



Designing the strategic plan for the development of the sports clubs in the Sultanate of Oman.

Dr. Mohammed Ahmed Al Amri ⁽¹⁾, Prof. Ebrahim Alidoust Ghahfarokhi ⁽²⁾, Prof. Mahmoud Goudarzi ⁽³⁾

(1) PhD candidate in Sport Management, Faculty of Sports Science and Health, University of Tehran, Iran.

(2) Professor in Sport Management, Faculty of Sports Science and Health, University of Tehran, Iran

(3) Professor in Sport Management, Faculty of Sports Science and Health, University of Tehran, Iran.

Abstract:

Sports clubs play a pivotal role in nurturing and actively contributing to the development of youth and young individuals, making them a crucial element within the sports system. The success in managing these sports organizations and addressing challenges hinges on effective and systematic planning. This study investigates how clubs perceive strategic planning challenges and aims to identify desirable strategies for developing sports clubs in The Sultanate of Oman through a comprehensive SWOT analysis (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats). The statistical population for this research comprises board members, officials, coaches, players, and employees associated with the Ministry of Culture, Sports, and Youth (334 individuals). A questionnaire was developed after identifying key strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats; a panel of experts validated it. Descriptive statistics, the Internal Factor Evaluation (IFE) Matrix, the External Factor Evaluation (EFE) Matrix, and the SWOT matrix were employed for data analysis. The findings reveal that the strategic position of sports clubs in the Sultanate of Oman falls within the W.O. quadrant, indicating that weaknesses surpass strengths and opportunities outweigh threats.

Consequently, adopting conservative strategies is recommended. The analyses delineated 11 strategies, encompassing three S.O.s, four W.O.s, two S.T., and two W.T. strategies. Policymakers are encouraged to consider issuing an investment law in the sports sector and reinforcing partnerships between the private sector and sports clubs through marketing and sponsoring community activities, programs, and initiatives..

Keywords: (Athletes, Coaches, Private Sector, Sports Clubs, Sultanate of Oman)

Introduction:

Today, physical activity and sports are considered essential for society since they impact human development, both from a physical dimension and from a social and even economic one, becoming relevant elements in people's lives and their environment (Michael, 2020). Sports today are one of human societies' most urgent needs and fundamental issues so that few countries can be found without a sports organization. One of the most important goals of sports federations and organizations in any country is to develop sports and increase public participation in championship and recreation activities (Rezaei & Ameen, 2019). Internationally, sports policy often has two participation focuses: elite performance and community-level participation (Eime et al., 2020).

Sport has transformed from an activity with no structure and little affiliation to having an unthinkable economic, cultural, and social importance a few years ago. As stated in the Sports Statistics Yearbook 2019 from Spain, the total expenditure linked to sport has increased from 4.865,9 million euros in 2008 to 5.686,5 million euros in 2017. This is a growth of 16.86% in 9 years, which is a huge figure compared to other professional sectors. These data corroborate the significant growth that has taken place in Spanish society, which invests/expends 123,4€ on sports per person (MECS, 2019). Even though the definition of

sport varies internationally, the critical policy aim is consistently to increase participation (Eime et al., 2020). Sports consumers are emotionally attached to sports clubs and are actively involved in sports events (Walker & Heere, 2011).

Sports clubs are among the most critical actors in the sports industry. The quality levels of the outputs produced by sports clubs will increase in parallel with the satisfaction of the activities carried out by the sports club stakeholders, who produce the sports service from the processes in the sports club (Demir & Sertbaş, 2018).

Sports clubs are usually equated with sports enterprises, and their management is considered a particular management branch (Tianyu Li et al., 2021). They have been defined as "private, nonprofit organizations formally independent of the public sector, including volunteer members and a democratic structure, having sports provisions as their main aim (Elmose-Oesterlund et al., 2017). Although admittedly, many sports clubs receive partial public financing or support (Zintz et al., 2012).

Sports clubs are interesting settings from a public health perspective for several reasons: (1) they welcome a diverse population across socio-economic status and lifespan, (2) the voluntary nature of sports participation provides an opportunity for health education, (3) previous studies have highlighted the benefits of health promotion, such as

increased membership or improved sport participants' health (Van Hoye et al., 2017). Therefore, in the past years, sports clubs have been actively supporting communities, hoping to create a positive social impact and maintain a progressive image of the organization (Godfrey, 2009). Participating in sports club activities is a typical way of exercising and playing sports in Finnish society: as many as nine out of ten children try sports club activities (Koski, 2016).

Nevertheless, recent results have shown that traditional sports clubs are no longer a favourite setting for adults to exercise for health benefits (Eime et al., 2020). Perkinen et al. (2022) pointed out that sports clubs positively impact many children and adolescents. However, teenagers in Finland are increasingly quitting participation in sports clubs when they reach adolescence. The cessation of sports club participation in adolescence is alarming (Mathisen et al., 2019). The dropout phenomenon has been identified both nationally and internationally. The reasons for quitting sports participation have been studied extensively (Crane & Temple, 2014; Deelen et al., 2018; Gonçalves et al., 2011). Okayasu et al. (2010) conducted a study to identify the problems faced by sports clubs in Japan through the responses of a sample of (260) people affiliated with these clubs. The study found that the most prominent problem experienced by Japanese clubs is the limitation of practice and attention to only one sport rather than the others. The research of Skille (2010) on the problems faced by sports clubs in Norway in terms of the services they provide showed that clubs focused on competitive games while neglecting services related to health, sports, and society.

As the activities of sports clubs are permeable to age groups, the potential of sports clubs to increase children's and adolescents' physical lifestyle is great. Therefore, not only from the point of view of the sports clubs but also of the individual's health and the public health, it is essential to find the reasons that engage an adolescent in a sports club (Mathisen et al., 2019). It is crucial that the development of sports policy, infrastructure, and strategies meets the changing landscape of participation and that sports organizations understand the total picture of participation in sports across different settings and the implications for their operations and provision of facilities and programs (Eime et al., 2020).

Quality and quality systems in sports clubs are considered systematically, including monitoring sports services, identifying problems related to the processes, and improving quality and feedback processes (Seraslan & Kepeoğlu, 2005). Regarding all processes carried out in a sports club, effectively implementing quality and quality management practices, such as training processes, infrastructure activities, and teamwork processes, will provide value to the sports clubs (Demir & Sertbaş, 2018). Organizations in various fields worldwide face many challenges and difficulties due to internal and external variables, making it a great challenge for them to survive and continue in light of the increasing numbers of these organizations and the intense competition between them.

Bryson (2018) noted that local governments face many complex challenges, such as rapid urbanization, new technological advancements, and an ageing workforce. In this regard, the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic has hurt the financial situation of several enterprises, regardless of the sector that they belong to (Rezaei et al., 2020; Umar et al., 2021; Umar, Su et al., 2021). About the latter, amateur sports organizations were forced to stop offering activities to their members due to social distancing rules and lockdowns (Feiler & Breuer., 2021). Thus, benefiting from strategic planning has been suggested as a necessity for governments, organizations, and communities (Hadadian et al., 2014). Strategic planning—setting long-term goals, prioritizing actions to achieve the goals, and mobilizing human and financial resources to execute the actions—is a valuable tool for anticipating and addressing such challenges (Bryson, 2018).

In this sense, strategic planning in sports organizations has become an indispensable tool for decision-making, concentrating actions in different areas that will be carried out in an articulated and coordinated way to achieve the expected results. Its strategic nature gives it leadership in the organization's direction, motivating its managers in planning (Duclos-Bastías et al., 2021).

The Strategic Planning:

Strategic planning in the public sector has grown considerably over the past three decades, and local governments have widely adopted strategic planning as a standard practice (Johnsen, 2021). Melaka (2014) defined Strategic Planning as the actions needed to achieve an organization's goals and the other critical elements developed during the planning exercise. However, strategic planning is an organizational management activity that is used to set priorities, focus energy and resources, strengthen operations, ensure that employees and other stakeholders are working toward common goals, establish agreement around intended outcomes/results, and assess and adjust the organization's direction in response to a changing environment. It is a disciplined effort that produces fundamental decisions and actions that shape and guide what an organization is, who it serves, what it does, and why it does it, with a focus on the future. Effective strategic planning articulates where an organization is going, the actions needed to progress, and how it will know if it is successful. More broadly, strategic planning is essential to creating public value, which involves enhancing the quality of life and ensuring continued benefits from public institutions in the face of an uncertain future (Bryson, 2018). A fundamental principle in strategic planning is that organizations should seek to formulate strategies to take advantage of external opportunities and avoid or reduce the effects of external threats (David, 2011).

David and David (2017) mentioned that defining strategies or directions to achieve a goal and deciding how to apply these strategies is known as strategic planning. In a systematic strategic planning process, the project manager

can benefit from appropriate strategies to reduce vulnerabilities and ensure the project's success by creating knowledge of the internal and external environment. The strategy, defined based on the SWOT matrix (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats), determines how to reach the goal. This combination can efficiently evaluate SWOT sub-criteria and thus prioritize them to allow decision-makers to determine which should be given attention first (Elsheikh & Azzeh, 2017). Wickramasinghe and Takano (2009) pointed out that SWOT analysis is obtained from the identification of the conditions, potentials, and problems with aspects related to the use of SO (Strength Opportunity) Maxi-Maxi Strategy, W.O. (Weakness Opportunity) Mini-Maxi Strategy, S.T. (Strength Threats) Maxi-Mini Strategy and W.T. (Weakness Threats) Mini-Mini Strategy.

In the study of Rezaei and Ameen (2020), which explored the desired strategies for the development of futsal in the Iraqi province of Sulaymaniyah, they pointed out that Environmental Analysis Technology (SWOT) is an essential tool in decision-making and is generally used for the systematic analysis of strategic conditions, the identification of internal and external factors in the organization's environment and the access to the most appropriate strategies which can be Conservative Strategies (W.O.), Competitive Strategies (S.T.), Defense Strategies (W.T.) and Aggressive Strategies (SO). The SWOT analysis results indicated that weaknesses override strengths and opportunities over threats, so conservative strategies should be used (improving internal vulnerabilities by exploiting available opportunities).

The Sports System in Oman:

The Sultanate of Oman has known sports clubs in their current form since the advent of the modern renaissance in 1970 with the establishment of many sports clubs that have spread in all governorates where their number has increased to reach 43 clubs (at that time) and has become the central unit in the sports system in the Sultanate of Oman. It also forms part of the Omani sports movement, being one of the foundations of sports work, and the need to upgrade it and rely on its future activities as the basic units of the Omani sports movement that are indispensable for building a comprehensive sports edifice. The government sponsors Sports and clubs, which believe in their importance in building and developing the nation (Al-Busafi, Al-Hashemi, 2015).

According to Article 3 of the Statute of Sports Clubs issued by Ministerial Resolution No. 124/2008 of the Ministry of Sports Affairs in the Sultanate of Oman, sports clubs aim to achieve the following:

1. It spreads and practices sports, physical education, and its lofty principles among members.
2. Contribute to the upbringing of community members athletically, culturally, and socially, develop their

- abilities and skills, discover their talents, care, and qualify them to achieve excellence in the sports field.
3. Providing tools to occupy the leisure time of members for their physical, social, cultural, and health benefit.
4. Forming club teams in sports fields.
5. Provide the appropriate environment to ensure women's participation in sports activities and programs per their needs.
6. Implementing the general policy of sports in the country, working within its framework, and adhering to the planning set by the Ministry in this regard.

Sports clubs and other sports organizations in the Sultanate of Oman face many challenges and changes that force them to change their traditional methods of the administrative process and replace them with ideas and concepts commensurate with modern administrative thought to compete globally and the significant development in sports management and sports sciences, which prompted the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Youth to prepare a comprehensive strategy for Omani sports (Alamri, 2017).

Strategic planning in sports system in Oman:

The Ministry of Culture, Sports and Youth has adopted scientific and technical methods in the field of strategic planning based on determining the current situation of the sports sector at different levels, analyzing the internal and external environments, and extracting available opportunities and challenges (SWOT) in preparation for the formulation of strategic objectives that can be implemented and evaluated in the light of performance evaluation criteria, all in complete consistency with the axes of the future vision Oman 2040. The vision of the strategy (advanced Omani sport and global achievements) came to express the upgrading of the level of sports practice and the promotion of its values in the daily life of everyone to become a lifestyle followed by the Omani citizens and expresses the Ministry's keenness to provide the requirements to achieve sports achievements at the continental and international levels at the high level (Ministry of Culture, Sports and Youth, 2024).

The mission of the strategy covers its main areas of work and axes in line with the future vision of Oman 2040, represented in sports, society, economic empowerment of the sports sector, and the development of the performance of its institutions and achievements while giving the environmental aspect the importance and care it deserves. The Omani Sports Strategy adopted four main axes. First, sports and society (for an active society). Second, economy and development (empowerment and economic inclusion). Third, governing sports bodies and raising their performance (advanced competitive sport and completed teams). Fourth, sports and sustainable environment (Ministry of Culture, Sports and Youth, 2024).

The number of officially recognized sports clubs in the Sultanate of Oman currently stands at (50); with this increase in number and the increase in the requirements and desires of the clubs, they have become a burden on the

government and sports federations, which has made them suffer from the inability to achieve adequacy for those clubs, and the support they provide is not enough to achieve the basic requirements for their success. Therefore, sports clubs should turn to plan for self-financing and marketing their sports potential, as this comes as a natural reaction to many variables, including the changes that occur to the Sultanate's policy in funding the sports field, where during economic crises it tends to reduce the financial support, it provides to the sports sector.

Through the researcher's work at the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Youth, he noted that despite the financial funds, logistical support, and facilities provided by the government to these clubs, they do not achieve the goals and objectives for which they were established, in addition to the reluctance of a large number of members of society of both genders to join and obtain memberships in clubs to benefit from the services they provide. It has attracted particular attention that sports organizations still need to adopt strategic planning seriously. Most sports clubs need a well-defined methodology in sports work or long-term strategic plans.

Objectives of the study:

This study aimed to investigate how clubs perceive the challenges of strategic planning and to answer the question of which strategies are desirable for developing sports clubs in The Sultanate of Oman by determining their SWOT analyses. It also aims to determine the ranking of this SWOT analysis.

Methodology:

This research was applied in terms of purpose and descriptive-analytic data collection method, conducted as a case study by examining the current situation and drawing a desirable situation in the area of designing a strategic plan for the development of sports clubs in the Sultanate of Oman.

Participants:

The statistical population consisted of the board members of the sports clubs, members, officials, coaches, players, technical staff, and employees in the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Youth, a total of 334 people. All populations were used as a sample ($N=n$).

Tools:

The researcher-made questionnaire was used to collect information. The validity of the questionnaire was determined using a survey of specialists and then was applied to a pilot sample, its reliability by Cronbach's alpha coefficient (0.92).

Data Analysis:

To analyze the data and the suitable strategies, the Friedman test, weighting method, and external and internal (I.E.) factors evaluation matrix was utilized.

Results:

The findings showed that 26.4% of respondents are board members of sports clubs, followed by club members by 21.9%. At the age group level, the largest segment of the participants in the questionnaire was 40-49 years old, at 41.3%, then 30-39 years old, at 30.8%. The highest frequency is for those with baccalaureate education, and the lowest frequency is for postgraduate degrees. After the questionnaire was prepared and presented to a group of experts as well as the survey sample, it included four axes that led to the identification of (6) strengths, (14) weaknesses, (10) opportunities, and (6) threats.

Prioritizing strengths based on the Friedman test showed that the most critical strengths of the sports clubs in the Sultanate of Oman include: 1) there is a lot of sports talent in Omani society, 2) local civil teams under the umbrella of sports clubs and 3) government trend towards supporting sports clubs respectively. Also, the most critical weaknesses of the sports clubs include

1. weak incentives and prizes offered in different competitions,
2. poor government funding against operational costs and
3. lack of training and qualification for club management staff.

Prioritizing opportunities showed that the most critical opportunities for the sports clubs in the Sultanate of Oman include:

1. the high proportion of young people in Omani society,
2. society's passion and willingness to volunteer and develop clubs and
3. The government granted clubs investment in land in economic and vital locations.

Also, the most critical threats to the sports clubs include:

1. poor support from the private sector,
2. the economic situation that has been affected at the current and international levels, and
3. attracting neighbouring countries for talent, professional players, and qualified technical staff.

To determine the strategic location of the sports clubs in the Sultanate of Oman, an Internal and external factors evaluation matrix was developed. Then, the strategic location was identified based on the total score of the internal factor evaluation matrix and external factors evaluation matrix.

Table (1)
Internal Factor Evaluation Matrix

<i>code.</i>	<i>Strengths and weaknesses</i>	<i>Weight</i>	<i>Rate</i>	<i>W.R.</i>
<i>S1</i>	<i>Government trend towards supporting clubs.</i>	<i>0.047</i>	<i>4</i>	<i>0.188</i>
<i>S2</i>	<i>There is a lot of sports talent in Omani society.</i>	<i>0.054</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>0.162</i>
<i>S3</i>	<i>The income from some investment and commercial projects.</i>	<i>0.045</i>	<i>4</i>	<i>0.180</i>
<i>S4</i>	<i>Some leaders are experienced, competent, and able to create administrative and financial stability in sports clubs.</i>	<i>0.046</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>0.138</i>
<i>S5</i>	<i>General assembly members are growing aware of exercising their roles and responsibilities by the law.</i>	<i>0.040</i>	<i>4</i>	<i>0.160</i>
<i>S6</i>	<i>Local civil teams under the umbrella of sports clubs</i>	<i>0.049</i>	<i>4</i>	<i>0.196</i>
<i>W1</i>	<i>Poor government funding against operational costs.</i>	<i>0.052</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>0.052</i>
<i>W2</i>	<i>Lack of technical and executive bodies in clubs.</i>	<i>0.050</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>0.100</i>
<i>W3</i>	<i>The infrastructure is still incomplete.</i>	<i>0.051</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>0.051</i>
<i>W4</i>	<i>Lack of training and qualification for club management staff.</i>	<i>0.052</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>0.104</i>
<i>W5</i>	<i>Weak incentives and prizes are offered in different competitions.</i>	<i>0.054</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>0.108</i>
<i>W6</i>	<i>The difficulty of releasing players, and technical and administrative officials working in different entities of the country and the private sector.</i>	<i>0.052</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>0.104</i>
<i>W7</i>	<i>Some current legislation does not help keep pace with future trends.</i>	<i>0.051</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>0.102</i>
<i>W8</i>	<i>Lack of strategic plans in sports clubs.</i>	<i>0.052</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>0.052</i>
<i>W9</i>	<i>There are no uniform development structures in sports clubs.</i>	<i>0.050</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>0.100</i>
<i>W10</i>	<i>Frequent resignations between board members and internal disputes.</i>	<i>0.051</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>0.051</i>
<i>W11</i>	<i>General assembly members do not play their full roles.</i>	<i>0.050</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>0.050</i>
<i>W12</i>	<i>Interested only in a limited number of sports.</i>	<i>0.050</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>0.100</i>
<i>W13</i>	<i>Lack of legislation or programs to nurture sports talent.</i>	<i>0.051</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>0.102</i>
<i>W14</i>	<i>The lack of community initiatives that the club offers to the community.</i>	<i>0.050</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>0.100</i>
<i>Total</i>		$\Sigma=1$		<i>2.20</i>

The results of Table 1 in the last page showed that the total score of the internal factor matrix is (2.20), which is less than (2.5), and indicates that the development of the sports clubs is in the weakness area. The results of Table 2 showed that the total score of the external factor matrix is (2.68), which is more than 2.5, and indicates that the development of the sports clubs is in the Opportunity area.

Table (2)
External Factors Evaluation Matrix

<i>code</i>	<i>Opportunities and Threats</i>	<i>Weight</i>	<i>Rate</i>	<i>W.R.</i>
<i>O1</i>	<i>The government granted sports clubs investment land in economic and vital locations.</i>	<i>0.064</i>	<i>4</i>	<i>0.256</i>
<i>O2</i>	<i>Social responsibility of some major government companies in the private sector.</i>	<i>0.061</i>	<i>4</i>	<i>0.244</i>
<i>O3</i>	<i>Clubs participate in various sports leagues at the regional and continental levels.</i>	<i>0.057</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>0.171</i>
<i>O4</i>	<i>The presence of the Omani Investment Agency, which includes more than 60 government companies.</i>	<i>0.061</i>	<i>4</i>	<i>0.244</i>
<i>O5</i>	<i>Oman hosts many regional and international sporting events.</i>	<i>0.061</i>	<i>4</i>	<i>0.244</i>
<i>O6</i>	<i>Effective partnership between government units and the private sector.</i>	<i>0.060</i>	<i>4</i>	<i>0.240</i>
<i>O7</i>	<i>Most clubs are located in vital and densely populated areas.</i>	<i>0.060</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>0.180</i>
<i>O8</i>	<i>Society's passion and willingness to volunteer and develop clubs.</i>	<i>0.065</i>	<i>4</i>	<i>0.260</i>
<i>O9</i>	<i>The high proportion of young people in Omani society.</i>	<i>0.070</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>0.210</i>
<i>O10</i>	<i>Ethnic diversity in Omani society.</i>	<i>0.064</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>0.192</i>
<i>T1</i>	<i>The economic situation has been affected at the current and international levels.</i>	<i>0.066</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>0.132</i>
<i>T2</i>	<i>Oman is constantly exposed to warm climates and tropical cyclones.</i>	<i>0.057</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>0.057</i>
<i>T3</i>	<i>Effects of global epidemics and diseases.</i>	<i>0.055</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>0.055</i>
<i>T4</i>	<i>Change in some laws and legislation from time to time.</i>	<i>0.061</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>0.122</i>
<i>T5</i>	<i>Attracting neighboring countries for talent, professional players, and qualified technical staff.</i>	<i>0.064</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>0.128</i>
<i>T6</i>	<i>Poor support from the private sector.</i>	<i>0.072</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>0.072</i>
<i>Total</i>		$\Sigma=1$		<i>2.68</i>

The internal and external matrix (I.E.) was used to analyze internal and external factors simultaneously. In this matrix, the strategic position of the sports clubs is in W.O. position, using the intersection of the total rated weight of the internal factors (2.20) and the total rated weight of the external factors (2.68) (Fig. 1), which shows that weaknesses overcome strengths and opportunities overcome threats. Therefore, the conservative strategies (improving internal weaknesses by exploiting existing opportunities).

Figure (1) Strategic position based on the Final Score of the Internal and External Assessment Matrix

Discussion:

This research aimed to develop a strategic plan for the sports clubs in the Sultanate of Oman. A Matrix of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats is one of the essential tools that managers compare information with and can present four types of strategies: SO, W.O., S.T., and W.T. (Teixeira & Canciglieri Junior, 2019). The results showed that the strategic location of the sports clubs in the Sultanate of Oman, using the intersection of the total rated weight of the internal factors (2.20) and the total rated weight of the external factors (2.68) is in the W.O. region, which shows that weaknesses overcome strengths and opportunities overcome threats. W.O.'s strategies of using potential advantages lie in the environmental opportunities to compensate for the organization's weaknesses. Therefore, conservative strategies should be used. This finding was consistent with Jamshidi et al. (2012), who aimed to design and develop strategies for cycling federations in Iran. It was concluded that the cycling federation's position in the SWOT model was conservative.

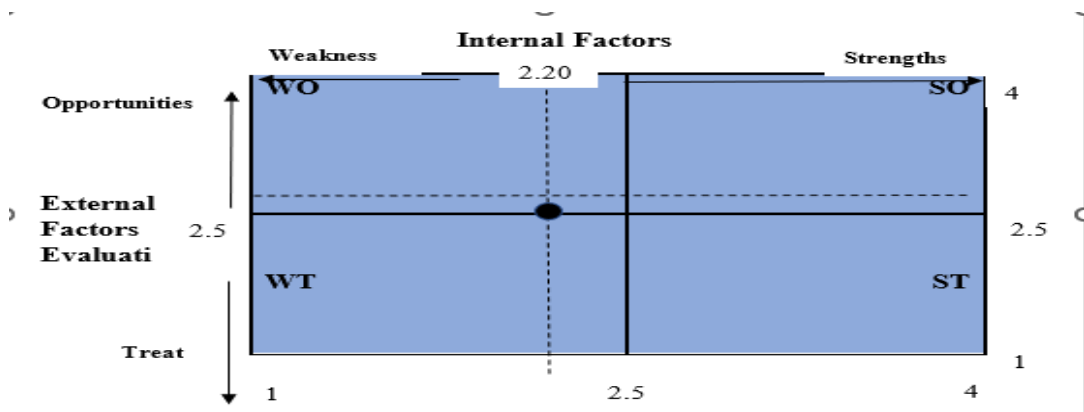
Also, Rezaei and Ameen's (2019) study sought to answer the question of the desired strategies for developing futsal in the Iraqi province of Sulaymaniyah, showing that the strategic situation is located in the W.O. area.

The findings were inconsistent with the studies done by Yogi (2017), which aimed to relocate the naval base and found that the SO Strategy was selected as a priority strategy to support the relocation of the Naval Base. Abbasi et al. (2016) also found out the strategic situation of the General Office of Sports and Youth of Kermanshah Province regarding championship sports was determined to be at the offensive zone (SO).

Bahrani and Kiani (2021) showed that the strategic situation of public sports in Kermanshah province is in the W.T. region. In the study of Mansouri and Sharififar (2017), which aimed to formulate a strategic plan for the Golf Federation of the Islamic Republic of Iran, the strategic position was determined to be a defensive position W.T.

Table (3)
TOWS Matrix for the sports clubs of the Sultanate of Oman

<i>EFE</i>	<i>Strengths (S)</i> <i>SI- S6</i>	<i>Weakness (W)</i> <i>W1- W14</i>
------------	---------------------------------------	---------------------------------------



<p style="text-align: center;">Opportunities (O) O1- O10</p>	<p>SO Strategies SO1: Encouraging government companies and the private sector to support investment projects in the lands belonging to the clubs through the Oman Investment Authority. <i>S1 , S3 – O1,O2, O6, O7</i> SO2: Organizing conferences and workshops to inform the general assembly members of their rights and responsibilities towards sports clubs. <i>S5, S6 – O8, O9</i> SO3: Activating cooperation with the Ministries of Education and the Ministry of Higher Education to develop sports curriculums and adopt programs to discover and nurture talented people. <i>S1, S2 – O6, O10</i></p>	<p>WO Strategies WO1: Issuing the investment law in the sports sector. <i>W1, W3, W5, W7 – O1, O4, O7</i> WO2: Maximizing the benefit of hosting international sports tournaments and events in developing the various stuff of sports clubs. <i>W2, W4 – O5, O8</i> WO3: Review all sports laws and regulations in line with international laws and developments in the sports sector worldwide. <i>W6, W7, W8, W9, W10, W12, W13 – O1, O2, O4</i> WO4: Strengthening the partnership between the private sector and sports clubs through marketing and sponsoring community activities, programs, and initiatives. <i>W1, W5, W13, W14 – O5, O6, O10</i></p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Threats (T) T1- T6</p>	<p>ST Strategies ST1: Spreading the strategic culture in sports clubs to adopt long-term strategic plans and crisis and risk management programs. <i>S1, S4, S5 – T1, T2, T3</i> ST2: Increase financial support, incentives, and rewards for sports clubs and players. <i>S1 , S4 – T5, T6</i></p>	<p>WT Strategies WT1: Working with mass media to raise public awareness of sports culture and clubs. <i>W1, W6, W10, W11, W12 – T5, T6</i> WT2: Benefit from training programs related to sports facilities management and risk management. <i>W4, W8, - T1, T2, T3</i></p>

Conclusion:

The main strengths of the sports clubs in The Sultanate of Oman include the presence e of many talents in Omani society, the income from some investment and commercial projects, and local civil teams under the umbrella of sports clubs. Lath et al. (2021) pointed out that the success of a federation or club in competitive sports depends on the performance of its athletes. Thus, it is often necessary to select athletes showing superior performance and the potential to show it in the future. Clubs, nations, and federations invest considerable money, time, and other resources in the identification and selection of 'talented' athletes to develop them into superior and successful athletes via targeted development programs (Baker et al., 2020; Vaeyens et al., 2008). The Ministry of Culture, Sports, and Youth focuses on discovering and selecting talented people through sports clubs and schools. In terms of investments, Ilic (2013) confirms that the strategic plan that the sports organization formally accepts has more chances to overcome problems, so the formulation of the plan must involve key investors in strategy implementation. An expanding investment of sponsorship assets for most sports clubs and leagues is apparent, and sports properties must demonstrate to sponsoring firms how vital an investment is. Even though sponsoring firms focus on organizations/individuals that can offer them the best return

on investment, sports sponsorships are additionally deliberately instrumental in creating impressive income for sports clubs and leagues (Koronios et al., 2014). The sports clubs in the Sultanate of Oman have good investment opportunities, especially if they are optimally exploited. Additionally, as part of the trend towards year-round specialized participation, youth athletes are often encouraged to join year-round “elite” or “select” club teams, which exist outside of the traditional interscholastic or community sports systems, to improve their skills, prepare them for interscholastic or intercollegiate sports, and showcase their abilities to interested coaches or scouts (Brenner & Council on Sports Medicine and Fitness, 2016; La Prade et al., 2016). According to the latest Ministry of Culture, Sports, and Youth statistics, more than 900 affiliated sports teams are under the umbrella of sports clubs. Weak incentives and prizes offered in different competitions, poor government funding against operational costs, Lack of training and qualification for club management staff, and Lack of strategic plans in sports clubs are the most critical weaknesses of the sports clubs in The Sultanate of Oman. For every sports tournament, it is essential to provide contestants with the appropriate incentives to perform (Csató, 2022). Since the seminal contribution of Lazear and Rosen (1981), numerous papers have explored the incentive effects of tournaments. Among

the most prominent results is that higher prize spreads lead to higher efforts (Herbertz & Sliwka, 2013).

The global economic situation due to the collapse of oil prices and then the coronavirus pandemic and its repercussions contributed to the negative impact on the support provided to clubs, whether from the government or commercial sponsorships from the private sector. Hambrick et al. (2018) described the Lack of resources and dependence on other organizations as one of the most critical threats to developing sports organizations. In the same context, the study of Jamshidi et al. (2012) showed that the lack of financial resources and the Federation's dependence on the State Budget is one of the weaknesses of the cycling federation in Iran. Therefore, the Ministry of Sports, Culture, and Youth recently organized a laboratory for investment in the sports field, in which all those concerned with the sports sector, as well as businessmen and traders, participated to discuss investment opportunities for sports clubs and find additional resources for them. At the level of training and rehabilitation, Çiftçi and Mirzeoğlu (2014) points out that Sports managers, especially those interacting with national and international organizations and structures, should have different qualifications according to management concepts in different fields.

The nature of sports has the beginning and end structure of sports events, instant consumption, discipline, and operating with other science fields because of the required perfection level. The study of McGillivray et al. (2018) noted the Lack of attention to urban policies and planning as the weak points of the physical development of sports in cities. This finding conforms to the results of this study.

The results also indicate that the key opportunities include the high proportion of young people in Omani society, the society's passion and willingness to volunteer and develop clubs, and the government granting clubs investment land in economic and vital locations. In the study of Abbasi et al. (2016), the population of sports youths in Kermanshah province and Sports volunteers, especially in the coaching field, are two of the opportunities for Sports and Youth of Kermanshah Province regarding championship sports. Rezaei and Ameen (2019) found that having young and interested people, government grants, and supporting sports activities are some of the most critical opportunities for futsal development in Sulaimaniyah. According to the latest statistics issued by the National Centre for Statistics and Information, the percentage of youth reached 41.3% of the total population in Oman, where males came by 63% and females 36% of the total youth.

In terms of threats, findings reveal that the most significant threats that sports clubs face are poor support from the private sector, the economic situation that has been affected at the current and international level, and changes in some laws and legislation from time to time. This result is consistent with Rezaei and Ameen (2019), where lack of

sponsorship for investing and supporting futsal clubs, lack of proper funding for the tournament, and the development of futsal clubs and teams were some of the threats to futsal development in the Sulaimaniyah. It was previously mentioned that the global economic crisis and the repercussions of the Corona pandemic have significantly affected the sports sector's funding level. Rapid changes in the Rules of the International Federation and non-compliance with financial supporters to attend and support the cycling federation in Iran were also some of the threats in the study of Jamshidi et al. (2012). Sandhiya et al. (2020) pointed out that financing in sports and other support activities varies from country to country due to the level of development, availability of funds, growth of industries, and the political situation present. Thus, the underdevelopment of sports is both a cause and a consequence of economic underdevelopment. A country's economy must carefully formulate policies so that sports help every individual improve their economic standards and that there are proper regulations to inculcate equity, justice, and good conscience in the economy.

At the stage of matching and comparison, according to identified internal and external factors and based on the analysis SWOT, a total of 11 strategies were proposed, including (3) SO Strategy, (2) S.T. Strategy, (4) W.O. Strategy, and (2) W.T. Strategy, for the development of the sports clubs in The Sultanate of Oman. Some of the essential strategies include Issuing the investment law in the sports sector, activating cooperation with the Ministries of Education and the Ministry of Higher Education to develop sports curriculums and adopt programs to discover and nurture talented people, Spreading the strategic culture in sports clubs to adopt long-term strategic plans and crisis and risk management programs and working with mass media to raise public awareness of sports culture and sports clubs. Rezaei and Ameen (2019) proposed supporting talent identification base futsal as an aggressive Strategy, strengthening investment and attracting private sector support as a conservative Strategy, use of media capacity to increase people's interest in futsal as a competitive strategy and updating processes, indicators, and programs as a defensive strategy for futsal development in the Sulaimaniyah.

This study aimed to investigate how clubs perceive the challenges of strategic planning and to answer the question of which strategies are desirable for developing sports clubs in The Sultanate of Oman by determining the SWAT analysis of these clubs. The results of IFE and EFE matrixes showed (6) strengths, (14) weaknesses, (10) opportunities, and (6) threats and strategic situations of the sports clubs In the Sultanate of Oman determined in the W.O. zone, which shows that weaknesses overcome strengths and opportunities overcome threats. Therefore, conservative strategies should be used.

References:

1. **Abbasi, H., Khanmoradi, S., Eydi, H., & Rasekh, N. (2016).** Quantitative strategic planning of General Office of Sports and Youth regarding championship sport using QSPM in Kermanshah. *International Journal of Sports Science*, 6(2), 36-45.
2. **Al-Ameri, M. (2017).** Study the strategic plans of sports federations in the Sultanate of Oman in the light of the Omani sports strategy [unpublished master's thesis, Sultan Qaboos University].
3. **Al-Busafi, M., & Al-Hashimi, A. (2015).** The Difficulties Facing Sports Clubs in the Sultanate of Oman. *Journal of Gulf and Arabian Peninsula Studies*, 41(157), 19-64.
4. **Ayub, A., Razzaq, A., Aslam, M. S., & Iftekhhar, H. (2013).** A conceptual framework for evaluating SWOT analysis as the mediator in strategic marketing planning through marketing intelligence. *European Journal of Business and Social Sciences*, 2(1), 91-98.
5. **Bahrami, S & Kiani, M. (2021).** Designing and Formulating A Strategy for The Development of Public Sports. *J Phy Fit Treatment & Sports*, 8(4), 60-68.
6. **Brenner, J. S. (2016).** Sports specialization and intensive training in young athletes. *Pediatrics*, 138(3), 1-9.
7. **Bryson, J. M. (2018).** Strategic planning for public and nonprofit organizations: A guide to strengthening and sustaining organizational achievement. John Wiley & Sons.
8. **Çiftçi, S., & Mirzeoğlu, N. (2014).** The research of qualifications of sport manager. *Procedia-Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 152, 740-745.
9. **Cobley, S., Baker, J., & Schorer, J. (2020).** Talent identification and development in sport: an introduction to a field of expanding research and practice. In *Talent Identification and Development in Sport* (pp. 1-16). Routledge.
10. **Crane, J., & Temple, V. (2015).** A systematic review of dropout from organized sport among children and youth. *European Physical Education Review*, 21(1), 114-131.
11. **Csató, L. (2022).** Quantifying incentive (in) compatibility: A case study from sports. *European Journal of Operational Research*, 302(2), 717-726.
12. **David, F. R. (2011).** Strategic management concepts and cases. Pearson.
13. **David, F. R., & David, F. R. (2017).** Strategic management: concepts and cases: A competitive advantage approach. Pearson.
14. **Deelen, I., Ettema, D., & Kamphuis, C. B. (2018).** Time-use and environmental determinants of dropout from organized youth football and tennis. *BMC Public Health*, 18, 1-15.
15. **Demir, A., & Sertbaş, K. (2018).** Total quality management applications in sports and an application on Kocaeli amateur sports club federation sports clubs. In *SHS Web of Conferences* (Vol. 48, p. 01018). EDP Sciences.
16. **Duclos-Bastías, D., Giakoni-Ramírez, F., Parra-Camacho, D., Rendic-Vera, W., Rementería-Vera, N., & Gajardo-Araya, G. (2021).** Better managers for more sustainability sports organizations: Validation of sports managers competency scale (COSM) in Chile. *Sustainability*, 13(2), 724.
17. **Eime, R., Harvey, J., & Charity, M. (2020).** Sport participation settings: where and 'how do Australians play sport? *BMC Public Health*, 20, 1-9.
18. **Elmose-Oesterlund, K., Ibsen, B., Nagel, S., & Scheerder, J. (2017).** Social integration and volunteering in sports clubs in Europe. Combining knowledge of sports clubs policies, sports clubs, and members in ten European countries.
19. **Elsheikh, Y., & Azzeh, M. (2017).** Prioritize E-Government Strategies Using SWOT-Ranked Voting Analysis Technique: The Case of Jordan. *International Journal of Computer Science and Network Security (IJCSNS)*, 17(1), 1.
20. **Feiler, S., & Breuer, C. (2021).** Perceived threats through COVID-19 and the role of organizational capacity: Findings from nonprofit sports clubs. *Sustainability*, 13(12), 6937.
21. **Godfrey, P. C. (2009).** Corporate social responsibility in sport: An overview and key issues. *Journal of Sport Management*, 23(6), 698-716.
22. **Gonçalves, C. E., Carvalho, H., & Light, R. (2011).** Keeping women in sport: positive experiences of six women's experiences growing up and staying with sport in Portugal. *Asian Journal of Exercise and Sports Science*, 8(1), 39-52.
23. **Hadadian, A., Mashhadi, A. B., & Hosseini, M. (2012).** Strategic Planning for Health Service Sector in Iran (Case Study: A General and Governmental Subspecialty Hospital).
24. **Herbertz, C., & Sliwka, D. (2013).** When higher prizes lead to lower efforts—The impact of favoritism in tournaments. *Economics Letters*, 120(2), 188-191.
25. **Ilić, R. (2013).** Strategic planning at sports organizations. *Journal of Process Management and New Technologies*, 1(4), 113-121.
26. **Jamshidi, A., Sajjadi, S. N., & Honari, H. (2012).** SWOT Analysis of the Strategic Position of the Cycling Federation in Iran. *International Journal of Academic Research in Business and Social Sciences*, 2(5), 2222-6990.
27. **Johnsen, Å. (2021).** Does formal strategic planning matter? An analysis of strategic management and perceived usefulness in Norwegian municipalities. *International Review of Administrative Sciences*, 87(2), 380-398.
28. **Koronios, K., Vrontis, D., & Thrassou, A. (2021).** Strategic sports sponsorship management—A scale development and validation. *Journal of Business Research*, 130, 295-307.
29. **Koski, P. (2016).** Finnish sports clubs as a mirror of society. In *Volunteers in Sport: International perspectives* (pp. 103-121). Routledge.

30. **LaPrade, R. F., Agel, J., Baker, J., Brenner, J. S., Cordasco, F. A., Côté, J., ... & Provencher, M. T. (2016).** AOSSM early sport specialization consensus statement. *Orthopedic journal of sports medicine*, 4(4), 2325967116644241.
31. **Lath, F., Koopmann, T., Faber, I., Baker, J., & Schorer, J. (2021).** Focusing on the coach's eye; towards a working model of coach decision-making in talent selection. *Psychology of Sport and Exercise*, 56, 102011.
32. **Li, T., Hao, L., Kubiczek, J., & Pietrzyk, A. (2022).** Corporate social responsibility of sports clubs in the era of coronavirus pandemic. *ZagłęBie Sosnowiec case study. Economic research-Ekonomska istraživanja*, 35(1), 2073-2092.
33. **Maleka, S. (2014).** Strategy management and strategic planning process. *DTPS strategic planning & monitoring*, 1(1), 1-29.
34. **Mansouri, R. & Sharififar, F. (2017).** Formulation and development of strategic planning for the Golf Federation of the Islamic Republic of Iran.
35. **Mathisen, F. K., Kokko, S., Tynjälä, J., Torsheim, T., & Wold, B. (2019).** Leisure-time physical activity and participation in organized sports: Changes from 1985 to 2014 in Finland and Norway. *Scandinavian journal of medicine & science in sports*, 29(8), 1232-1242.
36. **McGillivray, D. (2019).** Sports events, space, and the 'Live City'. *Cities*, 85, 196-202.
37. **Ministry Of Culture, Sports And Youth, <https://mcsy.gov.om>**
38. **Ministry of Education, Culture and Sport (2019).** *Sports Statistics Yearbook 2019*. <http://www.culturaydeporte.gob.es/dam/jcr:dc406096-a312-4b9d-bd73-2830d0affb2d/anuario-deestadisticas-deportivas-2019.pdf> Accessed 2 October 2019
39. **Nasirzade, A., & Rezaei, S. (2018).** Environmental Analysis of Assignment Iranian football clubs, Case study: Esteghlal and Persepolis clubs. *Applied Research in Sport Management*, 7(1), 105-115.
40. **Okayasu, I., Kawahara, Y., & Nogawa, H. (2010).** The relationship between community sports clubs and social capital in Japan: A comparative study between the comprehensive community sport clubs and the traditional community sports clubs. *International Review for the Sociology of Sport*, 45(2), 163-186.
41. **Perkinen, A., Valtonen, J., & Ruismäki, H. (2022).** Experience of Involvement: a Retrospective Case Study of Supporting the Continuation of Sports Club Participation in Adolescence. *Journal of Physical Education and Sport*.
42. **Pfahl, M. (2013).** The environmental awakening in sport. *The Solutions Journal*, 4(3), 67-76.
43. **Rezaei, S., & Ameen, H. K. (2020).** Analyzing the Futsal Strategic Plan in Sulaymaniyah Province and Providing Management Solutions. *Annals of Applied Sport Science*, 8(1), 0-0.
44. **Sandhiya, K., Balakrishnan, C., & Gayathri, S. (2020).** Sports-An Element Enhancing Global Economic Competitiveness. *Supremo Amicus*, 17, 452.
45. **Scheerder, J., Zintz, T., & Delheye, P. (2011).** The organization of sports in Belgium. Between public, economic, and social profit. *Sports governance in the world: a sociohistoric approach. The organization of sport in Europe: a patchwork of institutions, with few shared points*. Paris: Le Manuscrit, 84-113.
46. **Seraslan, M.Z., Kepeoğlu, A. (2005).** *Spor Örgütlerinde Toplam Kalite Yönetimi: Serkep Spor İşletmesi Modeli*. Morpa Kültür Yayınları, İstanbul.
47. **Skille, E. Å. (2010).** Competitiveness and health: the work of sport clubs as seen by sport clubs representatives-a Norwegian case study. *International review for the sociology of sport*, 45(1), 73-85.
48. **Teixeira, G. F. G., & Junior, O. C. (2019).** How to make strategic planning for corporate sustainability? *Journal of Cleaner Production*, 230, 1421-1431.
49. **United Nations (2019).** *Strategic Planning Guide for Managers*. https://hr.un.org/sites/hr.un.org/files/4.5.1.6_Strategic%20Planning%20Guide_0.pdf
50. **Vaeyens, R., Lenoir, M., Williams, A. M., & Philippaerts, R. M. (2008).** Talent identification and development programs in sport: current models and future directions. *Sports medicine*, 38, 703-714.
51. **Van Hoye, A., Heuzé, J. P., Meganck, J., Seghers, J., & Sarrazin, P. (2018).** Coaches' and players' perceptions of health promotion activities in sports clubs. *Health Education Journal*, 77(2), 169-178.
52. **Walker, M., & Heere, B. (2011).** Consumer attitudes toward responsible entities in sport (CARES): Scale development and model testing. *Sport Management Review*, 14(2), 153-166.
53. **Wickramasinghe, V. S. K., & Takano, S. E. (2009).** Application of combined SWOT and analytic hierarchy process (AHP) for tourism revival strategic marketing planning. In *Proceedings of the Eastern Asia Society for Transportation Studies Vol. 7 (The 8th International Conference of Eastern Asia Society for Transportation Studies, 2009)* (pp. 189-189). Eastern Asia Society for Transportation Studies.
54. **Yogi, P., Rizal, O., & Suharyo, O. S. (2017).** Feasibility analysis of naval base relocation using SWOT and AHP methods to support main duties operation. *Journal of Defense Resources Management*, 8(2), 14-30.