

## Pool Managers' Opinions about Risk Management and Examining Risk Management Practices in Pools

<sup>1</sup>Akbar Asghari, <sup>2</sup>Kamal Easapour, <sup>2</sup>Seyed Amin Alavi and <sup>2</sup>Akbar Poursaleh

<sup>1</sup>Abhar Branch, Islamic Azad University, Abhar, Iran

<sup>2</sup>Khalkhal Branch, Islamic Azad University, Khalkhal, Iran

---

**Abstract:** The purpose of this research was to examine situation of risk management in pools and its practices in Ardabil province. The research was descriptive-survey. Population included all pool managers in Ardabil province. Sample composed of pool managers who held competitions in their pools (70 pool managers). The instrument was two questionnaires: risk management questionnaire and risk management practices questionnaire. Cronbach  $\alpha$  was calculated 87%. Results showed that pools did not benefit a suitable risk management. Risk management practices differed significantly between male and female managers. Furthermore, private and public pools had significant different in processes of risk management. Because lack of safety in pools threatens swimmers' lives, pool managers should learn basic knowledge of risk management sport law.

**Key words:** Risk management • Risk management practices • Public pools • Private pools

---

### INTRODUCTION

Risks exit naturally in sport. Even safest programs can never prevent incidents and injuries [1]. Based on rules, sport managers should provide plans of compensation and risk management to make environment safe for sport participants [2].

Nowadays, sport is great business and industry in both recreational and professional levels [3]. Aquatic sports are ones of most popular sport activities. Aquatic sports have created valuable opportunities for occupation and employment in universities, public and private schools, parks, community centers, military bases, health clubs, hospitals and organizations of social services [4]. Human legal and political needs have created risk management. Risk management identifies ways against potential threats affecting negatively sport event [5- 7]. Of particular popularity, swimming is enjoyed by a large number of people. In summer, thousands people enjoy swimming pools, aquatic centers, lakes and seas. Sport and recreational organizations face a wide range of risks. Plan of risk management must be used among organization, employees and customers. Plans of risk management and safety support organization to have a good structure. Risk management must be part of staff's education in occupational environments of sport and recreation [8]. First, risk management was considered in industry. Long time later, it was considered in sport

management. Sport records of risk management were little before 1960s. Safety, commitment and legal responsibilities have been mentioned but specific problems of sport industry have not. Thousands of people are injured while participating or watching sport every year. Most of participants were injured during sport event before 1970s. Risk management is a scientific way to face risks. It predicts compensation and decreases financial compensation. Risk management propounded in sport and recreation in the middle of 1970. Risk management focuses on decrease of risks and injuries in sport establishment and facilities. Customers' injuries are common risks for litigation which managers of sport establishment and facilities should try to decrease them [9- 11].

In 21<sup>st</sup> century, risk management relates closely to sport industry and attempts have been done to decrease compensation and losses resulting from disregarding risks [1].

Major Reasons to Develop Risk Management in Sport:

- Litigation in sport has been increased in the world.
- Legislators and courts worry about unsafe environment with risk for participants and spectators.
- Nowadays governments are not immune from litigation in sport injuries [12].

Efficient and secure environments can decrease litigations and increase appeal of activities. Effective risk management should identify litigation and perilous factors to offer their solutions [1].

In contemporary century, risk management is very important for customers' litigation and safety. Importance of risk management has led to predicted events as follows [2]:

- Showing consequences of litigation clearly
- Teaching strategies of risk management and providing safe environment
- Introducing risk management as key factor in designing sport and recreational establishment
- Preparing professionally for risk management
- Developing comprehensive plans of risk management
- Demanding employment certificate in activity programs

#### **Risk Managers Supervise Following Fields in Sport and Public Facilities:**

- Making organized educational programs
- Making simple and understandable signs to show policies of establishment to swimmers
- Documenting affairs to decrease responsibility
- Eliminating dangerous and unimportant activities
- Supervising the whole establishment and equipment
- Ensuring fair and sufficient supervisions
- Ensuring to have qualified and educated staff
- Planning to train educated staff to treat injuries and face incidents
- Providing emergency plan
- Planning and implementing plans in emergency evacuation
- Reporting all the injured and fired offenders

Koozeshian [11] examined risk management practices in public and private pools. He concluded there was no significant difference between identifying, assessing and controlling risks with type of public or private pool management. However, there was significant difference between evaluating risks and type of management. Moreover, age was related significantly with processes of risk management but work experience was not related significantly with risk management practices.

Doosti [12] showed stadiums had no suitable risk management by examining risk management in football stadiums. He suggested managers of stadiums should learn basic knowledge of risk management and sport law to make environment of stadiums safer.

Harwell [13] represented every risk management plan had special characteristics. He introduced ability of influencing others, technical expert knowledge of financial risk, preventing skills and creativity as risk managers' abilities and skills.

Lhotsky [14] indicated low relationship between individual characteristics and risk management practices. Stadium capacity was related highly to risk management practices. Right risk management practices were better in bigger stadiums than smaller.

Styles [9] demonstrated big establishment with a large number of customers had the most incidents. In these places, part time employees and BA students were employed. Facility managers devoted risk management plans in establishment to decrease legal and financial risks. Findings showed lack of risk management plan led to incidents. Furthermore, facility managers had no sufficient knowledge about risks .

Hsiao [7] found managers of government aquatic centers paid more attention to provide medical history than private aquatic centers. Moreover, managers of government aquatic centers were less interested in inspecting establishment than private aquatic centers. Old male managers of aquatic centers emphasized on participants' medical history and physical examination more than female managers. Slack [15] saw high educated sport coaches supervised better than low educated sport managers.

This study examined pool managers' opinions about risk management and risk management practices in pools to answer these questions:

- Do pool managers have risk management plan?
- How are risk management practices in pools?
- Is there significant difference between processes of risk management and type of pool management?

#### **MATERIALS AND METHODS**

**Methodology:** This applied research was descriptive-survey and done as field study.

**Population and Sample:** Population was the whole managers of public and private pools in Ardabil province. Sample composed of seventy managers both male and female.

**Instrument, Data Collection and Analysis:** Research instrument included risk management questionnaire with 42 items [1] and questionnaire of risk management practices in aquatic centers with 50 items [7].

Cronbach  $\alpha$  of risk management questionnaire was calculated (0.87) [12]. Questionnaire of risk management practices in aquatic centers was shortened based on sociocultural condition. Shortened form had 45 items. Chronbach  $\alpha$  was calculated (0.85) [11].

Information was collected from pool managers. They filled the mentioned questionnaires.

Descriptive statistics were frequency, mean, percentage presented in graphs. Independent t- test and Pearson correlation coefficient were used to analyze data. Software was SPSS 18 and Excel.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Descriptive findings are presented into two parts; individual characteristics of pool managers and risk management.

**Individual Characteristics of Pool Managers:** Pool managers' work experience was considered. Pool managers' certificate was examined too. Moreover, pool managers' educational field was examined.

**Risk Management:** There were 10 indexes to examine risk management which seven indexes were related to pools. They were standard instructions, risk manager in pools, inspection records, organizing ticket selling, insurance, documents of incidents and injuries and appropriate signs and guidance.

### Hypothesis Tests:

**Hypothesis 1:** Identifying, assessing and controlling risk are significantly different based on type of pool management.

Table 5 presented there were significant differences in identifying risk ( $p= 0.043$ ), assessing risk ( $p= 0.032$ ) and controlling risk (0.011).

**Hypothesis 2:** Risk management practices are significantly different between male and female managers.

Table 6 presented there was significant difference in risk management practices between male and female managers.

**Hypothesis 3:** Risk management practices are significantly different in public and private pools.

Table 7 presented there was significant difference in risk management practices of public and private pools.

Table 1: Pool managers' work experience

Work experience	Frequency	Percentage
Fewer than 2 years	16	17
3-5 years	27	37
6-10 years	17	26
More than 10 years	10	20

Table 2: Pool managers' certificate

Frequency percentage of certificate			
High school Dip	2 year Dip	BA	Higher education
15	17	54	5

Table 3: Pool managers' educational field

Frequency of educational field	
Physical education	Non physical education
14	68

Table 4: Indexes of risk management in pools

Indexes	Frequency percentage of positive responses	Frequency percentage of negative responses
Standard instructions	18	71
Risk manager in pools	12	81
Inspection records	29	78
Organizing ticket selling	32	72
Insurance	27	69
Documents of incidents and injuries	34	88
Appropriate signs and guidance	30	74

Table 5: Identifying, assessing and controlling risk in public and private pools

	Df	T	P
Identifying risk	69	1.312	0.043
Assessing risk	69	1.678	0.032
Controlling risk	69	1.923	0.011

Table 6: Risk management practices between male and female managers

	Df	t	P
Risk management practices	69	2.411	0.003

Table 7: Risk management practices in public and private pools

	Df	t	P
Risk management practices	69	2.571	0.011

## DISCUSSION

There were 68% non physical education educated managers and 14% physical education educated managers. It was different from Lhotsky's finding [14]. This is maybe reason of non- familiarity of pool managers with methods and practices of risk management. Physical education students study lessons entitled management of sport events and tournaments, planning and managing sport facilities (obligatory courses) and sport law (optional course). These lessons explain holding sport competitions and safety of sport facilities and establishment for participants and spectators. Physical education students know methods of risk management and safety therefore physical education educated managers usually apply them more than other managers.

There were 54% managers being less than five year work experienced. It was different from Lhotsky's finding [14]. It showed lack of stability in pool management. Political managers instead of expertise managers lead probably not to consider secure and risk problems in pools.

### **Most Indexes of Examining Risk Management Were Not Suitable as Follow:**

**Standard Instructions:** There were 71% respondents who reported lack of standard instructions of risk management in pools. It is essential to make instructions. An effective approach is to teach or hold seminars about risk management in pools.

**Risk Manager in Pools:** There were 80% respondents who told lack of risk manager in pools. In Iran, it is a new responsibility in sport. It has not been considered so much. Risk manager is necessary to be taught to be employed in pools.

**Inspection Records:** There were 78% respondents who expressed lack of inspection records in prominent divisions of pools, electronic and mechanical instruments.

**Organizing Ticket Selling:** There were 72% respondents who said not to have organized ticket selling. Chaotic ticket selling disturbs swimmers' mental quiescence.

**Insurance:** There were 69% respondents who declared swimmers were not insured. Insurance is necessary in risk management. It decreases probable litigation.

**Documents of Incidents and Injuries:** There were 88% respondents who indicated lack of documents of incidents and injuries. Managers do practices to prevent incidents due to these documents.

**Appropriate Signs and Guidance:** there were 74% respondents who mentioned lack of appropriate signs and guidance in pools. They are essential to control and prevent incidents.

Risk management is not only to obey organizational rules and regulations. Incidents showed most of them happened for risk management was not according to related regulations and regulations were not effective according to risk elements. Organizations dealing with potential risks based on rules can maybe prevent risks by improvement of management and good performance and face lots of incidents [16]. Lack of attention to critic factors and superficial and cross-section performances threaten sport in Iran. Sport does not benefit a comprehensive, scientific and compiled risk management plan in Iran. It has led to unfortunate incidents in pools.

Findings showed pool management was significantly different to assess risks in private and public pools. Private pools controlled risks more than public pools. Moreover, managers of private pools performed in time table of repairmen, keeping equipment and building better than managers of public pools. Customers were prevented regularly to attend pool while repairing in private pools. Public pools insured swimmers more organized than private pools. Private pools enjoyed more teaching safety and using risk signs than public pools.

Female managers differed significantly from male managers about risk management practices. Female managers practiced more risk management than male managers resulting in their better practices in aquatic centers. Female managers identified and controlled risks more than male managers. It was different from Hsiao's finding [7].

In most aspects of risk management processes, private pools were better than public pools due to different goals and strategies. Private pools increase management and service quality for attracting customers and profitability. They have more safety practices to decrease losses and damage in aquatic centers. Shortage of humanity resource is problematic to implement risk management in public pools. Public pools have more customers therefore they should have more humanity resource. A few pool managers had risk management plan. Teaching and holding seminars are suggested to develop risk management plan.

Sport establishment with poor structure, plan and design may lead to problems for managers and participants. Poor design of establishment may limit to keep and supervise establishment. The most important is to maximize probability of danger for participants. These factors lead to injury and damage [17].

Risk management is so considerable for physical education teachers and sport managers. They must prevent risks for participants. They examine all dimensions of sport place regularly before participants' attendance plus check equipment and establishment to find any erosion or impairment [3].

Risk management is a complicated phenomenon especially in aquatic centers. It predicts and assesses factors of risk. Risk management predicts potential factors of risk in software and hardware aspects to predict preventing approaches. Consequently a peaceful and enjoyable environment will be provided for employees, athletes and spectators.

#### REFERENCES

1. Lhotsky, G., 2000. An analysis of risk management at NCCA division I-A football stadiums. Ph.D. Thesis, University of Florida, Department of Sport Manage., pp: 42-53.
2. Eazadi, B., 2008. Examining risk management practices in public and private pools. M.A. Thesis, Tarbiat Modarress University, Tehran, Iran,
3. Caroll, M.S. and D.P. Connaugon, 2006. Proper Maintenance of athletic fields and legal liability. *J. Physical Education, Recreation and Dance*, May/June : 77,7 5. Research Library Py, pp: 100.
4. Fawcett, P., 2005. Aquatic facility management. Human kinetics, USA.
5. Ammon, R. Jr., 1993. Risk and game management practices in selected municipal football facilities. Ph.D. Thesis, University of Northern Colorado, pp: 187-189.
6. Ammon, R. and R. Southall, 2005. Sport facility management, West Virginia University, pp: 81-87.
7. Hsiao, R., 2005. Analysis of risk management practices and litigation status in aquatic centers. Ph.D. Thesis, College of Education, Florida State University. Copyright by proquest Information and Learning Company.
8. Parks, J.B., 2003. Contemporary sport management. Translated by Ehsani, M. Tarbiat Modarress University Press.
9. Styles, A.E., 2002. The development of risk management recommendations and guidelines for a university recreational facility. Ph.D. Thesis, Kent State University of Ohio. Copyright by proQuest Information and Learning Company.
10. Girvan, G. and J.T. Girvan, 1993. Risk management practices in athletics-A content analysis. *J. Physical Education, Recreation and Dance*, 4: 64. Res. Library, pp: 26.
11. Koozehchian, H., 2009. Risk management practices in Private and public pools in Tehran. Scientific-Research *J. Physical Education Faculty, Tehran, Iran*, 2: 23.
12. Doosti, M., 2008. Examining risk management in sport complexes in Tehran. 5<sup>th</sup> student conference of physical education, Mazandaran, Iran,
13. Harwell, R., 2003. A study of effective risk management practices in higher education. Ph.D. Thesis, Baylor University, Waco, Texas. Copyright by Proquest Information and Learning Company.
14. Lhotsky, G.J., 2006. An analysis of risk management at NCAA division I-A Football stadiums. Ph.D. Thesis, College of Education, Florida State University. Copyright by Pro Quest Information and Learning Company.
15. Slack, D.A., 2004. Risk management health care practices in NCAA athletic programs. Ph.D. Thesis, Department of Exercise and Sport Science, Univeristiy of Utah, Copyright by proQuest Information and Learning Company.
16. Shah-Mansoori, E., 2006. Factors of sport crises and preventing methods in software, hardware, media and body health. *Research of Behavioural Sci.*, 12: 80-90.
17. Seidler, T.L., 2006. Palnning and designing safe facilities. *Journal of Physical Education, Recreation and Dance*, 5 : 77. Research Library, pp: 32.