



## The Future Study of Sports Tourism in Iran: Using Scenario Wizard and COPRAS

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### ABSTRACT

**Purpose:** The present study was conducted to do futuristic research on sports tourism in Iran using Scenario Wizard and COPRAS.

**Methodology:** After examining the topic and reviewing the research literature, interviews were done with twelve sports professors and sports tourism experts. Finally, the saturation views method was used as a criterion for finalizing the sampling process. Among the findings, 15 critical factors were identified as the most important ones affecting sports tourism in Iran. Using MICMAC software, the identified factors were structurally analyzed. The factors found to be more influential were sorted out and ranked directly and indirectly.

**Findings:** The research findings showed that according to the country's sports experts, the most critical factors affecting the development of Iran's tourism are as follows. Natural factors and characteristics of the destination, planning, and formulation of strategy, infrastructural factors, advertising and information, welfare services, marketing, transportation, the level of people's participation, technology and advanced knowledge, security and trust, international relations, budget, factors Social, economic factors, local issues. Then, the most important among them was presented as the main drivers of sports tourism. Based on the results, the two factors of local issues and international relations were found to have the most significant impact on sports tourism in Iran. Concerning these two key factors, four scenarios of resilient development, the darkness of sports tourism, fragile development, and ideal development were proposed for the future of sports tourism in Iran. Finally, by performing the COPRAS technique, the delicate development scenario was selected as the most likely scenario for sports tourism in Iran.

**Originality:** Since there is no sufficient future study of sports tourism in Iran, this article tries to develop the various aspects of sports tourism in this country.

### Keywords

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## 1. Introduction

One of the factors playing a crucial role in the economic development of cities and villages and one that, through foresight and scenario design, can lead to the economic growth and improvement of people's quality of life is the development of the tourism industry. Nowadays, tourism is just becoming one of the fundamental pillars of world commerce and economy, and many experts and executives consider it the central pillar of development. It is one of the critical aspects of countries' economies and has received a special place in the economic development of some countries in the past decades. It is so essential that some economists refer to it as invisible export. In fact, in the current world of economic competition, tourism is an industry that, like all other industries, needs special equipment and facilities and demands studies and research for its proper growth and development. In many countries of the world, tourism has become one of the most complex businesses. As a multi-faceted socioeconomic activity, it has various functions and fruitful outcomes, including the creation of jobs, income generation, earning foreign currencies, and strengthening the infrastructures of social and commercial activities (Taghvaei & Hosseinekhah, 2018).

According to a report by the World Tourism Organization, tourism is one of the world's most important and flourishing sectors, with an international income that has increased by more than 87% during the twenty-first century's first decade. The same report attests that tourism earnings have risen from 570 billion dollars in 2000 to more than 1000 billion dollars in 2010. Similarly, in 2014, the World Tourism Organization announced the growth of this industry to be 4.6 percent, while according to a more recent report, the total export income from foreign tourism in 2013 was 1.4 trillion dollars worldwide. The total revenue earned from foreign tourism in various tourist destinations worldwide through providing such services as accommodation, food and beverages, entertainment, shopping, other ones, and buying goods has increased to an estimated 1159 billion dollars since 2013 (Rahbar & Gudarzi, 2017).

Today, one type of tourism that has become very popular and welcomed by people from countries worldwide is sports tourism. Holding various kinds of international, national, and regional sports competitions and games strongly incentivizes people to attend or watch sports events. Among major sports events is the World Cup of Football, held every four years, Olympic and Paralympic events, and many other international games and races. Sports tourism is a trip that one takes for non-commercial reasons. It may happen formally or informally and is mainly done for having fun, watching sports, applauding the athletes, and participating in sports events. It takes place based on a short-term or defined plan inside or outside one's country. According to their capacities and potential, some countries have started creating sports centers focusing on one or more specific sports fields. Considering its geographical location and special weather conditions, any country can be the right site for producing and providing one or more sports services, followed by travel and tourism services (Moharramzadeh, 2019).

Tourism is a new industry in Iran, and many people are unaware of its importance in tourism. According to the available data, technologically-advanced countries earn more than 20 billion dollars annually from sports tourism. Despite its unique tourism, natural

attractions, and historical monuments of several thousand years, Iran has not benefited much from this area (Moharramzadeh, 2019). Through holding significant sports competitions, Iran has managed to decrease its unemployment rate by 19% annually. In agreement with the above discussion, statistics also indicate that most countries in the world have proper grounds for implementing sports tourism and have, thus, begun to invest many financial resources in the economy of sports tourism. Iran is among the first ten countries with the highest tourism diversity in the world (Safdel et al., 2014).

In scientific research on sports and tourism in Iran, not much has been done about tourism policies, especially the policy-making processes regarding sports tourism, which shows that the importance of this case has not been fully recognized and understood. Indeed, Iran needs detailed and long-term studies, research, and careful planning to succeed in attracting sports tourists and help boost its economy. Due to the diversity of its climatic conditions, Iran can host sports camps from European and Asian sports teams, but this will be only realized when the necessary infrastructures are provided for the development and advancement of this field. The importance of paying attention to tourism development in making macro-policies has been recognized to some extent, and measures have been taken. Indication of this concern is Iran's Twenty-year Vision Plan, in which the field of tourism, it is intended that the country reach an average of 20 million tourists by 2025 (ICCIMA, 2017). This is also the first document of strategic and futuristic thinking in Iran, paying particular attention to such significant areas of policy-making, based on which the country's development directions are designed and stratified in different sectors. This Vision Plan has aimed at dividing the regional work so that each province has assumed responsibilities according to its capabilities and all work toward realizing the country's desired future. In the meantime, Iran is faced with serious crises that make these plans and predictions undergo fundamental changes. According to results from future studies done in Iran, some of the most critical challenges in this country directly impact tourism. They are the water crisis, inefficient economic structures, unemployment, the social capital crisis, the rise of dust storms, social depression, bureaucratic corruption, and inflationary stagnation (ICCIMA, 2017).

In recent years, strategic planning has widely been applied in the sports organizations of our country Iran. Still, to improve future studies' performance, the necessity of strategic planning should also be considered in other areas. The futuristic study of sports tourism aims at studying the future of this industry and helps us make efficient decisions and long-term plans and realize how sports tourism can affect sports development. This study aims to find the strengths and weaknesses of the social, economic, technological, and political fields and to use the ideas from future research in the scenario-writing method to help expand and develop sports tourism. Therefore, in the present research, we intend to study the future of sports tourism in Iran using Scenario Wizard and COPRAS programs.

## **2. Theoretical background**

In their research "identification and prioritization of factors affecting the attraction of international tourists: the case study of Isfahan city", (Soleimani & Leila and Zamani, 2017), have studied the case of tourism in the city of Isfahan as a significant site of tourism

attractions. Their study found that historical, cultural, and natural attractions have ranked the highest among the attractions, followed by security, rural tourism, and advertisement, which rank fourth to sixth among the factors affecting tourism in this city. Also, exchange rate, religion, and infrastructures hold the seventh to ninth places among the factors. At the same time, the facilities for issuing visas to Iran and medical tourism occupy the tenth and eleventh places, respectively. Their research project (Naeim Abadi et al., 2017) measured the satisfaction of sports tourists with the security of coastal areas as a case study of Chabahar port.

According to the results obtained and the field studies conducted, and because the Chabahar region is one of the border areas of the country, it is concluded that authorities shall consider the potential of this port in creating direct and indirect employment and increasing income for residents, strengthening solidarity between ethnic and religious groups, and enhancing the national unity. These are stimuli for producing local goods and services, reducing poverty, and improving the social and cultural life of the local community. Despite all such potential, it was found that the level of security for tourists at this site has often been underestimated. Amini et al. (2017) studied “barriers to Iran's sports tourism” and concluded that administrative barriers with 0.549 weight, infrastructure with 0.519 weight, and information and communication with 0.496 weight are the three high-ranking barriers. According to their study, the existence of the mentioned barriers is one of the primary challenges retarding the success of the tourism industry. Still, it can be effectively overcome through development measures to solve Iran's tourism problems (Amini et al., 2017). Khajehpour and Doosti (2017) have reported efficient management as one of the key factors helping the development of sports tourism in Ramsar Green Roof Complex (Khajehpour & Doosti, 2017). Another study (Rahbar & Gudarzi, 2017) investigated sports tourism attractions in Isfahan province. It concluded that natural-sports attractions have first place, non-sport attractions (historical and cultural heritage) have the second place, and sports attractions hold the third most important place for developing sports tourism in this province and attracting tourists. Therefore, they suggested managers should propose more efficient plans for tourism development in Isfahan province, especially regarding nature and sports attractions. In their research, (Rahimi et al., 2016) also worked on “presenting a model for sports tourism development in Iran's international sports events”. Based on their results, building, and equipping special centers and sites for sports tourism focused on volleyball in different climatic regions of the country. Also, devising laws and regulations for encouraging and supporting domestic and foreign investments in Volleyball tourism seem necessary measures to be undertaken.

In “Identification and Analysis the Process of Co-creation Experience in Sports Tourism of Iran”, thematic analysis was used to analyze the qualitative data, and the results revealed six organizing themes such as market research, creation of dynamic organization, working team development, conversation, and interaction, as well as creation of shared commitment and participation. The quantitative analysis revealed that the most effective and impressionable components are the creation of shared responsibility and a dynamic organization, respectively. Market research is the minimum significant component, while the creation of active organization is the maximum (Rastgoo

et al., 2022). Fallah Kazemi and Atghia (2021) in “What Are the Sports Tourism Factors and Potentials in Guilan Province” have argued that aquatic sport in coastal cities could lead to the prosperity of sports tourism in Guilan Province and turn this province into a hub of water sports tourism. To achieve this goal, sports, welfare, transportation infrastructure, and proper advertisements are necessary (Fallah Kazemi & Atghia, 2021). In “The Role of Social Marketing in Sports Tourism Development in Tehran Province”, Data were analyzed by SPSS21 and LISREL 8 software. The results showed seven components of social marketing. They include technology, government laws and policies, environment, economic status, safety and security in sports venues, use of ads and communication channels, all but the last item have a positive and significant effect on the development of sports tourism (Moradi Doliskani & Atghia, 2021).

In a research project entitled “Business models for active tourism experiences of outdoor sports events”, (Perić et al., 2019) concluded that the basis of having a sound, systematic analysis is that one thing, such as the futuristic studies of sports tourism, should be analyzed in association with other factors, especially environmental ones. Such factors are either intentional or unintentional on the one hand and either internal or external on the other. Yeh et al. (2018) conducted research entitled “The full economic value of sports tourism in belt and road development: an environmental perspective”. Their research applies the methods of environmental studies to the case of sports events. They conclude that according to significant policy and management principles, it is evident that we should pay more attention to the natural environmental surroundings and reduce the risk of ecological and sports event problems (Yeh et al., 2018). Likewise, Ratten and Ferreira (2017) conducted a study entitled “Entrepreneurship, innovation and sport policy: Implications for future research”. They believe that the success of sports tourism, inspired by business models, comes from its principal capital being a combination of public and private sector property (Ratten & Ferreira, 2017). Their research entitled “Sports tourism: a comparative study of the people from Brazil and Hong Kong” (Uvinha et al., 2018) found that sports tourism capacities differ in different countries. For example, the capacities of sports tourism in Brazil are much higher than those of Hong Kong.

One reason for this difference is the high popularity of sports in Brazil compared to Hong Kong. In "Future directions of research towards sports demand", (Macdonald, 2017) maintains that the amount of research in the field of sports behavior, the contribution of knowledge, economic methodologies, and general specialties have all undergone important progress in the current century. At the same time, through the interference of the sports economy, market, advocacy, and strategies related to this economy, the future can bring challenges for human life. That is why we need interdisciplinary research to increase our understanding of designers of games and competitions and the factors affecting their presence and outlooks. Papanikos (2015) examined the “Economic Impacts of Marathon as a Sports Tourism Event”. The main finding of this research was that, seen as sports tourism, the Marathon depends, to a large extent, on the interests of investors. Therefore, first, we should see the economic benefits and costs of the Athens’ Marathon, and second, realize that cooperation regarding the Athens Marathon can raise investment in this city. In the few studies conducted about sports tourism in Iran, few aspects have been investigated, and no study that may consider the whole of it, including all the factors affecting sports

tourism in our country, has not yet been carried out. Few studies have been done to specifically investigate the futuristic study of sports tourism in Iran and abroad, either. One of the novelties of the present study is that it identifies the factors affecting sports tourism in Iran and presents scenarios for its future course of progress (Papanikos, 2015).

### 3. Methodology

The primary research methodology applied here is a mixed one (qualitative-quantitative). In terms of purpose, this research is a practical one, and in terms of research type, it is a case study. The research's statistical community (subjects) included sports management professors and faculty members, sports tourism specialists, and sports management Ph.D. graduates that were selected through snowball- the inferential method. The data and necessary information were collected by studying previous research and conducting an open interview which consisted of 8 general questions. Interviews were conducted with twelve sports tourism professors and experts, and the views saturation method was used to finalize the samples. In the quantitative phase of the study, the matrix questionnaire and questionnaire for soliciting the ideas of the experts used in the interviews were employed. Using MicMac software (mutual effects analysis approach) to identify the key factors affecting sports tourism, data analysis and determining the critical factors of sports tourism were done. After that, and based on results from analyses, a scenario was developed using the Scenario Wizard software in four consecutive steps, which will be discussed in more detail later. In the end, the COPRAS technique was also used to select the best and most probable scenario.

### 4. Results

#### 4.1. Extraction of the final propellants

In the first phase of the study, key factors affecting the development of sports tourism were identified and extracted by reviewing the research literature and conducting interviews. After identifying and sorting out 31 key factors, in the second phase, these factors were presented in the form of a questionnaire to the experts, who were asked to decide the importance of each factor by scoring them from 1 to 5. The results from 25 questionnaires filled out by experts were analyzed using SPSS software and through a two-sentence test, and finally, 15 critical factors were selected based on the experts' opinions. The list of final factors is presented in Table 1.

**Table 1.** Screened final factors.

Factors affecting sports tourism in Iran
Natural elements and characteristics of the sites
welfare services
technology and efficient knowledge
social factors
Planning and strategy
Marketing
Security and Trust

Factors affecting sports tourism in Iran
Economic factors
Infrastructure
Transportation
International Relations
Local issues
Advertising and information
The level of people's participation
the budget

After determining the list of influential factors, to identify and rank them, in the third step of the work, the variables were entered into the mutual effects analysis matrix. After developing a standard questionnaire, the analysis of mutual effects was left to the experts. Then, the average sum of the collected responses was entered into the Micmac software. In the fourth stage (analyzing the outputs of the Micmac software), after the questionnaire data was given to the software, the impacts of the factors affecting the future of sports tourism in Iran were directly and indirectly calculated. This software also calculates the degree of compatibility of the matrix in two modes of influencing and being influenced. The higher the percentages, the higher the compatibility of the factors and the rationality of the relationship among the factors. The software classifies and ranks the factors directly and indirectly under the two headings of influencing and being influenced, shown in two Figures 1 and 2. As can be seen from Figures 1, according to ranking based on the direct and indirect influence of the variables, for example, the critical factor of “international relations” has a similar place in the order based on direct and indirect impacts. But "marketing" ranks first indirect effects ranking and second in indirect effects ranking. This comparison is also valid for other variables.

Direct Influence		Indirect Influence	
MDL matrix		MLL matrix	
Rank	Variable		Variable
1	9. Marketing		3. Technology and efficient knowledge
2	6. Local Issues		9. Marketing
3	7. International Relations		7. International Relations
4	3. Technology and efficient knowledge		6. Local Issues
5	4. Security and Trust		4. Security and Trust
6	12. Natural elements and characteristics of the sites		12. Natural elements and characteristics of the sites
7	5. Budget		5. Budget
8	10. Transportation		10. Transportation
9	13. Planning & Strategy		13. Planning & Strategy
10	14. Infrastructure Factors		15. Advertising and information
11	15. Advertising and information		11. The level of people's participation
12	11. The level of people's participation		14. Infrastructure Factors
13	2. Economic factors		2. Economic factors
14	1. Social Factors		1. Social Factors
15	8. Welfare Services		8. Welfare Services

Figure 1. Classification of variables based on their direct and indirect influence.

Direct Influence		Indirect Influence	
MDL matrix		MLL matrix	
Rank	Variable	Variable	
1	15. Advertising and information	15. Advertising and information	
2	4. Security and Trust	4. Security and Trust	
3	10. Transportation	12. Natural elements and characteristics of the sites	
4	12. Natural elements and characteristics of the sites	13. Planning & Strategy	
5	13. Planning & Strategy	10. Transportation	
6	1. Social Factors	7. International Relations	
7	2. Economic factors	2. Economic factors	
8	5. Budget	5. Budget	
9	7. International Relations	1. Social Factors	
10	6. Local Issues	14. Infrastructure Factors	
11	9. Marketing	11. The level of people's participation	
12	14. Infrastructure Factors	8. Welfare Services	
13	8. Welfare Services	9. Marketing	
14	11. The level of people's participation	6. Local Issues	
15	3. Technology and efficient knowledge	3. Technology and efficient knowledge	

Figure 2. Classification of variables based on their direct and indirect influence.

The software calculates the relationships of the factors from the questionnaire completed in a matrix and finally considers a total numerical score for each factor. Then, based on this score, it ranks them based on their direct and indirect influences. The factors that get the most outstanding scores will have to change effectiveness accordingly. Upon analyzing the variables based on their efficacy by the Micmac software, as output, they are placed in the form of a Figure 3.

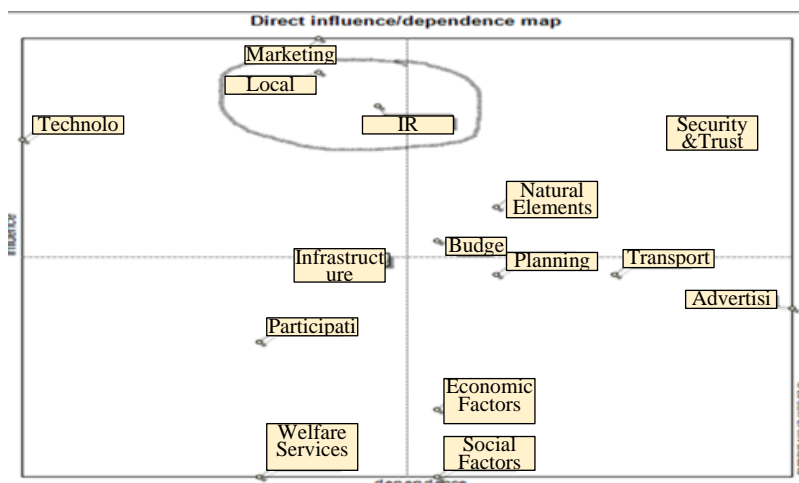
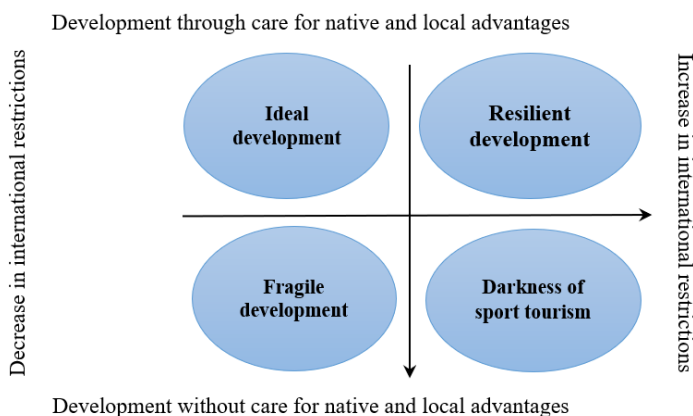


Figure 3. The status of crucial factors in the output of Micmac software.



Interpreting the variables as presented in the Micmac chart, it was determined that the two variables of local issues and international relations are among the most influential variables affecting the future of sports tourism in Iran. Considering these two key factors, four scenarios of resilient development, the darkness of sports tourism, fragile development, and ideal development were proposed for the future of sports tourism in Iran, as presented in Figure 4.



**Figure 4.** Plausible scenarios of sports tourism in Iran.

#### 4.2. Formulating plausible scenarios of sports tourism in Iran

According to the impact index, the two drivers of local issues and international relations have been used to form the research scenarios. The root definitions tool was used to develop research scenarios. The root definition tool consists of the following components: customers or the addressee, agents or actors, transformation process or service delivery, owners of the problem, worldviews or interests of stakeholders, and the system or problem environment. Four scenarios for the future of sports tourism are formed from the combination of the two modes of each driver. The driver of indigenous issues provides the two opposite modes of development, emphasizing native advantages versus development without regard to indigenous benefits. International relations drivers consist of the two states increasing international restrictions against decreasing global limits. Each scenario explains different situations and conditions. The status of other driving variables should also be described to describe each scenario. The Figure 4 shows the four scenarios and their titles. The names of the scenarios are described according to the contents and events that occur in each scenario. Based on the two main drivers described above, four scenarios of *resilient development*, *the darkness of sports tourism*, *fragile development*, and *ideal development* were proposed for the future of sports tourism in Iran.

#### *4.2.1. Resilient development scenario*

This scenario is gained by combining the two factors of paying attention to local advantages and increased international restrictions and sanctions. Customers of the tourism system and people using sports tourism services are mainly domestic and regional tourists because of international restrictions. The agents of this system are national authorities like those related to the Ministry of Sports and Cultural Heritage Organization and provincial managers and officials. The process of providing services takes place on a domestic or regional scale. There is a consensus over the stance of this scenario based on which the development of tourism and sports tourism, in addition to economic advantages and job creation, has cultural and medical advantages such as increasing soft power and creating vitality among a vast portion of the society including especially young people and women. The owners of this tourism system, the Ministry of Sports and Youth and the Cultural Heritage Organization, are the two significant possessors of the scenario. The system's environment is in Iran, especially the tourism business environment.

#### *4.2.2. The darkness of the sports tourism scenario*

Due to external pressures and restrictions and insufficient internal determination for tourism development. This scenario depicts the worst situation for sports tourism. Customers of the tourism system are domestic people who use tourism services. Due to the inefficient performance of agents and government sectors involved in the system and because of extensive external pressures, the nature of actors and agents is different in different regions. In this scenario, the government actors have been passive. Because of pressures from institutional groups, the possibility of the presence and attendance of non-state actors is also very poor. The process of providing sports and tourism services is very ineffective and does not follow international standards as it is sparsely done throughout the country. In this scenario, the tendency for the development of tourism and sports tourism, holding sports events and conferences, and the presence of tourists and foreign teams pose many threats to the country in the field of culture. Government actors own the system, but these actors have acted passively, and powerful traditional groups significantly influence them. Communication with other countries is reduced considerably and limited in the system's environment, tourism, and sports environment inside the country.

#### *4.2.3. Fragile development scenario*

Although many international restrictions are removed, and it is now possible to transfer technology and knowledge and provide for receiving capital and investment in this scenario, the negligence of authorities and their lack of concern for resources other than oil, which is an easy source of income, the development of the tourism and sports will be fragile and unstable. The customers and consumers of the tourism system are tourists, domestic and, to some extent, foreign agents who need and use tourism and sports tourism services. Activists of the system are government officials and decision-makers in sports and tourism, but they act passively and inattentively. Providing services has improved because of the relative betterment of the situation upon removing international

restrictions. Still, sports services and the quality of holding sports events and festivals are far from adhering to global standards. Overcoming international limits is necessary for developing sports tourism, but it is not sufficient. The worldview of this scenario is such that from the point of view of policy-makers and decision-makers, especially government ones, the tourism sector and its various subdivisions, such as sports tourism, are not worth the effort, and this is due to the lack of consensus, among the multiple decision-making sectors and comprehensive cultural sensitivities in the country. For them, oil resources and related accessories are an easy and hassle-free source of income. The system's owner is the Ministry of Sports and other organizations in charge of the tourism sector, which act hesitantly and are influenced by the decisions of different ministries and departments, including the government's economic team and cultural institutions. The environment affected by this system includes sports, domestic, and somewhat regional tourism.

#### *4.2.4. Ideal development scenario*

This scenario depicts the best and most ideal situation for tourism development. In this scenario, removing international restrictions and planning based on local capacities are combined to create a suitable ground for developing sports tourism in Iran. System customers are tourists, athletes, sports professionals, and sports managers at the domestic, regional, and global levels. System activists are government agents and authorities in sports, tourism, economy, and culture, and they work in complete coordination with each other toward developing sports tourism. Providing sports and tourism services follows global standards for domestic and foreign tourists and athletes. The worldview of this scenario is that complete development is not possible by just focusing on the oil resources. Instead of focusing on one advantage for creating resilience and stability over time, multiple points and benefits should be emphasized. The system's owners are the managers of sports organizations, and those of the culture, art and tourism sectors also control the system. Other departments, including economic executives, support their decisions. The environment of the system is that of international sports and tourism businesses.

#### *4.3. Choosing the most probable scenario*

The COPRAS technique is used in this stage to choose the best and most probable scenario. COPRAS is used during decision-making and is employed when we want to prioritize or rank various options or alternatives. To do that, it uses the weight of the factors involved. At first, this technique was developed to determine the priority and effectiveness of options. This method is often used for evaluating the value of both the minimum and maximum criteria, in which case the effects of the minimum and total measures on assessing the results are considered separately.

Furthermore, this method is efficient and easy to use and does not require complicated mathematical operations or calculations. To that end, a questionnaire about the scenarios was provided to the experts, who were asked to express their opinions about each of the scenarios based on the three criteria of being compatible with current trends, being consistent with recent statistics and data, and being plausible and factual. Then the experts' opinions were gathered using the geometric mean method, and the results thus gained

were finally used for ranking the scenarios (Fathi et al., 2022). The steps to perform the COPRAS approach are given below;

- We are determining the weight of the criteria using one of the usual methods such as entropy, hierarchical process, Fuller, etc.

**Table 2.** The weight of each criterion using the Shannon entropy model.

Scenarios	Weight of criteria
Compatibility with current trends (A1)	0.16
Compatibility with current statistics and data (A2)	0.24
Probability based on facts (A3)	0.11

- Formation of the decision-making matrix

**Table 3.** Decision-making matrix.

Scenarios	A1	A2	A3	Scenarios
Resilient development	7	5	5	Resilient development
Fragile development	7	7	3	Fragile development
Ideal development	3	3	9	Ideal development
The darkness of sports tourism	4	1	7	The darkness of sports tourism

- Forming the weighted matrix, the values of each option are multiplied by their weight and divided by the sum of the values:

$$\frac{q_i}{\sum_{j=1}^n x_{ij}} * x_{ij} = d_{ij}$$

**Table 4.** Normalized values of the criteria.

Scenarios	A1	A2	A3	Scenarios
Resilient development	0.013	0.025	0.016	Resilient development
Fragile development	0.012	0.031	0.009	Fragile development
Ideal development	0.009	0.024	0.048	Ideal development
The darkness of sports tourism	0.010	0.007	0.032	The darkness of sports tourism

- Then the positive and negative criteria are specified and separated. By a positive or consistent criterion, we mean a criterion whose desirability increases when its value increases.
- After determining the positive and negative criteria, their final values should also be determined. The algebraic sum of positive and negative values is calculated separately through the following relationships:

$$\sum_{zi=-} dij = s_j^-$$

$$\sum_{zi=+} dij = s_j^+$$

**Table 5.** Values related to the positive and negative differences of the criteria.

Scenarios	A1	A2	A3	+Sj	-Sj
Resilient development	0.013	0.025	0.016	0.099	0.016
Fragile development	0.012	0.031	0.009	0.113	0.009
Ideal development	0.009	0.024	0.048	0.069	0.048
The darkness of sports tourism	0.010	0.007	0.032	0.077	0.032

- In the final stage, the following relationship is used to calculate the absolute value of each Q option.

$$Sj^+ + \frac{s_{min}^- \sum_j^n = 1 S_j^- x}{s_j^- \sum_j^n = 1 \frac{s_{min}^-}{s_j^-}} = Q_i$$

**Table 6.** Ranking of scenarios facing sports tourism in Iran.

Scenarios	Nj	Qj	-Sj	+Sj	Rank
Resilient development	77.57	0.128	0.016	0.099	2
Fragile development	100	0.165	0.009	0.113	1
Ideal development	47.87	0.079	0.048	0.069	4
The darkness of sports tourism	55.75	0.092	0.032	0.077	3

According to the results thus obtained, the scenarios of fragile development, resilient development, and darkness of sports tourism hold the first to third positions, respectively. Based on the analyzed criteria, the most likely scenario is fragile development. According to experts, the delicate development scenario is the worst, and the ideal development scenario is the best for realization in Iran. Still, the fragile development scenario is more likely to be realized.

## 5. Discussion and conclusion

The current research project sought to identify the most plausible and probable scenarios for the future development of sports tourism in Iran. To that end, the key factors of the case were extracted by reviewing the related research literature and conducting interviews with experts. The findings of the study indicated that according to sports experts, the most important factors affecting the development of tourism in Iran could be summed up as follows: Natural factors and characteristics of the sites, planning and devising strategies, infrastructural factors, advertising and information, welfare services, marketing, transportation, people's participation, advanced technology and efficient knowledge, security and trust, international relations, budget, social factors, economic factors, and local issues. Results from our study are in accord with those of (Soleimani & Leila and Zamani, 2017), (Naeim Abadi et al., 2017), (Khajehpour & Doosti, 2017), (Rahbar & Gudarzi, 2017), (Esfahani et al., 2009), (Karizki et al., 2016), (Rostamkalai, 2015), (Hataminejad et al., 2017), (Yeh et al., 2018), (Ratten & Ferreira, 2017), (Uvinha et al., 2018), (Papanikos, 2015), (Perić et al., 2019).

After identifying the factors affecting the future of sports tourism in Iran, the identified factors were structurally analyzed using Micmac software. The effective factors were

identified and ranked directly and indirectly, and then the most important ones were presented as the main drivers of tourism in Iran. Based on the results, the two factors of “local issues” and “international relations” were found to pose the greatest impact on sports tourism in Iran. Based on these two key factors, the four scenarios of “resilient development”, “darkness of sports tourism”, “fragile development,” and “ideal development” were proposed for the future of sports tourism in Iran. The “resilient development” scenario is presented following a combination of local issues, advantages, and increased international restrictions. “Darkness of sports tourism”, as the second scenario, is a metaphor for referring to the dire situation that may come about due to the pressure of external restrictions and the lack of efficient management principles within the country. Under the third scenario, “fragile development”, although the use and import of technology and attraction of capital can occur to some extent, such challenges as poor management can endanger the development of tourism and sports. The fourth scenario, which we termed “ideal development”, introduces the best situation, and comes about out of removing international restrictions and using domestic and local capacities.

In the meantime, by assuming the limits of human knowledge, future studies intend to draw the future situation and help the managers, among others, in tourism and sports tourism. Based on the results from this research, suggestions have been proposed which include the following: Planning for raising general awareness about sports tourism in the society; changing people's attitudes and outlooks about tourism and sports tourists; establishing an organization for exclusively carrying out activities related to sports tourism; expanding and promoting and advertising the native capacities and attractions of Iran to other countries in order to attract sports tourists; doing wide advertisement through media, social networks, and other new platforms in order to promote local capacities of Iran and introduce them to foreign sports; producing and broadcasting programs and shows for raising global awareness about more indigenous and local sports and related festivals; holding international sports events in Iran for attracting sports tourists; preparing and launching publications, newspapers, magazines, catalogs and specialized brochures for sports tourism and introducing attractions and events related to sports tourism; establishing constructive international relations with other countries for enhancing cultural exchanges and introducing Iran's capabilities in attracting sports tourists and acquainting the tourists with Iran's native and local issues and attractions and finally getting plans and permissions for hosting sports competitions and games; establishing diplomatic relations abroad so as to change the negative attitudes towards Iran; training and employing native people in the sports tourism sector meaning to reduce conflicts between native people and sports tourists; specifying standards and frameworks for future studies meant to have a comprehensive view of this domain of socioeconomic activities (especially in the future studies about sports tourism); conducting more future studies in the field of sports and sports tourism in order to increase future studies records and using them for improving sports; and finally, cultivating team-working zest among sports experts in order for them to further cooperate in doing future studies.

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## آینده پژوهی گردشگری ورزشی در ایران با استفاده از سناریو ویزارد و کوپراس

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### کلیدواژه

آینده‌پژوهی

سفر

سناریونگاری

جهانگردی

گردشگری

### نوع مقاله

پژوهشی اصیل

### چکیده

**هدف:** پژوهش حاضر با هدف آینده‌پژوهی گردشگری ورزشی در ایران با استفاده از سناریوویزارد و COPRAS انجام شد.

**روش:** پس از بررسی موضوع و مرور پیشینه پژوهش‌ها، مصاحبه با دوازده نفر از اساتید و خبرگان گردشگری ورزشی انجام شد. از روش اشباع نظری به عنوان استاندارد برای پایان نمونه‌گیری استفاده شد. در میان یافته‌های بدست آمده ۱۵ عامل کلیدی به عنوان مهمترین عوامل مؤثر بر گردشگری ورزشی در ایران شناسایی شدند. با به‌کارگیری نرم‌افزار MICMAC عوامل یادشده تحلیل ساختاری شدند. عوامل اثرگذار و تأثیرپذیر به صورت مستقیم و غیرمستقیم شناسایی و رتبه‌بندی شدند و مهمترین آنها به عنوان پیشران‌های اصلی ارائه شدند.

**یافته‌ها:** یافته‌های تحقیق نشان داد از نظر خبرگان ورزش کشور، مهمترین عوامل مؤثر بر توسعه گردشگری ایران شامل موارد زیر هستند: عوامل طبیعی و ویژگی‌های مقصد، برنامه‌ریزی و تدوین استراتژی، عوامل زیرساختی، تبلیغات و اطلاع‌رسانی، خدمات رفاهی، بازاریابی، حمل و نقل، میزان مشارکت مردم، تکنولوژی و دانش سرآمد، امنیت و اعتماد، روابط بین‌الملل، بودجه، عوامل اجتماعی، عوامل اقتصادی، گویه‌های بومی. بر اساس نتایج دو عامل گویه‌های بومی و روابط بین‌الملل بیشترین تأثیر را بر گردشگری ورزشی در ایران دارند. براساس این دو عامل کلیدی چهار سناریو توسعه تاب‌آور، ظلمت گردشگری ورزشی، توسعه شکننده و توسعه ایده‌آل برای آینده گردشگری ورزشی در ایران ارائه شد. در نهایت با انجام تکنیک COPRAS سناریوی توسعه شکننده به عنوان محتمل‌ترین سناریوی گردشگری ورزشی در ایران انتخاب شد.

**اصالت و ابتکار مقاله:** از آنجایی که تحقیقات آینده‌پژوهی گردشگری ورزشی کافی در ایران وجود ندارد، این مقاله سعی دارد جنبه‌های مختلف گردشگری ورزشی در ایران را توسعه دهد.

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