
ENHANCING THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE ASSOCIATION OF NATIONAL OLYMPIC COMMITTEES OF AFRICA: MANAGING CHANGE INITIATIVES

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Abstract

Objectives

The Association of National Olympic Committees of Africa (ANOCA) is one of the five Continental Olympic Associations formed by the International Olympic Committee (IOC). Created in 1981, ANOCA is an international non-governmental not-for-profit organization constituted among 53 National Olympic Committees of Africa and is currently headquartered in ABUJA (Nigeria). Despite the significance of ANOCA in international sport, it has not been effective in discharging its responsibilities. Past efforts in organizational change have not been successful either. Underscoring the need for change, this study was undertaken to assess the perceptions of critical stakeholders including representatives of member NOCs in Africa regarding the need for change, obstacles to change, and ways and means of overcoming those obstacles.

Methods

A qualitative research was conducted, employing interviews and a mail survey to collect the necessary data. Eight members of the Executive Committee of ANOCA and two senior employees of ANOCA participated in semi-structured interviews guided by 28 open-ended questions eliciting interviewee's views on the current state of ANOCA, the challenges it faces, and its status as a modern organization. These questions were focused on the why, the what, the how, and the outcome of change as suggested by the Rational (Teleological) Model of Organizational change (Adrianna, 2001; Carnall, 1995; Huber and Glick, 1993). Representatives from 31 African National Olympic Committees responded to a specially constructed questionnaire. The present report is based on their responses to the last and open-ended question in the survey which requested the respondents to indicate their views on what should be done to achieve better results. It must be noted here that the African nations embrace two dominant languages—English and French.

Therefore, the questionnaire originally written in English was translated into French for use with respondents from French Speaking nations. Similarly, the interviews were also conducted in either English or French depending on the interviewee's preferred language.

Results

Our findings showed that the key factors that could facilitate organizational change include communication, governance, leadership style, readiness for change, stakeholders' involvement, timing, emotions, perception and interpretation of change, and the change process. Our result show that participants in the study felt that leaders play a pivotal role in the success of any change initiative and, hence, there is the need not-for-profit organization like ANOCA to embrace a leadership style that would facilitate the change process and quell resistance. Our results also showed the significance of stakeholders in making the change initiatives successful. Consistent with the views of (Bolman and Deal, (1991), our results also showed that the context of Olympic Sport Organizations requires sensitization, bargaining, persuasion, lobbying, amongst others to make any change initiative to be effective.

The results of our study and the conclusions drawn from them parallel the substance of the rRational (Teleological) Mmodel of Oorganizational Cchange (Adrianna, 2001; Carnall, 1995; Huber and Glick, 1993).

More specifically, the participants of the study felt that:

- Change becomes necessary when an organization faces challenges in fulfilling its mission;
- Change must be planned;
- Leadership is responsible for initiating change and bringing it to successful completion;
- The change process has to be linear and logical; and
- Stakeholder involvement is necessary for the change initiative to be successful (our respondents complained that ANOCA did not involve them sufficiently).

Conclusion

Given the paucity of literature on the topic of organizational change in sports organizations, our research can be seen as a useful addition to this body of literature. One avenue of future research could be focused on factors (e.g., gender, language group, regions of the continent, seniority, board versus management, etc.) that could affect the perceived need for change, the direction of such change, the processes of instituting the changes, and the effectiveness of those change initiatives. Finally, perhaps the most important question is: is the organization better off with successful organizational change? Longitudinal studies have to be undertaken to answer this last question.

References

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