Original Research

Designing and Developing an E-Business Model in the Sport Industry

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to design an e-business developing model in sports industry in the country. The method of this research was one of the applied researches, and was done with qualitatively method and by semi-constructed interviews helping. The statistical research community of this study was: Top level sport managers (Managers of the top clubs in the country and heads of sports federations) that Familiar with the subject of e-commerce and e-sports marketing and related topics, faculty members specializing in this field and managers and planners of reputable domestic sites who are planning and selling sports products. The research findings were analyzed in the form of an e-businesses development model and the coding was done up to the most abstract stage by the researcher. The results of this study showed that the country's sports industry, like other money-making industries in the country, is moving towards exploiting the benefits of the electronic world. But it is doing by a low speed. The researchers were looking for ways to speed up the process. The cases mentioned by the experts were in the 6 areas of form; Economic, social-cultural, political- legal, managerial and infrastructure development sectors. Experts involved in this study consider development infrastructure and management factors to be the most important factors. Updated and committed managers can help to provide the development infrastructure for fast moving as possible to this type of business. In order to classify the data obtained from the interview, the software for analyzing the qualitative data (Nvivo 10 version) was used.

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INTRODUCTION

Today's world has emerged with features that establish the nature of its computer and Internet communications. The increasing use of the Internet has led to extensive evolution in the business world and, of course, the business model of organizations and companies. With the introduction of new technologies to business, decision makers in this field have also adapted themselves and their organization to these conditions [1]. The globalization phenomenon and development of information technology has led to the emergence and development of e-business models in many manufacturing and service industries. They force the managers of many organizations to manage their business models to survive and maintain their competitive advantage. The e-business model is the core logic of the organization in value creation that forms the role and relationship of organizational units in detecting, explaining, designing, supplying and realizing value in the product as well as business relationships with customers, suppliers and sellers. The study of e-business models is an important topic in strategic management research [2]. E-business models answer the question of how a company earns money and makes a profit from online operations. The classification of business models varies. It is difficult to succeed in e-commerce due to the growing number of e-commerce users and customers [3].

One of the important factors in the success of the organization is to have the right strategy and planning to achieve the goals. The thing clearly seen in organizations is the relationship between e-business and functional strategies. Therefore, it is important to have the right business strategy especially in e-commerce. Even the best idea cannot be implemented without it. In today's organizations, choosing the right e-business model is a strategic choice [4]. The transition from the physical to the virtual world, universities have been influenced by modern information and communication technologies and have taken the first steps to make their services accessible and user-friendly [5]. According to Hughes (2001), organizations lack a clear path to e-business strategy at higher levels. He concluded that the main reason for this problem was the lack of sufficient knowledge about this new technology and its effects. Many managers consider e-commerce as a technical decision and not a vital one for the organization. However, to develop an e-business strategy, the organization's goals are defined based on the identified opportunities and threats arising from the analysis of the environment, which are the goals for the e-business strategy [6]. The relationship between sports and cultural, social, political and economic phenomena indicates the importance of sports and its role in national development programs [7]. Sports have global fans and their fans are spread all over the world. Therefore, the club may have fans in a remote area, sometimes in other countries and even on other continents. Utilizing new technology methods reduces many of the costs imposed on the organization and speeds up operations [8].

According to the researchers, one of the most important benefits of using the Internet in business is to reduce business operations; 21-70% of the cost savings of various commercial activities have been recorded. Managers who have specialty in e-business can take advantage of the industry's high potential and provide a platform for entrepreneurial activity [9]. The Internet can greatly help the sports organizations to access these markets, and this justifies the movement of organizations toward online markets because the demographic characteristics of Internet users are similar to those of sports fans. For example, according to Smith (2011), some of the demographic characteristics of Internet users in North America, including higher education, high social and economic affiliation, as well as gender and the average age of 18 to 34, are similar to those of the National Football League, National Basketball Association and the National Hockey League fan (in the United States) [1].

Rahimizadeh et al. (2018) consider managerial challenge as the most important challenge for the development of e-commerce. They point out that there are no serious challenges in technical or cultural

sectors [1]. Zakizadeh and Atghia (2019) argued that sport authorities, federations and events' organizers try to choose the most appropriate ticketing method according to the new technologies [8].

The main problem is the traditional managers who are unfamiliar with the world of new business; however, youthfulness or the use of young and creative consultants is the key to managers' success. Familiarizing the sports industry managers with e-business leads the organization to earn revenue from e-commerce. Zhou et al. (2020) also state that applying e-commerce techniques in the supply chain operations of products plays a very effective role in the success of organizations [1]. However, according to Mao et al. (2019), e-users often prefer multi-purpose applications and the organization and managers must have the necessary flexibility in their programs [1]. Entrepreneurship in the sports industry along with the techniques of the world of e-business can be very useful for organizations and managers who are skilled in this field are ahead of other managers. The purpose of this study was to design an e-business developing model in sports industry in Iran.

MATERIAL AND METHODS
Participants
The present research method is applied in terms of purpose and the data collection has been done in a qualitatively with semi-constructed interviews. Data collection was field-based, that using library studies, content analysis of 100 studies, and interviews with 26 experts and commentators, factors affecting the development of e-business in the sports industry were detected. The statistical population of this study included senior managers of sports (first level clubs' managers and heads of sports federations) who are familiar with e-commerce and e-sports marketing and related topics, expert faculty members in this field and the managers and planners of reputable domestic sites that are planning and selling sports products.

Instruments and Examinations
Data analysis was performed according to the nature of the qualitative method along with conducting the interview and data collection. This means that after the end of each interview, the process of analyzing the interviews began. Then the text of the interview was converted into conceptual codes, which was called open coding. After completing the open coding stage, the researcher compared the similarities and differences and categorized the codes that were conceptually similar in the same class. In the axial coding stage, the open categories and codes were placed around an axis after comparison. This step is called coding. To reduce the number of extracted clusters and classes and to understand the phenomenon under study, selective coding was performed. In the end, to rank the main factors (main categories) affecting the development of these businesses, the experts were consulted and asked to rate these categories based on the rate of impact from the maximum to minimum effect. These rankings assigned to each category are finally summarized by the researcher (based on the average score obtained in each category) and they form the final rankings of each category.

The following methods were used to confirm the reliability of the research:
Re-coding by the researcher and another researcher; thirty days after coding each interview, the researcher re-coded the data. Several interviews, for example, were re-coded over a 30-day period. The re-test reliability is 85%. Since the reliability rate is more than 60%, the reliability of coding is confirmed. Finally, the interviews were coded by another researcher and matched. The reliability of this coding test was 75%, which indicates the coding reliability.

Statistical Analysis
Qualitative Analysis Software: One of the ways to achieve reliability in qualitative research is to use qualitative data analysis software. Accordingly, the researcher used NVIO software.

RESULTS

Respondents' characteristics

The interviewees were divided into sports marketing, management, business, economics, education and research, customers, information technology and other areas.

The results of interviews and studies:

In this section, the researcher presents the results of the codes obtained from the studies and the interview with the experts in the form of a table. Table 1 shows the economic factors affecting an e-business model in the sports industry

Table 1. Economic factors

Selected codes	Open codes	interview	Research
Environmental analysis	Recognize the needs of regional and international markets		R_3, R_8, R_{16}
	Develop a clear pattern of the geographical distribution of e-businesses according to the needing of each region		R_5, R_{31}
	Form a working group to examine the basic needed of e-market customers	P_4, P_8	R_{10}, R_{12}, R_{22}
Improving product quality (production and supply cycle, etc).	Improved performance in the product supply chain		R_1, R_{11}
	Increase the quality of products offered to the market	P_1	R_5, R_{11}, R_{14} R_1, R_{22}, R_{25}
	Electronic businesses focus on quality products		R_{14}, R_{22} R_5, R_1,
Fight corruption	Monitoring the tax system of different parts of the sport		R_{23}
	Reduce the chances of corruption in various parts of the sport	P_2	R_3, R_{12}
	Optimal resource allocation	P_{19}, P_9, P_8	R_1, R_{12}, R_{26}
Economic and market stability	control Inflation In the society		R_{17} R_{12}
	Increase investment security in the sports industry	P_1	R_{14} R_{10}
	Prevent the devaluation of money	P_7, P_{13}	
Increase market surveillance	Increase control and monitoring of the privatization process in sports		R_{10}, R_{15}, R_{22}
	Use new financial tools for sports businesses		R_3, R_7

	Comprehensive oversight of the provision of financial facilities for investors in the sports sector	P_{20}	
	determinate strategies to legalize e-investment in the sports industry		R_{13} R_{12}
Attract financial sponsors	Attract and retain sports sponsors	P_{15}, P_{19}	R_6, R_{10}, R_{18}
	Establish a database of sponsors and celebrate them		

Table 2 shows the most important codes that were placed in the socio-cultural section.

Table 2. Socio-cultural section

Selected codes	Open codes	interview	Research
Increase public readiness and awareness of e-businesses	Increase the level of expertise (awareness of users with virtual technologies)	P_2, P_{24}	R_{17}
	Increase people's awareness of the benefits of e-business	P_{12}, P_{14}, P_{15}, P_{17}	R_{17}
	Increasing public confidence in e-business and its benefits	P_{12}, P_9, P_{15}, P_{17} P_{18}, $P_{20,}$ P_{24}, P_{26}	R_{12}, R_{17} R_6, R_2,
	Ensure users to have sufficient protection in electronic exchanges	P_3, $P_{8,}$ P_{18}, P_{19} $P_{21,}$ P_{23}, P_{26}	R_5, R_{11}, R_{16} R_3, $R_{20,}$ R_{28}
Publication of books and publications in the field of electronic sports businesses	Reassure users of specialized knowledge enhancement through the printing of books and publications in line with this field	P_7	
	Developing public information about citizenship rights and e-businesses	P_{12}, $P_{15,}$ P_{26}	R_{17}
Increasing public interest in sports businesses	Creating the credibility of sports businesses		R_{17} R_6,
	Specifying exercise in the household basket		
	Encourage family members to start a sports business	P_{11}	
	improving the social status of sports in society		R_{14} R_6,
	Increasing the credibility of club brands and professional leagues nationally and internationally		R_{15}

	increase officials and the general public pay attention to sports businesses	P_{12}, P_{14}, P_{17}, P_{22}, P_{26}	R_{17} R_9, R_{12}, R_1,
Increase ideation events	Encourage professors and physical education students to Brainstorming		R_6
	Holding workshops and seminars to change the attitude of managers and employees of public sports sectors to changing the approach to e-businesses		R_9, R_{12}

Table 3 shows the most important codes were briefly extracted and placed in the Political Factors section.

Table 3. Political Factors section

Selected codes	Open codes	interview	Research
Reduce public sector interference	Reduce the application of political tendencies in sports	P6, P13, P25	R17, R29, R31
	Reduce the number of decision-making institutions in sports	P6, P18, P13, P21	R21 R14
	Following the successful experiences of leading countries (shortcut to achieve high levels of e-employment(	P12, P15, P16	
Continuous updating of e-business rules	Updated rules for starting e-businesse	P2	
	Establish a working group of e-business elites to monitor and oversee the rules of these businesses to prevent the abuse of profiteers	P2	R18 R11
	Establish protection laws for e-business entrepreneurs	P12, P16, P17, P21 P23, P26	R5, R31 R2, R1
	Develop a package of facilitation, incentives and discounts for sports business activists	P5, P16, P15, P26	R31 R1,
	The Protection of e-business owners is fueled by government support during growth, stagnation	P12, P15	R31 R1,
	Development and improvement of specialized rules and regulations of the country's sports businesses	P21, P26	R7, R10, R14

Table 4 shows these codes fall into the legal section, although they have little overlap with political factors.

Table 4. Legal section

Selected codes	Open codes	interview	Research
Legal protections	Protection of banking and customs laws from e-commerce	P11, P12	R22

	Increase laws supporting e-business in the country	P1, P2, P7, P9 P18, P21, P24,	**R2, R5, R8 R1, R10, R11, R13, R15, R17,**
electronic banking	Anticipation of e-banking protection laws in the country	P5, P19	**R29**

The factors and codes of the table 5, which according to experts, are in the most important part, management section.

Table 5. Management section

Selected codes	Open codes	interview	Research
Creating the right environment for teamwork	Participate in the ideas of capable people and investors	P2, P8	**R16 R1,**
	Creating a safe and conducive environment for teamwork		**R11, R16, R29**
	Development of educational topics appropriate to the approach of expanding e-business in universities	P15	**R29**
Creating a strategic plan for the development of e-business	Creating and developing a national program for the development of e-business	P1	**R20**
	Identifying trustees for the establishment and development of e-businesses		**R13 R1,**
	Develop a vision document for the development of e-businesses	P1, P6	**R2, R12, R16 R1, R18, R19, R25, R28**
	Establish and increase cross-sectoral coordination in this area of e-business		**R16, R25, R28 R2,**
Increasing the fit between the labor market (service and industrial) and the university	Bringing science closer to the market		**R2, R3, R11**
	Establish communication between the Ministry of Sports, University and Industry	P1	
	Legal protection of new ideas	P6, P9	**R19 R3,**
Facilitate bureaucracy	Facilitate the issuance of licenses to start new businesses	P6, P9, P13	**R5**
	Determining the authority for issuing activity licenses in the field of sports		**R14**
	Facilitate membership in the National Center for Commodity Numbering	P12	
Agile management	Planning to facilitate and accelerate the control and implementation cycle in e-business programs	P8	**R2, R8, R22**
	Immediate and continuous monitoring and evaluation of the e-business implementation process and its consequences		**R11, R14, R22 R1,**
Management stability	Occupational safety for thinker managers in the sports industry to follow the work process	P26	**R18**

Selected codes	Open codes	interview	Research
Customer Orientation	Ensure customers do not interfere with e-mails	P2, P7	**R10, R14, R17 R8, R22, R29**
	Increase employee and customer satisfaction		**R14 R1,**
	Pay attention to the needs of society	P1	
Develop a comprehensive system of professional management and professional qualification system for sports jobs	Creating a meritocracy system in sports management	P2, P9, P15	**R6, R15**
	Eliminate non-specialist managers and use specialized managers in sports management	P2, P9, P15, P16 P22	**R15**
	Use creative managers with economic and business knowledge in sports	P2, P9, P15, P16 P22, P23, P16	**R15, R18 R10, R6,**

The factors and codes of the table 6, which according to experts, are in the most important part, infrastructure development section.

Table 6. Infrastructure development

Selected codes	Open codes	interview	Research
Provide business infrastructure	Eliminate legal barriers to checks and electronic signatures	P14	
	Correction and update of social security rules for virtual businesses	P8, P15, P22	
	Creating a platform for increased creativity in e-business	P1	**R11, R16, R19 R6, R20, R21**
	Creating a platform for increasing competition in e-business (and using these businesses)	P1	**R5, R16, R20**
Development of information technology infrastructure	Development of Internet access in the country	P6, P7, P14, P18 P21	**R4, R10, R12 R3, R13, R18, R21, R25**
	Increase the speed of the Internet	P6, P7, P14, P18, P19, P20,	**R6, R10, R12 R2, R13, R18,**
	Increase the penetration rate of landlines and satellite and mobile phones	P14, P21, P26	**R13, R14 R3, R10**
	Post reinforcement and modernization		**R14**
	Internet development across the country through the expansion of ISPs	P6, P7, P18 P21	**R10, R12, R13**
	Reduce Internet costs and eliminate artificial restrictions	P18, P21	**R12, R29 R10**
Media support	Improve advertising of products and goods in cyberspace		**R9, R15 R4**
	Improving advertising from successful e-businesses	P3, P4	**R15 R4,**

	Promote how to succeed in e-business and how to make money from cyberspace	P4, P8, P9	R15
	Increase advertising in the mass media to develop e-businesses		R9, R15, R4

These codes fall within the scope of infrastructure development, although it can be said that it's the duty of managers and the sports management department to provide these facilities. By combining the related codes, the main research categories were obtained as shown in Tables 2 to 7. These main categories were ranked based on the opinion of the experts participating in the research and the summary of their rankings. Table 7 shows the most and least important categories were managerial and political factors respectively.

Table 7. The main research categories

Row	Important research category	Rank
1	Economic	4
2	Sociocultural	5
3	Political	6
4	Legal	3
5	Management	1
6	Infrastructure development	2

Final research model
According to the results, obtained from the previous steps, the final research model is presented.
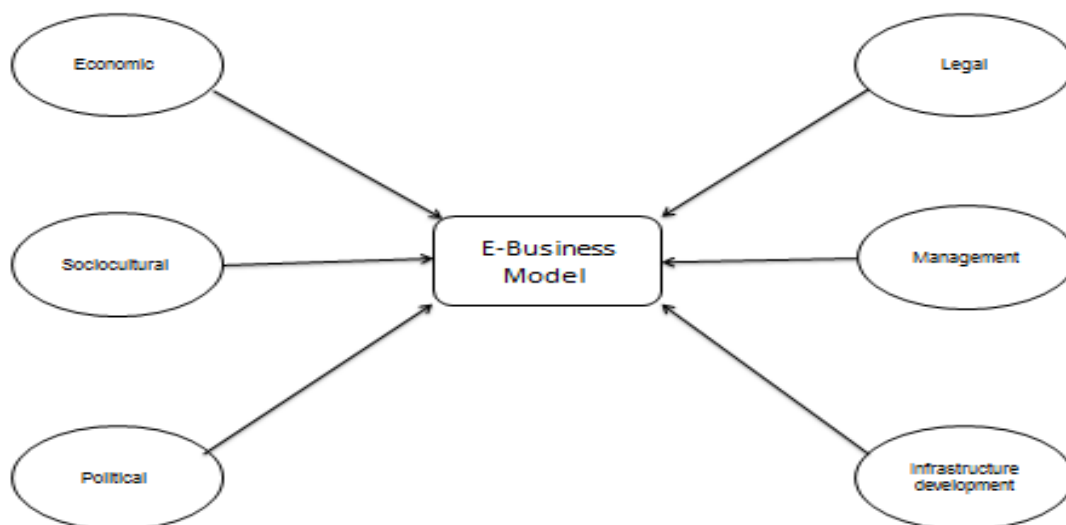
Figure 1. The final research model

DISCUSSION

Given the changes in the global business and the economic trend of developed and even developing countries towards the electronization of the economy and business, Iran is also forced to move forward and must be prepared and make the necessary plans for such movement. Although e-commerce is a relatively new concept, it already plays a significant role in the daily lives of Internet users, buying and selling goods and using services. Therefore, clubs, federations and, all sports-related jobs must be consistent with this change. The purpose of this study was to determine the most important factors affecting the development of e-business in the field of sports in the country. After conducting the necessary investigations and adequate interviews, the researcher identified the most important effective factors and categorized them into six areas. After coding and categorizing the data, the main themes were extracted. The most important extracted category after the interviews in this study was the management category, which shows the importance of the role of competent and committed managers in all areas, especially e-business space. Managers with up-to-date knowledge about the world, especially in the field of e-commerce and new international laws, can use this new space to earn income and develop the economic status of the country's sports.

The most important factor from the perspective of the co-experts in this research is the issue of proper management for planning and organizing these businesses and the existence of qualified and expert managers in this field. Since most sports managers in the country are traditional managers, they are not well acquainted with the new spaces of income generation. One of the problems associated with the sports in the country is the sports managers' lack of appreciation of young people. Many young people with new ideas can promote ports in the field of e-commerce due to their specialization. Successful managers are those who use the ideas of young counselors. There is a variety of ways for income generation from clubs and federations through startups that the knowledge-based groups and companies could be useful in this regard. Entering the electronics space is scary for many managers because entering these spaces requires learning

new skills as well as mastering the living languages of the world, which requires more activity and time. Creative and up-to-date managers in federations and clubs can have new ideas in marketing and revenue generation. These managers with their familiarity with new marketing spaces will naturally be more successful in achieving technological change than the traditional managers.

Adopting a strategic and long-term approach by the top sports managers of the country can be the most important and key action towards the development of e-sports businesses in the country. Institutionalizing and developing e-business in sports is a very complex and specialized task and there are few specialized forces in this field in the country's sports body, such as organizations, federations and sports clubs. Therefore, specialized sectors help to overcome this problem. Various researchers agree with this view and they have reported similar results in their research e.g. Rahimiadeh (2018) [11] and Moghaddasi (2006) (14). However, Askarian et al. (2014) considered economic barriers effective in implementing e-commerce on sports goods [15].

Providing the necessary infrastructure to support and strengthen this field will be one of the most influential factors in the employment of sports companies and institutions as one of the principles of the electronic world in carrying out their mission. A suitable development model should be developed make e-commerce inclusive in the country's sports industry as the focus, platform and tools for economic development of sports. Iranian sports' trade is traditional and all business is done in a traditional way. A logical and two-way communication must be established between e-commerce and the current traditional business market. This establishment could be realized through electronic preparation and layout. Optimizing the telecommunications platform will lead to advances in e-commerce. Appropriate infrastructures such as the internet speed, access to high-speed internet, updating the country's postal system and its compatibility with internet systems, public access to user operating systems and other facilities required by users in the e-business world and startups are factors that lead to establishing the foundation of a country's e-business.

CONCLUSION

To use the model results of this research, practical suggestions are provided for women and men active in the field of e-business; Due to the nature of this research, its mostly related to those involved and managers in the field of e-business. The country's sports policymakers must pursue policies that reduce government interference in sports. According to the researcher, one of the best ways to progress in entering this type of business is to follow the policies implemented in the developed countries and localize their activities. Managers can make a significant contribution to this movement by anticipating ways to increase communications with elite in the advanced countries. The existence of appropriate communication channels with fans and customers is also one of the important principles in this field.

Having a CRM system can help for better decision making in terms of service delivery, increasing intra-organizational communication, reducing costs, attracting and maintaining customers [32].

Websites and virtual networks of clubs and sports federations should be created in a simple and meaningful way, so that people can use that space easily. Since it is expensive for clubs and federations to enter the e-business environment, allocating the approved budgets to functional and operational sectors such as clubs and sports federations (with a precise monitoring and evaluation mechanism and program) can be helpful.

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طراحی مدل توسعه‌ی کسب و کارهای الکترونیک در صنعت ورزش

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چکیده

هدف از انجام این پژوهش، طراحی مدل توسعه‌ی کسب‌وکارهای الکترونیک در صنعت ورزش کشور بوده است. روش تحقیق حاضر از نظر هدف، جزو پژوهش‌های کاربردی بوده و به روش کیفی و با کمک مصاحبه‌های نیمه ساختاریافته صورت گرفته است. جامعه آماری این پژوهش عبارتند از: مدیران ارشد ورزش کشور (مدیران باشگاه‌های سطح اول کشور و روسای فدراسیون‌ها ورزشی)، که با موضوع تجارت الکترونیک و بازاریابی ورزشی الکترونیک و مباحث مرتبط با آن آشنا هستند، اعضای هیئت‌علمی کارشناس در این حیطه و مدیران و برنامه ریزان سایت‌های معتبر داخلی که مشغول به برنامه‌ریزی و فروش محصولات ورزشی هستند. برای انتخاب مصاحبه‌شوندگان از نمونه‌گیری غیر احتمالی هدفمند استفاده شد. تحقیق در قالب مدل توسعه‌ی کسب‌وکارهای الکترونیک تحلیل شد و کدگذاری تا انتزاعی‌ترین مرحله به‌وسیله محقق صورت پذیرفت. نتایج این پژوهش نشان داد که صنعت ورزش کشور نیز همانند دیگر صنایع پول‌ساز کشور در حال حرکت به سمت بهره‌گیری از مزایای دنیای الکترونیک است؛ ولی این حرکت با سرعت تقریباً آهسته‌ای در حال انجام می‌باشد. محقق در این پژوهش به دنبال راه‌هایی بود که می‌توانند به این فرایند سرعت ببخشند. موارد ذکر شده توسط صاحب‌نظران در قالب ۶ حوزه قرار گرفتند؛ که عبارتند از: حوزه‌های اقتصادی، اجتماعی-فرهنگی، سیاسی، حقوقی-قانونی، مدیریتی و توسعه زیرساخت. صاحب‌نظران مشارکت‌کننده در این پژوهش عوامل مدیریتی و توسعه‌ی زیرساخت را مهم‌ترین عوامل قلمداد نمودند. وجود مدیران بروز و متعهد می‌تواند کمک بسیاری در راه فراهم شدن شرایط توسعه‌ی زیرساخت لازم برای حرکت هرچه سریع‌تر به سمت این نوع از کسب‌وکارها باشد. جهت دسته‌بندی و طبقه‌بندی داده‌های حاصل از مصاحبه از نرم‌افزار تحلیل داده‌های کیفی ان ویوو نسخه ۱۰ استفاده گردید.

واژه های کلیدی: کسب وکار الکترونیک، صنعت ورزش، تحقیقات کیفی