

HOW THE ORGANIZATIONAL ENVIRONMENT INFLUENCES THE GOVERNANCE OF COMMUNITY SPORTS CLUBS IN JAPAN

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Keywords

Sports clubs, Organizational environment, Sport governance

Aim of abstract/paper - research question

The aims of this study were to comprehend the organizational characteristics and the governing pattern of sports clubs, and a discussion was made of the organizational relationship of sports clubs in the community (SCC).

Theoretical background or literature review

Creating a lifelong sport-oriented society for all people and building community sports clubs in every community has been an urgent issue of the Japanese government since 2000. Japan has become a super aged society with an enormous population of 30 million baby-boomers and they are expected to become the potential majority of sports club members. According to past studies, engaging in sporting activities is a crucial factor in enabling the elderly to age successfully. Creating an optimal sports environment through effective sports governance in the community to help the elderly to have a quality life will be an emerging trend.

Methodology, research design and data analysis

In this study, N District in Tokyo was chosen as the study site (709,427 citizens; 14,731 people/1km²). The major reason was that the government selected this district as the model for SCCs which exemplified the practice for other sports clubs in Japan. The methods employed by this study were participatory observation and in-depth interviews. Two of the seven SCCs were selected as the fieldwork sites where two months of observation were conducted, and an examination was made of how sports clubs operate and offer sporting services to the elderly. Eight Leaders from five local SCCs were chosen as the interviewees after observation.

Results, discussion and implications/conclusions

With an analysis of SCCs' internal environment, the results indicated that although sports programs in gymnastics, swimming, and table-tennis are widely offered for the elderly members in SCCs, only large clubs can supply diverse sporting opportunities for the elderly members, and attract many more senior customers to engage continuously in SCCs. In terms of budget and income, participant fees and government grants are the main financial support for the SCCs. Most SCCs which are commissioned by the government can obtain grants under the condition of conducting special sports programs and submitting an annual report. Meanwhile, the issue of the external environment is covered as well. First, the organizational relationship among SCCs was discussed; in general, SCCs have similar goals and means, so they communicate and cooperate with each other by sharing human resources and exchanging information. Next, the results of the organizational relationship between SCCs and the government showed that large SCCs have a strong connection with local governments so they can expand their organization smoothly and increase the available opportunities for the elderly to become involved in community sports clubs. However, the organizations depended mostly on the assistance of senior volunteers in developing "elite sports" and sports for children, which are still the main service targets of SCCs. To conclude, while SCCs have been well-developed for a decade, they face a series of organizational problems (i.e.: structural isomorphism) in more recent years. Although small SCCs make efforts on transformation and innovation, they seldom win in competition with large SCCs; as a result, the organizations either expand rapidly or shrink dramatically. Next, the tradition of working hard over taking part in leisure activities still limit the male elderly engaging in sports activities, so encouraging male participants to devote themselves more to sports in SCC services is a crucial topic for the future. Also, one of the best ways for perpetual management of SCCs is to enhance the connection and relationship with the community. According to the current scenario, scanning and integrating human resources, financial resources and material resources will be the most urgent needs for the future.

References

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