

SWOT Analysis of Strategic Position of Sport and Youth Ministry`s Public Relations Department in Iran: A Case Study

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Abstract

The aim of the present study was to design sports and youth ministry`s public relations department strategic plan .This research was survey research done in analytical method and the method of collecting data was field study. In terms of objective, it is an applied - developmental research in which the required information was obtained through library research and the researcher-made questionnaire. Also, this research was of strategic studies in which the qualitative and quantitative methods were used for data analysis. Statistical population included sports media managers and journalists, public relations directors of the sports federations, sport management professionals, staff specialists of the Ministry of Sport and National Olympic Committee and public relations staff consisting of 144 persons as the study sample. In this study, a questionnaire in two parts was used that included demographic data and determination of the strengths, weaknesses, threats and opportunities of Department of public relations in Youth and Sports ministry. To determine its validity, professors and experts were consulted and after applying all revised recommendations and changes necessary to comply with the conditions and characteristics of the study population, it was used, accordingly. Cronbach's alpha coefficient was used to measure the reliability. Therefore, Cronbach's alpha reliability was obtained 0.99. Coefficient obtained from the questionnaire indicated high reliability of the questionnaire. In data analysis, descriptive statistics was used to describe demographic variables in the research community. Friedman rank test was used for

ranking the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats. Finally, SWOT analysis was used for developing the Ministry of Youth and Sports ministry's public relations department's strategy. The results indicated that the scores sum in this matrix was less than 2.5 (2.42). This suggested that it was weak in terms of internal factors. In other words, the weaknesses of Youth and Sports Department public relations were superior to its strengths. In addition, the scores sum in this matrix was more than 2.5 (2.66). This suggested that in terms of external factors, it had an opportunity. In other words, the Ministry of Youth and Sport's department of public relations opportunities overcame the threats. Overall, based on internal and external evaluation matrix calculated according to comparison of internal and external factors, public relations department of Youth and Sport ministry was located in WO.

Keywords: Strategy, youth and sports ministry, Iran

Introduction

Strategic planning is used mostly by private and public sector executives for allocating resources to achieve high performance. Creating sport development strategy has many benefits, including the following:

- It improves the public health, social cohesion, renovation, rehabilitation and lifelong learning.
- It demonstrates the long-term goals, and the total profile of the sport.
- It meets the needs of the sport efficiently and effectively.
- It helps the participation growth in sport and creates a way to develop individual's skill.
- It helps the creation of best beliefs.

Fry and Stoner(1995) and Fred R. David define the strategic planning as a capable management tool designed to help small organizations, so they adapt themselves with the anticipated changes in the environment on a competitive basis. According to Lerner (2000), strategic planning is a complex and continuous organizational change process looking to the future and focusing on predicting the future and if the features are combined, a successful and comprehensive strategic planning process will be defined. Strategic planning is focused on the future to determine whether there will be created differences after 5 to 10 years and the future will be based on what is likely to be developed in the future. Peiffer defines the strategic planning as the process of establishing and developing the necessary procedures and operations for achieving the future. He differentiates between long-term planning that is responsive and the strategic planning that allows the organization to

create its future. Strategic planning is the organizational transformation and reconstruction process.

He believes that in long-term planning, goals and predictions are based on the organizational stability assumption, while in the strategic planning, organization role is considered in its environment. Strategic planning makes the organization to adapt its activities and services to meet the needs of changing environment. This program not only provides a framework for improving programs, but also it provides a framework to restructure programs, management and cooperation and also to assess the progress in these areas.

Nowadays, the need to mutual understanding and recognition in organizations and agencies to accelerate the achievement of the purposes and objectives has been accepted as a management fundamental principle. This relationship which is referred to as Public Relations is considered one of the most important and most valuable factors in the fate of each group and Institute.

The role of public relations in management and strategic decision-making in an organization is notable. Considering public relations as a management tool for professional, scientific and electronic activities is one of the public relations new feature in the new century. Therefore, having a clear strategy is important in public relations management. In fact, if public relations follows specific strategies, it can be involved in the decision making process. According to Ni (2006), the success in public relations requires strategic vision and coordination of public relations strategy with activities which have a close relationship with strategic matters or organizational goals. White (1995) believes that public relations should become part of strategic management. Then, it should design, implement and monitor strategies.

Therefore, using strategic planning process and scientific models and methods commonly used, particularly in sporting organizations, this research tries to design sports and youth Public Relations Department's strategic plan and answers the following questions:

1. How is the present status of Ministry of Youth and Sport` public relations department in terms of parameters related to the a strategic plan?
2. To what position the Public Relations department of Youth and Sport Ministry plans to achieve?
3. How the Public Relations Department of Sport and Youth ministry can achieve this position?

Methodology

This research was survey research that has been done in analytical method and the method of collecting data was field study. In terms of objective, it was an applied - developmental research in which the required information was obtained through library research and the researcher-made questionnaire. Also, this research was of strategic studies in which the qualitative and quantitative methods were used for data analysis. Statistical population included sports media managers and journalists, public relations directors of the sports federations, sport management professionals, staff specialists of the Ministry of Sports and National Olympic Committee and public relations staff consisting of 144 persons as the study sample.

In this study, a questionnaire in two parts was used that included demographic data and determination of the strengths, weaknesses, threats and opportunities of Department of public relations in Youth and Sport ministry. To determine its validity, professors and experts were consulted and after applying all revised recommendations and changes necessary to comply with the conditions and characteristics of the study population, it was used, accordingly. Cronbach's alpha coefficient was obtained 0.99 indicating a higher reliability. In data analysis, descriptive statistics were used to describe demographic variables in the research community. Friedman rank test was used for ranking the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats. Finally, SWOT analysis was used for developing the Ministry of Youth and Sports ministry's public relations department's strategy.

In the strategic analysis, internal evaluation matrix was used to compare the strengths and weaknesses, internal and external evaluation of the matrix was used to determine the strategic position, and the SWOT analysis, based on intuitive judgment, was used to determine WT, ST, SO, WO strategies. The ranking of the above matrices was calculated with multiplying importance coefficient (weight) of each factor in the intensity factor, such that the sum of each internal factors and external factors importance coefficients equaled number one and the rank was determined between 3 and 4 for the opportunities and strengths, and 1 and 2 for the threats and weaknesses.

Finally after the SWOT analysis, Ministry of Youth and Sport's public relations department's strategies were extracted.

Results

Score	Factor Intensity	Importance Coefficient (Weight)	Factors	Code	Internal factors
0.28	4	0.07	Existence of public relations unit in sport and youth federations and provincial departments	S1	Strengths
0.28	4	0.07	Ability of experts in setting News and Events	S2	
0.18	3	0.06	Existence of archives and documented products in public relations	S3	
0.2	4	0.05	Correct setting rate and timely delivery of news and reports	S4	
0.24	4	0.06	Updated news and information in Youth and Sports Ministry's website	S5	
0.15	3	0.05	Existence of specialized committees in the Public Relations	S6	
0.12	3	0.04	Content analysis and establishment of monitoring systems in written and virtual media	S7	
0.18	3	0.06	Understanding the importance and sensitivity of public relations in the Ministry of Youth and Sport` managers	S8	
0.18	3	0.06	Site to send sms	S9	
0.07	1	0.07	Weak interaction with mass media and social service	W1	weaknesses
0.12	2	0.06	Lack of questioning center for audiences and beneficiaries in Iran`s Youth and Sport ministry	W2	
0.08	2	0.04	Shortage of expert human resource in the Federations and Provinces` Public Relations	W3	
0.05	1	0.05	The effect of transparency lack in public relations performance	W4	
0.06	1	0.06	Weakness in fitness between jobs and workers in public relations` human resources	W5	
0.06	2	0.03	Lack of hardware and software in the public relations departments of Sport and Youth ministry`s Federations and the Provinces	W6	
0.05	1	0.05	Lack of approved job descriptions for the Public Relations posts	W7	

0.07	1	0.07	Weak monitoring of programs related to sports and youth in audio-visual media	W8	
0.05	1	0.05	Weakness of using the capacity of ICT (IT)	W9	
2/42=Σ		1=Σ	Total coefficients of Internal factors Importance		

Table 1 shows Internal factor matrix of Department of Public Relations .As it can be seen, scores sum in this matrix is less than 2.5 (2.42) and this suggests that in terms of Internal factors, it is weak. In other words, weaknesses of the Department of Public Relations are superior to its strengths.

Table2:External factors matrix in Public Relations Department of Youth and Sport ministry

Score	Factor Intensity	Importance Coefficient (Weight)	Factors	Code	External factors
0.32	4	0.08	Existence of several specialized publications and television and radio networks in the specific fields of sports and youth affairs	O1	opportunities
0.28	4	0.07	Attractiveness, the importance and sensitivity of exercise in the community	O2	
0.24	4	0.06	Existence of an active center for research and teaching in Media and Sport	O3	
0.24	4	0.06	Existence of sport writers and sports movies Festival	O4	
0.32	4	0.08	Iranian population is mostly youth	O5	
0.21	3	0.07	Development of ICT	O6	
0.15	3	0.05	Existence of varied and numerous worldwide structures and sports events	O7	
0.15	3	0.05	Increasing rate of active (athletes) and passive (spectators and fans) participations in the exercise	O8	
0.05	1	0.05	The lack of specialized agency in the Sports and Youth Affairs field	T1	Threats
0.12	2	0.06	The increasing presence of politicians in the field of sports	T2	
0.14	2	0.07	Rumors in the sports and multiplicity of non-formal news agencies	T3	
0.08	2	0.04	Priority of outcome orientation in country	T4	

0.04	1	0.04	Monopoly of News in football	T5	
0.1	2	0.05	Lack of media ethics in some media	T6	
0.04	1	0.04	Lack of knowledge and expertise among some reporters and the press lord	T7	
0.1	2	0.05	Lack of international sporting events in country.	T8	
0.04	1	0.04	The soft war and aggression of foreign media against the exercise of country	T9	
0.04	1	0.04	Increasing expectations and demands of the press and media group of athletes and coaches	T10	
2/66= Σ		1=Σ	Total coefficients of External factors Importance		

Table 2 shows external factor matrix in Department of Public Relations. As it can be seen, scores sum in this matrix is more than 2.5(2.66) and this suggests that in terms of external factors, it has opportunity. In other words, the Ministry of Youth and Sport`s department of public relations opportunities overcome the threats.

When the strategy is aggressive, this indicates that the organization is in the best possible condition and it can use its strengths and opportunities to take maximum advantage and develop its activities and services, assets, profits or combination of them.

When the organization's strategic position is conservative, this means that given the opportunities, the organization should overcome its weaknesses and does not put itself at great risks. In this case, arrangements should be done to enhance productivity, activities should be maintained in a reasonable level and weaknesses should be repaired.

When the organization's strategic position is competitive, this means that the organization should take advantage of its strengths and it should less be influenced by environmental measures. This means that organization for competing with rivals should reduce cost of product or service, increase quality for competitiveness and focus on certain less attractive but profitable sectors of the market.

When the organization's strategic position is defensive, it is located in a risky situation. Then for survival, the organization needs to reduce or eliminate some of the activities or programs. So, it should follow the logic of cost-benefit and transfer or dissolve some of its sectors, or merge them in other organizations and companies.

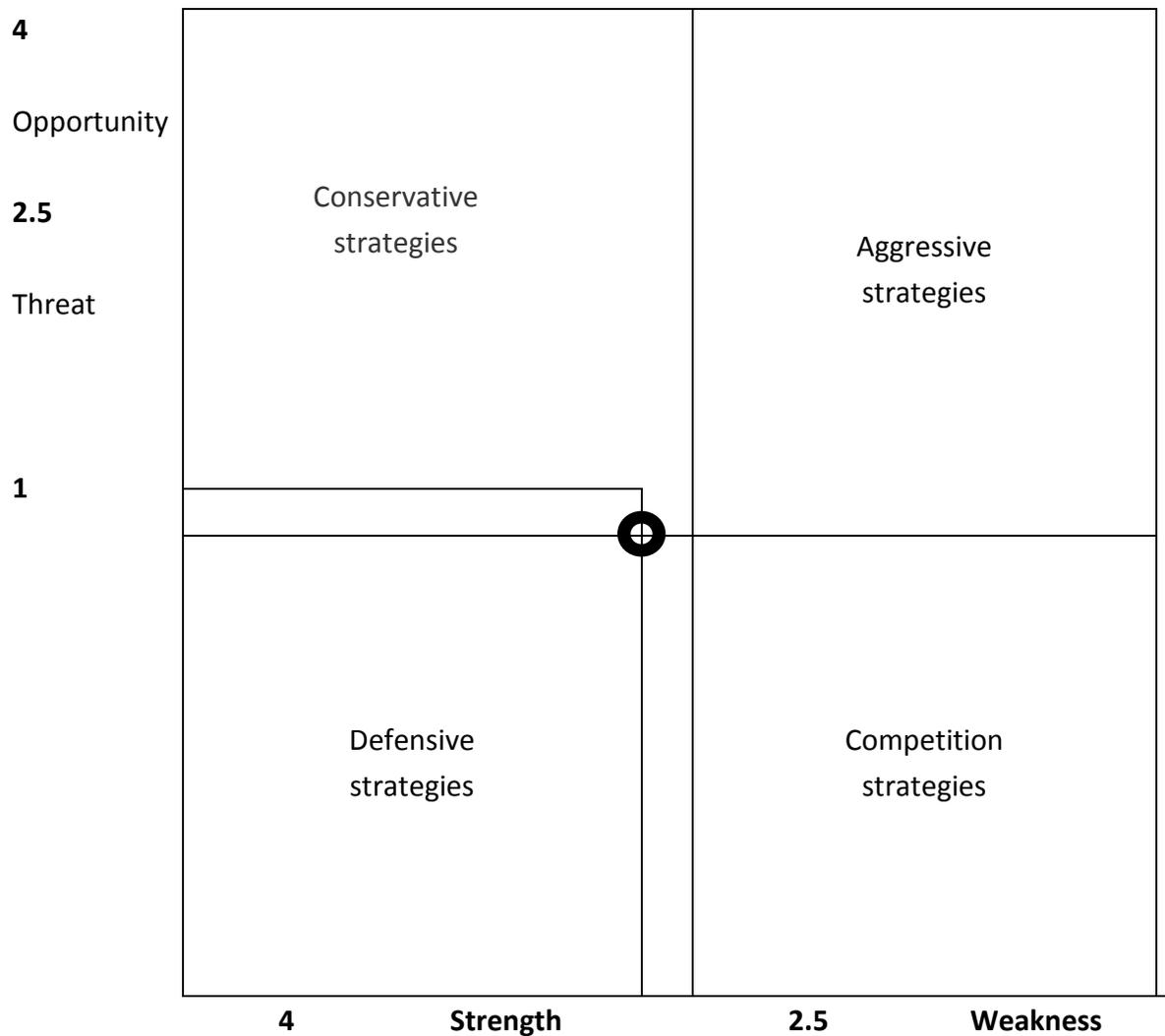


Figure 1: The strategic position of Public Relations department in Ministry of Youth and sport

The strategic position of Youth and Sports Ministry Public Relations was determined in the matrix homes. Strategies are often selected according to ministry's strategic location in one of four homes. In addition, the result suggests that Youth and Sports Department Public Relations is located in conservative position

Discussion

Internal and external matrix was used for simultaneous analysis of internal and external factors. This matrix to determine the location and type of public relations strategies are used to the Ministry of Youth and Sports. This matrix is used for determining the Ministry of Youth and Sports Public Relations location and type of strategy. For forming this matrix, the evaluation scores of internal and external factors are placed in horizontal and vertical dimensions, so the position of Youth and Sports Department Public Relations is determined in the homes of the matrix and a good strategy can be adopted. In this matrix, the scores are determined in a two-part range of strong (2.5 to 4) and weak (1 to 2.5).

Simultaneous internal and external matrix was used for strategic positioning of Department of Public Relations. For drawing this matrix, the scores of internal and external factors evaluation matrix were located in horizontal and vertical dimensions.

The strategic position of Youth and Sport Ministry's Public Relations department was determined in the matrix homes. Strategies are often selected according to ministry's strategic location in one of four homes. In addition, the result suggests that Youth and Sports Department Public Relations is located in conservative position.

Suggestions

The best suggestions that can be presented as recommendations arising from research include strategies and the operational program appropriate to them. Therefore, recommendations arose from the study are presented as follows:

Establishment and operation of a specialized sport center

Training of qualified and experienced human resources

Establishment of comprehensive performance assessment systems for Public Relations Federation and offices administrators

Training needs assessment

Promoting the strategic viewpoint in Sport Department Public Relations

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