

Sociologic Explanation of Sport Participation and National Confidence

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Abstract: Confidence is a form of social relationships which stabilizes the social order so that social order is established on the basis of rules and regulations and community members are supposed to observe these rules and this would not be possible unless confidence is developed throughout the community. Therefore, the present study aims at sociological explanation of the relationship between participation in public sport and championship sport and strengthening the national confidence from the viewpoints of sport and non-sport managers of the provinces. The present study is a survey in administration. The statistic sample of this study were 50 sport managers and 50 non-sport managers who were 100 people altogether (Statistic population was the same as statistic sample). The data collection tool in this research was a questionnaire. For assessing the validity, inter-item correlation method and also Cronbach's alpha were used. Data analysis was carried out by means of SPSS. Data analysis indicates that the functions of public sport and championship sport on the components of national confidence are significantly different. Therefore, the sport participation variable could affect the national confidence. Correlation coefficient between national confidence components (personal confidence, generalized confidence, institutional confidence) and the public and championship sport is significant and there is a positive and direct correlation between participation in championship sport and national confidence ($p = 0.05$) on the whole, social factors have a sort of relationship with sport which through focusing on the national confidence as one of the basic components of the social capital have a considerable role in enriching the transaction of and interaction between humans and has a tight relationship with a series of social relationships.

Key words: Sport participation, national confidence, public sport, championship sport, human

INTRODUCTION

Almost in any society, sport is considered a prominent social institution because sport combines the characteristics existing in any institution with the unique attractiveness which only religion may produce. Sport is the arena of patterned activities, social structures and the relationships between institutions where it is possible to study and understand complexities of social life. Sport is an activity that involves an amount of primary or secondary occupation that could not be exceeded by other institutional situations. Sport provides such an opportunity for investigating into "the transparent forms of social structure that could not be found in other systems or states. In other words, sport provides the possibility of structured conflict and competition in controlled conditions; a thing that could hardly be found in other aspects of social life. Group dynamics, achieving the goals through social organizations, subcultures, behavioral processes, social cohesion, structured inequality, socialization and organizational networks are only a few issues among sociological issues

that could be studied in sport environments. The presupposition of this attitude is that the structure or forms of behavior and interaction existing in sport environments are similar to the behavior and the interaction existing in the other social contexts. In other words, sport is like other institutions, a microcosm of the society. While, sport is the product of social fact, it is also unique. None of the other institutions, except for religion of course has that code, an ambivalent feeling of sadness merged with happiness, thinking about an event and cultural establishment of a romantic idea which sport involves. No other activity could so paradoxically combine the serious with non-serious, recreation and exhilaration with intensity and strength and ideological entity with structural entity (Rahmani, 2011).

Now a days, sport and physical activity have obtained an eminent place as a social phenomenon to be studied in two scopes of local and global. Boards, associations, unions and committees which deal with the issue of sport and attempts to support sport activities, either in local scope or official scope are themselves manifestations of this place (Rahmani, 2011).

Regarding the conducted studies, sport and dealing with it is an instance of social phenomena; it seems that at the same time that the social capital could be of help to develop sport but public attention of society to sport and dealing with it could also be among the enhancing factors of the social capital components like: high social unity, the spirit of flexibility and variety seeking, high civil participation, social confidence and, etc. which indicates sociological and psychological health of a society.

Therefore, sport as one of the important social factors seems to play a significant role in strengthening this social capital, i.e., national confidence so that the community members through communicating with each other and stabilizing this communication could obtain this capital.

Confidence is a form of social relationships which stabilizes social order. That is, the social order is created by rules and regulations and observing these rules is the community members' responsibility and this will not be realized unless confidence is developed throughout the society (Mohseni and Sherali, 2009). Confidence is considered as the main factor of development and one of the most important components of the social capital. It is by confidence that social actions are formed and maintained based on rational selection. In Kolman's opinion, if confidence is confined in the blood and family relations and could not link to the external environment, it would not be able to create the social capital. In other words, the wider and more generalized the confidence range, it could create greater social benefits. Confidence is one of the fundamental social and political issues and is considered as the basis of society and social relationships. Confidence in its simplest definition is used as a synonym of relying, entrusting a work to someone, trust and belief. In this study, confidence is described and analyzed in three components of interpersonal confidence, generalized confidence and institutional confidence. In interpersonal confidence, we rely on those with whom we are interacting such as family members, friends and, etc. In institutional confidence, we show confidence in a whole system of ours and generalized confidence could be defined as optimism toward the society members, apart from their ethnic and tribal classifications (Mehdizadeh, 2011).

Generally, confidence may be defined as entrusting one's resources to another person who is autonomous. Confidence is a sort of risking and according to definition; it involves acknowledging another's benevolence and preparing the possibility of his disadvantage to one's benefits (Coleman, 1990). Studies indicate that confidence is considered as one of the components of social capital and among the influencing factors on the social

relationships which becomes weaker and weaker undergoing a sort of daily obsolescence (Khvshfr, 2008). This issue has been observed both in global and national scopes and in many countries, social capital has been decreasing for several decades (Khvshfr, 2008).

Anyway, Sport (and in this study public and championship sport specifically) as a social phenomenon could be messenger of nations without the need for translation and could prepare the context for social coherence and unity and it is also able to develop international common ground and cultural exchanges and transactions.

Thus, it is necessary to make clear whether indulging in sport and increasingly developing that issue could be an opportunity for strengthening the national confidence. Knowing these opportunities and challenges depends on assessing the effects of sport participation on the national confidence in different statistic populations. For this purpose, the present study is going to discuss if there is a relationship between the public and championship sport and the components of the national confidence (personal confidence, generalized confidence and institutional confidence); Is there any significant difference between the sport and non-sport managers' viewpoints about the role of participation in public and championship sport in strengthening the national confidence components (personal confidence, generalized confidence and institutional confidence)?

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The present study is a survey in its methodology. The previous studies have also been utilized for developing the theoretical framework of this study. The study population of this research is ten provinces each with >2 million population; three organizations of physical education departments, culture and Islamic guidance departments and provincial governorship are considered in this population. The statistic samples of this research include 5 sport managers including (general directors and deputies, public sport head, championship sport head in physical education departments of provinces) and 5 non-sport managers including (political and security directors and police headquarters of country's provincial governor ships and general directors and deputies of culture and Islamic guidance departments of provinces) which are totally 100 people. In other words, the statistic population is equal to the statistic sample. The data collection tool in the present study is a questionnaire. For preparation of this questionnaire, the results of published field studies and library studies about sport activities and social unity were studied and the relevant components

and indices were determined. Then on the basis of the literature of research area and subject of study, similar questions in valid researches in the national scope were utilized in designing the questions of the questionnaire. In the next stage, by preparing the primary questionnaire after conducting a pre-test on 30 subjects similar to the population subjects, inappropriate and similar questions were deleted or modified and the final questionnaire was prepared and used. In analyzing the collected data using SPSS software, descriptive statistics was used for description of research variables like frequency distribution table, mean and standard deviation and inferential statistics (t-test for comparing means, Pearson correlation coefficient and multiple regression (stepwise) was used for comparing viewpoints of the groups under study.

RESULTS

According to the Table 1 of demographic information, statistic population indicates that 20 percent of managers are from Guidance Department, 47% of managers from Physical Education Department and 33% in provincial governorships. Male managers consist 88.2% of the statistic sample and 11.8% are female managers. The education levels of managers show that 7.2% of managers have higher diplomas, 45.4% have bachelor degrees and 44.3% have master degrees and 3.1% have PhD degrees. 91.4% of managers are married and 8.6% are unmarried. Their career records according to the above table indicate that 25% of them have records less than 5 years, 34.1% have 5-10 records, 25% have career records of 10-15 year and 15.9% have career records of 15 year or more.

According to the results of Table 2, the observed t is significant at $p = 0.05$. So, there is significant difference between means of the personal confidence scores in the public sport and championship sport. The mean of personal confidence score in public sport is 4.16 and this mean in championship sport is 3.77. In other words, personal confidence in public sport is more than championship sport. Therefore, there is significant difference between the viewpoints of sport and non-sport managers in terms of the role of participation in public sport and championship sport in strengthening the personal confidence (Fig. 1).

According to the results shown in Table 3, the observed t is significant at $p = 0.05$. Therefore, there is significant difference between the means of the generalized confidence scores in public sport and championship sport. The mean of generalized confidence scores in public sport is 4.18 and this mean in

Table 1: The frequency of the sample by gender, education level, marital status and service history

Individual characteristics	Numbers of responders	
	Absolute	Present (%)
Type of organization; office of physical education		
Sporty	47	47
Governor office of	33	33
Cultural and Islamic guidance		
Non sporting	20	20
Sex		
Man	82	88.2
Woman	11	11.8
Unanswered	7	-
Education		
Diploma	7	7.2
Bachelor	44	45.4
Graduate	43	44.3
PhD	3	3.1
Unanswered	3	3.1
Marital status		
Married	85	91.4
Single	8	8.6
Unanswered	7	-
Experience		
<5 years	22	25
10-5 years	30	34.1
10-15 years	22	25
15 years and more	14	14.9
Unanswered	12	-
Sum of respondents		100

Table 2: Comparing the means of personal confidence scores in public sport and championship sport

Variable	Mean	SD	t	p
Public sport	4.016	0.480	3.48	0.001
Champion sport	3.77	0.616		

Table 3: Comparing the means of generalized confidence score in public and championship sport

Variable	Mean	SD	t	p
Public sport	4.18	0.473	4.88	0.001
Champion sport	3.87	0.647		

Table 4: Comparing the means of institutional confidence scores in public sport and championship sport

Variable	Mean	SD	t	p
Public sport	4.16	0.576	4.39	0.001
Champion sport	3.89	0.619		

championship sport is 3.87. In other words, generalized confidence in public sport is higher than championship sport. So, there is a significance difference between viewpoints of sport and non-sport managers about the role of participation in public sport and in championship sport in strengthening the generalized confidence (Fig. 2).

According to the results of Table 4, the observed t is significant at $p = 0.05$. Therefore, there is significant difference between the mean of the institutional confidence scores in public sport and this mean championship sport. The mean of institutional confidence scores in public sport is 4.16 and this mean in championship sport is 3.89. In other words, institutional

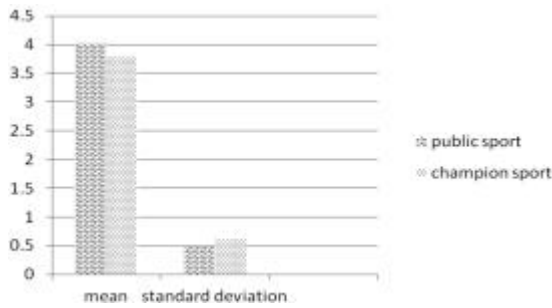


Fig. 1: Comparison of the mean and standard deviation of personal confidence score in public and championship sport

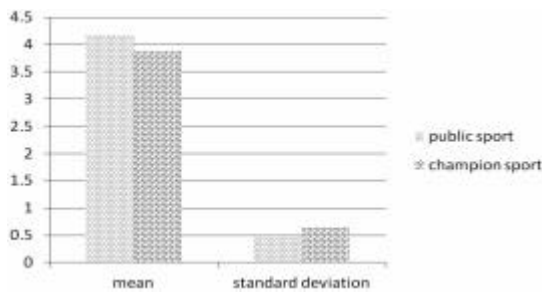


Fig. 2: Comparison of the mean and standard deviation of generalized confidence in public sport and championship sport

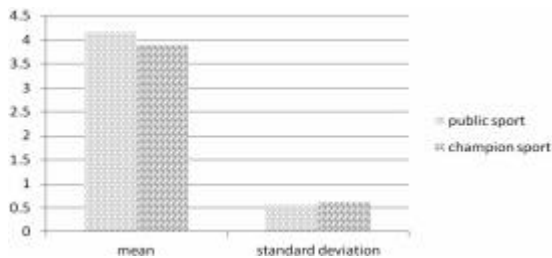


Fig. 3: Comparison of the mean and standard deviation of institutional confidence in the public sport and champions sport

confidence in public sport is higher than championship sport. So, there is a significance difference between viewpoints of sport and non-sport managers about the role of participation in public sport and in championship sport in strengthening the generalized confidence.

According to the results shown in Table 5, the correlation coefficient between the components of national confidence (personal confidence, generalized confidence and institutional confidence) and public sport is significant at $p = 0.05$. Therefore, there is a relationship between participation in public sport and national confidence in viewpoint of sport and non-sport managers.

Table 5: Correlation coefficient between public sport function and the national confidence components (Personal confidence, generalized confidence and institutional confidence)

National confidence components	R	p
Personal confidence	0.344	0.001
Generalized confidence	0.371	0.001
Institutional confidence	0.225	0.024

Table 6: Correlation coefficient between championship sport function and the national confidence components (Personal confidence, generalized confidence and institutional confidence)

National confidence components	R	p
Personal confidence	0.274	0.007
Generalized confidence	0.258	0.011
Institutional confidence	0.264	0.009

According to the results presented in Table 6, the correlation coefficient between the components of national confidence (personal confidence, generalized confidence and institutional confidence) and championship sport is significant at $p = 0.05$. Therefore, there is a relationship between participation in championship sport and national confidence in viewpoints of sport and non-sport managers (Fig. 3).

DISCUSSION

Sport as a social phenomenon deals with the cultural values and norms of a society and in an interactional way concerns different aspects and new dimensions of the human behavior. This effective phenomenon in the present age through customs, rituals, symbols, shared values, hegemony tool, violence orientation, commercialism, social and cultural capital, politicization, getting into the media and, etc. is considered as one of the most important institutions of the industrial and post-industrial modern society which has the majority of the population of any country behind itself in different ways. Sport as a totally social phenomenon involves equipping human and financial resources, structured organizations, developing the international communications, a sort of media entertaining and recreation, improving knowledge-centeredness, psychological and physical health, enhancing the confidence and social capital, growth of tourism, depletion of excitations and psychic responses, training the humanistic and social ethics and, etc.

In fact, individuals' membership in sport teams makes them to acknowledge and follow social values and norms when they are practicing and playing; such a socializing process has led to social unity enhancing. Nickson and Fry, sport sociologists believe that "the result of socializing via sport is learning and developing beliefs, attitudes, enhancing skills and socializing of the roles and

sexual identity. These learnings could be transferred to other contexts of sportsmen's lives which make them to be successful in other contexts of their lives in collective and group activities. In other words, training doctrines obtained through sport activities are transferred into other situations of the sportsman's life.

As can be inferred from the social advantages of sport, one of the latent functions of the sport participation is the establishment of networks of friends and unity between individuals so that the community members might obtain these benefits through communicating with each other and keeping these contacts.

Regarding the conducted researches and the results of this study, various functions of the sport in different social fields including national confidence and its components which are the very base of this study, in addition to creation of a concern for the humanistic science thinkers have found a special position in present communities.

The aim of this study is investigating a fundamental and basic component of the social capital, namely national confidence in three dimensions (personal confidence, generalized confidence and institutional confidence) focusing on the sport (public and championship). Due to the important place of national confidence as a potential factor in maintaining the political stability of the society, it seems that one of the effective social factors in enhancing these two components is the well-known term, sport. Although, all people without considering how they are dealing with sport may be somehow interested in listening to sport news or at least following the global races especially in certain fields they may be not so informed about the place of sport and its importance.

In present era, regarding the widespread urbanization, Internet and satellite communications and globalization as a principle which aims at breaking the cultural and value boundaries between states and nations and displays its effects on the process of value unity and national norms and the fact that Iran as a developing country faces with companionship of two authentic and rooted cultures of Iran and Islam and also has absorbed Western culture elements, sport may be an important and effective element in enhancing the national confidence.

The research method of this study is of a survey type and a questionnaire tool has been used for collecting the needed data. For verifying the assessment tool, opinions of expert advisors in the subject field were utilized. In order to analyze the reliability of this research, Cronbach's alpha was used. The reliability of the research tool was

evaluated during the primary study. Statistic population had consisted of 100 sport and non-sport managers including 5 sport managers (general directors of physical education and deputies and the head of public and championship sport development) and 5 non-sport managers (political, security and social managers) and 3 general directors and 2 deputies of culture and Islamic guidance department (5 people) in 10 provinces with a population of two millions or above in Iran in 1392. In other words, the statistic population had been the same as statistic sample.

Results of this study indicate that there is a positive and significant correlation between sport and national confidence components. Results also show that although variable of sport participation could be effective on three components of national confidence (personal confidence, generalized confidence and institutional confidence), it shows a significant difference between viewpoints of sport and non-sport managers in terms of the role of public sport and championship sport on strengthening the national confidence components. This study has illustrated an effective and useful role of sport in forming the public opinion, sticking to values and principles, increasing the communicative actions peaceful and friendly communications; results also states that on the whole, social factors have a sort of relationship with sport which through focusing on national confidence plays a significant role in enriching interactions and transactions between human beings and establishing a close relationship.

CONCLUSION

Therefore, regarding the study results and the positive and valuable role of sport, the reasons for and the necessity of conducting this research becomes more clear. So, sport and its increasing development could provide an opportunity for enhancing the national confidence as a basic and fundamental component of the social capital. In other words, results of this research and further researches in this context could be considered very outstanding in presenting practical and appropriate tactics for authorities and provides a context for strengthening and improving the social unity, stability and social bonds and national confidence in the society.

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