



Feasibility Study of Launching Sports Start-ups: A Case Study in the Sports Shoe Industry

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ABSTRACT

Purpose: This study investigated the feasibility of starting a new sports business in the Iranian shoe industry.

Methodology: The research method was qualitative, utilizing library sources and interviews with 15 participants, including sports start-up owners and professionals from Science and Technology Park. The thematic analysis method was employed, and the sampling strategy was purposive. In addition, a questionnaire based on the AHP method was distributed among 10 participants to prioritize the key elements. In this regard, Expert Choice software was used.

Findings: The study identified economic, financial, environmental, technological, team, and market feasibility essential for launching a sports start-up in the shoe industry. Based on the Analytic Hierarchy Process approach, the prioritization of these elements was determined as economic, human resource, financial, market, technological, and environmental. In addition, the prioritization of the sub-elements of each of the feasibility studies was also presented. Sports business owners must conduct proper planning and feasibility assessments when launching sports start-ups, considering the current market conditions. The key elements identified in this study can be used for sports business projects in Iran's economy.

Originality: The research has a strategic perspective in examining the probability of successful sports startups, which has received little attention. This study also opens up a new approach to forecasting in the sports shoe industry.

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1. Introduction

The sports industry is constantly evolving and requires innovation to remain competitive. Sports startups cover various activities and operate in multiple fields, such as sports equipment and facilities, laboratory equipment, rehabilitation, biomechanics, sports software, sports nutrition, sports tourism, environment, media, and sports (Ratten & Ferreira, 2016). Other sports startups include promoting and developing public sports, facilitating and improving club ownership and sports management, mediating between athletes and service providers, providing equipment to enhance sports activities, offering special equipment, courts and classes to people with disabilities, the training and improvement of sports efficiency, analysis, advice and providing improvement solutions for athletes (Ratten, 2020).

Startups are temporary organizations that aim to develop repeatable, scalable, and profitable business models (Ratten, 2020; Ratten, 2020b). They aim to create new products or services accepted in the market. Although their types are varied, the processes involved in launching and growing these businesses are similar (Ratten, 2020). Sports startups are creating new opportunities in several areas. First, they are leveraging technology to develop new products and services that enhance the sports experience for athletes and fans alike (Fenyves, 2022; Ratten, 2020). For example, companies such as STRIVR and Virtually Live use virtual reality to create immersive sports experiences that allow fans to feel on the field with their favorite teams (Housel, 2016). Second, sports startups are creating new revenue streams for the sports industry (Ratten, 2020). Companies such as Sportradar and Genius Sports are using data analytics to provide valuable insights to sports teams and organizations while also creating new opportunities for sports betting and gaming (Casadesus-Masanell et al., 2018). Third, sports startups are creating new opportunities for athletes, from training and performance technologies to new ways to monetize their brands (Fenton et al., 2022; Shah, 2017).

An opportunity in training and performance technology is the sports shoe industry, where technological advancements have led to the creation of intelligent sports shoes with various capabilities, such as measuring distance, tracking calories, and playing music (Ratten, 2020a). Nike, Adidas, New Balance, and Puma, the athletic footwear industry, have made great strides in technology, quality raw materials and scientific design, including 3D printers and nanotechnology. However, starting a sports company in the presence of these established companies requires a thorough evaluation and analysis of the business potential (Micic, 2010). This is especially true in Iran, where sanctions, lack of access to raw materials, unfavorable economic conditions, difficulties in setting up a workshop, and shortage of specialized human resources increase the risk of starting this type of business.

Feasibility assessment is necessary for sports businesses in dynamic and variable environmental and economic conditions. It can lead to deciding whether to invest, implement, or change the business plan (Ionut, 2015). There is an interaction between the feasibility analysis and the business plan, which can consider the feasibility study's importance and necessity before launching the business or a startup (Ionut, 2015; Issa & Rub, 2007). The present investigation can facilitate business entities in the identification

of barriers hindering their progress, consequently enabling them to devise practical approaches for overcoming the obstacles mentioned above. By taking into account these factors discussed above, startups can effectively decrease the probability of encountering failure and simultaneously augment their likelihood of achieving success (Justis & Kreigsmann, 1979). Another benefit of conducting a feasibility study is to improve investments and attract angel investors. Investors are more likely to contribute to a startup that has completed a feasibility study since it appears that the startup has taken the time to carefully survey the company's potential and create a necessary arrangement for the long run. This may increase investors' certainty and the plausibility of contributing to new businesses (Ionut, 2015; Justis & Kreigsmann, 1979). Furthermore, a feasibility study has the potential to facilitate the establishment of partnerships and collaborations for the startup. By showcasing that the commencement business has applied sufficient contemplation towards evaluating the potential of the entrepreneurial endeavour and has devised a well-defined strategy for its trajectory, it can entice potential collaborators who possess a higher probability of extending support towards the venture (Keerativutisest & Promsiri, 2021).

The importance of feasibility assessment has been the focus of many studies, particularly in the context of businesses and startups (Ionut, 2015; Nicholas & Chinedum, 2017). For instance, Benar et al. (2022) studied the feasibility of e-sports. They concluded that it depends on various factors, such as stakeholders of the e-sports ecosystem, the economic nature, legal and structural challenges, contextual conditions, infrastructure development, capacity development, managerial-structural development, and socio-cultural development (Benar et al., 2022). Other studies (Brockman, 2008; Justis & Kreigsmann, 1979; Keerativutisest & Promsiri, 2021) have also highlighted the importance of feasibility studies as tools for venture analysis.

Given that most startups face challenges in their early stages and that many businesses fail and are forgotten in the early stages (Mondalizadeh et al., 2022; Parvaz & Eydi, 2022), conducting feasibility studies for sports startups can help ensure their sustainability and growth. To increase the chances of success, it is crucial to conduct a feasibility study before investing time and resources into the start-up. This is especially true for sports startups, as the industry can be competitive and complex. A feasibility study is a preliminary evaluation of the potential of a proposed project or business idea, and its purpose is to determine the viability and potential of the proposed venture.

There are a few accurate statistics on sports businesses from the point of view of the sustainability and growth of these types of businesses. Starting a sports business and investing in the existence of such companies doubles the need to evaluate and analyze the business. Even in Iran, despite the import of sports shoes, the importance of this issue multiplies because despite the sanctions, the lack of easy access to raw materials, economic conditions, the lack of ease in setting up even a workshop, and the lack of human resources specializing in risk. It increases the investment to start this type of business. In addition, feasibility assessment is necessary for businesses involving new technologies. As a result, this study aims to "investigate the feasibility of starting a new sports business in the shoe industry". The results of this research can guide investors, students and sports business owners to analyze the business environment.

2. Theoretical background

Starting a business in the sports industry, especially a sports production business, requires careful consideration and planning. Feasibility studies play a crucial role in the success and sustainability of a business project (Brockman, 2008; Viorica, 2010). Feasibility assessment is a form of planning that predicts the success or failure of a project and helps to increase the probability of success and business continuity by identifying potential threats or weaknesses. A proposed project's assessment, evaluation, and analysis are based on research and studies that support the decision-making process (Issa & Rub, 2007).

The shoe industry is complex and broad, with numerous ranges of products, brands, items, designs and markets. It is intriguing to note that the domain of sports footwear presents a distinctive and evolving niche characterized by distinct advantages and hurdles. Various methods can be employed to examine the athletic footwear industry, including but not limited to exploring marketing tactics (Ciappei & Simoni, 2005; Khazaei Pool et al., 2018; Lily & Yazdanifard, 2021; Weiermair et al., 2007; Widyastutir & Said, 2017), devising product blueprints (Bathula et al., 2017), analyzing production techniques (Abeya & Mulugeta, 2014; Hernandez et al., 2019), and optimizing supply chain operations (Chang, 2022; Micic, 2010; Sellitto et al., 2015). Branding and marketing are crucial in the sports shoe industry (Lily & Yazdanifard, 2021). To succeed in this sector, businesses must put in tremendous efforts to establish a strong brand image and devise alluring promotional initiatives that attract customers (Widyastutir & Said, 2017). Advanced comprehension of customer tendencies and patterns is necessary, along with the capacity to be ahead of the game in terms of competition. Design is a crucial field of investigation within the domain of sports footwear. To succeed, businesses need to create original and appealing shoe concepts that are practical and stylish. To create products that will attract customers, it is crucial to have comprehensive expertise surrounding materials, methods of construction, and ergonomic concepts, while also having the capability to anticipate and integrate emerging trends (Reinschmidt & Nigg, 2000; Ruswanti et al., 2016). The production process is essential to the athletic shoe sector. Corporations must produce shoes that optimize efficiency and decrease costs while upholding high-quality standards without compromise. To accomplish this, advanced manufacturing methods and professional management of intricate distribution networks are essential, along with the capability to collaborate with suppliers across the globe (Boër et al., 2004). In the world of athletic footwear, supply chain management is considered an essential element that carries great importance. Businesses must possess apt handling and coordination skills to procure materials and parts from different locations and ensure smooth transportation and delivery. The ability to understand global trade and navigate complex regulations and laws, combined with skills in supply chain management, is crucial for this position.

Numerous studies have been conducted in the contemporary era to scrutinize the significance of conducting feasibility studies across diverse commercial domains. Rahimian (2022) conducted a study on the feasibility of forming electronic marketing cooperatives in Lorestan province and found that financial incentives, physical infrastructure, social culture, educational requirements, and administrative and legal requirements were the key factors affecting the project's feasibility (Rahimian, 2022).

Shah (2017) conducted a competitive analysis of sports shoe brands in the Indian economy, comparing the marketing strategies of Nike and Adidas, and found that innovative marketing and customer behavior influence were significant factors in these brands (Shah, 2017). Widyastutir and Said (2017) analyzed customer preferences for buying sports shoes in Indonesia, considering the effects of brand image, product design, and price perception. The results of the study showed that these factors had a significant impact on customer buying decisions (Widyastutir & Said, 2017). Guo (2022) analyzed the strategies of the sports industry during the Covid-19 pandemic, focusing on the cases of Nike and Adidas, and found that Nike was the most prominent brand in the competition, with a strong emphasis on innovative strategies and digital marketing (Guo, 2022). Nicholas and Chinedum (2017) investigated the role of feasibility studies on project and organizational performance and found that feasibility studies play a crucial role in achieving the main goals of an organization. The investigation findings indicate that feasibility studies present beneficial outcomes for startups, as these assessments enable entities to recognize and tackle extant obstacles and unforeseen circumstances that may impact the organisation's advancement (Nicholas & Chinedum, 2017).

The review of scholarly literature indicates a dearth of research about the feasibility of sports enterprises, underscoring the significance of this matter. Consequently, assessing the viability of commencing a sports enterprise, particularly the sportswear sector, can furnish valuable discernment for the industry's stakeholders, encompassing investors, scholars, and entrepreneurial entities.

3. Method

3.1. Study design

The research method was qualitative, and the research strategy was a case study. A case study is an approach that uses information sources as much as possible to examine people, groups, organizations, or events systematically and is used when the researcher seeks to understand or explain a phenomenon (Khanifar & Moslemi, 2018b). The present study entailed a multi-case analysis wherein several active sport shoe enterprises were employed as subjects, and their respective cases were subjected to in-depth scrutiny. Given the option to exercise discretion in selecting sources, a preference is evident for multi-case research over single-case research (Khanifar & Moslemi, 2018a).

3.2. Participants

Given that owner of sports businesses are involved in the sports shoe industry, each sector's strategic issues and challenges were formulated by surveying this group. In addition, professors and experts of the Science and Technology Park were also surveyed. The sampling method was purposive. As a result, the selected experts included individuals from the following groups, including university professors in the fields of science and sports, the owners of the sports shoe industry, and specialists from the Science and Technology Park.

Table 1. The participants in the research.

Category	Sex	Age	Position	Major	Degree
University professors	Men	51	Faculty member	Sport management	PhD
	Men	40	Faculty member	Sport management	PhD
	Men	40	Faculty member	Sport management	PhD
The owners of sports business	Men	30	The owner of a sports production business	Management	Master
	Men	31	The owner of a sports production business	IT Engineer	Bachelor
	Men	29	The owner of a sports production business	Sciences	Diploma
	Men	28	The owner of a sports production business	Sports Sciences	Bachelor
	Men	27	The owner of a sports production business	Mathematics	Bachelor
	Men	35	The owner of a sports production business	Industrial Engineer	Bachelor
	Women	37	The owner of a sports production business	Management	Bachelor
	Men	38	The owner of a sports production business	Sports Sciences	Bachelor
	Men	29	The owner of a sports production business	Diploma	Diploma
	Men	28	The owner of a sports production business	Sports Engineer	Master
The specialist in science and Technology Park	Men	36	Specialist in Science and Technology Park	IT Engineer	Master
	Men	49	Specialist in Science and Technology Park	Computer Engineer	Master

As Table 1 shows, three participants were faculty members of a university, 10 participants were owners of sports businesses, and 2 participants were employees of Science and Technology Park. Repeated information was obtained in the last five interviews, but 15 people were interviewed to ensure completeness.

3.3. Research procedure

Initially, a combination of document and library studies and interviews with ten randomly selected active sports businesses in the shoe industry was conducted to identify the critical indicators for launching a successful sports start-up in the field. Expert opinions were sought from specialists in sports science and those working at the Science and Technology Park. The Analytic Hierarchy Process (AHP) was then used to prioritize the themes obtained from the qualitative research. A questionnaire based on the AHP method was distributed among 15 participants, of which ten responded. The questionnaire used pairwise comparisons to assess the relative importance of the options. For each level of the hierarchy, a separate expert questionnaire was prepared. The scoring was done on a scale of 1 to 9, with 1 indicating equal importance and 9 representing significantly higher importance of one option over another. The AHP method is a well-established technique

for prioritization in management science and was first introduced by Saaty in the 1970s. The 1-9 scale Table (Saaty, 2004) was used in the questionnaire design, and participants were asked to assign scores between 1 and 9 for each question.

3.4. Data collection and analysis

The data collection process involved reviewing relevant and existing documents through library studies and researching other countries' practices related to sports businesses, specifically sports shoe brands. Thematic analysis is a primary method for qualitative analysis of interview data. The thematic analysis allows the researcher to search for obvious and hidden themes and then interpret them. In this regard, the theme is a repetitive and distinctive feature in the text that represents essential information about the data and a particular understanding concerning the research questions and the pattern found in the data set and describes the organization of observations and interpretation of aspects. It deals with the phenomenon (Khanifar & Moslemi, 2018b).

4. Results

The analysis of the interviews led to the extraction of the primary and sub-themes, shown in Table 2. For this purpose, we used thematic analysis. The elements that should be considered for the feasibility of launching active start-ups in the sports shoe industry were identified, which included economic, financial, environmental, technological, team, and market feasibility.

Table 2. The feasibility of starting sports startups in the shoe industry.

Sub-Themes	Main Themes
Inflation rate	Economic feasibility
Real interest rate	
Bank lending to support businesses	
Ease of doing business rates	
Identifying potential risks	
Evaluates potential return on investment	Financial feasibility
The total estimated cost of the venture (Initial supply rate, Wage rate of workers, Equipment maintenance cost)	
Research and development cost rate	
Tax rate	
Funding sources	
Capital structure	
Estimate sales forecast	
Estimate profitability	
The amount of investment	Environmental feasibility
Resources under the control of the company	
Considering legal and financial penalties	
Assess the potential environmental impacts (impact on air, water, and soil quality)	Technological feasibility
The level of communication with the company's stakeholders	
The amount of provision of hardware facilities	
Materials	
The process of production of service or produce	

Sub-Themes	Main Themes
Modernization of production equipment and infrastructure	Human resource feasibility
Management of requirements and expenses	
Technology needed	
Transportations for products	
An expert team and group structure	
Determination of the critical management member	
Planning for supportive professional service	
Skills and professional background	
Information of founders	
Determination of demand (customers, consumers, etc.)	
Market size	
Business Location	
Future market potential	
Competitor analysis	
Value proposition	
Marketing strategies (distribution channel, uniqueness, the type of marketing)	Market feasibility
Shoe industry trends	
Break-even analysis	
Sales estimation	
Projecting average spending	
Marketing research (consumer behavior, risk of the manufactured product, etc.)	
Goal market segmentation	

Based on the findings from the analysis of feasibility themes, the weighted average of feasibility components was prioritized by Expert Choice software (ver. 11). The inconsistency rate of the AHP questionnaire was also confirmed (Consistency Ratio CR = 0.075). Based on this, economic feasibility with an average weight of $M=0.523$ had the highest priority among other components. The prioritization of the components has been done based on pairwise comparisons and correspondingly. After economic feasibility, human resource feasibility was ranked second with an average weight of 0.125. Financial feasibility, with an average weight of 0.114, was ranked third. Market feasibility, with an average weight of 0.11, and technological feasibility, with an average weight of 0.107. And environmental feasibility, with an average weight of 0.02, was placed in the last priorities, as shown in Table 3.

Table 3. The weights for the criteria based on pairwise comparisons.

Category	Priority	Rank
Economic feasibility	0.523	1
Human resources feasibility	0.125	2
Financial feasibility	0.114	3
Market feasibility	0.110	4
Technological feasibility	0.107	5
Environmental feasibility	0.020	6

In addition, the sub-elements of the main criteria were evaluated by the AHP technique, as shown in each element's weights shown in Table 4-9. These are the resulting weights for the criteria based on your pairwise comparisons:

Table 4. The consequences for the requirements based on pairwise comparisons for economic feasibility, CR=0.077.

Category of economic feasibility	Priority	Rank
Identifying potential risks	0.405	1
Evaluating potential return on Investment	0.278	2
Bank lending to support businesses	0.192	3
Real interest rate	0.062	4
Inflation rate	0.037	5
Ease of doing business rates	0.026	6

Table 5. The weights for the criteria based on pairwise comparisons for human resources feasibility, CR= 0.068.

Category the human resource feasibility	Priority	Rank
Determination of the vital management member	0.558	1
Skills and professional background	0.253	2
An expert team and group structure	0.104	3
Planning for supportive professional service	0.052	4
Information of founders	0.033	5

Table 6. The weights for the criteria based on pairwise comparisons for financial feasibility, CR= 0.085.

Category of financial feasibility	Priority	Rank
Estimate sales forecast	0.372	1
Estimate profitability	0.205	2
The amount of investment	0.140	3
Funding sources	0.106	4
Capital structure	0.089	5
Research and development cost rate	0.030	6
Resources under the control of the company	0.024	7
Tax rate	0.019	8
The total estimated cost of the venture	0.015	9

Table 7. The weights for the criteria based on pairwise comparisons for market feasibility, CR= 0.087.

Category of market feasibility	Priority	Rank
Determination of demand (customers, consumers)	0.229	1
Market size	0.194	2
Competitor analysis	0.127	3
Future market potential	0.144	4
Value proposition	0.093	5
Marketing research (consumer behavior, ...)	0.060	6
Goal market segmentation	0.040	7
Shoe industry trends	0.030	8
Sales estimation	0.017	9
Projecting average spending	0.016	10

Category of market feasibility	Priority	Rank
Marketing strategies (distribution channel and, ...)	0.015	11
Business Location	0.014	12
Break-even analysis	0.011	13

Table 8. The weights for the criteria based on pairwise comparisons for technological feasibility, CR=0.066.

Category of technological feasibility	Priority	Rank
The process of production of a service or product	0.389	1
Modernization of production equipment and infrastructure	0.271	2
Technology needed	0.144	3
Materials	0.085	4
The amount of provision of hardware facilities	0.056	5
Transportations for products	0.033	6
Management of requirements and expenses	0.023	7

Table 9. The weights for the criteria based on pairwise comparisons for environmental feasibility, CR=0.039.

Category of environmental feasibility	Priority	Rank
Considering legal and financial penalties	0.717	1
Assess the potential environmental impacts	0.217	2
The level of communication with the company	0.066	3

5. Discussion and conclusion

Sports startups are an exciting and rapidly growing segment of the sports industry (Ratten & Ferreira, 2016). They create new opportunities for athletes, fans, and the sports industry. As the sports industry continues to evolve, sports startups will play an increasingly important role in shaping the future of sports (Ratten, 2020; Ratten & Jones, 2020). However, they also face significant challenges, from regulatory issues to competition from established players. Starting and running a successful business requires careful planning and consideration of various factors (Fisu et al., 2020). A feasibility study is a preliminary evaluation of the potential of a proposed project or business idea, and its purpose is to determine the viability and potential of the proposed venture (Issa & Rub, 2007, July 2-4). Conducting a feasibility study is essential for sports startups. It provides valuable insights into the proposed experience's potential and helps reduce the risk of failure (Brockman, 2008; Nicholas & Chinedum, 2017). By considering the market demand, competition, and resources required in advance, the startup can increase its chances of success, attract investment, and secure partnerships. A feasibility study is essential in starting a new sports startup.

The findings demonstrated that the economic feasibility dimension represents a crucial aspect of the feasibility assessment for startups. The evaluation of economic feasibility emerges as a vital factor in delineating the triumph of a nascent entrepreneurial undertaking. Economic feasibility studies in sports research were consistent with the investigation of (Benar et al., 2022; Stokes, 2015; Tarigan et al., 2018). Economic feasibility refers to evaluating the economic viability of a proposed project or business

idea (Stewart, 2017). Economic feasibility assessment is pivotal for sports startups in rendering well-informed and astute business decisions, constituting a vital step toward initiating a nascent sports enterprise. Assessing a proposed project's potential and impact on an organization's financial and resource allocation can significantly aid businesses. The economic viability of a business proposal may be determined by multiple indicators, including but not limited to the rate of inflation, the actual interest rate, the extent to which banks allocate loans to support enterprises, the level of ease of conducting business, the ability to recognize potential risks, and the assessment of the possible return on investment. In the meantime, identifying risk potential was of primary importance, and it has been a sign of the importance of economic monitoring. The indicators above pertain to the macroeconomic climate, whereby the feasibility of initiating a sports startup is perceptibly contingent on whether it is amenable or adverse. The assessment of indicators encompasses a comprehensive evaluation of the expenses, advantages, and hazards associated with a potential undertaking.

One of the critical factors determining a business venture's success is the people involved in it. For a business to succeed, a team must be assembled with the necessary skills, experience, and commitment to execute the project or initiative effectively. Human resources feasibility is the assessment of the suitability of a team to accomplish a particular task or industry, and it is a critical factor in the success of a business venture (Bell & Marentette, 2011). In this regard, the prioritization of the feasibility of human resources elements was: determination of the vital management member, skills and professional background, an expert team and group structure, planning for supportive professional service, and information of founders. The assessment of human resource feasibility is contingent upon scrutinising the proficiency, background, and accessibility of prospective personnel who intend to be part of the team. The previous endeavors require contemplation of elements comprising the team's aptitude for cooperative work, their accessibility, as well as their degree of dedication towards the undertaking. The evaluation is indispensable in guaranteeing that the team possesses the requisite competencies and expertise to undertake the project while efficiently demonstrating high commitment and availability.

Financial feasibility plays a crucial role in the success of a business. Economic feasibility refers to assessing the potential financial viability of a proposed business project. It involves an analysis of the projected revenue and expenses of the company and the ability to generate sufficient funds to support the business (Havard, 2013). This research showed that among the financial indicators were: the total estimated cost of the venture (initial supply rate, wage rate of workers, equipment maintenance cost), research and development cost rate, tax rate, funding sources, capital structure, estimated sales forecast, estimate profitability, the amount of investment, and resources under the control of the company. The main priority of financial feasibility elements was to estimate sales forecast, profitability, and investment amount. Economic feasibility and its indicators refer to the internal situation of a startup. The main objective of financial feasibility analysis is determining if the business will be profitable and self-sustaining over the long term (Fisu et al., 2020). Economic feasibility studies in sports research were consistent with the investigation of (Benar et al., 2022; Rahimian, 2022; Tarigan et al., 2018).

Financial feasibility is a crucial component of business planning and is essential for the success and continuity of a business. It provides valuable information for decision-making, helps secure funding, improves planning and budgeting, and supports risk management. A well-prepared financial feasibility study can increase the probability of success and provide valuable insights into the success and sustainability of a business.

In today's competitive business environment, organizations must understand their target market and the potential demand for their products and services. Market feasibility is the assessment of the viability of a market for a particular product or service, and it is a critical factor in the success of a business venture (Abou-Moghli & Al-Abdallah, 2012; Brockman, 2008). Norouzi et al. (2021) emphasized the significance of a social marketing program within the retail industry of sports products (Norouzi et al., 2021). Assessing market feasibility involves evaluating the potential demand for a product or service, competition, and market conditions. Among the sub-themes were: the determination of demand, market size, business location, future market potential, competitor analysis, value proposition, market strategy, shoe industry trend, break-event analysis, etc. Market feasibility studies in sports research were consistent with the research of (Guo, 2022; Shah, 2017; Widyastutir & Said, 2017). This assessment is critical in ensuring a viable market for the product or service and that the organization is well-positioned to compete.

The utilization of technology holds tremendous significance in diverse facets of business operations in contemporary times. Technology integration in various aspects of business operations, from communication to production, has emerged as a crucial factor in sustaining competitiveness and ensuring operational efficiency. Therefore, enterprises must contemplate the technical and technological viability of their strategies, commodities, and procedures (Lin et al., 2021). Technological feasibility pertains to the appraisal of the attainability and practicability of a proposed technology resolution within the confines of current technological and physical resources. The process encompasses an assessment of the technical prowess of the entity and its frameworks, alongside examining the conformity between the recommended resolution and the prevailing infrastructure and systems. Technical feasibility is critical in ensuring that a proposed solution is possible, feasible, and efficient in terms of implementation and use. Technological feasibility, however, is concerned with assessing whether a proposed solution is economically and financially viable. It involves evaluating the costs of developing and implementing a new technology solution and the potential benefits and Return on Investment (ROI) it may generate (Frate et al., 2021). The main priority of technological feasibility elements was: the process of production of service or product, modernization of production equipment and infrastructure, and technology needed. The evaluation of technical feasibility assumes a crucial role in the appraisal of the monetary plausibility and rationality of adoption by an organization of a potential solution.

Businesses need to take into consideration their impact on the environment and make a transition toward sustainability. This is where environmental feasibility comes into play. Environmental feasibility studies in sports research were consistent with the investigation of (Nicholas & Chinedum, 2017). Environmental feasibility refers to analysing a project or business to determine its impact on the environment and if it can be carried out in an environmentally sustainable manner (Batidzirai et al., 2016). The significance of

environmental feasibility is that it helps companies identify and address environmental issues early in their operations, reducing the risks of environmental degradation and improving the company's reputation. Environmental feasibility is crucial for the success and sustainability of businesses.

Furthermore, environmental feasibility can bring about economic benefits for companies, including reduced operating costs, improved competitiveness, and increased consumer appeal. In addition, when assessing the feasibility of a sports business, it is essential to consider the potential legal and financial penalties that may arise. This necessitates conducting a comprehensive analysis of the various laws and regulations that govern the sports industry and the possible consequences of non-compliance with these laws. Moreover, beyond legal penalties, sports businesses must also consider the potential financial ramifications of non-compliance. This may include revenue loss due to sanctions or suspension, harm to the business's reputation, increased legal fees and other expenses associated with defending against legal action (Nicholas & Chinedum, 2017). According to Darooghe Arefi et al. (2022) legal infrastructure was one of the most important factors for entrepreneurship ecosystem (Darooghe Arefi et al., 2022). In addition, Sohrabi et al. (2023) factors affecting on professional sport business model were infrastructures and human resources capability (Sohrabi et al., 2023). The level of communication with a sports business's stakeholders is another crucial factor to consider when assessing the feasibility of the business. Stakeholders are individuals or groups vested in the business's success, including customers, investors, employees, suppliers, and the broader community. Effective communication with stakeholders is essential for several reasons. It can help build trust and establish a positive reputation for the business. When stakeholders feel that they are being heard and their concerns are being addressed, they are more likely to have a favourable view of the business and may be more willing to support it.

Another result of the research was the prioritization of various feasibility studies. Based on the AHP approach, economic feasibility had the highest priority among other components. Team, financial, market, technological, and environmental feasibility were placed the second to sixth priority, respectively. It seems that paying attention to economic conditions, including macroeconomics, is essential for starting sports startups. For example, if the real interest rate is negative, it can lead financial resources to brokerage instead of investing in a business. The second priority for starting a startup is to pay attention to the expert team because teams are the ones who execute the project: Even if a project has great economic potential, it won't be successful if the team working on it cannot complete it effectively. The team's ability to work together, communicate effectively, and solve problems collaboratively is vital to the project's success. In addition, human resources can adapt to changing circumstances: Economic conditions can change rapidly, and a team that can adapt to these changes can help to keep the project on track. For example, if unexpected costs arise, a team that can brainstorm solutions and adjust the project plan can help keep it on budget. In the third priority, financial feasibility was conducted because funding is necessary to launch the business: A startup typically requires funding to cover expenses such as product development, marketing, and operational costs.

Without sufficient funding, a startup may not be able to get off the ground and start generating revenue. In addition, market feasibility is essential because it helps the startup to understand the potential customer base, competition, and profitability of their product or service. Without a proper market analysis, the startup may be unable to create a sustainable business model and could fail in the long run. Technological feasibility is crucial because it determines the ability of the startup to develop, implement and maintain the necessary technology to support its operations. This includes software, hardware, and infrastructure, among others. If the technology is not feasible or suitable, the startup may be unable to provide a quality service or product, leading to poor customer satisfaction and potential failure. The factor of environmental viability was subsequently assigned the lowest priority ranking. The current situation in Iran implies a lesser amount of emphasis placed on maintaining sustainability or changing regulations to suit the needs of investors (Heydari et al., 2022). Entrepreneurs try adapting to the existing circumstances rather than allocating precedence to environmental factors and regulations.

To conclude, identifying and evaluating feasibility is an imperative measure in commencing a successful startup. The significance of determining feasibility is rooted in its ability to present vital perspectives and data, which can facilitate entrepreneurs in making reasonable decisions about pursuing a specific business concept. Entrepreneurs can identify potential problems, assess the risks and opportunities associated with their idea, and adjust their business plans by conducting a thorough feasibility analysis (Keerativutisest & Promsiri, 2021). The assessment of economic feasibility aids in guaranteeing that the proposed business venture is financially sustainable and possesses the capacity to produce earnings. Human resources feasibility is significant because a harmonious and cooperative team plays a pivotal role in accomplishing a project. The financial viability of a startup is a vital factor in determining the venture's feasibility. Absent sufficient financial resources, the startup is improbable to initiate operations, let alone realize sustained and enduring triumph. Conducting a market feasibility study verifies a startup's product or service's viability, thereby ascertaining adequate market demand. Organizations can evaluate their ecological footprint by implementing an environmental feasibility study, devise measures to alleviate detrimental environmental effects, and guarantee adherence to regulatory mandates.

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امکان‌سنجی راه‌اندازی استارت‌آپ‌های ورزشی: مورد مطالعه صنعت کفش ورزشی

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کلیدواژه

استارت‌آپ
استراتژی بازار
طرح کسب‌وکار
نوآوری ورزشی

نوع مقاله

پژوهشی

چکیده

هدف: تحقیق حاضر به شناسایی عناصر کلیدی در موفقیت راه‌اندازی کسب‌وکار جدید در صنعت کفش ورزشی پرداخته است.

روش: روش تحقیق مورد استفاده کیفی و با استفاده از منابع کتابخانه‌ای بود که طی مصاحبه با ۱۵ شرکت‌کننده شامل صاحبان استارت‌آپ‌های ورزشی و متخصصان پارک علم و فناوری انجام شد. از متد تحلیل مضمون و راهبرد نمونه‌گیری هدفمند استفاده شد. همچنین، پرسشنامه‌ای بین ۱۰ شرکت‌کننده توزیع و از نرم‌افزار Expert Choice استفاده شد.

یافته‌ها: در این مطالعه عوامل اقتصادی، مالی، محیطی، فناوری، تیمی و بازار به عنوان مولفه‌های ضروری برای راه‌اندازی یک استارت‌آپ ورزشی در صنعت کفش شناسایی شدند. بر اساس رویکرد فرآیند تحلیل سلسله مراتبی، اولویت‌بندی این عناصر به صورت امکان‌سنجی اقتصادی، امکان‌سنجی منابع انسانی، امکان‌سنجی مالی، امکان‌سنجی بازار، امکان‌سنجی تکنولوژیکی و امکان‌سنجی محیطی تعیین شد. علاوه بر این اولویت‌بندی زیرعناصر هر یک از امکان‌سنجی‌ها نیز ارائه شد. برای صاحبان مشاغل ورزشی بسیار مهم است که با توجه به شرایط فعلی بازار، برنامه‌ریزی مناسب و ارزیابی امکان‌سنجی را هنگام راه‌اندازی استارت‌آپ‌های ورزشی انجام دهند. عناصر کلیدی شناسایی شده در این مطالعه را می‌توان برای پروژه‌های تجاری در اقتصاد ورزش ایران مورد استفاده قرار داد.

اصالت و ابتکار مقاله: این تحقیق دارای دیدگاهی استراتژیک در بررسی احتمال موفقیت استارت‌آپ‌های ورزشی است، حوزه‌ای که کمتر مورد توجه قرار گرفته است. این مطالعه همچنین رویکرد جدیدی را برای پیش‌بینی در صنعت کفش ورزشی فراهم می‌نماید.

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