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### **An investigation of human resource empowerment applied to the Greek sport federations**

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#### **Background**

Nowadays sport organizations develop and implement strategies in a globalized economic, social and technological environment. The managers of sport organizations all over the world must respond effectively to the changes taking place in their respective environments. Many authors claim that if a manager wants to be effective, he or she must be a good manager of people as they make up an organization and make everything work (Lipiec, 2001; Marken, 2000; Slack, 1997; Morton, 1996; Tosi, Rizzo & Carroll, 1986). As a consequence, human resource management and more specifically **empowerment** of human resources in the particular working and social environment of each organization has, greater importance than the management of other resources and requires a meticulous attention in order to constitute for the organization a source of competitive advantage (Bowen & Lawler, 1992).

#### **Objectives**

The objectives of this study were: (a) to examine the extent to which human resource empowerment is applied to the divided federations as shown by one variable (Sport Federations size: number of active clubs) and (b) to investigate if differences exist among the Greek Sport Federations (large, medium sized and small) as shown by one variable (number of active clubs) and the key factors of Empowerment.

#### **Methods**

The original sampling frames of 26 Greek Sport Federations. Responses were received from 20 Greek Sport Federations with a 77 % response rate. The participatory sport federations were divided into three groups based on one variable (Sport Federation size): (a) number of active clubs. The divided groups were: (a) large federations (n=7), (b) medium sized federations (n=6), and (c) small federations (n=7). For the purpose of the study a survey instrument was used (developed by Vogt & Murrell, 1990), to provide information on how managerial and technical directors of Greek Sport Federations see themselves in terms of the empowerment process. The first part of the survey instrument included questions concerning demographic characteristics. The second part consisted of 30 questions, which included six units based on areas of research mentioned above. The basic managerial styles included in the survey instrument were: (a) the

“totally empowering style of management”, (b) the “empowering and less controlling style of management” and (c) the “controlling style of management”. In the first case the manager has a managerial style that reflects the manager who creates and shares power. In the second case the manager is more empowering than controlling, and in the third case, the manager is concerned with control or seldom shares, creates or empowers subordinates. The reliability of the scale was found to be  $\alpha = .85$ . Descriptive statistics and one way analysis of variance were used to answer the research questions, using SPSS.

## **Results**

Medium sized Greek Sport Federations used 83.3% “more empowering style and less controlling”, and 16.7% “totally empowering style” in the key factor: “Total for all managerial functions”. Moreover, they used to the same extent (33.3%) the three styles of management (“more empowering style and less controlling”, “totally empowering style” and “controlling style”) in the key factor: “Leadership, motivation, and reward-systems skills”. On the other hand, large and small Greek Sport Federations used 71.4% “more empowering style and less controlling”, and 28.6% “controlling style” in the key factor: “Total for all managerial functions”. Referring to the key factor: “Leadership, motivation, and reward-systems skills” large Greek Sport Federations used 100% “controlling style”, while small Greek Sport Federations used 57.1% “more empowering style and less controlling”, and 28.6% “controlling style”. Finally, it was shown that the “totally empowering style” of management was not used by large and small Greek Sport Federations.

The results also showed that there was a significant difference among the large, medium sized and small federations in two key factors of empowerment: (a) Leadership, motivation, and reward system skills ( $F_{(2, 17)} = 4.35$ ,  $p < .05$ ), and (b) Total for all managerial functions ( $F_{(2, 17)} = 4.40$ ,  $p < .05$ ). Tukey Post Hoc test showed that: (a) large federations ( $M = 26,92$ ) differ in the key factor: Leadership, motivation, and reward system skills from medium sized federations ( $M = 36,39$ ) ( $p < .05$ ), and (b) large federations ( $M = 182,50$ ) differ in the key factor: Total for all managerial functions from medium sized federations ( $M = 217,72$ ) ( $p < .05$ ). No other significant differences were found.

## **Conclusion/Application to practice**

Medium-sized federations are more likely to apply empowerment to a greater extent than large and small ones. They also implement the “totally empowering style” of management, in comparison with large and small ones in the key factors: “Leadership, motivation, and reward system skills”, and “Total for all managerial functions”.

The present findings show that the most significant constraint to empowerment was “controlling style” of management. Considering that empowerment plays a vital role for sport organizations to survive and prosper, the directors of sport organizations and especially of large sport federations need to recognize this constraint and must be willing to shift from a top-down control system and

style to an empowering style of management, if they are to support the implementation of empowerment, by using a series of specific strategies and activities.

## **References**

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