

Providing a Comprehensive Model for the Development of Sports Marketing

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Abstract

Purpose: In the present era, development in professional sports is considered a symbol of a country's power, and undoubtedly, sports marketing guarantees the survival and growth of professional sports. Therefore, this research aimed to provide a comprehensive model of sports marketing development using a mixed-method approach.

Methods: In the qualitative section, conducted with the Grounded Theory and Glaser's approach, the participants consisted of stakeholders in the research field (university professors, sports marketing researchers, senior managers of federations, and prominent sports clubs) in 2021. Fifteen semi-structured in-depth interviews were conducted, and the data obtained from the interviews were analyzed through open, selective, and theoretical coding in three stages. Additionally, second-order factor analysis was used to confirm the identified factors in the qualitative section, validating 128 concepts, 24 sub-categories, and 9 main categories.

Results: The results showed that the phenomenon of sports marketing development is influenced by various factors, which can be categorized into 9 groups: capital structure, transformation management, strategic operational alignment, process efficiency, information dissemination network, marketing doctrine, governance and management structure, resource allocation, and legal and research compliance.

Conclusion: In this regard, the comprehensive model can be used as a tool to improve decisions and actions to develop sports marketing. Among the practical aspects of this model, we can mention the identification of the target market, analysis of competitors, determination of competitive advantage, raising the level of difference and differentiation of products and services, and determination of marketing channels more accurately and appropriately.

Keywords: Marketing, Sports Marketing, Comprehensive Model, Development.

Introduction

It is possible to develop the infrastructure of the sports industry in the world and meet the financial needs of sports enterprises with the investment of governments and the private sector. The resources available for the development of the sports industry in the world generally include the budgets allocated by governments, broadcasting rights of club sponsors, and other things that can somehow be effective in financing the financial needs of companies and sports clubs (Eizadi et al., 2017). In developing countries, such as Iran, the economy, income, and annual public budget, especially their sports budget, are usually financed by the revenues from the sale of natural resources, including oil; In these countries, in case of fluctuations and drops in the price of oil in the world markets, their performance and activity will face a severe challenge. Therefore, to face this threat, sports organizations must reduce their annual budget reliance on the government and revenues from the sale of natural resources as much as possible (Okpalaoka & Olaniyi, 2022). In this context, one of the ways to deal with such threats is to use sports marketing to provide more services and products to customers, which ultimately leads to an increase in income (Keshavarz, 2017; Vahedizadeh et al., 2021; Kamyab et al., 2023). Sports marketing can be used to increase fan interest, expand sports participation, and consume sports-related products (Sedky et al., 2022). Since the 1970s, sports have assumed an influential role in the globalization of business and public events, with sports participants, capital, and labor worldwide. With global sporting events such as the FIFA World Cup or the Olympic Games attracting large audiences worldwide, sporting events have become highly sought-after commodities. Professional sports in developed economies are considered a way out of poverty, and sports marketing is recognized as the primary means of attracting income in professional sports (Zhang et al., 2018). Global revenues from sports in the global market grew from USD 388.28 billion in 2020 to USD 440.77 billion in 2021 at a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 13.5%. North America was the

largest region in the global sports market, accounting for 35% in 2020. Asia Pacific was the second largest region accounting for 30% of the global sports market, and Africa was the smallest region in the global sports market (Kumar & Bhalla, 2021). For this reason, many countries have understood the importance of scientific marketing in their sports organizations as a growing industry (Tarighi et al., 2017). In the economic conditions of developing countries like Iran and according to the new economic policies of sports, organizations, clubs, and sports teams should be able to maintain their competitive power through marketing strategies. What is referred to as sports marketing in the current conditions of these countries relies on and is limited to the presence of the government in professional sports and championships; So that things such as the production and sale of sports goods, the sale of tickets for various competitions, and the partial support of financial sponsors for some sports teams have not been able to free professional sports from this strong dependence. It seems that getting rid of such conditions requires the cooperation of experienced researchers, specialists, and managers to study and analyze the complexity of the sports market in these countries, manage the vast amount of money circulation and the people working in it (Kamalvand & Afshari, 2021). In these countries, the lack of participation of the private sector in professional sports is one of the weak points of sports, and creating suitable facilities to encourage the private sector to invest in this field is particularly important; Since professional sports are private, to create favorable conditions and for the participation of the private sector and the organization of sports, the need for a better foundation in this field is quite noticeable. The importance of sports marketing has been recognized and proven in many developed countries, but it still needs to be addressed in many countries. The intelligent application of marketing methods can improve the overall condition of sports institutions by increasing efficiency, reducing costs, eliminating unnecessary time-wasting methods and increasing income, and ultimately helping their competitiveness in the industry. Part of the problems sports institutions face can be

attributed to a lack of attention to the importance of sports marketing in promoting sports activities. The inability to identify obstacles and the delay in removing identified obstacles are significant problems that cannot be ignored. The cases mentioned earlier make the need for research in the field of sports marketing development even more necessary; Based on this, the current research tries to provide a comprehensive model for the development of sports marketing and investigates what factors are influential in developing sports marketing. Nowadays, with the competitive markets and continuous changes in the environment, organizations have realized the fact that they are no longer facing an expanding economic system and growing markets as in the past; Although in the past, marketers were only thinking about finding new customers, in today's view, marketing means discovering a need, trying to fulfill it and continuing to try (Fuciu & Dumitrescu, 2018). The importance of marketing for developing sports organizations scientifically and experimentally has always been emphasized, but it needs to be addressed in sports in many third-world countries, including Iran. Meanwhile, the development of marketing in sports organizations can significantly improve their performance; Among the cases of improving performance with the help of marketing include the empowerment of the sports community, preventing waste of time and money by understanding the needs and demands of the audience and as a result more income for the organization, accountability and initiative in the organization and surpassing competitors (Kamalvand & Afshari, 2021). Also, managers' attitudes toward fans as consumers in professional sports clubs through marketing will eventually generate revenue for organizations (Da Silva & Las Casas, 2017; Monteiro et al., 2019). In research, Seifpanahi Shabani and his colleagues (2018) showed that the way of applying mixed elements of marketing in Iranian football clubs is not in a way that shows the importance of these elements and the effect it has on the revenue generation of these clubs is significantly different from what it should be. This finding shows that marketing in football clubs in developing countries is often traditional

rather than scientific, based on knowledge-based marketing principles and tools. However, the concept of development has been mentioned by many researchers as one of the most important marketing activities, and most of the international marketing efforts of large companies have focused on professional sports in developed countries (Goldman & Johns, 2009).

The role of marketing in the business strategies of a sports organization is constantly growing. At first, sports marketing may seem similar to general marketing; but sports marketing is different from other forms of marketing. For example, the sports product is often unpredictable because it is impossible to predict the outcome of a sports match or control the quality of the game, while in many other industries, not guaranteeing product quality would be disastrous. Another notable difference is that few products can be as emotionally addictive as exercise. To succeed in sports marketing, it is necessary to understand general marketing and the unique conditions of sports (Smith & Stewart, 2015). In the era of advertising since 1978, the basic definition of sports marketing focuses on creating value from the providers, and sports is an advertising tool in this definition (Matic, 2019). Kolyperas and others (2019) express the concept of sports marketing focused on activities designed to meet the needs and demands of consumers for sports products and services. The term sport in sports marketing is a broad concept to denote all individuals, activities, companies, and businesses involved in the production, promotion, facilitation, or organization of any sporting business, activity, or experience; Also, in events, entertainment, and competitions, sports marketing focuses on the management of sports activities and processes (da silva & las Casas 2020). The three main types of sports marketing are interest, participation and consumption. Sports marketing aims to increase fan interest and the association between sports products and services with consumer behavior. In addition, by increasing participation, sports will grow as a recreational activity that people can engage in different ways; Moreover, sports marketing can be used to increase the

consumption of products, services, and goods related to sports (Sedky et al., 2022). With the development of sports marketing, a new business model is created, which seeks to increase the public's attention and provide a suitable environment for earning and financial support for clubs (Aidar et al., 2013). The sports industry is a very suitable solution for business advertising because it attracts fans, athletes, brands, and media; As a result, sports marketing can be introduced as a very effective way to increase the income of the sports club by bringing people and organizations together (Caballero, 2013).

Ziyadullaev and his colleagues (2022) stated that in recent decades, the sports industry is experiencing a new era; Sports, as an economic sector in the production of sports goods and services and the development of the national economy of countries, is considered one of the most profitable industries in the 21st century. For instance, the growth of the sports industry is combined with economic changes and requires sports professionals to focus on marketing strategies. Therefore, marketing is one of the essential and practical fields of study in sports, and researchers have conducted many studies on that. In their research, while pointing out the importance of the role of marketing in the development of organizations, they stated that marketing is vital in increasing the commitment of stakeholders, consumer satisfaction, and improving the performance and productivity of organizations, which can be used for the development of the sports industry. Monteiro and others (2019) also mentioned sports-related activities as a strengthening factor to increase its final value and its internationalization as a commercial activity. Globalization and technological advancements have greatly enhanced business opportunities for sports organizations, marketers, and entrepreneurs involved in sports. The results of the research of Seifpanahi Shabani and others (2018), in an article titled *The Role of Sports Marketing Mix in Generating Revenue for Iranian Football Clubs*, showed that each of the elements of the sports marketing mix, apart from the price, has a positive and significant effect on the revenue generation of football clubs. Da Silva and Las

Casas (2020), in their research entitled *Key Elements of Sports Marketing Activities for Sports*, showed that improving the level of sports events with the help of marketing tools will lead to providing a favorable sports experience in the form of suitable products and services for fans of this industry. Vandermeersch and Scheerder (2017), in their article entitled *Sport Managers' Perspectives on Poverty and Sport: The Role of local sports authorities* mentioned the lack of sports marketing experience as one of the main obstacles to the development of sports participation. In addition, Ghasemi and others (2016), in an article entitled *Identifying Sports Marketing Barriers in Iran from Sport Managers' Perspectives*, have shown that legal, managerial, economic, environmental, and structural barriers are among the barriers to developing sports marketing. Sadeghi et al. (2022), in explaining the importance of women's sports and the development of their presence in national and international events, consider it necessary to pay attention to sports marketing as the most crucial tool in attracting supporters; They consider socio-cultural barriers, governmental thinking, legal and customary barriers, administrative and organizational barriers, and the media as weak points in the sports marketing system. They also believe that using new marketing strategies in sports federations is necessary. Khodaparast et al. (2019), in their study aimed at designing a marketing development model in Iran's premier volleyball league, showed that Various sports companies and organizations seek to gain a competitive advantage and create synergies through the design and implementation of appropriate marketing mix elements according to the needs and demands of potential customers in that target market. Martin et al. (2011) report that the use of media is an essential method for the development and growth of sports marketing; According to him, the broadcast of matches, primarily through television, can have a positive effect on creating a positive attitude in the viewer to consume the goods advertised around the sports field. In most countries, the media coverage of sports fields other than football is minimal, which has caused a strong reluctance of commercial companies to enter sports. Estiri and others (2010) investigated that

using appropriate marketing methods can help sports organizations by increasing efficiency, reducing costs, eliminating unnecessary time-consuming methods, and increasing income. According to these cases, many countries have understood the importance of scientific marketing in sports organizations. So, knowledge of sports marketing is considered one of the components of the survival of sports organizations, including federations, and the importance of this role is increasing; however, its neglect continues in many countries, including third-world countries. A review of the research background shows that significant research has been done in the field of the importance of marketing in the development of sports, development factors and obstacles, and other aspects of the subject. However, a research gap exists in providing a comprehensive model for developing sports marketing.

Materials and Methods

This research is applied in terms of its purpose; also, in terms of the data collection method, it is among the mixture method research, which was based on Grounded Theory and Structural Equation Model analysis. In the qualitative part, given that Grounded Theory fits the situation of this research and represents a suitable and appropriate explanation of the existing theories, this method was chosen. It should be noted that Grounded Theory includes three approaches: Systematic Approach attributed to Strauss & Corbin, Emergent Approach attributed to Glaser, and Constructivist Approach presented by Charmaz. Charmaz Constructivist Approach has been used in this research; Because this approach provides more extensive and diverse patterns for data integration; Instead of imposing the theory on the data, it looks for the theory from within the data and is unstructured compared to the other two approaches (Sagarvani et al., 2013). In other words, in this approach, it is believed that there are several theoretical maps for the connection between categories, and the use of only one paradigm is not enough; The presented model should be the result of the researcher's talent and emerge from the data; and the data should not be forced into a specific map like Strauss & Corbin's paradigm

model (Noori Khanyourdi & Kalateh Seifari, 2017); On the other hand, the Glaserian Approach has some fundamental differences with the Strauss & Corbin approach; One of the basic features of Glazer's approach is that the focus and attention of the research is closer to the main concerns of the participants; Also, in this approach, the researcher needs to stay in the research environment for a long time to be able to identify the main concern of the participants, so that the central category or process that depicts the main problem is allowed to emerge (Hosseinpour et al., 2018); All these cases are the main reasons for choosing this approach to conduct the present research. The participants in the research include experts and experts in the field of research, such as professors (academic faculty members) in the fields of sports management and marketing, sports marketing managers, and senior managers of prominent sports federations and clubs in the country in 2021 and 2022; Appropriate and sufficient executive (practical) and academic (scientific) experience in the field of sports marketing was among the selection criteria of these people. Appropriate and sufficient executive experience means having at least five years of executive work experience in the field of marketing and its development in various sports organizations, And the meaning of suitable and sufficient scientific background is to have a sufficient number of research works in this field in the form of articles, research projects, etc. For sampling, two sports management professors with appropriate expertise and scientific experience were interviewed in a targeted manner. Next, they were asked to introduce other people who could provide appropriate information to the researcher using the Snow Ball technique, and the interviews continued until theoretical saturation was reached. Based on this, 15 semi-structured interviews were conducted. In such a way, in the beginning, the researcher raised a general question about the subject of the research, and based on the interviewee's answer, he raised the following question and specified the direction of the interview. All the interviews were recorded with permission from the interviewees so that the researcher could use all the conversations for

coding. Immediately after the completion of each interview, initial analysis and coding was done.

Table 1. The participants' demographic characteristics

Expertise	Frequency	frequency percentage	education			Age			work experience (years)			Activity		
			Masters	Ph.D.	Under 40	40 - 60	60 and more	Under 10	10 - 20	21 - 30	Academic	Executive	Academic & Executive	
Sports Management and Marketing Professors	6	40	0	6	1	4	1	2	2	2	4	-	2	
Sports Marketing Manager	6	40	0	6	1	5	0	1	3	2	0	3	3	
Senior Managers of Federations	1	6.66	0	1	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	
Senior Managers of Sports Clubs	2	13.33	0	2	0	1	1	0	1	1	0	1	1	
Total	15	100	0	15	2	11	2	3	7	5	4	4	6	

To check the quality and validity of the results of the current research, the evaluation criteria of Lincoln and Guba (1985), including the criteria of Credibility, Transferability, Dependability, and Confirmability, were considered (Coleman, 2021). In the following, the current research has mentioned some appropriate strategies to meet these criteria. To Credibility, in the current research, various sources and aspects were used to collect data and information, select the research sample for the interview, and design the interview questions. The text of the interview and the extracted codes were sent to the participants in the interview, and their points of view were applied. Also, to evaluate the

transferability, all the stages of the research were documented in writing for the possible use of other researchers, and the demographic conditions of the interviewees were presented in detail. In addition, to evaluate Dependability, one of the experts in the field of marketing management helped in the coding process of the research. three interviews were randomly selected, and after the necessary training, coding was done them. As the data in Table (2) shows, Table reliability between two coders was equal to 71%. Considering that the reliability is more than 60%, the Dependability of coding was confirmed.

Table 2. Results of the reliability study between two coders

Interview number	Total codes	Agreements	Reliability percentage
3	37	13	70%
8	36	12	66%
13	20	8	80%
total	93	33	71%

Finally, to assess the Confirmability, the research results were provided to 6 professors of sports marketing management outside the research process. After studying and reviewing their opinions, the model was approved. In the last stage of the qualitative part of the research, after collecting the data, three processes of open coding, axial coding, and theoretical coding were used to analyze the data. In the quantitative

part of the research, the second-order confirmatory factor analysis and quantitative confirmation of the components and indicators discovered in the qualitative model were performed using the structural equation model. The statistical population in this section included all professors, researchers, and experts aware of the field of research. The number of statistical samples was considered equal to 314 based on

the formula $n \geq 50 + 8m$ (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007), where n is the number of statistical samples, and m is the number of variables and sub-variables. This number is almost 8 times the number of the observed variables studied, and the fit indices also showed the adequacy of the sample. The structural equation model was analyzed in the Amos software.

Results

In this section, the interview process results are

collected, classified, and analyzed. The interviews were reviewed, conceptualized, and categorized using the Grounded Theory to answer the research question. Concepts and categories were then identified based on the similarity of the conceptual relationship and common features between open codes. Table 3 shows the open codes, concepts, and categories related to the main research question, which were extracted through interviews with experts in this field.

Table 3. Results of the selective, axial, and open coding process

Interview code	Concepts	Subcategory	Main Category
P2, P7, P11, P12	Adjusting the macro investment of the country	Investment	
P3, P7, P13	Encouraging investors to invest in sports through impunity laws		
P1, P8, P10	Creating interest and desire to invest		
P1, P2, P3, P5, P6, P8, P10, P12	Enough confidence in sponsors to invest		
P13, P15	Adjusting the risk of investment		
P1, P2, P3, P5, P8	Observing the principles of communication and motivation with sponsors		
P5, P8, P10	Increasing the quality of the relationship between the sports organization and sponsors		
P2, P8, P10	Creating a desire to support nationally produced materials and services		
P1, P2, P5, P8	Continuous and adequate financial support	Sponsor	
P5, P10	Continuation of supporting domestic and foreign sponsors		
P1, P5, P10	Adjusting the number of regulations and directives related to sponsors		
P3, P4	Entering the stock market		Capital structure
P13	Existence of transparency in the financial information of relevant institutions in the sports industry		
P4	Increasing the share of sports in the country's gross domestic product		
P3, P9, P10	Increasing the annual profit	Capital management	
P2, P10	Allocating financial resources to implement effective marketing strategies		
P1, P2, P8	Offering low-interest loans		
P2, P8, P10, P12	Variation in revenue from the provision of services and products		
P1, P10	Enjoying the benefits of financial exemptions from advertising in sports		
P1, P10	Increasing the responsiveness and financial and administrative responsibility of clubs		
P3	Use of sports tourism		

P3, P5	Development of sports cooperatives		
P1, P7, P9, P10	Increasing the number of professional sports clubs in the country		
P1, P3, P7, P8, P10, P11, P12	The existence of a high level of sports in the country ensures a return on investment	Capacity building	Change management
P13	Increasing the hosting of major sporting events in the country		
P3, P8, P12	Existence of sufficient and suitable sports fields and services to encourage investors		
P14	Identification of and feasibility of sports tourism capabilities throughout the country		
P1, P5, P6, P7, P8, P10	Increasing creativity in sports marketing		
P3, P5, P7	An increasing number of innovations in sports marketing	Creativity and innovation	
P2, P3, P4, P6, P8	Extensive support for creativity and innovation in sports marketing		
P14, P15	Expanding the knowledge of the organization about sports marketing		
P14	Increasing the level of sports marketing intelligence		
P3, P4	Further use of process management science in sports marketing	Value creation in marketing	
P3	Increasing the achievement of long-term goals of sports marketing		
P5, P6, P10, P11, P14, P15	Learning more about sports marketing		
P13	Increasing the emphasis on relationship marketing		
P3, P8	Forming a marketing committee in the structure of many sports organizations in the country		
P3, P8, P10	Existence of a responsible and authorized organization to provide services in the field of sports marketing	Strategic marketing actions	
P10	Use brands with more credibility and power		
P8	Enhancing marketing experience		
P5, P10	Appropriate policies in pricing sports products		
P2	Increasing the presence of sports organizations in the community compared to other organizations		
P2	Providing the possibility of presence in the country market for many foreign investing companies		
P1	Existence of a competitive structure in the country's sports and the increase in the ability to compete with competitors	Cooperation and competition	Alignment of operations strategy
P8	Expanding the level of alignment of investment in sports with the development policies of the country		
P8	Increasing attention to sports, along with other industrial sectors		
P3, P5, P10	Improving the quality of dealing with the marketing plans of competitors		

P2, P9, P10	Increasing the quality of decisions made in the field of sports marketing	Quality of actions			
P1, P2, P5, P8	Increasing the quality of communication between marketing programs and strategic programs of the sports organization				
P1, P5	Increasing the quality of sports marketing programs				
P3, P7	Increasing the quality of sports services provided				
P5, P6, P10	Improving the quality of sports events and competitions in the country				
P12	Improving the quality of customer services				
P10	Improving the quality of advertising				
P5, P8, P10	Increasing the quality of sports marketing programs				
P1, P3, P5, P8, P10, P11, P12, P13, P14, P15	Expanding the diversity of sports services			Services	Process efficiency
P1, P2, P5, P6, P8, P12, P15	Availability of sports services				
P3, P5, P7, P8, P9, P13	Increasing the rate of advancement of sports services				
P9, P10	Increasing the success rate of sports marketing programs	Function of programs			
P13	Improving the flexibility of the process of implementing sports marketing programs				
P9, P11	Increasing the effectiveness of sports marketing programs in the community				
P3	Increasing advertising activities and the amount of advertising by the sports organization	Advertising			
P6, P7, P9, P11, P13, P14	Reducing the cost of advertising in marketing				
P2, P6	Proper use of event space for advertising				
P2, P5, P6, P11, P12, P13	Increasing the awareness of companies and industries about the benefits of sponsorship				
P9, P10	Increasing public awareness	Awareness and attitude	Information network		
P3	Improving attitudes toward service quality in public sports				
P1	Improving the attitude of the people and the government toward sports				
P4	Expanding mass media support	Media and press			
P3, P9, P10	Improving the quality and quantity of tournament broadcasts				
P2, P10, P12, P13	Allocation of television broadcasting rights to clubs by international rules				
P1, P2, P8	Increasing private television networks in the country				
P2, P8, P10, P12	Improving the quality of communication with fans				
P1, P7, P9	Full media coverage of the country's sports events				

P10	and the extent of restrictions in this area			
P15	Identification of resistance factors			
P1, P8, P10	Establishing the necessary support to create private clubs	Facilitation		
P1, P2, P10, P12	Providing guaranteed facilities for investors in the field of sports marketing			
P13	Developing strategic and operational marketing plans			
P5, P8	Adjusting strategies for development	Policy making and planning	Marketing doctrine	
P5, P8	Existence of comprehensive strategies and programs to increase investments in sports			
P2	Comprehensive and strategic programming by sports managers for marketing			
P1, P8	Designing a long-term marketing strategy			
P10	Development of sports marketing strategic programs	Quantity of the program		
P1, P5	Development of models for the implementation of sports marketing strategic programs			
P3, P4	Development of medium-term sports marketing programs			
P13	Development of short-term sports marketing programs			
P2, P4, P5, P9, P10, P13	Appropriate government systems for clubs in the form of stadium construction	Government		
P10	Financing of clubs by the government			
P11, P12, P13, P14	Support for senior management (parliament, government, etc.) to host international events			
P7, P10, P11, P15	Clear vision and strategy of the government in the field of sports industry development			
P2, P4, P6, P8, P10, P11, P13	Program to transfer governmental clubs to the private sector			
P5	Top industry executives believe in sports marketing as a source of income			
P13, P14	Support sports managers from marketing	Governance and management structure		
P5	Stability of management at different levels of sports in the country			
P7, P9, P10, P12	Expanding the level of knowledge of managers in the field of sports marketing			
P3, P4	Avoiding political tendencies in the management of the country's sports			
P3, P5, P8, P10	Improving the quality of sports marketing performance management	Management		
P10, P13	Improving the attitude of sports organization managers to sports marketing			
P6, P9, P14	Expansion of sports facilities and space			
P8, P10, P11, P13	Improving the condition of stadiums to achieve the company's advertising goals			
P1, P3, P5, P6, P8, P9, P11	Allocating land for sports purposes			
P4, P6	Infrastructure development			
P5, P4, P3,	Improving the quality of physical facilities and			

P9, P11	features of sports venues		
P1, P7, P11, P12	Existence of necessary technical and managerial standards in clubs and other sports organizations in the country	Hardware	
P13, P14, P15	Increasing the use of famous coaches and players		Resource allocation
P14	Increasing the number of sports marketing professionals		
P5, P9	Increasing the level of organizational commitment to human resources activities in the field of sports marketing	Human resources	
P1	Expanding the number of creative and innovative people in the sports marketing sector		
P3, P11	Training human resources in the field of sports marketing		
P3	Increasing the level of mastery of human resources in sports marketing		
P10, P11	Developing the level of knowledge and skills of employees of sports organizations to implement marketing activities		
P3, P11	Increasing the use of key athletes and coaches in teams		
P3, P11, P12	Increasing the use of organizations from human resources to develop internal marketing		
P2, P5, P10	Increasing the use of creative managers with business and revenue generation ideas and expertise		
P8	Presence of management and appropriate procedures for attracting, retaining, and developing fans		
P12	Expanding the ability of senior managers of clubs and other sports organizations in the optimal use of sports marketing	Meritocracy	
P5, P11	Existence of marketing specialists (in industry and sports) to make optimal use of sports marketing		
P1, P10	Developing special rules to support sports		
P3, P6, P10	Comprehensive and necessary rules for the recognition of media broadcasting rights		
P3, P5	Existence of appropriate economic laws to encourage industrial investors to invest in sports		
P1, P7, P9, P10	Enacting a copyright law throughout the country		
P1, P3, P8	Establishment and development of open economic system laws		
P11	Existence of regulatory laws in the field of sports marketing in the country	Legislation	
P3, P5, P10, P12	Standard financial and labor laws about sponsors		
P6	Existence of sufficient and reasoned information		
P2, P4, P6, P11	Investigation of the various dimensions of sports marketing in the country		
P3, P8, P6	Linking research performed and implementation fields		Legal and

P3, P8, P10, P13	Active participation of expert researchers and research institutes for fundamental studies	Research	research symmetry
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Based on the results of the open coding, 128 initial concepts or codes were identified (after discovering the overlapping codes). In the axial coding stage, considering the semantic similarity of the identified concepts, 24 sub-categories were formed, including investment, sponsor, capital management, capacity development, creativity and innovation, value creation in marketing, strategic marketing measures, cooperation and competition, quality of actions, services, the function of programs, advertising, awareness and attitude, media and press, facilitation, policy-making and planning, the quantity of program, government, management, hardware, human resources, meritocracy, legislation, and research. Table 3 shows the coding process.

Before designing the final model of sports

marketing development, second-order factor analysis was used to confirm the relationship between the components of the qualitative model of sports marketing development. In the second-order confirmatory factor analysis, 9 main categories were regarded as hidden variables and 24 sub-categories as observed variables, including the mean scores of the concepts of each sub-category. It should be noted that each sub-category consists of the concepts presented in Table 3, and before entering the final structural model, each was reviewed and approved separately by factor analysis (at this stage, 6 concepts were removed due to low factor load).

Table 4 shows indicators related to the model fit in the present study.

Table 4. Indicators of the measurement model fit of research categories

The main category	Indicator	Symbol	Acceptable range	The value obtained
Capital structure	The ratio of chi-square to degrees of freedom	X ² /DF	<3	1.164
	Comparative fit index	CFI	>0.9	0.966
	Tucker-Lewis's index	TLI	>0.9	0.954
	Incremental fit index	IFI	>0.9	0.941
	Parsimony normed fit index	PNFI	>0.5	0.623
	Root means a square error of approximation	RMSEA	<0.08	0.041
	Parsimony comparative fit index	PCFI	>0.5	0.621
	Change management	The ratio of chi-square to degrees of freedom	X ² /DF	<3
Comparative fit index		CFI	>0.9	0.986
Tucker-Lewis's index		TLI	>0.9	0.965
Incremental fit index		IFI	>0.9	0.942
Parsimony normed fit index		PNFI	>0.5	0.642
Root means a square error of approximation		RMSEA	<0.08	0.065
Parsimony comparative fit index		PCFI	>0.5	0.721
Marketing development		The ratio of chi-square to degrees of freedom	X ² /DF	<3
	Comparative fit index	CFI	>0.9	0.921
	Tucker-Lewis's index	TLI	>0.9	0.964
	Incremental fit index	IFI	>0.9	0.942

Alignment of operations strategy	Parsimony normed fit index	PNFI	>0.5	0.521
	Root means a square error of approximation	RMSEA	<0.08	0.052
	Parsimony comparative fit index	PCFI	>0.5	0.643
Process efficiency	The ratio of chi-square to degrees of freedom	X ² /DF	<3	2.715
	Comparative fit index	CFI	>0.9	0.934
	Tucker-Lewis's index	TLI	>0.9	0.968
	Incremental fit index	IFI	>0.9	0.983
	Parsimony normed fit index	PNFI	>0.5	0.680
	Root means a square error of approximation	RMSEA	<0.08	0.068
Information network	Parsimony comparative fit index	PCFI	>0.5	0.676
	The ratio of chi-square to degrees of freedom	X ² /DF	<3	1.994
	Comparative fit index	CFI	>0.9	0.958
	Tucker-Lewis's index	TLI	>0.9	0.961
	Incremental fit index	IFI	>0.9	0.922
	Parsimony normed fit index	PNFI	>0.5	0.732
Marketing doctrine	Root means a square error of approximation	RMSEA	<0.08	0.033
	Parsimony comparative fit index	PCFI	>0.5	0.711
	The ratio of chi-square to degrees of freedom	X ² /DF	<3	1.632
	Comparative fit index	CFI	>0.9	0.952
	Tucker-Lewis's index	TLI	>0.9	0.926
	Incremental fit index	IFI	>0.9	0.981
Governance and management structure	Parsimony normed fit index	PNFI	>0.5	0.701
	Root means a square error of approximation	RMSEA	<0.08	0.039
	Parsimony comparative fit index	PCFI	>0.5	0.794
	The ratio of chi-square to degrees of freedom	X ² /DF	<3	2.610
	Comparative fit index	CFI	>0.9	0.956
	Tucker-Lewis's index	TLI	>0.9	0.988
Governance and management structure	Incremental fit index	IFI	>0.9	0.937
	Parsimony normed fit index	PNFI	>0.5	0.656
	Root means a square error of approximation	RMSEA	<0.08	0.070
	Parsimony comparative fit index	PCFI	>0.5	0.743
	The ratio of chi-square	X ² /DF	<3	2.039

	to degrees of freedom			
	Comparative fit index	CFI	>0.9	0.936
	Tucker-Lewis's index	TLI	>0.9	0.901
	Incremental fit index	IFI	>0.9	0.949
	Parsimony normed fit index	PNFI	>0.5	0.599
Resource allocation	Root means a square error of approximation	RMSEA	<0.08	0.068
	Parsimony comparative fit index	PCFI	>0.5	0.637
	The ratio of chi-square to degrees of freedom	X2/DF	<3	1.889
	Comparative fit index	CFI	>0.9	0.944
	Tucker-Lewis's index	TLI	>0.9	0.916
	Incremental fit index	IFI	>0.9	0.931
	Parsimony normed fit index	PNFI	>0.5	0.661
Legal and research symmetry	Root means a square error of approximation	RMSEA	<0.08	0.053
	Parsimony comparative fit index	PCFI	>0.5	0.590

Table 5 presents the final structural model fit indices.

Table 5. The final structural model fit indices

The value obtained	Acceptable range	Symbol	Indicator
The ratio of chi-square to degrees of freedom	X2/DF	<3	2.104
Comparative fit index	CFI	>0.9	0.923
Tucker-Lewis's index	TLI	>0.9	0.904
Incremental fit index	IFI	>0.9	0.927
Parsimony normed fit index	PNFI	>0.5	0.603
Root means a square error of approximation	RMSEA	<0.08	0.048
Parsimony comparative fit index	PCFI	>0.5	0.682

As Table 5 depicts, the model fit indices are in the acceptable range, and the structural model of

the research is approved. Figure 1 shows the second-order factor analysis model.

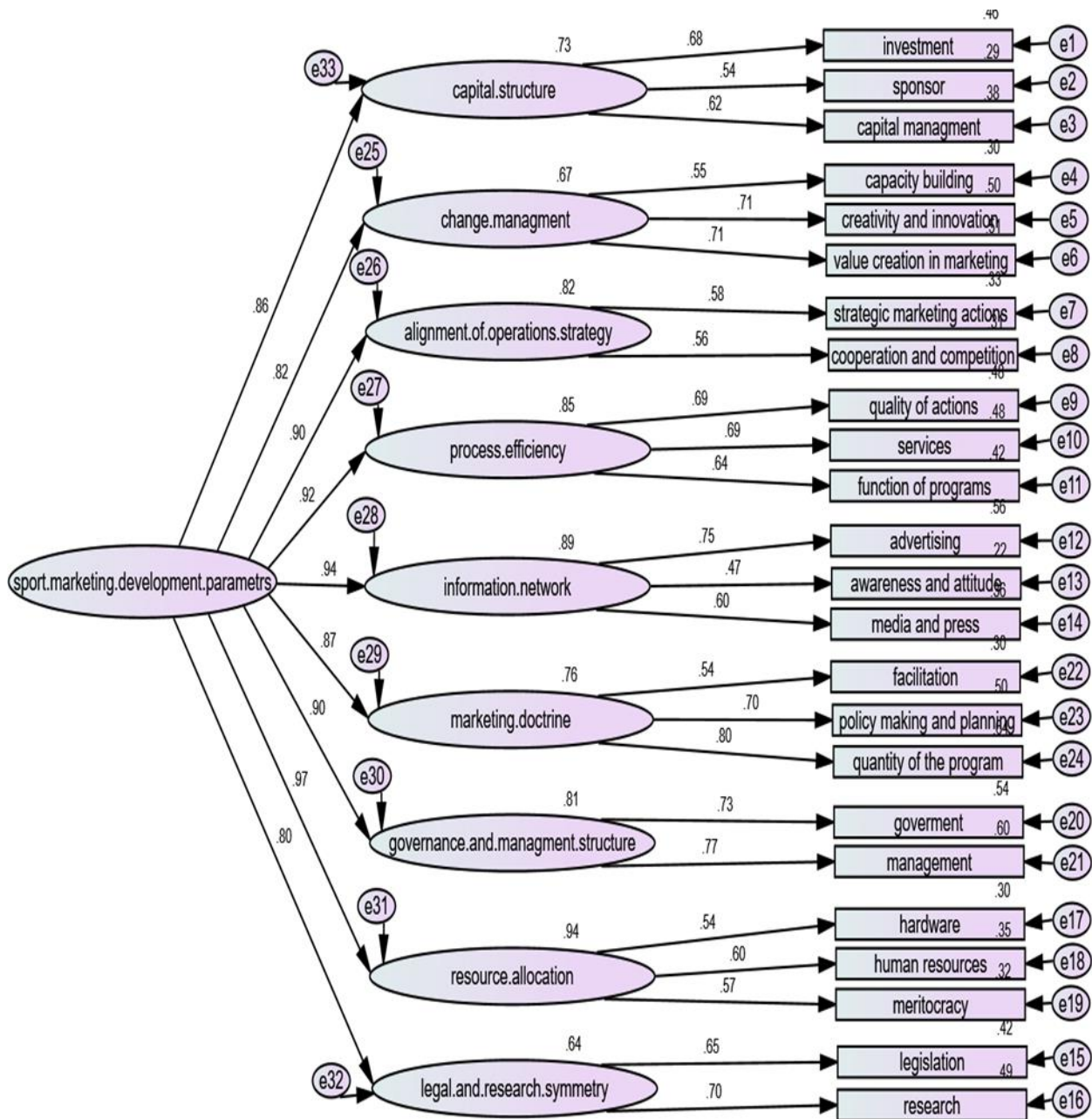


Figure 1. The second-order confirmatory factor analysis model in standard mode

Figure 1 shows that all factor loads are significant. Table 6 shows regression coefficients (standard) related to the relationship

between the central category and the main categories. Their value is higher than 1.96.

Table 6. Regression coefficients (standard) between the central category and the main categories

Central category	Main categories	Regression coefficients
Sports Marketing Development Parameters	Capital structure	5.689
	Change management	5.657
	Alignment of operations strategy	6.121
	Process efficiency	7.134
	Information network	7.661
	Marketing doctrine	5.862
	Governance and management structure	7.283
	Resource allocation	6.184
	Legal and research symmetry	6.082

Table 7 also shows the regression coefficients (standard) related to the relationship between the main categories and sub-categories.

Table 7. Regression coefficients (standard) between the main categories and sub-categories

Main Category	Sub-category	Regression coefficients (standard)
Capital structure	investment	7.113
	sponsor	6.216
	capital management	6.939
Change management	capacity building	6.437
	creativity and innovation	6.473
	value creation in marketing	6.467
Alignment of operations strategy	strategic marketing actions	7.994
	cooperation and competition	5.761
Process efficiency	quality of actions	7.805
	services	8.329
	function of programs	5.513
Information network	advertising	7.771
	awareness and attitude	5.090
	media and press	6.234

Marketing doctrine	facilitation	6.701
	Policy-making and planning	7.113
	quantity of the program	9.332
Governance and management structure	government	7.484
	management	7.684
Resource allocation	hardware	6.438
	human resources	7.461
	meritocracy	6.930
Legal and research symmetry	legislation	6.731
	research	7.613

Figure 2 depicts the formation of the main categories and sub-categories of the paradigm model of sports marketing development after identifying the basic concepts. According to the following model, the development of sports marketing is a function of the 9 main cores,

including capital structure, transformation management, alignment of operations strategy, process efficiency, information network, marketing doctrine, governance and management structure, and resource allocation, and legal and research symmetry.

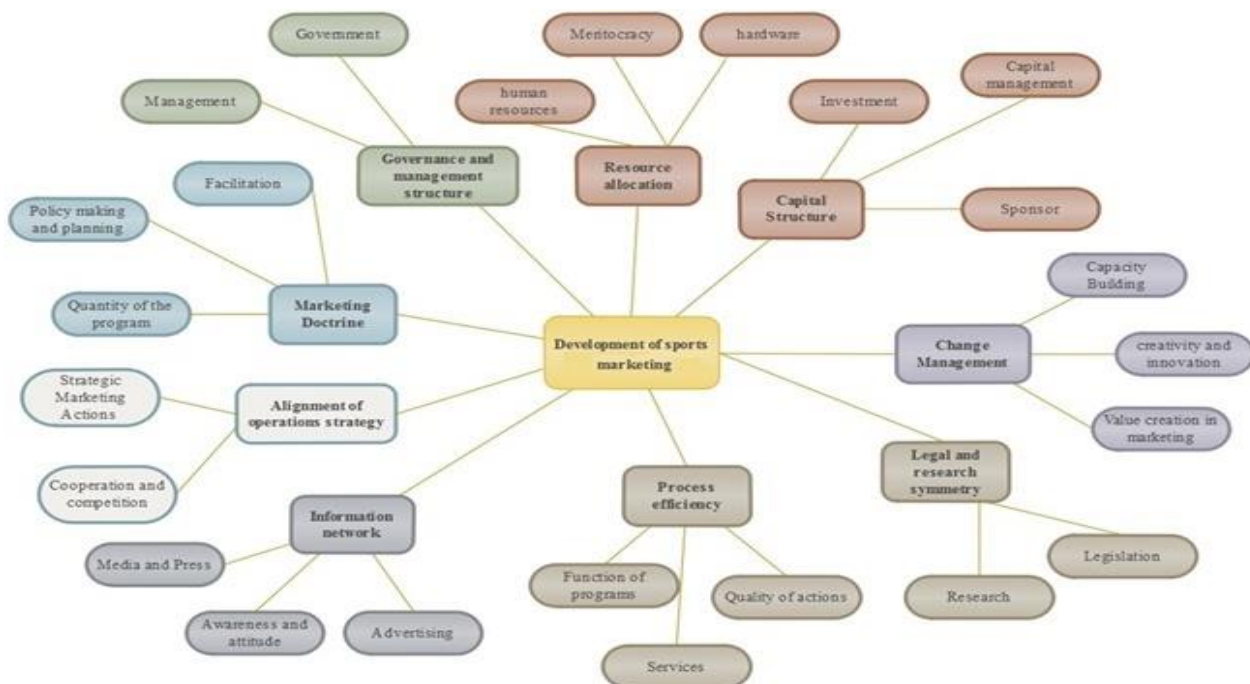


Figure 2. Comprehensive Model of sports marketing development

Discussion

Sport is a phenomenon that is directly related to social, economic, and cultural factors in society. Nowadays, progress in sports and sports power is one of the signs of a nation's identity; winning an Olympic medal can create pride in the hearts of the people of a country, which without exaggeration, no other phenomenon has this ability; Therefore, paying attention to the issues and problems of sports, especially professional sports, is not an issue that can be easily ignored. One of the problems that professional sports in developing countries are dealing with is the problems related to sports marketing. These problems are expanding daily, and countries' managers and sports officials must provide scientific and practical solutions to them. Because if it is neglected, professional sports will find a downward trend due to the inability to compete; Therefore, this research attempted to provide a comprehensive model of factors affecting the development of sports marketing. This article has been compiled to design a model for the development of sports marketing by using the Grounded Theory. The results showed that the phenomenon of sports marketing development is affected by various factors that can be classified into nine parts: capital structure, change management, alignment of operations strategy, process efficiency, information network, marketing doctrine, governance and management structure, resource allocation, and Legal and research symmetry. According to the obtained results, all the mentioned items are of particular importance and should be considered by the authorities. According to the related backgrounds, the findings obtained in this research have also been mentioned in another research. In their research, Kumar et al. (2019) pointed out the importance of process efficiency and ways to achieve it with the help of artificial intelligence in line with the development of marketing in services. When the company can achieve high effectiveness, it achieves "productive marketing," resulting in reduced marketing costs and satisfied customers. Savic et al. (2018) present sport as a business with the potential to generate income on a global scale for all parties involved; For this reason,

they introduce large companies and factories willing to invest in the development of the sport through marketing. Also, Ameri and Bashiri (2010) consider it necessary to attract financial sponsors concerning investing in sports marketing and believe that this can help increase the attention of private companies to sports. Innovative international marketing techniques provide a way to support sports and enhance the company's image, which is mentioned in the research of Drewes et al. (2021) under the title of capital structure. In another research, the profit-generating engine of each company, its operations, has been introduced (Schroeder et al., 2011); Based on this, companies should pay much attention to the efficiency of operations in formulating strategies; And, with cooperation, assign a suitable strategic role to it. This cooperation will increase the performance, competitiveness, and development of sports marketing in the country (Shavarini et al., 2013). In addition, investing in human resource management practices can significantly improve performance (Fey & Björkman, 2017). Today, sports organizations have realized the benefits of social media and are looking for ways to use them more effectively as part of their marketing and communication strategies (Abeza et al., 2019). In this regard, Milosevic et al. (2019), in research, mentioned the importance of the role of networks in facilitating the development of sports marketing through advertising. On the other hand, in a sports organization, the analysis of the marketing plan leads to the identification of the dimensions of a specific problem in a critical situation and helps to evaluate the necessary information to improve a strategic decision for development (Amelicichin & Budevicipuiu, 2018). Referring to the management and governance issues in the country, China has sought to gain international recognition in football, and after that, considers it important to solve the problems and gaps in the field of sports and marketing through sports (Connell, 2018); Because the marketing process can improve the optimal allocation of sports resources and consider the market as a guide for providing sports products or services to strengthen the sports industry; Finally, this leads to the development of the national economy for

countries (Zhao & Zhu, 2015). Also, among the legal factors, the lack of appropriate economic laws to encourage investors in the industrial sector to invest in sports was emphasized. Khodaparast et al. (2019) focused on the impact of government decisions and legislation in different parts of the country's sports markets and pointed out the need to conduct studies and research to understand the opportunities and threats for sports marketers. As a result, according to Barros (2006), the application of correct marketing methods and optimal use of sports by small business companies can turn them into global companies. Today, sports marketing is one of the favorite areas of management researchers, which has many scientific spaces for research in its many departments.

Conclusion

From a general view, until now, researchers have been studying sports marketing in three parts of sponsorship marketing, marketing of sports events and activities, and marketing of sports products and services. This research tried to examine the development factors of sports marketing with a comprehensive view of different parts of sports marketing and various sports fields, and also by using the applied research method. In a nutshell, sports marketing is essential for professional sports and their development. In developing countries, sports marketing problems can negatively affect the professional sports development process. Therefore, managers and sports officials should provide scientific and practical solutions to solve these problems. Providing a sports marketing development model has many practical aspects that help companies and organizations related to the sports industry to improve their marketing strategies and achieve business growth and development; Among the practical aspects of this model, we can mention the identification of the target market, analysis of competitors, determination of competitive advantage, raising the level of difference and differentiation of products and services, and determination of marketing channels more accurately and appropriately; What is important is that the

obtained factors were obtained according to the opinions of a completely expert statistical community; In addition to being practical, the findings of this research can be considered as a vital information basis for the research of other researchers in the future.

This research has been done in providing a comprehensive model for the development of sports marketing. So, the defects of this research would be clear, because of the newest methodology and its results. The research team appreciates the journal and reviewers for helping to improve the quality of this work. In future research, investigating the relationship of sports marketing with different fields such as e-commerce, information technology, international trade, and emerging technologies such as augmented reality and virtual reality can help better understand and promote the comprehensive model of sports marketing development. Sports marketing is a dynamic and changing field; new cases may emerge during research, and market conditions may change to which the model must be able to respond.

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