

The position of diplomacy in Iranian sports

La posición de la diplomacia en el deporte iraní

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Abstract

Sports diplomacy is a pervasive phenomenon that at the diplomatic level is one of the most important components of communication between countries and nations, and therefore it is important to know what is the position of Iran, as a powerful country in the field of diplomacy in this area. The purpose of this study was to investigate the position of diplomacy in Iranian sports. The research method was descriptive-analytical and applied in terms of purpose. The statistical population of the study was all political-sports managers and experts in the field of sports diplomacy who were selected by purposive and accessible sampling. The data collection method included library studies, semi-structured interviews with experts and finally the Delphi method in three stages. In order to identify the strategic position, the Internal Factor Evaluation Matrix (IFE) and the External Factor Evaluation Matrix (EFE) were used. The results showed that the position of Iranian sports diplomacy is in the position of WO (conservative strategy). In this regard, it is concluded that high-level officials and policymakers in the Ministry of Sports, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and other relevant institutions should focus their plans on addressing weaknesses and taking advantage of existing opportunities.

Key words: strategy, international relations, sports management, Iran.

Resumen

La diplomacia deportiva es un fenómeno generalizado que a nivel diplomático es uno de los componentes más importantes de la comunicación entre países y naciones, y por ello es importante conocer cuál es la posición de Irán, como país poderoso en el campo de la diplomacia en esta área. El propósito de este estudio fue investigar la posición de la diplomacia en el deporte iraní. El método de investigación fue descriptivo-analítico y aplicado en términos del propósito. La población estadística del estudio fueron todos los gerentes político-deportivos y expertos en el campo de la diplomacia deportiva, seleccionados mediante un muestreo intencional y accesible. El método de recolección de datos incluyó estudios de biblioteca, entrevistas semiestructuradas a expertos y finalmente el método Delphi en tres etapas. Para identificar la posición estratégica, se utilizó la Matriz de Evaluación de Factores Internos (IFE) y la Matriz de Evaluación de Factores Externos (EFE). Los resultados mostraron que la posición de la diplomacia deportiva iraní está en la posición de WO (estrategia conservadora). En este sentido, se concluye que los funcionarios de alto nivel y los encargados de la formulación de políticas del Ministerio de Deportes, el Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores y otras instituciones pertinentes deberían centrar sus planes en abordar las debilidades y aprovechar las oportunidades existentes.

Palabras clave: estrategia, relaciones internacionales, gestión deportiva, Irán.

INTRODUCTION

The formation of the global general territory has raised the challenge for governments and authority; In a way, they try to control and influence this territory in different ways. They cannot ignore this issue in terms of structural duties, especially diplomatic duties; Therefore, they have turned to modern public diplomacy (Ghasemi et al., 2013) . Diplomacy, the application of which increases the soft or intelligent power of a country and expands its influence in the global arena, and therefore governments have a key role of guidance and oversight, but the capacity and cooperation of actors other than Government also use (Ghasemi et al., 2013). In this regard, one of the capacities that has been able to explain its position in the diplomatic apparatus is sports; In a way that today, sports diplomacy literature has been able to blur the borders and open more ways for dialogue, so that different people can come together through it (Murray, 2013). Harvey noted that the high profile of international sporting events has provided a fertile ground for government intervention. Countries establish direct propaganda links between sports victories and their political-economic systems. In this strategy, sport is a political tool at the disposal of the government through which it links the achievements and victories of the country's heroes and athletes to its political-economic system so that they can show the superiority of their system to others. This process is called sports diplomacy and the athletes who are employed for this purpose are called sports diplomats (Eden , 2013).

If we call diplomacy the "The art of managing interaction with the outside world" by the government, Various tools and mechanisms can be used to apply this management, one of which is sports diplomacy. Using this tool, politicians and statesmen of the world, using sports figures and sporting events, seek to create a favorable image of their country among the organizations and governments of other countries (Murray, 2012). Today, sport has become an important aspect of the political influence of the government (ies) (Bergsgard et al., 2007). Argue that increasing the prominence and superiority of sport for governments and their various political goals is culturally and socially important in terms of sport (Gachi et al., 2023)

In his study "Sports Diplomacy: The Chinese Experience and Perspective," Qingmin (2013) states that sport is the realm of politics and diplomacy. When the relationship between the two countries is weak, sport can be a tool for confrontation between the two countries, if this relationship is improving, sport can increase its speed. In both cases, the sport is politically motivated, but from the Chinese point of view, only the second example can be considered as sports diplomacy. Another function of sports diplomacy is to develop social issues.

Woodward (2020), in a study entitled *The Sport and UK Soft Power: The Case of Mount Everest* concluded that sports and sporting events continue to play an important role in strengthening and developing diplomatic relations between countries and creating peace in the world.

Min and Choi (2018) in their research entitled *Sports Cooperation between the two Koreas; And the overemphasis on sports diplomacy in South Korea* has led to the conclusion that the use of sport as a diplomatic tool is expanding between North and South Korea, and since the early 1960s, Sports exchanges between the two Koreas have been more like a social factor for political cooperation.

Bakhshi Chenari et al. (2021) in a study entitled "Identifying the tools of sports diplomacy to advance Iran's political goals" concluded that hosting international events, using sports to introduce positive domestic changes to world public opinion, athletes' participation in charitable and international activities, training Sports ambassadors, gaining international seats, the presence of athletes, coaches, sports managers, etc. in diplomacy-related decision-making meetings are among the most important tools of sports diplomacy to achieve Iran's international goals.

Bakhshi Chenari et al. (2021) in two separate studies, identified the obstacles to the development of sports diplomacy and prioritize the effective factors of this diplomacy in our country's foreign policy, the results showed that the inattention of the Ministry of Sports and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to international sports issues, ideological obstacles and conflicts of

some values of the Islamic Republic with the rules and norms governing world sports, In order of the most important obstacles, as well as the support of the diplomatic apparatus, was the mutual cooperation between the Ministry of Sports and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the establishment of a centralized institution to follow up and prevent duplication, and one of the factors influencing the development of sports diplomacy in Iran's foreign policy.

Khabiri and Fattahizadeh (2019) in their research entitled *Sports Diplomacy; Demanding and Restricting a Political Strategic Concept Introduces 15 tools derived from the lived and objective experiences of sports diplomacy and acknowledges that these tools can be used to promote development, exercise soft power, and promote peaceful relations between states.*

Sports diplomacy is a pervasive phenomenon that at the diplomatic level is one of the most important components of communication between countries and nations, and therefore it is important to know what is the position of Iran, as a powerful country in the field of diplomacy in this status. A review of past research shows that despite the importance of sports diplomacy, most of them have introduced this diplomacy as a powerful tool to achieve their transnational goals or identify its components, and have less analyzed the position of sports diplomacy in their country. Numerous studies have been conducted in the field of SWOT in various fields, but most of these researches have dealt with specialized and macro issues of sports, and none of them have specialized in the discussion of sports diplomacy. Therefore, due to the lack of previous research in the field of SWOT and its connection with sports diplomacy at home, this research can be useful for researchers and enthusiasts in this field.

Today, due to the special political situation and the negative view of Iran, which is the product of the system of global domination, the country has faced a serious challenge in the world arenas. The existence of media powers, which are generally in the hands of the dominating powers, has led to the use of the capabilities and capacity of the country's sports diplomacy to be felt and considered more to counter it. The results of a PEW Research Institute poll in the United States show a decline in Iran's position in world public opinion. According to the report, out of 39 countries surveyed, only Pakistan and Indonesia have more than half of the population positive about Iran. The most negative comments about Iran have been reported in Israel, Western Europe and the United States with a frequency of more than 80% (Zainulbhai and Wike, 2015). Another poll released by the US Gallup Institute in February 2014 found that public opinion was negative about Iran after China and North Korea. In 2012, Iran was considered by US public opinion to be Iran's biggest enemy, although analysts at the institute cited Iran's initial agreement with the P5 + 1 in nuclear talks as a reason to improve relations (Australian Government, 2017).

On the other hand, it is necessary to mention that one of the basic responsibilities of the country's top management is to advance foreign policy at the international level, and today it has been proven that using cultural diplomacy in general and sports diplomacy in particular, can be more effective in the international arena. It seems that restoring Iran's civilizational and cultural position in the international arena by using the capabilities of soft power, including sports diplomacy, it will certainly be very important and instructive in improving the political, security, economic and social political situation of the country in the international arena and this is possible by adopting an effective strategy in the field of sports diplomacy, which itself will be subject to identifying and determining the position of sports diplomacy in the country and in relevant agencies (Vojdani tabatabaie et al., 2023). In the field of international relations, each country seeks to show its image positively and constructively among the people of other countries. The results of research show that Iran does not make good use of the capacities of sports diplomacy. This new diplomacy at its highest level is the bedrock of the interaction of cultures and civilizations and is the best tool to introduce the rich culture of our country and open the door to interaction and dialogue with other countries (Vojdani tabatabaie et al., 2023). Iran, as a civilized country with a rich cultural background, has great geopolitical importance in the region and the world. Therefore, it is necessary to use the capacity of sports diplomacy, while achieving its regional and global goals, to improve its image in the world. Achieving the great goal will not be possible except

through the formulation of an effective sports diplomacy strategy. In fact, a passive approach in this area and the lack of a proper strategic plan will deprive us of various opportunities for the development of the country in various political, economic, social, cultural and sports fields. In this regard, and due to the growing importance of sports diplomacy in our country's foreign policy, the present study seeks to determine the position and position of this diplomacy in the country, to provide practical suggestions for its success.

METHODOLOGY

The present study is descriptive-analytical and applied in terms of purpose. This type of study is a type of SWOT analysis (one of the sub-fields of strategic studies) in which it analyzes the internal and external environment, including identifying strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats of sports diplomacy. Data collection methods included library studies, semi-structured interviews with elites to achieve theoretical saturation, and finally the Delphi method, respectively. Thus, first information was collected through the library method in these areas, then with in-depth interviews with political managers who had a history of participating in sports or sports managers who had a history of holding political positions at high levels. Strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats of diplomacy Sports were identified. Finally, the Delphi method was used to create consensus and group information gathering because there was no complete certainty on the information. In order to start the process, 20 professors with experience in sports management, political science, international relations and strategic management were polled via e-mail (The criterion for selecting the statistical sample in this section, in addition to higher education in related fields, is managerial experience in one of the management positions related to sports organizations, including universities and other sports organizations, who are familiar with their knowledge and experience in sports diplomacy). Costa (2005) put the minimum number of Delphi commentators at 11. Also, Ahmadi et al. (2008) stated that the number of experts in this method is between 5 and 20. In this method, first, the weaknesses, strengths, opportunities and threats of sports diplomacy, which were obtained through library studies and interviews, were identified through a survey of each expert. In the second round, the selected items were discussed by these experts and some of them were fixed and adjusted by other experts. In the last round (third), the items on which the experts agreed were used as the basis for the work. The statistical population of this research in the interview section includes the statistical population of the research of all political-sports managers who had a history of managerial experience at the highest levels of sports in the country and also 15 experts in the field of sports diplomacy who were selected by purposive and available sampling.

RESULTS

In describing the research sample in the interview section, 11 elite professors of the university in the fields of sports management, political science, international relations and 2 senior sports managers at the level of Minister of Sports and Deputy Minister, 2 general managers of the Ministry of Sports and Youth (Director General of International Relations and Director General of Talent Search and former head of the Wrestling Federation). The following table separates and describes the research sample. In the following, the research examples in the interview and Delphi sections are described separately.

Table 1. Description of research examples in the interview section

The position of experts	Number	Description
University professors	11	Fields: Sports Management, Political Science, International Relations
Top political-sports managers of the country	4	At the level: Minister of Sports and Deputy Minister of Championship Sports of the 13th government, Director General of International Relations of the Ministry of Sports and Director General of Talent Search of the Ministry of Sports and head of the Wrestling Federation

Table 2. Description of research examples in Delphi

The position of experts	Number	Description
University professo	12	Field: Sports Management
University professo	4	Field: Political Science and International Relations
University professo	2	Field: Strategic Management
Former Ambassador of Iran	2	Retired Ambassador of the Ninth Government and an employee of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Former Member of Parliament	1	Member of the Foreign Policy Committee of the Parliament

Following and after the interview and Delphi method (in three rounds) with university professors, experts and specialists in the field of sports diplomacy; The final list of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats was obtained, which we will describe in a separate table below.

Table 3. Strengths of Iranian sports diplomacy

Row	Strengths of sports diplomacy
1	Existence of an international relations office in the Ministry of Sports and Youth
2	The non-hostile, low-cost and attractive tone of sports diplomacy compared to other diplomacies
3	Existence of common messages (such as international peace) between sport and diplomacy
4	Iran's geopolitical position in the region and the world
5	The role of sports diplomacy in the foreign policy of governments
6	Establishment of the International Affairs Coordination Council in the Ministry of Sports and Federations

Table 4. Weaknesses of Iranian sports diplomacy

Row	Weaknesses of sports diplomacy
1	Lack of a specific reference or decision-making body in the field of sports diplomacy
2	Not having an international seat
3	Lack of a spokesperson in the Ministry of Sports to introduce (or respond to) sports diplomacy
4	Lack of job descriptions in the Ministry of Sports and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs regarding sports diplomacy
5	Inability of managers to identify issues and respond to the challenges of sports diplomacy
6	Lack of a body to oversee the performance of officials in the field of sports diplomacy

Table 5. Opportunities for Iranian Sports Diplomacy

Row	Sports diplomacy opportunities
1	Sport is not sanctioned
2	Existence of the Office of International Relations in the National Olympic Committee and the federations
3	Existence of specialized forces in areas related to sports diplomacy, including: strategic management, foreign languages, law, etc.
4	Welcoming ambassadors, elites and the people of Iran's cultural-sports activities
5	Existence of common political, cultural, economic and other positions and positions with many countries in the region and the world
6	Development of tourism, earning economic income and improving the image of the Iranian nation in the world through sports diplomacy

Table 6. Threats of Iranian sports diplomacy

Row	Threats of sports diplomacy
1	Existence of Iranophobia, Islamophobia, Shiaophobia
2	Lack of specific bylaws, memoranda and legal documents for the cooperation of related institutions
3	Existence of intellectual (cultural) currents opposed to Iran
4	The oppressive sanctions of the enemy and the creation of political-economic deadlocks
5	Passivity of trustees and stakeholders in the field of sports diplomacy
6	Lack of sufficient financial resources

To determine the strategic position of sports diplomacy in Iran, the matrix of evaluation of internal (internal) and external (external) factors was used. Internal factors (strengths and weaknesses) and external factors (opportunities and threats) were included in internal and external evaluation matrices, and was determined by the brainstorming method or the loss of the thoughts of experts, the coefficient of significance, the severity of the agent and the score of each inner and external factors. In the first column of the internal evaluation matrix, the title of factors (strength or weakness) was entered. The second column is dedicated to the number of strengths and weaknesses. In the third column, the title of each of the strengths and weaknesses was written. In the fourth column, the significance coefficient of each factor was determined so that the sum of the significance coefficients of strengths and weaknesses is equal to one (1). In the fifth column, the intensity of the factor of each of the internal factors was mentioned according to their degree of importance, so that scores of 3 or 4 were assigned to the strengths and 1 or 2 to the weaknesses. The final score of internal factors was entered in the sixth column so that this score was obtained by multiplying the coefficient of importance by the intensity of the factor. The same process is observed in the external factors evaluation matrix.

Table 7. Evaluation matrix of internal factors of Iranian sports diplomacy

Internal factors	Indicator	Factors	Significance factor (Weight)	Agent intensity	Weight score
Strengths	S1	Existence of an international relations office in the Ministry of Sports and Youth	0/09	4	0/36
	S2	The non-hostile, low-cost and attractive tone of sports diplomacy compared to other diplomacies	0/03	3	0/09
	S3	Existence of common messages (such as international peace, etc.) between sports and diplomacy	0/01	4	0/04
	S4	Iran's geopolitical position in the region and the world	0/08	4	0/32
	S5	The role of sports diplomacy in the foreign policy of governments	0/06	3	0/18

	S6	Establishment of the International Affairs Coordination Council in the Ministry of Sports and Federations	0/05	4	0/20
weaknesses	W1	Lack of a specific reference or decision-making body in the field of sports diplomacy	0/14	2	0/28
	W2	Not having an international seat	0/19	1	0/19
	W3	Lack of a spokesperson in the Ministry of Sports to introduce (or respond to) sports diplomacy	0/07	2	0/14
	W4	Lack of job descriptions in the Ministry of Sports and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs regarding sports diplomacy	0/15	1	0/15
	W5	Inability of managers to identify issues and respond to the challenges of sports diplomacy	0/04	2	0/08
	W6	Lack of a body to oversee the performance of officials in the field of sports diplomacy	0/09	1	0/09
The sum of the importance of the coefficients of internal factors			$\Sigma=1$		$\Sigma=2/12$

Table 8. Evaluation matrix of external factors of Iranian sports diplomacy

External factors	Indicator	Factors	Significance factor (Weight)	Agent intensity	Weight score
Opportunities	O1	Sport is not sanctioned	0/11	3	0/33
	O2	Existence of the Office of International Relations in the National Olympic Committee and the federations	0/09	4	0/36
	O3	Existence of specialized forces in areas related to sports diplomacy, including: strategic management, foreign languages, law, etc.	0/12	3	0/72
	O4	Welcoming ambassadors, elites and people of cultural-sports activities in Iran	0/18	4	0/72
	O5	Existence of common political, cultural, economic and other positions and positions with many countries in the region and the world	0/05	3	0/15
	O6	Development of tourism, earning economic income and improving the image of the Iranian nation in the world through sports diplomacy	0/05	3	0/15
threats	T1	Existence of Iranophobia, Islamophobia, Shiaophobia	0/14	1	0/14
	T2	Lack of specific bylaws, memoranda and legal documents for the cooperation of related institutions	0/11	2	0/22
	T3	Existence of intellectual (cultural) currents opposed to Iran	0/02	2	0/04
	T4	The oppressive sanctions of the enemy and the creation of political-economic deadlocks	0/03	2	0/06
	T5	Passivity of trustees and stakeholders in the field of sports diplomacy	0/04	1	0/04
	T6	Lack of sufficient financial resources	0/11	1	0/11
The sum of the importance of external factor coefficients			$\Sigma=1$		$\Sigma=2/68$

As the results of the matrix of internal factors in the table above show, the total score of the matrix is less than 2.5 (2.12) and indicates that Iranian sports diplomacy is weak in terms of internal factors. The results in Table 8 also show the matrix of external factors. As can be seen, the total score of this matrix is more than 2.5, ie (68.2) and indicates that our country's sports

diplomacy has an opportunity in terms of external factors. In general, using the results of the above tables as well as the evaluation of domestic and foreign matrices, indicates that Iran's sports diplomacy is strategically located in the WO region; In other words, it should be said that due to the use of opportunities and repelling potential threats and due to the dominance of weaknesses over strengths, one should use a conservative strategy to achieve its goals. Therefore, simultaneous internal and external matrices were used to determine the strategic position of Iranian sports diplomacy. To draw this matrix, the scores obtained from the inner and outer matrices in horizontal and vertical dimensions were plotted as follows.

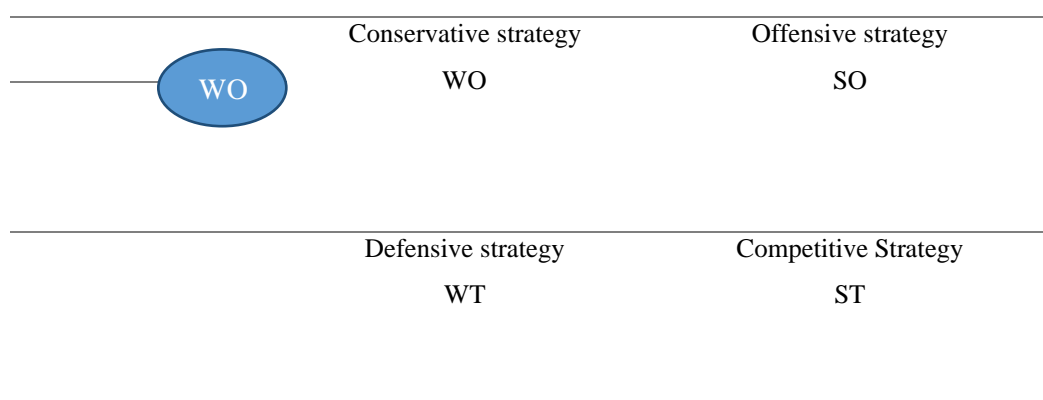


Figure 1- Strategic position of Iranian sports diplomacy

WO (Weakness-Opportunity) strategy means the strategy of internal weaknesses against external opportunities. The purpose of these strategies is to take advantage of opportunities in the external environment to improve internal weaknesses. In this case, due to internal weakness, these opportunities can not be properly exploited. In other words, when the WO organization's strategy is conservative, it indicates that the organization should address its weaknesses given the opportunities available and not expose itself to great risks.

Table 9. Charts and strategies of SWOT matrix

internal factors	Strengths	
	<p>S1: Existence of an international relations office in the Ministry of Sports and Youth</p> <p>S2: The non-hostile, low-cost and attractive tone of sports diplomacy compared to other diplomacies</p> <p>S3: Existence of common messages (such as international peace, etc.) between sports and diplomacy</p> <p>S4: Iran's geopolitical position in the region and the world</p> <p>S5: The role of sports diplomacy in the foreign policy of governments</p> <p>S6: Establishment of the Coordinating Council for International Affairs in the Ministry of Sports and Youth and the federations</p>	<p>Weaknesses</p> <p>W1: Lack of a specific reference or decision-making body in the field of sports diplomacy</p> <p>W2: Not having an international seat</p> <p>W3: Lack of a spokesperson in the Ministry of Sports to introduce (or respond to) sports diplomacy</p> <p>W4: Lack of job descriptions in the Ministry of Sports and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs regarding sports diplomacy</p> <p>W5: Inability of managers to identify issues and respond to the challenges of sports diplomacy</p> <p>W6: Lack of a body to oversee the performance of officials in the field of sports diplomacy</p>
External factors	SO strategy	
<p>Opportunities</p> <p>O1: Sport is not sanctioned</p> <p>O2: Existence of the Office of International Relations in the National Olympic Committee and the federations</p> <p>O3: Existence of specialized forces in areas related to sports diplomacy, including: strategic management, foreign languages, law, etc.</p> <p>O4: Welcoming ambassadors, elites and people of cultural-sports activities in Iran</p> <p>O5: Existence of common political, cultural, economic and other positions and positions with many countries in the region and the world</p> <p>O6: Development of tourism, earning economic income and improving the image of the Iranian nation in the world through sports diplomacy</p>	<p>1: Expanding international interactions with countries in the region and the world (focusing on sports diplomacy) by taking advantage of the geographical-political and communication situation of the country (S1,S4,S5,O4,O5)</p> <p>2: Utilizing opportunities and potentials of sports tourism and introducing cultural, artistic, historical resources, etc. through ambassadors, sports stars, diplomacy elites and other experts (S2,S3,S6,O3,O4,O6)</p> <p>3: Development of bilateral scientific relations with all stakeholders (such as the Ministry of Sports, the National Olympic Committee, federations with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Islamic Consultative Assembly, etc.) and the signing of a memorandum of understanding (O1,O2,O3,S1,S2)</p>	<p>WO strategy</p> <p>1: Establishment of an institution called Sports Diplomacy in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to make final decisions and prevent duplication (W1,W6,O2,O3,O4)</p> <p>2: Strengthen coordination between different agencies and increase managers' knowledge and awareness of the phenomenon of sports diplomacy (W3,W4,W5,O1,O2,O3)</p> <p>3: Training and education of specialized human resources and reviewing the laws and removing existing obstacles and weaknesses (W2,W3,O2,O3)</p>
	Threats	
<p>T1: Existence of Iranophobia, Islamophobia and Shiaophobia</p> <p>T2: Lack of specific bylaws, memoranda and legal documents for the cooperation of related institutions</p> <p>T3: Existence of intellectual (cultural) currents opposed to Iran</p> <p>T4: The oppressive sanctions of the enemy and the creation of political-economic deadlocks</p> <p>T5: Passivity of trustees and stakeholders in the field of sports diplomacy</p> <p>T6: Lack of sufficient financial resources</p>	<p>ST Strategy</p> <p>1: Creating a positive attitude from the international image of Iran among global citizens using the influence and power of sports diplomacy (T1,T3,T4,S2,S3,S4)</p> <p>2: Adopting a policy of expanding understandings, contracts and instructions between different agencies, as well as providing and allocating financial resources (T2,T5,T6,S1,S4)</p>	<p>WT strategy</p> <p>1: Encouraging and developing the knowledge and understanding of political-sports managers to the principles of sports diplomacy with emphasis on performance evaluation system (T5,T2,W4,W6)</p> <p>2: Reviewing the policies, methods and programs of sports diplomacy with the focus on supporting cultural (sports), social, scientific and political programs (T1,T2,W1,W2)</p>

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

In addition, the increasing prominence and superiority of sport for governments and their various political goals is due to the culturally and socially important aspect of sport (Bergsgard et al., 2007). In this regard, Murray argues that the male government supports sports diplomacy as a panacea, as it is a diplomatic tool that can reduce isolation, bring stability and security to the country (Murray, 2012) and solve non-sporting problems and provide social comfort (Republika et al., 2021). These points are very important for increasing Iran's political power due to its geopolitical position in the authoritarian and colonial environment of the region.

The purpose of this study was to investigate the position of diplomacy in Iranian sports. The matrix of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats is one of the important tools by which managers compare information and can use it to present four types of strategies: SO

strategies, WO strategies, ST strategies and WT strategies. Comparing the main internal and external factors is one of the most difficult parts of preparing a matrix of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats, which requires good judgments. In implementing SO strategies, the organization tries to take advantage of external opportunities by using internal strengths. The goal of WO strategies is for the organization to take advantage of opportunities in the external environment to try to improve internal weaknesses. Organizations in the implementation of ST strategies try to use their strengths to reduce or eliminate the effects of threats in the external environment. Eventually, the organizations that implement WT strategies become defensive and aim to reduce internal weaknesses and avoid external threats; In fact, the goal of such an organization is to reduce internal weaknesses and external threats so that it can gradually reach better positions. Given the strategic location of Iran's sports diplomacy in the WO region, senior officials at the Ministry of Sports and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, as the main custodians of this diplomacy, should focus their plans on addressing weaknesses and increasing opportunities for championship sports.

The results of this study showed that sports diplomacy in Iran is in a WO or conservative position which These results were concluded with the results of Vojdani tabatabaie et al. (2023) study entitled "analyze political behavior in sports organizations" and Badeei Nameghi et al (2023) study entitled " Comparison of the problems of sports tourism tours in domestic and foreign events ", they concluded that the training of specialized human resources, review of laws and strengthening coordination in various agencies are among the basic measures that officials should take. In interpreting this part of the results, it should be acknowledged that the changes and developments in the international system have presented many opportunities for the phenomenon of sports diplomacy of countries that Iran's use of these opportunities will further enhance the system's image in the international arena and ignore them, causing the loss of many achievements. Therefore, it is necessary for Iran, while maintaining its strengths in sports diplomacy, conceptually and theoretically, to revise the methods and management of this diplomacy so that the weaknesses in this area do not prevent the Islamic Revolution from achieving its interests and goals. Therefore, the officials should take advantage of the existing opportunities and capacities of the region, and provide the appropriate facilities for the system in the region and the world. During its four decades of existence, Iran has been able to take effective steps in the field of public diplomacy and alignment with other nations of the world, and in recent years has achieved significant results in achieving its goals. New international conditions by arrogant regimes to undermine Iran's international position and prestige, on the one hand, and the need for a more colorful and effective Iranian presence in the region, on the other, require Iran to reconsider sports and sports diplomacy, which is the new language of national dialogue to be able to overcome its weaknesses and challenges and strengthen its strengths.

The results also showed that conservative strategies can be based on the establishment of an institution called sports diplomacy in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to make final decisions and prevent duplication, strengthen coordination between different agencies and increase managers' knowledge and awareness of the phenomenon of sports diplomacy and training of specialized human resources and review of laws and eliminate existing obstacles and weaknesses that this part of the results is in line with the results of Bakhshi Chenari et al. (2021) which in its research to identify barriers to sports diplomacy in Iranian foreign policy as well as the final results of the study of Bakhshi Chenari et al. (2021), which in another study had identified the factors affecting the development of sports diplomacy in our country. Finally, according to the findings of this study and the studies conducted on the internal and external environment of Iranian sports diplomacy and determining its position as a conservative position, It is suggested that while adhering to the high values of the system and the goals set in the constitution, measures such as: Review current incomplete and adopted policies, review restrictive laws, reduce the number of bodies responsible for sports diplomacy to prevent duplication and coordination between them, train specialized personnel familiar with sports management sciences, strategic management,

political science, communications, relations International, foreign languages, etc., adopt the approach of allocating resources (financial) based on performance appraisal and establish a performance appraisal system and create a think tank consisting of experts in this field at the highest level.

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