

Stakeholder Needs for the Development of the Sports Science and Recreation for Health Program at Phuket Rajabhat University

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Abstract

This research aimed to investigate the stakeholder needs for the development of the Sports Science and Recreation for Health Program at Phuket Rajabhat University. The study employed a mixed-method research design, integrating both quantitative and qualitative approaches. Data were collected through questionnaires and semi-structured interviews with a sample of 310 stakeholders. Data analysis included percentages, means, standard deviations, and content analysis. The findings revealed that stakeholder needs were at a high level across all dimensions, with the Character dimension receiving the highest mean score, followed by Ethics, Knowledge, and Skills, respectively. Furthermore, the stakeholder needs for program development encompassed four essential dimensions: Knowledge, comprising both theoretical and practical knowledge in the field as specified by the curriculum; Skills, including both soft skills and hard skills relevant to the discipline; Ethics, encompassing moral and ethical values, integrity, positive professional attitudes, and demonstration of good social conduct; and Character, comprising good personality, physical appearance, robust health, self-confidence, leadership qualities, and assertiveness. Additionally, the findings suggest that program management must be aligned with current situations and keep pace with advancements in sports science and recreation for health.

Keywords: needs, stakeholder, sports science and recreation for health program

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Introduction

Thailand's sports industry is undergoing a significant transformation driven by the "Sport as Lifestyle & Community" concept. The successful hosting of major events, such as the SEA Games 2025, generated economic circulation of approximately 14 billion baht, with further momentum anticipated from the Moto GP 2026 in Buriram Province. Beyond the competitive dimension, a notable shift in consumer behavior toward mind-body balance has emerged, with meditation-related activities growing by 148 percent. Social phenomena such as Run Club and Soft Clubbing have transformed public parks and commercial spaces into new forms of social and economic communities. Although the overall fitness market has expanded remarkably to a value of over 12 billion baht, a key challenge remains the equitable distribution of this growth across regions, as approximately 80 percent of market activity is still concentrated in Bangkok. Accordingly, the strategic direction forward requires a coordinated effort between the public and private sectors to manage infrastructure investment and tax incentive policies systematically, with the ultimate goal of positioning Thailand as a sustainable Global Sports and Wellness Hub (Economics Tourism and Sports Division, 2026).

Curriculum development is a critical process that impacts the quality of graduates and the generation of new knowledge for the nation. Particularly in an era where society and technology are rapidly evolving, higher education institutions must develop curricula that are contemporary and aligned with labor market demands at both national and international levels. Furthermore, curriculum development must adhere to the Thai Qualifications Framework for Higher Education (TQF) to ensure academic quality and produce qualified graduates who can respond to national development strategies across various dimensions, including economy, society, and sustainable development. Curriculum development must therefore undergo a comprehensive process of research, contextual analysis, environmental assessment, and multifaceted stakeholder engagement (Wongpanit, 2025).

A popular approach to curriculum development in Thailand is Outcome-Based Education (OBE), which focuses on learning outcomes that graduates should possess upon completion of their studies. These learning outcomes serve as the framework and direction for all teaching and learning management within the curriculum (Katawazai, 2021). This approach aims to develop graduates with quality and competencies ready for employment, capable of effectively adapting to changes in economy, society, and culture. OBE is thus a learner-centered teaching approach that emphasizes systematic curriculum planning and assessment to achieve predetermined objectives and outcomes. This educational model stresses accountability in the teaching process and learner achievement, aiming to enable all learners to reach established educational goals. OBE differs distinctly from traditional teacher-centered education by shifting to learner-centered learning, promoting the effective development of skills and knowledge appropriate to real-life and workplace needs (Thepsaeng et al., 2023).

Phuket Rajabhat University is the sole comprehensive higher education institution on Thailand's Andaman coast. According to Section 7 of the Rajabhat University Act 2004, the university's mission focuses on local development, strengthening national intellectual capacity, revitalizing learning systems, celebrating local wisdom, and cultivating arts and sciences for sustainable advancement. In 2021, following a self-assessment based on the Ministerial Regulation on Higher Education Institution Grouping 2021, the Ministry of Higher Education, Science, Research and Innovation officially designated Phuket Rajabhat University as a Group 3 institution: Area-based and Community Engagement. This classification positions the university as an institution with missions focused on developing local communities, serving as

a learning center for knowledge and technology transfer, and providing lifelong learning opportunities that lead to sustainable development (Phuket Rajabhat University, 2024).

Therefore, in developing the Bachelor of Science curriculum in Sports Science and Recreation for Health, stakeholder needs are utilized as primary data for analysis to establish appropriate learning outcomes and guide curriculum development approaches, such as determining curriculum structure, course specifications, course-level and year-level learning outcomes, organizing teaching and learning activities, and implementing effective assessment methods that align with the genuine needs of the labor market and the constantly evolving professional landscape. A quality curriculum should be developed to respond maximally to the needs of learners, stakeholders, and societal demands.

Objective of the Study

To investigate the stakeholder needs for the development of the Sports Science and Recreation for Health Program at Phuket Rajabhat University.

Methodology

The study employed a mixed-method research design, integrating both quantitative and qualitative approaches. The sample consisted of 310 stakeholders, comprising 150 prospective upper-secondary students, 30 employers and industry representatives, 120 alumni and current students, and 10 instructors. Data were collected through questionnaires and semi-structured interviews. The questionnaire was validated by three experts and demonstrated satisfactory reliability. Data analysis included percentages, means, standard deviations, and content analysis.

Conclusions

This section presents the findings of the study on stakeholder needs for the development of the Sports Science and Recreation for Health Program at Phuket Rajabhat University. The results are organized into two sections: Section 1 reports the quantitative findings derived from questionnaire data, while Section 2 presents the qualitative findings obtained through semi-structured interviews. Together, these findings provide a comprehensive understanding of stakeholder expectations across four key domains: Knowledge, Skills, Ethics, and Character.

Section 1: Stakeholder Needs for the Development of the Sports Science and Recreation for Health Program Based on Questionnaire Results

Table 1

Stakeholder Needs in Knowledge

Knowledge Domain	Mean	SD	Level
1. Knowledge of basic sciences, including physics, chemistry, biology, mathematics, and technology	4.00	0.80	High
2. Knowledge of sports science and recreation, such as health care principles, physical fitness training principles, sports psychology, first aid, rehabilitation principles, sports management, sports tourism, and recreation for health	4.16	0.89	High

Knowledge Domain	Mean	SD	Level
3. Knowledge of modern equipment and its application in sports science and recreation, such as exercise equipment and physical fitness testing devices	4.50	0.91	Highest
4. Knowledge of foreign languages in sports science and recreation, such as basic terminology in anatomy and physiology, basic terminology related to movement/exercise postures	4.22	0.73	High
5. Knowledge of physical activities and sports, such as the importance of physical activity, types of physical activities appropriate for each age group, consequences of physical inactivity, and basic health maintenance	4.10	0.86	High
6. Knowledge of leadership principles in sports science and recreation, such as leading aerobic dance sessions and coaching exercise and sports	4.02	0.80	High
Overall Knowledge Domain	4.17	0.83	High

The overall stakeholder needs in the knowledge domain were rated at a high level ($M = 4.17$). Among the six specific areas, knowledge of modern equipment and its application in sports science and recreation received the highest rating ($M = 4.50$), followed by knowledge of foreign languages in sports science and recreation ($M = 4.22$), knowledge of sports science and recreation principles ($M = 4.16$), knowledge of physical activities and sports ($M = 4.10$), knowledge of leadership principles in sports science and recreation ($M = 4.02$), and knowledge of basic sciences ($M = 4.00$).

Table 2
Stakeholder Needs in Skills

Skills Domain	Mean	SD	Level
1. Critical thinking, problem analysis, and problem-solving skills in sports science and recreation work	4.10	0.80	High
2. Skills in using computer software, electronic mail communication, and applications for communication and creative work	4.00	0.79	High
3. Skills in collecting, analyzing, and presenting physical fitness data, such as using testing/training equipment and evaluating physical fitness results	4.08	0.83	High
4. Foreign language proficiency in sports science and recreation profession, including listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills in foreign languages used in professional practice	4.02	0.85	High
5. Exercise skills for developing health and physical fitness of oneself and others	4.14	0.94	High
6. Skills in using exercise equipment to develop health and physical fitness of oneself and others	4.05	0.76	High
7. Leadership skills in sports science and recreation	4.12	0.86	High
8. Teamwork skills in sports science and recreation	4.40	0.83	Highest
Overall Skills Domain	4.11	0.85	High

The overall stakeholder needs in the skills domain were rated at a high level ($M = 4.11$). Among the eight specific areas, teamwork skills in sports science and recreation received the highest

rating ($M = 4.40$), followed by exercise skills for developing health and physical fitness ($M = 4.14$), leadership skills in sports science and recreation ($M = 4.12$), critical thinking and problem-solving skills ($M = 4.10$), skills in collecting and analyzing physical fitness data ($M = 4.08$), skills in using exercise equipment ($M = 4.05$), foreign language proficiency ($M = 4.02$), and skills in using computer software and applications ($M = 4.00$).

Table 3
Stakeholder Needs in Ethics

Ethics Domain	Mean	SD	Level
1. Possess morality, ethics, honesty, and integrity	4.50	0.72	Highest
2. Demonstrate discipline, punctuality, and responsibility toward oneself and society	4.25	0.70	High
3. Show generosity, compassion, and kindness toward oneself and society	4.30	0.68	High
4. Possess Thai consciousness and participate in environmental conservation	4.20	0.74	High
5. Demonstrate public consciousness, respect for rights, openness to others' opinions, sacrifice for the common good, and participation in sports	4.29	0.71	High
6. Demonstrate courage in academic and research ethics	4.16	0.73	High
7. Ability to comply with rules, regulations, and policies, and adapt to living in society	4.27	0.76	High
Overall Ethics Domain	4.28	0.74	High

The overall stakeholder needs in the ethics domain were rated at a high level ($M = 4.28$). Among the seven specific areas, possessing morality, ethics, honesty, and integrity received the highest rating ($M = 4.50$), followed by showing generosity and compassion ($M = 4.30$), demonstrating public consciousness and participation in sports ($M = 4.29$), ability to comply with rules and adapt to society ($M = 4.27$), demonstrating discipline and punctuality ($M = 4.25$), possessing Thai consciousness and environmental conservation ($M = 4.20$), and demonstrating courage in academic and research ethics ($M = 4.16$).

Table 4
Stakeholder Needs in Character

Character Domain	Mean	SD	Level
1. Possess good interpersonal skills	4.60	0.72	Highest
2. Demonstrate intellectual curiosity, eagerness to learn, observational skills, and critical thinking	4.30	0.55	High
3. Show humility, politeness, and proper manners	4.43	0.74	Highest
4. Ability to coordinate with people at various levels and work effectively in teams	4.18	0.81	High
5. Possess good personality and well-proportioned physique	4.15	0.63	High
6. Demonstrate leadership in sports science and recreation, such as confidence, self-expression, and attention to health	4.10	0.75	High
7. Ability to play sports, love exercise, and maintain good physical and mental health	4.33	0.80	High
Overall Character Domain	4.30	0.80	High

The overall stakeholder needs in the character domain were rated at a high level ($M = 4.30$). Among the seven specific areas, possessing good interpersonal skills received the highest rating ($M = 4.60$), followed by showing humility and proper manners ($M = 4.43$), ability to play sports and maintain good health ($M = 4.33$), demonstrating intellectual curiosity and critical thinking ($M = 4.30$), ability to coordinate and work in teams ($M = 4.18$), possessing good personality and well-proportioned physique ($M = 4.15$), and demonstrating leadership in sports science and recreation ($M = 4.10$).

Section 2: Stakeholder Needs for the Development of the Sports Science and Recreation for Health Program Based on Interview Results

In the knowledge domain, it was found that students should possess knowledge in sports science, both theoretical and practical, including exercise leadership, sports coaching, exercise program design, sports physiology, sports biomechanics, sports nutrition, sports technology, sports psychology, sports medicine, fitness testing, fitness training, sports management, sports tourism, and recreation for health. The majority of respondents indicated that students in the Sports Science and Recreation for Health program should possess diverse and comprehensive knowledge with a genuine understanding of sports science fundamentals. Students should be able to apply this knowledge practically in concrete ways, such as utilizing sports science knowledge to develop athletes' physical fitness and prevent sports injuries. This diverse and comprehensive knowledge base will provide students with a strong foundation in sports science and exercise, contributing to their academic and professional development in the future.

In the skills domain, findings indicated that students should develop both soft skills and hard skills. Soft skills include communication, teaching, interpersonal relationships, emotional stability, emotional intelligence, and problem-solving abilities. Hard skills encompass concrete competencies such as exercise leadership, sports technology utilization, exercise program design, athlete consultation and basic injury care, and fitness testing and evaluation. Students should be able to apply sports science knowledge practically in real contexts. The majority of respondents further emphasized the importance of learning and innovation skills, creative thinking, effective communication, teamwork, information and media technology literacy, and life and career skills. Students should demonstrate leadership, responsibility, continuous self-development, and the ability to analyze and distinguish between correct and incorrect practices efficiently.

In the ethics domain, it was found that students should demonstrate commitment to correctness and professional ethics, possess discipline, sacrifice, honesty, positive attitudes toward the profession, morality and ethics, responsibility toward themselves and others, punctuality, maintenance of clients' interests and confidentiality, and provision of truthful information. Regarding ethical needs, actions or behaviors reflecting moral and ethical character are crucial for the sports science and exercise profession. As the majority of respondents indicated in their description of graduate qualities, these include honesty, discipline, punctuality, responsibility, and sacrifice.

In the character domain, it was found that students should possess good personality, self-confidence, leadership qualities, courage in self-expression, good physical and mental health, humility, trustworthiness, and intellectual curiosity in seeking new professional knowledge. External characteristics, such as having a good physique, fit body, and robust health appropriate to the profession, serve as an important foundation for establishing credibility. Therefore, it is essential to maintain an appropriate and age-suitable physique at all times.

The findings derived from four stakeholder groups — comprising 150 prospective students at the upper secondary level, 30 employers and organizations from the tourism, hotel, fitness, sports club, and health industries, 120 alumni and current students, and 10 instructors across general education, specialized, and elective course categories — were synthesized to identify key needs for establishing the Program Learning Outcomes (PLOs). These outcomes are organized into four domains: (1) Knowledge — the ability to explain knowledge in sports science and recreation for health; (2) Skills — the ability to apply sports science and recreation knowledge in professional practice in the digital era; (3) Ethics — the ability to practice in accordance with professional ethics and integrity in sports, and to adhere to social norms; and (4) Character — demonstrating leadership, assertiveness, effective communication, and the ability to work collaboratively with others.

In conclusion, stakeholder needs for the development of the Sports Science and Recreation for Health Program at Phuket Rajabhat University can be summarized into four essential domains. First, the knowledge domain encompasses both theoretical and practical knowledge in the field as specified by the curriculum. Second, the skills domain includes both soft skills and hard skills relevant to the discipline. Third, the ethics domain emphasizes morality, ethics, honesty, positive professional attitudes, and demonstration of good social conduct. Fourth, the character domain comprises good personality, physical appearance, robust health, self-confidence, leadership qualities, and courage in self-expression.

The findings of this study have several practical implications for curriculum development in higher education. The Bachelor of Science Program in Sports Science and Recreation for Health is well-aligned with national and regional policy directions across multiple dimensions. At the national level, the program supports the 13th National Economic and Social Development Plan (2023–2027), the Higher Education Plan for Workforce Production and Development (2021–2027), the New S-Curve target industries policy, and the 7th National Sports Development Plan (2023–2027), all of which emphasize the development of a skilled workforce in health, sports science, and wellness tourism. The program further aligns with the government's Soft Power policy by integrating Thai local wisdom with modern sports science. At the provincial level, the program is consistent with the Phuket 20-Year Master Plan (2023–2042), known as GEMMMSSSSFFFT, which encompasses pillars of Tourism, Health, Sport, and Education, thereby preparing graduates to drive sustainable development across the Phuket and Andaman region.

This study has several limitations that should be acknowledged. First, the sample was limited to 310 stakeholders affiliated with Phuket Rajabhat University and its surrounding community, which may limit the generalizability of the findings to other regional or national contexts. Second, the reliance on self-reported questionnaire data may introduce response bias, as participants may have rated all items favorably. Third, the cross-sectional design of the study captures stakeholder needs at a single point in time and may not reflect changes in industry demands over time. Future research should consider longitudinal approaches and broader sampling strategies to validate and extend these findings.

Declaration of Generative AI and AI-Assisted Technologies in the Writing Process

The authors declare that AI-assisted technologies were used solely for grammatical review and sentence refinement. The ideas, design, procedures, findings, analyses, and discussion are originally written and derived from careful and systematic conduct of the research.

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