beta = 0.25$). Furthermore, the staff's *social intelligence* had an indirect effect on increasing the *social capital* and improved their *OCB* ($\beta = 0.51$) and *EB* ($\beta = 0.44$). Hence, trying to increase the staff's *social intelligence* in sport organizations in Iran led to improving the staff's *extra role behaviors* as well as *entrepreneurial behaviors* at the organization, in addition to the effect of increasing the social capital in those organizations.

KEYWORDS   human resource management, Isfahan, organizational behavior, sport organization

Introduction

Given the breadth and complexity of today's organizations and in order to progress and develop a competitive advantage, sport organizations need appropriate social capital as well as economic, political, and financial resources. Social capital is a set of norms in social systems that enhances collaboration between members of the system and decreases the costs of exchanges and communication (Pillai et al. 2017). Some sociologists, such as Coleman (1988), consider an aspect of social structure for social capital that facilitates relations and interactions between those inside the structure. That is, social capital in an organization, like other forms of capital, is generative and enables the achievement of specific objectives that are otherwise impossible to achieve (Pillai et al. 2017). Therefore, enhancing social capital in an organization leads to consolidation and social bonds – both visible and invisible – and increases trust and participation, while the

lack of an appropriate level of social capital in an organization leads to a decrease in and costliness of communication among the staff, reduces organizational trust, weakens ethics, and reduces organizational efficiency (Minei 2016). Thus, the enhancement of social capital in organizations, particularly in sport organizations, given their increased complexity and breadth of organizational structure, can help enhance the performance of the staff and the productivity and efficiency of the organization. Furthermore, in order to gain a competitive advantage and progress in various professional fields, sport organizations need employees who not only carry out daily formal and vocational duties, but also manifest extra-role behaviors and are capable of initiating entrepreneurial behaviors and presenting novel ideas for the progress of the organization (Bastami & Shamsi 2016). Extra-role behaviors, usually known as Organizational Citizenship Behavior (OCB), consist of optional behaviors on the part of employees that are beyond their formal duties or vocational responsibilities, and, therefore, cannot be identified through formal organizational evaluations and structures (Liu & Cohen 2010). Such behaviors are not generally designed purposefully, intentionally, or systematically, nor are they considered in the formal rewarding systems of organizations or officially influenced by organizational planning and procedures; however, the emergence and development of such behaviors in an organization plays a significant role in the betterment of individual performance and the effectiveness and success of sport organizations in reaching their key organizational objectives (Zhang, Liao & Zhao 2011).

Entrepreneurial behaviors (EB) in an organization consist of the behaviors of employees that create new values (tangible or intangible) through committed efforts in the face of existing risks (Mirsafian & Salimi 2016). These behaviors involve activities and methods that help the staff in different organizational levels utilize and produce various resources in order to identify, create, and use opportunities (Henry, Hill & Leitch 2005). In fact, the entrepreneurs of organizations are those with novel thoughts and ideas who design a new process or product or resolve organizational issues by applying those thoughts and ideas (Mirsafian & Salimi 2016). They understand the needs of their organization, identify organizational vacuums, and initiate the entrepreneurial process; this process is facilitated through communication between the inside and outside of the organization and through developing multi-faceted relations with other employees and other organizations (Mirsafian & Salimi 2016). Therefore, in order to continue their business and become agile, flexible, opportunity-oriented, and cost-effective, organizations need a change in the behavior of their human resources toward a creative and entrepreneurial workforce.

Nonetheless, the results of research conducted in Iran reveal that despite the appropriate amount of social capital available in Iranian sport organizations, they lack an adequate development of entrepreneurial and extra-role behaviors (Mirsafian 2016). One of the reasons for this could be the lack of social intelligence and its relevant factors on the part of the human resources of such organizations (Aydin, Koc & Kaya 2017). Social intelligence involves a broad range of social skills, influencing the employees' perception, cognitive analysis, and behavioral skills or competence for individual interactions in organizational environments (Howe 2017). Social intelligence refers to the accurate perception of a social environment and plays a crucial role in interpersonal understanding (Aydin, Koc & Kaya 2017). Scholars present social intelligence psychometrics as a factor that improves the ability to understand social circumstances and affects an individual's management of interpersonal relations and social interactions (Nikoopour & Esfandiari 2017). Yahyazadeh-Jelodar and Lotfi-Goodarzi (2012) on organizational debates consider social intelligence as the ability to understand, control, and express social aspects of organizational life that are effective in organizational learning and establishing efficient relations in organizations. In addition, Nikoopour and Esfandiari (2017) see social intelligence in close connection with factors that lead to the higher efficiency of employees and greater productivity of organizations. Therefore, given the positive and undeniable effects of social intelligence on the relations among members of society and the performance of employees in organizations, the current research aims to investigate the effect of social intelligence on social capital and its impact on the entrepreneurial and extra-role behaviors of employees in one of the Iranian governmental sport organizations. In other words, the present research seeks to determine the effect of social intelligence directly on the entrepreneurial and extra-role behaviors of employees in this organization, and, indirectly, on the presence of social capital as the mediator variable.

Several studies have been conducted on the effects of social intelligence and social capital on vocational and professional variables in sports environments, among which Minaei's research (2016), which investigates the role of social intelligence and social capital in the vocational performance of employees who regularly participate in sporting activities, is noteworthy. It demonstrates that social intelligence and social capital can determine an increase in the employees' performance. Studying the relationship between social intelligence and cultural intelligence and its impact on the learning of the employees of an Iranian sport organization, Nasiri et al. (2014) show that social intelligence positively affects the components of organizational learning in the employees. Bastami and Shamsi (2016), examining the relationship between social intelligence and the leadership styles of sports coaches, demonstrate a significant relationship between the two. In another study, Groves (2002), investigating leader social intelligence and follower openness to organizational change, shows that leaders with greater social intelligence manifest more appropriate behavior towards employees and in implementing the managerial affairs of the organization than leaders with lower social intelligence.

Method

The method of this study was survey. The total population includes all of the staff members employed at the Sport and Adolescence Organization of Isfahan Province[4] (N= 441). Participants in this study (N = 205)[5] were selected through the stratified random sampling method according to gender, level of education, and job experience. The participants in this study include 136 (66.3%) males and 69 (33.7%) females from different educational levels (diploma[6]: 81, 39.5%; bachelor's: 92, 44.9%; master's and higher: 32, 16.6%). Also, 84 (41%) staff members had less than 10 years of job experience, 72 (35.1%) of them claimed to have between 10-20 years of job experience, and 49 (23.9%) of them had more than 20 years of job experience.

The sample of this study fairly represents the total population (Table 1).

Table 1. Demographic characteristic of total and selected population

Demographic Characteristic		N		S	
		n	percentage	n	percentage
Gender	Male	301	68.2	136	66.3
	Female	140	31.8	69	33.7
Educational Level	Diploma	163	36.9	81	39.5
	Bachelor	208	47.1	92	44.9
	Master and Higher	70	16	32	16.6
Job Experience	1-10 years	193	43.7	84	41
	10-20 years	143	31.7	72	35.1
	20 Years and Higher	105	24.6	49	23.9
Total		441	100	205	100

Source: Own study.

[4]The Ministry of Sport and Adolescence of the Islamic Republic of Iran is the largest authority for sports in the country and aims to extend sports activities in Iran to different levels: public, competitive, and professional. Also, attending to youth affairs and managing and improving their leisure activities are among the other objectives of the Ministry. The Ministry has a department in each province of Iran, each of which operates independently from the others. The present research studies the representative of that Ministry in Isfahan Province, called the Sport and Adolescence Organization of Isfahan Province.

[5]The appropriate number of participants for structural equation modeling should be selected at least 5-10 times more than the number of parameters at the assumed model (Andrew, Pedersen, & McEvoy 2011). The number of parameters at the assumed model of this study is 21; hence, the participants approved the opinions of Andrew, Pedersen, and McEvoy (2011).

[6]General Certificate of Secondary Education (high school).

Four instruments were employed in this study. The first questionnaire, created by Silvera, Martinussen, and Dahl (2001), measured *social intelligence* under three dimensions (social information processing, social skills, and social awareness) and 21 questions. The validity of this questionnaire was measured in this study and fixed at 0.78. Also, the reliability of the scale was fixed by them at 0.79.

The second scale measured *social capital* and was made by Nahapiet and Ghoshal (1998). This instrument includes three dimensions (structural, cognitive, relational) and 20 questions. The validity and reliability of the questionnaire in this research is fixed at 0.76 and 0.81, respectively.

The third instrument measured the *organizational citizenship behavior* (OCB) and was made by Organ (1988). This scale includes five dimensions (altruism, courtesy, sportsmanship, conscientiousness, civil virtue) and 15 questions. The validity and reliability of this instrument is fixed at 0.76 and 0.80, respectively.

The forth scale measured *entrepreneurial behavior of staff members at the sport organizations* (EB) (Mirsafian & Salimi 2016). This scale includes five dimensions (innovation, relationship, risk taking, self-knowledge, identifying opportunities) and 20 questions. The validity and reliability of this scale is fixed at 0.75 and 0.80, respectively. Participants were asked to respond to the questionnaires with a 5-point Likert scale, ranging from 5 = strongly agree to 1 = strongly disagree.

Structural equation modeling was used to analyze the data of this study.[7] Hence, SPSS software version 23 as well as Amos Graphic software version 18 was employed in this research.

Results

The results of the Kolmogorov Smirnov test indicated that the distribution of data are normal (Table 2).

Table 2. Results of the Kolmogorov Smirnov test for measuring the normality of the data.

| Variable	K-S-T	Sig
Social Intelligence	0.66	0.70
Social Capital	0.73	0.55
OCB	0.71	0.49
EB	0.69	0.66

$P \leq 0.05$
Source: Own study.

Based on the results of Table 2, the results of the Kolmogorov Smirnov test in *social intelligence*, *social capital*, *organizational citizenship behavior*, and *entrepreneurial behaviors* were not significant ($P \leq 0.05$). Therefore, the data of all of the variables are normal.

Also, the variance inflation factor and tolerance index are measured for finding the multicollinearity between independent variables, which indicated that there was no multicollinearity between *social intelligence* and *social capital* (VIF = 1.33), (T = 0.67).

The model of this research in standardized estimate status is presented in Figure 1. In this model, the direct effect of *social intelligence* was to improve the *social capital* (β: 0.63, P: 0.001). However, the direct effect of *social intelligence* on *OBC* (β: 0.15, P: 0.09) and *EB* (β: 0.08, P: 0.001) was not significant ($P \leq 0.05$). Also, *social capital* has a direct effect on increasing the *OBC* (β: 0.21, P: 0.04) and *EB* (β: 0.25, P: 0.03).

The results of the bootstrapping test for measuring the indirect effects of *social intelligence* on *OBC* and *EB* indicated that *social intelligence* indirectly affected the improvement of the *OBC* (β: 0.51, P: 0.001) and *EB* (β: 0.44, P: 0.001), with the effect on *social capital* as a mediating variable. The results of measuring the model fit indices, in standardized estimate status, are presented in Table 3.

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[7]Structural equation modeling is a multivariate statistical analysis technique that is used to analyze structural relationships. This technique is the combination of factor analysis and multiple regression analysis and is used to analyze the structural relationship between measured variables and latent constructs. This method is preferred by the researcher because it estimates the multiple and interrelated dependence in a single analysis.
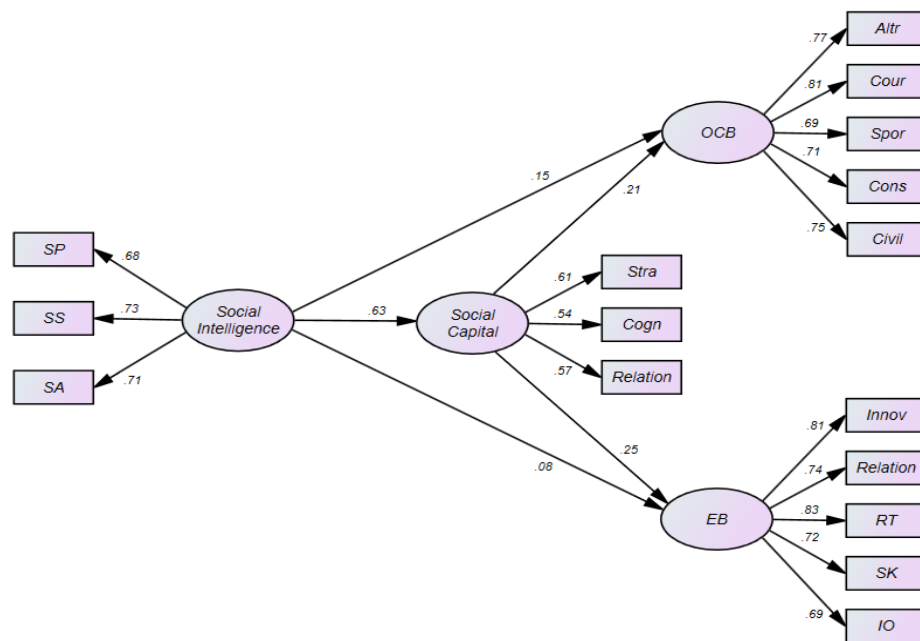
Chi_Square= 219.112, df= 88, P-Value= .000, RMSEA= .070

Figure 1. Effect of *social intelligence* on *organizational citizenship behavior* and *entrepreneurial behaviors*, with regards the effect of *social capital* as a mediating variable.
Source: Own study.

Table 3. Model fit indices

Index		Model	Result
Absolute Fit Indices	x^2	0.139	Approved
	GFI	0.932	Approved
	AGFI	0.918	Approved
	RMR	0.05	Approved
Comparative Fit Indices	NNFI (TLI)	0.934	Approved
	NFI	0.925	Approved
	CFI	0.939	Approved
	RFI	0.910	Approved
	IFI	0.941	Approved
Parsimonious Fit Indices	RMSEA	0.070	Approved
	CMIN/df	2.489	Approved
	PNFI	0.591	Approved
	Hoelter	205	Approved

Source: Own study.

The results of model fit indices indicated that the model of study, in *Standardized Estimate Status*, were fit in all of the *Absolute Fit Indices*, *Comparative Fit Indices*, and *Parsimonious Fit Indices*. In details, in *Absolute Fit Indices*, the *Chi-Square index* measured 0.139, *Goodness of Fit Index* found 0.932, *Adjusted Goodness of Fit Index* found 0.918, and *Root Mean Square Residual* found 0.05. In measuring the *comparative fit indices*, the *Non-Normed Fit Index* (*Tucker-Lewis Index*) found 0.934, *Normed Fit Index* found 0.925, *Comparative Fit Index* found 0.939, *Relative Fit Index* found 0.910, and *Incremental Fit Index* found 0.941. Also, in measuring the *Parsimonious Fit Indices*, the *Root Mean Square Error of Approximation* found 0.070, *Normed Chi-Square* found 2.489, and *Parsimonious Normed Fit Index* found 0.591. Furthermore, the *Hoelter Index* was 205, which indicated that the sample size of this study was appropriate for structural equation modeling and the model in this study.

Conclusion

In today's competitive world, in order to enhance organizational efficiency and productivity and maintain their competitive advantage against other organizations, sport organizations are in need of employees

who not only carry out their vocational duties, but also possess the ability and tendency to carry out extra-role, entrepreneurial, and creative activities to achieve organizational objectives better and faster. Accordingly, this research was conducted, aiming to study the effect of social intelligence on social capital and its impact on extra-role and entrepreneurial behaviors of the staff members of a sport organization in Iran. The research examines the direct effects of the social intelligence of staff members on their social capital, extra-role, and entrepreneurial behaviors, the direct effects of social capital on the staff's extra-role and entrepreneurial behaviors, as well as the indirect effects of social intelligence on the staff's extra-role and entrepreneurial behaviors with social capital as the mediator variable. The results indicated that the staff's social intelligence does not have a direct effect on increasing their extra-role and entrepreneurial behaviors. In other words, the level of the staff's social intelligence does not affect the level of their extra-role and entrepreneurial behaviors. This means that the staff's social and behavioral skills, their social awareness, and their ability to understand the social circumstances at the organization would not have the effect of increasing their extra-role and entrepreneurial behaviors. However, the staff's social intelligence in the presence of appropriate social capital at the organization leads to an increase in the staff's extra-role and entrepreneurial behaviors. This result, which emphasizes the mediating effect of the social capital at the model of the study, indicated that an increase in the staff's social intelligence can improve the extra-role and entrepreneurial behaviors of the staff members at the organization only if the organization possesses an appropriate level of social capital. In other words, the staff's social abilities, social awareness, and social understandings effect their organizational trust, their cooperation at the organization, their organizational commitment, their relationships at the organization, the general attitude they have at the organization, and the level at which they accept the organizational social norms, which improve the staff's extra-role and entrepreneurial behaviors. These results are consistent with the findings of Minaei (2016) and Nasiri et al. (2014). Therefore, based on the importance of having the appropriate level of staff social intelligence and existence of social capital at a sufficient level at the organizations, it is suggested that the administrators of public and private sport organizations in Iran try to increase not only the social capital at the organizations, but also try to improve the level of the staff's social intelligence in order to improve the staff's extra-role and entrepreneurial behaviors. Unfortunately, these days, the staff's psychological characteristics are not considered to be important and effective factors of organizational efficiency (Minaei 2016). However, on the other hand, social capital and its relevant factors are under consideration of responsible of sport in Iran, and many attempts have been made to improve their levels at the organizations (Bastami & Shamsi 2016). But, as the results of this research indicate, the existence of the staff's social intelligence as well as the social capital at the organization at sufficient levels could have an effect on improving the staff's extra-role and entrepreneurial behaviors. Social intelligence and its relevant factors can be taught; this makes it possible to increase social intelligence among the staff of sport organizations by organizing workshops and briefing classes. Also, revising the strategic plans of sport organizations in Iran in order to improve social capital would be important in this regard.

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