

STRATEGIES FORMULATION FOR CHAMPIONSHIP SPORTS IN ZANJAN PROVINCE

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this research is to design and develop strategies of championship sports in Zanzan Province- Iran. Here, the descriptive methodology would be applied based upon the case study. The Statistical population includes the physical education professors, the managers of Physical Education departments, educated coaches and M.A students in the province. The statistical sample encompasses 36 individuals selected totally due to limited Statistical population. To collect the data, we used library resources, literature and background review, interviews and open as well as closed questionnaires. Having developed the closed questionnaire, we had the validity confirmed by the professors and their reliability was confirmed using Cronbach alpha Coefficient ($\alpha=0/94$). For research findings analysis purpose, Friedman test and group discussion were taken into account. After identifying the most important strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats in the field of championship sport and ranking them in the existing order, we selected most important ones through group discussion. Based upon the internal factors evaluation matrix (2/30) and external factors evaluation matrix (2/38), it was shown that the strategic position of the province is in WT area. Finally, regarding the research findings, specifically, the strategic status of the province, we would develop the necessary strategies for the championship sport development in the province through group discussion with the province authorities and elites.

Key words: Strategic planning, championship sport, SWOT analysis

INTRODUCTION

Strategic planning is defined as a process through which organizations can analyze and recognize their external and internal environments. In addition, strategic planning can, in turn, create strategies to help attain pre-determined goals. The studies show that the organizations which take strategic planning into account enjoy better performance than their counterparts. There are various models as for strategic planning of which SWOT matrix is of practical importance. The matrix of strength, weakness, opportunity and threat areas is considered one of the most significant tools help the management compare the data so that they can develop 4 types of strategies namely as SO,OW,ST and WT strategies. Comparing the main internal and external factors is regarded as the most complicated task of SWOT matrix development. Implementing SO strategies, an organization tries to make use of external opportunities taking advantage of internal strengths. All managers prefer to consider internal strengths so as to considerably exploit external procedures and events. Generally, to achieve the afro-mentioned target, the organization applies WO, ST and WT strategies which, in turn, help them execute SO strategies. The purpose behind OW strategies is to help an organization improve its internal weaknesses using the existing opportunities in the external environment. Implementing ST strategies, an organization tries to minimize the present threats in the external environment through its strengths. Also, Considering WT strategies, organizations take defensive position so that they can minimize the internal weaknesses and prevent threats resulting from external environment. An organization facing internal weakness and threats from external environment is in highly weak place. In fact, it tries to reduce the internal weaknesses and external threats to gradually attain optimal positions in which it can, ultimately, apply ST,OW and even SO strategies. Developing vision and missions is a main focus of many strategic planning models.

Needless to say, although in recent years. It has attracted a special attention in Iran, strategic planning hasn't been seriously adopted by the authorities. Possibly an alternative, here, is to develop strategic plans for different provinces so that their achievements, in turn, shall promote our country. Zanjan province is, among other cities , deprived of a comprehensive and long-range plan regarding championship sport. So the present research tries to consider the internal and external environment of Zanjan-based physical education department in terms of championship sport. Then, it aims to find an answer to this question: What are strategies for championship sport development in Zanjan ?

METHODOLOGY

The present research is of descriptive and case study type. The statistical population is he physical education professors, educated coaches, sport management students and the respective authorities in physical education department in Zanjan province. The sample was 36 individuals whom we chose due to limited statistical population. To collect data, we applied library sources, literature review and background and interview as well as open and closed questionnaires. At first, we would interview the respective authorities in person in order to determine the most important strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats with regard to championship sport in the province. Some authorities weren't easily available, so we sent them open questionnaires including 4 general questions which reflected weaknesses, strengths, opportunities and threats in terms of championship sport in the province. Having gathered data through interviews, open questionnaires and literature review and background, we conducted a 43-item 5- scale Likert's questionnaire .The questionnaire encompassed 4 sections which

the respondents were supposed to value them in terms of both under current and desirable conditions. Having confirmed the questionnaire validity by the experienced professors and its reliability through Cronbach alpha (0.94), we handed out them among our statistical population. When gathered, data was analyzed using SPSS software and Friedman. Ultimately, the weaknesses, strengths, opportunities and threats were specified regarding championship sport in the province.

FINDINGS

To develop a vision, mission, goals and the desired strategies for the championship sport in the province, we would arrange meetings with the respective physical education elites and experts. The Zanjan -based physical education department’s vision in terms of championship sport:

- The general objective: To promote championship sport in Zanjan province
- Quantative part: To promote championship sport in Zanjan such that it develops as one of the 5 high profile provinces in sport fields
- Qualitative objective: To pave the way for all individuals to play sport regardless of their physical, mental, financial, social, cultural and economic qualities.

The general objective of Zanjan-based physical education department in terms of championship sport is to develop championship sport to take part in domestic and foreign competitions. In addition, its long-range goals regarding championship sport are as follows:

- a) Increasing both male and female coaches number from 6022 to 8000 through a five-year plan
- b) Increasing both female and male referees number from 3631 to 4500 through the 5-year plan
- c) Hosting championship competitions more than ever (20%)
- d) Increasing the athletes’s participation in championship sports
- e) Rising both male and female athletes number to 10%
- f) Increasing per capita for the sport spaces in the province from 62 c/m to 1m

-Mission: To enhance championship sport with an emphasis on the athletic ethics

Having specified the vision, mission, goals, weaknesses, strengths , opportunities and threats in terms of strategic position of championship sport in the SWOT matrix, we provided internal and external factors assessment matrixes. To provide the internal factors assessment matrix, we would develop a list of the most important internal factors(strengths-weaknesses)in the matrix taking the respective elites and experts` viewpoints and the existing gap between the current and desirable situations into consideration. Then, several elites were asked to give weights and ranks for the related factors. It should be noted that considering the internal and external factors assessment matrix, a weight reflects a single factor success, while a rank reveals the current strategies effectiveness in terms of a reaction directed toward the respective factor. Hence, the number “4”implies higher reaction ;number”3”reflects upper-intermediate reaction;number”2”entails lower-intermediate reaction and finally number”1”shows a weak one.Ultimately, the total grade was 2.3089 showing that the province suffered internal factors. The same conducted to assess the external factors. The final grade was 2.3896 revealing that the province` threats surpassed its opportunities. Positioning the final grades of both internal and external matrixes into SWOT matrix, we found out that strategic place of championship sport in the province was in the WT area. Having found the strategic place of the province in SWOT matrix and adjusting it with that of David’s model as well as preparing a strength, weakness, opportunity and threat matrix, we began to develop the strategies.

Table 1:Internal Factors Evaluation Matrix athletics Zanjan

Strength	Weight	Rating	Weight Rating 

The number of sports venues (arena, club, swimming pool ... now 137 places)	0.052	3.3	0.17
Potential of sport in the province especially in the individual sport fields	0.050	3.1	0.15
Impact of sports teachers (specialist in Physical Education and Sports Science)	0.046	3.4	0.15
Number of local athletes in the national teams (individual sport fields)	0.045	3.1	0.13
Number of local teams in the premier leagues-individual fields(currently 4 teams)	0.040	3	0.12
Number of local teams in the premier leagues-team sport fields (currently 22 teams)	0.042	3	0.12
Impact of coaching classes in the province (Top Level Classes)	0.037	3.3	0.12
Level of professional and technical knowledge of coaches	0.035	3.4	0.11
Effectiveness and efficiency level of experts in the Department of Physical Education and other cities	0.032	3.1	0.09
Interaction physical education department and educational department regarding school-wide competitions to identify the talented athletes	0.032	3.3	0.10
The number of private sports clubs	0.031	3.2	0.09
Weakness	Weight	Rating	Weight Rating <input type="checkbox"/>
The presence of athletes in team leagues	0.051	1.9	0.09
The quantity and quality of sporting facilities equipped with heating system (with respect to the geographical situation of the province)	0.042	1.7	0.07
Number of places, the halls and facilities for athletics	0.040	1.8	0.07
The number and quality of the coaching courses	0.040	1.6	0.06
The number and quality of the refereeing courses	0.039	1.6	0.06
The proper involvement of volunteers in sporting events	0.033	1.5	0.04
The limited scope of different sports boards	0.040	1.8	0.07
Quality and quantity of physical education schools	0.046	1.7	0.07
Financial status of sporting boards	0.044	1.8	0.07
Quantity and quality of sports clubs activities	0.041	1.7	0.06
The amount of time, the level of expertise and manpower involved in the process of finding	0.052	1.3	0.0676

talented athletes			
Authorities attention to physical education schools as the major element of sports talented athletes	0.048	1.3	0.0624
The deployment of educated and skilled forces in physical education and exercise science department	0.042	1.2	0.05
Total weaknesses and strengths	1		2.30

Table 2 - External Factors Evaluation Matrix of championship sports in Zanjan

Opportunity	Weight	Rating	Weight Rating
A good situation for championship sports (interest, talent ...)	0.054	3.5	0.1
Provincial authorities expertise in persuading manufacturing companies and sponsors to invest in athletics	0.049	3.5	0.17
Leaving sporting affairs with the private sectors	0.043	3.4	0.14
Geographical location of Zanjan and its proximity to the capital city and other developed cities in athletics	0.044	3.3	0.14
The full-time use of sports facilities of institutions and other agencies	0.048	3.7	0.17
Establishing Committee of the retired athletes to honor the values of physical education and efficient use of their experiences	0.054	3.5	0.18
Promote athletics through the local media	0.055	3.5	0.19
Comprehensive physical education program	0.057	3.1	0.17
Applying successful Cities and states experiences succeeded in athletics	0.057	3.1	0.17
Threat	Weight	Rating	Weight Rating
Quitting sport fields due to employment and education problems,	0.057	1.2	0.06
The impact of rising unemployment in athletics	0.053	1.2	0.06
Increasing impact of recruiting elite athletes from other provinces	0.055	1.7	0.09
Increased costs of equipment and sporting goods in the province.	0.052	1.5	0.07
The impact of unemployed graduates in the field of physical education and sport science	0.040	1.2	0.04
The cost for construction, maintenance and restoration of sites, facilities, sports halls	0.058	1.6	0.09
Rising costs of athletics	0.059	1.6	0.09

The optimal use of champions and medalists in the development of sport	0.054	1.5	0.08
Withdrawal of manufacturing companies and sponsors because of economic problems	0.057	1.9	0.10
The not-for-sport use of sports facilities	0.054	1.8	0.09
Total opportunities and threats	1		2.38

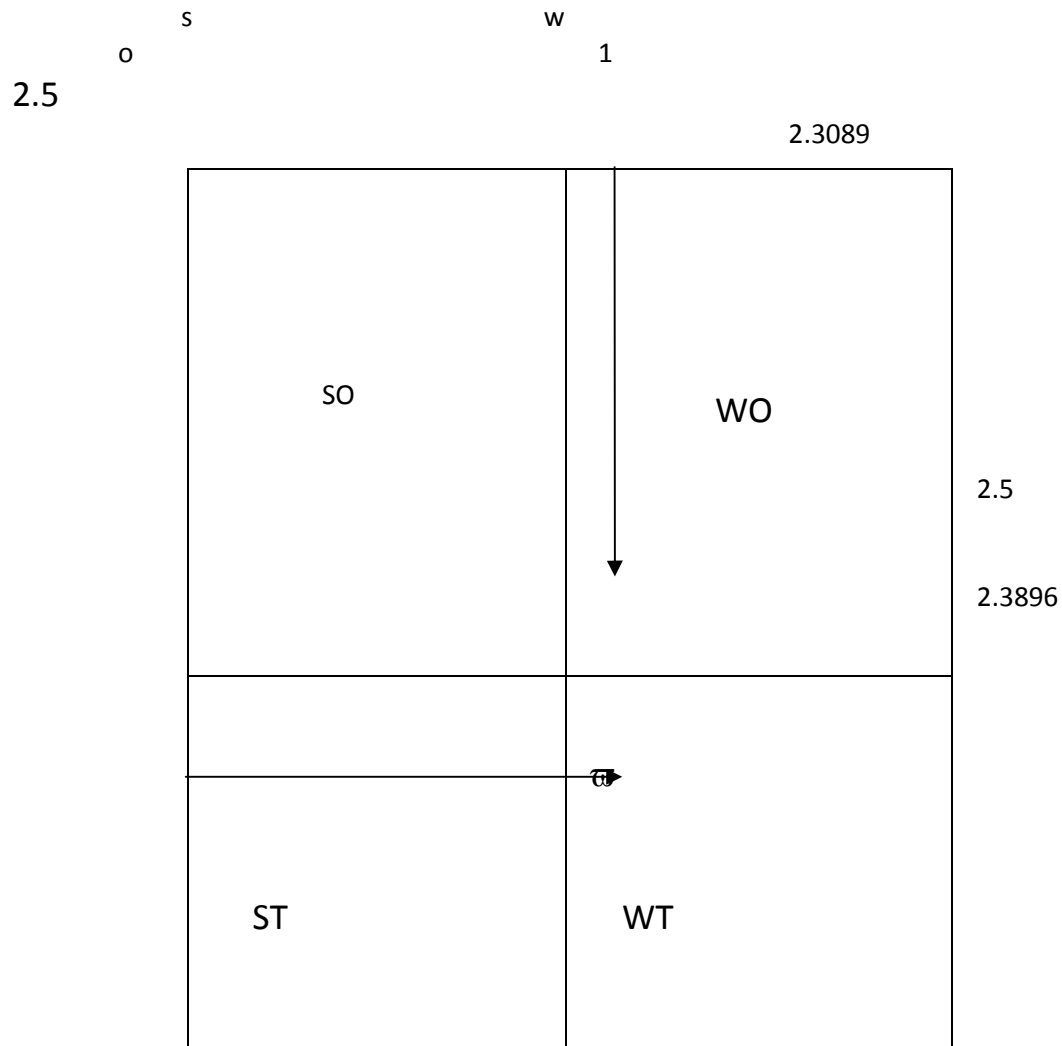
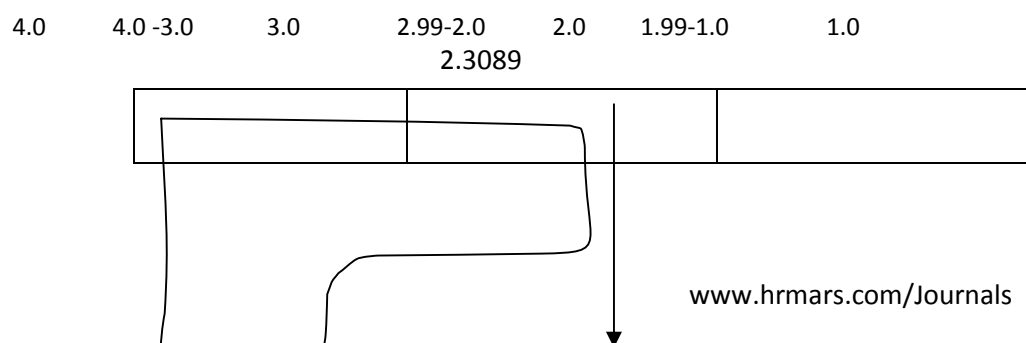


Figure 1 - The strategic status of athletics in the province in SWOT Matrix



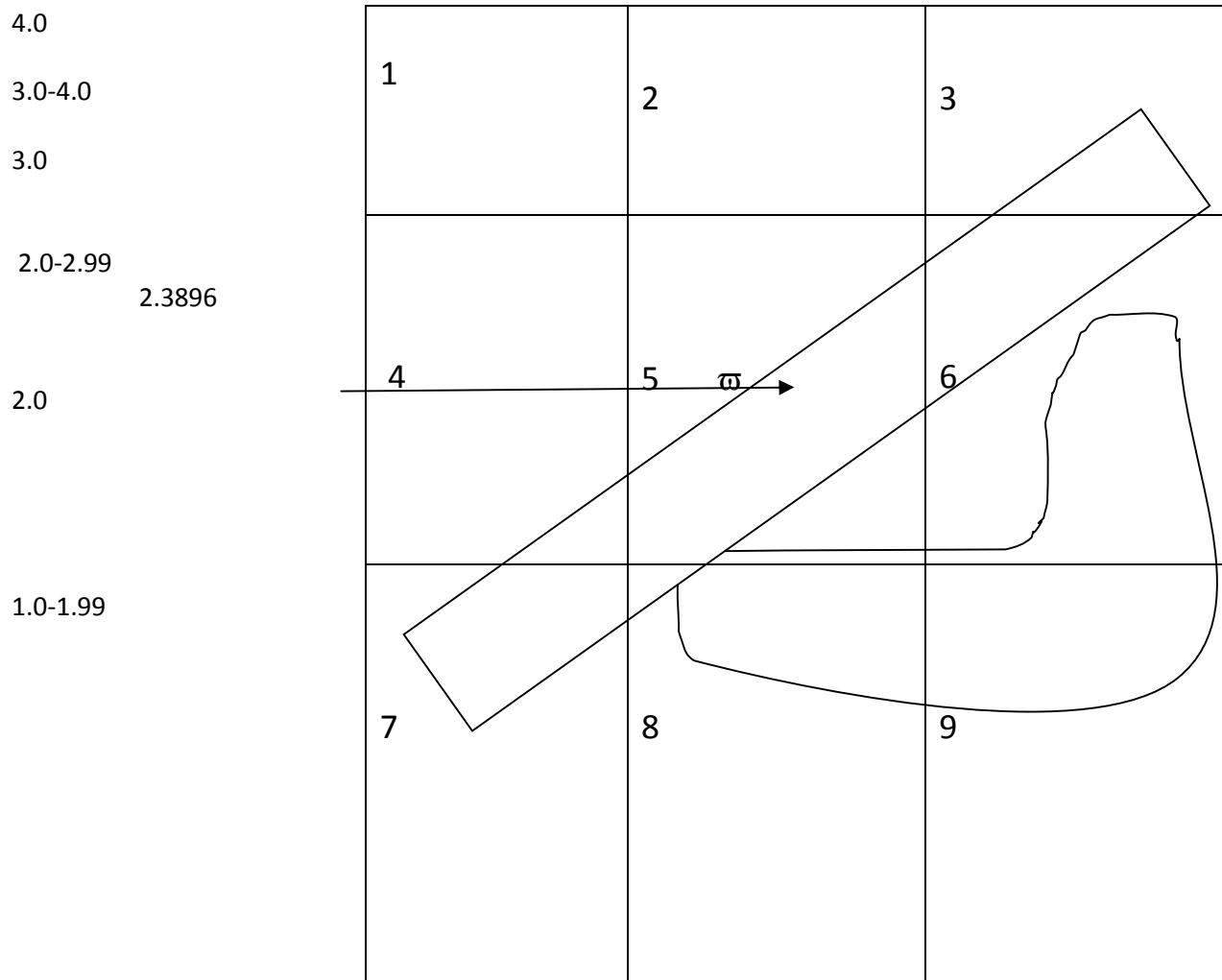


Figure 2 - The strategic status of athletics in the province in david model

The formulated strategies as for championship sport development in Zanjan:

ST strategies

1. Efficient use of professionals and agencies in the Department of Physical Education and plans to hinder for the youth abandonment of sports scene s(duе to problems with employment, education, livelihoods) regarding the number of sports venues (currently 137) in the province. (s9.t1.s1)
2. Increased interaction of Physical Education Department with Office of Education regarding school-level competitions to identify talented athletes (currently 137). (S10.s9.t5 . s1)

OW strategies

1. Increasing amount of time, expertise and level of staffing involved in the process identifying talented athletes and preparing the ground for athletics (interests, talents and).
2. Increased participation of athletes in the premier leagues .

SO strategies

1. Increasing the level of professional ability, technical knowledge and training in the context of a need for athletics (interest, talent).

2. Increasing number of physical education teachers (specialist in Physical Education and Sports Science) with respect to being an opportunity for athletics (interest, talent).

WT strategies

1. Optimal use of champions and medalists in the development of sport and the athletes involvement in the group teams in Premier League teams
2. The increase in deployment of forces and attracting educated and skilled in Physical Education and Sports Science Department due to unemployed graduates in the field of physical education and exercise science.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Considering the Athletics ,the following research has been done inside and outside the country sharing in strategies of WO, WT, SO, ST:

Alijani (2002), Goodarzi (2007), Ghofrani (2007), Seif Panahi (2007), Khosrow Hassanzadeh (2007), Nasirzade (2007), Department of Planning and Development of Department of Physical Education in Mazandaran (2010), Welsh athletic counselors (1992) and Bovayt (2001).

The results of the present study is in disagreement with that of Nsiri zade(2008) Khosravi`s(2008) in which the National Olympic Committee of Iran's strategic position is in the region of SO, is , but the strategies presented in his study are consistent with strategies developed in this study. On the other hand the results of this study are consistent with Ghofrani (2008) and Seif Panahi (2008) in which the position of athletics in the region of Kurdistan province and Sistan-Baluchestan is in WT .

After reviewing the documents and strategic plans of different places, it was found out that a general framework is used for strategic planning in developing the mission and vision, goals and strategies . The researchers then developed a vision and mission of the Department of Physical Education in Zanjan province and analyzed the strategies .

To determine the strategic position of athletics in Zanjan in the SWOT matrix ,we created a matrix of factors based on external and internal strategic review of the internal and external factors (opportunities, threats, strengths and weaknesses) . The External and internal factors evaluation matrix rendered total score of 2.3896 and 2.3089 ,respectively, indicating outperforming possible threats on its opportunities and strengths over its weaknesses . The athletics status in the province is in WT.

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