

Decline of Indigenous Sports: Investigating Factors and Consequences

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ARTICLE INFO

Keywords:

Decline in sports activities
Weakening local communities
Cultural barriers
Sustainable development

ABSTRACT

Purpose: Indigenous sports are physical activities and games held at the local level with the participation of community members to enhance social relationships and promote individual and collective health. In the past, these sports thrived, but today they face a significant decline. The aim of this research was to investigate the factors affecting the reduction of these activities and to propose suitable solutions for their revitalization.

Methodology: This study is descriptive-analytical in nature and was conducted in a field-based, practical manner. The statistical population consisted of 200 experts and specialists in the field of indigenous and community sports, from whom 127 participants were selected using stratified random sampling. Data collection was done through a questionnaire whose validity was confirmed through a review of scientific resources and consultations with experts. The reliability of the questionnaire was tested using Cronbach's alpha ($\alpha=0.83$).

Findings: The data were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistical methods, including Pearson's correlation coefficient, exploratory factor analysis, and second-order confirmatory factor analysis. The results indicated that inadequate infrastructure, cultural changes, lack of governmental support, and reduced individual and social motivation were among the key reasons for the decline of indigenous sports. Conclusion: To reconstruct and strengthen indigenous sports, it is essential to identify existing obstacles and adopt appropriate measures to create the necessary conditions for more active participation in these activities.

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Received 19 August 2025; Received in revised form 28 August 2025; Accepted 13 September 2025

Available online 16 September 2025

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Cite this article: Kiani, M., Nazari, L. (2025). Decline of Indigenous Sports: Investigating Factors and Consequences. *Journal of Data Analytics and Intelligent Decision-making*, 1(3), 70-84.

<https://doi.org/10.22091/jdaid.2025.14583.1019>

Introduction

Inactivity has become a major public health challenge in recent decades, with widespread health, social, and economic consequences (Mokdad et al., 2020). Reduced physical activity not only contributes to the increase in lifestyle-related diseases but also affects the quality of life, social interactions, and the level of participation in community activities. Although the role of physical activity in physical, mental, and social health has been widely confirmed in research (Strong et al., 2015), rapid urbanization, new lifestyle patterns, and the lack of natural opportunities for mobility have reduced people's participation, especially among adolescents and young people (Brinthaup et al., 2013). Neighborhoods, as the smallest social units of a city, play an important role in the formation and institutionalization of sports behaviors. Research highlights that environmental, social, cultural, and infrastructural factors of the neighborhood have a direct impact on the health, physical activity levels as well as the collective behaviors of residents (Grossi & Shams al-Dini, 2014). In the past, the traditional structure of Iranian neighborhoods paved the way for the spontaneous formation of sports activities and indigenous games, and these activities, in addition to improving the level of mobility, strengthened the sense of belonging, social interactions, and cohesion of the local community (Gilson et al. 2015). However, urbanization and lifestyle changes have caused a significant decrease in neighborhood sports in recent years (Hallal et al., 2014). Factors such as increased traffic and pollution, reduced usable space, growth of commercial spaces, lack of sports facilities, changes in urban architecture, decreased perceived security, increased parental employment, dependence on electronic media, and decreased social interactions are among the most important reasons cited in previous studies for the decreased participation in sports activities at the neighborhood level (Davidson & Lawson, 2006). A review of the literature shows that four main categories, including infrastructural, individual, interpersonal, and social factors, play the most important role in shaping sports behaviors (Trust et al., 2002). However, a comprehensive study that specifically identifies and prioritizes the reasons for the decline of community sports in Iran has not yet been conducted (Jones et al., 2007). Therefore, it is necessary to strengthen the statement of the problem and pay attention to the existing research gap as a precise understanding of the current obstacles and limitations can be the basis for designing effective programs, policies, and interventions to revive community sports (Priest et al., 2002). Accordingly, the present study was conducted with the aim of identifying and prioritizing the factors affecting the decline of community sports in Iran, relying on theoretical literature and prior studies. The results of this study can provide guidance for city managers, sports policymakers, and social planners to revive sports participation at the neighborhood level by removing barriers and strengthening existing platforms.

In fact, neighborhoodism allows us to reduce the likelihood of crime through face-to-face relationships and emotional control, and to encourage the participation of NGOs, organizations,

and the general public in providing public security (Kargar & Sarvar, 2011). Participatory capacities can be used as part of the local community's potential assets to intervene in local relations (Rafieian & Ahmadzadeh Nanova, 2014) and increase the participation of neighbors and neighborhood people in sports. Neighborhoods are crafted environments. Increasing crime statistics and the creation of problems for children, reducing the level of trust among neighbors, lack of familiarity among locals, the creation of gaps, and increasing emotional and social distances between neighbors, the cultural multiplicity of residents in a neighborhood, lack of a neighborhood council, the diminishing role of mosques as cultural centers, and the multiplicity of religious beliefs among the residents of the neighborhood are among the factors that have been studied in this research as the causes of the decline and lack of development of neighborhood sports.

Additionally, the lack of holding inter-neighborhood competitions by the relevant bodies and the lack of motivation of local residents, the lack of creativity among participants in neighborhood sports to create a temporary sports environment and the lack of adequate funding are other factors. Unfortunately, in our country, no official organization is directly in charge of neighborhood sports, and this sport has always been overlooked by sports officials. However, the findings of Kirke's (2020) research showed that the existence of sports organizations and federations is crucial for the success of certain sports, and the sports organizations of each country in that domain must be coherent and specific. The goals and objectives that are being pursued must be robust and follow a rationale. Gould et al. (1999) also highlighted in their research that the main factor in the success and development of sports in Australia is the Australian Sports Institute and the Australian Sports Commission. Although the ultimate goal of all theories, movements, scholars and politicians in urban issues is to improve the quality of life of citizens (Abbasi et al., 2016), growing and accelerating urbanization in recent decades has caused cities to face inequality in the distribution and dispersion of services, moving away from the path of environmental justice and reducing the quality of life (Abbasi et al., 2016). In contrast to this mechanization and inactivity of community life, exercise is one way for individuals to overcome physical, psychological and social pressures (Collins, 2002). However, increasing the passage of vehicles and increasing the risk for participants in neighborhood sports, traffic and noise pollution, air pollution, lack of proper design of the main street of the neighborhood to build a permanent sports space, a significant increase in television and satellite networks. O, the mushrooming of cafes and giants in neighborhoods, the existence and increasing number of new technologies are among the factors that can be effective in the decline and lack of development of neighborhood sports.

Although the city and urbanization itself is one of the most important indicators of welfare as well as social and economic development, its rapid growth can reduce the per capita access to many social and economic facilities, and thus, its consequences in the form of reducing the level of the quality of life should be shown in different urban areas (Nastaran, Ahmadi and Aghazadeh Moghadam, 2015). In numerous studies, there is a positive and significant relationship between socio-economic status and motivation to participate in sports activities (Santos et al., 2020; Vandendriessche et al., 2014). In addition, among the socio-economic components of economic classes, the income and education of parents is a strong predictor of motivation for sports participation among citizens (Islami et al., 2013). The study of people's views and motivations for sports participation has developed and diversified to such an extent that Green et al. (2002) have identified one hundred motivational factors in this field. A study of the results of various studies in Iran also shows that people have different motivations for participating in sports activities, such as gaining vitality, experiencing happiness, preventing disease, achieving freshness, losing weight, and maintaining good health (Ramezanejad et al., 2014). Colt et al., (2020) also identify motivations to stay healthy and physically fit to

participate in exercise. Maite and Feltz (2016) also examined the motivation of young people participating in recreational and competitive sports and showed that in both groups the development of physical fitness skills and competition is a priority. In this regard, the lack of encouragement among parents, the lack of self-confidence among children and adolescents, the lack of interest in sports and activities among neighborhood residents, and the lack of participation in neighborhood sports due to obesity and unsuitable limbs, as well as shyness and fear of inadequacy in skills among peers, are influential factors that can cause the decline and hinder the development of neighborhood sports.

In addition to the importance of physical activity for health and well-being, neighborhood sports have also played a significant role in cultivating talent in the history of Iranian sports. Many of the country's best athletes have emerged from the dirt fields of neighborhoods and the sports facilities created by local residents. On the other hand, various factors such as demographic and biological influences, psychological, cognitive, emotional, behavioral, skill-related, social, cultural, environmental, and characteristics of physical activity have been identified in prior research as affecting physical activity (Shahbazi et al., 2013). However, research has focused on public and championship sports, and the field of neighborhood sports has not been studied to date. Therefore, this study investigates the causes of decline and the obstacles to the development of neighborhood sports in Iran.

Despite numerous studies on indigenous sports and their role in promoting physical and social health, few studies have comprehensively analyzed the factors reducing the participation of these sports, emphasizing active community participation and providing practical and feasible solutions. Many past studies have been limited to examining one aspect of this issue, such as cultural, infrastructural, or motivational factors, and the relationship between these factors and their impact on the decline of community participation has received less attention. This study aims to fill the existing gap and, through an integrated approach, simultaneously examine all dimensions affecting the decline of indigenous sports. One of the main innovations of this article is the focus on active community participation as the main axis of promoting indigenous sports. Unlike past studies that have mainly examined the role of government policies and support, this study identifies individual, social, and motivational factors and provides solutions that can strengthen the collective and continuous participation of community members. In addition, the use of advanced statistical methods, such as exploratory factor analysis and second-order confirmatory factor analysis, allows for the identification of complex relationships between different factors and provides a scientific and evidence-based framework for a detailed understanding of the decline of indigenous sports. Another innovation of this research is the combination of field findings with detailed statistical analysis. By collecting data from 127 specialists and experts in the field of indigenous sports and using scientific validation and reliability methods, this study is able to provide practical, applicable, and implementable suggestions for the reconstruction and promotion of indigenous sports. These suggestions include improving infrastructure, educational and motivational programs, cultural promotion, and cooperation with schools and local institutions, all of which help create a supportive environment for active community participation. Finally, by providing a comprehensive and practical approach, this research not only scientifically identifies the factors that contribute to the decline of indigenous sports but also provides innovative and operational solutions for the reconstruction, promotion, and increase of active community participation. This approach enables effective planning for policymakers, local organizations, and sports coaches, and can help preserve cultural heritage, promote community health, and strengthen social cohesion. Therefore, this study, as a comprehensive and innovative research example in the field of indigenous sports, makes a significant contribution to the development of scientific and applied knowledge in this field and fills existing research gaps.

Research methodology

The present research utilized a descriptive-analytical method, conducted through a field approach, and was classified as applied research in terms of purpose. Experts in the field of public sports and neighborhoods, including managers and officials of public sports, university physical education professors, physical education experts from the General Directorate of Sports and Youth, physical education experts from the education sector, municipal sports experts, and sports coaches from parks (totaling 200 individuals), were considered for the study. Using the Krejcie and Morgan Table, a sample of 127 individuals was selected through stratified random sampling.

Table 1

Community and Research Sample

Row	Floor	Society	Sample
1	University professors	15	9
2	Managers and officials	6	4
3	Experts of the General Department of Physical Education	45	28
4	Education experts	35	22
5	Municipal sports experts	49	32
6	Sports coaches parks	50	32
7	total	200	127

The research measurement tool included a researcher-made questionnaire on the causes of the decline of neighborhood sports. The 21-item questionnaire on the causes of decline in neighborhood sports, which was scored based on a five-point Likert scale, identified the main causes of decline in exercise in neighborhoods. To evaluate the validity of the questionnaire on the causes of decline in neighborhood sports, face and content validity was used. In the study of face and content validity, while carefully reviewing the texts and literature of research on neighborhood sports and consulting professors and experts, 27 questions were asked as effective reasons for the decline of neighborhood sports. After distributing the questionnaires, the initial draft was prepared and returned to the professors and sports science experts (10 individuals) to assess the relevance, clarity and simplicity of each question. Following the review of the feedback from professors and experts, and based on the Waltz and Basel index, only the questions that obtained a coefficient above 0.79 remained in the questionnaire (21 questions). Subsequently, the questionnaire was administered to 30 respondents to evaluate the reliability of the questions and the overall questionnaire, which yielded a reliability coefficient of 0.83. At this stage, all questions demonstrated high reliability. To determine whether the questions were based on several underlying factors and to identify the number or nature of the factors justifying the overlap between variables, exploratory factor analysis was employed, the results of which are presented below.

Table 2

Results of the Kaiser-Meyer-Ulkin and Bartlett Tests

Sampling adequacy index) KMO(Bartlett's Test	
0.74	1296.148	χ^2
	351	df
	0.001	P_value

The results of KMO test in Table 2 indicate that the sample size is sufficient to perform factor analysis. It is also possible to perform factor analysis on research data and the data can be reduced to a number of underlying factors. The results of Bartlett test also show that there is a significant relationship between the variables and it is possible to discover a new structure in the data.

Table 3

The Results of Exploratory Factor Analysis and Factor Loads of the Questionnaires of the Causes of Neighborhood Sports Decline

Item	Infrastructure agent	Interpersonal factor	Individual factor	Social factor
1	0.481			
2	0.685			
3	0.646			
4	0.683			
5	0.513			
6	0.612			
7	0.511			
8		0.591		
9		0.759		
10		0.747		
11		0.721		
12			0.511	
13			0.746	
14			0.769	
15			0.531	
16				0.608
17				0.626
18				0.582
19				0.764
20				0.689
21				0.584

Table 3 shows the factor loads of each variable after the varimax rotation. In total, the eigenvalue of four factors was more than one (4.875, 2.713, 1.882, and 1.782). These four factors explained 53.50% of the total variance.

Table 4

Mean, Standard Deviation, Reliability Coefficients and Correlation Between Questionnaire Subscales

Factors	Number of items	Average	S.D	Reliability coefficient	Infrastructure factors	Interpersonal factors	Individual factors	social factors
Infrastructure factors	7	3.04	0.647	0.71	1	0.58	0.57	0.54
Interpersonal factors	4	3.64	0.734	0.78		1	0.68	0.48
Individual factors	6	3.01	0.723	0.74			1	0.53
social factors	4	4.12	0.718	0.75				1
Causes of decline	21	3.46	0.547	0.81				

The results presented in Table 4 indicate that the factors contributing to the decline of neighborhood sports have a significant relationship. Research data were collected in two parts: in the library section, data related to the literature and research background were reviewed through articles, books, dissertations, and internet searches; in the field section, research questionnaires were distributed and collected. Descriptive statistics (tables, percentages, means, and standard deviations) and inferential statistics (Kolmogorov-Smirnov test and second-order

factor model) were employed to analyze the research data. All analyses in this study were conducted using SPSS software version 22 and LISREL software.

Research Findings

The descriptive results of the study indicated that out of 122 samples, 67.2% were male and 32.8% were female, of which 51.6% were between 20 to 30 years old, 29.5% were between 31 to 40 years old, and 10.7% Percent were between 41 to 50 years old, while 8.2% were between 51 to 70 years old. Additionally, out of 122 research samples, 44.3% had a master's degree or higher and 55.7% had a bachelor's degree or less. Another descriptive result regards the work experience of the research sample, which 39.3% had work experience between 1 to 5 years, 33.6% had work experience between 6 to 10 years and 27% had more than 10 years work experience. Of the respondents, 41% were formal employees, while 59% were contract employees. In the inferential findings section, the results of the second-order factor analysis are presented to determine the priority of the causes of the decline of neighborhood sports. Additionally, the following model confirms the construct validity of the research tool.



Figure 1

Model of Standardized Coefficients of the Four-Factor Scale of Causes of Neighborhood Sports Decline

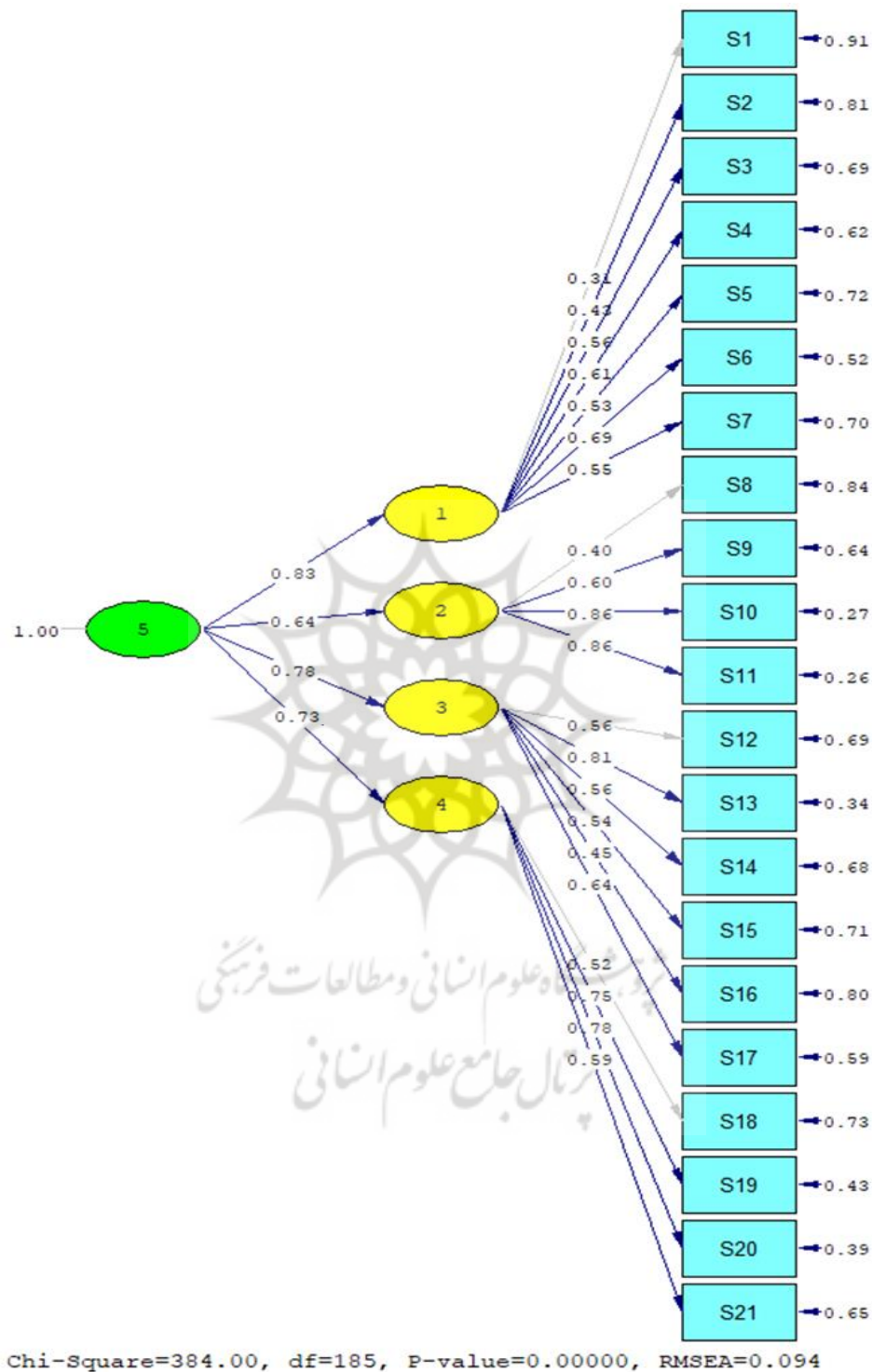


Table 5

Research Tool Model Fit Indices

status	Optimal value	Value	Indicator
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-	-	380.37	χ^2
Optimal	≥ 0.90	0.92	GFI
Optimal	≥ 0.90	0.91	AGFI
Optimal	≥ 0.90	0.91	NNFI
Optimal	≥ 0.90	0.90	NFI
Optimal	≥ 0.90	0.92	CFI
Optimal	≥ 0.90	0.92	IFI
Optimal	≤ 0.5	0.046	RMR
Optimal	≥ 0.50	0.79	PNFI
Optimal	≤ 0.5	0.092	RMSEA
Optimal	1 - 3	2.078	CMIN/DF

The results of Table 5 indicate that the chi-square ratio to the degree of CMIN / DF freedom is equal to 2.075, the absolute RMR fit index is less than 0.05, the CFI and IFI adaptive fit indices are more than 0.90, the good fit index of PGFI is equal to 0.77, and the RMSEA index of 0.094 is at an acceptable level. This indicates that the research model has a good fit and its factor structure is acceptable.

Table 6

Standardized Factor Loads and Significance Level of Model Variables

P_value	t	S.D	Factor Loading	reasons	Q	Hidden variable	Row
-	-	-	1	Lack of proper use of neighborhood spaces for various sports	S1	Infrastructural causes	1
0.001*	2.59	1.16	0.43	Increasing vehicle traffic and the risk for participants in neighborhood sports	S2		
0.001*	2.79	1.49	0.56	Reduced usable space for exercise in the neighborhood due to congestion and increased retail	S3		
0.001*	2.86	1.91	0.61	Existence of environmental, traffic and noise pollution for sports in neighborhoods	S4		
0.001*	2.78	1.54	0.53	Lack of interest of neighborhood residents in sports and physical activity	S5		
0.001*	3.88	1.38	0.69	Disrupting the comfort and tranquility of the locals	S6		
0.001*	4.27	1.47	0.55	Preventing locals from exercising	S7		
-	-	-	1	Decreasing the level of trust of neighborhood residents to participate in neighborhood sports	S8	Interpersonal causes	2
0.001*	3.96	1.33	0.60	Lack of familiarity of neighborhood residents with each other due to the desire to make lives more private	S9		
0.001*	4.27	1.12	0.86	Creating a rift and increasing the emotional distance between neighbors	S10		
0.001*	5.27	1.42	0.86	Creating gaps and increasing social distance between neighbors	S11		
-	-	-	1	Lack of confidence in doing sports among the residents of the neighborhood	S12	Individual causes	3
0.001*	4.69	1.23	0.81	Not participating in neighborhood sports due to obesity and unsuitable limbs	S13		

0.001*	4.56	1.01	0.56	Shyness of neighborhood residents to participate in physical activity and sports	S14	
0.001*	5.14	1.53	0.54	Negative thinking of neighborhood residents about physical activity and sports	S15	
0.001*	3.97	1.04	0.45	Lack of creativity among participants in neighborhood sports to create a temporary sports environment	S16	
0.001*	5.11	1.13	0.62	Lack of ability and skills to participate in physical activity and sports of neighborhood residents	S17	
-	-	-	-	Neighborhood residents do not welcome sports to fill their free time	S18	
0.001*	5.04	1.18	0.75	Significant increase in television and satellite networks and the attraction of families to these media instead of engaging in physical activity and sports	S19	Social causes 4
0.001*	5.07	2.54	0.78	Increase in the number of fungi and cafes in neighborhoods and people's tendency to them	S20	
0.001*	3.46	1.78	0.59	Filling people's leisure time with new technologies (Internet, Telegram, and Instagram)	S21	

The dimensional ranking of the causes of the decline of neighborhood sports is indicated by the gamma and lambda parameters, also known as factor loadings, which show the relationships between the structures or factors. The gamma parameter (γ) represents the relationship between the external and internal latent variables, while the lambda parameter (λ) indicates the relationship between the internal latent variable and the observed internal variable. Based on these coefficients and their significance values, determined using the t-value, it is possible to rank each of the causes of decline in exercise within neighborhoods.

Table 7
Ranking the Factors Affecting the Decline of Neighborhood Sports

Rank	P-value	t	Standardized factor load	factors	Row
1	0.001*	6.85	0.83	Infrastructure	1
4	0.001*	6.42	0.64	Interpersonal	2
2	0.001*	8.12	0.78	Individual	3
3	0.001*	2.83	0.73	social	4

The results of Table 7 indicate that the most important causes of decline in exercise in neighborhoods (based on factor loads) is the infrastructure factor with a factor load of 0.83. Subsequently, there is an individual factor with a factor load of 0.78, a social factor with a factor load of 0.73, and an interpersonal factor with a factor load of 0.64.

Discussion and conclusion

The results of this study, after analyzing the data, indicate that a set of structural, individual, social, and interpersonal factors play a role in the decline of neighborhood sports. Based on

these findings, the following is a final summary and practical suggestions for revitalizing neighborhood sports.

According to the research findings, the infrastructural factor plays the greatest role in the decline of neighborhood sports, followed by individual, social, and interpersonal factors. Therefore, revitalizing neighborhood sports requires a set of coordinated and practical measures. The most important suggestions of this study include the following:

Improving infrastructure: creating and redesigning small, accessible spaces in neighborhoods for sports activities, reducing physical and traffic barriers, and making optimal use of unused urban spaces.

Increasing individual motivation: implementing educational programs and information campaigns to strengthen individual beliefs and increase awareness about the benefits of physical activity.

Developing social interactions: holding neighborhood competitions, family sports events, and creating opportunities for collective participation to increase trust and interaction between residents.

Cultural and media interventions: managing the influence of electronic media, promoting an active lifestyle, and designing programs to replace part of the time spent using technology with sports activities.

Intersectoral support: collaborating with municipalities, education, sports departments, and social institutions to plan and provide the equipment required by neighborhoods.

Urban neighborhoods, as both physical and social spaces, have played a major role in the social life of Iranian cities. Within the framework of traditional neighborhoods, various activities were spontaneously formed and carried out. In such a system, physical activity and sports held a special place, and the neighborhood space provided an active physical environment for residents, allowing neighborhood sports to flourish and play an important role in the development and promotion of physical activity and sports in the country. However, with the growth of urbanization, changes in urban structures, and the emergence of new trends in sports, neighborhoods have significantly lost their prosperity. Therefore, the purpose of this study was to identify and prioritize the causes of the decline in neighborhood sports. By recognizing these causes at the neighborhood level, useful insights can be provided for future plans by officials to revive and develop neighborhood sports at the national level.

According to the results, the research indicated that four categories of factors—individual, interpersonal, structural, and social—were involved in the decline of neighborhood sports from the perspective of experts. Among these factors, infrastructural issues were recognized as the most significant causes of the decline. Factors such as improper use of neighborhood spaces, disturbances to the comfort and tranquility of residents, environmental pollution, traffic and noise, and the reduction of usable spaces for sports due to congestion and increased retail activities played a major role in this decline. Additionally, preventing neighborhood residents from engaging in sports, a lack of interest in sports among residents, and the increased passage of vehicles, which posed dangers to participants, further contributed to the decline of neighborhood sports.

Various studies have shown that the neighborhood environment and environmental factors play a crucial role in facilitating or hindering outdoor movement, and the characteristics of the neighborhood are related to physical activity (Geeks et al., 2006; Van Lenth & McNbach, 2002; Van Lanthe et al., 2015). The neighborhood environment, along with the availability of sports infrastructure and facilities, is essential for individuals to participate in sports and physical activity and to institutionalize physical activity within communities (Atkinson et al., 2015; Lim et al., 2011; Owen et al., 2020). The participation of individuals in physical activity is positively related to public recreational infrastructure (access to schools and recreational facilities) and

transportation infrastructure (existence of controlled sidewalks and intersections, access to public transportation) and proximity. Sports venues have a large impact on a person's level of physical activity (Gordon-Larson et al., 2006; Humbert et al., 2006; Reed & Phillips; Wicker et al., 2014). There is also a positive relationship between neighborhood safety and leisure walking (Cao et al., 2006). On the other hand, the lack of suitable environment and adequate facilities and equipment, insufficient access to sports facilities and the presence of environmental pollution prevent people from participating in physical activity and sports (Aniza & Firooz, 2014). Therefore, it can be argued that the total environmental causes, primarily related to the lack of proper access to sports infrastructure and the absence of a safe environment for physical activity and sports, have negatively impacted neighborhood sports. This decline is attributed to urban growth and the mismatch of urban development with the needs of population growth, changes in urban structures, and the increased passage of vehicles at the neighborhood level, which disturb the comfort and tranquility of residents.

In this regard, it is essential for city managers and sports organization leaders to thoroughly and fundamentally review the context of neighborhoods and enhance sports facilities and infrastructure that provide easy and low-cost access for residents of various urban neighborhoods, thereby helping to revitalize neighborhood sports. The results also indicated that individual factors contribute to this decline, including a lack of self-confidence in exercising among residents, limited participation in neighborhood sports due to obesity and unsuitable physical conditions, lack of skills and abilities, shyness, negative perceptions about physical activity, and a lack of creativity among participants in creating a temporary sports environment.

Various studies have shown that people's attitudes, perceptions, and mental states, as well as a lack of awareness of the benefits of physical activity, poor understanding of the importance of fitness and health (Biddle et al., 2015), lack of motivation, reluctance to engage in physical activity, and insufficient skills and abilities (Allander et al., 2006) have been reported as barriers to participation in sports and physical activity. The existence of such an atmosphere in urban areas, especially in neighborhoods that lack good welfare and economic conditions, means that residents often do not acquire the necessary skills and abilities to participate in sports or are unaware of their potential. Their lack of knowledge has led to less participation of neighborhood residents in sports and physical activity. Therefore, providing the necessary context and conditions in urban neighborhoods to remind and increase sports skills and abilities to individuals or improve a person's perception of their abilities and skills for physical activity and sports can facilitate people's participation in neighborhood sports and revive this activity.

Another result of the study was that social factors were also crucial in the decline of neighborhood sports. Neighborhood residents do not embrace sports as a means to fill their leisure time. A significant increase in television and satellite channels has attracted families to these media instead of engaging in physical activity and sports. Additionally, the proliferation of cafes and other distractions in neighborhoods, coupled with people's inclination toward them, and the use of new technologies (such as the Internet, Telegram, and Instagram) contribute to this decline.

Electronic media occupy a large part of people's lives today. While these media facilitate various aspects of life and provide benefits in learning and communication, they also have negative effects, such as promoting unhealthy habits, including excessive sitting and the consumption of fast food (Pearson & Biddle, 2011; Tremblay et al., 2011). Sedentary behaviors including watching TV, playing video games and other activities related to electronic media are one of the main factors in reducing physical activity among young people (Roberts et al., 2017). Additionally, a study showed that the use of electronic media was associated with an increase in BMI score and the possibility of overweight among girls and boys who did not have the

recommended levels of physical activity (Melquick et al., 2015). Moreover, among people who were physically active, the use of electronic media was associated with an increase in BMI score and the possibility of overweight among girls but not among boys. Sharma et al. (2017) also highlighted in a study that watching TV had a positive relationship with the use of computer games and the use of the Internet (sedentary behaviors) while it had a negative relationship with people's health and scientific performance. Roberts et al. (2017) also showed that the presence of television in children's bedrooms was associated with a high probability of sedentary behaviors, while the lack of a TV in bedroom reduced the likelihood of sedentary behaviors as well as their duration. In other words, the presence of electronic devices in children's bedrooms predicted sedentary behaviors. Given the results of the above research, it can be concluded that the excessive tendency of people toward electronic media and the proliferation of Internet cafes and gaming centers at the neighborhood level, which have consumed a significant amount of time, have contributed to a substantial decline in neighborhood sports. In other words, the previous atmosphere of neighborhoods that encouraged active physical behaviors—such as various indigenous games, group sports, and other activities that promote physical activity—has been replaced by environments that foster more sedentary behaviors. Consequently, we rarely observe individuals engaging in physically active behaviors at the neighborhood level. If necessary measures are not implemented, this trend will likely lead to a further decrease in physically active behaviors within neighborhoods.

Therefore, city and sports managers, along with officials, should develop proper plans to create spaces that encourage physical activity at the neighborhood level. Research has shown that the highest participation rates of adolescents in sports leisure activities occurred when both sports facilities and parks were available, and the social capital of the neighborhood was high (Prins et al., 2014). Additionally, children's participation in physical activity is positively correlated with access to public recreational infrastructure (such as schools and recreational facilities) and transportation infrastructure (including controlled sidewalks and intersections, and access to public transportation) (Davison & Lawson, 2006).

To prevent the uncontrolled growth of spaces that promote inactivity, it is essential to educate the community about the proper use of electronic media and inform residents at the neighborhood level about the adverse effects of excessive media consumption. These efforts can help prevent further decline in neighborhood sports and provide a foundation for the revival and growth of physical activities in neighborhoods. Finally, the results showed that interpersonal factors also play a role in the decline of neighborhood sports. Factors such as reducing the level of trust of residents in each other to participate in neighborhood sports, lack of familiarity of residents with one another due to the desire to make lives more private, creating gaps and increasing emotional and social distance between neighbors are among these factors. Various studies have confirmed the role of social environment and social interactions in the level of participation in sports. They have also shown that neighborhood cohesion or social cohesion is generally related to physical activity (Kardak et al., 2014). Changes in people's lifestyles and the growth of individualism, as well as changes in the structure of residential architecture and urban passages and facilities at the neighborhood level, have limited the possibility of acquaintances, so that even neighbors in an apartment residential unit sometimes see each other less and have minimal interaction. This lack of interaction prevents the locals from recognizing and understanding each other's issues, needs and capabilities, causing people to lack trust and confidence in the neighborhood environment. Increased desire for isolation, more privatized lives, and reduced participation spaces at the neighborhood level have caused the residents of the neighborhood to distance themselves from one another, reducing the level of security and ultimately reducing participation in group and social activities. This issue has

not only affected participation in neighborhood sports but also all aspects of life in neighborhoods.

When there is a feeling of insecurity, people may avoid being in different places, especially public places, and avoid participating in group and social activities by changing their rosemary activities and lifestyle. Regarding participation in sports, various studies have shown that social security, safety or insecurity of the neighborhood or community, and safety and security of sports venues affect the level of participation of people in sports and physical activity. For example, Biddle et al. (2015) underscored that the threatening area near people's houses affects their level of participation in sports. Allander et al. (2006) also showed that a safe environment motivated children to participate in sports and physical activity. Additionally, Weir et al., (2006) showed that parents' perception of neighborhood safety affects children's physical activity in urban areas. Levels of physical activity were negatively correlated with parental anxiety about neighborhood safety. Humbert et al. (2006) also highlighted that security is highly important for young people living in low socioeconomic status to participate safely in physical activity. Davison and Lawson (2006) indicated that local conditions (crime, regional deprivation) were negatively associated with children's participation in physical activity. Finally, Boyington et al. (2016) argued that participation in recreational physical activity was influenced by neighborhood safety. As the gap between neighborhood residents increases, trust among them decreases, leading to reduced social interactions. Consequently, we will observe a decline in residents' participation in group and social activities, which negatively impacts neighborhood sports. On the other hand, increasing social interactions among individuals plays a crucial role in fostering a sense of security in urban areas (Afshar Kahan & Reyhaghi Yazdi, 2013). This sense of security can facilitate participation in group and social activities, especially sports activities.

The local prevalence of healthy and unhealthy behaviors spreads in a person-to-person environment. Therefore, when people communicate, they can influence each other's behavior and promote certain activities. Consequently, city and sports managers, along with officials, should play an effective role in enhancing social interactions, building trust among neighborhood residents and increasing the sense of security in the neighborhood environment. They can achieve this by adopting appropriate strategies that promote the prosperity and growth of neighborhood sports in urban areas.

To rebuild and strengthen indigenous sports, it is essential to accurately identify existing barriers and take appropriate measures to create conditions for active community participation. These measures should address both the individual and community levels to increase both personal and collective motivation to participate in indigenous sports. Improving infrastructure and providing appropriate facilities at the local level, including fields, halls, and necessary equipment, is a fundamental step. Organizing community-based programs and events, such as festivals, local competitions, and training workshops, can continuously enhance active participation of individuals. Additionally, persistent support from the government, local institutions, and non-governmental organizations through budget allocation, supportive policies, and providing legal conditions plays a very important role in creating motivation. Cultural and educational campaigns can revive the interest of younger generations in traditional sports and increase an understanding of the cultural and social values of these activities. Creating incentive mechanisms, such as competitions, certificates of appreciation, awards and symbolic programs, can strengthen individual and collective motivation. Collaboration with schools, universities, sports clubs and local organizations can provide the basis for sustainable participation and facilitate the creation of active social networks around indigenous sports. Holding training workshops and empowerment programs for local leaders, coaches and community volunteers increases the capacity to manage and promote indigenous sports and

ensures that activities are carried out in an organized and continuous manner. Integrating indigenous sports into the educational and training programs of schools and universities can ensure the participation of younger generations and maintain the cultural continuity of these sports. Using media and social networks for promotion and information can increase public awareness and foster the sense of belonging and social valuation of these sports.

Finally, it is essential to establish monitoring and evaluation systems to track progress, identify problems, and continuously improve processes. Together, these measures provide a supportive environment that encourages widespread and sustained participation in indigenous sports, promotes the physical and social well-being of individuals, and preserves and enhances the cultural heritage of the community.

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