

## Management of football organizations from a business studies perspective

**Authors:** Magnus Forslund

**Institution:** School of Business and Economics, Linnaeus University

**E-mail:** Magnus.Forslund@lnu.se

### Abstract keywords

Football Management, Football Organizations, Business Studies, Literature Review

### Aim of abstract/paper - research question

Previous research has attempted to show how sport and business differ. This is especially so when it comes to team sports like football. This range from the fact that football organizations compete in leagues to that the product (the football match) is unique. Consequently there are claims that there should be specific theories for the management of football organizations. However, what is lacking is a more thorough discussion on these theories and to what extent they actually differ from those theories used in business studies. A critical stance towards the discussion also raises the question why it is so important to state these differences? Is it really the case that business studies theories are of little use in order to understand and manage football organizations or could it be argued that currently the potential of business studies theories are underestimated?

The aim of this paper is to critically discuss management of football organizations from the viewpoint of business studies.

### Theoretical background or literature review

The paper will depart from earlier attempts to discuss the relation between sports organizations and other types of organizations. This includes among others Knoke & Prensky (1984) on the relevance of organization theories for voluntary associations, Stewart & Smith (1999) on the differences between sports and business, Thiel & Mayer (2009) on the characteristics of voluntary sports clubs management, Hamil & Chadwick (2009) on Managing Football, and Bridgewater (2010) on Football Management. The aim is to highlight key arguments and then critically

assess and juxtapose them with discussions from the general business studies field. Assisting in this is a business organization model based upon e.g. Forslund (2011).

Business studies are understood as all discussions on how to create and manage effective businesses. This includes accounting, marketing, finance, organization theory, logistics, leadership and so on. Most important however is the general underlying idea on how we can understand what an organization is, the different offerings a business have and the complexities that businesses face in everyday operations. This leads to a much more complex image of what it means to manage a business organization and thus helps us problematize the relation between this and the management of football organizations.

### Methodology, research design and data analysis

Literature review followed by a construction of a conceptual model that can be used to discuss the management of football organizations.

### Results, discussion and implications/conclusions

The results are not clear at the present, but will be when it is time for submission. Preliminary findings include that there are severe simplifications and misunderstandings that plague discussions on differences between sport and business organizations. This prevents us from more clearer assess and understand sport organizations in general and football organizations in particular. The attempt to use a business organization model to conceptualize management of football organizations seems promising and indicates that there are great potential in using business studies theories to develop the field

### References

- Bridgewater, S. (2010). *Football Management*. Basingstoke: Palgrave-MacMillan
- Hamil, S & Chadwick, S. (2009). *Managing football – an International Perspective*. Oxford: Butterworth-Heinemann
- Knoke, D., & Prensky, D. (1984). What relevance do organization theories have for voluntary associations? *Social Science Quarterly*, 65(1), 3-20.
- Stewart, R., & Smith, A. C. T. (1999). The special features of sport. *Annals of Leisure Research*, 2, 87-99.
- Thiel, A., & Mayer, J. (2009). Characteristics of voluntary sports clubs management: A sociological perspective. *European Sport Management Quarterly*, 9(1), 81 - 98.