Designing Rumor Spreading Model in Sport Organizations

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Abstract

Today, the discrimination among employees in an organization is one of the most important human resources issues.It is a condition in whichemployees receive different reactions to same event in same condition.This may lead to spreading of rumors about injustice and discrimination among employees and deviation from original goals of organization.This study aimed to design rumor spreading model in sport organizations.This was qualitative exploratory-fundamental research. The sample was selected using purposive- snowball sampling method. The in-depth interviews were conducted for collecting the data. The data were coded and analyzed based on grounded theory method. The improvement of performance assessment systems, salaries and bonuses, and promotion, fair and transparent appointments, paying more attention to personnel problems and well-being, and using flexible working practices were factors which were impacted by managers' skills, improved employee motivation, moved them in line with organizational goals, and ultimately led to achieving organization goals.According to rumor spreading model in sport organizations, it was recommended that the role of various factors in formation of rumors in sports organizations would be considered and measures would be taken systematically to prevent them.

Keywords: Not caring organization, rumor, injustice, performance evaluation

1. Introduction

In twentieth century, the economy was based on industry. The companies and countries which had more physical and material assets produced more wealth. In twenty-first century, however, the economy is based on knowledge. Stewart (1997) considered human capital as the most important asset of company. Therefore, it is expected that the companies with more intellectual and human capital have better performance. Today, managers are experiencing a period in which human capital is the actual capital of organizations. In other words, the organizations will be successful in competitions and challenges and overtake the other organizations with the help of smart and knowledgeable employees (Barney, J. & Wright, 2001). On the other hand, the increasing rate of change in scientific, economic, and social fields is the main characteristics of present era. Today, the organizations face with massive international developments and threats which have endangered their survival. So, they should develop new solutions and ways to survive. The psychological studies show that public opinion affects individuals. Here, the reaction to other group members, especially in situations that are socially important, is concerned. The rumor is one of the factors negatively affect an organization's human capital. It is an unconfirmed report of events which help to define and explain the important and ambiguous situations (Sotude, 1997). In other words, it is the verbal transmission of messages or news at short time in wide society without knowing its source. So, the rumor is unconfirmed reports about events which essentially are transferred through word of mouth. In fact, a part of rumor may be true, but its total accuracy may not be definite (FathiAshtiani, 2003).

Lasswell considers rumor as the most natural social phenomenon and one of the most common social actions which is less known. It is a social and psychological category with broad dimensions. The social functions of rumor are not well known; however, they are developed more in chaotic conditions in communities and organizations. The level of rumor expansion equals to importance and ambiguity of subject for individuals. Rumors have different forms. Some rumors are developed in small group of people and some other are developed at community level. People usually believe rumors, because they do not recognize them as rumors. The rumor is one of the factors that create stress in organization. When people are eager to receive news anddo not get it from a trusted source, the rumor is developed (Fouladgar, 2007).

People communicate with each other and form informal networks in organizations with different reasons. In general, the informal networks in organizations have three characteristics: First, they are not controlled by managers. Second, most people believe them more. Third, they consider the interests of employees in organization (anbari, 2004). People deal with rumors in three ways:

1.   The rumor spreaders: this group receive information and transfer to others. They are the main actors of rumor spreading.
2.   The listeners: this group hear rumors, but do not transfer them to anyone.
3.   The neutral people: this group do not hear information, so do not transfer them. Usually, this group is outside the rumor spreading circle (Michra, 2008).

The motivation of spreading rumor is usually complex.Sometimes, the individual needs cause rumor development such as:

1.   Showing off: people try to attract the attention of others. To increase their credibility, they tell rumor to show themselves as knowledgeable.

2.   Reassurance and emotional support: In this case,people express the rumor to know the opinion of listener. The rumors reflection may decrease speaker's stress.

3.   Dispersal:people reflect rumors to outflow their fears, wishes, and hostilities that may not be aware of their existence.

4.   Aggression: people may transfer rumors to hurt others. In other words, they may aim to accuse others.

5.   Offering pleasant things: rumor may be told to provide pleasant news to listener. It may start as praise statements with small (or no) amount of truth and become indisputable truth after a time (FathiAshtiani, 2003).

The organization and workplace is the second home of individuals, because they spend more than half of day in these places. The managers, therefore, should meet the minimum psychological and spiritual needs of their employees. So, they may earn money and at the same time, improve their professional knowledge. In this case, they will provide honest services to achieve customer and manager satisfaction.However, rumors unavoidably confuse people about whether the news are true, who is the source of news, and etc.Therefore, the rumor prevent the main asset of organization (human resources) from focusing on original goal; this may disrupt the possibility of achieving predefined goals.Due to their specificcharacteristics and news which are considered by many people, the sport organizations always face with rumors.Therefore, this study aims to provide rumor spreading model in sport organizations.

2. Methodology

This study aimed to design rumor spreading model in sport organizations.This was qualitative exploratory-fundamental research. The in-depth interviews were conducted for collecting the data. The data were coded and analyzed using grounded theory method.

Strauss and Corbin's paradigm model (2011) was used to provide a systematic and schematic model for findings obtained from encoded data.
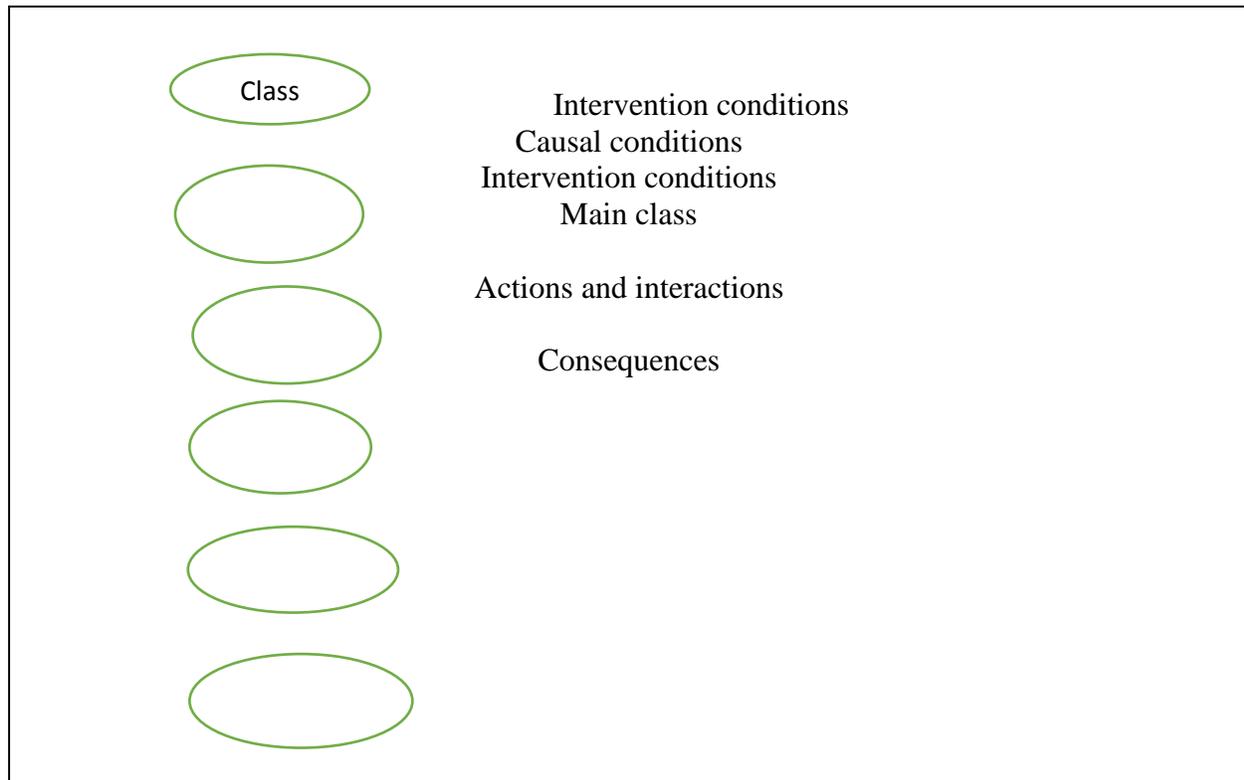
Figure 1: Paradigm model of grounded theory (Creswell, 2005; quoted by Danaeefard, Alvani, Azar, 2012)

Since research process has several layers, the process of present research was as follows:

Table 1: Structure of research process

Type	Component
Exploratory-fundamental	Nature of research
Qualitative approach	Method of conducting research
Interpretation - constitutive	Dominant paradigm in research
Deductive	Research approach
Grounded theory	Strategy of research
Depth and structured interviews and theoretical studies	Source of data collection
Grounded / systematic	Data analysis method

The population consisted of couches, specialists, experts, managers, and employees in sports organizations (National Olympic Committee, sports federations, youth and sport organizations, etc.).The sample was selected using purposive- snowball sampling method.In this method, an

initial group was selected for interview. Then, the next group was introduced by this group. The sampling (16 interviews) continued until saturation.

3. Findings

According to outlined procedures in research methodology, the final model is as follows.In this model, six classes were determined to explain rumor phenomenon in sports organizations; all of them are linked to each other.The rumor phenomenon is in the main class of this model.The causal condition is the next class.This condition creates and develops main class.The unhealthy atmosphere within organization and its properties may be considered as causal conditions.The dominant climate is the next class.It is the certain conditions which create necessary ground for main class.These conditions constitute a set of concepts and variables; they are named as non-health team structure in the model.This class affect the actions and interactions.The next class is intervention conditions. They are normal conditions which constitute a set of intermediate variables and affect actions and interactions class.In the model, this class is named as inter-organizational factors.The next class is actions and interactions. It expresses purposeful behaviors, activities, and interactions and is affected by dominant ground and intervention condition classes. In the model, this is named as ease of managers in organization.The last class in the model is for consequences; it is named as chaos and anarchy.This class represents the outcomes that occur as a result of adopting certain strategies and behaviors.

Causal conditions: unhealthy climate in organization	Dominant ground: unhealthy structure	Actions and interactions: ignorance of mangers in organization	Consequences: chaos
• Bad behavior of managers and staff • Lack of cooperation and participation spirit • Absenteeism and irregular attendance at workplace • Not transferring knowledge to colleagues • Inappropriate behavior	• Bad policies • Influence and power • Difference in personnel contract • Organizational culture • Incorrect evaluation criteria **Main class: rumor** • Achieving interests from chaos in organization • Difference in salaries due to rumor	• Differences in dealing with staff • Unequal bonuses, promotions, and punishments • Inconsistency between belief and act • Prefer someone to other in wrong way • Ignoring regulations	• Distrust • Lack of motivation • Reduced efficiency and effectiveness in organization • Sense of envy and rivalry in organization • Trivialization of issue in organization • Preferring relations to regulations • Norm-breaking

• Inappropriate control • Preferring relations to regulations	• Getting support from high positions • Difference between individual goals and organizational goals • Forced work • Distrust to personnel • Individual characteristics	• Ignoring ethical principles • Lack of timely notification of news • Lack of timely denying rumors	• Bad feelings toward managers
	Intervention conditions: factors within organization: • Multiplicity of roles in organization • Nepotism in selecting personnel • Characteristics of managers and properties of regulations • Organizational goals • Structural characteristics of organization		

Figure 2: Rumor spreading model in sports organizations

4. Discussion and Conclusion

Recently, the rumors have got prevalent.In certain circumstances and certain times, they have different nature. They become strong and weak according to needs and their sources conditions.Depending of their nature and influence, the rumors may increase social anxiety, decrease productivity, paralyze economic cycle, and damage the social credibility of individuals, institutions, and countries.Sometimes, they get extraordinarily strong and dominate on minds of people. In this case, the notifications and descriptions of official government sources may not even deny it and delete it from the minds of people.The rumor is not an unusual and strange

thing in human social reasonable behavior.But rather, the principle which is used in rumor is pervasive and widely used.The falsification which is used by rumor to remind, forget, visualize, imagine, and justify is exactly the kind which is seen in most human communications.Undoubtedly, the rumors may have some traces of truth.The rumors are everywhere and in all social classes; it is the oldest mass media.Before the development of writing, the speech was the only way of communication. It transferred the rumors and news, made some people reputable and some other defamed, and even caused wars.Despite the emergence of newspaper and radio and audiovisual media revolutions, today, most people still some transfer news through word of mouth.The media not only failed to prevent the emergence of rumors, but also have made it specialized. Due to special and multi-faceted features of sports, the rumor has always been considered as its integral part.Since the rumor is a process in which several factors act to create it,the identification of these factors may help the correct management of organizational rumors in sport organizations.The findings showed that the factors such as bad behavior of managers and staff, lack of cooperation and participation spirit, absenteeism and irregular attendance at workplace, not transferring knowledge to colleagues, inappropriate behavior, inappropriate control, and preferring relations to regulations are all contributing factors in causal conditions and impact the formation of rumor. Along with causal conditions, the factors such as bad policies, influence and power, difference in personnel contract, organizational culture, and incorrect evaluation criteria create rumors in the form of dominant grounds and unhealthy organization structure.The intervention conditions which were identified as inter-organizational factors in the model havecomponents such as multiplicity of roles in organization, nepotism in selecting personnel, characteristics of managers and properties of regulations, organizational goals,and structural characteristics of organization.The differences in dealing with staff, unequal bonuses, promotions, and punishments, inconsistency between belief and act, prefer someone to other in wrong way, ignoring regulations, ignoring ethical principles, lack of timely notification of news, and lack of timely denying rumors are all actions and interactions components which are labeled as ignorance of managers in organization.Finally, the consequences of rumor spreading model in sports organizations which were named as chaos include distrust, lack of motivation, reduced efficiency and effectiveness in organization, sense of envy and rivalry in organization, trivialization of issue in organization,preferring relations to regulations, norm-breaking, and inadequacy feelings toward managers.Since rumor may not be avoided in organization, its management is its best solution.According to designed model, managers should keep people aware of social events and provide quick and correct information to create mutual trust between organization and people. This may eliminate misunderstandings and misinformation.In addition, the effort to eliminate public concerns and anxieties is an effective step in preventing rumors.In good situations, the rumors rarely appear.Also, the promotion of logical thinking and moral religious education in society is a good strategy to prevent rumor.

Finally, it should be pointed out that rumor is not totally a bad thing; in some cases, it works and shows the facts that are not stated clearly.The mass media sometimes refuse stating some facts. In this case, the rumor works; but, the search for its resource and sender is necessary.

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