

## PRELIMINARY RESEARCH REGARDING THE IMPLEMENTATION OF SCIENTIFIC CONCEPTS IN THE MANAGEMENT OF UNIVERSITY SPORTS CLUBS

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### **Abstract**

*Science is an obvious and dominant phenomenon of the contemporary world in which we live, with a more and more important role in social development, found in all domains of human existence, including physical education and sports. Science constitutes a progress factor by means of its two essential notes, knowledge and prediction. They manifest as a systemic knowledge activity characterized by the fundamental demand to render reality based on a specialized activity based on systemic observations, experiments, new hypothesis and their verification. From this perspective, science constitutes the reflection of process essence, of their development objective laws.*

**Keywords:** *research, implementation, scientific, concept, resources, variables, management, university sport club*

### **Theoretical concepts that subsidize scientific research in sport management**

Using information from the specialized literature, we can say that science is a means for knowledge defined as a *structured investigation*, carried out in order to explain things, to be able to generalize and construct a theory, and that it is a process with four main fundamental characteristics: rationality, objectivity, completeness and prediction.

Scientific research is presented as *a set of activities and their results, conducted intentionally, deliberately, systemically and ordered, aiming at the accumulation and processing of data (information) in a field of reality, and at the use of the conclusions in order to achieve progress in the knowledge and practice of that field* (M. Epuran, 2005, p. 50). The author states that the approach is scientific if it is logically based, objective, unbiased, verified, controlled, observed, measured, logically interpreted, methodically organized, in other words, carried out in accordance with norms characteristic to science.

The knowledge domain of physical education and sports is growing and diversifying, constituting the theory of this science particularly structured, according to own laws and necessities. *Results of research in other disciplines (biochemistry, biomechanics, physiology, medicine, pedagogy, sociology, psychology, management, etc.) are unified and integrated in this knowledge system and are used within it for activity needs specific to the field.*

The authors of The Encyclopedia of Education and Sports (2002, p.237) consider that management in physical education and sports represents *“a branch of physical education and sports science that efficiently studies and applies design and organization, administration, management and leadership solutions in this field”*.

The influence of scientific activity is present today in all areas of social life, including physical education and sports, being characterized by the explosion of modern scientific research, by their orientation towards the transformation of nature and society, by the universal content, but also by the globalization of modern sci-

ence, by its entrance in all levels of society, operating changes in people's mentality.

*Physical education and sports, together with sports management, constitute an open system* in which management ensures the balance between social requirements and organizational objectives. This *system* consists of two categories of structures:

a) *the national system of physical education and sports*, characterized by specific variables (activities, organizations, interactions and purposes) which are influenced by a series of elements: the components of the economical and financial system, the specialized supersystem, the action of systems of the same rank, the action of the human resource;

b) *the organization's management system*, where the manager plays a decisive role.

Between the two systems, the *national system of physical education and sports* and *the organization's management system*, close complementarity and interdisciplinarity ties are formed.

*Sports are a globalizing factor*, a phenomenon, comprising millions of individuals from different cultures, a democratizing factor which interacts with the other subsystems of social life. *The sports organization is a factor of globalization*, with theoretical foundations, but also with its practice regarding managerial strategy, human resources, cultural orientation and organization, management development and performance.

### **Research resources**

Science is the primary factor for progress. By studying the objective laws governing the phenomena, science aims to foresee their conduct. The result of such research contributes in the creation of a database that helps the development and implementation of scientific methods in all fields, including sports management.

Sports management is a set of activities conducted in order to ensure the normal and efficient operation of the sports organization. Sports management specific activities and processes specific to sports organizations should be implemented in practice by people with delegated attributions by means of creative and

contextual application of scientific management concepts in specific system. The management processes as a creative action by the sports manager, exercise as foresight, organization, coordination, training and control functions, generate the structure, efficiency and performance for the subsystems in the sports structure's management system and of the organizational, decisional, informational and methodological-managerial components.

Public sports organization management emerged as a necessity for the development of the organizational segment, aimed at the improvement of efficiency and effectiveness of activities by orientation on the objectives and results (Al. Gore, 1993, A. Androniceanu, 2008, p. 17), on staff stimulation in order to obtain good performances while reducing costs and promoting the 3Es — economy, efficiency, effectiveness.

The management of public sports organizations is a component of sports management, whose conduct has as a fundamental objective the satisfaction of the social demand in the context of legislative induced influence and of a hierarchy determined through specific rules. The promoting of public performant management within sports organizations requires vision and clear, coherent, unitary leadership, and implies action in order to satisfy social needs in the context of normativity arisen from the specific normative framework, and can be realized only by continuous improvement of management processes and permanent improvement of managerial resource management.

In the specialized literature (A. Androniceanu, 2008, p. 346), it is estimated that *“concrete results in the process of reform cannot effectively be obtained only based on seniority, flair, experience, political orientation and a basic level of general education”*. From this point of view, promoting performant management within university sports organizations requires, first of all, the professionalization of management, reflected in the appropriate training of human resources, so that the elaboration and implementation of efficient organizational strategies is profitable in the context of an adequate organizational environment.

The promotion of performant management within university

sports structures *requires organizational development*, understood as a complex of design activities and the implementation of improvement measures regarding vision and management based on strategy, the organization's management system components and others in order to improve results in the context of rational resource usage. E. Burduş (2005, p. 543) outlines several plans for organizational development:

- a) the use of appropriate methods and techniques specific to modern management in the specific context;
- b) implementation of change in people's behavior, as a primary orientation of organizational management;
- c) the identification of organizational management components suitable for change and development and the implementation of efficient strategies.

Other recognized authors (O. Nicolescu, 2005, p. 52-59, A. Androniceanu, 2008, p. 365-366, I.I. Lador, N. Mihăilescu, 2008, p. 43-44) consider that *the promotion of management based on knowledge* is an improvement solution, able to ensure the development of knowledge and use of knowledge efficiently and effectively. All the more, since there is a lack of knowledge in sports management, an unclear definition of types of knowledge and of means by which they can be acquired, updated and improved.

A. Androniceanu (2004, 2008, p. 367-368, I. I. Lador, N. Mihăilescu, 2008, p. 44-46) consider that *promoting management based on performance* is a good orientation and activity improvement method, based on two premises:

1. the need to satisfy the social demand, taking into consideration the competitive conditions expressed through economy, efficiency and effectiveness („*the three Es*”);
2. the satisfaction, at the highest level possible, of social demands in the context of managing and ensuring the three Es.

Promoting of management based on performance requires de definition of performance in performance indicating term and the elaboration of application methodology in the context of the sports organization's particularities and the system of which it is a part.

Organizational improvement and promoting of performant

management also require the superior capitalization of two components specific to modern management: *the methodological-managerial tools and the management based on strategy*. Performant management in university sports structures implies the use of management by objectives as a modern approach meant to ensure a proper evaluation of organizational performances. Setting goals in sports organizations and their structural components, as well as means of achieving them, can determine a more efficient organization and use of resources.

Promoting management based on objectives:

a) constitutes a safe evaluation method for organizational performances, based on indicators;

b) enforces a management based on strategy at the organizational level and within its component structures.

c) requires a complex, systemic approach, correlated with other management methods: management by budgets, management by results, management by projects;

d) activates concepts such as strategic management, strategic segmentation and strategic alliance.

The performance of a university sports organization is decisively influenced by the level of implementation of scientific management tools in the organizational management.

The pertinence and applicability of decisions in real time, the monitoring of their implementation, in the context of an often hostile competitive environment, determines the need for a set of appropriate methods and techniques that will give the manager the possibility of a correct answer in the organization he leads.

### **Research variables**

Research in the field of physical education and sports, including that which targets the complementarity and interdisciplinarity components, like in the case of sports management, targets the methods by which individuals and phenomena change certain characteristics under the influence of human actions. *The variables are quantities or measures susceptible to changing their value one against the other, which remain constant (DEX, 2009,*

p. 1183) or „any attribute, behavior, trait or attribute that can change its value from case to case or depending on time” (M. Epuran, 2005, p. 163).

In research specific to sports management, a branch of physical education and sports (A. Nicu, coord., 2002, p. 237), we have taken into consideration the following categories of variables: *exploratory, control and external* (S. Chelcea, 2004, p. 64). *Exploratory variables are composed of causal factors introduced by us in research, respectively the independent variables and their consequences with changing values - dependent variables. Control variables are those which validate the influence relationship between independent variables and dependent ones*, found within the thesis as evaluation tools. We have considered all these factors as external variables, outside the exploratory and control ones that could influence the results, whose influence we have tried to eliminate.

As mentioned in the paper, management specific to public university sports clubs has two components: *one induced that resides from the components specific to the public component*, and another one *that is suitable to change under the influence of organization management*. In these conditions, the variables which characterize the work hypotheses are the causal, independent variables, which are thought to have a direct influence on dependent variables and causal, dependent variables, respectively the effect generated as a result of the cause. We have considered that there can be two or more causal variables with the same consequences regarding the effect, dependent, variable, if certain conditions are met (S. Chelcea, 1982, p. 53):

1. *The existence of a antecedence relationship between the independent variable and the dependent one, as cause always precedes the effect;*
2. *There must not be another cause that explains the modification of the dependent variable, other than the action of the independent variable.*

In the context of characteristics of sports organization management in the public domain, independent variables come from the

following directions:

a) The capitalization of some components of the methodological-managerial subsystem in a situational and organizational context: *SWOT analysis, VRIO analysis, PERT/CPM, GANTT, etc.*;

b) *The promotion of management through objectives both as a means of modern management and as a complex management method that requires objectives, budgets, results;*

c) The application of concepts and tools specific to management based on strategy, taking into consideration the particularities of club activity, with reference to *the strategic analysis, the strategic vision and strategic segmentation.*

The dependent variable, of type consequence of the actions of independent variables, is the one suggested by the theme of our thesis: „*Promoting performant management within university sports clubs*”. The argument for the achievement of the effect is the results obtained by the indicators used to evaluate the activity of university sports clubs, in the context of using the sports unit’s resources more efficiently.

The aspects that facilitated the elaboration of hypotheses were the following:

1. *Knowledge development*, done during thoroughgoing study done during doctoral school, as well as documentation done for the theoretical substantiation of the thesis, with reference to the theory of science for sports and physical education, to the theory of scientific management and to other complementary sciences for the field of physical education and sports;

2. *The management experience* accumulated as a manager of the Universitatea Sports Club Arad, which, along with *knowledge enrichment*, have allowed me to have insight regarding the relations between facts, phenomena and processes specific to the organization and management of a sports structure of this kind;

3. I have also used *analogy* with situations from other structures or other fields, with similar characteristics, which I tried to transfer through *extrapolation* to the actual club situation and to the research regarding the theme of the thesis.

4. Research hypotheses



In the scientific research specific to the field of physical education and sports, including the one specific to sports management, the following hypothesis can be considered:

- „the statement of a causal relationship in a way that allows empirical verification”(Th. Caplow, 1970, p. 119);
- „a statement with probability characteristics about the essence, the interconditioning and causality of facts, processes and socio-human phenomena” (S. Chelcea, 2004, p.99);
- „presumption, a temporary explanation, with which we infer on a relationship between phenomena, on their causal bonds, on mechanism and their structure” (M. Epuran, 2005, p.99).

Starting from the idea of empiricism as a theory for scientific knowledge, according to which the genuine information must be obtained through verifiable means (DEX, 2009, p. 352). The work hypotheses for the thesis aim at correlations of type cause-effect between the variables found in each of them and require the following conditions:

1. *External correlation*, meaning accordance „with the empirical base from which it has arisen” (M. Epuran, 2005, p. 10);
2. *Testability*, so that the verification of the hypothesis is done based on science;
3. *Internal correlation*, which requires that the hypothesis does not contain contradicting elements (logical thinking) or in contradiction with laws and theories that are considered true.

### **Conclusions**

*Scientific research in physical activity* requires well defined methods that are applied in a systemic vision in the development processes, and is defined by five characteristics (R. J. Thomas, K. J. Nelson, 1996, p. 5):

1. *systemic*: the resolution of problems is done by identifying and establishing variables and is followed by research design, which tests the relationships between these variables. The data is then gathered and analyzed to allow the evaluation of problems and of hypotheses;
2. *logical*: the examining of procedures used throughout the

research allows researchers to correctly evaluate conclusions;

3. *empirical*: the researcher correlates data on which decisions will be based;

4. *reductionist*: research requires the gathering of a large amount of data with individual character, which is then used to establish the more general relationships;

5. *reproducible*: the research process is recorded, allowing the resuming of research for retesting what has been discovered or in order to continue research based on previous data.

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