

Analysis of economic factors of Iranian professional football

Seyed Mehdi Seyed Bagheri¹, Rasool Norouzi Seyed Hosseini^{1*}, Marjan Saffari¹, Esmail Sharifian²

¹ Department of Sport Science, Faculty of Humanities, Tarbiat Modares University, Tehran, Iran.

² Faculty of Physical Education, Shahid Bahonar University, Kerman, Iran.

* Correspondence: Rasool Norouzi Seyed Hosseini; rasool.norouzi@modares.ac.ir

ABSTRACT

The objective of this study was to analyze the economic factors of Iranian professional football. The participants comprised experts specializing in football and sports economics. The purposive sampling method was employed to identify participants for the research. A total of 12 individuals were selected as the statistical sample. Data analysis was conducted using the Analytical Hierarchical Process (AHP). In the paired comparison questionnaire, participants were asked to assess the relative importance of the economy components. ExpertChoice software was utilized to calculate component weights. The findings revealed that it would be recommendable to depoliticize the football administrative and management system and minimize government interference. Additionally, fostering a tax culture and formulating a provincial tax system tailored to the specific characteristics of football is crucial. Moreover, creating a platform for privatization in football would facilitate free competition.

KEYWORDS

Economy; Money; Betting; Sports Industry; Football

1. INTRODUCTION

Sports industry is highly prosperous and lucrative, with an estimated annual revenue of \$145 billion (Bondarenko, Utkina, Rieznik, Malanchuk, & Yurakh, 2022). While sports competitions provide cultural exchange, the economic aspect of sports drives the industry forward (Naseh et al., 2020). However, the influx of money has led to the emergence of underground economy elements in sports, including corruption, collusion, match-fixing, tax evasion, and lack of transparency (Sokolova, 2019). To understand these factors, it is crucial to define the underground economy. Schneider (2010) defines it as unregistered economic activities, dividing the economy into official

and unofficial sectors. Mehrabi (2011) considers it to include legal and illegal activities not approved by society and authorities. Examples range from stolen goods trade and drug trafficking to unreported income and tax evasion (Mehrabi et al., 2011). Football, due to its size and financial resources, is particularly prone to the underground economy. Organized crime groups may support clubs and launder money through legal businesses, including advertising and sponsorship contracts (De Sanctis, 2014). Lack of financial oversight in football allows illicit funds to be injected and laundered through investments and sponsorships (FATF, 2009). Corruption is a consequence, affecting both competition outcomes and organizational structures in sports events (Nunkoo et al., 2018).

Sports industry has been implicated in corruption, particularly with the legalization of the online gambling market, which facilitates money laundering due to the swift circulation of money and international reach (TOMIC, 2022). The online gambling market is highly profitable, with a global value of \$53.7 billion in 2019, and expected rapid growth in the future (TOMIC, 2022). Mismanagement of the sports sector can have adverse consequences, including undermining fair play, weakening the rule of law, encouraging deviant behavior, and leading to a loss of interest from spectators (Andreff, 2018; Weitz-Shapiro & Winters, 2017). If left uncontrolled, this phenomenon can dismantle institutions and the legal and social structure of a country, posing a threat to the integrity of sports (Olmos, Bellido & Román-Aso, 2020; Morriconi, 2020). Sports managers face significant challenges in dealing with this issue and must be prepared to address it (Kihl et al., 2017; Gorse & Chadwick, 2011). In Iran, reports suggest that betting has influenced sports event outcomes, and sports have become lucrative for mafia groups, with football leaders, coaches, and players allegedly involved in managing betting sites or participating in bets with collusion or bribes involving coaches and referees to manipulate game results (Mansori, 2019; Zareian et al., 2019).

Corruption in the economy and society has long-term detrimental effects, necessitating an understanding of the factors contributing to the underground economy (Dimant, 2014; Montodoro, Cicchetti, Yelnia, & Allegrini, 2021). Media coverage and anti-corruption movements have negatively impacted the image of sports and its governing bodies (Hallmann, Dickson, & Giese, 2020). Several studies have examined the underground economy in sports and identified specific factors. Sack (1991) links income disparities among athletes to collusion and under-the-table transactions in American college sports. Sugden (2007) associates the expansion of football fields with the emergence of the underground economy in football. Levy (2015) points to increased football turnover and transnational financial transactions as factors leading to money laundering in sports. Dimant & Deutscher (2015) highlight the international nature and diverse sports fields as

contributors to corruption. Several factors related to the underground economy in sports have been identified in various studies. Zhanabikov (2022) reveals a positive relationship between direct tax illegality and the hidden economy. George, Oliva & Aguiar (2021) associate the growth of the underground economy with a low tax culture and tax increases. Schneider (2010) highlights the tax burden, complexity, vague laws and regulations, administrative inefficiency, excessive government involvement, and mismanagement as driving factors toward the informal economy. Zareian, Afrozeh, & Ashrafi (2019) identify tax transparency, legal loopholes, tax payment culture, fraud, concealment, and management loopholes as examples of the underground economy in Iranian professional sports. Kamal (2007) suggests that higher taxes incentivize individuals to shift to the informal sector to evade tax burdens. Hosseini, Salimi & Tayibi (2020) draw attention to widespread tax evasion among coaches and football clubs in Iran. Misuse of betting platforms is considered a significant factor in the emergence of the underground economy, as indicated by Tomic (2022); Mollaii et al. (2021); Bill et al. (2018); Palmer (2015); Keshkar et al. (2020). Inadequate regulation and supervision of sports betting enable organized crime's infiltration into sports (Palmer, 2015). Participation in online betting and lack of supervision influence the underground economy (Killik et al., 2018). The volume of regulations and weak laws contribute to the underground economy (Ashraf & Kamal, 2019; Guderzi et al., 2010; Friedman et al., 2000). The state of the economy, substantial government involvement, state ownership, and monopoly in sports organizations are also factors contributing to corruption and the underground economy (Beshrabadi, 2011; Pham, 2017; Mansouri, 2019).

Given the significant importance of the sports industry and its role in job creation, involving various segments of society such as children, teenagers, youth, women, families, producers, and other groups, as well as the media's sensitivity to corruption in sports, failure to prevent the spread of this phenomenon and its subsequent corruptions will have far-reaching consequences. These consequences include the dominance of capitalism in football, violation of the philosophy of sports centered on healthy and fair competition, damage to the reputation and social standing of football, undermining meritocracy, and diminishing the motivation of both healthy individuals and aspiring athletes. Additionally, it leads to a loss of fans and television viewership, resulting in diminished support from financial sponsors. Furthermore, an extensive review of the research literature reveals that the topic of the underground economy has been a vital and current subject within the scientific community.

The review of the research literature has identified two significant issues. Firstly, researchers attribute different factors as the cause of the underground economy, indicating a lack of consensus. Secondly, economic issues are interconnected and should be examined as a whole. Investigating only

a single factor provides incomplete information. However, due to the vastness of the underground economy, researchers have primarily analyzed individual factors, and comprehensive research on the underground economy in sports, particularly in professional football in Iran, remains lacking. Hence, conducting comprehensive research to investigate the factors contributing to the expansion of the underground economy in professional football in Iran is crucial. Recognizing that the first step in solving a problem is gaining a thorough and adequate understanding of the problem itself, this research aims to analyze the economic factors of Iranian professional football.

2. METHODS

The participants in this research consisted of experts and knowledgeable individuals in the field of sports economics. The purposive sampling method was employed to select participants, resulting in a sample size of 12 individuals. Out of the 12 questionnaires distributed, three were incomplete, leaving a total of nine questionnaires for analysis. The data obtained from these experts was analyzed using the Analytical Hierarchy Process (AHP) through a paired comparison questionnaire. In the current study, the AHP method was used to determine the weights and prioritize the expanding components of the economy. The paired comparison questionnaire asked the experts about the relative importance of these components. Expert Choice version 11 software was utilized to calculate the component weights. The inconsistency rate, an index measuring the consistency of experts' responses to evaluations and pairwise comparisons, was employed to assess the consistency of the questionnaire. If the inconsistency rate is below 0.1, the comparison matrix is considered consistent and reliable. In this case, the inconsistency rate of the questionnaire was 0.01, indicating that the group consolidation matrix of pairwise comparisons for the components exhibited acceptable consistency.

3. RESULTS

The AHP method was employed to determine the weights of the components and prioritize the constituent elements of the underground economy. In the paired comparison questionnaire, the following questions were posed: What is the relative importance of the components of the underground economy based on their paired comparison? And how should the components of the underground economy be prioritized? The Expert Choice software was subsequently utilized to compute the component weights. The questionnaire was completed by a group of 9 male experts, consisting of a club manager, student, lecturer and researcher, coach, and former football player. These experts had an average age of 40.67 (± 10.21) and an average work experience of 12.66

(±8.80). Among the participants, 3 individuals (33.33 percent) held a master's degree, while 6 individuals (66.7 percent) possessed a Ph.D. degree. Table 1 contains the matrix of paired group comparisons of the constituent components of the underground economy.

Table 1. Matrix of paired group comparisons of the components of the underground economy.

	Unsystematic betting market	Weakness of tax culture in sports	Susceptibility of football to money laundering	Weakness of laws and tightening of prohibitions	Defective economic policies	Organizational structural inefficiency in football	Management weakness in football	Government intervention and government rents	Corruption	Institutional functional curve
Unsystematic betting market	1	2.3469	1.88467	3.85179	6.25688	3.04762	2.58667	5.98951	5.94891	1.44225
Weakness of tax culture in sports		1	1.08006	1.30264	6.63388	2.02635	1.66285	3.29615	3.67061	1.31798
Susceptibility of football to money laundering			1	1.20442	3.40322	2.72917	1.56402	2.73773	4.23412	1.14257
Weakness of laws and tightening of prohibitions				1	4.31269	1.27074	1.07422*	2.66234	4.60624	1.08490
Defective economic policies					1	*2.62313	*2.71817	*1.04604	1.25772	*3.49476
Organizational structural inefficiency in football						1	*19581.1	2.33013	3.2797	*40499.1
Management weakness in football							1	3.04762	3.25626	*1.25092
Government intervention and government rents								1	1.1904	*2.20156
Corruption									1	2.43204
Institutional functional curve										1

* Row to column preferred

Table 2 and Figure 1 present the prioritized components of corruption and the lack of will to combat it (weight 0.215), faulty economic policies (weight 0.209), government intervention and government rents (weight 0.170), objection structure within the football federation and inadequate club ownership policies (weight 0.086), insufficient adherence to professional football principles (weight 0.069), the severity of regulations and lack of effective rules (weight 0.065), low Institutional quality index and exploitation of football's social status (weight 0.061), selective implementation of international anti-money laundering standards (weight 0.050), tax evasion and structural issues

within the taxation system (weight 0.047), and inadequate capacity and infrastructure for betting (weight 0.028). These components have been assigned a priority ranking on a scale from 1 to 10.

Table 2. Prioritizing the expanding components of the underground economy

	Components	Weight	Priority
1	Unsystematic betting market	0.028	10
2	Weakness of the tax system and culture in sports	0.047	9
3	Susceptibility of football to money laundering	0.050	8
4	Weakness of laws and tightening of prohibitions	0.065	6
5	Defective economic policies	0.209	2
6	Structural and organizational inefficiency in football	0.086	4
7	Management weakness in football	0.069	5
8	Government intervention and government rents	0.170	3
9	Corruption	0.215	1
10	Institutional functional curve	0.061	7

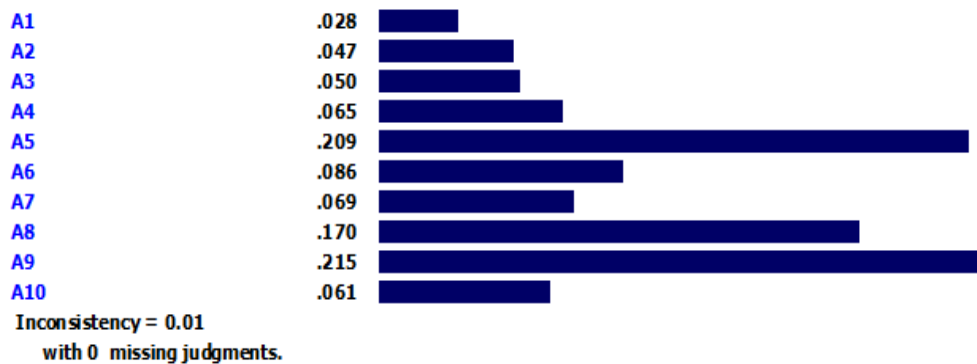


Figure 1. Prioritizing the expanding components of the underground economy

A1: Unsystematic betting market. **A2:** Weakness of tax culture system in sports. **A3:** Susceptibility of football to money laundering. **A4:** Weakness of laws and intensification of prohibitions. **A5:** Defective economic policies. **A6:** Structural and organizational inefficiency in football. **A7:** Managerial weakness in football. **A8:** Government intervention and government rents. **A9:** Corruption. **A10:** Institutional functional curve

4. DISCUSSION

The analysis using the Analytic Hierarchy Process (AHP) identifies ten main categories that contribute to the expansion of the underground economy in professional Iranian football. One significant category is the weak tax culture among athletes, which aligns with findings from studies by Oliva & Aguiar (2021); Zhanabikov (2022); Hosseini (2014); Kamal (2007). Athletes and coaches often transition to the informal sector to evade increased tax burdens, influenced by the complexity of

the tax system. George, Oliva & Aguiar (2021) highlight the role of a low tax culture and increased tax burden in the expansion of the underground economy. Schneider (2010) also emphasizes the tax burden as a primary factor, stating that tax systems become convoluted over time, facilitating tax evasion. Vague laws, inefficient administrative structures, excessive government intervention, monopolies, and mismanagement also contribute to the transition to the informal economy. Zhanabikov (2022) reports a positive relationship between indirect taxes and the hidden economy. To address this issue, sports officials and managers should focus on improving tax legislation, simplifying tax procedures, and ensuring strict implementation, fostering tax justice in Iran's football industry.

Another significant category is the managerial weakness in football. The findings of this research align with the studies conducted by Elahi (2009); Ali Dost (2020); Naseh (2020). Elahi (2009) emphasizes that the sports system in Iran has encountered numerous challenges due to management issues, particularly in the development of clubs' revenue sources. In contrast to professional football clubs in Europe and even Asia, which generate substantial annual incomes from television broadcasting rights, advertising, financial sponsorships, ticket sales, and other avenues, Iranian professional football not only lacks the opportunity to earn legal income through television broadcasting rights but also fails to fully capitalize on other potential revenue streams. It appears that significant income growth in the football industry cannot be expected until the club ownership system is further developed. Furthermore, enhancing the professional club management system in the country's football industry can contribute to the overall economy of the nation.

The lack of systemization in the betting market is identified as one of the main categories contributing to the expansion of the underground economy in Iranian professional football. The absence of a systematic framework in the football betting market leads to increased corruption and the growth of the underground economy. Shawan (2018) highlights the significant underground turnover in American sports after the prohibition of gambling, emphasizing the need for legalization to promote transparency and generate tax revenues. Palmer (2015) emphasizes the role of inadequate laws and oversight in enabling organized criminals to infiltrate the sports industry. Keshkar, Javid & Bahadur (2020) suggest that banning goods or services leads to the emergence of an illegal market. Additionally, rising team ownership costs and the lack of economic viability contribute to collusion and illegal betting, as indicated by Bill, Lastra & Band (2018). Sports managers should develop betting regulations that align with national religious characteristics to prevent corruption and maintain the social status of football in society.

Another significant category is the weakness of laws and the tightening of prohibitions, which contributes to the expansion of the underground economy in Iranian professional football. Zhanabikov (2022) states in his research that stringent and complex regulations drive individuals away from the formal economy. This point is also highlighted by Friedman, Johnson, Kaufman, and Lobaton (2000) in their research, where countries with extensive regulations tend to have larger underground economies, while countries with comprehensive laws successfully maintain lower levels of underground economic activities. The research findings of Ashraf and Kamal (2019) demonstrate a positive relationship between the volume of regulations and the underground economy, with a 1% increase in regulations leading to an average 10% increase in the underground economy. As regulations become more burdensome, economic activities become challenging for individuals, prompting them to turn to the underground economy to evade excessive regulations. Certain laws implemented in recent years within the football federation have actually fueled the expansion of the underground economy in football. For example, the law related to contract ceilings for football players has resulted in under-the-table and off-the-record payments. Therefore, lawmakers should seek input from experts, researchers, and draw from the experiences of other countries when drafting laws. The aim should be to formulate easily enforceable and comprehensive laws instead of increasing the number of regulations.

Faulty economic policies also contribute to the underground economy. The research conducted by Ashraf & Kamal (2019) supports this notion, stating that inflation has a positive relationship with the size of the underground economy. As the price level rises, the incentive for consumers and producers to engage in underground activities and evade reporting to tax authorities increase. Higher inflation leads to increased labor demand for higher wages. Gul (2019) asserts that inflation and economic shocks, such as embargoes and wars, contribute to the growth of the underground economy, and controlling them can help prevent the emergence of the shadow economy. Economic fluctuations resulting from sanctions imposed by other countries, inflation, and other economic factors erode people's confidence, leading them to engage in underground economic activities. Consequently, increasing economic pressures hinder investment, transparency, and promote corruption. It is crucial to address the consequences of economic fluctuations in football and implement solutions to minimize their impact on the country's football economy.

Government intervention and government rents were found to be effective in expanding the underground economy in Iranian professional football. This finding is consistent with the research conducted by Zhanabikov (2022); Beshrabadi (2011); (2017), which all highlight the prevalence of a large underground economy in countries with a significant state-controlled economy. Mansouri,

Rezaei, Sajjadi & Mohammadi (2019) state in their research that state ownership and monopoly in sports organizations contribute to corruption. Pham (2017) demonstrates a direct relationship between the expansion of government surveillance and the size of the underground economy, as observed in various countries such as Peru, France, Ukraine, and Russia. State-owned clubs may enjoy special privileges, such as tax exemptions or easier movement of financial resources and players, thereby creating an imbalance with private teams. Private teams, unable to compete with government teams, may resort to criminal activities like money laundering and betting due to weaker audit and monitoring mechanisms.

Another significant category in the expansion of the underground economy in Iranian professional football is the suitability of the football environment for money laundering. Levi (2021) conducted research on money laundering in football and highlighted the extensive occurrence of money laundering in the professional football sector. Meshkat (2020) notes the increasing trend of investment in football, which, as one of the world's most popular sports, provides ample opportunities for money laundering. Levi (2015) explains that the unexpected growth and global financial transactions associated with football have made it an attractive target for money laundering. Furthermore, Levi (2021) reveals that countries that adhere to anti-money laundering standards experience fewer instances of money laundering and have smaller underground economies. Conversely, countries that neglect these standards tend to have slower economic growth and larger underground economies. The research findings indicate that weak financial monitoring processes create favorable conditions for money laundering. Additionally, due to the widespread popularity of football, it becomes an appealing avenue for corruption networks to conceal illicit financial resources. The international player transfer market, coupled with non-compliance with international banking standards and Iranian banks being subjected to sanctions, further exposes football to vulnerabilities associated with money laundering.

Organizational structural inefficiency is identified as one of the main categories contributing to the expansion of the underground economy in Iranian professional football. Dost (2020); Shujie, Heydari, Asdalahi, Esfahani & Gol-Goli (2021) align with this finding, highlighting structural and brokerage issues as factors of corruption in football. Deldar, Shahpar Tawfiq & Bagheri (2016) emphasize the challenges posed by political and structural obstacles in the economic development of Iranian football clubs, including decision-making influenced by politicians, lack of strategic planning, and management instability. To address these issues, Iranian professional football should strive to align with professional standards and draw inspiration from FIFA and the Asian Football Confederation. Corruption is another major category contributing to the expansion of the

underground economy in Iranian professional football. Shastak & Yasiuk (2022); Dimant & Deutscher (2015) mention various forms of corruption, including match-fixing, doping, bribery, and fraud. The complex nature of corruption in sports is exacerbated by the commercialization of the industry and affects aspects such as player transfers, internal security, intellectual property, and the influence of the gambling industry. Efforts to combat corruption are crucial for the integrity and sustainability of the sports industry.

The institutional functional curve is another significant category that affects the expansion of the underground economy in Iranian professional football. Effective performance by government institutions in a country leads to increased public trust and reduced reliance on the underground economy. As mentioned, a poor country must develop its infrastructure and institutions to achieve economic prosperity. Sykoios, Missio & Dergiades (2021) conclude in their research that countries with better governance quality exhibit a smaller underground economy, whereas weaker governance is associated with a larger underground economy. Yousefi & Naseri (2021) emphasize the benefits individuals gain from their involvement in football, such as access to exclusive opportunities like banking facilities, communication networks, and tax exemptions. These benefits create resistance to reforming existing processes in football. Rentier economies, characterized by government size, economic monopolies, and increased corruption, ultimately lead to decreased institutional quality. Therefore, it can be inferred that institutional quality significantly impacts the level of the underground economy. Improving institutional quality is essential for enhancing the football economy in the Islamic Republic of Iran.

5. CONCLUSIONS

The authors obtained the following conclusions: Ten important factors contribute to the underground economy in Iranian professional football. The expansion of this underground economy could continue unless these factors are effectively addressed. The role of taxation is emphasized as a powerful tool for economic regulation. It is crucial to promote a tax culture by implementing clear and simplified tax laws and reasonable tax collection procedures. Regarding betting, specific rules should be established for Iranian football that take into account national and religious characteristics, while also accepting and regulating betting activities. Independent institutions should be created to combat match-fixing and other issues arising from betting. Income generated in the virtual space should be transparent and subject to taxation to prevent potential consequences such as sponsors earning significant amounts of money. Financial flows, particularly from investment institutions like

oil mining and industrial companies, should be closely monitored and held accountable within the context of football. Judicial bodies in football need to be overseen, inspected, and reformed to enhance coordination and cooperation, ensuring fair decisions and intensifying the fight against corruption, especially in the private sector. Shifting from traditional to electronic accounting methods in football clubs, along with the development of standardized financial statement recording guidelines and the establishment of executive and disciplinary safeguards, can help prevent corruption and reduce the underground economy. Privatization efforts should include all teams and be supported by a platform that facilitates the preparation and acceptance of privatization, while embracing principles of free competition to provide equal opportunities for all clubs.

6. REFERENCES

- Ashraf, O., & Kemal, M. A. (2019). Exploring the Determinants of Underground Economy of Pakistan. *Pakistan Institute of Development Economics, 2019*, 163.
- Bird, R. M, Martinez-Vazquez, J, & Torgler, B. (2006). Societal institutions and tax effort in developing countries. *Economic Analysis and Policy, 38*, 55-71.
- De Sanctis F. M. (2014). *Football, Gambling, and Money Laundering*. Springer International Publishing.
- Deldar, E., Tawfigh, A. S., & Bagheri, G. (2016). Investigate the Obstacles of Club Privatization in Iranian Professional Football League. *Sport Management Studies, 8(35)*, 97-118.
- Elahi, A., Sajjadi, N., Khabiri, M., Abrishami, H. (2009). Barriers to the Development of Revenues from Sponsorship in Iran Football Industry. *Journal of Sport Management, 1(1)*, 189-202.
- FATF. (2009). *Report, Money Laundering through the Football Sector*. OECD Publishing.
- Hoseini, M., Salimi, M., & Tayebi, M. (2020). Survey of People's Participation Factors in Sports Betting; Case Study: Football Sports. *New Trends in Sport Management, 7(27)*, 147-160.
- Keshkar, S., Javid, F., & Bahador, H. (2020). Pathology of virtual football betting and prevention strategies. *Sports Marketing Studies, 1(3)*, 105-132.
- Lastra, R., Bell, P., & Bond, C. (2018). Sports betting and the integrity of Australian sport: Athletes' and non-athletes' perceptions of betting-motivated corruption in sport. *International Journal of Law, Crime and Justice, 52*, 185-198.

- Levi, M. (2021). Making sense of professional enablers' involvement in laundering organized crime proceeds and of their regulation. *Trends in Organized Crime*, 24(1), 96-110.
- Levy, S. M. (2015). *Federal Money Laundering Regulation: Banking, Corporate, & Securities Compliance*. Wolters Kluwer.
- Mansouri, H., Rezaei, Z., Sajadi, N., & Mohammadi, M. (2019). Identification and Prioritization of Financial Corruption Indicators in Iran's Sports Organizations Using Hierarchical Analysis Approach. *Sport Management and Development*, 8(3), 58-70.
- Mehrabi, B. H., Kouchakzadeh, S., & Taboli, H. (2011). Whether shadow economy threatens economic growth? (case study: Iran). *Iranian Journal of Economic Research*, 15(45), 181-198.
- Meshkat, M. (2020). The FATF' Strategy on Money Laundering in Football Sector. *Journal of Criminal Law Research*, 9(33), 47-79.
- Naseh, M., Yazdi, A. H., & Elahi, A. (2020). Barriers of Long-Term Relationship between Iran Football Pro League Clubs and Sponsor Companies and Organizations. *Sports Marketing Studies*, 1(3), 1-25.
- Oliva, M., & Aguiar, L. L. (2021). Offshoring & leaking: Cristiano Ronaldo's tax evasion, and celebrity in neoliberal times. *Popular Communication*, 19(3), 178-192.
- Pham, T. (2017). Impacts of globalization on the informal sector: Empirical evidence from developing Countries. *Economic Modelling*, 62, 207–218.
- Psychoyios, D., Missiou, O., & Dergiades, T. (2021). Energy based estimation of the shadow economy: The role of governance quality. *The Quarterly Review of Economics and Finance*, 80, 797-808.
- Rezaei, S., & Esmaeili, M. (2019). Broadcasting Rights in the Iranian Football Industry. *Sport Management and Development*, 8(1), 86-101.
- Sack, A. L. (1991). The underground economy of college football. *Sociology of Sport Journal*, 8(1), 1-15.
- Schneider, F. (2010). The Influence of Public Institutions on the Shadow Economies: An Empirical Investigation for OECD Countries. *Review of Law and Economics*, 6, 441-468.

- Shajie, K., Heydari, R., Asadollahi, E., esfahani, M., Gol Goli, M. (2021). Hot bench: Pathology of frequent changes of coaches in Iranian Premier League. *Sport Management Studies*, 13(68), 130-170.
- Souto, M. (2013). Money laundering, new technologies, FATF and Spanish penal reform. *Journal of Money Laundering Control*, 16(3), 1-37.
- Sugden, J. (2007). Inside the grafters' game: an ethnographic examination of football's underground economy. *Journal of Sport and Social Issues*, 31(3), 242-258.
- Yousefi, B., & Naseri, A. (2021). Identification of the problems of entering the wealthy owners in Iranian football using Interpretive-Structural Modeling Technique. *Sport Management Studies*, 13(65), 79-108.
- Zareian, H., Afroozeh, M. S., & Afshari, M. (2019). Identifying the Examples of Shadow Economy Affecting the Development of Professional Sports in Iran. *Sport Management and Development*, 7(4), 185-206.
- Zhanabekov, S. (2022). Robust determinants of the shadow economy. *Bulletin of Economic Research*, 74(4), 1017-1052.

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS

All authors listed have made a substantial, direct and intellectual contribution to the work, and approved it for publication.

CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

FUNDING

This research received no external funding.

COPYRIGHT

© Copyright 2023: Publication Service of the University of Murcia, Murcia, Spain.