Management Strategies for Ethnic Prototypes of Senior Clubs in the Upper Northern Region

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Abstract

The objectives of this article were 1) to explore the management strategies for senior clubs, and 2) to study the implementation of the management strategy of the ethnic senior clubs in the upper northern region. This research was mixed methods research. The target audience of the research was the elderly who were members of five ethnic senior clubs in the upper northern region. 30 of them were collected from each club; there were 150 people in total. The tools used to collect the data were documented files, observation forms, interview forms, and focus group forms. The data were analyzed based on content analysis and descriptions. The results demonstrated that:

1) The management strategies for ethnic prototypes of senior clubs in the upper northern region included 1) SWOT 2) vision 3) mission 4) objectives and 5) four strategies that involved committees, management, member participation, and activity management aspects.

2) Concerning, the implementation of the management strategies for ethnic prototypes of senior clubs in the upper northern region, it was found that the management strategies were implemented as planned. Activities were conducted as follows: six committee items, eleven management items, five member participation items, and five activity management items.

This research uncovered an important finding. Strategies and strategic plans for managing ethnic senior clubs in the upper northern region could be applied to senior clubs, as well as geriatric schools across the country. Emphasis should be placed on strategic planning for management, plan compliance, monitoring, following up, and continual improvement to ensure that senior clubs or schools were operated in a stable and sustainable environment for all time.

Keywords: Management strategies, Ethnic prototypes of senior clubs

Introduction

With regard to the projections of the country's population in 2015-2030, Thailand is in the situation of an "aged society." In the next 10 years, it will begin to become a completely aged society. By 2030, the number of seniors will increase to 17.8 million, representing roughly a quarter of the country's population (Office of the National Economic and Social Development Board, 2013). Therefore, there is a need to prepare for the coming aging society. Government, private sector organizations, citizens, and various social institutions recognize the dignity and values of seniors. As a result, they jointly established Thailand's Seniors Charter as an obligation to ensure that seniors have a good quality of life. In particular, the elderly have the opportunity to continue to study, learn, and develop their potential. They should have access to information and social services that are beneficial to their livelihood. Therefore, they can understand the dynamics of the society around them, adapt their roles based on their age, and play roles and participate in family, community, and social activities. Specifically, they should gather to share knowledge, learn, and understand each other and people of all ages. In addition, according to the Elderly Person Act B.E. 2546 (Second Amendment) B.E. 2553, Section 11 provides that the elderly person shall receive the following protection, promotion, and support: 1) Medical and public health services; 2) Education, religion, and information that are beneficial to living; 3) Performing a profession or training for an appropriate profession; 4) Self-development and participation in social activities, groping as a network or community; 5) Provide sufficient accommodation, food, and clothing as necessary; 6) Payment of the living allowance monthly which is sufficient and fair, etc. (National Board of the Elderly, 2010)

Ethnic elderly groups in the upper northern region are one of the key target populations who should be recognized for their human worth as Thai citizens living in Thailand. Improving the quality of life of these populations has been consistently achieved for a long time in various dimensions, such as hygiene, education, housing, occupations, and additional income. Nowadays, Thai society has gone from a digital society that incorporates modern culture. This affects the lifestyles of the elderly population, ethnic groups, and mountaineers who have had to adapt to today's changing environment. Highland ethnic groups are divided into ten main groups: Karen, Hmong (Meo), Lisu (Lisaw), Lahu (Muser), Akha (Ekaw), Mien (Yao), Khmu, Mlabri, H'tin, and Lua, totaling approximately 1,116,669 people. The Karen ethnic group is the largest, followed by the Hmong group, the smallest being the Mlabri group (Ministry of Social Development and Human Security, 2018).

The senior club is another tool used to develop the potential of older people "within the framework of the concept of non-formal education for lifelong learning" through the systematic transfer of knowledge, which seniors will learn in a fun way. This can develop high standards of self-care and independence, including the development of physical, mental, social, intellectual, and economic capacities to make seniors "active aging" to contextualize the area. The key concept is to solve the problems of the elderly in communities. These include providing happiness for seniors, increasing the knowledge and life skills necessary for seniors,

and opening up social spaces for them, which vary depending on the context of particular areas. As a result, they have been successfully transformed into an aging school. Some have operational challenges and separate operations; members do not cooperate with operations.

Based on the above background and significance, suggestions, and research findings, this research was conducted in response to the 20-year national strategy for the development and improvement of human resource capacity. The research findings were developed in line with the country's integration in Goal 2: Research and innovation roadmap. This goal concerns research and innovation for the social development and environment of Thai seniors and society in the 21st century. In particular, it addresses issues related to the potential and opportunities of the elderly and the coexistence of the multi-generational population, with the main goal being to allow seniors to live well and to live happily. This can serve as a source of strength for the country. This research was conducted concerning the management strategies for ethnic prototypes of senior clubs in the upper northern region. It also aimed to improve the quality of life of the elderly from the ethnic groups in the upper northern region. Therefore, they have a good quality of life, well-being, and happiness, as a strength to drive the nation further.

A theoretical approach to strategy relies on concepts from Abraham, Stanley (2006), Beall (2007), David (1997) and Saritwanich. (2010). To conclude, there are important steps in the development of strategies: (1) SWOT, (2) vision, (3) mission, (4) objectives, and (5) strategies. Another idea of setting up and managing senior clubs comes from Department of Elderly Affairs (2016), Ministry of Social Development and Human Security (2016), and Yodpetch et al. (2012). Regional cooperation is important. And, most seniors are satisfied and want to establish a senior club in their area. Senior clubs should have components of committees, management, member participation, and ongoing activities.

This article presents the strategies and their implementation for the management strategies of ethnic prototypes of senior clubs in the upper northern region. The findings can apply to the management of senior clubs across the country.

Research Objectives

This research aimed to investigate:

1. The management strategies for ethnic prototypes of senior clubs in the upper northern region

2. The implementation of the management strategies for ethnic prototypes of senior clubs in the upper northern region

Methodology

This research was mixed methods research. This involved both quantitative and qualitative research. The field of research was senior clubs, which were well managed by the Office of Social Development and Human Security. The focused study was conducted in five locations using five ethnic groups: 1) Lisu in Ban Mai Lee Saw, Ping Khong Subdistrict , Chiang Dao District, Chiang Mai Province, 2) Muzeur (Lahu) in Ban Huai Chadan, Ping Khong Subdistrict, Chiang Dao District, Chiang Mai Province, 3) Hmong in Ban Mae Sa Noi, Pongyang Subdistrict, Mae Rim District, Chiang Mai Province, 4) Karen in Ban Phra Bat Huai Tom, Nasai Subdistrict, Li District, Lamphun Province, and 5) Lua in Ban La-oob, Huay Hom Subdistrict, Mae La Noi District, Mae Hong Son Province. The research process was made up of three stages:

1. The survey, the synthesis of problems, and the needs were examined through documentary research and a study of the problems and needs of ethnic prototypes of senior clubs in the upper northern region. These were collected from a sample of members of five ethnic senior clubs. 30 people were gathered from each club, totaling 150 people. The researcher collected the data through the interview. The data were analyzed based on descriptive and content analysis.

2. Creation of management strategies for ethnic senior clubs in the upper northern region

3. Trying out the management strategies for ethnic senior clubs in the upper northern region

    3.1 Try out with a small target group in Ban Mae Sa Noi, Muang District, Chiang Mai Province

    3.2 Try out with four large target groups of ethnic senior clubs in the upper northern region

    3.3 Examine the management strategies of ethnic senior clubs in the upper northern region with the original target group

Results

The findings of this research were consistent with the objectives established for both items, as illustrated below.

Objective 1: The findings showed that the management strategies for ethnic prototypes of senior clubs in the upper northern region included four aspects. These were 1) committee strategy 2) management strategy 3) activity strategy and 4) member participation strategy.

Objective 2: The findings showed that the implementation of the management strategies for ethnic prototypes of senior clubs in the upper northern region of five locations complied with the management strategies for ethnic prototypes of senior clubs in the upper northern region in each of the following aspects:

2.1 Committee strategy: it was found that the five senior clubs were implemented in line with a strategic plan regarding committee strategy for each of the following: 1) the committee had to be elected by its members or recognized by a majority of its members. 2) The committee had leadership and a code of conduct for administering the clubs. 3) The committee was altruistic, voluntary, honest, and of good conduct which was acceptable to society. 4) The committee performed its duties in the manner assigned to it. 5) The committee was transparent, non-discriminatory, and fair. 6) The committee had knowledge of seniors in various fields.

2.2 Management strategy: it was found that the five senior clubs were operated in the following manner. 1) Clubs had a permanent stable location that was convenient for carrying out activities. 2) There were clear management rules for clubs. 3) Clubs had operational plans in place. 4) Clubs had the management structures and roles of chairs, committee members, and members. 5) Clubs were provided with advisors. 6) Clubs systematically collected information about their members. 8) Budgets were recruited for operating purposes. 9) The income and expense accounts, registers of durable articles, registers of members, guest books, and meeting journals were up to date. 10) Clubs had good and quick communication. Items that were not clearly and regularly executed were as follows: 7) Clubs analyzed themselves and investigated their problems. 11) Club performance was monitored and reported.

2.3 Member participation strategy: it was found that the five senior clubs implemented in line with a strategic plan regarding member participation in every item as follows: 1) Members shared a common ideology to conduct activities following the club's objectives. 2) Members felt they were part of the club, which would contribute to the cooperation and participation in club activities. 3) Members participated in reflection, decision making, joint monitoring, evaluation, and participation in the interests of the club. 4) Members followed the club's rules, regulations, and requirements. 5) Members jointly establish the identity or strength of the club.

2.4 Activity strategy: it was found that the five senior clubs implemented in line with a strategic plan regarding activities in every item as follows: 1) Club activities responded to the needs and problems of its members. 2) Club activities were organized with continuity. 3) Club activities could address problems or promote members' quality of life. 4) Club activities were integrated into various networks, government agencies, or private organizations. 5) Club activities were diverse and rotated so that members did not get bored.

Figure 1 Data Collection with Focus Groups
(Source: Researcher, 2023)

This research uncovered an important finding. Strategies and strategic plans for managing ethnic senior clubs in the upper northern region could be applied to senior clubs, as well as geriatric schools across the country. Emphasis should be placed on strategic planning for management, plan compliance, monitoring, following up, and continual improvement to ensure that senior clubs or schools were operated in a stable and sustainable environment for all time.

Discussions

After researching the management strategies for ethnic prototypes of senior clubs in the upper northern region, the researcher found the results from exploiting senior clubs so that they were successful and sustainable. There were issues that the researcher would raise to discuss the findings to better understand as follows:

1. The management strategies for ethnic prototypes of senior clubs in the upper northern region: senior clubs were considered to be the starting point for the integration of seniors into the community. If the clubs were successful in doing so, it would affect the quality of life of the elderly and prepare them for full entry into the aged society of Thailand. Therefore, relevant organizations, communities, as well as the senior club committees should concentrate on the strategies that made the clubs successful. These strategies included (1) a committee strategy, (2) a management strategy, (3) an activity strategy, and (4) a member participation strategy. The promotion of the strategies which constituted every club should also be improved. If the senior clubs were managed using both science and art in management, the knowledge management would be shared across senior clubs. Excursions to successful senior clubs and management training could guide club management and influence the operation of the clubs in an ongoing and sustainable way. Successful senior clubs might have different indicators or assessments of club management. This was consistent with the findings of Siripanich (1999). It was found that the establishment of senior clubs needed to take into account various structural elements to ensure successful and beneficial operations for club members as planned. This

involved the following factors: (1) members, namely their age, status, knowledge, economic and financial status, ideology, and number, (2) committees or administrators, namely character traits, knowledge, abilities, motivations, training in which knowledge and abilities came from personal interests, getting information, training or circumstances surrounding them at that moment, dedication, and willingness to work that contributed to the smooth operation of the work, (3) club locations and venues for activities, and (4) regulations of senior clubs. In addition, the support of health care workers in the fields of education, information, health check-ups, and consultations were important factors that made the clubs healthy and sustainable. The participation of club members also enabled the clubs to pursue their activities.

2. For the implementation of the management strategies for ethnic prototypes of five senior clubs in the upper northern region, it was noted that the implementation was operated as stated in each aspect as follows:

2.1 A committee strategy: it was found that ethnic prototypes of five senior clubs in the upper northern region were utilized as intended in all aspects of senior club management strategies as follows: (1) the committee had to be elected by its members or recognized by a majority of its members. (2) The committee had leadership and a code of conduct for administering the clubs. (3) The committee was altruistic, voluntary, honest, and of good conduct which was acceptable to society. (4) The committee performed its duties in the manner assigned to it. (5) The committee was transparent, non-discriminatory, and fair. (6) The committee had knowledge of seniors in various fields. The strategies that allowed senior clubs or aging schools to succeed were to have a dedicated, altruistic, transformational leader, and a committee for activities. In particular, the transformational leaders who were elderly or psychological leaders, such as monks, could have a direct impact on faith-building for senior members of clubs, schools, agencies, and organizations. This was in line with the research by Boonjang, P. (2014). It was found that the success factor was having strong, engaged, and understanding community leaders in their activities, as well as the strong and ongoing support of resources from local government organizations. A key way for the clubs to succeed was to focus on their members' joint activities rather than the cumbersome form. Club administration should be flexible with members from various occupations. All sectors of the organizations were supportive, and they were understood and appreciated by the communities.

2.2 A management strategy: it was found that ethnic prototypes of five senior clubs in the upper northern region implemented as intended in all aspects of senior club management strategies in the Lanna approach in Chiang Mai Province as follows: (1) Clubs had a permanent stable location that was convenient for carrying out activities. (2) There were clear management rules for clubs. (3) Clubs had operational plans in place. (4) Clubs had the management structures and roles of chairs, committee members, and members. (5) Clubs were provided with advisors. (6) Clubs systematically collected information about their members. (8) Budgets were recruited for operating purposes. (9) The income and expense accounts, registers of durable articles, registers of members, guest books, and meeting journals were up to date. (10) Clubs had good and quick communication. Items that were not clearly and regularly executed were as follows: (7) Clubs analyzed themselves and investigated their problems. (11) Club performance was monitored and reported. This was in line with the

Ministry of Social Development and Human Security (2016) that researched "Strategies for Elderly Network Strengthen of Ministry of Social Development and Human Security." The findings demonstrated that the seniors' network style was divided by mission, activities, and social groups. The seniors' network comprised four groups that were government, people, private, and non-governmental. All groups performed their duties according to their principles, objectives, and structure. Similar procedural styles across all four groups were applied to both vertical and horizontal management. Vertical management was implemented by the Ministry of Social Development and Human Security, and the hierarchy system was applied to structural management. The decision making depended on the most competent person in the group. In terms of collaborating with other agencies, horizontal management was chosen; for example, requiring data and activities matters. Taking into account the communication between the Ministry of Social Development and Human Security and agencies (inside and outside), it was found that cooperation and assignment of missions was a slightly horizontal management style through the node leader relationship. This cooperation focused on the leadership network to move forward. Moreover, individuals and NGO groups were subjected to the application of the horizontal management style using participation in each process. There were various factors affecting the strategies of strengthening the network of seniors of the Ministry of Social Development and Human Security, but the cooperation between the ministry and the external seniors' network was not seriously pursued. There were many target groups and organizations within the area or province. Guidelines and work strategies of seniors were revealed in three criteria. (1) The management of senior networks supported participation in other networks. (2) Not only the support and development of the senior leadership network were needed, but also the selection and development of leaders were crucial to driving the senior network. (3) The combined strategies and the cooperation of networks of seniors needed an operational plan among networks of seniors inside and outside. Three policy recommendations were presented as a result of this research. First, the support of the Ministry of Social Development and Human Security for seniors' networks on the budget, the knowledge system, and the mission should be seriously implemented so that projects and activities for the elderly were pursued regularly. Second, the strategies and cooperation of senior networks should be promoted at a national level. Third, data on seniors should be developed and linked to a development plan.

2.3 A member participation strategy: it was found that ethnic prototypes of five senior clubs in the upper northern region were implemented as intended in all aspects of senior club management strategies in the Lanna approach in Chiang Mai Province as follows: (1) Members shared a common ideology to conduct activities following the club's objectives. (2) Members felt they were part of the club, which would contribute to the cooperation and participation in club activities. (3) Members participated in reflection, decision making, joint monitoring, evaluation, and participation in the interests of the club. (4) Members followed the club's rules, regulations, and requirements. (5) Members jointly establish the identity or strength of the club. Participation generated relationships and a sense of shared ownership. Mechanisms for members to participate both formally and informally, such as monthly meetings, a forum for discussion, and the exchange of ideas, were to be developed. This was in agreement with Thamdee (2017) who researched "Agency, Society, and Culture: Conditions

Promoting Active Aging in Older Persons in Chiang Mai." The findings revealed that the "social" and "cultural" contexts of solidarity, support, and self-sufficiency, were the most significant conditions. These, when combined with the "agency" of the elderly person's desire to learn and pride and self-respect, fostered active aging in them. Therefore, by encouraging active aging, all these dimensions should be integrated into the activities projects and associated with community strengthening so that families and the community came to participate in the process of sustainable active aging.

2.4 An activity strategy: it was found that ethnic prototypes of five senior clubs in the upper northern region implemented as intended in all aspects of senior club management strategies in the Lanna approach in Chiang Mai Province as follows: (1) Club activities responded to the needs and problems of its members. (2) Club activities were organized with continuity. (3) Club activities could address problems or promote members' quality of life. (4) Club activities were integrated into various networks, government agencies, or private organizations. (5) Club activities were diverse and rotated so that members did not get bored. An important strategy was to have clear objectives and to organize activities on an ongoing basis. Setting clear goals was a direction of work that created mutual understanding among the committees or leaders. This would be a strong force to collaborate and organize ongoing activities regularly as a mechanism to connect senior groups and communities. This could lead to collaborative cooperation to carry out the aging schoolwork. In addition, there should be continually learning and development of operations by reviewing them periodically and summarizing lessons learned. Learning strengths and weaknesses and what needed to be improved could be used to develop the work process continuously. This was in line with Sachiyo (2012) who researched "A Model of Lifelong Learning for Seniors in Toomhom Looglan Banlaoling Center, Bandoo Subdistrict, Atsamat District, Roi Et Province." It was found that the key to well-informed and professional learning was a network at the local, district, and provincial levels. The result of this research was a lifelong learning LING MODEL for seniors at the Toomhom Looglan Banlaoling Center. This model consisted of (1) learning by adjusting concepts, demonstrating, and exploring alternative communities for further development, (2) individual learning from known and new knowledge, (3) networking by continuously supplementing knowledge, and (4) community-based learning growth based on self-sufficiency.

Conclusion and suggestions

Concerning the summary of the article on the management strategies of ethnic prototypes of senior clubs in the upper northern region, these consisted of four aspects. They were (1) committee strategy, (2) management strategy, (3) activity strategy, and (4) member participation strategy. With regard to the implementation of strategies for managing ethnic prototypes of senior clubs in the upper northern region, it was noted that the management strategies were implemented as planned. Activities were conducted as follows: six committee items, eleven management items, five-member participation items, and five activity management items.

Suggestions

According to the research findings, the researcher proposed the following suggestions:

1. Suggestions for implementing research findings

Objective 1: The findings showed that the management strategies for ethnic prototypes of senior clubs in the upper northern region included four aspects. These were (1) committee strategy, (2) management strategy, (3) activity strategy, and (4) member participation strategy. Therefore, the relevant authorities should take steps to encourage the senior clubs to manage by using the four strategies as a tool to drive their operations.

Objective 2: The findings showed that the implementation of the management strategies for ethnic prototypes of senior clubs in the upper northern region of five locations complied with the management strategies for ethnic prototypes of senior clubs in the upper northern region in each of the following aspects: six committee items, eleven management items, five-member participation items, and five activity management items. Therefore, the relevant agencies should continue to encourage the senior clubs to develop a strategic plan with indicators for management based on research results and implement a strategic plan to manage the clubs for efficiency and effectiveness.

2. Suggestions for future research

This research uncovered important findings that the strategies and the strategic plan for managing ethnic senior clubs in the upper northern region could be applied to senior clubs and aging schools across the country. Emphasis should be placed on management planning approaches. For future research topics, they should involve the preparation of a strategic plan, compliance with the plan, ongoing monitoring, and continuous improvement of the operation to ensure that the senior clubs or aging schools were operated in a stable, sustainable manner at all times.

New knowledge and the effects on society and communities

The research generated knowledge, which was the management strategies for ethnic prototypes of senior clubs in the upper northern region illustrated below:

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│        SWOT          │
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Vision: By 2022, the ethnic prototypes of the senior clubs in the upper northern region develop their management based on the strategic management plans of the prototypes of senior clubs in all indicators.

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Mission: (1) Senior clubs are systematically managed. (2) Senior clubs are organized continually. (3) Senior clubs are organized permanently. (4) Senior club members participate in the operation.

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Objectives: In order for senior clubs (1) to be systematically managed, (2) to have continuous activities, (3) to have an ongoing implementation committee, and (4) to have members participating in the operation.

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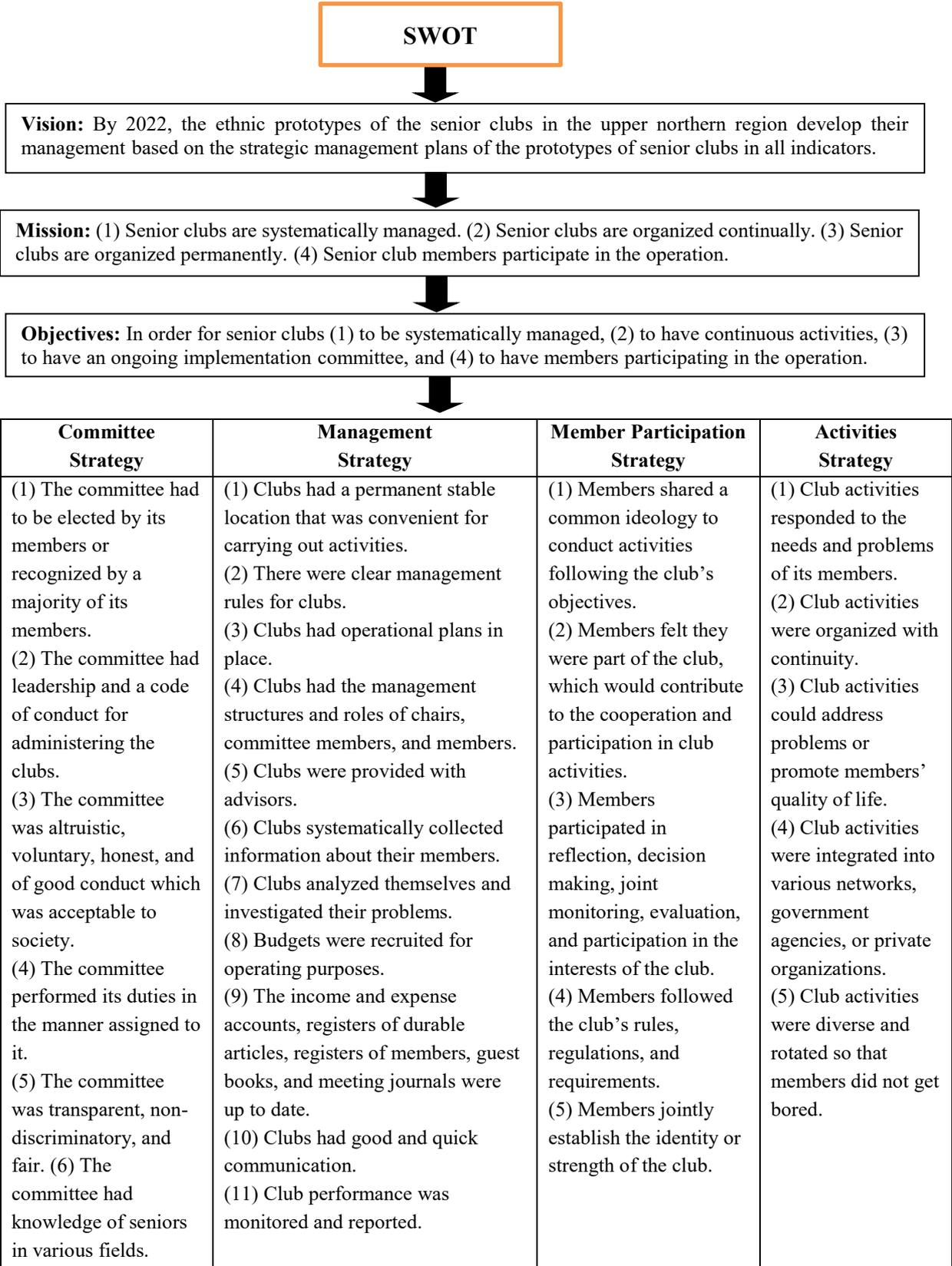| Committee Strategy	Management Strategy	Member Participation Strategy	Activities Strategy
(1) The committee had to be elected by its members or recognized by a majority of its members. (2) The committee had leadership and a code of conduct for administering the clubs. (3) The committee was altruistic, voluntary, honest, and of good conduct which was acceptable to society. (4) The committee performed its duties in the manner assigned to it. (5) The committee was transparent, non-discriminatory, and fair. (6) The committee had knowledge of seniors in various fields.	(1) Clubs had a permanent stable location that was convenient for carrying out activities. (2) There were clear management rules for clubs. (3) Clubs had operational plans in place. (4) Clubs had the management structures and roles of chairs, committee members, and members. (5) Clubs were provided with advisors. (6) Clubs systematically collected information about their members. (7) Clubs analyzed themselves and investigated their problems. (8) Budgets were recruited for operating purposes. (9) The income and expense accounts, registers of durable articles, registers of members, guest books, and meeting journals were up to date. (10) Clubs had good and quick communication. (11) Club performance was monitored and reported.	(1) Members shared a common ideology to conduct activities following the club's objectives. (2) Members felt they were part of the club, which would contribute to the cooperation and participation in club activities. (3) Members participated in reflection, decision making, joint monitoring, evaluation, and participation in the interests of the club. (4) Members followed the club's rules, regulations, and requirements. (5) Members jointly establish the identity or strength of the club.	(1) Club activities responded to the needs and problems of its members. (2) Club activities were organized with continuity. (3) Club activities could address problems or promote members' quality of life. (4) Club activities were integrated into various networks, government agencies, or private organizations. (5) Club activities were diverse and rotated so that members did not get bored.

Figure 2 The research generated knowledge, which was the management strategies for ethnic prototypes of senior clubs in the upper northern region illustrated

(Source: Researcher, 2023)

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