

MODEL CHARACTERISTICS OF OLYMPIC SPORT ORGANISATIONS IN SLOVENIA

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MODELNE ZNAČILNOSTI OLIMPIJSKIH ŠPORTNIH ORGANIZACIJ V SLOVENIJI

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Abstract

The study deals with the characteristics of Olympic sports organisations in Slovenia and the main differences in relation to non-Olympic sports organisations dealing either with competitive or recreational sport. Two samples were obtained. The data on the employee structure comes from a sample of 366 sports organisations, representing about one sixth of all sports organisations, while the financial data mirrors incomes and expenditures of fifty-five sports. The organisations and sports were classified into Olympic, non-Olympic competitive sports and recreational sports ones. The cadre and financial structure and the differences were analysed with descriptive statistics, chi-square statistics and canonical discriminant analysis.

Slovenian sports organisations are mainly managed voluntarily. Olympic sports organisations are situated mostly in cities, are smaller, have much higher incomes and expenditures and a relatively high level of professionalisation. Statistically significant differences were found between the three types of organisations in size, seat, income and expenditure and cadre structure. The most discriminating variables were the number of voluntary technical staff, honorary administrative staff, voluntary medical staff and full-time instructors.

Keywords: sport, organisation, Olympic sport, non-Olympic sport, recreational sport, model, Slovenia

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Izvleček

V članku so analizirane modelne značilnosti tistih športnih organizacij, katerih športna panoga je na programu olimpijskih iger. Ugotovljene so tudi glavne razlike med temi športnimi organizacijami in tistimi, ki se ukvarjajo s tekmovalnim športom v ne-olimpijskih panogah ali rekreativnim športom.

Dobljena sta bila dva vzorca. Podatki o strukturi zaposlenih izhajajo iz vzorca 366 športnih organizacij, medtem ko finančni podatki kažejo prihodke in odhodke petinpetdesetih športnih panog. Organizacije in športne panoge so bile razvrščene v tri skupine: olimpijske, ne-olimpijske tekmovalne in rekreativne. Kadrovska in finančna struktura ter razlike med skupinami so bile analizirane z opisno statistiko, χ^2 testom in kanonično diskriminantno analizo.

Olimpijske športne organizacije se nahajajo v glavnem v mestih, so manjše, imajo veliko višje prihodke in odhodke ter relativno visoko stopnjo profesionalno zaposlenih delavcev. Statistično značilne razlike so bile dobljene med tremi skupinami organizacij v velikosti, sedežu, prihodkih in odhodkih ter strukturi kadrov. Najbolj diskriminativne spremenljivke so bile število volonterskih tehničnih delavcev, honorarnih administrativnih delavcev, medicinskega osebja in redno zaposlenih učiteljev.

Ključne besede: šport, organizacija, olimpijski šport, ne-olimpijski šport, rekreativni šport, model, Slovenija

INTRODUCTION

Every human activity has a function, a purpose. The human activity we call sport has, like all other human activities, different functions and purposes: winning a competition, education, relaxation, health preservation, rehabilitation, earning, diversion for viewers and above all a way of life, which contains the substance we call "the quality of life" (Bednarik and Petrović, 1998). Therefore the question arises which are the most significant.

When we speak about Olympic sport and mean the sportsmen that will participate at the Olympic games, or are trying to qualify, we have automatically also defined the most important function. Namely, Coubertin's saying "the important thing in the Olympic Games is not winning but taking part" (Schoedel, 1968) has not held for a long time; now, the maxim is "winning (achieving the best possible result) is everything". Only such results trigger then the satisfaction and interest of the spectators. According to this maxim, the sports pleasure of the public then verifies and justifies the efforts of all involved (Bednarik, Petrović and Nyerges, 1997). Watching a sports event springs from the inner need of the spectator who nurtured this need through his interest for sport. Only in this way does the top-level sports result become a multiplier, a generator of mass sports and sport industry, their promoter and the promoter of the native country of the athlete and coach and also of the sports event in which the result was achieved. It is precisely these functions of the sports result that define the financial part of its exchange value (Bednarik, Petrović and Nyerges, 1997).

Slovene athletes have won 185 medals in Olympic sports and 98 medals in non-Olympic sports between 1996 and 1999 at the highest level competitions (senior World Championship, senior European Championship, World Student Games, junior World Championship, junior European Championship). At the last summer Olympics two Slovene athletes won two medals. Relative to the number of inhabitants (1.98 million), Slovene sport ranks among the most successful in the world (Bednarik, Petrović and Nyerges, 1997; Bednarik and Petrović, 1998). Slovene sport is organised in clubs. These can be placed into the third sector according to the typology of Chelladurai (1985), which is financed from public and private funds, but established and managed by the private sector. The sports organisations in Slovenia had in 1997 at their disposal 344 million EUR (Bednarik, Petrović and Šugman, 1998). In 1997, 2130 clubs (Kolenc and Bednarik, 1999) reported 90,000 athletes and 265,000 members (Bednarik, Kolenc, Petrović, Simoneti and Šugman, 1998).

From the works of various authors (Amis and Slack, 1996; Verhoeven et al., 1997; Kikulis, Slack and Hinings, 1995a; Theodoraki and Henry, 1994) we can suppose that predominantly professional organisations differ from predominantly voluntary ones in the number of members, amount of funds, cadre structure, competitive or recreational activity, etc. Even if Hirschmann (1974) found that clubs and their associations are predominantly voluntary organisations, one can ask if this also holds for sports organisations dealing mostly with top level sport – Olympic or non-Olympic sports – or just for organisations mostly dealing with recreational sport. The main purpose of this study is just that: finding some model characteristics of sports organisations, not just in light of their voluntary or professional organisation, but comparing those dealing mostly with top level sports in Olympic and non-Olympic sports, and those dealing with recreational sports.

Slovene sport has products, which are comparable to global ones and also successfully satisfies its functions (Bednarik and Petrović, 1998). Cognisance of the sport organisations' model characteristics gives the possibility of re-organisation and new organisation in a way that we know gives good results. Olympic sports have some specific demands due to their competition cycles in comparison with non-Olympic sports and are mostly more commercially interesting (Bednarik, Simoneti, Petrović and Štrumbelj, 1998), we can therefore suppose that their model characteristics differ. Since sports organisations, which are not involved in sports competition have a different product from those that are (Chelladurai, 1985), it seems rational to expect different organisational characteristics, which should be taken into account in managing sport.

METHODOLOGY

Subject sample

Two samples were analysed. The first consisted of 55 sports (financial data) and the second of 366 sports organisations (cadre structure).

The financial data (incomes and expenditures) for the individual organisations was unfortunately not available to us, so data summed into sports – the data of all organisations of the same sport are given as a sum – was used instead. Fifty-five sports (sums of data on individual organisations) were analysed. The sports were classified into two groups – Olympic and non-Olympic sports.

The population of sports organisations (henceforth organisations) was defined as all the national sports associations, communal sports associations and sport clubs entered into the register of sports organisations

in Slovenia, compiled after passing the new Law on Clubs (Zakon o društvih, 1995). There were 2,225 such units registered at the time of observation, 464 organisations returned our questionnaire, but after eliminating some which did not complete the questionnaire, the sample analysed here consists of 366 units (organisations and clubs) which gave at least all the basic data (16.5 % of the total population). The organisations were classified into three groups – Olympic, non-Olympic competitive and non-Olympic recreational.

Variable sample

The complete questionnaire for sports organisations consisted of more than sixty items; we shall present here only those analysed for this study.

SIZE – size of the unit (1=100, 2=101-250, 3=251-500, 4=500- members)

SEAT– located in: 1=rural, 2=urbanfringe, 3=city

The next thirty variables recorded the number of employees, according to the nature of association with the unit (voluntary, employed part-time, full-time employees) and their function (training: coaches of all levels (code numbers s1, s2, s3), umpires (s4) and medical staff (s5); managing: managers (f1), administrative personnel (f2), competition organisers (f3), technical staff (ft)). The variable code is in two parts:

- (1) voluntary work (ZV), retained part-time (ZH) or professional full-time (ZP)
- (2) denotes their function, ex.: s4=referee (see codes in parenthesis above).

The criterion variable (OLYMPIC), defining the nature of the unit, was derived from the sport(s) practised in the unit and the nature of the activity (competitive, recreational). It divides the sports organisations into three groups – Olympic, non-Olympic and recreational sport.

In the case of the sports sample, the following variables were analysed: total income, sale income, total expenditure and labour costs. The sale income and labour costs were also computed as relative values (percentages).

Data analysis

The data was analysed in three stages. First the descriptive statistics of the variables – frequencies and percents for nominal and ordinal variables and the basic central tendency and dispersion parameters for the scale data – were computed.

In the second stage the predominant nature of each organisation was determined (Olympic, non-Olym-

pic, recreational), according to the sport(s) practised in the organisation and level of competition or non-competition.

In the third stage contingency tables were constructed and the chi-square statistic computed to test the difference between the organisation types in the individual independent variables. Canonical Discriminant Analysis was also used to see which of the kinds of employees or financial data best differentiated between the organisation types. All differences (Chi-square in contingency tables or Wilks’ Lambda in canonical discriminant analysis) with an error less than 5 % were judged as statistically significant.

RESULTS

The majority of sport organisations in Slovenia have up to 100 members, one fifth up to 250 members; larger organisations are rather scarce (Table 1). It is interesting to note that “Olympic sport organisations” are the most numerous, followed by “recreational-sport organisations” and “competitive non-Olympic sports”. The three types of organisations differ in size, which is attested by the statistically significant χ^2 (Table 2). Olympic organisations are smaller than the other two, most of the largest organisations are non-Olympic competitive ones.

Table 1: Distributions of nominal and ordinal variables

Variable/Code	1	2	3	4	Missing
SIZE	61.2	21.9	7.4	9.0	0.5
SEAT	25.7	23.2	48.6		2.5
OLYMPIC	42.1	26.2	31.7		

Remark: Only percentage values are given due to lack of space, for value codes see the description of variables section.

Table 2: Differences between organisations – size

Size/Sport	Olympic	non-Olympic	Recreational
– 100	56.5%	60.0%	69.6%
101 – 250	31.8%	16.8%	13.0%
251 – 500	6.5%	6.3%	9.6%
501 -	5.2%	16.8%	7.8%

$\chi^2 = 24.1$ $C = .249$ $p(\chi^2) = .000$

Almost half of the organisations have their base in cities, the rest are almost evenly divided between those in the suburbs and rural areas. The differences between the three types are statistically significant (Table 3). The difference between Olympic and non-Olympic competitive sport organisations are small, with more Olympic-sport organisations based in cities. However, recreational-sport organisations differ a lot

from both, being almost equally based in urban and rural milieus.

Table 3: Differences between organisations – seat

Seat/Sport	Olympic	non-Olympic	Recreational
rural	16.8%	22.3%	42.1%
urban fringe	25.5%	26.6%	19.3%
city	57.7%	51.1%	38.6%

$$\chi^2 = 22.7 \quad C = .245 \quad p(\chi^2) = .000$$

The general cadre structure of Slovene sport organisations will not be presented due to limited space. However, some points are worth noting. If we first look at the number of staff (voluntary, professional and all), great differences can be seen between the individual organisations, with numbers ranging from 1 to over 500. This great variability can be seen also from the standard deviations, but inspection of the means shows that a typical organisation has between fifteen and twenty cadres, larger ones are the exceptions. It might also be worth mentioning that the volunteers outnumber professionals four to one. Inspection of the cadre structure according to their function shows that the most numerous are coaches (of all levels), organisers of competitions and umpires. This holds true for all types – voluntary, retained part-time or full-time employees. Technical staff (ft) are present in all the three categories, while medical staff (s5) and managers (f1) are mostly voluntary.

The multivariate differences between the groups (Olympic/non-Olympic/recreational) in cadre structure and financial indicators given in Table 4. Three comparisons have been made – the first between Olympic and non-Olympic sport organisations in cadre structure, the second among all three types in cadre structure and the third between Olympic and non-Olympic sports in financial indicators. The data for the discriminative functions are given at the head of the Tables. Both analyses of the cadre structure gave statistically significant differences, while the multivariate differences in financial parameters were not statistically significant.

An inspection of the discriminant correlation coefficients shows that the most discriminative variables for the first comparison (Olympic/non-Olympic) are: the number of voluntary technical staff, part-time administrative staff, voluntary medical staff and part-time instructors. The solution for three-way comparison (Olympic/non-Olympic/recreational) is very similar, with a slightly changed order of importance. The most important discriminators are: the number of part-time coaches, voluntary medical staff, voluntary managers, part-time administrative staff, voluntary umpires, voluntary technical staff and voluntary coaches. The post-hoc univariate difference testing shows that these in-

Table 4: Discrimination between Olympic, non-Olympic & recreational organisations

Function	Eigenvalue	% variance	can. corr.	Wilk's λ	sig.
(1) 1	.222	100.0	.426	.819	.010
(2) 1	.242	74.8	.441	.745	.000
2	.081	25.2	.274	.925	.388
(3) 1	.122	100.0	.330	.891	.217

Variable	DCC(1)	F(1)	Sig. F(1)	DCC(2)	F(2)	Sig. F(2)
ZVS1	.009	.01	.944	.005	.00	.998
ZVS2	.058	.19	.665	.045	.13	.875
ZVS3	.002	.00	.988	.261	5.09	.007
ZVS4	.174	1.66	.199	.302	4.07	.018
ZVS5	.319	5.59	.019	.359	6.01	.003
ZVF1	.262	3.78	.053	.328	4.84	.008
ZVF2	-.085	.40	.529	-.021	.29	.752
ZVF3	.147	1.19	.277	.244	2.63	.073
ZVF4	.151	1.26	.264	.193	1.66	.192
ZVFT	.377	7.83	.006	.264	4.53	.011
ZHS1	.132	.95	.331	.143	.90	.410
ZHS2	.097	.52	.471	.123	.68	.508
ZHS3	.238	3.11	.079	.373	6.20	.002
ZHS4	-.031	.05	.821	.122	1.53	.218
ZHS5	.161	1.42	.234	.226	2.25	.106
ZHF1	.106	.62	.431	.001	.38	.682
ZHF2	.332	6.07	.014	.320	4.98	.007
ZHF3	.056	.17	.677	.102	.47	.628
ZHF4	.159	1.39	.239	.172	1.41	.247
ZHFT	.166	1.51	.221	.084	.74	.480
ZPS1	-.132	.96	.329	-.047	.74	.476
ZPS2	-.299	4.93	.027	-.229	2.32	.100
ZPS3	-.001	.00	.992	.149	1.69	.186
ZPS4						
ZPS5						
ZPF1	.075	.31	.580	-.096	1.31	.270
ZPF2						
ZPF3	.068	.26	.613	.113	.56	.570
ZPF4	-.019	.02	.889	-.080	.41	.667
ZPFT	.007	.00	.959	-.153	1.80	.168
TINCOM	.875	4.87	.032			
SINCOM	.800	4.07	.049			
TEXPND	.869	4.80	.033			
LCOST	.781	3.88	.054			

Legend:

DCC – discriminant correlation coefficients, F - F coefficient,

Sig. F - significance of F (post-hoc univariate differences)

• missing data signifies variables with no within-group variance

• (1) analysis Olympic : non-Olympic organisations

• (2) analysis Olympic : non-Olympic : Recreational organisations

dicators are statistically significant univariate discriminators as well. Table 5 shows typical cadre models for the three types of organisations. In general, Olympic-sport organisations have more employees of all types than non-Olympic-sport organisations, and both more than recreational-sport organisations. In some indicators there are already differences between the first two types, while in others they differ only from recreational-sport organisations.

Table 5: Typical Olympic, non-Olympic and recreational organisations

Variable	Olympic	Non-Olympic	Recreational
ZVS1	2.53	2.45	2.50
ZVS2	.92	.58	.72
ZVS3	1.42	1.42	.58
ZVS4	4.99	2.63	.86
ZVS5	.47	.06	.06
ZVF1	1.14	.30	.18
ZVF2	.91	1.06	.91
ZVF3	4.74	3.02	1.91
ZVF4	2.77	1.24	.95
ZVFT	.90	.21	.47
ZHS1	.82	.52	.41
ZHS2	.74	.22	.14
ZHS3	1.44	.82	.41
ZHS4	.61	.72	.06
ZHS5	.13	.03	.00
ZHF1	.01	.00	.01
ZHF2	.23	.07	.09
ZHF3	.14	.07	.02
ZHF4	.13	.03	.03
ZHFT	.20	.10	.16
ZPS1	.01	.06	.02
ZPS2	.00	.03	.04
ZPS3	.33	.33	.05
ZPS4	.00	.00	.00
ZPS5	.00	.00	.00
ZPF1	.02	.01	.04
ZPF2	.00	.00	.00
ZPF3	.05	.03	.02
ZPF4	.01	.02	.03
ZPFT	.06	.06	.27
TINCOME	255,390	46,820	
SINCOME	165,635	35,530	
TEXPEND	250,248	42,534	
LCOST	43,472	3,967	

Legend: all given values are arithmetic means of the relevant groups

Group centroids:	1	2	3
Olympic	+ .370	+ .557	.274
Non-Olympic	-.596	-.230	-.430
Recreational	-.549		

The multivariate differences in financial indicators (Table 4) were not statistically significant possibly also due to the small number of units (55 sports), making the ratio sample size : degrees of freedom unfavourable. The univariate statistical differences, however, are all (with the exception of labour cost) statistically significant and very large in absolute values (Table 5).

DISCUSSION

One reason why sports organisations dealing predominantly with competitive sport (Olympic and non-

Olympic sports) base their seat in cities, while there are more organisations dealing with recreational sports in rural areas is probably in the better infrastructure in urban areas. Competitive, and especially top-level sport, requires a critical mass of knowledge, personnel, facilities, equipment etc, which is usually only available in larger cities, especially in countries with a smaller population. The second reason is probably in the number of possible members. Haggerty and Denomme (1991) namely found that there is a connection between the home-club distance and the chosen club. Sports organisations are therefore motivated to organise their activities close to their potential "clients" and since cities have a greater population, they are "the place to be". The young athletes trying to become top level sportsmen are secondary school pupils or students. Top level athletes in non-commercial sports from the sponsors' point of view, which achieved marked success (rowing, kayak-canoe, swimming, shooting...), but also most of the top athletes in the commercial sports (skiing, track and field) are also students. These come to the university centres which are in cities, and the circle is closed.

However, the situation is somewhat different for recreational-sport organisations. Recreational sport should be accessible to all, no matter where they live. In light of the finding by Haggerty and Denomme (1991) it is logical for the recreational-sport organisations to operate locally, hence the even distribution of such organisations between urban and rural areas. One can only hope that this situation persists and that these organisations will not be lured to the cities by (false) hopes of higher revenues. Maybe the state will be willing to systematically allocate some funds to such organisations to keep carrying out their "mission".

The finding that the sports organisations dealing with competitive sport are mostly larger than those dealing with recreational sport is in accord with the findings of Amis and Slack (1996), Kikulis, Slack and Hinings (1995b) and Verhoven et al. (1997).

Olympic sports differ from the non-Olympic ones in higher income, therefore it is normal that they also have higher expenditures, since they are non-profit organisations and must use all their income for the organisation's activities. Olympic sports deal with a much greater financial potential and it is therefore not surprising that they have higher labour costs — 13.5 % of the total compared to 7.2 %. This level of professionalism should not be ascribed only to the people employed (cadre structure), but also to the greater level of professionalism among the athletes.

The finding that Olympic sports differ from the non-Olympic ones in sales income is to be expected, since the sports which are interesting for sponsors in Slovenia are mostly Olympic sports (Bednarik et al.,

1998). It is interesting to note, on the other hand, that sales as a percentage of total income is significantly lower for Olympic sports (60.2 %) than for the non-Olympic ones (70.4 %). This points to the fact that the state financial support favours Olympic sports. The data, however, shows that sports organisations in Slovenia, similarly to EU (Andreff, 1994), are financed predominantly from private sources.

The statistically significant differences in characteristics, defined by the cadre structure according to the European Classification of Professions (Camy and Roux, 1997), which perform their work voluntarily (as defined by Horch, 1994), part-time or full-time, show that Slovene organisations have different cadre structures, depending on whether they deal mostly with competitive or recreational sport.

The differences between competitive and recreational sports organisations in the number of umpires and coaches can be ascribed to the nature of their work, this demands in competitive sport much more such employees. The voluntary orientation of the umpires is understandable as they perform their work just for payment of expenses incurred. The statistically significant differences in voluntary and part-time coaches show that a lot of coaching, probably mostly with the younger athletes, is voluntary or part-time alongside a regular full-time employment.

The differences between the Olympic and non-Olympic organisations in full-time instructors lead us to believe that the latter are forced to employ full-time but also not-fully qualified coaches, because there are not enough professionally trained (educated) ones available in Slovenia.

The organisations also differ in the number of medical, technical and administrative staff; This shows that dealing with Olympic sports is more demanding than with non-Olympic sports, and dealing with recreational sport is even simpler. The voluntary work of medical staff can be ascribed on one hand to some sport-oriented (enthusiastic) doctors in Slovenia and on the other hand to the publicity they gain from their work with top athletes can then be exploited in their regular job. The differences in the part-time administrative employees can be ascribed to rationality, since part-time employees work (and are paid) only as much as there is work to be done. However, the differences in voluntary technical staff are harder to explain: one would not expect here persons searching for personal satisfaction or "fall-out effects" in their full-time professional fields. The picture becomes clearer if we take in consideration that sports organisations in Slovenia are not the owners of the sports facilities (Bednarik, Petrovič and Šugman, 1998). It is therefore obvious that these are not technical facility staff (of course employed full-time), but ancillary tech-

nical staff in the training and competitive processes. These are usually parents or friends of the athletes.

Sports organisations should become more professional, in combination with volunteers (Schrodt, 1983; Beamish, 1985; Frisby, 1986; Macintosh, 1988; MacMillan, 1991; Thibault, Slack and Hinings, 1991; Auld and Godbey, 1998). This in consequence means a lesser role for volunteers in the organisational process (Slack, 1985; Macintosh, Bedeck and Franks, 1986; Slack and Thibault, 1988; Slack and Kikulis, 1989) and the transfer of the decision and management function into professional hands. Since the decision process is vital in any organisation (Knoke, 1981), predominantly voluntary management of Slovenian sport could lead to its inefficiency. However, Slovenia does have top level sports achievements which are comparable to other European countries when taking into account its population (Bednarik and Petrovič, 1998; Bednarik, Petrovič and Nyerges, 1997). The percentage of sport-active is on the same level as in other European countries (Bednarik and Petrovič, 1998), sports organisations are financed to about 75% from private sources and the model of financing sport is very similar to the EU model as defined by Andreff (1994). It could be concluded that the effects of sport in Slovenia are relatively good, either in spite of, or precisely because of voluntary management. This can also be because the volunteers are more dedicated to their work than professionals, and their greater possibility of making decisions and personal connections are in a positive association with their satisfaction in their work (Chelladurai and Haggerty, 1991).

We can therefore conclude that sports organisations in Slovenia have certain specific characteristics, which also differ between Olympic and non-Olympic sports and between non-Olympic competitive and non-Olympic non-competitive sports. In any case, those involved in managing sport should be aware of these characteristics, take them into account and conform accordingly.

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