

## **Development of Competencies Among Thailand Professional Football Clubs' Sports Staff**

Varattaya Varothai & Chanchai Bunchapattanasakda

School of Management, Shinawatra University, Thailand

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### **Abstract**

This study aimed to investigate factors influencing the development of sports staff's competencies and develop methods for professional football clubs in Thailand. A questionnaire was used to collect responses from 287 staff of professional football clubs in Thailand. Multiple linear regression was used to analyze the data. An in-depth interview has been conducted among the sports staff's were carried out with analysis from nine experts. A development model of sports staff's competencies of professional football clubs in Thailand was finally designed. The results of the study revealed that influential factors affecting the development of sports staff's competencies of professional football clubs in Thailand were significantly different at 0.05 in terms of their organizational atmospheres (flexibility), followed by their readiness in self-study including risky patients, ambiguity, learning complexity, mutual learning perspectives with useful processes, learning conception, and acceptance on self-responsibility of their learning. In summary, the development of sports staff's competencies of professional football clubs in Thailand could be divided into four significant aspects: 1) Concentration on learning and well-organized performances; 2) abilities in planning, setting up goals, analyzing, and synthesizing tasks; 3) creativity and innovations, and 4) sports staff's characteristics.

**Keywords:** Competencies, sports' staff, professional football clubs

### **INTRODUCTION**

Football is one of the industries that help Thailand's economic sector similar to other developing countries. To improve the quality of Asian professional football, Asian Football Confederation (AFC) has its regulations on the perfect career football club to achieve standards such as European football, while encouraging more many Asian countries to participate in this competition. The establishment of Thai Premier League Company plays an important role in the management of domestic leagues to produce professional players as the AFC Champion League (ACL) with the standards of club management standards, has established that companies and clubs hosting football matches in any country must comply with the AFC terms to be able to participate in the ACL. Dr. Vichit Yamboonruang was President and issued a regulation for the football club, the career established as a corporate company. It directed to take care of the club so that the club will have more professional management, and from the football club has become a business organization. The club executives need to have a good club management plan to raise the club to develop equal to the overseas club (AFC, 2011) in the management of the football club. Besides, having good human resource management competencies is also an important factor besides legal marketing and finance factors in club management. It is a tool most focused on and common among executives and resource executives because of competency. Competency in human resource management is related to managing other

people's resources, both management such as high-capacity, management, performance, development, progress, according to the professional line. Implementation of performance in human resource management will help the organization to get the person who can work efficiently and effectively. Working on purpose is essential to achieving the organization's goals (Klingner, Llorens & Nalbandian 2015).

According to Xiaodong and Jinrong (2010), the organized professional football league will push them forward and improve the club's performance. Therefore, the club that wants to create a competitive advantage and create the change needs to improve the performance of reserve personnel. In the organization, reserve personnel is considered an important factor to help promote the organization's performance as a real performance and can compete effectively with other clubs, as well as helping the club be strong and able to stand among the changes.

Sports industry such as football will receive a benefit if the sports staff of the professional football club can perform their role properly. Therefore, this study focused on the performance of the sports personnel of the professional football club to work. The development of professional human resources following the concept of Ulrich (competency model of the HR value proposition), including with strategic contribution personal credibility, strategic positioner, capability builder, change champion, human resource innovator and integrator and technology proponent to become a professional human resource (Ulrich & Losey, 2005). The question was raised by a researcher, how do develop the sports staff of professional football club to be professional? What should be the promotion of the event, so that researcher can review the research documents related to the organization's atmosphere? Moreover, the preparation factor in self-learning is an important factor and affects the relativity of the organization. The researcher has integrated the concept of an atmosphere of the organization which is implemented by McClelland (1995). The organization that the researcher is interested in doing education consists clarity of organization flexibility, personnel commitment responsibility, learning standards support such as reward, consider that the elements are covered and can take to study the atmosphere of the organization of the professional football club in the section of the self-learning factor of the working personnel. The researcher was also interested in doing this study according to the self-learning concept by Guglielmino & Guglielmino (2008) which consists 8 features of self-learning concept as an effective independent learner, tolerance of risk ambiguity, and view of learning as a beneficial and lifelong process initiative for self-understanding learning such as acceptance of responsibility for one's learning.

The study objectives were to investigate factors that influence the competency development in sports staffs and to study the performance development in sports personnel competencies of Thailand professional football clubs.

## **METHODOLOGY**

### **Population and sample size**

The study population was involved in 203 clubs and 1015 individuals from various levels of Thailand professional football clubs (Thailand Football Club, 2017). Yamane calculation has been used to determine the sample size and 267 participants were required for this study. Via multi-stage sample method, 287 participants were recruited; in which 260 participants were from club management and 27 participants were sports experts.

Before the actual study, the validity of the translated questionnaire has been conducted to maintain the quality and similarity to the original version. The alpha coefficient ( $\alpha$ -coefficient) Cronbach method (Cronbach & Lee, 1990) reported that the reliability was very high, at 0.95 on the threshold.

Besides, researchers also conducted an in-depth interview method for a data-based tool that provides a critical frame in each topic of the insights. The findings from interview sessions could enhance the results of the quantitative data. It is because the information provided by primary givers was crucial to access the findings that related to the objectives.

## RESULTS

The study objectives were to investigate factors that influence the competency development in sports staffs of Thailand professional football clubs. The multiple regression analysis was conducted to predict the relationship between environmental factors (atmosphere, organization, and self-learning) and the dependent parameters of staff competencies.

**Table 1.** Prediction on the relationship of the environmental factors towards learning and working to be quality, accurate, and complete.

Variable	learning and working to be quality, accurate, complete				
	B	SE(b)	B	t	p-value
A view that learning is a useful process and always happens.	0.295	0.075	0.28	3.922	0.000*
Acceptance of self-learning responsibility	0.940	0.055	0.761	17.186	0.000*

$r = 0.813$ ,  $R^2 = 0.661$ , Adjusted  $R^2 = 0.642$ ,  $F = 35.172$ ,  $p\text{-value} = 0.000^*$

\* Significantly statistical at level 0.05

Table 1 found that learning was a useful process and always happens ( $p < .0001$ ,  $\beta = 0.28$ ). Acceptance of self-learning responsibility was affecting the determination of learning and working to be quality, accurate, and complete ( $p < 0.001$ ,  $\beta = 0.761$ ). Other factors that could predict the determination of learning and work to be quality, accurate, complete was 35.8% greater.

**Table 2.** Prediction on the relationship of the average variable factors, atmosphere, organization, self-learning, self-learning factors of the ability towards the ability to plan the targeting, analysis, synthetic analysis, task mission.

Variable	the ability to plan the targeting, analysis, synthetic analysis, task mission				
	B	SE(b)	B	t	p-value
Learning initiative	-0.172	0.084	-0.152	-2.045	0.042*
Acceptance of self-learning responsibility	0.924	0.064	0.743	14.342	0.000*

$r = 0.732$ ,  $R^2 = 0.536$  Adjusted  $R^2 = 0.511$ ,  $F = 20.888$ ,  $p\text{-value} = 0.000^*$

\* Significantly statistical at level 0.05

Table 2 shows two variables; learning initiative ( $p = 0.042$ ,  $\beta = -0.152$ ) and acceptance of self-learning responsibility ( $p = 0$ ,  $\beta = 0.743$ ) were affecting the ability to plan the targeting, synthetic analysis, task mission which can explain the summary from the hypothesis test result, that it is consistent with some assumptions with the coefficient of making 51.1 percent of statistical significance at level 0.05. Other factors can predict the ability to plan the targeting, synthetic analysis, task mission overall is 48.9 percent more.

**Table 3.** Prediction on the relationship of the average variable factors, atmosphere, organization, self-learning, self-learning factors of the ability towards creative initiative brings innovation

Variable	The creative initiative brings innovation				
	B	SE(b)	B	t	p-value
Tolerance for risk, ambiguity, and complexity in learning.	-0.182	0.075	-0.12	-2.420	0.016*
Acceptance of self-learning responsibility	0.857	0.081	0.618	10.633	0.000*

$r = 0.645$ ,  $R^2 = 0.416$  Adjusted  $R^2 = 0.383$ ,  $F = 12.852$ ,  $p\text{-value} = 0.000^*$

\* Significantly statistical at level 0.05

Table 3 presents two variables were tolerance for risk, ambiguity, and complexity in learning ( $p = 0.016$ ,  $\beta = -0.12$ ) and acceptance of self-learning responsibility ( $p = 0$ ,  $\beta = 0.618$ ) were affecting the creative initiative, bringing innovation differently, with the coefficient of making 38.3 percent of statistical significance at level 0.05 and has sustenance. Other things that can predict the creative initiative, bringing innovation in overall is 61.7 percent more,

**Table 4.** Prediction on the relationship of the average variable factors, atmosphere, organization, self-learning, self-learning factors of the ability towards the characteristics of sports personnel

Variable	The characteristics of sports personnel				
	B	SE(b)	B	t	p-value
Flexibility	0.161	0.080	0.202	2.014	0.045*
A view that learning is a useful process and always happens.	0.246	0.085	0.296	2.889	0.004*
Acceptance of self-learning responsibility	0.296	0.062	0.305	4.786	0.000*

$r = 0.546$ ,  $R^2 = 0.299$ , Adjusted  $R^2 = 0.26$ ,  $F = 7.693$ ,  $p\text{-value} = 0.000^*$

\* Significantly statistical at level 0.05

Table 4 reports three variables were flexibility ( $p = 0.045$ ,  $\beta = 0.202$ ), a view that learning was a useful process and always happens ( $p = 0.004$ ,  $\beta = 0.296$ ) and acceptance of self-learning responsibility ( $p = 0$ ,  $\beta = 0.305$ ) it is affecting the characteristics of sports personnel different. It can be explained the summary of the hypothesis test results that are consistent with some assumptions with the coefficient 51.1 percent of the statistical significance at level 0.05, and other factors can predict the characteristics of the overall sports personnel is 48.9 percent higher.

**Analyzing performance development for sports personnel of professional football clubs in Thailand.**

**Figure 1.** A development of sport staff competencies of professional football clubs in Thailand

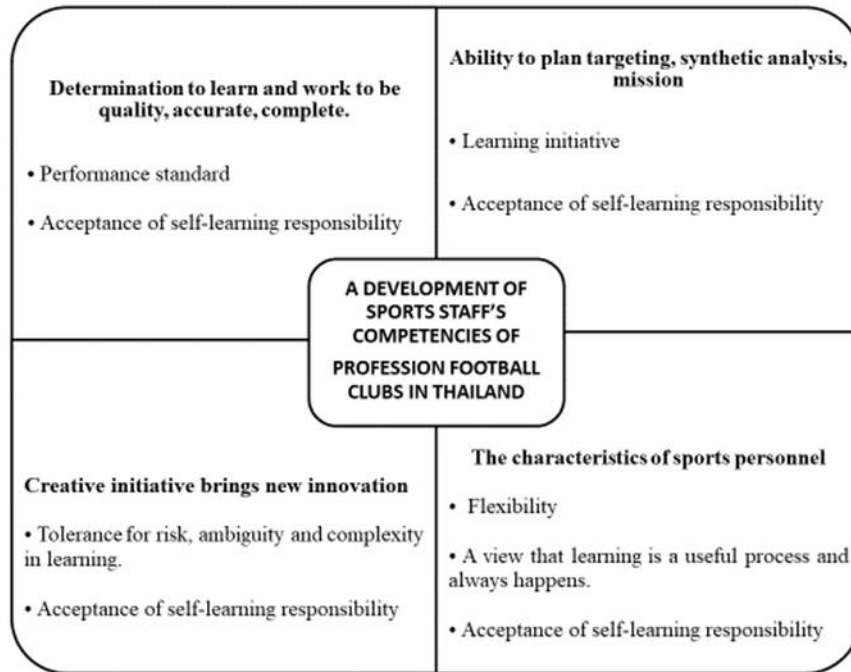


Figure 1 shows guidelines for performance development for sports personnel of professional football clubs in Thailand that involved the following elements:

**Element 1: Focus on learning the partner, development, skills**

The company (football club) is an important entity where sports personnel and physical therapy had specific responsibility for the club. The primary role is to maintain, improve, and restore the physical and psychological aspects of players to unleash the optimal potential in competition. Sports personnel must be enthusiastic, tolerant, and determined on the task, in which the strength and conditioning program is important to develop the potential of the players by planning for a suitable training program, conducting physical fitness tests, and play a role in reducing muscle fatigue in pre-season. Therefore, the football club should consistently monitor the personnel's' working performance by considering the performance of working according to the standards of professionals such as think ability and risk on every decision taken on care, maintain, develop, and restore the physical and mental of players. Furthermore, physical science personnel performance should be assessed while pre, during, and postseason. After that, working performance can be compared with the famous professional football club abroad to encourage the development of the workflow to be more standard.

**Element 2: Management, operation and self-development strategy**

Sports personnel and physical therapy in a football club should be able to put the work system effectively, such as creating a work plan, an operation to achieve work plan, operation quality standard control, and operational improvements in the face of obstacles and problems. This process includes a short-term and long-term goal to work, daily work plan, such as training periodization schedule, treatment, recovery, and injuries schedule. This holistic arrangement allows sports personnel to plan a comprehensive game strategy, self-development, and researching to obtain information, theory, training, and new treatment. Furthermore, it provides information in terms of the quality assurance

aspect of the great football club as a role model in the development of the treatment service system to be adapted to the players. Therefore, the football club in Thailand should develop staff as experts in the management area. Besides, improvement in operational performance offers benefits for the self-development of sports personnel.

### **Element 3: Innovation and the use of technology for the performance of the work.**

Nowadays, technology becomes very important to facilitate the management process of an organization. Many developing clubs in Thailand are utilizing technology to communicate with the club's spectators, preparation of documents, and gathering players' profile such as fitness, skills, and previous performance data. By implementing technology, clubs could be managed efficiently.

Sports scientists and therapists should implement innovative technology to collect data or to develop players. It can be initiated by analyze the problems in the agencies and follow by finding the solution. The experienced sports personnel can invent, innovate, or doing research for the next development.

### **Element 4: Desirable features of sports staff's competencies of professional football clubs in Thailand**

The Professional Football Club in Thailand has developed the ability of the players to have the highest potential for the hope to win this program or ranked 1 of 3 to get tickets to the Asian Football Club Championship (AFC Champion League). Therefore, sports scientists and physical therapists are persons who responded to practice professional football players, develop their potential, monitor physical fitness and skills as well as rehabilitation, fatigue, or injury either from training or competition. The sports personnel who are responsible for players' developments require self-enthusiastic to learn, develop skills by training, increase knowledge, and improve leadership. Also, individuals who remain in this industry need to empower themselves to master the Thai and English language to enhance communication, especially during competition and training. Furthermore, those who are working with the professional football club must equip themselves with good vision and looking forward to developing a great club management system.

## **DISCUSSION**

The findings of this study showed that atmosphere factors in an organization such as flexibility and self-learning factors, including patience, risk, ambiguity, and complexity in learning were influencing the development of sports staff competencies in professional football clubs (Murray, 2003). Furthermore, the perspective of the learning process is a useful parallel to the development of the sports staff (Singh, 2010). The sports personnel who are quickly adapting to the job will create a swift collaboration. Meanwhile, the organization which capable to give space for suggestions and opinions from personnel will encourage multi-directional collaboration. In fact, it will encourage staff to give their best commitment and a good contribution to the club. These qualities will acknowledge the potential and further provide satisfaction to the staff.

The development of sports personnel performance is evaluated via four major elements includes; a determination to learn and work to be quality, accurate, and complete; the ability to plan the targeting, synthetic analysis, and mission; creative initiative brings innovation; and characteristics of sports personnel. These elements were also found suitable to be implemented by local football clubs.

First and foremost, sports personnel should critically analyze before making a change or modification. The analyzing process is important to identify the lacking area to be improved. This initiative then directs sports personnel to further enhance their knowledge and skills. Secondly, sports personnel must wisely plan before implementation. Good planning for tasks helps them to work effectively and efficiently, minimizing fatal errors, and optimizing the possibility of problem-solving. Next, sports personnel should be driven to expand their knowledge and skills for self-lifelong developments. Nowadays, besides attending workshops or conferences, the related information could



easily be obtained from various sources available in clouds. Good knowledge and skills will provide a better option of action especially while facing a tough problem to solve. Finally, sports personnel should create a professional personality in ways of appearance, intrapersonal and interpersonal communication skills, and flexibility in socializing with surrounding people. Good personality boosts up a confidence level to both consumers and also to providers themselves.

## CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the development of the human resource management system of the professional football club in Thailand is very important to provide excellent performance with benefits football clubs, careers, and organizations. Sports personnel who have good quality brings creativity and flexibility to the club. Excellent human resources can provide information about the features and characteristics of the work of sports scientists and therapists as a requirement in the job description and job assignment. From the evaluation of performance that has been done, salary consideration can be determined and information on personnel development in the football club also can be determined to follow the direction that the club needs.

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✉ Varatthaya Varothai,  
Shinawatra University,  
Thailand  
Email: [varutthaya@gmail.com](mailto:varutthaya@gmail.com)