

Elite Sport Development Strategy through Systems View and Sport Development Model

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Abstract. The purpose of this research was to establish elite sport development strategies to solve crucial problems which hinder the advancement of the elite sport in a local government. In order to set the strategy, elite sport system was analyzed with a systems view and sport development model. The analysis was guided by the multiple case study method. The five different sport subsystems analyzed were sport organization, budget, facilities, policies, and publicities. Finally, the TOWS matrix was used to set the strategies which were induced by key situational factors.

Keywords: Elite Sport Development, Systems View, Sport Development Model, TOWS matrix

1 Introduction

In a comparative study, researchers found that a number of nations have used sport to preserve and strengthen their national identity (Chalip, Johnson, & Stachura, 1996). Although 'sport for all' movement has been highlighted during past decades, sport policy makers have still focused on elite sport policy development. Furthermore recent studies found that many nations have attempted to increase government support to rejuvenate their elite level of sport performance (Lee, 2013). They argue that maintaining the competitive elite sport system positively influences a nation's brand equity as well as the integration of national consciousness.

Recent government documents reported that approximately 53.3% of elite sport teams have been owned and operated by local governments (Kang, 2012). It shows that, without their support, our nation's elite sport systems cannot be sustained. The sustainability of Korean elite sport system has been highly challenged by the increase of breakup of the elite sport system operated by local governments. The most critical issue, therefore, is to find more effective and efficient ways to maintain the elite sport system enough to be sustained in the local government.

This research aims to establish an elite sport development strategy through which we expect to solve the prevailing problems of elite sport system in a region. To do so this study attempted to analyze an elite sport system through a systems view (Katz &

Kahn, 1978) and sport development model (Kim, Kim, & Park, 2009). We brought a systems view to examine the subsystems consisting of elite sport system. The systems view enabled us to identify the key outcomes of elite sport development. The elite sport development system was examined by a sport development framework, which showed how an elite sport system can be developed by integrating elite athletes with environmental elements such as media, sport events, coach, and facility. Finally the TOWS matrix (Wehrich, 1982) was used to integrate key elements in elite sport system with situational factors.

2 Related Researches

2.1 Systems View

A systems view has been widely applied into various areas (e.g., physics, management, biology) because it provides both holistic views on a system and the components of parts of the system. Therefore, it is very informative to explain a dynamic and complex system with their subsystems. In management fields, the systems view has also been applied to analyze and explain various complicated organization behaviors with key variables such as motivation, leadership, communication, structure, and so on (Robbins, 2011). He stressed that when we regard an organization as human system, such outcomes should be related to workers' performance, satisfaction, turnover, absenteeism, and organization citizenship.

A systems view has been applied to analyze and explain community development system. Ferguson and Dickens (1999) argued that community development is related to sectors (e.g., education, work force, public health) and levels (e.g., for profit, non-profit, and governmental) in a community and the success of community development depends specially on community development alliances. Bosscher and his colleagues (2009) applied a systems view to analyze elite sport systems and policies in six countries. They found that successful elite sport system is composed of sound financial subsystem, athletic and post-career support, effective training facilities, and well developed coach.

2.2 Sport Development

Although there may be many different definitions of sport development, this study sees it as maintaining an effective sport participation system. In other words sport development is to establish a process where a sport participant can take part in any types and levels of sport according to his or her wants and needs (Collins, 1995). Persons who would build a sport development system, therefore, may explain potential sport participants' socio-psychological factors (e.g., motives, socialization, commitment) (Green, 2005) and interaction between them and environment (e.g., coach, media, facility, sport event) (Kim, Kim, & Park, 2009).

Green (2005) explained that the low level of volleyball participants in the United States can be influenced by significant others and many smaller level of volleyball programs. She argued that they may remain in the volleyball system if they are continuously motivated, committed, and socialized through volleyball systems. She also found that volleyball players may want to play the higher level of competition when they easily take part in such competitions and new levels of involvement toward volleyball.

Kim and his colleagues (2009) argued the sport development model should be explained in terms of sport participants' needs and wants and environmental factors. They found that once we can identify their socio-psychological factors in a sport system, then we can examine how such factors can be interplayed with environmental factors. They suggested the four types of environmental factors (i.e., coach, media, facility, sport event) that may highly affect sport participants' recruitment, retention, and advancement. They illustrated that these factors do not always influence all the levels in the same conditions. In other words, for elite level athletes we need to support more opportunities to compete against other international top-level athletes. However, for elementary level athletes we need to provide more events where they can be socialized and supported by their significant others such as family and friends.

Guided by these theoretical reviews, this study would explain elite sport development strategies by specifying the outcomes of sport development systems and situational analysis.

3 Research Method

This research conducted a multiple case study method. It has several strengths to improve the quality of the research because it can test findings of a case across other independent case studies (Yin, 2003). It, therefore, enhances external validity. For the study key stakeholders working at sport organizations in a city in Korea were interviewed. The elite sport system in the city was further analyzed, which is composed of the five distinct sport subsystems: sport organization, budget, facilities, sport policies, and publicities.

Several interviews were conducted through the following interviewees: elite athletes, general sport participants, sport administrators, coaches, and referees. At least three persons in each category were interviewed by the researcher. They were asked what crucial problems existed in elite level sport system, why athletes have participated in a sport, what have made them continuously participate in a sport, which factors have influenced their sport participation, what kinds of goals and outcomes they have pursued through their athletic career, and other pertinent questions.

In addition, this study conducted a content analysis of an elite sport system with MEDIAGAON website which has provided newspaper articles and editorial from more than 20 major Korean media related organizations (www.kinds.or.kr). We examined contents regarding the five subsystems during past 10 years through the website. We analyzed whether the tone of the article is positive or negative. The simple results of sport games were removed from the content analysis.

Finally this study built the TOWS matrix which helps to establish strategies, reflecting the findings from the five different subsystems and sport development model.

4 Results

With regard to the problems of the elite sport organization in a region, interviewees identified the disparity of investing public funds between elite sport organizations and 'sport for all' types of organizations. Because the mayor of the city has doubled as the city mayor and the representative of elite sport organization in the city, more sport budgets have gone to the elite sport system. The urgent thing is to integrate elite sport system with 'sport for all' organizations to provide various sport programs not only for general sport participants but also for elite level players.

A number of interviewees were concerned about the possible decrease of the annual sport budget of the city because it is usually related to their job stability. The most critical issue was that all the elite teams in a region could be disbanded if a mayor decides not to invest the public funds. Therefore, to develop a sport system in a region is closely related to securing other types of revenue resources.

Many people complained about the utilization of sport facilities because many facilities have not been properly managed by the city. They rather have been monopolized by soccer related organizations or specific sport clubs where they are reluctant to rent their facilities to general citizens. The current issue is how we can increase sport facility turnover rate, prohibiting the monopoly of a sport facility.

Although sport policies in a region are related to a municipal ordinance, there existed in various types of sport policies such as projects and programs. One of the most crucial sport policies problems was related to unstable job security for elite athletes. Most elite athletes have felt that they could be dismissed without any special reasons due to their contract worker position. Although a recent Korean Supreme Court adjudicated that elite athletes hired in a city can be secured by the current legislation, most athletes did not know how their contract worker position could be protected.

We found the total of 86 articles of elite sport systems from 2004 to 2013 from MEDIAGAON website. Looking at the tone of the article, there were little differences between annual sport budget and facilities. On the other hand, more positive tones have been observed from sport policies and organizations. Overall the city was insufficient in exposure of sport related contents. Elite athletes and coaches were not mentioned and most of the articles were related to sport organizations and annual sport budget. It may be necessary to aggressively market and promote key players to increase the media exposure of a city.

We conducted the SWOT analysis and established the TOWS matrix through which we suggested possible strategic directions of elite sport system in a region. The TOWS matrix induced the total of the twelve strategies. The first thing is to build new sport governance where the blueprint of elite sport development would be discussed. Regional sport authorities should closely be aligned with a national sport authority. Third, regional sport system can cooperate with other synergetic service industries such as tourism and entertainment industry. Fourth, a city needs to build a sustainable development strategy that is related to balance the economy, environment,

and justice. Fifth, we should develop a welfare system that can be able to guarantee the quality of life through current sport system. Sixth, we need continuous education and training for elite athletes and administrative staffs. Seventh, transparent and reasonable sports organizations evaluation is needed. Eighth, for fair sport development various citizen groups should be included in the sport governance. Ninth, we need to develop communication channels to share our vision and mission among key stakeholders working at local sport areas. Tenth, we need to develop rules and regulations of the use of sport facilities. Eleventh, sport-related cooperative associations may be needed to increase indigenous force for sport participants. Finally, there should be an integrating strategy which can link elite sport programs and 'sport for all' practices.

5 Conclusions

In this thesis, we attempted to establish elite sport development strategies in a local government by analyzing elite sport subsystems and sport development model. This study suggests that a local elite sport can be analyzed with various sport subsystems, a sport development model can be applied to examine the interplay between elite athletes and key environmental factors, and then the TOWS matrix can be utilized to set the strategies which further reflect situational factors. We expect that the whole process of the analysis and strategy development can be applied to any kind of elite sport system development in a local government in near future.

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