

Determination of the Strategic Position of the Iran Pentathlon Association

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Abstract

Purpose: The purpose of this study was to determine the strategic Position of Iran Pentathlon Association.

Methods: The relevant literatures were reviewed and also the survey and PEST SCAN (Cronbach Alpha = 0.88) questionnaires and SWOT analysis were used for data collection. 21 current managers and experts together with in Pentathlon Association were selected to complete the questionnaires. By Delphi method, meetings and several strategic analyzing steps, 11 strengths, 10 weaknesses, 8 opportunities and 13 threats were recognized and ranked based on Friedman test.

Results: The results of this research show that the total scores of the matrix of internal factors of the Pentathlon Association is 2.13, which is weak in terms of internal factors, and in the evaluation matrix of external factors, the total weighted scores of external factors show the number 2.07, which in terms of external factors has is a threat.

Conclusion: The strategic position of the Iranian Pentathlon Association was determined using the evaluation matrix of internal and external factors in the WT position, therefore, the total weighted points of the internal and external factors evaluation shows the defensive position, which strategies should be formulated and selected based on this situation.

Keywords: Strategic Position, Pentathlon Association, SWOT

Introduction

Sports is a human activity having a very important role and specific characteristics, which was considered as a social entity during human life. The way in which sports develops and plays a role creates a sports culture in the societies. The sports industry is one of the biggest industries in the world market and has experienced an exponential growth in recent years. (Garla and Vay, 2014).

Today, the sports development in all of the sectors leads to increase in social and national wellbeing, and national sports development is an important part of economic and social development. The sports development means that by means of it, the opportunities and chances, fruitful systems and structures are created and through them, people can participate in sports and recreational activities (Pour Kiani et al., 2018). Therefore if the managers of sports organizations are going to survive in the sports business environment, they should be capable of effectively dealing with environment, challenges such as high expenses, a highly competitive market, the growing dissatisfaction of the supporters, and the exponential growth of new technologies (Galdun and Stun, 1 2009). Because, the sports organizations such as non-sport organizations are subject to environmental ‘global changes ‘ evolutions, and are struggling with their specific problems (Tarighi et al., 1. Gladen & Sutton, 2013).

In today's world, where we are witnessing dramatic changes and developments in various fields, the environment is facing a lot of turmoil, and competition has intensified, organizational systems that succeed must use some kind of planning that is forward-looking and environment-oriented. Organizations are strongly influenced by the rapid changes of the present century. To this end, organizations need to examine processes and methods to play a significant role in the environment and to

organize operational processes to achieve missions, values, and desirability (Jeanquart et al., 2017). .In general, organizations confront different external environmental changes such as political, economic, social and technological factors, competitors, stakeholders, governmental institutions, financial mediators, unions, suppliers and also internal factors such as managerial, financial, marketing, services, research, development and computer information system and organizational, technical and individual variables. Certain is that one of the most important and fundamental activities in the organization to positively synchronize with change and the ability of healthy competition in society is to use accountability improvement systems to achieve the desired and constructive goals of the organization (Nazari et al., 2014).

So the sport managers have recognized that by determining the goals and the Organization's missions in a long term, they can achieve their programs to make sport organization work better and respond to its environment. Therefore, using comprehensive and strategic programs have been introduced as a necessity in organizations because strategic planning, by analyzing Position quo, says where organizations are and stand now, and by analyzing favorite state, it says where they intend to reach, and by this planning enable the management to determine its orientation in the future and makes organization be equipped against upcoming changes. Hence, it is indispensable for all the organizations to be responsible for strategic management, and the organizations who can use science and strategic management are the winners.

Bryston (2016), strategic planning is defined as a regular and organized effort to make decisions and perform basic activities that shape the nature, how and why of the organization's actions.

Iranian sports organizations have also realized the necessity of strategic planning in sports

Research has also been done in this field, and the summary of the results of some of these researches is presented below:

Golmohammadi, et al (2023), said in the evaluation matrix of internal factors shows the status of the internal evaluation factor of Iranian karate in the sum of the weight points of 2.11. In the evaluation matrix of external factors, the status of Iranian karate in the sum of the weight points of external factors shows the number 2.59. To determine the strategic position, according to the position of the weight points in the external and internal factors of Iranian karate, the sum of the weight points of internal evaluation factors was obtained and the total weight score of external evaluation factors shows the approach of Iran's karate strategies in a competitive situation.

Javadipour and el. (2022), announced according to SWOT analysis, the results obtained from the algebraic sum of internal and external factor evaluation matrices showed that the Iranian Basketball Federation is strategically in the ST position.

Abbasi bakhtiari (2019), announced according to the same matrix evaluation of internal and external factors strategy for sport and the championship of Islamic Azad University focused on competitive conditions in force (ST) was determined.

Vahdani, and el (2018), showed that the model of strategic readiness in sport organizations were based on three main dimensions of human resources, leadership and management and organizational factors.

Rashid Lamir (2014) announced Sport and Youth Organization of Khorasan Razavi was in SO strategic position so strategies should be directed towards developing activities.

Goudarzi (2014), developing a strategic plan Triathlon Federation seems important and necessary by making maximum use of strengths and opportunities and solving Weaknesses and

threats to perform more effectively and efficiently. Responsibilities, further development of the principles and ideals of triathlon And also to gain a better position in international arenas achieve, on the other hand, that the Triathlon Federation can Correctly identify your current situation, destination Identify the right one and determine how to get there.

Goudarzi (2013), clarifying Position quo in physical education headquarter of Payame-Noor University, after creating the internal and external factors, noted that this organization is in SO area regard to the strategic position and can use its opportunities and strengths to achieve its objectives.

SeyfPanahi Shabani et al. (2011), in designing and codifying for Kurdistan development strategy, suggested that according to the final score of internal factor (2.29) evaluation matrix and external factor (2.44) evaluation matrix, the strategic position of athletic sport for this province is in WT area.

Abdavi et al. (2011), in designing and clarifying the strategic model, ICT, in IRI Physical Education Organization, noted that in Iran Sport organization, ICT position on SWOT is in weakness area, and in its matrices is in WT area. In this situation, preserving status quo strategy must be used and by decreasing the weaknesses, threads must be avoided.

BadriAzarin et al. (2007), to assess gymnastic state in Iran, with an approach to codify comprehensive system of human sources in gymnastic, studied 30 provinces and suggested that gymnastic position is in weakness area and we must use innovation strategy.

One of the ways to recognise organizations' situation is "environmental survey", which includes monitoring, evaluation and publishing concluded information about organizational environment. Among key and influential persons in organization, and is a tool to prevent from strategic shocks and to prepare long-

term health for organization. In such an environment, organizations deal with external factors like political, economic, social and technological forces and internal factors like managerial, financial, marketing, services, research and development, and computer information system (Arabi, et al., 2006).

The common method to identify these factors is using of SWOT analysis which is representative of organizational strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threads. This method allows to survey factors and to compare difficulties, threats and harmful aspects for organization, opportunities, demands, external environment with organization's weaknesses and strengths (HamidiZadeh, 2003).

It is believed that strategic planning is a key element for organizational supremacy and an important tool for organizational effectiveness.

For instance, American National Collegiate Athletic Association strategic planning, Canadian Interuniversity Sport strategic planning, Australian University Sport strategic planning and University Sport South Africa strategic planning, all express using of strategic planning and knowing sport organizations environment to achieve sport success and surviving.

Although Pentathlon will be in Olympics Games, but it is not considered a profitable and income-generating sport in Iran, and the economic wheel in this sport moves slowly, unlike Europe countries that are prominent in Pentathlon.

The lack of financial resources and the strong dependence of the country's Pentathlon provincial delegates on the government are the most important reasons for this.

The reliance of the provincial delegates on the government's budget has made them costly and loss-making groups that, economically speaking, even with government aid, are unable to present a positive financial balance sheet at

the end of a sports year. Among these, it is obvious that Pentathlon Association confront many problems and challenges to do its responsibilities and to achieve its objectives.

So, it seems to be important for Pentathlon association to recognise strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats to achieve a better position in international level, to do its responsibilities and duties effectively and optimally and to develop student sports' principals and objectives by maximum using of its strengths and opportunities and removing weaknesses and threats. In other hand, those above make Pentathlon association identify its Position quo correctly, recognise the best destination and determine the way, and also make it face future challenges and find a solution for them in its field.

So Iran Pentathlon Association can use sports services optimally, and their solution requires planning and management in the field of locating and organizing sports spaces, appropriate processes, and appropriate human resources and geographical conditions. In the meantime, Pentathlon is one of the most effective mix sports that has made a significant contribution to gaining the current status of Iranian sports. Pentathlon is kids' sport that has attracted many family but it should be acknowledged that a little benefit are our country share, so the current research aims to determine the strategic Position of Iran Pentathlon Association and Therefore, this association tried to determine its strategic position by applying SWOT analysis process and using the common patterns and science methods used specially by sports organizations.

Materials and methods

this, because of its conclusions, is a type of functional researches, and regard to study, is a case research that collected data in qualitative and quantitative form, and has surveyed the documents and evidences, opinion poll from this association's elites by Delphi method,

analysing conducted studies, and strategic meeting with commission directors of province, vice chancellors, board members, and current directors.

In opinion poll part, factor-analysis questionnaires contain open and close questions which its reliability was confirmed by some clear sighted professors and its validity was confirmed by Cronbach Alpha (0.88) method, and SWOT analysis and PEST SCAN also were used.

After analysing data concluded by documents and evidences, comparative studies, opinion polls, 42 internal and external factors were recognised, and then by Delphi method,

strategic council meeting and some strategic analysis, eventually 11 strengths, 10 weaknesses, 8 opportunities, and 13 threats were confirmed and were ranked by Freedman Test.

We needed some people who is aware and familiar with Pentathlon sport and association external and internal factors to remark about strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats. So, some people involved in key positions in association were selected. The numbers of those above which contain research population were 21, and regard to limitation in their numbers, the sample was selected overall and tantamount to statistical population.

Table 1. Statistical society and sample of the research

No	Expert Groups
1	Presidents of the association – 1 person
2	Vice-presidents– 2 people
3	Presidents of provincial departments – 10 people
4	General secretaries– 1 people
5	Board members of the association – 7 people

Table 2. Profile of the community of experts of the research

	Profile of the community of experts
1	U01 Man Ph.D. in Sports Management
2	U02 Man Ph.D. in Sports Management
3	U03 Man Ph.D. in Accounting
4	U04 Man Ph.D. in Sport Physiology
5	U05 Man MA of Sport Physiology
6	U06 Man Ph.D. student in Sports Management
7	U07 Female Ph.D. in Sports Management
8	U08 Man MA of MBA
9	U09 Man Ph.D. in Sports Management

10	U10 Man Ph.D. in Economics
11	U11 Man Ph.D. in International Law
12	U12 Man Ph.D. in Management
13	U13 Man Ph.D. in Sports Management
14	U14 Man Ph.D. in Economics
15	U15 Man Ph.D. in Sports Management
16	U16 Man MA. in Accounting
17	U17 Female MA of Sports Management
18	U18 Man Ph.D. in Sports Management
19	U19 Man Ph.D. in Law
20	U20 Man MA in Economics
21	U21 Man Ph.D. student in Sports Management

Results

We used evaluation matrix to evaluate internal factors. In this matrix, identified strengths and weaknesses were located in a column and were ranked by using some special coefficients and ranks to identify whether this association totally regard to internal factors has contains strength or weakness points. In this matrix, strategic factors or prior internal factors were filed in first column framing strengths and weaknesses, and then in second column regard to each factor importance and sensitivity, with comparing these factors with each other, accrues a priority between 0 to 1; the designation of these priorities must be so that sum coefficients not to be more than 1. In third column, regard to be a key or ordinary strength or weakness, rank 4 or 3 assigned to strengths and rank 2 or 1 assigned to weakness respectively. Ranks assigning means if strengths are in an excellence level, they will get rank 4, and if they are in an ordinary level, they will get rank

3; and if weaknesses are in an ordinary level rank 2, and if they are critical, they will get rank 1. Therefore, ranking procedure is in a way whatever we move from excellent strength to critical weakness, the rank will be reduced and will get from 4 to 1. In fourth column, second column priorities and third column ranks for each factor will be crossed in to identify that factor score. At the button of this column, the final score is determined regard to have strength or weakness.

If sum final score in this matrix is more than 2.5 means that everything is as we expected, the strengths will come over the weaknesses; and in the contrast, weaknesses will come over the strengths.

And also, for evaluating external factors, external factors evaluation matrix was used. Like former, in this matrix, if sum final score of this association is more than 2.5, it means the opportunities will come over the threats and vice versa.

Table 3. Internal Factors Evaluation Matrix of Iran Pentathlon Association

Internal Factors	Abbreviation	Factors	Significant Coefficient	Rating	Point
Strengths	S1	Human resources (the association president with his national and international relations)	0.04	4	0.16
	S2	Human resources (Swim and Run coaches in all around the Iran who like Pentathlon)	0.02	3	0.06
	S3	Human resources (committed personnel in the association and its provincial delegates)	0.02	3	0.06
	S4	Human resources (capable and expert board members of the association)	0.04	4	0.16
	S5	Human resources (capable managers in provincial delegates)	0.04	4	0.16
	S6	Education committee (instructors and educational resources for Pentathlon)	0.04	4	0.16
	S7	Talent identification committee (programs, models, and scientific criteria for TID in Pentathlon)	0.04	4	0.16
	S8	Public relations (communicating possibility and noticing effectively throughout the association)	0.03	3	0.09
	S9	International relations (international interactions)	0.04	4	0.16
	S10	Organizational culture (ethical values throughout the association)	0.02	3	0.06
	S11	Organizational structure (active provincial delegates in all around of Iran)	0.03	4	0.12
Weaknesses	W1	Human resources (inadequate expert coaches and referees of Pentathlon)	0.07	1	0.07
	W2	Economic resources (inadequate budget allocating by Sport & Youth Ministry and NOC of Iran)	0.07	1	0.07
	W3	Economic resources (limited income in Pentathlon)	0.07	1	0.07
	W4	Material resources (restriction of facilities and equipment for Pentathlon and high expenses to buy)	0.07	1	0.07
	W5	Information resources (inadequate knowledge and modern information systems)	0.07	1	0.07

for educational communications)					
W6	Operational processes (inappropriate identification, development and preparation of athletes)	0.07	1	0.07	
W7	Organizational structure and organizing (inadequate participation and promotion by provincial delegates)	0.04	2	0.08	
W8	Marketing committee (inadequate cooperation with sponsors)	0.07	1	0.07	
W9	Marketing committee (restriction number of covered athletes)	0.07	1	0.07	
W10	Marketing committee (lack of appropriate and extended advertisement of Pentathlon)	0.07	1	0.07	
Total		1	-	2.13	

The results showed that sum of internal factors matrix scores is 2.13 and is less than 2.5. This means that Pentathlon association, regard to internal factors, and contain weakness.

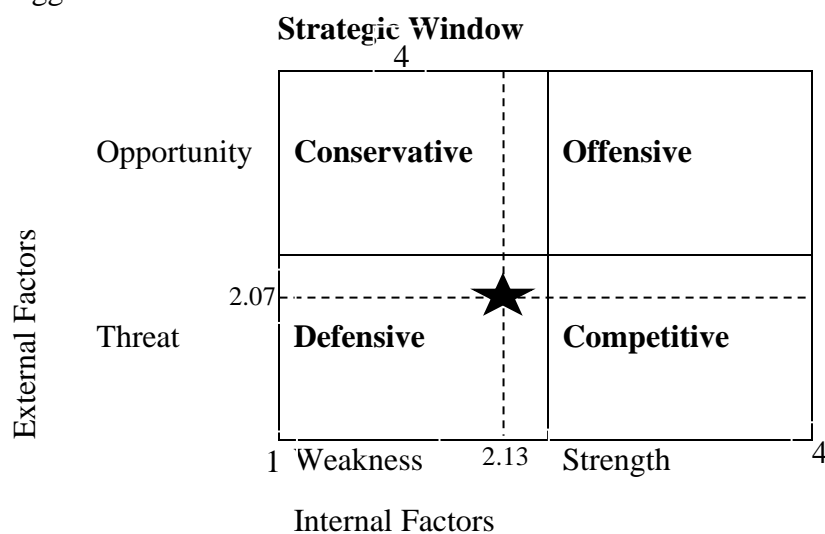
Table 4. External Factors Evaluation Matrix of Iran Pentathlon Association

Internal Factors	Abbreviation	Factors	Significant Coefficient	Rating	Point
Opportunities	O1	Political (alignment of Pentathlon with passive defense affecting national security)	0.03	4	0.12
	O2	Environmental (weather diversity and climate variety in Iran)	0.04	4	0.16
	O3	Social (Pentathlon included in Olympics program)	0.04	4	0.16
	O4	Political (serious attention to Pentathlon by IOC as Traditional sport in Olympic Games)	0.04	4	0.16
	O5	Social (possibility of utilizing professors and graduated people in physical education curriculum)	0.03	3	0.09
	O6	Social (existence of inherent talents in Iran)	0.07	4	0.28
	O7	Social (agreement between Education ministry and Sport & Youth Ministry of Iran)	0.04	3	0.12
	O8	Cultural & Social (supports by sport organization of Tehran Municipality)	0.04	3	0.12
T1	Social (poor priority for Pentathlon by Sport & Youth Ministry and NOC of Iran)	0.06	1	0.06	
T2	Political (destruction of national image by global exploitation toward debilitating of global participation of Iranians)	0.03	2	0.06	
T3	External opponents (increasing technical	0.07	1	0.07	

Threats				
		and scientific levels of national Pentathlon association in the Asia and world)		
T4	Internal opponents (increasing the number of more interesting and cheaper sports)	0.05	1	0.05
T5	Social (lack of capacities and interests equilibrium among provinces)	0.05	1	0.05
T6	Social (over-assignment of pool working times to leisure)	0.07	1	0.07
T7	Social (poor performance of Iranian swimming generally)	0.06	1	0.06
T8	Economical (weak interest and collaboration by sponsors and commercial NGOs)	0.05	2	0.10
T9	Economical (increased dollar rate and decreased the number of dispatched teams to international events)	0.06	1	0.06
T10	Technological (restriction for utilizing new technologies)	0.04	2	0.08
T11	Technological (utilizing modern technologies by other nations for preparing the elite athletes)	0.04	2	0.08
T12	Cultural (restriction for women sport uniform in swimming)	0.04	1	0.04
T13	Environmental (destruction of lakes and promenades appropriating for Pentathlon)	0.04	2	0.08
Total			1	2.07

Results also showed that sum of external factors matrix scores is 2.07 and is less than 2.50. It also means that this association, regard to external factors, contain threats. Totally, the results of tables 2 and 3 and also internal and external matrix suggested that Pentathlon

association, regard to strategic position, is in WT area; therefore, this association regard to internal factors contain weakness and regard to external factors contain threat, and it is necessary to use defensive strategies.



Discussion

The purpose of this study was determine the strategic Position of Iran Pentathlon Association. The result in the evaluation matrix of internal factors shows the status of the internal evaluation factor of Iranian Pentathlon in the sum of the weight points of 2.13. In the evaluation matrix of external factors, the status of Iran Pentathlon in the sum of the weight points of external factors shows the number 2.07. To determine the strategic position, according to the position of the weight points in the external and internal factors of Iranian Pentathlon, the sum of the weight points of internal evaluation factors was obtained and the total weight score of external evaluation factors shows the approach of Iran's Pentathlon strategies in a Defensive situation.

Strategic planning was created to respond the environmental changes. Its supremacy and popularity toward traditional planning is for these reasons: choosing and representing the path to the goal based on internal features and organizational conditions. Then, it is necessary to recognize internal and external factors in organisation to choose right path toward achieving organizational goals. During identification and analysis stages for environmental factors, determining strategic position is the most important stage in choosing the strategies because strategies turn current state into favourite state, so if, for any reason, there is a fault in determining current state or strategic position, resulted strategies are not correct to achieve the goals and favourite state.

Reviewing researches in strategic management field, it is clear to see the determination of strategic position in organizations, and they have mostly suggested the strengths or weaknesses from inside, and opportunities or threats from outside. But the only thing which is not clear exactly is their honesty and reliability of extracted environmental factors or determined strategic position because the opinions by high managers and elites about

organization current state can have some consequences by stakeholders. Therefore, magnifying the strengths and opportunities and ignoring the weaknesses and threats more than really it is has caused some distraction in codifying strategic planning and strategic positions are not really reported. It will create other distortions in strategies codification, implementation and assessment. However, current study has tried, by using of scientific processes in strategic planning and using of carefulness in identifying and determining really strategic state of Pentathlon association, by avoiding common distortions and preconceptions in codification stage, provide a plot for next stages based on Position quo.

In strategic studies, determined external and internal strategies are reserved for related organizations and the only distinction in this plan is focusing on special characteristics and specific features of organizations to codify the plan. So, comparing strategic research results, especially about strategic position from strategic perspective, is not normative. But from the aspect of descriptive discussions, the result can be reported. Therefore, Pentathlon association strategic position is similar to strategic positions in researches of Goudarzi (2014) about Iran Triathlon; Seifpanahi shabani et al. (2011), about athletic sport in Kurdistan; Abdavi et al. (2011) about ICT position in Iran sport organization and BadriAzin et al. (2007) about gymnastic, and all mentioned above are in WT area which means a dangerous position, and it is necessary to use defensive strategies. Also it is not, regard to strategic position, corresponding with the researches of Golmohammadi, et al (2023), about Iranian karate Federation, Javadipour and el. (2022), about Iranian Basketball Federation, Abbasi bakhtiari (2019), about sport and the championship of Islamic Azad University, Rashid Lamir (2014) about Sport and Youth Organization of Khorasan Razavi and Goudarzi (2013), about physical education headquarter of Payame-Noor University.

Conclusion

The results of this research show that the total scores of the matrix of internal factors of the Pentathlon Association is 2.13, which is weak in terms of internal factors, and in the evaluation matrix of external factors, the total weighted scores of external factors show the number 2.07, which in terms of external factors has is a threat. Therefore the strategic position of the Iranian Pentathlon Association was determined using the evaluation matrix of internal and external factors in the WT position, therefore, the total weighted points of the internal and external factors evaluation shows the defensive position, which strategies should be formulated and selected based on this situation.

Based on the analysis of the findings of the present study, it was determined that with the expanding information about Pentathlon, it will be possible with development of hardware infrastructure, proper use of human resources expertise by expanding activities in the public dimension, emphasizes the promotion of health and social vitality and also through the discovery of talents and elitism provides the ground for the presence of champions at the national and international levels.

Finally, it is proposed that it is necessary to clarify appropriate strategy regard to defensive position of Pentathlon association so that the association can plan its operations and activities for exiting this situation.

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