

# Factors Affecting Elite Sports Development in the Philippines: A Delphi study

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**Abstract** For several years in the past, Philippines has not recorded success in terms of the development of elite sports in the the South East Asian Games (SEAG), Olympic and Asian Games. When it comes to elite sports, history would tell that the country's sports achievement has been fluctuating. This study used a qualitative research. Also, a three-round Delphi survey approach was used to generate responses and achieve consensus from a selected group of experts such as government administrators, national coaches, olympian athletes, sports journalist and physical educators. The experts identified eleven direct factors, such as policies in sports, grassroots program and nine indirect factors like government service, economic condition and others that affect the development of elite sports in the Philippines. The study found out that the main factor in affecting elite sport in the Philippines was coming from the support of the government and non-government (directly) and National Sports Association leadership (indirectly). However the Political interest (directly) and Red tape (indirectly) are found to have the least that affects elite sports in the country. It was found out that factors such as mentioned above have significant effect on the Philippine's performance towards the development of elite sports as stated by the experts who were participants of the study.

**Key words:** *Delphi technique; elite sports; Philippines.*

## Introduction

Tracing the history of Philippines in terms of developing elite sports, records of performances at the South East Asian Games (SEAG), Olympic and Asian Games would tell that it has not been successful. Its achievements in these games show no definite status. This can be supported by records such as ranking 18th in 2006 and 19th in 2010 among 46 participating countries from Asia. Moreover, within its length of participation in the Olympic Games from the 1924 Paris Olympics, there were barely ten medals the national team won.

Philippines ranked 13th of the most populated nation worldwide with the total population of some 100 million and 73rd in comparison to the land size in the world (CIA, 2015). In addition, Philippines has a higher economy and geographical status as compared to other Asian countries however it shows a weak foundation and plays poor at international competitions (e.g. South East Asian Games (SEAG), Asian Games & Olympic Games). Comparing to the

nations that have smaller population sizes such like Taiwan, Thailand and smaller in land area such as North Korea; Philippines sporting achievement at international level were relatively poor.

Many studies had identified factors contributing elite sports performance such as economic, population, and geographic location. For examples Vagenas and Vlachokyriakou (2012), mentioned demo-economic factors as predictors for Olympic medals; Li.Liang.Chen, and Morita (2008) concluded that models of performance in the Olympic Games concerned the variability in the economic status of a country. It should be noted that these finding applicable in specified countries (Green & Collins, 2008; Hogan & Norton, 2000).

Studies in the past show that the population, economic and land size were related with the elite sport success. For example, in a study of Hogan and Norton (2000) for instance, they mentioned about the strategies that influenced the elite sporting success. It focused somehow on the programs in population (i.e.community or school based) activities showcasing of talents of the participants in various events.

Looking into the performance of the country from different competitions that it participated internationally, the status of it is deemed poor. With the present study, the factors behind this performance was investigated. It was expected of the study that relevant information to suggest or recommend towards the improvement of elite sports in Philippines. Furthermore, a practical sense of the information advanced from the study could be used to initiate development in the country's elite sports. Besides, the study was also aimed at increasing chances of improved performance in South East Asian Games, Asian Games and the Olympic Games ahead.

### **Methodology**

This study utilized qualitative research design. The Delphi technique will be used for collecting data and information from the group of experts. The following paragraphs explain and justify the qualitative research design and the application of the Delphi technique. The procedures using the Delphi technique were also described.

### **Research design**

The main purposes of using qualitative research in this study are interviews, and gathering official documents. Qualitative research provides a logical description of a particular situation. Qualitative research bridges the gap between research and practice along a certain discipline. Christensen, Johnson, and Turner (2011), mentioned that the advantage of qualitative research is understanding of small and large groups of individuals who are common description and it has the ability to initiate logical discovery.

Qualitative research methods include any techniques, except those focused primarily on counting, measuring, and analyzing statistical data, to study any social phenomenon (Barnhurst, 2005). Typically, qualitative study

typically involves fieldwork, in which the researcher, rather than remaining in the office or laboratory, goes instead to the settings where the people being studied live, work, play, and so forth.

Using the aforesaid design, the materials were collected through Delphi technique as the main tool in realizing the objectives of this study (see Figure 3). It was supplemented by other data such as official documents, records, and interviews with the involvement of other persons for the purpose of cross-checking and filling of information gaps.

Qualitative design in this study will be used to examine factors affecting the development of elite sports in the Philippines. The Delphi technique was selected in this research to gather information from the selected group of professionals. In addition, gathering official data, records and interview important personnel will be used to examine the sports organization (e.g. government and non-government) and important government policy related to the study. In collecting all the data materials from Delphi panels and government documents, content analysis will be applied to analyze and summarize all the information's gathered.

### **The Documentary method**

In this study, the documentary method will be used to gather information from different sources in the Philippines. The documentary method will be focusing on government and non-government official records to obtain the necessary issues in the study. In addition, appropriate selection of journal articles, books and magazines are also collected to supplement information and justify this study.

The documentary method in qualitative research uses a variety of documents. Hays and Singh (2012) asserted that the use of Qualitative researchers may use documents for data collection and will give the perspective on the numerous available public documents that may elect to use in the study.

### **The Delphi technique**

The Delphi technique was used in this study for the collection of information from different groups of professionals. According to Landeta 2006 "the Delphi method is a popular technique for forecasting and an aid in decision-making based on the opinions of experts." It has been recognized as an effective method for achieving consensus or for forecasting future events.

This technique is a well-recognized method for forecasting tool and obtaining consensus and has been used in many studies (Thompson, Macauley, & O'Neill, 2004). For example in science and technology (Cuhls, Blind, & Grupp, 2002; de Haan & Peters, 1993; Goluchowicz & Blind, 2011; Waissbluth & de Gortari, 1990); in business (Czinkota & Ronkainen, 2005• Liu, 1988• Nielsen & Thangadurai, 2007; Patari, 2010)• in health and care (Efstathiou, Ameen, & Coll, 2007; Linertova et al., 2012; More et al., 2010; Mullen, 2003); and mostly in field of education (Friebel, 1999; Hsin-Ling, James, & Yi-Fang, 2008; Hung, Altschuld, & Lee, 2008; Sjoström, 2009; van Zolingen & Klaassen, 2003).

Several challenges that confronted the use of Delphi technique were reviewed by Hung, Altschuld, and Lee (2008) in their selection processes in a Delphi study about methodological and conceptual issues in educational

program evaluation. The authors point out that the common problem encountered in applying Delphi technique are recruitment, panel composition and size, and participants.

### **Three-round survey**

This study used a three-round Delphi survey approach to generate responses and achieve consensus from a selected group of experts. This Delphi technique was used to reach the objectives of the study. The selected participants were carefully analyzed based on the different background of professions, their availability and willingness to participate.

Round 1: During the first round survey two open-ended questions were designed by the panelist to address important factors that affect elite sports in Philippines. The participants from this round are considered the most crucial in providing information that will base for the second round.

Round 2: During the second round of the process data obtained from the first round were collected, analyzed and distributed to the panellists. This time, experts will choose "agree or disagree" in the statements provided from different participants. In addition, participants also asked to put any comments/suggestion in each statement if necessary.

Round 3: On the third (final) round questionnaire the researcher will then analyze the responses from the second round and again these will be distributed to panelists. The statements from the second round again distributed and requested the panelists to rank each of the statement based on a 5-point Likert scale. After the completion of the three-round Delphi questionnaire the researcher sorted out the information and give the mean score according to each statement and feedback from the participants.

### **Sampling**

#### **Panel size**

Three rounds of survey with two open-ended questionnaires as the initial questions were used to collect data. Experts were carefully selected based on their field of specialization and a total of 20 panels to be used in this study. In many applications of the Delphi technique have used approximately 15- 20 panelists to reach consensus in their research for example in the study of (Brown, 2007 and Pruitt, 2009).

#### **Panel selection**

An additional consideration in this study was the selection of participants. Participants were chosen according to experience and expertise to cope across multi-disciplines in relation to the study. Therefore, the point of reference for selecting the Delphi panel members were according to their field of expertise, number of years in work experience and their educational background.

<i><b>Profession / Position</b></i>	<i><b>No. of panellists</b></i>
A. Government administrator (e.g., PSC & POC)	4
B. Non-government, CEO (e.g. National Sport Association)	3
C. Coach (at national level with academic background)	4
D. Olympian athlete	3
E. Educator or scholar (in the field of sport or Physical Education)	4

## 2.7 Delphi survey instrument

The Delphi survey in the present study will involve three rounds of communication with the competitively-selected panelists until the researcher reach the consensus of agreement. In this study, questionnaires and invitations are directly sent to different experts in their respective offices/places and some via email address. Responses based on the three-round questionnaire were obtained via their personal email address provided.

For every round, results from previous rounds served as feedback until consistency of responses about certain issues among the experts has been reached as repeated (van Zolingen & Klaassen, 2003).

### **Ethical considerations**

The considerations were strictly applied to maintain privacy of this study and to preserve anonymity of the participants.

- All participants involved in this study were oriented of the purpose and the relevance of this study.
- Participants are entitle of the right to withdraw at any time.
- Each participant's responses was dealt with utmost confidentiality as there shall be no individual participants revealed to any other participants. The panel members were also reminded on restrictions such as not to discuss their response with others.
- The data gathered from Delphi questionnaire was solely intended for the purpose of the present study.
- All information relevant to the retrieved questionnaire was kept secured only during the study and were destroyed after the completion of the research.

## **RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

A popular notion of elite sport is competing in the highest level of performance. Sports performances are likely associated with different factors such as nutrition, strength and conditioning, sport psychology, physiotherapist, sport technology. By using Delphi technique in this study, the primary objectives are to generate ideas and explore opinions of experts based on the issue provided in the two-open-ended question. From the initial response of experts based

on the two-open ended question, experts provided eleven issues (directly) and nine issues (indirectly) with regard to “what influences are perceived affecting elite sport development in Philippines”.

**Table 2**  
***Elite sport development in the Philippines***

<i>Directly</i>	<i>Indirectly</i>
Support from Government and Non-government agencies	National Sport Association
Coaches’ expertise and Athlete’s international exposure	Equipment acquisition
Sport Policies	Economic condition
Government funding allocation, Grassroots Development Program and Sport Science	Perspective towards Physical Education and Sports Science and Government services
Recruitment of athletes	South East Asian Games ( <b>SEAG</b> ) Politics and Geographical location

The statements obtained from the first and second round was distributed and requested the panelists to rank each of the statement based on a 5-point Likert scale based on the most important to the least important regarding elite sports development in the Philippines. The highest average from the experts that they believed to have the most factors that affects elite sport development in the country comes from government and non- government support (*see Table 2*).

This refers that all sectors of the community should commit together in developing elite sport in the country not just solely depend in Philippine Sport Commission (**PSC**) or Philippine Olympic Committee (**POC**). However, it is interesting that the Political in Sports like sustainability of existing sport programs is hampered due to priority focus and administration priorities of leaders. Moreover, Political interest among leaders in the government is the least among the eleven factors presented that some politicians were designated though they have little background in governing sport and with vested interests.

For factors indirectly affecting elite sports development in the Philippines, it showed that NSA's Leadership was the top factors indirectly they perceived to have hinders elite sports development in the country; which means that conflicts among members and leaders of NSA's have affect elite sport development in the country Also, the bias of selecting national athletes as well as who competes international in different NSAs have significant role. It's also interesting

to note that being less patriotism among the athletes and Red. tape which invitations comes from the NSA's were delayed have a less impact among experts on sport development.

This is in contrary to other cited literatures in the study, that most factors involved are economic, demographic, land size, and gross domestic product of a country (Dunning, Maguire, & Pearton, 1993• Hogan and Norton, 2000• Green and Collins, 2008, Li, Liang, Chen, and Morita, 2008, 2008, Vagenas and Vlachokyriakou, 2012). This factors are clearly seen in the factors associated of the panellist from the Delphi response and supported to have a significant role in the development of elite sports in the Philippines.

## **CONCLUSION**

In the Philippines, the government especially PSC, POC and Philippines Sports Institute (**PSI**) are in the process of making improvement on different factors associated with sports performance especially to the develop of elite sports in the country and to be a powerhouse with neighbouring South East Asian region and Asian countries in terms of a better sports program.

Philippine Sport Institute was re-established to further improve Coaches' Education Program and Sports Science in the country wherein the PSC already recognized this program in relation to elite sports and would like to improve on this situation within the soonest time possible. The government understand the importance of research and being capable of doing research for advancement of sports science in the country. The Philippine government are also making an extent collaboration with the Local Government Unit for the improvement of grassroots program nationwide to encourage young athletes in different provinces to play sports. In addition the government also establishes linkages with the local, national, international agencies and even for private companies in the country that it may invite for funding, support and assistance with different sport programs of NSA's from grassroots to elite level.

In continually developing elite sport in the country, the government should allocate and plan adequately with different NSA's program to have a close monitoring that may lead to ensuring the effectiveness of program from grassroots to elite level. This will encourage our athletes, coaches, trainers, sports leaders to improve our sports system to more effectively and efficiently and that will eventually lead to national and international sporting success in the future.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

1. There must be increased funding support in Sports Science (e.g. Psychologist, Nutrition, Physiotherapist, Sports Technology & Research). Sport Science must give on the physical and tactical training programs of the Coaches and Researchers and that their collaboration should be strengthened.

2. There must be sustainability of sport programs nationwide from grassroots to elite level. The government should pay more attention to development of sports programs in the provinces. Coaches and trainers in the provinces should undergo continuing education that is free in order to promote best practices in coaching wherever they are.
3. The government should establish a Department of Sports where it can manage the sports from the grassroots to elite program. In addition, creation of Extension projects in relation to Sports for all.

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