

## THE COMPARISON OF VIEWS OF SPORTS EXPERTS AND PARTICIPANTS IN THE SPORTS SECTOR TOWARD ENTREPRENEURSHIP BARRIERS IN SPORT

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*Original scientific paper*

### Abstract

*The main purpose of this study was to compare the views of sports experts and Participants in the sports sector toward barriers on employment and entrepreneurship in sport. This study is an applied research adopting a descriptive-correlational method and survey design. The population in this study consisted all of sports experts and Participants in the sports sector in the Golestan province. 100 samples were chosen randomly based on Morgan table. Barriers in entrepreneurship Yadollahi Questionnaire-Revised (2011) was used to collect data. The data were analyzed and interpreted using t test, and Pearson correlation tests. Results showed that impact of behavioral barriers on employment and entrepreneurship in sport is lower than the average level and the impact of structural barriers and environmental barriers on employment and entrepreneurship in sport is more than the average level. There was a significant difference between the views of sports experts and Participants in the sports sector toward behavioral and environmental barriers on employment and entrepreneurship in sport. Of all the demographic characteristics of subjects, there was a significant relationship between education and their attitude about environmental and behavioral employment and entrepreneurship barriers in sport.*

**Key words:** *sports experts, sports sector, barriers, entrepreneurship, employment*

### Introduction

Entrepreneurship describes the set of activities related to the introduction of products and services into the market. Entrepreneurship can also involve the creation of new organizations that are dependent on the social-economic environment (Aldrich, 2005). Unemployment rate is one of the most economical factors and has special importance in all countries (Mortazavifar, 2015; Ciletti, 2012). As a vital aspect of life, employment refers to a set of activities invaluable to all people. Employment helps provide for the necessities and actualize goals in life. When it exists in good psychological conditions in a balanced set of activities and preparations, it contributes to the quality of life, growth and positive attitudes toward work and workplace, which is generally referred to as job satisfaction. In addition to providing for the needs and realizing personal and organizational goals, such positive attitude may contribute to physical and mental health, commitment, loyalty and organizational efficiency. Entrepreneurship is defined as creating a new, valuable thing via investing due time and effort, considering financial, mental and social risks and achieving personal satisfaction and financial independence (Hisrich, 2006). Entrepreneurship is the process of innovation and creation of new economic projects with individual, organizational, environmental and procedural dimensions facilitated by participatory networks in government, education and institutions (Kuratko, 2004). Development researchers agree that, from among physical, technological and human capitals, it is the human capital that makes the most conspicuous contribution to the process of development. What matters most is the appropriate use of human capital. This is confirmed by the

experience of successful countries. Harbison considers that human resources constitute the main pillar of national assets. Natural resources and assets are subordinate factors of production while people are active agents compressing the resources, exploiting the resources, building up social, economic and political organizations and facilitating national development. A country that fails to develop knowledge and skills in its people and exploit them in national economy will certainly fail to develop anything else. Sport entrepreneurship is associated with the application of entrepreneurial strategies to business ventures. The practice of sport entrepreneurship entails the use of social skills and market knowledge. One of the key tasks managers have is to be continuously alert for shifts and changes in the market (Ansoff, 1991). Entrepreneurship involves people in the sports context developing a mindset that encourages innovation. An entrepreneurial mindset is defined as "the way of thinking about business which focuses on the creation of opportunities under uncertainty and goes along with a growth-oriented perspective, flexibility, creativity, innovation and renewal" (Harms et al, 2009). Sports entrepreneurs engage in an innovative activity that enhances their ability to use their resource base creatively and dynamically. Thus, sports entrepreneurs are people who enact ideas, information and practices for the purpose of engaging in a business venture. In many cases entrepreneurs do not actively search for opportunities but rather passively search, which means they are receptive to opportunities but are not actively searching for them (Ratten, 2011). Sports are developing in Iran, which can provide

opportunities for sports entrepreneurship (Foroughi, 2007). Investment in sports products and services, such as running a sports club, not only creates employment but also increases gross domestic product. In this regard, the development of national sports is an important part of economic-social development, which helps flourish economy and society. No doubt, sports are a potential area to create employment.

With regard to the broadness of sports sciences, they are one of the most rapidly developing areas associated with economic, social and political sectors in the world. Employment opportunities and achievements exist in a variety of sports events. In other words, increased entrepreneurship process in sports is creating a variety of new employment opportunities. By creating demand for sports services and goods and holding mass appeal, sports can provide a good opportunity for the development of entrepreneurship. In return, entrepreneurship helps develop sports through creating sports businesses, production of sports accessories and providing sports services. Research has shown that a lack of proportion between educational content and job skills, a lack of understanding of the graduates' minimum scientific and practical competence, a lack of balance between university admissions and future needs of the labor market, suppression of entrepreneurship culture and limited number of entrepreneurs are the most important challenges to employment (Rahmani,2003; Yousefi,2000).

Considering the young population structure in Golestan province and the whole country at large and the increasing volume of workforce, a lack of coordination between educational system and labor market, disproportion of economic growth and employment capacities with graduates' population, increased participation of the workforce in the society particularly among women, graduates' lack of the required skills consistent with the labor market, a lack of the information required for the labor market and employment opportunities have highlighted employment as the main concern of policy makers, economists and social reformists. Continuation of the current situation, unemployment, exerts adverse effects on economic, social, political, cultural and security systems. Thus, the present study is conducted to investigate entrepreneurship opportunities and determine the role of sports in youth employment in Golestan province. The study also aims to address the question 'what are the barriers to sports entrepreneurship in Golestan province?'

**Methods**

This study is an applied research adopting a descriptive-correlational method and survey design. The research population consisted of all sports specialists and employees with the sports service sector in Golestan province. The modified version of Entrepreneurship Barriers Questionnaire was used to collect the data. The questionnaire consists of 31

closed items on the Likert scale. Of the questionnaire items, 10 items addressed structural barriers; 10 items examined behavioral barriers; and 10 items addressed environmental barriers. In order to test the content validity of the scale, the items were modified consistent with the research hypotheses. The modified scale was then presented to a few professors of physical education and management for analysis. The reliability of the scale was examined using Cronbach's alpha formula, which yielded a reliability coefficient of  $\alpha=0.72$ . Considering the research objectives, type of data and prerequisites of normal distribution of the data (Kolmogorov-Smirnov test) as well as homogeneity of variance (Levene's test), the data were analyzed and interpreted using t test, and Pearson correlation tests.

**Results**

The participants consisted of 10 university lecturers, 26 authorities with sports boards, 14 experts with the offices of sports and youth and 50 employees with sports services sector. The participants' mean age was  $34.15\pm7.82$ . Of the participants, 8 people had associate degrees, 62 had bachelor's degrees, 23 had master'sdegrees and 7 had PhDs. From among the participants, 27 people had 5 years, 29 between 5 and 10 years, 23 between 11 and 15 years, 15 between 16 and 20 years and 5 had more than 20 years of service history. The gender proportion was 30% female and 70% male while 20% of the participants were single and 80% were married.

Table 1. Description of barriers on employment and entrepreneurship in sport

| Statistic Barriers     | Mean± Std. Deviation |              |           |
|------------------------|----------------------|--------------|-----------|
|                        | Experts              | Participants | Total     |
| Behavioral barriers    | 3.13±0.24            | 2.38±0.30    | 2.75±0.46 |
| Structural barriers    | 3.57±0.29            | 3.51±0.29    | 3.54±0.29 |
| Environmental barriers | 2.92±0.35            | 3.51±0.27    | 3.21±0.43 |

In surveying the amount of barriers on employment and entrepreneurship in sport, three kinds of barriers (Behavioral barriers, Structural barriers and Environmental barriers) were used, and the details by dividing the sports experts and Participants in the sports sector and all of the examinees are shown in table 1.

Table 2. Results of dependent t-test in the barriers to sports entrepreneurship

| Variable               | N   | Mean  | Std. Deviation | Mean Difference | df | t      | Sig.  |
|------------------------|-----|-------|----------------|-----------------|----|--------|-------|
| Behavioral barriers    | 100 | 2.758 | 0.462          | 0.142           | 99 | -6.79  | 0.001 |
| Structural barriers    | 100 | 3.548 | 0.294          | 0.548           | 99 | 18.583 | 0.001 |
| Environmental barriers | 100 | 3.219 | 0.435          | 0.219           | 99 | 5.026  | 0.001 |

As shown in Table 2, the participants believed that the impact of behavioral barriers to sports entrepreneurship was below average while the effect of structural and environmental barriers was above average.

Table 3. Results of Independent t-test in compare the views of sports experts and Participants

| Variable               | Group        | Mean  | Std. Deviation | df | t     | Sig.  |
|------------------------|--------------|-------|----------------|----|-------|-------|
| Behavioral barriers    | Experts      | 3.132 | 0.24           | 9  | 13.57 | 0.001 |
|                        | Participants | 2.382 | 0.30           | 8  |       |       |
| Structural barriers    | Experts      | 3.578 | 0.29           | 9  | 1.01  | 0.311 |
|                        | Participants | 3.518 | 0.29           | 8  |       |       |
| Environmental barriers | Experts      | 2.920 | 0.35           | 9  | -9.42 | 0.001 |
|                        | Participants | 3.518 | 0.27           | 8  |       |       |

As shown in Table 3, there was a significant difference between the views of sports experts and Participants in the sports sector toward behavioral and environmental barriers on employment and entrepreneurship in sport. There was not a significant difference between the views of sports experts and Participants in the sports sector toward Structural barriers on employment and entrepreneurship in sport.

### Discussion and conclusion

Results of testing the research hypotheses revealed that the participants believed that the impact of behavioral barriers to sports entrepreneurship was below average. The behavioral barriers included entrepreneur-related factors such as inherent tendency to control, craved independence, need for achievement, risk-taking, motivation, personal values and work experience. This is consistent with the findings of Mandalizadeh (2010) and Yousefi (2006), who reported a disproportion of the employees' level of education and skills with their salary and considered it as a weak economic incentive for the skilled workforce, hence calling for governmental support in sports employment. The participants considered the impact of structural and environmental barriers to sports entrepreneurship to be above average. The structural barriers included physical and non-human factors such as technology, rules and regulations of executive organizations, education, etc. This is consistent with the findings of Shamsaie et al. (2009) who studied the status of private sports clubs in Ilamcity with an emphasis on employment. They discussed that there were favorable opportunities for growth and employment in the sports sector in the country due to authorities' positive attitude, voluntary citizen services and public consecration.

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The environmental barriers involved the effective environmental conditions such as the economic, social, cultural, political, legal, technical and international milieus. Rahmaniet al. (2005) and Nazari Katouli (2005) reported that the main challenges to employment were a disproportion between educational content and job skills, a lack of understanding of the graduates' minimum scientific and practical competence, a lack of balance between university admissions and future needs of the labor market, suppression of entrepreneurship culture and limited number of entrepreneurs. In a study on the entrepreneurs' attitudes toward the barriers to sports entrepreneurship, Gholami (2008) asserted that limited governmental investment in sports infrastructure, intensive competition in sports markets, attention to product and service quality and a lack of public support for new business ideas in sports were the main barriers to sports entrepreneurship. The results revealed that structural, environmental and behavioral factors ranked first to third, respectively, as the main challenges to sports entrepreneurship.

This is consistent with the findings of Foroughiporet al. (2007), who examined and identified the priorities of sports entrepreneurship as viewed by authorities. Accordingly, they identified seven major areas of sports entrepreneurship including entrepreneurship in sports education, sports management and planning, sports services, sports advertisement, public sports, professional sports, manufacturing sports equipment and cultural affairs, respectively. Regarding the present findings, it is recommended that sports-related programs be developed in universities with an emphasis on sports entrepreneurship. The training programs on entrepreneurship may prove more effective in academic centers in the provincial capital.

The rules and regulations hindering sports entrepreneurship should be removed as far as possible. The government needs to adopt policies to support sport businesses. Banks should allocate required credits to sports businesses. Economic and scientific centers may offer consultation services on sports businesses. The private and cooperative sectors should be encouraged to invest in sports in Golestan province. A culture of business sports should be promoted in Golestan province. Mass media should contribute to the development of sports entrepreneurship.

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## USPOREDBA STAJALIŠTA SPORTSKIH STRUČNJAKA I SUDIONIKA U SPORTSKOM SEKTORU PREMA PREPREKAMA PODUZETNIŠTVA U SPORTU

### Sažetak

Glavna svrha ovog istraživanja bila je usporediti stajališta sportskih stručnjaka i sudionika u sportskom sektoru prema preprekama u vezi zaposlenosti i poduzetništva u sportu. Ovo istraživanje je primijenjeno istraživanje koje usvaja deskriptivno-korelacijsku metodu i dizajn istraživanja. Populacija u ovom istraživanju sastojala se od sportskih stručnjaka i sudionika u sportskim sektorima u pokrajini Golestan. 100 uzoraka odabrano je nasumično na osnovi Morganove tablice. Yadollahijev revidirani upitnik (2011) o preprekama u poduzetništvu korišten je za prikupljanje podataka. Podaci su analizirani i interpretirani koristeći t test i Pearsonov korelacijski test. Rezultati su pokazali da je utjecaj ponašajnih prepreka na zaposlenje i poduzetništvo u sportu niži od prosječne razine te da je utjecaj sastavnih prepreka i okolišnih prepreka na zaposlenje i poduzetništvo u sportu viši od prosječne razine. Postojala je značajna razlika između stajališta sportskih stručnjaka i sudionika u sportskom sektoru prema ponašajnim i okolišnim preprekama za zapošljavanje i poduzetništvo u sportu. Od svih demografskih karakteristika ispitanika, postojala je značajna veza između obrazovanja i njihovog stava prema okolišnom zapošljavanju i preprekama poduzetništva u sportu.

**Ključne riječi:** sportski stručnjaci, sportski sektor, prepreke, poduzetništvo, zaposlenost

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Received: March 7, 2016  
Accepted: August 10, 2016  
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### Acknowledgments

The author would like to express his appreciation to the subjects for their participation and the Gorgan branch of Islamic Azad University for financial and moral support in this study.