

NATIONAL UNIVERSITY OF PHYSICAL EDUCATION AND SPORTS OF  
BUCHAREST  
Bucharest, Romania, 2015

**Abstract of the doctoral thesis:**

**MANAGEMENT OF PRIVATE LAW SPORTS CLUB AS AN  
ALTERNATIVE TO THE PREPARATION AND PROMOTION OF  
ATHLETES TOWARDS PERFORMANCE**

Scientific advisor: PROF. PHD SILVIA TEODORESCU  
PhD student: HANU ELENA

*Keywords: sports, management, strategy, sports club, competitiveness, professionalism, social responsibility, IT management, “Laguna” IT application*

**Introduction**

Sport is a constantly developing social and economic phenomenon, which makes an important contribution to achieving the European strategic objectives of solidarity and prosperity.

Competiveness, the essence of sport, has propelled and conveyed people's desires from generation to generation, so that, nowadays, each of us reveals the passion for sport. The accurate and immediate purpose of sport, *winning the victory*, has made the sports movement to become inseparable from the nation and State, being more powerful than any other social movement through its positive image.

In the current context, at a global level, sport has become a real industry, with economic and social effects that might have many positive influences within the society, provided that “it is well managed”.

The doctoral thesis has 231 pages, 152 bibliographic references and 10 links.

**Part I:** *Theoretical, conceptual and methodological foundation of the research*, which includes 3 chapters.

**Chapter 1:** *Management of private law sports club – an integral part of the activities aimed to form and prepare performance athletes*

**Chapter 2:** *Managerial strategies to motivate human resource in the process of developing and increasing the efficiency of private law sports club's activity*

**Chapter 3:** *Conclusions*

### **Personal experience and motivation for choosing the theme**

During an athletic and professional career consisting of 16 years of sports performance, 27 years as a physical education teacher and a rich managerial experience within the pre-university education system, I gained, with much dedication and responsibility, skills and competencies that, at one point, I wanted to transmit to a private educational and sports system.

The long transition period that still persists in the Romanian sports system has caused major imbalances in the management system, leading to managerial de-professionalization. Holding the position of manager has turned, unfortunately, into an “opportunity” to solve issues, not into a profession. The lack of specialized training and consulting services, combined with the really low possibilities of sports organizations, has finally led to slow adaptation to the new socio-economic conditions.

### **Research directions**

- Generalities concerning the evolution of sports organization management to the benefit of sport - as a phenomenon of modern world;
- Management processes and particularities in private law sports club, for developing and increasing the efficiency of performance sports activities, as well as their importance to our field of activity;
- Developmental strategies in the management of private law sports club, in terms of gaining a competitive advantage.

The core of our scientific approach has started from the principle that sports organizations, regardless of their activity field and organizational nature (mono- or multi-sports), can contribute, using a management that operates on the basis of strategic thinking, to enhance sports performances, the economic growth of the region and the good development of the Romanian society.

The dominance of politics in the operative management process within the ministries, school inspectorates and sports directorates points out that there are many managers of public sports clubs who know neither the legislative framework nor the necessary steps to be taken for achieving an entrepreneurial behavior, to build the maximum support for adapting to the changing external environment.

Management of private law sports club, as a novelty in the national sports system, brings into focus sports organization and performance, highlights the essential elements, features and attributes of management, with all the content-related aspects of the concept of “compared management”, in order to identify the skills involved in sports performance and reveal the elements that ensure predictability in the process of selection, detection and promotion of performance athletes.

We believe that our approach is original, because we have aimed to achieve a reference work on the management of private law sports club as an alternative,

by establishing a system of values or a set of managerial tools that streamline the organization's managerial activity and also by increasing sports performances at the national and international levels.

In a pragmatic view, this research will analyze the following issues: management processes and relationships, management system, functions of the manager and sports organization, organizational culture, domain management (human and financial resources, sports facilities, competitive system), managers and efficient management in a direct correlation and a systemic view with specific elements of the organizational environment.

Management relationships have a triple determination, with a differentiated weight imposed by a number of variables, such as: *legal personality of sports organization* (public-private); *category of sports structure* (mono-/ multi-sports), *scope and complexity of the activity* (number of sections, number of employees/ associates, size of owned or administrated sports facilities); *human potential* (coaches, athletes, managers, support staff for the specific activity), each with an education level and possibilities of improvement. Private law sports club has as a starting point the educational sports complex and the economic one, both structured in a hierarchical system where individuals have clearly defined statuses and roles.

### **Conclusions of Part I**

The efficiency of management and sports organization is directly influenced by: *managers' attitude, environmental factors, managerial practices.*

Private law sports club organizes itself, develops and operates according to a set of norms and values, and adjusts itself depending on several factors, such as:

- human elements, which are in mutual interaction;
- transforming flexible actions;
- elements which give freedom to choose the means and ways of action;
- diversity of human activities, which is closely linked to motivation and conviction, satisfaction and moral conditions, complex behavior, communication and information systems, adapted models in the decision-making process and their performances.

Starting from the premise that the *domain of conceptual approaches to management* offers further possibilities for new analytical, interpretative, explanatory and investigative openings, we have focused, in the research work, on highlighting elements of novelty and originality, which can contribute to deepening performance capacity, from a managerial perspective, in the context of enhancing some authentically modern issues.

**Part II: Preliminary research on the management of private law sports club in relation to the managerial and athletic performance of sports organizations in Constanta County**, is structured in 3 chapters.

**Chapter 4: Operational methodological framework of preliminary research**

**Chapter 5: Preliminary research on the management of private law sports club**

**Chapter 6: Preliminary research conclusions**

**The research purpose** was to analyze the common and different aspects characterizing the public and private law sports clubs, from a managerial point of view, followed by the delimitation of Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats through a SWOT analysis performed at “Laguna” Private Law Sports Club, and, last but not least, to study the factors that motivate human resource in performance sections.

**The major direction** of preliminary research aimed at the management and operational systems oriented towards the achievement of performance, with all its issues and content-related elements (particular area of knowledge, research methodology, applicability and practical implications), which fall in the typology of applied research and are founded on a rigorous study of literature.

In the preliminary research part, we started from the principle according to which sports organizations, regardless of their activity field and organizational nature (mono- or multi-sports), can contribute, by getting involved in the managerial development, to enhance sports performances, the economic growth of the region and the good development of the Romanian society. Thus, **the objectives in this stage of research** aimed to:

- highlight the particular elements of private sports club management, in the process of developing and increasing the efficiency of performance sports activity;
- highlight the role and importance of managerial behavior components in sports;
- establish the most effective managerial strategies to motivate human resource in the process of developing and increasing the efficiency of private law sports club’s activity.

For proving the need to shift from exercising a conjectural management to implementing a competitive management, we achieved a comparative study on the managerial activity in the school sports clubs of Constanta County and “Laguna” Sports Club of Constanta. The research was conducted between September 2013 and April 2014, and consisted in a complex managerial analysis, from the perspective of functioning, organization, financing, sports facilities and human resource existing in the public and private law sports clubs.

Our scientific investigations were focused on “Laguna” Private Sports Club of Constanta, founded in 2008 as a private law, non-profit, non-governmental and apolitical sports association with legal personality, established for an indefinite period of time. The club is affiliated to 6 national federations by sports branches and prepares about 550 athletes in 16 training centers, with 21 teachers, coaches and sports instructors. In order to develop realistic and scientifically grounded strategies and policies, we used, within the management process of private law sports club, specifically managerial research methods for analyzing the internal and external potential of private law sports club (SWOT analysis), as well as the external environment and its interdependence with private sports organizations (PEST analysis), given that the knowledge of endogenous and exogenous variables influencing a sports organization can ensure its efficient functionality in a highly competitive environment.

Using *SWOT analysis*, as a managerial technical tool, has helped us construct an overall picture of the organization, so that the Strengths and Opportunities can be exploited, on the one hand, and the Weaknesses and Threats can be reduced or even removed, on the other hand. Based on listing the issues and establishing each one’s intensity and importance, we set the *Matrix for Strengths/Weaknesses*, relating to the organizational internal environment, and the *Matrix for Opportunities/Threats*, to assess the external factors. Following this assessment, it has been highlighted that the sports organization called “Laguna” Private Sports Club of Constanta has *Good possibilities of response* to the influences of internal environment and external environment as well, and all the capitalized elements were included in *SWOT Diagram*.

*PEST analysis* (from the political, economic, social and technological standpoints) of “Laguna” Private Sports Club, Constanta, has helped us identify long-term influences on the sports organization and thus “determine” its vision.

PEST analysis of the investigated private sports club will result in making value judgments on: the private sports club’s position in the local and national sports industry, the extent to which it falls in the specific trends of sports activities, the club’s competitive strength and ability to take advantage of opportunities and successfully cope with the existing or potential threats.

In compliance with the fundamental principles of methodology in the socio-human field, we have also applied, in our approach, a questionnaire research on the motivation level of employees in public and private sports organizations, whose activity field is swimming sports branch. The achieved results have revealed that the basic elements, *information and people*, are considered as categories of resources that serve to the development and implementation of the main managerial tool, *decisions*, which are designed to ensure a competent, flexible and

creative managerial activity, with an authority that leads to improved sports activity by increasing efficiency and effectiveness.

#### **Preliminary research conclusions**

- The manager is the most important character of the organization, regardless of the position he/she holds, that of director, president, teacher, coach or sports instructor. This one performs management processes at variable intensities, depending on the hierarchical position held in the organization's structural configuration, namely the manager makes decisions that influence the decisions and actions of other people.
- SWOT analysis emphasizes that the managerial behavior adjustment to the changes occurred in the external environment at "Laguna" Private Law Sports Club have generated attitudes and actions that are efficient and lead to achieving the objectives pursued by the sports organization.
- The sports organization, regardless of its nature, size or functionality, regardless of the dynamics of internal and external forces, cannot operate if not based on both a strategic thinking model aimed to provide solutions for adapting to the new demands of sport consumers and a prospective organizational development.
- From an operational standpoint, this type of managerial behavior determines the organization's long-term direction and performance through careful and gradual formulation of strategies, thus achieving competitiveness in relation to other competing organizations.
- An increasing number of managers realize nowadays that the investment in human resources can bring substantial professional and financial long-term gains. Those who will not understand quickly enough this idea are likely to leave the "market" slowly, but surely, because human resource management is the "backbone" of any sports organization and has a direct link with productivity, organizational performance and athletic success.

**Part III:** *Research on the management of private law sports club as an alternative to the preparation and promotion of athletes towards performance*, includes 5 chapters.

**Chapter 7:** *Operational methodological framework of the research*

**Chapter 8:** *"Laguna" Application with web-based technology, extension for tablet and mobile phone, and Android operation system*

**Chapter 9:** *Processing and interpretation of the research results after implementing the IT application*

**Chapter 10:** *Conclusions of the doctoral thesis*

**Chapter 11:** *Elements of originality, practical application of the research and result dissemination*

### **Research objectives**

- To promote and adapt those management elements that lead to achieving higher results in sports competitions of any level, by increasing the physical fitness parameters, the spiritual comfort of all sport consumers.
- To increase the scientific level of those management strategies that ensure an optimum preparation level for performance athletes.
- To emphasize the influence exerted by the managerial strategies of private sports club on the process of developing and increasing the efficiency of performance sports activity.

### **Research hypotheses**

1. *The development and implementation of a computer-based active management will lead to increase the private sports club's ability to perform judicious and rigorous administration of all activities.*

2. *The introduction of directed preparation plans into all training centers through an online IT system will lead to achieving the objective assumed by the private sports club, namely the participation of selected teams for each sports branch in national competitions.*

Due to the large number of data and information collected in Part II of the thesis, we considered it appropriate to introduce a new concept in our research, relating to the **management of private law sports club as an alternative to the preparation and promotion of athletes towards performance**, namely an IT management model which includes all the managerial elements and tools necessary for a leader to manage and streamline the club's activity in real time, in order to ensure professional and economic effectiveness, as well as institutional stability. Analyzing the current relationship between the sports products provided by "Laguna" Private Sports Club of Constanta and the local and national sports market, it has been found that, to harmonize sports services and apply unitary methodical lines in sports preparation, depending on age and training level, we should design a system of our own, an innovative one in the broadest sense of the word. Essentially, it is about the creation of an online application using web-based technology, extension for tablet and mobile phone, and Android operation system, generically called "*Laguna*" Application. Throughout the staged designing process, we aimed to: analyze the information flow regarding the club's activity, create specific modules for each department of the club and achieve the application using the PHP programming language, with MySQL databases. PHP is a programming language designed primarily for the Internet, bringing dynamics to a web page. It is one of the most important *open-source* programming languages, the source code is public, accessible to everyone, and the *server-side* does not run on the computer of the person viewing the page, but on the server containing it.

The concept of “online application” builds a management system comprising data about athletes, common training programs for each sports discipline and age category, domestic competition calendar, training attendances, financial statements regarding the collection of monthly contributions.

*“Laguna” Application* contains a comprehensive database with information about: *training centers, teachers/ coaches, training groups by value, athletes, parents, training attendances, training plans, sports results which are found in personalized IT modules and include those specific elements with which the administrator and other users operate based on rights set by the club manager.*

“Laguna” Application is structured in two distinct components: web-based section and tablet/smartphone section. The module for tablet or smartphone ensures the mobility of the coach and a direct connection with the system, without requiring a purposely arranged space. Therefore, either if we have to do with a sports field, a swimming pool or a stadium, the teacher accesses the IT system using the mobile “Laguna” Application to check the training attendance of athletes and apply the training plan. The data structure used for the internal processing and generation of dynamic formulas to update information is also exploited to populate the sports club’s website and is achieved exclusively by the user with administration rights.

The efficiency of managerial activity at “Laguna” Sports Club was assessed through the performance indicators achieved in several areas:

- ***Administration***
- ***Human resource***
- ***Sports results***

The development and expansion of this private sports club, also due to the computerized application which contains elements of latest generation technology, provides a direct interaction with the indirect beneficiaries of educational sports activity, transparency in communication and decision representing the key to success in the management of sports organization.

Also through this application, the club’s management can give the performance athletes who have left the competitive system, but possess the necessary sports experience, the chance to “step” towards a coaching career.

The accuracy of information introduced into the system can be checked online, where the technical conditions allow it, or through ad-hoc checking based on data from the IT system.

**Conclusions of the doctoral thesis** (*the research hypotheses have been validated*):

1. Analysis of data obtained from the performed tests using “Laguna” Application during the entire activity of implementation, checking and monitoring shows that:



- The management of private law sports club has brought to the forefront sports organization and performance, by highlighting the essential elements, features and attributes of strategic management.
  - The management processes and relationships on the basis of which the manager intervened have led to achieving the proposed objectives.
  - The functional capacity of IT system has led to recording higher results in the administrative, economic and financial domains of “Laguna” Private Sports Club of Constanta.
  - Good results have also been achieved in the IT application tests on directing the training of athletes from the groups composing the selected teams, representatives of the club in official sports competitions.
2. Sports programs organized and offered by the private sports club in regions with communities that have little access to activities with multiple formative and educational valences provide the development of motor ability, mental processes and phenomena, interpersonal collegiality relationships, stimulate and promote fair-play, reduce violence in schools, sports halls and arenas, ensuring the integration of children into society.
  3. The development of IT application, initiated and designed in the light of the club’s economic and functional thinking, has led to the development of specific competences and maximization of sports potential in each sports discipline.

### **Personal contributions**

- Synthesizing the data from specialized literature and presenting them in tables and figures that clarify the aspects underpinning the theoretical foundation of the thesis.
- Establishing the most appropriate elements, data and information used in the proposed research.
- Designing the online application that provides a range of facilities in both training and the judicious and rigorous administration of private sports club’s activity.
- Planning and applying programs through which the organization accepts the change and contributes to the efficient implementation of all mechanisms and components aimed explicitly or implicitly at the competitive advantage.
- Designing the questionnaire that highlights the motivation level of employees with responsibilities for sports preparation in public and private sports units carrying out their activity in swimming sports branch.

### **Practical application of the research**

Also through the mobile application, the research can be exploited and valorized for performance and high performance, the coordinating teacher having the opportunity to hold, in the future, all the baggage of IT tools with which to operate, maintain and use the individual technical sheet of the athlete, but the supervising coach must introduce in real time the results from standard training exercises or the results from competitions.

The IT scheme sequencing that we shall propose for future development could be like this: *athlete's psychomotor potential - athlete's medical data – dietary data - number of training sessions - training volumes - standard training exercises - competition results*, all related to individual records, which will shape those statistics and curves regarding the athlete's progress.

### **Acknowledgments**

*The doctoral thesis and scientific papers have been developed and published made and published under the aegis of the National University of Physical Education and Sports, Bucharest, as a partner of the program co-funded by the European Social Fund within the Operational Sectoral Program for Human Resources Development 2007-2013 through the project "Pluri- and interdisciplinarity in doctoral and post-doctoral programs", Project Code: POSDRU/159/1.5/S/141086, whose main beneficiary is the Research Institute for Quality of Life, Romanian Academy.*