

## Phenomenological Analysis of the Key Factors in Foreign Player Recruitment in Iranian Professional Football Clubs

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### Abstract

**Purpose:** Before the crisis, there is an opportunity to prevent some serious damage by predicting and managing possible crises. The absence of crisis management scenarios and conscious prediction of crises in Iran's professional football is visible. Therefore, the aim of this study is to present crisis management scenarios in Iranian professional football.

**Methods:** This research is a qualitative research from the point of view of the career goal and the perspective of the prospective research. In this study, the analytical approach and the final processing of the findings using the analysis of trends and uncertainties and the integrated scenario planning model have been used. The participants of the present analytical and exploratory study included 29 domestic and foreign stakeholders of Iranian professional football who were selected based on purposeful sampling. Data was collected through interviews and open questionnaires. Data analysis was done with the six-step model of combined scenario planning of Lipzig and Rollandberger.

**Results:** The findings and analysis of the 35 main factors obtained led to the production of 13 key uncertainties and 8 desirable, probable, possible and believable scenarios for the future of crisis management in Iranian professional football.

**Conclusion:** In the end, the strategy of "technology as a solution to change the behavioral pattern of fans during social and economic crises" was introduced as the main crisis management strategy in Iran's professional football in the future.

**Keywords:** foresight, professional football, scenario, informed forecasting, crisis management

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## Introduction

One of the most attractive aspects of sports is professional sports. Professional sports are among the vital factors in the development of the sports industry in different countries (Inouye et al., 2023). The increasing growth of sports participation in a large number of countries, the wealth, popularity and fame that great athletes gained for themselves were among the most important factors in the transformation of the concept of amateur sports and its gradual transformation into professional sports (Tesang et al., 2017). Professional sports are a type of sports business in which the attraction of highly skilled athletes is emphasized (Hassing, 2024). The characteristic of this type of sport is excitement (Gwartz and Spins, 2022; Richardson and McKenna, 2022). Among all the different professional sports, football is one of the most popular and beloved team sports in the world. Professional football is organized in such a way that the best athletes are recruited to attract the most spectators and financial income (Hassing, 2024; Madden, 2012). Today, football is the most common sport in most countries of the world. Even those who are indifferent to football do not deny its social importance. The interest in following and watching football matches is so much that it is not believed that there is any scientific, political, economic, social and cultural event that a society of this size wants to follow its progress with this speed. 2013). In Iran, football has become the most popular sport, and since 2010, with the first season of the Premier League, steps have been taken to make football professional in Iran. It was after that that those in charge of organizing professional football thought about increasing the quality of services and extensive planning at all levels of professional football.

One of the most important challenges facing the organizers of professional sports and especially professional football is dealing with possible crises and risks that are likely to occur in various economic, cultural, infrastructure, event, national and international sectors (Nazari et al., 2023). The International Strategy Secretariat (ISDR) affiliated to the United Nations, in its most recent statement, has

defined a crisis as a serious breakdown in the functions of a society that leads to human, capital or environmental losses (Delvin, 2023). In this way, it is referred to as a crisis incident that is beyond the ability of the society to adapt to it according to the available resources; from this point of view, the occurrence of accidents is usually caused by the negative effects of hazards that are not well managed (Coombs and Lafer, 2022). Georg and Pratt (2024) have defined a crisis as a sudden event and great misfortune that causes chaos in the basis of relations and normal activities of society. In order to control unexpected events and prepare to deal with crisis, the existence of a system called "Crisis Management System" is necessary. This management system should, with detailed planning and the formation of committees to collect information and analyze data, predict the probability of a crisis and prevent it, as well as analyze the crisis that has arisen and how to deal with it, estimate material and moral damage, and finally create Balance and restore the previous conditions, pay (Pakbaz, 20200). Crisis management, a range of activities designed to maintain control over crisis and emergency situations; and providing a framework to help people at risk or recover from the effects of crises (Coombs, 2008). It seems that one of the ways that can be a suitable platform for predicting and preventing the occurrence of a crisis is to take advantage of the knowledge base and new awareness. One of these new knowledges, which great thinkers around the world adhere to and serve their government, is the knowledge of futurology (McQua et al., 2019). In fact, the policy makers of the countries do foresight in different contexts with the aim of building their desired future (Adib Roshan et al., 2018).

Forecasting is done in different ways and with different tools (Shahuli Kohshuri, 2019; Shahuli Kohshuri et al., 2014). A powerful tool that predicts future competitive environments and develops long-term strategy even in the most uncertain environments is the scenario planning tool (Oliver and Pratt, 2017). The scenario expands opportunities, makes possible the ways of understanding and intervention in

the future, and leads to the development of organizational strategy and its implementation (Stringberg et al., 2023). So with these analyses, it can be acknowledged that planning in professional football has its own challenges due to the existence of various crises and the inability to predict them; Therefore, it is possible that the use of the scenario planning tool in the current environment full of uncertainty can have a significant impact on the control of professional football crises in Iran. In connection with scenario writing in sports, so far few studies have been recorded with the scenario writing approach; In this context, it is possible to refer to the theoretical and empirical study of Shahuli-Kuhishuri (1401) with the aim of developing strategic scenarios for health-oriented sports education in Iran and producing two key uncertainties: "Creating a sense of demand for sports based on modern technologies" and "Physical optimization with the institutionalization of sports"; Nazari and Jurkesh (2019) with the aim of developing scenarios of the factors affecting Iran's aging sports and presenting two scenarios for the future of Iran's aging sports, Adib Roshan et al. ) With the aim of formulating Iran's sports training strategies based on scenarios and presenting 4 scenarios. The ruling intellectual principles in future studies can be found in the knowledge of decision-making and operations of actors arising from future imaginations.

Although no study has been recorded so far in relation to the design of crisis management scenarios in professional football, but we can refer to the studies of Hasannejad and Gharenejad (2015) with the aim of ranking factors affecting crisis management in sports venues; Farahani et al. (2017) with the aim of analyzing the crisis in public sports; Shah Mansouri and Mozafari (2016) with the aim of identifying the causes of sports crises and how to prevent them in the fields of software and hardware, hardware and media and Karimi et al. mentioned in sports. Based on the presented literature, it can be acknowledged that the lack of a scenario and a forward-looking view in the design of crisis management in past researches is a fundamental gap and a major gap in the management of sports and professional football

in Iran.

Also, with an overview, it is clear that there have been researches in Iran and other parts of the world related to crisis management in sports; Among these researches, we can refer to the research of Knight et al. (2019) in relation to a proposed model in sports and communication crises, the research of McLoughlin (2019) in relation to the risk in winter sports for athletes, the research of Pikarz et al. (2019) in relation to With risk management and accidents in leisure time and the sports industry, Brown and Billings (2013) research in relation to sports fans as crisis audiences in social media, Farahani et al. et al. (2015) in connection with the presentation of the model of factors affecting the security of sports events and the research of Shah Mansouri et al. However, so far, no document indicating the existence of a research related to the presentation of the crisis management scenario in Iran's professional football has been registered, and this is a big research gap in the field of professional football research and the discussion of sports management. Probably, the existence of a research related to the presentation of crisis management scenarios in Iran's professional football seems important and necessary.

After determining the importance of crisis management in professional football and extracting the existing knowledge gap based on past research, the researcher focuses on the issue of what will happen if the recognition of possible scenarios is not paid attention to? Today, foresight, as the newest method of planning and policy making, has taken the title of "big science", which means purposeful organizing science and the cornerstone of future development (Maddi and Tomanian, 2015). Considering the power of predicting the future in the scenario writing method as one of the methods of foresight and the capabilities of foresight as a future research tool on the one hand and the limitations of traditional football development planning such as not considering key uncertainties, complex environment and global changes on the one hand, the selection of these variables And examining them is necessary and important and can lead to the

prediction of crisis management scenarios in professional football and ultimately lead to the development of sports in our country.

Today, professional football has become a sports industry, and the sports industry is considered one of the largest industries in the world. Increasing the economic share is one of the most important goals of professional football. Professional football leads to many benefits through economic development for communities. However, due to some issues, professional football in Iran has not grown as much as in developed and even less developed countries; but there have always been many risks and crises in the way of professional football and its various forms and all the trustees and beneficiaries of professional football.

Considering the political, security, social, economic and cultural conditions of the country as well as its geopolitical position and the type of interactions in the international arena; The concern of all the wise and knowledgeable officials in the field of crisis management in the country is to take effective steps in the field of modeling, formulation and design, foundation, implementation, development of crisis management models, as well as having different scenarios in crisis management, in different areas in the country. This will necessarily be possible by using the scientific power and the golden opportunities available before the crises. This research has very important and distinctive aspects of innovation. Firstly, this research has examined a completely new field due to its focus on the management of professional football crises in Iran. In the field of sports, especially football, this attitude towards crisis management is often reflected in general management perspectives. However, due to the specific focus on Iran's professional football, this research deals with this issue from specific and specific perspectives and compiles scenarios that are compatible with the specific and worthy features of this market and society. Secondly, this research uses up-to-date and appropriate data sources that are set based on the current conditions and realities of

### **Materials and Methods**

Future research methods are divided into

professional football in Iran. The focus on these new data sources sets it apart from other existing research. As a leading research, through the use of new and up-to-date data, this research presents a new and advanced approach in the management of Iran's professional football crises, which is coordinated and justified with the entities and challenges of this field.

Professional football is a mirror of the whole view of sports management. In this area, sports managers use different areas and trends of sports management and implement them in a specific context. Therefore, knowing and being surrounded by management knowledge is one of the most important issues for all professional football managers; they will have to plan, organize, direct and direct, budget, control and evaluate their collection at different levels. Therefore, when they are able to perform their tasks successfully, based on a comprehensive perspective that shows the future to some extent and has relative knowledge of different futures, along with theoretical issues and basic knowledge in this field. In this regard, the necessity and importance of research in order to develop crisis management scenarios in professional football is becoming clearer.

In this regard and considering the increasing importance of professional football and its development in Iran and the large population involved in professional football in various formats, it seems that creating scenarios for crisis management in this area is of particular importance. It seems that if this research becomes operational, the Iranian Football Federation, the Vice-Chancellor of Championship and Professional Sports of the Ministry of Sports and Youth, and the organization of the League of Different Sports Federations will be the main beneficiaries of this research; Also, private and public professional clubs can use the results of this research to plan their future and present their strategies. Therefore, the purpose of this research activity is to present crisis management scenarios in Iran's professional football.

normative and exploratory methods based on goals. Normative methods are based on values

and norms and ask about desirable futures, while exploratory methods look for what is possible. This study is based on the purpose, practical and exploratory. The present study is trying to develop a scenario for crisis management scenarios in Iran's professional football by using one of the forecasting methods, called scenario-based planning based on intuitive logic method. In this study, the analytical approach and the final processing of the findings using the analysis of trends and uncertainties and the integrated scenario planning model have been used. This integrated scenario planning model was introduced by Liptzig and Rollandberger (Shonker and Wolff, 2013), the six-step process for this model is outlined in Table 1.

To identify and extract key factors (political,

economic, social, technological, environmental and legal) affecting the future of crisis management in Iranian professional football, the method of library study, theoretical literature review, open questionnaire and interviews with experts were used. The criterion for selecting experts is theoretical and experimental mastery, ability to participate in research, and availability. Among the criteria for entering the study, we can mention people's familiarity with the literature of sports futurology, crisis management in sports and football, sports development, and people with books and scientific articles in the aforementioned fields, and people with work and executive experience in Iran's professional football.

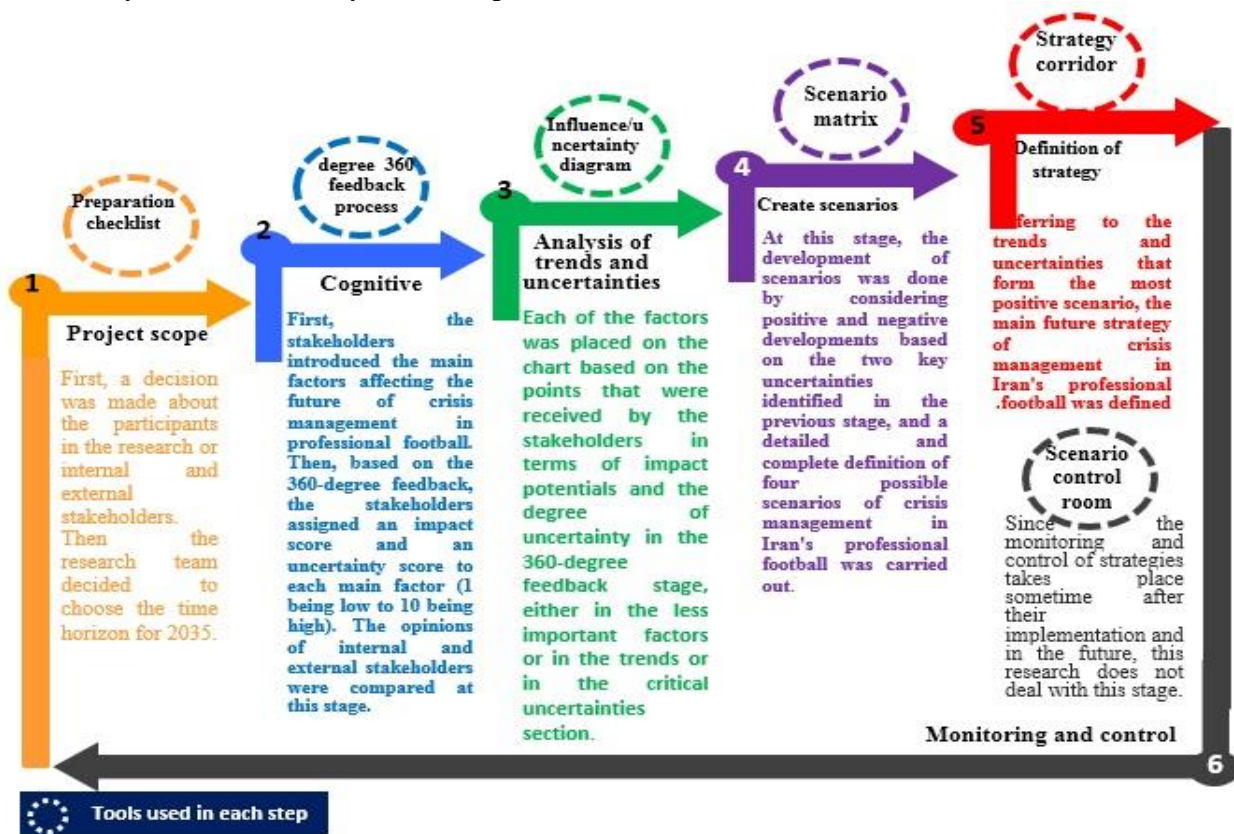


Figure 1. Lipzik and Rollandberger's integrated approach to the scenario development process (Shonker and Wolff, 2013)

In the first stage (definition of the scope of the project), the guardians of football sports such as the managers and senior experts of the Iran Football Federation, the vice championships and professionals of the Ministry of Sports, the senior managers and trustees of professional football clubs in Iran, the provincial boards of

football sports and football coaches and athletes with postgraduate education. As internal stakeholders, as well as sports management experts with operational experience in professional sports and professional football, they were considered as external stakeholders and the statistical population of this research. A

total of 27 people were selected as internal and external stakeholders based on targeted sampling.

In qualitative research, narrative validity does not have the same implicit meaning as validity in quantitative research, and narrative comparison is not meaningful (Zare Mirkabad, 2015). The validity of qualitative research depends on the ability and effort of the researcher. Considering the lack of distinction between the concept of validity and reliability in qualitative research (Long et al., 2000), in general, this research can have credibility and

### Results

After implementing the six-step process of scenario writing in the second step, the output of the 360-degree stakeholder feedback tool included 35 main and important factors that can

trust for the reasons of the scenario-writing subsection: 1- Data collection was done carefully and planned; 2- Efforts were made to avoid bias in the interviews; 3- The selection of experts was done carefully and with a lot of research; 4- Selection of key uncertainties was done directly with the opinion of experts; 5- The research colleagues made a note on the emerging findings that this method is known as the couple survey method according to (Moornam and Miner, 1988, quoted by Zare Mirkabad, 2015).

potentially affect the future of crisis management in Iran's professional football (Table 1).

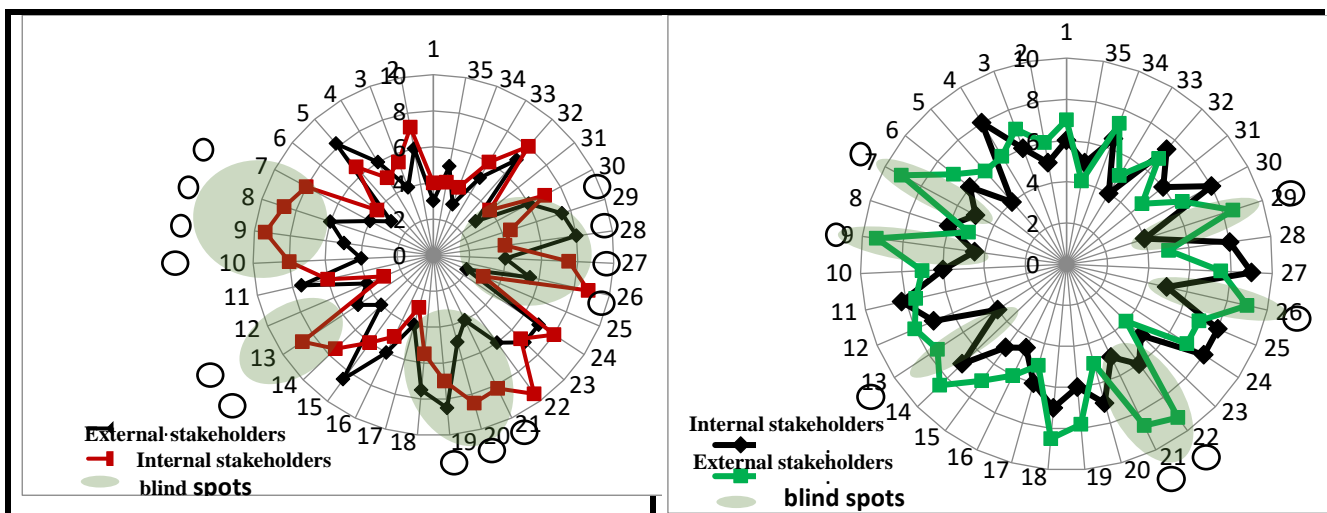
**Table 1. The main influencing factors and the consensus percentage of the factors on the future of crisis management in Iranian professional football**

main factors	Grouping
Changes in rules and regulations related to the football industry	<b>political</b>
International relations and the effects of sanctions	
Demographic changes and changes in the tastes and interests of football audiences	
The progress and development of football in neighboring countries and the region	
The influence of governments and globalization on the development of football	
Policies related to the gender gap	
Security and political issues of society	
Gaps or intergenerational influences	<b>Economic</b>
Inflation and high economic inflation rate	
Failure of clubs to attract income in a chaotic economic situation	
Changes in the process of financial support for the development of sports infrastructure	
The devaluation of the national currency and the increase in currency fluctuations in the country	
Changing the behavior of spectators due to economic crises	
Changes in the structure and lack of government financial support for professional football	
Changes in access to financial resources for clubs	<b>social</b>
Changes in consumption patterns related to sports and football	
Increasing social awareness in terms of cultural literacy	
Creating a social and religious divide in the country	
Expanding ethnic diversity	<b>Technology</b>
Changes in fan behavior patterns	
Advances in technology and technology in sports management	
Changes in culture and the use of technology in various plans and programs	
Increasing the virtual dimension of human life	
The impact of technology on professional sports trends	
The unique power of social networks	<b>environmental</b>
Widespread development of technology application in the region and lack of sufficient infrastructure in Iran	
Uncontrollable dust in hot seasons	
High air pollution in cold seasons	
Climate challenges	

Environmental literacy	<b>Law &amp; legal</b>
Considering macro environmental trends	
Legislation based on big data	
Updating the rules regarding the legal and judicial issues of football	
Reviewing the rules of club ownership and sports business	
Creating a process to facilitate the legal acquisition of income-generating components	

In Figure 2 and 3, the comparison of the opinions of internal and external stakeholders about these 35 factors in relation to the potential of influence and the degree of uncertainty on the future performance of crisis management in Iran's professional football is visible through a spider diagram. In the spider diagram, we can identify the blind spots visually; the blind spots affect those factors that, from the point of view of external

stakeholders, have a greater impact on the future performance of crisis management in Iran's professional football, while these factors are less important from the point of view of internal stakeholders. On the spider diagram, wherever the distance between the opinion of external and internal stakeholders is large and significant for each factor, it is defined as the range of blind spots with a different color from the background.



**Figure 3. The spider diagram of the degree of uncertainty in the future of crisis management in Iran's professional football: foreign versus domestic perspectives**

**Figure 2. The spider diagram of the potential of influencing the future of crisis management in Iran's professional football: foreign versus domestic perspectives**

In Figure 2, the seven blind spots are "society's security and political issues (7), inflation and high economic inflation rates (9), changes in spectator behavior due to economic crises (13), technological and technological advances in sports management (21), changes in the culture and use of technology in various plans and programs (22), the wide development of the use of technology in the region and lack of sufficient infrastructure in Iran (26) and climate challenges (29) have been identified.

addition to the five blind spots that were introduced earlier and are also present in the spider diagram of the degree of uncertainty and there is a significant gap between the opinion of foreign and domestic participants in this connection, there are other blind spots such as the factors of "security and political issues of the society" (8), the failure of clubs to attract income in a chaotic economic situation (10), changes in the structure and lack of financial support from the government for professional football (14), changes in the behavior patterns of fans (20), uncontrollable dust in hot seasons (27) and high air pollution in cold seasons (28)" were revealed; These blind spots were often

Also, the spider diagram in Figure 3 showed that in terms of the degree of uncertainty, there are more blind spots than the impact dimension, which have been ignored for any reason; In

discussed in political, economic, technological and environmental fields. The blind spots discovered at this stage are the critical uncertainties of the future of crisis management in Iran's professional football, from the point of view of the stakeholders.

In the third step of the six-step process of scenario writing, according to Figure 4 and in the influence/uncertainty diagram, the degree of influence of each of the identified factors on the future of crisis management in Iran's

professional football, as well as the degree of uncertainty related to each factor, as It has been determined systematically. The position of each of the factors in the diagram was determined based on the average points that were awarded to them by the stakeholders in the second stage, and the factors were determined based on the numbers assigned to them in Table 1 and the specific color of their type (political, economic, social , technological, environmental and legal) were displayed.

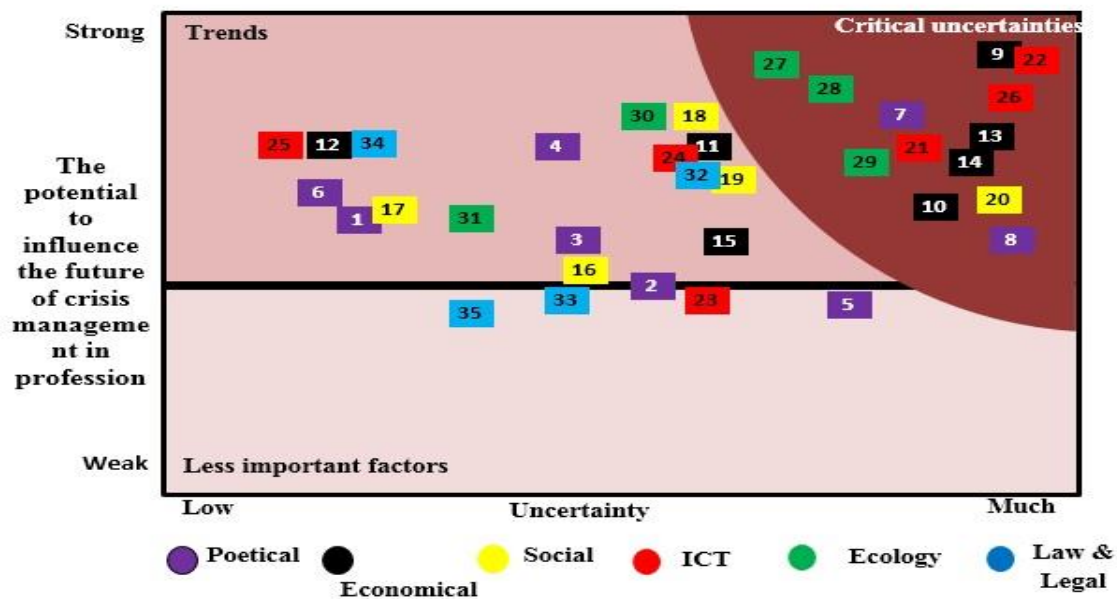


Figure 4. Impact / future uncertainty diagram of crisis management in Iranian professional football

The lower part of Figure 4 shows the less important factors that have a relatively small impact on the future of crisis management in Iran's professional football and have been removed in the scenario-based strategic planning process and will not be significantly referenced in the future. The factor "Establishing a facilitation process in the legal acquisition of income-generating components (35)" was the least important factor from the point of view of the beneficiaries. The upper and left part of the diagram shows the factors that have a high impact on the future of crisis management in Iranian professional football and are relatively easy to predict, and these factors are called trends. The most influential process selected by the stakeholders was "creating social and religious divide in the country (18)."

The upper and left part of the diagram (Figure 4) includes the most important factors for the

development of scenarios. Critical uncertainties play an important role in identifying the four main dimensions that are the basis of scenario development; Generally, these four main dimensions are identified through the correct and accurate combination and division of these factors; In this study, critical uncertainties, thirteen cases including "society's security and political issues (7), society's security and political issues (8), inflation and high economic inflation rate (9), failure of clubs to attract income in the situation Unsettled economy (10), changes in spectator behavior due to economic crises (13), changes in the structure and lack of government financial support for professional football (14), changes in fans' behavioral patterns (20), technological advances and technology in sports management (21) ), changes in culture and the use of technology in various plans and programs (22), the wide development of the use of technology

in the region and lack of sufficient infrastructure in Iran (26), uncontrollable fine dust in hot seasons (27), high air pollution in cold seasons (28) and climate challenges (29); These critical uncertainties are divided into four

groups based on the titles or common elements between them, as well as their meanings and applications in high-level divisions. Table 2 shows well what kind of critical uncertainties were and how it became a key uncertainty.

**Table 2. Conversion of critical uncertainties to key uncertainty**

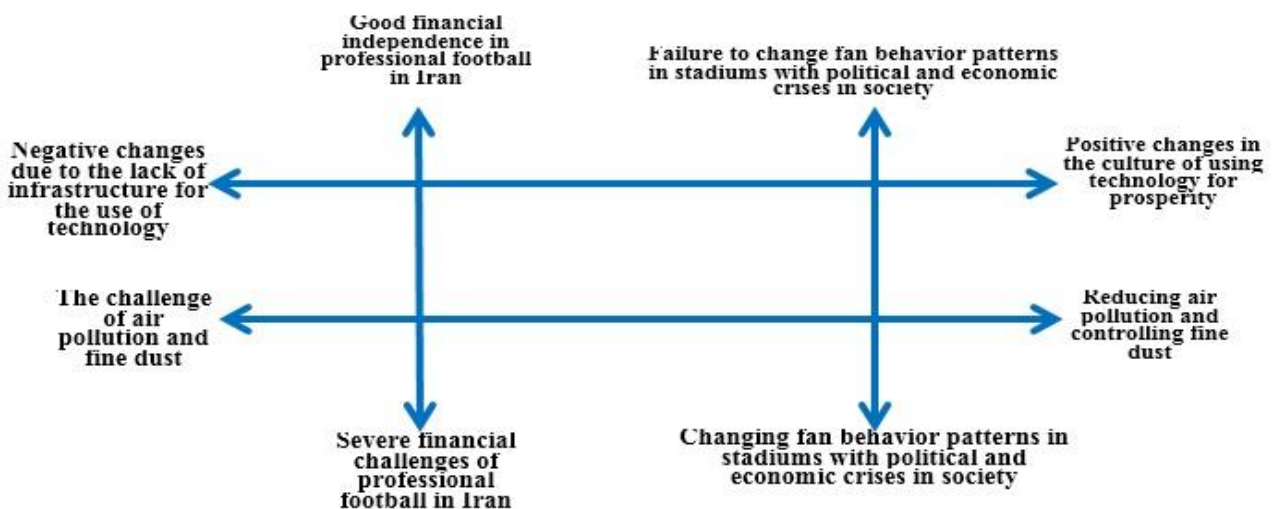
Key uncertainty	Critical uncertainty	type
Changing fan behaviour patterns in stadiums with political and economic crises in society	Security and political issues of society	<b>Political</b>
	Gap or intergenerational effects	<b>Political</b>
	Changing the behaviour of spectators due to economic crises	<b>Economical</b>
	Changes in fan behaviour patterns	<b>Social</b>
Severe financial challenges of professional football in Iran	Inflation and high economic inflation rate	<b>Economical</b>
	Failure of clubs to attract income in a chaotic economic situation	<b>Economical</b>
	Changes in the structure and lack of government financial support for professional football	<b>Economical</b>
Positive changes in the culture of using technology for prosperity	Advances in technology and technology in sports management	<b>ICT</b>
	Changes in culture and the use of technology in various plans and programs	<b>ICT</b>
	Widespread development of technology application in the region and lack of sufficient infrastructure in Iran	<b>ICT</b>
The challenge of air pollution and fine dust	Uncontrollable dust in hot seasons	<b>Ecology</b>
	High air pollution in cold seasons	<b>Law &amp; Legal</b>
	Climate challenges	<b>Law &amp; Legal</b>

These four key uncertainties are the basis for the development of future scenarios of crisis management in Iran's professional football in the next step.

The results of the six-step process of scenario writing at the end of the fourth step are shown in Figure 5. The scenario matrix is the main core of identifying scenarios based on four key uncertainty factors named "changes in fan behavior patterns in stadiums with political and economic crises in society, severe financial challenges of professional football in Iran,

positive changes in the culture of using technology for welfare and The challenge is pollution and fine dust" which were identified using the influence/uncertainty matrix in the previous step.

To build the scenario matrix, once the positive dimension of both key uncertainties and then the negative dimension of the key uncertainties identified in the previous step are considered separately. In the scenario matrix, these two contradictory dimensions face each other.



**Figure 5. Scenario matrix: the future of crisis management in Iran's professional football**

In the first step of this stage, to create scenarios, we depict the future state of each of the key uncertainties in the most negative and most positive state on the horizontal and vertical axes of the matrix; Then the scenarios were placed in the eight areas of the scenario matrix, as a result of which eight separate scenarios were automatically created. The scenarios should be developed in such a way that they cover the time horizon specified in the first step (year 1414). In the following, desirable, probable,

possible and plausible (justified) scenarios of crisis management in Iran's professional football, taking into account the future state of each of the key uncertainties in the most positive and negative possible state, are briefly presented in Table 3. In this table, the house with green color indicates the presence of the corresponding key uncertainty in the desired scenario, and the red houses indicate the absence of that key uncertainty in the scenario.

**Table 3. Future scenarios of crisis management in Iranian professional football**

Key uncertainty scenario	Key uncertainty								probability of occurrence	
	No change in fan behavior	Good financial independence	Use of technology	Control of air pollution and fine dust	Changing the behavior pattern of fans	Severe financial challenges	Lack of technology infrastructure	The challenge of pollution and fine dust	(internal stakeholders)	(external stakeholders)
First favorable scenario	Green	Green	Green	Green	Red	Red	Red	Red	%35	%15
The second favorable scenario	Green	Green	Green	Red	Red	Red	Red	Green	%40	%15
The first possible scenario	Green	Green	Red	Red	Red	Red	Green	Green	%60	%75
The second possible scenario	Red	Green	Green	Red	Green	Red	Red	Green	%35	%30
The first possible scenario	Green	Green	Green	Red	Red	Red	Red	Green	%40	%15
The second possible scenario	Green	Red	Red	Green	Red	Green	Red	Red	%70	%70
The first plausible scenario	Green	Green	Red	Red	Red	Red	Green	Green	%60	%80
The second plausible scenario	Green	Green	Red	Green	Red	Red	Green	Red	%50	%30

Therefore, the following scenarios can be predicted:

1. Desirable scenarios: prevention of possible crises assumed in professional football
2. Possible scenarios: hope for stable income generation and financial independence of professional football clubs in great weather!
3. Possible scenarios: the future behavior of football fans, similar to current behaviors; Fazgh from the community!
4. Believable scenarios: Missing modern technologies, at the right time!

The results of the implementation of strategy corridor instructions for the future of crisis

management in Iran's professional football, which includes the fifth stage of the six-stage process of scenario writing, are as described in Figure 6. This instruction is always trying to be on the path of the most positive scenario; this scenario is generally located in the upper and right part of the scenario matrix. The focus of the strategy corridor is on the two main driving factors of the scenario development, which are the axes of the scenario matrix and the critical uncertainties associated with them. In this project, the most positive scenario is based on no change in behavioral patterns and positive changes in technology.

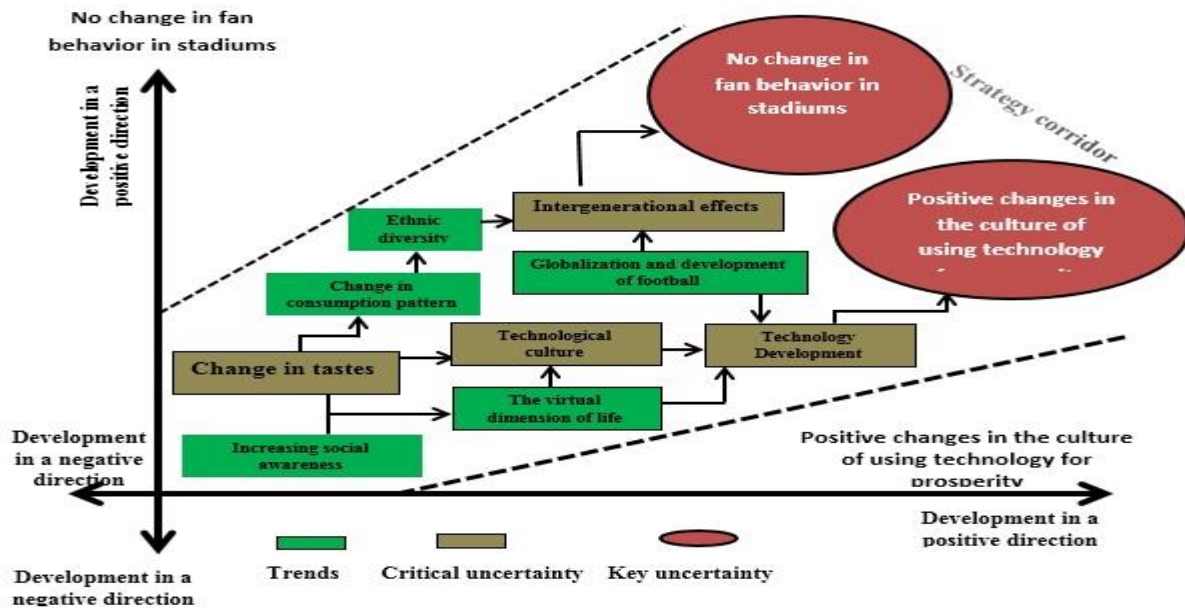


Figure 6. Corridor of the future strategy of crisis management in Iran's professional football

Taking into account the strategy corridor and the impact of critical trends and uncertainties that were on the path of the most positive scenario, the output of the fifth stage, determining the strategy of "technology as a

### Discussion

The main finding of this study was to compile eight scenarios related to crisis management in Iranian professional football; the scenarios were developed in such a way that they covered the time horizon specified in the first step (horizon 1401). To create these scenarios, the future state of each key uncertainty was considered in the most negative and positive possible state; in the following, these scenarios will be examined separately and practical suggestions will be presented according to each scenario:

#### Desirable scenarios: prevention of possible crises in professional football

The first favorable scenario indicates that 2035 is the year for crisis management in Iran's professional football in such a way that, with the possibility of crises, preventive plans and measures are considered. In this scenario, it is assumed that the behavior pattern of the fans in the stadiums has not changed despite the political and economic crises of the society, and proper financial independence prevails in Iran's professional football. Also, the culture of using technology has changed in a way that has helped to increase welfare and improve processes, and by reducing air pollution and

solution to change the behavioral pattern of fans in the era of social and economic crises" as the main management strategy. The crisis in Iran's professional football is in the future.

controlling fine dust in stadiums, healthier and cleaner environments have been created for games.

In the second favorable scenario, even though there is financial independence in Iran's professional football and the culture of using technology is moving towards prosperity and improving processes, the uncertainty of the air pollution challenge and the lack of control of fine dust create serious problems. The existence of the challenge of pollution and fine dust in stadiums and the environment of sports infrastructures causes a decrease in air quality and a health threat for players and fans. This situation may reduce the attendance of the crowd in the stadiums and reduce the direct contact with the athletes. In addition, this situation can lead to serious health problems for fans and players and decrease their performance, which will ultimately negatively affect the performance of the teams and the results of the matches. Therefore, in this scenario, the lack of control and reduction of air pollution and fine dust causes serious problems and health threats in the sports space and reduces the attractiveness and attraction of the audience to attend the stadiums.

In the first scenario, Iranian professional football managers are obliged to use preventive solutions considering the possibility of crises. These actions include designing educational plans for fans about positive behavior and responsibility in stadiums, using technology to improve processes and preserve the environment (Ardan, 2016), and creating healthier and cleaner sports venues. These measures can play an important role in preventing technological and environmental crises in Iranian football.

In this scenario, success in crisis management in Iranian professional football becomes possible by preventing possible crises. The use of preventive measures is the most important factor here. For example, measures for better and continuous training of fans about responsible behavior and the necessity of observing health and safety rules and principles in stadiums are of great importance. Also, the use of technology to improve processes and preserve the environment, such as the use of ventilation and air purification systems, is suggested. These measures can prevent environmental and health crises and provide healthier sports environments.

In the second scenario, facing the challenges of air pollution and fine dust in stadiums (Bundes et al., 2019) turns into serious problems and health threats. This situation can result in not attracting fans and reducing the communication between players and fans. For Iran's professional football managers, it is necessary to consider measures such as using new technologies to control air pollution and fine dust, improving ventilation and air purification systems in stadiums, and improving health and safety standards. These measures can be solutions to reduce environmental and health crises in Iran's football sports environment.

In this scenario, the lack of control of air pollution and fine dust in stadiums and sports infrastructure environment becomes a serious crisis and health threat (Kalcher et al., 2010). This situation can reduce the attractiveness and attraction of fans to attend the stadiums and even have negative effects on the performance of the players and the results of the matches. Here, immediate and efficient measures are

necessary to control air pollution and fine dust. For example, improving ventilation and air purification systems in stadiums, controlling the level of pollutants, and continuing to maintain health and safety standards can be among the measures that control and prevent these crises. In both scenarios, the active role and cooperation between the football federation, professional clubs, the Ministry of Sports and Youth, and relevant institutions in creating preventive and management solutions to face various crises is very vital. With smart planning and implementation of effective measures, these institutions can prevent the occurrence and effects of crises in Iran's professional football and provide security and improvement of environmental conditions for players and fans. In both scenarios, cooperation and coordination between the Football Federation, professional clubs, the Ministry of Sports and Youth, and relevant institutions is critical for the implementation of these preventive and management measures. By trying to implement smart plans and taking effective measures, these institutions can play the most effective role in preventing crises in the sports environment (Usmanet al., 2022) and provide improvement of environmental and health conditions for fans and players.

**Possible scenarios: hope for stable income generation and financial independence of professional football clubs in great weather!**

This possible scenario acknowledges that in 1414, Iranian professional football believes in stable income generation and financial independence in clubs. In this scenario, increasing the financial power of teams and financial independence leads to the beginning of a period of ambition and progress in stadiums. This creates a promising situation for attracting high-ability players as well as attracting more investments to the sport. Also, the increase in financial resources leads to the provision of necessary funds for the improvement of sports facilities, training and development of marketing strategies, and the promotion of technology in sports. Probably, the problems related to fine dust in summer in a part of the country or air pollution in winter and in big cities have been solved, and this has

provided good conditions for holding various professional football events. However, the lack of attention to social and political problems, as well as the lack of infrastructure for the use of technology for the well-being of various stakeholders of professional football in Iran, may create a defect in this economic boom. Although financial independence can promote sports development, paying attention to the financial development of fans and other people, as well as the use of technology, is also of great importance. If the importance of these issues is not properly addressed, economic growth may be threatened due to environmental reasons and serious crises may arise for professional football.

In the considered scenarios, financial independence and stable income generation (Rabi B et al., 1400) in Iran's professional football are depicted as a good and promising event. This situation can improve the financial foundations of the teams and help the development and progress of sports in the country. Increasing financial resources can lead to investment in sports equipment and buildings (Seminska, 2020), upgrading infrastructure, and increasing the quality of games. This allows teams to recruit the most talented players and the best coaches.

But these scenarios show that a focus on financial independence (Jiao et al., 2014) may lead to the neglect of social and political issues, as well as a lack of investment in technology and the well-being of fans and other stakeholders. Ignoring these factors can lead to a decrease in the attendance and interest of fans in stadiums, loss of direct communication with players, and even serious health and environmental problems in stadiums (Cao and Shen, 2014). These cases can gradually reduce the attractiveness of Iran's professional football and eventually lead to a crisis for this sport.

Although financial independence is important and necessary, this issue should not cause us to ignore other important aspects such as technological development, improving the welfare of fans, and paying attention to social and political issues. The balance between these factors will ensure the establishment of a stable policy and intelligent planning in managing

crises and increasing sports productivity in the country.

Professional football clubs with stable income generation and strong financial independence can improve the country's sports situation. This allows teams to attract the best players and invest in the development of sports infrastructure and technology improvements, given more financial resources. These measures can be effective in the development and promotion of professional football in the country. However, this focus on financial independence alone may lead to overlooking other challenges. Failure to pay attention to social and political issues can cause dissatisfaction among fans, reduce audience attraction, and ultimately reduce the income of clubs. Also, ignoring environmental issues such as air pollution and fine dust can lead to health and environmental problems in stadiums, which can gradually reduce the attendance of fans and attract them. On the other hand, paying attention to the development of technology and improving the welfare of fans is also very important. Technology can be effective in improving the processes and experience of fans in stadiums, and this can lead to increasing the attractiveness of games and increasing fan attendance. In general, the balance between financial independence, technological development (Haki, 2009), attention to social and political issues, and environmental issues is essential for the sustainable growth and success of football (Sismasro, 2018) of Iran's profession. Ignoring any of these aspects can lead to problems and crises for this sport. Optimum focus on all these aspects will improve the overall football situation and better crisis management.

**Possible scenarios: the behavior of future soccer fans, similar to current behaviors; Fazgh from the community!**

In 1414, the behavior of fans in Iranian professional football remains similar to their current behavior; ignoring social and political issues due to intense interest in sports; these possible scenarios show that fans pay less attention to social and political issues because of their love for soccer, and soccer is more important to them than many other issues. This

situation may cause fans to continue their consumption and emotional behavior, which can lead to tensions in stadiums or other unpleasant events.

In the environmental context, the possible scenarios have two different possibilities: one possibility is the continuation of air pollution, which can lead to negative effects on health and sports atmosphere. Another possibility is the possibility of solving this problem, if these measures are taken, it can improve the environment and sports space. In these possible scenarios, managers and sports officials are faced with the social challenges of fans and environmental problems, and they must use appropriate management policies to manage possible crises caused by these situations. These measures may include education, information and the implementation of appropriate environmental and social policies to improve the condition of football and preserve the environment. The mentioned scenarios show that the effects of football on the behavior of fans and the environment in the future can appear in two different ways. Due to the fans' deep interest in this sport, these attitudes play a very important role in improving the situation and managing possible crises in the future.

In these scenarios, fans' attention to social and political issues has been relatively reduced, and their intense interest in football can lead to ignoring social challenges and stadium tensions (Ronglan, 2016). This issue shows the high importance of officials and sports managers in training and promoting the culture of fans and managing tensions in the stadium.

Also, in the environmental discussion, we see two possible conditions, one of which is the continuation of air pollution and environmental problems, while the other is trying to solve these problems and improve the sports environment. This shows that management measures require the use of appropriate environmental policies and informing fans and managers to achieve a proper critical management to preserve the environment and improve the quality of the sports space (Zhang, 2021). With this in mind, providing educational and culture-building instructions for fans to pay attention to social and environmental issues

(Yon et al., 2018), along with active and efficient policies in crisis management, can help solve future issues and face sports and environmental challenges. In the first scenario, fans' focus on football and not paying attention to social and political issues can increase stadium tensions and become a challenge for crisis management. This can perpetuate emotional and possibly violent behavior in the stadium environment. Sports officials and managers should launch educational and cultural promotion programs to pay attention to social issues and reduce tensions in stadiums in order to prevent possible crises. In the environmental scenario, air pollution and environmental problems can become serious threats to the health of fans and athletes (N.J. et al. 2023). This issue can reduce the presence of fans in stadiums, reduce the level of communication with teams and ultimately reduce the performance of teams in competitions. To prevent this situation, measures such as improving infrastructure, using technology to control and reduce air pollution, and education in the field of environmental protection and health can help. As a result, creating educational programs, creating culture and raising the awareness of fans (Jennings et al., 2013) and sports managers in relation to social and environmental issues, along with effective management policies in facing potential crises, can prevent serious problems from occurring in the future. Prevent risks for Iran's professional football.

**Believable scenarios: Missing modern technologies, at the right time!**

One of the most believed scenarios in the crisis management of Iran's professional football refers to the fact that in 1414, Iran's professional football is facing issues that modern technologies are not available at the right time. While other countries and the world have benefited from technological advances and have used them, Iran is looking for the introduction of these technologies with delay. In this scenario, there is no change in the behavior pattern of fans and strong financial independence in Iran's professional football. But the lack of infrastructure related to technology at the right time, while other

countries have benefited from technological capabilities, Iran has faced problems for the development and improvement of football.

This situation leads to the lack of full productivity of the potential of technology. Iranian football lags behind other countries in the field of sports technology, and this lag can cause the loss of important opportunities for the improvement and development of stadiums, game management, and fan experience. Failure to use technology can result in the loss of unique opportunities to improve sports culture and experience. In this scenario, sports officials and managers are facing technical and infrastructural challenges. They need to lead Iran's football sport towards a more advanced and modern system by investing in technological infrastructure and optimal efficiency of technological capabilities. These measures include investment in technology infrastructure, training and the use of new management and technology systems that can help improve the quality of the game, fan experience and better management of stadiums. In the believable scenarios that were introduced, the problems related to the lack of modern technologies in Iran's football sport (Dale et al., 2021) and its impact on the economy and sports culture have been investigated. This scenario shows that if Iran does not take a step towards the efficiency of technology in sports, it can face challenges in the management of football, which the availability of the most up-to-date technologies could manage and help improve the state of football.

In this situation, one of the main challenges in attracting and retaining fans has been raised due to the lack of use of technology in the sports experience (Attinen et al., 2008). To solve this challenge, managers and sports officials need to think of ways to introduce technology in football in a way that has a positive impact on the fans' experience. This can include the use of advanced video systems in the stadium, the provision of online services to access game-related information and services, and the creation of virtual interactive spaces.

Also, these scenarios clearly show the necessity of investing in technological infrastructure and

improving technology related to football management. By creating policies and investment programs in this field, it is possible to improve the quality of the game, interaction with fans, and intelligent management of clubs. These investments can help the development and progress of Iran's professional football (Weib et al., 2020) and raise the status of this sport at the national and international level. In the credible scenarios of Iran's professional football crisis management, the point that is clearly raised is the lack of access to modern technologies at the right time. This lack of access can act as a major obstacle for the development and improvement of sports culture and club management in the country. Considering the positive effect that modern technologies have in sports management, such as the use of new management systems, advanced visual tools, and communication technologies, this lack of access can create many obstacles for the improvement and development of professional football in Iran. In these scenarios, lack of access to technology may lead to the decline of sports culture. When modern technologies are not used in professional football, the necessary infrastructure to improve the quality of the game, direct communication with fans, and intelligent management of clubs will not be provided. This can lead to missing great opportunities to improve the sport culture and experience. In order to improve the status of professional football in Iran in this situation, we need effective investments in technological infrastructure (Tassi, 2012). These investments can help create effective management systems, enhance the fan experience of the game, and improve the quality of players. Also, upgrading technology and using new methods can help to increase the attention of fans and establish a direct relationship with them, which, as a result, can help the growth and development of professional football in Iran.

### **Conclusion**

The issue of crisis management and relief and rescue has received more attention from officials in recent years, which has several reasons. In this context, approvals such as the "Comprehensive Plan for the Relief and Rescue

of the Country" and also "Law on the Formation of Iran Crisis Management Organization" approved and its Executive Regulations, which are in the government have been approved. All of these indicate the importance of proper management and the use of existing golden opportunities, before the crisis and unpleasant events during the crisis should be prevented as much as possible.

The sports environment, especially fetal in Iran, is one of the main candidates to face various crises, either natural or man-made, due to the many fans and the holding of many events. Therefore, in order to plan, organize, direct, allocate resources and other crisis management factors in professional football, it was necessary to determine educational, research, equipment, logistical and structural needs using scientific and applied models.

In examining crisis management scenarios, the role of technology, fans' behavior and financial power are very important. The impact of technology in improving processes and better management of stadiums, training and use of new technologies can have a significant impact in reducing possible crises. The behavior of the fans and its effect on the events inside the stadium is also an important point, and its correction can help reduce the possibility of mass crises in the stadiums. Also, the existing financial power and its optimal management can be effective in organizational development and prevention of financial crises. In short, planning and implementing strategies that interact with technology, fan behavior, and financial power can be effective in better managing crises and improving the situation of professional football in Iran. Also, coordination and interaction between key players such as clubs, federations, and media in prevention measures and crisis management is of great importance. Based on the findings, the following practical suggestions are provided:

1. Continuous education to fans and players about responsible behavior and health and safety principles
2. Using technology to improve processes and maintain the environment of stadiums
3. Creating ventilation and air purification systems in order to reduce air pollution and fine

dust

4. Immediate measures to control the level of pollutants and continuous follow-up to maintain health and safety standards
5. Active cooperation and coordination between the football federation, professional clubs and related government institutions
6. Implementing smart programs to control and prevent crises in the sports environment
7. Develop appropriate preventive policies and plans to increase welfare and improve processes in stadiums
8. Development of programs to reduce environmental pollution and control fine dust
9. Optimal use of technology to improve the experience of fans and players
10. Attention to social and political issues and their participation in crisis management
11. Development of educational programs to improve the culture of using technology in stadiums
12. Promoting the culture of financial development of fans and attracting continuous investments

In the final conclusion of this research, it can be stated that the root of all possible crises that are likely to occur in Iran's professional football should be determined and after that the pathology of each crisis should be determined considering that today's world is full of various uncertainties, complexity. There are many uncertainties and uncontrollable fluctuations. After that, with conscious forecasting, different scenarios and appropriate to each crisis should be designed; Finally, in order to plan, organize, direct, allocate resources and other factors of crisis management in professional football, it is necessary to determine the educational, research, equipment, logistic and structural needs using forward-looking management approaches. In relation to this study, there were no debatable limitations.

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