

# A Critical Review Of Project Control Models For Monitoring The Organization Of Sporting Events

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## **Aim of the research**

Access to a limited number of resources, more severe time constraints, more important coordination needs, and higher expectations to meet challenging project performance targets have all increased the importance of adopting formal project control processes, tools and techniques. Project control systems include planning, measuring, and monitoring functions that enable the comparison between the planned project objectives and the actual project performance. Project control is carried out through various processes and tools that are used to detect specific issues that may arise when executing any project and that favor the right selection of corrective actions.

Despite the research largely recognizing the positive impact using project control tools and techniques to manage projects (Montes-Guerra, Gimena, Perez-Ezcurdia & Diez-Silva, 2014), the sports management literature has largely ignored these tools. Indeed, descriptive use of project control mechanisms in sporting events is nearly inexistent. This might appear surprising as project management practices within sports has found a wide application for organizing sports events in supporting multiple activities such as planning project tasks, appointing project teams, and managing budgets (Dugalié, 2013; Rabnadi, Khallouli, As-Salem & Ghoniem, 2015). This paper aims at reviewing standard project control mechanisms and to identify possible reasons behind their low level of adoption for controlling sports event projects.

## **Methodology**

This research started by identifying standard project control tools and techniques by reviewing the main project management bodies of knowledge (PMBOK, AACE, ISO, Prince2). Then, we reviewed the literature on sports event project management using 'monitoring' and 'control' as keywords within the Elsevier, Emerald, Springer, and Taylor and Francis databases in order to identify the most used project controlling techniques in sports events. This review revealed a limited number of papers and Earned Value Analysis (EVA) was the only formal project control techniques reported. In fact, most papers focused on sports event planning and scheduling issues without addressing directly project control activities (Rabadi et al., 2015). This set of papers were further analysed to identify key sporting events planning characteristics that might explain the difficulties in trying to adopt standard project control tools for monitoring the organization of sporting events.

## **Results and discussion**

Montes-Guerra et al. (2014) confirmed the existence of a large number of tools and guidelines for project control issued by different organizations and professional associations. However, these references are intended to provide general guidelines for the development of a project control process without attempting to provide detailed information on the use of the recommended tools and methodologies (Stephenson, Hollman, Farin, Hartley, Murugesan & Simons, 2011). They include multiple project performance indicators, project review processes, change management processes, problem solving techniques and variance reporting tools. Most referred models aimed at monitoring one of the following project variable: scope, time, cost, quality, risk, procurement, and communication.

As exposed by Hazir (2015), EVA remains the most widely used project control tool. EVA uses monetary units as a common basis to measure and communicate the progress of a project by comparing the actual and the budgeted values of the work performed, the time taken and the costs incurred. Montes-Guerra et al. (2014) also confirmed that the use of project progress indicators, such as EVA, and the adoption of formal scope review processes are from all project control practices the most correlated with project performance.

Despite its recognized value, EVA has not found a wide application within sports practice. The basic concepts behind EVA might explain this problem. Input that serves to measure a project progress is based on the structure of the project activities (work breakdown structure) and their dependency representation (project network). Both these standard techniques are centered on the individual project activity work content and assume a full independence between activities in terms of workload and execution mode. The high correlation between multiple activities involved in the organization of sporting events (e.g., attendance planning, marketing, budgeting) is not considered and may generate false indications of real project

progress. In this context, some authors argue that the representation and monitoring of information and decision flow within activities might be as important as their logical execution sequence. In a similar manner, EVA assumes a constant execution of each activity. While this is reasonable for construction activities, this assumption is rarely met when executing sporting event organization activities.

In addition to EVA, project review processes and variance reporting tools have not found a wide application within sports event projects. Sports organizer's lack of training and the absence of fully integrated sports events software packages may explain this (Dugalié, 2013).

## References

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