MANAGEMENT OF PREVENTING THE SPREAD OF COVID-19 IN OPERATING THE THAI FOOTBALL LEAGUE SEASON 2021/22

Archavit Choengklinchan[1], Pornchai Trusjaithum[2]

[1]*College of Innovation and Management, Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University, Bangkok, Thailand*
[2]*Faculty of Sports Science, Kasetsart University, Nakhonpathom, Thaialnd*
Email: Archavit.ch@ssru.ac.th[1], Pornchai.Tr@ku.ac.th[2]

ABSTRACT

The purposes of Management of Preventing the Spread of COVID-19 in Operating the Thai Football League Season 2021/22 was to 1) study the preventing the spread of COVID-19 in operating the Thai Football League and 2) study of social confidence in measures to prevent the spread of COVID-19 of the Thai Football League Season. Taro Yamane's formula was applied to deliver the sample size. 400 samples were obtained by the convenience sampling process. The statistics used for data analysis consisted of frequency, percentage, means, standard deviation and regression analysis was applied for hypothesis testing.

The results revealed 3 dimensions detailed in 20 items that described the preventing the spread of COVID-19 in operating the Thai Football League Season 2021/22. The first dimension was players consisted of 3 items, secondly, free environment with consisted of 14 items, and thirdly customer consisted of 3 items. From 3 dimensions with 20 items, no item had mean score below 4.0 (on the 5-point Likert scale), indicating that, overall, respondents were confident in preventing the spread of COVID-19 in Thai Football League operations. The average mean score across all 20 was 4.72. "Screening" item in Customer dimension item had the highest mean score (M = 4.78; SD = 1.15), and the "Distancing" item in Free Environment dimension had the lowest mean score (M = 4.13; SD = 1.57). For all dimensions, the highest average mean score was also Players (M = 4.53; SD = 1.41) and followed by Customer (M = 4.23; SD = 1.29). The lowest average mean score was Free Environment (M = 4.18; SD = 1.31).

Keyword - Operating management, Management of Preventing, Thai Football League

INTRODUCTION

Football is one of the most famous sports in the world. There are approximately 3.5 billion people following, watching, and involving in several football related activities (Paraisocz.com, 2019). Football can reach out to everyone and has the power to united people in the way that others sports does. Only one football can create a group of friends at any place and any time. Currently, there are several countries who have their own football leagues, making new super stars who can develop themselves to play in the world class level. More over

these super stars can not only make themselves very famous, but also earning huge amount of money from being football players.

In Thailand, Football is also a sport that is very popular. Thailand has their own professional football league. This league is operated by Thai League Company Limited which is controlled and supervised by Football Association of Thailand. Thai League Company Limited is also the organization who is responsible for Thai Football League System. At this moment Football leagues in Thailand are developing themselves in the positive way. The growth of Thai League such as the number of average 5,707 audiences per game in season 2019/2020 and the success of getting more quota to play in AFC Champions League from 2+1 team to 2+2 team can tell us clearly that Thai Leagues is going on the right way.

Not only there are more people who are following Thai League, but also the are several people or investors who want to own a football club. Currently a lot of football teams are sent to play in TA Thailand Amateur League which can create a first step to be playing in the professional league. In 2019, 230 teams were sent to participate in TA Thailand Amateur League. It's was the competition that has the highest number of team participants in Thailand history (Football Association of Thailand, 2019)

Nevertheless, in 2020, COVID-19 pandemic brought us a huge negative impact on both domestic and overseas economy. Its impact was far more that we could imagine. Millions of people were sick and died throughout the world. (Department of Disease Control, Ministry of Public Health, 2019). Since Feb, 2020, all Thai League competitions had been postponed without knowing the exact resuming date. For preventing several problems that may happening while managing the future events, organizers had to issue the suitable rules and regulations which would help all parties cope with New Normal life style during the COVID-19 pandemic period. More over Thai League has been preventing everyone from inflecting the virous while attending the games such as inform the attendants to maintain a distance from others, wear a mask in public, clean their hands often, and follow the rules and regulation asked by government.

Objectives of the research
1) To study the preventing the spread of COVID-19 in operating the Thai Football League
2) To study of social confidence in measures to prevent the spread of COVID-19 of the Thai Football League

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Researcher applied mixed method, qualitative with semi-structured interview and quantitative questionnaire survey, for this study. The methodology will be presented in the following 5 sections: (a) generating of items, (b) population and sample, (c) instrumentation, (d) data collection, and (e) data analysis.

Section 1: Generate sample of items

To generate sample of items for conducting survey, semi-structured has been developed by using FA Thailand Operation Manual (season 2021/22) as a guide line for the semi-structured interview.

All semi-structured interview questions were reviewed for assessing reliability and validity from experts who were working as university's lectures in sport management and related areas. Non-probability sampling, purposive selection, was used to select all interviewees. 12 experts were selected to be interviewed, 3 participants from Football Association of Thailand, 3 participants from Sport Authority of Thailand, 3 participants from Ministry of Tourism & Sports, and 3 participants from Department of Disease Control, Ministry of Public Health.

Section 2: Population and Sample

A total 400 persons were selected, 40 persons from the selected 10 teams which were reached for the data collection stage by multistage – sampling method. Participation in this survey were voluntary and had to be 18 years old or over to do the questionnaire. They should had been attended at least one game in the past one year.

Section 3: Instrumentation

The items formed at instrumentation stage were discovered from the semi-structured interview by content analysis. Researcher used these items to develop the questionnaire for the data collection. The experts were asked to evaluate the accuracy of the items for representing the factors identified. In addition, the experts were asked to suggest if there were other items that may better represent the respective factors based on the factor descriptions. The content validation of the questionnaire was reviewed by the panels of 5 experts who expertise in sports industries both academic and business areas. The validity and reliability of the questionnaire were assessed by using Item Objective Congruence Index (IOC) as an evaluation tool. Moreover, the research also selected 30 participants to answer questionnaires as a test trail. The trial result of internal consistency of Cronbach's Alpha was $\alpha = .86$, which was greater than $\alpha = .70$, the cutoff value suggested.

Section 4: Data collection

For conducting the data collection process, 400 samples were randomly selected for conducting the survey in their home games, 40 questionnaires for each team. The research hired administrators to the survey conducting. The administrators were trained to have a good understanding about survey conducting process. Researcher had trained administrators by face to face before the actual dates.

Section 5: Data Analysis

After the survey has been successfully conducted, the statistics used for data analysis consisted of frequency, percentage, means, standard deviation and regression analysis and was applied for hypothesis testing, calculated by SPSS 17.0.

FINDING

Generate the sample of item

The researcher conducted semi-structured interviewing from 12 experts from Football Association of Thailand, Sport Authority of Thailand, Ministry of Tourism & Sports, and Department of Disease Control, Ministry of Public Health. The analysis described their perceptions of the preventing the spread of COVID-19 in operating the Thai Football League. The analysis resulted in 3 dimensions totally detailed in 20 items which described the preventing the spread of COVID-19 in operating the Thai Football League. Table 1 presents the 3 factors with 20 items.

Table 1 The preventing the spread of COVID-19 in operating the Thai Football League

No.	Items	Detail of 20 items from semi-structured interview
Players		
1	Check for infection	No COVID-19 found 48 hours before the match.
2	Vaccine	Complete vaccination
3	UP-DMHTA	Distancing, Mask wearing, Hand washing, Testing, Application
Free Environment		
4	Clean and Safe	Clean sports equipment after every user
5	Clean and Safe	Clean common contact surfaces, bathrooms, toilets every 1-2 hours.
6	Clean and Safe	Organize trash cans with lids. and eliminated every day
7	Clean and Safe	There is a hand washing station with soap. or alcohol gel provide adequate service
8	Clean and Safe	Organize food and beverages individually.
9	Clean and Safe	In case of payment, it is recommended to use electronic payment.
10	Distancing	Set up a pre-registration point
11	Distancing	Organize a clear and adequate queue for entry and exit.
12	Distancing	Determine the number of service users by specifying 4 square meters per 1 person (not more than 25% of the stadium's capacity).
13	Distancing	Refrain from group discussions abstain from eating
14	Ventilation	Provide good and adequate ventilation.
15	Ventilation	In case of using an air conditioner Clean it every 3-6 months.
16	Ventilation	Bathrooms and toilets should have good ventilation. or turn on the ventilation fan throughout use
17	Ventilation	There is a system to supervise, follow up and verify the operation.
Customer		
18	UP-DMHTA	Distancing, Mask wearing, Hand washing, Testing, Application

No.	Items	Detail of 20 items from semi-structured interview
19	Screening	Received all vaccinations according to criteria or had a history of infection for 1-3 months or had a negative ATK test result within 72 hours.
20	Distancing	Refrain from group discussions abstain from eating and refrain from cheering and cheering equipment

Description of the Sample

For the data of this study, 400 participants were expected to fill out a survey online by using Google Forms. The final sample of the study consisted of 234 men (58.5 %) and 166 women (41.5 %). Almost half of the respondents were between 18 and 25 years-old (49.7%). Most of the education of respondents were undergraduate (47.9%), then high school (27.6%). 43.8% of respondents has monthly income from 15,001 to 20,000 Baht and 38.6 % of the respondents has monthly below 10,000 baht. Almost 60% of football fan support their team because their team had performed well. 25.5% of football fan support their team because it is the team of their home town. Finally, in the past one year, every respondent has bought some products, followed information of their teams, or attended the game when their team played.

Descriptive statistics Mean and Standard Deviation:

Descriptive statistics including mean and standard deviation for the variables are presented in Table 4- 3. From 3 factors with 20 items, no item had mean score below 4.0 (on the 5-point Likert scale), indicating that, overall, respondents are confident in preventing the spread of COVID-19 in Thai Football League operations. The average mean score across all 20 was 4.72. "Screening" item in Customer dimension item had the highest mean score ($M = 4.78$; $SD = 1.15$), and the "Distancing" item in Free Environment dimension had the lowest mean score ($M = 4.13$; $SD = 1.57$). For all dimensions, the highest average mean score was also Players ($M = 4.53$; $SD = 1.41$), followed by Customer ($M = 4.23$; $SD = 1.29$). The lowest average mean score was Free Environment ($M = 4.18$; $SD = 1.31$).

CONCLUSION

The COVID-19 pandemic has given a huge negative impact on everyone worldwide. Sports industry is also one of the sectors that has been hit directly from this pandemic. The All stakeholders in sports industry have been carefully handle all problems the best they can. Some of them can survive, some of them already died and some of them in the period of recovering. For football industry in Thailand, even though this industry was direct disturbed by the COVID-19 pandemic, but Thai football industry has successfully taken care itself to overcome all the problems. The obvious evidence is that the result from this research. It shows that no matter how hard COVID-19 hits their life and football games, football fans are always supporting their teams by attending the games, buying products, and following information of their teams.

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