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STRATEGIES FOR SPORTS DEVELOPMENT IN IRANIAN POLICE FORCE: AN EMPLOYEE AND EXPERT PERSPECTIVE

***Safiye Sahragard, Hamid Sadjadi Hezaveh and Farideh Ashraf Ganjouei**

*Department of Physical Education and Sport Sciences, Central Tehran Branch,
Islamic Azad University, Tehran, Iran*

**Author for Correspondence*

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this research was to provide strategies for sports development in the Law Enforcement Force of Iran (Iranian Police Force) from the perspective of its employees and experts. The population consisted of all the sports employees and experts of Iranian Police Force with at least five years of experience (N = 1500). Based on Morgan's table and using accidental sampling, 306 individuals were selected as the sample. However, only 188 valid questionnaires were returned. Data were collected using a questionnaire with 52 items that measured 6 components, i.e. educational, economic, structural, management, championship, and human resource strategies). The content validity of the instrument was verified by 10 experts and Cronbach's alpha was used to determine its reliability. Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test, one-sample t-test, and Friedman test. The results showed the significant positive effect of educational, economic, structural, management, and cultural strategies and human resource on development of sports. The participants ranked championship strategies as the most important priority and educational strategies as the least important priority. Implications for practice and research are provided.

Keywords: *Sports, Development, Strategies*

INTRODUCTION

Today sport can be seen in different forms, including educational, public, recreational, and professional sports. Sports and physical education are crucial to physical and mental health and strategies are needed to develop sports in all its forms. Sports development strategies have been underlined in Iran's national development plans. Law Enforcement Force of Iran is responsible for establishing order and security in the society. Providing sporting opportunities for serving police officers can contribute to their health and that of the society. Thus, proper planning and a broader perspective are required to develop police sports in the country.

Sports developments an important part of economic, social, cultural, and political development plans in most countries. Sports can enhance wellbeing and productivity (Hardy, 2014). It can also help people overcome physical and mental stress (Karimi, 2014). This is especially useful for police officers who are faced with grave responsibilities and critical tasks. It is their job to establish order and security in the society, which are critical factors underlying economic, social, and cultural development (Salehi, 2013). Therefore, police officers must participate in special training to enhance their physical and mental health as well as their performance (Ghasemi, 2009).

Today organizations must constantly monitor internal and external events in order to keep up with changes. Organizations need to identify these changes and adapt to them. Sudden intuitive decisions have no place in today's fast-changing environment. Thus, successful organizations are those that make the best use of strategic management. Strategic management involves formulating and implementing the goals and initiatives taken by an organization's top management based on consideration of resources and an assessment of the internal and external environments (David, 2007). Many scholars have examined strategic planning and its different aspects (Kaplan and Beinbocker, 2003), and they all agree on the positive relationship between strategic planning and improved organizational performance. Planning is a dynamic and rational process (Lerner, 2002). Since the late 1950s and the increase in globalization, planning for sports has become a major challenge for governments (Houlihan, 1994).

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Developing the right policies requires an analysis of economic, management, human resource, and structural strategies (Afrasyabi, 2014). Malekahmadi (2013) examined the process of strategic planning in Iran Hockey Federation using SWOT analysis and AHP. The results showed that medals won in Asian championships, in sufficient information about hockey, and poor financial structure were the main factors influencing the development of hockey.

In its Girls' and Women's Football Plan (2014-2018), Irish Football Association (IFA) identified the strategies for developing girl's and women's football, including seeking additional sources of funding and sponsorship, developing an integrated marketing, seeking government support, establishing specialist football schools, supporting the participation of people with disability and ethnic minorities, creating a healthy domestic game, collaborating with universities to develop evidence-based programs, increasing the number of players, coaches, administrators, referees and volunteers, and systematic talent identification.

In its strategic plan for women's football development, the Royal Dutch Football Association (2015) ranked management strategies as the most important priority, followed by educational and financial strategies which included training, workshops, cooperation with universities, holding different sporting events and tournaments, and sponsorship.

Also the International Olympics Committee (2015) listed management, structural, and cultural factors as the driving forces in sports development. Holding sporting events was considered an effective educational tool to develop sports in the host country.

The purpose of this research was to derive strategies for sports development in Iranian Police Force from the views of its employees and experts.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Methods

This research was a descriptive concurrent study. The population consisted of 1500 sports employees and experts of the Law Enforcement Force of Iran (Iranian Police Force). Using accidental sampling and Morgan's table, 100 employees and 88 experts were selected as the sample. Data was collected using a 52-item questionnaire that measured 6 components, i.e. educational, economic, structural, management, championship, and human resource strategies. Demographic data was recorded using the same questionnaire.

The validity of the instrument was verified by 10 experts in the area of sports development, and Cronbach's alpha was used to measure its reliability ($\alpha = 0/71$). Descriptive statistics, Kolmogorov-Smirnov test, one-sample t-test, and Friedman test.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

Descriptive Statistics

The demographic data showed that 12.3% of the participants were less than 25 years old, 43% were between 26 and 32 years old, 25.5% were between 33 and 39 years old, and 19.3% were more than 40 years old.

Moreover, 1.6% of the participants had high school education, 29.8% had high school diploma, 41.6% had bachelor's degree, 22.8% had master's degree, and 4.2% had doctoral degree. 46.8% of the participants were experts in the area of sports and 53.2% were sports employees. The descriptive statistics also showed that championship strategies had the highest mean, while educational strategies have the lowest mean.

Inferential Statistics

The results of the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test showed that all the variables were normally distributed. Consequently, one-sample t-test was used to examine the effect of economic, management, championship, structural, educational, and human resource strategies on sports development in Iranian Police Force. The results are provided in Table 1.

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Table 1: The results of one-sample t-test

Strategy	Expected Mean	Observed Mean	t-value	df	Sig.
Human Resource Strategies	3	4.18	32.22	187	0.001
Management Strategies	3	4.11	32.35	187	0.001
Structural Strategies	3	4.23	37.39	187	0.001
Championship Strategies	3	4.23	37.39	187	0.001
Economic Strategies	3	4.2	31.64	187	0.001
Educational Strategies	3	3.89	28.37	187	0.001

Friedman test was used to rank sports development strategies based on their priority (Table 2).

Table 2: The results of Friedman test

N	188
Chi-square	90.64
df	6
Sig.	0.001**

Table 3 shows the ranking of sports development strategies based on the views of sports employees and experts in Iranian Police Force.

Table 3: Mean rank of sports development strategies

Strategies	Mean Ranks
Structural Strategies	4.25
Management Strategies	3.23
Educational Strategies	3.19
Economic Strategies	4.34
Human Resource Strategies	4.08
Championship Strategies	4.87

Based on the results of Friedman test, educational strategies have the least important role and championship strategies have the most important role in sports development in Iranian Police Force.

Discussion and Conclusion

Sports play a significant role in the law enforcement agencies of countries. Police officers need to improve and maintain their physical fitness as well as their physical and mental health given their grave responsibilities and the high-risk, stressful tasks that are assigned to them. Sport can enhance physical and mental health and fitness of police officers (Fathi, 2011). Even the history of sports goes back to military training in ancient times, where soldiers had to be physically fit and healthy to meet army requirements. Also certain sports are rooted in situation in ancient armies and special training or hobbies of soldiers in different weather conditions and with different tools and equipment.

The present research showed that management, championship, economic, structural, educational, and human resource strategies had a significant role in sports development in the Law Enforcement Force of Iran (Iranian Police Force). Our findings are consistent with the results of Malekahmadi (2013), the Royal Dutch Football Association's program for women's sports development (2015), and the International Olympics Committee (2015). It is recommended to provide the sports experts and employees in IRANIAN POLICE FORCE with the opportunity to participate in decision-making and planning on sports development. Adoption of new training methods, psychological counseling, talent identification, and cooperation with other organizations for building champions in different sports are also recommended. Also the views of coaches about standardization of facilities and equipment should be taken into consideration. Future research can examine strategies for sports development in different organizations and different populations.

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