

Applied Research of Sport Management

Vol. 14(2), (Series 54): 23-40/ 2025

 Doi: 10.30473/ARSM.2024.70550.3862

P-ISSN: 2538-5879 E-ISSN: 2345-5551

ORIGINAL ARTICLE

Identifying the Consequences of Using the Capacity of Donors in the Development of the Country's Sports Infrastructure

Hossein Kordloo¹, Abbas Naghizadeh-Baghi², Farzad Nobakht³, Mehrdad Moharramzadeh⁴

1. Ph.D Student, Department of Sport Management, Faculty of Educational Science and Psychology, University of Mohaghegh Ardabili, Ardabil, Iran.

2. Associate Professor, Department of Sport Management, Faculty of Educational Sciences and Psychology, University of Mohaghegh Ardabili, Ardabil, Iran.

3. Associate Professor, Department of Sport Management, Faculty of Educational Sciences and Psychology, University of Mohaghegh Ardabili, Ardabil, Iran.

4. Professor, Department of Sports Management, Faculty of Psychology and Educational Sciences, University of Mohaghegh Ardabili, Ardabil, Iran.

*Correspondence

Hossein Kordloo

E-mail: hkordl@gmail.com

Receive Date: 09/Feb/2024

Accept Date: 14/May/2024

Published Online: 02/Mar/2025

How to cite

Kordloo, H., Naghizadeh-Baghi, A., Nobakht, F. & Moharramzadeh, M. (2025). Identifying the consequences of using the capacity of donors in the development of the country's sports infrastructure. *Applied Research of Sport Management*, 14(2), 23-40.

EXTENDED A B S T R A C T

Introduction

Sport is a cornerstone of physical and mental well-being, significantly enhancing quality of life and fostering social empowerment across diverse communities. In modern societies, where industrialization has led to increasingly sedentary lifestyles, sport serves as a critical countermeasure to physical inactivity, reducing the prevalence of chronic diseases such as obesity, diabetes, and cardiovascular conditions, while promoting overall health and vitality (Rezaei et al., 2020). Beyond individual benefits, sports contribute to societal development by creating inclusive environments that encourage community engagement, social cohesion, and cultural unity, particularly in diverse populations. The availability and quality of sports infrastructure-encompassing facilities, equipment, and accessible public spaces-are pivotal for enabling physical activities, hosting competitive events, and expanding sports participation across various societal groups, including youth, women, and marginalized communities (Pedram et al., 2021). High-quality sports infrastructure not only enhances athletic performance but also motivates individuals to adopt regular physical activity, thereby cultivating a culture of health, wellness, and active living (Augustin & Mois, 2023). In Iran, however, the development of sports infrastructure faces significant challenges due to constrained public funding. Government budgets alone are often insufficient to meet the growing demand for sports facilities, necessitating innovative and alternative financing mechanisms to address this gap (Amiri-Parian et al., 2019). Among these, private sponsorships and philanthropy have emerged as critical strategies to support sports development (Afshari et al., 2018). Philanthropists, defined as individuals or entities who invest in sports infrastructure without expecting financial returns, play a pivotal role in this context. Their contributions, often rooted in altruistic motives and deeply ingrained cultural values such as *waqf* (endowment), facilitate the construction, equipping, and upgrading of sports facilities, addressing infrastructural deficiencies and promoting equitable access to sports opportunities across urban and rural areas (Khadem, 2019; Yaghoubi et al., 2019). The involvement of philanthropists aligns with Iran's historical tradition of supporting public services through charitable acts, enhancing both the physical landscape of sports and community participation in sports-related initiatives (Palmer, 2019). Existing literature underscores the multifaceted impacts of sports infrastructure development, including economic growth, social unity, improved public health, and enhanced community resilience (Mustafina et al., 2018; Ruchani et al., 2021). For instance, Hanza et al. (2012) advocate for balanced approaches that integrate municipal ownership with private financial support to optimize resource allocation, while Akwasam (2021) identifies eight key benefits of sports investment for economic development in developing nations, emphasizing the need for robust institutions, good governance, and effective policies. In the Iranian context, studies such as Majidi-Parast et al. (2021) highlight the importance of integrated management, public participation, media engagement, and cultural promotion to maximize the effectiveness of

philanthropists' contributions to sports infrastructure. Despite these insights, there remains a significant gap in comprehensively understanding the consequences of leveraging philanthropists' capacity in sports infrastructure development, particularly within Iran's unique socio-cultural and economic context. This study aims to address this gap by systematically identifying the economic, social, health, and sports-related outcomes of utilizing philanthropists' contributions. By exploring these consequences, the research seeks to provide actionable insights for policymakers, sports managers, and philanthropists to develop targeted strategies for sports infrastructure development, ultimately contributing to national health, social cohesion, economic growth, and the promotion of a vibrant sports culture in Iran.

Methodology

This study adopted a qualitative, exploratory research design, utilizing thematic analysis to investigate the consequences of leveraging philanthropists' capacity in the development of sports infrastructure in Iran. The research population comprised sports experts, managers, philanthropists actively engaged in sports development and university professors with expertise in sports philanthropy. Participants were selected through purposive and snowball sampling techniques to ensure the inclusion of individuals with relevant knowledge and experience. Theoretical saturation was achieved after conducting 22 semi-structured, in-depth interviews, indicating that no new themes emerged from additional data collection. Data were collected through a combination of note-taking and audio recording, with explicit consent obtained from participants to ensure ethical compliance. A preliminary set of open-ended interview questions was developed based on the research objectives and a comprehensive review of the literature. These questions were shared with participants prior to the interviews to facilitate preparation. Each interview commenced with demographic questions to contextualize participants' backgrounds, followed by core research questions exploring the impacts of philanthropists' contributions. Interviews concluded with an open-ended question (e.g., "Is there anything else you think we should discuss?") to capture additional insights. The duration of interviews ranged from 20 to 35 minutes, depending on the depth of responses. Data analysis followed a three-stage thematic analysis process: (1) transcription of interviews, initial coding, and identification of preliminary themes; (2) development of a thematic network through mapping and interpretation; and (3) synthesis and reporting of findings. To ensure the rigor of the study, Lincoln and Guba's (1985) criteria for qualitative research—credibility, transferability, and dependability—were applied. Credibility was enhanced through standardized interview protocols, triangulation of data sources (e.g., cross-referencing participant responses with existing literature), and iterative review of transcripts to ensure consistency. Dependability was assessed using intra-coder agreement, where the researcher collaborated with a doctoral student in statistics trained in coding techniques. Three interviews were independently coded by both, and the intra-coder agreement percentage was calculated using the formula: $(2 \times \text{Number of Agreements} / \text{Total Codes}) \times 100$, yielding an overall reliability of 80%, which exceeds the acceptable threshold of 60% (Stemler, 2001). Transferability was supported by detailed descriptions of the research context, participant characteristics, and methodological processes, enabling readers to assess the applicability of findings to other settings. The thematic analysis resulted in the identification of 49 sub-themes, organized into nine secondary themes and four main themes: economic development, social development, health development, and sports development.

Findings

The thematic analysis identified 49 sub-themes, categorized into four main themes: economic development, social development, health development, and sports development. **Economic Development** included sub-themes such as economic growth (frequency: 10), job creation (12), investment attraction (2), sports tourism development (3), and reduced income inequality (1). Participants emphasized that sports infrastructure development fosters job opportunities, boosts local economies, and enhances per capita income through increased sports-related activities. For instance, one participant noted that sports facilities attract tourists, contributing to economic vitality in urban and rural areas. **Social Development** encompassed three secondary themes: social capital (e.g., improved social relations, frequency: 10; social cohesion, 2), national unity (e.g., social security, 3; national unity, 3), and healthy society (e.g., healthy leisure time, 7; community health, 21). Interviewees highlighted that philanthropists' contributions strengthen social bonds, reduce deviant behaviors, and foster a sense of community and national pride. **Health Development** comprised physical health (e.g., increased sports participation, 5; improved physical fitness, 9), mental health (e.g., enhanced quality of life, 7; reduced depression, 3), and social health (e.g., reduced delinquency, 9; addiction prevention, 4). Participants noted that accessible sports facilities improve physical and mental well-being, reduce healthcare costs, and promote healthier

lifestyles. **Sports Development** included championship sports (e.g., talent identification, 4), infrastructure development (e.g., construction of sports halls, 11; facility upgrades, 4), and sports culture promotion (e.g., encouraging sports participation, 10). The findings suggest that philanthropists' investments significantly enhance sports infrastructure, promote a sports-oriented culture, and support talent development. Direct quotes from participants underscored these impacts, such as the role of sports facilities in reducing social issues, fostering economic growth through tourism, and creating opportunities for youth engagement. The results indicate that leveraging philanthropists' capacity transforms sports infrastructure into a catalyst for economic, social, health, and sports-related advancements in Iran, with far-reaching implications for national development.

Discussion and Conclusion

The findings of this study reveal that utilizing philanthropists' capacity in sports infrastructure development yields profound and multifaceted benefits across economic, social, health, and sports-related dimensions, offering transformative potential for Iran's sports ecosystem. **Economic Development** is significantly advanced through job creation, increased per capita income, sports tourism, and reduced income disparities, aligning with findings by Palmer (2019) and Madhu & Kesava Murthy (2023). These efforts stimulate local economies by generating direct and indirect employment opportunities, such as those in construction and sports-related services, while sports tourism attracts visitors, boosting regional economies. Additionally, enhanced access to sports facilities reduces economic inequalities by providing opportunities for underserved communities, aligning with Akwasam's (2021) emphasis on equitable development. **Social Development** is strengthened through enhanced social capital, national unity, and healthier communities, corroborating studies by Deldadeh-Mehraban et al. (2021) and Yaghoubi et al. (2019). Philanthropists' contributions foster social cohesion by creating inclusive spaces for community interaction, reducing social issues like delinquency, and promoting a sense of national pride and unity, particularly in Iran's diverse socio-cultural context. **Health Development** is bolstered by improved physical and mental health outcomes, as accessible sports facilities encourage active lifestyles, enhance physical fitness, and reduce healthcare costs, as supported by Karami et al. (2021). Moreover, sports participation fosters mental well-being by reducing stress and depression, contributing to a higher quality of life. **Sports Development** benefits from enhanced infrastructure, talent identification, and the promotion of a sports-oriented culture, aligning with findings by Amiri-Parian et al. (2019) and Yangsen et al. (2023). The development of modern sports facilities enables talent scouting, improves athletic training environments, and encourages widespread participation, fostering both grassroots and competitive sports. However, challenges such as ensuring sustainable funding, effective resource management, and alignment with government policies require careful consideration to maximize impact. Policymakers should develop targeted strategies, including regulatory reforms to streamline philanthropists' contributions, public awareness campaigns to highlight the societal benefits of sports philanthropy, and recognition initiatives such as cultural festivals or media coverage to honor philanthropists' efforts. These measures can foster a culture of sports philanthropy and encourage broader participation. Furthermore, collaboration between philanthropists, government bodies, and local communities is essential to ensure equitable distribution of resources and sustainable development of sports infrastructure. This study underscores the need for integrated policies to align philanthropists' activities with national sports development goals, ensuring long-term, sustainable, and equitable outcomes. By fostering such collaborations and implementing supportive frameworks, Iran can leverage philanthropists' contributions to achieve significant advancements in sports infrastructure, public health, social cohesion, and economic prosperity, positioning sports as a catalyst for national development.

KEY WORDS

Consequences, Donor Capacity, Development, Sports Infrastructure.

