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## Why and How Can Donors Be Involved in the Development of Student Sports? (Executive Solutions)

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### ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to explore why and how can donors be involved in the development of student sports?. The research method was based on grounded theory approach (Strauss & Corbin method). The statistical population in the qualitative stage included 15 experts and key experts including university professors and executives of university sports who were selected by purposive sampling, and at the quantitative stage, 315 people who were active in the field of charity and student sports were studied. The results were analyzed using confirmatory factor analysis in the form of structural equations with SPSS and PLS software. 73 primary concepts were identified, which were categorized into 58 sub-categories. Compiled to collect information. According to the developed model, the existence of security for donors in investing in student sports and providing the necessary support such as granting appropriate facilities, exemptions, and tax discounts provide incentives for the private sector to participate in various sub-categories of physical education and sports. In addition, considering other barriers as well as focusing on developing strategies, could potentially lead to donor investment and participation in student sports.

### Introduction

Kindness and charity are important parts of the Muslim culture and the extent of charity endowment in Islamic communities shows the historical effort of Muslims for charity (Hasanzadeh Sarvestani et al., 2018). In the meantime, Islamic lessons and religious motives are the most important factor to participate in charity; but other factors can be effective in increasing the

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motivation of donors too (Bottiglia, 2016). Government and government funding are the greatest support for country's sports which can't meet its needs due to reduced mentioned resources for investment (Seyed Bagheri & Sharifian, 2017). As a result, various organization that are responsible for country's sport won't be able to meet the needs of themselves using government budget (Faed, 2007). The university sports aren't an exception either. For University sports, it is necessary to develop coherent politics and planning for University sports, provide human resources and create sports facilities and infrastructures, provide funds and cost control (Manafi et al., 2015). The sports and construction of the sport spaces need the help of donors to the government (Arami, 2012), and leading the young students to the sports, leads to sustainable development, provides health and peace to the community.

Physical education and sports are parts of national development programs as background of training healthy and strong human resources. The development of university sports has an effective role in the development of the components of sports, means public sports, championship sports and development of physical and mental health of students (Asefi & Asadi Dastjerdi, 2015). The student sports should plan for enhancing the students' physical body and their souls in the way of preparing necessary fields and creating sustainable environment and meeting the needs of them (Yaghoobi et al., 2020) In developing countries, the sports management elites especially in University sports believe the way to the evolution and excellence of university sport is in the form of official associations and independent institutions and they also believe these are the factors to play more effective roles at the time of facing social issues (Poursoltani Zarandi et al., 2016).. One of the strategic plans of the general department of University sports is developing the culture of charitable participation in construction of university sport facilities and attracting sponsors for University sports teams (Nasirzadeh, 2018), along with the development of sport places. According to the needs of the country to invest in sports and financial limitations, the charitable people can play an effective role in the development of a sports facilities and equipment (Hassan Shahi et al., 2017). The important role of the sponsors and benefactors is obvious in helping to develop various parts of country and benefactors and donors are in a special position in this field. And also using charities has become a way to develop different parts that the government can't afford them alone. Researchers believe that the sport has made an opportunity to collect donations and charities at the same time (Heidari Fard & Sharifian, 2017). In the most countries legal solutions are provided for this; countries like: Germany, Australia, Spain, England and etc. But in Iran, people always do this voluntarily as endowments and charity (Ekramifar, 2004). One of the strategic weaknesses of the country is the failure in attracting the private sector to invest in sports (Rashid Lamir et al., 2013) and attracting donations has become a challenge (Nasiripour et al., 2014).

Donors are involved in sports according to these cases: Sport promotes health, sport targets the axial program of health (Rowe et al., 2019). One of the important approaches of sports in university is to increase the receipt of credits from non-governmental sources with the approach of donors' participation in university sports. In the field of public sports, construction of sport places is done by sports donors (Shaji, 2017). When we see that in the developing country of Iran, despite revolution, imposed war and international economic sanctions, there have been dramatic internal changes in culture, the importance of the donors is more obvious (Heidari Fard & Sharifian, 2017). The donors are more valuable for sport organizations specially for university sports due to this phenomenon. Their effort in the way of developing university sports with charity and sponsors of university sports along with the student sports development operation plan and to support and encourage universities to absorb non-governmental resources to perform sport activities are clean example of this. In the statute of the university supporting charity foundation, nowhere is student sports mentioned. We don't see any endowment in development of sports in spite of that effort to

develop sports in mentioned in 5<sup>th</sup> plan of developing economy, society and culture of the country (Hassan Shahi et al., 2017; Riahi Samani, 2011). Public sports are associated with all kind of students; evidence shows that the allocated budget for student sport is insufficient and like many other service areas, needs the people and the donors to take part to reach the goals, despite government's support (same as health and dormitory services) (Mansoori & Salimian Rizi, 2019). Some of the actions of the General Department of Physical Education of Ministry & Science, which can be considered in university sports (Nejhad Sajadi et al., 2018).

- A) Forming a council of sports sponsors
- B) Developing a regulation for attracting sponsors
- C) Creating a system for attracting sports donors
- D) Developing a culture of donor participation in the construction of sport places.

Research on attracting sport sponsors and donors let University sports to ask to recognize the effective factors on donor attraction. It seems that comprehensive information is not available on financial support in student sports and the factors affecting the attraction of donors in spite of that marketing research has a great track record. Also, the Solutions given are based on information obtained from ordinary people and mostly about the field of educational donors. Various factors affect the lack of attention of donors and participants to the field of student Sports. In this research an attempt has been made to identify the reasons for the lack of public participation and the barriers to public participation in the field of the student sports from perspective of the donors and the directors of the country's University sports & also to give some solutions for comprehensive and principled planning to attract donors and sponsors. So, we have to see what factors affect the desire of sponsors and the donors in student sport. How and in what way do they influence the desire and attraction of sponsors and donors and how is the connection between them? Which of these factors has the greatest impact on the desire of the sponsors and the donors to be attracted?

## Materials & methods

The method of conducting this research is mixed method (quantitative and qualitative); at first qualitative method and then, quantitative method has been used. The grounded Theory method presented by Strauss & Corbin has been used to build a conceptual research model. First qualitative data with open response information were collected to construct measurement tools and after compiling a questionnaire, quantitative data were collected through descriptive-survey research method. The sampling method is qualitative studies that were performed using theoretical saturation index compared to sampling from the statistical population. This method continues until the obtain data is duplicate and no more information is obtained which is called the theoretical saturation index. The participants include 15 experts including professors and administration managers of University sports with at least 15 years of experience in a student sports chosen by purposive sampling method. The criteria for selecting the interviewees were having works related to the research question. For data collection, semi-structured interview method has been used which is characterized by flexibility and depth and is suitable for qualitative research.

**Table 1.** Profile of sample members

Type of relationship with the central phenomenon of research	N	Interviews
Senior managers of university sports	5	5
University faculty members in the field of research	8	10
Informed managers with charitable activities	2	2
Total	15	17

Creswell Has introduced three separate approaches to grounded Theory with systemic and everything and constructivist titles. The systematic method has been used in this research, which is more perspective than others. This selected method helps the grounded theory in the need for a specific multiple use to analyze data which include: open coding, axial coding, and selective coding (Saghravani et al., 2014). In open coding that they took breaks and then they will be conceptually groups and their categories and the features will be generated. Free data collection continues until the effects of the axial category are plotted. Selective coding also means restrict coding to those variables that are related to axial variable. I.e. when I get a category is plotted selective coding will be started and interviews are in the direction of the axial variable. Data theory prepares a procedure for developing information categories developing categories and presenting a story to reconcile the categories with each other and concludes with set of theoretical and argumentative theorems (Clandinin & Connelly, 2004), to present a systematic and a schematic model. The used quantitative method in this level is survey research. The goal is to realize the opinion of interviewees about attracting donors in University sports, which its concept has been derived from interviewees. Also reaching a quantitative model was another goal of research. In this level the statistical community includes all people with management experience in different levels of a sports in the country, Donors Familiar with student sports issues, professors of sport management, students in Sports Management, experts in charity and students Sports (about 336 people). According to the method, the total number of the statistical samples was equal to the community. Finally, 315 people were selected as the sample. In confirmatory factor analysis and the structural model, the minimum sample size is determined based on hidden variables that 21 samples are required for each factor. The questionnaire of the factor affecting the attraction of donors in the student Sports in qualitative stage was identified and compiled by studying theoretical basis, interviewing professor and University experts and bases on qualitative analysis (grounded theory). Finally, a questionnaire with 49 questions was designed. The questionnaire has six dimensions (executive, managerial, participation, service, socio-cultural and economic dimension). Each dimension has components (Table 2). These items are closed type and from Likert 5-chice range from completely agree to completely disagree. The results of the analysis showed that the indicators related to the dimensions of the questioner for attracting donors are acceptable and are suitable indicators for measuring these components.

**Table 2.** Internal correlation coefficient of questionnaire items using Cronbach's alpha test

	Cronbach's alpha coefficient	Composite reliability
Executive	0.736	0.810
Managerial	0.769	0.830
Participation	0.790	0.851
Service	0.755	0.826
Socio-cultural	0.809	0.857
Economic	0.914	0.935

After extracting and classifying the collected information in the qualitative section to rank the items, the statistical method of Delphi group theoretical consensus with the criteria of agreement of more than 70% of experts for each item was used. Frequency and mean percentage were among the statistics used for descriptive statistics. To analyze the inferential data and to evaluate the reliability of the research instrument, Cronbach's alpha coefficients were used. In order to investigate convergent and divergent validity of the research instrument, the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) and the Fornell-Larker matrix were used based on confirmatory factor analysis.

Structure equation model and Friedman test based on SPSS and PLS software were also used. The significance level of this research was considered  $\alpha=0.05$ .

## Results

Using open coding method, 73 initial concepts were identified. Which were categorized into 58 sub-categories, and in the axial coding stage, about 20 main categories were categorized. In factor analysis, the KMO value is first calculated to determine whether the available data can be used for analysis or not? Its value always fluctuates between 0 and 1. If the KMO value is higher than 0.7, the correlation between the items will be suitable for factor analysis (Nazari and Mokhtari 1388). Bartlett test was also used to ensure correlation in the data matrix (Table 3).

**Table 3.** KMO, Bartlett and factor load test

Area	Questions	Factor load	KMO	Bartlett
Executive	Charity as one of the programs and behaviors to meet the needs of the community	0.574	0.704	0.001
	University sports and its promotion lead to a reduction in social harms	0.448		
	Legal smoothness	0.576		
	Formation of charitable academic organizations and groups	0.597		
	The smoothness of the path of charitable actions in academic sports in terms of law and legality compared to other areas of endowment	0.522		
	Donors' trust in university sports agents	0.636		
	Trust in university sports agents	0.468		
	Gaining inner satisfaction from participating in voluntary and charitable activities	0.227		
Managerial	Organizing charity centers	0.573	0.726	0.001
	Establish organizational communication	0.626		
	Creating a donations section	0.680		
	Organizing non-profit centers	0.479		
	social media advertisement's	0.622		
	Awareness	0.484		
	Media celebration	0.685		
	Advertised by prominent characters	0.691		
	Develop a strategy to attract donors	0.764		
	Establish effective communication between university sports officials and donors	0.791		
	Providing a suitable platform based on communication marketing	0.681		
	Strategies for keeping donors	0.628		
The event was attended by key people	0.761			
Participation	Health of the scientific elite	0.533	0.786	0.001
	Manpower health	0.748		
	Students' mental health	0.619		
	Sustainable development of sports infrastructure	0.654		
	Per capita development of student sports	0.648		
	Reducing government ownership	0.635		
	Donor support for college sports and active sports	0.928		
	Contribute to development projects	0.569		
Service	Voluntary behavior	0.679	0.819	0.001
	Development of university sports equipment	0.875		
	Development of university sports facilities	0.753		
	Creation and physical development of gyms and sports venues in dormitories and universities for sports activities for female students	0.812		
	Create discounts on the purchase of clothing and sports equipment for	0.739		

Area	Questions	Factorload	KMO	Bartlett
Socio-cultural	students or discounts			
	Financial support for holding university sports events at the provincial and national levels	0.718		
	Financial support in sending academic sports teams to international academic events	0.865		
	Existence of Islamic beliefs	0.752		
	Belief in spiritual and otherworldly rewards for charitable activities	0.749		
	Having morals and spiritual spirits	0.647		
	Social empathy	0.754	0.873	0.001
	Social benevolence	0.677		
Economic	Pay attention to the same type	0.768		
	Interest in sports and university, interest in students	0.849		
	Culture of participation in social and charitable activities	0.867		
	Charity charm in sports	0.567		
	Tax concessions	0.763		
	Gaining social status	0.575	0.793	0.001
	Acquisition of facilities	0.784		

Considering the KMO number and the significant number of Bartlett test, it can be said that the data are suitable and have requirements for performing factor analysis. For factor analysis, it is better that the factors have a correlation coefficient more than 0.3 (Nazari & Mokhtari, 2009). Some researchers consider coefficients higher than 0.3 and sometimes higher than 0.4 to be meaningful and consider lower coefficients to be zero or random factor (Karshki & Bahmanabadi, 2013). In this research, the minimum coefficient is 0.4. so, the factor loads of questions except the Am8 question with a factor load of 0.277 are removed in the model; the rest of the questions have a factor load higher than 0.4 and it can be said that the items are good to measure the concept.

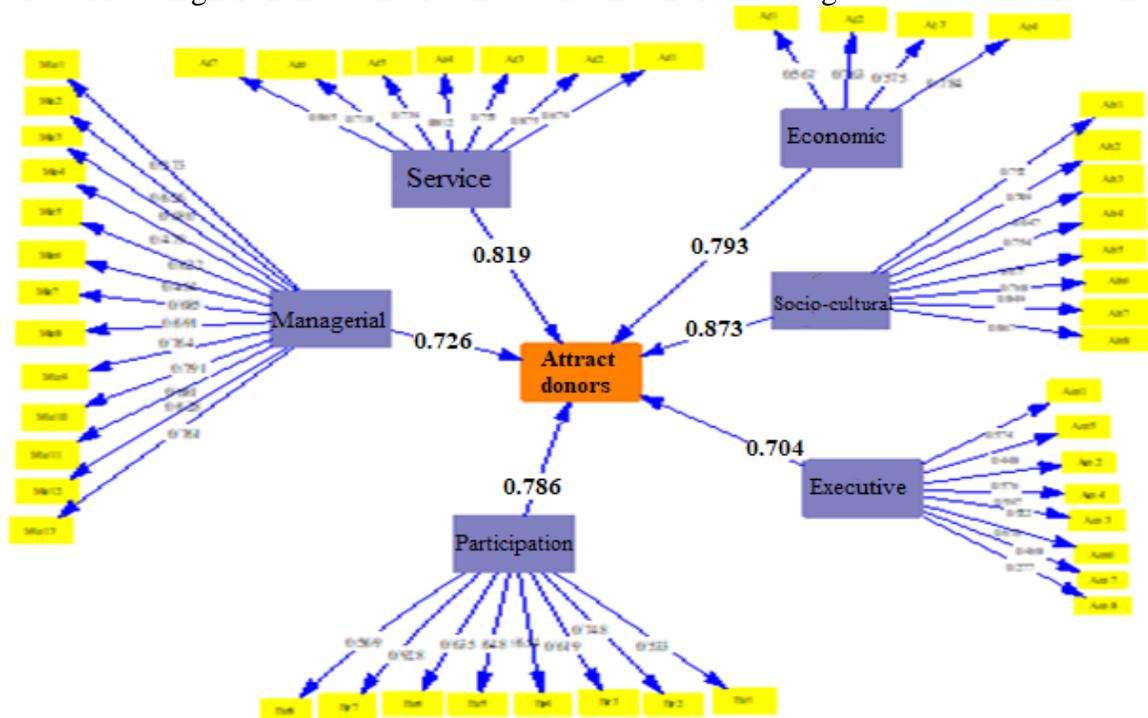


Figure 1. Modified structural model of research with standard coefficients

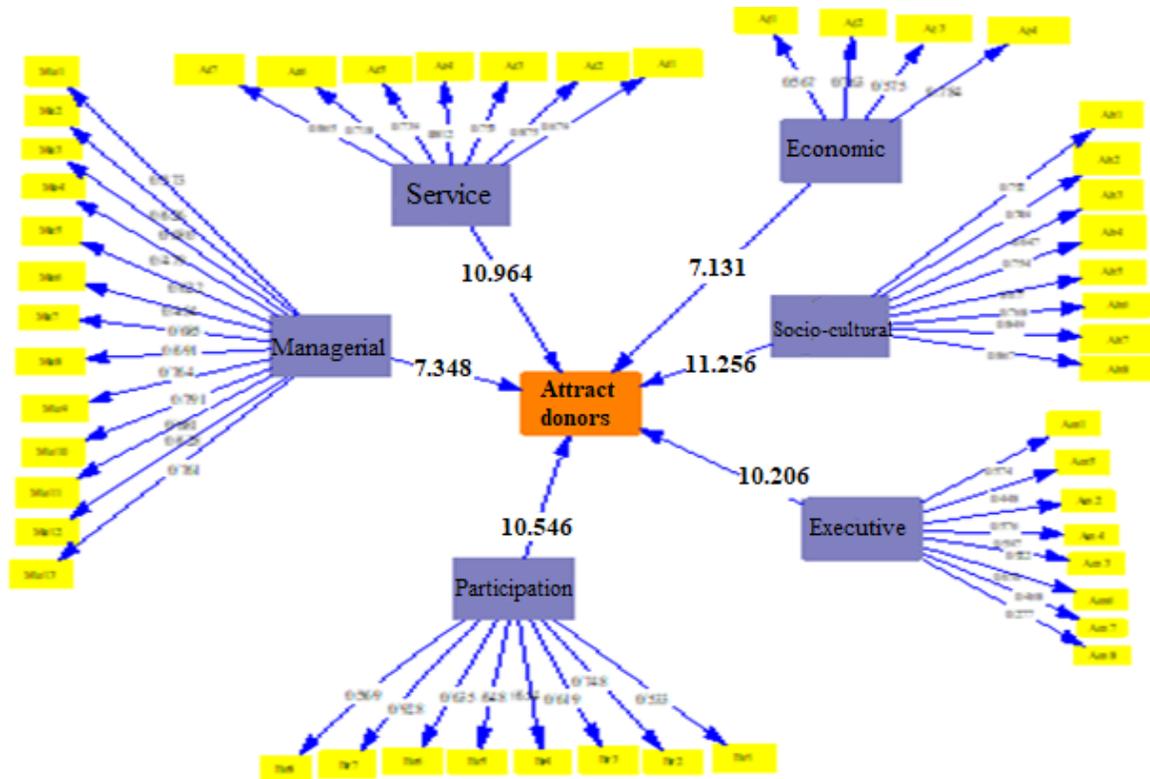


Figure 2. Modified structural model of research with significant coefficients

**Model Fitting**

In order to evaluate the reliability of the research measurement model, factor loading coefficients, Cronbach’s alpha coefficients and Composite Reliability (CR) and research variables, subscription coefficients and coefficients of determination were investigated

**Table 4.** Criteria results of hidden and obvious variables of research

Concealed variables	Hidden variables		Obvious variables	
	Combined reliability coefficient	Cronbach's alpha coefficients	Subscriptions	Explanation coefficient R <sup>2</sup>
Executive	0.921	0.865	0.649	0.001
Managerial	0.829	0.751	0.391	0.001
Participation	0.891	0.756	0.335	0.001
Service	0.819	0.799	0.677	0.001
cultural - Socio	0.857	0.893	0.648	0.001
Economic	0.935	0.864	0.295	0.001
Attracting donors in student sports	1.000	1.000	1.000	0.967
<b>Subscriptions</b>		<b>R<sup>2</sup></b>		<b>GOF</b>
		0.967		0.627

According to the table 4, these criteria have taken appropriate values for hidden and obvious variables. The reliability of the research can be properly confirmed. According to figure 1, the value of the coefficient of determination (R<sup>2</sup>=0.986) is calculated for the endogenous structure of

the research. According to 3 criteria, the fitness of the structural model can be confirmed. According to value of GOF (Goodness of fit), which is 0.627, the model fitness is confirmed.

**Table 5.** direct results and significant coefficients and factor ranking of the research

Factors	Causal relationships between research variables	$\beta$	T-Value	result
Socio-cultural	Attracting donors in student sports	0.837	11.256	Accept
Service	Attracting donors in student sports	0.819	10.964	Accept
Participation	Attracting donors in student sports	0.786	10.546	Accept
Executive	Attracting donors in student sports	0.704	10.206	Accept
Managerial	Attracting donors in student sports	0.726	7.348	Accept
Economic	Attracting donors in student sports	0.793	7.131	Accept

According to the results, it can be said that these factors have positive and meaningful effect on attracting donors in student sports, Executive factor ( $t=10.296$ ;  $sig=0.001$ ), Managerial factor ( $t=7.348$ ;  $sig=0.001$ ), Participation factor ( $t=10.546$ ;  $sig=0.001$ ), Service factor ( $t=10.946$ ;  $sig=0.001$ ), Socio-cultural factor ( $t=11.256$ ;  $sig=0.001$ ), & Economic factor ( $t=7.131$ ,  $sig=0.001$ ). The research hypotheses were answered by these results.

## Discussion

The Paradigm model of attracting donors in student sports is in form of 6 dimensions:

Causal Conditions (5 categories): religious believes, social duty, donor's perspective, altruism, charity culture in university sports. Background Conditions (3 categories): social needs, smoothness of the donation progress, trust. Interfering Conditions (2 categories): attraction, earning interest. Axial Condition (1 category): charity behavior. Strategies (5 categories): organizing, media activity, market activity, developing an operation strategy, charity events. Consequences (4 categories): helping government, health and well-being of students, student sports effects on the country, developing the sustainability of university sports

The results were consistent with the results of Heydari and Sharifyan (2017), Hasanshahi et al (2017), Filo et al (2019) and inconsistent with the results of Woolf et al (2013), Filo et al (2019). Probably, the reason for the inconsistency of the results was the type of culture governing the university system and the strategic goals outlined for university sports in these researches.

Helping to build and equip universities and university dorms probably can increase the participation of students and sport elites in sport activities. Students, as human resources, get ready for their jobs in society by taking part in student sport activities. Students can get a good mood and vitality by using the sport spaces made by the donors. Nekooyi Moqadam et al (2013) were identified in the study of the role of charities in the health system of the organization, the provision of resources, the type of donated resources, how to use resources, challenges and how to interact with the university and other related institutions regarding the management of charities. These results were consistent with this research.

Friedman test has been used in order to prioritize the effective factors in attracting donors in quantitative stage and second question of the research. There are meaningful differences between effective factors on attraction donors in terms of samples based on the results of Friedman test. According to the obtained average rate, the "socio-cultural factor" and "service factor" were the most important and the "economic factor" has the least importance among them. The results were inconsistent to the results of Afshari et al (2018), because he says that the managerial factor is the

most important factor of attracting funds for the provincial sport projects and also the socio-cultural factor is the least important factor.

The results of Heidari Fard & Sharifian (2017) were also inconsistent; because all of the factors hindered donors to participate. The degree of their obstruction is, respectively: executive, legal, belief, socio-cultural barriers and the barriers of sport itself. So, we can hope that the path of donor participation will be smoothed by removing these barriers. The results of Seyed Bagheri & Sharifian (2017) is inconsistent. Because there are 9 factors in the model of championship sports of Iran, which are in order of priority: Managerial, Sports, Financial and economic, Market, Media, Political, Supportive and encouraging, Socio-Cultural and legal factor. Khosravizadeh et al (2014) has concluded that the barriers of investment and participation of private sector are economic. Information and capital market, managerial, legal, socio-cultural, supportive and encouraging and politic barriers. Filo et al (2019) referred to the role of the donors and 3 limitations appeared: Lack of opportunity of acceptance among donors, lack of funds, time limitation. Social factors, advertisement, gratitude, personal aspect and awards and motivating donors are effective in donor attraction which was consistent to the research. Also, Bagheri et al (2018) and Djaballah (2017) are consistent. In the reviewing the background of the researches, most of researches are about barriers of donor participation. According to the background and the results, it can be said that it can make the students' talents shown by equipping sport places and dorms in universities. Also supporting the university sports can make various teams in different fields of student sports. The development of university sport infrastructures causes students to be attracted to different fields and discovery of sport talents at the national level. Donors' support for equipment and sports constructions can make students take part in public sports. Sport places and equipment in universities and dorms meet the needs of students' free time. There's no research found about this. Endowment has a wide range of activities and actions that if properly managed, it will meet many needs and human society will never face economic, social, educational and cultural deficiencies. It is important that all needs are introduced on the basis of priority at the level of public opinion, and that its necessity is taken into account objectively and in proportion of donors. Endowment can play a role in personal and family aspects and sometimes in the public dimension and in order to fill social gaps that the Qur'an emphasizes on public works and cooperation and solving problems of society and each other through cooperation. One of the aspects of endowment and charity can be expressed as university sports. Today, sport is one of the necessities of human life. Not only for increasing physical fitness of students, but also it is useful for strengthen the soul and psyche. Gaining vitality, disease and drugs control, preventing the spread of abnormalities and crimes, creating hope and promoting productivity are the results of investment on developing university sports. The important thing is to provide cheap and free sports in universities. Because most of country's universities have low budget in sports, they are not able to allocate budget for sports. Therefore, one of the important politics of universities should be attracting donors. Creating a culture for the development of university sports has both direct (government's help) and indirect (donor attraction) solutions, which we hope to see significant success in this direction. According to the results, it is suggested that for university sports, not to do these only to attract donors but also try to keep these donors for future collaborations by gratitude in university and national media and also for seminars and other collaborations.

The results of the research reveal the need to attract donors in student sports which is achieved through the effectiveness of media advertising in the charity and student sports sector. In this regard, the government, by supporting donors, can cause them to enter sports and invest in sports. Also, according to the identified influential factors, such as participatory factors, development of

gyms in universities, provision of cheap sport equipment, releasing journals about the effects of sport on health and developing facilities for students, the government can play more effective role. It is suggested that donors, by using investment models in sports and promoting the factors affecting it, facilitate investment conditions in student sports, also by creating an integrate management system and managing management in sport federations, they can influence many other influential factors in attracting donors including financial and economic factors and etc. According to the model fits obtained, It can be stated that the existence of security for donors in investing in student sports and providing the necessary support such as granting appropriate facilities, exemptions and tax discounts provide incentives for the private sector to participate in various sub-categories of physical education and sports and consider other barriers and focusing on developing strategies to develop this, could potentially lead to donor investment and participation in student sports.

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