

Designing the Sport Development Model of Iran

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Aim

Absence of any substantiated literature nor research on the subject of sport development model in Iran, has convinced the author of this paper that a more thorough look into this subject in Iran could indeed enhance the current understanding of the sports development and could help finding a sport development regime in Iran.

Theoretical Background

Sport development is about facilitating opportunities for people to get involved in sport and physical activity (Taks et al., 2014). More specifically, sport development refers to the policies, processes, and practice of facilitating opportunities for involvement in sport, from mass participation to elite performance (Hylton & Bramham, 2008; Green, 2005).

Traditionally, the analogy of a pyramid has been used to depict the relationship between mass participation and elite sport. Green's (2005) Pyramid Model of Sport Development suggested that there are three levels of sport development: (a) mass participation which seeks to develop opportunities for everyone to participate in sport; (b) competitive sport which deals with peoples chances to achieve their potential in sport, from taking part for fun and health to competition; and, (c) high performance sport in which athletes are identified and developed for their performance potential. Sport development systems have two main objectives: to increase the number of participants actively engaged in sport and to enhance the quality of performances in sport (Green, 2005).

Methodology and Data analysis

A qualitative research approach into sport development in Iran is seemingly the only viable option of gathering reliable data in the absence of sufficient literature in the subject. A group of seventeen individuals with expertise in this subject were selected and interviewed. Initial findings in the first thirteen interviews lead the author to the conclusion that the gathered data from interviews is facing repetition. To settle this uncertainty interviews were conducted with another four individuals and again this was confirmed.

Results, Discussion and Implications

The results of classification of codes led us to modify Mull et al's Model of sport participation to a model of 6 levels containing: Fundamental skills, Leisure time, Educational sports, Recreational sports, Athletic sports and Professional sports (FLERAP model). In fact, we used the model as a base for designing a developmental model in Iran. According to the experts, currently a comprehensive model for sport development doesn't exist in Iran and all the institutions involved in sports are acting in an isolated manner, without possibility for any sort of meaningful synergy. Considering the above, it is author's understanding that the suggested research model in this article could be the only applicable.

The chart presented in figure below, shows the pyramid model of sport development stages in Iran. As depicted in the figure, fundamental level, including basic and motor skills, is the first level of the development process. Progressing to fundamental level into second level of the model (leisure time), relevant culture-building has a greatly influential role. Despite the

importance of these 2 steps in the sport planning on a national level, it is chronically neglected in sport macro-level planning of sport.

The third level of the model is the Educational sports. Due to important role that educational departments such as schools, colleges and universities play in developing people through the process, the educational sport can be a solid foundation for recreational sports. Furthermore, according to experts the educational level has the best conditions for talent identification. Considering that Iran is a developing country, recreational sport and mass participation may attract less attention in sport policy making comparing to athletic and professional sports. Policy makers have a short sight and are not aware of the great role that recreational and mass participation play in reaching athletic and professional goals. They are focusing on the short effect of athletic and professional sports on the increasing mass participation but this is not a long term effect. Besides the 6 levels of the model, comprehensive training is a very important act that should take place in every single one of them. In order to get the best results from utilizing individual steps on this model, one should realize that all these stages, must be supplemented with adequate training.

References

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