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ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS OF FUTSAL IN GILAN PROVINCE AND DEVELOPMENT OF OPTIMAL STRATEGIES

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to perform SWOT analysis of futsal in Gilan province and to develop optimal strategies. This research is a practical study conducted by descriptive-analytical technique. The statistical population of the study consisted of football sports administrators and boards, CEOs of futsal clubs, referees, coaches, physical education faculty, players, football and futsal pioneers, school sports teachers, and specialized football committee chairmen of Gilan province (n=63) and the target sample was purposefully selected. The research tool was based on exploratory study and rewriting the foundations and similar studies by the researcher whose content validity by experts and its reliability was confirmed by Cronbach's alpha ($\alpha=0.87$). The Friedman test and assessment matrix of internal and external factors were used to analyze appropriate findings and strategies. The research results showed that adequate attention of managers to women's futsal, the unfavorable quality of salons, the government's consideration to the commercialization and privatization of clubs, and the change in people lifestyle towards physical inactivity were respectively identified as the most important strength, weakness, opportunity and threat. As well as, the strategic situation of futsal in province is in WO area based on matrix score for the internal factors (2.37) and the external factors (2.26). Additionally, 15 strategies, including four SO strategies, four ST strategies, five WO strategies, and two WT strategies, were generally developed for Futsal based on the SWOT analysis. According to the SWOT analysis matrix results, therefore, it is necessary to use more conservative strategy to manage the futsal development.

Keywords: Strategy, SWOT Analysis, Gilan Futsal, Internal Factors, External Factors.

INTRODUCTION

Nowadays, organizations have had to adapt themselves to many changes around them by constantly monitoring internal and external events, on time and as required. In today's world, which is changing at a staggering pace, prompt decisions based on intuitive and empirical judgments cannot be used anymore. So the organizations will today be successful which can use strategic management science. The management culture over the last decades has emphasized the importance and strategic advantage between managers and organizations for creating a superior competitive position and protecting against environmental changes. Thus, many organizations have begun to take advantage of strategic planning, or have put it in their agenda. Strategic planning identifies the organization's objectives according to its mission and through its environmental studies and opportunities, threats, strengths and weaknesses of the organization in order to determine and implement more realistic objectives. Applying strategic planning by managers can bring positive benefits to organizations in the long run. Research

shows that the performance of organizations which apply strategic management is better and higher than other organizations.

The main roots and core of football development are formed in clubs; and in fact, the clubs are the main constructors of the players for themselves and even their national teams. Obviously, the more favorable the situation of the clubs in Iran's regions or provinces and those clubs are closer to professional criteria or standards, then the higher level and quality the football sport will also have (Khabiri et al., 2005). Therefore, the development of professional clubs plays an important role in the economic development of the football industry (Elahi et al., 2009). Football also has major human resources such as athletes, coaches, spectators, fans, referees, etc. that affect the football development (Abdi et al., 2010). However, in the Asia Vision initiative¹, Asian Football Confederation has proposed various objectives such as talent identification affairs and basic levels, leadership improvement, training and education of personnel, including referees and other experts for football development and advancement in the provinces (Naderi-Nasab, 2011). Other considerable factors included the Football Federation, marketing, medical affairs, referees, coaches, senior and young age groups, futsal, men, women, fans and the media. In addition to this initiative, each country and its sub-region- i.e., the provinces- require specialized strategic programs for football development. Therefore, strategic programs and management in the football area should be as coordinated and comprehensive as specialized.

Many scholars have evaluated the importance of strategic planning from a variety of perspectives, and all agree on the strategic planning correlation with organizations' desirable performance. They believe that strategic planning is a dynamic and logical process. This process focuses on strategic and operational objectives, strategies and objectives based on organizational policies, programs and activities designed to achieve the organization's expected goals and outcomes, and it is a critical tool for organizational effectiveness (Khosravizadeh, 2008). Strategic planning enables the organization to adapt its activities and services in order to meet the changing environment needs. This planning not only defines the framework for program improvement, but it also provides a framework for reorganization of programs, management and cooperation, as well as for assessment of the organization's progress in these areas (Nadri, 2009). The application of SWOT analysis is one of common approaches for identification of the internal and external factors in an organization that reflects the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats of the organization. This approach allows comparing difficulties, threats and harmful aspects to organization, opportunities, demands and external environment situations along with the weaknesses and strengths of organization. The SWOT matrix is a tool to recognize the threats and opportunities in the external environment of a system and its weaknesses and strengths in order to analyze the situation and formulate a strategy for direction and control of the system (Ghadami et al., 2011). David (2011) believes that this matrix is one of the most important tools by which managers can compare information and can present SO strategies, WO strategies, ST strategies, and WT strategies. Of course, comparing the main internal and external factors is one of the most difficult steps to prepare the matrix of threats, opportunities, weaknesses and strengths, as it requires good judgments, as well as there is no such thing as the best set of comparable factors. Also having high analytical power is considered as one of the important factors to achieve the objectives of an organization and is the secret of

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the success of many projects. Determination of the proper strategy and, consequently, honest analysis and anticipation of external factors will ensure success and maximum productivity in an organization. The appropriate strategy identification can lead the organization to the highest degree of success, depending on its circumstances, or release the organization from bankruptcy and failure in vital conditions. The key point of the success of many organizations and management projects can be to accurately analyze the available internal resources (strengths and weaknesses) and examine the external situations (opportunities and threats).

Many strategic studies have been conducted on Iran sports mainly by SWOT analysis technique. Most of the research focused on the areas of championship and public sports at national and provincial levels. For example, Mozafari et al. (2012) formulated some strategies for the national championship sports system, the most important of which are as follows: institutionalization, specialization and meritocracy in federations and sports bodies of championship sports; strengthening sports development programs at the base levels in sports federations; development of the contribution of women's sports from various resources of sports federations; and formulation and implementation of a comprehensive system for the development of the national championship sports. Hosseini et al. (2011) in a strategic analysis of talent identification in Iranian championship sports assessed strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats of talent identification in the Islamic Republic of Iran championship sports and its facing difficulties and challenges, which were verified in several stages of strategic analysis, consisting of 4 strengths, 13 weaknesses, 4 opportunities, and 7 threats, and were finally ranked according to Friedman statistical test.

Some research has also focused on strategic analysis of sport fields. Goodarzi et al. (2007) with strategic analysis of Iran's wrestling demonstrated that the contribution of Iranian wrestling is very high in the world and championship areas. They identified the existence of scientific programs, advanced and up-to-date facilities of rival countries, and adequate credits as the most important threats; holding regular competitions at the level of schools and universities, organizational support of the government and Triple Powers officials as the most important opportunities; the lack of merit and competent managers in managing the delegations, the lack of a codified program, the lack of attention to scientific principles in the training and educating wrestlers, and the lack of qualified coaches as the most important weaknesses; and holding domestic and national championships and domestic international championships, cooperation with universities and scientific centers of the country, considering wrestling as national and traditional sports of the people, and the existence of the wrestling institute in the country as the main strengths of Iran's wrestling sports. In addition, Khabiri et al. (2011) in SWOT analysis of Iran Taekwondo showed that there is a significant difference between the importance of opportunities, threats, strengths and weaknesses in this field. The most significant strength of this field includes significant development in international competitions and the most important opportunity includes the existence of national Taekwondo champions as potential individuals for taekwondo coaching and management positions. Also, its main weakness is the lack of proper use of sponsors as a source of income and its most important threat is the lack of general information and knowledge level about Taekwondo sport. Furthermore, Nazari et al. (2012) identified 15 strengths, 21 weaknesses, 12 opportunities, and 13 threats for explaining the strategy of Iranian beach volleyball.



Strategic studies with SWOT technique have been very limited in the field of football in Iran. Given the growing importance of football as the most popular and favorable sport, which has created a political, cultural, economic and social phenomenon and an integral part of the lives of many people around the world, understanding the reasons for its success or failure in the country and finding the proper solutions to resolve the weaknesses and to strengthen the positive points is very essential (Jalali Farahani, 2004). In the most important study, Naderi-Nasab (2011) by examining the current status of the Islamic Republic of Iran football and determining the strategic position of football in the country showed that the status of Iranian football is inappropriate indicating the overcoming of weaknesses on strengths, and threats on opportunities, which creates the strategic position of WT for Iranian football. As well as, Moradi (2011) showed that there is a positive and significant relationship between the economic factor and the attraction of foreign investments in the Iranian football industry. Privatization and presence in the stock market has the most factor load among the factors affecting the improvement of the existing situation. In addition, Mohammadi et al. (2011) reviewed the status of the information technology and explained the appropriate strategy for it in the Iranian Football Federation, which 15 strategy strategies were finally developed for information technology section of Federation, including two strategies in the SO area, seven strategies in the WO area, three strategies in the ST area, and three strategies in the WT area.

There have also been various strategic studies in football abroad. For example, football officials from the Haringey region (one of the regions of England) formulated a football development program for the region during 2009-2012; accordingly, the increase of football teams in the region is considered as the most important strength; the overall level of participation in sport in Haringey less than the regional and national average is observed as the most important weakness; the strategies required and the possibility of interpreting them nationally and regionally by the London Football Association is determined as the most important opportunity; and the limited distribution of football fields in highly urbanized areas, where demand growth in these areas can be problematic, is identified as the most important threat in this study. They also developed some strategies in six areas. The Haringey communication strategy was developed to build community cohesion, improve the chances of youth living, fight health threats through increased physical activity. The international game strategy was determined according to the growth and sustainability of football participation and improvement of game standards as well as the development of football facilities. The London Football Association's strategy included raising the mini-football fields, the importance of youth football development, and the need for adult football growth. The strategy of sport and physical activity in Haringey is using the key role of football as an opportunity to participate in sports and physical activity to purposefully formulate this strategy. An inclusive and active strategy also included increasing the participation of people with disabilities by 1% each year, increasing the number of clubs for disabled people, and improving access to sports facilities for these people; and ultimately, the standard strategy chart of London Football Association for clubs was developed which this program should be set to qualitatively achieve the desired development level.

In the Wagga Wagga city, Australia (2012) SWOT analysis, the families' passion and lack of volunteers, the rapid growth of participation, especially in women and youth, and the lack of coaching development and its quality are respectively determined as the most important strengths, weakness, opportunity and threat to the city's football. As well as, the SWOT analysis,



which was conducted by the National Football Association of New Zealand (2006) to identify the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats of football, highlighted the most important internal and external factors. As a result, the international ranking of New Zealand women's football team and the appropriate organizational structure in the country's football are determined as the most important strengths; the deficiency in the control of the tournament and in the provision of facilities and imperfection in national and international communication are identified as the most important weaknesses; attending the Oceania Football Confederation (OFC) and transferring Australia to Asia Football Confederation (AFC) are the most important opportunities; and future capacity of OFC is identified as the most important threat to the country's football.

Given the large number of Mazandaran players in the Premier League and 1st and 2nd Iranian football teams, as well as the appropriate situation of the base teams in the province and the relatively good situation of the western region of Mazandaran in talent identification and development of provincial football, the need for a professional perspective and effort to improve the developmental indicators and identify the internal and external factors affecting football in this region is inevitable in order to further advance this sport field in the west of Mazandaran. Therefore, considering the necessity of conducting strategic studies in the field of sport, lacking strategic studies on football field in Mazandaran province and the similar study in other provinces and demand driven for football media demands regarding the lack of strategic football management in the province; in this research, the researcher is trying to environmentally analyze the strategies of football schools in the west of Mazandaran province by exploratory study and to formulate optimal strategies for the development of football in this region by SWOT analysis technique.



RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This research is a descriptive-analytical study, which its results are practical and as this study is a case study, its results cannot be generalized to other provinces. The statistical population of this research consists of all experts in football and futsal in Gilan province. The population was clearly not counted and accessible due to the researcher's emphasis on particular aspects of academic, background and performance levels. The statistical sample was purposefully selected from sports department administrators and football delegates (7 people), futsal club CEOs (5 people), futsal referees (5 people), futsal coaches (15 people), the faculty of physical education (5 people), futsal players (10 people), football and futsal protagonists (5 people), school sports teachers (6 people) and heads of specialized committees of football board of Gilan province (5 people)- a total of 63 people- and they were surveyed.

Study of the existing documents related to the past and current activities of the football delegates and the futsal committee of the province, study and analysis of research on strategy in various sports fields, and a survey of experts and stakeholders of futsal sports in the province were used to collect the data required for this research. In this research, through exploring the documents via the Internet network and library resources, we reviewed the sources on futsal in Gilan province and used them in related cases. The main research tool was a researcher-made questionnaire. The internal and external factors of this questionnaire were designed using the materials contained in the background literature as research-made and closed questions to identify the strengths and weaknesses, opportunities and threats of futsal in Gilan province, and

consisted of 52 questions for internal factors and 36 questions for external factors, in which the respondents expressed their perspectives on determining the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats, as well as the current and desirable situation of items.

Internal factors analysis matrix was used to evaluate the internal environment factors of the province futsal. In this matrix, the strengths and weaknesses were placed in a matrix column and scored using specific coefficients and ranks to determine whether the Gilan futsal generally has strength or weakness in terms of internal factors.

In this matrix, the strategic or priority factors of the internal environment were listed in the first column in form of strengths and weaknesses. In the second column, the item code was written to distinguish strengths and weaknesses. In the third column, internal factors were placed in the Friedman test according to the measured priorities. In the fourth column of the matrix (importance coefficient), according to the experts' perspective about the optimal situation of items, the result of dividing the mean of each item on the total mean of all items of internal factors was identified as a coefficient of importance. The sum of importance coefficients in the internal factor matrix was calculated to be 1. In the fifth column of the table (severity factor), the rank of 4 or 3 is assigned to strengths and 2 or 1 is assigned to weaknesses due to being critical or normal of the strengths and weaknesses. The ranks of 4, 3, 2, and 1 were assigned to the excellent strengths, ordinary strengths, ordinary weaknesses, and critical weaknesses, respectively. Thus, in the ranking process, the rank reduced from 4 to 1 by moving from excellent strength to critical weakness. It is worth noting that the internal factor matrix was used to determine the position (not reaction) and formulate the strategy, the strengths were rated 4 and 3, and the weaknesses were rated 2 and 1. In the last column, the product of the importance coefficient in factor intensity was calculated as the score of that item and the total score of items was determined by the position of the internal factors. If the total score is less than 2.5, then Gilan futsal has weakness in internal factors and if the total score is more than 2.5, then Gilan futsal has strength in internal factors.

External factor analysis matrix was used to evaluate the external environment factors of Gilan futsal. In this matrix, opportunities and threats were placed in a column and scored using specific coefficients and ranks to determine whether the province's futsal has an opportunity or threat in terms of external factors.

In this matrix, the strategic or priority factors of the external environment were listed in the first column in form of strengths and weaknesses. In the second column, the item code was written to distinguish strengths and weaknesses. In the third column, external factors were placed in the Friedman test according to their measured priorities. In the fourth column of the matrix (importance coefficient), according to the experts' view about the desirable situation of items, the result of dividing the mean of each item on the total mean of all items of external factors was identified as a coefficient of importance. The sum of importance coefficients in the external factor matrix was equal to 1. In the fifth column of the table (severity factor), the rank of 4 or 3 is assigned to strengths and 2 or 1 is assigned to weaknesses in the matrix due to being critical or normal of the strengths and weaknesses. The ranks of the excellent strengths, ordinary strengths, ordinary threats, and critical threats were assigned 4, 3, 2, and 1, respectively. Thus, in the ranking process, the rank reduced from 4 to 1 by moving from excellent strength to critical threat. It is worth noting that the external factor matrix was used to determine the position (not reaction) and formulate the strategy, the strengths were rated 4 and 3, and the threats were



rated 2 and 1. In the last column, the product of the importance coefficient in factor intensity was calculated as the score of that item and the total score of items was determined by the position of the external factors. If the total score is less than 2.5, then Gilan futsal has threat in external factors and if the total score is more than 2.5, then Gilan futsal has opportunity in external factors.

The internal and external matrix was used in order to simultaneously analyze internal and external factors. This matrix was used to determine the strategic position of the provincial futsal. To form this matrix, the scores derived from the evaluation matrices of internal and external factors were placed in horizontal and vertical dimensions to determine the position of the Gilan futsal sport in the cells of this matrix, so that an appropriate strategy can be adopted for it. In this matrix, the scores were determined in a spectrum with strong section (2.5 to 4) and weak section (1 to 2.5).

SWOT analysis and a four-cell matrix were used to formulate futsal strategies in Gilan province. For this purpose, two-to-two comparisons (strengths and opportunities; strengths and threats; weaknesses and opportunities; weaknesses and threats) were used to determine the four strategies of SO, ST, WO, and WT, based on analytical and intuitive judgment. To determine the content validity of this questionnaire, some of the professors with a sports management orientation (5 people), coaches (5 people) and team managers (5 people) were surveyed that they approved the questionnaire. The descriptive statistics method was used to describe the sample statistics, to determine the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats, as well as the existing and desirable situation. In this research, this test was used to prioritize and rank the most important weaknesses, strengths, opportunities and threats of the futsal province.



RESEARCH FINDINGS

The research results include two sections as follows: (1) the external and internal factors matrix; and (2) the formulation of appropriate strategy based on the matrix. The internal factors matrix, external factors matrix and internal and external factors matrix were used to determine this position.

Intrinsic factor evaluation matrix (IFE):

Table 1. Internal factors evaluation matrix for Gilan futsal

Internal factors	Code	Factors	Importance coefficient (Weight)	Factor intensity	Score
Strengths	S1	Adequate attention of managers to women's futsal	0.0179	3	0.054
	S2	The proper situation of the women's futsal teams in the province	0.0186	3	0.056
	S3	The appropriate number of futsal salons in the province	0.0190	3	0.057
	S4	Easy access to the futsal salons in the province	0.0190	3	0.057
	S5	The proper presence of women in futsal of the province	0.0184	3	0.056
	S6	Interactions and communication of the provincial futsal committee with other futsal committees of the country	0.0186	3	0.056

	S7	Focus on the development of youngsters and talent players at the basic level	0.0186	3	0.056
	S8	Good condition for base futsal in the province	0.0183	4	0.074
	S9	The desirable situation of the organization and structure of futsal committee	0.0177	3	0.054
	S10	A relatively good position of management of the province's futsal	0.0186	3	0.056
	S11	Accordance of duties and responsibilities with the organization structures of the provincial futsal committee	0.0186	3	0.056
	S12	Positive attitude toward futsal development from provincial futsal managers	0.0188	3	0.053
	S13	Interactions and communication of the futsal committee of the province with the Iranian Football Federation	0.0185	3	0.056
	S14	Independence of futsal committee management of the province	0.0172	3	0.052
	S15	Ability and sufficient knowledge of futsal instructors in Gilan province	0.0188	3	0.057
	S16	Determination of the duties and responsibilities in the provincial futsal committee	0.0179	3	0.054
	S17	The appropriate number of Gilan teams present in the reputable league of the country in different age categories	0.0178	3	0.054
	S18	A decent human resources situation in the provincial futsal committee	0.0177	3	0.054
	S19	Presence of statutes, regulations and detailed instructions in the futsal committee of the province	0.0176	4	0.071
	S20	Enough futsal coaches with international degree of A (AFC)	0.0181	4	0.073
	S21	The desirable number of referees in the province's futsal	0.0178	4	0.072
	S22	The appropriate number of futsal schools in the province	0.0182	4	0.073
	S23	A large number of Futsal clubs in the province	0.0175	4	0.070
	S24	Television coverage for Gilan teams in national leagues	0.0166	4	0.050
	S25	The proper ratio of the number of provincial futsalists to the country's futsalists	0.0155	3	0.047
	S26	A large number of provincial futsal leagues in various age groups	0.0162	4	0.065
Weaknesses	W1	Unfavorable quality of futsal salons in Gilan province	0.0185	1	0.019
	W2	Inappropriate situation of management of professional teams in the province	0.0175	2	0.035



W3	The poor performance of the futsal committee and the provincial teams in attracting sponsors	0.0182	2	0.037
W4	The weak performance of the futsal committee and the provincial teams in marketing affairs	0.0184	2	0.037
W5	Few research and scientific reports on futsal in the province	0.0182	2	0.037
W6	Sever dependence on government funds	0.0180	1	0.018
W7	The lack of salon development with proper income generation	0.0086	2	0.018
W8	The unfavorable situation of IT in provincial futsal	0.0187	2	0.038
W9	Adverse situation of professional teams in the province	0.0182	2	0.037
W10	Lack of developmental programs in the futsal teams of the province	0.0176	2	0.036
W11	The poor condition of hardware facilities and equipment of the salons in the development of the provincial futsal	0.0173	2	0.035
W12	The little presence of provincial players in national teams of different age groups	0.0187	1	0.019
W13	The lack of financial health and transparency of the provincial futsal teams	0.0177	2	0.036
W14	The lack of employment of elite and talent people in the management of province's futsal	0.0174	1	0.018
W15	Few volunteers in futsal competitions in Gilan province	0.0188	2	0.038
W16	The lack of transparency of financial performance of the futsal committee of Gilan province	0.0183	2	0.037
W17	The lack of merit in the provincial futsal managerial appointments	0.0192	2	0.039
W18	Lack of long-term program in the provincial futsal committee	0.0182	2	0.037
W19	Low quality futsal leagues in the province	0.0187	1	0.019
W20	Few futsal development programs in the provincial futsal committee	0.0182	2	0.037
W21	No attention to workshops and training courses for referees, coaches, etc.	0.0176	2	0.036
W22	Absence of participatory management space and collective decision in the provincial futsal committee	0.0183	2	0.037
W23	No attention of the futsal committee of the province to the cultural and social effects of futsal in community	0.0185	2	0.037
W24	Absence of qualified people in provincial futsal schools	0.0184	1	0.019
W25	Absence of skilled human resources in the provincial futsal committee	0.0187	2	0.038



	W26	The small use of football commissions from the cities' futsal committees of the province	0.0181	2	0.037
Total importance coefficients of the internal factors			$\Sigma-1$		$\Sigma-2.37$

As shown in Table 1, according to the final score of internal factor evaluation matrix (IFE) obtained from multiplying the factor intensity in the importance coefficient of 2.37, futsal in Gilan province has weakness (W) in terms of internal factors.

External factor evaluation matrix (EFE):

Table 2. External factor evaluation matrix for futsal in Gilan province

External factors	Code	Factors	Importance coefficient (Weight)	Factor intensity	Score
Opportunities	O1	The government's attention to commercialization and privatization of clubs	0.0321	3	0.097
	O2	Required coherence and cooperation between organizations and sports institutions of the province	0.0315	3	0.095
	O3	The public acceptability of women's futsal in the province	0.0308	3	0.093
	O4	Province weather condition	0.0326	3	0.098
	O5	Progress of several provinces through the implementation of the Asia Vision initiative in football	0.0279	3	0.084
	O6	Sports and youth management support of the province from futsal	0.0311	3	0.094
	O7	The proper number of local newspapers related to futsal in the province	0.0311	3	0.094
	O8	Existence of elite and talent people in province sport management	0.0305	4	0.122
	O9	People encouragement and stimulation by the provincial media for futsal sports	0.0328	3	0.099
	O10	Asia Vision Project in Provincial Football	0.0310	3	0.094
	O11	A large number of radio and television programs related to provincial futsal	0.0320	3	0.096
	O12	The look and proper deal of the media with Gilan futsal sport	0.0321	3	0.097
	O13	The appropriate number of provincial salons in urban areas in which demand is very high	0.0315	3	0.095
	O14	Gilan's people active participation in various sports fields	0.0291	3	0.088
	O15	Futsal popularity among different people in the province	0.0307	4	0.123
	O16	The enthusiasm and support of families from their children in the futsal	0.0332	4	0.133
	O17	The young population of the province and the abundant talent in the Gilan futsal	0.0331	4	0.133
Threat	T1	Changing the lifestyle of people towards physical inactivity and mechanical life	0.0162	1	0.017

T2	Changing the structure of cities and destroying futsal-related places	0.0185	2	0.037
T3	Impact of political issues in the provincial futsal	0.0162	1	0.017
T4	Delay in the implementation and completion of special futsal projects in the province	0.0163	2	0.033
T5	The increase in the price of equipment and supplies for futsal sports	0.0177	2	0.036
T6	The poor economic situation of most rural families in the province	0.0309	2	0.062
T7	Intervention of groups outside the futsal field in various futsal issues of the province, including trade and ethical issues	0.0158	2	0.032
T8	Emphasis on consequentialism of the top authorities of the futsal province	0.0181	2	0.037
T9	Incidence of immoral, violent, and doping issues in provincial futsal	0.0144	2	0.029
T10	Few sporting facilities in the deprived villages and districts of the province	0.0299	2	0.060
T11	Adverse socioeconomic situation in the province	0.0304	2	0.061
T12	Interventions and parallel works of the Sports and Youth Department of the province in futsal	0.0236	2	0.048
T13	Absence of macro investors in the province's futsal	0.0283	1	0.029
T14	The lack of macro investment of the private sector in the provincial futsal	0.0317	1	0.032
T15	The lack of voluntary and charitable organizations committed to futsal development in the province	0.0311	2	0.063
T16	Few spectators' tendency to futsal championship in the province	0.0326	2	0.066
T17	No allocation of the necessary funds for projects related to futsal in the province	0.0313	2	0.063
T18	The government's inability to pay for facilities, including loans, land, tax breaks, etc. to the private sector	0.0315	2	0.063
T19	The presence of political people in the provincial futsal to attract sponsors	0.0312	1	0.032
Total importance coefficients of the external factors		Σ -1		Σ -2.56



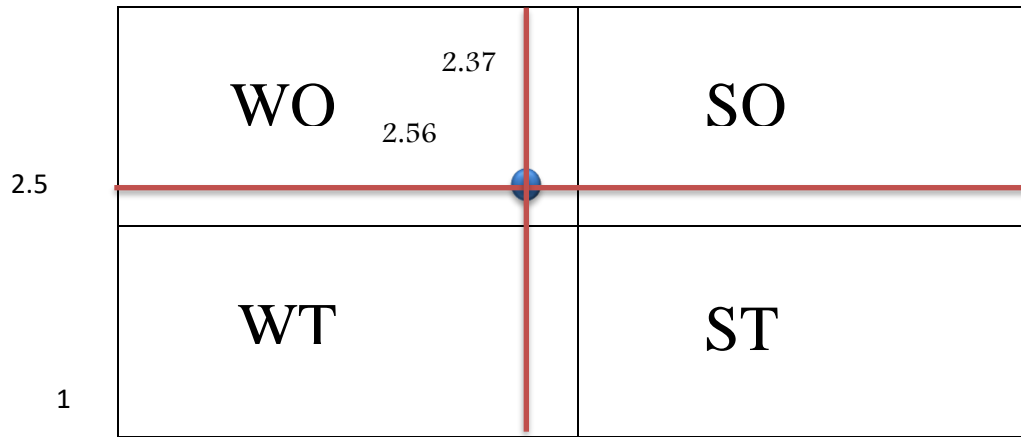
According to the results of the external factors evaluation matrix (EFE), the final score of 2.56 indicates that the futsal in Gilan has more opportunities than threats in terms of external factors. In general, the results shown in Tables 1 and 2 as well as the internal and external matrix indicate that futsal of Gilan province is strategically located in the WO area; thus, futsal of Gilan has weakness in terms of internal factors and opportunity in terms of external factors. The internal and external matrices were used in order to simultaneously analyze internal and external factors. This matrix is used to determine the position of the Gilan futsal. To form this matrix, the scores derived from the internal and external factors evaluation matrices are placed

in horizontal and vertical dimensions to determine the position of the Gilan futsal in the cells of this matrix and to adopt a proper strategy for that. In this matrix, the scores are determined in a two-part spectrum of strong (2.5 to 4) and weak (1 to 2.5) (Nadri, 2009).

The final score of internal and external factors evaluation matrix

Internal and external factor evaluation matrices for futsal in Gilan province are presented in Table 3. According to the results from Tables 1 and 2, it was determined that the strategic position of futsal in Gilan province is located in the WO area. Therefore, strategies related to this area should be used to advance their development programs. Because of the proximity of the futsal position of Gilan province to other areas of internal and external factors evaluation matrices, the strategies of these areas can also be used to develop the futsal in Gilan province.

Table 3. Internal and external factor evaluation matrices



Football strategies for Gilan province

According to SWOT analysis, 15 strategies were generally developed which are as follows: four SO strategies, four ST strategies, five WO strategies, and two WT strategies for provincial futsal. These strategies are presented in Table 4.

Table 4. Futsal strategies in Gilan province

SO	WO
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development of the base futsal in the province using the Asia Vision initiative. • Adjustment and reduction of barriers to women's futsal development. • The maximum utilization of futsal sports facilities in the province. • Emphasis on the educational and behavioral aspects of futsal talent identification system in the province. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strengthening the financial independence of the clubs by using the financial power of the private sector. • Increasing financial resources and credits of the province's futsal committee. • Improving the quality of the province's futsal salons. • Using the provincial media power to develop Gilan futsal. • Employing elite administrators in futsal province.
ST	WT
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Management intervention to reduce and moderate the destructive effects of politics and society in province's futsal. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Changing the ticket sales system and service to spectators.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Helping to expand the pure futsal in the province. • Encouraging and stimulating people to play futsal. • Publicizing futsal in the province. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Making major changes to the construction planning of projects related to futsal
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In the strategy of WO, also known as conservative strategy, the organization must use the available opportunities in the external environment to use them appropriately in order to transform their internal weaknesses into strengths. According to this definition, 5 strategies for this region were developed in football of Gilan province.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The purpose of this research was to strategically evaluate the futsal of Gilan province based on SWOT analysis and to formulate an appropriate strategy. The results of this study showed that futsal of the Gilan province has a score of 2.37 according to the internal factors matrix (Table 1). Therefore, in terms of internal factors (strengths and weaknesses) it has a weakness. In addition, based on external factors evaluation matrix (Table 2) it has a score of 2.56. Therefore, in terms of external factors (opportunities and threats), there is an opportunity. Overall, based on the internal and external evaluation matrix which was obtained from the comparison of internal and external factors, Gilan province futsal is located in the WO region. In the other words, it can be said that due to the dominance of weaknesses on strengths and capability of the Gilan's futsal to take advantage of opportunities and combating with the possible threats, it is better to adopt a conservative strategy to improve the situation of futsal in the province (NaderiNasab, 2011).

The results of this study showed that the strategic situation of Gilan's Futsal is in such conditions that it must reduce weaknesses of the internal environment by using external environment opportunities and turn them into strengths. However, due to the nearness of the strategic position of the Gilan's futsal to other positions, it is possible to use ST, WT, and SO strategies according to the existing conditions (Table3).

Various studies have represented similar results with the results of this research. Based on Hosseini's Findings (2010), Strategic Situation of Student Sports of Islamic Azad University is located in WO region.

The results of this study showed that the strategic location of student sport of Islamic Azad University is such that it has many weaknesses and opportunities in this field and can make maximum use of the available opportunities to eliminate the weaknesses (Hosseini, 2010). Hamidi (2010) in his research with the title of explaining the strategy of sport tourism in Iran, determined the strategic position of this industry in the WO region and developed strategies and operational plans for each of the fourfold situations of the table (Hamidi, 2010). Also, Nazari (2012) described the strategy of Iranian beach volleyball and obtained the strategic position of this sport in the conservative region. Meanwhile, he has developed 15 strategies, consisting of two SO strategies, three ST strategies, eight WO strategies, and WT strategy, for beach volleyball (Nazari, 2012). In another study, Mohammadi (2012) examined the current status of the information technology of the Football Federation Islamic Republic of Iran, and after positioning of its strategic situation in the WO region, he has formulated strategies related to the research.



Also, the results of the present study, in terms of strategic position, were different from the results of Seif-Panahi Shabani (2009), Goodarzi (2009), Ghofrani (2010), Aghayi (2011), Naderi-Nasab (2010), Khosravi Zadeh (2008), Shabani Bahar (2011), Mand Alizade (2011), Goodarzi (2012) and Razavi (2013).

Based on the SWOT analysis, a total of 15 strategies, including 4 SO strategies, 4 ST strategies, 5 WO strategies, and 2 WT strategies for the Gilan's futsal, were developed. SO strategies include development of the grassroots futsal in the province using the AsiaVision plan, developing women's futsal and trying to remove barriers to their participation in this sport, motivating and motivating young players in the province, and maximum use of futsal sports facilities in the province.

As indicated in Chapter 4, the best position for any organization is to be in the SO region. The strategies of this region were developed based on the strengths within the organization and taking advantage of opportunities outside the organization. The progress of several provinces with the help of the implementation of the AsiaVision plan indicates that the use of this project in Gilan province, given the talent in the grassroots futsal of this province, how much can improve the grassroots futsal of Gilan. Also, considering the desirable situation of women's futsal in the province, trying to maintain the existing position and further promoting this sport can be the main goals of the futsal directors of the province.

ST strategies include generalizing futsal in the province, helping to expand the clean futsal in the province, reducing the destructive political and social effects on futsal by futsal managers of province.

The ST strategy means that the organization, using its own internal strengths, can control the threats of the external environment and converting them to opportunity for itself. For example, the desirable situation in the management of the futsal of Gilan province and the precise operational plans can prevent the influence of people outside the futsal field to interfere in this sport.

WO strategies include employing elite executives in the futsal management of the province, utilization of the power of provincial mass media to develop Gilan's futsal, quality improving of futsal courts in the province, increasing resources and financial credits of the futsal committee of the province, strengthening the financial independence of the clubs by using the financial power of the private sector.

WO strategies, which in this study the position of Gilan's futsal located in this area, are known for conservative strategies (David, 2013). This means that organizations exploit the conditions and situations that are in their external environment and are referred to as opportunities, in order to reduce their internal weaknesses and turn them into strengths. For example, employing elite executives who are outside the province's futsal and recognized as opportunities, can turn the weakness of the futsal management of the province into strength. We can also improve the poor financial status of the clubs using the financial power of the private sector.

WT strategies include making fundamental changes to the planning of construction plans relating to futsal, changing the ticket selling system and moderating the price of tournament tickets.

In this strategy, also known as defensive strategy, because of its inherent weaknesses and the inability to turn the threats of its external environment into opportunity, the organization has to maintain the status quo (stability) or to completely change its activities and in the worst case, to



merge into another organization, or go into liquidation, totally. Regarding the changing of ticket selling system, it should be said that since the current situation is in such a way that causes low tendency of spectators, so the continuation of this process could have devastating effects on the development of the futsal. For this purpose, new policies for selling and distributing tickets should be adopted to increase the participation rate of spectators.

- ***The strategy of developing the grassroots futsal using efficient plans like AsiaVision:*** The progress of several provinces with the help of the implementation of the AsiaVision plan indicates that the use of this project in Gilan province, given the talent in the grassroots futsal of this province, how much can improve the grassroots futsal of Gilan. Other aspects of AsiaVision that contribute to the development of futsal in the country or region should also be carefully studied and implemented. In the Haringey City Football Strategy, the importance of youth football development was identified as one of the strategies of football development in this city. Also, enriching the development programs of the grassroots futsal was one of the strategies identified in the study of Mozaffari et al. (2010). Seif-Panahi Shabani et al. (2009) in their research also reported the creating an appropriate talent detection system as a suitable strategy for Kurdistan's championship sports.
- ***Strategy of moderating and reduction of barriers to women's futsal development:*** According to the province's experts' opinion, it was found that futsal has a great popularity among the women in the province, and the presence of women in the futsal of the province could have a considerable contribution in the development of this sport. Most of the studies that have been conducted were agreed with this opinion that women's participation could be a desirable opportunity for the futsal. Khosravizadeh (2010) identified the strategy of developing and enhancing the women's sport and attempting to eliminate obstacles in the deserving presence of them in the Asian Games in his proposed matrix. In the research of Mozaffari et al. (2010), increasing the share of women's sports from various resources of sports federations was introduced as a strategy for Iranian championship sport. In a study conducted by Nazari et al. (2012), increasing opportunities for women's participation in beach volleyball sports was identified as a strategy for this sport.
- ***The strategy of placing emphasis on the training and behavioral aspects in futsal talent identification of the province:*** The province of Gilan is full of latent and apparent talents in the futsal sport. It is difficult to organize and train this number of players. Motivating and encouraging these people for active participation in the futsal sports considerably could help the futsal development in the province. The mass media of the province play a significant role in this matter. Useful and motivating programs about futsal can create a positive attitude for teenage and young players towards this sport, and lead them to futsal as much as possible, which will lead to the discovery and flourishing of the talents of this stratum of the society.
- ***The maximum utilization of futsal sports facilities in the province:*** Having a comprehensive and applicable program, as well as appropriate facilities are prerequisites for achieving the titles of champion and earning honor in a sport field. The presence of good opportunities in the external environment of the Gilan's futsal, as well as the interest



of Gilan's society to the futsal sport can be a great help for the managers of the province for proper planning in order to improve and enhance the quality of futsal in the province.

- ***The strategy of managerial intervention for reducing and balancing the destructive political and social effects on futsal:*** The interference of politicians in the futsal sport of Iran is very high. The conflict between futsal managers and political people present in futsal has always caused a lot of problems in the Iranian futsal. The excessive interventions of politicians present in the futsal could lead the Iran's futsal to wane. No privatization of the clubs and governmental nature of them give the government the authority to intervene in various issues of the teams and appointment of political people in the futsal. According to experts' opinion, though the presence of politicians in the Gilan's futsal seemingly inferred for the help of the futsal of the province, but what goes on backstage has completely different results from what is expected. The top managers of the Gilan's Futsal should moderate and minimize these interventions and destructive effects so as to be able to provide optimal plans for the development of the futsal without problem.
- ***The strategy of encouraging and stimulating people to play futsal sport:*** According to the results of the research, the Gilan province has talented young people in the field of futsal sport. There is also a public tendency to futsal in Gilan province. These cases can provide sufficient reasons for the province administrators to significantly consider the provincial futsal sport. As the necessity for futsal development in the province is the presence of sufficient manpower in both fields of operational and technical, including players, coaches, etc., and comprehensive management and planning for the province's futsal. In the sports strategy in Bolsover, the strategy of increasing the participation in sport is considered as one of the most important strategies of sport in this city. In the strategy of sport in the Castle Bridge Boro district (2001-2008), developing the participation of various groups of society was reported as one of the strategic objectives of the region.
- ***A strategy to promote the pure and ethical futsal in the province:*** One of the main objectives of World Football Federation is to promote and boost ethical culture and respect for others. Although the words such as respect, opposition to racism and the like can be usually seen in most international competitions, unfortunately the issues such as consequentialism in futsal has led players, coaches and managers to be away from these slogans and to choose the wrong path to achieve their goals, which it is nothing but ruin at the end. The formulation of strict disciplinary rules can prevent the occurrence of these issues in this regard. The role of the media in promoting the futsal culture can be very bold and tangible in order to reduce the destructive effects of consequentialism in futsal of the province.
- ***The strategy of publicizing futsal sport in the province:*** The inadequate economic situation of the society and especially the villagers in Gilan province could lead not to flourish many talents in the province's futsal. The high cost of sporting equipment as well as football schools makes families, who do not have the proper income level, unable to move their children towards this sport. Accordingly, many talent youngsters and adolescents in various regions of the province are away from the vision of football and futsal coaches and talent identifiers. The top futsal directors of the province can try to reduce the cost of this sport in Gilan province in order to make accessible the futsal



facilities for all with any income level in the province by providing appropriate and applicable programs away from any emotional and irrational encounter.

- ***A strategy to strengthen the financial independence of clubs by using the financial power of the private sector:*** The entrance of the private sector into the country's futsal can reduce several problems of the futsal clubs to a large extent. On the one hand, it reduces the influence of the state and its political interference, and on the other hand, it reduces the financial problems of clubs by injecting appropriate funds. The futsal committee can also bring financial resources from private sector into its financial circle by attracting sponsors and appropriate marketing activities and thereby provide more funding for activities related to the futsal development. In the development strategy for the Castle Bridge Boro Distinct (2001-2008), the development of clubs was recognized as one of the sports strategies of this region in various ways.
- ***The strategy of increasing the financial resources and credits for the province's futsal committee:*** As mentioned in the previous section, appropriate activities in marketing and attracting sponsorship are one of the best ways to increase the resources and credits of the futsal committee in Gilan province. Unfortunately, there are no proper activities on marketing and attracting sponsorship for the futsal committee in Gilan province. Although the marketing committee has been defined in the organizational structure of the football board, the committee does not appear to have performed much positive work on marketing activities. Therefore, the administrators of Gilan Provincial Football Association are required to take this committee into account significantly to increase the financial resources and credits with positive activities on marketing and attracting sponsors, and also contribute to other committees such as the futsal committee. In designing the sports development strategy of Castle Bridge Boro Distinct (2001-2008), marketing development was placed on the agenda of the sports managers of this area as a strategic objective (66). Mozafari et al. (2010) identified the strengthening of the equitable distribution system for financial, physical and human resources as a strategy for Iranian championship sport.
- ***The strategy of quality improvement of salons in the province:*** The high number of players in the province, the large number of football schools in the province, as well as the large number of futsal clubs in the province makes it necessary the construction and repair of salons in the province. Unfortunately, the salons' supply is less than the club's demand for having salon to practice in the Gilan province. Also, the poor quality of futsal salons in the province in terms of flooring as well as hardware facilities has caused that futsal teams do not practice properly to prepare themselves in order to participate in different competitions. Poor quality of salons can also affect the learning of futsal in schools, in which the ideal futsal learning will be difficult for teenagers, adolescents and youths in Gilan province. It is better to complete and construct appropriate salons in the futsal dignity of Gilan province with a precise, long-term planning, not emotionally. The development of football facilities was reported as one of the 6 strategies for the development of football in the city of Haringey (2009-2012). Mozafari et al. (2010) identified the development of a system for standardization of places and sports spaces by emphasizing international standards as a strategy for Iranian championship sport. In the development of strategy for Kordestan championship sports, conducted by Seif-Panahi



Shabani et al. (2009), finishing the uncompleted sport projects was introduced as a strategy for sport in this province. Also, Nazari et al. (2012) identified the increasing number of coastal volleyball lands as a crucial strategy for Iranian beach volleyball.

- ***The strategy of using the media power of the province to develop futsal:*** In various sections of this research, it was stated that the provincial media play an important role in the development and promotion of futsal and various futsal issues of the province. In general, provincial audio, visual and written media can play the role of a double-edged sword. On the one hand, they can negatively influence the public's interest in futsal, and even in the more severe cases can result in community hate toward the sport, but on the other hand, they can help foster the people interest through appropriate infrastructure and advertisements as well as broadcast of various useful programs about futsal of the province. As stated in the Wagga Wagga, Australia Football Strategy (2012), the increased interest of the people causes that families encourage their children more towards this sport, and this can be a great opportunity for futsal talent identification and development in the Gilan province. Furthermore, Khosravizadeh (2010) formulated the strategy of the development and optimization of media communications for the National Olympic Committee of Iran.
- ***The strategy of providing major changes in planning the construction of projects related to futsal:*** According to futsal experts' perspective in Gilan province, civil activities on constructing and equipping the futsal salons in the province are very slow and after completing the project, the salons do not also have the proper quality in some cases. Benchmarking of futsal salons in advanced countries can provide innovative and desirable ideas for equipping futsal salons in the province. It should be noted that Elahi (2003) evaluated the status of football stadiums of Iran and compared it with European standards. The results of this study showed that the hardware situation of Iranian football stadiums is very weak and requires the attention of Iranian football managers to play an effective role in improving qualitatively and quantitatively Iranian football stadiums by developing precise plans.
- ***The strategy of changing the system of ticket sales and service to spectators:*** On changing the system of ticket sales, it should also be stated that since the current situation is such that, audiences' tendency will be lower, then the continuation of this process could have devastating effects on futsal development. To that end, there should be new policies in the process of selling and distributing tickets to increase the audiences' tendency.

In general, the strategic program of futsal in Gilan province was designed based on the selected model and all of its outlined issues were developed according to this model; it was attempted to maintain the unity, coherence and continuity between its strategic issues as much as possible and to comply with the programs' provisions of upper and relevant organizations.

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