



Women's Career Development in Sport Management A Grounded Theory Approach

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ABSTRACT

Purpose: The tourism industry is one of the most important industries of the new century, which is very dynamic and profitable. Sports tourism is an essential part of this industry. The research aimed to identify and categorize the sports attractions in Iran and to design a development model for the sports tourism industry.

Methodology: The research method was Grounded-Theory, with a systematic approach. The sampling method was theoretical sampling. In addition to studying literature, semi-structured interviews were conducted with 35 experts, including 19 faculty members of Iranian universities and 16 travel and tourism agency professionals, to achieve theoretical saturation.

Findings: In the first part of the research, the results showed that there are 11 types of sports attractions in Iran. The second part of the research showed that identifying and analyzing sports attractions, marketing, planning, and organizing to welcome tourists are the essential measures necessary for developing sports tourism. The development of sports tourism in section tourist welcoming is related to the development of the entire tourism industry and requires investment, planning, and organization. Marketing, providing necessary services, and creating distinct and exciting experiences for tourists and satisfying them are the key variables to success in the development of the industry. All these works require the cooperation and coordination of people and organizations in the sovereign, government, public and private sectors.

Originality: We have identified and categorized the types of sports attractions in Iran and presented a comprehensive development model for the development of the sports tourism industry.

Keywords

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1. Introduction

Women are half of the human resources in any society or organization. However, rare Iranian organizations are striving to make effective use of their full human resource potential. Combining all human resources can realize the valuable gender equality of women and men in attaining a country's development goals. Apart from considerations of democracy and social justice as well as the most efficient use of human resources, female participation in politics, particularly at the highest levels, is vital since it provides representation for another point of view (Jensen, 2008). The poor involvement and sometimes total absence of women in Iranian society is palpable at different intensities. However, the crystal-clear point is that such inequality often manifests in developing countries like other social and cultural realms. Another traditionally male-defined industry is the sports industry. Most certainly, men have dominated the playing fields regarding the number of participants, salaries earned, and media coverage (Hums & Sutton, 1999). There are challenges at different levels. For example, the number of female athletes has increased over the last decade, but the opposite is true of female head coaches nationally and internationally (Culver et al., 2019).

Nevertheless, an awareness of the underrepresentation of women in top positions in the corporate world has prompted many corporations to review their policies and practices (Oakley, 2000). Such inequality will be eliminated, and women will be employed in high-level management only by understanding the problem's details. It should be noted. However, women's participation can only be effective and meaningful when underlying gender power relations are transformed, and attention and support are given to women's specific knowledge and capacities (UNWomen, 2014)¹. As women constitute a minority in leadership positions, the factors that impact their emergence as leaders—success factors and barriers—are essential to understand (Peus et al., 2015). The people in bureaucratic ranks reflect the public's diverse values, racial makeup, socioeconomic backgrounds, and gender (Aguado & Frederickson, 2012). Gender and racial discrimination in organizations are institutionalized at critical stages in the employment process (recruitment and selection, reward systems, working time, equal treatment, training, promotion, redundancy) (Bradley et al., 2004). Personnel systems, approaches, structures, and operations inside organizations have created barriers to equal opportunities. Career development is essential for understanding whether organizations have created equal opportunities for women and men. The dynamic nature of a career may be characterized as 'career development. Popular associations of the term 'career' with promotion and material rewards will provide only partial insight (Bradley et al., 2004). While the issue of career development can be associated with higher material benefits, a promotion in bonuses and benefits per person will not necessarily be considered career development. Career development combines career planning, the individual's responsibility, and career management, which relates to the organization's training and development requirements and initiatives. Career planning is the process that the individual undertakes to assess their strengths and development

¹ United Nations Entity for Gender Equality And The Empowerment Of Women

opportunities relative to the job they are currently performing and the future career that they aspire to (Taylor et al., 2015).

The current reality in the Iranian organizations indicates the low number of women involved in management, whether at the macro or micro scale. (Zahedi, 2007) argued that women and men with comparable conditions have no equal opportunities in the Iranian academic community. She concluded that development and progress plans would not guarantee enforcement no matter how systematically or rationally devised. She believed that weaknesses lay not in the current projects but in putting them into practice and commitment to enforcement. In this sense, Iran has not been performing desirably compared to many other countries worldwide. Iranian women not only barely benefit from employment opportunities equal to men but are also limited in terms of career advancement, which is why there are a handful of female managers in Iranian society. In Iran, it is inevitable to understand women's career development, which has been evaluated to be poor in terms of quality and quantity. Accordingly, this qualitative study attempted to explore career development for women in the Iranian top sports management realm. The statistics indicate dramatic changes internationally. Most recently, the International Olympic Committee (IOC) reported that women in the new makeup of the commissions took up more than a third of the positions, expanding by 60% over the last three years. The IOC had 449 members on the Commission in 2016, of whom 150 were female (International Olympic Committee, 2016).

The researchers obtained reliable information about the involvement of women in middle and senior levels of the Iranian sport by making numerous visits to the Ministry of Sport and Youth. However, they faced an obstacle every time, thus restricting the project in the first place and ultimately preventing reliable data. Nonetheless, an overview of the organizational charts for 51 Iranian sports federations revealed that only two women were involved, one as a federation president and the other as federation secretary. Moreover, there are women engaged in vice-president posts in most federations, even though they were not more than a mere formality, since they have not been given much authority even in women's sports. The involvement of women in the Iranian sport senior positions at the national and provincial levels suggested unfavorable figures, not even amounting to a dozen. This result, in turn, demonstrates the importance of investigating the status quo in the senior management of Iranian sports.

Nowadays, gender inequality can be observed in most areas. Studies indicated that women were detained under a glass ceiling during past eras when unwritten rules blocked women on the road to engagement at high organizational ranks. The male-dominated culture prevailing the society prefers men under identical conditions for men and women; the masculine sports environment (Anderson, 2009; Steinfeldt et al., 2012). Sport management studies have been interested in gender diversity and women's leadership development in recent years. However, women continue to face challenges in sports organizations in developed countries. For example, despite the increased attention on leadership development within the sports industry, organizational gender and leadership development theory has not been applied within an Australian sports framework. In recent studies, participants believed that their organizations had gender policies, but they were unclear or limited in understanding (Banu-Lawrence et al., 2020).

2. Theoretical background

The issue of gender in the work environment can further scrutinize women's career development. We consider each approach as a frame to understand what gender is and why there is inequality between women and men at work. The first and perhaps most common approach to gender equity stems from a liberal strain of political theory, which posits that individuals rise and fall on their own merits. From this perspective, gender is an individual characteristic marked by one's biological category as male or female. Sex-role socialization produces individual differences in attitudes and behaviors between men and women, which have rendered women less skilled than men in competing in business (Ely & Meyerson, 2000). The second approach takes a nearly opposite standpoint to the first one. Although its conception of gender remains socialized differences between men and women, its proponents argue that these differences should not be eliminated but celebrated (Ely & Meyerson, 2000). The second approach seeks to create a well-modified structure that can include women and their feminine differences rather than as a weakened version of men. The third approach to gender equity focuses on structural barriers to women's recruitment and advancement. From this perspective, gender is still framed as differences between men and women; however, these differences result from socialization processes and differential structures of opportunity and power that block women's access and advancement (Ely & Meyerson, 2000). The fourth approach, however, is non-traditional and novel to the issue. The four frames are distinguished by their conception of gender and their grounding in different theoretical and epistemological positions. From this perspective, gender is neither an individual characteristic nor a basis for discrimination. Instead, it is a complex set of social relations enacted across various social practices within and outside formal organizations (Ely & Meyerson, 2000).

Research into gender-related diversity in sports organizations consistently demonstrates that sports organizations are far from being equitable for some reasons. While the aim of some policies is to increase the numbers of women in management positions, this does little to change the dominance of masculinities that are profoundly and historically entrenched in sport (Shaw & Frisby, 2006). However, how do they enter an executive office where women are generally afforded few political, social, and economic opportunities? (Jalalzai, 2008). Nevertheless, in a society grounded in hegemonic masculinity, women are considered off limits in certain areas, sport being one of the most obvious (Whisenant et al., 2002).

Although many aspects of career development might influence the decision to move into traditionally defined career advancement through senior management in parks and recreation, we were surprised that the number of women seeking senior management had not increased. Some of this lack of interest could be because of the high stress and time commitment women perceived, which may be challenging to negotiate and balance with their personal lives (Henderson et al., 2013). Since most women who have risen to the top were married and had children, they were confronted with the problems that affect most women who have both a family and a career. As a result, such as making provision for adequate childcare and dealing with feelings of guilt about not spending enough time with their families (Jensen, 2008). In the subcomponent of individual

desire, it should be noted that women suffered from psychological factors that mainly hindered their aspirations. Fear of failure, lack of confidence, and poor support from superior managers should be deemed the most important contributing factors. Waller et al. (2015) found that most women were not actively seeking career advancement. Of those who were, most were looking outside of campus recreation (Waller et al., 2015). Top management's attitude toward gender equality may significantly impact the representation of female managers in sports organizations. Previous authors have argued that maximum management support is critical to the effectiveness of equal employment opportunity and affirmative action initiatives (Moore et al., 2010).

Concerning the organizational factors, numerous researchers have pointed out the inadequate mentoring and database (Bower, 2008; Bower & Hums, 2009; Hums & Sutton, 1999). When discussing career lines, (Bower, 2008) concluded that the education level of women and the number of certificates obtained from authoritative organizations influence their progress—furthermore, mentoring leads to the successful promotion of individuals aspiring to take up management positions in sports industry. While the mentoring relationship is vital for the career development of both men and women, it is critical for women, especially those in male-dominated professions (Bower & Hums, 2009). (Rao et al., 1999) argued that gender inequality is rooted in the organizational structure, referring to it as a deep structure. The gender inequalities shown in the managerial rank of sports organizations are affected by human resource management (HRM) systems, and the tendency of traditional HRM practices to reinforce gender inequality is well documented (Moore et al., 2010). HRM is a system adopting standard dimensions. We use the term 'formalized HRM structures' to refer to formal rules, programs, positions, and procedures influencing personnel decision-making in an organization (Konrad & Linnehan, 1995).

The fact that women have fewer opportunities in the labor market may contribute to their unequal treatment in household settings. Parents have lower aspirations for their daughters than their sons, and female teenagers have lower aspirations (Duflo, 2012). Many successful organizations have distinctive personality that is shaped by gender. When a corporation has many more men than women (or vice versa) in influential positions, the culture tends to adopt attributes that favor the dominant gender (Klenke, 1996). It is generally argued that as women become educated and economically independent, they have the chance to lead a much more modern lifestyle. However, the essence of their traditions and customs may still govern their lives (Inal, 2011).

3. Methodology

This study was conducted through Grounded Theory. A grounded theory that is faithful to the everyday realities of a substantive area has been carefully induced from diverse data. As we have described, the process (Glaser & Strauss, 1967)—grounded theory starts by uncovering the conceptual scheme contextually without any predetermined theoretical or conceptual framework (Cassell & Symon, 2004). The statistical population consisted of the academic elite in sports management, women's studies, and management, and individuals with managerial backgrounds working in sports organizations. The sample

included 17 researchers and managers adequately knowledgeable in senior management of Iranian sports or with high experience in investigating women's issues. The sample consists of the senior managers of Iranian sports for half a century. It is plausible that grounded theory focuses on a range of potential individuals who can enrich the essential reservoir throughout data collection. For that reason, the grounded theory uses non-probability sampling. For concepts and categories to emerge during the data analysis, the need for sampling specific data sources continues until each category is saturated. Therefore, at the beginning of the study, there are no limits set on the number of the participants, interviewees, or data sources (Cutcliffe, 2000). In data collection, instructions were offered to the participants for every interview. The questions during each interview were raised through a funnel, where general items progressed toward more specific ones. In the next phase, a three-step coding was completed:

In open coding, the researchers examined the content line by line and paragraph by paragraph while reviewing all open codes, including strategies, barriers, and suggestions in two forms of the researcher's impression and exact statements of interviewees. At the end of this stage, the interviews yielded a total of 502 duplicate open codes. Axial coding, Researchers in this phase constructed the categories through the open codes extracted in the first phase by inserting the similar open codes in separate groups. A total of 502 duplicate open codes were converted into ten axial codes.

Selective coding, this phase reveals what the management researchers find appealing in the grounded theory, i.e., a modern theory or model elaborating on the problem and the contributing categories.

4. Results

Having completed 14 interviews, the researchers arrived at a theoretical saturation. To ensure the theoretical saturation, however, researchers conducted three additional interviews. Six participants had management experience at the senior level, nine at the middle level, and two at the operational level. Regarding education, 13 participants were Ph.D., and the rest were masters. Moreover, 14 participants were educated in sports management, while the others came from irrelevant fields but had conducted research on women's sports. A total of 770 minutes of interviews were completed. Each interview took 45 minutes on average.

Full interview transcripts were implemented, and the first phase involved open coding. At the end of the first phase of data analysis, 258 non-duplicate open codes were obtained. Open codes were all converted into axial codes. After categorizing the axial codes and analyzing the data from one phase to the next, a total of general groups was obtained. The axial codes included ten general groups. After implementation, the key points were identified from 17 interviews with experts and research backgrounds. Then, the open codes were categorized into separate but akin constructs. In the next stage, the constructs were depicted at four distinct levels under a reasonable frame, relying on the relevant literature to understand women's career development in the Iranian sports industry. In the third coding stage (i.e., selective), the researchers adopted the frame proposed in qualitative research to create a new order (Humphreys, 2014). By axial

coding and identification of the main groups concerning the full interview transcripts and content analysis of relevant literature, the axial codes were divided into four levels:

4.1. Adequate Level: Directing Level from the Top

According to the literature review, the conditions of sports organizations, and the open codes derived from the participants, the primary construct directing the career development of women in the Iranian sport are stated culture-making institutions, which affect the career development of women in sport from top to bottom. They are constructs not related to sports organizations but set the groundwork for significant decisions adopted in those organizations. The culture-making institutions refer to agencies spreading information and educating the society at a macro level. Such agencies include the Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Technology, IRIB, and other media outlets. The mass media plays a significant role in transmitting gender differences and inequality through daily visuals within print and television media (Trolan, 2013).

The critical point is that these culture-making institutions could also act as a data structure. As mainstream constructs, the state institutions in this model are beyond government. They cover the three branches of executive, judiciary, and legislative that can exercise their power on society. According to participant A15-35, 'Education is controlled by the State.'. In this light, the culture-making institutions are as critical as the state institutions, demanding further concentration on the former.

The state institutions playing rather strategic roles in terms of policymaking and legislation in Iran include (1) Legislative, (2) Judiciary, and (3) Executive. In Iran, a religion-oriented country, certain institutions in charge of religious affairs, including seminaries and the Islamic Propaganda Organization, which, together with the state institutions, influence women's career development. Religious institutions have been assigned to influential positions because people in religious societies tend to recognize modern changes through religion. The state institutions influence the women's career development in the sports industry through introducing new policies, adoption or rejection of laws, legal procedures, and ultimately the distribution of power in organizations. It is critical to explore where women stand in the state ideology. Table 1 displays how axial codes are obtained at the adequate level.

Table 1. The conversion path for open codes to axial codes at the adequate level.

Axial codes	Sub-groups	Open codes
State institutions	Upstream attitude	Strategic Council of Sports focuses on women
		The political approach to women
	Legislative bodies	The standpoint of women in state ideology
		Legal protection for women's freedoms and social rights
		Reforming legal macro loopholes
		Building efficient legal leverages
	Macro policies	The tendency of policies toward balance
		The harms of poorly-calculated policies to the grassroots
	Essential support from the state	We have increased participation and interaction between state agencies
		Profound reforming in legal origins

Axial codes	Sub-groups	Open codes
Culture making institutions	Executive bodies	A genuine desire for change from the upstream leadership
		Dependence of sports federations on the government
		The supportive role of the Ministry of Sport and Youth
	Media	The need for media content analysis
		Highlighting women in the media
		There is no positive feedback from mass media
		Mass media is the most potent tool to distill reasonable beliefs.
	Crucial attention from the culture-making institutions	The state controls education
		The fundamental cultural viewpoint should be scrutinized
	Raising awareness	Using technology to educate women
		Creating a data structure
	Education system	The central role of education
		Reforming the education system
		Initiation of training from the Ministry of Education
Transferring the training efforts to the higher education		

4.2. Intermediate level: dual effect

This level includes constructs that can overshadow the decisions adopted by culture-making and state institutions. It may act as a hindrance or facilitator, i.e., it cannot be stated with certainty that changes from top to bottom take place unilaterally. Changes might be affected by specific neutral or strengthening factors on their progress from the top to the operational point.

This level is composed of three constructs: (1) knowledge and attitude, (2) social elements, and (3) laws. Interviewee A1-14 stated that 'social and cultural factors reinforce gender stereotypes.' This indicates the importance of the intermediate level in shifting gender stereotypes. Knowledge and attitude are generally made up of four sub-groups covering society's attitude, both men and women. However, the attitude of men toward women is more important because men are currently considered the powerful forces in Iranian organizations. Another essential component of knowledge and attitude is social education, the open codes shown in [Table 2](#).

Table 2. Conversion path of open codes into axial codes at the intermediate level.

Axial codes	Sub-groups	Open codes
Knowledge and attitude	Society's attitude towards women	Women's sports dedicated solely to women's leadership
		Hostile public and household attitudes toward women's sports
	Subcultures	Local values and cultures
		Customs and traditions
	Adjustment of beliefs	Self-sacrifice to family
		Rejection of female directors in cultural beliefs
		Narrow-mindedness of men
	Social education	Duality of household responsibilities and the patriarchal culture
		Adjusted expectations in men
		Men rarely offer opportunities to women
Absence of social definition outside the family		
Social elements	The diversity of women's roles	Multiple, complex roles assigned to women
		Transparency of women's roles for men in the Iranian society

Axial codes	Sub-groups	Open codes
		Low-income family support in top positions
		The family recognized as the most minor and least-effective institution
	Family institution	The significant contribution of families to the development of girls
		Iranian women are an absolute reflection of their families
		Man's prominent role as husband
		Preference for household responsibilities over occupational responsibilities
	Women's associations	NGOs established and owned by women
		Women's voluntary movement
		Dependence of women on men in the sports sector
	Interpersonal factors	Men have the more profound social experience
		Mistrust of women in one another
		Women interact with each other poorly
	Social environment	Technological advances and the growth of cyberspace
		Social misperceptions
		Society strips women of development
	The absence of women in legislative	The lack of women in the political arena
		Underrepresentation of women in the Islamic Consultative Assembly
		Gender bias in promotion
Laws	Morality	Enormous financial resources in sports are corrupting
		Incorrect interpretation of laws
	Legally adopted protections	Adoption of bylaws for the engagement of women at the helm of organizations
		Legal means to mobilize women toward employment and management

The definition of social education covers all elements, the realization of which can improve the active participation of women in society. The culture-making institutions generally affect knowledge and attitude at the intermediate level. Any changes in the knowledge and awareness of the community can adjust and even entirely transform the wrong attitudes in society.

The social elements construct involves the society's micro-foundations, which can occur at large and potentially impact their lower level, i.e., the operational level and even the upstream level. This construct holds the family as one of the most important institutions. Hierarchical links between the intermediate level and its upper and lower levels are established when, for example, the upstream forces devise specific strategies for women's engagement at senior organizational ranks on the practical level. Still, boys and girls are not raised in line with such changes, thus neutralizing the effectiveness of such strategies. In this regard, one academic elite argued, 'the different ways boys and girls are raised in a family have indoctrinated the belief that female is secondary to male.' This confirms the importance of family as one of the institutions in social elements. Another social feature involves the women's entire organizations in sports. These organizations should be established by female sports administrators and pursue feminine aspirations in the industry. These organizations can relieve women from being under the

authority of men in Iranian sports. The social elements in the intermediate level are influenced partially by culture-making institutions and partially by state institutions.

The third construct of the intermediate level is laws. Part of this construct deals with the legal resolutions as the functional form of policies resulting from the adequate level. The Iranian Strategic Sports Council, for example, can fall under this category. State institutions influence the Council itself. It is seldom assigned executive duties but stipulates the sports macro policies based on the upstream guidelines, thus steering the Iranian sports industry. Another part of this construct refers to ethics guaranteeing the enforcement of many laws governing sports. The solid groundwork for enforcing statutes, called ethics in this paper, can be inhibited even if the legal loopholes in the resolutions are lifted.

4.3. Affected level: operational level

There is a lower number of women in the top ranks at the operational level. This level particularly points to what happens in practice in sports organizations. In axial coding, three sub-groups were achieved for this level: organizational climate, organizational factors, and overlapping organizational groups. Table 3 extensively shows the sub-groups and open codes on the affected station.

Table 3. The conversion path for open codes to axial codes at the affected level.

Axial codes	Sub-groups	Open codes
Organizational management factors	Human Resources Management	Weakness in the monitoring and evaluation system
		Eliminating the gender bias from the selection system
		Outlining a career line for women
		Inappropriate promotion measures
	Regulations and statutes	The predominance of nepotism over meritocracy
		Amendments in Federation statutes and bylaws
		Lack of incentive policies
		Poorly defined key decision-making posts for women
	Structure	Flexible structure for future changes
		The current structural defects in the Iranian sport
		The upstream gap between senior and middle levels
	Planning	Setting goals for women
Poorly operational programs		
Absence of organized changes		
Organizational climate	Assurance to female managers	Lack of trust in the capabilities of women
		Highlighted mistakes made by female executives
		Recognition of women by subordinates
	Political games	The political climate at higher organizational levels
		Women's moderateness
		Political treatment of women
	Women's engagement for the sake of formality	Offering poorly supported positions to women
		Organizational culture
Little attention is paid to individual attitudes		
Organizational overlapping groups	Informal groups	Women are not members of informal groups
	Communications	Terrible communications among women
	Roads to gain power	Networking

No exception to higher-level influence, organizational climate comprises culture-making institutions, knowledge, and attitude. Organizational climate is a construct dealing with recognition of women at senior ranks of sports by men and women in sports organizations and even the related ones. Therefore, it is essential to devise plans on the two upper levels, i.e., practical level and intermediate level, so that new individuals to an organization will shift their attitude toward women in managerial positions. The organizational employees come from the heart of society. It is undeniable that aside from corporate culture, society's culture can act as the parent culture.

The overlapping organizational groups intensely concentrate on women. It is critical to note women rarely participate in sports organizations within informal groups. It is somehow men that never allow women in their groups. Nonetheless, poor communication among women is another potent venom against building informal groups composed of women. Instead, the same venom tastes like nectar for men when expanding their communication networks. These groups within sports organizations are, to a great extent, like women's associations at the intermediate level.

One crucial construct on this level is organizational factors. The operational and affected level explores the organizations from within. At this level, organizational factors were the most frequent open codes (53 duplicates). When most of the elite highlighted the importance of organizational factors in understanding women's career development in sports, the outcome can be better modified. This construct holds all legal means available to a manager. [Table 3](#) shows that HRM is more important. However, this does not imply that this construct's planning and other sub-groups are less critical.

In Iranian sports organizations, the upstream desire for change at the practical level passes through the intermediate conditions and is put into practice at the affected level. This relationship shows that Iranian sports organizations, mainly state-owned or affiliated with the government, cannot, without upstream authority, succeed in propelling the organization toward further employment of women in the senior management ranks.

4.4. Inhibiting /facilitating level: change from downstream

The three former levels can facilitate the environment for further involvement of women. The inefficiencies concerning the entire society rather than women can be tackled regarding the three former levels. However, women's career development cannot be resolved entirely without an in-depth concentration on women. Women in this respect are discussed as individual factors. Individual factors or internal inefficiencies are essential since the participants unanimously stated that the absence of women in senior management of Iranian sports should be addressed by making both upstream and downstream changes. The downstream changes refer to individual factors. In addition, open code A5-14 pointed out that 'internal deficiencies of women reinforce the external deficiencies.' It points to the hindrance of personal characteristics. Individual factors fail to direct the upstream changes when women underappreciate the

set of individual elements. In contrast, women's factors are reinforced when they make up for a part of current inefficiencies in the other three levels.

The outcome is a simple model of constructs and their interrelationships regarding women's career development in Iranian sports management. No social phenomenon in today's world is immune to changes in the surrounding environment. International organizations on two levels more often influence the career development of women in Iran. Furthermore, one academic elite in open code A pointed out that 'the global and national beliefs need to be changed.' General international organizations such as the United Nations and International Labor Organization are the environments steering the first level, i.e., an adequate model level.

In addition, the affected level in the third level is close to the internal environment of sports organizations. International sports organizations such as IOC and FIFA can initiate fundamental changes. At this level, slight pressures are exerted even though the Iranian sports organizations barely budge due to the current political situation. Nonetheless, women and managers can be informed of the changes in the international sports arenas. Recent changes are indicative of a global effort to incorporate women in organizations. Sooner or later, these sports organizations will be compelled to make changes. Hence, it is wiser for the upstream leadership to devise plans to prepare women on the road to career development.

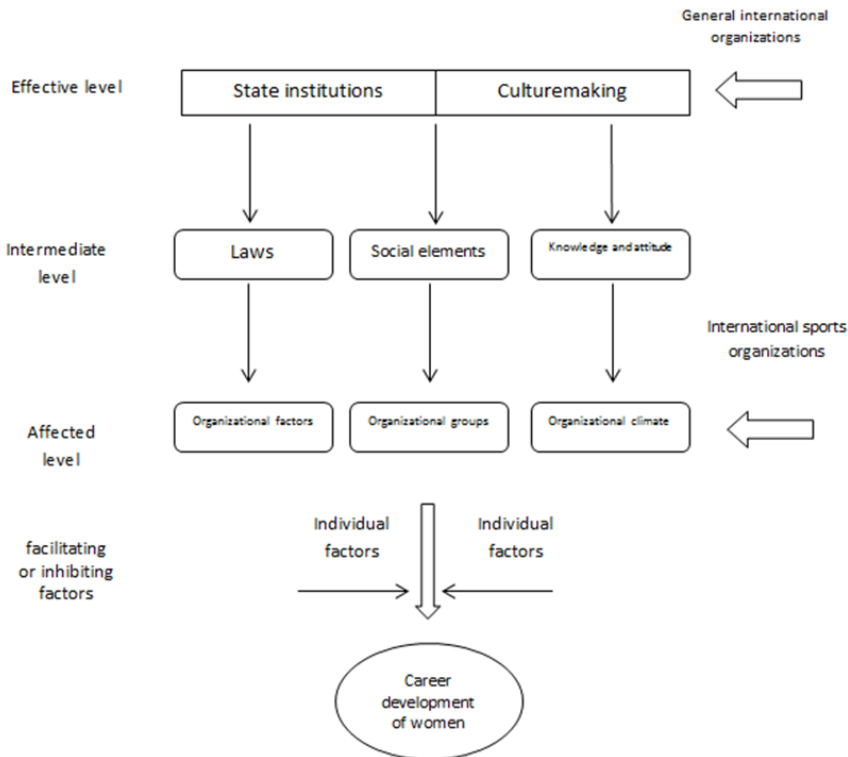


Figure 1. Women's career development model in the Iranian sports management.

5. Discussion and conclusion

It should be noted that the issue has nothing to do with being women and men, but it is instead all about being human. Such attitude in society can prompt organizations to focus on competencies rather than gender. Understanding the career development of women in sports management is tied up with massive forces unrelated to sports. Still, it can influence women's engagement in sports organizations. As indicated in Table (1), the constructs of the adequate level point to the significant forces in the society essential for making changes. Understanding the career development of women is made up of two dimensions found objectively on the practical level. One dimension relies on the nature of laws and the other on culture. The masculine treatment has shaped the Iranian culture in the workplace, the way girls and boys are raised in the family based on the deep-rooted beliefs in the society, and the general attitude toward feminism. It is crucial to instill modern beliefs and behaviors in understanding women's career development. In this regard, open code A3-27 argued that 'new behavior is institutionalized by repeating.' This can influence the intermediate level and gradually introduce such behavior to major social institutions such as families. As pointed out by interviewee A4 in open code 27, 'Pathological behavior can leak from the family into the workplace.' The beliefs and behaviors are so significant that they flow like blood in the vessels of a society, where each sector moves up in any free direction. In addition, the compliance of sports organizations with state institutions can be associated with their financial dependence on upstream and political bodies. Economic reliance has made it easier for upstream institutions to spearhead the ideology of sports organizations. The political approach to Iranian sports, especially women's sports, is an outcome of how state institutions treat women and their issues.

Above average listening skills, creativity, ability to apply innovative strategies and admit mistakes, willingness to learn new skills (e.g., delegating responsibilities, the art of crafting a memo or email), a readiness to network with internal and external stakeholders across institutional and industry boundaries. Also, an ability to hold to one's value system—even when pushed to do otherwise (Ransdell et al., 2008). These can be deemed vital as the top characteristic of managers at the helm of sports organizations. The ability to network is considered one of the personal characteristics of managers, as shown in Table (3), where it is one of the constructs leading to the affected level. Unfortunately, women have not progressed much in this respect. Women in Iranian sports organizations strive to achieve power with an emphasis on organizational hierarchy. Nevertheless, power in an organization can be based on three factors: order, control of resources, and networking (Astley & Sachdeva, 1984).

In Iranian sports organizations, women feel alien to the hierarchy of power and control of resources while performing poorly in terms of networking and staying in the spotlight, which to a great extent concerns women in sports organizations. However, the mere ability to build communication networks within the organizations will not benefit women, just as Table (3) illustrates how the political arena influences organizational climate. Women are unwilling to engage in political groups, whereas men's presence is projected. That is why women do not aspire to engage in overlapping corporate groups.

This suggests that at every level of women's career development model, it is essential to address the constructs in each level in addition to the upstream and downstream ones and parallel constructs. We suggest that women and men will have different policy preferences. First, women will prefer policies that better reflect their priorities. Since they are particularly concerned about child health and nutrition, they should choose guidelines to help them achieve these objectives (Duflo, 2012). The failure of women to pursue the goals, policies, and procedures supporting their future can jeopardize the prospects of their career line. One of the techniques to facilitate feminine-supporting approaches is the establishment of communication networks.

Organizations and authorities must interact multilaterally to gain a good understanding of the career development of women and women's access to the helm of Iranian sports organizations. Moreover, the concentration on the career development of women needs to transcend the glass ceiling of sports organizations, which originates from the attitude of society to sports and women. It is necessary to note that philosophical support of gender equality in the managerial ranks on the part of top management leads to the development of comprehensive substantive HRM programs to promote gender equality (Moore et al., 2010).

HRM is one of the essential components in forming the third construct of the affected level, i.e., the organizational factors. It may be argued that HRM is where the senior management ideas can be found in sports organizations. HRM can protect women's rights in managing sports organizations due to its legitimate nature. This very legal nature is one of the reasons why organizational factors fall under the laws of the intermediate level. The law requires employers to consider men and women for the same positions—unless the job fits into a narrow category of exceptions where sex is a 'bona fide occupational qualification' for performing the job (Brake, 2010).

In this light, the HRM can be described as one of the constructs of the affected level in understanding women's career development in Iranian sports management, which does not refer merely to the selection phase. Table (3) shows that HRM highlights the assessment and monitoring, system upgrades, and indicators. Women have management experience lower than their male counterparts, but the solution can be derived from the depth of HRM. The experience women need in these areas like operations, production, and marketing are not often recommended to a young female manager. Often these policy difficulties are not addressed in the lower ranks of management. Subsequently, when women rise to positions closer to the top later in their careers, they often find themselves excluded from the upper ranks of administration due to improper tracking earlier in their careers (Oakley, 2000). Management practice in smaller organizations, such as sports departments in municipalities in different regions, can enhance women's managerial experience.

The career development of women also depends on individual factors, given the model achieved in the research on the fourth level. These factors are partly aspired by women; the issues and problems surrounding women's career advancement should not be the sole concern of individual women (Waller et al., 2015). Interviewee A1 stated, 'the major focus in individual factors should be shifted onto the willingness and capability of women.' The capability of women to play a managerial role at the senior

level should be partly supported by the higher education system, i.e., the practical level. When discussing women's aspirations, all participants believed that women were performing poorly. Despite these inhibiting factors, individual factors are a facilitator in other areas. Nowadays, women are more frequently assigned to positions related to finance owing to their non-corrupt management. Due to organizational growth and diverse human resources, it is more than ever crucial to hire managers who treat conflicts appropriately. Open code A2-26 suggested that 'women can maintain the appropriate treatment and integrity far more efficiently.' This indicates the prominent characteristics of women who can better handle a sports organization when assigned administrative positions. The approach to gender is one of the factors leading to a better understanding of women's career development in sports management.

We conceptualize each approach as a 'frame' for understanding what gender is and why inequities exist between men and women at work (Moore et al., 2010). In the four-level model for understanding the career development of women in Iranian sports management, a fundamental approach involves the level directing the stream from top to bottom with the most significant authority. Accordingly, if women developed appropriate traits and skills, they would be better equipped to compete with men. They would advance at rates comparable to men and assume a proportionate share of leadership positions (Ely & Meyerson, 2000). The advice may help women obtain a management position by planning for the future, such as choosing an appropriate major, choosing a relevant professional certification, gaining practical experience, networking, and obtaining a mentor (Bower, 2008).

The critical point is that women's approach in a sports organization draws on better communication, this influencing the two constructs of organizational climate and laws. It can be a desirable solution to build contacts where women's influence is strengthened to facilitate the road to achieving their goals. However, the current approach adopted in the Iranian sports organizations dramatically resembles the third approach to gender. This approach concentrates on the structural barriers to women's employment and development. That reflects sexist attitudes toward and expectations of women and rewards men's structural position over women's (Ely & Meyerson, 2000).

That is why men have been deemed the only contributing structural factor in many sports organizations. At the same time, the solution to fulfillment of gender equality lies in a dependent structure for women within sports organizations. This is in line with the opinion of an elite participant, 'The separation of male and female sports will be in favor of women, even though it hardly expands their share of Iranian sport management.' This implies that the third gender approach to women's issues, i.e., changing the structural factors to build a larger effective share for women in the administrative sector, has only escalated the false representation of women as a trick to encounter the domestic criticism concerning the active engagement of women. There is a modern approach to gender, considering it as an outcome of social activities rather than biological factors. These social practices tend to reflect and support men's experiences and life situations because they have been mainly created by and for men (Ely & Meyerson, 2000). That is why the issue of gender equality in organizations is addressed as an isolated phase throughout their life cycles. So long as this approach effectively steers the mainstream

from top to bottom, it can redirect attention entirely toward social activities. Naturally, this trend will apply to the link with the intermediate level. However, such an approach affects the understanding of women's career development in the Iranian sport due to the 'absence of a common language resulting from a shared knowledge of women seeking top managerial positions, which has led to an obstacle to understanding women's problems. An identical, consistent approach to the issue of women's career development in sports management will enhance the participation and interaction with relevant agencies. The fact that they felt they weren't receiving administrative support, including from the media, reflects the ongoing battle women in sports have been engaged in for decades (Munk et al., 2014).

The impact of such changes will not likely be felt in the sports organizations in the short term due to their multiple complex structures and relationships. On the other hand, the top priorities pursued by the Iranian sports management include the involvement of women in higher education levels of sports science and physical training, Iranian successful female athletes in international arenas, and tangible changes in the gender composition of international sports organizations and concentration on career development of women. The newly proposed model can provide the Iranian sports authority and organizations with a crystal-clear image of the critical, complex road ahead so that the constructs and their relationships can be examined to improve the status quo and devise an appropriate plan for the future of women's career development.

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توسعه شغلی زنان در مدیریت ورزشی نظریه نظریه داده بنیاد

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کلیدواژه

تبعیض
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فرصت‌های شغلی

نوع مقاله

پژوهشی اصیل

چکیده

هدف: امروزه نابرابری جنسیتی در بیشتر عرصه‌ها قابل مشاهده است؛ هدف این مطالعه فهم توسعه شغلی زنان در مدیریت ورزش ایران بوده است.

روش: این مطالعه به روش نظریه داده بنیاد انجام شده است. نمونه آماری در این مطالعه نخبگان دانشگاهی در رشته‌های مدیریت ورزشی، مطالعات زنان و مدیریت بوده و مشارکت‌کنندگان ۱۷ نفر از محققان و مدیران بودند. سه مرحله کدگذاری برای تجزیه و تحلیل داده‌ها انجام شد و کدهای محوری در چهار سطح دسته بندی شده و سه سازه هر سطح را تشکیل دادند.

یافته‌ها: خروجی مطالعه حاضر مدل ساده‌ای از سازه‌ها و روابط متقابل توسعه شغلی زنان در مدیریت ورزش ایران است. با به کارگیری این مدل، مدیران و سازمان‌های ورزشی ایران می‌توانند تصویری ساده از مسیر پیچیده توسعه شغلی زنان به دست آورند و می‌توان از آن برای بررسی عوامل و روابط به‌منظور بهبود وضع موجود و برنامه‌ریزی برای آینده توسعه شغلی زنان استفاده کرد.

اصالت و ابتکار مقاله: یکی از چالش‌های مدیریت ورزش در ایران حضور کم رنگ زنان در سطوح ارشد سازمان‌های ورزشی و ابهام در شکل‌گیری میسرهای توسعه شغلی آن‌ها است. پژوهش حاضر تلاش کرده است با استفاده از نظریه داده بنیاد تصویری واقعی از وضعیت پیچیده مسیرهای پیشرفت شغلی زنان در سازمان‌های ورزشی نشان دهد.

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