

Critical Success Factors in Organizing International Sports Events: A Resource-Based View and Strategic Framework

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ABSTRACT: Major sporting events such as the Olympics, FIFA World Cup and Commonwealth Games are growing in importance as sites of national pride, economic growth and infrastructure renewal. However, they are notoriously difficult to plan and deliver, producing a mix of unreliable legacy outcomes, wasteful spending and financial risk. This work synthesizes the scholarly literature on the key success factors (CSFs) connected with the organization of international sporting events using the Resource-Based View (RBV) as the primary theoretical lens. The work is heavily based on the systematic review by Chutipongdech and Kampitak (2022) who reviewed 42 peer-reviewed studies and screened 1,050 records from Scopus and Web of Science to identify organizational, human, financial, physical, and reputational resources needed for the success of an event. This review contributes to the evidence base by offering illustrative cases, a critical appraisal of the limits of the RBV framework and a proposed strategic framework. The host nations and its event stakeholders, especially those in the Global South, form the target audience and are seeking strategies to organize and conduct high impact, sustainable events. The paper concludes that event results are shaped by a mix of intangible resources (reputation, stakeholder trust, organizational capability), tangible resources (venues, volunteers, financing) and external policy contexts. It also points to the need for more research on qualitative approaches, small and medium scale events and underrepresented places, such as sub-Saharan Africa.

KEYWORDS: Mega-events, International Sports, Resource-Based View, Event Legacy, Global South, Sports Event Management

Introduction

The staging of a high-profile international sporting event like the Olympics, the FIFA World Cup or the Commonwealth Games may do much for a country's diplomatic relations, tourism and international standing. To run huge events successfully, several critical things are crucial: well-planned infrastructure, professional administration, stable politics, cooperation amongst stakeholders, and savvy use of the media. Getz (2005) underlines the importance of incorporating different groups in such a way that event operations may be streamlined, while Gratton and Preuss (2008) further suggest that thorough planning and the intentional nurturing of a lasting legacy are vital if one is to achieve long-term economic and social gain.

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The impact of management methods such as risk control, volunteer co-ordination, and venue readiness (Masterman, 2009) is very much outcome dependent. If a host nation can deliver an outstanding experience for athletes and spectators through meticulous planning, friendly hospitality and sufficient security measures, then it can improve its standing in the globe and its possibilities to host in the future (Toohey & Veal, 2007). Hence, it is of paramount importance that those responsible for planning and implementing international athletic events possess a thorough knowledge of these success factors.

The instances of Montreal in 1976 and Athens in 2004 demonstrate that the organizing cities of the Olympic Games can experience great financial pressure, which can result in substantial budget deficits. The IOC is increasingly more involved in overseeing financial planning, but there are still problems, especially in financing huge infrastructure projects. A typical concern with Olympic venues is that when the games are over, or the hosts have no plan for their long-term maintenance, they are left underused and decaying (Gratton & Preuss, 2008).

International sports events are complex and have far-reaching consequences. They involve athletes, spectators, media personnel and politicians from all around the world. The Olympics, FIFA World Cup, and Asian Games are international events that showcase world-class athletic achievement and serve as a platform for promoting economic activity, improving municipal infrastructure, and enhancing national status (Chappelet, 2021). There is a need to bear in mind, for the success of these events, all associated variables such as administrative clout, political will, public engagement, financial resources and ecological awareness. Examples of host nations facing poor governance, stakeholder engagement, budgetary planning, and legacy focus are Athens and Rio de Janeiro, leading to overspending, underutilized infrastructure, public criticism, and inability to achieve long-term beneficial results (Preuss, 2019).

In today's globalized and highly visible environment, in addition to the games themselves and the medal tally, community engagement, positive economic impact, environmental responsibility and enduring societal gain are now considered success factors when hosting international sports events (Grix & Lee, 2013). In this post, we will look at the components of arranging successful international athletic events. Rather than presenting new primary data, this work follows the pattern of a literature review. Specifically, it relies on and extends the findings of a prior systematic review by Chutipongdech and Kampitak (2022) that assessed 42 peer-reviewed studies that used resources. The results are then discussed within a broader theoretical and empirical context, offering a paradigm for future host nations, particularly in the Global South, to organize and deliver sustainable, high-impact events.

Theoretical Framework

The main theoretical basis for this research comes from the Resource-Based View (RBV) of the company, which comes from the strategic management area and views the organization as a set of tangible and intangible assets that can lead to a competitive advantage over time (Barney, 1991; Wernerfelt, 1984). In relation to sporting events, the organizing committee, host city or national federation is a resource-holding organization according to the RBV (Pianese, 2021). The competitive position of these entities is determined by the value, rarity and inimitability of the resources they can mobilize, which in turn determines their capacity to attract spectators, sponsors, media coverage and future hosting chances. The success of an event is not only dependent on a physical site. A first-rate venue event can bomb if there is a lack of organizational credibility and stakeholder confidence. Good reasons exist for this perspective to gain momentum within the discipline of sports management research.

This review complements the RBV with two adjacent theoretical traditions. The first is the stakeholder theory that highlights the necessity to balance the interests of multiple stakeholders, including governments, sponsors, athletes, and volunteers. The most essential determinant in the success of large sports events is the level of support

from local inhabitants (Johnston et al., 2021). Secondly, there is event legacy theory, which posits that success is not only measured by the execution of the event, but also by the tangible and intangible structures that continue in existence long after the event has concluded (Preuss, 2019). Taken together, these three views suggest that the success of an event is not determined by one aspect but by the interaction between internal organizational resources, external stakeholder connections, and the extent of upfront planning for the event's legacy.

Methodological Note on the Evidence Base

This article is a narrative assessment of the literature, not a new systematic review. The description mentions an empirical evidence base on which key success factors (CSFs) in sports event management are based (Chutiphongdech & Kampitak, 2022). A systematic review was published in the *Annals of Applied Sport Science*. The study authors conducted a search of Scopus and the Web of Science databases in May and June 2021 using the PRISMA approach (Moher et al.; Page et al., 2021). After deleting duplicate and irrelevant entries and screening the remaining literature, the authors reduced the initial pool of 1,050 records to 42 peer-reviewed publications published across 20 journals from the domains of sport management, marketing and events. These articles were then coded inductively using the RBV framework.

The data used in this study are based on the conceptual framework and statistics of the review by Chutiphongdech and Kampitak (2022) and not on the authors' original research. The original contribution of this study is the critical integration of those results with case data from independent sources, theoretical literature and a strategy framework adapted to host nations in the Global South.

Findings Reported by Chutiphongdech and Kampitak

Methodological Composition of the Literature

In the last sample of Chutiphongdech and Kampitak (2022), almost 67% of the studies utilized quantitative methods, 12% used qualitative methods, while the balance of the studies used theoretical models or mixed methods. The authors justify the predominance of quantitative approaches because the phenomena usually studied (attendance, levels of participation, motivation, return intention and volunteer engagement) are best suited to the analysis of large populations and are more efficiently managed via quantitative instruments than other methods because of practical limitations of time and funding.

Geographic and Sport-Type Distribution

Research on sports events seems to be mostly North America- and Asia-based, where most of the included studies are undertaken in the US, with smaller concentrations in China, South Korea, Iran, Canada and Germany. Chutiphongdech and Kampitak (2022) mentioned that there is a lack of research on South Africa; therefore, the specific critical success factors of the region have not been fully explored. The research shows that marathons, endurance events and hockey are the most studied sorts of sports, while disability sports and women's athletic events are relatively less examined. Major events, such as the Olympic Games, accounted for about 38% of the literature assessed, while smaller and medium-scale events are highly underrepresented.

Resource Categories and the RBV Framework

Chutiphongdech and Kampitak (2022) proposed a taxonomy of business assets that included five pillars on which the success of a sporting event rests: organizational, reputational, human, financial, and physical resources. The authors view this as evidence that intangible assets (i.e., organizational and reputational resources) are more essential than physical infrastructure, human capital and financial resources in determining the outcome of an event.

Table 1*Summarizes this Resource Typology as Reported in the Original Review*

Resource Category	Representative Elements	Relative Emphasis
Organizational	Partnerships, collaborative networks, event coordination, managerial execution	High
Reputational	Host-city image, professionalism, brand reputation, authenticity	High
Human	Volunteers, staff training, task allocation, sense of belonging	Moderate
Financial	Sponsorship, broadcasting rights, diversified funding streams	Moderate
Physical	Venue condition, amenities, seating, spectator comfort, retail	Moderate

Note: Adapted from the resource typology reported in Chutiphongdech and Kampitak (2022).

Synthesis and Critical Extension of the Resource Typology

Organizational and Reputational Resources

Chutiphongdech and Kampitak (2022), in their literature analysis, pointed out that intangibles are very important for the event to function smoothly, such as the legitimacy of the event and the strength of the organizing team. Events are dependent on organizational qualities from a business perspective, including effective partnerships, collaborative networks, branded sports products, tailored event services, and the competent execution of management (Pianese, 2021). Xing et al. (2008) and O'Reilly & Nadeau (2006) discovered that professional event organization considerably enhanced media attention and financial help from corporate sponsors. A good impression of the host city, shaped by its unique personality and authenticity, increases the chance of participants having a memorable experience and coming back, while a good reputation for the event attracts larger crowds, sponsors and media attention (Kaplanidou & Gibson, 2010; Ramchandani & Coleman, 2012).

Stakeholder Engagement

A vital feature of successful events is the involvement of stakeholders, especially members of the local community. Research by Johnston et al. (2021) demonstrates that the opinions and backing of local people influence the public's perception of the outcomes of a major athletic event and hence the political feasibility of future hosting ambitions. Attractiveness of well-coordinated sporting events is related to the quality of the experience spectators enjoy and their willingness to spend money on such events (Hansen & Gauthier, 1989; Beccarini & Ferrand, 2006; Zhang et al., 2003).

Human Resources: The Role of Volunteers

Volunteers are a precious source for sports event organizers since they are dedicated to the cause and are willing to work hard (Bang et al., 2009; Jiang et al., 2017). Organizers can use this strength to help volunteers develop themselves by fairly distributing tasks and assigning them to teams. Research has proven that developing trust, belonging, and altruism can increase volunteers' satisfaction and encourage them to join the next event (Kim et al., 2013).

Physical Resources and the Spectator Experience

Physical materials substantially influence the experiences of people engaged in sporting activities. The seating arrangements, the size of the venues, the cleanliness of the restrooms, the availability of refreshments, and the retail

outlets selling souvenirs and merchandise with a theme all contribute to a better experience for spectators, which in turn improves the overall enjoyment of the attendees (Couto et al., 2017; Lim & Pedersen, 2018; Kler, 2016).

Financial Resources and Diversified Revenue

There are several kinds of methods to make money from athletic events, not only commercial partnerships and media rights. This diversity is significant because budget overruns in Montreal and Athens occurred due to over-reliance on state subsidies and other single sources of income (Gratton & Preuss, 2008). Thus, revenue diversification is an advantage per se, as it reduces dependence on the support of any particular stakeholder and provides strategic flexibility, according to the resource-based approach of financial strategy.

External Policy Environment

Factors beyond the company's control, such as changes in government policy related to the promotion of sports and tourism, affect the effective execution of athletic events (Chen et al., 2019; Won & Chiu, 2020). The engagement of government and institutions can affect the development and long-term legacy effects of elite athletic events, particularly when policies are explicitly tied to success and legacy-building goals (De Bosscher et al., 2009). This work uses the methodology of Chutipongdech and Kampitak (2022), where policy orientation is considered as an external factor that complements the internal resource base and does not replace it.

The RBV as a whole is a useful paradigm for the study of CSE, but it does have certain drawbacks. The RBV traditionally emphasizes long-term competitive advantage (De Bosscher et al., 2013). However, the framework tends to see resources as relatively static, whereas event organizing committees are often temporary organizations or “ad hoc” created and dissolved around a single event. Secondly, the research on stakeholders and soft power indicates that the power disparities within local communities determine resource prioritizing, and the approach that examines resources only may overlook these power imbalances (Grix & Lee, 2013). Hence, the RBV is regarded as a sufficient but not adequate explanatory lens in this review.

Case Illustrations

The following examples illustrate how the above-mentioned sorts of resources interact positively and negatively in practice.

For example, the host city of Montreal racked up debt from the Montreal Games that took almost thirty years to pay off. This illustrates the perils of spending extensively in fixed infrastructure without a sound strategy for long-term income or maintenance (Gratton & Preuss, 2008).

In terms of legacy planning, the investment in physical resources in the venues of Athens was not sufficient, and there was no organizational and financial strategy after the event to ensure their ongoing use; therefore, many of the venues remained unoccupied and decayed after the Games (Gratton & Preuss, 2008; Preuss, 2019).

The Chinese government's strategy for hosting the Olympics involved not just a significant investment in physical infrastructure, but also a more subtle attempt to influence public opinion and policy by using the event to transform the world's perception of China (Grix & Lee, 2013; Chen et al., 2019).

In the case of the London Organizing Committee, often held up as a relatively successful legacy case study, such aspects as the early integration of community and stakeholder engagement into planning and the coordination of organizational and human resources (“Games Maker” program and volunteerism) with a well-articulated strategy for the enduring impact of the event are often praised.

Rio de Janeiro: Like Athens, the lack of financial and institutional resilience caused cost overruns and underuse of the venue, highlighting the negative impacts of inadequate financial planning on political and economic stability at the national level (Preuss, 2019).

Beijing, as a repeat host, was permitted to re-use a large part of its infrastructure from 2008 in line with the sport policy legacy planning outlined by Chen et al. (2019). This was contrasted to alternative approaches, which focused on organizational learning and asset reuse rather than new fixed-capital investment.

Toward a Strategic Framework for Host Nations

This article proposes a four-stage strategic framework that is designed to be particularly useful for potential host countries in the Global South. To do this, it combines the resource typology given by Chutiphongdech and Kampitak (2022) with the earlier-mentioned case evidence. The literature review indicates that there is a considerable gap in research in this area (Chutiphongdech & Kampitak, 2022).

1. **Review of Resources before Bidding:** Host applicants should assess their existing organizational capabilities, reputation and physical infrastructure before committing to a bid rather than feeling they can conjure everything up from scratch under time pressure.
2. **“Stakeholder Participatory Design:** Results from the resident-support study by Johnston et al. (2021) imply that community and resident participation should be integral to planning from the outset and not an afterthought communications role.
3. **Finance relates to Legacy and Diversity:** To avoid the debt exposure seen in Montreal and Athens, it is advised that venues and infrastructure be funded on the basis of a proven use case for post-event use. Financial resources should be carefully diversified across sponsorship, broadcasting and public-private partnerships.
4. **Institutionalized Post-event Governance:** Prior to the event, an independent body should be created to supervise the event venues, the volunteer network and the commitments on policies after the closing ceremony. This entity is not to be confused with the temporary organizing committee (Preuss, 2019).

Discussion and Practical Implications

The research reported here suggests that intangible resources, like organizational competence and reputation, are often determining whether or not tangible investments are well-directed. So, event planners who want to ride this wave need to spend as much money on recruiting specialists in event planning, stakeholder relationship management and devising a reputational strategy as they do on developing new venues. The review indicates that sport policy is not a single instrument that policymakers may employ; it is successful depending on how it fits with the existing infrastructure and resources of the host (De Bosscher et al., 2009; Chen et al., 2019).

Moreover, the review points out a practical gap in the whole events industry. Most of the evidence is concentrated on large, elite-level events in Asia and North America, while the vast majority of events that are actually organized on a smaller or medium-scale are relatively understudied (Chutiphongdech & Kampitak, 2022). Practitioners planning similar events should see the CSF literature as directionally helpful, but should check local assumptions, rather than assuming that findings from mega-events will apply directly to smaller-scale settings.

Limitations

There are a number of limitations to the major evidence base for this assessment. Chutiphongdech and Kampitak (2022) did not include non-English literature or related studies published in non-sport management journals in their thorough review, such as general marketing, tourism, or public administration publications. They included only

English language materials indexed in Scopus and Web of Science. Also, their search was confined to a set period (May–June 2021), and the resource typology described here does not take into account literature released beyond this. The present narrative synthesis is not meant to replicate or update that search, which is a separate systematic review. Instead, it adds to the existing body of evidence by referring to other peer-reviewed sources that were obtained through targeted searches on the theoretical and case study issues discussed in Sections 2, 5 and 6. Readers seeking a comprehensive, up-to-date mapping of the subject should view this more as a jumping-off point than a substitute for a systematic search.

Conclusion

Critical success elements connected with the organization of international sporting events were analyzed based on case evidence from Montreal 1976 to Beijing 2022 as well as theoretical literature on stakeholder engagement and event legacy. Review conducted by Chutipongdech & Kampitak (2022). The findings suggest that the success of implementing an event is a function of physical and non-physical resources and the policy orientations imposed by institutional structures. Volunteerism, various financial inputs and well-maintained physical facilities enhance the experience for all event participants. Intangibles, such as organizational capacity and reputation for the brand, appear to be especially important. Good project delivery and image of the host city and stakeholder involvement are crucial to attract spectators, sponsors and media attention. In those countries where sport policy is integrated into a broader national development strategy, athletic events seem to be more sustainable in the long run.

Future research could usefully extend its geographical coverage beyond North America and Asia, particularly to sub-Saharan Africa and other understudied countries of the Global South, and utilize a broader range of approaches, especially qualitative and mixed-methods designs. More in-depth and context-specific investigations are needed to clarify the practical significance of the individual key success criteria for different dimensions of events, ranging from mega-events to competitions at the community level.

Key Observations

- 1) The two most essential business resources for effective management of athletic events are organizational and reputational resources, according to persistent study by Chutipongdech & Kampitak (2022) and Pianese (2021).
- 2) External policy environments are highly moderated by the impact of internal resources on event outcomes, in particular government alignment with sport and tourist development aims (De Bosscher et al., 2009; Chen et al., 2019).
- 3) Case evidence from Montreal, Athens and Rio de Janeiro illustrates that physical-resource investment without a defined post-event legacy strategy is a recurring driver of financial and reputational failure.

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