

Values in sport organizations: what values define the Norwegian sports movement?

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Aim of abstract

The Norwegian Olympic and Paralympic Committee and Confederation of Sports (NIF) can be characterized as an institution as it's an organization infused with values (Selznick, 1957). An institution is an organization which is defined by its values. For example, the societal role of sports is embedded in national values in which shape the role and responsibility for the sports organizations. Hence, the attitudes, decisions and actions of NIF and their affiliated member organizations (i.e. national federations or sport clubs) need to be consistent with both the values defined by the sports movement itself and the societal values expressed by public authorities. Complying with such values is also crucial in order to secure continued governmental support. Although several researchers have studied values in sports organizations (e.g. DeSensi, 2014; Kerwin, MacLean & Bell-Laroche, 2014), very little research have directed attention towards what values members and administrative staff within the sports movement emphasize. There are also very few studies that address to what extent the values that actors at the grass-root level holds are consistent with the values that the top leaders of the sports organizations holds. The purpose of this study is therefore to reveal which attitudes and values members and employees within Norwegian sports emphasize in relation to: doping and anti-doping, alcohol, eating disorders, performance pressure, fair play, modification of equipment, specialization, corruption, openness and transparency, elite athletes as role models, and the societal role of sports. The research question is: What values and attitudes defines the Norwegian sports movement at the elite and mass sport level?

Theoretical background

The study draws upon the theory of institutional leadership (Selznick, 1957; Washington, Boal & Davis, 2008). This theory addresses how leaders promote and protect key organizational values, and how these values influence the way an organization organizes their activities, i.e. the core process. The theory of institutional leadership is somewhat different from other perspectives on leadership and management by values as it has a strong emphasis on how leaders promote the key values in the institutional environment. In addition, it also emphasize the importance of consistency between the values of the institution and values in the institutional environment. In light of the research question, the theory of institutional leadership will be used to analyze to what extent leaders' attitudes and values are consistent with the other members' and employees attitudes and values. The theory will also be applied to discuss what implications the findings have for leadership of a voluntary sport organization.

Methodology

This is a quantitative study. The questionnaire consists of 80 questions and are divided into 5 sections:

1. Fundamental values in Norwegian sports,
2. Assertions in which the respondents must choose from "totally agree" to "totally disagree",

3. The societal role of children-, youth- and elite sports,
4. Ethical dilemmas, and
5. Attitudes towards doping and body modification techniques.

Many of the questions were also included in two previous studies conducted in 1993 and 2003 (Loland, 2003) and an important aim of the study is thus to analyze how values and attitudes have changed over the last 25 years. The last section of questions are also included in a study about attitudes towards doping on the population level (Norwegian Monitor study). The data collection from the Norwegian Monitor study are finished in April 2016. Hence, the overall study will compare the attitudes towards doping that administrative staff and members within the sports movement holds with the attitudes towards doping that the Norwegian population holds. The data collection will take place in May and June 2016. The questionnaire will be send to a sample of 3000 respondents and includes board members and administrative staff in the confederation of sports (N=1), national federations (N=54), regional confederations (N=19), district/region sport federations (N=350), and selected sports clubs (N=50) in all the Norwegian counties. In addition, the sample also includes coaches and athletes within the selected sports clubs and within the national elite teams. Hence, the sample covers both the mass- and elite sport level.

Results and discussion

As the data collection will be carried out in May and June 2016, there are no results available at the moment.

Conclusion

As the data soon are going to be collected there is not possible to draw any conclusions at this point.

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