



 **GROUNDING THEORY APPROACH:  
UNVEILING NEW INSIGHTS INTO SPORTS PARTICIPATION THROUGH  
EVENT HOSTING IN IRAN**

*ABORDAGEM DA TEORIA FUNDAMENTADA:  
REVELANDO NOVAS PERSPECTIVAS SOBRE A PARTICIPAÇÃO EM  
ESPORTES POR MEIO DA REALIZAÇÃO DE EVENTOS NO IRÃ*

*ENFOQUE DE LA TEORÍA FUNDAMENTADA:  
REVELANDO NUEVAS PERSPECTIVAS SOBRE LA PARTICIPACIÓN EN  
DEPORTES A TRAVÉS DE LA ORGANIZACIÓN DE EVENTOS EN IRÁN*

 **Niloofer Khosravi**

Master's in Sports Marketing  
Farabi College, University of Tehran  
Tehran- Iran.  
[niloofer.khosravi1372@gmail.com](mailto:niloofer.khosravi1372@gmail.com)

 **Hesamoddin Bagheri**

Phd Scholar  
Kharazmi University, Faculty of Physical Education and Sports Sciences.  
Tehran- Iran.  
[h.bagheri@khu.ac.ir](mailto:h.bagheri@khu.ac.ir)

 **Ali Hasaan**

PhD in Sports Marketing  
NFC Institute of Engineering and Technology.  
Multan - Pakistan.  
[aili\\_hasaan@hotmail.com](mailto:aili_hasaan@hotmail.com)

**Abstract**

**Objective of the Study:** This research aims to examine the impact of hosting sports events on Iranian society, seeking to establish a correlation between event hosting and sports participation across diverse demographic segments.

**Methodology:** Employing a qualitative approach, this study conducted semi-structured interviews with 12 experts. The interview questions were meticulously designed to address the central research question comprehensively. Grounded theory analysis, involving open coding, axial coding, and selective coding, was applied to the collected data, ensuring a thorough exploration of emerging concepts and themes.

**Originality/Relevance:** This research is distinctive in its approach by not delineating boundaries, instead aiming to comprehensively explore the effects of hosting sports events on all segments of the Iranian population. Despite recent political constraints limiting Iran's ability to host major international events, the study critically evaluates the significance of such occurrences and elucidates missed opportunities for societal advancement. The study's focus on diverse demographic segments and its exploration of causal, contextual, and intervening factors contribute to its originality and relevance.

**Main Results:** The study unfolds a nuanced interplay of social, cultural, techno-managerial, legal, economical, and socio-cultural factors, shedding light on the multifaceted relationship between event hosting and sports participation. While recognizing the significance of regular physical activity in promoting overall health, the main results highlight the motivational impact of sports events on individuals' increased physical engagement.

**Theoretical/Methodological Contributions:** The research makes theoretical contributions by developing a coherent framework grounded in the qualitative data, explaining the complex relationship between sports events and sports engagement.

**Keywords:** Sports for all. Event hosting. Volleyball. Sports participation. Qualitative research.

**Cite como**

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## Resumo

**Objetivo do Estudo:** Esta pesquisa tem como objetivo examinar o impacto da realização de eventos esportivos na sociedade iraniana, buscando estabelecer uma correlação entre a realização de eventos e a participação em esportes em diversos segmentos demográficos.

**Metodologia:** Empregando uma abordagem qualitativa, este estudo realizou entrevistas semiestruturadas com 12 especialistas. As perguntas da entrevista foram meticulosamente projetadas para abordar a pergunta central de pesquisa de forma abrangente. Foi aplicada uma análise de teoria fundamentada, que incluiu codificação aberta, codificação axial e codificação seletiva, aos dados coletados, garantindo uma exploração completa dos conceitos e temas emergentes.

**Originalidade/Relevância:** Esta pesquisa é distinta em sua abordagem ao não delimitar fronteiras, em vez disso, tem como objetivo explorar de forma abrangente os efeitos da realização de eventos esportivos em todos os segmentos da população iraniana. Apesar das recentes restrições políticas que limitam a capacidade do Irã de realizar eventos internacionais importantes, o estudo avalia criticamente a importância de tais eventos e esclarece as oportunidades perdidas para o avanço societal. O foco do estudo em diversos segmentos demográficos e sua exploração de fatores causais, contextuais e interventivos contribuem para sua originalidade e relevância.

**Principais Resultados:** O estudo revela um jogo matizado de fatores sociais, culturais, tecno-gerenciais, legais, econômicos e socio-culturais, lançando luz sobre a relação multifacetada entre a realização de eventos e a participação em esportes. Reconhecendo a importância da atividade física regular para promover a saúde geral, os principais resultados destacam o impacto motivacional dos eventos esportivos no aumento do comprometimento físico dos indivíduos.

**Contribuições Teóricas/Metodológicas:** A pesquisa realiza contribuições teóricas ao desenvolver um quadro coerente fundamentado nos dados qualitativos, explicando a relação complexa entre os eventos esportivos e o compromisso esportivo.

**Palavras-chave:** Esportes para todos. Realização de eventos. Voleibol. Participação em esportes. Pesquisa qualitativa.

## Resumen

**Objetivo del Estudio:** Esta investigación tiene como objetivo examinar el impacto de la organización de eventos deportivos en la sociedad iraní, buscando establecer una correlación entre la organización de eventos y la participación en deportes en diversos segmentos demográficos.

**Metodología:** Empleando un enfoque cualitativo, este estudio realizó entrevistas semiestruturadas con 12 expertos. Las preguntas de la entrevista fueron diseñadas meticulosamente para abordar la pregunta central de investigación de manera integral. Se aplicó un análisis de teoría fundamentada, que incluyó codificación abierta, codificación axial y codificación selectiva, a los datos recopilados, garantizando una exploración exhaustiva de los conceptos y temas emergentes.

**Originalidad/Relevancia:** Esta investigación es distintiva en su enfoque al no delimitar fronteras, en lugar de ello, tiene como objetivo explorar de manera integral los efectos de la organización de eventos deportivos en todos los segmentos de la población iraní. A pesar de las recientes restricciones políticas que limitan la capacidad de Irán para organizar eventos internacionales importantes, el estudio evalúa críticamente la importancia de tales eventos y aclara las oportunidades perdidas para el avance societal. El enfoque del estudio en diversos segmentos demográficos y su exploración de factores causales, contextuales e intervinientes contribuyen a su originalidad y relevancia.

**Resultados Principales:** El estudio revela un juego matizado de factores sociales, culturales, tecno-gerenciales, legales, económicos y socio-culturales, arrojando luz sobre la relación multifacética entre la organización de eventos y la participación en deportes. Reconociendo la importancia de la actividad física regular para promover la salud general, los resultados principales resaltan el impacto motivacional de los eventos deportivos en el aumento del compromiso físico de los individuos.

**Contribuciones Teóricas/Metodológicas:** La investigación realiza contribuciones teóricas al desarrollar un marco coherente fundamentado en los datos cualitativos, explicando la compleja relación entre los eventos deportivos y el compromiso deportivo.

**Palabras clave:** Deportes para todos. Organización de eventos. Voleibol. Participación en deportes. Investigación cualitativa

## Introduction

Regular exercise and physical activity have long been recognized as essential components of a healthy lifestyle, promoting both physical and mental well-being. Individuals who maintain fitness and physical strength often find greater success in their personal and social lives, experiencing heightened levels of happiness, energy, and overall health. Medical practitioners have increasingly incorporated sports and physical activity into their treatment plans, recognizing the positive impact on patients' health. Studies have shown that improved cardio-respiratory fitness is associated with a significant decrease in mortality, underlining the importance of physical activity (Adami et al., 2022). In today's rapidly evolving societies, the relentless march of modernity and technological advancement has given rise to physical and mental health challenges stemming from decreased physical activity. Consequently, the urgency of promoting "sports for all" activities has grown, with responsible organizations taking proactive measures to address the needs of individuals in contemporary societies (Mosquera-González et al., 2020). In this context, sports events, ranging from international competitions like the Olympic Games and World Cup to smaller-scale tournaments, exert a significant influence on motivating individuals to engage in physical activity.

Governments and international bodies are increasingly prioritizing policies encouraging physical activity participation to improve public health and reduce healthcare costs. Hosting sports events is not exempt from this trend, as event organizers recognize the potential to boost sports participation within host communities. Studies have consistently demonstrated the motivational impact of sports events, heightening public interest in sports and their positive effects (Storr et al., 2022; Cerezo-Esteve et al., 2022). Contrarily, some perspectives, as highlighted by Taks et al. (2018), argue against the notion that sports events have a significant impact on the participation of locals in sports activities.

The Iran Vision 1404, focused on development, security, welfare, and social development, aims to elevate the nation's global image and promote meaningful interactions with the international community. This strategic document outlines ambitious goals over a 15-year period, including the objective of achieving sports participation among 50% of the population by the year 1404, in line with the overarching principle of sport for all (Javadipour & Sameienia, 2013). In this particular context, the research endeavor seeks to investigate the impact of hosting sports events on the entirety of Iranian society. This study is distinctive in its approach as it does not delineate boundaries but instead, endeavors to explore the effects on all



segments of the population. Furthermore, it aims to establish a correlation between the Iranian populace and the act of hosting sports events, examining how such events influence people's participation in sports activities. Grounded Theory methodology serves as a gateway to generating new theories, allowing for an in-depth examination of the correlation between the Iranian populace and the act of hosting sports events. Given the recent political constraints that have prevented Iran from hosting significant international events, this study serves as a critical examination of the significance of such occurrences. It also underscores the missed opportunities and potential advantages that the people of Iran may have foregone due to the non-conduction of large-scale sporting events. Moreover, it underscores the broader relevance of this inquiry beyond academic circles, resonating with the non-academic community and emphasizing the practical implications of its findings.

## Literature review

The literature on the perceived impacts of major sporting events is rich and diverse, yet it remains a challenge to establish a universally agreed-upon framework for assessing these effects, as noted by Johnston et al. (2023). However, there is a prevailing consensus within the field that an approach integrating economic, social, and environmental elements, as advocated by Kim et al. (2021) and Fredline et al. (2004), is the most appropriate. It is important to recognize that these events often result in significant changes in the quality of life for residents in response to the event's requirements, as discussed by Kaplanidou (2021). Consequently, the frequency of hosting sporting events has been steadily increasing, as emphasized by Sato et al. (2014). Thus, both developed and developing countries prioritize promoting physical activity within their societies, often through sports-related initiatives for all development.

Hosting major sports events serves as a catalyst for sports tourism, offering multifaceted positive effects on economic, social, and public health aspects (Weed, 2020). These events can significantly boost trade and attract inward investments, leading to job creation and economic stability within local communities (Knott et al., 2015). As an illustration of this, the NCAA Men's Basketball Tournament stands out as a substantial driver of economic activity, impacting both primary advertising and university-based markets (Shapiro et al., 2009). However, it is essential to acknowledge that the sudden cancellation of the tournament, just prior to "Selection Sunday," resulted in a considerable estimated economic loss, with WalletHub calculating a staggering \$1.32 billion in lost television advertising revenue for the entire tournament (Cooper


& Alderman, 2021). As a result, proponents of economic impact emphasize the importance of shifting the focus toward how events can contribute to the sustainable economic, social, and environmental development of the host locations (Mair & Smith, 2022). This approach ensures that major sports events not only bring economic benefits but also contribute to the long-term well-being and progress of the communities they engage with (Luna-Cortés, 2021).

Sports events yield a broad range of benefits that extend into various domains, including culture and media (Gratton et al., 2020). These events, often garnering international media attention, draw people from diverse cultures to the host location, and the media reports generated can play an educational and supportive role for the country (Thomson et al., 2019). The media coverage of sporting events is of paramount significance, which increasingly involves live streaming of events through various digital platforms and the sale of broadcasting rights to companies such as Twitter and Amazon, resulting in economic enhancements (Sjöblom & Hamari, 2017). Digital media platforms invest significantly in sporting event content, offering it to fans via online streaming platforms and television channels, thus exerting both direct and indirect influence on the local community (Qian, 2022). This interplay between sports and media not only enriches the sporting experience but also bolsters the economic and cultural dimensions of the host community.

While the legal ramifications of sports events are often under-discussed, they hold a profound influence on society. Parra-Camacho et al. (2020) highlight that sports events encompass legal expectations, among other societal considerations, aiming to create or extend social benefits for the community. Consequently, this dynamic poses substantial legal and business challenges for event organizers as they work to safeguard sponsors and maintain the event's integrity (McKelvey & Grady, 2008). In this context, legal issues inevitably demand attention. For instance, a case in point is the legal matter surrounding Cristiano Ronaldo and Georgina Rodríguez, which initially clashed with the legal framework in Saudi Arabia. However, the club managed to resolve the situation following Ronaldo's signing (Fauzul & Imamuddin, 2023). This transfer saga demonstrates how the legal aspect of sports events extends to various facets, including contracts, international laws, and social regulations, all of which necessitate careful consideration and management by organizers and stakeholders.

Sports serve as expressions of "symbolic and emotional power" (Besnier et al., 2018, p. 158), enabling the communication of societal narratives and identities through intense involvement (Cooper & Alderman, 2021). Ramchandani et al. (2014) conducted research on audiences who attended ten events in England from 2010 to 2012. Their findings indicated that





these events inspired most spectators, with the degree of inspiration influenced by factors such as age, place of residence, social characteristics, prior sports participation, and exposure to sports. Parandvar (2015) explored the effects of hosting sports events over the past five years, including recreational opportunities, public property consumption, economic aspects, the lives of citizens, amenities and facilities, social prestige, environmental factors, city image, pricing dynamics, and societal interests. Furthermore, Araghi and Kashef's (2015) study on citizens' sports programs found that recreational sports, also known as sports for all, have the potential to attract a broad audience and enhance health and social well-being. The study identified 10 effective indicators, including participation in various activities, safety, and social interaction, which were implemented by municipalities to assess program effectiveness annually. Funk et al. (2011) revealed that 10 motivators significantly increased satisfaction with the event and ongoing involvement in physical activities. In a study by Frawley and Cash (2011) on the 2003 Rugby World Cup hosted by Australia, a 20% increase in youth participation in rugby was observed, with 15% attributed to minors in 2004.

The collective body of research consistently demonstrates that hosting events has a notably positive and substantial influence on the enhancement of public participation in sports activities, both in the immediate and long-term contexts (Thomson et al., 2019). It signifies a strategic, enduring investment in the advancement of public sports (Martínez-Cevallos et al., 2020). The act of hosting an event exerts a favorable impact across various dimensions, encompassing economic, social, environmental, and technological aspects. This influence is not confined solely to the event's duration but extends well beyond it, effectively motivating the public to partake in physical activities (Chung, 2022). While sports events hold promise for boosting sports participation, they are also subject to skepticism. Prior research, exemplified by Kaplanidou and Gibson (2010), underscores concerns that the focus of such events is often limited to one-off mega-events, catering primarily to elite sports participation and potentially neglecting broader public engagement, as noted by Chen et al. (2018). Moreover, negative aspects such as the dislocation of locals (Liu, 2016) and traffic congestion (Ghosh et al., 2019) may overshadow the enthusiasm generated by sporting events, highlighting the complexities inherent in their impact. However, it is essential to recognize that both positive and negative aspects of sports events contribute to a heightened level of social impact for locals (Inoue & Havard, 2014). Moreover, prior research has highlighted the significance of government policies in achieving the goal of "sport for all." Green (2006) emphasized the necessity for better integration of sports policies to realize this objective, while Hylton and Totten (2013)




underscored the crucial role of governmental commitment in attaining inclusivity in sports. Therefore, considering the imperative role of government policies in promoting sports participation, an examination of the Iranian Vision 1404 in the context of hosting sports events is warranted, particularly concerning its implications for advancing the "sport for all" agenda.

Overall, The literature on the perceived impacts of major sporting events is vast and varied, yet establishing a universally agreed-upon framework for assessing these effects remains challenging (Johnston et al., 2023; Preuss, 2018). Furthermore, Kim et al. (2021) and Fredline et al. (2004) advocate for an integrated approach considering economic, social, and environmental elements. Perić et al. (2016) highlight the significant changes in residents' quality of life in response to event requirements, contributing to the increasing frequency of hosting sporting events, as Sato et al. (2014) emphasized. Major sports events serve as catalysts for sports tourism, offering multifaceted positive effects on economic, social, and public health aspects, as evidenced by Solberg and Preuss (2007). However, it is crucial to acknowledge potential adverse impacts, such as the dislocation of locals (Taks et al., 2018) and traffic congestion (Ghosh et al., 2019), which can overshadow enthusiasm. Grounded Theory methodology offers a unique approach to explore these dynamics comprehensively. Grounded Theory methodology, known for its ability to explore complex phenomena in-depth and generate new theoretical insights, offers a unique approach to dissecting these multifaceted dynamics (Clarke, 2005; Hasaan, 2021; Sotiriadou & Shilbury, 2010). In light of these considerations, this study embarks on an exploration of how hosting events in Iran has contributed to increased sports participation rates across the populace. By employing a Grounded Theory approach, this research seeks to uncover nuanced insights that transcend traditional academic boundaries, offering valuable perspectives for both academic and non-academic audiences alike. Therefore, the study proposed that:

**Research Question: RQ1:** How has hosting sports events in Iran affected the overall participation rate in sports activities among all segments of the population?

## Methodology

This study was conducted within a qualitative framework, employing a grounded theory approach. Grounded theory analysis involved coding of both interview and textual data, comprising three key stages: open coding, axial coding, and selective coding. The study's



sample consisted of experts in the field of organizing sports events, selected using a snowball sampling technique. Initially, the researcher directly selected the first group based on specified criteria, and subsequent participants were identified through referrals from the initial group. Sampling continued until theoretical saturation was achieved.

The study employed semi-structured interviews with experts to gain deeper insights into the issue. The interview questions were meticulously designed to address the central research question comprehensively. Interviews were conducted over a two-month period, with an average interval of once every three days and a duration of 50-60 minutes. Given the qualitative nature of this research, both note-taking (verbatim) methods and the use of a recording device (mobile phone) were employed to capture interview data.

The participants for this study were selected from an academic background, emphasizing their research and operational experience within the field of sports-related disciplines. The final dataset consisted of 12 experts, comprising a diverse mix of both male and female professionals. These experts were chosen from various disciplines, including Sports Management, Sports Physiology, and Physical Education, and possessed either a doctorate or master's degree in a sports-related field. All participants signed a consent sheet to ensure their privacy and confidentiality throughout and after the study. The consent sheet assured participants that their identities would remain concealed, and only their responses to study questions would be used without reference to their actual identities. Consequently, a pseudonym was assigned to each participant, represented as P1 to P12 in all study-related documentation. This rigorous approach to participant selection and privacy protection aimed to provide a secure and ethical research environment while maintaining the individuals' anonymity.





**Table 1.**

*Demographic Characteristics Of Participants*

#	Gender M/F	Age	Education	Expertise	Discipline	Research experience	Operational experience	Experience years
P1	M	30	Ph.D.	Executive/Scientific	Sports Management	*	-	3/0
P2	F	33	Ph.D.	Executive	Sports Management	*	*	6/5
P3	M	38	Ph.D.	Executive/Scientific	Physiology	*	*	10/12
P4	M	49	Ph.D.	Executive/Scientific	Sports Management	*	*	20/16
P5	M	29	Ph.D.	Scientific	Physical Education	*	-	3/0
P6	M	24	Master	Executive	Sports Management	-	*	0/3
P7	M	26	Master	Executive	Sports Management	-	*	0/4
P8	F	53	Ph.D.	Executive/Scientific	Sports Management	*	*	23/25
P9	M	36	Master	Executive	Sports Management	-	*	0/10
P10	M	50	Ph.D.	Executive/Scientific	Sports Management	*	*	22/10
P11	M	47	Ph.D.	Executive/Scientific	Sports Management	*	*	15/30
P12	M	36	Ph.D.	Scientific	Sports Management	*	-	4/10

**Source:** Current study

Grounded theory analysis, as originally outlined by Glaser and Strauss (1967), involved three main phases: initial, axial, and selective coding. This method was applied to develop a coherent theory from the qualitative data collected during the research.

**Initial Coding:** In the initial coding phase, the research team embarked on a process of thorough data immersion. The collected data, which included transcripts, field notes, and textual information, was meticulously examined and reviewed multiple times to establish a profound understanding of the content. Subsequently, initial codes were generated by systematically deconstructing the data into smaller, meaningful units. These codes encapsulated emerging concepts, categories, and themes derived directly from the data without any preconceived notions or theoretical impositions.

**Axial Coding:** The axial coding phase involves the organization and categorization of the generated codes. A structured coding framework was developed to facilitate comprehension of the data and identify interrelationships between different codes. Researchers explored how codes interacted and evolved, leading to the identification of more abstract and focused concepts. This phase unveiled patterns and themes within the data.

**Selective Coding:** In the final phase of selective coding, the categories developed during axial coding were synthesized and integrated. This process aimed to construct a comprehensive and coherent theoretical framework that could effectively explain the phenomenon under investigation. Within this framework, a core category playing a central role in the emerging theory, was identified. This core category served as the linchpin, elucidating the relationships between other categories and subcategories.



The iterative nature of grounded theory analysis allowed for ongoing refinements and adjustments as the theory developed. This approach ensured the development of a well-grounded, contextually rich theory firmly rooted in the qualitative data, thus making a robust and meaningful contribution to the research field.

Multiple measures were undertaken to ensure the scientific accuracy of the study. Firstly, a review of codings, known as retest reliability, was conducted. Seven interviews were re-coded after a 30-day interval. The primary codes extracted from these interviews were compared with the re-codes, resulting in a total of 379 agreements. The number of agreements between codes during this process was 158, and the number of non-agreements was 46. Using this method, the retest reliability for the interviews in this research was calculated to be 83%. With a reliability rate exceeding 60%, the coding reliability was confirmed (Cutrona et al., 1994).

## Results

The current study delves into the intricate and multifaceted impact of sports events on the augmentation of sports participation, drawing from a rich tapestry of findings. The participants of the study reveal a complex interplay of causal, contextual, and intervening factors that collectively mold the influence of sports events on the enhancement of sports engagement. Within the causal domain, the influence of social factors, cultural dynamics, techno-managerial intricacies, and economic considerations were nominated. In the contextual arena, we explore the interwoven cultural, techno-managerial, economic, and legal facets that provide the backdrop for this impact. These multifaceted elements intricately contribute to the dynamic landscape of sports events' impact on sports participation.

**Table 2.**

### *Results*


	<b>Causal conditions</b>	<b>Contextual conditions</b>	<b>Intervening conditions</b>
<b>Social factors</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Social and national identity formation</li> <li>• leisure time enrichment</li> <li>• Social well-being and health gains</li> </ul>		
<b>Cultural factors</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cultural impact via sports events</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cultural background via sports viewing</li> </ul>	



	Causal conditions	Contextual conditions	Intervening conditions
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>National and religious promotion of sports</li> <li>Positive sports attitude</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Cultivation through advertising</li> <li>Social sports attendance</li> </ul>	
<b>Techno-managerial factors</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Productive human resource requirements</li> <li>Diverse city hosting</li> <li>Inconsistent sports definition</li> <li>Sports promotion for all via events</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Over 20 active sport federations</li> <li>High-ranking national volleyball</li> <li>Collaboration with leading nations</li> <li>National events</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Lack of private sector planning</li> <li>Limited inter-federation collaboration</li> <li>Failure to implement strategies</li> <li>Inefficient human resources</li> <li>Lack of integrated MIS</li> <li>Limited event management expertise</li> </ul>
<b>Economic factors</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Benefits of sports event investment</li> <li>Public sports affordability</li> <li>Financial backing for events</li> <li>Government event budget shortage</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Event organizing costs</li> <li>Sports event ROI</li> <li>Economic challenges in sports</li> <li>High sports service costs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Inadequate private sector incentives</li> <li>Financial barriers to participation</li> <li>Societal stagflation challenges</li> </ul>
<b>Legal factors</b>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Legal framework implementation</li> <li>Constitution's sports emphasis</li> <li>Sports event bureaucracy</li> <li>Participation barriers</li> <li>Women's spectatorship restrictions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Constitution violations</li> <li>Sports facility monopolization</li> <li>Public space privatization</li> </ul>
<b>Socio-cultural factors</b>			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Barriers to women's sports</li> <li>Cultural diversity in events</li> <li>Passive urban lifestyles</li> <li>Motivation for participation</li> </ul>

Source: Current study.

Casual conditions: The study identifies the pivotal role of social factors in shaping sports events' impact on increased participation. The study identified social and national identity formation, leisure time enrichment, social well-being, and health gains as social factors. As one respondent, P10, emphasized, "Sports events provide a unique platform for forming a common social and national identity." This sense of shared identity was a foundational element in driving sports engagement. The words of another participant, P2, underscored the importance of sports events in "enriching people's free time and enhancing their social happiness. This enrichment contributes to individual well-being, highlighting the significant role of sports events in creating a happier and healthier society." "Attending sports events caters to our mobility needs, bringing us together for physical activity," as P8 expressed, reflecting the importance of these events in addressing individual mobility requirements. Ultimately, "hosting sports events contributes to improving the overall quality of life," as told by P6.




In the realm of cultural influences, study participants identified cultural impact via sports events, national and religious promotion of sports, and positive sports attitudes, which unearthed the potent impact of sports events on cultural dynamics. A participant, P3, eloquently said, "Sports events directly shape our culture, and the emotions they evoke can be profound." The cultural influences extend to "national and religious teachings that endorse and celebrate sports," as P1 highlighted. These teachings foster a deep cultural affinity for sports, making them more appealing to the population. It is evident that a "positive societal attitude towards sports as a positive factor for mental and physical health" prevails, as expressed by P2. "Increased awareness about sports," as P4 pointed out, contributes to a cultural shift that recognizes the role of sports in happiness, health, and improved social relations.

Within the realm of techno-managerial factors, productive human resource requirements, diverse city hosting, inconsistent sports definition, and sports promotion for all via events emerged as key insights. One respondent, P3, stressed the "need for productive human resources to manage sports events effectively," highlighting the crucial role that competent personnel play. Additionally, "attention to large sports events in different cities" was considered paramount in ensuring widespread sports participation by P10. The "lack of a consistent definition of sports" emerged as a challenge per P4, making it essential to establish a clear and uniform understanding of sports within society. "Promoting sports for all through events" was seen as a "strategic imperative, requiring key organizations to collaborate and coordinate efforts" by P2 and P8.

Economic considerations identified in this study are the benefits of sports event investment, public sports affordability, financial backing for events, and Government event budget shortage. Our study revealed the "positive effects of investing in sports events," P1, and the favorable return on investment, countering the perception that high event costs might pose a barrier. However, "economic challenges, such as livelihood issues and high costs associated with sports services and equipment, impact participation," specified P7. The study participants, such as P1, P4, and P6, believed that societal stagflation, low per capita income, and time constraints further complicate sports engagement, underscoring the need for financial incentives and economic support to encourage participation.

Contextual conditions: The contextual factors, particularly those within the cultural domain, create a fertile ground for sports events to impact on increased sports participation. The study identified cultural background via sports viewing, cultivation through advertising, and social sports attendance as cultural factors under contextual conditions. One respondent,




P10, said, "Providing a suitable cultural background through attending sports events in person or via national media is integral to our sports culture." Extensive advertising campaigns that "draw people's attention to sports and sports events," as highlighted by P12, contribute to a more sports-friendly cultural environment. "Attending stadiums as a social activity" was stressed by P1, P2, and P7, indicating that this cultural aspect is pivotal in encouraging sports participation. These contextual factors shape the cultural context in which sports events are hosted and attended.

The contextual techno-managerial factors identified in the study over 20 active sports federations, high-ranking national volleyball, collaboration with leading nations, and national event distribution present opportunities and challenges. The presence of "over 20 active sports federations reflects a diverse landscape, suggesting a rich potential for sports participation," as indicated by P6. "The ranking national volleyball team is also perceived as an influential factor" by P11. Collaboration with leading sports nations and national events further enhances the sports landscape. As P12 mentioned, "the inclusion of sports in national policies and programs, or macro sports policy inclusion, highlights a strategic approach to promoting sports for all."

Economic considerations within the contextual factors encompass the financial dynamics of event hosting. The study participants identified event-organizing costs, sports event return on investment (ROI), economic challenges in sports, and high sports service costs as important factors. "High costs of organizing events are a recognized challenge, which may deter some," mentioned by P8 and P9. However, our study found that, overall, the "ROI for sports events counters the perception of high costs being prohibitive" (P4). Moreover, study participants P2, P8, and P11 mentioned, "the influence of economic challenges for sports participation is relevant in societies grappling with stagflation, low per capita income, and time constraints." "Economic challenges, such as high costs of sports services and reduced affordability of sports equipment, affect accessibility," said P10.

Legal aspects are crucial in shaping the context for sports events and participation. Our findings highlight the implementation of the legal framework, the constitution's emphasis on sports, sports event bureaucracy, participation barriers, and women's spectatorship restrictions as major legal factors. For instance, P3 highlighted "the importance of legal framework implementation to ensure the smooth operation of sports events." Furthermore, "the emphasis on free sports development in the constitution underlines the legal support for sports activities," as mentioned by P12. However, the study also uncovered bureaucracy-related challenges in sports event organization and called it "hindering the smooth operation and accessibility of





sports events" by P10. Also, "sport participation barriers act as the hurdles on the track of sports engagement, discouraging many potential athletes from joining the race," by P6, and "prohibitions on women's spectatorship cast a shadow on the inclusive spirit of sports events, limiting the audience and diminishing the potential for cultural diversity." All participants unanimously concluded that.

Intervening conditions: Techno-managerial factors are first identified under intervening conditions. The study participants have identified a need for more private sector planning, limited inter-federation collaboration, failure to implement strategies, inefficient human resources, lack of integrated MIS, and limited event management expertise as the main factors. As P11 pointed out, "the lack of proper planning to attract private sector investors and sponsors hinders event success." Lack of inter-federation cooperation, such as a lack of communication and cooperation between different sports federations, could harm sports participation, as emphasized by several interviewees. Furthermore, "implementing strategic plans effectively and optimizing human resources in sports federations are critical managerial factors that could improve event execution," mentioned P2. "The integration of management information systems (MIS) between government and private entities in sports can streamline operations," as P9 highlighted, enhancing the efficiency and effectiveness of event execution. Finally, building "international event management expertise is crucial for successful large event hosting," as multiple study participants such as P1, P4, P8, and P11 emphasized.

Economic factors play a significant role in shaping the outcomes of sports events. The current study identified inadequate private sector incentives, financial barriers to participation, and societal stagflation challenges as economic factors. One respondent, P4, expressed, "The high costs associated with organizing and hosting sports events may be perceived as a barrier, but when balanced against the positive effects and return on investment, the economics become favorable." This balancing act is crucial in the economic evaluation of sports events. However, livelihood and economic challenges faced by individuals can hinder participation in sports, as "high costs for sports services and equipment may limit accessibility," told by P8. Furthermore, "as societies grapple with increasing stagflation, low per capita income, and time constraints," as highlighted by P6, "financial incentives and economic support become essential for encouraging participation."

Legal considerations are pivotal in ensuring the successful promotion of sports through events. This study identified constitutional violations, sports facility monopolization, and public space privatization as legal factors. As one participant, P7 stressed, "The violation of



constitutional principles, such as the free exercise of sports, must be addressed to ensure equal access and participation." Furthermore, "the monopolization of sports facilities and the privatization of public spaces for profit pose legal challenges that require intervention," as several study participants suggested. Rectifying these legal aspects is crucial to creating an enabling environment for sports event hosting.

Socio-cultural interventions are essential to addressing the socio-cultural barriers and challenges of promoting sports through event hosting. The current study participants nominated barriers to women's sports, cultural diversity in events, passive urban lifestyles, and motivation for participation as socio-cultural factors. As one respondent, P2, emphasized, "Breaking down social and cultural barriers preventing women's sports participation is an imperative task." Similarly, addressing "cultural diversity and acceptance of various hosting approaches," as highlighted by P8, is crucial to creating an inclusive environment. "Tackling passive urban lifestyles that hinder sports engagement is a challenge," mentioned P7. "Motivation remains an ongoing challenge but is a key factor in improving sports for all," as multiple participants such as P3, P7, and P12 highlighted.

## Discussion


This study explores the multifaceted influence of sports events on increased sports participation, drawing from a rich array of findings. Through in-depth analysis, the study reveals a complex web of causal, contextual, and intervening conditions that collectively influence sports events' impact on increased participation. Beyond their competitive and entertainment aspects, sports events have emerged as powerful catalysts for promoting sports participation and fostering various societal benefits. The impact of such events extends across a spectrum of factors, encompassing social, cultural, economic, techno-managerial, and legal dimensions. The comparison of these conditions elucidates a dynamic interplay, emphasizing the need for comprehensive strategies that navigate the intricacies of each condition for effective and inclusive sports engagement. The results not only contribute practical insights but also lay the groundwork for future academic explorations in the dynamic realm of sports participation.

The findings of this study present a nuanced perspective on the intricate interplay between hosting sports events and the subsequent surge in sports participation. The bedrock of heightened sports engagement lies in a complex interplay of social, cultural, techno-managerial,



and economic dynamics. Socially, forming a shared identity acts as a powerful catalyst, unifying diverse individuals under a common sports culture. The enrichment of leisure time not only provides an avenue for relaxation but also becomes a communal experience. Contributions to well-being extend beyond individual health benefits, permeating societal happiness and cohesion. The results of this study are consistent with previous research. Heere et al. (2016) noted that sporting events have the potential to unite a nation by emphasizing the importance of national identity. Additionally, Hillman et al. (2021) observed that such events are associated with increased leisure activities. Furthermore, Wicker and Downward (2019) highlighted the positive impact of sporting events on public well-being and health. Culturally, sports events wield transformative influence, shaping the broader cultural landscape. Promotion through national or religious prospects instills a deep-seated appreciation for sports while fostering a positive attitude that integrates sports seamlessly into the cultural fabric. Yao and Schwarz (2018) emphasized that sports events are not only cultural or corporate influencers but also a part of our daily lives that encompasses religion (Jeroh, 2012). Therefore, integrating sports into the fabric of culture resulted in a positive attitude towards athletic pursuits. In the techno-managerial sphere, meticulous attention to organizing large-scale events and the need for productive resources underscore the organizational intricacies that contribute significantly to increased sports participation as Desbordes (2015) suggested that the sports industry and sports events should adapt to new technologies to achieve better outcomes. Economically, the positive effects of investment, public sports affordability, financial support from various quarters, and the challenges posed by budgetary constraints collectively paint a nuanced economic canvas, showcasing the financial complexities that organizers navigate to fuel sports engagement. According to Pawlowski et al. (2014), investing in sports events has positive economic effects on social well-being and indirect sports participation. Overall, these causal factors are not isolated but rather deeply intertwined with societal, cultural, and techno-managerial influences, collectively shaping an environment conducive to sports participation.

In the contextual conditions, the broader backdrop within which sports events operate reveals promising opportunities and formidable challenges. The landscape within which sports events unfold extends far beyond the confines of the playing field, encompassing cultural, techno-managerial, economic, legal, and socio-cultural dimensions. Culturally, the suitable background provided by sports events creates a unique cultural resonance. The meticulous cultivation of public interest through advertising and the communal experience of sports attendance solidify the cultural impact of these events. In order to boost sports participation,



Chalip et al. (2017) suggest that marketing and advertising are the most effective tools as they initiate various cultural aspects. In the techno-managerial realm, collaboration with leading nations, the strategic distribution of national events, and integrating of sports policies into broader national frameworks highlight the complexities of managing sports events nationally. Previous research has suggested that creating a lasting legacy of sports participation requires the involvement of federations and associations at national and international levels through the organization of high-quality sports events (Frawley et al., 2013). Furthermore, Fişne and Hasaan (2020) have emphasized that popular sports have a greater potential to attract individuals to engage in sports activities. Economically, the challenges of organizing events, determining the return on investment, navigating economic barriers, and addressing the high costs of sports services demonstrate the intricate financial considerations in creating impactful sports events. According to Davies et al. (2019), every £1 invested in sports generates £1.91 worth of social benefit in England. However, the impact of sports investment varies across countries due to different barriers. Shipway (2007) pointed out that economic barriers can prevent public investment and participation in sports. In extreme cases, they can also turn a popular sport into a niche one (Fişne & Hasaan, 2020). Legally, the importance of a comprehensive legal framework, constitutional emphasis on free sports development, and the recognition of barriers and restrictions underscore the legal complexities that influence the inclusivity and success of sports events. Yari et al. (2021) have stated that legal factors play a crucial role in assessing the implications of sporting events. For example, Iranian women have been prohibited from attending men's sporting events in stadiums, ultimately affecting their participation in sports (Mohammadi, 2020). These challenges point to the complexity of the contextual environment, one that can either facilitate or impede the impact of sports events on sports participation.

Intervening conditions are crucial determinants in sports participation, situated between causal factors and ultimate outcomes. The techno-managerial sphere unveils key areas for intervention, including the lack of proper planning for private sector investment, limited inter-federation collaboration, and weak diplomacy in inviting prominent teams. In their study, Kaplanidou et al. (2013) suggest that improper planning is the cause of unsuccessful delivery frameworks and failure to achieve desired outcomes in sports events. Addressing these challenges is imperative, alongside tackling issues such as inefficient human resources, the absence of integrated management information systems, and limited event management expertise. For instance, securing sufficient human resources (Chalip et al., 2017), implementing



a proper management information system (Daigo & Filo, 2020), and improving event management expertise (Masterman, 2010). Economic factors introduce a delicate balance, with benefits like sports event investment and public sports affordability counteracted by concerns about government event budget shortages, high organizing costs, and broader economic challenges in sports. Bob and Swart (2010) noted that the high initial investments required for sports events make private sector investment hesitant, making sports' affordability difficult for the public (Lee & Oh, 2016). In the legal realm, the study emphasizes the need for comprehensive legal responses to challenges such as sports event bureaucracy, participation barriers, and women's spectatorship restrictions. Past studies have identified the legal and political issues a sporting event could face. In hybrid and authoritarian regimes, legal barriers are often nonexistent as decisions are made, and financial agreements are signed without national consensus, as pointed out by Földesi (2014). However, to address such issues, special committees with specific jurisdiction are established to resolve them as soon as possible, as mentioned by Jankovic (2020). These issues underscore the critical role of legal frameworks in shaping the landscape for sports events and subsequent participation. Finally, in the socio-cultural domain, the research highlights the necessity of addressing barriers to women's sports participation, embracing cultural diversity in event hosting, combating passive urban lifestyles, and fostering ongoing motivation for sports engagement. Kaplanidou et al. (2013) suggest that the socio-cultural impacts of sporting events are more significant than their economic outcomes. As a result, residents of host cities tend to participate more in sports (Chen et al., 2018). However, participating in endurance sports may require adjustments in their daily lives due to the demands of urban lifestyles (Myburgh et al., 2019). The issue of female participation is not limited to Iran but is also prevalent in other major Islamic societies (Hasaan et al., 2018). Therefore, it is a sensitive issue that needs to be addressed with cultural and religious factors taken into account.

These findings contribute to our understanding of the multifaceted dynamics at play in the relationship between sports events and increased participation. The discussion prompts further reflection on the holistic strategies needed to leverage the positive aspects and mitigate the challenges within the sports event landscape. This study catalyzes future research, encouraging deeper exploration into specific causal, contextual, and intervening factors to inform targeted interventions and policies to foster a more active and engaged society.



## Conclusion

The culmination of this research underscores the intricate web of factors that collectively influence the impact of sports events on the augmentation of sports participation. The current study delves into the intricate dynamics of hosting sports events and their profound impact on increased sports participation. By categorizing these dynamics into three distinct conditions—causal, contextual, and intervening—we unveil a comprehensive understanding of the multifaceted nature of this relationship. Causal conditions are the driving forces behind increased sports participation, encompassing the formation of social and national identities, leisure enrichment, and health benefits shaped by societal, cultural, and techno-managerial factors. Contextual conditions set the stage for sports events, influencing culture through direct impacts, religious teachings, and positive attitudes toward sports. These conditions are enriched by sports viewing, advertising, and social event atmospheres, with the techno-managerial environment supporting human resources, diverse hosting, and sports definitions. Collaboration with leading nations and active sports federations contributes positively, yet challenges persist in private sector planning and inter-federation collaboration. Intervening conditions influence outcomes, addressing issues like private sector investment, event diplomacy, and strategy implementation, alongside economic concerns and legal barriers, while highlighting the need to remove obstacles to women's sports participation, foster cultural diversity, combat passive urban lifestyles and maintain motivation for sports engagement. In sum, the interplay between causal, contextual, and intervening conditions illuminates the multifaceted nature of the relationship between sports events and increased sports participation. These findings underscore the importance of a comprehensive, multidimensional approach to promoting sports engagement and the need for targeted interventions that optimize opportunities and address challenges across these conditions. Ultimately, this research offers valuable insights for event organizers, policymakers, and stakeholders seeking to harness the full potential of sports events in fostering a healthier, more active society.

This study provides invaluable practical contributions to various stakeholders within the sports event ecosystem. For event organizers and sports governing bodies, the insights gleaned from this research serve as a strategic compass, aiding in the planning and execution of sports events. Understanding the causal conditions that underpin increased sports engagement, including the formation of social identities and the enrichment of leisure, enables organizers to create events that not only entertain but also have a lasting societal impact. For policymakers



in the sports sector, this research offers a comprehensive analysis of the contextual and intervening factors influencing sports participation. Armed with this knowledge, they can craft informed policies that address a wide array of challenges, from economic barriers to legal constraints and socio-cultural issues. Additionally, private sector businesses and sponsors seeking to invest in sports events gain deeper insights into the landscape, enabling them to make well-informed decisions about sponsorship and investment, particularly in areas like public sports affordability and financial incentives.

Academically, this study provides a robust theoretical framework that categorizes and elucidates the intricate web of factors influencing the relationship between sports events and sports participation. It contributes significantly to the theoretical foundation in sports sociology, sports management, and related disciplines. Furthermore, the study's multidisciplinary approach, which explores factors across various domains, offers a holistic understanding of the sports event landscape. This multidisciplinary perspective provides a valuable resource for researchers and academics embarking on studies related to sports participation dynamics. The empirical data and findings generated by this study offer a rich source of information for researchers, enabling them to delve into and expand upon the research conducted in the context of sports events and participation. This dataset serves as a foundation for comparative analyses, longitudinal studies, and further investigations into specific causal, contextual, or intervening factors influencing sports participation. In conclusion, this study makes significant contributions both practically for stakeholders involved in sports event management and policymaking and academically by enhancing our understanding of the multifaceted factors influencing sports participation within the context of sports events.

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