

## Providing a Framework of Analyzing the Effective Factors on the Success of Small Businesses of Sports Service

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### Article history:

Received date: 2023/04/30

Review date: 2023/07/25

Accepted date: 2023/09/01

### Keywords:

Success of Small Businesses, Sports Service, Networking, Innovation in Management, Innovation in Services.

**Purpose:** Considering the importance of sports service small businesses in creating a competitive advantage in this field, the present research was conducted with the aim of providing a framework of analyzing the effective factors on the success of small businesses of sports service.

**Methodology:** This research in terms of purpose was applied and in terms of implementation method was qualitative. The statistical population of the current study was all active managers and experts in small businesses of sports services, which number of 16 people of them were selected as a sample according to the principle of theoretical saturation and with the purposive sampling method. The tool of the current research was a semi-structured interview, which its validity was confirmed by triangulation method and its reliability was obtained by Cohen's kappa coefficient method 0.803 and the data obtained from its implementation were analyzed by open, axial and selective coding method in MAXQDA software.

**Findings:** The findings showed that for the effective factors on the success of small businesses of sports service were identified 81 indicators, 23 components and 8 dimensions. The dimensions were included environmental (with three components of government support, legal environment and competitive environment), business plan (with three components of capital, information and work force), organization (with two components of suitability of job and employee and business institutional relations), marketing and information (with three components of marketing plans, networking and market orientation), financial affairs and facilities (with four components of budget, economic fluctuations, infrastructure and equipment and facilities), innovation (with three components of innovation in management, innovation in services and innovation in process), models consumption of sports services (with two components of consumption behavior and purchase patterns) and consequences of business success (with three components of commercialization, branding and sports participation). Finally, the pattern of the framework of analyzing the effective factors on the success of small businesses of sports service was drawn.

**Conclusion:** According to the results of this study, the success of small businesses of sports service depends on many factors. Therefore, in order to achieve success in small businesses of sports service, it is possible to provide the basis for improving the identified indicators, components and dimensions in the current research.

**Please cite this article as:** Heydari Rad P, Hamidi M, Sajjadi N, Rajabi Noushabadi H. (2023). Providing a Framework of Analyzing the Effective Factors on the Success of Small Businesses of Sports Service, *Iranian Journal of Educational Sociology*. 6(2): 97-111.

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## 1. Introduction

Leading in the field of competition and businesses requires quick and timely response and reaction to market intelligence, rapid innovation, and flexibility in the production of products and services (Ruiz & Makkar, 2021). In today's competitive market, customer retention is vital for the success of any business, which is doubly crucial in sports (Hubacek et al., 2019). Today, competition in many industries is mainly based on strategic assets and the ability to deploy these assets. In the global economy, competition depends on capabilities, skills, and knowledge accumulated through organizational processes (Fan & Wang, 2018). In today's economy, business success highly matters. The rapid and complex changes and transformations of recent years have caused developed and developing countries to consider the success of small businesses as a basis for achieving development goals such as economic development, social development, cultural development, etc. Sports is not separate from the business world, and the success of sports businesses can have direct and positive effects on development (Kishani et al., 2020). Today, sports is one of the most significant and vital factors in economic, social, national, regional, and global development, so this industry is one of the world's most significant and most tangible industries (Powder et al., 2018). Sports, the sixth income-generating industry in developed countries, has attracted the attention of many idea owners, sports entrepreneurs, and innovative accelerator centers. Therefore, it is necessary to use strategies for the success of sports service businesses to stay in the competitive arena (Ziyae & Toutifar Tehranpour, 2020). Nowadays, sports activities have a special place as one of the methods of spending free time and health tools, and many people value this lifestyle and give it particular importance (Troilo et al., 2016). As a leading industry, sports organizations and enterprises should focus on market changes and use their competitive advantage to offer new products and services (Lu et al., 2021).

Sports is a growing and extensive industry whose global value is estimated at 600 billion dollars, and the issue of sports businesses in the service and industry sectors is not an exception to this rule. It can play an essential role in sustainable development. Small businesses are integral to the transformation process in today's expanding market. These businesses play a noteworthy role in inventing new practices, leading to technological changes and increased production capability. Establishing small sports businesses generates new sources of wealth and creates new business opportunities (Talebpoor & Moodi, 2019). Today, small businesses are recognized as one of the areas with a high potential for national development, and this is due to the ability of these businesses to reduce the unemployment rate and its social impact. Moreover, these businesses play an essential role in economic development. (Dabic, Stojcic, Simic, Potocan, Slavkovic and Nedelko, 2021). These businesses are considered dynamic behaviors with a great capacity to deal with environmental changes to the extent that, according to economic experts' opinion, small businesses are fuel for countries' economic growth (Humaid & Ibrahim, 2019). Sports and youth departments link the knowledge produced and the business formed in society. Sports clubs, examples of small and medium-sized businesses, fail continuously due to the lack of scientific findings and up-to-date knowledge, and the governing body of sports needs to correctly evaluate and supervise these businesses (Dehghanpouri et al., 2019). Businesses must change their approach and focus from selling goods and services to creating customer value to achieve a competitive advantage. Without creating and providing value that solves a need or problem of sports customers, there is no reason to attract customers and create wealth for sports businesses (Gholami et al., 2019).

Today, most business managers and entrepreneurs say that the present age is the age of customer orientation. Accordingly, the importance of the role of the customer is one of the key elements in the success of organizations, and many theories about the customer have been designed for the success of businesses (Wijaya & Moro, 2022). The task of marketing for the success of sports organizations facilitates transactions. It provides the basis for making strategic decisions to improve business performance by conveying customers' opinions to business officials. Therefore, sports businesses can use new marketing methods to improve performance (Garner et al., 2016). Sports success is a measure of the efficiency and

effectiveness of the organization in a specific period, which is determined through signs in the market, the customer, and the amount of sales of the organization or business (Parkhouse et al., 2013). Business is a conceptual tool that contains elements and relationships between them and explains a company or organization's business logic and philosophy. In other words, business explains and interprets the logic of how to create, deliver, and acquire value in an organization (Funahashi et al., 2020). The success of sports businesses depends on two factors: efficiency and effectiveness. Efficiency describes how the organization uses resources to produce services and products, and effectiveness describes the degree of achievement of organizational goals. These goals are explained in the form of appropriateness (degree of compliance of outputs with customers' needs), availability (physical distance and degree of access to them), and quality (degree of fulfillment of required standards) (Kirkpatrick et al., 2018).

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### ***Research Background***

Jalili, Hematinejad, and Naderi Nasab (2020) conducted a study on the conceptual framework of business process management maturity in sports companies. They concluded that six general perspectives were identified, including market ecosystem (with components of market structure, competitor behavior, market competition, market demand, and foreign market imports), company system (with components of organizational structure, organizational culture, organizational resources, organizational brand, organizational strategy, and organizational technology), process chain (with components of process design management, supply process management, production process management, packaging process management, marketing process management, distribution process management, and sales process management), process performance (with components of process quality management, process time management, procurement management, process communication management, process risk management, process financial management, and process knowledge management), process management (with components of process design, process implementation, process monitoring and control, and process reengineering), and business process management maturity (with components of technical maturity, communicative maturity, supervisory maturity, performance maturity, and leadership maturity).

Hosseinpour, Jamshidi, Karimi, and Bakhsham (2020) conducted a study entitled "Designing the pattern of factors affecting the success of small and medium enterprises using a structural interpretive approach" and concluded that these factors include the use of specialized consultants, the level of manager's experience and skills, the support and commitment of management, the presence of facilitating laws and the absence of

inhibitory laws, the ability of the business to compete, comprehensive government support, the level of education of the manager or business owner, the social capital of the business, human resource management actions, the use of information technology in the business, financial capital and access to it, business innovation, internal communications of the business, the dominant organizational culture of the business, business networking, support from friends and family, and organizational infrastructure.

Bararzadeh, Razavi, Sajjadi, Amirnejad, and Mohammadi (2019) conducted a study on the factors affecting managers' behavior in utilizing knowledge management in sports businesses and concluded that organizational resources, equipment, direction, and outlook as background conditions, knowledge utilization, organizational communication, responsiveness, group participation in the organization, the use of technology and administrative automation, and the use of information management systems as causal conditions, and employee characteristics, management skills, and organizational structure as intervening conditions, all have an impact on managers' behavior in utilizing knowledge management in sports businesses.

Gholami et al. (2019) conducted a study on the proposed value to customers in the business model of sports businesses. They found that providing educational services to customers, consulting services, welfare services, health services, fitness and recreational services, addressing emotional needs, sports medicine services, addressing financial needs, and selling sports products were the most important values that can be offered in sports businesses.

Azimdelarestaghi, Razavi, and Boroumand (2018) conducted a study on the underlying factors influencing strategic entrepreneurship in sports businesses and found that six components, including government support policies, legal and regulatory factors, educational system, cultural factors, business policies, and governance factors were identified.

Nobakht, Ehsani, Koozehchian, and Amiri (2015) conducted a study on the underlying factors affecting the success of small and medium-sized sports businesses and concluded that owners of these businesses should focus on developing appropriate business plans, improving marketing activities, networking, utilizing government support, technological development, and enhancing entrepreneurial readiness.

Azimzadeh, Ehsani, Kordnaeij, Kozechian, and Pitts (2014) conducted a study on the startup model of small and medium-sized sports businesses and found that three influential factors included individual factors (including entrepreneurial personality traits and entrepreneurial skills), environmental factors (including political, economic, social, cultural, and technological factors), and capital factors (including private resources, debt and loans, and capital and shares).

Previous research reviews indicate that various factors have been investigated in the sports services industry. However, generally, the dimensions and stages from environment to business outcomes of small sports service businesses have yet to be examined. However, obtaining comprehensive information about small sports service businesses requires a systematic analysis to assist professionals and planners in ensuring their success. Additionally, small sports service businesses can be a suitable solution to overcome the problem of unemployment among sports graduates. Without a doubt, identifying the important factors in establishing small sports service businesses before their establishment can provide good knowledge to entrepreneurs and help them succeed. Furthermore, the results of this study can assist enthusiasts of small sports service businesses and government and private sports institutions in achieving success in this field. Therefore, considering the importance of small sports service businesses in creating a competitive advantage in this field, this present study provided a framework for analyzing the factors influencing the success of small sports service businesses.

## 2. Methodology

This research, in terms of purpose, was applied and was qualitative in terms of implementation method. The statistical population of the present study consisted of all managers and experts active in small sports

service businesses, and a total of 16 of them were selected as samples based on theoretical saturation and purposive sampling. This research was conducted in the years 2022-2023 on managers and experts of sports service clubs, sports management and marketing professors, managers and experts of sports clinics, coaches, and active athletes in the field of sports services. In purposive sampling, samples are selected based on executive experience and appropriate expertise, sports job history, willingness to participate in the research, and acceptance of interview recordings. According to theoretical saturation, there is no specific rule for selecting samples before starting the research, and sampling and interviewing them continues until new samples cannot add new findings to previous ones. The position, number, and percentage of research samples in Table 1 are reported.

**Table 1. The position, number and percentage of samples**

Position	N	Percentage
Managers and experts of sports services clubs	5	31.2
Sports management and marketing professors	3	18.7
Managers and experts of sports services clinics	6	37.5
Coaches and active athletes in sports services	2	12.5
Total	16	100.0

According to the results of Table 1, most of the samples in the present study were managers and experts of sports clinics (6 individuals, equivalent to 37.5%), and fewer of them were coaches and active athletes in the field of sports services (2 individuals, equivalent to 12.5%).

The data collection tool used in this research was a semi-structured interview, with questions designed based on theoretical foundations with the help of supervisors and advisors. In this study, there were five main questions and several sub-questions. The main questions were asked to all interviewees. However, the sub-questions were only asked of participants who had difficulty understanding the main question or deviated from the framework of the main question during their responses. The interviews were conducted individually and lasted about 45 to 65 minutes. Important and key points were noted during the interviews, and the interviews were recorded to review them again and prevent any loss of information. Another critical point is that the validity of the interviews was confirmed using the triangulation method, and their reliability was obtained using Cohen's kappa coefficient method with a value of 0.803.

The implementation stages of the present research were as follows: First, based on theoretical foundations and with the help of supervisors, questions were designed for interviews with experts. In the next stage, inclusion criteria were determined, and samples were selected based on these criteria using purposive sampling. The samples were justified about the importance and necessity of the research, and the need to observe ethical considerations for them was explained. Additionally, the conditions for participating in the research, such as the location and time of the interview and recording of the interviews for review, were explained to the samples, and their consent to participate in the research was obtained. The interviews were conducted individually and question by question at a predetermined time and place, and the interviews were recorded in addition to note-taking by the interviewer. At the end of the interview, participants were thanked and appreciated for participating in the research and providing their information to the interviewer and researchers of the present study.

In this study, the data obtained from conducting semi-structured interviews were analyzed using open, axial, and selective coding methods in MAXQDA software.

### 3. Findings

The samples consist of 16 individuals, and the findings were extracted based on interviews. The results of open, central, and selective coding to analyze the factors affecting the success of small sports service businesses were reported in Table 2.

**Table 2. The results of open, axial, and selective coding to analyze the factors affecting the success of small sports service businesses**

Dimension	Component	Indicator
Environment	Government support	1. Government support and information for sports organizations
		2. The position of sports in national documents and programs
		3. The level of government ownership in the sports sector
		4. Defining a role for non-sports organizations to participate in sports development
		5. Government economic policy and planning for the sports service industry
		6. Tax exemptions and economic incentives for sports service businesses
	Legal environment	7. Organizing legal and physical economic activities in the sports service sector
		8. Legal and legal support for sports service business brands
		9. Alignment of national financial laws with sports business development
	Competitive environment	10. Analysis of competitors in the sports service industry
		11. Understanding customer expectations of sports services
		12. Market research and business requirements for sports services
Business plan	Capital	13. The cost of sports in households and institutions' shopping and consumption basket
		14. Resources and financial support allocated by the government for sports development
		15. Allocation of budget and government resources based on priorities
		16. Provision of supportive facilities for public sports centers
	Information	17. Utilization of scientific and research productions in providing innovative sports services
		18. Awareness and transparency of business goals, mission, and vision for sports services
		19. Research and development program with investment
		20. Utilization and application of knowledge in providing sports services
	Workforce	21. Human resource capability
		22. Policies for attracting and retaining coaches and service providers
		23. Empowerment of the workforce
Organization	Job and employee fit	24. Establishing necessary communication between different business units and experts
		25. Creating task groups for providing sports services

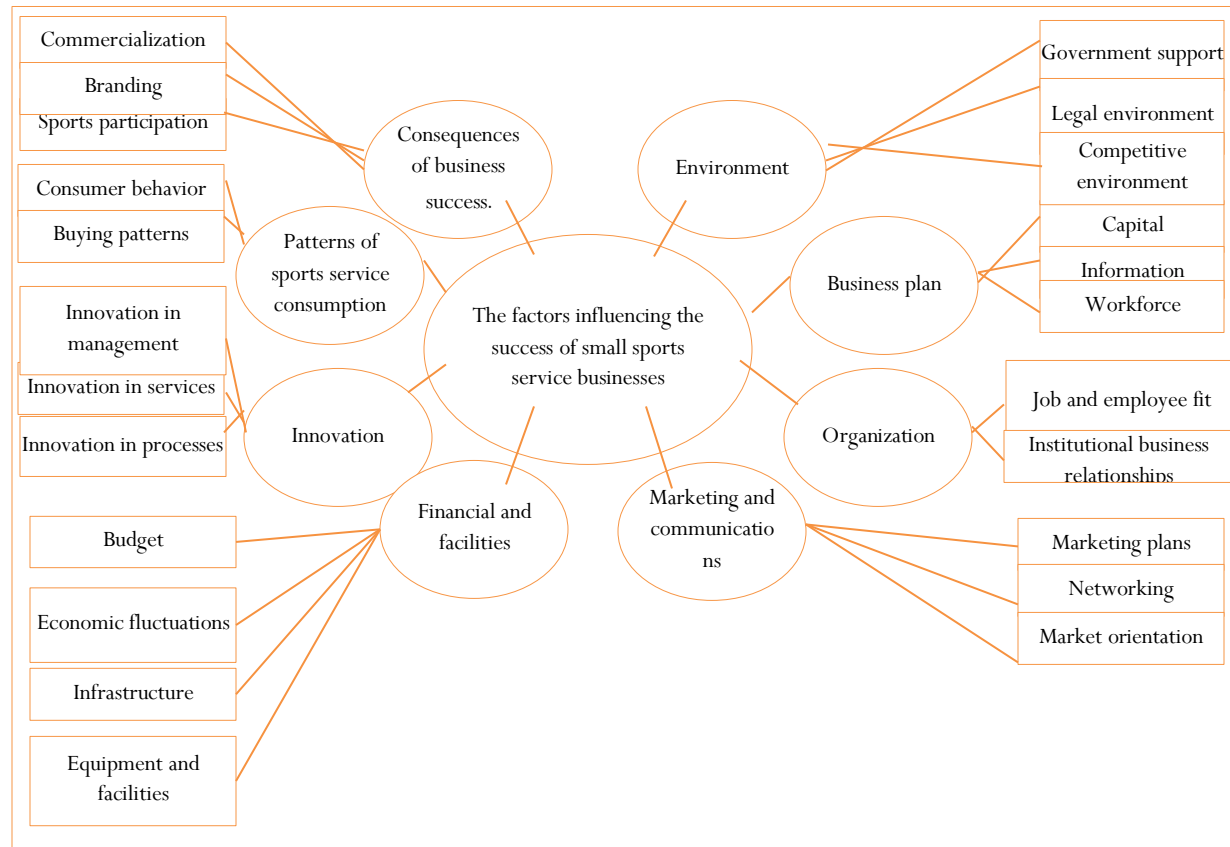
Marketing and communications	Institutional business relationships	26. Enhancing the knowledge of active individuals in the sports service business through training courses
		27. Level of communication and collaboration of sports service businesses with competitors
		28. Level of communication and collaboration of sports service businesses with the community
		29. Level of communication and collaboration of sports service businesses with designers and consultants
	Marketing plans	30. Utilization of marketing teams and development of marketing plans
		31. Utilization of various marketing and advertising methods
		32. Utilization of regional and national sports media for advertising sports services
		33. Role of virtual space and websites in marketing
	Networking	34. Development of coordinating intermediaries and structures in the sports service sector
		35. Division of labor and delegation of authority among sports organizations in the development and provision of sports services
		36. Attracting users by considering their interests
		37. Importance of public presence
	Market orientation	38. Interaction with virtual space activists
		39. Mapping stakeholders and public presence in the sports business space
		40. Use of customer interaction systems for selling sports services
		41. Online responsiveness to customers in minimum time
Financial and facilities	Budget	42. Possibility of communication between customers and using word-of-mouth advertising
		43. Cost and time for the success of sports services business
		44. Cost and time for comprehensive design of sports services business
	Economic fluctuations	45. Support and technical design costs of sports facilities
		46. Effects of severe exchange rate fluctuations on the prices of sports services provided
		47. Continuous change and modification of prices in the sale of sports services
	Infrastructure	48. Lack of government recognition of sports services business
		49. Quality of engineering and safety of sports infrastructure
		50. Accessibility to sports facilities and spaces
		51. Proportionality of sports facilities and space distribution based on sports population
	Equipment and facilities	52. Architecture of sports spaces
		Equipment and facilities
		54. Use of innovative equipment and tools for providing sports services
		55. Use of sports facilities and equipment with beautiful design

Innovation	Innovation in management	56. Research and use of innovative management systems for better management of sports services business
		57. Use of innovative evaluation systems for better management of sports services business
		58. Pioneering in providing innovative management systems in sports services business
	Innovation in services	59. Offering new sports services on social media
		60. Training sports club employees for innovation
		61. Offering new services in sports business
	Innovation in process	62. Continuous changes in the process of providing sports services
		63. Searching and researching new methods of providing sports services for sports service providers
		64. Continuous leadership in providing innovative methods and processes for sports services
65. Competing with new methods and processes offered by competitors and providing better methods and processes compared to competitors		
Patterns of sports service consumption	Consumer behavior	66. Customer orientation towards sports in the target community
		67. Consumption preferences among sports customers
		68. Interest in using exciting sports and enjoying them
		69. Customer expectations for providing innovative sports services
	Buying patterns	70. Criteria for selecting services by customers
		71. Customer access to provided sports services
		72. How to obtain information about sports services
Consequences of business success	Commercialization	73. Branding of sports services business
		74. Cultivating sports consumption
		75. Providing innovative sports services using standard equipment
	Branding	76. Providing sports services tailored to the needs and interests of the community
		77. Institutionalizing competitiveness in the sports services business in the country
		78. Efficient management of the sports services industry and market
		79. Increasing the presence of families in sports activities
	Sports participation	80. Increasing the presence of peers and friends in sports activities
81. Importance of schools' participation in sports activities		

According to the results in Table 2, 81 indicators, 23 components, and eight dimensions were identified as the factors influencing the success of small sports service businesses. These dimensions included environmental factors (with three components: government support, legal environment, and competitive environment), business plan (with three components: capital, information, and workforce), organization (with two components: job fit and institutional relationships), marketing and communications (with three components: marketing plans, networking, and market orientation), financial and facilities (with four components: budget, economic fluctuations, infrastructure and equipment), innovation (with three components: innovation in management, innovation in services, and innovation in processes), patterns of

sports service consumption (with two components: consumption behavior and purchasing patterns), and consequences of business success (with three components: commercialization, branding, and sports participation).

Finally, the framework for analyzing the factors influencing the success of small sports service businesses is depicted in Figure 1.



**Figure 1. Model of the framework for the analysis of factors affecting the success of small sports service businesses**

#### 4. Conclusion

This research was conducted to provide a framework for analyzing the factors influencing the success of small sports service businesses. One of the important innovations of this study was the relatively comprehensive examination of the success of small sports service businesses, in which the framework was identified and explained scientifically.

The findings of this study showed that 81 indicators, 23 components, and eight dimensions were identified as the factors influencing the success of small sports service businesses. These dimensions included environmental factors (with three components: government support, legal environment, and competitive environment), business plan (with three components: capital, information, and workforce), organization (with two components: job fit and institutional relationships), marketing and communications (with three components: marketing plans, networking, and market orientation), financial and facilities (with four components: budget, economic fluctuations, infrastructure and equipment), innovation (with three components: innovation in management, innovation in services, and innovation in processes), patterns of sports service consumption (with two components: consumption behavior and purchasing patterns), and

consequences of business success (with three components: commercialization, branding, and sports participation). The findings of this study were consistent with the findings of studies conducted by Jalili et al. (2020), Hosseinpour et al. (2020), Bararzadeh et al. (2019), Gholami et al. (2019), Azimidelarestaghi et al. (2018), Nobakht et al. (2015), and Azimzadeh et al. (2014) in some aspects.

This study's environmental dimension consisted of three components: government support, legal environment, and competitive environment. In the present study, the environment was considered an ecosystem and a precursor, and some studies emphasized the role of the environment as a key and active variable in the sports service industry. In contrast, others evaluated it as active and dynamic. Since all factors outside the organization potentially affect all or part of the organization, it can be said that the business environment can directly impact small sports service businesses. According to the interview participants, small sports service businesses require conditions that enable them to participate in sports service markets, and this will be achieved if sports institutions and government agencies provide the necessary support for various parts of the Iranian sports service market. Although the interviewees believed that government support for sports service businesses could contribute to their success, managerial and informational support for sports organizations by government agencies, the position of sports in national documents and plans, the level of government ownership in the sports sector, defining roles for non-sports organizations to participate in sports development, government economic policy-making and planning for the sports industry in the sports service sector, tax exemptions, and economic incentives for businesses related to sports services are among the factors for the success of sports service businesses.

The business plan dimension includes three capital, information, and workforce components. Capital indicates that the participants in the research believed that in order to succeed in small sports services businesses, resources, and financial support allocated by the government to sports development, budget allocation and government resources based on priorities, and granting supportive facilities for public sports centers can be used by incorporating sports into the shopping basket and consumption of households and institutions. Therefore, it is possible to improve sports services businesses' competitive capacity and success using material resources. The informational component indicates that through the use of scientific and research productions to provide innovative sports services, awareness and transparency of the goals, mission, and vision of sports services businesses, research, and development or investment plans, and the extent of using and applying knowledge in providing sports services, small sports services businesses can be successful. In addition, interviewees believed that using specialized and capable human resources and recruitment and retention policies for coaches and service providers can lead to the success of sports services businesses.

The organization dimension consists of two components: job fit and employee and institutional relationships. In the job fit and employee component, experts believed that by establishing the necessary communication between different parts of the business with specialized individuals, creating task groups for providing sports services, and improving the knowledge of active individuals in sports services businesses through training courses, it can be effective in the success of small sports services businesses. Therefore, making appropriate decisions to make organizational leisure programs enjoyable will increase organizational planning and organization among employees, the success of individuals in leisure time, and employees' ability at the end of leisure time. In the institutional relationships component, experts stated that the communication and alliance of sports services businesses with competitors, the community, designers, and consultants can be effective in the success of small sports services businesses. Therefore, social networks have provided opportunities to instill positive cultures in society gradually, and physical activity can also benefit from the potential of social networks. Various evidence suggests that the developments of the past

two decades in civic and social life have led to a reduction in direct interactions between social classes and different strata, and this issue itself leads to a reduction in mutual recognition between reference groups in society. Given that sports participation, media participation, and social capital are linked, individuals' compatibility plays an important role in starting, maintaining, and developing social relationships.

The marketing and information dimension includes three components: marketing plans, networking, and market orientation. In marketing plans, interviewees stated that by employing a marketing team and developing a marketing plan, using various marketing methods and advertising, using regional and national sports media for advertising sports services, and using virtual spaces and websites for marketing, it is possible to take steps towards the success of sports services businesses. In the networking component, by developing coordinating intermediary structures in the sports services sector, dividing tasks and delegating authority among sports organizations in the development and provision of sports services, attracting users by considering their interests, giving importance to people's presence, interacting with virtual space activists, and drawing a stakeholder network and people's presence in the sports business space, it is possible to take steps towards the success of sports services businesses. In the market orientation component, interviewees stated that through the use of a customer interaction system with each other for selling sports services, online customer response in the minimum time, the possibility of communication between customers, and the use of word-of-mouth advertising, it is possible to take steps towards the success of sports services businesses.

The financial and facility dimension includes four components: budget, economic fluctuations, infrastructure, and equipment and facilities, which can contribute to the success of small sports service businesses. Interviewees believed that using a structured program would reduce the costs associated with designing a business, reduce support costs, and take steps towards the success of a sports service business through a cohesive technical plan. Although budget and financial problem-solving are of paramount importance at the beginning of small sports service businesses, economic fluctuations can disrupt the success of sports service businesses, and problems related to exchange rates, continuous changes and adjustments to sports service rates, and the government's lack of recognition of sports service businesses can disrupt the success of these businesses and pose challenges for sports service providers. In addition, infrastructure factors can effectively improve the delivery of sports services and facilitate the success of business processes. Equipment and facilities can also improve the performance of small sports service businesses, as interviewees stated that by using specialized and standard equipment for various sports fields, using modern equipment and facilities to provide sports services, and using beautiful designs for sports equipment and facilities, steps can be taken towards the success of sports service businesses .

The innovation dimension consists of three components: innovation in management, innovation in services, and innovation in processes. From the perspective of the present researchers, through research and the use of modern management systems for better management of sports service businesses, the use of modern evaluation systems for better management of sports service businesses, training of sports club employees for innovation, continuous changes in the process of providing sports services, continuous leadership in providing innovative sports services and providing better procedures and processes than competitors can be taken to achieve the success of sports service businesses. Innovation in sports businesses is an opportunity for their growth, with a large portion of the revenue of major sports clubs coming from innovations such as insurance for new seats and luxury suites. Innovation is the main factor in increasing the satisfaction of sports enthusiasts and can influence consumers' acceptance of new sports services. With the growth and development of equipment, technology, and information, the level of knowledge and awareness of sports consumers about the services provided at events has increased, so it is no longer easy to stand against

customers. Innovation and ideation in sports service clubs are the only way to increase competitive advantage and visibility in today's competitive markets.

The patterns of sports service consumption dimension includes two components: consumption behavior and purchasing patterns. Consumption behavior is a cultural component, and the dominant culture in the country is such that participation in sports activities is at a low level. According to the interviewees, small sports service businesses should consider the level of customer involvement in sports, customer preferences, interest in participating in exciting sports, enjoyment of it, and customer expectations for the services provided. They should provide services that align with customer preferences and tastes to compete effectively. Needs and desires influence consumption patterns, and their lifestyles should be studied to understand customer consumption and purchasing patterns to offer sports services that meet their needs and interests and gain a suitable share of the sports service market. Additionally, to expand the consumption of sports services and capture a larger market share, businesses need to know and understand customer consumption patterns. Therefore, it is necessary to research customer service selection criteria, customer access to services, and how they obtain information about services to identify and address customer needs and desires in this area.

The consequences of the business success dimension had three components: commercialization, branding, and sports participation. According to the interviewees, small sports service businesses should strive to commercialize their services by enhancing their brand, promoting sports consumption culture, and offering innovative sports services with standardized equipment. The enhancement of brand and branding for small sports service businesses should be considered as a consequence of sports success. The interviewees believed that sports service businesses could enhance their brand in society by offering sports services that align with the community's needs and interests, institutionalizing competitiveness in the sports service business in the country, and making the management of the sports industry and market more efficient. Additionally, increasing sports participation can be one of the consequences of success for small sports service businesses. Suppose a sports service business addresses sports issues and problems in a manner that is suitable and relevant to the community. In that case, it can achieve business success and increase family participation in sports activities, increase peer and friend participation in sports activities, and emphasize the importance of schools' participation in sports activities.

This research was a qualitative study and encountered all the limitations of this method. Additionally, the population of this study was limited to managers and experts active in small sports service businesses. Furthermore, a purposive, non-random sampling method was used in this study. Therefore, it is recommended to conduct further research on the success of small sports service businesses from various angles, design a model and framework for it based on the perspectives of experts from various fields, and use random sampling methods to reduce sampling error. According to the results of this study, the success of small sports service businesses depends on various factors. Therefore, to achieve success in small sports service businesses, the groundwork can be laid for improving this study's identified indicators, components, and dimensions. It is also suggested that managers and officials of clubs and sports service clinics not only focus on certain actions but also on all effective processes in the success of small sports service businesses. The final practical suggestion is that necessary programs be designed and implemented for the growth and prosperity of small sports service businesses based on their factors and roles in the success process.

### ***Ethical Considerations***

In this study, ethical considerations such as confidentiality, privacy of personal information, preservation of interviewees' privacy, and so on were observed.

### **Acknowledgments**

The authors hereby express their gratitude and appreciation to all those who contributed to this research.

### **Authors' Contributions**

In this study, the student was responsible for conducting interviews and collecting data, while the professors were responsible for data analysis and writing the article.

### **Conflict of Interest**

There was no conflict of interest in this research.

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