



The Successful Implementation of a Sports Competition Program Through Sportainment Style: A Case Study of Thai Boxing in Thailand

■ Thunya Phovijittra

Abstract: The study aims to investigate empirically the factors which have effect on competition management of one sport, Thai boxing, through a Sportainment style in Thailand. The objectives are to study the factors which have effect on Thai boxing sports competition design through Sportainment style in Thailand, studying the Sportainment model for Thai boxing competition, in Thailand, and study the attitude of spectators' effects between THAI FIGHT, an open international Thai-Boxing championship competition and normal Muaythai competition: a professional Thai-Boxing Championship Competition. The results from this study explain the factors which have a positive effect on competition management of Thai boxing through the Sportainment style in Thailand such as 1) The integration of light and sound system with competition. 2) The Brand building process 3) Objectives of competition with enough values to motivate audiences to come to view the event, and, 4) Sequence of the event or event organizing, including event services, to create audience impression.

The factors which have a negative effect on competition management of Thai boxing through the Sportainment style in Thailand such as: 1.) Level of skill which athletes should have. 2.) Development of pattern and method of public relation (PR). Sportainment Model is = $0.10_Value - 0.12_Communication + 0.09_Process \text{ or organizing process} - 0.14_Product \text{ or type of sport} + 0.14_Brand + 0.93_Entertainment$.

Most of the respondents satisfy with all aspects of THAI FIGHT's competition. There are two aspects where samples are dissatisfied with THAI FIGHT. First is ticket buying. Because at the present time, the entrance tickets are distributed to the interested public for free of charge. If a THAI FIGHT organizer starts selling the ticket, respondents will have dissatisfaction. Second, respondents are dissatisfied with THAI FIGHT's public relation process.

Keywords: Model, Sportainment competition style, Sports competition, THAI FIGHT Competition, Successful, Implement

Introduction

The study aims to investigate empirically the factors which have an effect on competition management of Thai-Boxing competition, through the Sportainment style in Thailand. The scope of the study particularly revolves around three main aspects: 1.) Factors influence sports competition design through the Sportainment style in Thailand. 2.) How can the author construct a Sportainment model for sports competition? The author tests the model after consolidating all of the independent variables taken from literature on the model. 3.) How do the spectators think when comparing between THAI FIGHT: an open international Thai-Boxing Competition and normal professional Thai-Boxing competition?



Literature Review

There are many researchers who have identified marketing with sports, which includes the promotion, sports sponsorship and so on, which can make sports a good business. But Craig (2007) identified that sports competition with entertainment management can help sports business marketing expand. This study is located within the business of sports, which is a significant economic sector at the individual, organizational and national levels, and is an important contributor to economic activity and wealth creation. There are many factors which have an effect on sports business success such as: collateral communication and a unique combinations of inimitable resources. Cornwell (2005) identified that activation or “collateral communication” which is a key to achieve the desired consumer impact through sponsorship. Fahy (2004) suggested that sponsorship could serve as a source of sustainable competitive advantage through the use of unique combinations of inimitable resources. Shannon (1999) categorized the sports marketing industry into two related categories: 1) The marketing of sports, which includes marketing sporting events and equipment to spectators and participants. 2) Marketing with sports, which includes the promotion of non-sporting products at sporting events and the use of athletes to endorse non-sport products and services. Marketing with sports is also related to the broader sponsorship literature. Sportainment is one of the marketing of sports. The premise of the new format of the game was that this series is changing the way sport competition is traditionally played and viewed, not only as a sport but also as a form of entertainment (Craig, 2007). New elements are also added off the field to complement the excitement and thrill that is happening on the field. Sportainment can help the event become unique event.

Muaythai (Thai-Boxing) is popular in Thailand and around the world. There are many Muaythai competition programs which have been broadcasted on television but they are not entertainment style. Because the event has to follow strict traditional norms and values of regulations (e.g. women are not allowed to be on the boxing ring, or the prohibition on the use of lights and sounds, and background music must be played only with Thai traditional instruments). Thai fight is the first Muaythai competition TV program which is organized in the sportainment style and broadcasts live in Thailand and in other countries.. Sportainment is a marketing concept. It is a new format of the game, changing the way Muaythai which was traditionally played and viewed, not only as a sport but also as a form of entertainment. Sportainment can expand market from specific audiences who like to watch only a fighting match expand to general audiences who like to watch excitement of light, sound, color and computer graphic design show. Sportainment is a special modern activity which combines all aspects of entertainment, sport, leisure and recreation for all kinds of people in contrast to normal Thai-Boxing completion. Inside the venue of a Thai fight event, there are LCD Projectors for the scoring system enhancement during tournaments, 4 high-definition LCD screen TVs, a world class audio system, attractive lights, full exciting music and computer graphic design for presenting the fighters to create audiences impression and exciting atmosphere.

The scope of the study particularly revolves around three main aspects:

1. What factors influence sports competition design through the Sportainment style in Thailand?
2. How can the author construct a Sportainment model for sports competition? The author tests the model after consolidating all of independent variables from literature into the model.
3. What do the spectators think when comparing THAI FIGHT: an open international Thai-Boxing competition with normal national Muaythai (a professional Thai-Boxing) competition?

Objectives

1. To study the factors which have an effect on sports competition designed through the Sportainment style in Thailand.
2. To study the Sportainment model for sports competition in Thailand.
3. To study the attitude of spectators between THAI FIGHT and normal Muaythai competition.



Material and Methods

In this study, the researcher practices quantitative research approaches.

Respondents are 1,000 participants from the spectators who came to see THAI FIGHT on the competition day and have some experience of seeing normal Muaythai competition before. Judgment sampling was used in this study. The author chose the respondents as follows: 1) One of every fifth sample who passed the author at the entrance passage was chosen. When a previous sample was completed or returned, the author waited for another fifth sample to pass. 2) After the fifth sample passed, the author chose the next sample. The audiences who enter in Thai Fight's stadium are approximate 8,000 persons. This study used the formula of Cronbach to determine sample size as follows:

Cronbach's formulation method:

$$n = \frac{NZ^2 / 4}{NE^2 + (Z^2 / 4)}$$

N = All audiences which come to see Thai Fight in the stadium. There are around 8,000 persons.

Z = standard value in case of normal distribution.

$$\begin{aligned} \text{In this case} &= 1 - (\alpha/2) = 0.975 \\ &= 1.96 \\ E &= \text{Error value} = 0.05 \end{aligned}$$

$$\begin{aligned} \text{Where} \\ n &= \frac{(8,000 (1.96)^2) / 4}{8,000(0.05)^2 + ((1.96)^2 / 4)} \\ n &= \frac{7,683.2}{20 + 0.9604} = 366.55 \end{aligned}$$

Therefore, sample size is around 370 persons. But for the author who needs the research results to have high reliability, the author will use sample size equal to 1,000 persons.

Methods: The instruments were developed and set up. Questionnaires were used as a tool in this present study. A Likert scale questionnaire is used on the respondents. The questionnaire items in this study were developed from an extensive review of academic literature.

The variables were selected from the literature review, as well as from experts. The validity of questionnaires was tested by using the index of item objective congruence: IOC. Moreover, the suitability of questionnaires was evaluated by using 4 levels of rating scale as followings

| | |
|------------------------------------|-------------------------|
| Average value between 3.51 to 4.00 | means the most suitable |
| Average value between 2.51 to 3.50 | means more suitable |
| Average value between 1.51 to 2.50 | means suitable |
| Average value between 1.00 to 1.50 | means least suitable |

Each question involves attitude of the THAI FIGHT event, and compares attitude of sample which effect on THAI FIGHT competition and normal Muaythai competition, entertainment concepts, theories, and related researches. Pretest respondents were also asked to report the ease and time of response, as well as the appropriateness of vocabulary. The latter were modified as a consequence of the respondents' comments, and a new questionnaire was piloted with 3 experts who have more experience as sports supporters, after which only minor modifications were made. The questionnaire was distributed to the sample population after the questions had been pretested on 50 Muaythai samples? for validity testing and reliability testing. This process is constructed to ensure



that they included terminology that would be understood. The aims were to test the content validity of measures, to identify any ambiguity in the questions, and to identify any difficulties in answering the questions. Reliability was conducted by test-retest method, and data analysis by Cronbach measurement. The statistical significance was set at the level of 0.05, and Cronbach's Alpha of this study was 0.882. They have a meaning of high reliability. When the survey was confined to a target area, and the organization was willing and able to assembled groups of respondents to respond to the questionnaires at the place of entertainment, personally administering the questionnaires was a good way to collect data. The main advantage of this is that the researcher or a member of the research team could collect all the completed responses within a short period of time. Any doubts that the respondents might have regarding any question could be clarified on the spot.

Statistic analysis: Structure Equation Model (SEM) was used for analyzing data in this study. Seven assumptions of SEM that researchers should always test are used. Data of this study passed every assumption of SEM as follows:

Table 1 Showing results of SEM assumption testing.

| Number | Value | Standard criterias | Results |
|--------|-------------|--------------------|---------|
| 1 | χ^2/df | Less than 5 | 1.73 |
| 2 | RMSEA | Less than 0.08 | 0.027 |
| 3 | NFI | Over 0.9 | 0.98 |
| 4 | CFI | Over 0.9 | 0.99 |
| 5 | RMR | Less than 0.10 | 0.02 |
| 6 | GFI | Over 0.9 | 0.93 |
| 7 | AGFI | Over 0.9 | 0.91 |

The results of SEM assumption testing are achieve standard value. They mean that data from this paper can be analyzed further. Therefore, the author brings all data to be analyzed to find out the answers of research objectives.

Results

The findings are as follows:

Objectives 1. To explain the factors which have an effect to competition management of sports through the Sportainment style in Thailand.

In cases of a positive effect on Sportainment such as:

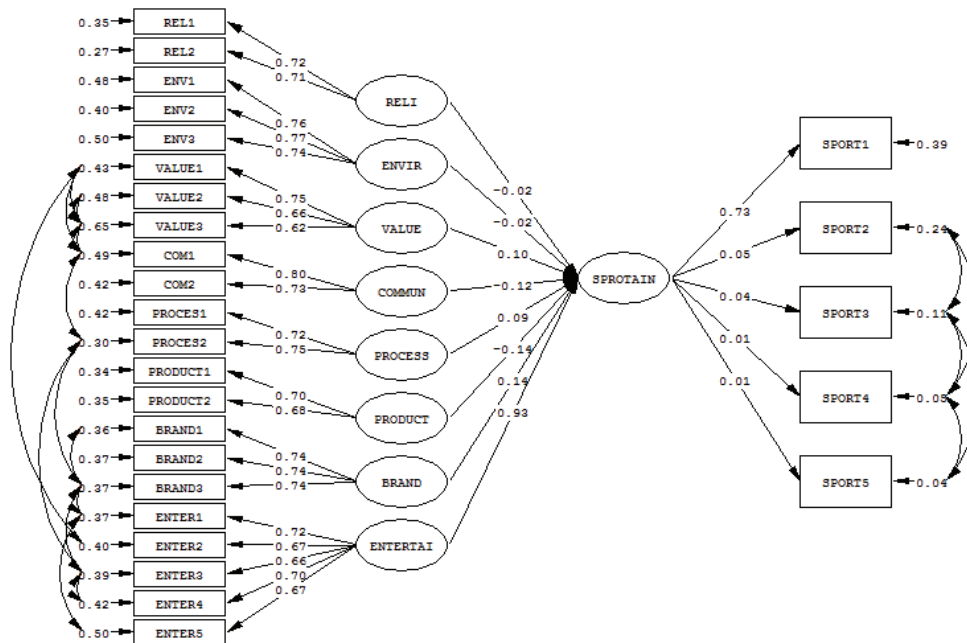
1. Integration of light and sound with competition.
2. There is a brand building process as opposed to Muaythai.
3. Objectives of competition should have enough values to motivate the audiences to come to join the event.
4. The sequence of the event or event organizing, including event services, should make the audience have a good impression.

The factors which have a negative effect to competition management of sports through Sportainment style in Thailand such as:

The athletes should have a similar level of skill in pattern and method of public relation (PR).



Objective 2. To study sports competition in Sportainment style model in Thailand.



Chi-Square=467.85, df=270, P-value=0.00000, RMSEA=0.027

The results as follows:

Table 2 Showing relationship between variables.

| All factors of Sportainment | Correlation Coefficient | | Hypothesis testing |
|-----------------------------|-------------------------|---------|--------------------|
| | value | t-value | |
| Reliability | -0.02 | -0.23 | No accept |
| Environment | -0.02 | -0.15 | No accept |
| Value | 0.10 | 1.98* | Accept |
| Communication | -0.12 | 2.01* | Accept |
| Process or organize | 0.09 | 1.96* | Accept |
| Product or type of sport | -0.14 | -2.03* | Accept |
| Brand | 0.14 | 2.04* | Accept |
| Entertainment | 0.93 | 3.71** | Accept |

R2 = 0.93

Sportainment Model is = 0.10_Value - 0.12_Communication + 0.09_Process or organizing process - 0.14_Product or type of sport + 0.14_Brand + 0.93_Entertainment.

Objective 3. About attitude testing, compare between Muaythai competition as THAI FIGHT competition type and normal Muaythai competition type.

Samples satisfy all aspects of THAI FIGHT competition. There are two aspects where samples dissatisfy THAI FIGHT. First is about ticket buying. If THAI FIGHT organizer starts selling ticket for the event, samples will dissatisfy. Second, samples dissatisfy THAI FIGHT's public relation process.



Conclusion

The objectives of this study are to study the factors which have effect on design of sports competition through the Sportainment style in Thailand, to study the Sportainment model for sports competition in Thailand, and to study attitude of spectators' effect between THAI FIGHT and normal Muaythai competition.

Objectives 1. To explain the factors which have effect on competition management of sports through Sportainment style in Thailand.

In case of a positive effect on Sportainment used in THAI FIGHT such as:

1. Integration of light and sound with competition
2. There is brand building process
3. Objectives of competition should have enough values to motivate the audiences to join in the event.
4. Sequence of the event or event organizing, including of event services should give the audience a good impression.

The factors which have negative effect to competition management of sports through Sportainment style in Thailand such as:

The athletes should have a similar skill level in pattern and method of public relation (PR).

To study sport competition in Sportainment style model.

Sportainment Model is = $0.10_Value - 0.12_Communication + 0.09_Process \text{ or organizing process} - 0.14_Product \text{ or type of sport} + 0.14_Brand + 0.93_Entertainment$.

About attitude testing, respondents satisfaction to THAI FIGHT in every aspects. There are two aspects which samples dissatisfaction THAI FIGHT. First is about ticket buying. If THAI FIGHT sells ticket for the event, respondents will be dissatisfied. Second, respondents will be dissatisfied with the THAI FIGHT's public relation process.

Suggestion

This study tries to find out what factors have an effect on the Sportainment competition style. The researcher found the valuable disclosure which could be studied and applied further for the future sportainment organizing.

The respondents of this study are only spectators who came to see Thai Fight in a stadium. Subsequent research should bring an agency and advertiser to be parts of the samples to fulfill perfect research results by including all related groups.

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