

Developing A Model for the Development of Private Iranian Football Club Management

Received: 2022-04-23

Accepted: 2023-09-23

Vol. 5, No.1. Winter.2024, 88 -105

Setareh Hassanzadeh¹
Jafar Barghi Moghadam¹
Hamid Janani²
Mohammad Rahim Najafzadeh¹

¹Department of Physical
Education, Tabriz Branch, Islamic
Azad University, Tabriz, Iran
²Department of Physical
Education, Tabriz Branch, Islamic
Azad University

***Correspondence:**

Setareh Hassanzadeh, Department
of Physical Education, Tabriz
Branch, Islamic Azad University,
Tabriz, Iran

Email:

setarehasanzadeh32@gmail.com

Orcid:

Abstract

Purpose: The present study was conducted with the aim of developing a model for the development of private Iranian football club management.

Method: This research has a qualitative approach and the Grounded Theory method of Strauss and Corbin has been used as the research method. The method of data collection was in-depth interviews with 15 experts, university professors and sports administrators after reaching the theoretical saturation limit. The validity of the instrument in this study was reviewed and confirmed by the interviewees and then expert professors; also, to calculate the reliability of the interviews, the intra-subject agreement method was used, which was obtained 0/91, which shows the high reliability of the coding. To analyze the data, the coding method was used in three stages of open, axial and selective coding; the number of open codes was 441 and the core codes were 55.

Results: The findings of this research showed that managerial, economic, legal, social and cultural, political, branding, and fans factors as causal conditions; club success, income generation, infrastructure, etc. as background conditions; legal barriers, governmental barriers, economic barriers, etc. as interfering conditions; And government support, infrastructure development, ease of laws, entering the stock market and targeted planning were chosen as privatization strategies, which will ultimately bring the consequences of the development of the country's football, branding, profitability of clubs, and reduction of government costs.

Conclusion: It is suggested that the government, sports managers, and football federation should take serious action by creating structural changes and laying the groundwork for the commercialization of football clubs, to increase their income sources, to be profitable clubs, the competition in the private sector to enter this field will increase, which will ultimately lead to the development of the country's football.

Keyword: Club management, privatization, football, grounded theory...

Introduction

Football is considered the most competitive sport in the world (Badri Azrin, Pashaie, Cincimino, & Dickson, 2021; Hafezi, Abdavi, & Pashaie, 2016). The modern sport version originates in England, where in the mid-19th century the rules were first published. Today, millions of people around the world are watching and playing soccer (Rathi, Somani, Koul, & Manu, 2020). In our society sport fulfill important functions and is indeed indispensable. Association football, commonly known as football or soccer. It is played by 250 million players in over 200 countries, making it the world's most popular sport (Diah, Nossal, Zin, Higuchi, & Iida, 2014). Today, football is the national sport in many countries, and the role of clubs among the pillars of the football industry is more important than other things because they act like a manufacturing plant and its enterprises (Zhang, Kim, Mastromartino, Qian, & Nauright, 2018). The football industry has been strongly influenced by economic developments and has attracted the attention of media and audiences around the world as the most popular number one national sport in most countries (Abawari, 2013). Today, football as a sport has become a lucrative industry that is always in the spotlight of media, commercial companies and owners of other industries given the great interest of the people in football. Clubs are the most important component of the football industry, and the persistence of this industry depends on the survival of clubs. Football clubs will be able to survive when they can cover their expenses and generate income (Asadollahi, Keshtidar, Heydari, & Peric, 2020). Therefore, it can be said that financial and non-financial resources (Olayo, 2019) have a significant impact on achieving the optimal performance of sports clubs (Naderian Jahromi & Akhavan, 2021).

At the beginning of the third millennium, a new era has experienced the world of sports. Successful clubs are always looking for thuds

and tools as competitive advantages and for continuous improvement and improvement (Badri Azarin, Pashaie, Hafezi, & Fateh, 2018). Transference of professional sports clubs to private sector involves the necessary conditions for private sector activity (Atghia, Gharekhani, & Yaghoubi, 2021). Football clubs are privately owned in all five major European football markets, including Italy, England, France, Germany and Spain. In recent years, there has been a relatively active market for buying and selling of clubs run by wealthy investors or a group of investors, the majority of whom live overseas (Morrow, 2013). In developed countries, the added value of sport industry constitutes a large part of GDP, but the situation of this industry is different in Iran. In Iran, the development of markets is slow because the activities of the private sector are influenced by market-government interactions. Given the state structure of the country's football industry, government-owned clubs have become consumers of financial resources due to their inefficient performance and do not allow the private sector to engage in productive economic activities. In this situation, privatization in a competitive environment presents a clear solution (Shahlaee & Ghorbanalizadeh Ghaziani, 2015). Regarding the formation of football club ownership from an economic and professional point of view, it should be said that historically, many football clubs have been owned by private companies such as small companies, owned by small groups of local businessmen and shareholders, usually loyal fans of those teams. We're coming. To examine the situation of Iranian clubs, we need to have a look at the situation of clubs in developed countries. In the past, many European clubs were run by wealthy landlords or politicians; however, in recent decades the structure of club management in Europe has changed dramatically and the management of clubs has been entrusted to companies and institutions with limited liability (Thiel & Mayer, 2009).

According to the (Atghia et al., 2021) results, the prerequisites for privatization were categorized in seven factors including cultural, executive, programming, motivational, legal, economic, and structural. Moreover, economic requirements (4.20) were the most important category, followed by executive (4.14), structural (4.04), motivational (4.02), legal (3.99), programming (3.97), and cultural requirements (3.62), respectively. Among the economic requirements, the transparency of financial information from the country's football clubs, presence of strong sponsors and the creation of supportive funds for financial guarantee of private sector are in the first to third ranks. The findings showed, we extracted seven elements based on the interviews. They included financial infrastructure resources, transformational leadership, strategic thinking, innovative marketing, human resources capacity, knowledge process, and institutional environment. The results showed that financial infrastructure resources as the tangible resources and institutional factors combined with a kind of transformational leadership and strategic thinking of board members in terms of innovation, innovative marketing, and effective use of knowledge could enable football clubs to innovate (Mondalizadeh & Amiri, 2021). Ahmadi and Noudehi (2020) in a study entitled "factor analysis of the components of executive enforcement before privatization of sports in Iran" concluded that the privatization of sports claims requirements and prerequisites that will disrupt the privatization process and cause problems in this process if ignored. According to the findings of this study, executive enforcement is one of the most important requirements before the implementation of privatization policy. Therefore, the country's sports officials should pay attention to executive requirements before privatization, and then transfer sports to the private sector (Ahmadi & Noudehi, 2020). Rahmati et al (2020) in a study entitled a pattern for the development of a sports places privatization

using a data based approach and by developed approach and in a qualitative concluded that the, sports places privatization requires the creation of a transparent and appropriate platform in order to managers could privatizing the places in a proper competition (Rahmati, Yektayar, Khodamoradpoor, & Ahmadi, 2020). The results revealed that behavioral and training components, team maintenance and promotion, team and individual management, and technical and educational skills were significantly correlated with football development. However, only background and experience component has no significant correlation with football development (Rizvandi, Taghipour Gharbi, Esmaeili, & Ashraf Ganjoe, 2019). Ahmadi et all (2108) research findings identified six essential cultural components before the privatization of sport, which were respectively: education and empowerment, private television network, government managers' attitudes, media, strategic thinking and trust (Ahmadi, Amirtash, & Safania, 2018).

The privatization of sports in developed countries is very important and this issue has been seriously addressed. One of the most important reasons for this is the economic importance of sports and healthy recreation because sports have many direct and indirect economic effects that have direct effects. It includes the production of goods, the production of services, the export of sports, the promotion of the health of the community, the increase of the efficiency of the labor force, and the enrichment of the leisure time of individuals. Therefore, in these countries, in order to achieve the mentioned economic goals, there are very coherent programs for the privatization of the sports industry, especially sports clubs. The experience of studied countries shows that if the necessary ground for privatization is not provided, it can increase injustice and public dissatisfaction in case privatization is not accomplished after comprehensive studies based on careful

planning. Also, the implementation of privatization irrespective of the infrastructure and requirements that are prerequisites of privatization is faced with many problems. Therefore, the success of privatization requires the creation of a suitable environment for the private sector to be able to work in that situation. The proposed model of the present study can be used as a tool to identify the marketing capabilities of football clubs and use these capabilities to logically and principally deal with marketing, revenue and financial independence of the club and solve problems in this area. According to research on privatization in the football industry, a comprehensive model for the development of private club management has not yet been developed and a conceptual model has not been designed in this regard. What is certain is that private sports clubs will work harder to increase profitability and compete with others. Considering the undeniable impact of the development of private club management in the comprehensive development of sports and the development of progress and job creation in the country, designing and developing a model for the development of private football club management in Iran seems necessary.

A review of past researches shows that they have only prioritized the specified factors; But it has not been done, a fundamental research, which has examined the privatization of Iranian football clubs from all aspects. Therefore, by conducting this research, we hope to be able to identify the most essential measures and requirements before the implementation of sports privatization policy and provide practical solutions to achieve this goal. In this study, researchers review the prerequisites and requirements with emphasis on has been said issues and seek to answer the following question: “What is the development model of Iranian private football club?”

Materials and Methods

To better understand the development of

private Iranian football club management, the authors employed semi-structured interviews with open-ended questions. Therefore, this research is of a qualitative type and uses the Grounded Theory (GT) research method. GT is a well-known method used in many research studies (Pashaie & Perić, 2023). GT is one of the inductive and exploratory methods that are rooted in reality and provide explanations for events as they occur. According to Corbin and Strauss, “GTs, because they are drawn from the data, are likely to offer insight, enhance understanding, and provide a meaningful guide to action” (Corbin & Strauss, 2014). Given the differences and subjectivity associated with qualitative research methods, researchers need to explain the process of how a theory is developed (Pashaie, Abbaszadeh, Abdavi, & Golmohammadi, 2023). The promise of theory and model development makes grounded theory an attractive methodology to follow. However, it has been argued that many researchers fall short and provide a detailed description of only the research area or simply a quantitative content analysis rather than an explanatory model (Pashaie & Perić, 2023). Given the lack of theorizing previous Developing a model for the development of private Iranian football club management studies, GT is well suited to such an undertaking.

An understanding of the multiple perspectives related to the development of private football club was regarded as of critical importance for the data. The authors were looking for informants with a wide knowledge of development of private football because of their ability to understand the research problem and central phenomenon (Pashaie & Perić, 2023). The informants were expected to be researchers and staff members of sports management, PhD students in sports management and, Managers, coaches, officials and related experts in the field of development of private football and to have published multiple papers (at least five paper) /book chapters/books on development of private football (For more details, see Table 1).

Therefore, this study used a convenience sampling and the initial screening determined the eligibility of each participant for this study. In the first stage of recruiting respondents, an extensive database of contacts was created. Then the interviewees from the list were invited, different ages and both sexes. The initial contact was made by email and social networks between 2021- 2022 explaining the purpose of the study. Participants were guaranteed the confidentiality of their data and personal information. Since there were practical limitations in terms of available funding and the Covid-19 pandemic, it was not possible to travel physically to meet respondents (face-to-face) from other parts of the country. Therefore, after the respondent's consent to participate in the study, they were asked whether they prefer to arrange an online meeting or answer to an

email. For those who have chosen email, an email with a short introductory explanations and few questions that coincide with the research questions of this study was sent to them. After three days, a gentle reminder was sent to those who did not responded. On average, respondents provided answers within 3 days. On the other hand, each interview began with brief introductory explanations by the interviewer as an icebreaker (Pashaie & Perić, 2023). Online interviews approximately ranged from 20 to 75 minutes. These procedures were continued until a new idea was obtained, meaning that theoretical sufficiency or theoretical saturation had occurred (Pashaie & Perić, 2023). However with 15 specialists, the data collection process continued until the last interview was conducted to ensure complete theoretical saturation.

Table 1. Research statistical samples

Group	Category	Reason for selection	Number
1	Staff members of sports management	Academic faculty members and professors of sports management	9
2	Managers, coaches, officials and related experts in the field	Activities in the field of privatization, history of coaching in clubs, history of management and club management and familiarity with the field of privatization in sports	6

Analysis was undertaken concurrently with the data collection process (Pashaie et al., 2023). Coding is the most important element in the process of analyzing the data obtained from interviews. Coding involves carefully reading the data and turning it into the smallest possible component. The codes are the result of microscopic analysis of the data. After the text files of the interviews were completed and accurately transcribed by the authors, each transcript was coded independently by the authors. Consistent with Corbin and Strauss (2014) systematic approach, three types of coding – open, axial, and selective – enumerated the first- and second-level categories and their relationships (Pashaie et al., 2023).

Classifications were performed based on code refinement, duplicate code removal, and comparison of embryonic codes with previously obtained codes. Systematic analysis was performed using MAXQDA statistical software (version 12) for data analysis and classification.

Finally, initiatives were undertaken to ensure the rigor of the analysis. Members of the research team discussed the data and themes, and their interpretations (Corbin & Strauss, 2014). Cohen's kappa coefficient (k) was used to establish sufficient inter-rater reliability. The results of these coding are shown in the table below:

Table 2: Percentage of reliability through recoding method

Row	Interview title	Total number of data	Number of agreements	Number of disagreements	The end of re-examination
-----	-----------------	----------------------	----------------------	-------------------------	---------------------------

1	Second	27	12	4	.91
2	Eighth	13	6	2	.89
3	Thirteenth	25	11	5	.93
Total		65	29	11	.91

As shown in Table 2, the total number of codes registered by both the researcher and the collaborator is 65, the total number of agreements between these codes is 29, and the total number of disagreements between these codes is 11. . The reliability between the two encoders using the mentioned formula is 91%, which is higher than 60%, so the reliability of the encoders is confirmed. To analyze the data, (Strauss & Corbin, 1997) comparative analysis technique consisting of three stages: open coding, axial coding and selective coding was used.

Results

The results of qualitative interviews were categorized into three stages of open, central and selective coding. In the open coding process, an attempt is made to extract key

points and emphases of the participants from the interviews. These tips made up 441 codes. In open and axial coding, a paradigm model of privatization of Iranian football was developed; According to the approach of (Strauss & Corbin, 1997) selective coding, the results of the previous steps were applied, the main category was selected, and systematically linked to other categories; Credits were reviewed and categories that needed further refinement and development were developed. This work was started based on the pattern identified between the main and sub-categories in open and axial coding. In the axial coding stage, 55 sub-categories were identified, which were finally classified into 5 main categories of grounded theory model. These findings can be seen in Table 3.

Table 3. Coding results

Selected code	Axis code	Open coding
Casual Conditions	Management factors	Appointment of committed and specialized managers, football managers 'awareness of modern technology, marketing management, proper management, close monitoring of clubs' performance, club targeting at the level of expectations
	Human Factors	Use of specialized people, use of skilled human resources, employment of prominent players, strong coaching team
	Funding	Advancing financial goals, club budget, club financial transparency, club profitability, taking advantage of advertising and media opportunities, selling TV broadcasting rights, revenue from the sale of club uniforms and advertising, special measures in the field of profitability, having a transparent financial balance, profitability, Revision of match ticket prices, revenue generation, reduction of club expenses
	Social and cultural factors	Organizational culture, social and political issues, culture building, providing a suitable cultural and social platform, society's acceptance of privatization in football, big prejudice among football fans.
	Infrastructure	Preparing privatization infrastructure, having proper administrative infrastructure, having a dedicated stadium,, science and technology, newspapers and media, dealing with grassroots teams
	Political factors	Conservative policies, transparency of sports leaders' support, transparency in these sports institutions, lack of transparency in pricing, inefficiency of the capital market, contraction of banks, lack of proper attitude of the private sector to the public sector, and improper performance of some political executives.
	Economic factors	Macroeconomic conditions of the country, lack of a suitable platform for investment, economic goals, economic prosperity of the sports industry, privatization for the growth of sports, placement of stock exchanges, fundamental reforms in principle 44 privatization, creating the necessary incentive to enter the private sector Investment, payment of long-term loans, establishment of investment companies
	Branding	Club brand, brand value building, brand building team
	Rules and Regulations	Commercial law governing clubs, legal factors, legal factors, reforming the club system, resolving legal problems, Article 44
Fans	Fan support, high number of team fans, increase of public participation, creation of fan shops, improvement of public opinion, support mechanisms, strengthening of the fan system, communication with fans	

Intervening Conditions	Lack of copy-right law	Lack of income from television broadcasting rights, lack of copyright or intellectual property law, problems in the quantity and quality of television broadcasting matches, lack of broadcasting of a suitable number of professional football matches,
	Legal barriers	Legal weakness, lack of a clear legal framework, uncertainty of the legal nature of professional clubs Uncertainty of the legal nature of professional clubs, problems in the system of coaching contracts,
	Managerial barriers	Managerial changes, lack of professional planning, lack of marketing experts, lack of strategic plans and marketing at different levels, lack of training at the managerial level, management instability, little support from the country's top management to host international competitions, lack of communication principles Appropriate, the presence of certain spectrums of football, lack of management, retention and development of fans, low brand reputation of clubs, incompetence, failure to perform duties, government ownership in clubs, government managers clinging to the management chair of football clubs, existence of government managers, non-use From the human and perceptual skills of managers, lack of specialized knowledge, lack of work experience, political sector intervention in sports, lack of effective policies, the entry of politicians into football to be seen and advertised, the structure of the country's management
	Negative balance of clubs	Incompatibility of expenses with income, negative financial balances of clubs, lack of transparency in disclosure of financial reforms of clubs, loss of clubs, having accumulated losses, lack of financial resources
	Lack of attention to basic teams	Little attention of professional clubs to basic leagues, Lack of investment in player growth, little attention to grassroots teams
	Economic conditions of the country	Lack of proper economy, sanctions, increase in currency prices, decrease in oil resources, increase in player prices and high club costs, high economic risk of investing in football, sports economy planning, high service costs, maintenance costs, lack of The right platform for investment
	Lack of transparency	Lack of transparency of financial information in football, lack of transparency in sports matters, lack of transparent financial list of clubs, financial coding
	Inability to compete	Inability to compete with big clubs, inability to compete with state-owned clubs, merely engaging in sports competition, lack of attention to economic competition, lack of competitive structure in many industries of the country, neglect of commercial competition
Context Conditions	Profitability of the club	Making money for the club, reducing costs, nurturing and selling basic players, not harming the club,
	Club success	Winning the championship, being at the top of the table, consistency in the conclusion
	Monetization	Making money through live TV matches, being able to take advantage of advertising opportunities, making money from new methods, attracting sponsors, using ticket sales revenue, sports products such as clothing, effective interaction between the trade industry, liberalizing the club brand, paying attention to the economic aspect of the sector Privatization, establishment of investment companies, revision of match ticket prices
	Club monitoring	Close monitoring of clubs 'performance, use of legal supervisor to prevent corruption, prevention of corruption, monitoring of players' and coaches 'contracts, close monitoring of clubs' performance, control of managerial activities,
	Specialized human resources	Use of skilled human resources, meritocracy, employment of competent managers
	Transparent rules	Review existing club rules and regulations, use copyright laws for clubs, resolve copyright law issues, remove cumbersome rules and guidelines for people investing in football, formulate appropriate rules, review club bylaws and take into account Professional regulations
	Government support	Government support for government teams materially and spiritually, creating investment incentive policies, indirect government assistance, preventing behind-the-scenes interference by members of parliament, government control and oversight rather than large and small interventions and decisions, providing spiritual support Long-term low-interest loans to good people who invest in football, long-term loans
	Correct policy making	Providing a platform for private clubbing, policy-making and implementation of development programs, promoting a dynamic and organic structure, providing government support mechanisms for investors, non-political interference in sports, financial support for clubbing development, conservative policies, persuading the government Privatization of sports in the country, technical and managerial services and support, planning in the field of sports economy, special measures in privatization, facilitating the conditions for competition of clubs, setting an example for neighboring countries
	Playback rights	Providing TV broadcasting rights to clubs, selling football broadcasting rights
	sports marketing	Use of managers with marketing knowledge, familiarity with current issues of sports marketing, use of income potentials in football
	Become a	Placement of club shares in the stock exchange, non-loss of the club to enter the stock

	public company	exchange, transfer of club shares to the fans
	Economic competition of clubs	Formation of economic competition of clubs, transparency in announcing the expenses and incomes of clubs, improving the competitiveness of clubs, announcing the top revenue-generating ranks in the league
Strategies	Government support	Indirect government assistance, government support for private clubs, payment of long-term loans, government support role for the development of private football, allocation of rangelands, allocation of rangelands, indirect government assistance
	Infrastructure development	Development of infrastructures, including increase of sports per capita, construction of a dedicated stadium, use of up-to-date equipment
	Investor support	Provide incentive and supportive incentives to create a professional structure, solve the problems of foreign investors in football, build trust among investors, build investor confidence, use good people and pro-football investors, use popular brands of private clubs to raise capital, raise funds Macro, lack of political intervention
	Special points for private teams	Giving special points to private teams, adequately assessing the qualifications of people entering the valley, granting incentive loans, giving points to clubs, paying rewards to private clubs
	Facilitation of rules	Clear framework of private and professional club management in terms of laws and regulations, observance of Article 44, travel to legal courts to protect the rights of players, pursuit of television broadcasting rights
	Patterning	Imitating European clubs, following the example of successful clubs, following the example of successful and prestigious clubs in the world
	Financial support	Long-term loans with low interest rates, development of club management with cost control and financial transparency, providing low-interest loans to private clubs, financial facilities, financing
	Increase knowledge	Specialized training for football sports management for clubs, increasing knowledge and awareness, specialized training, participating in managers' training courses, knowledge of coaches
	Attract fans	Using the capacity of spectators and fans for the economic prosperity of football, using the fan relationship management system, donating a fan card, paying attention to the fan committee, using material and spiritual incentives for the fans
	New revenue generation solutions	The emergence of ticketing agencies for the pre-sale of football matches, the globalization of the player transfer market, the increase in revenue from the sale of professional club products, new methods of stadium ticket sales, the use of revenues from the popularity of football in the country, the development of basic players
	Admission to the stock exchange	Presence of the club in the stock market, transformation of clubs into public joint stock companies, entry into the stock exchange
	Purposeful planning	Goal setting, careful planning for the future, implementing a sports system, having the right strategy, structuring and modernizing clubs, recognizing and assessing excess goals
	Financial transparency	Clear disclosure of financial resources, fight against corruption in sports, annual report of the club's income and expenses to the fans, report of contract amounts of players and coaches, continuous monitoring
Consequences	Profitability of clubs	Income in the club, income from the club brand, profitability, economic prosperity of the football industry, cost control, reducing club costs, paying attention to long-term investment teams and generating income from it, transferring players and profitability, developing sports tourism, valuing and exporting players Increase club revenue, increase productivity and efficiency to compete to increase profits, create added value, sell club points, increase productivity
	Meritocracy	Attention to meritocracy, specialization in management selection, employment of specialized forces, strengthening the management department of the club, prosperity of sports elites, development of technical and specialized management in clubs, employment of specialized people
	Employment	Creating youth employment, developing employment and entrepreneurship, creating job opportunities
	Get the right to broadcast	Earn money through broadcasting rights, provide TV broadcasting rights to clubs, generate income through live broadcast of TV matches, receive football broadcasting rights online, Internet and radio rights
	Admission to the stock exchange	Selling government shares to the private sector, increasing public participation, earning money, solving the club's financial problems, the fans' sense of ownership of the club, independence from the government,
	Development of country football	Expansion of professional football, strengthening of national football teams, increase of medals in national and transnational events and competitions, comprehensive development of sports infrastructure, raising the quality level of the league, increasing the level of sports per capita, increasing participation in sports, increasing central participation in club affairs

		Improving efficiency, increasing the productivity of sports venues, increasing competition, emerging youth talent, motivating athletes, creating a sports system
	Branding	Creating added value, increasing the value of the club brand, generating revenue through the club brand, highlighting the club name
	Economic prosperity of the football industry	Development and prosperity of the country's sports economy, reduction of corruption in football, impact on GDP, development of the football industry, looking at football and sports as industry and economy, circulation of the country's sports economic engine, increasing efficiency in the economy,
	Reduce government spending	Freeing the government from the big expenses of the clubs, directing the national capital in the right direction, reducing the dependence on government resources, reducing government spending, shifting the government's financial focus to the infrastructure of sports
	Better service	Daily and reliable news reports from the club, creating a suitable platform for fans' leisure, providing better services to spectators, creating social enthusiasm, developing the volunteering system in sports, improving media services, improving media services, Reduce social harms
	Reduce corruption in football	Eliminate corruption and brokerage, closely monitor the performance of club management, deal seriously with brokers, receive compensation from managers who have incurred debts

As the results of Table 3 showed, the categories identified in this study, each of which has its own sub-variables. Which included causal conditions, pivotal conditions, contextual conditions, intervening conditions, strategies and consequences, each of which had its own

sub-variables. Table 4 and Figure 1 show the development model of Iranian private football club management, which is taken from the data obtained from the coding method by grounded theory.

Table 4. Variables and sub variables derived from grounded theory model

Selected code	Axial code
Casual Conditions	Managerial factors, human factors, financial resources, social and cultural factors, political factors, economic factors, branding, laws and regulations, supporters
Intervening Conditions	Club profitability, club success, revenue generation, club oversight, expert manpower, transparent rules, supporters, infrastructure, government support, sound policy making, distribution rights, sports marketing, public offering, club economic competition,
Context Conditions	Lack of broadcasting rights law, legal barriers, managerial barriers, technical barriers, revenue barriers, infrastructure weakness, barriers to sponsorship and investors, government barriers, negative balance of clubs, lack of attention to grassroots teams, economic conditions, lack of transparency, inability to compete
Strategies	Government support, infrastructure development, investor support, special privileges for private teams, law facilitation, role modeling, financial support, knowledge enhancement, fan acquisition, new revenue generation strategies, stock exchange, targeted planning, financial transparency
Consequences	Profitability of clubs, meritocracy, job creation, receiving broadcasting rights, entering the stock market, developing the country's football, branding, economic prosperity of the football industry, reducing government spending, better services, reducing corruption in football

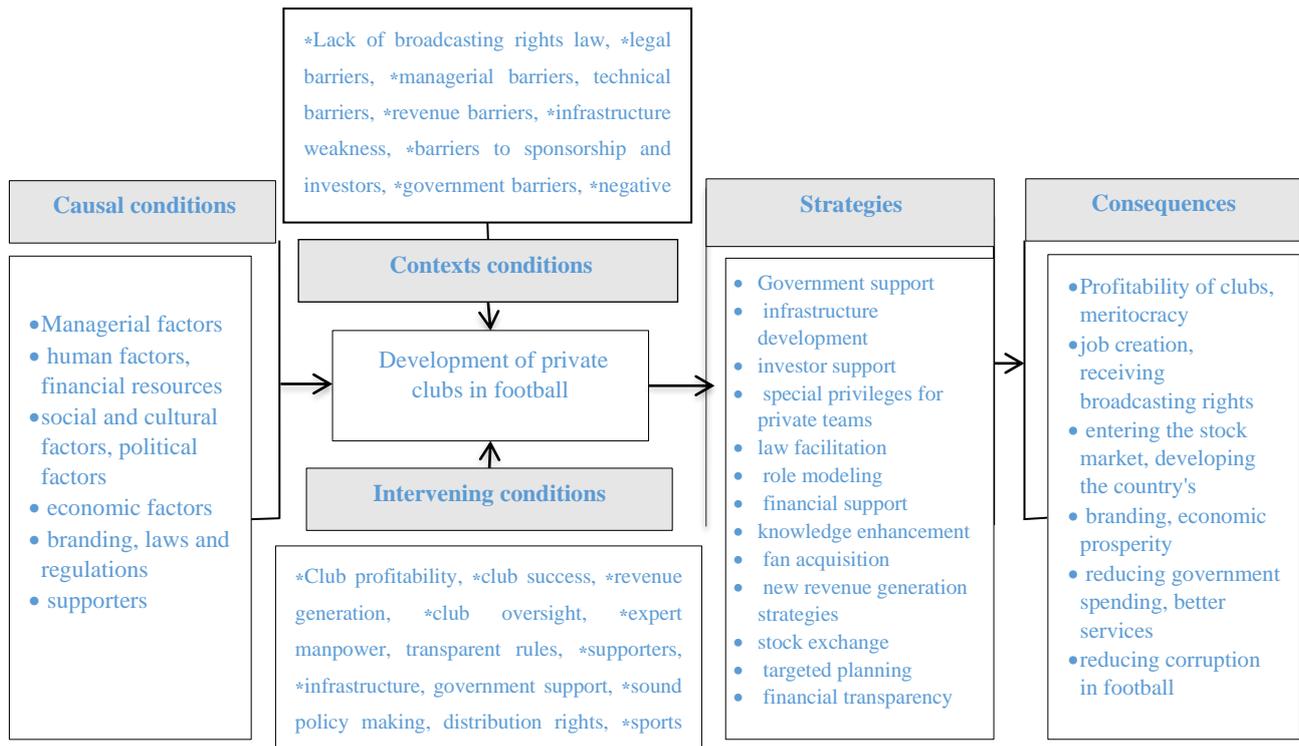


Diagram 1. Presenting a paradigmatic model, based on grounded theory, for the development of private football clubs in Iran

Discussion

The main purpose of this study was to search, describe and interpret the experience and understanding of experts regarding the development of private Iranian football club management in order to gain a deeper and richer insight into this phenomenon. For this purpose, privatization in sports should be cultured in different communities and organizations, and conditions should be provided for privatization activities among professionals, and their innovative ideas in the field of better development of the Iranian private football club and in order to solve the problems of clubs. And the sports industry, the necessary support to be provided by the relevant managers. This study was conducted with the participation of 15 experts. The interviews were categorized after open coding (441 codes), axial code (55 codes) and selective analysis and were categorized into broad subject areas.

Based on the development model of private

football club management in Iran: Presenting a paradigm model based on grounded theory, causal conditions (9 factors) including managerial factors, human factors, financial resources, social and cultural factors, political factors, economic factors, branding, rules and regulations, fans. In the research of Padash and colleagues (2013), the two factors of multiplicity of decision-making authorities and the lack of necessary and coordinated laws with the implementation of the transfer process have been determined as legal-legal factors, which are consistent with the results of this research. Also, in their research (2012) which examined and prioritized managerial-executive factors in the privatization of football clubs, they identified the lack of decisiveness and determination towards the implementation of the privatization policy among the relevant officials as one of the most important factors. . In this research, this factor was identified as a political factor, which was less important than the rest of the political-legal criteria. The low importance of sports in the set of economic-social development programs is the most

important criterion of social-cultural challenge. The reward (2008) also states that capitalism and investment are reprehensible, weak international trust in developing countries and little attention to the issue of sports in the set of economic-social development programs; It is one of the social factors affecting the privatization of sports with emphasis on the football sector. Which is consistent with the results of our research in the social-cultural factors section. The non-realization of television broadcast rights as a source of income is the most important criterion of the identified economic challenge. Elahi et al. (2008) in an article titled "Obstacles in the development of attracting income from financial support in the football industry of the Islamic Republic of Iran" state that the main sources of income for the football industry include television broadcasting rights, financial sponsors and daily income, respectively. It is a competition. Considering the fact that television broadcast rights are not recognized as a source of income in Iran's football industry, it is necessary for clubs and other relevant institutions of the football industry to have a special view on the issue of financial support in the current situation. Which confirms the results of this research. Judeo and Philip (2003) have also considered the lack of special and modern laws regarding media broadcast rights as one of the reasons for the inefficiency of the Spanish Football League. Moradi Chalanteri and colleagues (2013) state that due to the existence of legal obstacles in Principles 44, 81 and 139 of the Constitution and various legal and legal contradictions in the Foreign Investment Promotion and Protection Law, the football industry, like other industries, is affected by Increasing foreign investment has remained unprofitable. In this research, the lack of necessary conditions for investment is one of the legal factors that are considered as economic factors in our research and is stated under the title of high investment risk. The inadequacy of special facilities granted by the

government to the private sector, such as electricity and gas, was recognized as the most important criterion of the technological challenge. In their research, Kashif and colleagues (2007) also listed the inadequacy of bank facilities and the high cost of building sports facilities as two important obstacles in the path of privatization of Isfahan clubs. Barros (2006) in his research on the economic situation of football in Portugal came to the conclusion that football clubs urgently need the help and support of the government for various reasons in order to be profitable and remain competitive, which is in line with the results of our research in the challenge section. The technology that refers to the issue of appropriate and sufficient support of the government for the private sector of sports is consistent. Carlisle (2006) in his research in Canada considers the reduction of the government support program for small businesses as one of the most important weaknesses of privatization. Pasgal (2008) considers the most important challenges of privatization in Mexico to be the issue of technology, which is consistent with the results of our research in the section of technological challenges. In the sports industry in general and in every sports field of football in particular, in addition to the issue of planning in order to achieve sports success, the issue of income generation should also be given basic attention. Because based on the results of various researches and studies on the privatization of sports and especially sports clubs that act as economic enterprises of the sports industry, it is very important to know the effective factors in the realization of this important or the factors that prevent the achievement of this great goal. Has it.

The background conditions are also related to 14 factors, which include club profitability, club success, income generation, club supervision, specialized human resources, clear rules, fans, infrastructure, government support, correct policy, receiving broadcast rights, sports

marketing, becoming a public stock. Economic competition is the clubs. In the economic field of stability and coordination, management and control of economic variables and adapting the structure of clubs to the economy of privatization are among the components whose effectiveness is emphasized. In the political and legal field, political and executive stability, legal supervision, creating political motivation and providing guarantees are influential components. In the social and cultural field, we can mention risk culture and education. In the analysis of the underlying factors of privatization in sports, Razavi et al. (2018) categorizes 41 important factors into 5 sets including the financial market, cultural factors, media factors, management factors and legal factors that form the platform. Hemti et al. (2017) in examining the requirements for the privatization of Iranian football clubs have pointed out some of the effective conditions that are consistent with the findings of the present study. Among other things, in the socio-cultural dimension, improving the public perception of Iran's football conditions, in the economic dimension, improving the increase in income from ticket sales, and in the legal dimension, the transparency of the laws related to the privatization of football clubs have been considered important, which is in accordance with the present research. Is also Esmaili (2016) has identified seven important components as follows, which correspond to the components of the current research. Legal development, investors and sponsors, fans and beneficiaries, government support, media coverage, and training of athletes are among these components. Rezaei et al. (2014) draw a conceptual model of the development path of Iranian football, which commercialization and adaptation of the structure of clubs and their transformation into an economic enterprise is introduced as one of the prerequisites for the privatization of football clubs, which is consistent with the results of this research. It corresponds in the economic field. Mohammadi

Moghani et al. (2016) in a study entitled Analysis of the political role of the government in the implementation of privatization in sports found that the influence of political-social cohesion, the rule of law and the power of the government in the privatization of sports in Iran is significant, which is related to the political dimension. The present research is applicable. The most important achievement of the current research was that the design of the privatization model of football clubs should be based on the obstacles and challenges of privatization and the factors affecting it. In other words, to present a model based on the existing realities of the sports space and the privatization of football, it is necessary to move based on the existing realities. It is expected that the results of this research will provide a sufficient understanding of the factors affecting privatization in the country. In the current research, first, the elements of a professional club were defined in order to define it as an ideal and model destination. Such work helped the researcher and the interviewees to agree on the ideal conditions of a private professional club. The model obtained from the qualitative phase of the research showed that the central phenomenon in this development model was privatization as a political, executive and economic matter. Several factors will cause this stability in the privatization process, including economic and political stability, de-monopoly and providing guarantees. In fact, we need several political and economic infrastructure components in order to achieve stability in the field of privatization. This privatization process is in a platform. A platform that is shaped by obstacles and challenges. The findings of Sultan Hosseini et al.'s research (2016) showed that the three main causes of the obstacles to the privatization of the football sports industry in Iran are respectively: lack of proper planning for the privatization of football, lack of television broadcasting rights for the football sports industry in Iran. And the lack of proper infrastructure to privatize the football industry

in Iran. The ruling platform for this privatization process is bureaucratic obstacles, infrastructure risks, uncertainty about privatization and financial problems of clubs.

There are many discussions about the relationship between the government and the club. The relationship between sports clubs and government authorities is an issue that has not yet been clearly defined in Iran. Therefore, in many cases, this issue has been manifested as a social problem and has caused a lot of expenses. However, governments tend to get involved in sports for various reasons. Governments' attitudes towards clubs can range from actively supporting them to ignoring them. Sports clubs also urgently need the support of the government for various reasons, but what is important is that the relationship between the government and the clubs is clearly defined. It seems that the government's involvement in professional club ownership causes delays in the financial development and economic inefficiency of clubs, and it should be taken into account the new form of professional clubs that are subject to business laws and are required to do so like commercial companies. Have an activity registration number and pay taxes to the government, the role and relationship of the government with football clubs should be carefully discussed and re-examined. What should be done to get out of these challenges and extend the stability of the privatization process? These strategies can be presented based on the results of the research: First, changes should be made in the structure of the clubs and the management structure of the clubs should be shaped according to the process of privatization. Among other things, attention should be paid to the commercialization and specialization of the club structure, both of which are part of the definition of a private professional club. One of the approaches to income generation and sustainable economic development of clubs in football-owning countries is to register these clubs as commercial enterprises like other

companies and commercial institutions. Supervisions should find a form and organization appropriate to the private process and be comprehensive. In addition to legal and executive support, supervision should also have a mechanism to support football. The third strategy is to strengthen the capital market and bring it as much as possible to the football arena. What is certain is that television broadcast rights, financial support, ticket sales, and sales of commercial items to fans and copyright are the most important components of income generation in the football industry, and the position and relationships between them in the Iranian club industry have not yet been clearly determined. Moving from political and economic infrastructure to the process of privatization and dealing with obstacles and challenges and adopting strategies can achieve the realization of the elements of privatization. But there should be some points and considerations in this regard. This pattern is not a mechanical pattern that just by creating a certain element, another element is necessarily realized. But it has an interactive and flexible mode. In other words, the elements and strategies should be implemented by interacting with each other and considering other considerations. Each item in the pattern according to Corbin and Strauss paradigmatic pattern should be considered with subcategories and other related items. The current model means a comprehensive and extensive and interconnected process, not a collection of isolated cases. Some challenges and obstacles are included in the section of the governing background and intervening conditions, and the mention of obstacles and challenges has the implicit meaning of confronting and solving those challenges.

Intervening conditions of this research with 13 factors, in addition to the mentioned fields, there are also intervening conditions that always affect the field performance, which include: lack of broadcast rights law, legal barriers, managerial barriers, technical barriers,

Obstacles to income generation are infrastructure weakness, sponsorship and investor obstacles, government obstacles, negative balance of clubs, lack of attention to basic teams, economic conditions of the country, lack of transparency, inability to compete. These results are in line with the findings of Kashkar and Soleimani (2013) and Amiri and colleagues (2013). As an example, Kashkar and Soleimani (2013) conducted a research on the role of developing a suitable privatization program on the development of public sports from the experts' point of view. The results showed that there is a significant relationship between the implementation of the privatization program and the development of public sports. It seems that it is necessary to compile a comprehensive plan in the field of how to privatize the football industry in Iran in such a way that it is privatized step by step and taking into account the specific goals of the football industry in Iran, using the opinion of experts and experts. ; In such a way that the ways of earning money for the football sports industry in Iran through the football federation and the league organization will be determined according to certain plans and while privatizing the football clubs in Iran, these resources will be attracted based on the efficiency of each of the clubs. Another obstacle that was raised by the experts as an obstacle to the privatization of the football industry in Iran was the fact that the football industry does not have the right to broadcast on television, which is in line with the findings of Farza Alipour et al. (2012) and Salimi et al. (2012). Farzalipour and colleagues (2012) in a research that was conducted with the aim of understanding the role of mass media on the development of women's sports, concluded that mass media play a large role in the introduction and development of women's sports. It seems that one of the important obstacles to the privatization of the football sports industry in Iran is the lack of formality of the TV broadcast rights laws, which are the monopoly of the Broadcasting Organization. In

relation to the right to broadcast television, the situation is so regrettable that in some cases, first division football clubs have to pay an amount to the provincial radio and television to broadcast the match on their provincial network, and this is quite It is against the principles of professional sports and FIFA rules and regulations. Even the neighboring Arab countries have a better situation in this regard; As the United Arab Emirates has sold the right to televise football matches for five years for 95 million dollars (Amirtash and Mozafari, 2013); Therefore, considering that about half of the income of the world's professional football industry comes from television broadcasting rights (Salimi et al., 2013), and on the other hand, the fields in the field of sports cultural affairs and television coverage of football matches can be The expansion and development of sports and the methods of communication, reporting the games moment by moment and the use of television broadcasting rights will cause the exchange of large amounts of money and create many opportunities directly and indirectly for privatization in the football sports industry. ; Therefore, it is suggested that the Broadcasting Organization, in cooperation with the Football Federation and the League Organization, adopt strategies to clarify the amount of income from football (such as advertisements between games, SMS advertisements, the amount of broadcast time, etc.) and based on this, the income earned by the broadcasting organization from football should be provided to the clubs by the league organization. In addition, another obstacle that was raised by the experts as an obstacle to the privatization of the football industry in Iran was the lack of proper infrastructure for the privatization of the football industry in Iran, which is in line with the findings of Aslkouti's research (2013). . In this regard, the most important mechanisms to solve this problem are to give as much space as possible to the private sector and privatization in this area and to prevent the development of

the role of the government and quasi-private sectors with a governmental nature, especially in the executive fields. In recent years, the announcement of the executive policies of Article 44 of the Constitution by the Supreme Leader, which is referred to as a fundamental development in the executive and economic fields of the country, as well as a legal requirement, has drawn everyone's attention to the issue of privatization in The field of sports in the country has been busy (Amiri et al., 2012). In some cases, in order to create proper infrastructure, it is necessary to pay attention to these things. From the researcher's point of view, the first basic condition for the privatization of the football industry in Iran is to use an educated and experienced management force. In order to realize this, it is necessary for the football federation, league organization and football sports clubs to use expert forces in the field of sports marketing management while creating specialized areas of sports marketing. Also, paying attention to the potential income possibilities (such as ticket sales, advertising around the field, creating television broadcasting rights, creating stores affiliated with clubs, etc.) is another way to create a suitable environment for the privatization of the football sports industry in Iran. Another basic condition for the privatization of football clubs is to have the minimum registered capital according to the capital market regulations and to convert it into shares. In the current situation, it is not difficult for clubs to increase their capital due to the financial circulation that flows in them, and converting capital into shares is not a complicated process; Therefore, it is necessary for clubs to first increase their registered capital to the required extent and then convert it into shares (Amirtash and Mozafari, 2013); Therefore, since the football sports industry in Iran does not have a significant income due to the limitation of income sources and their financial balance is negative, providing The necessary condition for economic success and

commercialization is an effective step on the way to privatization; Because, removing the obstacles and problems in this field will make the football industry profitable in Iran and as a result, their attractiveness for the private sector and finally, the success of football in the country (Qarakhani et al., 2013); Therefore, in order to privatize the football sports industry in the country, it is necessary for the managers and sports officials of the country to pay special attention to the existing obstacles and try to solve them. Although the privatization of football sports in Iran is subject to a lot of cost and time and requires a detailed and comprehensive process; but neglecting it will have very heavy and irreparable consequences for the country's football sport. Therefore, with a general look at the past researches, it can be stated that many obstacles, such as the non-participation of companies and factories in order to invest in football and the lack of interaction between the organizations in charge of sports, played a role in the development of the privatization of the football industry in Iran. In the current research, based on the opinion of experts and past studies, effective obstacles for the privatization of Iranian football were presented, among which was the lack of proper infrastructure and neglect of television broadcasting rights, so it is important to pay attention to these obstacles and formulate effective strategies. Although taking a step in this direction requires planning and creating appropriate structures in this field, neglecting it will have very heavy and irreparable consequences for the future of the football industry in Iran.

In this research, the strategies are also with 13 factors that aggravate or weaken the context, including government support, infrastructure development, support for investors, special privileges for private teams, easing of laws, modeling, support Finance, increasing knowledge, attracting fans, new ways to generate income, entering the stock market, targeted planning, financial transparency. It can

be said that before handing over the clubs, measures such as defining, determining and providing revenue-generating components, establishing sports and economic relations, providing a legal, political, and cultural environment and removing legal and executive obstacles, a general agreement on the development of clubs, preparing the minimum standards of the professional club such as dedicated land and..., restructuring the financial, administrative and legal affairs of the clubs and finally choosing the most effective method of privatization should be done appropriately so that the model of privatization obtained in the real context and be based on effective components.

Conclusion

Finally, the results with 12 factors that include: club profitability, meritocracy, job creation, receiving broadcast rights, entering the stock market, developing the country's football, branding, economic prosperity of the football industry, reducing government costs, providing better services, reducing Corruption in football. It provides a detailed and complete evaluation of the main phenomenon with a comprehensive and comprehensive approach. According to the results of this research, privatization in Iran's sports has been affected by various conditions, therefore, in order to achieve the mentioned economic goals, there are very coherent plans for the privatization of the sports industry and especially sports clubs. Therefore, privatizing clubs and moving towards the comprehensive development of club ownership is one of the necessities. When we intend to implement privatization, we naturally need a tool to help us achieve our goal. As mentioned above, we realized the existential concept and philosophy of management that its existential necessity is inevitable in the matter of privatization, and important and vital matters such as organization, planning, control of resources are on the shoulders of managers. Sports management is the main cause of the movement

and direction of the public sector towards privatization, which requires the cooperation and comprehensive support of all institutions, especially the government. We can understand the necessity of privatization with the football clubs of our country. Therefore, the only way to get rid of the country's sports and football clubs from the current situation, which are always incurring losses, is to turn to privatization. We said that controlling this large amount of activity requires unique management, which is considered a very difficult task, so that today the government cannot alone examine all its angles and get the most efficiency from this industry. The step-by-step implementation of privatization steps and its operationalization in any field such as sports can facilitate the management process. Because all decisions are made in order to obtain the highest efficiency and the least interference has a role in it. Because, as mentioned, most of the country's football clubs are under the control of government agencies, and concretely and clearly, most of them are unable to achieve the minimum professional standards in various dimensions, and all these cases are due to the government's intervention and the entry of political people into the field of club management. Football and the lack of management stability in club ownership, so it is possible to achieve better results by following the patterns and principles of professional football at the global level. In this way, the government should have the most support, because a successful privatization program should be in the center of attention of the government, supported by the highest government officials, its goals should be clearly defined, experience and organizational competence should be expanded and solve the problems related to it.

In general, it can be concluded that the privatization of football clubs in the country faces several obstacles, the most important of which are economic. It seems that without the removal of these obstacles, the privatization

policy in the field of football will not be implemented and, like the past few years, the privatization of football clubs will be nothing more than a dream. Therefore, according to the findings of the research on the existence of three distinct categories of obstacles and the importance and priority of economic and financial obstacles, it is suggested that the government, sports managers and the football federation remove these obstacles and lay the groundwork for the commercialization of football clubs to increase resources. They took serious action because the private sector is looking for profit and losing clubs are not attractive to them. Also, it is necessary to provide the necessary legal and legal background with the cooperation of national institutions such as the parliament, the privatization organization and the government board, which includes drafting bills and legal plans by the government, drafting the necessary laws by the parliament and preparing He pointed out the necessary conditions and instructions and process design from the privatization organization. However, it is necessary to make structural changes in the clubs and lay the groundwork for economic activities along with sports activities. In other words, as they compete inside the green rectangle, football clubs should also think about doing commercial activities outside the field.

References

- [1] Abawari, Y. A. (2013). Investigating Factors that Affect the Development of Football in South Nation Nationalites and Peoples Region: With Particular Reference to Kaffa Zone Addis Ababa University].
- [2] Ahmadi, M., Amirtash, A. M., & Safania, A. M. (2018). Factor analysis of the necessary cultural components before the privatization of sport. *Sport Management Studies*, 10(50), 37-62.
- [3] Ahmadi, M., & Noudehi, M. (2020). Factor analysis of the components of administrative requirements before Sports Privatization in Iran. *Journal of Sport Management*, 12(1), 201-222.
- [4] Asadollahi, E., Keshtidar, M., Heydari, R., & Peric, M. (2020). Brand Identity Transfer and Consumers Sport Commitment in the Iranian Football Premier League: Mediating Role of Promotional and Advertising Tools. *Journal of New Studies in Sport Management*, 1(1), 10-21.
- [5] Atghia, N., Gharekhani, H., & Yaghoubi, S. (2021). Prerequisites for Transference of Professional Football Clubs in Iran with Emphasis on Economic Requirements. *Journal of New Studies in Sport Management*, 2(4), 286-299.
- [6] Badri Azarin, Y., Pashaie, S., Hafezi, V., & Fateh, H. (2018). Analysis the mediating role quality of ticket sale electronic services the performance of electronic customer relationship management (E-CRM) of league football matches of iran. *Communication Management in Sport Media*, 5(3), 15-26.
- [7] Badri Azrin, Y., Pashaie, S., Cincimino, S., & Dickson, G. (2021). Relationship between Personnel's Organizational Commitment with Managers' Leadership Styles in Sport Organizations of Iran. *Research in Sport Management and Marketing*, 2(3), 28-36.
- [8] Corbin, J., & Strauss, A. (2014). *Basics of qualitative research: Techniques and procedures for developing grounded theory*. Sage publications.
- [9] Diah, N. M., Nossal, N., Zin, N. A. M., Higuchi, T., & Iida, H. (2014). A Game Informatical Comparison of Chess and Association Football ("Soccer"). *Advances in Computer Science*, 3(4), 10.
- [10] Hafezi, V., Abdavi, F., & Pashaie, S. (2016). The analysis of the mediating role of customer attitude on purchase intention of electronic tickets of football matches. *Journal of Novel Applied Sciences*, 5(5), 188-194.

- [11] Mondalizadeh, Z., & Amiri, M. (2021). Designing a Conceptual Framework for Innovation Capability Development in Iranian Football Premier League. *Sports Business Journal*, 1(1), 101-117.
- [12] Morrow, S. (2013). Football club financial reporting: time for a new model? *Sport, Business and Management: An International Journal*, 3(4), 297-311.
- [13] Naderian Jahromi, M., & Akhavan, E. (2021). Identification and Evaluation of a Model for Succession in Football Pro League of Iran Based on the Grounded Theory Approach. *Journal of New Studies in Sport Management*, 2(3), 224-234.
- [14] Olayo, J. O. (2019). Succession Planning in Organizations; Impact on Workplace Productivity. *Supreme Journal of Business and Management*, 2(1), 1-11.
- [15] Pashaie, S., Abbaszadeh, M., Abdavi, F., & Golmohammadi, H. (2023). Improving the Validity of Mixed and Multi-Methods Through Triangulation in Sports Management Research. , 4(2), 16-27.
- [16] Pashaie, S., & Perić, M. (2023). The future of sports tourism in the light of the COVID-19 pandemic–Developing a new paradigm model. *Journal of Tourism Futures*. 10(9), [2022-2036](#).
- [17] Rahmati, S., Yektayar, M., Khodamoradpoor, M., & Ahmadi, K. (2020). Designing a pattern for the privatization of sports places with a data-based approach. , 4(3), 11-18.
- [18] Rathi, K., Somani, P., Koul, A. V., & Manu, K. (2020). Applications of artificial intelligence in the game of football: The global perspective. *Researchers World*, 11(2), 18-29.
- [19] Rizvandi, A., Taghipour Gharbi, M., Esmaeili, M., & Ashraf Ganjooe, F. (2019). The Evaluation of Performance Indicators of Coaches in Football Development. *Journal of Humanities Insights*, 3(04), 246-252.
- [20] Shahlaee, J., & Ghorbanalizadeh Ghaziani, F. (2015). Privatization priorities of Iranian football clubs from the perspective of experts. *Annals of Applied Sport Science*, 3(2), 57-68.
- [21] Thiel, A., & Mayer, J. (2009). Characteristics of voluntary sports clubs management: A sociological perspective. *European sport management quarterly*, 9(1), 81-98.
- [22] Zhang, J. J., Kim, E., Mastromartino, B., Qian, T. Y., & Nauright, J. (2018). The sport industry in growing economies: critical issues and challenges. *International Journal of Sports Marketing and Sponsorship* 19, no. 2 (2018): 110-126.