Differences of Needs and Problematics between Managers in Public and Private Sports Organisations in Spain

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Abstract

Aim of the Paper.

This study aims to detect the needs and requirements of current sports management, by examining the differences between public and private sports organizations. Sport plays a major economic and social role, and it needs to be administered efficiently by managers (Figure 1). Both public and private organizations are facing the same reality: to achieve excellence as an organization in their field of activity (improving the quality of their services by making optimum use of the resources they have at their disposal). Traditionally, public organizations strive to meet objectives marked by a social outlook, while private sector organizations are driven by the need to obtain profits. This difference of perspective in sports organizations means that the managers take on a greater dimension and importance.

Theoretical Background.

Boyne`s (2002) criticism of new Public Management is that differences between public and private organizations are so great that business practices should not be transferred to the public sector. Public administration was ´transformed` into public sector management through the importing of private sector techniques, so too has public sector employment been varied in pursuit of greater efficiency, flexibility and responsiveness (Colley, 2001). Boyne`s (2002) research categorizes four main theoretical effects of publicness that have been identified in the literature on the differences between public and private management with regard to the distinctiveness of public agencies. These concern the relationship between publicness and organizational environments, organizational goals, organizational structures, and the values of managers. In private organizations, owners and shareholders have a direct monetary incentive to monitor and control the behaviour of managers. Similarly, managers themselves are likely to benefit from better performance, either because they own company shares or because their pay is linked to financial success. By contrast, property rights in the public sector are diffuse and vague. Monitoring is a ´public good` – individual voters have little to gain from expending effort on this activity. Moreover, managers do not usually obtain direct financial benefits from higher organizational efficiency. Nineteen empirical studies have examined whether organizational structures differ significantly between public agencies and private firms

and eleven studies have tested that public organizations are more bureaucratic (Hood, 2000). Even so, there is a certain flexibility in local administrations with regard to their organizational structure (Slack & Parent, 2006). Other noteworthy aspects of public and private sports organizations have to do with the fact that planning is more thorough in private organizations, in many cases they are driven by feasibility plans. This is now becoming more common in the public sector as well (Hautbois & Durand, 2004).

Methodology.

128 sports organizations (60% public and 40% private) were asked to name their biggest problems, by means of a questionnaire set up for the study by a group of experts. This distribution of the public and private sphere is a resonably faithful reflection of the true situation for Spanish sports bodies (Gallardo, 2007). The questionnaire was personally delivered to each of the participating sports managers and taken in once it has been completed. The study followed a quantitative methodology of a descriptive nature, using a questionnaire that was structured and designed for this research. For data treatment we used the SPSS 14.0 for Windows.

Results and Discussion.

While we found an occasional difference (a greater number of external customers and sports facilities to administer in public organizations, different use of internal organization tools, quality-based management systems), we should like to emphasise that no substantial differences were detected between private and public sports managers` replies. Sports organizations are using more and more tools for internal and external purposes to help them in their day-to-day work. User-satisfaction surveys, together with complaints and suggestions systems are commonly used in both types of organization. Listening to what the customer wants is an essential option for the development of a sports organization (Homburg et al., 2005). Human Resources are the most problematic aspect of management in the organization as a whole. Human resources are the sports managers` greatest challenge if they want their organization to be successful, based on the employer`s satisfaction. The managers have unanimously pointed out the need for specific software to improve sports management. There is a need for the sports manager to be heard by the sector`s administrations and/or companies so that they can provide solutions for the requirements that need to be catered for in day-to-day management.

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