

## Needs, Practices and Strategies of Resource Acquirement of National Sport Associations in Taiwan

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Non-governmental sport organizations have been one of the major forces behind a society's sport development. The effectiveness of these organizations is usually defined by their ability to obtain and make good use of resources. Since most of the sport organizations in Taiwan are not profit-oriented, their operations are more likely supported by individuals or entities outside the organizations (Yang, 2000). In general, the input of social resource can not only relieve the financial burden of an organization but also expand the base of public involvement. With mutual interests, the incorporation of the two functions lays out a promising future for the sport industry (Chiu, 1997). However, even for a country with adorable sport environment like the United States, sport associations are inevitably subjected to financial difficulties (Howard & Crompton, 1995). Funding from the government is no longer sufficient to meet the increasing demands of the sport organizations' day-to-day operations (Douglas, 1996).

To function on their own has been an imperative objective for Taiwan's sport associations as well as the country's sport authorities. A past survey revealed that approximately 70% of the sport associations' activity expense was supported by governmental subsidies (National Council on Sports and Physical Fitness, 1999). Recently, the hardship has become heavier, if not unbearable, as governmental budget is redirected to fulfill other alleged more urgent needs. To strive for all sorts of social resource and allocate them properly is now the first priority for every sport association in Taiwan (Tsen & Wang, 1999). An investigation on these organizations' effort and accomplishment of the subject matter will shed some light on more effective ways to deal with it. The purpose of this study, therefore, was to investigate the current needs, practices and strategies of resources acquirement of national sport associations in Taiwan.

The researcher conducted in-depth interviews with 3 secretary-generals to learn the possible implementation differences among sport associations. The information gathered in this phase was used in developing a survey instrument, - The Needs, Practices and Strategies of Resource Acquirement of the National Sport Associations Questionnaire-", which was then distributed to 55 secretary-generals of the national sport associations for the second part investigation. A total of 40 subjects returned their questionnaires with a response rate of 73%.

The study found that over 90 percent of Taiwan sport associations had a - Moderate-" or higher level of reliance on outside resources, with an average overall reliance score of 3.71 on a 5-point scale. The respondents acknowledged that the more desirable resources, in a descending order, were - Cash-", - Professional Skills-", - Activity Space-" and - Human Power-". Among the resources, - Human Power-" was most likely reported by the respondents in currently assisting their associations' operations, followed by - Human Relations-", - Cash-" and - Activity Space-". Governmental agencies were the major supporter for most of the sport associations. Sponsors for different functions and business partners were also indicated by the respondents as among the major contributors.

Most of the associations actively initiated campaigns to attain resources. Secretary-generals were the typical individuals in charge of the resource acquiring tasks, followed by board members and supervisors heading specific programs. Task difficulty, cost-effectiveness and manpower, meanwhile, were most frequently reported factors that hindered the intention to initiate resource acquiring effort. The effectiveness of resource acquirement for most associations was - Moderate-". Less than one-third of the respondents regarded their efforts as well-rewarded and about 1 out of 5 associations received "Poor" or "Very Poor" results. In evaluation, the respondents indicated that "Capability of the Personnel" was the most influential factor on the outcome of resource acquirement, with "Overall Social Environment" the least, and "Organizational Characteristics" in between.

"Maintaining Public Relations" was the most agreed upon strategy in soliciting outside support, followed by "Strengthening Organizational Effectiveness", "Making Good Use of Outside Influence", and "Careful Target Selection". The recognition levels of "Careful Target Selection" and "Making Good Use of Outside Influence" strategies were found to be significantly positively correlated with the degree of importance of all resources but "Cash". "Cash" was the only resource that was not significantly correlated to any of the four strategies. In addition, there were significant positive correlations between the perceived resource acquiring effectiveness and the recognition levels of all of the four strategies. Step-wise multiple regression analyses, however, further revealed that - Maintaining Public Relations-" was the only factor having predicting power.

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The resource supply was not in line with the demands of Taiwan's sport associations. As the profit-oriented corporations seem to be still weighing the potential benefits of sport investment, looking for volunteer services is probably a more realistic way to start. Also, there is still room for improvement in attaining outside resources. Given that the employees of the sport associations may not obtain sufficient expertise to execute resource seeking assignments, professional consultation should be considered. As the competition for more resource becomes much more intensified among the sport associations and between them and other institutions of the society, public relations with an emphasis on the government sector should be well maintained as a day-to-day operation.

Keywords: Resource acquirement, organization development, public relations strategies.