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스포츠 매니지먼트 석사 학위논문

# Challenges and Opportunities in International Sport Organizations:

Investigation of barriers hindering the Asian Football  
Confederation from better governance

국제 스포츠 조직의 도전과 기회: 더 나은 거버넌스로 아시아  
축구 연맹을 방해하는 장벽 조사

2020년 7월

서울대학교 대학원 / 체육교육과

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# Challenges and Opportunities in International Sport Organizations:

Investigation of barriers hindering the Asian Football Association  
from better governance

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이 논문을 스포츠 매니지먼트 석사 학위논문으로 제출함

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# **Abstract**

## **Challenges and Opportunities in International Sport organizations:**

### **Investigation of barriers hindering the Asian Football Confederation from better governance**

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Since the beginning of early 2000's high profile cases of corruption, doping, and match-fixing in sport, together with misconduct and inefficiency within international and national sport organizations have resulted in calls for good governance (Chappalet & Mrkonjic, 2013). Interest in sport governance occurred due to numerous scandals involving high profile international sport institutions and governments such as IOC, FIFA, IAAF and Russia (with its state-financed doping program).

Inevitable presence of the media criticism, skepticism of people has made governance an important and meaningful aspect in sport field. Better sport governance enables sports governing bodies to achieve greater achievement and results, become more transparent to the public and accountable to its stakeholders. It is therefore sport institutions, academicians and governments

have developed number of good governance principles/indicators/requirements for sport organizations to be applied and practiced. Chappalet (2018) argued that governance need to be monitored occasionally in order to determine whether there is any improvement. Instead of the commonly known “good governance” term, the objective should be to ensure “better governance” within each governing body.

The aim of the current study is to investigate a number of key good governance principles and indicators that are being practiced in the Asian Football Confederation (AFC) and factors hindering from better governance. For this research a BIBGIS model developed by Chappalet & Mrkonjic (2013) is used as theoretical framework. Qualitative research method were employed for this study: first, after document review that was available externally during the research process was obtained and applied to BIBGIS, then interviews with AFC employees were conducted.

Results and findings obtained from the study have shown to what extent AFC employees know about current situation of governance. Accountability, gender under-representation, lack of stakeholder involvement and other external factors found to be barriers that are holding back the AFC from better governance.

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**Keywords:** Good governance, sport governance, governance principles, Asian Football Confederation, AFC, BIBGIS

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## **List of Acronyms**

AFC – Asian Football Confederation

ASOIF – Association of Summer Olympic International Federations

BIBGIS – Basic Indicators for Better Governance in International Sport

ExCo – Executive Committee

FIFA – The Fédération Internationale de Football Association

ISGB – International Sport Governing Body

GCG – Good Corporate Governance

GTF – Governance Task Force

IOC – International Olympic Committee

ISO – International Sport Organization

ISGB – International Sport Governing Body

MA – Member Association

NSO – National Sport Organization

SGB – Sport Governing Bodies

SGO – Sports Governance Observer

WADA – World Anti-Doping Agency

## **Chapter 1. Introduction**

### **1.1 Background**

The importance of sport as a global phenomenon, which has a growing impact on the behavior of the masses in different countries and generating powerful financial flows, determines the need for its international regulation (Shilbury et al., 2013). The transformations in the field of sports management radically changed its significance in society: from a simple form of leisure and health promotion, it has become a complex multi-billion, properly managed business. The combination of socio-cultural and economic components make sport an important tool for promoting interests (Kreft, 2017).

Interest in sport governance has emerged due to recent high-profile failures within the context of sport, such as IOC and Salt-Lake-City case, involvement of FIFA officials in money laundry, wire-fraud and other corruption related cases, IAAF and its doping incidents and the Russian state-sponsored doping scandal (Dowling et al., 2018).

According to Chappelet & Mrkonjic (2013) corruption scandals, doping incidents, and match-fixing in sport as well as mismanagement and inefficiency within sport organizations have resulted the need for good governance. In recent years, a number of international and national SGBs have been surrounded with corruption scandals and challenges to their legitimacy (Hoye , 2017).

Numerous occasions of individual directors failing to behave appropriately, the continued use of antiquated or inequitable governance structures, failures to introduce

adequate checks and balances over decisions by boards, and cases of utter failure to govern have led to calls for better governance of sport organizations from both governments and independent agencies (Parent & Hoye, 2018). As a response to those unethical decisions and performances government, sport organizations, and independent agencies have development an increasing number of suggested governance principles, indicators and guidelines designed to fight and overcome failures in governance. These principles include democratic process, accountability, transparency, professionalization, control mechanisms, fairness, solidarity, responsibility, equity and equality, gender balance, elected presidents, board size, skills and term limits, codes of ethics and conflicts of interest, athlete involvement/representation, stakeholder participation and representation, anti-bribery/corruption codes, respect, autonomy and independence, evaluation, effectiveness, efficiency, planning standards, structure standards, and access and timely disclosure of information (Chappelet & Mrkonjic, 2013).

In summary, the use of governance to the sport context explains how good sport organizations and systems within are directed and controlled. Central to the concept of governance is the notion of power, where power lies within sport organizations and systems, and the degree to which power has lifted.

## **1.2 Statement of the problem**

Sport governance provides a useful starting point for an examination and practical application of governance principles to amateur and professional sport organizations from a sports management perspective, as well as the economic,

political and social factors that impact on how the governance function is enacted within sports bodies (Chappalet & Bayle, 2005).

In the area of sport management, the significance of the governing role in sport organizations have not yet fully grasped by academicians and practitioners. Despite increasing literature on sport governance and recent researches in this field, focusing on the role of sport organizations in global governance (Foster, 2006), collaborative sport governance (Shilbury, O'Boyle & Ferkins, 2016) collaborative governance in a non-profit sport organizations (O'Boyle & Shilbury, 2018), changing global sport governance environment in a globalized society (Chatzigianni, 2018), international sport governance as a political phenomenon (Jedlicka, 2018), board structure (Ingram & O'Boyle, 2018) and others, relatively little research has been undertaken which examines the principles/indicators of good governance being practiced in sports organizations, with application good sport governance framework. Most of the studies in this field, if not all, were conducted in developed countries. None of the studies have concentrated on Asian continent.

The aim of the current study is to investigate a number of key principles and indicators relating to good governance that are being practiced in the Asian Football Confederation and factors hindering from better governance. There was no precedent study conducted in the field of sports governance within Asian continent and the ultimate goal is to establish good governance framework to be incorporated in the AFC.

### **1.3 Significance of the study**

The ways in which sport is governed and the failures that governance have, brought the issue into serious attention. Such interest has been fostered by questions about strategic directions and various complications involved in the decision-making process.

In this research paper The Asian Football Confederation (AFC) which is the governing body of football in the continent and one of the six Confederations of The Fédération Internationale de Football Association (FIFA) is investigated. The AFC was established in 1954 in the Philippines capital city, Manila. Organization launched its new Vision and Mission in 2016 pointing out its determinations to become world's leading Confederation (The AFC, 2018). It consist of 47 member associations and divided into four zones according to their geographic location. The AFC has second highest number of affiliated national associations after UEFA (Weinberg, 2012).

The AFC's new vision and mission slogan – “*One Asia, One Goal*” – identifies the main values of unity competence and leadership. On top of increasing and regulating the game, upkeeping the integrity and laws of the game, developing grassroots and youth football and conducting top-level competitions, the AFC also works closely with its Member Associations and main stakeholders to bring to life its objectives under its vision and mission (The AFC, 2017).

One of the AFC's vision is to become world leading confederation and under its seven elements of mission, good governance also takes place. Aimed at exploring the

role of the football governing body in Asia in the context of an international sports, this research using BIBGIS tool and interviews evaluates current state of governance in the AFC and ensure to what extend organization meets good governance principles.

One of main motives behind choosing AFC for this study is to develop a framework of good governance practices that could be adopted or considered as guiding framework in the organization's sports policy to have a reliable strong sports system and eventually become the world's leading and exemplary Confederation.

#### **1.4 Objectives of the Study**

In order to investigate whether good governance is practiced at its best and if there are any challenges and improvements for better governance, the following objectives have been set to achieve the aim of this research and they are:

1. To explore the Asian Football Confederation employees' perception about good governance and its principles;
2. To discover barriers that hinder from better governance within the Asian Football Confederation;
3. To examine major challenges and improvement opportunities for better governance in the Asian Football Confederation.

## **1.5 Research Questions**

It is important to understand factors that lead to the inadequate sports system and it could only be recognized by understanding the good governance practices in the AFC and that requires a comprehension of the good governance practices that frames a trustworthy sports system.

The focus of this study, therefore, was to investigate the current level of sports governance in the AFC and then identify barriers that are hindering this sport governing body from better governance. Hence, the following three research question were developed for the research:

**RQ 1:** What are the Asian Football Confederation employees' perception on good governance?

**RQ 2:** How do employees perceive the current state of good governance in the Asian Football Confederation?

**RQ 3:** In which ways the Asian Football Confederation can meet better governance principles?

## Chapter 2. Literature Review

### 2.1 Definition of governance

To govern is to steer and navigate an organization, and to make decisions that are consequential, strategic, and impactful, usually on behalf of others. The concept of “governance” is not new, it has been existing since human civilization. Definition of “governance” were expressed as: *the process of decision-making and the process by which decisions are implemented or vice-versa* (United Nations, 2014). Governance can be used in the contexts of corporate governance, international governance, national governance, local governance and sport governance.

Ysa et.al (2014) argue that governance includes the role of sub-national and trans-national authorities as well as private organizations. In this sense, governance appears in the context of the discussion about the role of the state, which can no longer be regarded the center of power and authority given that it shares the decision and implementation processes with other stakeholders. Davies (2007) defines governance as the processes and mechanisms for coordinating activities. This definition is useful because it refers to the mechanisms of governance, such as confirming governance boards are properly organized, with good record keeping, and with instructing and long-term policies.

Governance has been seen at the forefront of establishing standards of corporate ethics aimed at reducing immoral corporate practices while preserving a fair business environment (Fung, 2014). Corporate governance is also considered as significant part of risk management and the justification for that is poor corporate governance is

viewed as risky, whereas creditors and investors view good corporate governance (GCG) as a sign of strong point of organization (Tricker, 2009). Since stakeholders are paying more attention to what is reported and how, governance systems and the quality of its public disclosures are becoming increasingly important and are viewed as a strength. Accordingly, stakeholders are demanding clearer financial reports and transparency (Fung, 2014).

Corporate governance could also be considered as the implementation of power over organization entities. In a company, the board is the major driving force of governance and primarily determines whether a company's governance is thoroughly implemented. The primary objective of GCG is to contribute to improved corporate performance. In any establishment, GCG starts with the owners and goes down through the board and different management levels to the employees (Bhasin, 2010). No matter what the ownership is, there is a need for transparency and accountability in its relationship with other stakeholders. In this context, Fung (2014) opines that all rules that define the governance responsibilities, incentives and sanctions facing the board, management and staff must be well articulated. Board members must be held accountable and responsible for their performances and decisions that have impact on the other stakeholder's interests.

### ***2.1.1 Characteristics of good governance***

The terms "governance" and "good governance" are being increasingly used in development literature for the past 15 years. Major donors and international financial institutions are increasingly basing their aid and loans on the condition that reforms that ensure "good governance" are undertaken (Miller, 2011).

According to UNDP (2014) good governance has 8 major characteristics: *participatory, consensus oriented, accountable, transparent, responsive, effective* and *efficient, equitable* and *inclusive* and follows the *rule of law*. When these characteristics are practiced corruption is said to be minimized, the views of minorities are taken into consideration and the voices in society are heard in decision-making process. Fighting corruption, providing accountability and transparency are increasingly perceived as being essential to the concept of good governance (Madhushani & Wijethisa, 2017).

## **2.2 Governance in sport organizations**

Rosenau (1995) noted that governance is the process in which a single organization, or a system of organizations, directs itself, allocates resources, and practices co-ordination and control. This definition is an appropriate way to approach governance within the sport domain where the concept of “sport governance” has come to mean both the governance of an organization and the concept of governance within the sports field (Shilbury, Ferkins, & Smythe, 2013).

Sports have long been gaining popularity, attracting more attention of both financial and human resources. (Shilbury, Ferkins, & Smythe, 2013). With a growing, but still limited focus on the topic, research and academic attention to date have not yet resorted to fully interpreting the complexities of governance within sport organizations (Hoye & Doherty, 2011). Since sport governance has been emerging area of study, Ferkins & Shilbury (2015) claimed that research in this field has effectively drawn on more established information bodies from the realm of

commercial, public and non-profit governance to position and progress conceptual notions of sport governance.

Governance in sport has become a focus to sport management academics and scholars in recent years as evidenced by the number of keynotes (Shilbury, 2016), special issues (Dolles & Söderman, 2011), and books (Hoye & Cuskelly 2007); (King, 2017) dedicated to investigating sport governance issues. There have also been a number of studies within sports governance that have focused on government intervention in sport (Hoye, 2004), global sport organization governance (Forster, 2006) and changes in governance structures (Kikulis, 2000).

Sports governance is an evolving paradigm which implies the act of governing sports through the participation of various multiple actors and stakeholders such as the government, business and industry leaders, and civil society organizations in the formulation, legitimization, and implementation of sports programs, policies, and projects for sports excellence and development (Blanco, 2017). As sports organizations are required to become more professional and adopt a more transparent and accountable approach to their operations, it has become important for all researchers and professionals working in sports to recognize what governance is and how it should be achieved (O'Boyle & Bradbury, 2013). Sport governance thus provides an important means to refresh and strengthen people's interest and passion in actively engaging in sport through initiatives, policies and programs that can provide them with a source of motivation and encouragement, especially for young people (Coalter, 2010).

Sport governance allows national sports to reach greater achievements – it is a source of national pride, happiness, and honor to country and its people. Blanco (2017) noted that sport governance is an outstanding prerequisite and criterion for global prestige and reputation as sports excellence highly equates with social, economic, and political growth and development. Furthermore, sport governance foresees a condition in which sports serve as a promoter for national and international peace, solidarity, and resolution, making sports a great equalizer, pacifier, and unifier for people and for all nations (Shearer, 2014).

According to Hoye & Cuskelly (2007) sports governance is an act of arranging, maneuvering, facilitating, and organizing the pool of talents, resources, approaches, and processes in a much broader, fuller, and wider range of sports actors, agents, and stakeholders across various sectors of society. This presumes the interplay of policy-makers and policy-implementers in the field of sport in deciding the achievement of excellence in sport, not only personally or internationally, but also jointly and globally. In this sense Blanco (2017) suggests that the importance of sports organizations adopting good governance practices has become progressively recognized by governments which often provide significant amounts of funding to these organizations.

Meier & Garcia (2015) identified the governance of international sports as a mixture of a network and a linkage of stakeholders, private commercial actors and public authorities. The increase in the number of governance principles and guidelines developed in recent years was highlighted by Chappelet (2018, p.724) who stated

*“since the beginning of the twenty-first century, governmental and intergovernmental bodies, national and international sport governing bodies and academics have put forward numerous lists—more than 30 in total—of governance principles for sport organizations”.*

Despite the development of these guidelines over the last 15 years and, in some cases, the required implementation of them for sport governing bodies by national sport agencies or international sport organizations, Parent & Hoye (2018) mentions that there remains limited evidence of their impact on sport organizations’ governance practices and performance. There are a range of hidden and untested assumptions made by policymakers and agencies whereby adherence to governance principles is related to, or results, in improved governance performance of sport organizations, with performance referring to a potentially broad range of governance-related performance indicators and/or performance management measures centrally imposed by these actors.

The subject of sport organization performance in relation to governance practices has been explored by authors, such as Hoye (2004), Hoye and Doherty (2011) and Hoye (2017) who focused on several drivers of the performance of non-profit sport boards including structure, power, board composition, and leadership relations, but not specifically the adoption of a set of governance principles on the overall sport organization’s performance.

### 2.3 Good governance in sport and its principles

Journalists, academics, stakeholders and sport leaders pay a lot of attention to the issue of “good governance” in international and national sport, and for good reason. Highly exposed corruption scandals have afflicted the IOC, several prominent sport federations and WADA in recent years, calling into question these organizations’ abilities to effectively and ethically fulfil their respective missions. The word “governance” is used primarily as a synonym for “management”, implying that good governance can be achieved largely through judicious decision-making and adherence to moral standards (Jedlicka, 2018).

However, there is no generally agreed, and exact definition of “good governance”. The term is used in different contexts, therefore serving different meanings and purposes (Maennig, 2017). In the sport sector, definition of good governance has been cited the most is from the European Commission (2013): *“The framework and culture within which a sports body sets policy, delivers its strategic objectives, engages with stakeholders, monitors performance, evaluates and manages risk and reports to its constituents on its activities and progress including the delivery of effective, sustainable and proportionate sports policy and regulation”*. The concept of good governance has been subject to a number of revisions, additions, and analyses<sup>3</sup> over the past two decades. Chappelet and Mrkonjic (2013) provide an overview of more than thirty published principles and indicators of good governance in sports field, and it leads to the critique that good governance has a lot of meanings which are all useful (Rhodes, 1997).

Nevertheless, good governance is generally understood to imply the obligation to define clear roles, principles and responsibilities of sports organizations, as well as an enforceable code of ethics (European Commission, 2013). The general good governance approach may seem at odds with the principle of the “autonomous decision-making processes within the law” (Chappalet, 2016).

For a long time, the sports sector operated under self-governance and without control by an external institution, as sports were suggested to be independent of politics and other governmental organizations (Geeraert, 2016). Autonomy is also established as one of the main principles of the Olympic Charter (International Olympic Committee, 2018). However, with a growing awareness of and an increasing business volume by sports organizations, it seems appropriate to join the ongoing debate regarding the introduction and development of the normative concept of “good governance” in sports (Geeraert, 2014).

Among the first scholars to define the concept of good governance in sport, Henry & Lee (2004) present three interrelated approaches to help the understanding of sport governance: systemic governance, political (or democratic) governance, corporate (or organizational) governance. The first is concerned with the competition, cooperation, and mutual adjustment between organizations in business and/or policy systems. The second approach is concerned with how governments or governing bodies in sport steer, rather than directly control, the behaviour of organizations. The last one is concerned with normative, ethically-informed standards of managerial behavior.

It is inspired by corporate governance and provides means for resolving unethical or socially unexpected behaviors such as racism, discrimination or conservatism. Henry & Lee (2004) propose 7 principles of good sport governance: *Transparency, Accountability, Democracy, Responsibility, Equity, Efficiency* and *Effectiveness*.

Since the early 2000s innumerable definitions of governance have been put forward; Chappelet and Mrkonjic (2018) have identified more than 50 sets/frameworks of good governance' principles in sport alone, most of which have been published in the conditional tense. On the other hand, there are very few examples of tools for measuring sports organization governance. Exceptions include, for instance, UK Sport's 11 'governance requirements', which were suggested by (Walters, Trenberth, & Tacon, 2010), later were summarized by UK Sport (2017) to 5 governance principles, the Australian Sports Commission's (2015) that has 21 'mandatory sports governance principles', the 63 'basic indicators for better governance of international sport' (BIBGIS) developed by Chappalet & Mrkonjic (2013).

The IOC systematically refers to the more than 100 indicators that can be deducted from the Basic Universal Principles (BUPs), even though they have proven difficult to apply (International Olympic Committee, 2008). Association of Summer Olympic International Federations (ASOIF) Governance Task Force produced self-assessment questionnaire for IF's that include 50 indicators (ASOIF, 2017).

The Sports Governance Observer (2015), also known as SGO is another measurement tool that has been developed. The tool is one of the many outcomes of a research project funded by the European Commission in the framework of the Preparatory actions in the field of sport and gathering six European universities (AGGIS project). The aims of the tool are twofold. *Firstly*, it aims to assess the degree of good governance of a selection of international sports federations (Olympic sports) and highlight their main strengths and weaknesses in order to propose solutions for reform. *Secondly*, it also aims to analyse the conceptual and operational issues related to the application of a measurement tool to a large group of organizations. The set proposes four dimensions: ***Transparency; Democratic processes; Checks and balances; Solidarity***. Each dimension is segmented into numerous indicators (36) and a “qualitative” scoring system measuring the degree of fulfilment of an indicator.

**Table 1***Summary of some good governance principles and indicators established for the past 15 years*

<b>Authors/Institution</b>	<b>Number of principles/dimensions</b>	<b>Number of indicators/requirements</b>	<b>Publication/Source</b>
Henry & Lee (2004)	7 principles	–	The Business of Sport Management
The IOC BUPs (2008)	7 chapters	100+ indicators	Seminar on Autonomy of Olympic and Sport Movement
Chappelet and Kübler-Mabott (2008)	6 dimensions	–	Global Institutions: The IOC and the Olympic System
Walters, Trenberth, & Tacon (2010)	11 principles	–	Birkbeck University of London
EU Commission (2011)	4 dimensions	–	<a href="https://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-11-43_en.htm">https://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-11-43_en.htm</a>
Chappelet & Mrkonjic (2013)	7 dimensions	63 indicators	The Swiss Graduate School of Public Administration
Australian Sport Commission (2015)	3 dimensions	21 mandatory principles	<a href="https://www.sportaus.gov.au/">https://www.sportaus.gov.au/</a>
Geeraert (2015)	4 dimensions	36 indicators	Sport Government Observer
UK Sport (2017)	5 principles	20 mandatory requirements	<a href="https://www.uk sport.gov.uk/resources/governance-code">https://www.uk sport.gov.uk/resources/governance-code</a>
ASOIF (2018)	5 dimensions	50 indicators	ASOIF
FIFA (2018)	8 principles		FIFA Governance Report

### ***2.3.1 Shortcomings of existing principles and indicators***

Despite the introduction of all these principles, researchers noted still continuing lack of transparency, accountability, autonomy, equity and democracy (Roelofs, 2019). And these happen to be key dimensions of sports organization governance. Chappalet (2018) argues that there is lack of precise definition like *integrity*, overlapping terms, such as *transparency* and *accountability*, bundling several concepts together – *equity* and *equality*, confusion between *governance* and *management*, long list of principles as outlined in IOC's BUPs. It was also noted that measuring *democracy* is difficulty, and existence of only few sport specific principles as *solidarity*.

After thorough systematic review of studies on good governance principles and guidelines, Parent & Hoye (2018) discussed that despite an increase in interest in research associated with good governance principles and guidelines in sport, both the international sport community and researchers need to develop an agreed set of governance principles and universal language for international, national, and local level sport governing organizations. However, it may be not realistic considering the multitude and size of stakeholders involved, such as the IOC, IFs and a lot of national sport governing bodies, as well as the different legal and cultural contexts between national sport systems; but, this lack of unity will limit the ability of both sport organizations to improve their governance and researchers to understand which principles and guidelines are central to improved governance performance in sport organizations.

## **2.4 Barriers of good governance**

The academic discipline of corporate governance within sport organizations has begun to receive an increase in attention from academicians in response to the emerging concerns over the level of professionalization and commercialization that has taken hold of the sport industry in the last decade (Ingram & O'Boyle, 2018). This increase in scholarly attention has been mirrored by a substantial number of industry reports that also call for better corporate governance processes and systems to be implemented by the sport industry to fight the problems facing this sector in relation to “poor” governance practices (Chelladurai, 2005).

It is commonly accepted that governance structures have a significant impact on the performance of sporting organizations. Poor governance has number of causes, including incompetency of director, conflicts of interest, failure to manage risk, improper or inadequate financial controls, and generally poor internal systems and reporting transparency. Ineffective governance practices not only impact on the sport where they are present, but also undermine confidence in the Australian sports industry as a whole (Australian Sport Commission, 2018).

### ***2.4.1 Lack of transparency and accountability***

Beeks and Brown (2006) suggest that companies with better governance also disclose more information. Those organizations which are weak in governance are lacking of financial disclosure and transparency and tend to have corruption within. Accountability is another a central feature of good governance in global organizations and has increasingly come to be viewed as an issue much broader than nation states

working together to include non-governmental organizations and multinational corporations (Pielke, 2013).

Accountability requires few steps: first, people are given certain objectives; second, there is a reliable way of assessing whether they have met those objectives; and third, consequences exist for both the case in which they have done what they were supposed to do and the case in which they have not done so. Implementing accountability is particularly challenging in the context of global politics applied through international corporations because governmental and non-governmental organizations around the world practice a very wide range of mismatched systems of domestic governance, making it exceedingly difficult to reach agreement on formal and informal norms, standards, responsibilities and sanctions associated with decision making (Pielke, 2013).

#### ***2.4.2 Corruption***

Corruption is another threat to the reliability and integrity of sports organizations. It basically resulting from a desire to have advantages, even though precise definition that distinguishes between fair play, friendly conduct and corruption depends on the sports organizations of respective country and cannot be generalized in the same context (Maennig, 2017). Moreover, any definition of corruption needs to consider that it is not an external “shock” to the system but is exemplified within the political and economic systems themselves (Horne, 2016).

Maennig (2017) mentioned most conspicuous corruption scandals that took place in recent years that include the vote-buying scandal in the Salt Lake City Olympic bid and the decision to award gold medal during the same Olympic Winter Games in 2002 in the figure-skating competition. The systemic corruption, vote-fixing, bribery, wire-fraud among FIFA officials was stressed out by several scholars (Garcia & Welford 2015; Pielke 2016; Holzen & Meier 2018). In the recent whistleblowing case that exposed Russia and its systematic, state-financed doping scheme during the 2012 and 2014 Olympic Games, the links between corrupt behavior and doping became clear (Ruiz, 2016). As consequence, the Olympic medals from cheating athletes from 2012 and 2014 have been withdrawn, and many Russian athletes were banned from the 2016 Olympics in Rio de Janeiro.

Corruption in contemporary sports distresses a wide range of sports at almost all stages of the value creation chain and in all groups of “stakeholders”, including the allocation of rights, nominations for positions, and the commissioning of construction works for sports arenas and other venues (Maennig, 2017). In recent years, most corruption cases in sports have been related in betting (Forrest & Maennig, 2015).

One of the purposes of the good governance approach is to prevent corruption by operating transparently, giving no member of the governmental board or association in charge a potential reason or incentive to become involved in a corruption process. From an economic point of view, corruption may be encouraged if the *“expected net utility of a corrupt behavior (is) adequately large for both sides involved in order to outweigh any decline in the welfare”* (Houlihan, 2013). It is no

wonder that corruption often occurs in sports with high media attention, such as soccer, basketball or baseball; respective sports organizations generate high economic rents, as they operate economically in the manner of a monopoly (Horne, 2016). When consideration is given to the costs of anti-corruption policies, the extension of measures to reduce corruption should be extended as long as the marginal social costs do not exceed the marginal social value (Maennig, 2005).

But in sports, the degree of tolerance should perhaps be very low. Undeniably, a single case of corruption can cause major social marginal damage; that is, in general, it may result not only in a considerable loss of image for the wrongdoer but also for the sporting discipline as a whole and even for sports in general, and it may not necessarily stop at the borders of the individual country involved. For instance, it was not only FIFA that had problems due to recent corruption scandals. Moreover, the many measures already undertaken by sports associations as well as other probable future measures that the social marginal costs of avoiding corruption in sports could be kept comparatively low given a skilled mixture of measures. The calculation that the fight against corruption should be extended until its social marginal costs correspond to its marginal utility should result in a rate of corruption that differs only slightly from zero.

With these economic concepts as theoretical background, a framework including improvements with respect to good governance can be derived and formulated. Horne, (2016) provided five key suggestions as to how to manage corruption and build a framework of good governance around it, in particular, by

creating an organizational management and culture, as in large corporate businesses. These improvements feature the provision of a clear code of ethics that also includes how detection and measurement of misbehavior should be treated. Good governance should provide principles for a fair and transparent dissemination of profits, meaning that surpluses should be invested to encourage developments of grassroots sports or projects for young athletes. The incentives for corruption by insiders needs to be lowered, and punishments for misbehavior and bribery need to be enforced.

## **2.5 From “good” to “better” governance**

The concept of “good” governance has become a must when sports organizations are facing cases of corruption, doping, match-fixing and mismanagement (Chappalet & Mrkonjic, 2013). Because of the philosophical debate on what is considered a suitable (good) behavior in a given society and the theoretical debate on the concept of governance, “good” governance has acquired the quality of being highly elastic. Therefore, it can include a large scope of circumstances. However, the “good” governance theme developed in other parts of the universe, under different cultures, under different conceptual impacts, sometimes under different terms such as “good practice”, “principles of conduct” or just “governance”.

It is therefore Chappalet & Mrkonjic (2013) suggested to assess and implement “better” governance, rather than “good” governance. The reality of international sport organizations by focusing on a precise and brief set of indicators of measurement for better governance on the basis of seven dimensions of governance inspired by the literature and discussions with stakeholders. Governance can only be better in a given

context, under specific environments, for one given sport organization. A longitudinal approach seems therefore more suitable than a benchmarking approach aiming at comparing certainly very different sport governing body.

## **2.6 Sport governance themes**

Over the last two decades researchers have focused their efforts on assessing sport governance in international and national sport organizations with the use of different principles and guidelines, methods and frameworks. The wide range of governance principles and/or guidelines were related to board diversity and composition, board independence, board size, decision making issues such as accountability, transparency, fairness, democratic process, leadership, gender balance and others.

The subject of sport governance practices has been explored by authors who focused on a range of drivers of the performance of non-profit sport boards including structure, power, board composition, and leadership interactions, but not specifically the adoption of a set of governance principles on the overall sport organization's performance. The following table is the summary of some researches on sport governance theme which were conducted in the past 15 years. The table provides the guidelines/principles used in the research, the theoretical framework and method applied and the origin of the study that took place.

**Table 2***Summary of literature based on good governance principles and guidelines*

<b>Authors</b>	<b>Governance principles or guidelines considered</b>	<b>Theoretical framework</b>	<b>Method</b>	<b>Level of analysis</b>	<b>Publication/Source</b>
Adriaanse and Schofield (2014)	Board diversity in non-profit governance	Org. management and gender dynamics	Comparative case study using interviews	Australian NSOs	Journal of Sport Management
Bayle & Robinson (2007)	Organizational performance	Organizational theory and performance	Documents review and 100 interviews	French NSOs	European Sport Management Quarterly
Bradbury & O'Boyle (2015)	Board structure, role, calibre	Corporate governance and sport governance	Case study using 6 interviews	New Zealand Cricket	Corporate Ownership & Control
Dimitropoulos (2014)	Board size and independence	Corporate governance	Documents review from 67 soccer clubs in 10 European countries	European professional football clubs	Management Research Review
Ferkins et.al (2009)	Board strategic function & involvement in strategy	Agency theory, stewardship theory and managerial hegemony theory	Case study with interviews, documents review and participants observation	New Zealand Football (soccer)	Journal of Sport Management
Garcia (2008)	Structure	Agenda-setting, multi-level governance	Qualitative research based on 44 interviews and document review	European football clubs, continental associations	Loughborough University
Geeraert et.al (2014)	Accountability, democracy, check and balances	Good governance, corporate governance, good sport governance	Analysis of publicly available data	IFs of the 35 Olympic sports	International Journal of Sport and Policy
Parent et.al (2018)	Accountability and transparency	Good sport governance	163 documents equating to 958 pages and interviews	5 Canadian NSOs	Journal of Sport Management
Parent et.al (2017)	Accountability and transparency	Democratic governance	Document analysis and interviews	Norway OC	Sport Management and Marketing
Walters and Tacon (2018)	National good governance guidelines from UK Sport	Modernization	Document analysis and interviews	UK NSOs	European Sport Management Quarterly
Sisjord et.al (2017)	Board diversity	–	Interviews	Norway NSOs,	Sport Policy and Politics

## **Chapter 3. Research Methods**

The research has been conducted to investigate the current level of good governance practices in the AFC and barriers hindering from better governance, as well as to identify opportunities for the improvement. Based on the previous studies done in this area of research, I employed qualitative research approach. This method also provides broader and clearer understanding of the situation in the AFC. This chapter explains the methods and processes that were implemented in this study.

Perry (2000) specified that the most notable difference between the two approaches is that quantitative research problems ask *who* and *what*, *how many* and *how much*, while qualitative research points *how* and *why* social experiences are created and given the sense. According to Cresswell (2009) the peculiarity between qualitative and quantitative research is framed in terms of using words (quality) rather than numbers (quantity), or using closed-ended questions (quantitative hypotheses) rather than open-ended questions (qualitative interview questions).

Denzin and Lincoln (2011) added to the distinction arising from the methodological stances, observing that while quantitative research explores causal relationships between variables, qualitative investigation is concerned with the inductive analysis of processes.

### **3.1 Qualitative research approach**

Due to the nature of the research questions set in this study, a qualitative method would be the most appropriate investigative tool to employ and is reflective of the

majority of previous sport governance work in the field, which is to be employed in the second phase of research. Qualitative research has an emergent design and allows for flexibility in the outcomes as new information became available (Edwards & Skinner, 2009).

Qualitative research approach is a way to examine and understanding the meaning individuals or groups attribute to a social or human problem. The research process involves developing questions and procedures, data typically collected in the setting of the participant, data analysis inductively building from specifics to general themes, and the researcher interprets the sense of the data (Creswell, 2009).

### ***3.1.1 Rational for qualitative research approach***

Other scholars have employed similar qualitative approaches through action research and case studies and these have been acknowledged as appropriate techniques to explore such phenomena (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011). The use of quantitative methods was considered inappropriate in order to conduct in-depth investigation of an organization and ascertain the richness of information considered necessary. This research required an insightful and detailed description of characteristics associated with principles of governance, administration and structure with research outcomes that were largely inductively determined. It is for this reason that a qualitative method was chosen for this research study, which typically involved consideration of subject matter which is by no means easy to quantify.

The research was of an exploratory nature and therefore I adopted a qualitative method for data collection. In-depth interviews were used in finding out the good governance principles being undertaken in the AFC. The qualitative research method is commonly used in empirical researches. Ingram & O'Boyle (2018) used qualitative method by conducting interviews with the boards of directors in Australian NSO's to examine the corporate governance issues. O'Boyle & Shilbury (2018) employed an empirical qualitative study to shed light on enablers and barriers in sport governance with a particular focus on the behaviors and actions of those charged to govern. Madhushani & Wijethisa (2017) in their study focusing on the problem of responsibility in developing sports activities and to implementing good governance in the particular organizations, also used qualitative research approach.

It is suitable to use the qualitative research method because fewer assumptions are placed on the issue being studied, which is great for exploratory research. Since not everything can be quantified easily, the qualitative research method helps examine individual views and experience in more depth (Cresswell, 2013). Rich details can be acquired from the interviewees, including their real feelings and views towards issues and information about the boards and the organizations (O'Boyle & Shilbury, 2018).

The in-depth interview is appropriate because the inner board practices are quite complex. With one-on-one interviews, there is time for the respondents to further give reasons on individual point of views and ideas from one respondent do not influence the thoughts of other respondents. Without being influenced by the opinions of others, this increases the quality of the information obtained.

## **3.2 Data Collection**

It is essential to understand what data constitutes of and what kind of data is important to be collected, as to answer the research questions set earlier. Cresswell (2013) in that sense outlines that the data collection steps include setting the boundaries for the study, collecting information through unstructured or semi-structured interviews, documents review, and visual materials, as well as establishing the protocol for recording information. David & Sutton (2011) described data as the output or a product of research, as opposed to something the researcher collects. With this understanding of what data is, the sections below describes the ways data will be obtained.

### ***3.2.1 Document review***

Based on available tools for measuring the level of governance practices in international sports organization, I adopted BIBGIS model developed by Chappalet & Mrkonjic (2013) for measuring the current level of governance practices in the AFC sports system in the first phase of research. In order to evaluate organization's current governance state a total of 6 documents equating to 394 pages were collected, such as AFC Statutes, organization regulations, doping policies, annual reports, Disciplinary and Ethics code and available data of the AFC website was reviewed.

### ***3.2.2 Interviews***

Interview is described as a situation which questions are asked from interviewee by the interviewer. It also includes listening to the respondent and sometimes answering their prompt questions (David & Sutton, 2011). Interviews may

take different form depending on the objectives and goals of the research and its questions.

For this study I conducted one face-to-face and 3 telephone interviews with the participants. As suggested by Cresswell (2013), in order to elicit views and opinions from the participants, open-ended, semi-structured questions were asked. However, knowing the context of the research, participants were rather passive and implicit in their answer. Despite this difficulty, I was able to extract the information that was valuable.

### ***3.2.3 Research participants***

In order to obtain a better and clearer understanding of governance practices in the AFC, I have recruited participants from the AFC's top, middle and lower management employees. Initially, I planned to undertake at least six in-depth semi-structured interviews. Therefore, I sent e-mail to the AFC's Communication Department requesting to conduct recruit eight interviewees. However, only three employees agreed to take part in this research. The other participant was a stakeholder, who is regional representative of Lagardère Sports and Entertainment, which is AFC's media partner who runs all media channels of the organization. Below is the basic information about participants:

**Table 3***Basic information about participants*

<i>Participants</i>	<i>Position</i>	<i>Gender</i>	<i>Years of experience</i>
Participant 1	AFC Competition Committee member	Male	9 years
Participant 2	AFC Commissioner	Male	4,5 years
Participant 3	AFC Competitions Department	Male	5 years
Participant 4	Stakeholder / Lagardere Sport	Male	3 years

The names of the chosen participants were not mentioned in order to provide and ensure confidentiality and anonymity.

### **3.3 Interview questions**

As mentioned earlier, this research implements interviews as a main techniques to gather data. This method of collecting data is usually carried out in a structured way where output depends upon the ability of the interviewer to a large extent (Seadle, 2010). When using semi-structured interviews, the researcher may encourage an informal conversation covering some themes and questions. These questions may vary from one interview to the next, and the order in which questions are asked may also vary. Interviews involved semi-structured questions that are few in number and intended to elicit views and opinions from the participants (Creswell, 2009).

Research questions were aimed to get the data about what is the governance in sport organizations and how employees understand the governance process. The

interview guide consist of 12 semi-structured interview questions to catch out employer's attitude about good governance of sport organizations.

The interview questions were designed accurately to identify good governance principles within the organization mainly using BIBGIS model developed by Chappalet & Mrkonjic (2013). Questions were also designed using previous studies done by Shilbury, Ferkins & Liz (2012), Adriaanse & Schofield (2014) and Thibault, Kihl & Babiak (2010).

I used the thematic analysis to process the data which was collected through the interviews. The interview recordings were transcribed and reviewed and then transcribed data was transferred into thematic map which developed by myself (*please refer to Table-4*). Already during the interview process the duplications of certain themes were expected.

Below are the 12 semi structured questions categorized into three sections in order to be able answering research questions structured for this study. They are based on the sport governance literature noted above.

№	Interview questions developed based on categories	Based on
<i>Perception of good governance</i>		
1	In your opinion, what do you think good governance is?	Chappalet & Mrkonjic (2013)
2	How important do you think it is to have good governance for a sport organization?	
3	To what extend do you think AFC reaches good governance practices?	
<i>Good governance principles being practiced</i>		
4	What kind of good governance principles/methods are being practiced in the AFC? Could you tell some examples?	Shilbury, Ferkins & Liz (2012)  Bradbury (2013)
5	In the AFC, how the level of good governance is measured? (ex. surveys, questionnaires and etc.)	
6	Which good governance principles/methods are being practiced at AFC the best?	
7	How crucial do you think it is to have gender balance in sport organization? What about reporting transparency?	
8	Are there any employees who are responsible for practice/implementation of good governance in the AFC?	
9	How often does AFC review its good governance practices?	
<i>Challenges and opportunities</i>		
10	What do you think are the barriers for better governance in the AFC?	Adriaanse & Schofield (2014)  Thibault , Kihl & Babiak (2010)
11	There is no committee that represent athletes'/coaches' interest in the AFC. What do you think about stakeholder involvement in decision making process?	
12	What do you think could be done to improve good governance in the AFC?	

### **3.4 Ethical considerations**

Informing research participants about the overall purpose of the investigation and the main features of the design, and also any possible risks and benefits from participation in the research project. Informed consent further involves obtaining the voluntary participation of the people involved and informing them of their rights to withdraw from the study at any time. Through briefing and debriefing the participants should be informed about the purpose and the procedures of the research project. This also includes information about confidentiality and who will have access to interview or other material, the researcher's right to publish the whole interview or parts of it, and the participant's possible access to the transcription and the analysis of the qualitative data. (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2015).

#### **3.4.1 Confidentiality**

Confidentiality in research refers to agreements with participants about what might be done with the data that arise from their participation. Most often it suggests that private data identifying the participants will not be disclosed. Brinkmann & Kvale (2015) outlined that it should be made clear before the interviewing who will later have access to the interviews or the responses from them.

In order to assure the confidentiality of the obtained data from the participants, I has from the DTM program director to provide support letter that guarantees confidentiality of the respondents (*please refer to Appendix-2*).

### 3.5 Data analysis

The first step was documents analysis that are publicly available and the findings were applied to BIBGIS (Chappalet & Mrkonjic, 2013) tool which that consists of 7 dimensions: *Organizational transparency, reporting transparency, stakeholder's representation, democratic process, control mechanism, sport integrity* and *solidarity*, each of them with 9 indicators (total 63 indicators) of good governance. The scoring is based on a Lickert-type scale ranging from 0 to 4 depending on how clear and available documents are. And then interviews transcripts followed. For this study I adapted thematic analysis approach in order to examine the data obtained from the interviews. Braun & Clarke (2006) stated that thematic analysis is widely used in qualitative research method. They argue that the goal of thematic analysis is to find out themes/patterns in the data which is important and/or interesting, and use these themes to address the research or an issue. Braun & Clarke (2006) provided six-step guide that is very crucial for conducting this type of research. They are as followed:

**Step 1:** Familiarization of data – transcribing, reading and re-reading the data, writing down initial codes and ideas.

**Step 2:** Generating initial codes – coding interesting and important patterns of the data, assembling data relevant to each code.

**Step 3:** Identifying themes – organizing codes into potential themes, gathering all data relevant to each potential theme.

**Step 4:** Reviewing themes – checking if the themes work in relation to the coded extracts, generating a thematic ‘map’ of the analysis.

**Step 5:** Defining themes – ongoing analysis to refine the specifics of each theme, and the overall story the analysis tells, generating clear definitions and names for each theme.

**Step 6:** Finalizing with write-up – selection of vivid, persuasive derived examples, final analysis of selected extracts, relating back of the analysis to the research question and literature.

### **3.6 Qualitative research strategies**

In qualitative research study strategies are procedures that qualitative researchers use to demonstrate the accuracy of their findings and convince readers of this accuracy (Cresswell, 2009). The trustworthiness of qualitative research generally is often questioned by positivists, because their concepts of validity and reliability cannot be addressed in the same way in naturalistic work.

Sandelowski (1993) argued that issues of validity in qualitative studies should be linked not to ‘*truth*’ or ‘*value*’, but rather to ‘*trustworthiness*’, as it becomes a matter of persuasion whereby the scientist is viewed as having made those practices visible and therefore auditable.

Anney (2014) recommends that qualitative researchers adopt the trustworthiness criteria and strategies mentioned above as this will improve the believability of

qualitative inquiry. In order to ensure trustworthiness of the data, the following strategies were be employed:

**1. Triangulation of data** – data was collected through multiple sources to include interviews and document analysis. Triangulation helps to reduce bias and it cross examines the integrity of participants’ responses.

**2. Member checking** – the informant was served as a check throughout the analysis process. An ongoing dialogue regarding my interpretations of the informant’s reality and meanings ensures the truth value of the data. The purpose of doing member checks is to eliminate researcher bias when analyzing and interpreting the results.

**3. Peer examination** – during peer examination I discussed my research process and findings with doctoral student from Physical Education Department, Ms. Kim Yun-jeon, who has experience of qualitative research and is doing her research with the same method.

## **Chapter 4. Results & Findings**

The main objectives of the study were to acquire more knowledge of the current situation in the AFC in terms of good governance, barriers hindering from better governance, as well as improvement opportunities for organization. Therefore this chapter discusses the findings of the study in response to research questions:

1. What are the Asian Football Confederation employees' perception on good governance?
2. How do employees perceive the current state of good governance in the Asian Football Confederation?
3. In which ways the Asian Football Confederation can meet better governance principles?

This chapter is divided into two phases: results of documents analysis applied to BIBGIS and findings based on interviews. Firstly, in order to evaluate organization's current governance state a total of 6 documents equating to 394 pages were collected, such as AFC Statutes, organization regulations, doping policies, annual reports, Disciplinary and Ethics code and other data that was available on the AFC website during this research. Then based on document review all data was applied to BIBGIS model developed by Chappalet & Mrkonjic (2013).

Secondly, the interviews were conducted with the AFC employees and representatives. The collected data was examined using thematic analysis as it provides a flexible and useful research instrument to generate categories and match similar thematic elements across the research participants.

#### **4.1. Demographics of research participants**

The data was collected using interviews with participants. A total of 4 participants took part in the research. The ages of participants ranged from 28 to 37 years old. In terms of academic achievements, all of the interviewees possessed bachelor's degree. Three of them majored in Journalism, the other one in Business Administration.

Two of the participants had been working in football administration for more than 10 years, in the AFC 9 and 4 years. The other two had been working in football administration for 5 years and in the AFC 3 years (*please refer to Table-3*). The names of the chosen participants were not mentioned in order to provide and ensure confidentiality and anonymity of participants.

#### **4.2 Measuring quality of good governance**

Measuring the state or quality of good governance is rooted in comparative and development studies. Norris (2011) suggested that organization's principles/indicators should be measured by external or internal experts applying their own qualitative assessment. For example, starting with information on the international sport organization's website or any other accessible source of data such as, bye-laws, organizational structure, statutes and so on. And it ought to be completed with the scoring with one's knowledge of the organization.

As such, Chappalet & Mrkonjic (2013) developed BIBGIS model that consists of 7 dimensions: Organizational transparency, reporting transparency, stakeholder's representation, democratic process, control mechanism, sport integrity and solidarity,

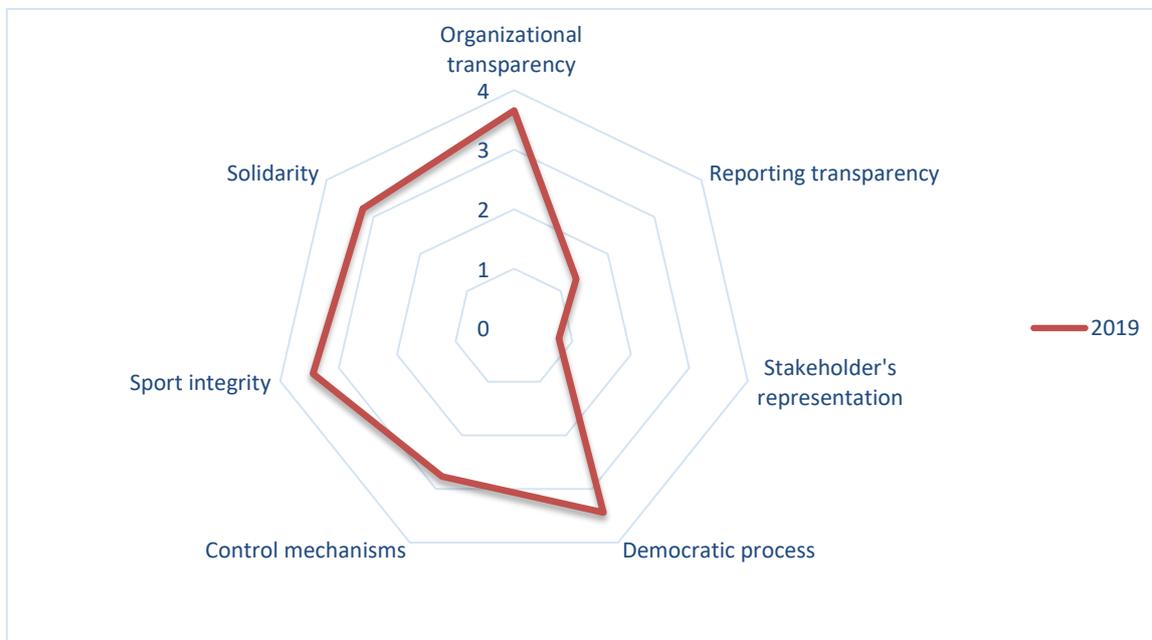
each of them with 9 indicators (total 63 indicators) of good governance. The scoring is based on a Lickert-type scale ranging from 0 to 4. The authors applied the BIBGIS model to the FIFA and the IOC and scored on the basis of their knowledge of these two sport governing bodies and externally available governing documents.

#### ***4.2.1 Application of BIBGIS to the AFC***

I also applied the BIBGIS on the AFC based on my knowledge and documents that are available on the organization's website up to the date the research was conducted (mid-November 2019). Documents equating to 394 pages such as AFC Statutes, Organization regulations, Doping policies, annual reports, Disciplinary and Ethics code were collected and reviewed. Consequently, after having added all the scores of the BIBGIS indicators applied to the AFC the following diagram can be drawn (*for detailed score of each dimension please refer to Appendix-1*).

**Figure 1**

*BIBGIS applied to the AFC<sup>1</sup>*



As per the figure above, none of the dimensions have an absolute score. However, **organizational transparency** had the highest score of **3.66** which indicates that the AFC is transparent in terms of disclosing general information about its organizational structure, providing related legal documents and bye-laws as well as its annual activities.

The second highest score was **democratic process** and **sport integrity**, both scoring **3.44**. In the AFC, integrity is cornerstone to the organization's Vision and Mission Having recognized the huge danger of match-fixing to Asian football, the AFC has implemented integrity measures with the aim to prevent, detect and respond to match-fixing in the continent. In December 2016, the AFC Executive Committee

<sup>1</sup> For detailed information on scoring, please refer to Appendix – 1

approved a whistleblower policy that has been named as “Do the Right Thing” policy that aims to improve governance in Asian continent.

As far as democratic process is concerned, the AFC strives to show openness and hear its Member Associations, giving opportunity to all the MA’s across the continent to have at least one member in the committees, setting limits to the terms of service for the President and Executive Committee members. Organizations publishes decisions made by the Congress and matters discussed in the meetings. Nevertheless, there is an enormous lack of gender balance in the Executive Committee. There are only 5 females out of 28 members in ExCo and it creates several questions, because FIFA has clear regulations in terms of gender balance which to be discussed in the following chapter.

The weakest dimension among others was **stakeholder representation** with the score of **0.77**. None of the athletes, coaches, agents or referees represent any of the bodies in the AFC. Neither does media partners, commercial partners (sponsors, supplier), sport fans, supporters, and volunteers.

Further, **reporting transparency** also found to be quite weak having **1.33** score. The AFC lacks to provide information on compensation benefits and/or salary of its President, financial allowances of its board members, salaries and benefits of its senior managers and amount of income tax paid and to whom.

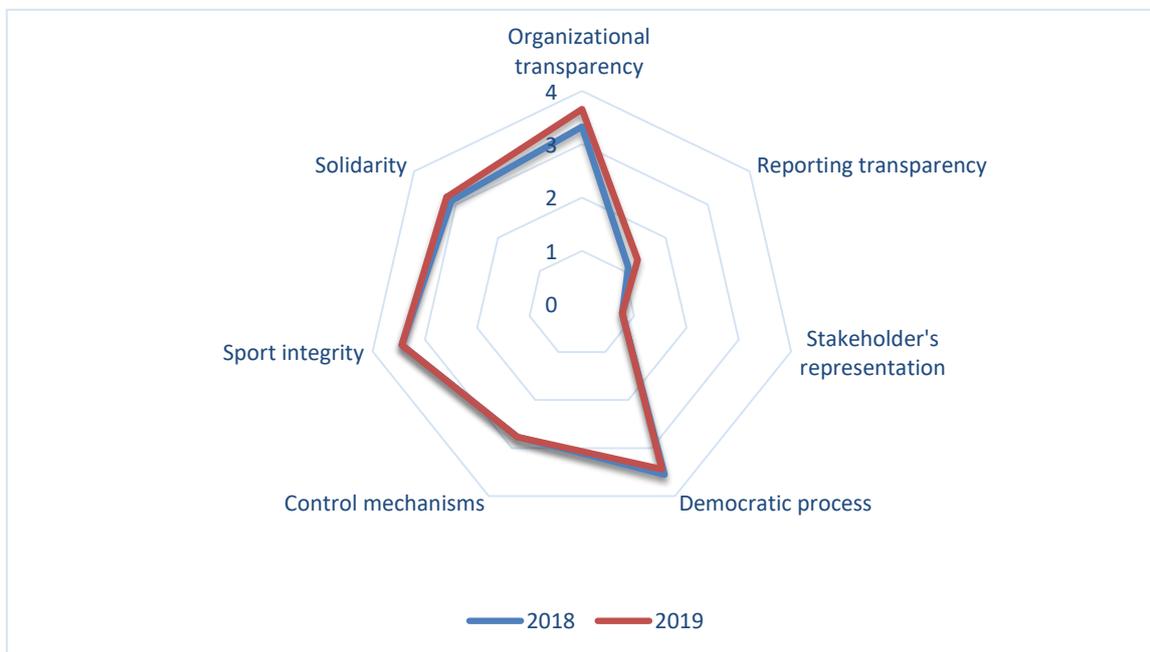
Last but not least, **solidarity** has scored **3.22**, which relatively high and **control mechanism’s** score was **2.77** which is above average.

#### 4.2.2 Comparison

The next step on the research was to find out whether there was any improvement in the AFC compared to last year same period (mid-November 2018). I had analysis of the same model in 2018 November and below is the spider chart of the BIBGIS applied to the AFC and compared to as of November 2019.

**Figure 2**

*Comparison of the AFC in 2018 and 2019<sup>2</sup>*



According to Figure–2, the AFC has slightly improved its governance in some of the BIBGIS dimensions. For instance, in 2018 **organizational transparency** had score of **3.33** (compared to **3.66** in 2019). The AFC improved in terms of publishing information on its website about an annual activity report with all competitions

<sup>2</sup> For detailed information on scoring and comparison, please refer to Appendix – 1

calendar attached and available to download. Though insignificant, organization has shown an effort to improve its current state of governance. **Reporting transparency** has also slightly gone up from *1.11* to *1.33* with the disclosure of basic financial statement available on the website, but still has huge gap from being at least above average. **Stakeholder representation (0.77)**, **control mechanisms (2.77)** and **sport integrity (3.44)** throughout the year remained the same with no improvement or deterioration caused.

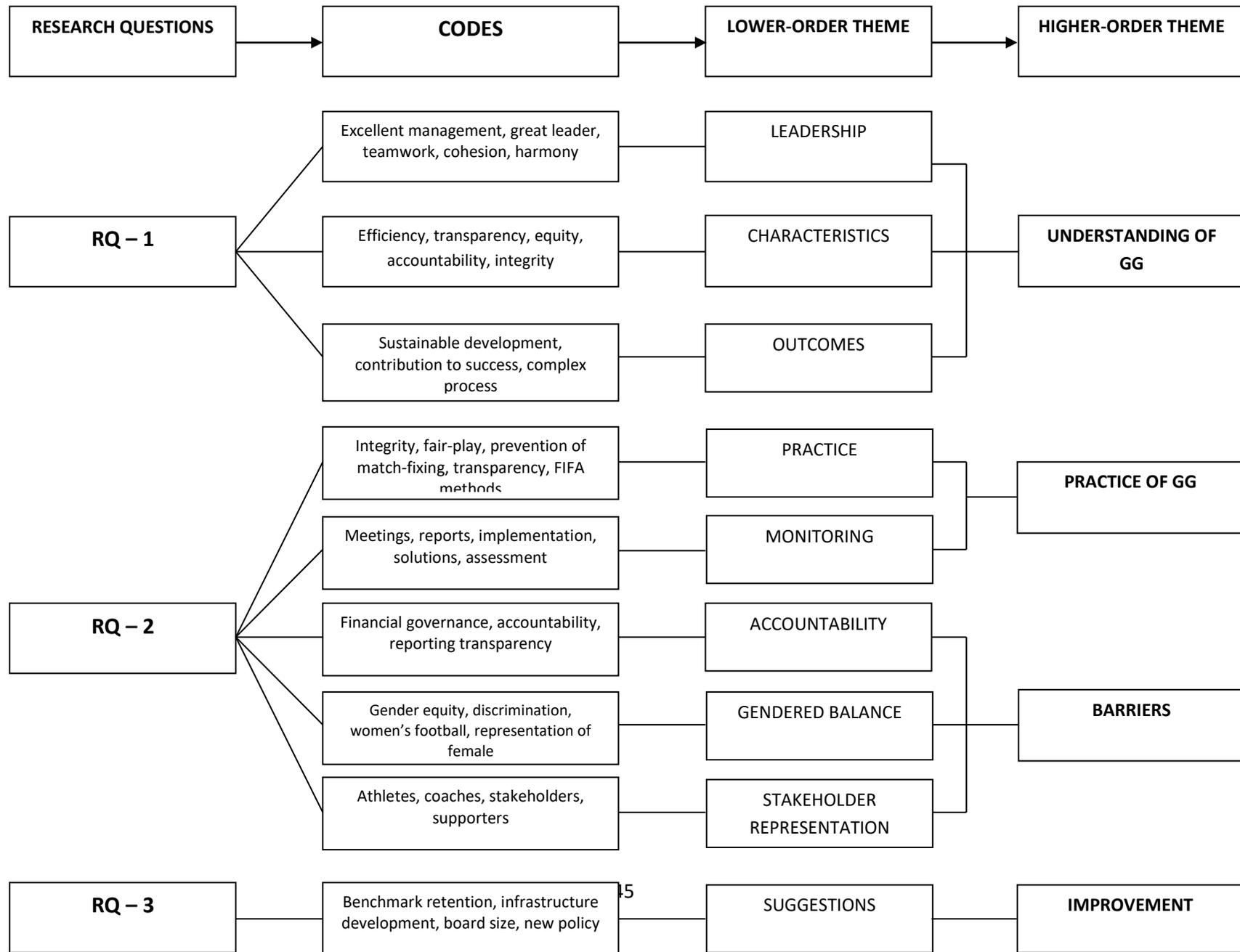
Surprisingly, one of the strongest governance dimensions in the AFC – **democratic process** had degradation during the past year. Total score went down from *3.55* in 2018 to *3.44* in 2019. The reason for having lower score was worsening representation of female members in the Executive Committee. In 2018 there were 5 female members out of 28 (18.5% representation) compared to 4 out of 28 (14.8%) in 2019 (please refer to Appendix–3)

### **4.3 Interview analysis**

In analyzing interviews, a thematic analysis technique was employed to identify to what extent the AFC employees understand, perceive and practice good governance. The results produced three main themes: Understanding and perception good governance, good governance practices and challenges and improvements. The results are also presented under with sub-themes. In order to thoroughly comprehend how themes were developed, I provide a summary of keywords and themes below:

**Table 4**

*Thematic map of analysis*



#### 4.4 Understanding of good governance

In order to find out the answer for RQ–1 of the research, interviews were aimed to identify whether respondents had any understanding of good governance and how much was important to have it in the sport organization. Interviews revealed that research participants had peculiar understanding and their own vision of good governance.

Jedlicka (2018) suggested that the word ‘governance’ can be used as a synonym for ‘management’, indicating that good governance can be achieved through decision-making process and devotion to moral standards. Similarly, Participant–1 mentioned that good governance is the proper way of management as it starts from the top and then disseminates below:

*In my opinion, good governance is all about having excellent management in organization with the great leader at the top and his well-organized team that work in harmony striving every day to contribute to the betterment of the workplace and also aiming to provide efficiency and success to the whole organization. Proper allocation of resources, I believe, is also part of good governance.*  
(Participant–1)

The above statement matches with Chelladurai (2005) research where the author stated that sport organizations are in need of good leaders from who have the capabilities of managing the performance of their organization and developing their strategic goals. Wherever they come from, one of the biggest challenges for sport

organizations is to ensure that their current and future managers have the necessary governance skills to lead in the sport industry of the twenty-first century.

Several scholars and institutions (Henry & Lee, 2004; Council of Europe, 2005; IOC, 2008; Chappalet & Mrkonjic, 2013) defined the concept of good governance in sport and have come up with principles and dimension. Some of the principles of good governance was reflected in Participant–3 response:

*Good governance is the commitment to creating a governance system, which can be founded in justice and peace that protects individual's rights and is accountable for all the actions to its stakeholders. In today's globalization, not only the sport organizations, but also small entities should acknowledge the importance of governance as a part of their agendas for their sustainable development. (Participant–3)*

Another participant of the research has described good governance as the complex process that leads to success and better image of the organization:

*To me good governance is complex process that organization should consider about when reaching its goals, mission and vision. In order to have good governance organizations need to be efficient, provide equity among employees and be transparent not only to its stakeholders, but to public as well. (Participant–4)*

From the responses of the interviewees, it is obvious that employees of the AFC have proper understanding of good governance. Further, respondents provided their insights in terms of the importance of good governance in sport organization. Following sub-theme shows their views on aforementioned subject.

#### ***4.4.1 Importance of good governance in sport organization***

Participants of the research were asked about the importance of good governance in sport organization. Chappelet & Mrkonjic (2013) noted that scandals related to corruption, doping incidents, and match fixing in sport together with mismanagement and lack of efficiency within sport organizations have resulted the need for good governance. As such, Participant–3 shared his view to what extent it is important to have good governance.

*Good governance is the foundation of the organization. Not having good governance and employees that do not understand that is going to lead to the failure. To me, it is number 1 aspect that organization has to consider about. (Participant–4)*

Another respondent pointed out the significance of the good governance in the following statement:

*Good governance is crucial to the sport organization to maintain an ‘open door’ policy, understand the views and opinions of society and stakeholders. A success of any organizations lies inside good governance through unity and stability. And in today’s sport, where there are a lot of complex issues, good governance helps to overcome obstacles that any organizations might face. (Participant–3)*

#### **4.5 Good governance principles being practiced**

This theme identifies the answer for RQ–2 which was aimed to explore the employees’ perception on the current state of good governance in the AFC and find out barriers that hinder organization from better governance. This theme covers participants’ responses on the principles being practiced within the Asian Football

Confederation. It is followed by two sub-themes: measurement and implementation, and barriers of good governance.

Bradbury (2013) suggested that the principles, methods and conditions that exist within a sport organization must be examined before the board can make decision on the most suitable form of governance for the organization. As a result, there is a need for these organizations to advance from simply performing administration to being held accountable through a responsible governance principles/methods. Thus, governance has become an important issue within sport.

In order to identify the current state of good governance in the AFC, participants were asked what kind of good governance principles are practiced in organization.

Participant–3 stated the following:

*In the recent years, AFC have gradually presented more interest in making football more accountable with respect to matters of good governance. Our organization approved a new range of good governance practices such as setting a minimum quota of female Executive Committee members, increasing age limit of ExCo members to 70 years. We introduced a non-executive President system with an empowered General Secretary and team of high-level Directors acting without day-to-day political influence, in order to separate the politics from the operational activities. (Participant–3)*

The AFC, in fact, had reformed its democratic process principles by increasing age limit to 70 years not only for Executive Committee members, but for President of the organization (The AFC, 2016). On a similar note, Participant–2 ensured that the AFC is working towards improvement through bringing integrity:

*Our organization has been maintaining highest standards of integrity and now is paying more attention on improving the level of governance system. We introduced Entry Control Body to uphold the principles of fair-play and transparency in football. (Participant–2)*

Integrity is one of the strongest principles of good governance in the AFC. With the high threat of match-fixing in Asian continent, the AFC has implemented integrity measures with the aim to stop, detect and react to match-fixing in the continent. In 2016 they also launched a whistleblower policy that is called “Do the Right Thing” (The AFC, 2016). The interviews have shown that the AFC is working closely with several organizations and institutions in order to improve its level of good governance. As such, Participant–4 revealed the following:

*In order to improve our current state of good governance, we are trying to create new policies and working close with several organizations and experts, such as WADA, Sportradar, ICSS (International Centre for Sport Security) and football bodies like FIFA, UEFA and FIFPro to apply good governance methods into action. (Participant–4)*

Participant–1 also mentioned that the Asian Football Confederation is following its parent organization FIFA and working in adjacent with it:

*AFC has peculiar methods of practicing good governance like FIFA. FIFA has always been exemplary for our organization. We are always trying to follow FIFA in terms of good governance practices. With the support of FIFA we have been fostering good financial governance in developing countries, where football needs resources. (Participant–1)*

Responses from the interviewees have generated assumption that AFC is working closely with FIFA (providing its AFC’s parent organization) and follows its

good governance methods. However, I found that FIFA has its own good governance principles which are *neutrality, prohibition, independence, avoidance, performance, regulation, and constitution*. Interestingly, none of the participants mentioned these particular principles to be practiced within the AFC. **Article 23 of the FIFA Statutes** requires Confederations' statutes to comply with principles of good governance (FIFA, 2018). In relation to monitoring and control, Yeh and Taylor (2008) suggest that a good system of governance "should" include the power to impose penalties on individuals or groups who are not complying with responsibilities.

#### ***4.5.1 Measurement and monitoring***

In addition to the perception of the current state of good governance in the AFC, the respondents were asked if there are any tools or methods to measure/review organizations good governance. Thus, Participant-1 stated that weekly meetings with General Secretary was the way to assess level of good governance in the organization.

*General Secretary once a week gathers his secretariat and all departments. He is provided with the report of what has been done within the past week and they seek for the solution to the existing issues. Every head of department has to participate in weekly meeting. All tasks are assigned by the General Secretary and are disseminates the other levels of the management in hierarchical order. (Participant-1)*

Participant-4 explained the ways how should governance be measured by the following statement: "*Governance should be measured by the several factors, such as rule of law, transparency, responsiveness and accountability.*"

Reflecting on their experience working with AFC, participants of the research indicated that General Secretariat and HR Department are the once monitoring good governance.

*General Secretariat is responsible for the implementation and assessment of good governance in our organization. However, HR Department partially also takes part in the measurement of good governance and reports to General Secretary. (Participant-3)*

Another remarkable findings was respondents' ignorance or lack of knowledge about Governance Task Force (GTF) within the organization. Established in 2014 as AFC Governance Reform Task Force and renamed as AFC Governance Task Force in 2017, it consists of four people: Deputy Chairperson and other three members. It is clearly stated that *"The objective of the task force is to achieve best practices in transparency, accountability, democracy, organizational structure, financial governance, commercial rights, selection of hosts of the competition and events, ethical and integrity matters* (The AFC, 2014). It can be assumed that participants were not aware of the existence of such working group. It is not surprising, provided there were only 10 GTF related news published in AFC's website and with the last one being published in 2017.

## **4.6 Barriers for better governance**

After FIFA was exposed with the cases of corruption, vote-fixing, fraud and money laundering in 2015, closer attention than ever before was given to international and national sport organizations, especially to football governing bodies. The case of FIFA has brought agenda to professional sports in respect to how they are governed. Bradbury (2013) argued that lack of a proper structure of governance can eventually cause in shortcomings within the sport organization through poor policy making and poor decision making processes.

### ***4.6.1 External factors***

In the light of aforementioned matters, interviewees were asked about the factors that hinder from better governance in the Asian Football Confederation. Respondents believe that lack of infrastructure, political instability, gender disbalance, government interference, corruption, match-fixing, vote-fixing in the Congress are the main barriers and threats to achieve better governance.

Participant–1 indicated:

*The biggest problem that Asian continent – lack of infrastructure. Today in Asia there are only 14 countries that can host Asian Champions League matches, which is the most prestigious tournament in club competition. Countries like Pakistan, Tajikistan, Brunei, Kyrgyzstan and Iraq cannot host Champions League games due to lack of infrastructure and inability to meet standards set by the AFC.*

In governmental level, infrastructure development is one of the bases of assessing the achievements of democratic leaders and it is the foundation of good

democratic governance. The challenges of infrastructure development are numerous and include finance, technology for development, maintenance and project (Oyedele, 2012). However, the evidence upon which this is based has not been articulated or supported in the academic literature relating to sport organizations and governance.

Participant-1 further went on explaining other factors that effect on good governance of the organization:

*Endless political instability another cause that hinder AFC from better governance. For instance, Iran and Saudi Arabia, Qatar and Saudi Arabia has bad bilateral relationship. Because of that matches of these two representative countries cannot be hosted in their home country. Based on that, AFC has to make difficult decision, which may affect its good governance and puts under the question.*

In accordance with art.3, par.2 of the AFC Statutes, AFC is neutral in matters of politics and religion. It is in compliance with FIFA Statutes art.22, par.3 (a). AFC is beyond any power in occurrence of political instability in the continent and has clear regulations from FIFA (Statutes art.15, par.3) being independent and avoiding of any form of political interference. Rather, in order to maintain the competition in the region, AFC upon request, otherwise provides Kuala Lumpur city where its headquarters is located as neutral zone for politically effected countries to play matches.

Other participant indicated that government interference is negative factor when it comes to provision of good governance.

*Government or a third party interference lead to the suspension of the associations and disqualify them from participating in any of the competitions under the flag of AFC and FIFA. Cases of Indonesia, Kuwait and Pakistan are the examples of a third party interference. We cannot be involved in resolution of this kind of matters, as we need to comply with FIFA Statutes. In these immediate suspension comes from FIFA. AFC cannot dispute any decisions coming from FIFA, we are highly dependent on our parent organization. (Participant–3)*

#### **4.6.2 Gendered representation**

Although over the past couple of decades women's participation in the sports has remarkably enlarged, females are still under-represented in senior management and sport governing bodies (Adriaanse & Schofield, 2014). Secondary data analysis has revealed that in the AFC democratic process deteriorated due to lack of gender balance (*please refer to Figure 2 and Appendix-1*). When participants asked about the significance of gender balance in sport organization, all of them agreed it is crucial to have equal female representation in the boards. As thus, Participant–1 has stated that the AFC is working on increasing the role of the females within the organization:

*In today's globalized world, gender balance is very important issue that has to be considered seriously. Preciously, AFC used to hire more men than women. However, lately our organization encourages involvement of women. Recently, there was unprecedented case, where women was appointed as head of department. AFC is trying to work on increasing number of women employees. We were was the first confederation that had women in their ExCo. There are also Women's Football Department that entirely consist of females. It's difficult for me to say how many percent of women are employed in the AFC, but I know that*

*organization is trying to make gender balance as suggested by FIFA.  
(Participant–1)*

In 2015, chair of FIFA Task Force for Women’s Football Moya Dodd submitted proposal to FIFA Reform Committee on enhancing female representation in decision making (FIFA, 2015). The proposal is shown below.

**Table 5**

*Minimum levels of gender balance proposed by FIFA Task Force for Women’s Football*

	<b>Governing body</b>	<b>Implementation instrument</b>
1	FIFA ExCo: 20% (1 woman per Confederation immediately, or 6/30)	FIFA Statutes
2	Confederation ExCos: by end 2016 (or at the next Congress thereafter) enact measures to reach 20% gender balance in ExCo by end 2018 (or next Congress thereafter)	FIFA Statutes, Confederation Statutes
3	MA ExCos: by end 2016 (or at the next Congress thereafter) enact measures to reach 20% gender balance in ExCo by end 2018 (or next Congress thereafter)	FIFA Standard Statutes MA Statutes
4	Club Boards: 20% gender balance in ExCo by end 2019	MA league statutes/ regulations. FIFA club licensing regulations
5	FIFA, Confederation and MA Standing Committees: target 20% gender balance by 2018 (or next Congress thereafter)	FIFA, Confederation and MA Statutes; FSS
6	FIFA, Confederation and MA Standing Committees: target 20% gender balance by 2018 (or next Congress thereafter)	Gender inclusion guidelines (new)

In 2017, FIFA Governance Committee in its first meeting also stressed the importance of ensuring appropriate female representation on FIFA's committees. FIFA have implemented representation of 1 women per Confederation in its Executive Committee. However, no other suggestions of the proposal have been followed or implementation. It was suggested that Confederations should have at least 20% of gender balance by 2018 or at the next Congress.

Another participant shared about the discrimination case that happened in FIFA being a lesson for gender balance to be learned from:

*Gender balance and discrimination is very crucial and sensitive issue. There was a case on discrimination in FIFA. A woman working in the same position as the other man got paid less. The women filed the case against the employer and this case has brought attention to lots of organizations. She was heard. (Participant-3)*

Participant-4 on a similar note stressed the importance of gender equality and revealed that having more women in the organization enhances performance and sustainability:

*The question of gender balance is one the primary challenges in contemporary sport, but a lot of sport organizations around the world are not performing well enough in this matter. Today, gender equality guidelines must be main part of democratic process in terms of good governance in the organization. Studies conducted in the matter of women representation have shown that employing more female increases organization performance and efficiency. (Participant-4)*

Participant–2 has brought my attention with his response to the importance of gender balance in sport organization. He revealed that in the AFC there is no agenda in increasing the number of female members in Executive Committee: *“To my knowledge, there is not any agenda on increasing the number of women in ExCo. Because this year (2019) AFC Congress has been held and the ExCo members were elected. They are going to remain the same until 2023.”*

In fact, on 6 April 2019 AFC held its 29<sup>th</sup> Congress where new members of the Executive Committee and other Committees were elected (for some Committees members were appointed by nomination from Member Associations). After the Congress, number of female representatives went down from 5 to 4 (from 18.5% lowered to 14.8%). The findings lead to the assumption that AFC employees are well-aware of the importance of having gender balance in organization. However, none of them spoke about the solutions to reach to the desired level of gendered representation.

#### **4.6.3 Accountability**

The principle of accountability includes the possibility of accessing relevant information concerning the organization, clear external communication, as well as external auditing and monitoring (Maennig, 2017). Therefore, accountability is at the base of each democratic concept, preventing corruption as well as the overall misuse of power in managing people. When secondary analysis exposed poor accountability in terms of reporting finance based information, participants of the research provided their insights on the above mentioned issue.

In this sense, one of the participants explained nuances of not reporting financial figures and salaries of the employees, managers and ExCo members to the public:

*Although AFC does not report information about the salary to the public, within organization they know how much is an individual paid. However, there is a reason AFC does not report the salary of employees. Because everyone is paid different. For instance, a specialist from Japan working in the AFC earns more than someone from Tajikistan. Because the employee from less developed country is ready to work for less amount of money. In order to avoid conflicts within the AFC, they do not report figures of salary. Therefore HR does not disclose this kind of information. I think it's more like socio-cultural aspect not revealing this kind of information. (Participant-1)*

Participant-4 urged that financial accountability is needed to prevent corruption and ensure good governance in the organization:

*Today society urge the organizations to provide financial accountability and transparency, because it is part of their responsibility. And I believe it can lead to good governance. Obviously, professional sport organizations lack in providing thorough details of finances. In order to avoid suspicions, sports organizations should develop proper disclosure requirements, including financial reporting, and adequately communicate their activities to the general public.*

The principle of transparency and accountability include the possibility of having access to relevant information regarding to the organization, clear external communication, as well as external auditing and monitoring. Geeraert (2016) asserted that accountability is at the base of each democratic governmental concept, stopping corruption as well as the overall misuse of power in managing

people. Nonetheless, reporting transparency is hardly practiced in some of the leading sports organizations. Maennig (2017) opined that financial transparency requires a certain degree of openness of traditionally closed organization structures for external auditors and governmental inspections.

#### **4.6.4 Stakeholders' representation**

Stakeholder representation is another threat for assuring good governance in sport organizations. In today's contemporary sports many organizations failed to involve their stakeholders: mainly athletes, coaches, referees, media partners and sponsors in their decision making process. Analysis of documentation and available data revealed that in the AFC stakeholders are not represented in any committees. There is no athlete's commission or the body that stands for them. Therefore, participants were asked about their thoughts on stakeholder representation and the following statement has been made:

*Committee has several meetings a year and therefore players, head coaches and other entourage cannot participate in meetings. Hence, none of them are involved in any Committees and decision making process. Only ex referees are represented as Committee members in the Referees Committee. Coaches only have conferences to ask their opinion in the matter that is brought to the agenda. But they have no voice in decision making process. Because of the schedule. Players' interest are represented by the club and association. Players can also hire lawyers to defend their interest. (Participant-1)*

Participant-3 indicated that AFC is determined to engage stakeholders in the near future and stated the following: *"To strengthen the spirit of unity across the*

*continent, the AFC is also enhancing its engagements with key stakeholders in the decision-making process.”*

In the similar context, Garcia & Welford (2015) pointed out that football governing bodies in European continent have resisted to identify supporters as legitimate stakeholders, whereas academicians considered fans as stakeholders in sport for decades (Cunningham, 2009). It is argued that opening up to the supporters will not only connect the game to the community, but also to increase transparency and accountability within sport organization (Garcia & Welford, 2015).

#### **4.7 Improvements for better governance**

Lastly, participants of the interviews were asked about future improvements and opportunities in terms of good governance. They have given meaningful insights on how AFC could have better governance in the organization. Participant–3 in this sense has stated the following:

*First of all, AFC should at least continue to keep up the policy of good governance and reforms to make sure the Confederation maintains its current practice of good governance and increase the role of women at all levels, in all areas. It is important to pay attention more attention to key principles like accountability, efficiency, effectiveness, financial management, fighting corruption and provision of more transparency.*  
(Participant–3)

Better gender equality will strengthen critical aspects of soccer governance by creating a better, more diverse environment for decision-making and a society less

vulnerable to bribery. Football being the biggest and most popular sport in the world, has attracted a lot of attention and investment, whereas women's game remain least-developed and less invested. With fair and equal resourcing, football can become the leading sport for women in the world (Dodd, 2015).

Likewise, one of the participants suggested to keep up the standard that has been set by the AFC to practice good governance and added organization should operate with extra care.

*Huge attention would be drawn to the Asia as Qatar is going to host 2022 FIFA World Cup. Therefore AFC has to at least keep the benchmark that they set. Organization has operate carefully, transparently and with justice. In my opinion, expansion of ExCo members would bring more transparency and it would effect on better decision making. (Participant-1)*

Yeh & Taylor (2008) highlighted that with a large board, non-profit organizations can have better capability to access external capitals and can satisfy its stakeholders. Olson (2000) found that there is a positive relationship between board size and contributions. However, in the context of sport governance, little research has been conducted to examine the issue of board size.

Other participant noted that it would be beneficial for AFC to apply new sets of standard and rules in order to prevent future failings:

*Good governance requires some efforts to draft and apply new sets of standards and rules in order to prevent from future failures. Therefore, reformation of the rules and policies are significant steps to develop better governance in the system that sports governing bodies must*

*overcome the issues, but potentially to transform them into an opportunity. Also prevention of vote-fixing in the elections would have added more value towards transparency of the organization. (Participant-4)*

Sport governing bodies in current civilization are faced with numerous performance challenges and issues. Issues of corruption, vote-fixing in committee elections, and unethical behavior for example, and “bad” governance in general, have become identical with some aspects of sport (Hassan, 2010). Closer inspection than ever before is being applied to ensure sport organizations such as International Federations (IFs), national sport organizations and professional sports are following international best practice in respect to how they are governed.

Governance is undoubtedly a central aspect for sport organizations. It is concerned with the development of policy and strategic direction, which directly affects organizational performance (Bradbury, 2013). If an organization adopts appropriate systems of governance, this can facilitate a level of high performance throughout the organization’s various roles and responsibilities.

Another participant suggested to establish policies ensuring gender balance not only in managing and decision making positions, but in the whole organization as well. As such, he stated the following:

*Ensuring women representation in the managing and decision making positions are vital and has to be considered. Establishment of policies within organization having gendered balance would undoubtedly guarantee improvement in governance of the AFC. (Participant-2)*

## **Chapter 5. Discussion & Recommendations**

Data collection and analysis of documents produced better picture of the AFC's employees' understanding of good governance and their perception on the current state of good governance within organization. Barriers and challenges that hinder organization from better governance were also identified. Moreover, interviews revealed in which ways AFC could improve good governance principles. These findings were obtained from document analysis externally available and interviews with AFC employees.

Parent & Hoye (2018) observed that the persistent use of obsolete or unequal governance structures, failure to enforce proper control and balances on board decisions and instances of utter failure to rule led to demands for better governance of sport organizations. It is therefore, current study aimed to find out reasons holding back the Asian Football Confederation from better governance and consequently strived to suggest possible outcomes for betterment of existing barriers in the organization.

This chapter presents analysis of received research results in more details and divided into three section. The first part of the chapter demonstrates the answer to three research questions of the study and discusses findings with the support of relevant literature. Furthermore, in this chapter I will present limitations of the study. Lastly, based on findings and discussion, I will propose suggestions and recommendations for future research.

## 5.1 Understanding of good governance

Increasing interest in the field of governance and sport governance specifically has produced a number of research and studies, thus providing with an extensive range of definitions in relation to governance. A thorough and a single definition of sport governance is yet to be found, it suggests that the matter of governance in sport organizations is very complicated issue.

Chappalet (2018) stated that from early 2000's the government bodies, international and national sport bodies, institutions and academicians have produced more than 30 governance principles for sport organizations. Most notable governance principles were produced by prominent scholars and institutions (Henry & Lee, 2004; Council of Europe, 2005; IOC, 2008; Chappalet & Mrkonjic, 2013; FIFA, 2018). The most widely used principles are: *democracy, transparency, accountability, control mechanisms, independence, stakeholder representation, anti-corruption, gender equity and equality, efficiency* and others.

The results showed that the AFC employees' had mediocre understanding of good governance and its principles according to their answers. Among the responses from the participants, governance principles such as transparency, efficiency and integrity were mentioned the most. In that sense, Bradbury (2013) argues that for sport organizations to become more proficient and to adapt to contemporary environment, there is a need to be more transparent and accountable to their operations, it has become authoritative for all people working in sport to understand what best practice governance is and how it can be achieved.

Interviews have also revealed that employees perceive good governance as having mission and vision of organization and achieving the goals. Similarly, Bradbury (2013) opined good governance is concerned with the development of policy which has effect on organizational performance and its reputation. If an organization adopts suitable principles of governance, this can enable high level of performance throughout the organization.

Interestingly, participants also noted that leadership was one of the principles of good governance. This principle or indicator have not been included in BIBGIS tool developed by Chappalet & Mrkonjic (2013). Therefore, I looked up to find a relation between leadership and governance, it was surprising that the fields of leadership and governance had established with relatively limited interaction between these two areas. Studies that are focused on leadership regularly appear in several academic disciplines, however, the field of sport management has arguably placed less attention on this area in comparison to more established domains of inquiry. Within sport governance in particular, given that the area has in reality only developed into a significant field of research over the past decade, there is a noticeable absence of research focusing on leadership issues (Ferkins, Shilbury, & O'Boyle, 2018).

Erakovic and Jackson (2012) observed that leadership mainly has its origins within the field of psychology, whereas governance research has largely come from disciplines such as accounting, economics and law.

In a recent review of leadership studies and relations to sport management, Welty Peachey et al. (2015) highlighted other areas of sport governance research that have had relationship with issues relating to leadership, including board performance; ethical issues and decision-making; governance and leadership of mega-sport events; and gender equality within non-profit sport organizations. Furthermore, given the allegations of corruption within organizations, such as FIFA and the International Association of Athletics Federations (IAAF), that have received an unprecedented level of media coverage in recent times, Ferkins et al. (2018) anticipated that leadership-based research in relation to international organization will continue to appear.

## **5.2 Current situation in the AFC in terms of good governance**

Document analysis and in-depth interviews with participants have revealed current situation of good governance and principles that are being practiced well. Organizational transparency, democratic process and integrity are well practiced governance principles.

In recent years the AFC has improved its transparency by providing relevant and sufficient information about organization, structure, timely publishing news related to its meeting and others. Parent (2016) described transparency as timely disclosure of information, and it is based on openness, communication, following up decisions, and clearness, which help to build trust and confidence for stakeholders. The AFC also provides all legal documents, bye-laws, sport rules and statutes on its website in PDF format and their available to download. Basic information about senior managers'

biography, organizational chart and outcomes of the meetings held are also available in official website.

In terms of democratic process, The AFC has also gone further than FIFA, including setting an age limit of 70 for the President and all AFC Executive Committee members.

The results also showed good practice of integrity in the organization. In recent years the AFC has progressively improved on providing fair and justice game in Asian football through integrity. Integrity is considered as foundation to the organizations vision and mission. Having recognized the enormous threat of match-fixing to Asian football, the AFC has implemented integrity measures with the aim to prevent, detect and respond to match-fixing in the continent.

Interviews revealed that AFC also formed the Entry Control Body to rule on the eligibility of clubs entering the AFC competitions. Any team found to be directly and/or indirectly involved in any event aimed at arranging or affecting the outcome of a match at national or international level will not qualify for one (1) football season in AFC Competitions.

Further, in December 2016, the AFC Executive Committee approved whistleblower policy called “Do the Right Thing”, which aims to improve governance in Asian football. This policy forms part of the AFC’s reformed and efficient governance structures, and is a solid example of the top-level commitment that the AFC is showing towards governance reform in Asian football.

Based on interviews it was identified that AFC employees had lack of knowledge about existence of Governance Task Force in the organization. Consisting of a chairman and three members, task force was found in 2014 as AFC Governance Reform Task Force and renamed as AFC Governance Task Force in 2017. The objective of the task force is to achieve best practices in transparency, accountability, democracy, organizational structure, financial governance, commercial rights, selection of hosts of the competition and events, ethical and integrity matters.

### **5.3 Barriers hindering AFC from better governance**

Analysis of documents review and interviews with participants have also revealed numerous barriers that are holding back AFC from better governance. Principles such as reporting transparency (accountability), stakeholder representation, gender under-representation and other external factors found to be problematic and attention not being paid well. In this sense, Yeh and Taylor (2008) highlighted that lack of a proper governance can eventually cause inadequacies within the organization through poor policy making and poor decision making. Apart from these internal issues that may arise from “poor” governance, funding withdrawal, patronage, participation, and potential interference from external entities such as government may also arise.

### **External factors**

Based on interviews it was found that factors like infrastructure, political instability in the continent as well as government interference. There is no literature was found to support connection between infrastructure and governance in sport. This could be a future research implication to be thoroughly studied.

Jedlicka (2018) noted while the relationship between sport and international politics may be misunderstood, it is due to lack of academic interest. Research in this area explores issues relating to the political behavior of international sport organizations, the symbiotic relationship between sport and the international system, and perhaps most prominently, the “use” of sport for political purposes across a range of analytical contexts. Sport is often described as a tool used by states to build and project a consistent identity, initiate or upkeep diplomatic activity, and encourage changes in domestic policy. Likewise, international sport competitions are often described as political enticements for states to confirm (or claim) membership of the international community and to draw on the symbolic power of individual and team achievements (Reiche, 2016).

However, in football FIFA discourages any kind of political or government interference among its Confederations and Member Associations. In accordance with art.3, par.2 of the AFC Statutes, AFC is neutral in matters of politics and religion. It is in compliance with FIFA Statutes art.22, par.3 (a). AFC is beyond any power in occurrence of political instability in the continent and has clear regulations from FIFA (Statutes art.15, par.3) being independent and avoiding of any form of political

interference. Thus FIFA provides autonomy and independency to its Confederations and Member Associations. Government interference or involvement in politics results to suspension of respective Member Association.

### **Accountability**

According to the findings, reporting transparency, thus accountability of the AFC was one the weakest dimensions in provision of good governance. The governing body of football in Asia failed to provide detailed annual financial statement, disclosure of senior managers', standing committees' compensation and benefits as well an archival policy to give access to its archives for scholars and media.

Geeraert (2016) argues that principle of accountability includes the possibility of retrieving relevant information about the organization, strong external communication, and external auditing and monitoring. It is at the basis of every democratic concept of government, preventing corruption and the general misuse of power in people management.

Transparency and accountability require external auditing and monitoring, giving not only members, but outsiders of the organization the possibility of legally control checks and balances, posing critical questions and enforcing democratic structures within the company. Pielke (2016) observed that sports organizations' accountability deficits and often increasing profits that could lead to bribery and corruption and also contribute to the decline in a organizations democracy.

In contrast to the AFC's parent organization – FIFA, it provides detailed annual financial report consisting of 150 pages. It provides President's, Secretary General's, ExCo and other managerial members' compensation and benefits (FIFA, 2018).

### **Gender under-representation**

Findings from this study have identified gender balance to be one of the weaknesses of the Asian Football Confederation. It is no surprise that football today is tremendously male oriented – not because women and girls are fundamentally impartial or incompetent, but rather due to decades of institutional and social barriers that preclude them from playing. Today, women's equity in leadership, in technical, administration and governance remains under-represented.

After the Congress in April 2019, number of female representatives in Executive Committee went down from 5 to 4 (from 18.5% lowered to 14.8%). The findings lead to the assumption that AFC employees are well-aware of the importance of having gender balance in organization. However, none of them spoke about the solutions to reach to the desired level of gendered representation

The issue of gender quotas on sport boards has been dynamically debated in past decades within other organizations, including the IOC, arguably the most powerful and prestigious sport organization in the world. In the past recent decades, a growing number of studies have examined the gender inequality in sport governance. Sisjord et al. (2017) asserted despite international and national sport organizations' efforts of many kinds are made in order to level the gender inequalities, females are still under-represented in sport governing bodies.

Chappalet & Mrkonjic (2013) outlined gender balance in executive boards as one of the indicators for better governance. A significant limitation of quotas is that they can be perceived as a maximum rather than a minimum value.

Hartarska and Nadolnyak (2012) found that gender diversity had a positive impact on organizational efficiency. Hoye and Cuskelly (2007) identified a tension for non-profit sport organizations: they need to accept that greater diversity in board size may enable good governance. Authors further emphasized that the composition of the board is critical in good governance of non-profit sport organizations.

Adriaanse & Schofield (2014) noted that in the business domain the ratio of women directors is positively related to board effectiveness and good governance. Furthermore, according to a broad review of research on women directors on organization boards, based on more than 400 publications over the past 30 years (Terjesen et al., 2009), governance in organizations was improved when women were appointed to boards.

The establishment of gender quotas and targets is the most common intervention to increase gender diversity on boards. Although both terms refer to the requirement of a minimum number/percentage of women or of either gender, a key difference is that quotas are mandatory, whereas targets are voluntary. In this sense, Whelan and Wood (2012) argued although quotas may be effective in increasing the presence of women on boards, critics argue that quotas undermine the principle of merit, with many women believing they will be viewed as tokens when they are hired to fulfill a quota.

Based on Gender Balance in Global Sport Report (2016) for IOC, IFs and NOCs and information available on FIFA’s and AFC’s websites, table below shows female representation in boards between 2016 and 2019.

**Table 6**

*Female representation as board members in international sports organizations*

International sport organization	Female board members (in 2016)	Female board members (in 2017)	Female board members (in 2018)	Female board members (in 2019)
<b>IOC</b>	27%	27%	30.8%	33%
<b>NOCs</b>	16.7%	16.6%	-	-
<b>IFs</b>	18%	18%		
<b>FIFA</b>	-	16.2%	16.2%	16.2%
<b>AFC</b>	-	14.8%	18.5%	14.8%

### **Lack of stakeholder’s representation**

From the results derived it has become apparent that Asian Football Confederation is in need for improvement in terms of stakeholder’s representation. It was found to be the weakest dimension among 9 in the BIBGIS. Scholars argue that involvement of stakeholders in decision making process result in more transparency and accountability.

Thibault et al. (2010) highlighted that a significant group of stakeholders in sport, particularly athletes have started to play an increasing role in the development of sport policies and decisions affecting them. Leaders of national and international sport

organizations are increasingly recognizing the prominence of involving stakeholders in the development of policies. In the governance of international high performance sport, an important group of stakeholders includes athletes.

The concepts of democracy and representation at the level of nations, governments and political systems have been applied to the governance context. Instead of transposing these ideas into the governance of non-profit organizations (e.g. IFs), it is believed that recent changes could be better appreciated in sport organizations where high-performance athletes have begun to serve (or are currently serving) more prominent roles in their organizations' governance, especially on organizational issues that directly affecting them. (Thibault, Kihlb, & Babiakc, 2010).

A lack of stakeholder engagement in sport organizations and misunderstanding about stakeholder-governing responsibility was revealed by Ferkins & Shilbury (2015) as the central issue in developing governance proficiency. A history of stakeholder doubt of sport leaders exists wherein many elite athletes feel that their priorities and values are not being represented in key policy decisions.

Garcia & Welford (2015) argued that opening the game up to the supporters will not only connect the game to the community, but also to increase transparency and accountability.

#### **5.4 Opportunities for improvement**

The interviews allowed to explore opportunities for improving current state of governance in the Asian Football Confederation. Infrastructure development, increasing number of members in Executive Committee, establishment of new policies were among most mentioned suggestions from participants.

Governance is clearly a fundamental aspect for sport organizations and concerned with the development of policy and strategic direction, which directly affects organizational performance (Bradbury, 2013). Adoption of suitable systems for governance, can facilitate a level of high performance throughout the organization's various roles and responsibilities.

Good governance requires some efforts to establish and implement new sets of standards and rules in order to avoid from future failures. Therefore, reforming the rules and policies are important steps to develop better governance in the system, which requires sport governing bodies to overcome the issues but potentially turn them into an opportunity.

Development of infrastructure is one of the pillars of assessing the achievements of democracy in the government and it is the basis of good democratic governance. The challenges of infrastructure development are numerous and include finance, technology for development, maintenance and project (Oyedele, 2012). However, the evidence upon which this is based has not been articulated or supported in the academic literature relating to sport organizations and governance. Even though there

is no literature supporting this argument, in general provision and development of infrastructure in the continent would enhance quality of football in Asia.

Participants also suggested increasing the number of Executive Committee members to ensure proper decision making process and performance enhancement. Yeh & Taylor (2008) in their study mentioned that resource dependence theory advocates that a large board has the ability to connect the organization to the external environment and secure critical resources. Zahra & Pearce (1989) asserted that a company with a large board size has a better ability of understanding and responding to the stakeholders. Goodstein et al. (1994) suggested that large boards are not strong as in-depth discussion becomes rather impossible; diversity, contention, fragmentation and factions make it harder for the board members to work as a group and reach a certain agreement. Large boards may also be less participative, less cohesive. There may be problems in coordination and tactical action prevention, which in turn limits the participation of the members of the board.

Little research has been conducted to examine the issue of board size in sport organizations. In summary, the question of board composition and size remains highly debatable. There is a relative consensus, however, that non-profit organizations have a larger board than profit organizations because their survival depends primarily on external resources. (Yeh & Taylor, 2008). In fact, the AFC Executive Committee consists of 27 members. In contrast, FIFA Council has 37 member.

## **5.5 Conclusion**

Although there is increased interest in research associated with good governance principles and guidelines in sport, there is a clear need for both the international sport community and researchers to develop an agreed set of governance principles and universal language for international, national, and local level sport governing bodies.

However, having said that, the BIBGIS model applied to the study and in-depth interviews have revealed the AFC's current state of good governance, principles being practiced and other lacking principles which have to be taken into consideration and improved in order to have better governance within organization.

Furthermore, there is no universal agreement in terms of evaluation and measurement of good governance. While there is existence of other benchmarking tools such as Sport Governance Observer and ASOIF self-assessment questionnaire, application of these tools may draw different results and implications. Yet, applying above mentioned tools would be useful in identifying gaps and factors hindering an organization in practicing better governance.

## **5.6 Implications**

Based on results and findings as well as suggestions from the participants I provide some recommendations with hope that it will be a step forward to improve current situation of governance in the AFC.

1. Public reporting cannot be limited to financial information; the AFC must also disclose criteria for and processes behind it. The AFC could also upgrade its existing financial governance by developing a portfolio of potentially critical

payments. In order to achieve transparency it is recommended to publish its activities in three different forms as FIFA does: the Activity Report, the Financial Report and the Governance Report.

2. Moreover, AFC lacks in stakeholder involvement – wider representation of stakeholders and other committees would enhance its good governance principles within organization. The AFC also has to increase its engagements with key stakeholders in the decision-making process. Establishment of Stakeholder’s Committee could be a solution to existing problem.

3. There is also a need for establishment of mandatory governance principles or requirements to be ratified in AFC Statutes or policies to be incorporated in the AFC. Application and implementation of governance tools with proper monitoring by GTF is also essential. Frequent monitoring and assessment of good governance in the organization. If relevant, AFC needs to set up an internal or external entity to monitor its entire range of governance activities.

4. Extension of members in Executive Committee. As suggested by scholars with a large and diverse board, non-profit organizations can have better ability to access external resources and can satisfy the desire of stakeholders.

5. Gender balance: The AFC to issue guidelines on gender inclusiveness in football governance and management, to keep its MAs appraised and updated on those guidelines, and to itself be the role model for those guidelines, including: A target of at

least 20% women's representation in all boards, committees and senior management with future projection of 30% by the next Congress that will be held in 2023.

## **5.7 Limitations**

It is important to note that this research has some limitations. The primary limitation of the study is individual evaluation of the organization when applied to BIBGIS. Authors of the tool (Chappalet & Mrkonjic, 2013) suggest that the extent to which an organization fulfils each indicator should be measured by external or internal experts or group of people applying their own qualitative assessment and knowledge about the AFC, starting with information on the international sport organization's website or any other accessible source of data.

Another limitation could be found in scoring method of the BIBGIS. It is based on Likert-type scale ranging from 0 to 4. Authors describe each score as shown below.

0 – Indicator not fulfilled at all

1 – Indicator partially fulfilled

2 – Indicator fulfilled

3 – Indicator well-fulfilled

4 – Indicator totally fulfilled in a state-of-the art way

I found it rather confusing while evaluating some of the indicators with the scores of 1, 2 and 3. There is no absolute distinction between partially fulfilled and fulfilled. Both of them very much alike. Similarly, when indicator is fulfilled or well-

fulfilled also brings confusion during evaluation. This confusion might lead to biasness while scoring one or the other indicator of the BIBGIS tool.

Lastly, I planned to conduct interviews with 6 participants and sent request to them. However, only 4 participants responded to the request and took part in this research. Despite these limitations, the study was able to identify main barriers hindering the AFC from better governance and provide relevant suggestions.

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## Appendices

### Appendix–1. Application of BIBGIS model to Asian Football Association

#### 1. Organizational transparency

№	Indicators	2018 score	2019 score	Comment
1.1	ISGB publishes on its website its statutes and bye-laws	4	4	The AFC <a href="#">updates</a> its statutes and bye-laws annually in the website.
1.2	ISGB publishes on its website its sports rules	4	4	Rules of the game is also <a href="#">provided</a> in the AFC website.
1.3	ISGB publishes on its website its LB members' basic information (name, address, date of creation for organizations, date of birth, nationality, gender for natural persons)	4	4	The AFC website <a href="#">provides</a> all relevant information about its LB (in this case Congress) members.
1.4	ISGB publishes on its website its EB members' and senior managers' biographical and contact information	1	1	Only EB members' and senior managers' name's, nationality and positions are <a href="#">displayed</a> on the AFC website.
1.5	ISGB publishes on its website its organization chart	4	4	The AFC's Organizational Chart is <a href="#">provided</a> in website.
1.6	ISGB publishes on its website its vision/ mission/ values and strategic objectives	4	4	The AFC's mission and vision are <a href="#">clearly stated</a> in the website.
1.7	ISGB publishes on its website the agenda of its LB meetings	4	4	The AFC website <a href="#">has been providing</a> agenda of its LB meeting since 2013.
1.8	ISGB publishes on its website newsletters and/or press releases	4	4	The AFC website <a href="#">publishes</a> press releases on regular basis.
1.9	ISGB publishes on its website an annual activity report	1	4	In 2018 only annual calendar was provided. A year later AFC <a href="#">published</a> calendar of competitions until 2022
	<b>Total</b>	30/36	33/36	
	<b>Mean</b>	<b>3.33</b>	<b>3.66</b>	

## 2. Reporting transparency

№	Indicators	2018 score	2019 score	Comment
2.1	ISGB publishes or makes available reports on its main events (championships, cups, etc.)	4	4	The AFC website have <a href="#">published</a> reports of all the championships held under its flag for the past two years
2.2	ISGB opens its Legislative Body meetings to media or publishes their minutes	3	3	The AFC website <a href="#">publishes</a> its LB meetings, but no minutes. Latest agenda of the meeting cannot be accessed.
2.3	ISGB annually publishes its Standing Bodies reports	2	2	Some of the SB reports were <a href="#">published</a> .
2.4	ISGB annually publishes an externally audited financial report according to recognized international standards (IFRS2 or similar)	0	2	No audited financial report was found in 2018. A year later AFC <a href="#">provides</a> basic financial statement.
2.5	ISGB annually publishes compensation benefits and/or salary of its president	0	0	No related information was found.
2.6	ISGB annually publishes financial allowances of its voluntary EB members	0	0	No related information was found.
2.7	ISGB annually publishes salaries and benefits of its senior managers	0	0	No related information was found.
2.8	ISGB annually publishes amount of income tax paid and to whom	0	0	No related information was found.
2.9	ISGB has an archival policy to give access to its archives for scholars and media	1	1	Archives are available for the past 2-3 years only
	<b>Total</b>	10/36	12/36	
	<b>Mean</b>	<b>1.11</b>	<b>1.33</b>	

### 3. Stakeholders' representation

<b>№</b>	<b>Indicators</b>	<b>2018 score</b>	<b>2019 score</b>	<b>Comment</b>
<b>3.1</b>	Athletes are represented in the ISGB bodies	0	0	There was no athlete found in the AFC's bodies.
<b>3.2</b>	The athletes' entourage (coaches, agents, medical staff, etc.) are represented in the ISGB bodies	1	1	Medical staff <a href="#">represent</a> Medical Committee of the AFC.
<b>3.3</b>	Judges / referees are represented in the ISGB bodies	0	0	No judges or referees represent the AFC bodies. Even Referees Committee represented by MA's members, but with ex referees
<b>3.4</b>	Clubs are represented in the ISGB bodies	0	0	Clubs are not represented in the AFC bodies.
<b>3.5</b>	Leagues are represented in the ISGB bodies	2	2	Only AFC Member Associations represented in the AFC bodies.
<b>3.6</b>	Event organizing committees are represented in the ISGB bodies	4	4	Latest <a href="#">organizing committee</a> for AFC Asian Cup 2019 represented in the AFC bodies.
<b>3.7</b>	Media partners are represented in the ISGB bodies	0	0	Only the AFC's Member Association members are represented in the bodies.
<b>3.8</b>	Commercial partners (sponsors, supplier) are represented in the ISGB bodies	0	0	Only the AFC's Member Association members are represented in the bodies.
<b>3.9</b>	Sport fans, supporters, volunteers, grass root participants are represented in the ISGB bodies	0	0	Only the AFC's Member Association members are represented in the bodies.
	<b>Total</b>	<b>7/36</b>	<b>7/36</b>	
	<b>Mean</b>	<b>0.77</b>	<b>0.77</b>	

#### 4. Democratic process

N <sup>o</sup>	Indicators	2018 score	2019 score	Comment
4.1	ISGB organs meet regularly (annually for LB and several times a year for EB)	3	3	The AFC Congress <a href="#">meet annually</a> and EB meet at least two (2) times a year.
4.2	ISGB organs' members are elected on the basis of secret ballots and procedures detailed in its statutes	4	4	The AFC organs' members are elected by secret ballots. All procedures are explained in its statutes.
4.3	ISGB has detailed regulation for the candidatures to its presidency	4	4	All relevant information is <a href="#">provided</a> in the AFC Statues.
4.4	ISGB organs' major decisions are taken by secret ballots and members with a conflict of interest are excluded from the vote	4	4	The Congress reaches a decision by means of secret ballot
4.5	ISGB organs' major decisions are taken on the basis of written reports supported by criteria	4	4	Decisions made by LB and EB are published on the AFC website.
4.6	ISGB EB's members have a term limit	4	4	President shall not serve for than three (3) terms of 4 years. EB members may serve no more than three (3) full terms of 4 years of office (whether consecutive or not)
4.7	ISGB EB's members have an age limit	4	4	The AFC has also gone further than FIFA, including setting an age limit of 70 for the President and all AFC ExCo members
4.8	ISGB EB's members and senior managers reflect the sport gender balance	1	0	In the AFC there is still imbalance in the sport gender. In 2018 5 female members out of 28 (18.5% representation), in 2019 only 4 out of 28 (14.8%)
4.9	ISGB EB's members and senior managers reflect an appropriate geographical balance	4	4	EB members are selected from the 47 AFC Member Associations and reflect geographical balance.
	<b>Total</b>	32/36	31/36	
	<b>Mean</b>	<b>3.55</b>	<b>3.44</b>	

## 5. Control mechanisms

№	Indicators	2018 score	2019 score	Comment
5.1	ISGB has adopted a code or principles of governance	2	2	Only statutes which comply with the principles of good governance. No separate code/principles of good governance
5.2	ISGB has an internal integrated control and risk management system (COSO3 or similar)	4	4	In 2016 the AFC <a href="#">approved</a> “Do the right thing” policy
5.3	ISGB has an audit and remuneration committee or similar, distinct from the finance committee	4	4	The AFC has <a href="#">Audit and Compliance Committee</a> .
5.4	An elected independent member sits on the ISGB’s Executive Body to safeguard proper decision making on behalf of the members	2	2	FIFA Council Members <a href="#">sit</a> on the AFC’s Executive Committee, but not independent.
5.5	ISGB has a committee to perform due diligence on the members of its bodies and senior managers based on FIT4 or similar	1	1	There is no distinguished committee to perform due diligence on the members, however FIFA does that.
5.6	ISGB separates regulatory and commercial functions	3	3	Commercial functions performed by Marketing Committee.
5.7	ISGB observes open tenders for its major marketing and procurement contracts	1	1	Only information if signing major contract <a href="#">given</a> in the AFC website.
5.8	ISGB’s decisions can be contested through well-defined internal channels specified in its statutes and bye-laws	4	4	The AFC’s decision can only be contested by FIFA or CAS.
5.9	ISGB recognizes the Court of Arbitration for sport (or similar) as an external channel of complaint and dispute resolution	4	4	The AFC <a href="#">recognizes</a> the independent Court of Arbitration for Sport (CAS) to resolve disputes between the AFC and the other Confederations, MA’s, Leagues, Clubs, Players, Officials, Intermediaries and licensed match agents.
	<b>Total</b>	25/36	25/36	
	<b>Mean</b>	<b>2.77</b>	<b>2.77</b>	

## 6. Sport integrity

Nº	Indicators	2018 score	2019 score	Comment
6.1	ISGB has or recognizes an Ethics/Integrity Code for its organs' members and staff including guidelines for receiving/giving gifts from/to individuals or organizations	4	4	AFC has Disciplinary and Ethics Code which includes guidelines for receiving/giving gifts from/to individuals or organizations and highly pursues integrity.
6.2	ISGB has state-of-the-art conflict of interest regulations	4	4	Conflicts of interest arise if the party bound by this Code has, or appear to have, private or personal interests that could detract from their ability to perform their duties with integrity in an independent and purposeful manner.
6.3	ISGB has rules concerning betting on its sports or recognizes the SportAccord code of conduct and model rules on sports integrity in relation to sports betting	4	4	Making any bets in relation to any Match or competition of the AFC is considered an offence and by breaching the Code one may be imposed by the judicial body.
6.4	ISGB has an independent body (e.g. Ethics Commission) to monitor the application of the rules presented in 6.1, 6.2 and 6.3, to initiate investigation proactively and to propose sanctions	4	4	The AFC has <a href="#">Disciplinary and Ethics Committee</a> to monitor the rules presented in 6.1, 6.2 and 6.3.
6.5	ISGB has a confidential reporting mechanism to manage comments and allegations by whistle blowers	4	4	Independent Head of Integrity <a href="#">receives reports</a> confidentially and anyone can also contact AFC Integrity Unit.
6.6	ISGB recognizes and complies with the World Anti-Doping Code	4	4	The AFC has its <a href="#">Anti-Doping Regulations</a> based on WADA.
6.7	ISGB's major events respect the principles of sustainable development and adopt an environmental management system (ISO9 14000 or similar)	2	2	The AFC deals with all social and environmental responsibility matters in connection with the AFC and its activities.
6.8	ISGB has integrity awareness / education programmes for its main stakeholders	3	3	AFC Integrity Unit collaborates with Key Stakeholders
6.9	ISGB collaborates with governmental and non-governmental agencies on integrity issues	2	2	The AFC mainly collaborates with its MA's and partly with non-governmental agencies.
	<b>Total</b>	31/36	31/36	
	<b>Mean</b>	<b>3.44</b>	<b>3.44</b>	

## 7. Solidarity

Nº	Indicators	2018 score	2019 score	Comment
7.1	ISGB invests an adequate part of its surplus in its declared non-profit objectives	4	4	The AFC invest some of the generated revenue towards non-profit objectives.
7.2	ISGB has a financial redistribution policy and programmes for its main stakeholders	4	4	AFC has Financial Assistance Program and its <a href="#">regulations</a> . Allocation of resources shown clearly.
7.3	ISGB audits the use of funds given to its main stakeholders	4	4	The AFC audits use of Financial Assistance Program. The AFC may also appoint Central Audit.
7.4	ISGB has programmes for the development of its sport at elite and grassroots levels	2	4	The AFC only annually holds grassroots programmes in its developing MA's and conducts seminar and workshops. In 2019 new grassroots programs were introduced.
7.5	ISGB has an environmental and social responsibility policy and programmes in place	3	3	The AFC deals with all social and environmental responsibility matters in connection with the AFC and its activities. The latest is social programme called Dream Asia.
7.6	ISGB has career and education programmes to assist its athletes during the transition to their post-athletic careers	2	2	Starting from 2017 the AFC runs <a href="#">MA Administration Programme</a> . Athletes can also participate, as long as they are nominated by MA.
7.7	ISGB has programmes or resources to assist the communities which host its events in their legacy planning	2	3	The AFC <a href="#">provides</a> financial assistance to build mini pitches in developing nations.
7.8	ISGB audits the use of funds given to its social responsibility programmes	3	3	The AFC audits all the funds given to its MA's.
7.9	ISGB collaborates with governmental and non-governmental agencies on social responsibility issues	2	2	The AFC somewhat has <a href="#">collaboration</a> with governmental agencies.
	<b>Total</b>	27/36	29/36	
	<b>Mean</b>	<b>3.11</b>	<b>3.22</b>	

## Appendix–2. Support letter from DTM Director



SEOUL  
NATIONAL  
UNIVERSITY



DREAM  
TOGETHER  
MASTER  
Global Sport Management  
Graduate Program

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September 16, 2019

To whom may it concern,

This letter serves to confirm that Mr. Akramov Zohid is a student in Global Sport Management Graduate Program at Seoul National University.

As a requirement of the program, the student is expected to accomplish individual thesis research project. Mr. Akramov is currently in the process of carrying out his project titled *Challenges and opportunities in International sport organizations: Investigation of good governance barriers in the Asian Football Confederation* by conducting a survey. I write to request for your assistance to enable his to undertake the research for the master's thesis.

Kindly note that findings will be shared and all information collected will be treated in confidence and solely for academic purposes. I hope you find this in order and assist accordingly.

Best Regards,

Joon-ho KANG

Director & Professor, Dream Together Master  
Global Sport Management Graduate Program  
Seoul National University

## 국문초록

국제 스포츠 조직의 도전과 기회:

더 나은 거버넌스로 아시아 축구 연맹 장벽에 대한 조사

Zohid Akramov

글로벌 스포츠 매니지먼트 전공

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서울대학교 대학원

2000 년 초반부터 국제 및 국가 스포츠 조직 내에서 잘못된 관리 및 비효율 성과 함께 스포츠에서 부패, 도핑 및 경기 고정 문제가 발생하는 사례가 많았기 때문에 good governance(좋은 거버넌스) 도입이 필요했다 (Chappalet & Mrkonjic, 2013). 유명한 국제 스포츠 기관과 IOC, FIFA, IAAF 및 러시아 (국가 재정 지원 도핑 프로그램)와 같은 정부와 관련된 수많은 스캔들로 인해 스포츠 거버넌스에 대한 관심도가 높아졌다.

언론 비판의 불가피한 존재, 사람들의 회의론은 거버넌스를 스포츠 분야에서 중요하고 의미 있는 측면이 되었다. 더 나은 스포츠 거버넌스를 통해 스포츠 거버넌스 기관은 더 향상된 결과를 달성하고 대중에게 더 투명 해지고 이해 관계자에게 책임을 질 수 있다. 따라서 스포츠 기관, 학자 및 정부는

스포츠 조직이 적용되고 실습 될 수 있도록 여러 가지 훌륭한 거버넌스 원칙 / 지표 / 요건을 개발했습니다. Chappalet (2018)은 개선 여부를 결정하기 위해 거버넌스를 때로 모니터링해야한다고 주장했다. 대중화된 “좋은 거버넌스” 라는 용어보다는 각 거버넌스기구 내에서 “더 나은 거버넌스” 를 보장하는 것이 목표이다.

그럼으로 본 연구의 목적은 아시아 축구 연맹 (AFC)에서 시행되고있는 주요 좋은 거버넌스 원칙과 지표와 거버넌스를 방해하는 요소를 조사하는 것이다. Chappalet & Mrkonjic (2013)이 개발 한 BIBGIS 모델이 이론적 프레임 워크를 적용했다. 이 연구는 질적 연구 방법이 사용되었다. 먼저, 연구 과정에서 외부 적으로 이용 가능한 문서 검토를 획득하여 BIBGIS 에 적용한 후 AFC 직원과의 면담을 실시했다.

본 연구를 통해 AFC 직원이 현재 전체적으로 거버넌스를 이해하는 정도와 AFC 에서 적용하는 있는 거버넌스 과정과 이해도를 알아가고자 한다. 책임감, 성과 표현, 이해 관계자 참여 부족 및 기타 외부 요인으로 인해 AFC 가 더 나은 거버넌스를 방해하고 있다는 점을 알 수 있었다.

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**주요어:** 좋은 거버넌스, 스포츠 거버넌스, 거버넌스 원칙, 아시아 축구 연맹, AFC, BIBGIS

**학번:** 2018-27286