Original Article

Factors influencing management success of the Thailand National Sports Association

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Abstract

The objective of this research was to study the factors influencing the management success of the National Sports Association. This study was conducted by exploring the causal relationship among various factors influencing the management success of the Association. The sample consisted of 400 managers, involving people and athletes from 33 affiliated sports in the National Sports Association certified by the Olympic Committee of Thailand. The sample was divided into 5 groups (excellent, very good, good, moderate and fair management) each of 80 people, according to the levels of success of each sports association. The research instrument was a questionnaire developed by the researchers regarding the factors influencing the management success of the National Sports Association. Ten factors in the management of sports associations were studied to determine their causal relationship among various factors influencing the management success of sports associations using path analysis.

The study results showed that the management success of sports associations was influenced directly by the personnel in the sports associations in terms of management, budget, structural organization, support, sports science and technology, competition management, law and regulation, facilities, and athlete development; with a direct influence of 0.653, 0.612, 0.752, 0.709, 0.723, 0.748, 0.708, 0.712, 0.674 and 0.908, respectively. The factors having the highest relationship were athlete development and the success of sports associations, with a correlation coefficient (r) of 0.908.

Key words: Management Success, National Sports Association

Introduction

The Sports Authority of Thailand established the National Sports Association (NSA) for national sports promotion and the Association Management Committee is responsible for managing and operating the missions of the NSA. The operation of the NSA has played an important role in developing Thai athletes and in supporting the country's reputation. It operates in accordance with the government's policies and objectives, which are under the control of the Sports Authority of Thailand. Based on the previous performance of the NSA, it can be seen that some associations have been successful in achieving their stated objectives while others have not.

However, previously, researchers who studied the operations of the NSA found problems and obstacles in its operation. The Sports Authority of Thailand (1993) reported that most sports associations lacked working cooperation, documents were in a mess, no one was responsible for attendance, personnel in sports associations never worked closely together, and the managers were always changing which caused a lack of continuity in operations that were consistent with problems and obstacles encountered in the operation of the NSA. Furthermore, Chusri (2000) found that a majority of sports associations' committees considered that the general management of the associations was at a fair level, which was not very good. Moreover, in terms of the activities of the associations, it was found that while many referee seminars were promoted, there was very little performance monitoring and the work plans were adjusted to fit with the current situation, with little academic or sport research being conducted, all of which was consistent with the main issues associated with sports development of Thailand that needed to be solved urgently.

The National Sports Development Plan No.1 (1992-1996) with regard to sports development, showed the lack of systematic and ongoing performance monitoring and evaluation and there was no up-to-date information system for planning or decision making for further sport development or problem solving promptly (Sports Authority of Thailand, 1993). These issues continued in the implementation of National Sports Development Plan No. 2 (1997-2001) and No. 3 (2002-2006). (Sports Authority of Thailand, 2001; 2007). The results of the studies also found that several parts of the operation did not achieve set goals, so that sport science and technology development of the sports associations at the strategic level and sport science and technology knowledge dissemination were still at a low level, with no information center for sport science and technology, as well as no information center for sports management, and no sport performance monitoring and evaluation. Laws and regulations related to sports had not been updated, there was a lack of good governance principles for sports management in various organizations, and also a lack of monitoring and evaluation in sports management

(National Sports Development Plan No. 4, (2007-2012); (Sports Authority of Thailand, 2007) Furthermore, it was also found that managers and officials did not know about the National Sports Development Plan No. 4, because, during that time, several sports associations thought that the country was using the National Sports Development Plan No. 3, so this was an additional source of poor performance (Ministry of Tourism and Sports, 2012).

From previous study, the researchers had observed and interviewed some associations, and found that the associations trained personnel perpetually, but there was no data collection about the training sessions, so, after the training sessions or seminars, personnel did not exchange their knowledge gained with others in the sports associations, instead just keeping that knowledge for their own self development. They also reported that some data storage and applications requested by the Sports Authority of Thailand had not been prepared by the sports associations, and the long time required to search documents/research was due to much of the data not being categorized. Furthermore, from an operational viewpoint, when personnel in the sports associations needed to find supporting documents, research or information, they had to search manually without any technology to work with. Finally, the researchers found that most of the managers and committee members of the sports associations had much experience from working with sport associations for many years, but the experience was not recorded and stored in documents, nor exchanged with the new generation of incoming personnel or officials. As a result, personnel who wanted to help by working for the sports associations needed to start from the beginning by themselves using manual searches for information. Such obstacles resulted in delays in the implementation of sports associations, disjointed work, difficulties in forwarding work output, and confusion regarding the work undertaken. Therefore, the sports associations needed a more organized system, more able to assist in completing tasks, and access to more knowledge and experience through exchanging information with other members of the associations. Moreover, the researchers studied the strategic approach adopted by the sports associations, and found that some of them applied knowledge management as a system to achieve quality in driving the operational processes of the NSA in a common direction (Sports Authority of Thailand, 2010).

Sports Authority of Thailand (2012) established a management framework of various sports associations to provide for improved development of the organizations by focusing on creating a new image of Thai sports as the SMART Organization. This approach involved 10 factors defined by the Sports Authority of Thailand: personnel in sports associations, management in sports associations, budget for sports associations, structure of sports organizations in sports associations, support for sports associations, sports science and technology in sports associations, sports competition management system in sport associations, laws and regulations in sport associations, location, materials, equipment and facilities in sports associations, and athlete development in sports associations. These 10 factors were used as indicators of the success of various sports associations. Thus, in order to allow each sports association to implement the right management of these factors, the researchers were interested to study how each factor had influenced the management success of sports associations. The results could be used to develop appropriate guidelines to manage the associations effectively, which in turn would raise the standard of future management of the sports associations in the country.

Material & methods

Participants

For this study on factors influencing the management success of the NSA, the participants were 400 managers, trainers, training assistants, and athletes from 33 sports associations of the NSA certified by the Olympic Committee of Thailand. The sample was divided into 5 groups of 80 people, according to the levels of success of the sports associations. Furthermore, 50% of the representatives from the 33 associations were chosen using simple random sampling.

A sample of 400 people was selected from those who had roles and were involved with sports associations from 18 national sports associations by setting a ratio based on the number and size of the population, consisting of:

1. Managers who still held various positions in sports associations (representing 5%),
2. Team managers and team vice-managers working in sports associations (representing 10%).
3. Trainers and training assistants working in sports associations (representing 20%).
4. Athletes in sports associations (representing 65%).

The study was approved by the Ethical Committee for Human Research, Chulalongkorn University, Thailand.

Data

Collection

The tools for this research included questionnaires about factors influencing the management of the NSA and questionnaires on managers' opinions about factors influencing the management of the NSA. In addition, factors in the management of NSA included the structural system of sports organizations, management, personnel, budget, location, materials, equipment and facilities, athlete development, sports science and technology, competition system, laws and regulations, and support.

The researchers had the developed questionnaires checked by five experts to consider the content validity by determining the questionnaire's IOC. The IOC result was in the range from 0.4 to 1.0 and the entire index was 0.8. The researchers cut off IOC results that were less than 0.5, and improved the questions based on

the experts' recommendations. The questionnaire's reliability was further evaluated using Cronbach's alpha coefficient (Gunnasud, 1999), and a sample of 30 improved questionnaires was tried out with groups similar to the sample groups. The researchers used criteria to consider alpha coefficients of 0.50 or higher (Kanjawasee, 2007) for the usable questions. The result of the questionnaire's validity was a value for Cronbach's alpha coefficient of 0.98.

Statistical analysis

1. The researchers processed and analyzed data from questionnaires using frequency, percentage, average and standard deviation (SD). The average evaluation of opinion level on 10 factors of sports associations' management was compared according to the defined criteria as follows (Gunnasud, 1999)

- (a) An average of 4:50 to 5:00 represented the highest opinion level.
- (b) An average of 3:50 to 4:49 represented a high opinion level.
- (c) An average of 2:50 to 3:49 represented a moderate opinion level.
- (d) An average of 1:50 to 2:49 represented a low opinion level.
- (e) An average of 1:00 to 1:49 represented the lowest opinion level.

2. The management success level of sports associations were scored using a range of 1-5 points based on the management success level of sports associations as follows: (Sports Authority of Thailand, 2012)

- (a) Belong to a sports association with excellent success level equals 5 points.
- (b) Belong to a sports association with very good success level equals 4 points.
- (c) Belong to a sports association with good success level equals 3 points.
- (d) Belong to a sports association with moderate success level equals 2 points.
- (e) Belong to a sports association with fair success level equals 1 point.

3. The 10 factors in the management of sports associations were subjected to path analysis to study the influence of variables in the form of causal relationships among various factors influencing the management success of sports associations.

Results

This research studied the factors influencing the management success of the NSA. The researchers analyzed the collected data, and the results of the analysis are presented in Table 1.

Table 1 Mean and standard deviation (SD) and opinion level of 10 factors influencing management success of National Sport Associations

Factor	Mean	SD	Opinion level
Personal	3.84	0.81	High
Management	3.80	0.81	High
Budget	3.71	0.80	High
Structural organization	3.70	0.82	High
Support	3.60	0.86	High
Sports science and technology	3.63	0.86	High
Competition management	3.72	0.83	High
Law and regulation	3.62	0.83	High
Facility	3.71	0.88	High
Athlete development	3.69	0.85	High

Table 1 shows that the majority of respondents on factors influencing the management success of the NSA were at a high level for all terms.

Table 2 Mean and standard deviation of various factors divided by the success level of sports associations

Table 2 shows that the highest average of the 10 factors was for the group of excellent level sports associations, followed by the group of very good level sports associations, good level sports associations, moderate level sports associations, and fair level sports associations, respectively. In addition, the data also showed that the 10 factors influencing the success of sports associations were at the excellent level with the lowest standard deviation. On the other hand, the fair level sports associations had the maximum standard deviation.

Table3 Correlation coefficient between various factors with level of management success of sports associations

Variable	Correlation coefficient (r)									
	Y	X ₁	X ₂	X ₃	X ₄	X ₅	X ₆	X ₇	X ₈	X ₁₀
Y	1									
X ₁	.653**	1								
X ₂	.612**	.851**	1							
X ₃	.751**	.798**	.789**	1						
X ₄	.709**	.829**	.823**	.856**	1					
X ₅	.723**	.723**	.686**	.808**	.795**	1				
X ₆	.747**	.734**	.711**	.810**	.822**	.753**	1			
X ₇	.709**	.718**	.635**	.685**	.748**	.623**	.759**	1		
X ₈	.713**	.613**	.536**	.652**	.646**	.666**	.791**	.755**	1	

X ₉	.675**	.656**	.560**	.677**	.648**	.631**	.618**	.604**	.593**	1	
X ₁₀	.909**	.718**	.671**	.771**	.760**	.731**	.825**	.755**	.731**	.647**	1
Y = Success management											
X ₁ = Personal						X ₆ = Sports science and technology					
X ₂ = Management						X ₇ = Competition management					
X ₃ = Budget						X ₈ = Law and regulation					
X ₄ = Structural organizations						X ₉ = Facilities					
X ₅ = Support						X ₁₀ = Athlete development					

** P< 0.01

Table3 shows that various variables used in this study had a reciprocal positive relationship at a statistically significant level of 0.01 in all pairs. The variable that had the maximum relationship was the factor of athlete development (X10) with the success level of the sports associations at a correlation coefficient (r) = 0.909. On the other hand, the variables that had the minimum relationship was the factor on laws and regulations (X8) with material and equipment (X9) with a correlation coefficient (r) = 0.593. The relationship between the variables in the table above was able to be analyzed for further causal influence.

Table4 Correlation coefficient through path analysis of factors influencing management success of sports associations as assumptions models

Path	Correlation coefficient	Path	Correlation coefficient
Px ₂ X ₁	.851**	Px ₁₀ X ₉	.647**
Px ₃ X ₁	.800**	Pyx ₁	.653**
Px ₃ X ₂	.788**	Pyx ₂	.612**
Px ₄ X ₁	.829**	Pyx ₃	.752**
Px ₅ X ₃	.809**	Pyx ₄	.709**
Px ₆ X ₃	.801**	Pyx ₅	.723**
Px ₇ X ₃	.685**	Pyx ₆	.748**
Px ₈ X ₇	.754**	Pyx ₇	.708**
Px ₉ X ₃	.675**	Pyx ₈	.712**
Px ₁₀ X ₃	.711**	Pyx ₉	.674**
Px ₁₀ X ₄	.760**	Pyx ₁₀	.908**
Px ₁₀ X ₆	.825**		

** P< 0.01

Table 4 shows the correlation coefficient paths from the multiple regression analysis of factors influencing the management success of sports associations. From the format specified by the hypothesis as shown in Figure 1, all 23 values had statistical significance at the 0.01 level. Thus, the calculated correlation coefficient paths could be used to set the routes as shown in Figure 1.

Figure1. Causal relationship of factors influencing management success of sports associations

Figure 1 shows the correlation coefficient path of factors influencing the management success of all sports associations. From the model assumptions, it was found that the management success of sports associations was influenced directly by personal, management, budget, structural organizations, support, sports

science and technology, competition management, law and regulation, facilities, and athlete development in sports associations.

Discussion

The analysis of the data in Table 1 (showing the opinion level of variable factors influencing the management success of sports associations being personal, management, budget, structural organizations, support, sports science and technology, competition management, law and regulation, facility, and athlete development) showed that in total, the opinion level on the 10 factors of the various sample groups of associations was at a high level (3.50 to 4.49 points). The participant groups used in this study included managers of the sports associations, a group of team managers and team vice-managers, a group of trainers and training assistants and a group of athletes in the sports associations. Thus, the opinions on the management success of sports associations in the various areas were at a high agreement level.

Furthermore, Table 2 (showing the average score of the 10 factors divided into the 5 groups based on the success level of sports associations), shows that the group of excellent sports associations' success also had the maximum average for the various factors influencing the management success of associations, followed by the group of very good sports associations' success, the group of good sports associations' success, the group of moderate sports associations' success, and the group of fair sports associations' success, respectively. The group of excellent sports associations' success had a higher average opinion level than other levels of associations, while the group of fair sports associations' success had the lowest average opinion level than other levels of associations. This result confirmed that the 10 factors on sports associations' management as devised by the Sports Authority of Thailand (2010) could be used to classify the management success level of sports associations effectively.

For the analysis of factors influencing the management success of the NSA, the researchers applied path analysis to determine the causal influences of various factors influencing the success of sports associations by testing the assumption model based on the raw data collected from the research. The relationship model of variable factors influencing the management success of sports associations was determined by the content and theories. Table 3 shows that the variable factors used in this study had a positive reciprocal relationship at a statistically significant level of 0.01 in all pairs. Figure 1 (showing the correlation coefficient of factors influencing the management success of all sports associations from the model based on assumption) shows that the management success of sports associations was influenced directly by the personnel in the sports associations in terms of management, budget, structural organization, support, sports science and technology, competition management, law and regulation, facilities, and athletes development in sports associations. From the direct influences of various factors on the management success of sports associations using the correlation coefficient path analysis, it was found that the management success of sports associations was influenced directly by the factors of personal, management, budget, structural organization, support, sports science and technology, competition management system, law and regulation, facilities, and athletes development in sports associations, with the values of the direct influence being .653, .612, .752, .709, .723, .748, .708, .712, .674, and .908, respectively. The highest variable factor was athlete proficiency development and the success of a sports league having a correlation coefficient (r) of 0.908 (Table 4). This demonstrates the direct influence of the variable factors on successful sport league management and that athlete proficiency had the highest influencing value. Hence, the determinants of successful Sports Authority of Thailand administration indicated that athlete proficiency development was the most important factor for the successful enhancement of the management of the Sports Authority of Thailand. According to Sports Authority of Thailand (2010); Ministry of Tourism and Sports (2012) and Sotiriadou and Shilbury (2009), the indicator showing the importance and success of Sports Authority of Thailand was athletes. Hence, the organization planned to develop athletes efficiently using both team preparation and real match play so that the athletes could succeed. This also suggested that the Sports Authority of Thailand had an efficient plan for athlete proficiency.

In general, the sports association management of the 10 factors involved in success can be summarized as follows:

1. Personal factor – the results found that the staff were systematically trained in workshops in most sport associations. To strengthen the operation of the sport association, it should analyze the environment, strength, weakness, opportunities, and threat (SWOT) for further information (Brides and Roquemore 2001). There should be support for plans such as finding new generation sport players to substitute for the old sport players, or injured players, which conformed with Saenphakdee (2015), who stated that personal management in the Sports Association was the key factor for the success of management. Effective personal management was the fundamental element in the successful management of the Sport Association.

2. Management Factor – the results found that planning, strategies, or an annual operation plan were clear. There was a memo form report for further improvement and this was presented to the committee. There were headings covering vision, mission, target, objectives, and values to identify strengths and weaknesses for improvement to set the activities plan to conform to the work plan of the Provincial Sport Association and the government's policies and the national sport development plan, along with short term and long term planning.

There were operational plans to achieve targets, objectives, operation goals, budget items, and operational time. (Kikulis 1992).

This was in agreement with Chusri (2000) whose research found that the management factors in terms of budget and structure must be included in management planning. It was necessary to rely on the experienced and skillful officers. So, officer factor was an important effective factor toward the success of sport association management. This factor was directly influential in the success level of sport association management and indirectly influential to the management, budget, and structural factors. The results conformed to Nhamo and Muswazi, (2013) who found that if the officers had matched skills to the job scope, and they were responsible for defined duties, then the management would be successful.

3. Budget Factor – the results found that most sport associations had a low budget when compared to annual expenses because there were more competitions in foreign countries. However, the budget remained the same regardless and this was why there was insufficient budget for operations in sports associations and to provide suitable rewards to the winners in competitions. Because the budget factor had a direct effect on sport authority development, there should be faster equipment and facility purchasing along with obtaining science and technology equipment to achieve the best development results. This was in agreement with Emanuele, et.al. (2004) who found that the level of budget management directly affected the quality of operations in public schools. The organization would not develop if there were insufficient budget. This result also conformed to Saenphakdee (2015) who reported that the budget to support the operation depended on the policies and budget plan in each year. The budget must pass the approval process before being available for project allocation, with budget auditing according to the plan.

4. Structural organizations – the results of the study found that most sport authorities had a distinctive structure and sport departments which followed the regulations of the Sport Authorities of Thailand. This conformed to Sport Authorities of Thailand (2010) regarding the following regulations:

4.1 The President of Sport Authorities manages the business of the association. The President will be the representative who is contacted by visitors and who conducts the formal meetings of the association.

4.2 The Vice-President manages the business in association with and following the President's assignment, and will work on behalf of the President when that person is away or not able to take action.

4.3 The Secretary performs all administration. This position acts as the head of the association's officers to provide job scopes and follows the President's orders, as well as acting as the secretary for all meetings in the association.

4.4 The Treasurer performs all duties regarding the finances of the association. The Treasurer is responsible for creating and managing the accounts payable and receivable, the association's balance sheet and for storing documents and evidence of the association's activities for further auditing.

4.5 The Receptionist takes care of the association's visitors. The Receptionist finds and prepares locations and meeting rooms for the association.

4.6 The Registrar coordinates the association's member accounts and coordinates with the Treasurer to collect the maintenance fee from members.

4.7 The Information officer propagates news and promotes the association to members and other people.

5. Support Factor – the results found that there was a project to develop young athletes in most sport associations with a view to these younger members becoming national representatives in the future. Examples of systematic athlete development were workshops, and working skills and sport abilities development. This conformed to the 4th National Sport Development Strategy, Sport Authorities of Thailand (2007) which included the arrangement of systematic staff workshop training sessions for the smooth operation of the association. The sport association should analyze POSDCORB were as follows: planning, organizing, staffing, directing, coordinating, reporting and budgeting for further decisions such as the types of sports which were ready for effective development. Young athlete support was necessary and important for the development of the Sport Authorities of Thailand.

6. Sports Science and Technology Factor – the results found that there were various hierarchies and categories to use in choosing athletes, especially with regard to science and technology to work with specific specialists, while the key success indicator should not simply be based on the numbers of medals or rewards, but also on sport science too. This conformed to Saenphakdee (2015) whose research advocated choosing athletes from childhood to develop the correct physical appearance, skills, and a good attitude. However, choosing most athletes was left to trainers or specific specialists, in conjunction with competition results and sport science input regarding physical testing, health checking, attitude measurement, knowledge measurement, and interviews.

7. Facility Factor - the results found that there was systematic document and equipment storage in the facilities in each department. Tools and equipment were up-to-date and in sufficient supply. Moreover, places and facilities were safe and standardized. The field and sports equipment were ready to use. There were facilities such as toilets, lockers, sport equipment, and other equipments for competition that were all were sufficient to requirement. The results conformed to Sport Authorities of Thailand (2007) who found that there should be suitable supply and coordination of places, sports equipment, and facilities for training and competition. There should be coordination between the educational institute and the local administration institute in terms of education and sport. This also conformed to Dabngen (1996) who considered that the sport association and provincial sports club development plan should involve public participation to establish a sports club. There should be budget coordination from the local administration department to develop sport, exercise, and recreational facilities.

8. Competition Management Factor – the results found that the development of the competition management planning should be coordinated into the future sport calendar, including coordination with other government, public, and local departments to support competition. Athlete choice should allow for variety and there should be a regular calendar event annually to identify the best athletes, as well as choosing them from the results of competitions. This conformed to Chusri (2000) who advocated a systematic athlete creation pathway from childhood, allowing an athlete to choose from many pathways.

9. Law and Regulation Factor – the results found that most sport authorities didn't know about relevant rules and regulations because there was no clear sports law and this resulted in some sport association members missing opportunities to join in national competition. This was consistent with Sport Authorities of Thailand (2010) who found that sport associations didn't know about laws and regulations. Furthermore, the association would lose out on benefits and the youngster athletes miss chances to develop.

10. Athlete Development Factor – the results found that there was promotion for athletes via workshops to develop their knowledge, abilities, and experiences of sport association management and to gain further knowledge about sport. Moreover, the sport associations promoted players to join competitions to improve their skills, abilities, and competitive experience, in line with the systematic sport development plan determined by the sport association. This conformed to Sotiriadou and Shilbury (2009) whose results found that supporting officers must attend workshops, to develop and practice their skills and abilities to be trainers and athletes should attend to further their development. Sport Authorities of Thailand (2008) reported that focus was required on teaching techniques and introducing new techniques and procedures to help develop the next generation of athletes, as well as obtaining experience from tournaments and other athletes.

Conclusion

The level of opinion toward the factors for successful National Sports Association of Thailand management are at the high level.

The average and standard deviation of various factors regarding the success level according to the 10 factors of sport associations, indicated that the sport associations with success at the excellent level had the highest values followed by the sport associations with success at the very good level, good level, moderate level and fair level, respectively.

Factors influencing the management success of the 10 factors each had statistically significant positive correlation at the 0.01 level. The variables with the highest correlation was the success level of the athletes and the sport associations having a correlation coefficient (r) of 0.909 while the variable with the lowest correlation was law and regulation, and location, material and equipment that had a correlation coefficient (r) of 0.593.

The direct influence of various factors affecting the management success of national sports association as determined using the analysis path method identified the personal factor, management factor, budget factor, structural organizational factor, support factor, sports science and technology factor, competition management factor, law and regulation factor and facilities factor influenced the management success of national sport association with direct influencing values of 0.653, 0.612, 0.752, 0.709, 0.723, 0.748, 0.708, 0.712, 0.674, and 0.908, respectively.

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