

(4,87±3,36%) boyun bölgəsi) belin intervertebral yırtıqları, 3-ü(7.31±4,06%) intervertebral protrüziya, 1-i (2,43±2,40) facet oynağının stress sınığı, 28-i (68,29±7,26%) bel əzələlərin spazmlarının nəticəsində baş vermişdir.

Nəticədə, Yunan-Roma güləşində idmançılarda bel ağrısının ən çox görülən səbəbi ağırlıq qaldırma və güləş məşqlərinin eyni gündə mövcud olduğu ortaya çıxmışdır.

**Açar sözlər:** bel ağrısı, arxa əzələlərin spazmları, bel ağrısı epidemiologiyası, idman terapiyası, Azərbaycan güləşi, reabilitasiya və fizioterapiya.

### THE INVESTIGATION OF AFFECTIVE FACTORS TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF BASEBALL IN IRAN

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**Annotation:** The purpose of this study was The investigation of affective factors to the development of baseball in Iran.

**Keywords:** macro-level, meso-level, micro-level, sports development, baseball.

**Methodology:** The type of research is descriptive survey and measurement tool for recognition of baseball development factors in Iran, consists of one customized researcher made questionnaire, contains 62 closed questions. These questions measured three

levels of baseball development such as macro-level variables (cultural and social factors, economic environment and political and legal environment with 10 questions), meso-level variables (financial support, Structure and organization of policies, the amount of sports participation, talent detection, sport supports, places and facilities, providing coaches and coaching development, national competition and scientific researches with 49 questions) and micro-level variables (3 questions) with 5-point Likert scale. Validity of questionnaire approved by 12 professors and baseball experts and the Cronbach's alpha test ( $\alpha= 97\%$ ) used for approving the reliability of this questionnaire. Statistic population consists of coaches, players and referees in both parts of baseball (men) and softball (women) from different cities of Iran. Due to this statistic population, the purposive sampling was used based on Morgan table. The descriptive statistical methods (Frequency, mean, percent and standard deviation) was used for analyzing data to describe variables in research community and the inferential statistics methods (Mann-Whitney and Friedman) was used for testing research hypotheses.

**Results:** The results of the research shows that meso-level with 2.18 mean rank, micro-level with 2.09 mean rank and macro-level with 1.73 mean rank, made the most important baseball development factors in Iran. Also among the macro-level factors, political environment factor; among the meso-level factors, sport facilities factor; and among the micro-level factors positive attitude for doing team sports activities are counted the most important baseball development factors in Iran.

**Conclusion:** According to the importance of above items and considering that no research has been done so far with this feature in the country, the need for research was felt for use of superior sports executives of the country, specially directors of Iran's baseball and softball association to get correct recognition of priorities of affective factors to development of baseball in Iran.

#### Introduction

Sport is no doubt one of important topic of each society and so many people do different kinds of sports and spend some of their times for it. Daily

development of sport is for millions of people like athletes, coaches, referees, club managers, cameramen, reporters and social medias are busy with sport activities all around the world. Sport development among all levels of society is important because it has many advantages like increasing physical and mental abilities, body health, avoiding laziness and inactivity and making an individual to a social person. Also, sport is in the spotlight of politicians, company owners, businessmen, experts and researches of different arias. In each society, sport is affected from its social structure and expresses important values and norms of that society (Elmiri et al, 2008; Ghafouri F., 2006). Baseball is undoubtedly one of the most popular and favorite sport around the world. There are so many reasons that have been made baseball to a popular sport. Nowadays it has been well developed all around the world and according to IBAF, there are officially 35 millions baseball athletes in 122 countries.

Baseball has started its activity as an association in Iran since 1988. But after passing 3 decades of its lifetime, we can clearly find out from existing data and records that this world popular sport has NOT been developed in the country and has very little activity yet.

Today in most countries, senior managers know that for developing sport and taking advantages of it they need proper planning and strategies. So like any other systems, sport needs practical strategies and programs in which it can move without losing its financial and human resources. Because sport activities have very wide range, it necessarily needs to have comprehensive planning system. With such a this comprehensive planning, sport can continuously move on the way to success (Ramezaninejad et al., 2012).

From the number of attendances in different baseball stadiums around the world, we can easily find out this sport is very popular worldwide. But as mentioned before, baseball could not get the right place among people in Iran because its activity level was very limited and low. So, now, we have to fundamentally think about sport planning, especially for covering baseball as an Olympic sport which

seems after Tokyo 2020 it will remain in the Games. It means baseball should be considered as a national design or part of the comprehensive plan which is now developing and running in the Sport Ministry. By this we can set codified plan according to country conditions, interests of people, economic situation and politics of the society. In this paper we will find the affective management factors for developing baseball in Iran and their relative importance according to their priorities.

As regards there is no records of research about baseball development in Iran, we have investigated results of other studies in different sports. Ghafouri et al (2002) found that role of TV is sensible for tendency of people to the sports and according to the researches medias affect it about 78%. In comparison of Gymnastic athletes, coaches and experts viewpoints, Tondnevis and Ghasemi (2004) got to this conclusion that all of groups are in common in these research factors for developing Gymnastic: upgrading level of technical knowledge of coaches, monitoring coaches' activity, talent detection with scientific ways, increasing the number of Gymnasiums and equipping them with specialized facilities. Mozafari et al (2008) represent 12 guidelines for developing sports of the country: 1- media and public relation expansion, 2- meritocracy in federations, 3- increasing of TV broadcast for less well-known sports (like baseball), 4- fair sharing of financial and human resources between all sports, 5- standardization sport places according to international standards, 6- employment of specialist human resource in any fields of sport, 7- privatization of sports, 8- reinforcement of sport development programs in federations for grass root levels, 9- developing women sport resources, 10- compilation of comprehensive system for scientific elite sport development, 11- creation of new coaching system in sports in the country, 12- increasing of interactions between national sports institutes and Ministry of Education. Razavi et al (2011) stated long-term planning and media coverage are the most important factors for developing Swimming in Iran. In investigation of affective factors for developing elite sports of Iran's provinces, Malayi (2015) represented cultural,

economic and social development besides sports substructures are the most important factors. Eftekhari (2015) stated in her thesis, "The investigation of barriers to the development of women's elite football in Iran", meso-level, macro-level and micro-level are respectively the barriers of women's elite football Iran and organizing sport policies factor from meso-level, cultural factor from macro-level and weak tendency to the team sports from micro-level have the most affectiveness among the barriers.

There are so many factors that can affect to sport development and they are totally divided into three levels: macro-level, meso-level, and micro-level. Although according to the researchers findings the affectiveness of macro-level factors are much more, but they are uncontrollable because they cannot be affected with sport policies. On the other hand, we can change and control factors from meso-level with sport policies; factors that have much affectiveness on sport development like financial support of training centers, sport talent detection, training time, experienced full time coach, sport medicine, coaching and training methods. Accordingly, different countries have done great planning on this level and have helped their athletes because today's the real competition is the competition between systems. Meso-level factors like role of medias and their attentions to sports, role of sport fans and role of sponsors are among those factors that have much affectiveness on sport development but cannot be controlled with sport policies. Also, some parts of micro-level factors like genetic cannot be controlled in short-term. In Iran, there has been tried to identify affecting factors on sport success and development, but there is no precise prioritization of them. So in this article we have tried to identify baseball development factors in Iran and prioritize them for using of sport politicians and Iran's baseball executive managers for their future planning's.

### **Methodology**

According to the purpose of this study, the type of research was descriptive survey and measurement tool for recognition of baseball development factors in Iran, consists of one

customized researcher made questionnaire, contains 62 closed questions. These questions measured three levels of baseball development such as macro-level variables (cultural and social factors, economic environment and political and legal environment with 10 questions), meso-level variables (financial support, Structure and organization of policies, the amount of sports participation, talent detection, sport supports, places and facilities, providing coaches and coaching development, national competition and scientific researches with 49 questions) and micro-level variables (3 questions) with 5-point Likert scale. Validity of questionnaire approved by 12 professors and baseball experts and the Cronbach's alpha test ( $\alpha = 97\%$ ) used for approving the reliability of this questionnaire. The target population consisted entirely of 240 female and male baseball and softball players, coaches, umpires and managers all around Iran (players= 210, coaches= 15, umpires= 10, managers= 5). According to the Morgan table and using purposive sampling method, 144 statistical samples were selected from the total population study. The descriptive statistical methods (Frequency, mean, percent and standard deviation) was used for analyzing data to describe variables in research community and the inferential statistics methods (Mann-Whitney and Friedman) was used for testing research hypotheses (using SPSS v.22).

### **Results**

The findings from the descriptive section of the study showed from totally 144 samples, there are 116 players (80/5%), 13 coaches (9%), 10 umpires (7%) and 5 managers (3/5%); and players with 27 and coaches with 38 had respectively lowest and highest age average. MA degree with 43% was the most among players, coaches, umpires and managers. The background results of these samples also showed that the most respondents (41%) have more than 10 years' experience and the least respondents (7%) have less than one year.

Data analysis by using Friedman test indicated significance difference between mean ranks of three levels of macro, meso and micro. According to this, meso-level with mean 2/18, micro-level with mean 2/09 and macro-level

with mean 1/73 prioritized (table 1)

**Table 1:** The comparison of baseball development factors' priority between three levels

Baseball development factors level	mean	Standard deviation	Level of significance	priority
Macro-level	3/42	1/18	0/001	3
Meso-level	3/78	1/21	0/001	1
Micro-level	3/64	1/22	0/001	2

Friedman test also showed there is no significance difference between macro-level factors' mean rank. In other words, there is no significance difference between cultural and social, economic environment and political environment factors. Accordingly political environment factor was the most important factor in this level (table 2).

**Table 2:** The comparison of baseball development factors' priority in macro-level

Macro level factors	mean	Standard deviation	Level of significance	priority
Cultural and social environment	3/33	1/55	0/074	2
Economic environment	3/37	1/17	0/074	3
Political environment	3/55	1/30	0/074	1

According to Friedman test, there is significance difference between baseball development factors' mean rank in meso level. It showed that sport facilities and sport participation factors have the most mean (table 3).

**Table3:** the comparison of baseball development factors' priority in meso level

Meso level factors	mean	Standard deviation	Level of significance	priority
Financial support	3/79	1/47	0/001	5
Sport structures and policies	3/63	1/17	0/001	8
Sport participation	3/90	1/36	0/001	2
Sport and job support	3/72	1/30	0/001	6
System development	3/83	1/27	0/001	4
Places and facilities	3/97	1/71	0/001	1
Coaching development	3/71	1/28	0/001	7

<b>National competitions</b>	3/86	1/30	0/001	3
<b>Scientific researches</b>	3/62	1/31	0/001	9

Also, there is significance difference between baseball development factors' mean ranks in micro-level (table 4).

**Table 4:** The comparison of baseball development factors' priority in micro-level

<b>Macro level factors</b>	<b>mean</b>	<b>Standard deviation</b>	<b>Level of significance</b>	<b>priority</b>
<b>Existence of good talents</b>	3/37	1/53	0/001	3
<b>Parents' acquaintance to baseball</b>	3/74	1/47	0/001	2
<b>Positive attitude to team sports</b>	3/81	1/32	0/001	1

In comparison of male and female respondents' viewpoints about baseball development factors, U test (Mann Whitney) showed that there is no significance difference between two groups' point of view (table 5).

**Table 5:** The comparison of baseball development factors' priority between male and female respondents viewpoint

<b>Levels</b>	<b>Group</b>	<b>Mean rank</b>	<b>Level of significance</b>	<b>Z</b>
<b>Macro</b>	Male	75/41	0/207	-1/263
	Female	65/89		
<b>Meso</b>	Male	73/28	0/737	-0/366
	Female	70/74		
<b>Micro</b>	Male	72/50	1/000	0/000
	female	72/50		

Given that study results showed meso-level has the most mean rank among three levels, here we ranked all of the nine subsets and their items according to their priorities from this level (table 6).

**Table 6:** The prioritization of meso-level factors and their items

<b>Factor's priority</b>	<b>Places and facilities</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Standard deviation</b>	<b>Item's priority</b>
<b>1</b>	Existence of the clubs equipped with baseball fundamentals	4/22	4/514	1
	Attention to development of main substructures of baseball in Iran	3/99	1/397	2
	Easy access to baseball equipment	3/91	1/438	7
	Justly allocation of facilities for baseball in different parts of the country	3/76	1/486	31
<b>Sport participation</b>				



	Developing youth team in different age levels	3/97	1/429	3
	Setting up baseball in schools and holding student baseball tournaments	3/95	1/497	4
2	Necessity of cooperation between baseball association and Ministry of Education	3/90	1/455	9
	Culturing and finding proper sport pattern through watching major baseball games	3/76	1/483	32
<b>National competitions</b>				
	Long-term planning for organizing baseball league	3/90	1/305	9
		3/90	1/432	9
3	Hosting international baseball events in Iran	3/85	1/424	15
	Continuous participation in international competitions	3/81	1/453	23
	Compilation of national strategy for organizing international baseball event in Iran			
<b>System development</b>				
	Setting up training camps for youth in the country	3/89	1/420	12
		3/86	1/382	13
	Comprehensive planning for talent detection among youth	3/86	1/387	13
4	Existence of a talent detection system and monitoring over development of talented baseball athletes	3/85	1/534	15
	Existence of professional baseball school at basic levels of Iran's sport	3/83	1/345	19
	Existence of practical and competitive supports of youth talents in the time of fostering	3/83	1/374	19
		3/78	1/328	25
	Existence of an assessment for baseball talent detection	3/75	1/460	33
	Upgrading quality of Iran's baseball league games			
	Increasing the number of baseball workshop in Iran			
<b>Financial support</b>				
	Existence of sponsors in baseball	3/92	1/547	5
5	Necessity of enough advertising for developing baseball	3/91	1/514	7
	Allocation of enough budget and credits to baseball	3/83	1/579	19
		3/78	1/538	25
	Investment of private sectors in baseball	3/51	1/551	52
	Mighty marketing management in baseball			
<b>Sport and job support</b>				

6	Financial support of elite baseball athletes	3/85	1/435	15
	Supporting of national level athletes(salary, insurance)	3/78	1/561	25
		3/77	1/342	29
	Existence of training and competitive supports	3/74	1/510	35
	Existence of money contract for baseball players	3/48	1/348	53
	Allocation of good training time for baseball teams			
<b>Coaching development</b>				
7	Increasing the number of academic and professional coaches in the country	3/83	1/391	19
	Sending out coaches to the international baseball workshops	3/78	1/430	25
	Existence of a comprehensive assessment system for classification of coaches	3/67	1/373	40
	Proper patterning for youth coaches in baseball	3/59	1/446	47
<b>Organizing sport policies</b>				
8	Existence of meritocracy system for choosing sports managers	3/92	1/372	5
	Existence of coordination between different sport organizations	3/77	1/368	29
	Using new sport management methods in the country	3/71	1/384	37
		3/71	1/448	37
	Culturing in clubs for supporting baseball	3/65	1/356	42
	Stability of managers in short-term periods	3/63	1/481	43
	Existence of social programs for fans and attracting them for watching baseball games	3/58	1/162	48
	Employment of high level coaches for national teams	3/53	1/448	50
		3/22	1/411	59
	Proper execution of sport privatization policy			
	Having strategy for transferring foreign players			
<b>Scientific researches</b>				
9	Cooperation between universities and baseball association	3/75	1/503	33
	Proper usage of scientific methods for talent detection	3/69	1/435	39
		3/62	1/419	45
	Doing research in the field of baseball	3/62	1/419	45
	Participating of coaches and managers in the conferences for getting new findings about baseball	3/55	1/532	49
		3/52	1/379	51
	Publishing baseball brochures and books in the country			
	Receiving scientific information of sport organization			

Also, as shown in table 7, the prioritization of micro-level items stated that "positive attitude to do team sports activities in Iran" is the most important item in this level.

**Table 7:** The prioritization of micro-level items

Micro-level items	Mean	Standard deviation	Item's priority
Positive attitude to do team sports activities in Iran	3/81	1/322	23
Parent's acquaintance to baseball and encouraging them to it	3/74	1/471	35
Existence of good talents for baseball in Iran	3/37	1/532	57

And finally, mean rank results in table 8 showed that politic environment factor is the first priority in macro-level.

**Table 8:** The prioritization of macro-level factors and their items

Factor's priority	Politic environment	Mean	Standard deviation	Item's priority
1	Positive attitude of politicians to baseball	3/66	1/444	41
	Existence of development programs for less well-known sports	3/45	1/452	54
<b>Economic environment</b>				
2	Role of medias in branding baseball	3/85	1/548	15
	Economic inflation in the country	3/42	1/417	56
	Transparency of political and economic procedures of the country	3/35	1/397	58
	Economic growth rate of the country	3/13	1/322	60
	Investing in sports of the country	3/10	1/413	61
<b>Cultural and social environment</b>				
3	Equivalent rating of different sports by authorities	3/63	1/586	43
	Advertising about baseball on social medias	3/42	1/417	54
	Playing of Iranian baseball players in foreign leagues	2/92	1/670	62

### Discussion

Overall, the finding of this study indicated that meso-level with mean rank 2/18, micro-level with mean rank 2/09 and macro-level with mean rank 1/73, have respectively highest and lowest importance for developing baseball in Iran. In this research, 3 factors of macro-level were investigated and political environment with 3/55, economic environment with 3/37 and cultural and social environment with 3/33 mean rank prioritized as baseball development factors in Iran. Also, results showed that item

of "positive attitude of politicians to baseball" in political environment factor, item of "role of medias in branding baseball" in economic environment factor and item of "equivalent rating of different sports by authorities" in cultural and social environment have the most mean ranks in this part. About the importance of two first items from respondents' viewpoint, it seems that because baseball was called American and luxury sport in the past by authorities, showing this sport on medias was a big problem. So sport authorities in Iran must



have non-political look to sports like baseball and pay more attentions to them for facilitating their successes.

This survey also showed that meso-level has the most mean rank among the other levels. In this level nine factors have been recognized as baseball development factors in Iran as follow: 1-places and facilities ( $M^1=3/97$ ), 2- sport participation ( $M=3/89$ ), 3-national competitions ( $M=3/86$ ), 4-system development ( $M=3/83$ ), 5-financial support ( $M=3/79$ ), 6-sport and job support ( $M=3/72$ ), 7-coaching development ( $M=3/71$ ), 8- organising sport policies and structures ( $M=3/63$ ), and 9-scientific researches ( $M=3/62$ ).

According to mean ranks, the first factor in meso-level is places and facilities with mean of 3/97. The item of "existence of clubs equipped with baseball fundamentals" with mean rank 4/22 was known as the most important factor for baseball development in Iran. Sport substructures play main role in success of athletes in any sports and pay attention to them can facilitate their development. So existence of proper sport places and facilities have positive effects on sport development. This finding is in the agreement with the findings of other researches like Okley and Green (2001), Chad et al (2005), Sotiriadou et al (2008), and De Bosscher et al (2009) that stated proper places and facilities are among main factors for sport development and success. High quality training facilities can affect athletes' success and help them for having better performances. So lack of standard sport place and facility caused athlete's development become slow and if this problem remains, reaching to highest level of capability for athletes is impossible (Jackson & Palmer, 1998).

Second affective factor of meso-level is sport participation with mean rank of 3/89. Results showed that the item of "developing youth team in different age levels" has the most priority in this factor. Because baseball has been managed based on adult level in Iran, there is no good alternatives in youth levels

for future of this sport after retiring of old baseball players and it is clear why this item is so important from respondent's viewpoint.

Third factor of meso-level is national competitions with mean rank of 3/86. In this factor, item of "hosting international baseball events in Iran" has the most priority. Competition helps athletes to develop and keep their skills and Athletes can be seen through it. High quality competitions help athletes to increase their experience and standardize their performances. So hosting different baseball tournaments or participating in international games help baseball athletes to measure themselves in comparison with the other competitors and gain more self-confidence for important international baseball games.

Forth factor of meso-level is system development with mean rank of 3/83. Results showed that items "setting up training camps for youth in the country" and "comprehensive planning for talent detection among youth" are both with 3/86 mean ranks the most important items in this factor. Whereas right and on time talent detection are among the sport basic principles of each country, from respondents' viewpoint, existence of talent detection centers and baseball schools have much more priority than the other items.

Fifth factor of meso-level is financial support with mean rank of 3/79. In this factor item of "existence of sponsors in baseball" has the most priority with 3/92 mean rank. We can say that for lack of TV broadcasting about baseball in the past, there were NOT any chance for sponsors to advertise their brands; therefor, according to the research samples viewpoint, the main factor for attracting sponsors to baseball is creating an opportunity for them to have enough advertising. Sixth factor of meso-level is sport and job support with 3/72 mean rank. Results of this study showed that item of "financial support of elite baseball athletes" has the most priority with 3/85 mean rank. Supportive services can improve athletes' efficiency and increase their motivation and they can also do their jobs without daily concerns. So, from respondents' viewpoint, financial supports of baseball athletes can be the affective factor for baseball development. This result is in the agreement

<sup>1</sup>M= Mean

with other finding from researches like Oakley and Green (2001), Bohlke et al (2009), and De Busscher et al (2009).

Seventh factor of meso-level is coaching development with 3/71 mean rank and item of "increasing the number of academic and professional coaches in the country" with 3/83 mean rank is the most important item in this part. Coaches have undeniable role in sport development and improvement of athletes' efficiency. So increasing the number of specialist and up to date coaches maybe caused to significant development of baseball in Iran.

Eighth factor of meso-level is organizing sport policies and structure with 3/63 mean rank. In this factor, item of "existence of meritocracy system for choosing sports managers" has the most priority with 3/92 mean rank. In most countries one unit organization with some subsets is responsible for sports and physical education; but multiplicity of this unit in Iran's sport may be a basic problem. There is a lack of organization for planning in this case. Ordination of custom-made directors for management of Iran's baseball association in different periods of times, actually had no returns. This is why the research samples prioritized existence of meritocracy system for choosing sports managers as the main item in this factor. Fortunately, it is being better in recent years. This result is in the agreement with results of researches like Oakley and Green (2001), Green (2004), Green et al (2007) and De Busscher and et al (2008, 2009).

Ninth factor of meso-level is scientific researches with mean rank of 3/62. The research result showed that item of "cooperation between universities and baseball association" has the most priority in this factor with 3/75 mean rank. Scientific researches have so many usage and can be used for designing and constructing both sport equipment and facilities, and training methods and strategies. So to access these benefits there should be strong cooperation between universities and federations.

The other level that has been prioritized in this study was micro-level with 2/09 mean rank

and had only three items. The results stated that item of "positive attitude to do team sports activities in Iran" has the most priority with mean rank of 3/81 in this level. Parents have very important role in their children's future sport successes. They are the first persons who teach kids physical training, register them on sport classes and spend money for buying sport equipment. Furthermore, parents have always emotional support for their children in their sport ages.

### Conclusion

In conclusion, based on the presented study, according to main importance of meso-level factors for baseball development in Iran, it is suggested that sport directors mostly pay attention to this level for development of baseball. Whereas the main factor of meso-level for baseball development is "places and facilities" factor, it is needed to negotiate between Iran's Baseball Association (IBL) and several wealthy clubs all around Iran for equipping necessary baseball substructures and facilities. Also, it is recommended that all top 5 factors of meso-level and their subsets which has been prioritized according to their importance, will be used by baseball directors in long term planning for future baseball development in Iran.

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## İRANDA BEYSBOLUN İNKİŞAFINA TƏSİR EDƏN AMİLLƏRİN TƏDQIQATI

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**Annotasiya:** Bu tədqiqatın məqsədi İranda beysbolun inkişafına təsir edən amillərin tədqiqatından ibarətdir.

**Aşar sözlər:** makrodərəcə, mezodərəcə, mikrodərəcə, idmanın inkişafı, beysbol.

## ИССЛЕДОВАНИЕ ВЛИЯНИЯ ФАКТОРОВ НА РАЗВИТИЕ БЕЙСБОЛА В ИРАНЕ

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**Аннотация:** Целью данного исследования было изучение факторов, влияющих на развитие бейсбола в Иране.

**Ключевые слова:** макроуровень, мезоуровень, микроуровень, развитие спорта, бейсбол.