Evaluating Islamic Azad University's Websites within the Knowledge Management Standards Viewpoint

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Abstract. The present research has been done by a descriptive survey method. This study aims to assess knowledge management standards in the seventh, fourteenth and fifteenth regional branches of Iran Islamic Azad University (IAU) websites. The statistical population of this study is consisted of all websites of IAU in these three regions. An evaluation model known as knowledge Access, Creation and Transfer (K-ACT) was presented for evaluating the academic websites. Findings show that in standard of knowledge access Sirjan branch has acquired the highest rank among all branches of three regions. In standard of knowledge creation the website of Zahedan branch, which is placed in the 14th region, has obtained the highest rank. The latest standard is knowledge transfer and Bardsir branch has acquired the best position among all of them. Totally, among these three standards, Zahedan branch obtained the highest rank among all branches of IAU and after that Sirjan branch was placed in the next position. In the end Hajiabad branch got the lowest position.

Keywords: Islamic Azad University, Academic websites, knowledge management, knowledge access, knowledge creation, knowledge transfer

1. Introduction

The organization of information on a website for information retrieval is a vital and important work. It is essential for users to find their needed information and can understand the theme of information. Techniques, skills and the methods of organizing information on websites have been discussed by a lot of experts such as information specialist and web designers [1]. In designing an academic website must pay attention to user's needs. Recognizing users is an important aspect in designing an academic website [2]. The users of academic websites are students, researchers, faculty members who search special information and try to find their needed information and use them in their jobs [3]. Students and researchers search efficient websites where they can access to required information without sinking in huge information and several dizzying links [4]. Because of access to information for faculty members and totally for students of universities is very important and vital; as a result, designing academic websites for receiving new information is an obvious affair [5]. We must notice that portals for receiving information in each research and scientific center are the doorway these centers. There is not special and commendable method for designing the websites of scientific centers but totally a set of standards or check lists has been explained for designing these websites [6]. This research with regarding to the importance of organizing knowledge in academic websites wants to evaluate the websites of the IAU in the 7th, the 14th and the 15th regional branches.

2. Related Studied

Stover [7] in his research made a tool for assessing academic websites. He observed that several elements in designing academic websites were important and significant. These elements were: access to online catalogs, reference tools under the web, and so on. In the research that Bao, played on websites of Vareage University in Amsterdam he noticed that the existence of two-sided links on university website, in comparison with other related universities, was a basic part in ranking the quality of academic website [8]. Lan**,** performed a research work on using the quality of information architecture on website of University Taiwan's library. This study did over 1784 users in the library of Taiwan University in order to study the rate

of their understanding and experience about the website of the library. [9]. Dragulanescu [10] in his paper has stated that the speed of increasing information on the internet, especially by World Wide Web, is very much in comparison with information which gets access in other group medias. Jask, in his research has studied the websites of Bristol University. He states that inserting search strategies on the academic websites has considerably attracted the opinion of users [11]. Vaughan and Thelwall made a research on Canada Universities and showed that the college scientific level and the language of university are two very important elements for linking to university website. Scientific high level of college is means of more links to the websites [12]. Lee and his colleagues [13] have made an interesting study about the rate of accessing, creating and transferring of knowledge in governmental websites. The results of the study, which performed among Asian countries and North American ones, showed that 36 present of the studied standards have been used on websites. Maheshwari and his colleague in their research work presented an interesting framework for management observation in designing governmental portals. [14]. Washington University [15] in a research work entitled: "assessing the quality of websites" in addition to giving importance to information quality has reported standards for assessing quality of websites.

3. Research objectives

3.1. General objective

The present research has been planned to assess knowledge management standards in the websites of IAU in the 7th, the 14th and the 15th regional branches.

3.2. Specific objectives:

- Determining the statue of the IAU websites based on the rate of knowledge access and assigning their grade in this standard.
- Determining the statue of the IAU websites based on the rate of knowledge creation and assigning their grade in this standard.
- Determining the statue of the IAU websites based on the rate of knowledge transfer and assigning their grade in this standard.
- Determining strength and weakness points of the IAU websites in three fields of access, creation and transfer knowledge.

4. Research Questions

1. How is the rate of using knowledge management standards in the websites of the IAU in the 7th, the 14th and the 15th regional branches?
- 1.1 How is the rate of using knowledge management standards in the field of knowledge access in IAU branches?
- 2.1 How is the rate of using knowledge management standards in the field of Knowledge creation in IAU branches?
- How is the rate of using knowledge management standards in the field knowledge transfer in IAU branches?
2. How is the grade and rank of each branch based on three standards of access, creation and transfer knowledge in comparison with other branches of the IAU?

5. Methodology

The present research has been done by ananalytical survey method. The statistical population of this study is consisted of all branches in three regions of IAU. An evaluation model known as knowledge access, creation and transfer (K-ACT) was presented for evaluating the websites. So, the model of (K-ACT) was chosen to collect the data and then with using the method of direct observation and a checked list based on this model studied the research population. The statistical population of this study consist all websites of IAU in the 7th, the 14th and the 15th regional branches IAU.

6. Results

In response to the first question part 1, this standard with 6 secondary elements (totally with 22 units) has been studied.The data collected about this standard are presented in table 1. With regard to table 1we can find that among surveyed regions the seventh region with using 28/5 percent of surveyed standards has placed in the first position. After that, the fourteenth region with 26/5 percent has stayed in the next place, and finally the fifteenth region with 25/72 percent has been placed in the last position.

Table 1: Using of the knowledge access standards

Academic regions	Access to website (1)		Search (5)		Browsing site (3)		Personalized (5)		Accessibility (4)		Presentation of information (4)		Total (22)	
	number	percent	number	percent	number	percent	number	percent	number	percent	number	percent	number	percent
7 region	1	100	1.09	21.8	1	33	1.85	37	0.23	5.75	1.04	26	6.28	28.5
14 region	1	100	1.28	25.6	1.14	38	1.25	25	0	0	1	25	5.85	26.5
15 Region	1	100	0.91	18.2	1.08	36	1.33	26.6	0.5	12.5	0.83	20.7	5.66	25.72
Total average	1	100	1.09	21.8	1.07	35.6	1.47	29.4	0.24	6	0.95	23.75	5.93	27

The data collected from answers to the first question part 2, like part 1, this standard also has been shown in the manner of comparative in table 2. With notice to the received average in the three regions can find that the fourteenth region with the average of 47/5 percent, in this standard, is in front of other regions. The seventh region is placed in the second position.

Table 2: Using of the Knowledge Creation Standards

Academic regions	Collecting information of users (2)		Users feedback (1)		Collecting data about site (3)		Total (22)	
	number	percent	number	percent	number	percent	number	percent
7 region	0.47	23.5	0.95	95	0.95	31.6	2.38	39.6
14 region	0.42	21	1	100	1.42	47.3	2.85	47.5
15 region	0.33	16.5	0.91	91	1	33	2.25	37.5
Total average	**0.4**	**20**	**0.95**	**95**	**1.12**	**37.3**	**2.49**	**41.5**

The data related to the first question part 3, are presented in table 3. This standard has been illustrated in the manner of comparative in tale 3. In this table can observe that totally the seventh regional branches with the average of 23/6 percent have used more standards in the field of knowledge transfer.

Table 3: Using of the Knowledge Transfer Standards

Academic regions	Cooperation of organization with users (7)	awareness of Information (7)	Supporting users (5)	sharing of Resources (3)	Total (22)

	number	percent	number	percent	number	percent	number	percent	number	percent
7 region	1.47	21	1.95	27.8	0.14	03	1.57	52.3	5.2	23.6
14 region	1.71	24.42	1.42	20.3	0.28	5.6	1.57	52.3	5	22.72
15 region	1.83	26	1.66	23.7	0.16	3.2	1.66	55.3	4.5	20.45
Total average	**1.67**	**23.85**	**1.67**	**23.85**	**0.19**	**3.8**	**1.6**	**53.3**	**4.9**	**22.27**

In table 4 all three standards (knowledge access, knowledge creation, and knowledge transfer) have been compared to each other in three regions. The data of table 4 show that the websites of the seventh region of IAU have achieved the highest grade among three regions with very little difference and the fifteenth region is placed in the latest position. The total average of using knowledge management standards in three regions is equal with 26/66 percent.

Table 4: Using of the Knowledge Management Standards

Academic regions	Knowledge Access standards (22)		Knowledge Creation standards (6)		Knowledge Transfer standards(22)		Total knowledge management standards (50)	
	number	percent	number	percent	number	percent	number	percent
7 region	6.28	28.5	2.38	39.6	5.2	23.6	13.86	27.72
14 region	5.85	26.5	2.85	47.5	5	22.72	13.71	27.42
15 region	5.66	25.72	2.25	37.5	4.5	20.45	12.41	24.82
Total average	**5.93**	**26.95**	**2.5**	**41.6**	**4.9**	**22.72**	**13.33**	**26.66**

The data collected in response to the second question, about the grade and rank of each academic branch based on three standards (knowledge access, knowledge creation, and knowledge transfer) are as follow: in part of knowledge access standard, Sirjan branch, among all branches of three regions, has received the first rank while, Jenah, Hajiabad, Parsian centers and Jask branch all from the 15th region have placed in the latest rank. In part of knowledge creation standard, Zahedan branch in the 14th region has obtained the highest rank among all branches of the7th, the 14th and the 15th regions whereas, Hajiabad and Mahan center and Jask and Bafgh branches have stayed in the latest position. Also, in part of knowledge transfer standard, Bardsir branch has placed in the best position and in the worst position Hajiabad, Mahan and Hormoz centers and Mehriz branch have placed. Totally, among three standards and all branches, Zahedan branch has received the best rank and then Sirjan branch has stayed in the next place and in the latest position Hajiabad branch has placed.

The data collected in response to the second question, about the grade and rank of each academic branch based on three standards (knowledge access, knowledge creation, and knowledge transfer), have been shown separately in table 4.

7. Discussion

In the present research 40 websites of academic branches in the 7th, the 14th and the 15th regions evaluated that 21 websites belonged to seventh region, 7 websites belonged to the fourteenth region and 15 websites allocated to the fifteenth region. The above mentioned results show that these three regions in IAU, by using the standards related to knowledge access, knowledge creation and knowledge transfer point of view are not in suitable statue. Also, research deputies and designers of websites have not noticed to the knowledge management standards. Several branches only due to being accompany with other branches and research forcible regulations have designed their academic websites. Totally, the reasons of lacking the use

of knowledge management standards in academic websites are related to the lack of knowing designers from users' needs and being new of these websites. In some cases these academic branches have not used from expert manpower in designing their websites. Also, the lack of accurate management, budget shortage, active manpower, and the lack of foresightedness are other cases that there are active in designing websites. Academic branches which have employed expert specialist and experienced educational groups such as Sirjan and Zahedan branches have designed useful websites. These two academic branches due to having sufficient budget, specialist manpower and collaboration of information specialists have designed suitable websites.

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