

## The Role of Strategic Thinking in the Productivity of the Ministry of Sports and Youth Using Structural Equation

Received: 2022-11-17

Accepted: 2023-02-28

Vol. 4, No.1. Winter.2023, 39-57

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### Abstract

**Purpose:** The aim of present research is to study the role of strategic thinking in the productivity of the Ministry of Sports and Youth using a structural equation.

**Methods:** in terms of purpose, the current research applies to the mixed research method combined with an exploratory approach. In the qualitative part, Strauss and Corbin method and in the quantitative part, the structural equation modeling method has been used. The statistical population of the research in the qualitative part includes people with sport senior management in the country, sports experts and policymakers, as well as sport management professors.

The opinions of 15 experts have been obtained during a semi-structured interview until reaching theoretical saturation in a completely non-probability way by using goal-oriented theoretical and snowball techniques. In the quantitative part, between five and 10 samples were required for each item; Therefore, the statistical sample consisted of 294 subjects. There were 49 variables that were considered in the structural analysis of 6 samples for each variable, according to Sarmad et al. 2014 findings, 5 to 10 samples are needed for each variable. The data collection tool was a semi-structured interview in the qualitative part and a researcher-made questionnaire in the quantitative part

**Results:** This research shows that the policies, solutions, programs, and acts should be adjusted with a strategic approach, for fulfilling the awareness guidelines, and with regard to the changes of the managers and human resources of the Ministry of Sports, towards constructing a collective memory.

**Conclusion:** it is recommended to establish a joint think tank between the human resources of the five current vice-chancellors of this ministry.

**Keywords:** Strategic thinking, Ministry of Sports and Youth, think tank

## Introduction

Today, sports organizations are facing a changing and threatening environment on the one hand, and on the other hand, the increasing trend of sports developments in the domestic and foreign arenas has required new and more expectations and demands on behalf of society and the sports communities, for them. In addition, old strong competitors are rapidly progressing, gaining higher titles and positions, making major investments, and achieving sustainable growth and development. These all are part of the claims as well as environmental threats, which are raised as a problem or a fundamental issue of the Ministry of Sports and Youth in sports fields (Mousavian, 2016). The Ministry of Sports and Youth, which its main responsibility and mission are to create a suitable context for providing various sports services throughout the country, in order to improve people's health through physical and sports activities, as well it's a living and active social-sports organization, which is the custodian for the championship and professional sports in the country, and has been intimidated with change and threats (Karimi Ja, Zoroastrians SW, & Mai, 2017). With this definition, on the one hand, they should respond to the mentioned needs, wants, and expectations in a timely, deserving, and appropriate manner, and on the other hand, to get out of these circumstances and deal with other environmental threats, to maintain the survival and dynamism of the future of the respective sports field, should make an effort to the sustainable development, and take an infrastructural action to acquire and manage resources. In this regard, they can use various managerial tools to face and overcome these threats, changes, and demands, in their infrastructural actions. Otherwise, "an organization that does not get along with the waves of change is condemned to ruin" (Ghaffarian & Kiani, 2010). One of these efficient and effective managerial tools, in order to solve the problem of environmental changes of the Ministry of Sports and Youth, is strategic

planning. Strategic design and planning in the organization are one of the processes that guide people's thinking. That can be practically profitable one of the ways to apply and strengthen strategic thinking. In order to implement strategic planning, managers and employees of the organization must be equipped with strategic thinking (Mousavian, 2016). Therefore, strategic planning and its implementation as effective tools can bring about a clear plan for the future of the Ministry of Sports and Youth and be a fundamental basis for dealing with environmental threats and their problems.

Since the role of managers in the process of strategic planning and decision-making is dependent on their way of thinking, strategic planning frameworks only provide questions whose answers are based on managers' methods and the way of thinking in decision-making (Castiglione, 2016), the importance of strategic thinking is realized. Despite the presence of the term strategic thinking in recent years, little research has been carried on in this field, and more research is needed to better understand this concept. Besides, it helps executive managers in developing strategies to promote strategic thinking in the organization. Whereas without understanding and defining the concept of strategic thinking, such as strategic planning, introducing a new word to the lexicon of strategic management, which is unrelated to executive managers, has been accepted as a risk, so it is necessary for the researchers of this field to try to explain and clarify strategic thinking (Lee & Chen, 2012). Most of the research conducted in the field of strategic management has not mentioned the conceptual dimension of decision-making, which deals with how strategic decision-makers think (Ouche, Oima, & Oginda, 2016). So, the importance of conducting research along with improving the level of strategic decision-making capability is clear. If sports organizations want to do strategic planning, the concept of strategic thinking that can bring strategic results for the organization

must be institutionalized, at least in the thinking of their chief officers. If the minds of the chief officers of these organizations lack the concept of strategic thinking or have it slightly, then the design of strategic planning not only does not have a suitable implementation capability in such organizations but also the organization and its sub-organizations face many problems and also will lose its effectiveness. In 2016, Ochi et al stated in their research results that there is a significant positive linear relationship between different strategic planning components and annual income, which means that strategic planning has a positive and significant effect on annual income. It is recommended that further integration of strategic planning will lead to significant improvement in annual income in NSF in Kenya. Király et al. concluded that the lack of implementation of sustainable policies is only due to the fact that successful political leaders cannot lack systemic thinking (Király, Köves, & Balázs, 2017) and based on the current rules of politics, the main motivation of political leaders to increase the chances of their political survival, depends on their systematic understanding; and having systemic thinking ensures political survival of leaders. Due to its positive social, cultural, and economic effects, sports have gained a special position in most countries (Tavakoli and Yaqoubi, 2018).

Karimi and Abbasi conducted a study in 2018 to clarify the relationship between strategic thinking among the experts of the Ministry of Sports and Youth of Iran and both organizational learning and knowledge management. The results of the research revealed that there is a significant relationship between strategic thinking and both organizational learning and knowledge management. As it was mentioned earlier that strategic thinking takes priority over strategic planning, if strategic planning is considered a mandatory issue for the Ministry of Sports and Youth, then strategic thinking in the minds of the senior managers of this organization, should be implemented as a mandatory initiation. This proves the importance

and necessity of priority of strategic thinking over strategic planning among senior managers of sports organizations. For the sake of knowing and understanding the utilization of the concept of strategic thinking among sports managers, measuring, assessing, and evaluating of the level of strategic thinking is necessary and important to enhance managers' utilization of strategic thinking in the Ministry of Sports and Youth. Nasrolahi et al (2022) In research titled "Developing a Model of Factors Affecting Strategic Thinking in The Ministry of Sport and Youth". The results showed that for the Ministry of Sports and Youth to develop strategic thinking it is important to make sure that management, psychological, psychological and intuitive, individual, and systemic are all implemented effectively. Nasrolahi et al (2022) in research titled "A Model of Strategic Thinking to Develop Performance of Sports Managers (Case Study: Sports Federations of Islamic Republic of Iran)". The findings of the study showed that there was a significant relationship between eight components of strategic thinking and the performance promotion of sports managers (and  $r = 0.76$ ). Therefore, to boost the performance of sports managers, especially in the strategic dimension, first of all, the strategic thinking model of sports managers should be available, so that, the sports managers should be measured and evaluated based on it, and if needed, educational programs and learning and development of strategic thinking should be taken into account, consequently, the change in behavior and improvement of their performance can be observed. Considering the need and necessity of the existence of a strategic thinking model in order to improve the special efficiency of sports managers, more available resources regarding the strategic thinking models have been reviewed, which demonstrate that in addition to the absence of a special strategic thinking model for sport managers, rarely the strategic thinking of sport managers has also been investigated and studied strategically. Thus, according to the

aforesaid gap, and also, due to the lack of such a model, researchers have tried to develop a strategic thinking model in order to improve productivity, especially in the field of the Ministry of Sports and youth and it may have applicability in other sports organizations. Besides, the novelty of the research topic and providing such a model has been considered an innovation in the field of sports management of the country. In the case of designing this model, of course, by using it, the Ministry of Sports and Youth can solve the problems better regarding the attitude and strategic thinking of sports managers. The custodians of the country's physical education and sports affairs, through designing strategic plans knowing the level of strategic thinking of their sports managers can react appropriately and fundamentally against environmental threats, program changes, legitimate wants and demands of the society and the sports community, etc. As well, as ensure the successful presence of related sports organizations in competitions at different sports levels. From another dimension, assessment, and measurement on the basis of the aforementioned mode, can prevent the waste of time and money, and mistakes caused by the lack of useful and complete understanding of the concept of strategic thinking in the sports organization and related managers and the creation of additional departments, heterogeneous structures, etc. Also, it can promote the performance of sports managers in line with strategic goals and plans. Because managers with strategic thinking and a better understanding of the strategic plan will perform more effectively (Rezaei and Salehpour, 2019). This is a popular idea in the field of strategic management that successful managers are managers who apply strategic thinking. For this reason, the researchers believe that the lack of such a model shows the importance and necessity of conducting research. Therefore, in this study, an attempt is made to take a step toward "explaining the role of strategic thinking in the productivity of the Ministry of Sports and Youth" by designing a

model.

## Methods

In terms of purpose, the current research applies the mixed research method combined with an exploratory approach. Strauss method has been used in the qualitative part, and the structural equation modeling method has been used in the quantitative part. The statistical population of the research in the qualitative part includes people with sports senior management in the country, sports experts and policymakers as well as sports management professors who had articles or literary works in the field of the present research. Also, the statistical population of the research on the quantitative part included the strategic council members of the Ministry of Sports and Youth, the senior managers of the Ministry of Sports and Youth, and the middle managers of the Ministry of Sports and Youth. In favor of obtaining the most information in the field of the structure of strategic thinking, the opinions of 15 experts were obtained during a semi-structured interview until reaching theoretical saturation in a completely improbable way and by using goal-oriented theoretical and snowball techniques; This way, those who had the most information in the field of strategic thinking due to their literary works, fields, and educational and work fields, were selected to conduct semi-structured interviews and, sampling has been continued until the data reaches saturation. In this research, 15 people participated in the interview. It should be noted that in the 15th interview, there has been no more data that would cause development, modification, enlargement, or addition to the existing theory in the research. In fact, theoretical saturation was reached in the fifteenth interview, however, in order to ensure the saturation of the interviews, three more interviews have been also conducted. In the quantitative section, between 5 to 10 samples were required for each item; therefore, the statistical sample includes 294 people. The data collection tool was a semi-structured interview

in the qualitative part and a researcher-made questionnaire in the quantitative part.

**Table 1- Expert status of interviewees**

Specialty	Frequency	Frequency percentage
Professors of Sports Management	7	46.66
Senior Managers of the Ministry of Sports and Youth	6	40
Strategic Managers	2	13.34
Total	15	100

Based on the results listed in Table 1, 46.66% of the participants are professors of sports management and 40% are senior managers of the Ministry of Sports and Youth, and 13.34% have expertise in strategic management. Two coders' intra-subject agreement has been used in order to check the reliability of the interview. Thence, a Ph.D. A student in sports management was requested to participate in the current research to associate in the coding part. Three interviews

were randomly selected, and the coding results of two people have been reported in Table 2. Also, the intra-subject reliability percentage has been calculated with this formula:

$$\text{Intra-subject agreement percentage} = \frac{\text{the number of agreements} \times 2}{\text{total number of codes}} * 100$$

**Table 2- Data reliability**

Interview Title	Total Number of Codes	Number of Agreements	Disagreements	Re-test Reliability
First Interview	17	7	10	0.82
Second Interview	18	7	11	0.77
Third Interview	23	10	13	0.86
Sum	58	23	34	0.79

Strauss and Corbin's coding method has been used to analyze the interviews. After analyzing the data, an initial questionnaire was prepared with 62 five-choice questions based on the five-point Likert scale and its options included: very high, high, medium, low, and very low with five, four, three, two, and one-point in succession. The interviewees' point of view has been used to check the content validity, and exploratory factor analysis has been used for the psychometric analysis of the research constructs. In order to ensure the validity of the structure and confirm the factors identified in the previous step (exploratory factor analysis), the factors have been employed using the confirmatory

factor analysis test with the partial square method. Also, path analysis using structural equation modeling and SPSS version 23 and PLS software. 4 Version three has been used to examine the conceptual model of the research. PLS is used for constructive measurement models. In PLS, the predictive power is high and exploratory research is used for the complexity of the model (a large number of constructs and indicators). In order to check the validity in structural equation modeling with the help of Smart PLS software, two methods of convergent validity and divergent validity were used. AVE criterion calculated by the PLS software was used for this purpose. The appropriate value for

AVE was 0.5 or higher. For reliability, the Rho coefficient is also used to measure the internal reliability of structures. As China (1998) believes, the Rho coefficient is more reliable than Cronbach's alpha. Rho coefficient is sometimes called the Dillon-Goldstein coefficient. The value of this coefficient should be more than 0.7.

## Results

In this research, in the first stage, after converting the interviews into text, the researcher did open coding as key coding

concepts. As a result of initial open coding, 214 codes have been extracted from 15 interviews. After summarizing similar codes, the final number of open codes has turned into 107. In the second step, axial coding has been done. At this stage, the researcher dealt with the process of relating categories and linking categories at the level of features and dimensions. At this time, the categories, characteristics, and dimensions resulting from open coding have been compiled and put in place to create a wide knowledge of relationships. At this point, all the final open codes have been made a revision and compared with the research literature.

**Table 3- Core category and ultimate open-source codes**

Axial Categories	Final Open-Source Code
Stable structure	1. Using standardized procedures 2. Using formal processes 3. Management stability 4. Stability of decision-making 5. Stability of developmental programs 6. Reducing the conflicts between government institutions 8. Intra-institutional coherence
Logical intelligence	Internal analysis of the organization External analysis of the organization Smart ecology 360-degree knowledge The problem-solving mind Strategic mind Fluctuating thinking Mental insight
Management wisdom	Continuous learning Basic management skills Having information on the spur of the moment and time managing Purposeful foresight and forecasting Creativity Courage in thinking
Patient organization	Opportunity for trial and error Streaming strategic thinking for everyone Creating incentives for strategic thinking Participation by employees in decision-making Institutionalization of preliminaries of strategic thinking Job security Increasing the scope of authority Regarding strategic thinking a significant
Individual competence and organizational capability	Innate gift Individual qualification Creative thinking Expert human resources Designing space to create an experience Structural stability Patronage
Transnational interaction	Transnational organizations International interactions
	Management traditions Island function

Traditionalism	Structural dependence	
Bargaining chips	Political, economic, and social pressure	Organizational cultural conditions Serving party interests
	Closed administrative system	
Strategic analysis	Developing programs for different departments Allocation of the mission and duties of each department Explaining the strategic issues	Developing strategies
Clarity of path	Legal basis Amending the rules Respecting the rules Financial control Transparency in drawing up contracts	Implementation monitoring Internal inspection Security and anti-corruption committee formation
Competition	Professionalism The risk-taking spirit	Resorting to new technologies Providing a competitive environment
Rational structuring	Human resource reengineering Rationalization of organizational processes Redefining the evaluation system Structural stability	Departmentalization Increasing organizational readiness Human resource transfer Planning-oriented position appointment system Unification of concepts Targeted succession

The results of table number four have shown that 12 categories such as stable structure, logical intelligence, self-management, patient organization, individual competence and organizational capability, transnational interaction, traditionalism, bargaining chips, strategic analysis, clarity of path, competition, rational structuring, orientation based on private and public interests and also the sponsorship structure has been identified in the axial coding section.

In the third stage, selective coding has been done. Selective coding includes the process of choosing the main category, systematically relating it to other categories, verifying the validity of these relationships, and completing the categories that need further refinement and

development. Selective coding based on the results of open coding and axial coding is the main stage of theorizing; in such a way that, it systematically relates the axial category to other categories and presents those relationships in the form of a report, and corrects the categories that need further improvement and development. The results have been presented in table number five, in which 10 factors have been identified as effective factors in the governance structure.

The identified factors describe the mechanisms through which the target community of the research identifies the improvement of strategic thinking and can take steps in line with the productivity of the Ministry of Sports and Youth of the country according to the obtained components.

**Table 5- Final axes**

Stable structure	Transnational interaction
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Logical intelligence	Traditionalism
Management wisdom	Bargaining chips
Patient organization	Strategic analysis
Individual competence and organizational capability	Rational structuring

In the quantitative section, according to the results of table number six, the KMO value obtained is 0.707. This value shows that the number of research samples is sufficient for factor analysis and it is possible to perform factor analysis for the considered data and the data can be reduced to a set of hidden factors.

And, the results of Bartlett's test (Sig = 0.001,  $2\chi = 8830.886$ ) show that there is a high correlation between the items; therefore, it is allowed to continue and use the rest stages of factor analysis.

**Table 6- The results of Bartlett and Keyser-Meir-Olkin tests**

Presupposition	Value
Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure of Sampling Adequacy	0.707
Approx. Chi-Square	8830.886
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	DF
	1891
	Sigh
	0.001

In accordance with the results of table number seven, the questionnaire questions include 67.68% of the total variance; in consequence, the

results of the factor loading of the questions show that the factor loading of all the questions is acceptable.

**Table 7- Shares of questions of the research tool**

Questions	Components									
	Stable structure	Logical intelligence	Self-management	Patient organization	Individual competence and organizational capability	Transnational interaction	Traditionalism	Bargaining chips	Strategic analysis	Rational structuring
1	0.812									
2	0.820									
3	0.799									
4	0.767									
5	0.766									
6	0.761									
7	0.760									



8	0.760								
9		0.745							
10		0.735							
11		0.765							
12		0.762							
13		0.644							
14		0.643							
15		0.501							
16			0.850						
17			0.801						
18			0.708						
19			0.705						
20			0.701						
21			0.669						
22				0.718					
23				0.714					
24				0.711					
25				0.682					
26				0.641					
27					0.783				
28					0.731				
29					0.769				
30					6.79				
31					0.747				
32						0.618			
33						0.617			
34						0.600			
35						0.573			
36							0.799		
37							0.796		
38							0.767		
39							0.516		
40								0.838	

41								0.826		
42								0.627		
43								0.577		
44									0.930	
45									0.923	
46									0.933	
47										0.723
48										0.709
49										0.614
Percentage of variance	11.47	10.94	9.42	7.43	7.29	6.47	5.94	5.42	4.43	4.29
Cumulative variance	67.68									

Based on the results of table number eight, the values of Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability are acceptable for all research

variables; so, according to the values of the average variance index extracted, convergent validity has been confirmed.

**Table 8- Cronbach's alpha values, composite reliability, and average variance index extracted for research variables**

Components	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability	AVE	Significance Level
Stable structure	0.93	0.94	0.68	0.001
Logical intelligent	0.83	0.87	0.50	0.001
Management wisdom	0.88	0.91	0.63	0.001
Patient organization	0.86	0.90	0.65	0.001
Individual competence and organizational capability	0.87	0.90	0.66	0.001
Transnational interaction	0.79	0.86	0.62	0.001
Traditionalism	0.82	0.89	0.67	0.001
Bargaining chips	0.83	0.89	0.67	0.001
Strategic analysis	0.79	0.88	0.72	0.001
Rational structuring	0.79	0.88	0.72	0.001

Table number nine shows that all the relations between questions 1 to 8 and the component of stable structure, 9 to 15 and the component of logical intelligence, 16 to 21 and the component of self-management, 22 to 26 and the component of the patient organization, 27 to 31 and the component individual competence and

organizational capability, 32 to 35 and the component of transnational interaction, 36 to 39 and the component of traditionalism, 40 to 43 and the component of bargaining chips, 44 to 46 and the component of strategic analysis and 47 to 49 and the component of the rationalistic structure, are significant. Also, based on the

degree of the relation of T-Value and the ten factors to the concept of strategic thinking structure recorded in table number nine, all the

relations have confirmed the relationship between each general factor and the strategic thinking structure scale.

**Table 9- The relationship between indicators and components (measurement model)**

Indicator	Component	Factor Loading	The Coefficient of Determination		The Standard Error	T-Value	The degree of Relationship to the strategic thinking	
1	Stable structure	0.67	1.25	0.193	0.17	12.42	17.23	0.19
2		0.48	0.58		0.31	5.86		
3		0.53	0.49		0.33	6.50		
4		0.66	0.51		0.34	10.77		
5		0.64	0.61		0.28	10.61		
6		0.53	0.59		0.27	7.17		
7		0.61	0.63		0.27	9.27		
8		0.69	0.45		0.40	11.32		
9	Logical intelligence	0.67	0.29	0.162	0.20	11.03	14.11	0.36
10		0.59	0.22		0.54	8.19		
11		0.62	0.33		0.45	8.19		
12		0.62	0.45		0.35	10.36		
13		0.58	0.19		0.53	8.35		
14		0.64	0.13		0.60	7.87		
15		0.64	0.27		0.50	11.37		
16	Self-management	0.67	1.32	0.136	0.15	12.01	14.44	0.23
17		0.56	0.67		0.23	7.24		
18		0.51	0.38		0.41	6.54		
19		0.68	0.29		0.53	10.45		
20		0.57	0.54		0.26	8.16		
21		0.60	0.24		0.50	9.36		
22	Patient organization	0.65	1.15	0.122	0.10	9.35		0.30
23		0.63	0.75		0.16	8.15		
24		0.59	0.71		0.18	6.95		
25		0.66	0.14		0.43	10.47		

26		0.64	0.14		0.43	9.06	13.12	
27	Individual competence and organizational capability	0.65	1.32	0.131	0.23	10.06	13.25	0.27
28		0.66	0.38		0.41	12.12		
29		0.67	0.47		0.41	11.18		
30		0.66	0.27		0.57	12.05		
31		0.66	0.48		0.40	9.24		
32	Transnational interaction	0.66	1.28	0.100	0.19	9.89	13.09	0.26
33		0.68	0.33		0.48	1.46		
34		0.58	0.26		0.52	7.35		
35		0.60	0.19		0.38	7.85		
36	Traditionalism	0.64	1.20	0.103	0.12	10.78	13.99	0.28
37		0.68	0.46		0.30	8.74		
38		0.62	0.22		0.47	9.39		
39		0.60	0.46		0.31	8.33		
40	Bargaining chips	0.73	1.07	0.115	0.45	14.17	12.29	0.98
41		0.61	0.14		0.56	7.88		
42		0.74	0.13		0.55	13.58		
43		0.67	1.07		0.045	11.05		
44	Strategic analysis	0.64	1.35	0.079	0.23	7.08	12.23	0.95
45		0.63	0.21		0.51	7.64		
46		0.71	0.19		0.51	11.59		
47	Rational organization	0.63	1.40	0.082	0.26	8.86	24.02	0.99
48		0.63	0.18		0.53	7.19		
49		0.78	0.17		0.53	14.74		

During the goodness of fit test, the appropriateness of the data set is checked, according to table number 10, the ratio of  $\chi^2$  to DF is equal to 2.45 and the Root means square Error of Approximation (RMSEA) is equal to 0.071; Therefore, the model has the necessary

fit. Also, NFI = 0.95, CFI = 0.98, GFI = 0.98 and AGFI = 0.97 confirmed the fit of the model; Therefore, the governance structure model is appropriate in terms of fit indicators, and all the questions and factors raised can be placed together in the research model.

**Table 10- Values of the goodness of fit test indices**

Variable	$\chi^2 / DF$	RMSEA	NFI	CFI	GFI	AGFI	GOF
Strategic thinking	2.45	0.071	0.95	0.98	0.98	0.97	0.50

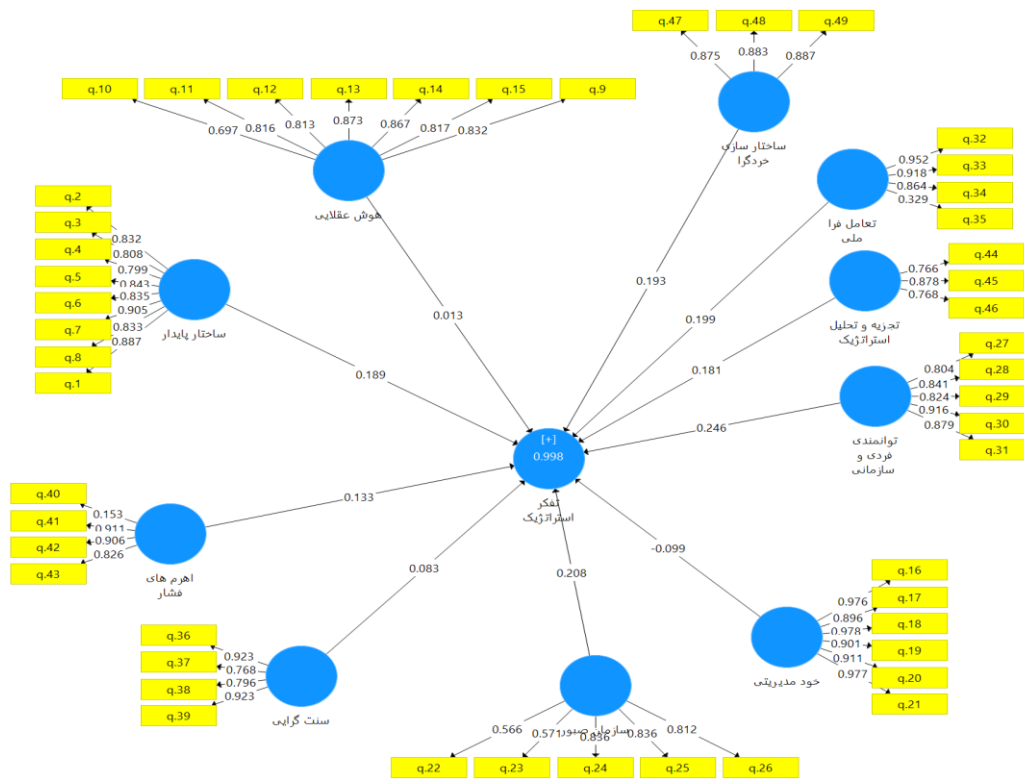


Figure 1- Structural Model of Standard Research

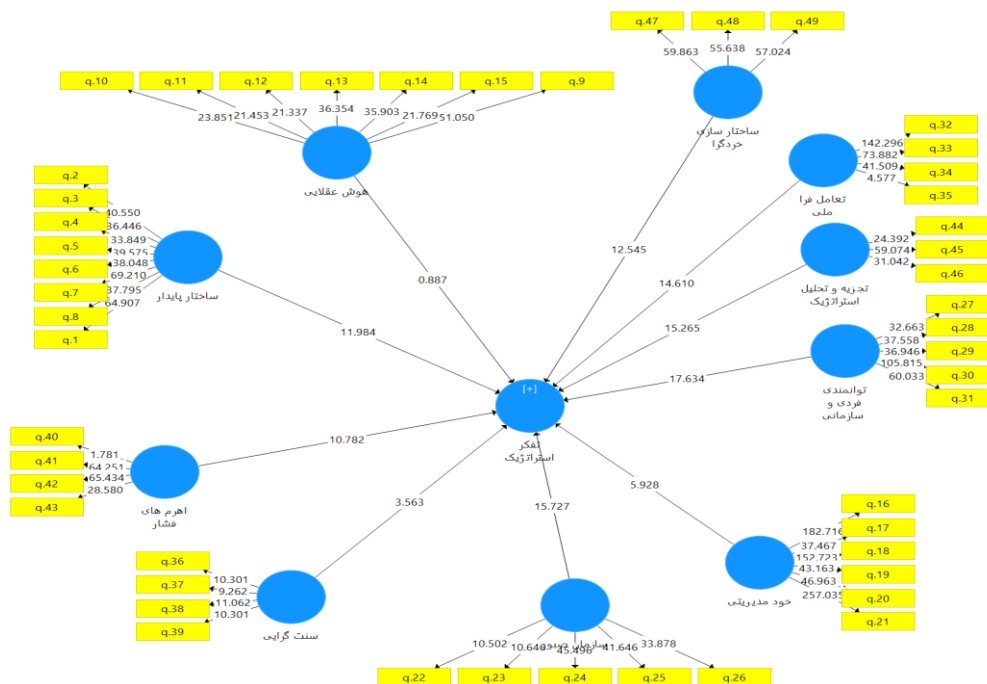


Figure 2- Structural Model of Research on the meaningful mode

Discussion and conclusion

The capacity for interpreting unrelated and unexpected incidents and events is the biggest

sign of the prosperity of successful managers of current sports organizations, and these capacities are actually the strategic thinking in an organization, which itself shows a fundamental deficiency to strive for excellence and empowerment of an organization. This strategic ability can help managers understand, recognize, predict, and control future events, and instead of being affected by changes, they can influence future changes. On the other hand, the strategic thinking applied in an organization will not result in success regardless of the type of action and management style of today's managers. Because the growth of an organization does not depend solely on the manager, his thoughts and decisions alone, and also depends on issues such as paying attention to the conditions and the position of the organization, the characteristics, conditions, needs, and priorities of the organization's employees (Lila Asayesh, 2015). The research demonstrates that a sustainable and stable structure is one of the effective factors of strategic thinking. Align with the current research, Hallman and Petrai (2013) believe that the orientation of the sports structure in England is bottom-up and with the maximum participation of the people, the whole structure has turned into a quasi-governmental and private structure. As reported by Yasteward and Nicholson (2006), the governance structure accepted by non-governmental sports organizations is widely criticized for being too broad, slow to react to changes in the market, being exposed to political harm or power play among the members, and reducing the organization's tendency to change. Zimmerman<sup>12</sup> (1989) found that there is an important relationship between the variables that shape the real structure of non-profit sports organizations. They also state that facilities have an important role in the design of a sustainable and stable structure. It is also declared that the design of seven structures has been used for sports governance at the provincial level in Canada, which was created with the help of various dimensions of the organizational

structure, including specialization, standardization, and centralization. It has appeared that there is an important relationship between the variables that shape the real structure of non-profit sports organizations and facilities have an important effect on the design of a sustainable and stable structure. As an international institution, the World Bank (2012) has divided the governance indicators into six components, including having a voice and answerability, political stability and confronting violence, government effectiveness, quality of regulations, rule of law, and corruption control; Therefore, it is suggested that the sustainability and stability of the structure of sports can be maintained through the stability of the designed programs, reduction of conflicts between governmental institutions and intra-institutional coherence. Logical intelligence can be called the ability to learn a rational method or the ability of a person to adapt to varying environmental conditions or the ability to think abstractly, the internal analysis of the organization, the external analysis of the organization, smart ecology, and the knowledge of 360 degrees. Thinking is a process through which a new mental representation is created through the transformation of information and the interaction between mental characteristics, judgment, abstraction, reasoning, and problem-solving (Roy, 2010). Probably, what the interviewees meant by the thinking methodology is that the transformation of information takes place through this interaction. The structural equation has proved that in the Ministry of Sports, logical intelligence has little effect on strategic thinking. The interviewees are of the opinion that, some factors are divided into individual factors including (analytical mind, comprehensive knowledge, perceptive alertness, and rationality) and organizational factors including (patient organization, good governance, and rational organization). Devising and following strategies to institutionalize strategic thinking depends on the foundation and ground of its phenomenon. In

fact, it means, individual ability (innate gift, individual qualification, creative thinking) and organizational ability (expert human source, space for creating experiences, structural stability, Patronage) are effective in the strategies that are adopted to improve thinking methodology, understanding, and intellectual ability. About the rational organization, it should be said that the word rational and the concept of rationality are always at the center of attention of topics in connection with organization and management, and rationality can be considered as the foundation and basis of organizations. Today, according to the enormous changes and developments, organizations should pay attention to rational behavior in order to maintain their survival. Therefore, in the rational model, stating that a particular organization is rational does not mean that this organization politically or ethically pursues reasonable goals, but it is simply to express the point that this organization acts in a way that maximizes efficiency. Behaving in a rational way means behaving in a way that plays a role in accomplishing the goals of the organization (Koshki, 2014). The findings of the research showed that strategic analysis is one of the factors affecting strategic thinking. In line with this study, Perkins and Shilberry (2010) believe that managers' ability to draw up strategic priorities can be increased by creating more partnerships with regional institutions and involving the power-sharing approach that seeks to develop regional capabilities and develop the strategic capability of managers in sports organizations and the relationship between national and regional governance. Wheeler, Klock, and Dornan (2018) believe that international institutions and their experts mentioned indicators for good governance in order to evaluate the developing countries' rules and whether they manage their society's affairs according to this model or not. If a country uses these indicators, it is successful according to this model; as a result, it receives global assistance and support from international organizations

such as the World Bank, the United Nations Development Program, and the International Monetary Fund. Overcoming traditionalism, bargaining chips, and personal characteristics are involved in the adoption of strategic thinking institutionalization strategies in the Ministry of Sports and Youth. Transnational interaction, in the opinion of interviewees, is one of the factors that affect strategies through familiarity with the programs and structure of international sports institutions, so by using adaptive studies, the presence of the country's sports director in international tournaments, the path of the pioneer countries in Sports will be determined for the Ministry of Sports and Youth of Iran, which will help the strategy of awareness and rational structuring in the Ministry of Sports and Youth. The more the country's international sports interaction with international sports institutions, it will help the strategy of mutual awareness and prevention of interactive blockages and will lead to the acquisition of more knowledge and experience in the field of sports development. On the other hand, the more the country's sports are stuck in traditionalism and do not follow the new methods of management, the less structure of the country's sports will become less rational. Gertez 2016 also considers the role of strategic thinking to strive for innovation and envision new and very different futures for the organization, which may be redefined as the main strategies or even the industry in which the company works (GERTEZ, 2012). While modernization of the structure of the Ministry of Sports and Youth happens, the re-engineering of human resources in the direction of purposeful succession creating will be done more easily, organizational procedures will be organized, the evaluation system will be created, the structure will become stable, the departmentalization will become more logical and easier, and the organizational readiness to overcome problems will increase. The category of alliance in this research means the behavior and decisions of the islands do not happen. In this regard, the opinions of the

interviewees pointed to the fact that the employees were dissatisfied with the status of islands of the actions of the beneficiaries in the field of sports. For example, one of the interviewees stated that the person in charge of the development of public sports in the country has not been defined, and the Ministry of Sports and Youth is making policies in this field that have nothing to do with the policies adopted by the Ministry of Education and Municipalities. In fact, every organization acts as it wishes. This will be an obstacle in the direction of implementation of the strategies of institutionalization of strategic thinking. The Bargaining chips, which according to the interviewees include political, economic, and social pressures, closed administrative system, organizational culture, and party interests, are effective in the strategy of rational structuring, competition, education, and organizational ethics in a way that makes the environment of the Ministry of Sports and Youth more rational or irrational. It can improve the level of strategic thinking training and conversely it can affect the moral level of the organization through the political and party currents influence and the undemocratic atmosphere of the ministry. Personal characteristics such as education and motivation for awareness strategy, rational structuring, enhancing the ability of strategic analysis, and low need for investment are effective in terms of education. Many changes, both in the dimensions of human resources and the structure of the Ministry of Sports and Youth, have an impact on the ethics-oriented strategy of the organization. In fact, with the frequent change of managers, which depends on bargaining chips, employees sometimes prefer to engage in non-developmental behavior which is in contrast to the long-term interests of the ministry. On the contrary, the certainty and ease of having no effect of the bargaining chips on the ministry besides moralizing the behavior make the competition among the employees more rational. One of the factors that have a particular impact on strategies is the individual

competence of the employees of the Ministry of Sports and Youth. The meaning of individual competence which is mentioned as one of the elements of strategic thinking in the research of Albrit 1999, Benn 2005, Kalizer et al. 2002 and Gernes 2002 means that the level of creativity of employees, process thinking, holistic, lateral, and intuition thinking which are part of Personality traits are considered to have an effect on the success or unsuccessful implementation of strategies. The interviewees pointed out that in the absence of expert staff, successive changes in the structure of the Ministry of Sports and Youth, and as a result, the lack of sufficient experience and the lack of motivation to patronize may lead to the failure of the strategies adopted to institutionalize strategic thinking in the ministry. Meshbaki and Khazaei also acknowledged the role of these organizational characteristics in the application of strategic thinking (Khazaei, 2011) and when the ministry's employees do not have an analytical mind, comprehensive knowledge, and less perceptual awareness, or if the ministry does not have a rational structure, the principles of good governance are not followed and are not patient to be institutionalized the strategic thinking, it will be necessary to use the awareness and training strategy to improve knowledge among the employees. Also, a competitive environment should be provided by managers to prepare a space for analysis and alertness. As well, when the principles of good governance are not observed in the Ministry of Sports and Youth, i.e., it has not had a clear structure, has weak answerability, the rule of law is ignored and there is no responsibility, the managers try to repair these defects by using strategies such as creating rational structures and providing the conditions that this ministrmeets such a rational organization and observing moral principles. In this regard, the interviewees repeatedly mentioned in their answers that in the Ministry of Sports and Youth, there has been little knowledge about the beneficiaries of sports for various reasons. So, it was suggested by them



that to gain skills to institutionalize strategic thinking in the Ministry of Sports and Youth it is required that managers and employees are aware of the plans, visions, and goals of other stakeholders active in the country's sports field. On this subject, Akur and Inglis 2006 in their research define strategic thinking using elements such as awareness of the industry and competitors, self-criticism, aware of the company's main problems, and experiential learning. Another strategy is rational structuring. Rationalism means that in order to institutionalize strategic thinking, human resources should be transferred from time to time within the vice offices in order to reach a common understanding, and also the organizational processes should be the incentives for changing towards the improvement issues. It is worth mentioning that the performance of people is subjected to the process of the evaluation system and the departmentalization is arranged in such a way that the responsibilities are specified and who is accountable, and also the ministry must be prepared and flexible against environmental changes. Of this, the appointments should be proportional to the standards of meritocracy and collection plans. People working in different parts should have the same attitude towards the goals of the ministry, and succession creating should be done based on management principles. Ben in his research has mentioned having experiences, skills, and views about various occupational specialties also, said that if the managers of the Ministry of Sports and Youth apply the strategies for the institutionalization of strategic thinking in this institution, results such as modernization of the Ministry of Sports, creation of a divisive ministry and also the clarity of the development path of sports will be achieved. Modern organization refers to a situation where the Ministry of Sports and Youth is fast on its way, effective, flexible, and leads to sports development and can manage the complexities and ambiguities of the sports field by searching

for flexible and efficient methods. In addition, this ministry should be able to see the horizon beyond the short-term obstacles or temporary issues of the organization, respect the opinions of the employees, and while being creative and innovative by encouraging the employees, make them also creative, self-controlled, self-organized, and co-creator. (Moradi, 2017) according to the opinions of the interviewees, clarity of the path refers to a situation where the Ministry of Sports and Youth has clear structures, achieve real goals to continue the path, and also its future will be determined. In relation to transparent structures, it should be mentioned that; Technological changes and the expansion of science and knowledge have challenged all the structures, institutions, and functions of the public administration of society, and organizations need new ideas and new theories to survive in the present turbulent and chaotic era, which are like a spirit that is breathed into the body of the organization and protect it from fierce storms. Organizations need to invent new structures and design new strategies to survive in such conditions. One of the tools that help organizations achieve their goals is organizational transparency, which can play an effective role in improving and developing affairs and assisting organizations in achieving sustainable competitive advantage which is a prerequisite for effective organizational performance (Goldman, Scott, & Follman, 2015). Respecting creating realistic goals for the ministry, it should also be said; one of the determining components of orientations in organizations is among their goals and how they are formulated. On the one hand, goals reflect national ideals, policies, and politics, and on the other hand, they have the role of guiding and inspiring decisions and activities. In addition, goals determine the direction of choices, values, knowledge, beliefs, and intentions of an organization or a system. In fact, every society and organization that wants to be developed and make fundamental changes must necessarily explore the unknown and the future world by

using different methods of futurology and forecasting (in order to survive and grow in the era of continuous changes and a world full of uncertainty, Organizations must identify future opportunities and threats in time and prioritize their handling in the strategic planning process (Khani et al., 2018) Structuralism is of extensive social, economic and political effects on the scientific organization and the role of scientist, the institutionalization of social interaction and social functions of science in society, as well as understanding the structures, social trends related to science and examining how the higher education system responds to social needs are important issues on the agenda of many countries. The understanding of cognitive change mainly takes place in the form of cognitive factors on the internal social structure and pays attention to the internal structure and expansion of scientific knowledge. In the studies of scientific policymaking, strategies are adopted for scientific priorities considering social, economic, and cultural factors. Also, the mission of science in realizing national growth and progress can be noticed. Countries are always successful that can predict changes and plan and act accordingly.

### Conclusion

This importance requires that the policies, solutions, programs, and actions be adjusted with a strategic approach, therefore, according to the analysis of the interviews, documents, and observations, the following suggestions are made: In order to realize the strategy of awareness and with regard to the changes of the managers and human resources of the Ministry of Sports, It is suggested to attempt to set up a joint think tank between human resources of the current 5 vice-chancellors of this ministry in order to create a collective memory.

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