

## Identifying and Analyzing the Barriers to Wrestling Development of Ardabil Province

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### Abstract

**Purpose:** The purpose of this research was to identify and analyze the barriers to wrestling development in Ardabil Province.

**Methods:** This study was of a qualitative type with a phenomenological approach and was applied in terms of purpose. The statistical population was made up of all veterans, coaches, and professors of wrestling in Ardabil Province, who participated in the research using the purposeful sampling method of 11 people, and the interviews continued until theoretical saturation was reached. Semi-structured interviews were used to collect research data. Also, for validity from the point of view of an external judge and to check reliability, Silverman's approach and the degree of similarity between the opinions of three coding experts were used, which were approved. MAXQDA20 software was used to check the open and central codes.

**Results:** First, from the primary data, the codes related to the subject were determined, and 50 open codes were obtained. In the next step, the identified codes were identified in the form of specific categories, and then the obtained categories were classified and combined based on the degree of conceptual similarity, and compiled in the form of seven main obstacles, based on the frequency of social, economic, cultural, personal, physical, legal and political were prioritized.

**Conclusion:** Based on the findings, it is suggested that those in charge of sports can show the real status of wrestling in Ardabil province by discovering and developing talents, holding competitions, and paying attention to the economic factors of coaches and athletes.

**Keywords:** Hero breeding, Society, Talent Search, Wrestling.

## Introduction

Sports is a social and cultural phenomenon that is strongly linked to a set of institutions and social structures. Nowadays sport has become a very wide concept individually and it has become one of the most important social, political, cultural, and economic phenomena in different societies (Khosravimehr, Masom, and Rezvani 2016). Until now, countries have been judged and reviewed based on the number of medals and champions of different fields in international tournaments and other major events by communities and from different aspects of societies (Philips and Roper, 2009). In this regard, creating a structure for the development and promotion of a national sport is one of the necessities of every society, and the views of most managers, officials, educators, and even media have changed to national sports and their athletes (Khodayari et al, 2014).

Sport has always been the interest of the people and sports authorities of every country and Iran is not an exception. Researchers believe that raising the medal in international contests in a certain discipline can improve national sovereignty, national pride, economic prosperity, sports development, and diplomatic relations (Green and Holihan, 2005). The title of major sporting events is the focus of the attention of most countries in the world as they can develop social, political, economic, and cultural issues, and therefore governments are trying to qualify athletes with regular and accurate planning to qualify for one whose success is imminent (Dee Buscher and colleagues, 2009). As it was mentioned before wrestling is a matter of interest in most countries and governments are trying to remove the barriers to its progress. As an example, the Canadian wrestling association since 2015, was able to develop a more comprehensive strategic plan that enabled officials and educators to pay attention to wrestling athletes' performance, watch the welfare level of athletes and avoid

any racial discrimination so that they can win medals in important events (Wrestling Association of Amateur Entario, 2021). On the other hand, the British wrestling association is taking a positive step towards developing the wrestling sport and has already paid attention to the identification of talented young people and women wrestling to include both categories and their strategic goals through 2026 (wrestling association of England, 2021). In other samples, the U.S.A wrestling federation believes that paying attention to different states, and races and avoiding ethnic and religious prejudices can lead to progress of the wrestling of the U.S.A and respect ethnicities, cultures, and different races, the U.S.A wrestling authorities are obliged to pave the way for the presence of all wrestlers (the U.S.A Wrestling Federation, 2021). Previous studies also suggest that one of the strategies for the development of wrestling in every community is to place knowledge of wrestling in schools and believe that the school context can identify pure talent (Santos and Brando, 2019). Ruherbakh (2021) claimed in his studies that, it is possible to strengthen the exercise of wrestling from a young age to a higher dimension, but requiring expert coaches in the profession to identify talents, give them confidence, personality, respect, and value, and seek their success in local events and then in major international events. In another study, it was shown that the use of professional coaches, infrastructure development, optimization of exercises, and attention to family issues can improve the performance of wrestlers, and besides development, the young generation of society can spread itself to the board and bring unity, solidarity and pride (Abdullah Jhato, Jomadordio and Joraboe, 2021). Along with all the above issues that demonstrate the importance of wrestling on the global level, there are plenty of documents indicating that wrestling is the national sport of Iran, and the people of the country have given special attention to this sport, its traditions, and

national athletes in the past, and in fact, wrestling is somehow associated with Iranian society and culture and is more popular than other disciplines (Rok Rok, Shahmansuri, and Froughi pour, 2021). According to the importance of this sport, there is a variety of research on the progress of wrestling sports in Iran for example Hosseinpour et al. (2012). Lack of a comprehensive and coordinated plan for the progress of wrestling, lack of adequate financial resources for programs, lack of sports officials' support, lack of wrestling facilities and equipment in provinces, and adequate and lack of appropriate advertising of the media in respect are indicated as the most important barriers to the progress of wrestling. Asghari, Koozechian, and Ziaee (2015) also claimed in their studies that, wrestling has a special place among the people, and the necessity of developing it is in need of long-term vision and fundamental planning because of large medals in the Olympics and international tournaments. In another study, Iran in wrestling has a long history, significant successes, and a high place worldwide, which is to stabilize and promote this situation as well as to preserve the dynamic population and attract the audience, which requires the possession of policies and propaganda strategies and effective information (Karimi Firouzjaie and Yarmand, 2018). Heirani, Khanmoradi, and Rezvani (2019) illustrated in their studies that there are several factors including skilled coaches, proper management solutions, media attention, attention to mental and psychological issues, youth trending and supporting the athletes in this sport in Kermanshah city. Another survey showed that lack of proper support for coaches, a lack of use of integrated talent identification with no discrimination, a lack of use of proper training schemes, a lack of meritocracy in the selection of sports managers, low monetization of the wrestling council at the provincial level and having fewer activities than other provinces, were the main barriers to the progress of wrestling in Lorestan province

(Tari, Khosravizadeh and Shahmansour, 2020). Rok Rok, Shahmansouri, and Froughipour (2021) also claimed in their studies that to develop the wrestling sport, wrestling should be made from the basic age of talent, and coaches and sports authorities of wrestling should be supported by the government so that they can identify the talent they need and develop in the same province to ultimately achieve their merit. In a study conducted by (Smolianov et al,2021), it was found that in order to promote a sport at the national and international levels, elite training should be done from the basic ages, and for this, all the coaches that sport must use a comprehensive and purposeful program, which can be seen in the field of wrestling and in America, that all the coaches in America use a comprehensive program to develop the sport of wrestling at the national and international levels. (Turabayev, 2021) In his study, he stated that the development of wrestling at the national level can promote a healthy lifestyle for all age groups, and it can also promote elitism and turn them into heroes. Meli strengthened the sense of patriotism.

Considering the above, it can be stated; The sport of wrestling has received more attention at the national and international levels than in the past, and the popularity of this sport is increasing among the people of Iran and the world. With the growth of wrestling in all parts of the world, especially in Iran, it is expected that those in charge of wrestling will have a fair view in this field and treat all provinces with potential in the field of wrestling in the same way. But in Ardabil province, which has a long history in this sport, this issue has been overlooked by the guardians of wrestling, and this issue has made this province remarkably susceptible to elitism and the discovery of important talents in this field. The most popular field will stay away due to existing problems and issues. This is despite the fact that since the past, Ardabil has been considered one of the most influential poles in the sport of wrestling, and everyone has seen in the past that Ardabil's

wrestlers were able to make themselves proud at the national and international levels. Promote national pride and solidarity. Therefore, the current condition of wrestling in Ardabil province is not worthy and suitable in any way, and those in charge of sports in this province should take effective measures to witness the pride of Ardabil youth in national and international competitions. For this reason, the current research seeks to identify the obstacles in the way of this popular sport in Ardabil province and provide effective solutions to institutions and officials, and custodians of sports.

### **Materials and Methods**

This study was of a qualitative type with a phenomenological approach and applied in terms of purpose. The statistical population of this research included all veterans, coaches, and professors of wrestling in Ardabil province. The participants in the research were people who had more knowledge and experience in relation to the research subject than others, whose list was provided to the researchers by the provincial wrestling board. Therefore, the purposive approach was used for sampling. The sample size was also determined based on theoretical saturation in response to questions. Thus, when the researcher concludes that questions are similar to the responses of other participants and there are no new data in them and theoretical saturation, the number of interviews is sufficient and the hand continues to be interviewed (Charms, 2006). In the present study, when the number of participants reached 11 people, theoretical saturation

occurred in response to the research questions. For data collection, semi semi-structure reviews were used. With the certainty of confidentiality, interviews were recorded and then coded via the coding software. The external referee approach was used for validation review in this research. And two external referees were monitoring the research and gave an advisory opinion, these people had no profit from the research. Also, to examine the reliability according to Silverman, three of the experts conducted data coding, which was identical to the coding results of more than 85 % of the open codes. Also, the MAXQDA20 software was used to analyze the data. While at the open coding stage, the text is partitioned based on semantic units to identify the focal categories for the formation of concepts that are linked through open coding in a logical order based on proximity and similarity to form a conceptual-theoretical image. At this stage, in order to be able to work with fewer codes, the researcher integrates the codes of common content while reviewing and proofreading the data text. In the end, it can be stated that in this study, all ethical principles were observed and participants volunteered to participate in the study voluntarily and with full satisfaction.

### **Results**

The research findings were analyzed in two parts, descriptive and inferential. In the section related to descriptive statistics, the following information was obtained from the data obtained from the statistical sample in the form of specific questions in the demographic field. (Table No. 1.)

**Table 1. Demographic characteristics of the participants**

Variable	description	Number	percent	Variable	description	Number	percent
Age	21-30	4	36.3	Coaching level	Degree B	1	9.1
	31-40	3	27.3		Degree C	10	90.9
	41-50	3	27.3	Championship position	a country	6	54.5
	50 years and above	1	9.1		provincial	5	45.5
Education	diploma	2	18.2	Coaching experience (years)	1-10	6	54.5
	Associate Degree	2	18.2		11-20	3	24.3
	Bachelor's degree	6	54.5		21-30	2	18.2
	Master's degree	1	9.1				

In the second part, the research findings of the interviews conducted with the participants were analyzed. In the first part, 167 open codes were obtained through the analysis, and the codes that were close to each other were combined to form 50 primary codes. Then, following the path of the primary codes that had very close similarities, they formed categories in the form

of categories and finally seven main factors, i.e. physical, cultural, individual, economic, social, political, and legal factors as obstacles to development. The wrestling sport of Ardabil province was recognized. At first, some examples of the codes extracted from the text of the interviews are presented, and then the categories and central coding are presented.

**Table 2. Some examples of extracted codes and their semantic units**

Basic code	The semantic unit of the interview
<b>The weather condition in the province</b>	First of all, I must say that the ship is not suitable in most of the geography of Ardabil province, except for cities like Namin and the hot areas of the province.
<b>Low income</b>	In the discussion of achieving championship titles, the favorable financial status of the athlete is important, and the lack of income prevents the continuation of sports
<b>Inadequate support for heroes</b>	The lack of support for athletes in this field compared to other fields in the province is one of the current damages in the field of wrestling, and unfortunately, the mentioned cases have damaged the spirit of athletes and the quality level of these people's performance.
<b>wrestling coach</b>	In general, the ship's problems cannot be attributed to a specific case. Among the notable problems in wrestling in the province is that the literacy and technical level of current coaches is lower compared to the coaches of the past.
<b>Inadequate parental support</b>	A wrestler's family plays an important role in his development. If parents have good support, many problems will be solved
<b>Attracting sponsors</b>	In the development and promotion of the ship, investors are needed, and having financial resources other than what is allocated is very important, and therefore attracting sponsors can help.

<b>Immigration of athletes</b>	Only in a few cases, we see that someone comes and follows sports professionally, and these people have to go to other provinces, including Tehran, in order to progress.
<b>Deprivation Region</b>	At the level of Ardabil province, the obstacles that can be mentioned are that Ardabil province is a deprived region.
<b>Poor performance of board managers</b>	In our city, most of the responsibilities are on the shoulders of the coach, and the head of the board only carries his name, and I do zero to one hundred tasks myself. Maybe if you ask the wrestlers of our city who is the president of the board, they will know him by name, but not by his face.
<b>Neglect of exercise</b>	Therefore, as I said, this sport is not suitable in Ardabil province, while in other provinces, such as Mazandaran, they even wrestle on the sand in the alleys.

After the coders labeled the initial codes based on the events and facts, the initial codes were formed. Then, three experts reviewed the initial codes and modified them based on the coding on the documents. Therefore, the triangle or triangulation method is used in the quality

measurement of the primary codes. Now, according to the theory of Strauss and Corbin (2003), a relationship should be established between the primary codes of the research and the categories that are called categories. All cases are detailed in Table No. 3.

**Table 3. Categories and Axial Coding**

<b>Substructure</b>	<b>Categories</b>	<b>Basic code</b>
<b>Physical f Actors</b>	Natural and Unnatural Infrastructure	The weather condition of the province
		Lack of hall facilities
		Lack of ship halls
		Absence of wrestling school
<b>Cultural Factors</b>	Position Wrestling	Neglect of exercise
		Inappropriate tribute to the athlete
		Inadequate advertising
		Inadequate support for athletes
		Thanks to the coach
		Neglect of exercise
		Poor media culture
<b>Individual Factors</b>	Physical Factors	Inadequate support for heroes
		Athlete's respiratory function
		Inappropriate feeding physical readiness
	Psychological Factors	Individual motivation
		courage
		Self-esteem Self Confidence
<b>Economic Factors</b>	Living Condition	Low income
		Insufficient budget allocation
		Deprivation Region
		Attention to livelihood
		Expensiveness and inflation
		unemployment
		Expensiveness and inflation/low income
		Failure to hold educational workshops / attention to talent search



Finally, it can be stated: According to the process that was stated in the research method, the identified codes were classified according to the degree of similarity into seven social, economic, cultural, individual, physical, legal, and political barriers, each of these barriers plays an important role in the lack of development. They have wrestling in Ardabil province and it should be paid attention to by those in charge of sports.

## Discussion

Wrestling is the national sport of Iran. This popular sport attracts more and more people every day. Today, there are heroes in Iran who not only cause national pride but are recognized as successful sports models in most countries of the world. Therefore, paying attention to the sport of wrestling and removing the existing obstacles can help to discover the talents of this field. The sport of wrestling in Ardabil province is very important for people, but in recent years, it has caused concern due to the inadequacies that have occurred. Perhaps it can be said that one of the strategies for the development of wrestling in any region or country is forward-looking, and to realize this, one of the things that must be paid attention to is the identification of development obstacles, which is important. In this research, it was said that seven social, economic, cultural, individual, physical, legal, and political barriers have been discussed and concluded.

The results of the study in relation to social barriers showed that the barrier plays a more important role in the development of the wrestling of Ardabil province. In this study, the social barrier is summarized in categories of "weakness of organizational factors, non-interaction with other organizations and families." In the context of the weaknesses of organizational factors, it was demonstrated that having an effective wrestling coach with knowledge and experience is essential to the development of the province's wrestling sport.

Also, from the point of view of the participants in the sponsor study, the performance of managers of the wrestling councils of the province and holding training workshops are more important than other factors of organizational weakness. In the next section, the social barrier can be pointed out as the lack of inclination with other organizations that have poor interaction with organizations such as the governorate, the exercise administration and youth and the parliament members' offices, etc. And there is no help from organizations in the development of wrestling. In the end, the social barrier between parental support of computer games and virtual space is another hurdle in developing the sport of Ardabil province in other research, which can be cited as the example of Asghari, Kuzechian, and Ziaei's (2014) research as "the identification and ranking of the wrestling development barriers in the failed provinces of Iran". The researchers found in their research that the sponsor, the weakness of the managers and heads of sport for the provinces, the lack of support of the organizations and government bodies from wrestling sport, and the lack of wrestling instructors with knowledge and experience from the main obstacles to the development of wrestling in the failed provinces. In another research Tari, Khosravizadeh, and Shahmansouri (2019) demonstrated that the lack of training workshops, weakness of managers, lack of financial support, lack of knowledge of coaches, and non-use of veterans in the coaching and practice of experience has led to the development of wrestling sports in Lorestan province. Therefore, in a general look and the results of other studies that are consistent with the results of this research, it is possible to say that the social barrier and its consequences the sooner it is settled, and Ardabil province will witness some success in wrestling sport.

In this study, participants announced the second main hurdle in developing the wrestling sport for economic obstacles. In addition, the low-

income factor among the first 50 concepts was known as the most important code. As Stalberg and Pedersen (2018) have argued in their study, there is an obvious difference in the conduct and continuation of a particular sport, and statesmen are tasked to support low-income classes. The findings related to the economic barrier also observed turnout, lack of funds, low incomes, inflation and unemployment, regional deprivation, etc. An obvious and significant impact on the development of the wrestling sport in Ardabil province. Another study by Pakistani researchers on the development of hockey sport came to the conclusion that one of the major impediments to the development of the Pakistani national sport, hockey, is the lack of government attention to the financial issues of the relevant organizations. They also stated that in addition to the lack of sufficient funds for the development of hockey in Pakistan, the existence of economic problems among the people themselves has caused many people to withdraw from this sport and prioritize livelihood issues (Javed, Naser, and Javed, 2021). Also, if the provincial authorities do not provide financial support to the athletes and talents of wrestling who can be proud in the future, this sport will definitely face bigger problems in the future.

The results show that from the participant's point of view, the third main obstacle to the development of wrestling in Ardabil province is related to cultural barriers. According to the classification conducted in the findings, lack of support for sportsmen, neglecting the sports, poor media performance in cultural building culture, lack of adequate advertising and inattention to coaches caused the sports of the province to lag behind other provinces. Among the mentioned issues, perhaps one of the most important impediments of media in the development of wrestling sport and attracting more audiences at the province level for this national crisis. Previous research also suggests that every sport has many cultural and social implications, but no progress is achieved until

the media is with them, and today, if we see progress in sports, it is because of the media's support of that field. As an example, the Olympic disciplines were able to put themselves at the forefront and be brought up at the global level through television (Cianferon, 2006). Or, Numerato (2009) also states that the media has a strange power and can appear in different roles, in fact, the media can play the role of the enemy and can play the role of a supporter. Another research was conducted by Irajpour, Meghdar, and Dabagh Rezaieh (2016) under the title of "Investigation of the role of mass media in the cultural development of popular and professional sports in the country". It turned out that broadcasting and other social media were instrumental in the development of mass sports and professional sports, they also stressed that sports managers and head of the council should increase their interaction with the media so that they can change the sport or the relevant field. Therefore, it can be stated that the sports authorities of Ardabil province have done little in this matter and the radio and television of Ardabil province have not paid much attention to the sport of wrestling, and it is suggested to pay more attention to the strong performance in the media and the creation of practical programs in addition to other obstacles.

The research findings indicate that the fourth hurdle is to develop the wrestling sport in Ardabil province to individual factors. Having an incentive, courage, and confidence to operate in each discipline will be achieved when the athlete has high nutritional and physical fitness, from the point of view of the participation of most of those working in the wrestling in Ardabil province, have weakness in one or more features related to individual factors, unfortunately. Saigin (2014) stated in his study that wrestling is different from all sports, wrestling needs athletes who have high physical fitness, and if this is not the case, success in wrestling will not be achieved, so coaches should pay special attention to physical

fitness factors. Berliana and Pournamasari (2016) also illustrated in their studies that Successful sports require time to achieve their highest levels, and at the same time they need to pay attention to factors that facilitate achieving success, they also aim to engage in the success factors of many factors, one of which is an ideal condition of athletes in terms of physical and mental health, and in addition to adequate physical fitness and high spirits, they should also pay attention to the technical and tactical abilities of the athlete. A fit body and high morale should also be considered for the athlete's technical and tactical ability. Erichsel (2019) also showed in his study that attention to individual factors in wrestling should not be limited to theory, but if coaches intend to train successful wrestlers, they should teach physical and psychological factors to athletes. Therefore, it can be stated that the athletes who are dynamic in wrestling in Ardabil province are not in good physical and mental condition from the perspective of the participants, and they say that most of the athletes are facing the problem of improper nutrition. In this regard, it is suggested that the wrestling trustees of Ardabil province should seriously follow up on this issue and even, if possible, consider credit from government institutions for this sector.

The results show that from the participant's point of view, the fifth key barrier to the development of wrestling in Ardabil province comes from physical obstacles. In fact, the code identified in the physical barriers indicates the geographic situation of Ardabil province from the point of view of the participants in the colder areas of Ardabil, wrestling is not very popular, and also physical barriers to the lack of sports halls, the lack of a wrestling school in Ardabil province and the lack of enough facilities in Ardabil province. If we have a look at the previous research, it can be stated that government facilities, including sports halls that are owned by governments, do not perform very well in terms of efficiency, and most of

these sports complexes are facing the problem of lack of maintenance budget, which has hindered the development of sports face problems in different disciplines (Bore, 2011) also, Moharramzadeh, Ghaibzadeh and Tavakoli Angut (2015) showed in their study that one of the obstacles to the development of sports is the lack of proper use of the infrastructure of sports and the lack of facilities and equipment which should be taken into account by the government. Zardoshtian and Ghaibzadeh also claim that ignoring the lack of hardware resources and sports spaces has a significant effect on the development of sports at a public and national level, in fact, the lack of sporting facilities and equipment is among the factors that slow the progress of athletes, and if these problems and shortages are not resolved, sport and athletes may have appropriate development. Therefore, considering the above-mentioned issues, the wrestling sport in the province of Ardabil also deals with these obstacles that the responsibility of sport in the province should be resolved by practical measures and solutions as far as the sport in the province particularly wrestling moves forward to progress. The results of this part of the findings are consistent with the above research.

The study of the role of legal and political barriers in the development of sport, namely the sixth and seventh barriers of the research, showed that the lack of support from political figures for the sport in Ardabil province and the political works of authorities has led to the creation of one of the obstacles impeding the development of wrestling. On the other hand, there are legal barriers to the view of the participants in the law to protect the employment of athletes and the law on the exemption from military service for athletes. In this regard, it can be stated that Vatandust and Nasirzadeh (2011) considered the entry of political people into the management body and wrestling decision-making as one of the problems and challenges of the wrestling

federation, and Tabasi (2019) also emphasized the role of political obstacles in his study. Also, Dusti et al.'s study (2015) also confirmed the role of legal factors and stated that removing legal barriers will help the development of sports. Therefore, it can be said that if the political and legal barriers are removed, we will see the growth of wrestling in Ardabil province.

### Conclusion

Considering the results of the present research, it can be stated that wrestling in Ardabil province, if it receives the attention of the authorities, can deliver talented athletes in this field to society. Also, the results show that social and economic obstacles are considered the most important obstacles, which shows that Ardabil province has severe restrictions in terms of the social environment in sports and economic matters, which can not only affect The field of wrestling but also affect other sports. Therefore, it is suggested that one of the main limitations of this statistical population research was that it is better for other researchers to choose athletes as their statistical population in order to generalize the findings more. Eventually, it is hoped that the results of this research will be noticed by the media, officials, and government institutions, so that wrestling activists, in addition to promoting the current elite athletes, can also train athletes from elementary ages to reach the world and Olympic competitions.

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