

# Investigating the Quality of Sports Federations Websites from the Perspective of the Audiences (Athletes, Coaches and Referees)

Mosab Khosravi<sup>1\*</sup>, Fatemeh Abdavi<sup>2,3</sup> and Abdulshakkor Menbari<sup>4</sup>

1- Master of Science in Sport Management, University of Tabriz, Tabriz, Iran

2- Assistant Professor, Faculty of Sport Management, University of Tabriz, Tabriz, Iran

3- Address: Faculty of Physical Education, University of Tabriz, 29 Bahman Blvd, Tabriz, Iran

4- Undergraduate Student, Physical Education, Payam Noor University, Sanandaj Branch

*Corresponding author:* Mosab Khosravi

**ABSTRACT:** The present study aims to investigate quality and factors affecting the quality of the Iranian Sports Federations websites from the perspective of the audiences, including athletes, coaches, referees and the members of sport associations. Statistical population of the research includes all Iranian athletes, referees, coaches and members of sport associations that their related associations exist in Kurdistan Province, including 59859 people. The size of the sample was estimated using Cochran table equal to 266. The study applies a researcher-made questionnaire including 40 questions. The attitudes of the sports management professionals were extracted to assess validity of the questionnaire and to measure reliability of the questionnaire a pilot study was conducted among 30 members of the population. According to the results, Cronbach's alpha value regarding the questionnaire used to measure quality of Sports Federations websites was 0.785. To investigate the hypothesis of the study, binomial and t tests were used. The findings of the study suggest that the quality of the websites and their quality factors are not satisfactory from the perspective of the audiences.

**Keywords:** Website, sports federations, quality factors.

## INTRODUCTION

Now many years have passed since the advent of the Internet and this phenomenon has affected all areas of our activities as well as all aspects of our life (Teimourpour, 2011). Internet networks thanks to the World Wide Web have turned to one of the strongest and fastest means of communication and interaction among people. Tim Berners-Lee through inventing web in 1990s paved the way for the spread of global communications via the Internet (Binesh, 2008). Usage of the web for the users has been in such a way that today they use web and Internet terms interchangeably. In line with the increase in the number of Internet users, the data available through this environment is growing amazingly. Websites are structured collection of data which are presented in the form of text, graphics, and videos. The main goal of the websites is to provide information. This fact that to what extent a website has been able to meet the expectations of its users and customers is an important question which is associated to the quality of the website (Mehrdad & Binesh, 2010; Zeithaml et al 2002).

Today, websites have become an effective measure to inform professionals in various fields. The better the quality of a site is, the better it can meet its missions – appropriate notification and serving its audiences- and elevate its position in notification area. Mainly, it is expected that the latest information of every business or organization appear on its website; of course the way this information is presented and the links with other websites related to the profession or organization is also very important. The findings of the study show that users mostly have some problems in browsing the webs and obtaining their required information (Teimourpour, 2011; Baldwin 2002).

Around the world, different countries have established some organizations called sport federation to administrate each of the sport fields. These federations have written constitutions which are formulated in accordance with the

Statute of the International Federation of the related field (Sajjadi, 2009). Federations are public organizations with legal entity, established with the purpose of planning, coordination, monitoring, evaluation and administrating the rules related to these sport fields. These federations are established according to the amateur principles and Olympic Charter and considered the highest competent authority of the relevant field in the country. Federations like other companies have their own special audiences, including athletes, referees, coaches, authorities and fans. Since these federations are considered the main reference for each sport field, then it is necessary that they have an appropriate communication with their audiences. Websites of these federations can serve as the main measure to this end.

Since in an open environment all people can easily achieve to appropriate sport information, related websites, through applying all available capacities, can raise awareness of the fans of these sport fields and provide comprehensive information for them (Chu, 2001; Hamidi, 2005; Sajjadi, 2009). Public popularity of these websites has created some problems. On the one hand enormous amount of information available on the Internet and problems related to data recovery and lack of control over the data which are increasingly added to this global network, and on the other hand popularity of these websites, increase users' motivations to visit these sites and the time they spend surfing these sites. Meanwhile, usability is a necessary term for survival, so that if the website is not a straightforward one, for example, the font of the website is illegible or it doesn't answer to the questions of the users, then soon it will lose its visitors (Teimourpour, 2011; Haghghi Nasab & Fakhr Fatemi, 2010; Zahedi, 2009; Zeithaml et al 2002). Investigating the factors related to the website quality is one of the main concerns of the managers, in order to improve their plans and expand their presence in the cyber space. When you visit the website of an organization, commonly look for certain information. The website of an organization in line with the missions of that organization should provide related information and services (Khaleghi & Davarpanah, 2005).

In recent years, much research has been done regarding quality of the websites. Each study has achieved to a certain result and has numerated some factors as quality indices for the websites. In general the presented qualities indices include performance, content, attractiveness and organizing. These four indices assess the websites both in terms of appearance and content (Hakman 2000, Chu 2001, Liu and Arnett 2000 & Osareh and Papi 2008). According to Davar Panah and Khaleghi (2002), the websites of Iranian companies have performed very poorly in terms of presentation and providing information and enjoy a poor quality in these regards. Investigating the factors related to the website quality is one of the main concerns of the managers, in order to improve their plans and expand their presence in the cyber space. When a user visits the website of an organization, he or she commonly looks for certain information. The website of an organization in line with the missions of that organizing should provide related information and services (Khaleghi & Davarpanah, 2005). Investigating the quality of the libraries administrated by Science and Technology Ministry, Osareh and Papi (2005) found out that audiences and purpose of the website characteristics, upload and structure stability were at a high level among the surveyed website; ease of search, graphics, existence of a scientific background of the authors and a clear purpose for the scope of the information were at an intermediate level, and Up datedness of the contents and internal links were at a low level (Osareh & Papi, 2008). In their study titled "Assessing domestic customers' attitude for website usability and attractiveness in Iran Petrochemical Commercial Company (IPCC) in business to business (B2B) market space", Haghghi Nasab and Tabeein (2008) investigated the quality of the Website of Iran Petrochemical Commercial Company from the perspective of its audiences. The findings of their study show that from the point of view of the users attractiveness of the website is less than its usability and overall assessment of the website shows an optimum level. Despite the important role that sports federations play in the country, no study in particular has examined the websites of sports federations. Present study aims to investigate quality of the sports federation's websites through webometrics from the point of view of the audiences. The study also tries to answer the question that "whether the websites of Iranian sports federations has met the needs of their audiences?"

### **Methodology**

The study aims to investigate the quality of the sports federations' websites. Due to the nature of the study and according to the intended purpose, the study is an applied research which is conducted as a field study. Kolmogorov-Smirnov test is used to investigate normality of the data, and t-test and binomial are used to evaluate hypotheses of the study.

Statistical population of the research includes all Iranian athletes, referees, coaches and members of the sports associations that their related associations exist in Kurdistan Province; including 59859 people. Using Cochran table, size of the sample was estimated 266 individuals. The study applies a researcher-made questionnaire containing 40 questions. The ideas of sports management professionals were used to assess validity of the questionnaire and to measure reliability of the questionnaire a pilot plan was conducted among 30 members of the population. According to the results, Cronbach's alpha value regarding the questionnaire used to measure quality of Sports Federations websites was 0.785.

**Findings**

Table 1. audience's frequency distribution in terms of gender and role

		Activity				
		Athletes	Referees	Coaches	Members of the	Associations
Gender	Male	115	25	21	30	191
	Female	29	12	4	20	65
Total		144	37	25	50	256

As table 1 shows statistical sample of the study includes 144 athletes, 37 coaches, 25 referees, and 50 members of associations; 65 participants were female and the rest 191 participants were men.

As Table 1 shows, two participants didn't complete the questionnaire or didn't return it back.

Kolmogorov-Smirnov test was used to assess normality of the data. The results indicates that the data related to the attractiveness, performance and content are not normal and consequently non-parametric statistical methods should be used to analyze them; but as results show, organizing and total data are normal and parametric statistical methods can be used to analyze them.

Table 2. binomial test to assess attractiveness, performance and content

No. of items	Title	observed probability	Test probability	significance level	Test result
1	Attractiveness	10	50%	0.001	Approved
2	Performance	8	50%	0.001	Approved
3	Content	0	50%	0.001	Approved

Table 2 is related to the binomial test which is used to assess attractiveness, performance and content of the federations' websites. According to the results of the table 2, hypothesis 1, 2 and 3 are rejected, and this indicates that from perspective of the participants the surveyed websites are not acceptable in terms of attractiveness, performance and content.

Table 3. t-test to assess organizing and quality of the websites

	Numbers	Average	Average standard deviation	T	df	Significance level
Organizing	256	22.0313	0.29215	-27.276	255	0.001
Quality	256	92.8164	1.03551	-26.251	255	0.001

Table 3 presents the results of t-test to evaluate organizing and quality of the sports federations' websites. Given that significance level is 0.001 which is less than 0.05, the null hypothesis which states that organizing and quality of the sports federations' websites is approved will be rejected. In other words the websites don't have an appropriate organizing and quality.

**Discussion and conclusion**

Investigating research hypotheses to evaluate the content, performance, attractiveness, organizing and quality of the sports federations' websites indicates that these websites are not approved by their audiences in terms of content, performance, attractiveness and organizing. The findings of the study also shows that the website enjoy a poor quality from the perspective of their audiences.

By contents of a website we mean all existing data including articles, texts, images and etc. The contents are the spirit of the website and they motivate to users to revisit the website. In the case of the content criterion, the subcategories of accuracy are correctness, reliability, being updated and quality of the new posts, where through assessing these subcategories one can find quality of the websites' contents (Binesh, 2008; Haghghi Nasab & Fakhre-Fatem, 2010). Binomial test results show that the observed probability to examine the content is less than the test probability and demonstrate the fact that the contents of the sports federations' websites are not appropriate. The findings of the study are consistent with the findings of the studies conducted by Mehrdad & Binesh (2010), Khaleghi & Davar Panah (2005) and Baldwin (2002). Performance criterion, in general, indicates ease of use and communicating with a service. Performance criterion includes user-friendliness, search capability and browsing capability sub-categories (Ilkhani, 2000; Baldwin, 2002). Binomial test results show that the observed probability to evaluate performance is less than test probability and demonstrate the fact that sports federations' websites do not enjoy an appropriate performance. The findings of the study are consistent with the findings of the studies conducted

by Haghghi Nasab (1999), Mehrdad and Binesh (2010), Baldwin (2002) and Zahedi (2009). Attractiveness includes graphic, color, style and layout. The combination of these attractiveness factors provides the websites with character and identity (Haghghi Nasab and Tabeen, 2008). Attractiveness of the sports federations' website was also analyzed through binomial test. The findings of the study show that the observed probability is less than the test probability, which means the websites of the sports federations do not enjoy an appropriate attractiveness. The findings of the study are consistent with the findings of the studies by Binesh (2010) and Zahedi (2009).

Organizing of the websites means placement of the contents on the websites and providing necessary facilities in the right place. A good organizing facilitates easy access to the contents of the website and plays also a key role to attract the users to the website (Bjorneborn & Ingwerson, 2004). Organizing of the websites was also investigated through t-test. The findings of the study shows that organizing of the websites like other qualitative factors related to the websites didn't approve by the audiences. The findings of the study are consistent with studies conducted by Binesh (2010), Baldwin (2002) and Zahedi (2009). A lot of research has been done to identify factors associated with quality of the websites, and researchers who have examined quality of the website have achieved various approaches; but yet there is no consensus about the variables and structures that have an impact on the quality of the websites. However, most conducted studies suggest that usability (performance, content) and form (attractiveness and organizing) elements play a key role in designing a website. The purpose of a website is to attract audiences and create value for them, and this plays a key role in satisfaction of the audiences from a given website (Haghghi Nasab & Fakhr Fatemi, 2010; Esfandiari Moghadam et al., 2009; Baldwin, 2002). Quality of the Websites was also analyzed by t-test. The findings of the study indicate that quality of the sports federations' websites didn't approve by the audiences. These findings are also consistent with the studies conducted by Haghghi Nasab & Tabeen (2008), Mehrdad and Binesh (2010), Baldwin (2002) and Zahedi (2009).

The findings of the study suggest that in general audiences of the sports federations' websites are not satisfied of the quality of these websites and they have not been able to meet their needs. The heads of sports federations and other sports authorities can use the findings of the study regarding quality and qualitative dimensions of the sports federations' websites to improve the quality of these websites and remove these problems and thereby turn these websites to a valuable resource of statistics, news, and educational and multimedia contents for their audience and consequently improve the sports position in the country.

## REFERENCES

1. Esfandiari Moghadam et al., (2009). Ranking and determining the core websites of Islamic Azad University's comprehensive and state branches using webometrics method. *Quarterly Journal of Epistemology (Library Science and Information Technology)*, Vol. 2, Issue 5, 2009.
2. IKhani, Shokoufeh (2000), Performance of the information published on the home page of the research and development centers in Tehran. Bachelor thesis for Science Library and Information Science. Faculty of Humanities, Islamic Azad University, North Tehran Branch.
3. Binesh, Mojgan (2008), Some Criteria to assess the websites (content and performance). *Journal of Information Science and Technology*, Vol. 23, Issue 4, 2008.
4. Teimourpour Babak (2011), a research project on ranking Iranian hospitals' websites. *Journal of Hospital Research*, 2011.
5. Haghghi Nasab & Tabeen (2008), Assessing domestic customers' attitude for website usability and attractiveness in Iran Petrochemical Commercial Company (IPCC) in business to business (B2B) market space. *Journal of Business Administration*, Issue. 1, 2008.
6. Haghghi Nasab, Manijeh; Fakhre Fatemi, Nazanin (2010). Investigating the factors affecting the quality of the academic and scientific websites from the perspective of graduate students of public universities in Tehran. *Journal of Iranian Higher Education*, Vol. 2, Issue. 4, 2010.
7. Hamidi, Mehrzad (2005). *Management of sports organizations*. Payam Noor University Press, Fourth Edition, 2005.
8. Khaleghi Narges; Davarpanah, Mohammad Reza (2005), Investigating Iranian Websites according to general evaluation criteria. *Studies in Education and Psychology*. Ferdowsi University, Issue. 5, 2006.
9. Zahedi, Shams al-Sadat (2009). Evaluating the quality of the websites, measures and metrics. *Journal of Development Evolution Management*, Issue. 4, 2010.
10. Sajjadi, Nasrullah (2009). *Management of the sports organizations. The Organization for Researching and Composing University Textbooks in the Humanities (SAMT)*, Sixth issue, 2009.
11. Jafar, Mehrdad; Binesh, Mojgan (2010). Assessment of the websites retrieved by two web guides (ODP and YAHOO) in the field of library and information based on content and performance standards. *Journal of Library and Information*, Vol. 10, first issue.
12. Bjorneborn, L., Ingwerson, P. (2004). Towards a basic framework of webometrics. *Journal of American Society for Information Science and Technology*, 55(14), 1216-27.

13. Chu, H. (2001). A webometric analysis of ALA accredited LIS school websites. In M. Devis and C. S. Wilson (Eds.), Proceedings of the 8th International Conference on Scientometrics & Informetrics, 16-20 July 2001.
14. Hakman A.Wan, 2000, "Opportunities to enhance a commercial website" Information & management, 38,pp 15-21.
15. Liu C., Arnett K. P., (2000) "Exploring the factors associated with website success in the context of electronic commerce", Information & Management, 38 (1), pp. 23–33.
16. Nicolae-George Dragulanescu, 2002, "website quality evaluations: Criteria and tools " Intl .In form. Libr. Rev, 34, pp 247-254.
17. Osareh F, Papi Z. Quality Assessment of Library Website of Iranian State Universities: Some Suggestions for Quality Improvement. Journal of Information Science and Technology 2008; 23(4): 35-70.
18. Soyoung Kim, Leslie Stoel, 2004, "Aparel retailers: website and satisfaction", Journal of retailing and consumer services, 11(2004), pp 109-117.