

Performance management in national sports organisations: a holistic theoretical model

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Abstract

Over the last two decades the performance management (PM) of sport organisations has been a subject of considerable interest. Much of the research has been into ways in which performance of sport organisations can be measured (Papadimitriou & Taylor, 2000; Bayle & Madella, 2002; Madella, et al., 2005; Winand, et al., 2014) with a few endeavours towards ways in which performance can be managed (Bayle & Robinson, 2007; O'Boyle & Hassan, 2014). While research has failed to look into how PM systems are implemented by sport organisations, O'Boyle and Hassan (2014) have called for researchers to look beyond performance measurement and more into the management of performance among sport organisations.

To fill this gap, this research aims to conceptualise how PM systems are developed and used by sport organisations. The research identifies (1) external factors that influence the development of PM systems, (2) internal factors related to the use of PM systems by organisational individuals, (3) the effect of the use of PM systems on organisational performance and (4) the influence of the feedback from performance measurement on the improvements of the PM systems. The present abstract provides theoretical grounding into a holistic perspective for the management of sport organisations' performance. Literature on organisational performance among sport organisations was used to construct a theoretical model of the development and use of PM systems.

Three mainstream theories underpin the research: resources dependency theory (Pfeffer & Salancik, 1978), stakeholder theory (Freeman, 1984), and institutional theory (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983). The model is based on the foundation that national sport organisations depend on the external environment and stakeholders (e.g. national sports agency) for the resources that they require in pursuit of their mission. This external dependence influences the development and use of PM systems, with particular pressures exerted on national sporting organisations to adhere to institutional logics including which system, dimension and indicators they should use.

The internal factors affecting PM are based on the performance of individuals within the organisation as they drive organisational systems. The roles that people play in an organisation include the board and the operational staff. Sport governance (Inglis, 1997; Shilbury, 2001; Hoye & Auld, 2001; Ferkins et al., 2009; Shilbury & Ferkins, 2011) is used to address factors related to the individual performance of the board members. Aspects of board performance that include board leadership, trust between the board and the executive, the control of the information available to the board and responsibility for board performance as described by Hoye and Cuskelly (2003) have been identified to influence PM systems. Regarding the operational staff, factors are based on individual performance of the volunteers and the paid staff within the organisation, the attitude of the personnel towards performance

and the relationship between the board and the staff. These factors have been identified to affect the use of PM systems.

The result obtained from measuring performance of a sport organisation illustrates the extent to which its PM system is effective. Measuring the effectiveness of a PM system used by a sport organisation, is based on the inputs (financial and human resources), their uses through organisational processes that include the management of resources and programs (throughputs) to achieve the goals of the organisation in terms of success in elite sports, mass sport participation, and delivery of services to stakeholders (outputs) and the consequence in terms of satisfaction of the stakeholders and organisational image as outlined by Winand et al. (2014). Finally, learning from the implementation of the PM system, improvements would be made to the system itself, in order to ensure sustained or better results in the future through the feedback loop.

This theoretical model, which will be fully presented at the conference, establishes the development and use of the PM systems in national sport organisations. It contributes to improving our understanding of organisational processes within sport organisations and informs practices on how these organisations can work towards sustained high performance over a long term. Furthermore, the theoretical model would serve as a basis for further research into PM in sport organisation settings, and answers call from researchers (O'Boyle & Hassan, 2014) to develop a holistic perspective on the PM of sporting organisations, beyond their measurement.

Further research could be conducted using this model to evaluate factors that impact PM systems within sporting organisations. Further research needs to investigate organisational and individual responses to external and internal pressures and the extent to which organisations learn from these and the changes that they implement to improve future practices.

References

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