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*A SAMPLE BASED MEMBERSHIP ANALYSIS OF
SPORTS CLUBS IN SLOVENIA*

*VZORČNA ANALIZA ČLANSTVA V ŠPORTNIH
DRUŠTVIH V SLOVENIJI*

Abstract

The article is based on the study 'A sample analysis of the number and structure of membership in grassroots sports organisations in individual sports disciplines in Slovenia' (Šugman, 1999). We classified 14 socio-demographic variables that enabled identification of the membership in sports associations and clubs, and made it possible to determine which functions individual members hold on the basis of their activities. As many as 1,130 survey questionnaires were sent by post and answers from 737 associations covering 51 sports disciplines were received (65.2% response rate). The results reveal a considerable difference in the scope and structure of Slovenian sports clubs. The number of sports clubs' members varies from 10 to 3,000. Approximately 40% of clubs included categorised athletes as members. The study thoroughly analyses coaches, particularly professional ones and those with amateur skills. In addition, at least one referee was recorded, one organisational and one technical staff member in about 60% of clubs, depending on the number of members and the number of categorised athletes. The aim of the article is to outline the organizational characteristics of associations and club members, with the emphasis on the number of referees, technical delegates, organisational and technical staff.

Key words: organisation of sport, organisational culture of sport, structure of sports organisations, sports disciplines, staff policy.

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Izveček

Podlaga za ta prispevek je študija 'Vzorčna analiza števila in strukture članstva osnovnih športnih organizacij po posameznih športnih panogah v Sloveniji' (Šugman, 1999). Število članstva v društvih ter vlogo, ki jo imajo v njih posamezni člani, smo ugotavljali s 14 socialno-demografskimi spremenljivkami. Po pošti smo poslali 1130 anketnih vprašalnikov, odgovorilo je 737 društev iz 51 športnih panog (65.2%). Rezultati kažejo veliko razliko v obsegu in tudi strukturi članstva slovenskih športnih klubov. Število članov v klubih se giblje od 10 do 3000. Približno 40% klubov je imelo v svojem članstvu tudi kategorizirane športnike. V študiji so predvsem podrobno analizirani profesionalni in amaterski trenerji. V približno 60% klubov so delovali tudi najmanj en sodnik, en organizacijski in en tehnični sodelavec. Namen tega prispevka je prikazati organizacijske značilnosti klubov, s poudarkom na številčnosti sodnikov, tehničnih delegatov ter organizacijskih in tehničnih delavcev.

Ključne besede: organiziranost športa, organizacijska kultura športa, struktura športnih organizacij, športne panoge, kadrovska politika.

INTRODUCTION

One of the most widespread and popular activities - sport is today still seen as being based on the classic elements of the English sport: motorics, playfulness, competition and fair play. That is why people undertake sports activity in different organisational structures. Sports clubs and associations functioning as basic entities for further association at a higher level are the most widespread and most important sports organisations. Like any other association sports clubs and associations are considered to be the »fundamental entities of civil society« (Bibič, 1997).

A primary goal of associating in the area of sport is to satisfy certain values and needs in terms of sports activity (Mesner Andolšek, 1995). Nowadays, sports activity manifests itself in various forms and is identified as involving different goals of the individuals who engage in sport. Every sports activity is shaped by the individuals within sports organisations. In addition, the grounds for that represent the broadest definition of sport as a cultural activity.

Sports associations' aims generally cover two fundamental aspects: a) to carry out sports activity with the aim of safeguarding and improving one's health, promoting the regeneration process and spending leisure time agreeably; and b) to promote and develop competitive sport and top sport.

The internal organisational structure of sports associations is usually not predetermined; it depends on the interests of members, programmes, the level of competition, financial resources, the available expert and organisational staff, and many other factors. Sports organisations' objectives always include achieving the best national or even world results in a given sport. The evaluation of these achievements is possible, prudent as well as socially and morally acceptable only through the formation of those variables that are legally supported by the world's expert public. Certainly, the expert public has a general and special sports character in both competitive and top sport. Both co-operate in sports leadership and are complementary (one cannot exist without the other, since, when speaking of fundamental values and concepts, the integrity of the notion of sports culture is indivisible from the international and national points of view).

The main element of sports management and leadership in competitive and top sport is setting up of a clear, transparent and target-oriented system based on well-defined and objectively measured functional criteria, used for measuring successful cultural functioning (and not confusing the notions, which usually leads to a mix-up of the main elements of sport and destroys its development; Šugman, 1999). This definition is also suitable for our research work, in which over 50 national sports federations participated. They are systematically developing competitive and top sport. The success of each special sports discipline is measured on the basis of results of international and national value. This means that each special national sports federation has to develop such an organisational scheme of its member clubs and associations which enables success at the national and global level, so that they are recognised as successful by the international sports and general public. It should be noted that each sports discipline has its own specific cultural expression at the manifest visual level, the level of values and the level of a fundamental predisposition for the development of a sports discipline.

As an element of human cultural life and as part of society, the principal goal of sport is to satisfy people's needs, interests and wishes (Šugman, 1999). The culture of sport is closely linked with the system of values of each individual and connected with the level of both the immediate

and broader social environments. Regardless of the fact that sports activity is primarily dedicated to a human as an individual, it would fail in its fundamental mission unless it established itself as a social activity in which participants build relationships in an organised way. Sports activity is a typically reasonable humanistic activity; objectively and through its target groups it is focused on an individual. The real value of its humanistic element is conditioned by the involvement of the social and organisational components of sport.

Studying organisational culture of sport relates to the overall picture of sport, which is created by various factors. These clearly include problems of setting up sports organisations. According to Vila (1994), the process of set-up is described as a creative process of defining an organisation. It requires the determination of all elements and sub-elements of the organisational structure of sports disciplines. Of course, the structure of organising a sports discipline is extremely complex and extensive as far as the number of elements involved and their relations are concerned. In addition, the nature of individuals' involvement changes within sports organisations. Yet it is beyond the scope of this article to study all the pertaining characteristics. We decided to research only a certain aspect of the organisation of grassroots sports entities within different sports disciplines. Furthermore, we aimed to classify in this segment those factors and characteristics of organisation which, in our opinion, play an important role in the ongoing development of (Slovenian) competitive and top sport.

The aim of the study was to carry out a sample analysis of the number and structure of selected characteristics of grassroots sports organisations in terms of various sports disciplines. In September 1997, disciplines were classified within the system of athlete categorisation kept by the Olympic Committee of Slovenia - Association of Sports Federations (NOC of Slovenia). Therefore, the research included sports clubs and associations that deal mostly with competitive and top sport and were registered with the National Sports Federation.

There are several research studies being conducted in the world, including in Slovenia, that study athletes and their coaches in greater detail than other sports staff, and there is almost no or very little research on referees, technical delegates, organisational and technical staff. The latter are dealt with in this article.

And what is the essence of research studying the latent structure of trainers and other sports staff? Researchers dealing with this issue can get deeply involved in the human soul and the relationships between sports activity leaders; this is not accepted by either sports experts or staff themselves, nor by sports associations or leading sports managing structures. In 1963 this view was expressed by the French sociologist, G. Magnane, in his book 'Sociologie du Sport', where he stated that sports officials in France did not want to provide any information about themselves and their work; in fact even then this was considered a taboo. That is why only a few researches exist in this area and therefore many more studies focus on school sports or physical education teachers. In the latter case state or public activity is researched, whereas in sports organisations private or civil activity is under scrutiny.

The key objectives of this research were:

- a) to identify the membership base participating in sports organisations, expressed in terms of the number of all members and above all the number of registered members;
- b) to ascertain the membership structure of sports organisations according to the roles played by certain members, namely the number of: categorised and non-categorised athletes, regu-

larly employed trainers with professional qualification, regularly employed trainers with amateur qualification, regularly employed trainers without any qualification, active amateur trainers with professional qualification, active amateur trainers with amateur qualification, active amateur trainers without any qualification, active referees, active technical delegates, active organisational staff, and the number of active technical staff; and
c) to discover any differences in the size of sports organisations emerging within selected sports disciplines or between them.

METHOD

Participants

We classified 14 socio-demographic variables as the basic variables enabling us to identify the membership in sports associations and clubs and the functions of individual members in view of their activities. The basic information was gathered by a mail survey carried out in the period from 1 February 1998 to 1 March 1999. Altogether, 1130 survey questionnaires were sent. Answers were received from 737 associations in 51 sports disciplines, which represents a response rate of 65.2 percent. The results showed that there were major differences in the scope and structure of Slovenian sports clubs.

Instruments

As many as 14 factors were analysed, namely the number of: all members, registered members, categorised athletes involved in the NOC of Slovenia system, non-categorised athletes regularly involved in the competition system, coaches employed full-time with a vocational qualification, coaches employed full-time with formal, amateur qualification, coaches employed full-time with no formal education, non-professional coaches with vocational qualification, non-professional coaches with amateur education, non-professional coaches without any education, active referees, active technical delegates, active organisational staff, and the number of active technical staff.

Among the basic variables 14 social and demographic variables were classified to establish to the membership base in clubs or associations and the functions of individual members in view of their activities.

Procedure

The results were statistically processed at the Computer Department of the Faculty of Sport of the University of Ljubljana. According to our expectations and the goals of research, the following parameters were obtained: arithmetic mean, standard deviation, minimum and maximum value, number of replies, number of replies in percentage, percentage of replies in total, Pearson's correlation coefficient.

RESULTS

Using 14 social-demographic variables the following results were obtained.

Table 1: Descriptive statistics of variables in the sample of all grassroots sports organisations involved in the research

	VARIABLE	N	MIN	MAX	SUM	M	SD
V 1	Number of all members	728	10	3.000	84950	116.7	166.65
V 2	Number of registered members	688	1	1.075	49521	71.98	97.03
V 3	Number of categorised athletes involved in the OCS-ASF system	303	1	88	2670	8.81	12.95
V 4	Number of non-categorised athletes regularly involved in the competition system	650	1	316	23718	36.49	37.33
V 5	Number of full-time employed coaches with vocational qualification	82	1	9	117	1.43	1.04
V 6	Number of full-time employed coaches with formal amateur qualification	80	1	11	150	1.87	1.56
V 7	Number of full-time employed coaches without any formal education	22	1	3	32	1.45	0.6
V 8	Number of non-professional coaches with vocational qualification	307	1	31	662	2.16	2.25
V 9	Number of non-professional coaches with amateur education	513	1	24	1461	2.85	2.42
V 10	Number of non-professional coaches without any education	326	1	58	797	2.44	3.54
V 11	Number of active referees	469	1	170	3035	6.47	11.87
V 12	Number of active technical delegates	255	1	20	619	2.43	2.39
V 13	Number of active organisational staff	513	1	65	3828	7.46	7.69
V 14	Number of active technical staff	429	1	200	2475	5.77	12.13

Legend:

N number of respondents

MIN minimum value

MAX maximum value

SUM sum value

M mean

SD standard deviation

Table 1 reveals the number of clubs that filled in the questionnaire and the number of clubs that gave non-zero replies to certain variables of the questionnaire. In total, the number of clubs which filled in the questionnaire and the membership base are displayed by the variable S1. That number of clubs in separate variables changes from high ($n = 688$) to low ($n = 22$). The results support the claim that there is no standard structure of clubs or associations in Slovenian competitive sport, whereby the functions are proportionally and equally distributed among individual members. Perhaps we can even presume that the role of individuals is very poorly structured, which does not provide any solid grounds for further development of Slovenian competitive and top sport. Much more attention should be devoted to the socialisation of functions, which could bring about thoroughly planned vocational qualification of club members, enabling them to carry out certain tasks and to take over certain expert responsibility for quality functioning of clubs and associations. Clearly, there is much potential in the non-activated membership, that is, for improving the quality development of the organisational culture of sport and its incorporation in everyday life.

In most cases, the results of basic statistics (see Table 1) may be disputed since the distribution of variables was abnormal. For that reason, the significance of the distribution of certain variables is proved by a frequency distribution.

Precisely because there are only few studies and sketchy information on referees, technical delegates as well as technical and organisational staff, those parameters which shed light on the profiles of referees, technical delegates, organisational staff and technical staff (see Table 1, variables 11-14) have been selected from the abovementioned researches. The article (see Table 1, variables from 1-10) in fact displays all the parameters, but only for informative purposes and better understanding of the problem at hand.

Referees participated in 469 associations. The highest number within a single association was 170. In 255 sports organisations there was at least one technical delegate working, while in one particular sports organisation there were up to 20 active technical delegates. Organisational staff took part in 513 sports organisations. In total, they numbered up to 3,828. The highest number of organisational staff recorded in a single sports organisation was 65. On average, there were seven organisational staff in each sports organisation. Their number varies a lot ($SD=7.66$) between sports organisations. Most sports organisations employed about five organisational staff. A considerable number had from 3 to 10, with the number of clubs employing more than 10 organisational staff falling rapidly.

Technical staff took an active part in over one half of sports organisations ($n = 429$). In one sports organisation, there were as many as 200 technical staff. In total, there were 2475 active staff, about 6 per a sports organisation on average. The distribution of the number of technical staff is normal and asymmetric as the number increases. Most associations disposed with one or two technical staff. A relatively high number of associations had up to five technical staff. The number of associations employing more than five active technical staff rapidly decreased.

Analysis of the structured roles of members participating in basic sports organisations revealed that the number of individuals occupying a certain role within sports organisations has been changing significantly. There were mostly associations whose members participated in competition systems ($n = 650$). Approximately 75% of associations had at least one active amateur trainer ($n = 513$) and at least one active organisational staff ($n = 513$). The lowest share (about 3%) accounted for by full-time employed trainers without any formal expert qualification ($n = 22$).

The correlation analysis of variables used is presented in Table 2.

Table 2: Pearson's coefficients of relations between sample variables.

		V1	V2	V3	V4	V5	V6	V7	V8	V9	V10	V11	V12	V13	V14
V1	r	1	.659**	.164**	.450**	.361**	0.017	0.201	0.094	.224**	.188**	.322**	0.12	.318**	.199**
	p	.	0	0.004	0	0.001	0.882	0.37	0.103	0	0.001	0	0.057	0	0
	N	728	683	302	645	80	79	22	302	506	324	464	253	509	426
V2	r	.659**	1	.197**	.360**	.419**	0.075	0.236	.174**	.262**	.195**	.372**	.204**	.327**	.273**
	p	0	.	0.001	0	0	0.523	0.317	0.003	0	0.001	0	0.002	0	0
	N	683	688	287	617	74	74	20	290	482	300	443	240	485	405
V3	r	.164**	.197**	1	.282**	0.142	-0.12	-0.24	.256**	0.004	-0.036	.339**	.325**	.239**	.177**
	p	0.004	0.001	.	0	0.278	0.422	0.531	0.002	0.95	0.686	0	0	0	0.01
	N	302	287	303	283	60	51	9	149	209	127	221	136	242	214
V4	r	.450**	.360**	.282**	1	.326**	0.178	0.163	.225**	.379**	0.079	.245**	0.087	.260**	0.073
	p	0	0	0	.	0.004	0.121	0.48	0	0	0.168	0	0.178	0	0.149
	N	645	617	283	650	77	77	21	277	464	305	435	241	476	397
V5	r	.361**	.419**	0.142	.326**	1	0.052	-0.29	0.141	0.023	.709**	0.21	0.312	.285*	.286*
	p	0.001	0	0.278	0.004	.	0.794	0.573	0.392	0.879	0	0.12	0.054	0.019	0.022
	N	80	74	60	77	82	28	6	39	47	23	56	39	68	64
V6	r	0.017	0.075	-0.115	0.178	0.052	1	-0.04	0.263	-0.019	-0.178	-0.103	-0.016	-0.179	-0.043
	p	0.882	0.523	0.422	0.121	0.794	.	0.895	0.168	0.898	0.384	0.455	0.928	0.175	0.77
	N	79	74	51	77	28	80	13	29	50	26	55	35	59	49
V7	r	0.201	0.236	-0.242	0.163	-0.293	-0.04	1	0.205	0.168	0.252	0.209	0.39	0.243	0.299
	p	0.37	0.317	0.531	0.48	0.573	0.895	.	0.627	0.602	0.33	0.436	0.299	0.33	0.243
	N	22	20	9	21	6	13	22	8	12	17	16	9	18	17
V8	r	0.094	.174**	.256**	.225**	0.141	0.263	0.205	1	0.001	-0.059	0.051	0.017	.174**	0.119
	p	0.103	0.003	0.002	0	0.392	0.168	0.627	.	0.986	0.527	0.467	0.853	0.008	0.094
	N	302	290	149	277	39	29	8	307	205	119	204	119	228	199
V9	r	.224**	.262**	0.004	.379**	0.023	-0.02	0.168	0.001	1	0.082	.213**	-0.001	.211**	0.083
	p	0	0	0.95	0	0.879	0.898	0.602	0.986	.	0.204	0	0.991	0	0.129
	N	506	482	209	464	47	50	12	205	513	240	342	206	397	333
V10	r	.188**	.195**	-0.036	0.079	.709**	-0.18	0.252	-0.059	0.082	1	.240**	0.128	.273**	.884**
	p	0.001	0.001	0.686	0.168	0	0.384	0.33	0.527	0.204	.	0	0.149	0	0
	N	324	300	127	305	23	26	17	119	240	326	225	129	252	217
V11	r	.322**	.372**	.339**	.245**	0.21	-0.1	0.209	0.051	.213**	.240**	1	.365**	.591**	.674**
	p	0	0	0	0	0.12	0.455	0.436	0.467	0	0	.	0	0	0
	N	464	443	221	435	56	55	16	204	342	225	469	216	369	306
V12	r	0.12	.204**	.325**	0.087	0.312	-0.02	0.39	0.017	-0.001	0.128	.365**	1	.378**	.325**
	p	0.057	0.002	0	0.178	0.054	0.928	0.299	0.853	0.991	0.149	0	.	0	0
	N	253	240	136	241	39	35	9	119	206	129	216	255	231	209
V13	r	.318**	.327**	.239**	.260**	.285*	-0.18	0.243	.174**	.211**	.273**	.591**	.378**	1	.475**
	p	0	0	0	0	0.019	0.175	0.33	0.008	0	0	0	0	.	0
	N	509	485	242	476	68	59	18	228	397	252	369	231	513	416
V14	r	.199**	.273**	.177**	0.073	.286*	-0.04	0.299	0.119	0.083	.884**	.674**	.325**	.475**	1
	p	0	0	0.01	0.149	0.022	0.77	0.243	0.094	0.129	0	0	0	0	.
	N	426	405	214	397	64	49	17	199	333	217	306	209	416	429

Legend:*r* Pearson's correlation coefficient*p* statistical significance*N* number of respondents* $p < 0.05$ ** $p < 0.01$

It is possible to identify a number of high coefficients of correlation on the basis of the above table. Strongest correlations between different variables are:

- the number of active technical staff (V14) and the number of non-professional trainers (V10) without any formal expert qualifications ($r = .88^{**}$);
- the number of technical staff (V14) and the number of active referees (V11) ($r = .67^{**}$);
- the number of active organisational staff (V13) and the number of active referees (V11) ($r = .59^{**}$);
- the number of active technical delegates (V12) and the number of active organisational staff (V13) ($r = .47^{**}$);

- the number of registered members (V2) and the number of active referees (V11) ($r=.37^{**}$); and
- the number of categorised athletes (V3) and the number of active referees (V11) ($r=.33^{**}$).

Note: The coefficients can be calculated on the basis of Table 2 (* $p < 0.05$; ** $p < 0.01$).

Based on the insight into the abovementioned statistically important correlations among the sample variables, we can identify a certain positive mutual regression of correlations between all variables. This somewhat confirms the need to a priori adopt the hypothesis according to which the number of registered members and of individuals performing a certain function grows with the number of members. To put it simply, this means that associations with a stronger membership base more often activate their members to perform certain functions contributing to the quality of the association's functioning.

DISCUSSION

Given the obtained results, the following conclusions can be drawn. About 85,000 members were active in those associations which filled in the questionnaire during the research (the lowest number was 10 and the highest 3,000). According to unofficial information this figure (85000) represents approximately 24.3% of all sports association members. There were 49521 registered members in those associations (a minimum of 1, and a maximum of 1075), which accounts for about 43% of all members of clubs included in the sample.

The number of all other staff in associations (active referees, active technical delegates, active organisational staff and active technical staff) reached 10000 and so, compared to the total of other staff, 117 regularly employed trainers with professional qualification represent only slightly more than one percent. If only that expert staff who have adequate professional qualification (779) are compared with the total number of staff (9957), their share in active experts, i.e. a mere 7.8%, is somewhat alarming.

It is indisputable that many referees, technical staff and organisational staff (who are, besides athletes, most numerous) participate in sports association and clubs. The only categories of the staff who are not members of associations are technical delegates, who generally act independently. We can conclude that both categories are indispensable for Slovenian sport and that they mostly work on a voluntary basis.

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