



Implementation of Blue Ocean Strategy in Gymnastics Clubs

Mohammad Khalili Khezrabadi ^{1*}, Mohammad Kashef ², Mehrdad Moharramzadeh ³

1. PhD Student in Motor Behavior, Department of Motor Behavior and Sport Management, Faculty of Sport Sciences, Urmia International Campus University, Urmia, Iran
2. Professor of Sport Management, Department of Movement Behavior and Sport Management, Faculty of Sport Sciences, Urmia University, Urmia, Iran
3. Professor of Sport Management, Department of Sport Management, Faculty of Educational Sciences and Psychology, University of Mohaghegh Ardabili, Ardabil, Iran

Corresponding Author Email: mohammadkhalili.kh22@gmail.com



Copyright ©The authors

Publisher: [University of Kurdistan, Sanandaj, Iran](#)

This is an open access article under the CC BY-NC 4.0 License (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0>)

DOI: [10.22034/sms.2024.140589.1293](https://doi.org/10.22034/sms.2024.140589.1293)

ABSTRACT

Received: 26.01.2024
Revised: 10.11.2024
Accepted: 16.11.2024
Available online: 16.11.2024

Keywords:

Blue Ocean, gymnastics, Grounded Theory, Marketing

According to the new attitude in the management of gymnastics clubs, in the present research, an attempt has been made to design the implementation model of the blue ocean strategy in gymnastics clubs. This research was a qualitative study. The participants in the research were university experts who, according to the nature of the research, were conducted with 10 people in a snowball manner with semi-structured interviews until theoretical saturation was reached. In order to ensure the reliability and validity of the research, intra-subject agreement and expert opinions were used and their opinions were revised. To form the theory, Strauss and Corbin's method was used in the form of three stages of open, central and selective coding, and by using blue ocean strategy implementation tools such as the strategy canvas, the four action framework, etc., in order to present the ocean strategy implementation model. The final concept was designed in the form of the foundation's data theory conceptual model consisting of the central category, causal conditions, contextual factors, intervening conditions, strategies and consequences. Also, a 5-step model for implementing the blue ocean strategy in gymnastics clubs was presented, and finally, this model was combined with the conceptual model of the foundation's data theory and the final model was obtained. In order to identify the right path to move towards the blue ocean, strategies of creation, increase, decrease and elimination were used, and finally, the implementation of the strategy resulted in the results of the research.

How to Cite This Article:

Khalili Khezrabadi, M., Kashef, M., & Moharramzadeh, M. (2025). Implementation of Blue Ocean Strategy in Gymnastics Clubs. *Journal of Sport Marketing Studies*, 6 (1): 45-60. [10.22034/sms.2024.140589.1293](https://doi.org/10.22034/sms.2024.140589.1293)

1. INTRODUCTION

Today, in the world of industry and business, two completely distinct spaces have formed: blue oceans and red oceans. Red ocean defines all industries that currently have a specific market and are trying to outpace others in traditional markets in order to gain a greater share of demand. In this area, the scope of the industry is predefined and specified. In such an environment, every business tries to somehow eliminate competitors and gain their share of demand. When the market space becomes turbulent, the level of profitability and growth forecast will be low. It is in these conditions that the conversion of product into commodity takes place and overtaking between companies creates a red ocean (Blue Ocean Strategy, 2020). Also, with the increase in competitors within an industry, the possibility of growth and profitability for all actors in that industry decreases significantly (Shahmari, 2010 and Mohammadi, & Salem Hasan, 2024).

Blue ocean strategy invites organizations to emerge from the bloody ocean of competition into a space where competition is meaningless by creating unknown markets. Instead of segmenting current demand or existing value, which is usually decreasing, this approach emphasizes the creation and growth of demand and escaping competition and not following the example of competitors and turning to value creation (Askariyan, 2014). The logic of the new strategy is based on a fundamental argument that seeks to create value both for customers of products and services and for the company itself. By applying these principles, tools and designed frameworks, innovation becomes a continuous and systematic activity that involves the participation of all employees (Awladthani, 2023). Blue ocean is a well-established approach to creating businesses where competition in traditional markets becomes meaningless and where the focus is on creating value-added innovation and entering new areas (Faezirad et al., 2013). New thinking has led companies offering similar products to adopt the concept of blue ocean strategy, in which companies have more freedom in terms of market space and

move towards their goals without spending time competing with competitors (Hussein, 2020). This trend is that companies follow blue ocean strategy to trivialize competition and instead deliver new value through new markets and achieve a unique competitive advantage (Sadiq et al., 2021). As a result, blue ocean strategy seeks to create new demand in the market by focusing on creative initiatives (Markopoulos et al., 2020).

Blue Ocean Strategy uses two tools: 1 - Strategy Canvas: which is a framework for diagnosis and operations and is used to build blue ocean strategies. Its purpose is to show the current state of the industry in the known market space. This display allows one to know where the competition is currently going and what factors the industry is competing on in the current situation. 2 - Four-Action Framework: In order to reconstruct the valuable elements desired by the buyer or applicant and draw a new value curve, this framework is introduced, which helps the company achieve higher value at lower cost by using four actions: reduction, increase, creation, and elimination (Kim & Mauborgne, 2005). In the current era, with the emergence of new and innovative economies and industries in the economic field of societies and the need to access more profit and income from these industries, experts and pioneers in this field have been prompted to introduce new plans and strategies for these industries. The sports industry is also one of these industries that has several sub-categories. One of these sub-categories is related to clubs and club management, which has been able to open a special place for itself in recent years, but the lack of a specific marketing strategy in sports that is on par with the strategies related to other industries has opened the field for the localization of strategies of other industries in sports or the creation and development of new strategies. It seems that sports organizations, like non-sports organizations, are exposed to environmental and global changes and developments and are struggling with their own special issues. Therefore, to survive and thrive in the

global competition arena, they need a high-performance organization, and today there will be high-performance organizations that can use strategic management (Priilaid, 2020). In the meantime, many sports organizations have prepared the required strategy according to their mission and have achieved the set goal with minimal energy and resources by implementing it. Therefore, given that the future environment is a strategic environment and such an environment is volatile, uncertain, complex and ambiguous, it is necessary to use strategic thinking as a fundamental principle in order to adapt and adapt and generally respond. One of the basic and influential sports disciplines in the sports performance of athletes and also in the development of sustainable sports in advanced societies is the sport of gymnastics, which plays an irreplaceable role in the development of national championship sports. Accordingly, having a strategic vision and attitude towards creating and developing the necessary platforms for practicing this sport is necessary and essential, to the extent that countries with a reputation in the field of sports have made and continue to make large investments in the development of spaces and sports halls dedicated to gymnastics and use various methods such as hosting competitions, producing gymnastics equipment and tools, producing educational and practical content, holding seminars and conferences and various camps, attracting athletes and art students, etc. to generate income and make material and spiritual investments.

Now, considering the progress, development, and general interest of people in gymnastics on the one hand, as well as the existence of appropriate and high capacities in this sector on the other hand, it is necessary to have an accurate and correct understanding of the current situation and to provide a principled and scientific strategy to determine the strategy of sports clubs dedicated to gymnastics in the medium and long-term plan horizon. Due to the competitiveness of the market, the customer is becoming more valuable day by day. Challenges such as intensifying competition, the continuous

increase in customer expectations, and subsequently their demand for increasing and improving the quality of products and services have caused clubs to no longer be able to effectively meet their needs and demands, and the risk of losing dissatisfied customers to competitors as well as the ultimate reduction in profits will lead to the bankruptcy of clubs (Tongtakabi, Moshkelgosh, & Mostahfezian, 2025). As mentioned, there is intense competition between sports clubs. This competition is very serious and high between clubs that provide common services and have common customers. In this regard, the challenge for gymnastics clubs is both internal (among gymnastics clubs) and external (competition with other sports clubs). As a result, competition in this field requires new methods and strategies that, while distinguishing themselves from other competitors, can also respond to the competitive environment inside and outside the club.

Applying the blue ocean strategy can be a new method for the survival, development, and promotion of the success of gymnastics clubs. Of course, the main challenge facing the managers of these sports clubs is how to implement and localize this strategy in existing clubs, and the present study tries to provide a model for implementing the blue ocean strategy in gymnastics clubs. Implementing the Blue Ocean Strategy in sports clubs, especially gymnastics, will lead to improving the overall performance of the club and preventing the emergence of a competitive environment and increasing the club's profits. Also, the lack of a suitable model for implementing the Blue Ocean Strategy with a grounded theory approach, where data is collected and coded solely based on interviews with experts and elites in gymnastics and can examine the facts, is very noticeable in sports. As a result, conducting new research on this topic seems absolutely necessary. Therefore, the present study is completely new and practical due to the presentation of a model for implementing the Blue Ocean Strategy in gymnastics clubs. Also, the present study, using grounded theory, has a

qualitative approach to the research topic and has completely creatively combined the conceptual model of grounded theory with the 5-stage model presented by the Blue Ocean Strategy.

According to the types of qualitative research, the present study is classified as a fundamental research. Considering that there are few sources and information background on the subject of the present study in the country, the grounded theory method, which is based on interviews, is used. The community of participants in this study consists of academic experts. In this study, semi-structured interviews were conducted with 10 interviewees who were selected and prioritized using the snowball method, and the interviews continued until the research data was saturated for designing the model, so that new data did not produce new added value .

In the present study, by obtaining the opinions of the research participants about the value of the findings and interpretations and judging the results, interpretations, and findings of the research in a group consisting of the research participants, as well as by using an external referee who carefully considered the research environment from outside and determined that the data supported the findings, results, and interpretations, the present study was validated and validated. The external reviewer validated the resulting codes by matching them with

2. Methodology

the interviews conducted with the interviewees, which showed that all comments were made around the writing, research method, and some coding corrections (Creswell & Miller, 2000). Also, for further validation, the intra-subject agreement method was used by two coders in the continuation of the work. For this purpose, one of the doctoral students in sports management was asked to participate as a research associate. The necessary training and methods for coding were transferred to the research associate. In each of the interviews, the codes that were similar in the opinion of the two people were identified as "agreement" and the codes that were dissimilar were identified as "disagreement". The percentage of intra-subject agreement, which is used as an indicator of the reliability of the analysis, is calculated using the following equation.

$$\text{percentage} = \frac{2 \times \text{Number of agreements}}{\text{Total number of codes}} * 100$$

If this index is greater than 0.6, the coding is considered sufficiently reliable (Bowen, 2008). For this purpose, three interviews were selected and the coding results are reported in Table 1.

Table1. Percentage of intra-subject agreement

Reliability	Disagreement	Agreement number	Encoder 2	Encoder 1	The title of the interview
0.76	9	23	28	32	First interview
0.78	11	31	42	37	Second interview
0.67	14	25	35	39	The third interview
0.74	34	79	213		Total

3. Findings of the Research

In this study, data from in-depth interviews with experts and elites, in three stages of the grounded theory process, namely open coding, axial coding, and selective coding, analysis and implementation model of the blue ocean strategy in the gymnastics club are presented and the components of the model are explained. Based on

the paradigmatic approach, 179 final concepts were extracted from a total of 313 initial codes.

These findings have been designed in the form of a grounded theory conceptual model consisting of a central category, causal conditions, contextual factors, intervening conditions, strategies, and consequences. Also, a 5-step model for

implementing the blue ocean strategy in gymnastics clubs has been presented, and the necessary tools for each stage to achieve the goals of each step have been identified and explained. Finally, this 5-step

In the axial coding stage, the concepts extracted in the open coding stage were categorized into categories. The result of this process was the identification of 34 main categories, which are listed

model has been combined with the grounded theory conceptual model and the final model has been obtained.

together with the corresponding concepts in Table 2. These categories were extracted around the axial category of "Implementing the Blue Ocean Strategy in Gymnastics Clubs.

Table 3. Axial coding

concept (open coding)	category (axial coding)
Specialty club, Suitable educational environment, Availability, V.I.P Parking, city Place	Sports venue
Profitability, income generation	Effective improvement of activity
Recruitment and registration, Audience attraction	Register
The presence of equipment, New equipment, safety, Standard, Technology, Suited to the needs of the athlete	Equipment
Employee, Manager, founder, Expert trainer, Experienced coach, referee, Sports expert	human resources
Basic sport, Rules of gymnastics, Gymnastics culture, Lack of knowledge, Sports alphabet, Basic age, Olympic sport, Interested in gymnastics	Gymnastics
Management , setting a goal , Organizing , planning , decision	Management skills
Aligning thoughts with goals , Recognizing goals , Strategic thinking , strategic Management , Fulfillment of goals and visions , Effective leadership	Strategy
Specialization , Long term training , talent search	Human resources
The impact of economic changes, The impact of social change, The impact of cultural changes , Impact of health changes	Environmental changes
Impact of legal problems , The effect of protective laws , The effect of executive letters	Laws and regulations
Individual ethics , Camp for coaches , The influence of teachers' creativity	Emphasis on human resources
Communication with other clubs, Communication with sports-related institutions, Communication with others, Communication between coach and athlete	Interactions and communications
Non-profit activities , Traditional management , Gymnastics branches that have lower priority , Low productivity times , Inefficient human resources , Used equipment , Competitors , Part of the athletes	Elimination
Overtime hours , Attention to the needs of the audience and athletes , Tuition , Educational quality , Holding competitions , Motivation and sense of competition , Advertising , Coaches meetings , Efficiency , Sports camps , connections	Increase
Cost , Human resource costs, Inefficient activities, Sports available in the club	Decrease

New educational methods , Sports products related to gymnastics , Content production , New thinking , Special training classes , Volunteer groups , Criticism and suggestion system , Room for families , Special buffet , Talent center , New branch , New products , Creating a separate dressing room for coaches and athletes	creation
The effect of fair performance evaluation	performance evaluation
The impact of people's participation	The culture of doing work
The effect of spatial constraints , The impact of the lack of specialized sports clubs , Monopoly effect , The impact of standard equipment and facilities , Fund	Limitations
The impact of sports institutions and organizations , The impact of organizations' support , The influence of sports boards	Related institutions and organizations
The impact of the cost of purchasing equipment , The impact of tuition pricing , The impact of the cost of renting a place , The impact of energy costs , Salary impact , The impact of equipment repair and maintenance costs	Club financial system
Training programs for athletes , New training , Teaching gymnastics , Coaches training , Training update , Education of families	Education
Development of movement patterns , Development of spiritual education , physical fitness , Sports champion , flexibility	The effects of gymnastics
Knowing the real status of the club , Competition , Consciousness	Club management
The influence of competitors , The influence of families , The influence of officials , The effect of advertising , The influence of the sponsor , Media influence	Environmental management
Identifying the needs of athletes , branding , becoming unique	Realizing the goals of implementing the blue ocean strategy in the club
Feedback , Supervision , selection , Education and training , risk taking , Knowledge , public relations , decision maker , Authority , Experience , responsibility , Validity , incentive , effective	Individual characteristics
Development of gymnastics , Improve management performance , Development of championship sports , Hero breeding	Improve performance
investment	Financial plan
Material capital , human resources , Social capital	Club capital
Holding competitions	Competition
The effect of valuation , The effect of meritocracy	Honouring
Gender , Age , Level of Education , Physical abilities , height , Weight	Individual characteristics
Cleanliness and hygiene of the environment , coloring , Refreshing the environment of the club , Standard bathroom , Mirrors , lighting , Coaches and athletes locker room	Learning environment
The effect of prioritizing coaches and athletes	prioritize

Selective coding

The purpose of selective coding was to analyze the placement of the identified categories in the paradigm model, so as to help the researcher in how

the categories should be placed. Accordingly, the categories are divided into six sets: main category, causal conditions, contextual conditions, intervention conditions, strategies, and

consequences. Based on the paradigm model of grounded theory, a conceptual model is presented.

Conceptual model of grounded theory

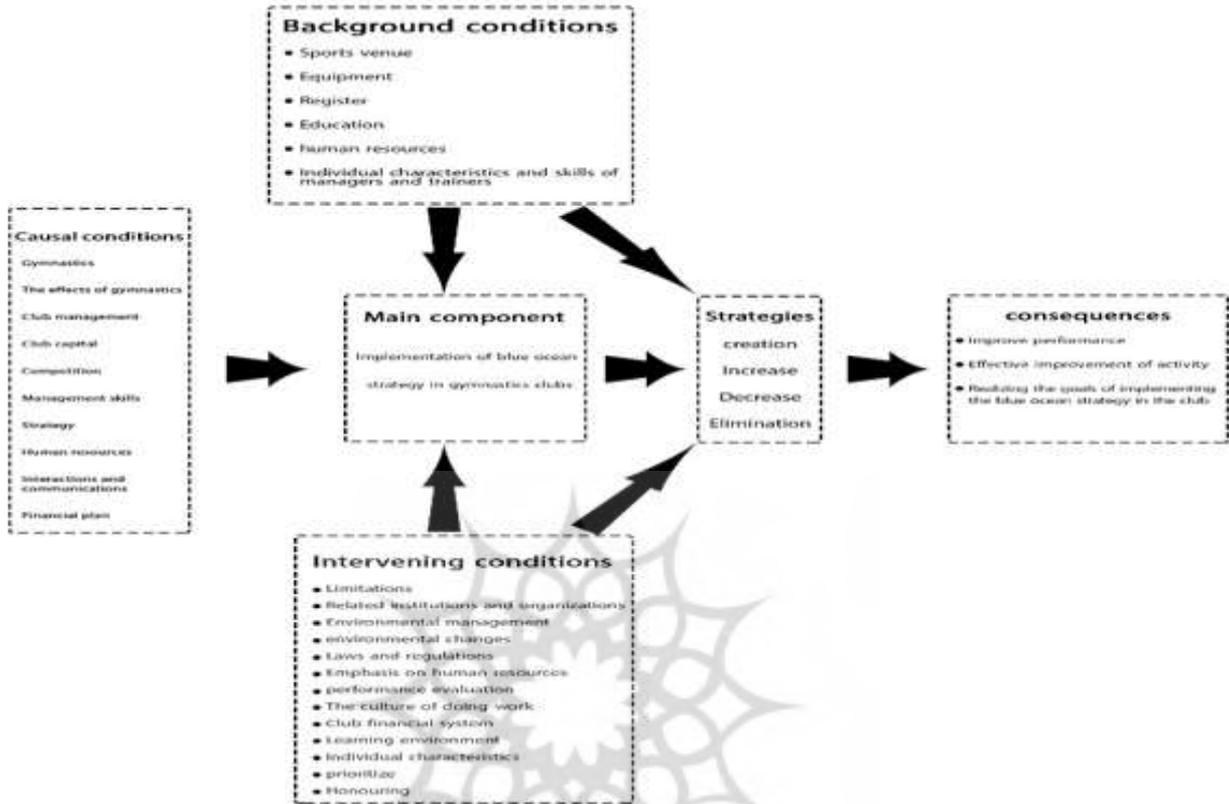


Figure 1. Conceptual Model of foundational data theory

Implementation of the blue ocean strategy:

Implementing a blue ocean strategy is based on the principle of using value innovation for its strategy, rather than following the competition. Value innovation involves creating a new value curve for

the club, which is based on fundamental changes in service characteristics, which are predicted to open up new, uncontested market space (Yunus, 2021).

Presentation of the Blue Ocean strategy implementation model in gymnastics clubs:

According to the results obtained from the present research, the 5-step process of implementing the

blue ocean strategy in gymnastics clubs is suggested:

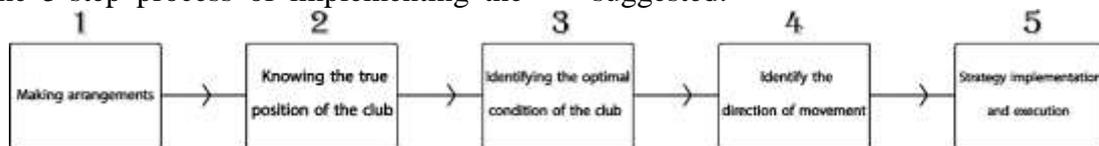


Figure 2. Blue ocean strategy implementation model in gymnastics clubs

Presenting the implementation model of blue ocean strategy in gymnastics clubs using Grounded theory:

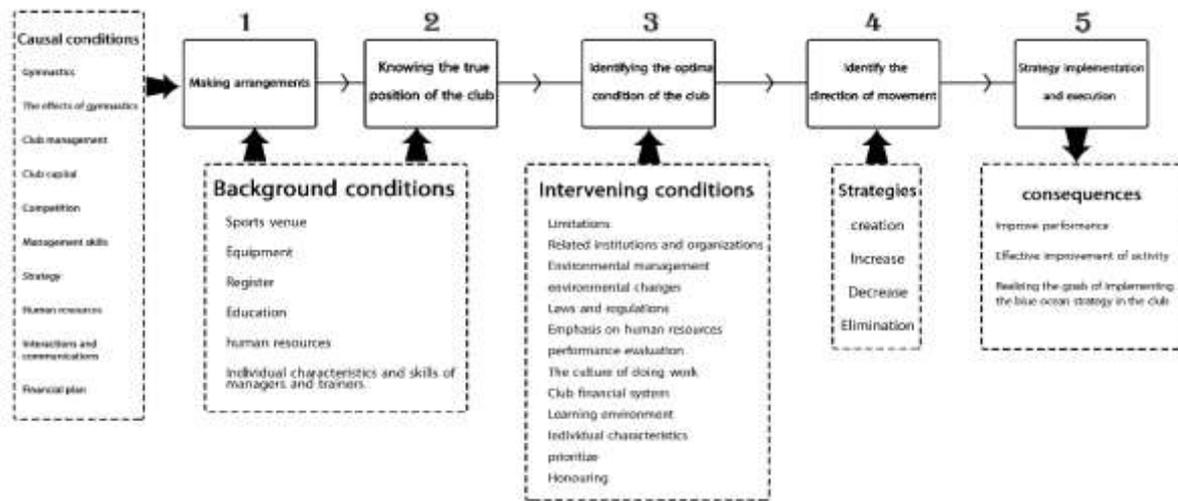


Figure 3. Blue ocean strategy implementation model in gymnastics clubs using foundational data theory

4. Discussion and Conclusion

In this study, an attempt has been made to provide a strategic tool to the managers and founders of these clubs by presenting a correct model of how to implement the blue ocean strategy in gymnastics clubs. Accordingly, using the Strauss and Corbin data-based theory, data was collected through interviews and coded in three stages, ultimately leading to the creation of a conceptual model. Based on the findings of the study, the central category is to achieve a model for implementing the blue ocean strategy in gymnastics clubs, which is influenced by identifying causes, background conditions, intervention conditions, and using four strategies: creation, increase, decrease, and elimination, which can lead to consequences such as effective improvement of activities and also the achievement of the goals of implementing the blue ocean strategy in the club. The causal conditions affecting the central category in this research are: gymnastics, the effects of gymnastics, club ownership, club capital, competition, management skills, strategy, human resources, interactions and communications, and financial plan. Understanding gymnastics, the role and effects of this sport in the physical and mental training and development of athletes are among the conditions affecting the central category. Management skills, which include goal setting, planning, organization, and decision-making, are also among the causal conditions. Akbari Emami (2014) has listed the

factor of management skills as an effective factor in implementing strategies. Vieira (2018) showed that the competencies, facilities, main services, and supplementary services of employees are key factors in the strategy of fitness clubs. The contextual conditions in this research are: sports space and location, equipment, recruitment, training, human resources, and individual characteristics and skills of managers and trainers. The suitability of the location and equipment of gymnastics clubs has a direct impact on the implementation of the blue ocean strategy and can be influential in obtaining the necessary strategies. Pir Ali et al (2014) have stated management skills, organizational culture, and technology as contextual factors in the implementation of the strategy. In this study, the intervening conditions have been divided into two main categories: outside the club (constraints, related institutions and institutions, environmental management, environmental changes, laws and regulations) and inside the club (emphasis on human resources, performance evaluation, work culture, club financial system, educational space and environment, individual characteristics, prioritization and appreciation). Pir Ali et al (2014) consider demographic changes, technological changes, market changes, and government regulations to be among the influential and interfering factors in the activities of organizations. In this study, four strategies of

creation, increase, decrease, and elimination based on the blue ocean strategy have been used. Creation strategies include: new teaching methods, gymnastics-related sports goods, content production, new thinking, special training classes, volunteer groups, criticism and suggestion system, special room for families, special buffet, talent center, new branch, new products, creating separate locker rooms for coaches and athletes. Alizadeh et al (2013) concluded in their research the strategy of using new and different products. Growth strategies include: extracurricular hours, paying attention to the needs of the audience and athletes, tuition, educational quality, holding competitions, motivation and sense of competition, advertising, coaches' meetings, productivity, sports camps, communications. Setayeh & Amin (2014) have pointed out two strategies to increase communication with the outside environment and work interaction. The reduction strategies are: inefficient activities, human resources costs, overhead costs and sports disciplines available in the club. In this regard, Alizadeh et al (2013) have pointed out two strategies to reduce labor costs and inefficient activities. Also, Setayeh & Amin (2014) have concluded a strategy to reduce side costs. The elimination strategies are: unprofitable activities, traditional management, gymnastics branches that have lower priority, low-yield times, inefficient human resources, used equipment, competitors, and some athletes. The research outcomes are in three

main categories: performance improvement (development of gymnastics, improvement of management performance, development of championship sports, champion training), effective improvement of activities (profitability and revenue generation), and achievement of the goals of implementing the blue ocean strategy in the club (identification Athletes' needs, branding, uniqueness, role modeling, talent development, sustainable sports, creating value and credibility for the club) are divided.

In order to implement the Blue Ocean Strategy, there are tools related to the development and creation of the Blue Ocean Strategy that have been used in each stage of the presented model, as appropriate to the process. In the first step, which is to provide the foundations for the implementation of the Blue Ocean Strategy in gymnastics clubs, the current and future status of the club is mapped using the "Pioneer-Emigrant-Resident Map" tool, which helps the club manager to have insight into the possibility of future growth of the club (Shyam, 2019). Residents in the present study include ordinary clubs with limited facilities and equipment. Immigrants refer to clubs that provide services beyond the average. Pioneers are clubs that provide unprecedented value. Examples of pioneer clubs are gyms and gymnastics houses in each city or province that are managed under the supervision of sports boards.

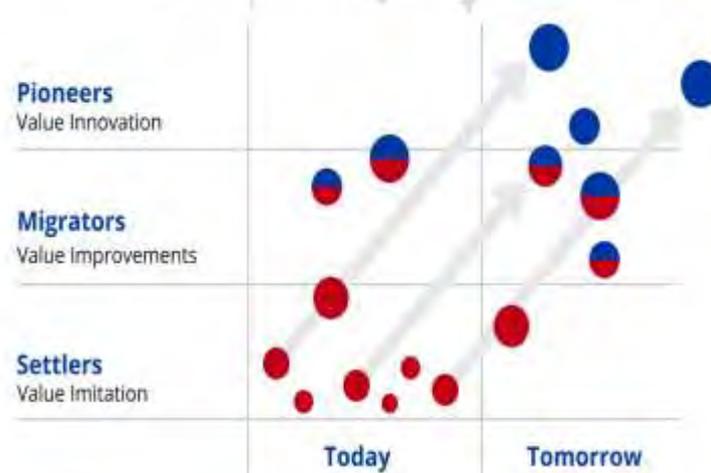


Figure 4. pioneer-migrator-settler map

According to the pattern in Figure 4, the services and features of gymnastics clubs are marked with circles. The amount of influence and importance of each of these features is directly related to the size of the circles drawn. That is, if, for example, the circle for facilities and equipment in clubs that are in the resident status will be smaller than the circle considered for pioneer clubs. The red color in this pattern indicates that this service is located within the blue ocean, and as we gradually move towards the pioneer club, these circles change color to blue. In the present study, these features are presented in 4 categories with the titles: location conditions, financial and equipment conditions, human resources conditions, and management conditions, which are known as contextual conditions in the conceptual model of grounded theory. The second stage of the process of implementing the blue ocean strategy in gymnastics

clubs is awareness of the status of existing clubs and also recognizing the real position of our own gymnastics club. The strategy canvas is a tool for understanding the current state of a club (Ellinger, 2020). The horizontal axis on the strategy canvas considers the range of factors in which a sports club competes, and the vertical axis shows the level of offering that athletes and audiences receive across all of these key competitive factors. The value curve or strategic profile is a graphic representation of a club's relative performance across its competitive factors. Based on the current study, the factors in which a sports club can compete are presented in 6 main categories in the context of grounded theory: 1- Recruitment and registration 2- Human resources (coach, referee, etc.) 3- Management 4- Training 5- Equipment and facilities 6- Space and location of the club.

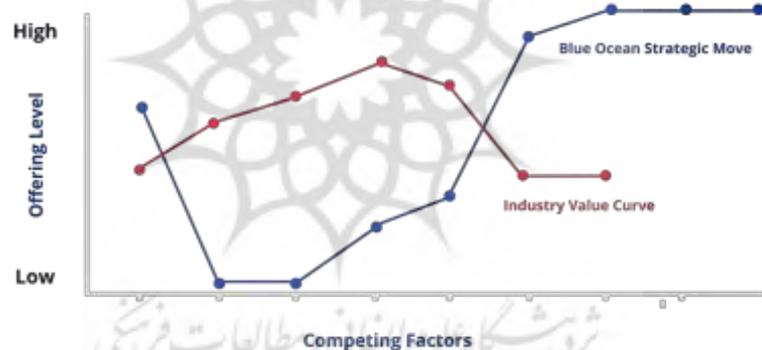


Figure 5. Strategy Canvas

The third stage is to identify the desired state of the club, which is achieved using the "buyer benefit map" tool. At this stage, using the data obtained from the intervention conditions of the grounded theory, the limitations should be overcome. Considering that the essence of the club's existence is based on its human resources, and that athletes and people present in the club are the main pillars of the club, and all management efforts are aimed at aligning the club's goals with the club's human resources, we must therefore pay special attention to the athletes present in the club who play the role of customers for the club. The impact of intervening

factors from inside and outside the club should also be seriously examined. Considering these intervening factors, the club's desired state should be identified. Accordingly, the buyer benefit map is proposed for this purpose. The buyer benefit map is used to discover pain points (limitations). Kim & Mauborgne by placing a new offer in one of the spaces of the buyer's obstacle map, club managers can clearly see whether the new idea is a different functional offer or not. A localized example of this map for a gymnastics club is given in Figure 6. The products of a sports club can be a variety of sports services that it offers to its athletes. On the same

principle, sub-categories of gymnastics can be mentioned as products of this sport in the club, for example, those interested in training in the field of artistic gymnastics or aerobic gymnastics or trampoline, etc. As a result, the club manager can examine each of these branches based on the buyer's benefit map and, according to the results obtained, create his strategic plan to reach the blue ocean. In the table in Figure 6, an example of a buyer's benefit map for the artistic gymnastics branch is drawn. According to the table, it is clear that planning based on tuition received, holding

competitions and preventing sports injuries are in line with the red ocean strategy, and in order to overcome these limitations, the club manager must have a detailed plan to achieve the blue ocean. Appropriate location of a club, offering extracurricular programs and using new tools and training in gymnastics training are new spaces for gymnastics clubs to differentiate their competitive aspects from other clubs and create a deeper blue ocean for themselves. As mentioned, this map can be drawn for all services and products that a gymnastics club can offer.

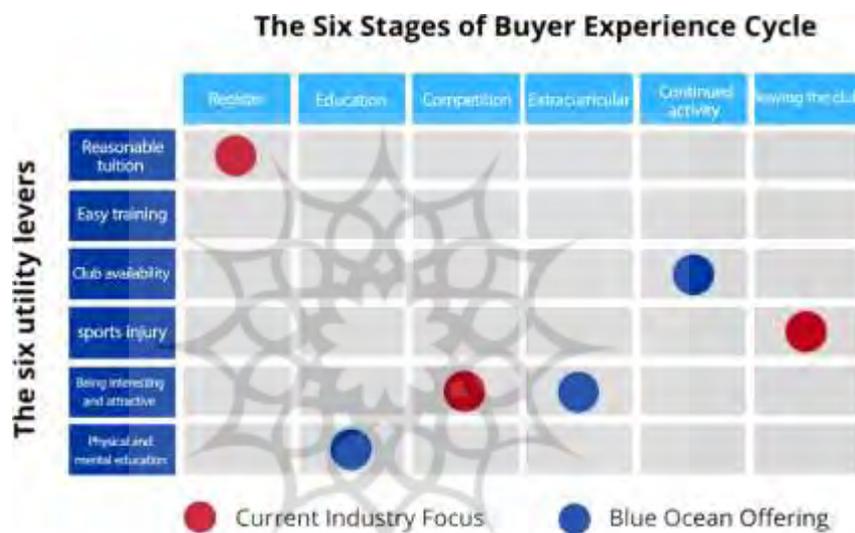


Figure 6. Buyer Utility Map

The next step in this phase is to understand who the non-customers of gymnastics clubs are and why they avoid registering and participating in club activities. Based on the blue ocean strategy, three groups of non-customers for gymnastics clubs are defined. This analytical framework helps gymnastics club managers broaden their horizons and convert latent demands into actual demand in the form of new customers and increase the size of their blue ocean (Kim & Mauborgne, 2005).

The first group of non-customers in gymnastics clubs are people who register in gymnastics clubs but, due to their circumstances, are unable to continue and be active in this field and give up their activity in gymnastics at the first opportunity. Every year, a large number of people interested in

gymnastics register in summer classes, but as soon as the three-month summer period ends, they no longer show interest in continuing the educational process and either become attracted to other sports or withdraw from sports altogether. According to the findings of the present study and considering the intervening conditions, the influence of factors within the club on the behavior of this group of non-customers is greater. Issues such as the impact of the training space and environment, the impact of the club's financial system, the impact of the club's human resources, the work culture, the individual characteristics of individuals, the club's priorities, the evaluation of individual performance, and the appreciation of each individually or together can be

factors that influence athletes' lack of continued activity in gymnastics clubs.

The second group of non-customers in gymnastics clubs are people who, due to their knowledge of the sport of gymnastics or lack of sufficient knowledge of this field, refuse to register and participate in the educational activities of gymnastics clubs. According to the research findings, the influence of factors outside the club, such as the effects of environmental management, such as the influence of families, advertising, etc., as well as the influence of factors inside the club, such as individual characteristics, can be influential in the formation of this group of non-customers.

The third group of non-customers in gymnastics clubs are people who have no knowledge of gymnastics and are not willing to register for gymnastics. These people include people who do not see themselves as eligible to register for gymnastics clubs, either intellectually, physically, or due to their age or gender. Examples of such non-customers include people with physical problems such as the disabled, people over 40 years of age, extremely obese or extremely thin people, people in need of corrective and therapeutic exercises, etc.

The fourth step is to identify the path of movement. In the fourth step, an attempt is made to

identify and select a path that will take the club from the current situation to the blue ocean. To help with this step, the Blue Ocean Strategy proposes the “Four Action Framework”. This tool helps the club manager see the opportunities ahead of him, while others only see the red ocean of competition (Awladthani, 2023). This framework helps gymnastics club managers identify possible boundaries to exit the competition and move towards the blue ocean by redesigning the boundaries of the market. This framework helps the club manager to focus on the things that they can: eliminate, reduce, increase or create. This framework is used to review the value proposition to the club’s audience and also to create a value curve. In the present study, the strategies obtained in the grounded theory model and using the four-action framework were used to design the matrix of increase, creation, reduction, and elimination, according to Table 3. In an article titled "Model of Blue Ocean Strategy Formation in Sports Clubs," Moshkelgosha (2020) recommends sports club managers to change the main strategies to use the four blue ocean strategies for clubs.

Table 3. Eliminate-Reduce-Raise-Create (ERRC) Grid

Elimination	Increase
Non-profit activities , Traditional management , Gymnastics branches that have lower priority , Low productivity times , Inefficient human resources , Used equipment , Competitors , Part of the athletes	Overtime hours , Attention to the needs of the audience and athletes , Tuition , Educational quality , Holding competitions , Motivation and sense of competition , Advertising , Coaches meetings , Efficiency , Sports camps , connections
Decrease	creation
Cost , Human resource costs , Inefficient activities , Sports available in the club	New educational methods , Sports products related to gymnastics , Content production , New thinking , Special training classes , Volunteer groups , Criticism and suggestion system , Room for families , Special buffet , Talent center , New branch , New products , Creating a separate dressing room for coaches and athletes

The fifth step is to move towards the implementation and execution of the Blue Ocean Strategy in gymnastics clubs. In this step, we must

take the chosen path towards the Blue Ocean and move. Using the concept of “fair process”, we can choose which path will lead to the Blue Ocean.

Three elements in the fair process for the Blue Ocean are defined: participation, explanation, and clarity of expectations. Participation means involving and intervening in strategic decisions that affect them, explanation and interpretation means informing and informing all people of the reasons for making the final strategic decisions. Transparency and clarity of expectations means that the club's human resources must be honestly aware of the standards by which their performance will be judged, as well as the penalties for failure and non-performance. When people clearly understand what is expected of them, they can quickly focus on implementing the strategy (Luo & Kao, 2020).

According to the results of the present study, the output of employing strategies (four-action framework) will be the consequences of grounded theory. These consequences are presented in the form of three main categories: performance improvement, effective improvement of activities, and achievement of the goals of implementing the Blue Ocean Strategy in the club. The club manager should include these categories in three sections: participation, explanation, and clarity of expectations, using the concept of fair process. For example, in order to achieve the category of performance improvement, the club manager should clearly and clearly share his expectations with athletes, coaches, and all executive staff of the club. It is also necessary that these items be done for sub-categories. Causal, contextual, and intervening conditions can affect the implementation of the Blue Ocean Strategy in gymnastics clubs, and by using appropriate strategies, including the strategy of creation, increase, decrease, and elimination, it can lead to improved performance, effective improvement of activities, and also the achievement of the goals of implementing the Blue Ocean Strategy.

Considering the consequences of this model, the following results can be presented at both macro and micro levels:

Implementing the Blue Ocean Strategy in sports clubs, including gymnastics clubs, will lead

to improved sports performance in gymnastics clubs and will develop the country's championship sport. Certainly, given the high potential and capacity of gymnastics in developing athletes' talents, if the implementation of the Blue Ocean Strategy in gymnastics clubs is realized, the number of champion athletes from gymnastics clubs to other sports will increase, and this will lead to the development of the country's championship sport. By implementing the Blue Ocean Strategy in gymnastics clubs, we will be on the path to having sustainable and systematic sports in the country. Knowing that every year a large number of students from elementary ages enter the field of gymnastics in various clubs across the country and this trend continues continuously, it doubles the need to pay attention to this process in the country's sports. Managing the process of recruiting and developing athletes from an early age, along with implementing the Blue Ocean Strategy in these clubs, will lead to the creation of sustainable sports in the country's sports. Implementing the Blue Ocean Strategy in gymnastics clubs will identify the specific needs of athletes from the very beginning of their elementary years, and on this basis, talent discovery and development programs tailored to the needs of each individual and each discipline can be implemented at a macro level (Karimi, Akbari, Bastami, & Aazami, 2025). Needs assessment, as well as efforts to eliminate the motor deficiencies and physical fitness of new trainees in gymnastics clubs, will lead to the correct guidance of these athletes towards the sport targeted for them in the future. Modeling selected athletes is one of the benefits of implementing the Blue Ocean Strategy in gymnastics clubs, because the education and training of this generation of athletes takes place in gymnastics clubs from an early age. The gymnastics coach is the main and fundamental pillar in training the generation of gymnastics athletes. Accordingly, according to the research results, the need to train committed and expert human resources in gymnastics is realized by implementing the blue ocean strategy in gymnastics clubs.

Implementing the Blue Ocean Strategy in gymnastics clubs will improve the effectiveness of activities and, as a result, generate more income and higher profits for the clubs. Given that the nature of the Blue Ocean Strategy is to create a platform for competition in an unrivaled environment and the financial aspects of this strategy are more prominent, it seems quite natural that gymnastics clubs will earn more income by implementing this strategy. The development of gymnastics is one of the results of implementing the Blue Ocean Strategy in gymnastics clubs. The more the platform is provided for the establishment and development of gymnastics clubs, the more gymnastics will naturally progress and develop. By implementing this model, the performance of gymnastics club managers will improve. The model obtained in the research is a practical tool for managers to improve their performance, because it provides managers with various strategies for specific management challenges. Implementing the Blue Ocean Strategy based on the presented model will make the club unique among other competitors. Paying attention to three specific groups of non-customers in this strategy creates a different perspective on the common attitudes towards developing athletes in the field of gymnastics, which distinguishes these clubs from other gymnastics clubs. Branding is one of the results of implementing the Blue Ocean Strategy in gymnastics clubs. The difference in the form and implementation of various management strategies, talent development, and champion building are important components in branding the club and also model athletes. The credibility and value of gymnastics clubs are enhanced. By implementing the Blue Ocean Strategy in gymnastics clubs and using the models obtained from the research, gymnastics clubs are recognized as references and talent development bases in the country that can meet the needs of other sports from the perspective of a champion athlete. Talent

5. Conflict of Interest

There is no conflict of interest.

6. Financing

development in gymnastics clubs is implemented in a purposeful and practical manner. One of the effects and results of implementing the Blue Ocean Strategy in gymnastics clubs is the special attention paid to talent development, where coaches of these clubs, regardless of the athlete's talent for the sport of gymnastics, use all their programs and strategies to educate and train new students to achieve their highest physiological and psychological performance.

Based on the results stated above, suggestions are presented in two sections: practical suggestions and research suggestions:

Practical suggestions:

According to the results and implications of the research, it is suggested that this model be implemented at the level of management of gymnastics clubs in the country. Also, considering the competitiveness of the business environment in the country's sports and the need to create a blue ocean for managers of sports clubs, including gymnastics, it is suggested that they pay special attention to the third group of their non-customers. It is suggested that the management of sports clubs should pay attention to examining and creating the club's value curve every year and also drawing a strategy canvas for their club. Considering the nature of the marketing of the blue ocean strategy, it is suggested that managers of sports complexes use the obtained model in order to earn more and create an unrivaled space for their club. Also, managers of women's clubs can manage the competitive space existing among women's clubs and create a blue ocean by implementing this model.

Research suggestions:

It is suggested that researchers in future research design the model presented in this study for other sports clubs, including athletics clubs. It is suggested that a strategy be developed to move towards the blue ocean based on the presented model.

The article has no financial sponsor or research funding, nor is it derived from a research project.

7. Acknowledgements



We would like to express our gratitude to the staff of the Journal of Sports Marketing Studies and

the esteemed referees who provided valuable feedback to improve the article.

8. REFERENCES

- Askariyan, B. (2014). Strategic planning of the organization with the blue ocean approach and early priority of strategies with the ANP network analysis process approach. [Persian]
- Akbari Emami, Shahnaz, Meshbaki, Asghar, Khodadad Hosseini, Seyyed Hamid, Kurdanaij, Asadallah. (2014). Designing a behavioral pattern for successful strategy implementation. *Management research in Iran*, 20(1,) 103-130. [Persian]
- Alizadeh, Nahid, Shiri, Ardeshir, and Taban, Mohammad (2013). Development of the blue ocean strategy model in the banking industry (case study: private banks of Ilam). *Business Management*. 3 (6) 622
- Awladthani, F. S., Porkodi, S., Saranya, R., & Pandurengan, V. (2023). A systematic literature review of the adoption of a blue ocean strategy by small and medium enterprises for sustainable growth. *Journal of Sustainability Science and Management*, 18(2), 197–230.
- Blue Ocean Strategy. (2022). *WHAT IS BLUE OCEAN STRATEGY?* Retrieved 2022, from Blue Ocean Strategy: <https://www.blueoceanstrategy.com/what-is-blue-ocean-strategy/>
- Bowen, Chieh-chen & william M. Bowen. (2008) Content Analysis; In Kaifeng Yang and Gerald J. Miller, Handbook of research methods in public administration, Taylor & Francis.
- Creswell, J.W. and Miller, D.L. (2000) Determining Validity in Qualitative Inquiry. *Theory into Practice*, 39, 124-130. http://dx.doi.org/10.1207/s15430421tip3903_2
- Ellinger, A. E., Naidoo, J., Ellinger, A. D., Filips, K., & Herrin, G. D. (2020). Applying blue ocean strategy to hire and assimilate workers with disabilities into distribution centers. *Business Horizons*, 63(3), 339–350.
- Faezi Rad, Mohammad Ali, and ebn al-Reza, Seyyed Reza. (2013). Creating a competitive advantage using structured outsourcing based on the components of the Blue Ocean strategy. Challenges and solutions management conference. [Persian]
- Heinemann. Akbari Emami, Shahnaz and Mashbaki, Asghar and Khodad Hosseini, Seyed Hamid and Kurdanaij, Asadollah (2014). Designing a behavioral model for successful strategy implementation. *Management Research Monthly in Iran*. 1(20)103-130. [Persian]
- Hossain, M. S. (2020). Practices of blue ocean strategy in mobile financial sector of Bangladesh: A study of bKash (Doctoral dissertation, University of Dhaka).
- Karimi, A., Akbari, P., Bastami, H. & Aazami, M. (2025). The mediating role of sports entrepreneurship in the effects of positive leadership strategies on innovative behaviors. *Sports Marketing Studies*, 5(4), -. doi: 10.22034/sms.2024.140756.1312
- Luo, M. M., & Kao, C.-W. (2020). Business model of sharing economy: two cases from Taiwan. In *International Research Journal of Advanced Engineering and Science* (Vol. 6, Issue 1).
- Markopoulos, Evangelos. (2020). A Democratic, Green Ocean Management Framework for Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) Compliance. 2nd International Conference on Human Interaction and Emerging Technologies: Future Applications (IHET – AI 2020) Volume: 1152.
- Mohammadi, F. & Salem Hasan, A. (2024). The Effect of Digital Entrepreneurship on the Development of the Marketing Mix of Professional Sports Clubs in the Southern and Central Cities of Iraq. *Sports Marketing Studies*, 4(4), 39-56. doi: 10.22034/sms.2023.139347.1233
- Moshkelgosha, E. & Nazari, R. (2020). Formulation Model of blue ocean strategy in Sport Clubs. *Sports Marketing Studies*, 1(1), 128-110. doi: 10.34785/J017.2020.975
- Pir Ali, Ali Reza and Amini, Mohammad Taqi and Parhizgar, Mohammad Mehdi and Norouzi Mobarakeh, Ali (2017). Designing a strategy implementation model in the organization with an integrated approach. *Strategic Management Research Quarterly*, 25 (73) 133-155[Persian]
- Priilaid, D., Ballantyne, R., & Packer, J. (2020). A “blue ocean” strategy for developing visitor wine experiences: Unlocking value in the Cape region tourism market. *Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Management*, 43, 91–99
- Vieira, Elsa Regina Monteiro (2018). “Strategic framework of fitness clubs based on quality dimensions: the blue ocean strategy approach”, *Total Quality Management & Business Excellence journal*, vol29, pp.13-14

- Sadiq, S., Amjad, M. S., Rafique, M. Z., Hussain, S., Yasmeen, U. and Khan, M. A. (2021). An integrated framework for lean manufacturing in relation with blue ocean manufacturing-a case study. *Journal of Cleaner Production*, 279, 1-16.
- Shahmari A. (2010). The way to save companies and enterprises from bankruptcy, moving towards the blue ocean strategy, *Industrial Engineers' View Quarterly*. 67(4): 13-14. [Persian]
- Shyam, R. (2019). Exploring uncontested markets with blue ocean strategy in convenience food business-a case of id fresh food. *Article in Journal of the International Academy for Case Studies*, 25(1), 1-7.
- Setyesh and Amin (2014). *Blue ocean strategy design in the field of activities of consulting engineers in national projects active in the field of dam construction in the country*. 7(1). 71-87. [Persian]
- W. Chan Kim, Renée Mauborgne. (2005), "Blue Ocean Strategy: How to Create Uncontested Market Space and Make Competition Irrelevant", *Harvard Business School Press*, February 3, 2005, PP. 240, ISBN: 978-1591396192
- Tongtakabi, M., Moshkelgosha, E. & Mostahfezian, M. (2025). Future Study of Influential Forces on Sportswear Brand in Iran with an Emphasis on Uncertainties in the horizon of 2035. *Sports Marketing Studies*, 5(4), 39-58. doi: 10.22034/sms.2024.140362.1280
- Yunus, M. (2021). A review on blue ocean strategy effect on competitive advantage and firm performance. *Academy of Strategic Management Journal*, 20(1).

