



## A Critical Success Factors Model for Golf Athletes' Talent Development in Malaysia and Indonesia

Adang Suherman<sup>1,\*</sup>, Azman Yassin<sup>2</sup>, Nur Indri Rahayu<sup>1</sup>, Hadi Sartono<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Universitas Pendidikan Indonesia, Indonesia

<sup>2</sup> Universiti Utara Malaysia, Malaysia

Correspondence: E-mail: [adangsuherman@upi.edu](mailto:adangsuherman@upi.edu)

### ABSTRACTS

Sport development research has identified five themes which consist of policy, development through sport, development of sport, future patterns of sport delivery, and marketing in terms of the relationship between professional sport and participation. To further explore this growing interest in the talent development of sport, this study aims to identify critical success factors (CSFs) specifically on talent development in the sport of golf that could produce future champions at the international level. These factors form the basis for a model for future amateur and professional golf development in Malaysia and Indonesia. Talent development is one of the important pillars of the SPLISS (Sports Policies Leading to International Sporting Success) Model. Hence, the primary objective of talent development is to discover young athletes and develop their gifts. Proper talent development is considered critical to achieving sports success. The proposed research is expected to significantly to society, the economy, and the nation. Society, encourages healthy living through participation in sports, especially golf. It also provides equal opportunity for young talent to be identified and developed and increases the talent pool for both countries. The research methodology consists of two main aspects of literature review and research analysis to gather all information concerning Talent Development in Golf, specifically in the Malaysian and Indonesian contexts. Because of the geographical distribution and difficulties with face-to-face interviewing, a quantitative research approach was adopted and a survey method will be used. The data will be collected through questionnaire dissemination.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

There is growing academic interest in the success factors of golfers competing in international competitions. So far, there is limited literature on the environmental success factors on talent development in a specific sport, although several studies have analyzed sports systems and success factors in the specific sport like sprint canoe, athletics, tennis and winter sports. These studies have identified key factors that contributed to the success of long-term talent development in some countries. Sport development research has identified five themes which consist of policy, development through sport, development of sport, future patterns of sport delivery, and marketing in terms of the relationship between professional sport and participation. Two major trends can be observed in high-performance or elite sports at the international level. Firstly, many countries seek success in major sporting events, and secondly, many countries have developed their ability to win medals at these international events. It is also not possible to develop one single model for all nations that can produce the same success. This has led to interest amongst academics to study the relationship between environmental success factors and long-term talent development fundamentals. Some studies have also tried to identify determinants of international sporting success. To further explore this growing interest in the talent development of sport, this study aims to identify critical success factors (CSFs) specifically on talent development in the sport of golf that could produce future champions at the international level. These factors will form the basis for a model for future amateur and professional golf development in Malaysia and Indonesia.

Talent development is one of the important pillars of the Sports Policies Leading to International Sporting Success (SPLISS) Model. Hence, the primary objective of talent development is to discover young athletes and develop their gifts (Vaeyens et al., 2009). According to De Bosscher a proper talent development is considered critical to achieve sports success. The identification and development of talent in sports is a complicated process. The CSFs that lead to success in individual sports are not necessarily the same as in team sports. Without knowing and exploring this issue, talent development has problems to decide the key best practices. Malaysia and Indonesia have a common problem where our athletes do not perform competitively on the world stage, especially in golf. The Southeast Asian Games, also known as the SEA Games, is a biennial multi-sport event involving participants from the current 11 countries of Southeast Asia. The games are under the regulation of the Southeast Asian Games Federation with supervision by the International Olympic Committee (IOC) and the Olympic Council of Asia. Since Golf has been introduced in 1995, only Indonesian women emerged as champion gold medalists in 2011 ([https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Golf\\_at\\_the\\_2011\\_Southeast\\_Asian\\_Games](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Golf_at_the_2011_Southeast_Asian_Games)).

The major question is whether we are lacking a pool of talented and gifted athletes OR we are not properly developing the talent. Only limited attempts have been made to embark on a structured talent development model with individual sports in Malaysia and Indonesia. Without having a reliable model, talent development faces problems to decide to choose an appropriate model. Thus, this study focuses on the individual sport to identify the CSFs in the case of Golf in both countries. Objectives of this research are:

- (i) To identify CSFs for the development of talents in individual sports athletes.
- (ii) To construct the CSF's model for talent development.
- (iii) To validate the CSF's model for talent development.

Talent development policies are designed to assist individual sports athletes to reach extraordinary levels of performance. To further meet the needs of establishing a suitable

model for talent development in an individual sport, the study seeks to find the answers to the following research questions:

- (i) What are the CSF's components for individual sports athletes' talent development?
- (ii) How to construct the CSF's model?
- (iii) How to evaluate the CSF's model?
- (iv) What policies can be developed based on CSF's model for long-term individual sport athlete development?

The proposed research is expected to significantly to society, the economy, and the nation. For society, it will encourage healthy living through participation in sports, especially golf. It also will provide equal opportunity for young talent to be identified, and developed and increase the talent pool for both countries. For the economy, it will encourage the development of golf-related industries through higher demand, sports tourism, and job creation. Lastly, successful athletes in golf will bring high prestige to the country by winning at the international level. It also glorifies the nation and places Malaysia and Indonesia on the World Map.

## 2. METHODS

This study is a literature survey. This study obtained data from the internet source, especially articles from International journals.

## 3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### 3.1. Talent development

Talent identification is the process of recognizing athletes with the potential to attain expert performance. On the other hand, talent development is developing them into world-class athletes through programs like extensive training and coaching. The process of talent development in sports has been around for decades. The Soviet bloc nations had used their own elite sport development system to stay ahead of their neighbors in the 1950s. Their success showed that a state-managed system can produce superior elite athletes. Due to the intensified competition worldwide, sports organizations are continuously looking for more effective operating models.

Talent identification and talent development have become major focuses and challenges to NGBs all over the world (Gray & Plucker, 2010). Recent focus has been on redesigning talent identification and talent development systems or policies to further enhance the preparation and delivery of athletes to higher levels. Talent development can be a complex process. Few have been able to accurately predict the likelihood of success at the highest level. Talent development assumes that innate talents are not necessarily transformed into elite athletes. Some studies have indicated that many who were identified by the talent identification process and supported in talent development programs failed to be successful athletes (Martindale *et al.*, 2005; Martindale *et al.*, 2007; Vaeyens *et al.*, 2009). In golf, the failures could be due to a variety of many reasons like injury and illness, pressing social economic factors, burnouts, or players switching to other sports. Dropping out of the elite program midway is also a common feature with Malaysian amateur golfers.

Turning professional or furthering education are some of the main reasons. Hence, there is a requirement to construct better and systematic approaches to identify, nurture and develop elite players with potential (Vaeyens *et al.*, 2009). Here, the talent development pathway has to be clear and includes specialized support in coaching, technical, and physical to meet individual needs. Another method that is currently being adopted by the governing body is using a contractual mechanism where the athletes are required to stay for a specified

duration subject to the NGB meeting its obligations. This results in a much bigger pool of talented golfers for the NGB to select into the national squad.

### 3.2. The Malaysian golf scene

Golf is a popular sport all around the world. It is a challenging game because it requires both physical and mental skills. Due to its popularity and high following over the last two to three decades, golf was brought back into the Rio Olympics 2016 after being absent for over one hundred and twelve years. Since the Olympics is the pinnacle of sports, it is considered the ultimate for an athlete. It also raised the profile of golf internationally. The exposure was a boost and extra popularity for golf. The Rio Olympics 2016 brought golf to undeveloped parts of the world. People who have not watched golf before were exposed to it on television. Hopefully, it had a positive impact, especially in Asian countries, including Malaysia and South American countries where more people may be expected to play the game in the future.

Looking at the recent poor performances of Malaysian amateur golfers at international events held both locally and overseas, the need to generate and implement effective policies on talent identification and talent development is critical. It became urgent following the failure of Malaysian golfers to deliver the expected medals at the Kuala Lumpur 2017 South East Asian (SEA) Games. The golf event was held at a popular and exclusive venue, The Mines Resort & Golf Club in Kuala Lumpur. As hosts, the Malaysian players were given exclusivity and full access to the facilities for training and familiarization months before the event. Unfortunately, they failed to capitalize on it and did not deliver the expected medals. The expectation was high amongst Malaysian officials and supporters wanting to see local golfers perform well at the SEA Games and contribute medals to the overall tally.

Malaysia is handicapped by the limited talent pool available in the game of golf. There is an immediate need to first increase the size of the talent pool. To date, there are ongoing programs conducted by the NGB and golf clubs to attract new golfers to the game. What is needed is to introduce fun into the game which can attract new talent. This is critical in the process of creating a bigger talent pool. Good policies when fully implemented can give the players some edge and have a positive impact on the ability of the Malaysian elite golfers to perform well in the long run. Hence, this study is aimed at generating the right policies that can contribute significantly to an efficient and effective talent identification and talent development model for amateur golf in Malaysia. This, if strictly implemented, can contribute to the future success of Malaysian elite golfers in the international arena.

At the international level, amateur golf has to be managed professionally. In Malaysia, the Malaysian Golf Association (MGA) is responsible for the management and development of amateur golf. It is tasked with producing elite amateur golfers as well as developing the game at the grass-root level. Malaysian amateur golfers have not performed to the expected level at international competitions in the recent past. This has triggered a search for a better model with effective policies for talent identification and talent development that can deliver better results in the future. Hopefully, the findings from this study can play a significant role in shaping the future of Malaysian elite golf. It may also hold the key to Malaysia producing a top one-hundredth player under the World Amateur Golf Ranking (WAGR).

Investments in developing elite sports policies can be high. To minimize the risk, it is, therefore, crucial to have the right policies which are fundamental to the process of identifying and developing talents. Proper identification of talent has many benefits (Gray & Plucker, 2010) like reducing waste, time, and money. For this study, the policies were derived, formulated, and recommended by participants who have many years of personal experience in golf development, especially in the process of identifying and developing talents. Open-

ended interviews can provide in-depth information related to participants' experiences and viewpoints on a particular issue. This sharing of knowledge and experiences can assist in the creation of successful athletes. The aim was also to identify and select these talents as early as possible and develop their potential. Offering a systematic approach to talent identification can reduce the element of chance. The NGB has to have an efficient and effective internal system to implement these policies. This is to ensure a continuous flow of talented golfers at the top level of the amateur game who can be successful internationally.

The MGA, being the NGB for amateur golf is ultimately responsible for identifying talents and developing them into national and international players. Substantial resources need to be invested in identifying, selecting, and developing talents for international sporting success. These resources need to be channelled to areas where they are most relevant and likely to contribute to success. As noted by Green and Oakley, for nations to maintain or improve their international competitiveness, they must continue to invest in talent identification and talent development programs. This will allow NGBs to identify, train, support, and retain potential in the hope that they perform at the elite level. In golf, it is important to correctly identify emerging talents and then continue to invest in their skills and experience to the level where they can be good enough to compete and be successful internationally. Besides the NGB, golf clubs, and state associations, the other stakeholders that play a major role in elite development are the government, sports organizations, athletes, coaches, and sponsors. The role of these stakeholders varies. The government initiates sport development strategies whilst coaches, sport managers implement them. It is most important that a collaborative and aligned approach is established across schools, golf clubs, associations, and parents.

### **3.3. The need for a model**

Malaysian and Indonesian people need a clear vision for the sport of golf with clear pathways for development. It needs a well-established national development program, a roadmap or model which defines the skills and knowledge required for talent development. It is necessary to recognize that without a proper model for elite development, it will affect the future growth of golf in Malaysia. Hence, there is a need to develop the knowledge and competencies of the NGB and its coaches to improve the identification and development of potential golf talent.

Player development is also a key goal in golf. It is regarded as the breeding ground for future elite golf players. The lack of good development structures can also mean very few players reach the highest levels of performance. Athletes are selected based on the belief that they have the potential to succeed and have a strong desire and work ethic to improve. The long-term aim of golf is to emphasize development rather than results. Their development process needs to be systematic and training is based on the stage of their physical development. The guidelines or key success factors for the model are to provide support for the athletes to achieve success as elite golfers. The training programs are designed to meet individual needs by providing specific technical skills and tactical play. All these factors can contribute to the development of a model for golf development designed for local amateur golfers. Without an effective talent development model, the pathway to elite performance of Malaysian and Indonesian golfers may not be easy. Thus, the effort is made to identify the Critical Success Factors (CSFs) for long-term talent development as follows:

- (i) **Factor 1: Long-Term Development Focus.** The importance of a consistent and coherent long-term priority is supported in almost all the talent development literature by the idea that certain developmental experiences are required; forming the foundations for future progressions, as opposed to preparation for short-term outcome success per se.

Furthermore, even in later periods of development, certain activities may be required for advanced future performance levels, which may hinder short-term performance capability (e.g. [Martindale \*et al.\*, 2007](#)).

- (ii) Factor 2: Quality Preparation. The idea of the need for quality practice is not new. The theory of deliberate practice highlights the need for practice to be effortful and specifically designed to improve performance through goal setting, feedback, and opportunities for repetition. Furthermore, research in motor learning has long highlighted the importance of the quality of training structure, feedback, and instructional style in the development of robust and useful skill sets. Also, the crucial nature of quality competition experiences for elite development is highlighted by many researchers, as is the need for quality recovery methods, particularly given the dangers to developing- ing athletes from burnout, de-motivation, over-training, and over-playing (e.g. [Martindale \*et al.\*, 2007](#)).
- (iii) Factor 3: Communication. The need for good coach communication in sports has long been highlighted. The quality of coach-athlete relationships, intrinsic motivation of athletes, and coach-athlete effectiveness depend on it. Indeed, highlighted communication as the vehicle for effective coaching, and [Martindale \*et al.\* \(2007\)](#) highlight the need for both informal and formal communication systems to maximize effectiveness.
- (iv) Factor 4: Understanding the Athlete. Significant work such as that of Bloom (1985) has highlighted the need for a close coach-athlete relationship in the development years and beyond. This work also highlights the complex, holistic nature of development, whereby a whole host of cognitive, physical, social, and performance-based developments can trigger successful progression. Similarly, the work of and Vaeyens and colleagues ([Vaeyens \*et al.\*, 2008](#)) emphasizes the individualized and emergent nature of performance capability and development, stressing the need for consideration of athletes' needs on an individual and ongoing basis.
- (v) Factor 5: Support Network. Many instrumental talent development studies have highlighted the need for a strong support system throughout development. Indeed, Rees and colleagues [Rees \*et al.\* \(1999\)](#) reported a significant relationship between quality support and performance, while poor perceived support can lead to poor coping mechanisms and stress.
- (vi) Factor 6: Challenging and Supportive Environment. This concept of providing a challenging yet supportive environment emerged strongly from the work by Csikszentmihalyi with talented teenagers. Challenging competition and training environments are necessary to facilitate development to the highest level, but this is not to say the traditional "school of hard knocks" is appropriate. As with any development opportunities, challenges can be facilitative or debilitating depend- ing how they are handled. For example, while the standard and pressure of higher level (e.g. elite, professional, adult, etc.) training and playing opportunities are essential for the development of athletes, only in combination with quality review processes, goal setting, and support, however, will such an approach consistently act to support the transition to senior level.
- (vii) Factor 7: Long-Term Development Fundamentals. The nature of development shows that relative performance level per se may fluctuate significantly through the development years for a whole host of reasons (e.g. maturation, injury, motivation, opportunities), and as such athletes must understand this and the challenges it brings, and are treated with their individual needs in mind.

### 3.3. Possible research framework

Figure 1 shows the correlation between research framework and theoretical framework. The research methodology consists of two main aspects of literature review and research analysis to gather all information concerning Talent Development in Golf, specifically in the Malaysian and Indonesian contexts. Because of the geographical distribution and difficulties with face-to-face interviewing a quantitative research approach will be adopted and a survey method will be used. The data will be collected through questionnaire dissemination. There are two parts to the question in the questionnaire. First, the demographic information when information listed in Table 1 will be collected, and then, the data based on the proposed model as in Figure 2.

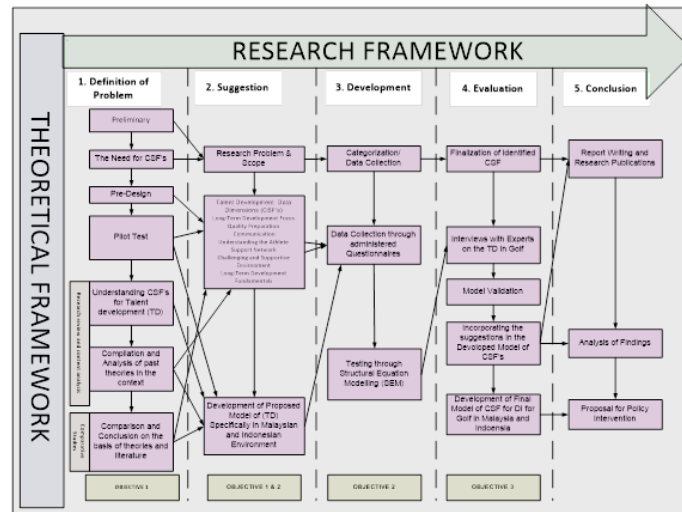


Figure 1. Research framework for talent development of Golf in Malaysia and Indonesia.

Table 1. Demographic survey.

Demographic Information	
1.	Gander
2.	Nationality
3.	Age (12-21 years old)
4.	Club Membership
5.	Handicap (maximum 24 for the male golfer and maximum 36 for the female golfer)
6.	List of Tournament participation

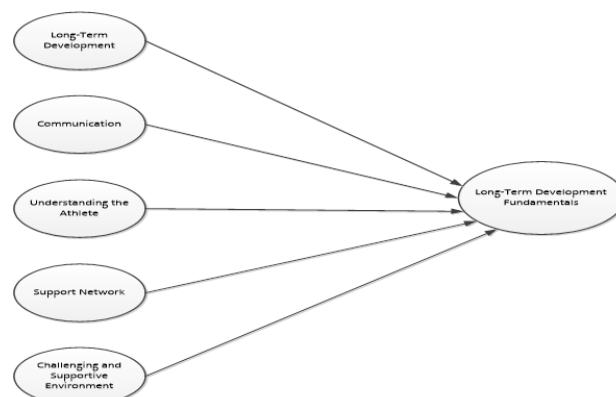


Figure 2. Propose model for talent development (Source: Martindale et al., 2010).

The research was conducted through structured questionnaires sent to particularly qualified respondents, in this case, the Golfers in the age group of 11 to 21, with a valid handicap that satisfies the conditions of those who have a certain level of ability to be a Golf athlete. The respondents will be approached through their memberships or Handicap registered with relevant authorities to assign such handicaps in Malaysia and Indonesia. The survey will be conducted by sending questionnaires via post and email for about six months. Before the main survey, a pilot survey will be conducted to test the reliability and validity of the questionnaire items. After the main survey, data will be analyzed via SmartPLS© software. As the study is a predictor in nature, therefore variance-based structural equation modeling is decided to be the most appropriate. Two prior and two post-doc supporting analyses will be conducted; namely a-priori analyses for item scale reliability (Chronbach's Alpha and composite reliability-rho) and power analysis for determining sample size. In addition, post hoc analyses of power analysis and sample adequacy and Herman's single-factor test for detecting any common method variance or bias will be conducted.

#### 4. CONCLUSION

There are many issues that have directly impacted the size of the talent pool. The discussion on the research questions that were asked would identify appropriate CSF's to develop these talents into successful golf athletes. This study contributes to novel findings for development of sports, especially golf.

#### 5. AUTHORS' NOTE

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest regarding the publication of this article. Authors confirmed that the paper was free of plagiarism.

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