

Recruitment Pattern of German Sport Managers – Hiring-Practice between professional and unprofessional criteria

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Introduction

Commercialization, growth and change in the demand for sport lead to the demand for an efficient management of resources and to rising requirements on the management of sport organizations. Sport management both as an occupation and as an academic discipline has experienced exceptional growth (SOUCIE 1998, p. 14). Professionalization of sport management activities presupposes professional training and recruiting. The importance of the right type of manager is self-evident to any organization wishing to be successful. The German press typically blames stumbling sport organizations on unprofessional recruitment, this is hiring winners of gold medals, friends or recommended persons, while professional recruitment relies on well trained and experienced specialists. Different occupational fields of German sport managers have been studied in the past decade and the knowledge on their managerial work has been extended and differentiated (HORCH/NIESSEN/SCHÜTTE 2003, HORCH/SCHÜTTE 2003, HOVEMANN/KAISER/SCHÜTTE 2003, KAISER 2004, KAISER/SCHÜTTE 2004a). Since within these investigations several aspects concerning the recruitment-practice were queried, there is the chance to find out whether this reproach is justified or not, and to test some assumptions regarding the explanation of the recruitment pattern.

Theory

Following the Bureaucracy Theory of Max WEBER (1972) and the Contingency Theory (i.a. DONALDSON 2001) according to the three sectors (NPO, FPO, State), organizational size and stratification the following assumptions can be developed: Hiring is done in an increasingly professional way the more bureaucratic (NPO < FPO < State) an organization is (H1), the bigger the organization is (H2) and the higher the particular hierarchical management position is (H3).

Research Methods

The data consists of data from several quantitative surveys (mailed questionnaires) in different occupational areas of sport managers: Sport clubs/sport federations (HORCH/NIESSEN/SCHÜTTE 2003; N=199), municipal sport administration (HORCH/SCHÜTTE 2003; N=282) and sport event agencies (HOVEMANN/KAISER/SCHÜTTE 2003; N=76).

Results

Recruitment patterns were measured with a self-estimation of the managers. A given list of 2 professional (job experience, competencies) and 3 unprofessional reasons (already known, recommendation by a third, sport career) had to be filled in. Multiple and alternative answers were allowed. 39% of the managers indicated professional recruitment reasons and 45% both professional and unprofessional (Table 1).

Table 1 Recruitment Pattern of Sport Managers

Reasons for Hiring	N	%
No answer	42	7,7
Only unprofessional reasons	44	8,1
Only professional reasons	214	39,2
Professional and unprofessional reasons	246	45,1
Total	546	100,0

An ANOVA reveals significant differences between the sectors, but all three prefer highly professional criteria rather than unprofessional.

84% claimed to be recruited for professional reasons or for both professional and unprofessional reasons. The question remains to which extent we can rely on the managers self estimation? A comparison of the indicated qualification criteria with the actual graduation shows the validity of the managers self estimation. 73% held a university degree and only a few (3,8%) had a low educational level. Again differences in the sectors were found (Table 2).

Table 2 Educational Level

Educational level	Sport club/ federation	Municipal sport administration	Sport event agency	Total
Low-Level (no apprenticeship)	2 1,0%	11 3,9%	8 11,0%	21 3,8%
Mid-Level (apprenticeship/highschool)	63 32,0%	40 14,3%	23 31,5%	126 23,0%
High-Level (University)	132 67,0%	228 81,7%	42 57,5%	402 73,2%
Total	197 100,0%	279 100,0%	73 100,0%	549 100,0%

Testing the assumptions the following results occur: Hypothesis 1 is supported with regard to the criteria “experience” and “recommendation”, but in the case of “competencies” the opposite structure shows up: the more bureaucratic the organizations are the less important is qualification (Table 3). This may be caused by the fact, that especially NPO’s are often criticized for malrecruitment, they will be more sensitive to their hiring-practice.

Table 3 Recruitment and Bureaucratization

H1: Bureaucratization (NPO<FPO<State)		Tau b	Sign.	N
Professional reasons	Job experience	0,12**	0,01	546
	Competencies	-0,21**	0,00	546
Unprofessional reasons	Already known	-0,07	0,08	546
	Recommendation by a third	-0,17**	0,00	546
	Sport career	-0,08	0,06	546

Regarding H2 only the recruitment criteria “competencies” correlates significantly with organizational size (Table 4).

Table 4 Recruitment and Size

H2: Size (Number of employees)		Tau b	Sign.	N
Professional reasons	Job experience	0,02	0,51	513
	Competencies	0,13**	0,00	513
Unprofessional reasons	Already known	-0,07	0,06	513
	Recommendation by a third	0,01	0,75	513
	Sport career	0,04	0,26	513

H3 is supported by a significant correlation with the recruitment criteria “experience” (Table 5).

Table 5 Recruitment and Stratification

H3: Position in the hierarchy (1=top, 2=middle, 3=low position)		Tau b	Sign.	N
Professional reasons	Job experience	0,11**	0,01	510
	Competencies	-0,07	0,10	510
Unprofessional reasons	Already known	0,07	0,09	510
	Recommendation by a third	-0,02	0,65	510
	Sport career	0,04	0,38	510

Discussion

The results show that the often quoted statement, sport organization suffer of malrecruited managers, is only in single cases true and cannot be considered as typical. Sport organizations may suffer for a lot of reasons, but most of them work with professionally recruited managers. Even though the findings cannot satisfactorily represent the hiring-practice of sport organizations, they can at least disprove the received opinion: Sport organizations may suffer for a lot of reasons, but most of them work with professionally recruited managers. Recruitment pattern depend on bureaucratization, size and stratification.

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