

# Designing a Model for Organizing Sports Events for Individuals with Disabilities and Veterans in Iran

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## ABSTRACT

The aim of the present study was to design a model for organizing sports events for individuals with disabilities and veterans in Iran. This research is a mixed-methods study (qualitative-quantitative) with an exploratory approach. The statistical population in the qualitative section consisted of academic experts in the field of sports events for individuals with disabilities and veterans, and in the quantitative section, it included sports managers and the National Paralympic Committee, the Federation of Sports for Veterans and Disabled Persons, as well as the heads and secretaries of the provincial boards of the Federation for Veterans and Disabled Persons. The qualitative sample consisted of 14 experts, selected through purposive and snowball sampling techniques until theoretical saturation was reached. In the quantitative section, between 5 to 10 samples were required for each item, resulting in a total sample size of 384 individuals. The data collection tools included semi-structured interviews in the qualitative section and a researcher-made questionnaire in the quantitative section. Content validity was confirmed by experts, and construct validity was assessed through exploratory and confirmatory factor analyses. Reliability was measured using composite reliability, Cronbach's alpha, divergent and convergent validity, and structural equation modeling. The model's goodness-of-fit index (GOF) was reported as 0.59. Ultimately, the organization of sports events for individuals with disabilities and veterans in Iran was presented with 13 factors: organizing costs and determining financial resources, organizing operational plans for preparation, organizing regulations for competition execution, publishing brochures (advertising and publications), registration and acceptance of participants, organizing medical and pharmacy services, organizing accommodation and event venues, organizing committees and human resources, organizing cultural events and leisure activities, organizing nutrition and catering services for participants, organizing transportation services, organizing opening and closing ceremonies, and organizing referees and volunteers.

**Keywords:** Organization, Sports Events, Individuals with Disabilities, Veterans

## 1. Introduction

Sports provide a unique platform for individuals with disabilities to engage in physical activities that contribute to their overall health and well-being. Participation in sports has been shown to have numerous benefits, including improved physical health, enhanced psychological well-being, and increased social interaction (Wickman, 2015). Furthermore, sports participation fosters a sense of belonging and self-esteem among individuals with disabilities, helping them to overcome societal stigma and discrimination (Blauwet & Willick, 2012).

Physical activity is crucial for individuals with disabilities, as it helps mitigate the effects of sedentary lifestyles, which are often more prevalent in this population due to barriers to accessibility and participation (Sahlin & Lexell, 2015). Moreover, sports offer opportunities for skill development, competition, and achievement, which are essential for personal growth and self-fulfillment (Guerra et al., 2018). The positive impact of sports on the quality of life for individuals with disabilities underscores the importance of providing accessible and inclusive sports opportunities.

Despite the numerous benefits of sports participation, individuals with disabilities often face significant challenges and barriers that hinder their involvement in sports activities. These barriers can be broadly categorized into physical, psychological, and social obstacles. Physical barriers include a lack of accessible sports facilities, inadequate adaptive equipment, and insufficient support from sports organizations (Jaarsma et al., 2016; Jaarsma et al., 2014). Psychological barriers may involve low self-confidence, fear of injury, and internalized negative stereotypes about disability (Cursiol & Barreira, 2021). Social barriers, on the other hand, encompass societal attitudes, discrimination, and a lack of awareness or understanding of the capabilities and needs of individuals with disabilities (Brittain et al., 2013).

Moreover, the marginalization of disability sports within mainstream sports organizations further exacerbates these barriers. The limited visibility of disability sports in the media and the broader public discourse contributes to the perpetuation of stereotypes and the exclusion of individuals with disabilities from sports participation (Kolotouchkina et al., 2020). These challenges highlight the need for targeted interventions and policies that address the specific needs of individuals with disabilities and promote their active involvement in sports.

The social model of disability, which views disability as a result of societal barriers rather than individual impairments, provides a valuable framework for understanding and addressing the challenges faced by individuals with disabilities in sports (Afacan & Afacan, 2021). According to this model, the focus should be on removing environmental and social barriers that restrict the participation of individuals with disabilities in sports and other activities. This approach emphasizes the need for inclusive practices, such as the adaptation of sports facilities, the provision of adaptive equipment, and the promotion of positive attitudes toward disability.

In the context of sports, the social model advocates for the integration of individuals with disabilities into mainstream sports activities, rather than segregating them into separate disability-specific sports programs (Albrecht et al., 2019). This integration can foster greater social inclusion, reduce stigma, and create opportunities for individuals with disabilities to interact with their non-disabled peers on equal terms (Ramsden et al., 2023). Furthermore, the social model encourages the involvement of individuals with disabilities in the planning and organization of sports events, ensuring that their voices are heard and their needs are adequately addressed.

Inclusive sports events play a crucial role in promoting the participation of individuals with disabilities in sports. These events provide a platform for showcasing the talents and capabilities of athletes with disabilities, challenging societal perceptions and stereotypes (Lumsdaine & Lord, 2021). Inclusive sports events also create opportunities for individuals with disabilities to compete at various levels, from local community sports to international competitions such as the Paralympic Games (Blauwet & Willick, 2012).

The organization of inclusive sports events requires careful planning and coordination to ensure accessibility and inclusivity. This includes the provision of adaptive equipment, the training of coaches and officials on disability awareness, and the development of inclusive policies and practices within sports organizations (Demirci, 2019). Moreover, inclusive sports events should be designed to cater to the diverse needs of participants, including those with different types and degrees of disability (Balan & Mujea, 2022).

Sports have the potential to be a powerful tool for social integration, particularly for marginalized groups such as individuals with disabilities. Participation in sports can help individuals with disabilities build social networks, develop a sense of community, and gain acceptance and recognition

from their peers (Brown & Pappous, 2018, 2020). Inclusive sports events, in particular, can foster social integration by bringing together individuals with and without disabilities in a shared space of competition and camaraderie (Alhumaid et al., 2022).

The impact of sports on social integration is well-documented in the literature. For example, a study by Albrecht et al. (2019) found that sports clubs that actively promote the inclusion of individuals with disabilities reported positive outcomes in terms of social cohesion and community engagement (Albrecht et al., 2019). Similarly, a review by Alcaráz-Rodríguez et al. (2021) highlighted the role of physical activity and sports in enhancing the social inclusion of individuals with visual impairments. These findings underscore the importance of inclusive sports events as a means of promoting social integration and fostering a more inclusive society (Alcaráz-Rodríguez et al., 2021).

Sports organizations play a pivotal role in promoting the inclusion of individuals with disabilities in sports. These organizations are responsible for creating accessible and inclusive environments, developing adaptive programs, and advocating for the rights of individuals with disabilities (Brown, 2017). The commitment of sports organizations to inclusivity is crucial for ensuring that individuals with disabilities have equal opportunities to participate in sports and achieve their full potential.

However, the organizational capacity of sports organizations to support inclusion varies widely. Some organizations have made significant strides in developing inclusive programs and practices, while others struggle with limited resources and a lack of awareness or expertise (Kitchin & Crossin, 2018). The success of inclusive sports initiatives often depends on the leadership and commitment of sports organizations, as well as their ability to engage with and respond to the needs of individuals with disabilities (MacDonald et al., 2020).

Given the complexities and challenges associated with organizing inclusive sports events, there is a need for a comprehensive model that guides the planning and implementation of these events. Such a model should encompass all aspects of event organization, from logistics and accessibility to participant engagement and community outreach. It should also be flexible enough to accommodate the diverse needs of participants with different types of disabilities (Alhumaid et al., 2022).

The development of a comprehensive model for organizing sports events for individuals with disabilities

and veterans in Iran is particularly important, given the unique cultural, social, and logistical challenges in this context. This model should draw on best practices from international examples while being tailored to the specific needs and circumstances of the Iranian context (Faraji et al., 2023). By providing a structured framework for organizing inclusive sports events, this model can help ensure that these events are accessible, inclusive, and successful in promoting the participation of individuals with disabilities in sports.

In conclusion, the integration of individuals with disabilities into sports is a critical aspect of promoting social inclusion, physical health, and psychological well-being. The aim of the present study was to design a model for organizing sports events for individuals with disabilities and veterans in Iran

## 2. Methods and Materials

The present study is applied in terms of its objective and is of a mixed-methods type (qualitative-quantitative) with an exploratory approach. In the qualitative section, all experts in the field of sports events for individuals with disabilities and veterans were included. To access these experts, researchers utilized knowledgeable and active individuals from all relevant organizations, including the Ministry of Sports, the National Paralympic Committee, and the Federation of Sports for Veterans and Disabled Persons. In the quantitative section, participants included managers from the National Paralympic Committee, the Federation of Sports for Veterans and Disabled Persons, as well as the heads and secretaries of the provincial boards of the Federation for Veterans and Disabled Persons. In the qualitative section, all experts in the field of sports events for individuals with disabilities and veterans were selected purposefully, ultimately forming a sample of 14 individuals. In the quantitative section, given the number of items, between 5 to 10 individuals were needed for each item from among the managers of the National Paralympic Committee, the Federation of Sports for Veterans and Disabled Persons, and the heads and secretaries of the provincial boards of the Federation for Veterans and Disabled Persons, using a proportional stratified method. Ultimately, a sample size of 384 individuals was formed. Thus, individuals with the most knowledge in the field of sports events for individuals with disabilities and veterans, due to their publications, academic background, and work experience, were selected, and semi-structured interviews

were conducted with them. Therefore, sampling continued until data saturation was reached. As a result, 14 individuals participated in the interviews conducted for this research.

To assess the reliability of the interviews, the method of intra-subject agreement between two coders was used. For this purpose, a doctoral student in sports management was invited to participate as a research assistant in the coding process for this study; three interviews were randomly selected, and the coding results indicated high reliability.

The coding method was used to analyze the interviews. In the first stage of this research, after transcribing the interviews into text, the researcher conducted open coding by identifying key concepts as codes. As a result, from the 15 interviews conducted, 185 initial open codes were obtained, which were then condensed into 116 final open codes after summarizing similar codes. In the second stage, axial coding was performed. In this stage, the researcher linked and connected categories at the level of characteristics and dimensions. Thus, categories, characteristics, and dimensions resulting from the open coding were developed and organized to increase knowledge about the relationships. In this stage, all final open codes were reviewed again and compared with the research literature. In the third stage, selective coding identified 13 factors as the influencing factors on the organization of sports events for individuals with disabilities and veterans in Iran.

After analyzing the data, an initial questionnaire with 94 five-option questions was developed based on a 5-point Likert scale, with options ranging from "very high" to "very low," scored as 5, 4, 3, 2, and 1, respectively. Content validity was assessed based on the opinions of the interviewees, and exploratory factor analysis was used for

the psychometric evaluation of the research constructs. To ensure construct validity and confirm the factors identified in the previous stage (exploratory factor analysis), confirmatory factor analysis using the partial least squares (PLS) method was employed. Additionally, to evaluate the conceptual model of the research, path analysis using structural equation modeling (SEM) was conducted with SPSS version 23 and PLS version 3 software.

**3. Findings and Results**

In this study, exploratory factor analysis was used to determine and identify the organization of sports events for individuals with disabilities and veterans. Therefore, before conducting the factor analysis, the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure was used to ensure the adequacy of the sample size, and the Bartlett test was employed to determine the correlation between variables (items).

The obtained KMO value was 0.68. This value indicates that the sample size is sufficient for factor analysis, allowing the data to be reduced to a series of latent factors. Additionally, the results of the Bartlett test ( $\chi^2 = 13,354.247$ , Sig = 0.001) indicate a high correlation among the items, justifying the continuation and use of further factor analysis steps.

The participants in this study consisted of 46.66% sports management faculty members, 40% senior managers from the Ministry of Sports and Youth and the National Olympic Committee and federation presidents, and 13.34% strategic management professionals.

Based on the findings from the exploratory factor analysis, 13 factors were extracted in the questionnaire under review. The corresponding questions for these extracted factors are as follows:

**Table 1**

*Factor Loadings*

Row	Items related to organizing costs and determining financial resources	Factor Loading
1	Payment of petty cash to the purchasing officer for the competition	0.81
2	Budget forecasting and fund acquisition	0.80
3	Securing financial resources through various organizations	0.78
4	Reviewing and paying the expense documents	0.78
5	Arranging and paying fees for officials (referees, technical, operational, etc.)	0.77
6	Preparing a financial report of all revenues and expenses at the end of the competition and submitting it to the relevant deputy	0.76
7	Forecasting and purchasing necessary technical equipment and services for committees	0.66
8	Managing logistical and service tasks for all committees	0.66
9	Forecasting gifts and prizes	0.64
10	Determining an appropriate method for distributing entry and exit packages for participating teams	0.63
11	Designing and preparing forms related to financial requests, equipment, items, etc.	0.62

Item	Items related to organizing the operational plan for preparation	
12	Dividing responsibilities for preparation among committee members	0.76
13	Developing an operational plan and scheduling committee meetings	0.76
14	Drafting an operational plan for responsible individuals for each section	0.75
15	Developing scripts for the opening and closing ceremonies	0.71
16	Coordination with various committees and team leaders before, during, and after the competition	0.70
17	Planning for contingencies such as power outages	0.69
18	Planning for competition security	0.66
19	Classifying athletes based on the severity of their injuries	0.51
Item	Items related to organizing competition regulations	
20	Preparing regulations that reflect the objectives and purposes of the competition	0.72
21	Preparing regulations that reflect the time and location of the competition	0.65
22	Preparing regulations that ensure the presence and safety of participants	0.64
23	Preparing regulations that reflect the competition schedule	0.62
24	Preparing regulations that reflect the organizing committee's guidelines	0.54
25	Regulations reflecting financial conditions and athlete insurance	0.50
Item	Items related to publishing competition brochures (advertising and publications)	
26	Providing maps for access routes to accommodation and competition venues	0.74
27	Specifying the schedule, time, and location of opening and closing ceremonies	0.72
28	Specifying the time and location of competitions for each discipline	0.71
29	Listing the officials in charge of the competitions	0.68
30	Listing the sponsors of the competitions	0.64
31	Providing maps for access routes to accommodation and competition venues	0.51
Item	Items related to participant registration and acceptance	
32	Considering the medical condition of each athlete	0.63
33	Pre-registration of participants	0.59
34	Acceptance of participating teams based on the regulations outlined in the sent circular	0.54
35	Issuance of ID cards for participants	0.53
36	Providing the overall competition schedule, date of team leader and coach meetings to the team leaders	0.53
37	Coordination with the public relations committee	0.51
38	Preparing a special acceptance stamp in coordination with the executive assistant and the chief referee	0.51
Item	Items related to organizing medical and pharmacy services	
39	Monitoring the hygiene of all accommodation and event locations	0.70
40	Inter-departmental coordination with emergency services, Red Crescent, hospitals, and medical committees	0.68
41	Compiling a list of necessary medical and health equipment and supplies, and preparing them for the disabled according to their injuries	0.67
42	Coordination with nearby hospitals for rapid dispatch and acceptance of injured persons	0.61
43	Monitoring and reporting the treatment of injured persons	0.54
44	Forecasting the presence of doctors and paramedics at each sports event according to the athlete classification	0.50
Item	Items related to organizing accommodation and event venues	
45	Preparing the schedule, selecting and introducing personnel, determining items, and estimating budget	0.73
46	Inspecting and evaluating the facilities and sanitary services at accommodation and competition venues	0.71
47	Designating accommodation for guests and officials	0.68
48	Allocating accommodation for athletes according to their physical condition	0.66
49	Preparing daily reports on significant events at the accommodation	0.63
Item	Items related to organizing cultural events and leisure activities	
50	Coordinating with relevant departments and organizations for visits and access to cultural, historical, tourist, and recreational sites	0.80
51	Preparing and organizing the participants' visit schedule according to the competition program	0.72
52	Preparing cultural gifts for various ceremonies	0.56
53	Organizing sightseeing tours during the event	0.50
Item	Items related to organizing nutrition and catering for participants	
54	Monitoring the preparation, cooking, and distribution of food	0.85
55	Preparing daily statistics based on the increase or decrease in the number of participants	0.83
56	Scheduling meal times and informing team leaders	0.80
57	Preparing meal vouchers and distributing them	0.77
Item	Items related to organizing transportation services	
58	Assessing the number of vehicles needed for the opening ceremony, visits, etc.	0.74
59	Scheduling transportation for ceremonies and other events	0.61
60	Coordinating with traffic police regarding routes and conduct with participants	0.53
61	Allocating parking spaces for participating teams' vehicles and other vehicles	0.53
Item	Items related to organizing committees and human resources	

62	Identifying all committees needed for the competitions	0.94
63	Preparing job descriptions for all committees	0.95
64	Identifying committee heads	0.94
Item	Items related to organizing opening and closing ceremonies	
65	Preparing the award podium for individual and team competitions according to the athletes' needs	0.87
66	Preparing the list of officials for attendance at the opening and closing ceremonies	0.85
Item	Items related to organizing referees and volunteers	
67	Conducting competition draws and preparing the competition schedule for each sport	0.64
68	Supervising the proper implementation of rules and technical regulations for each sport	0.63
69	Addressing technical and refereeing complaints from participating teams	0.63
70	Coordinating with the referees' committee to synchronize the competition schedule	0.56
71	Preparing the final technical report of the competition and submitting it to the chief referee	0.50

To ensure construct validity and confirm the factors identified in the previous stage (exploratory factor analysis), the factors were examined using confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) with the partial least squares (PLS) method. If the factor loading is less than 0.30, the relationship is considered weak and is disregarded. Factor loadings between 0.30 and 0.60 are acceptable, and if greater than 0.60, they are highly desirable. Based on the reported results, the factor loadings of the research questions are acceptable, and the t-statistic values also exceeded 1.96, resulting in the retention of all questions (Figure 1 and Figure 2).

Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability indices were used to assess reliability and evaluate the internal consistency reliability of the model's measurement variables. For Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability,

values greater than 0.70 were considered acceptable. As shown in Table 2, the values for Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability for all research variables were acceptable. Therefore, the reliability and internal consistency of the research variables were confirmed. The average variance extracted (AVE) index was used to assess the convergent validity of the research's measurement model. Convergent validity is used to ensure that each question has the highest correlation with its construct compared to other constructs. The AVE index examines the variance explained by the latent variable for each question; in other words, it assesses the correlation of each latent variable with its corresponding questions. The minimum accepted value for AVE was determined to be 0.50. As shown in Table 2, based on the AVE values, convergent validity is confirmed.

**Table 2**

*Values for Cronbach's Alpha, Composite Reliability, and Average Variance Extracted (AVE) for Research Variables*

Components	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability	AVE	Significance Level
Organizing Costs and Determining Financial Resources	0.91	0.92	0.54	0.001
Organizing the Operational Plan for Preparation	0.73	0.77	0.57	0.001
Organizing Competition Regulations	0.71	0.77	0.52	0.001
Publishing Competition Brochures (Advertising and Publications)	0.78	0.80	0.59	0.001
Participant Registration and Acceptance	0.87	0.90	0.57	0.001
Organizing Medical and Pharmacy Services	0.76	0.82	0.51	0.001
Organizing Accommodation and Event Venues	0.79	0.87	0.60	0.001
Organizing Committees and Human Resources	0.77	0.74	0.53	0.001
Organizing Cultural Events and Leisure Activities	0.78	0.84	0.59	0.001
Organizing Nutrition and Catering for Participants	0.70	0.76	0.55	0.001
Organizing Transportation Services	0.73	0.80	0.57	0.001
Organizing Opening and Closing Ceremonies	0.78	0.83	0.52	0.001
Organizing Referees and Volunteers	0.77	0.85	0.60	0.001

The goodness-of-fit (GOF) index for the overall structural equation model allows researchers to assess the overall model fit after evaluating the measurement model and examining the structural model's predictive quality and strength. This index is the square root of the product of the average communalities and the average R-squared values.

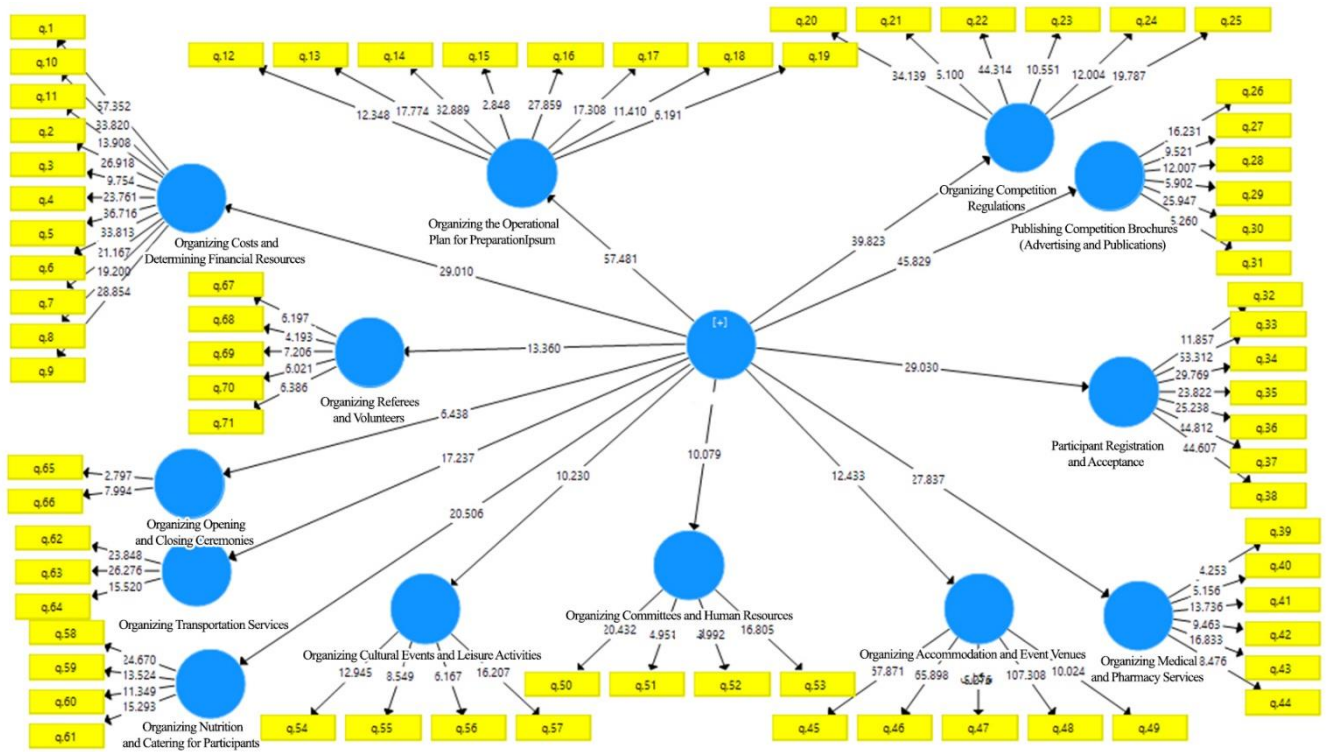
GOF values of 0.01, 0.25, and 0.36 are considered weak, medium, and strong, respectively.

The GOF value calculated for our research model is 0.59, which is considered strong and satisfactory. Therefore, it can be concluded that the overall model fit is appropriate, and the model's ability to explain and predict

the variables related to effective governance in the structure of elite sports in the country is high and suitable.

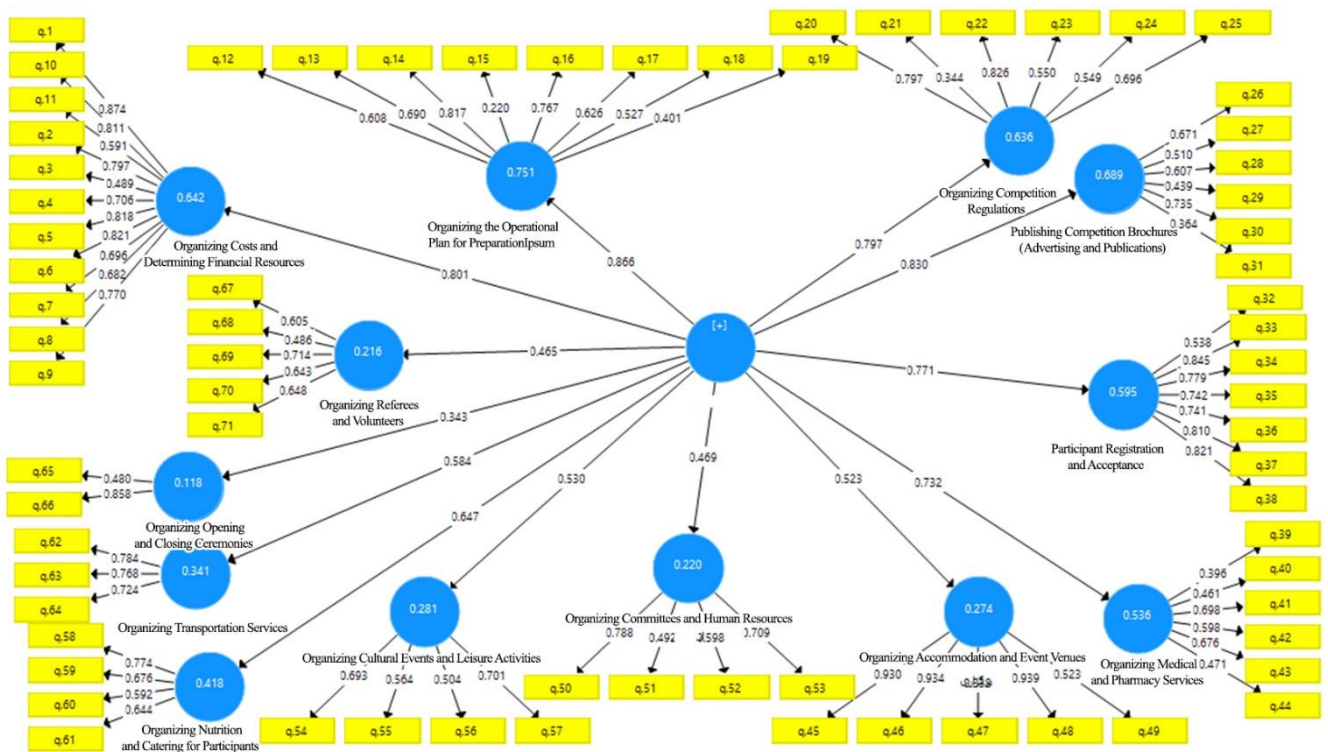
**Figure 1**

Model with T-Values



**Figure 2**

Model with Factor Loadings



#### 4. Discussion and Conclusion

The findings of this study provide significant insights into the organization of sports events for individuals with disabilities and veterans in Iran. The identification of 13 key factors crucial for the successful organization of such events underscores the complexity and multi-dimensional nature of this task. These factors, which range from financial resource management to medical services and the organization of cultural events, reflect the broad spectrum of needs that must be addressed to ensure the effective participation of individuals with disabilities in sports.

The first factor, organizing costs and determining financial resources, emerged as a critical component in the planning and execution of sports events for individuals with disabilities. This finding aligns with the broader literature, which emphasizes the importance of adequate financial resources in overcoming barriers to participation in sports for individuals with disabilities (Alhumaid et al., 2022). The ability to secure funding and manage budgets effectively is essential for providing the necessary adaptive equipment, facilities, and services that enable full participation. Previous research has similarly highlighted financial constraints as a significant barrier to the organization of inclusive sports events, particularly in contexts where resources are limited (Balan & Mujea, 2022). Thus, the identification of this factor reaffirms the need for robust financial planning and resource allocation in the organization of sports events for this population.

The second factor, organizing the operational plan for preparation, emphasizes the importance of meticulous planning and coordination among different stakeholders involved in the event. This includes the division of responsibilities, scheduling, and ensuring that all aspects of the event are executed smoothly. The importance of operational planning is well-documented in the literature, particularly in studies focusing on the logistics of organizing large-scale sports events (Blauwet & Willick, 2012). This factor is particularly relevant in the context of disability sports, where additional considerations, such as accessibility and the specific needs of participants, must be taken into account (Ramsden et al., 2023). The findings of this study confirm the critical role of operational planning in the successful organization of sports events, reinforcing the need for detailed and proactive planning processes.

The third factor, organizing competition regulations, highlights the need for clear and inclusive rules that reflect the objectives and logistical realities of the event. This

finding is consistent with previous studies that have emphasized the importance of clear regulations in ensuring fair and equitable competition, particularly in sports for individuals with disabilities (Jaarsma et al., 2016). The development of competition regulations that are inclusive and sensitive to the needs of participants with disabilities is crucial for fostering an environment where all athletes can compete on an equal footing. This aligns with the principles of the social model of disability, which advocates for the removal of barriers to participation and the creation of inclusive environments (Afacan & Afacan, 2021).

The role of publishing competition brochures and advertising as a key factor reflects the importance of communication and visibility in the organization of sports events. This finding supports previous research that has highlighted the role of media and public relations in promoting disability sports and enhancing the visibility of athletes with disabilities (Kolotouchkina et al., 2020). Effective communication strategies, including the dissemination of information through brochures, websites, and social media, are essential for raising awareness and encouraging participation. Moreover, the visibility of disability sports in the media can help challenge stereotypes and promote a more inclusive society (Alcaráz-Rodríguez et al., 2021). The findings of this study underscore the need for targeted communication strategies that not only inform but also inspire and engage both participants and the broader public.

The fifth factor, participant registration and acceptance, underscores the importance of a streamlined and accessible registration process for participants. This finding is consistent with the literature, which identifies administrative barriers as a significant obstacle to participation in sports for individuals with disabilities (Albrecht et al., 2019). A registration process that is inclusive and accommodating of the diverse needs of participants is essential for ensuring that all eligible individuals can participate without unnecessary difficulties. The findings suggest that attention to detail in the registration process, including the provision of adequate support and clear communication, is crucial for the successful organization of sports events for individuals with disabilities.

The organization of medical and pharmacy services emerged as another critical factor in this study, reflecting the unique health and safety needs of participants with disabilities. This finding aligns with previous research that highlights the importance of medical support in disability



sports, where participants may have specific health needs that require careful management (Fagher et al., 2022). The provision of appropriate medical services, including on-site healthcare professionals and access to necessary medications, is essential for ensuring the safety and well-being of participants. The emphasis on medical services in this study reaffirms the importance of health and safety considerations in the planning and execution of sports events for individuals with disabilities.

The organization of accommodation and event venues was identified as a key factor, emphasizing the need for accessible and comfortable facilities for participants. This finding is consistent with the literature, which underscores the importance of accessibility in the successful participation of individuals with disabilities in sports events (Sahlin & Lexell, 2015). The provision of accessible accommodation and venues is critical for ensuring that participants can fully engage in the event without facing physical barriers. The findings of this study highlight the need for careful consideration of accessibility in all aspects of event planning, from the selection of venues to the arrangement of transportation and accommodation.

The inclusion of cultural events and leisure activities as a factor reflects the broader role of sports events in promoting social inclusion and community engagement. This finding aligns with the literature that highlights the social benefits of sports participation, particularly in fostering a sense of belonging and community among individuals with disabilities (Ramsden et al., 2023). Cultural events and leisure activities provide opportunities for participants to engage with their peers, share experiences, and build social networks. The findings of this study suggest that the organization of such activities should be an integral part of sports events for individuals with disabilities, as they contribute to the overall experience and well-being of participants.

The organization of nutrition and catering services was also identified as a key factor, reflecting the importance of providing appropriate and accessible food services for participants. This finding supports previous research that emphasizes the role of nutrition in the performance and well-being of athletes, particularly those with disabilities who may have specific dietary needs (Crawford et al., 2015). The provision of accessible and nutritious food options is essential for ensuring that participants can perform at their best and maintain their health throughout the event. The findings of this study highlight the need for careful planning and coordination in the provision of

catering services, taking into account the diverse needs of participants.

The organization of transportation services emerged as another critical factor, emphasizing the importance of accessible and reliable transportation for participants. This finding is consistent with the literature, which identifies transportation as a significant barrier to participation in sports for individuals with disabilities (Geidne & Jerlinder, 2016). Accessible transportation is essential for ensuring that participants can travel to and from the event without facing physical or logistical barriers. The findings of this study suggest that transportation services should be carefully planned and coordinated to meet the needs of participants, including those with mobility impairments.

The organization of committees and human resources was identified as a key factor, reflecting the importance of effective leadership and management in the successful organization of sports events. This finding aligns with previous research that highlights the role of organizational capacity and leadership in promoting inclusion and ensuring the success of disability sports programs (Kitchin & Crossin, 2018). The establishment of dedicated committees and the allocation of clear responsibilities to staff members are essential for ensuring that all aspects of the event are managed effectively. The findings of this study underscore the need for strong leadership and organizational capacity in the planning and execution of sports events for individuals with disabilities.

The organization of opening and closing ceremonies was also identified as a key factor, reflecting the importance of these events in setting the tone for the entire event and celebrating the achievements of participants. This finding is consistent with the literature that emphasizes the symbolic and social significance of opening and closing ceremonies in sports events (Dashper, 2010). These ceremonies provide an opportunity to recognize the efforts of participants, promote a sense of unity and celebration, and engage the broader community. The findings of this study suggest that the organization of opening and closing ceremonies should be carefully planned and executed to create a positive and inclusive atmosphere for all participants.

Finally, the organization of referees and volunteers emerged as a critical factor, highlighting the importance of fair and effective officiating and the contribution of volunteers to the success of the event. This finding aligns with previous research that emphasizes the role of referees and volunteers in ensuring the smooth running of sports events and promoting fair competition (Blauwet & Willick,

2012). The recruitment, training, and management of referees and volunteers are essential for ensuring that the event is conducted in a professional and inclusive manner. The findings of this study underscore the need for careful planning and coordination in the organization of referees and volunteers, ensuring that they are adequately prepared to meet the specific needs of participants with disabilities.

While this study provides valuable insights into the organization of sports events for individuals with disabilities and veterans in Iran, it is not without limitations. One of the primary limitations is the focus on a specific cultural and geographical context, which may limit the generalizability of the findings to other regions or countries. The unique socio-political and economic conditions in Iran may influence the applicability of the identified factors to other contexts. Additionally, the study relied on self-reported data from participants, which may introduce bias or inaccuracies in the reporting of experiences and perceptions. Finally, the study did not explore the long-term impact of organized sports events on participants' well-being and social integration, which could provide further insights into the effectiveness of such events.

Future research should seek to address the limitations of this study by exploring the organization of sports events for individuals with disabilities in different cultural and geographical contexts. Comparative studies that examine the similarities and differences in event organization across countries could provide valuable insights into best practices and potential areas for improvement. Additionally, longitudinal studies that track the long-term impact of participation in sports events on individuals with disabilities could provide a deeper understanding of the benefits and challenges associated with such participation. Further research is also needed to explore the role of technology and innovation in enhancing the accessibility and inclusivity of sports events, particularly in the areas of adaptive equipment, communication, and transportation.

Based on the findings of this study, several practical recommendations can be made for the organization of sports events for individuals with disabilities and veterans. First, it is essential to secure adequate financial resources and allocate them effectively to ensure the provision of necessary adaptive equipment, facilities, and services. Second, meticulous operational planning and coordination among stakeholders are crucial for the successful execution of the event, with particular attention to accessibility and the specific needs of participants. Third, the development

of clear and inclusive competition regulations is essential for promoting fair and equitable competition. Additionally, communication strategies should be targeted and effective, using various media channels to raise awareness and encourage participation. Finally, the recruitment, training, and management of referees and volunteers should be prioritized to ensure that the event is conducted in a professional and inclusive manner. By implementing these recommendations, organizers can create more accessible, inclusive, and successful sports events for individuals with disabilities and veterans.

### Authors' Contributions

L.S. and L.S. conceptualized the study and developed the research design. H.K. and A.H.S. conducted the data collection and analysis in both the qualitative and quantitative phases. L.S. and H.K. were responsible for conducting interviews and managing the qualitative data, while L.S. and A.H.S. handled the quantitative data collection and analysis. L.S. and L.S. contributed to the writing and editing of the manuscript. H.K. and A.H.S. reviewed the manuscript and provided critical feedback. All authors read and approved the final manuscript.

### Declaration

In order to correct and improve the academic writing of our paper, we have used the language model ChatGPT.

### Transparency Statement

Data are available for research purposes upon reasonable request to the corresponding author.

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### Declaration of Interest

The authors report no conflict of interest.

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**Ethics Considerations**

The study protocol adhered to the principles outlined in the Helsinki Declaration, which provides guidelines for ethical research involving human participants.

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