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# Sports Business Journal

**Scientific Semi-annual Journal  
of Alzahra University**

Winter and Spring, 2021  
Vol. 1, Issue. 1, Serial Number 1

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All submissions must include a structured abstract, following the format outlined below. These four sub-headings and their accompanying explanations must always be included:

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**Note that:**

Title fonts in English (Times New Romans 14), abstract text fonts in English (Times New Romans 10), full-text fonts of the manuscript (Times New Romans 11) as well as headings (Times New Romans Bold 12), and subheadings (Times New Romans Italic 11). Title fonts in Persian (B Titr 14) and abstract text fonts in Persian (B Nazanin 10).

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The number of references of each manuscript should be between 40 and 50 references. Systematic review and Meta-synthesis manuscripts are excepted. However, sending the list, names, and complete details of the articles used for review in a table as a supplementary file is necessary.

**References examples:****Journal article**

Memari, Z., Rafei Boldaji, S., & Pouyandekia, M. (2021). How is the Football Schools Franchise Using a Valuable Approach to Revenue-Generating Capacity in Iranian Football Clubs? *Sports Business Journal*, 1(1), 31-44. <https://doi.org/10.22051/sbj.2021.36864.1008>

**Book**

Corbin, J., & Strauss, A. (2008). *Basics of Qualitative Research: Techniques and Procedures for Developing Grounded Theory*. SAGE Publications. <https://books.google.com/books?id=0TI8Ugvy2Z4C>

**Book chapter**

Blase, K., Van Dyke, M., Fixsen, D. L., & Bailey, F. (2012). Implementation science: Key concepts, themes, and evidence for practitioners in educational psychology. In *Handbook of Implementation Science for Psychology in Education* (pp. 13-34). <https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9781139013949.004>

**Conference proceeding**

Schreiner, R., Daniel, J. o., Junginger , C., Hauser, T., & Hoener, O. (2017, 31 May-2 June). *Soccer coaches' education within the German tid program: perceptions of the quality and need for development*. World Conference on Science and Soccer - Rennes, France. [https://wcss-rennes2017.sciencesconf.org/data/pages/Proceedings\\_WCSS\\_17.pdf](https://wcss-rennes2017.sciencesconf.org/data/pages/Proceedings_WCSS_17.pdf)

**Dissertation**

Kim, J. (2008). *An Analysis of Talent Development in Korean and German Football* [Seoul National University]. <https://www.semanticscholar.org/paper/An-Analysis-of-Talent-Development-in-Korean-and-Kim/5fff3eeafe4f5a4465bc1fbb0714ff7367392d55>



### Print Newspaper Article

Grohmann, K. (2014, July 14). Investment, youth planning are secret of Germany success. *Reuters*. <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-soccer-world-ger-success/investment-youth-planning-are-secret-of-germany-success-idUSKBN0FJ1K920140714>

### Blog Post

Amigone, M. (2015, June 23). Dutch Soccer Coach Jan Pruijn Shares Secrets from His Years Training Youth Players. *ACIS Educational Tours*. <https://acis.com/blog/dutch-soccer-coach-jan-pruijn-shares-secrets-from-his-years-training-youth-players/>

### Report

Chesler, D. (2013). *2001-2013 The Evolution of Youth Academy Programs* (Technical Director Course - International Academy Case Study, November, Issue. <http://resources.usoccer.com/n7v8b8j3/cds/Email/131106-TECHNICAL-SUMMARY-ICS-GERMANY-Chesler-v.1.pdf>

### Webpage

Fuller, J. (2020, August 5). *Football Coaching Courses: How to become qualified?* Pitch Hero Ltd. <https://blog.pitchero.com/football-coaching-courses>

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- **Author details.** All authors of a manuscript should include their full name and affiliation on the cover page of the manuscript. Where available, please also include ORCIDs and social media handles (Facebook, Twitter, or LinkedIn). One author will need to be identified as the corresponding author, with their email address normally displayed in the article PDF (depending on the journal) and the online article. Authors' affiliations are the affiliations where the research was conducted. If any of the named co-authors moves affiliation during the peer-review process, the new affiliation can be given as a footnote. Please note that no changes to affiliation can be made after your paper is accepted.
- **Figures.** Figures should be high quality (1200 dpi for line art, 600 dpi for grayscale, and 300 dpi for color, at the correct size). Figures should be supplied in one of our preferred file formats: EPS, PS, JPEG, TIFF, or Microsoft Word (DOC or DOCX) files are acceptable for figures that have been drawn in Word.
- **Tables.** Tables should present new information rather than duplicating what is in the text. Readers should be able to interpret the table without reference to the text. Please supply editable files.
- **Equations.** If you are submitting your manuscript as a Word document, please ensure that equations are editable.

## Editor-in-Chief Lecture

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Before and at the beginning of the Iranian Football Premier League in the 1980s, sports managers and presenters used marketing techniques in practice. However, the study and research in business in sports has officially started in sports sciences since 2005. Professors and sports management students have welcomed did their thesis and dissertations on various topics of sports business. Specialist professors and colleagues in the sports business have also compiled and translated valuable scientific books on it. During the last 15 years, this field's quantitative and qualitative growth has progressed so that today, most universities in the country in sports marketing management have established MSc and Ph.D. courses.

After the quantitative growth, the importance of qualitative development in a managerial, research, and executive field is the provision of specialized scientific, research, and executive infrastructure. There are administrative and infrastructural deficiencies in sport. Consequently, semi-professional and professional sports have not met the growth opportunities. The marketing specialists are stuck in a vicious cycle due to the Iranian sports market's lack of growth and development. In other words, with insufficient growth of infrastructure, it is not possible to grow the market and professional sports. Therefore, the lack of market development and professional sports makes it impossible to develop infrastructure and increase specialists' skills, experience, and human resources.

Meanwhile, specialists in universities and research institutes are engaged in their educational and research work, and managers and experts in the field of executives in sports are managing the Iranian sports market in their way. However, both groups agree that the capacity of the Iranian sports market in an 80 million people society is more than this. So far, the possibility of optimal growth of employment potentials, income generation, and socio-cultural potential has not been provided.

One of the missing links in this vicious cycle is the scientific journals of sports marketing. Although they have sincerely published the scientific articles of the researchers in marketing during these 15 years, they sometimes eliminated the valuable and high-level articles in this field. Because the lack of editors' professionals of the mentioned publications stopped the processing list, and their files have been closed. However, some were eventually published, and some have never had the opportunity to be published. Perhaps for some reason, we could understand the editors' decisions. Because sometimes, the placement of marketing studies and research in the scope of current publications was less understandable, and it was necessary to do as soon as possible to publish specialized journals in this field.

By changing the regulations of scientific journals, it became possible to obtain a license and provide facilities for publishing the *Sports Business Journal*. Its publication would not have been possible without the professional, infrastructural, technical, and financial support of Alzahra University and its esteemed editorial board members. Therefore, while thanking all those involved and colleagues and respected authors for submitting their valuable articles, it is hoped that colleagues in submitting their manuscripts and esteemed judges in guiding the dear writers and researchers as much as possible, the journal in the way that is helpful. May it be a valuable asset in the growth of the sports business in Iran and precious heritage for the future.

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## The Effects of Sports Mega-Events on Host Communities: A Systematic Review of Studies in Three Recent Decades

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### ABSTRACT

**Purpose:** This review was purposed to systematically explore how host communities have been affected by the sports mega-events. This systematic review identified the related literature strengths and weaknesses, identified the existing gaps in this regard, and provided the following researchers with new state-of-the-art strategies and implications.

**Methodology:** The Web of Science databases, Scopus, Google Scholar and PubMed have been thoroughly explored. Moreover, a manual search has been carried out in the most relevant references and documents to ensure sufficiency. Indeed, data surveys and extraction were conducted based on a predefined protocol, and finally, 40 selected documents have been analyzed.

**Findings:** The results revealed that the effects of sports mega-events on the host communities could be categorized into positive and negative ones. Most studies have explored subjects inferred from the findings, including socio-economic impacts, tourism, heritage, image, media, hygiene, cultural, and environmental effects. However, other affected has implications by prostitution-related, psychological, spatial, commercial, voluntary, financial and recreational issues have been rarely considered.

**Originality:** This study provides policy-makers and event planners with a complete summary of the studies conducted in the past three decades, which is a valuable and credible source to realize the related decision-making processes. Reviewing the documents revealed points about the effects of holding big events that had previously received less attention.

### Keywords

Hosting Impacts  
Event Management  
Sports Mega-Events

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## 1. Introduction

Sports mega-events are included in social and cultural mega-events globally of palatial, famous and prestigious characterizations grasped by different society classes (Roche, 2000). These events are deemed those long one-time events that deeply affect, whether positively or negatively, the host communities (Brent Ritchie, 1984; Kim et al., 2006). This effectiveness has been merely considered positive by most host applicants. They have simplified to achieve the host for such events with naïve premises, while repeatedly observed hosting these events would negatively affect the host communities. In this regard, (Müller, 2015) stated that every significant event could not be considered "mega". Indeed, what makes a mega-event distinguished from the major ones is the event size. Regarding size, investment, and effects, the mega-events are so great to an extent which affects the entire community economy and are widely reflected and echoed in global media (Hover et al., 2016).

In other words, sports mega-events in virtue of various dimensions, including visitor-friendly attractiveness, destination image and urban transformations, can attract extensive media coverage (Müller, 2015). Olympic Games and World Cup are considered the most prominent and famous sports mega-events in which many visitors and audiences are ever interested. They have an entire stock of unique, untouchable features and dreams realized once a 4-year certain period (Shone & Parry, 2004). Therefore, constructing tourism infrastructures and absorbing numbers of foreign visitors are highly treated as one of the most distinctive benefits of hosting sports mega-events. Such factors cause the hospitality industry to be grown in long-term times, and the host country or community is fortunately situated on the mounting tourism map and growth in the soon future. It is evident that tourism growth is a distinctive mode to attract additional investments, and compensate organizational costs, spent in such events (Peeters et al., 2014). The host cities try to reconstruct their cultural, economic and urban visions by holding these events to compete and guarantee a financial benefit (Viehoff & Poynter, 2016).

Therefore, hosting the sports mega-events seems reasonable as highly expected positive socio-economic, cultural, political and environmental effects caused after the act (Greenwell et al., 2019). These effects lead developed and developing countries to increasingly request and announce their readiness to hold such events (Horne & Manzenreiter, 2006). However, possible adverse effects should never be ignored by the policy-makers and researchers. In general, there are some literature relevancies about the systematic review of sports events and their consequences. They have been conducted with different methodological approaches. Of the most related studies, the following cases can notably mention:

- 1- Developing a physical activity legacy from the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games: a policy-led systematic review (Weed et al., 2012)
- 2- A systematic review of the Chinese outbound tourism literature: 1983–2012 (Keating et al., 2015)

- 3- The Olympic Games and raising sport participation: a systematic review of evidence and interrogation of policy for a demonstration effect (Weed et al., 2015)
- 4- Sports event legacy: A systematic quantitative review of the literature (Thomson et al., 2019).

Although various studies have been globally released on sporting event effects, especially the mega-events, there is no exact and rich information on all possible positive and negative impacts caused by the sports mega-events. Scientifically systematic methodologies can play a remarkable role in this field. Hence, this systematic review has been conducted to conclude and provide the related literature findings and results regularly and identify the existing gaps. Consequently, it can be effective in the making-decision process for sports managers, policy-makers, and government officials. Furthermore, this systematic review can help future researchers explore all positive and negative outcomes of the sports mega-events and mention these outcomes better.

This study uses a systematic review approach to identify the possible positive and negative effects of events. Also, highlighting the strengths and weaknesses and identifying gaps in past research has been one of the main goals of the present study. The results of this study may reduce some of the ambiguities about the possible positive and negative effects of sports mega-events. The results of this study can provide a roadmap for scholars and managers of sports events to have a more comprehensive understanding of the hosting effects of sporting events.

Also, the essential difference between this study and some previous studies is the multidimensionality of this study. In our study, the economic, social, cultural, political and environmental impacts of sport mega-events simultaneously considered. Furthermore, positive and negative effects were categorized and introduced in each of the dimensions mentioned above.

## **2. Method**

As mentioned, this study was a systematic review carried out by collecting secondary information or data. The data and information used to describe and interpret the subject have been collected from the previous studies.

### ***2.1. Search strategy***

The Web of Science, Scopus, Google Scholar and PubMed have been thoroughly reviewed. Moreover, a manual search was conducted regarding the keywords related to sports management and sports events to make confident of information sufficiency. To more clarify, the search strategy is annexed in more detail at the end of the article.

### ***2.2. Selection criteria and document inclusion***

One of the most significant components in the systematic review studies is selecting reliable and valid criteria to include more comprehensive and rich documents. Some agreed inclusion criteria were applied in the present study as follows: a) documents

released within 1990-2019, b) documents focused on exploring sports mega-events and their effects, c) documents reported in English or finally represented in English, d) full-text documents with a reasonably scientific structure, e) documents published in the indexed scientific viable journals. Accordingly, unscientific reports, unreliable documents and evidence have been excluded from the body of this systematic review.

### ***2.3. Document selection and evaluation***

Two independent evaluators reviewed all the documents retrieved and recovered from databases. Then, the perceived discrepancies between those two evaluators were referred to a third party to avoid any bias during the research process (Edwards et al., 2002; Gianola et al., 2013; Goldkuhle et al., 2018; Zeng et al., 2018). Generally, selecting the intended documents has been conducted according to the primary research purpose and intuitive judgment.

### ***2.4. Extracting data***

Based on the study objectives, the data extraction form was predesigned. The main components of the data collection form included: authors' names, title, journal, publication year, objectives, study type, case of study, time and geographical domain, population or participants, data collection and analysis methods, as well as related findings and resources used. It is highly worth noting that the present article is a segment of a more comprehensive study, so it is only considered as a part of that study, and it was purposely focused on the effects of the mega-events on the host community. This study was proposed to explore the effects caused by the sports mega-events mentioned in studies spanned from 1990 to 2019. Therefore, 823 studies had been first found out through the primary search. Then, 326 and 457 were respectively removed under redundancy and irrelevance. Thus, 40 documents would be finally analyzed using intuitive judgment based on the research proposed objectives. These documents are annexed in [Appendix 1](#).

### ***2.5. Analysis of results***

According to inconsistency observed in the collected data and impossibility in achieving a specific reliable classification, qualitative explicit content analysis was chosen to analyze findings. Qualitative research with implicit contents was impossible and unsuccessful to accomplish the intended goals of this study. Hence, both positive and negative effects of hosting major sporting events were identified, and they were then categorized. To better understand the impacts of mega-events, the positive and negative impacts have been separately drawn and identified using the online WordArt software<sup>1</sup>. This method is an attractive arrangement of randomly positioned words, where the most important words are more significant than the others. In this study, comments with more frequency in literature would be intentionally displayed larger. In order to be more explicit, the negative and positive effects caused by hosting events are well separated in

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<sup>1</sup> <https://wordart.com/create>



the drawn figures. This means that the negative and positive impacts are marked in red and blue, respectively.

### **3. Results**

According to the systematic review conducted, the most published studies in the recent three decades have been related to economic and social effects. Subsequently regarded, Word Claude's online tools were used to display better and easily quicker understand the Sports Mega-event consequences. In our opinion, such tools are applied to display the textual data visually, and they show words embedded in a text as word clouds. Hence, frequencies are indicated by graph sizes in the figures. The more frequency emerges, the larger the graph is displayed, and the smaller the frequency occurs, the smaller the graph is indicated. As mentioned earlier, the adverse effects are marked in red, and the positive results are done in blue.

#### ***3.1. Economic effects***

Different studies explored the economic effects of the sports mega-events and reported such events to have positive and negative outcomes for the host communities. However, our review indicated that the host communities, on the one hand, were positively affected by creating employment, increasing investment, improving infrastructure, promoting tourism, increasing GDP and reconstructing the urban. Of these positive effects, creating jobs and increasing investments have been identified as the most remarkable ones ([Figure 1](#)). On the other hand, these events would have unavoidable adverse effects, including rising event costs, rising prices and inflation. Therefore, countries seeking to host such significant events must simultaneously consider these negative and positive economic effects. A cost-benefit analysis by policy-makers should be conducted to determine whether the economic benefits of the event outweigh its costs.

#### ***3.2. Social effects***

The results obtained from this systematic review revealed that several studies mentioned the social effects of sports mega-events, in detail can be observed in [Figure 2](#). As followed, the events are of positive impacts, including increased pride and honour, increased event social support, felt happiness, integration nationally, increased sense of security and cohesion, and integrated socially. It needs to be noticed that increased pride and honour and increased event support have been deemed the most evident positive social effects. Moreover, such events have adverse social outcomes such as congested traffic, increased crime, disrupted public and legal discipline, increased crowd congestion. Also, increased living costs and noise pollution were considered the most repeated negative impacts of congested traffic and high crimes.



cultures being perceived, and promoting global culture, can be highly prioritized. Cultural effects, such as economic and social ones, can reflect a negative aspect. In other words, they will have some adverse effects, such as increased racial and gender inequalities, by which women's social security may be endangered in some way. Therefore, the host communities will be inevitably involved with their future irreparable consequences unmentioned or clarified in the literature.



**Figure 3.** Cultural impacts of sports mega-events.

### 3.4. Political effects

A series of political consequences have been identified by reviewing the most related articles on the sports mega-events. All of which are mentioned in Figure 4. As observed in figure 4, some positive political outcomes such as national identity and patriotism, political attention, international cooperation, and international affinity are considered the most frequent political effects. Furthermore, the sports mega-events have adverse effects, including the possibility of bribery and corruption. So, the interested sports mega-event organizers and applicants should not ignore these effects and other negative ones.

### 3.5. Environmental effects

By considering sports mega-events, environmental effects reported in previous studies which presented in Figure 5. In this figure, the positive and negative environmental impacts are respectively emphasized with blue and red colours. As indicated, traffic congestion is considered the most frequent negative effect in virtue of the environment. It is followed by the pollution growth and waste rate increase as the most frequent following adverse effects on the environment. Green technology promotion is deemed the most frequent positive environmental effect. As traffic congestion and pollution increase have

been respectively weighed three and two times the green technology and waste increase, it can be concluded that the main concern for the host community is traffic congestion and pollution increase. In general, the results of our systematic review show that the negative environmental impacts mentioned in the articles of recent decades have been very significant compared to the positive effects.



**Figure 4.** Political impacts of sports mega-events.



**Figure 5.** Environmental impacts of sports mega-events.

### 3.6. Strengths, weaknesses, and research gaps

Having evaluated the findings, we need to look at the positive and negative effects caused by the targeted events. Figure 6 provides an overview of the various impacts of hosting

significant events mentioned in the literature. Repeated results in previous research have been highlighted as blue, and those that have received less attention have been shown as red. As Figure 6 indicates, the scholars' socio-economic and tourism effects affected by the sports mega-effects have been increasingly emphasised. This fact reveals that positive results are more exciting and considered by scholars and host communities. On the one side, various studies have implied positive and negative effects in physical, hygiene, image, media and legacy effects of events in the journals during recent years.

On the other hand, some negative and positive effects are inevitably caused by these events that researchers should seriously focus on. Some positive effects perceived as seemingly significant but received less attention are volunteer-related, spatial, recreational, and leisure-related positive ones. Also, some adverse effects have been neglected, such as sexual, mental, financial, transportation, and infrastructure-driven. These mentioned above, positive and negative effects have been identified as the literature gaps.



**Figure 6.** Impacts of sports mega-events at a glance.

#### **4. Managerial implications; Executive recommendations to Policy-makers and Applicants for Sports Mega-Event Hosting:**

A) Given the high traffic congestion caused by the sports mega-events, the urban management organizations are suggested to consider the integrated land-use design. Also, they are recommended to reduce traffic congestion and pollution in the central areas of the host cities by constructing playgrounds, recreation centres, and recreation centres in low-crowded areas, urban roads and public transport.

B) According to the high levels of job creation and investment growth, policy-makers and applicants of sports mega-event hosting are recommended to optimize spending domestic and foreign investments so that the right effective businesses will be consequently created. Tourism-related infrastructures must be expanded to attract future and post-event tourists to develop the right productive businesses to return those tourists

and attract new ones.

C) Given the possibly high crime incidents and legal disruptions caused by the sports mega-events, the security units and, in particular, the host country's judicial authorities are recommended to be timely determined in the law enforcement and commitment as facing criminal cases.

D) Due to the high pollution (air and noise) in the sports mega-events, the environmental protection managers and executives are suggested to modify travel patterns in the host cities, for example, the type of personal vehicles used. In this regard, they must try to change, institutionalize and internalize the culture of using public transport (e.g., railways, subway and urban trains) and walking culture among the host residents. These management actions must be planned from years before the year of the event.

E) Considering the importance of national identity, patriotism, and increased political attention to host countries, the foreign ministry officials are suggested to pay particular attention to disseminating political goals and demonstrating the country's national power through these events as a kind of media.

F) To energy-saving and drop event costs, the policy-makers and applicants of sports mega-events are suggested to use renewable energy technologies at sports venues, village games and recreational areas. Also, they are recommended to use solar energy in busy areas such as subway entrances and exits, hotels, stadiums and sports venues, and apply electric flooring that converts the kinetic energy of walking into electricity.

## 5. Discussion and Conclusion

Various authors have explored the effects of sports events, especially mega-events, as their research interests during recent years. Each of the authors has dealt with some specific aspects of such developments. Hence, the results of this study could lead us to the following themes:

- 1- Reviewing negative or positive cultural, political, social, economic, and environmental effects caused by the sports mega-events on the host communities,
- 2- Identifying the existing gaps in the previous studies,
- 3- Collecting, screening and identifying previous conducted research strengths and weaknesses, and providing the following scholars with new strategies.

Economic effects are one of the essential variables that many previous studies have paid particular attention. Given the economic competition among countries, this is not far from the expectation. As with these same effects caused by sports mega-event, a large number of studies have been done. These studies showed different and significant economic outcomes of such sports events. The present findings indicate that the sports mega-events can provide the host communities with many job opportunities before, during and after these events. This positive effect has been emphasized by other authors (Bob & Swart, 2009; Gursoy et al., 2011; Hotchkiss et al., 2003; Ryan, 2003). Also, mega-events are accompanied by many national and international investments, can consequently cause job creation and economic growth being made for the host countries (Malfas et al., 2004). Considering the nature of such events and people's high interests in them, they seem

potentially able to attract significant numbers of visitors and tourists, ultimately lead to increased tourism and its related positive economic effects (Brent Ritchie, 1984). In other words, a successful host in this regard can help tourism increase (Lee et al., 2014). Additionally, these events help urban reconstruction (Bob & Swart, 2009; French & Disher, 1997; Gratton et al., 2005; Gursoy et al., 2011), and infrastructure improvement being made in the host countries (Bob & Swart, 2009; Gursoy et al., 2011; Swart & Bob, 2004; Wu et al., 2016). On the other side, due to increased costs related to these sports events, some issues, including inflation (Yoon et al., 2001), increased prices (Nunkoo & Ramkissoon, 2011), increased taxes (Bob & Swart, 2009; Deccio & Baloglu, 2002; Lorde et al., 2011) and debts (Wu et al., 2016) may occur.

Kim et al. (2006) state that the events' social effects are significant as the economic ones. For instance, sports mega-events can help national pride and integrity to be increased (Brent Ritchie & Aitken, 1984; Waite, 2003). As national pride increased, national rationale and patriotism are subsequently enhanced. It is consequently hoped that the ruling political system on the society begins to be progressive and sustainable more than before (Kersting, 2007). On the other hand, these events necessarily have resulted in both positive and negative effects. Authors mentioned adverse outcomes such as crime (Barker et al., 2001), traffic congestion (Gursoy et al., 2011), population overcrowding (Dyer et al., 2007), disorder and noise (French & Disher, 1997; Gursoy et al., 2011) vandalism, increased prostitution, and other crimes (Gursoy et al., 2011; Nunkoo & Ramkissoon, 2011). These outcomes can lead to creating social dissatisfaction and tensions.

The sports mega-events can provide the host communities with a lot of cultural benefits. The findings of this study revealed that these events bring higher cultural exchanges to the host communities (Karadakis et al., 2010; Shipway & Brown, 2007), make different cultures closer together, and encourage the communities to exchange various beliefs and attitudes. Thereby, cultural exchanges are also enhanced through sharing cultural insights (Konstantaki, 2009). These events have benefits, including fostering and feeding local values and traditions (Kim et al., 2006) and making and promoting reputation (Lee et al., 2014). On the other hand, the negative cultural consequences of these events should not be ignored or overlooked. These events can result in cultural commercialization (Cohen, 1988), such as mass prostitution (Dyer et al., 2007; Nunkoo & Ramkissoon, 2011) and traditional negative values for families (Kousis, 1989).

As for the political outcomes, findings showed that sports mega-events, on the one hand, have positive benefits, including increasing political attention (Caiazza & Audretsch, 2015) and improving inter-countries political diplomacy (Ishac, 2018). Also, they can enhance a politician image (Caiazza & Audretsch, 2015; Malfas et al., 2004). Therefore, such benefits can improve political and general diplomacy and demonstrate the countries' political power. On the other hand, they convey adverse effects such as bribery and corruption (Bob & Swart, 2009; Lorde et al., 2011). Therefore, these scandals and bribery result in heavy fines and penalties but irreparable damages to the host country's international reputation and organizing committee of the games. Also, the findings

obtained from this systematic review implied that increasing national identity and patriotism and growing political attention are considered the most frequent political components of the intended events. Therefore, macro-economists and foreign affairs policy-makers are recommended to pay special attention to the potentials rooted in such a field to promote political goals and national strengths.

The review of previous studies on the effects of hosting sports mega-events has shown that environmental impacts have become essential in studies over the past decade. In other words, two decades before, few studies have addressed this critical issue. Findings related to environmental effects demonstrate that sports mega-events provide the host residents with positive benefits, including recycling policies, pollution control (Allen et al., 2010) and ecological awareness promotion (Kim et al., 2006). On the other hand, increases in visitors and traffic have negative consequences such as traffic congestion, increased climate pollution and environmental damages (Gursoy et al., 2011; Kim et al., 2006; Prayag et al., 2013). It is undeniable that these consequences can simultaneously disrupt the social life of host residents. These negative impacts will threaten the host communities not only during the venue but also in the aftermath. Although the international sports organizations, including the International Olympic Committee, frequently emphasize sustainable developments in the sport, some significant conflicts are highly feeling between the adverse environmental effects of sports mega-events and those policies. Therefore, it is better to reformulate the ecological policies of events and communicate them to the event organizers. These systematic review findings showed that traffic congestion and increased pollution are deemed the most frequently occurred environmental effects. The event organizers, especially environmental managers involved in planning, are encouraged to pay thorough attention to environmental components considering environment-friendly technologies.

As mentioned, this study is one of few systematic review studies that simultaneously integrate and examines the economic, social, cultural, political, and environmental impacts of mega-sporting events on the host communities. In recent years, the number of studies on sports mega-events has dramatically increased. Therefore, the economic findings of this study suggest that the sports mega-events have many consequences, including employment creation, increased investment, increased prices, improved infrastructure, increased tourism and urban reconstruction for the host communities. Other impacts of such events may include social influences, tourism, heritage, image, media and health, each of which has desirable and undesirable consequences for the hosts. In other words, this study provides policy-makers and event planners with a complete summary of the studies conducted in the past three decades, which is a valuable and credible source to realize the related decision-making processes.



## 6. Limitations and suggestions

It should be noted that one of the present study aims was to identify gaps in the past researches. Thus, considering the current systematic review, the sexual, psychological, commercial, volunteer, financial, transportation, spatial, recreational, and infrastructural impacts of the sports mega-events have been a result of this identified as the research gaps of previous studies. In recent years, the mentioned effects have received little attention from authors, and they should be considered more.

Each researcher inevitably faces a series of constraints that affect the data collection or analysis of findings. Authors have some limitations, including lack of access to the literature and research abstracts published in conferences, congresses, organizational reports.

The choice of the 1990–2019 time period and the study language (purely English) were primarily based on a personal decision that could deprive us of other critical research in different languages or periods. Given the lack of access to summaries of organizational studies, reports and first-hand sources, future researchers are recommended to deal with the present study limitations in a separate study. Furthermore, future scholars are suggested in another (more) systematic study to include pre-1990 research and documents conducted in other languages.

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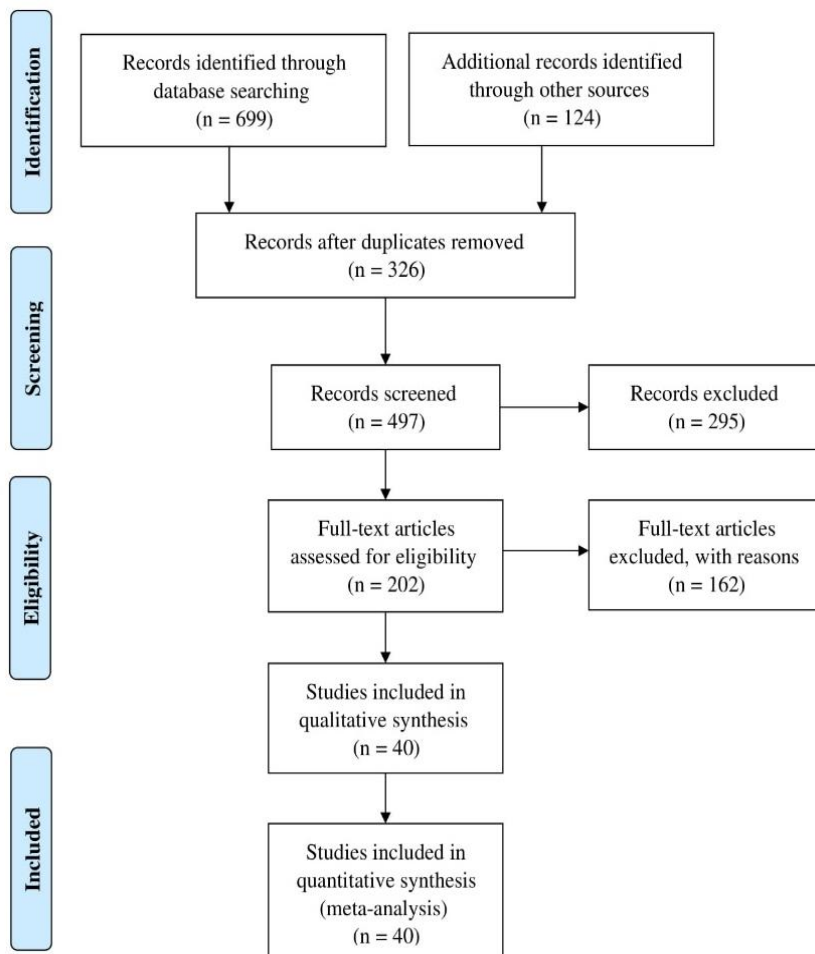
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**Appendix 1.** Prisma 2009 flow diagram.



# نشریه کسب و کار در ورزش


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## تأثیرات رویدادهای ورزشی مگا بر جوامع میزبان: مرور نظام‌مند مطالعات سه دهه اخیر

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### کلیدواژه

تأثیرات میزبانی  
رویدادهای ورزشی مگا  
مدیریت رویداد

### نوع مقاله

پژوهشی اصیل

### چکیده

**هدف:** این مطالعه با هدف بررسی نظام‌مند مطالعات در مورد چگونگی اثرپذیری جوامع میزبان از رویدادهای ورزشی بزرگ انجام شده و منجر به شناسایی نقاط قوت و ضعف ادبیات شناسایی خلأهای موجود در این زمینه و ارائه استراتژی‌ها و پیامدهای جدید برای محققان بعدی شده است.

**روش:** به‌منظور گردآوری اطلاعات، پایگاه داده‌های Google Scholar, Scopus, Web of Science و PubMed به‌طور کامل مورد بررسی قرار گرفته و برای اطمینان از صحت بررسی‌ها از روش کفایت جستجوی دستی در مهم‌ترین منابع و اسناد انجام شده است. درواقع، بررسی و استخراج داده‌ها بر اساس یک پروتکل از پیش تعیین شده و سپس اسناد و داده‌های انتخاب شده مورد تحلیل قرار گرفته‌اند.

**یافته‌ها:** نتایج نشان داد که تأثیرات رویدادهای ورزشی بزرگ بر جوامع میزبان را می‌توان در دو گروه اثرات مثبت و منفی دسته‌بندی کرد. با استناد به یافته‌ها، بیشتر مطالعات به بررسی موضوعاتی از جمله تأثیرات اقتصادی-اجتماعی، گردشگری، میراث، تصویر، رسانه‌ها، بهداشت، تأثیرات فرهنگی و زیست‌محیطی پرداخته‌اند. از موارد دیگر می‌توان به تأثیر مسائل روانی، فضای، تجاری، داوطلبانه، مالی و تفریحی که به‌ندرت مورد توجه قرار گرفته‌اند، اشاره نمود.

**اصالت و ابتکار مقاله:** این مطالعه خلاصه‌ای کامل از مطالعات انجام شده در سه دهه گذشته را در اختیار سیاست‌گذاران و برنامه‌ریزان رویداد قرار می‌دهد، که یک منبع ارزشمند و معتبر برای درک فرایندهای تصمیم‌گیری مرتبط است. با مرور اسناد، نکاتی از اثرات برگزاری رویدادهای بزرگ روشن شد که قبلاً کمتر مورد توجه قرار گرفته بودند.

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## How is the Football Schools Franchise Using a Valuable Approach to Revenue-Generating Capacity in Iranian Football Clubs?

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### ABSTRACT

**Purpose:** One of the intangible assets of clubs is the transfer of privileges, including licenses to establish football schools. The researcher aimed to identify and rank the factors affecting the power of the franchise assignment of clubs to develop football schools.

**Methodology:** The research was conducted in a mixed-method in two parts. Including quantitative and qualitative. The research sample consisted of 11 experts aware of football and sports industry issues. The research tools included library studies, interviews, and researcher-made questionnaires with six indicators and 33 sub-criteria provided to the research samples. Data analysis was performed by AHP and ANP tests in Supers Decision software version 3.2.

**Findings:** The results in AHP analysis showed that human resources, management, legal, software infrastructure, marketing, and economic indicators were the essential factors in enhancing the franchise power of clubs, respectively. Also, in ANP analysis, while determining the weight of sub-criteria and the relationships between the main criteria, the importance of human resources index, managerial expertise, marketing, software, legal and economic infrastructure were the factors influencing the promotion of club franchise power. Thus, human resources are considered the essential internal resource.

**Originality:** Few studies have been done on franchise rights in sports, specifically football clubs. A few studies have been done on how football schools franchising increases clubs' income. And from a micro and macro perspective, it has addressed the issue of managing the transfer of exploitation rights.

### Keywords

AHP & ANP Modelling  
Business  
Franchising  
Football Clubs  
Football Schools

### Article type

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## 1. Introduction

Everyday marketing is somehow related to our lives as human beings. It is defined as a socio-managerial process by which individuals and groups meet their needs and wants by producing and exchanging goods with each other (Kotler & Keller, 2011). Also defined by Pitts and Stotlar (2007), "Sports marketing" is the process of designing and carrying out activities to produce, value, promote, or distribute a sport or sporting goods to satisfy consumers' needs and desires achieve the goals set by companies. They conclude that the focus of sports marketing is, in fact, a specific area between manufacturing companies and consumers and believe that meeting the needs of consumers is more important. This definition should eventually be considered by all manufacturers of sports products (Pitts & Stotlar, 2007).

Babapour (2005) -argued that: "to better respond to the needs of consumers and with the transformation of business practices that have grown in recent years in developing countries", the use of intangible assets, especially intellectual capital of companies, is to benefit from multiple businesses. Therefore, attention to using all tangible and intangible income sources, including franchise rights as one of the organization's intangible assets, is considered a communication network between small independent businesses. This tendency is called specific contracts. The payment of fees as the right to use the franchise asset is one of the most important subdivisions of marketing management in organizations (Babapour, 2005). A franchise is a business operation formed with the franchisor's support, while the franchisor's success depends on the cumulative revenue stream of the successful franchisee. Therefore, the franchisor needs a system with a broad vision to manage the franchisee's revenue and its own. In such a situation, the franchisee is less likely to engage in passive behavior in their day-to-day operations, maintaining and enhancing the franchise system brand equity (Hsu & Jang, 2009). For example, sports investment is a mature business in the US, and wealthy owners see the sector as an opportunity-a for a prosperous industry. So, it can attract substantial corporate sponsorship, significant broadcasting revenues and networking possibilities that can extend global franchises and open up new avenues of business (Ahern et al., July 2020).

Football clubs are a particular type of business organization. Their main goal is not financial performance but sporting performance. But contrary to the common idea that good on-field performance will drive good financials, there is evidence that better revenue-generating structures can significantly impact the team's performance (Perez-Cutino, 2008).

There are significant differences in the ability of the clubs to monetize the increased interest that football raise in the general public around the globe, and even bigger clubs still derive most of their revenues from their home markets and through traditional means (Perez-Cutino, 2008). One of the initiatives is the compulsion for the franchises to invest in the development of grassroots football (Mangesh Sawant, 2021). For example, Borussia Dortmund (BVB) has earned a reputation for talent development, focusing on young players within and outside Germany. While their team of exciting young players has pushed them into contention for honours once more, the club has



benefitted from record revenues and expanding business opportunities. Ajax has reclaimed its position as a club that develops and nurtures young players that yield decent profits. Ajax is the leading club for producing talent in the top leagues in Europe. Undoubtedly contributed to the club's 17% increase in brand value to €198 million (Ahern et al., July 2020).

Brighton's expansion also includes improvements to their training ground, creating a regional talent centre that can tap into young players in the area. Sevilla is also committed to grassroots development in emerging markets, such as India, hosting football schools for young children (Ahern et al., July 2020). Companies such as the Wanda group have made huge investments, who own shares in Atletico Madrid and are sponsors of FIFA since 2016. Evergrande Real Estate Group has also made investments in various fields, such as the football school they run in partnership with Spanish giants Real Madrid (Mangesh Sawant, 2021).

The distribution and commercialization of Real Madrid products is the final category of new businesses concerns. The club uses two establishment types to sell its products: official club stores and franchises (Miguel & Forcadell, 2006).

In Iran, too, football schools are trained by experienced coaches. Accordingly, to developed nations, football schools are expected to be influential in various aspects of the growth and development of football in a city or region. But before they became the basis for action, they have had more sources of income. They are often operating on a temporary, seasonal, non-standard basis. In the meantime, the clubs have not withdrawn their rights from this tangible asset, and the general public has not received decent and standard services from these schools. The consequences of this disorder are not only related to the development and material issues of football. Instead, the cultural implications of insufficient oversight of the activities of these clubs can cause many social and cultural problems for families and society. Also, the damage to the brand of the clubs and impossibility of returning the investments that the clubs spend on their professional activities developed and the government budgets to which they depend are more. Yet, on the other hand, it keeps the club managers at the forefront of technical and professional growth and development in the national and international arenas.

It seems insufficient attention to the sources of intangible assets in the Iranian professional sports and the lack of a coherent and defined military so that updates and attention are paid to all day. Along with insufficient supervision over these schools' work by the football federation, especially the clubs' officials, on the one hand, has caused the talent identification disruption. On the other hand, also, it is not efficient enough, and, gaining an advantage related to the right to sell football school operating points with the club's name and logo. The resulting financial income will turn into a forgotten problem in professional football in the country.

Therefore, cultural and economic growth and development of the country and improving the situation of clubs in developing their non-governmental sources of income are essential. Also, it is suitable to increasing jobs opportunities and football development as an economic stimulus for the sports industry. It is a significant industry with all its social, cultural, political, and economic benefits for the country, considering that franchises, especially in football schools, have received less attention in the sports

and football industry research literature. Therefore, we decided to identify and study the factors that play a role in strengthening the franchise power of clubs to transfer the operating rights to football schools.

## 2. Theoretical background

Franchising is one of the essential sources of entrepreneurial growth that involves two types of entrepreneurs. First, a franchisor identifies an opportunity and manages the distribution of his brand image in different geographical areas. Second, take advantage of this opportunity locally. By providing financial capital, high motivation, and expert management, the franchisee leads to the rapid growth of the franchisor's entrepreneurial capacity, which reduces costs, attracts investors, and promotes rapid growth (Madanoglu et al., 2011). Franchising is a business model where the franchisor extends business know-how, intellectual rights, and the right to operate in the name of a brand for consideration (usually in the form of fees and royalties) to the franchisee (Alon et al., 2021).

A franchise is a system in which the franchisor allows someone to build a brand. Franchising successfully is a low-risk growth strategy. It is a business model to generate mutual benefits (Jang & Park, 2019). To establish a long-term relationship between franchisor and franchisee, a balance between the interests of the two parties to the contract is critical. For example, if the franchisee's benefits outweigh the franchisor's, the controversy will ultimately damage the relationship between the two to balance the benefits (Jang & Park, 2019). The franchisor is considered an essential factor in the franchise agreement and plays a decisive role as a manager. Therefore, managing the relationship between the franchisor and the franchisee is very sensitive to create a sustainable franchise system (Jang & Park, 2019).

The main question in franchise research is why do entrepreneurs grow through franchising? The initial answer is that the entrepreneur gains access to the financial, human, and information resources needed to proliferate during the franchise process. The combination of capital, managerial talent with motivation, and local market knowledge that the franchisee brings with it allows investors to overgrow (Gillis et al., 2018). In this regard, Eskini and Bagherabadi (2011): "In franchise agreements based on the business method, the concessionaire, while dependent on the concessionaire, from his system and procedure, which has already been proven to be superior and by other investors. The franchisee's exercise of the franchisor's exclusive rights, regardless of his obligation to pay royalties, imposes other requirements, such as the secrecy of his trade secrets and non-competition and the provision of the franchise system (Eskini & Bagherabadi, 2011). Gillen and Mantin (2014) demonstrate that if the potential for concession revenues is small, the private airport will focus attention on generating income from aviation activity, thereby suppressing aviation activity and ultimately resulting in a sizeable aeronautical welfare loss. Lee (1999) also noted that franchising was introduced as a way of doing business. Countries such as the United States and global markets have revolutionized business prosperity, job creation, and economic development (Lee, 1999). Combs et al. (2004) also noted that the role of franchises in

the growth of global entrepreneurship and new investments in various industries should not be underestimated (Combs et al., 2004).

Business intelligence is not just for the franchisor but for the franchisee. There is a strong relationship between the franchisor and the franchisee. Concessionaires rely on franchisees to do business because the franchisee is the party who starts the business first and sells his right to do business using intellectual property and business information (Halim et al., 2014). Therefore, Brookes (2014) predicts the franchisee's business strategy, the franchisee's performance and behaviours, customer behaviours, favourite products, and Improved commercial value used (Brookes, 2014). Davies et al. (2011) study on a model of trust and compliance in franchise relationships concluded that trust in the franchisee is the only determinant of the essential franchise compliance critical to the franchise's performance (Davies et al., 2011).

Mansfield and Killick (2012) described how the Netball League franchise framework developed in the United Kingdom. He concluded that the strength of the franchise model stems from the shift of a hierarchical model to a decentralized and informal model by a high degree of diversity in the organizational environment, characteristics and structure of the organization itself has been non-standardized and specialized (Mansfield & Killick, 2012). The franchisor's performance is essentially dependent on the franchisee's performance and relies on a relationship between the two parties. Also, the franchisee is willing to continue the current business relationship with the franchisor only if satisfied with the justice, internal independence, formalization, and franchisor's support (Jang & Park, 2019).

Gillis et al. (2018) examined a sample of 229 franchisors, stated that franchise management capabilities are significantly related to how franchisors perform (Gillis et al., 2018). The development of team identification is critical for a new sporting organization as it seeks to grow a fan base and market share (Kerr & Wijeratne, 2021). Therefore, franchise management capabilities as a new theoretical structure link the franchise and how franchisors operate. The same is true in the field of sports organizations. Many intangible assets, including franchisees, can plan and focus on transferring operating points in various forms and spaces, including clubs, academies, and football schools. The franchising football schools are beneficial not only for revenue generation but also for the development of football and the prosperity of the sports and football industry and the countries' cultural, sports, and social development. Therefore, all over the world, football schools act as a base for recognizing and cultivating talents and introducing them to the world of professional football. These schools also achieve goals such as the development of football among children and adolescents, primary and scientific football education, identifying and discovering top talents at an early age and paving the way for its flourishing, as well as enriching the leisure time of infants and adolescents by creating a healthy environment attractive and cheerful created.

### **3. Methodology**

The present study did in mixed-method include qualitative and quantitative sections during the three stages of the study, we did literature review, interviews, and then

quantitative calculations. First, we studied the articles and documents on franchising. Then, by categorizing the materials obtained from the studies, the initial material for conducting semi-structured interviews with 11 football management and coaching experts and football club management concerning football academies and football schools was obtained by open and pivotal coding of the results from the interviews conducted and their comparison with the research literature, the influential factors in the research topics identified and categorized. A semi-structured interview is an interview in which the interview questions are determined in advance, and all respondents are asked the same questions; But they are free to answer in any way they want (Delavar, 2004). Then, by extracting the factors, a questionnaire with six indicators and 33 sub-criteria was prepared to determine the importance and priority of the obtained items—the questionnaires were distributed among the same group of interviewees. In the last section, we used the AHP test to extract the rankings and the relationships between the factors of the questionnaires. The validity of the findings is guaranteed. It was calculated by the inconsistency rate of 0.083 (fewer than 0.1 is acceptable).

Then, the main criteria of the research were ranked on the research events using the hierarchical analysis technique. Then the sub-criteria were entered into the analysis using the ANP technique. After presenting the rank of sub-criteria; The results of AHP and ANP were compared. The two tests did in the Supers Decision Software version 3.2. Finally, the researcher obtained a decision model related to the factors influencing the promotion of the franchise power of professional football sports clubs in transferring the right to establish football schools.

## 4. Results

A hierarchical technique was used to evaluate the rank of the leading research criteria and their weight. The basis of this decision-making method was based on pairwise comparisons. Here are the results of this calculation (Table 1):

**Table 1.** The rank of main research criteria and their weight from Hierarchical Technique (AHP).

	Economic	Human resources	Legal	Managerial	Marketing	Software infrastructure	Rank	Weight
Economic	1	1.99	2.19	1.12	0.29	7.94	6	0.080
Human resources		1	1.24	2.45	0.26	1.41	1	0.318
Legal			1	0.47	0.31	1.38	3	0.177
Managerial				1	0.42	1.93	2	0.184
Marketing					1	0.79	5	0.111
Software infrastructure						1	4	0.127

As presented in Table 1, the highest rank is related to the human resources variable, and the lowest level is associated with the economic variable.

### 4.1. Investigation and prioritization of factors by ANP technique

The ANP technique was used again to evaluate the rank of the leading research criteria and their weight. This decision-making method was based on pairwise comparisons of

factors that are not independent of each other. Here are the results of this calculation (Table 2):

**Table 2.** The rank of the leading research criteria and their weight using the ANP hierarchical technique.

Criteria	Weight	Rank
Human resources	0.249	1
Managerial	0.223	2
Marketing	0.212	3
Software infrastructure	0.149	4
Legal	0.091	5
Economic	0.073	6

As presented in Table 2, human resources with a weight of 0.249 have the highest rank, and economic criteria with a weight of 0.073 have the lowest.

**Table 3.** The rank of sub-criteria of main research factors and their weight using the ANP hierarchical technique.

Factors	Weight
<b>Human Capital Factor</b>	
Use of expert human resources in the club (experienced national coaches)	0.413
Leadership style of club managers	0.232
Employee experience in other club franchise agreements	0.125
Number of players in the national team	0.115
Increasing the club's support for football schools	0.111
<b>Management Factor</b>	
Club structure and culture	0.374
Level of management of human behaviors, attitudes, procedures, and technology in the club	0.223
Design and implementation of club operating standards	0.192
Business intelligence	0.117
Information sharing	0.092
<b>Marketing Factor</b>	
Number of club fans	0.226
The social and cultural influence of the club in the community	0.244
Club's championship records and successes	0.162
Club activity history (dating)	0.154
Brand value (club brand)	0.117
Club advertisements to attract the cooperation of football schools	0.065
The unsaturated labor market for football schools	0.029
<b>Software Infrastructure Factor</b>	
Work environment (organizational climate) of the club	0.270
The quality of the club's interaction with all stakeholders through the website and the media	0.129
Creating educational opportunities for football school staff	0.210
The level of information technology used in the transfer of knowledge and information of the club	0.079
<b>Legal Factor</b>	
The health of the franchise agreement legally	0.231
Develop legal regulations for franchise agreements	0.140
The influence of the club in the application of quality indicators by football schools	0.130
Presence of professional legal advisors along with club managers	0.110
The political power of club managers	0.192
Football school principals trust the club's competence and honesty	0.124

Factors	Weight
A fair contract between clubs and football schools	0.069
<b>Economic Factor</b>	
Club capital	0.268
Facilities that the club provides for the fans (club attractions) (Such as e-ticketing, active fan club, loyalty incentives.)	0.239
The profitability of the club	0.037
Club turnover	0.054
The value of the club's stock on the stock exchange or over-the-counter	0.040

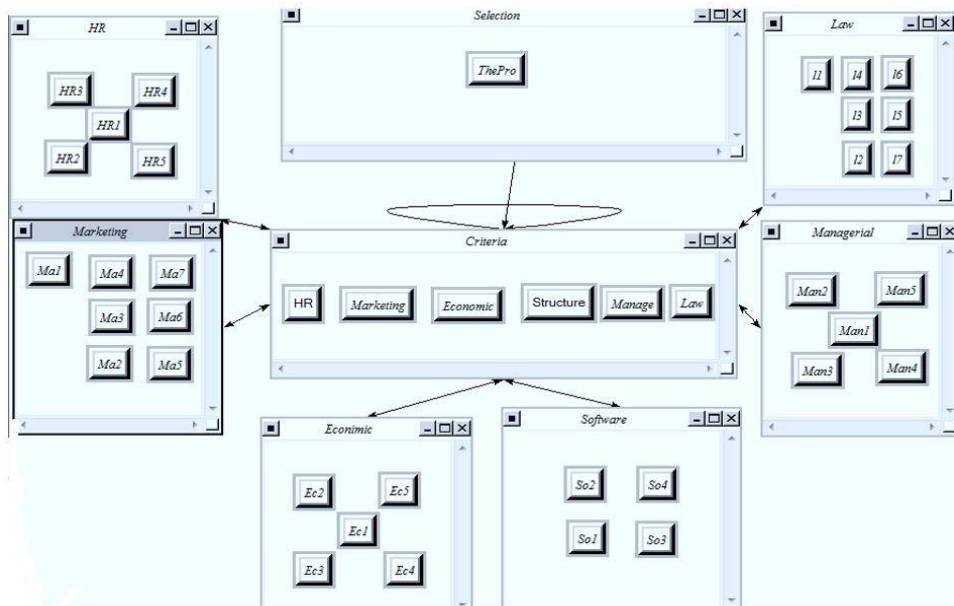


Figure 1. Research model on criteria and sub-criteria

### 5. Managerial implications

For years, traditional businesses have given way to professional companies. With the priority of science, human beings have realized that it is necessary to use scientific methods in all issues, including management, to survive and progress. Organizations that do not adhere to this fundamental principle will burden society and governments or ultimately fail. The same rule applies to the direction of the football club, which is one of the most expensive sports businesses. Managers who are not willing to follow certain scientific principles in the club's management sooner or later have to pay attention to valuable sources of income, such as franchising to operate goods and services with the name and logo of the club. In this way, it is necessary to overcome legal obstacles and bear the costs of establishing a system of assignment and supervision of franchisees. The main factor that can help clubs is expert human resources. Attention to structures,

marketing, and economics were the items suggested in this article to introduce managers' use in using the franchise of products and services of football clubs.

## **6. Discussion and conclusion**

The purpose of this study was to identify the influential factors in promoting the power of the franchise. The results in AHP analysis showed the human resources index with weight (0.318) as the most crucial index; managerial (0.184), legal (0.177), software infrastructure (0.127), marketing (0.111), and economic (0.127) were the following most essential indicators in enhancing the franchise power of clubs, respectively. Also, in ANP analysis, the human resources index with weight (0.249), as the most crucial index; Management (0.223), marketing (0.212), software infrastructure (0.149), legal (0.0119), and economic (0.073) were the following most essential indicators in promoting the franchise power of clubs, respectively.

Managers of organizations have found that human resources are one of their most important assets. Therefore, failure to pay attention to the strengths and weaknesses of the organization in terms of human resources will lead to incorrect choice of the optimal strategy for the organization. Also, the change of direction in the strategic management literature from the emphasis on external environments to internal resources based on the attitude of the resource has provided a platform for human resource management researchers to discuss the importance of human resources as the most critical internal resource. Some energy, savings, and natural resources are valued, but these are used daily, and copying can always be helpful. In such areas, human resources can be a significant source of competitive advantage. Also, today the role of human resource management is different from the past. If not more, at least as important as other parts of the organization and more critical tasks and responsibilities have been assigned. Its role and importance are increasing day by day.

Human resources must also introduce new functions and policies, and operations managers must implement progressive policies (Boxall & Purcell, 2003). Also, according to Baker et al., Successful managers today believe that the valuable asset that creates a competitive advantage for the organization is its employees. Only the employees keep the organization at the forefront of competition (Becker et al., 2001). Cho (2004) also examined an essential feature in the privilege narrative in his research. Explaining the results of his research report, he stated that the partner's characteristics (scorer), support and cost, were the most critical determinants of the purchase of goods (Cho, 2004). The effectiveness of the human resources component in enhancing the franchise power seems to be in line with the views of researchers such as Rose and Kumar (2006), Boxall and Purcell (2003), and Becker et al. (2001) and with the opinions of researchers such as Cho (2004) is inconsistent. In this regard, we argued that human resources are one of the most critical assets of organizations. Human resources play an essential role in improving the productivity of the organization. Due to various developments and developments, organizations need to seek upgrades for their human resources to gain a competitive advantage over their competitors.

After human resources, both management and legal factors are other important and influential factors in this field. It will be possible for clubs to pay attention to management principles in exploiting this valuable resource under legal factors. For example, paying attention to the club's structure and updating the general management of the clubs in adopting the principles of professional club management and managing human behaviors, attitudes, procedures, and technology in the club are other factors that can do in this way. By standardizing professional management practices in the country's clubs, the management of the executive and operational affairs of the clubs under the operational standards is another matter in providing standard services. Thus, by observing the principle of equality between the beneficiaries, the right to establish a football school has financial benefits for the club and society. It will benefit from it. Utilizing business intelligence in club management and databases in many ways, including the proper and up-to-date management of football schools, can be an effective aid in this regard. These results are consistent with the Babapour (2005) and Jang and Park (2019) research. From a legal point of view, paying attention to the health of contracts is another issue that has received less attention today and has made the country's football very vulnerable to legal problems in the international arena. In this way, the presence of professional legal advisors and the club managers and the development of legal regulations for franchise agreements is one of the cases in which there is no room for delay, and legal experts must have a more prominent presence in this field. If legal advisors can establish their permanent presence in the management of clubs, it will expand the club's influence in football schools' application of quality standards. On the other hand, with club managers' increasing influence and political power, their situation will be empowered. Such that the atmosphere of trust of football school principals in the competence and honesty of the club and a fair contract between the club and football schools will expand.

Club management will not be possible without the involvement of factors such as marketing. Fans are one of the essential sources of clubs and their natural wealth. Increasing the number of fans without observing the relevant techniques, paying attention to their satisfaction, and increasing fan loyalty cannot be considered sustainable sources for clubs. Therefore, it will allow the club to socialize in the local, regional, and even global community, which will increase the club's social base and help the club when needed. Preserving the club's historical records and championship titles are other things that can be effective in developing and maintaining the unique value of the club brand. Keeping the club's historical memories and achievements in the club museum is one thing that can bring countless benefits to it. These results effectively enhance the club's power to transfer the rights to use the club-related goods and services. Advertising is an integral part of marketing, besides advertising, marketing, and clubs' social influence by creating a relationship with the fans and the host city's people.

It is no secret that the management of sports organizations and clubs will be possible with the help of infrastructure. Even a superhuman manager cannot develop a club alone. It is natural that maintaining a healthy and professional relationship with the government and legal institutions, including the federation and the league organization, as well as fans, veterans, and employees of the club and members of the community are



areas for which careful scientific planning and particular investment should be made. Other necessary infrastructures include developing and creating equal educational opportunities for football schools, which cannot be expected to be a powerful arm of the club in the community and as a cultural tool. Economic (Elahi et al., 2021) issues are raised for it.

Like any other organization, attention to information systems is a crucial element of the infrastructure of a great football club. Few organizations can be found today, without which it would have succeeded. Paying attention to human capital on the one hand and planning for the club's economic and financial prosperity to develop working capital and increase its profitability are critical issues for any organization. In other words, the era of sports clubs' dependence on public and state capital has ended, and clubs will be able to survive as government for-profit organizations. Maintaining a sustainable competitive advantage is no longer possible based on popular bases and fans. Because clubs, like other organizations, have a duty to serve the community in which they operate economically and culturally. Relying on the club's sources of income, including brand equity, ticket sales, goods with the name and logo of the team and the league, and paying attention to the value of teams shares in the stock market, can cause the development of other sources of incomes. This step will effectively reduce the club's dependence on public budget resources and the professional management of the club and consequently the league.

Researchers in this study had some limitations. If more quantitative data from clubs' activities were available, we could have more objective results. The most way to promoting the clubs' revenue and social effects is more scientific, intelligent and measurable management. Also, more experienced and more specialist club managers can gain more success. We propose future research on clubs' data if available to have more objective and measurable results.

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## چگونه واگذاری امتیاز تأسیس مدارس می‌تواند رویکردی درآمدزا در باشگاه‌های فوتبال ایران باشد؟

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### کلیدواژه

باشگاه‌های فوتبال  
فرانشیز  
کسب و کار  
مدارس فوتبال  
مدل‌سازی AHP & ANP

### نوع مقاله

پژوهشی اصیل

### چکیده

**هدف:** یکی از دارایی‌های ناملموس باشگاه‌ها واگذاری امتیازات، از جمله مجوز تأسیس مدارس فوتبال است. محقق در این تحقیق بر آن بود تا عوامل مؤثر بر ارتقای قدرت فرانشیز واگذاری مجوز تأسیس مدارس فوتبال باشگاه‌ها را شناسایی و رتبه‌بندی نماید.

**روش:** تحقیق به شیوه‌ای ترکیبی و در دو بخش کیفی و کمی انجام شد. نمونه تحقیق ۱۱ نفر از خبرگان آگاه به مسائل فوتبال و صنعت ورزش ایران بودند. ابزار تحقیق شامل مطالعات کتابخانه‌ای، مصاحبه و پرسشنامه‌ای محقق ساخته با ۶ شاخص و ۳۳ زیرمعیار بود که در اختیار نمونه‌های تحقیق قرار گرفت. تحلیل داده‌ها با دو آزمون AHP و ANP و در نرم‌افزار سوپر دیسیژن نسخه ۳.۲ انجام شد.

**یافته‌ها:** نتایج در تحلیل AHP نشان داد به ترتیب شاخص‌های منابع انسانی، شاخص‌های مدیریتی، حقوقی، زیرساخت‌های نرم‌افزاری، بازاریابی و اقتصادی به ترتیب مهم‌ترین عوامل در ارتقای قدرت فرانشیز باشگاه‌ها بودند. همچنین در تحلیل ANP ضمن تعیین وزن زیرمعیارها و روابط میان معیارهای اصلی، به ترتیب اهمیت مشخص شد شاخص منابع انسانی، شاخص‌های مدیریتی، بازاریابی، زیرساخت‌های نرم‌افزاری، حقوقی و اقتصادی عوامل مؤثر در ارتقای قدرت فرانشیز باشگاه‌ها بود. بدین ترتیب، منابع انسانی به‌عنوان مهم‌ترین منبع درون‌سازمانی محسوب می‌شود.

**اصالت و ابتکار مقاله:** مطالعات محدودی در زمینه واگذاری حق امتیاز بهره‌برداری در ورزش انجام شده است. این تحقیق از جمله مطالعات معدودی است در مورد چگونگی افزایش درآمد واگذاری حق امتیاز مدارس فوتبال توسط باشگاه‌ها انجام شده و از منظر خرد و کلان به موضوع مدیریت واگذاری حق بهره‌برداری پرداخته است.

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## The Role of Social Marketing in Sports Tourism Development in Tehran Province

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### ABSTRACT

**Purpose:** The goal of this study was to investigate the role of social marketing in the development of sports tourism in Tehran Province.

**Methodology:** The study is applied in terms of purpose, and it is descriptive correlational research in which 100 experts in the field of social marketing (professors of marketing), specialists in sports tourism (professors), authorities in sports tourism (professors and researchers of this field), as well as managers and experts of Iranian Cultural Heritage Organization were selected as the sample using available and selective sampling. The data collection tool was a researcher-made questionnaire taken from previous studies. The professors confirmed the face and content validity, with reliability confirmed by Cronbach's alpha coefficient of 0.99.

**Findings:** 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.

**Originality:** The results of this study showed that the investment of tourism organizations in social marketing factors is effective. The present study is one of the few comprehensive studies that have been conducted on credit and infrastructure investments in Iran concerning sports tourism.

### Keywords

Social Marketing  
Sports Tourism  
Tehran Province

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## 1. Introduction

Social marketing is a new field of marketing science in which managers seek social goals or public works by changing abnormal behaviours. In sport social marketing, it is attempted to adopt a new behaviour. For individuals and people, exercise and physical activity are virtue and should be considered in the household budget. Therefore, regular exercise is accepted as a desirable behaviour; potential actions such as the overuse of fast food or personal automobiles disappear. Social marketing is the application of business marketing techniques to analyze, design, implement, and evaluate the designated programs that voluntarily influence the behaviour of the target audience and improve personal and community wellbeing (Andreasen, 2012).

Social marketing uses marketing principles and techniques to change behaviour. It is a concept, process and application to understand who people are and what they want and then to organize the creation, communication and delivery of products and services to meet the wants and needs of society and to solve serious social problems (Serrat, 2017; Slade et al., 2017). Social marketing affects several economic components, including tourism. Zarei et al. (2016), in a study on the impact of social marketing on health tourism, found that the application of social marketing tools can create a positive belief in the destination of health tourism to invoke the desire for travelling for health purposes. One of the aspects of tourism is sports tourism. This industry has emerged from the combination of two sectors of tourism and sports (Adabi Firouzjah et al., 2009) and can generally divide into active and inactive sports tourism. In countries with an advanced industrial sector, the tourism industry complex, known as white exports, accounts for 4-6% of GDP, of which the share of sports tourism is 1-2%. According to World Tourism Organization (WTO), the number of tourists worldwide is growing at an average rate of 4.3% per year, which is projected to reach 1.6 billion by 2020. Therefore, the expenditures of tourists worldwide are growing by an average of 6.7% per year, which could amount to 2 trillion \$ up to 2020 (Adabi Firoozjah et al., 2009: 68 Quoted from WTO). This issue can be deliberated when we know that sports tourism has the highest growth rate among various dimensions of the tourism industry. Therefore, as a multidimensional phenomenon, sports tourism has found its place in human societies (Khodabakhshzade et al., 2020). Accordingly, many countries are trying to gain these benefits by investing heavily in this industry. For example, by investing in its tourism capabilities, Turkey earned 6 million \$ in 2007 by attracting 1,200 sports teams worldwide that often travel to Turkey for pre-tournament preparations (Richards, 2020).

In recent years, especially in undesirable conditions of the global economy, countries are paying more attention to the tourism industry and look at it as an alternative to their incomes (Javid et al., 2013). For Iran, whose economy relies heavily on revenues from crude oil exports, given that macroeconomic variables fluctuate sharply over time following global oil prices, as well as the country's young population and high unemployment rate, the development of sports tourism is of great importance (Elahi et al., 2021; Honarvar & Khatibzadeh, 2014; Memari et al., 2021).

## 2. Theoretical background

Today, sports tourism has recognized as an employment-generating, income-earning and influential industry with broad and complex consequences and effects in the context of human societies. The sector has gained double importance in some areas with astonishing leaps, such as surpassing oil and automobile industry revenues or its tremendous impact on world peace and prevention (UNWTO, 2021)<sup>1</sup>.

In recent years, due to the objective benefits of sports tourism, many national and international sports institutions, including International Federations (IF<sup>2</sup>), National Olympic Committees<sup>3</sup>, Organizing Committees for Olympic Games<sup>4</sup>, United Nations Environment Program<sup>5</sup> and International Olympic Committees,<sup>6</sup> have been committed to the sustainable development of sport tourism at regional, national and global levels. However, sports tourism can be considered a new category from industry in Iran. After the inauguration of the Cultural Heritage and Tourism Organization in early 2004, the sports tourism committee was established in this organization. A memorandum of understanding was signed between this organization and National Olympic Committee on sports tourism in August 2016 (Ramezani & Foroughi, 2009). The annual income of the developed countries in the world from sports tourism exceeds 20 billion dollars; however, despite being among the top five countries of the world in terms of biodiversity and natural attractions and generally being among the first two countries in the world in view of tourist attractions (Zarei et al., 2016), our country is not even among the top forty countries in the world concerning tourist reception (Karimi et al., 2020). Therefore, given the existence of these potentials and with full awareness of the various benefits of sports tourism, it seems that there have been no in-depth and practical studies in terms of credit and infrastructure investments in Iran.

The role of marketing components in the development of sports tourism has been investigated in several studies. Mirabadi et al. (2019) in a study examined the role and performance of media in the development of sports tourism and found that the media have had an overall poor performance in the development of sports tourism. Asadi et al. (2019) in their research designed a model for the development of sports tourism with AIDAR<sup>7</sup> advertising framework in various mass media and stated that from the perspective of research sample, "informative roles and "acting roles (purchasing)" have the highest and lowest ranks among the factors affecting the development of sports tourism with AIDAR advertising framework through the media, respectively. Javid et al. (2013) studied the role of the Internet and new media in marketing of sports tourism, and found that the promotion of attractions and tourism packages, more appropriate and faster use of information and advertising resources, the introduction of attractions to

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<sup>1</sup> The World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) is a specialized agency of the United Nations

<sup>2</sup> IFs

<sup>3</sup> NOCs

<sup>4</sup> OCOGs

<sup>5</sup> UNEP

<sup>6</sup> IOC

<sup>7</sup> Awareness, Interest, Desire, Action, Retention

sports tourists and the promotion of attractions are important indicators in the development of sports tourism. Liao and Nong (2021) in their research stated that the use of new technologies and high-speed Internet leads to the development of sports tourism. However, no study was found to investigate the impact of social marketing on the development of sports tourism.

Tehran province is a popular destination and one of the most important and long-standing sports tourism places among sports tourism destinations of Middle East. Considering the development of social marketing and its ability to influence people's perceptions and beliefs, it can be said that social marketing can greatly contribute to encouragement of tourists in choosing sports tourism sites of Tehran Province as a tourist destination.

Researchers have used different methods for the development of sports tourism, but in this study, it has been attempted to assess the role of social marketing and its elements in the development of sports tourism, especially sports tourism in Tehran Province in order to help the relevant tourism institutions of this province to formulate a program in this regard. New theories in the field of tourism show that sports-based tourism attractions have more economic, social and political advantages relative to other cultural attractions Ebrahimzadeh et al. (2011). Therefore, many countries in the world are striving to strengthen their sports tourism industry because this industry can play a prominent role as an economic generator with political, social, cultural and environmental impact on different communities (Liao & Nong, 2021).

The vast territory of Iran has a coloured and exceptional nature that includes unique mountains, beaches, lakes, forests and deserts, ranking fifth in the world in terms of natural attractions. Mountaineering, beach and water sports, public winter sports, hunting and desert tourism are among the most important potential natural sports attractions of Iran (Parto et al., 2020). Unfortunately, Iran's tourism industry has not found its true place, and Tehran Province is no exception. Therefore, a realistic leadership and application based on social marketing is necessary to be able to effectively use sports tourism in tourist sites of Tehran Province for the growth and development of sports and tourism in the country and the region by providing suitable conditions and space for tourism.

The following analytical model, which is taken from research conducted in the two fields of social marketing and sports tourism, is the basis for designing the main and secondary research questions, and the present research tool has been designed and implemented based on the following model.

### 3. Methodology

The present study is applied research and the scientific method of it is descriptive-correlation. The statistical population of the present research includes experts in the field of social marketing (professors of marketing), sports tourism (professors of sports tourism), as well as managers and experts of Cultural Heritage Organization who are responsible for tourism development in general and sports tourism in particular in Tehran.



Due to the lack of accurate information on the Number of familiar specialists and experts in this field, the following unlimited sampling formula was used:

In this formula:

n= Number of samples under study

Z= Value of the normal variable of the unit corresponding to confidence level ( $\alpha-1$ )

P= Estimation of variable attribute ratio in society

q = Estimation of failure ratio of a variable trait in the community or (1-p)

d = Permissible error rate

Considering 95% confidence level and the assumption of normal distribution, the t value is equal to 1.96 and due to the unknown variance of the population, p is equal to 0.5 and thereby q equals 0.5. The permissible error rate (d) is assumed to be 0.1. Thus, the sample size required for this study is roughly as follows:

$$n = \frac{z^2 p (q)}{d^2} = \frac{(1.96)^2 \cdot 0.5 (0.5)}{0.1^2}$$

Therefore, in this section, our sample consisted of 96 subjects. Due to the possibility of loss of research samples, 120 questionnaires were distributed, of which 100 were returned correctly and analyzed.

The available and selective sampling was used in this study due to its research method. The face validity of research questionnaire was confirmed after translation, retranslation and adjustment with prevailing culture in the country by obtaining the opinions and applying the desired corrections from eight professors of sports management who had the necessary expertise in the field of sports tourism. A questionnaire consisting of 37 questions was designed to evaluate the content validity using the panel method. After designing the questionnaire, to ensure its completeness and eliminate possible deficiencies, a pilot study was conducted. For this purpose, a sample of 35 subjects was selected before the main test, a questionnaire was distributed among them and its reliability calculated using SPSS software. However, with the changes made in questions after applying the necessary corrections in the questions, Cronbach's alpha coefficient of final questions was calculated to be 0.885. The obtained coefficient indicates that the questionnaire has the necessary reliability or in other words the required reliability, while the value of this coefficient for each of the dimensions and components is as described in [Table 2](#).

Considering the fact that the minimum reliability coefficient for research questionnaires is equal to 0.7, it is observed that the obtained Cronbach's alpha coefficient is higher than this value and is thus suitable. Afterward, with general distribution of the questionnaires, Cronbach's alpha coefficient for all questionnaires that were fully completed and reviewed was calculated to be 0.991. To answer the questions and test the research model, SPSS software version 24 and LISREL were used.

## **4. Results**

Description of the demographic features of research samples showed that the highest frequency was related to doctoral degree, which accounted for 59 subjects (59%). Also,

the lowest Number was related to bachelor's degree, which included four subjects. Out of 100 statistical samples, 57 were male (57%) and 43 female (43%). The 42-49 and <26-33 age group had the highest and lowest prevalence, respectively.

According to Hair et al. (2012), skewness and kurtosis were used to determine the normality of data. The results showed that the skewness and kurtosis is between -3 and 3 and between -5 and 5, respectively. Therefore, the data have normal distribution and the use of covariance-based software is justified.

The measurement model of research variables was subsequently implemented and it was found that the critical ratio of all cases is significant (critical ratio must be between -1.96 and 1.96 with  $p < 0.050$  significance level). Also, in all critical ratios of items, the value of critical ratio is  $> 2.58$ , so it is significant at 99% level. Therefore, in general, because it is significant in all items, no question is omitted. Besides, in the standard mode, all factor loads were  $> 0.5$  (the strictest mode). Therefore, in the standard mode, no item was deleted.

To examine the research model, which includes the independent variable of social marketing [with dimensions of technology, government laws and policies, environment (environmental health), economic status, establishing safety and security in sports venues, use of ads and communication channels, external rewards and incentives) and the dependent variable of the development of sports tourism (with the dimensions of attractiveness of tourist destinations, attractiveness of the tourism environment), the suitability and good fit must be ensured before confirming the structural relationships. In the research model, the ratio of chi-square to degree of freedom is 15.06, which is  $> 5$ . Moreover, the root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA) is equal to 0.061 and  $< 0.08$ . In addition, comparative fitness index (CFI=0.95), goodness of fit index (GFI=0.89), adjusted goodness of fit index (AGFI 0.85), incremental fitness index (IFI=0.94), normalized fitness index (NFI=0.92) and non-normalized fitness index (NNFI=0.91) are all  $> 0.85$ , so the model fits well and is approved.

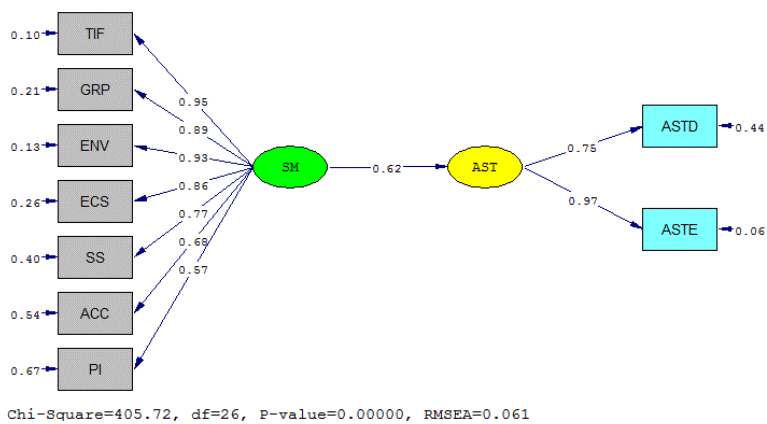
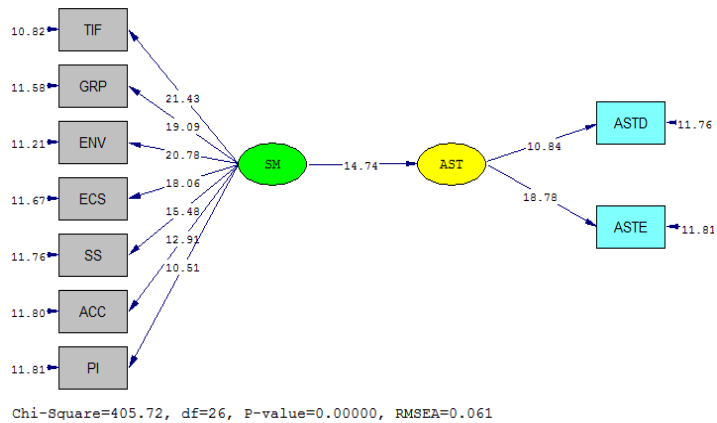


Figure 1. Model in standard estimation mode.



**Figure 2.** Model in significance coefficients mode (t-statistic).

Figures 1 and 2 show the results of structural relationships between the variables of research model. This model examines the role of social marketing in the development of sports tourism. According to the path coefficient of 0.62 and t-value of 14.74 at detection level of 0.05, this relationship was confirmed (because the t-statistic is out of -96.1 to 96.1 range). Furthermore, considering the positive sign of path coefficient, it can be stated that the relationship is positive.

Figure 3 shows the final research model. In this Figure, the standard coefficients obtained from structural equation modelling are also shown. These coefficients indicate the effect of each of the components and the independent variable on the dependent variable.

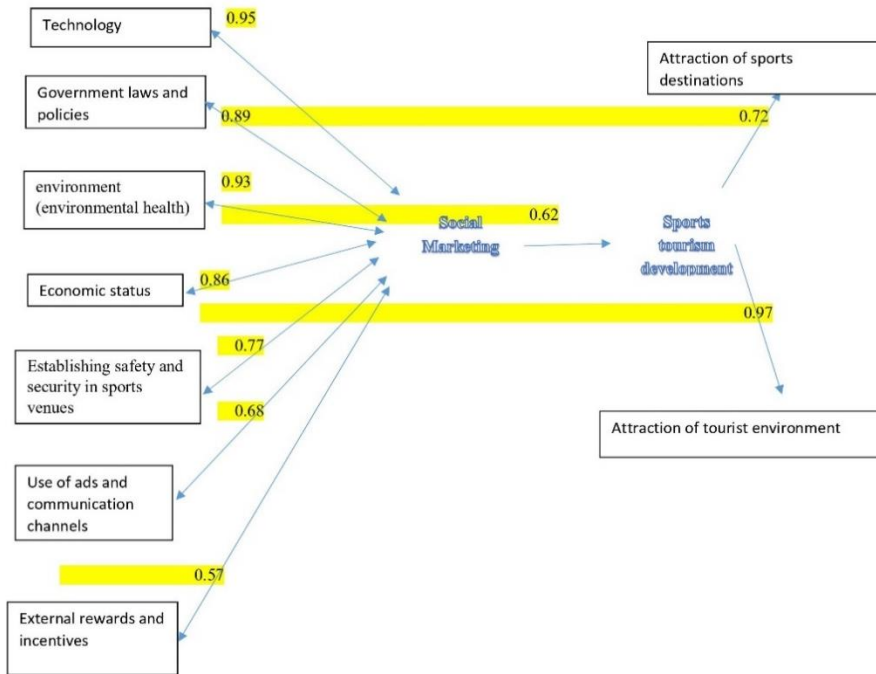


Figure 3. Standard estimation model based on double correlation of conceptual model.

Table 1. Components and indicators of the research model along with their corresponding sources.

Dimension	Component	Support sources	Indicates
Social Marketing	Technology	Saberi et al. (2019)	Addiction to computer games in people Technology Popularity of media and social networks in individuals
	Government laws and policies	Saberi et al. (2019)	Consistent policies in the development of sports tourism in the country Management instability Lack of a written and comprehensive plan for implementation
	Environment (environmental health)	Ajdary et al. (2015) Saberi et al. (2019)	Undesired weather conditions Air pollution Noise caused by vehicles
	The economic situation	Naghavi (2016) Kim et al. (2015) Zarei et al. (2016) Saberi et al. (2019)	Excessive preoccupation of people (right to punishment) Inadequate economic situation in society Inadequate economic problems in society
	Establishing safety and security in sports venues	Kim et al. (2015) Zarei et al. (2016)	Approval of places used in terms of safety and security Security and tranquility of places for activities The cleanliness of the place
	Use of ads and communication channels	Kim et al. (2015) Zarei et al. (2016)	Proper use of sports personalities and athletes by IRIB in their films and programs Encouraging films and documentaries that are in line with the development of sports and physical activity The advertising message must be at specific and appropriate times
	Use of external rewards and incentives	Javid et al. (2013) Malek Akhlagh et al. (2016) Zarei et al. (2016) Saberi et al. (2019)	

Dimension	Component	Support sources	Indicates
Development of sports tourism	Development of sports tourism	Malek Akhlagh et al. (2016) Saber et al. (2019)	Presenting evaluation cards to encourage people according to the material benefits given to them Providing benefits for people with a high level of participation Providing benefits for those with good health
		Zebardast et al. (2020)	Introducing and having a global reputation as a tourist destination Acquisition of hosting sports events in tourist destinations Cheap tourist destination for service Existence of quality and desirable infrastructure for tourist destinations Clean and hygienic tourist destination Diversity of the tourist destination to create a new experience Considering seasonal sports tourism destinations Information about the destination of sports tourism to raise the level of people's aspirations Marketing of international tourist tours
			Beautiful attractions and landscapes Various resorts and entertainments Favourable and pleasant weather Security and reliability of tourist places Quiet place for tourists to have fun and spend their free time Hospitality of the staff of sports tourism destinations Modern and advanced sports camps and destinations for tourists

**Table 2.** The specifications of questionnaire and Cronbach's alpha coefficient of research.

	Dimension	Indicator	Relevant measures (questions)	Cronbach's alpha coefficient
1	Social marketing	Technology	Question 1 to 3	0.770
2		Government laws and policies	Question 4 and 5	0.721
3		Environment (environmental health)	Question 6 to 8	0.901
4		The economic situation	Question 9 to 11	0.778
5		Establishing safety and security in sports venues	Question 12 to 14	0.832
6		Use of ads and communication channels	Question 15 to 17	0.933
12		Use of external rewards and incentives	Question 18 to 20	0.928
14	Attracting sports tourists	Attracting tourist destinations	Question 21 to 29	0.868
15		Attracting the tourism environment	Question 30 to 36	0.740

## 5. Managerial implications

This question was analyzed using statistical methods and structural equation modelling. As shown in [Figure 3](#), the social marketing factors affecting the development of sports tourism include technology, government rules and policies, environment (environmental health), economic status, safety and security in sports venues, the use of ads and communication channels with path coefficient of 0.62 and t-value of 14.74. The t value for this parameter (according to the rule of 5% error in rejection area of zero hypothesis for values outside -1.96 to 1.96 range for each model parameter) is calculated  $>1.96$ . Therefore, it can be stated that in response to the main research question, the role of social marketing is confirmed with 95% confidence; in other words, social marketing has a statistically significant role (relationship) in the development of sports tourism and the type of relationship between the two variables is positive and significant considering the positive path coefficient. Therefore, at 95% confidence level, one can expect that concomitant with the improvement in social marketing, the likelihood of developing sports tourism in a positive direction increases, and any weaknesses and shortcomings in the field of social marketing hinder the development of sports tourism.

The value of this coefficient (0.62) shows that in tourism sites of Tehran Province, social marketing has an important role in the development of sports tourism and that strong and supportive social marketing can lead to flourishing of sports tourism.

The phenomenon of sports tourism has received special attention as a strategy for economic development of societies. In this regard, sports tourism sites of Tehran Province as one of the most important provinces with tourism attractions have been addressed. Also, considering the income derived from holding sporting events, the marketing element can be a common factor of sports marketing with other marketing types such as commercial or educational marketing. The results of the main question confirm that social marketing is an effective factor in the development of sports tourism in sports tourism sites of Tehran Province; therefore, tourism managers in these areas can create conditions for enjoyment and attraction of tourists and eventually develop the sports tourism industry by providing social marketing factors and removing the barriers.

According to the final model that was tested in sports tourism sites of Tehran Province ([Figure 3](#)), it was found that social marketing overshadows the development of tourism in these sites directly and with higher than average effect (62%). Among the components of social marketing, the following factors had the highest impact respectively: technology (95%), environmental health (93%), government laws and policies (89%), economic status (86%), safety and security in sports venues (77%), the use of ads and communication channels (68%), external awards and incentives (57%). Among these factors, the technology is the most important in social marketing. Social marketing in technological debate can use technological tools and take steps to somehow change the undesirable behaviour of a person into desired behaviour, and emails, text messages, social networks, websites, Instagram and so forth are among the technological approaches used for this purpose. According to statistics obtained from

the official news agencies of the country<sup>1</sup> and more importantly from cyber police website<sup>2</sup>, nearly 40 million users of social networks are Iranian. In a majority of these channels, there are channels and groups to encourage and change people's behaviour toward specific activities (including sports tourism), and perhaps this technology is the most important factor in social marketing in the present study.

## **6. Discussion and conclusion**

Overall, the results of this study show that the investment of tourism organizations on social marketing factors is valuable because the following measures can affect the desire for tourism and its consideration:

- The issue of social marketing can be deliberated as a strategy for the development of sports tourism as a comprehensive approach that has been regarded in this way for the first time
- It can be stated that the conceptual model of the present study is a complete and comprehensive tool to implement social marketing for the development of sports tourism. Such a model has not been used with this research approach.
- Given that social marketing is a marketing philosophy to solve social problems, this approach can be used as a method and strategy for the development of sports tourism.
- Based on the obtained conceptual model, tourism development officials in sports tourism sites of Tehran Province are advised to first identify the effective causal conditions of this phenomenon to use the social marketing for the development of tourists and apply the right strategies accordingly.
- Considering the fact that there are several problems and obstacles for the implementation of any strategy, we recommend that the authorities cooperate properly in the development of sports tourism in all cases except for the factors beyond their control. Given that sports tourism in Iran is not the responsibility of an organization, clear and transparent cooperation can be highly effective in attracting tourists.
- Regarding the fact that many dimensions were identified in the field of strategies and appropriate indicators, it is suggested that these strategies should be considered with a social marketing approach not pursuing financial benefits for planning and implementation of strategies. Instead, great attention should be paid to social interests so that these strategies can be executed empirically on a small scale.
- Since advertisements and communication channels were in the second priority in terms of path coefficient, it is suggested to use prominent people in the study areas for this purpose. These celebrities can be prominent athletes, actors or veterans, or approved groups such as family, social brands and clubs.
- Considering that technology and environment had the third and fourth priority in

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<sup>1</sup> Including Mashregh, Tasnim and Tabnak

<sup>2</sup> [www.cyberpolice.ir](http://www.cyberpolice.ir)

terms of path coefficient, respectively, it is suggested that the spaces used for tourism in sports tourism sites should be attractive, uniform and use natural spaces to take advantage of advances and internet technologies to attract tourists, and the existence of beautiful sports spaces, parks, clean and tidy spaces (in terms of pollution), as well as entertainment with a variety of colours has a great impact in behaviour, mood, tranquillity, positive and negative emotions of individuals, vitality and power of society.

- In environmental health category, it is suggested to choose the right time to hold sports competitions in order to attract tourists. Sports tourism managers can boost the tourism industry by selecting the appropriate time depending on the geographical and climatic conditions.
- To create a safe place for tourists, the government and law enforcement forces must provide the necessary infrastructure for tourism development, especially security for tourists. Meanwhile, the performance of sports organizations and managers in establishing and developing security has a significant role in the security perceived by sports tourists.

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## نقش بازاریابی اجتماعی در توسعه گردشگری ورزشی استان تهران

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### کلیدواژه

بازاریابی  
محیط گردشگری  
مقصد گردشگری  
ورزش

### نوع مقاله

پژوهشی اصیل

### چکیده

**هدف:** پژوهش حاضر با هدف بررسی نقش بازاریابی اجتماعی در توسعه گردشگری ورزشی استان تهران انجام شد.

**روش:** مطالعه حاضر از نظر هدف کاربردی، از نظر شیوه جمع‌آوری داده‌ها توصیفی از نوع همبستگی بوده که ۱۰۰ نفر از صاحب‌نظران در زمینه بازاریابی اجتماعی، صاحب‌نظران در زمینه گردشگری ورزشی و مدیران و کارشناسان سازمان میراث فرهنگی به شیوه نمونه‌گیری در دسترس و انتخابی، برای شرکت در این مطالعه انتخاب شدند. ابزار جمع‌آوری داده‌ها، پرسشنامه محقق ساخته برگرفته از پژوهش‌های انجام شده بود که روایی ظاهری و محتوایی آن توسط خبرگان و پایایی آن با استفاده از ضریب آلفای کرونباخ برابر ۰/۹۹ مورد تأیید قرار گرفت.

**یافته‌ها:** داده‌ها توسط نرم‌افزار SPSS ۲۱ و LISREL ۸ تجزیه و تحلیل شدند. نتایج نشان داد که از ۷ مؤلفه بازاریابی اجتماعی به استثنای استفاده از جوایز و مشوق‌های بیرونی، سایر مؤلفه‌ها (تکنولوژی، قوانین و خط‌مشی‌های دولتی، محیط، وضعیت اقتصادی، برقراری ایمنی و امنیت در اماکن ورزشی، استفاده از تبلیغات و کانال‌های ارتباطی)، در توسعه گردشگری ورزشی تأثیر مثبت و معناداری دارد.

**اصالت و ابتکار مقاله:** نتایج این مطالعه نشان داد که سرمایه‌گذاری سازمان‌های گردشگری بر

بازاریابی اجتماعی موثر است. تحقیق حاضر، جزو معدود مطالعات جامعی است که درباره

سرمایه‌گذاری‌های اعتباری و زیربنایی در ایران در ارتباط با گردشگری ورزشی انجام شده است.

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## How We Can Develop Sports in Iran: Explaining the Process

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### ABSTRACT

**Purpose:** The current research aimed to design and explain the sports development processes in Iran.

**Methodology:** The qualitative and grounded theory-based methods have been used for the current study. The snowball data sampling method and the semi-structural interviews with 15 knowledgeable elites on the subject was used for data collection. The obtained data were analysed by the grounded theory coding with the structuralist approach introduced by Charmaz (2006). The coding was done in two phases as the primary and concentrated codes. Then, the theoretical coding was used to organize the concentrated codes. The trustworthiness of the obtained data and codes for ensuring them the researcher did authenticity.

**Findings:** The findings show that the processes required for sports development in Iran include attraction, maintenance (the process of maintaining community sport participation and the process of retaining talent), and education. These three processes and their components are interrelated and connected in a systematic approach. The proper designing of the processes and the relationship between their components with the strategy to use each process output as the input of the next one with particular emphasis on the interstitial processes and components is an essential point that must be considered.

**Originality:** Proper design of processes and the relationship between their components using each Process's output as input to the next Process with special emphasis on the Process and intermediate components is a critical point that must be considered. It is in this state that heroism is taken out of the greenhouse mode. Incidentally, with the spread and promotion of sports and physical activity among different sections of society, the possibility of the emergence of sports talents naturally increases, and their growth and excellence path become clear. Iran's sports development model is presented with a stakeholder approach, procedures and process.

### Keywords

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## 1. Introduction

Today, sports as a relatively global entity have had significant effects on the social, political, economic, and technological changes (Aboagye & Mbale, 2017; Astle, 2014; Haasler, 2012; Kaufman & Wolff, 2010). The achievement of these functions in the national and international arenas will be possible only in the light of the effective development of the sports. Sports Development, as a field of study, has grabbed the attention of researchers since 1970 and has been defined and interpreted diversely by the people (Askarian & Raahbar, 2021; Astle, 2014; Bramham & Hylton, 2008; Houlihan & White, 2003; Hylton & Bramham, 2007; Nicholson et al., 2010). However, the vision that has been noted in all definitions of sport's development is about the opportunities of participation and promotion and the advantages of sports participation (Shilbury & Deane, 2001). Generally, sport's development is focused on three objectives: public health, educational objectives (which denotes the growth of the sports participators and they may become successful through the promotion of their performance), and the elites' performance excellence (Collins et al., 2012). Therefore, the sport's development has grabbed the attention of various states as the main priority; however, what is so essential meanwhile is the specification of the processes to realize this matter. Sports development models (Hylton et al., 2001; Shilbury & Deane, 2001) cannot fully cover and specify all the sports development processes (Bailey et al., 2010; De Bosscher et al., 2006). For example, these frameworks do not explain how sports organizations play a role in developing or supporting different stages of sports development (Brouwers et al., 2015). In addition, these frameworks ignore the people participating in the sport's development, the way of this participation, and the related results (Sotiriadou & Shilbury, 2013).

## 2. Theoretical background

### 2.1. *The Process of Attraction, Retention/ Transition, Nurturing*

Sotiriadou et al. (2008) have introduced the sports development path based on the ARTN to include three processes: attraction, retention (transition), and nurturing. This framework results from four years of studying the annual reports and other political evidence from 35 national sports centers in Australia. It provides an organizational vision of who, how, and which degree and results are involved in sports development. It can be taken as a managerial and administrative approach to the sport's development (Brouwers et al., 2015).

#### 2.1.1. *Attraction Process*

The attraction process aims to increase knowledge and encourage people to participate in sports (Sotiriadou et al., 2008; Sotiriadou & Shilbury, 2013). Numerous studies have been done regarding the attraction process, which seeks to promote and increase public participation. For example, Collins et al. (2012) have suggested a model based on biological maturity, psychological development, and social factors to replace the one-

dimensional and straightforward models of sports participation development. Côté et al. (2014) in, the study of the sport's development's dynamic processes, have introduced the three essential elements for youth sports participation: what they do, their relationships with others, and the environment and conditions in youth sports which the sports activity is done. These three elements, in a positive interaction with each other, lead to the change in the personal assets of the participators (the sense of competence and merit), trust, connection (joint), and personality, as well as long-term results such as the participation in continuance of the sports, reaching higher levels in sports, and personal development through the sports. Also, Rowe et al. (2013) introduced a model for the development of sports participation. They stated the reaction of four factors: the physical environment, individual factors, social environment factors, and the policies and regulations that determine the individual's participation in the different levels of sports (from recreational sports to professional sports). The current study has aimed to combine the science of sports development with the social-ecological theory to develop sports and promote physical exercises at the societal level.

### *2.1.2. Retention Process (Transition)*

The retention process (transition) includes the stages of identification and development of the talents. Its objective is to help talented youth athletes attain the skills required for international success (Brouwers et al., 2015). In terms of the retention process (transition), various models have been provided. For example, the Athletic Talent Development Environment Model is an ecological model introduced as a framework for the specification of the roles and functions of the components and the different relationships within the environment in the talent development process. The essential part of this model is to help the youth talents transition to the elite levels. In this model, the athletes are at the center. The components are made up from the micro-level (the school, friends, family, team, or club) and macro-level (education system, national culture, sports culture, and federations), which are placed in the sports and non-sports areas and consider the past, present, and future conditions (Henriksen, 2010). Also, he has categorized the Environment Success Factors Model, which affects the successfulness of the talent's development environment, under three categories. The input section is (financial resources, human resources, infrastructural resources, and educational facilities), the processes are (education, camps, competitions, and social events), and output is (development of the individual achievements of the athletes, result of the team achievements, and development of the organizational culture) (Elahi et al., 2021). Mills et al. (2012) have identified six main categories of the factors that positively or negatively affect the outcome of football talented athletes to reach higher performance levels, which are: awareness (self-awareness, awareness of others), flexibility (such as resisting the defeat, positive vision), directed features (such as enthusiasm and professional approach), intelligence (the sports intelligence, sense of competence), sports specific features (such as the guidance and competitiveness), and social factors (such as the critical others and game culture). In this study, awareness has been considered as an essential and mediatory element. Also, the findings express the

multidimensional nature of talent development. Röger et al. (2010) also introduced the specified, strategic, and written objectives, ordered and regular planning, consideration for the modern scientific approaches in the talent spotting, and understandable and adaptable educational content as the critical factors in evaluating the quality of sports talent-spotting system.

### 2.1.3. Nurturing Process

The Process of nurturing is a process in which the focus is on promoting the elite athletes and obtaining the best performance in the national and international arenas (Sotiriadou et al., 2008). In terms of the nurturing Process, also, the results of Newland and Kellett (2012) have shown that the three crucial elements in the elites' sports development: 1- sports development process, 2- sports development settings (development of the clubs and the elite performance institutions- non-development of the clubs and educational systems), and 3- sports development environment (effects of structure- effects of policy). In addition, Liebenau (2010) has introduced sports development strategies to include: coaching, sports psychology, tournament, facilities and equipment, physical conditions, and the budget and finance. Astle (2014), in terms of sustainable development in New Zealand, has introduced five vital elements for sustainable sports. The growth and development include developing the games, players, development of the providers (schools and clubs), facilities and equipment, and the coaching. De Bosscher et al. (2006) have classified the influential factors that lead the nations to enjoy the development of the championship and professional sport and international sports success in 9 pillars and three groups: the first group is the input which includes the human, financial resources, and is essential. The second group consists of accepting the strategies and policies that facilitate championship sports, such as promoting the training, competition, match, and scientific research. The third group is the output that is the result of the championship sports development and is specified by the Olympic Games and other competitions medals, number of athletes, and sixth to eighth place. Table 1 is a review of the studies that have used the ARTN framework.

**Table 1.** A Review of the Studies with ARTN Approach Adopted from (Brouwers et al., 2015).

Article	Thomson et al. (2010)	Liebenau (2010)	Thomson et al. (2010)	Sotiriadou et al. (2014)
Title	Domestic youth sports development programs	The path of sports development for amateur golfers	Limitations and Benefits of Sports Participation for People with Mental Disabilities	Attracting and retaining club members in changing societies
Process	Retention/ transition/ nurturing	Public and Special Paths for Public Participation to Selectness	Attraction/retention	Attraction/retention

### 2.1.4. The Iranian Sports Structure

Iranian sports structure has a governmental and semi-governmental system. At the national level, it faces the traffic of administrative and decision-making bodies. The closer we get to the operational level, the fewer the supervision and participation of the



government become. Practically, numerous executive institutions related to sports and their performance somehow affect the outputs expected by the country's sports system.

#### *2.1.5. The Sports Participation Condition in Iran*

Low participation of the people in sports and their sedentariness, especially youths and adolescents, is a challenge that can jeopardize the people's public health. Also, the emergence of diseases due to sedentariness is another challenge. Based on the research conducted in this regard, 70.65% of Iranian people do not do any physical exercises, which can be a serious alarm to the authorities (Majdara et al., 2018)

#### *2.1.6. The status of Elite Sport in Iran*

Based on the analysis performed on the status of Iran in different summer Olympics, the Iranian average medal has been just four medals. The other words, in each period, proportionate to the conditions and compared to other periods, it has had ups and downs, and the instability in the medal has been evident. The observation of the gold medals obtained by the Iranian athletes during different summer Olympics confirms the above claim. Among 68 medals won, only 18 have been gold, and Iran has managed to win a gold medal in only eight summer Olympics games. The observation of Iran's status in different periods of the Asian Games indicates the falling trend of Iranian athletes' medal-winning started from Beijing's 1990 Asian Games, and it has been worsened from 2010 (Majdara et al., 2018).

Various countries in the world have adopted different programs in different time sections to achieve sports development. In Iran, multiple plans have been designed and implemented by other institutions related to sports in recent years to realize sports development. However, due to a lack of harmony and consistency, these plans have not been as efficient as they should (Askarian & Raahbar, 2021). A look at sports participation and elite sports shows that sports development processes have not been appropriately designed and are inefficient. The conducted studies within the country in terms of the sport's development also have usually considered elite sports development or public sports participation separately, and they have rarely provided a framework with an integrated and comprehensive approach that determines the sports development processes at all levels. In addition, these studies are quantitative researches based on the traditional models of sports development, and often, they have ignored the flaws of these models. Therefore, Iran's sports development authorities must conduct research again and design processes more accurately and coherently. Seemingly, because process designing is one of the primary and central circles in the sports development system in any country, the lack of enough attention and proper investment in it can impose financial and non-financial losses upon the nations. The direct economic costs include any costs that do not lead to the realization of the objectives. The indirect financial costs include the drop in society's public health, the accidental elimination of talents, and the like. Thus, based on what was mentioned, the main research question is how the sports development processes in Iran are?

### 3. Methodology

In the current study, the grounded theory-based qualitative method has been used for explaining the Process of sports development in Iran. Regarding the nature of the research, the data collection instrument included semi-structural interviews and library-based studies (through referring to the documents and studying and investigating the theoretical frameworks of the subject). In selecting the samples for semi-structural interviews, we used both academic degrees and managerial experience. The sampling method is snowball sampling, and finally, after 15 interviews and data saturation, it was finished. The demographic data of the 15 experts interviewed in the current study are presented in [Table 2](#).

**Table 2.** Demographic Data of the Interviewees.

Total number	Position		EducationField of study			
	Manager	Member of faculty	PhD	Bachelor's	Sports management	Economy/management
15	7	8	13	2	12	3
100%	46.66%	53.33%	86.66%	13.33%	80%	20%

Before doing the interviews, the interviewees made the arrangements, and the instructions were sent to them. Therefore, 15 interviews have been done until saturation. During the interviews, the people's conversations were fully recorded with prior permission. Then, the discussions were written on paper, and finally, the data were prepared for analysis. The conducted interviews were analysed by the grounded theory coding with a structuralist approach which was introduced by [Charmaz \(2006\)](#). Also, the validity and reliability concepts have different definitions in the qualitative data. [Skinner and Edwards \(2010\)](#) suggest using the concept of credibility instead of validity, based on the various objectives and features of the qualitative studies. It should be tried to obtain this task through long-term involvement, sustainable observation, checking with the participators, and triangulation. Glazer also states that triangulation is one of the instruments that can judge the research's strength and validity. The methods used for validation of the current study have been presented in [Table 3](#).

**Table 3.** The Methods Used for Validation of the Current Study.

<b>Long-term involvement</b>	It was done to increase the theoretical participation and communications with the participators to evaluate the researcher's inferences.
<b>Re-inspection of the data extraction path</b>	The researcher's periodic inspection of the obtained data and codes to prevent bias and ensure their credibility was done.
<b>Checking with the participators</b>	Investigation of the obtained data by the help of the research group and surveying the interviewees about the results.
<b>Triangulation</b>	Three sources of data collection as 1) interview, 2) related literature and the theoretical framework (articles, theses, and up-to-date international reports on the sports development as well as investigation of the sports development models and structures in some countries such as China, Australia, Japan, Singapore, Germany, and Canada, the documents (First to Fifth Development Plan, 20-year Vision Document of the Islamic Republic of Iran, Master Plan for Sport Development).
<b>Continuous comparison</b>	Comparison of the data obtained from the investigated sources with other sources throughout the study.

The criteria were considered with different strategies (Table 3)-the data obtained from the interviewees and recorded and written on paper. In addition, the researchers contacted participants continuously to get their new comments. Also, to prevent bias and ensure the validity of the data, periodic inspections on codes were done. In the current study, based on the suggestion by the researchers (Charmaz, 2014; Flick, 2014), the validity criterion was considered the credibility of the data and the method. Through the effort for ensuring the data worthy of analysis, the organized comparison between the data obtained from various sources, the documentation, and the precise and detailed reporting of the data was performed. Also, to ensure the reliability of the current study, the percent agreement formula was used. A co-researcher was asked to participate in the research. Then, the researchers, alongside the co-researcher, coded three interviews. The agreement rate between the coders was 83.23%, regarding the fact that the reliability value is above 60%. So, the credibility of the coders was confirmed and suitable.

The obtained data were analyzed using grounded theory-based coding with the structuralist approach introduced by Charmaz (2006). The coding in the grounded theory with the structuralist approach includes at least two phases: primary coding and concentrated coding. Also, this approach of theoretical coding is done to form the concentrated codes. The primary or open coding (extraction of the concepts and subjects): in the first phase of coding, which is called prior coding, the researcher, reviewing the collected data, tries to identify the concepts which are hidden in them. While performing the primary coding, data sections such as the lines, words, chapters, and events are investigated. We mainly consider them from an analytical point of view (Charmaz, 2006). The coding objective is to re-parsing the set of the data collected to the minor conceptual components. About 310 key points were extracted from the interviews, and after omission of the standard codes and conceptualization in the framework of 35 open codes, 15 concepts, and 15 categories were defined. Concentrated coding: complete coding is the second phase in coding. These codes were accurate in terms of directing power and have more optionality. They are also more conceptual than word-for-word, line-for-line, and event-for-event coding (Charmaz, 2006). After the primary coding and creation of the required analytical paths, these primary codes can be used to combine and explain more extensive sections of data. In this phase, 15 categories were obtained, and they were transformed into four full codes in the previous phase. Theoretical coding: theoretical coding is a complicated level of the coding process. They are integrated and form the obtained concentrated codes. They help the researcher make and describe their analytical story. Therefore, these codes conceptualize the relationship between the codes and direct the analytical story towards the theoretical destinations (Charmaz, 2006).

#### **4. Results**

In Tables 4 and 5, the coding guide and data coding process with the structuralist method has been provided, respectively.

**Table 4.** Coding Guide.

Code	Source	Required instruments and facilities
IN-M	Interview with the managers	Recording facilities
IN-T	Interview with the members of faculty	Recording facilities
DO	Literature and theoretical framework, documents	Worksheets, indexing, and checklists

**Table 5.** Data coding process with the structuralist method

Concentrated code	Categories	Concepts	Primary code
Attraction process	Attraction process	Individual attraction	People attraction
			Importance of the attraction process
	Attraction process input	The public	All people
			The youths and adolescents
	Attraction process output	1. Promotion of sports participation, 2. Talents spotting and attraction	Promotion of community participation
Attraction process processing	Participation development	Talent spotting and attraction	
		Individual factors	
		Social factors	
		Physical environment	
Retention process	Talent retention	Policies and regulations	
		Participation development strategies	
		Talent retention	
		Retention management	
Talent retention process	Retention process input	Pool (treasury) of talent (talented youths and adolescents)	Talent pool
			Talent development sources
	Retention process processing	Talent development	Talent development requirements
			Talent development strategies
	Retention process output	Talent (talented youths and adolescents)	Talented people
Elite nurturing Process	Nurturing process processing	Elite development	Paying attention to the development of mass participation
			Adopting a ladder movement approach
			Provincial development of sports
	Nurturing process output	National and international achievements	Development of special training programs
			Development of modern coaching services
	Nurturing process input	Elite talent	Elite development strategies
			Medal-winning
Nurturing Process	Talent nurturing	Elite athlete	
		Athletes capable of attending the national team	
Input	Adoption of two approaches as reinforcement of the environment and	Talent nurturing	
		Talent development	
			Reinforcement of learning environment

Concentrated code	Categories	Concepts	Primary code
Process of retention of community sports participation		learning, and changing the retention environment	Changing the retention environment
	Processing	Improving individual and engineering skills of community	Improvement of individual skills Social engineering
	Output	Continuation of sports participation and Community Health	The institutionalization of sports behavior Individuals' health

After determining and grouping the concentrated codes based on the theoretical studies and the field notes and the interviews, and the investigation of their relationships, the final framework obtained is provided in Figure 1.

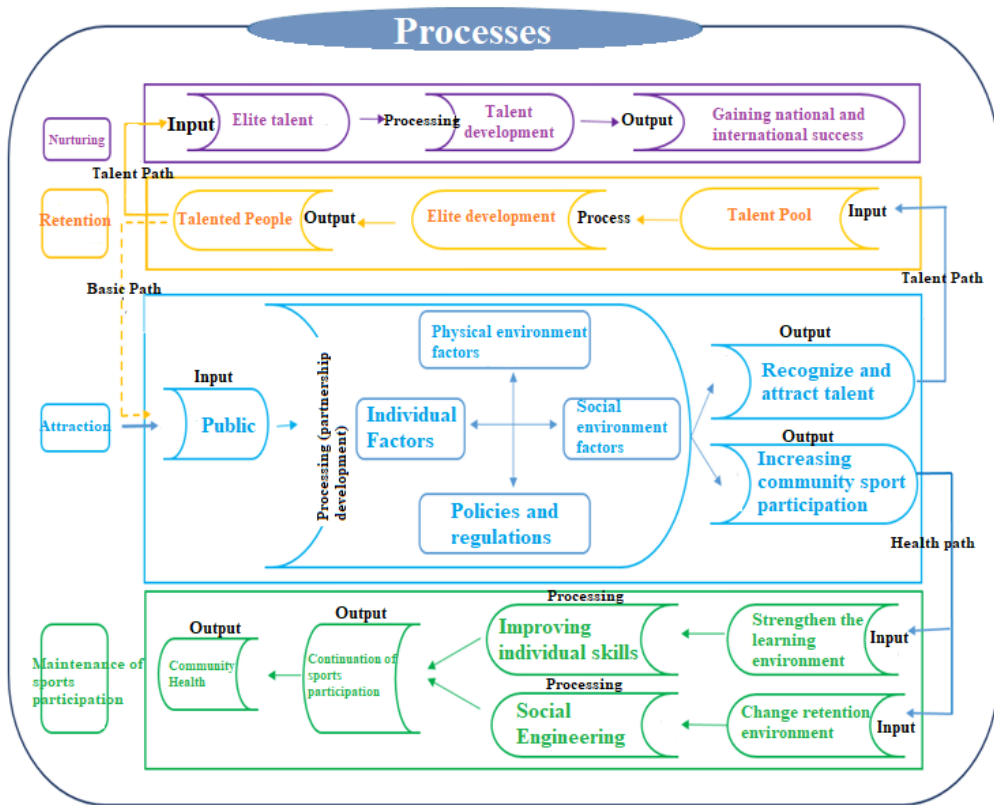


Figure 1. Iranian sports development processes.

### 5. Managerial implications

The purpose of this paper is to offer constructive suggestions for sports policymakers and sports officials and ultimately create the best practices to address unique perspectives of sport. The current study results can be used for long-term policy-making

and planning in sports development. In the executive area, it can also provide the sports managers and officials with a clearer perspective. It is expected that studies in this area would help inspire more scholarly inquires and ultimately improve the continued advancement of sport in Iran.

## 6. Discussion and conclusion

In the current study, the sports development processes were designed and explained in three processes: attraction, retention (retention of the community's sports participation and talent retention process), and nurturing (Figure 1). The system theory can justify the rationale of such design of the sports development processes. Every Process has three sections as the input, processing, and output. The researchers defined a set of subsystems including participation development system, talent development system, elite development system. Furthermore, the collection of these three processes is a part of a macrosystem, which is the deports development system. Based on the research findings, the first sports development process in Iran is the attraction process. This Process aims to increase the community's sports participation and identify talented people in Iran. It seeks to, by using an ecological approach and a spectrum of participation development strategies, attract all people to the sports, regardless of their age and sports performance level. In the current study, this Process is defined as having three parts: the input, the processing, and the output. The details are provided in Table 6.

**Table 6.** Attraction process.

Definition	Input	Processing	Output
Attraction process	The public	Sports participation development	- Increasing the community's sports participation - Identification and attraction of the talents

In the input phase of the attraction process, every adult, youths, and gender (women and men), with every physical situation, is attracted to sports without any constraints. The interviewee (IN-M-5) has stated in this regard that "the attraction process input is the public. Anybody can enter this process and there no constraints". The processing phase of the attraction process in the current study is the development of sports participation based on the experts' opinions. Rowe et al. (2013) have introduced four factors (physical environment, individual factors, social environment factors, and the policies and regulations) as the factors that internationally determine the individual participation behavior in different levels of sports (from recreational sports to professional sports). Based on this framework and the opinions of the current experts, the participation development in the present study includes four factors as the individual (awareness, vision, behavior, beliefs, perceived obstacles, motivation, joy, self-efficiency, skills, education, social and economic status of the person, and occupational status), social environment (the family such as the effects of the parents and other family members' physical activities, family support, the peers, the institutions and organizations such as the schools, the workplace and social organizations, access to the social support networks, the effects of essential others such as the teachers and

instructors, society's norms, cultural background, the social and economic status of the community), physical environment factors (natural factors such as the weather or geography, access to the facilities such as the parks, playgrounds, sports grounds, stadiums, aesthetics or perceived quality of facilities or the natural environment, security such as crime rates or traffic volume, urban design such as street connections, housing congestion), policies and regulations (urban planning policies, active transportation policy, educational policies such as scheduling sports classes, financial policies, sports policies, health policies, environmental policies, workplace policies) plus a range of participation development strategies including (providing facilities and infrastructure, culturalization through media content, design and implementation of popular campaigns and carnivals, incentives, regulating prices for sports services and free provide of parts of it). The results of this chapter are in line with those of [Wolman \(2014\)](#), [Sotiriadou and Shilbury \(2013\)](#), [Darcy and Dowse \(2013\)](#), [Rowe et al. \(2013\)](#) in terms of sports participation development. In this regard, interviewee IN-M-2 stated: "In terms of the public participation in the sports, the social participation must be increased through the formation of non-governmental institutions. In the public sports and attraction process, the preparation of the platforms is upon the governments, and participation is upon the people. In fact, at the individual level, the social and economic status of the family, especially the access to the equipment and facilities and having the money are important, and at the macro level, the facilitated issuance of the permissions by the governments and the creation of the non-governmental institutions are important. And finally, the output of the attraction process also includes the identification of talented individuals and increasing the society members' sports participation which is itself considered as the input for the retention process ([Memari et al., 2021](#)).

Based on the findings, the retention process is the second Process of sports development in Iran. The two outputs of the attraction process include two separate retention processes, including the community sports participation, retention process, and the talent retention process. The Process of community sports participation seeks to provide a suitable learning environment for improvement of the individual skills and sound engineering of the society and the environment the individual is in, continue the society members' sports participation. In the current study, this Process has been defined in three phases: the input, the processing, and the output. The details are provided in [Table 7](#).

**Table 7.** Society sports participation retention process.

Operational definition	Input	Processing	Output
The Process of retention of community sport participation	Two approaches: -Enhancing the learning environment -Changing the retention environment	-Improving individual skills -Community engineering	-Continuation of sports participation -Community health

Based on [Laitakari et al. \(1996\)](#) findings in the introduction of two learning and retention environments for retention of the sports behavior, and with regards to the opinions of current study's experts, the input of the community sports participation

retention process includes the adoption of two approaches as enhancing the learning environment and changing the retention environment. The learning environment is a controlled environment for learning objectives and acquisition of the skills and those related responses to the sports behavior that is focused on the individual. Opposite to the retention environment is the ordinary life environment with the changing moods, stresses, temptations, and other forces opposed to sports behavior, which require suitable changes for retention and continuance of the sports behavior, and is focused on the environment (Laitakari et al., 1996). The processing phase of this Process includes improvement of the individual skills (especially the cognitive skills such as the self-efficiency and self-motivation) and community engineering. The enhancement of personal skills is one of the fundamental approaches in retaining sports behavior. It leads to the improvement in an individual's capability and trust for continuing the sports behavior and independence of his sports behavior from the external environmental effects. The use of behavior change theories, cognitive learning theory, and behavioral-cognitive principles to enhance individual skills can be seen in various studies on sports (Laitakari et al., 1996). In the current study, the community engineering approach means the revision of behavior through environmental issues and community for positive reinforcement of the physical activities related to health. It includes creating a suitable environmental space such as easy access to the facilities, security, and attraction, beautifying the environment, networks organization, supporting programs, and supports by the government, families, and friends to retain and continue the sports behaviors of the community. In other words, the highest focus of community engineering is put on the culture. With the improvement of the individual's cognitive skills in sports, alongside a good culture in the society, the continuance and institutionalization of the sports behavior and ultimately, the community health as the outputs of this Process can be achieved. Nigg et al. (2008), also in their model, have provided the Physical Activity Maintenance (PAM) theory based on the psychological and contextual factors, which align with the current study's findings. The interviewee (IN-M-4) explains the sports behavior-changing path as follows: "for retention of the people's sports behavior, the Process of behavior-changing must be created. The behavior-changing starts with the change in cognition, and then the vision change occurs. The next stage is the change in beliefs and finally, the change in behavior of the individual". The talent retention process seeks to provide the talent development requirements and the use of talent development sources and strategies, develop the talented individuals identified in the attraction process, and enter the *eliteness* level. In the current study, this Process has been defined in three phases: the input, the processing, and the output. The details are provided in Table 8.

**Table 8.** Talent retention process.

Operational definition	Input	Processing	Output
Talent retention process	Pool (treasury) of talent	Talent development	Talented people

After identifying the talents in the attraction process, a wider pool for talent is created, which is considered the input of the talent retention process. It includes children



and adolescents with championship talents and potential. Also, the processing phase of this Process is the talent development, and it consists of the talent development sources (human resources, financial resources, and infrastructural resources), requirements for talent development, including (community support, family, media, politicians, and legal support, creation of specialized structures, the need for required considerations by unrelated agencies) and talent development strategies (talent development through training and practice, designing training programs with competitive structure, investment in sports academies, continuity in talent spotting, developing an integrated and coherent talent identification system, early recognition, and comprehensive talent development). [Henriksen \(2010\)](#), also, in a model provided under the title of “talent development environment’s successfulness factors, ” has noted three categories of environmental resources: human, financial, and infrastructural resources. The findings in this chapter are in line with those of [Jacob \(2014\)](#), ([Hayman et al., 2011](#)), ([Mills et al., 2012](#)), and [Röger et al. \(2010\)](#) in terms of the influential factors on the talent development. The all-out support of the talent by the society, media, family, and politicians shows that the talent seed would be fruit when it is cultivated in a rich and supportive environment. The media provides supportive cultural and social platforms by delivering the correct awareness of talent identification, promoting its importance, and positively changing the community and families’ attitudes. On the other hand, the major politicians also prepare the supportive political platforms for the realization of objectives of talent development through the adoption of optimal policies and strategies as well as the provision of sufficient and facilitating legal frameworks. Finally, the output of the talent retention process is the youths and adolescents with elite talents, which are considered as the input of the nurturing Process. The interviewee (IN-M-1) comments in this regard: “After identification of the talented people, now there should be the location, facilities, and well-trained instructors to work on these people and we should also implement in our country what the developed countries have done in this regard. Also, the interviewee (IN-T-4) states about the retention process: “we take the attraction process in Iran seriously, but the retention and nurturing processes are being ignored. For example, the failure to retain the old customers in a sports shop, failure in the retention of a talented youth who was attracted to the youth club, and failure in the retention of a coach we have attracted with difficulty. Or numerous efforts to attract spectators and not having a suitable plan to retain them”. Also, he has stated that: “the attraction process is the only active process in Iran, and the lack or insufficiency of the retention and nurturing processes in sports are felt.”

In the current study, the nurturing Process is considered the last sports development process in Iran. It aims to focus on the elite sport in Iran to achieve success in the national and international arena. This process is divided into the input, processing, and output phases. The details are provided in [Table 9](#).

**Table 9.** Elite nurturing process.

Operational definition	Input	Processing	Output
Elite nurturing Process	People with elite talents	Elite development	Achievement of national and international success

The nurturing Process's input is the talented individuals (the youths and adolescents with elite talents) who are outed from the talent retention process. The processing phase of this model is the elite development process. It includes developing elite strategies, modern coaching services, special training programs development, full-time athletes supporting, specialized elite sports equipment, designing competition system. The other segments of this Process are the importance of training science and financial support of elite athletes to prepare the identified talents for the elite levels to achieve the best performance in the national and international arenas and win the medals. The findings in this chapter align with those of [Newland and Kellett \(2012\)](#) and [Park \(2011\)](#) regarding influential factors on elite sport development. Finally, the output of the nurturing Process is a national and international success. In this regard, the interviewee (IN-T-4) comments: "In the nurturing process, we must have suitable financial, mental, and physical plans for nurturing the talented athlete."

The relationship between these processes and their related components determines the path for effective implementation of the countries sports development policies. Designing the relationship between the sports components using each Process's output as the next, with particular emphasis on the Process and the mediatory elements, is an important point that must be considered. It is in such a state that heroism exits the greenhouse state. Indeed, with the expansion and promotion of sports and physical exercise among the society's groups, the possibility of the emergence of sports talents is increased, and the path for their growth and excellence becomes clear. The current situation of the relationship between the sports development components in Iran is indicative of an island approach as long as this relationship is not designed and enhanced, no clear vision can be predicted ([Majdara et al., 2018](#)). The interviewee (IN-M-6) has the same idea: "The task of beneficiaries of these processes is to control the input and the output as well as the processing process." Generally, a view of the three sports development processes mentioned above indicates that these processes must follow their path in sequence to properly realize the sport's development at all levels as if they were interlocking gears. With the movement of the attraction gears, the retention gears move, and the direction of the retention gears leads to the action of the nurturing. These processes tell us that if you want to experience sustainable success in the international arena, you must focus on the retention process and invest in designing a good talent development system. To have a good talent development system, you must focus on the attraction process and expand the policy-making, planning, infrastructures, and required resources. To have continuous sports participation among people, you must focus on the cognitive skills of the individuals besides social support and community engineering. The perception of each Process and its related components are so important that with creating a small problem in each, the following processes would also face the problem. Consequently, the desired product and objective would not be realized.

Provision of such integrated and coherent sports development processes can be the same as a road map for the related officials. It determines that they must start from where they should go through and what results they should obtain to realize sports development at all levels. Also, this framework can be a good criterion for measurement and evaluation and provides a new approach for sports researchers, regardless of the

pyramid and traditional models of sports development. Regarding the extensiveness of the current study, researchers tried to identify and explain the related processes and components with a systematic approach.

However, each of these identified processes is among the essential issues that are suggested to be further studied more precisely and as a separate subject.

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## طراحی و تبیین فرآیندهای توسعه ورزش در ایران

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### کلیدواژه

توسعه ورزش  
فرآیندها  
نظریه داده بنیاد

### نوع مقاله

پژوهشی اصیل

### چکیده

**هدف:** هدف تحقیق حاضر طراحی و تبیین فرآیندهای توسعه ورزش در ایران است.

**روش:** در این پژوهش از روش تحقیق کیفی، مبتنی بر تئوری داده بنیاد استفاده شد. داده‌ها با استفاده از نمونه‌گیری گلوله‌برفی و مصاحبه‌های نیمه ساختاریافته با ۱۵ نفر از نخبگان آگاه به موضوع گردآوری شدند که به روش کدگذاری نظریه‌مبنایی با رویکرد ساخت‌گرا مورد تجزیه و تحلیل قرار گرفتند. کدگذاری در دو مرحله کدگذاری اولیه و متمرکز انجام و سپس از کدگذاری نظری برای فرم بخشیدن به کدهای متمرکز استفاده شد. بازرسی ادواری داده‌ها و کدهای به دست آمده به جهت اطمینان از صحت آن‌ها توسط محقق انجام گرفت.

**یافته‌ها:** یافته‌های پژوهش نشان داد فرآیندهای لازم برای توسعه ورزش در ایران شامل جذب، نگهداری (فرآیند نگهداری مشارکت ورزشی جامعه و فرآیند نگهداری استعداد) و پرورش است که در یک رویکرد سیستماتیک نحوه ارتباط هر سه فرآیند و مؤلفه‌هایشان، تبیین شد.

**اصالت و ابتکار مقاله:** طراحی درست فرآیندها و ارتباط میان مؤلفه‌های آن‌ها با رویکرد استفاده از خروجی هر فرآیند به‌عنوان ورودی فرآیند بعدی با تأکید ویژه بر فرآیند و مؤلفه‌های بینابینی نکته بسیار مهمی است که باید مورد توجه قرار گیرد. در چنین حالتی است که قهرمان‌پروری از حالت گلخانه‌ای خارج شده و با گسترش و ترویج ورزش و فعالیت بدنی در میان اقشار مختلف جامعه، به شکل طبیعی امکان ظهور و بروز استعدادهای ورزشی افزایش و مسیر رشد و تعالی آن‌ها شفاف می‌گردد. مدل توسعه ورزش ایران با رویکرد توجه به ذینفعان، رویه‌ها و فرآیندها ارائه شده است.

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## Modelling the Relationship between Environmental Graphics and Feeling of Security in Spectators of Iranian Soccer Stadiums

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### ABSTRACT

**Purpose:** The feeling of security in public sports stadiums is one of the most critical indicators for the quality of the arena. The use of environmental graphics in stadiums can create a sense of security in the spectators. This study aimed to design a communication model of environmental graphics and a sense of security in Iranian soccer spectators.

**Methodology:** An applied method was adopted for this descriptive-explanatory research. The researcher-made questionnaire with five environmental graphics components and six feelings of security was used for data collection. Fifteen experts confirmed the validity of the questionnaire and its overall reliability for environmental graphics and security. The study's statistical population included the spectators of the Iranian Premier League, among whom 384 people were selected in proportion to the size of stadiums.

**Findings:** The results showed a significant relationship between environmental graphics and feeling of security in spectators and that the intensity of this relationship was 0.553 based on R2 criterion, indicating a strong correlation between these two variables. Therefore, in the design, construction and installation of soccer stadiums, it is necessary to instil a sense of security in the spectators present in the stadium and prevent social and cultural anomalies or non-return of spectators to the stadiums using the capacity of graphic, environmental experts.

**Originality:** This article is valuable and unique because it analyzes the relationship between new variables of Environmental Graphics and Feeling of Security in Spectators.

### Keywords

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## 1. Introduction

Since the worldwide expansion, sport is now widely recognized as a popular leisure activity (Larson et al., 2011). Football is one of the most popular sports and brings millions of fans to stadiums every year (Foroughi et al., 2018; Vallerand et al., 2008). Nevertheless, attendance at live sporting events continues to be a key goal of sports organizations business planning (Koenig-Lewis et al., 2018). With intense competition in the marketplace, football marketers are impelled to create more effective strategies and present a wide range of services to motivate spectators to come to stadiums to watch live games (Foroughi et al., 2019; Theodorakis et al., 2001). Two streams of research provide sport managers with guidance to improve the experience for sport spectators. The first stream is concerned with the market demand perspective. In this stream of research, consumers expectations towards the essential features of the game are investigated (Byon et al., 2010; Greenwell et al., 2002; Kim et al., 2009). These features reflect the quality of the core service. The second group of studies are related to the aspect of game support programs, investigating the characteristics of controllable service, which are concerned with the programs of game operation and reflect the quality of peripheral services (Byon et al., 2010; Murray & Howat, 2002; Zhang et al., 2005). Several studies have demonstrated that these two perspectives could be the primary drivers of the behavior of game consumption (Byon et al., 2010; Greenwell et al., 2002; Zhang et al., 2003).

Core service quality encompasses features related to the game itself: these attributes consist of players' performance, the quality of the game and the characteristics of the team (Brady et al., 2006; Yoshida & James, 2010). Core service quality takes place on the pitch (Masteralexis et al., 2009) and is difficult to control. On the other hand, peripheral service quality is under sports marketers' direct control. It deals with the features of the supporting services, the stadium/facility environment, and the interactions between employees and spectators (Theodorakis et al., 2001; Yoshida & James, 2010). Due to growing competition in sports marketing, it seems vital to develop innovative ideas to wisely manage the variables closely controlled by sports marketers (Kelley & Turley, 2001; Theodorakis et al., 2001). Such strategic management will help to ensure that fans enjoy their sporting experience even when their home team is losing, or the game is not exciting. As such, the focus of this study is on the peripheral service quality factors that are under the direct control of sports marketers.

## 2. Theoretical background

A Uhrich and Benkenstein (2012) define the concept of sports stadium atmosphere, which includes the venue of the event, attitudes and actions of spectators, and the emotions that people display at the event as behavioral sports responses. Balaji and Chakraborti (2015) also describe the atmosphere of a stadium as the functional, emotional and social aspects of the stadium that stimulate cognitive, emotional and behavioral responses among spectators during a live sporting event as well as a set of interactions between the spectator and any aspect originating from the stadium's environment. Since spectator satisfaction has a strong correlation with the atmosphere



and environment of a sports stadium and the behavioral attitudes of spectators, it appears to have a positive relationship with behavioral intent that leads to spectator satisfaction (Jensen et al., 2016).

On the other hand, the sense of security that a spectator perceives when attending a sports venue, including soccer stadiums, plays an irreplaceable role in repeating their presence at the venue. As one of the essential human needs, security is of secondary importance in Maslow's hierarchy of needs and the main requirement of quality of life after physiological conditions. Security is an essential requirement in human societies, a central component of sustainable human development and leading quality improvement factors in public spaces. If all the design principles but security are observed in an arena, there will be no guarantee for its success. Public spaces (including sports venues and spaces such as soccer stadiums) are places for external relationships, interactions, as well as social changes and encounters (Belali e oskui et al., 2020). Therefore, security has always been one of the essential human needs, which is of great importance from a psychological point of view, especially in mental health and psychopathology. Security is one of the most important quality indicators for measuring the desirability of life in all societies because peace of mind, human growth and prosperity, the emergence of talents and creativity, and human perfection are achieved in the shadow of security. Therefore, considering citizens' basic needs in public environments and paying attention to solving relevant problems and difficulties, including reducing anomalies and increasing security, is one of the essential issues continuously regarded by managers, planners, and urban designers (Vahdat & Sajadzadeh, 2016).

In general, security is derived from the Latin root "securus", which means they lack worry and concern and encompasses issues such as "relief from danger, threat, harm, anxiety, fear, and worry as well as calm, confidence, comfort, trust, supply, and guarantee". In Persian culture, security means "freedom and peace, lack of fear and not being invaded by others". In the dictionary of behavioral sciences, two meanings of this word are as follows: "a state in which personal needs and desires are satisfied" and "a condition with a sense of personal value, self-assurance, self-confidence and acceptance that is ultimately exercised by social classes towards the individual (Saheli, 2008). Glossary definitions of the concept of security emphasize the "sense of freedom from fear" or the "feeling of security" that governs material and psychological safety. There have been several definitions of security, namely various lexical purposes ranging from mental states and situations (sense of security) to objective and external conditions (safe position). Three sets of security concepts can be expressed (Grossi et al., 2007). The first group includes definitions that emphasize the threat to collective identity. Accordingly, security refers to preserving a series of characteristics based on which individuals consider themselves as members of a particular group. The second group sees security as the lack of fear of destruction and threat to society's values. Finally, the third group stresses the collective liberation from the risk posed by illegal action of the state, system, individual or group in all or part of the society.

On the other hand, like many other notions, two distinct dimensions must be considered in explaining the concept of security. The first concept is the "objective"

dimension in which tangible environmental and behavioral parameters are evaluated, and the other is the "mental" dimension that is perceived based on the sense of group security (Ostvar, 2013). The mental dimension of security is of high importance in terms of a direct effect on the level of security of citizens. The sense of security refers to a psychological feeling of citizens toward the existence or non-existence of crime. The higher the frequency of crime and its causes, the lower the sense of security among citizens. As a kind of "psychological perception", this feeling is a function of human exposure to environmental conditions distinguished from a specific urban and cultural structure to another socio-cultural system. Therefore, the development of security is psychologically dependent on environmental conditions and the type of perception and conceptual levels (Hosseini, 2008). On this basis, the feeling of security in society (including spectators in sports stadiums) is more critical than security because there may be good security conditions, but the citizens do not feel safe. In this regard, Zakeri (2011) believes that there are four states concerning the objective and mental dimensions of security as follows: a) There is security, there is also a sense of security; b) There is neither security nor sense of security; c) There is security in terms of security indicators, but people do not feel safe; d) There are no security meeting security standards, but people feel safe.

On the other hand, according to (Beeler, 2011), the sense of insecurity in a society leads to the compromised mental health of citizens and, of course, the loss of social trust. These conditions increase stress, tension and anxiety, restlessness, and many mental diseases in society. For this reason, recognizing various spaces and factors that reduce security and disrupt public order is one of the essential points that urban designers and planners consider in creating, developing, and managing public spaces and environments. In public spaces, "a sense of security" means that citizens can move freely, communicate with their fellow citizens, and engage in social activities without being threatened or subjected to physical or mental violence or inequality. The feeling of security indicates the safety of citizens in terms of property, life, which itself shows the organization, legitimacy and stability of society.

Due to the importance and role of environmental design in perceiving the sense of security in individuals, several urban studies have been conducted about the feeling of safety and environmental design. Cho et al. (2019) indicated that spaces susceptible to crime have irregular geometry and lack of enough light. Kondo et al. (2018) showed that the design mode of the environment and a set of interventions meant to re-form existing public spaces could significantly reduce the crime rate of neighbourhoods and increase residents' perception of the security at their place of residence (Kondo et al., 2018).

The results of a study by Foster et al. (2014) also indicate that the incidence of crime and the fear of crime is potentially affected by the environment and design of crime avoidance or criminalization of public spaces. The findings of Menaker et al. (2019) entitled "Changes in crime pattern in the vicinity of Cleveland sports venues on competition day" showed that holding sporting events in each of these venues affects the frequency, type and timing of crime perpetration in the vicinity of these areas having higher crime rates on competition days. In addition, races have had the most significant impact on the increasing frequency of violent crimes, resistance to detention, and

misconduct related reports. Whereas the research findings of [Phipps and Horrobin \(2014\)](#) showed that in general, the level of security reported in older neighbourhoods was much lower than that of newer ones, which is a function of environmental characteristics and the design technique of public spaces in these neighbourhoods.

In local studies, the findings of [Behzadfar et al. \(2013\)](#) indicate that territoriality and access control, environmental design and graphics, management and maintenance of public spaces have a potential effect in reducing the crime rate of public spaces. [Moayeddy et al. \(2013\)](#) introduced familiarity with the space and its reputation, social monitoring, population density, clarity or readability, sense of belonging, urban landscape and attractiveness of the environment as factors used to measure the importance of security. Also, [Akbari and Pak Bonyan \(2012\)](#), in a study entitled "The effect of physics of public spaces on women's sense of social security", introduced the size and shape of space and visual and environmental comfort as the physical components affecting the feeling of feeling social security in urban spaces. Therefore, space and environmental factors have an essential role in creating security. According to the mentioned components such as urban landscape, the attractiveness of the environment, clarity and readability, size and shape of space and the like in the environment, the role of arts, and among them environmental graphics is more prominent.

As indicated by the above research findings, having a sense of security in public spaces comes from several factors, one of which is environmental factors. Since the importance of security is a psychological and social phenomenon affected by several variables, such feeling results from direct and indirect experiences that people gain about the environment. In this regard, the art of environmental graphics is one of the most popular graphics components, which has a role beyond mere art in changing public spaces. In addition to being sufficiently literate in graphics, a graphic designer must be a sociologist and psychologist aware of the community and its surroundings for his works to be influential and solve social and cultural problems by providing appropriate visual elements in public spaces. Environmental graphics is a science in which the use of various forms, colours, maps and images has been addressed in a skilful, principled and planned way to improve and simplify relationships, communications, and traffic to complement the beauty of the public environment. This field of art includes many branches of graphics, the most important of which are navigation systems, building graphics, exhibition and stadium design, and thematic design of environmental maps. Environmental graphics are in direct contact with different strata of society to create a favourable and pleasant living space in harmony with the people's traditions, culture, and mood. If the environmental graphics are to grow, environmental graphics are the most effective tool for influencing the behavioral patterns of human life, including citizens.

Large-scale graphics with quasi-architectural facilities is the best way to identify the environment that can pave the way for psychological harmony, further clarity and readability of the environmental understanding by creating typical urban signs ([Azizi, 2009](#)). The graphic design facilitates routing, information update and beautifies the environment, building security and comfort for the audience ([Sharifi Noghabi & Rahnama, 2015](#)). According to the international classification by Walter Merdger Archigraphia book, environmental graphics are divided into six components:

pictogram; traffic signs in cities and shops; visual guidance systems; graphic design of letters on buildings and shops; graphic signs on motor vehicles (Satari & Eghbali, 2017). In this regard, the research findings of Atamaz (2019) showed that concomitant with fast changes in urban life and the urgent need to provide solutions, environmental graphic design is a new order to create a better atmosphere in public spaces that will soon spread around the world. This study showed that graphic design consists of elements from typography, photography, illustration, and pictogram, a universal language that can tell a story.

The global expansion of sports has made it an important leisure activity worldwide and professional exercise (Alonso & O'Shea, 2013). This popularity has led to new professional leagues and teams and attracted many sports consumers (McDonald et al., 2010). Sports managers and marketers are increasingly looking for strategies to increase spectators in stadiums because spectator arrivals make up a significant portion of sporting event revenue with such a highly competitive market. Sports event organizers around the world spend more than 2000,000 \$ per year on security activities. Security costs related to safety operations include staffing and physical support systems, environmental and access control, risk management, crisis, population, circulation, access, traffic, and parking. Research has shown that a majority of our sports venues and spaces are not adequately protected. Quantitative and qualitative status of security in sports venues and events can vary depending on the structure of venues, capacity, and type of event and the availability of resources.

Observing safety points in the design, construction, and operation of sports venues and spaces and ensuring athletes, spectators, and fans of sports teams during sporting events has long been a concern for sports venues and events managers. Soccer stadiums are among the most important sports places and spaces full of spectators. They account for a significant part of the world sports industry and spectators due to the unique attractiveness of soccer. The owners and investors in the soccer industry are trying to increase spectators by creating the best sports environments while retaining their existing spectators and fans. Therefore, in pursuit of academic research, one of the most important factors affecting the re-appearance of spectators is the feeling of security when attending sports venues and spaces, including the stadium where the match is held. In this respect, important studies have been conducted on characteristics of sports spaces in attracting, retaining and expanding the re-presence of spectators. For example, Dhurup et al. (2010) in a study examined the relationship between seven physical characteristics of the stadium, including the beauty of equipment, space allocation, access to the stadium, the comfort of seats, scoreboard quality, food service, and clean stadium with the willingness of spectators to stay in sports places, including sports venues. The results showed that improving the quality of environmental features in a stadium has a positive and significant relationship with the re-presence of spectators.

Pine (2010) also recognized the following factors that draw attention to the event: high quality of services, including resorts, stands and booths with licenses or exploitation rights, as well as aesthetic aspects of the stadium such as architectural style and those spectators who enjoy spending time in the stadium are more likely to attend other matches. Meanwhile, Razavi et al. (2012) also showed that the dimensions of color, space, form,

harmony, light, and environment effectively affect the tendency of customers and sports venues, respectively. [Rezaei et al. \(2011\)](#) argued that ease of access to sports space, separate sportive facilities for the championship, educational, public and recreational sports, age of sports facilities, and the existence of conveniences were among the factors that were respectively effective in creating a good sense in spectators to re-attend the stadium. [Karimollahi et al. \(2016\)](#) showed that easy access to sports venues, presentation of a variety of services to people and the attractiveness of the sports complex environment from the customers' viewpoint were factors that play a role in selecting a sports complex by customers. [Pourzarangar \(2018\)](#) considers the facilities and equipment of stadiums and factors related to the attractiveness of football matches as effective on maintenance and increase in the number of spectators. [Darvishi et al. \(2018\)](#) argued that social, infrastructural, economic, technical, cultural, and value factors are the most factors influencing the retention and increasing number of spectators.

Several studies have examined the issue of environmental graphics in sports. They have considered the role of aesthetics and attractiveness of the environment in the re-presentation of people in sports venues ([Cleland et al., 2010](#); [Cleland et al., 2008](#)). Mentioned findings indicated that the tendency toward physical activity and sports and a presence in sports venues and spaces are influenced by environmental characteristics. Those aesthetics and environmental graphics play an important role in physical activities and re-presentation in sports spaces. The dimensions of colour, light, harmony, form, space, and environment influence customers' tendency to sports places. The study of [Memari et al. \(2020\)](#) also showed that security and educational instructions, special attention to the management of hardware and software of places and spaces, planning and physical protection, and security services and facilities are essential to improve security conditions in soccer matches. In addition, the findings of [Harati et al. \(2019\)](#) consider physical security as one of the leading security issues affecting the security of volleyball stadiums in Iran. The results of [Mahmoodin et al. \(2019\)](#) showed that spectator satisfaction mediates the effect of sports stadium atmosphere on the behavior of spectators and fans in the future. The respective dimensions of the sports stadium atmosphere, team performance, facilities, electronic equipment, professional staff, team competition, entertainment, spectator enthusiasm and behavior, cheerleading groups and team traditions have the most significant impact on spectator satisfaction directly and also on their behavioral intentions indirectly.

Even though numerous studies have been conducted on safety and security in stadiums, few investigations have dealt with the role of environmental design and graphics in developing a sense of security among soccer spectators of Iranian stadiums. Most of the research findings have focused on protection from crime prevention, not in terms of creating peace but a sense of aesthetics and pleasure leading to the return of spectators to stadiums. Soccer stadiums in Iran attract many people. It seems that environmental graphics around the lawn, spectator benches and even giant stadium screens can significantly influence the sense of security in spectators.

The findings of this study can address several factors causing spectator anomalies in soccer stadiums over recent years, such as throwing flammable materials, beating and insulting in the stadium, breaking seats and destroying platforms, injuries and deaths.

These results may lessen some of the concerns of investors, clubs and sports managers regarding reduced re-attendance of spectators in soccer stadiums by recreating and redesigning the graphic, thereby contributing to the turnover of soccer matches. Therefore, the role of environmental graphics and their effects in creating peace, attractiveness, and a sense of security in public sports venues and spaces, this study seeks to answer whether environmental graphics are associated with creating a sense of security in spectators of soccer stadiums in Iran. If the answer to the question is yes, what is the appropriate communication model between these two categories?

### 3. Methodology

The research method was descriptive-explanatory, and the study was of applied type. According to Morgan's table, the study population included soccer stadiums from the Iranian Premier League, namely 384 subjects in an unknown community. The sample was randomly selected according to the capacity of Premier League stadiums during the soccer matches in 2017 and randomly distributed among the spectators. A researcher-made questionnaire taken from previous studies was used to collect the data, the validity of which was confirmed by 15 professors and experts in sports management and architecture and several operational staff. The reliability of the research instrument was 0.748 and 0.911 for environmental graphics and sense of security using Cronbach's alpha, respectively, and the combined reliability for environmental graphics and sense of security were 0.8 and 0.925, respectively. Because of the reliability of the questionnaire, three questions were removed. Finally, the environmental graphic questionnaire with 16 questions and the questionnaire of the feeling of security with 23 questions were designed for final implementation. The questionnaires were based on a five-point Likert scale (very high, high, to some extent, low and very low). In this research, the components of environmental graphics included signposts, pictograms, graphic designs (murals), advertisement posters and a visual guidance system. The parts of sense of security were a sense of place, the site's identity, memorability, readability, general perception, visual pleasure, form and morphology. The confirmatory factor analysis and structural equation modelling were used to determine the relationship between environmental graphics and the feeling of security in soccer stadium spectators. SPSS version 16 and PLS software were used to analyse descriptive data and confirmatory factor analysis and validation of the tool, respectively.

### 4. Results

Demographic [Table 1](#) shows the descriptive statistics of the research, including marital status, education level, attendance at stadiums and age of spectators.

**Table 1.** Distribution of spectators by marital status, education level, attendance at stadiums.

		Frequency	Percent	Total
Marital status	Single	203	52.9	384
	Married	181	47.1	

		Frequency	Percent	Total
Education level	Diploma	32	8.3	384
	Undergraduate	120	31.2	
	Bachelor	153	39.8	
	Master	56	14.6	
	PhD	23	6	
Attendance at stadiums	Rarely	99	25.78	384
	Usually	112	29.16	
	Mostly	67	17.44	
	Always	106	27.6	

As can be seen, most spectators were single; most held a bachelor's degree, and many of them were frequently present in the stadium.

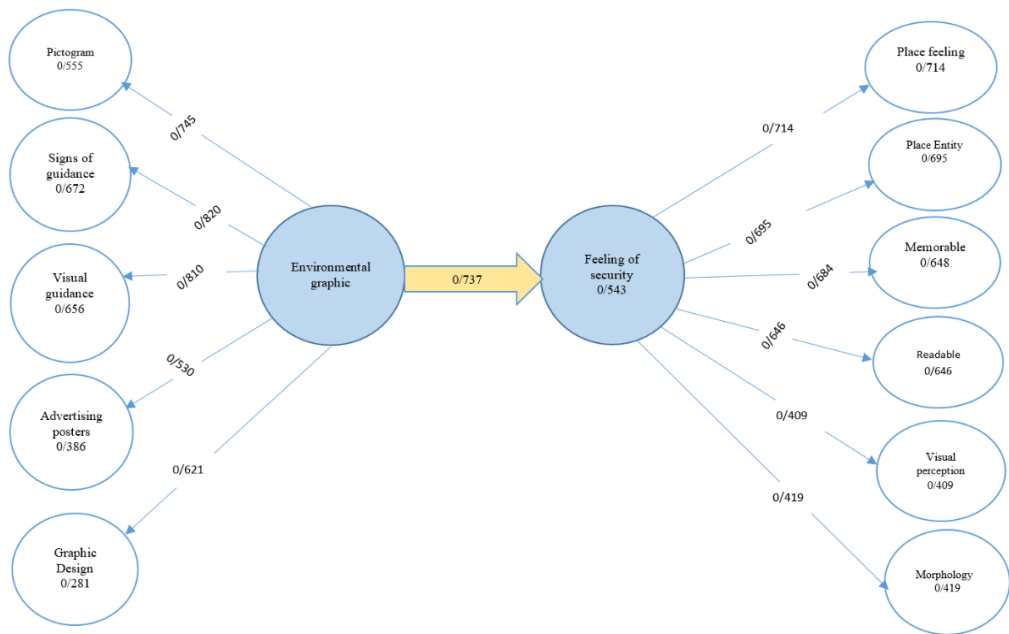
**Table 2.** Reliability of research tool based on Cronbach's alpha and combined reliability.

Variables	Questions	Cronbach's alpha	Average variance extracted (AVE)	Combined reliability (CR)
Environmental graphic	16	.822	.51	.856
feeling of security in the spectators	23	.899	.58	.905

**Table 3.** Combined reliability of each component.

Components	Number of questions	Combined reliability (CR)
Feeling of place	4	.865
Place Identity	4	.842
Memorable	3	.850
Readability	4	.818
Visual perception	3	.796
Form and morphology	5	.785
pictogram	4	.812
Signs of guidance	3	.873
Graphic Design	3	.748
Visual guidance system	3	.723
Advertising posters	3	.802

\*If the CR value for each construct is  $>0.7$  (1978, Nunnally), it indicates suitable internal stability. Also, if the mean value of the extracted variance is  $>0.5$  (Fornell & Larcker, 1981), the fit of the measurement model is indicated in PLS. Therefore, according to the above tables, based on Cronbach's alpha ( $>0.7$ ), combined reliability ( $>0.7$ ) and mean-variance ( $>0.5$ ), the measurement model has good reliability and fit.



**Figure 1.** Measurement model for factor analysis of environmental graphic and feeling of security in the spectators.

Load factors are calculated by measuring the correlation value of the indices of a construct if  $\geq 0.4$  (Hulland, 1999). It confirmed that the variance between the construct and its indices is greater than the measurement error variance of that construct and that the reliability of the measurement model is acceptable. Therefore, the values of load factors from the above test show that all components have a good load factor and are thus significant.



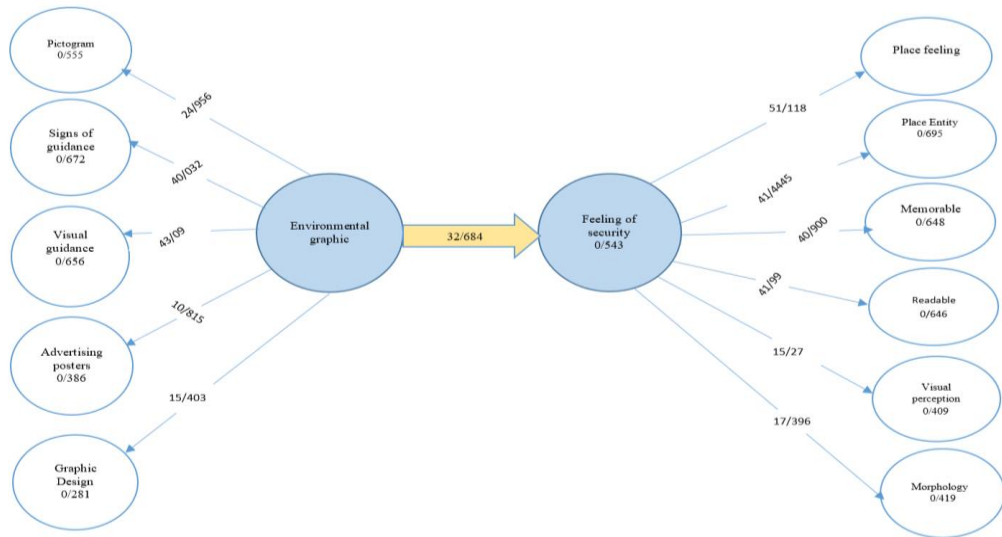
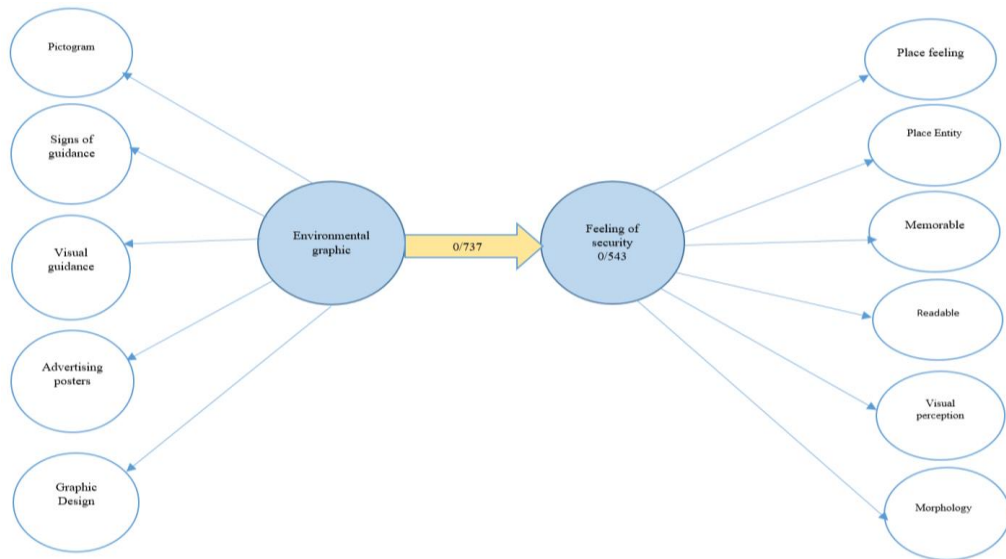


Figure 2. T-value statistic.

The most basic criterion for examining the significance of the relationship between variables is t-statistic or t-test. If the value of load factors observed with the t-value test is calculated  $>1.96$ , the relationship is significant at 0.05 level, and if it is calculated  $>2.58$ , it is significant at 0.01 level. It should be noted that this statistic only shows the accuracy of the relationship and that it cannot measure the intensity of the relationship (Davari & Rezazadeh, 2014). As shown in Figure 2, the t-statistic of all components and constructs is 2.58, which shows that the observed relationship between environmental graphics and the feeling of security is significant at 0.01 level and that the constructed model is suitable.



**Figure 3.** A model for measuring the analysis of graphic, environmental factors and the feeling of security in football spectators.

According to the Factor analysis model in Figure 3, the effect of environmental graphics on the feeling of security in spectators of Iranian football stadiums is equal to 0.737, which indicates the high impact of environmental graphics on the sense of security in spectators of Iranian soccer stadiums.

The model's overall fit is assessed through the goodness of fit criterion proposed by Tenenhaus et al. (2004) and calculated using the following formula. Communalities and R<sup>2</sup> represent the mean of shared values and R-squares of model constructs, respectively (Davari & Rezazadeh, 2014).

$$\sqrt{\text{communalities} * R^2} = \sqrt{0.545 * 0.543} = 0.538$$

Kline (2015) introduced three values of 0.01, 0.25 and 0.36 as weak, medium and robust values for GOF. As can be seen, the 0.538 value for the present model indicates a good fit of the model Davari and Rezazadeh (2014).

**Table 4.** Results of structural equations for research variables.

Path between structures	Standard Coefficient	T-Value	Result
Environmental Graphics ---> Feeling of Security	0.737	32.684	Confirm

### 5. Managerial implications

The results of the present study showed that there was a significant relationship between environmental graphics and the feeling of security in spectators. Therefore, in the design, construction and installation of soccer stadiums, it is necessary to instil a sense

of security in the spectators present in the stadium and prevent social and cultural anomalies or non-return of spectators to the stadiums using the capacity of graphic environmental experts.

## **6. Discussion and conclusion**

The needs of people must consider to motivate and persuade them toward a type of behavior satisfying them. One of the most popular theories of human motivation was proposed by Abraham Maslow in 1943. Human needs are classified in a hierarchy of importance, beginning from physiological conditions in the lowest level, followed by higher requirements, and ending with dependence and attachment to social needs. After modification of the pyramid in two stages during 1970 and 1990 that made it compatible with new theories, the three categories of cognitive, aesthetic and transcendental needs were placed in the fifth, sixth and eighth classes, respectively. In this way, improving the appearance and redecorating the environment through various art forms can stimulate human behavior based on the genuine requirement (need for beauty).

This study aimed to present a communication model between environmental graphics and the sense of security among spectators of Iranian soccer stadiums. In general, the findings of this study showed a relationship between environmental graphics and the importance of the security of spectators in soccer stadiums. Using environmental graphic components such as pictograms, traffic signs, graphic design (murals), advertisements, posters, and visual guidance systems can provide an attractive environment with a sense of security for the spectators.

In this regard, pictogram as a component of environmental graphics affecting the feeling of security was observed, consistent with the results of [Eslami \(2016\)](#)'s research. Results showed that the function of visual signs and pictograms in guiding public sports spaces leads to visual attraction in these spaces. Also, it stimulates the aesthetics taste of spectators, which is followed by the reduction of psychological stress. It is caused by the crowded soccer stadiums, thereby creating a pleasant feeling of security and comfort in the stadium environment.

Another finding of this study was that visual guidance system as a component of environmental graphics, which includes various attractive colors and paintings, affects the feeling of security. This result is also consistent with the findings of [Salavati \(2011\)](#) research. Overall, the color element has innate and actual capabilities and talents that will have a desirable, positive and harmonious effect on stadiums and spectators if used appropriately and adequately.

According to the present study's findings, the graphic design (mural) was another component of environmental graphics affecting the sense of security, consistent with [Mozaffarikhah and Kafchian Moghaddam \(2012\)](#) results. This result showed that Iranian painters and architects could properly renew public spaces (environmental graphics) such as soccer stadiums through mural and sometimes combining it with architecture. In addition, they can present novel patterns for creating new murals and even sports space graphics leading to further peacefulness and enhanced practical aspects of their works on the life of the audience, especially in sports spaces and soccer stadiums.

Another result of this study was the relationship between ads and advertising posters (including stands and publicity posters) with the sense of security in soccer spectators in sports stadiums, consistent with [Hatami \(2017\)](#)'s research results. Environmental graphics can play an influential role in raising the level of cultural awareness among sports spectators (especially those of soccer stadiums) by focusing on proper placement of stands, posters, banners and billboards in these stadiums and thus inject a sense of security and calm into those present in the stadium.

The role of guiding and informing the spectators in a soccer stadium is another component of environmental graphics studied in this research. The findings showed that communicating to guide and educate the audience is one of the most important roles of environmental graphics in public spaces, especially dense soccer stadiums, evoking a sense of security in spectators' minds while beautifying the environment. Man subconsciously demands beauty, symmetry, balance, and splendor and avoids malice and anomalies. It is a pleasant experience for every human to be in an environment where all the elements are correct. Also, the colors are in harmony and contrast, each doing its job correctly, inviting the soul tired of struggles and problems of everyday life to calm down. This is important for sports spectators, including those of attractive soccer matches who spend part of their free time in stadiums. This finding was consistent with the results of ([Davari & Rezazadeh, 2014](#)).

In addition to affecting each of the conceptual components of public spaces, environmental graphic art increases citizens' attendance in sports venues. The results show that the most important and most operative effect of environmental graphic art on the desirability of public places from the viewpoint of citizens and users of space is related to the elements and characteristics of physical component followed by social, semantic, and environmental components ([Vahdat & Sajadzadeh, 2016](#)).

By rationally designing visual elements based on the proper use of environmental graphics and examining the psychological perception of human beings and collective memory in public spaces (small or large), profound effects can be exerted on citizens. They include sports spectators in the environment and space of soccer stadiums that will contribute to the dynamization of public sports spaces.

Generally, the present study's findings indicated the unique role of environmental graphics in developing a sense of security among soccer spectators in Iranian sports stadiums. Creating the perception of security from various angles leads to sports growth in general and soccer in particular in Iran and even globally. Firstly, studies similar to ours showed that dealing with environmental graphics in public places, including sports venues and spaces, is associated with the attention to aesthetic sense and art in a public place and respect for the art-loving nature of man. Secondly, the environmental graphics and its components play the role of calming the audience mentally at the end of a busy day or week, creating a high capacity and causing a good feeling of spectators' return to the sports venue as well as placing the return to such spaces in people's leisure basket. Thirdly, studies show that this reduces the crime rates, stress and anomalies due to the dullness and roughness of a public sports space and promotes revenue and reduces the concerns of managers, owners and investors of the private sector in sports.

In the present study, inconsistent research nor consistent or inconsistent structural models were not found due to the novelty of the research. Therefore, environmental graphics create a sense of safety and psychological security in spectators of soccer stadiums to hold the competitions as good as possible, especially in sensitive competitions.

All sports managers, investors and owners of sports venues and spaces, especially soccer stadiums, are recommended to recruit graphic experts, construction and equipment of public stadium venues. They can ensure the re-presence of spectators and fans of their sports teams by taking advantage of art, creativity and up-to-date innovations. Other suggestions include using the subtlety of change based on painting and staining, various murals on communication paths, corridors, stairways, and entrances to stadiums and sports venues, diversity of banners, electronic and non-electronic billboards. They could have a significant impact on the return of spectators to soccer stadiums. There are different attitudes towards specific sports and attendance in sports venues and spaces from several perspectives; therefore, we suggest that this issue be studied in other sports and from the viewpoint of other sports' spectators.

The most significant limitation was the absence of Iranian women in soccer stadiums. All data and information of the present research have been taken from the male community. Therefore, studying this subject in detail in women's societies and sports with female spectators is necessary.

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## طراحی مدل ارتباط بین گرافیک محیطی و احساس امنیت در تماشاگران استادیوم‌های فوتبال ایران

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### کلیدواژه

اماکن ورزشی  
استادیوم‌های ورزشی  
تبلیغات  
هواداران  
فوتبال

### نوع مقاله

پژوهشی اصیل

### چکیده

**هدف:** احساس امنیت در فضاهای عمومی یکی از مهم‌ترین شاخصه‌های کیفیت فضا محسوب می‌شود و به نظر می‌رسد بهره‌مندی از گرافیک محیطی استادیوم‌ها بتواند موجب ایجاد حس امنیت در تماشاگران شود. لذا هدف پژوهش حاضر، طراحی مدل ارتباطی گرافیک محیطی و حس امنیت در تماشاگران فوتبال ایران بود.

**روش:** روش پژوهش توصیفی-تبیینی از نوع کاربردی و ابزار جمع‌آوری داده‌ها، پرسشنامه محقق ساخته‌ای با ۵ مؤلفه گرافیک محیطی و ۶ مؤلفه احساس امنیت بود که روایی آن توسط ۱۵ تن از متخصصین و پایایی کلی پرسشنامه با استفاده از آزمون آلفای کرونباخ (گرافیک محیطی ۰/۷۴۸، احساس امنیت ۰/۹۱۱) و پایایی ترکیبی (گرافیک محیطی ۰/۸۰۰، احساس امنیت ۰/۹۲۵) به‌دست آمد. مؤلفه‌های گرافیک محیطی شامل علائم راهنمایی، پیکتوگرام، طراحی گرافیکی (دیوارنوشته)، آگهی و پوسترتبلیغاتی و سیستم هدایت بصری و مؤلفه‌های احساس امنیت شامل حس مکان، هویت مکان، خاطره‌انگیزی، خوانایی، ادراک عمومی و لذت بصری و نهایتاً فرم و ریخت‌شناسی بود. جامعه آماری مورد مطالعه، تماشاگران استادیوم‌های فوتبال لیگ برتر ایران و نمونه آماری ۳۸۴ نفر بود که به‌صورت تصادفی ساده و متناسب با حجم استادیوم‌ها انتخاب شدند.

**یافته‌ها:** نتایج تحقیق نشان داد بین گرافیک محیطی و احساس امنیت در تماشاگران ارتباط معناداری وجود دارد و شدت این ارتباط بر اساس معیار R<sup>2</sup> در نرم‌افزار PLS برابر ۰/۵۵۳ بود که نشانگر ارتباط قوی بین این دو متغیر است. از این‌رو ضروری است در طراحی، ساخت و تجهیز استادیوم‌های فوتبال، با استفاده از ظرفیت متخصصان گرافیک محیطی، حس امنیت به تماشاگران حاضر در ورزشگاه القاء شود و تا از ناهنجاری‌های اجتماعی، فرهنگی یا عدم بازگشت مجدد به ورزشگاه‌ها، پیشگیری گردد.

**اصالت و ابتکار مقاله:** در این مقاله به طراحی یک مدل نوین با ارتباطدهی بین دو متغیر تحت عنوان گرافیک محیطی و احساس امنیت با جامعه تماشاگران فوتبال پرداخته شده است.

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## Designing a Conceptual Framework for Innovation Capability Development in Iranian Football Premier League

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### ABSTRACT

**Purpose:** Innovation is a critical factor in the success of football clubs. The use of innovation in organizations leads to the development of competitive advantage and sustainability. Innovation is the source of competitive advantage in the public and non-profit sectors by improving efficiency and effectiveness. This article aimed to design a framework for developing innovation capability in Iranian Premier League Clubs.

**Methodology:** The participants were 16 management and sports management professors. The sampling strategy was purposeful. To analyze the interviews, we used content analysis based on the Grounded Theory.

**Findings:** We extracted seven elements base on the interviews. They included financial infrastructure resources, transformational leadership, strategic thinking, innovative marketing, human resources capacity, knowledge process, and institutional environment. The results showed that financial infrastructure resources as the tangible resources and institutional factors combined with a kind of transformational leadership and strategic thinking of board members in terms of innovation, innovative marketing, and effective use of knowledge could enable football clubs to innovate.

**Originality:** The new capabilities of the Premier Football League clubs have been less discussed. In this study, we introduced the financial independence groundes, competitive advantage, value creation through innovation and supportive approaches of clubs in Iran.

### Keywords

Competitive Advantage

Concept Framework

Football Clubs

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## 1. Introduction

Today, innovation is an essential source of competitive advantage in organizations (Kulins et al., 2016). The use of innovation in organizations leads to the development of competitive advantage and sustainability. Innovation is the source of competitive advantage in the public and non-profit sectors by improving efficiency and effectiveness (Damanpour & Aravind, 2012). Organizations need to adapt to the competitive environment. They need to be changed to meet customer expectations or create added value through innovation (Ratten & Ferreira, 2016).

Sports organizations are no exception to this rule and seek to innovate to meet customer expectations and competitive advantage. In this regard, sports clubs or sports federations have been encouraged to make changes to satisfy and meet the expectations of their new members. Because of the growing commercialization and professionalism of the sports industry, it is essential to empower these organizations to innovate as much as other organizations (Newell & Swan, 1995). Club management will not be possible without the involvement of factors such as marketing. Fans are one of the essential sources of clubs and their natural wealth. Increasing the number of fans without observing the relevant techniques, paying attention to their satisfaction, and increasing fan loyalty cannot be considered sustainable sources for clubs (Memari et al., 2021).

The purpose of organizations' empowerment is to provide a platform to create and develop innovation capability in sports organizations. Sports organizations are increasingly challenged by competitors and sports providers and by increasing competition from other sports organizations. In this regard, sports clubs may compete for members and scarce resources such as financial resources and facilities (Newell & Swan, 1995). As recognized by the managers, this type of competition causes innovation in sports organizations (Winand et al., 2013).

Innovation capability is one of the most important approaches to creating innovation outcomes. Innovation capability is the determinant of achieving a high level of competitiveness in national and international markets and can be developed by measuring the performance of companies (Saunila & Ukko, 2014). It has been described as promoting the success of businesses (Francis & Bessant, 2005). The literature on innovation and its potential in industry is general and extensive but does not explicitly address sports products and innovation (Lawson & Samson, 2001).

Socio-technical system theory divides the elements of innovation capability into two categories: 1) technological innovation capability (development of new services, technology and service operations) and 2) non-technological innovation capability (management, market and marketing) (Ngo & O'Cass, 2013). Technology innovation capability is the use of new products or services that affect the performance of organizations (Oh & Teo, 2010), and non-technology innovation capability can include the branding of a company. Innovation is a tool preventing corporate growth and branding risks and is the root of innovation to access the market (Gupta & Malhotra, 2013). In general, innovation capability is defined as a multidimensional concept that has different structures (Saunila & Ukko, 2014).

Organizations that commit to developing innovation capabilities have a better vision for future success. One of the hallmarks of entrepreneurship is competition, which largely depends on the production of innovation in the future. Organizational performance largely depends on the ability to innovate (Saunila et al., 2012). Innovation capability is defined as the ability of organizations to mobilize skills and human resources to create new knowledge to deliver new services, products, or processes (Cohen & Levinthal, 1990). According to Newell and Swan (1995) Newell & Swan (1995), the ability of sports governing organizations to innovate to access (new) resources, sustain and promote their sport, as well as the development of sport in general, the spread of innovations and new practices or practices is essential (Newell & Swan, 1995). Sports organizations have unique opportunities and constraints that affect their ability to innovate (Ratten & Ferreira, 2016).

Numerous innovations have been linked to sports and football. Innovation in the service sector can include service itself in service delivery or service conditions (Edvardsson & Olsson, 1996). Hoeber and Hoeber (2012), in a study of football clubs, explained how new electronic devices had been developed, which in turn is a technological innovation (Hoeber & Hoeber, 2012). In addition, in recent years, FIFA has implemented many innovative measures to promote football and the growth of entrepreneurial activities in football. Changes in technology in various sports fields, especially in football with its unique nature, have made spectators want to participate in some sports activities. Increasing changes and innovative technologies will continue in the future. Products that were imagined in the past are now a constant and effective phenomenon (Hamidi et al., 2013). The processes required for sports development in Iran include attraction, maintenance (the Process of maintaining community sport participation and retaining talent), and education (Askarian et al., 2021). What is important is developing the ability to innovate in football clubs, despite the development of technologies and innovations alongside football.

The development of innovation capability and performance innovation, training and performance has led to an increase in the competitive advantage of football. Promoting innovation as well as the capacity for innovation in football clubs improves the performance of football clubs.

The world's biggest football clubs are still profitable and have a high financial balance due to the proper management of club resources and creating a competitive advantage. Meanwhile, football clubs in Iran are still in dire financial straits and have not been able to take full advantage of their value-added capabilities and have moved away from the sports industry in the true sense of the word. At the same time, the maintenance costs of the clubs are increasing day by day, and the shareholders and even the government are finding it difficult to overcome these costs. Similarly, clubs have to go to different resources to cover their expenses by providing them and creating the capability to provide their financial needs (Seifpanahi Shabani & Hamidi, 2017). One of these competencies is developing innovation capability in Premier League Clubs, which can pave the way for the clubs' financial independence, competitive advantage development, value creation through innovation, and more supportive approaches. As a result, sports organizations do not value innovation, which is debatable in the discussion

of football clubs. Football clubs in Iran are entirely state-owned and under the supervision of the Ministry of Sports and Youth, which is a reason for the reluctance to innovate. The research aims to develop a framework for developing innovation capability in Iranian Premier League clubs.

As a result, the researcher seeks to answer the following questions:

- 1- What are the components of the innovation capability development framework in Iranian Premier League clubs?
- 2- What are the relationships between the components of developing innovation capability in Iranian Premier League clubs?

## 2. Theoretical background

A review of research has shown that no study was conducted on the innovation capability in sport. On the other hand, the first research in this field dates back to 1995. The recent research in the field of innovation is [Ratten \(2017\)](#); [Ratten and Ferreira \(2016\)](#), who has pointed out the importance of managing innovation in sports and the growth of the sports industry as a result of increasing leisure and sports recreation and has introduced innovation as the heart of sports. Without innovation, sports will not be recognized as an industry and have a competitive advantage. Indeed, most research has cited the consequences of innovation, but few studies have considered the capability to innovate and develop in sports clubs. [Table 1](#) shows the summary of research conducted in innovation capability in organizations, including sports organizations.

**Table 1.** A summary of research conducted in the field of innovation capability in organizations.

Researchers	Purposes	Results
<a href="#">Bachari Salehi et al. (2014)</a>	A framework for evaluating and developing innovation capability through a system dynamics approach	The excellence model was used to explain the capability of innovation in organizations. Accordingly, the constituent elements of innovation capability are leadership, strategy, partnerships, resources, people, processes, and policies.
<a href="#">Haghighi Kaffash et al. (2015)</a>	Modelling organizational innovation capability	Three dimensions of operational capability, human capability and structural capability play the most crucial role in shaping innovation capability in the organization and components such as individual knowledge capacity, managerial capacity, communication capacity, technological capacity, and support capacity have a direct and significant dependence on innovation capability. They had organizations (fifty-five large companies active in various industries).
<a href="#">Naeiji et al. (2017)</a>	The effect of mediating the culture of innovation and knowledge capability on the entrepreneurial orientation of sports clubs	Culture of innovation and knowledge management ability affect entrepreneurial orientation.
<a href="#">Mohammadi et al. (2016)</a>	The Impact of Strategic Innovation on Customer Purchasing Tendency: The Role of Adjusting Innovation Capabilities	Strategic innovation and its indicators (value innovation, creating a new market, market entry innovation, breaking the competition) significantly affected the customer's willingness.
<a href="#">Soltani et al. (2018)</a>	Factors Affecting Competitive Advantage in Professional Football Clubs	Efficiency, innovation, and customer response are the most important factors of competitive advantage in football clubs. This research emphasizes resource-based theory.
<a href="#">Newell and Swan (1995)</a>	Innovation process in sports organizations	Factors affecting the innovation process in sports organizations are structure and strategy (input) of education, media, sponsors, other sports organizations, internal networks and the type of sports organization (process), and finally, organizational change (Result).

Researchers	Purposes	Results
Hull and Lio (2006)	Factors affecting the innovation capability of non-profit sports organizations	The financial dimension (sponsors, financial balance), the human resources dimension (volunteers and staff), the user dimension (expectations and customers), and the strategic dimension (stakeholders, sports services, and sports network) affect the ability to innovate.
Saunila et al. (2012)	Conceptual model of measuring innovation capability and its effects	The elements of innovation capability as an innovation performance, including innovation potential, processes, and innovative results using the system process, were concluded. The effects of the innovation performance process on performance management, including employees, operations, and customer and financial resources, were reported.
Omar et al. (2016)	Assessing the factors affecting service innovation and performance	Organizational structure, organizational learning, transformational leadership, and customer orientation.
Saunila (2016)	Measuring the performance of innovation capability in small and medium-sized businesses	The development of the innovation capability framework was achieved through performance management. Among the constituent elements of the innovation capacity measurement framework were leadership culture, work climate, and structural organization, ideation, and organization, exploitation of external knowledge, knowledge development, and individual activity.
Foroudi et al. (2016)	The effect of innovation capability and customer experiences on loyalty and reputation	Customer experiences due to innovation had a positive and significant effect on business loyalty and reputation.

### 3. Methodology

The qualitative approach and grounded theory research method have been used. Participants included 16 management and sports management professors. Grounded theory (GT) is a widely cited qualitative approach in social science. Purposeful sampling is considered those in which the relationships under study are of particular clarity, such as experts' opinions or those of particular importance to the performance of the program being evaluated (Khanifar and Moslemi (2018)). Sampling continued until theoretical adequacy was reached. In other words, the criterion for judging the time to stop selection was theoretical adequacy. According to Glasser and Strauss (1967), when theoretical adequacy is achieved, no additional data can be found by which the researcher can formulate properties or characteristics (categories). As it collects similar data, it empirically ensures that a category is sufficient (Danaei Fard et al.). The interviews were performed from August to September 2020, varying from 30 minutes to 1.5 hours.

The emerging theory approach requires an extended stay in the research environment to allow the researcher to identify the participants' main concerns to allow the main category or process that depicts the answer to the problem to emerge. The fundamental theory begins with codes, concepts, dimensions, and finally, theory. The resulting theory does not need to be validated and tested separately because the theory is derived from data. Three types of coding in the research process are open coding, axial coding and selective coding (Khanifar & Moslemi, 2018). To analyze the interviews from an editorial approach is one of the data analysis approaches used in interviews (Danaei Fard et al.).

Open and axial coding can help identify the concepts. Selective coding used to elaborate the dimensions of the properties of those concepts. In open coding, the data obtained from the interview and the necessary concepts were extracted as a result of the editorial approach. Axial coding examines the relationship between the classes

produced in the open coding phase; in selective coding, the extracted pivot codes are grouped and compared with each other to obtain the main groups and the necessary dimensions. The Conformability (through the researcher's 6-month presence in the research approach and interview), transferability (through maximum extraction and analysis), verifiability (clarity of research steps for other researchers) and reliability (through the reliability formula for qualitative approaches) are confirmed.

The percentage agreement method was performed for coding reliability. For this purpose, three interviews were considered, and each of them was coded twice at intervals of 14 days. The following formula was used for the percentage of reliability.  $100\% (\text{number agreements} \times 2) / (\text{total number codes}) = \text{formula reliability percentage}$

**Table 2.** Calculation of reliability among encoders (stability index).

Row	Interviewee number	Number of codes	Number of agreements	Number of disagreements	Re-test reliability
1	MO1	28	13	2	92.8%
2	MO3	21	10	4	95.2%
3	MO7	19	7	3	73.6%
	Sum	68	30	9	88.2%

## 4. Results

Demographic findings showed that 25% were management professors among the interviewees, 75% were sports management professors, 12.5% were women, and 87.5% were men. The average service years were  $10.18 \pm 5.12$ . 68.75% of the participants were assistant professors, and 31.25% were associate professors.

Twenty-five concepts were identified for the framework, which is given in [Table 3](#) of open, axial and selective (optional) coding.

**Table 3.** Open, axial and selective coding.

Concepts	Axial coding	Selective coding
Efforts to finance football clubs (obtain sponsors) support public and private institutions	Financial resources - infrastructure	Input
Infrastructures such as private lawn, club building, standard stadium, application of sports-related technology, physical facilities		
Inspirational motivation Individual considerations in the football club	Transformational leadership	
Encouragement and mental encouragement of people and stakeholders in the club		
Ideal influence on related stakeholders in the football club Systematic thinking to achieve the vision of the club by considering the feasibility of the strategic plans of the club	Strategic thinking	process
Clever opportunism in the light of developments and changes in the club environment		
Present creative thoughts and ideas using approaches such as brainstorming, brainstorming and considering the arguments of sports fans by forming a think tank. ...		
Thoughts related to talent identification, branding Determining and prioritizing the goals of the club		
Strategic analysis Customer orientation and attention to customers of sports clubs, fan segmentation,	Innovational marketing	
Networking with fans and stakeholders of sports clubs,		



Concepts	Axial coding	Selective coding
media and international clubs		
Creative advertising, promotion of services and production of sports products by the club, prediction of results and legal betting		
Selection of qualified managers	Human resources capacity	
Employing expert trainers		
Discover the world day knowledge in the field of football	Knowledge processes	
Utilizing the knowledge and science of the day in football		
Access to and retrieval of knowledge through relevant training courses		
Transfer knowledge to coaches, players and managers		
Removing barriers related to legal rules, trying to recognize the right to broadcast media		
Importance and value of football	Institutional factors	Institutional environment
Cooperation and coordination of various institutions involved in football		

Figure 1 shows a framework of innovation capability in football clubs.

The conceptual framework of innovation capability and relationships between components based on the system approach is shown in Figure 1:

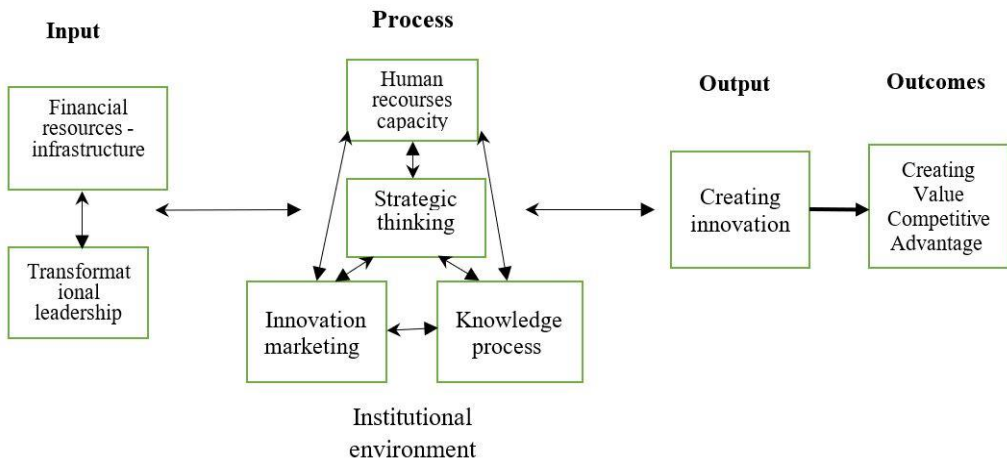


Figure 1. Conceptual framework for innovation capability development in football premier league.

Conceptual framework of innovation capability in football clubs developed based on the system theory. A system as a set of elements that interact with the self and the environment. A system was defined as an interconnected set of elements that make up a whole unit or complex. The system consists of input, process, and output components that the input causes activity in the system and converts the input power or process into results (Clavio et al., 2012). A system can include a comprehensive approach that somehow all its elements and components to achieve are purposefully interrelated. Financial and infrastructure resources, as well as the existence of transformational leadership, are considered as inputs of the system. Because organizations with vital infrastructure can create favourable conditions for the use of human capital, and these conditions and

benefiting from it require transformational leadership, these two elements were considered as input systems. The existence of financial capital infrastructure is a prerequisite for the better implementation of organizational processes. Managing creativity and innovation and gaining financial support and infrastructure development in sports clubs requires capable sports leadership (García-Morales et al., 2012).

## 5. Managerial implications

The study indicates a conceptual framework for policymakers and sport managers to ensure football clubs' innovation capabilities. The study's outcomes also provide helpful direction on the decision-making process of the owner or manager considering the sports industry's institutional, human, and marketing aspects.

Managers can take advantage of the development of innovation capacity in football clubs, can develop innovation creatively with a variety of approaches, and as a result, take the lead over other clubs and create a competitive advantage and profitability—the consequence of the process exploited in developing privatization and differentiation in Premier League clubs.

Due to the impact of infrastructure financial resources on the innovation capability of football clubs, providing standard and up-to-date facilities and equipment and using new and advanced technologies in football clubs and private sector activity can be recommended. Considering the positive effect of using the capacity of human resources and knowledge management on the innovation capability of football clubs, encouraging the participation of coaches in knowledge-based approaches related to innovation, participating in the exhibition should be considered. Innovation festivals in the sports industry and holding such exhibitions in the region, and holding seminars can be conducted.

The management committee's role in football clubs can be enhanced by improving managers' technical and special abilities and mastering sports knowledge and technology through participating in training courses. Collaborative approaches, stakeholder communication, continuous stakeholder consultation can create innovative changes in the management process of football clubs.

One of the results was the effect of communication capabilities on the innovation capability of football clubs. As a result, the practical suggestions of the present study can be expressed as follows:

- Development of informal relations and participatory groups and providing suitable conditions, facilities, and environment for them;
- Increasing personal skills, knowledge and awareness of employees by participating in sports workshops.

For improving the innovative marketing to the innovation capability of football clubs, supporting the ideas and creativity of staff innovations to improve products and provide better sports services can be suggested.

## 6. Discussion and conclusion

Financial resources and physical infrastructure are considered as indicators of input for the present framework. Tangible club resources are considered as system inputs. In this regard, the ability to innovate based on resource-based theory can be explained (Breznik & D. Hisrich, 2014). The resource-based theory states that organizations compete against others based on their resources and capabilities (Miles, 2012). The source is defined as anything that can be thought of as a strength to the organization. Resources include any tangible or intangible asset that has a semi-permanent link to the organization. Examples of sources include brand names, employee knowledge, skills and abilities, technology, capital, contract, efficient procedures and processes (Miles, 2012). Infrastructures, including technical, technological and information infrastructures, are defined as sources of support for sports clubs. Based on this, indicators such as the level of tax support, access to sports services, access to economic information, information and communication infrastructure and the extent to which technical standards are applied in the club sector are among the infrastructures required for clubs. Accordingly, essential infrastructures such as information and communication (clubs, internet.), technology and access to financial resources (banks) seem important in supporting sports clubs.

Another influential part of innovation in football clubs was intangible resources, one dimension of transformational leadership. The resource theory does not explain how to achieve a competitive advantage. Accordingly, one of the approaches in the field of the management function is the discussion of leadership. The context of innovative sports organizations is based on innovative leaders who influence organizational performance (Ratten, 2016). Innovative and transformational leadership in the organization is one of the factors that can lead to innovation. Many researchers have examined the relationship between innovation and transformational leadership (García-Morales et al., 2012). Transformational leadership influences innovation activities by mentally encouraging and motivating employees (Vaccaro et al., 2012). Transformational leaders strive to significantly increase performance beyond what is necessary to achieve organizational goals. Transformational leadership is associated with a higher level of efficacy in public and private organizations (Bryman et al., 2011). That is why they can try to obtain resources in different ways. This is because leadership in sports (due to the unique nature of sport) or sports clubs is not just leadership over staff, players, coaches, but a large community of stakeholders, including sports fans and supporters. It includes finance, etc. In this regard, leadership must be able to communicate and manage this relationship to achieve success goals. In other words, transformational leadership is emphasized in sports because of the greater focus on the need for self-fulfilment and the position of ambition (Ratten & Ferreira, 2016).

Strategic thinking is another intangible resource needed for football clubs. One of the essential assets of sports organizations is strategic thinking, innovative opportunity seeking, a systemic perspective, purposefulness and timely thinking (Nazemi et al., 2010). Strategic thinking requires creative and divergent thinking, so strategic thinking should be at the heart of any organization that takes advantage of opportunities around the environment. Corporate social responsibility is considered a creative strategy for

sports teams, which as a responsibility to the community goes beyond financial returns for the team. Social responsibility has been increasingly discussed in the political, socio-economic and business sectors (Ratten, 2011). Social responsibility includes social, cultural and environmental factors. In general, in a situation where cultural conditions are receptive to sports, it can be considered a positive step to continue innovation in sports and improve the status of the football club. The attitudes and thoughts of the football club stakeholders towards social responsibility and moral commitment to the community and the sports community can be an indicator of sports goals and values. Sports brands are significant in creating wealth and importance. The most successful sports teams in Europe are those that have been successful in brandings, such as Manchester United (\$ 259 million), Real Madrid (\$ 155 million) and Bayern Munich (\$ 150 million). Other sports teams are also trying to brand their team to create value.

As a result, the ability to use the brand capacity of a team and strengthen it can be a factor in developing the ability to innovate in the sports team (Ratten, 2011) because the support of sports teams is increasingly due to the reputation and brand of different sports teams. Brand strategy and the area of strategic brands can also change in the field of innovation. Innovation can occur in the context of brand goals and strategies. As a result, branding can be a potential for brand innovation in sports. Vaux Halliday and Trott (2010) examined the development of service innovation by building branding competencies and introduced branding as an optimal capability for innovation in companies (Vaux Halliday & Trott, 2010).

Human resource capacity includes empowering human resources to develop creativity and strategic thinking in the organization. Utilizing human resources, including capable and creative coaches and players, help to increase the capacity for innovation in organizations. Accordingly, human resources empowerment in various researches on organizational performance (Men, 2011; Mustafa & Bon, 2012) or employees' organizational commitment (McDermott et al., 1996; Rawat, 2011) has been impressive. The approach of human capacity development is one of the approaches of empowerment, process and consequence of efforts and influencing decisions that affect organizational performance and quality of social life (Zimmerman, 2000).

Another factor was innovative marketing. Many strategies can be used in conjunction with transformational leadership in sports marketing. Among the creative marketing strategies in sports, various strategies such as viral marketing, transactional, and ambush marketing can effectively develop the ability to innovate. The principles and tools of sports marketing reflect the basic knowledge that sports marketers need. Sports clubs should develop strategies for events, competitions and activities focused on customer fans (Da Silva & Las Casas, 2017). Communication capacity and communication capabilities, and coordination between different areas were other components. Innovation diffusion theory examines how individuals or organizations are notified over time, which can lead to the use of an innovation. Dissemination is when innovation is transmitted and shared with individuals in a social system through communication channels. Communication requires people to exchange and create information that leads to a collective understanding of innovation. Innovation communication focuses on two-way communication between people (not one-way

communication from one source to one audience) (Miles, 2012). Communication capacity to communicate with other intangible or tangible resources can help in further coordination in sports organizations.

Knowledge and its processes are the approaches of absorbing and acquiring knowledge by specialists, experts, and professionals in the organization, the results of which make this group enjoy power, credibility, and independence in front of the management of the organization and provide their knowledge in return for a reasonable price. In the traditional model, organizations and individuals are often reluctant to transfer and exchange their knowledge. Instead of looking at knowledge as an organizational resource, they view knowledge as a source of power for personal gain and promotion. An organization that supports information sharing and knowledge creation can better define effective and efficient processes and improve its organizational capacity (Miles, 2012). Knowledge processes and cycles and their importance for the leaders of a sports organization, especially in sports clubs, can absorb the knowledge and technology used in other clubs to create practical value. The importance of knowledge management from this is because innovative technologies are affecting sports day by day. As a result, sports clubs should seek and monitor knowledge opportunities from other clubs globally and contribute by cooperating with various institutions. Have knowledge and creativity in the gym. Finally, the institutional environment was another factor in the framework of innovation capability of Premier League clubs, which included the rules, norms, and values of society. Indeed, one of the most critical factors in innovation and value creation for sports clubs is the institutional environment. Therefore, studying the environment is important in the process of activities of any organization because the factors that make up the environment, including legal factors and corresponding values and norms, identify limitations and opportunities and organizational matters. By considering environmental changes, new patterns of customers are discovered (Ehsani & Mondalizadeh, 2019); therefore, the environment can be adequate support for innovative activities and cause the growth of the essential factor of production, namely people and their spiritual capital. Institutional quality and its components include coordination of institutions, the commitment of sports institutions and organizations to implement laws and programs. Furthermore, support of government institutions to football clubs and its development and tailoring the goals of such programs to the needs of Cultural-geographical of each region, proper management of resources and justice in the development of infrastructure and adequate division of tasks of each sports institution can play a role in developing the ability to innovate.

Innovation capability in sports clubs is necessary to create value creation innovation and differentiate between sports clubs. The innovation capability approaches organizations by creating environmental changes and reacting to them to develop and maintain a competitive advantage (Miles, 2012). In this regard, the proper management of tangible and intangible resources through the strategies adopted by the leaders of sports clubs and improving the institutional environment can play a crucial role in creating a competitive advantage. To be innovative, an organization must develop its ability to innovate.

This framework, supported by strategic thinking (as the heart of innovation capability development) and transformational leadership, the club process and the institutional environment combined with a holistic view and taking into account all the stakeholders of a football club can lead to innovation and create value.

One of the research limitations was the lack of access and the willingness of club managers to participate in the research. In addition, quantitative studies on the ability to innovate in sports football clubs and research in this area were limited. The future quantitative analysis could assess the ability to innovate (the building blocks of innovation) in sports clubs based on the positivist paradigm.

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## طراحی چارچوب مفهومی برای توسعه قابلیت نوآوری لیگ برتر فوتبال ایران

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### کلیدواژه

باشگاه فوتبال  
ظرفیت نوآوری  
مدل مفهومی  
مزیت رقابتی

### نوع مقاله

پژوهشی

### چکیده

**هدف:** نوآوری عامل اصلی موفقیت باشگاه‌های فوتبال است. استفاده از نوآوری در سازمان‌ها منجر به توسعه مزیت رقابتی و پایداری می‌شود. نوآوری با بهبود کارایی و اثربخشی منبع مزیت رقابتی در بخش‌های عمومی و غیرانتفاعی همراه است. هدف این مقاله طراحی چارچوبی برای توسعه قابلیت نوآوری در باشگاه‌های لیگ برتر ایران بود.

**روش:** شرکت‌کنندگان ۱۶ نفر شامل اساتید رشته مدیریت و مدیریت ورزشی بودند. از استراتژی نمونه‌گیری هدفمند استفاده شد. برای تجزیه و تحلیل داده‌ها از روش تحلیل محتوای مصاحبه استفاده شد.

**یافته‌ها:** برای ارائه یک مدل مفهومی بر اساس نظریه داده بنیاد، هفت عنصر شامل منابع و زیرساخت‌های مالی، رهبری تحول‌آفرین، تفکر استراتژیک، بازاریابی نوآورانه، ظرفیت منابع انسانی، فرایند دانش و محیط نهادی شناسایی شدند. نتایج نشان داد عوامل محرک نوآوری باشگاه‌ها شامل منابع زیرساخت‌های مالی به‌عنوان منابع ملموس و عوامل نهادی همراه با نوعی رهبری تحول‌آفرین و تفکر استراتژیک اعضای هیئت مدیره از نظر نوآوری، بازاریابی نوآورانه و استفاده مؤثر از دانش هستند که می‌توانند باشگاه‌های ورزشی را به‌سوی نوآوری هدایت کنند.

**اصالت و ابتکار مقاله:** قابلیت‌های جدید باشگاه‌های لیگ برتر فوتبال کمتر مورد بحث قرار گرفته است. در این مطالعه، ما زمینه‌های استقلال مالی، مزیت رقابتی، ارزش‌آفرینی از طریق نوآوری و رویکردهای حمایتی باشگاه‌ها را در ایران معرفی کردیم.

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## The Infrastructure, Peripheral, Organizational and Market Relations in the Iranian Sports Industry

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### ABSTRACT

**Purpose:** Nowadays, exercise plays an essential role as economic activity in the economic development of different communities. In most countries, it is considered a trade and necessary industry. This industry is wide-ranging and has many sectors that can be recognized as an industry.

**Methodology:** Researchers in this study using a researcher-made questionnaire with 71 items whose content validity and validity were confirmed by exploratory and confirmatory factor analysis test in SPSS software version 21, subsections, infrastructures and relationships between them and introduced a model for the Iranian sports industry.

**Findings:** The two-way correlation of these infrastructures shows that other factors can grow and improve it with one weakness. Paying attention to this classification and their relationships creates a helpful platform for managers to make decisions. Based on the findings, managers can plan according to the interrelations of each subdivision.

**Originality:** Researchers have introduced a new classification for the relationship between factors related to the sports industry by presenting a new perspective in this article, thus introducing a new basis for decision-makers in the sports industry.

### Keywords

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Market  
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## 1. Introduction

Nowadays, sports have grown relatively fast and played an important role as economic activity in producing and consuming sports products and the economic development of different communities. Therefore, sport is considered a trade and important industry in most countries and has a remarkable financial place (Stotlar, 2013). However, sport is not considered an industry in some countries' economies, including Iran. It causes the lack of recognition of this revenue-generating industry in the economic system of these countries (Eschenfelder & Li, 2007). To maintain profitability, the managers in this industry must be aware of challenges related to the supply chain, including suppliers, producers, merchandisers, and consumers. It must be balanced with entering new markets, increasing the club's value, and maximizing media exposure (Memari et al., 2020). The global sports market can be segmented into North America, South America, Europe, Asia-Pacific, Middle East, and Africa submarkets. North America is still the most significant market for the sports industry, accounting for 32.5% of the global transactions in 2018 (Zhang et al., 2021). If we do not include sport as a distinct industry, it means we do not pay attention enough to the economic potential of this industry. So, it makes some aspects of the sports industry fade and be unknown, which has a significant share in generating national revenue in other countries.

Using definitions and standard classified concepts in industries presents a clear and explicit explanation of the economic structure of each (Economic & Social Affairs, 2008). A specified financial system facilitates the collection of required statistical data in the industry. Access to this accurate and comprehensive information facilitates the preparation and implementation of social and economic programs and precise assessment for planners. Economic effects are essential variables that many previous studies have paid particular attention (Elahi et al., 2021). So, our sport's lack of a robust structure reduces agility in senior managers' process and implementation and evaluates the sports organization's plan. Also, the lack of accurate statistical data can disrupt research projects related to sports that make the development of the sports industry face problem. Because 60% of the world population lives in Asia, in recent years, professional sports organizations in developed economies have made concerted efforts to reach billions of potential fans (Zhang et al., 2021).

Regarding the alleged role of the sports industry in all sectors of the so, it society from health to entertainment, from political and social to cultural and economic seems, it is time to take a look at the overall state of the sports industry to have a general description of it. We hope that the strength and weaknesses of this model reveal more decisions to make the Iranian sports industry stronger.

The research aims to identify and explain the spheres and infrastructures of Iran's sports industry to better understand the structure by knowing these dimensions in the best way. This model demonstrates the new aspect of the sports industry, and it can provide a new frame for the future of the sports industry. So, the following research is interested in finding out the answer to this question: "What are the spheres and infrastructures of the sports industry?" And "What are explaining infrastructures of each of these spheres?" On the other hand, when we know how the constructive spheres of

this industry are classified, one crucial question will have appeared. How is the general view of the activity has done in the sports industry of Iran?

## **2. Theoretical background**

In recent years, the economic impact of sport has attracted many researchers, including: (Kim et al., 2017; Wang et al., 2018). But are all of the general and detailed aspects measurable distinctly? Is it possible to accurately test the different parts of this industry without knowing any spheres and their infrastructures?

Over the past fifty years, research about the sports economy has shown economic growth of this industry (Maennig, 2017). What is the sports industry? So far, there is no clear and appropriate answer to this question, even though many efforts have been made by sport management researchers and interns of the sports industry. On the other hand, sport management researchers have not agreed yet. Despite many efforts that have been made by some researchers, including: (Li et al., 2001; Meek, 1997) and (Pitts et al., 1994), management researchers have not agreed yet about the definition of the sports industry.

So it seems that recognition of spheres and the infrastructures of the sports industry has become an essential task for sports experts (Eschenfelder & Li, 2007).

Because not having an accurate and specific definition is causing an error, and it is not expected that managers and researchers plan correctly. Also, (Pitts & Stotlar, 2007) tried to improve strategic marketing planning by partitioning of sports industry (product model- market). Eschenfelder and Li (2007) said: Pitts and his colleague did not describe the connection between different sectors, only presenting a general outline of the sports industry and making a general category.

Therefore, Meek (1997) classifies the sports industry into three spheres. Eschenfelder and Li (2007) said that: Meek's structure may create ambiguity, just because the foundation of his model is cost-based and does not include all the economic activity that the companies and sport-driven organizations involved. The Iranian sports industry has 18 categories: facilities, equipment, events, human resources, business, economic, and government (Aghaei shahri et al., 2018). The sports industry today exists within the social-economic achievements and power of a society. In essence, it should adapt to the new living conditions, work conditions, and how business is being conducted. Today, it is necessary to invest more in the offer of the sports industry (athletes, results, equipment, equipment, facilities, diagnostics) to be more efficient in the form of the final product on the market. The industry must adapt to the conditions of the world market (supply and demand) (Savić et al., 2018).

Eventually, (Li et al., 2001) present a more advanced model of the sports industry whit six secondary subsections. This model represents sport producer companies as a core of the sports industry, and the other organizations have been created to support, fabricate, facilitate, produce, manage or advertise this core (Li et al., 2001). In a proposed Iranian football business paradigmatic model, there are six parts: human resources, financial resources, relationships, organizational structure, infrastructure, and

processes, which provide the conditions necessary for optimally offering football (Memari et al., 2020)

These three models have common traits, and all of them provide us with some methods for categorizing industry in general. Each of these models is meaningful for this industry but also help us to know if a particular business is appropriate for this industry or not and how this industry is related to the other industry sectors. Having more information about the industry you are active in and the relationship between your business and the other business, whether direct or indirect, will help you make a decision and develop competitive strategies (Pitts & Stotlar, 2007). Supposing the relations between the industry elements can be helpful when we don't have the data and statistics on the industry activities. So, we can hope that theoretical and statistical models produce an appropriate starting point to present a general perspective of this industry.

### 3. Methodology

The present research did in two qualitative and quantitative sections. In the qualitative section, a list of the most crucial variable in the sports industry was prepared by reviewing the scientific sources. Then, the most repetition and emphasis. Experts confirmed the validity of the questionnaire. In the quantitative section, inferential statistical methods were used to analyzing the information. Researchers selected 263 experts, including science committee's members, Sports experts working in the governmental department affiliated to Ministry of Sports and management committee's members of federations, the national team coaches, and finally athletes/ champions to answer the survey. The sampling quality index was  $KMO=84/0$ . The questionnaire, including 71 items, was ready to use, which are scored by a Likert scale (1: very low, 2: low, 3: medium, 4: high, 5: very high). Five professors of the university confirmed the content validation of the questionnaire. Also, the liability coefficient of the questionnaire was at 953/0 by using Cronbach's alpha ( $>01/0P$ ). Then for the second time, analyzing the exploratory factor onto 18 infrastructures was carried out, and infrastructures were classified into four spheres.

We used exploratory factor analysis with the varimax rotation method to identifying the total capacity of the infrastructures and domains. The quorum of acceptance criteria for variables was obtained at least 3/0. The respondent did not know any boundaries between researchers. Then, the Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) was used to confirm the relations between infrastructures and domains. The KMO index and Bartlett test were used to examine the adequacy of the exploratory model.

## 4. Results

### 4.1. Demographic information

According to research findings, the most frequency was related to 39-40 years old, people with 1/36%, the master degree and higher to 6/69%, 10-20 years of experience

in the sport with 6/23% and the most frequency in sports activity belong to the respondent of sports expert with 4/30% of the total sample frequency.

Regarding the importance of the infrastructure and factor loading, seventy-one items of the questionnaire; the sports industry of Iran was affected by 18 infrastructures.

These 18 infrastructures are classified into four spheres to identify the macro sphere by re-testing the exploratory factor analysis, the amount of KMO index according to chart number one, in both exploratory factor analysis The Bartlett's test confirms the use of this method.

**Table 1.** Bartlett and KMO index test results.

Exploratory Factor Analysis for 71 items	
KMO	0.84
Chi-square	12423.144
Degrees of freedom	2556
Sig	0.000
Exploratory factor analysis for 18 infrastructures	
KMO	0.885
Chi-square	1993.063
Degrees of freedom	153
Sig	0.000

In **Table 2**, the areas of the exploratory model and explanatory infrastructure are introduced:

**Table 2.** Areas of the country's sports industry and descriptive infrastructure and their factor loadings.

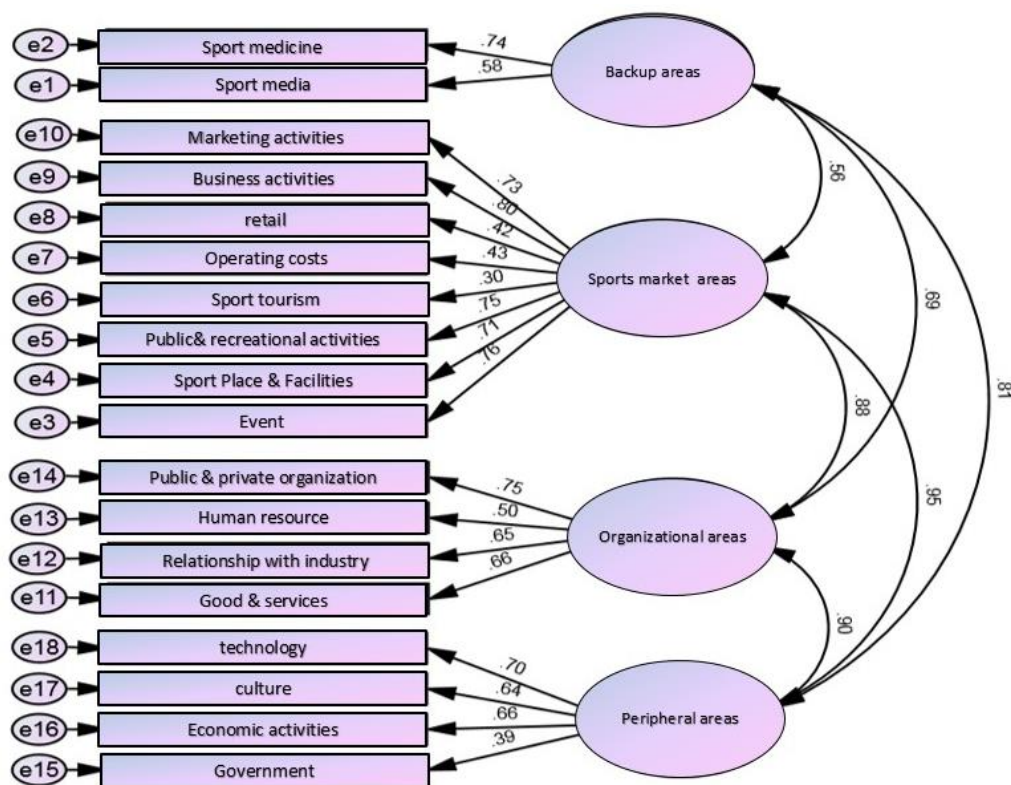
Areas	Infrastructure	Factor load
Peripheral areas	Technology related to the sports industry	0.68
	Cultural affairs related to the sports industry	0.43
	Economic activities related to the sports industry	0.80
	Government	0.52
Organizational areas	Public and private organizations active in the field of sport	0.65
	Human resources	0.72
	Relationship with industry	0.25
	Sports goods and services	0.67
Sports market areas	Market:	
	Revenue from marketing activities	0.48
	Business activities	0.35
	Retail	0.42
	Operating costs	0.69
	Sport function:	
	Sport Tourism	0.73
	Proceeding from the public and recreational activities.	0.54
Backup areas	Places and Sports Facilities	0.55
	Event	0.39
	Sport media	0.75
	Sport Medicine	0.67

Confirmatory factor analysis was used to confirm the relationship between areas of the sports industry infrastructure.

**Table 3.** Fit index of the first-order factor analysis.

Cmin/DF	RMSEA	PNFI	CFI	IFI
2.60	0/078	0.63	0/907	0.903

According to the results, Fit indices show that the confirmatory factor analysis model is appropriate.



**Figure 1.** The standard model of confirmatory factor analysis Iran sport industry.

Finally, the relationship between the four main domains and the sports industry in the following structural model was developed and approved by Amos software.

**Table 4.** Fit index of structural analysis model.

Cimin/DF	RMSEA	GFI	AGFI	RMR	IFI	CFI
1.057	0.015	0.998	0.980	0.012	0.999	0.999

According to the results, Fit indices show that the confirmatory factor analysis model is appropriate.



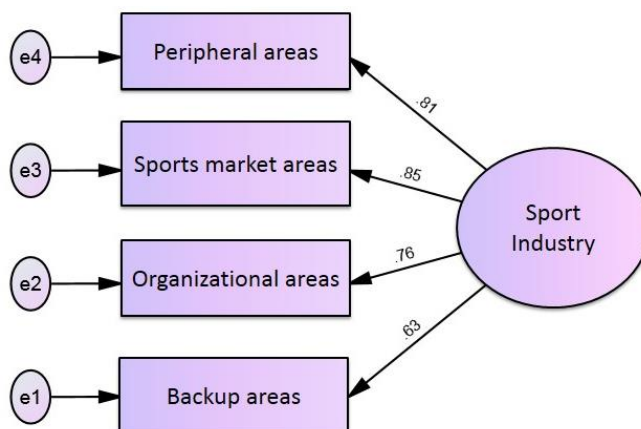


Figure 2. The structural model of the sports industry and areas of its constituent.

## 5. Managerial implications

Factors defining the Iranian sports industry are in four general categories: environmental, organizational, contextual, and related to the sports market. Although managers' awareness of the relationship between the sub-factors is important, identifying the macro-factors is also important for the optimal distribution of budget and facilities. It is also necessary for managers to know that the underlying factors have a double correlation with market-related factors and pay attention to the two-way relationship between market factors and organizational factors and the two-way relationship between organizational factors and environmental factors.

## 6. Discussion and conclusion

The purpose of this research was to recognize the sphere and infrastructure of the sports industry of Iran. Seventy-one items of the sports industry were identified by analyzing the opinion of the skill-full expert, and then, these items were divided into 18 general factors. After analyzing again, the 18 factors were included into four significant elements: peripheral areas, Organization areas, market areas, and backup areas. Eventually, the models of structural equations were confirmed. Also, interrelations between the factors, macro domains and the general structure of the Iranian sports industry was determined.

So many different models have been proposed for the sports industry, and besides, this model gives a better understanding of the Iranian sports industry. In this study, the obtained model was based on the opinion of experts and quantitative statistical methods; This method is not used in other models of the sports industry, including: (Li et al., 2001; Meek, 1997; Pitts et al., 1994). Because the model of Meek (1997), which is known as the economic model of Meek, is not based on the cost of the sports industry

that conducts us to care about the economic dimension of this model like Lee and Eschenfelder do (Eschenfelder & Li, 2007).

Pitts et al. (1994) classified sports industry according to product and buyer and is presented in three sections: implementation, propagation, and sports production. However, this contrast is due to a different perspective of researchers to this precious sports industry. This great industry has influenced the economy, political, and even Peripheral and is influenced by them. The research was conducted to develop this industry according to the demand of related businesses and planners.

It is essential to care about the division of the sports industry for businesses operating in related areas because knowing this division makes the sports business aware of its position in the sports industry. Also, based on the division of the sports industry, companies can identify the related areas and besides, they can manage, plan, organize and decided for their businesses perfectly.

In the discussion, it will be discussed about each models area of this research: In the Peripheral domain, it seems that the variables of technology, cultural issue, economic activities, policy and government affect the structure of the sports industry, in the other sports industry's models (Eschenfelder & Li, 2007; Meek, 1997; Pitts et al., 1994). There is just a little attention to Peripheral factors, which is effective for the sports industry, and only slight references have been made in this area. For example, in the model (Li et al., 2001), sub-section six (Municipal and Regional Councils and Authorities) indicates the external perspective of the sports industry.

In the present model, the Peripheral factor refers to the businesses of the sports industry that are in the cultural, economic, technology and government sectors; of course, this division cares about the PESTEL model somehow. Although the infrastructures of the Peripheral domain are presented in the recent model in the sports industry, from another perspective, this area can be considered a macro-Peripheral of the sports industry, and it is believed that the crust of sport with such good infrastructures can't be separated.

So, in each sports business, it is necessary to pay attention to the Peripheral area. If issues such as technological factors, cultural issues, economic activity, and the government is not considered, sports businesses will not be able to improve day by day; In this regard. We can refer to (Azimzadeh et al., 2013), which demonstrate the importance of Peripheral factors to set up small and medium-sized businesses.

There are some infrastructures in the organizational sphere, including the private and public organizations active in sports, human recourses, communication with industry, goods and sports services.

In the model of (Meek, 1997), professional and amateur organizations are part of the sports industry and are called sports support organizations. Also, there are goods and sports services in another model called sports products. In contrast to the present research model, Meek's model is not allocated human sources and communication with industry.

In Pitts et al. (1994) model, there is a section called sports function that included governmental and non-governmental organizations and fitness companies; that professional and the amateur athlete is included in this part. Of course, in the present research, the professional and amateur athlete is considered part of human recourses in

the sports industry; Hence, this division is similar to (Pitts et al., 1994). Also, in the model of (Li et al., 2001), sub-section one includes department and organization controlling sport and sub-section two include producers of sports goods. In general, this similarity of sports organizations with sports industry structure shows that sports organizations have a crucial role in shaping the main design of the sports industry. So, it is crystal clear that sports organizations are important; Because without planning, organizing and overseeing the sports industry, the structure of this industry will be disrupted and disoriented.

In every three models mentioned (Li et al., 2001; Meek, 1997; Pitts et al., 1994), considered a distinct section for productions and services in sport, but in the model of sports industry of Iran, sports goods and services are not in an area alone. Besides the other units, they are private and public organizations, human recourses and communication with industry). Perhaps because the government administrates a significant of the sports industry of Iran, and the private sector runs just a tiny part of this industry; For example, 16 teams of 18 teams of football premier league in Iran is governmental, and just two other groups are quasi-governmental. Hence, human recourses and communication in this industry and goods and services in the sports industry of Iran are in one section.

In the sports market field, factors are divided into two parts theoretically; 1-Market: income from marketing activities/ trade/ retail/ operational costs. 2-sports function: sports tourism/ income from the public and sportive activity/places and sports facilities/ event. The first section will support the activity of a sports market; if the sports market includes the seller, buyer and spot product which trade and bargaining around, we can say that activities such as retrieval, trading, retail and operational cost all work around a pillar.

For example, in a transaction, operation costs are the distribution and sell costs. The second section of the market, which means sports function, presents factors that underpin the development and production of sport; these factors have an important position in sports definition (Stotlar, 2013). All of these sections exist in the previous models of the sports industry. Therefore, the economic development of these four sections has an economic effect on the sports industry, according to some researchers' opinions (Matheson, 2018).

In the Pitts et al. (1994) model, sports products which are required or desirable for production or impress the sports function is considered as a section; this sector matches with some structures such as (Market: income from marketing/ Businesses/ retails/ operational costs) which are in the sports market area. Also, another part of Pitts model was sports function, which is a service provided to customers as an athlete or spectators. It is also matched with another part of infrastructures of obtaining sports market area (sports function: sport tourism/ income from public and leisure activities/ places and sports facilities/ event). Therefore, in the Pitts model, the factors in the sports function and product sectors are considered distinctly. These factors in the sports industry of Iran are presented as sports market areas.

There are two factors in the sports support area, including sports media and sports medicine. It seems that these two areas are relatively independent and have given a

significant hand to the industry by entering the sports industry. Perhaps, sports couldn't become remarkable and attractive as much as now without these two factors. In previous models of the sports industry and researches like (Garcia-del-Barrio, 2018), the importance of media in sport has been emphasized. In Li et al. (2001), media is considered the fourth secondary subsection, including (Radio, television, cable network, magazines, and other periodicals).

According to Lee model, sports media has achieved relative independence as a part of the sports industry. Also, Meek (1997) model shows the media are considered a part of entertainment and leisure and a subcategory of the professional and non-professional sports team. Meek believes that media are related to entertainment and leisure. So, we can say: Lack of sport and sports media will be an essential loss. Therefore, the importance of media in the previous model of the sports industry and recent research is shown clearly.

Remarkably, previous models of the sports industry are not mentioned in medicine. Perhaps in Meek (1997) model, a part of (supporting organization sector) is related to sports medicine, or in the Pitts et al. (1994) model, sports medicine is included in (sports development). Also, in Li et al. (2001), it has been mentioned in sub-section one (sports agencies and sports organizations). But nowadays we see that sports medicine can provide a huge benefit for sport including sports medicine, tourism which is very useful for the destination city.

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## روابط میان زیرساخت‌ها، عوامل سازمانی و پیرامونی بازار صنعت ورزش ایران

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### کلیدواژه

تجارت در ورزش  
محیط بازار  
مدل معادلات ساختاری

### نوع مقاله

پژوهشی اصیل

### چکیده

**هدف:** امروزه ورزش نقش اساسی را در توسعه اقتصادی جوامع مختلف ایفا می‌کند. از این رو، در بیشتر کشورها ورزش یک صنعت پررونق تجاری محسوب می‌شود. رویکرد صنعت ورزش بسیار گسترده و دارای بخش‌های زیادی است که هر یک را می‌توان به تنهایی یک صنعت دانست. هدف از انجام این مطالعه شناسایی روابط عناصر کلان صنعت ورزش ایران بود.

**روش:** محققان در این تحقیق با استفاده از پرسشنامه محقق ساخته با ۷۱ گویه که روایی محتوایی و اعتبار آن تأیید شده بود، با آزمون تحلیل عاملی اکتشافی و تأییدی در نرم‌افزار SPSS نسخه ۲۱، زیربخش‌ها، زیرساخت‌ها و روابط میان آن‌ها را شناسایی و مدلی را برای صنعت ورزش ایران معرفی کردند.

**یافته‌ها:** همبستگی دوسویه این زیرساخت‌ها نشان داد با وجود ضعف در یکی از عوامل می‌توان از همبستگی آن با سایر عوامل برای رشد و بهبود این صنعت استفاده نمود. بنابراین، توجه به این دسته‌بندی و روابط میان آن‌ها بستر مناسبی را برای تصمیم‌گیری مدیران ایجاد می‌کند. بر اساس یافته‌ها مدیران می‌توانند به تناسب روابط هر زیر بخش با سایر زیر بخش‌ها برنامه‌ریزی کنند.

**اصالت و ابتکار مقاله:** محققان با ارائه نگاهی جدید در این مقاله دسته‌بندی جدیدی را برای روابط میان عوامل مرتبط با صنعت ورزش معرفی نموده موجب شدند تا مبنایی نو برای تصمیم‌گیران صنعت ورزش معرفی گردد.

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تاریخ پذیرش: ۱۴۰۰/۰۶/۲۱



## Presenting a Model of Factors Affecting Sports Entrepreneurship (Case Study: Lorestan Province)

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### ABSTRACT

**Purpose:** This research aimed to present a model of factors affecting sports entrepreneurship in Lorestan Province.

**Methodology:** The statistical population of this study included all managers and experts affiliated with the General Department of Physical Education and members of sports boards in Lorestan Province (N=275). By referring to the Morgan table, the number of samples was considered to be 191 persons who were selected as categories appropriate to the size of the study population. The research tool was a researcher-made questionnaire prepared based on research goals and experiences of previous studies after reviewing the theoretical foundations and background of the research by professors, elite and experts of this field, which was used after validation. Structural equation modelling (SEM) was also employed to design the model.

**Findings:** The results showed that structural ( $pc=0.99$ ), environmental ( $pc=0.88$ ) and behavioral ( $pc=0.80$ ) factors exert a direct effect on sports entrepreneurship. Social-cultural and technological (factor loading of 0.93), economic-commercial (factor loading 0.89), and political-legal (factor loading of 0.86) factors are involved in the impact of environmental elements on sports entrepreneurship, respectively. Organizational structure (0.96); monitoring, control and evaluation (0.91); scientific-educational and research (0.89) were the most important structural factors influencing sports entrepreneurship, respectively. Also, personality characters (0.94) and specialized features (0.90) played the most crucial role in behavioral aspects of sports entrepreneurship, respectively. Based on the obtained results, influential factors must be considered and managed comprehensively to expand entrepreneurship in Lorestan Province and remove its obstacles.

**Originality:** This article is valuable and unique because it provides a model for the factors affecting sports entrepreneurship in Lorestan Province.

### Keywords

Behavioral Factors  
Environmental Factors  
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Structural Factors  
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## 1. Introduction

The world is turning into a village in which power will be in the hands of developed countries. Economic development is an indicator of the growth and progress of nations. Economic growth itself depends on several elements and factors (Todaro & Smith, 2020). One of the most important and influential is entrepreneurship (Faraji Qanati, 2011). Entrepreneurship focuses on emergence and novelty in the form of new products, processes and markets, and it is known as a motive force for value (Honari & Mandalizadeh, 2011). Therefore, planning and adopting strategic approaches in this area is necessary by considering the economic, social and political dimensions (Mandalizadeh & Honari, 2011). Hisrich and Peters (2002) defined entrepreneurship as the process of creating something new and valuable by dedicating time and effort, taking on financial, psychological and social risks, gaining financial rewards, as well as personal satisfaction and dependence resulting from it (Hisrich & Peters, 2002).

Sport is new ground for the emergence of entrepreneurship (Razavi et al., 2016). As the sixth most lucrative industry in developed countries, sports creates the demand for sports services and goods as well as attractiveness for communities, providing the necessary context for entrepreneurship development, and on the other hand, entrepreneurship contributes to the advancement of sports by creating a sports business for the production of sportive equipment and supplies as well as provision of sports services and enterprises (Yadollahi Farsi et al., 2011). Sports entrepreneurship can be regarded as the process of taking advantage of economic opportunities available in sports, namely prospects that may seem to be a threat, a shortcoming or those that do not receive much attention. Creating new jobs, innovation in sports products and services, turning shortages into employment opportunities or developing new markets are issues that can be addressed in sports entrepreneurship. Although sport is a well-known phenomenon, several economic aspects are attributed to it, which are not fully understood, and if identified, they could be used for entrepreneurship in sport (Atghia, 2002). Therefore, understanding sports entrepreneurship grounds in the country can introduce new opportunities to entrepreneurs in society for socio-economic development (Mandalizadeh & Honari, 2011). Investing in the production of sportive products and services, on the one hand, creates employment and, on the other hand, increases GDP (Yadollahi Farsi et al., 2011).

## 2. Theoretical background

At present, identifying the factors' affecting sports entrepreneurship is one of the main pillars for creating job opportunities. According to research conducted in the field of entrepreneurship, it can be said that there is no record of scientific and practical entrepreneurship in Iran, especially in sports (Ahmadpour Dariani, 2000). On the other hand, the economic aspects of sports have expanded in the world today and can be further developed. However, many of these fields remain unknown in the country, especially in provinces, which can be introduced through research. Given the importance of entrepreneurship in sports, Ratten (2011), in a study entitled "sport-based entrepreneurship: towards a new theory of entrepreneurship and sport management",



discussed the relationship between entrepreneurship and sports management, arguing that these two disciplines need more integration into new studies and traditional theories of entrepreneurship. Besides, while examining different types of entrepreneurialships in sports management, this study expands the idea of sports entrepreneurship after reviewing the literature and background of entrepreneurship and explaining why the entrepreneurial view of sports is essential. This article states that sport-centred entrepreneurship involves passive behavior, innovation and risk-taking in sports (Ratten, 2011). Surujlal (2016) concluded that sports coaches with a high level of motivation, talent, and attitude towards work possess high entrepreneurial potential. Coaches with a positive attitude toward work are aware of entrepreneurship and have a reason for progress. These trainers are more likely to achieve progress than those who do not have these characteristics. Therefore, sports coaches who have these features should use entrepreneurial measures to avoid uncertainty about sports training (Surujlal, 2016). Porter argued that the triple sports product of Steven Hardy (1986), which was subsequently modified by George Sage (2004) and most recently by Wray Vamplew (2016), is a starting point for any entrepreneurship study about sports. This is a perspective to identify and examine some key features of entrepreneurship, which is considered a creative process whereby opportunities are implemented and developed instead of being discovered and exploited (Porter, 2018).

Regarding domestic research conducted in this field, Mohammad Kazemi et al. (2011) also "identified and analyzed the behavioral barriers to entrepreneurship in Iranian Ministry of Sport and Youth. According to the results of this study, managers' and employees' personality traits, organizational culture, organizational stress and conflict, and leadership style are the most important barriers, respectively (Mohammad Kazemi et al., 2011). Rezaei (2011) studied the structural barriers to entrepreneurship development in sports from the perspective of sports managers and entrepreneurs in Mazandaran Province". According to the results, intrusion of non-sportive and non-specialized people into sports, lack of skilled workforce for entrepreneurship in the province and the absence of adequate infrastructure for sports business are structural obstacles to sports entrepreneurship development in Mazandaran Province (Rezaei, 2011). Mandalizadeh et al. (2015) showed a significant relationship between business infrastructure in education programs and sports entrepreneurship development but that there is no correlation between technology and policies with entrepreneurship development (Mandalizadeh et al., 2015). Razavi et al. (2016), in a study titled "identification and ranking the affecting factors on sports entrepreneurship with the coherent approach of multi-criteria analysis and Copeland Method", prioritized the factors obtained in previous studies. The most critical factors influencing sports entrepreneurship in this study were as follows: development of community planning in the field of sports entrepreneurship, the existence of Ministry of Sport and Youth and a sportive television channel in the country, disbursement of banking facilities with favorable conditions to start and progress projects in the field of sport, presence of sports professionals in Ministry of Youth and Sport, and the privatization process in sports (Razavi et al., 2016). Ziviar et al. (2017), in a study entitled "identification of structural

barriers to organizational entrepreneurship in Ministry of Youth and Sport", reported seven obstacles, namely systems of research and development, performance appraisal, reward, decision making, leadership, finance, and organizational structure as the most critical structural barriers (Ziviar et al., 2017).

Unfortunately, due to the growth of the young population in Iran, the unemployment rate has increased significantly in recent years. According to the Statistical Center of Iran, nearly 3,210,000 people looked for work in 2018 (The Statistical Center of Iran, 2018). On the other hand, the issue of entrepreneurship has received more attention from policymakers, planners and executives in different countries these days, which stems from the role of entrepreneurship in creating wealth, prosperity, and employment in society. Because of their job-creation potential, entrepreneurs help reduce unemployment, which is among governments' economic and social goals. Thus, entrepreneurship can be the basis of staff employment, and the innovation created by an individual in economic activity leads to job creation in society (Jahanian, 2006). In Lorestan Province, the economic, social and cultural conditions are currently such that solving financial problems and bottlenecks demands a new and different model and solution (Mehrdad, 2011). Moreover, according to the Statistical Center of Iran (2018), the unemployment rate in Lorestan Province was 12.5% in 2017. This province does not have a good position in terms of unemployment (The Statistical Center of Iran, 2018). Regrettably, despite the importance of entrepreneurship, this issue has received less attention in Lorestan Province, and its role in economic development has been relatively ignored (Mehrdad, 2011). This study aimed to model the relationship between several variables with sports entrepreneurship in the General Department of Physical Education and members of sports boards in Lorestan Province. Therefore, we were prompted to undertake this research considering the above statements, the importance of sports entrepreneurship and development for society. The fact that Lorestan Province has not achieved a special place for development and transformation of science and technology in various fields despite copious material and spiritual resources along with distinguished position in the country (Mehrdad, 2011), lack of studies and research in the field of entrepreneurship (especially sports entrepreneurship) in Lorestan Province, the limited research conducted in the field of entrepreneurship in general and sports in particular, as well as contradictory results of some studies and the absence of a structural communication model, behavioral and environmental variables affecting entrepreneurship. The main questions of this research are as follows:

- What are the factors affecting sports entrepreneurship in Lorestan Province?
- What model can be presented for the factors influencing sports entrepreneurship in Lorestan Province?

In this study, to identify the factors that affect sports entrepreneurship, the researcher sought to develop a comprehensive model to investigate the subject under investigation thoroughly. According to one of the scientists and management experts of our country, all concepts, events, organizational and social phenomena (such as entrepreneurship) can be analyzed in the form of a three-pronged theory: behavioral, structural, and contextual (Yadollahi Farsi et al., 2011). Based on theoretical foundations and research background, the researcher used the conceptual model presented in Figure 1 as the

underlying template for modelling these relationships in the General Department of Physical Education and provincial sports delegations of Lorestan Province.

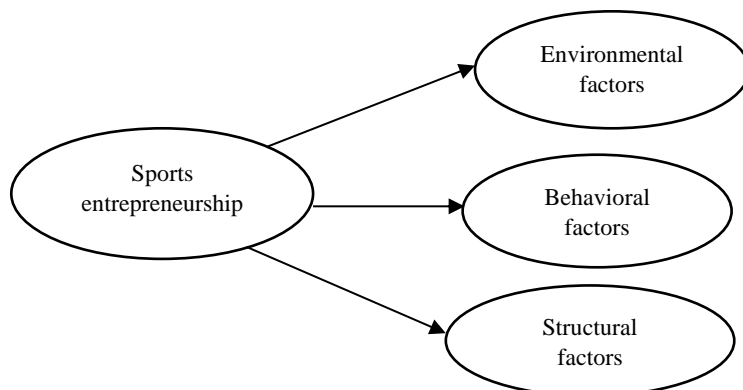


Figure 1. Conceptual framework.

**Environmental factors:** All environmental conditions and factors are influential, including the economic, social-cultural, political-legal, technical and transnational setting, each of which involves specific elements (Yadollahi Farsi et al., 2011).

**Behavioral factors:** These include all human factors related to entrepreneurs like innate interests in control, sense of independence, need for success, risk-taking, motivation, personal values, creativity, work and personal background (Yadollahi Farsi et al., 2011).

**Structural factors:** These are all elements, factors, physical and non-human conditions of the organization that form the framework, format, shell, physical and material body of the organization with a particular and continuous order, rule and arrangement. Therefore, all material, financial, information and technical resources, which flow for a specific order in the organization's general body (inorganic factors), are components of the structural branch (Moqimi, 2004).

### 3. Methodology

The present research is applied in terms of purpose, and it is a descriptive survey in terms of nature, which was conducted in the field. The statistical population of the study includes all managers and experts of the General Department of Physical Education of Lorestan Province (55 persons) and members of sports boards (44 provincial boards, each board with five active members) from Lorestan Province, namely 220 subjects (N=275). The statistical sample size was 191 as determined by Morgan's table, which was selected by a categorical method proportionate to size. Forty-five questionnaires were completed by the managers and experts of the General Department of Physical Education, and board members filled 115 questionnaires. The data collection tool was a researcher-made questionnaire of factors affecting sports entrepreneurship, which was developed based on research objectives and experiences of similar researchers after reviewing the theoretical

foundations and literature by considering the opinion of sports management professors, experts and specialists in this field. The first part of the questionnaire consists of six demographic characteristics (age, sex, academic degree, area of study, work experience, and workplace). The second part has 58 questions associated with the leading research variables (environmental, behavioral, and structural).

The Likert scale has been used to grade and quantify technical questions. To obtain the validity of the questionnaire, we consider the items such as the structure of the questionnaire and the use of comprehensible and unambiguous sentences. Also, content validity was such that based on literature and research background review, the factors were determined as those influencing sports entrepreneurship. The questionnaire was subsequently submitted to 12 experts in this field, and finally, the accepted questionnaire was used as the data collection tool. Confirmatory factor analysis was employed to evaluate the construct validity of the questionnaire and research. Subsequently, after entering the data into SPSS, the reliability of the questionnaire was confirmed based on the obtained alpha coefficient (0.975). The researcher must use statistical methods to be able to analyze and subsequently interpret the research data. In the present study, two general categories of descriptive and inferential statistical methods have been used. In descriptive statistics, tables, diagrams, and central tendency, scattering and distribution indices were used to analyze information. In inferential statistics, the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test was employed to determine the normality of data distribution, a one-sample t-test to specify the status of research variables, and multiple regression to observe the relationships. Statistical data analysis was performed by SPSS software, and AMOS22 software and structural equations (SEM) were used to design the model. KMO & Bartlett's test of sphericity evaluated the appropriateness of the sample number. As can be seen, the KMO index is >0.9, which indicates the adequacy of the sample size. The results of Bartlett's test also indicate the adequacy of a sample size to perform factor analysis.

**Table 1.** Sample adequacy tests of KMO and Bartlett's.

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy. .929		
	Approx. Chi-Square	8968.601
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Df	1653
	Sig.	.000

#### 4. Results

**Table 2.** Demographic characteristics of samples.

Characteristics of sample	Scale	Frequency	Percent
Age	20-30 years	16	10
	30-40 years	72	45
	40-50 years	50	31.3
	>50	22	13.7
Gender	Male	118	73.7
	Female	42	26.3
Academic degree	Associate degree	23	14.4
	BSc	59	36.9

Characteristics of sample	Scale	Frequency	Percent
Discipline	MSc	65	40.6
	PhD	13	8.1
	Physical education	57	35.6
	Management	21	13.1
	Other	82	51.3
Work experience	5 < years	17	10.6
	5-10 years	33	20.6
	10-15 years	39	24.4
	15- 20 years	23	14.4
	20> years	48	30
Workplace	General Department of Physical Education	45	28.1
	Sports boards	115	71.9

Based on descriptive findings, from 160 participants in the present study, 73.7% were male, and 26.3% were female. A majority of research samples, namely 72 subjects (45%), were in the age range of 30-40. Also, 40.4% of research samples held an MSc degree, and 51.3% were educated in other fields of study. In terms of work experience, 30% of subjects had >20 years of work experience, and most of them (71.9%) worked in sports boards. Other information on descriptive statistics related to demographic variables of research is summarized in Table 2. Besides, based on the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test for normality of the data, the distribution of all data was normal and parametric tests were employed to test the statistical hypotheses related to them because the significance level of all components was  $\alpha > 0.05$ .

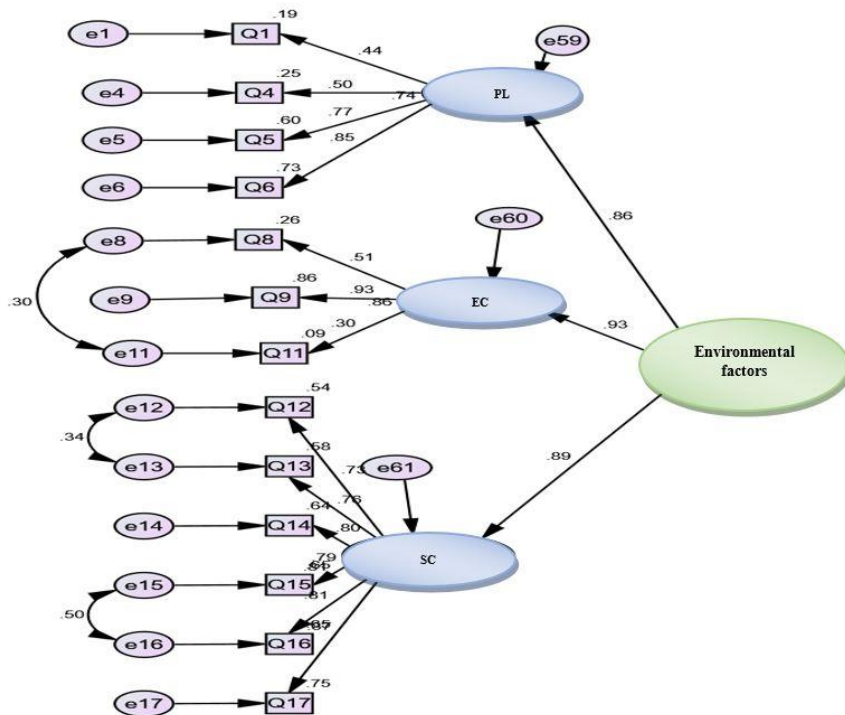
Initially, the model was tested based on the questionnaire. In the primary model, questions, 2, 3, and 7 of the political-legal component and question 10 of the economic-commercial element did not have a significant factor loading, so these questions were removed, and the model tested again. Table 3 shows the significance of the estimated regression coefficients. In this table, P-value indicates the importance of the relationships. If  $P < 0.05$ , the determined estimate is significant and should be considered in the measurement model.

**Table 3.** Significance of estimated parameters of factors affecting entrepreneurship.  
Regression Weights: (Group number 1 - Default model).

Label	P	C.R.	S.E.	Estimate			
				1.000	Sportsnet	--->	Environ
par_51	***	4.645	0.646	2.155	Sportsnet	--->	Struct
par_53	***	4.432	0.362	1.604	Sportsnet	--->	Beha
par_44	***	9.741	0.116	1.130	Struct	--->	SR
par_45	***	11.232	0.114	1.278	Struct	--->	CE
par_46	***	10.374	0.117	1.218	Struct	--->	OS
par_47	***	8.958	0.116	1.039	Struct	--->	IS
par_48	***	8.183	0.102	0.832	Struct	--->	OC
				1.000	Struct	--->	LS
				1.000	Environ	--->	PL
par_49	***	4.142	0.336	1.391	Environ	--->	EC
par_50	***	4.999	0.475	2.374	Environ	--->	SC
				1.000	Beha	--->	PT
par_52	***	8.478	0.136	1.150	Beha	--->	ST

Label	P	C.R.	S.E.	Estimate			
				1.000	EC	--->	Q8
par_1	***	6.606	0.272	1.800	EC	--->	Q9
par_2	***	3.588	0.156	0.559	EC	--->	Q11
				1.000	SC	--->	Q17
par_3	***	12.558	0.071	0.895	SC	--->	Q16
par_4	***	12.628	0.063	0.790	SC	--->	Q15
par_5	***	12.398	0.068	0.847	SC	--->	Q14
par_6	***	11.662	0.075	0.869	SC	--->	Q13
par_7	***	11.194	0.074	0.831	SC	--->	Q12
				1.000	PT	--->	Q32
par_8	***	12.036	0.073	0.874	PT	--->	Q31
par_9	***	10.040	0.103	1.036	PT	--->	Q30
par_10	***	10.799	0.102	1.100	PT	--->	Q29
par_11	***	7.912	0.115	0.913	PT	--->	Q28
par_12	***	9.501	0.119	1.130	PT	--->	Q27
par_13	***	10.034	0.113	1.138	PT	--->	Q26
par_14	***	10.901	0.116	1.261	PT	--->	Q25
par_15	***	10.251	0.111	1.135	PT	--->	Q24
par_16	***	9.995	0.116	1.163	PT	--->	Q23
par_17	***	9.496	0.117	1.113	PT	--->	Q22
par_18	***	10.192	0.121	1.235	PT	--->	Q21
par_19	***	9.769	0.117	1.147	PT	--->	Q20
par_20	***	9.867	0.113	1.111	PT	--->	Q19
par_21	***	7.945	0.115	0.913	PT	--->	Q18
				1.000	ST	--->	Q36
par_22	***	12.885	0.076	0.980	ST	--->	Q35
par_23	***	12.493	0.080	1.000	ST	--->	Q34
par_24	***	11.599	0.084	0.974	ST	--->	Q33
				1.000	LS	--->	Q38
par_25	***	14.260	0.073	1.036	LS	--->	Q37
				1.000	OC	--->	Q43
par_26	***	13.539	0.073	0.989	OC	--->	Q42
par_27	***	14.806	0.073	1.080	OC	--->	Q41
par_28	***	13.203	0.075	0.992	OC	--->	Q40
par_29	***	6.082	0.091	0.552	OC	--->	Q39
				1.000	IS	--->	Q45
par_30	***	14.857	0.073	1.090	IS	--->	Q44
				1.000	OS	--->	Q50
par_31	***	15.468	0.060	0.925	OS	--->	Q49
par_32	***	11.241	0.076	0.854	OS	--->	Q48
par_33	***	12.980	0.074	0.960	OS	--->	Q47
par_34	***	14.204	0.069	0.976	OS	--->	Q46
				1.000	CE	--->	Q52
par_35	***	19.234	0.051	0.980	CE	--->	Q51
				1.000	SR	--->	Q58
par_36	***	15.545	0.064	0.997	SR	--->	Q57
par_37	***	15.118	0.070	1.063	SR	--->	Q56
par_38	***	14.448	0.079	1.135	SR	--->	Q55
par_39	***	15.153	0.073	1.103	SR	--->	Q54
par_40	***	13.748	0.075	1.037	SR	--->	Q53
				1.000	PL	--->	Q1
par_41	***	5.233	0.360	1.884	PL	--->	Q5
par_42	***	4.350	0.267	1.159	PL	--->	Q4
par_43	***	5.288	0.394	2.085	PL	--->	Q6

The research variables were examined in Amos 22 software, and the indicators related to good fit and measurement errors were obtained. In this regard, three different indicators were used. Tables 4-6 represent the indices related to the fit of the model that the researcher presented. As the results of these tables show, considering the model fit indices in three categories of absolute, comparative and parsimony indices, the research model has a good fit, which reveals the approval of this model.

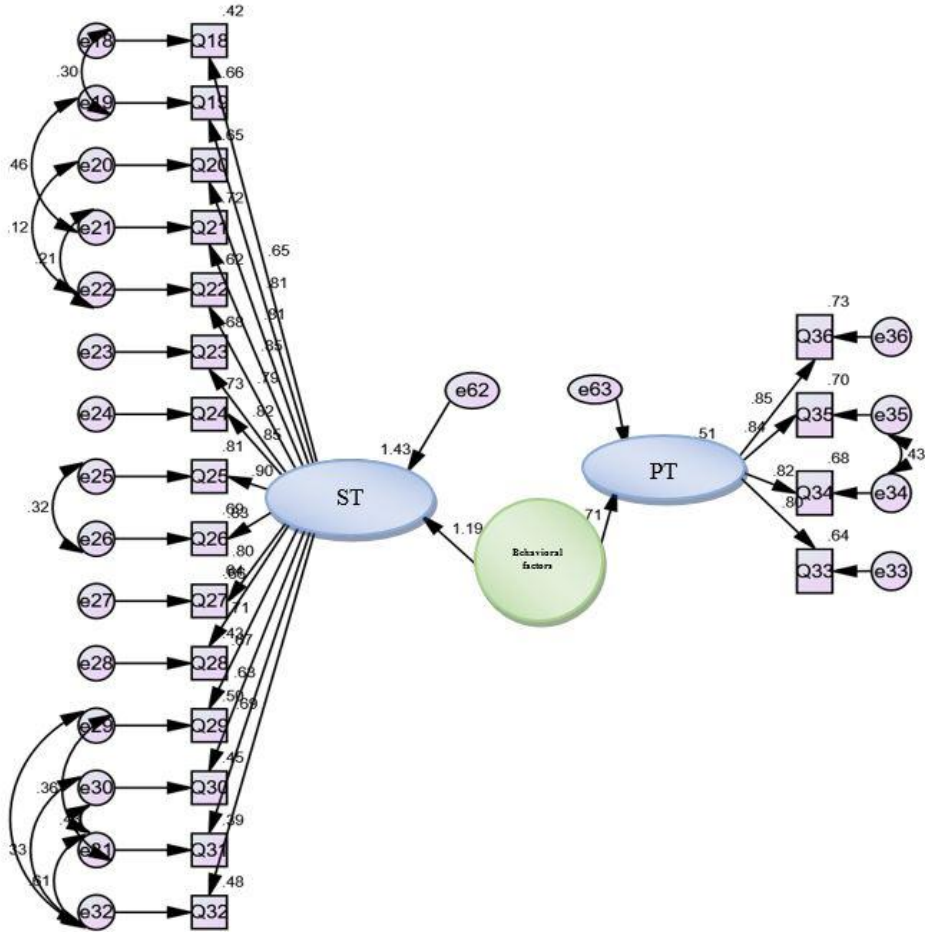


**Figure 2.** First-order confirmatory factor analysis (modified) and its coefficients in environmental factors affecting entrepreneurship [PL (political-legal factors); EC (Economic-commercial factor); SC (Socio-cultural and technology factors)].

**Table 4.** Fit indicators of first-order factor analysis of environmental factors influencing entrepreneurship.

Fit index		Theoretical (primary) model	Final (modified) model	Criterion	Interpretation
Absolute	X <sup>2</sup> to the degree of freedom	3.853	1.510	1-3	Good fit
	Goodness of fit index (GFI)	.706	.923	>0.90	Good fit
Comparative	Tucker Lewis Index (TLI)	.721	.965	>0.90	Good fit
	Comparative Fit Index (CFI)	.762	.974	>0.90	Good fit
Parsimony	Root Mean Square Error of	.134	.057	<0.05	Good fit

Fit index	Theoretical (primary) model	Final (modified) model	Criterion	Interpretation
Approximation (RMSEA)				
Parsimony Normed Fit Index (PNFI)	.603	.701	>0.05	Good fit



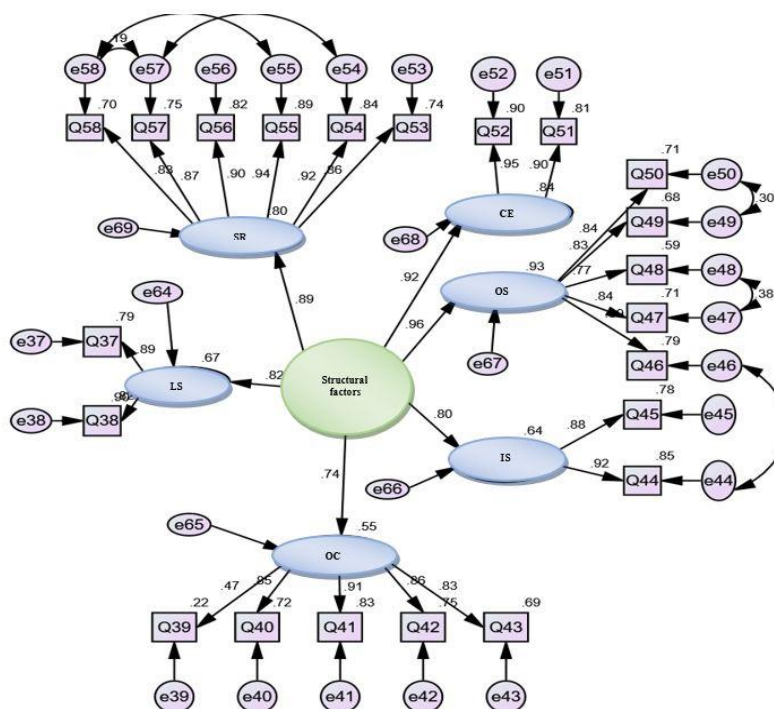
**Figure 4.** First-order confirmatory factor analysis (modified) and its coefficients in behavioral factors affecting entrepreneurship [PT (Personality traits); ST (specialized characteristics)].

**Table 5.** First-order confirmatory factor analysis (modified) and its coefficients in behavioral factors affecting entrepreneurship.

Fit index		Theoretical (primary) model	Final (modified) model	Criterion	Interpretation
Absolute	X <sup>2</sup> to the degree of freedom	3.653	2.167	1-3	Good fit
	Goodness of fit index (GFI)	.711	.895	>0.90	Good fit
Comparative	Tucker Lewis Index (TLI)	.834	.927	>0.90	Good fit



Fit index	Theoretical (primary) model	Final (modified) model	Criterion	Interpretation	
Parsimony	Comparative Fit Index (CFI)	.853	.940	>0.90	Good fit
	Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA)	.129	.056	<0.05	Good fit
	Parsimony Normed Fit Index (PNFI)	.715	.733	>0.05	Good fit



**Figure 3.** First-order confirmatory factor analysis (modified) and its coefficients in structural factors affecting entrepreneurship [CE (Monitoring, control and evaluation); SR (scientific-educational and research); LS (leadership style); IS (information Sources); OC (organizational culture)].

**Table 6.** First-order confirmatory factor analysis (modified) and its coefficients in structural factors affecting Entrepreneurship.

Fit index	Theoretical (primary) model	Final (modified) model	Criterion	Interpretation	
Absolute	X <sup>2</sup> to the degree of freedom	2.349	1.981	1-3	Good fit
	Goodness of fit index (GFI)	.796	.899	>0.90	Good fit
Comparative	Tucker Lewis Index (TLI)	.913	.937	>0.90	Good fit
	Comparative Fit Index (CFI)	.924	.946	>0.90	Good fit

Fit index		Theoretical (primary) model	Final (modified) model	Criterion	Interpretation
Parsimony	Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA)	.092	.059	<0.05	Good fit
	Parsimony Normed Fit Index (PNFI)	.769	.766	>0.05	Good fit

The final model of research is shown in Figure 5. Based on the information provided in Figure 5, in addition to appropriate experimental-theoretic assumptions of a theoretical model of fit in path analysis, environmental ( $pc=0.88$ ), structural ( $pc=0.99$ ) and behavioral factors ( $pc=0.80$ ) have a direct effect on sports entrepreneurship. Regarding the impact of environmental factors, social-cultural and technological components with a factor loading of 0.93, economic-commercial components with a factor loading of 0.89 and political-legal elements with a factor loading of 0.86 are practical on sports entrepreneurship. Considering the effect of structural factors, organizational structure components (factor loading of 0.96); monitoring, control and evaluation (factor loading of 0.91); scientific-educational and research components (factor loading of 0.89), leadership style (factor loading of 0.81), information resources (factor loading of 0.80), organizational culture (factor loading of 0.72) are effective on sports entrepreneurship, respectively. In relation to the impact of Behavioral factors, the components of personality traits with factor loading of 0.94 and specific characteristics with factor loading of 0.90 are effective on sports entrepreneurship, respectively.

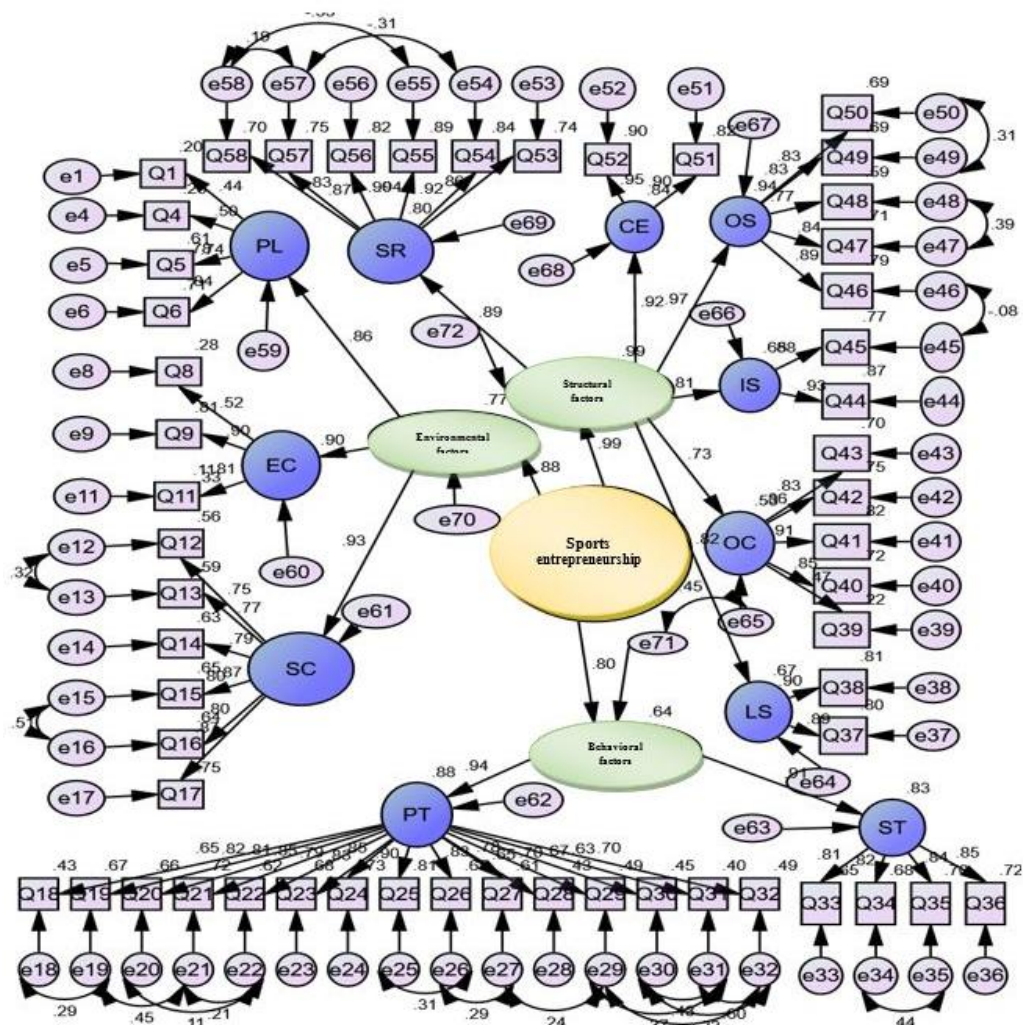


Figure 5. The final modified research model.

Table 7. Fitness indices of second-order factor analysis of factors influencing sports entrepreneurship.

Fit index	Theoretical (primary) model	Final (modified) model	Criterion	Interpretation	
Absolute	X <sup>2</sup> to the degree of freedom	2.033	1.689	1-3	Good fit
	Goodness of fit index (GFI)	.687	.890	>0.90	Good fit
Comparative	Tucker Lewis Index (TLI)	.802	.906	>0.90	Good fit
	Comparative Fit Index (CFI)	.811	.909	>0.90	Good fit

Fit index		Theoretical (primary) model	Final (modified) model	Criterion	Interpretation
Parsimony	Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA)	.081	.051	<0.05	Good fit
	Parsimony Normed Fit Index (PNFI)	.657	.719	>0.05	Good fit

## 5. Managerial implications

The main goal was to present a model of factors affecting sports entrepreneurship in Lorestan Province of Iran. Based on the findings obtained in the present study, the officials of Lorestan Province must consider the following suggestions as to the most critical managerial and practical recommendations of this research:

- 1- Considering that structural factors, especially organizational structure, were identified as the most influential elements on sports entrepreneurship in Lorestan Province, it is suggested to pay more attention to corporate design to lay the foundation for sports entrepreneurship in Lorestan Province.
- 2- We suggested that financial support and budget allocation to sports institutions should be reviewed to develop sports entrepreneurship in Lorestan Province.
- 3- Because personality traits were detected as one of the behavioral factors influencing sports entrepreneurship, it is recommended that sports organizations pay more attention to the personality traits of individuals when hiring the workforce.
- 4- Since specialization of individuals, leadership style, and organizational culture are less effective than other factors on sports entrepreneurship in Lorestan Province, it is suggested to prioritize other more influential factors to pave the way for sports entrepreneurship.

## 6. Discussion and conclusion

Regarding the first goal of the present study, namely determining the effect of factors influencing sports entrepreneurship in Lorestan Province, the results and the average of factors show that the factors affecting sports entrepreneurship in Lorestan Province are as follows: environmental (political-legal, economic-commercial, social-cultural and technological); behavioral (personality and professional traits) and structural (leadership style, organizational culture, information resources, organizational structure, monitoring, control and evaluation, scientific-educational and research). More precisely, concerning the impact of factors on sports entrepreneurship, organizational structure (factor loading of 0.96) and personality traits (factor loading of 0.94) have the most significant effect. In fact, the most influential factors are those variables that provide the main context for sports entrepreneurship. These findings were consistent with the study of (Yadollahi Farsi et al., 2011) concerning the high impact of organizational structure, as well as (Mohammad Kazemi et al., 2011) results on the strong influence of personality characteristics. Regarding the factors having the most negligible impact on sports entrepreneurship, the findings of the present study were in

line with the research by (Aidis & Van Praag, 2007; Goudarzi et al., 2016; Okello-Obura et al., 2008) indicating the lower effect of specialized features but were consistent with the results of research by Mohammad Kazemi et al. (2011) showing the low impact of organizational culture. Possible reasons for this discrepancy are the difference in statistical population, statistical methods and data collection approaches of this study with previous ones. These differences can affect participants' responses because the study of Mohammad Kazemi et al. (2011) has been conducted at the Ministry of Interior. The variation in the scope of the study has led to mixed results. Inconsistency between the findings and mentioned investigations is the difference between the research's conceptual model and the questions arising from it. Therefore, researchers should examine how the results vary in similar organizations but with different approaches. This study suggests that sports organizations should dedicate more energy, budget, and time to high-impact factors rather than low-impact ones. Because of today's competitive and complex conditions, it is impossible to excel in all areas, and according to the strategy of differentiation in management, we must invest in the most critical factors. According to the findings, personality traits and organizational structure have the most significant impact on sports entrepreneurship; therefore, it is evident that these factors should be given priority in the province to develop an entrepreneurial culture.

An organization will soon be overwhelmed by other organizations that cannot use the hidden talents in themselves. Being an entrepreneur means combining personal characteristics and resources in the workplace. Many personality traits can be developed and used to prosper in business (Shahhosseini, 2004). Since employees of the organization, like those managing various tasks having particular personality traits, can help advance the organizational goals, it is no exaggeration to attribute any part of an organization's success or failure to employees. Experts in management science have also considered personality characteristics as an influential factor in the success of an organization and have taken them into account along with organizational structure. They believe that employees should have specific personality characteristics such as self-confidence, risk-taking, and control (Mohamadi et al., 2011). Therefore, the effect of personality characteristics on entrepreneurship is noticeable, and the results of this research are pretty justifiable.

Regarding the effect of organizational structure on sports entrepreneurship, when appropriate conditions for entrepreneurship are provided in the organization, it will motivate, encourage and train people to carry out entrepreneurial activities. In all conceptual models of organizational entrepreneurship designed by researchers, the organizational structure has been suggested as a primary driver of corporate entrepreneurship. Organizational structure means the standard mode of communication between individuals and groups in the assignment of tasks and rules of the organization. Entrepreneurial organizations have a flexible organic structure (Mousavirad et al., 2013). Inflexible structures and parallel relationships are emphasized instead of vertical ones; their influence is based on skills and knowledge rather than the authority of organizational positions. The responsibilities are flexibly defined instead of based on job descriptions, and emphasis is placed on exchanging information rather than issuing

orders. A flexible (organic) structure is used in turbulent and changing environments. Such organizations are dynamic and flexible, there are usually no written rules and regulations nor administrative hierarchy, and there is a decentralized decision-making system. According to Burns and Stalker, the most effective structure is the one that adapts to the requirements of the environment (Hall, 1977). Most researchers have examined organizational entrepreneurship through five essential characteristics of entrepreneurial tendencies, including innovation, independence, market leadership, aggressive competition, and risk-taking. An organization having an appropriate administrative, entrepreneurial context is directed toward entrepreneurial tendencies. These factors often work together to increase an organization's entrepreneurial performance (Rauch et al., 2009).

Technical characteristics with a factor loading of 0.90, organizational culture with a factor loading of 0.72 had less impact on entrepreneurship in this study. Entrepreneurs in all professions and occupations need a series of characteristics, knowledge, skills and competencies. In a broader sense, competence is defined as the set of knowledge, skills, values, attitudes, behaviors, routines and patterns of thinking that individuals or groups can effectively or successfully use to solve problems and meet challenges and opportunities. However, individuals' technical characteristics have been considered a less influential factor probably because of the recruitment of employees and sports managers in the physical training according to their education. This factor has been estimated less effective due to the provision of the necessary conditions and the use of appropriate specializations in suitable positions. Otherwise, the effect of being a professional on entrepreneurship is undeniable. Also, organizational culture items such as regarding work as fun, ethics, integrity, confidence and self-esteem, a sense of commitment and loyalty, valuable work for customers, attention to detail, structure and processes may be the things that managers have had fewer challenges.

In conclusion, to achieve entrepreneurship development and eventually create employment in provinces, the necessary infrastructure for starting businesses, educational planning, financial support, and an appropriate organizational structure for sports entrepreneurship should be considered. Facilitating the introduction of firms into the market and entrepreneurship along with the necessary training, changing the culture and attitude of people toward sports to spend for it and make an investment in this regard as well as guaranteeing security in investment and privatization of sports increase and expand the necessary conditions for sports entrepreneurship. Entrepreneurs need different skills to start and run a successful business. In today's world, the lack of information and knowledge or experience of entrepreneurs leads to weak management and low productivity of the society, resulting in poor production that in turn causes unacceptable performance of entrepreneurs as well as lack of growth and development of entrepreneurship. In addition to these training programs, the necessary conditions and infrastructure for business and the preparation of the environment can lead to the continued development of sports entrepreneurship, which highlights the role of sports in this vital body. A review of studies conducted on the part of sports in entrepreneurship development shows that new employment attitudes can be progressed if the necessary hardware, software, and brainstorming platforms are provided. Therefore, what seems

to be closer to reality in Iran is that due to the government's involvement in sports, there are no economic movements in Iranian sports nor the desire to invest in it. The international federations have imposed the initiatives, and the Iranian sports federations have agreed to those conditions to continue their activities. In this regard, the present study attempted to identify the factors affecting entrepreneurship in Lorestan Province, which has not reached a good status in science for development in various fields despite having material and spiritual resources and a privileged situation in the country. Now that these factors have been identified, it is necessary to pay further attention to more critical factors in sports entrepreneurship to pave the way for them. In this respect, it is hoped that with the integrated application of sports-related activities in the field of entrepreneurship and employment and other sports activities in Lorestan Province, a comprehensive, strategic and codified system will be developed. Based on such a comprehensive strategic plan, Lorestan Province will continue its successful movement without being affected by environmental conditions.

Also, concerning the second objective of the present study, which is presenting a model for factors affecting sports entrepreneurship in Lorestan Province, showed that the main factors influencing sports entrepreneurship in Lorestan Province include environmental, structural and behavioral factors. Among environmental factors, political-legal, economic-commercial, cultural-social and technological variables; among behavioral factors, personality traits and technical characteristics; and in structural factors, leadership style, organizational culture, information resources, organizational structure, monitoring, control and assessment, academic-educational and research variables were identified as effective. The final model is shown in Figure 5. It can be stated that creating an internal environment for physical education departments is a complex task due to the large number of identified factors that lead to sports entrepreneurship, which requires the efforts of many committed and responsible people. Revitalization and modernization of sports processes need a combination of scientific, executive, and motivational activities by many people and regular and calculated research to create value and commercialize ideas. Motivation, support and encouragement from within sports departments and organizations can be done by improving monitoring systems, structures, financial resources and human resource activities, which can facilitate, support, promote and sponsor entrepreneurial activities that pave the way for the development of sports entrepreneurship. The present study also shows that employees and managers of sports departments need entrepreneurial behavior through personality traits and organizational structure, and financial support to motivate and establish sports entrepreneurship.

As shown in the model, organizational structure and personality traits can significantly impact people's motivation for sports entrepreneurship. Therefore, it is crucial that other organizational factors effectively stimulate entrepreneurship to be considered in the society under study. However, in sports departments, the policies, rules and procedures announced by the government predominate; in other words, the government only reflects on social aspects of these investments. Therefore, to promote entrepreneurship, we need to create internal changes in sports organizations and

departments and transform the systems of organizational structure, financial support, control of the workforce in these institutions to advance sports entrepreneurship. Finally, the initiative designed in this study can help institutions in charge of sports entrepreneurship appraise sports entrepreneurship capabilities and strive to adopt appropriate policies for entrepreneurship according to their weaknesses and strengths. Moreover, because the present study identified the organizational structure as the most influential factor in sports entrepreneurship, it is suggested that the prevailing organizational structure redesign support entrepreneurship development to lay the foundation for sports entrepreneurship in Lorestan Province. It is recommended that sports organizations pay further attention to this issue in hiring their workforce and recruiting people who have the mentioned personality traits.

The present study adds to the richness of research on factors affecting sports entrepreneurship by testing and evaluating a conceptual model. We hope that the impact of these factors on sports entrepreneurship will examine more broadly in the future. Also, it is suggested that effective strategies and guidelines for removing cultural, economic, political and environmental barriers are reviewed in another research to assess the development of sports entrepreneurship in Lorestan province. In addition, since the specialization of individuals, leadership style and organizational culture were the factors that had the most negligible impact on sports entrepreneurship in Lorestan Province, it is suggested that the reason for this phenomenon be investigated. Finally, considering the role of the nature and type of industry in entrepreneurial models, it is recommended that similar research be conducted in other sectors and a comparison be made between the findings.

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## ارائه مدل عوامل مؤثر بر کارآفرینی ورزشی (مورد مطالعه: استان لرستان)

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### کلیدواژه

عوامل رفتاری  
عوامل ساختاری  
عوامل محیطی  
کارآفرینی  
کارآفرینی ورزشی

### نوع مقاله

پژوهشی

### چکیده

**هدف:** امروزه ورزش به عنوان صنعتی رو به رشد و توسعه در جهان مطرح است که افزایش فرآیندهای کارآفرینی در آن می‌تواند باعث ایجاد فرصت‌های شغلی جدیدی و بهبود سایر شاخص‌های اقتصادی شود. با توجه به این‌که کارآفرینی می‌تواند متأثر از عوامل منطقه‌ای نیز باشد، هدف اصلی تحقیق حاضر ارائه مدل عوامل مؤثر بر کارآفرینی ورزشی در استان لرستان بود.

**روش:** جامعه آماری تحقیق، کلیه مدیران و کارشناسان اداره کل تربیت بدنی و اعضای هیئت‌های ورزشی استان لرستان بود. (N=۲۷۵) تعداد نمونه آماری این تحقیق با مراجعه به جدول مورگان ۱۹۱ نفر تعیین شد که به صورت طبقه‌ای متناسب با حجم از جامعه پژوهش انتخاب شدند. ابزار گردآوری داده‌ها پرسشنامه محقق‌ساخته عوامل مؤثر بر کارآفرینی ورزشی بود که بر اساس اهداف تحقیق و تجارب تحقیق‌های مشابه گذشته و پس از بررسی مبانی نظری و پیشینه تحقیق و با نظر اساتید مدیریت ورزشی، خبرگان و متخصصان این حوزه، تهیه و تنظیم گردیده و سپس مورد استفاده قرار گرفت. جهت طراحی مدل نیز از مدل‌سازی معادلات ساختاری (SEM) استفاده شد.

**یافته‌ها:** یافته‌های پژوهش نشان داد عوامل ساختار (pc=۰/۹۹)، عوامل محیطی (pc=۰/۸۸)، و عوامل رفتاری (pc=۰/۸۰)، دارای اثر مستقیم بر کارآفرینی ورزشی هستند. در اثرگذاری عوامل محیطی بر کارآفرینی ورزشی به ترتیب عوامل فرهنگی-اجتماعی و فناوری با بار عاملی ۰/۹۳، اقتصادی-تجاری با بار عاملی ۰/۸۹، و سیاسی-قانونی با بار عاملی ۰/۸۶ نقش دارند. در اثرگذاری عوامل ساختاری بر کارآفرینی ورزشی به ترتیب سه عامل ساختار سازمانی (۰/۹۶)، نظارت و کنترل و ارزیابی (۰/۹۱)، و علمی-آموزشی و پژوهشی (۰/۸۹)، بیش‌ترین نقش را داشتند. همچنین، در اثرگذاری عوامل رفتاری بر کارآفرینی ورزشی به ترتیب ویژگی‌های شخصیتی (۰/۹۴) و ویژگی‌های تخصصی (۰/۹۰) دارای بیشترین نقش بودند. بر اساس به نتایج به‌دست آمده، برای گسترش کارآفرینی در استان لرستان و رفع موانع آن باید با نگاهی جامع، عوامل اثرگذار هم‌زمان مدنظر و مورد تدبیر قرار گیرد.

**اصالت و ابتکار مقاله:** از آنجا که مقاله حاضر، به ارائه مدلی برای عوامل مؤثر بر کارآفرینی ورزشی در استان لرستان پرداخت، ارزشمند و منحصر به فرد است.

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## The Analysis of Strategic Ecology of Sports Tourism

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### ABSTRACT

**Purpose:** The purpose of this study was to analyze the trend of sport tourism in Isfahan based on Social, Technology, Economical, Environmental, Political and Values (STEEPV).

**Methodology:** For the descriptive-analytic in this study, we used a survey. The statistical population included all faculty members and sport management students, managers of travel agencies, and experts in sport organizations in Isfahan. According to the Cochran formula, the statistical population was 483. But 215 were selected as the sample. After confirming the formal validity of the Check List by ten sports management specialists, reliability was calculated to be 0.89 based on Cronbach's alpha.

**Findings:** The results showed that one of the most important social factors: increasing the share of sport tourism in the leisure time of the people according to their interest in sport tourism; technological: using the capabilities of cyberspace in the development of sport tourism; economical: trying to increase investment in sports tourism; boom Sport: Developing sports tourism to improve the environment; Political: Efforts to improve the status of international societies and values: Use of culture and identity of the city to increase athletic motivation in sport tourism.

**Originality:** In general, implementing unit management in sport tourism policy is suitable for creating synergy. Ultimately, this synergy leads to the realization of landscape in the tourism field of Isfahan.

### Keywords

Ecology  
Isfahan  
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## 1. Introduction

Countries, cities and regions with development indicators face socio-economic problems. Hence natural capital (ecosystem services) is not considered for development (Türe & Türe, 2021). It is imperative in planning the development of structural and natural elements (Alkan, 2021). The feasibility of global environmental sustainability solutions is based on one or more value changes. This framework shows four models of sustainability. Solutions are characterized by productivity concerning welfare and intergenerational equality for the use of the environment. Also, it is interesting by confirming compatibility with alternative justice approaches to utilitarianism (Zagonari, 2019).

Strategic planning is how organizations analyze and recognize their internal and external environment, establish their strategic direction, and create strategies (Nazari & Abedi, 2013). Strategic thinking is the concept of the individual's mental and executive readiness to adapt to the environment's preconditions and change timing. It is not a prediction of the future but the timely recognition of the characteristics of the field of competition and seeing opportunities that competitors are unaware of criticizes. There is little consensus in strategic management literature on strategic thinking (Shapira et al., 2017). In this regard, Elbanna (2016), high autonomy with low control, increases the tension in the organization, resulting in the ineffectiveness of strategic planning. As a result, the organization should prevent failures by using policies, views, and related functions.

Strategic thinking creates internal consistency of responsiveness in a competitive environment. Strategic leaders use strategic thinking to make strategic decisions and develop the field of effectiveness in the setting for the organization (Elbanna et al., 2015). Beginning with the era of organized and moving organizations, organizations must regularly engage in self-organizing processes to respond to environmental demands. Considering the present organizational world, which is the competition of organizations' primary goal, an organization can survive to use appropriate strategies and, while formulating its vision, define its mission, long-term, short-term goals, and strategy. Can stabilize the process of its activities to adapt to changing environments. In this regard, Social, Technology, Economical, Environmental, Political and Values (STEPPV). Model is suitable for analyzing the general environment and strategic thinking. In general, the model is used in problem-solving, decision-making, planning, crisis management, uncertain situations and scenarios. The macro, social, technological, economic, environmental, political, and cultural models are macro variables (Mobini Dehkordi & Heidari, 2014).

Sport has a unique role and identity in most societies (Yao et al., 2020), and various forms are part of many people's daily lives (Jackman et al., 2020). Since exercise involves a degree of physical activity that is beneficial to physical and mental health (Herbert et al., 2020), exercise significantly affects current levels of self-efficacy and the proper orientation in choosing life goals (McCreary et al., 2019). Various researchers have looked at the effects of sports activities, including broad participation and not being age-restricted (Gard et al., 2018), teamwork, freedom and choice, low cost, low importance of competition and win, gender, race, time and place. Cho (2017)

and entertainment, with liveliness and happiness (Gardner & Lidz, 2006), through public exercise to the dynamism and mental health with activity (Sadeghi & Einaky, 2020; Wang et al., 2018).

Sport and physical education development are an essential part of economic and social development in any society. The presentation of strategic plans in different parts of it is significant. The achievements of sport development are widespread and lead to economic prosperity and social prosperity (Nazari et al., 2016). The continuous triumph of nations in the field of sports is a significant issue. Extensive research has been done on the strategic environmental exercise methods in other countries, including in today's fast-paced world, people's development, sports, and the environment through social ecosystems. As a result, according to their mission, many sports organizations from different countries made the strategy and achieved success with its implementation. Some sports organizations have developed their organizational strategy to succeed in their mission (Kennelly & Toohey, 2014).

Layton and Latham (2021) point out that infrastructure provision, the proper use of volunteers, a dynamic and robust economy, and political stability should be considered the main strengths of a major sporting event. Also, the growth of the tourism industry, business development, quality of life, infrastructure improvement, and action are important opportunities for organizers to hold a sporting event. Six major influences on sports tourism include economic benefits, social development, social pride, economic costs, traffic problems and security risks—essential areas for strategic thinking in the tourism industry. Today, the vast tourism industry, especially domestic tourism, has a special place in the countries' economies. Meanwhile, despite Iran's many natural, cultural and historical attractions, Iran has yet to find its position as a tourist destination in global and domestic tourism, especially urban tourism. Therefore, it is necessary to identify the capabilities and potential of tourism in different regions, including cities, proper measures and programs for the optimal use of these potentials, as well as the development and expansion of the positive effects of tourism in these cities, take place (Nazari et al., 2016).

Domestic and foreign tourists have long regarded Isfahan for its historical, cultural and religious works and its cultural and original traditions and attractions. Today, it is also considered one of the most important historical and industrial cities in the territory. National, regional and global are of particular importance. In this regard, the STEEPV model is suitable for analyzing the general environment and strategic thinking. In general, the model is used for problem-solving, decision making, planning, crisis management, uncertain situations and scenario. The significant variables are social, technological, economic, environmental, Political and values. In today's world, when there are tremendous changes in various fields, the environment is confronted with turbulence, and competition has grown a lot. Sports tourism should use a kind of planning that is prospective and environmentally oriented. While identifying Environmental factors in the long-term horizons determines their impact on sports tourism and how it interacts. According to thinkers, strategic planning is a dynamic and rational process. Therefore, considering the above mentioned and studies, the question

is: what is the sport tourism strategy from the perspective of educated and experienced people, and how can we achieve the desired strategy in sport tourism? Does the researcher seek to answer the following questions: Isfahan's optimal design for sports tourism based on the STEEPV model?

## 2. Methodology

The research methodology is descriptive-analytic in applied case studies in Isfahan city since its results cannot be generalized to other cities. In this research, by carefully examining the past and present process of analyzing the trend of sport tourism in Isfahan based on the STEEPV model, based on this analytical model, appropriate strategies were designed and developed to help the tourism excellence in Isfahan. Therefore, six goals and criteria are determined to fill these gaps and distances and then select the appropriate standards for controlling their progress. They include social, technological, economic, environmental culture, politics and values. The study sample was 384 people. They had faculty members and students of the faculty of sport and tourism science, managers of travel agencies, experts in organizations and departments of sports and youth, municipalities, tourism and cultural heritage of Isfahan, divided into two sections of experts in the field of sport and tourism management. The research tool was a checklist of Isfahan sports tourism strategy was designed by the researcher for sports tourism in Isfahan. Ten sports management experts have approved the verbal validity. The reliability was calculated based on Cronbach's alpha of 0.89. Data analysis was carried out in quantitative and qualitative methods. To collect the required information in the quantitative section, we used a checklist. In the qualitative area, intuitive judgments were used. The matrix (QSPM) was used to prioritize the considered strategies.

## 3. Results

The status of the educational qualification is the least frequently observed in the diploma group with about 4% and the highest frequency of the graduate group with 42.8%. 45% of the statistical population is women and 55% of the male population.

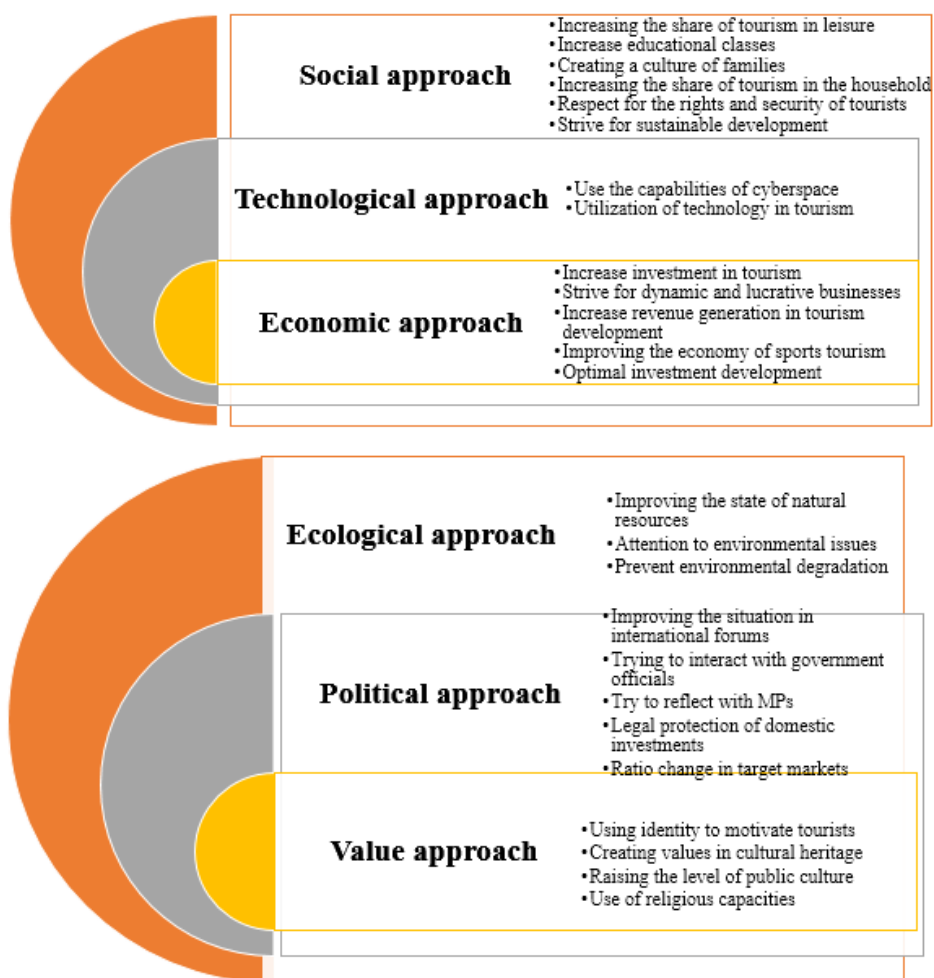
**Table 1.** Strategies for Sporting Tourism in Isfahan using matrix.

Components	Title Strategies
Social Approach	1 An increase in the share of sports tourism in leisure people due to their interest in sports tourism
	2 Increasing the sports classes and workshops related to sport tourism
	3 Cultivating families to encourage children to sport tourism
	4 Increasing the share of sports tourism in the household basket
	5 Observe the rights and safety of sports tourists
	6 Trying to develop sport tourism to reduce the impact of urban life on people
Technology Approach	1 Use of cyberspace in the development of sport tourism
	2 An effort to improve the level of utilization of technology in sport tourism
Economic Approach	1 Trying to increase investment in sport tourism
	2 Trying to boost dynamic and high-performing jobs in sport tourism



Components	Title Strategies
	3 Increases in sports in sport by developing sports tourism
	4 Improving the sports tourism economy
	5 Developing optimal investment for utilizing facilities and resources
	1 Development of sport tourism in order to improve the environment
	2 Attention to environmental issues in the establishment of sports grounds
Ecological Approach	3 Preventing environmental degradation through sport tourism
	1 Efforts to improve the situation in international assemblies
	2 Trying to interact with government officials to pay particular attention to sport tourism
Political Approach	3 Trying to contemplate with parliamentarians to approve the laws of supportive tourism
	4 Legal protection of domestic and foreign investments and providing the grounds for attracting these resources
	5 Changing its position towards the country in the target markets through appropriate investment in advertising
	1 Use of city culture and identity to increase athletic motivation in sport tourism
Value Approach	2 Strengthening religious values in sport tourism
	3 Increasing the role of religion in sports activities using sport tourism
	4 Creating sustainable values in the cultural and religious heritage at the national and international levels for the development of tourism
	5 Raise the level of public culture in the field of sport tourism
	6 Development of sports tourism culture using religious capacities

Based on the findings of [Table 1](#), a list of strategies for social approach with six strategies, a technology approach with two strategies, an economical approach with five strategies, a political process with five strategies, an ecological approach with three strategies, and finally, a value approach with 6 The strategy is listed.



**Figure 1.** Adventure sports tourism strategies Iranian sports adventure tourism.

Based on the findings of the list of strategies, a social approach with six strategies, a technological approach with two strategies, an economical approach with five strategies, a political approach with five strategies, an ecological approach with three strategies. A value approach with the four strategies were obtained.

#### 4. Managerial implications

Politically (P) provides for efforts to improve the situation in international assemblies, interact with government officials, and pay particular attention to sports tourism. Furthermore, it proposes to try to reflect with MPs to approve sports supremacy laws. Also, deregulation minimizing government interference, providing legal support for domestic and foreign investment are more suggestions. Also, providing them with an opportunity to absorb these resources,

shifting their perspective on Iran in target markets through appropriate investment in advertising and increasing domestic sporting tourism to achieve global participation. In terms of values (V), it includes: using culture and identity of the city to increase the athlete's motivation in sport tourism, strengthening religious values in sport tourism, using virtual space to develop ethics in sport tourism, introducing tourism attractions of Iran through the development of sport tourism, The establishment of continuous values in the cultural and religious heritage at the national and international levels for the development of sport tourism, raising the level of public culture in the field of sport tourism, developing the culture of sport tourism using religious capacities and sustainable development of sport tourism with cultural values. The city's resources and sports facilities as the most crucial strategy could be considered. Application of unit management in sport tourism policy is a suitable strategy that can create a complete synergy. this synergy will lead to the prospecting of a landscape in the tourism field of Isfahan. Generally speaking, sports leaders, with regard to adopting the strategies mentioned above, can highlight the sporting goals of sport tourism and provide the conditions for achieving the intended landscape.

## **5. Discussion and conclusion**

The results of this study showed that the long-term goals for sports tourism in Isfahan include: sustainable development of sport tourism in Isfahan citizenship society, development of new technologies in Isfahan sports tourism, Isfahan sports tourism development, promotion of ecological indicators in the development of sport tourism in Isfahan, an increase of share Iran in the world of sports tourism in Isfahan and strengthening religious and religious beliefs in sport tourism in Isfahan.

Based on the findings of the study, the trend analysis of sport tourism in Isfahan based on the STEEPV model was socially (S), which included: increasing the share of sports tourism in leisure time, considering their interest in sport tourism, the increase in funding allocated to research according to The interest of people in sport tourism, the proliferation of classes and workshops related to sports tourism, the rise in the number of sports tourism students, the development of families to encourage children to sports tourism, increase sports tourism in families, try to improve the readiness of experts to respond to Events, observance of the law Security and sports tourism, trying to develop tourism.

Technologically (T) includes the use of cyberspace in the development of sport tourism, efforts to improve the level of exploitation of technology in sport tourism, the establishment and development of research and development centres in sport tourism, and try to improve the approach of individuals to technology in Sports tourism.

Economically (E) includes: trying to increase investment in sport tourism, improving the economic situation of experts with the development of sport tourism, trying to boost dynamic and high-income businesses in sport tourism, reducing unemployment and job creation in sport with the development of sport tourism, Increasing the income in sport by developing sports tourism, improving the sport tourism economy, creating

employment through sports tourism, and developing optimal investment for utilizing facilities and resources.

Ecology (E) includes developing sports tourism to improve the environment and prevent the destruction of the environment through sports tourism.

In general, regarding the analysis of the trend of sport tourism in Isfahan based on the STEEPV model, sports tourism in Isfahan has a few low points and several negative points. Since sports tourism is considered one of the fastest-growing sectors in the relatively new tourism industry, it has identified destinations in both developing and developed countries in the economic and social reconstruction of urban and rural communities, which have seen increasing interest in recent years. It has become a market for domestic growth. So that the sport tourism industry is effective in creating employment and income in the host area if the sport tourism industry is developed and appropriate infrastructure is created. It also has spatial effects, such as changing in different parts of the city, including the street network, residential texture and other parts of the city, and in general, tourism can be transformed into various components such as economy, population and culture and other social characteristics, also affect spatial variations of cities. Of course, in the absence of a coordinated marketing strategy, sports tourism is a low-performing and low-growth market. It is better to do sports sporting activities at different levels, such as sports, for sports tourism in Isfahan.

We can be deduced from these results considering the opportunity identified in the perimeter environment.

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## تحلیل اکولوژی استراتژیک گردشگری ورزشی

رسول نظری<sup>۱\*</sup> ID

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### کلیدواژه

استراتژی  
اصفهان  
بوم‌شناسی  
جهانگردی ورزشی  
رویکرد استراتژیک

### نوع مقاله

پژوهشی اصیل

### چکیده

**هدف:** هدف از انجام این مطالعه تجزیه و تحلیل روند گردشگری ورزشی در اصفهان بر اساس مدل STEEPV بود.

**روش:** این مطالعه به روش توصیفی-تحلیلی و از نوع پیمایشی انجام شد. جامعه آماری آن کلیه اعضای هیئت علمی و دانشجویان مدیریت ورزشی، مدیران آژانس‌های مسافرتی و کارشناسان سازمان‌های ورزشی اصفهان به تعداد ۳۸۴ نفر بودند. نمونه‌ها به تعداد ۲۱۵ نفر و بر اساس فرمول کوکران انتخاب شدند. بر اساس مطالعات کتابخانه‌ای، پرسشنامه‌ای برای بررسی عوامل و عوامل خارج از کنترل گردشگری ورزشی در اصفهان در دو قسمت طراحی شد. پس از تأیید روایی و اعتبار آن که توسط ۱۰ متخصص مدیریت ورزشی با استفاده از چک لیست انجام شد، پایایی آن بر اساس آزمون آلفای کرونباخ ۰/۸۹ به دست آمد. برای تجزیه و تحلیل یافته‌ها، از ماتریس استراتژیک استفاده شد.

**یافته‌ها:** نتایج نشان داد یکی از مهم‌ترین عوامل اجتماعی شامل افزایش سهم گردشگری ورزشی در اوقات فراغت مردم با توجه به علاقه آن‌ها به گردشگری ورزشی بود. همچنین، عوامل فناوری به معنای استفاده از قابلیت‌های فضای مجازی در توسعه گردشگری ورزشی، عوامل اقتصادی به معنای تلاش برای افزایش سرمایه‌گذاری در گردشگری ورزشی بود. علاوه بر این، توسعه گردشگری ورزشی برای بهبود محیط‌زیست و عوامل سیاسی به معنای تلاش برای بهبود وضعیت جوامع و ارزش‌های بین‌المللی، و نیز استفاده از فرهنگ و هویت شهر برای افزایش انگیزه‌های ورزشی در جهانگردی ورزشی از عوامل مؤثر در این دیدگاه استراتژی بودند.

**اصالت و ابتکار مقاله:** به‌طور کلی، اجرای مدیریت واحد در سیاست گردشگری ورزشی استراتژی مناسبی است که می‌تواند در ایجاد هم‌افزایی سودمند واقع گشته و در نهایت این هم‌افزایی منجر به تحقق چشم‌انداز در حوزه گردشگری اصفهان گردد.

**تاریخ دریافت:** ۱۴۰۰/۰۴/۲۵

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## ADIDAS Sportswear Brand Popularity Model in Iranian Consumers

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### ABSTRACT

**Purpose:** This research aimed to test the influential factors that lead to the popularity of sportswear brands like Adidas AG in consumers from the perspective of physical education students.

**Methodology:** The methodology utilized in this research was descriptive and based on a survey. The data collection tools used for brand popularity took from Carroll and Ahuvia (2006) questionnaires. The statistical population of the study included 457 students of physical education at the Ferdowsi University of Mashhad. According to the Cochran formula, 210 samples were chosen by a simple random sampling method. The K-S test, T-test, and SEM were used for the confirmatory factor of data analysis.

**Findings:** The results revealed a significant positive correlation of factors affecting brand popularity. The affection to a brand had a significant impact, while the attitude strength component had the most negligible influential effect on the popularity of a brand. Thus, sportswear apparel manufacturers may plan and apply these components to increase the popularity of their brand. The sportswear industry could improve along with brands increasing their market share in competitive markets through the affection of consumers and implementing other components of brand popularity.

**Originality:** For the first time, the popularity of a reputable sports brand in the world has been investigated in Iran.

### Keywords

ADIDAS AG  
Brand  
Brand Popularity  
Sportswear

### Article type

Case study

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## 1. Introduction

Individuals' need to be covered has been easily fulfilled for several years as ready-to-wear has become widespread. However, due to technological developments, various benefits besides covering function are expected from clothes. Different wardrobes for different parts of life such as work, sports, and daily wear are required. People who live in cities do exercise to control stress, but without leaving the city. Recently, it is known that training provides the situation and contributes to the general image of the individual, which is an essential element in social life. The increasing trend of wearing Sportswear in daily life in addition to sports has been increasing. Thus, the target group of sportswear companies has expanded from people who train to another group who are young and follow trends.

The increasing prominence of health psychology has been paralleled by developments in the psychology of health-related exercise. Evidence has been amassed that supports the efficacy of regular physical activity in reducing the risks of some debilitating health conditions such as coronary heart disease and obesity and the promotion of physical function and mental well-being (Biddle & Fox, 1989). The development of technology and the increase of living standards have raised the expectations of Sportswear. People expect durability, design, style, and the functionality and comfort of clothing (Çivitci & Dengin Sevinir, 2014).

In the textile industry, the active market for Sportswear has grown globally. Competition in this sector forces manufacturers to meet the demands of consumers in the field of clothing comfort and beauty, so the convenience of clothing has become more critical in sportswear research (Güneşoğlu, 2005).

Clothing comfort is associated with rising living standards, so research on this issue has attracted both researchers and manufacturers (Öner & Okur, 2010). Slater (1985) defines the comfort of clothing as "a desirable state of physiological, psychological, and physical harmony between man and the environment" (Okur et al., 2008).

Characteristics expected from Sportswear are stated below according to the research on clothing comfort: Efficiently moving away sweat from the skin, Quick-drying, Breathability, Balancing body heat by moving away moisture and ventilating the body's critical heat areas. Presently, Sportswear has become mainstream because it gives the youth a comfortable and diverse lifestyle. Consumers wear Sportswear not only during athletic activities but also at home, school and workplace. In addition, the tendency has always been towards wearing raiment, which is both athletic and perfectly fitting. Sports lovers combine their exercise routines with their favourite clobber to be fashionmongers.

A brand was considered a part of product physics only, and the definitions included a term, a name, and a trademark (Bornmark et al., 2006). A brand is far more than these statements. It is the perception of a long-term relationship between a business and consumers (Oliver, 1999; Shevchenko, 2014). The knowledge of branding is the most valued characteristic of a company created via investment in marketing plans (Brady et al., 2005). A brand's strong presence in the market could be the only characteristic that distinguishes a product or a service from its competitors. In such situations, acquiring a



place in a consumer's mind that persuades him to be loyal to the company is of great importance (Azadi et al., 2015).

The brand name consists of a name, phrase, term, sign, design, or combination. It introduces a product or a service that a seller or a group of sellers offer, differentiating it from competitors (Keller, 2008). A division of athletic products which played a vital role in the implementation and development of sports and gained global attention is athletic clothing and footwear (activewear) (Cowie, 2001). In this regard, the novel area of brand popularity has become an essential domain in marketing research. Within the last few years, love and enthusiasm towards a brand have been considered one of the main elements of a consumer's relationship (Ahuvia, 1993).

The factors influencing brand affinity include inherent fit, long-term emotional relationship, positive affection, and unexpected unhappiness about the absence of a brand, overall strength, certainty, confidence and creating a positive connection with the brand. The consequences of brand affinity consist of a tendency to pay more, reliability and verbal propaganda of the brand.

Albert and Merunka (2013) investigated the role of brand love on the relationship between the brand and its consumers. Their studies indicated that brand identity and trust had a positive and significant impact on brand commitment and love. In turn, brand commitment and passion had a positive and meaningful effect on verbal propaganda and was marked by a tendency to pay for higher prices. Ismail and Spinelli (2012) investigated the impact of brand love, brand personality and brand image on verbal propaganda in their research. Their studies showed that brand love and brand image had a positive and meaningful effect on the oral propaganda of the brand. Aron et al. (1995) studied the relationship between the brand's social mentality and brand love. According to their findings, brand love was reflective of higher identity. Kheiry et al. (2013) found out during their research that the attitude and experience of the consumers affect the formation of an emotional dependency on the brand. Also, it proved that consumers having a passionate relationship with the brand demonstrate a higher level of loyalty. Marinejad Asl and Vazifehdoost (2015) realized that brand image had a positive effect on brand love. Azizi et al. (2012) reported in their project that the most crucial factor in the growth and retention of a brand is creating loyalty in consumers' attitudes, beliefs, and behaviours.

The results have shown that the four dimensions of responsiveness, dynamic, emotion and audacity impact attitude loyalty and attitude loyalty influence the behaviour of the brand. However, the simplicity of a brand doesn't affect attitude loyalty. Shafaie et al. (2016) showed that by focusing on the mentioned dimensions and variables in the advertisements, sport managers and marketers could attract more fans, earn income and gain the top spot in the market. By adapting the company and products to the mentioned variables, sponsors can also have an excellent interactive relationship. Currently, no existing brand has proposed the challenges in exporting sports goods (Shafaie et al., 2016). However, no research in the past has been specifically focused on how a consumer purchasing a specific brand can help a company distinguish itself in the market and satisfy its consumers exclusively. The creation of a brand was not a choice but an inevitable necessity to increase the competition in the world market. Otherwise,

it may lead to monopolization of the national market by imports and obsoleting the exports. Adidas® AG is a well-recognized name in global brands that have found exceptional popularity among consumers. The investigation of the factors that have propelled Adidas' popularity is necessary for domestic sportswear industries to understand and implement these factors for the flourishing of the domestic market and burgeoning export of sports clothing. Nowadays, the brand process is extended from regular advertisements to social media strategies sharing values and generates identities (Mataruna-Dos-Santos & Pena, 2017; Mataruna et al., 2015).

With regards to the explanations above, performing research in the area of sportswear brand popularity is indispensable. In addition, the study and assessment of a sportswear brand's favour from the viewpoint of students and graduates of sports science who deal with relatively all athletic fields may evaluate and guide sportswear and equipment producers' activities in Iran to create a strong brand presence. This article tries to examine the popularity of the Adidas brand among consumers. With headquarters in Herzogenaurach (Germany), Adidas Group is the largest company in the sports footwear and apparel industry in Europe and the second-largest globally. With total revenues of EUR 19.3 billion in 2016, its product range covers the entire spectrum of apparel and footwear goods, from casual sportive fashion to high-performance products for competitive athletes.

Thus, the purpose of this research is to investigate the question: What factors have led to the popularity of sportswear brand Adidas AG?

## 2. Theoretical background

### 2.1. Brand name

The brand name consists of a name, phrase, term, symbol, sign, design, or a combination that serves the purpose of introducing a product or a service that a seller or a group of sellers offer and differentiates it from competitor companies (Keller, 2008). A business's brand name is a modelled commitment by a company to support its consumers (Rowley, 2004). In other words, the branding of a business gives consumers the signs of product core and protects both the consumer and producer against competitors that try to produce analogous ones. Branding a business is defined as a set of experiences formed by connecting links between the company and consumer (Ghodeswar, 2008).

### 2.2. Brand popularity

Brand popularity is defined as accumulating market acceptance and brand goodwill over time (Kim & Chung, 1997). It is said to positively influence a brand's loyalty, increasing its number of users (Raj, 1985). Also, it is helping to garner more favourable evaluations and larger market shares, provide better value to consumers and improve its overall performance by creating a clear brand image (Kim & Chung, 1997). In this study, the brand popularity concept is used within a cue utilization theory, which suggests that products consist of an array of cues (both extrinsic and intrinsic) that serve as indicators of quality for consumers as they consider their product purchase decisions (Cox, 1967;

Olson, 1972; Purwar, 1982). In addition, the theory suggests that when a brand is famous, consumers assume a certain level of trust and confidence in the brand, which reduces their level of uncertainty (Dean, 1999). Thus, it is clear that brand popularity, when used as an extrinsic cue in advertising, may stimulate more favourable assessments, provide consumers with the product's value, and even create the perception that unpopular brands are riskier options than popular ones.

### ***2.3. Sportswear***

Developments in technology and escalating standards of life have raised expectations from Sportswear. Individuals expect durability, design, and fashion and demand performance and clothing comfort (Çivitci & Dengin Sevinir, 2014). In the textile industry, the active Sportswear's market has grown globally. Competition in this sector compels manufacturers to fulfil consumers' demands of clothing comfort besides Aesthetics. Therefore, clothing comfort of sportswear researches has become more critical (Güneşoğlu, 2005). Clothing comfort is related to raising standards of life; thus, studies on this subject have drawn both researchers and manufacturers (Öner & Okur, 2010). Clothing comfort is defined by Slater (1985) as "a pleasant state of physiological, psychological and physical harmony between a human being and the environment" (Okur et al., 2008).

### ***2.4. Brand loyalty***

Customer brand loyalty came into enterprisers' eyes for several years. It plays a more and more critical role in modern global marketing. To maximize profit, people try different strategies, among which a large amount of people in business recognizes loyalty. On the other hand, some may assert that it is a challenge to achieve it. Most of all, by finding the elements and effects of loyalty, business people may better understand the nature of consumer faith (Mao, 2010). Brand loyalty has a positive and significant impact on purchase intention, and Perceived quality has a positive and significant effect on brand loyalty and purchase intention. Brand loyalty can mediate the perceived quality of purchase intention, while perceived quality can mediate brand awareness of purchase intention (Noorlitaria et al., 2020). Under high-involvement conditions, the loyalty program's value perception influences brand loyalty directly and indirectly through program loyalty. Under low-involvement conditions, value perception has no direct effect on brand loyalty (Yi & Jeon, 2003).

Schultz and Block (2015) show that manufacturer brands are challenged, not by private label, but by no brand preference in the category (Schultz & Block, 2015). The influential factors in brand loyalty of dairy products in the Tehran city market sequenced as follows: Price, Taste, Advertising, Packaging, Availability and word of mouth. In the end, the summarizing, concluding and suggesting were accomplished (Hoseini & Rezaei, 2011).

## 2.5. Emotional connection

A consumer evaluates the quality aspects of a specific brand and purchases a brand that satisfies their emotional needs. The emotional value to a brand is accompanied by positive affection of using the brand (such as joy and pleasure). It leads to an increase in a tendency to buy that brand again. In other words, consumers that have a good feeling in purchasing a product (feel-good factor) from a brand may buy that brand again (Kumar et al., 2009; Shevchenko, 2014).

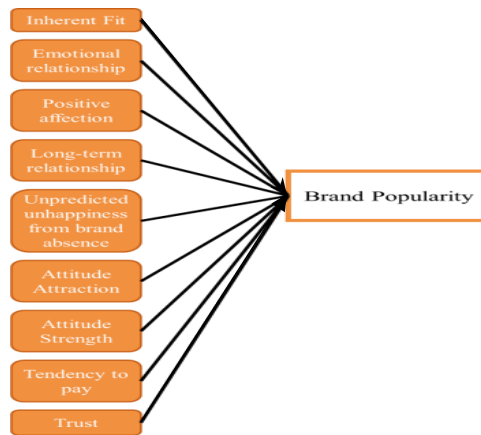


Figure 1. A conceptual model of Carroll and Ahuvia (2006) research on brand popularity.

## 2.6. Hypotheses

- **Hypothesis 1:** There exists a relationship between inherent fit and brand popularity.
- **Hypothesis 2:** There exists a relationship between emotional connection and brand popularity.
- **Hypothesis 3:** There exists a relationship between positive affection and brand popularity.
- **Hypothesis 4:** There exists a relationship between long-term relations and brand popularity.
- **Hypothesis 5:** There exists a relationship between unexpected upset because of brand absence and brand popularity.
- **Hypothesis 6:** There exists a relationship between overall attraction attitude and brand popularity.
- **Hypothesis 7:** There exists a relationship between attitude strength: certainty/confidence, and brand popularity.
- **Hypothesis 8:** There exists a relationship between brand popularity and the tendency for paying more.
- **Hypothesis 9:** There exists a relationship between brand popularity and trust.

### 3. Methodology

The current paper is practical research regarding the research goal because the findings are used for existing questions. The nature of research is descriptive and cohesion type that is considered under the covariance investigation. The statistical community of this research were the students of sports science at the Ferdowsi University of Mashhad enrolled in the 2nd semester of the academic year 2016-2017, consisting of 457 people. The attitude of students towards the products of Adidas was also assessed. Two hundred twenty people participated in the study. The survey consisted of two main sections, which have been achieved through a thorough research in this field. In the first section (general questions), an attempt was made to gather comprehensive and demographic information related to the respondents. In the second section (technical questions), research variables were studied.

The brand popularity questionnaire of [Carroll and Ahuvia \(2006\)](#) was utilized for information gathering. The survey questions are arranged in a 5-point Likert spectrum, one of the most popular measuring scales. The stability of the survey was calculated via Cronbach's coefficient for brand popularity ( $\alpha=0.787$ ). Moreover, a respondent's group features such as gender, employment status, level of education and level of family income were investigated in the descriptive statistics section for data analysis. For the inferential statistics section, we used the Kolmogorov Smirnov, Pearson correlation, simultaneous regression, and confirmatory factor analysis by LISREL software.

### 4. Results

According to the results, 45.0% of the respondents are male, 55.0% female, 21.9% employed and 78.1% unemployed. 72.4% of the respondents have a bachelor's degree, and 27.6% have a Master degree. Furthermore, from the student's point of view (both male and female), the most critical statement in brand loyalty was "How much do you value for him/her?" ( $\bar{x} = 4.35, SD = \pm 0.70$ ). and the last one was "How much of using this brand is due to your friends' group acceptance?" ( $\bar{x} = 2.94, SD = \pm 1.21$ ).

**Table 1.** Brand loyalty.

Standard deviation	Mean value	Statements related to brand loyalty	Level of importance
1.80	2.94	How much of using this brand is due to you being admitted to your friend's group?	Least importance
1.70	2.96	How much do you use this brand to match your favourite group?	
1.20	2.97	This brand is a scientific and emotional experience.	
0.70	4.53	How much do you value him in your life?	Most important
0.80	4.33	How much does seeing him/her excites you?	
0.80	4.32	How much keeping a relationship is essential to you?	

In addition, descriptive findings on the importance of various brand popularity dimensions are listed in [Table 2](#). In the following, the importance and circumstance of brand popularity components will be discussed according to a normal distribution

of the obtained data using a single T-sample test and dedicating score three as the hypothetical indicator.

**Table 2.** The circumstance of brand popularity components importance.

	The concept	Hypothetical mean value	Observed mean value with a standard deviation	T statistic	Degree of freedom	Significance level
1	Inherent fit	3	3.98±0.53	108.2	219	0.05
2	Emotional relation	3	4.11±0.75	81.3	219	0.05
3	Positive affection	3	4.2±0.75	83.02	219	0.05
4	Long-term relation	3	3.74±1.07	51.57	219	0.05
5	Predicted unhappiness	3	3.50±0.65	79.54	219	0.05
6	Attraction attitude	3	3.3±0.89	54.57	219	0.05
7	Strength attitude	3	3.15±0.86	54.15	219	0.05
8	Tendency to pay	3	3.36±0.74	66.6	219	0.05
9	Trust	3	3.34±0.85	58.1	219	0.05

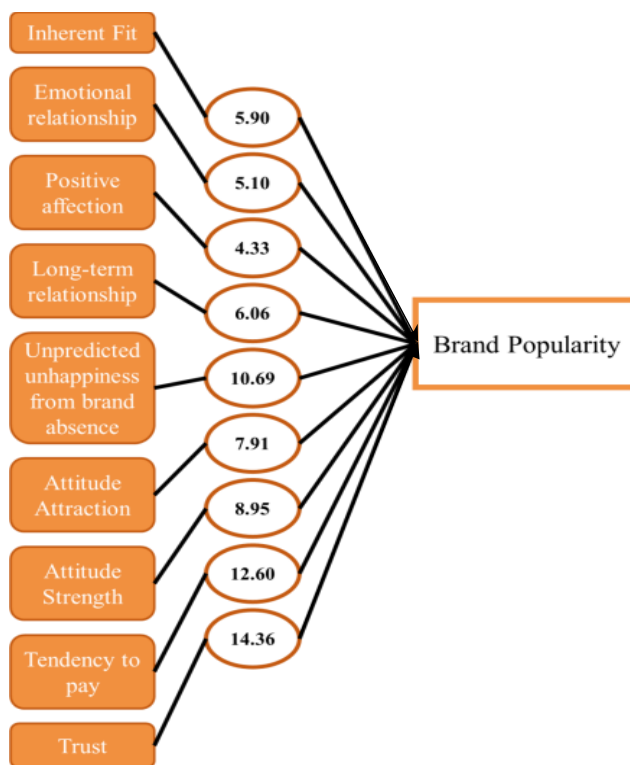
As it can be inferred, the highest mean value is related to positive affect, and the lowest mean value is for strength attitude. According to the results of [Table 3](#), it can be observed that a meaningful difference exists between hypothetical and observed mean values. Therefore, the difference between the theoretical mean value and the observed mean value of every component is of a considerable level. In the following, a conceptual model of research using LISREL software will be presented. The standardized output coefficients of LISREL are plotted in the diagram related to the T score of each coefficient. In addition to the LISREL output, path coefficients are set on the conceptual model of research. The following discussions are presented for every relationship between components and statements.

**Table 3.** Indicators of model's goodness fit.

Fitness level	Desirable value	Obtained value		Fitness statistics
		0.05		
Acceptable	Lower than 0.05	Lower limit	Upper limit	Root mean error
		0.49	0.07	
Desirable	Lower than 3	2.66		Chi-square to the degree of freedom ratio
Desirable	Higher than 0.9	0.91		NFI
Desirable	Higher than 0.9	0.94		CFI

According to the mean values for nine components of brand popularity and the LISREL's output data presented in [Figure 2](#), the calculated  $\chi^2/df$  is 2.66, which show suitable model fitness. Also, the root of the mean square error approximation in the model

is 0.05, and the value of GFI, AGFI, NFI, and CFI components was obtained 0.77, 0.74, 0.91, and 0.94, respectively. In addition, the RMR value of this model was 0.05. Therefore, according to the indicators and model outputs, the obtained data relatively coincides with the model. Furthermore, the presented indicators demonstrate that the proposed model is suitable and experimental data coincides with the model nicely.



**Figure 2.** The diagram of research model analysis along with the factor loading.

## 5. Managerial implications

The most element in brand popularity is trust. In other words, customers say the most meaningful aspect for them is trust in the brand to which they decided to be a loyal customer. After that, the unpredictable unhappiness of the brand absence, tendency to pay, and attitude strength. As we know, loyal customers are the most valuable assets of a business. So, a businessman needs this information, and the customer needs to have more success in his job.

## 6. Discussion and conclusion

According to the data analysis results, there is a positive and meaningful relationship between inherent fit and brand popularity. This research follows (Albert & Merunka,

2013; Bergkvist & Bech-Larsen, 2010). They believed that matching an inherent fit of a brand and presenting an identity similar to a desired identity from the consumer can influence brand love and even brand loyalty. In addition, if the consumer feels the same as the brand, they will have a higher enthusiasm to have the brand. Thus, forming a negative opinion known as a psychological motivation in a consumer's behaviour can provide an opportunity for popularity and help improve the sports industry's domestic production. Researchers believed that brand identification could enhance dependency and nurture an emotional connection in consumers loyal to the brand. It seems that the consumer loves the brands that create a feeling of true identity. Thus, forming a positive and desirable surface that is discerned from the inner dimensions of a consumer can provide an opportunity for the introduction and verbal propaganda of the brand.

According to the results, there exists a relationship between a long-term relationship and brand popularity. These research results are under [Fournier \(1998\)](#), which showed that consumers have a strong brand relationship. Thus, brand love brings about a long-term relationship between the consumer and the brand. According to the research, a brand can create a sense of love and interest by helping the social identity of the consumer. Therefore, creating social relations such as running campaigns and social networks usefully helps the long-term popularity of the brand.

There exists a positive and meaningful relationship between predicted unhappiness due to the absence of the brand and brand popularity. This item was only investigated in [Carroll and Ahuvia \(2006\)](#)'s research and indicated that if less popular brands enter production, the opportunity for increasing brand popularity increases. Therefore, brand success allows marketers to create a competitive advantage by showing flexibility against pressure and creating barriers for a competition of domestic producers.

There exists a positive and meaningful relationship between general overall attraction attitude and brand popularity. The result of this research follows [Kheiry et al. \(2013\)](#), which has found out that the experience and mood of the consumers influence the formation of a favourable attraction and emotional dependency with the brand. Many research discussed the existence of colour psychology in marketing. Thus, creating psychological behaviours can enhance this attraction. In addition, results show that consumers who have gained emotional dependency on the brand deliver a higher level of loyalty. There exists a positive and meaningful relationship between attitude strength (certainty/confidence) and brand popularity. Through conducting this specific study, a review of a wide range of literature in the field of management studies was conducted, especially in marketing. In addition, applying the purchase decision model to practice in the marketing industry with empirical research and hypothesis testing contributed to this study to assert the firmness of purchase decisions and initially make it more applicable in marketing ([Khuong & Tram, 2015](#)).

The results show a positive and meaningful relationship between brand popularity and the tendency to pay more. The findings of this research are per ([Albert & Merunka, 2013](#); [Jalali et al., 1390](#)), which belief that perceived value, quality, and specific value influence loyalty and the tendency to buy again from a brand. According to the results, loyal consumers buy only from one brand despite various existing brands. They may buy a product with up to 20 % higher price. Thus, it seems that if a consumer gains an



advantage as a result of their shopping, they may be ready to buy again. Accordingly, complementary attractions in shopping such as motivational and attractive packages (small gifts and postal cards) can provide this opportunity.

There exists a positive and meaningful relationship between trust and brand popularity. The result of this research is under (Albert & Merunka, 2013; Kafashpour et al., 2009; Motaharnejad et al., 2014; Yasin & Shamim, 2013), which all indicate that experience, reliance, and emotional commitment to the brand has a positive and meaningful relationship on consumer's shopping intention. Shopping intentions have a positive and significant effect on brand love and verbal propaganda. According to the obtained results, attachment to the brand is the result of the brand's trust and satisfaction. Thus, trust is considered the most crucial factor in creating a positive and desirable mental image in the consumer's mind. Building trust is the last chain in brand development, is the most influential factor in building brand love, and facilitates verbal propaganda.

### **Recommendations arising from the research findings**

Research is significant and applicable only if the results can offer suggestions and practical solutions. Now with the cultivation of examining hypotheses and determining how factors may influence the research procedure, these results may help sports managers, producers, and even consumers of domestic Sportswear. In this regard, the following suggestions are recommended:

- **Brand-consumer relationship management** - It is suggested to the sportswear producers to establish a long-term relationship with their consumers by implementing a Consumer Relationship Management (CRM) program, regulated marketing techniques, and creating a positive experience for the consumer.
- **Advertisements** - Pleasant emotions accompany emotional dependency, and this dynamic relationship results in higher brand popularity. Therefore, it is advised to the sportswear producers to create hype and excitement by investing in various advertisements in mass media. It makes an emotional dependency on consumers.
- **Product quality** – The results showed that the sportswear producers enhance the quality of products according to the consumer's needs to increase the brand popularity, resulting in the establishment of a long-term relationship of consumers with their products (especially physical education students).

According to the results, popularity factors have a positive effect on brand popularity. Sportswear producers can enhance their brand popularity by implementing desired plans and applying these factors, resulting in an up-gradation of their brand in the sportswear industry and increasing their position in the competitive market.

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# نشریه کسب‌وکار در ورزش

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## مدل محبوبیت برند ورزشی آدیداس در مصرف کنندگان ایرانی

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### چکیده

**هدف:** هدف پژوهش حاضر، ارزیابی عوامل مؤثر بر محبوبیت برندهای لباس ورزشی مانند آدیداس بر مصرف‌کنندگان از دیدگاه دانشجویان رشته تربیت‌بدنی و علوم ورزشی بود.

روش: این پژوهش به روش توصیفی و از نوع پیمایشی انجام و داده‌های آن به‌صورت میدانی جمع‌آوری شدند. ابزار پژوهش پرسشنامه محبوبیت برند (کارول و آهوویا، ۲۰۰۶) بود که از معادلات ساختاری برای تأیید ابزار پژوهش استفاده شد. جامعه آماری پژوهش شامل ۴۵۷ نفر از دانشجویان رشته تربیت‌بدنی دانشگاه فردوسی مشهد بودند. بر اساس فرمول کوکران، ۲۱۰ نفر از این تعداد به‌روش نمونه‌گیری تصادفی به‌عنوان نمونه آماری انتخاب شدند. برای تحلیل داده‌ها از آزمون‌های کلموگروف اسمیرنوف و تی تک نمونه‌ای استفاده شد.

یافته‌ها: نتایج پژوهش نشان داد همبستگی مثبتی بین عوامل مؤثر بر محبوبیت برند وجود دارد. میزان علاقه به یک برند، دارای بیشترین و نگرش قدرت، کمترین تأثیر را در محبوبیت یک برند دارند. تولیدکنندگان پوشاک ورزشی می‌توانند از این مؤلفه‌ها برای افزایش محبوبیت برند خود استفاده کنند. صنعت پوشاک ورزشی، نیز می‌تواند در کنار افزایش سهم برندها از بازار خود در بازار رقابتی و از طریق تأثیرگذاری مثبت بر مصرف‌کنندگان و استفاده از سایر مؤلفه‌های محبوبیت برند توسعه یابد. اصالت و ابتکار مقاله: در این پژوهش، برای اولین بار در کشور ایران به بررسی محبوبیت یک برند ورزشی معتبر در سطح جهان پرداخته شده است.

### کلیدواژه

البسه ورزشی

آدیداس

برند

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## The Relationship between Service Quality, Physical Evidence and Customer Satisfaction in Sports Centres

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### ABSTRACT

**Purpose:** Ensuring customer satisfaction is one of the basic requirements of quality management systems and excellence models, is obtained by comparing before the customer buys the expected performance with the actual perceived performance. This study aimed to investigate the relationship between quantitative and physical evidence and service quality with customer satisfaction of sports facilities in District 5 of Tehran.

**Methodology:** The research method is correlational in terms of implementation method. The statistical population includes all those who have used the services of sports facilities in District 5. 395 subjects were selected using cluster sampling as research samples. To collecting data, three questionnaires include quantitative and physical evidence (researcher-made), SERVQUAL (Parasuraman and Zithamel, 1988) and customer satisfaction (Kooshesh, 2014), was used. The validity of which was determined by 12 experts in the field of sports management was confirmed. Also, in a pilot study on 40 subjects using Cronbach's alpha, the reliability of the questionnaires was 0.86, 0.89 and 0.91, respectively.

**Findings:** After the data collection, descriptive statistics, Kolmogorov-Smirnov tests, Pearson correlation, and multistage regression in SPSS software were used. The results showed a significant relationship between physical and quantitative characteristics and service quality with customer satisfaction. Also, there is an important relationship between customer satisfaction and the components of perceived factors, reliability, responsiveness, reliability and empathy. In addition, the variables of physical and quantitative characteristics and quality of services are significant predictors of the variable of customer satisfaction. Finally, suppose the quantitative and physical evidence and the quality of services of health clubs are at a suitable level. In that case, it can lead to customer satisfaction and more customer membership in that sports space.

**Originality:** We showed the correlations between physical evidence, satisfaction, and loyalty in sports centres which were less noticed in previous studies.

### Keywords

Customer Satisfaction  
Health Clubs  
Physical Evidence  
Service Quality

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## 1. Introduction

Assets are divided into tangible and intangible assets. Intangible assets (INTANGIBLES) are created and developed due to the company's performance in various fields. Real assets (TANGIBLES) are purchased or acquired without connection to the version and managers' decisions. They were part of the capital that is seen in the balance sheet as land, buildings, machinery, inventory of raw materials, inventory of manufactured goods (Gholami Torkesaluye et al., 2020).

With the advent of the third millennium AD, many concepts in organizations have found a different meaning. They have taken on a new role in this transformation in the "customer" of societies. The word is not safe. Human relations are understood in a two-way interaction because its purpose no longer merely evokes a commercial transaction. So that each person is a customer of other people on the one hand and has customers. On the other hand, in this age, the key to survival in organizations' healthy and long-term competition is to constantly meet the expectations and desires of customers as they think and are valuable to them Formation (Rajouei, 2008).

Customer satisfaction is a result that is obtained by comparing before the customer buys the expected performance with the actual perceived performance and the cost paid (Attafar & Mansouri, 2011). Undoubtedly, the most critical assets of most organizations are their customers. Customers are a valuable source of opportunities, threats, and operational questions related to the industry because of their direct connection to an organization's actions.

Today, to grow and survive in the field of economic competition, companies and organizations must pay special attention to customer orientation and increase their relationship with buyers of goods more than before. In new business processes, achieving customer satisfaction has a significant and vital place in companies' goals. Senior managers know very well that their success in achieving the firm's goals depends on customer satisfaction. On the other hand, it cannot be said that all customers have an equal role in the company's success. Therefore, satisfying key customers will be more sensitive.

On the other hand, one of the variables directly related to customer satisfaction is the quality of service. Philip Cutler believes that service, activity, or benefit is intangible and intangible that one party exchanges with the other and do not seek ownership. The production of services may or may not depend on the physical commodity (Kotler & Armstrong, 2017). Memari (2018) argued that An optimal management of tangible factors of service quality such as physical elements is helpful to develop customers' behavioral attention to managers (Memari, 2018). On the other hand, there are different approaches to defining quality; So that in the philosophical approach, quality is synonymous with inherent superiority. In the technical approach, quality is attributed to the degree of product compliance with technical standards. In the customer-centred approach, quality is a subjective issue determined and explained by its recipients. It seriously depends on customer perceptions, which seems to be of particular interest in defining quality in the field of service (Schneider & White, 2004).

In this regard, Abdulqawi and Owen (2011) define service quality as the degree of discrepancy between customers' perceptions and expectations of services. In recent



decades, service quality has become one of the most important issues in academic research (Ho & Lin, 2010). The model is created, evaluated. The SERVQUAL scale has been proposed by Parasuraman et al. (1985) and has been modified several times in subsequent years. In the definition of the term characteristics, quantitative characteristics of the physical refer to the characteristics and characteristics that can be measured, for example, in sports venues, the quality of products used in the hall, such as balls, nets and light (natural and artificial light) in characteristic pools. Quantity includes water quality and the quality-of-service delivery that can be measured in one of the quantitative characteristics of that physical evidence. Based on the gap theory, this scale defines service quality based on the gap between customer expectations and perceptions. The final version includes a 22-item scale in five components: tangible factors, reliability, responsiveness, guarantee, and empathy. Expects and perceives the quality of the service.

However, Cronin and Taylor (1992) question the relationship between expectations and performance as a basis for measuring service quality and the Servperf scale, which directly correlates customer perceptions of performance. In the face of services examined, suggested. Although these tools can measure the quality of services in many service organizations, their components and items in some services need to be modified and reviewed. Based on this limitation, tools have been developed to measure the quality of services in various services, including Internet sites. In sports, various models have been presented to evaluate the quality of services. The quality of service models has been used in the health and wellness industry of (Lagrosen & Lagrosen, 2007) and (Moxham & Wiseman, 2009). The only difference is based on the number of components. And are the items of the questionnaire and are generally based on the SERVQUAL and SERPQRF model. Various researches have been done on the relationship between service quality and customer satisfaction. For example, Fesanghari et al. (2017), by examining the regression pattern of service quality and customer satisfaction in sports clubs, reported a positive and significant relationship between service quality and customer satisfaction. Multiple regression tests introduced tangible quality items, empathy and confidence as stronger predictors of customer satisfaction. Also, Bastami et al. (2015), by examining the relationship between service quality and attracting and retaining customers of sports facilities in Tehran, reported that there is a significant relationship between the quality of services perceived by customers of sports facilities in District 20 of Tehran and their satisfaction and loyalty, respectively. Memari et al. (2014) argued that the quality, value, customer satisfaction and expectations were the most important. Also, sufficient attention to the image, and demographic characteristics should be considered (Memari et al., 2014).

Outcome quality, interaction quality, program quality and physical environment quality correlated with customer satisfaction. In addition, Karimi and Nourbakhsh (2017) examined the relationship between expectations, service quality and satisfaction with women's participation in bodybuilding clubs. They reported a significant relationship between company motivation, expectations, satisfaction, and service quality. There were multiple relationships between expectations, service quality and satisfaction with women's company motivation. The best predictor of motivation to participate in sports activities was expectations. In terms of service quality dimensions, interaction quality and

efficiency and satisfaction, empathy and tangibility were the best predictors. Extensive research has been conducted in this field abroad. Hennayake (2017) points out that what banks offer as a product and service is almost the same, and the only difference is in their quality. This study showed that the human dimension related to service quality has a more significant impact on customer satisfaction. The two components of trust and accountability have the most significant effect on happiness. Also, Van Lierop and El-Geneidy (2016) conducted a study on the relationship between service quality, customer satisfaction and loyalty in the public transport industry. They showed that using a series of specific strategies by transport agencies can satisfy. Rahbar et al. (2015) argued that Satisfaction and trustiness had contribution on situational factors. Also, satisfaction and perceived trustiness had a great role on loyalty formation and firm's benefits, but considerations on value, as a mediator factor, were suggested (Rahbar et al., 2015).

It attracted service users intending to increase the support of various groups. Familiarity with passenger perceptions provides valuable information to transportation organizations about customer satisfaction and loyalty (Ahmadi & Asgari Dehabadi, 2015). Many organizations and institutions offer a variety of services to customers, of which health clubs are one Section that provides a variety of services to customers in various sports. Sports centres can offer different services to customers according to the kind of sports, age groups, social and economic levels, health (healthy and disabled). Therefore, the more people can satisfy customers, the more they have a competitive market and are more successful in attracting their customers. Perhaps in the past, customers were forced to choose limited services due to the lack of variety of services, but now they have more options to choose the services and products they want, making it difficult to choose (Amin Bidokhthi & Faraji Ghazani, 2013).

In this regard, paying attention to the quality of health clubs is very important for customer satisfaction. Since sports physicals, as centres that are in direct contact with people, to grow and survive, need to identify and strengthen the factors affecting customer attraction, study and identify the factors that lead to the presence of people and their attraction to such places. It is important in sports management because health clubs and spaces in today's world are centres that accommodate many people interested in sports activities; modern and comprehensive principles and criteria must be in place to ensure the health and safety of sports programs and activities. Anticipate and apply these places to the general public and users of these places. Due to various reasons such as increased demand for supply and limited competition in various fields, the demands and needs of customers were not paid much attention, and people had to receive the goods or services they needed in any quality. In recent years, due to increasing supply and competition, manufacturing and service organizations to maintain survival and increase profitability and market share have been forced to provide a variety of goods and services, with better quality and tailored to the wishes, desires and tastes of customers. On the other hand, customers' awareness of goods and services has also increased, and with the increase in the number of competitors, they no longer accept any goods or services (Almasi et al., 2015). Mandalizadeh and Amiri (2021) argued that for improving the innovative marketing to the innovation capability of clubs, supporting the ideas and creativity of staff

innovations to improve products and provide better sports services can be suggested (Mandalizadeh & Amiri, 2021).

Today's customers are looking for a product or service that best meets their needs, wants and tastes and has the right quality and price. One of the factors that can play a role in attracting more customers and spectators to these places, and it is necessary to pay more attention to the designers, architects and builders of health clubs, is to pay attention to the physical features and few health clubs. In previous research, items such as security (Shakouri Asl, 2017), permeability, diversity, readability, flexibility, visual proportions and sensory richness (Karimollahi et al., 2016), physical graphic features, access to Stadium, parking, cleanliness, beauty, the comfort of seats, allocation of space and food services (Nazemi, 2013), staff, location, product and facilities and beauty of equipment, allocation of space, access to Stadium, the comfort of seat Scoreboard quality, foodservice and Stadium cleanliness (Dhurup et al., 2010) have been mentioned as various factors in customer attraction, satisfaction and their re-presence for re-use of services. Of course, only some of these cases are related to health clubs, so the present study intends to examine the relationship between physical and quantitative characteristics with the quality of service and customer satisfaction in health clubs in Tehran's District 5.

## **2. Methodology**

The present study is applied in terms of purpose, and the nature of the research is descriptive in terms of strategy and correlation in terms of method, which was conducted by field method. Because a complete list of statistical populations was not available, the researcher used cluster sampling. The study's statistical population includes all those who use the services of sports facilities in District 5. The sampling and calculating the sample size online use Cochran's formula method, reviewing the list of sports facilities in District 5 of Tehran Municipality. Various sports were identified in the area, which operates as women's sports venues, men's sports venues, and men's-women's sports venues. According to Cochran's formula, 385 samples needed for unlimited communities. Taking into account the return rate of the questionnaire, more subjects were selected. Finally, by removing the defective questionnaires, 395 questionnaires were used using cluster sampling from customers of different sports venues. District 5 of Tehran was collected.

$$n = Z^2 pq / d^2 = (1/96)^2 \times (0/5) \times (0/5) / (0/05)^2 = 384/15$$

Three questionnaires were used, including the quantitative and physical evidence questionnaire: A researcher-made questionnaire was used in this field because there was no standard quantitative and physical characteristics questionnaire. This questionnaire consists of 30 questions designed in the five Likert value range (very low = 1 to very high = 5). This questionnaire does not have a subscale and means physical evidence, physical factors involved in people's satisfaction with sports spaces such as light, ventilation, humidity, temperature. These can be observed at the desired and standard levels. Lead to creating a suitable space for sports activities and quantitative features related to the

quantity of sports facilities, including gates. SERVQUAL: SERVQUAL Parasuraman et al. (1985) standard questionnaire was used to assess the quality of services in sports facilities in five regions of Tehran. This 22-item questionnaire includes five components of tangible factors (questions 1 to 4), reliability (questions 5 to 9), responsiveness (questions 10 to 13), reliability (questions 14 to 17) and empathy (questions 18 to 22). It was designed in the 7 Likert value range (strongly disagree = 1 to strongly agree = 7). This questionnaire is in two parts; 22 questions are used to assess the expected status of service quality, and 22 questions are used to determine perceptions of service quality. Customer Satisfaction: To measuring customer satisfaction, Koshesh (2014) Questionnaire was used. This questionnaire has 12 questions and a 5-point Likert scale (strongly disagree = 1 to strongly agree = 5) and its components.

Twelve sports management experts have reviewed the questionnaires and confirmed them. In a pilot study on 40 subjects using Cronbach's alpha, the reliability of the questionnaires was 0.86, 0.89 and 0.91, respectively. We used the SPSS software at a significance level of  $P \leq 0.05$ . To analyzing the data, the "Intra-Subject Test" method has been used.

### 3. Results

The descriptive findings of the study show that 192 people in the statistical sample, 49%, were men and 203 people, or 51%, were women. In terms of gender, 35% of the subjects were single, and 63% were married. Also, 10% of the research sample are under 20 years old, 27% are between 20-30 years old, 37% are between 40-50 years old, 19% are between 50-60 years old, and 6% are over 60 years old. In terms of education, the subjects are 6% undergraduate, 19% diploma, 10% associate degree, 42% bachelor's degree, 18% master's degree and 3% doctorate.

The importance and application of the normal distribution are due to the "Central Limit Theorem". This theorem states that for random variables with finite variance, the mean samples of the randomly distributed, independent (iid) random variables will be normally distributed. This is why the distribution of most physical quantities obtained as the sum of several separate processes (e.g. measurement error) is assumed to be expected.

The findings of Table 1 show that there is a significant relationship between quantitative and physical evidence and customer satisfaction ( $P \leq 0.01$ ,  $r = 0.472$ ). Also, between customer satisfaction with service quality ( $P \leq 0.01$ ,  $r = 0.653$ ) and its components including tangible factors ( $P \leq 0.01$ ,  $r = 0.522$ ), reliability ( $P \leq 0.01$ ,  $r = 0.57$ ) There is a significant relationship between responsiveness ( $P \leq 0.01$ ,  $r = 0.515$ ), reassurance ( $P \leq 0.01$ ,  $r = 0.574$ ) and empathy ( $P \leq 0.01$ ,  $r = 0.341$ ).

**Table 1.** Correlation matrix between quantitative and physical evidence and service quality with customer satisfaction.

Customer satisfaction		
Significance level	The correlation coefficient	
0/001	0/472	Physical and quantitative characteristics
0/001	0/653	the quality of service
0/001	0/522	Tangibles

Customer satisfaction		
Significance level	The correlation coefficient	
0/001	0/557	Reliability
0/001	0/515	Responsiveness
0/001	0/574	Reassurance
0/001	0/341	Sympathy

According to the results of [Table 2](#), the result of the Watson camera test was 1.734. According to the fact that if the value of the Watson camera test is between 1.5-2.5, regression is confirmed; therefore, it shows that the regression test can be used.

**Table 2.** Watson camera test result for error independence.

Watson Camera Test	Standard estimation error	Modified R squared	Square R	Model
1/734	6/071	0/425	0/426	1
	5/997	0/439	0/442	2

**Table 3.** Significance test of regression equation between two variables of physical evidence and quantitative service quality with customer satisfaction.

Significance level	F	Average squares	Degrees of freedom	Total squares	Model
0/001	292/253	10770/229	1	10770/229	Regression
		36/852	393	14483/001	Leftover
		.....	394	25253/230	Total
0/001	155/091	5577/678	2	11155/357	Regression
		35/964	392	14097/874	Leftover
		.....	394	25253/230	Total

**Table 4.** Significant variables in regression.

Significance level	T	Standard coefficient	Non-standard coefficients		Model
		(Beta)	Standard error	(Beta)	
0/001	5/852	.....	2/046	11/975	Constant
0/001	17/095	0/653	0/018	0/304	The quality of service
0/002	3/116	.....	2/429	7/568	Constant
0/001	12/407	0/568	0/021	0/265	The quality of service
0/002	3/272	0/150	0/023	0/077	Physicalal and quantitative characteristic

Also, according to [Table 3](#), the significance of the coefficient of determination or linear relationship in model 1 between the service quality variable with customer satisfaction. The values were  $P = 0.001$ ,  $F = 292.253$  (1, 393) and in model 2 between service quality and physical evidence and quantitative measures are approved by customer satisfaction with values of  $P = 0.001$ ,  $F = 155.091$  (2, 392). Finally, the results of [Table 4](#) show that the modified standard coefficient for the service quality variable is equal to  $B = 0.653$ ,

which is significant ( $P = 0.001$ ,  $t = 5.852$ ), in other words, this situation indicates that this independent variable is a significant predictor of the dependent variable (customer satisfaction). But in the second sequence, with the entry of physical and quantitative characteristics into the model, the significance level is still established. The variables of physical and quantitative characteristics and service quality are significant predictors of customer satisfaction. Its regression model can be presented as follows:

$$\begin{aligned} & (\text{Physical and quantitative characteristics}) B_2 + (\text{Service quality}) B_1 + B = \text{Customer satisfaction} \\ & (\text{Physical and quantitative characteristics}) + 0.077 + (\text{Service quality}) + 5.265 + 265 = \text{Customer satisfaction} \end{aligned}$$

#### 4. Managerial implications

Managers provide more attractive, permanent, and profitable ground by providing desirable services.

Use of new and advanced facilities for sports as well as timely repair of damaged equipment. Assign more points to experienced samples. Provide diverse and appropriate programs to meet the needs of people at different times and for all other age groups.

#### 5. Discussion and conclusion

Despite the long time spent on service quality and methods of measuring and evaluating it, not only has attention to this vital issue not diminished but also due to the growing importance of services in the economies of countries, its role has become more critical. It is widespread, and no business can survive without services. Therefore, club managers must pay the most attention to customers' needs, opinions, and protests about services to retain customers and provide better services. By examining the problems and addressing the views, and being aware of the level of customer satisfaction, by increasing the quality and speed of services, we can help a lot to maintain them.

The primary purpose of this study was to investigate the relationship between physical and quantitative characteristics with service quality and customer satisfaction. Findings showed that there is a significant relationship between quantitative and ecological aspects with service quality. Also, there is an important relationship between physical and quantitative characteristics with tangible factors, reliability, responsiveness, reliability and empathy. This shows that the more substantial the physical evidence and the fewer health clubs, the higher the quality of customer-perceived service. In addition, the variable of physical and quantitative characteristics is a significant predictor of the variable of service quality. The quantitative and ecological characteristics variable is a significant predictor of the variable of customer satisfaction. This means that the more desirable the quantitative and physical evidence of health clubs such as lighting, ventilation, green space, the more satisfied the customers who use these health clubs. According to the reviewed materials related to health clubs and factors involved in promoting customer satisfaction with health clubs, quantitative and physical factors play a role in people's satisfaction with the health clubs and make the space desirable. And each of these factors must be complemented by other factors and organized to meet customer needs. The research findings are consistent with the results of (Dhurup et al., 2010; Karimollahi et

al., 2016; Koshesh, 2014; Nazemi, 2013). The findings also showed that there is a significant relationship between service quality and customer satisfaction. Also, there is a significant relationship between customer satisfaction and the components of perceived factors, reliability, responsiveness, reliability and empathy.

This shows that customer satisfaction has a positive relationship with the quality of services provided to them in the possibility of sports. The higher the quality of services offered, the higher their level of satisfaction. Although the presence of customers in health clubs is training, and each customer engages in sports activities with a particular motivation, the quality of services provided can also create a double incentive for them to do sports. Even sports activities for some people looking for fitness are somewhat tedious. The quality of service provided that leads to customer satisfaction can reduce these difficulties to some extent. Numerous studies have shown a positive relationship between service quality and its dimensions with customer satisfaction, which can find in the studies of (Bastami et al., 2015; Fesanghari et al., 2017; Hennayake, 2017; Karimi & Nourbakhsh, 2017; Van Lierop & El-Geneidy, 2016) pointed out and are consistent with the present study. On the other hand, the quality of services and the variable of physical evidence and quantitative predictors are significant predictors of customer satisfaction. Although other researches do not exclusively mention the ability to predict customer satisfaction by quantitative and physical evidence, however, the quality of services is a significant predictor of customer satisfaction, which can be researched by Fesanghari et al. (2017) pointed out.

In general, the research results showed the relationship between all three variables of physical and quantitative characteristics, service quality and customer satisfaction of sports facilities in District 5 of Tehran. Physical features and few places seem to pay more attention to tangible and observable factors. The customer sees the desired features and can express their satisfaction about its level. The customer can also compare physical and quantitative features with international, national standards or health clubs in other parts of Tehran. However, as its name implies, it considers intangibles such as trust, confidence, and empathy regarding service quality, which seem a little more challenging to measure. However, quantitative and physical features complement the quality of services and consider tangible and intangible factors regarding the quality of sports facilities. The research results also showed that quantitative and physical characteristics with the quality of services could predict customer satisfaction with sports facilities in Tehran's 5th district. The fact that the quantitative and physical evidence and the quality of services in sports facilities in Tehran's District 5 are at a high level can lead to the customer being a member of that sports facility for a long time and attracting more customers by word of mouth. Be a sport that can be financially and economically significant.

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# نشریه کسب و کار در ورزش

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زمستان ۱۳۹۹ و بهار ۱۴۰۰، دوره ۱، شماره ۱، ص ۱۷۵-۱۸۶

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## رابطه بین کیفیت خدمات، شواهد فیزیکی با رضامندی مشتریان اماکن ورزشی

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### چکیده

**هدف:** تأمین رضایت مشتری یکی از الزامات اساسی نظام‌های مدیریت کیفیت و مدل‌های تعالی است که از مقایسه پیش از خرید مشتری از عملکرد مورد انتظار با عملکرد واقعی ادراک شده به دست می‌آید. هدف از این تحقیق بررسی ارتباط بین ویژگی‌های کیفیت خدمات و شواهد فیزیکی با رضامندی مشتریان اماکن ورزشی منطقه ۵ تهران بود.

**روش:** روش تحقیق به لحاظ روش اجرا از نوع همبستگی است. جامعه آماری تحقیق شامل تمام کسانی بود که از خدمات اماکن ورزشی منطقه ۵ استفاده کرده‌اند. تعداد آزمودنی با استفاده از نمونه‌گیری خوشه‌ای به‌عنوان نمونه‌های تحقیق انتخاب شدند. برای جمع‌آوری داده‌ها از سه پرسش‌نامه ویژگی‌های شواهد فیزیکی (محقق ساخته)، سروکوال (پاراسورمان و زینامل، ۱۹۸۸) و رضامندی مشتریان (کوشش، ۲۰۱۴) استفاده شد که روایی آن‌ها توسط ۱۲ تن از متخصصان حوزه مدیریت ورزشی مورد تأیید قرار گرفت. همچنین، در یک مطالعه رانما روی ۴۰ نفر از آزمودنی‌ها با استفاده از آلفا کرونباخ، پایایی پرسش‌نامه‌ها به ترتیب ۰/۸۶، ۰/۸۹ و ۰/۹۱ بدست آمد.

**یافته‌ها:** به‌منظور تجزیه و تحلیل داده‌های گردآوری شده از دو بخش آمار توصیفی (فراوانی، درصد فراوانی، میانگین، انحراف استاندارد در قالب جداول و نمودارها) و استنباطی با استفاده از آزمون‌های کلموگوروف اسمیرنوف، همبستگی پیرسون و رگرسیون چند مرحله‌ای در نرم‌افزار SPSS در سطح معناداری  $P \leq 0/05$  استفاده شد. نتایج نشان داد بین ویژگی‌های محیطی و کیفیت خدمات با رضامندی مشتریان ارتباط معناداری وجود دارد. همچنین، بین رضامندی مشتریان با مؤلفه‌های عوامل محسوس، قابلیت اعتماد، پاسخگویی، اطمینان دهی و همدلی ارتباط معناداری وجود دارد. علاوه بر این، متغیرهای ویژگی‌های شواهد فیزیکی و کیفیت خدمات پیش‌بینی کننده معناداری برای متغیر رضامندی مشتریان هستند. اگر کیفیت عناصر محیطی و کیفیت خدمات اماکن ورزشی در سطح مناسبی باشد می‌تواند به رضایت مشتری و همچنین عضویت بیشتر وی منتهی شود.

**اصالت و ابتکار مقاله:** ما در این تحقیق همبستگی بین شواهد فیزیکی، رضایت و وفاداری در مراکز ورزشی را نشان دادیم که در مطالعات قبلی کمتر مورد توجه قرار گرفته بود.

### کلیدواژه

اماکن ورزشی  
رضامندی مشتریان  
شواهد فیزیکی  
کیفیت خدمات

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## How Are the Coronavirus Impacts on Sport Businesses?

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### ABSTRACT

**Purpose:** The tourism industry is one of the most important industries of the new century, which is very dynamic and profitable. Sports tourism is an essential part of this industry. The research aimed to identify and categorize the sports attractions in Iran and to design a development model for the sports tourism industry.

**Methodology:** The research method was Grounded-Theory, with a systematic approach. The sampling method was theoretical sampling. In addition to studying literature, semi-structured interviews were conducted with 35 experts, including 19 faculty members of Iranian universities and 16 travel and tourism agency professionals, to achieve theoretical saturation.

**Findings:** In the first part of the research, the results showed that there are 11 types of sports attractions in Iran. The second part of the research showed that identifying and analyzing sports attractions, marketing, planning, and organizing to welcome tourists are the essential measures necessary for developing sports tourism. The development of sports tourism in section tourist welcoming is related to the development of the entire tourism industry and requires investment, planning, and organization. Marketing, providing necessary services, and creating distinct and exciting experiences for tourists and satisfying them are the key variables to success in the development of the industry. All these works require the cooperation and coordination of people and organizations in the sovereign, government, public and private sectors.

**Originality:** We have identified and categorized the types of sports attractions in Iran and presented a comprehensive development model for the development of the sports tourism industry.

### Keywords

COVID-19  
Sports Economy  
Blue Ocean Strategy  
Market Segmentation  
Socio-Economics

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## 1. Introduction

Coronavirus disease COVID-19 caused by the novel human Coronavirus, severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2). It was first detected in Wuhan, China, in December 2019 and has since spread worldwide. On January 30, 2020, the World Health Organization (WHO) declared COVID-19 a public health emergency of international concern, and 6-weeks later, the outbreak was characterized as a pandemic (Yezli & Khan, 2020). With the death toll from the Coronavirus exceeding 1,000, the World Health Organization (WHO) has chosen the official name COVID-19 for the resulting disease (Shirvani & Rostamkhani, 2020). As of May 4, 2020, according to the World Health Organization, more than 3.5 million people worldwide have been infected with the virus; however, the incidence is still increasing. Also, the lack of definitive specific treatment has caused the death of more than 240,000 people during this period (Ghasemi et al., 2020). This pandemic has no regard for geography, it has a global reach, and no continent is out of its clutches (Parnell et al., 2020).

Within a period of only a few months, the SARS-CoV-2 virus has managed to spread across the world. This virus can spread by close contact, including large droplet spray and inhalation of microscopic droplets, and indirect contact via contaminated objects (Blocken et al., 2020). Nazari (2021) Showed that increasing the share of sport tourism in the leisure time of the people according to their interest in sport tourism; technological: using the capabilities of cyberspace in the development of sport tourism; economical: trying to increase investment in sports tourism; boom Sport: Developing sports tourism to improve the environment; Political: Efforts to improve the status of international societies and values: Use of culture and identity of the city to increase athletic motivation in sport tourism. But, the spread of Coronavirus in the shadow of global communications and business and travel tourism and cultural, artistic, and sports communities and low estimates of its effects compared to the prevalence of SARS, Ebola, and Mers, caused that after China, Italy and Iran, countries Asian and then European and American countries quickly become infected with this deadly virus (Agheli & Imam Gholipour, 2020). In such circumstances, the most important, priority, and problem-oriented topic that requires the help of a wide range of researchers in various fields is the field of corona research and the study of the effect of these conditions on multiple topics (Noroozi Chakoli, 2019). Many challenges have arisen in various areas of politics, economics, health. Infectious disease and quarantine cause widespread destruction in people's lives due to limited employment (Ghasemi et al., 2020). To create a safe environment for tourists, the government and law enforcement forces must provide the necessary infrastructure for tourism development, especially security for tourists (Moradi Doliskani & Atghia, 2021; Nazari, 2021; Nazarian Madavani et al., 2021).

The CEPR Centre for Economic Policy Studies examines the economic effects of the Corona epidemic in a book called Economics in the Time of COVID-19. Triple blows to the manufacturing sector in times of corona crisis that hinders production; are presented as follows 1- Severe decrease in demand, 2- Disruption of supply chains, 3- Disruption of direct supply (Salimi Zaviyeh, 2020).

COVID-19 pandemic has had devastating effects on communities globally, leading to significant restrictions on all sectors of society, including sport (Hughes et al., 2020). Most studies have explored subjects inferred from the findings, including socio-economics, tourism, heritage, image, media, hygiene, cultural and environmental effects (Elahi et al., 2021). The borderless spread of this new and deadly virus has caused the replacement of public centers, but sports, and important events, including different levels of sports competitions in other worlds and even the 2020 Olympics. World Health Organization and Ministry of Health; Protests many introductory rates (such as the United States, China, Germany, Iran, Spain, Italy) have forced people to quarantine at home (Shirvani & Rostamkhani, 2020). COVID-19 substantially impacts sporting schedules as some of the world's most significant sporting events come to view in 2020. Football's much anticipated Euro 2020 tournament has been postponed for 12 months, while play-offs have been delayed till June 2020 at the earliest. The international Olympic committee was committed to staging the Tokyo 2020 Olympics this summer without delay. However, they have now decided to postpone the games to 2021, which is a decision for the respective nations. These are but a few examples; golf, tennis, athletics, basketball, rugby, cycling, boxing, snooker, and ice-skating fixtures have all faced cancellations and delays to curb the spread of disease (Nicola et al., 2020). According to the available evidence, football is the most popular and popular sport in the international arena, to the extent that many countries consider it their national sport. The overcrowding of stadiums and hundreds of millions of students has made football the most popular sport in the world. Iran is also one of the countries where football is the concern of many people. Progress or lack of progress in football is closely related to the national pride, satisfaction, and hope of individuals (Tajik Esmaeili & Vaezi, 2019).

Football, a global phenomenon, was immediately affected by this Coronavirus, but in the meantime, the behavior of different countries with this phenomenon was other. The Football Federation, the League Organization, and with the approval of the National Headquarters, requested to Combating Coronavirus in Sports. The football stadiums, where many fans attend to watch the games and the health of players, coaches, club organizers, and mass media representatives, postponed all football matches from Sunday, March to April 2020. Relying on the club's sources of income, including brand equity, ticket sales, goods with the name and logo of the team and the league, and paying attention to the value of teams shares in the stock market, can cause the development of other sources of incomes (Memari, Rafei Boldaji, et al., 2021). Football clubs have many significant income sources, such as sponsors, advertisers, merchandise, and media contracts. Despite this, a strong, loyal fan base serves as a supportive customer base and ensures that the business's customers also take a keen interest in the club's affairs (Memari, Rezaei Pandari, et al., 2021). The sports industry was severely affected during the outbreak of the virus (Krnjaic, 2020; Mohsenifar et al., 2020). The aggravating effect of COVID-19 epidemics demonstrated these vulnerabilities on a global scale, effectively reducing the international calendar of sporting events from March 2020 onwards (Miles & Shipway, 2020). It is essential to care about the division of the sports industry for businesses operating in related areas because knowing this division makes

the sports business aware of its position in the sports industry. Also, based on the division of the sports industry, companies can identify the related areas, and besides, they can manage, plan, organize, and decide for their businesses perfectly (Aghaei Shahri & Azimzadeh, 2021).

Several countries are in lockdown mode for an indefinite time. People are working from home or simply not working. And there is evidence that discretionary spending by consumers has collapsed. We face travel bans, sporting event cancellations, and prohibitions on gatherings. People in Europe are not using public transport and are avoiding public spaces, such as restaurants, shopping centers, and museums. All sectors will be affected. However, according to the data shown in previous sections, the consequences of COVID-19 will not be equally distributed throughout the economy. Some sectors may even benefit financially (everyone knows the toilet paper stories, while others suffer disproportionately (Fernandes, 2020)). Hammami et al. (2020) state that one of the positive effects of Coronavirus is the development of exercise at home. They cite the Coronavirus as an excellent opportunity for sports and humanity to become active. They believe that coaches and individuals have free time to use cyberspace and creative ways to exercise at home easily. They do not need extensive equipment. In addition to the benefits such as people's health and improving the body's immunity, the development of exercise at home also helps people's health and self-education (Safania & Barahmand, 2020). Askarian et al. (2021) presented a system that can justify such a design of the sports development processes. Every process has three sections the input, processing, and output. The researchers defined a set of subsystems, including participation development, talent development, and elite development. Also, the collection of these three processes is a part of a macrosystem, which is the sports development system. However, the sports industry and businesses in each of the societies involved in the coronation situation experience specific strategies and situations according to specific political, social, economic, cultural, and geographical components (Rizvandi et al., 2020). Organizations must now create blue oceans to seize new growth and profitability opportunities. The idea of a blue ocean strategy by challenging competition, which has been the most crucial premise in strategic management for many years, and presenting new solutions, introduces a new field for success in work and services (Tavalaee, 2010).

The main questions and objectives of the research are:

The primary purpose of this research is to study the Coronavirus and Sports businesses, which will provide insights for researchers and managers in crisis response strategies. The main research questions are as follows:

- 1- What is the impact of the Corona crisis on the economy of the sports industry?
- 2- What are the strategies for responding to the economic crisis of the sports industry during the Corona crisis?
- 3- What were the opportunities for sports businesses during the Coronavirus?
- 4- What have been the threats of the Coronavirus to sports businesses?

## 2. Theoretical background

Author	Title	Sample research	Discussion	Result
(Nicola et al., 2020)	The socio-economic implications of the coronavirus pandemic (COVID-19): A review	A review	Fear of impending economic crisis and recession.	Effects of the socio-economic COVID-19 on individual aspects of the world economy.
(Buldú et al., 2020)	The resumption of sports competitions after COVID-19 Lockdown: The case of the Spanish football league	The Spanish football league	They were worried about closing the league after players got COVID-19.	Reducing the days between matches minimizes the risk of spreading COVID-19 throughout the season. PCR tests should be performed on all football players participating in the competition. The tests should be carried out continuously along with the competition, with the optimum scenario being one test per day. The player's environment is essential to avoid introducing the disease into the system. The process is highly unpredictable. While qualitative results are clear, obtaining precise predictions for a single realization (the objective case). This is in agreement with recent work that warns about the solid sensitivity for parameter values in epidemics modeling.
(Webb, 2021)	Analysis of the impact of COVID-19 on referees in world football	Football referees	In the professional game concerns exist around the ability of elite referees to operate and perform as they usually would in empty stadiums, the associated implications of quarantine environments, and elongated time away from family.	These opportunities can be working towards changing attitudes and behavior towards referees from the professional game down to the grassroots level, there can be revisions of support systems and consideration of the management and provision of facilities for referees, and there can be a movement towards additional care of training and development opportunities which will be required in a post-COVID-19 landscape.
(Hughes et al., 2020)	The Australian Institute of Sport framework for rebooting sport in a COVID-19 environment	A review	Anxiety after the reopening of sports venues after Corona	Education of community sports members about COVID-19 risk mitigation strategies is crucial. Education will help promote and set expectations for the required behaviors before recommencing activities—improved health literacy, including self-monitoring of respiratory symptoms (even if mild).
(Sato et al., 2020)	The COVID-19 outbreak and public perceptions of sport events in Japan	Japanese citizens (n = 529)	Approximately 75% supported postponement decisions made by professional sports leagues	Data indicated that Japanese citizens did agree with sports organizations that decided to postpone or cancel their sports events in the cases of popular professional leagues. However, only less than half supported the cancelation of Spring Koshien and holding the Olympics and Paralympics in four months. (Note: The Tokyo Olympics and Paralympics 2020 was postponed after completing this study).

Author	Title	Sample research	Discussion	Result
(Majumdar & Naha, 2020)	Live sport during the COVID-19 crisis: fans as creative broadcasters	-	The hiatus in-stadium spectatorship due to the COVID-19 pandemic presents us with a unique opportunity to rethink how sports fans participate in making live events.	The creative harnessing of user-generated content and online and offline fandom integration can help broadcasters present sport in a much more attractive manner during and after the pandemic.
(Mohsenifar et al., 2020)	Postponing football matches in Iran to reduce human-to-human transmission of SARS-CoV-2	-		Postponement of football matches in Iran to reduce the human-to-human transmission of the new Coronavirus.
(Nasirzadh et al., 2019)	Obstacles and challenges of university students' sports marketing (Case study: Payam Noor University)	The static populations were Director Generals of Physical Education department, deputies, Physical Education faculty members active in the field of strategy and Heads of departments physical education Payam Noor were provinces.		The results showed that some of the obstacles and challenges such as, Shortage of sites and specialized publications, lack of media coverage, lack of marketing strategy, Weakness in attracting sponsors, lack of meetings with organizations active marketing of the most critical challenges that managers must consider.

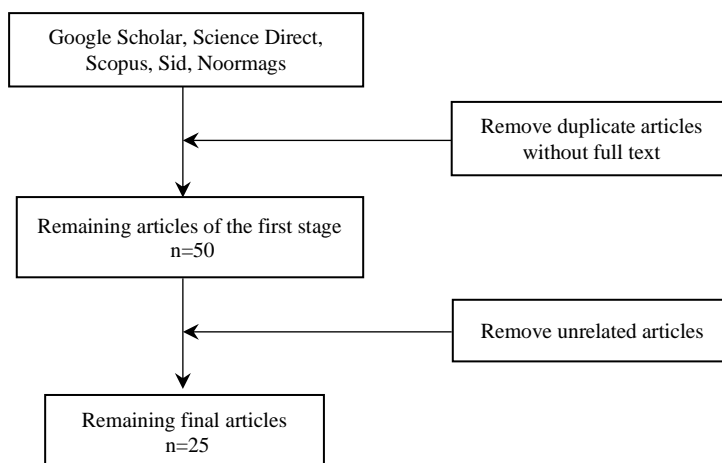
### 3. Methodology

The present study is a library-type method, a Narrative review study. According to the descriptive orientation of this research, the necessary data have been collected and analyzed from library sources and documents available in full online, based on the "Narrative review" method. The statistical population of this study is all articles related to the impact of Corona on sports and the economy from June to July 2020, which were published in domestic and foreign journals in the field of management, marketing, and health, became available. These articles are from the databases of Science Direct, Scopus, Google Scholar, Sid, Noormags journals database and with the keywords COVID-19, Sports Participation, Economic Effects, Olympic Game, Coronavirus Pandemic, Corona and Economy, Sports and Corona, Corona Crisis was searched.

Given that the texts and complete documented reports and reports on the consequences, goals, and plans of countries against Corona have not been officially presented, I will describe their projects and outputs according to the best information. For this purpose, the reports of international organizations, including the World Health Organization and within the country, the initial reports of various organizations and ministries have been studied. Criteria for inclusion of studies include publishing articles in reputable scientific databases, English or full Persian text of the pieces, relevance to the research topic and operations to its full text and exclusion criteria, publication of the article in invalid journals, lack of relevance to the issue and inactivity. The full article text was considered rose. [Figure 1](#) shows the applied process to articles and research. Achieving



the properties search based on the criteria for entering the article identified more than 50 articles and books in the field under review. After initial review, some removal operations and 25 papers were selected for final review.



**Figure 1.** Prism flowchart for search and research.

## 4. Results

According to research, a higher percentage of them believe that the COVID-19 virus has hit the sports economy, and it is unclear how long the adverse effects of Corona on socio-economic status will continue. The cancellation of some events has left unemployment, financial poverty, and much damage to countries. As research has shown, Corona has a significant effect on sports programs; because some of the biggest sporting events in the world in 2020, such as the Olympics, Euro 2020, Formula One, have been canceled or delayed. But in the meantime, some articles have written that this threat can be used as an opportunity.

## 5. Managerial implications

The COVID-19 has damaged the sports economy, and it is not clear how long the adverse effects of Coronavirus on socio-economic status will continue. In addition to the difficulties that Coronavirus has brought, but it can also get opportunities for sports and community health; Use strategies such as market segmentation, emphasis on virtual activity, and blue ocean strategy, which can turn into a chance for sports managers.

## 6. Discussion and conclusion

The purpose of the present study was to review the scientific research in "A Review of the Impact of Coronavirus on Sports businesses" and summarize the results of the previous

study. In this regard, articles were searched in specialized databases, and then 25 related articles were selected and analyzed based on entry and exit criteria. The effects of the Coronavirus on sports businesses have been studied. The results and review of previous research show that the impact of this virus can be both positive and negative. Most studies have pointed out its harmful effects. With the epidemic of the Coronavirus, to reduce human-to-human transmission, people are denying entering sports places and stadiums, which has hurt sports business owners and, to some extent, sports coaches and delaying sporting events. For example, in [Mohsenifar et al. \(2020\)](#)'s research, with the title of postponing football matches in Iran to reduce the transmission of humans to new human Coronavirus, this postponement has been mentioned. This result is also in line with [\(Nicola et al., 2020\)](#). It shows that it has also raised fears of an impending economic crisis and recession. Social distancing, personal isolation, and travel restrictions have reduced the workforce in all sectors of the economy and led to the loss of many jobs. This threat suggests that marketing managers rely on market segmentation and industries less affected by Corona's investment.

Also, [Taku and Arai \(2020\)](#) showed that the Consequences of Postponing the Tokyo 2020 Olympic and Paralympic Games, COVID-19, impact coaches and athletes. Due to the limitations and challenges of training environments worldwide. Also, the trainers were another group of people affected by the COVID-19 epidemic. The prevalence of COVID-19 disease worldwide has had its problems and challenges, and it will undoubtedly bring about changes that will have short-term, medium-term, and long-term effects. Therefore, the resumption of sports businesses depends on the return of trust and health to the communities. If a careful assessment is not made in this regard, it may not be far from expected that severe damage will be done to the material and human resources in this sector ([Parnell et al., 2020](#)). In addition to creating health guidelines by the medical department, psychologists should also invite the community to engage in sports with correct information about the benefits of exercise so that homelessness and the quarantine situation can worsen the feeling of boredom among community members. Because on the one hand, exhaustion and boredom are caused by quarantine, and on the other hand, stress and psychological pressures can cause inactivity and overweight. Exacerbation of such a situation can spread many mental and physical problems in society.

But on the other hand, it has also had positive effects on some creative and innovative producers. In addition to the hardships it has brought, Coronavirus can also get sports and community health opportunities. For example, due to quarantine, the importance of home exercise has increased, so managers should take steps to develop this sector. As in [Safania and Barahmand \(2020\)](#)'s research, many sectors in the sports industry were damaged. So, it is the duty of sports organizations, government, and voluntary institutions to identify these sectors and create opportunities for the threat to the sports industry by proper management. Home exercise is one of the sports industry's positive development strategies and options ([Aghaei Shahri & Azimzadeh, 2021](#)). According to this research, attention has shifted from championship and professional sports to mass sports in this era, and even professional champions have supported mass sports. And on the other hand, the current situation is an opportunity to help the leap in domestic production.

Also, in the research of [Rizvandi et al. \(2020\)](#) entitled Identifying the Challenges of Sports Businesses in the COVID-19 Crisis and Providing a Solution, he points out that the private use of sports facilities under health guidelines can be a significant help in returning sports businesses to have a revenue stream. Therefore, accurate information by health care staff can help restore trust and active participation of people in sports activities and sports tourism and events ([Elahi et al., 2021](#); [Nazari, 2021](#)). By holding educational webinars, we can help educate and develop health literacy in this period. Also, sports media can be effective in this field by educating and informing the people. In these days of corona outbreak, the sale of some sports goods has increased more than before. Virtual stores, online sports consulting, various sports software have flourished, and the Corona crisis has accelerated this new form of business. Structuring a suitable foundation and enhancing infrastructure can also strengthen it.

There are solutions given the breadth and diversity of sports businesses globally and the different effects on each sector, especially in specialized sports clubs ([Memari, Rafei Boldaji, et al., 2021](#); [Memari, Rezaei Pandari, et al., 2021](#)). One of the sciences that helps in these critical situations is the science of marketing in sports—work from the past to study marketing aids from this science and create solutions for your business ([Moradi Doliskani & Atghia, 2021](#)). According to the review of articles on the effects of disease on sports economics after going through a particular condition, this can be a severe problem, and there is a need to adopt extreme and principled planning in this area, which requires the empathy and coordination of professors with officials and sports. To create new opportunities, organizations must now create blue oceans to seize new growth and profitability opportunities. The idea of a blue ocean strategy by challenging competition, which has been the most critical premise in strategic management for many years, and presenting new solutions, introduces a new field for success in work and services ([Tavalaee, 2010](#)). Value innovation is the cornerstone of the Blue Ocean Strategy, which emphasizes innovation and value alike and emphasizes creating innovation for both buyers and sellers at the same time. Instead of competitors with traditional indicators, the blue ocean intends a new activity. It creates competition through what Kim and Mabon call value innovation. This view seeks to increase value for customers by creating new services and reducing costs by eliminating low-value services ([Shabandarzadeh & Kabgani, 2016](#)).

### ***Market segmentation strategy***

- Focus activities on market segments that are less affected by Corona.
- Emphasis on virtual activities: use of an online coach, online spectator.
- Blue ocean strategy.

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## مطالعه نقش کرونا در کسبوکارهای ورزشی

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### کلیدواژه

اجتماعی - اقتصادی  
استراتژی بلواوشن  
اقتصاد ورزش  
بخش‌بندی بازار  
کووید-۱۹

### نوع مقاله

مروری

### چکیده

**هدف:** هدف این مطالعه ارائه تصویری جامع از این روند و فراهم آوردن بینشی ارزشمند از وضعیت و وجوه مروری بر تأثیر کرونا در کسبوکارهای ورزشی و کمک به هدایت پژوهش‌های آتی در راستای پوشش شکاف‌های تحقیقاتی موجود در این حوزه است.

**روش:** پژوهش حاضر به لحاظ روش از نوع کتابخانه‌ای که به‌صورت مطالعه مروری - توصیفی انجام شده است. جامعه آماری آن، کلیه مقالات مرتبط با تأثیر کرونا بر ورزش و اقتصاد هستند که از خرداد تا تیرماه ۱۳۹۹ در نشریه‌های حوزه مدیریت، بازاریابی و سلامت انتشار یافته و در دسترس قرار گرفتند.

**یافته‌ها:** با بررسی و مطالعه پیرامون پژوهش‌ها، درصد بیشتری از آن‌ها معتقدند ویروس کووید-۱۹ به اقتصاد ورزش ضربه وارد کرده است و مشخص نیست اثرات نامطلوب کرونا بر وضعیت اقتصادی اجتماعی تا چه زمانی ادامه داشته باشد. اما برخی پژوهش‌ها به اثرات مثبت آن بر روی ورزش اشاره داشتند. کرونا علاوه بر سختی‌هایی که به همراه داشته، می‌تواند برای ورزش و تندرستی جامعه فرصت‌هایی را نیز به ارمغان آورد؛ از راهبردهایی همچون بخش‌بندی بازار، تأکید بر فعالیت مجازی و استراتژی اقیانوس آبی بهره برد که یکی از راهکارهای مدیران ورزشی تبدیل این تهدید به فرصت است.

**اصالت و ابتکار مقاله:** این مطالعه کارکردهای استراتژی اقیانوس آبی در صنعت ورزش را در زمینه کرونا معرفی کرد.

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پیش و در زمان آغاز برگزاری لیگ برتر فوتبال ایران در دهه ۸۰ شمسی، مدیران و مجریان ورزش در عمل از تکنیک‌های بازاریابی بهره می‌بردند. اما مطالعه و پژوهش حوزه کسب‌وکار در ورزش از سال ۱۳۸۴ به‌طور رسمی در دانشکده‌های علوم ورزشی آغاز و اساتید و کمکم دانشجویان مدیریت ورزشی با استقبال کم‌نظیری رساله‌ها و پایان‌نامه‌ها خود را در موضوعات مختلف این حوزه انجام دادند. همچنین اساتید و همکاران محترم رشته در انجام تألیفات و ترجمه کتاب‌های علمی ارزشمندی در زمینه‌های مختلف بازاریابی همت گماشتند. طی ۱۵ سال اخیر رشد کمی و کیفی این رشته به گونه‌ای پیش رفته که امروزه اکثر دانشگاه‌های کشور در گرایش مدیریت بازاریابی ورزش اقدام به جذب دانشجویان تحصیلات تکمیلی می‌نمایند.

پس از رشد کمی، آنچه برای رشد کیفی یک حوزه مدیریتی، تحقیقاتی و اجرایی از اهمیت ویژه‌ای برخوردار است، تدارک زیرساخت‌های علمی، تحقیقاتی و اجرایی تخصصی است. به دلیل رشد ناکافی ورزش نیمه حرفه‌ای و حرفه‌ای در ایران که بنا به دلایل حقوقی، مدیریتی و زیرساختی، و به تبع آن عدم رشد و توسعه بازار ورزش ایران، شکل گرفته متخصصان بازاریابی ورزشی در یک حلقه معیوب قرار گرفته‌اند. به عبارت دیگر، با رشد ناکافی زیرساخت‌ها امکان رشد بازار و ورزش حرفه‌ای وجود ندارد و با عدم رشد بازار و ورزش حرفه‌ای امکان رشد زیرساخت‌ها، مهارت‌افزایی و تجربه‌اندوزی متخصصان و منابع انسانی این رشته دچار اختلال می‌شود. در این میان متخصصان رشته در دانشگاه‌ها و پژوهشگاه‌ها به کار آموزشی و پژوهشی خود مشغولند و مدیران و کارشناسان حوزه اجرایی در ورزش به روش خود در حال اداره بیرق بازار ورزش ایران هستند. لیکن هر دو گروه هم نظرند که ظرفیت بازار ورزش ایران در یک جامعه ۸۰ میلیون نفری بیش از این‌هاست و تاکنون امکان رشد بهینه پتانسیل‌های اشتغال‌زایی، درآمدزایی و فرهنگی - اجتماعی آن فراهم نشده است.

یکی از حلقه‌های مفقوده این چرخه معیوب، نشریات علمی مدیریت ورزشی هستند که هر چند طی این ۱۵ سال بار نشر تولیدات علمی و مقالات محققان و پژوهشگران حوزه بازاریابی را صمیمانه به دوش کشیده‌اند، لیکن گاهی مقالات ارزشمند و سطح بالای این حوزه به دلیل عدم نگاه تخصصی سردبیران نشریات مورد اشاره، از فهرست داوری حذف و پرونده آن‌ها مختومه شده‌اند. هر چند برخی از این مقالات در نهایت در یک نشریه خوب داخلی یا خارجی به چاپ رسیده‌اند، اما برخی نیز در عین شایستگی هرگز فرصت انتشار نیافته‌اند. شاید به یک دلیل بتوان این‌گونه از تصمیم سردبیران را درک کرد. چرا که گاه قرارگیری حوزه مطالعاتی و تحقیقات بازاریابی در اسکوپ نشریات فعلی کمتر قابل درک بوده و نیاز بود تا هر چه سریع‌تر برای انتشار نشریه‌ای تخصصی در این زمینه اقدام شود.



با تغییر آیین‌نامه نشریات علمی، امکان دریافت مجوز و فراهم آوری امکانات برای انتشار نشریه **کسب‌وکار در ورزش** میسر شد. پرواضح است که انتشار آن بدون حمایت‌های تخصصی، زیرساختی، فنی و مادی از سوی دانشگاه الزهراء(س) و نیز همراهی اعضای محترم هیئت تحریریه آن میسر نمیشد. لذا، ضمن تشکر از تمامی دست‌اندرکاران و همکاران و نیز نویسندگان محترم در ارسال مقالات ارزشمندشان، امید است تا همکاران رشته در ارسال مقالات خود و داوران گرامی در هدایت هر چه مناسب‌تر نویسندگان و محققان عزیز، نشریه را در راهی که در پیش گرفته یاری‌رسان باشند. باشد که سرمایه‌ای ارزشمند در رشد کسب‌وکار در ورزش ایران و میراثی گران‌بها برای آیندگان باشد.

- ۳۰ تاثیرات رویدادهای ورزشی مگا بر جوامع میزبان: مرور نظام‌مند مطالعات سه دهه اخیر  
علیرضا الهی، سجاد غلام‌پور، فریبا عسکریان
- ۴۴ چگونه واگذاری امتیاز تأسیس مدارس می‌تواند رویکردی درآمدا در باشگاه‌های فوتبال ایران باشد؟  
ژاله معماری، سیما رفیعی بلداجی، مهری پوینده‌کیا
- ۵۹ نقش بازاریابی اجتماعی در توسعه گردشگری ورزشی استان تهران  
نسرتین مرادی دولیسکانی، ناهید اتقیا
- ۷۸ طراحی و تبیین فرآیندهای توسعه ورزش در ایران  
فریبا عسکریان، مریم رهبر، فرناز فخری
- ۹۸ طراحی مدل ارتباط بین گرافیک محیطی و احساس امنیت در تماشاگران استادیوم‌های فوتبال ایران  
عباس نظریان مادوانی، امیرحسین منظمی، هادی براتی
- ۱۱۴ طراحی چارچوب مفهومی برای توسعه قابلیت نوآوری لیگ برتر فوتبال ایران  
زینب مندلی‌زاده، مجتبی امیری
- ۱۲۶ روابط میان زیرساخت‌ها، عوامل سازمانی و پیرامونی بازار صنعت ورزش ایران  
ملیحه سادات آقایی شهری، سید مرتضی عظیم‌زاده
- ۱۴۷ ارائه مدل عوامل مؤثر بر کارآفرینی ورزشی (مورد مطالعه: استان لرستان)  
سیده سمیه حسینی، مریم مختاری دینانی، عباس رضایی پندری
- ۱۵۸ تحلیل اکولوژی استراتژیک گردشگری ورزشی  
رسول نظری
- ۱۷۳ مدل محبوبیت برند ورزشی آدیداس در مصرف‌کنندگان ایرانی  
وحید ساعتچیان، بهادر عزیزی، مهدی طالب‌پور
- ۱۸۶ رابطه بین کیفیت خدمات، شواهد فیزیکی با رضامندی مشتریان اماکن ورزشی  
شهاب بهرامی، محمد سعید کیانی، لیلا نظری، لیلا شهبازپور
- ۱۹۹ مطالعه نقش کرونا در کسب‌وکارهای ورزشی  
سید نصرالله سجادی، ستاره اسکندری، امیر صدیقی و مرضیه روشن ضمیر

نشریه

نشریه دو فصلنامه علمه

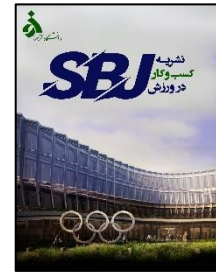
دانشگاه الزهراء (س)

کسب و کار

دوره یک - شماره یک، شماره پیاپی یک

زمستان ۱۳۹۹ و بهار ۱۴۰۰

در ورزش



طراح جلد:

حمیدرضا عطالهی

صاحب امتیاز: دانشگاه الزهراء (س)  
سر دبیر: دکتر محمد احسانه  
مدیرمسئول: دکتر ژاله معمای  
مدیر اجرایی و صفحه‌آرا: مهری پوینده‌کیا

اعضای هیئت تحریریه

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دکتر رضا اندام	دانشیار مدیریت ورزشی، دانشکده تربیت بدنی و علوم ورزشی، دانشگاه صنعتی شاهرود، سمنان، ایران.
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### لیست داوران

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دانشیار مدیریت ورزشی دانشگاه تهران	دکتر محمد خبیری
استاد مدیریت ورزشی دانشگاه کردستان	دکتر سعید صادق پروجری
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دانشیار مدیریت ورزشی دانشگاه صنعتی شاهرود	دکتر رضا اندام
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دکترای مدیریت ورزشی	دکتر مریم رهبر

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# نشریه کسب و کار در ورزش

نشریه دوفصلنامه علمی دانشگاه الزهرا (س)

دوره یک - شماره یک، شماره پیاپی یک

زمستان ۱۳۹۹ و بهار ۱۴۰۰

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آدرس: ایران، تهران، میدان شیخ بهایی، خیابان ده ونک، دانشگاه الزهرا (س)

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