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Implementation of planning, organizing, actuating, and controlling (POAC) management functions in a community-based karate dojo

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ABSTRACT

The ability to manage an organization effectively is recognized as an important factor determining results at club-level sports. However, most studies about organization management in sports focus on large urban sports clubs based in Western countries and not many empirical works address the management function of small, local martial arts clubs in developing countries. How the four traditional management functions planning, organizing, actuating and controlling (POAC) are carried out in small community-based martial arts organizations located in developing regions is still unknown. Purpose: By exploring stakeholders views on the use of POAC-based management in a karate training center in West Pasaman Regency of Indonesia, this paper gives a first picture of a local club management situation that has, until now, never had any performances or data on management documented. Methods: A study that describes a specific situation quantitatively without drawing generalizations was done. As the total population of people involved (20) was rather small, all people that participated: athletes, coaches and administrators, were chosen for a survey through Total Sampling (a census of the entire available population, i.e., complete enumeration rather than qualitative data saturation). A questionnaire with the Likert-type format was used asking for opinion on the four domains of the POAC theory. The results were shown as mean figures, percentiles and norm-referenced distribution. Reliability (Cronbach's alpha) and validity evidence for the questionnaire were not formally assessed in this study; this is acknowledged as a limitation and discussed further below. Results: Stakeholders' perceptions on the entire POAC implementation score were between 176 and 188 (mean, 182.3 and standard deviation, 3.71). When using this study's categories of norms, 45% of the responders assessed the implementation as "Very good" or "Good," 25% as "Adequate," 25% as "Poor," and 5% as "Very poor," indicating, overall, a positive but non-uniform reaction. Conclusion: The overall opinion of the stakeholders on how the club's management was implemented was very good or good. A significant proportion of respondents also mentioned weaknesses in two specific aspects, namely, lack of communication or coordination between administrative staff and coaches and the absence of an athlete-progress review being carried out periodically.



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Introduction

Sport groups across the spectrum, from country federations right down to local community clubs, rely on efficient management systems that will convert available resources and efforts into athlete development and good results for an organization. Community sport clubs in particular, which are often badly supported and largely dependent on volunteers, put a great demand on whether and to what extent the key management functions are actually carried out instead of just being planned or intended (Doherty & Cuskelly, 2020).

Empirical studies addressing this question have often focused on larger and more resource-rich settings. Doherty and Cuskelly (2020) conducted a multi-dimensional investigation of 336 community sport organizations in Canada. They found that human resources, infrastructure, financial, planning, and external-relationship capacities were all significantly related to performance outcomes at the club level, controlling for club size, thus highlighting that management capacity, not only content of programs, is related to organizational outcomes. On the one hand, studies of how clubs get formalized in competitive swimming linked more structured and standardized ways of organization, with the long-term development of the elite athletes within the clubs (Geringer, King, & Kerr, 2020), thus reaffirming the importance of the way a team is organized and managed for the performance of its athletes, alongside how training methods are applied.

The organizational-capacity evidence reviewed above, while informative, derives almost entirely from mainstream, team-based sport settings; whether the same management functions and capacity dimensions matter in the same way for individual, dojo-based martial arts disciplines, which typically have simpler governance structures and a single instructor-led hierarchy, remains an open and largely untested question that this study begins to address. Apart from general sports, martial arts have an even thinner body of research and it mainly deals mainly coach behavior and athlete psychosocial outcomes, excluding organisational management entirely. Mũjdecı, Kılıç, Bulut, Kuru (2025) collected data from 454 young athletes through boxing, judo, karate, kick boxing, taekwondo, wrestling which took place in Turkey, they evaluated athlete's perception of competence, confidence, connection and character as coaching effectiveness and quality of youth sport programming indicators and the results showed that outcomes differ depending of age, level of competition, gender. This kind of study is proof that environmental as well as structural and programmatic factors influence developmental outcomes in sports, martial arts, and especially at such a level, but the actual management practices (planning, organizing, implementing, controlling) of the head office behind the scene in the gym (or dojo) are left behind by the study.

A lack of context is another issue. Much of the literature on club-formalization and organizational capacity has focused on areas in North America, Europe, and Turkey, i.e., locations with quite developed data availability, where the clubs themselves either report to the governing bodies or the research institutions. In this case, in Indonesia, it is the case that POAC has been a tool for description of other fields in sports apart from the subject under current study, for instance, as was reported in football coaching management in West Sulawesi (Aqwan, Saparia, Saldi, & Ismail, 2026) and likewise in an evidence of athletic coaching management in East Java (Erdilanita, Mulyana, & Widiawati, 2025). This suggests a wider familiarity of the framework both in the practice and amongst the researchers of Indonesian sport management.

There are a number of more recent references as well. Wijaya and Wijono (2021) provided qualitatively the detail of a POAC based coaching programme management at the Indonesian Karate-Do Institute (INKAI, East Java). They identified activities across all four functions, from the training programme planning and selection, through the competition-cycle evaluation and report. In a research methodology almost the same as the current study Kitra and Jatra (2022), who investigated a small regional Inkanas karate coaching program in Siak Regency, Riau, reported using a descriptive quantitative method with a full sampling of 31 respondents across the athlete, coach, and organization dimensions, and the findings were mostly "very good" (86.2% overall), showing a substantially much more positive picture, compared with the mixed evaluation of this dojo. Zen and Saputro (2024) on the other hand, in the context of qualitative POAC assessment of INKAI, Jombang, East Java, they found the weak model of the four management functions. Planning and organizing were considered 'appropriate', but actuating and controlling were only 'moderate'. They recommended strengthening the two latter functions. Most recently, Bulandari, Lubis, and Setiakamawijaya (2025) studied a university-connected karate training programme in Jakarta where they remarked that at the level of bachelor's study karate research in Indonesia was mainly based on describing without explanation, a big chasm between academic and real-life aspects athlete development which is the same challenge this study tries to address but for a very small rural dojo without the university setting. Other studies beyond the scope of karate also found management issues. Purnama and Sahudi (2024) presented a single-club case organisational management study of a small volleyball club in Majalengka, West Java. Their result demonstrated that such case analysis of a sports organisation is not limited to karate but also practiced and well-accepted, in Indonesian sporting management literature. These articles, as a whole, clearly indicate the feasibility of the POAC model as a diagnostic method in the assessment of

Indonesian sports entities. They point, though, how results vary between sports and regions, to take two for example: the Riau team was very happy with the level of the activities while the EastJava team had to be more careful in making judgments as many of the activities of the four functions were done to a greater extent. Thus it should be understood that even the findings at a single dojo could not be taken as a yardstick for others as their activities can differ considerably in one way or another. But, on the other hand one thing is that all four karating-related studies were limited to Java or Riau, while management of martial arts activities in West Sumatra remains unexplored and even less of the authors have considered the quantified distribution in relation to the stakeholders' perception as it is in this study. Other studies in the field of karating in Indonesia so far focused more on the coach leadership style and athlete psychological condition rather than management process (Ayuningrum, Rismayadi, & Sagitarius, 2025). This means, to all intents and purposes, that the management issues of karate dojos as they exist nowadays are completely a blank book in Sumatra's West.

The current context which is rural, characterized by shortage of resources, calls for direct explanation since the great bulk of studies, including those in Indonesia, about organizational capability, has been conducted on urban or well-resourced associations. The review by Mountfield (2025) looking at community sport clubs in Australia set in rural areas revealed that these kinds of clubs have a major part to play in developing social capital and social cohesion just at a time when such clubs are the only source of social gathering locally and are at the same time confronted by the highest capacity limitations a situation very likely comparable to that of a dojo in rural West Sumatra except it has not been verified here.

In the West Pasaman Regency the situation is that there is no authoritative and regularly updated documentation of athlete performance trends and management of the dojos. Hence making it quite a hurdle for local officials such as coaches, administrative staff, and politicians to set a performance standard or know exactly where a particular support in management has to be provided.

This lack of baseline data, rather than an automatic assumption that management is actually failing, is what immediately prompted our research. Management theory still provides an excellent reference framework to describe the actions of a well-run sport organization: George Terry's classic planning-organizing-actuating-controlling (POAC) formulation is still widely used in Indonesian sport management education and practice as a handy, practitioner-relevant framework, though it was not originally formulated within the sport-specific organizational capacity literature which we examined above.

In view of the above, since POACs are not a new thing in the world of sport or sport administration, this research does not seek (and cannot) find an empirical link between the use of POACs (e.g., in implementing POAC as a management system) and athletic achievement. On the contrary, the researchers intend to achieve the more humble, yet not without value result: to give the very first documented, quantitative account of what are the opinions of the most important stakeholders in a West Pasaman dojo about the degree to which the implementation of each of the POAC functions is going on, along with a. the development of a reusable and measurable tool, a procedure, for other small, scarcely-documented sport organizations, and b. the establishment of a detailed local baseline that the authorities can use right away instead of waiting for future studies that may examine relationships with performance via a suitably measured performance variable and a larger multi-dojos sample.

This research aims to describe the extent to which the planning, organizing, actuating and controlling functions are perceived to be implemented by athletes, coaches and administrators in a community karate dojo in West Pasaman, Indonesia. The target population, sampling procedure, sample size, and instrument used to operationalize these constructs are detailed in the Method section below.

Praha Organization and Activities Chart (POAC) is presented here as a descriptive method through which the framework that sport coaches have widely adopted to classify management activities has been used since Indonesia sport coaching education program commonly adopts POAC as a framework for classifying coaching management activities. POAC was presented as a classification system for the survey questionnaire but not as a validated causal model of organizational effectiveness. POAC is conceptually overlapping with the organizational capacity construct that is used in the sport management literature internationally, which also decomposes the club functioning into human-resource, financial, infrastructure, planning, and external-relationship dimensions (Doherty, 2013); planning and organizing fairly directly correlate with planning and infrastructure capacity while actuating and controlling correspond to human-resource and process capacity; however, POAC does not contain external-relationship capacity a network of affiliations to clubs from governing bodies, sponsors, and other organizations that was omitted from questionnaire so the current results cannot reveal how well this dojo is connected to the karate governing system, a boundary condition that deserves explicit mention.

Another useful approach would be placing POAC's "actuating" role at the level of coaching-specific research, as the term actuating in the sport coaching literature generally refers to a coach delivering their service on one hand, and managing their athletes, on the other. Côté and Gilbert (2009) have provided one of the leading definitions of a coach's success, stating that it is a combination of a coach applying his knowledge on professional, interpersonal, and intrapersonal levels in such a way, that athletes' competence, motivation, social connection, and character development are fostered. This provides us with a much richer view of what "good actuating" looks like from the athletes' point of view than what single Likert items can deliver. Furthermore, one would expect this definition to function well as a natural companion instrument for any follow-up study. In the same way, the development of the athlete-coach relationship, which can be assessed with established instruments like Coach-Athlete Relationship Questionnaire (Jowett & Ntoumanis, 2004), is conceptually very close to actuating but was not measured separately here.

Furthermore, besides being one of the first Indonesian case studies to be explicitly grounded in a management-process theory like POAC, the study's theoretical framework has also been cited in sport-organization case studies outside Indonesia as a solid basis for interpretation. Recently, using the same approach Fan, Lee, Johnston, and Zhang (2025) studied a private youth table-tennis academy in Shanghai. Based on their grounded theory approach in management-process theory, they concluded that a small sport Academy's success can basically be attributed to technical knowledge, financial resources, athlete training program, promotional activities, and operational innovation. Their framework is, in fact, very close and even more market-driven one to POAC, but still can be seen as a good interpretation companion to understand what "good management" means in a small, athlete-development-focused sport organization.

Method

Study Design. This research is a case study of one karate dojo that is using quantitative data to provide a description and snapshot of the situation at this time. **Participants and Sampling.** All the people involved were the athletes, the coaches, and the administrator of a particular place called a dojo. In this case, a small population was present so a total (census) sample was taken: all the 20 individuals who were available participated. This is a complete enumeration of the available population (a census) rather than the qualitative concept of data saturation, which refers to redundancy in interview or observational data rather than exhaustive coverage of a population. This method is acceptable for a small, clearly defined group, however, the results obtained refer to the situation in that specific dojo and cannot be said to be representative of the overall population on a statistical level.

Instrument. In our research, a structured Likert-type questionnaire was used. Respondents were asked to rate items on a 5-point scale from strongly agree to strongly disagree. For each dimension of the POAC a number of both positively and negatively formulated items were included. Careful consideration was given to item wording in line with standard recommendations; i.e., making the statements as short, unambiguous, and void of absolute wordings ("all", "never", etc.) as possible. Reliability (e.g., Cronbach's alpha) and formal validity evidence for this version of the questionnaire were not assessed prior to data collection; this is an explicit limitation of the present study rather than an omission from reporting, and is discussed further, together with recommendations for future validation work, in the Results and Discussion section. Descriptive statistics (mean, standard deviation, range) and a very simple five-category norm-referenced distribution (very poor to very good) served as the main tool for analyzing and summarizing the total POAC scores.

For a more robust version of this tool for the future, the following improvements are suggested. First, reliability and validity of a tool can be assessed at a single-point-of-time level, or across times for a tool like this to get a more comprehensive picture. So the first suggestion is that the instrument report the reliability (Cronbach's alpha) and any validity evidence. Second, instead of merely reporting the total score, the instrument could present a breakdown by individual (P, O, A, or C) dimensions. Third, if one wishes to connect achievement level to management practices, the researcher needs to develop/measure a new operationally defined achievement variable separately from a management questionnaire. For example, one could collect results of a competition during a pre-determined time period and use the number/level of achievement as a measure of success. Such an achievement measure should be collected separately i.e., not through the management questionnaire.

Results and Discussions

The total score on the POAC varied across respondents with a minimum and a maximum of 176 and 188 respectively, ($M = 182.3$, $SD = 3.71$), $N = 20$. As revealed by the results from the norm categories, almost half

of (40%) subjects were considered as having a good performance while others were divided into adequate (25%) and poor (25%) categories. The rest were very good (5%) and very poor (5%) which is summarized in Table 1. Given the small, single-dojō sample ($N = 20$), these figures are reported descriptively only; no inferential statistics or reliability/validity indices are presented, and the results should not be generalized beyond this specific dojō.

Table 1. Distribution of respondents' perceived POAC implementation scores, by frequency and percentage ($N = 20$).

Interval	Frequency (%)	Category
>188	1 (5%)	Very good
184–187	8 (40%)	Good
180–183	5 (25%)	Adequate
177–179	5 (25%)	Poor
<176	1 (5%)	Very poor

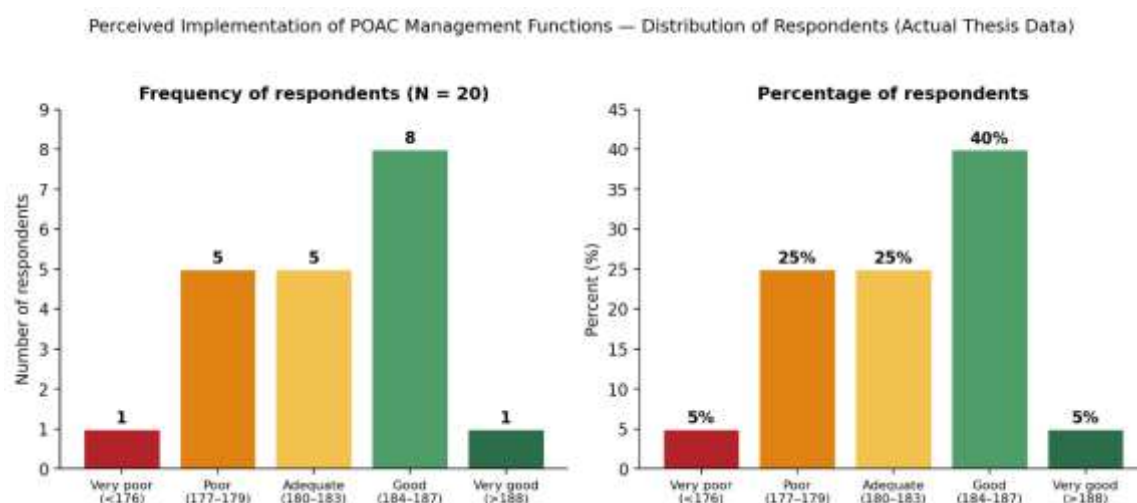


Figure 1. Distribution of respondents' perceived POAC implementation scores, by frequency and percentage ($N = 20$). Plotted directly from the thesis's data; no values were estimated or altered.

The fact that the majority of respondents are rated as "good" seems to reflect how much the stakeholders themselves value the management functions carried out in the dojō, i.e., planning, organizing, actuating, and controlling. Such assessment is a good alignment with the general statement found in the organizational capacity literature that managing practices make the difference for the regular functioning of community sport organizations (Doherty & Cuskelly, 2020). Nevertheless, it comes as a half of the respondents (25% bad, 5% very bad, in addition to 25% just sufficient), who described the experience as relatively negative, which points to inconsistencies in how management functions have been carried out at different levels of the organizations and is contrary to a situation where implementation is a uniformly strong aspect throughout the stakeholder base.

This finding roughly resembles the results from formalization research studies in other sports that show even well-organized clubs differ in terms of how consistently their members are aware of and agree in following club structures in different roles (Geringer et al., 2020), that is, the same organizational processes may look totally differently to a coach, an administrator, and an athlete. As the research used only one overall score of the managers' understanding of the organizational environment, it is unable to pinpoint the particular POAC function (planning, organizing, actuating or controlling) causing the low responses. This is by far the most immediate research problem and would be a very natural next-step investigation using reporting at a level of each dimension separately.

This comparison can be very telling since our research is almost the only other qualitative work on Karate management at the administrative level to directly match ours, except for Zen and Saputro (2024) in Jombang District. Their results were that planning and organizing were "fit", while actuating and controlling were only at "a satisfactory level", showing that generally, execution and monitoring (actuation and control functions in POAC terms) are the weaker parts of POAC functions in Indonesian Karate organizations. This current study's overall score is not sufficient to tell for sure whether similar trends are found here, though the overall sentiment

remains largely positive (with some notable weak spots), just as mentioned in the reference, and the earlier proposal of carrying out a similar dimension-level analysis remains very much supported.

We will not hesitate to clarify the limits of the present research. It is true that a great number of research works have first studied a certain developmental or competencies-competence-type of output and then have connected it to a set of organizational or coaching factors (e.g., that athletes' competence and confidence are two separate variables in Müjdecı et al., 2025). However, the present work, which does not have an independent variable for athlete accomplishment or athlete performance is not going to argue for a better-perceived POAC implementation as being the factor of better athlete accomplishment. Moreover, the fact that most of the respondents consider the organization and management as satisfactory is a descriptive statement by itself and cannot be considered as a support for a relationship between the management practices and organizational performance.

The inequality in management capability observed here is, in fact, quite typical and conforms to patterns noted in international non-profit sport club literature: the volunteer-run organizations, which are often rather small, regularly have their management processes limited or even stopped because of their lack of resources or their very small resources base. Wicker and Breuer (2011) discovered that human-resource capacity the main areas include how to get volunteers and coaches and keep them is the number of organizational problems reported by German non-profit sport clubs most of the time. This may give an explanation for why actuating and controlling aspects of coordinating are harder to sustain than planning. The same authors (Wicker & Breuer, 2013) in their follow-up project, also concluded that the limitation of organizational resources rather than just one shortcoming in management, was the key statistical factor in predicting the type of problems reported by the clubs. This also means that treating the discrepancies of POAC scores as a sign of resource constraints only makes sense and it should not be taken that the lack of such discrepancies could be due to lack of good will or effort of this dojo's leadership. Also, the work of Musso, Richelieu, and Francioni (2016) on 200 small, non-professional Italian sport clubs showed that the number and variety of support services are the strongest among the club size and other features which are predictors of the organizational and financial performance of the company. This demonstrates that, a single small dojo may not have adequate resources to meet its management needs, even if its directors and other staff are very dedicated.

Cross-national cluster research on sporting club structures provides another lens for interpretation. Nichols, Wicker, Cuskelly and Breuer (2015) identified UK, Germany and Australia community sports clubs on a continuum from very informal to heavily organized clubs, and concluded that the majority of non-profit clubs are more or less located on the intermediate level rather than at the extremes only. A club in the current dojo having mixed opinions about their management, the majority rating it as "good," but one-fourth each saying "adequate" and "poor", is in fact broadly in line with expectations for clubs located somewhere along the spectrum, as such clubs are the typical and not the exceptional, type of small, non-profit sport organizations worldwide. Board and leadership structures can be significant factors in how regularly management actions appear to be carried out; according to an investigation by Wicker, Breuer and von Hanau (2012), German clubs exhibiting a balanced presence of both sexes on the management level reported fewer overall internal problems something that the present study did not include for this dojo's administrative team and trainers and which collecting further data could be helpful.

Currently, the Dojo's administrators and coaches have a definite and separate initial point reference based on respondents; since about half of them still do not consider management as strong, we are still able to take some actions without having to claim the cause first. Priority issues based on the raw data include improving the working relationship or coordination between administrators and coaches and formalization of athlete progress assessment cycle. Managing facilities and infrastructures also came up repeatedly during other small organization case studies in the neighborhood (Fatma & Nurrachmad, 2025); so it would be good to have it listed directly in any revised POAC questionnaire. Also, the membership-growth strategies framework of Morrison and Misener (2022) could assist the Dojo's leadership to choose which overall strategic direction growth or consolidation aligns most with their management capabilities right now.

This study is a contribution to the mostly Western/Turkish sport management and coaching effectiveness body of academic articles that the literature includes (Doherty & Cuskelly, 2020; Geringer, King, & Kerr, 2020; Müjdecı et al., 2025). The research paper uses an example of a rarely documented sports scenario. It is a martial arts center, very small, run by a local community in the heart of a village in an Indonesian regency. This case demonstrates that the POAC tool, developed in this work, is not limited to big, well-resourced sport organizations but can also be used as a measurement tool of stakeholders' views in small sport businesses that hardly any data.

Different aspects of these limitations can be pointed out the use of only one dojo, $N = 20$, a single cross-sectional design without the measurement of an achievement outcome, completely drawing sample from a small population, which makes it difficult to apply statistics in a broader population beyond the specific dojo. Reliability and validity of instrument were not included, which should definitely be done when you are resubmitting a manuscript. Another point of weakness is related to the organizational accountability risk that this measuring instrument is not even remotely addressing research conducted by Wicker, Misener, Kihl, and Cuskelly (2023) showed that the community sports organizations with weak strategic planning and lack of board-level trust were more exposed to occupational fraud, an occupationally-related risk adjacent to controlling, that a POAC survey concentrating solely on perceived quality of implementation would not be able to detect.

Future study should copy this evaluation in several dojos and regions in order to make between-dojos comparisons, report per-dimension (P/O/A/C) scores, include an independently assessed achievement factor such as competition results and check how it is correlated with the management scores by running the right inferential statistics, and report the reliability of the measuring tool (Cronbach's alpha) and preferably the factor structure as well. Another useful element that one could add would be digital-management practice as one of the capacity dimensions: Ehnold, Faß, Steinbach, and Schlesinger (2020) demonstrated that the voluntary sports clubs' degree of implementation of digital tools for communication, membership reporting, and administration was related to club goals and organizational capacity rather than being adopted uniformly, a dimension that is not included at all in the current questionnaire and it is something that a more comprehensive tool for this dojo could beneficially incorporate in the future.

Conclusions

In direct answer to the research aim stated in the Introduction, stakeholders in this West Pasaman dojo generally perceived the four POAC management functions as being implemented well, but with a consistent and specific gap around coordination between administrators and coaches and around periodic athlete-progress review. In their paper, these authors present, as yet unheard and described for the first time, the ways that participants in a karate community dojo in the West Pasaman Regency of Indonesia see to the implementation of management functions like planning, organizing, actuating, and controlling among other things. Majority of them saw this implementation as good one but there was a significant segment who did not have a positive experience suggesting there has been an inconsistent implementation across the community. The major contribution of this study is neither a causal claim about management being related to achievement since data does not support that, nor anything else. Rather it is the creation of a documented, replicable assessment tool and a first quantitative management baseline that can be used directly by studies of the kind of sport organization that, is small, under-resourced, and, so far, hardly represented in sport management literature. The future researchers can, with a greater understanding, take this baseline data, spread it to different dojos, measure the management practices at the level of various dimensions, correlate it with achievement outcomes measured through independent methods, and only then go on with any causal or correlation claims.

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