

Sport Management: Challenges in the Management of Football in the Case of Iran

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Submitted to the
Institute of Graduate Studies and Research
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of

Master
of
Business Administration

Eastern Mediterranean University
June 2013
Gazimağusa, North Cyprus

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ABSTRACT

Traditional management in football is the main problem of football in Iran which prevents growth. The traditional managers of football do not have updated knowledge to manage professional football of Iran in modern environment. But today's world is the world of changes in the moment. Resistance against changes do not have any results unless failure, whereas, the nature of traditional management is strange with these changes. Traditional managers sometimes sacrifice the advantages of clubs and national benefits for their gaining. This is the clear issue that is visible in the Football of Iran. The weaknesses of management in clubs can be one of the reasons of backwardness in Iran's national football in the world. So, by applying modern management in the level of clubs can dramatically help the national team of a country. The clubs should employ the available management potential and should use updated and intelligent managers in order to direct the teams and consequently the national team of Iran to the high ranks.

The problem which is the reason of this study is the backwardness of Iran's football. The hypothesis for this problem is the weakness in the management of clubs. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to investigate the management of clubs to know if their managers are familiar with modern football and effective factors of modern management in football. In addition, it is aimed to find out whether the weaknesses of football in Iran are because of weak and traditional management of football at the level of clubs. To reach above-mentioned aims the management of Damash-e-Guilan Football Club

(Damash FC) has been investigated which can be a good representative of clubs in the Premier League of Iran (Khalij-e-fars League).

The applied method in this study consists of combination of quantitative and qualitative research methods. After literature review, study has been carried on by focusing on the case of Damash FC. At first, in the case study, information about the history of both football in Iran and Damash FC have been gathered. In the next step, the interview with the managers of Damash has been held and the questionnaires have been distributed between people who are related with football. It is concluded that because of lacks in infrastructures and hardware, it is difficult and in some case impossible to pass traditional management toward modern management.

Keywords: Traditional Football, Modern Football, Football in Iran, Damash FC

ÖZ

Futbolda geleneksel yönetim, İran'da futbolun en önemli sorunudur ve bu futbolun gelişimine engel olmaktadır. İran'ın geleneksel futbol yöneticileri modern bir ortamda profesyonel futbolu yönetmek için güncel bilgiye sahip değildirler. Fakat bugünün dünyasında değişiklikler gereklidir. Değişikliklere karşı direnç, başarısızlıkların artmasına neden olabilir. Geleneksel yönetim doğası bu değişiklikler ile tersdir. Geleneksel yöneticiler bazen kendi kazançları için kulübün menfaatini ve ulusal faydaları feda edebilirler. Bu İran Futbolunda sıkça görülen bir konudur. İran'ın milli futbolunun geri kalmışlığın nedenlerinden biri de kulüplerin iyi yönetilememesi olarak görülebilir. Kulüplerin modern yönetim olguları uygulaması ülkenin milli takımının da başarılı olmasına yardımcı olabilecektir. Kulüpler, profesyonel ve eğitimli yöneticiler istihdam ederek futbolun gelişimine ve İran'ın milli takım seviyesinde de yükselmesine katkıda bulunabilirler .

Bu çalışmanın yapılmasının amacı, İran futbolunun diğer ülkelerle kıyaslandığında geride kalmasıdır. Bu sorun için varsayım kulüplerin iyi yönetilmemesidir. Bu nedenle, bu çalışmanın amacı, yöneticilerin modern futbol ve modern futbol yönetiminde etkili olan faktörlere aşina olup olmadığını ortaya çıkarmaktır. Ayrıca, İran'da futbolun eksik yanlarının, kulüplerin zayıf ve geleneksel yönetim olgularına sahip olup olmadığının belirlenmesi amaçlanmaktadır. Yukarıda belirtilen amaçlara ulaşmak amacıyla İran

Premier Liginde (Khalij-E-fars Ligi) yer alan Damash-E-Guilan (Damash FC) Futbol Kulübü araştırılmıştır.

Bu çalışmada uygulanan yöntem nicel ve nitel araştırma yöntemlerinin kombinasyonundan oluşmaktadır. Literatür taramasından sonra, çalışma Damash FC kulübüne odaklanarak gerçekleştirilmiştir. Öncelikle, vaka çalışmasında, İran ve Damash FC'nin futbol tarihi hakkında bilgi toplanmıştır. Bir sonraki adımda, Damash FC yöneticileri ile görüşme gerçekleştirilmiş ve anketler futbol ile ilgili kişilere dağıtılmıştır. Sonuç olarak, altyapı ve donanımın eksik olması nedeniyle, İran futbolunda doğrudan geleneksel yönetimden modern yönetime geçmek bazan zor hatta bazı durumlarda imkansız olabilir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Geleneksel Futbol, Modern Futbol, İran Futbol, Damash FC

I dedicate this manuscript to my family that supports me in all circumstances.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I want to thank my kind supervisor Asst. Prof. Dr. Dođan Ünlücan not only for his supervisory, supporting and guiding for this thesis also for providing me the opportunity for researching, reading and writing.

In continue my great thank is for sympathetic Assoc. Prof. Dr. Mustafa Tümer who helps all the students patiently in all circumstances regardless to their nationality and do not let any student thinks that is stranger in North Cyprus. Besides I want to thank my family and friends who supported and prayed amorously for my success.

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Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

Football as one of the most popular sports in the world is also on the top consideration among sport-lovers in Iran. The impressive growth of information technology and media have converted today's globe into a village that information transfer is done in less than one second. The increase in the knowledge and awareness of the fans has led the increase in their expectations from their favorite clubs. Nowadays, the football fans in Iran like other countries are not the same as fans of 30 or 40 years ago, whereas their interaction with favorite clubs has become totally different and this issue has become one of the greatest problems of the traditional football managers in Iran. Traditional managers who manage professional football in modern environment mostly do not have enough knowledge to navigate football clubs and organizations and do not employ consultants and experts and in some cases even do not know the strength of media and are strange with modern football. These sport managers harm the sick football of Iran either intentionally or unintentionally. This research will investigate whether the problem of Iran's football is related to its sport managers or not and it is intended to find out if these managers benefit from updated knowledge and modern sport management in the field of football.

1.1 Problem

The problem of this study is the current crisis in Iran's football which is suffering from traditional football management. It is important to know if the football management is conducted by updated sport managers which are benefited from special knowledge in this field and modern football management.

1.2 Aims and Objectives

The aim of this research is to know the factors that a modern manager of football should consider in order to be successful and the essential knowledge in growing environment of competitive football in Iran. It is also objected to investigate if the managers of football organizations and clubs in Iran are flexible in different circumstances and can react properly in crisis situation, serve appropriate organizing, planning strategic factors, and employ expert consultants in order to manage this favorite sport of this country.

1.3 Research Questions

1. What is modern thinking in football?
2. What are the approaches for converting traditional thinking into modern one in football?
3. Is traditional thinking one of the greatest problems in the football of Iran?
4. What are the weaknesses of football managers of Iran?

1.4 Focus

The focus of this manuscript is the challenges in the football management in Iran.

1.5 Methodology

The method that will be applied in this thesis consists of quantitative and qualitative research methods which case study is applied in it. In order to achieve the aims of the

study surveys is done by distributing questionnaire; interview is used and case study is applied. To collect data for literature review, books, articles and reports of conferences will be studied. Interviewing active football managers of Damash FC in Iran and scheming questionnaire to distribute between the people who are related to football are planned to do in order to gain answers of the research questions.

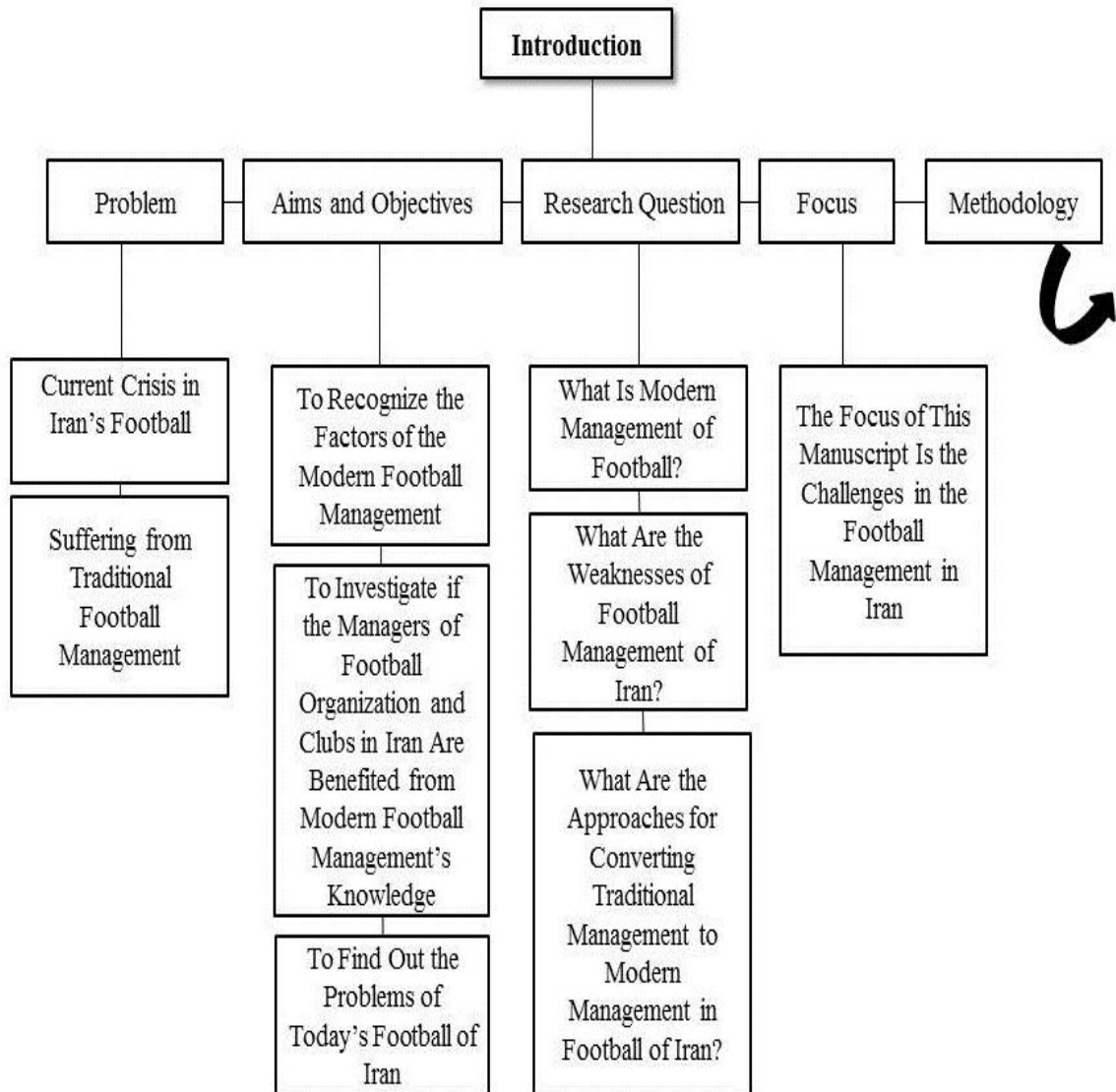


Figure 1. General View of Introduction

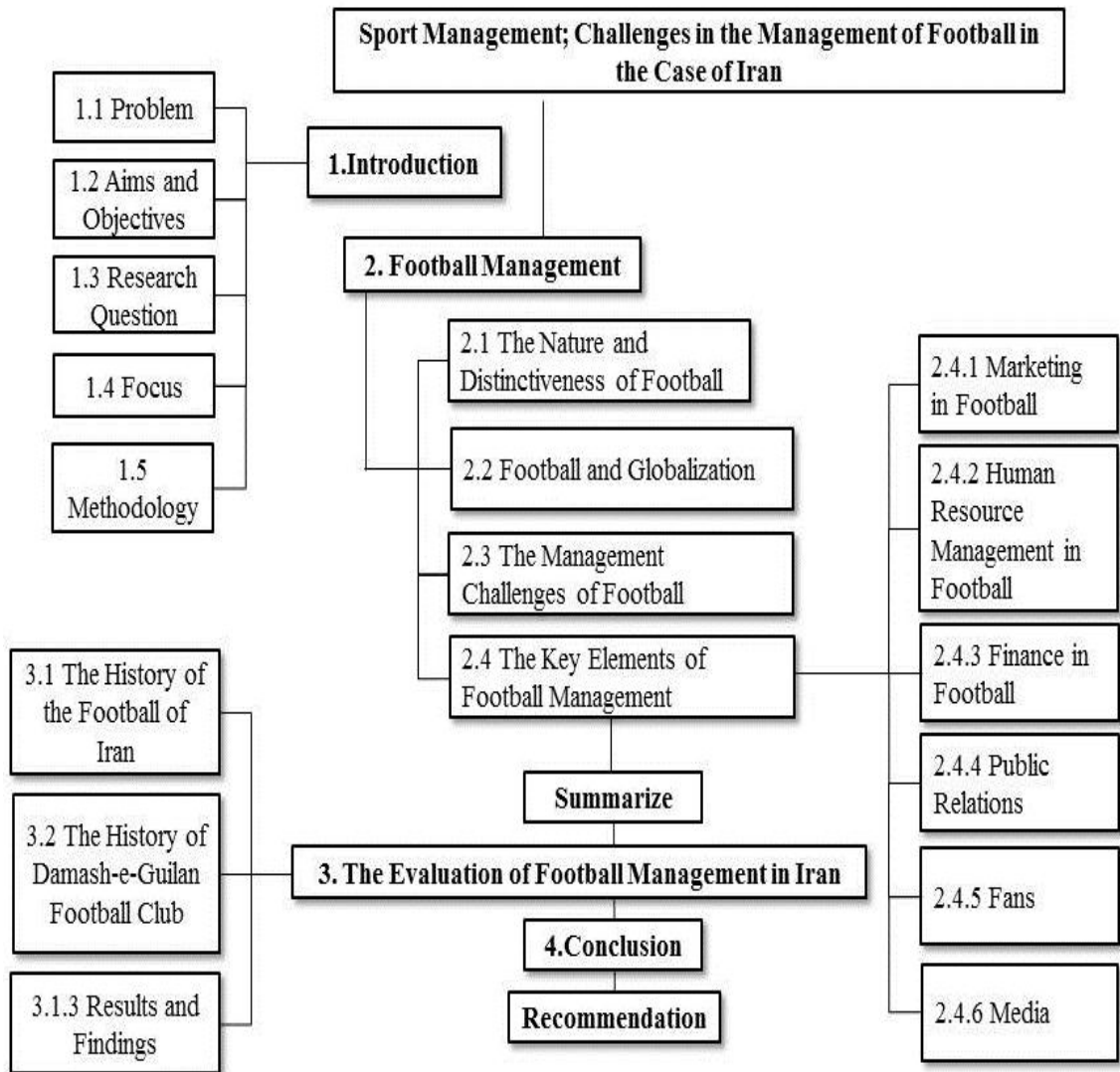


Figure 2. General View of This Study

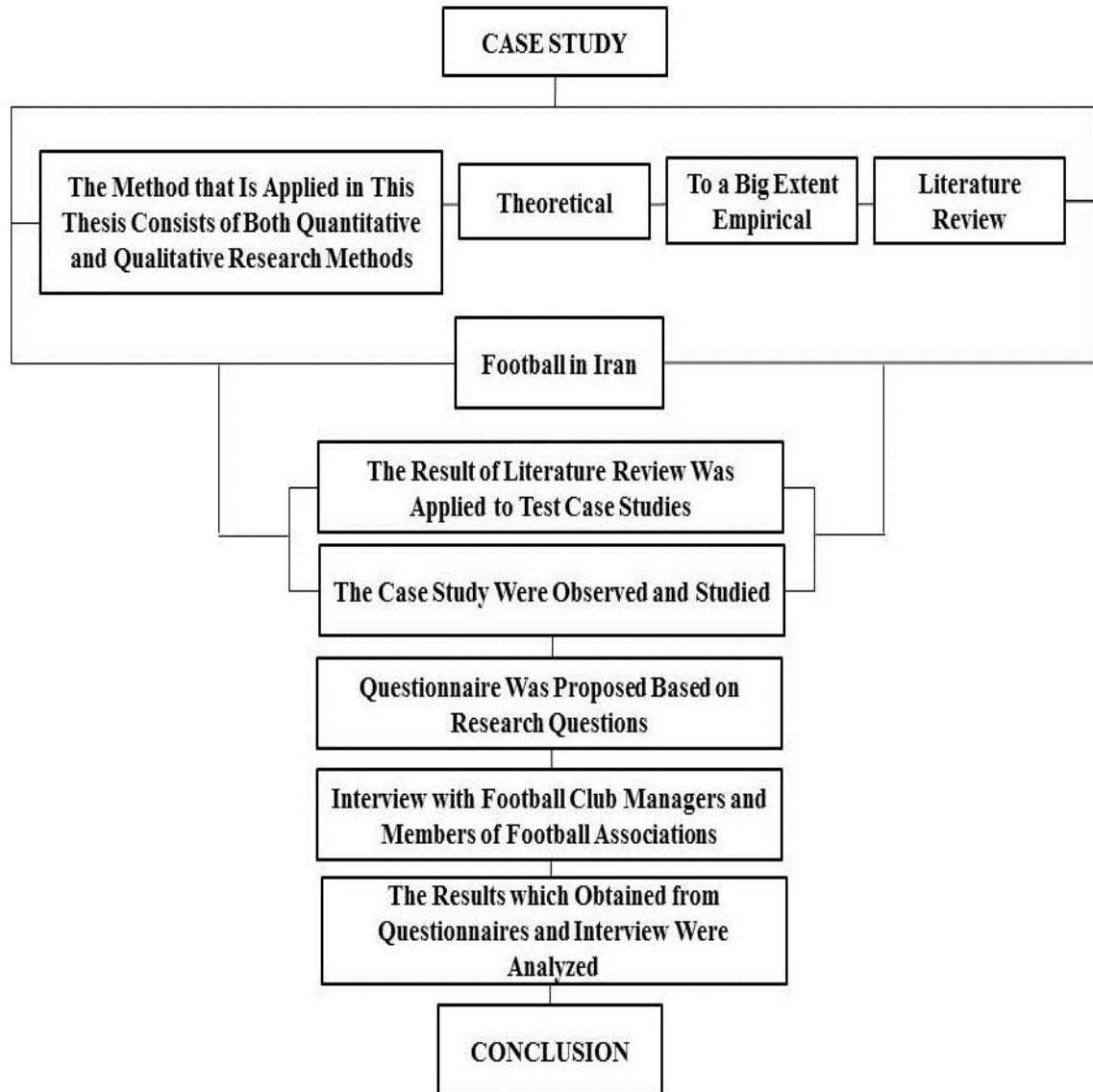


Figure 3. General View of Methodology in Case Study

Chapter 2

FOOTBALL MANAGEMENT

2.1 The Nature and Distinctiveness of Football

There is a question that what football is. To answer this question it is necessary to consider economists. Meale (1964) said the nature of football is being uncertain about the outcome in a match between two teams. In this uncertainty a great number of people, organization and groups are engaged in football. Uncertainty leads to have a sense of expectation and excitement. If the tension or drama are taken away and people lose their interests; uncertainty will be promoted and people will respond to this circumstance in various ways. Some of them will attend to watch games closely, others will watch matches on television, and plenty of people will read newspaper and magazines and follow the news of games and players for pure pleasure and enjoyment so that these responses leads to financial revenues generation (Neale, 1964).

From the psychological viewpoint, people will consider the football mostly as the basis of success and in some cases failure. Many people use football with the term “their” club, “their” team or “their” sport to show their affiliation to a geographic region, or to express their social, political or economic values. If the fundamental of football is based on uncertainty outcome so retaining the strength of uncertainty undoubtedly will become the most vital challenge in the management of football (Hamil & Chadwick, 2009).

2.2 Football and Globalization

Football became the most popular in the world especially after international diffusion of football by British in late nineteenth century. Football as the global game measure various societies in all countries; almost 250 million person who participate directly, an estimated 1.4 billion people who have interest, and football's tournament, the finals of football world cup, have almost cumulative 33.4 billion television audience all over the globe. Football games' unparalleled cross cultural rapture have been recently considered financially. Based on statistics of FIFA, the worth of all the contrast under the control of FIFA was almost £ 4 billion, while the football's turn over in 2011 was around £ 250 billion which was equivalent to the GDP of Netherland (Walvin, 2001 in Giulianotti & Robertson, 2004).

In the 20th century, as people had more free time and communications were increased, then international football was begun and this game was developed and it caused to make it more popular. By entering 21st century, by the progresses in technology and fast changes in media, the impacts of internationalization and globalization, and the spread of business oriented thinking all sports and liberal economic began to transpire in all sports especially in football (Hamil & Chadwick, 2009).

Football is still considered as a hobby, a leisure activity and a celebration, whereas it is recognized as a complex industry which must be managed like a business. It is accepted that football is popular all around the world, and it is considered as a global game which transcends political, economic, cultural and social boundaries.

According to the figures reported by FIFA, there are 265 million football players all around the world who are registered and playing for almost 1.7 million teams in about 300000 official clubs. These figures confirm afore mentioned fact that football is a business. Although many of these football players' teams and clubs may play for pleasure and amusement, the top ranked clubs administrate such bushes, against their socio-cultural importance (FIFA, 2007).

2.3 The Management Challenges of Football

In order to describe the football's management challenges, it is necessary to explore the outstanding features of football through investigating four dominant management challenges; 1) the product and the market of that product, 2) the consumer of that product, 3) the business process, and 4) the strategy of management such as vision, mission and major goals (Dolles & Söderman, 2005).

2.3.1 The Football Package – The Products of Football and Their Markets

It is difficult to define the products of football because each person has his particular experience and expectations of the games and football events and they are related to the experiences of football. There, it can be concluded football offers more than service, experience and entertainment. There are six possible offerings from football package: 1) Teams, 2) football competitions and matches, 3) clubs, 4) football events and arenas, 5) football players, and 6) merchandise (Levitt, 1983 in Wolf, 1999).

2.3.2 Who Buys Football – The Consumers of Football

It is clear that cost and price is not the reason of fans to select on team compared to others. The related factors which influence the opinion of fans to attract toward teams include skilled players, excitement, fun and regional relation. Therefore, the various products of football introduce five different customers of football; 1) the fans and spectators, 2) the members of clubs, 3) the sponsors for clubs, 4) the media family, and 5) local communities (Dolles & Söderman, 2005).

2.3.3 The Business Process of Football – The Procedure of Creating Outcome

Unless merchandising, the business of football cannot produce and accumulate inventory to sell in the future in accordance with the most characteristic of football which is uncertainty of the outcomes of matches. So, the questions that come to consideration in the football business are how to create a skillful and good player and how to create a professional and good team (Dolles & Söderman, 2005).

2.3.4 The Strategic Management in Football – The Vision and Major Goals

Vision of a club is the highest and broadest objective of the football club which is a statement that shows in what position the club aspires to achieve in the following seasons. Also, this kind of statement is associated with the strategic purpose that is not about victory in one or two next games, whereas, it is the expectation of the club managers and trainers to be in the future such as being at international level or winning the championship league (Ewing, 2004).

Sports performance is the key success element to achieve the major goals of football clubs. Strategies can be planned for various tasks in the clubs, where the least amount of aggregation is only one particular activity, and the peak level of aggregation is related to all tasks in one club. League-level strategy can be one of the most logical extensions of above-mentioned distinction (Hamel & Prahalad, 1989).

2.4 Key Elements of Football Management

2.4.1 Marketing in Football

Almost all businesses are like this that a firm develops, after that produces and finally sell its product to consumers or buyers on an agreed price. Normann (2001) believes a service society that specifies the economy of “the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development” countries, needs a particular tangible output incorporated with a specific group of services to be prosperous (Normann, 2001). This is a fundamental service step which is considered like raw materials in many cases. Especially in financial services, home and car insurance, checking accounts and saving accounts are considered as identical services in consumers’ perspective, with choosing based on price and interest rates only. In this circumstance, companies to differentiate themselves go over services into “experiences” or “entertainments” (Levitt, 1983 in Wolf, 1999). For example, McDonald’s restaurant has offerings rather than just a meal, and it hosts birthday party of children. According to Pine II and Gilmore (1999), experiences are different offerings over services. They believe experiences must include a memorable offering which remains in the mind of consumers for a long time (Pine & Gilmore, 1999).

As it will be discussed, football business draws more than service, even more than experience and entertainment. In other word, football managers are confused to clearly identify their products. It is a problem which is resulted to some extent from the fact that each person has his/her specific expectation and experience from the football games and its events. There is not only one single specific product, entertainment or service that is offered by football clubs, whereas, there are five following probable offerings which are, football game, football merchandise, football players, football team, and football club (Dolles & Söderman, 2005).

- 1) The **football game** can be considered as a media event which millions of spectators follow it. These TV recordings also can be served as permanent library. These events which are recorded and shown by media affect the stadiums and arena which are stuck to the events and are converted from ordinary places into special places.
- 2) **Football merchandise** is the action of reselling goods which are not produced by the football clubs such as caps and scarves, flags and banners, training gear, team uniforms and fleeces, DVDs and videos of the clubs' game, pillows and blankets, watches, clock, tables, lamps and signs.
- 3) **Football players** and the development of players are one of the most concerning issues for football managers; football clubs and their scout to find talented young-aged players in their region in order to sign contracts with this aim that some of them may achieve to go in a professional team. By doing this, as the founded rules through governing body of FIFA, a club which employs a football

player who has unexpired contract with a former club has to pay a transfer, training or development fee.

- 4) It is obvious that football is a sport team which consists of eleven players. Whereas, eleven skillful players next to each other do not ensure the victory against opponents with good technique and planned strategy of playing. So, team leaders and coaches are the other products that are offered by this complicated business.
- 5) Football is a game which is played by the teams of clubs with antiquity. Many professionals and experts may be only a minor part of an organized club as club members (Dolles & Söderman, 2005).

It is important to know why supporters choose one team rather than another one. Undoubtedly, the expenditure is not the argument of supporters in the business area of football for fans, while, regional embeddedness, skilled players, excitement and fun are the probable reasons for choosing a team to support. Also, the corporate culture of the football club may be one of these reasons because fundamental culture can determine the values which are placed on football teams through consumers. Traditions and beliefs constitute this organizational culture and help supporters to discern it over other businesses and organizations and arouse a specified life into the foundation of structure (Mintzberg, 1989). Therefore, a broader approach to reach consumers is created in football that includes (1) the fan base which is consist of spectators and supporters, (2) the members of clubs, (3) the media, and (4) the sponsors.

Professional football has emerged as a beneficial business and has a great number of opportunities for football marketers to flourish. Professional football teams incorporate to produce a league product which is initially produced to provide entertainment for fans, but is sold to four particular groups: 1) fans who by attending the games, watching the games on television, following their teams' news on newspaper and other medias and buying club-related merchandises; 2) media companies which buy the rights of showing games; 3) the groups which build club-related facilities; 4) corporations which gain revenues by supporting clubs, buying teams outright, increasing gate money (ticket sales), and/or through sponsorship (Mason, 1999).

The Match Ticket: The most basic product of football is the match ticket, which provides the access to enter the stadium for a particular game. This product does not guarantee a high quality of the football game. If fans be lucky, their favorite team will win, and conversely they see a bad performance and losing. In both circumstances the fan will pay the same amount for this product. Based on football match attendances, the “product” which requires promotion and club managers try to provide for spectators is the opportunity to watch the football contest and enjoy from the facilities that are available in stadiums in match days. There is a constant quantity of product that each club produces and it is the quantity of salable match tickets based on the determined quantity for the capacity of stadiums, less any sold season tickets (Ellen, 2010).

Market Segmentation: Football as a favorable scene is a kind of entertainment which people can enjoy from it. Theoretically, football is accessible and suitable for adults in any age and for children with at least four or five years old, regardless to their gender,

race, education, religion or class. The demographic segmentation of the people who can show interest to football is so extensive. Therefore, the potential supporters of football are not limited to any particular psychographic segmentation (Shank, 2005).

From the geographical perspective clubs are often limited by their covered area in the fans issue. Some fans may travel many kilometers to a far place in order to watch their favorite team's match, while the realistic segment is those people living with only 90 minutes for away stadiums. This is restricting to some extent, but if you consider some stadiums which are located in the city or vicinity of cities, the people can reach in average 30 to 60 minutes to the stadiums so that enough people even more than the capacity can fill the seats of stadiums (Shank, 2005).

These geographically and demographically viable people can be segmented by their behavior in five clusters; (A) the people who do not have any interest in football so they do not attend match games, (B) the ones who have interest but they do not attend, (C) the ones who have interest and attend games occasionally, (D) the ones who have interest and attend regularly, (E) the ones who have season tickets. Undoubtedly it has less probability to persuade the people in first category to change their mind and attend the matches. The club managers have to concentrate in the middle three categories as the people who have spaces for improvement in order to increase the attendance for matches. For clubs which enjoy from the attendances near the capacity there would be no product available for selling to run this strategy. These clubs should base their marketing approaches such as global reach, top-end hospitality packages, and ensuring long term interest (Nagle & Dodd, 2008).

Marketing Mix: By considering that the target market in this study is the individuals who are in the geographic segmentation of 90 minutes away from stadiums and are categorized in B, C and D behavioral cluster the optimum marketing mix can now be investigated.

- I. Product:** The individuals who categorized in behavioral cluster B and C their interest to attend matches may not be increased by simple pricing because the product may be wrong in their opinion. For example, if you consider the women in categorized B and C, they may have interest in football and they also may be able to afford tickets of matches easily, while the experience of going to a stadium and watching a match is not a pleasant experience. Also, the children in category B and C, as another example of this issue, do not have any worry for prices because their parents will pay instead of them. Whereas, it may be difficult for them to travel in cold weather, or waiting and standing in long queues can be considered as a big dissuasive factor. The club managers to attract fans and improve the attendances through suggesting products which convert the match day experience to a something more than basic product (Ellen, 2010).

- II. Price:** One of the major reasons that many people in behavioral category D do not buy season tickets is price. These groups of fans believe season tickets being overpriced because of deposit money (Beech & Chadwick, 2007).

III. Promotion: It is obvious that football tickets are less promoted rather than other entertainment events which advertise. It is because of this fact that football fans know where to go to buy tickets and when attend the match. The promotion action for football is relatively an easy task specially by increasing the application of customer relationship marketing system which can collect the information of the club's fan and analyze them. By storing their contact information, the club manager can send their marketing material directly to fans with lower cost of promotion (Ellen, 2010).

IV. Place: Place is an element which is getting easier day to day. The accessibility to ticket by online ticket sale system and ordering by phone made it easier. The club managers should think to find an approach to avoid long queues for tickets (Beech & Chadwick, 2007).

2.4.2 Human Resource Management

Wall and Wood (2005) believes that human capital enhancing which is the determinant of HRM includes practice such as complex selection methods, evaluation, training and instruction, teamwork, communication, performance-related pay and securing for employment. But it is important to know how complex these practices in sport organization are and how apply this approach for enhancing human capital in sport organization (Wall & Wood, 2005). Taylor and McGraw (2006) researched about the assumption of HRM practices in the state sport organization in Australia and related to this fact that despite high pressures to act more strategically in their people management,

only a small number of sport-related organizations have formal human resource systems (Taylor & McGraw, 2006).

Sport organizations are based on operations which have people-oriented function and in these organizations human capital must be considered by sport managers firstly. It has been resulted that commitment to HRM brings a competitive advantage for an organization so that a consumer-led economy can achieve success in a volatile and highly competitive industry. Although there are a lot of evidences which represent positive relationship between HRM and performance and promise increasing in turnover by high-performances HRM practices, the sport organizations do not apply and invest sufficiently in their most important and costly recourse “people” and do not benefit from it (Hamil & Chadwick, 2009).

The early attempts to show there is direct relation between HRM and organizational was based on considering enhances organizational performance by improving the way that people were managed had no theoretical justification. But now, plenty of theoretical surveys have been done to represent that human resource practices will result in business turnovers such as great financial results and higher market value as well as lower absenteeism and reduced amount of turnover at the individual level. A number of theories for explaining the relationship between HRM and turnovers at the level of organization have been proposed, while there are only a few researches to justify the intermediary relationship between HRM and turnover at the individual level such as innovation, productivity and quality. A theoretical model based on the theories of motivation was developed. Theories of motivation have been included theories such as

expectancy theory which says high performance at the individual levels is related to high motivation beside having essential skills and competencies and a sufficient understanding of the role. This constructs the fundament from which to determine the human resource management practices that encourage high competencies, skills and motivation to navigate behavior toward organizational goals (Ulrich, 1997).

HRM also has been realized as a success element by organization in the leisure industry. In 1998 it was recognized that leisure industry suffers shortages of skilled and motivated personnel who were despondent by lower salaries, poor working situations, and a perceived shortage in career opportunities. However, a great number of clear attempts to change the business climate have been started in leisure industry through incorporating a business-focused human resource approach into this sector including sport organizations (Whitrod Brown & Green, 2001).

As it is reported from different surveys, there is a long way to apply HRM practices in the football at the organization level. There are few investments in the practices which are aimed to be high-performance work practices in football clubs. It is essential to employ HRM practices sufficiently as it is proven that high-performance work practices investments enhance organizational turnover. Unlike other industries and other areas of business and commerce activities, only few football club managers fill out application form or prepare a CV as their written career resumes. The written job description with clear responsibility is not seen sufficiently for football club managers. Superficial and ill-defined expectations and situations accumulated with manager's own personality

most of the times propose the activities which managers perform (Taylor & McGraw, 2006).

One of the major abilities that a football manager must have is to maintain key stakeholder relationship, while by the lack in formal training it is infeasible for football club managers to be successful in maintaining sufficient effectiveness in winning and constructing confidence. Davakos believes training should be the separable part in strategic planning for sport organizations specially football clubs and organizations. Training personnel in contemporary rebel economic provides better-quality products for organizations with fewer resources and employees and this factor adds value to both organizations and personnel (Davakos, 2006).

2.4.3 Finance in Football

Football is different from all other professional sports by considering it as a business. This sport is being recognized with its characteristics of “specificity” and “uniqueness” through European Union. It is reported that football clubs do not control their revenues and costs directly compare to other businesses (Commission of the European Communities, 2007). The main area for generating revenues for most of the clubs is employing and transferring players, except the clubs at champion League level which compete in the Far East in merchandising. Most of the clubs can compete in the player transfer market or they can foster their own players from Youth Academies. In order to have a healthy financial club, below factors should be considered:

- Try to be in the center of the table of a league which is an appropriate position for potential fans, and avoid relegation
- Create a trusted local fan base

- Own a private stadium which has been constructed recently and has proper facilities for hospitality in match days and for other activities which generate revenues in non-match days
- Have contracts with its players which are related to their performances
- Employ a manager who brings success on the pitch and grateful of financial limitations (Morrow, 1999).

Since 1990 almost all football clubs especially European football clubs have worked in three important activities for financial aims: the first one is making revenues by accepting the media, markets, merchandising, corporations and global model, the next one is dealing and trading the contacts of players (acquisition and disposal), and finally the last one is nurturing and fostering domestic and local talents (Zoccali, 2011).

Based on Lago, there are two main categories in the business models of football clubs: first one is large clubs and the other one is smaller clubs. The first group needs a massive initial capital to invest and tries to spend on capacity and its aim is only sporting successes. This business model is often applied by large clubs which belong to industrial companies (competing to win their national league, European Championships and Premier leagues) or owned by individual investors who are rich. Their concentration is on the results of football matches and they pay less attention to economic affairs. The second group tries on talent development by selecting and buying young potential players and selling them at higher price after becoming more skilled. This model is applied by smaller clubs which focus on economic aims and pay less attention to sporting objectives (Lago, 2008 in Zoccali, 2011).

2.4.4 Public Relation

In contemporary era, one of the important communication tools is public relation that sport managers and professionals do not appreciate and realize it as it deserves. Not investing seriously and not paying appropriate attention to the strategic communications management within sports especially football is the main reason for this fact. Media has pervasive, intrusive and sometimes controversial roles in football. Perceiving the urgency of providing and developing mutually effective media relationships with all range of republics of whom media is one, anyway, is an essential requirement for administrating today's football. Surprisingly, this issue can only be achieved completely through appreciating public relations.

Based on Pederson *et al.* (2007), public relations is so important in sport entities especially when attempting to impress public opinion and should not be ignored through sport managers and professionals. The most important function of public relations is in affecting public opinions in the field of professional football because public opinion provides the whole significant licenses to administrate the football organizations. According to Pederson *et al.* (2007), sports public relations affair is so important in sport organizations and clubs to create and establish strategies which ensure they communicate internally and externally in a most desirable procedure with vital components. Because of above-mentioned reasons, an appreciating of public relations is inevitable success point in the modern football in contemporary era and it is being used to fulfill the objectives of sport entity through crafting and amplifying the organizations brand image.

But it is important to know what public relation is. It is the least perceived and realized tools among all available tools in contemporary business and sport. Because of this ignorance and shortage of understanding, it is the marketing communications discipline which negative opinion and the greatest criticism are toward it. Whereas, public relation has a lot of benefits to be offered to football organizations and clubs if it be implemented by persons who perceive its advantages and its unique characteristics. Mostly along with spin and elusion viewpoint, the potential proper value of public relations remains ignored and underused particularly in the sport fields.

From the viewpoint of public relations in football, the terms “mouth communications” and “media interest” are key issues for attracting different range of publics including the supporters and sponsors on whom the survival and subsistence depends. It is important to consider that proper professional public relations consist of the elements more than event management, publicity, and media relations. According to Jahansoozi’s observing, there are plenty of models and theories about public relations which consist of the concepts of group dynamics and behavior, communicating with groups, and relating with particular publics or groups, a bias conclusion from a focus on the function of media relations. The main concept of the individuals and interpersonal communication as persuasive communication and interpersonal relationships which are focused in the viewpoint of relational in public relations has been sidelined. This concept is becoming more popular in public relations academic and has great relevance to football public relations.

If public relations are practiced truly and properly, it can become the greatest form of relationship management especially in the field of sport and football. Ledingham and Bruning (2000) believe public relations practice is a field which is characterized through what it does instead of what it is. Public relations' main aim is creating goodwill and bringing good feelings toward it about the organizations and their products. This aim can be achieved by establishing a sound "corporate" reputation and heir inviting people to think positively about the activities of their organizations. It is a long and time-consuming process to change the way of thinking and feeling of people about an organization particularly a football club, whereas, if the knowledge of public relations is applied in the organization and if public relations are understood and managed properly, they can bring favorable benefits for organizations. Public relations can become the most cost-effective, mechanism of communications if it is managed and handled professionally and truly. This recognition is mostly related to football clubs of minor, non-, and junior leagues which often allocate low budgets for communication and promotion affairs. In other words, it assures that the right things are being done at the right times and informs public that what the organizations is doing.

2.4.5 Fans

Fan Relationship: It is heard that ancient people said that absence causes a heart to become fonder or it is negotiated that out of site but not out of mind. But it is not true and absence causes a relationship to become weaker. This fact is also true in football. If a club be absent in its fans mind, they will relate with other clubs to fill its void. The relationship between a fan and his club is such a love relationship which it is usually stronger than the relationship between a man and woman because it is in feasible to transfer this relation to another club. It may someone cannot transfer this relationship to

another club, but if this is not fostered it will be degenerated. If the benefits of this relationship are not realized by the football manager, the greatest problem will be occurred. If this relationship be ignored, the fans will become armchair supporter and they will love their club but from the comfort in their living rooms not in the stadium (Ehsani, *et al.* 2013).

In football, if there is lack of relationship between fans and club, it will lead to empty stadium, decreasing in merchandize, no interest for sponsoring and finally no growth. The club managers have to establish a fan relationship management program in order to benefit from fans. The fan relationship management can be instituted as bellow:

1. Identifying and marketing to a single fan based on one to one action is the foundation of FRM.
2. It is helpful to differentiate fans because the person who is in low development housing cannot actually be the same with the one in a rich suburb. Although they have the same wish for the success of their club, they do not have the same abilities. The first group fans can hardly afford even a single match, while the other group fans pay and buy the tickets of one season. If club manager does not differentiate them, he will not target them correctly.
3. It is crucial for manager to talk with their fans. This should be the basis of creating and attaching relationship with their fans. The football club managers should average meeting with their fans to exchange ideas. This issue needs a great participation and commitment in high level especially from the club managers.

4. It is essential to gain assistance from technology in order to achieve a sustainable relationship with their fans. But club manager have to be cautious not to put technology over and above the process (Sebbale, 2006).

Through fan relationship management a club manager can ensure to have full stadiums in the season. It is the most beneficial way to merchandize successfully and attracts worthwhile sponsorship. Sponsors are attracted to a team which besides a big following has also an advanced engagement with them.

Fan Demand for Football: The great amounts of profits which are generated from football are because of huge and continuous fan demand for football. Borland and Macdonald (2003) believe “fan interest” is an essential factor which runs demand for the match and football contests. Fans show their interest to the football matches and contests by watching the matches on television, listening to the game in radio, buying the merchandises which are associated with the favorite club, or following the news of the games in newspapers. Traditionally, the football fans have an association or identification to a favorite club which is commonly based on a geographic district or emotional connection. It is claimed that fans in professional football and they are in demand-side of this market. These fans can be considered as the markets for club merchandise presents, and the other products of club sponsors. They purchase newspapers which include the reports of games and watch TV channels which cover live games. These people are also consumers who buy tickets and attend stadium and fill the stadiums and thus become component of the product itself, as an exhibition of the live

football events which are sold to other consumers (Borland & Macdonald, 2003 in Hamil & Chadwick, 2009).



Figure 4. Spectators of Damash-e-Guilan FC in Dr. Azodi Stadium
Photo by: (Mahdavi Darsara.F, 2012)

Football marketers often isolate special characteristics of football fans which are considered as “Market segmentation” so that they establish particular activates for promotional aims that target different groups of fans. In each weekend, the premier football attracts millions of people as the spectators who are considered as the consumers. These spectators are involves in football for different reasons. Wise football marketers allocate particular market resources to advertise and promote particular products through segmenting the market place so that higher range of revenues will be gained by corporate sponsors. It is the most challenging issue for football managers to select proper market segmentation strategies to fulfill the desire of appropriate groups of their club fans. According to the fan demand for football events, the broadcasters of TV and radio purchase space and time for advertising to the particular advertiser and sell the right of subscription or pay-per-view basis to the aimed individuals and organization.

Corporations of various countries involve in football marketing affairs to obtain benefits and enhance the value of their brand and increase their reputations through advertising their products via football events and media because of the fans' interest in football events (Borland & Macdonald, 2003).

2.4.6 Media

The composition for attracting consumer attention is intensifying, so the challenge in modern football management is to obtain competitive advantage. Then, competition for attracting attention has become the greatest principle for merging new media within enterprises of football. Although the manager of modern media technologies in football proposes higher access and opportunity for all broadcaster, consumers and managers of sports league/club/event, it also has caused change in the methods which were used for producing, distributing and consuming sport content. The contributory relationship between new media and sport is simplified through the increment in the complexity of the worldwide sport industry, the mutation in the demand for sport content by international media companies and the swift convergence in the needs of consumers in the globe. Therefore, it essential that new media resources which are relevant to enterprises in football be identified by football managers in order to gain benefits and achieve potential opportunities which are offered through these modern technologies. It is important for football managers to place emphasis on recognizing practical and conceptual dimensions of expanding an approach to manage the execution and administration of new media (Hamil & Chadwick, 2009).



Figure 5. Role of Media in Football (URL1)



Figure 6. Role of Media in Football (URL2)

Media has considerable impact upon sport as equipment; match times and financial changes have been altered. It is obvious that media has a substantial effect on sport, but as the impacts of media on all parts of life is increasing so its effects on sport is increasing proportionally. Through this relationship between media and sport both of them are growing and becoming richer (Nicholson, 2007).

Sports and media had partnership from the advent of newspapers and also it grew by the invention of radio and placed in the most significant level by coming television. Suddenly, people oriented to watch games in televisions in their homes instead of going to stadium. They would be more comfortable in their homes while watching matches although they are charged lower cost relatively, as sport receives funding, coverage of big sport events and advertisement. Therefore, it enhances the popularity of sport. This relationship caused sponsors come into sport and make financial revenues. All these three elements-sports, media and sponsors are interrelated. This means that sport provides events, media covers these events and sponsors provide the financial parts of them. If one of these chains does not exist, this chain will dialyze. It needs all these three

elements have relationship together in order to function properly, efficiently and profitably (Maguire, et al. 2002).

The positive aspects of the relationship between football and media:

- I. The mass media has the ability to find the general public and show them to the game. For example, it can be considered that a great number of new football fans have been created by showing premierships matches in “BskyB”. This caused considerable revenue generation which clubs were gained.
- II. Hugely popular football matches such as champion leagues in the high-ranked football country are now easily accessible from all around the globe through a good coverage of media.
- III. Football games coverage in television empowers fans through the access of slow motions, replays, the comments of experts, and multiple camera angles which unfold the events of a game in front of the eyes of spectators. Fans can benefit from different views, opinions and analysis by television. Also, they can view only highlights of the games because of the lack of time (Haynes, 2007).

Chapter 3

THE EVALUATION OF FOOTBALL MANAGEMENT IN IRAN

In accordance to current study which is about the management of football at the level of clubs in Iran and its effects on the national football of Iran, after discussing about the managerial elements of football in modern contemporary era in the professional environment it is necessary to investigate whether the factors of modern management in football are applicable in the football of Iran, and to achieve the aims of this study it has been investigated if the modern management of football is applied at the level of clubs. Also, the effects of the factors of modern management in football have been analyzed to realize if the backwardness of the national football of Iran is because of defects in the management of clubs in Iran. In order to accomplish this research, the Damash FC has been selected as a club in the Premier League of Iran and interviews with the managers of this club have been done to survey its management. Finally, through questionnaire the opinions of people who are related with football is questioned to know if in their opinions the backwardness of football in Iran can be because of weaknesses in the management of football clubs in Iran.

To start the investigation of this research in the clubs of Iran, the case study will be started by the history of football in Iran, then a brief introduction about Damash FC will be mentioned and after these introductions the findings and results will be analyzed.

3.1 The History of the Football of Iran

For the first time, the English men who were residents in Tehran and other large cities in Iran and sailors of foreigner ships in Khorramshahr, Boushehr and Bandar-Abbas seaports started football in Iran. In the capital of Iran, the members of England's embassy, Shahi Bank and Telegraph-house played football in their leisure time and gradually by increasing their members they established three separate football teams and in any free time competed to each other.

After a while they established a tournament to make these games official. These teams sometimes used the Iranians who were around the playground as the spectators when they had lack of players. The noises and excitement of English men gradually made Iranian teens and young-aged boys interested and attracted them toward football grounds. These teens and young-aged boys through watching English men's football learnt the way of playing football and its rules, therefore, they tried to establish football team like them.

Along spontaneous of young boys in Iran, the American School (Alborz School in contemporary era) started to train football to its students in around 1910 and matches between students were held until the First World War when these matches were cut

totally. After First World War, football restarted again and because of existence of English soldiers this game gained a good quality.

The first organization of football in Iran was established through Abolfazl Sadri, Mirbagher Azimi, and Seyyed Mohammad Tadayyon as “The association of Development and Promotion in Football” in 1921. After 1921, this association registered clubs and teams annually and held football matches and by translating and defining the rules of football tried to dedicate discipline and regularity to football in Iran. This association achieved to hold the first period of football contests in 1923 and these games promoted and expanded football all around the Iran until it was converted to a national league.

In 1940, for participating Iranian athletes in Olympic Games, the first steps for establishing sport associations especially football were done and since this year the football of Iran actually has been started under administration of this association that was called “ The Football Convention of Iran”. This convention achieved to send the first official national team to Afghanistan for a match in 1941. After Second World War in 1946, the name of Football Convention was changed to the “Football Association of Islamic Republic of Iran” and in the mid of 1947 requested to be a member in FIFA. This request was accepted by FIFA in its meeting at 20 January, 1948. The national football team of Iran has achieved to participate in the Football World Cup three times in 1978, 1998, and 2006.

3.2 The History of Damash FC

Damash FC is one of the football clubs in the Premier League of Iran which belongs to Rasht city in Guilan province that is located in the north of Iran. Damash FC has been established after purchasing club right of Pegah-e-Guilan FC in 2008. This team after achieving first position in the first level league of Iran (Azadegan League) climbed to Premier League. Damash Sport Club in an organized way has also Volleyball team in super league and basketball team in the first level league and other subsidiary teams in several other sports.



Figure 7. Damash FC in Home Uniform (URL 3)

The origin of Damash FC comes from the Sport-e-Rasht FC in 1941 and transferring its right to Taj-e-Rasht in unknown date. Its club right was sold to Esteghlal-e-Shahrdari-e-Rasht in 1983. In the July of 2002, Pegah-e-Guilan FC purchased the right of this club and eventually in the May of 2008, the company of mineral water with the brand of Damash bought the right of belonging of this club and changed its name to Damash FC.



Figure 8. Damash FC in Away Uniform (URL 3)

3.3 Methodology

The applied method for this study has both qualitative and quantitative methods for gathering data. To collect data for literature review and applying the results of it into the case of Damash FC the qualitative research method was necessary to do. Based on aims and objectives of this study, it was necessary to setup an interview with the managers of selected case study which is Damash FC. After discussing the results of literature review, it is the time to compare the factors of modern management with the department of management of Damash FC. To accomplish an interview (Appendix 1), 15 open-ended questions had been proposed to ask from the managers of Damash FC. In the next section, the questions and the aims of questions with the answers will be mentioned.



Figure 9. The Logo of Damash FC (URL3)

Based on research questions of current study, the questions of the questionnaire have been proposed to achieve desirable conclusion parallel to the aims and objective of this study. This questionnaire includes eight questions in Yes/No format which have been distributed between 50 people in Guilan province of Iran who are related to football family such as referees, the members of Football Association of Guilan, veteran football players and one of the sport performers in the TV of this province. The questions and purpose of proposing each of them have been mentioned and gained responses and yield results of each question have been investigated. These results have been analyzed and exhibited in particular diagrams and charts.

3.4 Findings and Results

3.4.1 The Answers and Analysis of the Questions of Interview

As the first question, it had been asked to mention the main factors of modern management of football at the level of clubs in Iran. Amir Abedini (The Current Chief Executive Officer of Damash FC) believes the modern and nontraditional look of a manager of a football club is one of the main primary requirements of modern management of football at the level of clubs in Iran. He describes that it should be considered that what the opinion and perception of football manager about a football club. He described that it should be considered that what the opinion and perception of a

football club manager from the modern and traditional management is, then how and based on which approaches plan his goals. The next important factor for passing traditional management and achieve modern management is the availability of infrastructures and hardware. In other words, if the infrastructures do not be available, it will be difficult to achieve the desirable management, even may be impossible. These infrastructures and hardware for modern management are consist of suitable private ground for exercise, suitable welfare facilities, administrative and automotive organizational system, the academic and young teams and principled consideration to these teams. Continuous apprenticeship and updating knowledge is the other factor of modern management. This means, beside the management team, technical staff and organizational staff should do their best to obtain updated knowledge in order to be harmonized with the department of management of the club to achieve modern management. Therefore, from the perspective of Amir Abedini, the look of manager, infrastructures and hardware and continuous enhancing of the level of knowledge are the main factors of modern management in the football.



Figure 10. Amir Abedini, the CEO of Damsh FC (URL4)

By question two it had been aimed to know if the football managers of both organizations and clubs are aware of these factors and apply them in their management affairs. The CEO of Damash FC believes the football managers of Iran in both organizations and club levels are aware to these factors, whereas, applying them in most circumstances is impossible or very difficult to apply. He explained at this time, only in two Foulad-e-khouzestan and Sepahan-e-Isfahan Football these factors and their performing can be seen, while other clubs try to reach this level but they are so far from it.

In third question it had been ask that to what extent football clubs in Iran are managed traditionally or with modern management. Ali Ahmadi Saravani (The public relations manager of Damash FC) replied that only up to ten percent of clubs in Iran apply the factors of modern management in football and only up to 20 percent of clubs try to achieve this level. It is necessary to consider that almost all clubs want to achieve this level, but some non-football factors prevent them to manage their clubs by updated knowledge.

In question four, it had been ask that to what extent the factors of modern management are applied in Damash FC. Amir Abedini told that Damash FC has private ownership and because of the problems about ownership which has been occurred during recent two years, the ways to reach the infrastructures and hardware have become so difficult but the fundamental changes in applying the first factor (the look of manager) and the third one (the continuous apprenticeship) in the opinion of the CEO of Damash FC can be seen obviously. In Damash FC, some practices to provide infrastructures and

hardware had been started before the ownership problems such as purchasing ground for constructing private sport camp around the Rasht the center of providence Guilan.

In question five, it had been asked whether the manager of Damash FC employs consultants and experts who are equipped with the knowledge of modern management in football in management affairs. The CEO of Damash FC said, in the management affairs of Damash FC, in different fields such as marketing, media, advertisement, culture and academy of football, experienced and skillful experts and consultants are used and the managers of each unit make their decision by the help of particular expert in that field. Question six asked to mention the organizational chart of Damash FC with the specified positions in it. As the CEO of Damash FC mentioned, Damash FC like all other organizations and entities has organizational chart which in its peak there is the Convention of the Club and after it Board of Directors. Then, the Chief Executive officer position which is executed by Amir Abedini and this position have several subsidiaries as below:

1. Financial Manager: Rasul Zarei
2. Office Manager: Mohammad Hmidi
3. Marketing Manager: Hossein Alaedini
4. Cultural Manager: Morteza Salehi
5. The manager of Academy: Abdollah Maarghoub

This subsidiary has its own subsidiary which is called young teams under the supervision of Ali Nazarmohammadi. The young teams consist of:

- 5.1. Children Team (12 to 14 -year-old)
- 5.2. Teen Team (14 to 16 -year-old)

5.3. Young Team (Under 18-year-old)

5.4. Olympic Team (Under 23-year-old)

6. Public Relation Manager: Ali Ahmadi Saravani

This unit also has subsidiaries as below:

6.1. Fan Club Center

6.2. Media Center

6.3. Audio-Visual Center

6.4. People Relation Center

7. The manager of Support Center

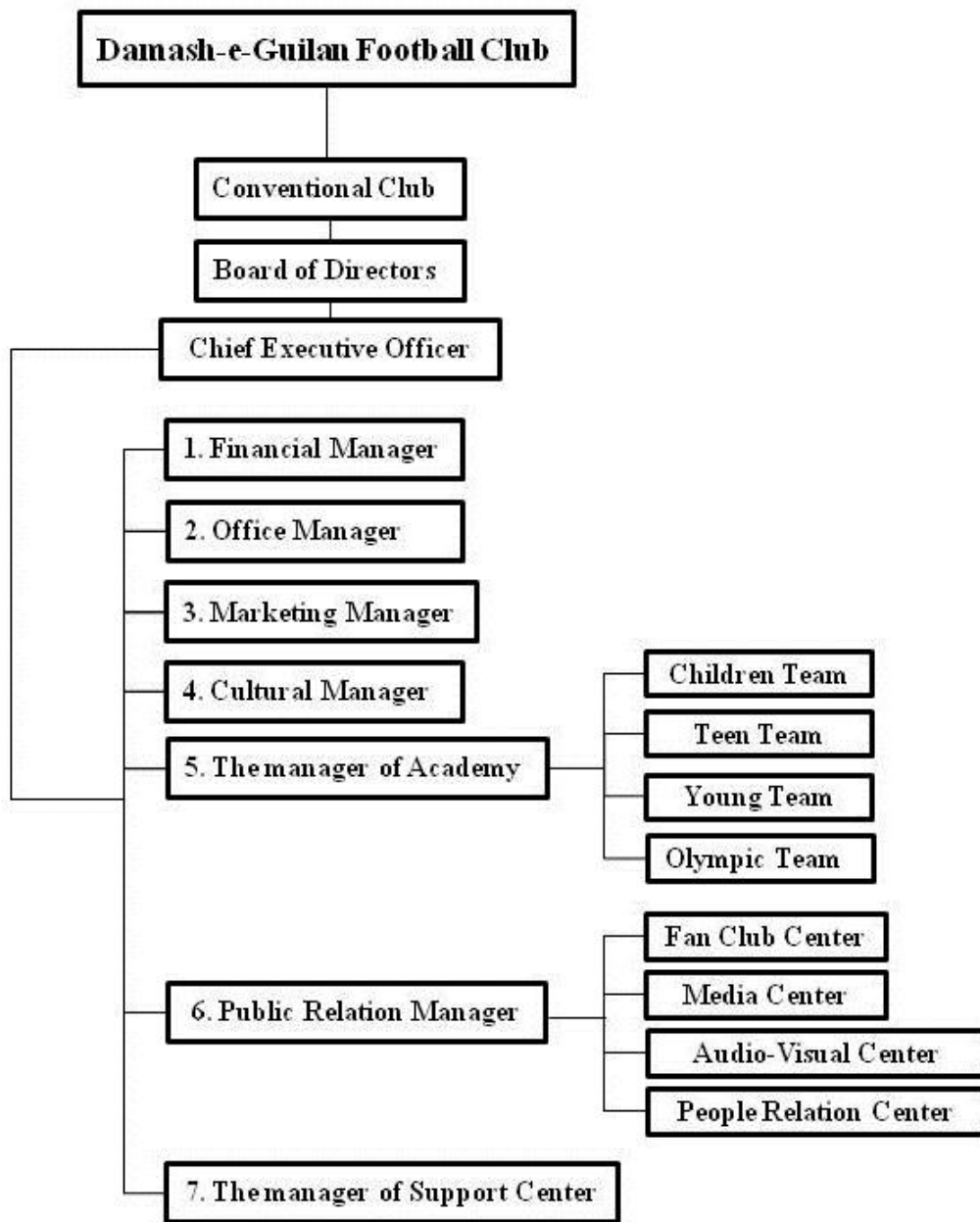


Figure 11. Organizational Chart of Damash FC

In seventh question, it had been asked to tell the managerial strategy of Damash FC. The public relations manager of Damash FC started “to show a high quality game to the residents of Guilan who re the fans of Damash FC” as the mission of this club. Furthermore, he stated that “becoming the representative of Iran in the Champions

league of Asia” is the main objective of this football club. he mentioned the growth and development of football in Guilan province and benefiting from talents and potential of this province are the opportunities of this club. Also, by creating motivation in local talents, the management department of this club converts these opportunities to strength. The alliance and empathy of Guilans people is the most supporter of this club.

The aim of question eight was to know what the marketing approaches of the management team of Damash FC for marketing its products are. Hossein Alaeddini the marketing manager of Damash FC stated that because of not accepting the fact that football is such a business in today’s environment of Iran, the marketing affairs are very simple and it is still related to the interest and the love that the fans of this team have for the most popular team in the north of Iran. So, attracting people to attend the stadium in match days is only by informing them about the football events. Also, to sell the merchandising products such as clothes, shoes, caps, clocks, flags and other things by the logo of Damash FC, a store has been opened under the supervision of the fan club unit. In addition, the approach of transforming players is based on selecting and training young talented and potential players from young teams to play in adult team and representing them as the surprising of the league to transfer them to larger and richer team, even to team of other country. For example, Alireza Jahanbakhsh who is the captain of national Olympic team of Iran that is the surprising of the league of season 2012-2013 and is transferred to a team in the premier league of Netherland.



Figure 12. Alireza Jahanbakhsh, the Surprising of the Season 2012-13 of Premier League of Iran (URL4)

In question nine, it had been asked to know what the resources of revenues for Damash FC are. The CEO of Damash FC stated game events such as premier league of Iran sponsors for the rights of advertising on the clothes, merchandising by selling clothes, caps, shoes and other products such as clocks, flags, the local supports from the governors of the Guilan province and the financial support of the rich people of this province who are the fans of their favorite team, ticket sales, the advertisement around the football ground in match days and transferring players.

In question ten it had been asked that the revenues of ticket sales constitute what proportion of whole revenues of Damash FC in one reason. As fans are the main and most important resources of a club, it also had been asked the management department of Damash FC do to attract more people and fans to attend stadium to watch the games

in match days. The public relations manager of Damash FC explained that Damash FC is the fourth most popular team in Iran that made 15 percent of its whole revenue in a season through selling match tickets. The continuous relation, meetings and seminars between the officials' fan club unit and the management team of it, distributing presents between spectators through lottery, sending fans for matches outside the home through funds of club, and making fan web pages to attract fans and inform them the news of the team and the matches are the actions that were done to attract people and fans toward stadiums in match days.

By question eleven it had been aimed to become aware of the principles of accepting sponsors by Damash FC. Also, it had been asked the percentage of revenues which are made through attracting sponsors. Ali Ahmadi Saravani mentioned the rules and principles which are flown in Iran are the principles that Damash FC considers them. He said, the whole revenue of club was being made by sponsors until two years age. While, in the last two years, the revenues from sponsors has been decreased that because of ownership problems it was predictable.

In question twelve it had been asked whether Damash FC has public relations manager and what his responsibilities are. Ali Ahmadi Saravani said Damash Fc like all other football clubs in Iran has public relations manager who is responsible in relating and supervising Fan Club Unit, Media affair and relating and visiting the managers of other organizations and entities.

In question thirteen it had been explained that Human Resource Management is more complicated and needed in sport clubs compared to other organizations. It had been asked whether this club has a Human Resource Manager, and if it has how this manager selects the personnel of this club. The Public Relations Manager of Damash FC stated that basically all football clubs in Iran for choosing the personnel behave totally traditionally. All football clubs employ the persons whom they know and are aware of their experience and background in the management and football and they do not obey particular rules and principle to employ staff.

In question fourteen it had been asked if Damash FC has a special expert person for media affairs. Also, it had been questioned how much revenues this club makes through media. Public Relations Managers of Damash FC stated the media affairs of this club are managed through one of the famous journalists of Guilan province who is the editor of a local newspaper of Guilan province. He said “unfortunately, not only Damash FC, but also all football clubs in Iran do not have any income from media and even it is considered as expenditure for clubs to work in media affairs”.

In question fifteen it had been asked to what extent applying the factors of modern management influenced the results of Damash FC in premier league. Amir Abedini stated that “As I explained before, the football of Iran is passing form traditional toward modern; therefore the effects of these factor are not that much in the result than can be perceived”. He continued that mental and spiritual issues and the strength of players are still the most effective factors on the result of the matches.

3.4.2 The Results and Analysis of the Questionnaire

At the beginning of the questionnaire (Appendix 2), a brief description of concluded results from literature review about the key elements of modern management of football had been mentioned. In the first question it had been asked if the six elements which had been realized as key elements of modern management of football are key element of management in football from the perspective of respondents. 39 respondents put of 50 believe that these six elements are the essential factors in the modern management of football. This means 78 percent of respondents' opinion is the same as the results of this study.

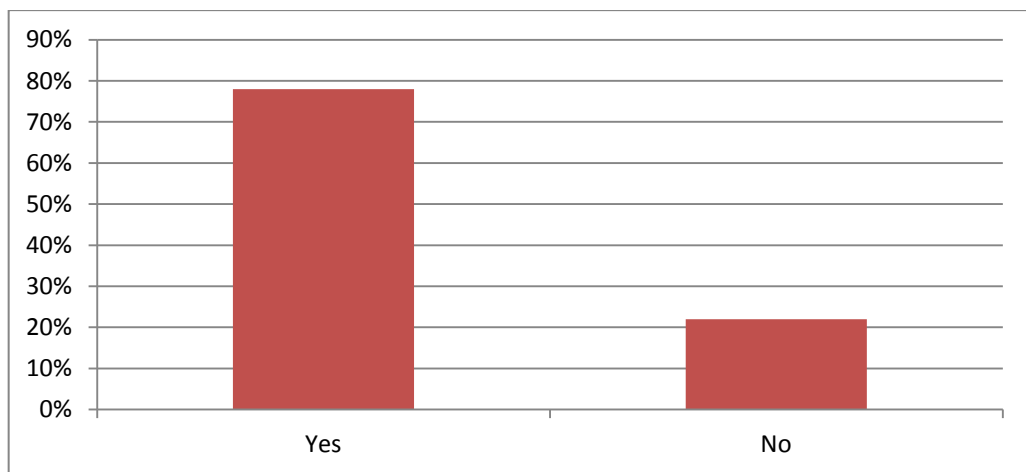


Figure 13. Question 1: Are These Factors the Elements of a Modern Management in Football?

In the second question, it had been asked if the aforementioned elements are applicable in the club management in Iran and are beneficial for the important of the status of clubs. Only 36 respondents out of 50 believe these elements can help football managers to strengthen their clubs.

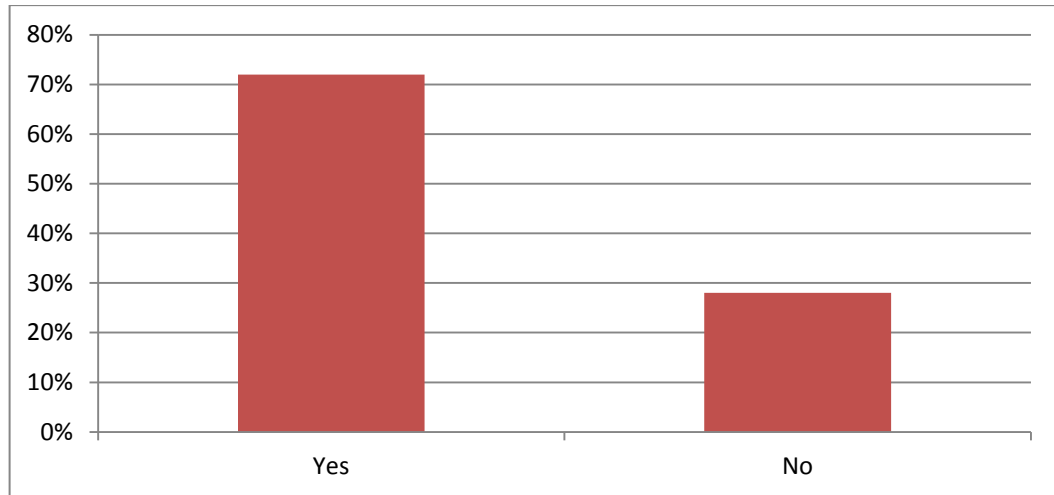


Figure 14. Question 2: In Your Opinion, Are These Factors Beneficial in Managing Clubs in Iran?

The aim of third question was to know if the club managers in the football of Iran are aware of modern management in football. 44 respondents out of 50 believe that the current football club managers are strange with the modern management in football.

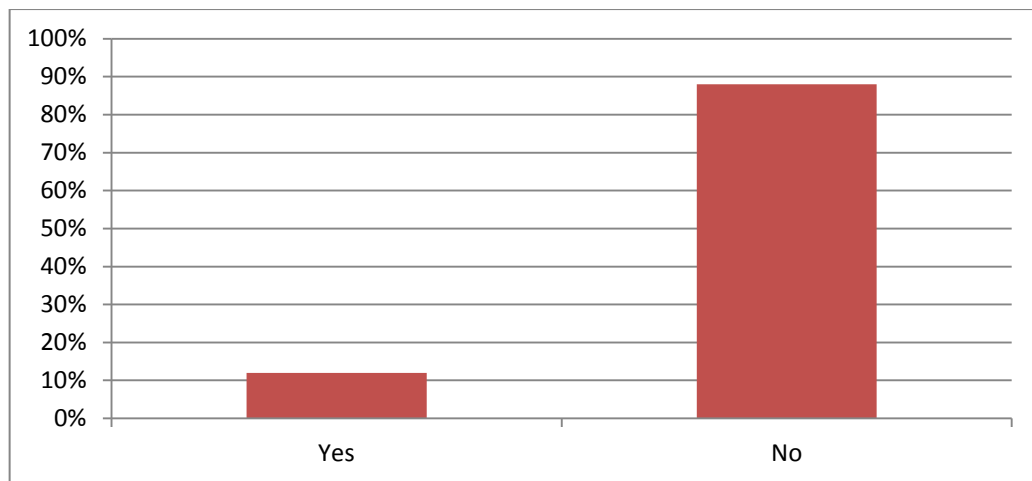


Figure 15. Question 3: Are These Factors Considered in Today's Football of Iran?

Also, 41 respondents, as the answer of question four replied the football club managers in Iran do not apply above-mentioned key elements in their management affairs.

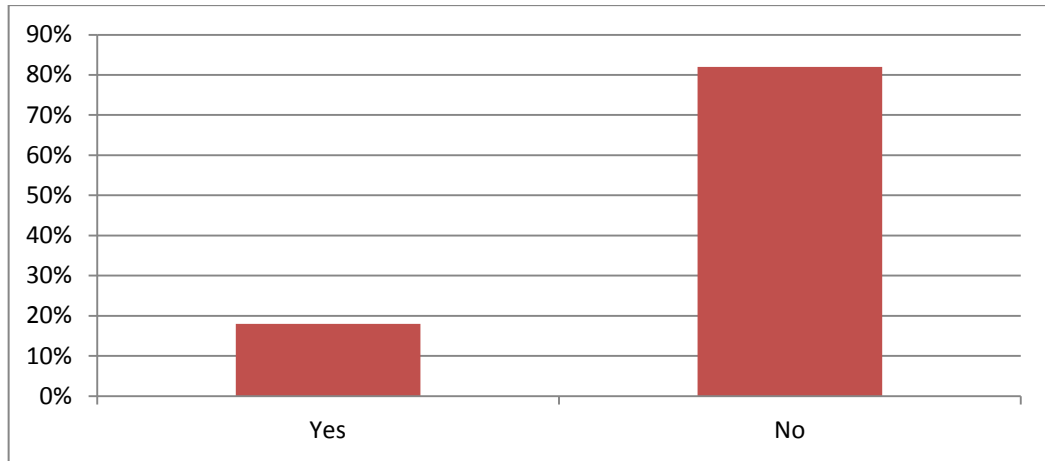


Figure 16. Question 4: In Your Opinion, Are Today's Football Managers in Iran Are Familiar with Modern Knowledge of Football?

In the fifth question, it had been asked if traditional thinking in the management of football at the level of clubs can be a reason of backwardness in the national level and all the respondents chose "yes" to show their positive opinion about this fact. Exactly after question five, in the sixth question, it had been explained that an expert and professional football at the level of clubs leads to progress at the national level of football in the high ranking countries in football, and then it had been asked if the backwardness of football at national level in Iran is because of defeats in club management in Iran. As it can be guessed, all 49 respondents out of 50 believe that the weakness of the Iran's football at national level is because of the ill management at the club level in Iran's football clubs.

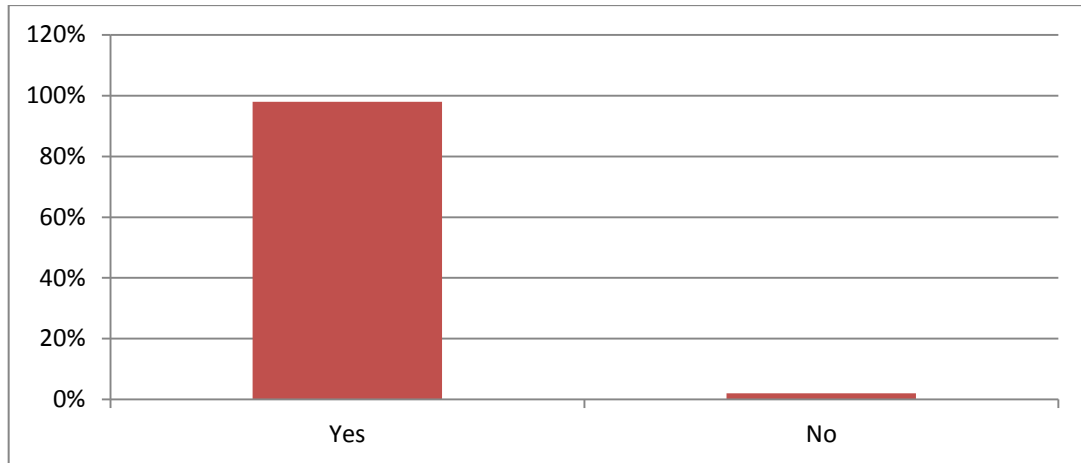


Figure 17. Question 6: As Professional Clubs and Leagues Can Lead to Have a Professional Football in a Country, Do You Think the Backwardness of Iran's Football Can Be Because of the Weakness in the Management of Clubs in Iran?

In the question seven, it had been aimed to know if the football club managers in Iran employ consultants and expert who are equipped with the knowledge of modern management in football. Unfortunately, from the perspective of all 50 respondents, the football club managers in Iran do not employ consultant and experts with modern knowledge in their management affairs and manage their clubs with their expired beliefs.

At the beginning of the eighth question it had been mentioned that at the premier level of Europe's football the fact that clubs with more experience, skillful and wiser manager have gained better results rather than clubs with skillful players and coaches is proven. Then, it had been asked if the management of football clubs can be the reason of progress or failure for clubs. By the 100 percent answers of respondents, the Iranian people have the same opinion with the findings of champion and premier leagues of football in Europe.

Questions	Yes	No
1. Are these factors the elements of a modern management in football?	39	11
2. In your opinion, are these factors beneficial in managing clubs in Iran?	36	14
3. Are these factors considered in today's football of Iran?	6	44
4. In your opinion, are today's football managers in Iran are familiar with modern knowledge of football?	9	41
5. Can traditional methods in the management of football be the reasons of backwardness of Iran's football?	50	0
6. As professional clubs and leagues can lead to have a professional football in a country, do you think the backwardness of Iran's football can be because of the weakness in the management of clubs in Iran?	49	1
7. In your opinion, do club managers employ experts and consultants who are aware of modern knowledge of football in the management of clubs or they tend to manage their clubs themselves with their expired knowledge?	50	0
8. It has been proven in the European Premier Leagues and Champion Leagues that the most advanced teams achieved to their aims and success through their skillful managers not by their professional players and coaches. Do you believe management in clubs is the reason of development and reversely the failure of teams?	50	0

Figure 18. The Result of Questionnaire

Chapter 5

CONCLUSION

Traditional thinking in the management of football is one of the most complicated dilemmas which is not only the reason of slow growth in the football of Iran, but also leads to problems in developed countries in football. Traditional managers of football who manage professional football in modern environment mostly do not have essential and sufficient knowledge to manage clubs, and do not employ experts and consultants who are specialist in modern management of football. These managers do not know the strength of media and even they are strange with the concept of modern football.

In the literature review of this study, the viewpoints of the most highlighted researches about the management of football have been investigated. At the beginning of it, the nature and distinctiveness of football have been mentioned. The, the globalization and its effect on football have been stated and its impacts to convert football from a leisure activity to a complicated business have been discussed. After mentioning the most challenges in the management of football, the key elements of modern management in football have been explained one by one. Finally, in chapter these factors of modern management in football have been in tested in Damash FC as a representative of a club in the Premier League of Iran. To investigate the management department of this club it was necessary to interview the club managers to be aware of their management affairs.

After doing interview with three managers of this club the desired findings have been gained.

From the saying of Amir Abedini (the CEO of Damash FC) it is concluded that the managing of football in Iran at club level is being converted from traditional management to modern management. So, to apply the main elements of modern management in the football of Iran several required factors should be achieved. He noted that “the look of manager toward the management of football”, “infrastructures and hardware of an organization” and “the continuous apprenticeship” are the most important factors to achieve the level which is prepared for applying essential elements of modern management. It is concluded that these requirements are not provided, therefore, the weaknesses of the managers in applying modern management is because of the defects which have non-football origins in these three areas.

Also, it is concluded that some factors of modern management are not applicable in Iran such as media and human resource management. Because of the rules of Football Federation of Iran and the rules of the Islamic Republic of Iran Broadcasting (IRIB) the right of showing games is exclusively for the federation and football clubs do not gain any revenue from this resource, even they spend in this unit. The other element is human resource management which is ignored in the employing personnel in the clubs of football in Iran because there are no specified and defined competencies for a person who will accept the responsibilities of a position in football clubs, and on the other hand, no one request for a position in football clubs, but the managers choose personnel without their request.

In addition, to find out the reasons of backwardness of football in Iran at national level, besides investigating the management Damash FC as a sample of clubs in the premier league of Iran it was aimed to ask people who are related to football family about the reasons of backwardness of national football team of Iran. It is concluded from the findings of the survey by written questionnaires that the bad results and weaknesses of football of Iran at national level is because of the weaknesses in the management of football clubs in Iran. It can be understood from the results based on the perspective of people who are related to football family in the province of Guilan, club managers are not familiar with updated knowledge of management of football and do not apply them in their management affairs. As it is proven and also as people believe the more powerful and more wisely management at club level, the more successful the national team of a country is, it is concluded that one of the main reasons of national team of Iran is because of defects in the management of football clubs.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1- Interview

The Questions of the Interview with the Management Team of Damash FC

As an active manager in premier league of semi-professional environment of football in Iran, do you know the key elements of modern football management in the international football management? In your opinion, what are the most important factors for club management in Iran?

- 1) In your opinion as an active manager in Iran's professional football, what are the main factors of modern management in football at club level?
- 2) In your opinion as an active manager in Iran's professional football, how much are football managers and club managers in Iran familiar with key elements in modern football management and apply them in their administration?
- 3) What are proportions of applying traditional and modern football management in Damash FC?
- 4) To what extent does the management of Damash FC apply the factors of modern management football?
- 5) Does management of Damash FC employ consultants and experts who are equipped with the knowledge of modern football management?

- 6) Does Damash FC have an organizational chart? Mention the members of the execution and management group of Damash FC and their responsibility.
- 7) What is the strategy of the management of Damash FC (Vision, Mission, and SWOT)?
- 8) What are the products of Damash FC? What are the approaches of the club to do marketing management for them?
- 9) What are the sources of Damash FC for generating revenues?
- 10) As fans are the most important source of revenue, what does the management of Damash FC do to attract people to attend the games?
- 11) What are the principles of Damash FC in selecting sponsors? How much is the amount of revenue which is gained from sponsors?
- 12) Does Damash Fc have public relations manager? What are the responsibilities of public relations manager of Damash FC?
- 13) As Human Resource Management is one of the most complicated affairs for sport clubs, does Damash Fc have human resource manager? How does the management of Damash behave in employing personnel?

14) Does Damash FC have a particular person for media affairs who is expert in media issues? How much is the generated revenue by Damash FC during one season?

15) How much did the key elements of modern football management which the management of Damash FC has applied affect the performance of Damash FC?

Appendix 2-Questionnaire

This questionnaire is for the thesis of graduate program at EMU with the subject of “Sport Management: Challenges in the Management of Football in the Case of Iran”. The below explanation is necessary to get a better conclusion from this study. Thank you in advance for your cooperation that helps me to accomplish my study.

As it is proven in recent century, football has been changed from being only leisure into a complicated business. Therefore, the club managers should be equipped to the knowledge of management in order to be successful in this business. Based on studies of this research, the six key elements that club owners and managers have to consider for being successful are; 1) marketing in football, 2) finance in football, 3) human resource management in football, 4) public relations management, 5) fans, and 6) media.

Now, it is aimed to investigate whether club managers in the semi-professional environment of Iran’s football are familiar with these criteria and apply them in their management.

- 1) Are these factors the elements of a modern management in football? (Yes / No)

- 2) In your opinion, are these factors beneficial in managing clubs in Iran? (Yes / No)

- 3) Are these factors considered in today’s football of Iran? (Yes / No)

- 4) In your opinion, are today's football managers in Iran are familiar with modern knowledge of football? (Yes / No)

- 5) Can traditional methods in the management of football be the reasons of backwardness of Iran's football? (Yes / No)

- 6) As professional clubs and leagues can lead to have a professional football in a country, do you think the backwardness of Iran's football can be because of the weakness in the management of clubs in Iran? (Yes / No)

- 7) In your opinion, do club managers employ experts and consultants who are aware of modern knowledge of football in the management of clubs or they tend to manage their clubs themselves with their expired knowledge? (Yes / No)

- 8) It has been proven in the European Premier Leagues and Champion Leagues that the most advanced teams achieved to their aims and success through their skillful managers not by their professional players and coaches. Do you believe management in clubs is the reason of development and reversely the failure of teams? (Yes / No)