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ORIGINAL ARTICLE

Identifying the Factors Affecting the Open Policy of Public Sports in Iran with Emphasis on Good Governance

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EXTENDED A B S T R A C T

Introduction

In today's world, development is a key concept frequently addressed in political, sociological, economic, and cultural studies, serving as a factor that distinguishes nations and regions. The primary goal of development is to enhance the standard and quality of life for the population (Ghadiri Masoom, 2000). Meanwhile, sport constitutes a fundamental pillar of political, economic, social, and cultural activities and planning; as a cultural domain, it is regarded as a beneficial social phenomenon that profoundly influences national development (Ghaedi et al, 2015). Consequently, policymaking behind closed doors is no longer adequate for current conditions; concerns regarding the consequences of such practices have spurred the emergence of new approaches to policymaking and governance—one of which is the concept of "open policymaking." The aim of the present study was to identify the factors influencing open policymaking in Iran's recreational sports sector, with an emphasis on good governance.

Mothodology

This study is exploratory-applied in nature and qualitative in methodology. Data analysis employed the Grounded Theory approach (Strauss and Corbin method), and data collection was conducted through interviews. To assess reliability, inter-coder agreement was utilized; a PhD student in Sports Management served as a research collaborator for the coding process. The study population consisted of experts possessing academic and/or executive expertise in sports management. Participants—including headquarters-level managers from the Ministry of Sport and Youth, the Sports for All Federation, and faculty members—were selected via purposive sampling to engage in in-depth, semi-structured interviews and share their views on the research questions. Sampling continued until data saturation was reached, resulting in the participation of 15 individuals in the qualitative phase. Grounded Theory was employed to analyze the interviews; this method comprises three stages. In the first stage—open

coding—initial open codes were generated by analyzing the interview transcripts; 340 initial codes were derived from the 15 interviews, which were subsequently refined by consolidating similar codes to yield 170 final open codes. In the second stage—axial coding—all final open codes were reviewed and compared against the existing research literature. Finally, in the third stage—selective coding—eight core codes were identified.

Findings

As shown in Figure 1, the core phenomenon is legislation and policymaking; the researcher has identified this category as the central emerging concept. Given that the present study examines the design of an open policymaking model for recreational sports in Iran—with an emphasis on good governance—the analysis of collected data revealed a causal relationship: inter-sectoral cooperation drives the creation and development of the core phenomenon. Consequently, inter-sectoral cooperation—along with its associated attributes (such as identifying partner institutions and agencies, analyzing key stakeholders regarding impact and commitment, harmonizing concepts to create a shared lexicon, and developing joint implementation plans)—was designated as a causal condition. Strategies include: reforming the recreational sports structure (timely provision of implementation infrastructure for policymakers, restructuring sports policymaking bodies, and improving the attitudes of government managers at various levels) and networking (capacity building for organizations and sports-governing bodies, knowledge transfer, inter-sectoral cooperation processes, and networking for experience sharing). The prevailing context encompasses technology and social media (active technology-based systems, content design strategies, content integration, technical requirements, and social feedback channels). Consequences include implementation-related outcomes (timely provision of implementation infrastructure for policymakers, restructuring sports policymaking bodies, and improving the attitudes of government managers at various levels).

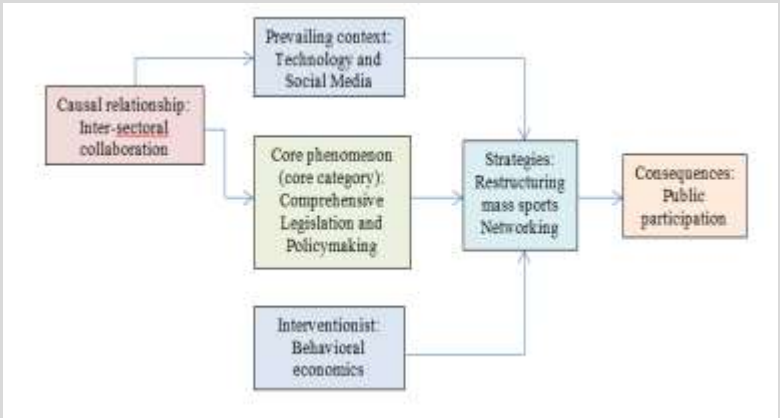

Figure 1. Grounded theory model of open policymaking for recreational sports in Iran, with an emphasis on governance.

Discussion and Conclusion

Based on the identified factors influencing policymaking for recreational sports in Iran-with an emphasis on good governance-—the following measures are proposed: networking and developing active national and provincial networks in the recreational sports sector; expanding incentives for private sector investment; moving beyond the short-sighted view of the

private sector merely as a financial sponsor by addressing its needs and designing win-win partnership programs; establishing planned, inter-sectoral cooperation; adopting interactive (rather than one-way) policymaking; effectively incorporating public and key stakeholder feedback into the policy process and remaining open to policy adjustments based on that input; transparently communicating the policymaking process; fostering public satisfaction through inclusive policymaking; leveraging modern technologies—particularly social media-to facilitate knowledge and experience exchange, joint initiatives, and resource sharing; and strengthening approaches focused on an "active society" (improving public attitudes and awareness regarding regular physical activity), an "active population" (designing effective events at national, regional, provincial, and local levels tailored to audience needs), an "active environment" (improving urban design and sports infrastructure, emphasizing affordable and accessible facilities), and an "active system" (fostering synergy and enhanced inter-sectoral cooperation).

K E Y W O R D S
Open Policy-Making, Good Governance, Public Participation, Cross-Sectoral Cooperation.

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