

Ethical, Social, Legal and Managerial Factors Affecting the Performance of Iraqi Football Clubs

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Abstract

Introduction: In organizational studies in the field of sports, the performance of a football team can be examined in three parts according to its goals: sports performance, social performance and economic performance. Several factors are effective in each of these functions. The aim of the present study is to examine the ethical, social, legal and managerial factors affecting the performance of Iraqi football clubs.

Material and Methods: The present study was conducted qualitatively and using grounded theory. The research population was sports management professors, experts and athletes, from whom 30 people were selected as samples using purposive sampling. The instrument was an interview. Data analysis was performed using the coding method and NVIVO software was used.

Results: The results showed that the categories included 14 concepts that were obtained through an approximate combination of 67 primary concepts or free coding. Based on this, a conceptual design of the research was formed in which 4 managerial, legal, ethical and social factors were proposed as causal factors.

Conclusion: The results of the research showed that 4 main factors affect the performance of Iraqi football clubs: In the area of managerial factors affecting club performance, managerial stability is an important issue. In the legal area, complete awareness of specialized issues of sports law and compliance with domestic and international legal regulations in sports contracts is important. In the ethical area, moral education and meritocracy and the club's ethical culture are of great importance. In the social area, issues such as social responsibility, support from spectators and fans, and social awareness are important.

Keywords: *Ethical-social factors, Legal-management factors, Football club performance*

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INTRODUCTION

A “sports club” can be defined as a group of individuals with defined roles and responsibilities who interact adaptively, reciprocally, and dynamically toward a common, valuable outcome, and who are embedded together in an overarching organizational system, with boundaries and connections to the broader

systemic context. The task environment of individuals in elite sports support teams includes team/athlete coaches and members of the sports medicine and science team who are constantly looking for ways to improve the performance and health of the athletes they work with.

Clubs that encourage and facilitate the pursuit of a common goal and perform better are influenced

by factors such as management and leadership style, team behavior, organizational support, etc. Sports clubs that pay more attention to these factors naturally have better performance results and achieve higher positions in competitive situations.

Currently, sports managers are trying to create a very strong and advantageous competitive position for teams. The competitive position of sports clubs may be improved by using various strategic performance assessment techniques [1]. Strategic assessment of the performance of sports clubs, including football, is possible from the perspective of all relevant parties: management, players, coaches, sponsors, media and spectators. This is reflected in the possibility of increasing investment opportunities more clearly through a group of sports institution managers who apply for a balanced scorecard [2, 3]. For strategic assessment of the performance of sports clubs, including football, it is necessary to fully identify the factors affecting performance. Various factors affect the performance of football clubs. Some researchers introduce budget and financial resources as the most important factor in this regard [4]. Another group of researchers consider the neglect of the development of coaches and human resources, talent acquisition and training of athletes as the most important factor in the decline of club performance [5]. Some researchers emphasize the role of effective political governance, legal support, executive commitment of managers, equipment and standard facilities in sports success.

Given that football clubs operate in three functional areas, namely sports, economic, social and cultural, the assessment of the effective factors of these performances covers a wider range. Therefore, in addition to the effective financial, managerial and legal factors, social and ethical factors should also be considered in this regard.

It is believed that football is facing an ongoing moral crisis, which has been shown by a series of different moral issues, from financial fraud and match-fixing to sexual abuse and hooliganism. Therefore, paying attention to moral and social factors in football clubs, along with managerial factors, can be effective in combating this crisis and, of course, improving the performance of football clubs. Undoubtedly, ethical leadership from the board of directors and coaches is needed to transform the content and spirit of the code of ethics into practice in football clubs. Therefore, it is essential that managers of sports organizations also manage their organizations according to ethical principles and standards and respond to the set goals in the best possible way.

In this regard, the present study aims to investigate the ethical, social, legal and managerial factors affecting the performance of Iraqi football clubs.

MATERIAL AND METHODS

The present study was conducted qualitatively using grounded theory. The research population was sports management professors, experts, and athletes, from whom 30 people were selected as samples using purposive sampling (10 of the sample individuals are university professors and faculty members in the sports management department. 8 of them are sports club managers and 12 are athletes and sports elites). The instrument was an interview. In this process, several initial interviews were conducted first. Except for the initial few interviews, a time interval of at least one week was observed between different interviews to allow for the review and analysis of each interview and the extraction of key categories. The minimum time allocated for the interviews was 30 minutes and the maximum time was 120 minutes.

Data analysis was conducted using the coding method and NVIVO software was used. This process was implemented in such a way that after

the interviews were conducted, the interviews were first converted into text. After editing the texts and removing irrelevant paragraphs, the researcher identified the relevant concepts from the different paragraphs and established connections between these codes. In subsequent interviews, the categories were completed and undiscovered areas were questioned. It is worth mentioning that the content analysis method was used in coding. After note-taking, the categories were finally refined through selective coding. Through these processes, the framework was finally developed through comparison with existing literature and identifying differences and similarities with another research. The result of

this process is the drawing of the conceptual framework of the research.

RESULTS

The results showed that the categories consisted of 14 concepts that were obtained through an approximate combination of 67 primary concepts or free coding, and on average every 6 primary concepts showed a secondary concept that was named and edited in the next stage of these categories. Table 1 shows the list of conceptualized political behaviors after free and axial coding.

Table 1. Primary concepts and categories resulting from open and axial coding

	Open coding	Axial coding
1	Public ownership	Fixing destructive defects
2	Marketing and attention to market size	
3	Receiving broadcasting rights	
4	Stability in management	
5	Eliminating irregularities	
6	Avoiding the axial edge and burden in any direction	
7	Setting goals	Attention to infrastructures
8	Hardware infrastructure	
9	Software infrastructure	
10	Intellectual investment	
11	Economic investment	
11	Possibility of holding a camp	
12	Attention to the training needs of facilities and structures	Ethical training and meritocracy
13	Moral education of players	
14	Moral education of coaches	
15	Respecting, employing and preserving veterans	
16	Respecting and employing technical and trained forces	
17	Employing training forces for ages from infancy to youth	
18	Ethics-based football academies and schools	
19	Modeling the successful experience of other countries	
20	Financial transparency	Legal aspects
21	Regulation of laws and regulations	
22	Regulation of contracts	
23	Transparency in concluding contracts	
24	Resolving legal and legal problems	
25	Increasing information on international law for managers and officials	
26	Clarification of laws	Tax system
27	Clarification of tax laws	
28	Club ownership	Ownership right
29	Recruitment process	Human resource development
30	Instruction and orientation of new employees	
31	Evaluation of individual performance and program	
32	Improving employee job satisfaction	
33	Enriching employee experiences	

34	Job description	Ethical leadership
35	Improving sense of belonging	
36	Setting goals	
37	Understanding the environment	
38	Managing finances	
39	Managing social affairs and relations between club members	
40	Specifying salaries and rewards	
41	Avoiding politics	
42	Developing rules and regulations	
43	Committing to public accountability	
44	Providing financial and human resources	
45	High income for the club	Privatization
46	Providing job position	
47	Helps increase GDP	
48	Reduces the power of politicians	
49	A system based on expertise	
50	Specialized management	Social responsibility
51	Environmental support	
52	Participate in public activities	
53	Social accountability	
54	Respect for social values and norms	
55	Social commitment	
56	Pay attention to the public interests of the community	
57	Support for spectators and fans	Support for spectators and fans
58	Social awareness	Social awareness
59	Ethical culture	Deontology
60	Executive framework of ethical and cultural issues	Ethical culture
61	Avoid cheating	
62	Avoid violations of laws	
63	Avoid obscenity and impure speech	
64	Respect for the referee	
65	Important to give personality and ethical variables	Personality and ethical characteristics of managers and players
66	Cooperative behavior	

After determining the open codes and the central categories, selective coding was undertaken. The results of this coding are shown in Table 2. At this stage, similar and concurrent categories were

placed in the main fields, and based on the conceptual commonality that the categories had with each other, the fields were extracted in the form of more abstract concepts.

Table 2. Focal Categories of the Football Club Performance Evaluation System

	Focal categories	Axial categories
1	Managerial factors	Addressing destructive deficiencies
2		Attention to infrastructure
3		Ethical leadership
4		Privatization
5		Human resource development
6	Legal factors	Legal aspects
7		Tax systematization
8		Club ownership
9	Ethical factors	Personality and ethical characteristics of managers and players
10		Ethical education and meritocracy
11	Social factors	Club moral culture
12		Social responsibility
13		Support from spectators and fans
14		Social awareness

Finally, the relationship between the various identified categories is displayed in the form of a paradigmatic pattern.

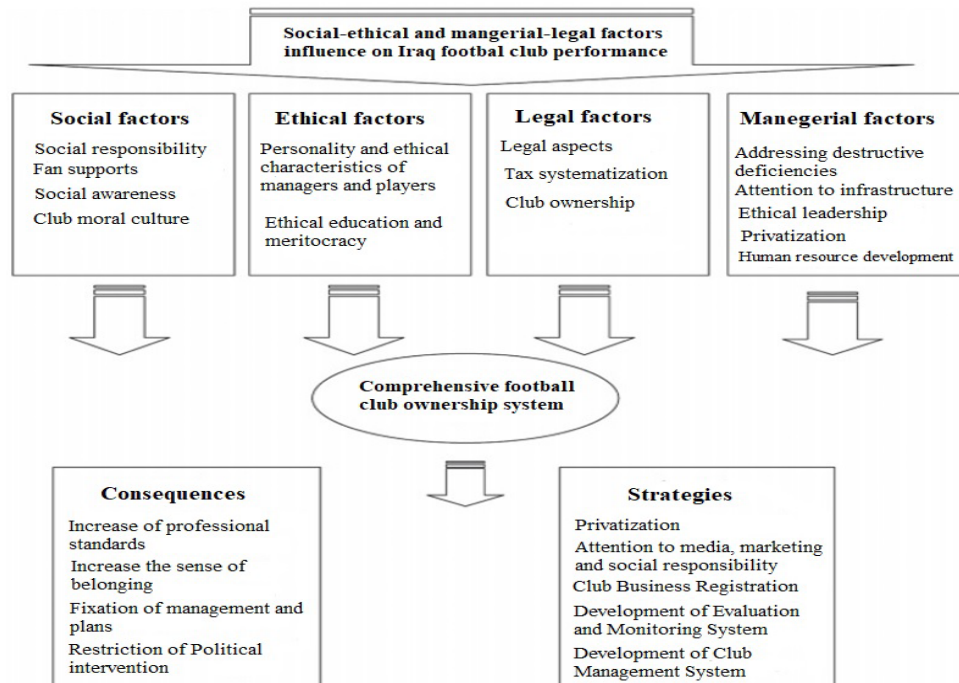


Figure 1. Paradigmatic model of the comprehensive club ownership framework in football

DISCUSSION

The proposed model and pattern of research on the framework of the club ownership system in the country's football sports includes 14 central categories: eliminating destructive deficiencies, paying attention to infrastructure, ethical leadership, privatization, human resource development, legal aspects, tax system, club ownership, personality and moral characteristics of managers and players, moral education and meritocracy, club moral culture, social responsibility, support of spectators and fans, and social awareness, which has been obtained through a combination of about 67 primary concepts. The present study was conducted

considering the importance of the comprehensive club ownership system and the current movement towards specializing functional patterns, and considering the lack of academic studies in the field of the comprehensive club ownership system. Accordingly, a comprehensive club ownership system in football is realized as a central category based on causal managerial, legal, ethical and social conditions and through strategies for appropriate ownership and management of clubs, development of an evaluation and monitoring system, commercial registration of the club, media management, social responsibility and employment of experienced

and specialized human resources and most importantly through the privatization of clubs and leads to the realization of financial consequences such as increased income and employment, a sense of belonging to the club, stabilization of management plans, limiting political interference and improving professional standards in football. Previously, in a similar study [6], economic, legal and cultural factors were mentioned and the privatization of football clubs was stated as a solution for football development, which is in line with the present result. Attention to legal and legal aspects, marketing and business was also considered in another study [7]. These researchers also emphasized that the development of the professional football club ownership industry in Iran depends on factors such as legal and legal issues, marketing management and the size of the football industry market, which is also in line with the results obtained. Also, comparing the designed model with literature, theoretical foundations, and scientific findings, the findings of this study are consistent with the research of some researchers [8-13]. Also, some studies emphasize the social and ethical dimensions of the problem, which are in line with the results of the present study [14, 15].

According to the findings, it is suggested that:

- Given the prevailing economic conditions in the country, government sector funds do not meet the needs of the institutions, and the Ministry of Education's physical education and sports activities sector also needs to secure part of its funds from the private sector to achieve its strategic goals.
- Appropriate strategy and planning in the field of privatization and appropriate infrastructure measures should be considered in moving towards professional football club ownership in the country.

CONCLUSION

The results of the study showed that in the area of management factors affecting club performance, management stability is an important issue, and currently, management instability is plaguing football clubs in Iraq and is not being addressed. Without changing the management structure of football clubs and resolving their problems, there is little hope for the development of the football industry. In the legal area, full awareness of football activists in the field of specialized sports law issues is essential. The need to comply with domestic and international legal regulations in sports contracts requires them to be aware of these laws and regulations in order to minimize legal problems that may affect sponsors, players and clubs and cause heavy deprivation and compensation. In the ethical area, moral education and meritocracy and the club's ethical culture are of great importance. Numerous immoralities in the field and widespread financial corruption are among the factors affecting the decline in the performance of football clubs. In the social area, issues such as social responsibility, support from spectators and fans, and social awareness are important, and clubs that pay attention to social responsibility will naturally enjoy greater social support.

ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Ethical issues (such as plagiarism, conscious satisfaction, misleading, making and or forging data, publishing or sending to two places, redundancy and etc.) have been fully considered by the writers.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interests.

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