

Designing a Development Model for Cultural Capital in the National Sports System

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ABSTRACT

Objective: The primary objective of this study is to develop a comprehensive model for understanding and enhancing cultural capital within the national sports system.

Methodology: This research adopts a qualitative grounded theory approach, specifically utilizing the Strauss and Corbin method (2008). Data were collected through in-depth, open-ended interviews with 20 experts in academic and executive sports environments. The interviews were analyzed using open coding, axial coding, and selective coding to identify key concepts and categories. The study also incorporated library studies and document reviews to supplement the interview data. The validity and reliability of the findings were assessed through expert reviews and inter-rater agreement methods.

Findings: The analysis revealed several critical factors influencing cultural capital in the national sports system, categorized under main constructs such as sports tradition, professional status of sports, sports in society, economy, and education. Intervention conditions like policy status, unexpected events, development indices, media, politics, cultural macro-conditions, and geographic distribution were identified as significant influencers. Background conditions included values, social class diversity, organizational culture, meritocracy, and job security. The study identified strategic responses as either pattern-centered or conventional interactions leading towards globalization. These strategies significantly impacted social mobility and the priorities within the sports field.

Conclusion: This study provides a comprehensive model for understanding and developing cultural capital within the national sports system. It underscores the multifaceted nature of cultural capital and its critical role in fostering participation, professionalization, and social mobility in sports. The findings highlight the necessity for robust policy frameworks, educational initiatives, and financial support mechanisms to enhance cultural capital.

Keywords: Cultural Capital, Sports, Grounded Theory

1 Introduction

The concept of cultural capital was first introduced by Pierre Bourdieu. Bourdieu and Passeron consider cultural capital one of the most significant indicators of respect, power, and wealth among elite classes in contemporary societies. The authority of this new class relies on new forms of capital, specifically cultural capital. In their work, the concept of cultural capital serves as a tool for understanding social differences (Sekkeh et al., 2021). Bourdieu emphasizes the importance of cultural capital, stating: "The system of habits and dispositions of individuals is dependent on the positions they occupy in society, which is related to the extent of their possession of capital that influences their ability to benefit from specific advantages available in this field" (Salehi Amiri, 2015).

In the past, cultural capital was considered an individual asset and viewed in a personal context. It was described as a collection of relationships, knowledge, information, and privileges that an individual used to maintain or achieve a social position (Tamana, 2016). However, today cultural capital is described as foundational factors that provide the means and adaptability for human societies to sustain themselves within their environment. Sustainable development requires changes in how natural capital is managed and utilized, with significant efforts made to discuss and analyze the process of sustainable development and the mechanisms by which levels of natural capital can be maintained. Cultural capital is an important, yet often overlooked, element in this process (Cochrane, 2006).

Understanding cultural capital in the national sports context, which has its own unique subculture and is both influenced by and influential upon broader society, is crucial. This understanding aids governments and sports managers in targeting and planning to guide and reform societal beliefs, values, and norms, and in training athletes, coaches, and all sports stakeholders, thereby preventing social anomalies. Additionally, it holds special importance for directing and planning sports activities at the national level. Accordingly, cultural capital is one of the most critical issues that can enhance efficiency in the sports sector and support focused studies to strengthen identity and prestige within and outside the organization. Given that scientific literature consistently regards sports as one of the fundamental and constructive institutions of human societies, whose existence is based on meeting the functional needs and necessities of each society (Sekkeh et al., 2021),

recognizing and leveraging cultural capital becomes imperative.

Parsamehr et al. (2017) concluded that there is a direct and significant relationship between cultural capital and its dimensions (embodied, objectified, and institutionalized) and women's participation in physical activities. As women's cultural capital increases, their participation in physical activities also rises (Parsamehr et al., 2017). Additionally, Adelkhani et al. (2012) concluded that the development of information and communication technology, the use of modern technologies in education, promoting the culture of public sports, establishing sports houses in academic centers, unified management and systematic planning, and creating a culture of public participation in addressing urban problems and social anomalies through public sports are among the most important policies and suggested strategies for influencing the cultural capital of participants in public sports (Adelkhani et al., 2012). Eskandaripour et al. (2020) developed a model for the development of cultural capital at Payame Noor University, categorizing ten concepts in the model: individual capital, objective and institutional capital, cultural wisdom, sense of cultural belonging, cultural awareness, transformationalism, university culture-centeredness, commitment-centeredness, cultural support, and cultural intelligence (Eskandarpour, 2020). Babapour Sekkeh et al. (2021) demonstrated that the cultural capital model of the Islamic Republic of Iran Police comprises three dimensions, eight components, and 82 indicators. The three dimensions and eight components are as follows: A) Individual and physical capital of the police, including embodied, objectified, and institutionalized; B) Organizational capital of the police, including tangible and intangible; and C) Community-oriented cultural capital of the police, including social trust in the police, social interactions of the police, and the public relations of the police (Sekkeh et al., 2021). Bazeghli et al. (2020) showed that the five influential components of cultural capital include social identity, social capital, family interactions, media consumption, and lifestyle. The five affected dimensions are academic achievement, student empowerment, social responsibility, social acceptance, and student happiness (Bazeghli et al., 2021). Spaaij (2012) argued that the contribution of sports programs to the development of social and cultural capital is closely related to their ability to foster connections with multiple institutional factors and provide a facilitating institutional environment. This environment enables young people to get to know each other and expand their social horizons (Spaij,

2012). Vollmer et al. (2019) demonstrated a direct hypothetical relationship between the level of parental education (parental cultural capital) and the amount of physical activity among adolescents (Vollmer et al., 2019). Warde (2006) stated that it is now common to discuss body culture and consider regular physical activity and sports as part of cultural life. In recent decades, body management techniques have become a prominent aspect of self-presentation, increasingly used with the expansion of commercial services to address diet and health, physical education, and appearance improvement, alongside the professionalization and commercialization of sports (Warde, 2006). Stempel (2019) focused on whether social class patterns of four types of sports participation (fitness, competition, attendance at elite sports events, and participation in all three) align with Bourdieu's theory of cultural class divisions (Stempel, 2020). Moreover, Mollborn and Model (2022) argued that health performance through diet, exercise, and body size is an increasingly important form of cultural capital that is passed on to children (Mollborn & Modile, 2022).

Therefore, studying and explaining cultural capital, as well as efforts to enhance it within the national sports sector, can increase tolerant behaviors in the sports community. Furthermore, there is a need for a targeted and coherent study that can serve as a framework to cover the necessary dimensions, components, and key indicators of cultural capital. It is evident that implementing macro policies in the field of cultural capital growth and development in sports must be based on scientific approaches and validated models. This ensures that the assigned missions, based on the identified components and indicators of the cultural capital model, can realize social and symbolic capital and achieve their primary responsibilities and objectives. Hence, the main objective of this research is to develop a model for cultural capital in the national sports system to identify its dimensions, components, and indicators. The primary question is: What is the development model of cultural capital in the national sports system?

2 Methods and Materials

2.1 Study Design and Participants

The present research adopts a qualitative grounded theory approach based on the Strauss and Corbin method (2008). The study aims to develop a fundamental understanding and employs a descriptive-survey method for data collection.

The statistical population of this study includes all experts familiar with the concept of cultural capital within both academic and executive sports environments. The sample was selected using the snowball sampling method.

Information was collected through library studies, document review, and in-depth, open-ended interviews with the selected sample. Initially, interview questions and preliminary data collection tools were designed, and an interview guide was prepared. Before conducting each interview, the researcher sent the interview guide to the interviewees. Subsequently, in-depth and semi-structured qualitative interviews were conducted with experts knowledgeable about the research topic.

It is worth noting that to document the information obtained from the interviews, both note-taking and a specialized audio recording device were used. Due to ethical considerations, the researcher obtained permission from the interviewees before recording the conversations. The duration of the interviews varied, and the location of the interviews was agreed upon by both the interviewees and the researcher.

In this study, exploratory and semi-structured interviews were conducted with 20 individuals. The initial theoretical categories of the research were developed by the end of the seventeenth interview. From the seventeenth interview onwards, the subsequent interviews were used to evaluate the previously identified concepts and categories. Since no new valuable data were observed in the subsequent interviews, theoretical saturation was achieved by the twentieth interview.

Sources such as interviews with professors, doctoral students, and sports experts were used to assess the validity and reliability of the findings. The study was reviewed by two professors who provided suggestions for modifications or changes to the theory. With a thorough audit by experts of all raw data, analysis, codes, categories, study process, initial objectives, and questions, the reliability of the data and the accuracy of all research steps were confirmed.

Additionally, in the current research, the method of inter-rater agreement was used to calculate the reliability of the conducted interviews. For this purpose, an expert was asked to participate in the research as a co-researcher (coder) to ensure the reliability of the interviews using the inter-rater agreement method with two coders (evaluators).

3 Findings and Results

The data analysis process in this study involved three main stages: open coding, axial coding, and selective coding.

Open Coding: This initial phase involved breaking down the data into distinct concepts. Events and observed items in the data were named, focusing on identifying the unique characteristics of these events. Two primary activities during open coding were conceptualization and categorization. Concepts were identified, and their properties and dimensions were discovered.

Axial Coding: In this phase, the goal was to integrate data that were fragmented during open coding. One category from the open coding phase was selected as the main category or central phenomenon and placed at the center of

the process. Other categories (subcategories) were then linked to it. This phase involved establishing relationships between the central phenomenon and the questions arising from it, such as when, where, why, who, how, and with what consequences.

Selective Coding: This stage is crucial for theory building. It involves systematically connecting the core category to other categories, presenting these relationships within a framework, and refining categories that require further development. The researcher either presents a narrative form of understanding or visually presents the final theory.

Table 1

Results from Axial Coding on Causal, Intervention, Background Conditions, Strategies, Consequences, and Central Phenomenon

Category	Conceptual Codes	Initial Codes
Causal Conditions	History of Sports	Formation of Sports Institutions and Organizations, History of Games and Sports in Iran, History of Participation in Major Sports Events, Number of Indigenous Sports in the Country
	Iran's Position in the World of Sports	Iran's Ranking in the History of the Olympic Games, Achievements in Global and Asian Competitions, Presence of Reputable and Attractive Leagues, Scientific Development in Sports and Global Leadership
	Social Capital in Sports	Number of Sports Associations, Attraction for Individuals to Join Sports Committees, Holding Elections in County Sports Committees, Growth of Fan Associations
	Professionalization of Sports	Specialization of Jobs in the Sports Sector and the Public vs. Private Nature of Sports Institutions, Globalization of Iranian Sports, Professionalization of Sports Organizations
	Education	Hosting Coaching Courses, Quality of Physical Education in Schools, Quality of Physical Education Programs in Universities, Quantitative and Qualitative Enhancement of Sports Schools (e.g., Football Schools)
	Consumerism in Sports	Increase in Per Capita Sports Participation Among Iranian Households, Increase in Per Capita Sports Facilities, Public Interest in Active Transportation (Cycling-Centric), Interest in Enrolling in Sports Clubs, Increase in Licenses for Starting Sports Businesses
	Economic Capital	Private Sector Involvement in Sports, Proliferation of Private Professional Sports Clubs, Bank Loans to Promote Sports Culture Among Individuals, Government Investment in Sports, Tax Support for Sports Businesses
Intervention Conditions	The Iranian Tradition of Family	Support from Religious Institutions for Sports and Physical Activities, Encouragement and Emphasis on Sports in Islam, Iranian Architecture Promotes Physical Activity Among People, Support of Iranian Political Culture for the Development of Sports
	Laws	Existing Laws Supporting Sports in the Country, Changes in Political, Legal, and Cultural Laws of the Country
	Unexpected Events	Major Successes and Striking Results in International Competitions, Emergence of Sports Stars in the Country
	Development Indices	Country's Demographic Pyramid, Climate
	Media	Media Support and Changes in Public Opinion, Development of Sports Media
	Politics	Government's Perspective on Sports, Country's Political Conditions, Contradiction of Political System with International Sports Laws and Sports Institutions, Types and Methods of Interactions with Other Countries, Individual and Institutional Interest in Interaction, Negotiation, and Diplomacy
	Cultural Macro	Alignment of International Regulations with Country's Values and Norms, Position of Sports Micro-Culture in the Country Compared to Other Micro-Cultures, People's Lifestyle, People's Beliefs and Attitudes Towards Sports
Geographic Distribution	Distribution of Sports Disciplines in the Country, Compatibility of Lifestyle and Customs in Different Regions with Common Sports Disciplines	

Background Conditions	Values	Ethics and Support for Human Values in Sports, Change in Values, Individual and Institutional Efforts in the Country's Sports, Stable Structures and Continuous Decision-Making Processes
	Diversity of Social Classes	Socio-Economic Status of Athletes, Social-Economic Foundation of Athletes
Strategies	Organizational Culture	Internal Commitment of Human Resources, Organizational Culture in Sports Institutions, Motivation Level of Human Resources, Education and Experience Level of Administrative and Sports Personnel
	Meritocracy	Establishment of a Performance Monitoring System, Participation in National Teams Based on Merit, Fair Selection of Administrative and Sports Members
	Job Security	Incentives and Rewards, Financial Support for Athletes
	Reproducibility	Increasing Participation in Somewhat Dubious International Games, Neglect of Traditional Sports, Encouraging Young Minds to Engage in Modern Western and Eastern Sports
	Change in Taste	The Emptying of Stadiums from Spectators, A Change in People's Attitudes Towards Sports and Physical Activity
Consequences	Pattern Modeling	Lobbying and Political Maneuvering to Attain Sports Positions, Winning International Bids and Hosting Competitions, The Power Struggle Among Sports Officials to Reach Sports Positions, Increasing the Recruitment of Foreign Athletes in Leagues
	Development of Relationships and Interactions	Media's High Attention to Athletes, Attracting Top International Coaches, Development of Celebrity-Centric Culture, Increasing Foreign Trips for Federation Officials, Increasing Interactions Between Sports Officials and Politicians
	The Change in the Sports Field's Location	Shifts in People's Priorities and Preferences Towards Various Types of Sports Disciplines, A Shift in Policymakers' Perspectives on the Macro Impacts of Sports, Activation and Dissemination of Cultural Sports Knowledge Among the Public
	Social Mobility	Earning Financial Benefits Through Sports, Gaining Social Capital Through Sports, The Growth of Obtaining Licenses to Establish Clubs, Increasing Sports Clubs, The Growth of Athletes' Presence in Political Positions, Increasing Migration of Athletes
Central Phenomenon	Cultural Intellectual Capital	Universal Development of Sports Education and Health-Focused Sports, Involvement of Parents in Sports and Encouraging Children to Participate in Sports, Mesomorphic Body, The Value of Sports and Physical Activity in Society, Active Lifestyle
	Tangible Cultural Capital	Development of Championship Sports, Innovations in the Field of Sports, Books, Articles, and Sports Publications, Competitions, Indigenous Games, Sports Museum, Athletes Winning Medals, Major Sports Facilities, Sports Organizations
	Institutional Cultural Capital	Development of Professional Sports, Coaching and Refereeing Certifications, Professional Leagues, Securing a Prominent Position in International Sports Events

The analysis revealed several critical factors influencing cultural capital in the national sports system. These factors were categorized under main constructs such as sports tradition, professional status of sports, sports in society, economy, and education. Intervention conditions like policy status, unexpected events, development indices, media, politics, cultural macro-conditions, and geographic distribution were identified as significant influencers. Background conditions included values, social class diversity, organizational culture, meritocracy, and job security.

Strategies employed by the sports sector were identified as either pattern-centered responses or conventional interactions, leading towards globalization. These strategic responses were seen to impact the social mobility of athletes and the shifting priorities within the sports field.

Based on the findings, a theoretical model was developed to represent the relationships between the core concepts,

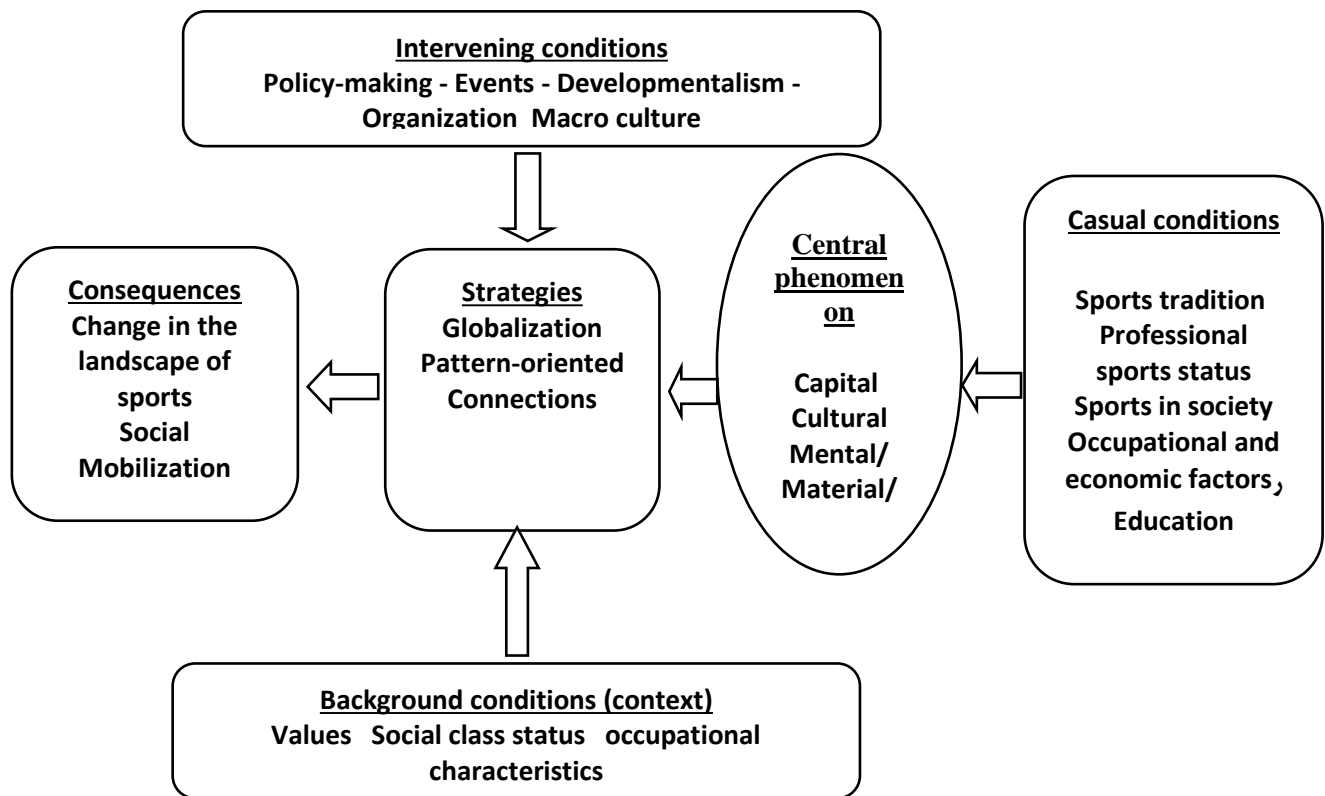
categories, and conditions affecting cultural capital in the national sports system. The central phenomenon identified was cultural capital, divided into three main types: institutional, intellectual, and tangible cultural capital. The model incorporates causal conditions, intervention conditions, and background conditions that collectively influence strategic responses and their subsequent outcomes.

Figure 1 illustrates the theoretical model of cultural capital in Iranian sports, showing how different factors interrelate to influence the development and impact of cultural capital in the national sports context.

This model provides a comprehensive framework for understanding how cultural capital is developed and utilized within the sports sector, highlighting the importance of strategic responses and their consequences on social mobility and the positioning of sports within society.

Figure 1

Theoretical Model of Cultural Capital in Iranian Sports



4 Discussion and Conclusion

The findings of this study underscore the intricate relationship between cultural capital and the national sports system, emphasizing the multifaceted nature of cultural capital as a determinant of success and social mobility within the sports sector. The conceptualization and categorization of cultural capital into institutional, intellectual, and tangible forms align with the broader literature on cultural capital in various contexts, including education, sustainable development, and organizational behavior.

Cultural capital, as elucidated by Adelhani et al. (2012), plays a chief role in shaping participation in mass sports (Adelhani et al., 2012). This study's identification of social capital in sports, professionalization, and education as critical components mirrors findings by Parsamehr et al. (2017), who highlighted the significant relationship between cultural capital and women's participation in physical activities (Parsamehr et al., 2017). The enhancement of cultural capital through educational initiatives, as proposed by Bazeghli et al. (2021), suggests that targeted interventions

in the education system can foster greater engagement in sports (Bazeghli et al., 2021).

The economic aspects of cultural capital, including private sector involvement and government investment, resonate with Cochrane's (2006) assertion on the importance of cultural capital in sustainable development (Cochrane, 2006). The economic capital identified in this study underscores the necessity for robust financial support mechanisms to cultivate a thriving sports culture. Furthermore, the social mobility resulting from strategic responses in the sports sector, as observed in this study, aligns with Stempel's (2020) exploration of sports as a vehicle for social ascension in the USA (Stempel, 2020).

The model presented in this research highlights the critical role of institutional cultural capital, corroborated by Eskandarpour (2020) in the context of Payame Noor University (Eskandarpour, 2020). The strategic responses identified, such as pattern modeling and development of relationships, emphasize the importance of institutional support and policy frameworks. Babapour Sekkeh et al. (2021) also underscored the significance of structured policies and organizational culture in enhancing cultural

capital within law enforcement agencies, which can be extrapolated to the sports sector (Sekkeh et al., 2021).

Mollborn and Modile (2022) discuss the deployment of health-focused cultural capital among young adults (Mollborn & Modile, 2022), which parallels the emphasis on health and active lifestyles in this study. The incorporation of health-focused cultural capital within sports initiatives can lead to broader societal benefits, reinforcing the value of sports in promoting well-being.

The role of parental cultural capital, as highlighted by Vollmer et al. (2019), in influencing adolescents' sports participation (Vollmer et al., 2019) is reflected in the findings on media support and societal attitudes towards sports. The media's role in shaping public opinion and promoting sports culture is crucial, as evidenced by Warde (2006) and Spaaij (2012), who emphasize the role of cultural capital in fostering social connections and community engagement (Warde, 2006).

While this study provides a comprehensive model of cultural capital within the national sports system, it is not without limitations. The qualitative nature of the research, while rich in depth, may limit the generalizability of the findings. The reliance on interviews with experts may introduce bias, as the perspectives provided are subjective and may not fully represent the broader population. Additionally, the study focuses primarily on the Iranian sports context, which may limit the applicability of the findings to other cultural or national settings.

Future research should aim to quantify the relationships identified in this study through large-scale surveys or longitudinal studies to enhance the generalizability of the findings. Comparative studies across different countries or cultural settings could provide valuable insights into the universality of the proposed model. Additionally, exploring the impact of cultural capital enhancement initiatives over time would help in understanding their long-term effectiveness and sustainability. Investigating the role of digital media and emerging technologies in shaping cultural capital within the sports sector could also offer new avenues for research.

Policymakers and sports administrators should leverage the insights from this study to design and implement targeted strategies that foster an inclusive and dynamic sports culture. Emphasizing educational initiatives that enhance cultural capital can significantly increase participation in sports and physical activities. Financial support mechanisms, both from the government and private sectors, are crucial in sustaining the development of cultural capital. Institutions should also

focus on building robust policy frameworks and fostering an organizational culture that supports the professionalization and globalization of sports. By prioritizing these strategies, stakeholders can enhance social mobility and elevate the status of sports within society.

Authors' Contributions

All authors have contributed significantly to the research process and the development of the 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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Ethical Considerations

In this research, ethical standards including obtaining informed consent, ensuring privacy and confidentiality were observed.

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