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# The Development of Volunteer Management Model for the International Games in Thailand

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## The Development of Volunteer Management Model for the International Games in Thailand

### Abstract

Volunteers are human resources which are very critical to sports organizations (Chelladurai,1999). SEA Games, Asian Games and Olympic Games are all international games which need a large number of volunteers (Green & Chalip, 1998). However, Thailand which has been the host for several international games has still no standard model for volunteers management according to human resource management.

This study aimed to develop a model for sport volunteers management in international games held in Thailand. The research samples consisted of 4 experts in sport volunteers management in international games held in Thailand who were purposively selected and 410 volunteers and stakeholders in sport organizations who were simply randomly selected. The tools were a form of structured interview and a set of questionnaire whereas data were analyzed in terms of frequency, percentage, arithmetic mean ( $\bar{X}$ ), standard deviation (*S.D.*), and Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA).

The results indicated as follows: A model for sport volunteers management in international games held in Thailand contains the following phases: 1) Preparing Phase:

planning of the overall game, identifying the number and types of volunteers; 2)

Implementing Phase: application & recruitment of volunteers , Orientation & training,

operational management, volunteer evaluation and retention; 3) Networking Phase:

network creation, development and sustainable retention of the networks. In addition,

factors encouraging the sport volunteers management in international games held in

Thailand are motivational factors in 3 phases: pre-event motivations, on-site-event

motivations, and post-event motivations.

**Keywords:** Olympic legacy, environmental impact, mega event management



## Introduction

Those people who generally volunteer to do social works and to help other people without any kinds of rewards are so called “volunteers” (Ministry of Social Development and Human Security, 2004). It refers to people who do not want to be forced or placed in a frame but prefer to be free to help and give services to others without expectation of income. This is consistent with Patten (2000) suggesting that volunteer work contribute in many ways, whether for volunteers or volunteering organizations. Volunteering encourages and cultivates people to develop the public / service mind through sacrificing private valuable time as well as personal happiness to help others and make a positive contribution to society without expecting something in return. It also contributes to the increased development of mental and emotional stability.

In the field of sports, volunteers have begun to play a role since the 18th century, particularly in England, the birthplace of modern sports and sports management (Mandell, 1984). In those days, a sports club often and simply organized an event once a year to allow members to meet each other. Until the 19th century, sports clubs began to establish game standards and regulations and games started to be seasonally organized. The first sport club which organized the game was the horse racing club. At that time, a horse racing was typically held on holidays in horse trading communities and it was also the first

time when volunteers were used in management (Lisaet et. al., 2008). Later even games evolved a lot but the majority of managements still had their origins from the sports clubs. Even in many countries where sports clubs of elites are not so popular and replaced by other forms of management. European football clubs were changed to the teams of the best clubs in Europe such as Manchester United, Real Madrid and Olympiacos which is controlled by a billionaire like entertainment business (King, 1997). As clearly seen, the current Olympic Games has changed a lot from its first origin. Although sports management have changed, volunteers are still important resources for sports organizations (Chelladurai, 1999). As it can also be clearly seen from the SEA Games, the Asian Games and the Olympic Games, which are all huge & complex international games, a lot of volunteers are still required (Green & Chalip, 1998). In the Olympic and Paralympic Games in Atlanta in 1996 and in 2000 in Sydney, more than 40,000 volunteers joined the Games (Cuskelly et al., 2006). Meanwhile at the Olympic Games in 2008 in the city of Beijing, the People's Republic of China, there were 100,000 people volunteered to work on the field sports and transportation (Yan & Chen, 2008). So volunteers are valuable for sporting success. Sports cannot operate effectively without volunteers (Chelladurai, 1999; Chalip, 2000).

Since there are many volunteers required in the sports event, organizing committee must have an understanding of the motivation to make students and common people to volunteer at the event (Green & Chalip, 2004). Strategic human resource management

(SHRM) should also be adopted to assist in the management of volunteers. Thus, it can begin with planning: designing types of volunteer work, defining the number and functional roles of the volunteers and promoting the recruitment process. Then volunteers recruitment are conducted and followed by the orientation and training of volunteers with knowledge and understanding of organizational roles and responsibilities, coordination and the relationship among volunteers. According to SHRM, when volunteers work and finish, they are under supervision and evaluation. If necessary, they will get some recommendations for improvement. Moreover, SHRM's principle of recognition, after the games, volunteers are still recognized and honored (Suparat, 2551). In sum, organising committee must understand the importance of volunteers who have contributed significantly to the game success.

From the foregoing it can be seen that volunteers' works which are prosocial behaviors are very valuable and beneficial to the international game mainly in the context of the organization (Wilson & Musick, 1997). For Thailand, although it has been honored to host several international games, it still has no standard model of volunteers management. This may result in poor planning and management and may cause volunteers so unhappy, not dedicated to work, with a lack of confidence that they withdraw from work in the end. Because of above-mentioned reasons, the authors are so interested to study and to develop a model for volunteers management for international games held in Thailand for the purpose of standardized, systematic and effective

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management in the future.

## Research Objectives

### General Objective

To develop a model for sport volunteers management in international games held in Thailand.

### Specific Objectives

1. To examine elements in a model for sport volunteers management in international games held in Thailand
2. To develop a model for sport volunteers management in international games held in Thailand
3. To assess the suitability and feasibility of the model

## The Scope of Research

### The Scope of Research Population

The Research Population consisted of experts and staff having experience in sport volunteers management in international games held in Thailand including sports associations administrators and volunteers.



## **The Scope of Research Content**

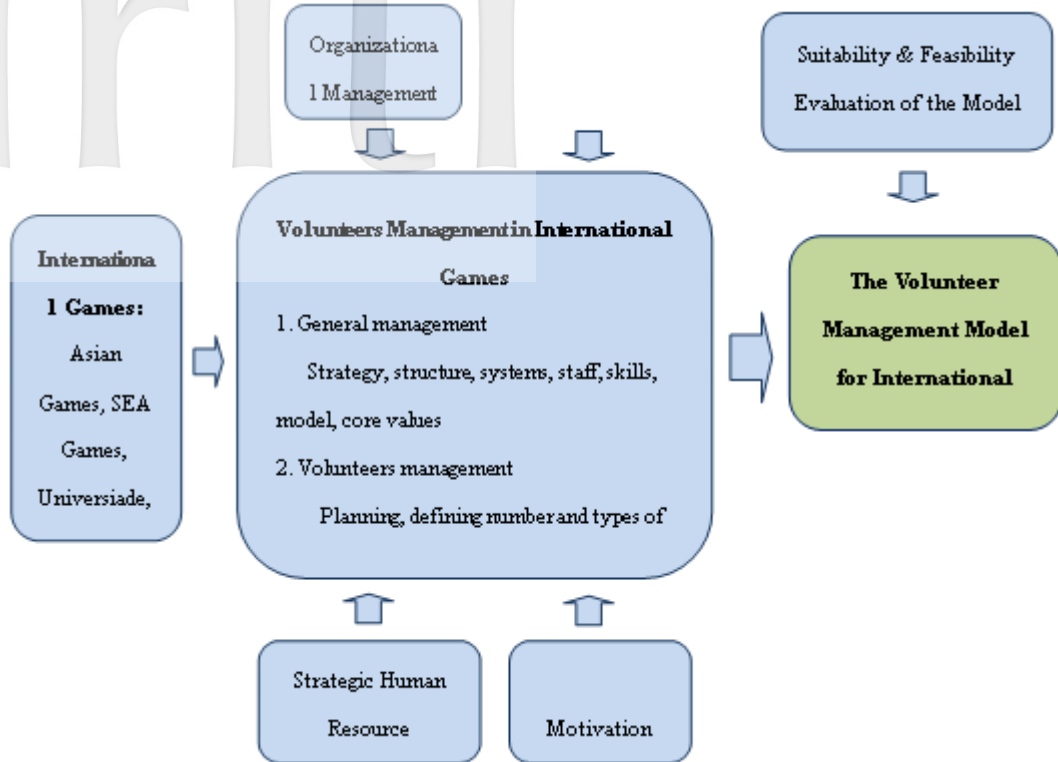
1. The authors examined, analyzed and synthesized all literature related to the process of volunteers management in international games held in Thailand and abroad.

2. They elicited related information and opinions from experts and staff having experience in sport volunteers management in international games held in Thailand.

3. They also developed a model for sport volunteers management in international games held in Thailand including: planning, defining the number and types of volunteers, application and recruitment, operational management, evaluation, follow-up and conservation.

## **Research Conceptual Framework**

In order to develop a volunteers management model for international game in Thailand, the authors conceptualized the research framework through synthesizing various concepts and theories such as organizational theories, strategic management theories, strategic human resource management theories and theories of motivation as shown in the diagram below:



### Research Definitions

A **volunteer management model** refers to factors / phases or approaches in volunteers management in terms of a simulation structure or model of real phenomena which suggest involved activities in volunteers management of the international games including: planning, defining the number and types of volunteers, application and recruitment, operational management, evaluation, follow-up and conservation.

A **volunteer / volunteers** refers to an individual or a group of individuals who has service mind, and sacrifices his / her personal time and happiness to work for an international game without being paid or any kinds of rewards.

**International games** refer to international sports events with at least two types of sports, for example: Asian Games, SEA Games, World University Games, and ASEAN World University Games etc.

### **Research Methodology and Data Analysis**

The research methodology which were employed were 1) Documentary Research and Content Analysis, 2) Quantitative Research collecting data through using a set of questionnaire from a random sample of 410 respondents of which the size was determined by Taro Yamane's method, 3) Qualitative Research eliciting data through structured interviews from experts and staff purposively selected, having experience in sport volunteers management in international games held in Thailand and acting a chairperson / a vice-chairperson or a secretary of a subcommittee for volunteers management in Asian Games, SEA Games, World University Games, and ASEAN World University Games, and 4) Suitability & Feasibility Evaluation of the Model conducted through a Focus Group of 10 sports experts including 7 Sports Managers and 3 Sports Events Managers.

### **Research Results**

The development of volunteers management model for international games in Thailand was done through synthesizing and analyzing the data in terms of strategic

organizational management, human resource management in international games and the motivation was studied from related literature, a questionnaire and interviews. The research findings are as follows:

From the review of the related literature, it was found that organizational management requires dividing structure according to functions and responsibilities. In order to conform with upcoming, and ever-changing future trends, strategic management approach is also applied in human resource management. Thus in order to cope with such trends requires readiness and availability of human resources and organizational potential to sustain.

Meanwhile the interviews revealed that volunteers management requires basic organizational factors to support and to lead all efforts by volunteers. The basic organizational factors are strategy, structure, systems staff, skills, model, core values. The efficient process of volunteers management begins with 1) planning: concerned persons are called for a meeting to assess the size of the event and to identify key operational phases, 2) defining the number and types of volunteers required: volunteer qualifications required are to be analyzed and defined and the same process to be repeated according to existing work days and budget; 3) recruitment and assignment: the recruitment process is to be analyzed, designed and publicized; time, place, how to apply and what to take with application form are to be defined and informed among applicants; the recruitment should be fair and transparent; the selected applicants should be 15- 30% more than the expected

number to cope with post withdrawal; 4) integration and training: this is to impress all volunteers with warm and friendly atmosphere and to create a sense of organizational commitment among them and to make them realize their own values to the organization; in practice, they are general integration and practical training; 5) operational management: volunteers are well informed of work requirements, necessary rules and regulations, facilities and fringe benefits by their team leaders; and 6) evaluation, follow-up, and conservation: evaluation and follow-up are conducted with all stakeholders whereas volunteers conservation is to create friendly commitment and relationship among volunteers and also other sports stakeholders; for motivational factors affecting achievements in volunteers management, it was found that before the event, a general public should be motivated to realize the significance of the international game and that everyone should take part in the game to contribute to personal and national history of honor; volunteering works are not only challenging but also, during the events, give us varieties of experience including souvenirs, uniforms, accommodations; in addition, after the game for the purpose of volunteer conservation, some sorts of gatherings and sharings such as a club or a network among volunteers and stakeholders should be set up to exchange and share current information of volunteering affairs. This network is not only a warehouse of volunteering knowledge and skills it is also a useful base for volunteer management in another international game.

From a questionnaire survey, it indicated that all 75 variables in volunteers management were correlated enough to further factor analysis. Thus, all pairs of variables were significantly and positively correlated at .01 statistical level.

Factors	Factor Analysis Results of Variables		
	Variables	Variance (%)	Factor Weights
Planning	7	71.261	0.913-0.588
Defining the number and types of volunteers	15	72.495	0.885-0.570
Application & recruitment	8	75.952	0.947-0.682
Volunteer training	15	76.744	0.841-0.735
Operational management	15	81.701	0.875-0.743
Evaluation, follow-up & conservation	15	80.306	0.786-0.919

### Conclusion

The volunteers management model for an international game in Thailand theoretically consists of 1) preparing, 2) implementing and 3) volunteer networking as shown below:

## A Volunteer Management Model



According to the diagram above, as follows are details: 1) Preparing: Planning is the first step and very important in volunteers management. It contains technical contents, time limitations and existing resources according to tasks to complete the overall program. It also includes assessing the size of the event, identifying the key operational phases, organizational structure and size, timetable and budget and defining the number and types of volunteers according to the game objectives. 2) Implementing: This phase begins with application and recruitment. Application and recruitment are analyzed and designed. A team of public relations and promotion of recruitment campaign is to set up. The process goes on with receiving and examining the application forms, calling for interviews and

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signing of employment contracts. Later, orientation and training will be conducted to ensure that the volunteer applicants are able and ready to work and at the same time the volunteers are inculcated with a sense of teamwork and commitment to the organization.

Also, they will be informed with all requirements by the organization, work timetable and how to contact volunteer leaders. Their performance will be evaluated by these leaders and they will be officially recognized at the end of the program by the organization to retain them.

3) Volunteer networking: This final phase is to create cordial connection among all stakeholders. This is also to collect and conserve all capitals of knowledge, skills and networks required and useful for the new another game. It begins with encouraging all various groups of volunteers to work together which will lead to close cooperation among all groups of stakeholders in the game organizers. Program management model is continuously publicized and disseminated among network members by network secretary who will regularly report important information and current activities to all members.

Thus, updated, efficient and effective communication for information and messages sharing among volunteer network is always carried on. Furthermore, motivation is a key process adopted in volunteer management to encourage the volunteers to work to achieve the game's goals. For example, to publicize the significance of the game in terms of that the game is a social and valuable event that everybody should come to participate for national benefits and their own honors. Moreover in the motivational process, volunteers are provided with such working facilities and tools as a volunteer village, a shuttle-van



service, a volunteer uniform, a souvenir, a radio, a mobile phone and IT gadgets etc. and they are also attended with friendliness.

### **Recommendation for Further Research**

For sustainable development of international game management in Thailand, further research should be conducted on such issues as volunteer team manager's performance, motivation development among volunteers, other management-related factors and volunteer network management.

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**The Knowledge Management: Knowledge Identification of  
National Sports Associations in Thailand**

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## **The Knowledge Management: Knowledge Identification of National Sports Associations in Thailand**

### **Abstract**

Nowadays, scholars in management have focused on human capital in organizations and knowledge as the most valuable resource. As the modern management gurus Peter F. Drucker said that the economic knowledge is an important influence and become the decisive advantage factor of competition. The researcher has interests in studying The Knowledge Management: Knowledge Identification of National Sports Associations in Thailand for the purpose of determining the appropriate knowledge to the knowledge management of the Sport Association of Thailand. This research approach is a qualitative research. The data were collected from the literature review and by interview using in-depth interview with key informant from a total of 21 sports association administrators and relevant agencies of the 2 major contributors to the sport authority of Thailand and the contributors from the Department of Education, Ministry of Tourism and Sports total of 23 persons.

Information from the interviews showed that the knowledge of the field was divided into two parts: the knowledge of administration development of the sport association and

the knowledge of the development of the sport.

1) The knowledge of administration development of the sport association as it is used in the operation of the Association. To serve as a framework for determining the direction of development in line with the changing environment both within and outside the country in the field of sports, we concluded that all of the knowledge to develop the Association is composed of two parts: the knowledge of management including knowledge of the change management, the strategic management, the target-aimed management and the knowledge in sports management, the knowledge of modern sports organizations, the event management, the application of Sport Science, the network management for sports, the personnel management in sport, the management of supporters, rules and regulations of the sport in the country and abroad and the resource management in sport.

2) The knowledge of the development of the sport as the knowledge to enhance the capabilities and management experience and knowledge of the role to promote the administration of the sport to be developed continuously and sufficient for the development of sport position. We concluded that the knowledge of administration development of the sport association has two parts: the knowledge of the executive and the knowledge-based job description.

In the next study, there should be a gap assessment of knowledge in the sport associations. To determine whether the lack of knowledge about the sport and should be studied to determine their knowledge of the sport in terms of technique operators such as

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sport techniques, coaches or referees, etc., the study should determine the knowledge of sport organization of foreign countries in order to compare and improve our knowledge continuously.

**Keywords:** The knowledge identification, National Sports Associations



## Introduction

Knowledge is the most important thing for the organization as an intangible asset in order to increase productivity, creativity and innovation (Kermally, 2002). Moreover, knowledge is a resource to influence economic importance and the decisive factors of competitive advantage (Ruggles, 1998). Therefore, since the beginning of the 21st century, many organizations have changed the system and strategic of management. The operational work is required to be developed or learned all the time. In order to be successful in the future, the organization must be able to make a commitment of personnel in the organization and responsibility for the organization. Organizations need to encourage people to open up to new ideas or knowledge. The personnel must be communicated clearly to understand the context of the organization, common vision and work together to achieve the objectives of the organization (Kirti Yotyingyong, 2009).

When knowledge is essential for the operation of the organization, the proper use of knowledge management is the key to organizational development. Therefore, it must be applied to the existing knowledge to build capacity and effective performance. It is also congruent with the study of O'Dell, Grayson, Jackson and Nilly (1998). They stated that knowledge management is a strategy that resulted in a knowledge transfer,

which is required to be right at the right time and is translated into actions and improve organizational performance.

National Sports Associations in Thailand have a significant role in the development of athletes to achieve excellence, which bring the country's reputation. The National Sport Associations operate in accordance with the policies and objectives of the government, under the control of the Sports Authority of Thailand. Sports associations are volunteer organizations. The staff of each association has two parts: a personnel action, including athletes, coaches and administrators who are paid according to the performance evaluation from the Sports Authority of Thailand. The personnel management and board positions are paid for their works. The president of associations is elected every two years and can serve for two consecutive terms only.

The study found that the barriers in the internal operations of the National Sports Association are mainly from the lack of cooperation of several works, unfragmented documentation system, lack of responsible care, staff in association never working closely together, frequent change of management, and the lack of continuity in the operation as well (Lertrat Rattavanish, 1993). A study by the Sports Authority of Thailand (1993) was found that the majority of the National Sport Association Board of directors hardly followed up the plan and adjusted it to suit the current situation. No modern information systems are sufficient in planning or making decision to develop the sport further or to correct the troubleshooting promptly (Sports Authority of

Thailand, 1997). It is also congruent with the results of the implementation of the 2nd National Development Plan (1997-2001) and the 3rd National Development Plan (2001-2006) that overall result did not to achieve the goals. For example, a strategic development of science and technology of sport, that the Dissemination of knowledge in sports science and technology in sport was in a low level. There are not information center of sports science and technology in sports. Also they are not sports information center to manage and monitor the performance of the sport. Regulation relating to the sport has not been updated, and the administration lack of monitoring and evaluation (Ministry of Tourism and Sports, 2007). The National Sports Associations also do not have knowledge identification of their associations.

From the current problem in running the National Associations, the researchers had reviewed research of sports organizations in the foreign countries. Halbwirth and Toohey (2001) studied the knowledge management to improve the performance of organizations and the study of Olympics and knowledge management; a case study of the Sydney Olympic Games Organising Committee, also known as SOCOG. Knowledge management is implemented through knowledge management project in 2000 which showed that the Olympics volunteers are more than 500 people. And there is a lot of variety the problem of sharing data. Thus SOCOG realized the importance of data collection in the organization by learning from the experience of the operator. For example, the organization created solutions from information technology to support

organizational knowledge management via a central management system and library, which help to communicate information sharing within a large organization or for the general public. The staff can access information at any time as well as linked to other external information, critical operations and information system. In addition, the information technology also provides customer service and reduction of the redundancy in data collection. The Sydney 2000 Olympic Games organizing committee's information system should serve as a backbone for transferring knowledge across the organization. The system also monitored and analyzed the business needs and information seeking behavior of the staff, solved the problem of the recommendations of the technology, retrieved record information retrieval, and the knowledge that came from the Knowledge Management process to prepare a management plan for organizing the Olympic and Paralympic Games. However, research also suggested that measuring the success of knowledge management is not only focused on using technology to solve the problem. The data must be complete as required and efficient resources to facilitate appropriate training for workers. The successful knowledge management must be combined with change management.

National Sport Organization for Canadian O'Reilly and Knight (2007) studied the best practice of knowledge management in the national sports organization in Canada. The objective of this research is to create a framework for research which can bring research to understand the activities of knowledge management by examining what

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facilitates learning, improving the performance of non-profit organizations and managing volunteer in organizations. The results revealed that printed matter and community practitioners had a positive correlation with the level of need for cognition. In addition, the print media and consultation are highly positive correlated with the level of complexity of the task, while, the community of practice had a positive relationship within the same application.

However, it was found that the teaching effect of research on learning outcomes, which the researcher recommended to maintain the implicit knowledge, and level of the person's knowledge and sharing a common network. The study by Andrew (2008) focused on the study of knowledge in the field of communication, knowledge transfer, and good information. This is congruent with Jonathan (2008) that study about the determination of knowledge, storing knowledge in a sport as well. The results of the study of knowledge management in sport organizations in the foreign countries and in Thailand focused on knowledge management to improve organizational performance. The research is to study the essential knowledge of the National Sport Associations in Thailand.

### **The objective of the research**

For the knowledge identification of the National Sports Associations of Thailand.



## Research Definitions

**Knowledge Identification** is to identify the knowledge and expertise of the association, the association must exist. To be used in planned development of the association.

**Sports Associations** Meaning The National Sport Associations of Thailand, with the main objective to promote the sport or sports direct. Which has been authorized by the Sports Authority of Thailand. To establish under Section 53 and Section 59 of the Act. Sports Authority of Thailand 1985. And is controlled by a Board of Directors of the Authority are appointed and served in the year 2010-2012.

## Research Methodology and Data Analysis

The qualitative approach was used in this research and the research tools included semi-structured interviews, which are to verify the accuracy of the scale, by a group of 6 experts. The Index of Congruence (IOC) were determined and the questions at the IOC more than 0.5 were selected. The data were analyzed by content analysis and reported on a narrative format. Samples were 23 executives from the National Sports Associations, who provided and identified important information.

## Research Result

Knowledge identification is derived from Association's strategy, policy, vision and mission. Knowledge identification can be divided into two parts: 1) the knowledge in National Sports Associations development and 2) the knowledge in administrator development.

1) Knowledge Management in National Sports Association Development. it is used in the operation of the association. It serves as a framework for determining the direction of development within changing environment, both within and outside the country in sports. The results were concluded that knowledge required for association development included change management, strategic management and result-based management. Knowledge in sports management consists of modern sports organizations, event management, applications of sport science, networking for sports organizations, sports personnel management, rules and regulations of international and national sport, and resource management in sports. 2) Knowledge of sport administrator development for developing ability and experience to international level of sports administrators can be divided into two parts.

2.1 Administrative knowledge includes leadership vision, strategic planning, self-control and teaching and assignments.

2.2 The role of knowledge in the structure of sports associations. It allows the implementation of key positions.

Knowledge for President is knowledge about the nature of the sport, management and planning, human resource management, knowledge of the law, regulations pertaining to the sport, knowledge of monitoring and performance evaluation, coordination skills and foreign language proficiency.

Knowledge for the Vice President is knowledge about the nature of the sport, management and planning, human resource management, knowledge of the law, regulations pertaining to the sport, knowledge of monitoring and performance evaluation, coordination skills and foreign language proficiency.

Knowledge for Secretary General is knowledge about the nature of the sport, the rules of the sport, law and regulations relating to the operation and coordination skills, and proficiency in foreign languages.

Knowledge for the Treasurer is the financial and tax accounting and regulatory knowledge of the law relating to the operation and regulation of sports in the country, law and the act.

Knowledge for the Registrar is information technology such as design and analysis, developing of information technology, creating a database to keep records of athletes, coaches and referees, knowledge of law and regulations pertaining to the operation.

Knowledge for the Hostess is the facility management services, knowledge of the laws and regulations pertaining to the operation.



Knowledge for the Public Relations: knowledge of associations, knowledge of public relations and media planning, image building for the associations, support and promote the implementation and coordination of public events, knowledge of the laws and regulations pertaining to the operation.

Knowledge for Technical department is to develop athletes, organizing competition, resource development such as golf equipment, technology, sports, etc., and knowledge of the law and regulations pertaining to the operation.

Knowledge for the Foreign Affairs is knowledge of the law, and regulations pertaining to the operation.

Knowledge for the Marketing and Sponsorship department is the business market incentives and tax benefits, knowledge of business management and marketing, knowledge management activities, knowledge support, and knowledge of business law, regulations relating to the operation and related agencies, both government and the private sector.

The uses of knowledge management in practice include 1) the development of the field of knowledge is knowledge that is used in the operation of the Association. And 2) Knowledge Management Development Association, which is divided into two parts: the knowledge of the executives, and knowledge-based roles in the structure of National Sports Associations.



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## Conclusion

The knowledge identification is required for the National Sports Associations to know which knowledge need developed. It is also useful in planning human resource development especially in the field that personnel lack expertise, considering the organization's vision, mission, goals, and knowledge to develop the sport (organizational management and sports management) and knowledge management to develop the executives (managerial competency and functional competency), which is consistent with Andrew (2008). He studied of knowledge identification in the field of communication, the transfer of learning and good information. This is also congruent with Jonathan (2008) which his study determined the knowledge and storing knowledge in a sports organizations, and also prioritizing of the knowledge. In order to prioritize what you need to know the most and less important knowledge, the vision, mission and strategic goals of the organization need to be considered.

### **Recommendation for Further Research**

In the future study, the gap within sports organizations should be examined. Knowledge in the specific field, knowledge to develop the sport, knowledge on

management and development the association should be studied in order to determine if lack of knowledge about the sport. The mentioned issues should be studied to determine their knowledge of the sport in terms of technical personnel such as sports coaches or referees. In addition, the knowledge identification of an international level should be studied to compare and improve knowledge of the National Sports Association in Thailand.

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## **Psychological Attachment to Local Community and Team Identity**

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# Psychological Attachment to Local Community and Team

## Identity

### Abstract

The relationship between sports teams and local community has garnered the interest of a large number of researchers in recent years. Sports teams are a symbol of the local community, and based on the social identity theory, it is believed that those who internalize the identity of a local of the community to which they belong also show a tendency to identify more strongly with the local sports team. The purpose of this study is to demonstrate the relationship between the emotional attachment fans have towards their local area and identification with their home sports team. For the purpose of this study, we conducted an analysis using spectators of games played by the University of Illinois baseball team in the state of Illinois, America as the sample population. Based on the results of research into identification with the local community using a multiple indicator model to show the relationship between psychological home and team identity, it was revealed that the model showed some goodness of fit and that identification with the local community had a positive impact on team identity. Future studies are still required in order to identify factors other than emotional attachment to the local community that impact on

team identity and to further verify these findings in Japan through the use of new data.

**Keywords:** local identity, psychological home, team identity, hometown activities,  
community-based strategy

The relationship between sporting teams and local community has garnered the interest of a large number of researchers in recent years. In Japan, since the establishment of the J. League in 1993, a large number of sporting teams have focused on management strategies that tie in with attachment to the local community. Team management that focuses on attachment to the local community is a strategy, which aims to establish the community in which the team is located as the hometown and by inviting members of the local public to participate in activities, such as coaching teams and visiting the local sporting facilities, to securely position a team as one that represents the area in order to obtain a larger, local fan base. By promoting hometown activities, a team becomes recognized as symbol of the local community, making it possible to transfer the emotional attachment residents have for their area over to their hometown team. As representatives of their local area, teams compete against those from other cities and in areas where there is a history of interregional tension, such in the case of European soccer clubs, we can say that local residents have a strong identification with their local team.

Cities are host to cultural commodities, including ethnicity, culture, space, economy, legal and political systems, sporting organizations, habits, beliefs, actions, myths, customs, attitudes, emotions, traditions, and local history etc.(Sasaki 2004) and these cultural



commodities play a unifying role in creating a local identity among the residents (Rausch 2005). The positioning of these cultural commodities is the concept behind community attachment strategies which aim to transfer emotional attachment towards the local community over to the home team. Looking at the relationship between sporting teams as a cultural commodity and the emotional attachment residents have for their local community from the perspective of organizational attachment, it can be perceived that residents belong to a large organization, that being the community in which they live and we can also assume that they will tend to value highly an identity which serves as a symbol of that community. For example, in the case of universities, it is known that students who can identify strongly with the university will have a more positive opinion of the university sports team(s) than students who have a low sense of identity with the university (Dietz-Uhler 1999). Students belong to the organization that is their university and their level of identification with that organization (university) is expressed in how they rate the university sporting team(s), which serves as a symbol of the university. Bonaiuto et al. (1996) have conducted research into the strength of local identity and the awareness of pollution levels at local beaches and showed that there was a tendency for residents who were more attached to their town to perceive their local beaches as less polluted. This result shows that the stronger the level of identification people show towards the area in which they live, the better perception they have of their local beach, which serves as a symbol of their community, and indicates that there is a tendency for

organization members to have a higher perception of a symbol of the organization to which they belong. Sporting teams, like beaches, are a symbol of the local community and also a cultural commodity therefore we can also assume that fans that have a stronger level of identity with their local area will have a higher perception of the local team.

As outlined above, although we can assume that positive acceptance of a sporting team, as a symbol of the local community, by local residents can lead to a transfer of emotional attachment to the community to the home team, little research has been done to validate this relationship. This study aims to clarify the relationship between local identity of fans and the way in which they identify with their home team.

### **Teams, local community and fans**

Professional sporting teams, including J. League clubs are establishing their own hometown status and conducting hometown activities based on community attachment strategies. Figure 1 shows the relationship between fans and teams in the local community. Both the fans and the team exist in the “community” and the community offers a sense of reassurance and consolation to the fans and the team. Fans rate the team’s winning percentage, playing style and hometown activities to form team reputation (a path from the fans to the team). As a result, it is possible for strong teams and teams with star players to increase their popularity and their fan base. While on the other hand, the sporting team creates a sense of unity and togetherness among the local residents (path from the team

back to the fans).

On the other hand, fans hold an emotional attachment towards the community in which they live (path linking fans to the community). Research has been conducted in various fields, including the area of community psychology and sociology, into the emotional attachment that people hold towards the community in which they live from the perspective of community identity (Puddifoot, 2001), local identity (Rausch 2005, Auman 2007), sense of community (Pretty et al., 1996, McMillan 1986, Peterson et al., 2008, Chavis & Pretty 1999, Sonn & Fisher 1999, Peterson et al., 2008, Rovai 2002, Townley & Kloos 2009), sense of home (Riemer 2000, Wiles 2008, Donahoo & Caffey 2010) and community attachment (Crowe 2010, Kasandra 1974) etc. Sense of community has been raised as one factor which defines social capital (Long & Douglas 2007), and is also an important research theme in the area of community psychology. It can be said that a hometown sporting team is a cultural commodity and a symbol of the local community (Krawczyk 1996) (path linking community to the team). As a result, we can also assume that the sense of emotional attachment towards the local community will have an impact of the emotional attachment towards the team that represents the area.

The sense of emotional attachment towards a team born from how highly the activities of the team are rated will be affected by the activities of the team. For example, the loss of a star player or drop in team performance etc. will result in a drop in the team's reputation and can be a factor resulting in a drop in emotional attachment towards the

team. However, emotional attachment towards a team born from an emotional attachment to the local community is generally stable and long-lasting. This is because the emotional attachment residents hold towards their local community is not something that rises and falls over the short-term. As a result, being able to link the emotional attachment fans hold towards their local community to the attachment they hold towards the home team is an important part of team management in order to create strong loyalty among its fan base.

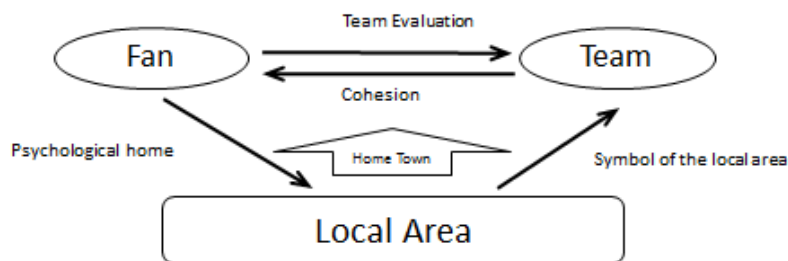


Figure 1. Framework of this Study

### **Emotional attachment to the local community and team identity**

It is believed that the emotional attachment people feel towards the local community has an impact on strengthening the level of identification a fan will have with their home team. This relationship can be explained using social identity theory (Ashforth & Mael 1989). People generally have two identities; a personal identity and a social identity (Tajfel & Turner 1979). Personal identity is shaped by abilities and interests whereas

social identity is formed by your demographic group (gender, race) or a social group to which you belong (religion, education, social organization). People may belong to multiple social groups at any one time, and generally internalize the identity of those groups (Ashforth & Mael 1989). It is this sense of belonging that makes fans identify themselves as part of the group, which is the city in which they live (Matsuzaki & Homma 2003). Fans of a team hold the identity of the social group, as a resident of the team's hometown however if we think of the team as a symbol of the city, strength of identity as a resident should be proportionate to the level of loyalty towards the team.

Research that has been conducted in an attempt to understand the behavior of sports consumers using social identity theory includes research that has demonstrated the aggressiveness of sporting spectators (Wann 1993), research that has demonstrated the relationship between the bad behavior of athletes off the field and fan identification (Fink 2009), research to demonstrate soccer hooliganism from the perspective of social identity (Hughson, 1998) and other research to demonstrate the satisfaction levels of sports spectators (Leeuwen et al., 2002) etc. All of this research has been targeted at sports fans and spectators with the aim of understanding the impact that belonging to a particular group has on fans using social identity theory and as a result, it appears that the primary focus of research in this area has been to gauge the impact that values of a social group have on sports fans.

Applying social identity theory, this study posits the process under which fans with a strong sense of community identity will place high value on the hometown team and as a result, enhance team identity. This is referred to as “in-group favoritism” (Tajfel & Turner 1979) and implies a preference or affinity with the in-group or in-group members and is seen as a form of self-enhancement as a result of aligning oneself to the social identity of a group (Matsuzaki & Homma 2003). As a result, it is believed that fans who see the home team as an in-group will have a more positive image of the team, thereby increasing team identity. To date, there is no research which serves to validate this relationship and it is believed to be an important theme in order to prove the validity of community-based sports team management.

This study, in order to achieve the objective of proving the relationship between fan identity with community in which they live and identity with the home team, has established the hypothesis that, “the emotional attachment people hold towards the community in which they live will impact on their identity with local sports teams” and aims to validate the relationship between the two.

## **Measurement scale**

### **1) Psychological home (PH) scale**

This study has applied the “psychological home scale” developed by Sigmon et al. (2002) as a scale to measure resident’s level of attachment to the local community.

Psychological home is defined as a sense of belonging in which self-identity is tied to a particular place (Sigmon 2002). Although sense of community can be divided into sense of community that is community-based or based on social networks, in recent years, there has been a lot of research concerning the importance of members in that community, group cohesion and security from the perspective of psychological sense of community (Sonn & Fisher 1999). Psychological home concerns how self-identity relates to and is expressed in relation to a psychological environment. We believe that psychological home, an expression of how self-identity ties in with a particular place is a suitable scale of measurement to validate the relationship between aligning self-identity with local community and aligning self-identity with a local sporting team for the purpose of this study. The psychological home scale used in this study is comprised of the eight criteria developed by Sigmon et al. (2002).

## **2) Team identity (TI) scale**

Ross et al. (2008) have been involved in measuring spectator-based brand equity in sporting teams. Brand equity is a measurement of the total equity of a team brand and it is measured using a measurement scale comprised of 13 elements and 49 criteria. Included in these are four criteria concerning “Identification” and four criteria concerning “Internalization” and we have used these eight criteria in this study as a scale to measure team identity.

The aim of this study is to demonstrate the relationship between how fans identify with the local community and the emotional attachment they have towards the local sporting team. We have mentioned above how the process by which emotional attachment to the local community can lead to emotional attachment towards the local sporting team can be explained using social identity theory. Emotional attachment to a sporting team built based on social identity is the process of identification with the team and internalization of the team's existence therefore it is necessary to measure emotional attachment to a sporting team from the perspective of identification and internalization.

Several studies have been conducted into team identity. For example, research conducted by Fink et al.(2009) demonstrating team identification using social identity theory aimed to measure team identification using a fan identification scale comprised of three criteria developed by Trail and James (2001). However, it should be pointed out that it would be difficult to understand the more detailed aspects of emotional attachment to a team using only three criteria. In order to reinforce these points, this study relies on eight criteria from two different perspectives.

### **Data collection**

The data used in this study was collected from questionnaires distributed at a home game played by the university baseball team of the University of Illinois,



Urbana-Champaign campus situated in the state of Illinois in the US. College sporting teams in the US play a role of providing sports entertainment to the local community and function, together with professional sporting teams, as a symbol of the community. The survey was conducted over two days, on the 16th and 18th May in 2010. On both of these days, we were permitted to distribute questionnaires to spectators at the entrance to the stadium and these were collected at a stand before the start of the game. On the first day, 47 questionnaires were handed out from which 33 were collected (70.2%) and on the second day, 90 were handed out from which we collected 68 (75.6%). This data was tallied and the data from 101 questionnaires was used in our analysis.

### **Method of analysis**

In this study, after considering the basic statistics and internal correlation from the two perspectives of psychological home and team identity, we employed factor analysis to understand the factorial structure of these perspectives and created an analytical model to test the relationship between the two and then examined the goodness of fit of the model.

## Results/considerations

### 1) Sample attributes

Table 1 shows the sample attributes of the respondents. In terms of gender, 47.1% were male and 52.9% were female. The majority of the sample at 27.6% was aged between 40-49yrs followed by those aged between 30-39yrs at 24.1%. The average age of the sample was 42.4yrs. In terms of school education, the majority of the sample at 39.1% had graduated from a graduate school while 25.3% had graduated from university.

Table 1. Demographic of respondents

Sex	n	%
Male	41	47.1
Female	46	52.9
total	87	100

Age	n	%
-19	6	6.9
20-29	12	13.8
30-39	21	24.1
40-49	24	27.6
50-59	12	13.8
60-69	6	6.9
70-	6	6.9
total	87	100

Education	n	%
Less than H.S.	1	1.1
H.S. graduate	9	10.3
Post H.S. education	15	17.2
Bachelors Degree	22	25.3
Graduate Degree	40	46
total	87	100

## 2) Psychological home

In measuring psychological home, we used the measurement scale comprised of eight criteria developed by Sigmon et al.(2002). Table 2 shows the eight criteria used, basic statistics and the internal correlation between each of the criteria. The mean score for each of the criteria was extremely high at 4 points or more revealing that the sample expressed a strong emotional attachment to the community in which they live. The criterion with the highest mean score was “I take pride in the place where I live” at 4.44 followed by “I add personal touches to the place where I live” at 4.43 and “I work at making a place my own” at 4.39. Looking at the internal correlation between the criteria, PH5 and PH6, PH6 and PH7, PH7 and PH8 all showed a strong correlation of over .80 and of these PH6 and PH7 showed a particularly high ceiling effect therefore these two criteria were excluded from further analysis.

Following this, in order to understand the factorial structure, we conducted a factor analysis (principle factor analysis, Promax rotation) on six criteria, removing the two criteria from PH6 and PH7. The results of the factor analysis are shown in Table 3 where two factors have been extracted. Four criteria are bundled into the first factor including, “I get a sense of security from having a place of my own” and “I work at making a place my own”. This bundle contains a large number of such criteria where individuals made a dedicated effort to convert the place in which they reside into an environment that was easy to live in and therefore this bundle was named “Dedication” factor. The coefficient

for the four criteria was .843 revealing a certain degree of credibility. The second factor comprised a bundle of two criteria, “I have grown attached to many of the places I have lived” and “I put a lot of time and effort into making a place my own”. These criteria express emotional attachment to the place in which people live and as a result, this bundle was labeled “Emotional Attachment” factor. The  $\alpha$  coefficient was .877 and like the first factor, was a result which revealed a certain degree of credibility. Based on the above analysis, we decided to establish a psychological home scale built on two factors for the purpose of this study.

Table 2. Basic statistics and internal correlation of the psychological home scale

	M	SD	PH1	PH2	PH3	PH4	PH5	PH6	PH7	PH8
PH. 1	4. 02	. 988	-							
PH. 2	4. 14	. 878	. 787**	-						
PH. 3	4. 25	. 796	. 407**	. 415**	-					
PH. 4	4. 01	. 800	. 338**	. 345**	. 471**	-				
PH. 5	4. 30	. 684	. 317**	. 434**	. 586**	. 610**	-			
PH. 6	4. 43	. 676	. 334**	. 507**	. 598**	. 593**	. 854**	-		
PH. 7	4. 44	. 642	. 296**	. 428**	. 487**	. 398**	. 706**	. 800**	-	
PH. 8	4. 39	. 617	. 367**	. 522**	. 531**	. 580**	. 767**	. 852**	. 886**	-

- PH.1, I have grown attached to many of the places I have lived
- PH.2, I put a lot of time and effort into making a place my own
- PH.3, I feel more relaxed when I'm at home
- PH.4, I get a surround myself with things that highlight my personality
- PH.5, I get a sense of security from having a place of my own
- PH.6, I add personal touches to the place where I live
- PH.7, I take pride in the place where I live
- PH.8, I work at making a place my own

(  $\alpha = .892$  )

Table 3. Results from factor analysis of the psychological home scale

<b>Dedication(<math>\alpha = .843</math>)</b>	
I get a sense of security from having a place of my own	.911
I work at making a place my own	.843
I get a surround myself with things that highlight my personality	.683
I feel more relaxed when I'm at home	.650
<b>Emotional Attachment(<math>\alpha = .877</math>)</b>	
I have grown attached to many of the places I have lived	.928
I put a lot of time and effort into making a place my own	.854

### 3) Team identity scale

Next, we considered team identity. Table 4 shows the basic statistics and internal correlation from the team identity scale comprised of the eight criteria from two perspectives developed by Ross et al.(2008) used in this study. The mean scores were widely distributed, ranging from the low 2s to the high 3s. The highest mean score was “The Illinois baseball team is my team” at 3.70, followed by “Supporting the U of I Baseball team is very important to me” at 3.68 and “I consider myself a loyal fan of the Illinois baseball team” with a mean score of 3.59. The lowest mean score was recorded for “I “live and breathe” the U of I Baseball team” at 2.25. Looking at the internal correlation between each of the criterion reveals a correlation of more than .80 between TI6 and TI7 and TI7 and TI8. As a result, TI7 was removed from following analysis for the purpose of this study. Further, consideration of ceiling and floor effects based on the standard deviation scores revealed that there were none for any of the criteria.

In order to understand the factorial structure for the team identity scale, we conducted a factor analysis (principle factor analysis, Promax rotation) on the team identity scale

developed by Ross et al.(2008) used in this study. The results were bundled into two factors which are shown in Table 5. Bundled in the first factor are three of the four identification criteria developed by Ross et al.(2008). The  $\alpha$ coefficient was .936. Bundled in the second factor are three of the four internalization criteria also developed by Ross etc. with an  $\alpha$ coefficient of .888. For the purpose of this study, we arrived at a team identity scale comprised of two factors having removed two criteria from eight specified by Ross et al. (2008).

**Table 4. Basic statistics and correlation of the team identity (TI) scale**

	M	SD	T-I 1	T-I 2	T-I 3	T-I 4	T-I 5	T-I 6	T-I 7	T-I 8
TI. 1	3.70	1.295	-							
TI. 2	3.59	1.126	.536**	-						
TI. 3	3.68	1.062	.318**	.685**	-					
TI. 4	3.43	1.137	.466**	.792**	.731**	-				
TI. 5	2.53	1.209	.377**	.572**	.551**	.655**	-			
TI. 6	2.39	1.261	.436**	.606**	.529**	.661**	.763**	-		
TI. 7	2.25	1.232	.369**	.529**	.419**	.620**	.682**	.827**	-	
TI. 8	2.45	1.379	.382**	.585**	.473**	.641**	.651**	.774**	.823**	-

TI.1, The Illinois baseball team is my team

TI.2, I consider myself a loyal fan of the Illinois baseball team

TI.

TI.3, Supporting the Illinois baseball team is very important to me

TI.4, I want others to know that I am a fan of the Illinois baseball team

TI.5, I feel like I am a member of the Illinois baseball team

TI.6, Being a fan of Illinois baseball is a large part of who I am

TI.7, I “live and breathe” the Illinois baseball team

TI.8, I like to think that I “bleed the colors” of the Illinois baseball team

**Table 5. Results from factor analysis of the team identity scale**
**Identification ( $\alpha = .936$ )**

I consider myself a loyal fan of the Illinois baseball team	.951
The Illinois baseball team is my team	.949
I want others to know that I am a fan of the Illinois baseball team	.843

**Internalization ( $\alpha = .888$ )**

Being a fan of Illinois baseball is a large part of who I am	.658
I like to think that I “bleed the colors” of the Illinois baseball team	.817
I feel like I am a member of the Illinois baseball team	.810

#### 4) Psychological home and team identity

Next, in order to test the hypothesis established for this study that, “the emotional attachment people hold towards the community in which they live will impact on their identity with local sports teams” we created the multiple indicator model shown in Figure 2 in order to establish goodness of fit. The goodness of fit indices are as shown in Figure 2. Values of above .90 are considered to be convincing for GFI and AGFI statistics however in this study, these statistics were GFI=.908 and AGFI=.851. While over .90 was obtained for the GFI, AGFI came in at .851. Although it did not exceed .90, AGFI was over .85

coming in close to the desired value of .90. The closer the CFI statistic is to 1, the higher the goodness of fit and in this study, the CFI statistic of .981 came extremely close.

RMSEA was .042, which puts it inside the generally accepted range of falling under .08.

Based on all of these indices, the analytical model established for the purpose of this study satisfies the goodness of fit criteria and as a result we have deemed the hypothesis for this study that “the emotional attachment people hold towards the community in which they live will impact on their identity with local sports teams” to be acceptable.

While the normalized estimate for the path extending from psychological home to emotional attachment was 1.10, maximum likelihood estimation was used in this study therefore we have shown a value over 1. What this implies is that it is being affected by the high contribution ratio of one of the observed variables that makes up the emotional attachment factor. Further, the normalized estimate for the path extending from team ID to identification was high at .96. This is also believed to be affected by the high contribution ratio of one of the observed variables that makes up the factor. This is a result of using the maximum likelihood estimation in our analysis. The normalized estimate for psychological home to team identity is .39 and this shows that there is a positive relationship between psychological home and team identity.

This study examined the process of how residents, members of the local community heighten their identification with the local sporting team, which serves as a cultural commodity and symbol of the community from the perspective of social identity theory



and in-group favoritism as part of BIRGing. Results showed that there was a certain degree of goodness of fit for the analytical model established for this study and that there was a correlation between the variables. This demonstrates that emotional attachment to the community will impact upon emotional attachment towards a team which serves as a symbol of the same community. Currently in Japan, community-based strategies are being used in the field of professional sports team management with the aim of increasing their fan bases and this study proves that strategies which aim to link the emotional attachment residents have towards their community to team identity can be expected to have a positive effect. As a result, it can be suggested that as a strategy, it would be effective to align team image with the image of the community and to position the team as one which represents the local area. There are currently examples in Japan of professional sporting teams in port towns adopting the image of seagulls as their team mascot, teams in hot springs region adopting a hot spring logo and other examples where teams have used specialty home-grown products as their team mascot. The results of this study will provide a backup for these kinds of strategies.

However, in-group favoritism, where a team in a local area is seen as an in-group, prompting emotional attachment is often followed by black sheep effect. Black sheep effect refers to the tendency to look down on the team an individual supports when they are on a losing streak, more so than other teams in a similar situation, and show outward

aggression towards them (Matsuzaki & Homma 2003). Fan psychology is volatile and all sporting teams should be cautious of this tendency.

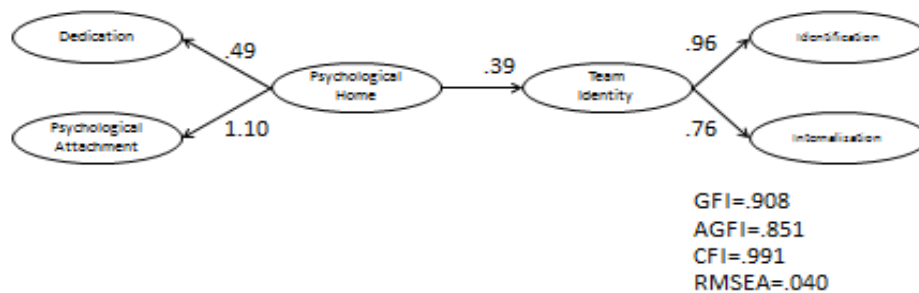


Figure 2. PH-TI Model

## Conclusion

In order to demonstrate the impact that attachment to community has on team identity, this study examined psychological home and team identity measurement scales and applied multiple comparison models with the aim of further understanding this relationship. Following examination of the psychological home scale, there was found to be a strong internal correlation and ceiling effect in the eight criteria scale developed by Sigmon et al.(2002) therefore two criteria were removed and the remaining six criteria used in factor analysis. As a result, we arrived at two factors which were labeled

“Dedication” and “Emotional Attachment” factors. We then examined the measurement scale comprised of eight criteria, which looked at team identity from the perspective of identification and internalization developed by Ross et al.(2008). One criterion, which was found to have a strong correlation with others, was removed and the remaining seven criteria were used in a factor analysis. This resulted in one other criterion with a low contributing ratio being removed and the remaining six criteria being bundled into one of two factors, identification or internalization, developed by Ross et al.(2008). Results of analysis using a multiple comparison model in order to demonstrate the relationship between psychological home and team identity provided values that satisfied goodness of fit indices and therefore the model was adopted to demonstrate the relationship between attachment to community and team identity.

Results of examination into whether internalization of one’s identity as part of a social group as a resident of a city has a direct impact on identification with a sporting team which serves as a symbol of the community based on social identity theory gave a normalized estimate of .39. This result shows that the feelings or perceptions one has about their local area will have a direct impact on how they identify with their home team. The results of this study have shown that emotional attachment to community will have a positive impact on team identity however it can be assumed that there are a variety of other factors, other than emotional attachment to community, which will impact on how

people in a community identify with their home team. In light of such, it is necessary to further explore what other factors may impact on team identity.

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# Success Drivers in the Japanese Elite Sport System: An Examination Based on Evaluations of the Elite Sport Climate by Elite Athletes

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# Success Drivers in the Japanese Elite Sport System: An

## Examination Based on Evaluations of the Elite Sport Climate

by Elite Athletes

### Abstract

The purpose of this research was to examine policy-related success drivers leading to athletic success by conducting an evaluation of the elite sport climate with Japanese elite athletes as the survey subjects (n=105). The analysis investigated which specific policy-related factors describe the difference between elite athletes who achieved results in the Top 8 in major international competitions, e.g. World Championships, in the 2 years before the survey was conducted between 19 July 2011 and 31 December 2011 (Elite  $\alpha$ ) and other elite athletes (Elite  $\beta$ ). The study was drawn from the research framework and scoring system developed by De Bosscher et al. (2006, 2008, 2009, 2010) that is built on the SPLISS (Sports Policy Factors leading to International Sporting Success) model. The results revealed differences in elite sport climate between Elite  $\alpha$  and Elite  $\beta$  in 3 pillars (organisation and structure of sport policies, talent identification and development, and (inter)national competition), which were all evaluated higher by Elite  $\alpha$ . The findings support the importance of the improvement of the elite sport climate with the particular

reference to the significance of organization and structure of sport policy, talent identification and development, and (inter)national competition.

**Key words:** Japanese elite sport climate; Japanese elite athlete; elite sport system; scoring system

## Introduction

The race to win medals among countries at international sport competitions, including the Olympic Games, has clearly escalated in the past few decades (De Bosscher, Bingham, Shibli, van Bottenburg & De Knop, 2008; Kukidome, 2010), and for many countries, an excellent medal tally at international sport competitions is becoming more and more important. Recently, governments have been directly intervening in policies designed to improve the international competitiveness of their sport organisations and associations by providing financial assistance (Green & Houlihan, 2005) and as a result, elite sport systems are becoming increasingly institutionalised (Bergsgard, Houlihan, Mangset, Nodland, & Rommetveldt, 2007).

So far, Japanese success at international sport competitions has been achieved by the efforts and ingenuity of individuals, such as athletes or coaching staff, and sport organisations and associations (Sport Promotion Advisory Panel, 2007). However, as seen in the establishment of the Japan Institute of Sports Sciences (JISS) in 2001 and the National Training Center (NTC) in 2008, and the introduction of the Basic Sports Act in 2011, which obligates the government to promote competitive sport, it is evident that the Japanese government is now actively engaged in promoting elite sport as a national strategy. Yamamoto (2008) stated the recent re-emergence of Japan as a strong sporting

nation in international sports (5<sup>th</sup> in the medal table in 2004, 8<sup>th</sup> in 2008) is the outcome of a refocusing by the government on elite sport policy. In 2010, about 70 percent of the 22.7 billion yen ‘Sport-related Budget’ of the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science, and Technology (MEXT) was allocated to elite sport purpose.

Elite sport policy study in Japan has just started in recent years. Yamamoto (2008) described the increasing emphasis on elite sport in the Japanese public policy which emerged in the late 1990s by examining a range of policy documents and interviews with policy actors. Kukidome (2010) revealed the problems and issues associated with the Long-term Athlete Development System<sup>1</sup>. These domestic literatures have revealed some distinctive features of the Japanese elite sport system and similarities to foreign countries’ frameworks. However, at present, only descriptive analysis has been conducted and evidence-based research leading to the improvement of elite sport policy has not. Furthermore, the elite sport system was never evaluated from the consumer’s perspective, despite it is the consumer who knows the quality of a service they experience (Chelladurai & Chang, 2000). The importance of the evaluation from the perspective of primary stakeholders is commonly mentioned in literature on organisational effectiveness (Shilbury & Moore, 2006; Taylor & O’Sullivan, 2009).

To address this issue, the present study analysed the elite sport system in Japan from the athletes’ perspective. In particular, the aim of this study was to examine key success factors which lead to athletic success by surveying elite athletes’ elite sport climate in

Summer Olympic sports, who have been achieving a certain level of sporting success at international competitions and can be regarded as the most important stakeholders in the current elite sport system. Elite sport climate is a climate created by the elite sport system and it is defined by van Bottenburg (2000) as “the social and organisational environment that provides the circumstances in which athletes can develop into elite sport athletes and can continue to achieve at the highest levels in their branch of sport” (p. 24). The result of this study will help policy makers and performance directors to set up an improved elite sport policy based on an empirical result.

### **Literature review**

In the past decade, research on the elite sport system has been pursued in various fields and advances have been made in each of the three levels of study examining the factors determining elite success classified by De Bosscher, De Knop, van Bottenburg, and Shibli (2006) which is macro-, micro-, and meso level.

According to Funahashi and Mano (2011), who conducted a macro-level review of research into international sporting competitiveness, it is apparent that recently, within the econometric model used to define the level of international competitiveness, the proxy variable for the elite sport system has been incorporated into the explanatory variable of elite success (Martin, Arin, Nitha & Chetty, 2005; Forrest, Sanz, & Tena, 2010; Luiz &

Fadal, 2010). Considering the finding that the importance of factors at the macro-level, representing 'population' and 'economic power', appeared to decrease during the last two decades (Bernard & Busse, 2000) and this might be because increasing numbers of nations have taken a state-sponsored strategic approach to the development of medal winning elites (Shibli & Bingham, 2008), the impact of the elite sport system on elite sport success can no longer be ignored for macroeconomics approach.

Concerning micro level studies which focus on factors that determine athletes' performance, most of literatures are in the field of sport psychology. These studies have investigated the ways in which athletes' state of mind and their relationships with their coaching staff affected their performance (Cunningham, 2011). On the other hand, not only factors that relate to the athlete's individual circumstances have been recognised, but also the influence of policy-related factors (Duffy, Lyons, Moran, Warrington, & MacManus, 2001; Gibbons, McConnel, Forster, Riewald, & Peterson, 2003). This line of research tells us that even without complex international comparisons that are deemed to be necessary at the meso level, it is still possible to obtain important information on the policy-related factors that support the performance of elite athletes (De Bosscher et al., 2006).

Among qualitative meso-level research in the field of sport management, various factors that support elite sport in different countries have been identified through research to compare elite sport systems throughout the world (Digel, 2002; Bergsgrad et al., 2007;

Green & Houlihan, 2005; Houlihan & Green, 2008). Houlihan (2009) identified three clusters of these factors: contextual factors (i.e. financial support), processual factors (i.e. talent identification and development system), and specific factors (i.e. training facilities).

In these types of research, similarities among the elite sport systems of different countries were identified through comparison of descriptions, like document analysis and interviews, in order to focus on the strategic structural designs of different systems (Böhlke, 2007; De Bosscher, Shibli, van Bottenburg, De Knop, & Truyens, 2010). More practice-oriented approaches have also been pursued; these include benchmarking research, which analyses best practices to focus on the management of the system rather than the system itself (Böhlke, 2007; Böhlke & Robinson; 2009).

Further, as extension to this qualitative meso-level research, the conceptual SPLISS model (Sports Policy Factors Leading to International Sporting Success) has been constructed, which classifies policy-related factors that define international sporting success into nine pillars. In addition, collaborative research to compare the elite sport systems of different countries has been undertaken (De Bosscher et al., 2008; 2010; De Bosscher, De Knop, van Bottenburg, Shibli, & Bingham, 2009). SPLISS research differentiated from descriptive analysis studies by adopting a mixed research method in which both qualitative and quantitative data for the critical success factors (CSF) in each pillar are converted into numerical values by a scoring system. The authors of this research have not yet reached to clear conclusions on the relationship between



international sporting competitiveness and particular factors (Houlihan & Green, 2008), but it has been suggested in the SPLISS study that ‘financial support for national sport organisations’, ‘athletic career and post career support’, ‘training facilities’, and ‘coaching provision and coach development’ are the key success drivers correlating to international sporting success (De Bosscher et al., 2009).

The domestic and wide-ranging international literature review indicates that the SPLISS model is the most sophisticated model that one can find in previous literatures, and to move beyond the descriptive analysis of the Japanese elite sport system, the framework of the SPLISS study is an applied possibility in order to investigate which factors contribute to success.

### **Theoretical framework and hypothesis**

The theoretical model underpinning this study is derived from the SPLISS model (see Appendix A). This model is based on 9 pillars and identified 126 CSFs. These Pillars along with the notion of input, throughput, and output form the basis of the SPLISS model. Although the SPLISS model has been tested within only 7 Western nations, the model was deemed employable for the Japanese elite sport system on the statement that “when we see the Japanese elite sport programmes as a ‘framework’, there is no major difference compared to other countries” (Waku, Abe, & Tobias, 2008).

The model tries to conceptualise the following: “How should elite sports policies function so that elite athletes can train and perform in optimal circumstances at each stage of their careers, with access to good facilities, surrounded by high quality coaches and medical and paramedical support?” (De Bosscher et al., 2008). Therefore output starts with an improved elite sport climate. If all the Pillars are well organised, the elite sport climate will improve and this is a basic condition leading to improved performances.

The above background leads to the following hypothesis of this study.

H: Successful Japanese elite athletes are in better elite sport climate.

Thus, the following research question is raised and will be addressed in this inquiry

RQ: What particular elite sport climate differentiates more successful Japanese elite athletes from less successful ones?

In the present study, the term ‘success’ refers to results in the Top 8 in major international competitions, e.g. World Championships, as increasing the number of elite athletes who have a potential to get medals is described as an important policy goal of the immediate elite sport policy in Japan.

## **Methods**

### **Survey subjects**

Survey subjects were 205 Japanese elite athletes. In order to select the survey

subjects, 'Infostrada', a database of results from international competitions of various disciplines, was used. Elite athletes selected as subjects were defined as follows.

1. *Those athletes who participate in summer disciplines targeted by "Team 'Nippon' Multi Support Project" in 2011. AND*
2. *Those athletes who have placed in the top 16 at major international competitions from the Beijing Olympic Games onwards (Olympic Games, World Championships, World Rankings, World Cups, etc.)*

"The Team 'Nippon' Multi Support Project" is a national elite sport project which aims to provide strategic and comprehensive support to top-level athletes to win medals in the London 2012 Olympic Games. In 2011, 14 summer disciplines were designated as target disciplines by the government. The compiled list was then checked by those responsible for enhancing the athletes' performance in each discipline such as national coaches, and staff involved in the Multi Support Project, to arrive at a list of 205 athletes as survey subjects.

## **Procedures**

In this study, the questionnaires were administered by mail or directly to the athletes, e.g. for athlete group surveys at training camps. The survey was called "Elite Climate Survey toward Top Athletes" and conducted between 19 July 2011 and 31 December 2011 as a request for co-operation from the MEXT and the Japanese Olympic Committee (JOC). The period the survey was implemented was coordinated by the personnel in charge of

enhancing the athletes' performance in each National Governing Body (NGB) and the coaching staff. A postal questionnaire was sent to and collected through the NGBs or the clubs to which the subjects belong enclosing a description of the research. Group surveys were conducted during national team training camps and 'Athlete check-ups' at JISS. Athletes were collected to a room where they answered the questionnaire individually after receiving an oral explanation on the surveying purpose. For those athletes participating in long-term training camps overseas, staff members attending the camp were asked to distribute and collect the questionnaire. A total of 155 questionnaires were sent to athletes belonging to those NGBs that agreed to co-operate with the survey and 105 were returned, giving a response rate of 69.5% on the surveys sent, and 51.2% on the total number of 205 targeted sample athletes.

### **Measurement items**

For investigating the elite athletes' elite sport climate, we used a questionnaire produced as part of the SPLISS project, which is engaged in international comparative research into the elite sport policies of various countries. Based on the discussion of five JISS researchers and one postgraduate student, the original questionnaire was translated into Japanese to make it useable for Japanese speakers. The survey items pertained to basic attributes (sex, birth year, specialised discipline, sporting achievements, and academic achievements) and the elite sport climate. The elite sport climate in this study is evaluated through the identification of 21 CSFs associated with 7 pillars (on a total of 126

CSF on 9 pillars). These CSFs were selected on the basis that subjects can evaluate a CSF subjectively. These include ‘organisation and structure of sport policies’ (Pillar 2: 5 CSF, 11 items); ‘talent identification and development system’ (Pillar 4: 4 CSF, 9 items); ‘athletic and post-career support’ (Pillar 5, 5 CSF, 10 items); ‘training facilities’ (Pillar 6, 1 CSF, 2 items); ‘coaching provision and coach development’ (Pillar 7, 1 CSF, 11 items); ‘(inter)national competition’ (Pillar 8, 4 CSF, 7 items); and ‘scientific research’ (Pillar 9, 1 CSF, 6 items). These selections were converted to 56 measurable items (see Table 1) and the survey respondents were asked to evaluate these questions subjectively on a scale from one to five or a binary choice. In order to differentiate the meanings attached to support given when the athlete is active compared to when he/she is retired, Pillar 5 was further divided into ‘athletic support’ and ‘post-career support’ and were labelled as Pillar 5(a) and Pillar 5(b) respectively. ‘Financial support’ (Pillar 1) and ‘sport participation’ (Pillar 3) were excluded from this survey because they were judged to be the pillars that could not be subjectively evaluated.

Table 1: CSF associated with each pillar and the list of measurement items (*italicised*) based on the CSF that were subjectively assessed by the elite athletes

<b>Pillar 2: Organisation and structure of sport policies</b>	
CSF2.6	Policy is regularly evaluated with athletes, coaches, performance directors who are formally invited to be involved in the evaluation process. <i>Regularity of the consultation of policy makers about elite athletes' specific needs</i>
CSF2.10	Athletes and coaches are represented within National Governing Bodies. <i>Involvement of elite athlete in the development of National Governing Body's policy</i> <i>Involvement of elite athlete in the evaluation of National Governing Body's policy</i>
CSF2.15	There is an efficient, punctual decision-making structure regarding elite sport policies at all levels. <i>Uncomplexity of administration involved in being elite athlete</i>
CSF2.17	Athletes and coaches are represented in the decision making process of the National Sport Agency. <i>Involvement of elite athlete in the development of national sport policy</i> <i>Involvement of elite athlete in the evaluation of national sport policy</i>
CSF2.19	Athletes and coaches are well informed about national policies, support services and other aspects. <i>Communication with club</i> <i>Communication with National Governing Body</i> <i>Communication with government</i> <i>Communication with National Olympic Committee</i> <i>Communication with National Sport Agency</i>
<b>Pillar 4: Talent identification and development system</b>	
CSF4.13	Young talents receive multidimensional support services at different levels, including training and competition support, medical / paramedical support and lifestyle support. <i>Age that athlete first receive extra attention and extra provision</i> <i>Support from National Governing Body as an talented athlete</i> <i>Support from club as an talented athlete</i> <i>Support from other organisations as an talented athlete</i>
CSF4.14	Young talents receive age appropriate training and competition support, supervised by expert coaches with access to high standard facilities. <i>Expertise National Governing Body coach as an talented athlete</i> <i>Expertise club coach as an talented athlete</i> <i>Expertise other coach as an talented athlete</i>
CSF4.16	There is a nationally coordinated system that facilitates the combination of elite sport and studies during secondary education (so that students / athletes are not dependent on variable locally implemented initiatives). <i>Support at secondary education when combining elite sport training with studies</i>
CSF4.20	There is a nationally coordinated system that facilitates the combination of elite sport and academic studies in higher education. <i>Support at higher education when combining elite sport training with studies</i>
<b>Pillar 5(a): Athletic support</b>	
CSF5.2	Athletes' monthly income (total gross annual income) in general and income from their sport activities is sufficient. <i>Financial support to pay for living and training cost</i>
CSF5.3	Employers are supportive towards athletes' careers. <i>Support of other paid work's employer toward elite sport career</i>
CSF5.5	Athletes can receive financial support that allows them to dedicate themselves sufficiently to their sport (sustain a living whilst preparing for and competing in elite sport). <i>Reimbursement for sport activity</i>
CSF5.6	There is a coordinated support programme for elite athletes (apart from financial support) including career coaching, legal advice, media training, coaching support (specialist coaches), training and competition support (training facilities, training camps), sports science support (strength & conditioning, nutrition, mental coaching), sports medicine support (medical specialists, physiotherapists, etc) <i>Quality of overall support services as an elite athlete</i>
<b>Pillar 5(b): Post-career support</b>	
CSF5.8	Government / national sports bodies offer a post career support programme to prepare and assist athletes for life after sports, such as: financial support (in the early stages) after their sports career, study support (for athletes who want to start studying or to finish their studies), job offers, advice and personal assistance (in the early stages) to find a suitable job after their sports career, lifestyle coaching, prepare for job applications, psychological support. <i>Support services information about athletic career and future career</i> <i>Development of post athletic career</i> <i>Concerned about life after athletic career</i> <i>Negative affect of concern about future on elite sport ability</i> <i>Perspectives of elite athletes after retirement</i> <i>Expectation to find suitable job after elite sport career</i>
<b>Pillar 6: Training system</b>	
CSF6.6	There is a sufficient number (no lack) of high quality sport facilities either exclusively for, or with prioritised use for elite sports. <i>Quality of training and competition facilities at elite level sport</i> <i>Availability/accessibility of training and competition facilities at elite level sport</i>

Table 1 (continued)

<b>Pillar 7: Coaching provision and coach development</b>	
<b>CSF7.5</b>	<b>Athletes are satisfied on the level and expertise of their coaches during talent development and as an elite athlete</b> <i>Contribution of NGB coaches on performance</i> <i>Contribution of personal coach on performance</i> <i>Contribution of youth coach on performance</i> <i>Expertise of coaches from NGB</i> <i>Expertise of coaches from club</i> <i>Expertise of coaches from other</i> <i>Level of current elite coach's knowledge/expertise at the highest international level</i> <i>Level of current elite coach's technical coaching skills</i> <i>Level of current elite coach's interpersonal coaching skills</i> <i>Appropriation of current coach</i> <i>Necessity of further learning from current coach</i>
<b>Pillar 8: (Inter)national competition</b>	
<b>CSF8.4</b>	<b>There is a high number of international events that have been organised in the country over the past five years in a (wide) range of sports for junior and senior athletes</b> <i>Number of international elite events organised</i>
<b>CSF8.6</b>	<b>There are sufficient opportunities for elite athletes to participate in international competitions.</b> <i>Opportunity for participation in international competition</i>
<b>CSF8.7</b>	<b>Young talents, athletes and coaches can receive reimbursement of their costs for participating in international competitions.</b> <i>Financial support from NGB or other sports organisations to participate in international competitions</i>
<b>CSF8.8</b>	<b>The national competition structure in each sport provides a competitive environment at an international top level at each age.</b> <i>Frequency of national level junior competitions</i> <i>Level of national level junior competitions</i> <i>Frequency of national level elite competitions</i> <i>Level of national level elite competitions</i>
<b>Pillar 9: Scientific research</b>	
<b>CSF 9.6</b>	<b>There is a network to communicate and disseminate scientific information to the NGBs, clubs, elite athletes and coaches. Coaches receive scientific information from NGBs and other organisations and use applied sport science in their training activities.</b> <i>Applicability of applied scientific research</i> <i>Applicability of new technology developments</i> <i>Applicability of innovation</i> <i>Opportunity available for scientific research</i> <i>Opportunity available for new technology developments</i> <i>Opportunity available for innovation</i>

## Analysis

In order to test the research hypothesis, it was necessary to classify the sample of elite athletes according to their athletic performance. To do this, elite athletes who achieved results in the Top 8 in major international competitions, e.g. World Championships, in 2 years before the survey conducted between 19 July 2011 and 31 December 2011 were named Elite  $\alpha$  and other elite athletes were named Elite  $\beta$ . Then, the subjective evaluation score of each pillar for both groups was calculated based on the

method called scoring system which was developed as part of the SPLISS study (De Bosscher et al., 2009; 2010).

### **The scoring system**

For examining athletes' evaluations of the elite sport climate and the relation between the climate and athletic success, a scoring system was used that calculates a single score by collating the measurement items for each pillar. It is considered that the score derived from this method enables the interpretation of results to go beyond the descriptive level of analysis (De Bosscher et al., 2009). 21 CSFs and 56 items were built into the scoring system (Table 1). The elite athletes' subjective evaluation of each measurement item was ranked on a 5-point scale. When creating rankings, a different method was used depending on the nature of the question; binary choice (yes/no) or 5-point scale (ordinal) (De Bosscher et al., 2010) (Table 2). In a next step, the evaluation of each pillar was determined by aggregating the scores of each CSF for each pillar and subsequently calculating a percentage score relative to the possible greatest value, which was determined with taking into account the number of 'not applicable (NA)' items. In the Appendix B and C, the process is shown through which the various evaluation values associated with Pillar 4 were converted into a single score. As the minimum score on a CSF was one, the minimum percentage score was 20 percent. Each pillar's evaluation value was then expressed as a value between 20 percent and 100 percent and five categories (A, B, C, D, and E) were created at 16 percent intervals. These categories were



labelled as from ‘A: climate is very well maintained’ to ‘E: little or no maintenance’.

Table 2: Evaluation values for measurement items (De Bosscher at al., 2010)

Binary choice (Yes/No)		5-point scale	
%Yes		%(Positive - Negative)	Evaluation
0-20%		<-19.9%	1 (--)
20.1-40%		0-(-19.9)%	2 (-)
40.1-60%		0.1-20.0%	3 (0)
60.1-80%		20.1-50.0%	4 (+)
80.1-100%		>50.0%	5 (++)

## Results

Table 3 provides a profile of the study sample. Males accounted for 56.2 % of the respondents; those who are engaged full-time with sport activities accounted for 43.1 percent; those in their twenties accounted for 78.1 %; those who have won a medal at an international competition in the past 2 years accounted for 24.8 %; and those who have a four-year undergraduate degree or above, including those who were still studying, accounted for 81.0 percent. This can be deemed to represent the target sample, where on a total of 205 elite athletes 52.2% were male and 47.8% were female. The average age when the subjects started to practice their own specialised discipline, that age when they decide to specialise in a particular discipline, and that age when they received special treatment or support service from NGBs was  $10.0 \pm 5.9$ ,  $14.6 \pm 5.0$ ,  $16.5 \pm 3.0$  respectively. The percentage of athletes who can use the NTC at any time, including the specialised training

facilities within the JISS, and the NTC's disciplinary-specific training centres was 86.7%.

Table 3: Characteristics of the survey subjects

		Total (n=105)		Elite α (n=54)		Elite β (n=51)	
		n	%	n	%	n	%
Sex	Male	59	56.2	29	53.7	30	58.8
	Female	46	43.8	25	46.3	21	41.2
Occupation (missing: 3)	Full time student	22	21.0	12	23.1	10	20.0
	Part time student	1	1.0	1	1.9	0	0.0
	Employed/ self employed full time	15	14.3	8	15.4	7	14.0
	Employed/ self employed part time	7	6.7	1	1.9	6	12.0
	Full time athlete	44	41.9	25	48.1	19	38.0
	Others	13	12.4	5	9.6	8	16.0
Age	10's	4	3.8	2	3.7	2	3.9
	20's	82	78.1	47	87.0	35	68.6
	30's	18	17.1	5	9.3	13	25.5
	40's	1	1.0	0	0.0	1	2.0
	(Mean age)	(25.7 ± 1.6)	(25.1 ± 1.5)	(26.4 ± 1.6)			
Mean age that athlete take up the sport for the first time (NA: 1)		(10.0 ± 5.9)	(8.3 ± 5.2)	(11.7 ± 6.0)			
Mean age that athlete decided to concentrate on the current sport (NA : 6)		(15.7 ± 5.3)	(13.5 ± 4.3)	(15.7 ± 5.3)			
Athlete received special treatment or support service from NGBs		67	63.8	36	66.7	31	60.8
(Mean age)		(16.5 ± 3.0)	(16.7 ± 3.1)	(16.2 ± 2.6)			
Highest level of success as a senior elite athlete at World Championship in the past 2 years	Top3	26	24.8	26	51.0	—	
	Top8	28	26.7	28	54.9	—	
	Others	51	48.6	—	—	51	100.0
Highest educational qualification (includ e in-school student)	Juniour high school	2	1.9	0	0.0	2	3.9
	High school	18	17.1	6	11.1	12	23.5
	University	85	81.0	48	88.9	37	72.5
Athlete who can use the NTC on regular basis		91	86.7	51	100.0	40	78.4

The evaluation of the total sample showed that the climate in Pillar 4 (talent identification and development), Pillar 5(a) (athletic support), Pillar 6 (training facilities), and Pillar 7 (coaching provision and coach development) was evaluated to be very well maintained. The climate in Pillar 8 ((inter)national competition) was evaluated to be of a

good level of maintenance. On the other hand, the climate in Pillar 2 (organisation and structure of sport policies) and Pillar 9 (scientific research) were evaluated to be of a moderate level of maintenance and that one in Pillar 5(b) (post-career support) to be of little or no maintenance.

The hypothesis proposed that among the Japanese elite athletes, successful elite athletes were in better elite sport climate. The results of the scoring system are summarised in Table 4. The results revealed differences in the elite sport climate between Elite  $\alpha$  and Elite  $\beta$  in Pillar 2 (organisation and structure of sport policies), Pillar 4 (talent identification and development), and Pillar 8 ((inter)national competition). These 3 pillars were all evaluated higher by Elite  $\alpha$  and as these relationships are positive, it can be said that surrounded by better climate in Pillar 2, 4, and 8 is likely to be a factor leading to athletic success. The results thus supported the hypothesis in several Pillars and the scoring system in the table allowed us to answer the RQ.

Table 4: Comparison of Elite  $\alpha$  and Elite  $\beta$ 's evaluation of the elite sport climate and the total evaluation using the scoring system

Pillar	Score (%) Elite $\alpha$ (n=54)	Evaluation	Score (%) Elite $\beta$ (n=51)	Evaluation	Total Score (%) (n=105)	Evaluation
1. Financial support	-	-	-	-	-	-
2. Organisation and structure of sport policies	70.9	B	60.0	C	65.5	C
3. Sport participation	-	-	-	-	-	-
4. Talent identification and development system	90.0	A	80.0	B	87.5	A
5(a). Athletic support	95.0	A	90.0	A	95.0	A
5(b). Post-career support	33.3	E	33.3	E	33.3	E
6. Training facilities	100.0	A	100.0	A	100.0	A
7. Coaching provision and coach development	87.5	A	87.5	A	87.5	A
8. (Inter)national competition	77.1	B	60.0	C	74.3	B
9. Scientific research	66.7	C	60.0	C	66.7	C
Criteria for evaluation		Climate is very well maintained		84.1-100%	A	
		Good level of maintenance		68.1-84.0%	B	
		Moderate level of maintenance		52.1-68.0%	C	
		Limited maintenance		36.1-52.0%	D	
		Little or no maintenance		20.0-36.0%	E	

\*Pillar1 and 3 are unquestioned item in the elite sport climate survey

Table 5 shows the analysis of each measurement items in the 3 pillars in which differences between the two groups were found. This helps to understand which particular items cause the difference in the score of these pillars. For Pillar 2, differences were demonstrated in the *involvement in the development of NGB's policy, involvement in the development of national sport policy, involvement in the evaluation of national sport policy, and communication with government*. For Pillar 4, different scores were observed in the *age that athlete first receive extra attention and provision, support from NGB as a talented athlete, support from other organisations as a talented athlete, support at higher education when combining elite sport training with studies*. For Pillar 8, difference were found in the adequacy of the *number of international elite events organised, level of national level junior competitions, level of national level elite competitions*. Interestingly, in all 11 items for which the two groups showed different assessment, scores of the Elite  $\alpha$  were higher than Elite  $\beta$  without exception. Among them, *involvement in the evaluation of national sport policy* was a sole item that the scores differ by 2 points.

Table 5: Items which differ in the evaluation between Elite  $\alpha$  and Elite  $\beta$  (Pillar 2, 4, and 8)

Pillar	CSF	Items	Elite $\alpha$	Elite $\beta$
Pillar2	CSF2.10	<i>Involvement of elite athlete in the development of National Governing Body's policy</i>	3	2
	CSF2.17	<i>Involvement of elite athlete in the development of national sport policy</i>	2	1
	CSF2.17	<i>Involvement of elite athlete in the evaluation of national sport policy</i>	3	1
	CSF2.19	<i>Communication with government</i>	4	3
Pillar4	CSF4.13	<i>Age that athlete first receive extra attention and extra provision</i>	4	3
	CSF4.13	<i>Support from National Governing Body as a talented athlete</i>	5	4
	CSF4.13	<i>Support from other organisations as a talented athlete</i>	4	3
	CSF4.20	<i>Support at higher education when combining elite sport training with studies</i>	5	4
Pillar8	CSF8.4	<i>Number of international elite events organised</i>	4	3
	CSF8.8	<i>Level of national level junior competitions</i>	4	3
	CSF8.8	<i>Level of national level elite competitions</i>	4	3

Table 6 depicts the analysis of each item in the least developed pillar, namely Pillar 5(b). The result shows that the Japanese elite athletes do not feel that concern about their future prospect negatively affect the ability to focus fully on being an elite athlete. However, the scoring system has shown least mark in any other items.

Table 6: Scores of each item in Pillar 5(b)

Items	Elite $\alpha$	Elite $\beta$
<i>Information about support services available for post career</i>	1	1
<i>Post athletic career support is well developed in Japan</i>	1	1
<i>Concern about what will happen after my athletic career *</i>	1	1
<i>Concerns about future prospects outside sport have negatively affected the ability to focus fully on being an elite athlete *</i>	5	5
<i>Career perspective after retirement is a serious problem in Japan *</i>	1	1
<i>Able to find a suitable job after elite sport career</i>	1	1

\*reverse scored item

## Discussion

The study set out to determine the key policy-level success factors for athletic success of Japanese elite athletes. The results showed that successful elite athletes were surrounded in better elite sport climate in several pillars. The following paragraphs evaluate the results found in the scoring system based on the SPLISS model.

Results of the scoring system showed that on the whole, the Japanese elite sport climate was scored higher compared to other countries' evaluations (De Bosscher et al., 2008). The previous study included subjective evaluation of elite coaches and therefore, it

is not comparable in a direct way. However, the finding in this research suggested a high standard of the Japanese elite sport climate in Pillar 4 (talent identification and development system), Pillar 5(a) (athletic support), Pillar 6 (training facilities), and Pillar 7 (coaching provision and coach development). Pillar 5, 6 and 7 were concluded to be possible drivers of an effective system (De Bosscher et al., 2009) and in this regard, the findings in which the 2 pillars and a sub-pillar got a top score by the most important stakeholders, suggested the possible effectiveness of the Japanese elite sport system. In addition to the total evaluation, the results revealed that elite sport climate in 3 pillars were better maintained for Elite  $\alpha$  and these results followed the core principle of the SPLISS model. These showed a certain validity of using the SPLISS model as a conceptual framework in the Japanese elite sport system as the model stood on the notion that better climate lead to better performance.

Meanwhile, we demonstrated an inconsistent result with previous study (De Bosscher et al., 2009; Yamamoto, 2008) which should be considered as the limitation of the model. De Bosscher et al. (2009) revealed that Pillar 4 was an underdeveloped area where nations may gain a competitive advantage. In Japan, Yamamoto (2008) stated that the Japanese approach to talent identification relies too heavily on private corporations and schools and both organisations are not systematic in a long term view. Taking these findings into account, Pillar 4 was supposed to be an underdeveloped part of the elite sport system in Japan. However, the findings revealed that the climate in Pillar 4 was evaluated to be very

well maintained for Elite  $\alpha$  and to be of a good level of maintenance by Elite  $\beta$ . The first reason is the support of youth talent from clubs and schools which is regarded as a CSF in the model. In addition, the evaluation reflected only elite athletes who received talent support. Thus, although government-initiated talent identification and development system is not sufficiently provided, an unintended result could have been indicated.

However, having granted even the potential over-assessment, this study offered important evidence by showing that the climate in Pillar 4 was positively related to athletic success. The empirical results verified that sufficient athletic support from a NGB and other organisations, sufficient support from a higher educational institution, and gaining athletic support at appropriate age are related to athletic success. It is essential for pre-elite athlete to get a professional support for their later successful development (Gulbin, Croser, Morley & Weissensteiner, 2013). Besides, earning athletic scholarship at a university or a subsidy from sport organisations are essentially based on their practical achievement. Therefore it can be considered that Elite  $\alpha$  who enjoy significant benefit from NGB and higher educational institution have achieved an excellence performance before their transition into “supported” talent athlete stage. In addition to this, Elite  $\alpha$  consists of higher percentage of elite athletes who think the age when they first receive support from a NGB was an optimum age. For convenience of school system and athlete development pathway, talent identification and development is based on the age stage (i.e. Strachan, Côté, & Deakin, 2009). However, there are differences in the development

stages across sport (Vaeyens, Lenoir, & Philippaerts, 2008) and timing and tempo of maturation and growth vary among individuals (Baxter-Jones, Thompson, & Malina, 2002). The importance of biological age rather than chronological age has previously reported (Pankhurst & Collins, 2013) and knowing the biological age of each athlete might enable coaches to provide developmentally appropriate training. The empirical result of the present survey and the previous findings suggest the importance to gain a confident understanding of the optimum age of each talent to give a professional support according to their disciplines and individual characteristics.

There was a difference in the evaluation result of the climate in Pillar 2. The higher evaluation in this pillar by Elite  $\alpha$  might be explained by previous findings of qualitative studies that identified those organisational factors that were hindering competitive performance in various countries (Woodman & Hardy, 2001; Fletcher & Hanton, 2003; Mckay, Niven, Lavalley, & White, 2008; Fletcher, Hanton, Mellalieu, & Neil, 2012). These existing literatures found that poor access to information and poor communication between athletes and administrators (Woodman & Hardy, 2001; Fletcher & Hanton, 2003), as well as governing body factors (Mckay et al., 2008) are factors that hinder elite athletes' performances at competitions. In addition, the lack of opportunity to participate in the decision-making process in NGBs has recently been reported to be an 'organisational structure and climate of the sport' factor that hinders the athletes' performance (Fletcher et al., 2012). These were included in the measurement items in this study and based on them,



it is considered that Elite  $\alpha$  were less suffering from these hindering factors and this situation contributed to athletic success. It implies the need to enhance communication between policy makers and elite athletes and reflect more opinions of elite athletes in development and evaluation process of national or NGB's sport policy.

The different climate of the two elite athlete groups in Pillar 8 were derived from the difference in response related to the sufficiency of the number of international event in his or her discipline organised in Japan and the sufficiency of the level of national competition. In macro level studies, it is a well-known fact that host effect has been adopted as a significant variable to explain nation's international sporting success (Bernard & Busse, 2004; Hoffmann, Ging & Ramasamy, 2004; Forrest et al., 2010). Other than home advantage, organising more international championship provides not only increased opportunities for athletes to gain greater experience and knowledge (Tan & Green, 2008), but also opportunity for talent identification, athlete development or identification and development of coaches at international level (Robinson & Minikin, 2012). Crespo, Reid, Miley and Atienza (2003) have verified the importance to provide access for high-quality competition in own nation for the success in single sport. This study extends such result by clarifying that to create a competitive environment in domestic context would be a key driver which differentiates 'successful' elite athlete from 'normal' elite athlete.

As discussed above, the 3 pillars (organisation and structure of sport policy, talent identification and development, (inter)national competition) are likely to be the policy

factors leading to an increase the number of successful elite athletes in Japan. Meanwhile, these policy factors can be regarded as the sources of Japanese competitiveness on an international level if more elite athletes could be put on this level of climates. In sum, the model provided an important tentative theoretical direction on sports policy factors that lead to athletic success in Japan.

Finally, the climate of Pillar 5(b) was evaluated to be of little or of no maintenance. The results of this study support the finding of Yoshida et al. (2006; 2007) who concluded that there is a need for policies to support athletes' second careers. Maintenance of the climate which enables elite athletes to focus on their elite sport activity without anxiety about life after sport might lead to athlete performance enhancement (Price, Morrison, & Arnold, 2010), and therefore, it is considered that post career support is an underdeveloped area in the Japanese elite sport system in which there is still room to maintain climate for enhancing competitive advantage. The major cause was considered that because nothing substantial has actually been done to encourage top athletes to develop a second career in spite of the recognition of the importance to support (Yoshida et al., 2006). Consequently, a combination of this would affect elite athletes' consciousness about their post career: feeling that post career support is totally underdeveloped in Japan, feeling a high anxiety against post career, feeling that post career is a serious problem in Japan, and feeling low expectation of the possibility to find a suitable job after sporting career. Other reasons include that post career measures at the

national level is still in its early days of introducing and that there is a lack of dedicated staff to support the athletes' post-career phase and the absence of a dual-career culture among athletes. Therefore, as long as the data shows, policy makers are strongly urged to promote the efforts to heighten elite athletes' awareness about the present support service available for their future career. In De Bosscher et al. (2008; 2009), athletic career and post-career support is assessed in one single pillar. In contrast, in this study these two aspects were analysed as two separate pillars, which revealed a significant divergence in evaluation. This research can be regarded as a study which suggests the need to develop post career support measures from the standpoint of comparison among the variety of policy area by examining the ways in which elite athletes evaluate the elite sport climate.

### **Limitations, future works, and conclusion**

Research on the elite sport system, especially research that can help to reform policies toward improved international competitiveness, is hardly conducted in Japan today, and if it was, it is descriptive and not involving the key stakeholders' viewpoints. Therefore, there is a need to promote research that can serve to realize evidence-based policy making. Based on this concern, the current study has derived from the research framework developed by De Bosscher et al. (2006; 2008; 2009; 2010) that is built on the SPLISS model.

The findings of this research make it possible to conclude that this study has managed to quantify the overall situation of the Japanese elite sport climate; however it does have a few limitations. First, the scores for the elite sport climate were calculated based on subjective evaluations by elite athletes, and these scores were then used to identify key success drivers in the elite sport system; in other words, the results did not include any objective evaluations. Consequently, we need to be cautious when interpreting the results of this study in order to identify success drivers in the elite sport system. Nevertheless, the elite athletes are the most important stakeholders in elite sport and their subjective evaluations have great significance. In addition, no previous research has evaluated the elite sport climate in Japan and so this study is a pioneer in that field. In the future, by combining this study with objective data regarding the elite sport system and comparisons with other countries, more detailed suggestions could be provided. Furthermore, a more comprehensive examination that includes not only evaluations by athletes but also analyses by elite coaching staff, the personnel in charge of performance enhancement in NGBs, talented athletes, and retired athletes, each of who are also stakeholders in the elite sport system, namely a multi-constituency approach (Connolly, Conlon, & Deutsh, 1980; Papadimitriou & Taylor, 2000; De Bosscher, Shilbury, Theeboom, Van Hoeche, & De Knop, 2011), could also yield insights that would be helpful for policy makers. Second, the current study does not allocate different weights to each measurement item in the study. If weightings were included in each measurement

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item, the evaluation score could be different depending on the weighting. In order to achieve this, it would have been necessary to design a survey that would have allowed us to give a different weight to each measurement item. Third, because the questionnaire was administered via NGBs, bias caused by social desirability in responses could not be avoided. Finally, in order to maintain the athletes' anonymity because the elite athletes who participated in this survey were chosen by proxy names based on detailed definitions, we could not perform a sub-analysis according to the discipline. As the level of governmental financial support varies from discipline to discipline, the elite sport climate may also vary according to discipline. For this reason, there is a need to examine what kind of climate has been constructed in any given discipline.

Notwithstanding the limitations listed above, this study has provided a new insight into what future policies may improve the international sporting competitiveness of Japanese athletes. It achieved this by analysing the key success drivers in the Japanese elite sport system with a view to quantifying the elite athletes' evaluation of the elite sport climate. However, as it has been argued that the scoring system adopted is just a method of visualising the elite sport system (De Bosscher et al., 2010) based solely on the results of this study, we cannot draw definitive conclusions about policy-related factors that define the international sporting competitiveness of Japanese athletes. Therefore, there is a need for vertical studies that combine qualitative descriptions of the elite sport system (Yamamoto, 2008; Waku et al., 2008; Kukidome, 2010) and that would help to achieve

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policy shifts.

In conclusion, the present study represented one of the first attempts to investigate policy level factors leading to athlete success in Japan. The findings support the importance of the improvement of the elite sport climate with the particular reference to the significance of organisation and structure of sport policy, talent identification and development, and (inter)national competition. Practical implications of our findings in terms of increasing the current international sporting performance are summarised below:

Enhancing communication between elite athletes and policy makers with considering more elite athletes' voices on development and evaluation process of NGBs' and national sport policy, gaining a confident understanding of the optimum age of each talent to provide professional support according to their disciplines or individual characteristics and improve support, enhancing more access of elite athletes and talented athletes to high level national and international competitions, heightening awareness of elite athletes on the current post career support services.

### **Notes**

1. Long-term Athlete Development System was defined as a system through which, regardless of coaches and training places, a talented athlete can be developed to top level athlete through getting an appropriate coaching which is suited to the individual trait and developmental stage under a coherent coaching spirit (Kukidome, 2010).

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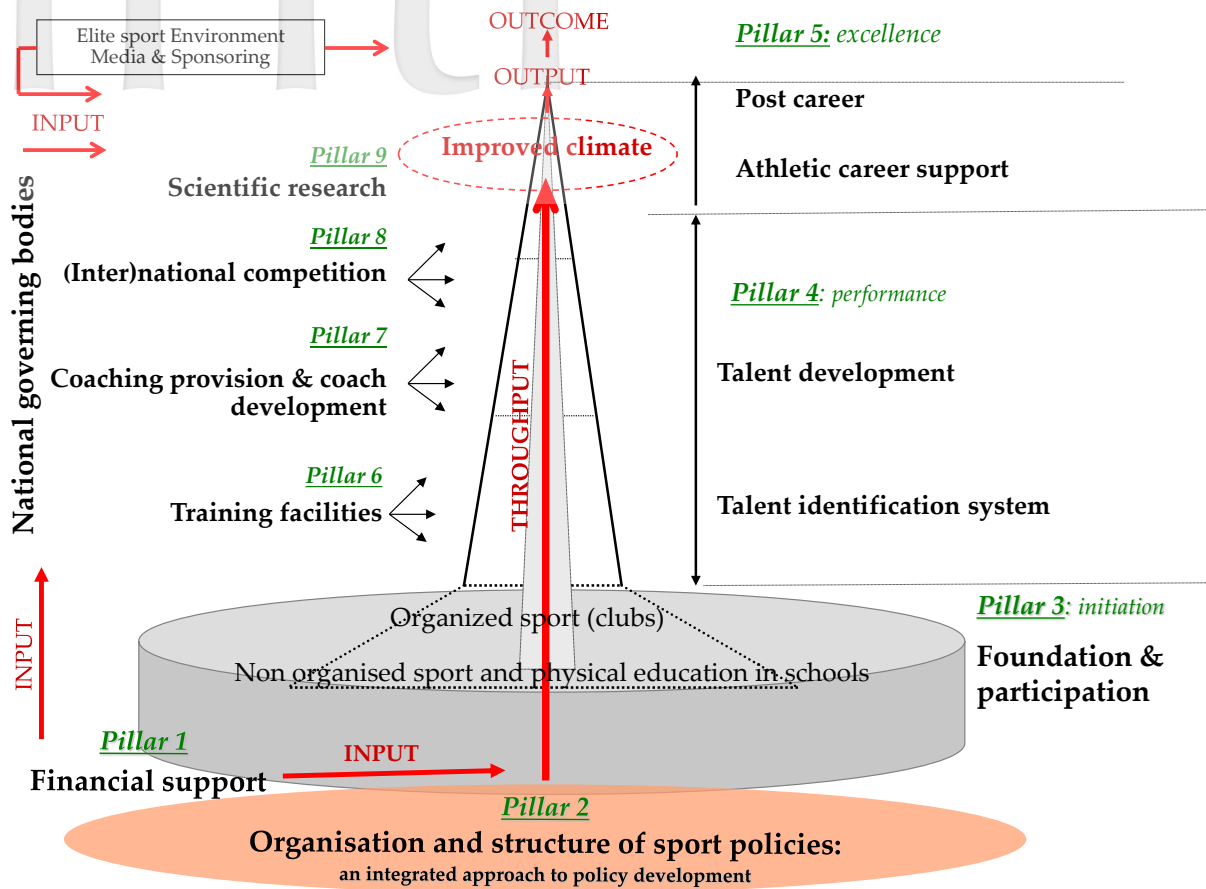
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Appendix A. SPLISS model developed by De Bosscher et al. (2006)



De Bosscher et al., 2006

Appendix B. An illustration of the evaluation of item in Pillar 4 (Binary choice and 5-scale question)

Binary choice

Assessment on age that athlete first receive extra attention and extra provision; *In your general opinion, is the extra support and attention at this age (Q before) from the governing body about right, too early or too late?*

	Elite α (N=30)	Elite β (N=28)
% Positive answer	80%	54%
score	4	3
MAX	5	5
Total (%)	80.0%	60.0%
score of the item:	4	3

Binary choice	
% Yes	Score
0-20%	1 (--)
20.1-40%	2 (-)
40.1-60%	3 (0)
60.1-80%	4 (+)
80.1-100%	5 (++)



5-scale

Assessment on support from club as an talented athlete; *In general terms, do you think the amount of support that you received as an emerging talented athlete from your club was sufficient for you to develop at your highest possible level?*

		Elite α (N=37)	Elite β (N=30)
(5) good	A	24.3%	23.3%
(4) sufficient	B	43.2%	33.3%
(3) reasonable		21.6%	30.0%
(2) insufficient	C	2.7%	6.7%
(1) very insufficient	D	8.1%	6.7%
	A+B	67.6%	56.7%
	C+D	10.8%	13.3%
	AB-CD	56.8%	43.3%
	score of the item:	5	4

5-scale	
% (Positive - Negative)	score
<-19.9%	1 (--)
0-(-19.9)%	2 (-)
0.1-20.0%	3 (0)
20.1-50.0%	4 (+)
>50.0%	5 (++)

**Appendix C. An illustration of the evaluation in Pillar 4 using scoring system**

evaluation items	scores on a 1-5 scale; binary choice question	Elite α	Elite β
Assessment on age that athlete first receive extra attention and extra provision	}	4	3
Assessment on support from National Governing Body as an talented athlete		4	4
Assessment on support from club as an talented athlete	}	5	4
Assessment on support from other oraganisations as an talented athlete		4	3
Assessment on expertise National Governing Body coach as an talented athlete		5	5
Assessment on expertise club coach as an talented athlete		5	5
Assessment on expertise other coach as an talented athlete	NA: not available	NA	NA
Assessment on support at secondary education when combining elite sport training with studies	}	4	4
Assessment on support at higher education when combining elite sport training with studies		5	4
	TOTAL points	36	32
	Maximum score (=number of item x 5 - NA)	MAX	40
	Number of times NA	1	1
	Total score of Pillar = total points/MAX	Total score for Pillar 4	90.0
			80.0

# Consumer Involvement in Sport Activities Impacts Their Motivation for Spectating

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# Consumer Involvement in Sport Activities Impacts Their Motivation for Spectating

## Abstract

In order to attract a sufficient number of spectators to stadiums and arenas, it is crucial for sport managers to clearly identify and understand the factors that trigger consumers' need to watch sporting events. A great deal of research has gone into the investigation of explanatory variables of spectators' motives since such findings are useful in segmentation marketing. To further deepen our understanding regarding this matter, this study also examined other variables associated with spectators' motives. A unique classification criterion in the sports spectator market might be the extent of spectators' actual experience in playing sports. Thus, this study examined spectators' motives across different levels of involvement in sports activities. The author employed nine spectator motives: achievement, aesthetics, drama, escape, knowledge, physical skill, social interaction, team affiliation, and family. The survey was conducted on the spectators of a game of professional basketball in Japan. The questionnaires with 18 items assessing spectator motives were distributed and collected at the arena. The number of effective respondents was 481. According to their involvement in playing basketball, 46.5% of subjects have experience in playing basketball regularly, 16.8% of subjects have played basketball occasionally, and remaining 36.6% of subjects have no experience in playing basketball. Results of the data analysis indicated that there were significant differences across the three groups on "knowledge," "skills," and "family." Those who have played basketball regularly were high in "knowledge," whereas those of no experience in playing

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basketball were high in “family.” Furthermore, there were differences on “knowledge,” “skills,” and “family” between spectators belonging to basketball teams and those who do not belong to any teams.

**Keyword:** spectator motive, sport activity, segmentation marketing

Due to successful management of the J-League (Japan Professional Football League) and growth in the popularity of spectator sports, Japan has experienced significant growth in the spectator sport industry year after year. However, not all professional sports leagues, clubs, or teams are financially healthy; many are suffering from the difficulty of attracting enough attendees, and are having problems with marketing and financing. Professional sports leagues in other Asian countries have also faced such challenges. In order to attract a sufficient number of spectators to stadiums and arenas, it is crucial that sport managers clearly understand the factors that trigger consumers' need to watch sporting events.

Engel, Blackwell, and Miniard (1995) introduced six major categories of triggering factors: time, changed circumstances, product acquisition, product consumption, individual differences, and marketing influences. Although these factors are important, the primary issue might be the consumer's motives themselves. Therefore, marketers need to answer the question: "Why would people want to consume a particular service?" Some people may want to enjoy the aesthetic sport performance by skillful athletes, while others may want to feel the excitement by watching sports and being part of a group experience.

Several research studies have sought to examine the motives of spectators in more depth. For example, Wann (1995) as well as Wann, Schrader, and Wilson (1999) discussed eight reasons why individuals were spectators at sporting events: self-esteem; group affiliation; family; aesthetics; escape; economic; eustress; and entertainment. Similarly, Milne and McDonald (1999) identified twelve motives: self-actualization; self-esteem; value development; social facilitation; affiliation; skill mastery; aesthetic; stress release; risk-taking; aggression; competition; and achievement. Trail and James (2001) developed the Motivation Scale for Sport Consumption composed of nine factors: achievement; acquisition of knowledge; aesthetics; drama; escape; family; physical attraction; physical skill; and social interaction. By using the data from spectators of women's soccer, Funk,

Mahony, and Ridinger (2002) examined 14 motives including: vicarious achievement, excitement, interest in soccer, interest in player, national pride, and so forth to capture the wide variety of motivating forces. More recently, Funk, Filo, Beaton, and Pritchard (2009) proposed a 10-item scale named SPEED to measure five facets of motivation: socialization, performance, excitement, esteem, and diversion.

In addition to extending our understanding of the structural components of spectator motivation, researchers have attempted to find answers to the question: “Do those spectating motives differ among various types of consumers?” From the perspective of segmentation marketing, it is necessary for sport marketers to understand the most important motives of each segment in their target markets. Researchers have investigated factors that are associated with spectator motives such as gender (James & Ridinger, 2002), country (James, Fujimoto, Ross, & Matsuoka, 2009), sport type (James & Ross, 2004; Wann, Grieve, Zapalac, & Pease, 2008), length of time as a fan (Nakazawa, Mahony, Funk, & Hirakawa, 1999), the extent of psychological commitment to teams (Mahony, Madrigal, & Howord, 2000), the level of fans’ attachment to teams, players, and head coaches (Koo & Hardin, 2008), and demographics and psychometrics (Mullin, Hardy, & Sutton, 2007).

Since these findings are useful in segmentation marketing, it is useful to investigate other variables related to spectator motives. A unique classification criterion in the spectator sports market is the extent of consumers’ actual experience in playing sports. Because of a spectator’s experience in playing basketball, he or she might have specialized knowledge of the game, which may provide specific motives for spectating basketball games. Although some research studies have dealt with the relationship between sports participation and sports spectating (Tokuyama & Greenwell, 2011), the precise nature of that relationship has been unclear. It has been suggested that empirical studies were necessary to decipher this connection (McDonald, Milne, & Hong, 2002; Tokuyama &

Greenwell, 2011). Therefore, the purpose of the current study was to compare the motives of spectators across different degrees of involvement in sports activities.

## Method

### Instrument

A questionnaire was prepared to assess spectators' motives behind attending a professional basketball game. As shown in Table 1, the author considered nine spectator motives drawn from previous research (James et al., 2009; Matsuoka, Fujimoto, & James, 2003; Trail & James, 2001). Nine motives were achievement, aesthetics, drama, escape, knowledge, physical skill, social interaction, team affiliation, and family.

Table 1 Nine Spectator Motives

Motives	Definitions
achievement	desire to be associated with successful teams
aesthetics	appreciation of the beauty and gracefulness of sport
drama	desire to experience the pleasant stress or stimulation from watching an uncertain/suspenseful outcome
escape	desire to escape from one's daily routine
knowledge	desire to learn and understand the technical aspects of a sport
physical skill	appreciate and enjoy the players' athletic skills
social interaction	desire to interact/spend time with others
team affiliation	desire to feel part of the team
family	desire to spend time with one's family

In addition to these nine facets, there are some other dimensions of spectators' motivation that have been commonly employed in previous studies. These are: entertainment; interest in player; interests in sports; and so forth (e.g., Funk et al., 2002, Funk et al., 2004; James et al., 2009; Trail & James, 2001). The reason why the present study did not employ these factors was rooted in the following definition of motivation: "an internal force that directs behavior toward the fulfillment of needs (Shank, 2002, p.116)." Since spectators attend sporting events to fulfill their needs, such needs have to be captured by researchers and practitioners who must appreciate the internal forces that encourage watching sports. The three facets listed above (entertainment, interest in player, and interest in sports) are not rooted in the fulfillment of spectators' needs. What is required is to understand the spectators' need to attend a game as a form of entertainment and the reasons behind their interest in players or sports. Therefore, the relevant questions are: "How does a spectator want to be entertained in a sporting event?" "Why is a spectator interested in a specific sport?" and "What does a spectator want to see while watching a specific player's performance: skillful play, beautiful play, intelligent play, or dramatic play?" Thus, this study attempted to determine the core components of the motives of sports spectators using the nine facets listed above.

Another unique element and challenge of the present study was to assess each dimension of motivation of spectating using only two items instead of three or more. Most of the previous studies on spectator motivation employed at least three items for one dimension and thirty, forty, and more for all dimensions (e.g., Funk et al., 2002; McDonald et al., 2002; Trail & James, 2001). Such large numbers of questions often bother respondents at stadiums and arenas, which may lead to an irresponsible attitude toward answering them. Consequently, potentially ambiguous responses may have low internal validity. Thus, by minimizing the number of questions, this problem can be kept

in check (DeVellis, 2003; Funk et al., 2009).

Shorter scales also help practitioners understand the psychological and sociological factors influencing consumers' decision-making process. Since the longer scales bother customers, practitioners may want to consider using a short one in a game day environment. In addition to exploring theoretical scales, sport marketing studies need to consider practical applications (Razzaque, 1998; Funk et al., 2009).

Therefore, the present research employed 18 items assessing nine facets listed above. Participants rated items on seven-point Likert scales with "1" representing "Strongly Disagree" and "7" representing "Strongly Agree." The questionnaire also included a set of questions pertaining to demographic characteristics, measures of experience in attending professional basketball games, experience in playing basketball, current status of membership in basketball teams, and intention to attend games in the next season.

### **Sampling**

The survey used in this study was conducted among the spectators of a pre-season game of the bj-league (Professional Basketball Japan), which was established in 2005 with six teams. The league has since expanded rapidly and included 21 teams in the 2012-13 season.

The game was held in a city located in the western part of Japan. Since the host city did not have its own team, two teams from two different cities played against each other. Thus, spectators of the game consisted of fans of both teams who had traveled to the arena from their hometown as well as people living in the host city who had no favorite teams. This composition should make the sample of this survey diverse, consisting of avid fans and unfamiliar spectators. Questionnaires were passed out at an entrance point; convenience sample was used to distribute the questionnaire. A total of 481 usable questionnaires were collected at the arena.

### **Participant Characteristics**

The participants consisted 226 male (47.0%) and 255 female (53.0%). The mean age for the sample was 28.2 years (SD=12.8). Of the subjects, 34.1% were under 19 years old, 19.8% were between 20 and 29 years old, 22.7% were between 30 and 39 years old, 18.9% were between 40 and 49 years old, and 4.6% were 50 years old or older. Most respondents (72.6%, n=349) had attended one or more games of bj-league in the previous season or before.

According to their involvement in playing basketball, 221 subjects (46.5%) have experience in playing basketball regularly, 80 subjects (16.8%) have played basketball occasionally, and remaining 174 subjects (36.6%) have no experience in playing basketball. Among those who have experience in basketball regularly, 72.3% (n=149) of them belong to a basketball team currently, whereas 27.7% (n=57) of them do not belong to any teams currently.

### **Spectator motives: descriptive analyses**

Mean scores and standard deviations for nine facets of spectator motives are shown in Table 2. The participants were motivated to a greater extent by variables, “Aesthetic,” “Skills,” “Drama,” and “Knowledge.” The mean scores on these motives were 6.30, 6.25, 5.72 and 5.37 respectively. The mean scores on “Family,” “Team affiliation,” and “Escape,” 4.42, 4.63, and 4.76 respectively, were relatively low among the nine facets of motives. Standard deviations for nine facets ranged from .1.10 to 1.77. Table 1 also provides correlation parameters among nine facets of motives, which ranged from  $r = .16$  to  $r = .73$ .



Table 2 Correlations, Means, Standard Deviations and Reliability Estimates for Nine Facets Motive Facets (n=481)

	AC	AE	DR	ES	KN	SK	SO	TA	FA	M	SD	$\alpha$
AC	-									4.84	1.46	.66
AE	.36	-								6.30	1.10	.73
DR	.47	.61	-							5.72	1.32	.72
ES	.53	.34	.45	-						4.76	1.62	.77
KN	.27	.43	.44	.32	-					5.37	1.25	.74
SK	.29	.72	.49	.31	.59	-				6.25	1.20	.89
SO	.42	.22	.29	.53	.19	.21	-			4.78	1.66	.86
TA	.73	.27	.42	.60	.23	.21	.66	-		4.63	1.58	.84
FA	.46	.17	.27	.54	.16	.18	.62	.59	-	4.42	1.77	.87

*Note:*

Motives measured on scale anchored with 1=Strongly disagree and 7=Strongly agree. AC= Achievement, AE=Aesthetics, DR=Drama, ES=Escape, KN=Knowledge, SK=Skills, SO=Social Interaction, TA=Team affiliation, FA=Family M=Means, SD=Standard Deviations,  $\alpha$ =Cronbach's Alphas

### Spectator motives: assessment of the scale

The measurement scale of nine facets influencing spectator motives with 18 items were examined in terms of internal consistency, convergent validity, and discriminant validity. Cronbach's Alpha, which assessed internal consistency for all facets ranged from  $\alpha = .66$  to  $\alpha = .89$  (see Table 2). Only the "achievement" factor was below the .70 benchmark (Hair, Black, Babin, & Anderson, 2010). However, since it was not significantly below the benchmark, it was considered acceptable, indicating that the measurement scale with nine facets was internally consistent.

Assessments of convergent and discriminant validity were conducted via an examination of the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) values. Since these values for the nine facets ranged from .53 to .81(see Table 3), they were greater than the benchmark

value for convergent validity (.50) (Fornell & Laecker, 1981). In addition, discriminant validity was examined by comparing the AVE value for each facet with the squared correlations between the respective facets. Since any of the squared correlations did not exceed the AVE value for all facets (see Table 2 and Table 3), discriminant validity was confirmed (AVE value of “achievement” = .5348; the squared correlation between “achievement” and “team affiliation” = .5285).

The model’s fit indices by the results of confirmatory factor analysis using Amos 21 ( $\chi^2 = 318.22$ ,  $df = 99$ ,  $\chi^2/df = 3.21$ ; CFI = .96; NFI = .94; RMSEA = .068) also showed the acceptable fit to the data (Hair et al., 2010).

Table 3 Results of Confirmatory Factor Analysis of Motive facets (n=481)

Facets and Items	$\beta$	AVE
Achievement		.53
I feel a personal sense of achievement when my favorite team wins.	.56	
I feel proud when the my favorite team plays well	.87	
		.59
Aesthetics	.75	
I appreciate the beauty inherent in the game of basketball.	.78	
I enjoy the graceful plays in the baseball game		
		.56
Drama	.72	
I like the suspense of a game where the lead changes back and forth.	.77	
I like the excitement of a game’s outcome not being decided until the end.		
		.63
Escape	.85	
For me, a game is an escape from my day-to-day activities (e.g., housekeeping, work, study).		
I like going to a game because when I’m there I forget about all of “life’s little problems	.72	
	.82	
		.59
Knowledge		
I increase my knowledge of basketball when I attend a game.		.81
I learn about the technical aspects of basketball by going to a game.	.91	
	.88	
		.76
Skills		
One reason I like a game is being able to see well-played basketball.	.85	
Getting to see the players’ superior skills is a major reason why I enjoy a game.	.89	
		.72

Social Interaction	.86	
I enjoy a game because it gives me an opportunity to be with my friends.	.84	
Wanting to spend time with my friends is one reason I go to a game	.84	.77
	.91	
Team affiliation		
I want to feel like a part of my favorite team..		
It is important for me to feel connected to my favorite team		
Family		
Being with my family is why I enjoy baseball games		
The opportunity to spend time with my family is something I like about attending games.		

Note:  $\beta$  = Standardized Regression Coefficients, AVE = Average of Variance Extracted

### Spectator motives: comparative analyses

The scores regarding each of the nine facets were compared by the degree of experience in playing basketball. The respondents were divided into three groups: experience in playing basketball regularly, experience in playing basketball occasionally, and no experience in playing basketball. The Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) results indicated that there were significant differences across the three groups with respect to “knowledge,” “skills,” and “family” (see Table 4). Those who have played basketball regularly were ranked high in “knowledge (M=5.76)” and “skills (M=6.39),” whereas those with no experience in playing basketball were ranked high in “family (M=4.91).”

Rank order comparisons are also shown in Table 4. The four most important motives: “aesthetics,” “skills,” “drama,” and “knowledge,” were common to all three groups. Conversely, distinctive differences were found regarding “social interaction” and “family.” Among those with no experience playing basketball, “social interaction” and “family” were ranked fifth and sixth, respectively. In contrast, those facets were ranked seventh and ninth, respectively among the “Regularly” and “Occasionally” groups.

Table 4 A Comparison of Spectator Motives by Degree of Experience in Playing Basketball

Facets	Mean <Rank> (Standard Deviation)			F Statistic	p Value
	Regularly (n=221)	Occasionally (n=80)	No experience (n=174)		
Achievement	4.77 <5> (1.50)	4.87 <6> (1.52)	4.88 <7> (1.38)	.36	n.s.
Aesthetics	6.29 <2> (1.10)	6.27 <1> (1.00)	6.32 <1> (.87)	.09	n.s.
Drama	5.80 <3> (1.32)	5.79 <3> (1.20)	5.86 <3> (3.78)	.04	n.s.
Escape	4.65 <6> (1.62)	4.97 <5> (1.55)	4.84 <8> (1.54)	1.47	n.s.
Knowledge	5.76 <4> (1.25)	5.13 <4> (1.31)	4.96 <4> (1.37)	19.54	<.01
Skills	6.39 <1> (1.20)	6.04 <2> (1.25)	6.16 <2> (1.17)	3.04	<.05
Social Interaction	4.63 <7> (1.77)	4.78 <7> (1.58)	4.93 <5> (1.53)	1.55	n.s.
Team affiliation	4.54 <8> (1.61)	4.62 <8> (1.58)	4.72 <9> (1.53)	.57	n.s.
Family	4.02 <9> (1.86)	4.42 <9> (1.72)	4.91 <6> (1.55)	12.47	<.01

Note. Motives measured on scale anchored with 1=Strongly disagree and 7=Strongly agree.

In addition, each of the nine motives were examined to ascertain whether there were significant differences between participants currently belonging to a basketball team and those who did not belong to any teams. According to the rank orders of both the groups, “aesthetics,” “skills,” “drama,” and “knowledge,” were once again ranked as the top four facets. Among other facets, the rankings were similar for both the groups.

Nevertheless, the comparisons of mean scores revealed statistically significant differences between the two groups. The results reported in Table 5 indicate that respondents that were identified as “current members of a team” desired to learn and understand the technical aspects of basketball, and appreciated and enjoyed the players’ athletic skills more than those that were classified as “non-member of any team” (knowledge: M=6.11, M=5.02, respectively, and skills: M=6.57, M=5.95, respectively).

The results also indicated that “non-members of any team” desired to spend time with their family by attending the basketball game more than “current members of a team” (family:  $M=4.58$ ,  $M=4.00$  respectively).

## **Discussion and Conclusions**

### **Summary**

The present study attempted to compare the motives of spectators across different degree of involvement in sport activities. Each of the nine motives was examined with the data received from attendance of a professional basketball game. The results showed that there were significant differences among the motives of respondents having experience in playing basketball regularly, those that played basketball occasionally, and those with no experience in playing basketball, and between the motives of respondents belonging to a basketball team currently and those who did not belong to any teams. Initially, the measurement scale with 18 items was used to examine the nine facets of spectator motives. The scale was made shorter to improve its practical usage, and its' validity and reliability were improved.

The findings revealed that spectators that were involved in basketball (beyond simply watching a game) desired to learn and understand the technical aspects of the game (knowledge), and appreciated and enjoyed the players' athletic skills (skills). On the other hand, spectators were less involved in playing basketball or not at all tended to enjoy watching a basketball game with their family (Family).

### **Implications and limitations**

The present study contributed to extend our understanding of the motives of spectators by revealing the relationship between spectators' motives and their involvement

in sport were revealed. The study clarified the following points.

First, the findings of the study may provide an answer to the question: “How does someone become a sport consumer?” “Consumers are surrounded by a host of factors that may influence their decisions about sport involvement (Mullin, et al., 2007, P. 71).” Therefore, it is important for sport marketers to appreciate the factors that affect sport consumers’ behavior. Although researchers have been discussing socialization regarding participant sports (Mullin et al., 2007), there has been limited analysis with respect to socialization regarding spectator sport (James, 2001). This study revealed a probable causal relationship that a consumer’s experience in playing sports fosters his/her need to learn, understand, and enjoy the technical aspects of sports as well as players’ athletic skills by watching sports. This finding might be one of the clues for understanding how a sport participant becomes a spectator.

Second, marketers of professional sport organizations need to recognize the two different segments they need to cater to: spectators that have significant involvement in sports and those with low or no involvement in sport activities. There have been several studies regarding segmentation of sport spectators. Some criteria of this segmentation were demographic and psychometric factors such as gender, age, and psychological commitment to teams (e.g., James et al., 2009; James & Ridinger, 2002; Mahony et al, 2000). In addition to these criteria, actual sports experience, which can be viewed as sport involvement, is a critical and effective criterion of segmentation of sports spectators. This clarification enables sport marketers to treat the two customer groups differently. Marketers may try to provide spectators with significant sports involvement access to the knowledgeable and skillful aspects of watching sports. On the other hand, they may try to give spectators with limited or no involvement in sports activities opportunities to have social interactions at sporting events.

Finally, regarding the study's limitations, the generalizability of the findings beyond Japanese professional basketball is limited. Additional studies need to focus on other spectator sports such as football and baseball, and examine these issues in more Asian countries and other continents.

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