

# The Qualitative Study of Sustainable Sports Development in Iranian Football Clubs: a Boolean Comparative Study

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## Abstract

**Purpose:** The present research was carried out with the aim of investigating the conditions for the realization of sustainable sports development in Iranian football clubs.

**Methods:** The current research method is of qualitative-adaptive type, and in terms of approach, it was done with Boolean algebra. Sampling in this research was done purposefully. The criterion of this sampling was to have high indicators of sustainable development. The method of data collection was document type. Therefore, the conditions under consideration and the events targeted for sustainable development in the Commonwealth of Nations, Japan, the International Olympic Committee and Iran were selected and compiled. In research with the Boolean algebra approach, validity and reliability are examined during the research stages. The reliability and validity of the research was confirmed through data reduction, calibration and experts in form and content.

**Results:** The results of the research explored 19 necessary events in the four necessary conditions for the realization of sustainable sports development in football clubs. Also, 10 events were reported in four sufficient conditions for the realization of sustainable sports development. Finally, the final formula of combining and separating the necessary and sufficient conditions for sustainable sports development was presented in the form of Boolean algebra.

**Conclusion:** Because these results are novel, they are a suitable platform for conducting other qualitative and quantitative research. Also, according to the results of the research, it is possible to plan, organize and evaluate the sustainable sports development program in Iran.

**Keywords:** Sustainable sports development, football clubs, Boolean algebra, comparative study.

## Introduction

During the last decade, the social and organizational dimensions of sustainability have received special attention (Woolcock, 2001). There is a growing evidence in this regard that various ways of human life have played a role in the exploitation of renewable resources such as land and non-renewable resources such as minerals and water (Jia & et al. 2019). There is a movement at the international level that supports the sustainable way of life, based on which the needs of the present generation should be met without compromising the needs of the future generation (Roostaie & et al., 2019). Laszlo and Zubbayo (2011) describe sustainability as environmental connections, health, and social value in the main business of the company, without lightening and burdening the price or quality. The above definition includes all the required factors including: economic, social and environmental responsibility that organizations should consider (Laszlo, 2011). According to Portney (2003) sustainability; biological-environmental-natural topics; local economic performance; It includes a range of quality of life issues and long-term government issues (Portney, 2003). In sustainable development, extensive use of the environment is considered a limitation in economic growth. At the same time, cultural aspects, the dimension of social justice, etc. are considered more. Green issues, which are also called environmental sustainability issues, have become important social trends not only in the field of ecology but also in other common and conventional fields such as economics, ethics and political sciences (Andersson, 2005).

Batley and Manning (1997) consider sustainable communities to be a place for fostering a sense of place and stimulating social participation. Local communities should support the human-made environment and sublime biological patterns, inspiring, creating memories and reviving the sense of belonging.

The key to understanding society is the concept of identity. In social and psychological theory, identity refers to the development of a sense of self. This sense of self grows as a result of social interaction. Also, identity is formed in a range of social fields so that people learn specific patterns of normative behavior and feelings of identity from experiences and are committed to it. This process of identity formation is also one of the fundamental elements of sports and societies (Zakus, 1999). Sports have benefits such as improving self-esteem, identity and social integration and can facilitate the growth and development of society and social inclusion (Vail, 2007). Social inclusion requires the realization of social participation and social integration in societies so that participants can overcome their present and future (Coalter & et al., 2000). So, we are going to know how the right effect of sports industry in sustainability is.

Sports is a multi-billion dollar industry worldwide. Sports has attracted considerable attention in recent years. Exercise has been proven to be beneficial for maintaining a person's well-being and a way to maintain good social relationships. The sports market includes a range of sub-markets, from shoes to clothes. In this market, being close to customers, gaining their insight into the product and understanding their wishes is one of the key drivers for success (Mathur, 2010). Sports clubs are an important source for providing sports, they are one of the most important actors in realizing the role of sports (Skille, 2008). The football club can play a role in the sustainable development of a city that is formed through economy, environment and society. If governments want to take advantage of the advantages of football clubs to achieve sustainable development in cities with a high need for football entertainment, they should invest in local football clubs (Sparvero, 2007). On the other hand, unstable jobs are increasing due to basic requirements and high employee rates, job stress and burnout, and lack of work-

life balance (Kelliher & ey al., 2019).

Hockman et al. (2019) in a research titled re-participation of local youth for sustainable sports development concluded that the involved youth showed an important change that enabled them to be uniquely trained and to the best way to respond to the needs of program participants and local communities in a set of socio-cultural environments. (Hoekman, 2020). Absalimov (2015) found in a research entitled the impact of major cultural and sports events on sustainable urban development that holding international cultural and sports events has beneficial effects on sustainable urban development, especially the economic development of that city (Absalyamov, 2015). Niko Skolinkorf (2012) in a research titled sustainable social development through green sports venues and sports events, found that non-governmental and governmental sports organizations, by building sports projects and events, improve the social development of society compared to previous decades. Have increased especially in newly developed societies, sport has caused more participation and cooperation within the society (Schulenkorf, 2012). Xavier et al. (2014) introduce the most important role of sports events in attracting tourism and media coverage. In addition, player transfers, issuing coaches, selling tickets, advertising sports fields, creating sports facilities and facilities, betting and attracting financial sponsors, which are among other achievements of sports events as the main product of this industry. , can also be mentioned (Javier, 2014). There are strong growing sports research and projects regarding gender equality and empowerment of women and girls (Murra, 2015). In his research, Kalter (2007) focused on how sports can have a positive effect on social cohesion and social inclusion. That is, sports can help build positive levels of trust and interaction between members of a community. This research also showed that sports can help community members grow socially through supportive relationships,

education, training, and employment (paid for volunteer work) (Coalter, 2007; Hu & Zeng, 2016). Yang et al. (2020) in a research titled multi-indicator decision-making model to explore the impact of sustainable sports tourism criteria in Taichung city, reached the conclusion that the quality of urban security, government marketing, business financial support and planning Mass transportation is the most important criteria (Yang & et al., 2020). Hsu et al. (2020) in a research titled Measuring Sustainable Tourism Attitude Scale in the context of Eastern Island showed that local culture and environmental support are the most important factors in tourism development (Hsu et al.,2020). Nestico and Masalli (2020) in a research titled Economic evaluation of tourism investments on Azghan Islands stated that local residents are employed as personnel during sports events, which increases employment opportunities for local residents (Nestico and Masalli, 2020).

To show the importance of the research, we should say in Iran sports industry, Heydari et al, in a research in 2018 concluded that Iran's football clubs have not achieved sustainable development indicators.

For a comparative example, in response to the regulations imposed by FIFA on the proposed registration, the Japan Football Association formed a committee to manage the hosting participation process. The tender documents were submitted to FIFA in 2010. The inspections were carried out from July 20 to 22, and the FIFA inspection team was present in that country for about 71 hours. In recognition of the fact that the World Cup is the most important sports event with an impact on both the national and local levels. As an international economic power, Japan is the second largest economy in the world with a large gross national product and the largest in terms of currency purchase balance. Also, Japan is the fourth largest exporter and the fifth largest importer in the world. Insurance,

banking, retail, transportation, telecommunications and construction are the most important industries. In 2009, the GDP was approximately \$32,500 and the unemployment rate was approximately 5.1%. Japan had made good proposals to help develop football around the world, in addition to increasing and continuing the activities already being carried out in Asia. Based on the existing activities in Japan and Asia, he proposed plans to penetrate and commercialize several elements of the hosting concept, such as global fan festivals and internet business to generate income for the development of activities. The proposal included a project called 208 Smiles, which had the following goals:

- 1- The development of women's football with a satisfactory organization and the calm arrival of coaches and teams to first-class venues.
- 2- Hosting the Women's World Cup.
- 3- Development of the "Asia Dream Project" of the Japan Football Federation.
- 4- Supporting sports and health initiatives.
- 5- Organization of FIFA youth football tournaments.
- 6- Promoting football for ordinary people through the "World Fans Festival".
- 7- Hosting football competitions for the disabled together with FIFA.

The Japan Football Association has been developing Asian football for many years and has shared its expertise with many members, positively influencing sustainable development with projects such as the AFC Professional League project. There were no signs of government and government institutions' involvement in those programs. The proposed program for sustainable social and human development was only related to FIFA's current social responsibility strategy. social dimensions of activities; Educating children to prevent poverty and discrimination and creating social

harmony, promoting health with a focus on preventing obesity, diabetes, heart disease and high blood pressure among adults and communication; It included increasing the awareness of social causes through the festival and the global fan workshop. The scope of the program was mainly for elements related to national health and for global communication (Harold, 2020). In the proposal of hosting, Japan presented a history of previous activities. With the advice of experts, he compiled guidelines for evaluating and reducing carbon dioxide production in sports events through the Ministry of Environment and the Football Federation, and compiled a comprehensive plan and guidelines for environmental protection in relation to the World Cup. Projects included cleaning stadiums, free public transportation, and reusable bottles for food and beverages. The proponent also intended to reduce all transportation that produced carbon dioxide. The Japan Football Association previously participated in the UN Global Compact, which included environmental principles and a demand for 25 campaigns (government campaigns to prevent global warming). Anyway, this program implements the stadium cleaning campaign and the green project to plant grass in schools and public lands. According to the brochure of the hosting proposal, the Japan Football Federation has previously been active in environmental issues and has extensive experience in implementing environmental projects and campaigns in Japan (Harold, 2020).

The meaning of sustainable development in sports is all economic, human, social and environmental aspects, which are the leading sports planning in the developing countries. Therefore, since there is no comprehensive theoretical foundation in Iran regarding the sustainable development of sports, therefore, domestic categories will be compared in the comparative samples under investigation.

Therefore, the importance and necessity of the

issue comes from here, which is neglected in Iran's sports industry, especially football, due to the comprehensive nature of the issue of sustainability.

### Material and Method

Ragin argued in the book of comparative method (John, 1992) that first, the logic of Boolean algebra is an implicit methodology of comparative-historical research, and secondly, by using Boolean algebra, a technique can be presented so that analysts with different combinations of explanatory Work as causes of a single result. Ragin called this technique comparative qualitative analysis, which was based on Boolean algebra or the Boolean extension of Stuart Mill's nominal comparison logic, that is, methods of agreement and disagreement. Qualitative comparative analysis (QCA) is a novel analytical tool that offers the possibility to compare intermediate numbers of cases and to assess the necessity and sufficiency of conditions in relation to an outcome. It is based on set theory and Boolean algebra, and its fuzzy-set version (fsQCA) draws on fuzzy logic (Zadeh, 1965)

Comparative-qualitative analysis bases its explanation on Boolean algebra. Here, the items are checked according to whether or not they are members of the collection. Boolean analysis is the explanation of the problem with compound causality; In other words, Boolean analysis provides the possibility of combining causal conditions. In this method, each cause is not considered separately from another cause; rather, it is always examined in a historical context of the presence and absence of other main conditions (Saie, 2008). The main weakness of this approach is not establishing a strong link between cause and effect (Mill, 1843). Also, Boolean algebra has a logical and non-statistical nature and logical propositions find a methodological requirement in it.

Sampling in this research was done purposefully. The criterion of this sampling was to have high indicators of sustainable development. The method of collecting information in this research was library and documentary. Therefore, first category sources, articles and previous researches were used. The present research deals with the main causes and conditions for the realization of sustainable sports development in Iranian football clubs compared to other countries. That is, the fulfillment of which conditions will be effective in achieving sustainable sports development in Iranian football clubs. In the present research, using addition (or), multiplication (and) and Boolean combinations, we discussed the causes and conditions for the realization of sustainable sports development in football clubs. The realization of each of the effective events in the realization of sustainable sports development in football clubs compared to other countries was reported as two values (0) non-existence and (1) existence of valuing and checking the amount of agreements and differences. Calibrating qualitative data as sets requires the development of definitions of fuzzy-set values based on theoretical and substantive knowledge and not the generation of an arbitrary numeric representation of the data (absurd & speer, 2012). Hence data reduction has some steps in qualitative comparative research. We tried to omit some condition based on 'is' or 'isn't" in our context. This an approach in reliability and validity of research. In research with the Boolean algebra approach, validity and reliability are examined during the research stages. The reliability and validity of the research was confirmed through data reduction, calibration and experts in form and content.

### Results

The general results of the events and conditions in the comparative cases examined are shown in Table No. 1.

**Table 1. All events and initial conditions of Boolean**

concepts	Conditions
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	Selected comparative cases				D	C	B	A
	IRAN	JAPAN	Commonwealth Nations	IOC	Political-legal-human	economic	social	environmental
Environmental education in the context of sports	0	1	1	1				*
Use of renewable energy in sports structures and facilities	0	1	1	1				*
Support and environmental activities of fans and sports lovers	0	1	1	1				*
Using green structures and facilities in sports venues	0	1	1	1				*
Environmentally friendly transportation systems	0	1	1	1				*
Sustainable waste and sports waste disposal systems	0	1	1	1				*
Sustainable water storage and consumption systems	0	1	0	0				*
Teaching social issues through sports environment	0	1	1	1			*	
Promoting ethics and social norms	0	0	1	1			*	
Safety and security measures in the field of sports	1	1	1	1			*	
Improving health and mental health in sports fans and beneficiaries	0	1	1	1			*	
Improving public health	0	1	1	1			*	
Social cohesion and integration	0	0	0	0			*	
Strengthening gender equality in terms of balanced presence of women and men in sports	0	1	1	1			*	
Peace and social justice	0	0	1	1			*	
Promoting cultural issues	1	0	1	1			*	
Patterns and role models through heroes	1	0	0	1			*	
Dealing with discrimination	0	1	1	1			*	
fight against poverty	0	0	1	1			*	
Promoting social responsibility	0	1	1	1			*	
Increasing social participation	1	1	1	1			*	
Promotion of sports volunteering	1	1	1	1			*	
Improving social capital	1	1	1	1			*	
Creating social networks	1	1	1	1			*	

Vitality of society	1	1	1	1	*
Creating national and local identity	1	1	1	1	*
Employment and entrepreneurship	0	1	1	1	*
Holding events and festivals	0	1	1	1	*
ticket sales	1	1	1	1	*
paying tax	1	1	1	1	*
Transferring players	1	1	1	1	*
Advertising and marketing	0	1	1	1	*
Professionalization and privatization of sports	0	1	1	1	*
TV broadcasting rights	0	1	1	1	*
Financial support	1	1	1	1	*
Players training academy	0	1	1	1	*
Government investments	1	0	0	0	*
Issuing permits and licenses for construction and operation	1	1	1	1	*
Sport Tourism	0	1	1	1	*
Assignment of clubs	0	1	1	1	*
Shareholding of fans and beneficiaries	0	0	0	0	*
Development of international policies	0	1	1	1	*
Establishing sustainable relationships in human resources	0	1	1	1	*
Creating a work environment with quality human resources	0	1	1	1	*
Human resource support	1	0	0	0	*

Data reduction and combination were used to check the accuracy of the research results and the adequacy of the conditions and causes of the events. The reduction and combination of data leads to the calibration of the research process. This was done by adaptive design specialists. Therefore, the items with similarity as well as value share of 1 and 0 were merged

or removed in the comparative plan. Therefore, the reliability of the test can be done by removing the disagreements of all the items under review. Therefore, in Table No. 2, the events and conditions for the realization of financial management were presented in a refined form.

**Table 2. The results of the occurrence rate of the event with the relevant conditions in the selected countries**

Events	Consequences						Conditions				
	Iran's relative share	The amount of agreement /Percentage	Selected comparative cases			IOC	D	C	B	A	
			IRAN	JAPAN	Commonwealth Nations						Political-legal-human
Environmental education in the context of sports	NO	75%	0	1	1	1				*	
Use of renewable energy in green sports structures and facilities	NO	75%	0	1	1	1				*	
Support and environmental activities of fans and sports lovers	NO	75%	0	1	1	1				*	
Environmentally friendly transportation systems	NO	75%	0	1	1	1				*	
Sustainable waste and sports waste disposal systems	NO	75%	0	1	1	1				*	
Safety and security measures in the field of sports	YES	100%	1	1	1	1				*	
Improving health and mental health in sports fans and beneficiaries and the general public	NO	75%	0	1	1	1				*	
Strengthening gender equality in terms of balanced presence of women and men in sports	NO	75%	0	1	1	1				*	
Promoting cultural issues	YES	75%	1	0	1	1				*	
Fighting discrimination	NO	75%	0	1	1	1				*	
Spreading social responsibility	NO	75%	0	1	1	1				*	
Increasing social participation and volunteering	YES	100%	1	1	1	1				*	
Improving social capital and creating social networks	YES	100%	1	1	1	1				*	
Vitality of society	YES	100%	1	1	1	1				*	
Creating national and local identity	YES	100%	1	1	1	1				*	
Employment and entrepreneurship	NO	75%	0	1	1	1		*			



Holding events and festivals	NO	75%	0	1	1	1	*
ticket sales	YES	100%	1	1	1	1	*
paying tax	YES	100%	1	1	1	1	*
Transfer of players	YES	100%	1	1	1	1	*
Advertising and marketing	NO	75%	0	1	1	1	*
Professionalization and privatization of sports	NO	75%	0	1	1	1	*
TV broadcasting rights	NO	75%	0	1	1	1	*
Financial support	YES	100%	1	1	1	1	*
Players training academy	NO	75%	0	1	1	1	*
Sport Tourism	NO	75%	0	1	1	1	*
Assignment of clubs	NO	75%	0	1	1	1	*
Development of international policies	NO	75%	0	1	1	1	*
Establishing sustainable relationships in human resources	NO	75%	0	1	1	1	*
Creating a work environment with quality human resources	NO	75%	0	1	1	1	*
Human resource support	NO	75%	0	1	1	1	*

**Table 3. Table of value of necessary conditions according to sustainable sports development events**

Composite writing in Boolean Formula	Consequences		Necessary causal conditions			
	In IRAN		D	C	B	A
Abcd	not achieved		Environmental education in the context of sports			
Abcd	not achieved		Use of renewable energy through green sports structures and facilities			
Abcd	not achieved		Support and environmental activities of fans and sports lovers			
Abcd	not achieved		Environmentally friendly transportation systems			
Abcd	not achieved		Sustainable waste and sports waste disposal systems			
aBcd	not achieved		Improving health and mental health in sports fans and beneficiaries and the general public			
aBcd	not achieved		Strengthening gender equality in terms of balanced presence of women and men in sports			
aBcd	not achieved		Fighting discrimination			
aBcd	not achieved		Spreading social responsibility			
abCd	not achieved		Employment and entrepreneurship			
abCd	not achieved		Holding events and festivals			
abCd	not achieved		TV broadcasting rights			
abCd	not achieved		Players training academy			
abCd	not achieved		Sport Tourism			
abCd	not achieved		Assignment of clubs			
abcD	not achieved		Development of international policies			
abcD	not achieved		Establishing sustainable relationships in human resources			
abcD	not achieved		Creating a work environment with quality human resources			

abcD	not achieved	Human resource support
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= in the separation factor of all events in the necessary condition = Boolean's general formula in research

$$Abcd + aBcd + abCd + abcD$$

Then

In the combination factor of all the events in the necessary conditions =  $5(A) + 4(B) + 6(C) + 4(D)$

As it can be seen from the results, the necessary conditions that are expected for the realization of financial management in Iran were formulated as above. In this formula, financial support, financial resources from outside the country, and public funding in sports are necessary conditions for the realization of financial management in Iran. These conditions have been fulfilled in selected countries, but it is necessary to fulfill them in Iran.

**Table 4. Table of Boly value of sufficient conditions according to sustainable sports development events**

Composite writing in Boolean Formula	episode		Sufficient causal conditions		
	IN IRAN	D	C	in Iran	A
aBcd	accomplished		Safety and security measures in the field of sports		
aBcd	accomplished		Promoting cultural issues		
aBcd	accomplished		Increasing social participation and volunteering		
aBcd	accomplished		Improving social capital and creating social networks		
aBcd	accomplished		Vitality of society		
aBcd	accomplished		Creating national and local identity		
abCd	accomplished				ticket sales
abCd	accomplished				paying tax
abCd	accomplished				Transfer of players
abCd	accomplished				Financial support

According to the separation factor of all events in the sufficient condition = Boole's general formula in research =  $A'bcd + abC'$

then

The combination factor of all events in sufficient conditions =  $6(A') + 4(B')$

**Discussion**

The current research was carried out with the Boolean algebra approach. In this research, 19 necessary causal conditions and 10 sufficient causal conditions were discovered as the necessities for the realization of sustainable sports development in Iranian football clubs. The research is according to the conducted researches, for example, Absalimov (2015) found in a research entitled the impact of major

cultural and sports events on sustainable urban development that holding international cultural and sports events has beneficial effects on sustainable urban development, especially its economic development. The city has (Absalyamov, 2015). Niko Skolinkorf (2012) in a research titled sustainable social development through green sports venues and sports events, found that non-governmental and governmental sports organizations, by building sports projects and events, improve the social development of society compared to previous decades. Have increased especially in newly developed societies, sport has caused more participation and cooperation within the society (Schulenkorf, 2012). Xavier and his colleagues (2014) introduce the most important role of sports events in attracting tourists and media

coverage. In addition, player transfers, issuing coaches, selling tickets, advertising sports fields, creating sports facilities and facilities, betting and attracting financial sponsors, which are among other achievements of sports events as the main product of this industry. , can also be mentioned (17). According to the presented discussion, the results of the present research regarding the social dimension (sub-cultural component), green sports grounds, development of the social dimension of tourism, ticket sales, transfers of players, sponsors with the research of Absalimov (2015), Skolinkorf (2012) and Javier Et al. (2015) is consistent and consistent. Of course, it should be said that the research in the field of sports was not compatible with the current research in terms of the human and political dimension. This is one of the limitations of the present research. Also, this research result in this dimension will be a research background for other researchers. As from the Boolean formulas, the research showed that there are few sufficient conditions for the realization of sustainable sports development in Iran's football clubs. This means that the sustainable development of sports in various dimensions is less implemented in Iran. In this way, the conditions that need to be implemented were also high, and this confirms that the field of sustainable sports development as a macro-policy is mandatory according to international macro-policies. But it should also be said that the need to realize this is to pay special attention to the Islamic culture of Iran. Therefore, as a research proposal, it should be said that this platform should be researched in the form of Islamic culture. In this case of cultural dimensions of our society, there can be some constraints based on religious believes. The results of that, cause feeling discriminations in society groups especially in Iran women.

It should be said that the development of sports in today's world is one of the fruitful ways to achieve lofty goals in various dimensions of

development for the statesmen of advanced countries. The proposal from the research can be presented according to the goals of sustainable sports development and the results of the current research, saying that Iran Football Federation and related organizations should first of all plan on handing over the clubs. This can help to develop the infrastructure and build the image of the clubs and attract financial sponsors to the clubs. Therefore, they can help sports tourism by holding small and large football events. Therefore, the development of sports infrastructure will boost sports tourism. Also, in the use of sports facilities, sports clubs can model the use of green structures and facilities, the advanced waste disposal systems of world-famous clubs, and make football clubs sustainable. The country's football policy makers can adapt the findings of the research to the goals of the International Olympic Committee and the World Football Federation and use the policies of these organizations in line with the goals of the research. Among the other solutions emerging from the research, we can mention the growth and development of players and their transfer in a systemic way, which is a suitable model of economic stability in leading countries. The use of volunteers is a stable human resource that always has many economic and human benefits.

## Conclusion

In conclusion, There are a number of organizational (e.g. size, type, stage in life cycle, etc.) and contextual conditions (e.g. governing structures, alliances, types of pressures, etc.) that have been identified in the context of sport; however, qualitatively exploring and quantitatively confirming the existence and weighting of such factors are of interest. The organizational conditions could be further explored and could answer the questions related to the level of impact of various organizational characteristics have on responsiveness, capacity and capability to

manage environmental sustainability demands.

The same could be explored for general typologies of other forces on the movement across waves, such as government and market types (e.g. capitalist, socialist, commonwealth, free trade markets, etc.) in conjunction with the diffusion elements (e.g. innovation, time, social system and communication) that facilitate such movements (Werner, 2002).

Much like legislation and governance mechanisms have done for issue such as race and gender equity, it is believed the waves can bring various threads of ideology, theory and practice together in order to outline a clearer environmental pathway for sport personnel to follow. The literature discussed environmental efforts in terms of CSR practices (in addition to economic ones) and improved fan engagement, especially in relation to improving their lives through sport fandom and participation (Kellison and Hong 2015; McCullough & Cunningham, 2010).

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