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DOCTORAL THESIS IMPROVING THE MANAGEMENT OF SPORTS

Abstract

COMPETITIONS

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CLUJ-NAPOCA

2010

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Key words: management, methods, functions, sports competition, competition management, sport, evaluation, table tennis.

PART I

Chapter 2: APPLIED SPORTS MANAGEMENT

The development of sport, continuously higher performances and well organized sports activities have been rendered possible by the scientific, technical and technological foundations of sports. Management – as science applied to sports - has also contributed to the development of the scientific foundations of sport. Management has become indispensable to any sports specialist as it helps organize sports structures and activities at the same time clearly and precisely establishing the duties of each institution and sports specialist.

Sports management takes into consideration the development of general management and therefore aims to:

- establish precise short, medium and long-term aims and objectives;
- improve decision-making techniques;
- run activities based on the systemic concept;
- involve all human resources in this process and train them continuously;
- ensure real and effective cooperation between manager and team members;
- know the influences played by the environment and other internal and external factors.

Sports managers plan, initiate, organize, coordinate and control activities ensuring that objectives are met.

Chapter 3: MANAGEMENT OF SPORTS COMPETITIONS

Sports competitions are the most important stimulating factor of sports activities and an original form of entertainment in which performances are continuously improved and compared [Todea F.S., 2003:182].

The level of sports performances differs in various fields, according to the proposed objectives. The forms of manifestation of sports performance are based on the relation between space, time, dynamics, the social aspects involved in a certain sport and the motor abilities of an athlete [Roman Ghe., 2007:300].

3.1. Sports competitions: characteristics and functions

Characteristics of sports competitions

Rivalry in sports is the soul of any competition. We could hardly imagine the Olympic Games without rivalry during the various events that take place on this occasion.

In this context, competition highlights elements with clear educational value:

- ability to fully concentrate so that an athlete may reach the highest potential at a given moment;
- shaping of competitive behavior that positively influences the athlete's personality;
- strength to accept both victories and defeats and consider them a normal part of sports [Roman Ghe., 2007:303].

a) Sports performance in competitions

Performance equals the highest ability an athlete possesses or the meeting of an objective by assessing the relation among the obtained result, the available abilities and skills (talent) of the subject. [Oana O., 2005:35]

b) Motivation of performance

Sports today is a tough competition, a race against oneself and the others, which involves success and glory, self-motivation and enjoyment, trust and perseverance, but above all performance – therefore reaching one's physical limits and sometimes surpassing them. [Banica I., 2007]

The motivation of performance influences athletes' behavior due to the simultaneous status of team member and opponent.

c) The competition system

Competition means comparing the performance potential of athletes using certain rules according to generally accepted norms.

The competition system is defined as all competitions scheduled and organized for a certain sport within a certain time interval and the running of these competitions based on adopted regulations. [Dragnea A., Mate Teodorescu, 2002]

The competition system includes the following:

- ranking system;
- scoring system;
- category system;
- KO system (eliminatory);
- mixed systems [Roman Ghe., Batali C., 2007:307].

The competition system is run according to a calendar that schedules championship and cup matches, friendly games and other competitions.

The competition system may be evaluated according to various aspects [Roman Ghe., Batali C., 2007:307]:

- the international aspect (European and World Championships, international events, World Cups, European Cups);
- the national aspect (main events, best athlete of the year, national championships, national cups, national matches);
- the organizational aspect (quarter finals, eliminatory competitions, invitation competitions, finals, semifinals, qualifying rounds, series, intermediate rounds);
- The aspect regarding training methodology (preparation competitions, main competitions, checking matches, test competitions, training and control competitions, high level competitions, qualifying competitions).

a) General functions of competitions

Cultural function (competitions for active and passive relaxation, recovery and fun). The cultural aspect of major sporting events is not neglected. The cultural function is valid for individuals who regard sports as appealing and useful for culture.

Commercial function includes the measures that need to be taken in order to sell competitions. Sports, especially performance and high performance sports, represents an important investment area, therefore it receives the attention of managers and specialists in the financial, tourism and commercial fields.

Social communication function involves forms of social cohabitation and integration at national level. International competitions may lead to better understanding and tolerance of various peoples' mentalities.

b) Social functions of competitions

Sports training function includes learning a sport within the pedagogical process of training and sports competitions.

Educational function includes special educational opportunities for the athlete (performance character and behavior) and therefore for the population. This is the most complex function as it develops all sides of human personality: ethical, intellectual, technical and professional [Lupu E., 2006:25].

Selection function must follow the rules of sports pedagogy as it represents the link between the theory of talent and skills. Selection focuses on high performance, which it supports.

3.2. Competition management

The notion of competition management has fully adapted to the requirements of organizing important or long competitions. National and international sports federations and the other institutions that govern sports activities (departments, ministries, bodies and organizations) create homogenous competition and training systems.

A committee whose task is to structure a well organized and effective system is required for the successful organization of sports competitions, clubs or institutions. The following are managerial problems that have to be dealt with:

- scheduling contests, the competition itself;
- planning and inviting officials;
- setting up material resources: field, hall;
- ensuring parking spaces;
- communication system with the spectators;
- communication with the media;
- transporting the teams;
- administrative staff;
- consolidating conduct rules and regulations;
- after-event activities— award ceremony, press conference [Voicu V.A., Nagel A., 2003:136].

3.3. Human resources involved in organizing and running competitions

A sporting event requires careful and thorough planning. The complexity and size of the organized event as well as its social impact involve an interdisciplinary approach.

Three professional categories are involved in organizing and running sports competitions [Hoffmann A., Competiția din punct de vedere interdisciplinar, 2003]:

- A. Managers of various governmental and non-governmental sports institutions and organizations: president of the Romanian Olympic Committee, team manager, sports club president, secretary general of sports federation, etc;
- B. Technical staff specialists: coaches, sports medical staff, sports counselor, etc;
- C. Support staff: referees, sports journalists, stakeholders, manufacturers of sports equipment and goods, spectators, sports complex administrators, etc.

3.4. Evaluating the management of sports competitions

The management of sports competitions is evaluated by analyzing how objectives are met and by comparing the performances obtained by athletes, coaches and all those involved in the activity.

The SWOT analysis was used to evaluate the management of sports competitions. SWOT stands for "Strengths" (Strong points). "Weaknesses" (Weak points), "Opportunities" (Chances) and "Threats". The first two refer to the organizing club and reflect its situation while the last two regard the environment and its impact on activities.

Strong points:

- creating strategies for organizing competitions;
- controlling activities for preparing competitions;
- coordinating the actions of the staff involved in organizing competitions;
- ensuring the budget required for running competitions.

Weak points:

- halls rented for competitions;
- insufficiently equipped material resources;
- lack of spectators;
- reduced number of sponsors willing to finance;
- lack of valuable participants.

Opportunities:

- organizing popularization shows;
- involving the local authorities (city hall) in event organization;
- involving the media in promoting the competition;
- promoting table tennis in the area;
- supporting athletes.

Threats:

- tendency of valuable athletes to move to other countries;
- decrease in the number of table tennis players;
- insufficient popularization.

Conclusions part I

Management is required by current sports trends in order to ensure that various structures and activities are connected. Sports management contributes to the whole functioning of sports structures, human resources, numerous means, objectives and intentions. Sports management coordinates individuals' efforts to achieve a common aim. Thus, sports management helps control situations as well as complex systems by ensuring the continuous and efficient management of sports activities.

The characteristics of sports management are also reflected in the fact that it applies to all forms of sports activities and branches, which ensures organized participation for better results.

As far as the organizational structures of the physical education and sport system are concerned, important reforms have taken place in the last years. Consequently, organization forms improved based on clear principles that ensure appropriate relations between governmental and non-governmental structures for successful mass and performance sports activities.

Sports organizations need a creative and flexible manager who is open to all organization actions and who is well prepared in the fields of both management and psychology.

Any competition organizer wishes for the most valuable competition possible in terms of both organization and athlete participation. Starting from this premise, successful organization of competitions is required from a managerial viewpoint as key part of sports, training and performance. Athletes want to take part in well organized competitions that offer nice prizes and many ranking points. This will please athletes, parents and the local community.

High performances, from junior to top level, is no longer possible without a series of absolute requirements able to solve all problems by completely changing the training and playing process with the help of high managerial and scientific support.

Competition, rigorous method of continuously assessing training and playing, remains the number one means of evaluating sports performance.

Part II:

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND DATA ANALYSIS

Chapter 4: THE RELATION BETWEEN MANAGERIAL COMPETENCES AND THE PERFORMANCE OF ROMANIAN SPORTS CLUBS: EMPIRICAL STUDY

4.2. Defining hypotheses and setting scientific research objectives

The following empirical hypotheses were established within our research:

Hypothesis 1: The management of sports competitions is linked to the financial resources of the club organizing the competition.

Hypothesis 2: The success of the competition depends on the management of the club organizing it.

Hypothesis 3: The success of the competition depends on the material resources involved.

Hypothesis 4: The success of the competition depends on how often the club organizes competitions in that respective year.

Hypothesis 5: Athlete participation in competitions depends on the prizes awarded.

Hypothesis 6: Athlete participation in competitions depends on competition type (regional, national).

Hypothesis 7: The results of sports management at club level depend on the skills and potential of the club managers.

Together with the 7 hypotheses, the following research objectives (O) were also set:

O1: To evaluate the management of sports competitions based on statistical information provided by the questionnaire.

O2: To carry out qualitative analysis of sports club management.

O3: To establish links between the elements used and the successful organization of sports competitions.

O4: To evaluate the managerial potential of club managers.

4.3 Subjects and methods

The research was carried out in 50 subjects from the sports field: 23 table tennis club managers from our country and a group of 27 physical education and sport students. The sample has the following important parameters:

Most subjects in the studied group work for national sports clubs, compared with Olympic level club managers. This structure matches the national situation, which is presented in Figure 4.1.

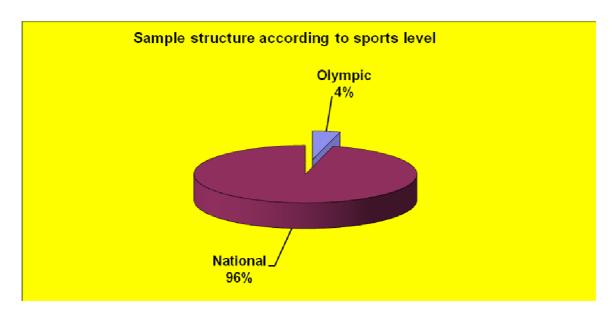


Fig. 4.1. Structure diagram of the studied group according to the competition level of the sports managers participating in the study

This group was administered two questionnaires: one questionnaire focuses on specific sports management issues and it contains 16 items regarding quantitative and qualitative aspects of sports management: the role of financial and material resources in sports, main success factors in sports, time and crisis management in sports organizations, organizing athlete participation in various level competitions. The questionnaire is presented in Appendix 1.

The second tool used is the California Psychological Inventory (Gough, 1984, 1987, 1996), which refers to the following relevant aspects for the field of management:

FOUR LIFESTYLES

The scores for the first two personality types, when considered together, define four ways of living or lifestyles. In the general population, approximately 25 percent of the people are classified in each of the four ways of living. They may be described as follows:

IMPLEMENTER LIFESTYLE (ALPHA) includes people who are interpersonally active and who accept social norms and conform to them. People who adopt this lifestyle step forward, get involved and do not hesitate to act. They believe that social rules are appropriate and must be respected. They are ambitious and goal-oriented, they have strong leadership potential and are well organized. At their best (highest scores), Implementers can be charismatic leaders and initiators of constructive endeavors. At their worst (lowest scores), they can be opportunistic, manipulative, and hostile toward those who break the rules.

SUPPORTER LIFESTYLE (BETA) includes people who are reserved in their daily behavior and supportive of social norms. Supporters are caring, conscientious, patient and well organized. They value and protect their personal feelings avoiding public display or disclosure. Their role is to preserve traditional values and humanize the ways in which social rules are enforced. At their best (highest scores), Supporters can be inspirational models of goodness, virtue, and tolerance. At their worst (lowest scores), they may be self-denying, lacking in self-esteem and confidence.

INNOVATOR LIFESTYLE (GAMMA) includes people who are interpersonally active, but who see flaws and even absurdities in the way many things are done. Innovators are imaginative and often creative in their work. Their values are personal, not traditional or conventional. At their best (highest scores), Innovators are creative, readily open to new ideas, products and social forms. At their worst (lowest scores), they are rebellious, intolerant, self-indulgent, and disruptive.

VISUALIZER LIFESTYLE (DELTA) includes people who value their own privacy and who see many of society's conventions as arbitrary and unduly restrictive. Visualizers are reflective and nonconforming. They see things differently from others, but

for the most part keep these perspectives private. They are most comfortable working in fields such as the arts and abstract sciences. At their best (highest scores), Visualizers are imaginative, esthetically perceptive, and have a rich inner life. At their worst (lowest scores), they feel fragmented, alienated from others, and internally in conflict.

4.4. Interpretation of research results

Data analysis and interpretation is an important stage as it is often regarded as the most significant stage in a research report [Chelcea S., 2007b:97]. Data and statistical methods used for data processing are presented below, accompanied by data interpretation. Relevant graphs, tables and figures are used to illustrate the theoretical interpretation of the results.

Managers in the studied group consider that management at club level is more successful than at national level, as shown in Figure 4.2.

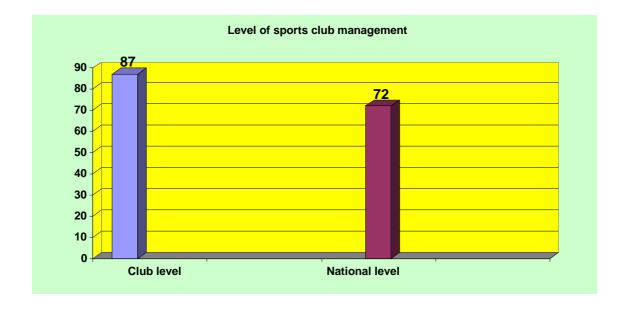


Fig. 4.2. Comparison diagram of total scores for assessing the level of sports club management at club and national level by managers included in the study

According to the managers participating in the study, budget and managerial strategy ensure the successful organization of competitions while coordination and control are regarded as least important, as presented in Fig. 4.3.

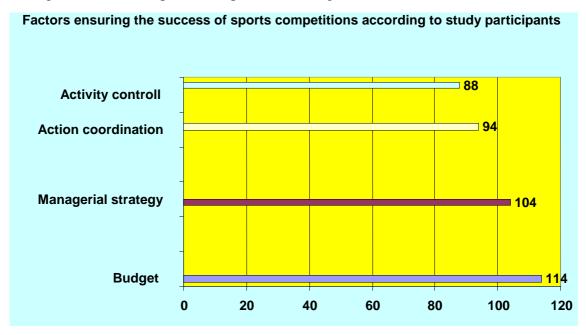


Fig. 4.3. Comparison diagram of total scores for assessing the factors ensuring the success of sports competitions at club level according to the managers included in the study

The material resources available in Romania are regarded as inappropriate for training and competition purposes. The sports infrastructure is perceived as rather average, as presented in Fig. 4.4.

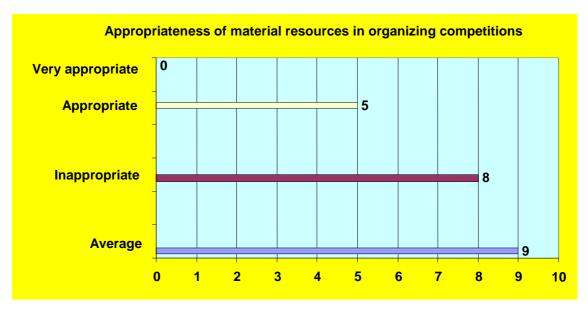


Fig. 4.4. Comparison diagram of total scores for assessing the quality of material resources available to the study participants

Lighting and the sports hall are the most important technical factors in the successful running of a table tennis competition, while the playing area is regarded as the least important, as shown in Fig. 4.5.

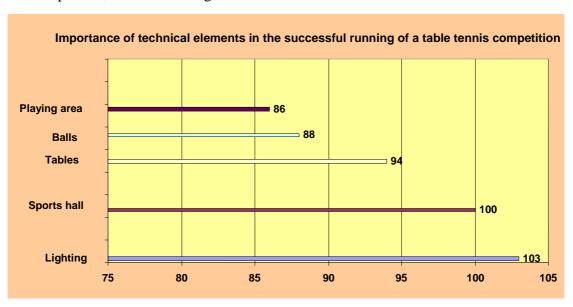


Fig. 4.5. Comparison diagram of total scores for assessing the factors influencing the successful running of table tennis competitions according to the managers participating in the study

State subsidies and sponsorships represent the main income sources for Romanian table tennis clubs, while donations and other sources are ranked lowest, as presented in Fig. 4.6.

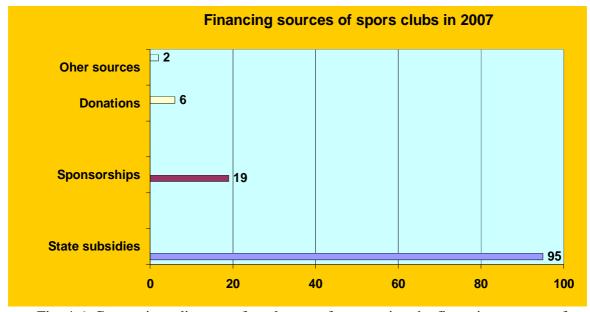


Fig. 4.6. Comparison diagram of total scores for assessing the financing sources of Romanian table tennis clubs in 2007

The same situation was registered in 2008, as presented in Figure 4.7.

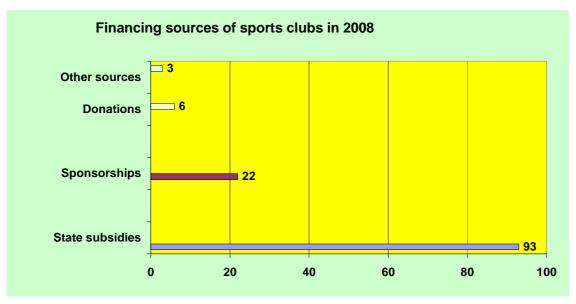
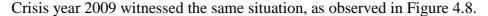


Fig. 4.7. Comparison diagram of total scores for assessing the financing sources of Romanian table tennis clubs in 2008 according to the managers participating in the study



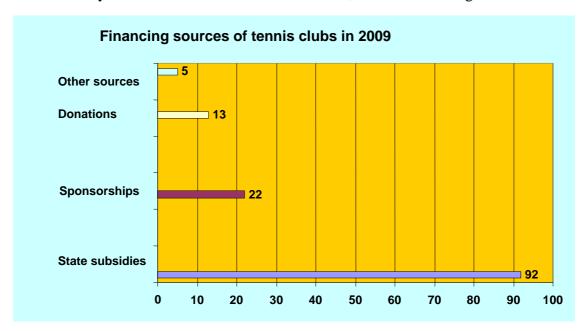


Fig. 4.8. Comparison diagram of total scores for assessing the financing sources of Romanian tennis clubs in 2009 according to the managers participating in the study

Success in sports achieved through activity coordination carried out within sports clubs is directly proportional to the managerial potential of the sports managers in the studied group.

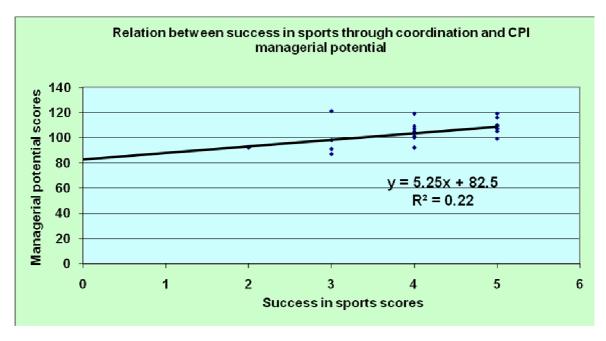


Fig. 4.9. Dispersion diagram showing the relations between success in sports through coordination and CPI managerial potential of the sports managers participating in the study (r = 0.47, p = 0.02)

The success of sports activities through control is directly proportional to the managerial potential, as observed in Figure 4.10.

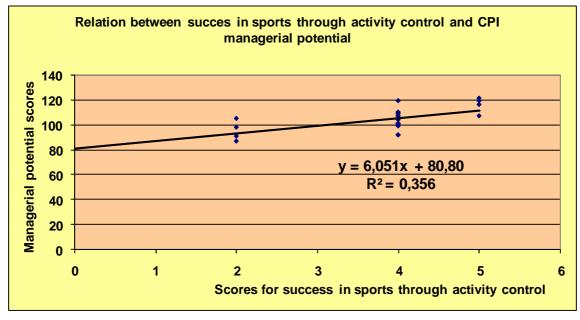


Fig. 4.10. Dispersion diagram showing the relations between success in sports through activity control and the CPI managerial potential of sports managers participating in the study (r = 0.60, p = 0.002)

The managers who believe strategy weighs most in sports management also have the highest number of departments in their clubs, as reflected by Figure 4.11.

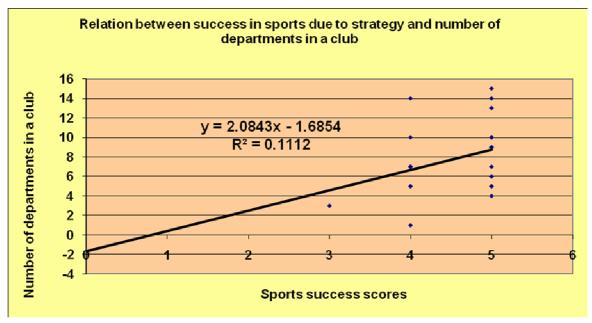


Fig. 4.11. Dispersion diagram of the relations between success in sports due to strategy and the number of departments according to the sports managers participating in the study (r = 0.33, p = 0.11)

Conclusions and proposals

This study carried out using two specialized questionnaires revealed numerous aspects of sports management in Romanian sports clubs.

Thus, the managerial potential assessed using the managerial potential scale (MPS) of the California Personality Inventory (CPI) designed by Harisson Gough showed that female table tennis club managers have greater managerial potential than male managers. This result contradicts the normative values of CPI validation for the Romanian population (Pitariu, 1995, pag. 27). According to this data, the managerial potential of male managers is higher (19.60 points on average for raw scores) by approximately three points compared to female subjects (16.36 points on average). This situation might apply to sports managers only and not to managers in general.

A significant difference was found between managers' performance according to competition level as Olympic level managers organized more table tennis competitions. The managerial potential of sports managers also differs significantly according to county. The highest scores for the MPS scale of the CPI questionnaire were obtained by sports managers from the Arges and Sibiu counties while those from Covasna scored lowest.

The results obtained in sports competitions are clearly influenced by the managerial potential of the sports managers.

The managerial activity of sports managers is validated by the number of sports competitions organized at child, junior and senior level and which, in their turn, ensure the success of departments and sports clubs in national and international competitions.

The value of the prizes awarded heavily influences the athletes' decision to take part in competitions.

Athlete participation in competitions depends on competition importance and level. In this respect, higher level competitions attract a larger number of participants.

A few important results generated by inferential statistical analysis of data obtained from the two questionnaires are mentioned below.

The assessment of regular and crisis management quality coincide for the three levels: club, county and national level.

Management through activity control and coordination at club level is directly proportional to the managerial potential reported by the participants included in the study.

Management quality proved higher in cases of sports club managers with a higher educational level, who also possessed better organizational skills. Experience in the sports field and experience as a sports manager also had a positive influence on the quality of sports management. More experienced managers obtained better managerial results.

The ability of sports managers to obtain donations and sponsorships for their clubs is inversely proportional to age. Therefore age is not always an advantage as young managers have better financial results.

The value of this research is also supported by Cronbach α internal consistency indices of over 0.70, which indicates that the tool used – MPS measured the managerial potential of table tennis club managers with reasonable accuracy.

Proposals

The data obtained indicate that the managerial training of Romanian sports managers needs improving as far as both their financial and organizational skills are concerned.

- the managerial training of Romanian sports managers needs improving as far as both their financial and organizational skills are concerned;
- sports managers could improve within exchange programs with table tennis departments from other countries with a long tradition in this sport;

- managers should participate in sports management training courses;
- the material resources should improve for a better organization of table tennis competitions according to the requirements of international regulations;
 - other financing sources should be found in order to support table tennis.

Appendix 1: Questionnaire for the practical study

Please fill in this questionnaire that evaluates the **management of sports** competitions in Romania.

_						
	Rate the level of sports club - In your club - Generally, at country lev	el				
Use the	following scale: 5 – very good; 4 –	good; 3 – sati	isfactory; 2 – v	weak; 1 – unsatis	sfactory;	
	Rate the ability of management 2009 Romania: - Level of the Ministry of - Level of county offices - Levels of sports clubs	Sports				omic crisis in
Use the	following scale: 5 – very good; 4 –	good; 3 – sati	isfactory; 2 – v	weak; 1 – unsatis	sfactory;	
3.	Rate the importance of the for your club (Choose only one	_			npetition org	ganization by
	ELEMENTS	Very	Important	Neither	Less	Unimportant
		important		important	important	
				nor		
				unimportant		
	1.Creating a strategy for running					
	the competition					
	2. Coordinating actions and the					
	staff involved in organizing the					
	competition					
	3. Controlling the activities					
	carried out in preparation of the competition					
	4. Ensuring the required budget					
	for running the competition					
4.	Rate the appropriateness of one statement) 1.Completely inappropriate 2. Inappropriate 3.Average 4.Appropriate	your mater	rial resource	es for organiz	zing compet	itions. (Tick
	5. Very appropriate					

5.	To what extent do material	resources	influence th	ne results of a	competition	n? (Tick one
	statement)					
-	To a very great extent					
-	To a great extent					
-	To a moderate extent					
-	To a small extent					
6.	Rate the importance of the f	following n	naterial reso	ources in the s	uccess of a	competition
	(Choose only one cell for ea	_				1
	`		,			
	ELEMENTS	Very	Important	Neither	Less	Unimportant
		important	_	important	important	
				nor		
				unimportant		
	1.Sports hall					
	2. Table tennis tables					
	3. Balls					
	4. Lighting					
	5. Playing area					
8.	1.International tournaments 2.European Championships 3.World championships Which of the following fina material resources? (Tick financing sources is 100)					
		In	2007			
	FINANCING SOURCES	0 – 20	% 21- 40	% 41 – 60%	61 – 80%	81 – 100%
	1.State subsidies					
	2. Sponsorships					
	3. Donations					
	4. Name other sources					
		In	2008			
	FINANCING SOURCES	0 – 20		% 41 – 60%	61 – 80%	81 – 100%
	1.State subsidies					
	2. Sponsorships					
	3. Donations					1
	4. Name other sources					+

In 2009

FINANCING SOURCES	0 – 20 %	21- 40%	41 – 60%	61 – 80%	81 – 100%
1.State subsidies					
2. Sponsorships					
3. Donations					
4. Name other sources					

9. How many **national competitions** did you organize in the last 3 years?

YEAR	CHILD LEVEL	JUNIOR LEVEL	SENIOR LEVEL
2007			
2008			
2009			

10. Do financial resources allow your club to organize high level competitions such as? (**Tick competition type**)

1. International	
tournaments	
2. European	
Championships	
3. World	
championships	

11. Which of the following elements influence athlete participation in competitions organized by your club?

ELEMENTS	CHILDREN	JUNIORS	SENIORS
1.Type of competition:			
- regional;			
- national.			
2. Number of points awarded			
3. Value of the prize			
4. Value of the participants			

Use the following scale: 5 – very much; 4 – much; 3 – average; 2 – little; 1 – very little.

12. For how long have you worked in this sports club? <i>Circle one answer:</i>	
Less than 1 year —1-5 years — 6-10 years — 11-15 years — More than 15 ye	ars—

13. For how long have you worked in the sports field? *Circle one answer:*

14. Less than 1 year —1-5 years — 6-10 years — 11-15 years — More than 15 years—

15. Your position within the sports club -----

16. Name of sports club -----

17. Number of sports departments in your club:

Appendix 2: QUESTIONNAIRE FOR EVALUATING MANAGERIAL POTENTIAL - CPI MPS

Instructions: The statements below concern human attitudes, opinions, interests and feelings. Please read each statement carefully and choose the answer that matches how you *feel and act in general*. There are no right or wrong answers, so please select an answer for each statement using the following options:

Totally disagree 1
Partially disagree 2
Undecided, not sure 3
Partially agree 4
Totally agree 5

Statement	Answer
I have had very weird and strange life experiences.	
2. In many respects, a person with a modest income is happier than a rich person.	
3. Most people would not hesitate to lie if they thought this could be to their advantage.	
4. I am very serious about ethical and moral issues.	
5. I am not afraid to walk into a room where other people are already engaged in a conversation.	
6. I sometimes feel rather downcast.	
7. I do not judge people who try to take advantage of whatever possible in this world.	
8. Most mornings I wake up fresh and rested.	
9. Most people would be capable of using inappropriate means to obtain something rather than lose an opportunity.	
10. I have often noticed that my hand is shaking when I try to do something.	
11. Teachers often expect students to make special efforts.	
12. I often act on an impulse, without thinking about my actions.	
13. My way of being may be misunderstood by others.	
14. I have had too many troubles.	
15. I do not usually get involved in gossip and group discussions.	
16. I like leaving people around me guess my intentions.	
17. If opportunity presented itself, I could be a good leader.	
18. Most people are honest, especially for fear of getting caught.	
19. Most people do not like exposing themselves in order to help others.	
20. I try to avoid troubles at all costs.	
21. The future is too uncertain to make serious future plans.	
22. I am often bothered by useless thoughts that linger in my mind.	
23. When prices increase one cannot blame those who look for bargains.	
24. I usually find life worth living.	
25. I believe most people would be capable of lying in order to obtain what they want.	
26. I find it hard to behave naturally when strangers are around.	
27. I often feel I had been wrongly punished.	
28. I have never been a big alcohol consumer.	
29. I believe I am usually the leader of my group.	
30. I like organizing and deciding what every person should do.	
31. Success is a matter of will.	
32. My skin seems to be extremely sensitive to touch.	
33. People normally resort to me when a decision must be made.	
34. I feel people do not know how to have fun like in the old times.	

Please fill in the following personal information:
Age years; Gender: M/F (circle); Number of school years years;
Last school you graduated from

Information you provide is strictly confidential and will be used for research purposes only.

Thank you for your kind help!