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FACTOR STRUCTURE OF TOP MANAGERS IN MACEDONIAN SPORTS CLUBS

Abstract: With this paper, we aim to determine the structure of top managers in Macedonian sports clubs through the application of factor analysis in sports games - basketball, football, handball and volleyball, while condensing and reducing the large number of interrelated indicators - variables to a smaller number of mutually relatively independent latent variables. The paper covers 40 top managers from the best Macedonian football, basketball, handball and volleyball leagues. The population from which this sample of respondents was drawn can be defined as a population of active high-ranking sports top managers, holders of management functions in Macedonian sports clubs. The basic tools we used during the research to collect the data for the top sports managers were the survey questionnaires and the interviews. In this research, a system of 15 predictor variables, derived from top managers, was applied. The sample of treated predictor variables are characterized as indicators of management functions, expressed through the abilities and traits of top managers. Basic descriptive statistical methods were used in the research, and factor analysis was used to determine the latent structure of the treated indicators.

Keywords: sports clubs, top sports managers, factor structure

INTRODUCTION

Sport is a powerful institution that has grown into an industry valued at $425 billion annually (Plunkett, 2011; Coakley, 2009), and the emergence and evolution of sport management curricula is analogous to the development of the industry. The impetus for professional training in sport management came from the industry itself, thus beginning its development as an academic discipline (Gillentine & Crow, 2005). The process of management in sports is carried out within a system that consists of organizations that act in the form of sports clubs and federations. Without sports organizations, management is not able to provide its functional content, and conversely, without management, the sports organization does not have integral, that is, optimal strength for its action and development. In sports, a key issue is the achievement of the set goals of the sports club, and top sports managers are necessary to realize them. At the top of the pyramid is the top manager who manages the sports club and determines the vision, mission, goals and strategy of the sports club. The top manager is responsible for the coordination of the work, as well as for the processes and functions at the level of the entire sports club, in a single system of organization and analyzes the decisions made. The top sports manager is more focused on the external environment, and less focused on the interior of the sports club and the athletes. His main task is how to achieve the goal and how to implement the planned strategy to win the desired place on the table. Today's modern professional sport does not tolerate improvisation. Due to its complexity, professional sport requires quality and educated top sports managers. World knowledge says that top sports successes cannot be

achieved without thorough and daily monitoring of the latest scientific achievements, which greatly influence the development of sports and the achievement of high sports results. The experiences of developed Western European countries show that quality professional sports can only be managed by educated, professional and verified managers. Sports managers, without exception, in all European countries are educated at higher education institutions, specialized in sports management. Educated sports managers with their managerial skills are able to make right and timely decisions, as well as improve organizational efficiency, and thus improve sports results. Such sports managers will be less and less influenced by "random results" and more and more under the control of a team of sports management professionals.

According to Novak (2006), the integrative elements of success in sports activities are:

1. The laws and the environment, which affect the degree of success of sports operations: Legislative and legal environment, Law on commercial companies, Law on accounting, Law on sports, etc.
2. Sports marketing
3. Sports management
4. Expected results.

According to the research results presented in Bartolucci and Škorić, the most important characteristics that a "successful" manager in sports must possess are resourcefulness, determination and diligence.

1. SUBJECT AND PURPOSE OF THE RESEARCH

The subject of the paper are the top managers from the macedonian sports clubs in the sports games of basketball, handball, volleyball and football.

The main goal of this paper is to investigate the structure of top managers in macedonian sports clubs.

2. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

With the applied factor analysis in sports games - handball, basketball, football and volleyball, we aimed to condense and reduce the large number of interrelated indicators - variables to a smaller number of relatively independent latent variables, which will provide an answer for the structure of top sports managers. Based on the intercorrelation matrix of the applied variables among top managers of sports clubs, its characteristic equation was calculated and characteristic roots (LAMBDA) were obtained, which explain the common variance of each isolated principal component.

By factoring the intercorrelation matrix of sports club management, four characteristic roots (LAMBDA) greater than 1.00 were isolated and are shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Characteristic roots and explained parts of common variances

LAMBDA	VARIANCE %	CUMULATIVE %
5,77	39,08	39,08
1,97	13,20	52,28
1,30	9,44	61,73
1,18	7,85	68,96

Source: Own observations

The four factors contribute 68.96 % of the total system variability. While the individual contribution to the explanation of the common variance for the first latent dimension is 39.08 %, for the second it is 13.20 %, for the third it is 9.44 % and for the fourth it is 7.85 %. The first latent dimension is defined by the variables MTDP, VOTTMISC, SCBUDG, CSSMT, IIIC and LOTSC, which have medium high correlations with this latent dimension. Hence the latent information that gives us the right to define this factor as POSITIONING THE MEDIUM-TERM STRATEGY BY THE TOP MANAGER, CONDITION FOR SUCCESSFUL MANAGEMENT. This factor creates great opportunities for the team to perform successfully in a longer period of time, and for its realization, above all, long-term resolved financing, good vision, objectively and quality medium-term work plan are needed.

Table 2. Rotated factor matrix of top managers in macedonian sports clubs

	FACTORS			
VARIABLES	1	2	3	4
Working engagement of the top managers in a sports club - WETMASC	-,054	-,229	-,071	,801
Degree of education of the top manager - DOETTM	,171	-,005	,871	,187
Application of world languages - AOWL	,133	-,019	,903	-,030
Mid-term development plan - MTDP	,752	,209	,109	-,062
Level of health team - LHT	,413	,449	,513	-,103
Level of representation of sports management - LOROSM	,568	,661	,087	,089
Vision of the top manager in a sports club - VOTTMISC	,791	,140	-,052	-,002
Sports club budget - SCBUDG	,651	,183	,176	,404
Criteria and standards for selection of management teams - CSSMT	,585	,112	,281	-,057
Investing in intellectual capital - IIIC	,729	,137	,434	,022
Hiring a marketing person in a sports club - HAMPSC	,247	,836	,077	-,009
Hiring a financial person in a sports club - HFPISC	,274	,697	-,055	,139
Hiring a public relations person in a sports club - HPRPISC	,010	,865	,018	-,086
Representation of control in the management of a sports club - RCMSC	,087	,421	,181	,694
Level of organization of the sports club - LOTSC	,571	,417	,296	,371

Source: Own observations

The second latent dimension is constructed by the variables LOROSM, HAMPSC, HFPISC and HPRPISC. The listed variables have a significant impact on this latent dimension which can be interpreted as a factor of setting up a FUNCTIONAL MANAGEMENT TEAM, CONDITION FOR SUCCESSFUL MANAGEMENT OF SPORTS. This factor has a significant contribution in today's modern sport. The efficiency of this latent variable largely depends on the marketing team, which should ensure rational, economical and efficient implementation of sports and work functions. In today's modern top sport, marketing plays a very important role, because it has the opportunity to attract significant funds, needed for successful functioning and further upgrading of the sport.

It is very problematic to define the third factor that has the greatest connection with the variables DOETTM, AOWL and LHT. The listed variables, which are derived from the abilities and characteristics of the management teams, greatly help the top manager to successfully manage the sports club and to establish good cooperation with the internal and external environment inside and outside the country. Education and knowledge of world languages have a significant contribution to the successful implementation of today's modern sports management. For the stated reasons, we define this latent dimension as a GUIDE TO THE EDUCATION OF THE TOP MANAGER, A

CONDITION FOR SUCCESSFUL MANAGEMENT OF THE SPORTS CLUB.

The fourth latent dimension is defined as a CONSTRUCTION CONSTRUCTION SYSTEM BY THE TOP MANAGER, A REQUIREMENT FOR SUCCESSFUL CHANGE-RUNNING OF THE SPORTS CLUB. This latent dimension has relatively high projections of the variables WETMASC and RCMSC. The management of the sports club can be successfully implemented only if, in addition to the managerial experience, the top manager has an appropriate control system.

CONCLUSIONS

The main role of the top manager is to increase sports productivity, as well as taking responsibility for the functioning of all processes and resources that are most responsible for managing processes and functions, where ideas are translated into the goals of the sports club. Based on the above and the obtained results, we propose the following conclusions:

» The bearers of sports activity in sports clubs are the top managers, who aim to successfully coordinate the efficient and effective performance of sports work activities. The top manager tends to create stable conditions for the smooth operation of the club. Managers place their sports activities on a rational approach, which is highly correlated with the planning and control of significant sports activities, and this can only be achieved by appropriately educated top managers.

» Sports managers, without exception, in all European countries are educated at higher educational institutions, specialized in sports management. Due to its complexity, professional sports require a quality personnel structure in which different types of knowledge, abilities and skills are evenly represented. Educated top sports managers with their management skills are able to make right and timely decisions and constantly improve the effectiveness and efficiency of operations.

» Resources represent the tangible and intangible assets that enable the realization of the transformation processes, and thus the set goals. Intangible capital is tied to human resources in the sports club, so human resources are the most important resources available to the sports club. Such work has education and knowledge in the foreground.

» In Macedonian sports clubs, the biggest improvisers are the top managers and direct culprits for the low level of Macedonian sport. As the main reason, we can cite the inadequate educational structure of the top managers who are not able to create conditions for high achievements and ensure a high level of professional-scientific work. As a support, we will state that only 5% of the managers have an adequate education in the field of management, and 95% are from other areas that have nothing in common with management, and even less with sports management.

» With factor analysis, 4 latent dimensions were singled out among top managers of sports clubs, namely:

1. Setting the mid-term strategy by the top manager, a condition for successful management of the sports club;
2. Setting up a functional management team, a condition for successful management of the sports club;
3. The direction of the education of the top manager, a condition for successful management of the sports club;
4. The set control system by the top manager, a condition for successful management of the sports club.

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