

## The Keys Success Factors Talent Development Environment for Golf Athletes in National Golf Academy Universiti Utara Malaysia

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### Abstract

The aim of the study is to determine the Key Success Factors (KSF's) on talent development environment for golf athletes. This Study is a quantitative study that has a survey using simple random sampling method. The respondents in this study were 146 student golf athletes (Male = 98 Female = 48) training under the National Golf Academy Universiti Utara Malaysia. The instrument that had been used is the Talent Development Environment Questionnaires – 5 (TDEQ-5). Findings of the study indicate, construct of communication indicate highest percentage (33.4%) and when combined with construct of alignment of expectation the percentage indicate 37.4%. In conclusion the construct of communication and alignment of expectation are the most highly contributed to the talent development focus in National Golf Academy Universiti Utara Malaysia

**Keywords:** Talent Development Environment, Golf Athletes

### Introduction

Academic interest in the success factors of golfers participating in global competitions is growing. There is limited research so far on environmental success factors on talent development in individual sports, although many studies have studied sport structures and success factors in particular sports such as sprint canoe (Sotiriadou, Gowthorp, De Bosscher, 2013), athletics (Truyens et al., 2014), tennis (Brouwers, Sotiriadou, De Bosscher, 2014) and winter sports (Weber et al., 2014). These studies have identified key factors that in some sport organization have led to the success of long-term talent development. In terms of the relationship between professional sport and participation, sport development research has identified five themes consisting of policy, development through sport, sport development, future sport delivery patterns and marketing, (Shilbury et al., 2008).

To further explore this growing interest on the talent development of sport, this study aims at identifying the Key Success Factors (KSF's) 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 on future amateur and professional golf development among National Golf Academy (NGA) Universiti Utara Malaysia athletes. One of the essential pillars of SPLISS (Sports Policies Leading to International Sporting Success) Model is the production of talent. (De Bosscher et al., 2006). The primary goal of talent development is therefore to find young athletes and develop their gifts. (Vaeyens et al., 2009). According to De Bosscher et al (2006) in order to achieve sports success, proper talent development is considered critical.

There are two big patterns that can be noticed at the international level in high performance or elite sports. Firstly, many countries pursue success in major sporting events, and secondly many countries have established their ability to win medals at these international events, (Shibly et al., 2007; Shibly et al., 2013). It is also not possible to create a single model that will deliver the same performance for all nations, (De Bosscher et al., 2006). This has contributed to academic interest in studying the relationship between environmental success factors and the fundamental production of long-term talent. Some studies have also attempted to establish determinants of global athletic performance (Brouwers et al., 2014).

#### *The National Golf Academy University Utara Malaysia Golf Scene*

Golf is a popular sport all around the world. It is a difficult game because both physical and mental skills are required. Golf was brought back to the 2016 Rio Olympics after being absent for over one hundred and twelve years because of its popularity and high following over the last two to three decades. Since the Olympics are the pinnacle of sports, an athlete is considered to be the ultimate. It also raised the profile of golf internationally. The exposure was a boost and an extra popularity for golf. The Rio Olympics 2016 brought golf to undeveloped parts of the world. People who have not previously watched golf have been exposed to it on television. Hopefully, it has had a positive impact on Malaysian golf scene especially in NGA, where more golfers are interested and keep work hard in the sport of golf. Looking at NGA amateur golfers' recent poor performances at international events held both locally and overseas, the need to develop and implement effective talent identification and talent development policies is critical. The failure of NGA golfers to deliver the expected medals at the World University Game (Universiade) and World University Golf Championship (WUGC) since their participation in 2011 has become urgent. The high prestigious event ran by International University Sport Federation (FISU) are held every year. Since NGA is a Pusat Kecermelangan Sukan (PKS) appointed by the Ministry of Higher Education (MOHE) for golf, most athletes who represent the country to the Universiade and WUGC are NGA athletes. As a preparation for athletes, players were given exclusivity and full access to the facilities for training based in UUM. Unfortunately, they failed deliver the expected medals. The expectation was high amongst MOHE and NGA management wanting to see local golfers perform well at the Universiade or WUGC and contribute medals to the overall tally.

#### **The Need for a Model**

The NGA needs a clear vision for its golf sport, with clear development paths. It requires a well-established national development plan, a roadmap or model that defines the skills and knowledge needed to develop talent. It must be recognised that the future development of golf in NGA will be affected without a proper model for elite growth. Therefore, the

knowledge and skills of the NGA management and its coaches need to be developed to improve the identification and development of potential golf talent.

Player development is also a key goal in golf. The breeding ground for future elite golf players is considered to be, (Holt & Morley, 2004). The lack of good structures for development can also mean that very few players reach the highest performance levels. Athletes are selected on the basis of the belief that they can succeed and that they have a strong desire and work ethic to enhance. In golf, the long-term goal is to emphasise development rather than results. Their process of development must be systematic and training is based on the phase of their physical development. The guidelines or key model success factors are to provide athletes with support to achieve success as elite golfers. By providing specific technical skills and tactical play, the training programmes are designed to meet individual needs. All of these variables can contribute to the development of a golf development model for amateur golfers from NGA. The pathway to elite performance of NGA golfers may not be easy without an effective talent development model.

Thus, effort is made to identify the Key Success Factors (KSF's) for talent development environment in golf. According to Martindale et al (2010) there are seven factors was identify such as long term development focus, quality preparation, communication, understanding the athlete, support network, challenging and supportive environment, and long term development fundamentals. Another on further study from Li et al (2015) there are five factors appears to be strongly reliable and valid scale for use in factors of talent development environments in sports.

The five factors talent development environment in sport as follows Li et al (2015); Long-term Development Focus, Holistic Quality Preparation, Communication Support Network and Alignment of Expectation:

i. Long-Term Development Focus

The extent to which developmental programmes are specifically designed to facilitate athletes' long-term success (e.g., fundamental training and rounded development, on-going opportunities, and the emphasis of winning).

ii. Holistic Quality Preparation

The extent to which intervention programmes are prepared both inside and outside of sports settings (e.g., caring coach, clear guidance, mental preparation, and balanced life).

iii. Communication

The extent to which the coach communicates effectively with the athlete in both formal and informal settings (e.g., development path, rationale for training, and feedback).

iv. Support Network

The extent to which a coherent, approachable, and wide-ranging support network is available for the athlete in all areas (e.g., professionals, parents, coaches, and schools).

v. Alignment Of Expectation

The extent to which goals for sport development are coherently set and aligned (e.g., goal setting, goal review, and individualised goals).

The Objective and question in this study was to see the factors was contributed to the talent development environment in golf according to 5 construct namely:

- long-term development focus
- holistic quality preparation
- communication
- support network
- alignment of expectation

## **Method**

### *i. Study Design*

A quantitative research approach will be adopted and a survey method will be used. Survey designs allow researchers to answer three kinds of questions; descriptive questions, questions about the relationships between variables in a longitudinal study or in cases in which a survey design is replicated over time, and questions over time about predictive relationships between variables (Creswell, 2018)

### *ii. Research Instrument*

Talent Development Environment Questionnaire also known as TDEQ-5 by Li, Wang, Pyun, & Martindale (2015) will be used in this study. The TDEQ-5 model with 25 items had meet the reliability coefficient value of .81. The analysis yielded a 25 item 5-factor structure and were scored using a 5 point likert type scale, anchored at 1 (strongly disagree) and 5 (strongly agree) (Chua, 2021).

### *iii. Population and Sampling Study*

A random sample will be used as suggested by (Creswell, 2018). Talented golf athletes who practised under the NGA were the research participants. The participants include the alumni of NGA to join the research as a participant. The sampling technique will apply as suggested by Krecie & Morgan (1970) in (Piaw, 2021). The criteria of the participants also based on excellence in the sport of golf. The minimum criterias is the athletes were trained by the NGA. All participants (N = 146, Male = 98 Female = 48) involved in this research were athletes identified with athletic potential. The NGA has been established to nurture athletes (18 to 30 years old) with athletics potential in golf

### *iv. Study data Analysis*

After collecting the data, the data will be analysed via Statistical Package for the Science Social (SPSS – Version 25) software.

## **Findings**

First, descriptive statistics will be carried out to profile of the participants in this study (Gender, age, club membership, level of participation in golf). A total of 146 (N = 146, Male = 98, Female = 48) useable questionnaires were collected and there was no missing data. The percentage shows that male (67.1%) are much higher than female (32.9%). Majority of the respondents are from the age group 18 to 22 years with 85 respondents (58.2%), followed by the age of group 23 to 26 years with 31 respondents representing 21.2% of the study. The minority of the respondents are from the age group above 27 years with 30 respondents representing 20.5%. Most of the respondents are playing in the national level with 59 respondents representing 40.4%, followed by respondents that playing on the university level

with 34 representing 23.3%. while the minority of the respondents show the respondents are playing in state level with 26 (17.8%) and international level with 27 (18.5%).

The mean and standard deviation on each construct also show the Long-term development focus (M = 4.61, SD = 0.506), Holistic of quality preparation (M = 2.48, SD = 1.076), Communication (M = 4.47, SD = 0.685), Support network (M = 3.93, SD = 0.921) and alignment of expectation (M = 4.42, SD = 0.694). The parametric can be used on this study because all of the mean value on the constructs are greater than standard deviation.

Table 1.1  
*Mean and standard deviation on each construct*

Construct	Mean	Standard Deviation
Long-term development focus	4.61	0.506
Holistic of quality preparation	2.48	1.076
Communication	4.47	0.685
Support network	3.93	0.921
Alignment of expectation	4.42	0.694

#### *Multiple Regression Analysis*

The multiple regression method was used to examine the relationship between the independent and dependent variables. Based on the result, the predicted variables (COM, AOE) are significant contributed to long-term development focus. Construct of communication indicate highest percentage (33.4%) and when combined with construct of alignment of expectation the percentage indicate 37.4%. In conclusion the construct of communication and alignment of expectation are the most highly contributed to the talent development focus in NGA.

Table 1.2  
*Model Summary*

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square
1	.578 <sup>a</sup>	.333	.330
2	.612 <sup>b</sup>	.374	.365

a. Predictors: (Constant), COM

b. Predictors: (Constant), COM, AOE

The Anova table shows the multiple regression analysis was run to predict LTF from COM and AOE. These variables statistically significantly predicted LTF, (F (1,144) = 72.3, p < 0.01 and LTF, (F (2, 143) = 42.7 p < 0.01.

Table 1.3

*Anova*

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	f	Sig.
1	Regression	12.411	1	12.411	72.360	.01*
	Residual	24.699	144	.172		
	Total	37.110	145			
2	Regression	13.877	2	6.939	42.707	.001*
	Residual	23.233	143	.162		
	Total	37.110	145			

a. Dependent Variable: LTF

b. Predictors: (Constant), COM

Based on table 4.13, the highest standardized coefficient beta is 0.578, which is contributed by communication (COM), and followed by alignment of expectation (AOE), which has a beta coefficient of 0.278. This indicates that communication and alignment of expectation has a stronger unique contribution in explaining the dependent variables compared with other variables. Both variables make a significant contribution to the prediction of the dependent variable, as the significant value of both variables is less than 0.05 (Table 23). The unstandardized coefficient B is the beta that will be used in the equation for the model. The B value is an indication to predict the dependent variable values. From the findings shown in table 24, the multiple regression equation is as follows:

$$\text{LTF} = 2.447 + 0.284 \text{ COM} + 0.203 \text{ AOE}$$

Where:

LTF = Long-term development focus

COM = Communication

AOE = Alignment of expectation

Table 1.4

*Coefficients*

Model		Unstandardized	Coefficients	Standardized Coefficients
		B	Std. error	Beta
1	(Constant)	2.700	.227	
	COM	.427	.050	.578
2	(Constant)	2.447	.236	
	COM	.284	.068	.384
	AOE	.203	.067	.278

## Discussions

The discussion explained based on findings through the analysis of the five factors of talent development environment. Besides, this study will discuss the factors that contributed to the success factor on talent development in NGA. Five significant and effective environmental elements that are thought to influence talent development have repeatedly emerged from the talent development literature including long-term development focus, holistic of quality preparation, communication, support network and alignment of expectation.

*i. Long-term Development Focus*

Factor of long-term development focus has indicated positively to talent development environment in NGA where's majority of the respondents strongly agree with coach guidance, training programme and goal settings. It clearly shows the athletes are training under the NGA had received a training programme for a long-term development and trust the process (e.g. „ my coach emphasises that what I do in training and competition is far more important than winning).

*ii. Holistic Quality Preparation*

The holistic quality preparation factor not contributed to the talent development in NGA golf athletes. The value of mean on this construct are weak because the item is related to negative perspective (e.g my coach doesn't appear to be that interested in my life outside of sport, my coach rarely talks to me about my well-being). The head coach of NGA frequently asking about well-being of athlete outside and inside of sports to prevent mental burnout. This clearly show when outside of training sessions, where's coach have a relationship like a good friends with athletes. This can make athletes more comfortable to share problems and ideas either in sports or personal problems.

*iii. Communication*

Based on result, the communication factor strongly contributed to golf athletes talent development environment  $R^2 = 33.4\%$ . This result are in line with study from Li, Martindale, & Sun (2019) where's environmental factor of communication were positive predictors of satisfaction of needs, which then predicted mental strength positively. The most typical situation can be seen in the training environment for NGA athletes is, the head coach always start the session with briefing the athletes on the objective of the training. These are shown on item 1 (my coach and I regularly talk about things I need to do to progress to the top level in my sports) were high value. Besides, the session will ended with a motivation talk such as, what previous world golf athletes have done on their life to be on top of the world. These can boost athlete motivation to achieve their long-term goals.

*iv. Support Network*

The factor of support network show, there's not contributed to talent development environment. There are low value especially in item 1 of the construct (currently, I have access to a variety of different types of professionals to help my sports development e.g., physiotherapist, sport psychological, strength trainer, nutritionist, lifestyle advisor). Since NGA were established, athletes are not provided with others need such as recovery treatment, nutritionist and fitness trainer. Besides, the NGA are in trouble to getting a sponsor for larger expenses on talent development programme. Based on the open-ended question given, the respondent are suggest the need from outside entity to support the development programme especially on funding. It is responsibility of management to attract big companies to provide sponsorship to the development programme.

*v. Alignment Of Expectation*

Alignment of expectation factor contributed to the talent development environment in NGA. Based on result ( $R^2 = 37.4\%$ ), these factor is the most highly contributed. This finding was in line with Gangso, Aspvik, Hoigaard & Seather (2021) has indicate, the top ranked player perceived their alignment of expectation factor on talent development environment,

compared to players from the bottom ranked. Overall of the item show a high mean value  $M = 4.42$ . The relationship between coaches and parents is clearly seen to occur in NGA. Mostly parents are closed with coach and always talk about same direction. In item 2 in the construct (the advice my parents give me fits well with the advice i get from my coaches.) with mean value is  $M = 4.44$ , show that athletes get a parallel advice between coaches and parents

### **Conclusions**

From the research question are listed, only two factors (communication and alignment of expectation) are contributed to the talent development environment in NGA golf athletes. Hence the findings of this study have several implications for research. These findings can help athlete and to refine needs and focus on achieving maximum levels of development. further, its helps NGA management in identifying problems that occur in the talent development environment in NGA. The first implication is that coaches can make this study a source of reference in identifying factors that contribute to talent development through coach-player relationship. Through this study, coaches can understand the policies in the talent development environment that need to be emphasized. Besides, this study provides benefits to coaches to enhance their image and identity as a coach. The implications for management at NGA by applying the proposed development factors can improve the image of management and a more professional management system. In addition, it also raises the name of NGA as an excellent institution as well. Hence, this can make NGA as a golf training centre that is the choice of golf athletes to undergo better training in improving the game to a higher level.

Based on the finding of talent development factors in NGA, the researchers found that there were improvements that could be made in the future of the study. This is because, research on talent development in sports in Malaysia is less and it is very important to conduct this study in the future. Based on the demographic info the study that was conducted only looked at gender, age, club and level of participation. For future studies can add some more demographic info such as athlete status (professional / amateur) and playing experience to see if those demographics influence talent development factors. Future researchers may use different populations. Based on the study, the respondents only consisted of golf athletes who had undergone training at NGA only. Therefore, the researcher recommendation for future research is to review similar studies on a larger population or study student-athletes from other sports. This study is also seen as interesting if conducted on national athletes, especially individual sports in Malaysia.

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