# The survey of information technology statuesque in Iran's National Olympic Committee (NOC) and presents the current situation

Jahan Jamalsirat

Department of Physical Education ،Yasuj Branch ،Islamic Azad university ،Yasuj ،Iran
jamalsiratj@mail.ru

**Abstract:** Nowadays, the emergence of information technology has made changes in proceedings and tasks of sports organizations. This paper aims to study the current state of information technology in the National Olympic Committee of the Islamic Republic of Iran. Khosravizadeh (2008) has introduced information technology and information management system as one of the weaknesses of the National Olympic Committee of Iran. Sy-Tak-Chy stated that using information technology was one of the achievements and successes of the first strategic plan of Malaysia's Olympic Association. Kim & Robinson mentioned that inadequate utilization of information technology is a weak point of that committee. The present study is a descriptive research in which a questionnaire was designed by the author to investigate the state of information technology. The study population included all workers employed at the National Olympic Committee. Given the equality of population size with sample size, sampling was done by total number method, and consequently the survey sample was set equal to 86. Data obtained from above-mentioned questionnaire were analyzed using descriptive statistics by SPSS software. The results showed that the state of software, hardware, and human resources indices in the National Olympic Committee was evaluated poor, good, and poor respectively by the respondents. Failure to develop information technology seems to be a problem in most third world countries and any transformation in this field is subjected to attitude change of top managers toward software and human development of information technology. Such a situation in the National Olympic Committee can be considered as a weakness and threat, while the existing hardware state can be a strength and opportunity to this committee.

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## 1. Introduction

The emergence of information technology has made changes in proceedings and tasks of organizations. Experts believe that as the steam engine and the industrial revolution brought enormous changes in people's lives, communication revolution also changed human life. Repeated use of this metaphor in various studies suggests this message that, each group or organization that is able to quickly adjust to these changes can takes the steps of development earlier, based on the experience of the industrial revolution (Wanda Orlikowski. Baroudi, Jack J. 1990). The rapid development of information technology has started several years ago and predictions indicate that rapid growth and widespread application of this technology in various aspects of human life will continue in the coming years. In today's world, information technology in not a a tool and means of job, but it is a new environment and condition of work which is known as a strong factor for economic and social changes, if realistically look at it (Lynne. Markus M. and Daniel Robey. 1988). For the first time, the term *information technology* was used by Leavitt and Wissler in 1958 in order to explain the role of computer in supporting decision making and information processing in an organization. Application of information technology allows organizations to benefit from advantages such as saving in costs, increased accuracy in the information exchange, prevention of human errors, saving in time, coherence and coordination between different tasks, and improved efficiency (Wanda J. Orlikowski.1992).

On the other hand, due to the changing pattern of life in most aspects, physical activity and sports requires serious attention as one of the components of human life. Development of physical education and sport which underlies the supply and training of healthy human resources is part of national development program (Dhillon, G. J. Backhouse. 1996). One of the major organizations responsible for sports affaires in Iran is the National Olympic Committee which is an independent, nonprofit, financially independent, and away from any racial, religious, and political trend. Based on the principles embodied in the Olympic Charter, this committee has been established to develop sports, train young people, support the Olympic movement, promote sports and the Olympic and Asian games, and participate in activities which encourage and

support peace and ethics in sport (Lynne. Markus M. and Daniel Robey. 1988). National Olympic Committee will be successful in doing its tasks when it is in compliance with technology and the necessities of today's world apply information technology as a valuable opportunity to respond to rapid environmental changes and increase efficiency, because information technology is itself one of main causes of these changes.

This paper aims to investigate the current state of information technology in the National Olympic Committee of Iran. Since information technology can be seen as a system composed of three sub-systems including hardware, software, and human resources, above-mentioned aim of this study were presented in form of more detail questions using SWOT analysis. In a study entitled *Effect of IT on the Structural Aspects of the National Iranian Oil Company* by Mohammadi in 1383, effect of application of IT on organizational complexity and reducing organizational recognition was not confirmed, but decentralization in the organization which was the main hypothesis confirmed (Dhillon, G. J. Backhouse. 1996). Shahibeyk, in a study entitled *Reengineering of Human Resources Through Information Technology*, stated that despite the rapid developments in new technologies of information, information technology will not be able to make any change until human resources departments maintain their traditional structure and hierarchy and those organizations that are indifferent towards a proper coordination with these developments have no choice to leave the competition (Wanda J. Orlikowski. 1992). In a research entitled *Study and Design The Strategic Plan of the Islamic Republic of Iran's National Olympic Committee* conducted by Khosravizadeh in 2008, inadequate utilization of information technology and information management systems was mentioned as one of the weaknesses of the National Olympic Committee of Iran. He believes that information computing and technology should be placed within the functional areas of the committee (Wanda Orlikowski. Baroudi, Jack J. 1990). Merchend et al (2000) concluded that information technology can lead to development when it is combined with informational capabilities and correct behaviors and values (*Khandelwal V.K. (2001)*). Tiamiyu studied the main barriers to effective application of information technology in Nigerian federal agencies. 4 factors including the high cost of information technology equipment, the high cost of maintenance and repair of this equipment, their persistent failure, and the high cost of information technology training to staff were determined as the key barriers to the use of information technology in this organization (*Tiamiyu M.A (2000)*).

Ni showed that information technology has no direct impact on improvement of performance, but indirectly affects organizational performance and learning as a confounding factor. So, information technology should be combined with other organizational resources in order to improve performance (*Ni, W.B. (2006)*). Sy-Tak-Chy stated that using information technology was one of the achievements and successes of the first strategic plan of Malaysia's Olympic Association (*Winter S.S., L. Taylor S. (2008)*). Kim & Robinson conducted a study to design a strategic plan for Zimbabwe Olympic Committee for the years 2002 to 2008 using SWOT analysis. Their findings showed that inadequate utilization of information technologies including lack of database and website was one of the major weaknesses of this committee (*Winter S.S., L. Taylor S. (2008)*). Taubin et al studied the effect of investment in information technology on performance at different organizational levels in industries associated with health care and concluded that increased funding of IT equipment leads to increased profitability of organization, while increased costs related to personnel working in this sector was not followed by a significant profitability for the organization (*Winter S.S., L. Taylor S. (2008)*). Currently, organizations have no choice to make changes and use the most recent technological achievements access the highest level of improvement of themselves and their staff (Lynne. Markus M. and Daniel Robey. 1988). In order to improve the quality, decrease costs, and increase productivity, various tools are used by companies and organizations, all of which rely on information technology in Weston's idea (1993) (*Du plooy N.F. (1995)*). Given the increasing importance of information technology, the ability of this technology to solve organizational problems, economic use of this technology, prominent role of National Olympic Committee in the development physical education and sport, and few studies on application of information technology in sports organizations inside and outside the country, this paper aims to study and analyze the current state of information technology at the National Olympic Committee of Iran in order to pay the way for more efficient use of this technology in the National Olympic Committee and other sports organizations.

## 2. Material and Methods

This study is a descriptive one and in terms of supervision and control degree, it is also a field research. The method used in this study is an applied one. The study population included all workers employed at the National Olympic Committee. Given the equality of population size with sample size,

sampling was done by total number method, and consequently the survey sample was set equal to 86. Questionnaires were handed out between the respondents after coordination with officials of the committee. The main variable of this study is the current and the desired state of information technology which includes software, hardware, and human resources. A questionnaire was designed by the author in order to investigate the current and the desired state of information technology. The validity of this questionnaire was confirmed by academic experts of sport management and its reliability was determined 0.81 using Cronbach Alpha formula indicating high reliability of questionnaire to measure the studied variable. Questionnaire design process included review the existing research on studied topic, development of a preliminary questionnaire, initial validation through asking the ideas of experts and selective tests, and reliability assessment by a pretest. This questionnaire includes three variables and 53 questions that part of it deals with personal traits. Questions were designed according to Likert 5-choice Scale. Data obtained from questionnaires were analyzed using descriptive statistics by SPSS 16 software.

## 3. Results

In this part, features of families are described at first, and then descriptive results of studied variables are presented. Graphs are also provided for a better understanding.

According to the results of descriptive statistics, indices of the present study including software, hardware, and human resources scored 19.86, 34.45, and 73.6 for current sate and 42.56, 44.38, and 171.24 for desired state, respectively. In other words, current state of software, hardware, and human resources indices in the National Olympic Committee was evaluated poor, good, and poor respectively by the respondents. The idea of the respondents also showed that two indices are far from the desired state in their organization

**Table 1:** State of information technology (current and desired) from the perspective of employees

| Statistics / Index | | Mean | Standard deviation | Median | Mode | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Current state | Software | 19/86 | 1/21 | 22/5 | 21 | 1707/96 |
| | Hardware | 34/45 | 1/10 | 27/0 | 32 | 2962/7 |
| | Human resources | 73/60 | 0/49 | 71/46 | 71 | 6329/6 |
| Desired state | Software | 42/56 | 0/41 | 42/3 | 42 | 3660/16 |
| | Hardware | 44/38 | 1/07 | 44/0 | 43 | 3816/68 |
| | Human resources | 171/24 | 1/11 | 172/19 | 173 | 14726/64 |

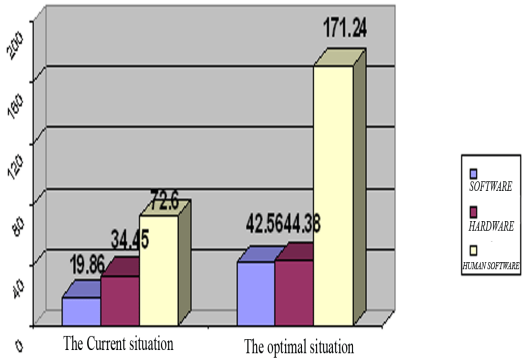


**Figure 1:** State of information technology (current and desired) from the perspective of employees at the score of each index

## 4. Conclusion

The results showed that National Olympic Committee is in an acceptable state in terms of hardware, although there is a gap to reach the desired level. It seems that the approach of equipping sports organizations with communication tools is following by the managers. Such a state is a strength and such a attitude is an opportunity to the studied organization. Although this part needs more development, hardware state of organization can be investigated good in terms of using computers, telephone, mass communication tools, fax, scanner, printer, and other accessories. These results are consistent with those of Kim & Robinson (2007) and Garisano & Hito (2007) but in contrast with the results of Tiamyu (2000) and Lav (2001) which may be because of bigger size of sample and more specific restriction for their selection.

The respondents also stated that software and human resources indices are in a poor state at the National Olympic Committee. Lack of laws supporting the use of information technology, lack of funds allocated to the IT department, insufficiency of existing software to manage the affairs at the committee, difficult access of employees to the internet, lack of integrated systems with affiliates and subsidiary federations, lack of support for designing specialized sports software at the committee, inability of committee's website to respond the needs of users, inundated information of committee's website, low capability of committee's database to respond the needs of users, and so on are some of software weaknesses at National Olympic Committee. Also, shortage of skilled labor at the committee, lack of staff familiarity with English language, lack of caring knowledge of information technology for employment, low levels of expertise in the Information Technology Department, shortage of on-the-job training on information technology, mismatch

between courses and the needs of staff, unfamiliarity of staff with network and use it and other related websites, low use of the internet for interorganizational and intraorganizational communications, lack of legal infrastructures in the field of IT, lack of supportive regulations of government in this field, giving little importance to information technology in sport strategic document, etc are some weak points of human resources at the National Olympic Committee from the perspective of its staff. It seems that all third world countries are dealing with these failures and any transformation in this field is subjected to attitude change of top managers toward software and human development of information technology. Such a situation in the National Olympic Committee can be considered as a weakness and threat to this committee. These results are consistent with Merchend *et al* (2000), Kandol (2001), and Ni (2006).

However, organizations should be very careful in applying information technology and approach it with a purposeful plan and program. Financial ability in not enough to run a successful IT, but several factors are involved in its implementation that neglecting them can lead to project failure and the loss of capital. Economic perspective to information technology in an organization is a fundamental issue which implies the need for realistic and conscious investment in this field. This investment should be done considering organizational requirements, behavioral norms of staff, and other factors involving in the successful implementation of a IT project. In addition to economic aspect of using information technology, a correct attitude about its productivity is also of importance.

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**Corresponding Author:**
Jahan Jamalsirat
Department of Physical Education, Yasuj Branch,
Islamic Azad University, Yasuj, Iran
E-mail: jamlsiratj@mail.ru

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