

Systemic Vision – Its Necessity in the Management of Sports Organizations

Gheorghe Gabriel Cucui^{a*}

* Corresponding author: Gheorghe Gabriel Cucui, gabi_cucui@yahoo.com

^a“Valahia” University, 2 Carol I Blvd., Targoviste, Romania

Abstract

<http://dx.doi.org/10.15405/epsbs.2016.06.45>

Diagnosing the activities of a sports organization requires, without doubt, the use of the methodological advantages of a systemic approach. Purpose: This diagnosis was aimed at making an intricate analysis of the sports club in order to detect any deficiencies/problems which might appear in the management process. Methods: The evaluation of the management system was carried out by means of a questionnaire survey, in which the sample, made up of subjects from the Management Department and Technical Department, was invited to assess 10 items, each on a scale from 1 to 5. Also, a PEST analysis and MFSOA matrix were carried out, based on a SWOT analysis. Results: This endeavour leads to the evaluation of their system of management and, at the same time, to actions which can improve the management system of the sports club. Conclusions: Management without solid theoretical foundations and without a systemic vision can lead to syncope within the management system. The organization must have the ability to maintain itself and evolve under the demands of the external environment, as well as the ability to adapt/ readapt to the changes in the internal environment.

© 2016 Published by Future Academy www.FutureAcademy.org.uk

Keywords: Management; organization; vision systems.

1. Introduction

The increasing complexity of the managerial process has made necessary a systemic approach to this process. This concept defines the system as “a set of elements organized and based on inter-conditioning connections the function of which allows certain objectives to be reached” (Burduş, 2007: 21).

Management includes methodological, decisional, informational and organizational components, a fact which allows it to be treated as a system. Management does not exist without an organization, and an organisation cannot function without management.

Organizations generate a system of actions from the perspective of the members of the organization and their actions in different situations. The members of the organization personalize and adapt the organization according to the situations encountered in the system. The manager and situations necessitating action together form a logic of action: “The meeting of the manager with a situation leads to interactions which allow the creation of laws of action” (Amblard et al., 1996).

In the diagnosis of the activities of a sports organization, a methodological approach to the system is, without doubt, necessary.

The systemic nature of sports organization has been studied since the 1990s, several authors (Chiffler, 1993; Defrance, 1997; Loret, 1993) addressing the systemic vision of sports organizations in terms of interdisciplinarity, because management of sports organizations is based on concepts and tools borrowed from other fields: economic, sociological, managerial.

A systemic vision permits uncovering the components of structural parts, relationships, interactions and inter-conditioning, which can explain a process, a phenomenon or an activity with the adjustments and mutual influences responsible for the unit, the coherence of certain actions, or responsible for the disorder or incoherence of others. A systemic approach leads to emphasis on the dynamics of the activities.

A systemic vision highlights subordinate and/or superordinate relationships of the different structures and relationships between the aims of the organization and the results obtained.

In the light of managing a sports organization, a systemic vision is aimed at the function of the whole, as well as the individual parts of which it is composed, the relationship between the managerial system and that which is managed, and the dialectical connection between the systems of the organization, the organizational environment and the orientation towards a specific goal (Livian, 2008: 98).

The systemic approach facilitates the analysis process, but it also permits, thanks to the global vision, the discovery of a logic to the recommendations made in order to re-stabilise the coherence of the organization with its environment. Every organization possesses the ability to self-transform, self-adjust and acquire a certain synergy.

For the success of the organization, the manager must analyse both its internal and external components. Focusing solely on internal issues can lead to ignoring the environmental conditions which affect the activities of the organization, or to the lack of ability to recognize the constraints or opportunities of the employees and the athletes. This is why the manager must focus his actions on managing the relationships between the organization and its external environment (Donna, 1990: 13), meaning in fact permanent adjustment of the organization's activities according to the conditions presented by the surrounding environment in which the activities are conducted.

Directly related to the environment, the organization provides a transfer of information between the components that constitute its internal systems and between them and the environment, acting through its external systems, thus enabling a process of self-regulation of components and relations between them (Aldea, 2010: 19).

Emphasizing the differences between internal and external factors as determinants of performance has remained an organizing principle in strategic management (Mihăilescu, 2008: 43).

By studying the literature (Simion, 2009; Frâncu, 2000; Fugigi & Petrache, 2000), we observe interest in the managerial work of sports organizations. The specific managerial methods used in this research are found in scientific studies whose objective results generate the tools needed for redesigning the managerial system.

2. Materials and methods

The diagnosis performed on Chindia Targoviste Football Club included an investigation designed to evaluate the management applied within the club. 10 members of the Human Resources Department of the club were investigated, while a SWOT analysis provided us with internal and external information which was necessary in making the best decisions and founding a development strategy for the management system. A sports organization contains and functions as a complex, dynamic, open system, with multiple, varied internal and external connections determined not only by the actions within the organization, but also the political, economic, social and technological (PEST) influences of the external environment, this analysis having also been carried out at the aforementioned club. Following the SWOT analysis, we developed an elaborate matrix of the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (MFSOA).

All of these lead to the evaluation of the management system of the club and, at the same time, the discovery of actions which could improve the club's system of management.

2.1. Purpose

The research was initiated with the purpose of identifying existing problems in the different components of the management system and gaining knowledge of the internal and external environment of the organization, this being considered a premise to the creation of a development strategy for the system of management in the sports organization.

2.2. Hypothesis

Promoting a systemic vision within the management of a sports organization and performing a diagnosis of its management system is a necessary course of action in developing a strategy for the management system of the respective sports organization.

2.3. Methods

In the research, we used the following instruments of scientific research investigation: SWOT analysis, PEST analysis, MFSOA matrix, and methodological instruments needed to obtain information deemed necessary to our research.

SWOT analysis - by using this tool, it was performed a diagnosis of the internal and external environment of the sports organization, meticulously identifying important issues that could lead to improved managerial work within the football club and to redesigning the studied management system.

The list of problems on internal environment for being analysed has determined the intensity and importance of each issue (Table 1), by awarding them a value on a scale from 1 to 5, where 1 signifies very low intensity/ importance, and 5, high intensity/ importance.

Table 1. List of issues evaluated by the Club President on the internal environment

Problem
1. Appropriate staff training positions within the organization
2. The quality of technical staff
3. Quality of human resource corresponds to the job description
4. Defined information-based internal subsystem and own computer
5. Information flows consistent with the club objectives
6. Activity of information and scientific documentation
7. Clearly delimited decision
8. Organizational change at club level
9. Organizational strategy of the club is set, it has clear objectives and directions
10 Financial resources to achieve the objectives
11 Using specific management methods
12 Quality and own sports equipment

On the issues identified for the external environment, it was determined the likelihood of their manifestation and their impact on the sports club on a scale from 1 to 5, where 1 means a probability with very low impact, and 5 a probability with a very big impact (Table 2).

Table 2. List of issues evaluated by the Club President on the external environment

Problem
1. Involving local authorities in supporting sports activities for children and youth
2. Perception and reaction of society on the importance of sports clubs for children and youth
3. Level of achievement of financial resources from the local budget
4. Importance given to the development of material base
5. Opportunities available to education and training
6. Communication and collaboration with local authorities
7. Applying a systemic and integrative project management
8. Attracting funding from the private sector
9. Collaborations with other sports organizations in the same field
10. Avoiding impact of policy change on the development strategies for sports club
11. Staff training and maintenance of specialist support
12. The relationship component and university education

A sports organization is established and operates as a complex, dynamic and open system, with multiple and diverse internal and external connections determined by the actions within the organization and the political, economic, social and technological (PEST) influences of the external environment. To diagnose the management system at the investigated football club, we developed a matrix of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (MFSOA) which were identified, in order to develop the club's management system. MFSOA matrix was developed by:

- combining strengths with opportunities, resulting in a development strategy;
- combining opportunities with weaknesses, resulting in a growth strategy with risk;
- combining strengths with threats, resulting in a growth strategy with risk;
- combining weaknesses with threats, resulting in a reorientation strategy.

MFSOA matrix contains nine squares:

- four dials for the four key-factors: strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats.
- four quadrants for strategic alternatives resulting from the combination of the four basic factors.

3. Results

With regards to the global evaluation of the management system within the researched club, the score obtained was 2.23, a satisfactory level according to the evaluation scale used.

The SWOT analysis has led to the discovery of different strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats, as presented in the following table:

Table 3. SWOT analysis of the football club investigated

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
- Employee training corresponds to their positions held within the organization	- Insufficiently defined informational subsystem
- Quality of human resource corresponds to the job description	- Insufficiently organized information transfer
- Information flows are consistent with the objectives of the club	
- Own sports facilities are currently being developed	
OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS
- Engaging the local authorities to support youth and junior sports activities;	- Less financial support following the economic crisis from local authorities
- Interest in developing and equipping the sports facilities	
- Relationship with the local authority's department of sport	
- Funding from the private sector	
- Collaboration with other sports organizations in the same domain	

In Table 4, we show the results of the PEST analysis for the club researched.

Table 4. PEST Analysis

POLITICAL	ECONOMIC
- the club is, in the current political context, an organization in search of and promoting real values, being exposed to the transition of the whole system and all of the subsystems	- although financial legislation allows the attraction of extra budgetary sources, this is extremely reduced within sports organizations
	- the interest of economic agents in offering sponsorship or donations continues to be low
	- the modest means of many parents are, in some situations, the reason why a number of children drop out of sports activities

SOCIAL	TEHNOLOGICAL
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the mentality of the majority of the population and its influence, which is placing more and more emphasis on the child education at the expense of sports involvement - at the demographic level, a continual decrease can be seen in the selection pool, having a long-term effect on Dambovită football - the tendency of the mass-media to fail to publicize football events in the youth and junior leagues, the starting point of competitive football 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - with regards to technology, the most important form of this is represented by the material resources of the club - modern technology has aided in the creation of a personal database and in providing information regarding the latest updates in the domain etc.

Table 5. MFSA matrix (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats)

<div>INTERNAL</div> <div>EXTERNAL</div>	Strengths: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Staff training corresponds to the positions within the organization - Quality of human resource corresponds to the job description - Information flows are consistent with the objectives of the club - Developing sports facilities 	Weaknesses: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Insufficiently defined informational subsystem - Insufficiently organized information activity
	Opportunities: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Engaging local authorities in supporting sports activities for children and youth - Interest in developing and sports equipment - Relationship with local government department for sport - Attracting funding private sector - Collaborations with other sports organizations in the same field - Support to the “Valahia” University and the School Inspectorate of Dambovită 	Development strategies: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Organizing the promotion and development of football activity level of children and youth locally - Organizing programs for the exchange of experience and professional culture - Organizing competitions in order to increase the area of selection - Attracting new funds within the organization in the private sector
	Threats: <p>Decreasing financial support following the generalized economic crisis from local authorities</p>	Growth strategies under risk: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Developing vocational training programs - Developing fundraising projects - Strengthening links with local institutions of common interest
		Strategy shift: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Redesigning informational subsystem of the sports club - Increasing financial share from the local budget

Following the diagnosis of the sports club's management, we have identified and proposed the following strategic approaches in order to develop and improve the system of management within the sports organization.

Table 6. General objectives of the development strategy

STRATEGIC AIMS	GENERAL OBJECTIVES
Improvement of the structural and procedural organization of the club in order to achieve the proposed objectives	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Perfect the procedural and structural organization of the club 2. Strengthen the informal organization of the club to achieve the proposed objectives 3. Improve youth and junior groups
Modernization of the informational component of the club	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Improve the informational components of the club 2. Improve the informational infrastructure 3. Improve the information medium necessary for the trainers to conduct the entire training process

Development of the professional components of the club in terms of special training specific to the position held within the sports organization	1. Update the framework of the sports organization's technical knowledge
Development of partnerships in view of sustaining activities within the football club	1. Bring in new shareholders to support the footballing activities of the club 2. Promote footballing activities with the help of the local authorities
Increase income through fundraising from different sources	1. Add to the club's budget through funds obtained from different sources 2. Ensure optimal conditions to achieve the sports results proposed

4. Conclusions and discussions

Using the SWOT analysis has led to the identification of the actual situation of the club (Table 3), where we see an important aspect of strengths: quality human resource as well as a worrying aspect related to weaknesses: informational subsystem is insufficiently defined and opportunities as well, but the support of local authorities will lead to the development of sports organization. On the basis of identified MFSOA matrix (Table 5), we achieved development strategies, growth and reorganization of risk conditions, which has led to improved process of management. Through the managerial approach proposed and performed, we find that the methods used are effective and lead to diagnosing the management system and design strategy for improving the activity of the organization.

Managing without a solid theoretical foundation and without a systemic vision can lead to syncope within the management system. The organization must have the ability to maintain itself and evolve under the impact of the demands from the external environment, and adapt/ readapt according to the changes in the internal environment. The good/ poor functionality of an organization is the result of the actions, either good or bad, upon the internal and surrounding environment, namely the leadership or management of it. Thus, the efficiency of an organization depends on the ability of its leader or leaders to use the internal resources available – material, financial, human and informational, to conform to the trends and changes which take place and exploit the opportunities presented by the external environment. Within sports organizations, physical, informational and psychological transformations take place. This is reflected in the external environment of the organization, constituting 'inputs' into the system of the organization. For these transformations to take place, sports organizations have to possess the ability to act/ react through its resources and efficient work methods, the results of these transformations representing the 'outputs' of the system. Such a vision is essential in the context of modern management used within sports organizations for the transformation of recommendations into operational contexts.

References

- Aldea, A. S. (2010). *Analiza valorii, metodă de reproiectare/proiectare a sistemului de management al organizației*. București: Agir.
- Amblard, H., Bernoux, P., Herreros, G., & Livian, Y. F. (1996). *Les nouvelles approches sociologiques des organisations*. Paris: Seuil.
- Burduș, E. (2007). *Fundamentele managementului organizației*. București: Editura Economică.
- Chifflier, P. (1993). *Associations de sportifs ou entreprises de sport*. Paris.
- Defrance, J. (1997). *Sociologie du sport* (2^e édition). Paris: La Découverte.
- Donna, W. (1990). *Business and Society*. Harper Collins Publishers.

- Frâncu, E. (2000). Rolul managementului în determinarea obținerii performanței sportive. *Știința Sportului*, 17.
- Fugigi, P. C., & Petrache, A. (2000). Atribuțiile funcției de manager al echipei naționale de rugby. *Știința Sportului*, 17.
- Livian, Y. F. (2008). *Organisation. Théories et pratiques*. Paris: Dunod.
- Loret, A. (1993). *Sport et management. De l'éthique à la pratique*. Paris: Dunod.
- Mihăilescu, N. (2008). *Organizare și conducere în structurile sportului*. Pitești: Editura Universității din Pitești.
- Simion, C. D. (2009). *Dezvoltarea handbalului pe plan european prin îmbunătățirea activității manageriale*. (Teză de doctorat). ANEFS, București.