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Evaluation of The Organizational Structure of Sports Organizations: The case of Greek MSO

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to examine the organizational structure of Greek Municipal Sports Organizations and to classify them based on their organizational types. The sample consisted of eighty-four Municipal Sports Organizations/Companies/Sports Offices. The Sport Commission Organization Structure Survey questionnaire (SCOSS) was modified and translated in Greek, in order to be used for this survey. The Exploratory Factor Analysis for the aforementioned sample detected three factors: a) formalization, b) concentration, c) complexity with high reliability coefficients for all factors. The Confirmatory Factor Analysis revealed highly satisfactory indicators. Consequently, the model fitted the sample data quite well. The Cluster Analysis for the sample identified three basic groups of organizational characteristics. The results of this study verified the validity and the reliability of the SCOSS questionnaire and may be used by Municipal Sports Organizations/Companies/Sports Offices, in order to manage organizations effectively.

Keywords: complexity; concentration; formalization; organizational dimensions; public

Introduction

Mass sport has been promoted extensively in recent years. In countries, such as Great Britain, the Netherlands and France, increased rates of citizens' participation in sports have been reported on a local level. In addition, there is a dire need to encourage citizens to engage in physical activities, which has led the governments of the UK and Canada to cooperate with public sports organizations, in order to provide enhanced sports services to their citizens (Thibault, Frisby & Kikulis, 1999). It is essential that the services offered by Municipal Sports Organizations be adjusted, in order to strengthen their social dimension. Also, it is obvious that Municipal Sports Organizations constitute a key element in promoting sports and their quality indicates the attention local authorities pay to promoting exercise amongst their citizens (Afthinos, 2001).

All sports organizations have a certain organizational structure, regardless of their size and years in the sport industry. Although it seems that organizations have similar internal structure, the existence of two identical sports organizations is impossible. According to Slack and Parent (2006), the organization's structure and dimensions, the human factor, appropriate strategic moves, current conditions and charismatic leaders are the keys to maximizing the organization's performance. Another research revealed strong support for the general idea that there are important interdependencies between resource values and their payments that have significant effects on performance (Hill, Aime & Ridge, 2017). Huber and Glick (1993) suggested that organizational structure is the heart of every organization. In other words, organizational structure refers to the organization's basic elements, which are used to achieve effective function of the organization. More importantly, it is believed that the organizational structure is responsible for describing the staff's responsibilities and distribution of tasks within the organization.

This study attempted to examine an emerging field, namely municipal sports organizations' structure. Specifically, the main aim of this study was to present the dimensions of organizational structure in Greek municipal sports organizations, as well as their classification in terms of organizational structure. The conclusions which derived from this research: a) provide information about the organizational structure, dimensions

and types of municipal sports organizations b) provide knowledge to sports managers, in order to understand the characteristics of organization, in order to run them efficiently.

Organizational dimensions

One of the most sophisticated and frequently used of all organizational typologies is the one developed by Henry Mintzberg (1979). Mintzberg uses the organizational dimensions and factors such as age, size and environment to produce five design types. These are simple structure, machine bureaucracy, professional bureaucracy, divisionalised form and adhocracy. Each has strengths and weaknesses and works best under certain conditions. The five designs developed by Mintzberg enable us to compare and contrast sport organizations. They also provide us with a basis for studying a wide variety of other organizational phenomena. For example, how does a sport organization change from a simple structure to machine bureaucracy to a divisionalized form? Are decisions made differently in a professional bureaucracy than in an adhocracy? And how is power exercised in each of these different designs? These questions and many more are valid topics of investigation for sport management. The design types outlined can provide a useful basis for investigation into these areas.

The classification of sports organizations in organizational structures are based on the three most common dimensions: “centralization”, “complexity” and “formalization” (Slack & Parent, 2006). Most researchers use these dimensions in order to describe and understand the organizational structure (Cunningham & Rivera, 2001; Daft, 2005; Fahlen, 2006; Kikulis et al., 1995a; Slack & Parent, 2006; Sotiriadou & Quick, 2002; Stenling & Fahlen, 2009; Theodoraki & Henry, 1994; Zhen & Mao, 2009). Analysing these dimensions is essential, in order to examine organizations, compare them and identify their components (Cunningham & Rivera, 2001; Daft, 2004; Fahlen, 2006; Kikulis et al., 1995a, 1995b; Slack & Parent, 2006; Sotiriadou & Quick, 2002; Theodoraki & Henry, 1994).

Centralization is related to the people who take decisions in a sport organization. When decisions are taken by the organization’s higher-level employees, the organization is considered centralized. Other characteristics of centralized structures are: the limited participation by lower-level staff in decision making, the lower-level staff

have restricted choice of decision making alternatives, the senior managers control add the autocratic structure. Contrary, when decisions are taken by the lower level employees, it is considered decentralized. Other characteristics of decentralized structures are: the lower-level staff actively participate in decision making, the lower – level staff given choices when making decisions, the senior managers coordinate and the democratic structure.

Complexity is in many ways one of the most readily apparent features of any sport organization. Anytime we look at any sport organization we cannot help but be aware of such things as the different job titles, the way in which the organization is departmentalized or divided into subunits and the hierarchy of authority. Even a cursory look at a sport organization such as a university's faculty of health physical education and recreation will verify this observation. Individuals have job titles such as clean, chair professor, research associate, graduate student and secretary. Facilities may also be divided into departments or subunits with names such as leisure studies, health and sport sciences. Even a sport organization such as a local judo club which at first glance may appear relative "noncomplex" will probably have job titles a committee structure and a simple hierarchy of authority. In some sport organizations the level of complexity may actually vary among departments that are perceived as equally important. As we can see from these brief examples complexity describes the way an organization is structured. Three different types of differentiation may occur: horizontal, vertical or spatial. Horizontal differentiation occurs in two ways: specialization and departmentalization. Specialization means that the time required to learn a job is relatively short, the chances of making errors while learning the job are slim and that, because the task is frequently repeated, the person becomes more skillful in its execution. Specialization also entails no time is lost due to switching from one task to another. As a result, techniques are improved and individual skills are utilized in the most efficient way. Departmentalization specifies how managers assign activities to subunits, in order to achieve the organization's goals more effectively. Vertical differentiation refers to the number of levels in the organizational hierarchy. The more the levels, the greater the problems of communication, coordination and supervision,

are, hence the sport organization becomes more complex. A sport organization is spatially differentiated when tasks are separated geographically.

The formalization is the key dimension because it strongly influences the way individuals are able to behave in an organization. Just as the rules of a sport limit the way an individual can behave in the playing area, formalization in organizations works to control the amount of discretions individuals or groups are allowed to exercise when performing their jobs. Formalization, refers to the extent that various mechanisms, including rules and regulations, job descriptions and policies, control the operation of a sport organization (Slack & Parent, 2006). If a sport organization is highly formalized it has lots of rules and regulations comprehensive policies and procedures and detailed job descriptions to guide its operations. In this type of organization employees have little discretion over how and when they do their work. In organizations with low formalization employees are given the freedom to exercise discretion about their work and how and when it is carried out. The findings of MacIntosh and Doherty (2010) revealed that the cultural dimension of formalization negatively impacted the participants' level of job satisfaction. This suggests that the number of rules and procedures as well as dress and grooming standards are less desirable aspects of organizational culture. Though it is important for management to have specific checks and balances for each job position, hence protecting the employee, the organization, and the client, this is an aspect that should be carefully reexamined by fitness club managers.

In Greece, few studies were conducted, which examined the organizational structure of sport organizations (Papadimitriou & Taylor, 2000; Papadimitriou, 2001; Sotiriadou & Quick, 2002). Moreover, there is no relevant research data about the organizational structure of non-profit municipal sport organizations. Another research for sport organizations was made by Megheirkouni (2017) who investigated the transformational and transactional leadership styles and organizational learning at for-profit and non-profit sports organizations, and the impact of these leadership styles on enhancing organizational learning in these sports organizations. He revealed that management by exception-active in transactional leadership and idealized leadership in transformational leadership seem to be equally important for facilitating organizational learning.

Several researches compared the dimensions of organizational structure in sports organizations. Thibault et al. (1993) studied and introduced analysis plans of Canadian non-profit sports organizations. They identified the differences between profit and nonprofit sports organizations and presented a theoretical framework that identified four strategic profiles for nonprofit sports organizations. Cunningham and Rivera (2001) examined the relationship between structure and effectiveness in American sports organizations. Moreover, they examined concentration, complexity and formalization, in order to determine potential structural designs. Their results indicated that these three dimensions of structure (concentration, complexity and formalization) were useful for identifying structural arrangements in American sports organizations. The same researchers also introduced the presence of two distinct structural designs: the simple structure and the enabled structure. Finally, they reported significant differences between departments with an enabled structure and departments with a simple structure, in terms of their athletic achievement.

Furthermore, Bradish (2003) studied and discussed the differences between the structural dimensions and organizational characteristics of sports commissions in the United States of America. Furthermore, the aforementioned researcher attempted to classify sports commissions according to their organizational structure. In addition, the comparison between the structural dimensions and organizational characteristics referred to organizations from both large and small geographic regions. The results showed that both small and large sports commissions were similar in organization and structure. The only differences found, regarding the characteristics of the organization, were related to total budget, number of board members and events hosted. Also, the researcher reported moderate levels of complexity and centralization and moderate and low levels of formalization.

Fahlen (2006) studied the organizational structure of eleven Swedish professional ice hockey teams. He classified the teams, based on three dimensions (concentration, complexity, formalization), into low, medium and high level. The researcher reported that, although the teams encountered similar environmental conditions and performed similar tasks, such as fund raising, recruiting players, competing in the same league and organized events, there was variation in their structural features.

Classifications of sports organizations in organizational types or structures

As for the organizations, they share some common characteristics, which lead to their classification into common organizational types or structures. One of the main typologies, which is widely accepted, was developed by Henry Mintzberg (1979). The typology of Mintzberg was based primarily on organizational dimensions and secondly on the organization's characteristics, such as size, level of growth, technology and environment of each organization. In this direction Erhardt, Martin-Rios and Harkins (2014) referred that managerial capabilities for knowledge flow appear to operate differently in tall and flat teamwork structures.

Based on the above variables, five organizational types were defined: a) simple structure, b) machine bureaucracy, c) professional bureaucracy, d) divisionalised form and e) adhocracy.

a) simple structure: the most evident characteristic of this structure is its simplicity. This structure has high levels of centralization and low levels of horizontal and vertical complexity and formalization. Important decisions are made by the top of the strategic apex. As a sport organization grows, simple structure is no longer appropriate.

b) machine bureaucracy: this structure allows simple, repetitive tasks to be performed precisely and consistently by human beings. The levels of horizontal and vertical complexity, formalization and centralization are high. Moreover, although machine bureaucracy works well in stable environments, it does not respond well to changes.

c) professional bureaucracy: professional bureaucracy combines the standardization of the machine bureaucracy with decentralization, which expresses the professional's need for autonomy. This structure has also low levels of formalization and high levels of horizontal and medium levels of vertical complexity. This type of structure can be found in several different fields of the sport industry, such as medicine clinics, sport marketing companies and some voluntary sport organizations. The key part of the professional bureaucracy is the professionals and their work, which is based on their specialized knowledge and skills.

d) divisionalised form: the key part of this structure is the presence of middle-line managers, who are individuals who control the divisions. Another characteristic of this type is the large number of sections. There is notable centralization, formalization and vertical and horizontal complexity among the sections.

e) adhocracy: the strength of this structure is its flexibility and its ability to respond well to changes. For this reason, most of the executives are young, as they are quite adaptable. This type of structure has also low levels of centralization, formalization and vertical complexity, while its horizontal complexity is high (Slack & Parent, 2006).

Each of the above-mentioned structures refers to an ideal structure, that is why we seldom find sport organizations that fit the pattern exactly as described. Many researchers have pointed out that the adjustment of each organization is interdependent of the societal changes (Conger & Kanungo, 1987; Tichy & Devanna, 1986; Ulrich, 1987; Tolbert, 1985). Hinings & Slack (1987) discussed the existence of nine types of organizational structure, which were all quite similar and showed characteristics of professional bureaucracy. Kikulis, Slack, Hinings and Zimmermann (1989) used data from 59 sport organizations. Using Ward's method of hierarchical agglomerative clustering, eight structure types were produced and high levels of professional bureaucratic structuring were found. Cunningham and Rivera (2001) found two types of structures: simple and alternative in another similar research.

It is important to note that the five structure types described above are, in fact, the ideal types. However, it is nearly impossible that any sport organization will be exactly like one of these types. Some sport organizations may approximate one of the main structures, some may be in transitional states among structures and others may utilize a hybrid structure that has the characteristics of more than one types. What do all these mean, then? Does the fact that the above-mentioned organization structures cannot be found at their entirety mean that these designs are not useful? Of course, not. The five designs which were developed by Mintzberg enable us to compare sport organizations on various dimensions. They also provide us with a basis for studying a wide variety of other organizational phenomena (Babiak, 2003).

This research will discover the theory of sport structure in practical terms and will try to apply this knowledge in real situations in Greece. It will provide a better

understanding of the way that sport organizations are structured and designed, how they operate and why some are effective when others are not. This understanding can help sport managers analyse and diagnose more effectively the problems they face and enable them to respond with appropriate solutions.

The purpose of this research was to study the organizational structure of Greek Municipal Sports Organizations and their classification into organizational types. The absence of similar researches in Greece increased the importance of this investigation, since the conclusions that will be revealed would assist:

a) by providing data, concerning the dimensions and the organizational structure of municipal sports organizations, as there is no information on the topic in Greece,

b) the managers of sports organizations in understanding the organizational structure of their organizations. The understanding of these processes is a prerequisite for managers to be able to design the organizational structure that best meets the needs of their organization, aiming at optimal operation.

Methodology

Sample

For the purpose of this study 138 questionnaires were distributed to the whole population of MSO in Greece and specifically to the presidents or the heads of the departments. From the total population, 84 (61%) of the country's Municipal Sports Organizations/Companies/Sports Offices answered and returned the questionnaires. There is no other research for MSO in Greece with this size of sample and representation. All types of municipal sports organizations were included in the sample, in order to acquire a sufficient sample, according to the needs of the research.

Questionnaire

The Sport Commission Organization Structure Survey questionnaire (SCOSS) was selected for this research. Robbins (1990) designed the first section of the questionnaire, based on the types of organizational structure. Bradish (2003), Erdmann (1995) and McDougal (1991) used the abovementioned section of the questionnaire to assess the organizational structure of local sports organizations, federations and clubs.

The second section was created and approved by the National Association of Sports Commissions (1994) and included descriptive and organizational characteristics. Thereafter, the above sections were approved by Amis and Slack (1996) and by Slack (1985), verifying that the questions of this questionnaire have a theoretical background and are based on established theories of organization and research to ensure the content's validity.

Also, Erdmann (1995) used the same sections and found statistically significant correlation among concentration and complexity ($r=0,96$), concentration and formalization ($r=0,98$) and complexity and formalization ($r=0,94$) respectively. Additionally, McDougal (1991) in a similar survey found statistically significant correlation among concentration and complexity ($r=0,98$), concentration and formalization ($r = 0,98$) and complexity and formalization ($r=0,96$). These strong correlations indicate that the questionnaire is valid and "reflects" the concepts that is supposed to measure. This questionnaire was used in Greece for the first time and some modifications were deemed necessary. Therefore, the results of the structural validity and reliability examine whether these changes have been a limiting factor in this investigation or not.

Pilot Study

SCOSS scale was translated in Greek and then a pilot study was held in 31 Greek Municipal Sport Organizations. The Exploratory Factor Analysis, conducted after the pilot survey, showed that there were three factors that interpreted the 74.8% of the total variance: a) concentration, b) complexity and d) formalization. Cronbach α reliability analysis showed a high degree of internal consistency for all factors ($\alpha=.86$, $\alpha=.85$, $\alpha=.78$).

Finally, the questionnaire which was used for this study was the Sport Commission Organization Structure Survey (SCOSS), expanded by 3 questions, which concerned the dimension of formalization. These questions were considered necessary to enhance the value of Cronbach α of the formalization factor, based on the results of the pilot survey. The final questionnaire, which included 40 questions and consisted of 3 parts, was translated and subjected to critical analysis by three academics, who teach

statistics and research methodology at the University of Thrace. In addition, it was assessed by a philologist to ensure the interpretation and clarity of its questions. The additional questions gave information about the organizations' written or verbal regulations, the existence (or not) of a manual containing the jobs' descriptions and the existence (or not) of staff training sessions, based on the abovementioned manual. The questions were "closed" and required that the presidents of municipal sports organizations chose a number from a scale from 1 (never) to 5 (always). Chosen answers to "closed" questions were marked with an "x". Moreover, a question that gave information about the form of the organization after the Kallikratis project was included.

Process

The distribution, completion and collection of the questionnaires started in early October 2014 and was completed in late November of the same year.

Statistical analysis

For the data recording and analysis of the results the statistical package SPSS was used. The EFA and CFA were used to verify the scale because many variables were added or had been changed to adjust the questionnaire to the Greek sample, so it was very important to check if the final questionnaire measures the concepts that it is designed for:

- a) Exploratory Factor Analysis, which included the Analysis in Main Components and the Varimax Rotation of axes, was performed. The number of factors was set to 3, with the help of the variations' graph, and the cutoff point of questions' loadings on the factors was 0.45.
- b) internal consistency of the factors was examined with the coefficient alpha of Cronbach having a limit of 0,6.
- c) Confirmatory Factor Analysis was utilized to verify the dimensions which emerged from the exploratory factor analysis.
- d) Hierarchical Cluster Analysis, based on aggregation of clusters, was used to classify the sports organizations in classes.

Results

Validity and reliability of the scale

For the verification of the validity scale (SCOSS) for the Greek sample (Greek Municipal Sport Organizations after the Kallikratis project) Principal Component Analysis (PCA) was used. PCA and varimax rotation for the 16 variables identified 3 factors, which explained the 55,293% of the total variance:

a) Formalization, five questions were loaded to this factor which explained the 22,587% of the total variance.

b) Centralization, five questions were loaded to this factor which explained the 19,271% of the total variance.

c) Complexity, five questions were loaded to this factor which explained the 13,435% of the total variance.

Table 1. Results of the PCA.

Variables	1	2	3
Predefined procedures and written regulations	0,834		
Autonomy of personnel	0,833		
Written work description	0,769		
Internal regulation availability	0,767		
Personnel training upon work description	0,597		
President's participation in the decisions		0,78	
President's participation in the decisions implementation		0,722	
President's decisions control		0,7	
Participation of personnel in the evaluations		0,692	
Participation of personnel in the recruitment / dismissals		0,641	
Number of titles			0,725
Job levels			0,678
Personnel experience in sports management			0,629
Number of departments			0,615
Work grouping			0,536

Question 12, which was about the participation of personnel in trainings and implementation of new programs or action plans, was removed because it wasn't significantly loaded to any factor.

The internal consistency of the factors was examined with the coefficient alpha of Cronbach having a limit of 0,6 (Cortina, 1993; George & Mallery, 2003; Gronbach, 1951; Kline, 2000). The results supported the validity scale and all three factors had a high degree of internal consistency. Thus, the questionnaire was found suitable for use in Greece. Table 2 presents the minimum and maximum dispersion, standard deviation and Cronbach α of each factor.

Table 2. Minimum and maximum values, standard deviation and Cronbach α .

Factors	Min.	Max.	Mean	S.d.	Cronbach
Formalization	1	5	2,54	1,22	0,84
Centralization	1,8	4,8	3,28	0,74	0,81
Complexity	1,2	4,8	2,576	0,91	0,74

Confirmatory Factor Analysis

The Confirmatory Factor Analysis, which followed the Exploratory Factor Analysis resulted in the following fit indices:

- Relative Chi-Square Test (X^2/df) = 1,05
- Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA) = 0,033.
- Comparative Fit Index (CFI) = 0,97.
- Tucker Lewis Index (TLI) = 0,94.

The overall model fit of SCOSS, as shown by the Confirmatory Factor Analysis upon the factors that emerged from the Exploratory Factor Analysis, was very satisfactory. After all, the fit indicators had acceptable values. Furthermore, the values of the indicators CFI and TLI were over 0.90, which reveals a very good model fit (Bentler & Boonet, 1980; Hu & Bentler, 1999; Mc Callum & Austin, 2000; Steiger, 1990).

Ascending Hierarchical Clustering

Hierarchical Cluster Analysis, on the basis of aggregation of clusters, was used to classify the sports organizations in classes, based on Ward's metric and the "Mutual k-Nearest Neighbors" algorithm for the aggregation of clusters. The abovementioned analysis was used to examine if different types or organizational structures of Greek Sport Organizations/Companies/Sports Offices of local authorities would arise. The cluster analysis identified 3 classes/groups. 18 Sport Organizations/Companies/Sports Offices belonged to the first group, 53 to the second group and 13 to the third group. For the interpretation of the clusters, according to the characteristic (variable) the clustering was based on, the mean values of variables for each class were calculated (Table 3).

Table 3. Mean score of the variables involved in the cluster analysis.

Variables	1	2	3	Mean
President's decisions control	4,85	4,92	4,2	4,65
President's participation at the decisions	4,87	4,80	4,5	4,75
President's participation at the decisions implementation	4,66	4,87	4,7	4,75
Participation of personnel at the evaluations	1,36	1,50	1,9	1,61
Participation of personnel at the recruitment / dismissals	1,45	1,52	2,0	1,66
Number of titles	4,12	3,01	3,2	3,45
Number of departments	3,62	3,12	3,1	3,30
Work grouping	4,32	3,20	4,0	3,85
Personnel experience in sports management	3,40	2,21	2,0	2,54
Job levels	2,43	1,50	2,0	2,00
Predefined procedures and written regulations	4,03	2,15	2,1	2,78
Written work description	4,01	2,48	2,1	2,89
Autonomy of personnel	3,86	2,31	1,4	2,55
Internal regulation availability	4,19	2,07	1,3	2,52
Personnel training upon work description	4,41	2,74	1,9	3,02

The first class included Municipal Sport Organizations/Companies/Sports Offices which showed the following characteristics: high participation of the president in decision making, implementation and control of decisions, while the participation of personnel in the evaluation and recruitment or dismissal of their colleagues was very low. Also, questions related to the factor of formalization showed moderate to high levels

(predefined procedures and written regulations, written work descriptions, personnel autonomy, internal regulation availability, personnel training based on work description).

Finally, questions related to the factor of complexity indicated moderate levels (number of departments, personnel experience in sports management and job tasks), whereas the question regarded the work grouping and the number of titles has shown high levels. Therefore, this class was characterized as highly concentrated, with moderate complexity and moderate to high formalization, thus it could not be classified purely in any of the above classifications of Mintzberg. It had some of the characteristics of simple, some of the professional bureaucratic and some of the divisive structure.

The second class had the following key features: very high participation of the president in the decision making, implementation and control of decisions, thus small participation of the staff in the evaluation and recruitment or dismissal of their colleagues. Also, this class showed a modest number of titles, departments and work grouping, while job levels were few and staff experience in sports management was low. Finally, the variables which concerned the factor of formalization (predefined procedures and written regulations, written work descriptions, personnel autonomy, availability of internal rules, personnel training based on job description) showed low levels. Thus, the second class was characterized by low complexity and low formalization. Therefore, the structure of the second class included features of the simple structure.

The third class had the following main features: high participation of the president at the decision making, implementation and control of decisions, and low participation of personnel in the evaluation and recruitment or dismissal of their colleagues. Also, this class had few job levels and limited experience of personnel in sports management, while the number of titles and departments was moderate. The variable related to the work grouping was high. Finally, the variables related to the factor of formalization (predefined procedures and written regulations, written work descriptions, personnel autonomy, availability of internal rules, personnel training based on job description) showed very low levels. Therefore, the third class was characterized as concentrated with very low levels of formalization and moderate levels of complexity. Therefore, the structure of the third class included features of the simple structure, except for the complexity, which exhibited moderate levels.

Discussion

This research mostly concentrated on the organizational dimensions and types. The elements mentioned above are fundamental and form the structure of each organization. Therefore, knowledge and understanding related to these elements are essential for any manager to be able to run a viable organization and to maximize its efficiency.

This study was based on previous literature and presented the three most common dimensions of organizational structure: “centralization”, “complexity” and “formalization”. These variations in structure introduce different managerial philosophies and ways of developing sport organizations. Future researchers may also focus on examining sports clubs / organizations in different cultures, religious backgrounds, and countries, to examine whether these factors have an influence on the organizational structure.

This research attempted to study an emerging area (Municipal Sports Organizations) based on the dimensions of organizational structure. The organizational dimensions are tied to the structure of sports organizations. Therefore, their understanding is essential both for the examination of organizational structures and for designing the structure that meets the needs and expectations of the organization.

According to Carlisle (1974), organizational dimensions exist in all conditions that the organization is developed and their importance varies from case to case. Moreover, the same researcher argues that the efficient organization of a sports organization requires an understanding of these dimensions and of the relationships between them. Finally, it is revealed that these dimensions provide useful guidance to managers in order to decide which organizational structure to use to achieve the goals of the organization.

Conclusions

It is worth mentioning that this research was a first attempt nationwide to examine the organizational structure of Greek Sports Organizations / Companies / Sport Offices in Local Government based on their organizational dimensions. However, a longitudinal study of the organizational structure of Sports Organizations / Companies / Sport Offices

in Local Government is suggested, in order to collect more information. Moreover, the organizational structure of each organization is a criterion for the assessment its efficacy. Therefore, this information gives a more complete picture of organizations and facilitates their managers to design the ideal organizational structure, which meets the needs and expectations of each sport organization and maximizes their effectiveness.

Sport managers must understand the structural properties of the broader network. This information informs partnering decisions and allows sport managers to more strategically position their organization within the overall system of interactions. For example, sport managers with knowledge of the broader network are able to seek out organizations with compatible resource profiles, similar sport values, or access to complimentary resources (Jones, Edwards, Bocarro, Bunds & Smith, 2017). As Edwards and Leadbetter (2016) suggest, strong communication links need to be established to facilitate the necessary information for management of MSO to deliver to the National Coaching Certification Program. In Greece this could be established through the Departments of Physical Education and Sport Science and the Departments of Sport Management.

In addition, the understanding and recognition of the examined elements (characteristics, dimensions, types of organizations), will help managers in the division of job responsibilities within the organization and in the division of liabilities. Furthermore, employees will be encouraged to have more harmonious cooperation. For these reasons, municipal sport organizations should be briefed and executives with strategic thinking, flexibility and continuous training should be specialized. Because of this, systematically conduct seminars are proposed for the managers of municipal organizations. These seminars' focus should be the viability of the Municipal Sports Organizations and updating the skills of managers, in order to run their organizations more effectively.

This research could be combined with other concepts, such as efficiency of the organization, staff attitude and satisfaction of employees in their workplace. Also, comparisons between different Sports Organizations / Companies / Sport Offices in Local Government might be interesting based on geographical location, population of the city where the organization is located, work environment, number of staff and

number of citizens who participate in the organization's sport programs. Furthermore, a comparison between private enterprises that offer sport services and public Sports Organizations / Companies / Sport Offices, based on their organizational structure, might be valuable as well.

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