

Providing the Performance Management Framework of National Sports Organizations Based on Performance Prism: (A Case Study of Football Federation of Islamic Republic of Iran)

Mohammad Moradi^{*1A-D}, Hamid Reza Gohar Rostami^{*2BD}, Rahim Ramzani Nejad^{3AB}

¹²³Department of Sports Management, Faculty of Physical Education and Sports Sciences, University of Guilan, Rasht, Iran.

ABSTRACT

The organizational performance of sports organizations has been studied in recent decades, but less attention has been paid to performance management compared to performance measurement. The purpose of this article is to fill the research gap in the field of performance management by providing a stakeholder-based performance management framework based on the performance prism, that managers plan based on and improve organizational performance among stakeholders in the environment in which they operate. Guided by a mixed method (quantitative-qualitative), the key stakeholders of the Football Federation were initially identified by distributing and collecting a questionnaire. Then, 14 semi-structured interviews were conducted with the key stakeholders, including professors, officials, coaches, national and international referees, school principals and football club managers. The results showed that the key stakeholders of Football Federation of Iran fell into nine groups: International organizations, clubs, financial sponsors, coaches, referees, players, national organizations, provincial organizations, media. By answering the five basic questions of the performance prism, eleven basic demands of stakeholders were identified, for which to be met, the federation required 22 strategies, 22 processes and 30 capabilities. The federation asked for 30 interactions from stakeholders. The framework presented in this research is actually a step towards improving and promoting the performance of national sports federations (football) with an emphasis on the satisfaction of different stakeholders. Also, the results of this research can be the basis for planning and policy making in the football federation.

Keywords: Football federation; non-profit organizations; performance management; performance prism; stakeholders

Corresponding author:

*Hamid Reza Gohar Rostami, Department of Sports Management, Faculty of Physical Education and Sports Sciences, University of Guilan, Rasht, Iran. Email: Goharroostami@gmail.com

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INTRODUCTION

As social phenomena in a changing environment, organizations are facing various challenges. The more comprehensive, transparent and coherent the organization's systems are and the more they are aligned with the requirements and prerequisites of the organization in the design and implementation, the more successfully they will identify and provide practical solutions for organizational problems (Gunduz & Simsek, 2007). There are various non-profit organizations in different fields across the globe, all of which seek to create social value for their stakeholders. These organizations have been pressed to improve their management practices, efficiency, effectiveness and responsibility and are seeking to optimize their performance (Moura et al., 2022). Some researchers have conducted studies on performance measurement and management in these organizations



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(Cestari et al., 2022; Moura et al., 2020; Treinta et al., 2020) and have stated that employee performance affects that of organization (Mishra, 2022) and the combination of all individual functions in an organization shows the overall performance, which is called organizational performance (Ocal, 2015).

Every organization has an urgent need for a performance management and measurement system to know the level of desirability and quality of its activities in a dynamic environment. Performance management is a strategic and integrated approach that continuously identifies, measures and develops the performance of individuals and teams to align performance with the organization's strategic goals in order to achieve successful results in the organization (Aguinis, 2013). There are many models for performance management that can be divided into two groups: the old generation (PMM) and the new generation (BSC). The new generation of performance management models gained attentions over time, and more emphasis was placed on non-financial performance criteria (Robinson, 2010) and environmental conditions (Ferreira & Otley, 2009). This change of attention seems appropriate for national sports organizations, because instead of financial results, they emphasize more on achieving sports and social goals (O'Boyle & Hassan, 2014; Winand et al., 2010), but using this new generation may results in operational challenges for sports organizations due to the implementation of the rules and regulations of international and continental sports organizations (Bayle, 2005; Winand et al., 2010), different and sometimes contradictory goals (Papadimitriou & Taylor, 2000; Shilbury & Moore, 2006), being managed by volunteers (Papadimitriou, 2007; Winand et al., 2010) and being accountable to the stakeholders (Bayle, 2005). That being the case, according to these characteristics of national sports organizations, we need special performance management models to manage the performance of these organizations (Kasale et al., 2018) and because these organizations, including federations, try to achieve their goals and satisfy their stakeholders, performance management has become crucial for them (Perck et al., 2016).

Sports organizations are also becoming complex social environments in which a diverse range of people try to make athletes do their best (Arnold et al., 2019). Therefore, the success of the athlete is not only limited to their preparation (Molan et al., 2022), but is achieved through a collective approach to the management of other factors such as the coach role, coordination between sports science and medical achievements, and attention to the vision and culture of the sports organization. (Arnold et al., 2019; Feddersen et al., 2020; Wagstaff, 2019). Personnel performance management in traditional workplaces has been heavily researched and limited studies have investigated the performance management processes in elite sports. Knowledge of performance management processes in sports programs will help to better evaluate and understand them at individual, operational and organizational levels (Molan et al., 2022).

The football industry is one of the most profitable industries in the world and has the largest sports population and is considered as the national sport of most countries throughout the globe (Zhang & Pitts, 2018) and also has a great role in inciting to do sports and physical activity in different people of all ages (Fredrick-Brown, 2015). Considering the high potential of football in Iran, including the position of its national and club teams in Asia and the existence of a wide range of fans and diverse stakeholders such as people, media, government, etc., the performance management of this federation based on the performance prism can make the federation successful in achieving its goals. Although being aware of the benefits of using the performance prism in sports organizations

(Winand et al., 2014), it has not been used for an organization like the Football Federation, which is the largest sports federation in most countries and has a wide range of stakeholders. Therefore, in this research, using the dimensions of the performance prism, we are looking for answers to these questions: Who are the key stakeholders of the football federation? What are the demands of these stakeholders? What strategies, processes and capabilities should the football federation use to meet the demands of these stakeholders? And finally, what does the federation expect from these stakeholders?

LITERATURE REVIEW

Although the review of studies shows that the organizational performance in non-profit sports organizations has been investigated over the past years (O'Boyle & Hassan, 2014; Solntsev & Osokin, 2018), but the focus of these studies has been more on performance measurement (O'Boyle & Hassan, 2014) and many of these performance measurement methods have been gradually developed (Bayle & Madella, 2002; Madella et al., 2005; Winand et al., 2010). Perhaps due to the fact that national sports organizations are managed by volunteers and these people are not well experienced in using performance management systems (Hoye & Cuskelly, 2004; Hoye & Doherty, 2011), instead of being a method for planning, monitoring and reviewing actions, performance management is considered as a measurement tool (O'Boyle & Hassan, 2015; Kasale et al., 2018). Performance management is considered as a general concept for monitoring the extent to which an organization achieves its goals (MacLean, 2016). Organizational performance in national sports organizations, which are also called national sports federations or sports bodies (Winand et al., 2021), has become an important issue in sports management due to the increase in the amount of public investment in these organizations (O'Boyle, 2015).

In some researches, they considered dimensions for performance management (Bayle & Madella, 2002; Bayle & Robinson, 2007; Chelladurai et al., 1987; Fletcher & Arnold, 2011; Madella et al., 2005; Papadimitriou & Taylor, 2000; Shilbury & Moore, 2006; Solntsev & Osokin, 2018; Winand et al., 2010) and there was a consensus in most studies that performance management is a multidimensional structure (Bayle & Madella, 2002; Chelladurai et al., 1987; Papadimitriou & Taylor, 2000; Winand et al., 2010).

Some researchers show that for organizational effectiveness in sports organization, performance management includes a systematic cycle of input, process, output and feedback (Chelladurai et al., 1987; Winand et al., 2014). Also, given that national sports organizations interact directly with several stakeholders with different demands such as athletes, volunteers, referees and coaches, (Baldock, 2009; Winand et al., 2014) a number of researches point to the effect of stakeholders on performance management in non-profit sports organizations (Chelladurai & Haggerty, 1991; Papadimitriou & Taylor, 2000; Shilbury & Moore, 2006). In addition, other research point to the identification of other factors such as organizational environment (Chelladurai et al., 1987; Frisby, 1986; Madella et al., 2005; Papadimitriou, 1998), organizational people (Papadimitriou & Taylor, 2000; Shilbury & Moore, 2006; Winand et al., 2011; Winand et al., 2013), contingent variables (Frisby, 1986) and environmental conditions (Bayle & Robinson, 2007) that affect performance management in sports organizations. Researchers state that performance management in sports organizations is still in the evolutionary stages and there is a need for development in this field (O'Boyle & Hassan, 2015). Also, there are some approaches to evaluate sports organizations, such as performance management based on the organization's goals and objectives, theory of sports performance evaluation from the

perspective of stakeholders, theory of sports performance evaluation considering inputs and outputs, and finally, performance measurement multidimensional models (Hoye et al., 2012).

Organizational performance indicators have been shaped in the form of profitability, productivity, marketing effectiveness, customer satisfaction, and employee motivation (Cignitas et al., 2022). The sport governing bodies as natural and open systems with different levels should be taken into consideration and the limitations of the existing models should be accepted in reviewing the approaches and methods used to measure organizational performance (Barth et al., 2018). Therefore, non-profit sports organizations try to be accountable to their stakeholders through performance-based approaches (O'Boyle & Hassan, 2014; Winand, et al., 2013) and for this accountability and achieving their goals, they need to implement and develop performance management models in their organization (O'Boyle & Hassan, 2014). One of the performance management models that helps organizations achieve their goals is the performance prism. The performance prism is a stakeholder based model and considering the diversity of the stakeholders of sports organizations, it is a suitable option for performance management in these organizations. Also, the difference between sports organizations in Iran and elsewhere, due to its governmental or semi-governmental structure and the effects of government policies on it, has increased the diversity of stakeholders, and the need for a stakeholder-based model to manage its performance is more appropriate.

THEORETICAL PRINCIPLES AND CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Performance management

Performance management is a process that gathers data of the organization, compare, and provides light for a strategy to achieve organizational targets (Taticchi et al., 2010). In this way, it will be able to align the employees' goals with those of the organization and increase the productivity of organization. The need for more comprehensive performance measurement systems has emerged with the increased awareness of non-financial measures that cannot be accurately reflected in short-term accounting criteria. (Lucianetti et al., 2019), (Hasan & Chyi, 2017). SWOT analysis, Balanced Scorecard, PEST analysis, Total Quality Management and Performance Prism are some of the performance management systems that help measure corporate performance to achieve goals and strategies. Considering that sports organizations have many stakeholders and they have different ideas about measuring the organization's effectiveness and performance (winand et al., 2014), multi-dimensional models are preferred for this purpose. The most popular and common applied methods/models include: balanced scorecard and performance prism (Helia et al., 2021). Although the balanced scorecard clearly has real benefits for non-profit sports organizations, its inability to identify the mutual participation of stakeholders for the organization is one of its main weaknesses. According to the need of non-profit sports organizations for the participation and satisfaction of stakeholders, performance prism might bring equal or more benefits (O'Boyle, 2015). On the other hand, the balanced scorecard approach does not consider all the stakeholders, and the key performance indicators are formed according to the strategies.

Performance prism

Researchers argue that the performance prism, which focuses on the perspective of stakeholders, is a framework for performance measurement that covers the weaknesses of the balanced scorecard approach, but has been used in a limited way in non-profit organizations and at the general management level (Micheli and Kennerley, 2005) therefore suggest that a wide range of organizations, both for-profit and non-profit, can use it (Neely et al. 2001).

In this model, the key performance indicators are based not only on the strategy, but also on the satisfaction and participation of the organization's stakeholders, processes and capabilities. The performance prism refers to the demands of the stakeholders and emphasizes the priority in paying attention to their demands. This model considers the stakeholders instead of strategies to referee the performance (Harrison, 2010) and tries to compensate for the weaknesses and shortcomings of the previous models and prevent the accumulation of information. Also, the performance prism provides a comprehensive performance measurement by identifying the organization's strategies, processes and capabilities, taking into account the satisfaction of the stakeholders and their mutual contributions to the organizational goals (Helia et al., 2021). The performance prism, with the coherence of five related perspectives, prepares top-level managers to answer the following questions:

1. Stakeholder satisfaction: Who are the stakeholders and what are their demands and desires?
2. Stakeholder participation: What do we want from them?
3. Strategy: What strategies do we need to achieve their demands and desires?
4. Processes: What processes are required to achieve their demands and desires?
5. Capabilities: What capabilities do we need from professional employees, technology, operations, skills and infrastructure for processes and increasing efficiency and effectiveness?

Despite the significant progress that has occurred in recent years in the design of frameworks and performance evaluation systems, the implementation of the performance prism method is only case-by-case in the field of micro and small businesses, including sports shops, pharmacy and clothing store has been done (Helia et al., 2021), and based on the results of such research, researchers consider it appropriate to use the performance prism model for sports organizations (Nova, 2018), but many organizations still rely on traditional standards. One of the reasons for this problem is that the new and advanced models (for example performance prism) in this field only explain conceptual and fundamental issues and are rarely operationalized. Therefore, the manner of using these operational frameworks in a specific organization in order to create a unique performance evaluation system and in accordance to the needs of that organization, is a subject that requires further work.

These five perspectives provide an integrated framework for the organization performance managing (Youngbantao & Rompho, 2015). By answering these five questions, we can provide a framework for improving performance.

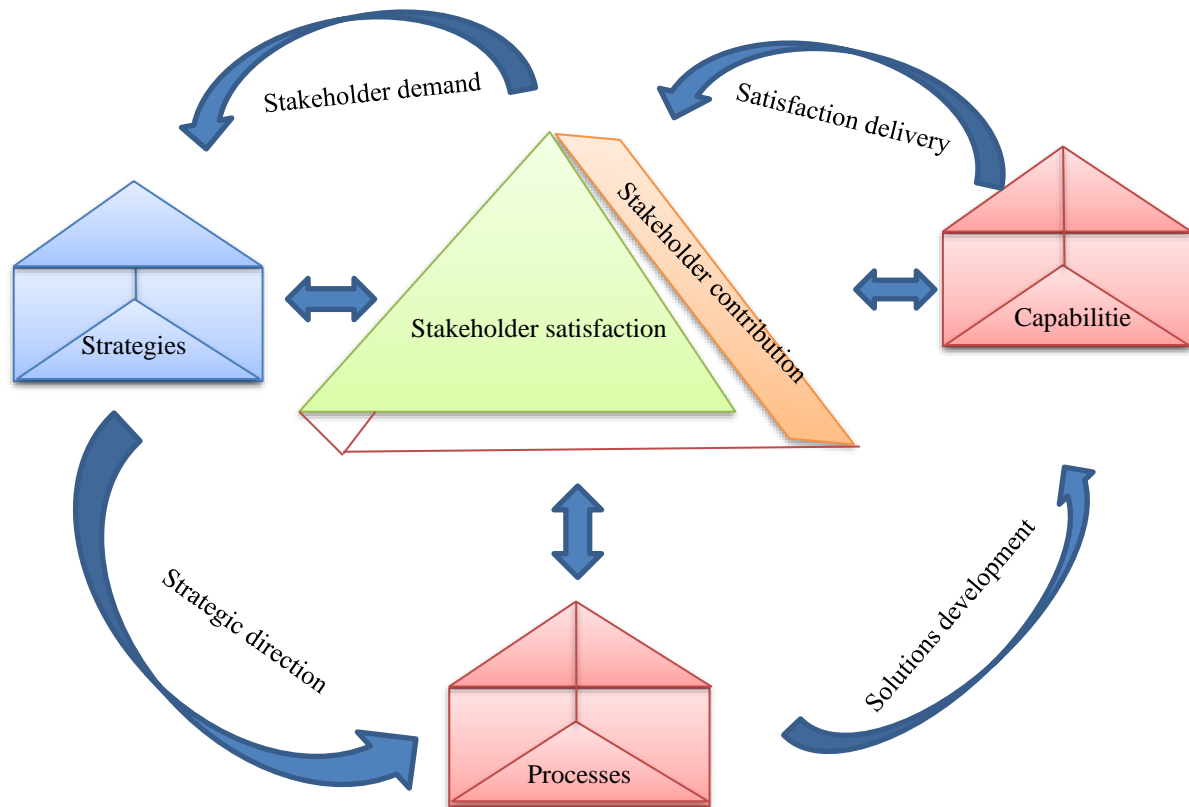


Figure 1. Performance prism model dimensions (Neely et al, 2002)

METHOD

A mixed method (quantitative-qualitative) is used in this research. The quantitative and qualitative data are collected and analyzed simultaneously or sequentially in a mixed method (Creswell et al., 2018). Therefore, when quantitative and qualitative data are mixed, we will have a very powerful combination (Miles & Huberman, 1994) that helps researchers reach quick and accurate conclusions (Guest & Fleming, 2015).

Purposive sampling is used which means that we contacted specific participants with the knowledge that they met our selection criteria (Neuman, 2013). A) People who already had a theoretical understanding about the research phenomena and were known as the stakeholders of the football federation, B) Sports management professors who had research experience in this field, C) People who are working in the federation or affiliated departments. The sample consisted of 24 participants (24 people in the first stage for the quantitative part and 14 people in the second stage until we reached theoretical saturation). A summary of the characteristics of the interviewees is presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Classification of experts in two stages

Expert classification	Sample	Sample in qualitative stage
Sports management professor who has researched in the field of football	9	6 (experts 7, 9, 10, 11, 13, 14)
People working in the federation or affiliated departments	4	2 (experts 4, 9)
Those aware of the conditions of the federation and influencing or being influenced by the federation	11	6 (experts 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 12)
Total	24	14

Considering that the research has both quantitative and qualitative parts, data collection was done in two stages through questionnaires and semi-structured interviews. In the first stage, due to the fact that the stakeholders of the football federation were not clear, first through the study of previous researches and documents, a relatively comprehensive understanding of the stakeholders of the Football Federation was obtained. Based on the theoretical basis, a list of stakeholders related to the football federation was provided, which included 46 stakeholders. In the continuation of the first stage, 46 identified stakeholders were compiled in the form of a questionnaire and through the Delphi Saaty method, it was provided to the experts and specialists in order to obtain the validity of the questionnaire and localization of these stakeholders. At this stage, experts were asked to specify the importance of each of these stakeholders on a scale of one (least) to ten (most). Next, the stakeholders who obtained an average score above seven according to the experts were identified as the key stakeholders of the federation, which included 25 stakeholders. At the end of the first stage, 25 key stakeholders of the federation were classified into nine groups based on the homogeneity and similarity of needs and expectations, the results of which are available in the findings section.

In the next stage and in the qualitative part, after determining and classifying the stakeholders in the first stage, through semi-structured interviews with 14 sports experts including (club coaches, supporters, referees, University faculty members, players and teachers of the federation), the demands and expectations of these stakeholders and the strategies, processes and capabilities of the federation to meet these expectations were asked to the theoretical saturation of the experts.

The semi-structured interview was flexible about the order of questions and topics to be covered, and the discussion was centered on the research topic introduced by the interviewer (Klenke, 2008). Interviews were conducted on the phone or in person. The interviews lasted between 30 and 45 minutes. In order to protect the identity of all participants in any kind of socio-scientific research, the participants must ensure that their conversations and statements remain confidential (Anney, 2004) and to ensure the integrity of the findings, the word “expert” is used for participants. Before starting the actual interviews, procedures regarding the reliability of the interview protocol should be considered in order to establish accuracy in the study (Anney 2004; Groenewald 2004). For this purpose, a guide framework was developed and it covered the dimensions of the performance prism that should be asked about.

Through examination of the background of researches related to the performance prism, unstructured discussions with people who had some personal experience in this field, as well as consultation with professors, the interview protocol was finally approved by the research team. The interviews started by explaining the background and purpose of the study. After the introduction and explanation of the first phase of the research and the obtained results, the interview was started with the question “What are the basic demands of the key stakeholders of football?” In the following and after the necessary guidance, we asked the following questions according to the dimensions of the performance prism.

Data analysis included a mixture of identifying and categorizing the key stakeholders of the football federation from the first stage and a coding process resulting from the coding of the interviews. 25 out of the 46 stakeholders of the Football Federation (available in Appendix 2) obtained an average above 7 according to the experts and were considered as key stakeholders. Then, the interviews were analyzed by reading and re-reading the recorded interviews to get familiar with the data. The qualitative data were then entered

into Atlas.ti 6.2, a qualitative software, to structure the findings so that the expressions obtained from the interviews could be explained. Finally, the obtained codes, concepts and categories were summarized in a table.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results section is structured according to four main themes emerging from the data: (1) identification of the key stakeholders of the football federation, (2) their demands and expectations that are crucial for the optimal implementation of performance management based on the performance prism in the football federation, (3) strategies, processes and capabilities that the football federation should have to meet the interests and expectations of these key stakeholders and (4) federation's demands and expectations of these stakeholders.

Key stakeholders of the Football Federation

At the beginning of the research process, the classification of the stakeholders of the football federation should have been done based on the prism of performance. By reviewing the available documents and sources, all the stakeholders were listed, which amounted to 46. The results of the quantitative part of the research showed that 25 out of 46 stakeholders were identified as the key stakeholders of the Football Federation. According to the homogeneous and identical expectations of these 25 people, they were categorized into 9 classes. Table two shows these nine groups.

Table 2. Classification of key stakeholders of the Football Federation of the Islamic Republic of Iran

No.	Stakeholder groups	Subset
1	Media stakeholders (media and social networks)	Football sports reporters - newspapers and domestic press - radio and television
2	Coaches	Coaches working at provincial, national and international levels
3	Referees	Referees working at national and international level
4	Players	Players working at national and provincial levels
5	Economic stakeholders (sponsors)	Organizations and companies owning the team, investors, club shareholders, foreign investors, sponsors
6	National stakeholders	Ministry of Sports and Youth, National Olympic Committee, League Organization
7	Provincial stakeholders	Provincial football boards and physical education departments
8	International stakeholders	FIFA - Asian Football Confederation
9	Club stakeholders	Clubs, club fans, football schools, organizing officials, security forces, stadium managers, youth, women, executive managers of teams

Expectations and demands of key stakeholders of Football Federation of Iran

In the next step, the demands and expectations of these nine groups of stakeholders were identified by interviewing experts. They were asked to express the demands and expectations of each of these groups. They emphasized the good communication and interaction of the federation with the stakeholders by stating that "all these stakeholders are interwoven loops" (Expert 1).

They also stated that “first of all, the demands of each of these nine groups can be different. Also, in addition to the demands, the federation communicate and interact differently with these groups” (Expert 10). According to the studied experts, the demands of the stakeholders can be different from each other.

I think as we have categorized the stakeholders and placed them in different groups, their demands are also different. That is, some demands might be identical for all groups, and some are considered only for a specific group and not relevant to other groups (Expert 13).

Therefore, the experts were asked to talk separately about the demands and expectations of each group. Experts have considered appropriate interaction of the federation as the need of media stakeholders. “The federation must be able to have a proper and constructive interaction with the sports media - radio and television are among the most important ones” (Expert 11).

Regarding coaches, they mentioned the conditions for people to enter the coaching field. “From my point of view, as a coach, this issue should be totally revised and not everyone can enter the field of coaching. Because coaching has a lot in common with a professor and an outstanding teacher and don’t differ” (Expert 6). They also referred to support mechanisms. “It would be great if the federation enter into an agreement with the insurance company and provides financial and medical support for coaches in exchange for receiving the insurance premium especially during retirement” (Expert 8). Ignoring the referees and reducing their expectations were what mostly discussed among referees.

Considering that we are refereeing in the Premier League as well as the Asian competitions, and just last week we were in the Asian competitions in Thailand and we are going to Jordan in a few days, we, the refereeing community, have expectations from the federation. Expectations are not so high considering our football conditions, but they ignored the referees so much that our expectations are getting smaller and smaller, which has caused many referees to be unable to continue their activities (Expert 1).

Therefore, “the federation and the boards should cooperate with the referees so that they don't get disappointed” (Expert 3). “We unfortunately had a lot of referees that have reached the second and first leagues, but couldn’t manage to reach the Premier League and all their efforts got nowhere” (expert 3), this points to the referees’ need for encouragement and support from the federation. In the players section, expectations such as insurance services during and after the playing period have been mentioned.

First of all, financially speaking, a condition should be provided for these people to be insured, to have a club membership card, so that if one day, for example, they were injured, they would not have any problems to provide the minimum basic necessities of life for themselves and their families (Expert 3).

Another concern in Iran’s football is the presence of deprived good players who rise to a certain level and remain at the provincial level and at most make a name for themselves in the basic ranks of the country and after that they say goodbye to football due to economic problems (Expert 6).

Regarding the demands of economic stakeholders, the need for support structures has been mentioned.

Investment is not well defined in our football. Persepolis team and a European team, for example, use the Sony brand on their uniforms. As a rule, Persepolis fans like to buy Sony goods in support of their beloved team, but are Persepolis stores active in all parts of Iran to sell Sony products and meet this

need? Of course not, so one should not expect such support from the sponsoring company because it will not reach its goals and will not benefit much (Expert 8).

Also, “Sponsors are looking to meet some of their own demands in exchange for financial aid, which vary. Big global companies don't invest in Iranian sports, because a sponsor invests when he reaches his goal and brand for which he has invested” (Expert 6) and start to expand his brand in this way.

“Regarding the national stakeholders as another stakeholder of the football federation, it is necessary to establish bilateral and multilateral interaction between these domestic organizations, which can be the National Olympic Committee, the Ministry of Sports and other sports institutions” (Expert 9). These bilateral and multilateral interactions help coordination in the field of football management. Also, “as football grows, it will help the economy of sports and the economy of the country. The derby games that we play, such as Persepolis and Esteghlal, or the presence of our clubs in Asian club competitions, bring money for the Ministry of Sports” (Expert 5) and this is one of the ways of generating income through sports.

From the point of view of the studied experts, FIFA and the Asian Football Confederation as the key international stakeholders of the federation have specific expectations.

Well, each of them has specific expectations from the federation and they are very clear. In my opinion, the implementation of regulations is very important for FIFA and the Asian Football Confederation, it should be accountable to FIFA and the Asian Football Confederation, as well as their rules and regulations (Expert 7).

Also, “In the field of international stakeholders, in my opinion, strengthening international communication is a main pillar and federations should outperform in order to strengthen international communication” (Expert 9).

In discussing the demands and expectations of the provincial stakeholders, it should be noted that the federation, in addition to delegating authority to these organizations, should issue clear regulations.

The football federation should have a department to feed them. For example, he should provide the necessary information to the municipalities about the rules and regulations and the way of implementing the recreational football and then let that organization do its work. Or in the field of amateur sports, he should be able to direct the delegations, train the heads of the delegations and the departments of the delegations. Got it? Otherwise he himself cannot get involved (Expert 11).

Also, in the section of provincial stakeholders, experts pointed to the creation or improvement of performance systems.

In the context of provincial stakeholders, which are mainly provincial delegations, it is necessary to use performance management systems to strengthen their performance. Also, developing performance indicators appropriate to the activities of the delegations and actually institutionalizing the performance management process in these subgroups can be considered a basic need (Expert 9).

The club stakeholders, as one of the key stakeholders of the football federation, expect the division of national work in the field of football. “Unfortunately, we have not created a clear dialogue space between the clubs and the federation. The division of national work is not clear, sometimes we poke around our nose in each other's affairs.

Some affairs don't belong to football, some affairs don't belong to clubs” (Expert 10). They also expect to help the process of privatization of clubs. “Football clubs are considered the main drivers of football development. Therefore, as long as the ownership of the clubs is monopolized by the government, the competition is weak and the clubs rarely feel the risk of leaving the competition or winding-up” (Expert 12).

Strategies, processes and capabilities of the federation to meet the interests and expectations of key stakeholders and those of the football federation from them

After identifying the demands and expectations of the key stakeholders of the football federation, in the continuation of the interview, the experts were asked what strategies, processes and capabilities the federation needs to meet these demands.

Although we have various organizations and institutions related to football, such as delegations, the Ministry of Sports and Youth, the National Olympic Committee, clubs, etc., but in the end, in our structure, the Football Federation is obliged to be accountable to all above-mentioned stakeholders, like referee, coach, sponsor, etc. Therefore, the federation must have good and many capabilities that can serve this large amount of stakeholders (expert 4).

Also, one of the experts mentioned the positive and negative effects of processes and capabilities.

Meeting the demands of each requires its own strategy, and the processes and capabilities can have a positive or negative effect on the implementation of these strategies: Positive because it can increase the attractiveness of football in the community and attract more fans, it can also attract more sponsors. On the contrary, if he fails to perform well in these fields and does not know these demands well, he will lose his sponsors and fans. Why do many people now say that we don't take our children to the stadium? Because there are dirty words or I don't know, issues arise that have a negative impact on their child's upbringing, well, both hardware and software aspects have many flaws and these factors can help in identifying our demands and each of these wants its own type of strategy (Expert 14).

In the following, one of the experts pointed out the specialization of strategies.

Well, a key point that I want to say at the beginning is that, in my opinion, the strategy should be developed according to the goal, performance and the specific approach of that group. We cannot say: Do this for this group or do that for that group. We have to see what the main goal of our target group is and what its main need is. Then, based on that, we can formulate a strategy (Expert 13).

In addition, the differences and commonalities of the processes were discussed.

The processes of the federation in order to implement these strategies, while having commonalities, are completely different from each other. The processes and capabilities of the federation can have a positive effect if they are implemented in the right way. For example, if the stadiums are not ready in terms of hardware, it will be crowded, I don't know, the spectators will not sit in their seats and it will cause a negative effect, like what exists now especially in our football federation. (Expert 7).

Expectations of the Football Federation from its key stakeholders

The last part of the results was devoted to the data collected from interviews with experts about the expectations of the federation from its key stakeholders.

One of the experts pointed to the classification of the federation's expectations from the stakeholders in general and specific.

In my opinion, the federation can have expectations from all these groups. That is, you have to re-categorize the general and specific expectations of the federation. It is possible that some of the general expectations of the federation return to the entire society and the entire structure of the socio-political-cultural system. That is, for example, it is possible that the federation may ask for affairs such as financial, cultural, and political or, I don't know, managerial, structural and anything that is almost public and goes back to all these stakeholder groups and goes back to the government and stakeholder groups and will definitely have some specific expectations (Expert 14).

Also, one of the experts focused on the financial expectations of the federation.

Basically, the most important expectations of the federation are financial ones and meeting the financial needs of the federation. That is, whoever becomes the head of the federation again says that with the money I possess, or with the money I earn, or with the money given to me, it is impossible to satisfy all the stakeholders and all the needs. It is really the case, after all, football is a big industry that has allocated so many demands and so many stakeholders to itself, and it really requires much higher money than what we are spending, and if we want to enhance the quality of the football industry and in general, the level of football in our country, considering the large volume of demands, we must have many plans, actions and strategies, and finally, all of these can be done with money (Expert 13).

Table 3. The performance management framework of the Football Federation based on the performance prism

Stakeholders	Needs	Strategy	Process	Capabilities	Stakeholders' contribution
Media stakeholders	The quality of communication between the Federation and the media	1) Improving the quality of communication between the Federation and the media 2) Improving the culture of being accountable to the media and public opinion	1) Compilation and development of the communication manual of the federation with the media 2) Improving the processes related to the quality of public relations of the Federation	1) The communication skills of federation managers in communicating with the media 2) Development of communication equipment 3) Increasing the capacity of public relations staff	1) Transparency and honesty in publishing information and lack of convulsions in the society 2) Healthy and close cooperation with the federation's public relations
Coaches	Development of the position of coach and coaching	1) Increasing the financial and job support of coaches 2) Development of the training system for coaches	1) Drafting and approving the career regulation of football coaches in line with financial and career support 2) Upgrading the organizational and union status of the Football Coaches Union 3) Upgrading the quality training system of coaches	1) Attention to the salaries and benefits of full-time and part-time educational and professional coaches 2) Implementation of legal, financial and administrative system in support of coaches at different levels 3) Having quality trainers	1) Participation in promotion and retraining courses 2) Helping the growth of basic football

			4) Formulating the career path of football coaches according to the level of coaching	in coaching classes 4) Creating a system for identifying the talents of coaches 5) Creating professional opportunities to participate in retraining courses at the international level	
Referees	Support and empowerment of referees	1) Improving financial and motivational support 2) Improving the ability of referees	1) Compilation of the material and spiritual support system (rights, benefits and work opportunities) 2) Development of the talent management process of football referees (recruitment, improvement and retention)	1) Existence of a positive attitude in managers regarding the financial and spiritual support of referees 2) Availability of equipment needed for referees 3) The active role of the federation and the relevant committee to create opportunities for the participation of elite referees in international events and training courses	1) Making correct, just and fair judgments
Players	Support programs during and after the championship period	1) Improving career support for players 2) Increasing the quality of services provided by the federation to the players	1) The process of developing support programs suitable for the playing and after the retirement of football players 2) The process of improving the quality of services provided to national players	1) Aligning the operations of the federation according to the path of elite playing 2) Establishment of quality management and standardization of national camps	1) Having professional behavior and respecting national laws 2) Not having a purely material vision in activities
Economic stakeholders	Constructive and effective interaction	1) Improving the quality of communication between the	1) Development of communication processes between the federation and	1) Development of the federation's communication	1) Having a correlation between sponsor activity and sports field

		<p>federation and sponsors</p> <p>2) Increasing the benefit of sponsors from sponsoring</p>	<p>the sponsors according to the interests of the parties</p> <p>2) Compilation of the effectiveness process of sponsors from the federation</p>	<p>skills with sponsors</p> <p>2) Establishing a communication management unit with different sponsors in the federation</p> <p>3) and increasing the competitive environment between sponsors</p>	<p>2) Fulfillment of obligations according to the established contracts</p>
National stakeholders	Organizational Excellence	<p>1) Improving inter-organizational strategic alignment</p> <p>2) Improving the position and gaining a position in the World Games (Asian and Olympic Games)</p>	<p>1) Explaining and adjusting the processes of strategic cooperation between national sports organizations</p> <p>2) Compiling the competitiveness system in football championship</p>	<p>1) Structural empowerment of the football federation</p> <p>2) Improvement of the legal environment of inter-organizational cooperation in the federation</p> <p>3) Existence of a comprehensive information system regarding competitors and competitiveness</p> <p>4) Increasing the quality of the medal winning requirements (technical and human) in football</p>	<p>1) Delegation of authority to the federation</p> <p>2) Prevention of politicization in sports</p> <p>3) Integrated management in the field of football (division of national work)</p> <p>4) Organizing preparatory games</p> <p>5) Appropriate interaction between the Ministry of Sports and the National Olympic Committee with the Federation</p> <p>6) The effort of the Ministry of Sports to create a private television for sports or to give the right to broadcast television to the federation</p>
International stakeholders	Legal and executive alignment and coordination	<p>1) Improving the federation's legal coordination with FIFA and the Asian Football Confederation</p>	<p>1) Compilation and approval of legal processes aligned with international upstream organizations</p> <p>2) The process of participation</p>	<p>1) Developing communication with upstream institutions (legislative and executive powers)</p>	<p>1) The rules and regulations of the submission should be clear.</p> <p>2) International competitions should be conducted professionally</p>

		2) Improving the program coordination of the federation with FIFA and the Asian Football Confederation	and cooperation in the forums and programs of international upstream organizations	2) Getting a seat in international forums 3) Increasing the political and executive influence of the federation in the football confederation and FIFA. 4) Strengthening the international relations of the football federation	and without discrimination. 3) Helping to develop specialized human resources 4) Financial aid from FIFA and the Asian Football Confederation
Provincial stakeholders	Existence of a suitable incentive program and system at the provincial level	1) Planning and exploiting the capacity of the provinces in the development of football based on territorial goals 2) Improving the performance management of sports teams 3) Creating an incentive system for the realization of the Federation's plans in the delegations	1) Development and formulation of the process of territorial preparation of football at the country level 2) The process of implementing performance management in provincial boards	1) Alignment of national and provincial football development programs 2) Compatibility between the performance management system of the federation and the provincial development plans 3) The commitment of the senior managers of the federation to the performance management system	1) Activity in accordance with the laws of the Federation 2) Conducting regular amateur competitions 3) Constructive communications and interactions with the federation. 4) Clear and transparent elections 5) Having a written and targeted program
Club stakeholders	1) Developing basic sports 2) Increasing the quality of services in events 3) Developing the system of clubs and owning clubs	1) Structural improvement of football schools 2) Improvement of coordination between clubs and the federation in the development of elite players 3) Improvement of the quality of holding	1) Development and implementation of quality management process in football schools 2) Creating a coordinated system for the development of elite players between the federation and the clubs 3) The process of standardization	1) Attention and implementation of comprehensive quality management in the operations of the federation 2) The financial and spiritual support of the federation from elite national players working in clubs at different ages	1) Clarification of the financial performance of the club 2) Implementation of a system for finding football talent in the country 3) Compliance with social and cultural responsibilities 4) Having a documented program for

		events and competitions	and quality of events	3) Ability to rank clubs based on quality criteria	training and promoting human resources
		4) Improvement of the system of club ownership in football	4) Development of the process of having a club in football		5) Trying to become professional
					6) Attracting sponsors

As mentioned in table one, the demands and expectations of the key stakeholders of the Football Federation of the Islamic Republic of Iran, as well as the strategies, processes and capabilities of the federation to meet these demands have been identified. The last column on the left shows the mutual expectations of the federation from these stakeholders.

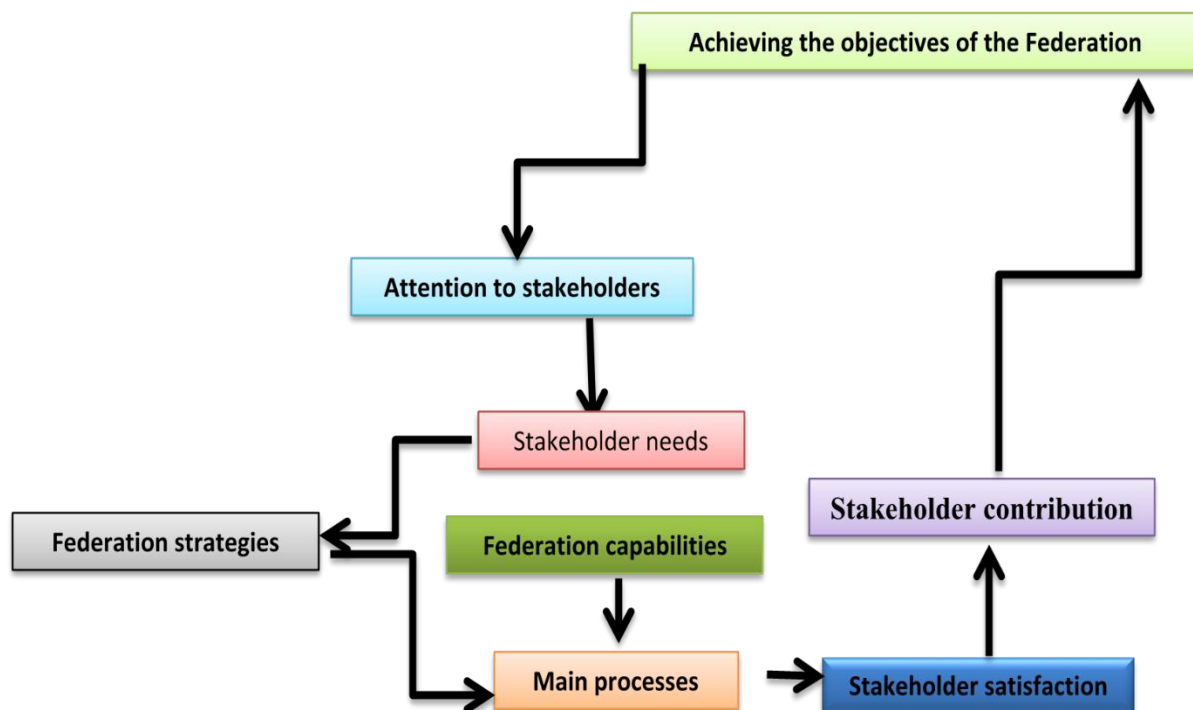


Figure 2. Management of the performance of the Football Federation of the Islamic Republic of Iran based on the performance prism framework

This research aimed to design the performance management framework of Football Federation of Iran based on the performance prism. In this paper, the performance prism model (Neely et al., 2002) was used to manage the performance of the football federation. The most important reason for the acceptance of this model and its success was to pay attention to all the key stakeholders of an organization. A factor that has received much attention in recent decades and its role in the success of organizations has been proven (O'Boyle & Hassan, 2013; Mar & Schiuma, 2003). The results showed that 25 people were identified as the key stakeholders of the football federation, which were categorized into nine groups. The results of this section are consistent with the results of Kristiansen and colleagues (2021) and Parent and colleagues (2021). The research results of Parent and colleagues (2021) showed that in all Canadian national sports organizations, the

federal government, athletes, coaches, officials, their international federation and the Canadian Coaching Association are recognized as stakeholders. Also, they concluded that in 91-97% of Canadian national sports organizations, the stakeholders included employees, volunteers, social media, as well as provincial (regional) sports organizations. Of course, it should be accepted that the structure and purpose of the organization is effective in changing and diversifying the stakeholders. Accordingly, Bezkurt and colleagues (2025) name coaches as the key stakeholders of football academies. Also, the position of sports in that society, economic and political conditions, cultural factors and other variables can affect the composition and diversity of stakeholders. Hammerschmidt and colleagues (2021) investigated the reaction of professional football clubs during the COVID-19 crisis. They considered the league and associations, staff, players, government, media, fans and community, sponsors and service providers as specific stakeholders of professional football clubs. By reviewing these and similar studies, we realize this important point that despite the diversity and plurality of stakeholders in different sports organizations, some of these stakeholders such as financial sponsors, international and domestic organizations, media and fans have been identified as key stakeholders in most of these researches, which is consistent with the results of our research.

Organizations in the 21st century must consider the desires and demands of all their stakeholders because they can rebel or refuse to cooperate, this can jeopardize the organizational mission and goals (Nogning & Gardoni, 2017). The results of this research showed that the demands and expectations of these groups of stakeholders are different. Based on the stakeholder theory, the interests of all stakeholders must be considered for an organization to be successful (Covell, 2005). Paying attention to the role of each stakeholder group in the football federation and their demands and expectations creates the need for stakeholder management and stakeholder management strategy in national sports (Sotiriadou, 2009). Stakeholder management strategy is the amount of attention that the organization pays to each of its stakeholder groups and provides a framework for the organization to manage diverse and conflicting demands and interests of stakeholders based on its strategy (Duesing, 2009).

Given that the strategy formulation and implementation process is one of the key steps in sports organizations (Ilic, 2013), strategy formulation according to the demands of the stakeholders is one of the main measures for the success of any organization. Accordingly, a special strategy should be developed for each of these demands, or to overcome this challenge, we can divide the demands into two major groups: general and specific demands. General demands refer to those that are somewhat the same for all interest groups, such as mutual respect, bilateral interactions, compliance with existing laws, etc. Specific demands refer to those specific to the same group and perhaps specific to a member of that group. To meet these demands, the football federation also requires several strategies, which can again be divided into two general and specific groups. Considering that processes are derived from strategy and capabilities are derived from processes (Nogning & Gardoni, 2017), processes and capabilities can also be divided into two general and specific groups, or they can be formulated according to each strategy.

It is very beneficial to use performance prism to encourage management teams to know their stakeholders and what they expect from the organization in return. The concept behind this framework is that for long-term success, key stakeholders must be identified and their demands must be met appropriately (Macnab, 2011) so that the organization can finally achieve its desired goals and results. According to the previous

explanations, the federation can have two types of expectations from the stakeholders. A group of federation expectations are general and include all stakeholders. For example, the federation expects to respect his independence and expertise in football and not to interfere in his private activities. In the specific section, we can also mention the expectations of the federation from the media. The federation expects to have full television broadcasting rights.

Providing a stakeholder-based performance management framework based on the performance prism fills the research gap in the field of performance management. It also provides a framework for improving the performance of the federation based on stakeholders so that managers can plan based on it and improve organizational performance among stakeholders in the environment in which they operate. The framework presented in this research is actually a step towards improving and promoting the performance of national sports federations (football) with an emphasis on the satisfaction of various stakeholders. Finally, considering that the stakeholders have different positions and importance, the results of this research can be the basis for planning and policy making in the football federation.

Considering that the performance prism model includes the performance of all stakeholders, it is recommended to be considered as a basis for improving organizational performance and all the activities and actions of national federations such as the Football Federation is based on this model. It is also suggested that each of the constituent elements of the performance prism model be examined in a separate research in more detail for sports organizations. It is recommended to conduct this research in other countries and other sports organizations. In addition, according to the results of the research, the stakeholder should be considered as a basis for performance improvement and performance management in sports organizations. Also, some representatives of stakeholders such as international stakeholders were not included in the interviewed samples due to lack of access to them.

CONCLUSION

The basic premise of this study was based on the idea that the use of the performance prism model can improve the performance management of national sports organizations. Also, the result of this study is a step towards its implementation in the football federation and other sports organizations. By identifying the key stakeholders of the organization and determining their demands, by using appropriate strategies, capabilities and processes, organizations should take basic steps towards the satisfaction of these key stakeholders and finally improve their organizational performance and effectiveness through stakeholder orientation and stakeholder satisfaction and their mutual help.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

There were no conflicts that occurred in this study.

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