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Providing the Grassroots Football Development Model in Iran

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ABSTRACT

Grassroots football is a fundamental and essential part of professional football; therefore, the current research was conducted with the aim of presenting a grassroots football development model in Iran. The current research is applied in terms of purpose and mixed in terms of data collection. In the qualitative part, the systematic approach of grounded theory methods was conducted, and structural equation modeling was used to evaluate and validate the qualitative model. To conduct the interviews, faculty members and sports managers were studied through purposeful approach. In the quantitative part, the research samples included sports managers, coaches and players selected via convenience sampling. Based on the results, causal conditions include factors related to facilities and resources, human resources and managerial factors; context includes factors related to family, education and motivational factors; Intervening factors include economic-political and legal factors; the strategies include human resource management strategies, development of scientific management and coaching, synergy of related organizations and the use of income generation strategies. The consequences include the development of professional football and sustainable development through sports. According to the results of quantitative part, the validity of the research model was approved. the proposed model can be presented as a scientific framework and guidance based on the knowledge of experts for the country's sports managers in line with the development of grassroots football.

Introduction

The development of sports can play a role as a driving engine in advancing projects in various fields such as health promotion and disease prevention, economic development, facilitation of diplomacy in international relations, and also the development of social capital in societies (Yelamos, Carty, & Clardy, 2019). Many developing countries are still trying to industrialize to speed up the process of economic growth and development. Considering this issue, they continue to search for an antidote to

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their underdevelopment challenges, and the development of sports can be a valuable opportunity in this field (Acquah-Sam, 2021). It is clear that achieving these results will be possible under the shadow of the development of sports at the national and international levels. Sports development is a process that provides opportunities for people of any age, with any level of interest and ability to participate, improve and progress in sports activities (Askarian & Raahbar, 2021). In general, studies refer to sport development as an increase in the number of practitioners and opportunities for sport, from low to high performance levels (Barreira, Santos, Mazzei, & Galatti, 2022). The development of various sports has its own special benefits, but the results of the development of popular sports can bring great results at the level of society (Gohari, Hamidi, & Amirhosseini, 2020).

Football is a sport that combines competition, fitness and entertainment, and its contribution to the national development of countries is increasing (Liu, 2022). Its role in the sports industry has made football the most important sport in the world (Gohari et al., 2020). In line with the growth and development of football, it is necessary to plan based on updated and effective approaches for the use and coordination of resources (Junior, Rodrigues, & Leite, 2019); In this direction and in competitive and dynamic conditions as well as in response to continuous changes in the structure of the sports industry, it is necessary to develop and implement special and practical programs and strategies in Iran in line with the development of football (Gohari et al., 2020). The development of football should be in line with better design and methods to promote and increase interest, participation and performance in this sport, and in the meantime, a part of the development of the sport is related to the concept of development and training of talented and elite athletes (Ramzaninejad & Hozhabri, 2017).

Cultivating talents at basic levels in any sport has a direct impact on the development of sports at professional levels (Vrban, 2021). In terms of defining grassroots football, there are different views around the world. For example, one of the main philosophies of the International Football Federation states that football should be for everyone regardless of age, gender, religion and level of fitness, while its main focus in the development of basics football is promoting football. It is for boys and girls aged six to 12 through community, school and club initiatives (Sugiyama & Diaz-Cidoncha Garcia, 2022). Developing players at basic levels in football is the main duty of individuals at all levels, including coaches, clubs and national and international football organizations. It is interesting to note that the majority of professional players have a history of a non-professional club, which indicates that most players should be transferred from a non-professional club to a professional club (Sæther, 2017; Stambulova & Franck, 2012). Talent development in soccer is complex and challenging due to the fact that managers, coaches, and talent developers must replace the focus on long-term development with short-term performance goals. However, for successful clubs, grassroots football development is a potentially very profitable business strategy. Professional soccer clubs buy and sell youth players across continents, have strong commercial organizations, and negotiate large salaries (Ryom, Ravn, Düring, & Henriksen, 2020). Football at basic level and talent development in this field is often done in dedicated academies. In these academies, key roles such as coaches, managers, sports psychologists and other staff work to develop skilled soccer players and create effective learning environments (Kingston, Wixey, & Morgan, 2018); at the same time, other organizations also play a pivotal role in the development of grassroots sports. For example, the role of school in the process of finding talent and identifying potential elite athletes cannot be ignored (Junior et al., 2019); Therefore, a multidimensional approach to analyse the factors that affect the development of football at different levels can provide much better support for managers to identify and develop elite players to achieve professional and championship goals with high speed and efficiency (Vrban, 2021).

The development of football players is a very complex process that is influenced by various factors. In this regard, (Liu, 2022) states that in the world of modern sports, traditional football education no longer meets the requirements of football education. According to the results of this researcher, the use of new educational methods with the combination of big data and the internet is of great importance in the development of this sport. (Machado et al., 2021) state that there are several limitations including individual, environmental and task limitations in the development of athletes. (Schulenkorf, 2017) considers sports development to include structures, systems, opportunities and processes that enable people to participate in sports and improve their performance to the desired level. (Sotiriadou, Shilbury, & Quick, 2008) in presenting the Australian sports development

framework, emphasized the dimensions of stakeholders, programs, processes and paths of sports development and stated that the development of athletes is the most important part of sports development and the role of stakeholders and the use specific programs, processes and paths are essential for the development of athletes. (Askarian & Raahbar, 2021) in compiling the sports development model of Iran showed that the sports development model has five input sections including stakeholders, procedures, processing, maintenance and breeding. In general, the factors that can be significant on the growth and promotion of sports development at different levels, whether at the basic or professional level, are affected by the different conditions in which the development of sports is realized. Positive and negative factors can be effective in this field depending on the studied situation. For example, in advanced countries, especially in the field of football, the economic conditions of the country can be considered as a positive contextual factor, while this factor in a developing country can be considered as a negative contextual factor; Therefore, it is necessary to carry out independent research to obtain comprehensive knowledge in the field of factors affecting the development of sports at any level and area.

Considering the importance of football in countries and the integration of its events and currents with people's daily life, it is very important to pay attention to this sport and plan for the development of football athletes (Ziya, Ramzaninejad, & Gohar Rostami, 2022). For many societies, it is very important to use tools such as football in creating national or local identity (Hashemi & Javadi Yeganeh, 2007); also, football is an important part of sports civilization and an important manifestation of countries' soft power (Lepschy, Wäsche, & Woll, 2018). Football is also a key element in promoting international trade. In fact, football is an extremely important economic and social activity. The increase in the commercial and entertainment element of professional football has increased the focus on recruiting and developing players, and in this area, youth grassroots football is the lifeblood of the professional game, as it provides a base from which players can grow, places are developed and supporters are produced (Bullough & Jordan, 2017).

A special focus on the education of children and youth has great importance to FIFA because of its impact on securing the future of football in the world. The Football Federation of the Islamic Republic of Iran has started its activities in this field since 2012 in this country and is still implementing this project (Samimi, Seyfollahi, Moradi Barzel Abad, Mohammadzadeh, & Safkhani, 2022). The study of the factors affecting the development of football guides us in finding the direction of the Iran's football and shows us a suitable approach for the development of the football in this country based on the governing goals of sports and physical education. In this way, achieving the goals of sports in the society becomes more realistic and unrealistic slogans and goals that will lead to the destruction of sports, society and the educational system of sports are avoided (Razavi, Ghareman Tabrizi, & Fallah, 2016).

The review of the conducted studies indicates the unfavourable situation of grassroots football in different dimensions in Iran, and reviewing the results in relation to the investigated factors can be considered as a guide for effective measures in this field. Professional and expert human resources in the field of grassroots football are among the most essential factors affecting development, Professional and expert human resources in the field of basic football are among the most essential factors affecting development, so that in case of weakness, other resources will be wasted. For example, if there are no coaches with high knowledge and expertise to identify or nurture the talents of talented players, acceptable results will not be achieved despite the financial and facility investment; Also, despite the appropriate potentials of human and financial resources and facilities, if there are no competent managers to mobilize these resources and guide them towards development and progress, the loss of resources is predictable. In this regard, the review of studies shows that the state of grassroots football development in Iran is not in a favourable state in terms of the knowledge of coaches and the learning experience of coaches and managers (Khojasteh Eghbal, Farahani, & Alidoust Ghahfarrokhi, 2022); Also, based on the research results of (Darvishi, Dousti, Razavi, & Farzan, 2018), all three dimensions of the football talent identification system, including structure, process and results, were far from the desired level, which is mainly due to weak management in this area. Financial resources are considered as a driving engine that can be considered as one of the basic resources in the development of grassroots football. Because in order to have high-level human resources, there is a need for acceptable financial resources, and in order to have suitable facilities

and equipment, an acceptable investment is required; however, a review of studies shows that the development of grassroots football in Iran is not favourable in terms of financial resources and marketing. On the other hand, football schools are considered as one of the main components of the identification and growth of talents in sports, whose situation is not suitable in relation to football in Iran (Khojasteh Eghbal et al., 2022); In this regard, the strategic pathology of basic football by (Karimi, Rostami, & Moradkhani, 2015) showed that the strategic position of football schools is in the weakness-threat zone. For growth and development in any field, each of the effective factors must play their role in the best way so that the expected results are achieved, while the results indicate the unfavourable situation of the factors affecting the development of grassroots football in Iran.

By examining the history of football in the past, football managers in different parts of the world, believing that the growth of football in every country has no other way but to follow its own scientific path, have tried to step in this direction (Darvishi et al., 2018). On the other hand, it has been made clear to everyone that attention should be paid to the growth of football from the basic level and proper management in this field should be done in favourable scientific and experienced conditions. According to the review of the background of the research, which shows a major weakness in the field of basic football in Iran, and also considering the importance of the development of basic sports in the success of professional sports at the national and international levels, there is a need to conduct targeted studies in this field. In the current research, the design of a qualitative model for the development of grassroots football in Iran was considered using the grounded theory approach, and then, evaluation and validation of the qualitative model was done through structural equation modelling; Therefore, in this research, it seeks to answer the question, what are the components of the qualitative model of grassroots football development in Iran based on the grounded theory approach?

Methodology

The current research is applied in terms of purpose and mixed (qualitative-quantitative) in terms of data collection. In the qualitative part, among the various methods of the grounded theory, the systematic approach of Strauss and Corbin (1996) was used. Data collection in this section was done through semi-structured interviews. To conduct the interviews, the statistical community including faculty members (with research experience in the field of grassroots sports) and active sports managers in the field of grassroots football were considered. The participants were selected in a purposeful method (snowball type) and the number of interviewees reached 16 until the theoretical saturation. The interviews were based on the causal, contextual and intervening conditions affecting the central phenomenon of the research as well as expressing the strategies and consequences of the development of grassroots football in Iran. The interviews continued until theoretical saturation was reached; in this way, from the 14th interview, the repetition of opinions and overlap of received information was observed; however, to ensure reaching the theoretical saturation point, the 14th interview was conducted with a faculty member and the 15th interview was conducted with a sports director. The duration of the interviews was between 40 and 55 minutes. In order to check the validity of the research results in the qualitative part, the evaluation criteria of Guba and Lincoln (1985) were taken into consideration, which include the criteria of validity, transferability, reliability and verifiability (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). In order to achieve the validity criteria in the process of collecting data and information and selecting the research sample for the interview and designing the interview questions, various sources and aspects were used (multifaceted evaluation). In order to achieve the transferability criterion, all research steps were documented in writing for the possible use of other researchers. In order to achieve the criterion of reliability, the processes and procedures were audited during the interviews and coding, and finally, it was confirmed by standardizing the methods as much as possible, as well as documenting and maintaining all the steps of the research and documentation was considered in the research process. In the reliability check, the within-subject agreement method was used that in this way the accuracy and reliability of the research was evaluated (Table 1).

Table 1. Retest reliability percentage

Interview Title	Total Number of Codes	Number of Agreements	Reliability Percentage
M3	23	9	%78
M7	18	8	%89
M12	20	8	%80
Total	61	27	%82

According to table (1), the obtained reliability is 82%, which is higher than 60%; therefore, the reliability of the coding is confirmed and it can be claimed that the reliability of the interview analysis was appropriate.

In the quantitative part, structural equation modelling was used to confirm the factors identified in the qualitative part. The statistical community of the research in this section included sports managers active in football, football coaches with A, B and C coaching grades and active or experienced football players in first and top division leagues. According to many researchers, the minimum required sample size is 200 (Hoe, 2008; Hoelter, 1983; Sivo, Fan, Witta, & Willse, 2006); Therefore, 250 questionnaires were distributed among available people ,and finally 213 questionnaires were returned. The results of the qualitative part were used to develop the questionnaire of the quantitative part. In order to analyse the data SPSS 22 and AMOS 22 software were used.

Results

In the qualitative part, the opinions of 7 faculty members and 9 sports managers were used. The data analysis process was carried out simultaneously with open and exploratory interviews. In this section, first open coding, then axial coding, and then selective coding, and finally the process of data analysis until reaching the final paradigm model are described. In the open coding stage, 145 concepts were identified, which were reduced to 116 concepts after removing duplicates. In the axial coding stage, it is possible to classify similar concepts in the form of the same classifications. The number of categories discovered in this stage was 32. Finally, in the selective coding stage, the common dimensions of the categories from the previous stage were identified and according to their commonalities, they were organized into a more general and limited category and finally 14 core categories were identified in this stage.

The results related to the causal conditions of the central phenomenon of the research are presented in Table (2). In this study causal conditions refer to the factors that lead to the development of grassroots football in Iran.

Table 2. Concepts, categories and core categories related to causal conditions

Selective coding	Axial coding	Open coding
Factors related to facilities and resources	The qualitative and quantitative level of facilities of sports organizations	The quality level of sports board facilities (as one of the main custodians of talent search)
		The quality of the facilities and equipment of the specialized camps of the Federation
		The quality and quantity of facilities of state sports organizations to dedicate to grassroots football
		Levels of access to sports facilities
	The qualitative and quantitative level of sports academies facilities	Up-to-date facilities and services of sports academies
		The number of sports academies and grassroots football development centers
	Factors related to financial resources	The quality of coaches and technical staff in sports academies Financial resources that can be provided to the technical staff in grassroots football

Factors related to human resources	Factors related to coaches	Financial resources available to talented players
		Managers' financial resources in grassroots football
		The level of knowledge based on the experience of coaches
		The level of commitment of coaches
		The level of expertise and academic knowledge of the coaches
	Factors related to managers	Pragmatism of managers
		The necessity of managers not being result-oriented
		Management stability
		Coherent and strong planning at different levels of short-term, medium-term and long-term
		Program implementation guarantee
Managerial factors	General-managerial factors	Coherent planning for income generation
		Dominance of strategic thinking
		Special attention to deprived areas
		Level of the culture of scientific management
		The level of synergy through the use of the potential of relevant organs and organizations
	sports-managerial factors	The importance and priority of talent search in organizational structures
		The amount of monitoring, receiving feedback and performance reports from sports academies
		Considering the performance indicators of sports boards in the field of talent search and development
		Planning and allocation of resources for holding competitions at the national and international level
		The level of communication with international academies
		Establishment of insurance system in recruitment bases
		Needs assessment of athletes
		Strengthening the volunteer force
		Holding events and camps based on current knowledge
		The priority of basic sports in the policy-making of the federation and, accordingly, the sports boards
		Experience in organizing and hosting international competitions

Contextual conditions express a certain set of factors affecting the development of grassroots football, which provide the conditions for development. The concepts and categories that are categorized in the three cases of factors related to family, motivational factors and factors related to education can be seen in table (3).

Table 3. Concepts, categories and core categories related to contextual conditions

Selective coding	Axial coding	Open coding
Family-related factors	Attitudinal factors	Attitude of families to sports
		The lifestyle of families
		The degree of desire of families for their children to reach elite levels
	Support level	Other family members being athletes
		Accompanying families
Motivational factors	Factors related to athletes	Prioritizing expenses related to sports in the household basket
		The quality of local elite players in the world's leading clubs
		People's attitude towards professional football as a career
	Factors related to sport	Level of commitment of athletes at basic levels
		The general popularity of football
	Media related factors	The income level of soccer in the sports industry
		The level of introduction and promotion of grassroots football development centers in the media

Factors related to education	Factors related to teachers	The spread of sports programs related to football in the media
		News coverage of events in the media
	Factors related to facilities and services	Quality level of teachers
		Level of commitment of teachers
	Management factors	Quality of equipment in schools
		Quality of school sports facilities
		The number of centres for finding talents in education and training
		The quality level of talent centres of education and training
		Levels of macro-planning of education in the field of basic sports
Commitment of managers to update education programs in the field of basic sports		

Table (4) shows the concepts, categories and core categories related to the intervening conditions in the development of grassroots football, which can be seen in the form of two theorems: legal factors and economic-political factors.

Table 4. Concepts, categories and core categories related to intervening conditions

Selective coding	Axial coding	Open coding
Legal factors	Weakness in protective laws	Weakness in protective laws for the private sector
		Weakness in the field of financial and tax support
	Weakness in guaranteeing the implementation of laws	Weakness of protective laws in attracting donors in this area
		Legal obstacles to the growth and development of academies
		Low guarantee of the implementation of laws related to academies
Economic-political factors	Economic factors	Low guarantee of law enforcement in the private sector
		High costs in the private sector
		High costs related to sports equipment
		Economic limitations of employing foreign elite coaches
		Restrictions on providing facilities and subsidized facilities
	Political factors	Being low per capita to do applied research and academic work
		Restrictions related to sanctions and foreign policy
		The political face of Iran

Table (5) shows the main concepts, categories and categories related to the central phenomenon in the development of grassroots football, which can be seen in the form of the theory of attraction and cultivation.

Table 5. Concepts, categories and core categories related to the central phenomenon

Selective coding	Axial coding	Open coding
Attraction and cultivation	Attraction	Maximum attraction at different ages at the basic level
		Maximum attraction of boys and girls
		Maximum absorption in different geographical areas
	Cultivation	Efficient and effective breeding at different ages at the basic level
		Efficient and effective breeding of boys and girls
		Efficient and effective breeding in different geographical areas

Strategies include actions that help the development of grassroots football. In the coding stage in this section, 25 concepts were identified in the form of 8 categories and finally 4 core categories, which can be seen in table (6).

Table 6. Concepts, categories and core categories related to strategies

Selective coding	Axial coding	Open coding
Human resource management strategies	Human resource management strategies related to managers	Promoting the culture of meritocracy in basic sports management
		Determining indicators and evaluating managers' performance based on qualitative criteria
	Human resource management strategies related to technical staff	Improving the compensation system for teachers at basic levels
		Determining indicators and evaluating the performance of football coaches at basic levels
		The need to consider incentives and rewards for trainers
		Employing specialists and experts in the technical staff in different fields along with the trainers
scientific management and coaching development	Development of scientific management	Holding specialized football coaching courses at the basic level
		Holding training courses for managers in the field of grassroots football development at the national and international level
		Carrying out research and research activities in the field of football management at the basic level
	Development of scientific coaching	The existence of databases for scientific and knowledge-based management
		Recognizing technological changes in grassroots football coaching
		Carrying out research activities in the field of coaching and exercise science at the basic level
Synergy of relevant organizations	Alignment	Urges to apply modern knowledge based on scientific research in the field of talent search and talent cultivation
		Holding educational and scientific courses and classes for trainers at the national and international level
		Aligning the goals and perspectives of relevant organizations
	Communication and coordination	The need to align the goals of the private and public sectors
		The need to align the strategies of academies with the macro strategies of sports organizations
		Establishing communication between sports boards and government bodies such as municipalities and...
Using income generation strategies	Identifying the strategy	Communication and cooperation of grassroots football development centers with academic and scientific centers
		Communication and cooperation of academies and education with sports boards
		Identifying and applying strategies to attract financial sponsors in grassroots football
	Developing the strategy	Identifying and applying the strategies of attracting sports Donors in grassroots football
		Identifying the potential of the media in promoting income generation in grassroots football
		Compilation of strategic marketing plans in grassroots football in the football federation
		Requiring sports boards to develop strategic marketing plans in grassroots football

Consequences include tangible or intangible results that are created as a result of the development of grassroots football. These results are presented in the form of the core categories of professional football development and sustainable development through sports in table (7).

Table 7. Concepts, categories and core categories related to consequences

Selective coding	Axial coding	Open coding
Development of professional football	Football development	The growth of the country's professional football league
		The growth of provincial clubs
		Identifying talents in different geographical areas
		The growth of the national team
	Human resource development	Sending elite athletes to prestigious foreign clubs
		Development of football coaches at elementary levels
		The presence of capable managers in management at the level of basic sports
	The growth of the football industry	Income generation through talent centers
		Facilitate capital attraction
		Branding and as a result income generation of athletes
Sustainable development through sports	Economic development	Reducing costs through the expansion of resources and infrastructure in a networked manner
		Entrepreneurship development
		Currency exchange by issuing young athletes
	Social Development	Reducing social problems
		Promotion of national identity
		Reduce discrimination

The final structure of the grassroots football development model is presented in Figure (1).

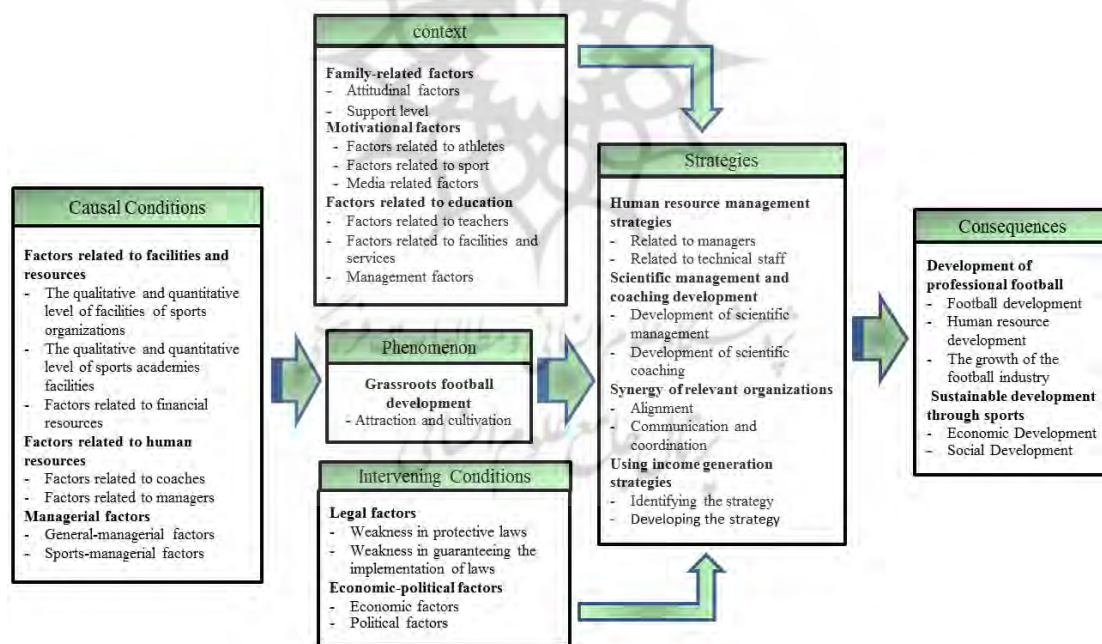


Figure 1. The grassroots football development model in Iran

In the current research, the model presented in the qualitative section is evaluated using the structural equation modeling method. The fit indices of the structural model are presented in Table (8).

Table 8. Concepts, categories and core categories related to consequences

Index	Acceptable range	The amount obtained
X2/DF	Smaller than 3	2.781
CFI	More than 0.9	0.906
TLI	More than 0.9	0.911
IFI	More than 0.9	0.901
PNFI	More than 0.5	0.721
RMSEA	Less than 0.08	0.077
PCFI	More than 0.5	0.644

According to the optimal range of goodness of fit indices of the structural equation model, it can be said that the developed model is supported by the research data. The structural model of the grassroots football development can be seen in the standard state in Figure (2).

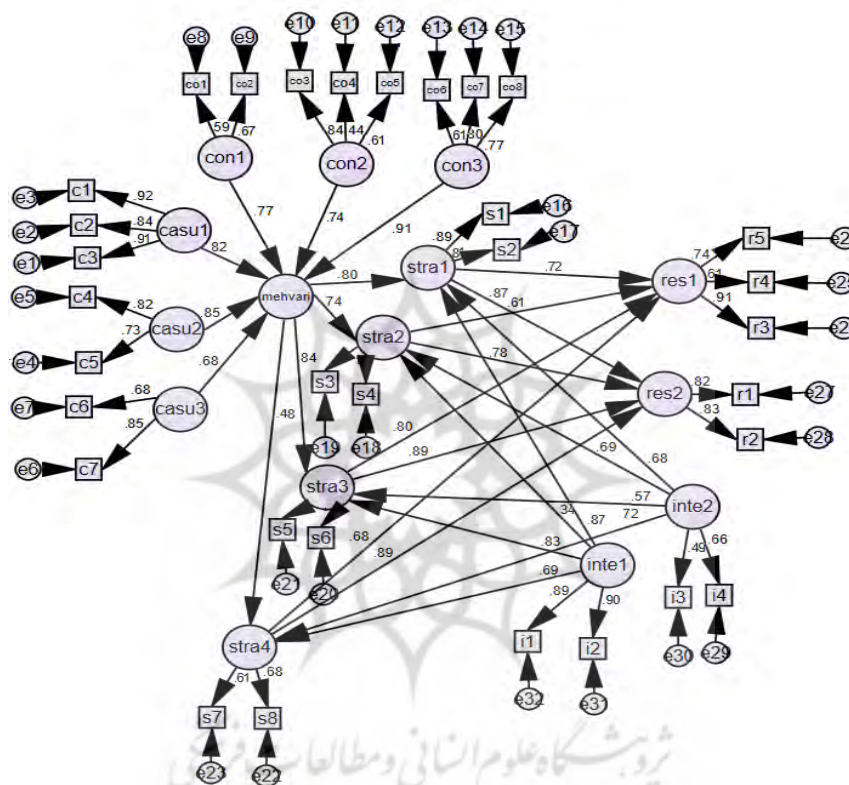
**Figure 2.** The structural model of the grassroots football development in standard mode

Table (9) shows the factor loads of the main structures of the desired model.

Table 9. Concepts, categories and core categories related to consequences

The structural model	Path coefficients	Sig	interpretation
Factors related to facilities and resources → grassroots football development	0.825	0.001	Confirmation
Factors related to human resources → Grassroots football development	0.851	0.001	Confirmation
Management factors → Grassroots football development	0.685	0.001	Confirmation
Factors related to family → Grassroots football development	0.774	0.001	Confirmation
Factors related to education → Human resource management strategies	0.741	0.001	Confirmation
Grassroots football development → Scientific management and coaching development	0.801	0.001	Confirmation

Grassroots football development → Synergy of relevant organizations	0.741	0.001	Confirmation
Grassroots football development → Using income generation strategies	0.839	0.001	Confirmation
Grassroots football development → Grassroots football development	0.478	0.001	Confirmation
Attraction and cultivation → Grassroots football development	0.911	0.001	Confirmation
Legal factors → Human resource management strategies	0.875	0.001	Confirmation
Legal factors → Management development and scientific coaching	0.340	0.07	Disapproval
Legal factors → synergy of relevant bodies	0.832	0.001	Confirmation
Legal factors → Applying income generation strategies	0.689	0.001	Confirmation
Economic-political factors → Human resource management strategies	0.678	0.001	Confirmation
Economic-political factors → Management development and scientific coaching	0.695	0.001	Confirmation
Economic-political factors → synergy of relevant bodies	0.568	0.001	Confirmation
Economic-political factors → Applying income generation strategies	0.721	0.001	Confirmation
Human resource management strategies → development of professional football	0.721	0.001	Confirmation
Human resource management strategies → sustainable development through sports	0.870	0.001	Confirmation
Development of management and scientific coaching → Development of professional football	0.607	0.001	Confirmation
Development of management and scientific coaching → sustainable development through sports	0.783	0.001	Confirmation
Synergy of relevant bodies → development of professional football	0.809	0.001	Confirmation
Synergy of relevant bodies → sustainable development through sports	0.893	0.001	Confirmation
Applying income generating strategies → development of professional football	0.678	0.001	Confirmation
Applying income generating strategies → sustainable development through sports	0.886	0.001	Confirmation

As the results of table (8) show, the path coefficients are significant in relation to all paths except the path of legal factors to management development and scientific coaching.

Discussion and Conclusion

In the current research, a paradigmatic model for the development of grassroots football in Iran was compiled using the opinions and views of experts that its results are explained in comparison with the results of other researchers' studies.

In the causal factors section, factors related to facilities and resources, factors related to human resources, and management factors were identified. (Bimanggara & Mansur, 2020) stated that facilities and infrastructure are one of the important factors for carrying out the training process and achieving an achievement, so that its provision increases sports participation. In relation to football academies and schools, not only football is practiced, but there are also formal educational activities that require indoor and outdoor facilities (Daeli, Pare, & Sudarwani, 2021). In this research, the level of hardware facilities and infrastructure, including quality, access level, number, etc., were considered by the experts; also, the amount of financial resources available in this section was considered. In this regard, the results of (Raahbar, Askarian, Raghfar, & Saffari, 2021) consider financial and infrastructure resources as input in the sports talent development system; Also, the results of (Eftekhar, Gohar Rostami, & Darvishi, 2019) research showed that the competition and training

environment is one of the most important effective factors in the development of successful talents in futsal. Also, based on the research results of (Reza Soltani & Vahdani, 2013), facilities, equipment and services as a hardware factor are one of the factors influencing the recruitment of teenagers and young children in football schools; Also, in the research of (Nazari, Yousefi, & Eydi, 2016), lack of sufficient resources and equipment and lack of financial support are weaknesses in the quality of the talent search system from the point of view of the beneficiaries. Sports facilities and equipment play the most important role in developing champions and are a valuable element in management activities and directing programs. Meanwhile, the results of the research by (Khojasteh Eghbal et al., 2022) show that in the football federation, the facilities and infrastructure of football schools do not have a favourable condition, which indicates the necessity investment and special attention in this area. In the development of sports, different human resources, including athletes, coaches, and managers are involved, each of them playing a role in their own position. The performance of each can play a significant role in the success or failure of development programs. Using a holistic ecological approach, (Larsen, Storm, Sæther, Pyrdol, & Henriksen, 2020) investigated talent development among under-19 male soccer players in Ajax Amsterdam which in this environment focused on the relationship between players and a club community consisting of a team of coaches, teachers, experts and managers, which shows the importance of human resources in the growth and development of athletes at basic levels. The results of various researches show the key role of the coach in the development of football at different levels, especially grassroots football. In the research of (Xiang, Kamalden, Liu, & Ismail, 2022), the knowledge of the coach was identified as one of the effective factors in identifying sports talent; also, the results of research (Cooper, 2020) showed that in the development of players in English football academies, coaching has the strongest effect on the growth of players. The results of (Raahbar et al., 2021) research showed that expert human resources are considered as an input in the sports talent development system; also based on the research results of (Ziya et al., 2022), the development of a talented player in the field of football largely depends on the behaviour of the coach and his leadership style; Despite the important role of coaches in the development of grassroots football, the results of the research of (Khojasteh Eghbal et al., 2022) show that in the football federation, the knowledge of coaches, training and learning experience of coaches do not have a favourable situation that indicates the necessity of adopting and implementing effective strategies in this area. In the current research, management factors in both public and sports sectors were considered. In this regard, the management factor was identified as one of the most important factors affecting the development of professional football in Iran in the research of (Tabibi Sani, Fahiminejad, & Roshan Zamir, 2020). In the general section, factors that can be discussed in any organization, whether sports or non-sports have been considered. Sports managerial factors in the current research refer to those management factors that are specific to sports organizations and its results are significant in the development of grassroots football. In line with the results of the present research in this section, the results of (Raahbar et al., 2021) research showed that the necessity of talent management and competition is important for processing in the sports talent development system. Meanwhile, the results of the research of (Khojasteh Eghbal et al., 2022) in the study of the development of grassroots football in Iran show that the organization of events and finance and marketing performance in the football federation are not in a favourable condition.

In the contextual factors part, factors related to family, motivational factors and factors related to education were identified. In the development of basic sports, due to the fact that athletes are at low age levels, the role of families will be prominent. In this regard, based on the research results of (Naseri Plangerd, Bahrami, Zardoshtian, & Yoosefy, 2021), in the analysis of the role of family and school management in the development of sports talents, the supporting role of families in the form of financial, motivational and social support is key; Also, the results of (Ziya et al., 2022) research showed that family has an effect on the emergence of talent in explaining the development of football talents, and the results of (Eftekhari et al., 2019) research showed that family support is one of the most important factors in the development of successful talents in futsal. Based on the results of (Reza Soltani & Vahdani, 2013), the family as one of the social indicators is one of the most effective factors on the recruitment of teenagers and young children in football schools. (Tao, 2018) also showed that the family support system along with teachers in schools and the cooperation of departments related to the sports system with these institutions is an important factor in the development of championship

sports. Motivational factors can somehow be effective on the development of grassroots football; although this effect is not direct, it can provide a basis for development. The motivational factors considered in this research are in areas such as financial motivation and fame, in this regard, the amount of financial and non-financial facilities of football players and their position in society and the amount of advertising in the media are important. In this regard, the results of (Eftekhari et al., 2019) research showed that motivation and ideals are one of the most important effective factors in the development of successful talents in futsal. Also, based on the results of (Reza Soltani & Vahdani, 2013) research, advertising as an index is one of the factors influencing the recruitment of teenagers and young children in football schools. One of the factors that can be considered as a platform for the growth of grassroots football in Iran is the performance of education in this field. Based on the results of (Naseri Plangerd et al., 2021), the supportive role of the school can be investigated in the form of financial, motivational, and social support. Education and training has always been of great importance in the issues of identification and development of sports talents, and the importance of the breadth and balance between physical education programs as a basic prerequisite for finding talent is emphasized a lot. It is always discussed that the scope and structure of the talent search process depends on the education system, because by introducing talented students, the opportunity to achieve various kinds of success is provided for the relevant organizations. With millions of students, schools are a huge source of different talents in different sports fields. In developed countries, championship sports have a special relationship with school sports. In fact, by using appropriate educational methods, not only students grow comprehensively in the field of physical education, but also their sports talents are gradually revealed in different fields. The process of discovering talented athletes and directing them to the national sports teams in order to participate in organized and specialized training programs is one of the expectations of the society from the physical training of the Ministry of Education (Nazari et al., 2016); Therefore, it is necessary to pay special attention to the talent search in the Ministry of Education and through the development of appropriate programs and solutions, a principled and logical connection between related organizations.

In the current study, legal factors were considered as one of the intervening factors. In the area of grassroots football development, academies, private and public football schools can play a major role, and legal facilities for the formation and maintenance of these centres at standard levels can facilitate performance in this area. These measures can be considered through drafting protective laws, removing legal obstacles and providing financial and tax support. In this regard, in the research of (Askarian & Raahbar, 2021), political-legal platforms were considered as platforms for the development of sports in Iran. Considering the political conditions of this country in the global dimension and the economic restrictions caused by sanctions economic and political factors were brought up as another interfering factor in the development of grassroots football. In this regard, the economic factor was identified as the most important factor in the research of (Tabibi Sani et al., 2020). These factors are considered in the sections of financial restrictions in employing elite foreign coaches, purchasing sports equipment and the low per capita research in the desired field and restrictions in the provision of subsidies; in this regard, (El-Gilany, Badawi, El-Khawaga, & Awadalla, 2011) have reported that people's physical activity levels depend on the cultural and economic development of countries.

Human resource management strategies were proposed as one of the strategies for the development of grassroots football in Iran. Considering the role of human resources, including managers and technical staff (the most prominent of which are coaches) in the development of grassroots football, human resource management strategies were identified as one of the main strategies. In this regard, in the research of (Askarian & Raahbar, 2021), the development of the human system and the development of management are considered to be the procedures for the development of sports in Iran; On the other hand, Armstrong (2006) introduced human resources as the most important factor in the organization, which can positively affect other resources of the organization, including financial and infrastructure resources (Weerakoon, 2016). Looking at the situation of coaches in Iran, in terms of the development of sports coaches, indicates the absence of a systematic structure for the development of elite sports coaches, which necessitates the use of foreign coaches (despite astronomical financial costs and cultural costs) which shows the importance and necessity of implementing development strategies in this field. The next procedure is the development of

management, which includes meritocracy in management, evaluating the performance of managers, setting incentives and punishments, holding training courses for managers. In order to have an effective management in the field of sports in Iran, it seems better to first define a clear philosophy for it in the sense that the importance and value of sports development is clear and understood for all sections especially sports managers. The development of scientific management and coaching is one of the strategies presented in the development of grassroots football in the present study. Applying the results of scientific studies in sports management and coaching in the grassroots football sector will make the results in this sector much more fruitful. In this regard, the research results of (Raahbar et al., 2021) in the design of the sports talent development system model in Iran showed that education and scientific approach are considered as one of the processing components in the sports talent development system. Synergy of related bodies is another strategy that is proposed in the current research in line with the development of grassroots football in Iran. In the field of grassroots football development, there are various sports organizations, including sports boards, federations, ministries, etc., municipalities, media, education, scientific research centres, government, academies, and private sports schools are involved and effective, and the alignment of their actions in the growth and development of grassroots football will bring fruitful results. Using income generating strategies is the last strategy presented in this section. One of the factors considered in the causal factors section was the existence of facilities and resources in the field of grassroots football, and the most important resources needed in this section are financial resources. Financial resources act as a driving engine in any field, so it is necessary to adopt strategies to provide the required resources. Income generation in basic sports has more limited potentials and more obstacles compared to championship sports; therefore, it is necessary to take the measures taken in this area carefully. According to the results of (Nazari et al., 2016), lack of financial support and lack of support for school sports are among the quality weaknesses of the talent search system from the point of view of the stakeholders. Acquiring resources, including attracting sponsors and financial resources, is a challenge for most individual and team sports federations in Iran and an important factor in the effectiveness of the talent search system. (Woo Kim, 2010) considers financial support to be the main reason for the development of sports in the United States and states that if financial support is removed, none of the professional sports in this country will be able to survive. (Askarian & Raahbar, 2021) stated that the development of the financial system is another procedure for the development of sports in Iran. In this country, the public view of sports federations and their dependence on the government budget is a challenge that the sports are facing and shows the need to adopt income-generating strategies.

The development of professional football was raised as one of the consequences of the development of grassroots football. The superior performance of football players at professional levels can only evolve by discovering the talent, growth and development of the players' potential abilities at the basic ages. This process continues with the growth of players' innate and acquired skills at grassroots levels and evolves as players become professional in clubs (Reilly & Williams, 2000). In line with the results of the current research, in the research of (Raahbar et al., 2021), national and international successes, the development of championship and professional sports are considered as the outputs of the sports talent development system; Also, in the research of (Nazari et al., 2016), it was concluded that the development of talent as the infrastructure of professional sports and championships can make the sports successful in the world and international scenes. Sustainable development through sports is considered as the second consequence of the development of grassroots football in Iran. Today, sports are linked with societies in all economic, social and environmental dimensions (Mondalizadeh, Ehsani, Kozechian, & Honari, 2021). In the current research, in the social dimension, reduction of social harms, promotion of physical and mental health of athletes and identification of talents in different geographical areas are considered; The main concepts identified in the field of economic development include generating income through the talent centers of the province, attracting financial sponsors, the desire to invest with regard to income generation, the growth of the football sports industry and finally the country's economy, reducing costs through the expansion of resources and infrastructure in a networked manner, earning currency by exporting young athletes and developing entrepreneurship. In this regard, the research results of (Raahbar et al., 2021) in the design of the sports talent development system model in Iran showed that financial results are considered as one of the outputs of the sports talent development system.

The results of the quantitative section show that the grassroots football development model has a good fit. Examining the relationships between the components shows that among the existing relationships, only the relationship between legal factors and management development and scientific coaching was not confirmed; Meanwhile, the role of economic-political factors was confirmed as the second contextual factor on the development of management and scientific coaching. In the interpretation of this result, it can be stated that considering that the improvement of the scientific level in the two parts of managers and coaches requires international relations to use the knowledge of foreign specialists, political factors can play an undeniable role; also, the costs of training courses and effective research activities, taking into account the cost of equipment, facilities and human resources, require financial resources at an acceptable level, so that the existence of economic resources is required to inject financial resources in this area. In the current research, the main components related to legal factors are related to the private sector and the attraction of financial resources, as well as academies. Laws and regulations can be effective on scientific management by attracting financial resources and facilities, but this relationship is not unmediated, which rationalizes the lack of approval for a direct relationship in this sector.

The review of the strategies presented in the current research shows that the implementation of strategies requires managerial skills and abilities in this field; Therefore, it is necessary to be successful in implementing the strategies and applying effective operational measures and finally achieving the expected results, managers in the basic football sector should be employed in accordance with the required skills and abilities, which requires the determination of management indicators in this field. In the current research, an attempt was made to provide a comprehensive and scientific model based on the opinion of experts for the development of grassroots football in Iran, and it is hoped that its results can be useful as a guide for effective and applicable measures for sports managers in grassroots football. Considering the existence of different opportunities and limitations for girls and boys in this country's sports, it is suggested to other researchers to carry out special researches in the field of women's basic sports development.

Ethical Considerations

Compliance with ethical guidelines

All the authors of the article pledge that they have observed all the ethical issues related to the research in this manuscript.

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Authors' contribution

All authors have contributed to the design and implementation of this study.

Conflict of interest

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