# Explaining the Managerial Position of Women in National and International Sports Levels

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A R T I C L E   I N F O

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A B S T R A C T

**Purpose:** The status and position of women in the management system face numerous challenges and problems. Therefore, the present study was conducted with the objective of explaining the managerial position of women in sports assemblies at the national and international levels.

**Methodology:** This study was applied in terms of its objective and mixed (qualitative and quantitative) in terms of its implementation method. The population in the qualitative part consisted of sports experts, professors, and high-ranking sports managers, from whom 16 individuals were selected as the sample through purposive sampling based on the principle of theoretical saturation. The population in the quantitative part included sports experts, athletes, professors, and high-ranking sports managers, from whom 141 individuals were selected as the sample through random sampling based on the Cochran's formula. The research tools were semi-structured interviews in the qualitative part and researcher-made questionnaires in the quantitative part, the psychometric indices of which were confirmed. Data were analyzed using coding methods and exploratory factor analysis.

**Findings:** The findings from the qualitative part revealed that the managerial position of women in sports assemblies at the national and international levels encompasses 54 concepts in 27 subcategories and 10 categories, including identity formation in managerial spaces, division of labor capability, overcoming gendered spaces, effective control, program orientation, field management and leadership, social support for women's management, management practice, organizational efficiency, networks, and communication skills. Moreover, the quantitative findings indicated that all 27 observed variables had a positive standardized factor loading and a critical ratio greater than 1.96 with each of the 10 latent constructs, thus confirming their validity, and their reliability was calculated to be higher than 0.70 using Cronbach's alpha. In addition, the model of women's managerial position in sports assemblies at the national and international levels fitted well, having a direct and significant effect on all 10 constructs of identity formation in managerial spaces, division of labor capability, overcoming gendered spaces, effective control, program orientation, field management and leadership, social support for women's management, management practice, organizational efficiency, networks, and communication skills (P<0.05).

**Conclusion:** Based on the results of this research, to improve the managerial position of women in sports assemblies at the national and international levels, it is possible to create conditions for the realization of the identified subcategories and categories.

*Keywords: Women's managerial position, sports assemblies, national and international, social support, organizational efficiency, networks, and communication skills.*

# 1. Introduction

The most important condition for the growth and development of societies is maximum employment; such that the workforce is a resource for success, and if not utilized correctly and appropriately, it will be detrimental instead of beneficial. Moreover, the lack of access for women, as half of society's human potential, to suitable jobs and the absence of career advancement leads to the stagnation of organizations and societies (Meier et al., 2021). Women make up half of society's members, and excluding them in all cases means omitting half of the society's capabilities, and not employing them in any area is tantamount to ignoring half of the existing potential. Therefore, one of the topics discussed in the field of development is the role and participation of women, as half of any society's population, in the process of development and progress of countries, and accordingly, women's participation in society is considered one of the indicators of society's growth and development (Shakrifard et al., 2023). Today, considering that various organizations, including sports organizations, are facing fundamental transformations in areas such as changing leadership styles, development of communications, and expansion of innovations, women, with their level of knowledge, abilities, attitudes, and potential capacities, can pave the way for transformation, but studies indicate a very scant presence of women in the field of sports management (Yenilmez, 2021). Sports organizations, like non-sports organizations, are subject to fundamental national and international changes and transformations and are grappling with specific issues. Planning in sports organizations ensures that the objectives of all activities and collective efforts are defined, and the methods of achieving them are also planned, one of the suitable programs in this regard being the utilization of female managers (Pate et al., 2023).

Women, as a vast and potential workforce, have caught the attention of today's managers, and organizations also need some special skills of women in management to increase competitiveness and agility, but there are still inequalities at management levels, and women have a small share in being selected for high-level organizational management (Swanson et al., 2020). Women's participation as a workforce has rapidly increased globally over the past decades. However, female managers are in the minority in European Union countries, with the average being between 20 to 30 percent. In Europe, only one in every five elite coaches is a woman, and only 8 percent of sports federation heads are women (Movafagh et al., 2022). In Iran, women have traditionally been employed in lower job positions, an example of this being in the country's sports federations, where women serve as vice presidents of federations and rarely had responsibilities as line managers. Therefore, female managers are less involved in line duties in the organization, and based on this, the patriarchal culture, prevalent norms in society, and the social attitude towards women's sports, limited entrepreneurial women's connections with associations and related guilds, and women's limited social participation in sports are among the cultural and social reasons related to the scant presence of women in national and international sports assemblies (Shakrifard et al., 2023). One interpretation for this situation and the lesser presence of women in managerial positions is the existence of gender stereotypes about women that conflict with stereotypes of management and leadership. Studies indicate that the mental image of a successful manager aligns more with masculine traits than feminine ones and is more in harmony with masculine gender stereotypes. Therefore, not only are most high-level managers men, but good management is also perceived as masculine (Morris et al., 2019).

Today, despite political, economic, social, and cultural interventions, women are still marginalized in management and leadership positions, and masculinity is considered a global and natural standard for judging success in high-level leadership (Rowe & Silva, 2023). The weak presence of women in sports management positions is completely at odds with the increasing growth of girls and women as athletes and sports elites over the past decades (Thomson et al., 2023). Sometimes, women's access to high ranks is considered difficult and unbearable because the prevailing notion is that women should be on the sidelines and not at the forefront, but examining the situation of women in different societies has become a serious matter, and their presence in forming institutions and organizations defending women's rights indicates that to achieve success, it is necessary to utilize women's capabilities, especially in managing some institutions and organizations (Burton, 2015). Women's experiences in the workplace qualitatively differ from men's experiences, and discrimination against women manifests in various forms, including wage gaps, lack of access to social networks, and shortage of promotion opportunities (Fisher, 2018). Access to sports management positions not only empowers women to face discriminations such as unequal hiring standards, unequal wages, unequal professional training opportunities, unequal access to

production resources, and unequal job promotion opportunities but also increases their confidence, acquires an independent identity, improves their status, and promotes social growth, benefiting society from their advantages (Weizman et al., 2023).

Gender equality is so important that the World Health Organization dedicated the third goal of the Millennium Development in 2000 and the fifth goal of Sustainable Development in 2015 to promoting gender equality and empowering women, obliging countries to implement measures to reduce gender inequality (Brown et al., 2016). According to the statistics of the Deputy of Women's Sports Development in 2015, the employment and management situation of women in the Ministry of Sports and Youth and its subsidiary organizations indicates numerous obstacles and limitations for women. For example, out of 7659 employees working in the headquarters and provincial sections of the Ministry of Sports and Youth, only 27 percent, equivalent to 2086 employees, are women; women have only managed to hold two federation presidency positions among 45 active federations in the women's section and have only won 41 presidency positions among 1451 active provincial sports associations; among 92 deputy director-generals in the provinces, only 7 positions were allocated to them, and out of 434 heads of sports and youth county offices, only 3 positions were allocated to them; they had no share among the 31 director-general positions of sports and youth in the provinces, and out of a total of 454 specialized women's sports positions in the provinces, 258 positions are vacant (Monazami et al., 2017).

Welch, Siegele, and Hardin (2021) in a study titled "Two Fists to the Glass Ceiling: Experiences and Occupational Challenges of Minority Ethnic Women in Sports Management" concluded that masculine gender stereotypes exist in sports organizations, and the current research offered solutions for improving social justice, removing barriers, and eliminating negative stereotypical behaviors against female sports managers. These women faced three issues, including intersectional challenges, competency questions, and professional support, and had to continually prove themselves and fight the related challenges (Welch et al., 2021).

Jafari, ShaririFar, and Alam (2020) in their research titled "Role Playing of Women in Sports Management with a Futurology Approach" concluded that the general framework of futurology in women's sports management consists of four layers: future opportunity finding, bottleneck analysis, future-oriented pathway, and

implementation and review, where each layer had separate outputs for topics, key factors, roadmap, and performance, respectively. Furthermore, a future-oriented model based on actions and considerations necessary for improving women's position in the country's sports management was drawn at five levels: challenge, capability, strategy, performance, and outcome. Therefore, the future role of women in sports management is influenced by both internal and external factors and streams within the sports system, and this framework provides a holistic, systemic, and long-term view on women's management in sports, aiming to guide managers in longer time horizons and broader implementation areas (Jafari et al., 2020).

Nayyeri (2020) in a study titled "Antecedents of Gender Stereotypical Attitudes Towards Women in Management Positions" concluded that 23 concepts in 11 categories were identified, including women's lower inclination to take on management positions, stereotypical definition of a good manager, dominance of male power in organizations, women's potential exposure to sexual harassment, double-duty syndrome, lack of social capital for women, senior managers' stereotypical attitudes, dominance of feminine-relational and masculine-agency traits, the stereotype of man as breadwinner-woman as homemaker, industrial male-service female job stereotypes, and observed performance weaknesses in women (Nayyeri, 2020).

Ashouri, Seted Ameri, and Moharramzadeh (2020) in their research titled "Developing a Model of Professional Competencies for Women Managers with an Emphasis on Proactive Change Management in the Ministry of Sports and Youth" concluded that 67 components in 12 factors were identified, including managerial and leadership competencies, professional competencies, political competencies, communicational competencies, operational competencies, perceptual competencies, psychological competencies, ideological competencies, ethical competencies, cultural-social competencies, personal traits, and decision-making and behavioral competencies (Ashouri et al., 2020).

Monazami et al. (2017) in a study titled "Modeling Factors Affecting the Managerial Advancement of Women in Iranian Sports" concluded that effective factors included organizational, cultural, professional, family, and personality factors, and the drawn model had a suitable fit (Monazami et al., 2017).

Lovelin and Hanold (2014) in a research titled "Perceptions of Women Sports Leaders on Management and Leadership: Skills and Attitudes for Success" concluded that

to increase the presence of women in managerial and decision-making positions in companies and sports organizations, it is necessary for women to undergo targeted management and leadership training (Lovelin & Hanold, 2014).

At the beginning of the third millennium, the world of sports is experiencing a new era and witnessing rapid and extensive transformations across the globe in all dimensions of sports (Ghiabi et al., 2023). Sports, separate from the world of business, can have direct and positive impacts on development, and today, sports are one of the most important and vital factors in economic, social, national, regional, and global development (Heydari Rad et al., 2023). An important issue worldwide is that women are more concerned about their advancement than ever before, and while the current era offers more opportunities for their advancement compared to the past, an examination of their career paths shows that most of them experience a deviation from the growth path. Most women who want to be promoted to high-level jobs and are on the path to success face gender-related factors that cause them to deviate from the path of success. Moreover, utilizing women's experiences and competencies and ensuring that women also have equal and fair opportunities to impact important sports decisions; the topic of women's managerial positions in sports assemblies is of great importance. Based on this and because most research conducted in the country has focused on the barriers and limitations to women's advancement to managerial positions without any research explaining the managerial position of women in national and international sports assemblies, examining it can have many practical implications for the Minister of Sports and other officials and stakeholders. The status and position of women in the management system face numerous challenges and problems. Therefore, the present research was conducted with the aim of explaining the managerial position of women in sports assemblies at the national and international levels.

## 2. Methods and Materials

### 2.1. Study Design and Participants

This study was applied in terms of its objective and mixed (qualitative and quantitative) in terms of its implementation method. The qualitative part of this study's population consisted of sports experts, professors, and high-ranking sports managers, from whom 16 individuals were selected as the sample through purposive sampling based on the principle of theoretical saturation. In this method, the sample size cannot be determined before the research starts; rather, the sample size is determined during the research, and sampling and research on them continue until new samples do not add any findings to those of the previous samples. The qualitative samples always consist of informed individuals who have extensive experience in managerial fields and sports records, making them reliable sources of managerial information in the field of women's management in sports assemblies. These individuals, known for their knowledge, speak about their roles and responsibilities in various organizational sections more than others. Additionally, these individuals are well-known theoretically and can provide access to one or more important social networks. In other words, these informed individuals are knowledgeable and intelligent social actors who excel in the research field. In purposive sampling, samples are selected after examining the criteria of interest to researchers and if they meet the conditions for entering the study. The quantitative part of this study's population included sports experts, athletes, professors, and high-ranking sports managers, from whom 141 individuals were selected as the sample through random sampling based on Cochran's formula. In random sampling, a list of all sports experts, athletes, professors, and high-ranking sports managers was prepared, each was assigned a code, and then some of them were randomly selected as the sample.

### 2.2. Measures

### 2.2.1. Qualitative Part

The research tool in the qualitative part was semi-structured interviews. In such interviews, the researcher can place their ideas in any verbal guise they choose and ask their questions in any phrase they wish, while the interviewee can also respond in any form and words they prefer. Experts freely expressed their personal experiences and opinions during the interview, and the interviewer extracted and recorded meaningful statements for analysis beyond these expressions. The interviewer in the interview attempts to observe and analyze the hidden content of the interview. The place and time of the interview were determined in coordination with the participants or interviewees. The total interview time with all experts lasted 873 minutes, ranging from 39 to 64 minutes. The validity of the interviews was confirmed by triangulation, and their reliability was obtained using the agreement coefficient method, which resulted in 0.80. It's worth mentioning that the interview questions with experts included 8 items as follows:

How is the model of women's management system in sports assemblies formed?

What are the components of the women's management system model in sports assemblies in the country?

Under what conditions will the model of the women's management system in sports assemblies be a successful model? What are the accelerators and inhibitors?

What environments are needed for the success of the women's management system model in sports assemblies in the country?

What will be the reason for the success of the women's management system model in sports assemblies in the country?

What are the best strategies and tactics for the success of the women's management system model in sports assemblies in the country?

What are the outcomes and implications of the success or failure of the women's management system model in sports assemblies for the country?

Does the women's management system model in sports assemblies in the country have credibility?

### 2.2.2. Quantitative Part

Additionally, the research tool in the quantitative part was a researcher-made questionnaire designed by the present research's researchers based on the semi-structured interviews. A questionnaire is a research tool consisting of a series of questions for collecting information from respondents, and the responses to the questionnaire can be designed in open or closed format, with this study using the closed method. The researcher-made questionnaire on the managerial position of women in national and international sports assemblies had 54 questions and 10 components including identity formation in managerial spaces, division of labor capability, overcoming gendered spaces, effective control, program orientation, field management and leadership, social support for women's management, management practice, organizational efficiency, networks, and communication skills; with each of the three components overcoming gendered spaces, management practice, and networks and communication skills having 4 questions and the other seven components each having 6 questions. A five-point Likert scale from one to five was used to respond to each question, and the score of each component was calculated by summing the scores of the questions for that component. The face validity of the questionnaire was confirmed by experts and specialists, and its reliability was obtained using Cronbach's alpha method for all components, which was higher than 0.70.

### 2.3. Data Analysis

The research process involved identifying and selecting qualitative sample members, designing questions for interviews with them, and conducting the interviews at times and locations coordinated with them. In addition to noting important content, the interviews were recorded, and after several reviews, the researcher transcribed them and then conducted the analysis based on the recorded interview texts. Sampling from experts and interviewing them continued until the research reached what is termed saturation. After completing the interviews and coding their content, a researcher-made questionnaire on the managerial position of women in national and international sports assemblies was designed. This questionnaire was completed by the quantitative sample members, who were thanked for their participation in the research, similar to the qualitative sample members. In this study, data from both the qualitative and quantitative parts were analyzed using coding and exploratory factor analysis methods, respectively.

## 3. Findings and Results

In this study, 16 sports experts, professors, and high-ranking sports managers were interviewed, and 141 sports experts, athletes, professors, and high-ranking sports managers responded to the researcher-made questionnaire. The demographic characteristics of the interviewees in the qualitative part are presented in Table 1.

**Table 1**

*Demographic Characteristics of Qualitative Interviewees*

| Code.Number | Employment Status | Organizational Position | Age | Education |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Employed | National Youth Organization | 42 | PhD |
| 2 | Studying | Islamic Azad University | 35 | PhD Student |
| 3 | Employed | Ministry of Sports and Youth | 38 | PhD |
| 4 | Employed | University of Tehran | 44 | Master's |
| 5 | Employed | Shahid Beheshti University | 42 | Master's |

| 6 | Employed | Wrestling Federation | 46 | PhD |
| 7 | Employed | Islamic Azad University | 39 | Bachelor's |
| 8 | Employed | Local Sports Association | 28 | PhD Student |
| 9 | Studying | National Youth Organization | 32 | PhD |
| 10 | Employed | Ministry of Sports and Youth | 49 | Master's |
| 11 | Employed | Volleyball Federation | 43 | PhD |
| 12 | Employed | National Olympic Committee | 57 | Master's |
| 13 | Studying | Islamic Azad University | 39 | Bachelor's |
| 14 | Employed | Department of Sports and Youth | 36 | PhD |
| 15 | Retired | Tehran Football Association | 63 | Master's |
| 16 | Studying | Ministry of Sports and Youth | 32 | PhD |

The Table 1 displays the demographic characteristics of the interviewees. The demographic characteristics of the respondents to the researcher-made questionnaire in the quantitative part are presented in Table 2.

**Table 2**

*Demographic Characteristics of Respondents to the Researcher-Made Questionnaire in the Quantitative Part*

| Variable | Value | Frequency | Percentage (%) |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Gender | Male | 31 | 21.99 |
| | Female | 110 | 78.01 |
| Age (Years) | 25-34 | 12 | 8.51 |
| | 35-44 | 27 | 19.15 |
| | 45-54 | 71 | 50.35 |
| | 55-64 | 29 | 20.57 |
| | 65-74 | 2 | 1.42 |
| Job Position | Public Sector Employees | 11 | 7.80 |
| | Private Sector Employees | 27 | 19.15 |
| | Professional Athletes | 53 | 37.59 |
| | Sports Managers | 44 | 31.21 |
| | Non-Sports Managers | 6 | 4.25 |
| Work Experience (Years) | <5 | 51 | 36.17 |
| | 5-10 | 58 | 41.13 |
| | 10-15 | 16 | 11.35 |
| | >15 | 16 | 11.35 |

The demographic characteristics of the respondents to the researcher-made questionnaire are visible in Table 2. The coding of the managerial position of women in national and international sports assemblies is presented in Table 3.

**Table 3**

*Coding of Women's Managerial Position in National and International Sports Assemblies*

| Category | Subcategory | Number of Concepts |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Identity Formation in Managerial Spaces (3 subcategories and 6 concepts) | Reviewing Gender Stereotypes | 2 |
| | Belief in Impactful Identities | 2 |
| | Acceptance of New Identities | 2 |
| Ability to Divide Labor (3 subcategories and 6 concepts) | Organizing Employees Based on Competency | 2 |
| | Allocation of Positions in Work Areas | 2 |
| | Recruitment | 2 |
| Overcoming Gendered Spaces (2 subcategories and 4 concepts) | Elimination of Male Management Schemas | 2 |

| | Stopping the Representation of Gender Stereotypes in Media | 2 |
|---|---|---|
| Effective Control (3 subcategories and 6 concepts) | Personnel Control | 2 |
| | Process Control | 2 |
| | Organizational Control | 2 |
| Program Orientation (3 subcategories and 6 concepts) | Continuous Planning | 2 |
| | Visioning | 2 |
| | Short-term Goal Setting | 2 |
| Field Management and Leadership (3 subcategories and 6 concepts) | Team Building | 2 |
| | Participatory and Effective Presence | 2 |
| | Decision Making and Policy Making | 2 |
| Garnering Social Support for Women's Management (3 subcategories and 6 concepts) | Culture Building for Women's Management | 2 |
| | Non-Obstruction in Women's Management | 2 |
| | Acceptance of Women's Capabilities by Colleagues | 2 |
| Management Practice (2 subcategories and 4 concepts) | Managing Home and Family | 2 |
| | Role Playing | 2 |
| Organizational Efficiency (3 subcategories and 6 concepts) | Respect for Organizational Values | 2 |
| | Alignment of Female Managers with Society | 2 |
| | Social Responsibility | 2 |
| Networks and Communication Skills (2 subcategories and 4 concepts) | Inter-Organizational Relationships | 2 |
| | Interaction and Cooperation with Male Managers | 2 |

In Table 3, the coding of the managerial position of women in national and international sports assemblies is visible, consisting of 54 concepts in 27 subcategories and 10 categories including identity formation in managerial spaces, division of labor capability, overcoming gendered spaces, effective control, program orientation, field management and leadership, social support for women's management, management practice, organizational efficiency, networks, and communication skills. The exploratory factor analysis of the managerial position of women in national and international sports assemblies is presented in Table 4.

**Table 4**

*Exploratory Factor Analysis of Women's Managerial Position in National and International Sports Assemblies*

| Factor | Components | Items | Standard Coefficient | Factor Loading | Critical Ratio | p | Cronbach's Alpha |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Identity Formation in Managerial Spaces | 3 | 6 | 0.83 | 0.78 | 3.96 | 0.000 | 0.73 |
| Ability to Divide Labor | 3 | 6 | 0.85 | 0.83 | 4.02 | 0.000 | 0.77 |
| Overcoming Gendered Spaces | 2 | 4 | 0.97 | 0.97 | 4.25 | 0.000 | 0.91 |
| Effective Control | 3 | 6 | 0.95 | 0.95 | 4.16 | 0.000 | 0.86 |
| Program Orientation | 3 | 6 | 0.17 | 0.18 | 2.19 | 0.028 | 0.83 |
| Field Management and Leadership | 3 | 6 | 0.57 | 0.61 | 2.04 | 0.041 | 0.75 |
| Garnering Social Support for Women's Management | 3 | 6 | 0.45 | 0.45 | 3.51 | 0.000 | 0.83 |
| Management Practice | 2 | 4 | 0.44 | 0.42 | 3.55 | 0.000 | 0.76 |
| Organizational Efficiency | 3 | 6 | 0.30 | 0.35 | 3.13 | 0.002 | 0.81 |
| Networks and Communication Skills | 2 | 4 | 0.54 | 0.13 | 2.20 | 0.027 | 0.84 |

The Table 4 shows the exploratory factor analysis of the managerial position of women in national and international sports assemblies, where each of the 27 observed variables (components) had a positive standardized factor loading and a critical ratio greater than 1.96 with each of the 10 latent constructs (factors), thus their validity was confirmed, and their reliability was calculated using Cronbach's alpha method to be higher than 0.70. Additionally, the model of women's managerial position in sports assemblies at the national and international levels had a direct and significant effect on all 10 constructs. Therefore, the standard coefficient status of the model of women's managerial

position in sports assemblies at the national and international levels is presented in Figure 1. Notably, the goodness of fit index (GFI) was 0.76, the adjusted goodness of fit index (AGFI) was 0.83, the Tucker-Lewis index (TLI) was 0.79, the comparative fit index (CFI) was 0.76, and the incremental fit index (IFI) was 0.85, all indicative of a suitable model fit because they were greater than 0.70; the root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA) was 0.07 because it was less than 0.10, and the chi-square to degrees of freedom ratio (CMIN/df) was 2.09 because it was less than 3.00, indicating a suitable model fit.

**Figure 1**

*Study Model with Standard Coefficients*
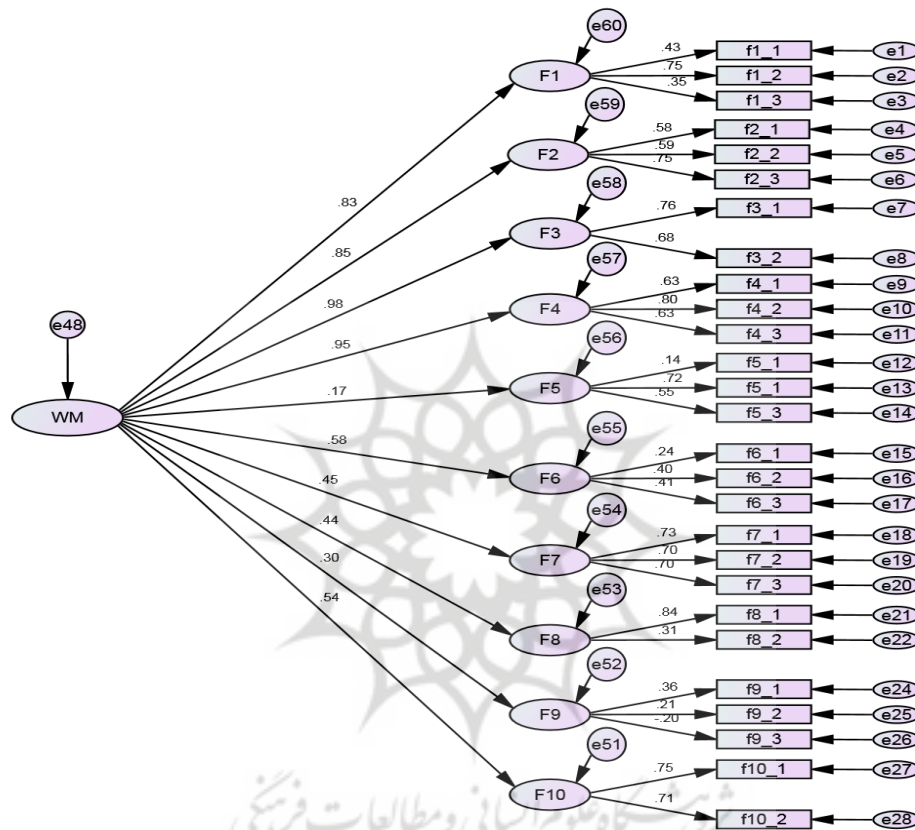


## 4. Discussion and Conclusion

Today's society, with its progress in equality and combating gender stereotypes and eliminating outdated patriarchal patterns, has created more opportunities than ever for women's entry into public and managerial roles. However, many women still are not seen in managerial positions in sports assemblies at the national and international levels. The entry of women into higher organizational ranks has brought many issues, and despite the increasing number of women in the workforce, this growth has not been noticeable in managerial positions, and there is still a need for progress in the area of women's managerial position in sports assemblies at the national and international levels. Therefore, this research was conducted with the aim of explaining the managerial position of women in sports assemblies at the national and international levels.

The findings of the current study in the qualitative part showed that the managerial position of women in sports assemblies at the national and international levels consists of 54 concepts in 27 subcategories and 10 categories. Moreover, the quantitative findings showed that each of the 27 observed variables had a positive standardized factor loading and a critical ratio greater than 1.96 with each of the 10 latent constructs, thus their validity was confirmed, and their reliability was calculated using Cronbach's alpha method to be higher than 0.70. Additionally, the model of women's managerial position in sports assemblies at the

national and international levels had a direct and significant effect on all 10 constructs.

The findings of this research are in line with the findings of previous studies (Ashouri et al., 2020; Jafari et al., 2020; Lovelin & Hanold, 2014; Monazami et al., 2017; Nayyeri, 2020; Welch et al., 2021). It can be said that undoubtedly, women's educational status plays a significant role in employment and improving their social and job positions, and in recent years, the share of highly educated women in employment in Iran has significantly increased; to the extent that in recent years, the number of university girls has far exceeded that of boys. It is worth mentioning that despite the increase in girls' and women's education levels in society, their job positions have not experienced any particular transformation, and the situation in management is even more unsatisfactory. Theoretical literature and previous research acknowledge that future management needs to employ women's potential in various managements more than ever, as utilizing this immense capacity will lead to increased widespread structural transformations in society. The most basic reason for women's presence in management should be the issue of justice in society, as it is far from justice for women, despite their high managerial capabilities, to have a small and insignificant share in management. Additionally, for today's organizations to be successful, it is necessary to usefully and effectively utilize all specialties and capabilities, a significant portion of which exists in women. Women in sports management, like other areas, do not have a satisfactory status and need their managerial share in sports and sports management to increase. Women's entry into sports management will lead to desirable outcomes, allowing for the utilization of the potential of half of the society's members and moving towards equality and empowerment. Today, with women's entry into the public sphere, the conditions for their entry into managerial positions have been provided, and management views have experienced a paradigm shift with this transformation, and gender-based management theories have entered the scientific management fields. Based on this and considering the different social positions of women in many countries worldwide, employing these theories has been challenging for all societies, and the need to present indigenous models to explain the management system of women in different societies has been felt more than ever.

Although some theories exist to explain the managerial position of women, these theoretical approaches alone cannot explain the status and position of women in sports management. Therefore, it is necessary for those involved in women's issues in management to develop theoretical discussions in this area, as they have the experience and knowledge in this field and can propose new theories. The theory-building process in this research was based on combining various categories to identify ten main categories, which can be masterfully integrated into a theory. This theory is important for several reasons. First, such components do not exist in any of the existing theoretical literature, and second, this theory will be effective for describing and explaining the managerial position of women in sports assemblies in Iranian society. Additionally, this theory can be compared with the most general management theories at a simple and preliminary level. All management theories contain several general principles including planning, organizing, leading, and controlling, all of which exist in the extracted theory. In this context, field management and leadership and program orientation are among the most important strategies for the position of women's management system in sports assemblies, which can be said to be the same as leadership and planning in management, acknowledged by great theorists.

Like any study, this research faced common limitations such as a limited research population, a small sample size, etc. Another significant limitation is the scant research background on the managerial position of women in national and international sports assemblies, which, if looked at from another angle, can be considered a strength of this research, and its results can be unique and new. Given the limitations, further research on the managerial position of women in sports assemblies is recommended to future researchers and scholars. Additionally, examining the model of women's managerial position in sports assemblies from the perspective of other experts and specialists and norming it based on the views of other groups is suggested. Based on the results of this research, conditions can be created to realize the identified subcategories and categories to improve the managerial position of women in sports assemblies at the national and international levels. Moreover, the results of this study have many practical implications for the Ministry of Sports, specialists, officials, and sports planners, who can take effective steps to improve the managerial position of women in sports assemblies and provide a competitive advantage for women's sports organizations.

**Authors' Contributions**

In this study, authors had different contributions and roles; the first author was responsible for collecting data for both the qualitative and quantitative parts, and the second and third authors were responsible for data analysis and writing the article.

## 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

All ethical standards were explained and adhered to for both qualitative and quantitative sample members.

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