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### Identifying the opportunities and threats of sport climbing in Iran

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#### ABSTRACT

The purpose of this research was to identify Sport Climbing's opportunities and threats in Iran. This is an applicable and descriptive-analytical study. For this purpose, at first the present status of Iran's Sport Climbing was studied by gathering information from library resources, internet and designed forms. A researcher-made questionnaire was prepared. 12 climbing experts and professors confirmed its validity. The reliability of the questionnaire consisting of 35 items was approved with Cronbach's Alfa ( $\alpha=0.952$ ). Eighty seven coaches, route setters, judges, elite athletes and managers of sport climbing in Iran completed it. In analyzing data, both descriptive statistics and inferential statistics model, Chi-squared test and Friedman test was done by using SPSS and Excel software. The External factors Evaluation Matrix (EFE) revealed that the external position of the Sport Climbing in Iran was in T area ( $EFE=2.464$ ).

**Keywords:** Sport climbing, The External factors Evaluation Matrix (EFE), Opportunities, Threats.

#### INTRODUCTION

Motion and sport has accompanied by human being since the very beginning of his life, sport evolutionary procedure in life starts with playing which is a necessity for child's growth and development; then it will join a sport which competitiveness is one of its aspects. This competitiveness was first unofficial and developed to an organized competitive sport in its evolutionary procedure which is championship and professional sport [1]. Curiosity and tendency to know and discover the unknowns has made human being to climb and ascend; this tendency has gradually created different methods for ascending including mountaineering, mountain climbing, big wall climbing and rock climbing. At first controlled conditions of rock climbing gyms attracted fans to this sport to maintain physical fitness and preparation necessary for combinational mountain and rock climbing. Organizing competitions in sport climbing goes back to the middle part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Sport climbing has been subjected to several ups and downs in a way that since after speed competitions in the soviet in the 40<sup>th</sup> decade several other disciplines have been innovated and championship competitions have also been organized in these disciplines in different categories [2]. Tendency toward completion and development in all aspects of life and social organizations including sport organizations has encourage people to management and planning of their activities. Robbins & De Cenzo claimed that in case you would not care where you are going to, then it is not important which way you go. Planning includes defining goals, formulating overall strategy for achieving those goals and developing action plans for the integration and coordination of activities. Determining purposes will result in the fact that the works will be done with sufficient care and will help the organization members to concentrate their attention on what is the most important [3]. In the

present era, complex structure of the organizations, have made planning for continuity of life and dynamics them more important than ever. Basis of planning is established on awareness of future opportunities and threats and how to use these opportunities and fight the threats [4]. Philosophy of planning as an approach and a life option which guarantees the acts on the basis of thought, future oriented thinking and ambition to regular and continuous planning is an inseparable part of management [4]. Strategic planning is a process to mobilize resources and to unite efforts to achieve its mission, long-term goals, in accordance with facilities and limitations of the inside and outside of any organization. In this process internal Strengths and Weaknesses, and external Opportunities and Threats of the organization (SWOT Analysis) will be identified. Considering the mission, the organization long-term purposes will be prepared and for obtaining these purposes, from among strategic options the ones will be selected that by depending on Strengths and benefiting the opportunities, the weaknesses would go away and threats will be avoided, so that in case of proper execution it would result in success of the organization[5]. Planning in sport organizations such as other organizations is considered the most important management duties. In fact, planning in a sport organization will result that, the aim of all activities and team works would be determined and the type of access to them would be planned. Sport climbing also like any other championship sports requires identifying of weakness and strengths, opportunities and threats, codifying general purposes, strategies, and operational planning; so that along with awareness of the path it would be able to prevent any rework, deviation and waste of financial, human, physical and information resources.

In many successful countries in the field of sports such as Australia, Canada, Japan, America and Britain, strategic planning is used for determining purposes and methods for obtaining them; for this goal, they have first used the SWOT model. In Iran also by codifying the national sport comprehensive plan, and researches for development of championship sports in Iran; also codifying the sport for all strategy in a number of provinces of Iran, this method has been used for obtaining more success and productivity. Although some studies like this research have been realized in particular sports such as Taekwondo and Gymnastic, but searching for the studies about recognizing opportunities and threats of sport climbing in Iran and other countries has not yet resulted in a conclusion.

Seyed Karimi(2012) in his M.A. thesis, studying sport schools status in Iran and strategic planning formulation, using researcher-made questionnaire of internal and external factors have used the viewpoints of 520 beneficiaries of sport schools. He also in addition to descriptive indexes and freedman test has used internal and external evaluation matrixes. Results of the research indicated that sport schools at their present conditions are facing 10 strengths, 13 weaknesses, 13 opportunities and 13 threats, and are at WT strategic situation.

Firouzian(2012) in his M.A. thesis, evaluating the condition of sport for all in province of East Azerbaijan, using SWOT method and presenting appropriate approaches for its development, and using a researcher-made questionnaire and viewpoints of 384 samples of the research. He totally determined 23 strengths and weaknesses and 33 opportunities and threats in the province's sport for all.

Mozafari and Elahi(2009) in a research under the title of Strategic planning for championship sports in Iran, studied the present status and also selected strategic plans of Iran championship sports, using viewpoints of 52 samples, provided items in four separate lists. The results indicated meaningfulness of 5 strengths, 10 weaknesses, 12 opportunities and 8 threats.

Zhang et al(2012) in a research, investment analysis in China sport industry using SWOT method came to this conclusion that investment in china industry must attempt to improve its weakness and use the opportunities. Moreover considering long-term financial resources, rules and by-laws, investment management team, invested institutes and organizations, activities of the complex significant preliminaries have been provided for creation and improvement of investment in china sport industry.

Australian Sports Commission(2011) in its strategic planning for 2011-2012 and 2014-2015 initiated a poll among 650 related individuals and organizations and came to this conclusion that:

- Australia was to continue to be successful at the elite level.
- All Australians were able to participate in their sport or sports of choice.
- The health and wellbeing of population was to be improved.

Karadakis et al(2010) in a paper under the title of, event leveraging of mega sport events: a SWOT analysis approach, identified strengths and weaknesses, and opportunities and threats. He asked four groups of questions from managers of Athens Olympic Game by telephone and after content analysis, rewrote and analyzed them. Findings suggested that the strengths lie in having certain infrastructures in place, volunteers, a strong economy and good political standing. Weaknesses stem from a lack of infrastructure, the size of the country, uncertain political and economic stability. Opportunities included the growth of the tourism industry, business developments, increase in the quality of life, the use of legacies post-event, and the improvement and development of infrastructures. Threats included the cost of the event, pollution, relying on the event to rejuvenate the economy and the displacement of residents.

Green(2010) have presented in strategic plan to attendance of the Australian team in 2012 London Olympics that determining aims for the Australian team for regain its position amongst the top five nations on the overall and gold medal counts with more than 14 disciplines winning medals. For this purpose a strategic model was design which consisted of these four factors: preparing for success, creating an environment for high performance, providing the foundation for success, and celebrating Australia's Olympic team.

In this research, it has been attempted to identify opportunities and threats of sport climbing in Iran using scientific and practical experiences of the experts and specialists with this hope that the obtained results could be used by the related authorities including sport climbing communities, mountaineering and sport climbing federation, and Ministry of Sport & Youth of I.R. IRAN. Considering the present potential in Iran and nice future for this sport, we hope to observe growth, flourishing, development and success of Iran sport climbing in the Asia and the world.

#### **MATERIALS AND METHODS**

This research considering purpose and identity is an applied research made using surveying method. It is a descriptive-analytical research considering execution strategy. The present research aims to identify opportunities and threats of sport climbing in Iran in 2013. This research is performed with studying the present conditions and identifying opportunities and threats of sport climbing the scope of strategic studies.

Statistical population of the research consisted of coaches, judges, route setters, national athletes and managers of sport climbing whom are estimated to be 100 people according to the announcement of the federation. It must be described that most of the actors in Iran's sport climbing are active in two or more branches and separating them to any of these scopes requires collecting more precise information and cooperation of Iran federation.

For collecting data interview, reports and documents of mountaineering and sport climbing federation of Iran and also designed forms for information collection were used. On this basis first for collecting information and present statistical conditions using report of sport climbing committee, interview with a number of authorities in this field, reviewing official website of the federation and filling data collection forms were used. For the purpose of identifying sport climbing threats and opportunities after studying the present conditions and using the collected information and polling among experts a researcher-made questionnaire was prepared related to 17 opportunities and 18 threats in five-scale Likert. For the purpose of confirming reliability of the content, viewpoints were taken from 12 experts in the field of sport climbing and specialists, professors and managers and physical education department of universities of province of Alborz and Tehran. Then by distributing this questionnaire among 30 samples and collecting them after completion, cronach's alpha (0.95) was used for determining reliability of the research.

After these stages final questionnaire was distributed among 100 coaches, route setters, judges, national team athletes and sport climbing managers and was filled by 87 people whom returned it after completion.

For determining statistically significant of each list of the questionnaires a Chi-squared test was performed. Also for ranking and determining weight of each questions, and data analyzing SPSS software and Friedman test was used.

In external factors evaluation(EFE)Matrix stage using forms that were designed for this purpose. The respondents were requested to assign a weight and rating to each factor of each opportunity and threats. In continuing using total weighted scores by multiply each factor weight with its rating, situation of Iran sport climbing was determined considering external factors.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Studied samples were selected among trainers, rout setters, judges, national athletes and managers of sport climbing. In table 1, research sample is presented according to their sex.

**Table 1: Studied Group Separately according to sex**

Sex	Frequency	Percentage
Female	26	29.89
Male	61	70.11
Total	87	100

The results indicated that specialization of samples consisted of the following matters:

10.34% trainers; 6.90% judges; 3.45% national athletes; 2.30% managers; 44.83% managers and one or more activity scopes and 32.18% two or more simultaneous activities except manager.

Age mean of research samples was 35.17 and standard deviation was 7.58. The greatest amounts were seen among people who were active simultaneously in several fields. The highest level of education was related to Bachelor's Degree with 48.28% including 42 people and 9 people with Diploma's degree, associate's degree with 24 people, Master's degree with 12 people.

**Table 2: statistically significant of each list of the questionnaires**

List of items	Opportunities	Threats
Total Number	87	87
Chi-squared	62.341	80.814
Degree of freedom	16	17
Significance level	0.000	0.000
Test error	P<1%	P<1%
Result	Significance difference between items	Significance difference between items

**Table 3: Friedman test for opportunities of sport climbing in Iran**

Opportunities items	No.	Mean	Standard Deviation	Mean rank
Possibility of using national TVs to broadcasting competitions	87	4.767	0.430	10.750
Possibility of using higher educated people & experts in S.C.	87	4.767	0.626	1.700
Possibility of using NGOs sponsors	87	4.733	0.583	10.617
Possibility of having scientific- sport communications with research centers	87	4.733	0.640	10.550
Possibility of participation national team in international competitions	87	4.733	0.450	10.300
Attending the sport climbing in FISU	87	4.533	0.730	9.500
Possibility of recognition of an independent sport climbing federation in Iran	87	4.567	0.679	9.400
Possibility of using veteran in sport climbing	87	4.500	0.861	9.283
Development of new technologies and possibility of using them in S.C	87	4.533	0.571	9.150
Being international rules in sport climbing	87	4.533	0.730	8.917
Interested fans welcoming the tournament in some provinces	87	4.500	0.630	8.833
Possibility of attending sport climbing in Olympic Games	87	4.400	0.855	8.750
Possibility of utilizing the mass media for sport climbing	87	4.300	0.952	8.100
Being Manufacturers of sport climbing equipment and accessories in Iran	87	4.200	1.064	7.650
Possibility of using experiences of other sports champions & veteran in S.C	87	4.000	1.083	6.399
Having youth community of sport climbing in Iran	87	4.067	0.868	6.783
Possibility of using S.C national champions for technical places	87	3.900	1.269	6.783

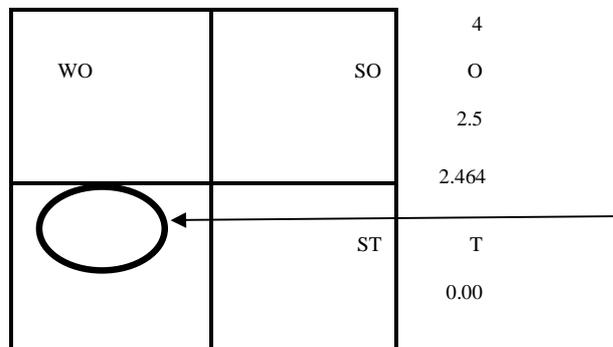
As it can be seen in table 3, sport climbing have opportunities such as Possibility of using national TVs to broadcasting competitions; Possibility of using higher educated people & experts in sport climbing; Possibility of having scientific- sport communications with research centers, that have more importance in order to sample's idea. Research samples believed that possibility of using experiences of other sports champions and veteran in sport climbing; having youth community of sport climbing in Iran; Possibility of using the sport climbing national champions for technical places have less importance.

**Table 4: Friedman test for threats of sport climbing in Iran**

Threats items	No.	Mean	Standard Deviation	Mean rank
Having problem for sport climbing training in multi-purpose gyms	87	4.667	0.802	11.317
Having a lack of knowledge about sport climbing among the physical education school teachers	87	4.767	0.430	11.167
Having a lack of system for administering talent scout& talent nurturing in schools	87	4.700	0.702	10.933
Having inappropriate time for S.C in multi-purpose gyms	87	4.667	0.606	10.717
No attending to meritocracy in national sport	87	4.667	0.547	10.567
Inadequate the state financial resources and having difficulties in hosting international competition	87	4.633	0.556	10.467
Inadequate time for sport climbing training in more gyms	87	4.633	0.615	10.350
Using the potential sponsors facilities in a unsuitable manner	87	4.600	0.498	10.017
Economic crisis and influencing on investing in sport climbing	87	4.567	0.679	10.000
Depending the national federation on ministry of sport & youth in sport sites, facilities & financial resources sections	87	4.567	0.626	9.833
Inconsiderable support management of sport climbing from state institutions	87	4.467	0.819	9.750
Unfair supervising among different sports in Iran by managers	87	4.467	0.900	9.617
Inadequate public announcement about sport climbing	87	4.500	0.682	9.333
No investing on construction & improvement of S.C sites & facilities	87	4.433	0.817	9.033
Being inner conflict in national sport system	87	4.333	0.802	8.450
Partly expensive facilities in sport climbing	87	4.100	1.029	7.750
To growth & improve sport climbing in rival countries	87	3.500	1.408	6.150
Close connection of rival countries with international & continental federations	87	3.600	1.037	5.550

As it can be seen in table 4, according to the viewpoint of the audience of this research having problem for sport climbing training in multi-purpose gyms; having a lack of knowledge about sport climbing among the physical education school teachers; having a lack of system for administering talent scout & talent nurturing in schools are the most important threats in this field. Partly expensive facilities in sport climbing; to growth & improve sport climbing in rival countries; close connection of rival countries with international & continental federations have less importance.

The results indicated that the total external factors matrix scores of sport climbing in Iran was less than 2.5 (2.464).It means that sport climbing in Iran is weak in accordance to external factors and being places at T location.



**Diagram 1- Strategic status of sport climbing in Iran**

**Table 5: External Factor Evaluation (EFE) Matrix of sport climbing in Iran**

External Factors	Items	Weight	Rating	Score	
<b>Opportunities</b>	<b>O1</b>	Possibility of using national TVs to broadcasting competitions	<b>0.028</b>	<b>3.80</b>	<b>0.105</b>
	<b>O2</b>	Possibility of using higher educated people & experts in sport climbing	<b>0.031</b>	<b>3.97</b>	<b>0.121</b>
	<b>O3</b>	Possibility of using NGOs sponsors	<b>0.029</b>	<b>3.93</b>	<b>0.115</b>
	<b>O4</b>	Possibility of having scientific- sport communications with research centers	<b>0.030</b>	<b>3.97</b>	<b>0.121</b>
	<b>O5</b>	Possibility of participation national team in international competitions	<b>0.029</b>	<b>3.90</b>	<b>0.114</b>
	<b>O6</b>	Attending the sport climbing in FISU	<b>0.026</b>	<b>3.73</b>	<b>0.098</b>
	<b>O7</b>	Possibility of recognition of an independent federation of Iran sport climbing	<b>0.029</b>	<b>3.97</b>	<b>0.116</b>
	<b>O8</b>	Possibility of using veteran in sport climbing	<b>0.029</b>	<b>3.87</b>	<b>0.113</b>
	<b>O9</b>	Development of new technologies and possibility of using them in S.C	<b>0.029</b>	<b>3.93</b>	<b>0.114</b>
	<b>O10</b>	Being international rules in sport climbing	<b>0.028</b>	<b>3.83</b>	<b>0.108</b>
	<b>O11</b>	Interested fans welcoming the tournament in some provinces	<b>0.030</b>	<b>4.00</b>	<b>0.122</b>
	<b>O12</b>	Possibility of attending sport climbing in Olympic Games	<b>0.030</b>	<b>3.93</b>	<b>0.120</b>
	<b>O13</b>	Possibility of utilizing the mass media for sport climbing	<b>0.031</b>	<b>4.00</b>	<b>0.123</b>
	<b>O14</b>	Being Manufacturers of sport climbing equipment and accessories in Iran	<b>0.025</b>	<b>3.67</b>	<b>0.092</b>
	<b>O15</b>	Possibility of using experiences of other sports champions & veteran in S.C	<b>0.027</b>	<b>3.80</b>	<b>0.103</b>
	<b>O16</b>	Having youth community of sport climbing in Iran	<b>0.026</b>	<b>3.63</b>	<b>0.093</b>
	<b>O17</b>	Possibility of using S.C national champions for technical places	<b>0.029</b>	<b>3.90</b>	<b>0.113</b>
<b>Threats</b>	<b>T1</b>	Having problem for sport climbing training in multi-purpose gyms	<b>0.029</b>	<b>1.10</b>	<b>0.032</b>
	<b>T2</b>	Having a lack of knowledge about sport climbing among the physical education school teachers	<b>0.030</b>	<b>1.03</b>	<b>0.031</b>
	<b>T3</b>	Having a lack of system for administering talent scout & talent nurturing in schools	<b>0.030</b>	<b>1.03</b>	<b>0.031</b>
	<b>T4</b>	Having inappropriate time for S.C in multi-purpose gyms	<b>0.029</b>	<b>1.10</b>	<b>0.032</b>
	<b>T5</b>	No attending to meritocracy in national sport	<b>0.030</b>	<b>1.07</b>	<b>0.032</b>
	<b>T6</b>	Inadequate the state financial resources and having difficulties in hosting international competition	<b>0.022</b>	<b>1.47</b>	<b>0.033</b>
	<b>T7</b>	Inadequate time for sport climbing training in more gyms	<b>0.029</b>	<b>1.10</b>	<b>0.032</b>
	<b>T8</b>	Using the potential sponsors facilities in a unsuitable manner	<b>0.023</b>	<b>1.53</b>	<b>0.035</b>
	<b>T9</b>	Economic crisis and influencing on investing in S.C	<b>0.029</b>	<b>1.13</b>	<b>0.033</b>
	<b>T10</b>	Depending the national federation on ministry of sport & youth in sport sites, facilities & financial resources sections	<b>0.026</b>	<b>1.27</b>	<b>0.033</b>
	<b>T11</b>	Inconsiderable support management of sport climbing from state institutions	<b>0.030</b>	<b>1.03</b>	<b>0.031</b>
	<b>T12</b>	Unfair supervising among different sports in Iran by managers	<b>0.030</b>	<b>1.07</b>	<b>0.032</b>
	<b>T13</b>	Inadequate public announcement about sport climbing	<b>0.030</b>	<b>1.07</b>	<b>0.032</b>
	<b>T14</b>	No investing on construction & improvement of S.C sites & facilities	<b>0.029</b>	<b>1.07</b>	<b>0.031</b>
	<b>T15</b>	Being inner conflict in national sport system	<b>0.028</b>	<b>1.20</b>	<b>0.033</b>
	<b>T16</b>	Partly expensive facilities in sport climbing	<b>0.028</b>	<b>1.13</b>	<b>0.032</b>
	<b>T17</b>	To growth & improve sport climbing in rival countries	<b>0.030</b>	<b>1.00</b>	<b>0.030</b>
<b>T18</b>	Close connection of rival countries with international & continental federations	<b>0.031</b>	<b>1.00</b>	<b>0.031</b>	
<b>Total External Factor</b>		$\Sigma =$ <b>1.00</b>		<b>2.464</b>	

## CONCLUSION

The results of this research indicated that sport climbing in Iran has 17 opportunities and 18 threats. The possibility of using national TVs to broadcasting competitions; the possibility of using higher educated people & experts in sport climbing; the possibility of having scientific- sport communications with research centers, were the major opportunities of sport climbing. It seems that by planning and using opportunities in sport climbing we would be able to destroy many of weaknesses of this field and also decrease or destroy all the threats.

Having problems for sport climbing training in multi-purpose gyms; having a lack of knowledge about sport climbing among the physical education school teachers; having a lack of system for administering talent scout & talent nurturing in schools are the most important threats in sport climbing in Iran. In case of using strengths and opportunities in sport climbing there is a possibility of decrease and even vanishing of the threats. According to the inspections made through external factors evaluation matrix and placement of Iran sport climbing at treating situation T the necessity and importance of planning for coming out of critical situation is more and more become important. It seems that managers of Iran's sport climbing can prepare the necessities for development of this field scientifically and logically along with appropriate programming by decreasing threats and using opportunities in sport climbing, provide the basis of growth and development of this sport in Iran.

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