

ORIGINAL ARTICLE



A Systematic Review of the Key Success Factors of Sports Event Management: A Resource-based View Approach

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ABSTRACT

Background. Many countries worldwide use sports events as a tool to stimulate both their national and local economies. To gain a competitive advantage, knowledge of sports event success is essential for stakeholders and hosting countries. However, due to the diverse conceptualizations of event success, the knowledge of the issue is fragmented, and there is a lack of comprehensive studies for scholars and event practitioners. **Objectives.** This article aims to review the key success factors (KSFs) of sports events based on the resource-based view (RBV) theory to fill this knowledge gap. **Methods.** A systematic review is used to analyze the KSFs of sports event management. **Results.** Our findings from 42 peer-reviewed papers indicate that organizational and reputational resources seem to play the most critical roles in sports event management success. **Conclusion.** The conceptual framework representing the KSFs of sports event management based on the RBV theory is presented. Moreover, several themes for future research on this issue are also suggested.

KEYWORDS: *Sports Management, Event Management, Key Success Factor, Resource-based View, Systematic Review.*

INTRODUCTION

Many regions worldwide have hosted sports events to stimulate economies and develop communities (1, 2). By utilizing opportunities from infrastructure investment from both the public and private sectors, sports events can have positive economic and social impacts on a country (3). Sports events have also been deployed as a tool for broadcasting tourist destination images, highlighting city branding, and projecting international tourism development to attract global attention (4). Thus, the number of sports events ranging from minor to mega-event scales has steadily increased (5).

Given the importance of sports events, understanding sports event success is critical for stakeholders and destinations to leverage their

hosting (6). The definition of event success is diverse. It can be a measure of achieving the aims of events (7) or meeting stakeholders' expectations (8). Therefore, several research papers have examined various aspects to measure sports event success. Upon searching the database with "sport-event-success" as a relevant key term, many studies have focused on spectators' and participants' satisfaction (9, 10) or motives toward intention to revisit (11, 12). Some studies have also considered revenue generation (13) and image deriving from event-hosting legacy (14, 15) as a measure of success in sports event management (16).

Consequently, various definitions of sports event success lead to knowledge paucity and a fragmentation of the related literature that

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provides a comprehensive collection for sports management scholars and event practitioners. This article aims to elucidate the key success factors (KSFs) of sports event management by using a systematic review approach to fill this gap in the literature. By utilizing the resource-based view (RBV) theory, according to Wernerfelt (17) and Barney (18), this study sheds light on how to identify the KSFs for sports event management, which ultimately allows hosts to gain competitive advantages (19). The conceptual framework derived from the analysis is proposed at the end of this article.

The RBV is considered one of the most influential strategic management theories employed to explain the success of business administration (5, 20). Assuming a sports event as a firm (18), RBV elucidates business resources and capabilities that enable event organizers to achieve successful sports event management (21, 22). According to Wernerfelt (17) and Barney (18), business resources and capabilities with the potential to create competitive advantage and enable sports events to achieve success must be adequately valuable, rare, inimitable, and heterogeneous to attract spectators and participants to engage in sports events.

Business resources and capabilities are classified as tangible and intangible (23). Tangible resources consist of human, financial, and physical resources, while intangible resources include organizational and reputational resources. Organizational assets relate to managerial skills, collective skills, know-how, and connections with stakeholders. Reputational resources refer to assets linked to famous branding, good event image, event quality, creditability, and trustworthiness. Sports event managers and organizers are supposed to formulate strategies based on utilizing and exploiting such resources to create value and gain strategic positions that contribute to event success vis-à-vis attracting audiences, participants, sponsorships, legacy formation, and revenue generation (5, 18).

MATERIALS AND METHODS

A systematic review is employed to answer the research question, “What are the business resources that play pivotal roles as KSFs in sports event management?”. As a tool to provide a comprehensive summary of research involving specific research questions, this type of review is used to identify, select, synthesize, and assess

quality evidence to answer the research question. By setting the eligibility criterion for collating evidence into the study, this method allows bias minimization (24). It also gives researchers a chance to carefully evaluate the quality of the papers used in the review (25).

To start the systematic review, the PRISMA flow chart shows the procedure for processing the systematic review (26, 27). The first step is to set the eligibility criteria and identify the sources for retrieving academic papers. The academic journal and paper retrieval process are conducted from May to June 2021. Elsevier’s Scopus and Clarivate’s Web of Science (WoS) is used as reliable sources because they provide the foremost citation analysis tool and offer leading scientific journals (28, 29). The WoS Master Journal List and Scopus Preview are used as automated tools to retrieve a list of academic journals.

For the inclusion and exclusion criteria, the eligible journals included in the analysis must aim to publish sports and event management research, and non-English academic journals indexed in the databases are excluded. The academic journals published in English and indexed in the WoS and Scopus databases are searched using “sports management” and “event management” as relevant key terms. During the identification process (Figure 1), we gather 2,332 journals, of which 2,324 journals are obtained from WoS, while the rest are from Scopus. However, despite several non-related sports and event management peer-reviewed academic journals, 2,303 are excluded from this stage.

Twenty-nine journals are retrieved during the screening process. However, after accessing 29 sports–event–management-related academic journals using “sport event” and “success” as relevant key search terms, we find that papers relating to the KSFs of sports event management are unavailable in 9 journals. Hence, they are excluded from this stage. Table 1 lists the 20 academic journals included in the study.

After searching each of the 20 academic journals for “sport event” and “success” relevant key terms, we read throughout the remaining journals to obtain a complete set of papers relating to sports events management success. Lastly, we find 42 peer-reviewed papers, which exclude proceedings, theses, dissertations, and unpublished works. They are included in the review to provide a comprehensive understanding of the KSFs of sports event management.

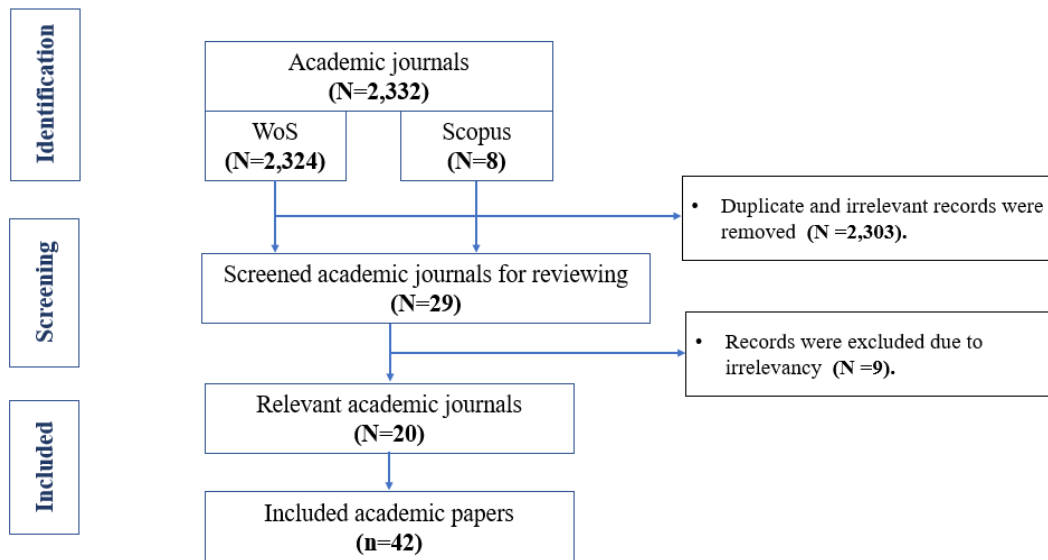


Figure 1. Academic Journal Retrieval Procedure According to PRISMA (27)

Table 1. List of Academic Journals Included in the Study

Journal Title	
Sport Management Review	International Journal of Sports Marketing and Sponsorship
Journal of Sport Management	International Journal of the History of Sport
European Sport Management Quarterly	Recreational Sports Journal
Event Management	Sport Marketing Quarterly
International Journal of Sport Management and Marketing	Journal of Sports Economics
Journal of Global Sport Management	Sport in Society
Journal of Applied Sport Management	Journal of Sport & Tourism
Managing Sport and Leisure	Journal of Policy Research in Tourism, Leisure and Events
SPORT TK-EuroAmerican Journal of Sport Sciences	International Journal of Event and Festival Management
Journal of Sport Policy and Politics	Journal of Convention and Event Tourism

RESULTS

According to the review, most academic papers (67%) use quantitative research methods, while qualitative analysis is employed in approximately 12% of the papers (Figure 2).

The remaining papers entail the use of conceptual development and mixed research methods. The

quantitative analysis approach is employed because the investigated issues involve sports event attendance and participation, motivation, attitude toward intention to revisit, and volunteers, which sometimes relate to a large population. Given the limitations regarding the given budget and time, the quantitative methods are more appropriate.

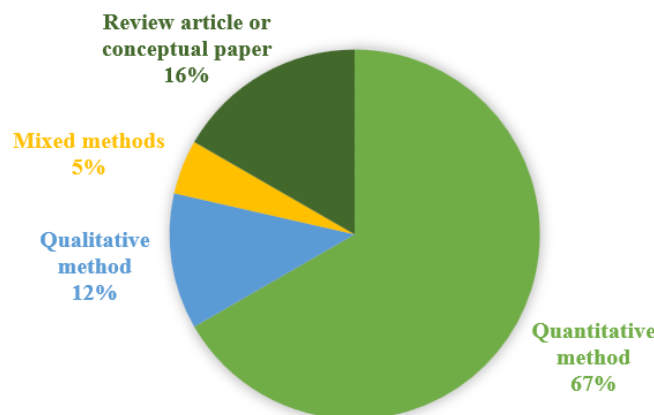


Figure 2. Types of Research Methods Used in the Included Papers

The included papers mostly use the United States as the setting of the studies (Figure 3), while China, South Korea, Iran, Canada, and Germany are the countries where the contexts of the studies occur. Therefore, North America and

Asia are the top two regions examined for sports events. Conversely, a study relating to the KSFs of sports events in South Africa does not appear in our analysis and receives less attention than other regions worldwide.

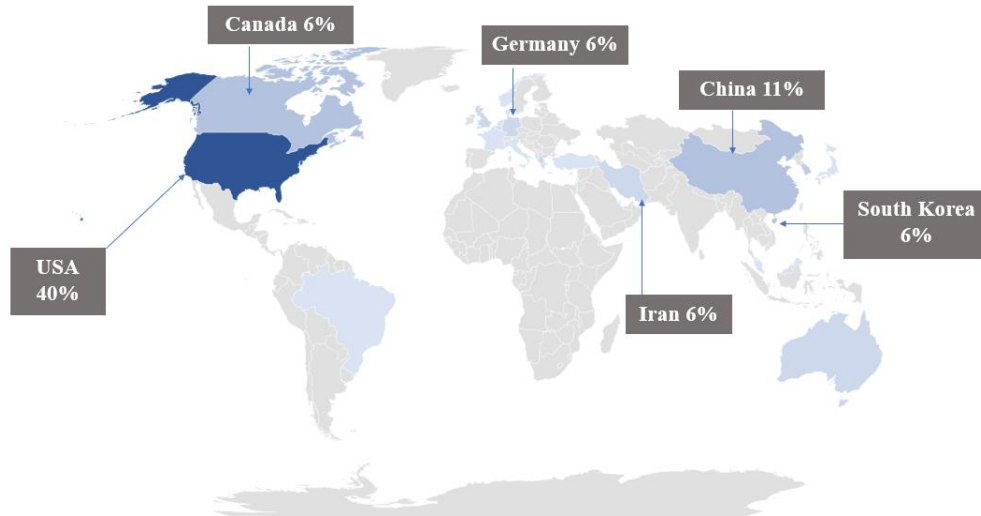


Figure 3. Country and Regional Distribution.

Soccer is the sports event that has drawn the most attention from scholars to study KSFs. Hockey and marathon-related sports events are also popular sports events that have gained attention from event scholars. Disability-related sports events and other types of female sports require further investigation.

Most of the reviewed academic papers employ significant international or major sports events,

Major League Baseball (MLB), National Basketball Association (NBA), National Football League (NFL), National Hockey League (NHL), and Major Soccer League (MSL), as a context of their studies. According to Figure 4, approximately 38% of mega-events, such as the Olympic games, draw the most attention from scholars. Small to medium-sized event events have received little attention in sports event studies.

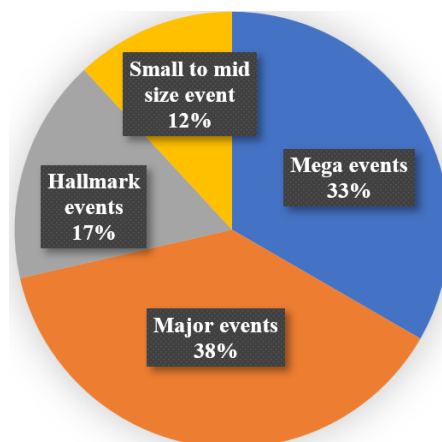


Figure 4. Types of Events in the Included Studies

Table 2 presents the KSFs of sports event management, classified according to the RBV theory. Tangible resources seem to be the most critical for successful sports event management.

Organizational and reputational resources have the highest frequencies compared to other resources, including human, financial, and physical.

Table 2. Key Success Factors of Sports event Management Based on the RBV Theory

Authors	KSFs					Other Factors
	Tangible Resources			Intangible Resources		
	Human Resources	Financial Resources	Physical Resources	Organizational Resources	Reputational Resources	
Hansen and Gauthier (30)			✓	✓		
Lewis, Seth (31)	✓			✓		
Zhang, Lam (32)				✓		
Beccarini and Ferrand (33)				✓	✓	
O'Reilly and Nadeau (13)				✓		
Funk, Toohey (34)				✓	✓	
Xing, Church (35)					✓	
Bang, Won (36)	✓					
Doherty (37)	✓					
Funk, Filo (38)				✓	✓	
Kaplanidou and Gibson (39)				✓	✓	
Hong (40)						✓
Khodr (3)						✓
Ramchandani and Coleman (41)				✓	✓	
Wicker, Hallmann (11)				✓	✓	
De Bosscher, Sofiriadou (42)				✓		✓
Kaplanidou, Kerwin (6)				✓	✓	
Kim, Hong (43)	✓					
Mutter and Pawlowski (44)			✓	✓		✓
Cottingham, Gearity (45)	✓			✓		
Kler (46)		✓		✓	✓	✓
Okayasu, Nogawa (47)				✓		
Aicher, Rice (48)				✓		
Chalip, Green (49)				✓		
Couto, Lai Tang (50)			✓	✓		
Jiang, Potwarka (51)	✓			✓		
Weimar and Rocha (52)				✓		
Chu (53)				✓		
Lim and Pedersen (54)			✓	✓		
Slavich, Dwyer (10)			✓	✓		
Chen, Preuss (55)						✓
Bradbury (56)			✓	✓		
Çevik and Şimşek (57)			✓		✓	
Elahi, Moradi (9)					✓	
Kapareliotis and Voutsina (15)					✓	
Koronios, Dimitropoulos (58)					✓	
Valenti, Scelles (59)				✓		
Won and Chiu (60)						✓
Duan and Liu (61)					✓	
Givi, Monazzami (16)				✓		
Storm and Holum (62)				✓		
Johnston, Naylor (63)				✓		

DISCUSSION

Intangible resources, which consist of organizational and reputational assets, seem to play significant roles as KSFs in sports event management. Upon assuming a sports event as a firm, the organizational resources of sports events include strategic networks and partnerships, sports-related products, event-related products, and effective management (5). Capabilities derived from exploiting organizational resources resulting from effective event management can

lead to media attraction and vast amounts of money from corporate sponsorships (30, 31).

The collaboration and advocacy relationship from stakeholders, such as residential support, is essential to event success (32-36). As suggested by Johnston, Naylor (36), resident support is vital for the prosperous hosting countries of major sports events, as it is closely connected to perceptions of event impacts.

Sports- and event-related products, which refer to forms of competition (10, 13, 37, 38), club

management (39), and attractiveness of event management (40), also impact the decision to participate in sports events. This is because sports- and event-related products play a part in enhancing participants' experiences, thereby facilitating their willingness to pay (13) and increasing the financial resources of sports events. It can be a source of funds besides broadcasting rights and sponsorship (5).

Reputational resources, which include a positive destination image, professional quality, and good event image, are regarded as business resources that allow the success of events (5). In particular, the city or destination image, which reflects the senses and authenticity of places, creates positive experiences for spectators and participants. This factor engenders intentions to revisit sports events (9, 11, 15, 41, 42). Likewise, positive event images also motivate spectators and sponsorship (42-44) and attract media coverage (31).

Considering tangible resources, such as human, financial, and physical resources, volunteers are the human resources of sports event organizations tasked with producing successful events (45, 46). To exploit this type of business resource, event organizers should promote personal growth while assigning teamwork projects and proper workloads to create a sense of trust, belonging, and altruism are critical toward increasing volunteer satisfaction and motivating them to participate in future sports events (47-49).

Physical resources also play a role in creating stakeholder experiences. In particular, facilities, amenities, and comfort within a stadium can make sports events more enjoyable (50). Seat plan,

capacity, cleanliness of toilets, availability of food and beverages, and souvenir shops contribute to spectator satisfaction and experience (50-53). Moreover, sound, lighting, and scoreboards can create "sportainment" to improve stadium experiences (10).

In summary, the RBV theory is well described as a pivotal contributor to the success of sports event management. Its perspectives show evident interconnections among resources. In other words, the exploitation of tangible and organizational resources has consequences on reputational resources, creating overall experiences for sports event stakeholders, audiences, participants, communities, and sponsors.

However, we point out that there are other factors besides business resources and capabilities that allow sports events to be successful and gain competitive advantage, as suggested by Wernerfelt (17) Barney (18), and Pianese (5). Based on our review, we find that some external variables, such as changes in policy focus, especially in terms of sports and tourism development, are also a part of sports event success (3, 30, 33, 54-57). If policy development orients success and legacy in elite sports events, interventions from governments or institutions can foster sports event business success (14, 58).

In this regard, we propose a conceptual framework for the KSFs of sports event management (Figure 5). It exhibits business resources that are key to successful sports event management. We also illustrate the connection between resources and suggest that policy changes and focus should be considered variables that affect the KSFs of sports event management.

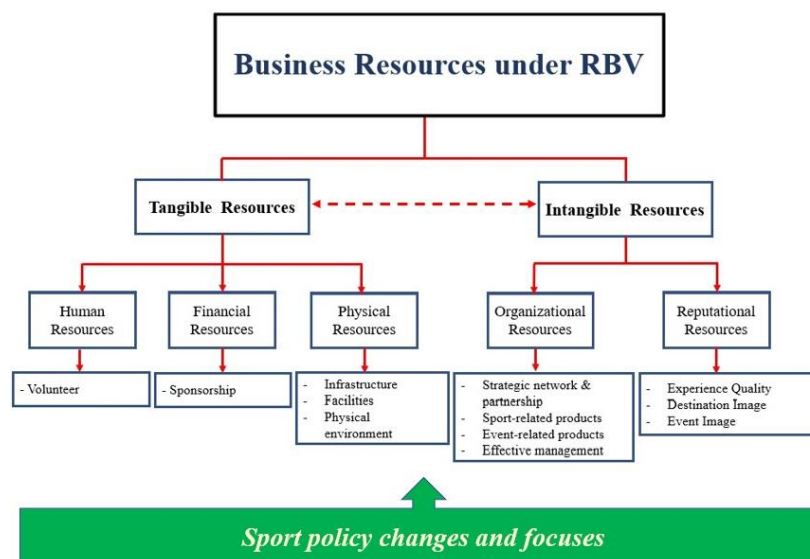


Figure 5. A Conceptual Framework of the Critical Success Factors of Sports Event Management

CONCLUSION

This article examines the KSFs of sports event management based on the RBV theory. Using a systematic review to answer the research question, we find that both tangible and intangible resources, together with sports policy orientation from institutionalism, play important roles regarding the success factors of sports event management.

Intangible resources, organizational and reputational resources, have significant impacts on sports event management. The advocacy relationship from stakeholders, positive image of event management, and effective project management can attract spectators, corporate sponsorship, and media coverage. While volunteers and financing opportunities from sponsorships and physical resources also play a part in creating stakeholder experiences. Furthermore, if a government puts further efforts into sports policy development and regards it as a tool to promote a nation, it fosters the success of sports event management.

The limitations of this study should be addressed for further investigation. As we use English papers as a criterion for the systematic review, some non-English papers indexed in WoS are excluded. In addition, during the systematic review process, we begin our screening process with relevant key terms in sports-related journals. Therefore, some related academic papers published in non-sports academic journals are excluded. Since sports event management involves interdisciplinary, the related literature is sometimes published in non-sports academic journals beyond sports and event management journals such as *International Marketing Review*, *World Leisure Journal*, *Marketing Intelligence & Planning*, and *Performance*.

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The information obtained from the analysis reveals several academic gaps for future research on sports event management. As most of the studies employ quantitative analysis in large event settings in North America and Asia, some in-depth information on KSFs is missing. Hence, the sports event management literature requires scholarly attention in context and research methodology. Moreover, each KSF calls for further studies to gain insights into its precise implementation in sports event management.

APPLICABLE REMARKS

- This study identifies vital business resources for event organizers to attain success through the systematic review. Strategic sports event management plans and marketing communication tools should be formulated to exploit each type of business resource properly.
- Consequences from government-related policies should be considered when managing sports events.

AUTHORS' CONTRIBUTIONS

Study concept and design: Thanavutd Chutipongdech. *Acquisition of data:* Thanavutd Chutipongdech. *Analysis and interpretation of data:* Thanavutd Chutipongdech. *Drafting the manuscript:* Thanavutd Chutipongdech. *Critical revision of the manuscript for important intellectual content:* Thanavutd Chutipongdech. *Statistical analysis:* N/A. *Administrative, technical, and material support:* Teepakorn Kampitak. *Study supervision:* Thanavutd Chutipongdech.

CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

The authors declare that they have no competing interests.

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