



Factors influencing achievement of Regional League Division 2 football tournament management



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ARTICLE INFO

Article history:

Received 20 December 2016
Received in revised form 5 June 2017
Accepted 25 July 2017
Available online 1 September 2017

Keywords:

achievement,
factors,
football tournament management,
Regional League Division 2

ABSTRACT

This research studied factors influencing the achievements of Regional League Division 2 football tournament management. There were two groups of participants: 1) 438 people internally involved with football league tournament organization using the theory of non-probability sampling for purposive sampling, and 2) 1,068 participants related to football matches using the accidental sampling approach. This research employed two sets of questionnaires, one for each participant group, presented in the form of Likert scale and Lisrel (Linear Structure Relation) for the analysis of descriptive analysis and inferential statistics. The analysis showed that both internal and external factors of 1) Management, 2) Marketing mix, 3) Sports science, 4) Politics and government policy, 5) Player selection criteria, and 6) Performance evaluation system influenced the achievements of Regional League Division 2 football tournament management, with all at a high degree. The external factors relating to the management of the team which significantly affected the internal success of football match organization were the Performance evaluation system, Coordination, and Player selection criteria, respectively. These factors positively and significantly affected internal factors at the .01 level. The three external factors were found to inductively determine 76 percent of the success of football match organization. The external factors relating to the team fan clubs which significantly affected the internal success of football match organization were political policies launched by the government and the processes of sports marketing, respectively. These factors positively and significantly affected internal factors at the .01 level. The two external factors could determine 65 percent of the success of football tournament organization.

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Introduction

In 1999, the professional football tournament in the regional league was organized under the name of the “Provincial League” by the Association of Sports Authority of Thailand and The Football Association of Thailand. Later,

the Sports Authority of Thailand was merged with the Ministry of Tourism and Sports, and the tournament was improved and divided into two divisions in 2002. Consequently, the title of the competition was changed to “Professional League” and further divided into two main divisions—Thai League Division 1 and Regional League Division 2 for regional league football tournament (Football Association of Thailand, 2011). The ways that football tournament management are organized is that the winning team and the first-runner up team from both groups of the champion league will be promoted to Thai League Division 1, and from that point onward, the football players are

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Peer review under responsibility of Kasetsart University.

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supported and shaped to become professional players. Since then, Thai League has resurged with great success and popularity since 2009 based on the massive current numbers of football match viewers via television broadcasting. As a result, a number of television broadcast stations are trying to bid in the auction to broadcast both national competitions and Thai league tournaments with a costly patent. [Kasikorn Research Center \(2016\)](#) anticipated that the growth of Thai league soccer will generate approximately THB 12,000 million (approximately USD 352,428) of working capital in the financial system this year. The cost of patent auction of Thai league broadcasting will be as high as THB 4,200 million (approximately USD 123 million) or an average of THB 1,050 million (approximately USD 31 million) per year during 2017–2020. During 2014–2016, the revenue was THB 1,800 million (approximately USD 53 million) higher or an average of THB 600 million (approximately USD 18 million) per year.

At present, the Regional League Division 2 soccer tournament is supported and funded by Advanced Info Services Public Company Limited (AIS) to develop and improve Thai football leagues to be on a par with international soccer teams. The company focuses on the notion of domestic leagues development from local teams to national team level, because local teams are close to the community and easily accessible. [Siam Sport Online \(2017\)](#) analyzed the methods of organization administration and management in order to provide live stream television broadcasting for viewers nationwide to closely follow and support their favorite teams without having to go to the stadium. What is more, soccer competition management promotes working capital in financial circles by having a positive impact on other business sectors like investment in field construction and forming football teams, telecommunication trends, sport products and football items, souvenirs, and sport club shirts. In addition, the profits from ticket distribution, sponsors, and television live streaming such as volume sales of ticket distribution and souvenirs of the Udon Thani FC during the first 15 weeks earned THB 2,694,385, followed by the Khonkhean FC making THB 10,291,154 and Samutsakorn FC making THB 983,168, respectively ([Bangkok Business, 2016](#)).

In addition, was found that the football matches in Regional League Division 2 involved more than 3,000 professional players including national players, national youth players, foreign players, provincial football teams, and provincial youth football teams. These players are considered as skilled, tactical, and versatile players who can earn a living by themselves. The football team will sign a contract with players and the football clubs pay compensation in order to support their livings as truly professional football players. It can be concluded that the achievement of Regional League Division 2 football tournament management entails a clearly outstanding success in which other factors and components are particularly necessary for such success. Thus, the researcher was interested in investigating the factors and components influencing the achievement of Regional League Division 2 football tournament management suitably to the Thai context. It is expected that this study will be beneficial for Sports Authority

of Thailand and the Football Association of Thailand in terms of development and improvement.

Objective of the Study

This study aims to investigate factors influencing achievement of Regional League Division 2 football tournament management.

Literature Review

Since the achievement of successful football competition management depends on different factors, the researcher reviewed the different concepts, theories, articles, and journals relating to regional and national soccer competitions in order to select and examine factors affecting the achievement of successful football tournament management. There were only two factors influencing the competition organization: internal and external ([Brenes, Mena, & Molina, 2008](#)). An external factor refers to the successful factors affecting tournament management which are uncontrollable; however, it can facilitate a manageable one according to the political context and government policy. On the other hand, an internal factor describes a successful factor which stockholders can manage by following follow the plan stipulated in order to succeed. Internal factors include: Management, Marketing mix, Player finding and selecting systems (Talent Selection), System of players' performance analysis, Sports science and Politics and State policy which are detailed as follows:

Management

Having studied the related concepts and theory of football tournament management at the regional and national level, it was found that the achievement of successful soccer competition depends on main five responsibilities of the manager consisting of planning, managing, assigning, coordinating, and controlling ([Asasongtham, 2003](#); [Fayol, 1923](#); [Santibutr, 2007](#); [Suwantada, 2005](#)). This was consistent with Drucker's idea ([Drucker, 1979](#)) which described directors, managers, or organizational leaders as being obligated to do their jobs in order to reach the organization's targets in planning, organizing, implementing, and controlling. Additionally, [Luther \(1973\)](#) noted that chief executives also need to do an annual report and budget. Accordingly, this study focuses on four factors relating to the management, namely planning, organizing, leading, and controlling.

Marketing Mix

Since this study involves interests and profits derived from sport products, research journals and articles relating to marketing mix and principles, and sport competition were investigated to determine factors. This factor is called "Sport Marketing Mix" ([Mullin, Hardy, & Sutton, 2000](#)) which includes price, products, distribution medium, and sales promotion. This factor supports Kotler's marketing theory ([Kotler, 2000](#)). Another study related to sport

marketing mix comprised four aspects: products, price, distribution medium, and sales promotion (Bodet, 2009; Kosinkha, 2005; Somchit, 2002). Thus, this study puts emphasis on the four factors related to Marketing mix.

Talent Selection

This is a very important factor for success in sport management and organization since seeking sports talent needs to consider many factors such as size, body structure, and individual talent (Pitakwong, 2007). What is more, Pawilas and Keawyod (2006) stated that searching for sports talent in individuals needs to rely on some principles of sports science initiated from the selection phase to the best practice phase until becoming champions. Therefore, the principles of sports science come into play in every phase of selection. In the talent selection, this involves size, body structure with respect to muscle fiber types in the training phase; it includes physical and mental development and support in the sport skills and competition phase; and it focuses on employing sports psychology in the selection phase. As elaborated, this study was conducted to appraise the three factors affecting talent selection—physical, developmental and players' performance in the past.

System of Athletes' Performance Analysis

Having studied the concepts, studies, and theories related to factors influencing players' performance, it was found that this aspect was vital to the successful achievement of sport competition. The system of players' performance analysis consists of tools and self-assessment forms relating to records of practice, previous performance, and self-discipline (Kritpet et al., 2009). This factor is compatible with the present research study's i.e. analytical tools and player's performance. Actually, there are other tools used to analyze and evaluate performance in each game in order to specify the competitiveness of both players and teams. In addition, other academics justify that the system of seeking talent should accompany analytical factors combining a tool used to evaluate players' practice and a tool used to analyze competition (Santibutr, 2007; Suwantada, 2005). Because of these important accounts, the three factors affecting analysis of players' performance i.e. tool, players' performance, and competitiveness analysis are involved in this study.

Sport Science

Another factor which can impact competition success is sport science. Suwantada (2005), Somchit (2002) and Wilairat (2014) studied strategic management in sports and they found that sport science relates to strategic management in seven aspects; namely, Sport Physiology, Sport psychology, Sport Medicine, Sport Nutrition, Sport Biomechanics, Sport Technology, and Sport Business Management. Hence, these seven aspects were involved in the study in order to determine the successful factors affecting the achievement of Regional League Division 2 football tournament management.

Politics and State's Policy

Intharaprawat (n.d.) pointed out that politics has something to do with sport success, since it is considered as a method to drive and develop a sport system by means of sponsorship, which leads to fame and reputation. Therefore, the role that Politics plays is seen as an important and influential factor affecting sport affairs in many different ways; for example, sport management relating to law, policy corresponding to management and administration, and budget allocation. These policies are justified as motivation and a driving force which helps lead to the targets of sport competition or sport reinforcement and sponsorship. Moreover, other scholars claim that sport management has to be in line with a particular political system and the policy launched by the government involving a combination of laws, politics, policy, and sponsorship. Accordingly, this research approaches political factors and government policy as constituting four main attributes which are politics, sponsorship and reinforcement, policy, and laws.

Methods

This study was conducted to determine the factors which influence the achievement of successful Regional League Division 2 football tournament management. It involved survey research which involved the following processes.

Participants

The population was divided into two groups: the teams and staff who work in regional league football clubs and people who are involved with regional league football. The determination of the sample size and the selection of the samples were as follows.

Group 1 constituted staff who worked in regional league football clubs, including the president, vice-president, team manager or coach, physical therapists, referees, and players. In total, 438 participants were selected using a Purposive Sampling Technique based on Comrey and Lee (1992). There were about 300–499 persons considered at a “good level”. Then, the data source was identified using Systematic Random Sampling. Data were derived from participating football clubs in six different regions involving 84 clubs. The clubs were selected using a Purposive Sampling Method, with an equal number in every region. There were 18 participating clubs involved in this group nationwide.

Group 2 included people who were involved in regional league soccer competitions as sport journalists and some of the representatives of the fan clubs. This sample group could not be estimated exactly due to fluctuating numbers. However, the sampled size was still consistent with Yamane's proposal regarding an indefinite population (Yamane, 1973). The data was collected using Systematic Random Sampling and 1,068 participants were involved in this group.

Research Instrument

The research instruments included two sets of questionnaires. The first questionnaire was designed to

investigate factors affecting the success of Regional League Division 2 football tournament management. The study was divided into three parts: the first part was a checklist exploring the five topics of respondents' personal information: status, sex, age, educational background, and soccer experience. The second part investigated factors influencing the achievement of Regional League Division 2 football tournament management: 1) Management factor with 4 aspects and constituting 19 questions, 2) Marketing Mix factor covering 5 aspects and consisting of 29 questions, 3) Sport Science factor comprising 7 aspects and constituting 32 questions, 4) Politics and State Policy factor involving 4 aspects and 14 questions, 5) Talent Selection factor consisting of 5 questions, and 6) Performance Analysis System factor containing 4 questions. The third part identified the factors affecting successful achievement of competition management involving two aspects and 13 questions. The questions were answered in the form of a five-point Likert scale.

The second questionnaire was designed to investigate the regional league football tournament. It was divided into three parts: part I dealt with demographic information: status, sex, age, education background, and soccer experience. Part II explored factors influencing the success of Regional League Division 2 football tournament management: 1) Marketing Mix factor consisting of 5 aspects and 29 questions, and 2) Political and State's policy factor covering 4 aspects and 14 questions. The final part related to factors affecting the success of competition management with 2 aspects and 13 questions. The questions were answered in the form of a five-point Likert scale.

Research Instrument Development

1. Literature and research studies related to factors affecting marketing mix, sport science, politics and state policy, talent selection, players' performance analysis system, and achievement of Regional League Division 2 football tournament management were studied in depth in order to develop and improve the questionnaires.
2. Then, 120 questions were constructed and listed based on the studied factors, after which, the components of Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) were analyzed according to principal component analysis to examine each component using Orthogonal Rotation Varimax. The question items covering the related components with calculated values higher than 0.4 were selected. There were 116 useable items selected out of 120 items.
3. Question types were classified in accordance with EFA. There were two practical sets of questionnaire which were classified according to the sampled groups.
4. The content validity of the questionnaire items was checked, tested, and approved by the researcher's supervisor and experts using Index of Item Objective Congruence (IOC). Items rated higher than 0.6 were selected.
5. Thirty of the improved questionnaire papers were then tested with an experimental group in order to explore the reliability value using the α -coefficient formula of

Cronbach's Alpha and resulted in an acceptable coefficient of reliability of 0.859.

Data Collection

1. Questionnaire sets were distributed to the sampled group, with 1,550 papers in total. However; only 1,520 sets were returned.
2. Only complete and finished questionnaire papers were selected and analyzed. There were 1,498 complete and finished questionnaire papers out of 1,550 (99.46%).
3. The completed questionnaire sets derived from the two sampled groups were then analyzed in accordance with the investigated factors.

Data Analysis

1. Demographic information relating to status, sex, age, education background, and soccer experience of the sampling group was statistically analyzed in terms of percentage using descriptive statistics.
2. Factors affecting the success of Regional League Division 2 football tournament management were statistically analyzed in order to determine mean scores and standard deviations using descriptive statistics.
3. First-hand data were preliminarily checked before confirmatory factor statistical analysis for skewness, kurtosis, coefficient of variation, and inferential statistics. Pearson's correlation coefficient was primarily used to investigate the relationship between the sampled groups and the investigated factors.
4. The congruence of structural equation modeling and the empirical data were then analyzed by means of CFA which comprised two parts: a measurement model and a structural model.

Results

Part I: General Results Based on Respondents' Demographic Information

Two fifths of respondents (41.37%) had direct experience in football, followed by fan club members (26.49%), academics, teachers, or professors (18.99%), sport journalists (11.36%), and managers (1.79%), respectively. Most informants held a Bachelor degree (41.83%). They had soccer experience of 1–5 years (51.33%) and 6–10 years (24.43%), respectively.

Part II: Factors Affecting Achievement of Regional League Division 2 Football Tournament Management

Management factors were found to be rated at a "much influential factor" level in all aspects. The findings showed that the planning aspect was the most prominent with an average of 3.85, followed by organizing (3.84) and leading and controlling (3.82), respectively. Likewise, marketing mix factors were rated as a "much influential factor" in all

aspects. The aspect of sport products came first with an average of 4.10, the aspect of distribution medium came second (4.05), pricing came third (4.04), and sales promotion came last (3.99).

Similarly, sport science factors were also rated as a “much influential factor” in all aspects. The results indicated that Sport Physiology averaged 3.62, Sport Psychology averaged 3.73, Sport Biomechanics averaged 4.07, Sport Medicine was 4.08, Sport Nutrition was 4.05, Sport Technology was 4.0, and Sport Business Management was 4.13. Furthermore, the findings showed that political and state policy factors were rated as a “much influential factor” in every aspect, too. The most dominant aspects were laws with an average score of 4.19, followed by state policy with 4.12, sponsorship and reinforcement from local politicians with 4.07, and political circumstances with 4.04, respectively.

Talent Selection factors were similarly, prominent in all aspects. First, size and body structure averaged 4.09. Second, competition management in national league averaged 4.05, and third, family class and support averaged 3.96. Finally, players’ performance analysis factors were also dominant in all aspects. The findings showed that when the aspects of the performance analysis system were averaged practice had a score of 4.03, while support of players’ self-assessment averaged 4.01 (see Figure 1)

Part III: Congruence of Structural Equation Modeling

The findings and empirical data derived from analyzing the factors affecting successful Regional League Division 2 tournament management are illustrated and presented in Figure 2, which shows that the statistical values which were used to consider the criterion of Congruence of Structural Equation Modeling mapping with the factors affecting achievement of Regional League Division 2 tournament management passed the determined minimum levels for each criterion. For the groups of 1) executives, CEOs, and administrators and 2) the involved parties of tournament management associates in the game, the results were: a p-value for the χ^2 -test of .43 which was higher than .05, thus passing the set criterion, with χ^2/df equal to 1.574 which was less than 2.00, thus passing the set criterion; GFI of 0.96 which was higher than 0.90, thus passing the set criterion; AGFI of 0.95 which was higher than 0.90, thus passing the set criterion; CFI of 0.99 which was higher than 0.95, thus passing the set criterion; SRMR of 0.0101 which was less than 0.05, thus passing the set criterion; RMSEA of 0.0183 which less than 0.05, thus passing the set criterion; and CN of 1,127.07 which was higher than 200, thus passing the set criterion.

As reported, the p-values met the preset criteria of congruence for Structural Equation Modeling. It can thus be

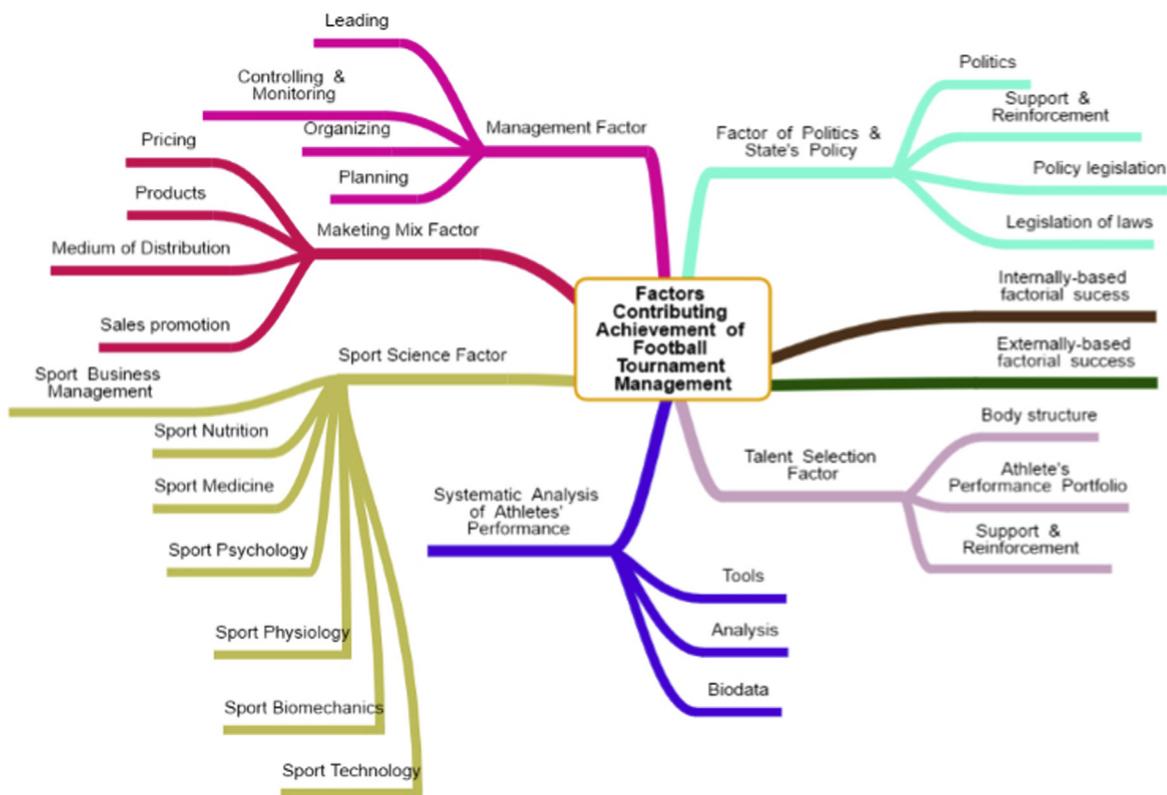
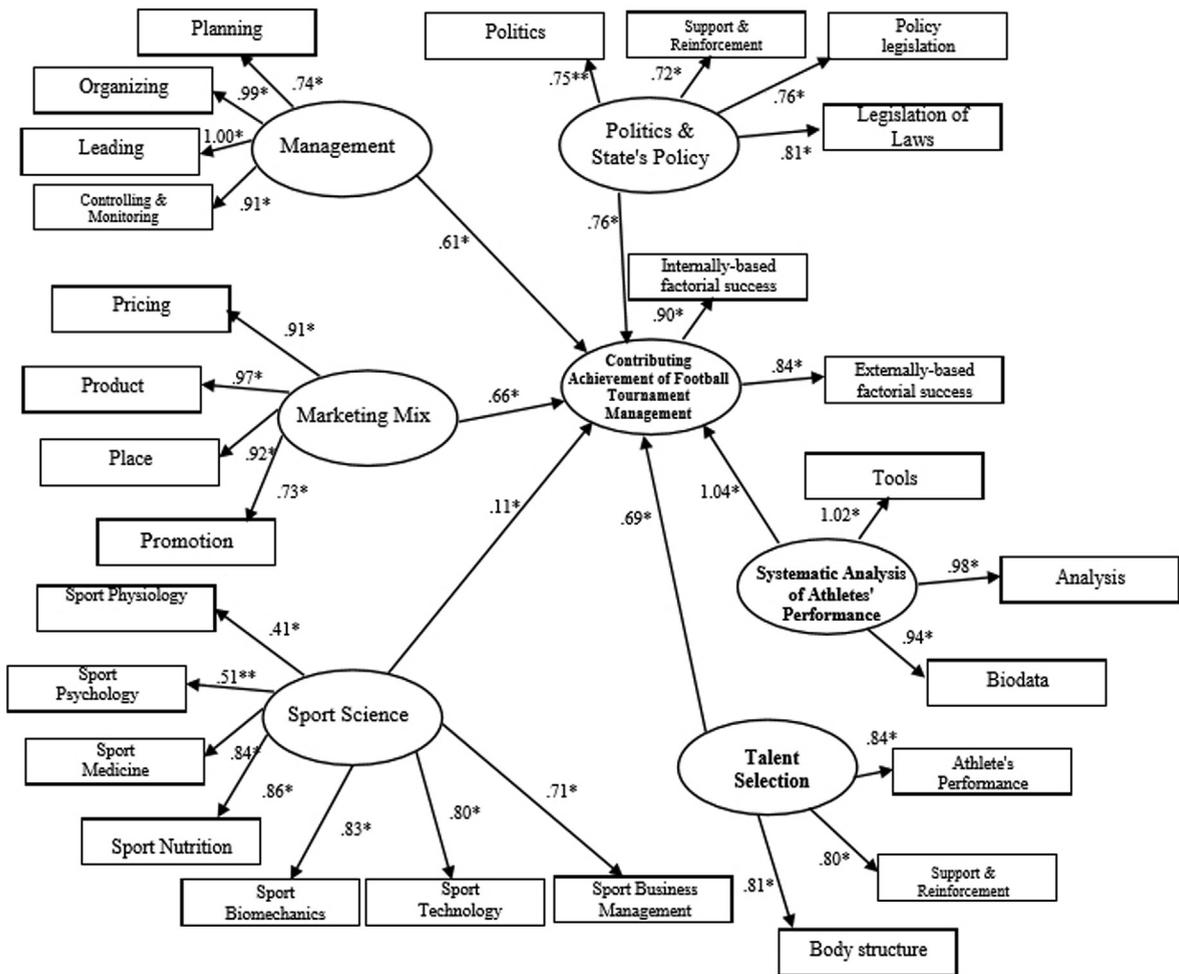


Figure 1 Factors influencing achievement of Regional League Division 2 football tournament management



Chi-Square = 423.52, df = 269, p-value = 0.43207, RMSEA = 0.018

Figure 2 Model of factors affecting success of Regional League Division 2 Football tournament management

stated that there was model congruence between the empirical data and the conceptual framework of the data. Consequently, every predictive correlation coefficient can be interpreted by the preset parameters as the following structural equation:

$$Success = 0.61 * Management + 0.66 * Marketing mix + 0.11 * Sports science + 0.76 * Policies + 0.69 * Select + 1.04 * Portfolio \quad R^2 = 0.76.$$

From this structural equation, it can be noted that the most influential factor which can predict achievement of Regional League Division 2 football tournament management was the factor relating to athletes' performance analysis system which yielded a predictive coefficient of 1.04, followed by the politics and state policy factor at 0.76, the talent selection factor at 0.69, the marketing mix factor at 0.66, the management factor at 0.61, and the least predictive coefficient was 0.11 which belonged to the sport science factor. When considering the predictability of all six factors, they were found to be able to predict 76 percent

of the success. To be more specific, pertaining to those main factors there were actually sub-factors which yielded the best prediction. The best sub-predicting factors of politics and state policy factor were laws and sponsorship and reinforcement aspect factors. For the talent selection

factor, the best sub-predicting factors were analysis and athlete's information aspect factors, while for the marketing mix factor, the best sub-predicting aspect factors were products and distribution. For the sport science factor, the best sub-predicting aspect factors were nutrition, biomechanics and technology. Finally, the management factor's best sub-predicting aspect factors were organizing and controlling. Among those sub-factors which yielded the best prediction, the least sub-predicting aspect factors with the lowest coefficient values were psychology and physiology aspect factors.

Discussion

According to the results previously reported, the system of athletes' performance analysis was the most influential factor affecting the achievement of successful Regional League Division 2 football tournament management with the predictive coefficient value at 1.04 ($\Gamma = 1.04$). The underlying reason for this being the highest influential factor in relation to the management success might be because the more competing experience athletes have, the more accumulated experience and the more body adaptability they have to the approaching and/or confronting competition conditions. These benefit the administrators' planning, strategic management, and the athletes' positioning. These concur with the research results of [Tassanaiyana, Yuttanon, and Sornpakdee \(1989\)](#) who found that the performance level of athletes essentially affects the competition success, because skilled and highly proficient athletes usually deter and terrify their opponents with their own prestige publicly shown. Therefore, involving organizers and authorities organizing football tournament together with its management should consider and determine the suitability of athletes' performance levels in order for fairness in the competition and public attraction.

The factor of Finding and Selecting Athletes also influenced the achievement of successful Regional League Division 2 football tournament management with the predictive coefficient value at 0.69 ($\Gamma = 0.69$). This was most likely due to the selected athletes who have good basic skills usually being able to adapt themselves more easily to the confronting competition conditions. They can play the game without worrying, all of which lead to better performance. Finding and selecting the right athletes, therefore, is one of the most influential factors which can help a team reach its competition goal. This goes well with the statement given by [Gould and Weiss \(1981\)](#) saying that the great effort that athletes made together with involving parties' arranging training conditions to be as close to the real competition conditions as possible can help benefit athletes' skill learning, physical capability, and psychological readiness.

The factor of Politics and Government's Policies had a considerable effect on the achievement of successful Regional League Division 2 football tournament management with the predictive coefficient value at 0.76 ($\Gamma = 0.76$). It might be said that when the determined policies launched by the government have appropriately been brought to bear, work execution is thus seen as meaningful and valuable; achievement, accordingly, seems reinforced and executed efficiently. In addition, Politics plays important roles in legislating laws in response to the government's policies and also plays roles in allocating revenue and fiscal budgets for running and reinforcing the activities following the policies announced. These coincide with [Santibutr \(2007\)](#) and [Kosinkha \(2005\)](#)'s study results that policies are essentially important elements leading to success in organizing and managing sports competitions.

Marketing Mix influenced the achievement of successful Regional League Division 2 football tournament management with the predictive coefficient value at 0.66 ($\Gamma = 0.66$). This value might be due to the fact that

organizing sports competitions is considered a kind of productive activity which continually helps develop the sports standard of the country. This necessitates not only good preparation but also good operational execution; there must also be parties who are in charge of and ready to be responsible for organizing efficient and quality sports competitions, which in the long-term will positively help activate and make sports marketing systems more successful. This is compatible with [Somchit \(2002\)](#) and [Thanapornpan's \(2001\)](#) statements that football is considered an international sport which involves the processes of both internationalization and marketization proceeding simultaneously.

The management factor has been reported to also influence the achievement of successful Regional League Division 2 football tournament management with the predictive coefficient value at 0.61 ($\Gamma = 0.61$). It is possible that the management theory which covers planning, organizing, managing human resource, directing, coordinating, reporting, and budgeting ([Gulick & Urwick, 1937](#)) necessitates and emphasizes a management system by means of these functioning simultaneously, thereby generating tangibly successful operation and management.

Lastly, Sports Science was the factor which least influenced the success of Regional League Division 2 football tournament management; its predictive coefficient value was 0.11 ($\Gamma = 0.11$). This might be explained by physical appearance of each of the individual athletes or sport players being different. With regular proper training, they will undoubtedly be more ready for competition and thus more likely to attain success in the competition. These statements appear compatible with [Tipparuk \(2003\)](#) and [Suwantada \(2005\)](#) whose research studies found that developing athletes' potentials and enhancing the system of sports science, which constitutes Sport Physiology, Sport Psychology, Sport Biomechanics, Sport Medicine, and Sport Technology, will definitely improve and bring about successful results in competition.

Recommendations

1. Regional football clubs and associated agencies should pay more attention to and focus more on investment in the analytical system of athletes' performance and analytical system of searching and selecting athletes. Football players are influential in determining spectators, the audience and public popularity. If only there were a practically suitable athlete selection and good care system, it would continually support on-going tournament management and benefit the nation's economic system.
2. The State should more clearly express its views and pay more attention to the importance of regulating sport policy such as professional player sponsorship and support, standardized field construction for competition and practice, scholarship provision so athletes can realize their full potential and make improved progress.
3. Sport agencies and state authorities should promote and support sport science in all dimensional aspects by

raising all sectors' awareness of sport science's importance and by forming sectors which can provide necessary service in sport science to enhance athletes' potential including physiology, psychology, biomechanics, medicine, and nutrition so that the athletes can be well prepared for any approaching game.

Suggestions for Further Research

1. This study dealt only with Regional League Division 2. Further research should also involve basic levels such as primary, secondary or academy levels in order to benefit these phases of development to identify the weaknesses and strengths of each level. This will benefit the Football Association of Thailand's work and responsibilities in determining and regulating developmental policy for each level.
2. This study focused on football matches which only involved male athletes. Female athletes are also in the spotlight of football competition at present, but they as yet are unable to officially compete with other teams in Asian countries. Hence it would be a good opportunity for researchers to conduct and investigate more about this suggested area so that the female teams can develop and surpass international teams.

Conflicts of interest

There is no conflict of interest.

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