Does Political Governance Influence the Sports Performance of Asia?

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Abstract

National sports are highly valued throughout Asia, yet, political and administrative concerns impede the expansion of the sport system landscape. This study aims to investigate the effect of political governance structure on Asian sporting performance. To accomplish so, we analyzed the relationship between corruption control, government effectiveness, political stability, regulatory law, and national sports performance from 1998 to 2018 while controlling for the rule of law and accountability. The Generalized Linear Model and Partial Least Square estimators were utilized to examine the data. No significant association was observed between political and governance structure and national sports performance in the Asian countries under examination, according to the study's findings. The paper includes recommendations for further research and consequences for the government and policymakers.

Keywords: Political governance, Political stability, National sports performance, Asia, Generalized linear models

1. Introduction

Sports performance in both professional and amateur settings has become crucial for the effective economic and social development of many modern nations. The global expansion of the sports business is attracting the interest of economists. Many experts have suggested that a country's sporting success is intimately related to its demographic, social, and economic conditions (Pauna et al., 2020; Shasha, Abbasi, & Sohail, 2022). In light of Cho, Leary, and Jackson (2012), Asian sports are becoming more globalized and regionalized as they play a crucial part in global sports. In the first quarter of the twentieth century, sports' social, political, and economic significance in the Asian region began to grow. This trend is continuing (Lee & Tan, 2019). Figure 1 depicts the international participants in the Asian games. From the perspective of spectators, the graph depicts the rise and popularity of Asian sports in a worldwide context.

Current empirical evidence identifies various variables that may influence the athletic performance of multiple locations (Corbally, Wilkinson, & Fothergill, 2020; Zambom-Ferraresi, Rios, & Lera-López, 2018). Ghalia et al. (2019) feel that effective institutional quality benefits growth by encouraging cooperation and promoting investment. In the past decade, the growth and profitability of the sports business have been accompanied by increased corruption. Stathopoulou, Quansah, and Balabanis (2022) feel that failure to address corruption and its repercussions may lead to an increase in societal skepticism regarding professional sports, along with several ethical repercussions that affect the effective performance of sports. In addition, dynamic political stability is a promising indicator of sports performance stability (Hamacher et al., 2018; Megheirkouni, 2014).

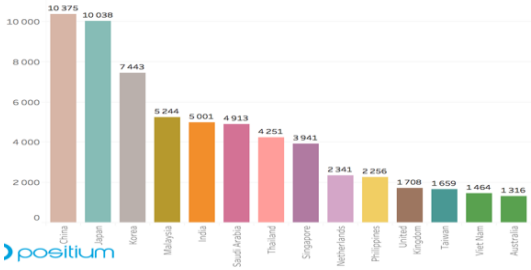

Figure 1. Involvement of global spectators in Asian sports
Source: (Positium, 2018)

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Even though numerous empirical research has successfully studied the impact of major elements, few studies have examined the sports performance of the Asian region. Thus, this study presents several creative ways. To begin with, it examines the sports performance of Asian areas from a novel perspective by focusing on the backdrop of 10 key medal-winning Asian nations. Second, this research examines the sports performance of the Asian region from 1960 to 2018, a fresh perspective in the current literature. Thirdly, as the Asian region has been subject to social and economic development since the beginning of the 20th century, the role of these elements in influencing the sports performance of Asian regions must be determined. In light of these considerations, the primary aims of this study are to analyze the impact of institutional quality on sports performance, to investigate the impact of corruption on sports performance, and to examine the impact of political stability on sports performance in the Asian region.

This study also has other significant ramifications. Asian athletes are becoming increasingly visible globally, and the Asian sports sector is expanding rapidly. Therefore this study examines the region's athletic performance. This study provides a scholarly forum for highlighting the contextual and critical significance of sports studies in the pertinent region in light of the rise and expansion of Asian athletic performance. Theoretically, this study applauds the future contribution of international academics to the analysis of Asian sports. It encourages Asian scholars to increase the significance of sports performance for the region's development and prosperity. Thus, the findings of this study are useful for Asian policymakers in promoting institutional policies, a corruption-free environment, and political stability to accomplish the sustainable development of sports in their particular regions.

2. Literature Review

As a result of their frequent hosting of major international games such as the Olympics and FIFA World Cup, Asian countries have emerged as prominent actors in the global sports sector. China, Japan, and Korea have distinguished themselves as significant hosts for these big sports events. Around the same time, their domestic sports business grew steadily. Nonetheless, the Asian sports industry is far from the significant research on sports management and economics in Western contexts (Lee & Watanabe, 2019). Using data from the World Bank's Global Governance Indicators, a previous study (Potts, 2022) evaluated the relationship between governance and athletic performance in the Summer Olympics from 1996 to 2016 using the Global Governance Indicators. According to the study (Potts, 2022), nations with a high indicator score for the rule of law and control of corruption had fewer athletes disqualified and a greater proportion of medals. Notably, nations with a percentile ranking of 67 or higher have a greater chance of winning medals and a lesser chance of athletes being disqualified. Our findings emphasize the importance of anti-doping legislation and its enforcement in promoting fair play in sports and suggest a link between excellent governance and Olympic success. Government involvement in high-performance sports benefits a nation's cultural, political, and economic development (Bloomfield, 2003; Gordon, 1994; Houlihan, 2005). An econometric model was applied by Andreff (2013) to predict medal successes at the Winter Olympics based on variables such as GDP per capita, population, ski and winter sports resorts, and host nation status. The model was used to predict China's and Russia's performances in the 2014 Sochi Olympics. China projected to improve in future Olympics due to its economic growth, and Russia expected to perform better than in 2010. Gowthorp, Toohey, and Skinner (2017) examined the effect of interaction between the Australian Sports Commission and five Olympic National Sporting Organizations on Olympic performance outcomes. The findings of Gowthorp et al. (2017) revealed concerns over the ASC's administration of NSO programs and Australia's absence of a cohesive high-performance sport system.

The NSO participants lacked faith in the ASC's ability, competence, and expertise to steer Australia's high-performance sports. There is a distinct convergence in high-performance sport management, which means that many nations, including Australia, cannot sustain their advantage in high-performance sports (Houlihan, 2013). Houlihan also noted that many countries had adopted an isomorphic mimetic strategy in high-performance athletics, technology, coaching, and top facilities. Hence, gaining a competitive advantage in elite athletics has become more difficult and costly (Houlihan, 2013). Adopting the methods and procedures of nations with a history of success is not always a guarantee of achievement. Yet, there is a growing realization that the success of elite sports programs is due to the efficient management and implementation of high-performance plans by the government and sporting organizations (De Bosscher et al., 2006). According to Sam (2009), governments today have high hopes for the ability of their participation in sports to promote economic growth, reduce healthcare expenses, foster social cohesion, and strengthen national identity. According to Bergsgard et al. (2007), the rationale for government involvement in sports includes promoting health, military prowess, national pride, unification, social

peace, and reducing crime. Houlihan commented that an increasing number of nations are participating in this activity (Houlihan, 2013). In economics, management, social science, and political science, the new institutional theories have become the de facto standard for organizational research (Furubotn & Richter, 2010; Maharoof, Kumari, & Ilangasekara, 2022; March & Olsen, 2011; Milgrom & Roberts, 1992; Scharpf, 2018). The study Green (2009) examined how altering governance models affect two current aims in sport policy: boosting public participation in sports and physical activity and fostering the development of elite athletes.

Table 1

Empirical evidence from past studies

Author	Country	Period	Variables	Methodology	Results
(Ma & Kurscheidt, 2019)	China	1993-2018	Elite sport development, sports governance, sport policy	Institutional analysis.	NGC is not responsible for undesirable results like manipulating amateur sports and amateur talent development.
(Meier & Mutz, 2018)	33 countries	1896-2010	International sports, sport-related national pride	Programmatic-level analyses	National pride in sports appears to be inversely correlated with economic growth.
(Csurilla & Fertő, 2023)	Host countries	1996-2021	Sports performance, hosting	Econometric model Robustness analysis	Australia and the United Kingdom may be the only two nations where the host effect may be seen. The findings imply that conclusions are impervious to model assumptions and estimators.
(De Bosscher & Kerckhofs, 2016)	20 countries with the highest score in Olympic	1992-2012	High-performance sports systems, sports policies, judo, international sporting success	Mix-Method Research Exploratory Factor Analysis	Exploratory Factor Analysis results show that organizational aspects that affect high-performance judo's ability to compete internationally are connected and have been independently validated.
(Wu et al., 2023)	Japan	1996-2012	International sporting performance, simple ippons	Documentary analysis	Elite sporting culture may not necessarily lead to better athletic performance. It has a negative impact.

National governments have supported high-performance sports for various reasons, including believing they might drive individuals to participate (Grix & Carmichael, 2012). Since its inception, governments have exploited high-performance sports as a national identity politics platform to glorify athletic achievements as emblems of national strength (Krüger, 1995). Such political interpretations of athletic exploits considerably contribute to the drive for athletic dominance and the development of extraordinarily complex sports infrastructures leveraging the most recent advances in exercise and training physiology (Hunt, 2007; Waddington, 1996). Compared to sports with objective results, research on the Olympic Games indicates that past performance is a better predictor of future performance in sports where external judges and officials may influence the outcomes. The same pattern was observed in individual boxing matches, when subjective rather than objective boxing results were more influenced by national achievement in the past (Waguespack & Salomon, 2016). Governments provide funding to assist their athletes in achieving excellent results on home soil before the Olympic Games. Researchers usually incorporate a host effect into their models to explain the large increase in the number of medals won by the host nation. This effect is demonstrated by studies employing aggregated data, in which the host dummy variable has a large positive effect on the number of medals (Bernard & Busse, 2004; Contreras

& Corvalan, 2014; Rewilak, 2021; Singleton et al., 2021). This research aims to add to the existing theoretical literature by introducing additional determinants, such as government effectiveness, regulatory quality, corruption control, and political stability variables, to empirical studies. In addition, the study aims to contribute to the empirical literature by examining sports performance using a rare case methodology.

3. Methodology

The pooled ordinary least square (OLS) method is utilized in this study to estimate the connection between the dependent and independent variables. This study selected eleven countries as a panel (Thailand, Indonesia, China, India, Pakistan, Iran, Japan, Philippines, South Korea, and North Korea). In addition, the researcher collected six years of observations for the analysis (1998, 2002, 2006, 2010, 2014, and 2018). The basis for selecting these nations is that they have won the most medals at the Asian Games. In addition to the pooled OLS method, the researcher utilized the Generalized Linear Model (GLM), a linear regression model used to evaluate the association between IVs and DVs. This model was utilized to validate the findings of pooled OLS.

This study's dependent variable was sports performance. The researcher utilized each country's entire medal haul to operationalize sports performance. The study includes independent factors of institutional quality, corruption control, and political stability. Two indices were used to quantify institutional quality: government effectiveness and regulatory quality. The control of corruption index was developed to measure corruption control. In addition, the terrorism index was used to assess political stability. This study also included two control variables, accountability, and the rule of law, each examined using its index. These control variables helped to account for the underlying issues that affected athletic performance.

$$NSP_{it} = \alpha + \beta_1 GE_{it} + \beta_2 RQ_{it} + \beta_3 CC_{it} + \beta_4 PS_{it} + \beta_5 ACC_{it} + \beta_6 RL_{it} + \varepsilon_{it}$$

NSP represents national sports performance, GE and RQ represent regulatory quality and government effectiveness, which were used to measure institutional quality, CC, PS, RL, and ACC represent corruption control, political stability, accountability, and the rule of law, while it is the error term.

4. Results

The descriptive summary of the data, including the mean, kurtosis, and Jarque-Bera test, is presented in Table 2. Kurtosis and skewness values for a normal distribution must fall within the intervals of -7 to +7 and -2 to +2, respectively (Hair et al., 2010). Except for NSP, the readings indicate that all variables fall within the recommended range. Likewise, the Jarque-Bera test reveals that NSP and PS do not have a normal distribution, as $p > 0.05$, but the remaining variables have a normal distribution.

Table 2

Descriptive Statistics

	CC	GE	NSP	PS	RL	RQ	VA
Mean	39.75512	51.30588	121.3833	31.15232	44.38561	41.81355	38.34754
Median	38.54820	52.80158	47.50000	22.59259	41.34616	43.02885	43.01091
Maximum	92.30769	96.63461	2016.000	93.08511	90.50000	88.94231	81.04266
Minimum	1.923077	0.478469	0.000000	0.473934	1.923077	0.000000	0.000000
Std. Dev.	23.86855	24.37494	271.4977	25.62639	25.16331	25.37713	26.74828
Skewness	0.536068	-0.349389	5.826386	1.016269	0.356562	-0.076978	-0.012665
Kurtosis	2.655818	2.777856	40.93972	2.940164	2.174156	2.198345	1.569493
Jarque-Bera	3.169839	1.344096	3938.024	10.33697	2.976413	1.665883	5.117478
Probability	0.204964	0.510662	0.000000	0.005693	0.225777	0.434769	0.077402
Sum	2385.307	3078.353	7283.000	1869.139	2663.137	2508.813	2300.853
Sum Sq. Dev.	33612.76	35054.13	4348950.	38746.00	37358.32	37995.92	42212.77
Observations	60	60	60	60	60	60	60

CC= Corruption control, GE= Government effectiveness, NSP= National sports performance, PS= Political stability, RL= Rule of law, RQ= Regulatory quality, VA= Voice and accountability

The results of cross-sectional dependence tests indicate that error terms are not cross-correlated, as shown in Table 3. (Pesaran, 2021). The null hypothesis assumes unit dependency across sections. Cross-sectional dependence may result from common shocks or incorrect model parameterization. Hence, cross-sectional dependence between the series must be accounted for to provide accurate and impartial results. The test statistics of the three

tests provided in Table 2 indicate that the null hypothesis of no cross-sectional dependence is accepted with a p-value less than 0.05.

Table 3

Cross-Section Dependence Test

Test	Statistic	d.f.	Prob.
Breusch-Pagan LM	58.63297	45	0.0835
Pesaran scaled LM	0.382948		0.7018
Pesaran CD	2.308918		0.0209

Checking the unit root is the most critical statistical method for panel or time series data following tests of cross-sectional dependency. The unit root statistics for the level and first difference variables are provided in Table 4. The null hypothesis of the unit root test implies the presence of a unit root and non-stationarity of data, i.e., panel variables contain a unit root. In contrast, the alternative hypothesis assumes the lack of a unit root, indicating that the panel series is stationary (Pesaran, 2015). Table 3's results indicate that variables CC, RL, RQ, and VA are stationary, whereas variables GE, NSP, and PS are non-stationary, indicating that the order of integration is one. Therefore, it was necessary to calculate the first differences to attain stationarity for all variables. The outcomes demonstrate that all variables are stationary at the first difference.

Table 4

Unit Root Test

Variable	Level	First difference
CC	49.25**	77.69**
GE	54.91	52.77**
NSP	19.76	31.80**
PS	23.37	37.17*
RL	73.79**	83.55*
RQ	51.40**	69.5**
VA	43.39**	64.25**

CC= Corruption control, GE= Government effectiveness, NSP= National sports performance, PS= Political stability, RL= Rule of law, RQ= Regulatory quality, VA= Voice and accountability

Generalized Linear Model (GLM) and Partial Least Squares (PLS) regression analysis were performed. Originally, we calculated the correlations using GLM; the results are shown in Table 4. It is evident that RL and VA negatively impact the national sporting achievements of Asian nations. With $p > 0.05$, however, the hypotheses are rejected. Moreover, CC, GE, PS, and RQ positively affect national sporting performance. The data do not support the hypotheses at the 5% significance level. Hence, we conclude that Asia's political and administrative framework has little effect on national sporting success.

Table 5

Generalization Linear Model

Variable	Coefficient	Std. Error	z-Statistic	Prob.
CC	6.284545	4.653418	1.350522	0.1768
GE	1.398592	4.659821	0.300139	0.7641
PS	1.617109	2.206528	0.732875	0.4636
RL	-1.822566	5.487849	-0.332109	0.7398
RQ	0.763943	3.901223	0.195821	0.8447
VA	-2.744458	2.550860	-1.075895	0.2820
C	-96.39647	82.15930	-1.173287	0.2407
Mean dependent var	121.3833	SD dependent var		271.4977
Sum squared resid	3143927.	Log-likelihood		-411.3571
Akaike info criterion	13.94524	Schwarz criterion		14.18958
Hannan-Quinn criter.	14.04081	Deviance		3143927.
Deviance statistic	59319.39	Restr. deviance		4348950.
LR statistic	20.31415	Prob(LR statistic)		0.002434
Pearson SSR	3143927.	Pearson statistic		59319.39
Dispersion	59319.39			

CC= Corruption control, GE= Government effectiveness, PS= Political stability, RL= Rule of law, RQ= Regulatory quality, VA= Voice and accountability

Table 6 illustrates the results of the regression analysis. The regression coefficients indicate that only RL and VA harm national athletic performance; nevertheless, a p-value greater than 0.05 renders the results insignificant. Similarly, it was determined that the effects of CC, GE, PS, and RQ were positive but minor. According to the R-square result, only

27.7% of the variance in the dependent variable, sports performance, is explained by the independent variables. This demonstrates that the suggested model forecasts national sports performance inadequately. Both regression analyses in Tables 4 and 5 demonstrate that political and administrative issues do not impact the performance of Asian sports.

Table 6

Partial Least Square

Variable	Coefficient	Std. Error	t-Statistic	Prob.
CC	6.284545	4.653418	1.350522	0.1826
GE	1.398592	4.659821	0.300139	0.7652
PS	1.617109	2.206528	0.732875	0.4669
RL	-1.822566	5.487849	-0.332109	0.7411
RQ	0.763943	3.901223	0.195821	0.8455
VA	-2.744458	2.550860	-1.075895	0.2868
C	-96.39647	82.15930	-1.173287	0.2459
R-squared	0.277084	Mean dependent var		121.3833
Adjusted R-squared	0.195244	SD dependent var		271.4977
SE of regression	243.5557	Akaike info criterion		13.93785
Sum squared resid	3143927.	Schwarz criterion		14.18219
Log-likelihood	-411.1355	Hannan-Quinn criter.		14.03342
F-statistic	3.385691	Durbin-Watson stat		2.624778
Prob(F-statistic)	0.006698			

CC= Corruption control, GE= Government effectiveness, PS= Political stability, RL= Rule of law, RQ= Regulatory quality, VA= Voice and accountability

5. Discussion

Having a history dating back thousands of years, sports have been integral to human culture for centuries. As societies have evolved, sports have evolved into sophisticated, intensely competitive activities that attract millions of players and spectators worldwide. In recent years, there has been a growing interest in the relationship between politics and sports, specifically how political governance may affect sports performance. While there have been many studies examining this relationship in various regions of the world, there has been limited research on the effect of political governance on sports performance in Asia, specifically how factors such as government effectiveness, regulatory quality, corruption control, and political stability influence sports performance in Asia. This research tries to fill this vacuum in the literature by investigating secondary data on several political governance parameters and their link with sports performance throughout Asia. This study could contribute to a better understanding of the complex relationship between sports and politics in Asia by shedding light on the potential impact of political governance on sports performance in the region. Political instability can disrupt sports activity and infrastructure, negatively impacting performance. As was the case, political instability can also present opportunities for sports to serve as a unifying factor and a source of national pride (Kshetri & Rojas-Torres, 2018). Stathopoulou et al. (2022) feel that failure to analyze corruption and its repercussions might increase societal skepticism about professional sports, which has numerous ethical repercussions that affect the effective performance of sports.

Moreover, dynamic political stability is viewed as an additional positive sign of the consistency of sports achievement (Hamacher et al., 2018; Megheirkouni, 2014). According to the statistics, CC, GE, PS, RL, RQ, VA, and C were among the variables analyzed regarding Asia's athletic performance. The R-squared value of 0.277804 shows that the variables evaluated in the analysis can account for approximately 27.7% of the variance in Asian athletic performance. The p-values greater than 0.05 suggest that none of the variables had a statistically significant influence on Asian athletic performance. This suggests that political governance in Asia, as expressed by these variables, may not substantially affect athletic performance. Noting that the coefficient for variable "C" is negative but not statistically significant demonstrates that sports performance may not always be greater in countries with higher per capita GDPs. No previous research demonstrates the considerable effect of political governance on athletic performance. Overall, these data lend some credence to the notion that political governance in Asia has little effect on sports performance. Still, additional research is necessary to appreciate the complex

interplay between these variables fully. Future research could examine the relationship between other components of political governance, such as political rights and civil liberties, economic growth, cultural values, and sports policy.

6. Conclusion

This study examined the impact of political governance, including corruption, government effectiveness, political stability, the rule of law, regulatory quality, and voice and accountability, on Asian sports success. The results of the regression analysis revealed that the aspects of political governance have no meaningful effect. Little empirical studies have explored the athletic prowess of the Asian region, despite the efficacy of several empirical studies in examining the influence of key factors. This study provides several inventive methods for examining the athletic prowess of Asian locations. As an initial observational framework, ten Asian nations that consistently win many medals are utilized. Second, this study examines the athletic achievements of Asia from 1960 to 2018, adding a novel perspective to the existing literature. Thirdly, because the Asian region has seen social and economic expansion since the turn of the 20th century, it is crucial to determine how these factors have impacted the athletic performance of Asian regions. There is a complex relationship between political governance and athletic performance, and additional research is required to appreciate the underlying mechanisms and relationships completely.

Implications

Overall, these findings have significant implications for policymakers and sports organizations across Asia, underlining the need to address additional elements to promote a more hospitable climate for the development and success of sports. In addition, it is essential to adopt a flexible and adaptable strategy for developing sports, taking into account the unique challenges and opportunities presented by the political and social context, given the region's diverse political and cultural origins. Collaborating with local governments, communities, and stakeholders may be required to identify and address the unique requirements and priorities of various regions and populations.

Limitations and Future Research

Nonetheless, it is essential to consider the limitations of this study. Because it only evaluates a limited number of variables, the analysis may omit other crucial factors that could influence sports performance. Also, the study is limited to a set time period. Thus it may not truly reflect the current status of Asia. This study utilizes secondary data that may not have been collected specifically for this research question. The results could be affected by the limitations or biases of the data. Instead of relying solely on secondary data sources, use data acquired specifically for the subject of the study. This could aid in ensuring that the data is accurate, dependable, and obtained in a manner pertinent to the study issue. In the future, this research could be enhanced by incorporating other components and considering many periods. Qualitative research could be used to investigate how political governance may or may not affect sports performance in Asia. The findings of this study suggest that political governance may not have a significant effect on the athletic performance of Asian athletes, but further research is required to comprehend this link fully.

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