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Sports Business Journal

Scientific Quarterly Journal
of **Alzahra University**

Autumn 2024

Vol. 4, Issue. 4, Serial Number 12

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Book

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Editor-in-Chief Note

While we published the first **Sports Business Journal** issue, the Journal has found its position among researchers and reviewers and has been accepted worldwide. Although most visitors to its articles are from other countries, its monthly visits exceed 4,000, half of which are from researchers abroad and five continents. By complying with the necessary form and content standards, we can be more successful in increasing the visibility of the articles and be indexed in more specialized databases. The keywords cloud of the articles also shows that we are still required to comply with the Journal's scope, and we have been able to maintain its specialized position. With the continuous cooperation of dear colleagues and authors, we will be more successful in how we have taken.

Once again, we thank the esteemed vice president for research at **Alzahra University** and our dear colleagues in this field for their support and guidance. We are also grateful to the honourable managers of the Iranian Journals' Commission of the Ministry of Science, Research and Technology, and we hope that they will continue to support the new English language Journals and continue their technical and material support for publishing such publications until the results are achieved. Also, we hope to continue receiving valuable specialized articles towards the publication of technical articles and other activities for the growth of the field and the improvement of the level of writing articles in English.

Table of contents

Application of the Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Augmented Reality Technology in the Development and Promotion Sports with the Moderating Role of Consumer Inertia	13
Alireza Nazemi Bidgoli; Samaneh Alipour; Zahra Sadeqi-Arani	
The Effect of Vertical Orientation of Sportswear Images on Attracting Customers' Visual Attention	29
Farangis Najafi; Seyede Nahid Shetab Boushehri; Amin Khatibi; Tahereh Azmsha	
Developing a Paradigm Model for Sports Marketing in Iranian Schools	45
Soroush Arianpour; Hadi Bagheri; Seyed Karim Saadat Mirghadim; Seyed Ehsan Hoseiny	
Presenting the Development Model of Active Sports Tourism with an Economic Approach: the Share of Health-Oriented Sports in the Gross Domestic Product	67
Zahra Sohrabi; Mehrdad Moharam Zadeh; Rasool Nazari	
Investigating Business Capacity and Dynamics in the Skating Federation of Iran: Importance-Performance Analysis of Competitive Advantage Promotion Indicators	89
Majid Honarjo; Rasool Norouzi Seyed Hossini; Shahram Nazari	
Identification of Solutions for Utilizing Donors' Capacity as Non-commercial Partners in Sports Infrastructure Development	105
Hossein Kordloo; Abbas Naghizadeh-Baghi; Farzad Nobakht; Mehrdad Moharam Zadeh	



Application of the Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Augmented Reality Technology in the Development and Promotion Sports with the Moderating Role of Consumer Inertia

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ABSTRACT

Purpose: Technological advances have been central to the development of societies in this century. Various countries have increasingly embraced technological innovations to enhance life experiences in different dimensions. However, consumers' widespread adoption of these technologies is crucial for their ongoing success and further expansion. This research explores the Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology (UTAUT) of augmented reality technology, considering the moderating role of consumer inertia in the advancement and promotion of sports.

Methodology: This research, designed in an applied-descriptive manner, utilized the non-random sampling method, and the data collected through online questionnaires were analyzed using the structural equation modeling method. Although the concept of consumer inertia is not initially incorporated into the framework of the technology acceptance model, evidence suggests that this factor plays a significant role as a key predictor of resistance to adopting new products. This resistance can be more critical than other predictive factors, such as expected performance, required effort, social influences, and facilitating conditions.

Findings: This research has revealed that gaining a deeper understanding of these critical factors and establishing the necessary infrastructure to support them will significantly increase the likelihood of success and the potential benefits of augmented reality technology in sports.

Originality: This research innovatively incorporates consumer inertia into the Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology framework for augmented reality technology in sports. By highlighting the significance of consumer inertia as a critical predictor of resistance to new products, it addresses potential barriers to adoption. The findings provide valuable insights for researchers and practitioners to enhance technology acceptance in the sports industry.

Keywords

Augmented Reality Technology
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1. Introduction

Technological changes significantly impact the sports industry, evident in improvements such as enhancing athletes' performance, enriching spectator experiences, improving sports event management, and enhancing post-event reviews (Amirjan, 2016). One technology that researchers are interested in is augmented reality technology. It involves integrating digital information with the user's environment in real time, enhancing the user experience (Rauschnabel et al., 2022). Unlike virtual reality, which creates an entirely artificial environment, augmented reality technology allows users to experience natural environments with additional perceptual information overlaid onto them (Liao, 2015). Augmented Reality (AR) enhances the physical world by incorporating digital visual elements, sounds, and other sensory stimuli into the user's environment (Dadwal & Hassan, 2016). AR is an emerging technology widely utilized across various industries, including sports and fitness. By leveraging this technology, it offers a new and engaging way to perform exercises and sports activities (Arzani Birgani et al., 2017). Among its main applications, we can highlight the use of virtual reality for teaching and practicing physical activities and fostering motivation to maintain regular exercise routines (Doskarayev et al., 2023; Golabian Moghadam, 2018; Venkatesh et al., 2003). In AR, athletes can engage in specific exercises within virtual environments to enhance their skills (Arzani Birgani et al., 2017; Doskarayev et al., 2023; Venkatesh et al., 2003). Additionally, augmented reality technology can be employed to analyze and improve athletes' performance through artificial intelligence systems. These systems can assist coaches in identifying athletes' strengths and weaknesses, enabling them to create more tailored training programs (Azami & Hasanpour, 2020; Frevel et al., 2022).

Indeed, using augmented reality technology is crucial for advancing and promoting sports. It can substantially enhance athletes' performance and overall experience, potentially fostering significant growth within the sports industry (Azami & Hasanpour, 2020; Doskarayev et al., 2023; Frevel et al., 2022). This aspect should be considered: While augmented reality has introduced new perspectives in sports and enriching experiences for athletes and enthusiasts, the effective implementation and increased public acceptance of this technology necessitate a clearer understanding of the influencing factors. The acceptance of technology is crucial (Doskarayev et al., 2023). One of the most prominent models regarding technology acceptance is the UTAUT. He and his colleagues developed a model called the Unified Theory of Technology Acceptance and Use, based on eight models: rational action theory, technology acceptance model, motivation model, theory of planned behavior, combination of technology acceptance model and theory of planned behavior, personal computer use model, theory of diffusion of innovation, and theory of social cognition. These models, all related to information and communication technology, collectively explained 70% of the variance in the behavioral intention variable (Golabian Moghadam, 2018; Venkatesh et al., 2003). This model inherently seeks to understand people's reasons and justifications for rejecting or accepting technology and aims to predict people's behavior by identifying their motivations for using technologies (Azami & Hasanpour, 2020). The UTAUT model identifies four constructs: expected performance, effort, social influence, and facilitating conditions, influencing technology

acceptance and willingness to adopt it. Performance expectancy relates to job performance benefits, effort expectancy to ease of use, social influence to perceived importance, and facilitating conditions to support (Venkatesh et al., 2003).

Many studies have investigated the effects of expected performance, expected effort, social influence, and facilitating conditions on the attitude, acceptance, and use of augmented reality technology, highlighting the importance of this technology (Cossich et al., 2023; Frevel et al., 2022; Joshi, 2019; Pascoal & Guerreiro, 2017; Sawan et al., 2021; Soltani & Morice, 2020; Zollmann et al., 2019). In her research titled "AR in Sports and Physical Education," Zhang & Huang (2023) demonstrated that educational materials based on AR outperform video-based materials, particularly in enhancing the learning outcomes of challenging motor skills. Doskarayev et al. (2023), in a research paper titled "development of AR games with computer vision to increase motivation for sports," asserts that AR games that integrate computer vision and artificial intelligence have emerged as a potential tool to boost motivation for sports participation. Frevel et al. (2022), in a prospective study titled "the impact of technology on sports - a prospective study," asserts that the rapid advancement of augmented reality technology and its integration into the sports industry will enhance how athletes train and compete, along with other similar advancements. Sports managers are expected to lead sports organizations and guide sports consumers' engagement and involvement with sports (Frevel et al., 2022).

In another research titled "Acceptance of Virtual Reality Head-Mounted Displays by Athletes to Enhance Sports Performance," Mascret et al. (2022) asserts that athletes' acceptance of augmented reality technology increases the likelihood of its utilization across various sports and skill levels. This technology enables athletes to leverage its full benefits to enhance their sports performance. Additionally, personalized interventions tailored to athletes' specific needs can be implemented for those who may prefer not to incorporate this technology into their training routine (Mascret et al., 2022). Yu et al. (2023) demonstrated that engaging in physical exercises with AR can enhance physical performance in post-surgery patients. This technology can offer crucial motivation to sustain the activity through real-time feedback, fostering a conducive environment for creating sports (Yu et al., 2023). In a 2019 research study titled "UTAUT to Investigate the Intention to Use Physical Activity Programs," Aulu's findings indicate a semantically solid relationship between the four indicators of expected performance, expected effort, social influence, and conditions facilitating attitude, behavioral intention, and the utilization of augmented reality technology (Liu et al., 2019). In a study by Th rouanne et al. (2023) on women's postbariatric surgery, the aim was to explore the acceptability of technology-based physical activity interventions through qualitative analysis utilizing the theory of acceptance and use of technology. He suggests that due to the strong semantic relationship among the UTAUT indicators, it can be argued that this theory is a suitable theoretical framework for technology acceptance in physical activity (Th rouanne et al., 2023).

Although augmented reality technology offers numerous opportunities to enhance professional objectives and facilitate scientific studies, as indicated by researchers (Goebert, 2020), many studies have demonstrated its impact on user satisfaction (Chiu et

al., 2021), acceptance (Rese et al., 2017), intention to use (Huang, 2021), perceived usefulness (Rese et al., 2017), and purchase intention (Kang et al., 2020). However, it is essential to note that some individuals resist change and are hesitant to embrace new situations. They may prefer to stick to their current products or services (Wang et al., 2021; Zhang & Huang, 2023) even when presented with potentially superior alternatives. This approach, incorporating cognitive and emotional aspects (Barnes et al., 2004), serves as a stable and effective behavioral model, illustrating a solid inclination to maintain the status quo and resist changes, known as consumer inertia (Polites & Karahanna, 2012).

Despite significant progress in acquiring emerging technologies across different facets of the sports field, consumer inertia acts as a moderator in current technology adoption models. Understanding how inertia influences adoption trends can enhance our analysis, as the inclination to maintain the status quo may evolve and drive innovation in the adoption process. Resistance to change can cause disturbances and slow down the adoption of innovations, thereby impeding the development and broader promotion of sports. The current research explores the impact of consumer inertia on sports development and promotion. It aims to mitigate financial risks, facilitate optimal decision-making, and pave the way for more efficient adoption of new technologies in sports. In this study, the researchers aim to investigate the impact of variables within the integrated conceptual model of acceptance and technology on the willingness to adopt augmented reality technology for sports development and promotion. Additionally, they seek to understand the role of consumer inertia as a moderator in this context. Figure 1 illustrates the research hypotheses and the structural relationships among the variables in the research model.

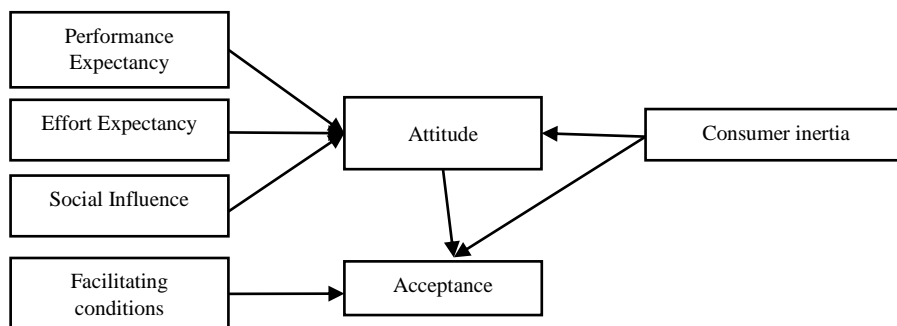


Figure 1. Conceptual Model of the Research.

2. Methodology

The current research aims to utilize augmented reality technology in sports development and promotion, focusing on the moderating role of consumer inertia. Consequently, it is classified as applied-descriptive research. The statistical population of this research includes all athletes and coaches participating in provincial and national sports competitions in 2023. Therefore, a non-permitted sampling method was utilized, and according to the Krejcie-Morgan formula, a research sample of 384 individuals was

deemed necessary. Subsequently, after distributing the online questionnaire, 388 questionnaires were completed. This research comprised a total of 30 questions. Among these, four questions about demographic information, while the remaining 26 covered seven variables: expected performance (4 questions), expected effort (4 questions), facilitating conditions (4 questions), social influence (3 questions), attitude (4 questions), acceptance (3 questions), and consumer inertia (4 questions). The five-choice Likert questionnaire scale ranges from "completely disagree" (1) to "completely agree" (5). The questionnaire's reliability was assessed using Cronbach's alpha. The questionnaire was distributed to 10 sports management professors to determine face validity. The data was analyzed, and research hypotheses were tested using structural equation modeling (SEM) with SmartPLS version 3 and SPSS version 22 software.

3. Results

In table number one, the demographic status of the research samples is reported.

Table 1. Describing the demographic characteristics of the research samples.

Demographic variables of the research		Frequency	Percent relative frequency
Gender	Female	249	64.18
	Male	139	35.82
Age	Below 20 years old	12	3.09
	20-30	182	46.91
	31-41	121	31.19
	41-50	64	16.49
	Above 50 years old	10	2.58
Education	Diploma	26	6.7
	Bachelor	138	35.57
	Master	197	50.77
	Doctoral	26	6.7
Occupation	Coach	201	51.8
	Athlete	187	48.2

The results of the demographic analysis in this research revealed that among the 388 participants, the majority were women (249 individuals) aged between 20 and 30 years (182 individuals) who were pursuing post-graduate studies (197 individuals), with 201 of them serving as mentors in science-related fields. Cronbach's alpha index and composite reliability were utilized to assess the internal consistency of the questionnaire constructs. The extracted average variance index was employed to evaluate convergent validity. According to the researchers, the measurement model is considered homogeneous if the absolute value of the factor loadings of the observable variables is at least 0.7. However, some researchers have accepted a threshold of 0.4 and recommended eliminating variables with factor loadings below that. Based on the results in [Table 2](#), it is evident that the variables demonstrate adequate utility.

Table 2. Reliability and convergent validity coefficients and Cronbach's alpha and factor loadings of research variables.

Variable	Factor loading	Cronbach's alpha Alpha ≥ 0.7	Composite reliability CR ≥ 0.7	Extracted average variance AVE ≥ 0.5
Consumer inertia	0.926	0.908	0.925	0.755
	0.912			
	0.827			
	0.804			
Effort Expectancy	0.784	0.820	0.878	0.644
	0.869			
	0.788			
	0.764			
Facilitating conditions	0.798	0.784	0.858	0.603
	0.761			
	0.780			
	0.766			
Performance Expectancy	0.779	0.874	0.914	0.726
	0.848			
	0.891			
	0.889			
Social influence	0.854	0.827	0.896	0.743
	0.914			
	0.815			
	0.778			
Attitude	0.758	0.818	0.879	0.645
	0.843			
	0.831			
	0.864			
Acceptance	0.845	0.823	0.895	0.739
	0.870			
	0.870			

The Fornell and Larcker indices have also been calculated to assess divergent validity. Fornell and Larcker suggest that divergent validity is satisfactory when the average variance extracted for each construct exceeds the shared variance between that construct and others in the model. The results presented in [Table 3](#) confirm that the divergent validity of the research variables has been established.

Table 3. Divergent validity of research variables.

Variable	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)
Consumer inertia	0.869	-	-	-	-	-	-
Effort Expectancy	0.136	0.802	-	-	-	-	-
Facilitating conditions	0.023	0.565	0.776	-	-	-	-
Performance Expectancy	0.278	0.676	0.471	0.852	-	-	-
Social influence	0.005	0.580	0.561	0.577	0.862	-	-
Attitude	0.021	0.143	0.136	0.168	0.173	0.803	-
Acceptance	0.154	0.587	0.581	0.581	0.631	0.137	0.860

The primary measure for evaluating endogenous variables is the coefficient of determination. Values of 0.25, 0.5, and 0.75 represent small, medium, and large magnitudes of one structure compared to another. The coefficient of determination for the variables of attitude toward use and willingness to use are 0.096 and 0.496, respectively, indicating a good fit for the structural model. The quality index of the structural model also assesses its predictive capability. Q2 values above zero indicate the model's predictive strength. The Q2 values obtained for the variables of attitude towards use are 0.194, and willingness to use is 0.338, demonstrating the structural model's good predictive quality.

Table 4. Evaluation indices of the structural model.

Variable	R Square	Q2
Attitude	0.037	0.017
Acceptance	0.369	0.254

Table 4 displays the results of the path coefficient analysis and the significance levels of this research.

Table 5. Structural model evaluation indices.

Path	Path Coefficient	Standard Deviation	T level	Significance Level	Result
Attitude → Acceptance	0.155	0.041	3.329	0.029	Confirmed
Effort Expectancy → Attitude	0.115	0.073	2.211	0.033	Confirmed
Facilitating Conditions → Acceptance	0.578	0.029	19.664	0.000	Confirmed
Social influence → Attitude	0.207	0.053	3.049	0.041	Confirmed
Performance Expectancy → Attitude	0.497	0.078	7.234	0.001	Confirmed
Consumer inertia → Attitude	-0.108	0.058	2.049	0.040	Confirmed
Consumer inertia → Acceptance	-0.166	0.048	3.426	0.001	Confirmed

According to the results listed in Table 5, it can be stated that the variables of expected performance, expected effort, and social influence on the attitude to use exhibit a significant level of acceptability. Additionally, the direct effect of the consumer inertia variable on attitude and acceptance also shows an acceptable level of significance. The positive and direct impact of attitude and facilitating conditions on acceptance were also confirmed.

Figure 2 illustrates the research hypotheses and the structural relationships among the variables in the research model.

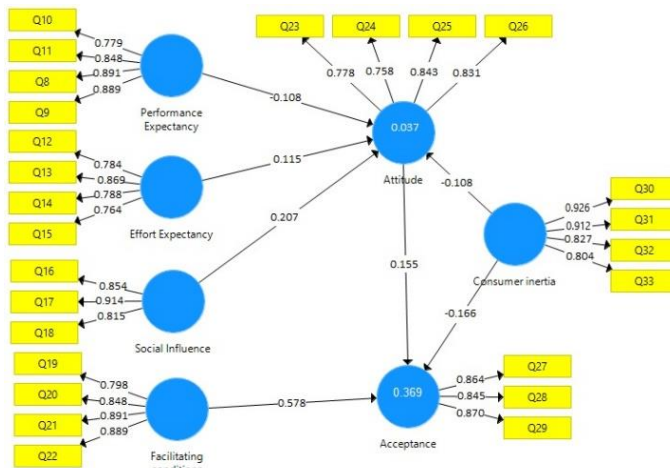


Figure 2. Structural model of the research.

Figure 3 depicts the significance levels of the research hypotheses, and all relationships exhibit an appropriate significance level.

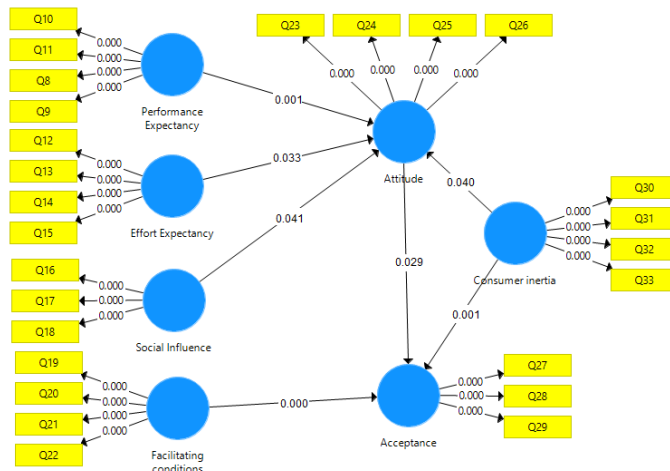


Figure 3. Significance levels of the research.

4. Discussion and conclusion

We have witnessed various technologies' emergence and continuous development in the present era, one of the most prominent being added. This technology has significantly impacted the performance and success of professional athletes, making a substantial contribution to enhancing training quality and improving sports techniques. At the same time, it has exerted further influence and provided an impetus to develop and promote sports as an integral part of a healthy lifestyle among the general public, aiming to foster a dynamic society. This technology can blur the lines between competitive sports and everyday physical activities, solidifying sports' crucial role as a significant and

influential factor in enhancing the quality of life across all social classes. In this research, we investigated the influential factors affecting the adoption of augmented reality technology in sports development and promotion, considering the moderating role of consumer inertia.

The research findings suggest that the expected performance variable significantly impacts attitudes toward augmented reality technology, especially in sports settings where participants anticipate enhanced productivity and improved specialized training opportunities. This aligns with findings from previous studies (Bozyer, 2015; Doskarayev et al., 2023) that emphasize the positive reinforcement of attitudes following initial experiences and tangible benefits users observe (Farahani, 2002). Organizations, coaches, and athletes can leverage these dimensions to enhance service delivery and training processes in sports. Additionally, Shokery et al. (2016) research underscores the significance of societal culture, affordability of technology, collaboration among educators, and suitable technological infrastructure for successful technology adoption, which resonates with recent insights on motivation and conducive conditions for technology integration.

Discussing the research findings elucidates a clear correlation between expected performance and positive attitudes toward augmented reality technology in sports contexts. By leveraging these insights and emphasizing the enhancement of user experiences and concrete benefits, organizations, coaches, and athletes can foster the adoption and effective use of this technology. Collaboration among stakeholders and suitable training is crucial to successfully integrating AR solutions. Additionally, addressing cultural norms and affordability issues and establishing a supportive environment for technology adoption is essential for enhancing overall acceptance and utilization of AR in sports. Integrating these implications based on the unified model will drive technology adoption and improve performance and training outcomes in sports settings.

The study findings highlight the significance of the "expected effort" variable in influencing attitudes toward adopting augmented reality technology in sports. This variable, focusing on users' ease of technology use and understanding, aligns with prior research emphasizing the impact of accessibility and user-friendliness of augmented reality technology on cultivating a positive attitude (Hilken et al., 2017; Mohammadi et al., 2013). The rapid advancements in technology and increased accessibility of platforms have played a crucial role in shaping these conclusions. The continuous evolution of technology, especially in mobile devices, has facilitated the acquisition of skills and knowledge necessary for utilizing AR tools. This increased accessibility within the sports sector has streamlined processes and encouraged the development of positive attitudes (Mohammadi et al., 2013). The rise of smart devices has led to the development of mobile sports applications that use augmented reality technology. These apps offer interactive workouts, guides, and visual feedback, enhancing the exercise experience. These applications are expected to gain popularity and foster positive attitudes towards AR in sports. Training courses and workshops can help users improve their proficiency in utilizing AR, overcoming barriers to adoption, and facilitating a smoother integration of AR in sports practices.

The available findings emphasize the role of social influence in shaping attitudes towards adopting augmented reality technology in sports. Past research indicates that the popularity and dissemination of new technology among individuals and the influence of social companionship significantly impact its acceptance rate. Influential figures in the sports industry, such as professional athletes, coaches, and celebrities, play a crucial role in encouraging the adoption of new technologies (Mohammadi et al., 2013). Convincing individuals, particularly professional athletes, coaches, and celebrities, are often encouraged to adopt new technologies (Doskarayev et al., 2023; Mohammadi et al., 2013; Venkatesh et al., 2012). The study findings suggest that maintaining a positive attitude towards using augmented reality technology in sports is a reliable predictor of its acceptance and actual adoption. This aligns with previous research findings and highlights the importance of fostering positive attitudes to increase the adoption and usage of new technology in sports (Dalili Saleh et al., 2022). Cultivating a positive attitude towards augmented reality technology can increase acceptance and usage. Hence, highlighting the advantages and positive results of utilizing AR in sports can influence attitudes and foster adoption within the sports community. To advance and optimize the use of AR tools in sports training, it is advisable to employ strategies that captivate and involve enthusiasts. Crafting focused and efficient advertising campaigns can boost awareness and promote acceptance of augmented reality technology. Leveraging the influence and endorsements of esteemed athletes who share their favorable experiences with augmented reality technology can allure and convince other users, propelling technological advancements in sports.

Facilitating conditions, such as technical knowledge and technology compatibility with sports activities, play a significant role in boosting the adoption of augmented reality technology. This case, emphasized in previous research (Al-Gahtani et al., 2007; Alalwan et al., 2015), refers to when users have the necessary knowledge and skills to use a new technology and perceive that its use aligns with their typical work routine. Users are generally more willing to adopt the technology when not conflicted. Steps can be taken to promote augmented reality technology in sports and ensure optimal utilization. These measures involve identifying and reducing barriers such as usage costs, technological complexity in deployment, and security concerns. Investing in relevant training and providing necessary instruction to users to ensure they acquire the knowledge and skills essential for using AR are crucial aspects of this process. Furthermore, the adaptability of augmented reality technology to current practices and the promotion of techniques that integrate technology into everyday sports activities can significantly encourage and facilitate adoption. By implementing these strategies, augmented reality technology will serve as an emerging tool and a valuable and complementary component in the advancement and evolution of sports.

The findings of this study also indicate that attitude exerts a positive and notable influence on the acceptance of this technology, a notion supported by previous research (Dwivedi et al., 2022; Venkatesh et al., 2003; Venkatesh et al., 2012). This underscores the pivotal role of users' attitudes in molding the acceptance and utilization of groundbreaking technological solutions. By comprehending the influence of attitudes on technology adoption, organizations and stakeholders in the sports industry can adapt

their approaches to introducing and endorsing AR applications while considering the preferences and perceptions of potential users. This highlights the necessity of evaluating users' attitudes and perceptions in designing and implementing augmented reality technologies to enhance their adoption and efficacy in the sports domain.

The evaluation findings show that resistance to change, often called consumer inertia, significantly impacts attitude formation and the acceptance of emerging technologies such as AR. This concept relates to a constant and inherent element in consumer behavior that reduces the desire and interest in using new technologies and can lead to a decreased willingness to adopt these technologies. This issue is in line with the findings of a previous study (Sadeqi Arani et al., 2023). To overcome consumer inertia and enhance acceptance of AR, it is crucial to inform and raise awareness about the benefits of this technology. Creating educational and communication programs that showcase compelling scientific evidence and positive user experiences can generate interest and enthusiasm for AR. This strategic approach has the potential to shift current attitudes and promote broader acceptance of the technology, especially in various societies and industries like sports.

The research findings demonstrate the potential of augmented reality technology to revolutionize the sports industry by enhancing training quality and promoting healthy lifestyles. However, challenges related to consumer inertia and resistance to new technologies may impede its full adoption. By analyzing the impact of consumer inertia on accepting AR in sports, valuable insights have been gained. These insights can inform intervention tactics to raise awareness, address consumer decision-making factors, and boost technology acceptance. Stakeholders in the sports sector can leverage this information to tailor strategies that facilitate the seamless integration of AR, driving efficiency and prosperity in sports through optimized utilization of this innovative technology.

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کاربرد نظریه یکپارچه پذیرش و استفاده از فناوری واقعیت افزوده جهت توسعه و ترویج ورزش با نقش تعدیل کننده اینرسی مصرف کننده

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کلیدواژه

پذیرش
تربیت بدنی
فناوری واقعیت افزوده
نظریه یکپارچه پذیرش و
استفاده از فناوری

نوع مقاله

پژوهشی اصیل

چکیده

هدف: در قرن حاضر پیشرفت‌های فناوری در توسعه جوامع نقش اساسی داشته است. کشورهای مختلف به طور فزاینده‌ای از نوآوری‌های تکنولوژی برای ارتقای تجربیات زندگی در ابعاد مختلف استقبال کرده‌اند. با این حال، پذیرش گسترده این فناوری‌ها توسط مصرف‌کنندگان برای موفقیت مداوم و گسترش بیشتر آنها بسیار مهم است. هدف این تحقیق بررسی نظریه یکپارچه پذیرش و استفاده از فناوری واقعیت افزوده باتوجه به نقش تعدیل‌کننده اینرسی مصرف‌کننده در پیشرفت و ارتقای ورزش است.

روش: این پژوهش که به روش کاربردی - توصیفی طراحی شده است، با استفاده از روش نمونه‌گیری غیرتصادفی، داده‌های جمع‌آوری‌شده از طریق پرسش‌نامه آنلاین با استفاده از روش مدل‌سازی معادلات ساختاری مورد تجزیه و تحلیل قرار گرفت. اگرچه مفهوم اینرسی مصرف‌کننده در ابتدا در چارچوب مدل پذیرش فناوری گنجانده نشده است، شواهد نشان می‌دهد که این عامل نقش مهمی را به‌عنوان یک پیش‌بینی‌کننده کلیدی مقاومت در برابر پذیرش محصولات جدید ایفا می‌کند. این مقاومت می‌تواند از سایر عوامل پیش‌بینی‌کننده مانند عملکرد مورد انتظار، تلاش مورد نیاز، تأثیرات اجتماعی و شرایط تسهیل‌کننده مهم‌تر باشد.

یافته‌ها: این تحقیق نشان داده است که با درک عمیق‌تر این عوامل کلیدی و ایجاد زیرساخت‌های لازم برای حمایت از آن‌ها، احتمال موفقیت و مزایای بالقوه فناوری واقعیت افزوده در حوزه ورزش به میزان قابل توجهی افزایش می‌یابد.

اصالت و ابتکار مقاله: این تحقیق به طور مبتکرانه اینرسی مصرف‌کننده را در چارچوب نظریه یکپارچه پذیرش و استفاده از فناوری برای فناوری واقعیت افزوده در ورزش گنجانده است. با برجسته‌کردن اهمیت اینرسی مصرف‌کننده به‌عنوان یک پیش‌بینی‌کننده کلیدی مقاومت در برابر محصولات جدید، موانع بالقوه برای پذیرش را برطرف می‌کند. این یافته‌ها بینش‌های ارزشمندی را برای محققان و متخصصان باهدف افزایش پذیرش فناوری در صنعت ورزش ارائه می‌کند.

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The Effect of Vertical Orientation of Sportswear Images on Attracting Customers' Visual Attention

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ABSTRACT

Purpose: Today, consumer behavior has changed from traditional methods to online methods. However, the factors that may attract consumer visual attention online have yet to be studied. Therefore, using an eye-tracking approach, the current research investigated the effect of the vertical orientation of sportswear images on attracting customers' visual attention.

Methodology: This research was designed as a semi-experimental study. Two critical factors, fixation count (FC) and total fixation duration (TFD), extracted the vision data of 32 participants purchasing Majid brand sportswear. Pupil capture and pupil player software were utilized to record and analyze research data. The extracted data were analyzed in the next step through repeated measure ANOVA.

Findings: The results showed that the vertical orientation of sportswear images affects customers' visual attention. In most cases, images without human models and in higher positions attract more visual attention than those in lower positions. The results have practical implications for website designers, online sellers, and sports marketers regarding the appropriate placement of products in website design.

Originality: This research investigates the effect of the vertical orientation of sportswear images on attracting the visual attention of customers in Iran using eye-tracking technology for the first time. This article can encourage sportswear businesses to evaluate the visual stimuli of their website design using eye-tracking studies. By catching customers' attention, they can develop and optimize their website design.

Keywords

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Eye Tracker
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1. Introduction

Sports consumers seek experiences obtained from sports and their benefits to satisfy their needs and desires (Funk et al., 2016). Sports consumer behavior focuses on the cognitive and behavioral responses before, during, and after choosing and consuming a sports product or brand (Funk et al., 2022). Meanwhile, sports consumption refers to the consumption behavior that people use money to buy various goods and services related to sports (Wang et al., 2024). It is worth noting that the income of the sports industry's revenue amounted to over 403 billion US dollars in 2022, and it is also predicted that this market will be worth more than 680 billion dollars by 2028 (Statista, 2023). However, the COVID-19 pandemic caused restrictions on customers' access to stores. Therefore, traditional businesses and retailers began selling their products online or expanding their existing online business (Al-Hattami, 2021). In addition, increasing trust in technology, the ability to use information and communication technology, and online payment methods caused consumer behavior to change from traditional approaches to online methods (Bramillari & Nerjaku, 2021).

The change in consumer behavior and increased online customers have created intense competition for online stores to attract customers' limited attention (Kaushik et al., 2020). Customers' attention is directly related to their cognitive processing of information displayed in website design (Hwang & Lee, 2018). Furthermore, attention focuses on attractive images and information to customers (Wedel & Pieters, 2008). Therefore, visual attention is one of the essential prerequisites for buying products (Boardman et al., 2023). But since the mental capacity of customers is limited, and they cannot remember and pay attention to all the elements displayed in the website design, it is always busy gathering information and evaluating the best choice for attention (Wang et al., 2017).

As mentioned, customers pay attention to website design elements selectively. For this reason, customers may only pay attention to some of the information provided online and ignore other information in the limited time they spend checking online products; therefore, how to design a website to attract the visual attention of customers is an important issue (Wang et al., 2017). One of the elements of website design that affects customers' visual attention is the orientation of an image. The orientation of an image means the location of that image on a website page. Of the two types of orientation, namely vertical and horizontal, the former refers to the area of product images at the top and bottom of a website page, and the latter refers to the position of product images on the right, middle, and left side of a website page (Sulikowski et al., 2021). Moreover, identifying the best location for placing product images and knowing which areas of the website have the most or least effect on attracting customers' attention can help website designers design and effectively present products (Modi & Singh, 2023).

In addition, in the era of globalization and market saturation with similar products and a wide range of online sellers, it is difficult for companies to identify customer behaviour (Vukasović & Petrič, 2022). Traditionally, web user behavior is studied using web mining techniques (Velásquez et al., 2011), where web log files containing records of web users' activities are processed (Roy & Giduturi, 2019). Studying web user behavior on a website using only web log files would not be a good idea because we cannot recreate exactly a

user session and know what the user sees on each page visited. Meanwhile, web log files contain a lot of noise, and it is usually impossible to identify directly a web user session, the sequence of web elements viewed, and the time spent on each page by the web user (Slanzi et al., 2017). Better approximations of web user session reconstruction have been developed employing Neuro-marketing techniques (Mičík & Kunešová, 2021). Neuro-marketing focuses on the consumer decision-making process and uses neuroscience to analyze and understand human behavior in the market and market exchanges (Bočková et al., 2021). Neuro-marketing tools can identify relationships between marketing stimuli. These tools can measure the effects of stimuli on the system of vision, mind, sense, emotion, and, in general, the brain system of a person (Vecchiato et al., 2013).

The eye-tracking device is one of the new neuro-marketing tools researchers used to measure audience attention to website design (Slanzi et al., 2017). Eye movements recorded by this device can provide an objective source of user interface evaluation data containing information for designing websites (Djamasbi et al., 2010). Fixation Count (FC) and Total Fixation Duration (TFD) are two critical factors in tracking eye movements, which indicate the viewer's attention to visual stimuli (Yang, 2015). FC and TFD indicate how many and how long customers' eyes stay focused on an Area of Interest (AOI) on a website page (Hwang & Lee, 2018).

It is worth noting that many studies for processing visual information of people on job websites (Mičík & Kunešová, 2021), tourism websites (Aicher et al., 2016), news websites (Simonov et al., 2023), and web Shopping sites (Beşer et al., 2022) utilized the eye tracking technique. However, few studies have investigated the design elements of sportswear websites (especially the vertical orientation of images) and their effect on attracting customers' visual attention. Therefore, according to the mentioned research gap, the present research seeks to answer whether the vertical orientation of sportswear images affects attracting customers' visual attention.

2. Theoretical background

2.1. Visual attention and vertical orientation of images

Attention is a cognitive process in which the mind focuses on a specific stimulus or stimuli from the environment, ignoring other environmental stimuli (Boardman et al., 2023). Thus, the attention a stimulus receives reflects the cognitive load required to process it (Scott & Hand, 2016). According to the theory of visual marketing attention (Wedel & Pieters, 2008), when people look at marketing stimuli, visual attention is guided by a combination of top-down and bottom-up factors. Top-down factors are primarily relevant to personal characteristics such as mentality, motivation, expectations, and user goals and refer to the internal direction of attention (Scott & Hand, 2016). These factors are also called goal-driven because visual attention is drawn more to stimuli related to the user's behavioral goal (Huang et al., 2021).

Furthermore, if participants are given research tasks, a top-down approach explains the guidance of visual attention (Hwang et al., 2009). If the bottom-up factors are related to the characteristics of the visual stimuli the person looks at, they are called stimulus-

driven (Cortinas et al., 2019). Therefore, in a website page, features such as size, shape, content, bright colors, and the position of an image are bottom-up factors affecting people's attention (Meißner et al., 2019). It is worth noting that limited research has investigated the interaction between top-down and bottom-up attention in users' online shopping. Thus, future research will enable researchers to explore this aspect further (Boardman et al., 2023).

In addition to the mentioned theory, the Visual Hierarchy Model (Faraday, 2000) believes that the position of elements on a web page affects the visual attention of users, and the elements placed at the top of the page are considered more important. The meaning of position of an image is the location of that image in the vertical orientation (up and down) and horizontal orientation (right, middle, and left) on a website page (Sulikowski et al., 2021). According to Still (2017), the spatial position of images can predict customers' visual attention. In this regard, the research results of Espigares-Jurado et al. (2020) revealed that the main pictures placed at the top of the hotel reservation website attract more visual attention than the photos at the bottom. Sulikowski et al. (2021) also reported in their research that the upper positions (first and second) of a vertical layout attract more visual attention. By contrast, the results of Goodrich's research (2010) displayed that people pay more attention to online advertisements in low than high positions. The research results of Muñoz-Leiva et al. (2021) also showed that the fixed image of the room on the hotel reservation website in the upper proper position attracts more attention. However, the research results of Li et al. (2018) demonstrated that customers' attention is focused on the books on the top and left side of the website. Schröter et al. (2021) research showed that clothing images presented by human models and located in the upper middle area were visited by more participants. The research results of Boardman & McCormick (2019) also showed that human models are the features of product presentation attracting the most attention on clothing sales websites.

3. Methodology

In the current research, a semi-experimental method was utilized to determine the effect of the vertical orientation of sportswear images on attracting customers' visual attention.

3.1. Participants

Using an online and face-to-face survey with the male students of Shahid Chamran University of Ahvaz (2nd semester of 2022-2023), 36 people were selected to participate in the experiment with a targeted sampling method. All students belong to Millennials or Generation Y. This generation consists of people aged 18-32, which has become an essential part of the market and a unique population for study due to the everyday use of the Internet and technology (Djamasbi et al., 2010). These students were familiar with Majid's website. Familiarity here was consistent with the number of previous online purchases reported in the survey between one and three times per year (Modi & Singh, 2023). It should be noted that there were several reasons for choosing Majid's website:

1. Majid Manufacturing Company is one of the Iranian manufacturing companies in the production of sportswear that has been able to compete among foreign brands (Moghadas & Kalateh Seyfari, 2017),
2. Students had the experience of shopping online from this website,
3. This website had both credibility and the Electronic Trust symbol¹.

Moreover, according to the research entry criteria, no participants had vision problems such as color blindness, eye deviation, or poor vision. Three participants were excluded due to absence on the test day and one due to eye calibration problems; thus, the final number of valid participants reached 32. The sampling size and method selection were based on previous similar studies (Bočková et al., 2021; Mo et al., 2023). Meanwhile, according to the type of product (men's T-shirt), only male students participated in this research (Hwang & Lee, 2018). A summary of the most important demographic characteristics of the subjects is presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Demographic characteristics of the subjects.

	Categories	Frequency	Percent
Age	18 to 22	21	65.6
	23 to 27	8	25
	28 to 32	3	9.4
Education level	Bachelor's degree	25	78.1
	Master's degree	7	21.9

3.2. Measuring Tool

The visual attention of all participants was measured using moving eye-tracking glasses (Pupil Labs Core, Germany). These glasses had two eye cameras with a frequency of 200 Hz and a resolution of 192 x 192 pixels to record the information on the pupil of one eye (right eye). The glasses also had a scene camera with a frequency of 60 Hz and a resolution of 720 pixels, recording data with high precision using infrared light. The data recording software was Pupil Capture, and the data analysis software was Pupil Player. The five-point method calibrated the device (Asadi et al., 2023). Other equipment used in this experiment was a plasma Panasonic model TX-P42UT30B device, two laptops, an HDMI cable, and a wireless mouse. One laptop was connected to the plasma Panasonic device, and the other was attached to the eye-tracking device.

3.3. Research Implementation Method

After each participant entered the testing environment and filled out the demographic characteristics form, they were asked to sit on a chair with adjustable height in front of the screen. At the same time as the eye-tracking device was installed, the height of the camera and the responding eyes were set at the same level. Next, participants were presented with an online shopping task, where they were asked to imagine buying a T-

¹ The electronic trust symbol is a sign for internet businesses that is issued by the e-commerce development center belonging to the Ministry of Industry, Mines and Trade for the purpose of organizing, verifying their identity and eligibility.

shirt for themselves. Participants searched for their favorite T-shirt by scrolling through a product search page. Since people of different ages wear T-shirts often, the researchers selected this product (Schröter et al., 2021). They were also asked to click add to cart to indicate the end of the experiment (Li et al., 2018). To ensure the visual processing behavior of people regularly, the participants were informed about the real purpose of the research after completing the experiment (Oboudi et al., 2023). Eye tracking data were also collected on several pages, but for the present study, the focus was on the product search page. On this page, product images were presented in four rows. Some of the photos had human models, as well. These features can be observed in Figure 1.

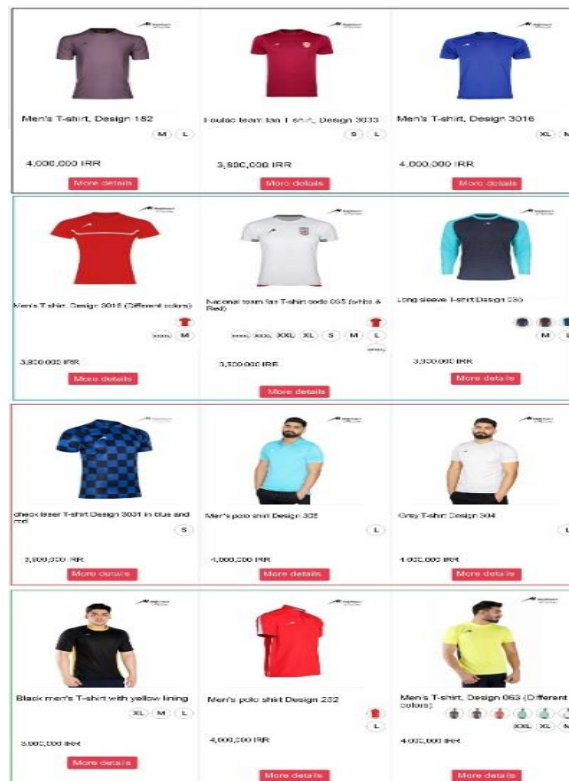


Figure 1. The image of the Majid sportswear online store with AOI is marked with black color (row 1), blue color (row 2), red color (row 3), and green color (row 4).

3.4. Data Analysis

Two measures, namely fixation count and total fixation duration, were utilized to measure participants' visual attention. These two measures were calculated as average values in milliseconds. It is worth noting that the product information (including image, description, and price) was defined as four AOIs in four rows (Hwang & Lee, 2018). This helped facilitate eye-tracking experiments and specify the products' vertical orientation (rows). The defined AOIs are displayed in Figure 1 and Table 2.

Table 2. AOIs are defined in the product search page on the Majid sportswear website.

AOIs	AOI-1	AOI-2	AOI-3	AOI-4
Stimulus (Rows)	Row 1	Row 2	Row 3	Row 4

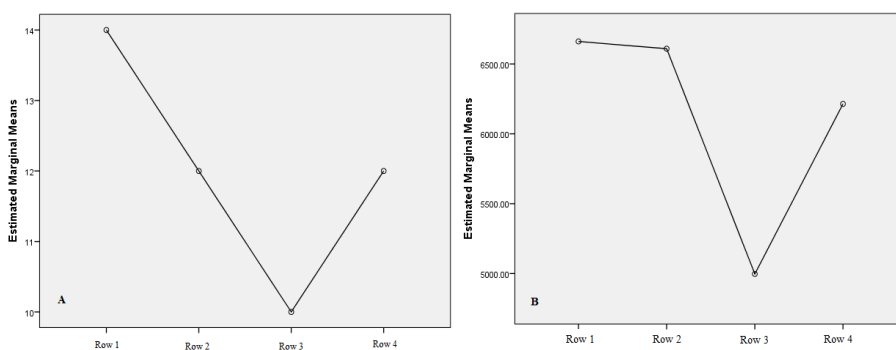
After collecting and interpreting the vision data of customers using IBM SPSS statistics v.24 statistical software, repeated measures analysis of variance test was employed to answer the research question. In addition, the Bonferroni test was conducted for all pairwise comparisons since the number of comparisons made is more than three groups (Agbangba et al., 2024). The alpha level was set at 0.05 for all analyses. Normality and equality of variances were checked with the Shapiro-Wilk and Mauchly's sphericity test, respectively. Also, there is no reason to reject the null hypothesis if the probability value (p-value) for Mauchly's test statistic is higher than that of type 1 error (α). In this case, we can accept the assumption of sphericity for repeated measures ANOVA, and as a result, we will use the Sphericity Assumed correction line.

4. Results

The eye-tracking data of the participants in the AOIs related to the vertical orientation of the product images were analyzed. As shown in Table 3 and Figure 2, the average visual attention of customers (FC, TFD) is different from each other in the vertical orientation of the images.

Table 3. Descriptive indicators (mean (standard deviation)) related to the amount of visual attention (FC, TFD) of customers.

Variable	FC	TFD (ms)
Row 1	14.72 (6.76)	6661.92 (2999.34)
Row 2	12.72 (4.66)	6609.89 (3047.38)
Row 3	10.63 (5.06)	4997.47 (2417.11)
Row 4	12.75 (6.02)	6214.01 (2834.00)

**Figure 2.** Charts A and B related to customers' estimated marginal means FC and TFD.

Also, the repeated measures ANOVA was used to check the difference in the averages of customers' visual attention (FC, TFD). Table 4 shows a statistically

significant difference between customers' visual attention to the vertical orientation of images ($P < 0.05$).

Table 4. The indicators related to the repeated measures ANOVA test to compare customers' visual attention (FC, TFD) to the rows.

Source		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Squares	F	Sig	Partial Eta Squared
FC	Sphericity Assumed	268.28	3	89.43	4.27	0.007	0.12
TFD (ms)	Sphericity Assumed	57682052.84	3	19227350.95	3.83	0.012	0.11

Bonferroni's post hoc test was also used to determine the location of differences. The results of this test are presented in Table 5. The results revealed that the difference is caused by the difference between rows 1 and 3 with more visual attention to row 1 (FC: MD= 4.09, $p < 0.05$) and also rows 2 and 3 with more visual attention to row 2 (TFD: MD = 1612.41, $p < 0.05$). No statistically significant difference was found between customers' visual attention to other rows.

Table 5. Bonferroni's post hoc test results related to the pairwise comparison of customers' visual attention (FC, TFD) to the rows.

Variable	Rows	MD	SE	Sig
FC	Row1, Row2	2.00	1.16	0.562
TFD (ms)	Row1, Row2	52.03	600.78	1.000
FC	Row1, Row3	4.09*	1.36	0.031
TFD (ms)	Row1, Row3	1664.44	626.87	0.074
FC	Row1, Row4	1.97	1.38	0.985
TFD (ms)	Row1, Row4	447.91	575.84	1.000
FC	Row2, Row3	2.09	0.89	0.148
TFD (ms)	Row2, Row3	1612.41*	507.74	0.020
FC	Row2, Row4	0.03	1.01	1.000
TFD (ms)	Row2, Row4	395.88	569.20	1.000
FC	Row3, Row4	-2.12	0.97	0.219
TFD (ms)	Row3, Row4	-1216.54	464.58	0.081

5. Managerial implications

By measuring customers' visual attention as one of the influencing factors in customer purchase intention, valuable recommendations can be provided to all website designers, online sellers, and sports marketers. Firstly, they must consider the effects of the vertical orientation of product images. Secondly, sportswear that needs special promotion must be placed in the areas that attract the most visual attention. In a website's upper half, bottom, and middle rows, respectively. Thirdly, all products should be presented similarly through attractive human models because this form of presentation has a competitive advantage and makes it easier to evaluate the suitability and make purchasing decisions of customers. Therefore, the findings of this research can indirectly help businesses' income, sales promotion, and website page revisit rate. Moreover, our research findings can encourage sports businesses to evaluate the visual

stimuli of their websites using eye-tracking studies. In this way, they can attract customers by developing and optimizing their websites.

6. Discussion and conclusion

The current research aimed to investigate the effect of the vertical orientation of sportswear images on attracting customers' visual attention. The results of the present research largely agreed with the existing literature. They showed that the vertical orientation of sportswear images affected attracting customers' visual attention. This finding is consistent with Still's (2017) research, which found that the location of website design elements can predict users' visual attention. In addition, most of the time, by scrolling the customers from the top to the bottom of the website page, the amount of visual attention of the customers to the information of the products (sports t-shirts) has a downward trend and decreases. Faraday's visual hierarchy model (2000) also acknowledged that the upper elements of the website design attracted more attention than those at the bottom (Djamasbi et al., 2010). However, research Djamasbi et al. (2010) showed that people paid more attention to online advertisements in low positions than in high positions. One of the reasons for this inconsistency is the use of different tools to measure people's visual attention since visual attention in this study was estimated based on the percentage of clicks on a specific area. In this study, eye tracking with infrared light technology, which has higher accuracy, was used to measure people's visual attention.

Furthermore, the research results revealed no statistically significant difference between the customers' visual attention to rows 1 and 2. The information on sports products in rows 1 and 2 attracted the same attention. This finding is consistent with the research results of Schröter et al. (2021) and Li et al. (2018) regarding paying more attention to the upper half of the website page. Since rows 1 and 2 are located in the upper middle area of the product search page on Majid's website (Figure 1), this matching can be justified.

In addition, the current research results showed that customers' visual attention to the information on sports products (T-shirts) in rows 1 and 2 is more than in row 3. This finding is consistent with the research results of Espigares-Jurado et al. (2020), Muñoz-Leiva et al. (2021) as well as Sulikowski et al. (2021). indicating that more visual attention is paid to the images at the top of the website rather than to those at the bottom of the website, and is inconsistent with the research results of Schröter et al. (2021) as well as Boardman & McCormick (2019), who claimed more attention is paid to human models on websites selling clothes. The possible reason for this inconsistency is that the human models in the mentioned research are in the upper half of the website. Still, in the present study, all the models are in the lower half (Figure 1). There seems to be competition between images with higher positions and images with human models on Majid's website to attract customers' attention. In the meantime, images with higher positions have performed better in attracting customers' visual attention.

It should be mentioned that no statistically significant difference was found between the customers' visual attention to row 4 compared to other rows (rows 1 to 3). This

finding shows the importance of the last row of products, indicating no difference between customers' visual attention to the information on sports T-shirts in row 4 compared to other rows. The downward trend of customers' visual attention stops in the last row and is associated with a relatively insignificant increase. In this regard, [Gidlöf et al.'s research \(2017\)](#) showed that products of any quality and popularity are more likely to be purchased if placed on the lower and upper shelves instead of the middle shelves. Therefore, paying equal attention to the top and bottom rows on Majid's websites is consistent with the research findings. The research results of [Lagun & Lalmas \(2016\)](#) on online news sites also clearly showed that most users read articles from top to bottom, and some scroll up before leaving the page. Therefore, it seems that the relative increase in the customers' visual attention in the last row of the website means that the customers scroll up again to find the sports T-shirt they want.

Meanwhile, researchers have found that the laboratory is different from the participant's natural environment, and the research findings are influenced by the tasks and laboratory environment of the research ([Djamasbi et al., 2010](#)). The results of the study of [Pieters & Wedel \(2004\)](#) also indicated that the visual attention of consumers is affected by the test tasks. In the current research, considering the presentation of the online shopping task and the limitations created in the laboratory space (such as browsing and checking the visual attention of customers on a website page), the relative increase in visual attention in row 4 can be justified.

Sports marketing relies mainly on consumer experiences, but most consumers need help to express these experiences. Eye-tracking technology provides a way to investigate hidden consumer behaviors empirically. Therefore, this research analyzed customers' visual attention to the vertical orientation of sportswear images using eye-tracking technology. This study showed that the vertical position of product images affected customers' visual attention. In most cases, images without human models and in higher positions attracted more visual attention than those in lower positions. Also, the visual attention to the pictures of sports products presented in the upper half of the website (rows 1 and 2) was the same. It is worth mentioning that the visual attention to the images of the last row was the same as other rows, and this row had particular importance in attracting customers' visual attention.

7. Limitations and future research

This research had two limitations. Firstly, only male students were selected for this study due to the product type (men's T-shirts). This might reduce the external validity and generalizability of the findings because studies indicated that gender is influential in the visual attention pattern of customers ([Hwang & Lee, 2018](#)). Secondly, the number of participants could have been increased due to the experimental nature of the research and the necessity of working with the eye-tracking device. It is suggested that future research study the effect of the vertical orientation of images with more participants, rows, and pages. Also, due to the contrast between the characteristics of clothing ([Mo et al., 2023](#)), it is suggested to investigate the color, type, and print patterns of clothing with familiar and unfamiliar fonts and their effect on customers' visual attention. Since not all

customers' visits to a website are targeted, it is suggested that their visual attention patterns be investigated without any experimental task. It is also indicated that customers' visual attention to other sports products be compared with multiple targeted experimental tasks.

It should be noted that research has shown that fandom affects the experiences and behavior of users when interacting with sports websites (Scelles et al., 2017). It is, therefore, suggested that future researchers pay attention to this fact in processing people's visual attention patterns. Also, considering the optimal performance of neuro-marketing tools in providing accurate information in the field of sports marketing, it is suggested that future researchers investigate the amount of visual attention customers pay to website design elements by combining eye tracking and electroencephalography (EEG) with other quantitative and qualitative research methods.

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تأثیر جهت‌گیری عمودی تصاویر پوشاک ورزشی بر جلب توجه دیداری مشتریان

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کلیدواژه

خرید آنلاین
ردیاب بینایی
رفتار مصرف‌کننده ورزشی
طراحی وبسایت
عوامل پایین به بالا

نوع مقاله

پژوهشی اصیل

چکیده

هدف: امروزه، رفتار مصرف‌کننده از روش‌های سنتی به روش‌های آنلاین تغییر کرده است. با این حال، عواملی که ممکن است توجه دیداری مصرف‌کننده را در یک محیط آنلاین جلب کند، کمتر مورد مطالعه قرار گرفته است. بنابراین پژوهش حاضر با هدف بررسی تأثیر جهت‌گیری عمودی تصاویر پوشاک ورزشی بر جلب توجه دیداری مشتریان با استفاده از رویکرد ردیابی چشم انجام شد.

روش: این پژوهش به روش نیمه تجربی طراحی شد. داده‌های بینایی ۳۲ شرکت‌کننده در خرید پوشاک ورزشی برند مجید با دو عامل مهم تعداد تثبیت (FC) و مدت زمان تثبیت کل (TFD) استخراج شد. برای ثبت و تحلیل داده‌های تحقیق از نرم افزار Pupil Player و Pupil Capture استفاده شد. در مرحله بعد، داده‌های استخراج شده با استفاده از آزمون آنالیز واریانس با اندازه‌گیری مکرر مورد تجزیه و تحلیل قرار گرفت.

یافته‌ها: نتایج نشان داد که جهت‌گیری عمودی تصاویر پوشاک ورزشی بر توجه دیداری مشتریان تأثیر دارد. در بیشتر موارد، تصاویر بدون مدل انسانی و در موقعیت‌های بالاتر توجه دیداری بیشتری نسبت به موقعیت‌های پایین‌تر به خود جلب می‌کردند. نتایج، پیامدهای عملی برای طراحان وبسایت‌ها، فروشندگان آنلاین و بازاریابان ورزشی در رابطه با چیدمان مناسب محصولات در طراحی وبسایت دارد.

اصالت و ابتکار مقاله: این پژوهش برای اولین بار با استفاده از فناوری ردیاب بینایی به بررسی تأثیر جهت‌گیری عمودی تصاویر پوشاک ورزشی بر جلب توجه دیداری مشتریان در ایران می‌پردازد. این تحقیق می‌تواند کسب و کارهای پوشاک ورزشی را تشویق کند تا محرک‌های دیداری طراحی وبسایت خود را با استفاده از مطالعات ردیابی چشم ارزیابی کنند. به این ترتیب، با جلب توجه مشتریان، آنها می‌توانند طراحی وبسایت خود را توسعه و بهینه کنند.

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Developing a Paradigm Model for Sports Marketing in Iranian Schools

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ABSTRACT

Purpose: The current research aims to develop a model for sports marketing in Iranian schools using a foundational data approach.

Methodology: Due to the exploratory nature of this research, a grounded theory method using a systematic approach was employed. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews, and the findings were assessed using conventional techniques to ensure their reliability. The participants in the study consisted of 13 experts who were purposively selected, including professors of sports management, members of the student sports federation, former heads of the General Department of Education, and sports teachers.

Findings: The data analysis identified 94 concepts across 19 school sports marketing model categories. Three categories reflect contextual conditions: sports governance, institutional communication, and innovation. Causal conditions include economic stability, media management, and a knowledge-based economy. Intervening conditions involve cultural development and a resistance economy in schools. Six strategy categories were identified: event branding, stakeholder management, private sector collaboration, human resource training, agile marketing plans, and legal revisions. Finally, the five outcomes of the economic discourse model include promoting economic thinking in sports, developing educational sports, organizing equipment, monitoring performance, and enhancing talent management.

Originality: The current research can use school sports to achieve marketing goals by designing a paradigmatic model for the development of sports marketing in Iranian schools.

Keywords

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Event Branding
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1. Introduction

Sport, as a social phenomenon and one of the essential scientific systems, plays an unparalleled role in individuals' psychological and social growth. This role is particularly significant during childhood, adolescence, and maturity and can improve individuals' conditions and create a lifelong learning process (Savari et al., 2021). Sport provides a unique context for the psychosocial development of individuals because it is categorized as an environment where children and young people dedicate more motivation, time, energy, and focus compared to other environments such as school. In sports, there are various opportunities for children and adolescents to develop personal and interpersonal skills that can enhance their well-being (Bedard et al., 2020). The younger generation spends most of their time in school. Since each country's educational system can significantly contribute to the development of sports and the recognition of talents and assist in the growth of competitive sports, special attention must be given to school sports (Rabiei et al., 2023). School sports are identified as the foundation for the development of sports in countries. Investment in school sports has led to its recognition as a cornerstone for sports development today (Darnell et al., 2019). Student sports, as part of the Physical Education and Health Department in Education, allow talent to flourish and for ethical and physical merits to be reflected (Hamidi et al., 2018). Since the lack of development in school sports hinders the progress of public and competitive sports, this issue can be addressed by identifying obstacles, consulting with relevant officials and policymakers, and fostering the growth of sports in the country (Vafaei Moghadam et al., 2018).

Moreover, schools are suitable places for interventions and allow students to acquire and develop the skills and strategies needed to face life's challenges in the best possible way, with a high physical and psychological well-being (Cronin et al., 2020). Developed countries utilize the development of school sports to promote sports in various dimensions. Investment in schools creates a favorable outlook for sports (Camiré & Kendellen, 2016).

The importance of sports in schools has led to significant efforts in this regard. Extensive financial resources have been directed towards developing school sports improving the quality and quantity of sports in schools. However, in Iran, there are significant problems in school sports development. Specific financial weaknesses in the education system in Iran have caused school sports to face serious challenges (Javidi et al., 2021). Like non-sports organizations, sports organizations are exposed to environmental and global changes and face unique issues. Professional, amateur, and university sports organization managers must effectively manage challenges such as high costs, highly competitive markets, growing fan dissatisfaction and disconnection, and the explosive growth of new technologies to survive in the sports business environment (Eagleman, 2013). Therefore, investment in sports reduces costs in the healthcare sector, treatment centers, and social misconduct prevention centers and lowers individual and social abnormalities (Beneli et al., 2016).

Planning physical education in schools is inherently complex and challenging. The most significant reason and the greatest challenge is that physical education and sports comprise a blend of two entirely separate domains: marketing and sports, each managed

independently. This implies that neither of these units holds complete responsibility for sports marketing (Minten & Forsyth, 2014). The burgeoning trend in sports marketing has profoundly affected global sports development and has attracted substantial financial resources, extensive advertising benefits, and broad socio-cultural and political advantages for stakeholders in this industry. In today's competitive environment, achieving optimal performance in marketing has become a fundamental concern for managers who strive to excel using various techniques. Marketing capabilities are crucial in achieving competitive advantages and superior performance for organizations (Zolfaghari et al., 2023). In the present era, marketing is essential for any deliberate and targeted action in today's market—a market that recognizes no borders and targets no specific customers. Today's marketing motto for all entrepreneurs, managers, and professional marketers can be summarized in this brief phrase: think globally, act locally (Lee et al., 2018).

Furthermore, establishing a marketing unit is considered an innovative achievement for developing any organization, regardless of its nature, which is part of the revenue generation process. Marketers formulate plans in various sports fields to impact their audience and establish bilateral communication. Socially, marketing serves as a tool for individuals and groups to obtain what they desire through producing, supplying, and exchanging valuable products and services. Activities that garner positive reactions from audiences should be targeted for precise and appealing imagery (Kamalvand & Afshari, 2021). Providing a model for school sports marketing and theoretical foundations in sports data mining offers a benchmark for evaluating activities, specifying beneficial programs for defining what must be accomplished in school sports and setting goals for measuring the success or failure of managers and organizations (Eizadi et al., 2017). Moreover, attention to sports and its development and enhancement constitutes a decisive component in the marketing industry (Miller et al., 2012).

In reviewing the background and past research relevant to the research topic, it can be noted that the importance of developing student sports has been highlighted. In this regard, Rastogi et al. (2017) demonstrated in their examination of the state of physical education development in various countries that despite suitable methods and programs in the field of school sports development, significant failures are observed in these development programs. This issue is attributed to the need for a long-term and comprehensive plan. These findings indicate the necessity of long-term and thorough planning for developing school sports (Rastogi et al., 2017). Mirzaei Kalar et al. (2020) showed that the development of student sports is a dynamic process, and to achieve development outcomes, stakeholders, strategies, methods, and development paths need to work together. Therefore, policymakers and planners must consider stakeholders, techniques, processes, and development paths when formulating policies and programs for student sports development (Mirzaei Kalar et al., 2020).

Furthermore, in their research, Ghanbari Firouzabadi et al. (2020) identified the components of human resources, financial resources, space and equipment, and implementing physical education lessons and extracurricular activities as causal factors. They also introduced managerial, socio-cultural, media and technology, and scientific sports management components as contextual conditions affecting the development of

student sports. Financial, political, and economic components were also identified as intervening conditions. At the same time, structural development strategies, managerial actions, human resource development, income development, space and equipment development, cultural development, and extracurricular program development were stated as strategies for developing student sports (Ghanbari Firouzabadi et al., 2020). Sarlak & Kaveh (2022) also elucidated the challenges of educational sports in the country, showing that the shortage of human resources and the lack of sports facilities and equipment are the most critical barriers to developing educational sports. The research results indicated that comprehensive planning is necessary to address these issues because the development of educational sports plays a significant role in shaping students' lifestyles.

Additionally, some researchers have studied the importance of marketing in sports, particularly in school sports. Nasrollahi Ghadim et al. (2022), in a study titled "Designing a Model for Integrated Marketing Communication Tools (IMC) for Wrestling of Iran," found that the use of an integrated marketing model can increase the attractiveness of wrestling, attract spectators, gain financial sponsors, and ultimately boost revenue. This research highlights the importance of using integrated marketing models in developing school sports. Dost Mohamadi et al. (2020), in a study titled "Identifying the components of student sports marketing and designing a model using an interpretive structural method," concluded that student sports marketing variables are categorized into five levels, with marketing performance and financial support at the first level and marketing strategy at the last level. According to the findings, it is necessary to create a proper student sports marketing strategy plan by attracting financial supporters and improving the services provided in student sports to facilitate the development of student sports marketing (Dost Mohamadi et al., 2020). Shahmansouri et al. (2021) found that the use of creative and innovative methods by managers of sports complexes can contribute to profitability and customer satisfaction. These findings emphasize the importance of modern marketing elements in developing school sports. In their research, Savari et al. (2021) concluded that motivational, individual, facilities, structural and managerial, socio-cultural, and economic factors are the factors of the student health model. This study highlights the importance of considering various factors in designing a school sports marketing development model. Zohrevandian (2021), in a study titled "Designing Model of Conversion of Marketing Capabilities to Function in Football Clubs of Iran Premier League," concluded that the presented model can help identify the marketing capabilities of football clubs and convert these capabilities into performance (revenue generation). This model can also be similarly used in schools (Zohrevandian, 2021). Rosales & Tito (2022), in a study titled "Sports Marketing Communications in South America," showed that sports have become an excellent communication platform through the organization of events.

Sports competitions broadcasted by various networks attract more fans and companies worldwide. These findings can be helpful in developing school sports marketing strategies (Rosales & Tito, 2022). Winand & Anagnostopoulos (2019) indicated that solid fan support for their favorite club increases social identity and enhances and expands the brand equity of the club. This suggests that similar support can be leveraged in school sports (Winand & Anagnostopoulos, 2019). Maadi et al. (2024), in a study titled "The

Pattern of Integrated Marketing Communications in Physical Education and Sports of the Ministry of Education," concluded that causal factors include the school environment and market ecosystem, human capital, culture building, and infrastructure as contextual factors; advertising campaigns, branding, public relations, and direct marketing as intervening factors; and financing, promotion, education structure, and identifying marketing methods as strategies. The outcomes of this model included the economic development of education, empowerment, and improvement of sports services (Maadi et al., 2024). Dost Mohamadi et al. (2023), in a study titled " Identifying Factors and Presenting the Marketing Model of Iranian Student Sports," concluded that the most critical factors in managing student sports marketing in Iran include advertising for competitions, attracting financial support, information systems, brand development, and event quality. These findings highlight the importance of effective planning for improving the quality of sports events and designing and registering sports brands specific to schools (Dost Mohamadi et al., 2023).

By reviewing the research and studies conducted in sports and its educational approach over the years, it is evident that issues such as the lack of sports facilities, appropriate equipment and spaces, and insufficient budget relative to the number of athletes persist. Unfortunately, the sports marketing index in schools has also been poorly addressed. These deficiencies have led to a significant decrease in student sports development and have hindered optimal progress in this area. Therefore, in this research, the researcher aims to understand the sports marketing model in schools. What strategies should be adopted for sports marketing in schools? What will the outcomes of the proposed school sports marketing model after identifying the necessary strategies? Thus, considering the issues mentioned earlier, the objective of the present study is to design a paradigmatic model for the development of sports marketing in Iranian schools.

2. Methodology

The current research employed a qualitative approach systematically using the Grounded Theory methodology (Strauss and Corbin). This approach relies on a three-stage coding process: open coding, axial coding, and selective coding. In this regard, it utilizes a logical paradigm or theoretical diagram to create a theory. Following the open coding process, the researcher identifies a central phenomenon (the main issue) within the ongoing process of investigation and exploration and subsequently relates other concepts to it. The theory derived from such a method is a process theory that systematically collects data to identify themes and concepts and establish relationships among them. To select participants for semi-structured interviews, efforts were made to engage experts familiar with the research topic. As a result, 13 individuals were interviewed in this study (Table 1), comprising eight males and five females. Additionally, nine interviewees held doctoral degrees, while four held master's degrees. The interviews continued until theoretical saturation was achieved.

Table 1. Describe the demographic characteristics of the interviews.

Row	Participants	Number
1	Member of the faculty of sports management	6
2	Former head of the General Department of Education	2

Row	Participants	Number
3	Employee of Student Sports Federation	3
4	Physical education teacher	2

Researchers have highlighted various perspectives regarding the criteria for evaluating the processes and outcomes of qualitative research; some have proposed criteria for the credibility and reliability of qualitative research, including credibility, transferability, dependability, and conformability (Danaeefard & Mozafari, 2008). To confirm the study's validity, the researcher provided the research findings in the form of a table and report to several interviewees, ensuring the credibility of the research definitions and conclusions and the generalizability of the research findings under investigation and their confirmation. Moreover, the findings were compared with those of other researchers and existing theories to establish validity, correctness, and significance. Additionally, ensuring accuracy and trustworthiness is a crucial step in the qualitative data analysis process; therefore, Cohen's Kappa coefficient method was utilized to measure the validity of the research. Cohen's Kappa is one of the statistical decision-making tools used to determine the degree of agreement and consistency between two individuals on a phenomenon, each demonstrating a phenomenon separately or in an independent examination; the range of the Kappa coefficient is between -1 to +1, with outputs closer to +1 indicating proportional and direct agreement, while those closer to -1 indicate inverse agreement and coefficients near to zero indicate disagreement (Pourabdi et al., 2021). After presenting the questions and the research implementation method, the researcher provided them to two sports management professors, resulting in a Cohen's Kappa coefficient of 0.70.

3. Results

The qualitative data analysis yielded 94 concepts, classified into 19 themes within the axes of the foundational data-driven paradigm. To accomplish this, initially, in the open coding stage, as previously described, concepts relevant to the research topic were extracted through repeated examination of the interview transcripts (Table 2). Subsequently, through consolidation and integration of concepts, distinct final codes, and similar codes were labeled as encompassing themes (second column of Tables 3 to 7). In the following stage, axial coding was conducted by reviewing the extracted themes and referring to the interview texts. The themes were categorized into causal conditions, contextual factors, interventions, strategies, and outcomes (Tables 3 to 7). It is worth mentioning that selective coding was simultaneously performed in all these stages. Initially, the discourse on the economic aspect of school sports was chosen as the central phenomenon, and other axes were adjusted, modified, and expanded based on it. In the open coding stage, initial concepts are extracted, and analytically, this can be done row by row, phrase by phrase, paragraph by paragraph, or as separate pages.

Table 2. An example of initial coding of interviews and extraction of concepts..

Interview Text	Concept
For the presentation of a marketing model in any field, attention must first be paid to the political and economic environment of	Political and economic stability

Interview Text	Concept
that society, as without the necessary stability and consistency, it is not possible to achieve appropriate goals and visions.	
One of the ways to facilitate the entry of private companies and investors into the field of physical education is to create financial incentives for them, such as tax incentives.	Tax incentives for private companies.
In order to achieve greater productivity and efficiency in marketing initiatives in school sports, activities should not be carried out in isolation; rather, relevant organizations should strive to develop student sports through collaboration and cooperation with each other.	Development of interdepartmental communication processes and collaboration.
Relevant organizations involved in the marketing process of school sports should provide necessary assurances for profitability and return on investment for stakeholders and should have plans in place to ensure this.	Designing financial return programs.
All marketing activities of relevant organizations and entities should be clearly defined so that their performance in marketing school sports can be assessed accordingly.	Clarification of the roles of various institutions.
Student sports Olympiads serve as a reflection of the entire spectrum of physical education. Therefore, qualitatively, the level of their competitions should be elevated to attract greater financial support from sponsors and stakeholders to participate in these events.	Improving the quality of student sports Olympiads
Unfortunately, in the marketing of student sports, we lack transparent and effective regulations, which has led to a decrease in investment from stakeholders in this area.	Optimizing upstream regulations in the field of school sports marketing.

3.1. Causal conditions

The emergence of class centrism is attributed to specific conditions about certain groups and their characteristics that influence the core issue. In this study, the necessities and challenges necessitating the design of a paradigmatic model for developing school sports marketing were considered the underlying conditions, including economic stability and sustainability, media management, and a knowledge-based economy in sports, as observable in [Table 3](#).

Table 3. Causal conditions of model of the economic discourse of school sports.

Central Coding of Themes	Items	Concepts
Causal conditions	Economic stability and sustainability	Creating a business-friendly environment / Political and economic stability / Support for diversity and competition / Sustainable financial resource management / Optimal utilization of available resources / Sound financial planning

Central Coding of Themes	Items	Concepts
	Media management	Promoting physical education through mass media / Coverage of student sports news / Live broadcasting of major events / Production of relevant content / Active presence in the virtual space
	Knowledge-based economy in sports	Expansion of research initiatives / Futurology in physical education / Support for research activities in student sports / Enhancement of creative and talented forces / Utilization of sports elites in decision-making / Knowledge-centered program and actions

3.2. Contextual conditions

Table 4 illustrates the concepts and principles of background conditions. Background conditions represent specific characteristics of school sports marketing that facilitate development conditions. The current study selected sports governance, institutional interaction and communication, and entrepreneurship and innovation in sports as background conditions.

Table 4. Contextual conditions of model of the economic discourse of school sports.

Central Coding of Themes	Items	Concepts
	Sports governance	International interactions in educational sports investment / Localization of successful models / Sports industry growth / Increasing the share of sports in GDP / Sports marketing activities / Promotion of sports goods and services
Contextual conditions	Institutional interaction and communication	Development of cross-sectoral communication processes and collaboration / Federations' synergy with other organizations / Involvement of philanthropists and grassroots organizations in building sports facilities
	Entrepreneurship and innovation in sports	Increasing employment through entrepreneurial ventures in production / Support for sports-related startups / Diversification and development of revenue sources / Advancement of marketing and branding

3.3. Intervening conditions

The conditions that influence strategies encompass a set of mediating and intermediary variables. Intervening conditions are structural conditions that facilitate or restrict the involvement of other factors and are general and overarching (Corbin & Strauss, 2014). This study identified characteristics of cultural development and economic resilience in schools.

Table 5. Intervening conditions of model of the economic discourse of school sports.

Central Coding of Themes	Items	Concepts
Intervening conditions	Cultural development	Institutionalization of the positive position of sports in the school curriculum / Interest of school managers and staff in sports / Increasing interest of students in sports and physical activities / Enhancing society's attitude towards sports
	Economic resilience in schools	The necessity of attention to the school economy / Balanced development of school facilities / Financial participation of students in school affairs / Reforming consumption patterns / Support for domestic production

3.4. Strategies

Strategies are measures adopted to manage or develop the phenomenon under study. As presented in Table 6, this study identified the strategies of event branding, stakeholder management, public-private partnership, human resource development, marketing program agility, and revising and amending regulations.

Table 6. Strategies of model of the economic discourse of school sports.

Central Coding of Themes	Items	Concepts
Strategies	Event branding	Improving the quality of student sports Olympiads / Utilizing appropriate logos and emblems / Enhancing service quality / Designing and updating programs / Upgrading the incentive and reward system at events / Smart selection of host cities / Establishing an online platform for registration and management of student

Central Coding of Themes	Items	Concepts
		sports Olympiads / Effective advertising / Offering special prizes and attractions
	Stakeholder management	Supporting physical education teachers / Improving relationships with investment companies / Supporting elite student athletes / Holding sessions with investors and stakeholders / Building trust for investors
	Public-private partnership	Financial incentives for private companies / Privatization and reducing government intervention / Financial support from the private sector for student sports / Ensuring capital return and profitability for the private sector
	Human resource development	Optimal training for administrative staff and school managers / Strengthening marketing skills of education administrators / Updating marketing knowledge in financial departments / Holding training workshops
	Marketing program agility	Developing transparent and simple guidelines / Designing financial return programs / Strategic and long-term thinking / Designing long-term income-generating contracts / Clarifying the roles of various institutions / Establishing a unified income generation system in physical education / Attracting financial supporters
	Reviewing and amending regulations	Lack of supportive laws / Optimizing upstream laws in school sports marketing / Facilitating licensing processes / Eliminating conflicting-interest-supporting laws

3.5. Consequences

These variables represent the outcomes and results arising from adopting strategies, and in fact, implementing these strategies leads to consequences. According to [Table 7](#), the promotion of economic thinking in sports, the development of physical education, the organization of school sports equipment, performance monitoring and supervision, and the development of talent identification management in schools are extracted as outcomes of the economic discourse pattern in school sports.

Table 7. Consequences of model of the economic discourse of school sports.

Central Coding of Themes	Items	Concepts
Consequences	Promotion of economic thinking in sports	Fostering a sports-oriented mindset among philanthropists, NGOs, and the private sector/Cultivating awareness among marketing and advertising companies/Eliminating the narrow and individualistic views of some managers
	Development of physical education	Enhancing the efficacy and overall physical and mental performance of students/Improving the effectiveness of physical education teachers and physical education courses in education/Enhancing the performance and elevating the position of education in society
	Organization of school sports equipment	Continuous improvement of sports infrastructure in schools/Providing support and consumable equipment for physical education/Securing suitable facilities and halls for physical education/Maintaining proper upkeep of facilities and equipment/Allocating special sports facilities for students/Establishing new and standardized competitive infrastructures
	Performance monitoring and supervision	Financial transparency in sports (expenses and revenues)/Establishing appropriate control and oversight mechanisms/Serious pursuit of financial corruption cases/Financial performance evaluation/Evaluation of students' sports achievements
	Development of talent identification management in schools	Facilitating talent management and sports development/Identifying sports talents in schools/Introducing talented students to prominent clubs/Comprehensive support for talented students.

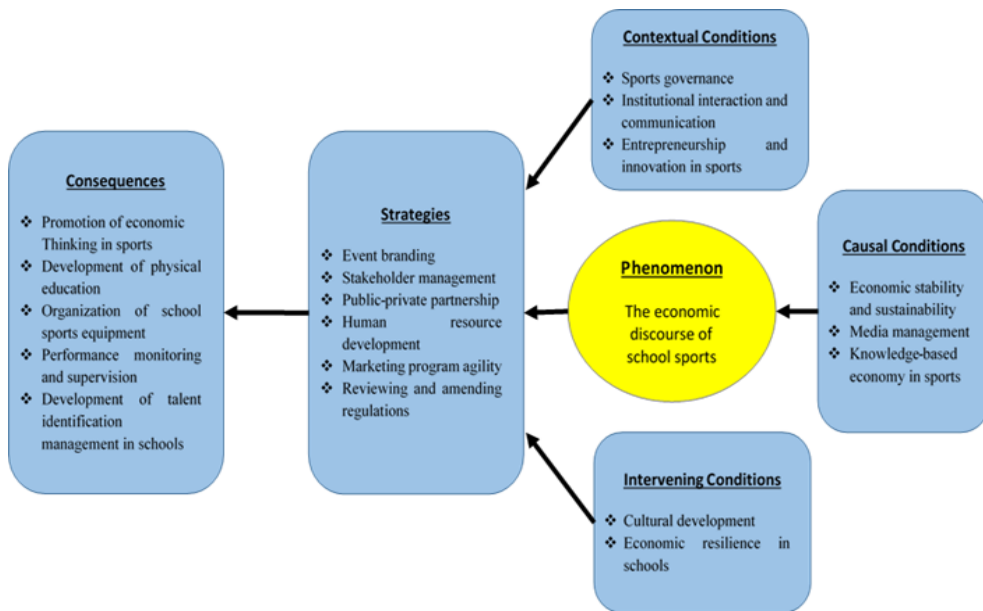


Figure 1. Categories of axial coding in six axes: core category, causal conditions, contextual conditions, intervening conditions, strategies, and consequences.

4. Discussion and conclusion

The current research aimed to present a paradigmatic model for the marketing development of school sports. School sports marketing, or generally physical education, has thus far been neglected both theoretically and in terms of legal and infrastructural considerations due to the specific nature of the country's educational system. It should be prioritized, and the unique capacity of school physical education across all its domains, including physical education classes and student competitions, should be utilized. There appears to be considerable potential in the education system, and the interest of stakeholders indicates that legal barriers to the development of school sports marketing should be removed, and facilitative strategies for revenue generation should be proposed to foster greater flourishing of this crucial sector of the country's sports.

In this context, the research findings indicated that three categories—economic stability and sustainability, media management, and knowledge-based economy in sports—are highly influential in developing school sports marketing, referred to as causal factors. The results obtained from the present study were in line with the findings of [Bahrami & Kiani \(2023\)](#) and [Dastoom et al. \(2020\)](#). [Bahrami & Kiani \(2023\)](#) stated in their research findings that the use of social media impacts sports marketing. [Dastoom et al. \(2020\)](#) also noted that the country's sports have significant potential capabilities for transitioning to a knowledge-based economy. However, achieving a knowledge-based economy requires more crucial and specialized infrastructure, structures, and investments ([Dastoom et al., 2020](#)). Economic stability and sustainability are essential for creating a stable platform for developing student sports, improving the economy and employment, and achieving financial growth. This is essential because sustainable

economic development is necessary to advance in marketing development confidently. Media management refers to the efficient use of media and modern technologies to develop school sports marketing, aiming to enhance the image of student sports among the public and investor companies through advertising and utilizing available information resources. Mass media plays a significant role in this regard.

Moreover, student sports can be recognized as vital in developing a knowledge-based economy. This fosters a dynamic and innovative environment in sports, creating conditions for realizing personal ideas and small businesses, thereby strengthening the knowledge-based economy. Hence, supporting student sports and providing a suitable environment for marketing development can be considered strategies for advancing the knowledge-based economy in the realm of sports and student sports.

The categories of sports governance, institutional interaction and communication, and entrepreneurship and innovation in sports were introduced as contextual conditions in the present study. The results obtained from the research were in line with the findings of [Norouzi Seyed Hossini et al. \(2024\)](#), [Shahmansouri et al. \(2021\)](#), and [Ahmady et al. \(2018\)](#). [Norouzi Seyed Hossini et al. \(2024\)](#) also stated in their research results that the identified categories for capacities and new methods in sports entrepreneurship provide a roadmap for entrepreneurs, stakeholders, and policymakers to navigate the competitive and dynamic environment of the sports business. [Shahmansouri et al. \(2021\)](#) found that the use of creative and innovative methods by managers of sports complexes can contribute to profitability and customer satisfaction. [Ahmady et al. \(2018\)](#) stated that identifying the factors of sports governance leads to prioritizing and organizing actions in sports federations. Like any other system, student sports require formulating comprehensive policies within the framework of the country's sports governance, including overarching goals, strategies, and operational plans. This ensures awareness of the path forward while avoiding the waste of financial, human, physical, and informational resources.

In this regard, student sports policies must be linked with macro sports policies to promote community sports development within a general framework. Institutional interaction and communication can be a significant factor in developing school sports marketing. Various organizations such as schools, federations, companies, and other institutions can create an environment for developing school sports in the educational setting through cooperation and resource sharing. For instance, sports federations can assist schools by providing sports education programs and plans to offer suitable and attractive sports programs for their students. Additionally, various companies and organizations can support student-athletes by providing financial support and participating in the provision of facilities, helping them flourish as professional athletes.

Furthermore, different organizations and institutions can collaborate and provide the necessary resources to develop student sports. In that case, they can play a role in the revenue generation of sports institutions and improve the state of student sports in the country. On the other hand, entrepreneurship and innovation in sports can contribute to developing school sports marketing. Given the increasing growth of the sports industry, entrepreneurship and innovation in this field will provide good job and financial opportunities. Examples include the creation of startups in the educational sports

technology sector, the production and sale of innovative sports equipment, and the provision of technology-based sports services for athletes, all of which will contribute to the development of school sports marketing.

Intervening conditions are another factor that influences the research strategies. In this study, the categories of cultural development and the resistance economy in schools were central to the intervening conditions. The results obtained were in line with the findings of [Savari et al. \(2021\)](#) and [Hajiheydari & Nazari \(2021\)](#). [Savari et al. \(2021\)](#) concluded in their research that motivational, individual, facilities, structural and managerial, socio-cultural, and economic factors are the determinants of the student health model. This study underscores the importance of considering various factors in designing the school sports marketing development model ([Savari et al., 2021](#)). [Hajiheydari & Nazari \(2021\)](#) also stated that to implement significant economic policies in managerial domains such as sports, it is necessary to foster culture, create a positive outlook in society, and utilize the maximum scientific, geographical, indigenous, and sociological capacities. Cultural development is another intervening factor in the present research; the interviewees' opinions indicate that institutionalizing and enhancing sports in schools and improving managers' and officials' attitudes towards sports play a role in developing school sports marketing. A resistance economy always envisions an economy capable of withstanding potential damage to its structure. To achieve such an economy in schools, a long-term view of economic policies in schools is necessary, and the financial infrastructure must be designed so that in the future, schools can pursue their goals and visions in various fields.

In this research, the categories of event branding, stakeholder management, public-private partnership, human resource development, marketing program agility, and reviewing and amending regulations were considered as strategies to control and respond to the phenomenon under study. The results obtained from the research were aligned with the findings of [Dost Mohamadi et al. \(2023\)](#), [Mirzaei Kalar et al. \(2020\)](#) and [Dost Mohamadi et al. \(2020\)](#). [Dost Mohamadi et al. \(2023\)](#) indicated in their study that the most critical factors in managing school sports marketing in Iran are advertising for competitions, attracting financial support, information systems, brand development, and event quality. These findings highlight the importance of effective planning for developing the quality of sports events and the design and registration of sports brands specific to schools. [Mirzaei Kalar et al. \(2020\)](#) showed in their research that the development of school sports is a dynamic process, and to achieve this. The outcomes of development, stakeholders, strategies, methods, and pathways of sports development must work together. Therefore, policymakers and planners should consider stakeholders, strategies, processes, and pathways of sports development when formulating policies and programs for developing school sports ([Mirzaei Kalar et al., 2020](#)). [Dost Mohamadi et al. \(2020\)](#) concluded in their research that by creating an appropriate school sports marketing strategy, attracting financial sponsors, and improving the services offered in school sports, the groundwork for the development of school sports marketing can be laid. In this regard, event branding of student events can be seen as one of the effective ways to attract financial sponsors and material and spiritual support. This method can facilitate the provision of standard equipment, regular

organization of competitions, and improvement of the quality of school sports and other related activities. Overall, event branding leads to increased attention and recognition of school sports.

On the other hand, stakeholder management in school sports (including parents, coaches, students, investors, etc.) can improve the conditions of school sports and consequently contribute to the development of school sports marketing. For instance, managing parents can encourage students to participate in sports activities and purchase sports equipment. At the same time, proper management of coaches and school administrators can improve the conditions of sports training and create opportunities for participation in sports competitions. As a result, effective stakeholder management increases students' interest and motivation to participate in sports activities, which was introduced as one of the research strategies. Public-private partnerships are another strategy of the current research. A review of the privatization literature in sports shows that almost all countries worldwide attach great importance to the role and position of privatization in the sports sector. This concept in grassroots sports can take the form of cooperation with private companies to promote physical education in commercial environments or as an investment in various aspects of school sports. According to the research participants, establishing an educational system among human resources involved in school sports marketing development is crucial. Education provides a suitable opportunity to develop knowledge and skills, resulting in empowerment and self-efficacy for individuals and organizations in the marketing field. Marketing program agility was identified as the final strategy in the present research, referring to the continuous improvement and updating of principles and programs. This concept focuses on designing and outlining marketing programs with a strategic and long-term approach.

Additionally, this process should concentrate on creating, scheduling, and implementing specific actions while providing criteria to track the progress of marketing activities. Reviewing and amending regulations is another factor essential for developing school sports marketing. These revisions may include macro-level restrictions on investments in physical education or limitations on school revenue generation. Lawmakers can facilitate the development of the student sports industry by drafting and approving appropriate laws and guidelines. Consequently, reviewing and amending regulations can significantly increase revenue for student sports and foster a healthy and fair competitive environment in this field.

Promotion of economic thinking in sports, development of physical education, organization of school sports equipment, performance monitoring and supervision, and development of talent identification management in schools are the outcomes of the economic discourse model for school sports. The results obtained from the research align with the findings of [Maadi et al. \(2024\)](#), [Sarlak & Kaveh \(2022\)](#), [Ghanbari Firouzabadi et al. \(2020\)](#), and [Rastogi et al. \(2017\)](#). In their research results, [Maadi et al. \(2024\)](#) stated that causal factors include the school environment and market ecosystem, human capital, culture building, and infrastructure as contextual factors. Advertising campaigns, branding, public relations, and direct marketing were identified as intervening factors, while financing, promotion, educational structure, and

identifying marketing methods were recognized as strategies. The outcomes of this model included the economic development of education, empowerment, and improvement of sports services (Maadi et al., 2024). Sarlak & Kaveh (2022), by explaining the challenges of educational sports in the country, showed that the shortage of human resources and the lack of sports facilities and equipment are the main obstacles to the development of educational sports. The research results indicated that comprehensive planning is needed to address these issues since the development of educational sports plays a vital role in shaping students' lifestyles (Sarlak & Kaveh, 2022). In their research findings, Ghanbari Firouzabadi et al. (2020) introduced human resources, financial resources, space and equipment, implementation of physical education lessons, and extracurricular programs as causal factors. Managerial, socio-cultural, media and technology, and scientific sports components were presented as contextual conditions affecting the development of student sports.

Financial, political, and economic components were also identified as intervening conditions. At the same time, structural development, managerial actions, human resource development, revenue development, space and equipment development, cultural development, and extracurricular program development were presented as strategies for the development of student sports (Ghanbari Firouzabadi et al., 2020). Rastogi et al. (2017), in their examination of the state of physical education development in various countries, showed that despite suitable methods and programs in school sports development, development programs have many failures. This issue is related to the need for a long-term and comprehensive program. These findings indicate that long-term and thorough planning for school sports development is essential (Rastogi et al., 2017). From the interviewees' perspective, promoting economic thinking in sports was one of the most important outcomes of the present research. This means having a correct understanding and awareness of economic concepts in sports, which can be achieved through discourse in society. Therefore, discourse creation and promotion are the prerequisites for developing the financial space of sports. The primary goal of the development of physical education is to promote collective participation among students and, subsequently, to identify and develop sports talents, promote the culture of a healthy and active lifestyle, and strengthen social cohesion among students and, consequently, in society. Therefore, it is clear that applying the school sports marketing development model will lead to the development of physical education. The organization of school sports equipment was identified as another research strategy. Given the importance and role of standard spaces and equipment in the quality of sports activities, officials and organizations should provide the necessary support to meet the needs of standardized sports facilities. Success and achieving the expected goals require performance monitoring and supervision because with proper monitoring and evaluation, the progress of individuals and organizations can be measured, and appropriate control and supervisory mechanisms can address violations and deficiencies. The development of talent identification management in schools is a foundational element for professional and championship sports, which has yet to progress as expected in Iran. Undoubtedly, this talent identification can be used as a platform for marketing development through school sports. By identifying students'

sports talents, schools can provide opportunities for participation in sports competitions and support athletes to develop their abilities.

Based on the findings of the research and the necessity for developing school sports marketing, it is proposed that relevant agencies and organizations prioritize implementing a transparent and desirable marketing system for student sports nationwide through increased interaction and mutual coordination. Considering the need for legislative review and amendments, it is recommended that legislators and policymakers draft facilitative resolutions and guidelines regarding revenue generation for student sports. Furthermore, to synergize with the private sector, the Student Sports Federation, in collaboration with the Ministry of Education, should create conditions for private companies to invest in educational sports for long-term investments. Developing diverse and comprehensive marketing plans is suggested to complement and strengthen these strategies. These plans should encompass various sporting activities to attract a broader spectrum of students. Additionally, establishing supportive financial structures such as support funds and attracting sponsors to finance school sports programs can reduce dependence on government budgets and create economic sustainability. Moreover, investment in developing and renovating school sports facilities and equipment aims to provide a suitable and attractive environment for student sports activities, among other proposed recommendations.

Regarding the limitations of the research, it can be noted that some interviewees, due to their work commitments and busy schedules, needed more time for more comprehensive and in-depth interviews. This issue resulted in the potential loss of valuable information and essential details, preventing a complete exploration of all aspects of the research topic. To achieve more comprehensive and complete results, it was necessary to conduct interviews with individuals holding high-level managerial and decision-making positions in the country's sports and education fields. However, there were limitations in accessing these individuals, which prevented us from benefiting from their broad and strategic perspectives. These limitations could affect the comprehensiveness and depth of the research results. Therefore, these limitations should be addressed in future studies through more precise planning and alternative methods to access interviewees.

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طراحی مدل پارادایمی توسعه بازاریابی ورزش مدارس ایران

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کلیدواژه

بازاریابی ورزشی
برندسازی رویدادها
چابک‌سازی برنامه‌های بازاریابی
نظریه داده بنیاد
ورزش مدارس

نوع مقاله

پژوهشی

چکیده

هدف: هدف پژوهش حاضر طراحی مدل توسعه بازاریابی ورزش مدارس ایران با رویکرد داده بنیاد بود.

روش: با توجه به ماهیت اکتشافی پژوهش حاضر، از روش داده‌بنیاد با رویکرد سیستماتیک استفاده شد. داده‌ها از طریق مصاحبه‌های نیمه‌ساختاریافته جمع‌آوری شدند. یافته‌های پژوهش با استفاده از شیوه‌های متداول ارزیابی شدند تا از قابلیت اعتماد آن‌ها اطمینان حاصل شود. مشارکت‌کنندگان پژوهش شامل ۱۳ نفر از خبرگان بودند که به صورت هدفمند انتخاب شدند و این افراد شامل اساتید مدیریت ورزشی، اعضای فدراسیون ورزش دانش‌آموزی، روسای سابق اداره کل آموزش و پرورش و دبیران ورزش بودند.

یافته‌ها: نتیجه تحلیل داده‌ها، استخراج ۹۴ مفهوم در قالب ۱۹ مقوله بود که در تدوین مدل توسعه بازاریابی ورزش مدارس نقش دارند. از این میان ۳ مقوله شرایط زمینه‌ای (حکمرانی ورزشی، تعامل و ارتباطات نهادی و کارآفرینی و نوآوری در ورزش)، ۳ مقوله شرایط علی (ثبات و پایداری اقتصادی، مدیریت رسانه‌ای و اقتصاد دانش بنیان در ورزش)، ۲ مقوله شرایط مداخله‌گر (توسعه فرهنگی و اقتصاد مقاومتی در مدارس)، ۶ مقوله راهبرد (برندسازی رویدادها، مدیریت ذی‌نفعان، هم‌افزایی با بخش خصوصی، آموزش منابع انسانی، چابک‌سازی برنامه‌های بازاریابی و بازنگری و اصلاح قوانین) و ۵ مقوله به عنوان پیامد (ترویج تفکر اقتصادی در ورزش، توسعه ورزش تربیتی، ساماندهی تجهیزات ورزشی مدارس، پایش و نظارت عملکرد و توسعه مدیریت استعدادیابی در مدارس به عنوان پیامدهای الگوی گفتمان اقتصادی ورزش مدارس) دسته‌بندی شدند.

اصالت و ابتکار مقاله: این مطالعه با طراحی مدل توسعه بازاریابی ورزش مدارس ایران می‌تواند از ورزش مدارس در رسیدن به اهداف بازاریابی استفاده کند.

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Presenting the Development Model of Active Sports Tourism with an Economic Approach: the Share of Health-Oriented Sports in the Gross Domestic Product

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ABSTRACT

Purpose: More comprehensive and practical research is needed on active sports tourism, the importance of sports development in Iran, and its impact on the economy. Therefore, the current study aims to develop a sports tourism development model with an economic approach to address various aspects of increasing sports tourism's share in the gross domestic product.

Methodology: This qualitative study used the database theory strategy and Charns's constructivist approach. Data were collected using in-depth semi-structured interviews. Nineteen experts in three fields—sports science, economy, and tourism—participated in the research.

Findings: The interviews' 210 sentences were implemented into 145 initial and 22 focused codes. Finally, the factors identified from the interviews were classified into six core categories: health-giving movements, institutionalization, active lifestyle, health, people and society, and economy. The current model acknowledges that active sports tourism may directly and indirectly affect the Gross domestic product (GDP).

Originality: It was found that increasing attention to active sports tourism improves people's health and quality of life and can also lead to increased productivity, reduced health costs, the growth of related industries, and an increase in gross domestic product.

Keywords

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1. Introduction

Lifestyle is a multifaceted concept that profoundly affects individuals' lives (Bahodir et al., 2020). It encompasses the habits, practices, choices, and values that shape each person's way of living (Lambrinou et al., 2019). A variety of factors influence lifestyle, including culture, economy, society, and environment (Abdullayeva, 2023). Analyzing this concept through its theoretical foundations and various theories enhances our understanding of the lifestyles of individuals and communities (McCormick & Vasilaki, 2018). In contemporary society, the transformation of people's lifestyles and behaviors is both a natural and desirable occurrence (Uusitupa et al., 2019). Individuals are exposed to social, technological, economic, and cultural advancements that significantly affect their daily routines. These changes can be observed in various contexts, such as consumption patterns, leisure activities, dietary habits, and environmental factors (López-Moreno et al., 2020). Investigating and analyzing these shifts and their implications for individuals' lives is a compelling and essential area of exploration within social research and the human sciences.

One of the styles garnering significant attention today is active sports tourism. Engaging in active sports tourism and physical activity is crucial for public health. Sports and recreational activities not only enhance people's physical well-being but also have a positive impact on their mood and mental health (Van De Zande et al., 2022). Consequently, promoting active sports tourism and physical activity has emerged as a strategy for disease prevention and improving overall quality of life (Henderson & Bialeschki, 2005). This approach can lead to diminished healthcare costs associated with disease treatment and heightened efficiency in daily living (Liu et al., 2018). From this perspective, research and studies focusing on active sports tourism and physical activity are vital for public health. It can be recognized that the pursuit of health, well-being, and sustainability is closely linked to the adoption of active sports tourism (Bruland et al., 2019). Active sports tourism encompasses various dimensions, including psychological, social, and spiritual aspects (Nazem, 2012). The World Health Organization defines a healthy lifestyle as one that includes complete physical, mental, and social well-being, rather than merely the absence of disease or organ dysfunction (World Health Organization, 2018).

Sports tourism is increasingly being recognized as a burgeoning concept within Iranian society. Individuals across various age groups and genders are displaying a keen interest in sports and recreational activities (Nikoabadi et al., 2024). Over the last few years, traditional sports like wrestling and football have garnered significant popularity. However, a wider array of sports, including cycling, hiking, mountain climbing, and group activities such as yoga and Pilates, is now captivating the attention of many. People from the youth to middle-aged and elderly populations are engaging in active sports tourism. The benefits of this lifestyle for Iranian society are noteworthy; it has the potential to enhance overall quality of life and mitigate the prevalence of chronic diseases like diabetes and cardiovascular conditions (Nazari & Shahvali, 2022). Moreover, promoting sports and physical activities can foster stronger social connections and reinforce community spirit (Weiss & Kipp, 2018). This trend also has the potential to develop the sports and

recreation industry, generating job opportunities and boosting economic prosperity (Acquah-Sam, 2021) within the nation. Consequently, research into active sports tourism and its impact on Iranian society is essential, contributing to sustainable development and overall improvement.

Active sports tourism plays a significant role in society (Yang et al., 2014) and encompasses a wide diversity of sports and recreational activities. Given the extensive relationship and interaction between active sports tourism and key factors such as the economy, health, and overall well-being of Iranian society, there is ample opportunity for scientific and academic research in this area to be both expanded and enhanced. A thorough examination of the impact of active sports tourism on the economy and health of Iranian communities can facilitate the development of effective strategies and policies aimed at promoting this concept and maximizing its benefits within society.

In the realm of active sports tourism, the economic perspective holds significant importance (Myburgh et al., 2019). Sports and physical activities, as integral components of this lifestyle, have a considerable impact on various sectors of the economy and business (Ya, 2020). Notably, this includes the production and sale of sports equipment and apparel, the provision of sports training and consulting services, as well as the organization of sports tournaments and tours (Gagnon et al., 2017). These elements contribute to job creation and the expansion of the private sector, playing a crucial role in generating national income through increased sales and trade in these areas. Furthermore, the relationship between the economic approach and active sports tourism in Iran positively influences the promotion and development of sports (Mohamadi Torkamani et al., 2016). Effective promotion and advertising of sports and recreational activities can attract individuals and stimulate demand for services and products associated with sports and recreation (Shahvali Kohshouri et al., 2022). Consequently, these factors can significantly support the growth of the sports and recreation industry and are essential for realizing active sports tourism within Iranian society. The economic perspective on active sports tourism serves as a comprehensive framework that can enhance the promotion of sports and recreational activities within Iranian culture, underscoring its considerable economic and commercial significance.

One of the debates in different societies related to the economy is the gross domestic product; the relevance of GDP in active sports tourism is significant (Hafner et al., 2020). Gross domestic product measures the value of all goods and services produced in a country during a specific period. This measure is a general indicator of a country's economic activity and size. More simply, this measure tells us how much a country has added value from all its goods and services and is used to measure its wealth and economic prosperity. Ferrara & Simoni (2023) This study analyzes how active sports tourism affects the gross domestic product in Iranian society. Research in this field can help formulate more detailed policies and programs to actively promote sports tourism in Iran and use it optimally to meet society's economic, social, and health needs. This research helps identify the strengths and weaknesses in these areas and determine the right path to achieve sustainable development goals and the general improvement of Iranian society.

Only a little research has been done on the relationship between active sports tourism and GDP. This little research suggests that promoting sports tourism can actively help

improve inflation (Pretty et al., 2016). Lambrinou et al. (2019) believe that with the increase in sports and recreation activities, the demand for products and services related to sports and recreation also increases, which, as a result, can encourage the growth of sports-related industries. In addition, Sassi & Hurst (2008) showed that active sports tourism can help reduce healthcare costs associated with chronic diseases. People who engage in vigorous physical activity may be less likely to develop chronic diseases, which can reduce disease rates and healthcare costs related to their lead (Ehrman et al., 2022). Therefore, research in this field can formulate more detailed policies and programs to actively promote sports tourism in Iran and its optimal use in meeting economic and social needs and helping the community's health. Also Haase et al. (2004) acknowledged that the development of the gross domestic product by actively promoting sports tourism could lead to increased productivity of people and efficiency in daily life, as well as the development of governments. People who do sports and take recreation seriously usually have better energy and physical health, which can help improve efficiency in daily tasks and performance in various areas of life (Nazari, 2021).

This research and their achievements show that the relationship between active sports tourism and the national gross product is of particular importance and shows the effects of this lifestyle on the economy, health, and productivity of individuals and society. By reviewing the literature related to active sports tourism and the gross domestic product in past research, the fundamental gap that can be seen in domestic research in the field of sports management, economy, and health is not paying attention to the development of sports tourism and determining its share in the gross domestic product. Hence, research in this field can help to develop more comprehensive and targeted policies and programs to actively promote sports tourism and take advantage of its positive effects in Iranian society.

The present study examines the relationship between active sports tourism and gross domestic product in Iranian society. These issues include two essential aspects that are potentially important in the economic and sports fields. First, the primary concern of the research is to address the fundamental void in domestic research related to the development of sports tourism and its contribution to the GDP. Previous research has inevitably pointed to ignoring this relationship and not specifying this lifestyle's direct and indirect effects on the national economy. One of the main reasons for investigating these two issues is that sports tourism is actively considered an essential factor in determining society's health and increasing people's productivity. By connecting these two important aspects, this research tries to prove the importance of awareness of active sports tourism in Iranian society. Also, studying this relationship can help officials and policymakers implement more comprehensive programs and policies to promote sports tourism and improve its effects on the gross domestic product.

During the research, in addition to filling the research gap in sports management, economy, and health, understanding these issues will probably lead to the importance of informing the public. This research aims to formulate more comprehensive and targeted policies and programs to promote sports tourism, actively exploit its positive effects in Iranian society, and tell people. So, the main issue of this research is the relationship between active sports tourism and gross domestic product in Iranian society. This issue

examines how increasing sports activities and recreation in society can lead to economic growth and reduced medical expenses. As a financial and social reflective and analytical study, this research addresses the critical questions of how active sports tourism in Iran can increase the gross domestic product and help improve the quality of life of individuals and society. This research will help us to be aware of the positive and negative effects of active sports tourism on our economy and communities, and we will also be able to improve essential issues such as public health, quality of life, and economic sustainability. One of the essential aspects of this research is that it can help policymakers and officials make decisions regarding public health, sports and recreation, and the economy. The information obtained from this research can help to improve decisions and develop policies in the field of actively promoting sports tourism and increasing investment in industries related to sports and recreation. Also, this research can help raise society's awareness about the importance of active sports tourism and its effects on human health and well-being. Hence, this research is of particular significance as a multidisciplinary study that deals with the economy, health, and society, and its results can contribute to the general improvement of Iranian society. This research can be essential in promoting sports and recreation activities and further research in this field. The results of this research help policymakers and decision-makers to create more effective policies in promoting active sports tourism and developing industries related to sports and social recreation. Ordinary people can also use the results of this research to improve their health and quality of life. Sports industry and trade can also take advantage of the results of this research to increase investment in sports-related sectors and services. Researchers can even see this research as a source for further research. This research is of particular importance to Iranian society. It can contribute to the general improvement and increase awareness about the importance of active sports tourism and its effects on the economy, health, and productivity of humans and society. This research aims to develop a sports tourism development model with an economic approach to address various aspects of increasing its share in the national GDP. This review deals with active sports tourism and gross domestic product in Iranian society and the effects of this lifestyle on the economy, health, and productivity of individuals and society.

2. Methodology

The current study is qualitative and was conducted using the database theory method. In the current research, the constructivist approach of data theory based on [Charmaz \(2006\)](#) was used to present a schematic model of the findings from the coded data. The theory based on the constructivist approach leads researchers to focus on what is happening in the field of study. Therefore, researchers are part of it and should be flexible ([Charmaz, 2020](#)). The participants in the research reached 19 people using the theoretical saturation index. The characteristics and demographic characteristics, the participants, the selection criteria of the participants, and the topics in the interviews are shown in [Table 1](#).

Table 1. Demographic characteristics, characteristics of participants, and inclusion criteria.

Demographic characteristics									
Number of people	Location	Number of people	Ege	Number of people	Education	Number of people	Filed of study	Number of people	Activity
12	Isfahan	5	35-44	1	BA	11	Sport science	11	academic
5	Tehran	9	45-55	4	MA	6	economic	5	executive
2	Khozestan	5	uper5 5	14	Ph.D.	2	Sport Tourism	3	other
2	other	The topics in the interviews				Criteria for selecting participants			
		1- Lifestyles 4- Sports marketing 2- Economy 5- Public sports 3- Active life 6- Health oriented				1- People who are familiar with sports tourism literature and are actively involved in sports 3- Having at least 3 scientific articles or a bookIn the field of active sports tourism and sports economics and marketing			

The exclusion criteria included those participants who refused to be interviewed or answer questions during the study or interview in any way and were unwilling to participate in the research. In the present study, in the entire sampling process, three stages of free, relational, and theoretical sampling, which is the basis of using the constructivist approach of foundational data theory, were followed (Charmaz, 2006). The interviews lasted approximately 45 to 60 minutes. These meetings were conducted with prior coordination and at the workplace of the participants, and in some cases where it was not possible to be physically present, the interviews were conducted through voice calls. Data collection was stopped after 19 interviews due to data saturation. On the day of the interview, explanations were provided to the participants regarding the research objectives, which they only narrated based on their abilities about the research topic. They were assured that they were selected only for academic research, that their information would remain confidential, and that their details would not be mentioned.

In this research, the interviews were analyzed based on the constructivist approach of data theory based on (Charmaz, 2006). The four overlapping processes in the constructivist grounded theory analysis are initial coding, focused or selective coding, axial coding, and theoretical coding. The first step in the experiment and data analysis, namely primary (open) coding, which is the process of crushing, comparing, conceptualizing, and categorizing data, was formed with the focus of conceptualization. In the next stage (focused coding), codes with similar phenomena were classified, and so-called categorization was done. In the next stage (axial coding), axial codes emerged from categorizing concepts. Finally, theoretical coding was done. Theoretical coding in the constructivist method consists of arranging core codes together and based on logic, connecting them with other focused codes, validating relationships, and filling empty spaces with categories that need to be modified and expanded (Charmaz, 2006). This stage is the most abstract level of coding through which the relationships between the created categories are described. The researcher must adjust and commit himself to the primary phenomenon to achieve the desired integration at this stage. The output of this stage is nothing but theorizing that has been achieved (Amiri & Nourozi Seyed Hoseini, 2019).

In this study, the method [Guba & Lincoln \(1994\)](#) with the name of reliability, which is related to qualitative studies, was used to verify the results and strength accuracy and to legitimize and validate the findings and analysis. Therefore, the four indicators of acceptability, trust, verifiability, and transferability were used to ensure the consistency and strength of the qualitative data. Based on this, to check the acceptability of the data, the principal researcher and the research team members also supervised and actively participated in the stages of data collection, analysis, and interpretation. Also, long-term involvement with the participants helped to gain their trust and a better understanding of their experiences and ultimately increased the validity and acceptability of the data. The researcher used the method of continuous comparative analysis for reliability (stability). This way, the codes were reviewed several times to determine similarities and differences. The member review method [Andrew et al. \(2019\)](#) was used to assess the verifiability of the member review. In this way, the codings and the final model were given to four participants, who applied their opinions, and finally, the research model was approved. To check the transferability, it was also tried to participate. Participants should have more diversity, and this process continued until data saturation.

3. Results

After removing duplicate and unrelated items, the researcher identified and marked about 101 primary categories in the primary coding. Then, 22 codes were obtained in the focused coding and presented in six central codes. Based on the procedures given in the methodology section and the provided coding sample, the categories, focused codes, and central codes are described in [Table 2](#).

Table 2. Categories, centralized codes, and core codes of the sports tourism development model with an economic approach.

Cocepts	Centralized code	Categoriz (Theoretical code)
Prevention of diseases	origin	
Creating employment through sports activities		
Improving the physical and mental health of people		
Creating fields of physical activity in communities		
Promoting a culture of healthy lifestyle		
Increasing the rate of participation in sports activities	Changing the	
Reducing the consumption of substances harmful to health	behavior pattern	
Raising people's awareness about healthy eating		
Encourage active and sports tourism		
Improving sports skills in people		
Promoting self-care and pursuing personal health	Individual ability	
Increase safety and physical ability		
Development of individual knowledge in the field of nutrition and health		Healthy movements
Creating sports infrastructure in cities	organize	

Cocepts	Centralized code	Categoriz (Theoretical code)
<p>Encouragement to participate in sports events and competitions</p> <p>Promoting cooperation between organizations in providing health services</p> <p>Improving coordination between institutions to implement health programs</p> <p>Compilation and implementation of national health programs</p> <p>Promoting the use of technology in the advancement of individual health</p> <p>Creating health standards in communities</p> <p>Promotion of advertising and awareness in the field of health</p>	Strategizing	
<p>Analysis of the needs of society in the field of health and sports</p> <p>Identifying weaknesses and development needs in related industries</p> <p>Research in the field of lifestyle and its effects on the economy</p> <p>Identifying the challenges and opportunities of institutionalizing an active health lifestyle</p> <p>Assessing the impact of demographic and social changes on needs</p> <p>Determining the duties and responsibilities of different departments in institutionalization</p> <p>Creating communication and coordination between different organizations and institutions</p> <p>Promoting coordination between different departments of the government</p> <p>Creating incentive policies to promote a health-oriented lifestyle</p> <p>Developing strategies to attract investment in related industries</p> <p>Providing facilities and government support to businesses related to active sports tourism</p> <p>Formulation of regulations related to the quality and safety of health-oriented products</p> <p>Developing risk management strategies against economic and social changes</p> <p>Setting up sample projects in different communities</p> <p>Establishing counseling and training centers in the field of health and sports</p> <p>Implementation of educational programs in schools and universities</p>	<p>Recognizing the needs</p> <p>Structure design</p> <p>Formulation of policies and regulations</p> <p>Implementation and enforcement</p> <p>Evaluation and corrections</p> <p>Stabilization and establishment</p>	<p>Institutionalization of mobility in nature</p>

Cocepts	Centralized code	Categoriz (Theoretical code)
<p>Analysis of the results of the implementation of programs and projects</p> <p>Conducting continuous evaluations based on specific indicators</p> <p>Gathering community feedback and providing opportunities for criticism and suggestions</p> <p>Implementing pleasant programs to promote a health-oriented lifestyle</p> <p>Creating measures to attract community support and participation in programs</p> <p>Continuation of promoting the promotion of health-oriented lifestyle in social media</p> <p>Implementing measures to deal with challenges and obstacles in the long term</p> <p>Creating tools and resources for continuous financial support of programs</p>		
<p>Prevention of diseases</p> <p>Promoting public health programs</p> <p>Promotion of community awareness</p> <p>Access to preventive medical services</p> <p>Encouraging sports and physical activities</p> <p>Teaching stress management techniques</p> <p>Promoting health-oriented lifestyles</p> <p>Educational programs to improve mental health</p> <p>Consulting services to improve the quality of life</p> <p>Development of healthy food businesses</p> <p>Creation of sports equipment production industries</p> <p>Promoting health and sports tourism activities</p> <p>sHealth and treatment services with a prevention approach</p> <p>Communication with social influencers</p> <p>Cooperation with famous athletes</p> <p>Detailed and attractive information about products</p> <p>Research and development programs to improve products</p> <p>Special facilities and discounts to attract customers</p>	<p>Reducing treatment costs</p> <p>Increased productivity and greater concentration</p> <p>Creation of related industries and services</p> <p>Increase sales of related products</p>	<p>Active sports tourism</p>
<p>Promoting sports activities to improve physical health</p> <p>Promoting healthy and balanced nutrition in communities</p> <p>Creating educational programs to inform about health</p> <p>Encouraging preventive examinations and periodic checkups</p> <p>Development of disease prevention and control programs</p> <p>Raising the level of community awareness in the field of health and improving daily life</p>	<p>Health Promotion</p> <p>General improvement</p>	<p>Health</p>

Cocepts	Centralized code	Categoriz (Theoretical code)
Research and innovations related to sports and physical activity		

The present model has six specific axes, which are presented schematically in the continuation of forming one of these axes. Figure 1 schematically shows how the economic axis is formed as one of the principal axes of the sports tourism development model with a financial approach.

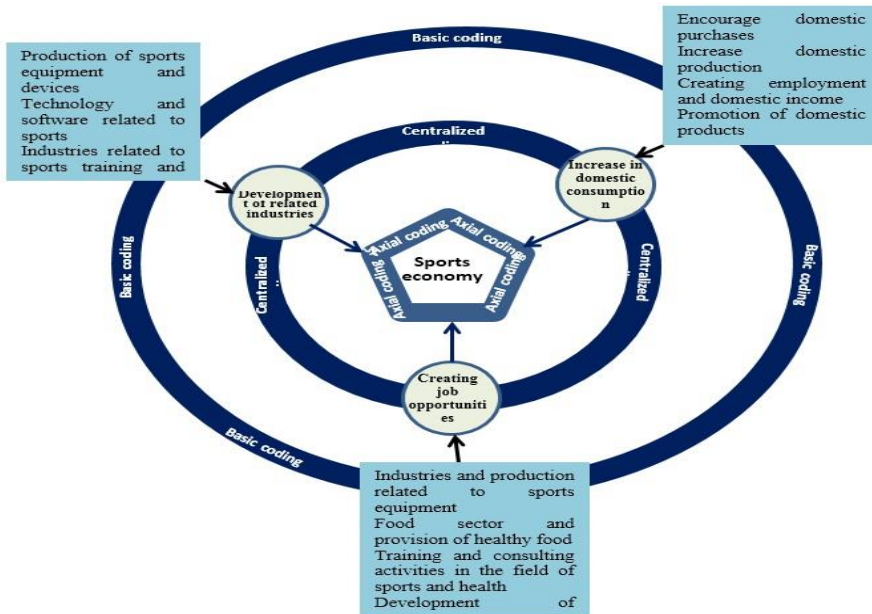


Figure 1. Schematic of the economic axis.

Following an analysis of the categories associated with the economic aspects of sports tourism development, the final research model is illustrated in Figure 2. The factors derived from the interviews were organized into six primary categories: health movements, institutionalization, active sports tourism, health, individuals and society, and the economy.

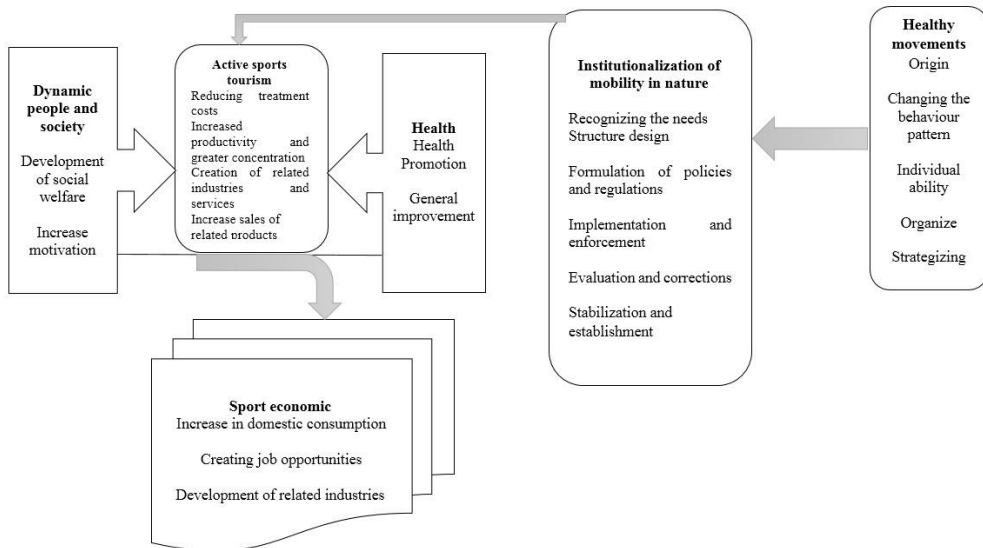


Figure 2. The final construction model of sports tourism development with an economic approach.

4. Discussion and conclusion

This research aimed to contribute to the general improvement and awareness of the importance of active sports tourism and its effects on the economy, health, and productivity of individuals and society. Therefore, the present model addressed this goal in two separate parts. The sports tourism development model with an economic approach can be described and explained based on these two phases. Ibn Madal first discussed how to actively institutionalize sports tourism. In the following section, he investigated the impact of actively institutionalized sports tourism on Iranian society's economy and gross domestic product. In the initial phase of this model, it is mentioned that the institutionalization of healthy movements leads to an active lifestyle. First, it stated how the movements of the health sector were created. This model acknowledged that the beginning of health-giving movements had a principle and origin that directly referred to the awareness of the people of society about the benefits of a health-oriented and active lifestyle. Awareness of the benefits of active sports tourism (Carl et al., 2020) can be promoted through various strategies. Holding workshops, exhibitions, webinars, and advertising campaigns are among the methods that provide society with the necessary information. Government encouragement and support can also have a significant effect on increasing awareness. Publishing successful examples of people who have adopted a healthy lifestyle and achieved positive results can influence the decisions of others. Also, schools and educational centers can provide a platform to convey health and physical activity information to young people and children. These measures and solutions can all be effective for improving society's understanding of the importance and benefits of a healthy and active life and encourage people to choose better and more nutritious options.

Changing the behavior pattern is mentioned ([Heimlich & Ardoin, 2008](#)); changing behavior patterns can promote healthy activities. Implementing new behavioral patterns, such as increased exercise and dietary changes, can improve physical and mental health. For example, increasing physical activity leads to stronger muscles, reduced stress, and improved cardiovascular health. Also, changes in the eating pattern can help improve the general state of health and reduce the risk of chronic diseases. Overall, changes in behavior patterns can help a person achieve a healthier and more active lifestyle. In the next stage, it is mentioned that it should be organized to facilitate the organization, improvement, and facilitation of health department movements. With the proper arrangement and organization of health activities ([Gauld, 2012](#)), improving the provision of health services and sports activities and promoting healthy lifestyle patterns is possible. Organizations can facilitate and encourage this process by providing resources and training and creating appropriate spaces for exercise and health activities. Stress, and improved cardiovascular. Also, by setting strategies and implementing documented programs, organizations can encourage people to engage in health-giving and community-empowering activities and positively impact public health.

In the next step, individual ability is mentioned to achieve healthy movements ([Kwete et al., 2022](#)). Individual ability plays an essential role in healthy movements. People can lead a healthier lifestyle when they focus on their skills and work to improve them. Individual abilities such as endurance, motivation, appropriate decision-making, and coordination to perform sports activities and changes in dietary patterns can help people move towards health and recovery. Also, these abilities can encourage a person to make better choices for personal health and overall life improvement.

In the last stage of reaching health-giving movements, the present model has mentioned the strategy discussion. Strategizing by providing detailed and documented plans and strategies helps health-giving movements. Setting goals and formulating action plans can lead to improved performance and increased efficiency of health movements. Excellent and appropriate strategy can lead to high productivity and optimal use of resources, encouraging participation in sports activities and promoting a healthy lifestyle. This process also helps to promote the role of organizations and health service providers in society, as it improves and expands health activities through effective planning and direction.

In the next part of the initial phase, the current model acknowledges that by institutionalizing healthy movements, active sports tourism can be achieved ([Jafary Nadrabady et al., 2023](#)); for this purpose, he introduced a structure and process. To institutionalize health-giving movements in communities, the first step is to provide appropriate awareness and education. Providing practical information and educational programs to familiarize people with the benefits and importance of a healthy lifestyle and sports activities is very important. Creating sports spaces and sidewalks and providing facilities encouraging people to participate in sports can be essential in institutionalizing these movements. In addition, the need for government support and policies to promote sports activities and healthy lifestyles is critical. Combining these factors makes it possible to institutionalize community health-giving movements and move towards improving health and quality of life more purposefully.

Also, based on the findings, it can be stated that the institutionalization of health-giving movements (La Berge, 1984) consists of different stages. First, it is vital to know the needs of the society and analyze them carefully. Then, the appropriate structure is designed, and policies and regulations that respond to these needs are formulated. For success, implementing these policies is done with precision and quality, and in the next step, continuous evaluation of these activities takes place. Strengths and weaknesses are identified through assessment, and necessary corrections are applied. Finally, this institutionalization process is stabilized and established to embed and stabilize these societal concepts and approaches, primarily through culturalizing and building endurance in these actions.

At the end of the first phase of this model, it has been mentioned that sports tourism can actively help all people and society with different approaches. A health-oriented lifestyle can help all people and societies with different approaches. Individually, this approach allows each person to manage strategies to improve their situation and health. This includes regular exercise, optimal nutrition, stress management, and improving mental health. Promoting this lifestyle can help foster positive attitudes and create shared health habits within the family. Making public sports spaces, encouraging group activities, and holding health-oriented events can increase people's participation and share a health-oriented culture in local communities. At the policy level, supporting health-based policies and promoting health programs can significantly impact communities and guide people toward healthier lives.

In the second phase, this model indicates that, if institutionalized, sports tourism can actively affect the economy, health, and productivity of individuals and society. Active sports tourism, if used as a comprehensive approach, can help reduce treatment costs and promote health and general well-being (Fancourt & Finn, 2019). This approach is based on disease prevention and health maintenance. Promoting regular sports activities and healthy eating can reduce the risk factors of chronic diseases such as cardiovascular diseases and diabetes. These preventive measures can lead to a reduction in the need for costly treatments and uncomplicated hospital admissions.

For example, regular exercise and a healthy diet can help you lose weight and control your blood pressure and blood sugar, which can help reduce related diseases. On the other hand, providing urban environments and communities that encourage physical activity plays a vital role in preventing diseases related to lack of physical activity. For example, regular exercise and eating a healthy diet can help you lose weight and control your blood pressure and blood sugar, which can help reduce related diseases. On the other hand, providing urban environments and communities that encourage people to be physically active plays a vital role in preventing diseases related to lack of physical activity. Also, raising awareness and promoting a healthy lifestyle (Hayman, 2010) can help increase people's motivation to follow healthy habits and follow up regularly. These preventive measures may significantly reduce the costs of treating preventable diseases and improve the community's health. Therefore, this approach helps improve people's health and is influential in reducing health costs and promoting health and general improvement. Hemptennin of the current model points out that sports tourism actively encourages healthy habits and regular sports activities, improving people's energy and

mental ability (Uhrich et al., 2021). These measures can improve the efficiency and concentration of people in doing their daily tasks and work. Also, concerning stress management and attention to mental health, this approach can help people face less stress, manage emotions, and focus more.

In this regard, promoting healthy habits in the workplace (Kugathasan et al., 2022) and daily life can strengthen the balance between personal and professional life and prevent mental burdens on the individual. Also, group activities and group sports can help maintain social connections, create a sense of belonging to society, and encourage people to continue in healthier and social activities. Therefore, sports tourism actively plays a vital role in increasing people's productivity and concentration and improving the quality of life and the general spirit of society.

It can also be stated that sports tourism can actively contribute to the development of social welfare by promoting health approaches and regular sports activities. Strengthening people's physical and mental health can increase their satisfaction and well-being and improve their quality of life. Also, creating spaces for group activities and promoting social communication can take advantage of people's spirit and motivation and strengthen the feeling of belonging to society and, as a result, promote social well-being. Increasing people's motivation to participate in health activities and creating a culture for a healthy lifestyle can also make a more positive and dynamic life from the people's point of view. Since each person, as a part of society, participates in realizing this goal, it can positively affect social well-being, which is an increase in the motivation and determination of society.

One of this model's most important parts is the effect of active sports tourism on the economy. Active sports tourism has a significant impact on the economy. This lifestyle can affect related industries and services by increasing attention to regular exercise, healthy eating, and stress management. To expand industries and services related to this lifestyle, investments can be made in sports activities, the production of healthy products, healthy food services, and providing services to improve mental status. For example, the creation of more sports spaces, the development of healthy food stores and restaurants, and the development of mental health counseling and education centers, among other activities, can be among the measures that cause the expansion of these industries and related services.

Various methods can be used to increase the sale of products related to a health-oriented lifestyle. One of these solutions is proper promotion and effective advertising for these products as part of a healthy lifestyle. Also, communicating with people and communities focused on physical and mental health through stores, nutrition programs, sports courses, and health-oriented events can help improve the sales performance of these products. Also, accurate and complete information about the products, their positive effects on health, and their role in a healthy lifestyle can help increase demand and, as a result, the successful sale of these products.

Active sports tourism can have many effects on the economy. This lifestyle creates more demand for products and services related to health and sports. This demand is seen in various categories, from healthy food and nutritional supplements to sports equipment and healthcare services. As attention to health and sports increases, the

demand for these products and services will increase, resulting in the need for more production, job creation, and the growth of related industries.

To develop these industries and services, investing in producing healthy food, creating sports spaces, developing health and pharmaceutical technologies, and providing healthcare services can be effective. Also, creating efficient distribution networks and implementing effective advertisements to promote these products and services to the market can be effective in making people more accessible to these products and services and encouraging their use.

To increase the sales of products related to active sports tourism, communication with communities and target groups, using appropriate marketing methods, can be efficient. Partnering with social influencers, celebrity athletes, or health-related content providers can significantly impact attracting customers and promoting products. In addition, direct communication with customers and providing accurate and helpful information about products, their positive effects on health, and how to use them can be essential in encouraging customers to buy.

In general, increasing attention to a health-oriented lifestyle can help economic growth by increasing the demand for products and services related to health and sports, which can lead to job creation and profitability for various industries. As a result, with the development and promotion of a health-oriented lifestyle, it is possible to expand related sectors and services, and the sales of products belonging to this category will grow and increase. These measures will not only help to improve the health of the society but also help in economic development and increase the income of related industries.

The current model acknowledges that active sports tourism has the potential to directly and indirectly affect the share of the gross domestic product (GDP). These effects may occur in several vital areas. First, increasing people's physical health increases efficiency and productivity at work. People with better physical health perform better in the workplace, which can help increase production and improve the economic results of companies and industries. Secondly, increasing attention to healthy lifestyle and exercise can lead to a reduction in health costs. This drop reduces the need to treat preventable diseases and additional medical care, ultimately reducing health-related costs and providing more resources for investment in other areas of the economy.

Industries and services related to health-oriented lifestyles also play an essential role in the national GDP. The creation and development of related sectors to produce healthy food, sports, and fitness activities, produce health equipment and products, and provide health and treatment services create jobs and economic growth. These industries help to strengthen and grow the country's economy by creating added value, creating job opportunities, and producing new products and services. Therefore, increasing attention to the active lifestyle not only helps to improve people's health and quality of life but can also lead to increased productivity, reduced health costs, the growth of related industries, and an increase in the country's gross domestic product.

Industries and services related to health-oriented lifestyles also play an essential role in the national GDP. The creation and development of related sectors to produce healthy food, sports, and fitness activities, produce health equipment and products, and provide

health and treatment services create jobs and economic growth. These industries help to strengthen and grow the country's economy by creating added value, creating job opportunities, and producing new products and services. Therefore, increasing attention to active lifestyle not only helps to improve people's health and quality of life but can also lead to increased productivity, reduced health costs, the growth of related industries, and an increase in the country's gross domestic product. The presented model has such a capacity that appropriate strategies can be given based on increasing the share of the gross domestic product in Iranian society based on active and health-oriented sports tourism in separate sectors. The current model acknowledges that the institutionalization of sports tourism can actively help to increase the gross domestic product in two ways: First, the physical and mental health of people will probably lead to an increase in productivity and efficiency in the work environment, and the improvement of these functions, probably It leads to an increase in the gross domestic product. Second, creating industries and services related to health and sports tourism will actively create appropriate job opportunities and increase the incomes of individuals and society. This will also create economic improvement and increase the national GDP. Finally, institutionalizing sports tourism can actively improve the overall economy and sustainable economic growth. In the end, based on limitations such as the lack of familiarity with the future of this area and the analysis of regional differences, it is suggested to investigate the role of active sports tourism in the gross domestic product in different regions of a country and compare it with other countries, from the perspective of uncertainties and macro trends of the future should be considered by future researchers.

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ارائه الگوی توسعه گردشگری ورزشی فعال با رویکرد اقتصادی: سهم ورزش سلامت محور در تولید ناخالص داخلی

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کلیدواژه

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نوع مقاله

پژوهشی اصیل

چکیده

هدف: در رابطه با گردشگری ورزشی فعال و اهمیت توسعه ورزش در ایران و همچنین تأثیر آن بر اقتصاد، تحقیقات جامع و کاربردی چندانی انجام نشده است. از این رو، هدف پژوهش حاضر تدوین مدل توسعه گردشگری ورزشی با رویکرد اقتصادی است تا بتواند به جنبه‌های مختلف افزایش سهم خود در تولید ناخالص داخلی بپردازد.

روش: در انجام این مطالعه کیفی از راهبرد تئوری پایه‌گه داده و رویکرد سازنده گرای Charms استفاده شد. داده‌ها با استفاده از مصاحبه‌های عمیق نیمه ساختاریافته جمع‌آوری شد. شرکت کنندگان در این پژوهش ۱۹ نفر از متخصصان در سه حوزه علوم ورزشی، اقتصاد و گردشگری بودند.

یافته‌ها: از حدود ۲۱۰ جمله اجرا شده از مصاحبه‌ها، ۱۴۵ کد اولیه، ۲۲ کد متمرکز و در نهایت عوامل شناسایی شده از مصاحبه‌ها در شش دسته اصلی جنبش‌های سلامت بخش، نهادسازی، سبک زندگی فعال، سلامت، مردم و جامعه طبقه‌بندی شدند. مدل فعلی تصدیق می‌کند که گردشگری ورزشی فعال ممکن است تأثیر مستقیم و غیرمستقیمی بر تولید ناخالص داخلی (GDP) داشته باشد.

اصالت و ابتکار مقاله: مشخص شد که افزایش توجه به گردشگری ورزشی فعال نه تنها به بهبود سلامت و کیفیت زندگی افراد کمک می‌کند، بلکه می‌تواند منجر به افزایش بهره‌وری، کاهش هزینه‌های سلامت و رشد صنایع مرتبط و افزایش تولید ناخالص داخلی شود.

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Investigating Business Capacity and Dynamics in the Skating Federation of Iran: Importance-Performance Analysis of Competitive Advantage Promotion Indicators

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ABSTRACT

Purpose: Competitive advantage is the distinguishing factor that positions an organization or company ahead of its competitors. It encompasses superior product or service features, cost-effectiveness, organizational culture, and innovative technologies. Companies must prioritize continuous improvement and innovation to sustain and enhance their competitive edge. This study scrutinizes the indicators of the Islamic Republic of Iran Skating Federation's competitive advantage, employing the Importance-Performance Analysis framework. It also explores its implications for business, employment, and entrepreneurship within the skating industry.

Methodology: This research adopts an applied purpose and a descriptive method. The statistical population includes experts in the field of skating. Given the expert-centric approach used to analyze importance and performance, 73 individuals within the skating sports community were selected as samples. Criteria such as extensive experience in skating sports and appropriate education were considered in the selection process.

Findings: According to the findings, four variables were placed in the first quarter. After prioritization and weighting, the priority is attracting sponsors, the second priority is the development of facilities and infrastructure, the third priority is customer orientation, and the fourth priority is the development of international relations in the country they were determined.

Originality: This research pioneers an exploration of the skating federation's competitive advantage, offering valuable insights into its current state and implications for the broader business landscape, employment opportunities, and entrepreneurial endeavors within the skating industry. The findings can inform strategic planning and international goal-setting initiatives, providing a novel perspective on the skating federation's competitive positioning and multifaceted impact.

Keywords

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Positioning
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1. Introduction

In recent years, the focal point of discussions on competitive strategies has revolved around gaining a competitive advantage, as extensively explored by researchers (Hoseinzadeh Shahri & Shahini, 2018). Competitiveness represents an ongoing process wherein each organization endeavors to outperform others and establish superiority. In the contemporary global landscape, acquiring competitive capabilities has become a fundamental challenge for various countries (Karamikhah, 2023). A competitive advantage is a crucial factor influencing organizational productivity and performance, encompassing factors or capabilities that consistently elevate an organization's performance above its competitors. Competitive advantage materializes when an organization attains advancements and capabilities in specific indicators, or a combination thereof, which surpass those of its rivals. These indicators may encompass access to natural resources, highly specialized human resources, or advancements in industrial and information technologies (Shabanpour, 2018). In essence, competitive advantage signifies a state where an organization achieves sustained improvements and developments, placing it in a superior position relative to its competitors.

Achieving a competitive advantage is a paramount objective for managers operating in competitive and slow-growth markets, with its significance escalating as a critical determinant of success and corporate growth in recent decades (Rihani, 2015). This competitive advantage, cultivated through enhanced competitive intelligence, represents a collection of factors and capabilities enabling companies to outperform their competitors consistently (Hassanzadeh et al., 2021). Acquiring a competitive advantage remains central to the strategic activities of managers. However, in the face of significant environmental changes, maintaining corporate superiority over competitors has become a formidable challenge (Bossaghzadeh et al., 2023). Competitive advantage is often described as the skills essential for an organization's survival in the competitive arena (Moradiyegannmahaleh et al., 2021; Moses & Sharma, 2020). Companies can sustain a competitive edge through innovation, research, and development grounded in data, as well as the creation of novel products and services (Alghamdi & Agag, 2024). According to Barney (1991) the article, a company possesses a competitive advantage when it possesses unique and hard-to-imitate resources and capabilities, allowing it to offer products that deliver more excellent value to customers than competitors. In essence, a company's success in meeting customer demands compared to competitors hinges on the perceived value of its competitive advantage (Mahdi et al., 2019).

The sports industry presents a substantial potential for attaining a competitive advantage (Dansoh, 2005). In sports management research, exploring competitive advantage in the sports domain commenced in the 1990s, drawing on the resource dependence theory proposed by Pfeffer & Salancik (1977). This theory considers sports as a crucial indicator of advantage. Sports organizations, by nature, place a significant emphasis on customer satisfaction with services, forming the core philosophy of their existence (Moodi et al., 2017). In this context, Robinson (2006) the distinctive characteristics of sports organizations that set them apart from others were highlighted. Firstly, sports services are often novel and carry substantial significance for customers in

terms of costs. Secondly, customers engage with sports clubs during their leisure time. Thirdly, emotional investments, such as a sense of belonging, are prevalent in most sports clubs. These factors elevate expectations from clubs, achieving customer satisfaction and establishing a positive customer relationship, which are central goals for sports club management.

Researchers have traditionally approached the exploration of competitive advantage indicators unidimensionally. For instance, [Kerdpitak & Jernsittiparsert \(2020\)](#) they focused their investigation on the impact of human resource management practices on competitive advantage. Their findings revealed a positive relationship between human resources performance, such as employee training, learning methods, and employee selection, and a competitive advantage. Similarly, [Jun et al. \(2022\)](#) a study titled "Determinants of competitive advantage for sports companies in Korea" was conducted. This research delved into the determinants of competitive advantage concerning the economic performance of sports companies. The study evaluated efficiency, organizational characteristics, and industry classification indices as determinants of competitive advantage, highlighting that increasing efficiency emerged as a crucial determinant. [Ramezanlo et al. \(2022\)](#) conducted research examining the role of input resources, market position, and creativity in establishing a competitive advantage for sports businesses. Their study concluded that the efficacy of a combined approach lies in the adept utilization of input resources. Within the spectrum of human, organizational, and financial resources, emphasis on customer capital and the integration of competitive intelligence emerged as pivotal factors shaping and sustaining market positions.

Furthermore, innovation capital, information technology prowess, and knowledge management were the paramount resources and elements instrumental in leveraging creative power to confer a competitive advantage upon businesses. Similarly, [Soltani et al. \(2018\)](#), employing a resource-oriented approach, identified and ranked the factors influencing the acquisition of competitive advantage in professional football clubs in Iran. Their findings indicated that efficiency, innovation, customer responsiveness, and quality were the foremost factors contributing to competitive advantage in football clubs. Additionally, the study [Beyrami Igder et al. \(2019\)](#) underscored the significance of sports clubs managing the acquired knowledge of their customers, asserting that such practices lead to increased commitment and a heightened competitive advantage relative to other sports clubs.

Competitive advantage assumes a pivotal role in the success of sports organizations, as significant profitability hinges on their ability to acquire and cultivate competitive advantages. Various perspectives on the determining and influential factors of competitive advantage have been presented in the literature ([Ying et al., 2019](#)). Recognizing the evolution of customers' wishes, needs, and expectations, it becomes imperative to ascertain customer preferences before devising the means to fulfill them ([Karamikhah, 2023](#)). As custodians of a nation's sports, sports organizations strive to contribute more successfully and effectively to society's economic, social, and cultural development by reforming and enhancing their structures and processes. The intricate landscape of sports, diverse cultures, preferences, sports facilities, and numerous investments in the country intensify the complexity of the responsibilities faced by sports managers ([Shabanpour,](#)

2018). In light of these challenges, sports organizations must gain a competitive advantage to navigate environmental changes and meet competitive demands effectively (Dehghan et al., 2012). Simultaneously, they seek a larger share of the expansive and attractive sports market by creating distinctive competitive advantages. Since customers typically prefer organizations that offer more value, sports organizations must focus on developing higher, more unusual, and enduring value for their customers, especially when faced with products that are otherwise equal in all aspects (Tong & Hawley, 2009). Consequently, achieving a competitive advantage and identifying the factors contributing to its enhancement stand out as imperative objectives for managers in today's competitive markets. Failing to outperform other organizations in various activities could jeopardize the prospects of sports organizations (Eaton, 2000).

Moreover, the intensifying competition in sports has propelled sports organizations into the challenging task of engaging a diverse clientele with distinct tastes and needs, all while fiercely contending for their satisfaction and loyalty. The proliferation of sports organizations has expanded the competition to attract customers and deliver superior services. Given this escalating competition, senior managers must prioritize attracting and retaining customer satisfaction. Against this backdrop, the identification and analysis of determining factors represent the initial steps in developing the competitive advantage of sports organizations. In Iran, sports such as football, volleyball, and wrestling are society's primary sports, perennially embraced by the public with a widespread desire for participation. In addition, skating consists of twelve disciplines under the World Federation's supervision, and eight are active in Iran. So, the skating federation has many competitors from East Asia; countries in Central Asia, Europe, and Latin and Central American countries have modern technologies; professional infrastructure and coaches are up to date, which are the advantages of these countries. Therefore, the Iranian Skating Federation is also looking to improve its competitiveness. Hence, the researchers are keen to identify the Federation's weaknesses to improve the skating Federation's competitive advantage based on identifying these weaknesses and prioritizing solving these problems.

2. Methodology

Importance-performance analysis, a proposed technique by Martilla & James (1977), offers a method for scrutinizing an organization's products or services. IPA finds widespread application across various domains, including the automotive industry (Farsijani & Dehghan, 2016), higher education (Silva & Fernandes, 2011), and tourism (Taplin, 2012). The present research adopts an applied purpose and a descriptive methodology. The statistical population comprises experts in the field of skating. Given the expert-centric nature of the Importance-Performance Analysis method (Azar; et al., 2019), a sample of 73 individuals within the skating community was selected. Criteria such as extensive experience in skating and appropriate education were considered in the selection process.

To identify the main factors that are effective in improving the competitive advantage of the skating federation, the first stage of the study included conducting interviews with experts. In the qualitative part, we extracted the final categories based on theoretical

foundations and interviews with 15 experts in the field of skating who had more than 10 years of performance and academic experience. In this section, we identified 5 final categories and 13 sub-categories. Therefore, we designed 13 sub-categories in the importance-performance analysis section and presented them to 73 members of the skating community. The aim was to determine the favorable and existing situation of the federation, identify its weak points, and provide solutions to eliminate them based on the necessary strategies.

The final categories used in the importance-performance section are presented in Table 3.

- **The first step:** Based on the problem's goal, effective indicators should be extracted from experts or theoretical sources.
- **The second step:** is designing a questionnaire and asking experts to determine the importance and performance of each indicator based on the 5, 7, or 9 Likert scale.

Table 1. An example of a designed questionnaire.

Index	Importance				performance					
	Very low	Low	Medium	High	Very high	Very low	Low	Medium	High	Very high
Index 1			2						4	
Index 2	1							3		

- **Third Step:** Use the geometric mean to amalgamate the perspectives of all decision-makers or experts. Saaty (2003) advocates for using the geometric mean as a more effective method for articulating the collective opinion of multiple decision-makers. Consequently, b_j is denoted as the final importance value, and c_j represents the final performance value of the j th characteristic, reflecting the amalgamated opinions of n experts.

(1) The Final value of importance $b_j = \left(\prod_{t=1}^n b_{jp} \right)^{\frac{1}{n}}$

(2) The Final performance value $c_j = \left(\prod_{t=1}^n c_{jp} \right)^{\frac{1}{n}}$

- **Fourth Step:** Compute the threshold values for importance and performance. The threshold values play a crucial role in delineating each matrix segment. The determination of these threshold values relies on the arithmetic average. Specifically, the importance and performance threshold values are denoted as μ_b and μ_c , respectively. These threshold values, represented by μ_b and μ_c , are integral to Relationships 3 and 4 in the analysis process.

(3) Performance threshold value $\mu_b = \frac{\sum_{j=1}^m b_j}{m}$

$$(4) \quad \text{Importance threshold value} \quad \mu_c = \frac{\sum_{j=1}^m c_j}{m}$$

- **Fifth step:** Analysis of the importance-performance matrix.

First Quarter (Focus Here): In this quadrant, the importance of indicators is high, yet their performance is low, signifying a vulnerability that requires prioritized attention for improvement. The organization's current performance levels need to address characteristics perceived as significant by stakeholders, exposing a weakness that demands urgent and focused efforts to enhance and rectify. Second Quadrant (Keep up the Good Work): Positioned as the main strength of the organization, this quadrant demands continued attention and nurturing. Here, indicators' importance and performance are high, highlighting these aspects as pivotal competitive advantages that should be sustained and leveraged. Third Quadrant (Low Priority): Indicators in this quadrant hold low importance, coupled with weak organizational performance. Given their lesser significance, the organization should refrain from dedicating excessive resources to this segment. Instead, limited time and resources should be allocated judiciously to prevent unnecessary expenditure. Fourth Quarter (Waste of Resources): This quadrant features indicators of low importance despite the organization's high performance in this sector. Resources invested here are essentially wasted, as these indicators, though performing well, contribute little to the organization's overall goals. To avoid resource drain, strategies should be devised to eliminate or repurpose these indicators effectively.

- **Sixth step:** We determine the weight of the *j*th characteristic based on the following relationship.

3. Results

According to [Table 2](#), most participants in this section were men, comprising 81% of the total. Among the participants, individuals aged 31-40 exhibited the highest participation rate, accounting for nearly 48% of the total respondents. Regarding education level, participants with master's degrees constituted the largest group. Regarding sports experience, approximately 41% of respondents reported having more than 15 years of experience. For further details, please refer to [Table 2](#).

Table 2. Demographic characteristics of the participants.

Variable	Categories	Frequency	Percentage
Age	20-30	8	11%
	31-40	35	48%
	41-50	24	33%
	51 and above	6	8%
Gender	Male	14	19%
	Female	59	81%
Education Degrees	Diploma	2	3%
	A.D	5	7%
	B.A	18	25%
	M.A	33	45%
	Ph.D.	15	20%

Variable	Categories	Frequency	Percentage
Sports History	Less than 5 years	5	7%
	6-10	14	19%
	11-15	24	33%
	Above 15 years	30	41%
Sum		73	100%

The analysis of importance and performance, based on the collected findings, involves the following stages:

- **Step 1:** The researchers used qualitative research and thematic analysis to identify the main characteristics of the skating federation's competitive advantage.
- **Step 2:** A questionnaire was formulated, employing a 5-point Likert scale ranging from option 1 (very little) to option 5 (very much). Refer to [Table 1](#) for details on the questionnaire.
- **Step 3:** The researchers gathered the experts' opinions in this step, utilizing the geometric mean of relationships 1 and 2. [Table 3](#) presents the results of the views collected from 73 experts.

Table 3. Aggregation of expert opinions based on geometric mean.

Code	Indicators	Importance Bj	Performance Cj
F1	Awareness and information	3.41	3.42
F2	Improving the human capital advantage of the Federation	4.42	3.86
F3	Development of management skills	4.39	2.97
F4	Development of internal relations	3.45	2.3
F5	Customer orientation	3.98	2.91
F6	Development of international relations	4.48	3.3
F7	General advertising	4.6	3.55
F8	Technical development of skating sports in the country	4.57	4.12
F9	Attracting sponsors	4.52	2.69
F10	Development of facilities and infrastructures	4.58	3.14
F11	Expansion of educational places and spaces	4.65	3.86
F12	Development of skating among the public and families	4.43	3.88
F13	Institutionalization of skating	4.02	3.33

- **Step 4:** Based on relationships 3 and 4, the threshold value of importance and performance has been calculated.

$$(5) \quad \eta_b = \frac{55.5}{13} = 4.27$$

$$(6) \quad \eta_c = \frac{43.33}{13} = 3.33$$

- **Step 5:** Drawing the Importance -performance analysis matrix.

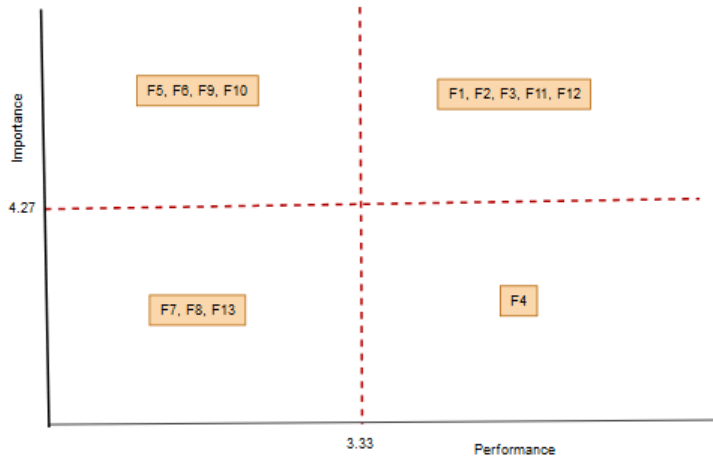


Figure 1. The graph of the importance-performance matrix of the competitive advantage of the Islamic Republic of Iran Skating Federation.

According to [Figure 1](#), the indicators of attracting financial sponsors, development of facilities and infrastructure, customer orientation, and development of international relations were placed in the first quarter. In other words, these characteristics are essential, according to experts. However, the federation's performance is low, so it should focus on these indicators to increase its competitive advantage and improve its performance. Indicators of technical development of skating sports in the country, promoting the human capital advantage of the federation, development of management skills, expansion of educational places and spaces, and the development of skating among the public and families were placed in the second quarter. In other words, these indicators are critical, and the federation's performance in these indicators is also appropriate. Therefore, the federation should maintain these departments in their current form. Indicators of awareness and information, institutionalization of skating sport, and public advertisements at the country level were placed in the third quarter. Experts say these indicators are unimportant, and the federation could have performed better. In other words, according to experts, the federation has low performance in indicators of low importance, which does not cause much of a problem. Finally, the development of internal relations was placed in the fourth quarter. In other words, according to experts, the federation has a high performance in indicators of low importance. This shows that the federation has spent its resources and time on indicators that could be more important.

In the sixth step, the weight of the qualitative characteristics was to determine the priority for improvement.

As mentioned in [Figure 1](#), the indicators of attracting financial sponsors, Development of facilities and infrastructure, Customer orientation, and development of international relations were placed in the first quarter, and based on the weight calculated for each indicator, improvements should be made as follows:

- Priority: attract sponsors
- Second priority: development of facilities and infrastructure
- Third priority: customer orientation
- Fourth priority: development of international relations

This prioritization suggests how improvements should be addressed, focusing on enhancing attracting sponsors as the top priority.

Table 4. General prioritization of competitive advantage indicators of the Islamic Republic of Iran Skating Federation.

Code	Indicators	SWj	OWj	Priority
F1	Awareness and information	0.034	0.001	13
F2	Improving the human capital advantage of the Federation	2.475	0.047	11
F3	Development of management skills	6.234	0.118	3
F4	Development of internal relations	3.968	0.075	6
F5	Customer orientation	4.259	0.081	8
F6	Development of international relations	5.286	0.100	4
F7	General advertising	4.830	0.091	5
F8	Technical development of skating sports in the country	2.057	0.039	12
F9	Attracting sponsors	8.272	0.156	1
F10	Development of facilities and infrastructures	6.595	0.125	2
F11	Expansion of educational places and spaces	3.674	0.069	7
F12	Development of skating among the public and families	2.437	0.046	10
F13	Institutionalization of skating	2.774	0.052	9

4. Discussion and conclusion

Competitive advantage is an organization's unique ability to penetrate the desired markets and provide superiority over competitors ([Moradiyeganmahaleh et al., 2021](#)). In the present research, after identifying the indicators for improving the skating federation's competitive advantage, we determined each indicator's importance and performance based on experts' opinions. Finally, we analyzed the matrix graph of the indicators for improving the competitive advantage of the country's skating federation based on the importance-performance approach. The results of the graph matrix of competitive advantage, based on the importance-performance approach, showed that the indicators in the first and second quadrants were the most important. In contrast, the indicators in the third and fourth quadrants were less critical.

Indicators of the development of international relations, customer orientation, attracting sponsors, and Development of facilities and infrastructures were placed in the first quarter. In other words, these characteristics are essential, according to experts. However, the federation's performance in them is low, so it should focus on these indicators to increase its competitive advantage and improve its performance. In other words, these indicators are critical, according to experts, but the federation's performance in them could be better. Therefore, the federation should focus on these indicators and improve its performance to improve its competitive advantage. In other words, the weakness of the skating federation is in the mentioned indicators. Improving performance in these indicators can effectively enhance the competitive advantage of the country's skating federation. Since they consider customer orientation one of the most critical indicators of achieving employee satisfaction and surviving in a competitive environment, this factor can reduce marketing and sales costs. It brought faster and more effective customer acquisition and a better understanding of needs to the organization (Winer, 2001). Attracting financial sponsors ensures sports organizations' bright and prosperous future. In this regard, Moharramzadeh (2009) organizations or clubs need to find additional financial resources to overcome their difficult conditions. One of the reasons for the importance of sports infrastructure is the positive impact of sports participation on the health of society and, as a result, on the cost of health (Wicker et al., 2013). Therefore, the existence of suitable sports infrastructures along with the principles of neighborhood to improve the competitive advantage of the skating federation is needed to increase collective participation in this field. Therefore, by building the specialized infrastructure of skating rinks in cities and optimizing our sports facilities and gyms, this weakness can be eliminated to some extent. Kerdpitak & Jernsittiparsert (2020), who investigated the impact of human resource management practices on competitive advantage, showed a positive relationship between the development of employee training and educational spaces and the organization's competitive advantage. Based on this, paying attention to these indicators is essential, mainly because the federation's performance is low. Greco et al. (2016), also pointed out that the more a business interacts with other organizations, the more its chances to acquire ideas, capabilities, knowledge, technology, and other external intangibles, and its chances for successful innovation increase.

Indicators of technical development in skating sports in the country, promoting the human capital advantage of the federation, development of management skills, expansion of educational places and spaces, and the development of skating among the public and families were placed in the second quarter. In other words, these indicators are of high importance and performance in the federation, and the federation's performance in these indicators is also appropriate. Therefore, the federation should maintain these departments in their current form. It is natural that if the country's skating federation develops this discipline at the national and provincial levels in terms of technical, human capital, and management, it will positively affect the competitive advantage of the federation. Since external and environmental conditions influence the skating federation, the development and expansion of the organization among families,

teenagers, and young people can prevent the federation from falling behind, facing isolation, crises, etc.

Conversely, new and ethical strategies can give sports organizations a competitive advantage, including the innovative skating federation. Additionally, due to globalization, technological complexity, increased competition, and resource scarcity, organizations are changing and adopting a more open and collaborative approach to create their competitive advantage (Barrett et al., 2021). Soltani et al. (2018) also considered innovation and respect for clients as some of the most critical factors for a competitive advantage in football clubs. Mirzaeeian et al. (2017) concluded that sports boards can convert strategy into a competitive advantage through leadership, resources, creativity, and innovation.

According to experts, the third quarter in the graph of the competitive advantage matrix, based on the importance-performance approach, shows that these indicators could be more critical. On the other hand, the skating federation could have performed better in these indicators. In other words, according to experts, the federation has low performance in these indicators that are of low importance, which only causes a few problems in the short term. Of course, since these indicators are also effective in improving the competitive advantage of the federation, the federation should pay attention to the indicators of this sector after paying attention to the indicators of the first and second quarters. This section includes indicators of awareness and information, institutionalization of skating sport, and public advertisements at the country level. After paying attention to the indicators of the first and second quarters, the federation should also pay attention to the indicators of this quarter. The reason for placing these indicators in this quarter is that, according to the experts in this field, paying attention to the indicators of the first and second quarters mentioned can eventually affect the rest of the indicators. There is no need for special attention from the country's skating federation directors. It is logical that paying attention and giving importance to indicators such as the attraction of financial sponsors, customer orientation, development and expansion of infrastructure, and development of international relations, which were in the first quarter, can be the need for awareness and information, the institutionalization of skating sport, and reduce public advertising at the country level.

Finally, the development of domestic relations took place in the fourth quarter. In other words, indicators are of low importance, according to experts, but the federation has a high performance in them. Paying attention to these indicators on the part of the skating federation does not harm increasing the promotion of the competitive advantage; it can even help improve the competitive advantage. However, the competitive advantage enhancement matrix graph analysis shows that the federation should pay special attention to the indicators of high importance instead of paying attention to these indicators, which are of low significance according to experts. Since the time, material, and financial resources for organizations are limited, and it is not possible to give full and exceptional attention to all the considered indicators, it is logical to consider the importance of the indicators and components in advancing the goals of the organization and improving the competitive advantage of the organization. They have a more positive

impact, freeing up the organization's time and resources to achieve the upcoming goals faster.

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بررسی ظرفیت و پویایی های کسب و کار در فدراسیون اسکیت جمهوری اسلامی ایران: تحلیل اهمیت - عملکرد شاخص های ارتقای مزیت رقابتی

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کلیدواژه

جایگاه سازی
صنعت ورزش
کسب و کار در ورزش
هدف گذاری

نوع مقاله

پژوهشی اصیل

چکیده

هدف: مزیت رقابتی به مزیتی اطلاق می شود که یک سازمان یا شرکت را از رقبای و جایگاهشان از سایر شرکتها برتری دهد. این مزایا می تواند از طریق ویژگی های محصولات یا خدمات ارائه شده، هزینه های پایین تر، فرهنگ سازمانی، فناوری های نوآورانه و غیره ایجاد شود. به منظور حفظ و توسعه مزیت رقابتی، شرکتها باید به بهبود مستمر و نوآوری در فعالیتهای خود تمرکز کنند. پژوهش حاضر به بررسی شاخص های مزیت رقابتی فدراسیون اسکیت کشور بر اساس رویکرد اهمیت و عملکرد می پردازد.

روش: پژوهش حاضر از نظر هدف کاربردی و از نظر روش توصیفی است. جامعه آماری این پژوهش شامل خبرگان حوزه ورزش اسکیت می باشند. با توجه به خبره محور بودن ماهیت روش تحلیل اهمیت و عملکرد ۷۳ نفر در بین جامعه ورزشی اسکیت به عنوان نمونه در نظر گرفته شدند، برای انتخاب این افراد معیارهای از جمله سابقه بالا در حوزه ورزش اسکیت، تحصیلات مناسب لحاظ شد.

یافته ها: مطابق با یافته ها ۴ متغیر در ربع اول قرار گرفتند که بعد از اولویت بندی و وزن دهی به ترتیب اولویت اول جذب اسپانسر، اولویت دوم: توسعه امکانات و زیرساختها، اولویت سوم: مشتری مداری، اولویت چهارم: توسعه روابط بین المللی در کشور قرار گرفتند.

اصالت و ابتکار مقاله: این تحقیق به کاوشی در مورد مزیت رقابتی فدراسیون اسکیت می پردازد و بینش های استراتژیک و ارزشمندی را در مورد وضعیت فعلی و پیامدهای آن برای چشم انداز تجاری گسترده تر، فرصت های شغلی و تلاش های کارآفرینی در صنعت اسکیت ارائه می دهد. یافته های این تحقیق می تواند در برنامه ریزی استراتژیک و ابتکارات بین المللی و همچنین هدف گذاری های کسب و کار مورد استفاده قرار گیرد و دیدگاه جدیدی را در مورد موقعیت رقابتی فدراسیون اسکیت در فضای کسب و کار و همچنین در مقایسه با سایر فدراسیون ها ارائه کنند.

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Identification of Solutions for Utilizing Donors' Capacity as Non-commercial Partners in Sports Infrastructure Development

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ABSTRACT

Purpose: Given donors' significant capacity and potential to contribute to sports infrastructure development in the country, identifying suitable and practical Solutions for leveraging this capacity is of utmost importance. Therefore, this research aims to identify Solutions for utilizing donors' capacity in sports infrastructure development.

Methodology: This qualitative study employed a thematic analysis approach, utilizing content analysis as an exploratory technique. The study population consisted of sports experts, managers, and individuals engaged in sports donors. Purposeful and snowball sampling methods were employed, and data saturation was achieved through 17 interviews. Semi-structured interviews were conducted either in person or via telephone. Validity and reliability were ensured through acceptability, transferability, confirmability, and retest.

Findings: The data analysis yielded 42 open codes, categorized into nine sub-themes. Ultimately, the sub-themes were classified into five main themes: legal and structural reforms, improvement of management and planning, transformation and enhancement of public culture, strengthening of information dissemination and awareness, and economic support and incentives. The findings of this research present a comprehensive set of effective Solutions and tools for maximizing donors' participation in sports infrastructure development. Sports organizations and donors can make the most of this valuable capacity by employing these Solutions.

Originality: The research findings provide insights into philanthropists' motivations, challenges, and potential contributions to advancing sports development initiatives. The study also proposes an innovative framework for effectively engaging and collaborating with donors to drive sports infrastructure growth.

Keywords

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1. Introduction

Sports and physical activity are fundamental elements of a healthy, disease-free lifestyle. These activities play a significant role in maintaining individuals' physical and mental well-being. Participating in sports improves people's social and movement skills, self-esteem, and leads their lifestyles toward a healthy and active life (Naghizadeh-Baghi et al., 2021). Numerous studies have shown that regular exercise can reduce the risk of chronic diseases such as diabetes, cardiovascular diseases, cancer, and obesity (Wilkinson et al., 2023). On the other hand, the presence of suitable sports infrastructure and facilities is one of the key factors in encouraging and motivating people to engage in physical activity and participate in sports. Easy access to well-equipped, quality sports facilities can reduce barriers to exercise and provide a platform for promoting a sports culture in society (Eime et al., 2015). Donors are pivotal in supporting various sectors through their philanthropic contributions, including sports. Donors—whether individuals, corporations, or foundations—play a crucial role in supporting the sports sector through philanthropic contributions (Tóth & Mátrai, 2023). Their involvement can take various forms, such as funding sports organizations, sponsoring events, providing scholarships to athletes, or investing in the development of sports infrastructure (Babiak & Yang, 2022).

Motivations driving donors include personal interests, social responsibility, and a desire to promote physical activity and healthy lifestyles within communities (Palmer et al., 2022). By alleviating the financial burden on governments and institutions, donor support enables more comprehensive development and access to sports facilities, programs, and opportunities, ultimately contributing to the economic and social development of the sports sector (Palmer et al., 2022). Developing sports infrastructure is essential for supporting professional and championship sports and ensuring public access to sports spaces. This, in turn, leads to increased participation in physical activities and ultimately improves the community's overall health (Balan, 2023). Therefore, considering the numerous benefits of sports and the importance of sports infrastructure in promoting an active lifestyle, investment in this area should be a significant priority for any country to enhance the health and well-being of its citizens.

Consequently, the development of infrastructure and the expansion of public access to sports facilities should be one of the crucial priorities for improving citizens' health and enhancing the quality of life in any community (Aslam et al., 2023). Governments play a vital role in supporting, planning, and investing in sports infrastructure. Through budget allocation and the allocation of public resources, they can significantly contribute to developing sports facilities and amenities (Veal et al., 2012). Despite government efforts to develop sports infrastructure, they often need help with severe challenges and limitations. One of the most significant obstacles is more financial resources and a sufficient budget. Governments are usually obligated to fund various sectors such as education, healthcare, security, and public infrastructure, which can create constraints on investment in sports (Veal et al., 2012).

On the other hand, the high costs of constructing and maintaining complex and modern sports facilities impose considerable financial pressure on governments. Additionally, sports facilities must be continuously renovated and refurbished to meet the community's

increasing needs (Pfleegor & Seifried, 2014). As a result of these challenges, governments often need help in developing sufficient and high-quality sports infrastructure across the country, relying solely on public resources. This can lead to a reduction in public access to sports facilities and, consequently, a decrease in participation in physical activities and sports (Wang et al., 2022).

In such circumstances, attracting private sector participation and support can provide a valuable source of funding to address the existing deficiencies in sports infrastructure. Donors and investors with various motivations, such as interest in sports, a sense of social responsibility, or even profitability, can contribute to constructing and equipping new sports facilities or renovating and improving existing ones (Wicker et al., 2015). The presence and involvement of donors in this field can yield multiple benefits, including increasing public access to sports facilities, comprehensive development of infrastructure nationwide, reducing the financial burden on the government, and creating new opportunities for investment and economic growth (Spenceley & Meyer, 2012). Donors refer to individuals or organizations that, driven by humanistic motivations, support community or social responsibility and utilize their financial or non-financial resources to assist in charitable activities or projects (Yaghobi et al., 2021). Donors can be wealthy individuals, corporations, charitable institutions, or any other entity interested in investing in various fields, including sports. Donors' participation and support can be crucial in developing sports infrastructure. They can significantly contribute by providing the necessary financial resources to construct new sports facilities, equip and renovate existing facilities, and support programs and sports events (Gadai, 2020). The presence and involvement of donors in this domain can bring multiple benefits to society, including increased public access to sports facilities, the promotion of sports culture and physical activity, the enhancement of citizens' physical and mental well-being, and the creation of new opportunities for economic development and job creation (Collison et al., 2019). Furthermore, donor support can relieve the financial burden on governments in developing sports infrastructure and free up more resources for investment in other priority areas (Wicker et al., 2009).

In recent decades, many countries have faced challenges in developing and maintaining adequate sports infrastructure due to limited government resources (Hone et al., 2015). Despite the efforts of government authorities, a significant gap remains between the needs and available facilities, hindering the development and promotion of sports activities (Paramio-Salcines et al., 2013). In this context, the increasing role of private sector participation and humanitarian assistance has become crucial in addressing governments' financial constraints (Walters & Tacon, 2010). However, the potential of philanthropy in sports infrastructure development needs to be utilized more effectively due to various factors, such as the lack of proper planning, regulatory frameworks, and incentivization mechanisms (Anagnostopoulos, 2014). Identifying effective solutions for harnessing the potential of individuals and private donors in sports infrastructure development is paramount. It can serve as a valuable funding source and resource to fill existing gaps and support overall growth and access to sports facilities in a country (Jafari Ramiani et al., 2024). By tapping into this underutilized resource, a country can address pressing needs for sports infrastructure, enhance physical activity and overall well-being,

and create a more favorable environment for sports development at various levels (Wicker et al., 2009).

Past studies reveal that donors and charitable individuals are pivotal in expanding sports infrastructure (Collison et al., 2019). Numerous barriers stand in the way, ranging from the need for more legal frameworks and tax incentives to the scarcity of necessary trust and transparency, deficiencies in planning, and the absence of appropriate mechanisms (Palmer, 2020). Atalay & Švagždienė (2023) believe that promoting a culture of participation and increasing awareness among donors about the vital importance and positive impacts of their contributions are critical steps in soliciting philanthropic engagement in sports. On the other hand, Ajmal et al. (2023) suggest that developing a comprehensive plan and model could be an appropriate solution for attracting and optimally managing donor participation. Moreover, Pandandini's findings (2023) indicate that raising awareness and providing proper information regarding the critical importance of donor financial supporters play a crucial role in attracting them to support sports. In line with this, Mane (2022) also introduces awareness and proper information as the main factors in attracting donor financial supporters for sports in another study.

Additionally, Filo et al. (2020) found that providing financial and tax incentives by governments can increase donors' motivation and willingness to invest in the sports domain. However, a significant gap appears in the current research literature. On the one hand, many studies have focused only on examining challenges and barriers or have investigated successful experiences. On the other hand, fewer studies have comprehensively addressed practical and tailored solutions for optimally utilizing donors' potential in developing sports infrastructure while considering each country's unique conditions and characteristics. This is a vital gap because challenges can be addressed, and custom solutions adapted to each country's circumstances must also be identified and implemented. Otherwise, this valuable opportunity will continue to be missed.

While previous studies have highlighted the importance of donor participation in sports infrastructure development and identified some challenges and barriers, more comprehensive research must be conducted that provides practical solutions tailored to each country's specific conditions and characteristics. Most existing literature focuses solely on examining the obstacles or analyzing successful case studies, neglecting the need for an integrated approach that addresses both challenges and proposes contextualized solutions. This study aims to bridge this theoretical gap by identifying obstacles and challenges specific to the country's context while proposing practical solutions to optimize the utilization of donor capacity in sports infrastructure development. By adopting a holistic perspective, this research seeks to contribute to existing knowledge by providing a framework that can guide policymakers and planners in designing effective strategies to attract and leverage donor support for sports infrastructure projects.

The development of sports infrastructure requires significant financial resources, which may limit the government's economic capacity. Therefore, participation from the private sector and donor investments can significantly compensate for financial shortages. However, despite the importance and necessity of utilizing donor capacity, obstacles and challenges hinder the optimal utilization of this capacity. Identifying these obstacles and

providing solutions to overcome them is of great importance. This research has several significant aspects. Firstly, sports infrastructure development is crucial for promoting physical activity and improving public health. Given the economic challenges and limitations of government resources, attracting participation from the private sector and donors can be a valuable source for addressing the shortages in this field.

On the other hand, it can help identify the obstacles and challenges in attracting donors' participation in the country and provide solutions to overcome them. Such understanding is a crucial step towards optimizing this capacity and resources. Furthermore, the findings of this research can assist policymakers and planners in the sports field in designing and implementing more effective solutions and programs to attract donors' support. Ultimately, this will lead to increased investment in sports infrastructure and expanded access to sports facilities and services for all segments of society. Finally, success in this area can serve as a model for other sectors to utilize donors' and the private sector's capacity to develop the necessary infrastructure. Therefore, this study aims to identify solutions for utilizing donors' capacity to develop sports infrastructure in the country, which can be a significant step towards facilitating donors' participation and accelerating the process of sports infrastructure development in the country.

His study contributes to the theoretical discourse on sports philanthropy and infrastructure development by adopting an integrative approach that bridges the gap between identifying challenges and proposing contextualized solutions. Drawing upon existing theories on donor motivations, resource mobilization, and public-private partnerships, this research extends the current understanding by exploring how these theoretical concepts can be applied and adapted to the country's specific context. By analyzing the unique socio-economic, cultural, and regulatory factors that influence donor participation in sports infrastructure development, this study sheds light on the nuances and complexities that must be considered when devising strategies to effectively harness the potential of private donors. Furthermore, this research's proposed solutions and recommendations can serve as a foundation for developing more comprehensive theoretical frameworks to optimize donor engagement in infrastructure projects across various sectors and settings.

2. Methodology

From The philosophical paradigm and underlying assumption of this research are interpretive-constructivist. The inductive research approach employs a qualitative research strategy and uses the content analysis technique. Given that this study aims to identify solutions for utilizing the capacity of donors in developing sports infrastructure in the country, the research is considered applied in terms of its objective. The target population of this research includes all sports professionals, managers, and individuals involved in donor sports activities. The participant selection criteria for this study include sports donors with a history of constructing at least one sports facility, managers who have been in contact with sports donors or who manage a facility built by sports donors, and individuals actively participating in sports philanthropy. Potential participants were initially identified through purposive sampling based on their relevant expertise and

experience. Subsequently, a snowball sampling approach was employed, where the initial participants recommended other suitable candidates from their professional networks. This combination of purposive and snowball sampling ensured a diverse range of perspectives and insights was captured. Sampling continued until theoretical saturation was reached, and when the number of interviews reached 17, theoretical saturation was achieved.

Theoretical saturation, a guiding principle in qualitative research, is the point at which no new or relevant information emerges from additional data collection. In this study, the researcher employed an iterative data collection and analysis process to determine when theoretical saturation was achieved. During the initial rounds of interviews, new themes and concepts related to leveraging donor support for sports infrastructure development emerged. The researcher carefully analyzed and coded each interview, identifying and refining the emerging themes. As the interviews progressed, the researcher observed patterns and redundancies in the data, indicating that fewer new themes emerged. After conducting 15 interviews, the researcher noted that the newly collected data confirmed the existing themes and concepts with minimal additional insights. To ensure theoretical saturation was reached, the researcher conducted two more interviews, bringing the total number to 17. The analysis of these final interviews yielded only a few substantially new themes or pieces of information, suggesting that theoretical saturation had been achieved. The researcher thoroughly reviewed the coded data and themes to ensure no new perspectives or concepts were overlooked. By continuously analyzing the data throughout the data collection process and monitoring the emergence of new themes, the researcher determined that theoretical saturation was reached after 17 interviews. This iterative approach, combined with the researcher's expertise and judgment, allowed for a rigorous and comprehensive exploration of the research topic while ensuring that the data collection process was sufficient to capture the relevant perspectives and experiences of the participants.

Data collection was conducted through semi-structured and in-depth interviews. An interview protocol was developed, consisting of open-ended questions that allowed participants to share their experiences, challenges, and perspectives on using donor support for sports infrastructure development. The conversational interviews enabled the researcher to explore more detailed responses and emerging themes. Before starting, the researcher asked permission from the interviewees to record the interview. The interview began by describing the demographic characteristics of the interviewees, and then the main research questions were presented. Then, by asking the interviewees an open question, "Do you think there is something you have not mentioned?" the interview concluded. The duration of each interview was between 15 and 35 minutes. A combination of deductive and inductive approaches was adopted for the thematic analysis of the interview data. Initially, a deductive coding process was employed, where an initial codebook was developed based on existing literature and theoretical frameworks related to sports philanthropy and infrastructure financing. Subsequently, an inductive approach was used to identify new themes and sub-themes emerging from the participants' responses.

Lincoln & Guba (1985) evaluation criteria were considered to ensure the validity of the research results, including credibility, transferability, and dependability. To examine credibility, the interviews were standardized with open-ended responses and were consistent for all participants. Additionally, the credibility of the findings was enhanced through multiple, careful examinations of the interview transcripts, and the coherence of participants' responses was analyzed. In the present study, the inter-coder agreement method was used to calculate the reliability of the interviews. For reliability calculation using inter-coder agreement, two coders (evaluators) were selected, and a doctoral student in sports management was asked to participate as a research collaborator (coder). The necessary training and techniques for coding the interviews were provided to the coder. In each interview, similar codes assigned by the two individuals were labeled "agreement," while dissimilar codes were labeled "disagreement." Then, the researcher and the research collaborator coded three interviews, and the percentage of inter-coder agreement, which serves as an indicator of reliability analysis, was calculated using the following formula. The results are presented in Table 1.

$$100 \times (\text{total number of codes} / 2 \times \text{number of agreements}) = \text{reliability percentage}$$

Table 1. Reliability results between two coders.

Number of interviews	Total codes	Number of agreements	Number of non-agreements	Percentage of reliability
Three	15	5	3	66.66
Eleven	14	6	3	85.71
Seventeen	18	6	2	66.66
Total	47	17	8	73.01

As shown in Table 1, the total number of codes was 45, the total number of agreements between the codes was 17, and the total number of disagreements was 8. The reliability of the retest interviews conducted in this study, using the mentioned formula, was approximately 73%. Considering that this reliability exceeds 0.60 (Stemler, 2000), the trustworthiness of the coding has been confirmed and is considered acceptable. The overall research process followed a systematic approach, which can be summarized in the following flowchart:

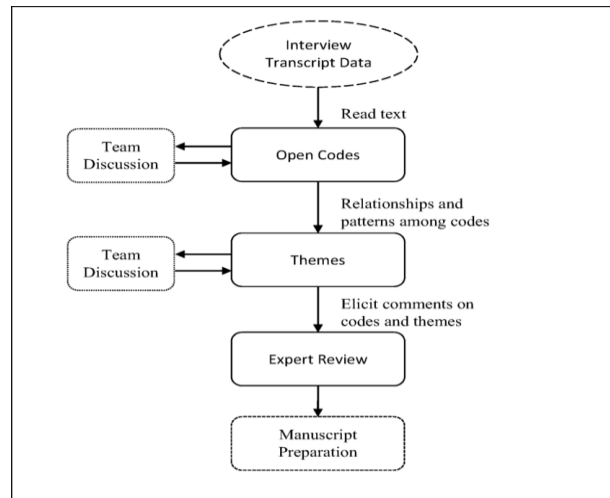


Figure 1. The process of conducting research using a thematic analysis method.

This flowchart provides a concise visual representation of the research process, enhancing the clarity and transparency of the methodological approach.

3. Results

As observed in [Table 2](#), out of the 17 individuals interviewed, 3 were females, and 14 were males. On the other hand, the age range of participants was between 38 and 71 years old. Additionally, seven participants were donors, five were university faculty members, and five were organizational managers who were in contact with the donors.

Table 2. Participant characteristics.

Interviewee code	Gender	Age	Type of participant
P1	man	60	Donor
P2	women	38	Faculty members
P3	men	39	Donor
P4	men	47	Managers
P5	women	37	Faculty members
P6	men	45	managers
P7	women	50	Faculty members
P8	men	42	Donor
P9	men	62	Donor
P10	men	43	managers
P11	men	56	managers
P12	men	55	Donor
P13	men	48	faculty members
P14	men	59	faculty members
P15	men	49	managers
P16	men	52	Donor
P17	men	71	Donor

After coding based on the theme analysis method, 42 open codes were obtained, placed in 9 sub-themes and five main themes. It should be noted that after reviewing the interviews several times, sub-themes were extracted, and the main themes were obtained according to the sub-themes. Table 3 shows an example of the interviews conducted for coding.

Table 3. An example of how to code based on one of the conducted interviews.

The text of the interview	Detected codes
One of the approaches to attract donors towards sports is their attitude and perspective towards sports. The donors must first develop a comprehensive attitude towards sports-related issues. Once this attitude and belief is formed within the individual, they will understand that building a sports hall is as important as constructing a mosque, school, or hospital. Donors should personally experience the essence of sports, leading to an enhancement of their perspectives. Their presence at major domestic and international events, various award ceremonies, accompanying teams, interacting with athletes, being among athletes, and experiencing multiple aspects firsthand can serve as an effective strategy to guide donors toward the sports domain.	1. Engaging donors 2. Donors' Presence in Sports 3. Enhancing donors' Attitudes towards Sports

In Table 4, open codes and main and sub-topics of Solutions for using the capacity of donors' capacity to develop the country's sports infrastructure are presented.

Table 4. An example of how to code based on one of the conducted interviews.

Main	Subthemes	Codes
Legal and structural reforms	Process and administrative procedure reforms	Simplification of procedures and reduction of bureaucracy
		Facilitating the licensing process for charitable activities
		Improving coordination and inter-sectoral interaction
		Collaboration and coordination among organizations for the development, attraction, and retention of donors
		Increased attention of sports organizations to philanthropy
	Legal and regulatory reforms	Enhancing transparency of relevant laws
		Removing legal barriers to donors' investment
		Establishing legal requirements for comprehensive support of donors
		Creating comprehensive and targeted laws for attracting and retaining donors
		Identifying the target community of donors for assistance
Improving management and planning	Developing comprehensive programs and models	Developing and disseminating comprehensive models for sports charities
		Preparing and voting on a comprehensive program for supporting sports donors
		Presenting a comprehensive program for the development of donors' participation in sports
		Setting up long-term written programs for the involvement of relevant organizations
		Developing a program and roadmap for attracting more donors
		Identifying sports needs for donors' participation

Main	Subthemes	Codes	
		Providing diverse solutions for donors' participation based on their customs and culture	
		Providing various options for donors' participation based on their motivations and goals	
		Planning for better coordination among organizations	
	Human resource empowerment	Training and employing specialized personnel	
		Conducting specialized training courses for managers	
	Improving interactions and support	Creating better communication mechanisms with managers	
		Attracting exceptional support from officials	
		Donors' participation in decision-making	
	Cultural transformation and enhancement	Changing attitudes	Strengthening the culture of supporting donors
			Changing the attitudes of officials toward donors
			Enhancing public trust in officials
		Promotion and education	Promoting the moral execution of support for sports
			Promoting donors' participation in sports
	Enhancing communication and awareness	Strengthening communication and awareness	Honoring and commemorating sports donors
			Promoting and highlighting centers built with the help of donors
Organizing conferences and training courses			
Launching communication campaigns			
Producing media content about donors			
Informing and educating donors			
Appropriate advertising by relevant organizations			
Support and economic incentives	Support and economic incentives	Reducing land acquisition costs	
		Supporting sports equipment producers	
		Financial support for the maintenance of sports facilities	
		Providing loans and banking facilities	
		Efforts to create awareness of the proper use of donors' assets	
		Transparency and awareness of proper use of donors' assets	

The results in [Table 3](#) indicate that from the qualitative data analysis, 42 open codes were identified, which were categorized into nine subthemes. From the obtained subthemes, five main themes were identified, including legal and structural reforms (main themes: process and administrative procedure reforms, legal and regulatory reforms), improving management and planning (main themes: developing comprehensive programs and models, human resource empowerment, improving interactions and support), cultural transformation and enhancement (main themes: changing attitudes, promotion and education), enhancing communication and awareness (central theme: strengthening communication and awareness), and support and economic incentives (central theme: support and financial incentives). A prominent theme emerged: "Donor Engagement and Motivation in Sports Infrastructure." This theme encapsulated the factors influencing donors' motivations and willingness to contribute to sports infrastructure projects. Subthemes included personal affinities towards sports, desires for community impact, and opportunities for brand recognition or corporate social responsibility initiatives.

Another theme, "Tailoring Infrastructure Projects for Donor Alignment," emphasized the importance of aligning sports infrastructure projects with potential donors' specific interests and preferences. Subthemes explored strategies for matching project scopes, locations, and beneficiary groups with donors' philanthropic goals and target communities. The theme "Governance and Transparency in Sports Infrastructure Philanthropy" highlighted the need for robust governance frameworks and transparent processes to foster trust and accountability in utilizing donated funds for sports infrastructure development. Subthemes addressed financial reporting, project monitoring, and stakeholder engagement issues.

4. Discussion and conclusion

This research aimed to identify solutions for utilizing the capacity of donors to develop sports infrastructure in the country. The results were categorized into five main themes: legal and structural reforms (main themes: process and administrative procedure reforms, legal and regulatory reforms), improving management and planning (main themes: developing comprehensive programs and models, human resource empowerment, improving interactions and support), cultural transformation and enhancement (main themes: changing attitudes, promotion and education), enhancing communication and awareness (central theme: strengthening communication and awareness), and support and economic incentives (central theme: support and financial incentives).

The research findings have revealed critical insights into leveraging donors' capacity for the development of sports infrastructure in the country. Identifying five main themes—legal and structural reforms, management and planning improvements, cultural transformation and enhancement, strengthened communication and awareness, and economic support and incentives—highlights the multidimensional nature of this endeavour. Each theme represents a crucial component that must be addressed to harness the potential of donor participation effectively.

The first finding was related to legal and structural reforms, with two main themes being process and administrative procedure and legal and regulatory reforms. In this regard, it can be mentioned that simplifying procedures and reducing bureaucracy, facilitating the licensing process for donor activities, improving coordination and intersectional interaction, enhancing collaboration among development organizations, attracting and retaining donors, increasing the attention of sports organizations to philanthropy, enhancing the transparency of relevant laws, removing legal barriers to donor investment, establishing legal requirements for comprehensive support of donors, and creating comprehensive and targeted laws for attracting and retaining donors were highlighted. The data from this research indicate that for effective engagement of donors in developing sports infrastructure, significant reforms in the country's legal and institutional structures, including simplifying processes and administrative procedures and reforming relevant laws and regulations, are necessary. The legal framework and administrative structures can be significant barriers or facilitators for private sector participation in economic and developmental activities, including those of donors.

Therefore, reforming and improving these infrastructures is essential for creating suitable platforms for attracting participation. The findings of this research are consistent with the results of [Banerjee et al. \(2006\)](#), [Oluyeju \(2023\)](#) and [Moszoro et al. \(2015\)](#). In this regard, [Banerjee et al. \(2006\)](#) highlights the impact of property rights and bureaucratic quality on private infrastructure investment. [Oluyeju \(2023\)](#) emphasizes the need for legal reforms to stimulate private investment in public infrastructure. [Moszoro et al.'s study \(2015\)](#) also demonstrates that the eradication of corruption and the rule of law influence private participation in infrastructure financing. The key findings of this research emphasize the need for significant reforms in the country's legal and administrative structures to facilitate and increase donor participation in developing sports infrastructure. Reforming existing processes and administrative procedures, along with reviewing and improving the legal framework, are among the most critical actions that should be taken. Therefore, the government and relevant institutions need to build the foundation for broader donor involvement in developing the country's sports infrastructure by adopting a concerted approach and national determination. Facilitating and expediting administrative processes, clarifying regulations, and removing legal barriers can enhance the motivation and willingness of donors to invest in this field.

Furthermore, promotional and cultural development measures are necessary to institutionalize the value and importance of donors' participation in sports development within society. Creating transparency and accountability in the expenditure of donors' contributions is another necessity to build public trust and strengthen the motivation for participation. Ultimately, attracting the support and involvement of donors alongside government resources can solve many problems and deficiencies in the country's sports infrastructure.

The second finding was related to management and planning, with two main themes being comprehensive program and model development, capacity building of human resources, improving interactions, and support. In this regard, it can be mentioned that defining the target community for soliciting assistance from donors, developing and disseminating a comprehensive model for sports charities, preparing and voting on a comprehensive program for supporting sports donors, presenting a comprehensive program for developing donor participation in sports, setting long-term plans for the involvement of relevant organizations, establishing a strategy and roadmap to attract more donors, identifying sports needs for donor participation, offering diverse solutions for donor participation based on their customs and culture, presenting various options for donor participation based on their motivations and goals, planning for better coordination among organizations, training and employing specialized personnel, organizing specialized training courses for managers, establishing better communication mechanisms with managers, attracting exceptional support from officials, and involving donors in decision-making were highlighted. The findings of this research indicate that to compellingly attract and manage donor participation in developing the country's sports infrastructure, improvement in management and planning in this field is necessary. Developing a comprehensive program and model, capacity building of specialized human resources, and improving interactions and mutual support are among the most essential sub-themes of this issue. A systematic and

programmatic approach by developing comprehensive models and programs can outline a clear vision and path for attracting and managing donor participation. This emphasizes the importance of strategic management in attracting private-sector investment in sports. On the other hand, capacity building of specialized human resources and improving interactions and mutual support are prerequisites for the successful implementation of programs. The results of this research align with [Ajmal et al. \(2023\)](#) and [Yaghobi et al. \(2021\)](#). [Ajmal et al. \(2023\)](#) suggest that developing a comprehensive plan and model is one of the proposed solutions for attracting and managing donor participation. Furthermore, capacity building of human resources and upgrading the knowledge and skills of managers are essential factors in attracting donor involvement. In this context, [Yaghobi et al. \(2021\)](#) support the role of management and planning in attracting private sector participation in sports. These findings can provide a basis for reviewing and reforming the management structures and processes related to attracting donor involvement in the country's sports organizations. This can lead to increased efficiency and effectiveness in utilizing this critical capacity. Therefore, it is necessary to improve management and planning in this field to achieve compelling attraction and management of donor participation in developing sports infrastructure. Developing comprehensive programs and models, capacity building of specialized human resources, and enhancing essential interactions and support are among the critical solutions on this path.

The third finding was related to transforming and promoting public culture, with two main themes: attitude change, promotion, and education. In this regard, it is possible to refer to strengthening the culture of supporting donors, changing the attitudes of officials towards donors, enhancing public trust in officials, promoting the spiritual performance of supporting sports, promoting the participation of donors in sports, commemorating and honouring sports donors, and promoting the centers built with the help of donors. The findings indicate that to successfully attract donors' participation in developing sports infrastructure, transforming and promoting public culture through attitude changes, promoting donors' values, and providing appropriate education are necessary. A society's culture and prevailing beliefs can significantly impact individuals' motivations and behaviors. Promoting the values of goodness and philanthropy and providing essential education can change traditional and outdated attitudes and, thus, enhance the motivation to participate in donor activities such as supporting sports infrastructure development. The findings of this study are consistent with the results of [Atalay & Švagždienė \(2023\)](#), [Schwab et al. \(2022\)](#), [Gui et al. \(2023\)](#) and [Hogan et al. \(2023\)](#). [Atalay & Švagždienė \(2023\)](#) believe that promoting a culture of participation and increasing donors' awareness of its importance and positive effects are meaningful solutions for donors' involvement in sports.

On the other hand, [Schwab et al. \(2022\)](#) state that changing the negative attitudes of individuals and managers is also crucial in this regard. [Gui et al. \(2023\)](#) found that the need for more public awareness about the benefits of humanitarian participation in sports is a significant obstacle that must be addressed through education and promotion. In this regard, [Hogan et al. \(2023\)](#) believe that traditional and stereotypical views about private sector participation in sports infrastructure should also change. The findings of

this research emphasize the need to simultaneously pay attention to cultural and other dimensions to attract donors' involvement in sports infrastructure development. Attitude changes, promoting donors' values, and education in this area are prerequisites for cultural transformation and increased donor participation in sports. Therefore, cultural and promotional actions should also be prioritized in addition to legal and structural reforms and the development of comprehensive management programs. Creating a transformation in public attitudes and beliefs regarding philanthropy and its positive effects on developing the country's infrastructure can provide a basis for attracting broader donor participation in sports. Therefore, extensive educational and promotional activities in society and the media should be seriously considered, focusing on raising public awareness about the importance and necessity of donor participation in national affairs and introducing successful models and examples in this field. Coordinating government and public efforts to promote culture can pave the way for achieving goals in developing sports infrastructure with donor participation. Thus, a comprehensive and multidimensional approach encompassing legal, managerial, and cultural dimensions can provide a suitable platform for maximizing public donors' involvement in the country's balanced development of sports infrastructure.

The fourth finding related to strengthening information dissemination and awareness focused on enhancing information dissemination and awareness. In this regard, holding conferences and training courses, launching information campaigns, producing media content about donors, informing and educating donors, and appropriate advertising by relevant organizations can be mentioned. The findings of this research indicate that proper information dissemination and awareness of the role and importance of donor participation in the development of sports infrastructure are critical factors in attracting and effectively utilizing donors' capacity. Insufficient awareness of opportunities and a subject's importance can reduce individuals' motivation and participation. Therefore, extensive information dissemination and increased awareness of the valuable role of donors in developing the country's sports can enhance their motivation and participation. The results of this study are consistent with the findings of [Pandandini \(2023\)](#), [Yaghobi & Forghani Ozrudi \(2021\)](#) and [Mane \(2022\)](#). [Pandandini \(2023\)](#) showed that the research findings indicate that increasing awareness and providing appropriate information about donor participation is crucial in attracting financial supporters of sports. [Yaghobi & Forghani Ozrudi \(2021\)](#) believe that the lack of information is recognized as one of the main obstacles, and the need for actions to increase donor awareness of sports is emphasized.

Additionally, [Mane \(2022\)](#) considers the importance of awareness and appropriate information as critical factors in attracting financial supporters of sports. Therefore, this is consistent with the findings that increasing awareness and information dissemination can be effective solutions for attracting financial supporters of sports. The findings of this study can provide the basis for planning and implementing suitable information dissemination actions by sports organizations to familiarize the public with the subject of donors and sports. This can significantly contribute to increasing donor participation in this field. Therefore, sports authorities in the country must prioritize comprehensive and targeted information dissemination and awareness campaigns. Utilizing the

capacity of mass media, social networks, and educational platforms can be effective in this regard. Introducing successful domestic and international models and examples of donor participation in sports development, explaining the positive effects of this issue in various social, economic, and cultural dimensions, and describing the processes and methods of involvement can significantly impact public awareness. Alongside media actions, organizing workshops, conferences, and educational sessions for various segments of society, including active and potential donors, can raise awareness and promote a correct understanding of donor participation in sports. Increasing awareness and fostering a proper culture in this regard will pave the way for creating a widespread social movement and attracting extensive support and participation from donors, which can significantly enhance the speed and depth of sports infrastructure development in the country.

The latest finding was related to economic support and incentives, which focused on economic support and incentives. In this regard, reducing land acquisition costs, supporting sports equipment producers, providing financial support for maintaining sports facilities, granting loans and banking facilities, promoting appropriate consumption of charitable properties, and increasing transparency and awareness regarding the proper utilization of donors' assets can be mentioned. This research's findings indicate that the government's implementation of practical economic support and incentives facilitates attracting and increasing donors' participation in sports infrastructure development. Economic motivations and financial facilities can enhance the attractiveness and cost-effectiveness of donors' participation in sports development projects. The findings of this study are consistent with the results of [Yaghobi and Forghani Ozrudi \(2021\)](#), [Filo et al. \(2020\)](#), and [Ko et al. \(2014\)](#). [Yaghobi & Forghani Ozrudi \(2021\)](#) showed that financial incentives and tax exemptions for donors can create incentives for the private sector to engage in sports. [Filo et al. \(2020\)](#) found that providing government financial and tax incentives can enhance donors' motivation and willingness to invest in sports.

Similarly, [Ko et al. \(2014\)](#) believe that ensuring security for donors in sports investment, along with necessary support such as appropriate facilities, exemptions, and tax incentives, can incentivize the private sector to participate in sports. This finding provides a roadmap for policymakers to design and implement suitable supportive measures and economic incentives to attract more donors to sports development. Taxes, loans, discounts, and other financial instruments may be among these measures. Given the findings of this research, it is necessary to consider appropriate economic support and incentives for donors to enhance their motivation for participating in sports infrastructure development. However, this should be accompanied by other non-economic measures and solutions. Therefore, the government and relevant institutions need to review existing financial and tax regulations and formulate a comprehensive package of economic support and incentives to attract and encourage active donors in the field of sports. Granting exemptions and tax deductions, cash and non-cash rewards, and providing special facilities can be included in this package. Communicating and disseminating these incentives widely is essential so donors and sports enthusiasts become aware of their motivating effects. Designing and implementing transparent and

fair mechanisms for donors to benefit from these supports is also a fundamental requirement in this process.

In conclusion, this study has demonstrated the necessity of adopting a comprehensive approach to optimally utilize donors' capacity to develop the country's sports infrastructure. Addressing legal and institutional barriers, enhancing management practices, fostering a supportive cultural environment, raising awareness and engagement, and providing economic incentives are all critical elements that must be collectively pursued. The findings underscore the importance of a coordinated effort involving policymakers, sports organizations, donors, and other stakeholders. By implementing the proposed solutions and recommendations, the country can unlock the potential of donor support, accelerate the development of sports facilities, and promote increased participation in physical activities to improve societal well-being.

The key takeaways from this study underscore the pivotal role that donors can play in driving the development of sports infrastructure within the country. By implementing a multifaceted approach that addresses legal reforms, strategic planning, cultural promotion, awareness-raising, and economic incentives, the nation can unlock the immense potential of philanthropic support. Furthermore, this research paves the way for future studies to delve deeper into specific aspects and develop tailored implementation frameworks for different regions or sports disciplines. Continuous collaboration among policymakers, sports organizations, academics, and donor communities will be essential to refine and optimize the strategies for harnessing this valuable resource. Ultimately, by fostering an environment that encourages and facilitates donor participation, the country can accelerate the expansion of sports facilities, promote active lifestyles, and enhance the overall well-being of its citizens.

5. Research and practical implications

While this study provides valuable insights into leveraging donor capacity for sports infrastructure development, it is essential to acknowledge its limitations and identify areas for further exploration. One limitation lies in the qualitative nature of the research, which focused on the perspectives of a specific group of stakeholders within the country's sports sector. Future studies could incorporate quantitative or mixed-method approaches to obtain a more comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon. Additionally, this research focused on the country's national context, and the findings may only be directly applicable to some regions with different socio-economic, cultural, and regulatory environments. Cross-cultural or comparative studies could illuminate the proposed solutions' generalizability and adaptability to diverse contexts.

Furthermore, while this study addressed the broader aspects of donor participation in sports infrastructure development, future research could delve into specific areas, such as the role of corporate social responsibility initiatives, the potential of crowdfunding platforms, or the impact of public-private partnerships in this domain. Lastly, as the landscape of sports philanthropy and infrastructure financing continues to evolve, longitudinal studies or periodic assessments would be beneficial to capture emerging trends, challenges, and best practices over time.

Potential research proposals stemming from this study include:

- 1- A mixed-methods study combining qualitative and quantitative approaches to comprehensively assess the factors influencing donor participation in sports infrastructure development across multiple regions.
- 2- A comparative study examining the differences and similarities in donor engagement strategies and their effectiveness across various cultural contexts or levels of economic development.
- 3- This is an in-depth investigation into the role of corporate social responsibility initiatives in sports philanthropy, exploring the motivations, challenges, and best practices for businesses contributing to infrastructure projects.
- 4- A longitudinal study tracking the evolution of donor participation in sports infrastructure development over an extended period, identifying emerging trends, challenges, and the long-term impact on community well-being.
- 5- An evaluation of the effectiveness of various public-private partnership models in facilitating donor involvement and investment in sports infrastructure projects, highlighting successful case studies and lessons learned.
- 6- A study exploring the potential of crowdfunding platforms and digital technologies in revolutionizing attracting and managing donor support for sports infrastructure initiatives, particularly in resource-constrained settings.
- 7- An investigation into the role of policy interventions, regulatory frameworks, and incentive structures in fostering an enabling environment for donor participation in sports infrastructure development, drawing insights from multiple national contexts.

This study contributes to the ongoing discourse by acknowledging these limitations and suggesting future research directions. It paves the way for further advancements in understanding and optimizing the utilization of donor capacity for sports infrastructure development worldwide.

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شناسایی راهکارهای استفاده از ظرفیت خیرین به عنوان شرکای غیر تجاری در توسعه زیرساخت‌های ورزشی کشور

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کلیدواژه

اقتصادی
توسعه
راهکارها
زیرساخت ورزشی
ظرفیت خیرین
نوآوری

نوع مقاله

پژوهشی

چکیده

هدف: با توجه به ظرفیت و پتانسیل بالای خیرین برای مشارکت در توسعه زیرساخت‌های ورزشی در کشور، شناسایی راهکارهای مناسب و عملیاتی برای بهره‌گیری از این ظرفیت از اهمیت ویژه‌ای برخوردار است. لذا هدف پژوهش حاضر شناسایی راهکارهای استفاده از ظرفیت خیرین در توسعه زیرساخت‌های ورزشی کشور می‌باشد.

روش: این پژوهش به شیوه کیفی انجام شد و برای تحلیل داده‌ها از روش تحلیل محتوای کیفی با استفاده از تکنیک تحلیل مضمون استفاده گردید که ماهیت اکتشافی دارد. جامعه آماری در این پژوهش را تمامی متخصصان و مدیران ورزشی و کسانی که در حوزه خیرین ورزش فعالیت داشتند، تشکیل داده بودند. نمونه‌گیری به صورت هدفمند و گلوله برفی انجام شد که با ۱۷ مصاحبه به اشباع نظری رسید. به منظور گردآوری اطلاعات از مصاحبه نیمه ساختاریافته استفاده شد که به صورت ارتباط مستقیم و به صورت تماس تلفنی انجام شد. برای سنجش روایی و پایایی از مقبولیت، قابلیت انتقال، تأییدپذیری و باز آزمون استفاده شد.

یافته‌ها: از تجزیه و تحلیل داده‌ها ۴۲ کد باز استخراج شد که در ۹ مضمون فرعی قرار گرفت. در نهایت مضامین فرعی نیز در پنج مضمون اصلی شامل اصلاحات قانونی و ساختاری، بهبود مدیریت و برنامه‌ریزی، تحول و ارتقای فرهنگ عمومی، تقویت اطلاع‌رسانی و آگاهی‌بخش، حمایت‌ها و مشوق‌های اقتصادی دسته‌بندی شدند. یافته‌های این پژوهش، مجموعه‌ای غنی از راهکارها و ابزارهای کارآمد را برای جذب حداکثری مشارکت خیرین در توسعه زیرساخت‌های ورزشی ارائه می‌کند. با بهره‌گیری از این راهبردها، سازمان‌های ورزشی و خود خیرین می‌توانند به بهترین شکل ممکن از این ظرفیت ارزشمند بهره‌مند شوند.

اصالت و ابتکار مقاله: یافته‌های تحقیق بینش‌های منحصربه‌فردی را در مورد انگیزه‌ها، چالش‌ها و مشارکت‌های بالقوه نیکوکاران در پیشبرد طرح‌های توسعه ورزشی ارائه می‌دهد. همچنین، این مطالعه چارچوبی نوآورانه را برای مشارکت مؤثر و همکاری با سازمان‌های بشردوستانه برای هدایت رشد زیرساخت‌های ورزشی پیشنهاد می‌کند.

تاریخ دریافت: ۱۴۰۲/۱۲/۲۴

تاریخ پذیرش: ۱۴۰۳/۰۲/۲۹

در حالی اولین شماره **نشریه کسب و کار روزش** را منتشر کردیم، که نشریه جایگاه خود را در بین محققان و داوران پیدا کرده و در سراسر جهان پذیرفته شده است. اگرچه بیشتر بازدیدکنندگان مقالات آن از کشورهای دیگر هستند، اما بازدید ماهانه آن بیش از ۴۰۰۰ نفر است که نیمی از آن از محققان خارج از کشور و از پنج قاره جهان هستند. امیدواریم با رعایت استانداردهای فرمی و محتوایی لازم بتوانیم در افزایش دید مقالات و نمایه شدن در پایگاه‌های تخصصی تری موفق‌تر باشیم. ابر واژگان مقالات نیز نشان می‌دهد که ما همچنان ملزم به رعایت محدوده مجله هستیم و توانسته‌ایم جایگاه تخصصی آن را حفظ کنیم. به یاری خداوند متعال و با همکاری مستمر همکاران و نویسندگان عزیز در نحوه برداشت خود موفق‌تر خواهیم بود.

بار دیگر از معاونت محترم پژوهشی **دانشگاه الزهراء(س)** و همکاران عزیزمان در این حوزه به خاطر همراهی و راهنمایی‌هایشان تشکر می‌کنیم. همچنین از مدیران محترم کمیسیون نشریات علمی وزارت علوم، تحقیقات و فناوری کمال تشکر و قدردانی را داریم و امیدواریم حمایت خود را از مجلات نوپای انگلیسی زبان حفظ نموده و همچنان به حمایت‌های فنی و مادی خود برای انتشار این‌گونه نشریات ادامه دهند. همچنین امیدواریم در راستای انتشار مقالات فنی و سایر فعالیت‌ها برای رشد این رشته و ارتقای سطح مقاله نویسی به زبان انگلیسی، همچنان دریافت مقالات تخصصی ارزشمند را ادامه دهیم.

- ۲۷ کاربرد نظریه یکپارچه پذیرش و استفاده از فناوری در پذیرش فناوری افزوده در توسعه و ترویج ورزش با نقش تعدیل‌کننده اینرسی مصرف‌کننده
علیرضا ناظمی بیدگلی؛ سمانه علی‌پور؛ زهرا صادقی آرانی
- ۴۳ تأثیر جهت‌گیری عمودی تصاویر پوشاک ورزشی بر جلب توجه دیداری مشتریان
فرنگیس نجفی؛ سیده ناهید شتاب بوشهری؛ امین خطیبی؛ طاهره ازمشا
- ۶۵ طراحی مدل پارادایمی توسعه بازاریابی ورزش مدارس ایران
سروش آریانپور؛ هادی باقری؛ سیدکریم سعادت میرقدیم؛ سیداحسان حسینی
- ۸۷ ارائه الگوی توسعه گردشگری ورزشی فعال با رویکرد اقتصادی: سهم ورزش سلامت محور در تولید ناخالص داخلی
زهرا سهرابی؛ مهرداد محرم‌زاده؛ رسول نظری
- ۱۰۳ بررسی ظرفیت و پویایی های کسب و کار در فدراسیون اسکیت جمهوری اسلامی ایران: تحلیل اهمیت- عملکرد شاخص‌های ارتقای مزیت رقابتی
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حسین کردلو؛ عباس نقی‌زاده باقی؛ فرزاد نوبخت؛ مهرداد محرم‌زاده

نشریه

کسب و کار

در ورزش

نشریه فصلنامه علمی

دانشگاه الزهراء (س)

دوره چهار، شماره چهار، شماره پیاپی ۱۲

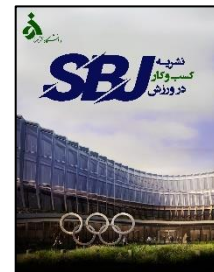
پاییز ۱۴۰۳

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- استادیار مدیریت ورزشی دانشگاه الزهرا (س)	دکتر لیلیا مصلحی
- دکترای مدیریت ورزشی	دکتر مهیم نیازی تبار
دکترای رشته مدیریت دانشگاه تربیت مدرس	دکتر عباس رضایی پندی
دکترای مدیریت ورزشی دانشگاه طباطبائی	دکتر فریاد مظلومی سوینی

نشریه

کسب و کار

در ورزش

نشریه فصلنامه علمی دانشگاه الزهرا (س)

دوره چهار، شماره چهار، شماره پیاپی ۱۲

پاییز ۱۴۰۳

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

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