

IDENTIFYING THE DRIVERS FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF TENNIS IN IRAQ AND DRAWING FUTURE SCENARIOS

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Abstract:

The purpose of this study was to conduct a foresight analysis of tennis in Iraq by 2033 using the scenario planning method. The research is applied and future-oriented, conducted with a mixed-methods approach (qualitative and quantitative) in a survey-case study design. Initially, the theoretical literature on foresight and tennis development was reviewed, followed by the development of the research methodology. The participants included all experts in the field of tennis in Iraq, such as faculty members in sports management, professional tennis players, coaches, and tennis experts, as well as managers, tournament organizers, federation and association officials, fans, and audiences. They were selected through purposive and snowball sampling methods. For environmental scanning, the PESTEL model was used, identifying 41 drivers. After three rounds of the Delphi process, 21 drivers with a 70% agreement among experts were selected. These drivers were then analyzed using a cross-impact questionnaire and MICMAC software. The results identified four key drivers: “the influence of foreign policies and international relations,” “private sector support for tennis,” “expansion of commercial leagues,” and “increased financial turnover through advertising and branding.” Using Scenario Wizard software, three main scenarios for the future of tennis in Iraq were developed: “Sustainable Progress,” “Interaction Challenges,” and “Unsustainable Growth”. The Sustainable Progress scenario, as the best-case scenario, ensures optimal growth for tennis through full coordination among factors such as international policies, private sector support, expansion of commercial leagues, and stable financial resources. In the Interaction Challenges scenario, foreign policy constraints exist, but proper management enables progress at both national and international levels. The Unsustainable Growth scenario highlights the risks of reduced advertising revenue and threats to financial sustainability, emphasizing the importance of financial interactions and resource management. The study concluded that coordination among economic, political, and managerial factors is essential for developing tennis in Iraq. The Sustainable Progress scenario offers the best outlook for this development, while the other two scenarios focus on challenges and opportunities in resource management and international interactions. Finally, recommendations were provided to strengthen policymaking, attract private support, and manage financial resources sustainably, which could also aid decision-making and the development of other individual sports.

Keywords: Foresight, Scenario Planning, The drivers of tennis, MICMAC, Scenario Wizard.

Introduction

Tennis, as one of the most popular sports in the world, has undergone significant changes in recent decades under the influence of technology, social and economic changes, and sports policies (Fernandez et al., 2014). Technological advances, increased access to educational and sports resources, and social and economic changes have led to significant growth of this sport at various levels. However, tennis also faces challenges that could affect the future of this sport (Kilit et al., 2024; Brouwers et al., 2015).

In the past four decades, the prediction of future developments has decreased significantly, globalization has caused more factors and variables to influence the formation of the future (Moqaddamerad & Ali, 2024). On the other hand, traditional strategic planning approaches are not flexible in the face of environmental uncertainty and do not respond appropriately to it. Contemporary physical education, sports, and sports sciences are also dynamic domains that are changing rapidly and are affected by this environmental uncertainty (Farokhshahinia, 2021). To better understand the effects of the future and plan for a more positive outcome in the future, prepare for expected changes in reactions and create desirable changes in the future, sports organizations require the inclusion of a form of foresight in their management (Doshybekov et al., 2024).

Foresight, as an interdisciplinary science, benefiting from a kind of inter-paradigm rationality domain, can be helpful in this regard (Martin, 2024); therefore, foresight is a systematic matter, an integrated and holistic process that can bring sports into an uncertain, competitive, and unpredictable space and take action to change the future of sports organizations by presenting concerns about environmental changes and drawing future horizons (Farokhshahinia, 2021).

Foresight research allows sports managers and policymakers to understand the challenges and opportunities in the development of sports in a comprehensive and accurate way (Peter & Jarratt, 2015). For example, the lack of sports infrastructure, lack of financial support and lack of public acceptance of tennis are among the main challenges that need to be addressed. On the other hand, the interest of young people in sports activities and the possibility of using international experiences in the development of this sport provide important opportunities. Foresight research helps to accurately identify these challenges and opportunities and plan for them (Von der Gracht et al., 2015).

Foresight requires a technique to represent uncertainties and to frame the future in predictable elements (Bouhaleb & Tapinos, 2023). A powerful method that anticipates future competitive environments and develops long-term strategy even in environments with the highest uncertainty is the scenario planning technique (Scenario et al., 2019, Oliver & Parrett, 2018). A scenario is a descriptive story of plausible alternatives that describes how planning will be carried out and its effectiveness in uncertain conditions (Frith & Tapinos, 2020).

Among the studies conducted in this field, Nash et al., (2024) emphasized that for the long-term development of tennis, it is very beneficial to structure and organize effective tennis programs and implement appropriate training methods for their players. Three main issues related to creating a high-performance tennis culture include (a) a high-performance environment, (b) a deliberate focus on growth and development, and (c) barriers to creating a tennis culture. In a study by Cahill & MacNamara (2024) examining the macro and meso factors of tennis talent development from the perspectives of key stakeholders involved in the design and delivery of tennis systems in two countries, Malaysia and Ireland, they found that tennis development is a strategic decision. National governing bodies in sport should consider the impact of micro and macro factors on the development of tennis policies. Less developed tennis countries face challenges such as lack of financial resources, inadequate competition structures, and limited support from stakeholders (coaches, parents).

A study by Jumadi & Damrah (2023) assessed the development of tennis in Pekanbaru. The findings of this study indicate that the current state of tennis development is quite satisfactory in various aspects. The researchers noted that athletes and coaches are not sufficiently supported by managers. However, input factors such as management organizations, facilities, infrastructure, coaching, budget, training programs, and parental support were generally in a good state. In a study by Rahim et al., (2021) titled A Review of the Evolution of Tennis Development in Malaysia, they reported that elite athlete development is the result of a combination of elite sports policies, athlete development pathways, and interactions between various stakeholders involved in providing athlete development pathways. These factors make elite athlete development a complex, multifaceted, and multifaceted field of study that requires specific research efforts that focus on how these factors contribute to the development of elite athletes in specific sports.

In a study by Prayer & Al-Badri (2019) that examined the status of strategic leadership in tennis tournament management in Iraq, the results of the study showed that there is a significant weakness in the level of strategic leadership in this field, which highlights the need for increased attention and effort to advance tennis tournament management throughout the country. Also, in a study by Jasim (2019) titled The Level of Administrative Performance of the Directors of the Central Tennis Federation of Iraq from the Perspective of Coaches, the following results were obtained: 1. Establishing a benchmark for the administrative performance of the administrative body of the Central Tennis Federation of Iraq from the perspective of coaches. 2. The administrative performance of the Central Tennis Federation of Iraq is within the required standards and does not meet the ambition. 3. The federation's weak commitment to predetermined programs that affect preparation for domestic and international championships.

By reviewing the research conducted, the research innovation of the present study is to provide a comprehensive analysis of the current state of tennis in Iraq and to create a scenario plan for the future development of this sport. The research innovation of the present study lies in providing a comprehensive analysis of the current state of tennis in Iraq and to create a scenario plan for the future development of this sport. This study is important from both theoretical and practical aspects. Theoretically, this study helps to produce new and deeper knowledge in the field of tennis studies by combining innovative methods and using expert opinions. This method allows for a more accurate analysis of the trends and challenges facing tennis in Iraq and paves the way for the development of new theories in this field. From a practical perspective, this study, by providing

valuable insights into the future of tennis in Iraq, helps policymakers, sports managers, and other stakeholders in this field to make better strategic plans and decisions for the development of this sport.

Considering the above, research in the field of foresight is one of the most key tools for developing effective and sustainable strategies in the development of sports, especially tennis, in countries like Iraq. Tennis, as a popular global sport, has a high potential for development, provided that proper planning and foresight are carried out for it. Research in the field of foresight is of great importance and necessity for the development of tennis in Iraq. The use of foresight research can help decision-makers to develop more effective paths for the development of tennis and use limited resources in the best possible way. Ultimately, this research, in addition to enriching the literature on the subject, will help improve the quality of decision-making and increase the chances of success in the sustainable development of tennis in this country; therefore, the main question of the research on foresight of the development of tennis in Iraq.

Materials and methods

This research is theoretical-applied in nature; on the one hand, it develops knowledge on the subject under study and provides explanations related to it, and on the other hand, the results obtained from it provide the possibility of effective planning for the development of tennis in Iraq. This study uses the scenario writing method to examine the future of tennis development in Iraq. The participants of this research included all experts in the field of tennis in Iraq, including professors of the sports management faculty, professional tennis players, tennis coaches and experts, managers and organizers of tennis competitions, officials of the federation and the tennis board. First, a list of characteristics and criteria of experts in this subject was determined in consultation with the supervising professors and consultants. Some of the most important of these characteristics include a history of sports and executive activity in tennis, a history of scientific and research activity in the field of foresight and sports development. According to the specified criteria, since there was no accurate statistics of these people, a purposeful and deliberate sampling method was used to identify and refer to experts and continued until theoretical saturation. Finally, 14 experts were selected. The researcher used two tools: a study of the background and a semi-structured interview tool (14 interviews) to identify the drivers of the development of tennis in Iraq and the PESTEL (Political, Economic, Social, Technological, Environmental, Legal) model to categorize them. After studying the background and obtaining information on the future development of tennis in Iraq, the researcher went to the experts on this matter. At this stage, the Delphi technique was used. In the first round of Delphi, a semi-structured interview was conducted with tennis experts. The researcher began the interview with the general question, "In your opinion, what are the drivers of the development of tennis in Iraq?" and, based on the information expressed by the interviewee, follow-up questions were asked by the researcher. After the first Delphi round and completing the list of drivers for the development of tennis in Iraq, a questionnaire of drivers for the development of tennis in Iraq was prepared to determine the importance of each driver and identify the key drivers and was provided to the Delphi group in the second round. After the second Delphi round, drivers whose consensus was less than 70 percent were removed from the questionnaire and provided to tennis experts for the third Delphi round. After the third Delphi round, 21 key drivers were subject to consensus by the Delphi group.

Triangulation, i.e., using different data sources including literature and interviews, was used to confirm the results and enhance the acceptability of the findings. The results were also presented to the participants to review and confirm that the findings were consistent with their experiences. To achieve transferability, a comprehensive and accurate description of the research environment, conditions, and processes was provided so that others could apply the findings to similar situations. The results were also compared with similar studies in different fields to determine whether the findings were generalizable to other cases. To achieve confirmability, complete documentation of the research steps, decisions, and reasons for choosing tools was done to provide the possibility of review and confirmation by others. Other researchers were also asked to review the data and tools to confirm that the findings were consistent with the data collected and that the results were not based on researcher assumptions or biases. Intra-subject agreement was used to calculate the reliability of the interviews. According to Table 1, the inter-coder reliability was 81, which is higher than 60%, and the reliability of the codings is confirmed.

Table 1. Results of reliability of two coders

Interview number	Total number	Agreements	Disagreements	Reliability percentage
P2	28	11	6	78
P7	21	9	3	85
P11	25	10	5	80
Total	74	30	14	81

Interaction analysis and scenario writing techniques were used to analyze the data. In order to analyze the interactions and identify key driving forces, the interaction matrix was used, and mathematical calculations related to the interactions between influential and affected variables were performed using the MICMAC software. In the scenario writing step, the interaction matrix was used, and the Scenario Wizard software was used to create scenarios so that different and possible future combinations could be analyzed and evaluated more accurately.

Results

In order to answer the first research question, “What driving forces can shape the future of tennis in Iraq by 2033?”, research conducted in the field of tennis and sports foresight was reviewed. The Delphi method was also used to complete and determine the importance of the driving forces. Table 2 reports the frequency and percentage of demographic characteristics of the experts in the Delphi group.

Table 2. Frequency of demographic characteristics of experts in the Delphi group

Feature	Sex		Education level		Field of study		Average sports-executive record		Age	
	Male	Female	Master	Ph.D	Physical	Non-Physical	Minimum	Maximum	Minimum	Maximum

					educati on	al educati on				
Freque ncy	8	6	5	9	13	1	7 years	25 years	30 years	50 years
Freque ncy %	57. 1	42.7	35.7	64. 3	92.8	7.2				

After reviewing the background, the Delphi technique was used to complete the list of drivers for the development of tennis in Iraq. In the first Delphi round, 14 semi-structured interviews were conducted with experts in the field of tennis to complete the list of future drivers for tennis in Iraq. In the second Delphi round, a semi-structured questionnaire was provided to the Delphi group to determine the importance of 41 future drivers for tennis on a 5-point Likert scale. Drivers that received a consensus rating of less than 70% of the Delphi group in the second Delphi round were marked in red. Experts should be consulted at least twice on each component and given the opportunity to revise their opinions at least once based on the responses of the entire group, which are presented in the form of statistical summaries; therefore, all drivers that received a consensus rating of more than 70% (Hawsson et al., 2000) were provided to the experts along with statistical summaries on a 5-point Likert scale in the third Delphi round. The results of the literature review and Delphi technique in Table 3 are remarkable.

Table 3. Future drivers for the development of tennis in Iraq

Number	Field	Drivers	Article	Interview	Second round of Delphi consensus assessment	Third round of Delphi consensus assessment
1	Political	Government Support for Tennis Development	R1, R4	P2, P3, P5, P6, P7, P8, P10, P11	95.6	88, 8
2		Foreign Policy and International Relations	R1, R18	P1, P2, P7, P14	73.9	94, 4
3		Government Policies for the Development of Women's Sports and Strengthening Women's Tennis	R4, R18	P3, P5, P11	86.9	83, 3
4		Tax Policies on the Income of Tennis Players and Clubs	R18	P2, P7, P11, P12	82.6	94, 4
5		The Role of Government Institutions in Regulating and	R1, R17	P5, P9, P11	34.7	-

		Supervising Tournaments and Leagues					
6		Changes in the Election and Management Policies and Laws of Tennis Federations	R21	P1, P2, P7	60.8	-	
7		Public and private investments in the development of tennis courts and clubs	R2, R17	P5, P7, P11, P13	69.5	-	
8		Private sector support for tennis players and tournaments	R6, R7	P2, P5, P7, P11, P14	78.2	100	
9		The effects of global economic fluctuations on tennis investments and tournaments	R1, R9	P2, P7, P9, P11	73.9	88.8	
10		Increasing logistics and equipment costs	R3	P3, P6	60.8	-	
11		Expanding commercial tennis leagues	R9	P7, P10, P11	82.6	88.8	
12	Economical	The impact of television and internet broadcasting contracts on tennis revenues	R3	P3, P4, P5, P6, P7, P8, P11	69.5	-	
13		Increasing turnover through advertising and branding	R9, R16	P2, P3, P8, P12	73.9	88.8	
14		The relationship between employment status and participation in individual sports such as tennis	R6, R16	P3, P5, P7, P8, P11, P12	39.1	-	
15		Tennis' competition with other sports in attracting sponsors and media attention	R8, R15, R16, R21	P2, P7, P8, P14	56.5	-	
16		Increasing public awareness of the benefits of tennis	R8	P10, P11, P13	95.6	94.4	
17	Social	Expanding opportunities for women in tennis and	R8, R10,	P2, P3, P5, P7	52.1	-	

		strengthening women's leagues and competitions	R12, R19			
18		Tennis promotion programs in schools and the community to attract young people to the sport	R6, R15	P3, P3, P7, P11	43.4	-
19		The influence of families in encouraging children to participate in tennis	R10, R13	P2, P6, P7, P8	59.5	-
20		Promoting tennis at a grassroots level and increasing public access to facilities and training	R8, R9, R20	P2, P11	86.9	88.8
21		The role of social media in promoting tennis	R9, R10, R15	P3, P4, P5, P7, P8, P10	86.9	94.4
22		Using new technologies in the production of tennis equipment such as rackets, shoes and tennis balls	R8	P2, P5, P7, P11	86.9	100
23		Developing applications and online platforms for tennis training and practice	R11	P2, P7, P10, P11	65.2	-
24	Technology	Using artificial intelligence to analyze match data and improve player performance		P2, P7, P14	82.6	83.3
25		Advanced live streaming systems	R11	P10, P11, P12	78.2	94.4
26		Using smart refereeing technologies such as "Hawk Eye" for accurate diagnosis in games	R14	P2, P3	52.1	-
27		Using wearable technologies to analyze player health and		P1, P2, P3, P6, P7, P10, P11, P14	43.4	-

		performance during training and matches				
28		Using virtual reality to simulate matches and training	R14	P1, P2, P6, P7, P11, P12	78.2	88.8
29		Using big data and talent discovery software to discover new talents in tennis	R11	P7, P11	86.1	88.8
30		Innovation in medical equipment and technologies to prevent and treat injuries in tennis		P4, P7, P13	52.1	-
31	Environmental	The impact of climate change on the planning of outdoor tournaments and training	R13	P2, P3, P5, P11	43.4	-
32		Striving to hold green tournaments and reduce the carbon footprint of tennis events	R14	P7, P9	78.2	94.4
33		Using sustainable and recyclable materials in the production of tennis equipment	R11	P11, P13, P14	86.9	94.4
34		Designing and building tennis stadiums and courts using renewable energy	R14	P2, P3, P7, P11	39.1	-
35		Promoting recycling programs at international tennis tournaments		P2, 28	56.5	-
36	Legal	Laws related to broadcasting rights	R13	P1, P4, P5, P7, P11	78.2	94.4
37		Policies and laws protecting players and coaches from sports injuries and financial issues		P1, P3, P5, P6, P7, P8, P10	56.5	-
38		Laws related to the intellectual property rights of players, brands and tennis tournaments		P1, P2, P7	78.2	88.8

	in the field of advertising and ancillary products					
39	Laws related to gender equality in tennis	R12, R19	P2, P7, P11	60.8	-	
40	Regulations related to the salaries and working conditions of professional players, insurance and legal protection against injuries		P7, P13	69.5	-	
41	Laws related to the protection of the rights of tennis fans regarding ticket purchases, refunds, spectator rights and conduct at matches	R20	P2, P7, P9, P11	82.6	88.8	

After identifying 21 influential driving forces for the development of tennis, a 21 by 21 matrix was designed and provided to the expert group, based on which the drivers, relationships, and interactions between them were determined using numbers 0 to 3 (zero = no impact; one = weak impact; two = moderate impact; three = strong impact; and P = potential impact), according to the intensity of their impact on each other. In this way, the degree of impact of each driver on the other and the degree of their influence were determined. The results of the questionnaire were analyzed by the Miqmac software.

The MICMAC software, upon receiving data related to the input elements, separates them into two processes and two matrices: the Direct Impact Matrix (MDI) in Table 5 and its related graphs, and the Indirect Impact Matrix (MII) in Table 5 and its related graphs. These matrices express the degree of influence between the drivers. The first output of this matrix is shown in Table 4, which reflects the general characteristics of the matrices in the research.

Table 4. General characteristics of the matrix

Matrix size	Number of repetitions	Number of zeros	Number of ones	Number of twos	Number of threes	Number of P	Total	Filling rate
21	2	257	64	50	60	10	184	41.72

Table 5 shows the prioritization of direct and indirect impacts of drivers.

Table 5. Prioritization of direct and indirect impacts of drivers

Number	Drivers	Direct impact	Drivers	Direct impact	Drivers	Indirect impact	Drivers	Indirect impact
1	P1	1250	S3	930	P1	1157	S3	846
2	P2	988	E3	784	P2	1009	E1	781
3	P3	988	E4	784	E2	836	E4	715
4	P4	872	E1	726	E1	823	E3	701
5	E1	872	P2	610	E4	804	T4	699
6	E2	813	L3	610	E3	785	P2	612
7	E3	581	T4	581	P3	705	L3	612
8	E4	523	S1	465	P4	576	S1	503
9	S1	406	P4	406	T4	470	T2	473
10	S2	377	T2	406	S3	438	P3	422
11	S3	348	P1	377	T5	394	e1	407
12	T1	290	P3	377	e1	283	T3	405
13	T2	290	E2	377	T1	281	E2	389
14	T3	261	T3	377	T2	261	P1	373
15	T4	203	S2	348	S2	256	P4	355
16	T5	174	e1	348	L3	209	S2	304
17	e1	174	L2	348	T3	205	T5	298
18	e2	174	T5	319	S1	201	L2	295
19	L1	174	L1	319	L2	142	T1	284
20	L2	174	T1	261	e2	101	e2	257
21	L3	58	e2	232	L1	51	L1	257

Based on the results of the Miqmac software, the stability or instability of the system has been analyzed based on the impact and direct impact plan. According to the output of the Miqmac software and based on the opinion of experts, the future of tennis development in Iraq is predicted to be somewhat unstable and there is a possibility of changing the current conditions. According to the results obtained from the MDI matrix map, the drivers of tennis development were placed in four areas of the table, which can be seen in Figure 1.

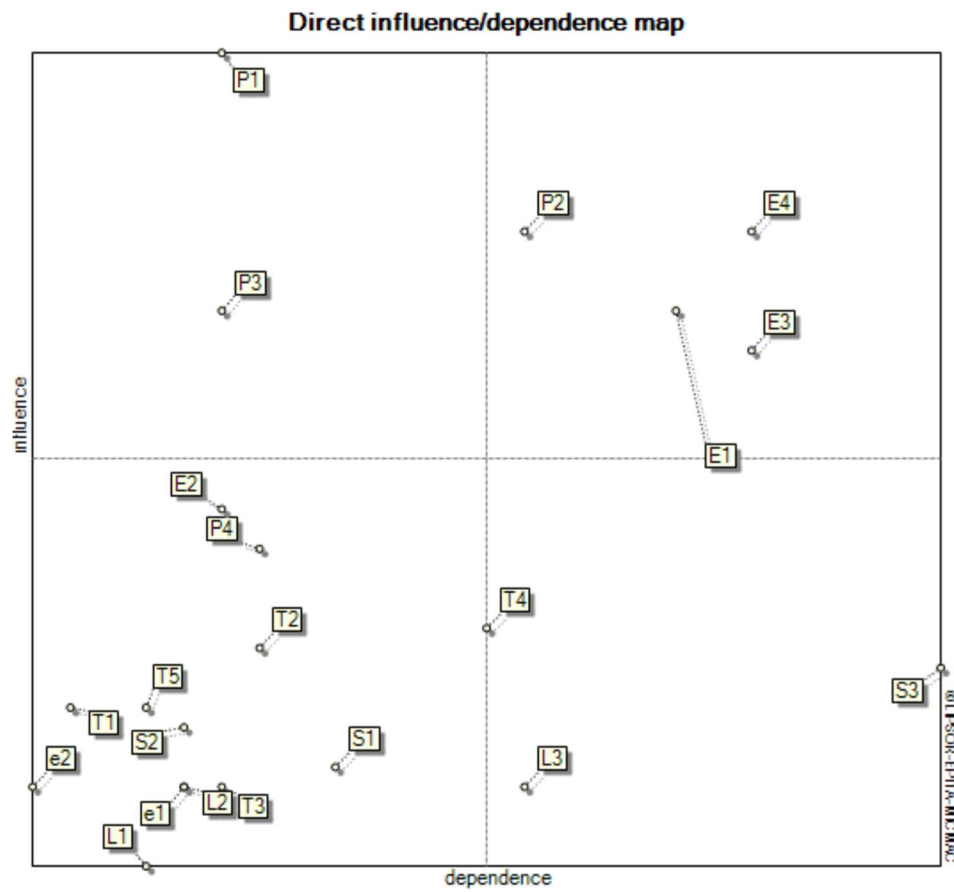


Figure 1. Status of influence and impact of drivers in the MDI matrix map

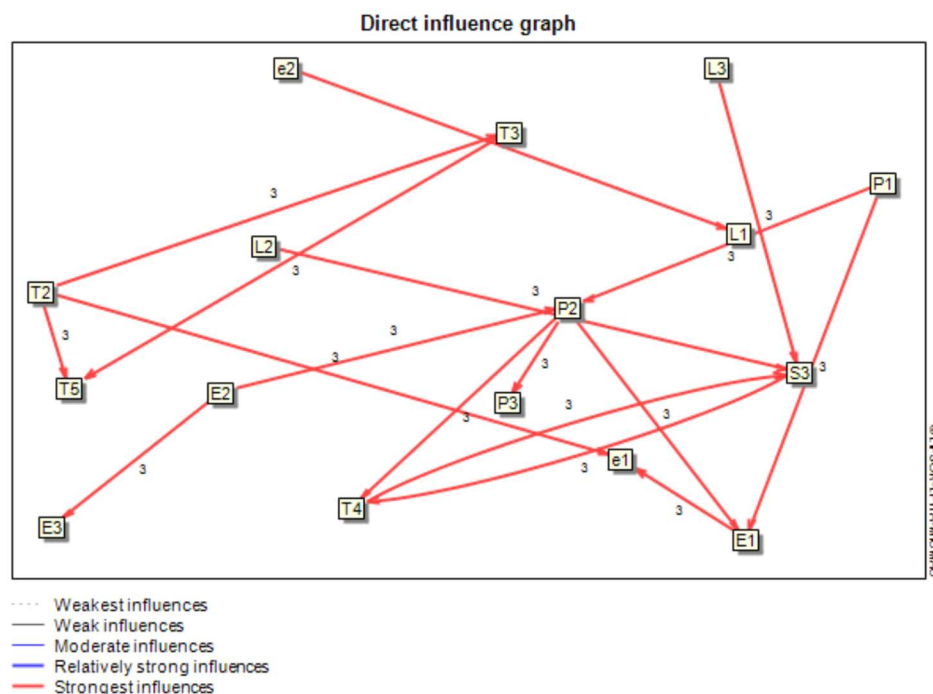


Figure 2. Graph of the direct impact of drivers in the MDI matrix map

The drivers of tennis development in Iraq are divided into four types based on their location: Zone One Drivers (bimodal): P2, E1, E3, E4; Zone Two Drivers (influential): P1, P3; Zone Three Drivers (independent): P4, T1, T2, T3, T5, E1, E2, S1, S2, L1, L2; Zone Four Drivers (influential): T4, L3, S3. The variables in Zone One of the coordinate grid, which were bimodal variables, are key variables. Therefore, the four drivers - the influence of foreign policies and international relations, private sector support for tennis players and tournaments, the expansion of tennis business leagues, and increasing turnover through advertising and branding - are key drivers. The possible states range from a favorable to a critical state, with three states considered for each driver. The probable status of the key drivers can be seen in Table 6.

Table 6. Possible status of key drivers

Key drivers	Optimum	Semi-Critical	Critical
The impact of foreign policy and international relations	Facilitating the entry of foreign players and teams into the country and holding international competitions	Minor restrictions on international interactions and the need for further negotiations	Ban on the entry or exit of players and teams and imposition of severe sanctions on the country's sports

Private sector support for tennis players and tournaments	Increasing investment by private companies in sponsoring players and competitions	Gradual reduction in financial support and lack of long-term commitments from sponsors	Complete cessation of financial support and inability to hold competitions.
Expansion of commercial tennis leagues	Holding professional leagues with the participation of domestic and foreign sponsors	Low quality of competitions and restrictions on attracting sponsors and professional players	Complete cessation of leagues and migration of players to other countries
Increasing turnover through advertising and branding	Signing large advertising contracts and increasing revenue from television broadcasts of competitions	Decrease in the number of advertising contracts and branding revenue	Lack of advertising contracts and withdrawal of brands from supporting tennis

Based on the possible situations for the four key drivers of the future of tennis, a total of 12 situations were designed, from the optimal to the critical. Based on the defined situations, the ScenarioWizard software designed a 12 by 12 matrix to evaluate the effect of different situations on each other, which was provided to the Delphi group. In response to this matrix, the experts had to determine what effect each of the 12 situations would have on the occurrence or non-occurrence of the other situations if they occurred. The questionnaire was scored in the range of positive 3 to negative 3, which indicated a continuum of reinforcing to weakening characteristics. Based on the calculations of the ScenarioWizard software, there are three scenarios with very high scores and a higher probability of occurrence in the future conditions of tennis in Iraq, among which there is a scenario representing the optimal situation, a scenario representing a relatively optimal situation, and a scenario representing a relatively critical situation, which can be seen in Figure 3.

Figure 3. Compatible scenarios for the future of tennis in Iraq

Scenario No.1	Scenario No.2	Scenario No.3
The impact of foreign policy and international relations; Facilitating the entry of foreign players and teams into the country and holding international competitions;	The impact of foreign policy and international relations; Minor restrictions on international interactions and the need for further negotiations	The impact of foreign policy and international relations; Facilitating the entry of foreign players and teams into the country and holding international competitions;
Increasing investment by private companies in sponsoring players and competitions; Private sector support for tennis players and tournaments		

Holding professional leagues with the participation of domestic and foreign sponsors; Expansion of commercial tennis leagues	
Signing large advertising contracts and increasing revenue from television broadcasts of competitions; Increasing turnover through advertising and branding	Increasing turnover through advertising and branding; Decrease in the number of advertising contracts and branding revenue

Naming scenarios and analyzing the status of each scenario

Scenario No.1: Sustainable progress

Features: Weight: 21 / Compatibility Value: 1 / Descriptor Incompatibility: 0 / Overall Impact Score: 30

Scenario Analysis: This scenario represents a situation where all factors work in unison. Facilitating the entry of foreign players and holding international tournaments, along with strong private sector support and increased advertising revenue, will lead to sustainable and rational growth in the country's tennis industry. In this scenario, professional leagues will be strengthened with the participation of domestic and foreign sponsors, and as a result, the country's sports economy will flourish.

Scenario No.2: Interaction Challenge

Features: Weight: 30/ Compatibility Value: -1/ Descriptor Incompatibility: 1/ Overall Impact Score: 26

Scenario Analysis: This scenario represents limited foreign policy challenges that require further negotiations. While private sector support and commercial leagues continue to strengthen, restrictions on international engagement may slow progress. The impact of these restrictions is not directly felt on the sports economy, but could create barriers to growth in the long term.

Scenario No.3: Unsustainable growth

Features: Weight: 30/ Compatibility Value: -1/ Descriptor Incompatibility: 1/ Overall Impact Score: 27

Scenario Analysis: In this scenario, the facilitation of the entry of foreign players and the strengthening of professional leagues continue, but the decline in the number of advertising contracts and branding revenues indicates unsustainable growth. This imbalance could damage the incentive of sponsors in the long term and reduce financial resources for the development of tennis.

Conclusions and suggestions

The present study was conducted with the aim of foresight and identification of scenarios affecting the development of tennis in Iraq. Using environmental scanning and analysis of the MiqMaq and ScenarioWizard software, this study identified three main scenarios, each of which had different characteristics and impacts on the development of this sport. Each of the scenarios will be discussed below.

Scenario No.1: Sustainable Development: This scenario, with a weight of 21 and a consistency value of 1, shows the highest harmony and stability among the factors studied. In this case: Facilitating international policies attracts foreign players and holds world-class tournaments. Private sector support ensures increased investments in player and tournament sponsorship. The expansion of commercial leagues attracts more audiences and improves the quality of tournaments. Increased advertising revenues through advertising contracts and television broadcasting provide sustainable financial resources for the development of tennis. This scenario represents ideal conditions in which economic, political, and cultural factors work in harmony and the sustainable and rational growth of tennis is ensured. The results of this scenario are consistent with the research of Smith et al. (2020) in Spain, which showed that supportive government policies and facilitating the entry of foreign players have increased the share of tennis in GDP. Also, research by Kazemi et al. (2019), Wang & Cheng (2024), and Pourzabih sarhamami et al. emphasize that private sector support for individual sports leads to sustainable infrastructure development and increased economic income.

The results of this study are in some cases consistent with the findings of Veisi et al. (1402). In contrast, Li et al. (2018) found in a study in China that private sector support alone is not enough and that a strong government system is needed to develop sports leagues. This difference may be due to the differences in the economic system and sports management of the countries. In both, the impact of government policy and foreign investment has been confirmed as key influential factors. The study by Gholamian et al. (1401), which pointed out the impact of social and economic drivers on sports development, is consistent with the findings of the present study on the necessity of paying attention to social and economic components for sports development. In the study by Cahill and McNamara (2024), the multilayered and multifaceted nature of tennis development was emphasized, which confirms the findings of the present study on the importance of the interaction of multiple factors in the development of tennis.

Scenario No.2: Challenges to Interactions: This scenario, with a weight of 30 and a compatibility value of -1, indicates minor restrictions on international interactions. Foreign policy restrictions require further negotiations, but do not have a direct and negative impact on other factors. Private sector support and the expansion of commercial leagues continue to grow, providing the conditions for tennis to progress on a national and international scale. Advertising revenues are not affected in this scenario, but they do not realize their full growth potential either. This scenario shows that although external barriers exist, with proper management, the sport of tennis can continue to develop.

The findings of this scenario are consistent with Nasrollahi's (1400) research, which emphasizes that even under sanctions, individual sports such as tennis can continue their growth path by relying on domestic resources and limited international interaction. Jasim et al.'s (2019) research also showed that under conditions of limited external relations, strengthening domestic leagues and attracting national sponsors can ensure the development of sports. However, Stevens (2021) showed in a study of African countries that the lack of extensive interaction with the international

community leads to a decline in the quality of leagues and a decrease in investor motivation in the long run.

Scenario No.3: Unsustainable Growth: This scenario, with a weight of 30 and a compatibility value of -1, represents unsustainable growth. The facilitation of the entry of foreign players and the expansion of commercial leagues remain in place. The decline in advertising contracts and branding revenue poses a serious threat to the sustainability of financial resources. This decline in revenues could reduce the incentive of sponsors in the long term and challenge the economic development of tennis. This scenario highlights the importance of paying attention to financial interactions and the role of sustainable revenues in the development of tennis.

This scenario is consistent with the findings of Alizadeh et al. (2018) and Askari et al. (2014), where the decline in financial and advertising sponsorship is identified as one of the main factors of the recession in professional sports in Iran. Also, Harris et al. (2020) emphasized that the instability of advertising revenues can be an obstacle to the growth of commercial leagues in developing countries. In contrast, Perri et al. (2021) found in a study in Australia that even in the event of a decline in advertising revenues, government support and appropriate policies can neutralize the negative effects. This difference is due to the key role of the government in the management of professional sports.

The results of this study showed that the development of tennis in the country is highly dependent on the coordination between various factors. The first scenario, as an ideal scenario, shows that facilitating international policies, supporting the private sector, expanding commercial leagues, and effective management of financial resources can lead to sustainable growth. In contrast, the second scenario shows the possibility of growth despite the challenges in foreign policy; but the third scenario emphasizes the importance of financial sustainability and warns that in the absence of proper management, the development of tennis will face serious obstacles.

Practical suggestions

The results of this study showed that for the sustainable development of tennis in Iraq, coordination between key factors such as international policies, private sponsorship, financial management, and the expansion of commercial leagues is essential. Paying attention to financial and political challenges can be a guarantee for the growth of this sport. Based on the results of the study, practical suggestions are provided that can help in better decision-making and effective planning for the development of tennis and other individual sports in the country.

For policymakers:

1. Facilitating international policies: Setting rules and regulations that facilitate the entry of foreign players and the holding of international competitions.
2. Developing sports diplomatic relations: Using sports diplomacy to attract foreign investors and enhance the country's image internationally.

For the private sector:

1. Incentivize sponsors: Develop tax incentives and ensure transparency in contracts to attract investors.
2. Focus on advertising and branding: Develop effective marketing strategies to increase advertising and television revenues.

For tennis league organizers:

1. Improving the quality of the leagues: Attracting domestic and foreign professional players to increase the attractiveness of the tournaments.
2. Cooperating with television networks: Increasing media coverage to attract a larger audience.

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