

ORIGINAL ARTICLE**Challenges of Using Blockchain Technology in Drafting Football Contracts: A Qualitative Analysis**Mohammad Reza Ghanavati¹, Seyed Ehsan Amirhosseini^{*2}, Farhad Rad³, Reza Nikbakhsh⁴

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EXTENDED A B S T R A C T**Introduction**

A sports contract consists of the club and the player as the parties to the contract, and the player's commitment to apply skills, techniques, physical and mental strength in competitions and training, and the club's commitment to pay wages as the subject of the contract. The commercialization of sports is inevitable, and authorities and stakeholders must take measures to adapt the structure of sports to business. Because the abundant economic benefits that come from investing in sports activities have led capitalists and owners of industry and wealth to increasingly move towards this profitable market (Palganeh, 2018).

Therefore, one of the important problems in the field of sports is the damages that are caused to the sports community, treasury, and international reputation due to the violation of contractual obligations or the termination of contracts in this area, and the lack of necessary transparency has caused problems in the country's sports (Heidari, 2019) he principles governing contract law that apply to sports are not necessarily the principles governing all contracts. A sports contract is an anonymous or indefinite contract and its acceptance is prescribed by Article 10 of the Civil Code, but the reality turned out differently and Article 10 of the Civil Code did not reach it, because whenever the constituent elements of a contract are compatible with one of the definite contracts; it will be an instance of that definite contract and no more anonymous or indefinite contracts will be the case. Smart contracts are simply programs that are stored on a blockchain and are executed if predetermined conditions are met. They are usually used to automate the execution of an agreement so that all participants can be assured of the outcome immediately, without the intervention of an intermediary or wasting time (Hiva, 2021). Smart contracts can automate a workflow and initiate the next action if conditions are met (Zhang, 2022).

These actions can include releasing funds to the relevant parties, registering a vehicle, sending a notification, or issuing a ticket. Once the transaction is completed, the blockchain is updated. This means that the transaction cannot be changed and only parties who have been granted permission can see the results (Kumar, 2022) Given the importance of sports contracts in football, the principles and standards governing them are not used in all aspects of professional sports today. However, initial studies show that in Iranian professional football, the principles and standards governing sports contracts do not have a proper and clear place. A smart contract can exist as many times as needed to satisfy the participants

that the work will be done satisfactorily. To create conditions, participants must determine how their transactions and data will be displayed on the blockchain, based on the rules of “if/when.then.» that govern those transactions, review all possible exceptions, and define a framework for resolving disputes (Koshvaha, 2022). Bradbury (2022), in his research aimed at global trends in contract reform, found after his studies that the growth of economic crimes at the international level has led to efforts by regulatory organizations to promote and improve management of contracts between parties with the help of technology. Therefore, the purpose of the present study Challenges of using blockchain technology in drafting football contracts: A qualitative analysis.

Methodology

The present research method was qualitative and the research design was data-based. In-depth interviews with experts were used to collect data. The statistical population of the research consisted of senior managers of the Football Federation and managers of the country's football clubs. Which was a purposive sampling method. For this purpose, 19 senior managers of the Football Federation and managers of the country's football clubs were identified as the research sample. Sampling continued in each section until theoretical saturation was reached. Qualitative data was analyzed through the coding process. In this research, first, the interviews were coded paragraph by paragraph. Then, primary concepts were extracted from these codes, and in the second stage, secondary concepts were obtained from the primary concepts. In the focused coding stage, secondary codes were obtained and major categories and concepts were discovered and classified. In the second stage, which is called axial coding. Next, the main categories obtained in the open coding stage are divided into the general model framework as the categories of conditions (causal, contextual and intervening conditions), strategy (process/interactional) and consequences, and the relationships between them are obtained.

All stages of the research have been supervised and controlled by experts. Also, a management expert familiar with the concept of the sports contract problem analysis model with blockchain was also consulted. In this research, by documenting the extracted concepts and controlling the research participants, an attempt was made to show that the present findings are reflected impartially and fairly.

Findings

In the present study, manual coding was performed and by studying the collected materials, an attempt was made to harmonize the initial codes. In this study, 15 samples were interviewed until theoretical saturation was reached. By conducting interviews with these individuals, the researcher and the research team determined that the collected information had reached a saturation point and that there was no need to conduct further interviews. The results obtained from identifying the analysis of sports contracts problems with blockchain showed that the initial concepts of the study included 73 concepts, which were grouped into 16 categories. In the next step, the themes that were presented for analysis were defined and reviewed again, and the data were analyzed within them. By defining and examining, the form of what a theme discusses is determined and it is determined which aspect of the data each theme contains. Finally, the results showed that the main concepts of the present study included 4 main themes, which were grouped under the main theme of the study, which was analyzing the problems of sports contracts with blockchain: a case study of football sports contracts in the country

Discussion and Conclusion

The results showed that the initial research concepts included 73 concepts, which were grouped into 16 categories. Finally, the results showed that the main concepts of the present study included 4 main themes. These concepts include legal and legal, technical and technological, financial and economic, and social and cultural. Blockchain is recognized as a powerful tool for improving transparency and

security in football contracts. However, legal and legal challenges related to validity, enforcement, and property rights prevent the full adoption of this technology. Peng et al. (2022) have emphasized that blockchain can facilitate transactions and reduce administrative costs. Blockchain as a new technology can help improve transparency, security and efficiency in football contracts, but its numerous technical and technological challenges, including scalability, security and privacy, property rights and compatibility with existing systems, prevent the widespread adoption of this technology. Krall et al. (2018).

The use of blockchain can help streamline tax processes, as all transactions are accurately recorded and can be easily accessed by tax authorities. However, there is a need to adjust and update tax laws to adapt to new technologies have examined the security and privacy challenges in blockchain in a study and proposed solutions to improve these aspects. In the social and cultural dimension, the acceptance of blockchain technology depends on public awareness and education. In summary, the success of blockchain implementation in the football industry requires a multidimensional and comprehensive approach. This approach should include interaction and cooperation between all stakeholders, including leagues, clubs, regulatory bodies and the media. It is also important to create appropriate educational and cultural platforms to increase public awareness and build trust. The use of blockchain can help facilitate tax processes, as all transactions are accurately recorded and can be easily accessed by tax authorities.

However, there is a need to adjust and update tax laws to adapt to new technologies. Ultimately, it can be said that blockchain can be an effective tool to improve the financial and economic situation of football contracts. However, there are significant challenges in the areas of costs, financial transparency, economic sustainability, and tax and regulatory issues that need to be addressed. To overcome these challenges, close cooperation between clubs, regulatory bodies, and tax systems is needed to find effective solutions to these issues. In addition, there is a need to change and update tax laws and regulations related to new technologies to best exploit the benefits of blockchain. Ultimately, the future of football contracts with blockchain depends on the industry's ability to embrace change and adapt to new technologies. According to the results of the present study on the importance of individual issues in the factors affecting the development of blockchain technology in Iranian football, it is suggested that by holding training courses to improve the technical and practical knowledge of people involved in sports regarding blockchain technology, it is proposed to provide a basis for improving individual knowledge in this regard. It is suggested that by comprehensively covering sports contracts at all levels and groups using blockchain technology, it is proposed to provide a basis for the presence of all people in the field of blockchain technology. It is suggested that by creating committees and specialized departments to form blockchain technology infrastructures, it is proposed to provide conditions for utilizing all the capacities of sports in this direction.

KEY WORDS

Sports contracts, Blockchain, Football References.

