

What are the factors influencing Iran's sports talent identification process? Findings of a qualitative study

¿Cuáles son los factores que influyen en el proceso de identificación de talentos deportivos de Irán? Hallazgos de un estudio cualitativo

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Abstract: This study aimed to determine the factors affecting the process of Iranian sport talent identification. Considering the exploratory nature of the subject, the qualitative research method and the theorizing approach based on the data were used. First, through the initial studies and the systematic review of related resources, the inventory of effective signs was identified. Subsequently, 23 targeted semi-structured interviews with experts were conducted through snowball method. The interviews continued to reach the theoretical saturation. The open coding results indicated that 145 primary signs and 57 final signs were extracted. In the axial coding, the final signs were classified into 18 concepts and 7 main categories. Consequently, the identified categories including environmental conditions, individual, cultural, and social issues, infrastructure, management system, participation in sports, and key stakeholders were determined. The country sports managers can use the identified concepts and categories for their future plans in order to develop talent identification.

Key Words: sports infrastructure, sports talent identification, environmental conditions, key stakeholders.

Resumen: Este estudio tiene como objetivo determinar los factores que afectan el proceso de identificación del talento deportivo iraní. Teniendo en cuenta la naturaleza exploratoria del tema, se utilizó el método de investigación cualitativa y el enfoque de teorización basado en los datos. Primero, a través de los estudios iniciales y la revisión sistemática de los recursos relacionados, se identificó el inventario de signos efectivos. Posteriormente, se realizaron 23 entrevistas semiestructuradas dirigidas a expertos mediante el método de la bola de nieve. Las entrevistas continuaron hasta alcanzar la saturación teórica. Los resultados de la codificación abierta indicaron que se extrajeron 145 signos primarios y 57 signos finales. En la codificación axial, los signos finales se clasificaron en 18 conceptos y 7 categorías principales. En consecuencia, se determinaron las categorías identificadas, incluidas las condiciones ambientales, las cuestiones individuales, culturales y sociales, la infraestructura, el sistema de gestión, la participación en los deportes y las partes interesadas clave. Los gerentes deportivos del país pueden usar los conceptos y categorías identificados para sus planes futuros con el fin de desarrollar la identificación del talento.

Palabras clave: infraestructura deportiva, identificación del talento deportivo, condiciones ambientales, principales partes interesadas.

Introduction

The success of countries in the international sports fields, in addition to the social and economic effects, is a symbol of stability and comprehensive capabilities of those countries. This can be one of the reasons for the high investment of countries in the championship and professional sports (Asadi et al., 2017). Success in athletic championship is in at least three factors: 1. Proper intrinsic talent; 2. Favorable psychological conditions, and 3. Mastering technical skills (Farahani & Aboudy, 2004). According to many coaches and experts, among the mentioned factors, inherent or congenital talent is a priority and one of the most important factors in the field of sports championship (Brown, 2011). Talent identification is currently one of the main challenges in sports (Abbott et

al., 2005; Hoare & Warr, 2000; Reilly & Gilbourne, 2003; Wolstencroft, 2002). Today, all countries around the world carry out infrastructure planning for achieving gold, silver, and bronze medals from the world and Olympic competitions (Hirose et al., 2007). Interest in identifying talents is one of the most important concepts in sports sciences and education, which has grown considerably in recent years (Krasilshchikov, 2011). In fact, talent identification is the process by which young people are guided by certain tests toward the sports that they have the greatest chance of success (Amiri et al., 2013). Undoubtedly, identification of talents and familiarity with various sports and events is a complex and multidimensional process, that is, a process that involves the interaction between physical, psychological, political and social factors (Aparicio et al., 2016; García et al., 2016; Pankhurst et al., 2013; Stoszowsky, 2011). Researchers have always tried to detect methods to discover the best in their

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area of expertise, from various sports to arts and education. The process of talent identification and providing the hardware and software required to train elite athletes to participate in regional, continental and global competitions is an issue that cannot be ignored. However, discovering the most effective and most widely used method of talent identification is very complicated and has long been a concern for researchers (Bomapa, 1999). The recognition and training of talents have been included in academic subjects over the past 50 years (Henriksen, 2010). Through talent identification, the progress and success of young athletes takes place in the best and most appropriate way. Talent identification is an extremely complex attribute that appears in the form of genetics, which regarding behavior, can depend on environmental conditions (Hadavi, 2000).

Based on the existing evidence, coaches are informally engaged in talent identification and assessment of the physical and mental status of individuals for over fifty years. Before the 1970s, when Eastern European countries, in particular Russia, Eastern Germany and Bulgaria, had talent identification program, there was no such program existed in any country (Bigdeli, 2006). The results of talent identification in the countries of the Eastern European region were incredible and astonishing. Most of the individuals taking medals in the 1972 Olympics, especially from East Germany, were scientifically selected. This issue was also true about Bulgaria in the 1976 Olympics. Approximately 80 percent of the medalists were the result of the process of talent identification (Gharakhanlu et al., 2009). Available information indicates the functionality of talent identification plans and the existence of coherent and coordinated programs in various championship sports organizations in the implementation of talent identification programs in the mentioned countries. This can help organizations to succeed in anticipating and confronting environmental challenges in fulfilling their missions and realizing their objectives. (Gharakhanlu, 2009). Alford (1992) argues that the former East Germany proved that it was possible to create an effective talent identification system through which prominent champions in the sports world could be developed. He believed that the first step in creating an effective talent identification system was to establish a relationship with the education and training and employing experienced and educated sports trainers to identify and develop talents, as did the former East Germany (Alford, 1992). Regarding this issue, prominent countries, in the field of championship sports, have started to design and implement talent identification programs in an integrated, systematic, and comprehensive way. In this regard, for talent identification, scientists have represented various models and patterns, such as the models of Matsudo (1987) and Abbott et al. (2007), which can help to understand it more and apply it according to the circumstances (Khosravizadeh

and Khosravizadeh, 2015). Furthermore, Bailey and Collins (2013), in a research review, represented The Standard Model of Talent Development (SMTD). In this model, the weaknesses and strengths are introduced according to the research background.

Understanding the significance of talent identification among researchers of physical education and sports sciences in Iran has led to the development of talent scouting projects. Most of these studies often focus on talent identification and presentation of a model for identifying talents in a particular sport. They attempt to provide a specific method for talent identification in sports fields on which various research have been made. In this regard, Asadi et al. (2017) identified 70 obstacles in the study of Iranian sports talent identification and classified and prioritized them into 7 factors: 1. Human. 2. Financial. 3. Support. 4. Management 5. Infrastructure 6. Process, and 7. Scientific and research obstacles. Benar (2015) also compiled a managing system for the process of talent scouting in his research and concluded that based on the structure and framework identified, the athletes' career path generally involves three stages of before, during, and after the championship. Talent management involves sports carers in the field of championship sports (sports clubs, sports and youth departments, etc.), and they are responsible for the guidance and support of athletes. Hosseini et al. (2013) in a study investigated the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats of talent identification in Iranian championship sports as well as the challenges and problems ahead. In the last decade, a number of federations have also developed a variety of ways to identify talents, often in the form of centers in the provinces, public invitations of the people concerned, and holding competitions. The Physical Education Organization in 2003 investigated the strategic document of a comprehensive system for the development of physical education and sports of the country at macro and micro levels. In this document, the institutions implementing the process of talent identification and their objectives and activities have been determined regarding the topic of championship sports and talent scouting (Asadi et al., 2017). In summary, it should be noted whether the processes and tests that are used to discover and anticipate the talents are effective and to what extent they are sufficient. There is also this question that could talented individuals with a promising future in sports be identified and guided toward a specific sport so that they could grow and present their talent or not? By looking at the countries that have been successful in the field of talent identification, the answer to these questions could be positive. In our country, experts also agree with these positive answers to the questions, although not in practice. In addition, we are not always there in decision makings where we witness the unrepeatable results in medal bringing which is a result of the championship sports due to talent identification. What

factors make the talent identification process not conducted correctly? However, studying the factors affecting the process of talent identification in the championship sports of the country, is one of the most important needs of the country's sports from the viewpoint of elites, experts, and specialists in this field, especially in sport organizations. Concerning what was mentioned, the present study attempted to investigate the factors affecting the process of talent identification of Iranian championship sports through a qualitative method. It applied two systematic review approaches of previous studies and an interview with the experts in this field.

Methods

Participants

In this study, two purposive and snowball sampling methods were applied in the form of theoretical sampling, and sampling continued to saturation data; eventually, 23 qualitative interviews were carried out. The subjects included sports talent identification experts from three fields of science, practice, and sports. These experts included faculty members in the field of physical education (6 subjects), managers and experts in the field of sports talent identification and talent scouting experts and secretary of the federations (13 subjects), and senior champions of the national championship sports (4 subjects).

Instruments

The instrument used for gathering the required data was the interview based in an opened questionnaire.

Procedures

The main question of the present study is what the factors affect the process of Iranian talent identification. In order to answer this question, the qualitative research method in the form of grounded theory was applied with the Glaser approach. Glaser (a novice or emergent approach) argues that, through an exploratory method, the categories of concepts and structure of the model should be formed from the data collected in the research itself (Daneifar & Imami, 2007). The data theory approach provides the foundation of flexible principles and practices as guidance, and not as a rule or prescription. In this way, according to the research environment, the researcher can design and implement the pathway and stages of his research, and can even get help from other research methods (Charmaz, 2014). In the first stage of the present study, by studying the research background and collecting desk study data, the primary list of predicting indicators of the main components was identified. The preliminary list

was determined as interview questions and the initial data collection tool, according to which the interview guide was developed. The researcher sent the interview guides to the informed elites before interviewing them. In the next stage, semi-structured qualitative interviews were taken from the elite informed about the research topic. It is worth noting that in order to record information from the interviews, in addition to taking notes, a special sound recording device was also used. Because of ethical issues, the researcher takes permission from the interviewer before recording any interviews. The duration of the interviews was different and the location of the interview was determined by the interviewee and the researcher.

The presentation of a data-driven theory requires the simultaneous collection and analysis of coherent data. Five essential steps, but not necessarily sequential, were applied in the process of obtaining the results. These steps included selecting participants, collecting data, adjusting findings, analyzing the findings, and presenting an implementation model. The theoretical sampling in this method meant that the data were collected in a way in order to accompany the researcher to get to a theory. During the continuous process of collecting, analyzing and categorizing data through interviews and based on the relationship of the categories together, the final model was formulated. It is worth noting that the researchers in these interviews were in search of identifying the challenges and factors affecting the management of talent identification of Iranian championship sports. In theoretical sampling, data collection and analysis are actions that are highly interdependent and should be performed alternately since simultaneous analysis directs data sampling.

Statistical Analysis

Coding in this study was conducted in an open and axial way. In the open coding, the researcher, by reviewing the collected data from the interviews and theoretical foundations, tried to identify the hidden concepts. In the axial coding, the objective was to determine the relationship between the categories created in the open coding stage, where the categories were identified and the effective factors were presented.

Since theories presented in the field of humanities and behavior are modifiable over time, therefore, qualitative researchers, instead of the terms validity and reliability, use other terms of credibility, transferability, dependability, and conformability. Transferability of the research results indicates the generalizability of the results to other groups and similar environments. Although this is beyond the capacity of a qualitative researcher, it is possible to provide some validity parts of the research by extracting and providing as much information as possible. In the present study, this recommendation was tried to be implemented by reviewing numerous

interviews and maximum and non-repetitive extraction of the content. Conformability of the qualitative research results are realized when other researchers are able to follow the research pathway and actions taken by the researcher clearly.

Results

The research findings were obtained by using simultaneous analysis of the coding process during and after the interviews and is presented below. In the process of open coding, data related to the studied issue is carefully named and

categorized. In this coding, the data is broken into distinct parts and is carefully considered to obtain similarities and differences and some questions are also raised about the phenomena. However, the researcher first implemented all the interviews content and then conducted their open coding. The results indicated that, in the total extracted codes, after the deletion of repetitive codes, 145 initial signs were created and then were classified into 57 signs due to their plurality according to conceptual and semantic affinity. Due to the high volume of codes, some parts of the coding results are displayed in Table 1 as an example.

Table 1. Results of open coding of factors affecting the Iranian talent identification process.

Development of equipment and facilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Availability of sports venues • Equipping talent scouting offices of provinces for identification tests • Lack of facilities in rural and deprived areas • Development of facilities and office spaces in talent scouting offices • Lack of basic sports equipment • Lack of proper infrastructure
Infrastructure development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Raising per capita of sports spaces • Development of sports facilities and infrastructure • Asymmetric distribution of facilities
Taking advantage of strengths	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Optimal use of existing facilities • Optimal use of development offices of basic sports and talent identification • Natural resources in different regions • Lack of specialized equipment at the championship level • Climate diversity and natural resources
Geographic variation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ethnic and genetic diversity • Demographic variation in different regions
Deprived areas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Different facilities in different areas • Talent identification in deprived areas and villages
Spatial planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spatial planning in 8-fold regions of Iran
Interaction and communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creating effective and practical online communication network between stakeholders • Chain interaction between relevant organizations • Improving stakeholders relationship with executive agreements • Better interaction between parents and schools • Interaction of educational and research centers with executive centers
Elimination of administrative bureaucracy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facilitating organizational guidelines • Removing barriers to private sector
specialized human power	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trainers • Sports teachers • Physical education graduates • University professors • Talent identification specialists • Students of different educational levels
Diversity of Culture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • society culture
Culture making	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • cultural diversity • Creating talent identification culture through informing • Weakness of championship sports culture

In the open post-coding process, the axial coding process was conducted. The axial coding is the second phase of data-based theorizing analysis. The objective of this stage is to establish a relationship between the classes produced (in

the open coding step). While open coding breaks data into different categories, axial coding links their categories and subcategories to each other according to their characteristics and dimensions. (Corbin & Strauss, 2008). During the axial

coding process, to raise questions, the researcher used analytic tools as well as perpetual and theoretical comparisons between the categories and subcategories which appeared in open coding to develop their relationships. As a result, secondary signs were categorized into 18 sub categories, from which seven main categories emerged, as displayed in Table 2.

Table 2. Axial coding of research findings.

Categories (factors)	Concepts	Signs
Infrastructures	Development of Infrastructures and equipment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development of equipment and facilities • Infrastructure development • Taking advantage of strengths
	Infrastructure obstacles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Eliminating administrative bureaucracy
	Technology and education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Education • Increasing knowledge • Research and development • Use of technology
Environmental conditions	Geographical location	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Geographic variation • Deprived areas • Spatial planning
	Economic conditions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Economic conditions
Cultural-Social	Interaction and communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interaction • Relationships
	Social needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Motivation • Parents' attitude
	Culture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Diversity of Culture • Culture making
Individual issues	Individual features	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Genetic features of talented individuals • Physiological features of talented individuals • Livelihood of families • Individuals' inner capabilities • Psychological features • Physical maturity
Management structure	Management system	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Management stability • Integrated management • Comprehensive sports system • Interaction of relevant organs • Policy making
	Human resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Specialized human power
	Support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Financial support • Psychological support • Support makings in sports • Government support
Participation in sports	Sports in schools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Physical education in basic skills training • Sport hours of schools in identifying talented individuals • Attending school competitions
	Women's sport	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attending international events • Lack of space for women's sports championship • Ethical and religious issues of society
	Public sports	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development of public sports centers • Public sports organizations • Control and evaluation system of public sports • Voluntary assistance by people

Key stakeholders	Private sector	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Talent identification and genetic centers • Sports in schools • Sports clubs • Mediation in championship sports
	Mass media	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Media support • Using social networks • Awareness and interest
	Related Organizations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Government (Ministry of Sports and Youth, Sports Development Office) • National Olympic Committee • Federations (boards, clubs, coaches) • Education and Training (schools, sports teachers) • The Ministry of Science, Research, and Technology (universities, physical education colleges) • Parents

At this stage, the formation and connection of each category with other groups is described. In this step, the researcher will appear more in the role of an author, acting based on categories, coded entries, theoretical notes, networks, and diagrams. Selective coding orientation is aimed at integrating different categories into the form of a large theoretical plan (Jones & Noble, 2007). In conclusion, the final relationship between the categories derived from the axial coding of factors affecting the process of talent identification in Iranian championship sports were discovered. The categories including infrastructure, environmental conditions, management system, social-cultural subjects, participation in sports, key stakeholders, and individual issues were developed by consid-

ering the categories and coding writings as well as the experts' and researchers' opinions and the emphasis of interviewees. After designing the model to increase its credibility, the final model was provided to the experts who were familiar with both the sport talent identification and the qualitative method. These experts were asked to comment on the developing process and the final model. Most of them confirmed the model and some had corrective comments that were received in the process and the modifications were applied. The theoretical model presented consisted of seven factors, at the center of which there is the process of talent identification (Figure 1).

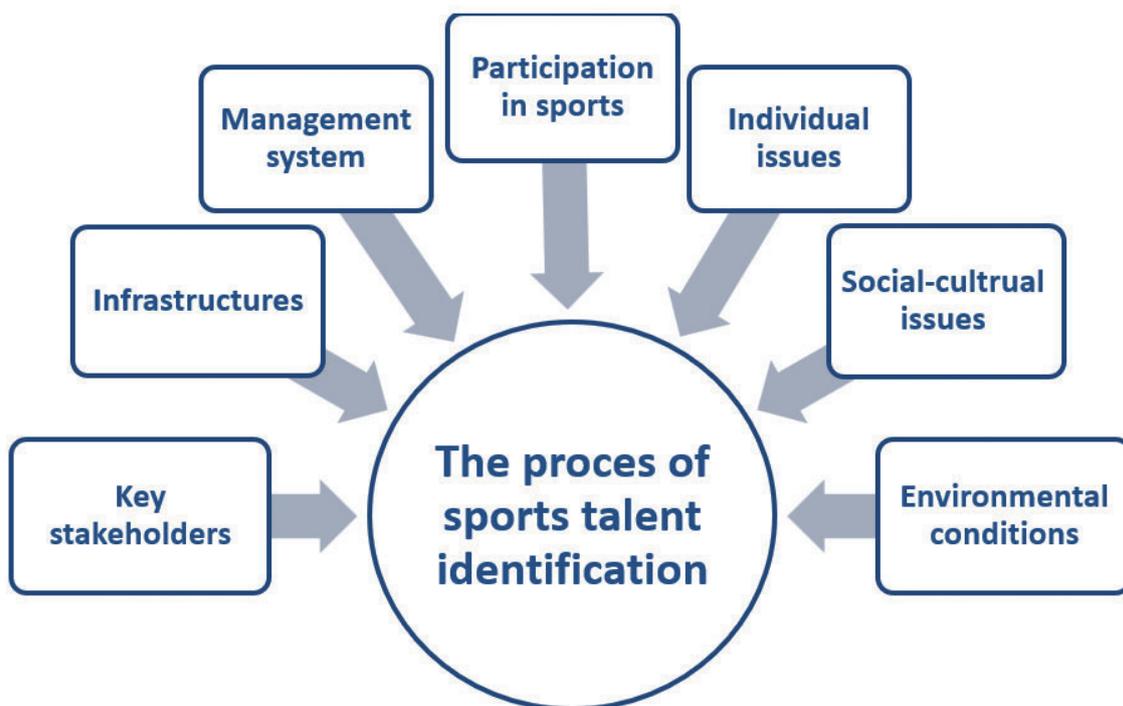


Figure 1. Factors affecting the process of talent identification in Iran.

Discussion

Concerning the research findings of researchers and experts and the study of the background of talent identification, it is referred to the factors affecting the process of talent identification in the championship sports. One of the issues derived from the research and opinion of experts is the issue of key stakeholders; a subject that is of high importance and it is the stakeholders who implement the process of talent identification. According to the findings of the research, key stakeholders who are directly and indirectly involved in the process of talent identification include the government, the Ministry of Sports and Youth and its subsidiary departments such as sports and youth departments of the province and the city as well as provincial sports development and talent scouting offices, The Ministry of Education and its subsidiary including sports schools and sports teachers, federations, boards and clubs, the National Olympic Committee, universities, private sector, media, parents and athletes. In most models presented, the role of stakeholders has been highlighted in the leading countries in sports. The model of talent identification in China, Australia, and Canada include a person-based scouting system; systematic scouting has also been conducted in former East Germany and the Soviet Union. Education is the main organizer of talent identification in these countries and there is a hierarchy of sports schools for the development of athletes that play a major role. Sports clubs are considered as other athletic training centers. In the strategies of most of the countries under study, there are necessary plans for the development of sports clubs and the development and promotion of instructors. This has led to the quantitative and qualitative development of sports coaches in these countries, which can be regarded as models to be followed. A sustainable method of talent identification requires that all key stakeholders participate in the work, of course if the long-term success of the sport is to be achieved (Hosseini et al., 2013). In identifying and training talents, there has to be individuals whose participation contributes to accurate evaluation of talent identification and development programs which lead to successes at the local, national and international levels. The key point is to get close coordination and collaboration with key stakeholders (Ghasemzadeh et al., 2013). For example, the private sector can be effective in the field of scouting and identifying talents through talent centers and laboratories as well as guidance and talent training by the establishment of nongovernmental sports schools. In addition, clubs can take part in this process and help government organizations. In the field of competitions and festivals at different levels and ages, federations and sports boards, with regard to the spatial planning, can contribute to the talent selection and elite scouting that is a part of the process of talent identification.

The results of the present study demonstrated that the management structure is an effective factor in the Iranian talent identification process, which was derived from categories such as management system, support and human resources. Regarding this, the participants in the study pointed out some factors such as: management instability, inefficiency of some managers, superiority of relationships in the country, lack of integrated management in talent identification, inability of upstream managers, result-oriented managers, lack of a comprehensive system of instructors and athletes, lack of support for a systematic talent identification program, lack of interaction of some relevant organizations, parallel work of stakeholders, mediation in sports championship, corruption in sports, policy making of the government, discrimination in supporting some sports, lack of investment in sports and talent identification, shortage of physical education teaching hours in schools, and disregarding basic sports. The results of this study are consistent with those by Asadi et al (2017), Doostari et al (2015), and Hosseini et al (2013). To this end, the issue of management structure can be managed effectively through strategic planning and work division between key stakeholders, along with human and financial resources in the field of talent identification, monitoring, and evaluation of the Ministry of Sports or the Office for the Development of Basic Sports and talent identification.

Based on the findings of the present study, the infrastructure category can be considered as another factor affecting the process of talent identification. According to previous studies and opinions of the participants, the achieved signs regarding the infrastructure categories can be numbered as: the development of equipment and facilities, infrastructure development, taking advantage of the existing capabilities in the field of talent identification, the elimination of administrative bureaucracy, the barriers to the private sector, education and increasing knowledge, research and development, and the use of technology. Asadi et al. (2017), in their study, identified the infrastructure obstacles as the fifth factor in terms of priority for talent identification, which included 10 components. Hosseini et al. (2013) also reported the lack of sports equipment and facilities in most sports fields. In fact, the infrastructure category addresses obstacles that are essential for the field of talent identification and administrative activities. In the past, talent scouting were carried out traditionally and through eye techniques; however, with the progress of science, modern and scientific talent identification models have emerged to the world, many of which have been applied throughout the world and are well suited to the needs of this field. In order to execute and apply modern scouting models, facilities such as gyms, sports facilities in various fields, special tools and instruments for measuring and evaluating, talent identification software, laboratory testing equipment, etc. should be made available to experts. As we

know, these facilities do not exist in many parts of the country, or if they do, are incomplete, limited, sometimes unused or out of service. The lack of these capabilities will slow down the performance of modern models of talent identification and reduce the ability of professionals in applying different tests and methods of scouting and ultimately they return to the traditional ways. The results of this study were consistent with those of Asadi et al. (2017), Hosseini et al. (2013), and Gharkhanlu et al. (2009).

The results of this study indicated that participation in sports can be an important factor in the field of talent identification. Giving importance to sport schools, public sports, and women's sports are the accomplished categories in the present study. Insufficient participation in sports reduces the emergence and development of sports talents. Regarding the competitions, there are various institutions active in the championship sport, each of them are involved individually dealing with it, and there is no connection between the various competitions held by different institutions. There is no specific program to organize and categorize the tournaments in the country; this reduces the effect of competitions in the development of athletes (Khabiri, 2008). Hosseini et al. (2013) investigated the role of public sports and women's sports in the championship sports. Moreover, Dizani (2015) emphasized in his study the role of basic sports in the field of talent identification. In fact, active participation of students during the hours of physical education lessons, in addition to the chance to be seen and selected, also contributes to the physical fitness of the individual and the completion of basic skills that are regarded as early stages of sports. This issue has been addressed in the talent identification model in developed countries such as Australia, Canada, China, America, and so on. The role of public sports as an effective factor in the process of talent identification is unquestionable. Investigations by health and sports centers in Europe has indicated that the main objective of sports in Europe is the exercise of public sports, along with the development and growth of which, various attempts have been conducted. Public sport in the world has been established with the objectives of increasing the participation of all social groups and providing pluralism in sports, improving championship sports, developing and promoting health, and expanding healthy recreation and recreational sports (Vandendriessche et al., 2012). Attention to the promotion of qualitative and quantitative level of women's championship sports has grown well in the post-revolutionary years. It has also gradually grown along with the progression of women's sports management in sporting leadership, which has led to the improvement of the structure of women's sports in the physical education system. However, it has not yet succeeded thoroughly, and the issue of women's sports in Iran is one of the challenges with its own special problems in the field of championship sports particularly

international competitions. Among such problems, the type of women's cover can be mentioned in some fields such as swimming, gymnastics, wrestling, weightlifting, etc., which requires a comprehensive expertise measure. The presence of women as a major body of our community in the field of championship sports is indispensable, and almost half of the Olympic medals are dedicated to the women's tournaments. This requires a strong motivation for women to compete in the events, which follows and demands a proficient talent identification program as well.

Concerning the findings of this study, individuals' issues are also reported as factors affecting the process of talent identification. Genetic features of talented individuals, physiological characteristics, livelihoods of families, individual's inner abilities, psychological characteristics, physical maturity, are regarded as the codes derived from theoretical foundations, interviews, and research background. The open signs acquired from the participants are the gender equality and stereotypes of individuals, attitudes and interests of individuals in sports, livelihoods of families with talented people, attention to the physical development and growth of children, physiological factors of individuals, differences in individual abilities, personal intelligence, psychological issues, genetic and familial characteristics, differences in showing talents in different ages, and finally the identification of inner motives of talented people. The results of this study are in consistent with those by Hosseini et al. (2013) and the model presented by Hadavi (2011). In the process of entering the stages of talent identification, first, the genetic, physiological, psychological, etc. characteristics were investigated and, if confirmed, will be placed in the process of talent identification. Individual abilities and talent and, in general, individual issues are important and effective factors in the process of talent identification that specialists should have special attention in this regard.

The social-cultural issue is another factor affecting the process of talent identification, which was obtained from the study results. Cultural diversity in Iran was one of the codes obtained in the cultural-social category. Culture making for parents, sports managers and authorities in the area of talent identification requires informing in this regard. In each society, in order to advance the objectives, the culture of society must be in line with the goals. Therefore, by aligning parents' attitude with talent identification and, in general, with championship sports and by giving motivation to athletes and parents, talent identification can be advanced in its own channel. This is not possible except by interaction and relationship between stakeholders as well as by raising awareness and interest.

The results of this study demonstrated that environmental conditions are among the factors and categories that affect the process of talent identification. According to the subjects'

opinions and the background of the issue, it is possible to refer to the geographical and economic situation. Based on the studies on the sports championship investigation (Ahmadi Tabatabai et al., 2016), the country can be divided into eight geographical regions in the field of sports, which will provide a valuable contribution to the authorities in this regard. Therefore, in the category of talent identification, sports analysis is one of the most important factors to be considered. Diversity of climate and natural resources, ethnic and genetic diversity, population diversity in different regions, differences in facilities in distinct regions, deprived areas and villages, and spatial planning are among the codes derived from this study. For example, investment and talent identification in wrestling or endurance courses in the north and west of the country can move the process of scouting one step forward. However, paying attention to natural resources, individual and cultural characteristics of the society, and spatial planning, will support the process of talent identification and puts it in its right path. The economic condition of society, government, and all stakeholders are also among the environmental factors that play a role in the field of talent identification.

Conclusion

In conclusion, according to the findings of the study, seven of the main factors affecting the Iranian talent identification process were identified, including the following factors: environmental condition, individual issues, social-cultural, infrastructure, management system, sport participation, and key stakeholders. It is recommended to increase the interaction between scientific, research and university centers with the executive organizations of sports of the country at the national and provincial levels. Continuous assessment programs for the country's sports scouting and the establishment of a scientific, research and technological park for championship sports should be implemented. With precise programming, organizing key stakeholders, and with consistent and continuous monitoring of the human and financial resources, the true path of systematic talent identification will be prepared. The development of sports schools from the elementary level to the highest levels in the public and private sectors is one of the most important options and strategies for the development and expansion of talent identification in Iran. This will be best achieved by the support of the government, Ministry of Education, and the private sector.

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